

# [***DC Loves Cornyn's Bid To Replace McConnell. Texans? Not So Much; 'It's highly probable that he will face a formidable primary challenge'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BR2-88P1-JBFB-H01V-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/GettyImages-1993434616-scaled-e1711975851992.jpg)

Republican Texas Sen. John Cornyn seems to enjoy wide support among Washington's movers and shakers for a potential Senate leader bid, but his home state of Texas might have the last word.

Powerful and deep-pocketed forces in Texas plan to challenge Cornyn's 2026 reelection bid, claiming he represents a return to establishment ***politics***.

The Daily Caller talked to local elected officials, GOP candidates for elected office and high-profile political leaders who argue voters' dissatisfaction with Cornyn's job performance in the Senate stems from his lack of support for former president Donald Trump and conservative policies championed by Texan GOP voters. That dissatisfaction may pose a lethal threat [*to his hopes*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/29/john-cornyn-announces-intention-run-gop-leader/) to be the next Senate Majority Leader.

“Texans deserve Senators who will fight for them against the DC swamp, which is why I filed a bill to allow Texas to recall Senators if they go rogue,” said Republican Texas State Rep. Brian Harrison in a statement to the Daily Caller. “I hear from many constituents who are unhappy with Sen. Cornyn for some of his high-profile capitulations to Democrats. I hope he listens to their concerns so that we can protect freedom and liberty for the next generation.”

Harrison's Republican colleague in the Texas legislature also criticized Cornyn and supported a potential Senate bid for Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton.

“John Cornyn is a total failure. Texas will not re-elect him to the US Senate, and his colleagues would be fools to trust him,” said Texas State Rep. Tony Tinderholt. “Republican voters deserve leaders who will fight for them and put America first. John Cornyn is nothing more than a swampy sellout.”

“Ken Paxton is a proven conservative fighter with a record of taking on the Swamp and delivering results for our voters,” he continued. “Texans are proud to have him as our Attorney General and would be thrilled to have him in the US Senate.”

Paxton's name has been floated by a number of Texas conservative figures as a possible candidate to replace Cornyn in the Senate. Since becoming attorney general in 2015, Paxton has firmly entrenched himself with the right flank of the Texas GOP, aligning himself as a strong ally of former President Donald Trump and the grassroots base of the party.

While it may seem beneficial for Texas to have a hometown man leading Senate Republicans, there are some powerful players who see things differently and may work to stop it. [***(RELATED: Here Is Who Will Likely Replace McConnell As GOP Senate Leader)***](https://dailycaller.com/2023/09/07/likely-replacements-mitch-mcconnell-republican-senate-leader/)

“For years, I have been looking for any evidence whatsoever that John Cornyn is actually a Republican. So far, I have been greatly disappointed, over and over again, as have all grassroots conservatives and the Republican Party of Texas,” Republican State Senate nominee and BizPac Founder and Executive Chairman Joseph Trahan told the Caller. “He continually sides with the Democrats and defines the UNIPARTY with his policies. The last thing the United States needs right now is a Democrat or RINO in leadership of the US Senate.”

Trahan, a successful businessman from the energy sector who is well-connected in Texas ***politics***, is just one of many form the Lone Star state who could make 2026 a headache for Cornyn. He suggested Ted Cruz should be the Texas senator who runs for leadership.

If I could remove one man from the US Senate, it would be Chuck Schumer. If I could remove two, the next would be John Cornyn.

A neocon cancer on Texas that directs all state political funds & patronage. Notice he never said a word in support of Governor Abbott on the border. [*https://t.co/8XoefJTLvh*](https://t.co/8XoefJTLvh)

- Dissident Soaps (@DissidentSoaps) [*February 14, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DissidentSoaps/status/1757614512163680599?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“Another fact about John Cornyn, in fact, the underlying reason grassroots conservatives rebuke him is he has proven he is anti-gun, anti-Trump, and pro-democrat crossover voters. He's the worst kind of politician, that is, a global elite career politician, not a citizen representative fighting for liberty, government transparency, justice, and for Texas first and Texans first,” he added.

Although Texas GOP Chairman candidate Ben Armenta credits Cornyn with helping approve Trump's Supreme Court nominees, he sees a disconnect between grassroots voters and the Senator.

“There have certainly been things that Sen. Cornyn has done that have benefited our movement,” Armenta told the Daily Caller. “Things like what he did on the judicial committee in helping move forward many of Donald Trump's nominees, but there have been gaps, and I think you witness the grassroots calling that out. I want all the other senators in the Republican caucus to hold him accountable just like they would anybody else: make him stand by his record and listen to his constituents in Texas.”

“The job isn't just to go to DC and do whatever the inside-the-loop folks want you to do,” he continued. “The job is to go to DC and represent your constituents and, in this case, Texans and, in this case, conservative Republican Texans.”

Cornyn, by contrast, [*kicked off*](https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2023/05/18/cornyn-says-trump-cant-win-in-2024-gop-needs-someone-else-as-presidential-nominee/) the 2024 presidential cycle by stating the GOP needed to look anywhere but Trump for its nominee. The former president went on to dominate the Republican primary, particularly among the party's grassroots base.

Mitch Little, the GOP nominee for Texas House District 65, told the Caller that Cornyn is a strong fundraiser but could still be vulnerable.

“The money John Cornyn can raise in a primary race is not irrelevant,” said Little. “It does pose an obstacle to someone who wants to challenge him. But I will say the money is not everything. The bottom line is that when the grassroots decides they will move, they move.”

“My impression is that John Cornyn is the most vulnerable statewide politician because, from the grassroots perspective, he's decided to put the jersey on,” Little added. “And when I say put the jersey on, I mean he chose to throw in with national Republican figures who advance non-conservative ideals.”

“Look at the border deal he decided to go along with that died a very swift death in the US House of Representatives. It's that type of betrayal that has happened over and over again that is animating the grassroots. They do not believe he represents them.”

At the 2023 Texas GOP State Convention, voters booed Cornyn for his legislative efforts, which they believed would curtail their Second Amendment rights. [***(RELATED: EXCLUSIVE: Gun Owners Of America Comes Out Swinging Against John Cornyn After He Announced Bid For Senate Leader)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/29/exclusive-gun-owners-of-america-against-john-cornyn-after-announce-bid-senate-leader/)

[*Link to Video*](https://www.youtube.com/embed/NCLz4xXvIeI?feature=oembed)

Texas Republican Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller, whose name has also been floated alongside Paxton as a threat to Cornyn in 2026, told the Caller that the incident shows Cornyn is out of touch with base Republicans.

“In our last state Republican convention, Sen. Cornyn got booed off the stage, and that's from the grassroots,” said Miller. “They completely drowned him out. Everyone thought he was going to retire, but with this new opportunity, he's probably rethinking that. I don't know what his plans are. Obviously, if he gets into a powerful position, it would be hard for him not to want to be re-elected.”

“But in my opinion, it's going to be pretty hard for him to get re-elected in Texas. Just about any statewide elected official could beat him,” Miller continued. “It doesn't matter how much money he spends; the grassroots knows his history, and they know who the real conservatives are.”

Cornyn has no right to even consider running for Senate leadership.⁰⁰He should retire and spare gun owners more of his tyranny. [*https://t.co/ruKTPwCmOO*](https://t.co/ruKTPwCmOO)

- Gun Owners of America (@GunOwners) [*April 4, 2024*](https://twitter.com/GunOwners/status/1775970922307993600?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Charlie Kolean, the president of Strategic Political Management and a Texas ***politics*** expert, opined that Cornyn needs a political infrastructure in Texas similar to McConnell's stronghold in Kentucky to fend off potential contenders in 2026.

“As we look ahead to the 2026 US Senate race, all signs point to Senator John Cornyn throwing his hat in the ring once more, driven by his long-standing ambition to become the Senate Majority Leader,” suggests Kolean. “However, unlike McConnell's firm grip over Kentucky ***politics***, Cornyn has not demonstrated the same level of control in Texas.”

As a [*longtime ally*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/03/05/john-barrasso-passes-senate-gop-leadership-run-lower-post/) of Leader McConnell, Cornyn has gained a reputation in Washington as a prolific fundraiser and the Senate minority leader's right-hand man.

Like McConnell, Cornyn is an advocate for military aid to [*Ukraine*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/29/john-cornyn-ukraine-aid-senate-gop-leader/) and an interventionist foreign policy. He's also voted for a number of government spending bills that have displeased the party's grassroots.

McConnell [*touted delivering*](https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/475831-mcconnell-flexes-reelection-muscle-with-1b-gift-for-kentucky/) $1 billion in federal funds for his home state of Kentucky on the campaign trail in 2019 due to his position in the Senate, which boosted his standing among the Kentucky electorate. If Cornyn becomes the next Senate leader, he may use his position to direct federal funds for the Lone Star State and win over disgruntled voters.

“It's highly probable that he will face a formidable primary challenge, potentially from figures like Ken Paxton or Sid Miller, who both command significant respect among the state's conservative base,” Kolean added. “Their established credibility with Texas conservatives could pose a serious contest to Cornyn's campaign aspirations.”

While the race for the White House is on, Cornyn will have a campaign of his own to run to sure up his home-state support - Republicans [*are slated*](https://dailycaller.com/2023/09/07/likely-replacements-mitch-mcconnell-republican-senate-leader/) to convene after the November election to elect a new Senate leader.

Cornyn's senate office did not offer a response to questions from the Daily Caller prior to publication.

**Graphic**

John Cornyn (R-TX) arrives to a luncheon with Senate Republicans at the U.S. Capitol on February 07, 2024 in Washington, DC.

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