



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 4, 2016

Carson Accepts Apology From Cruz for Rival Campaign's Misleading Message

During a February 2 interview with co-host David Asman on FOX Business Network's *After the Bell* program, presidential candidate Dr. Ben Carson (shown) said he accepted an apology from rival candidate Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) for a misleading e-mail sent out by a Cruz campaign staffer hinting that Carson was close to ending his campaign. While accepting the apology, however, Carson also asked whether there should be "some accountability" for the action.



"As Christians, of course we accept people's apologies," Carson told Asman. "We also have to ask ourselves is this acceptable to us, the American people, or should there be some accountability?"

Carson added: "There should be some consequences for things. You don't just say 'oh, okay, sorry... okay let's move on.' The damage was done to me; it wasn't done to them."

The incident that began the controversy occurred when a Cruz campaign staffer read a CNN article reporting that Carson was flying home to Florida on February 1, rather than going directly to either New Hampshire or South Carolina where the next primaries will be held. According to a report in the *Des Moines Register*, Representative Steve King (R-Iowa), co-chair of the national Cruz campaign, interpreted that report to indicate Carson was dropping out of the presidential race. King sent a tweet at 7:20 p.m. Monday: "Carson looks like he is out. Iowans need to know before they vote. Most will go to Cruz, I hope."

Spence Rogers, Cruz's deputy Iowa state director, sent an e-mail suggesting the same to supporters in Iowa:

PRESS REPORTING CARSON TO TAKE BREAK AFTER IOWA

Dear __,

Breaking News. The press is reporting that Dr. Ben Carson is taking time off from the campaign trail after Iowa and making a big announcement next week.

Please inform any Carson caucus goers of this news and urge them to caucus for Cruz.

For Liberty,

Spence Rogers

In response to those actions, reported *USA Today*, Carson's Iowa campaign co-chair, state Representative Rob Taylor, demanded an apology from King on February 2, describing the campaign tactic as potential libel or slander and certainly "defamation of character."

After which King tweeted: "I respect Ben Carson & regret any miscommunications. Perhaps @RealBenCarson supporters r unaware of this CNN story [followed by a link to a CNN tweet noting that



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after the Iowa caucus, Carson “plans to take a break from campaigning.”]

Iowa caucusgoers at multiple precincts told the *Register* that Cruz representatives had announced that Carson was suspending his campaign.

Carson told CNN’s *The Lead With Jake Tapper* program on February 2: “I think whoever is responsible for blatant lying should be dismissed, absolutely. Unless that kind of behavior is acceptable in your campaign culture.”

The *Washington Post* reported on February 3 that Cruz, while campaigning in Goffstown, New Hampshire, that day, told reporters that his staff had simply “passed on a CNN news story that CNN broke.”

Cruz stated:

The news story said that Ben Carson was not continuing on from Iowa to New Hampshire; he was not continuing to South Carolina. He was going home to Florida. That was a news story CNN had posted. And our political team passed it on to our supporters. It was breaking news that was relevant. Now, subsequently the Carson campaign put out another statement saying that he was not, in fact, suspending his campaign. And I apologized to Ben for our team not passing on their subsequent clarification.

The *Post* reporter, Callum Borchers, referring to the e-mail that Rogers had sent to supporters in Iowa hinting that Carson’s break was likely to be a permanent one, wrote: “That’s not *exactly* how things played out, however. The Cruz camp did a little more than just relay a CNN report that Carson was going home.” (Italics in original.)

Whether the Cruz campaign was being deceptive or merely capitalizing on what was believed to be fortuitous news will probably never be known. However, recognizing the highly competitive nature of politics, it is not unreasonable to assume that campaigners will try to get away with whatever works.

Speaking with CNN’s *The Lead With Jake Tapper* on February 2, Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus said that he would not take sides in a dispute between Cruz and Carson:

Look, for me to get in the middle of litigating these things that are going on behind the scenes, that we find out about the next day — I think it was explained by one of the campaigns as to what happened, I think you take them at their word for it and we move onto the next state.

Photo of Ben Carson: Gage Skidmore

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