



### [American Politicians Gov. Ron DeSantis and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy Visit Israel on Separate Trips](#)

Two American politicians visited Israel with two very different goals and outcomes. Both House Speaker Representative Kevin McCarthy and Governor and potential Republican primary candidate Ron DeSantis visited Israel in a show of support for Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel. Netanyahu is currently facing widespread protests and civil unrest as he continues his campaign to try and gut Israel's supreme court. Of the two visits, the one far more consequential was that of Speaker McCarthy. He was joined by a bipartisan delegation during his visit. McCarthy is only the second U.S. speaker to address a full session of the Knesset, the first being Republican Newt Gingrich in 1998.

In visiting Israel, he has placed himself in the middle of a widening rift between President Biden and Netanyahu. Both Netanyahu and McCarthy are at odds with the President. Biden has rebuked the Netanyahu government for its push to gain greater control over the country's Supreme Court and is currently battling McCarthy over increasing the United States debt limit and avoiding defaulting on its loans. Both actions have drawn heavy condemnation from Biden, who stated that Netanyahu's government "cannot continue down this road" and that this kind of move should only be made with a broad consensus. Netanyahu has also not been invited to the White House, which is seen as traditional for every new Israeli Prime Minister to be invited. He took office four months ago. The outcome of both could have dire consequences for their respective countries. If the United States defaults on its loans, it will almost certainly lead to a global economic disaster. If Netanyahu succeeds in his attempt to gain greater control over Israel's supreme court, it will remove an important check against the legislative branches' power. Netanyahu also has a personal stake, as he is currently being investigated for corruption.

During his visit, McCarthy said he would be willing to invite Netanyahu to speak before Congress if Biden did not invite him to the White House. If you consider solely through the narrow optics of appealing to the Republican base, inviting Netanyahu without the consent of Biden would be seen as an attempt to make Biden appear weak and allow Netanyahu to "beat" Biden. This shallow view is a dangerous and short-sighted way to practice politics. Politically, this move would be a nightmare for both Netanyahu and McCarthy. For Netanyahu and Israel, it would further drive a wedge between the American left and Israel, potentially expediting the end of staunch bipartisan support for Israel. A similar plan was carried out in 2015 in an attempt to disrupt then-President Obama's plans to negotiate a nuclear deal with Iran. This was a significant breach of protocol. It created a schism that remains to this day and was widely criticized in Israel as a significant breach of protocol. This would happen again if Netanyahu accepted an invitation by McCarthy to speak before Congress. McCarthy would lose any political goodwill he had

remaining from the international community and the Biden administration. He will be seen supporting a corrupt leader who is leaning more and more toward authoritarian tendencies. This support would give Democrats plenty of ammunition in the upcoming to paint the Republican party in a poor light.

Governor DeSantis's meeting, though noteworthy, officially, was about promoting trade between Israel and Florida. In reality, it was more about acquiring his foreign policy bona fides ahead of the upcoming Republican primary and Israel was just one stop on his world tour. DeSantis met with Netanyahu on Thursday last week during the former's visit to Jerusalem. Netanyahu downplayed the meeting, with his office not mentioning it in their statements. DeSantis also gave a speech during his visit vowing to continue to support Israel, calling Jerusalem the "eternal capital of the Jewish People", and said the United Nations unfairly criticizes Israel. His visit was largely overshadowed by his ongoing dispute with Disney.

These two different visits do have something in common, both republican politicians were attempting to win the favor of an increasingly authoritarian leader. Both DeSantis and McCarthy overlooked the massive protests against Netanyahu's attempts to exert control over Israel's supreme court to score political points with their base. Blindly overlooking a blatant attack on democracy not only undermines the view of the United States being the leader of the free world but also signals to other authoritarian-leaning countries that certain politicians in the United States are more than open to working with authoritarian regimes if it means they can score political points.