

OPINION

Cruz cruising in Iowa

I live in Canyon Lake but have been here in Iowa frequently because this is my wonderful mother-in-law's home.

At Thanksgiving, Iowans were saying about Ted Cruz: "Who is this guy?"

At Christmas, Iowans were saying about Ted Cruz: "He is our guy."

My in-laws are Hawkeyes so Sandy and I have been here often. We are observing how the Republican primary in Iowa has changed during that time.

Mr. Cruz is doing well in a state which is very different from his home. For example, Iowa is purple; the legislature is split. Also, it has a high county density with 99 counties in 56,000 square miles while our ratio is 254 in 270,000.

That density is important because counties are the heart of Iowa contests and campaigning is difficult. Each county needs a cadre.

Local Iowa news programs on television are filled with political commercials and the newspapers even announce when candidates will be appearing at a nearby diner. Iowa is consumed by its caucus.

But back to Mr. Cruz. In October he could have gone to a Halloween party in Des Moines and not needed a mask because no one would have known

who he was.

And then he let loose. He organized his campaign. He received the endorsement of Rep. Steve King (R-IA). So what, you say. Well, it seems that Mr. King is a very big shot in Iowa. Meanwhile the Iowa Republican senators have not come out for anyone. That means the most influential elected official in the state, who has declared, has chosen Cruz.

There are more. Popular conservatives in the state including Steve Deace and Bob VanderPlaats have sided with Cruz.

Doug Gross, a respected analyst, and the person who ran Mitt Romney's 2008 presidential campaign, on the Iowa Press news program, predicted a Cruz victory in Iowa. Gross was graphic in his reasoning. He saw Cruz as knocking off, one by one, his competitors by saying he (Cruz) was, "The wolf by the side of the road consuming stragglers."

A Quinnipiac University (yes I know you have probably not heard of the school, but its research is rock solid) survey found that Cruz has advanced in the last four months and turned, as one person who reported it said, most of his competitors into road kill.

So now, what is the most important issue way up here in the land of origin of winter Texans? For Republican voters it is terrorism. Evangelical principles come next.

And who are many of the people leading the Cruz crusade? Pastors. His message is the same as theirs.

Now back to the numbers. Ted Cruz has a campaign chairman in every one of the 99 counties. In some he has co-chairs. The other candidates don't. He has his stuff together.

What we see in Iowa is the perfect collaboration of ideals' popularity and political acumen.

It has been said that in Washington, DC, Ted Cruz is disliked by Democrats and hated by Republicans! Perhaps so. But here in the heartland, I can feel the love.

**Star Carey,
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