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USA

Trump's Legal Problems Could Affect the Republicans in November

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Donald Trump still dominates the Republican Party, but he and his party are vulnerable. Last week in the Republican Party primary in Wyoming, Trump's candidate, Harriet Hageman, trounced Liz Cheney, Trump's most vocal and important critic in the Republican Party, winning by 40 points.

Trump endorsed 200 candidates—159 of whom deny that Biden won the election. Some Trump's candidates won, some lost. Several of his victorious candidates are kooks like the quack Dr. Mehmet Oz in Pennsylvania, or white nationalists like “replacement theory” advocate J.D. Vance in Ohio. Their extreme rightwing views may make it hard for them to win in the general elections. Believing that, Democrats helped to finance some of them.

Trump continues to dominate the party, but the former president's legal problems could pose problems for him and the party. The U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland with the approval of a federal judge got a search warrant and on August 8 sent FBI agents to search Trump's home at Mar-a-Lago to recover many boxes of documents, some of them secret papers dealing with “nuclear” issues, that Trump had illegally taken with him when he left the White House. The warrant stated that the search was based on possible crimes: the concealment, mutilation or removal of records; obstruction of justice, including the destruction, alteration or falsification of records in federal investigations; and possible violations of the Espionage Act. Trump could be indicted for these felonies.

Garland, who is also investigating the January 6 insurrection and attempted coup d'état, could bring charges against Trump for his role in those events too. The U.S. House investigation into January 6 has argued that Trump was responsible for a conspiracy to organize the insurrection and overturn the results of the 2020 election, putting pressure on Garland to indict. Trump could face charges in Georgia too for criminal interference with the 2020 presidential election in which he asked Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, the state's top election official, “to find 11,780 votes. Biden defeated Trump in Georgia by 11,779 votes. In New York State Attorney General Letitia James is investigating the charge in a civil case that Trump misrepresented his companies' finances, while Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg in a parallel criminal investigation has already led to two indictments — both the Trump Organization and its CFO Allen Weisselberg were indicted in July 2020.

True to form, Trump claims that he is innocent of any wrongdoing and is being persecuted by the Democrats and the “deep state.” Most Trump followers—about 40 percent of the electorate—remain loyal and have rallied around him, making him the likely presidential candidate in 2024, if he is not in jail.

Some Republicans have pulled away. One Colorado Republican state senator, Kevin Priola, recently quit the Republican Party and became a Democrat because, he said, Republicans' attacks on democracy were an “existential threat.” Groups such as the Republican Accountability Project are spending millions to try to reach Trump's base and change their minds, though so far without great success.

Joe Biden, who calls Trump's politics “semi-fascism,” has seen his popularity rise somewhat and the Democrat's chances in the midterm election are looking up. Democrats recently passed the \$369 billion Inflation Reduction Act, the most important environmental legislation in years, the \$52.7 billion Chips Act to promote to support semiconductor chips manufacturing, the U.S. Congress supports his military spending for Ukraine while the Senate approved the proposal to admit Sweden and Finland to NATO, and finally, he used his presidential powers to cancel millions in student debt. All of that and opposition to the Republican Supreme Court's overturning of abortion rights may drive Democrats to the polls in numbers large enough to keep the Senate and perhaps—though unlikely—keep the House.

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Written for l'Anticapitaliste.

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