



# Speak Out Now

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## Trump Indictments: Whose Democracy is Under Threat?

The past few months have been historic for many reasons. Record-breaking heat has made this summer the hottest ever – at least so far. These extreme temperatures have led to hellish heat waves and have contributed to the unprecedented fires in both Canada and Hawaii. But the climate is not the only thing heating up this summer.

The media has also been fired up reporting on former president Donald Trump's four indictments. Not only is he the first U.S. president to have been indicted four times, but he is also the first president to have ever been indicted, period.

The 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States is currently facing more than 90 criminal charges in four different jurisdictions – two federal and two state cases. His charges range from illegally using campaign funds to pay “hush money” to influence the 2016 election, mishandling classified documents after his presidency, and attempting to overturn the 2020 election results.

For some of us, we may not even pay attention because we're tired of all the noise around Trump. For those of us that do tune in and follow what's going on, depending on what news outlet or social media you watch, it can seem like both sides of the Trump debate are living in parallel universes.

If you flip on liberal media outlets like CNN, we see that they have focused their criticisms on Trump's actions as a threat to “democracy.” They see his conviction in these cases as necessary for legal accountability and to “save democracy” by preventing him from becoming president again.

Meanwhile, Trump and right-wing media outlets like Fox News present the indictments as the affront to democracy, claiming the former president is falling victim to a left-wing witch-hunt. For them, the charges are bogus and are an attempt by the political establishment in Washington D.C. to undermine or prevent Trump's upcoming presidential bid altogether.

Regardless of our opinions on Trump, the consensus from the media and the politicians seems clear: U.S. democracy is in peril. But what democracy

are we really saving if we support Trump or his Democratic opponents?

Regardless of which party is in power, wealthy individuals and corporations are allowed to pour unlimited funds into political campaigns, which translates into buying politicians who rig the system in their favor. During the 2020 election cycle, an estimated total of \$14 billion dollars was spent just on campaigns. Imagine if that was spent on our healthcare, transit system, or schools!

On top of this, restrictive measures like voter ID laws and gerrymandering limit the ability of minorities and the working class to participate at the ballot box. Plus, media ownership is highly concentrated among a handful of large corporations, so we are only presented viewpoints that serve the interests of those in power.

Many working people have understood for a long time that these two parties don't really work in our best interest. That's why so many people have stopped voting. Neither party prioritizes working people – instead they support different factions of the rich and the system that maintains their wealth.

While we can be aware that this is going on, it's not always clear what can be done to change our situation and the structures we are living under. The only choices we seem to have are to suck it up and vote “blue” or “red” every time an election comes around, or to sit on the sidelines.

But in fact, on-the-ground activity of working people is what has won us basic liberties that we take for granted, such as the eight-hour workday, voting rights, the right to have unions, and more. All democratic rights we have were won, they were not given to us by the politicians in power. We need to reflect on this tradition and find new ways to organize and fight for the world we need.

Their system and their version of democracy are what's holding us back. The rich in power will never advance an agenda in the interest of workers. It's going to be up to us to lead the fight to improve our futures, not the politicians and economic elites who run this system against our interests.