

U.S. NEWS

Jordan Weighs Next Step in Speaker Bid

Conservatives derail alternative plan to temporarily put McHenry in charge

WASHINGTON—Struggling Republican speaker nominee Rep. Jim Jordan postponed to Friday morning a third floor vote after a plan to temporarily put caretaker speaker Rep. Patrick McHenry in charge of the House ran into sharp objections from conservatives.

By *Siobhan Hughes, Kristina Peterson, Katy Stech Ferek and Gabriel T. Rubin*

Jordan's push to have another vote on his candidacy Thursday fell apart as he met continued resistance from his opponents during a meeting in a House office. As some detractors trickled out, there was no sign he had managed to change their minds.

"He does not have the votes to be speaker," said Rep. Carlos Gimenez (R., Fla.), a Jordan foe, after the gathering. He said a number of lawmakers had encouraged Jordan to drop his bid.

Another opponent, Rep. Mike Kelly (R., Pa.), said Jordan could see the writing on the wall, "and he doesn't even wear glasses."

Republicans have been tied in knots for more than two weeks over filling the vacancy created with the ouster of former Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.). Because of the GOP's slim majority in the House, any speaker candidate from the



Few signs emerged that Rep. Jim Jordan would gain ground in a third floor vote to become the next speaker of the House.

party can afford to lose only a handful of Republican votes, assuming all Democrats vote for their own nominee.

Rank-and-file GOP lawmakers this week have been losing patience with Jordan's efforts to continue his campaign for speaker after losses on two consecutive ballots. The now-canceled plan to put McHenry in charge would have given Jordan several months to build support for his bid while allowing the House to move forward with votes expected on Israel and Ukraine aid and keeping the government funded.

Putting the plan in place would have required a House vote. While some Republicans backed the plan, many said they weren't on board.

"We need to be able to bring our agenda forward," said Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R., Fla.), who opposed Jordan. "Anything that will get us in that direction I think is a good step," he said. Rep. Jim Banks (R., Ind.), a Jordan supporter, called the plan "a giant betrayal."

Rep. Pat Fallon (R., Texas) estimated that about two-thirds of the House Republican conference opposed the idea.

While the plan would have kept the GOP majority in charge of the narrowly divided chamber, passing any measure to empower McHenry would likely have required Democratic votes, raising the possibility of concessions to get them on board. Democrats have suggested a rule change to enable legislation with significant bipartisan support to come to the House floor without having to go through the Rules Committee.

Thursday saw Republicans and Democrats huddling in separate conference meetings. The lead architect of the plan

to give McHenry more powers, Rep. David Joyce (R., Ohio), initially said he hoped to hold a vote soon. He then backed away from that time line, citing the need to rebut GOP criticism that any vote amounted to a power-sharing arrangement with Democrats.

Rep. Dan Goldman (D., N.Y.) said Democrats weren't seeking dramatic concessions. "We just want the House to open so we can get bills that have bipartisan support on the floor." One major concern of Democrats is getting Ukraine aid passed, which has bipartisan backing but likely no longer

has the support of a majority of Republicans.

It couldn't be determined whether the backup plan was dead or merely had been put on ice. "I think it's still an option," said Rep. Richard Hudson (R., N.C.), the head of House Republicans' campaign arm and a key player in the negotiations over filling the speaker's position.

McHenry was designated speaker pro tempore by McCarthy under a rule that emerged after the 9/11 terrorist attacks that was designed to ensure continuity of leadership. McHenry and other lawmakers have maintained that under the rules of the House, he currently only has narrow powers limited to ensuring the election of a new speaker.

On Wednesday, Jordan fell short of the 217-vote threshold needed to be elected speaker, losing more GOP votes than he had on the first ballot.

House Republicans' narrow 221-212 majority has produced an immutable mathematical reality: With all Democrats voting for their own leader, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D., N.Y.), the GOP speaker candidate can lose no more than four Republicans if all members show up and vote for an individual.

Few signs emerged that Jordan would gain votes in a third round, and detractors were predicting he would lose further support. McCarthy, who backs Jordan, on Wednesday said he had two months to sew up GOP backing before his own speaker vote in January and that Jordan should be given "the same time frame" to build support.

JOSE LUIS MAGANA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pressure Campaign Against GOP Holdout



Pressure Campaign Against GOP Holdouts Backfires

By GABRIEL T. RUBIN

WASHINGTON—Rep. Jim Jordan's passionate Republican supporters were supposed to help his campaign for House speaker. Instead, they may be sinking his chances, with lawmakers opposing his run complaining of bullying calls and even death threats.

For days, outside allies, including party activists and media personalities, have turned up the heat on recalcitrant Republican lawmakers, pressing them to back Jordan. But their campaign instead may be hardening the opposition of holdout Republicans who would prefer to look elsewhere for a new leader.

"I will not be pressured, intimidated," said Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R., Fla.), who voted Tuesday and Wednesday against Jordan. "I have no intention of moving."

Jordan can afford to lose no more than a handful of GOP

votes in the narrowly divided chamber, assuming all Democrats continue to vote for their nominee, Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D., N.Y.).

The controversy over pressure tactics became more urgent late Wednesday, when

Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R., Iowa), who voted for Jordan on the first ballot but not the second, said she received "credible death threats and a barrage of threatening calls."

She said the incidents further soured her on the Ohio Republican and said the party needs a conservative consensus candidate.

Shortly after Miller-Meeks's statement, Jordan released one of his own: "We condemn all threats against our colleagues and it is imperative that we come together. Stop. It's abhorrent."

The speaker post became open two weeks ago, when a group of eight Republicans engineered the ouster of former



Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks said she received death threats after voting against Jim Jordan on the second ballot.

Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.). Jordan was nominated after Rep. Steve Scalise (R., La.) took himself out of the running last week because of resistance from some conservative members.

Jordan, a close ally of for-

mer President Donald Trump, currently chairs the House Judiciary Committee, which is probing the Biden family. While many GOP lawmakers resented the way McCarthy was removed and Scalise was blocked, Jordan was seen as a

speaker who could get the most fractious members of the conference on board and potentially unite the party.

But some pro-governance lawmakers and centrists in competitive seats weren't enthusiastic about the idea of a Speaker Jordan. To get him the gavel, Jordan allies pressured Republican lawmakers in social-media posts and phone calls, hanging the threat of possible GOP primary challenges over their heads. The pressure may have helped limit Jordan's losses among lawmakers who were lukewarm about his candidacy, but it aggravated many of his more vocal opponents.

Rep. Don Bacon (R., Neb.) shared text messages his wife received from an unknown number saying that he should support Jordan or risk not holding political office ever again. He has voted for McCarthy rather than Jordan in both rounds.

On Thursday, Bacon told reporters that his wife had slept with a loaded gun after receiving some "ugly phone calls."

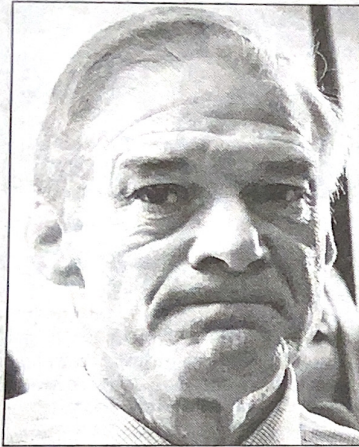
Appropriations Committee Chair Kay Granger of Texas, a surprise vote against Jordan in the first round of voting, said that she wouldn't be swayed by intimidation and threats. She voted against Jordan again on Wednesday.

Rep. Steve Womack of Arkansas said his aides have been "cussed out" and threatened. "When my staff has to absorb the brunt of this kind of verbal assault, then that's just unacceptable," Womack said, adding that the pressure campaign wouldn't succeed.

Influential conservative figures, including Fox News host Sean Hannity and Tea Party Patriots co-founder Jenny Beth Martin, have urged Jordan supporters to call opponents' offices. A spokeswoman for Fox didn't comment.

ANNA MONYMAKER/GETTY IMAGES

HAVOC IN HOUSE



By JOSH CHRISTENSON

House Republicans were no closer to choosing a replacement speaker for the deposed Kevin McCarthy on Thursday night, as a plan to give more power to Speaker Pro Tempore Patrick McHenry (R-NC) ran into resistance from hard-line members and at least one conference leader.

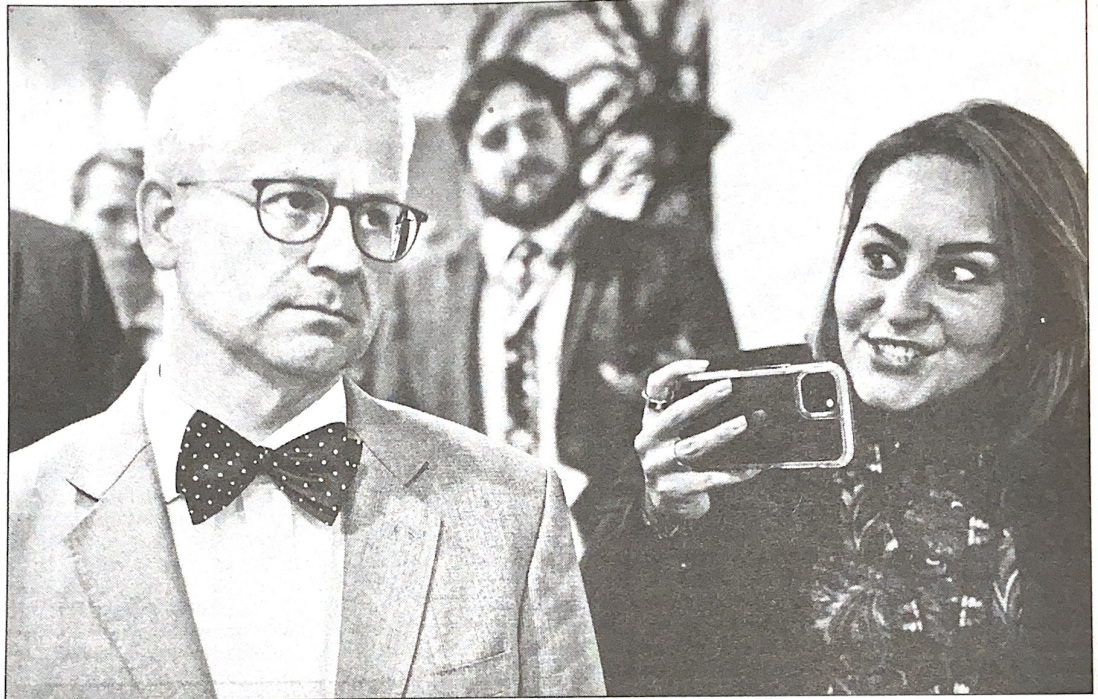
Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), Republicans' speaker designate, floated the proposal during a closed-door meeting at the Capitol — only to face backlash from supporters of his own speakership bid, including GOP Conference Chair Elise Stefanik (R-NY).

"The people across #NY21 and America can rest assured that I strongly oppose any attempt to create a Democrat backed coalition government," she posted on X.

"I will vote to support Jim Jordan for Speaker on the House Floor," Stefanik said as members remained uncertain Thursday evening of when or whether a third ballot would take place.

GOP lawmakers emerged from the meeting certain that the prospect of a "Speaker" McHenry was no prospect at all.

"I think it's dead. . . . I don't think it's going to the floor," said Rep. Byron Donalds (R-Fla.), whose estimation was echoed by Floridians Kat Cammack and Vern Buchanan.



GOING NOWHERE FAST: The House GOP continued to flail on Thursday, with neither Rep. Jim Jordan's (left) speakership bid nor a plan to give more power to temporary Speaker Patrick McHenry (above) having enough votes.

Speaker plan, Jordan lack votes

Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.), a firm Jordan ally, called the McHenry option "the biggest FU to Republican voters I've ever seen."

"We're handing our majority back over to the Democrats by going along with a power-sharing agreement. It's absurd," he said.

McHenry faction

But some pro-Jordan members were equivocal about the idea.

"I'm certainly on the side of empowering McHenry because the speaker is there to process bills coming to the floor," argued Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas).

"The real work up here happens in committees; the real work is happening on my task force with

the cartels," he explained. "Arguing with each other about who's the most popular, that's not real work."

After 16 days of stalemate following McCarthy's ouster Oct. 3, the bad blood between the eight Republicans who voted with 208 Democrats to remove him and the rest of the conference bubbled to the surface Thursday, as the House faces pressure to respond to Israel's war against Hamas terrorists.

"We are in completely uncharted territory as a country in the middle of a Middle East war," said Rep. Mike Waltz (R-Fla.), the first Green Beret ever elected to Congress. "Where I come from, as a veteran, if you got to blow a bridge, you better have another

one to cross. Those eight clearly didn't have another one to cross."

House Republicans erupted when Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) stepped up to address his colleagues, with one source telling The Post that nearly the "whole room booed" and "yelled at him to sit down."

The source also said Rep. Michael Bost (R-Ill.) shouted angrily at Gaetz, who led the motion to vacate McCarthy's speakership.

Gaetz later described it as being "like a Thanksgiving dinner" with Bost playing the "drunk uncle," the Washington Examiner reported.

McCarthy recounted, "I think the entire conference screamed at him. The whole country, I think, would scream at Matt Gaetz right now."

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