

# [***Nikki Haley's home-state loss is unique in US politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDK-6H61-JBSS-S41K-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Republican presidential candidateNikki Haley lost in Iowa and New Hampshire. She placed second to "none of these candidates" in a Nevada primary for which there were no delegates at stake and where Donald Trump was not on the ballot. Now she has lost the primary in her home state of South Carolina, where she was a two-term governor.

Her insistence on staying in the race puts her in a rarefied position: the losing candidate who won't quit.

No other major, modern candidate has refused to drop out of the race after so many losses.

[*Sen. Marco Rubio*](https://www.cnn.com/2016/03/15/politics/marco-rubio-drops-out/index.html), the Florida Republican who ran in the crowded 2016 field that produced Trump as the GOP nominee, dropped out after he lost his home state of Florida. Fellow Floridian [*Jeb Bush*](https://www.cnn.com/2016/02/20/politics/jeb-bush-drops-out-2016/index.html), a former governor, dropped out earlier, after a disappointing finish in nearby South Carolina.

On the Democratic side, [*Sen. Elizabeth Warren*](https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/05/politics/elizabeth-warren-drops-out/index.html) of Massachusetts quit the Democratic race in 2020shortly after Super Tuesday, which that year featured the Massachusetts primary. Finishing third was enough to convince Warren things were over.

Most candidates reading the writing on the wall drop out after Iowa or New Hampshire, or at least early enough to avoid the embarrassment of a home-state loss. That's what [*Sen. Amy Klobuchar*](https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/02/politics/amy-klobuchar-ends-2020-campaign/index.html) did in 2020, suspending her campaign days before Warren and before she was set to lose the primary in her home state of Minnesota.

Some candidates do keep going. They're usually more on the fringes of their parties.

Former Rep. Ron Paul ran in both the 2008 and 2012 GOP primaries. He admitted he wasn't going to win and [*would wind*](https://www.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/03/07/ron.paul/index.html?section=cnn_latest) before losing the primary in his home state of Texas in 2008. His campaign [*ran out of money*](https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/OTUS/ron-paul-ends-presidential-campaign-continues-delegate-strategy/story?id=16344597) for active campaigning in 2012, but he technically remained an active candidate trying to secure delegates and influence the party. The person who did win the Republican nomination that year, [*Mitt Romney*](https://www.cnn.com/2012/05/29/politics/romney-delegates/index.html), clinched the magic number of delegates with his victory in Texas.

Undeterred, Paul's supporters swarmed the state GOPconvention in Iowa and, despite his poor showing at the Iowa caucuses in January, secured him [*most of Iowa's convention delegates*](https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/Decoder/2012/0618/Ron-Paul-wins-Iowa!-Does-that-matter). Republicans have since changed the rules in most states.

FormerRep. Dennis Kucinich also made an argument about influencing the agenda when he refused to drop out of the 2004 Democratic primary race. Kucinich only got 9% of the vote in his home state of Ohio, but he [*maintained his candidacy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/17/us/down-but-not-out-kucinich-keeps-on-fighting.html) until just before the Democratic convention. Kucinich won zero states and amassed just a smattering of delegates.

Could Haley win delegates without winning states?

If Haley isn't likely - at least not at the moment - to win any primaries or caucuses, is there an argument she could amass enough to keep Trump from securing it?

That also seems extremely unlikely. Trump's campaign believes the former president will have enough delegates to secure the GOP nomination - the magic number is [*1,215 of 2,429 delegates*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/14/politics/republican-presidential-nomination-delegates-dg/index.html) - before the end of March. Heading into South Carolina, Trump had 63 delegates and Haley had 17.

Haley has mentioned Super Tuesday, March 5, as a key date. In 15 contests, more than 850 delegates, 35% of the Republican total, will be up for grabs on that date. But it still isn't halfway through the primaries. It's also before any of [*Trump's four criminal trials*](https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2023/07/politics/trump-indictments-criminal-cases/) get under way, although news coverage of those trials do not seem likely to hurt him in Republican primaries.

Haley argues that Republican primary voters deserve a choice, and she argues that Trump, while the clear favorite of Republican primary voters, will have a harder time winning the general election.

"It is literally impossible that we will win an election if Donald Trump is the nominee," she told CNN's Jake Tapper Thursday, days before the South Carolina primary.

Most Republican voters, at least so far, don't seem to agree. Haley told Tapper she'll stay in the race "as long as I possibly can."

By Annette Choi, Ethan Cohen and Zachary B. Wolf

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