

NBC's *Today*  
10/20/26  
7:00:44 a.m. [TEASE]  
17 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Homestretch]

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: Homestretch. Candidates making a final to reach voters with the midterms exactly two weeks away. Democrats seeing signs of success in Republican strongholds

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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE JAMES TALARICO (D): We are building a movement to take back our state and take back our country.

GUTHRIE: — as President Trump blitzes red states looking to stiffen the spine of the Republican base.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: All you have to do is turn out. If you turn out, we win.

GUTHRIE: Where it all stands with just 14 days to go until the election.

(...)

7:03:18 a.m. [TEASE]  
18 seconds

JONES: We want to get right to this morning's top stories, including the final countdown to the midterm elections, now just two weeks away.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Happening *Today*; Campaign Blitz]

GUTHRIE: President Trump adding more stops on the campaign trail, seven states in seven days, with the future of the House and the Senate and who controls it hanging in the balance. We've got full coverage in just a bit.

(...)

7:05:02 a.m.  
2 minutes and 20 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump Pushes for GOP in Red State Blitz]

JONES: With exactly two weeks to go until the midterms, candidates nationwide are in a sprint the finish line. President Trump keeping up his intense pace, as well, planning to campaign for struggling Republicans across seven states in seven days. NBC's senior White House

correspondent Gabe Gutierrez starts us off. Gabe, good morning.

GABE GUTIERREZ: Sheinelle, good morning. President Trump is racing to help Republicans hold on to Congress, heading to North Carolina today, where his party is wrestling with a tight race in yet another state he won in 2024. Overnight, President Trump campaigning in a state that's traditionally deep red.

TRUMP: I love you, Kansas.

GUTIERREZ: But expressing concern that Kansas could be moving away from the Republican Party.

TRUMP: I hate to say it, you're sort of tending toward the purple.

GUTIERREZ: Trump won the state by 16 points in 2024.

GARRETT HAAKE [TO TRUMP]: Is it a bad sign for Republicans that you have to go campaign in Kansas today?

TRUMP: No. [SCREEN WIPE] It's a close race. It shouldn't be.

GUTIERREZ: Now, incumbent Republican Senator Roger Marshall is locked in an unexpectedly tight race with Democratic challenger, Adam Hamilton. If elected, Hamilton would be the state's first Democratic senator in 94 years. The President promising voters more rewards, including money for farmers —

TRUMP: Some more goodies, you know, I always heard that when you're President, you have a little bit of an advantage.

GUTIERREZ: — and pledging that he'll make a fuel waiver permanent for candidate if the Republican, Marshall, wins.

TRUMP: If Adam Hamilton is in, I'm not doing it.

GUTIERREZ: It was the President's first stop in a seven-day sprint across seven states, all of which he won in 2024.

TRUMP: If you turn out, we win.

GUTIERREZ: He's also announcing another trip to normally deep-red Texas next week, where early voting is now underway in a marquee Senate match-up features Republican Ken Paxton facing off with Democrat James Talarico.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE TEXAS VOTER: I spent most of my life not paying attention to politics, and not realizing how important it is, and how much it affects our lives, and now I do.

GUTIERREZ: A new NBC News poll shows that Trump's approval ratings when it comes to his handling of the top issues with voters have dropped. Cost of living down to 27 percent. Vice President JD Vance trying to pin the sagging economy on Democrats.

VICE PRESIDENT JD VANCE: Vote for the people who have solutions to lower the cost of gas.

(....)

7:07:41 a.m.

3 minutes and 9 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Countdown to the Midterms]

GUTHRIE: I want to turn to Kristen Welker, moderator of *Meet the Press*. Kristen, good morning. I mean, we see President Trump in these deep red states. They really feel that the political operation of the White House and some of these candidates, that if anyone can turn out Republicans in these elections, it's Trump. Is there any sign it's having an impact?

KRISTEN WELKER: Savannah, there is, actually. I spoke with an administration official overnight who said they believe the President's efforts are paying off, specifically pointing to internal polling. Now, these are internal polls, in places like Alaska and Ohio, where they say the races are tight. But look, just a caveat here. These races are already incredibly close. Republicans still believe the President is the most effective messenger at turning out the MAGA base. He's been announcing those new economic proposals. Gabe just mentioned that. It does cut both ways, though. He also drives out the Democratic base. But look, it's extraordinary that he's campaigning in these reliably red states. This does highlight the reality that Republicans are on defense in part because of the President's approval ratings are underwater. There's deep dissatisfaction over Iran, the high price of gas. One thing I'll be watching for, Savannah. We just saw Elon Musk pour millions of dollars into propping up Republican candidates, including in a state like Texas, where Republicans are trying to defend their Senate seat there. Will this last-minute infusion of cash make a difference or will people's perceptions baked in at this point?

JONES: Kristen, with that said, there are some Republicans who are distancing themselves from the President. Can you talk a bit about that?

WELKER: Sheinelle, look. Candidates learned in 2018 that distancing themselves altogether from President Trump meant they didn't get the benefit of turning out his base in force. So right now, we're seeing Republicans walk a fine line. A couple of examples. You have Mike Rogers in Michigan, Dan Sullivan in Alaska. Both have opposed President Trump's waiving of Russia sanctions. Rogers has even cut an ad, opposing the President's tariffs. I recently visited Michigan. I spoke with voters across the political spectrum. I can tell you the one thing they have in common, their frustration over the economy. Interestingly, a *New York Times* analysis, Sheinelle, found less than one percent of Republicans' television campaign ads in the last month actually mentioned President Trump.

GUTHRIE: And, Kristen, let's talk about the Democrats. Because, you know, the Republicans have their problems. Democrats are unpopular, broadly, as well. Where are they facing some of those headwinds?

WELKER: Well, it's interesting, Savannah, because polls show that, yeah, while voters might be frustrated with the economy and President Trump, they're not enthusiastic about the Democratic brand, and one of the big questions Democrats are facing right now? Those ideological differences within the party. People want to know what they're going to do if they win back Congress. One of the key questions: If they win back the House, for example, will they pursue a third impeachment against President Trump? There's a lot of division on this issue. Democrats like Brian Schatz of Hawaii, Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, warning impeachment would backfire. It's clear that voters want some oversight, but they want a clear message from Democrats. What's their plan to improve the economy? What's their plan to make life more affordable, Savannah and Sheinelle?

GUTHRIE: Kristen, thank you very much.

(....)

8:03:54 a.m.

2 minutes and 43 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; Trump Pushes for GOP in Red State Blitz]

JONES: Turning to the midterm elections now exactly two weeks away, candidates across the country making their final push to reach voters. President Trump looking to give struggling Republicans a boost, with seven campaign stops in seven days NBC's senior White House correspondent Gabe Gutierrez joins us with the latest. Gabe, good morning.

GUTIERREZ: Hi, Sheinelle, good morning. With exactly two weeks until those midterms, President Trump is playing defense in states he won handily, just two years ago. While campaigning in Kansas, he acknowledged Republicans could be losing ground. Overnight, President Trump campaigning in a state that's traditionally deep red —

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GUTIERREZ: — but expressing concern that Kansas could be moving away from the Republican Party.

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VANCE: For the people who have solutions to lower the cost of gas.

GUTIERREZ: Today, the President heads to North Carolina. A senior administration official tells me their internal polling suggests that their rallies are having an impact, but Democrats see a dramatic opening in these areas that weren't expected to even be competitive a year ago, Sheinelle?

JONES: All right, thank you, Gabe. Certainly something to watch. We invite you, in fact, to take a deeper dive into the 2026 midterms on our website, [NBCNews.com](https://www.nbcnews.com). There, you'll find our polling page, early-vote data, expert analysis, and more subscriber-only content. Just scan the QR code on your screen to subscribe now.