



Fact-checking Ted Cruz on 'Meet the Press'

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Sen. Ted Cruz is using this week's pivotal Indiana primary to make a last stand of sorts against Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump.

Cruz trails Trump by more than 400 delegates and is unable to win a majority of delegates prior to the GOP convention. Cruz's best hope is to keep Trump from hitting that delegate mark himself, and Indiana presents a favorable battleground.

In interviews that aired Sunday on NBC's *Meet the Press* and ABC's *This Week*, Cruz dodged questions about what happens if he loses in Indiana.

But he said the choice should be simple for Indiana Republican voters.

Cruz told NBC's Chuck Todd that Trump's "only economic agenda is imposing massive taxes on the American people with a 40 percent tax hike of a giant tariff." He also accused Trump of being a clone of Democratic presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton.

"I believe if the Republican Party nominates Donald Trump we will lose to Hillary, because when we offer Democrat-lite, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton on the ballot, they support the same social policy, they support the same economic policy, Cruz said.

"Donald can't criticize Hillary Clinton on Planned Parenthood, because he agrees with her. They both say it's terrific and -- and that it should keep taxpayer funding," he added.

We at PolitiFact decided to fact-check Cruz's claims about Trump's economic plan and Trump's position on Planned Parenthood.

Trump's economic agenda

Cruz said on *Meet the Press* that his top priority will be "bringing jobs back to America, bringing manufacturing jobs back to Indiana, raising wages across this country."

He then said Trump's "only economic agenda is imposing massive taxes on the American people with a 40 percent tax hike of a giant tariff. That would send us into a recession. It would drive jobs overseas. It would kill small businesses."

Cruz's claim about Trump's economic agenda rates Half True.

First, Trump has outlined a few other economic proposals beyond tariffs like declaring China a currency manipulator, upholding intellectual property law, ending China's export subsidies and lowering the corporate tax rate to incentivize American companies to stay at home. He's also suggested renegotiating or pulling out the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and stopping the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

But Cruz has a point that Trump has talked at length about imposing tariffs on imported goods as a remedy for trade imbalances and lost American jobs. He's specified a 35 percent tariff on some goods coming from Mexico and 45 percent tax on all Chinese products, which he said in the last Republican debate is a "threat" that he'd only enact it if "they don't follow the rules."

Trump's tariff proposals have been called "uneducated" and "worrisome" and many economists (though not all) say they would hurt Americans. However, Cruz may be overstating the impact.

"The biggest losers would be U.S. consumers and companies," said Scott Lincicome, an international trade law and policy expert at the libertarian Cato Institute.

Tariffs at the level Trump is suggesting would cause prices of cheap products like air conditioners and intermediate goods like auto parts to soar and could kill millions of U.S. jobs. But as some of the costs would be absorbed by Chinese and Mexican exporters, a 40 percent tariff doesn't translate directly into a 40 percent tax hike.

"You would have to do some analysis to determine how much of a tax hike it is, but it is probably significantly less than 40 percent," said Joel Trachtman, a trade law specialist at the University of Maryland.

Trump and Planned Parenthood

Cruz also said that Trump and Hillary Clinton have the same position when it comes to Planned Parenthood. "They both say it's terrific and -- and that it should keep taxpayer funding," Cruz claimed.

That rates Mostly False.

There's no question about Clinton's support for Planned Parenthood. Throughout the campaign, she has frequently attacked Republicans' pledge to defund the organization. And Planned Parenthood endorsed Clinton in July, its first-ever presidential primary endorsement.

"I am not only against defunding Planned Parenthood, but I would like to see Planned Parenthood even get more funding," Clinton told Fusion in January.

Trump's position is more nuanced.

Regarding abortion generally, Trump has several times raised both Republicans' and Democrats' eyebrows by changing position. Today, Trump says he's anti-abortion.

As it pertains to Planned Parenthood, Trump has been fairly consistent since October 2015. He has praised some of the work the organization does but not with respect to abortion services.

Trump has said Congress should stop providing the group with federal funding full stop as long as they provide abortions.

"Planned Parenthood does a lot of good jobs, a really good job in a lot of different areas. But not on abortion. So I'm not going to fund it if it's doing the abortion. I am not going to fund it." Trump said in February.

"Millions of women have been helped by Planned Parenthood," Trump said in March. "But we're not going to allow, and we're not going to fund, as long as you have the abortion going on at Planned Parenthood, and we understand that and I've said it loud and clear."