

Jordan Gains Momentum Before Vote

Hard-right lawmaker wins over some GOP holdouts as House seeks a new speaker

BY KATY STECH FERREK
AND SIOBHAN HUGHES

WASHINGTON—House Republicans' speaker nominee Jim Jordan (R., Ohio) won over some pivotal holdouts as broader GOP opposition to his bid appeared to crumble, moving him closer to winning the gavel in a floor vote expected Tuesday afternoon.

"I felt good walking into the conference. I feel even better now," Jordan said after a meeting with House Republicans on Monday evening. "We got a few more people we're going to talk to, listen to, and then we'll have a vote tomorrow," he said.

Jordan has been reaching out to skeptical colleagues to win them over, with several indicating they were satisfied with how he would approach contentious issues like spending and military policy. Holdouts have also faced pressure from grassroots Republicans who back Jordan, with the threat of a possible primary challenge hanging over lawmakers' heads.

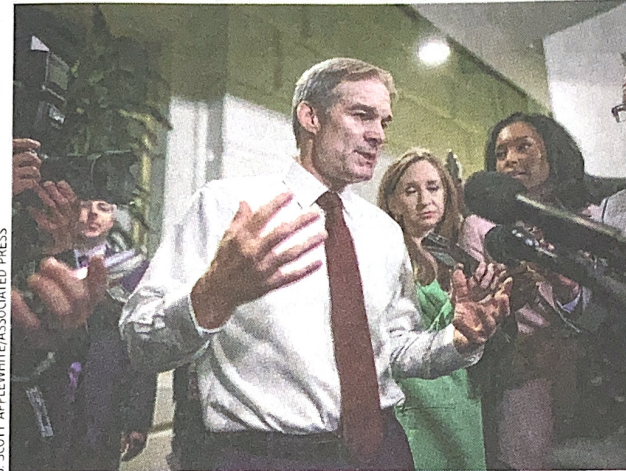
Many members also want to resolve the speaker fight quickly and see Jordan as the only plausible choice.

Rep. Vern Buchanan (R., Fla.) said he was "deeply frustrated by the way this process has played out," but would back Jordan in the interest of party unity.

The chamber is 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, as is expected.

The House has been frozen ever since Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.) was ousted as speaker two weeks ago, and lawmakers are eager to get to work on an aid package for Israel, which the White House wants to package with Ukraine and Taiwan funding as well as border security. Jordan isn't seen as a lock in a first round of voting, but his supporters anticipate that public and private pressure will continue to whittle down the number of opponents.

A series of members who had indicated they wouldn't back him switched course, including Rep. Mike Rogers (R., Ala.), who chairs the House Armed Services Committee. Last week, Rogers told reporters that there was no action that Jordan could take that would win his support. But on Monday, Rogers said he would back him, citing "thoughtful and productive" conversations they had about pending legislation on military policy, spend-



Rep. Jim Jordan said he is ready for a speaker vote Tuesday.

ing levels and farm policy.

Rep. Ken Calvert (R., Calif.), who chairs an appropriations subcommittee on defense, said he also spoke to Jordan and will be supporting him for speaker. Rep. Michael McCaul (R., Texas), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said he would support Jordan. He said Jordan told him that he was open to the idea of a package combining spending for Israel, Ukraine, Taiwan and the border.

A handful of Republicans said they remained opposed, showing Jordan still had some work to do.

Rep. Carlos A. Gimenez (R., Fla.) said he would continue to vote for McCarthy on the floor and rejected the implication that he was prepared to strike

some sort of deal with Democrats. Rep. Mike Lawler (R., N.Y.) said on CNN he would vote for McCarthy but wasn't a "hell no" on Jordan.

Many critics of Jordan say elevating him to the speakership would effectively reward the bad behavior of small bands of GOP dissenters, with one group ousting McCarthy with Democrats' help and another then blocking Rep. Steve Scalise (R., La.) from taking his place.

Jordan, head of the House Judiciary Committee and co-founder of the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus, is a strong ally of former President Donald Trump and was in close contact with Trump during his efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss.

On Friday, 55 Republican lawmakers said in a secret ballot vote that they wouldn't back Jordan in a vote on the House floor. That vote took place after Jordan won a 124-81 vote to become the Republican nominee for speaker, beating Rep. Austin Scott of Georgia, who made a last-minute bid for the position.

Jordan's supporters pressured reluctant colleagues throughout the weekend. Backers say Jordan is best positioned to bring together Republican lawmakers.

By the end of the weekend, Jordan was thought to have the support of more than 180 Republicans, according to one lawmaker aligned with Jordan's camp, as members who had previously opposed his speakership reverse course.

Jordan supporters said his opponents risked being labeled as turncoats by opposing the nominee or by opening the door to some sort of agreement with Democrats.

"There's a huge risk that if you end up with a coalition government, and you were the person who caused it, you will be excommunicated from the party and not just from Congress," said a lawmaker aligned with Jordan.

It wasn't known what if any reassurances Jordan has made to bring hesitant colleagues on board, particularly regarding appropriations.

U.S. WATCH

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Proud Boys Member Pleads Guilty in Riot

A Proud Boys member who joined others from the far-right group in attacking the U.S. Capitol pleaded guilty on Monday to obstructing the joint session of Congress for certifying Joe Biden's 2020 electoral victory.

William Chrestman, 49, of Kansas, also pleaded guilty to threatening to assault a federal officer during the riot at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly is scheduled to sentence Chrestman for his two felony convictions on Jan. 12.

Estimated sentencing guidelines for his case recommended a prison term ranging from four years and three months to five years and three months.

Chrestman brought an axe handle, gas mask, helmet and other gear when he traveled to Washington with other Proud Boys members from the Kansas City, Kan., area. On Jan. 6, he marched to the Capitol grounds.

Chrestman and other Proud Boys moved past a toppled metal barricade and joined other rioters in front of another police barrier. He shouted a threat at officers and yelled at others in the crowd to stop police from arresting another rioter, according to prosecutors.

—Associated Press

FBI

Violent Crime Fall

Jordan Makes Gains but Still Faces Holdouts

By LUKE BROADWATER

WASHINGTON — Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio picked up steam on Monday in his bid to become speaker, winning over several of his biggest opponents in the fractured G.O.P. ranks even as deep reservations remained about elevating him to the top post in the House.

Several mainstream Republicans who had said they could not countenance a vote for Mr. Jordan, the hard-line co-founder of the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus, fell into line after a pressure campaign by his right-wing allies and a series of one-on-one calls with him.

Their reversals suggested that Mr. Jordan was within striking distance of the 217 votes he would need to be elected in a planned vote around noon on Tuesday. But the outcome remained far from certain.

"The role of the speaker is to bring all Republicans together. That's what I intend to do," Mr. Jordan said in a letter sent to his Republican colleagues on Monday. In it, Mr. Jordan acknowledged the deep divisions in the G.O.P. and said he would give more lawmakers input into the party's agenda.

"We will make sure there are more Republican voices involved in our major decisions beyond the Five Families," he wrote, using House G.O.P. lawmakers' shorthand for the various factions in their ranks. It is also a reference to warring Mafia families.

People close to Mr. Jordan, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said the number of Republican holdouts had shrunk from around 50 to around 10. That is still enough to block his election, but he planned to press ahead anyway, counting on his remaining opposition to cave under pressure on the House floor.

Leaving a two-hour meeting of House Republicans on Monday night at the Capitol, Mr. Jordan indicated he would force a series of floor votes on Tuesday until Republicans had chosen a speaker.

"We need to get a speaker tomorrow," he said. "The American people deserve to have their Congress, their House of Representatives working. And you can't have that happen without a speaker, so we need to do that. Plus, we need to be helping our best friend and closest ally, Israel."

Should Mr. Jordan, 59, become speaker, it would cap an extraordinary rise in Congress that propelled him from a right-wing rebel on the fringes of his party to the post that is second in line to the presidency.

His ascent would be the clearest indicator yet of how far House Republicans have moved to the right during Mr. Jordan's 16 years in the chamber. It would also show how strong a grip former President Donald J. Trump, who counts Mr. Jordan among his closest allies, has on the party.

Kayla Guo and Robert Jimison contributed reporting.



Representative Jim Jordan was within striking distance of the votes needed to become speaker.

A small band of hard-right Republicans, most of whom are supporters of Mr. Jordan, forced Kevin McCarthy out as speaker two weeks ago. Then a broader group of Mr. Jordan's supporters refused to back the party's initial chosen successor for the post, Representative Steve Scalise of Louisiana, who abruptly withdrew last week.

The downfalls of Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Scalise left many mainstream Republicans bitter that the will of a majority in their ranks had not been honored. Several argued that elevating Mr. Jordan would reward "bad behavior."

In his conversations with holdouts, Mr. Jordan said he listened to "frustrations about the treatment of Kevin McCarthy and Steve Scalise and the events of the past month."

Several members spoke against Mr. Jordan's candidacy during the closed-door meeting on Monday night in the basement of the Capitol.

One, Representative Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania, proposed giving Representative Patrick T. McHenry of North Carolina — the temporary speaker whose role is primarily to hold an election for a speaker — more power to carry out the chamber's work for the next month until the conflict could be resolved.

"When you go outside the rules of your own conference because you didn't get your way, I think that is truly sad," Mr. Kelly said, using a profanity to describe the tactics Mr. Jordan's supporters used to undermine Mr. Scalise's victory. "That is a real indictment of who you are."

Mr. Jordan won the party's nomination after Mr. Scalise's withdrawal, but scores of Republicans signaled that they would not support him on the House floor.

That was before Mr. Jordan and

his allies went to work with a public pressure campaign against lawmakers who were resisting his election.

Amy Kremer, a political activist who also leads Women for America First, which organized a "Stop the Steal" rally on Jan. 6, 2021, posted a hit list of 12 members on Friday. She listed their office phone numbers and urged her followers to call them and tell them to support Mr. Jordan. The list included Representatives Ann Wagner of Missouri, Mike Rogers of Alabama and Carlos Gimenez of Florida, all of whom had publicly stated their opposition to Mr. Jordan.

Pledging in a letter to colleagues to 'bring all Republicans together.'

By Monday morning, two of the three had declared their support for him.

Ms. Wagner, a supporter of Mr. Scalise, had called Mr. Jordan's candidacy a "nonstarter" and accused him of behaving classlessly after his loss to Mr. Scalise. But on Monday, she said Mr. Jordan had won her over.

"Throughout my time in Congress, I have always been a team player and supported our Republican nominees out of conference," Ms. Wagner said in a statement. "Jim Jordan and I spoke at length again this morning, and he has allayed my concerns about keeping the government open with conservative funding, the need for strong border security, our need for consistent international support in times of war and unrest, as well as the need for stronger protections

against the scourge of human trafficking and child exploitation."

Mr. Rogers, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said he had "two cordial, thoughtful and productive conversations" with Mr. Jordan, and received assurances about carrying out the functioning of government and funding of the military.

Mr. Jordan also picked up support from Representative Ken Calvert of California, the chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, who said he had spoken with Mr. Jordan "about how we must get the House back on a path to achieve our national security and appropriations goals."

Another initial holdout, Representative Vern Buchanan of Florida, said he remained "deeply frustrated" but would vote for Mr. Jordan based on the need to have a functioning House.

"I believe the future and immediate well-being and security of our country is too important and the need for Republicans to move forward united is greater than ever," Mr. Buchanan said.

Still, there were some members of Congress who were unmoved. Mr. Gimenez said he would continue to support Mr. McCarthy and refuse to give in to the hard-right rebels who had ousted him.

"Last week, eight colleagues joined all the socialist Democrats to carry out a coup against our duly-elected Republican Speaker Kevin McCarthy," Mr. Gimenez wrote on the social media site X. "These 8 lit the fuse & every Democrat in Congress provided the gunpowder to overthrow the will of 96% of Republicans in Congress who voted to retain Speaker McCarthy. I will not partake in this despicable coup. Speaker McCarthy should have never been removed to begin with."

House Is in 2nd Week Without a Speaker. What Happens Now?

By ANNIE KARNI

WASHINGTON — Representative Jim Jordan, Republican of Ohio, locked down more support on Monday in his drive to become speaker. The job has been vacant for almost two weeks amid Republican feuding that has left the chamber paralyzed.

Mr. Jordan, the hard-right chairman of the Judiciary Committee, became his party's latest speaker-designate on Friday, after a majority of Republicans voted by secret ballot to name him their party's candidate. But even after winning over some holdouts, Mr. Jordan, who is popular with the right-wing G.O.P. base and a close ally of former President Donald J. Trump, remained short of the 217 votes he would need to be elected, amid resistance from some more mainstream Republicans.

Here's a look at what comes next.

What now?

Republicans have set votes to begin on Tuesday at noon Eastern, and Mr. Jordan indicated on Monday night that he would force a series of floor votes until Republicans had chosen a speaker.

If he is successful on Tuesday, his ascent would come exactly two weeks after Kevin McCarthy was ousted from the speakership by a small far-right faction. Mr. Jordan is trying to move quickly, and his allies spent the weekend pressuring Republicans opposing him to fall in line.

Mr. Jordan gained some ground on Monday, but the math still does not quite add up for him. In a secret-ballot vote on Friday after he was nominated, 55 Republicans said they would oppose Mr. Jordan on the House floor. That put Mr. Jordan in a similar spot to Representative Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the No. 2 Republican who first won the speaker nomination last week after Mr. McCarthy's ouster, but then quickly withdrew from consideration after he failed to consolidate enough support to be elected on the House floor.

People close to Mr. Jordan said on Monday that the number of Republican holdouts had shrunk from around 50 to around 10. That is still enough to block his election, but he planned to press ahead anyway on Tuesday, counting on his remaining opposition to cave under pressure on the House floor.

If he lacks the support to prevail, Mr. Jordan could easily postpone a vote, just as he did on Friday. He could also try to grind it out in multiple rounds of voting, as Mr. McCarthy did in January. Or he could follow Mr. Scalise's example and simply drop out altogether.

Electing the next speaker

The process of electing a new speaker is low-tech and transparent, as the world learned in January during Mr. McCarthy's once-in-a-century floor fight to win the gavel. The entire House of Representatives gathers in the chamber, and lawmakers cast their votes in alphabetical order, by standing up and yelling out a name. Whoever earns a majority of those present and participating wins the race.

If the entire House is in attendance, that means a nominee needs at least 217 votes to be elected speaker. (There are currently 433 members of the House and two vacancies.) The math can change if there are absences, or if any lawmakers vote "present" rather than in support of a candidate.

If no one succeeds in meeting that threshold, the House simply continues to hold elections until someone does. Typically, a speaker has been elected after one floor vote. But if that proves impossible, the process can drag on indefinitely. Mr. McCarthy only prevailed after five days and 15

The likelihood of a deal between the two parties remains low.

Jeffries of New York, the minority leader, just as they did in January. There is virtually no chance that any of them would help elect Mr. Jordan, a far-right figure who has been called a "legislative terrorist" by a former speaker of his own party and who many Democrats consider a partisan extremist who helped instigate the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

Mr. Jeffries has pitched the idea of forming a coalition government that he describes as an "enlightened arrangement." But the idea is a long shot. And given that he has more votes than any Republican seeking the speakership, it is highly unlikely that Mr. Jeffries would agree to cede to a G.O.P. candidate without substantial concessions.

Mr. Jeffries said Democrats would team with Republicans to elect a speaker only if they agreed to change House rules to allow "governance by consensus", in other words, allowing bills with bipartisan support to come to the floor. The Rules Committee, which determines what legislation gets a vote, is now structured so that Republicans are in complete control of what bills the House considers. That means that Democratic priorities are almost always blocked and the hard right effectively has veto power on what is considered and what is not.

On Sunday, Mr. Jeffries said that "there are informal conversations that have been underway," but he declined to offer any details about what a power-sharing agreement would look like.

Is the House still working without a speaker?

Legislative business in the House has been halted for two weeks as Republicans struggle to unite behind a speaker. That includes work on legislation to fund the government and avoid a shutdown that will begin in about a month if no action is taken. Also frozen is any consideration of an aid package to Israel, something that President Biden has said is an urgent priority after the terrorist group Hamas made one of the broadest incursions into Israeli territory in 50 years.

Is there a way for the House to function without an elected speaker?

Representative Patrick McHenry of North Carolina is acting as the "speaker pro tempore," a position created after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, to ensure continuity of government in case the speaker was killed or incapacitated. The position has never been tested, and so far, Mr. McHenry and House aides have interpreted the role very narrowly, simply as a place-holder who presides over the election of a new speaker.

Some more centrist G.O.P. lawmakers have been working on a resolution that would explicitly grant Mr. McHenry the power to bring legislation to the floor, giving his inchoate role more clearly defined authority.

Doing so would require a vote, and it is not clear that Republicans would go along with such a move. Empowering Mr. McHenry, one of Mr. McCarthy's closest allies, would be regarded by many far-right members as akin to reinstalling Mr. McCarthy as speaker. It is also not clear whether Democrats would support it, unless they secured commitments that their legislative priorities would be addressed.

Another option would be for Mr. McHenry to simply attempt to

Families Separated at the Border Reach a Settlement

By MIRIAM JORDAN

Lawyers representing thousands of families separated at the southern border during a Trump administration crackdown have reached a settlement with the federal government that enables the migrants to remain in the United States and apply for asylum, putting them on the path to permanent legal residency.

The agreement, filed on Monday in federal court in San Diego, concludes years of negotiations that were part of a class-action lawsuit to address the harm inflicted by family separations carried out in 2017 and 2018.

The policy was a key component of the Trump administration's efforts to curb unauthorized immigration. Children were sev-



A 2018 protest against family separations. Under the new deal, migrants could live and work in the U.S. and apply for asylum.

or foster homes. Most of the separations occurred in the spring of 2018 and lasted several weeks. But, in some cases, they extended to years because parents were deported without their children.

The American Academy of Pediatrics said the initiative amounted to "sweeping cruelty." Some young children did not recognize their parents when they were reunified by U.S. authorities, after an order issued in June 2018 by Judge Sabraw. Other parents and children could not be found, delaying reunification, because of poor record-keeping by federal agencies.

The settlement largely restricts separations in the future to cases in which a parent has been abusive or committed serious crimes, and the settlement stipulates that