Laura Loomer lost – but why?

By Terry A. Hurlbut   August 25, 2022
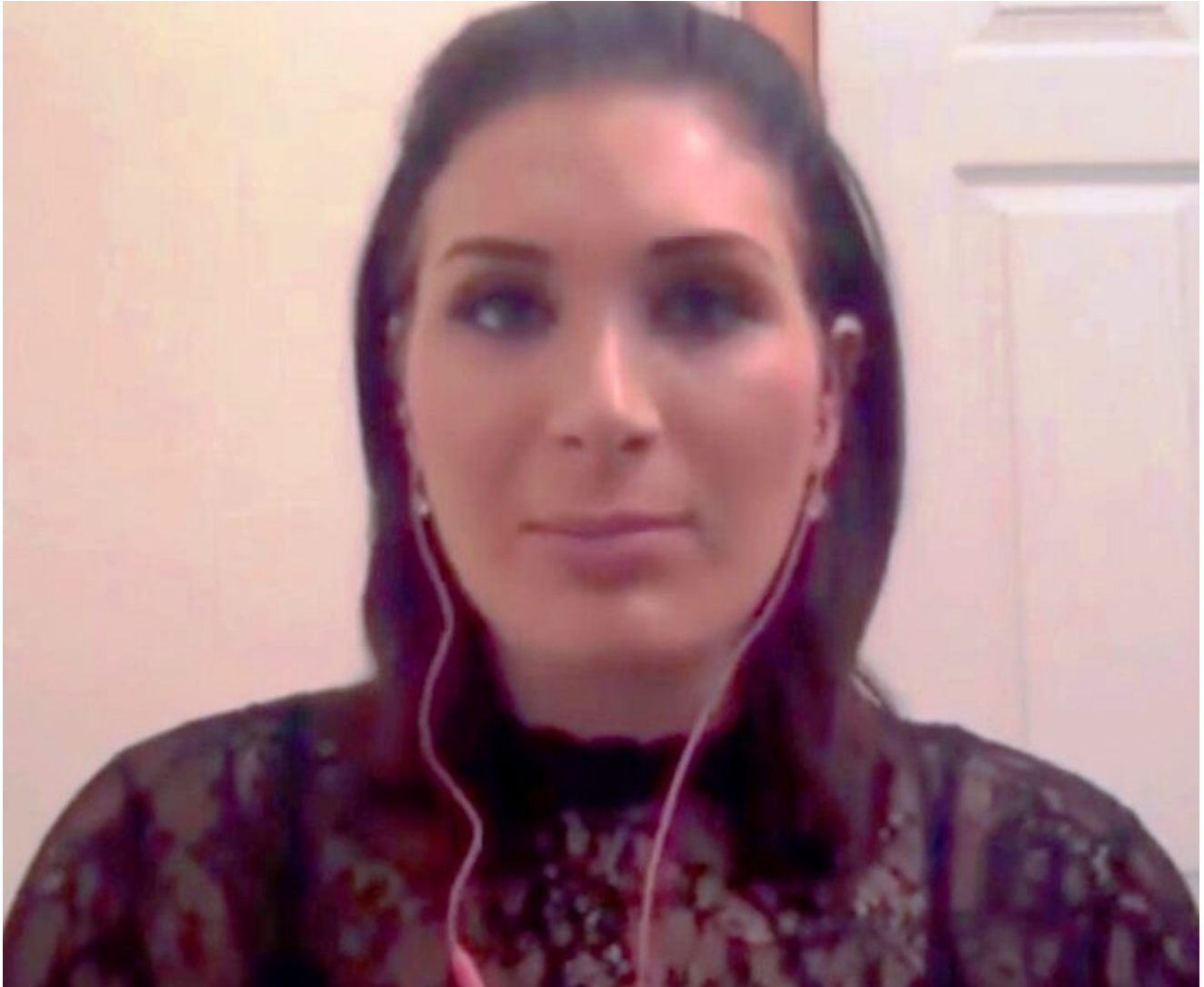
In the only sour note in Republican primaries on August 23, Laura Loomer lost her bid to oust Rep. Daniel Webster (R-Fla.-11th). At time of writing, she has not conceded the election. What exactly she will do next, she is not telling. But the returns on the Florida District 11 primary, and the wider context, do raise legitimate questions. On the other hand, conservative candidates like Laura Loomer should also ask themselves how to change people's minds. This applies equally to rank-and-file Republican establishment loyalists as to anyone who habitually votes absentee or by mail.

The election returns – and why Laura Loomer won't concede

Total returns on the Florida House District 11 Republican Primary come from Decision Desk Headquarters.

Candidate	Votes	Pct.
Daniel Webster *	43,471	51.05%
Laura Loomer	37,612	44.17%
Gavriel Soriano	4,070	4.78%

* = Incumbent Votes in: Estimated > 99% Votes counted: 85,153

The county-by-county returns tell another story. In Lake County:

Candidate	Votes	Pct.
Daniel Webster *	13,165	50.30%
Laura Loomer	11,838	45.23%
Gavriel Soriano	1,169	4.47%

* = Incumbent Votes in: Estimated > 99% Votes counted: 26,172

In Orange County:

Candidate	Votes	Pct.
Daniel Webster *	13,877	60.59%
Laura Loomer	7,766	33.91%
Gavriel Soriano	1,260	5.50%

* = Incumbent Votes in: Estimated > 99% Votes counted: 22,903

In Polk County:

Candidate	Votes	Pct.
Daniel Webster *	1,378	47.29%
Laura Loomer	1,350	46.33%
Gavriel Soriano	186	6.38%

* = Incumbent Votes in: Estimated > 99% Votes counted: 2,914

And in Sumter County:

Candidate	Votes	Pct.
Laura Loomer	16,658	50.23%
Daniel Webster *	15,051	45.38%
Gavriel Soriano	1,455	4.39%

* = Incumbent Votes in: Estimated 99% Votes counted: 33,164

As one can see, Daniel Webster had his highest margin in Orange County. That Orange County is Democrat country, might or might not be significant. On the other hand, Laura Loomer had a higher margin in Sumter County than Mr. Webster had in Lake County.

Votes counted over time – what caused the spike?

Of higher interest is the vote count as a function of time.

> The Webster v Loomer election was very close until the last few minutes, reportedly because of a mail dump. pic.twitter.com/TPTVziDpqr
>
> — VDARE (@vdare) August 24, 2022

Notice that the vote totals for Webster (in blue) and Loomer (in red) switched leads at first. They then were nearly even until 8:10 p.m. (Polls closed at 7:00 p.m.) The Site VDARE.com advanced a theory that mail-in ballots came in at about that time. Mail-in ballots, as *CNAV has shown* with a Chi-Square analysis of the Virginia 2021 Governor's race, skew left.

But in her post-election statement, Laura Loomer advanced another theory:

> As you all saw last night, the Laura Loomer For Congress campaign had the nation on its heels because the entire night, I was ahead of Daniel Webster, beating him in the election. Then, there was a very strange long pause in the counting of votes while I was still ahead of Daniel Webster. And then all of a sudden, a drastic shift in numbers at the 11th hour occurred after the Supervisor of Elections websites crashed (while I was ahead in votes).

That pause could have happened between 7:50 p.m. and 7:53 p.m. All three vote-total graphs, for Webster, Loomer, and Gavriel Soriano, were flat during that time. Then all three vote totals sloped slightly upward over the next twelve minutes. And then, between 8:05 p.m. and 8:10 p.m., came the spike. The final vote totals seem to reflect the state of the graph at 8:10 p.m.

The wider context of the Laura Loomer campaign

One cannot infer, with complete confidence, whether the demographics of District 11 are the same today as they were two years ago. The current District 11 has changed since the Census. It has lost its original Florida West Coast portion, and picked up some of Democrat country, especially in Orange County. Despite this, three separate political prognosticators rate the district Solid Republican. *CNAV* rates it *Likely* Republican at best, considering the pickups in Orange County.

Did Democrats gimmick the Republican Primary in any way? They have a history of doing that in Pennsylvania and Michigan. (That's no mere allegation; it is a lament from a leftist who feels the Democrats shouldn't have.) But no one sees any evidence that they did that in Florida. In fact, commentator Chris Hayes flatly denies that. At 7:54 p.m., he tweeted this:

> I'll note here that there was no Democratic campaign arm propping up loomer or meddling, etc…This is sheer base voter preference in action. https://t.co/7PFuLoiq7Z
>
> — Chris Hayes (@chrislhayes) August 23, 2022

"Sheer base voter preference in action," he said. And that "sheer base voter preference" nearly put Laura Loomer over the top. Which is the more remarkable because almost every social media platform disallowed her. She has accounts on Gab.com, Telegram.org, and Gettr.com – and nowhere else.

The old District 11 switched from Democrat to Republican after the 2010 Census. Republican Presidential candidates carried the District with 65 to 70 percent of the vote. Again, the District is new. So *CNAV* places little confidence in whether the new District 11 will perform as the old one did.

Did America First people split the vote?

Gavriel Soriano made several America First style pronouncements. So did he spoil the election for Laura Loomer? He couldn't have. Daniel Webster, in unofficial returns, has a clear majority. That alone negates any spoiler theory.

Loomer doesn't mention Soriano at all. Instead she concentrates on Daniel Webster's record, and his relatively lacking campaign. She says he was the seventh most absent member of the House and missed more than 15 percent of votes. Was he absent by reason of his health? Or did he miss some votes merely to stay off the record? As for campaigning, Peter Brimelow of VDARE.com writes:

> Driving into FL-11 yesterday, we were amazed by the vast number of Loomer For Congress signs—we only saw one Webster sign, I think outside his headquarters—as later by the size and enthusiasm of the crowd at her Election Watch party.

On the other hand, Donald Trump *did not* endorse Laura Loomer in this primary. Why didn't he? Who might have advised him not to? We also hear from Dan Conston, head of the Congressional Leadership Fund. By his word, he supported Daniel Webster with "turnout calls" for which his organization budgeted $50,000.

> CLF launched $50k in turnout calls for @WebsterCongress today just to be safe. Not regretting that investment!
>
> — Dan Conston (@danconston) August 24, 2022

So why did Mr. Conston do that? He apparently won't say.

Add this to it, though. School elections also took place, and school boards in 13 districts switched from woke to anti-woke. One of these was Polk County. So how did Webster still come out barely ahead there?

What will Laura Loomer do next?

Perhaps one shouldn't expect anyone planning to contest an election, or litigate anything else, to discuss plans in advance. So when Laura Loomer won't say exactly what she will do to change this result, this should surprise no one. Nor would speculation be wise. Except in Polk County, all margins of victory were well over a thousand and amounted to four percent or more. Any election contest will likely be very expensive for her campaign.

The larger question for her (and others in her position) to answer is: how to change the minds of voters who likely have voted with a certain mind-set for forty years? Her positions on the issues – positions *CNAV* certainly shares – might strike elderly Republican voters as too radical. That might apply especially to any voter who feels too debilitated to vote in person. So such a voter votes by mail. Could the same attitude of preferring to send in a vote in the mail, also include preferring the *status quo* to someone saying it's time for significant changes?

But one big fact tells against this idea. Laura Loomer did best in Sumter County, which*is*The Villages. In fact it has a median age of 68.3 years, the oldest of any county in America. *These* are the voters who preferred Laura Loomer by nearly five percent.

Lake County, by contrast, is Daniel Webster's literal home base. He hails from Clermont, the seat of Lake County.

Her latest statements

The Laura Loomer Telegram account has been very active today. Again, she said nothing specific about her next steps. But more generally she promises simply to wear him down physically. She cites several indicators of poor health, which again could explain his

absenteeism, in large part.

> His health is drastically failing, he is demented, looks ill, he can barely speak, [and] he wears a life alert.

So she has set a goal to have him simply resign.

In fact, Laura Loomer broke this news at 12:38 p.m. Daniel Webster *will resign* after Midterms. Apparently he will endorse someone for a special election to take place next springtime. Laura Loomer vehemently protests that apparently *no primary* will take place ahead of that special election.

Clearly the contest in District 11, at least until the next Census, will be between two kinds of Republican. Daniel Webster represents the old, and Laura Loomer the new. But she must do more than expose what she calls the corruption in the Republican establishment. That establishment still has an extensive base of support, and she must undermine it, if it takes years.

About the image