

On second anniversary of Trump's failed coup

Republicans elect House Speaker on 15th ballot, Biden praises police and “patriotic” Republicans

Barry Grey
7 January 2023

In the aftermath of the November midterm elections which saw the defeat of prominent Trump-backed election deniers and failed to produce the predicted “red wave,” media pundits proclaimed a “victory for democracy” and “return to normalcy” in American politics. The events of Friday, however, the second anniversary of the January 6 attempted coup, have well and truly exploded all such fantasies.

Late Friday night, the narrow Republican majority in the House of Representatives elected Kevin McCarthy as Speaker of the House.

The vote in the 14th round earlier that night came down to Matt Gaetz of Florida, one of the most adamant supporters of the January 6 coup, who the previous day nominated Trump to be House Speaker. Gaetz voted “present,” denying McCarthy the necessary votes and forcing another round.

After feverish behind the scene negotiations with the fascist Gaetz, McCarthy was elected on the 15th vote, which concluded after midnight. The number of ballots required to elect the Speaker is the most since the run-up to the Civil War.

Prior to the vote, McCarthy, himself an accomplice in Trump's failed coup, made a series of concessions that would immensely increase the influence of the fascist right over the operations of Congress and advance a program of savage attacks on the social conditions and democratic rights of the working class.

Those opposing McCarthy included key players in the conspiracy to overthrow the 2020 presidential election and maintain Trump in power as dictator-president: Andy Biggs and Paul Gosar of Arizona, Matt Gaetz of Florida, Lauren Boebert of Colorado, Scott Perry of Pennsylvania and Bob Good of Virginia. They are now set to have power within the House far out of proportion to their numbers or popular support.

CNN's list of concessions and promises made by McCarthy over the course of closed-door negotiations includes:

- Lowering the threshold to bring a motion to oust the House

Speaker from the current 50 percent of the Republican conference, reduced in earlier talks to five members, to just a single member.

• Substantially increasing representation of the far-right House Freedom Caucus on key committees, beginning with the Rules Committee.

• Giving members greater ability to offer amendments on the House floor.

• Promising that McCarthy's leadership PAC will not intervene in open primaries in safe Republican districts (where in a few cases the PAC had opposed far-right candidates).

These procedural changes, far-reaching in themselves, are reportedly tied to substantive agreements to make historic cuts in domestic spending and federal taxes that add up to a reversal of all social reforms since the 1930s—that is, a social counterrevolution.

McCarthy has agreed to hold votes on:

• A balanced budget amendment, banning deficit spending

• The further militarization of the US-Mexico border

• Capping discretionary spending at 2022 levels

He has further pledged to restore the Holman rule, which will allow members to propose amendments to appropriations bills that cut the salaries of specific federal workers or funding for specific programs down to \$1, effectively defunding them.

He has also agreed to oppose a debt ceiling increase that is not paired with sweeping spending cuts.

CNBC wrote: “House Republican holdouts who switched their votes to back GOP leader Rep. Kevin McCarthy for Speaker after weeks of opposing him are touting what they say is a historic deal reached with the California Republican that will fulfill their longtime goals of radically reducing federal spending.”

This escalation of class war against the vast majority of the American people is proceeding without any opposition from the Biden administration or the Democratic Party. The ability of the Republicans and Trump—who is publicly backing

McCarthy—to intensify the assault on social and democratic rights is due to the refusal of the Democrats to prosecute or arrest any of the ringleaders in the Trump administration, Congress, the military, the FBI and police, and on the US Supreme Court involved in the attempted overthrow of the Constitution. On the contrary, they are being allowed to continue the conspiracy.

One of the demands of the Republican fascists reportedly accepted by McCarthy is the creation of a subcommittee on the “Weaponization of the Federal Government,” which will be under the House Judiciary Committee and its chairman, the far-right provocateur Jim Jordan. It will likely be used to exonerate the hundreds of fascist foot soldiers arrested for storming the Capitol and to shield Trump himself from any potential criminal indictment.

The Democrats are doing their best to conceal from the American people the dire implications of the machinations in the House. They are either treating the disarray as a joke or using it to step up their appeals for a bipartisan “partner” with which to govern.

On Friday, even as the voting on the House floor and backroom deal-making were continuing, Biden held a ceremony at the White House to mark the second anniversary of the coup. He made no mention of the latest reactionary plot being hatched against the American people in the US Capitol. Nor did he take note of the role of powerful sections of the police, the military, the intelligence agencies and the Supreme Court in the attempted coup two years before.

Biden never so much as uttered Trump’s name. Instead, he used the event to promote the police as saviors of democracy and hail the role of “patriotic” Republican officials who balked at Trump’s demands to overturn the election results.

Biden awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal to nine police officers caught up in the fascist attack on Congress, three posthumously; four election officials who defied right-wing harassment and even armed threats to count and certify the vote, three Democratic and one Republican; and former Arizona House Speaker Rusty Bowers, a Republican, who refused demands that he certify pro-Trump electors and ignore the pro-Biden popular vote in Arizona.

There was no mention of the failure of the FBI, Secret Service and Department of Homeland Security to issue advance warnings, despite a mountain of evidence of an impending attack to block congressional certification of Biden’s victory; or the desperate appeals by US Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund for National Guard troops to halt the assault on the Capitol, which went unanswered; or the 199-minute delay in approval by Trump’s hand-picked Pentagon officials of pleas from the D.C. Guard commander for sanction to send forces to clear out the insurrectionists; or the fact that 139 House Republicans, including both McCarthy and most of his opponents, a full 65 percent of the Republican conference, voted against certifying the election hours *after* the mob had

been cleared out of the Capitol.

Instead, Biden began his remarks by noting the damage to US geopolitical interests resulting from the violent events of two years prior, citing statements by world leaders at a subsequent G7 meeting questioning the stability of the US government. This—US imperialist foreign policy—has been the basis of Democratic opposition to Trump from the outset, and remains so today.

The overriding concern of the Democratic Party is to maintain a working relationship with the Republicans to conduct the escalating war against Russia in Ukraine and prepare for military confrontation with China. As far as the democratic rights of the mass of American workers go, the Democrats’ attitude was amply shown when they united with the GOP last month to pass a law banning a strike by over 100,000 rail workers and impose a sellout contract that had been voted down. This fascist measure was carried out with the support of the rail unions.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* explained in its New Year’s statement (“2023: The global capitalist crisis and the growing offensive of the international working class”):

The recklessness of US foreign policy cannot be understood solely in relation to the geopolitical interests of American imperialism. A central factor is the extreme domestic crisis within the United States itself. For all its dreams of global conquest, the American ruling class presides over an increasingly dysfunctional political system. As far back as the Clinton impeachment crisis of 1998–99 and the Supreme Court’s intervention in 2000 to suppress the counting of votes and award the presidency to George W. Bush, the International Committee has warned that the American ruling class was moving toward dictatorial forms of rule...

In the present situation, the pressure of the objective crisis drives the ruling elite to abandon democratic forms of rule and strike a preemptive blow against the emerging movement of the working class.

The defense of the social and democratic rights of the working masses depends on the expansion of this movement and its development into an independent political struggle for socialism against American capitalism and both of its parties.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact