

Jordan Falls Short In Opening Round Of Vote for Speaker



WASHINGTON—Rep. Jim Jordan failed to win enough votes Tuesday to be elected House speaker after more Republicans than expected joined

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Democrats in declining to support him, setting lawmakers up for an unpredictable second round of balloting.

The Ohio Republican, a fa-

vorite of the GOP base and ally of former President Donald Trump, saw 20 GOP lawmakers break with him in the first round Tuesday afternoon. That was many more than the handful that Jordan, the GOP nominee, could afford to lose. Democrats backed their leader, Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, while the Republican holdouts scattered their votes among other GOP figures.

The result deflated hopes for a quick resolution of intra-

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Jordan Falls Short on First Ballot

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party fighting, two weeks after a small band of GOP dissidents engineered the ouster of then-Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.). While Jordan and some of his detractors had pushed for another vote Tuesday, Republicans ultimately decided to regroup for the second round at 11 a.m. Wednesday.

“We’re going to keep going. We’ve had great conversations, great discussions with our colleagues,” Jordan said late Tuesday.

The tally showed the challenges facing Jordan: Those who voted against him were a mix of Republicans facing competitive races next year, such as Rep. Mike Lawler of New York, and longtime members such as Kay Granger of Texas, the chair of the House Appropriations Committee.

“The days of just, ‘Oh, this is our person, everybody’s just going to rally’—those days are over,” said Rep. Byron Donalds (R., Fla.), who voted for Jordan.

Jordan has little wiggle room in a chamber split 221 Republicans to 212 Democrats. It remained unclear if Jordan would gain votes in a second ballot, let alone enough to win. In the initial round, he drew the support of 200 out of 432 members voting, with Jeffries getting 212, both shy of the required 217 majority. One Republican was absent in Tuesday’s initial vote.

A Jordan win would mark an earthshaking victory by the populist wing of the GOP over more establishment and pro-governance figures, moving one of the chamber’s rabble rousers, known for blocking rather than passing legislation,



GOP speaker candidate Jim Jordan talks with ex-Speaker Kevin McCarthy in the chamber.

to the top leadership role in the House. It also would raise new questions about the ability of Republicans to work with Democrats to pass critical bills in the coming months.

Jordan, head of the House Judiciary Committee and co-founder of the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus that often has fought with party leaders, was in close contact with Trump during the former president’s efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss. He has lobbied colleagues with reassurances related to spending and national security, while grass-roots conservatives have turned up the pressure on lawmakers who didn’t embrace Jordan.

After the vote, Republicans huddled in small groups to discuss their options. One approach would be to give more power to Speaker Pro Tempore Patrick McHenry (R., N.C.), if

enough Republicans and Democrats supported the idea.

On the floor, Rep. Mike Kelly (R., Pa.), who proposed temporarily allowing McHenry to bring up legislation to avoid a government shutdown in mid-November, could be seen in discussions with other holdouts. At one point, Kelly talked to fellow GOP holdout Rep. Don Bacon of Nebraska and Democratic Rep. Debbie Dingell of Michigan—both members of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, whose Democratic leaders have floated a separate plan to empower McHenry.

Some votes against Jordan showed how his approach to spending has become a factor in his race. Jordan voted against the law that staved off a government shutdown on Oct. 1. While he has pushed a plan to avoid another shutdown when a stopgap law expires on Nov. 18, some Republi-

cans view his approach as a tactic to allow deep cuts to take effect, including to the military.

“The defense budget is inadequate like it stands,” said Rep. Jen Kiggans (R., Va.), who flipped a Democratic-held seat last year and voted against Jordan.

Many Republicans remain skeptical of Jordan’s leadership acumen and angry about his path to the gavel but are desperate to unite the party and get a speaker in place after McCarthy was removed, freezing any action in the House until a new leader is elected.

Lawmakers of both parties are eager to get moving on providing further aid to Israel, with the White House set to make a supplemental request also tying in funding for Ukraine and Taiwan as well as for U.S. border security. Deadlines also loom for funding the

government past mid-November as well as passing the farm bill.

Others continued to complain that Jordan’s elevation would set a terrible precedent, by validating the power of a small minority of members to drag the conference its way. McCarthy was ousted when eight Republicans voted with Democrats, and Jordan became the GOP’s speaker designee after some of his supporters refused to get behind House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R., La.), who had defeated Jordan in an earlier head-to-head internal ballot. With no clear path to the speakership, Scalise withdrew, clearing the way for Jordan.

Holdout Republicans have faced increasing pressure to back Jordan. In social-media posts and phone calls, party chairs and leaders of grassroots groups have hounded and politically threatened lawmakers, with some Jordan foes worried about facing GOP primary challenges.

While the efforts likely helped limit his losses, they seemed to backfire with some members. “I will not be pressured, intimidated,” said Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R., Fla.). “I have no intention of moving.”

Jordan, whom former Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio) once termed a “legislative terrorist,” has shown sides of moderation in recent months, including by voting for a debt-ceiling deal that was widely criticized by other Republicans. Still, he voted against McCarthy’s stopgap bill to keep the government open through mid-November, the legislation that precipitated McCarthy’s ouster.

Jordan has said that he would try to pass another continuing resolution, this one stretching through mid-April, to trigger a 1% cut from fiscal 2023 levels that was contained in the debt-ceiling deal, as part of a larger strategy of forcing the Senate to negotiate.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R., Texas), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said he would back Jordan after the Ohioan told him he was open to the idea of a package combining spending for Israel, Ukraine, Taiwan and the border. Having Jordan as speaker might hold at bay the party’s self-destructive tendencies, he said.

“The strength that I see with Jordan is, McCarthy couldn’t control the Freedom Caucus,” McCaul said. “Scalise couldn’t control the Freedom Caucus. Jordan’s the only one that can.”

For years Jordan has been seen as the mastermind behind the hard-line GOP flank’s efforts to derail Republican legislation it views as insufficiently conservative. In 2018, the Freedom Caucus took down the farm bill—crucial legislation for many Republicans representing rural communities—as part of a fight over immigration. At the time, Jordan objected to a bipartisan effort to craft an immigration compromise. “Our party wasn’t elected to put together a bill with 190 Democrats and a handful of Republicans,” he said then.

Although now allied with Trump, Jordan and the Freedom Caucus helped deal a stinging defeat to him in 2017 when House GOP leaders were forced to pull a bill backed by Trump to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

Sen. Chris Murphy (D., Conn.) was skeptical that Jordan had matured into a leader. “He’s always seemed to exist to tear things down, not to build anything up,” Murphy said.

As head of the Judiciary Committee, Jordan has led GOP efforts to dig into what Republicans view as the Biden administration’s overreach and family scandals, including opening an impeachment inquiry. Biden has denied wrongdoing. Jordan also voted against certifying Biden’s victory in January 2021.

KENT NISHIMURA/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Jordan Pushes On to Next Vote, And Chaos Seems Set to Persist

By LUKE BROADWATER

WASHINGTON — Representative Jim Jordan, an ultraconservative hard-liner from Ohio, lost a bid to be elected speaker on Tuesday and put off a second vote until Wednesday, prolonging a two-week fight that has paralyzed the chamber and exposed deep G.O.P. divisions.

Mr. Jordan, a combative co-founder of the House Freedom Caucus and a close ally of former



HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Representative Jim Jordan checked the tally sheet after falling 17 votes short.

Facing Blowback From Various Factions

President Donald J. Trump, fell 17 votes short of the majority he would have needed to prevail, as a determined bloc of mainstream Republicans stood against him.

Mr. Jordan had initially sought to force a second vote on Tuesday night, but, struggling in the face of unyielding opposition, he called for a recess for the night and planned to hold a vote Wednesday at 11 a.m. Eastern.

“We’re going to keep working, and we’re going to get to the votes,” Mr. Jordan said.

The group of 20 G.O.P. holdouts was larger than previously known and included some influential members of the House. Among them were the chairwoman and several members of the powerful Appropriations Committee, as well as half-dozen Republicans from politically competitive districts won by President Biden.

Mr. Jordan’s loss underscored the seemingly intractable differences within the party as well as

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Jordan Loses First Speaker Vote, and Disarray Seems Set to Continue

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the near-impossible political math that led to the ouster of Kevin McCarthy as speaker two weeks ago and which has so far thwarted Republicans' attempts to choose a successor.

Because Republicans control the House with only four votes to spare, a small hard-right minority has flexed its muscles repeatedly to the consternation of the mainstream conservatives who form the bulk of the conference. The refusal of some of them to go along with Mr. Jordan's election was an unusual show of force from a group that more commonly seeks compromise and conciliation.

But Tuesday's vote also indicated how sharply the G.O.P. has veered to the right. Though Mr. Jordan failed to win a majority, 200 Republicans — including many of those more mainstream members — voted to give him the job second in line to the presidency. That was a remarkable show of support for Mr. Jordan, 59, who helped Mr. Trump try to overturn the 2020 election and has used his power in Congress to defend the former president. Mr. Jordan has a long track record of opposing compromise that prompted a previous Republican speaker to brand him a "legislative terrorist."

Representative Elise Stefanik, Republican of New York, formally nominated Mr. Jordan, a former wrestling champion, on the floor on Tuesday and cast his bruising style as a virtue. "Whether on the wrestling mat or in the committee room, Jim Jordan is strategic, scrappy, tough and principled," she said.

Before his loss, Mr. Jordan said he was willing to force multiple rounds of votes — "whatever it takes" — to win the speakership, and with his opponents' names now on the record, right-wing activists were bombarding them with calls.

"The calls that are coming in are ridiculous," said Representative Ken Buck of Colorado, who voted against Mr. Jordan in part because Mr. Jordan has refused to say that President Biden won the 2020 election. "They're in the hundreds if not thousands that are



Representative Kevin McCarthy, left, the former speaker, and Representative Jim Jordan, lower right, who wants to succeed him, during the first round of voting.

remained deeply embittered about the way Mr. Jordan's allies forced out Mr. McCarthy from the speakership and then refused to line up behind Representative Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the party's No. 2, when he initially won an internal party election for nominee last week.

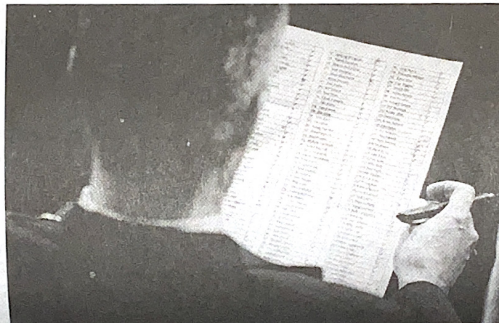
"I will not be pressured or intimidated," vowed Representative Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida, an Appropriations Committee member and one of the holdouts against Mr. Jordan who voted for Mr. Scalise. He added, "I voted for the guy who won the election."

Mr. Scalise "won the head-to-head conference vote against Jim Jordan," said Representative John Rutherford of Florida, another appropriator who said he intended to continue voting against Mr. Jordan. "I think now we're going to have to find a consensus candidate."

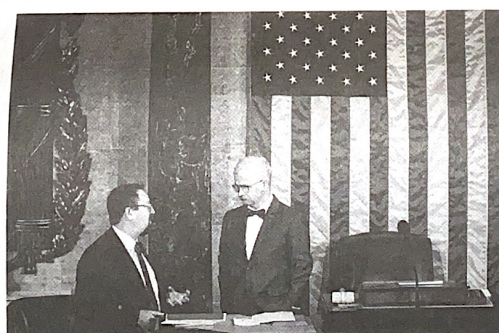
The chaos in the House has prompted renewed discussion of empowering Representative Patrick T. McHenry of North Carolina — the temporary speaker whose role is primarily to hold an election for a speaker — to carry out the chamber's work until the conflict could be resolved. Lawmakers have grown increasingly worried about the impact of continuing to operate without an elected speaker, including that Congress might not be able to act to support Israel as it wages war against Hamas.

On Tuesday, Democrats were united in voting for Representative Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the minority leader. Representative Pete Aguilar of California, the No. 3 Democrat, nominated Mr. Jeffries with a blistering speech against Mr. Jordan. He accused the Ohio Republican of "inciting violence on this chamber," a reference to the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the Capitol — remarkably sharp language about another lawmaker seldom heard on the House floor and hardly ever during a nominating speech for speaker.

Mr. Aguilar made a pointed case against Mr. Jordan, calling him the "architect of a nationwide abortion ban, a vocal election denier and an insurrection inciter." It encapsulated the political argument that Democrats are prepared to make against Republicans for embracing Mr. Jordan, af-



A House member keeping a tally. The group of 20 Republican holdouts who blocked Mr. Jordan's win was larger than expected.



The chaos in the House prompted renewed discussion of empowering the fill-in speaker, Representative Patrick T. McHenry, right.

ter a show of disarray that some in the G.O.P. were already worried would cost them their House majority.

Amid the chaos, at least one Republican said she was heading for the exit. Representative Debbie Lesko of Arizona, a member of the Freedom Caucus, said in a statement announcing her retirement from the House that, "Right now, Washington is broken; it is hard to get anything done."

In a news conference at the Capitol on Tuesday night, Mr. Jeffries called for Republicans to put forward a different nominee. "There are many good men and women on the Republican side of the aisle who are qualified to be

the speaker of the House Representatives," Mr. Jeffries said. "There is no circumstance where Jim Jordan is one of them."

Tuesday's vote fueled the bitter infighting raging in the Republican ranks. The bad blood between Mr. Jordan's and Mr. Scalise's camps was particularly evident.

After his defeat, Mr. Jordan met privately with Mr. Scalise to ask for his help in shoring up votes, but he received no such pledge to do so, according to a person familiar with the conversation. Mr. Scalise's spokeswoman denied that he had refused to help Mr. Jordan, but Mr. Scalise's supporters remain angry at the way Mr. Jordan's supporters refused to

Republicans Who Opposed Jordan

By ANNIE KARNI

Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio lost a bid to become speaker on Tuesday after 20 Republicans refused to back him on the first vote, prolonging a two-week fight that has paralyzed the chamber and underscored the deep Republican divisions in the House.

- Biden-district Republicans**
 - There are 18 Republicans in the House who represent districts President Biden won in the last presidential election. Six did not vote for Mr. Jordan:
 - Don Bacon of Nebraska
 - Lori Chavez-DeRemer of Oregon
 - Anthony D'Esposito of New York
 - Jen Kiggans of Virginia
 - Nick LaLota of New York
 - Mike Lawler of New York
- Steve Womack of Arkansas** — Mr. Womack said he voted against Mr. Jordan on principle because Representative Steve Scalise of Louisiana was "kneecapped before he could win over his opponents."

- McCarthy Loyalists**
 - Doug LaMalfa of California — The northern Californian said he would vote for Mr. Jordan on the second ballot.
 - John James of Michigan
 - Andrew Garbarino of New York
 - Carlos Gimenez of Florida
 - Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania

- Institutionalists**
 - A group of seven Republicans who serve on the Appropriations Committee, which controls federal spending, expressed concern about Mr. Jordan's anti-spending past. Some of them feared that he would demand across-the-board funding cuts.
 - Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida
 - Jake Ellzey of Texas
 - Tony Gonzales of Texas
 - Kay Granger of Texas, the chairwoman of the appropriations panel
 - John Rutherford of Florida
 - Mike Simpson of Idaho
- Wild Cards**
 - Victoria Spartz of Indiana
 - Ken Buck of Colorado — Mr. Buck said there were a number of reasons he did not back Mr. Jordan, but his main sticking point was the fact that Mr. Jordan played a lead role in the attempt to overturn President Biden's victory in the 2020 election on the floor of the House.

back the Louisianian. Immediately after losing on the House floor, Mr. Jordan held a series of meetings with the holdouts, finding himself in a deeply uncomfortable situation. For a lawmaker whose approach has been to demand ideological purity from his party's leaders, Mr. Jordan now finds himself needing to negotiate with some of the very establishment Republicans his supporters consider a corrupt "cartel," as they sometimes refer to elected leaders in Washington.

Mr. Jordan is not known as a skilled legislator or deal cutter; in 16 years in Congress, he has not sponsored a single bill that has become law. Four of Mr. Jordan's detractors were from the New York delegation, which helped deliver the House majority to Republicans last year. Representative Anthony D'Esposito of New York issued a public statement that laid out a number of demands, including to rework state and local tax deductions, known as SALT, a top priority for the delegation. "I want a speaker who understands Long Island's unique needs," Mr. D'Esposito wrote. "Restoring the SALT deduction, safeguarding 9/11 victim support funding and investing in critical infrastructure are our priorities."

Speaker Vote Results

Candidate	Total	Dem.	Rep.
Jim Jordan Ohio	200	0	200
Steve Scalise Louisiana	7	0	7
Kevin McCarthy California	6	0	6
Lee Zeldin Former representative	3	0	3
Tom Emmer Minnesota	1	0	1
Mike Garcia California	1	0	1
Tom Cole Oklahoma	1	0	1
Thomas Massie Kentucky	1	0	1
Hakeem Jeffries New York	212	212	0

Note: To win, a member must receive a majority of all votes cast, not counting "present" votes. The Constitution specifies that House members choose the speaker, but the speaker does not have to be a current or even a former representative. Lee Zeldin, a former representative of New York, received votes.

coming into every office right now.

Many of the Republicans who voted against Mr. Jordan vowed to stand strong in the face of the pressure, citing a variety of concerns. Some members of the Appropriations Committee, which writes the government spending bills, are deeply distrustful of Mr. Jordan's approach to spending and the types of cuts he has endorsed. Others were Republicans from swing districts in which Mr. Trump's brand is toxic. Still others

Reporting was contributed by Katie Edmondson, Annie Karni, Carl Hulse, Kayla Guo and Robert Jimison.