



## **Ted Cruz endorses Eric Burlison, Eric Schmitt for Congress during event in Springfield**

Susan Szuch and Galen Bacharier

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About 200 people packed into the event space at Ocean Zen restaurant on Saturday night to hear Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz speak alongside Missouri state Sen. Eric Burlison and Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt at an event organized by the political action committee Truth and Courage.

"The eyes of the country are on the state of Missouri, and Missouri is blessed to not have just one, but two, fantastic candidates for the House and Senate. I'm here today supporting my friends Eric Burlison and Eric Schmitt," Cruz said.

Burlison is running to represent Missouri's 7th Congressional District in the House of Representatives and Schmitt is running for Senate.

Being backed by Cruz was "one of our proudest endorsements we have," according to Cassidy Bowen, communications director for Burlison.

"Ted Cruz has been one of the most successful and fearless fighters for the conservative movement, and he said Eric Burlison is the guy who I trust the most to join me in Washington, D.C. to carry the torch," Bowen said.

Missouri state Rep. Ben Baker also shared his endorsement as he emceed the event.

The crowd was engaged and energetic despite the heat in the room and outside, with many alternating between fanning themselves and taking photos or video. Cheers were heard when topics like conservatism, the Second Amendment and border control were discussed, and jeers met mentions of socialism, President Joe Biden and masking.

Cruz emphasized how Burlison and Schmitt's actions spoke to their devotion to conservatism: "Don't look to their words; look to their records."

Cruz called Burlison a warrior for Second Amendment rights, a warrior for life and a warrior against taxes and spending.

He also praised Schmitt for his lawsuits against President Joe Biden's administration: "Eric (Schmitt) wakes up every day, he showers and shaves, he sues Joe Biden, and he goes to bed. And the next day, he does it all over again."

Burlison likened his relationship and work with Schmitt to a famous sports duo.

"Sometimes I feel like some of the bills I pass, my work with the attorney general, it's almost like we're the Chicago Bulls — I'm Scottie Pippen and (Schmitt is) Michael Jordan," Burlison said.

Both Burlison and Schmitt also shared how they have been committed to their work as conservatives.

"When I ran for office, I made a commitment to you: I said I wouldn't be any old Republican, I would be a conservative Republican," Burlison said. "And I'm proud to say — it's not just me saying it — my voting record objectively is ranked the most conservative voting record in Jefferson City."

Schmitt highlighted the lawsuits he's filed as well as opinions he's issued.

"After Roe v. Wade, six minutes later, I signed that opinion and Missouri became the first state in the country to" ban abortion, Schmitt said among cheers.

During the evening, Cruz also commended Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley for his response to University of California-Berkley law professor Khiara Bridges during the July 12 Senate Committee hearing on abortion.

Super PAC backed by prominent GOP operatives & donors

Truth and Courage was created in late 2021, according to documents filed with the Federal Elections Commission. The super PAC has since raised over \$4.4 million and spent more than \$2.5 million, and has \$1.87 million on hand as of July.

The PAC's two largest expenditures are \$400,000-plus payments to the Missouri-based Reagan Investments LLC, for media production and travel. Reagan Investments LLC's registered agent is James C. Thomas III, according to documents filed with the Missouri Secretary of State.

Thomas, a prominent Kansas City attorney, was one party involved in a \$350,000 fine by the FEC in 2017 after an investigation into multiple Missouri political committees that he managed. The commission alleged that groups illegally funneled money to a PAC that was heavily involved in Missouri's 2012 U.S. Senate race; Thomas and the groups did not admit liability in the settlement with the FEC.

According to its July spending report, the PAC also paid over \$15,000 in June to Axiom Strategies, a political consulting group run by Kansas City's Jeff Roe. Schmitt and Burlison are both among Axiom's clients.

Among Truth and Courage's most recent prominent donors is Frank Suryan Jr., the chairman and CEO of the California-based real estate company Lyon Living; and Kyle Stallings and Joseph Agresti, oil and gas investment and car dealership executives, respectively, from Texas.

Jeff Yass, a Philadelphia options trader, GOP mega-donor and board member for the Cato Institute, a libertarian D.C. think tank founded by Charles Koch, gave Truth and Courage \$1 million in March. Yass has also contributed \$3 million this year to Club for Growth Action, a prominent PAC backing Republican candidates around the country, including Burlison.