

# [***'Just Asking For Trouble': Republicans Sound Alarm On RNC Security, Secret Service Turns Deaf Ear***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1T-2T51-JBFB-H01N-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Black_bloc_at_RNC_running-e1715806795684.jpg)

Republican lawmakers have approached the U.S. Secret Service with concerns about security issues at July's Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but Secret Service has so far been unwilling to compromise, sources told the Daily Caller.

“We have identified a critical flaw with the Security Perimeter that creates an elevated and untenable safety risk to the attending public,” counsel to the Republican National Committee Todd R. Steggerda wrote to Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle in April.

The current [*Secret Service*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/05/09/tim-miller-secret-service-whistleblowers-alleged-claims-jesse-watters/) plan designates Père Marquette Park as the protected First Amendment zone for demonstrations, but Republicans say that's far too close to the convention spaces, which include Fiserv Forum (where the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks play) and UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena.

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Milwaukee.png)

A screenshot of Milwaukee's Pere Marquette Park, which is the current designated First Amendment protest zone in the Secret Service's security plan. Republicans are raising concerns with its proximity to Fiserv Forum and UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena, two of the Republican National Convention's primary venues. Screenshot/Google Maps

“The City's current plan would pack demonstrators into a one-block park - a park bordered by the two streets that thousands of peaceful attendees will be using to access the Convention site, as set out in the Secret Service proposal. This will force thousands of peaceful attendees and demonstrators, who may otherwise choose to avoid or limit direct, proximate engagement with one another, to be in extremely close, consistent, and unavoidable proximity,” Steggerda wrote in the letter obtained by the Daily Caller.

The convention [*expects*](https://gopconvention2024.com/about/) to draw over 50,000 attendees to the city to watch the President Trump accept the GOP's [*nomination*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/01/25/rnc-considering-draft-resolution-declare-trump-presumptive-nominee/) for president. [***(RELATED: Barron Trump Pulls Out Of Delegate Role At RNC, Melania Says: REPORT)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/05/10/barron-trump-rnc-delegate-2024-melania/)

“Having the protest zone this close to the entrances, uncontrolled, this close to the convention center,  you're just asking for trouble.” Republican Wisconsin Sen. [*Ron Johnson*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/25/trump-proof-ukraine-aid-nato-russia-joe-biden-mike-johnson/) told the Caller.

Johnson relayed his concerns to Secret Service, as did Republican Florida Sen. Rick Scott and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

“I am deeply concerned about reports that the security perimeter around the Republican Convention site in Milwaukee may be creating a likely - and preventable - area of conflict between protesters and convention attendees and delegates,” McConnell wrote in a May 10 letter to Cheatle, MSN [*reported*](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/mcconnell-pushes-secret-service-to-move-rnc-protesters-farther-away/ar-BB1mkbTq?ocid=BingNewsSerp).

McConnell's staff and Scott have apparently both met with Cheatle in recent days to persuade her to alter the Secret Service plan, Johnson told the Caller.

Senator Johnson also expressed frustration about the Secret Service's refusal to address GOP concerns.

“I appreciate what they do and I don't doubt their sincerity, but [Cheatle] is talking about the fact that they base their assessment on certain criteria and they made their assessment and now they can't change it. So she had the authority to use criteria they've used in the past to develop a security plan. She had the authority to draw up the plan but now she claims she doesn't have the authority to change it. I think that's crazy,” Johnson said.

“My experience with bureaucracy is they kind of dig their heels in. So I'm hoping she and the administration ... whoever she reports to ... in the end they report to the President, and my guess is if President Biden was aware of this, maybe that's the next step here,” he continued. “We need to raise his level, and get him to intervene and say, 'Let's make sure that we reduce the risk to the full extent we can.'”

“Again we've raised the issue. I hope it wouldn't happen, but if something were to happen, people have been put on notice,” Johnson added. “This isn't like Jan. 6 where there weren't warnings and people weren't raising issues.”

The RNC proposed expanding the security perimeter to include Père Marquette Park park and moving the designated First Amendment zone elsewhere.

“We're not concerned about the local protesters, it's about the people who come from who knows where. That's our concern and that's why we're asking them to move it to a different park because this is right on the edge of where one of the main pedestrian access points is,” a source in the Wisconsin Republican Party told the Caller.

Both McConnell and Johnson expressed the need to balance First Amendment and safety concerns.

“Listen we all - well, Republicans respect First Amendment rights,” Johnson said with a chuckle. “Democrats say they do, but we actually do. So we're pretty concerned about that but we're also concerned about the safety of convention goers. Plus, I want to make sure this is a success for Milwaukee and for Chicago. I want people leaving going, 'This was a great experience, the RNC made a great choice. Love Wisconsin, love fresh cheese curds. Love the people of Wisconsin.' That's what I want this thing to be. I don't want the whole story to be, 'Here's the 2024 Milwaukee riot.' We need to do everything we can to prevent that.”

The Secret Service maintained that its security plan aimed to “ensure the highest level of security, while minimizing impacts to the public,” Anthony Guglielmi, chief of communications for the Secret Service, [*told*](https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/05/14/secret-service-appears-unlikely-to-alter-rnc-protest-area-in-milwaukee/73603295007/) the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

Johnson, however, suggested that the Secret Service's unwillingness to budge could be politically motivated.

“I would say if it were any other administration ... I think they'd be intelligent enough to realize this could blow up in their faces, but because this is the Biden administration, and I understand how they've weaponized the federal government against American citizens - you know we've seen the threats they pose to democracy - I wouldn't put it by the Biden administration to view it politically and just sort of be chuckling in case something went awry,” he told the Caller. [***(RELATED: FBI Used Cash Bonuses To Encourage Agents To Wiretap More Americans, Whistleblower Says)***](https://dailycaller.com/2023/05/18/fbi-used-cash-bonuses-encourage-agents-to-wiretap-more-americans-whistleblower/)

Johnson also drew parallels between the upcoming RNC and the Capitol riot of Jan. 6, 2021.

“Let's face it, going back to Jan. 6, I still have my suspicions. If there was a security plan for Jan. 6, the only explanation you have for that security plan was it was a plan to allow something to happen,” he alleged. “Certainly they seized on that, basically used Jan. 6 as a way to accuse half of Americans to be potentially domestic terrorists.”

“I've pointed out repeatedly, the fact that they came up with the phrase 'armed insurrection' and then thousands of armed insurrectionists, almost instantaneously, almost had to be pre-planned,” Johnson continued. “That's the last thing I would've called what happened on Jan. 6. An “armed insurrection.” But that's exactly what Democrat leadership [said when they] came to the microphones that day and the day after. I mean it was already cooked. I have a great deal of suspicion of what happened in Jan. 6.”

“If they don't fix this, would I suspect that they wouldn't mind something happening? That they could exploit? Again, I wouldn't put anything beyond the possibility of what the Biden administration might do,” the senator concluded.

The convention is set to kick off on July 15 and run until July 18.

**Graphic**

Black bloc participants running at the 2008 Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota. Jake Mohan Creative Commons Attribution 2.0

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