



Aloha State Rejection

Even In Hawaii, Obama's Hand-Picked Candidate Can't Escape Rejection At The Ballot Box

This Weekend, Gov. Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) Lost His Bid For Re-Election To State Sen. David Ige (D-HI) By 35 Points. “A 40-year political career came to a close after Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie lost his bid for a second term in a stunning primary-election defeat by a fellow Democrat and state senator who defied party leadership to challenge the incumbent. A second intraparty fight for U.S. Senate was too close to call. State Sen. David Ige, once seen as an underdog, cruised to a decisive 35 percentage point win in Saturday's primary after being dramatically outspent by Abercrombie, who also had high-profile endorsements including President Barack Obama.” (Cathy Bussewitz and Juliet Williams, “Hawaii's Governor Ousted In Stunning Primary Loss,” [The Associated Press](#), 8/10/14)

- **Abercrombie Is “The First Incumbent Governor In The State's History To Lose In His Party's Primary.”** “After nearly four decades in elected office in Hawaii, Gov. Neil Abercrombie was dealt a stunning defeat in his bid for re-election over the weekend, becoming the first incumbent governor in the state's history to lose in his party's primary.” (Ian Lovett, “In Surprising Defeat, Hawaii Governor Loses Primary,” [The New York Times](#), 8/10/14)

Voters Rejected Abercrombie Despite The Fact That He Outspent Ige “By About 10 To 1.” “Ige mounted his challenge against Abercrombie despite being outspent by about 10 to 1. While Abercrombie tore through \$4.9 million through July 25, Ige spent just \$447,000, according to Hawaii's Campaign Spending Commission.” (Cathy Bussewitz and Juliet Williams, “Hawaii's Governor Ousted In Stunning Primary Loss,” [The Associated Press](#), 8/10/14)

And In The U.S. Senate Race, Obama-Backed Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI) Is Locked In A Dead Heat In A Race That Remains “Too Close To Call.” “U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz and U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa were locked in a dead heat in the state's Democratic primary election, with the race too close to call early Sunday. The anticlimactic result may send both candidates to the storm-ravaged communities on the Big Island to help clean up the rubble and perhaps pick up votes.” (Cathy Bussewitz, “Schatz, Hanabusa Senate Primary Too Close To Call,” [The Associated Press](#), 8/9/14)

- **Obama Made A “Rare Intervention In A Primary” To Back Schatz's Campaign.** “Schatz said the race should be about performance, favorably comparing his year-plus in the Senate with Hanabusa's House record. He says his endorsement by President Obama — a rare intervention in a primary — and support from Senate Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, along with much of the rest of the party establishment, means he can deliver in ways the congresswoman cannot.” (Mark Z. Barabak, “U.S. Senate Race In Hawaii Pits Opposing Wings Of Democratic Party,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 4/23/14)

Abercrombie's Stunning Defeat Came Despite Strong Backing From Obama And Close Ties To Obama's Family

In December 2013, Obama Officially Endorsed Abercrombie's Re-Election Bid For Governor.

"Campaign officials for Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie say President Barack Obama is endorsing Abercrombie's bid for re-election next year. The campaign said on its website Friday that Obama is backing Abercrombie because of his handling of state finances and approach to making tough choices. Obama says in a statement that he's known Abercrombie for decades and appreciates him as a friend and public servant who doesn't let politics get in the way of serving the people. Abercrombie, a Democrat, says he is honored by Obama's endorsement." ("Obama Endorses Gov. Abercrombie For Re-Election," [The Associated Press](#), 12/20/13)

In The Closing Weeks Of The Campaign, Obama Stepped "Up To Help" Abercrombie And Cut A Radio Ad In Support Of His Campaign. "President Barack Obama is stepping up to help endangered Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie — a longtime family friend — fend off a difficult challenge in next month's Democratic primary. In a radio advertisement to begin airing Wednesday, first reported by the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, Obama praises Abercrombie for making 'gutsy decisions' on Hawaiians' behalf, but he leads with a personal appeal on behalf of the governor." (Kyle Cheney, "Obama Cuts Radio Ad For Neil Abercrombie," [Politico](#), 7/23/14)

- **"In The Ad, Obama Describes Abercrombie As Like 'Ohana' — Hawaiian For Family."** (Kyle Cheney, "Obama Cuts Radio Ad For Neil Abercrombie," [Politico](#), 7/23/14)

Obama Also Cut An Ad For Abercrombie's 2010 Campaign, Featuring A "Direct-To-Camera Endorsement." "It's not the first ad Obama has cut for Abercrombie. Back in October 2010, when the then-congressman was hoping to succeed GOP Gov. Linda Lingle, Abercrombie's campaign ran a 30-second TV spot featuring the president's direct-to-camera endorsement." (Kyle Cheney, "Obama Cuts Radio Ad For Neil Abercrombie," [Politico](#), 7/23/14)

It Wasn't Just Politics – Abercrombie Was A Strong Backer Of Obama's Signature Policy

In September 2013, Abercrombie Predicted "Hawaii Will Be Among The First, If Not The First In The Nation To Fully Accommodate The Affordable Care Act." ABERCROMBIE: "So I want to acknowledge all those who have put in countless numbers of hours to meet the federal requirements, to work together in a collaborative basis, to meet the deadlines. To assure that Hawaii will be among the first, if not the first, in the nation to fully accommodate the Affordable Care Act and its implementation." (Neil Abercrombie, [Press Conference](#), 9/17/13)

Hawaii Announced Plans To Build And Operate An ObamaCare Exchange Before Any Other State, But The Exchange "Has Failed In Several Areas." "To preserve these benefits and show support for President Barack Obama, who championed the law, Hawaii officials decided to build and operate their own health care exchange and announced those plans before any other state. But the Connector has failed in several areas..." (Cathy Bussewitz, "Hawaii Health Care Faces Federal Threat," [The Associated Press](#), 7/29/14)

- **The ObamaCare Exchange Has Signed Up Only A Fraction Of The Number Of Predicted Enrollees And Has Fallen Well Short Of Expected Revenues.** "It enrolled just 10,800 people, far below the 100,000 that some supporters predicted. This was at least partially because so many residents already insured under Hawaii's law, officials say. In its first six months, the Connector earned just \$40,350 in revenue, falling short of the \$320,000 expected." (Cathy Bussewitz, "Hawaii Health Care Faces Federal Threat," [The Associated Press](#), 7/29/14)

ABERCROMBIE'S LOSS "DEFIES HAWAII'S POLITICAL HISTORY" AND IS A HISTORIC REBUKE FOR A PRESIDENT'S HOME-STATE GOVERNOR

Abercrombie's Struggles Were "A Sign Of Obama's Waning Political Influence In His Home And Native States." "Both incumbents could still win reelection, but experts say the fact that they're struggling — and even trailing — is, in part, a sign of Obama's waning political influence in his home and native states and proof that presidential endorsements only go so far." (Kyle Cheney, "Obama's Endangered Home-State Governors," [Politico](#), 8/8/14)

- **"In State After State That Once Called The President Its Favorite Son, He Is Finding That His Political Advocacy Is Unwelcome."** (David Freedlander, "Even Hawaii Hates Obama Now," [The Daily Beast](#), 8/8/14)

"It's Been More Than A Century Since An Incumbent Governor Of The Same Party Was Toppled In The President's Home State..." "Although it's been more than a century since an incumbent governor of the same party was toppled in the president's home state, it's slightly less rare for a statehouse to switch sides when the governor's chair is vacant." (Kyle Cheney, "Obama's Endangered Home-State Governors," [Politico](#), 8/8/14)

Even Ige Noted That Obama's Influence In Hawaii Has Faded. "Ige, Abercrombie's vastly outfunded primary opponent — the incumbent outspent him 7-to-1 from July 1-25 — said he's not sweating the presidential intervention because Obama's influence in Hawaii has faded. 'I'm disappointed that he chose to [get involved in a competitive primary],' he said. 'But I think he gave up his right to vote in Hawaii. He's not a resident in our community and he doesn't get a vote in our primary.'" (Kyle Cheney, "Obama's Endangered Home-State Governors," [Politico](#), 8/8/14)

- **Hawaii Political Consultant Neil Milner: Obama's Abercrombie Endorsements Has "Certainly Not Moved The Needle In Any Real Way."** "'This is certainly a place where his endorsement remains welcome,' said Neil Milner, a Hawaii-based political consultant. 'No one here hides from the fact that they know Obama. But [his endorsements] have certainly not moved the needle in any real way.'" (David Freedlander, "Even Hawaii Hates Obama Now," [The Daily Beast](#), 8/8/14)

Merriman River Group's Pollster And Executive Director Matthew Fitch Said Hawaii Has An "Incredible Tradition Of Keeping Their Incumbents." "Although Fitch noted that Hawaii voters have 'an incredible tradition of keeping their incumbents' — and polls have had hit-or-miss accuracy in recent elections — early voting has already begun, so some of the polling trends could solidify." (Kyle Cheney, "Obama's Endangered Home-State Governors," [Politico](#), 8/8/14)

- **Fitch, On Ige's Then-Impending Victory: "What He's Doing Defies Hawaii's Political History."** "'What he's doing defies Hawaii's political history,' Fitch said of Ige." (Kyle Cheney, "Obama's Endangered Home-State Governors," [Politico](#), 8/8/14)

ON POLICIES AND VISION FOR HAWAII, DAVID IGE REPRESENTS MORE OF THE SAME

Recent Campaign Debates Have Highlighted That There Were "Few Major Policy Differences" Between Ige And Abercrombie. "The gubernatorial debate was brought to the Big Island on Wednesday as Gov. Neil Abercrombie squared off against challenger state Sen. David Ige in Waimea. With few major policy differences, both sought to make the case for their leadership abilities and knowledge of neighbor island needs." (Tom Callis, "Abercrombie, Ige Hold First Big Island Debate," [Hawaii Tribune Herald](#), 7/24/14)

- **"But The Primary Rivals Are Split More On Who's To Blame For Hawaii's Issues Than They Are On How To Solve Those Problems."** ("Abercrombie, Ige Debate Blame For Hawaii's Issues," [The Associated Press](#), 6/24/14)

On A Host Of Issues And "Their Visions Of Hawaii's Future," Ige And Abercrombie Offered Very Few Differences During Their Primary Campaign. "A debate between Hawaii Gov. Neil Abercrombie and state Sen. David Ige on Tuesday revealed few major differences in their visions of Hawaii's future. Both Democratic candidates want to solve Hawaii's housing problems, support Native Hawaiian

sovereignty and improve the state's troubled health exchange. They also both want to keep gambling out of Hawaii and improve its public education system.” (“Abercrombie, Ige Debate Blame For Hawaii's Issues,” [The Associated Press](#), 6/24/14)

University Of Hawaii’s Colin Moore Has Noted A Challenge Facing Ige Is “To Articulate A Different Vision From Gov. Abercrombie.” ““Gov. Abercrombie was trying to show that he was calm and confident and in charge, and of course Sen. Ige kept saying the same thing he's been saying throughout the campaign, which is that his administration lacks leadership,’ said University of Hawaii political science professor Colin Moore. Ige used the phrase ‘lack of leadership’ several times during the debate. We asked Moore if the strategy works. ‘He clearly thinks its going to work. And I think the challenge for him in this debate, one that perhaps he really didn't meet this time was to articulate a different vision from Gov. Abercrombie,’ said Moore.” (Ben Gutierrez, “Abercrombie, Ige Spar In Final Televised Debate On Hawaii News Now,” [Hawaii News Now](#), 7/9/14)