

Trump, aides embrace fascist Republican candidates

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At a press briefing last week, President Donald Trump offered public encouragement to supporters of QAnon, an online fascistic conspiracy theory group that justifies violence against Trump's political opponents, including leaders of the Democratic Party such as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and former presidential nominee Hillary Clinton.

Trump went out of his way to praise supporters of the online trend. He claimed not to know very much about QAnon—although he has retweeted QAnon-linked material at least 200 times, according to Media Matters, a site that monitors right-wing media and internet activity.

“I’ve heard these are people that love our country,” he said during a White House news briefing on the coronavirus. “I don’t know much about the movement other than I understand they like me very much, which I appreciate. But I don’t know much about the movement.”

Warming to the subject, Trump continued, “These are people that don’t like seeing what’s going on in places like Portland and places like Chicago and other cities and states.”

It was after a reporter gave details about QAnon in a follow-up question—noting that QAnon claims Trump is fighting a Satanic cult of child sex traffickers and cannibals linked to the Democratic Party—that the US president went beyond his previous arms-length posture.

“Well, I haven’t heard that, but is that supposed to be a bad thing or a good thing?” he replied. “If I can help save the world from problems, I’m willing to do it. I’m willing to put myself out there.”

Online message boards linked to QAnon immediately lit up, hailing Trump’s reply as an endorsement of their demented and bigoted ravings.

At least one supporter of QAnon recently won a Republican primary in Georgia for a seat in the House of Representatives. The candidate, Marjorie Taylor Greene, is expected to win the general election in Georgia’s heavily Republican 14th Congressional District and become the first open QAnon backer in Congress.

Another supporter of the trend won the Republican primary for US Senate in Oregon, although Democratic Senator Jeff Merkley is a heavy favorite for reelection there. A total of 19 Republican congressional candidates have been linked to QAnon, although only two, Greene and Lauren Boebert in Colorado’s 3rd Congressional District, are considered likely to win seats.

Another ultra-right candidate, Laura Loomer, won the Republican nomination for Congress in Florida’s 21st Congressional District, a heavily Democratic district currently held by Representative Lois Frankel.

The main significance of Loomer’s victory was that Trump is a resident of that district, which includes his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, and he likely voted for her in the primary, for which he requested a mail ballot. Trump effusively welcomed her candidacy. “Great going Laura. You have a great chance against a Pelosi puppet!” he tweeted on the night Loomer won the nomination.

Loomer is an ultra-Zionist and vitriolic Islamophobe, who has described Islam as “a cancer on society” and called for “a non-Islamic form of Uber or Lyft because I never want to support another Islamic immigrant driver.” She has been banned from most social media platforms because of her strident anti-Islamic bigotry.

In 2017, she retweeted a magazine headline about 2,000 migrants drowning in the Mediterranean and added an applause emoji and the words, “Good. Here’s

to 2,000 more.” She has also dismissed the terrorist attack in New Zealand, in which a fascist gunman murdered 50 Muslim worshippers at two mosques, declaring, “Nobody cares about Christchurch.”

Neither anti-immigrant racism nor fascistic conspiracy theories are too much for the Republican Party. Loomer was endorsed in the primary by Representative Matt Gaetz of Florida and Paul Gosar of Arizona, and Greene had the support of House Freedom Caucus leaders such as Andy Biggs of Arizona and Jim Jordan of Ohio.

According to a report in the *Guardian*, Greene had significant financial support from Mark Meadows, a former leader of the House Freedom Caucus who is now White House chief of staff, and other high-ranking Republican campaign donors.

The Your Voice Counts Political Action Committee, linked to Meadows, gave \$2,000 to Greene’s campaign in March. The RightWomen PAC, whose executive director is Meadows’s wife Debbie, gave \$17,500 to help Greene in her runoff victory against conservative Republican John Cowan. The House Freedom Fund spent more than \$30,000 to support Greene and raised nearly \$90,000 more from donors for her campaign, the *Guardian* wrote.

This explains why, when asked on several Sunday morning television interview programs about Trump’s comments embracing QAnon, Meadows declined to condemn the conspiracy theory outlet, but instead attacked journalists for raising the subject. In response to a question from ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos, Meadows flatly lied, saying of QAnon, “I had to Google it to figure out what it is.”

Other donors to Greene included Barb Van Andel-Gaby, chairman of the board at the Heritage Foundation, a leading right-wing think tank in Washington, and a member of the family that founded Amway, along with the late Richard DeVos, father of Dick DeVos, the billionaire husband of Trump’s secretary of education.

The *Guardian* cited several other billionaires who had given money to Greene, including at least one who is Jewish, even though Greene traffics regularly in anti-Semitic attacks on liberal Jewish billionaire George Soros.

Supporters of QAnon have been arrested for real-world crimes that were politically motivated by

materials posted on social media, including at least one would-be assassin of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden. The army reservist who attempted to kill Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in July was also linked to QAnon.

According to a report Friday in the *New York Times*, the most open connection between the Republican Party and the fascist trend has developed in Texas, where the state Republican Party has launched a new campaign slogan, “We Are the Storm.” This is a direct overture to QAnon supporters, who frequently use that slogan to describe what they anticipate will be a military coup led by Trump that will end in the round-up and mass execution of his Democratic Party opponents.



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