

ABC's *Good Morning America*

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5 minutes and 29 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: One Week Until Midterms]

ROBIN ROBERTS: But we're going to begin with the midterm elections. Just one week until the final votes. But across the country, tens of millions have already cast their ballots early. President Trump is on the campaign trail in the home stretch, making a swing through Texas as he focuses on red states where Democrats are hoping to make gains. Jay O'Brien is tracking it all there in Dallas, Texas, for us. Good morning to you, Jay.

JAY O'BRIEN: Robin, good morning to you from Texas. Just a week out to Election Day. Now, the President touches down here in just hours. His fourth trip to this state, a sign of how close the race here has become. But tens of millions of Americans have already voted early, breaking records in states across the country, including right here in Texas. This morning, a week to go until Election Day, and an explosion of early voting. Over 30 million Americans already casting their ballots. Overnight, President Trump rallying in Mississippi, where Republican Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith has seen an unexpectedly strong challenge from Scott Colom in a state that hasn't sent a Democrat to the Senate in four decades. Top of voters' minds: rising gas prices amid the war in Iran. But during the rally, the President defending his flurry of White House renovations, from his ballroom to the gold in the Oval Office.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: It actually relaxes me. Donald Trump spends a lot of his time fixing up the White House. Isn't that a nice thing to do?

O'BRIEN: It comes after former President Obama, on the campaign trail, mocked the President's renovation projects.

TRUMP: This isn't a Cheesecake Factory. Can you believe it? Which is a very successful company.

O'BRIEN: And this morning, all eyes on the Lone Star State, where more than 20 percent of registered voters have already voted early. Trump making his fourth trip to Texas this campaign season, hoping to give a last-minute boost to state Attorney General Ken Paxton in a tight race against Democrat James Talarico.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE JAMES TALARICO (D-TX): It's why we can't afford the basics in this economy — gas, groceries, utilities, health care. It's because the system has been rigged by billionaires and crooked politicians like Ken Paxton.

O'BRIEN: Voters across the country telling us they're worried about the cost of living. On the ground in Michigan, we met grocer Gerald Westland. His family has owned this supermarket in Lansing for three generations. He says his customers are hurting.

GERALD WESTLAND: More people that really never brought bottles back, bringing bottles back and things like that — like real indicators that, you know, they're pinching their pennies. They're really trying to make it right because the bills are still due.

O'BRIEN: Voters here in Texas tell us the economy is on top of their minds. The President has two rallies here today, George.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: The President's activities aside, the Justice Department also continuing its efforts to interfere in the elections, facing some pushback from state officials and the courts.

O'BRIEN: That's right, George. The Department of Justice demanded that Washington state pull some 400 ballots that it alleged belong to noncitizens. The secretary of state there accuses the Department of Justice of trying to sow doubt in the election before a single vote has even been counted. There's a hearing today in California after a federal appeals court declined to step in after the DOJ made a similar demand for some 20,000 ballots there, and it all comes, remember, George, after the Department of Justice brought that extraordinary lawsuit in Alaska seeking to challenge the results of that race if the Republican narrowly wins there, because there are two men named Dan Sullivan on the ballot. And the DOJ says that may confuse voters, George.

STEPHANOPOULOS: And other efforts to use the Postal Service were rejected by the Supreme Court. Okay, Jay, thanks very much. Let's bring in our senior political correspondent, Rachel Scott. For more on the midterms. And, Rachel, you have the map in front of you right there. Democrats favored to take the House. The Senate, a closer call.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Midterm State of Play]

RACHEL SCOTT: Yeah, it is a closer call, George. Seven days to go. Let's take a look at where things stand on the map right now. 35 Senate races up for grabs this election. But the path to the majority, it is going to run through these states. These are the toss-up races. These are the closest races in the country, stretching from Alaska all the way to Maine. The number that we're watching for by the end of the night: Democrats need to net at least four seats in order to take control of the Senate. That means they're going to have to flip at least two states that President Trump won by double digits, but when you talk to Democrats, they're certainly feeling like there is an opening here, especially because they're seeing tighter-than-expected races in a state like Kansas, a red state that has not elected a Democrat to the Senate in nearly 100 years. All of that, though, is putting Republicans on the defensive. And you just heard it there from Jay. But just take a look at where President Trump is spending the final days of this campaign. We're talking about campaigning in deep-red Mississippi. He's going to Texas today for a fourth time. Meanwhile, it is Democrats who are on offense here. They're deploying one of their biggest surrogates, former President Barack Obama, to the state of Georgia this week, George.

STEPHANOPOULOS: And Rachel, so much of this environment is being shaped by high prices and the President's low approval ratings.

SCOTT: Yes. So let's take a look at where that stands. Poll after poll shows that President Trump is seeing record-low approval ratings, and I just want you to take a look at these numbers: 66 percent of Americans — a whopping 66 percent — disapprove of the President's job performance. Only 32 percent approve of the President's current job in office right now, and then we took a look at what is driving voters to the polls this election. And here's no surprise: the economy is at the top of this list, at 23 percent. What's also interesting about this Reuters/Ipsos poll: it also shows that the majority of Americans believe that the economy is on the wrong track, George.

STEPHANOPOULOS: Okay, Rachel, thanks very much.

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8:02:03 a.m.

1 minute and 10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking at 8; One Week Until Midterms]

STEPHANOPOULOS: We start with midterm elections just one week until the final vote. Tens of millions of Americans have already cast their ballots early. President Trump on the campaign trail, focusing on red states where Democrats are hoping to make gains. Jay O'Brien is in Texas. Good morning, Jay.

O'BRIEN: Jim [sic] — good morning again from Texas, George, one of several states that could decide control of the Senate. President Trump, in just hours, will make his fourth appearance here of the campaign season, a sign of just how close this race has gotten between Democrat James Talarico and Republican Ken Paxton. The President, though, has been barnstorming traditionally red states, states he won in 2024, not just campaigning here in Texas, but Mississippi overnight. States that have seen their Senate races tighten in recent weeks. All of it comes as we've seen an explosion of early voting across the country. More than 30 million ballots cast a week out from election day, some states breaking records, including here in Texas, where more than 4.5 million early votes have been cast. That's about 20 percent. Actually, over 20 percent of the registered voters in this state. But we still got a ways to go. We're a week out from election day. We are in that final campaign sprint now, Robin.

ROBERTS: We certainly are. Jay, our thanks to you.

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8:13:56 a.m.

3 minutes and 30 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Election Workers Under Pressure]

STEPHANOPOULOS: Going to switch gears now. One week into the midterm vote, we have a

special report on the officials who will be counting those votes. Under pressure after years of false claims from President Trump and his refusal to accept the 2020 results, senior national correspondent Steve Osunsami is in Dallas, Georgia, with the story. Good morning, Steve.

STEVE OSUNSAMI: Good morning to you, George, from just outside early voting here in Paulding County, Georgia. When this election here is all said and done in Georgia, about four million Georgians will have voted, and already about half of them have voted. Election workers say that as Georgia becomes even more of a swing state, they become more concerned about their own personal safety and interference from Washington.

DEIDRE HOLDEN: Good morning. How are you?

OSUNSAMI: They're in the middle of early voting out in Paulding County, Georgia.

HOLDEN: Thanks for coming out.

OSUNSAMI: And it's a busy morning for this beloved grandmother who's run their elections here for the last 25 years. On most mornings, 58-year-old Deirdre Holden gets coffee at the Sugar Biscuits restaurant down the road, where she says voters who are overwhelmed with misinformation will sometimes question whether she's actually counting their ballots.

HOLDEN: Let's say 2020. The question was, who really won the election? Now the question has shifted from that to, does my vote really count? And, you know, I try to explain, you know, we have nothing to hide. You're welcome to come in and watch the process.

OSUNSAMI [TO HOLDEN]: What are some of the other rumors or things you've had to knock down?

HOLDEN: So, you know, the big issue in Georgia has been the QR code on the ballot. What is it actually reading?

OSUNSAMI: After voters have printed their ballots, it's the QR code that tells the scanners what the voter decided.

HOLDEN: You know, people don't trust the QR code. They don't believe that the scanners are tabulating the vote as it is put in there.

OSUNSAMI: This is a county where the President has won three times, and President Trump is helping to drive the suspicions, accusing election officials in Georgia and several other states of running bad elections. In Paulding County, election workers say they're worried about their safety.

WOMAN [IN TRAINING EXERCISE]: I am a U.S. citizen. I demand that I vote. Give me my ID, and I want to vote now.

OSUNSAMI: Seen here in trainings, preparing for violent voters and active shooters.

WOMAN [IN TRAINING EXERCISE]: I'm going to call my husband. Would you like me —
[COLLAPSES]

HOLDEN: This is our normal now. I used to train people on how to smile and hand out an "I Voted" sticker. Now I have to train my workers on basically survival skills.

OSUNSAMI: Georgia's secretary of state says he's working hard to try and keep the federal government from coming back down to Georgia and accusing election officials of breaking the law. He's already promising multiple counts of the votes.

GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE BRAD RAFFENSPERGER (R): So, those ballots actually, in effect, will be counted three times just to verify the results. So, at the end of the day, we know that the winner won, and that's our job.

OSUNSAMI: The Trump administration is very serious about possibly jailing election workers who cross their line, and it's got election workers across the country worried about what happened here in Fulton County, Georgia, in January, when the federal government came down and seized thousands of ballots. It's one of the main reasons why the secretary of state, who is outgoing, says that he is promising a clean election and a vote that should be counted here by midnight on Election Day, guys.

STEPHANOPOULOS: And those workers work for the state, not the federal government. Okay, Steve, real eye-opening report. Thank you.