

March to Save America

The March to Save America was the key rally at the Ellipse in Washington prior to the violent assault on the Capitol on January 6, 2021. The event is also often referred to as the **Save America March** or **Stop the Steal rally**.

As the star of the show for this and related events in D.C. that day, Trump was [reportedly furious](#) when he saw the small crowd size from backstage. As a result, he pushed to allow security guards to admit his many supporters bearing arms without requiring them to pass through metal detectors.

Several witnesses testified under oath to the House Select Committee investigating the attack on the Capitol that Trump knew that many of his supporters there that day were heavily armed. Nonetheless, he [urged them](#) to take their grievances directly to the congressional session in progress at the Capitol and “fight like hell.”

Lead Organizers

Many right-wing individuals and fringe groups helped organize and fund the event, including:

- **Women for America First** served as the [primary organizer](#) of the rally, [obtaining the permit](#) for it from the Department of the Interior. The permit allowed for as many as 30,000 people at the event, which was to take place between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The AP estimated the crowd to be in the realm of 10,000 people, while Trump insists that “it was a massive rally with hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people.” [Women for America First](#) was initially founded in 2019 to support Trump as he faced his first impeachment for withholding aid to Ukraine and soliciting foreign interference in the 2020 presidential election.
- **MyPillow**, the bedding company owned by conspiracy theorist [Mike Lindell](#), helped [fund bus tours](#) around the country in December 2020 to urge Trump supporters to “keep up the fight” by participating in the March to Save America in D.C. on January 6, 2021.
- **Turning Point Action**, a right-wing student group, [helped organize buses to bring participants to the march](#). Before the event, [Turning Point’s leader Charlie Kirk](#) tweeted that his efforts would bring “80+ busloads of patriots to DC to fight for the president” and he predicted the event “would likely be one of the largest and most consequential in American history.” After the deadly assault on the Capitol, he quickly deleted this message.
- **Phyllis Schlafly Eagles**, a network of organizations associated with the late right-wing activist Phyllis Schlafly, [provided financial support](#).
- **Moms for America**, a right-wing group that has been promoting lies about rigged elections since Trump first ran in 2016, [provided funding](#) for the rally and also hosted another rally on Capitol Hill the day before in which newly elected Representative [Mary Miller](#) (R-Ill.) caused a stir by quoting Hitler. (At a June 2022 Save America Rally she attended with Trump, she stirred things up again, [calling the Supreme Court decision](#) to overturn *Roe v. Wade* “a historic victory for white life.”) In October 2016, the

organization's president, Kimberly Fletcher, wrote an article in which she predicted Trump falling victim to election fraud "isn't a conspiracy theory, [it's a conspiracy fact](#)" (though after he won that election, she suddenly stopped arguing the "fact" and never once suggested that his win was fraudulent in any way).

- **Peaceably Gather**, a far-right religious group, is believed to have [helped fund](#) the rally. The nonprofit worked closely with the Trump administration to [reopen churches and defy governors](#) across the country during the early months of the pandemic.
- **Stop the Steal**, the movement/organization in Alabama led by convicted fraudster [Ali Alexander](#) to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, helped plan the March to Save America and [allegedly coordinated with](#) members of Congress to do so. Prior to January 6, Stop the Steal organized dozens of rallies around the country proclaiming that Trump had been robbed of a second term. Funding for the group is ["shrouded in mystery,"](#) according to an *ABC News* report in February 2021.
- **Tea Party Patriots** is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit that first gained national attention in 2009 during the Tea Party movement to oppose "Obamacare"—President Obama's historic healthcare bill, the Affordable Care Act. The group was [one of the many planners and organizers](#) listed on the March to Save America website before it was taken down. Following the violence at the Capitol, [Tea Party Patriots](#) released a statement that read: "Neither Tea Party Patriots Foundation, Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund, nor Tea Party Patriots Action spent any money on the rally."
- [Kimberly Guilfoyle](#), a television pundit and fiancée of [Donald Trump Jr.](#), [played a key role](#) in planning and fundraising for the March to Save America. According to Representative **Bennie Thompson** (D-Miss.), chair of the House Select Committee that investigated the attack on the Capitol, Guilfoyle helped decide on the speakers for the rally and was with Trump when he called Vice President [Mike Pence](#) to again urge him to prevent the certification of the Electoral College results on January 6.

Several other far-right extremist groups that have been criminally charged with planning the attack on the Capitol reportedly attended and/or played a role in organizing the March to Save America, including:

- **Proud Boys**, a neo-fascist organization designated as a "hate group" by the Southern Poverty Law Center, helped [lead the first wave of marchers](#) from the Ellipse to the Capitol building. In 2017 they played a key role in stoking the violence at the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. In June 22, a federal grand jury convened by the Department of Justice charged Enrique Tarrio, the group's leader, and four other [Proud Boys](#) with [seditious conspiracy](#).
- **Oath Keepers**, a militia group of [anti-government extremists](#), resists what it sees as unconstitutional laws and policies designed to strip average Americans of their basic rights. On January 6, [Oath Keepers](#) provided a [security detail](#) for [Roger Stone](#), who was originally scheduled to speak at the rally and later participated in the riot inside the Capitol. In January 2022, [federal authorities arrested](#) Oath Keepers founder [Stewart Rhodes](#) and 10 other members of the militia on [charges of seditious conspiracy](#) for their role in the attack on the Capitol. In May 2023, he was [sentenced](#) to 18 years in prison for seditious conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government.

- **Three Percenters**, a [white nationalist militia group](#) active in the U.S. and Canada, also [participated in the march](#). The Canadian government has labeled the group a [terrorist organization](#).

Key Speakers

Most speakers at the March to Save America event used incendiary rhetoric that inspired large portions of the crowd to proceed to the Capitol and violently disrupt the congressional session underway.

- As the event headliner, [Donald Trump](#) infamously told his supporters at the rally to “fight like hell,” warning that “if you don’t fight like hell, you’re not going to have a country anymore.” The statement became a [focal point of his subsequent impeachment trial](#) and the public hearings held in 2022 by the House Select Committee investigating the attack on the Capitol.
- **Amy Kremer** of [Women for America First](#) repeatedly told Trump’s most hard-core supporters that “it is up to you and I to save this Republic.... We are not going to back down, are we? [Keep up the fight!](#)”
- [Rudy Giuliani](#), the then-president’s personal lawyer, said Trump supporters should engage in “[trial by combat](#)” to support his efforts to stay in power. Later, when defending himself against a lawsuit brought by Representative Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.) for his role in the insurrection, he said this comment was not meant to be taken literally. Giuliani also [accused Democrats of hiding evidence of fraud](#) and cast doubt on the authenticity of voting machines, saying “if they ran such a clean election, they’d have you come in and look at the paper ballots.”
- Representative [Mo Brooks](#) (R-Ala.) [fired up the crowd](#) at the rally by saying: “We, American patriots, are going to come right at them. We, American patriots, are going to take America back and restore the foundational principles that have combined to make us the greatest nation in world history.... God bless America, and the fight begins today.”
- Representative [Madison Cawthorn](#) (R-N.C.) [proclaimed](#): “This crowd has some fight in it!” He also dumped on both parties, saying: “My friends, the Democrats, with all the fraud they have done in this election, the Republicans hiding and not fighting, they are trying to silence your voice.”
- [John Eastman](#)—a law professor who encouraged Trump to get Vice President Pence to reject Electoral College votes and has since been indicted for doing so—kept [spreading the Big Lie](#), saying “we know there was fraud” and “we know dead people voted” while also baselessly claiming that state officials across the country violated laws to put Biden “over the finish line.”
- [Donald Trump Jr.](#) threatened congressional Republicans by saying they “[better fight for Trump](#). Because if they’re not [going to], guess what? I’m going to be in your backyard in a couple of months!”
- [Lara Trump](#), wife of Trump’s son Eric and as of early 2024, co-chair of the Republican National Committee, said “[This fight has only just begun](#). Let’s be very, very clear about that.”

Funding Sources

- The Republican Attorney General's Association (RAGA) paid for [robocalls inviting people](#) to attend the March to Save America. RAGA funneled its payments through its 501(c)(4) arm, the Rule of Law Defense Fund.
- According to [ProPublica](#), [Kimberly Guilfoyle](#) bragged in texts to a GOP operative that she had raised \$3 million for the January 6 Stop the Steal rally from **Julie Fancelli**, heir to the Publix fortune and one of the leading financiers of the event. The texts also suggest that Guilfoyle attempted to influence the choice of invited speakers for the event.
- Guilfoyle, her aide [Caroline Wren](#), and Fancelli worked together closely throughout 2020 to raise and distribute money through a network of conservative organizations.
- Through Turning Point USA, [Fancelli paid Guilfoyle \\$60,000](#) for delivering a very brief speech at the January 6 rally.
- Conspiracy theorist [Alex Jones](#) also [helped coordinate funding](#) for the March to Save America by facilitating a donation of at least \$300,000 from Fancelli. In total, Jones said he spent \$500,000 on the rally and claimed that the Trump administration asked him to lead a march on the Capitol.
- Groups connected to Trump and the GOP have paid a number of players who planned the March to Save America. According to a [June 2022 investigation by OpenSecrets](#), "Trump's political operation and Republican Party committees have paid over \$12.6 million to individuals and firms that organized" the January 6 rally. Groups tied to the GOP included the [Republican National Committee](#) and the 2016 GOP Convention Arrangements Committee, while Trump-affiliated donors included Trump Victory, Trump's [Save America](#) leadership PAC, and the Make America Great Again, Again! super PAC. Recipients of the funding that appeared on the permit for the March to Save America included Women for America First and Event Strategies Inc., a vendor that has received millions from Save America and other right-wing groups.