

GOP Confab: Where, Oh Where Are Congress Members

Contributed by Carolyn Barta
Sun, Jun 15, 2008, 09:41 AM

Texas has 19 Republican members of Congress, but according to one blog we saw, only five were present to parade across the stage at the GOP state convention in Houston. Congressman and prez candidate Ron Paul was among the no-shows, writes Alan Bernstein on [chron.com's Texas Politics](#), although Paul drew a crowd off premises in downtown Houston Thursday night when he officially ended his presidential campaign and launched a national organization to elect libertarian-leaning Republicans to all levels of government. Some U.S. House members admittedly may have visited earlier with home folks and left the convention before their stage time came on Saturday. One member, however, tried to make his presence felt. Joe Barton, who represents a number of Dallas exurbs in Ellis County and part of Tarrant, wanted to be named an at-large national convention delegate so he could get on the platform committee. However, according to state GOP rules, Congress members may sit on the floor as non-voting members of the delegation. Barton's plea to change the rule was slapped down. U.S. Sens. Kay Bailey Hutchison and John Cornyn will be voting delegates, and Gov. Rick Perry will head the delegation to Minnesota.

One area elected official who attended the Houston convention said the John McCain camp won't be ecstatic over Texas' national delegation, as it will be hard-core conservative.

Meanwhile the Republican challenger in the old Tom DeLay congression district got some platform time at the state convention. Pete Olson, the GOP candidate challenging incumbent Democrat Nick Lampson for the Houston-area 22nd Congressional District seat, was called "an American hero" when he led the Pledge of Allegiance, according to the [chron.com](#) blog. Olson was a Navy pilot who flew missions in the Middle East and elsewhere before becoming a Senate aide for about nine years, and returned to Texas to run for Congress. This is a seat the Republicans would dearly love to take back and is expected to be a tough fight for Lampson.

One last note from the convention, from one of our sources there: The latest Republican chant is "Nobama, Nobama."