

# [***Ronna McDaniel's Rise and Fall***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8R-JX81-JBR6-90M7-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Kate Plummer

**Highlight:** The Republican National Committee chairwoman is said to be considering stepping down.

**Body**

Ronna McDaniel, the embattled Republican National Committee (RNC) chairwoman, is considering stepping down after weeks of criticism, according to multiple reports.

*The New York Times* first cited anonymous sources who said the Republican told former president and GOP frontrunner Donald Trump she would step down after the South Carolina primary later this month. [*CNN*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/cnn?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and [*CBS*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/cbs?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) News were among other media that reported the news, but McDaniel herself has not confirmed it.

"Nothing has changed. This will be decided after South Carolina," RNC spokesperson Keith Schipper told *Newsweek*.

[*McDaniel*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/ronna-mcdaniel?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), the niece of Republican Senator [*Mitt Romney*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/mitt-romney?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), has served as the RNC chairwoman since 2017, having been chosen by Trump to lead the party after she served as chair of the Michigan Republican Party.

But her fortunes have since turned and she has been criticized for funding issues within the GOP governing body, as well as for the [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) losing multiple elections since 2020, leading to [*calls for her to resign.*](https://www.newsweek.com/ronna-mcdaniel-republican-party-chair-1865200?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)

In November 2023, the GOP governing body [*reported its lowest bank balance*](https://www.newsweek.com/republican-national-committee-running-out-money-1854454?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) at that point in any year since 2016[*,*](https://www.newsweek.com/republican-national-committee-running-out-money-1854454?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) disclosures to the Federal Election Commission showed. With $9.96 million in spending money, the RNC had less than half the $21.35 million it reported in the year [*Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) won the presidential election.

McDaniel has faced sustained criticism from her GOP colleagues, including Trump, who on Monday suggested she should step aside from her role.

When asked by [*Newsmax*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/newsmax?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)'s Rob Schmitt whether it is "time for Ronna McDaniel to step aside," he replied: "I think she knows that, I think she understands that."

Trump also signaled [*he was distancing himself*](https://www.newsweek.com/ronna-mcdaniel-republican-party-bannon-trump-1866812?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) from McDaniel on Sunday during an interview on [*Fox News*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox-news?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). "I think she did great when she ran Michigan for me," Trump said. "I think she did OK, initially, in the RNC. I would say right now there'll probably be some changes made."

It was this that may have proved the death knell in McDaniel's RNC career. Speaking to *Newsweek*, Thomas Whalen, an associate professor of social sciences at Boston University, implied Trump was using McDaniel as "a scapegoat."

"Everyone needs a scapegoat, especially the GOP it would seem," he said. "Frankly it doesn't matter who is head of the RNC, so long as the party is wholly subservient to Trump's political interests. The reason Republicans have lost recent national elections is due to Trump and his myriad legal problems and personal scandals. Independents and other key swing voters are turned off, especially when GOP candidates cravenly tow the Trump line.

"Until the situation changes, the RNC chair's post is irrelevant."

Christopher Phelps, historian at the Department of American and Canadian Studies at the U.K.'s University of Nottingham, said the problems started when McDaniel "overreached" in her attitude to Trump, by saying he was the party's eventual nominee despite the ongoing GOP primary.

"Ronna McDaniel is a Trump appointee, and she even overreached in her enthusiasm recently by saying on television that he will be the 'eventual nominee' although [*Nikki Haley*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nikki-haley?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is still in the race," he told *Newsweek.* "But it serves Trump to have someone to blame for weak Republican fundraising and the election outcomes in 2018, 2020, and 2022 when the 'red wave' failed to materialize. Otherwise that might be seen as Trump's fault, given his high negatives in opinion polls."

Todd Landman, professor of political science, School of ***Politics*** and International Relations, at the University of Nottingham in the U.K., agreed that McDaniel "jumped the gun" by endorsing Trump too enthusiastically.

He told *Newsweek*: "After the New Hampshire primary, Ronna McDaniel effectively jumped the gun in suggesting that the party simply declare Donald Trump as the nominee for president. This idea was quickly quashed and appeared somewhat ironic given the many statements members of the party have made about electoral interference. The primaries had only just begun with one in Iowa and one in New Hampshire.

"There is a key primary in South Carolina this month, home state to former governor and challenger Nikki Haley, while March 5 will see Super Tuesday with numerous primaries. The electoral logic is to let these primary contests play out and assess the position of candidates at that time. Nikki Haley has stated that she is still in the race at least until Super Tuesday. Donald Trump and his allies have now turned against Ronna, with Trump signaling that it is time for her to go. Her position is not helped by the financial woes currently being experienced by the RNC. There is thus building pressure for her to resign and have new leadership to secure stronger outcomes for the party between now and the November election."

A year has proved to be a long time in ***politics***. In 2023, McDaniel was re-elected to the position of RNC chair with 111 votes. This was more than double the number of votes received by her challenger, former vice chairwoman of the California Republican Party, and a National Committeewoman of the Republican National Committee for California, Harmeet Dhillon, who got just 51 ballots from committee members.

On Tuesday, Dhillon [*announced she is "not seeking" to replace McDaniel*](https://www.newsweek.com/rnc-chair-ronna-mcdaniel-harmeet-dhillon-1867266?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), before *The New York Times* report broke.

The Trump lawyer wrote on X, formerly Twitter: "Each version of RNC Game of Thrones I hear is worse than the last one.

"To be clear, I'm not seeking the chair position. We had an election, I lost, shook the victor's hand, and offered my support. But there are plenty of folks gunning for it.

"Happy where I am. I love the law!"

Rumours are already swirling regarding who, then, could replace McDaniel. Publications have reported former Speaker of the House of Representatives [*Kevin McCarthy*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kevin-mccarthy?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) has been named as a potential candidate, while in November MyPillow CEO [*Mike Lindell*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/mike-lindell?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) told [*Steve Bannon*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/steve-bannon?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), Trump's former chief strategist, that he would "100 percent" be interested in the role. In 2023 he ran for the role and received just four votes.

*Update 2/7/24, 8:16 a.m. ET: This article was updated with comment from an RNC spokesperson.*

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2345648/ronna-mcdaniel.jpg)

**Graphic**

Ronna McDaniel

Photo by PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP via Getty Images

Ronna McDaniel, Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee (RNC) holds the gavel at the start of the 2023 Republican National Committee Winter Meeting in Dana Point, California, on January 27, 2023. The Republican National Committee chairwoman is considering stepping down.

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