

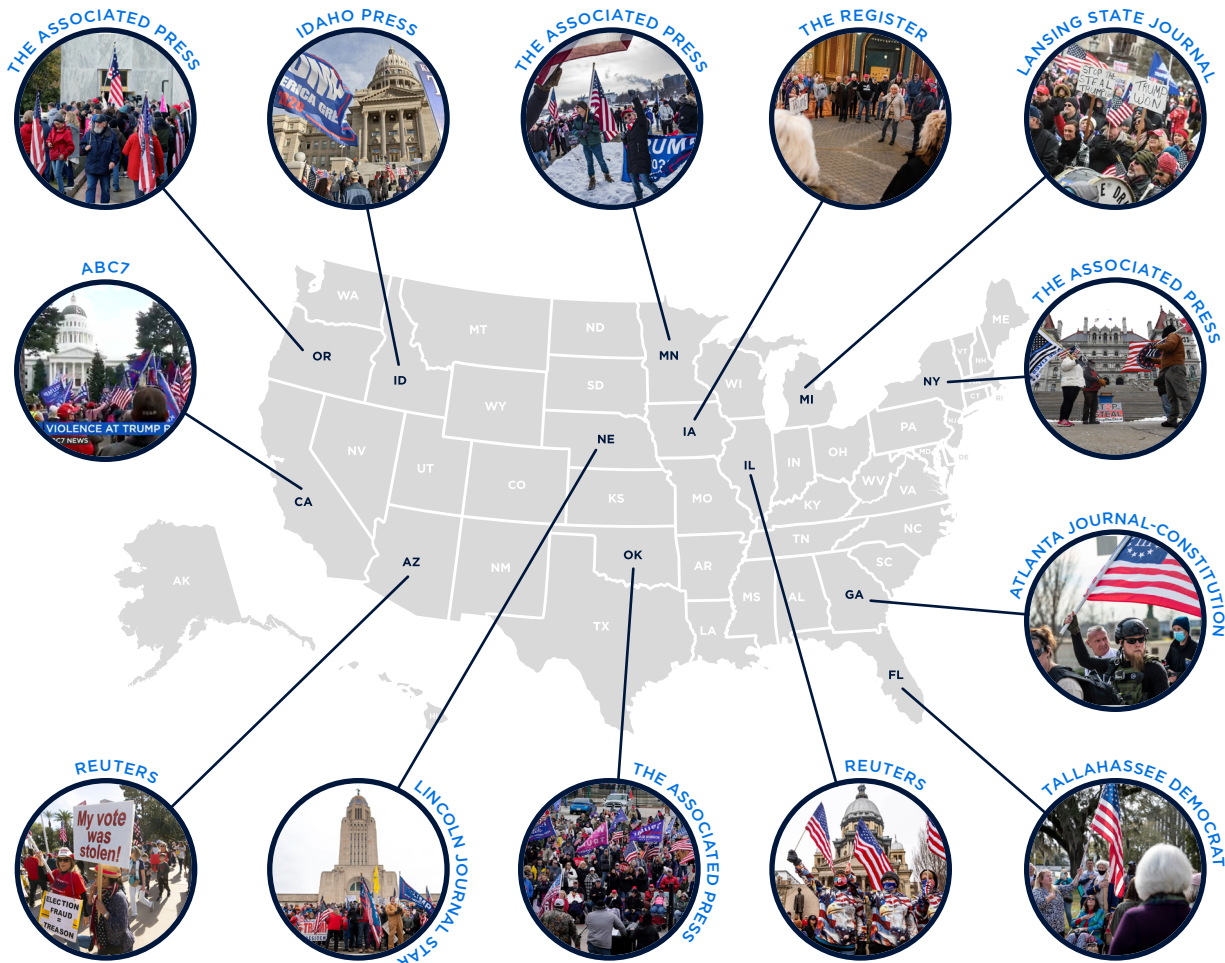


TO: Interested Parties
 FROM: Heather Williams, DLCC President
 DATE: October 23, 2024
 RE: Memo: State Legislatures are Key to Preventing the Next Insurrection

January 6, 2021, was among the darkest days in American history. Images of protestors violently clashing at state capitols across the country—followed by the U.S. Capitol itself—are seared into our national consciousness. As we approach the first presidential election since the greatest assault on our democracy in modern times, the DLCC is bringing attention to the critical role that America’s state legislatures play in protecting the right to vote and safeguarding our elections.

The Lead-Up To January 6th

While the many protests at state capitols were quickly eclipsed in the national news by the brazen attacks on the U.S. Capitol on January 6th, the harbingers of insurrection were on full display at statehouses across the country in both 2020 and 2021. The effort of MAGA state allies to support Donald Trump’s lies and challenge the election results was widespread in scale and reach, including:



It's clear that throughout 2020, state capitols became central launching pads for the movement to challenge the election results. Armed protests in states like Michigan and Idaho occurred months before January 6th and provided a roadmap for how angry mobs could invade capitol buildings—incited by Republican state legislators.

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“Armed statehouse protests set tone for US Capitol insurgents”

Trump used state legislators to push his virulent lies and attempted to overturn the election results, both leading up to and after Election Day. GOP legislators colluded with those seeking to disrupt election certification, meeting with them ahead of riots and aiding their entry into capitols. Trump’s MAGA allies in state legislatures led the charge in drafting letters, resolutions, and legislation to upend the certification of results and the Electoral College. Several legislators led fake electors schemes, including Arizona and Georgia state representatives who even served as fake electors themselves and signed bogus documents claiming that Trump won the 2020 election.

Since January 6th, 2021, the DLCC tracked nearly 60 state GOP legislators and candidates who were present in DC on that dark day and went on to run for or serve in statehouses across the country. Some of these individuals have gone to jail for their actions that day; while others have been defeated at the ballot box. Still, [more than a dozen](#) of these individuals remain in elected office, with 2024 candidates poised to grow their ranks:

Incumbent Legislators who were in Washington, DC on January 6th

Alaska Rep. David Eastman
Arizona Sen. Anthony Kern
Arizona Sen. Janae Shamp
Illinois Rep. Chris Miller
Iowa Rep. Luana Stoltenberg
Maine Rep. Barbara Bagshaw
Michigan Rep. Angela Rigas
Michigan Rep. Matt Maddock
New Mexico Rep. John Block
North Carolina Rep. Donnie Loftis
North Dakota Rep. Donna Henderson
Pennsylvania Sen. Doug Mastriano
Texas Sen. Angela Paxton
West Virginia Sen. Mike Azinger
Wyoming Sen. Bob Ide

2024 Non-Incumbent Candidates who were in Washington, DC on January 6th

Arizona Senate, Mark Finchem
California Assembly, Denise Aguilar Mendez
California Assembly, Jessica Martinez
Texas House, Katrina Pierson
Vermont Senate, Joe Gervais

Trump’s strategy to sow discord and upend electoral processes in 2020 relied on Republican state legislators, and many of those who were willing to help him in 2020 remain in a position to do so again in 2024.

The DLCC’s Work To Protect Democracy

The environment for political violence this year is alarming. Like in 2020, Trump has [refused to commit to accepting the election results](#), as well as refused to rule out the potential for violence following November’s elections. He’s even [suggested](#) U.S. armed forces be used against his political adversaries, whom he called “the enemy within,” on Election Day. The frightening truth is that we could very likely see the same tactics weaponized by state Republicans in 2020 used again in 2024 under the direction of Donald Trump to undermine the peaceful transfer of power. It’s no exaggeration to say the outcome of state legislative races this year could decide whether democracy prevails in this election or the next.

That’s why the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee is leading the work to ensure defenders of democracy are elected. Just last month, the DLCC launched a [“Races to Watch”](#) memo, which includes a slate of Democratic candidates running against Republicans who pose threats to democracy. And we’re making sure democracy is a cornerstone of our messaging in top battleground states, particularly those which were hotbeds for election conspiracies in 2020.

In **Pennsylvania** Senate District 37, we’re highlighting that MAGA extremist Devlin Robinson participated in election conspiracies:

Devlin Robinson is too extreme for us:

- ❑ Voted to take away the right to an abortion with no exceptions¹
- ❑ Voted against protecting women’s access to birth control²
- ❑ Participated in the 2020 Stop the Steal conspiracy³
- ❑ Voted to allow insurrectionists to hold elected office⁴

And in **Arizona**, mailers were recently sent linking MAGA candidates to an extreme agenda to overturn elections:



Ensuring MAGA state Republicans are defeated is the strongest path to prevent future insurrection activity. Not only will that keep insurrectionists out of office, but it also paves the way for state Democrats to pass legislation to strengthen election systems—as we saw most recently in the new Democratic trifectas secured in 2022:

- ▶ In **Minnesota**, Democrats swiftly passed a voting rights package into law in 2023, including protecting election workers from intimidation and implementing a ban on tampering with voting equipment and ballot boxes.
- ▶ In **Michigan**, Democrats passed laws in 2023 to streamline elections and punish those who attack voting access, including new penalties for attempts to intimidate and prevent election officials from performing their duties.

The Path Forward

Electing Democrats to statehouses next month will have immediate and long-term impacts on upholding our democracy and ensuring a safe and stable transfer of power. Across the country, control of state legislative chambers—and whether elections are protected or undermined—will come down to a single seat and perhaps just a few hundred votes. That's especially true in battleground states that witnessed some of the most intense insurrection activity in 2020, including Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Michigan:

- ▶ **Pennsylvania** Democrats clinched a one-seat House majority in 2022 by just 63 votes. Republicans control the state Senate, and preserving Democrats' slim control of the state House will ensure MAGA extremism cannot take hold in the state.
- ▶ **Arizona** Democrats were short of the majority by just 7,000 votes in the House and 6,000 votes in the Senate in 2022. The Arizona legislature represents a promising opportunity to flip both chambers this cycle if we can overcome these slim margins.
- ▶ **Michigan** Democrats secured a trifecta in 2022 by just 1,400 votes in the House and about 6,000 votes in the Senate. While the Senate isn't up this cycle, Democrats must protect the one-seat majority in the House.

Our nation is at a critical juncture to turn the page on attacks on our democratic process and uphold the sanctity of the will of voters. Electing Democrats to state legislatures across the country is the strongest path to protect our democracy not just in 2024—but for years, decades, and centuries to come.