

Corrupt self-promoter George Santos faces expulsion from US House of Representatives

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A vote on a resolution to expel New York Republican Congressman George Santos from the US House of Representatives is expected in the next week to 10 days. If the resolution is adopted, it would mark only the sixth time in US history that a member of Congress has been expelled. The expulsion move follows two unsuccessful earlier attempts. With a two-thirds vote necessary, the outcome is not a foregone conclusion.

The momentum for expulsion comes after the release of a report by the House Ethics Committee. The 56-page report, adopted unanimously by the Democratic and Republican members of the panel, is based on the testimony of 40 witnesses and the review of 170,000 pages of documents, including texts, emails and bank statements. Verifying illegal expenditures of thousands of dollars in campaign funds at spas, luxury hotel stays in Las Vegas, and other purchases unrelated to the campaign, it concluded that Santos “sought to fraudulently exploit every aspect of his House candidacy for his own personal profit.”

The Republican congressman had already been exposed, in an investigation by the *New York Times*, after his election in November 2022 but even before he took office last January, as basing his run for political office upon lies about his whole life and career. He falsely claimed to be the grandson of Ukrainian Jews who had fled the Holocaust, to have graduated from Baruch College and New York University, and to have worked at Citigroup and Goldman Sachs. There was not a shred of evidence for these claims, or for numerous other assertions about his finances and personal wealth.

The lies continue to unravel, including the most trivial. Santos claimed, for instance, that his volleyball team at Baruch College “slayed” Yale, and became champions “across the entire Northeast Corridor.” But

he never went to Baruch, nor does Yale have a men’s varsity volleyball team.

Santos also faces 23 federal felony charges, on which he was arraigned last spring, including wire fraud, lying on federal disclosure forms and fraudulently obtaining unemployment benefits.

After nearly a year in office, Santos remains unapologetic. The release of the House Ethics Committee report prompted him to announce that he would not run for reelection next year, but at the same time he denounced the whole investigation, declaring on X (Twitter): “If there was a single ounce of ETHICS in the ‘Ethics committee,’ they would have not released this biased report.”

Most significant were some statements on X by Santos earlier in October, after the events of October 7. Saying he was worried about “the kind of danger that we’re in on a national security front,” he suggested investigation of those who waved Palestinian flags at protests against the Israeli massacre of more than 12,000 Palestinians in Gaza. “I think every inch of this country at this point should be mapped out again and completely checked. I don’t care if we go into a police state for a couple of months,” said Santos.

This outburst from the congressman, only reported for the first time in a column in the *Times* by journalist Mark Chiusano last week, was undoubtedly directed toward the fascist base of the Republican Party. Chiusano observed, “Here was an elected official pulling a police state out of his hat that would make the Patriot Act look timid. And it went all but unnoticed...”

Santos’ fascistic views are of course not at issue in the move for expulsion, since they are shared by the vast majority of the Republican caucus. Instead, the ethics report appears to have convinced Republicans, from the standpoint of the small change of capitalist

politics, that hanging onto Santos would cost them votes in some suburban competitive House races, outweighing his single vote with the majority for the next year. With a very narrow majority in the House and desperately needing every vote they could muster, they had previously either disregarded the exposures, or piously proclaimed they were acting out of concern for due process.

If Santos is expelled, New York Governor Kathy Hochul would call a special election. The winner of that contest would serve through 2024.

The focus has thus far largely remained on the tawdry details of Santos as a pathological liar and petty grifter. Far less has been written on the issue of how this somewhat clownish ultra-rightist secured the primary nomination to run for office, and how, once that was accomplished, he managed to win last November.

As the WSWS has previously pointed out, identity politics played a role, with Santos claiming to be both gay and Jewish, appealing to some self-described liberal voters unhappy with the Democrats, in a district just east of New York City with its own share of social and economic discontents.

Santos is only the crudest expression of the corruption that permeates the capitalist two-party system, with Democrats and Republicans alike spending most of their time fundraising for the next election cycle and shamelessly selling themselves to the highest bidders. This whole episode points to the utter decay of the two-party system of capitalist politics, which attracts the most backward and selfish individuals.

As the *Times* reported, one of the members of the Ethics Committee, Democrat Glenn Ivey of Maryland, said, “Most of us have never seen anything like this—this extensive, this brazen, and this bold.” Representative Ivey was unintentionally frank, indicating that Santos’ venality and sleaze differed from the usual corruption only by degree.

Moreover, most House members reserve their most blatant lying to the defense of corporate interests (the “free market”) and of US imperialism (the “free world”) and integrate their personal corruption into the general framework of big business politics, rather than flaunting it as stupidly as Santos.

Particularly significant are Santos’ above-mentioned comments about a police state. If these were mostly

“unnoticed,” that is because the corporate media and the political establishment want to play down the real political significance of the changes that are most often associated with ex-president and presumptive 2024 Republican nominee Donald Trump.

Trump is the most prominent expression of a fundamental shift that has been taking place within capitalist politics. The steady rightward swing of recent decades has accelerated since 2016. The Republican transformation into a fascist party is at a very advanced stage, and the Democrats’ response to this development is to double down on their search for common ground with the fascists.

Led by President Biden, they continue to seek bipartisan cooperation, in order to wage war abroad as well as at home. The latest episodes of division and dysfunction among the Republicans, their inability to find a speaker and to put together a governing majority, are of concern to the Democrats only insofar as they complicate the US backing for endless war in Ukraine and in Occupied Palestine, part of the preparation of a third world imperialist war, and the intensification of the class war at home.

The George Santos scandal thus highlights the need, more urgent than ever, for the working class to break completely from the reactionary swamp of capitalist politics, to build a new leadership, and take up the fight for socialism.



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