

“LEAVE THE REST TO” MIKE JOHNSON: REPUBLICANS PREPARE TO ELECT KEY JAN6 FIGURE AS SPEAKER

Update: Sure enough, Johnson was elected unanimously, 220-209. All the Republicans who had raised issues about election denialism (like Ken Buck) capitulated, as did all the so-called moderates.

On December 27, 2020, Donald Trump told Richard Donoghue to announce that the election was corrupt.

*rest, just say that the election was
was corrupt + leave the rest to me and
the R Congressmen.*

“Leave the rest to me and the R Congressmen,”
Trump said.

One of those Congressmen – one who had for weeks been inventing reasons for other Republican Congressmen to defy their oaths – was Mike Johnson.

NYT described Johnson’s role this way:

[I]n early December 2020, the Texas attorney general filed a long-shot appeal citing an array of unproven claims of fraud and other irregularities and asking the U.S. Supreme Court to invalidate the Pennsylvania results on similar constitutional grounds.

Mr. Johnson drafted a supporting brief that focused on the constitutional argument. As chairman of the Republican Study Committee, he pushed its members to sign the brief, and he also wrote an

email to all Republican lawmakers warning in bold red letters that Mr. Trump would be tracking their response. “He said he will be anxiously awaiting the final list to review,” he wrote.

[snip]

The lawyer for the House Republican leadership told Mr. Johnson that his arguments were unconstitutional, according to three people involved in the conversations, and Ms. Cheney, also a lawyer, called the brief “embarrassing.” Mr. McCarthy, the Republican leader, told members that he refused to sign, the three people said.

Nonetheless, Mr. Johnson pushed ahead and filed the brief on Dec. 10 with 105 lawmakers as co-signers, and within a day he had added 20 more – including Mr. McCarthy. Later, at the caucus meeting on Jan. 5, 2021, Mr. Johnson suggested the signers, in effect, had signaled their support for declaring “constitutional infirmity” as grounds for objecting. Most of the signers did exactly that.

In the days leading up to January 6, he invented a reason beyond voter fraud not to do what the Constitution requires.

In formal statements justifying their votes, about three-quarters relied on the arguments of a low-profile Louisiana congressman, Representative Mike Johnson, the most important architect of the Electoral College objections.

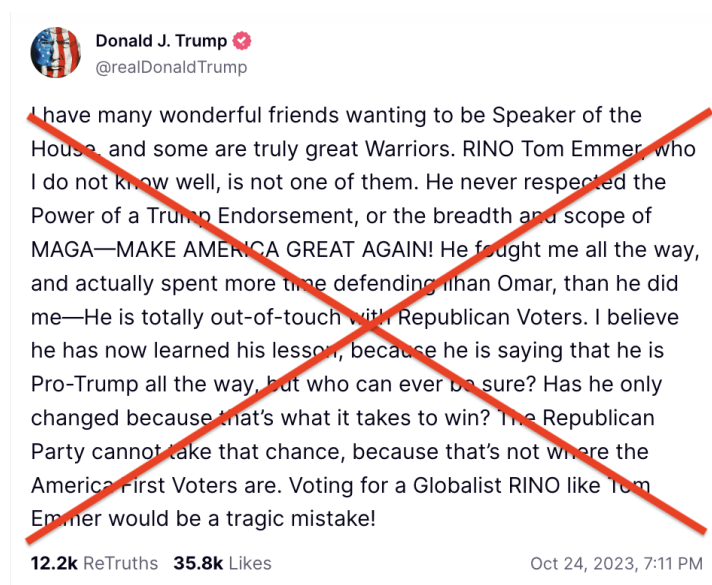
On the eve of the Jan. 6 votes, he presented colleagues with what he called a “third option.” He faulted the way some states had changed voting procedures during the pandemic, saying it was unconstitutional, without supporting the outlandish claims of Mr.

Trump's most vocal supporters. His Republican critics called it a Trojan horse that allowed lawmakers to vote with the president while hiding behind a more defensible case.

On Monday night, Trump said something similar as what he said to Richard Donoghue, but he said it publicly. He told supporters in New Hampshire that they don't have to vote, they only have to watch what sounds like vote counters.

You got to get out there and you got to watch those voters. You don't have to vote. Don't worry about voting. The voting, we got plenty of votes. You got to watch election night.

The next day, Matt Gaetz first shepherded Tom Emmer's nomination to be Speaker, then let Trump destroy his candidacy by Tweet (Trump's return to his fraud trial was delayed slightly, and this post came out while he was in the courtroom).



By the end of the evening, Johnson had been picked as the next man to try to get 217 votes.

When a reporter asked Johnson, at the gleeful presser afterwards, about his role in leading efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, everyone booed, he simply shook his

head, and called for the next question.

It remains the case that no vote in these caucus meetings have generated the total votes necessary to win. Politico reported that 44 of those present didn't vote for either candidates, and the total votes cast were only 201: still less than Hakeem Jeffries will get.

Republicans went back to the drawing board, and made Johnson the latest aspirant to a position the fractured and exhausted conference can't seem to fill. He beat out a field of four other candidates, including Byron Donalds, in the final ballot by a 128 to 29 vote. Some 44 other Republicans didn't vote for either of the two men.

But it increasingly looks like this process of picking a Speaker is a process designed to oust those who did support their oaths on January 6 and replace them with people who could find excuses to pick Donald Trump in 2025.

Update: The first round, via secret ballot, is where Johnson only got 128 votes. He would have gotten around 198 in a later public vote.

He won only 128 votes, defeating Rep. Byron Donalds (R-Fla.), who won 29 votes. But 44 Republicans voted for other candidates – including 43 who voted for McCarthy, according to notes taken by Rep. Randy Weber (R-Tex.).

But Johnson did far better in a roll-call vote late Tuesday night in which House Republicans voted by name instead of by secret ballot. Just three lawmakers voted “present” and about 20 were absent, according to two lawmakers. The rest backed Johnson.