

## U.S. NEWS

# Jordan Has GOP Fans, but Also Holdouts

Lawmaker's allies say he has support for speaker, but his rivals prep for a fight

BY LINDSAY WISE

WASHINGTON—Some Republicans say support from grassroots conservatives will help new House speaker nominee Jim Jordan (R., Ohio) win over dozens of GOP critics and take the gavel this week. But opponents are standing firm, Democrats are angling for a role and the math remains unforgiving, setting the stage for another unpredictable floor vote.

Pressure is mounting on Republican lawmakers to resolve their internal fighting nearly two weeks after Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.) was ousted in a historic vote. The White House is poised to ask Congress for an emergency national security aid package that could fund Ukraine, Tai-

wan, Israel and U.S. border security through next year's presidential election. The Senate returns Monday from a weeklong recess, but without a functioning House, no legislation can pass in Congress and make it to President Biden's desk.

"We've got to get past this stage," Rep. Frank Lucas (R., Okla.) said of the turmoil over the House speaker. "There's not enough political oxygen in this place to think about other stuff."

Jordan, a founder of the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus and staunch ally of former President Donald Trump, clinched the nomination last week after previous pick Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the House majority leader, bowed out. Jordan has locked up about two-thirds of Republicans, leaving him about 65 votes short of the majority of the full House he needs to become speaker.

Republicans sent lawmak-

ers home for the weekend to give Jordan time to win over his critics. The chamber is narrowly divided between 221 Republicans and 212 Democrats, and Jordan needs to win at least 217 votes to become speaker. That means he can afford no more than four Republican defections, if all Democrats oppose him.

"We're gonna get 217," Jordan told reporters Friday.

But holdouts within his own party emphasize he can't get there without their support.

"It's a very difficult math equation for him to overcome," said Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R., Fla.), who plans to vote against Jordan on the floor. Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R., Texas), who backs Jordan, said on CNN: "Nothing's impossible, but it's going to be really, really difficult, based on what I'm hearing."

Lawmakers pointed to Jordan's support from grassroots Republicans and conservative

media as potentially putting pressure on his opponents to back him.

"There's nobody stronger in the grassroots than Jim Jordan. Nobody," said Rep. Tim Burchett (R., Tenn.).

A group of eight Republican dissidents voted with Democrats to oust McCarthy on Oct. 3. They were furious that he had relied on Democratic votes to avoid a partial government shutdown a few days earlier. The move to "vacate the chair" plunged the House into disarray. Many of those holdouts, including ringleader Rep. Matt Gaetz (R., Fla.), are now on board with backing Jordan, but their tactics shone the way for other disgruntled lawmakers to throw up roadblocks.

Gaetz said he believed the number of Jordan opponents would winnow, noting that the votes Friday for the nominee were secret ballots and that the floor votes will be public. Two tallies on Friday

showed Jordan's challenges. In an internal vote Friday, Jordan defeated Rep. Austin Scott (R., Ga.), 124-81, to become the party's nominee for speaker. In a second internal vote, 152 Republicans said they would vote for him on the floor, while 55 were opposed—more than enough to deny him the gavel.

Scalise tried and failed to meet the 217-vote threshold. He withdrew his candidacy on Thursday. McCarthy won 188 votes in his own conference tally, and eventually prevailed in the speaker vote on the floor after 15 rounds.

McCarthy has thrown his support behind Jordan. "We cannot have this 'Gaetz doctrine' continued any further," he said on Fox News, referring to the power of a small party minority.

Democrats also say they could help get a speaker across the line, in exchange for concessions such as rules changes that would enable

bills with substantial bipartisan support to get to the floor.

"There are informal conversations that have been under way. When we get back to Washington tomorrow, it's important to begin to formalize those discussions," said House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D., N.Y.) on NBC News.

Rep. Mike Turner (R., Ohio), chairman of the intelligence committee, said he thought either Jordan or another Republican would be able to become speaker. "But if any minority of Republicans continues to block the House from getting back to work, he said, 'then I think obviously, a deal will have to be done' with Democrats."

Some Republicans have said they are considering a resolution that would temporarily enhance the powers of Speaker Pro Tempore Patrick McHenry (R., N.C.) so the House can pass legislation to fund the government and the war in Ukraine and respond to the Hamas attack on Israel.