



NRSC Chair Rick Scott: I'll Support Incumbents Over Trump-backed Primary Challengers

Did Rick Scott just kill his political future?

The U.S. senator and former Florida governor who was recently tapped to serve as chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) appeared to side with the establishment on Thursday when he said that he will back incumbent GOP senators over Trump-backed primary challengers in the 2022 election — even if it means going against members of Donald Trump's family.

"I'm supporting incumbents," Scott [said](#) to Capitol Hill reporters when asked about speculation that Ivanka Trump may be preparing a primary challenge against Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.).



AP Images

Pressed about whether he would stick to that stance despite Donald Trump's promise to support primary challengers to some 2022 incumbents, and whether he would specifically support Senate Majority Whip John Thune (R-S.D.) against a challenger backed by the former president, Scott doubled down on his promise to side with incumbents.

Specifically, Trump has vowed to support a primary challenger against Thune. Back when he was still on Twitter, he urged popular conservative Governor Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) to primary the Senate's Number 2 Republican, but Noem publicly said she will not do so.

As Trump departed Washington, he vowed that he would "be back in some form."

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Reporters also asked Scott if he believed the presence of Trump-backed primary challengers would make his job harder. The Floridian replied that the 2022 cycle would be focused on the GOP vs. President Biden.

"Part of what I'm trying to do is get everybody to focus on, you know, what the difference is between Republicans and Democrats. I think it's gonna be clear with a lot of Biden stuff," Scott said.

Scott is one of eight Republican senators who supported at least one challenge to the Electoral College vote during Congress's counting of the results on January 6 and 7.

Scott voted for the challenge to Pennsylvania's Electoral College results, made after the storming of the Capitol. He has said he doesn't regret that vote, even though it has gotten him slack from many GOP [megadonors](#).

"I mean, you have to remember what I went through in my 2018 election where they completely violated the law. They found 95,000 votes after election night. Chuck Schumer sent lawyers down



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on January 21, 2021

because he didn't care what the votes were, he's going to the court. So, I want people to follow the law," Scott said.

Supporting incumbents is typically the position of the NRSC, though growing dissatisfaction among the Republican base with its elected officials in general and its leadership in particular has fueled desire for widespread primary challenges.

This would put the Republican Party in a tight spot. The GOP will be defending 20 seats in 2022. Conventional wisdom dictates that in such situations, the party should stick with incumbents, as they have proven themselves capable of winning a general election and will likely win again.

However, following the conventional wisdom could very well be Republicans' undoing in what is an unconventional time. A sense of betrayal deeply permeates the electorate right now to such a degree that if the party is seen as trying to suppress the rise of constitutionalist, pro-Trump candidates who truly represent voters' preferences, these voters will ultimately stay home in the general election rather than cast their ballots for the incumbent.

In other words, the GOP's commitment to incumbents because office holders are seen as the safer bet during a general election could backfire.

Furthermore, 2022 may well be an election year in which the GOP could hold its seats and potentially make gains, even if it runs less-known or first-time candidates in the general election. Because it will be Joe Biden's first midterm and Republicans voters will be motivated to stop Democrats' unrestrained control of the federal government, the usual pendulum swing of party control will shift in the GOP's favor.

While Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is insulated from the wrath of voters because he was just reelected in November, other Republicans seen as having betrayed the president by refusing to stand up to fraudulent election results will likely face weakened reelection prospects.

Representative Liz Cheney (R-Wy.), the House's Number 3 Republican, is the subject of a [petition](#) signed by 115 GOP members of the House (more than half the chamber's Republicans) that calls for her removal from the post of House GOP Conference chair. And she [already has a primary challenger](#).

Patriots throughout the country would do well to likewise challenge the Republican traitors in their districts to [create a wave](#) of new constitutionalist lawmakers.



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