

# [***Nikki Haley Is Costing Taxpayers Millions by Not Dropping Out of the Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDT-62N1-DY68-100G-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Kate Plummer

**Highlight:** The former governor has vowed to remain in the Republican primary, despite polls showing she is far behind Donald Trump.

**Body**

By her act of defiance in remaining in the Republican primary, [*Nikki Haley*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nikki-haley?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is costing U.S. taxpayers millions of dollars.

The former South Carolina governor is the one remaining challenger to [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), in a now largely symbolic battle to secure the Republican party nomination ahead of November's presidential election. *Newsweek* contacted representatives for Haley by email to comment on this story.

On Saturday, Haley [*lost against Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/nikki-haley-south-carolina-republican-primary-result-1873128?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in her home state of South Carolina, securing 39.5 percent of the vote to Trump's 59.8 percent. The latest data from polling aggregator FiveThirtyEight says she is expected to garner 15.6 percent of the overall vote share across all the state primaries; Trump, the former president, dwarves this figure with 76.7 percent of the projected vote.

Against these odds, and amid mounting calls to drop out, Haley has said she will [*remain in the race*](https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-wins-south-carolina-primary-cnn-projects-1873106?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). "We will keep fighting," she said on a speech Saturday night.

"I said earlier this week, that no matter what happens in South Carolina, I would continue to run for president," Haley said. "I'm a woman of my word."

However, the cost of Haley's word amounts to a burden to the taxpayer in the millions. While there is little public data on the cost of hosting primaries, campaign group Open Primaries says presidential primaries in all states cost at least $427,300,168.79. This figure includes Democratic primaries. The group said the average cost to all states for primaries, which are paid for from state funds, was $10,813,388.94.

Different states accrue different costs, depending on the number of personnel they employ to administer elections, their salaries, the cost of hiring polling stations and other administrative factors. Therefore, it is not possible to come to a definitive figure as to how much it will cost states to run the remaining primaries.

However, only five states have held Republican primaries or caucuses so far. This means there are still 45 states left in which voters will cast their ballots, racking up significant costs.

Open Primaries said the three most-expensive state primaries are California, which cost $96 million; Maryland, which costs $27.9 million; and Illinois, which costs some $27.3 million, according to the group's research. All of these votes and more are yet to come.

Heath Brown, an associate professor of public policy at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, told *Newsweek*: "The benefits of democracy far outweigh the costs of limiting democracy. Haley remaining in the race is her right, and states have an obligation to fulfill voters' rights to participate in choosing the Republican nominee. That this requires public funds is a necessary part of the democracy."

Meanwhile, Mark Shanahan, an associate professor in ***politics*** at the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom, told *Newsweek* that Haley is remaining in the race in the hopes that one of Trump's many legal cases take him down.

"Haley is banking on the law catching up with Trump before the primary cycle is complete. If it does, she's first in line, in a line of one, of viable candidates ready to replace him on the GOP ticket," Shanahan said.

"While there's a doubt over whether Trump can make it to November, thanks to his legal travails, she'll hang on in there as long as there's still enough money rolling in to keep campaigning. She undoubtedly hopes her presence will lead to more voters switching to back her, but Trump has sucked the oxygen of publicity out of just about every area of this race, and chances are that his high numbers will remain in the stratosphere."

Shanahan added: "In reality, the only block to his progress is the indictments against him in the courts. And should he fall, Haley wants to be there to reap the benefit."

Ari Fleischer, the former White House press secretary for [*George W. Bush*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/george-w.-bush?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), has said that Haley might be remaining in the race to set herself up as [*a third-party candidate*](https://www.newsweek.com/nikki-haley-launching-third-party-no-labels-run-gop-consultant-ari-fleischer-predicts-1873149?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on the "No Labels" ticket, as she saw success with independent voters. However, Haley said she is focused on the Republican Party, in a Tuesday interview with [*Fox News*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox-news?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

The next primary takes place in Michigan on Tuesday. The extent to which Haley can pick up momentum remains to be seen.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2353607/nikki-haley.jpg)

**Graphic**

Nikki Haley

Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Nikki Haley, speaks during her primary election night gathering at The Charleston Place on February 24, 2024 in Charleston, South Carolina. The former South Carolina governor has vowed to remain in the Republican primary, despite polls showing she is far behind Donald Trump.

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