

AUG 21, 2022

# Republicans Vote Out Trump Critics

This is The Weekly Letter for August 21, 2022. [About this newsletter](#)

## Big Story

On Tuesday, Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney was defeated by Donald Trump-backed opponent Harriet Hageman in the Republican primary. The Vice Chair of the January 6th Select Committee, Cheney has been perhaps the most high-profile congressional Republican critic of Trump's attempt to overturn the 2020 presidential election. She was also one of 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump in January 2021.

The impeachment vote has not been kind to the political careers of those representatives: four opted not to run for re-election and four (including Cheney) lost their primary elections this year. David Valadao and Dan Newhouse survived their primaries, but neither captured a majority of the vote for Republican candidates. ([FiveThirtyEight](#))

Cheney is also not the only Republican whose political career has taken a hit because of their affiliation with the January 6th Committee. Arizona state House Speaker Rusty Bowers gave emotional testimony to the committee, recalling how he drew on his faith to resist the efforts by Trump and allies to pressure him to overturn Joe Biden's victory in Arizona. This month, Bowers lost a race for state Senate to a Trump-backed candidate. ([NBC News](#))

However, there are signs that the January 6th Committee hearings eroded support for Trump among Republicans, as [Politico](#) reported last month. Fatigue from the committee's revelations "is evident in public polling and in focus groups that suggest growing Republican openness to an alternative presidential nominee in 2024." Additionally, [The Washington Post](#) reports that the Murdoch family's media properties—such as Fox News, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Post*—appear to be creating some distance between themselves and Trump, although the opportunistic connection between the Murdochs and Trump has not been completely severed.

Primary elections such as the contest between Cheney and Hageman in Wyoming demonstrate that the Republican Party is continuing to cast out opponents of Trump's attempt to overturn the 2020 presidential election. However, the party is not fully united behind Trump. On the one hand, there remain "establishment" figures like Mitch McConnell and Rupert Murdoch who liked Trump's policies but not his style of politics. On the other hand, the far-right currents in the party approve of Trumpian politics but may favor a leader other than Trump. Most Republicans either wish Trump won in 2020 or believe that he did. Whether they will help him win in 2024 is yet to be determined.

## Opinion

**Last Week Tonight:** John Oliver on the impact of U.S. sanctions and Taliban rule on [Afghanistan](#). [Video] (HBO, 8/15)

**Jameel Jaffer:** The [Espionage Act](#) should be reformed, but that wouldn't let Trump off the hook. (Politico, 8/17)

**Oren Cass and Chris Griswold:** [Three policies](#) that Republicans should support if they gain control of one or both houses of Congress. (NY Times, 8/18)

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