



By: James Oliphant

Brother Trump's Traveling Salvation Show might be doing more harm than good for his fellow Republicans



President Donald Trump stopped by the Michigan border town of Port Huron on Sunday for a get-out-the-vote **rally** during which he did the following things:

- told Michigan voters that if Democrats reverse his policies, “you will only have yourselves to blame.”
- commented on the shape of singer Nicki Minaj’s backside
- called Norway a “shithouse” country citing the fact that he didn’t receive the Nobel Peace Prize
- likened Michigan Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed to the terrorists who hijacked planes on 9/11 and said if El-Sayed won, he would have to enter the Senate through a metal detector
- bragged that he had rescued Christmas
- offered voters \$5,000 apiece if Republicans keep control of Congress

All in all, it was just another day for Brother Trump’s Traveling Salvation Show, a heady brew of outrage, bombast, hyperbole, vindictiveness, stand-up comedy, giveaways, threats, and lamentations from the president of the United States during his mad dash from state to state. (Full apologies to Neil Diamond.)

For most of this month, Trump has embarked on a cross-country tour intended to bolster **Republican prospects** in next week’s midterm elections, when control of the US Congress will be at stake.

During that time, he has ping-ponged from Florida to Alaska to New York, holding his signature rallies before the MAGA faithful and trying to recreate the dynamic that propelled him to two presidential campaign victories.

But there are precious few signs Trump’s barnstorming is doing any good for his fellow Republicans, and it’s possible that in a few instances, he has made things worse.

What he has done, more than anything, is keep himself in the daily news cycle, sometimes at the expense of the candidates he’s trying to

promote.

The outlook for Trump’s Republican Party’s chances in the midterms continues to look grim, with some analysts predicting a wave that could cost the party as many as 25 seats in the House and perhaps loss of control of the Senate to boot.

The Trump effect

As he has trekked across the country, Trump has urged voters to act as if he is on the midterm ballot in a bid to spur turnout among his MAGA base.

But that’s exactly the problem facing Republicans.

For all intents and purposes, voters are acting as if Trump is on the ballot – at least Democrats are. **Early voting numbers** suggest turnout among them could be high, while Republicans, who are showing less enthusiasm for the proceedings, may stay home in droves.

The Trump effect has historically been two-fold: He drives voters out both to support him and to oppose him, and the question typically comes down to which side is more energized.

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That’s one reason why Trump’s salvation tour has spent much of its time in states where Republicans hold a clear advantage such as Kansas, Oklahoma and Tennessee. The hope is that his presence will convince voters who usually bypass the midterms to come out.

But make no mistake, those are the actions of a party looking to contain its losses. The political environment is so poor right now for Republicans that Trump has felt the need to

shore up candidates who normally would not need his help.

The tougher tests come in places like Michigan, where Trump was on Sunday, and Georgia, where he spent Saturday. Those races will help determine whether a president whose **disapproval rating** among Americans hovers at around the 60% mark can be more of an asset than a liability.

“I don’t give a damn”

At every stop, Trump has insisted that the U.S. economy is better than people think, that consumer prices will soon fall and that the unpopular war with Iran is necessary. But it’s fair to wonder whether a large share of the electorate has tuned him out.

And there have been times when Trump hasn’t done his party any favors. At the rally in Perry, Georgia, he dismissed voters’ concerns over high fuel prices – perhaps the largest motivating issue in the midterms.

He told the crowd that the country was making a “freaking fortune” from high oil prices, anticipating headlines accusing him of bragging while people were “suffering at the pump.”

“That’ll be the headline, but I said, ‘I don’t give a damn,’” Trump said.

The president also, as he has done in other places such as North Carolina, threatened to withhold federal aid from states represented by Democrats, this time saying if Georgia Senator **Jon Ossoff** called, he wouldn’t help him. “I don’t give a damn what he wants,” Trump said.



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Last week, Trump stepped into what has become a white-hot controversy over an ad created by Republican **Vivek Ramaswamy's campaign** for Ohio governor that featured the estranged mother of his opponent, Amy Acton, calling Acton a “liar.”

Acton’s mother lost custody of her after Acton’s stepfather was charged with raping her as a child; her mother subsequently left the state with him.

Ramaswamy has been heavily rebuked for the spot, even among some Republicans who have called for it to be taken down. Analysts have suggested the furor could cost Ramaswamy the election.

At a rally in Iowa, Trump said Ramaswamy was “lucky” and should stick to his guns. “So I told him, leave it up and look upstairs and say, ‘Thank you, God, very much.’”

In Georgia, Trump also repeated what has become a stock line for him at rallies – that if you don’t know the name of a man from the Middle East, it’s likely “Mohammed.”

“You’ll be right 64% of the time,” Trump said. (Figure unverified.)

Along with the more incendiary remarks, Trump’s rallies have been full of his usual tangents and asides. This is a politician who,

when running for president in 2024, devoted time during his **speeches** to wondering about the invention of the paper clip.

In Ohio, he marveled at Senator Jon Husted's physique ("I looked at his ass"). In Alaska, he questioned whether a newborn baby's rear end is really as clean as the simile suggests.

At a rally in Tennessee, he told his audience that he "could say the stupidest things and you clap" and floated the idea of naming the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean after himself ("We need an ocean").

In an economically depressed region of Arizona, Trump talked at length about receiving a new luxury jet from Qatar to use as his official plane. "When you're given gifts, you take 'em, right?" Trump told the crowd. "When they give you a 747, you say two words: 'Thank you.'"

Hungry for change

Trump and his administration, however, are not leaving everything to rest on his rhetorical skills. For months, they've been attempting to disqualify voters in key states by claiming they are noncitizens.

The Justice Department sued 30 states, seeking sensitive voter information (27 suits have been **dismissed**). In California, the **department** is seeking to set aside mail ballots associated with roughly 20,000 registrations it considers likely to belong to noncitizens until citizenship can be verified.

In a separate case, a **California judge** last week restricted election-related government field investigations in nine states, finding that the efforts were likely unlawfully intimidating voter-assistance groups.

The administration has also filed a lawsuit in Alaska seeking to deny certification of the state's Senate election if the Democrat, Mary Peltola, wins, claiming that the presence of two opponents with the same name, Dan Sullivan, will have confused voters.

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The courts will determine whether any of the administration's back-channel efforts will have an effect on next Tuesday's outcome.

In the meantime, Trump was scheduled this week to travel to Mississippi, Texas, and South Carolina, among other places, a further indication that Republicans are worried about contests in traditionally conservative states.

But regardless, the salvation show will come to a close next week – and it's highly possible this will be the final all-out, state-by-state swing of Trump's political career.

He may end up with little to show for his efforts. That's because when it comes down to it, polls show the American public is hungry for change.

And as he has demonstrated over the last few weeks, Trump's song remains ever the same.