

He Wants Marco Rubio's Senate Seat ... and He Wants This

Carlos Beruff isn't the most widely known candidate aiming to replace Marco Rubio in the U.S. Senate, but comments he recently made at a candidate forum are certainly making him more well known, even outside of Florida.

According to the *Sun Sentinel* newspaper in Broward County, Beruff was asked about his position on "Muslim immigration," prompting the following reply:

"I think our immigration department is broken," he said. "And I don't think it's safe to allow anybody from the Middle East into this country ... until they fix it."

The answer resulted in the crowd of more than 200 to "erupt" into applause and cheers, the newspaper reported. Afterward, a reporter asked Beruff to clarify his remarks. It included those comments in its report:

"I think it's pretty simple. We have a system that doesn't work. When they fix that, I don't care. But right now, we have a terrorist threat that's very real. You want to ignore it, but I don't."

He said he would apply the ban to people from many countries. "Pretty much anybody that's got a terrorist organization in it, which is pretty much all the Middle East." Asked about Israel, he said the ban wouldn't apply to people from that country. "I think Israel's security measures are pretty strong," he said. "Israel is an exception."

Although the original question from the audience member was about "Muslim immigration," Beruff said in the interview that his ban would apply to Christians and Muslims. "Unless

you can tell me how you get the system to be able to do that correctly, I think it applies to everybody."

Those comments seem to align with Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump, who knocked Rubio out of the GOP presidential primary race. The senator had argued early on in the campaign that Trump's proposal to temporarily ban Muslim immigration to the U.S. was unconstitutional, adding the proposal was "wrong" and "immoral."

"It violates the Constitution. It places a religious test. And it isn't the best way to do this," he told radio host Hugh Hewitt last December. "I think a better way to address this threat is to look carefully at the processes we use to vet people, understand that there are people that no matter how often you vet them, you're not going to be able to allow in, because we lack information on that part of the world."

Beruff, who is chairman of the Florida Commission on Healthcare and Hospital Funding, is one of nine Republican candidates vying to fill Rubio's seat in the Senate. Among his primary opponents are U.S. Reps. Ron DeSantis and David Jolly and Lt. Gov. Carlos Lopez-Cantera.