

# Anti-Trump forces lose bid to change rules [www.myajc.com](http://www.myajc.com)

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After months of threats and legal theorizing, the movement to deny Donald Trump the Republican nomination for president died late Thursday evening, as an alliance of GOP stalwarts and Trump supporters outlasted the remnants of resistance in a 14-hour, marathon session of the convention rules committee.

In a series of three votes, the committee that sets the rules for next week's four-day convention here eliminated the persistent argument, made primarily among social conservatives hostile to the unorthodox winner of this year's primaries, that delegates would be free to follow their consciences and ignore their pledges to support the candidates who won their states' primaries and caucuses.

Trump, in other words.

Victory wasn't what anti-Trump forces were shooting for, but they also failed to win a quarter of the votes on the 112-member panel that would have allowed them to carry their battle to the convention floor on Monday.

With 28 votes, anti-Trump forces would have been allowed to generate a minority report that would have placed a "conscience clause" before the full convention.

Throughout the day, the same alliance of Trump supporters and party regulars beat back attempts to strip Reince Priebus, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, of much of his powers, and to strengthen the clout of social conservatives by awarding delegates in future national conventions to state parties with high Republican turnout.

One proposal would have rewarded states that close their primaries or caucuses to non-Republicans. "When we don't have closed primaries, when we don't have some system — whether it's a closed primary or a convention or something that draws a distinction between us and the other people, those who are Republicans and those who are not — we lose," said U.S. Sen. Mike Lee of Utah, one of the "conscience" Republicans on the rules committee.

In essence, those who didn't want to see next week's four-day convention become a contested event played rope-a-dope, allowing the opposition, which included many supporters of U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz' candidacy, to exhaust itself amendment after amendment.

In the 13th hour, pro-Trump forces went on the offensive. Bass-voiced Jordan Ross of Nevada, dressed in his constable's uniform, introduced the first of two amendments, which read thusly: "Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prohibit the binding of delegates...."

"The caucuses in my constituency voted overwhelmingly for Donald Trump. I have no intention of returning to those people I rely on in office by telling them I had a change of heart and am shredding their votes," Ross said.

Several others spoke in favor of the proposal, but no one spoke in opposition. The motion passed 87 to 12 — well short of the 28 votes needed to continue the fight.

The anti-Trump forces were then allowed to take their best shot. Kendal Unruh of Colorado, one of the leaders of the rebellion, introduced the following proposal:

“...[T]he right of each delegate and alternate delegate to vote their conscience on all matters shall not be infringed or impaired by any state party rule, state law, ruling by the national convention chair or any other method.”

It lost on a voice vote.

A final vote, directed at another section of convention rules, reinforced the right of the Republican party to bind delegates to the results of state primaries and caucuses. Senator Lee spoke against it.

“It’s important for presidential nominees to win two votes. First to win the primaries, and then to win over the delegates. I hope that whoever our nominee is going to be this time will, in fact, win over the delegates. But rules like this are not going to help that,” Lee said. “This problem, this angst, as we will see in a few days, isn’t going to go away just because we paper over it with rules.”

On Friday morning, Paul Manafort, top aide to Trump, sent out the following victory message via Twitter: “Anti-Trump people get crushed at Rules Committee. It was never in doubt: Convention will honor will of people & nominate [Trump].”

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