

NBC's *Today*

10/25/22

7:01:27 a.m. [TEASE]

24 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Battlegrounds]

HODA KOTB: Battlegrounds. With the midterms exactly two weeks away, high-profile debates in the spotlight. Last night in Florida —

CONGRESSMAN CHARLIE CRIST (D-FL): You talk about Joe Biden a lot.

GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS (R-FL): The only worn out, old donkey I'm looking to put out to pasture is Charlie Crist.

KOTB: Tonight, Pennsylvania where the candidates in that key Senate race square off for the first and only time. We're live with what you can expect.

(...)

7:13:39 a.m.

2 minutes and 35 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Races Tighten With Two Weeks to Midterms]

KOTB: The midterms are knocking on the door.

CRAIG MELVIN: Oh, they are. Hoda, Savannah, good morning. Good morning to you as well. With just two weeks to go now, the race for the control of the House and Senate —

[SIGNAL CUTS OUT FOR 23 SECONDS]

HALLIE JACKSON: — starting to vote early and our new polling shows polarization is off the charts. Call it a Keystone clash today in Pennsylvania in a race that could tip the balance of power in the Senate. Republican candidate Dr. Mehmet Oz face-to-face in the first and only debate against Democratic Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman, who's downplaying expectations after a stroke five months ago that affected his speech. His campaign, in a new memo this morning calling the debate unprecedented, previewing the likelihood of awkward pauses or missing some words, adding that the live captioning process they're using may also lead to time delays and errors in the exchanges. That set for tonight coming after another overnight in Florida where the firebrand Republican Governor Ron DeSantis is widely speculated to be looking past November to 2024 and a possible White House run. His opponent, former governor Charlie Crist, trailing in the polls.

CRIST: Yes or no, Ron. Will you serve a full, four-year term if re-elected governor of Florida?

It's not a tough question.

[SCREEN WIPE]

DESANTIS: The only worn out, old donkey I am looking to put out to pasture is Charlie Crist.

JACKSON: Two weeks out from Election Day and, across the country, people are interested, really interested with a new NBC News poll showing 70% of registered voters raring to cast their ballots, the highest number of any midterm campaign in the history of our poll. Republicans more enthusiastic than Democrats, 78 to 69 percent, but right now, stunning polarization. 80% of voters think the other side poses an existential threat to the country. President Biden, in a kind of pep talk from party headquarters, laying out the stakes.

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN: Everybody wants to make it a referendum, but it's a choice between two vastly different visions for America.

JACKSON: When you talk about the top issues that matter, right now a third of Democrats say it's threats to democracy with dozens of Republican election deniers on ballots and about a third of Republicans say their top issue, jobs and the economy, with two weeks to go now until Election Day, Craig.

MELVIN: Hard to believe midterms is two weeks away. Hallie Jackson for us this morning. Hallie, Thank you.