

NBC's *Today*

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7:00:48 a.m. [TEASE]

14 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Choosin' Texas]

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: Choosin' Texas, Republicans gather in Dallas today for the party's first ever midterm convention. Why? Trump hopes his presence in the reliably red state will energize voters in the midterms now less than two months away.

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7:07:29 a.m.

2 minutes and 58 seconds [1 minute and 57 seconds on convention]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Republican Midterm Convention Gets Underway]

CRAIG MELVIN: Well, now to a first-of-its-kind political event that starts today, Republicans gathering in Dallas for a midterm convention ahead of the November elections. It's the brainchild of President Trump, who is set to speak on both nights. NBC's Ryan Nobles is in Texas for us. Ryan, good morning.

RYAN NOBLES: Hey, Craig. Good morning from the Lone Star State, and Republican candidates up and down the ballot are facing electoral headwinds, which is not uncommon for a midterm election year. But one surprising area of fatigue has been among Donald Trump's most diehard supporters, and he's hoping this two-day event will get them to reengage in battleground Texas. Today, Republicans are hoping to make a bold statement with a first-of-its-kind midterm convention aimed at firing up voters.

HOUSE SPEAKER MIKE JOHNSON (R-LA) [on FNC's *The Will Cain Show*, 09/08/26]: I believe we're going to defy history and grow the House majority in the House.

NOBLES: Republicans have never held a midterm convention before, but President Trump is counting on this event to spark excitement among his most diehard supporters. But while GOP candidates need Trump supporters to show up at the polls this November, they risk alienating moderate and independent voters who are increasingly skeptical of the President. A new NBC News poll shows Trump's approval rating hovering around 36 percent, with 64 percent of voters saying they disapprove of the job he's doing. Many Republicans, including some in pivotal swing districts, like Virginia's Rob Wittman, don't even plan to attend the event.

CONGRESSMAN ROB WITTMAN (R-VA) [on NBC News NOW's *Meet the Press NOW*, 09/08/26]: I go right back to my focus is on the district. I'll be in the district, traveling across the district.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump Clarifies 9/11 Story]

NOBLES: It comes as President Trump is drawing criticism for comments he made about September 11th, just days ahead of the 25th anniversary of the attacks.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: I took the whole crew down there right after this happened.

NOBLES: The President suggesting that he was pulled from a building near Ground Zero that firefighters were worried might collapse.

TRUMP: We thought it was coming down on top of us, and two firemen, big, strong guys — and I'm not the smallest guy in the world — they grabbed me under the arms. They got to get out of here, and they literally lifted me up.

NOBLES: Trump later clarifying that he was not at Ground Zero on September 11, writing in a social media post, "I was there, obviously not on the same day as the collapse, but shortly thereafter," adding "everything I said was exactly accurate." The President made the comments at an event honoring 9/11 first responders, including volunteer firefighter Welles Crowther, who saved 18 people before losing his life. He was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Now, Democrats aren't doing very much to counter-program this event. They do have a response team here. They will do daily press conferences, but they're not going to do a convention of their own. Their candidates are focused on their districts and on their states, and they aren't all that upset about allowing President Trump and his low approval rating to steal the spotlight from their vulnerable Republican opponents, Savannah.

GUTHRIE: All right. That's looking ahead to the midterms.