

Pastor's Endorsement Signals Ted Cruz Laying Ground Work in California

The Golden State is truly a treasure for the candidates vying for the Republican presidential nomination.

One in eight of the delegates at the Republican National Convention in August will come from California. And, like South Carolina, it is winner-take-all state at the statewide and district levels.

The Republican Primary isn't until June 7, more than three months away, but U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) is already making it known he intends to be fighting at the end for the GOP nomination. Two new endorsements over the weekend show he's already made some big inroads there, as well.

Friday evening, his campaign announced the endorsement of Pastor Jack Hibbs, the founder and Senior Pastor of Calvary Chapel Chino Hills in southern California, a church of approximately 9,000 attendees. Calvary Chapel Chino Hills is being represented by Alliance Defending Freedom in a lawsuit against California's Department of Managed Healthcare because the department has forced all employers, including churches, to pay for elective abortions.

Hibbs has appeared on television and testified before the California Senate Health Committee about this issue. He previously was a proponent of California's Personal Privacy Protection Act, an initiative to combat "transgender bathroom" legislation that would require people to use restrooms, showers, and locker rooms according to their natural born gender in California government buildings, including public schools.

"Ted Cruz has a fan base in southern California—we are impressed by his courage, his common sense, and his consistent leadership," Hibbs said. "The promise of America has been under attack in our state: I and many other people of faith are joining Ted Cruz to oppose the Washington values that are bankrupting our nation and blighting our children's future. America can do better, and people of faith in California are not afraid to lead the way."

The second big endorsement came Saturday evening from the California Republican Assembly, the state's oldest and largest Republican volunteer organization. It was once hailed by Ronald Reagan as the "conscience of the Republican Party."

Cruz was endorsed by the required two-thirds of voting delegates during the first round of voting. This is the first time in 20 years that a first-round ballot has determined the official endorsement.

"Senator Cruz won the overwhelming first ballot endorsement because he is the proven, consistent conservative," CRA President Tom Hudson said. "Cruz is a hero to the conservative movement and he's right in line with what we need in California and nationwide. The conscience of the Republican Party has spoken."

The Cruz campaign's California leadership team consists of 118 leaders chaired by Ron Nehring. Former California Republican Party Chairman Michael Schroeder, former California legislator Ray Haynes, and Los Angeles investor Dan Palmer serve as co-chairs.

The campaign also announced the endorsements of Congressmen Dana Rohrabacher and Tom McClintock, Assemblymembers Shannon Grove of Bakersfield and Matthew Harper of Orange County together with former Chapman University Law School Dean John C. Eastman.