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# Commentary: Republicans should do all they can to help Ted Cruz



Sen. Ted Cruz speaks at the Armory restaurant in downtown Janesville, Wis., on March 24, 2016. (Anthony Wahl, AP)

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**T**here is still a lot of foot dragging and paralysis among [Republicans](#) as they contemplate supporting Texas Sen. [Ted Cruz](#). But Republicans can support Cruz and feel good about it. It is unfair to suggest that between himself and [Donald Trump](#), Cruz is the "lesser of two evils." For months now, I have been bewildered as to why Cruz and Trump are always referenced together, as if they have some similarities.

Cruz has real intellectual depth, and it's not just that he has a sufficient IQ or good educational credentialing — he's a student of government and of history. You can bet that everything from his personnel selections to his policy positions would be informed, thoroughly thought through and defensible.

So what problems does Cruz really have? He has been a gratuitous irritant to his colleagues in the Senate, and sometimes he crosses the line with personal vitriol and engages in pointless grandstanding. That's not good, but it's not disqualifying either. In fact, I think that to be effective, a little stubbornness is in order.

Some claim that Cruz is a phony; that he's really not belligerent but acts that way so he will be viewed as an outsider. If that's true, then he should get credit for having a good political antenna. Let's face it: The two candidates leading the Republican nomination race are the two who are the most distant from the so-called establishment.

A more real problem for Cruz is that some voters, particularly women, think he comes across as harsh and lecturing and feel his style and cadence are better-suited for a Southern church pulpit than the podium at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. OK, so there are certain parts of his presentation that need work in order to maximize his appeal. But by all accounts, Cruz takes criticism pretty well and would listen to his advisers.

And as Cruz tries to unite the Republicans who are opposed to Trump, the senator is seeking the support of the party regulars he has long criticized. An artful line by Jonathan Martin and Matt Flegenheimer in the New York Times piece "Ted Cruz names friends, but silence from GOP brass deafens" perfectly describes Cruz's dilemma: "The decision by so many leading Republicans to remain on the sidelines is all the more notable because it appears inversely proportional to the scale of concern about Mr. Trump."

I have no doubt the smart people at the Cruz campaign have thought long and hard about the wisdom of pursuing endorsements from "establishment Republicans." Republicans need to get over it — whatever "it" is — and they should be doing all they can for Cruz. (In full disclosure, I contributed to the Cruz campaign last July and I will do so again. I'm trying to persuade my wife to give, but so far I haven't been successful.)

Given the nature of politics, if Cruz wins Wisconsin (he was endorsed by Gov. [Scott Walker](#)), he might have friends coming out of the woodwork. At the end of the day, people like winners — and in politics, winning begets winning. Despite his flaws, Cruz doesn't have any personality problems that a winning streak wouldn't solve.

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