

Pro-Trump election deniers vie for speakership of US House

Barry Grey
9 October 2023

In the midst of the Israeli war on the Palestinians, following the incursion of Hamas fighters, and the deepening crisis of the US-NATO war against Russia over Ukraine, the political impasse in Washington continues unabated. Congress remains paralyzed as a fractious Republican majority in the House of Representatives seeks to elect a new speaker following the removal last week of Kevin McCarthy.

Already, the failure of Congress to include additional funding for Ukraine in a bipartisan stop-gap spending bill and growing opposition among Republicans to additional money for Kiev have fueled concerns in the White House and the Democratic Party, as well as among NATO governments, over US financial backing to escalate the war and deliver a decisive defeat to Moscow.

And with no clear solution to the impasse in the House of Representatives at hand, Washington's political breakdown is further eroding confidence within ruling classes around the world in US imperialism's ability to crush a growing insurgency of the oppressed masses in the Middle East as well as an emerging mass movement of workers in the centers of world capitalism, including the US.

Two top House Republicans have announced their candidacies for the vacant speakership. The Republican conference is slated to return to Washington on Monday for closed-door meetings at which the candidates, Majority Leader Steve Scalise of Louisiana and Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan of Ohio, will make their cases. The current plan calls for further internal discussions on Tuesday and a vote by the Republican conference on Wednesday. The Republicans hope to elect a new speaker in a floor vote later Wednesday, but this is by no means assured.

The overriding concern of Biden and the Democrats, who control the Senate, is to secure countless billions in additional financing for the Ukraine war. Last week, Biden announced that he had reversed his previous opposition and ordered the building of a 20-mile extension of Trump's wall along the US-Mexico border. The following day, the Homeland Security Department said it would begin

deporting asylum seekers from Venezuela who had crossed into the US illegally. This was a brazen attempt to exchange Democratic support for the Republicans' agenda of more brutal attacks on immigrants for GOP votes to continue funding the US puppet regime in Kiev.

The *World Socialist Web Site* previously wrote that the Democrats will "collaborate with the domestic agenda of the Republicans in exchange for guarantees that funding for Ukraine is untouchable. The Democrats have no problem working with the fascists in the Republican Party; after all, they are in an alliance with fascists in Ukraine."

Toward this end, House Democratic Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries published an op-ed in Friday's *Washington Post* headlined, "A bipartisan coalition is the way forward for the House." He wrote:

Traditional Republicans need to break with the MAGA extremism that has poisoned the House of Representatives since the violent insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021, and its aftermath—when the overwhelming majority of House Republicans continued to promote the "big lie" and voted not to certify the presidential election.

The 139 House Republicans who voted in the early hours of January 7, 2021 to decertify the victory of Joe Biden over Donald Trump in the Electoral College in fact included both Jordan and Scalise, as well as deposed House Speaker McCarthy.

Jordan is a co-founder of the far-right House Freedom Caucus. He threatened to seek the removal of Republican House Speaker John Boehner during the Obama administration. Boehner resigned rather than face a "motion to vacate," calling Jordan a "legislative terrorist."

One of Trump's closest allies in Congress, Jordan was deeply involved in the conspiracy to overturn the 2020 presidential election and maintain Trump in office as

president-dictator. Ahead of the attempted coup of January 6, 2021, Jordan was in frequent contact with Trump's chief of staff Mark Meadows and the president himself, plotting to disrupt and delay the congressional certification of Biden's victory in the Electoral College.

On January 5, 2021, the day before Trump's fascist mob besieged the Capitol, he sent Meadows a message calling for Vice President Mike Pence to "call out all electoral votes that he believes are unconstitutional as no electoral votes at all," and unilaterally declare Trump the winner. Five days after the assault on Congress Trump awarded Jordan the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Post-January 6, he has led investigations of federal and state prosecutors who indicted Trump, and is playing a leading role in the current impeachment inquiry into alleged corruption on the part of President Biden related to his son Hunter's business activities in Ukraine and China. He also heads a special subcommittee on the supposed "weaponization of government" against the right.

Jordan has reiterated his opposition to additional funding for the regime in Ukraine, channeling the line of Trump, the leading candidate for the Republican nomination for president in 2024. They are seeking to exploit popular opposition to the war and at the same time argue for a greater focus on the conflict with China.

Last week, Liz Cheney, former number three Republican in the House and co-chair of the House Select Committee on January 6, spoke at the University of Minnesota, where she said, "Jim Jordan knew more about what Donald Trump had planned for January 6 than any other member of the House of Representatives. Jim Jordan was part of the conspiracy in which Donald Trump was engaged as he attempted to overturn the election."

Cassidy Hutchinson, former top aide to Mark Meadows, said recently, "Jim Jordan was privy to about everything, if not everything, pertaining to January 6. Jim Jordan can't be trusted with the Constitution."

Trump endorsed Jordan early Friday for the House speakership, stating on Truth Social that the Ohio lawmaker "has my Complete & Total Endorsement!"

Scalise has also been a close supporter of Trump, while denouncing the actual mob attack on Congress on January 6. Like many Republicans, he has sought to equate the attack on Congress and attempt to overthrow the 2020 election with the mass demonstrations that swept the country that year against police violence following the police murder of George Floyd.

He has also promoted the line that then House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was responsible for the January 6 attack because she opposed calling for troops to defend the Capitol

from the mob. This lie was exploded last October when video emerged showing him standing only feet from Pelosi and then-House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (Democrat from Maryland) in the Capitol as the two Democrats pleaded over the phone with acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller, who was appointed by Trump after the election had been called for Biden, to send National Guard troops. In the event, Miller failed to approve sending the troops for more than three hours.

Scalise has voted in favor of military aid to Ukraine in the war against Russia, but his continued support for the war is believed to be uncertain.

The two candidates have been making phone calls to line up support, with each having won endorsements from about two dozen House Republicans, while the majority in the conference have put off making a decision. On Friday, a bloc of more than 90 GOP House members proposed a change in party rules to require a unanimous vote in the conference behind one candidate instead of mere majority support before a vote is held on the floor of the chamber.

One of the leaders of the proposal is Rep. Chip Roy of Texas, who has endorsed Jordan. Scalise has denounced the proposal as an attempt to block him from gaining the nomination on the basis of majority support. Such a rule, if adopted, would help the hard-core Trump-aligned far-right group headed by Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz—whose eight votes, combined with the votes of all House Democrats, removed McCarthy last week—to exercise veto power over the selection of McCarthy's replacement. The proposal is to be discussed on Monday behind closed doors.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact