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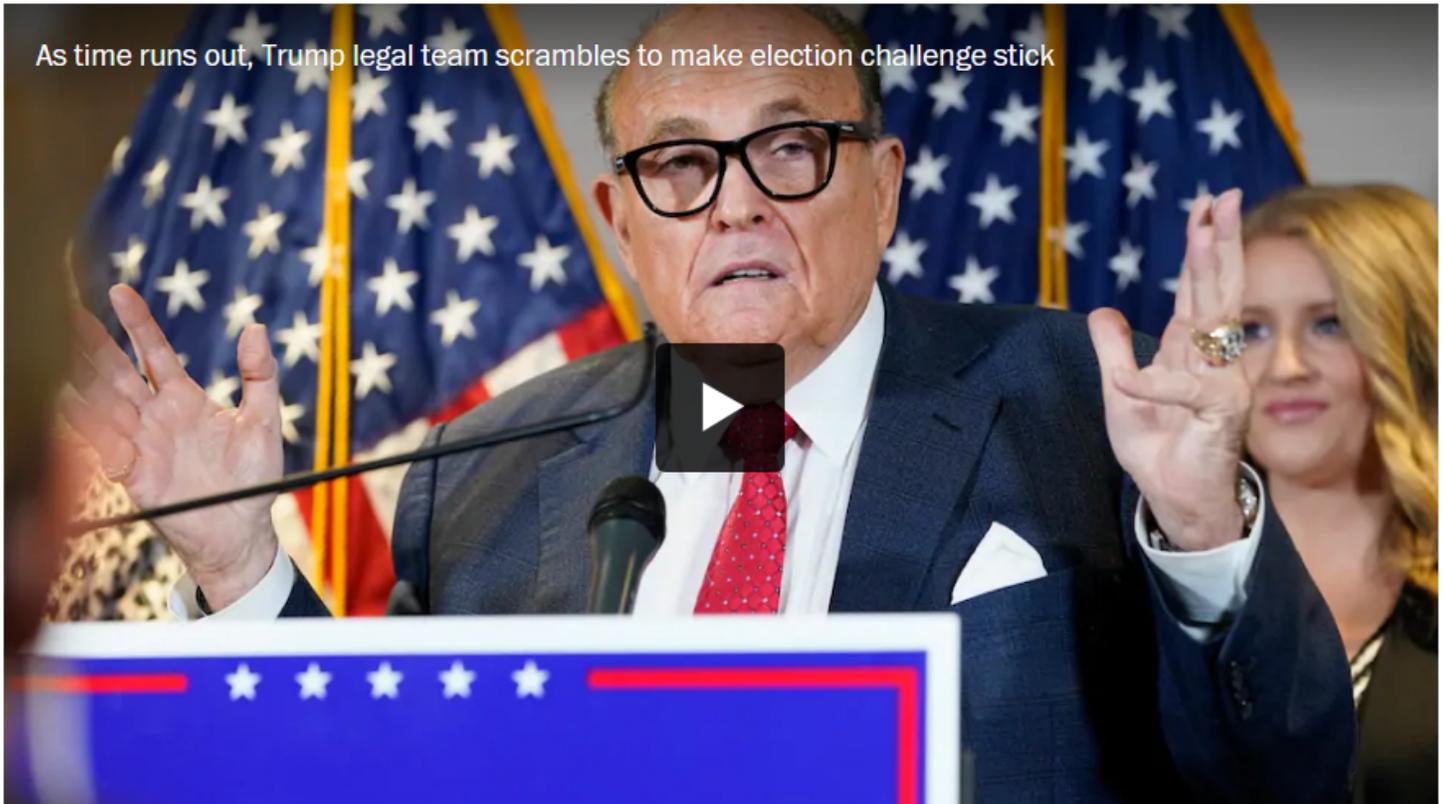
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Chris Christie calls the conduct of Trump's legal team a 'national embarrassment'

As time runs out, Trump legal team scrambles to make election challenge stick



The Post's Jon Swaine analyzes the Trump Campaign's last ditch legal attempts to get the result of the 2020 election overturned. (The Washington Post)

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By **Paul Kane** and **Felicia Sonmez**

November 23, 2020 at 4:11 a.m. GMT

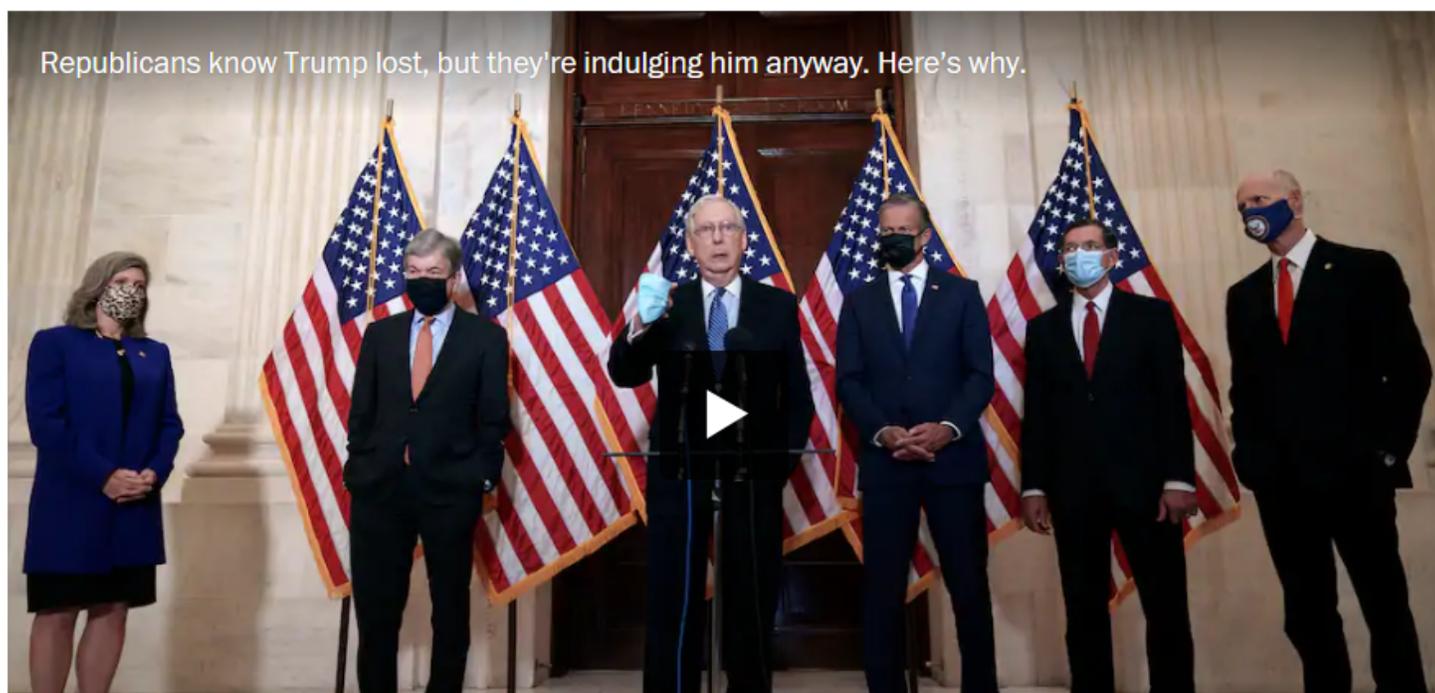
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Several prominent Republicans said over the weekend that President Trump's legal arguments had run their course and called on him to allow the presidential transition process to begin.

Chris Christie, a Trump confidant [who helped prepare the president](#) for the debates, called the conduct of Trump's legal team a "national embarrassment." Sen. Patrick J. Toomey (R-Pa.) said Trump had "exhausted all plausible legal options" and urged him to concede. Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.) said it's time to begin the transition.

The comments mark the latest signs of dissent from within the president's party, with increasingly more Republicans urging Trump to accept the results of the election and move on.

In an interview on ABC News's "This Week," Christie said the president should give up his legal strategy. "Elections have consequences, and we cannot continue to act as if something happened here that didn't happen," he said.





The Post's Ashley Parker explains why some Republicans followed President Trump's lead in denying the reality of the election and the danger they're posing. (The Washington Post)



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“The conduct of the president’s legal team has been a national embarrassment,” Christie added, noting that Trump’s lawyers have made a flurry of fraud allegations but have offered no evidence to back them up in court.

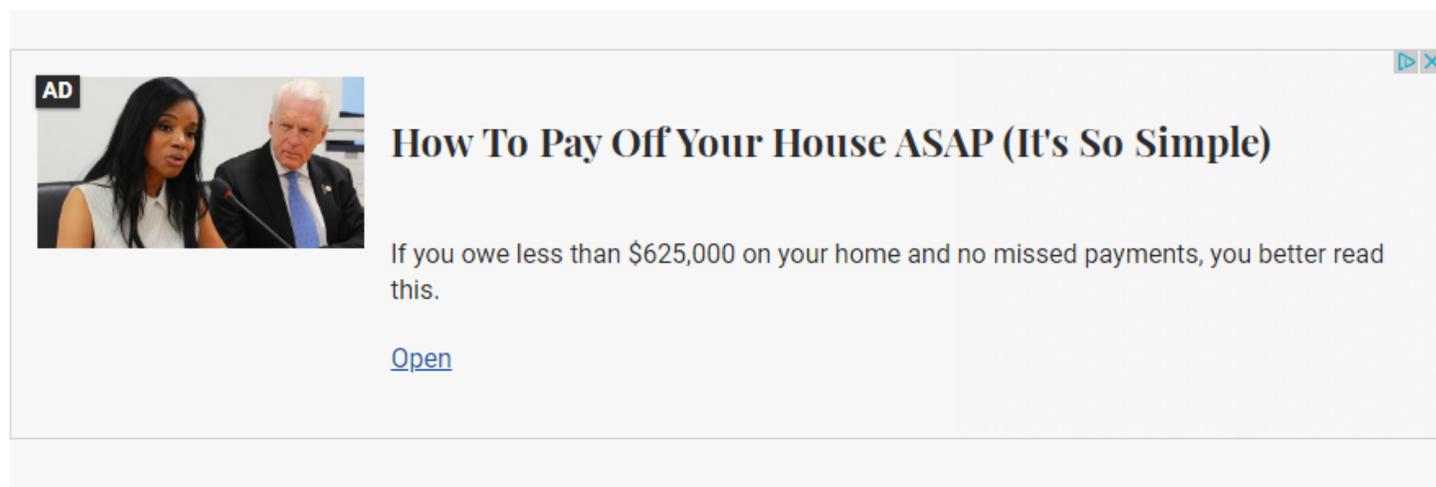
Christie criticized Trump’s lawyers for proffering false conspiracy theories at news conferences and other media appearances.

“They don’t do it in the courtroom,” the 2016 Republican presidential candidate said, suggesting the attorneys are fearful of making baseless arguments under oath before federal judges.

“It must mean the evidence doesn’t exist,” Christie said.

Christie said the Republican Party should focus on trying to win Georgia’s two runoff elections Jan. 5 to secure the Senate majority rather than continuing with its unsuccessful legal challenges of the presidential election results.

5 to secure the Senate majority rather than continuing with its unsuccessful legal challenges of the presidential election results.



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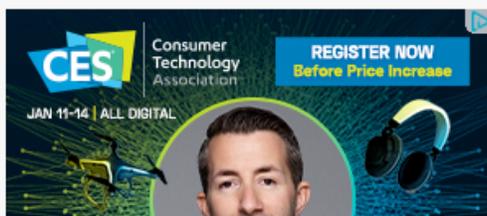
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“The rearview mirror should be ripped off,” Christie said.

The president’s legal team was thrown into tumult Sunday when two Trump attorneys — Rudolph W. Giuliani and Jenna Ellis — released a statement abruptly distancing the campaign from a third attorney, Sidney Powell.

Giuliani, Ellis and Powell appeared at a news conference last Thursday where they made a range of baseless accusations about the integrity of the election. Powell in particular has been vocal in lobbying some of the most convoluted claims, alleging a conspiracy that involved “communist money,” the late Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez and an algorithm favoring Democrats.

At the beginning of the news conference, Giuliani said that he, Ellis, Powell and other attorneys present were “representing President Trump and we’re representing the Trump campaign.” Ellis introduced the group as “an elite strike force team that is working on behalf of the president and the campaign to make sure that our Constitution is protected.”





But on Sunday, Giuliani and Ellis distanced themselves from Powell.

“Sidney Powell is practicing law on her own,” Giuliani and Ellis said in their statement. “She is not a member of the Trump Legal Team. She is also not a lawyer for the President in his personal capacity.”

Two advisers to Trump, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations, said that the president disliked the coverage Powell was [receiving from Tucker Carlson](#) and others, and that several allies had reached out to say she had gone too far. The advisers also said that she fought with Giuliani and others in recent days.

The president believed she was causing more harm than help. “She was too crazy even for the president,” a campaign official said.

Powell did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



Late Saturday night, [after a federal judge threw out](#) Trump's legal attempt to invalidate millions of votes, Toomey congratulated Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala D. Harris on their victory and encouraged the president to accept that result.

"President Trump has exhausted all plausible legal options to challenge the result of the presidential race in Pennsylvania," Toomey said in a statement, noting that the deciding judge, Matthew W. Brann, is a "longtime conservative Republican."

This result, Toomey noted, followed [Georgia's certification Friday of Biden's victory](#) there and Michigan's GOP legislative leaders rejecting efforts to block the certification of Biden's clear victory in that state.

"I congratulate President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on their victory. They are both dedicated public servants and I will be praying for them and for our country," Toomey said.



Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), who congratulated Biden in a statement after his Nov. 7 victory address, also urged Trump to "begin the full and formal transition process" and criticized the president's efforts to pressure state and local officials.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), who congratulated Biden in a statement after his Nov. 7 victory address, also urged Trump to “begin the full and formal transition process” and criticized the president’s efforts to pressure state and local officials.

“President Trump has had the opportunity to litigate his claims, and the courts have thus far found them without merit,” Murkowski [said in a tweet Sunday night](#). “A pressure campaign on state legislators to influence the electoral outcome is not only unprecedented but inconsistent with our democratic process.”

Senate Republicans have by and large [avoided commenting on Trump’s actions](#), with more than 40 not responding to requests for comment Thursday and Friday about the president’s effort to have Michigan legislators reject the Biden victory there of more than 150,000 votes.



Republicans are aware that any perceived lack of loyalty to the president could prompt him to attack the defectors — just as Trump did Saturday night when he called Brann a “product of Senator Pat ‘No Tarriffs’ Toomey.”

“No friend of mine,” [Trump tweeted](#).

Even some Trump backers who support pushing ahead with legal challenges said that Biden probably will take office and that the General Services Administration should allow the Democratic transition team access to the federal agencies and key briefings, along with office space and millions of dollars in funding, so they can hit the ground running on Jan. 20.

probably will take office and that the General Services Administration should allow the Democratic transition team access to the federal agencies and key briefings, along with office space and millions of dollars in funding, so they can hit the ground running on Jan. 20.

“I just think that you have to begin that process, give the incoming administration all the time they need,” Cramer said Sunday on NBC’s “Meet the Press.”

Cramer said that the transition process should have begun at least a week ago. But he added that the transition could begin even as Trump’s legal team continued to press its cases in the states.

This is, Cramer said, “just a simple legal process.”

Josh Dawsey contributed to this report.

6.1k Comments

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Paul Kane is The Washington Post's senior congressional correspondent and columnist. His column about Congress, @PKCapitol, appears throughout the week and on Sundays. He joined The Post in 2007. Follow [Twitter](#)

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Felicia Sonmez is a national political reporter covering breaking news from the White House, Congress and the campaign trail. She was previously based in Beijing, where she worked for Agence France-Presse and The Wall Street Journal. Follow [Twitter](#)

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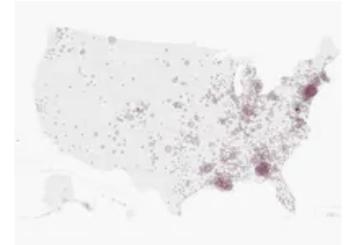


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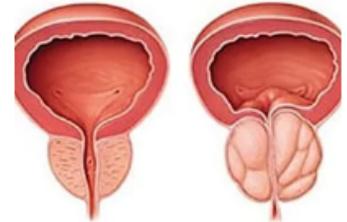
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Chris Christie knows a few things about national embarrassments.

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To use Trump's own vernacular, the only thing worse than a loser is a sore loser

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Donna%20Shepherd 1 month ago

To use Trump's own vernacular, the only thing worse than a loser is a sore loser

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negoziare o morire 1 month ago

So about that bridge-gate thing? Come on Chris they are not going to ever put you up for president so maybe you can do a little better describing the who and the what that is far more than simply an embarrassment. Messing the bed overs and over is not merely an embarrassment it is a dysfunction and requires some meaningful intervention. I posit that you have some thoughts and feelings about Jared's role throughout this clusterfrig!

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Try_to_be_rational 1 month ago

The conduct of the entire Republican party is an embarrassment, Mr. Christie included.

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Bapario 1 month ago

Its all about the "Grift" now.....

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NoKoolaidHere 1 month ago

"Chris Christie, a Trump confidant who helped prepare the president for the debates, called the conduct of Trump's legal team a "national embarrassment."

Chris Christie as usual slithers around the issues. Trump's legal team is just following orders. It is the conduct of President Trump that is the national embarrassment. But you will not hear Christie say that. Feels like Christy is getting a pass and he should not. His consistent and insistent support of President Trump was also a national embarrassment.

Like 3 Link Report



Ruegak 1 month ago

The president believed she was causing more harm than help. "She was too crazy even for the president," a campaign official said.