

A warning from Trump to the Supreme Court if he's not on Colorado ballot: 'chaos, bedlam'

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WASHINGTON – Warning of "chaos and bedlam," former President Donald Trump asked the Supreme Court to put a "swift and decisive end" to efforts to disqualify him from the presidential ballot.

These moves "threaten to disenfranchise tens of millions of Americans and which promise to unleash chaos and bedlam," he said.

Trump made that argument in his main filing to the court before the Feb. 8 oral arguments on his earlier request that the court overturn a bombshell decision from a Colorado court that could keep him off that state's ballot over his actions connected to the violence at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Trump hasn't said yet if he plans to attend the arguments in which he would be facing the three justices he appointed to the court, along with the rest of the bench. He has been attending civil trials in New York state and federal court, for alleged business fraud and defamation, despite campaigning for president in Iowa and New Hampshire.

The Republican National Committee, GOP congressional leaders, attorneys general, secretaries of state and other Republican officials from across the country have filed supporting briefs backing Trump, the frontrunner for the nomination.

Colorado's Supreme Court ruled last month that Trump was barred from another term – and therefore banned from that state's primary ballot – by a Reconstruction era provision in the 14th Amendment intended to keep federal officials who sided with the Confederacy from regaining power in the reconstructed federal government.

That decision was put on hold pending the outcome of Trump's appeal, as was a similar decision in Maine.

Other states have considered the issue and reached different conclusions from Colorado and Maine: California Secretary of State Shirley Weber, a Democrat, said she would include Trump on her state's primary ballot. Supreme courts in Michigan and Minnesota both ruled that Trump would remain on the ballots in those states.

Trump's arguments include that the insurrection provision of the 14th Amendment doesn't apply to former presidents. And even if it does, Trump's lawyers wrote, "he did not `engage in' anything that qualifies as `insurrection.'"

The Colorado Supreme Court, which split 4-3 over whether Trump can be disqualified, said the record "amply demonstrates that President Trump fully intended to—and did—aid or further the insurrectionists' common unlawful purpose of preventing the peaceful transfer of power in this country."

"He exhorted them to fight to prevent the certification of the 2020 presidential election. He personally took action to try to stop the certification," the majority wrote. "And for many hours, he and his supporters succeeded in halting that process."