

Ted Cruz Is Targeting This Group

In a video released Monday evening, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) announced the addition of a new coalition for this campaign.

“Homeschoolers for Cruz” was one element of his campaign stop that evening in Winterset, Iowa, about 20 miles southwest of Des Moines. During that even, the Bontrager Family Singers—a core component of this new coalition—performed for the audience.

“My family and I are so grateful that the Lord has given us a godly man like Ted Cruz to run for president” said Marlin Bontrager, who with his wife, Becky, homeschool educated his 10 children on their farm near Kalona, Iowa. “As a homeschooling father of 10 and the leader in my home, it is vitally important to me that we have a president who is concerned first and foremost about religious liberty and protecting the constitution. Within that is included the rights that we need to have as parents to be able to choose what education we desire for our children. I believe that Ted Cruz has and will continue to fight for these rights, and that is why I endorse him for president.”

The whole Bontrager family loves working together as a team, both on the farm and in their travels with their family ministry and band, which got its start on bluegrass gospel radio stations, at nursing homes, and the Salvation Army soup kitchen in Iowa City. After hearing about the Gospel Express prison ministry in South Carolina and Florida, they decided to participate in a prison tour.

They now travel and perform throughout the country, often for months at a time. The Bontragers host a yearly homeschool

event that draws more than 1,500 homeschoolers per year. Marlin and Becky Bontrager are also on the Cruz campaign's leadership team in Iowa.

The new Cruz coalition represents homeschool communities across the country—now totaling nearly 6,700 members—who are dissatisfied with their local school districts, the recent implementation of Common Core, or who just wish to be more involved in their children's upbringing. Joining Bontrager on the coalition's leadership team are William Estrada and Vicki Crawford.

Estrada is a homeschool graduate from Pennsylvania who began working for the Home School Legal Defense Association in January 2004. Currently, he directs HSLDA's Federal Relations department and serves as HSLDA's federal lobbyist.

"I spend my days fighting for homeschool freedom," he said. "It's not easy because much of the education establishment is against us. So, when I was deciding whom to support for president of the United States, I evaluated each candidate by his or her willingness to consistently fight for conservative, constitutional principles, by his or her eagerness to take on the political establishment in both parties as part of those fights, and by his or her record of reducing the role of the federal government in the everyday lives of American citizens. Only one candidate truly fit the bill, and that's Ted Cruz. I endorse Ted Cruz for president because I know that he will do what he says he will do, despite strong political headwinds from D.C. insiders, and will work each day to make this country a better place for every American."

Crawford is a homeschooling mother who has served Iowa home educators for many years while chairing the Homeschool Iowa Capitol Day Committee for the Network of Iowa Christian Home Educators, the statewide organization for Christian homeschoolers and the largest homeschool group in the state. She has also worked with The FAMiLY LEADER, as well as with a

number of conservative political campaigns over the years.

“Sen. Ted Cruz has been a beacon of hope and freedom that has inspired and encouraged so many of us in our mutual desire to restore America’s promise” she said. “His courage, conviction, character and consistency are the hallmarks of a true leader who faithfully represents all the principles that founded this nation. It is a privilege to offer him my support.”

According to the HSLDA, in 2013, there were nearly 1.8 million homeschool students in the U.S. In announcing the new coalition, Cruz said the federal government does not have any role in dictating the content of curricula, and that education is a “state and local issue and parents should have direct input and control” over what their children are taught.

“The single most important thing in a child’s education is parental involvement,” he said. “If you or I disagree with what some bureaucrat in the federal Department of Education says, you can’t change that, and that is not the way it should be. I have great faith in the leaders of this coalition, and the passionate supporters of homeschooling who are uniting for this cause—to take back power from the Washington Cartel and to restore choice to the people who know our students best: parents.”