

Marco Rubio Picks Up Former Competitor's Endorsement

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) is going to have a difficult time distancing himself from the party's establishment—if he even bothers to try anymore—after the latest endorsements of his presidential campaign.

Tuesday morning, he picked up the support of one of his former campaign rivals, former New York Gov. George Pataki. The endorsement was announced on FOX News Channel, during which he said:

“I took a look at all the candidates, and in my mind one person who stands out, that's Senator Marco Rubio. We need someone who is going to bring Americans together. Senator Rubio has the leadership. He has the vision. He has the intelligence from Congress to understand what it takes to defend us against radical Islam. I'm proud to endorse Senator Rubio ...

“I have enormous confidence that Marco Rubio is ready today to be President of the United States. He's provided great leadership. He did it in the state legislature in Florida. He's done it in the U.S. Senate, particularly when it comes to rebuilding our military, standing up to radical Islam. Martha, I have got to tell you, to me personally, one of the most important things is for us to understand we are all Americans. We have had a president who has divided us for political benefit. Hillary Clinton is always dividing us for her benefit. Donald Trump is dividing us so he gets the benefit. Marco Rubio is going to bring us together and make us understand we are all Americans with a common future. I'm proud to endorse him. And I don't just intend to endorse him, I'm going to do everything I can to help Senator Rubio win this election.”

It's difficult to ascertain just how much Pataki's endorsement will help Rubio. He never moved out of the low single digits in polling in any of the early voting states, although he polled best in New Hampshire, where he sat at about 2 percent just before he ended his own campaign.

It does, however, reinforce the notion that Rubio is shoring up the GOP establishment's support just ahead of the first real votes being cast in the nominating process. That view was boosted even more with the news that the Florida senator also picked up the endorsement of the former Senate Republican Whip on Tuesday.

Former U.S. Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), in a statement released by the Rubio campaign about two hours before Pataki's announcement, said:

"I am proud to endorse Marco Rubio for President. In a world in which terrorists are targeting our cities and adversaries are challenging our leadership, we need a serious president—one with sound judgment and resolve. In the Senate and on the campaign trail, Marco has shown that he has deep knowledge of the national security challenges our country faces. He has the experience and wisdom to serve as our next commander-in-chief.

"Marco understands that to keep Americans safe, American leadership is essential to our security. After eight years of disengagement under the Obama administration, our enemies are challenging us, our allies [are] questioning us and the world is becoming increasingly dangerous. As an active member of the Senate Foreign Relations and Senate Intelligence Committees, Marco has warned of the chaotic impact of President Obama's policies and fought to keep Americans safe.

"Marco understands how to restore American leadership. He will focus on the necessary priorities: rebuilding and modernizing our military including by ensuring we modernize our nuclear

deterrent, bolstering our missile defenses, and restoring our alliances. And he will not only undo the damage of the Obama years, but also build a better America: one that guards peace and stability, defends free commerce and stands for a moral foreign policy rooted in our best values. Marco will do this with strength and optimism, keeping us safe and giving us pride in our country. I trust Marco to guide our nation through these troubled times with poise, and ensure that this century is another American century.”

Like Pataki’s endorsement, Kyl’s will have little impact on grassroots support in Iowa or New Hampshire but could entice GOP establishment donors who could be looking for an alternative to former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who appears to have hit rock bottom in the polls.