



POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

After Trump backs one of her GOP challengers, SC's Nancy Mace sends a message at Trump Tower

BY CAITLIN BYRD

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CHARLESTON, S.C.

One day after former President Donald Trump endorsed one of her Republican primary challengers, South Carolina U.S. Rep. Nancy Mace stood outside Trump Tower in New York City to make her case.

In a [video posted to Twitter](#) Thursday morning, Mace defended her political credibility, touted her ties to Trump and questioned Republican Katie Arrington's ability to deliver for Republicans, even after Arrington [secured Trump's endorsement](#).

“If you want to lose this seat once again in a midterm election cycle to Democrats, then my opponent is more than qualified to do just that,” Mace said in her video,

looking straight into the camera as the 68-story glass skyscraper that is also home to the Trump Organization loomed behind her.

“If you want a Republican majority, if you want someone to continue to represent the Lowcountry, if you want someone to represent a Lowcountry with our fiscally conservative values,” Mace continued, “then I’m here to serve.”

Less than an hour later, Arrington, who once worked alongside Mace in the South Carolina state House, fired back.

“Nancy- did you get lost on your way to the Fox News Studio? Or are you in NYC to fundraise with the progressives?” [Arrington tweeted](#). “What does NYC have to do with the Lowcountry?”

Mace told The State in a text that she was in New York to talk to national media about her bill to legalize cannabis.

The video came nearly 15 hours after Trump made his public pick in South Carolina’s 1st Congressional District race Wednesday evening through his political action committee.

His backing came just one day after Arrington [announced her candidacy](#) in a 2-minute online video Tuesday. Mace also faces two other Republican challengers in the race: North Charleston military wife Lynz Piper-Loomis and veteran and author Ingrid Centurion.

In his announcement, Trump’s statement oscillated between praise for Arrington and swipes at Mace.

“Katie Arrington is running against an absolutely terrible candidate, Congresswoman Nancy Mace, whose remarks and attitude have been devastating for her community, and not at all representative of the Republican Party to which she has been very disloyal,” Trump said in explaining why he won’t support Mace, despite endorsing her in 2020. “Katie Arrington, on the other hand, is liked and respected and a true Republican.”

Sources with direct knowledge of Trump's plans confirmed the former president is also [planning to hold a rally](#) in South Carolina as early as this month or this spring.

In her video taken outside Trump Tower, Mace offered a rebuttal.

"I remember in 2015 when President Trump announced he was running," Mace said, standing outside the building where Trump launched his presidential campaign after his now-famous descent on a golden escalator. "I was one of his earliest supporters. I actually worked for the campaign in 2016."

Mace worked as a coalitions director and field director for Trump's 2016 presidential campaign from September 2015 until August 2016. Federal documents show she earned \$43,000 for the work she did across seven states: California, Indiana, Texas, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin and South Carolina.

In her video, Mace reiterated her loyalty to Trump, saying she supported him when he ran for reelection in 2020.

She cited policies she supported that Trump championed, like lowering taxes and challenging China.

"As a strong fiscal conservative, I believe in putting America first. I believe in putting our country back on the path to prosperity. But Nancy Pelosi would love nothing more than to win the seat back in the midterm election cycle. She did it '18 And she could do it again this cycle," Mace said.

When Arrington ran for Charleston's congressional seat in 2018, she defeated incumbent U.S. Rep. Mark Sanford, a former governor who had never lost an election.

Her victory carried national implications in how it revealed Trump's influence over the Republican Party. She secured Trump's endorsement in that race just hours before polls closed on a rainy primary election day.

Despite her Republican primary victory, Arrington went on to lose her 2018 general election match-up against Democrat Joe Cunningham. It was the first time in nearly 40 years that the reliably Republican seat had changed hands.

In 2020, Mace ran for the same U.S. House seat. She easily won her GOP primary in a four-way contest, and [narrowly defeated Cunningham](#) in the general election. He is now running for the Democratic nomination in the South Carolina governor's race and Mace is running to defend her U.S. House seat.

"I won the seat back for Republicans in 2020," Mace said in the video.

In 2020, Trump endorsed Mace after her primary win, tweeting, "Keep up the great work so we can #MAGA! We need you in Washington fast." Many of her campaign materials [in the general election](#) featured a photo of Mace standing next to a smiling Trump, who is giving a thumbs-up.

This time, Mace won't have his support. During last year's attack on Jan. 6, Mace found herself hiding from a violent mob as they stormed the U.S. Capitol. The next day, she said she [no longer believed in Trump](#), the man she helped elect.

Mace joined U.S. Sens. Tim Scott and Lindsey Graham in voting to uphold the election results from Arizona and Pennsylvania — two battleground states that voted for President Joe Biden. She was the only Republican U.S. House member from South Carolina's Washington delegation to do so.

In her first floor speech as an elected member of Congress, Mace criticized Trump for the events of the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol and said, "I hold him accountable for the events that transpired."

Arrington [has said Trump won the 2020 election](#), echoing the president's continued false claim despite there being no evidence of widespread voter fraud affecting the 2020 election's outcome.

But Mace does have backing from a member of Trump's administration.

On Monday, former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley [endorsed Mace](#) in the Republican primary contest.

Haley, a rumored 2024 presidential candidate and Trump’s former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, called Mace “the conservative voice the Lowcountry needs in Washington.”

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Profile

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Caitlin Byrd covers the Charleston region as an enterprise reporter for The State. She grew up in eastern North Carolina and she graduated from UNC Asheville in 2011. Since moving to Charleston in 2016, Byrd has broken national news, told powerful stories and documented the nuances of both a presidential primary and a high-stakes congressional race. She most recently covered politics at The Post and Courier. To date, Byrd has won more than 17 awards for her journalism.

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