

Firebrand Roy Moore wins GOP primary runoff

Moore first gained notoriety when, as Alabama Supreme Court chief justice, he displayed a Ten Commandments monument in the state judicial building.

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This article appears in the [October 25, 2017](#) issue.



Roy Moore at a victory party in September 2017 after he won a runoff. AP photo / Brynn Anderson.

Roy Moore, the former Alabama chief justice who was twice removed from those duties by a judicial discipline panel after taking stands in favor of publicly displaying the Ten Commandments and against gay marriage, has had a political resurrection.

On September 26 he won the Alabama Republican primary runoff for U.S. Senate, defeating an appointed incumbent backed by both President Trump and deep-pocketed allies of Sen. Mitch McConnell. Moore clinched a nine-point victory over Sen. Luther Strange to take the GOP nomination for the seat previously held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The general election is December 12.

In his victory speech Moore said that he “never prayed to win this campaign” but only that “God’s will be done.” “We have to return the knowledge of God and the Constitution of the United States to the United States Congress.”

Moore said his victory told establishment politicians that “their wall has been cracked and will now fall.”

The race pitted Trump against his former strategist Steve Bannon, who argued that Moore was a better fit than Strange for the “populist nationalist conservative” movement. Introducing Moore, Bannon told the crowd that the victory was a repudiation of the “fat cats” who pumped millions into the Alabama race to boost Strange. Bannon also declared Moore’s win a victory for Trump, despite the president’s support for Strange. Moore said he supports Trump and his agenda.

The Senate Leadership Fund, a group with ties to McConnell, had spent an estimated \$9 million trying to secure the nomination for Strange.

Steven Law, SLF president and CEO, said that Moore won the nomination “fair and square” and the group will now back him.

In a statement, McConnell congratulated Moore and said Senate Republicans are committed to keeping the seat in GOP hands.

Even though Alabama has not sent a Democrat to the U.S. Senate in two decades, Democrats are hopeful they have an opening in the December election. The Democratic candidate, Doug Jones, is a former U.S. attorney best known for prosecuting the Klansmen who killed four girls in a 1963 church bombing. Jones said that he wanted to focus on “kitchen-table issues,” which he named as “health care, education for our kids, jobs, and a living wage.”

Moore was twice elected chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court and twice removed from office: first in 2003, for disobeying a federal judge's order to remove a Ten Commandments monument he had placed in the state courthouse lobby. Last year, he was permanently suspended after a disciplinary panel ruled that he had urged probate judges to defy federal court decisions on gay marriage and deny wedding licenses to same-sex couples. He denied that accusation.

The crowded August primary went to a runoff between Moore and Strange because neither topped 50 percent in the voting. In the runoff, Moore was propelled by evangelical voters and consolidated support from a number of anti-establishment forces, including Bannon and the pro-Trump Great America Alliance.

Many at Moore's victory party had supported him through the years in his stances on the Ten Commandments and other issues.

"He stood up for God," said Patricia Riley Jones of Abbeville as she stretched out her arms to hold a Moore sign and American flags above her head. "He's a great Christian man." —Associated Press

A version of this article appears in the October 25 print edition under the title "Firebrand Moore wins GOP primary runoff."