

# [***Republican committee to select Buck's likely replacement, adding a challenge to Boebert's campaign***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNB-P071-JC5B-G228-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Associated Press

March 28, 2024 Thursday 11:56 PM GMT

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**Section:** DOMESTIC NEWS; POLITICAL NEWS; STATE AND REGIONAL

**Length:** 708 words

**Byline:** JESSE BEDAYN, Associated Press/Report for America

**Dateline:** DENVER

**Body**

DENVER — A panel of Colorado Republicans will select a candidate Thursday who will likely serve out [*the final months*](https://apnews.com/article/ken-buck-resigns-congress-colorado-ba8123ca43626ee07150a423aa0fcb07) of U.S. [*Rep. Ken Buck*](https://apnews.com/hub/ken-buck) ’s term — and could pose a challenge to Rep. Lauren Boebert’s bid for another term in Congress.

It's an unusual and confusing twist in a closely watched Republican primary race for a district that the far-right Boebert [*jumped into after a near loss*](https://apnews.com/article/lauren-boebert-district-colorado-republican-election-58cf21682012023f1362a01932909d36) in the district she currently holds. Whoever the committee chooses is expected to prevail in the special election against the Democratic nominee, and then finish Buck's term and reinforce the Republicans' slim majority in the U.S. House.

But the decision could have far-reaching consequences. The committee is expected to pick one of the current Republican primary candidates competing for the same seat. That won't be Boebert, since she opted to finish her current term in her old district, so one of her rivals will likely secure the role.

Whoever is picked would be running in two separate races for the same seat until the June election, giving them greater attention, media coverage and expanded fundraising opportunities — a boon for the candidates who are otherwise eclipsed by Boebert's national name brand and campaign chest.

“Ken Buck really threw a wrench into the whole thing,” said Seth Masket, director at the Center on American ***Politics*** in Denver, who noted that it's unclear what Buck's intentions are. “It was already a fairly topsy-turvy race, but I think this does make it a little bit harder for her.”

Boebert said in a recent statement that the move was interference: “The establishment concocted a swampy backroom deal to try to rig an election.”

The congresswoman has built a far-right name with a ferocious political style, in step with the accusation of election rigging, and remains a known, if divisive, quantity among conservatives nationwide.

While Boebert has made headlines with scandals, including a tape of her [*groping and vaping with a date*](https://apnews.com/article/boebert-gop-voters-campaign-apology-reelection-frisch-af8cf7cb563e6b97bc75f3e8b849281c) in a Denver theater, she’s also garnered endorsements from former President Donald Trump and current Speaker of the House Mike Johnson.

Those votes of confidence will likely go far for Boebert in the new district — a expansive sweep of Colorado's plains, where voters overwhelmingly supported Trump in 2020 and where her opponents are lesser known, local Republicans.

While it would be hard for the other candidates to match Boebert’s national conservative clout, the special election shakeup could give one of them an opportunity to make up some ground.

“Whoever it is, they are going to be much more well known come June,” said Conor Dowling, a professor of political science at the University of Buffalo.

The committee is convening at the fairgrounds in Hugo, Colorado, on Colorado's corner of the Great Plains. It's a small town of some 800 people, but legend and photos hold that then-President Theodore Roosevelt stopped in this town to share a meal with cowboys at the turn of the 20th century.

Boebert moved east to join the race in this district at the end of last year, after she nearly lost her old, Republican-leaning seat to a Democratic candidate in 2022.

The slim margin raised questions of whether her Trumpian style still had purchase among GOP voters. After the Democrat who nearly beat her went on to far outraise her for an expected 2024 rematch, the congresswoman switched districts.

The move incited grumblings about political maneuvering, with some of Boebert's homegrown primary opponents accusing her of “carpetbagging."

She defended the move by saying her voice is still needed in Congress, and that her exodus from the old district makes it easier for Republicans to retain the seat, and therefore their majority in the U.S. House.

The option to district hop was opened to Boebert after Buck announced he wouldn’t run for reelection last year, citing his party's handling of Trump.

Then, earlier this month, Buck abruptly resigned, pointing to the “bickering and nonsense” he said now pervades the U.S. Capitol. Buck left Congress on March 22.

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Bedayn is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. [*Report for America*](https://www.reportforamerica.org/) is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

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