



Top GOP Senators Want to Delay Vote Reelecting McConnell as Party Leader

Is Mitch on the verge of facing a mutiny?

Although Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and other members of the Senate GOP leadership are expected to glide back into their positions in next week's leadership elections, some members of the caucus are saying "not so fast" — and the list of those seeking to delay a McConnell anointing includes some of the biggest names in the chamber.

Republican Sens. Ron Johnson (Wis.), Mike Lee (Utah), Rick Scott (Fla.), Marco Rubio (Fla.), Josh Hawley (Mo.), Ted Cruz (Texas), and Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.) have all signaled that they believe the leadership elections, which are scheduled for November 16, should be postponed until at least after the results of the elections from this midterm cycle are definitively known. The Georgia Senate race is going to a runoff in December, when it will be decided whether Republican Herschel Walker will beat Democratic incumbent Sen. Raphael Warnock.

Johnson, Lee, and Scott circulated a letter among their colleagues in the Senate calling on them to sign a postponement, as reported by [Politico](#).

In their letter, the senators lamented that "a Red Wave failed to materialize, and there are multiple reasons it did not. We need to have serious discussions within our conference as to why and what we can do to improve our chances in 2024."

The letter further reads:

Holding leadership elections without hearing from the candidates as to how they will perform their leadership duties and before we know whether we will be in the majority or even who all our members are violates the most basic principles of a democratic process. It is certainly not the way leadership elections should be conducted in the world's greatest deliberative body.

On Friday, Rubio posted a tweet in which he similarly maintained that the leadership elections should be held off for the time being.



AP Images
Mitch McConnell



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on November 12, 2022

“The Senate GOP leadership vote next week should be postponed,” the Florida senator wrote. “First we need to make sure that those who want to lead us are genuinely committed to fighting for the priorities & values of the working Americans (of every background) who gave us big wins in states like #Florida.”

Hawley quoted Rubio’s tweet and echoed the sentiment with remarks of his own, writing: “Exactly right. I don’t know why Senate GOP would hold a leadership vote for the next Congress before this election is finished. We have a runoff in #GASenate — are they saying that doesn’t matter? Don’t disenfranchise @HerschelWalker.”

Cruz likewise said Senate leadership should wait to hold the elections until after the Georgia runoff.

Of these names, the only one to explicitly say so far that he would vote for someone other than Mitch McConnell for Senate GOP leader is Hawley. The three authors of the letter, meanwhile, say they want “a chance to hear from leadership candidates as to what type of collaborative conference governing model we should adopt.”

David McIntosh, a former Republican congressman who now heads the establishment conservative money group Club for Growth, said he doesn’t believe McConnell will be knocked out of his position, though the tension may result in the Kentuckian losing some of his influence.

“I don’t anticipate that there would be a leadership change, based on doing my own mental vote count on that question, but I do think there’s going to be a sea change in terms of how much power he has as the leader,” McIntosh said.

If McConnell is again given the mantle, as expected, he will break the record currently held by former Sen. Mike Mansfield as the longest-serving party leader.

For the time being, Senate GOP leadership has indicated that next week’s elections will go forward as planned. They say every senator will have “a chance to be heard” at the first post-election party lunch on Tuesday.

Notably, Florida’s Rick Scott, who leads the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC), was [making moves](#) to challenge McConnell for the position of GOP Senate leader. But those plans reportedly came crashing down in light of the midterm results, which saw Scott-backed candidates underperform at the ballot box.

Scott, a former governor of Florida who made a fortune worth roughly \$300 million as a hospital executive, has had a [dicey relationship](#) with McConnell over the last year.



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