



• NEWS

## Who Did — and Did Not — Attend El Paso County GOP’s Marjorie Taylor Greene Fundraiser Stirs Up Right-Wing Activists

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Last Friday, Aug. 6, the El Paso County GOP hosted its annual fundraising event in Colorado Springs, a Lincoln Day Dinner featuring their top-billed speaker, [controversial](#) and [embattled](#) U. S. Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA).

El Paso County, the seat of Colorado conservatism with the [largest population of Republican voters](#) in the state, has become the epicenter of Republican infighting over

the past several years, bitterly embroiling grassroots and establishment factions in power struggles over [representation](#), [policy](#), and [elections of executive positions](#).

Normally, the event would attract GOP luminaries from all over the state, the featured speaker would have mainstream appeal, and hatchets would be buried for the night.

Not this year, apparently.

Because the event was closed to the press, dispatches from grassroots attendees provide the only accounting of what transpired, and — more importantly — who was in attendance and who “snubbed” the affair.

Establishment Republicans were largely absent, presumably to evade the political liability of appearing in proximity or in support of a Congresswoman who has been [censured](#), [removed from her congressional committee assignments](#), [associated with QAnon](#), and accused of [making anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim statements](#).

Absences were noted, tallied, and publicized over last [Friday's](#) and [Monday's](#) episodes of The Chuck & Julie Show, a political podcast featuring Chuck Bonniwell, a grassroots member of the Colorado GOP state executive committee, and his wife, former KDVR journalist Julie Hayden.

With the help of callers and guests, which included state Rep. Dave Williams (R-El Paso County), and Ben Nicholas and Peg Cage from the GOP state central committee, a thorough listing of establishment truanxies was compiled and broadcast out to the grassroots audience.

Below is a list of some of those missing from the El Paso County Lincoln Day Dinner featuring Marjorie Taylor Greene, according to the hosts and callers on the Chuck & Julie Show:

**Kristi Burton Brown, Chairwoman of the Colorado GOP:**

**BONNIWELL:** So this year, they invited Marjorie Taylor Greene. Well, the reaction was very interesting. The leadership of the Republican Party in KBB [Kristi Burton Brown] said that she wasn't going to go because she –  
**HAYDEN:** –was busy! **BONNIWELL:** And then she apparently gave a dicta to staff saying, “You can't go.”  
**HAYDEN:** [riffing with Bonniwell] “Because you're all busy too, by the way.” **BONNIWELL:** They're all busy, too, except Marilyn Harris, the secretary, the brave one in leadership, said, “No. I'm going.” And she did.

**BONNIWELL:** And the trouble is, you can always get the establishment in Colorado to follow along. Well, so they've all boycotted the event, including Kristi Burton Brown [who] can't make it down for the hour and a half drive.

**BONNIWELL:** the fact that Kristi Burton Brown isn't here tells you everything you need to know.

**DAVE WILLIAMS:** To be perfectly fair to Kristi, she did send a message to Vickie notifying her that she did have a conflicting engagement, but that she was otherwise happy that the party here is making money and fundraising dollars. And, you know, you can you can make your own judgments on that. But I'll tell you right now, that's a hell of a lot more than than what what any other person who's not showing up has done.

**CALLER CHARLENE:** When Kristi Burton Brown says that she can't be there — and I know everybody has their

reasons and, you know, being out of the state is definitely a reason — but it reminds me of when they couldn't show up for Trump. It was like they all had their reasons. But it was just coincidental that so many of them had the reasons on the same day. ... And so, anyway, it's a snub. It's a snub to the conservatives of the party. It's a snub to the Patriots in Colorado. ... Kristi Burton Brown gets no credit for anything. She is uni-party. She needs to be recalled.

Priscilla Rahn, Vice Chair of the Colorado GOP:

**BEN NICHOLAS:** I was so, so happy to see that our state Secretary, our state party secretary, Marilyn Harris, was there. She is a fighter. I am so proud of her. But I don't know what is going on with Priscilla [Rahn], our vice chair.

**BONNIWELL:** I'll give Priscilla a pass. And I like her a lot. And she was under enormous pressure, I assume, from Kristi Burton Brown.

U.S. Representative Doug Lamborn (R-Colorado Springs):

**DAVE WILLIAMS:** And Lamborn, yeah, he's not showing up to tonight's event. He was apparently out of town, too. But to my understanding, he was asked if he could purchase a table or otherwise support the party. And from what I was told, he chose not to do neither. And that's that's up to him. You can certainly do that. But, you know, I couldn't be here, but I chose to support the grassroots.

**HAYDEN:** Representative Lamborn, who represents this part of the state, also couldn't make it, although all the people who couldn't make it tonight are going to what Chuck was referring to as "The Lamborn Swamp Fest," a fundraiser coming up next week for him. ... You know that

**Lamborn, he's going to be the first one with his hand out to Vickie Tonkins — right? — looking for volunteers, looking for people to help him if he runs for reelection. I mean, he's going to be calling the El Paso County Republicans saying, "Hey, I need you, I need you." And what they should do is say, "Stick it!, Where were you when we needed you?" Like you said, if he couldn't be here, he could at least [have] bought a ticket. ... But Lamborn is like, "Nope, can't do that." And again, I just I find it atrocious.**

**Heidi Ganahl, CU Regent At-Large, and presumptive GOP candidate for statewide office:**

**BONNIWELL: [defending Greene against claims that she's a racist] Oh, but they'll take a line out of there and say, "Oh, you see? [Greene] said — she mentioned a monkey, I think, there, about something and therefore it must be a racist statement!". I mean, it's so pathetic. But I can't tell you, it was so much fun being there with patriotic — there were no Democrats, no RINOs, SWINOs — no SWINOs there. And it was — I didn't see Heidi Ganahl.**

**Phil Anschutz, Colorado Republican, media mogul, and donor:**

**HAYDEN: Well, you know, Dave, [the El Paso County Lincoln Day Dinner] is being attacked all over the place, notably in news media owned by Phil Anschutz, known for his grassroots support. No, that's a sarcastic joke.**

**Jon Caldara, president of the Independence Institute, a conservative think tank,:**

**BONNIWELL: I didn't see Jon Caldara there, from the Independence Institute.**

**CO Rep. Dave Williams (R-Colorado Springs):**

**BONNIWELL:** We've got one of our favorite people, Dave Williams, on line three. He's from El Paso County. He is not boycotting an event he can't be here for, because he already had a preexisting commitment. But in his case, he's telling the truth. **HAYDEN:** [to Williams] Let's go ahead and let you clarify that, too, because ... you cannot be here because, you know, you don't have to just wash your hair or something. Today you've got another appointment. But you would be here if you could be, right? **DAVE WILLIAMS:** When me and Vickie went ahead and were looking for speakers, we put out many invitations to various Republican officials that lined up with the grassroots and the conservatives. And Marjorie Taylor Greene was really quick to get back to us. But she had a stipulation. She said August 6 — you know, that was the time frame. And I had already had a prior commitment to go to another legislative conference for grassroots leaders in Florida. So right now, I'm I'm at the event calling into you guys and wishing I could be there, but otherwise supporting you and Vicki and everyone that came ...

CO Rep. Bob Gardner (R-Colorado Springs), CO Rep. Larry Liston (R-Colorado Springs), and Eli Bremer, GOP candidate for U.S. Senate

**BONNIWELL:** All of the effort by the establishment in El Paso County, which includes the [inaudible] and the — oh, God! — all the other ones, you know, the Larry Listons, the Bob Gardners, the Doug Lamborns, the Bremers — yes, Eli Bremer — they all boycotted it, figuring, “Well, we'll break them! They won't be able to raise any money!” And that dinner is usually how counties have most of their money, their budget for the year. Well, instead of breaking it, they made it the most popular event ever!

Lois Landraf, former Colorado Legislator:

**DAVE WILLIAMS:** I wish I could be there. And it is unfortunate. I mean, I'll let everyone who couldn't make it or didn't want to show up speak for themselves. But, you know, one person I'll definitely pick on is former Representative Lois Landgraf. I mean, she very publicly and very loudly told everyone, "I'm not showing up!" And she's not showing up and she's deliberately boycotting. And I can tell you that that's not an uncommon feeling, that's not an uncommon sentiment from among the establishment Republicans, not only in her county, but in other places, too. So that's fine. We don't we don't need them. We don't need their help.

Interspersed with naming and mostly deriding the Republicans who were notably absent, Bonniwell, Hayden, and their guests also discussed who was notably *present* at the El Paso County GOP fundraiser. They defended Greene's character and summarized the content and tone of Greene's speech to those in attendance.

The following is a sampling of quotes addressing those topics from both episodes of the Chuck & Julie Show.

**HAYDEN** And here's what I would say to all of those cowards. You are running from this myth put out by the fake news media, right? I got to admit, I wasn't sure what to expect with Marjorie Taylor Greene, but I'm going to tell you what: she was articulate, extremely bright, funny, witty, warm.

**HAYDEN:** I mean, she was a great speaker. She didn't say anything kooky. She didn't say anything nutty. What she did tell you is what's going on and how some of the inside stuff works in Washington, D.C., and how she is working with Mark Meadows and some other members of the Freedom Caucus to put a stop to it and to hold people accountable.

**HAYDEN:** They all know — if you were to ask them, they all know that Marjorie Taylor Greene did not really say that climate change is caused by alien spaceships or whatever it is they say she said. Everybody knows that, but they just make it up and then wimpy, scared, weak-kneed Republicans, who really actually don't want to work for you, they just want to work for the swamp and I think that article called them called SWINOS—. ... They jump on and say, "Well, she's too controversial!" But she didn't say a single thing that I don't think anyone listening to this or frankly, anyone in the United States wouldn't say, "Well, that makes sense!"

**HAYDEN:** Our friend Ben Nicholas — "fighting Ben Nicholas" — was there as well.

**BONNIWELL:** You could really tell from the people who were there. I mean, Randy Corcoran was there.

**HAYDEN:** Tom Tancredo! **BONNIWELL:** Tom Tancredo was there. Sue Moore was there. I mean, you really had — you kind of go, "Okay, which ones are really the grass roots and which ones are the establishment?" Well, you either showed up or you didn't.

**BEN NICHOLAS** Well, as our movement is progressing, you can tell that we are gaining momentum throughout the state, here, because more and more grassroots people are standing out and refusing to go along with the establishment Republican side of our party.