

# [***Kari Lake airs election grievances as GOP leaders urge her to look forward***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BHJ-DPR1-DY7V-G002-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

GOP leaders have counseled Arizona Senate candidate Kari Lake to avoid airing grievances about past elections and instead center her campaign on a more forward-looking message.

She hasn't exactly taken the advice.

While Lake did say she is more concerned about her upcoming battle against Democratic candidate Rep. Ruben Gallego, the former TV broadcaster is still not shying away from echoing former President Donald Trump's conspiracy theories about the election when asked about the issue as she fights for a critical Senate seat in a battleground state.

In a wide-ranging interview with CNN last week, Lake continued to insist there were "major problems" with her own failed gubernatorial bid and falsely claimed the 2020 election was "rigged."

"I think it was a rigged election. ... I believe it was. But what I'm trying to do is look forward," she said in the interview, which will air on Sunday's "Inside ***Politics***" with Manu Raju. "I do continue to talk about it when I'm on the campaign trail in Arizona. ... When I'm on the campaign trail, the people care deeply about it.

"I want honest elections that all voters - whether they be the most liberal Democrat or most conservative Republican - knows that their one legal vote counted, and we actually have results when we go to bed on election night," she added. "We can live with the results because we believe the process was fair. And that's not what we have right now."

Trump's claims that the election was "stolen" have been [*dismissed*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/16/politics/fact-check-trump-officials-testimony-debunking-election-lies/index.html) not only by the courts, but by numerous officials who worked in his administration and on his campaign. And Lake lost her own race to Democrat Katie Hobbs by [*more than 17,000 votes*](https://ballotpedia.org/Arizona_gubernatorial_election,_2022), in large part because people who voted for Republican candidates in other races on the ballot [*didn't vote for Lake*](https://twitter.com/utilityreporter/status/1617194179536486400?s=20&t=AyOv1ED7UEddEPaBY60MmQ).

Yet Lake continues to repeat the same election denialism, even as she vows to look forward, that has been central to her identity as a MAGA firebrand - a sign that it may be a challenge to rein in some of her most far-right instincts, even as establishment Republicans may prod her to tone down her rhetoric ahead of the key race this fall.

Sen. Steve Daines of Montana, the head of the Senate GOP's campaign arm, told CNN before Lake announced her bid that he would encourage her to talk squarely about the future.

"I think one thing we've learned from 2022 is voters do not want to hear about grievances from the past," said Daines, who endorsed Lake's bid last month. "They want to hear about what you're going to do for the future. And if our candidates stay on that message of looking down the highway versus the rearview mirror, I think they'll be a lot more successful, particularly in their appeal to independent voters, which usually decide elections."

And GOP Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming, who has also endorsed Lake and helped shepherd her around the Capitol last week, told CNN he has given her this message: "To continue to talk about the things that people in Arizona are talking about: which is the border, which is in deep disarray."

When asked whether she still believes her own race was stolen, Lake pivoted to talking about immigration and the border - but not without first baselessly casting doubt on the 2022 Arizona election results, even though other GOP candidates prevailed statewide that year.

"We had major problems in our election, and we're really working to resolve those problems. We still have some court cases," Lake said. "What I'm concerned about going forward in the next election is my radical opponent wants to give 9 to 12 million people who poured in illegally, invaded our country, the ability to vote. He wants them all to vote. That's wrong."

Last year, Gallego voted to protect a DC law that would allow an estimated 50,000 noncitizens, including undocumented immigrants and foreign diplomats, to vote in local elections. But Democrats sayLake's rhetoric about the border echoes far-right fringe theories about the party trying to gain an electoral advantage by purposely allowing immigrants into the country.

Asked for comment by CNN, Gallego introduced his State of the Union guests who were in tow - both of whom served in Iraq with the congressman - and said: "Marine combat veterans are not radicals."

Asked for further comment, a Gallego campaign spokeswoman said in a statement to CNN that Lake "will say or do anything to gain power, including ban abortion and challenge the results of the 2020 and 2022 elections."

"She disrespects our war heroes, embraces traitors who assaulted our police on January 6th, and cannot bring people together to solve our most pressing problems. Arizona deserves better," spokeswoman Hannah Goss said.

CNN's Manu Raju contributed to this report.

By Melanie Zanona, CNN

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