

Trump-endorsed gubernatorial candidate

Kari Lake calls for Republican election officials to be incarcerated at fascist Turning Point USA rally

Jacob Crosse
20 December 2022

At the fascistic America Fest rally, held December 17-20 in Phoenix, Arizona, defeated Arizona Republican gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake demanded that Republican election officials in Maricopa County be incarcerated for refusing to back her campaign to overturn the election.

Emulating ex-president Donald Trump, Lake said in her speech Sunday that Maricopa County was “ground zero for botched sham elections” and that the two leading election officials in Maricopa County, both Republicans, were “magicians” who created ballots out of thin air.

“These people,” Lake hissed to the crowd of a few thousand right-wing students, aspiring political operatives and fascist militia members, “are crooks. They need to be locked up.”

Lake was one of several far-right Republican politicians who spoke at the event, organized by the Charlie Kirk-run Turning Point USA. Turning Point is a far-right college-oriented organization that frequently hosts Proud Boy and Christian nationalist speakers on university campuses under the guise of “free speech.”

The Trump-endorsed Lake, who made her fealty to Trump and his lie of the stolen election the centerpiece of her gubernatorial campaign, lost to current Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs (Democratic) by over 17,000 votes.

Despite her clear defeat, Lake, following in Trump’s footsteps, has refused to concede the race, more than a month after Hobbs was declared the winner in preliminary tallies and more than two weeks after Hobbs, serving as Secretary of State, along with outgoing Republican governor Doug Ducey, Republican attorney general Mark Brnovich and Chief Justice Robert Burtinel, a Ducey appointee,

certified the results on December 5.

Leaving no doubt that her call for incarceration was not an “off the cuff” remark but the result of a definite, predetermined strategy to oppose the November election results if she lost, no matter the vote totals, Lake added, “And I think they knew that when I got into office, that was precisely what we were going to do with them. Right?”

Lake used most of her speech to attack the election officials and harp on “election integrity.” She accused Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Gates, a lifelong Republican, of corrupting the elections “in broad daylight.”

Referring to Gates and any other Republicans who did not back her campaign to overturn the vote, Lake said, “They corrupted our elections on November 8 ... they have built a house of cards ... We are going to burn that [house] to the ground.”

Lake’s violent threats against election officials were made to a room full of far-right operatives, including neo-Nazis and actual murderers.

Independent left-wing journalist Vishal P. Singh, one of the first anti-fascist journalists banned from Elon Musk’s Twitter, reported that among the attendees at the four-day conference was neo-Nazi Ryan Sanchez. Sanchez is a former US marine who was kicked out due to his open membership in the Rise Above Movement. RAM was one of several Nazi and white supremacist militias that participated in the deadly Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017.

Singh reported that in addition to getting his photo taken

with Jack Posobiec, a Republican operative and one of the event's speakers, Sanchez was photographed shaking hands with fascist murderer and honorary Proud Boy Kyle Rittenhouse, a frequent "special guest" at Turning Point USA events.

Lake did not make her comments at a "fringe event," but one which featured several current Republican politicians, many of whom backed Trump's coup and continue to plan for the next one to this day. While Trump did not attend or speak at the rally, his son Donald Trump Jr. did, along with Trump Jr.'s girlfriend Kimberly Guilfoyle.

Missouri Senator Josh Hawley, one of 147 Republicans to vote against certifying the election after the attack on the Capitol, also spoke at the event, along with leading "Stop the Steal" organizer Representative Andy Biggs. Florida Representative Matt Gaetz, Colorado Representative Lauren Boebert and defeated Arizona Senate candidate Blake Masters also spoke at the rally.

The last major speaker at the fascist rally was host of the *WarRoom* show and former Trump adviser Steve Bannon. Like Lake, Bannon called for his political enemies to be locked up, in this case Hunter and Joe Biden.

"Impeaching Joe Biden" Bannon bellowed, "is too good for him ... we got to bring criminal charges and send him to prison for treason and selling out this country."

Inciting fascist terrorist violence, Bannon yelled, "Are we at war?! Are you prepared to take this to its ultimate conclusion and destroy the deep state?"

To the cheers of "Lock them up!" Bannon concurred, "Lock them up and throw away the frickin' key."

Lake and Bannon are deadly serious in their violent rhetoric, which reveals the ongoing crisis of bourgeois democracy, nearly two years after Trump's failed coup.

The defeat of some of Trump-endorsed election-denying candidates last month has not lessened the drive to dictatorship by far-right sections of the ruling class.

In fact, Trump and the rest of the Republicans have been emboldened by the inability of the Democrats to hold any of them accountable for trying to overthrow the government. The reason Bannon and Lake speak so freely is because they know that the spineless Democrats are far more terrified of a

mass movement from below against both big business parties, and the entire rotten capitalist system they defend, than of their increasingly fascistic "Republican colleagues."

Lake is backing up her violent rhetoric with legal actions. On Monday, a lawsuit filed by Lake last month, seeking to overturn the election results, was allowed to proceed on narrow grounds.

In the lawsuit Lake claimed, without evidence, that "thousands" of illegal votes were cast in the general election, more than the 17,117 vote margin for Hobbs.

As Trump did in the months prior to the November 2020 election and again after Biden was declared the winner, Lake claimed in her lawsuit that mail-in ballots were inherently fraudulent.

She also claimed that Republican voters in Maricopa County were specifically disenfranchised.

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Peter Thompson dismissed this, and most of Lake's claims, but he did allow two of her ten claims to go to trial, one concerning alleged misconduct involving ballot printers on Election Day, and another concerning chain of custody with some of the ballots. The trial will begin on Wednesday.

In her lawsuit, Lake demanded as relief that the judge issue an order setting aside the certified result of the election and unilaterally declaring Lake the winner.

Alternatively, if the judge is not willing to overthrow the election, the Lake campaign is demanding, despite the fact she lost by thousands of votes, that the election be rerun and that it exclude "all improper votes, under the direction of a special master."

While it is not likely Lake will win on either of her two remaining claims, she has already promised to appeal her lawsuit all the way up to the Supreme Court, where she will have a friendly reception from at least two justices, Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas, both of whom have been linked to Trump's January 6, 2021 attempted coup.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact