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POLITICS

Trump is making House



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A new travel ban targeting Muslims.

BY [LISA MASCARO](#), [MARY CLARE JALONICK](#) AND [JILL COLVIN](#)

Updated 2:24 PM UTC, March 19, 2024

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican [Donald Trump](#) has launched his general election campaign not merely rewriting the history of the [Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack](#), but positioning the violent siege and its failed attempt to overturn the 2020 election as a cornerstone of his [bid to return to the White House](#).

At a weekend [rally in Ohio](#), his first as the presumed Republican Party presidential nominee, Trump stood onstage, his hand raised in salute to the brim of his red MAGA hat, as a recorded chorus of prisoners in jail for their roles in the Jan. 6 attack [sang the national anthem](#).

An announcer asked the crowd to please rise “for the horribly and unfairly treated January 6th hostages.” And people did, and sang along.

“They were unbelievable patriots,” Trump said as the recording ended.

Having previously vowed to [pardon the rioters](#), he promised to help them “the first day we get into office.”

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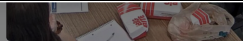
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Man charged with planting pipe bombs before the Jan. 6 riot argues Trump's mass pardons apply to him



Trump isn't immune from civil claims his Jan. 6 rally speech incited riot, judge says

In heaping praise on the rioters, Trump is shifting blame for his own role in the run-up to the [bloody mob siege](#) and asking voters to absolve hundreds of them — and himself — over the deadliest attack on a seat of American power in 200 years.

At the same time, Trump's allies are installing 2020 election-deniers [to the Republican National Committee](#), further institutionalizing the lies that spurred the violence. That raises red flags about next year, when Congress will again be called upon to certify the vote.

And they're not alone. Republicans in Congress are embarking on [a re-investigation](#) of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack that seeks to shield Trump of wrongdoing while lawmakers are showcasing side theories about why thousands of his supporters descended on Capitol Hill in what became a [brutal scene](#) of hand-to-hand combat with police.

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President Donald Trump arrives to speak at a rally in Washington, on Jan. 6, 2021. Trump is making the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol a cornerstone of his bid to return to the White House. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, File) [Read More](#)

Taken together, it’s what those who study authoritarian regimes warn is a classic case of what’s called consolidation — where the state apparatus is being transformed around a singular figure, in this case Trump.

Jason Stanley, a philosophy professor at Yale, said in history the question comes up over and over again: How could people not have taken an authoritarian leader at his word about what was going to happen?

“Listen to Trump,” he said.

“When a coup against the democratic regime happens and it’s not punished, that is a very strong indicator of the end of the rule of law and the victory of that authoritarian movement,” said Stanley, the author of “How Fascism Works.”

“Americans have a hard time understanding that what happens in most of the world can happen here, too.”

Trump is facing a [four-count federal indictment](#) over Jan. 6 — charges he conspired to defraud Americans over his 2020 election defeat and obstructed the official proceeding in Congress to certify the vote for Joe Biden. As the Supreme Court considers Trump’s claim that he should be [immune from prosecution](#), it’s unclear when the case will go to trial, raising the possibility it might not be resolved until after the election.

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The initial House Select Committee report on the "Jan. 6 conspiracy" to overturn the 2020 election accused supporters from across the country of plotting to stop his

multi-part report to stop his



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Supporters of President Donald Trump riot at the Capitol in Washington, on Jan. 6, 2021. (AP Photo/Julio Read More

More than 1,200 people have been charged in the riot, including far-right Oath Keepers and Proud Boys extremists, with hundreds convicted. Trump lawyer [Rudy Giuliani](#) and attorney [John Eastman](#) face legal challenges over their work on the 2020 election.

Trump's campaign, in response to an inquiry from The Associated Press, pointed to the work from the House investigators who are trying to show inconsistencies in the Select Committee's probe and its star witness [Cassidy Hutchinson](#), a former aide who had a front-row seat to inner workings at the White House.

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Trump's national press secretary Karoline Leavitt said the Justice Department has spent more time prosecuting the former president and "targeting Americans for peacefully protesting on January 6th" than other criminals.

"President Trump will restore justice for all Americans who have been unfairly treated," she said.

Even as Republicans worry privately that Trump risks turning off women and independent voters he would need in the general election rematch against Biden, top aides have said there is only so much they can do as

[Trump is going to be](#)

Over the weekend, T
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Supporters of President Donald Trump gather for a rally on Jan. 6, 2021, at the Ellipse near the White House in Washington. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana, File) [Read More](#)

Many Republicans are willfully ignoring the issue, especially in Congress, despite lawmakers having run for their lives and taken shelter as the rioters stormed the Senate chamber and ransacked Capitol offices.

Senators who sharply criticized Trump after the Jan. 6 attack, like Republican Leader Mitch McConnell and South Dakota’s John Thune, the No. 2 Senate Republican, have now reluctantly endorsed him.

Others are still declining to endorse Trump, including Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, who voted to convict Trump in his second impeachment on the charge of inciting the insurrection for the Jan. 6 attack. But the holdouts are in the minority.

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