

# [***How Taylor Swift Broke Republicans***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B72-MDX1-DY68-1183-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** The singer's continually rising star has only served to make her a target of criticism from a faction of conservatives.

**Body**

As [*Taylor Swift*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/taylor-swift?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) continues to see her star rise as one of the world's most successful pop singers, she has also collected hordes of detractors in the form of prominent [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

The 34-year-old musician closed out 2023 on a high, after embarking on her highly lucrative *Eras Tour*, which has become the first tour to break the $1 billion barrier. In December, she was named *Time* magazine's 2023 "Person of the Year," an honor bestowed upon an eclectic list in the past that has included influential figures, world leaders and royalty.

On a personal front, she embarked on a romance with Kansas City Chiefs tight end [*Travis Kelce*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/travis-kelce?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in the summer, leading to her becoming a fixture at [*NFL*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nfl?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) games and driving a massive increase in football viewership. As the Chiefs face the San Francisco 49s in February 11's Super Bowl, there's every chance that Swift's presence as a mere spectator will draw as much attention as the teams vying for glory.

With the Swift era in full force, she has also faced her fair share of critics. Sure, there are the bog standard detractors, who have pledged allegiance to other musicians and therefore refuse to support her. There are also those who just simply don't care for her, or her work. And then there's a faction of Republicans, who seem intent on [*telling the world how deplorable Swift apparently is*](https://www.newsweek.com/republicans-war-against-taylor-swift-could-backfire-1829936?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

Vivek Ramaswamy, who recently pulled out of the race for the GOP nomination and is now backing former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), became the latest of his ilk to [*weigh in on the star*](https://www.newsweek.com/meghan-mccain-vivek-ramaswamy-taylor-swift-theory-1865005?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on Monday, when he responded to a social media post shared by alt-right activist Jack Posobiec.

"Thinking about when Taylor Swift called out the Soros family in 2019 for buying the rights to her music and then how she came out a super liberal in 2020," Posobiec wrote in a post on X, formerly [*Twitter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/twitter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

During a speech at a Billboard Women in Music event in 2019, Swift criticized private equity, singling out the Carlyle Group and the Soros family for their roles in helping her nemesis, music mogul Scooter Braun, purchase the rights to her older catalog. Billionaire philanthropist [*George Soros*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/george-soros?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is often the target of Republican attacks and conspiracy theories over donations to Democratic and liberal causes.

Ramaswamy responded to Posobiec by suggesting that Swift and Kelce will announce a presidential endorsement in the coming months. He also appeared to question the authenticity of the celebrity couple's relationship.

"I wonder who's going to win the Super Bowl next month," Ramaswamy [*commented*](https://twitter.com/VivekGRamaswamy/status/1751944730114498838). "And I wonder if there's a major presidential endorsement coming from an artificially culturally propped-up couple this fall. Just some wild speculation over here, let's see how it ages over the next 8 months."

*Newsweek* has contacted representatives of Swift and Ramaswamy via email for comment.

Samuel Ronan, who is currently vying for the GOP nomination for president, has characterized Ramaswamy's post as a move to satiate Trump's base, telling *Newsweek* that he believes the businessman has done so "to solidify his bid for the VP nod, or possibly a cabinet position as a consolation prize.

"Given that he has dropped out of the presidential race, his relevance has been reduced to campaigning for the Republican front runner. Attacking Taylor Swift, or any socially left-leaning celebrity is a simple means to that end.

"Once Politicians realize that people support values, policies, and integrity, more than sound bites, we will start seeing the [*Vivek Ramaswamy*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/vivek-ramaswamy?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)s of the world maintain their popularity and support through the virtue of their beliefs and policies rather than fighting for soundbites in a crowded space of who can bash this celebrity or the other the best."

**Trend of Criticism**

Ramaswamy's post, which as of press time has been viewed more than 2.5 million times, marks a continued trend in conservative criticism of Swift.

"Taylor Swift is dumb and her music sucks," wrote Sean Davis, CEO and co-founder of conservative web magazine *The Federalist* on X in September. The post was accompanied by a link to an article on *The Federalist*'s website that described Swift's popularity as "a sign of societal decline."

That same month, political commentator [*Tomi Lahren*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/tomi-lahren?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) directed [*backhanded compliments at Swift*](https://www.newsweek.com/tomi-lahren-taylor-swift-braindead-travis-kelce-vaccine-1830251?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) while acknowledging the star's boon to local economies through her *Eras Tour*.

"Her lefty, liberal braindead political opinions aside, I am a fan of Taylor Swift and I have been since way before she went full liberal," Lahren recently said on her podcast. "She's also single-handedly done more for the U.S. economy than any Democrat president, maybe ever."

"Taylor Swift earning the ire of Republicans is nothing new," Ronan told *Newsweek*. "Being touted as a Democratic psyop is nothing new. The simple fact is that she is a millennial, female, self made billionaire whose personal beliefs and fanbase align more socially liberal. Because of this fact she becomes an easy target as a woke feminist icon that is disparaging white men in America with her 'agenda.'

"The irony in that statement is that during the transition of physical CDs vying for supremacy with MP3s, it was Taylor Swift who was leading the charge against teenagers illegally downloading her music costing her losses in revenue. Metallica soon joined suit and the rest is history: CD's ultimately lost and now it's streaming and concerts.

"The point is she has been a ruthless entrepreneur since her earliest successes, which should make her a Republican darling. However, because of her social views she is reviled and targeted by Republicans who use this bandwagon to grandstand on whichever issues they wish to share that week."

The political views expressed by Swift are certainly not as bold or in-your-face as those of Jane Fonda and Susan Sarandon. In fact, she had previously been criticized for being tight-lipped about political issues.

In 2018, however, she used her platform to back Democratic nominees in Tennessee ahead of the midterm elections. Upon hearing the news of Swift's support for [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), Trump told reporters at the time: "Let's say that I like Taylor's music about 25 percent less now, OK?"

**Political Power**

Over the years, Swift has become more politically outspoken. She [*endorsed President Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/everything-taylor-swift-said-about-president-joe-biden-1865185?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) during his 2020 run for the White House, and has publicly criticized Trump.

While such actions would put her in line with countless other celebrities, her power and influence are likely major factors in why she faces increasing disapproval from the other side of the political aisle.

On September 19, National Voter Registration Day, the singer took to [*Instagram*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/instagram?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) to share a message urging her fans to register on the nonpartisan, nonprofit Vote.org. According to the organization, Swift's post was followed by a surge of more than 35,000 registrations—an almost 25 percent increase over the same day last year.

Per NPR, Andrea Hailey, the CEO of Vote.org, said in a statement that the single-day surge in registrations was a "highly encouraging sign of voter enthusiasm," particularly as there was a 115 percent spike over 2022 in newly eligible 18-year-olds registering to vote.

Recent exclusive polling conducted for *Newsweek* by [*Redfield & Wilton Strategies*](https://redfieldandwiltonstrategies.com/) found that 18 percent of voters say they're "more likely" or "significantly more likely" to vote for a candidate endorsed by Swift.

Seventeen percent said they would be less likely to vote for a Swift-backed candidate, while 55 percent would be neither more nor less likely to do so. Of all the respondents, 45 percent said they were fans of the singer, and 54 percent said they were not. Only 6 percent said they were not familiar with Swift.

[*The survey*](https://www.newsweek.com/can-taylor-swift-sway-2024-election-1864474?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), which had a sample size of 1,500 eligible voters, was conducted on January 18 and had a margin of error of plus or minus 2.53 percent.

"Taylor Swift is a force," comedian and Democratic consultant Chip Franklin told *Newsweek*. "Her presence at NFL games has been a $330 million bonanza for both the Chiefs and the NFL. Just tweeting that yesterday got 1.2 million views.

"But why? Swift's music taps into the angst and pressure young people are experiencing in this social media maelstrom, and combine that with her boyfriend—a handsome football star and pro-vax advocate—and you have an unprecedented whirlwind of cultural and political opinion."

Turning his attention to Ramaswamy, Franklin added that the "MAGA Republican thinks that there's a conspiracy inside the NFL, the Democratic party, the networks and maybe UFOs. He also believes Biden stole the election, so at least he's consistent. The MAGA reaction has been consistently conspiratorial, but as is the case with the 2020 election, there is no basis in fact.

"But here are a few facts: the Republican party has a problem with young voters and women. And once again, they fumbled the ball at the one yard line, recovered by Taylor Swift."

In an election where the youth vote is expected to be key to winning the White House, Swift's influence is all the more important. The 2024 election will see 8 million potential new voters in the electorate, according to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. That means 41 million members of Gen Z will be eligible to vote in November.

Younger voters have typically voted for Democrats, and the voting bloc was credited with helping Biden win in 2020. But with many young people unhappy with Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war, Trump has been able to gain ground among them, further highlighting how critical the youth vote will be in 2024.

A *New York Times* poll from last month showed Trump up 6 points over Biden among voters under 30. In July, Trump had trailed the president by 10 points.

*Newsweek*'s poll found that an endorsement from Swift would have the greatest impact on younger voters. Roughly three in 10 Americans under 35 said they'd be more likely to vote for a candidate backed by Swift. Only 4 percent of Americans 65 and older said they'd be swayed by a Swift endorsement.

Given the scope of Swift's influence and the current reactionary culture, [*Evan Nierman*](https://www.instagram.com/evannierman), CEO of global PR firm [*Red Banyan*](https://redbanyan.com/), told *Newsweek* it's little wonder the star's every move draws political discussion.

"In today's world, clickbait rules the day and everything is politicized, which explains why Taylor Swift and her boyfriend Travis Kelce are making waves related to the 2024 presidential election," Nierman said. "Whether she endorses Biden or anyone else, Swift has already been dragged into the partisan bickering that has become our new national pastime.

"One minute, Taylor Swift is [*grappling with deepfake porn pics online*](https://www.newsweek.com/taylor-swift-ai-pornography-deepfake-photos-twitter-x-1864445?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and the next she is facing naked aggression from online trolls and attention-seeking aspiring politicians such as Vivek Ramaswamy.

"Vivek knows that the fastest shortcut to stirring up reactions online is to go after one of the world's most famous stars and Taylor Swift is a logical and obvious target."

**Conspiracy Theories**

Jeffrey R. Dudas, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science at the University of Connecticut, told *Newsweek* that if it wasn't Swift being targeted with vitriol, it would've been another high-profile celebrity.

"This latest ludicrous conspiracy theory is of a piece with the sorts of nonsense that have been floating around the edges, and sometimes right at the center, of American right-wing ***politics*** for generations," said Dudas. "As such, it just so happens to feature Taylor Swift because she is by some measure the most popular person on the planet and because...it turns out that she is not actually a MAGA princess."

"Indeed, all of the standard American right-wing conspiracy fare is here: a secret cabal of either metaphoric or literal demons are conspiring to subvert and destroy the American nation, and what makes the conspiracy so dangerous is that is coming from within, featuring a nefarious cast of characters who look like us and talk like us," Dudas went on.

"The conspirator's motivations are typically a bit too slippery and mysterious to pin down exactly but they likely have to do with unbound and sadistic desires to exert total control over good and virtuous American patriots, reducing them to the status of mindless zombie slaves."

"Worst of all is how this 'artificially created' power couple is in cahoots with [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), the Democratic deep state, the NFL, the [*FBI*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fbi?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), and maybe the [*CIA*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/cia?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)," added UConnPopCast co-host Dudas. "Donald Trump is, of course, the only person who can stop the coming apocalypse."

While it feels as though conspiracy theories are running more rampant than ever in American ***politics***, Dudas explained that there are decades of precedent.

"You can trace the contours of this current Taylor Swift psy-op conspiracy theory back in American right-wing history to the John Birch Society lunacies of the 1950s," he said. "There is an unbroken line that connects fears of fluoride in the water to alien invasions to communist red scare campaigns to CIA plots to assassinate JFK to Jewish space lasers to 9/11 trutherism to [Barack] Obama birtherism to QAnon to Pizzagate and on and on.

"The irony, of course, is that this is all projection: the savior figure who is the hero of right-wing fever dreams, Donald Trump, has already engaged, with his team of paid enablers and superfans, in an actual conspiracy to subvert American democracy."

Red Banyan's Nierman, author of *The Cancel Culture Curse* and *Crisis Averted*, warned that the increased need to vilify and fashion foes out of those whose ***politics*** don't align with one's own will only serve to deepen divides.

"Tribal ***politics***, whether emanating on the right or the left, is corrosive to our country since it makes those on the other side of the political spectrum the 'enemy' rather than recognizing that Americans have far more that unites than divides them," Nierman told *Newsweek*.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2342516/taylor-swift.jpg)

**Graphic**

Taylor Swift

Dimitrios Kambouris/Getty Images;/ChrisGorgio/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Taylor Swift is pictured on November 12, 2021 in New York City. Her photo is superimposed over an illustration of a Republican mascot elephant. The pop star has been the focus of conservative criticism over the past several months.

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