

Eller wins GOP nomination in MS District 2 runoff.

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Mississippi Clarion Ledger

Ron Eller has won the Mississippi District 2 Republican congressional primary runoff.

Eller, 63, who was running against 27-year-old Andrew Scott Smith, received 2,413 votes, making up 76.8% of the total ballots cast when the election was called by the Associated Press at 8:20 p.m. Tuesday. Smith received 728 votes, consisting of only 728 ballots at that time.

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By 1:50 p.m. Wednesday, 97.03% of voter precinct had reported in. Of the total ballots cast, Eller received 4,807 votes, making up 76.9% of ballots, while Smith garnered 1,441 votes, which is 23.1%.

The Mississippi Republican Party, which is based in Jackson, did not answer requests to comment on the voter turnout Tuesday night.

Eller and Smith both ran in the District 2 primary in March, but neither candidate received the 50% plus one vote needed to receive the nomination. At the time, Eller received 46.5% of the votes and Smith received 35.9%.

Eller previously told the Clarion Ledger he was prepared for the runoff and confident he would receive the winning share of votes Tuesday night. Eller is focusing his campaign toward improving education standards in both schools and in prisons, conservative policies on immigration and creating an environment in which people can be educated and get more jobs.

Eller said just an hour after AP called the runoff that he was happy with the results, and he plans to continue running job-creation and promoting conservative leadership in Mississippi and Washington D.C.

"Of course I am pleased with the results," Eller said. "We must become united as a party going forward. If we're going to have an effective change in the second congressional district as well as in Mississippi. We need to be working for that common good. We need to work towards energy independence. We need to return jobs to America, and particularly jobs to Mississippi and the second congressional district."

Smith in an interview after the runoff was called did not have anything specific to say about Eller taking the nomination, other than to allude toward an uphill battle for Eller with incumbent Democrat Bennie Thompson.

"It's not looking in my favor, but I do want to go ahead and congratulate Bennie Thompson on winning reelection this year," Smith said. "You haven't seen the last of me."

Eller will now face off against Thompson, who has held the District 2 seat in the United States House of Representatives since 1993.

3 Apr 2024
Mississippi Clarion Ledger