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Peter Thiel Is Maga's Big Money Man

The techno-billionaire's grand plans include unseating the 10 Republicans who voted to impeach Donald Trump for his role in January 6.

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February 14, 2020

One week after announcing he would step down from the board of Facebook's parent company, Meta, after almost 17 years, a clearer picture of what **Peter Thiel** will do next is coming into focus. The techno-libertarian billionaire was among the few major donors willing to go all-in for **Donald Trump**'s 2016 run and is now devoting his attention—and his deep pockets—to funding the next wave of far-right politicians.

As *Vanity Fair* reported last month, Thiel hosted a January fundraiser at his Miami compound for Wyoming Republican **Harriet Hageman**, the Trump-backed candidate running a primary challenge against **Liz Cheney** after Cheney refused to endorse Trump's "big lie" and voted to impeach him. Now, *The New York Times* reports more details: Thiel made it known at the fundraiser, the *Times*' sources say, that his goal for the upcoming midterm elections is to unseat all 10 GOP lawmakers who voted to impeach Trump for his role in the Capitol riot. "The traitorous 10," Thiel declared to a crowd that included **Donald Trump Jr.**, must be replaced by Trump loyalists, the *Times* reports.

In past election cycles, Thiel—an early Facebook investor and cofounder of PayPal—has succeeded in predicting the next evolution of the Republican Party. Aside from his support of Trump, Thiel also helped reshape the GOP during the height of the tea party years, as he donated to **Ted Cruz**'s first Senate campaign when the Texan was a political unknown. And while Thiel did stay on the sidelines during the last election, according to the *Times*, he has set himself up to be the far-right kingmaker this cycle by giving more than \$20.4 million to 16 House and Senate candidates—including three challengers of Republican incumbents who voted to impeach Trump.

Blake Masters, an associate of Thiel's who is running for the GOP nomination for Senate in Arizona, is one of the candidates receiving backing from the billionaire. Masters, the president of the Thiel Foundation, said last year that so-called election integrity "may be the top priority" of his platform, and that "it's really hard to know" if **Joe Biden**'s electoral victory was legitimate. While Thiel has not publicly questioned the legitimacy of the 2020 election, the *Times* spoke to

three sources close to Thiel who said that he views Trump as a “vessel” capable of carrying out his ideological goals.

Thiel has long been known for his fringe political beliefs, which in the past have included an open disdain for women’s suffrage; writing in a 2009 Cato Institute essay that he “no longer” believed freedom and democracy were “compatible;” and showing support for seasteading, a libertarian concept in support of billionaires founding island communities where they can hoard their wealth free of taxation. But in recent years, he has drifted away from unattainable libertarian theories in favor of a more realistic far-right worldview, seemingly deciding that he can more effectively alter the U.S. by using the Republican Party than he can with tech.

As noted by former Trump aide **Steve Bannon**, Thiel may be poised to further push the GOP toward Trump’s anti-establishment bent. “I don’t think it’s just about flipping the Senate,” Bannon told the *Times*. “I think Peter wants to change the direction of the country.” Additionally, the *Times* report featured a speech Thiel gave to the Federalist Society last fall, in which he summarized his skepticism toward the functionality and longevity of U.S. democracy. “My somewhat apocalyptic, somewhat hopeful thought is that we are finally at a point where things are breaking,” said Thiel in an optimistic warning that the “deranged society” created by America’s “completely deranged government” is headed for a harsh course correction.