

Ohio Republican Party chair unsure who he'll vote for

<http://www.10tv.com/article/ohio-republican-party-chair-unsure-who-hell-vote>

By: Tylar Bacome, WBNS CBS 10 Columbus, Saturday, October 8



Ohio Republican Party leader responds to latest Trump comments, and talks about supporting the presidential candidate.

COLUMBUS - The head of Ohio's Republican Party is speaking out about the comments of Donald Trump recorded saying in a conversation with Access Hollywood, Billy Bush in 2005. Trump's comments have been described as sexist, misogynistic and crude as he speaks about women using graphic, lewd terms.

10TV asked Matt Borges who he's voting for and if he thinks Trump can win Ohio and where he sees the future of the Republican Party.

Here's a partial transcript of that interview:

Tylar Bacomé: "You're voting for Donald Trump?"

Matt Borges: "I don't know."

TB: "Really?"

MB: "Well I don't know because right now there's still at least the possibility and there's been a lot of speculation that he may in fact step aside. Now I know that he's said that he won't. I think a lot of that will hinge on tomorrow night's debate."

TB: "Is that tape the end of him?"

MB: "Well it's hard to know that right now. Look there are infinite numbers of ways I would have rather spent my Saturday. 30 days before an election that we absolutely should be winning. We should have been pressing a message. We should have been contacting voters. We should have been executing our early voting program today. Instead, I've spent most of my day answering questions about something that is really indefensible. And I'm not going to try to defend it. Certainly, if there's any more that comes out and I think there's been some more even today, um how can you look forward in this manner."

TB: "You've stopped just short of saying Donald Trump is unfit to be President. Have you ever walked that line that closely?"

MB: "In a Presidential race?"

TB: "Yes."

MB: "No, I mean I absolutely thought the world of Mitt Romney. I thought the world of Senator McCain. I worked for President Bush. I worked for President Bush's father. Senator McCain, Mitt Romney. These were high-quality individuals who I've always been proud to have the opportunity to work with and serve. In some capacity, that's what we are going to have to continue to look for."

TB: "Can he win Ohio still despite this?"

MB: "It's so hard to know that right now Tylar so we're going to have to see how things transpire over the next couple of days. He had a lead here. He was winning here. I don't know that he would've won the 270 electoral votes but Ohio was prepared to hand him the 18 electoral votes. Tomorrow night he's going to have to have a command performance. He's going to have to, we have to understand that this campaign is on life support."

After debate, Ohio GOP chairman unsure whether he'll vote for Trump

<http://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/politics/elections/2016/10/10/indecision-ohio-gop-chair-wife-watch-debate-struggle-choice/91844208/>

By: Chrissie Thompson, Cincinnati Enquirer, Monday, October 10

Saturday was the worst day in Matt Borges' career in politics.

The Ohio GOP chairman says he did three dozen interviews, condemning Donald Trump's [2005 comments about his behavior toward women](#), [but not quite pulling his support](#).

That was his party's nominee who had said those things. His party. The one whose national chairmanship Borges is expected to seek this fall. The one whose true ideals he believes in. The one that had a shot at defeating Democrat Hillary Clinton and now is stuck with – this.

At home on Sunday, as he joins his wife on an oversize sectional to watch the debate, the peace of mind about Trump is no better. Kate Borges started backing Republican politicians when she married Matt in 2010, having been sold on the notion that "Republicans stay out of your business." But she had never backed Trump. Last week, she [made headlines](#) when Matt acknowledged she wouldn't let him put a Trump sign in their yard.

Still, she doesn't trust Democrat Hillary Clinton. And she believes in the kind of Republicans she has seen in Ohio.

As state party chairman, Matt Borges is trying to figure out how to do the right thing, personally, morally. Kate Borges is trying to figure out the right way to vote.

Right at the debate's start, the latest issue – the breaking point for some Republicans – comes up. Did Trump kiss women and grab their genitals without consent?

Kate leans forward, her mouth tight, her eyes wide. "It's locker room talk," Trump insists. A hint of a wry smile forms. "No, I have not" acted in the way described, Trump says. Kate chuckles ruefully.

One of Matt and Kate's dogs vomits.

"Trump was so bad, he made the dog throw up," Kate calls, dashing for the paper towels. You can't make this stuff up.

It's not like Kate found the latest Trump comments surprising. She's actually surprised people have reacted with so much shock and outrage. When she first heard the comments, she thought: "OK, one more thing that I think is terrible that no one else is going to care about." She met Trump once, at a fundraiser with Matt. He didn't smell. (She expected him to reek of hair-styling products.) He complimented her looks. He fawned over Matt all night long. He told one of the attendees he had a great reputation; Matt and Kate knew Trump had never heard of the guy.

He didn't win her over.

Lucy, Kate and Matt's 5-year-old daughter, is autistic. Trump has mocked people with disabilities.

"When he was making fun of the reporter, that kind of, to me, was – wha-chaaw! – the ax," Kate says. After that, "I don't know what he could say. I'll listen ... but, jeez almighty, you can only change your spots so much, right? ...

"I don't think he respects women. I don't think he respects anybody."

Trump is lashing out at Clinton now, saying she attacked women who accused Bill Clinton of "abusive" behavior. Kate buries her head in her hands.

Matt's face has alternated between muted disgust and intense focus. Strategically, he knows Trump is having a better debate than he had two weeks ago. Trump is finally bringing up topics to use against Clinton, not just answering the questions posed. He's attacking the moderators, who are part of the "bias" Matt says Republicans have to fight. And Clinton is merely answering the questions. At times, she seems ruffled, Kate and Matt agree.

Trump focuses on Clinton's emails and her server. Matt leans back on the couch, scrolling through text messages from other GOP state chairpersons. Many are rooting for Trump to pull it together. "Stay on this, DJT. Don't leave it. Say nothing else but emails," one person texts. "Implosion," someone else says.

After the first exchange about Trump's 2005 remarks, "he does seem to kinda have come to life here. In a good way," Matt says. "This is the Donald Trump that beat us."

By "us," of course, Matt means the campaign of his friend and ally John Kasich, the Ohio governor who lost to Trump in the GOP presidential primary. Kasich then refused to endorse Trump and released an I-told-you-so statement when the 2005 tape was unearthed.

Matt is back on his phone. "Do you think he's helping himself?" texts Beth Hansen, who managed John Kasich's presidential campaign.

"Yes," Matt responds.

And here's where it gets tougher. Matt is starting to think Trump is winning the debate. He thinks Clinton is performing terribly.

A lot of Republicans were waiting to make a decision on Trump until after the debate. This is a debate, Matt notes, [that will rally Trump's base](#). But it won't win over the Kates of the world. "I still think it's on life support," Matt says.

So what to do? Matt has never been a huge Trump fan. But he wants Hillary Clinton to lose. "I'm never ever, ever, ever going to say that I'm for Hillary. It's just not going to happen," Matt says. Even though he's having "obvious misgivings," he says, "I don't want her to win. And we should have been able to win this year. We should have been able to beat her."



The lawn of Matt and Kate Borges' home is conspicuously missing a Donald Trump yard sign.(Eric George for The Enquirer) (Photo: Eric George for The Enquirer)

So if Trump has a zero percent chance of beating Clinton, and someone else has a 1 percent chance? Matt wants that someone else.

But it's not that easy.

For the GOP to replace Trump, he'd have to be willing to withdraw. He has vowed to keep fighting, but Matt has seen him listen to criticism when he's down in the polls. He might step down, Matt says, "if it looks like he's going to lose." But will the rest of the GOP support that? The texts Matt has gotten from state chairpersons are leaning in Trump's favor.

"Why aren't we standing with Donald Trump?" some ask.

The public answer from the Republican National Committee has been silence.

"Right now, I think there needs to be more guidance" publicly, Matt says. "I don't think anyone knows what's going on."

Even if the RNC set a direction, there are his [state committee members to consider](#). Matt serves at their pleasure. He hasn't heard much support for Trump from them this weekend, but he has heard some. In any case, he knows it's up to him. He's their leader.

The debate is ending. Trump uses his tell-it-like-it-is persona refreshingly: to compliment Clinton for being a fighter.

"That Donald Trump is so much more appealing," Matt says. He would actually be able to win over new voters. But it's not the Trump who is running for president.

Say GOP voters continue to back Trump, despite behavior party leaders view as despicable. Might the party leaders – might Matt – need to set an example? Might they need to say they don't support this kind of a man, even if the voters do?

Maybe, Matt says.

"This is the Boomer generation going out with a whimper," Borges says of GOP voters' support for Trump. "They've now held on to it with a death grip for the last 25 years. ... If we're going to advance the party forward, we need a forward-thinking vision. And a lot of this ugliness and divisiveness, from the worst presidential campaign that I've ever seen, that's not going to help us grow the party."

It's 11:15, and it hits Matt and Kate at the same time. Lucy is asleep upstairs.

At the end of the day, Kate and Matt are both undecided voters, trying to decide how to cast a vote they can stand by when Lucy is old enough to understand.

"That's when my stomach starts doing this again," Kate says, twisting her hands. "Is it really: if you don't vote for Donald, then it's a vote for Hillary? ... It doesn't seem like there's a good option. There has to be an option that, in 10 years, when I look at Lucy in the face, I feel glad."



Kate and Matt Borges, with Jagger, one of their dogs. (Eric George for The Enquirer) (Photo: Eric George for The Enquirer)

“That’s what it is, too,” Matt chimes in. “I’ve got to think about what I want to remember having done, like you said, 10 years from now.”

For Matt, it’s more than just whether to cast a vote for Trump. Kate has no problem leaving a spot blank – she says she didn’t even vote until she married Matt. As a Republican who has devoted his life to the electoral process, for Matt, “the not voting part is something I may regret.

“And I’m not voting for [Gary Legalize-Heroin Johnson](#) or [Jill I-Landed-in-Cincinnati-Even-Though-My-Event-Was-In-Bexley](#) Stein. Or Hillary Clinton. I’m not voting for Hillary Clinton. She’s anathema to everything I’ve ever thought about, believed, fought for, worked on over the past 20 years.

“That really only leaves me with one choice,” he says. “And I just don’t know right now.”

The Donald Trump whisperer: Here's what Ohio GOP chief Matt Borges has been telling the presidential hopeful

http://www.cleveland.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/10/the_donald_trump_whisperer_her.html#incart_m-rpt-1

By: Henry Gomez, Cleveland.com, Wednesday, October 12

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Matt Borges has become something of a Donald Trump whisperer.

When the Ohio Republican Party chairman calls, the GOP nominee for president listens.

[Trump toned down his attacks on John Kasich](#), who challenged him in the primaries, after Borges told him it would be political suicide to pick on Ohio's popular governor. And when Borges believes the New York businessman has gone too far, he doesn't mince words.

The two speak frequently by telephone and when Trump campaigns in the Buckeye State. But the contact has intensified in recent days, as Trump's campaign reels from the damaging revelation of a 2005 video that featured him making lewd comments about women.

Borges had just hung up with Trump when cleveland.com reached the chairman by telephone Wednesday morning. He shared details of their three discussions since Sunday.

What did they talk about Wednesday?

"I told him we have a path to carry Ohio, so let's just stick together," Borges said.

"He said, 'OK, I love ya.'"

What is that path?

"I don't want to share internal numbers with you," Borges told cleveland.com, acknowledging [a new Baldwin Wallace University poll](#) Wednesday that showed Democrat Hillary Clinton leading Trump by 9 percentage points in a four-way race in Ohio. "But there's another poll that I am aware of that demonstrates his [second] debate performance had a huge impact. And of course that's what he wants to hear, so I hope that positive reinforcement helps him."

Borges declined to offer more specifics about the internal polling.

Is Borges mad that Trump is trashing Republicans for rescinding endorsements (Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio falls into this category) or for refusing to campaign with him?

"I made a point to him so that he understood there's a wide discrepancy between where he is and where Senator Portman is in these polls" – Portman leads Democratic challenger Ted Strickland by double digits – "and he needs those voters, so the last thing he should be doing is throwing shade at them," Borges said.

"And he agreed with me."

Borges also noted with satisfaction that, though Trump has attacked Sen. John McCain and House Speaker Paul Ryan, he has not publicly slammed Portman for pulling his support.

Is Trump mad that Borges has given Ohio Republicans the OK to unendorse him?

"I have talked to him on the phone 15 to 20 times," Borges said. "It's not like we're close, OK? But in terms of what I think I know of him, sure, I think there was concern that he was going to fly off the handle with me. But he has never once done that with me. He has always been even-keeled, even tempered with me. He always seems to kind of like me."

How long did Wednesday morning's phone call last?

Seven minutes, Borges said.

Anything else interesting from his recent conversations with Trump?

Borges said he spoke to Trump on Monday about [claims and speculation on social media](#) that there could be more audio or video footage of Trump using offensive language.

"He's told me he never used the 'N' word in his life," Borges said. "I'm going to take him at his word, and if it turns out that he lied to me, I will be profoundly disappointed in him."

Borges has been noncommittal in recent days about whether he will vote for Trump. So where does the Ohio GOP chairman stand after Wednesday's call with the nominee?

"There is no way I will ever vote for Hillary," Borges said. "I'm going to vote on Election Day. And if everything he's pledged to me turns out to be true and we run this campaign the way we need to run it for the last four weeks, of course I'll vote for our nominee."

What does Trump's team say about his conversations with Borges?

A spokesman for Trump's Ohio campaign did not immediately respond to questions.

How does all of this Trump whispering figure into speculation that Borges will run for Republican National Committee chairman after the November election?

Borges has not been shy about [airing his concerns about Trump](#) or about advertising his efforts to rein in the mogul. And [Politico reported Wednesday](#) that he emailed all RNC members to argue against punishing Republican officeholders and candidates who have split with Trump.

You can – and probably should – interpret all of this as a sign Borges is interested. But on Wednesday he only would say that he is focused on the general election and would not discuss the RNC job until Nov. 9.

That's the day after Election Day.