

Bill Kaplan: Trump is the speaker of the House

Posted on Monday, Oct 30, 2023

The column below reflects the views of the author, and these opinions are neither endorsed nor supported by WisOpinion.com.

Trump failed to overturn the 2020 presidential election through the courts, state legislatures, state officials, U.S. Justice Department, Vice President Mike Pence and the January 6, 2021 mob assault on the U.S. Capitol. About 1,150 rioters have been arrested, over 800 convicted. Then House Minority Leader, Kevin McCarthy, called Trump's actions "atrocious and totally wrong" and told House Republicans that Trump "should resign." However, McCarthy soon pivoted and made a "humiliating pilgrimage to kiss Mr. Trump's ring" (Washington Post). Similarly, then Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell blasted Trump at his impeachment trial, but now says he would support Trump if he is the 2024 GOP presidential nominee.

In October, Trump's chaos was on display in the House. Extreme GOP election deniers forced a vote to fire Speaker McCarthy. With terrorism and war engulfing Israel and the Middle East, Russian aggression pounding Ukraine and an imminent federal government shutdown threatening to sink the economy, there was GOP chaos. The leaderless House was paralyzed with Republicans unable to agree on a new speaker. Nebraska GOP Representative Don Bacon aptly said: "We're not a governing body." Trump vetoed any choice for speaker if not an election denier.

It appeared that House Republicans would elect Ohio GOP election denier Jim Jordan as speaker. Jordan was key to Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election. But Jordan's pugnacity was too much for some House Republicans. However, all six Wisconsin GOP representatives, lacking honor and integrity, voted for Jordan, despite death threats against Jordan's GOP House opponents! Wisconsin GOP Representative Mike Gallagher pathetically abandoned his previous stance: "I just don't think we want to endorse the principle that January 6 (counting electoral college votes) is a legitimate forum for Congress to overturn the will of the states and the people. ... If you've endorsed that principle, then you've already destroyed the idea of American government" (January 2021).

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

Former Wyoming GOP Representative Liz Cheney told CNN that GOP representatives who voted to overturn the 2020 presidential election were not fit to be speaker: “And I think that, if it isn’t a disqualification, it will send a very clear message ... to voters, as they think about who they’re going to vote for in 2024, to what extent can you trust this group of Republicans to defend the Constitution if they’re unwilling to even acknowledge the rulings of the courts, as well as the constitutional process that unfolded and the complete lack of evidence (that the election was stolen), as well as all of the testimony (from) the January 6 committee?”

However, all Wisconsin GOP representatives (present) voted for Trump endorsed Louisiana GOP election denier Representative Mike Johnson for speaker (generalissimo Representative Derrick Van Orden was in Israel). Speaker Johnson, a little-known firebrand, was Trump’s accomplice in trying to overturn the 2020 presidential election. Johnson organized House Republicans to support a lawsuit blocking certification of electoral college votes from Wisconsin and other states. Trump is the speaker of the House in all but name. Shutdown next?

-Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C., for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 - 2009.