

Rhode Island Democrats have thrown additional question marks into the Democratic race for president by giving Jerry Brown what he says is a victory that makes him the preeminent challenger to front-runner Jimmy Carter.

On a primary day in which the voters continued to send out mixed signals and five of the six major candidates involved claimed some sort of victory, the most noted result was in Rhode Island.

There a small turnout of voters gave an uncommitted slate 32 per cent of the vote to 30 per cent for Carter, the former Georgia governor, and 28 per cent for Idaho Sen. Frank Church.

Brown, the California governor, had urged voters to vote uncommitted, and when they did, he said they were really voting for him.

In other results from Tuesday's primaries, Ronald Reagan defeated President Ford in Republican voting in Montana and South Dakota but Ford gained a 2-1 victory in Rhode Island and swept all 19 delegates there. That gave the President a 28-11 edge in delegates for the day, although

Montana has still to select its slate of 20 at a convention.

Carter, meanwhile, was winning in South Dakota with a 41-34 per cent edge over Arizona Rep. Morris K. Udall, who had hoped to win his first primary

and instead finished second for the eighth time. And Church captured Montana easily with over 60 per cent of the vote to 24 per cent for Carter.

So going into next Tuesday's primaries in California, New Jersey and Ohio, which will select 540 Democratic delegates and 331 on the Republican side, this is the way they stand:

Republicans, with 1,130 delegate votes needed for nomination: Ford 805, Reagan 654, uncommitted 144.

Democrats, with 1,505 needed: Carter 903, Udall 306.5, with an uncommitted bloc of 415.5. Brown, who got no official delegates on Tuesday, is far down the list with 22.5, "although he should improve that standing next week in his home state of California where there are 280 at stake.

On the whole, Carter said, it wasn't a bad day.

"We are very pleased about South Dakota," he said. "I

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