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High-profile hires hint at Sanders' 2024 plans



Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders, D-Vt., speaks at the University of Chicago, Monday, Sept. 28, 2021, in Chicago. (AP Photo/Paul Beaty)

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Feb. 7, 2024, 11:47 a.m.

MICHIGAN: Peter Meijer Defends Trump

Former Rep. Peter Meijer (R), one of 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach former President

Trump, is now defending him as the Supreme Court is set to hear a case that could bar him from the ballot.

- **THE CASE.** The high court will hear arguments on the case that attempts to appeal the Colorado Supreme Court's decision to remove Trump from the 2024 ballot on the grounds of the 14th Amendment over his role in Jan. 6.
- **MEIJER SAYS:** "One week following that day, I was one of only 10 House Republicans to vote to impeach Trump because I believe he failed to act to protect the Capitol that day. I'm the furthest thing from a Trump apologist, but these efforts to use a 'novel' interpretation of our Constitution to strip Trump—or anyone else—from the ballot should shock anyone who cares about constitutional principles. More than that, they're terrible for our public trust." (*[Detroit News](#)*)
- **THE GOP FIELD.** Meijer is one of four leading contenders in what's become a crowded Republican field to replace retiring Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D). The field includes former Rep. Mike Rogers (R), 2022 GOV candidate James Craig (R), and 2018 candidate Sandy Pensler (R).

MONTANA: Matt Rosendale Expected to Enter Race This Weekend

Rep. Matt Rosendale (R-02) is expected to enter the Republican primary to take on Sen. Jon Tester (D) as early as this weekend. He "plans to formalize his campaign as Montana Republicans gather for their winter meetings this weekend in Helena, according to three people familiar with the deliberations who insisted on anonymity to discuss unannounced plans." (*[New York Times](#)*)

- **HOSTILE PRIMARY BREWING.** But even though he has yet to enter the field, "a hostile Republican Senate primary" is already brewing in Big Sky Country. Rosendale has some advisers and allies of former President Trump "stewing." These tensions "threaten to undermine Rosendale's campaign before it even officially starts."
- **ANONYMOUS STRATEGIST CLOSE TO TRUMP SAYS:** "Obviously there's this bloodbath that's about to play out. But I think the undercurrent is that Rosendale has a clear Trump world problem that may reach to the highest level of Trump world as he enters this race."
- **KEEPING SCORE.** Trump allies are still reeling from Rosendale's snub of the former president when he refused to take his call during a House leadership battle last year and recently posting a photo of the two on social media at Mar-a-Lago. "A new rift developed last week" when the Montana GOP rescinded an invitation for Trumpworld consultant and Rosendale foe Alex Bruesewitz to speak at the party's convention.
- **ON NOTICE.** Two sources in Trump's orbit said Rosendale "should worry about handing Trump an early excuse to endorse" former Navy SEAL Tim Sheehy (R), who endorsed Trump before Rosendale and campaigned with the former president at the Iowa caucuses. (*[NBC News](#)*)

OHIO: SLF to Spend Big on Advertising in Ohio

The Republican-aligned Senate Leadership Fund and its affiliated group American Crossroads have booked about \$83 million in air time for this fall.

- **THE SPEND.** "SLF will invest \$57.5 million from Sept. 3 until Election Day. American Crossroads will spend \$25 million from Sept. 17 to Oct. 21."
- **ANOTHER BIG ONE.** The deep-pocketed conservative group Club for Growth, which endorsed 2022 candidate Bernie Moreno (R), spent \$850,000 in advertising to back its candidate. (*[Politico](#)*)
- **THE OTHER GOP.** Rep. Mike Turner (R-10) endorsed Secretary of State Frank LaRose (R) in his bid to take on Sen. Sherrod Brown (D). Turner's backing of LaRose is the secretary of state's first endorsement from the state's congressional delegation. (release)
- **TRUMP'S PICK.** Meanwhile, the Franklin County Republican Party endorsed Moreno. (*[Twitter](#)*) The county party's endorsement is notable because they backed 2022 candidate Matt Dolan (R), a more moderate Republican who is not seeking former Trump's endorsement in the race, last year. (*[NBC News](#)*)

VERMONT: High-Profile Hires Hint at Sanders' 2024 Plans

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I) has been quiet about whether he will run for reelection at 82 years old. Sanders, who [ruled out](#) a third White House bid last year, said in early January he would decide in the "[near future](#)" on a reelection bid. But that same month, he made two high-profile hires on his team, which may be a sign he is gearing up for another run.

- **MEET THE NEW HIRES.** Anna Bahr, who previously worked as a senior adviser for Rep. Barbara Lee's (D-CA 12) Senate campaign, left the [congresswoman's team in January](#) to work as Sanders' director of communications. Bahr also previously worked as Sanders' national deputy press secretary during his last presidential campaign in 2020. Jeremy Slevin, a longtime senior staffer for Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN 05) also departed the congresswoman's office in January to work as a senior adviser for Sanders.
- **DEPARTURE LOUNGE.** Sanders lost longtime staffer [Mike Casca](#) last year, who's now Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's (D-NY 14) chief of staff.
- **LOCAL BUZZ.** A political operative with ties to Vermont told *Hotline* they think the additions of the two high-profile staffers on Sanders' team makes it appear as if he's gearing up for another term.
- **TOO SOON TO WALK AWAY.** Sanders became the chair of the high profile Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions early last year, a committee he has wanted to be on for much of his career. The operative said they would be surprised if Sanders walked away from the role so soon.
- **TIME'S ON HIS SIDE.** If he does run, it's unlikely he would face a primary opponent or a formidable Republican challenger. Vermont holds late primaries in August and the state's candidate filing period begins April 22. Sanders would have until May 30 to decide on a run. If Sanders does decide to retire, it's been said Rep. Becca Balint (D-VT AL) could be his successor.
- **SOMETHING BIGGER?** Another source familiar with Sanders' political operation does not necessarily think the addition of the two new staffers is a sure sign Sanders is running. Even if Sanders doesn't run, the source thinks Sanders will remain influential in progressive politics and Democratic circles and likely maintain a political organization the new staffers could be a part of.
- **OUR LIPS ARE SEALED.** When asked about their recent moves to Sanders' team and if it means the senator is staffing up for a reelection bid, Bahr reiterated to *Hotline* that Sanders has yet to make an announcement on his plans. (*Hotline* reporting)

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