

Thunderous boos for Cruz for refusing to endorse Trump

CLEVELAND (AP) — Stubbornly undercutting calls for Republican unity, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz refused to endorse Donald Trump Wednesday night as he addressed the GOP convention, ignoring thunderous boos from furious delegates as he encouraged Americans to simply “vote your conscience” in November.

In a surreal moment, Trump unexpectedly walked into the arena just as Cruz was wrapping up his remarks. Delegates chanted Trump’s name and implored Cruz to voice his support for the businessman, to no avail.

“Vote for candidates up and down the ticket who you trust to defend our freedom and to be faithful to the Constitution,” Cruz said. While he backed some of Trump’s policy proposals, including building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, he mentioned the GOP nominee by name only once.

Cruz’s defiance ripped open party divisions anew, on the summer’s biggest political stage. Trump allies were infuriated, including New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who said Cruz’s decision was “totally selfish.”

The stunning moment upended what was shaping up to be the convention’s most successful night, and overshadowed Indiana Gov. Mike Pence’s national convention debut as Trump’s running mate.

“You have nominated a man for president who never quits,” Pence said. “Until now, he’s had to do it all by himself against all odds but this week, with this united party, he’s got backup.”

Trump’s campaign had hoped Pence’s address would quiet Republican doubts about Trump. Unlike Trump, Pence is an experienced politician, favorite of conservatives and ally of party leaders.

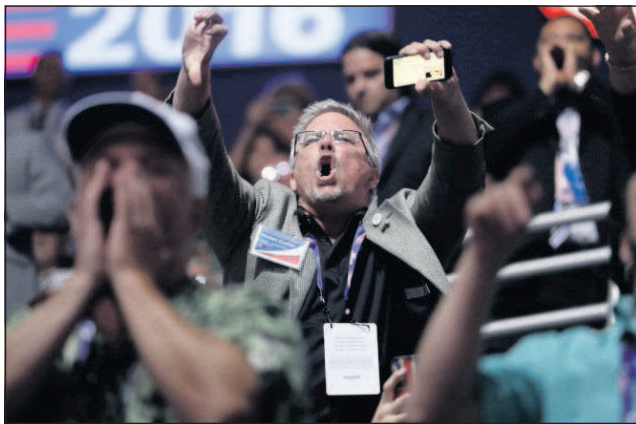
Taking the stage shortly after Cruz, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich tried to explain away the senator’s lack of support for the nominee.

“Ted Cruz said you can vote your conscience for anyone who will uphold the Constitution,” he said. “In this election there is only one candidate who will uphold the Constitution.”

It was unclear why Trump’s campaign invited Cruz to speak — in a headlining role, no less — without getting him to agree to an



Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, walks from the podium after speaking during the Republican National Convention, Wednesday in Cleveland.



People react to Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Tex., as Cruz addresses the delegate during the third day session of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Wednesday.

endorsement. The decision was sure to spark a new round of second guessing about the campaign’s management of the convention and preparedness for a bruising general election against Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Trump did get a boost from Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, one of the 16 Republicans whose White House dreams were vanquished during the primary. Still, Walker suggested he was driven as much by a desire to keep Clinton out of the White House as admiration for his party’s nominee.

“Let me be clear: a vote for anyone other than Donald Trump in November is a vote for Hillary Clinton,” Walker said.

After two nights of low-energy speeches, the crowd packed into the arena was noticeably more energetic Wednesday night, dancing in the aisles and waving signs reading, “America Deserves Better Than Hillary.”

Lynne Patton, a longtime

Trump employee, spoke movingly about the businessman’s strong family. Patton, who is black, said she was proud to support Trump “not just in spite of the color of my skin, but in fact because of the color of my skin.”

Trump’s campaign had hoped that by the convention’s end, voters would look past the gathering’s rough start, including the plagiarism charge involving Melania Trump’s opening address. After 36 hours of denials, the campaign moved to put the matter to rest Wednesday, releasing a statement from a speechwriter who took blame for including lines from a Michelle Obama speech in the remarks.

Trump, who will address the convention Thursday night, cheered on the night’s proceedings via Twitter. After Walker’s remarks, Trump wrote, “Great speech!”

Cruz was harshly critical of Trump in the waning weeks of their primary battle, calling the busi-

“A vote for anyone other than Donald Trump in November is a vote for Hillary Clinton.”

— Scott Walker, Governor of Wisconsin

nessman a “pathological liar” and “utterly amoral.” He arrived in Cleveland with an eye on his own political future, holding a rally with hundreds of supporters who greeted him with chants of “2020” — suggesting Cruz’s backers have no interest in seeing Trump become a two-term president.

In his convention address, Cruz spoke at length about the recent stretch of violence across the country. He urged Americans to fight for the families of five police officers killed in his hometown of Dallas, as well as the family of Alton Sterling, a black man killed by police in Louisiana.

Wednesday afternoon, Pence and his family, along with Trump’s adult children, greeted the billionaire as his helicopter landed by Cleveland’s picturesque lakefront.

Eric Trump, the candidate’s 32-year-old son, took the stage near the evening’s end, praising his father as other family members had earlier in the week.

“Vote for the one candidate who does not need this job,” he said.



Delegates hold signs as Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin speaks during the third day of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland on Wednesday.

Hating on Hillary: Republican convention down and dirty

CLEVELAND (AP) — Liar. Garbage. Lock her up.

Republicans at their national convention are putting Hillary Clinton on mock trial, declaring her guilty and issuing sentences that include death by firing squad, in a remarkable display of political rhetoric gone wild. Even some Clinton haters say the vitriol has gone too far.

The focus on Clinton has sometimes upstaged what’s supposed to be a weeklong celebration and promotion of Donald Trump. Instead of extolling the virtues of their nominee, Republicans have turned to increasingly crass slurs against his opponent.

One GOP delegate and adviser to Trump on veteran’s issues, Al Baldasaro, took it a step further than the rest. He dubbed her a “piece of garbage” and suggested a punishment for alleged inaction during the 2012 Benghazi, Libya, attacks that left four Americans dead.

“Hillary Clinton should be put in the firing line and shot for treason,” the New Hampshire state lawmaker said in a radio interview Tuesday.

Trump spokeswoman Hope Hicks said that Trump and his campaign don’t agree with Baldasaro’s comment. The U.S. Secret Service said it was investigating.

On the streets of Cleveland, demeaning buttons for sale say “Life’s a Bitch — Don’t Elect One” and “Trump vs. Tramp.” Others have been even harsher and more vulgar, with crude references to parts of Clinton’s body.

Tony Ensminger, a 63-year-old selling buttons outside the arena, insisted “this was mild” compared to what Democrats said about former President George W. Bush.

Visceral disdain for

Clinton has been palpable all week on the convention floor, where the go-to chant is “Lock her up.” One former GOP presidential candidate, Ben Carson, drew a connection between Clinton and Lucifer, and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said scandals follow Clinton and her husband “like flies.”

It’s no surprise that Republicans are emphasizing Clinton’s weaknesses more than Trump’s strengths. The GOP’s strategy for winning in November rests in part on the hope that voters dislike the Democrat more than the Republican.

Fifty-seven percent of Americans in a July Associated Press-GfK poll said they viewed Clinton unfavorably, as did 64 percent of independents who don’t lean toward either party. Slightly more, 63 percent overall, viewed Trump unfavorably; 62 percent of independents.

It’s those independents that Trump’s campaign hopes it can peel off — if it can keep up a steady drumbeat of negativity about Clinton. Three-quarters of voters in the poll said their pick for president is motivated by a desire to cast their ballot against either Clinton or Trump.

Still, the criticism has triggered a backlash from some Republicans who say it’s beyond the pale.

Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake, a Trump critic who’s skipping the GOP convention, tweeted that Republicans “can make the case that she shouldn’t be elected without jumping the shark.” And Bill Pickle, a South Carolina delegate and talk radio host, said those doing the name-calling “sound and act like demons.”

But most Republicans seem unperturbed.

U.S. goes after more than \$1B taken from Malaysian fund

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States moved Wednesday to recover more than \$1 billion that federal officials say was stolen from a Malaysian economic development fund and that was used for high-end real estate, fancy artwork and production of the Hollywood film, “The Wolf of Wall Street.”

The diverted funds paid for luxury properties in New York and California, a \$35 million private jet and expensive paintings by Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet, according to federal government complaints that demand the recovery and forfeiture of the ill-gotten assets.

The complaints, filed in Los Angeles, allege a complex money laundering scheme that the Justice Department says was intended to enrich top-level officials of a government-controlled Malaysian wealth fund.

That fund, known informally as IMDB, was created in 2009 by the Malaysian government with the goal of promoting economic development projects in the Asian nation.

Instead, officials at the fund diverted more than \$3.5 billion over the next several years through a web of shell companies and bank accounts in Singapore,

Switzerland, Luxembourg and the U.S., the complaints allege. About \$1.3 billion raised through purportedly legitimate bond offerings was swiftly transferred to a Swiss bank account and, from there, distributed to fund officials for their own personal benefit.

Turkey declares 3-month state of emergency after failed coup

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey’s president on Wednesday declared a three-month state of emergency following a botched coup attempt, declaring he would rid the military of the “virus” of subversion and giving the government sweeping powers to expand a crackdown that has already included mass arrests and the closure of hundreds of schools.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was accused of autocratic conduct before the insurrection, said the measure would counter threats to Turkish democracy. Possibly anticipating investor jitters, Erdogan criticized Standard & Poor’s for downgrading its credit rating for Turkey deeper into “junk” status and said the country would remain financially disciplined.

The president did not announce details, but the security measure could facilitate longer detentions for many of the nearly

10,000 people who have been rounded up since loyalist security forces and protesters quashed the rebellion that started Friday night and was over by Saturday.

“This measure is in no way against democracy, the law and freedoms,” Erdogan said in a national televised address after a meeting with Cabinet ministers and security advisers.

The state of emergency announcement needs to be published in a state gazette and lawmakers have to approve it for it to take effect, according to analysts. Turkey imposed emergency rule in the southeast of Turkey in 1987, allowing officials to set curfews, issue search and arrest warrants and restrict gatherings as the security forces fought Kurdish rebels. The emergency rule was gradually lifted by 2002.

The president suggested military purges would continue. Turkey also said it would close more than 600 private schools and dormitories following the attempted coup, spurring fears that the state’s move against perceived enemies is undermining key institutions in the country.

Erdogan’s government said it has fired nearly 22,000 education ministry workers, mostly teachers, taken steps to revoke the licenses of 21,000 other teachers at private schools and sacked or detained half a dozen university presidents in a campaign to root out

alleged supporters of a U.S.-based Muslim cleric blamed for the failed insurrection.

The targeting of education ties in with Erdogan’s belief that the cleric, Fethullah Gulen, whose followers run a network of schools worldwide, seeks to infiltrate the Turkish education system and other institutions in order to bend the country to his will. The cleric’s movement, which espouses moderation and multi-faith harmony, says it is a scapegoat.

Appeals court: Texas voter ID law discriminates; orders fix

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas’ strict voter ID law discriminates against minorities and the poor and must be weakened before the November elections, a federal appeals court ruled Wednesday, following claims that at least a half-million registered voters could have struggled to cast a ballot.

The ruling was a striking election-year victory for President Barack Obama’s administration, which took the unusual step of bringing the U.S. Justice Department into Texas to fight the case. U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch said the ruling affirmed that the 2011 law — which Texas enforced in three elections — abridged the right to vote based on race or color.

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