

New Hampshire's 'Liberty Wing' Shifts to Ted Cruz

One of the under-reported stories leading up to Ted Cruz' win in the Iowa Republican Caucus was his ability to attract libertarian-leaning members of the GOP base.

With Rand Paul in the race, it seemed unlikely he would be able to convince New Hampshire's decidedly more libertarian "liberty wing" to follow suit. Paul dropped out of the race last week, and this week seven of the Kentucky senator's biggest Granite State supporters announced they are backing Cruz now.

State Rep. J.R. Hoell was among the first to switch. The mechanical engineer now in his third term serving New Hampshire House District 23 said:

"For years, I have worked very diligently to protect and advocate for the natural and constitutional rights of the gun owners of the state of New Hampshire. In reviewing the remaining candidates in the field, there is only one candidate that has a proven track record in defending the gun owners from further erosion of their rights, and that is Ted Cruz. I have grave concerns that other candidates would be willing to bargain our rights away and fail to support us when the time came to stand strong in defense of the second amendment. With that in mind, I stand with Gun Owners of America and agree that Cruz is our remaining best shot at electing a president to protect the rights of the gun owners of our great nation."

He was joined by the following New Hampshire GOP libertarians:

Rep. Max Abramson is serving his first term in the New Hampshire House of Representatives. Rep. Abramson represents district 20, Hampton Falls and Seabrook.

Rep. Eric Eastman is serving his first term in the New Hampshire House, representing district 28, Nashua and Ward 1.

Rep. Harold French is also serving his first term in the New Hampshire House, representing district two. He's currently a real-estate broker and auctioneer as well as a folk art sculptor.

Rep. Larry Gagne is serving his fourth term in the New Hampshire House, representing district 13. Rep. Gagne served in the United States Navy from 1961 until 1966, he is also a lifetime member of the NRA and Pro-Gun NH.

Rep. Mark McLean is serving his first time in the New Hampshire House, representing district 15. He is a member of the Deering, Fish and Game Club and senior engineer at Osram Sylvania.

"I am thrilled to announce such an outstanding group of leaders committed to cause of liberty and the Constitution," Cruz said. "They join an impressive group of Liberty Leaders for Cruz that our campaign has assembled across the country. The U.S. government is crushing liberty at nearly every turn. Our constitutional rights are under attack like never before and we must fight back."

Less than 24 hours later, on Monday morning, the Cruz camp announced the endorsement of former Rand Paul New Hampshire state chair State Sen. Kevin Avar. He said he was proud to endorse Cruz for president:

"This election is so critical for our nation and it is time we send a principled, conservative leader to the White House. Ted has fought tirelessly to protect our constitutional rights, especially our Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. I have watched him stand up to the Washington establishment in the fight against Medicaid expansion and his unyielding leadership to repeal Obamacare and give states and the American people greater control over their health care instead

of Obamacare bureaucrats and profiteers in Washington, D.C. He has been a strong defender of property rights and has fought to protect our liberties from government overreach. Because of his proven record in fighting for our men and women in the military, I have the confidence Ted is ready to be the commander in chief we need to restore America's leadership in the world."

Avard is serving his first term as the State Senator from District 12. Before being elected to the New Hampshire Senate, he served in the House from 2010-2012 and on the Franklin City Council from 2000-2002.

The Cruz campaign notes Avard is a self-employed contract cleaning manager. He has "fought to tighten government spending, lower taxes, promote local control of education, protect property rights and ensure that all government agencies are held accountable to the people."

"Kevin has spent his time serving in the New Hampshire House and Senate fighting hard for the liberties of his constituents," Cruz said. "He has fought to curb out of control spending, help promote growth and job opportunities in the Granite State and free the private sector from the harmful government regulations that are stifling businesses. I am thrilled to have Kevin's support and look forward to working together to unite conservatives behind our campaign."