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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: High-Stakes Debates]

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Latest now on the midterms. With 27 days until the final votes, candidates faced off in crucial debates, including in Maine, which could decide control of the Senate. Senior political correspondent Rachel Scott has the story. Good morning, Rachel.

RACHEL SCOTT: George, good morning to you. We are now entering this final stretch with less than 30 days to go. But some Republicans who the President has backed are now trying to distance themselves from him, and core issues that he supports as voters are grappling with the war with Iran and that ongoing trade war with Canada. Overnight, several Republicans in tight races distancing themselves from President Trump as he faces record-low poll numbers amid the war with Iran and surging fuel prices. In Michigan, Republican Congressman John James is facing off against Democratic Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson for governor. James, who was backed by Trump, breaking with the President on trade, saying, "we need to stop acting like children and insisting the war needed to end, yesterday.

CONGRESSMAN JOHN JAMES (R-MI): I applaud the administration for using every economic and every diplomatic resource at their disposal. Iran cannot have a nuke, but we need to wrap this thing up, like, yesterday.

SCOTT: But James has voted against several efforts in the House to end the war. Benson pushing back.

DEMOCRATIC SECRETARY OF STATE JOCELYN BENSON (MI): So, if you like gas pushing \$5 a gallon or mortgage rates over seven percent, or tariffs taxing just about everything we pay for, then John James is your guy.

SCOTT: In Georgia, a similar scene playing out. Trump-endorsed Republican Rick Jackson running for governor against Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms.

FORMER ATLANTA MAYOR KEISHA LANCE BOTTOMS: I will stand up to Donald Trump when necessary. I'm not running to be his favorite governor.

SCOTT: Jackson once vowed to be like Trump, then quietly removed a reference to the President from his campaign website, never once mentioning him by name on the debate stage.

JACKSON: Nobody's ever told me what to do. My number one priority is Georgians. It's you, and I will stand up to anybody.

SCOTT: And in Maine, on the WGME debate stage, vulnerable Republican Senator Susan

Collins, who is running for her sixth term, distancing herself from Trump, who lost the state in 2024.

SENATOR SUSAN COLLINS (R-ME): I'm not exactly his favorite senator.

SCOTT: Even boasting about splitting from Republicans.

COLLINS: I voted against my party more than any other senator on either side of the aisle.

SCOTT: But her challenger, Democrat Troy Jackson, repeatedly tying her to the administration.

TROY JACKSON: Senator Collins is like an arsonist who helped set the fire, and then she wants credit for bringing a cup of water to put it out.

SCOTT: Collins is one of few Republicans who voted to convict Trump in his second impeachment trial, rebuking the Iran war, and calling the President's trade war with Canada a mistake.

COLLINS: Troy mocked it. But I was successful in getting concrete, pulp, and road salt removed from the tariff list.

SCOTT: Jackson firing back.

JACKSON: I didn't mock the fact that she got road salt back. I mocked the fact that: What about everything else? I mean, we can't eat road salt.

SCOTT: And then repeatedly pressing Collins on her vote to confirm Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who later joined the conservative majority to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*, and Senator Collins says that she disagrees with Kavanaugh on that issue. Meanwhile, President Trump is heading back to Texas today for the third time in just one month, the second time in just a week here. President Trump won that state by double digits back in 2024, but polls are showing a very tight race for Senate between Democrat James Talarico and the Republican Ken Paxton, much tighter than Republicans are hoping for, Michael.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: And we know it is there. Rachel, thank you.