



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on October 11, 2023

Kari Lake Announces Senate Run, Gets Mainstream Makeover

Kari Lake is back in campaign mode. But this time, she's taking a different approach to running for statewide office in the Grand Canyon State.

Lake, the Trump-aligned firebrand who unsuccessfully ran for governor in 2022 and thereafter has asserted that her loss was the result of electoral fraud, officially [launched her campaign](#) for U.S. Senate on Tuesday during a 50-minute speech out of an airplane hanger attended by about a thousand people.

Lake, the 54-year-old former news anchor who won wide support among the conservative base in the 2022 race by upholding Donald Trump's claims of fraud in 2020, has the blessing of the 45th president for her bid to go to Washington.

"I am proud to give her my complete and total endorsement for the United States Senate," Trump said in a video message played near the end of Lake's speech. He added, "When I'm back in the White House, I need strong fighters like Kari in the Senate. She is a fighter. She's strong, and she's good. Republicans must win, and we must win very, very big. It's much harder for them to cheat if we do it like we should."

Lake herself made only a passing reference to the subject of "honest elections," despite the fact that she has been so strongly associated with the electoral-fraud issue during her time in the national spotlight. As NBC News notes, Lake's campaign launch speech focused on issues such as inflation, gas prices, water, trade schools, and the southern border.

The marked change in tone is reflective of what some are saying is Lake's attempt at a political makeover. As [Politico](#) reports, 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 National Republican Senatorial Committee executive director Jason Thielman.

Establishment Republican insiders had hoped Lake would disappear from politics after she failed to become governor. But as private polling made clear that she would steamroll through a GOP primary, these insiders have given up on finding an alternative and instead made peace with the possibility of working with her.



AP Images
Kari Lake



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For her part, Lake has signaled that she is also willing to work alongside the establishment. Politico notes:

But Lake hasn't just scared off her Republican skeptics; she's courted them too. She spent last week on Capitol Hill, meeting with senators across the ideological spectrum, including Sens. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) and John Cornyn (R-Texas), two allies of Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). She had a "productive" sitdown with Josh Holmes, a McConnell adviser, and Steven Law, the president of the McConnell-aligned Senate Leadership Fund.

"She's impressive," Cornyn said. "I'm looking forward to seeing how the campaign goes."

The National Republican Senatorial Committee has not ruled out endorsing Lake, according to a person familiar with its planning. Its chair, Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.), met with Lake when she was in D.C. He has said he hopes she will focus on the future — and not elections of the past.

Some within the establishment gave their opinions on whether they think Lake has a chance at winning this time around. Chuck Coughlin, a longtime Arizona operative, told Politico that he believes Lake can win "if she's less contemptuous and more aspirational" — though he doesn't see her doing that.

Senator Mitt Romney (R-Utah) was less generous, saying, "I don't think she has any prospect of actually being elected. The people of Arizona are smarter than that."

But at her launch, Lake presented a more inclusive attitude, directly addressing Democrats and speaking to shared challenges.

"I don't think you're a threat to democracy. You are a citizen just like me," Lake said to the crowd. "And I know you're struggling as well. We're all struggling — there's not a gas pump out there for Republicans and one for Democrats."

Yet she still displayed a spirit of combativeness, declaring, "This mama bear has a whole lot of fight left in her. I am not going to retreat. I'm going to stand on top of this hill with every single one of you."

According to a [poll](#) from the Democratic-leaning firm Public Policy Polling, Lake receives 36 percent of the vote in a three-way matchup between herself, Democratic frontrunner Representative Ruben Gallego, and sitting Senator Krysten Sinema (elected as a Democrat, now an Independent). Per the poll, Gallego would win the race with 41 percent, while Sinema would come in last place at just 15 percent.

Sinema has not yet announced whether she will seek reelection, and it is uncertain whether her presence in the race would draw more votes away from the Republican or the Democratic candidate.



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