

## The future of democracy is uncertain

Published: January 13, 2026, 12:54 am

---

I worry about politics. In the US yesterday, [a pro-Trump candidate defeated the pretty far-right US Senator Liz Cheney](#) in the Republican primary for Wyoming, meaning that Cheney, whose crime has been to criticise Trump over the storming of the Capitol on 6 January 2021., will lose her seat. Supporting insurrection and the violent overthrow of government now has widespread support in the USA.

And here the unedifying Tory leadership debacle continued with hustings in Perth last night. I watched some of it. There was the predictable denial of democratic choice there too. The Tories might change their minds four times since 2016, but Scotland is denied the opportunity to change its mind about the Union, and the rest of us are refused the chance to revisit Brexit. Choice is now, apparently, only available to the right wing. Just as the left can apparently be cancelled with government consent now despite the Tory obsession with cancel culture, democracy is an option only if it reinforces the opinion of the upper echelons of the Tory Party and the opinions of the Daily Mail.

Democracy was what defined liberalism, which in turn delivered the possibility of freeing people from material poverty by the creation of a social and economic safety net within society. The Tories are now very definitely following the Republicans in seeking to deny us democratic choice. We should all be worried. Our survival depends in turn on the survival of democracy: nothing else will deliver the changes to society that will prevent climate meltdown. I am fearful for both.