



GOP Gets New Speaker Pick After Emmer

WASHINGTON—Rep. Mike Johnson of Louisiana was chosen as House Republicans' latest nominee for speaker in a conference vote late Tuesday, hours after the party elected

By Siobhan Hughes, Katy Stech Ferek, Kristina Peterson and Eliza Collins

and then derailed a different member in its search for the elusive candidate who can actually win the gavel.

Johnson, the vice chairman of the House Republican conference, bested Byron Donalds of Florida, a Trump ally popular with many of the most conservative lawmakers. The other candidates to be eliminated or drop out in earlier rounds were Roger Williams of Texas and two Tennessee Republicans, Mark Green and Chuck Fleischmann.

The House is frozen until a new speaker is elected. Lawmakers are eager to get back to work, with many wanting to pass aid to Israel and address

viously led the Republican Study Committee, a broad group of conservative members, but has less experience in leadership than the previous three speaker picks. The 51-year-old joined Congress in 2017 and serves on the House Judiciary Committee.

In a sign of the growing discontent with the state of the race, the tally in the final round was 128 for Johnson to 29 for Donalds, with 44 protest votes for "other"—all but one for McCarthy.

"I think there was probably a general frustration that we had kind of gone through our most popular candidates, that's probably what you're seeing there," said Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R., Texas) about the "other" votes.

Most of the evening's candidates were aligned with the party's most conservative wing. All voted to challenge the results of the 2020 presidential election. Fleischmann is the only one who voted for a continuing resolution to fund the government this year. He was the first to be eliminated.

More than 30 lawmakers didn't vote for any of the official candidates. Rep. John Duarte (R., Calif.) said he would be writing McCarthy's name in and others would as well. Some lawmakers said an idea was floated earlier for a new McCarthy speakership with Jordan as an assistant speaker.

Earlier, House Republicans picked Emmer, a former chairman of the House Republicans' campaign arm, over fellow finalist Johnson, following a rapid-fire series of votes to winnow an initial group of more than a half-dozen hopefuls. The tally in the final round was 117 for Emmer to 97 for Johnson.

The close finish immediately raised questions about whether Emmer could assemble the 217 votes on the House floor needed to become speaker. After Emmer won the nod, more than 20 members indicated they wouldn't support him, including some members of the House Freedom Caucus who pulled for Jordan last week.

Trump, who is close to Jordan, issued a statement after the GOP vote saying that electing Emmer speaker would be a "tragic mistake," painting him as Republican in name only and insufficiently deferential to Trump and his movement.

Emmer voted to enshrine federal protections for same-sex couples, and this year supported a debt-ceiling deal and a stopgap spending bill to avoid a shutdown, putting him at odds with many conservatives.

Any speaker candidate needs a majority of votes in the 433-member House, assuming all members vote for an individual. Republicans hold 221 seats to the Democrats' 212.

—Lindsay Wise contributed to this article.



AL DRAGO/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Rep. Mike Johnson

a looming government funding deadline next month. But it wasn't clear if Johnson would fare any better than earlier GOP hopefuls in actually winning the speaker post.

The vote marked the latest chapter in a dizzying day, as Republicans' deep divisions and the power of its most conservative members to steer the party were thrust into the spotlight once again. House Majority Whip Tom Emmer (R., Minn.) was chosen as the nominee around lunchtime but dropped his bid by dinner, as stiff resistance from hard-right members buttressed by former President Donald Trump sank his chances.

Emmer's withdrawal put the Republicans back to square one for the fourth time, after hard-liners engineered the ouster of former Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.) three weeks ago and efforts by Reps. Steve Scalise (R., La.) and Jim Jordan (R., Ohio) to take his place ran aground. Republicans regrouped again late Tuesday to assemble another slate of candidates and hold a fresh vote.

New nominee Johnson pre-

Emmer Drops Speaker Bid Following Immediate Backlash From Right Wing

By LUKE BROADWATER

WASHINGTON — Divided House Republicans chose and then quickly repudiated yet another of their nominees for speaker on Tuesday and were rushing to name a fourth, prolonging a remarkable three-week-long deadlock that has left Congress leaderless and paralyzed.

Representative Mike Johnson, Republican of Louisiana, was emerging as the leading contender for the post after Representative Tom Emmer of Minnesota, the No. 3 House Republican, dropped his bid for speaker on Tuesday only hours after securing the nomination. Mr. Emmer's downfall followed a swift backlash from the right, including former President Donald J. Trump, that left his candidacy in shambles.

It was not clear whether Mr. Johnson could do any better, as dozens of House Republicans indicated they were not inclined to back him.

Mr. Emmer's abrupt exit signaled that Republicans were as far as ever from resolving their impasse. It made Mr. Emmer the third Republican this month to be chosen to lead the party, only to have his bid collapse in a seemingly endless cycle of G.O.P. grievances, personality conflicts and ideological rifts.

Republicans have now succeeded in repudiating all three of their top leaders over the past few weeks. The chamber has been frozen for the better part of a month as Republicans feud over who should be in charge, even as wars rage overseas and a government shutdown approaches.

By late Tuesday afternoon, they were back to the drawing board.

Catie Edmondson, Robert Jimison and Kayla Guo contributed reporting.

Republicans huddled behind closed doors for the second evening in a row to hear from potential nominees and choose a candidate. They were prepared to go to the floor for a vote of the full House as soon as Wednesday if anyone could muster a majority, but it remained unclear if that was possible amid the current strife.

"It's a pretty sad commentary on governance right now," said Representative Steve Womack of Arkansas, adding: "The American public cannot be looking at this and having any reasonable confidence that this conference can be governed. It's sad. I'm sad. I'm heartbroken."

Tuesday's breakdown was the latest evidence of the seemingly unending Republican dysfunction. Mr. Emmer began the day with a scant victory, winning an internal party nominating contest by a vote of 117 to 97 over Mr. Johnson. But the margin reflected that House Republicans were still deeply at odds.

Then immediately after Mr. Emmer's nomination, about two dozen right-wing Republicans indicated that they would not vote for him on the floor, denying him the majority he would need to succeed in a vote of the full House. And as he met with holdouts to try to win them over, the former president issued a scathing statement on social media expressing vehement opposition to Mr. Emmer, calling him a "Globalist RINO" — short for "Republican in name only" — whose elevation would be a "tragic mistake."

"I have many wonderful friends wanting to be Speaker of the House, and some are truly great Warriors," Mr. Trump wrote on Truth Social. "RINO Tom Emmer, who I do not know well, is not one of them. He never respected the Power of a Trump Endorsement,



ANNA ROSE LAYDEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Representative Tom Emmer of Minnesota dropped his bid for speaker on Tuesday mere hours after being narrowly nominated.

or the breadth and scope of MAGA—MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

A majority of those opposed to Mr. Emmer were members of the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus and loyal to Mr. Trump. Any candidate for speaker can lose only a handful of votes and still win the speakership because Republicans hold such a small majority in the House.

Only hours later, Mr. Emmer told Republicans in a closed-door meeting that he was dropping his bid, according to a person familiar with his decision who divulged the private discussion on the condition of anonymity. He then quickly left the room, avoiding reporters' questions.

By Tuesday evening, four more Republicans, none with a national profile, were vying to become the potential nominee with Mr. Johnson in the lead after the first ballot. Others were Representative Byron Donalds of Florida, a member of the Freedom Caucus; Repre-

sentative Mark E. Green of Tennessee, the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee; and Representative Roger Williams of Texas, the chairman of the Small Business Committee.

"He's uniquely positioned to lose 30 votes on either side of the conference," said Representative Thomas Massie of Kentucky, who said he was continuing to vote Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio, the Judiciary Committee chairman. "Nobody dislikes Mike Johnson. He's principled. He's moral. But I think Jordan has a better chance of getting to 217 than Mike."

The Republican disarray underscored a new ethos that has gripped the House G.O.P.: Dozens of members have abandoned the old norms of respecting the winner of the party's internal elections, and instead are acting according to their individual preferences, ideologies and allegiances.

Some hard-right Republicans consider themselves a distinct po-

litical party from their more mainstream colleagues, whom they accuse of being in a "uniparty" with Democrats.

The House has been in a state of uncertainty since Oct. 3, when rebels forced a vote to oust Kevin McCarthy as speaker. Eight Republicans backed that move along with Democrats, who remained united behind their own leader, Representative Hakeem Jeffries of New York. Republicans have cast aside two previous winners of their closed-door nominating process — Representative Steve Scalise of Louisiana and Representative Jim Jordan of Ohio — before settling on Mr. Emmer.

Some on the right opposed to Mr. Emmer cited his vote in favor of codifying federal protections for same-sex couples. Others railed against Mr. Emmer's vote in favor of a stopgap spending bill put forward by Mr. McCarthy, the speaker at the time, to avert a government shutdown. Still others said he was insufficiently loyal to Mr. Trump, because he voted to certify the results of the 2020 election won by President Biden.

Mr. Emmer had attempted to mollify Mr. Trump by calling him over the weekend and praising him, according to the former president. But Mr. Trump made clear he had not been won over.

"I believe he has now learned his lesson, because he is saying that he is Pro-Trump all the way, but who can ever be sure?" Mr. Trump wrote. "Has he only changed because that's what it takes to win? The Republican Party cannot take that chance, because that's not where the America First Voters are."

Old rivalries also helped to tank Mr. Emmer's speakership bid. Feelings remained raw from a contentious race for his current post against Representative Jim

Banks of Indiana.

"I can't go along with putting one of the most moderate members of the entire Republican conference in the speaker's chair," Mr. Banks said. "That betrays the conservative values that I came here to fight for."

The current free-for-all left more mainstream members of the party fuming.

"Our conference has been essentially at war with itself," said Representative Brandon Williams of New York, who represents a district won by President Biden. He called the situation "disheartening" and reminiscent of the movie "Groundhog Day."

"Most of the country's concerned about inflation, what they're experiencing at the grocery store, and they would like to see Congress stand up and act like adults," Mr. Williams said.

A former college ice hockey player and coach, Mr. Emmer, 62, currently holds the job of "whip," the chief vote counter for the party. He served two terms as the chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, helping Republican candidates around the country win elections and making inroads across the conference in the process. But that was not enough for the party's right flank.

Republicans were growing increasingly frustrated with the spectacle of their own chaos. Late Tuesday afternoon, Representative Thomas Massie of Kentucky suggested that the only way to bridge the party's divisions was to get everyone drunk.

"I think they're going to have to bring alcohol in there to solve this," he said. "There's some angry drunks that can fight it out. There's some friendly drunks like me. But I don't see this happening without alcohol."