

US presidential election 2024

Donald Trump's vulgar rally ramble fuels questions about his state of mind

Increasingly dark rhetoric comes as presidential candidates start final pitch to voters in run-up to election day



Donald Trump during his rally in Pennsylvania on Sunday © Justin Merriman/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock

James Politi in Washington YESTERDAY

Donald Trump fuelled further questions about his state of mind on Saturday by delivering a vulgar ramble during a rally in Pennsylvania, in his latest diversion from the political script just weeks before election day.

Trump kicked off his rally with a 12-minute speech that included crude suggestions about the late golfer Arnold Palmer's anatomy. The remarks were delivered at Arnold Palmer Regional Airport as the Republican nominee started to make his final pitch to US voters in the battleground states that will decide the [White House race](#).

"When he took showers with the other pros, they came out of there, they said: 'Oh my God, that's unbelievable,'" Trump said, in an apparent reference to Palmer's genitalia. "We have women that are highly sophisticated here, but they used to look at Arnold."

The off-colour remarks were just the latest in a string of unusual campaign appearances that have raised concerns about Trump's state of mind as he vies for a second term as president. His Republican allies have sought to encourage him to focus on policy issues, but Trump has continued to veer off-message.

At a town hall in Pennsylvania this week, he ended the event by playing music for more than 30 minutes and swaying back and forth on stage without speaking. His rhetoric has grown increasingly dark and vulgar and his speeches more prone to wild digressions, which he refers to as "the weave".

"You have to tell Kamala Harris that you've had enough, that you just can't take it any more . . . you're a shit vice-president," he said at the rally on Saturday, referring to his Democratic rival.

The Harris campaign has focused its attacks on Trump's age and mental acuity, mirroring the Republicans' claims that US President Joe Biden was no longer fit to hold office.

Harris said Trump was "becoming increasingly unstable and unhinged" at a rally in Detroit on Saturday.

In an interview on MSNBC on Sunday she added that "the American people deserve so much better".

"The President of the United States must set a standard, not only for our nation but understanding the standard that we as a nation must set for the world," she said.

Speaking to ABC News on Sunday, Republican governor Chris Sununu of New Hampshire said Trump's comments were "outrageous".

"I don't like the profanity. I don't like personal attacks. I don't like any of that stuff," he said. "It's just par for the course. He speaks in hyperbole. He gets his crowds riled up."

Trump held his rally as Elon Musk, one his most significant corporate backers, travelled to Pennsylvania in a separate event to campaign for the Republican candidate.

During the visit, Musk promised to give \$1mn every day until election day to randomly selected Pennsylvania voters who signed a petition through his Save America political action committee to protect free speech and the right to bear arms, a highly unorthodox manner of generating support.

"One of the challenges we're having is like, well, how do we get people to know about this petition? Because the legacy media . . . won't report on it," Musk said.

Trump and Harris are seeking to win over undecided voters and make sure their existing supporters cast their ballots on November 5, as [polls show the two candidates nearly tied in crucial swing states](#) and as early voting gets under way in some states.

Harris campaigned in the battleground state of Georgia on Saturday and is expected to fly to Pennsylvania on Sunday.

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