

# Did Donald Trump Just Lose 50 Delegates?

As has been mentioned here before, the quirkiness of some states' rules for allocating and binding delegates could play a major role in determining the eventual Republican Party presidential candidate.

For instance, in Alaska, state rules requires the delegates to be reallocated when a candidate drops out of the race. And because U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) had suspended his campaign, the state GOP distributed his delegates to Donald Trump and U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas).

But suspending a campaign isn't technically the end of a campaign. And, following a request from the Rubio campaign, the Alaska Republican Party gave back his delegates, once again resetting the "hard" delegate counts for the two leading candidates.

Another state's rules may play an even bigger role in determining the GOP nomination. Prior to its "First in the South" primary, the South Carolina Republican Party demanded the candidates sign a "loyalty pledge" to support the eventual nominee.

No loyalty pledge, no delegates.

At the time, it became a moot point because all of the candidates had signed the Republican National Committee's loyalty pledge, and it appeared the party establishment was playing nice with all of the candidates. Less than two months later, however, and two of the remaining candidates—Trump and Ohio Gov. John Kasich—have turned their backs on that pledge, while the third—Cruz—has significantly distanced himself from it.

So does that mean the delegates will be reallocated?

At this point, the South Carolina GOP has been mum on the issue. But the rules for reallocating delegates are very clear. They state if the candidate who received the most votes is not placed in nomination, the delegates must then be bound to the second- or third-place finisher.

If none of the top three finishers are placed in nomination, the delegates are unbound, meaning they can vote for anyone.