

CNN October 30, 2021 Jim Kolbe is a former Republican member of Congress from Arizona and an adviser to the Renew America Movement (RAM), a nonprofit focused on countering political extremism.

“Former President Donald Trump may have left the White House, but make no mistake: his specter hangs over the next election. With about a year left until the 2022 midterms, a number of pro-Trump incumbents are up for reelection in key races around the country.

Among them are Representatives Lauren Boebert and Marjorie Taylor Greene. Rep. Matt Gaetz, whose term ends in 2023 (it's still unclear whether he will run for reelection), tried last week to dub all three the "[pro-America squad](#)." To their critics, however, they might as well be called the "anti-democracy crew" for fervently [defending](#) the former president's claims of a stolen election.

The [rhetoric of these extremists may be shocking](#), but they no longer represent a small fringe of the party. Their views have crept into the mainstream and their faces will define the next election cycle.

Right now, Republicans are favored to win back the House. If they prevail, the lower Congressional chamber will become a haunted House that could be overrun by the former president's allies and possessed by his whims.

This may sound like hyperbole, but Trump's surrogates have done little to dispel the suggestion that Republicans could name him Speaker of the House if they retake the lower chamber (an outcome which is [technically possible](#), since the top job does not need to be held by an elected member of Congress.)

Liz Harrington, a spokesperson for the former president, [told NPR](#), "We know a lot of people are talking about it. A lot of people like the idea, but it's nothing Mr. Trump is thinking about." But when conservative talk show host Wayne Allyn Root presented Trump in June with the possibility of running for Congress and replacing House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the former president said, "You know, it's very interesting. That's so interesting."

However outlandish, the fact that such a move is [still being discussed](#) after former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon [presented the idea](#) in February as a means to lead impeachment proceedings against President Joe Biden after the 2022 midterm elections is evidence that the twice-impeached ex-president wields a commanding grip over his party, whether he is in office or not.

Democrats, if you want to win, get tough

It is also why a growing band of concerned Republicans are coming together under the banner of the [Renew America Movement \(RAM\)](#) to oppose the reelection of representatives -- from our own party — who we believe pose the greatest risk to the future of the GOP and the country. While political extremism poses a danger on both the left and the right, we believe it is our role to police it within our own ranks.

The [list of divisive figures](#) goes beyond the likes of Gaetz, Boebert, and Greene, and includes House leaders who have failed to keep Trumpism at bay and betrayed the conservative movement.

Most of us in RAM -- [including](#) former Republican governors, congressmen, cabinet secretaries and party leaders -- have worked with the highest-ranking GOP figures over the years and once considered them reasonable. Yet we cannot abide their eagerness to put one man's interests over those of the country, or to look the other way as the party's junior ranks prioritize confrontation over compromise.

That is why we are mobilizing concerned conservatives, independents and principled progressives against divisive Republicans, recruiting individuals to oppose them where possible and planning to campaign directly in their races.

Our concerns are not merely based on differences in philosophy. Yes, these "[dividers](#)" have strayed from the Party of Lincoln's core values, but worse than that, they have shaken Americans' faith in democracy and fomented a national security crisis by contributing to a [surge in support for political violence](#) in America.

We know it will be difficult to unseat these extremists, in part because they thrive in politically safe districts. But the fight to weed out unfit and dangerous politicians is not one we can afford to neglect.

Picking up where the "Never Trump" coalition left off, we are now focusing our firepower on the worst-of-the-worst politicians — and laying out the characteristics that we believe are disqualifying, namely:

Never Bigotry. We will not tolerate politicians in our party—such as Representatives [Paul Gosar](#) and [Andy Biggs](#), who pander to racist groups or associate with those who spout Islamophobic, anti-Semitic and otherwise bigoted views.

Never Conspiracies and Threats of Violence. We will not tolerate Representative [Marjorie Taylor Greene](#), who has embraced and peddled conspiracy theories, or Representative Burgess Owens, who -- despite denying that he believes in QAnon -- has reportedly [appeared on programs linked to the conspiracy theory, appealing for financial support](#). And we will stand against Representative Madison Cawthorn, who has [warned of "bloodshed"](#) after repeating debunked election fraud conspiracies.

Never Lies. We will not tolerate the actions of leading House Republicans—such as Minority Leader [Kevin McCarthy](#), Minority Whip [Steve Scalise](#) and Representative [Jim Jordan](#) —who have undermined our democracy by repeatedly twisting and evading the truth in an attempt to protect Donald Trump.

We can and must do better.

While no one in our movement desires a civil war in the GOP, we will oppose the radical figures in our party as long as they dominate it. If left unchecked, their ranks will grow and pose a continuing threat to our system of government.

That is why we are committed to planting a flag against the populist forces that have hijacked the modern Republican Party. To those in the GOP who embrace the corrosive influences of bigotry, conspiracies and lies, we say: No. Never.