

NBC's Today
09/10/26
7:00:12 a.m. [TEASE]
46 seconds

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: President Trump grabbing attention overnight.

CRAIG MELVIN: As he tries to reframe the crucial midterm elections. It is September 10, 2026. This is Today. Center stage.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Center Stage]

LEE GREENWOOD: Sing it! I'm proud to be –

MELVIN: President Trump in the spotlight at the first-ever midterm convention, urging his party's voters to pretend he is on the ballot while making this stunning pitch to all Americans.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: So, if the Republicans win, you win with us, and you get \$5,000.

MELVIN: But this morning, major questions about just where that money, more than \$1 trillion, would actually come from. We'll have the overnight reaction as the race to November intensifies.

(...)

7:04:01 a.m.
45 seconds

GUTHRIE: We will start, though, with politics. The President rallying Republican support in deep-red Texas at his party's first-ever midterm convention. His speech lasted an hour and 45 minutes, and he urged supporters to vote as if it was his name on the ballot.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE; Happening Today; \$5,000 Promise]

MELVIN: But a big headline, the President saying all Americans will get \$5,000 if Republicans hold the House and Senate. This morning, though, no word on how that \$1.3 trillion payment would be funded or if it is even legal.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE; Happening Today; Surprise Cameo]

GUTHRIE: There was also a big political surprise. Democratic Senator John Fetterman appeared on video at this Republican midterm convention to introduce his fellow senator from Pennsylvania, Republican Dave McCormick. He touted working with President Trump.

(...)

7:04:59 a.m.

4 minutes and 15 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Republicans Kick Off Midterm Convention]

MELVIN: We will start in Dallas with NBC's Garrett Haake. Garrett, good morning to you.

GARRETT HAAKE: Hey, Craig. Good morning. This had many of the trappings of a traditional presidential convention, including the party's leader giving that keynote speech late into the night. But, of course, in this case, President Trump won't be on the ballot. He urged voters to act as though he is, though with his party's accomplishments and their control of Washington on the line. President Trump taking center stage in Dallas, delivering the keynote address at the GOP's first-ever midterm convention. The two-day pep rally, designed to pump up the Republican base, with Mr. Trump urging voters to think of him when they cast their ballots this fall –

TRUMP: I'm asking you to pretend that I'm on the ballot. I'm on the ballot.

HAAKE: – and defending his decision to go to war with Iran, predicting that the conflict he first said would last only a few weeks now will continue a few more months.

TRUMP: The war will be over very shortly after the election.

HAAKE: The President also announcing that, if Republicans hold both the House and Senate, he will push for every U.S. citizen to receive a \$5,000 dividend, adding the money could only be spent in the United States.

TRUMP: If the Republicans win, you win with us, and you get \$5,000.

HAAKE: But the White House has not said where that estimated \$1.35 trillion would come from or how they could enforce where Americans spend the money. And the President has floated some similar payments in the past that have not come to fruition. With just 54 days left until the November midterms, Republicans are facing many challenges, including high gas prices and the President's growing unpopularity, with 64% in a new NBC News poll saying they disapprove of his job performance. The President repeating his pledge to hold rallies for GOP candidates in 35 key races, including in Texas, where GOP candidate Ken Paxton is locked in a tight race with Democrat James Talarico.

TEXAS ATTORNEY GENERAL KEN PAXTON (R): I will fight to preserve the American Dream. James Talarico is running to destroy it.

HAAKE: We caught up with Talarico here in Dallas at a food drive he organized to counter program the convention. [TO TALARICO] What does it say to you about the shape of this campaign that the Republicans are having a midterm convention at all and that they're doing it in Texas?

STATE REPRESENTATIVE JAMES TALARICO (D-TX): I think the fact that they're doing it in Texas speaks volumes. They know that the movement we are building here is catching fire.

HAAKE: Perhaps the biggest surprise in this carefully choreographed convention a cameo from a sitting Democratic senator, Pennsylvania's John Fetterman, who praised President Trump and fellow Pennsylvania senator Dave McCormick and blasted his own party.

SENATOR JOHN FETTERMAN (D-PA): Why am I here talking to you today? Because, well, I'm a common-sense Democrat. I am always going to stand with America.

HAAKE: Facing a barrage of criticism for that appearance, Fetterman put out a statement overnight insisting that he is a lifelong Democrat and if Democrats take control of the Senate, he would still be their 51st vote, meaning he has no plans to become a Republican, Craig.

MELVIN: Garrett, you mentioned some of the challenges Republicans face ahead of the midterm elections. What – what's their strategy beyond just focusing on President Trump?

HAAKE: Well, look, it's sort of politics 101 that if you can't make yourself more popular, you have to make the other guy less popular. In this case, that means trying to disqualify Democratic candidates around the country as too radical or too out of step with the American mainstream. We're in Texas. We heard a lot about James Talarico from candidates, including many not running Texas, but also about other up-and-coming candidates associated with the far left, people like Abdul el-Sayed in Michigan, but we also heard about Democrats who are not on the ballot anymore ever. Joe Biden's name was invoked quite a bit last night, as was former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who is, of course, retiring from Congress. As for tonight, we'll hear from Vice President Vance, thought a lot of people to be the future of the party, but he won't have the spotlight entirely to himself. President Trump is expected to speak again tonight. Craig.

MELVIN: Garrett Haake, in a state he knows well, there in Texas for us. Garrett, thank you.

(....)

8:00:14 a.m. [TEASE]
23 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Center Stage]

MELVIN: Coming up, center stage. President Trump rallying Republican voters at the GOP's first-ever midterm convention.

TRUMP: I'm asking you to pretend that I'm on the ballot.

MELVIN: And delivering this controversial promise.

TRUMP: So, if the Republicans win, you win with us and you get \$5,000.

MELVIN: We're live in Dallas with the latest.

(....)

8:03:19 a.m.

1 minute and 47 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; Republicans Kick Off Midterm Convention]

MELVIN: We're going to start with the first-ever Republican midterm convention. President Trump delivering a lengthy keynote speech last night, trying to rally the GOP base ahead of November's crucial midterm elections. NBC's Garrett Haake was there. He joins us once again from Dallas with all of the highlights. Garrett, good morning to you.

MELVIN: Hey, Craig, good morning. Yeah, Republicans have never done a midterm convention before, and they're doing so now to try to generate enthusiasm in an election year that might otherwise be a challenge for them. President Trump putting himself at the center of all of the action, encouraging voters to act as though he is on the ballot, although with his approval ratings at an all-time low. That's a message welcomed as much by Democrats as it is by some Republicans, so the President did roll out one new policy proposal last night that's already generating a lot of controversy and raising some eyebrows. He suggested if Republicans hold on to the House and Senate, they would pass a \$5,000 dividend to every American adult in this country. Some of the questions here include how they would come up with the \$1.3 trillion to pay for it, and how they would enforce the rules, the President said, would exist to make sure that the money is only spent on American products. Now, there was one other surprise last night in what's obviously a carefully choreographed affair. That was the appearance of Democratic Senator John Fetterman in a video, boosting President Trump and his Republican fellow candidate from Pennsylvania, blasting some fellow Democrats. Fetterman had to put out a statement afterward, insisting he still is a Democrat and will remain so after the midterms. Now, as for tonight, Vice President Vance takes center stage as the keynote speaker, but he won't be alone. President Trump is expected to speak again tonight, Craig.

MELVIN: Garrett Haake for us there in Texas. Garrett, thank you.