

CORY WILSON

My vote is with Romney

That direct mail piece from a "SuperPAC" and the phone ringing during dinner mean that Mississippi's primary election is Tuesday. It also means that, unlike many years, the race for President is not settled, and Mississippi gets a real vote March 13. This year's Republican race is still very much active. Gingrich, Santorum, and Romney will all visit Mississippi before Tuesday.

Mississippi could play an important role in shaping the GOP race in light of the Super Tuesday primary results this week. With Romney wins in Alaska, Idaho, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Virginia, Santorum wins in Tennessee, Oklahoma, and North Dakota, a Gingrich home-state win in Georgia, and a close Romney edge in Ohio, Romney is the clear leader in delegates. But the nomination remains in doubt.

Mississippi, practically speaking, can vote to contin-

ue the process by going with Santorum or Gingrich. Or, for a bigger impact on the national race, we can vote for Governor Romney. A Mississippi win would give the slow-but-steady frontrunner a significant win in the Deep South and perhaps hasten the end of the GOP contest, allowing us to move to the main event: defeating Obama. That's where I fall.

I am voting for Romney, partly because a Romney win here could spur Republicans nationally to unify, and wind down what is becoming a counterproductive primary process. (Will a few more debates really help?) It is time for the GOP to focus on our vision for America's future, compared to Obama's disastrous soft socialism.

Of the remaining candidates, Governor Romney is the best candidate to beat Obama in November. And, without victory, exactly zero conservative ideas will become real-

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After vigorous debate and vetting by voters across the Union, Romney has been the most durable, and the most Presidential.

Romney offers the best mix of experience and temperament of the candidates running. He is a fiscal conservative: When Governor Romney led Massachusetts, he cut taxes 19 times, and used his veto 800 times. That is fighting the good fight, in a state with a Legislature that was 85% Democratic. And those were liberals, not "Southern Democrats," with whom Governors Fordice and Barbour often were frustrated.

Romney has the most experience in the private sector. He has, as they say, signed the front side of a paycheck. And he has been successful. It will take determination and economic savvy to right the ship of state. Romney's a turnaround guy, and America needs a turnaround. In a year when people are disgusted with Washington, Romney is the only candidate who comes from outside DC. Yet, Rom-

ney's background shows that he gets how to get things done. Much better than community organizing.

Governor Romney has pledged to appoint judicial conservatives to the bench. With the possibility of three Supreme Court picks over the next term, this may be the most critical issue of all for conservatives. Forty years on, we still live under Roe v. Wade, the result of a liberal activist court. If a President Romney does nothing else, appointing judges who will follow the law and not legislate from the bench will have a generational impact.

Governor Romney's focus has been the economy, the deficit, and the size of government. These are the issues, illustrated by Obama's anti-energy policy, his Stimulus, and Obamacare, that will decide the election. Romney will reverse those failed policies.

Other candidates have repeatedly been drawn off course. Gingrich ponders lunar bases, and Santorum has been mired in a debate over contraception. Ron Paul dismisses a nuclear Iran. These candidates all have strong points, and Romney is not perfect. But Romney has kept the main thing, the

main thing. He has also shown that he can take the fight to Obama, after surviving a tough primary season.

Finally, Romney's "family values" seem solid. His wife Ann is warm and relatable, and her energy and grace under fire are all the more remarkable since she suffers from multiple sclerosis. The Romneys have raised five boys, who all seem to have turned out well. Living conservative values comes across better than merely preaching them.

Romney has talked about those values in Mississippi. Over five years ago, he spoke to the Jackson County Republican Women and to the Rankin County GOP, stressing traditional families, faith, and freedom. Quoted in the August 18, 2006 Mississippi Press newspaper, Romney noted that Americans "value life, dignity and the family is the foundation of our society." Combined with Romney's fiscal conservatism, that sounds like change I can believe in.

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