

ELECTIONS

Trump says he 'took a bullet for democracy' at massive battleground state rally alongside running mate Vance

More than 12,000 people showed up to rally in support of Trump and Vance in Grand Rapids, Michigan



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Thousands descend on Michigan town for first Trump rally since his failed assassination attempt

Thousands of people have lined the streets of Grand Rapids, Michigan to show support for former President Donald Trump at his first rally since a would-be assassin tried, but failed, to take his life.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Former President [Donald Trump](#) declared Saturday that he "took a bullet for democracy" while firing up a crowd of voters in Grand Rapids, Michigan, at his first rally since surviving an assassination attempt last week.

More than 12,000 people piled into the Van Andel Arena, home to the Grand Rapids Griffins hockey team, to see him and his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, who are coming off a packed week at the [Republican National Convention](#) (RNC) in Milwaukee, where each accepted their respective nominations to appear on the GOP ticket together.

"They keep saying he's a threat to democracy. I'm saying, 'What the hell did I do to democracy?' Last week I took a bullet for democracy," Trump said as the crowd cheered, referencing an often used Democrat talking point. "What did I do against democracy? Crazy."

WATCH: THOUSANDS DESCEND ON MICHIGAN TOWN FOR FIRST TRUMP RALLY SINCE FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT



Former President and 2024 presidential nominee Donald Trump with Sen. and vice presidential nominee JD Vance, attend their first campaign rally together at Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Mich., on Saturday. (Jim Watson/AFP via Getty Images)

Vance spoke ahead of Trump, and dedicated part of his time on stage to slamming Vice President Kamala Harris, asking rallygoers "what the hell" she has ever done and noting his own service as a U.S. Marine.

"I've served in the United States Marine Corps ... What the hell have you done?" Vance said.

"What has she done other than collect a check from her political offices?" he asked, before going on to talk about his grandmother, who he calls "Mamaw," and his upbringing.

Harris ripped Vance after his Wednesday speech at the RNC in which he accepted his role on the 2024 ticket.

"It was compelling. It's a compelling story. But it's not the full story," Harris said after Vance's RNC speech. "Frankly, what is very telling is what he did not talk about on that stage. He did not talk about Project 2025, the 900-page blueprint for a second term. He did not talk about it because their plans are extreme, and they are divisive."

RNC DELEGATES, GUESTS MAKE PREDICTIONS ABOUT BIDEN'S POLITICAL FUTURE AMID REPORTS HE MIGHT EXIT 2024 RACE



Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance. (Getty Images)

Vance later spoke to rallygoers about the various challenges facing the nation under [President Biden's administration](#), including the fentanyl crisis, the border crisis and the economy.

Trump took the stage after Vance, beginning his speech by saying that he "shouldn't be here right now, but something very, something very special happened." He took a moment to recognize the supporters who were injured or killed at the rally last week.

"We continue to pray for the recovery of the two citizens who were wounded in that evil attack – David Dutch and James Copenhaver, two really incredible people," the Republican frontrunner said. "We remain in contact and send our deepest respect to the families."

ALINA HABBA TAKES ON MAJOR ROLE IN TRUMP CAMPAIGN, DISHES ON HIS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED RNC SPEECH



More than 12,000 people piled into Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Mich., on Saturday to see former President Donald Trump and vice presidential nominee JD Vance at their first joint rally, and the first since Trump was struck by a would-be assassin's bullet but survived. (Fox News Digital/Brandon Gillespie)

Trump also acknowledged the death of Corey Comperatore, calling him a "hero" for protecting his family from the bullets.

"Corey Comperatore was a brave firefighter who died, [his] funeral [was] yesterday," Trump said. "Corey was a hero. And we will carry his memory in our hearts for all time."

Later in his speech, Trump conducted a "poll" with the audience members about who should become the Democratic nominee if President Biden steps down from the race.

"We're going to do a poll, and it's going to be a very nice poll and great. Who is your favorite candidate? Who would you like?" Trump said.

GOV. WHITMER TELLS 'THE VIEW' SHE NEVER SAID MICHIGAN'S UNWINNABLE FOR BIDEN: 'CRAZIEST THING TO THINK'



Former President and 2024 presidential nominee Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally with Sen. and vice presidential nominee JD Vance at Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Mich. (Jim Watson/AFP via Getty Images)

"So who would you like to most run against, if you're us, if we want to win? Ready? Kamala Harris? Crooked Joe Biden?" Trump asked. The audience booed louder in response to Biden.

Trump also engaged with the crowd on a personal level, and while he was speaking about electric cars, he suddenly recognized an audience member who was a union member.

"Are you the same guy? Yes? No kidding," Trump said. "Pretty good memory, right? Unlike somebody else that I happen to be running against."

The Republican then encouraged the worker to get up on stage and joked around with him.

"He's a serious union guy, a United Auto Workers [worker]," Trump said. "He does not carry guns. Come on up here, look at him. Look at the shape he's in."



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump, right, shakes hands with an autoworker on stage at a campaign event Saturday at Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Mich. (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

"I'm glad to see this guy," the union worker said energetically at the podium. "I told you, we're gonna get 85 million of us out there to vote for him. So let's go home from this rally and do our part."

The former president also slammed Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, calling her a "terrible" leader.

"Well, you have a terrible governor here who did a terrible job. Whitmer — I'd like to run against her, actually," Trump laughed.

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Michigan is expected to be one of the most closely watched battleground states in November, and could narrowly determine who will serve the American people in the White House for the next four years.

Polls have largely suggested Trump leads Biden in every battleground state, as well as in some states that have trended more Democratic in recent years. That comes as a growing number of Democrats call for Biden to step aside from the 2024 race, in favor of Harris or another candidate.

Fox News Digital's Andrea Vachianno contributed to this report.

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