

# [***Russia Urges Restraint After Iranian Attack; Anti-Israel Protesters Chant Death To America; Interview With Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR); Biden To Bibi: Will Not Join Strike Against Iran; Biden Foreign Policy Under Criticism; Biden Administration Still At Odds With Israel Over Rafah; Interview With Rep. Brian Mast (R-FL); Iranian Proxies At Center Of Israel- Hamas Conflict; Iran Warns US To Stay Away After Israel Attack; Jury Selection Monday In Trump Hush Money Trial; Trump Legal Cases Collide With 2024 Campaign; The Abortion Debate: Defining When Life Begins; Speaker Drama Resurfaces In Congress; Interview With Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-NC)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT6-NNJ1-JCS1-617Y-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News SUNDAY NIGHT IN AMERICA 9:00 PM EST

April 14, 2024 Sunday

Copyright 2024 Fox News Network LLC All Rights Reserved

**Section:** NEWS; Domestic

**Length:** 6577 words

**Byline:** Trey Gowdy, Ashley Strohmier

**Guests:** Tom Cotton, Brian Mast, Reza Pahlavi, Elliot Felig, Katie Cherkasky, Lauren Wright, Kevin Walling, Patrick McHenry

**Body**

MARK LEVIN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: We have people in our families who have fought for this country, many of whom have died.

Let's not surrender this to Biden and the other reprobates. Get engaged in some way somehow in your own role in life. We can beat these bastards.

I'll see you next time on "Life, Liberty & Levin."

TREY GOWDY, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Good evening and thank you for joining us on Trey Gowdy and it is SUNDAY NIGHT IN AMERICA. Missiles and drones filled the Israeli skies as Iran launched hundreds of attacks against the Jewish state. Most of the incoming weapons were intercepted by Israeli, US, or other friendly defense systems in the region. Is this the beginning of Iran's response? Or will Iran simply go back to fighting through proxies like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis?

And speaking of Iranian proxies, Russia is siding with Iran, again, for those wondering who the US should be pulling for in Russia's war against Ukraine.

After this unprecedented Iranian attack inside Israel, does the Biden administration still want Israel to halt its ground offensive in Gaza? And does Biden still believe Netanyahu is making a "mistake"? And did Biden in fact discourage Israel from immediately responding to the attacks of the last 24 hours? And what to make of Israeli opponents who chant this?

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

(PROTESTERS chanting "Death to America" in foreign language.)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GOWDY: That's "Death to America" for those wondering about the translation.

Joining us to react is Arkansas Senator Tom Cotton, an Army veteran who serves on the Senate Intel and Armed Services Committees.

Welcome to you, Senator.

Well, what do you make of Iran's response? And was that the beginning or the end of their direct engagement with Israel and especially the reporting that Biden advised Netanyahu not to respond?

SEN. TOM COTTON (R-AR): Thank you, Trey.

Unfortunately, that's neither the beginning nor the end of Iran's war in Israel. It has been waging that war for more than 40 years, just like it's been waging proxy war and shadow war against the United States.

I first want to commend the bravery and skill of American and Israeli pilots and other troops and troops from friendly nations like Saudi Arabia and Jordan and Great Britain, who helped intercept almost every single one of more than 300 drones and missiles shot at Israel.

But of course, President Biden is wrong, telling Israel they should respond.

Imagine America getting 300 drones and missiles shot at our homeland, and having a country telling us not to respond.

Now, it is up to Prime Minister Netanyahu and his War Cabinet and ultimately, the elected government and people of Israel about how and when they respond. It's hard to imagine this doesn't steal their resolve to finish the job against Hamas and Gaza, or to refuse to tolerate Hezbollah, Iran's proxies to its north in Lebanon, possessing more than 100,000 rockets and missiles and drones on its own and ultimately, to tolerate Iran with a nuclear weapon.

Imagine what last night would have looked like if Iran was shooting nuclear armed missiles into Israel.

But the question for us here in America is not so much what Israel will do, it is what President Biden is going to do. And there's a few things we can do right away, and they don't even require military force. He said he wants diplomatic solutions. I've got a few recommendations.

One, he keeps giving more than $10 billion and waive sanctions to Iran periodically. He should rescind those immediately. Two, he should work with our European partners to immediately reimpose the snapback sanctions under the flawed nuclear deal with Iran that he has refused to do now, for three- and-a-half years.

Three, he should immediately and fully enforce sanctions against Iran's shipment of oil, most of which goes to China, all of these things would immediately put Iran on the backfoot diplomatically and financially without President Biden even having to take a step of what he doesn't want to do anywhere, which is used the American military to ever defend American interests.

GOWDY: You know, Senator, while President Biden should listen to you, I'm not sure that he has been I mean, he has had tougher words for Netanyahu lately, even tougher than what he says to the religious fanatics running Iran.

So how do you, under this administration, how do you view our relationship with Israel given what he says to Netanyahu and what he doesn't say to the mullahs in Iran?

COTTON: Well, Trey, it doesn't seem to me like the relationship between President Biden and Prime Minister Netanyahu, through no fault of the Prime Minister is very good. It doesn't seem frankly, like the relationship between the Democratic Party and Israel is very good right now when you have pro-Hamas proxies running around like Rashida Tlaib in the House. We have Chris Van Hollen in the Senate demanding that we condition aid to Israel as if it is some third world tyranny.

But I can tell you, America's relationship with Israel is very strong and will remain very strong because normal Americans and both parties recognize that Israel is a great ally, a strong military that enhances our own strengths and protects our own interest in the Middle East, and also shares deep cultural, religious, historical and political ties with our nation, the exact kind of ally we should want to have.

So whatever the relationship is, between the president and the prime minister, the relationship between America and Israel is outstanding and rock solid.

GOWDY: Before I let you go, Russia seems to be siding with Iran. FISA is up for reauthorization. The most progressive member of the House, Miss Jayapal, who called Israel a racist state offered an amendment. What do you think of this requirement with FISA? Should it be reauthorized and should it be reauthorized with reforms?

COTTON: Well, we certainly need reforms of the FISA process to give the American people confidence it's not going to be abused the way other parts of FISA were abused against President Trump in 2016. I think the bill the House passed is probably the bill that will pass the Senate as well.

It has some important reforms in there. It's only a two-year reauthorization, so we'll have a chance to revisit it in President Trump's second year in office. But the kind of parade of horrible you just mentioned, Trey, I want to stress is happening because Joe Biden has projected weakness all around the world.

Russia did not invade Ukraine on Donald Trump's watch. He did on Barack Obama and Joe Biden's watch. Iran would have never thought to shoot 300 missiles and drones at Israel when Donald Trump was president.

Russia and Iran and China wouldn't have been mutually supporting each other in wars of unprovoked aggression the way they are now when Donald Trump was president.

That's why the world was safer and more stable and America therefore was safer and our interests were more protected when Donald Trump was president. That's one of the reasons why the American people are going to reelect Donald Trump later this year.

GOWDY: Senator Tom Cotton from the great state of Arkansas, who also served our country in uniform. Thank you for joining us on a Sunday night.

COTTON: Thank you, Trey.

GOWDY: Israel is still planning to enter the city of Rafah as part of his plan to eliminate Hamas, the Biden administration is still expressing opposition. Is President Biden running the war with Hamas or is Netanyahu and the Israeli War Cabinet?

Biden has been famously wrong in the past when it comes to military and foreign policy matters, but he wasn't the commander-in-chief, so his mistakes could be overcome, until now, until Afghanistan, Ukraine, and now Israel.

Florida Congressman Brian Mast served our country in uniform and now serves on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and he joins us now.

Congressman, welcome. You were part of our war on terror, our war in the aftermath of 9/11. We pursued it for decades. So why does Israel only get about six months to avenge what happened last October?

REP. BRIAN MAST (R-FL): Double standard and we predicted this in the immediate days following October 7th. Hey, there's global support right now for what happened against October 7th, largely. But that's going to wane in just a couple of weeks or a couple of months, and we have to be ready to stand by our ally and as you spoke about in your intro, that goes even most importantly right up till this moment of Israel potentially entering the far south of Gaza, Rafah, this is one of the most important parts of the operation.

GOWDY: All right, you will understand war, Congressman, the psychology of war. Iran warned everyone what was coming and then most of their missiles and drones were ineffective and intercepted, so what did you make as a military veteran? What did you make of their retaliation? And do you think it's really over?

MAST: I think you could never trust that they say, hey, we count this as square and if you don't do anything, we won't do anything. We know that that's not true. Israel has not been historically the aggressor against Iran. Iran has been through their proxies, whether in Yemen, whether in all of the regions -- Syria, from Egypt, to Gaza, to the West Bank, everywhere that they have proxies, they have been the aggressor against Israel, no reason to think that that would end in one of the most important ways that we put Iran onto their heels, is by destroying their proxies.

And that goes right up to Hamas that is on their heels in the south of Gaza and the last of the Hamas leadership likely remaining there, the last of their tunnel systems, likely remaining in the south of Gaza, and any hostages that they have allowed to stay alive, likely still in that area if they have not moved them into other countries.

So this is the attack that you have to take if you're going to be credible there, which unfortunately, this administration I think, this is one of the most important points we can make, it doesn't have credible deterrence.

General McKenzie, CENTCOM Commander under Biden, very specifically spoke about this now that he's out of uniform, that the Biden administration has taken Iran off the table as a target. And what he said directly for all of the intelligence agencies across the world, to hear him say was, that means there is no deterrence against Iran if we deem that we take them off the table and I think that's really the direction you see Biden pushing with every statement that he is making.

GOWDY: You mentioned taking Iran off the table. I hate to ask guests to speculate, but yours would be an educated speculation. Do you believe Israel wanted to strike back last night in the heart of Iran and were discouraged from doing so by Biden? And if so why?

MAST: I think absolutely. They have been discouraged. It goes back to that point that I've made, and the Biden administration has been clear in the hours since then. We will not stand with them and participate in an attack that is taking Iran off the table and there should be no moral equivalency made to the attack that Israel made against Iranian generals, versus the indiscriminate attack that Iran just made against Israel.

We are talking about a hundred to three hundred Shahed 136, drones and other rockets that were meant to indiscriminately target any Israeli that they could hit. It wasn't a military operation intended for just Israeli military targets. That's a huge difference.

And let's bring another point into this as well. Last week, we saw 40 House Democrats, one of them being Nancy Pelosi, a mainstream Democrat that all signed letters saying no more arms transfers to Israel, so that no more arms transfers, what does that equal? That equals don't resupply the Iron Dome system that was knocking these drones out of the sky, don't resupply the David's Sling system, the midrange system; don't resupply the Arrow system, the long range and ballistic missile system to knock them out of the sky. That's essentially what they're saying, and I think that's a continuation of where you see Biden at right now.

GOWDY: Congressman Brian Mast, we continue to salute your previous service to our country and your continued service in the House of Representatives.

Thank you for joining us on Sunday night.

MAST: Thank you, Trey.

GOWDY: Up next, the exiled Crown Prince of Iran gives his view on Tehran telling America to "stay away." Only on SUNDAY NIGHT IN AMERICA.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GOWDY: Welcome back to SUNDAY NIGHT IN AMERICA, well, the missiles and drones were still in midair last night, Iran made a point to say the attack was revenge for the IDF strike in Syria that killed their top generals, that the matter was "concluded in their minds."

But Iran has been provoking conflict in the region for decades. So it did not start and will not likely end with the events of last night, but what is Iran trying to signal, and what should we make of Iran warning the US to stay away?

The exiled Iranian Crown Prince, His Royal Highness, Reza Pahlavi joins us now.

Welcome, Your Highness.

REZA PAHLAVI, EXILED IRANIAN CROWN PRINCE: Good evening, Trey.

GOWDY: What did you make of the Iranian response last night? And what do you think was meant by the matter has been concluded?

PAHLAVI: Well, Trey, these are signs of the regime becoming more weak and desperate. And as a matter of fact, at the very same time that it launched its missiles and drones against Israel, it has cracked down yet again on the Iranian women on the streets of Iran.

The Ministry -- the Intelligence part of the Sepah or the IRGC has warned people in Iran that the slightest demonstration of sentiment and sympathy to the Israelis will be harshly treated. They are extremely afraid of what the Iranian people think and as a result, is only indicating that as we have always believed, the regime is trying to hang on to power by intimidation and repression at home, and exercising through its proxies, this time directly by itself. It is conflict abroad.

GOWDY: Sir, if my memory serves me correctly, you visited Israel and you believe the Iranian people and the Israeli people can coexist in peace. What will it take to make that happen?

PAHLAVI: Well, from Tehran to Tel Aviv, from Hamadan to Haifa, Iranians and Israelis know that this is not the Iranian people's war. This is Ali Khamenei, he is the dictator of this brutal regime's war.

As we speak, Trey, there were demonstrations in Paris, in London in Berlin, Iranians together with Israelis and Jews hand in hand together, supporting each other, and demonstrating to the whole world that we, as a nation and Israel as a nation, have our destiny intertwined.

We cannot hope for any chance for peace and stability in the region until this regime is finally gone. I think, it is important for the world to realize that the only obstacle to peace and stability and a better future lies on putting an end to this regime.

It is time for the world to finally decide to endorse and back the Iranian people to topple this regime and put an end to all this matters.

GOWDY: You know, you mentioned regime change, many of us found it stunning that Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer called for regime change in Israel. But they've been pretty silent on regime change in Iran.

What can or should the US do to support the Iranian people to have a different government, a government that doesn't do the things that you just described, especially to women?

PAHLAVI: Well, look, when you release money to a regime and give it more means to finance its proxies, and use brutality at home? Basically, appeasement has proven that it only emboldens the regime. We said that a long time ago.

In fact, as you indicated, last year, when I visited Israel, part of our discussions with Israeli leaders, and for that matter, other leaders around the world has been precisely this.

If you let the regime be emboldened by the fact that they can count on appeasement or paying ransom for the release of hostages or not imposing old sanctions, which gave the regime almost an extra hundred billion dollars, the fact that the current administration is trying to release even yet more money to the regime, about $10 billion of Iranian electricity revenue from the Iraqis, what do you think is going to happen next?

I think there is the direct correlation between appeasement and doing these kinds of things and the regime becoming emboldened. The solution, again, is to use every opportunity to put more pressure on the regime.

For instance, it is time that the United States allies in Europe finally decide to put the IRGC on the terrorist group list and that will mean more pressure on the regime. But also parallel to that, it is time to use maximum support to the Iranian people in their struggle against this regime.

It is the Iranian peoples ask to have change. It doesn't have to be a US senator saying who needs to change. If the Iranian people are saying loud and clear, we are done with this regime, help us liberate ourselves. That's the message that the Iranian people have to the entire world and I hope that the US government and other governments will heed this call and finally, help us save our world from disaster and more conflict and have an opportunity post this regime to have regional peace and brotherly cooperation, not just Iran in Israel, but the Arab world, too, that has also been a target of this regime.

GOWDY: Your Royal Highness, thank you for joining us on a Sunday night and loaning us your truly unique perspective on Iran. Thank you.

PAHLAVI: Thank you, Trey.

GOWDY: Still ahead, the first criminal trial ever of a former US president that begins with jury selection tomorrow in New York, with allegations hush money was passed off as a business expense.

Katie Cherkasky and Elliot Felig on the first of what could be a very active docket for the former president next on SUNDAY NIGHT IN AMERICA.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ASHLEY STROHMIER, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: This is a "Fox News Alert." I'm Ashley Strohmier live in New York.

House Speaker Mike Johnson plans to try to advance wartime aid to Israel this week on the heels of an historic attack by Iran. He will have a difficult task unifying his party though. He will need to win over House Republicans to pass a National Security Package that also includes funding for Ukraine and allies in Asia.

President Biden is urging leaders on both sides of the aisle to pass the aid bill as soon as possible.

And now there are millions of people across the Plains and Midwest who are bracing for dangerous severe weather to start the work week. The potent system could bring baseball sized hail, damaging winds, tornadoes, and heavy downpours to those regions and the strongest storms are expected to hit parts of Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Northern Texas on Monday and in parts of Iowa and Missouri on Tuesday.

People in those areas are being urged to take precautions.

I'm Ashley Strohmier, now back to SUNDAY NIGHT IN AMERICA.

GOWDY: Welcome back to SUNDAY NIGHT IN AMERICA.

Trials are often won or lost before opening statements or even utter. It is called jury selection.

Trump has pleaded not guilty to falsifying business records in connection with payments to Stormy Daniels. He remains presumed innocent no matter how infrequently you hear that on other networks.

The way the jury selection system works is people are asked questions by the judge, the lawyers, or both to determine fitness and fairness. It's an amazing process.

If you like small government, what could be smaller than 12 people deciding the fate and freedom of a fellow citizen? But can any politician get a fair trial these days? Are people willing to say I don't like the defendant, but the government did not meet the burden of persuasion.

New York is the beginning, Special Counsel Jack Smith, then wants the Supreme Court to reject Trump's presidential immunity claim. The court will hear arguments the week of April 22nd, but the DC Court of Appeals was unanimous in rejecting an earlier claim.

We're joined now by two former prosecutors who switched over to the more lucrative side of life, Katie Cherkasky and Elliot Felig. Welcome to you both.

Katie, what kind of jury are you looking for in New York? Now, jury selection is a misnomer. It's really unselecting or de-selecting a jury. But ideally, who would be on your New York jury?

KATIE CHERKASKY, FORMER FEDERAL PROSECUTOR: Well, the judge in this case has already said that anybody who self identifies as somebody that cannot be fair and impartial upfront, will not even be questioned further. So that will weed out a significant amount of people who are openly partisan, as it were.

We want people who are going to be listening to the evidence in this case and understanding the very high burden of proof that the prosecution has here, because this is not an easy case for the prosecution.

And people that are not openly political, obviously, is a significant factor here as well.

So I believe jury selection is going to take a long time in this case. We will see if they can get a fair jury.

GOWDY: Yes, finding 12 people who have not already made up their mind is always a challenge in high profile cases.

Elliot, let's listen to the former president together, and then I'll ask you a question on the other side.

ELLIOT FELIG, FORMER FEDERAL PROSECUTOR: Sounds good.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: We'll see how that -- and the one in New York is totally discredited. Every legal scholar said they have no case. It is a horrible thing, but it is election interference.

It's all run by the White House. Every one of the cases that you mentioned has an example, Fani Willis, every single case that's being run -- civil, criminal, it is election interference.

Joe Biden is using this to try and get elected and it's a shame.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GOWDY: Elliot, I'm a little rusty. But that sounds to me like a jury nullification argument. So is a jury even going to hear allegations of being politically targeted, never done before, they're out to get me.

I mean, it's really irrelevant politically, but will a jury hear any of that?

FELIG: Almost certainly not. The judge is probably going to limit it simply to whether or not the four corners of the indictment, the actual elements of each and every charge are proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

But going back to the jury thing, I mean, yes, there is a real risk here. Generally speaking, the likelihood of a conviction is supposed to depend on the strength of the evidence. But in this case, because of the inherent political bias that jurors may bring to it, there's a real chance that the outcome will be driven not by the evidence, but simply by the popularity or in this case, the unpopularity of the accused.

GOWDY: Katie , presidential immunity, give me a quick line of demarcation between a private act versus a presidential act, because that case is going to be decided by the Supreme Court. I guess that's the line of demarcation, immunity for presidential acts, but not private or personal acts. I mean, how do you see this matter that is soon to be argued before the High Court?

CHERKASKY: Well, I personally think that it's a very strong case for Donald Trump, I think that the Supreme Court needs to make it very clear where the line in the sand is drawn and that's not an easy task when you're talking about the executive, who is one person unto an entire branch of government?

So how do you draw that line? Where will we stop questioning executive decisions? Because you can get into hypotheticals regarding military operations and decisions that were made that end in death and maybe were negligent at the time.

So you really have to have the court weigh in here and be very clear about where they will draw that line, because it totally will debilitate the executive branch if there's not some sort of significant immunity given to the president.

GOWDY: Elliot, the president is presumed innocent no matter how infrequently that is mentioned on other networks, but let's assume arguendo he were to be convicted. Is this the kind of case that results in an active prison sentence? I mean, it doesn't seem that way to me. And if you're not going to be sentenced to prison, are you not better of kind of leaving the judge alone rather than picking a public fight with the sentencing judge?

FELIG: Sure, so here in New York we rank felonies from A for the most serious to E for the least serious. These are all E felonies, the least serious, none of them carry mandatory jail time. We are talking about a defendant with no criminal record. And if Alvin Bragg holds to his previously stated philosophy, he said when he, in his famous day one memo that he would only seek prison sentences in the most violent of cases.

So I can't conceive of him holding to those principles and then asking for jail if there's a conviction in this case.

GOWDY: It is going to be a fascinating year. I know when we were sitting in Con Law classes, first year law students, the three of us did not think we would be discussing four pending cases against a presidential candidate. But here we are. And I'm glad y'all did well in law school, and y'all can help us understand these issues. Thank you for joining us on the Sunday night.

CHERKASKY: Thank you.

FELIG: Thank you, Trey.

GOWDY: Up next, the border and the economy, top of minds to voters. But those are not the only issues driving the upcoming election. Could abortion dictate the outcome? Dr. Lauren Wright and Kevin Walling next on SUNDAY NIGHT IN AMERICA.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GOWDY: The consequences of an unsecure border continue to dominate the minds of voters heading into November. And this is true for a myriad reasons. The border impacts sovereignty and law enforcement and national security and spending, and it symbolizes the justice system that ebbs and flows with the political vagaries it was actually designed to supersede.

If the election were today, the border and economy would be the leading issues but not the only issues. Republicans underperformed in 2022 because Democrats cobbled together a constellation of less dominant issues, which in the aggregate proved powerful.

Among these issues was abortion.

Dobbs sent the issue back to the states, but Republicans consistently lost on state initiatives while being seen as out of touch with many voters, especially female voters.

In addition, Republicans can't seem to agree on what their position is. Does life begin at conception or six weeks or 12 weeks or 15 weeks or when a heartbeat is detected or when pain can be felt or viability or birth.

There is little consensus on the GOP side and that doesn't even address the issue of exceptions for rape or incest or the life or health of the mother.

Most Americans seem to have settled on something of a consensus. Grudgingly, after decades of decisions and divisions and debate, it seemed voters were following the line of a former president who said abortion should be safe, legal and rare. But that still leaves the question of why something should be rare unless there remains moral uncertainty.

And so we entered the second half of the century debating the fundamental issue of life.

Joining us are associate research scholar in ***Politics*** and Public Affairs at Princeton University, Dr. Lauren Wright, and former Biden surrogate and strategic and Democratic strategist, Kevin Walling.

Welcome to you both.

Dr. Wright, there are constitutional legal, moral, even religious views that factor into this decision. Is there a consensus on when life begins or how the issue of abortion should be handled among voters?

DR. LAUREN WRIGHT, ASSOCIATE RESEARCH SCHOLAR IN ***POLITICS*** AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY: No, and actually, there's really no consensus among Democrats or Republicans. It's a very thorny moral and political issue, but I would say Trey, the top issue that Democrats have surrounding abortion heading into 2024 is that when we poll voters only about 10 to 12 percent of them say, abortion is my number one most important concern.

And when you lower that to what we call low propensity voters, voters who maybe didn't turn out in the midterms, but are sure to turn out in a general election. It's even lower.

And so the task Democrats have because absolutely they have the advantage on the abortion issue, and Republicans are losing on it is making it salient and making the case that this is just as important as the economy, immigration, or crime, which as you mentioned, are much more important issues to a much bigger swath of voters.

GOWDY: All right, Kevin, abortion is not mentioned in the Constitution, but neither are marriage, children, education or the Air Force for that matter.

Life, however, is mentioned twice. So is this an issue for Congress, for the Supreme Court, or the states? And can you really have 50 different definitions on when life begins?

KEVIN WALLING, FORMER JOE BIDEN SURROGATE: Yes, Trey, it is a good question. And again, we're seeing this patchwork play out right now in the wake of the Dobbs decision back in June of 2022.

Listen, every state that has had abortion on the ballot since that decision, and I'm talking about deep red states like Montana, Ohio, states like Kansas, Kentucky have all voted for enshrining abortion protections into their constitutions or state law.

So clearly, this is an animating issue, it might not be the number one issue that Americans when they are asked whether it be in immigration or the economy, but it still is in the mindset of a lot of voters and you're looking at nearly a dozen states that are going to have this on the ballot, states like Florida, states like Arizona, the vice president was just in Arizona, this past Friday talking about abortion access, harkening back to this 1864 law, that is now potentially the law of the land in Arizona in the wake of the Dobbs decision.

So clearly, this is going to be a problem for Republicans. The former president really doesn't know how to talk about this issue. He released that video, but there is a lot of uncertainty, even where his position is.

So clearly Republicans are going to have to grapple with this in the next six, seven months.

GOWDY: Dr. Wright, technology seems to move people on this issue much more so than sermons or speeches from politicians. Where do you think the American people are headed? Because I would think the idea of a woman who was raped being in prison is just as noxious to people as an elective late term abortion.

So where are the voters on this issue? Because they don't seem to be where the politicians are.

WRIGHT: I think that's a very good assessment. You know, voters are very moderate on the abortion issue. And one of the most interesting findings in social science in the last couple of decades has been, as you said, Trey, as technology advances, young people, for instance, are getting more conservative on abortion. That doesn't mean they're for eliminating abortion under all circumstances. But most people, most groups of voters want abortion to be legal, and they want some exceptions.

And so politicians, the issue is, a lot of them are pandering to these very, very specific constituencies, maybe they're very conservative, but statewide, nationwide, a lot of politicians are out of step on the issue, because most people really are very middle of the road. They might not be personally for abortion, but they want some form of it early on in pregnancy to be widely accessible.

GOWDY: Kevin, you may attend the Democratic National Convention of I may be forced to go against my will, but if there were a question at the convention, when does life begin, what do you think the consensus would be on the Democrat side? How would they answer that question?

WRIGHT: It's a good question. You know, hopefully, I'll see you in Chicago, Trey. It should be a great convention. But listen, I think, you know, Democrats, just like Republicans grapple with this issue. You have a lot of prolife Democrats. The president is a consistent Catholic, you know, he is a moderate when it comes to this issue and he has been, you know, forced to, I think, you know, change his position over time where the party is, for example, as a practicing Catholic.

He fully supports the right to abortion, and he is obviously campaigning on that with the Vice President. But, you know, I think the Democrats, you know, in any kind of conversation about our platform in Chicago are going to focus on the legal right to access abortion, and probably stay away from the morality questions, the religious questions with regards to abortion.

Dr. Lauren Wright, Kevin Walling, it is a very divisive issue, but thank you for the civility with which you are able to discuss it with us and with one another and we look forward to seeing you both real soon.

Thank you for joining us on a Sunday night.

WALLING: Thanks, Trey.

WRIGHT: Thank you, both.

GOWDY: Up next, if drama were a drug, Congress would be a cartel. And there will be a new "Narcos" miniseries. Former acting Speaker Patrick McHenry after the break with more on the threats against Speaker Mike Johnson.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GOWDY: Welcome back to SUNDAY NIGHT IN AMERICA.

HBO had the House of Lannister and the House of Stark.

C-SPAN has the House of Representatives. Winter is not coming but a motion to vacate might be.

Marjorie Taylor Greene is the latest speaker antagonist, but she wasn't the first. Mark Meadows did it and then her friend Matt Gaetz did it. Gaetz and Greene used to tour the country together raising money and then they decided to separate, but for the same purpose raising more money.

Greene watched how much green Gaetz raised attacking Speaker Kevin McCarthy with the ancillary benefit of trying to kill an ethics investigation into alleged misconduct.

And now Marjorie Taylor Greene is following suit holding the sword of Damocles over Mike Johnson's head. You may be wondering what would happen if the same energy was put into, I don't know, maybe winning the White House or winning two Democrat Senate seats in Georgia?

There is a lot of money to be made in fame when family members fight. There is just not much in it for you.

Joining us is a former acting Speaker, Congressman Patrick McHenry.

Welcome, Congressman.

Some folks just aren't built for the majority, I mean, being in the minority is easier. You show up, you vote no and you go post your videos on social media. Leading is hard.

So we saw one speaker defrocked and now threats to defrock another. What's going went on?

REP. PATRICK MCHENRY (R-NC): It is just that, look we're a divided government. Democrats run Washington. They run the Senate, they run the executive branch and the only thing that's stopping them are House Republicans.

But we're not winning, we are just stopping bad things from happening. That's not really exciting stuff. And so just like Marines on leave, aren't as focused on their duties, and sometimes can get in trouble. That's what House Republicans are doing right now.

The infighting is what's driving a lot of media attention, rather than the harm that Joe Biden is doing to America and the American economy and the national security. We're spending time fighting amongst ourselves about trivialities and stupid things.

It's really not serving the American people, and certainly not the interests of us winning the next election.

GOWDY: I want to play a clip from the gentlelady from Georgia, and then I'll ask you a question on the other side.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE (R-GA): He is the Republican leader. He is the leader of the opposition party against the Biden administration, and we expect him to lead that way, not to pass the Biden administration's agenda.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GOWDY: You know, Congressman, she represents a ruby red district in Georgia, there are scores of members that you serve with who represent less secure seats, some seats where Biden actually won. So what are realistic expectations when your conference is full of different people from different districts?

MCHENRY: Well first, listen to her comments. She is saying the speaker needs to lead. I said the same thing. He is leading through turbulent times. We've given him a tough job. He sought the tough job, and he's gotten on with the tough dealmaking that you need to do to get through the waters that we're in, that is a good encouragement for the speaker.

But the expectation setting for an election year, expectation setting for a Republican House. Look, we cut spending year-over-year, that is the biggest gain for House Republicans and the American people. That's a biggest policy win of this Congress.

Now after that, it's not going to be a good outcome, because we still have Joe Biden in the White House. We still have way too much spending in Washington. We still have a president that doesn't have a strong national security objective with his actions.

So we've got to do the best that we can in the confined space that we're in and get through this year, so we can get reinforcements in November. That's what I'm trying to encourage my colleagues to hear and voters to hear that we're going to do the best that we can, but until we have reinforcements, we can't do the good work that is demanded and needed.

GOWDY: Congressman, we had Speaker Johnson on our show recently, he remains in my judgment, a very decent, honorable man with an almost impossible job. He voted to keep Kevin McCarthy. He was not one of the eight who held hands with Democrats and replaced Kevin McCarthy.

In hindsight, what exactly was accomplished when they got rid of one speaker and inserted Speaker Mike Johnson?

MCHENRY: Nothing. There is no policy win, in fact, we are worst case with FISA, with federal spending, and with major initiatives on national security. We are not in a better position to extract conservative reforms than we were with Speaker McCarthy.

And so we traded and a trade didn't result in more conservative policy. It actually put us in a worse position politically and organizationally.

So I don't think making another trade here on the speakership will get us a different outcome or a better outcome as Republicans. We've got to go focus on November and getting the best results we can there.

GOWDY: You announced that you are leaving Congress to return to your beloved state of North Carolina. Have you reconsidered that? It seems like a lot of fun. Are you sure you want to leave?

MCHENRY: Well, look, Trey. You know that I love this place, and I love the battles. I love the policy initiatives. I even love the people. But it was time for me to be done.

We have committee term limits here. The House Republicans have committee term limits. Having committee term limits on the chairmanship is a really good thing and I am respecting the term limits and out of respect for the term limits, I also recognize that having served here in the House for 20 years, it's time for me to call it quits and, and allow a new generation of leaders to come in.

And so I've had my opportunity and I leave this institution, really loving it and respecting it even in its most chaotic forum that we're currently in.

GOWDY: One of my former favorite colleagues, Patrick McHenry, from the great state of North Carolina, thank you for joining us on Sunday night.

MCHENRY: You're the best, Trey.

GOWDY: Thank you for spending part of your Sunday with us. I hope you have a great week ahead.

Until next week, you can find us online at Gowdy America or on "The Trey Gowdy Podcast." Goodnight from South Carolina.

**Load-Date:** April 15, 2024

**End of Document**