The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Never-Trumpers Exit Stage Left

By John and Andy Schlafly

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The dramatic exit last Friday by Rep. John Katko (R-NY), who announced he would not run for reelection, may have shocked liberals but was no surprise to Trump supporters. One by one, the Republicans who voted for the second impeachment or who publicly blamed Trump for the Jan. 6th rally at the Capitol are leaving public office.

Katko was the third to prematurely retire among the impeachers, and the most significant due to his seniority and otherwise bright future. He was in line to become chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee after the predicted takeover of the House by Republicans this November.

In addition to his impeachment vote, Katko also helped draft legislation to create a 10-member commission to investigate the Jan. 6th rally. He promoted his vote last year for Biden's first trillion-dollar infrastructure deal, which he laughably described as a "quintessentially conservative bill" despite its wasteful pork.

Across the aisle, Democrats are retiring from Congress in droves, and a recent Gallup poll shows a record 5-point advantage by the GOP among voters nationwide. That is a 14-point swing to Republicans from a 9-point lead held by Dems a year ago.

The most recent Quinnipiac poll shows that Biden's approval rating has dropped to a record low of only 33%. Republicans are expected to gain 4 seats in the Senate in addition to winning the House if Biden's approval rating remains below 44%, and he is far below that now.

Trump took a much-deserved victory lap Saturday night before a humongous outdoor crowd of tens of thousands in Arizona. The media rarely shows the extent of his audiences, bias that Trump criticized again, and the turnout was overwhelming despite unusually cold weather.

Standing before a roaring crowd that kicked off more planned rallies like it, Trump declared that this "year we are going to take back the House, we're going to take back the Senate and we are going to take back America. And in 2024, we're going to take back the White House."

It will be a far stronger Republican Party, too. In addition to the departure of Never-Trumpers from Congress, members of the Administration who turned against Trump a year ago have likewise vanished from the political scene.

Prominent among them is the cabinet secretary Elaine Chao, wife of Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), who has disappeared from public view after lashing out against Trump while she herself was being investigated for misconduct. As Senator Lindsey Graham pointedly asked, “Can Senator McConnell effectively work with the leader of the Republican Party, Donald Trump?”

At Saturday’s spectacular rally in Arizona, Trump rattled off the conservative agenda that prioritizes election integrity, ending mask requirements for children, protecting freedom from vaccine mandates, holding China accountable for Covid, stopping the unfair invasion by men into women’s sports, protecting the unborn, nominating better judges, and helping our veterans.

Trump praised the new breed of candidates whom he’s endorsed for office, and welcomed to the stage Kari Lake as the candidate for governor of Arizona. She declared that as governor she will build Trump’s southern wall to stop the flow of illegal aliens into our country through Arizona.

The contrast is stark between the energetic Trump-endorsed candidates, such as Kari Lake, and the dough-faced opponents of Trump, such as Katko. Despite winning office by presenting himself as a tough prosecutor, Katko admittedly spent the afternoon of Jan. 6th “holed up” inside his office with the lights turned off, in fear of unarmed Trump-supporting Americans.

Never-Trumpers should not have been frightened by the likes of the recently sentenced woman who entered the Capitol with her 14-year-old child, or by the fellow who amused the entire country by harmlessly hoisting Nancy Pelosi’s podium with a goofy grin on his face. One and allegedly a second unarmed pro-Trump women were killed there by Capitol police, but there has been no justice for them.

Earlier this month liberal Republicans expressed unjustified fear about comments to be made by Trump on Jan. 6th, while House conservatives declared that they wanted to listen and learn from what Trump would say. At the Arizona rally Trump delivered those comments, and they were spot on.

He observed that “it’s a disgrace to our country” that politicians are resorting to “Stalinist show trials” against those who participated in the Jan. 6th rally. He remarked that witnesses brought before the sham House investigatory committee say they "have never been treated so horribly in my life.”

It is perpetrating an “unprecedented assault on civil liberties” and engaging in a “blatant abuse of power to harass their political opponents,” he continued. Trump rightly pointed out that “it’s never happened to this extent” to misuse the powers of government to persecute political opponents as House Democrats are doing.

John and Andy Schlafly are sons of Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) and lead the continuing Phyllis Schlafly Eagles organizations with writing and policy work.