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**Liz Cheney**

## Liz Cheney loses primary after leading Republican charge against Donald Trump

Prominent critic of former US president will be ousted from Wyoming seat after midterms



Liz Cheney, left, arrives to vote in Wyoming's Republican primary on Tuesday with her father, former vice-president Dick Cheney © Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post/AP

**James Politi** in Washington YESTERDAY

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Liz Cheney has lost the primary contest for her seat in the US House of Representatives to a challenger backed by Donald Trump, as Republicans in staunchly conservative Wyoming punished one of the most prominent congressional critics of the former president.

[Cheney](#), daughter of former vice-president Dick Cheney, has represented Wyoming in the House since 2017. However, she faced an uphill battle to win re-election this year after becoming vice-chair of the congressional panel investigating the January 6 2021 attack on the US Capitol and voting to impeach Trump, in defiance of the former president and Republican leaders.

In a speech to supporters following her loss, Cheney said she could have won the primary, but it would have required embracing Trump's conspiracies about the 2020 election. "Our republic relies upon the goodwill of all candidates for office to accept the outcome of elections," she said.

Cheney noted that Abraham Lincoln had lost congressional races before winning the presidency, and went on to denounce "major elements" of her party who defended the January 6 rioters and to attack [false claims about the FBI search](#) of Trump's home last week. "Poisonous lies destroy free nations," she said. "Freedom must not, cannot and will not die here."

Primary contests in Wyoming and Alaska on Tuesday were among the last ahead of November's midterm elections. They offer a test of Trump's grip on Republican voters after the FBI's search of his Mar-a-Lago estate and the start of an [investigation into his handling](#) of classified national security documents.

Congressional candidates who have been openly critical of [Trump](#) have had trouble winning Republican primaries. Tom Rice of South Carolina, Jaime Herrera Beutler of Washington and Peter Meijer of Michigan — who all voted to impeach Trump over his conduct on January 6 — have lost their seats to candidates endorsed by the former president. Four others who voted to impeach Trump decided not to run, and just two survived the primaries.

Trump-backed challenger Harriet Hageman [had been leading Cheney](#) by nearly 30 percentage points in polls prior to the primary, leaving the daughter of the former vice-president with no illusions about the result.

“Today, no matter what the outcome, is certainly the beginning of a battle that is going to continue,” Cheney told CBS as she cast her ballot on Tuesday.

“We're facing a moment where our democracy really is under attack and under threat. And those of us across the board — Republicans, Democrats and independents who believe deeply in freedom and who care about the Constitution and the future of the country — have an obligation to put that above party,” she added.

After Mar-a-Lago was searched, Hageman — who has also embraced Trump's denial of the 2020 election results — defended the former president, calling the investigation “political persecution”.

“If the FBI can treat a former President this way, imagine what they can do to the rest of us. It's a 2-tiered justice system — one for elites & another for their political enemies,” Hageman wrote on Twitter.

Even before Cheney's defeat was projected, Trump and his allies were gleeful. Taylor Budowich, a Trump spokesperson, posted a picture of Trump dancing on Twitter and wrote: “Bye Bye Liz Cheney”.

Cheney said she was “ashamed to hear members of my party attacking the integrity of the FBI agents”, criticising the comments for putting “the lives of patriotic public servants at risk”.

But most notably, in her final, quixotic pitch to Wyoming voters, she launched an

appeal for Americans to abandon the “Big Lie” perpetrated by Trump and his followers about the 2020 election.

“America cannot remain free if we abandon the truth. The lie that the 2020 presidential election was stolen is insidious. It preys on those who love their country,” Cheney said in a short video posted on Twitter.

Cheney has not said whether she would consider running for the Republican presidential nomination in 2024, but it would be a long shot, requiring conservative voters to turn their back on Trump and Trumpism.

In her role as vice-chair of the congressional committee probing the [January 6 attacks](#), Cheney has said evidence was growing that Trump committed wrongdoing in connection with the assault on the Capitol and that the case for prosecution had become stronger.

In Alaska, the focus is on whether Sarah Palin, former governor and 2008 Republican vice-presidential nominee, will be able to prevail in a field of three to win a special election for a House seat.

Another question is whether Lisa Murkowski, the incumbent Republican senator who is considered relatively moderate, will advance to the general election. Murkowski is facing a Trump-backed challenger.

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