



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on January 16, 2026

Trump Keeps “Joking” About Canceling Midterms Amid Threat of Insurrection Act Invocation

President Donald Trump has yet again mused aloud about canceling midterm elections. The White House immediately dismissed the remarks as a “joke.”

The comment came as tensions sharply rise between federal immigration agents and protesters in multiple cities, most visibly in Minneapolis. Large demonstrations have erupted after aggressive ICE enforcement actions and multiple shootings involving federal agents sparked nationwide outrage. Protesters have clashed with officers. Tear gas, forceful arrests, and heated confrontations now appear regularly in widely shared videos.



AP Images

Trump, meanwhile, is [threatening](#) to invoke the Insurrection Act, the rarely used emergency law that would allow him to deploy military forces and federalize the National Guard to quell what the administration describes not only as obstruction, but as “insurrection” and “domestic terrorism.”

At the same time, the president’s approval rating [remains low](#), with recent polls showing [vanishing support](#) on the issues of immigration and foreign policy and [rapidly slipping numbers](#) among younger voters, signaling trouble for the Republicans.

Against this backdrop, Trump’s casual talk about canceling elections lands less like harmless humor and more like a public conditioning.

The January Musings

Over the first two weeks of the new year, Trump raised the idea of canceling midterms twice. The latest occurred in a closed-door interview reported by Reuters on Thursday:

The president expressed frustration that his Republican Party could lose control of the U.S. House of Representatives or the Senate in this year’s midterm elections, citing historical trends that have seen the party in power lose seats in the second year of a presidency.

“It’s some deep psychological thing, but when you win the presidency, you don’t win the midterms,” Trump said. He boasted that he had accomplished so much that “when you think of it, we shouldn’t even have an election.”

On January 6, Trump had made a similar comment while addressing House Republicans at the Kennedy Center. According to a [Time](#) report, he said:

They [the Democrats] have the worst policy.... How we have to even run against these people — I won’t say cancel the election, they should cancel the election, because the fake



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on January 16, 2026

news would say, “He wants the elections canceled. He’s a dictator.” They always call me a dictator.

The speech wandered widely. Trump complained about his polling numbers, floated the idea of serving beyond the 22nd Amendment’s [two-term limit](#), and suggested Americans did not fully appreciate Republican leadership.

The president urged the lawmakers to put on their best fight to protect him from what he framed as political retribution:

You gotta win the midterms. Because if we don’t win the midterms, they’ll find a reason to impeach me.... I’ll get impeached.

Is It Funny?

At the White House briefing, reporters pressed press secretary Karoline Leavitt. [One asked](#) her why Trump had raised election cancellation twice in “recent days.” Leavitt replied:

The president was simply joking. He was saying, “We’re doing such a great job. We’re doing everything the American people thought. Maybe we should just keep rolling.” But he was speaking facetiously.

Andrew Feinberg of *The Independent* [challenged](#) her sharply,

Americans for generations have fought and died for democracy.... Are you saying that the president finds the idea of canceling elections funny?

Leavitt snapped back: “Andrew, were you in the room? No, you weren’t. I was in the room. I heard the conversation, and only someone like you would take that so seriously.”

Her tone landed as combative rather than reassuring.

Zelensky as a Model?

A related topic surfaced last August, when Trump hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. During the meeting, they touched on Ukraine’s martial law and suspended elections. Trump [reacted](#) with apparent amusement:

So during war, you can’t have elections? So let me just say, three and a half years from now — so you mean if we happen to be in a war with somebody, no more elections? Oh, that’s good.

Critics argued that he was normalizing the idea that war could justify canceling elections. Trump did not explicitly say this, but his comment fueled suspicion that he views emergency powers as politically useful.

Since then, however, his administration has taken a more aggressive military posture abroad, including intervention in Venezuela and renewed threats toward Iran, Greenland, Mexico, and Cuba, angering



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on January 16, 2026

parts of Trump's anti-war base.

None of this proves intent to cancel U.S. elections. But it does suggest comfort with expansive presidential power.

Other Remarks and Developments

Trump went further in a recent interview with [The New York Times](#). According to the report:

President Trump said ... that he regretted not ordering the National Guard to seize voting machines in swing states after his loss in the 2020 election, even though he doubted whether the Guard was "sophisticated enough" to carry out the order effectively.

This summer, Trump and the Department of Defense, along with other agencies, [created specialized units](#) within the National Guard to "ensure public safety and order" in the face of "rampant violence and disorder."

Trump has been open about his views. In October 2024, he [told Fox News](#) that if "radical left lunatics," whom he identified as the "enemy from within," caused trouble on Election Day, the situation should be handled by the National Guard.

The reference to Election Day was explicit. The concrete identity of the supposed enemy remained vague. Almost a year later, as president, Trump described opposition as an "[invasion from within](#)." He told 800 top military leaders that domestic unrest, particularly in Democrat-run cities, was "no different than a foreign enemy."

Trump is right that America has an "enemy from within." And he is certainly right that many of them sit on the left side of the aisle. Yet despite a rapidly growing security state built to hunt down criminal networks, not one major mastermind or financier has been named or charged. When you pair that with the administration's handling of Deep State scandals like the [Epstein case](#), the picture gets clearer, if not exactly comforting. It suggests that the real insiders remain protected, while everyone else is invited to argue — and fight — about who the enemy is.

Uniparty's Ping-pong

Former housing official and financial analyst Catherine Austin Fitts has offered a blunt theory.

In October, she [described](#) what she calls the "ping-pong of the Uniparty." She argued that one side foments disorder; the other side then justifies repression.

She pointed to Memphis, Tennessee, where, she argued, a Soros-backed district attorney allowed criminals to "ravage" the city.

Then comes Trump, she said. For example, in Chicago, she argued, ICE dropped in aggressively, arresting people without warrants and seizing property — instances documented in court complaints. She asked why ICE would behave this way.

Her answer was, it's political: If ICE provokes resistance, Trump can claim obstruction. That, in turn, could justify invoking the Insurrection Act and deploying the military domestically.

People's frustration with the increasingly brutal tactics is understandable, but some crucial elements of the protests are likely orchestrated. In a Thursday post, Fitts [asked](#) pointedly:



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on January 16, 2026

Who financed the so-called protestors [in Minneapolis] and made it possible for them to do it?

She was responding to a clip in which a former ICE director said that to invoke the Insurrection Act, the president need only determine that enforcing federal law has become impractical due to obstruction. But if the bar is that low, chaos becomes a political resource.

The Law and the Limits

Legal scholars across the spectrum agree on one basic point: Canceling federal elections would be extraordinarily difficult.

The Constitution fixes election dates. Congress controls the mechanics of federal voting. Federal courts would almost certainly block any unilateral presidential move. States administer elections, not the White House.

Even under emergency powers, the legal hurdles remain immense. The Insurrection Act allows domestic military deployment to restore order. It does not grant the president authority to suspend elections. Yet, the military involvement in domestic “crises” raises a deeper question. If troops were deployed around polling places, the vote itself would be transformed. Many citizens would likely stay home. Others would cast ballots under implicit coercion. The results would almost certainly be disputed in court and, most dangerously, in the streets. Even a technically accurate count would carry a cloud of illegitimacy. A single precedent could then be cited by future administrations, further normalizing an “emergency” as a new political norm.

Therefore, any so-called jokes about canceling elections cannot be treated as harmless in a moment when chaos appears increasingly engineered. They function less as humor and more as political conditioning, slowly acclimating the public to the idea that republican norms are optional when power feels threatened.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.