

CBS Mornings

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7:09:08 a.m.

2 minutes and 35 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Primary Day Surprises on Both Sides of the Aisle]

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: Turning to big surprises in the Democratic and Republican primaries Tuesday. In a major upset in Florida Democratic socialist Angie Nixon defeated former Trump impeachment witness Alex Vindman in the Democrat Senate primary. Then, Trump-backed Republican Congressman Cory Mills lost his bid for reelection. CBS News's executive director of elections and surveys Anthony Salvanto is here with closer look. So, Anthony, let's start first in Florida. Some pretty striking results on both sides.

ANTHONY SALVANTO: Yeah, let me start on the Democratic side, Vlad, because, nationally and in Florida, the Democrats are having a debate about the direction of their party about Democratic socialism and that label. I can show you, nationally, just over half the party thinks of that in a positive way. The trouble going forward is that, when you look at views of socialism and capitalism across the wider electorate, socialism is net negative. So, they're going to have to reconcile that. Let me show you in context, though, the Florida Senate race. This is a list of battlegrounds and, Vlad, you will notice Florida is not on it.

DUTHIERS: Not on there.

SALVANTO: Florida is a reliably Republican state, so that's the way that one will likely trend in either case, but I do want to go back to the House for a second. You mentioned Cory Mills. Normally, Trump's endorsement this primary cycle —

DUTHIERS: Carries a lot of weight.

SALVANTO: — yeah, that's been the golden ticket. Too much controversy around that, but at the same time, Republicans still do stand to pick up three or four in Florida — three or four House seats, just based on redistricting alone.

DUTHIERS: Really interesting, too, there are a lot of people in Florida who fled socialist regimes and that's going to be a problem, I think, for Angie Nixon. So, let's talk about that race in Alaska, one of the Democrats' potential pickup opportunities, which is kind of surprising to me. This is a state that Donald Trump won comfortably, as you know. So, what makes Mary Peltola such a formidable challenger to the Republican Senator Dan Sullivan —

SALVANTO: Right.

DUTHIERS: — one of two Dan Sullivans, by the way, running —

SALVANTO: Right.

DUTHIERS: — in that race?

SALVANTO: There were two on the ballot, the same name on the ballot, the incumbent who is in the runoff. Here's the deal with Alaska. The Democrats have Mary Peltola now in the runoff, which is what takes place in November. She's won statewide office before. That's the reason they think they have a chance here. The other reason they think they have a chance is that the way Alaska's elections work, it's ranked-choice voting. And so, even if you don't get over 50 percent, you might be the choice of the second- and third-place folks, and they could put you over the top. Stay tuned, watch Alaska. We will be talking about it all fall.

DUTHIERS: I know we will. Anthony, as always, thank you, my friend. And a note, we are going to be talking to Democratic socialist nominee Angie Nixon. That's coming up.

(...)

7:16:32 a.m.

1 minute and 59 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Gov. Shapiro on Democratic Socialist Candidates]

GAYLE KING: Governor, let's talk about the midterms very quickly. Another big win for the socialist party — the socialist part of the Democratic Party in Florida. Are you concerned about this? Do you think that the party is on the right track? They seem to be gaining traction — the socialist part of the Democratic Party. Are you concerned?

GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO (D-PA): Well, Gayle, good morning —

KING: Good morning.

SHAPIRO: — and thanks for your question. I will tell you what I was paying more attention to. Last night, we had a special election right here in Pennsylvania for the state House, a district that had been held by the most conservative member probably in the history of the state House about a decade ago, really the beginning of the MAGA movement, and a district that Donald Trump won by 18 points in the last election, the incumbent Republican state rep won by 30, and we won that district last night with a middle of the road, community leader, who I backed, who won this improbable race. What I think we're seeing here in Pennsylvania, more than anywhere else — I'm not an expert on those races in Florida, Gayle — but what we're seeing are common sense folk from the community who I think reflect a lot more my values and my approach to governing, who are winning and upsetting Republicans in deep-red districts.

KING: I hear that. I hear that very clearly, but also there seems to be the Democratic socialist part of the party is picking up steam. Are you concerned at all about that or do you think it's okay for now, when it comes to the general, it's going to be a whole different ballgame?

SHAPIRO: Yeah, I think we have to see what happens in the general election. But what's also

clear is there is a ton of passion in the electorate right now, and a desire to defeat Donald Trump's chaos and cruelty and corruption, and people are showing up in record numbers. Our party is going to certainly have an ideological battle. It's going to have a real debate over these ideas going forward.

KELLY O'GRADY: It certainly will.

SHAPIRO: But the thing we have to focus on is winning in these midterms and defeating Donald Trump and his enablers.

(...)

7:55:39 a.m. [TEASE]

10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ahead; Angie Nixon]

DUTHIERS: Ahead, another landmark victory for a democratic socialist. In just a moment, we will talk with Angie Nixon, winner of the Democrats' Senate primary in the great state of Florida.

(...)

8:00:07 a.m. [TEASE]

11 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Angie Nixon]

KING: Democrat Angie Nixon, fresh off of a surprise win in the Florida Senate primary, why the Democratic socialist thinks more Americans want change in 2026.

(...)

8:01:13 a.m.

7 minutes and 56 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Democrat Angie Nixon on Winning FL Senate Primary]

DUTHIERS: We're going to begin this hour with a big political upset in the state of Florida drawing new attention to the Democratic Party's left-wing. State legislator Angie Nixon, a Democratic socialist, won her Senate primary in a state that has shifted deeply Republican in recent years. She defeated Alex Vindman, a former national security official and well-known Trump critic. Her victory follows gains for Democratic socialists in other states, and Angie Nixon joins us now from Jacksonville. Good morning, good to see you.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ANGIE NIXON (D-FL): Good morning, Vlad, how are you?

DUTHIERS: I'm doing well. Thanks so much for joining us and congratulations on the win. I want to jump right into it. You were outspent by more than 20 times, and prediction markets, which I thought was really interesting — prediction markets had you — had your opponent with a 90 percent chance of defeating you. Now, you are the nominee and registered Republicans, they outnumber Democrats by 1.5 million in Florida. I just want to go through a couple of issues you've been campaigning on. You want Medicare for all, and free universal child care, and pre-k. How are you suggesting taxpayers pay for that?

NIXON: Yeah, for sure. Thank you for that question. I have been traveling all across the state of Florida, having conversations with folks, and what is evident is that everyone wants the same things, right? To be healthy, prosperous, and safe, and a lot of folks, it crosses party lines as it relates to universal child care and Medicare for All, and how do we pay for that? Actually, Medicare for All, we're already spending the amount we would be paying for Medicare for All right now, even while folks are still paying for co-pays and deductibles and co-insurance. When it comes to universal child care, I think it's important to note that for every \$1 we spend, that puts \$3 back into —

DUTHIERS: So, representative, how would you pay for that?

DIXON: — the economy. Yeah, so how I would pay for that, I would repeal that Big BS Bill because that's what it was. It wasn't beautiful, and I would make sure that these big-time billionaires, the ultra-wealthy millionaires, pay what they owe.

DUTHIERS: Alright. So, that's another issue that you called for — you want a billionaire tax, you want a national rent freeze. Which of these policies are you prepared to tell moderate voters and perhaps even some Republicans who may be intrigued by this that this should become federal law, and how do you convince them that the cost will be worth it?

NIXON: I mean, have conversations with them, and it's been resonating. I want to be clear, there are Republicans and independents that crossed party lines to vote for me in the primary because they're fed up with what's happening in Washington, D.C. They realize it's broken and people like unelected Ashley Moody and Donald Trump are working less and less and less and meanwhile getting richer.

DUTHIERS: Alright, no, I understand that, but you really haven't articulated how you would pay for it. Let me ask you about something else here. You have faced some criticism. Like other Democratic socialists, you're advocating for ending unconditional aid to the state of Israel. Florida has the third-largest Jewish population in the country. What would you say to those voters who are perhaps worried about your position, given that we've seen an enormous spike in anti-Semitism in this country?

NIXON: For sure. I will let them know that I have continued to fight for the safety and well-being of all Floridians, despite their religion or whatever their ideology is. I'm going to

continue to advocate as such. So, back to your previous question, I'd articulate how I would pay for it, I told you that I would make sure that we made these billionaires and ultra-wealthy millionaires pay their fair share.

DUTHIERS: But —

NIXON: A budget is a moral document. It lets us know what our values are —

DUTHIERS: — I just —

NIXON: — and, right now, we can see that they care more about spending a billion dollars on a ballroom that many of us will never get to dance in.

DUTHIERS: Okay. I just want to get, again, your position on funding and providing material and support to the state of Israel. For example, do you believe that Hamas should be completely disarmed and removed from governing Gaza?

NIXON: Yes, I do.

DUTHIERS: You do. And what do you say, then, to those voters in the state of Florida who say to you that they are worried about the fact that the United States would not support a key ally in the Middle East?

NIXON: What I would say is the same thing I would say about every ally. We need to make sure that we are scrutinizing all military aid or all aid to them, to ensure that they are doing right by their citizens or their neighboring countries.

KING: Socialist message seems to be resonating right now. Good to see you, Angie Nixon, and congratulations, too. It seems to be resonating right now in the primary. Do you think that it will resonate in the general — when it comes to the general election? Many people are very frightened of the positions: defund the police, abolishing ICE. How do you think that's going to work when it comes to the general election?

NIXON: For sure. So, it's not necessarily a socialist message or a progressive message. It's not about labels. It's actually just about the needs of people. People want the same things, as I stated earlier, to be healthy, prosperous, and safe, and they want to make sure that people are looking out for these rights that they deserve, which are healthcare, which are housing, which are voting rights. It's actually resonating, and they're supportive of them.

KING: Have you heard from anyone in the Democratic leadership since your win?

NIXON: So, we have had folks that have reached out to call us, and we are going to be returning phone calls all this week.

KING: You've campaigned with Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, Mr. Piker. Do you want to see

them on the campaign trail with you as well?

NIXON: So, I have not campaigned with Mr. Piker, I'm not sure where that information came from. I have campaigned with Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib. And so, she is someone who wants the same things that I want, to make sure that government is working for people and not against it. So, I will continue to do the same thing, but I have not campaigned with Mr. Piker at all. I'm not sure where that came from.

KING: All right. My apologies, I thought that you had. My apologies about that. Would you want him to campaign with you?

NIXON: I don't really know who Mr. Piker is. I've heard about him, and so —

KING: You don't know who he is?

NIXON: — I said I don't really know who he is personally or anything like that. I am actually focused on Florida and making sure that I'm talking to voters here to uplift their needs and their concerns. So that's what my focus is going to be over the next 76 days.

KING: How do you think you pulled this off, Angie Nixon? You know, the money — you were outspent by the money, your opponent seemed to have more appeal, allegedly, when this campaign first started, the poll numbers were not in your favor in the beginning. How do you think you pulled it off? I know you said people wanted change, I hear you, but what do you think happened?

NIXON: Yeah, for sure. So, I — I worked hard, but also, I was a former single mom for 12 years, so I know how to make a dollar stretch, and I want to be clear: We knew we were going to win. I am a former union organizer, and I'm a current community organizer, and we work hard, and we go and speak to everyone, and that's what the difference was between me and Mr. Vindman, and that's going to be the difference between me and Ashley Moody —

KING: Alright.

NIXON: — because she doesn't like to show up to speak to constituents.

DUTHIERS: Representative, really quickly before you go, you are a Democratic socialist running in a statewide race with a large population of people who have fled governments that call themselves socialists. How do you convince those voters when they hear socialists that they may see that as disqualifying?

NIXON: Yeah, for sure. So, I want to be clear, I just recently became a member of the Democratic Socialists. I've also just recently became a member of the Working Families Party, and I let people know that nothing has changed about me. I am someone who is going to stand up for them, to make sure that I listen to them, and continue to fight for them and what their needs are.

DUTHIERS: All right. Representative Angie Nixon, congratulations again on the win. We will be tracking you. Thank you very much for appearing.

NIXON: Thank you so much. Have a good day.

KING: You, too.