

## TRUMP, BRASH NEW YORKER, PICKS UP SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN

**ATLANTA:** Donald Trump is a brash New Yorker who knows the path to the Republican presidential nomination runs through a swath of Southern states where residents pride themselves on graciousness and gentility. He leads many state polls in the region just as he does nationally. In the last few weeks he's hired staff members in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia to go along with staff in South Carolina, which hosts the South's first primary. "It's almost like we're running a campaign for president of the United States," quipped Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski when asked about the expansion.

Lewandowski said the hires and Trump's schedule - he'll be in metro Atlanta on Saturday - are proof that Trump is in the race for good. Trump and his aides are pushing back on suggestions - fueled by his own comments - that he is plotting an exit in case his poll numbers continue to slide, as they have recently. Lewandowski declined to talk about advertising plans and side-stepped questions on whether any firms have been hired to help with ballot access work. But he and political players in the South say Trump shouldn't be tak-

en lightly in the region, even if it may not seem like a natural fit.

"Look, the idea that only Southerners appeal to Southerners and Northerners appeal to Northerners is overdone," said David Mowery, an Alabama-based consultant who has worked for both Republicans and Democrats in multiple states. "He may not sound like us, but he's saying the things that people in the Republican base - and even disaffected, frustrated voters outside that base - want to hear."

South Carolina is accustomed to its place immediately after Iowa and New Hampshire. But the rest of the South is enjoying a newfound prominence in the nominating process, driven by Georgia and others moving up for a March 1 Super Tuesday dubbed the "the SEC primary" after the college athletics league. Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Virginia will have 471 delegates at stake that day. Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Florida follow in the next two weeks with a combined 301 delegates.

With the earlier votes, the candidates have followed. Trump was expected to draw thousands to a campaign rally yesterday in Norcross, Georgia. In August,

he set the high mark for Republicans this campaign when he drew about 30,000 to a rally in Mobile, Alabama. Among the Southern states voting in March, only Florida is winner-take-all, with the rest using varying proportional distributions



**LAS VEGAS:** In this Oct 8, 2015 photo, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks at a rally. —AP

of delegates. That means the region won't put any single candidate on the cusp of the necessary 1,236 delegates necessary for nomination. But it will winnow the field.

### Conservative

If anything, Trump's anti-establishment rants may resonate more strongly in the region that has long been the nation's most conservative and most distrustful of the central government. "He comes in and plays smash-mouth football, and it fires people up," says Henry Barbour, a Mississippian and influential member of the Republican National Committee. Barbour said Trump would be well-served to add more policy specifics to his personality and style-driven pitch, but he said it's obvious Trump's initial approach has worked, animating a wing of Southern Republicans who look at the establishment and say "not only no, but hell no."

Barbour, who is neutral in the primary, initially backed Rick Perry, a former Texas governor who was at ease with Southerners but dropped out. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, an ordained Southern Baptist preacher who also fits the Southern politician prototype, previously called the SEC primary "manna from heaven" and won several primaries in the region in 2008. But he's found a tougher path this year. So, too, have Louisiana Gov Bobby Jindal and South Carolina Sen Lindsey Graham.

For his part, Huckabee, without directly addressing Trump, has boasted of his grassroots organization in South Carolina and neighboring states as more important than Trump's standing months from voting. And, indeed, candidates like Huckabee, Jindal and Graham appear to devote much more energy than Trump to the meet-and-greet affairs that occur away from the big rallies. If any candidate has managed to produce both large crowds like Trump and build a nuts-and-bolts organization in the region, it's Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, another conservative who appeals to the region's anti-Washington bent.

Barbour said Trump should try for the same balance if he hopes to sustain momentum. But Roger Villere, Louisiana's longtime Republican Party chairman and vice chairman of the national GOP, said it may not matter in 2016. With so many states bunched close together, he said, it may be a campaign won largely on television and sweeping visits - just the race for a bombastic billionaire. "Sure, you need some help on the ground," Villere said, "but I'm sure Mr. Trump or any of the rest of them who are doing well coming out of South Carolina will find everything they need." —AP

## TOP NH REPUBLICANS TELL CHRISTIE TO KEEP GOING

**EAST HAMPSTEAD, New Hampshire:** Despite his single-digit poll numbers and the dominance of another tough-talking candidate, Chris Christie is hearing a clear message from influential Republicans in the early voting states of New Hampshire and Iowa: Keep going. What he's not hearing are enough commitments. With Donald Trump still commanding the field and several other rivals apparently rising, the New Jersey governor has been quietly chugging along, holding nearly 30 town hall meetings in New Hampshire, for example.

"Maybe he's the tortoise in this race," said Donna Sytek, a former speaker of the New Hampshire House whose support Christie is courting heavily. "He's authentic," she said. "He's not scripted. He'll tell you a story from his own experience that illustrates these serious issues." After he visited her hometown of Salem, Sytek told Christie he is in her 'top three.' She received a text back from Christie saying he'd prefer to be her No. 1.

Still, Sytek hasn't committed. She's received phone calls from Jeb Bush, attended several events with Carly Fiorina and likes Marco Rubio and John Kasich. This is Christie's conundrum. Many top Republicans in early states are urging him to stick with it, but few are willing right now to give him endorsements that could bring credibility and momentum to his campaign. Christie's supporters say his poll numbers, low as they are, give them reason to hope he can catch on in early states. In a September CNN/WMUR New Hampshire Primary Poll, for example, half of likely GOP primary voters said they had a favorable opinion of the governor, up from 31 percent in June. Christie adviser Mike DuHaime says that shows the campaign's long-haul strategy is making headway in a chaotic, quickly evolving race. Christie has repeatedly dismissed his placement in the horse race, with so much time left before voting. "People in New Hampshire know that they don't have to decide right now," Christie said after a campaign event at a lumberyard during a recent three-day campaign swing. "We're going to continue to work to gain their trust and to gain their support and that's what campaigns are all about."

Buoyed by a well-reviewed second debate performance and in response to voters' desire for an outsider candidate, Christie has subtly tweaked his message. He's changed the slogan of his town hall meetings from "Tell it like

it is" to "Our Country, Our Presidency." And he has increasingly distanced himself from Washington, saying that he is the consummate outsider by virtue of being a Republican in Democrat-heavy New Jersey. He's also signaled plans to spend more time in Iowa.

Last month, six influential Republicans in Iowa announced their support for Christie. In New Hampshire, his campaign is steadily rolling out lists of support from activists. The lists often lack big names, but several Republican leaders are behind him, such as Merrimack County Sheriff Scott Hilliard and Wayne McDonald, a former state party chairman. Hilliard, who joined Christie in July, said he's lobbying other law enforcement members to get behind Christie. Over lunch recently, he handed Christie a list of names and numbers and Christie began calling them. "The governor's ready to work for it," Hilliard said.

### Positive Reviews

Beverly Bruce, Mitt Romney's 2012 finance director in the state, held a house party for Christie in late August. She's not signing on with anyone yet but said that crowd gave him positive reviews. "Very influential people were very impressed with the thoughtfulness and thoroughness from the answers of the questions that were asked," she said. "People came up to him and to me and said, 'He's got my support.'"

Jeb Bradley, the state Senate majority Leader, is another Republican receiving the full-court press from Christie and his team, which means personal phone calls and lunches. Bradley, who could run for governor next year, says Christie is working "exceptionally hard." "I haven't endorsed anybody, but he's certainly one of the top candidates that I'd want to see," Bradley said. GOP strategist Mike Dennehy, who led John McCain's 2000 primary victory here, said Christie is running one of the best campaigns in the state. "I would be one of those people to say 'Do not get out of the race,' if he has enough money to continue running," Dennehy said.

Christie's campaign is one of the few that has yet to release fundraising details for the third quarter. His finance chairman, Ray Washburne, said last month that fundraising was going well, especially after Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker left the race. Christie said: "I'm traveling, we're advertising, I'm paying bills. We're doing fine." —AP



**WASHINGTON:** Rep Paul Ryan arrives for a meeting on Capitol Hill on Oct 8, 2015, where Republicans were to nominate candidates to replace outgoing House Speaker John Boehner. — AP

## LEADING REPUBLICAN RYAN RECONSIDERS SPEAKER RUN

### VOTE DELAYED AFTER FRONTRUNNER DROPS OUT

**WASHINGTON:** A leading Republican congressman with allies on the right wing of the party, Paul Ryan, is weighing a bid to replace retiring US House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner, fellow lawmakers said on Friday as they sought to defuse a leadership battle. Numerous House Republicans and even 2012 presidential candidate Mitt Romney have asked Ryan to run for speaker after the frontrunner, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, abruptly dropped out on Thursday.

But with Congress embarking on a week-long recess, there was no sign of any move from Ryan, who was Romney's vice presidential running mate, or of any other development that could bring order to the Republican Party's disarray in the lower chamber of Congress. Representative Ryan of Wisconsin is chairman of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee and negotiated a bipartisan budget deal in 2013. "Although he's ruled himself out, it's very clear he's reconsidering," Representative Darrell Issa of California said of Ryan as he left a closed-door meeting of House Republicans. "The fact is, his time is now."

Former Massachusetts governor Romney called Ryan to ask him to run for speaker, a source familiar with the situation said. "I wouldn't presume to tell Paul what to do, but I do know that he is a man of ideas who is driven to see them applied for the public good. Every politician tries to convince people that they are that kind of leader; almost none are - Paul is," Romney said in an emailed comment. Ryan's spokesman Brendan

Buck noted, however, that Ryan had repeatedly said he is not seeking the speaker's job. "Chairman Ryan appreciates the support he's getting from his colleagues but is still not running for speaker," Buck said. Finding a replacement for Boehner has consumed Republicans as Congress faces a series of pressing decisions, from raising the government's borrowing authority to funding federal agencies through September. Boehner announced Sept 25 that he would leave the post on Oct 30. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers, who wants Ryan to run, said after speaking to Ryan as Ryan was preparing to catch a plane home: "He needs to talk with his family first. But I'm optimistic."

### Plea for Party Unity

Boehner made a plea for unity at a closed-door meeting of House Republicans, urging members to "truly listen to each other and have an open mind about how we can come together," according to a source in the room. "It's not helpful for one group of members to say they will only vote for this candidate on the floor," Boehner said, in apparent reference to the conservative Freedom Caucus, which has about 40 members and is aligned with the small-government Tea Party movement.

Earlier this week, the Freedom Caucus endorsed Representative Daniel Webster of Florida for speaker, raising doubts Californian McCarthy could get enough votes to win on the House floor. Admitting he was shocked by

McCarthy's sudden pullout, Boehner told Republicans he intended the speaker's election to happen before the end of October. Among items immediately facing Congress is something Republicans generally are reluctant to do: raise the debt ceiling. The Treasury Department says the government will need to increase its borrowing limit by Nov 5.

"The most recent development in the speaker's race plus the compressed time frame to come to a resolution increases the chances of a policy mistake around the debt ceiling," said Libby Cantrill, an analyst for Pacific Investment Management Co. McCarthy's departure left Webster and Oversight committee chairman Jason Chaffetz of Utah in the race. But Chaffetz said on Friday that he, too, backed Ryan and would drop out if Ryan changed his mind.

Hours before McCarthy withdrew from the race Thursday, some Republicans received emails accusing McCarthy of an affair with Republican Representative Renee Ellmers of North Carolina, two lawmakers told Reuters. McCarthy has denied that any personal misdeeds were behind his decision to quit the race. Ellmers condemned "false accusations" in a statement released Friday. "As someone who has been targeted by completely false accusations and innuendo, I have been moved by the outpouring of support and prayers from my colleagues, constituents and friends. Now I will be praying for those who find it acceptable to bear false witness," Ellmers' statement said. —Reuters



**EAST HAMPSTEAD, New Hampshire:** In this Oct 7, 2015 photo, Republican presidential candidate Gov Chris Christie, talks with employees during a campaign stop at East Coast Lumber. — AP

## STUDENT KILLS ONE, WOUNDS THREE AT ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

**PHOENIX:** An 18-year-old student killed a classmate and wounded three other students when he opened fire during a confrontation on the campus of Northern Arizona University early on Friday, in the latest shooting to hit a US school, authorities said. The suspected gunman, Steven Jones, a freshman at the state university in northern Arizona, was taken into custody following the shooting, campus Police Chief Gregory Fowler said. Jones was charged with first-degree murder and three counts of aggravated assault and was ordered held on \$2 million bond at a brief court appearance.

Fowler said Jones pulled the handgun in a confrontation with several students. The university iden-

tified the student who was killed as Colin Brough. Brough was from Annapolis, Maryland, according to an online article by the Capital Gazette newspaper in Annapolis. The three injured students, identified as Nicholas Prato, Kyle Zientek and Nicholas Piring, suffered multiple gunshot wounds and were being treated at Flagstaff Medical Center, Fowler said. Their conditions were not disclosed.

The shooting occurred just hours before President Barack Obama was scheduled to visit Roseburg, Oregon, to meet privately with families of the nine people killed in a mass shooting at a community college there last week. Northern Arizona University, with a student body of about 20,000, is

located in the mountain city of Flagstaff, about 140 miles north of Phoenix, and about 80 miles south of the Grand Canyon. A university spokeswoman said Friday's incident occurred in a parking lot next to a residence hall for Greek organizations - fraternities and sororities - around 1:20 am. "We don't know the facts yet about what brought them together, or what caused the confrontation," Fowler said.

Delta Chi International Fraternity executive director Justin Sherman said the four victims were members of the fraternity but the alleged gunman was not. Jones, who did not try to flee, was arrested by university police and was cooperating with authorities, Fowler said. —Reuters



**FLAGSTAFF, Arizona:** People participate in a candlelight vigil in support of the Northern Arizona University shooting victims on Friday on the university campus. —AP