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— News From The States —

EVENING WRAP



By [Kate Queram](#)

Here is the choice before me today: Do I talk about the ongoing fallout from the 2020 election? Or should I go with the ongoing fallout from the inability of Republicans to elect their own congressional leader? Or maybe I should start with the ongoing fallout from states messing with their primary election schedules? Basically it's all fallout all the time here, but at least it generally follows a theme.



The Big Takeaway

U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) on Thursday suspended his quest to become speaker of the House of Representatives and then unsuspected it hours later, opting to push for a third floor vote despite not appearing to have shored up any additional support after losing the first two, [our D.C. bureau reported](#). The legislative whiplash came amid fury from Jordan's far-right backers, who abhorred his initial decision to step aside and support a plan to install Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-N.C.) as an interim speaker through Jan. 3. That proposal, hatched by Democrats and non-MAGA Republicans, would allow the chamber to consider legislation/be at least slightly useful while Jordan toils in the background, attempting to win the minds and hearts of everyone who has so far refused to support him.



Behold, your choices for (some version of) speaker.

(Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)

That plan wasn't guaranteed to succeed even before Jordan caved thanks to his far-right besties, who reflexively reject bipartisanship the way a normal person might reject, I don't know, [cult membership](#)? [To them](#), elevating McHenry (a Republican) would constitute a "giant betrayal to Republicans" because it would basically "give the Democrats control of a Republican majority." If they do that, well. They don't even *deserve* the majority, according to Rep. Scott Perry, a Pennsylvania Republican.

"What they're doing right now is walking Republicans off the plank," he said, which "doesn't seem to be the right way to elect a speaker to me."

Obviously this is not the right way to elect a speaker. The *right* way to elect a speaker is to agree on a candidate and then agree to vote for that candidate and that's it, you've elected a speaker. But *obviously* that isn't happening here, and that's why lawmakers went in search of a temporary fix, only to once again have everything gummed up by a tiny-but-mightily-exhausting

faction of Republicans who exist to sow dysfunction for the sake of sowing dysfunction. The McHenry plan was, at least, a plan. A third floor vote is just a bad rerun of a show that already got canceled. (Twice.)

No one seems sure when that vote will happen, which probably doesn't matter because the problem here is not that Jordan needs more time to win over more Republicans — the problem is Jordan himself. He's a hard-line [far-right MAGA-loving election-denying](#) Republican, a cofounder of the ultraconservative [House Freedom Caucus](#), and the chosen candidate of the small group of [fringe lawmakers](#) who spent nine months [torturing Kevin McCarthy](#) before finally [plucking the speaker's gavel](#) from his weary hands. Most of the chamber (nay, the country) is tired of those shenanigans, tired of the legislative gridlock — just plain *tired*, and Jordan is never going to be the guy to lead us out of the fray. Jordan *is* the fray.



Just a casual photo of Jim Jordan trying to stop votes from being counted in a democratic election, NBD...

(Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

At some point, there may have been a chance, however slim, that Jordan could overcome ... himself to convince enough Republicans to vote for him, but that opportunity (if it existed) evaporated once he and his allies [attempted to bully the holdouts](#) by disseminating their contact

information throughout the MAGA messaging system. Presumably, the idea was to flood the phone lines with voters urging support for Jordan, which may have been a sensible plan if you'd never heard of the MAGA movement or the Jan. 6 insurrection or, I don't know, anything that's happened since November 2020?

But if any of that rings a bell, you could probably predict how this was going to unfold: With [multiple lawmakers](#) receiving a barrage of vulgar and violent messages. At least four lawmakers said they'd received death threats, including Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-Iowa), who faced backlash after withdrawing her support for Jordan following the first ballot, when it became "abundantly clear" that his candidacy was doomed, [the Iowa Capital Dispatch reported](#). As you might imagine, this did not particularly help Jordan's cause.

"One thing I cannot stomach or support is a bully," Miller-Meeks said [in a statement](#). "I understand that voting against Rep. Jordan is not popular at this time. I respected Jim enough to vote for him, knowing he did not have the votes to be elected ... Our party needs a consensus candidate."



Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks would very much like people to stop calling her about Jim Jordan.

(Photo via the Iowa Capital Dispatch)

Other Republicans said they flipped their votes *because of the vitriol*, including Rep. Drew Ferguson (R-Ga.), who'd supported Jordan on the first ballot and had intended to back him again after the two had a seemingly productive conversation about the threats against other lawmakers. But he changed his mind when the intimidation tactics continued, [per the Georgia Recorder](#).

“Following the first vote, I had genuine concerns about the threatening tactics and pressure campaigns Jordan and his allies were using to leverage members for their votes,” he said [in a statement](#). “I discussed this directly with Jim, and planned to support him on the second ballot. When the pressure campaigns and attacks on fellow members ramped up, it became clear to me that the House Republican Conference does not need a bully as the Speaker.”

Once he'd cast that vote, Ferguson added, he started receiving death threats, too.

“That is simply unacceptable, unforgivable, and will never be tolerated,” he said.

Jordan did the bare minimum to denounce the deluge on Tuesday evening [on social media](#), where he proclaimed that “no American should accost another for their beliefs.”

“We condemn all threats against our colleagues and it is imperative that we come together,” he said. “Stop. It's abhorrent.”



*Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen and Yanqi Xu, the reporter he shrugged off because of where she comes from.
(Photos by Zach Wendling/Nebraska Examiner and courtesy of Joseph Saaid for Flatwater Free Press)*

And that reminds me that we need to talk about Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen, who's facing national backlash after dismissing an article about pollution at his farm because it was written by a journalist "from communist China." The remark, part of [a radio interview](#) in September, came in response to a question about whether the Republican governor wanted to comment [on the story](#), which detailed elevated [nitrate levels](#) at 16 hog farms owned by the Pillen family, [the Nebraska Examiner reported](#).

"Number one, I didn't read it. And I won't," Pillen said. "Number two, all you got to do is look at the author. The author is from communist China. What more do you need to know?"

The author is Yanqi Xu, a human person with feelings who grew up in Guangzhou, China; studied English and international journalism in Beijing, earned a master's degree in the U.S. and has reported in four states and Washington, D.C. (One of those jobs was at [NC Newline](#), part of our network of nonprofit news outlets.) She's now with the Flatwater Free Press, where she's reported on the [attendance rates](#) of the state Board of Parole and won awards for her investigative work [on nitrate levels](#), all while pursuing a second master's degree (this one in analytics). This marks the first time anyone has written her off based on her nationality, according to Matt Wynn, executive director of the Nebraska Journalism Trust, which launched and funds the Flatwater Free Press.

"And it was broadcast, over the air, by the governor of Nebraska," he wrote in [a Tuesday column](#). "As an employer, that infuriates me. As a believer in democracy and a free press, it saddens me. As a Nebraskan, it embarrasses me."

Wynn said Pillen was given ample opportunity to comment on Xu's findings before her story was published but declined every request. He has similarly ignored emails and phone calls from Wynn seeking an apology, along with requests for comment from national, state and local news organizations, including the Examiner.

"I hope he still will," Wynn wrote. "I hope that he takes the time to reflect on his response and understand why it may make many thousands of Nebraskans feel less welcome here."

Elsewhere in the fallout: [An Arizona Supreme Court justice openly opposes abortion. He'll decide its legality anyway.](#) ... [Federal court denies state's request for dismissal of challenge to Georgia's political maps](#) ... [Kansas lawmakers on track for hefty salary increases in 2025](#) ... [Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear makes surprise visit to striking autoworkers in Louisville](#) ... [U.S. intelligence shows Islamic Jihad rocket misfired on Gaza hospital, but Rep. Rashida Tlaib \(D-Mich.\) still blames Israel](#) ... [It's official: Mississippi Democrat Brandon Presley fulfills promise to](#)

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