

Ted Cruz, Newt Gingrich or Someone Else ... Who Is Trump Going to Pick?

Now that Donald Trump has become the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, many are beginning to ask who his running mate might be.

The businessman has said surprisingly very little about who or what he's looking for in a potential running mate. Based on interviews on the subject, he's looking for someone with political experience who knows how to work the channels in Congress.

He wants to get his agenda accomplished, but he has said he is loathe to use executive orders, as President Obama has done. Other than that, he's been surprisingly mum on the subject.

So with the limited information available, here is a list of possible VP picks, along with the pros and cons of each, starting with some of the "Dark Horse" candidates:

Ohio Gov. John Kasich—Pros: he has extensive experience, not just in navigating the congressional legislative process, but in crafting a balanced budget in a divided government. Cons: He's only slightly less liberal than either of the Democratic presidential candidates, which would turn off much of the party base, and he has said repeatedly he doesn't want the job.

Retired Neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson—Pros: Like Trump, he brings a lot of new voters to the GOP, and he's tried to help bridge the gulf between the bombastic businessman and Christian voters. Cons: he has absolutely no experience in government, which was readily apparent on several occasions during the course of his own presidential campaign.

Former U.S. Rep. Joe Scarborough—Pros: the congressman-turned-MSNBC morning show co-host has suggested he'd like the job, he certainly has experience working in the halls of Congress, and he comes from a key swing state (Florida). Cons: he works for MSNBC, and as a result, he would have a hard time building bridges with conservatives and Christians.

Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani—Pros: he's relatively popular with the GOP establishment, has an excellent track record in crisis management, and he's already connected to Trump as a key adviser, according to some reports. Cons: he doesn't have any experience navigating the legislative process in Congress, and he would be a "home state pick" for Trump (contrary to popular belief, there is no prohibition against the president and vice president hailing from the same state).

Former U.N. Ambassador John Bolton—Pros: he's got strong foreign policy chops, and a reputation for being just as blunt as Trump, plus he's got connections with the Cruz campaign (mending fences without bringing Cruz himself onboard). Cons: little legislative experience, or political experience, outside of his work in the Foreign Service.

U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst—Pros: she's a darling to the GOP establishment who is still very popular in a crucial swing state (Iowa), and she's a woman (to help offset the misogyny complaints against Trump). Cons: she's only been in Congress for less than 18 months, and a few of her votes have upset grass-roots conservatives in her home state.

The following are some of the "popular picks" in the mainstream media:

Florida Gov. Rick Scott—Pros: he has both executive experience and business acumen, and he hails from a key swing state. Cons: he has said he doesn't want the job.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie—Pros: he's still relatively popular with the GOP establishment. Cons: he comes with a LOT of baggage, he does little to improve the ticket in swing states, and he would turn off many grass-roots conservatives and Christians in the GOP.

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio—Pros: he's also been considered one of the GOP establishment's top three choices for vice president, he has six years' experience working within the congressional legislative process (plus his experience in the Florida legislature), and he hails from a key swing state. Cons: the Gang of Eight immigration bill, and his ties to pro-amnesty advocates.

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley—Pros: until recently, she was considered one of the GOP establishment's top three choices for vice president, and she's a woman. Cons: she upset some grass-roots conservatives and Christians by endorsing Marco Rubio over Ted Cruz ahead of her state's "First in the South" primary early in the nomination process.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin—Pros: she's a woman with some fairly strong conservative credentials, and she's said she wants the job. Cons: Oklahoma isn't exactly a swing state.

And these are the potential running mates logic alone dictates he should seriously consider:

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker—Pros: he was once the front-runner for the GOP presidential nomination, he's had to work within a hostile legislative environment, he's won statewide re-election in a crucial swing state three times in less than six years, he's a tough campaigner, and he's another indirect connection to the Cruz campaign. Cons: his presidential campaign was a little reckless with its financial stewardship.

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz—Pros: he's immensely popular with many in

the grass-roots base of the party, he has a solid conservative record in the Senate, and his addition would go a long way toward solidifying the GOP before the November election. Cons: given the tone of the primary race, it's difficult to see how two Alphas like Cruz and Trump could ever work together.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions—Pros: he's also popular with many in the grass-roots base of the party, even after his endorsement of Trump, he has a long list of conservative credentials, and he can reach out to grassroots conservatives and Christians in the party who may currently be disenchanted with a Trump nomination. Cons: he doesn't put any new states in play on the Electoral College map.

Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich—Pros: he's perhaps one of the most articulate champions of modern American conservatism in politics today, and he knows about as well as anyone how to get things done on Capitol Hill. Cons: other than past lapses in personal judgment, which are well-documented, he doesn't have very many.

Among all of these, Gingrich makes the most sense, both practically and politically. He has the traits Trump says he's looking for, and he's been a strong advocate for the businessman when hostility arose with the GOP establishment.

And, this week, the *New York Times* suggested he was among those Trump was likely considering as his No. 2 on the ticket. Here's what the newspaper had to say about the possibility:

Mr. Gingrich made his name taking on President Bill Clinton during the "Republican Revolution" of 1994—the sort of fiery, insurgent operation that Mr. Trump seems to appreciate. He's also just idiosyncratic enough to handle Mr. Trump's strong personality, and has generally offered a series of positive comments about him.

He said, "It would be very hard for a patriotic citizen to

say no," and very few people pass up the chance to be heartbeat away from the presidency. The spot would give Mr. Gingrich, who is 72, what would probably be a final shot at elected office.

Myra Adams of *National Review* is now arguing that a Trump-Gingrich ticket would "make sense":

Even though the Times lists Ohio governor John Kasich as a possible Trump pick—I made the case for why a Trump-Kasich ticket would make sense back in January—that is looking less and less likely with each passing day. But even when it comes to passing legislation and pulling the levers of power, Gingrich's skillset and experience are actually better suited to helping Trump than are Kasich's. To use a military analogy: While serving on Capitol Hill, Representative Kasich was a mere one-star general. Gingrich, on the other hand, was the five-star supreme commander when, in 1994, he led the "Republican Revolution" that took back control of the House after four decades of Democratic party rule.

And:

There are other advantages. We already know that in a no-holds-barred Clinton vs. Trump general-election campaign, Trump will be bombastic as ever. Gingrich, as Trump's running mate, could be deployed to throw policy red-meat back at Hillary and Bill. Gingrich would be especially effective when the Clintons' wax eloquent about their presidential legacy. That is when Gingrich could speak real truth to power because he—more than any other person in Washington—helped shape the Clinton presidency from his perch as speaker of the House. During those volatile years (a period that culminated in Gingrich's shocking resignation), it was the Clintons vs. Gingrich in political hand-to-hand combat. Now, more than two decades later, a potential Trump-Gingrich vs. the Clinton Machine matchup has

all the makings of an epic battle.

Furthermore, if Trump remained weak on policy specifics, speaking only in broad strokes and grand gestures, Gingrich could play wing-man: Trump knows that no one is more versed in the nuances of foreign and domestic policy than Newt Gingrich.

But there are definite pitfalls to the pairing, as well:

There is an obvious downside, however, of a Trump-Gingrich ticket: With gender issues shaping up to be a yuuge factor in the general election, Newt's three marriages are sure to raise red flags that Team Clinton will joyfully exploit. Fortunately for him, since 2000, it appears that he has been happily married to the very accomplished Callista Gingrich. Still, with six marriages between Trump and Gingrich, one can only imagine all the trophy-wife jokes that would be thrown at the Republican ticket—especially given that both men are currently married to stunning women 20-plus-years their junior.

The real question is whether Newt would hinder Trump's ability to attract female voters. That's unlikely—the real onus for attracting women voters will fall on Trump. But assuming Callista plays an active role in the campaign, she could be a tremendous asset both to Gingrich and to Trump, helping to smooth some of their rougher edges.