



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on March 6, 2022

Trump Considers Endorsing Greitens in Order to Oust McConnell

In his effort to dethrone Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Donald Trump is [eyeing an unlikely candidate](#) to potentially endorse in the much-followed Missouri Senate primary: former Governor Eric Greitens.

Greitens resigned as governor in 2018 after a hairdresser accused him of sexually assaulting her. Trump himself had privately criticized Greitens for the scandal that led to his downfall, but recent events suggest he may be willing to look past it in order to gain a new ally against McConnell.



Eric Greitens (AP Images)

Greitens reportedly ran into a Trump ally in Orlando, Florida, at the recent CPAC conference. The ally jokingly offered the former governor tickets to a private Trump-hosted reception with the catch that he tweet out his opposition to McConnell.

Greitens, who has been publicly critical of McConnell in the past, did just that.

Greitens got the tickets and attended Trump's private event. Now the 45th president is telling people he's open to endorsing the Senate candidate.

That openness was seen last week when Trump put out a press release promoting an article the former governor penned for Breitbart last fall in which he called for McConnell's ousting as Senate GOP leader. And Trump reportedly met recently with Greitens at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, a meeting to which Greitens brought a copy of the op-ed and polling data showing him leading the primary field.

Trump noted that Greitens is doing well and expressed an open mind about who he would support. Greitens was then invited to attend an event at Mar-a-Lago organized by a pro-Trump Super PAC.

Yet some worry that Greitens is a compromised candidate who could lose to a Democrat in the general election, bringing embarrassment to Trump.

"Eric Greitens, if he gets nominated, it's the only way we can lose the general election for Senate in Missouri," said Mark McCloskey, another Trump-aligned candidate in the race who is known for brandishing a firearm at BLM rioters outside his home in 2020. "If President Trump endorses him, it can only be the result of a lack of sufficient information or bad advice from his associates."

"It's sad that Mark has chosen to criticize President Trump's team," responded Steven Cheung, a Greitens campaign consultant and former Trump team member.

Politico notes:

Trump's interest in Greitens has intensified in recent days. During a meeting with Trump last week, Club for Growth President David McIntosh talked up Greitens and urged the



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former president to support him. While Club for Growth hasn't endorsed Greitens, the organization's top donor, billionaire shipping and industrial supply company executive Richard Uihlein, is bankrolling a pro-Greitens super PAC.

Those close to Trump say his attraction to Greitens largely centers on the former governor's scorched-earth attacks on McConnell. While Greitens has made his opposition to McConnell a centerpiece of his campaign, other Missouri candidates haven't taken that step. Trump aides point out that while at CPAC, state Attorney General Eric Schmitt declined to say whether he'd vote against McConnell. Another contender, Rep. Billy Long, recently met with McConnell to talk about the race.

Some Trump advisers also say their boss' interest stems from the parallel between what Greitens depicts as a witch hunt by a liberal St. Louis prosecutor to take him down and the New York attorney general's investigation into Trump's finances.

If Trump sides with Greitens, he would be going against one of his allies — Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), who has already endorsed GOP Representative Vicky Hartzler in the race.

Following January 6, Hartzler reportedly accused Trump of making "unpresidential remarks" and said "many" of the rioters "supported President Trump."

Meanwhile, senior Republicans are trying to prevent a Greitens nomination, fearing this would lead to certain loss in the general.

"Within the highest levels of the party, there are discussions about launching a well-funded effort devoted to stopping Greitens," Politico reports. "One potential vehicle that's been mentioned is a newly launched pro-Hartzler super PAC overseen by Chris Cox, a former top National Rifle Association official."

But some involved in those discussions say an anti-Greitens effort should be based in Missouri, not in Washington, to prevent the Greitens camp from painting it as a McConnell-led plot.

Long went so far as to call Greitens "Chuck Schumer's candidate."

"So every Republican in town is trying to figure out how to keep Greitens from winning," Long added.



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