Republicans elevate Freedom Caucus fascists to top House committees

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House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and the Republican Steering Committee, the group of influential Republican representatives who decide on committee chairs and assign members to committees, have given prominent positions to members of the Freedom Caucus, the ultra-right faction that fought McCarthy's election for 15 ballots during the first week of this year's session.

Not a single one of the holdouts against McCarthy suffered any repercussions for opposing the candidate backed by better than 80 percent of the Republican caucus. Those representatives already on top committees, such as Judiciary, retained their positions. Others were given new positions on committees such as Appropriations, Homeland Security and Government Oversight.

The most significant action taken by McCarthy and the Republican inner circle was to award fascist Georgia Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene two positions on top committees, Homeland Security and Oversight, after she was removed from all committee positions in the previous Congress for death threats against Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other top Democrats.

Greene was the most prominent supporter of McCarthy among the members of the Freedom Caucus, and she repeatedly and vocally lobbied for his election among her fascist colleagues. She has not retracted either her vitriolic threats against Democrats or her association with neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups.

Arizona Republican Representative Paul Gosar, removed and censured for posting an online death threat against Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, was restored to his committee positions as well.

Reportedly, McCarthy agreed to seat three members of the Freedom Caucus on the powerful House Rules Committee, but those selections have not yet been announced.

The formal process of committee selection has only just begun, and the appointments leaked to the corporate media could well change in the course of it. The Republicans and Democrats select their committee nominees through internal discussions and, occasionally, votes, and then the full lists are approved by the House.

Significantly, the two committees that will play the largest and most public roles in investigating and attacking the Biden administration are the ones with the largest contingents of outright fascists.

The House Committee on Government Oversight and Accountability has been the most public in its anti-Biden campaign, with presumptive committee chair, James Comer of Kentucky, already demanding documents related to Biden's retention of classified documents from his vice presidency even before the committee has been formed and its members elected.

Press reports indicate that at least five members of the Freedom Caucus will be seated on this committee, including Marjorie Taylor Greene, Gosar, Lauren Boebert of Colorado, Scott Perry of Pennsylvania and Byron Donalds of Florida. Boebert refused to vote for Kevin McCarthy as Speaker, ultimately casting a "present" vote on the 15th ballot, one of six ultra-right Republicans who did so.

Perry was the Republican representative most closely linked to the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol and played a key role in the effort to enable Trump to remain in office by appointing a lower-level Justice Department official as attorney general, with the understanding that he would send letters to election officials in key battleground states encouraging them to withdraw their slates of Biden electors.

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Donalds was the candidate for whom most of the "never-Kevin" Republicans voted in the course of the lengthy balloting for Speaker. When he came over to McCarthy's side, that signaled the collapse of the ultra-right opposition. For this he was rewarded with the Speaker's nomination to join the Republican Select Committee that oversees the process of choosing committee chairs and members of major committees.

The other committee which is loaded with fascists is Judiciary, to be chaired by Jim Jordan, the Ohio representative who co-founded the Freedom Caucus but was a key ally of McCarthy during the speakership vote. Jordan is to head a special subcommittee of Judiciary on the "Weaponization of the Federal Government," in other words, to investigate agencies like the FBI that have investigated Trump and other top Republicans.

Joining him on the Judiciary Committee will be five ultra-right Republicans, who withheld their votes from McCarthy. Victoria Spartz of Indiana voted "present" for a dozen ballots, then switched to McCarthy. Chip Roy of Texas and Dan Bishop of North Carolina opposed McCarthy until the 12th ballot. Andy Biggs of Arizona and Matt Gaetz of Florida voted against McCarthy for 14 ballots and then voted "present" on the final ballot. Which of these might be on the "weaponization" subcommittee is not yet known.

Other major committees, and their fascist members, are as follows, according to current press reports:

Appropriations, perhaps the single most powerful committee, will include Mike Cloud of Texas, Andy Clyde of Georgia and Andy Harris of Maryland. All voted against McCarthy for 11 ballots. Cloud and Clyde switched to support him on the 12th ballot, Harris on the 13th ballot.

Homeland Security, which oversees the department of the same name, with jurisdiction over both immigration and domestic terrorism, will include numerous allies and sympathizers of the domestic terrorists who attacked the US Capitol on January 6, 2021: two newly-elected Republicans, Josh Brecheen of Oklahoma and Eli Crane of Arizona, and Marjorie Taylor Greene.

Natural Resources: Lauren Boebert, Anna Paulina Luna of Florida and Matt Rosendale of Montana

Financial Services: Byron Donalds (Florida) and Ralph Norman of South Carolina. Warren Davidson of Ohio, a Freedom Caucus member who supported McCarthy, was named chairman of the Financial Services subcommittee on Housing and Insurance.

Agriculture: Mary Miller of Illinois

Foreign Affairs: Scott Perry and Keith Self of Texas

The committee assignments are only a small portion of the concessions McCarthy made to the fascists in order to obtain the speakership. He agreed to significant changes in House rules, including allowing a motion to declare the chair vacant—essentially a demand for a new vote for Speaker—to be introduced by any individual member at any time.

This means that his own position is constantly at risk, with a narrow five-seat majority in the House. Any five fascists can turn him out of office any time he fails to satisfy the most right-wing positions in negotiations with the White House and the Democratic-controlled Senate.

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