

# Breaking from Democratic Party, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. declares “independence” from any pretense of social reform policies

Jacob Crosse  
9 October 2023

Nearly six months after announcing he would challenge Joe Biden on the Democratic presidential ticket, on Monday in Philadelphia, right-wing environmental lawyer Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced he would seek the 2024 presidency as an independent candidate, renouncing the party synonymous with his famous last name.

“I am here today, to declare myself an independent candidate,” Kennedy Jr. declared to a crowd of a few hundred supporters. “I haven’t made this decision lightly,” he added. “It is very painful for me to let go of the party of my uncles, my father, my grandfather and both of my great grandfathers.”

Since announcing in April, Kennedy Jr. has never broken above 30 percent support among Democratic Party voters while consistently polling better among independent, Republican and right-wing voters due to his overt opposition to any COVID-19 mitigation measures and pledges to enact “free market” solutions to climate change.

In multiple appearances on Fox News and on right-wing podcasts over the last six months, Kennedy has attacked ex-President Donald Trump from the right for enacting limited “lockdowns” at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, while refusing to condemn Trump and his Republican co-conspirators for launching the failed coup.

In an interview with *Vanity Fair* last month, Kennedy expressed his belief that “censorship” over his and Trump’s social media accounts was a “greater threat to the republic” compared to the growth of fascistic elements in the ruling class and Republican Party.

“You could blow up the Capitol and we’d be okay if we have a First Amendment,” Kennedy said. “Why are we hearing about the Capitol day after day after day after day, and nobody’s talking about the First Amendment?”

Leading up to Monday’s announcement there had been some speculation that Kennedy would announce he would seek the presidential nomination of the Libertarian Party. Last month, the *New York Times* reported that in July, Kennedy spoke privately for over an hour with antisemite Angela McArdle, the chair of the Libertarian Party, while both were attending a conference in Memphis, Tennessee.

“He emphasized that he was committed to running as a Democrat but said that he considered himself very libertarian,” McArdle said in an interview with the *Times* on the summer meeting. “They agreed on several positions, including the threat of the ‘deep state’ and the need for populist messaging,” the *Times* added, with McArdle claiming that she and Kennedy were “aligned on a lot of issues.”

“My perspective is that we are going to stay in touch in case he does decide to run,” McArdle said. “And he can contact me at any time if that’s the case.”

Further cementing his ties with the far right ahead of his “independent” launch, on October 6, the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) announced that Kennedy and Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy would headline the CPAC “Investor Summit to Save America” in Las Vegas, Nevada, from October 18-21.

CPAC Chairman Matt Schlapp praised Kennedy Jr. for “ensuring the constitutional right of medical freedom,” a reference to his anti-vaccine conspiracy theories. Schlapp said that Kennedy joining the event was a reflection “of the splintering of the left-wing coalition that has gone full woke Marxist to the point that traditional liberals don’t feel welcome anymore.”

A who’s who of Trump co-conspirators will be joining

Kennedy at the CPAC later this month, including Steven Bannon, fascist *War Room* host and former special adviser in the Trump White House; Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton; and Kash Patel, an intelligence operative who was chief of staff to acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller during the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Like Trump, Kennedy Jr. is able to exploit the broad antiwar sentiment in the working class by professing opposition to Biden and the Democrats' escalating war in Ukraine. However, Kennedy's antiwar facade suffered a serious blow this weekend following his latest pledge for unstinting military support for Israel's war against the Palestinians.

As was the case with virtually every Democratic and Republican politician, Kennedy Jr. released a statement on October 7 in support of the genocidal campaign being carried out against the Palestinian people. In a press release, he condemned Hamas and "[t]his ignominious, unprovoked, and barbaric attack on Israel." Putting no limits on the lethal weaponry to be shipped to the neo-fascist Netanyahu regime, Kennedy Jr. wrote, "We must provide Israel with whatever it needs to defend itself—now."

Attacking Biden from the right, Kennedy added, "I applaud the strong statement of support from the Biden White House for Israel in her hour of need. However, the scale of these attacks means it is likely that Israel will need to wage a sustained military campaign to protect its citizens.

"Statements of support are fine," Kennedy wrote, "but, we must follow through with unwavering, resolute, and practical action. America must stand by our ally throughout this operation *and beyond* as it exercises its sovereign right to self-defense." (Emphasis added.)

At Monday's event, Kennedy's overt support for the near-genocide of residents of Gaza was demonstrated by the presence of Zionist Jacob Shmuel Boteach, an American Orthodox Jewish rabbi, a Republican, and one of the people who introduced Kennedy at the rally.

"I'm here speaking at the major announcement of Bobby Kennedy," Boteach posted on Twitter/X Monday morning. "We are going to speak about Israel, we are going to speak about war in the Middle East, we are going to speak about the prospects of peace which can only come about through the destruction of Hamas." Following Kennedy's speech Boteach posted a photograph of himself with the candidate and his wife Cheryl Hines captioned, "Thank you, my dear friend @robertfkennedyjr ... for your incredible support of

Israel and the Jewish community in this most darkest of times."

After Boteach, Kennedy's campaign manager and former Democratic Congressman Dennis Kucinich characterized the pending announcement as an "evolution of the campaign" and the dawn of a new "unity of nationhood."

Kennedy's roughly 40-minute speech was filled with right-wing pabulum and attacks on a "corrupt elite," without any condemnation of the capitalist or "free market" system. "I'm proud to say that my supporters include both pro-lifers and pro-choicers," Kennedy boasted. "They include climate activists and climate skeptics. They include vaccinated and un-vaccinated."

He declared that in the six months since launching his presidential campaign, he has "surrendered my attachment to taking sides" and is now able to "see some solutions that otherwise would have been invisible."

As an example of a previously invisible "solution," Kennedy cited his support for "sealing" the US-Mexico border, something he has publicly advocated since early June. "Six months ago," Kennedy said, "I thought an open border was a humanitarian policy and ... if you were for sealing the border, it meant that you were probably a xenophobe and maybe a racist. I was wrong."

Kennedy added that his views "changed" after "I spoke to Border Patrol officers, local officials, sheriffs..."

Assuring his capitalist benefactors and the leadership of both parties that Kennedy's "independence" meant he was "independent" to work with both parties in enacting their shared right-wing agenda, Kennedy explained that "being independent of the two political parties does not mean making them my enemy.

"As president I am going to work with officials in both parties who will join me in serving our nation. I am going to build coalitions from both sides of the aisle, like we have not seen in a generation.

"There are good and honest people in both parties" Kennedy added, "even in their leadership."



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**