

December 14, 2020

Ms. Ronna McDaniel

Chair

Republican National Committee

310 First St, SE

Washington, DC 20003

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Mr. Kevin McCarthy

Republican Leader

U.S. House of Representatives

U.S. Capitol

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman McDaniel and Leader McCarthy:

The weeks since the 2020 General Election have been traumatic for many in our nation, both voters and those of us who took an oath to serve this nation.

As you well know, my voting record in Congress over the past two terms has been in line with President Trump and the administration's policies more than 95 percent of the time. Further, I voted for President Trump in the 2020 General Election despite some reservations about four more years under his leadership. I felt that many policies achieved during the Trump administration had been positive for our nation, whereas the policies espoused by the Democratic Party were too radical and did not reflect my principles.

I have also worked hard to support each of you and your efforts. Ronna, you may recall that I spoke with you several times as you considered undertaking the role of RNC Chair. It was my strong belief that you could help lead our party and support its core principles, and I encouraged you to undertake the position. Kevin, I worked diligently with you as part of the Republican Leadership Team for both the 115th and 116th Congresses. I fervently whipped votes for our policies during both terms on some tough issues.

As an active supporter of the national GOP, the state GOP, the NRCC and individual candidates, I raised almost \$800k in just 2 1/2 years for the NRCC to support Republican candidates supported by leadership. I have contributed personal funds, not simply PAC funds, to innumerable candidates at the Federal and state levels.

I agree that there have been some disconcerting aspects to this election. With more than 155 million people voting, both administrative errors and even some fraudulent voting likely occurred. Steps must be taken, by each state, to audit election results, validate ballots and process and report findings to ensure that every legal vote counts. Michigan clearly needs to do that, not just Wayne County. However, the president and his legal team have failed to provide substantive evidence of fraud or administrative failure on a scale large enough to impact the outcome of the election.

Ronna, you know Michigan politics well. President Trump did not lose Michigan because of Wayne County, but rather he lost because of dwindling support in areas including Kent and Oakland County, both previous Republican strongholds. In the 2020 election, President Trump lost Michigan by 154,000 votes, compared to 2016 when his margin of victory was slightly more than 10,700 votes.

I have stated publicly numerous times that when entering the political arena, a person must be willing to accept winning and losing with grace and maturity. Having personally experienced both winning and losing, the latter can be brutal.

Any candidate, including the president, is entitled to request recounts and pursue legal challenges they believe are appropriate if they possess evidence of wrongdoing. President Trump has undertaken or supported both of these options. Recounts have failed to significantly alter the vote outcome in any state and dozens of court cases have been summarily dismissed in both state and Federal courts across our nation.

It is unacceptable for political candidates to treat our election system as though we are a third-world nation and incite distrust of something so basic as the sanctity of our vote. Further, it is unacceptable for the president to attack the Supreme Court of the United States because its judges, both liberal and conservative, did not rule with his side or that "the Court failed him." It was our Founding Fathers' objective to insulate the Supreme Court from such blatant political motivations.

If Republican leaders collectively sit back and tolerate unfounded conspiracy theories and "stop the steal" rallies without speaking out for our electoral process, which the Department of Homeland Security said was "the most secure in American history," our nation will be damaged. I have spoken out clearly and forcefully in opposition to these messages. However, with the leadership of the Republican Party and our Republican Conference in the House actively participating in at least some of those efforts, I fear long-term harm to our democracy.

The stability and strength of our democracy has been an ongoing concern for me. I expressed strong concerns about the president's response to Charlottesville, the anti-immigrant "send them back" rhetoric, and even the racist comments of my own colleagues in the House.

I believe that raw political considerations, not constitutional or voting integrity concerns, motivate many in party leadership to support the "stop the steal" efforts, which is extremely disappointing to me. As elected members of Congress, we take an oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States," not to preserve and protect the political interests of any individual, be it the president or anyone else, to the detriment of our cherished nation.

As a result, I am writing to advise you both that I am withdrawing from my engagement and association with the Republican Party at both the national and state level. I will support,

contribute to, and fundraise for individual candidates who reflect the principles I hold dear. Further, by copy of this letter I am also advising Ms. Laura Cox, Chair of the Michigan GOP of this decision.

I am also requesting that the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives change my party affiliation to Independent for the remainder of my term in office. While admittedly symbolic, we all know that symbols matter.

Sincerely,

Paul Mitchell

Member of Congress

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CC Laura Cox, Chair, Michigan Republican Party

Cheryl L. Johnson, Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives