



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on February 20, 2021

John Thune Rails Against Trump Supporters, Vows to Back Establishment Candidates Over Outsiders

Considering the dim view John Thune has of the pro-Trump Republican base, grassroots Republicans cannot be faulted for souring on Thune. In fact, “souring” may be putting it too mildly.

Thune, the South Dakota U.S. senator currently serving as the Number Two Republican in the Senate, [accused](#) supporters of President Trump of engaging in “cancel culture” for holding pro-impeachment members of the party such as Liz Cheney accountable.



Senator John Thune (AP Images)

During his first interview given since voting to acquit President Trump in the impeachment trial, Thune defended Republicans who sided with Democrats to cast a “vote of conscience” to convict.

“There was a strong case made,” Thune said of Democrats’ impeachment case. “People could come to different conclusions. If we’re going to criticize the media and the left for cancel culture, we can’t be doing that ourselves.”

Thune’s remarks alluded to the censuring of senators who voted to convict Trump by GOP state party officials, as well as pushback from the Republican base.

The Wyoming Republican Party, for example, censured Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wy.) for voting to impeach. Among others to be censured was Senator Bill Cassidy by the Louisiana GOP for his vote to convict President Trump.

What is clearly lost on Thune amid his “cancel culture” remark is that this isn’t Hollywood we’re talking about. It’s elected politics, where, within the framework of the Constitution and its specified powers, the entire point is that our representatives should represent our values and vote the way on Capitol Hill that we expected them to when we cast our ballots for them.

If a member of the House or Senate breaks the promises he made on the campaign trail, voters are totally within their right to ask for his proverbial head.

Thune’s homestate is a conservative stronghold. He’s up for reelection in 2022 and his words could put him in hot water in the primary for the first time in years.

While President Trump was in office, Thune rarely criticized the eclectic head of state. But now that Trump is no longer in the White House, Thune appears to be quite comfortable attacking the man who is still immensely popular among the base.

Thune said it was “inexcusable” that President Trump allegedly incited an insurrection at the January 6 Capitol protest, accusing him of undermining the peaceful transfer of power.



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While Thune voted to acquit Trump, he did so, like Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, only because the billionaire-turned president is already out of office, not because he actually believed him not guilty.

Thune made clear he will take an active role in primaries to defend establishment Republicans like Cheney against Trumpian challengers.

As Politico notes:

Thune suggested he would be taking steps to assist candidates “who don’t go off and talk about conspiracies and that sort of thing.” He praised Rep. Liz Cheney, a Wyoming Republican, who was censured by the Wyoming GOP for voting to impeach Trump, for doing an “exceptional job on most issues” and said he was ready to jump into primary battles like the one she is sure to face.

“At the grassroots level, there’s a lot of people who want to see Trump-like candidates,” he said. “But I think we’re going to be looking for candidates that are electable.”

The arrogance in Thune’s comments is remarkable. He’s acknowledging that what voters — his voters — really want is “Trump-like” candidates, yet he nevertheless promises to try to shoot down such candidates by throwing the weight, resources, and money of the establishment behind detested incumbents.

President Trump previously lashed out at Thune, calling him a “RINO,” after the senator said that the Senate effort to challenge fraudulent election results would “go down like a shot dog.”

“You’ve got to face the music, and at some point, it’s got to be over and you’ve got to move on,” Thune said, adding, “I think it’s just important to tell people the truth. The most important responsibility of any leader is to define reality.”

Mitch McConnell is 79 years old. It’s likely that fairly soon, John Thune is going to be the Republican leader (perhaps Majority Leader if the GOP manages to take the Senate back next year) unless his political career comes to a grinding halt in a primary race.

It’s time for grassroots patriots to get involved in House and Senate races to make an example of elected officials — not just liberal Democrats but also RINO Republicans — who violate their oath of office and live in complete disconnect from the people who put them in power in the first place.

If a few politicians who will never stop being part of the swamp (Thune?) are voted out of office, it will send a strong message to their like-minded colleagues that they’ll need to pay more attention to the wishes of their constituents if they wish to continue representing them in Washington.



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