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Sununu: Bolduc a 'Conspiracy Theorist Extremist;' Will Make it Harder for GOP to Win

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Gov. Chris Sununu said Friday his endorsement in the U.S. Senate GOP primary is a possibility. But endorsing Don Bolduc is not.

"He's not a serious candidate, he's really not," Sununu said of the retired general and current frontrunner. "If he were the nominee, I have no doubt we would have a much harder time trying to win that seat back. So I don't take him seriously as a candidate. I don't think most people do."

During an interview on WGIR radio, Sununu said he might endorse a GOP Senate primary candidate, "and maybe in the First CD or maybe some local house and Senate races, too. Everything's still very much on the table in terms of endorsement," Sununu said. The governor has already endorsed Keene Mayor George Hansel in the Second Congressional District primary.

But he won't be backing Bolduc, who he described as a "conspiracy-theory extremist."

Sununu compared Bolduc to far-right GOP candidates whose campaigns were boosted by millions of dollars in Democrat-funded campaign ads to help them defeat more viable Republicans. In Illinois and Michigan, those candidates are now the GOP nominees.

"Democrats are actually using Democrat donations to fund the candidacies of these conspiracy-theory extremists across the country," Sununu said. "If I were a Democrat, I'd be seriously angry about it, frankly, because those folks could still potentially win. Democrats could be helping give the seat, not to a more reasonable candidate on the Republican side, but to folks that carry this kind of really bizarre extremism."

Sununu, who spent a year teasing a U.S. Senate bid of his own before retreating to a run for re-election, has been the target of attacks from Bolduc since the general's failed bid in the 2020 U.S. Senate primary against Corky Messner. Bolduc has called Sununu a "Chinese Communist sympathizer" and claimed the Sununu family was connected to Arab terrorists.

During a recent U.S. Senate primary debate on the Jack Heath radio show, Bolduc offered a semi-apology. (<https://nhjournal.com/bolduc-confronted-over-controversial-statements-in-radio-debate/>).

"Listen, he's on the 'Chinese Communist friendly' list as published by our State Department and as briefed by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo," Bolduc said of Sununu. "That's a fact. Now, I've also said that perhaps calling him a Chinese Communist sympathizer was a bit of an exaggeration."

Bolduc senior advisor Rick Wiley took Sununu's criticisms in stride.

"General Bolduc's message is working. He's meeting the voters where they are and connecting with them because he's endured most of the hardships they have," Wiley told NHJournal. "He understands what they've gone through and can relate to their pain, and that comes from his life of service."

“Don Bolduc is the only candidate inspiring voters in this primary, and his common sense message has broad appeal because the hardships people have gone through aren’t partisan, but they are personal.”

Granite State Republican insiders tell NHJournal the governor’s brutal attacks on Bolduc mean it is all but certain he will endorse in the race. “How can you say the front-runner isn’t acceptable and then sit on the sidelines and watch him win?” one NHGOP insider said.

So, would Sununu back Bolduc if he becomes the party’s nominee to take on Sen. Maggie Hassan, another target of the governor’s attacks?

“As he always has, the Governor plans to support the republican ticket in November,” said Sununu senior advisor Paul Collins.

But Bolduc’s problems don’t end with Sununu. Former Donald Trump campaign manager and current confidant Corey Lewandowski has repeatedly declared Bolduc a non-starter for the GOP. Trump and Sununu have a contentious relationship and rarely see eye to eye. Asked if the two could be on the same page for a change, Lewandowski told NHJournal, “Anything is possible.”

“But one thing is for sure: Don Boldoc will not be the U.S. Senator from New Hampshire,” Lewandowski added.

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