

Ted Cruz Picks Up Critical Endorsement Ahead of Indiana Primary

During an interview Friday morning on Indianapolis radio station WIBC-AM, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence declared to host Greg Garrison he would be voting for U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) in Tuesday's presidential primary election.

"Ted Cruz is a principled conservative who's dedicated his career to advocating the Reagan agenda," Pence told Garrison. "I'm pleased to support him."

The announcement from the stalwart champion for conservative governance was hardly unanticipated. But it could provide Cruz with a much-needed boost. The Real Clear Politics polling average shows he is trailing GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump by about six points in the Hoosier State.

Pence said he "admires" the way Cruz has been willing to stand up on behalf of taxpayers by opposing runaway spending, deficits and debt. He also appreciated Cruz's leadership in opposing Obamacare in Congress.

"I also have to tell you, I'm very impressed with Ted Cruz's devotion and knowledge of the Constitution of the United States ... of the freedoms that are enshrined there in our Bill of Rights from our liberties to our Second Amendment," he added. "I appreciate his strong and unwavering stand for the sanctity of life. It's for those reasons—and just as much as in support of the principles that have always animated my public service—that I'm voting for Ted Cruz in the upcoming Republican primary."

Pence entered politics with two unsuccessful runs for Congress in 1988 and 1990, despite the endorsement of former President

Ronald Reagan. He was encouraged to run again in 2000, winning the Sixth Congressional District race six times and never with less than 60 percent of the vote.

While in Congress, he rose to the No. 3 position in the GOP leadership, Republican Conference Chairman.

When he ran for governor in 2012, Pence was unopposed in the Republican primary, and won the general election by a little more than 3 points. His first term has seen a cut in the state's income tax, repeal of the inheritance tax and a battle over religious freedom.

Of Cruz, he said the senator has "shown the courage of his convictions," noting that it's not popular in Washington, D.C., to "take on the leadership" of one's own party.

"I know that firsthand," he said. "I did it when I was there."

Cruz said he was honored to have Pence's endorsement. He said the governor has been "an important voice" for conservatives during his time in office.

"The success of Indiana shows that conservative ideas work," he said. "I look forward to working together to continue to coalesce Republicans around this campaign."