



Republicans batter each other in primaries

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(CNN) -- After enduring months of brutal campaigning, a barrage of negative campaign ads and spending in excess of \$100 million by wealthy candidates, California Republicans go to the polls Tuesday to decide who will represent their party against two Democratic stalwarts.

Two women, both former CEOs and largely self-financing their runs, have captured a lot of attention as they run for office for the first time and are favorites in their respective races.

The marquee event has been the campaign for governor, with former eBay CEO Meg Whitman pitted against state insurance commissioner and former technology company CEO Steve Poizner. The race has set a record for spending in a state primary with the two pouring in well over \$100 million. Of the \$80 million Whitman has put into her campaign, more than \$71 million is her own money, while Poizner has spent about \$25 million of his own funds.

Whitman, who would be the first female nominee for governor if she wins the primary, is well ahead of Poizner in the latest polls.

Ads by both camps, which have cost in excess of \$40 million, according to CNN consultant Campaign Media Analysis Group, have been running constantly.

Whitman said it is money well spent.

"I have invested to make sure people know where I stand. What I want to do is turn this state around and that is what it costs," she said last week. "You know politics is one tough business. And Jerry Brown and Steve Poizner are coming at me with everything they have because they know I will disrupt the status quo in California. So they are putting everything they have against me."

Poizner said, "She's trying to buy the election from her living room, and it's very objectionable to lots of people who are in the middle of this deep recession. And she's trying to distort the facts and cover over her background. It will matter to people. There will be a blowback to all this spending for sure."

Whoever wins the GOP gubernatorial nomination is expected to go up against state Attorney General and former Gov. Jerry Brown, who was nicknamed "Governor

Moonbeam" the first time he served in the late '70s and early '80s and is known for his eccentric style. With more than \$16 million on hand, Brown so far has held his fire, going on the air with his first television ad just last week criticizing the spending of his two GOP rivals.

With the state facing massive economic problems, a \$19 billion budget deficit and 12.6 percent unemployment, both Whitman and Poizner are trying to position themselves as the best conservatives to help bring the state out of the recession and to create more jobs.

The two have also battled in the last few weeks over immigration, with Poizner trying to put Whitman on the defensive over the new Arizona law that requires law enforcement to check whether a person being investigated is in the country legally if there is a suspicion. Poizner has embraced the new bill and Whitman has said she opposes it. Both have said more needs to be done to beef up border security.

Also hoping to make history is Carly Fiorina, running for the GOP nomination for U.S. Senate. If she wins the chance to go up against three-term incumbent Barbara Boxer, it would be the first time in the state that two women ran against each other for the Senate.

Fiorina, the former CEO of Hewlett-Packard, is hoping to ride the anti-incumbency wave by attacking Boxer on the economy and national security, saying she is better equipped to lead on those issues.

"Certainly it appears there is a lot of anti-incumbent sentiment, and I think it is because people are tired of professional politicians. They have figured out that people like Barbara Boxer are part of the problem -- not part of the solution. But I also think it is Barbara Boxer has pushed policies that people in California don't agree with," Fiorina said.

Fiorina was confident about the outcome Tuesday, telling CNN affiliate KGO that she's looking forward to taking on Boxer in the fall.

"Barbara Boxer is a fantastic politician and she's a great campaigner, but she hasn't delivered very many results for the people of California," Fiorina said.

With only 34 percent of registered voters saying they would vote to re-elect Boxer, according to a recent Los Angeles Times/USC poll, the incumbent knows she has a tough challenge ahead. She is working to fill her campaign coffers. She is already going on the attack against Fiorina over her tenure at HP and her conservative views.

"I would say with one of my opponents ... before she got fired, she fired 30,000 people, sent their jobs to India and China, that is tough for her. That is a record she has," Boxer said.

Fiorina has been running on a conservative agenda, including pushing more tax cuts, opposing abortion rights, supporting the Arizona immigration law, opposing offshore oil

drilling, and pledging to repeal the health care overhaul passed earlier this year. She is running well ahead of the two other GOP candidates: former Rep. Tom Campbell and Assemblyman Chuck DeVore.

Campbell, backed up by the recent Los Angeles Times/USC poll that shows him doing better against Boxer than Fiorina, argues he would be the stronger GOP nominee because of his moderate social positions, such as favoring abortion rights.

Republican analysts agree if Fiorina does win, she will have to try to appeal to some of the state's more moderate voters to be competitive in the general election.

Also on the ballot Tuesday is an initiative that would overhaul how primaries for statewide and congressional elections are run. Instead of candidates from each party running in separate primaries and the winners facing off in a general election, Proposition 14 would have all candidates run together in a first round of voting.

The two receiving the most votes would then compete in the general election. Supporters say the proposition would open up the process by not restricting voters to party-line choices.