

# ‘Gravely serious charges.’ Boston legal experts react to Trump indictment for 2020 election.

By [Tonya Alanez](#) Globe Staff, Updated August 1, 2023, 10:21 p.m.



Martin Weinberg, pictured in 2020 outside Boston federal court, said the charges against Trump on Tuesday are the most serious so far facing the former president. “The third indictment to me, is the most serious indictment,” Weinberg said. ELISE AMENDOLA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The third, and latest, criminal case brought against Donald Trump, which alleges he sought to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, is the strongest, most thorough and egregious, and the one most likely to land him in prison, Boston legal experts said Tuesday.

“This is the first time that I thought that Trump might actually get convicted,” Jed Handelsman Shugerman, a law professor at Boston University, said in a telephone interview. “It is urgent that this case be moved to the front of the calendar; this case must come first.”

Trump was charged Tuesday in a Justice Department investigation on charges that include conspiracy to defraud the United States government, subvert the peaceful transfer of power, and witness tampering in the run-up to the violent riot by his supporters at the U.S. Capitol.

The indictment comes as the former president seeks to reclaim the White House in 2024.

It is also the strongest yet brought against the former Republican president, Handelsman Shugerman said.

“The Manhattan DA case is weak. It’s a waste of time, political capital, and credibility,” he said of Trump’s first indictment in a New York state court. “The Florida case is strong, but the judge and jury pool are unpredictable, and it will take too long to get through national security issues.”

The former president was indicted last week on three new charges of keeping classified documents at his Mar-a-lago estate in Florida. The original indictment was handed up in June.

“But this case is strong,” Handelsman Shugerman said of Tuesday’s indictment. “and the judge and jury pool are more reliable in DC.”

Dana Curhan, a Boston-based appellate attorney for more than three decades said, the indictment is exceptionally thorough and brings “much more serious charges.”

“It looks like they have the goods to back it up,” Curhan said. “If he’s convicted of this,

I don't see any way he stays out of prison ... I've had a lot of clients go to prison for a lot less."

Curhan said the indictment "lays out the fact that he was repeatedly told that he lost the election, he knew he lost the election, there's no issue that he lost the election, yet he's trying to get Mike Pence to just overturn it."

"I don't think we've ever had a president that was this corrupt," Curhan said. "I think he'll take everyone down with him."

**Martin Weinberg, a prominent attorney in Boston who has defended clients for more than four decades, said "these are gravely serious charges, and it's a very sad day for American democracy."**

**"The third indictment to me, is the most serious indictment," Weinberg said. "It charges a criminal coup d'état, an attempt to invalidate thousands of votes. What can be a greater crime?"**

Brian Kelly, an attorney with Nixon Peabody and the former head of the public corruption unit in the US attorney's office in Boston, said the three indictments against Trump are getting repetitive.

The federal indictments in Florida and Washington are brought by a special counsel "with an unlimited budget ... whose got nothing better to do than keep indicting Trump."

"Now, it's going to become more political. Here, they're going a little broader in trying to say his resistance to acknowledging defeat somehow led him to commit federal crimes," Kelly said. "At a certain point, it starts to feel a bit like overkill."