

# [***House Republicans ditch their day jobs to stand with Trump, while legislating languishes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C20-HTK1-JC5B-G4B6-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

**Body**

Leaving Washington behind, prominent far-right House Republicans who have repeatedly [*thrown this Congress into chaos*](https://apnews.com/article/speaker-johnson-oust-motion-to-vacate-marjorie-taylor-greene-482da113f542b62ee00b5f1692f58a5b) showed up Thursday at [*Donald Trump’s hush money trial*](https://apnews.com/live/trump-trial-updates-day-18-cohen) to do what they do best.

They stood outside Trump Tower filming their support for the indicted former president. They filed into the Manhattan courthouse “standing back and standing by,” as Rep. Matt Gaetz put it — invoking Trump’s call to the [*extremist Proud Boys*](https://apnews.com/article/enrique-tarrio-capitol-riot-seditious-conspiracy-sentencing-da60222b3e1e54902db2bbbb219dc3fb). They were admonished to put down their cell phones.

And the House Republicans commandeered the spotlight — much like [*House Speaker Mike Johnson*](https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-speaker-mike-johnson-court-09aef3de395fa77843f2600f40da6ac3) did earlier in the week — to rant against what they called the “kangaroo court” and the “political persecution” of Trump, as their day jobs waited for their return.

“President Trump is not going anywhere,” said Rep. [*Lauren Boebert*](https://apnews.com/hub/lauren-boebert), R-Colo., as hecklers interrupted.

“And we are not going anywhere either. We are here to stand with him.”

The split-screen scene between New York and D.C. provided one of the more vivid examples yet of how Republicans have tossed aside the de rigueur tasks of governing in favor of the engineered spectacle of grievance, performance and outrage that powers Trump-era American ***politics***.

As much of Congress stalled out yet again, unable to legislate through the country’s challenges, the Republicans chose to spend the day going viral.

The excursion was all the more remarkable because it comes as House Republicans were focused Thursday on moving to hold Attorney General Merrick Garland [*in contempt of Congress*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-robert-hur-classified-documents-justice-department-edf67af3810ab877c7c195956b49b3a6) — part of a broader campaign attack on President Joe Biden.

The House’s Oversight and Judiciary Committee Republicans are demanding the Justice Department turn over evidence in the classified documents case against Biden, including an audio [*interview*](https://apnews.com/joe-biden-special-counsel-report) that is potentially embarrassing to the president as he stumbles through some answers. The Judiciary panel soldiered on Thursday, while the Oversight committee punted its hearing to evening, once lawmakers return.

Rep. [*Marjorie Taylor Greene*](https://apnews.com/hub/marjorie-taylor-greene), perhaps the most outspoken of Trump's allies who joined him in New York when he was first charged in the case, lambasted her GOP colleagues for dashing to Manhattan when she said they should be back in Washington doing congressional business.

“I'm here doing my job,” Greene said on the eve of the trip.

Greene particularly criticized Johnson, [*the speaker she tried to oust*](https://apnews.com/article/speaker-johnson-ouster-failed-marjorie-taylor-greene-11b3f1fa0c3b18a87d6ef797da739972), for “running up” to New York when she is pushing him toward her next big project, dismantling Special Counsel Jack Smith's office and its [*federal indictments*](https://apnews.com/trump-election-2020-indictment) against Trump, including for trying to overturn the 2020 election in the run-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack.

It all unfolds as Congress is on record as being among the most unproductive in recent times, with few legislative accomplishments or bills passed into law.

Republicans swept to House majority control in 2023, but became quickly consumed by infighting as traditional conservatives were pushed aside by Trump's national populist Make America Great Again movement. They ousted their own leader, then-Speaker Kevin McCarthy, derailed priority bills and left Johnson forced to rely on help from Democrats to stay in power, an unheard of scenario.

“The extreme MAGA Republicans have brought nothing but chaos, dysfunction and extremism to the Congress from the very beginning,” said Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the Democratic leader. “And they cannot point to a single thing that they’ve been able to do on their own to deliver real results, to solve problems for hardworking American taxpayers.”

“Get a job,” the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee posted on social media.

Outside the courthouse, the dozen or so Republican lawmakers didn’t dress the same, as others did with matching dark suits and Trump-styled red ties earlier in the week, but still formed a unified front for Trump.

“We're watching the persecution of a patriot,” said Rep. Diana Harshbarger, R-Tenn. “What a price to be a patriot President Trump has paid.”

Gaetz called it the “Mr. Potato Head doll of crimes" where the prosecutors had to "stick together a bunch of things" to make a case.

While some like Gaetz are among Trump’s biggest backers in Congress, others are working quickly to burnish their credentials with the MAGA movement that now defines the Republican Party for their own political survival.

The chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, Rep. Bob Good, R-Va., had been late to endorse Trump, and now faces a difficult primary next month. His Trump-aligned challenger, Republican John McGuire, was able to ride with Good and the other lawmakers in Trump’s motorcade to the courthouse.

“We’re here to have his back,” Good said of Trump. “We're here to defend him and to tell the truth about this travesty of justice, this political persecution, this election interference, this rigging of elections.”

Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., who had been a supporter of his home state presidential contender Nikki Haley, derided the “kangaroo court” prosecuting Trump.

Arizona Rep. Eli Crane said Democrats are prosecuting Trump because “they can't beat him” at the ballot box in November.

Crane said he and other Republicans are fighting to “Make America Great Again,” which after the afternoon of heckling, drew a round of cheers.

By day’s end, they were back at the Capitol, several of them recounting their visit in a series of late-evening floor speeches, all caught on the cameras, before they finished up for the night, and closed out the House.

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