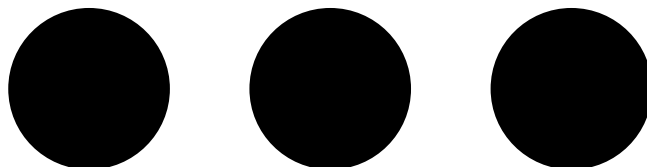




Courting the Establishment? Kari Lake Endorsed by NRSC

Is Kari Lake, the once consummate anti-establishment candidate, turning her back on those whose support has brought her this far?

As first reported by [Politico](#), the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC), the campaign arm of the Senate Republican caucus with a long reputation as an instrument of the GOP’s establishment wing, formally endorsed Kari Lake in the U.S. Senate race in Arizona.



“I am honored to have the endorsement of Chairman [Senator Steve] Daines and the NRSC,” said Lake in a statement. “We are uniting Republicans in Arizona and have a clear path to victory, The Senate Majority runs through Arizona.”

Lake, a former news anchor, made a name for herself as a candidate for governor of Arizona in 2022 with vocal views on issues considered “hot-button” with the Republican base — for example, adamantly maintaining that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from Donald Trump and then making similar claims with regard to her own gubernatorial race after losing to Democrat Katie Hobbs.

AP Images
Kari Lake

As a gubernatorial candidate and prior to announcing her bid for senator, Lake was a pariah among establishment Republicans, who disapproved of her election claims and viewed her as too extreme to win a general election.

As a Senate candidate, however, Lake has distanced herself from her most controversial views and made inroads with Washington insiders. In a sign of the new relationship between lake and the GOP elite, the NRSC is set to hold a fundraiser in Washington next month. Both Daines and Senate GOP Conference Chair John Barrasso (R-Wy.) are slated to be there.

Politico further reported:

The party’s endorsement has been months in the making. Lake met with Republicans in Washington — including the NRSC — before launching her run for Senate. The committee’s executive director attended her kickoff event.

Lake spent last weekend at the NRSC’s winter meeting at The Breakers luxury resort in Palm Beach, Florida, talking with senators and key donors. Several attendees told Senate



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on February 13, 2024

campaign officials they were impressed with Lake, according to three people familiar with the interactions, granted anonymity to discuss internal conversations. Lake's prepared remarks touched on her attempts to unify the party, take on the Democratic front-runner, Rep. Ruben Gallego, and reach out to those who didn't support her in 2022, according to a person in the room.

"Kari Lake is one of the most talented candidates in the country," said Daines. "Kari is building out an effective campaign operation that has what it takes to flip Arizona's Senate seat in November."

As [The New American](#) previously reported, Lake has a new campaign team this time around; a more "professional" one than she had in 2022. In the previous race, Lake was her own campaign manager and shied away from hiring professional consultants and buying TV ads, preferring to work with young true believers in her cause.

Now, Lake has professional consultants on her payroll, including Garrett Ventry, who previously worked with NRSC executive director Jason Thielman.

It remains to be seen how well and how long the relationship between Lake and the establishment will last. Lake has not shied away from openly criticizing members of her own party in the past. Just in January, she opened a can of worms in Arizona Republican political circles when she released a recorded conversation between herself and state GOP Chair Jeff DeWit in which he attempted to bribe her by offering her a job outside of elected office if she bowed out of the Senate race. The incident led to DeWit's resignation.

The only thing that's certain is that the future of the seat remains uncertain. Arizona was once a firm Republican territory, but, propelled by migration-related demographic change, the state has leaned left in recent elections, with Democrats winning prized statewide offices such as the governorship and both of the state's senate seats.

But Republicans see an opening in 2024. Senator Kyrsten Sinema, who was elected as a Democrat but changed to independent during her term amid backlash for joining with Republicans on a few key votes, has not yet declared if she will run for reelection. If she does, it would be a three-way race between Sinema, Lake, and Democratic front-runner Representative Ruben Gallego — a situation that could potentially siphon off enough votes from Democrats to hand the Republican candidate the election.

If Lake wins, the question will remain: Will she have won based on her own campaign's merits, and thus have the liberty to vote according to the mandate from her Republican supporters? Or will she have won due to the assistance from the establishment she is now courting, and thus be obligated to side with them against the base on the most important issues?

If we know anything about the workings of the establishment, it's that they are unlikely to throw their support — and more, importantly, their money — behind anyone whom they deem a serious threat to their interests.



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