

GOP Selects Scalise As Speaker Nominee But Holdouts Dig In

WASHINGTON—House Republicans narrowly picked Rep. Steve Scalise as their nominee for speaker only to have a new band of GOP hold-

President Donald Trump who is now chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

To now win the speakership, Scalise will need support from a majority of the House, or 217 members, if all current lawmakers cast votes for a candidate. The House is split 221-212, giving Republicans little room to maneuver, since all Democrats are expected to oppose him. More than a half dozen Jordan supporters said Wednesday they wouldn't back Scalise, likely enough to block him from claiming the

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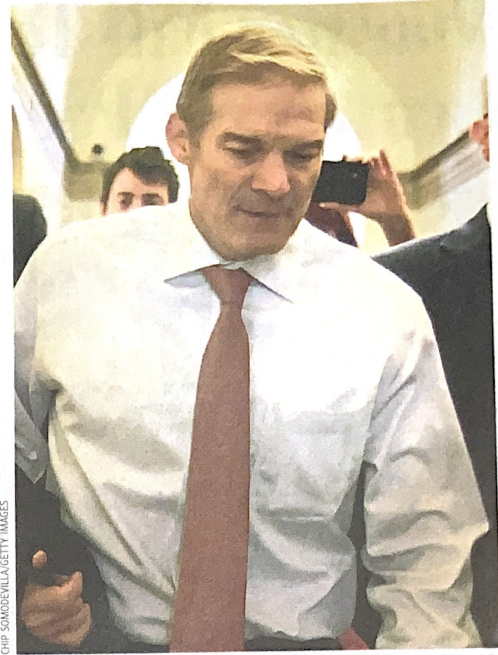
outs emerge, putting the party's divisions back on display as it moved toward another unpredictable leadership fight.

In a secret ballot Wednesday, Republicans voted 113-99 to select Scalise of Louisiana, currently majority leader, over Rep. Jim Jordan, a fiery Ohio conservative backed by former

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U.S. NEWS



Rep. Steve Scalise, shown above at left, topped Rep. Jim Jordan, above right, in the secret ballot, while staffers Wednesday moved boxes out of former Speaker Kevin McCarthy's office.

Speaker Vote Reveals New Fight

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gavel unless he can win some of them over.

Scalise's thin victory left the House staring down a potential replay of the 15-ballot marathon back at the start of the year, when Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California emerged as the winner only after making a series of promises related to spending and other issues to conservatives. Some of those same holdouts helped to oust him just nine months later.

"Obviously we still have work to do," Scalise said shortly after the vote selecting him as the GOP's nominee. "We're going to have to go upstairs on the House floor and resolve this and then get the House open again."

Republican leaders huddled late Wednesday in the speaker's office, where a wooden plate with McCarthy's name still hangs above the entrance.

Congress has little time to get back to work before the threat of a government shutdown returns. Lawmakers passed a short-term spending bill that expires in mid-November and little progress on spending negotiations can occur while the House is paralyzed with no speaker. The fighting in Israel and Gaza also added urgency to restoring House operations, lawmakers said.

Jordan didn't publicly endorse Scalise on Wednesday, but wasn't working to stoke



opposition to him, according to his spokesman. Still, Jordan's decision not to publicly throw himself behind Scalise gave Jordan's backers room to dig in. Many said they viewed electing Scalise as simply extending the status quo, while others have specific objections tied to strategy around spending bills or the process used to conduct the speaker election. House Republicans had initially hoped to hold a full House vote on the speaker later Wednesday, but that prospect dimmed as GOP leaders worked to wrangle the holdouts.

"I'm tired of the politics that are played in this chamber," said Rep. Lauren Boebert

(R., Colo.), who said she still planned to vote for Jordan after meeting with Scalise. "I want somebody who's actually going to put some teeth into what we do."

The uncertainty could slow Scalise's fight to get to a majority of the House. By comparison, McCarthy had the support of 188 GOP members heading into his protracted floor vote.

For the second time in less than a year, the GOP was moving to fill the top job and tamp

down dissent that could derail their pick, after the ouster of McCarthy brought the chamber to a standstill last week.

While some lawmakers said they would like McCarthy back in the speakership, he took himself out of the running.

Some Republicans initially thought a House floor vote could come as soon as midafternoon, but no vote was scheduled after it became clear that some Jordan supporters weren't ready to back Scalise.

The House stares down a potential replay of the 15-ballot marathon.

The list grew as the day progressed, with Boebert as well as Reps. Max Miller (R., Ohio), Thomas Massie (R., Ky.), Chip Roy (R., Texas), Michael Cloud (R., Texas), Bob Good (R., Va.) and Marjorie Taylor Greene (R., Ga.) all saying they wouldn't vote for Scalise.

Speaker Pro Tempore Patrick McHenry (R., N.C.) briefly gavelled the House in and out of session Wednesday, an indication that GOP leaders were working to align support for Scalise before bringing a vote to the floor. "The speaker designee has the right to put his votes together for the floor, and make sure the time is right, so we're going to let that happen," McHenry said.

"What needs to happen is we need to get 217 votes, and we ain't got 'em," said Rep. Scott Perry (R., Pa.), chair of the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus.

Other lawmakers said they were ready to coalesce around Scalise and end the messy, public battle over their party's leadership.

"My folks in West Texas don't send me up here to wander in the wilderness for 40 years and fail to advance our agenda," said Rep. Jodey Arrington (R., Texas), the House Budget Committee Chairman. "There's a lot on the line and there's a lot going on in the world. It's time to unite and rally behind our designee."

Democrats are all expected to vote for their leader, Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York.

Massie estimated there are at least 20 House Republicans who wouldn't vote for Scalise on the floor. He predicted it would be even more difficult for Scalise to win a majority than it was for McCarthy in January.

Some lawmakers were frustrated Wednesday by an internal vote earlier in the day blocking a proposal that would have required the winning candidate to secure 217 votes—the number needed to get elected on the House floor—rather than simply have the most votes of any candidate. Allies of Scalise had been lobbying against the rules change, which was dismissed in a 135-88 vote, according to a congressional aide.

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R., Fla.), who precipitated the leadership crisis when he brought the motion to vacate to the floor, has said he would support either Scalise or Jordan.

—David Harrison and Lindsay Wise contributed to this article.

Politics Hinders Response to World Events



KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Representative Steve Scalise of Louisiana turned back a challenge by Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio, a favorite of the hard right.

Divided G.O.P. Nominates Scalise for Speaker

By LUKE BROADWATER and ANNIE KARNI

WASHINGTON — Representative Steve Scalise of Louisiana narrowly scraped together enough Republican support on Wednesday to become his party's choice to lead the House, but deep divisions in the G.O.P. ranks threatened to complicate his election as speaker.

Minutes after a slim majority of Republicans voted in a closed-door party meeting to select him as the candidate, Mr. Scalise's fate was thrown into doubt. Several Republican lawmakers announced they would not back him on the House floor without concessions, complaining of a rushed process to choose a new speaker and voicing skepticism that he could unite their conference.

Republicans delayed an election of the full House that had been planned for midafternoon while the party regrouped, and adjourned on Wednesday evening with no resolution. They scheduled another meeting of the House for noon on Thursday, but there was no sign that the G.O.P. was any closer to an agreement that would allow them to elect a speaker at that point.

A week and a day after the abrupt ouster of former Speaker Kevin McCarthy at the hands of a small right-wing bloc, Republicans voted behind closed doors, 113 to 99, to name Mr. Scalise, their second-ranking leader, as his successor. Mr. Scalise turned back a challenge by Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio, the chairman of

the Judiciary Committee and a favorite of the hard right who had the endorsement of former President Donald J. Trump.

But he still had to win a majority on the House floor, where chaos reigned the last time Republicans tried to elect a speaker, and it was clear that Mr. Scalise did not yet have enough votes.

Mr. Scalise toiled Wednesday evening to try to win over his detractors, meeting one-on-one with several of them, but he appeared to be losing votes, rather than gaining them. The Republican leadership vacuum was fueling the infighting just as Mr. Scalise was working to quell it.

Representative Chip Roy of Texas, the policy director for the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus who engineered what he called a "power sharing agreement" with Mr. McCarthy during his excruciatingly drawn-out election in January, pledged not to vote for Mr. Scalise.

The two men met Wednesday evening, and Mr. Roy said afterward he wanted to see Mr. Scalise commit to changes demanded by hard-line conservatives to how Congress operates.

"What we're trying to do is make sure we can make this institution represent the people and not just represent the swamp," Mr. Roy said.

After his slender loss, Mr. Jordan met with Mr. Scalise privately and offered to nominate him on the House floor, according to a spokesman, but he made no public endorsement, and his supporters did not appear swayed.

"I just voted for Jim Jordan for speaker on a private ballot in conference, and I will be voting for

Jim Jordan on the House floor," said Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, a far-right Republican from Georgia.

"I'm not switching my vote," said Representative Max Miller, Republican of Ohio, another right-wing member. "I'm Jim Jordan all the way."

Complicating the picture, a variety of Republicans were refusing to back Mr. Scalise, including some in the mainstream who represent districts won by President Biden and even a powerful committee chairman.

"He came out with 110 votes; he needs 217," Representative Mike

Democrats who control the Senate and the White House.

The Republican infighting has left the House largely paralyzed since Mr. McCarthy's ouster. Lawmakers were growing increasingly worried about the impact of continuing to operate without a duly elected speaker.

The nomination of Mr. Scalise, 58, who has been the No. 2 leader in the chamber, was a vote of confidence for a deeply conservative Republican who once described himself, according to a local columnist, as "like David Duke without the baggage." He represents the Louisiana congressional district that elected Mr. Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan leader, to the State Legislature in 1989. His conservative governmental philosophy, the columnist wrote, was not much different from the one Mr. Duke embraced as a politician, including oppositions to taxes and social safety net programs.

Mr. Scalise apologized in 2014 for having attended a white supremacist gathering more than a decade earlier, saying that he had not known the nature of the group.

On Wednesday, Representative Nancy Mace, Republican of South Carolina, cited that episode as a reason not to support him, saying that she would back Mr. Jordan instead.

"I personally cannot, in good conscience, vote for someone who attended a white supremacist conference and compared himself to David Duke," she told CNN.

Over the past year, Mr. Scalise has been marginalized by Mr. McCarthy, who has privately described him to colleagues as ineffective, checked out and reluctant to take positions, and cut him out of all major decision making.

A full vote is delayed as some lawmakers request concessions.

Turner, Republican of Ohio and the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, said on CNN. "He's going to have to give us a message or an understanding of how he's going to bridge that gap and make certain that he brings Congress together and not divide the Republican conference more."

The situation underscored the formidable challenge any Republican speaker would face in navigating the same dynamics that made the party ungovernable for Mr. McCarthy. The party's minuscule margin of control and its many divisions make maintaining a governing majority difficult. Those factors have also empowered a far-right faction that will not tolerate compromise with

Catie Edmondson, Robert Jimison and Carl Hulse contributed reporting.

Yet gang of 8 did conspire w/ Dems last week