

Nancy Mace Launches South Carolina Governor Bid

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CHARLESTON, S.C. U.S. Representative Nancy Mace has officially entered the race for governor of South Carolina, marking a significant development in the early stages of the 2026 Republican primary contest.

Mace announced in a video titled “Huge MAGA Announcement” posted to her website, highlighting her alignment with President Donald Trump’s conservative base. Currently

representing the 1st Congressional District, she has served in Congress since 2021 and now seeks to become the first Republican woman elected as governor of the state.

Her entrance sets the stage for a crowded and competitive Republican primary. Other declared candidates include Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette, Attorney General Alan Wilson, state Senator Josh Kimbrell, and U.S. Representative Ralph Norman.

Mace's journey has been central to her political identity. After leaving high school at 17, she worked at a Waffle House before returning to education. She later became the first woman to graduate from The Citadel's Corps of Cadets, one of America's most demanding military colleges.

Her public service began in the South Carolina General Assembly, where she served from 2018 to 2020. She gained national attention in 2020 when she defeated Democrat Joe Cunningham to become the first Republican woman elected to Congress from South Carolina.

Though Mace worked on Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, she distanced herself from the president after the events of January 6, 2021. Her criticism of Trump's actions led him to endorse a primary challenger in 2022. Nevertheless, Mace won both the Republican primary and the general election.

Since then, she has taken a more supportive stance, backing Trump during his legal challenges and endorsing his 2024 presidential campaign. This shift appears to align with South Carolina's conservative base, where Trump remains popular.

A recent poll by the South Carolina Policy Council shows Mace narrowly leading the Republican field with 16 percent support. Wilson is close behind at 15 percent, while Evette, Norman, and Kimbrell poll in single digits. However, 52 percent of GOP voters remain undecided, signaling a fluid race.

Mace stirred controversy earlier this year when she publicly accused Attorney General Wilson of failing to address sexual assault allegations involving her and others. Wilson denied receiving any such complaints and avoided naming Mace in his response.

Name recognition may prove a key advantage for Mace. A Winthrop University poll conducted earlier this year found that 52 percent of South Carolinians are familiar with her, compared to 39 percent for Wilson and 32 percent for Evette.

With her military background, legislative experience, and growing visibility among conservative voters, Mace is positioned as a strong contender in a race that's likely to attract national interest as it unfolds.