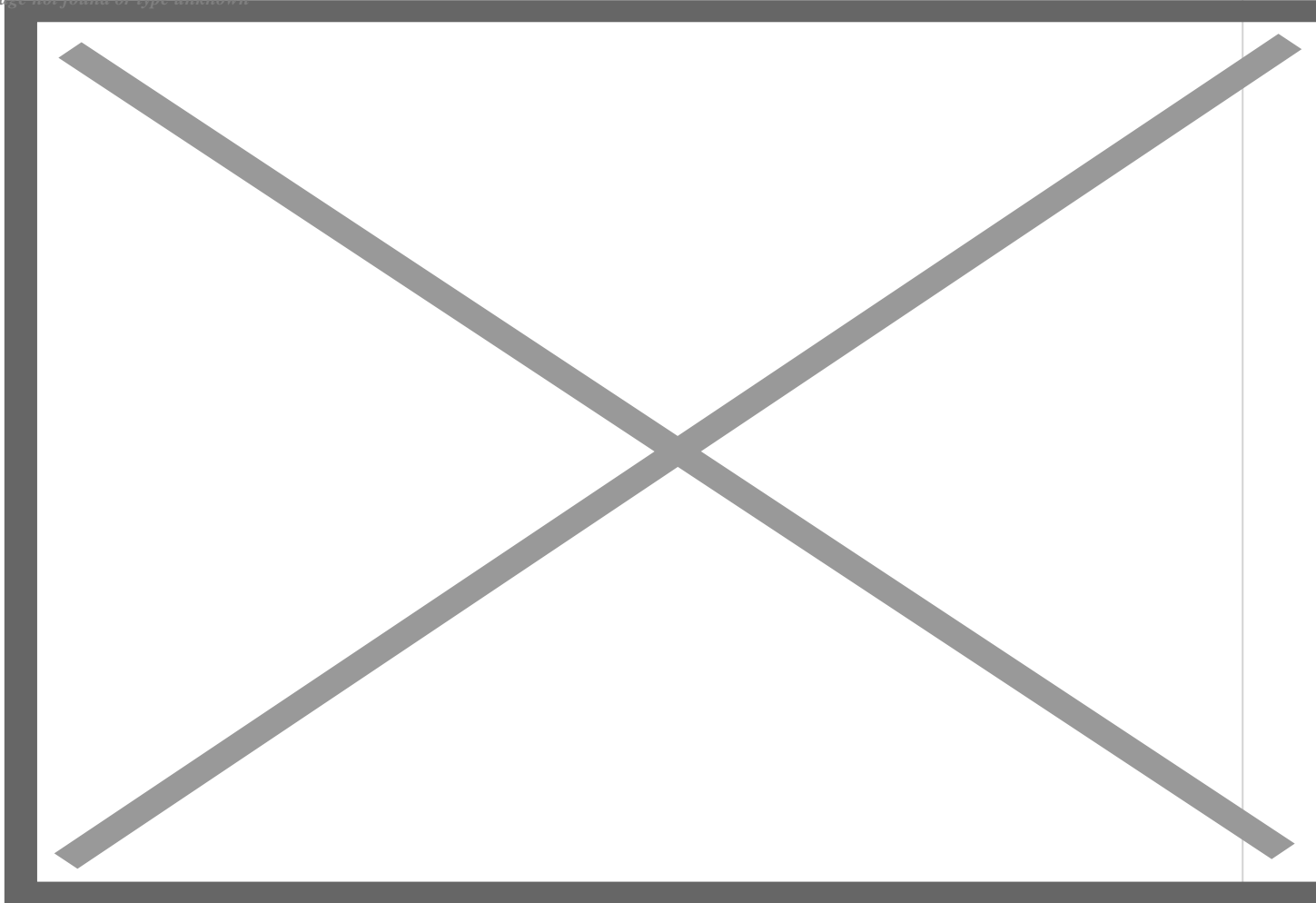


Donald Trump launches 2024 U.S. presidential bid

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Donald Trump announces that he will once again run for US president during an event at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, US, November 15, 2022 [Jonathan Ernst/ Reuters]

Palm Beach, November 16 (RHC)-- Donald Trump has announced he will run for United States president again in 2024 despite facing multiple criminal investigations and the poor performance of the candidates he backed in last week's midterm elections.

Trump launched the bid — his third for the presidency — on Tuesday evening at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, a week after elections in which Republicans failed to win as many seats in Congress as they had

hoped. In a speech broadcast live on U.S. television, Trump spoke to hundreds of supporters in a ballroom decorated with several chandeliers and lined with dozens of American flags.

“In order to make America great again, I am tonight announcing my candidacy for president of the United States,” Trump told the cheering crowd of donors and longtime supporters. “I am running because I believe the world has not yet seen the true glory of what this nation can be,” he said. “We will again put America first,” he added.

Earlier in the day, aides filed paperwork with the US Federal Election Commission setting up a committee called “Donald J Trump for President 2024”. There is a long road ahead before the Republican presidential nominee is formally selected in the U.S. summer of 2024, with the first state-level contests more than a year away. Analysts believe Trump’s unusually early launch may well be aimed at fending off potential challengers for the party’s nomination in 2024, including rising star Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and Trump’s former vice president, Mike Pence.

But Trump, who was twice impeached during his last term as president, enters the race at a moment of political vulnerability. He had hoped to launch his campaign in the wake of resounding Republican midterm victories, fuelled by candidates he elevated during this year’s primaries. Instead, many of those candidates lost, allowing Democrats to keep the Senate and leaving the Republicans with a path to only a bare majority in the House of Representatives.

The losses have prompted some prominent Republicans to openly blame Trump for promoting weak candidates who they say derailed the party’s hopes of taking control of Congress.

Trump’s bid to seek his party’s nomination also comes amid a series of escalating criminal investigations, including several that could lead to indictments. They include the probe into dozens of documents with classified markings that were seized by the FBI from Mar-a-Lago, and ongoing state and federal inquiries into his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

He is also facing a congressional subpoena related to his role in the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol by his supporters. Trump, a property tycoon and former reality TV star, has called the various investigations he faces politically motivated and has denied wrongdoing.

The former president’s stint at the White House — between 2017 and 2021 — was one of the most tumultuous in modern U.S. history. As well as the unprecedented impeachments, he deployed harsh rhetoric that critics say often veered into explicit bigotry and deeply polarised the country. But despite his loss to President Joe Biden and the Republicans’ poor showing in the midterms, he remains the most powerful force in his party.

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