

# [***The Republican National Committee May Become Trump's Cash Machine | Opinion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKG-W791-JBR6-919D-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** This month, presumptive Republican nominee for president Donald Trump took over the Republican National Committee (RNC) and then days later liquidated dozens of staff members.

**Body**

This month, presumptive [*Republican*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republican?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) nominee for president [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) [*took over*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/trump-officially-takes-over-republican-national-committee-rcna142362) the Republican National Committee (RNC) and then days later [*liquidated*](https://www.politico.com/news/2024/03/11/bloodbath-at-rnc-trump-team-slashes-staff-at-committee-00146368) dozens of staff members, and installed three ride-or-die loyalists at the top. One of them is his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, married to Trump's son who isn't Donnie Jr., Eric. With the housecleaning at the RNC complete, Trump now has uncontested control of the Republican Party, which augurs poorly for the GOP's chances of capturing one or both chambers of [*Congress*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/congress?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), and offers a grim preview of what he would do to the federal government writ large should he win the 2024 presidential election.

Lara Trump was not given some two-bit job but made the co-chair of the RNC. Why, in a country of [*334 million people*](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045223) and tens of millions of dedicated [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), does Trump need to rely on a family member, particularly one with practically zero political experience, to run a major party organization in the United States?

Well, looking around the world, one sees many examples of authoritarian kleptocrats who, for quite good reasons, can't trust anyone not budded off the familial tree.

In fully authoritarian regimes, that's both because they worry that anyone without blood or marriage ties to the autocrat could choose to kill and replace them, and also because systemic graft is much simpler if it can be run through people who attended your wedding. In a United States that remains, for the moment, somewhat democratic, the worry is not that someone will topple Donald Trump, but that underlings won't carry out potentially deranged orders.

For Trump, that may be to to use the RNC like an ATM to shield himself and his family from the consequences of his many legal travails, including posting a [*$91.6 million bond*](https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/trump-e-jean-carroll-defamation-bond-rcna142499) to cover what he now owes [*E. Jean Carroll*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/e-jean-carroll?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), the woman he was found to have sexually assaulted and then defamed. Since then, the former president has been unable to come up with an additional [*$464 million*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/trump-unable-get-bond-464-million-judgment-lawyers-say-rcna143860) he needs for a bond in his most recent fraud trial.

So, for at least the next year when loyal rank-and-file Republicans get an email or text begging them to "Rush a donation to the RNC now! Triple match!!!" what it will likely mean is that the Trump legal machine is low on scratch and needs a payday loan from the suckers whose interests he pretends to represent.

But this has been Trump's modus operandi for his entire life. Posting Lara Trump as the RNC co-chair is merely a continuation of Trump's [*seedy*](https://apps.bostonglobe.com/opinion/graphics/2021/06/future-proofing-the-presidency/part-3-a-sordid-family-affair/) first-term personnel management, when he gave important tasks, including forging peace in Israel-Palestine to his son-in-law [*Jared Kushner*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/jared-kushner?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), and appointed his daughter Ivanka as an advisor without portfolio. And, of course, Jared and Ivanka leveraged their newfound expertise and connections to score [*a $2 billion investment deal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/10/us/jared-kushner-saudi-investment-fund.html) with Saudi Arabia for Kushner's firm that neatly accomplished the only practical goal the Trump family has ever cared about—enriching itself.

Lara Trump [*has already said*](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/02/14/lara-trump-rnc-donald-trump/72597947007/) that "every penny" of the RNC's funding should be spent on electing Trump, not supporting and coordinating between Republican candidates up and down the ballot as it is supposed to do. The RNC is already sporting its lowest cash reserves in a decade and installing sycophants to run the national party organization isn't going to help.

President Biden's seemingly bottomless unpopularity is perhaps a once-in-generation opportunity for Republicans to seize total power in Washington this fall and cement conservative gains from statehouses to the Supreme Court; the message that Donald Trump is sending his comrades with these appointments is that he doesn't care about that project at all.

Why would he? Trump is running for president to stay out of jail, and he might just succeed at that. But if he trims his own coattails by putting his daughter-in-law in charge of the national party organization, his presidency will be profoundly hobbled from the start.

That won't stop him from running this same playbook on the federal government, though. Trump and the gaggle of right-wing think tanks responsible for the notorious Project 2025 document [*plan to fire*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-2024-government-regulations-democrats-6badc3b424b9eff3ba51e0ec35a8d824) up to 40,000 federal workers with a dramatic and unilateral expansion of the kinds of employees who are considered political appointees and who can thus be pink-slipped at will. There aren't enough members of the Trump clan to fill all of those positions, so the far right is [*compiling*](https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2023/04/conservative-think-tanks-are-preparing-list-20k-potential-political-appointees-hopes-reviving-schedule-f/385545/)a handy-dandy list of candidates who can corral the mean old "Deep State" that they delusionally hold responsible for the hot mess express that was Trump's first term.

The last time the far right was this desperate for personnel to carry out its absurd plans was when [*George W. Bush*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/george-w.-bush?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) [*scraped*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2004/05/23/in-iraq-the-job-opportunity-of-a-lifetime/56eed6e7-f407-4d97-a29e-f6b8cbc88301/)the bottom of the conservative barrel to fill out the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq after invading the country under false pretenses in 2003. Frequently without background checks or interviews, the Bush administration pulled applicants directly from the right-wing Heritage Foundation website and packed them on a plane to Baghdad, where they were tasked with administering a traumatized and devastated country of 25 million people about whose society and ***politics*** these new deckhands knew virtually nothing. We all know how that turned out.

Just as 23-year-old Heritage interns earned the CPA the moniker [*Can't Provide Anything*](https://www.google.com/search?q=cpa+can%27t+provide+anything+iraq&oq=cpa+can%27t+provide+anything+iraq&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIHCAEQIRigATIHCAIQIRigATIHCAMQIRigATIHCAQQIRigAdIBCDUwMDFqMGo0qAIAsAIA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8), Trump's takeover of the RNC is more likely to turn it into "Republicans Need Cash" than anything resembling a competent national organization capable of winning elections.

*David Faris is an associate professor of political science at Roosevelt University and the author of* It's Time to Fight Dirty: How [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Can Build a Lasting Majority in American ***Politics***. *His writing has appeared in* The Week*,* The Washington Post*,* The New Republic*,* Washington Monthly *and more. You can find him on Twitter @davidmfaris.*

*The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.*

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2364450/takeover.jpg)

**Graphic**

Takeover

CECILE CLOCHERET/AFP via Getty Images)

Lara Trump, daughter-in-law of former US President Donald Trump, attends the Republican National Committee (RNC) Spring meeting on March 8, in Houston, Texas.

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