

Back in Washington, Clinton, Trump work toward party unity

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The presidential race shifted to the nation's capital Friday, with Democrats executing a carefully orchestrated plan to unify their party around presumptive nominee Hillary Clinton.

Her likely general election rival, Donald Trump, continued his months-long effort to win over the Republican base, with events wooing top donors and evangelical voters.

With the primary contests all but over, a series of top Democrats formally announced their support for Clinton, headlined by the glowing endorsement of President Barack Obama on Thursday.

Within hours, Vice President Joe Biden and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren joined that effort, both backing Clinton and signaling to many of Sanders' supporters that it's time to unite around the party's presumptive nominee. Clinton and Warren met privately for about an hour Friday morning at Clinton's home in Washington, intensifying speculation that the progressive stalwart may be tapped for the vice presidency.

"If you really want to electrify the base you've got to get somebody who's been speaking to the base and is going to turn the base out," said Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn., one of Sanders' top supporters in Congress. He said he and other progressives would be thrilled if Clinton tapped Warren for her ticket.

Democrats in Washington are eager to unite their party against Trump and avoid a lingering intra-party spat.

Primary rival Bernie Sanders, who's vowed to take his political revolution to their national Democratic convention in July, has been stressing his determination to defeat Trump, perhaps signaling that he may exit the race or at least shift his focus away from Clinton after the final primary election next Tuesday in Washington, D.C.

On Friday, he retreated to his home in Burlington, Vermont, to plot his next steps.

Clinton, meanwhile, delivered her first speech since becoming the presumptive nominee, addressing advocates at Planned Parenthood, the women's health organization and abortion provider. The nonprofit was a strong champion of Clinton in the



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump addresses the Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority Conference in Washington on Friday.

AP Photo/Cliff Owen



In this June 7 file photo, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton gestures as she greets supporters in New York.

AP Photo/Julio Cortez File

primaries, giving her its first endorsement in their 100-year history.

Describing Trump as someone who "doesn't hold women in high regard," Clinton launched into an unabashedly feminist attack on her GOP rival, arguing he would take the country back to "when abortion was illegal, women had far fewer options and life for too many women and girls was limited."

"When Donald Trump says,

'let's make America great again,' that is code for 'let's take America backward,'" she told the cheering audience.

Trump, who has also faced resistance from corners of his party, addressed a gathering of conservative evangelical voters at the Faith & Freedom Coalition's "Road to Majority" conference not long after Clinton spoke.

Facing criticism for suggesting a

judge's Mexican heritage biased him in a case against the now-defunct Trump University, Trump struck a more welcoming tone.

"No one should be judged by their race or their color and the color of their skin," he said. "We're going to bring our nation together."

Reading mostly from teleprompters, he declared Clinton "unfit to be president" while vowing to "restore faith to its proper mantle" in the U.S.

As he took the stage, Trump boasted of the support he received from evangelicals in the Republican primary and touted his opposition to abortion rights and commitment to religious freedom — issues he rarely discusses in other settings. Seizing on social issues, Trump claimed Clinton would appoint "radical" judges who would "abolish" the Second Amendment and "destroy the rule of law."

In a new dig against her email scandal, Trump proposed "tough new ethics rules to restore dignity of the office of the secretary of state" and challenged Clinton to drop her support for increasing refugee admissions and instead support "a new jobs program for our inner cities."

It was one of several examples of Trump's burgeoning populist attacks against Clinton, whom he painted as indebted to big money. He claimed her immigration, education and trade policies would harm working families and "plunge our poor African-American and Hispanic communities into turmoil and even worse despair."

"Her policies will be a crushing blow to all poor people in this country," he said.

He also accused Clinton of failing to understand the gravity of the risk posed by Islamic extremism, and faulted her for wanting to allow more Syrian refugees into the country.

"Hillary will bring hundreds of thousands of refugees, many of whom have hostile beliefs about people of different faiths and values and some of whom absolutely and openly support terrorism in our country," he claimed. "We have to temporarily stop this whole thing with what's going on with refugees where we don't know where they come from." Clinton has proposed allowing 65,000 Syrian refugees into the country each year.

His speech was interrupted by several protesters, including one woman who screamed "Refugees are welcome here!" as she was escorted out of the room.

Many evangelical and conservative leaders remain deeply skeptical of Trump's candidacy — a resistance that was underscored by the speakers who proceeded him on Friday.

Former rival Carly Fiorina, who spoke immediately before Trump, failed to mention her party's presumptive nominee's name a single time during her remarks, which heavily criticized Clinton.

Meanwhile, in his long-expected endorsement, President Barack Obama pointed to Clinton's grit and determination but also called for "embracing" Sanders' economic message, which has galvanized liberals and independents. Obama sought to reassure Democrats that Clinton shares their values and is ready for the job.

The president plans to campaign next week with Clinton in Green Bay, Wisconsin, marking his first major foray into the 2016 campaign.

"It was a wonderful, meaning endorsement in every way," said Clinton, sipping an iced chai, during a stop at a muffin store in Washington.

Unlikely path for foes hoping to dump Trump at convention

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Dumping Trump at next month's Republican national convention? Dubious, but not prohibitively implausible.

The GOP was already distressed by Donald Trump's comments about Hispanics, women, the disabled and others. Now, it's been driven to near-despair over his belittling of a Mexican-American judge as incapable of fairly handling a Trump lawsuit.

That's fed talk of using the party's July gathering in Cleveland to find a different presidential nominee.

So far it's just limited chatter, at least publicly. But with party leaders already flashing mixed messages about the billionaire's candidacy — House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., belatedly endorsed him but labeled his comments "racist" — any more rhetorical bombs that Trump tosses could cause opposition to him to snowball.

Here's how the party could derail Trump and why it's improbable, at least now:

THE MATH

Trump has 1,542 delegates, according to The Associated Press' count, including 1,447 pledged under current GOP rules to vote for him at the convention. That's well above the 1,237 delegates needed for the nomination and more than double the 559 of his nearest rival, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

Measured another way, Trump has amassed 13.4 million votes in primaries, well above Cruz' 7.7 million.

Those numbers add up to one word: Winner.

THE PROBLEM

Some Republicans think Trump can't win, will drag down the party's congressional candidates with him and inflict long-term damage to the party's appeal to women and minorities. Control of the Senate, and less likely the House, are at also stake in November's election.

But while open talk of

"What does Trump have to do or say for the party to disassociate with him?"

— Rory Cooper, adviser to Never Trump political committee

finding a different nominee is limited, it's out there.

Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., said this week that Trump's denigration of the judge "might spur" talk of finding another candidate. He noted that Trump's 70th birthday is approaching and said, "It's tough to change. And he certainly hasn't shown any signs that he's going to."

"What does Trump have to do or say for the party to disassociate itself from him?" asked Rory Cooper, senior adviser to the Never Trump political committee.

And conservative talk radio host Hugh Hewitt said on his show that Trump should be dropped because "the plane is headed toward the mountain."

THE CURE

One way to stop someone from winning a game is to change the rules.

Mechanically, if not politically, that's possible in Cleveland next month. The procedures governing the convention will be whatever a majority of its 2,472 delegates approve.

Current rules, which they seem likely to adopt, give the nomination to whoever wins a majority of their votes.

GOP rules experts say that to block Trump, one option is to set a higher threshold than he currently can reach, such as requiring a two-thirds margin.

That would only be needed for the first ballot. If no candidate wins the nomination by then, most delegates are free to vote for anyone in the second and succeeding rounds of voting.

Another option: Let all delegates immediately support whoever they'd like.

Though it's widely disputed, some say current rules already let delegates back anybody. That would mean no changes would be

needed.

"The primaries are baloney" and award candidates "bragging rights," not committed delegates, said Curly Haugland of North Dakota, a member of the Republican National Committee.

THE PROBLEM WITH BLOCKING TRUMP

Though the GOP is already torn, many believe booting Trump is politically unrealistic because it would deepen the party's rifts and is probably impossible anyway. Ignoring the millions who've voted for him is politically unthinkable, they say.

"The American people have spoken on this, and I think, as a party, we better listen to them," said Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb.

Trump campaign senior adviser Ed Brookover said Friday there's enough delegate support to block any rules changes that would deny Trump the nomination. He provided no specific figures.

"We have stopped counting" the number of delegates supporting Trump "because of the control we believe we have," he said.

BUT WAIT

If Trump has a majority of delegates, does he really have to worry about rules changes that could deny him the nomination?

Probably not. But maybe.

That's because by party bylaws, delegates are free to vote however they want on the rules, platform and challenges to delegates' credentials. The only thing most must do is support the candidate they are pledged to, and only on the first round of votes.

The danger for Trump: Many of his delegates — the numbers are unclear — actually prefer Cruz or perhaps other alternatives. If they're persuaded to do so, perhaps by additional intemperate Trump comments, they can vote for rules changes that would open the door for a replacement.

Kendal Unruh, a Cruz delegate and Trump opponent from Colorado, said Friday she's seeking support for one such proposal. It would let delegates abandon their candidate if there have been "grievous acts of conduct" and cast "a vote of conscience, either personal or religious" for anyone.

Brookover said some Cruz delegates really back Trump, and rated the chances the convention will avert Trump's nomination at "virtually zero." He said the Trump campaign opposes any rules changes that would affect the Cleveland convention.

GOP insiders pressure Trump to steer clear of controversy

NEW YORK (AP) — Weary Republicans are looking for assurances that Donald Trump can maintain the discipline needed to stay on message as he prepares for a bruising general election run-up against Hillary Clinton.

Trump's conciliatory, teleprompter-guided victory speech Tuesday appeared to stave off — at least for the time being — a near-GOP revolt over his racially divisive attacks against the American-born judge of Mexican heritage hearing the case against

his now-defunct Trump University.

As he kicks off his general election campaign with a scheduled speech Friday, a thorny question has arisen: How does the party keep Trump in check?

"A primary campaign against 16 opponents is very different and combative in a different way than a general election against a well-organized, well-funded Clinton machine," said Rep. Chris Collins, who has been helping to coordinate Trump's outreach to Congress.



ROAD WORK AHEAD

I-84 EXIT 209 WESTBOUND OFF-RAMP TO BE CLOSED THREE DAYS IN JUNE

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will be making repairs to the Interstate 84 westbound Exit 209 interchange bridge in June. The Exit 209 interchange is located in Pendleton, crossing over and connecting traffic to U.S. 395 / Southgate. The project will result in lane closures on the bridge and the temporary closure of the westbound freeway off-ramp from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 16, and again on June 22 and 23.

Due to the lane restrictions on the bridge and close proximity of the exit ramp, there will not be enough room for westbound traffic to safely exit the freeway at this location. During ramp closure times motorists wanting access to Pendleton will need to continue westbound on I-84 and use Exit 207, or use Exit 210 prior to the closed exit ramp. These dates are subject to changed, depending on weather conditions.

The eastbound off-ramp and all on-ramps at Exit 209 will not be impacted by this bridge repair work.

"We realize this will be an inconvenience for some travelers and greatly appreciate everyone's patience," said ODOT Bridge Crew Manager Richard Lani. "We'll work to get the project completed as soon as possible."

The bridge repair work requires dry pavement. In the event of wet weather the project and ramp closure may be postponed. Update information will be shared through local media if scheduled changes are made.

For more information about this or other ODOT highway project in eastern Oregon contact Public Information Officer Tom Strandberg at 541-963-1330, Thomas.m.strandberg@odot.state.or.us. Check www.TripCheck.com for highway closure/delay information.

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