

Texas Railroad Commission nominee's racist post exposes fascist transformation of Republican Party

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Vile, racist comments from the Republican nominee for Texas Railroad Commissioner have shed further light onto the GOP's open flirtation with a conglomeration of far-right forces, including fascists, neo-nazis and virulent racists.

On Sunday, September 13, Bo French posted a photo of a crowd of University of Texas football fans, most of them students of South Asian descent, saying, "The problem is now obviously far worse than anyone imagined."

French subsequently doubled down on his original post, later writing, "I weep for the families in Texas who can't get into UT because they prioritize foreigners over Texans."

French's assertion is contradicted by the university's enrollment figures. International students constitute only 4.3 percent of UT Austin undergraduates, while more than 80 percent of the student body consists of Texas residents. State law also requires 90 percent of the university's entering undergraduate class to be Texas residents.

Semantics aside, French's comments drew a certain amount of condemnation from his fellow Republicans in the Lone Star state, not from any genuine repulsion towards his racism but instead out of anxiety that French's rhetoric could undermine Republican performance in upcoming state and federal elections. These include Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's reelection and the contested US Senate race between Attorney General Ken Paxton and Democratic state representative James Talrico.

Paxton's response was the political equivalent to him playing an Uno reverse card and deflecting allegations of racism onto Talrico. Paxton did not mention French nor his post directly.

"I condemn racism in all its forms," Paxton wrote on X, adding, "Only one person in this race has a history of dividing Texans by race, and it's James Talarico."

Abbott did no better and ignored the post's bigotry as well before bragging of his own reactionary politics. Without naming French directly, he said the racist post was "not my message." He added, "A selective picture of Longhorn fans

celebrating our biggest home victory—ever—actually shows a way that Texans unite."

Abbott then went on to praise his administration's strict immigration laws and pointed to his move to block Texas public universities from using skilled foreign worker visas. French has been endorsed by a list of Republicans in the state, including Abbott and Paxton, none of which have publicly withdrawn support for his campaign whose politics the Texas GOP have been aware of for some time.

Outgoing Senator John Cornyn called it racist and warned that such statements would cause the Republican Party to "self-destruct." Texas House Speaker Dustin Burrows demanded that French delete it, writing, "You can oppose immigration policy without demeaning people because of their race or ethnicity."

Cornyn subsequently announced that he would not vote for French, calling him "an embarrassment to the Republican Party." Republican strategist Karl Rove said he would vote for French's Democratic opponent, Jon Rosenthal. "The GOP has a growing number of Bo Frenches—and not only in Texas," Rove wrote in a *Wall Street Journal* article. "These people are diminishing the Republican Party, not building it. I'll have no part of it."

French, however, defended the post and claimed that Republicans criticizing him were afraid of being called racist.

If French is elected, he would occupy a position that regulates Texas' powerful oil, gas and mining industries. The post was not an aberration but consistent with French's campaign for Texas Railroad Commissioner and his established political record. He has called for the denaturalization and deportation of a Pakistan-born Democratic state representative, when asked whether Muslims or Jews posed the "bigger threat" to the United States and encouraged Republicans to embrace Islamophobia. At the Conservative Political Action Conference in March, he presented the deportation of 100

million people as the beginning of a solution to the country's problems.

The acceptance of racism and fascism into the fold of Republican politics is not isolated to Texas, however. Far-right candidates are winning elections across the country and have been found within the supporting staff of multiple Republican politicians.

In Florida, Marshall Rawson won the Republican nomination for state House District 10 after his earlier association with the neo-Confederate League of the South was already public. Subsequent reporting revealed that Rawson and his wife had attended the deadly 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Photographs placed him near James Alex Fields Jr., who later drove his car into counterprotesters, killing Heather Heyer and injuring dozens.

Rawson reportedly accepted \$15,000 in campaign contributions from individuals with ties to white supremacist organizations. His social media history is as vile as French's. From 2017 to 2020, he operated a pseudonymous X account that he used to advocate for public lynchings and to defend slavery. In 2023, Rawson expressed glee that two gay men in Uganda would be put to death under laws criminalizing homosexuality, advocating for such draconian punishments be replicated in America. "This is how you would run the perves and miscreants out of Florida," he wrote, adding: "A one-way ticket to no more sexualizing of children and the lgbtq+ agenda in Florida!"

Stephen Woytek, recently hired as political director for Republican Senator Jon Husted's Ohio campaign, had used an image of SS soldiers as his Facebook profile picture and maintained a playlist celebrating Rhodesia's former white-minority regime. Husted's campaign fired Woytek after the posts became public. Woytek denied supporting Nazi ideology and attributed the material to his interest in military reenactments.

In Texas, Republican congressional nominee Brandon Herrera posted a video in which he displayed a Nazi-era submachine gun and called it the "original ghetto blaster." In a 2023 video, he referred to children as "trophies" for women getting a man to ejaculate, arguing that the opinions of women and mothers are without value.

There are even staffers responsible for the White House's social media presence who utilize their position to share Nazi-inspired rhetoric. For example, in January, the X account for the Department of Labor posted a video with the caption "One Homeland. One People. One Heritage. Remember who you are, American," a line that echoes the Nazi slogan of "Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer."

What little opposition Republicans have issued in response to Bo French indicate the anxiety the party feels during this

election cycle. Amid Trump's lagging poll numbers, widely opposed immigration policies and reckless war mongering, Texas Republicans have genuine concern to fear the state could "turn blue." A September Emerson College poll placed Talarico at 47 percent and Paxton at 46 percent, while the *Cook Political Report* moved the contest to its "toss-up" category. A Talarico victory would produce Texas' first Democratic US senator since Lloyd Bentsen left office in 1993.

The emergence of openly fascist and racist candidates within the Republican Party underscores that the danger of fascism does not reside in the single personality of Trump but has a material basis in capitalist society. The historic crisis of US capitalism, over \$40 billion in debt, coupled with the disastrous war with Iran which has resulted in skyrocketing energy prices and widening inequality leaves a widely hated ruling class, unwilling to brook any change to its social position and immense unearned wealth, no choice but to cultivate and elevate fascistic tendencies and attitudes in US and internationally.

It must be stated that the growing presence of fascism within one of America's two dominant parties cannot and will not be combated by the Democrats, who have their share of blame in aiding and abetting this. In the 2022 election cycle, Democratic Party-aligned PACs spent at least \$44 million on ads designed to promote pro-Trump fascists in Republican primaries, under the cynical calculation that elections against MAGA extremists would be more easily won.

The Democrats' own politics feed the far right directly. Their promotion of identity politics divides the working class, their war policies and austerity betray every section of the population and they offer nothing but a "lesser evil" that repels millions of workers toward the demagoguery of Trump and the far-right.

The Democrats have demonstrated, in dollars and in deeds, that they will not and cannot stop fascism—they are its enabler. The fight against fascism can only be won by the independent political mobilization of the working class, the only social force whose existence is entirely bound up with the defense of democratic rights, and the only force capable of abolishing the capitalist system that breeds fascism.



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