Since I started reporting on the environmental aspects of the House Speaker race, I might as well continue. After I last wrote on Friday, following Scalise's surprise withdrawal, another candidate tossed his hat in the ring, Austin Scott from Georgia. As an aside, I can't help but wonder: what is the ring, and why is it a target for airborne headwear? But I digress — though from a topic that is nearly as lightweight: Austin Scott's four-hour quest for the speakership.

There are certain subatomic particles that last for such a short amount of time that they can be observed only by the particles they release when they decay. So too for Austin Scott, who announced for Speaker on Friday morning, caused the release of eighty votes in his favor later Friday, and vanished before he could even really be interviewed about his candidacy.

I can't resist another digression. The shortest unit of political time was previously thought to be the *scaramucci*, equal to its namesake's ten-day stint as communications director in the Trump White House. Politics watchers will now have to recalibrate and replace the *scaramucci* with the *austinscott*, which is less than 2% as long.

Still, it was fun while it lasted.

Scott was actually an interesting candidate. His lifetime LCV score was comparable to Steve Scalise's, but that's somewhat misleading. What is interesting about Scott's scores is that they were extremely low until 2017 but then rose steadily to 17% in 2021, a high score for a House Republican. In 2022, however, like many Republicans, his score was zero.

To be sure, the scores require interpretation. In 2021, Scott's three scored votes weren't directly environmental (a hate crimes bill and certifying election results in Pennsylvania and Arizona). In 2020, his pro-environmental votes were for the Great American Outdoors Act and for Great Lakes restoration, and in 2019 he voted to reject an amendment that would have restricted federal protection for endangered whales. Admittedly, this voting record looks good only by comparison to others like Jim Jordan, the Republican caucus's preferred choice.

Scott didn't seem to be a climate change denier. In a hearing on an agriculture spending bill, he said that climate has a profound impact on the agriculture industry and natural resources. In another hearing, he said: "Many of the recommendations focus on reducing America's dependence on fossil fuels and not enough on

emissions, in other words, if we could move from diesel to natural gas, that certainly is a benefit to the environment. The focus on emissions would be more productive than the focus on simply eliminating fossil fuels.” Not exactly what we’d want to hear, but again, much better than Jim Jordan.

It appeared for those few brief hours of his political life that in environmental terms, Scott might be better than Kevin McCarthy would have been, and he would have definitely been an improvement over Jordan. And Scott had the additional benefit of being willing to uphold the results of democratic elections. That, alas, may have torpedoed his chances.

By the time this post goes live, I have no idea if Jordan will still be a candidate, but I’m tired of rewriting these things every few hours. If Jordan goes down, I suppose he’ll be replaced by Marjorie Taylor Greene of “Jewish space laser” fame. (Fact Check: She didn’t actually use the phrase “Jewish space laser” but she did suggest that the Rothschilds, Jerry Brown, and PG&E were responsible for starting deadly California wildfires with a beam of light from space.) I wouldn’t have the heart to post about her anyway. So I’m going to go ahead and post this Monday morning, come whatever may.