

Trump Reasserts His Dominating Lead, While Sanders Continues to Challenge Clinton’s Hold on the Nomination

Key Takeaways from March 8th Primaries and Caucuses

| Key Takeaways | Background |
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| <i>Donald Trump reasserted his dominance in the GOP contest</i> | There were real questions of whether Donald Trump’s support had peaked and was beginning to wane after his performance on March 5 th . However, Trump’s crushing wins in Mississippi and Michigan laid that hypothesis to rest demonstrating his support from white-working class is still strong enough to win major primaries. His win in Michigan also bodes well for him in the upcoming March 15th Midwestern contests. |
| <i>Bernie Sanders is holding on while Hillary Clinton continues to extend her lead</i> | Bernie Sanders upset Hillary Clinton in Michigan drawing from his support from white, young voters to close the lead. Although Clinton won handily in Mississippi and won more total delegates overall, Sanders’ victory in Michigan shows he remains competitive in states outside the South. |
| <i>Ted Cruz continues to solidify himself as the only Trump alternative</i> | Ted Cruz was the only one besides Trump who was able to win a contest on Tuesday finishing first in Idaho’s primary. Cruz is also the only candidate to win more than once against Trump, positioning him increasingly amongst the GOP establishment as the only candidate who has a chance to best Trump or force him into a brokered convention. |
| <i>Marco Rubio’s chances of becoming a factor are fading fast</i> | The March 8 th primary results were an absolute disaster for Marco Rubio. He got <i>zero delegates</i> and much of his moderate support went to Kasich. Even a win in Florida, which polls have him behind in the double digits, may not be able to close the momentum or delegate gap that has opened up between him and Cruz, let alone Trump. |
| <i>Open primaries favor outsider candidates like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders</i> | Trump’s impressive victories and Sanders’ win in Michigan were partially a result of the fact they were open primaries. Trump and Sanders both draw more support from independents compared to Cruz and Clinton, who registered party voters tend to favor. |

Source: Niall Stanage, “Winners and Losers After Michigan’s Big Primary Night,” *The Hill*, March 9, 2016; Alexander Burns, “Primary Night Takeaways: Hillary Clinton is Shaken and Donald Trump Roars Back,” *The New York Times*, March 9, 2016.