

# [***Donald Trump Is a 'Thug' Leading Republican 'Cult': Nancy Pelosi***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYS-4J41-DY68-11WM-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 786 words

**Byline:** Jesus Mesa

**Highlight:** The former House Speaker criticized the GOP's ethical trajectory under Trump's leadership, denouncing it as contrary to traditional Republican values.

**Body**

Former House Speaker [*Nancy Pelosi*](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=ab6fe8e0710853a5JmltdHM9MTcxNDk1MzYwMCZpZ3VpZD0xODhiYjNjOC05Y2FlLTZiNDQtMmUzMC1hN2I4OWRlZDZhOTUmaW5zaWQ9NTI3MQ&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=188bb3c8-9cae-6b44-2e30-a7b89ded6a95&psq=nancy+pelosi+site%3anewsweek.com&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubmV3c3dlZWsuY29tL3RvcGljL25hbmN5LXBlbG9zaQ&ntb=1) slammed former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) calling him a "thug" and accused him of morphing the [*Republican*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republican?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Party into a "cult," during a recent episode of the [*podcast, "The Rest is* ***Politics****."*](https://alastaircampbell.org/2024/05/72-nancy-pelosi-from-jfks-inauguration-to-fighting-donald-trump/)

In the hour-long discussion with hosts Rory Stewart and Alastair Campbell, Pelosi talked about the GOP's ethical trajectory under Trump's leadership and the current political landscape, including the upcoming electoral clash between President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and the former president.

"It shouldn't be a call to a thug; this should be the [*Republican Party*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republican-party?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), not some personality cult centered around one man," Pelosi said during the podcast which aired on May 6.

The veteran California congresswoman's criticism also extended to Trump's appeal, which she characterized as rooted in ethno-nationalist populism. Pelosi noted that this development is "fairly recent" and criticized Trump for exploiting people's fears.

"As I said, there are people with legitimate concerns about globalization, immigration... and Trump exploits these to his advantage, benefiting the wealthy."

Pelosi, who was the first woman to lead a party in [*Congress*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/congress?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and the first female speaker of the House, denounced Trump's approach to governance as contrary to traditional Republican values, which include a respect for diverse viewpoints and a "unified love for the country."

When [*asked*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/trump-hush-money-case?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) why Republican members of Congress support Trump despite his numerous legal challenges, Pelosi said many within the party recognize the detrimental changes but feel powerless to counteract them due to fears of losing political power or facing primary challenges from more radical candidates.

"What some Republican leaders have told me is: 'We can't defeat these people in the primary; you have to defeat them in the general, and then we can come back to the normal debate,'" Pelosi recounted from her discussions with GOP leaders.

**'There are so many good Republicans'**

Pelosi touched on more moderate Republican figures like [*Liz Cheney*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/liz-cheney?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and [*Mitt Romney*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/mitt-romney?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), whom she suggested were eclipsed by the dominant Trump-centric ideology. Pelosi mentioned conversations with Republican leaders who recognize the problematic nature of Trump's influence but confess an inability to oppose him effectively in public forums.

"It's a tragedy because there are so many good [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)... It shouldn't be a call to a thug; you should be the Republican Party, the grand old party," she expressed, invoking Abraham Lincoln's legacy as a unifying figure for the GOP.

In stark contrast to Trump's ***politics***, Pelosi reminisced about [*Ronald Reagan's*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/ronald-reagan?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) era, highlighting a time when bipartisan support for immigration underscored a more inclusive Republican vision. "Historically, figures like Ronald Reagan were proponents of immigration, viewing it as a strength for our country," Pelosi noted, drawing a clear line between past and present GOP ideologies.

Emphasizing the need for bipartisanship, Pelosi highlighted historical moments when cooperation across the aisle proved crucial for national progress. "We need to remember times like when Tip O'Neill and Ronald Reagan worked together to reform our tax code or when [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and Republicans came together to strengthen Social Security," she pointed out.

Discussing the broader implications of the current political climate, Pelosi warned of potential interferences in the electoral process, viewing it as a critical battleground between autocracy and democracy. She also voiced concern over the apparent camaraderie between Trump and autocratic leaders such as [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/vladimir-putin?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and [*Viktor Orban*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/viktor-orban?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

"We've seen a troubling alliance among these figures, which seems to celebrate autocratic methods and disdain for democratic norms," she said.

**Trump vs. Biden**

The upcoming presidential election is almost certainly a rematch of the 2024 contest, pitting a continually aggrieved Trump against Biden. "We have to win that election," Pelosi [*said to Newsweek earlier this year*](https://www.newsweek.com/nancy-pelosi-grotesque-donald-trump-election-putin-nato-1870960?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), echoing the White House's framing of the race as a battle for the survival of American democracy.

Despite Trump's multitude of personal scandals, two impeachments, and 91 felony charges, he remains a strong contender for the [*2024 Republican presidential nomination*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/2024-election?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). Various [*polls*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/polling?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) show Trump nearly neck-and-neck with Biden in voter support, his challenge buoyed by concerns over the incumbent's age of 81.

As of March, both Biden and Trump have secured enough delegates to win their respective parties' nominations, setting the stage for a [*2024 White House rematch*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/2024-election?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). With several months until the election, polls predict a close race, with outcomes still likely to shift as the voting day approaches.

The presidential election will take place on November 5.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2388634/nancy-pelosi-donald-trump.jpg)

**Graphic**

Nancy Pelosi Donald Trump

Getty

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi slammed former President Donald Trump calling him a "thug" and accused him of morphing the Republican Party into a "cult," during a recent episode of the podcast interview.

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