

These Leading Conservatives Are Plotting a Third-Party Campaign If Trump Wins

Last month, several leading conservatives began hinting that if Donald Trump were to win the Republican presidential nomination, there could be a grassroots third-party effort in the November general election.

In the weeks since then, as the Republican front-runner has gained momentum, the hints became rumors of meetings. Then, this week, it became an actual meeting, led by former RedState editor Erick Erickson—now of The Resurgent—from which an official statement was released, stating:

“We are a group of grassroots conservative activists from all over the country and from various backgrounds, including supporters of many of the other campaigns. We are committed to ensuring a real conservative candidate is elected. We believe that neither Hillary Clinton nor Donald Trump, a Hillary Clinton donor, is that person.

“We believe that the issue of Donald Trump is greater than an issue of party. It is an issue of morals and character that all Americans, not just those of us in the conservative movement, must confront.

“We call for a unity ticket that unites the Republican Party. If that unity ticket is unable to get 1,237 delegates prior to the convention, we recognize that it took Abraham Lincoln three ballots at the Republican convention in 1860 to become the party’s nominee and if it is good enough for Lincoln, that process should be good enough for all the candidates without threats of riots.

“We encourage all former Republican candidates not currently

supporting Trump to unite against him and encourage all candidates to hold their delegates on the first ballot.

“Lastly, we intend to keep our options open as to other avenues to oppose Donald Trump. Our multiple decades of work in the conservative movement for free markets, limited government, national defense, religious liberty, life, and marriage are about ideas, not necessarily parties.”

The group, which calls itself Conservatives Against Trump, consists of a number of big-name conservatives and Republican Party operatives who have been backing U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) for the GOP nomination. The meeting, held Thursday at the prestigious Army and Navy Club in Arlington, Va., didn't reach a consensus on what a “unity” ticket for the party would look like.

Third-party options would likely look to an alliance with the Libertarian or Constitution parties, which already have broad ballot access. And Cruz may have difficulty being the candidate at the top of any third-party ticket due to “sore loser” laws many states have implemented to prevent a candidate who loses a primary from mounting a third-party challenge in the general election.