



Could Donald Trump Become Speaker of the House?

As the remarkable House speaker election saga drags on, several alternatives have, in turn, attracted the interest of the 20-odd GOP House members-elect who are opposing Kevin McCarthy. Today, a name surfaced that evoked surprise in the legislative chamber: Donald John Trump. Although former President Trump had not been nominated, Representative Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) voted for him during the roll call. The former president, of course, is not an elected member of Congress, which prompts the question: Must the speaker of the House be an elected member of that body?



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Actually, no. According to Article I, Section 2, Clause 5 of the U.S. Constitution, “The House of Representatives shall chuse [sic] their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.” Nowhere is it stipulated that the speaker — or, for that matter, any of the other House officers — must be a member of Congress, although every speaker of the House so far has been.

Not only that, Gaetz’ vote for Trump was not the first time the former president has been considered for the position. According to *The Wrap* back on November 13, the possibility of bringing Trump back into government as speaker has been an active one among GOP House members for months. In fact, Gaetz himself at a Trump rally in Georgia back on March 26 made an interesting promise to the MAGA faithful in attendance: “Give us the ability to fire Nancy Pelosi, take back the majority, impeach Joe Biden, and I am going to nominate Donald Trump for speaker of the United States House of Representatives.” The former president, responding to Gaetz’ pledge, commented, “Well, that was interesting.”

And as far back as November 2021, former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows admitted that he “would love to see the gavel go from [House Speaker] Nancy Pelosi to Donald Trump. You talk about melting down — people would go crazy.”

Trump himself has clarified that he is not interested in the job, although recent legal setbacks and the final recommendations of Pelosi’s rogue January 6 Committee might cause him to reconsider should the position actually be offered to him.

Other non-House members have occasionally been nominated for the speaker’s position in the past, including Georgia’s perennial gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams and former Secretary of State Colin Powell. In the 2015 speaker election, Senators Rand Paul and Jeff Sessions also received votes.

But never until this year’s fraught election has any serious consideration been given to the possibility of a first-ever non-congressman as speaker. Certainly the oddsmakers aren’t completely ruling it out: bookmakers at Betfair, the world’s largest online gambling site, told *Newsweek* that they were offering 33-to-1 odds of Trump becoming speaker — a steep hill, to be sure, but not entirely beyond the realm of possibility. Stay tuned.



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