



## Trump Is Losing His Grip on the GOP. Here's How He Can Keep It.

As the 2024 presidential race rolls on and President Trump finds himself far from the only big name in the GOP primary contest, many elected officials who previously considered it a given to voice support for Trump to ensure their political survival now feel free to either stay out of the fray or even publicly put their support behind other candidates.

The change marks a notable shift in Republican politics: After the controversial events of 2020 and then the less-than-stellar performances of Trump-supported candidates in 2022, the 45th president has seen a diminishing of his influence within the party.



Luis Miguel

Ultimately, 2024 will be the deciding factor in the future of “Trumpism.” A Donald Trump loss in the general election would certainly knock the wind out of his support among all but his most devoted supporters. A loss in the primary would be doubly damaging.

Of course, America’s political system was never supposed to be about leadership cults built around individuals. But the fate of Trump in the coming election is relevant to the nation at large beyond what it means for The Donald’s political career.

With his “America First” platform, Trump brought a strand of conservatism that had formerly been panned as “fringe” into the mainstream of the Republican Party.

Being pro-American manufacturing, tough on China, opposed to foreign interventionism, staunchly pro-life, in favor of securing the border, against freely giving our taxpayer dollars away to other countries — all of these things that the establishment dismissed as the stuff of conspiracy theorists and wing nuts largely became the norm in the GOP thanks to Trump.

As a result, most Republican politicians have had to not only embrace Trump to remain popular with the base, but also embrace the Trumpian policy agenda — or at least pay lip service to it.

But as Trump wanes, the danger is that this brand of America First, constitutionalist conservatism will wane along with him, and the Republican Party will go back to the big government, police state, pro-war party it was for so long before Trump — especially during the Bush years.

Because while we would all like to believe that politics is driven by ideas, principles, and philosophies, the reality is that human factors drive it much more. And these human factors are personality, organization, and money.

Nearly every great political movement has grown due to one or more grand personalities associated with it. For better (but more often, worse) human beings instinctively follow strong personalities and



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are more moved by the impassioned speech of a bold leader than by the logical arguments of a great thinker, however correct they may be.

In the contemporary era, Trump was the catalyst that brought the America First vision, which had been articulated for decades by people and organizations as diverse as The John Birch Society, Pat Buchanan, and Phyllis Schlafly, to the masses.

On the other side of the political spectrum, it was Bernie Sanders' failed presidential bids, especially his first in 2016, that really ignited the progressive cause, leading to democratic socialism becoming a dominant force within a newly radicalized Democratic Party.

But organization is also key to a successful movement. Strong personalities alone aren't enough to get results or to build something that lasts. Armies of volunteers, activists, social media figures, and other players all working in coordination — that's how you take enthusiasm and turn it into concrete political power.

And, of course, money is the inescapable reality in electoral politics, as much as we wish it wasn't. Even the Tea Party, which played a key role in reshaping Republican politics and the nation at-large during Obama's presidency, had the reach that it did because of copious amounts of spending by the Koch Brothers' network, namely their Americans for Prosperity organization.

These three factors — personality, organization, money — build off of each other. Organization and money can make it possible for new personalities to gain a voice and mass reach.

That was the case of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), who has become quite the "thought leader" within the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. But prior to 2018, Ocasio-Cortez was a complete unknown. She became a national figure thanks to the money and organization of Sanders-aligned groups such as Justice Democrats and Brand New Congress.

In turn, a big personality can use his platform to develop an organization and generate the money with which to sustain that organization.

This is what Trump had the potential to do, but didn't. Although he was on the right track with his Save America PAC, it has been an instrument more for his own political career (paying his lawyer fees and laying the groundwork for his 2024 campaign) than for creating an organization that can support candidates and causes aligned with his vision.

If he used his voice to that end, Trump could exert far more influence in the long term than he could even by running for president again. He could create an infrastructure to provide real support to America First candidates and to educate the electorate. And it could be an organization that would last even after his death.

We don't know what Trump's plans for the long term are. In the meantime, thankfully, organizations like JBS are providing quality organization and activism to advance Americanism.



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