

# Trump peddles fascist lies and conspiracy theories at Arizona rally

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Former President Donald Trump held his first rally of the 2022 election year in Arizona Saturday night, devoting the bulk of his interminable 90-minute speech to bemoaning the result of the 2020 presidential election and complaining that it had been stolen from him, despite the fact the Republicans were in control of the election machinery in nearly all the closely contested “battleground” states.

Both the content of his remarks, their vitriolic and ignorant character, and the lack of any logic or coherence are familiar to the point of staleness, or nausea. Some two-dozen more such events are planned throughout the 2022 election campaign, with the next in Conroe, Texas, north of Houston on January 29.

Trump boasted about the size of the crowd, claiming that the number of people coming to see him at the rally in rural Arizona on January 16, 2022, proved that he could not have lost a national election on November 3, 2020. He presented himself as the victim of alleged crimes committed by Democrats and Republicans who would not acknowledge his great achievements.

He denounced the “fake news” media and its description of his claims of a stolen election as “the big lie,” concluding, with typical crudeness, “The big lie is a lot of bullshit. That’s what it is.”

“If an election were held today, we would trounce them so badly in a landslide in every way, just as we really did on November 3,” Trump said. “We trounced them. If we had an honest press, the election would have been much different.”

Trump actually lost the election by a near-landslide, more than seven million votes, and Biden won as many votes in the Electoral College in 2020 as Trump won in 2016. Five states, Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, swung from the Republicans to the Democrats.

There were a handful of new pieces of political poison in the overall dosage. Trump claimed that the Democrats were distributing vaccines and antiviral medicines for treating COVID-19 on a racially discriminatory basis, favoring minorities over whites.

“The left is now rationing lifesaving therapeutics based on race, discriminating against and denigrating, just denigrating, white people to determine who lives and who dies,” he said. “If you’re white, you don’t get the vaccine, or if you’re white,

you don’t get therapeutics.”

This is an open appeal to the racist views of fascists and white supremacists. It seizes on an aspect of a policy, limited to New York state, which includes race as one of a number of risk factors in prioritizing distribution of therapies for particularly endangered COVID patients. Neither Democrats nor Republicans support the mobilization of the social resources necessary to abolish any form of medical rationing.

Significantly, Trump made no significant mention of vaccines, which were actually developed under his administration, after it provided huge financial incentives for the pharmaceutical companies to accelerate their research and production. The last time Trump addressed an audience and touted the efficacy of vaccines—he has had three shots himself—some of the rabid anti-vaxxers and COVID deniers in the crowd began booing. He evidently wanted to avoid a repetition of that incident.

He denounced White House coronavirus adviser Anthony Fauci as a “king,” prompting the crowd to begin the “lock him up” chant that is usual at Trump rallies. He denounced mask mandates, claiming that the Democrats were “just running roughshod all over this country.”

As he began to do at the end of last year, Trump more openly embraced those arrested for crimes committed in the January 6, 2021, attack on Congress, portraying them as political prisoners. “Partisan Democrats have celebrated their indefinite detention without trial,” he claimed.

He forecast a sweeping Republican victory in the 2022 congressional and gubernatorial elections, endorsing a number of the Republican politicians who had preceded him to the rally stage.

These included State Senator Wendy Rogers, a close associate of white supremacist Nick Fuentes, who has proposed more than 50 bills to change Arizona’s election laws to ensure Republican predominance. She called for the state government to rescind its certification of Biden’s 2020 victory. Biden carried the state by 10,500 ballots, winning its 11 electoral votes.

Three US representatives from Arizona addressed the rally, Debbie Lesko, Andy Biggs and Paul Gosar. Biggs and Gosar have been identified as active participants in the preparation of

the January 6 attack. Another speaker was Kari Lake, a former local news anchor who is among a half-dozen candidates seeking the Republican gubernatorial nomination. At the rally, Trump delivered his personal endorsement of her campaign.

Of the six states that have been the focus of the bogus “stop the steal” campaign, which was the pretext for the fascist attack on the US Capitol, Republicans controlled the entire state government in two, Arizona and Georgia, the office of chief election administrator and secretary of state, in Nevada, and the state legislatures and most county-level vote counting in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Trump did not produce a shred of evidence of either voter fraud or manipulation of the vote counting by election officials, or convince mainly Republican-appointed judges in some 60 lawsuits that anything untoward had occurred. He has been reduced to denouncing the Republican election officials, no matter how right wing, as RINOs (Republicans in name only).

It was evident from the Arizona rally that Trump aims to make the “stolen election” of 2020 the central focus of his intervention in the 2022 congressional and gubernatorial elections, as well as of his preparations for entering the 2024 presidential election. If the Republicans win control of Congress in November, which in bourgeois political circles is considered likely, Trump is laying the basis to push for the impeachment of Biden on the grounds that his election victory was fraudulent.

Even more provocative is his open embrace of those who attacked Capitol Hill on January 6 in a last-ditch effort to prevent congressional certification of Trump’s election defeat by blocking the official tabulation of Electoral College votes. This occasion—a purely ceremonial one for more than 200 years—became the focal point of a fascist coup attempt.

This political reality was underscored by the indictment last week of 11 members of the fascist Oath Keepers militia group, including its leader Stewart Rhodes, on charges of seditious conspiracy. The Department of Justice (DOJ) prosecutors charged that the 11 men conspired among themselves and with others to overthrow the American government by blocking the peaceful transfer of power from Trump to Biden.

The indictment and arrest of Rhodes were particularly significant because he was the first person charged in connection with the events of January 6 who never entered the Capitol and therefore took no immediate part in the violence there. His was a purely directing role, communicating through encrypted messaging with Oath Keepers who acted as assault teams overrunning police lines and breaching the Capitol’s defenses.

Rhodes is the logical next step up the ladder from the more than 700 on-site participants to those behind the scenes who gave the orders and provided the resources. It remains to be seen how far up the chain of command the DOJ is willing to go, given that the Democratic Party and the Biden administration are committed to protecting the Republican Party as an

institution from the consequences of any full investigation into January 6.

Meanwhile efforts by Republican state and local officials to mount pro-Trump “investigations” in the battleground states continue, mainly in the courts. A Wisconsin judge kept alive, at least temporarily, an effort to compel the top state election official, Meagan Wolfe, to give closed-door testimony to Michael Gableman, a Republican-appointed investigator.

Gableman is a former Wisconsin Supreme Court justice named by the Republican-controlled state legislature as a special counsel to review the 2020 election, even though several previous audits and reports have confirmed Biden’s victory by a margin of 20,000 votes, giving him the state’s 10 votes in the Electoral College.

Wolfe, administrator of the Wisconsin Elections Commission, has said she is willing to testify about the election, but only in public, not in secret. Her office is challenging the validity of the subpoena issued by Gableman.

Similar subpoenas have gone out to election officials in the state’s five largest cities—a clear indication of the political nature of the investigation, since Biden rolled up large majorities in these heavily Democratic areas. Gableman has demanded that the mayors of Madison and Green Bay be jailed if they refuse to submit to his authority.

In Pennsylvania, inspection of voting machines in heavily Republican Fulton County was temporarily blocked Friday by an appeal to the state Supreme Court by attorneys for Democratic Governor Tom Wolf. The inspection is based on the bizarre claims of one-time Trump lawyer Sidney Powell that machine software was manipulated by Venezuela and/or China to switch votes from Trump to Biden.

The Wolf administration was not opposed to the inspection, but sought disclosure of the identity of the inspectors and to have a state-designated voting machine expert present to record and document the results.

In Michigan, the state’s attorney general, Democrat Dana Nessel, said she has asked federal prosecutors to investigate a group of Republicans, including state co-chair Meshawn Maddock and national committeewoman Kathy Berden, who submitted a certificate falsely claiming they were the state’s presidential electors. Biden won the state by a margin of 150,000 votes, but the fake document sought to award Michigan’s 16 votes in the Electoral College to Trump.



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