


Kevin McCarthy elected speaker of the House following chaos on the floor



WASHINGTON- January 7, 2023 (Source )

GOP leader Kevin McCarthy beat back a conservative rebellion and won election as the 55th speaker of the House early Saturday morning, following a chaotic confrontation on the House floor between his allies and his far-right opponents and ending four days of deadlock.

The California Republican's narrow victory came on the 15th ballot — the fifth-longest speaker vote in American history by number of ballots and the longest such vote in 164 years.

McCarthy received 216 votes and all six of his remaining GOP detractors agreed to vote present, helping to lower the number of votes needed to win the coveted gavel. All 212 Democrats rallied behind their nominee, Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York.

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Becoming speaker of the House has been a career ambition for McCarthy, who served as a House staffer and a minority leader of the California Assembly in Sacramento before being elected to the House in 2006. A prolific fundraiser and backslapper, he has methodically risen through the ranks of the House Republican leadership team — chief deputy whip, whip, majority leader and GOP leader — over the past 14 years.

McCarthy, 57, is now the highest-ranking Republican in the nation, and second in line for the presidency.

Jeffries handed McCarthy the gavel shortly after 1 a.m. Saturday. In his acceptance speech, McCarthy promised that the House will be a check on President Joe Biden and his policies.

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For three days this week, a band of roughly 20 conservative hard-liners voted 11 consecutive times to block McCarthy from winning the prized gavel, even as former President Donald Trump was personally dialing up McCarthy foes to end their opposition. Some called on McCarthy to

drop out, while others placed demands on him that jeopardized his fragile GOP coalition of moderates and conservatives.

The intraparty standoff paralyzed the House of Representatives, preventing all 434 members from being sworn in, bills from being voted on and committees from being formed. Some lawmakers lamented they had lost their security clearances and could not receive classified briefings.

It marked a rocky start for the new House GOP majority.

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But a breakthrough came on Day 4 of the stalemate. After days of difficult closed-door negotiations, leaders of the far-right House Freedom Caucus extracted a suite of concessions from McCarthy. They included promised spending cuts; a package of rules changes that empowered members and watered down the speaker's power; and giving HFC members seats on Rules, Appropriations and other powerful committees.

One key concession McCarthy gave to the agitators: Reinstating a rule giving a single lawmaker the power to force a vote to oust a sitting speaker in the middle of the term, a change that almost certainly will haunt McCarthy in the months to come. Previously, McCarthy had agreed that at least five members would be needed to make that "motion to vacate" the speaker's chair.

The fresh support still didn't earn McCarthy the majority of all House members voting, which he needed to win the speaker's gavel. But it did hand him a much-needed surge of momentum as members closely watched to see whether his support would fall or rise as the impasse dragged on.

After the successful vote, an exhausted but exuberant McCarthy walked into Statuary Hall, stood before reporters and television cameras, and made sure he publicly acknowledged Donald Trump.

"I do want to especially thank President Trump," McCarthy said. "I don't think anybody should doubt his influence. He was with me from the beginning. ... He was all in."

He and his entourage then walked into the speaker's office. Above the doorway was a brand new sign: "Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy."