

# [***Lisa Murkowski, done with Donald Trump, won't rule out leaving GOP***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMH-WV81-JBSS-S00G-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, aghast at Donald Trump's candidacy and the direction of her party, won't rule out bolting from the GOP.

The veteran Alaska Republican, one of [*seven Republicans who voted to convict Trump*](https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/13/politics/republican-votes-trump-guilty-convict-impeachment/index.html) in his second impeachment trial amid the aftermath of January 6, 2021, is done with the former president and said she "absolutely" would not vote for him.

"I wish that as Republicans, we had ... a nominee that I could get behind," Murkowski told CNN. "I certainly can't get behind Donald Trump."

The party's shift toward Trump has caused Murkowski to consider her future within the GOP. In the interview, she would not say if she would remain a Republican.

Asked if she would become an independent, Murkowski said: "Oh, I think I'm very independent minded." And she added: "I just regret that our party is seemingly becoming a party of Donald Trump."

Pressed on if that meant she might become an independent, Murkowski said: "I am navigating my way through some very interesting political times. Let's just leave it at that."

Murkowski hasn't always been on the outs within her party. Appointed in 2002 by her father, Gov. Frank Murkowski, the senator's ***politics*** were in line with the president at the time - George W. Bush - as she maintained a tight relationship with the senior GOP senator from her state, Ted Stevens, who helped build Alaska through federal dollars he funneled back home.

She later found herself at odds with Sen. John McCain's running mate, the then-Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, who had been sharply critical of her father. As the tea party rose in 2010, Murkowski was at sharp odds with the insurgent right-wing of her party. She lost a primary in 2010 to Republican Joe Miller, only to later hold on to her seat after she became the second candidate ever to win a write-in campaign for Senate in the general election.

Murkowski skated to reelection in her next two elections, even after voting to convict Trump in 2021, voting against Brett Kavanaugh for the Supreme Court in 2018 and supporting Ketanji Brown Jackson in 2022. She had been targeted by Trump and his allies in 2022 but was backed by Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell and his high-spending outside group.

In the 2024 cycle, Murkowski - along with Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine - offered a late endorsement of former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, just days before she dropped out of the race.

Now, Murkowski is clear she's ready to move past Trump. Asked about Trump's recent comments that Jewish people who vote for Democrats [*must "hate" their religion*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/18/politics/trump-antisemitic-jewish-people-israel-support-netanyahu/index.html), Murkowski said it was an "incredibly wrong and an awful statement."

And Murkowski pushed back when asked last week about Trump's other controversial rhetoric, namely that he views January 6 prisoners as "hostages" and "patriots" who should be pardoned.

"I don't think that it can be defended," Murkowski said. "What happened on January 6 was ... an effort by people who stormed the building in an effort to stop an election certification of an election. It can't be defended."

By Manu Raju, CNN

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