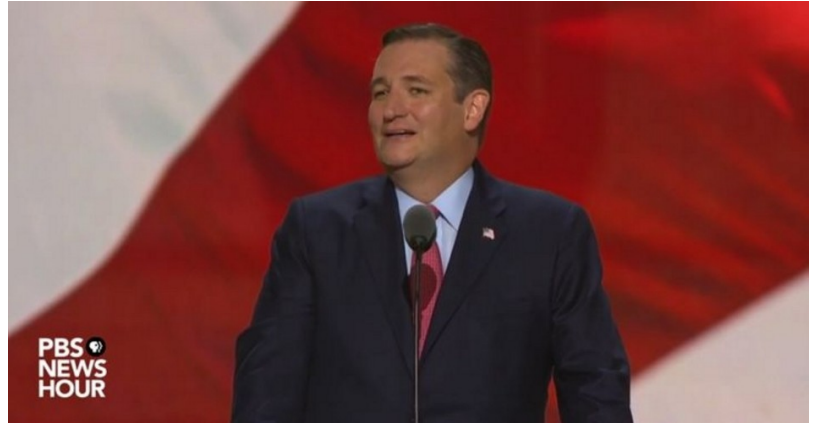




Written by [Steve Byas](#) on July 21, 2016

Senator Ted Cruz Booed at Republican Convention

CLEVELAND — After a tough, and sometimes bitter struggle, the man who had won the nomination of the Republican Party asked his chief rival to speak to the Republican National Convention. The rival praised the platform of the Republican Party, attacked the platform of the Democrats as “liberal,” and expressed concern over the “erosion of freedom” and the “invasion of private rights.” He ended his speech with the words, “We must go forth from here, united,” but did not actually utter the words that he endorsed the party’s nominee. When he finished, the mood in the convention hall shifted from gloom to hope for victory in the fall campaign.



That was 1976. President Gerald Ford, following his own acceptance speech, asked former California Governor Ronald Reagan to “say a few words” to the convention. Reagan and his wife, Nancy, were in the gallery, but made their way to the platform.

Reagan took the opportunity to praise the platform as one with “no pastel shades,” but rather one with “bold pastel colors.” When he ended his impromptu speech, the convention ended in an upbeat mood.

In contrast, last night, at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, many of Donald Trump’s delegates felt betrayed by his chief rival’s failure to say he endorsed Trump, and Senator Ted Cruz’s speech was met with a chorus of boos throughout the convention hall.

Listening to many of Trump’s supporters, it was clear that the Cruz speech was not received in the same way as was the Reagan speech in 1976.

Cruz spoke of many of the same themes of “freedom” and the intrusion of big government, and the like, that were not much different from the Reagan speech of 1976. He even identified himself with Trump’s positions of trade and immigration, specifically calling for the building of a wall between the United States and Mexico (although he stopped short of predicting that Mexico would pay for it). Cruz praised the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, which he said should inspire Americans who are concerned about our own erosion of national sovereignty through trade deals.

Of course, the Trump-Cruz contest ended more bitterly than even the Ford-Reagan contest did in 1976. While Reagan and Ford fought mostly over political differences, the Trump-Cruz contest ended with personal comments about Cruz’s wife and father, and Cruz’s exceptionally strong reaction.

Cruz did begin his speech congratulating Trump for winning the nomination, and urged the television audience watching to vote for Republicans “up and down” the ticket, as long as the candidates followed the Constitution of the United States.

In 1964, when Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona won the Republican nomination at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, his chief rival, New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, was also booed. But historians



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have determined that most of that booing came from the gallery, and not from delegates on the convention floor.

Rockefeller was speaking on behalf of a platform plank that would have condemned political “extremism.” It was widely understood that the plank was intended as an effort to associate the Goldwater campaign with fascism, communism, naziism, and the Ku Klux Klan. He even threw the conservative John Birch Society in with those groups as another supposed example of “extremism.” Although The John Birch Society did not then and does not today endorse candidates, many of the Goldwater delegates were members of the organization.

When the booing started, Rockefeller took full advantage (no doubt anticipating booing) by saying he “smelled fascism” in the hall. It was not a positive for the Goldwater campaign.

After the Wednesday night speech by Cruz, Republican delegates expressed concern that the booing of Ted Cruz would be the story of the evening. Certainly the mainstream media will look for negative stories to come out of the convention, and this was certainly another such opportunity for them.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, speaking soon after Cruz, made an effort to smoothe things over by telling the delegates that they had misunderstood Cruz’s speech — that the Texas senator had, in effect, endorsed Trump by saying they should vote Republicans up and down the ticket.

Today’s session of the convention, in which Trump will deliver the traditional “acceptance speech,” (although probably not in a traditional way), will offer an opportunity for a different story, with some predicting more explanations of Cruz’s words being offered to the delegates.



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