

Trump praises Texas governor as border state clashes with Biden administration over immigration

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LAS VEGAS (AP) — Former President [Donald Trump](#) lavished praise Saturday on Texas Gov. Greg Abbott for not allowing the Biden administration entry to remove razor wire in a popular corridor for migrants illegally entering the U.S. [in an escalating feud over immigration](#).

In a speech focused overwhelmingly on border security, Trump said Texas should be given full support in its measures to deter migrants along the U.S.-Mexico border. The state is restricting the U.S. Border Patrol after the Supreme Court [cleared the way](#) for these federal agents to cut or remove the sharp metal barrier.

“When I’m president, instead of trying to send Texas a restraining order, I will send them reinforcements,” Trump told a crowd of supporters in Las Vegas, where he rallied on an indoor soccer field in a largely Latino neighborhood. “Instead of fighting border states, I will use every resource tool and authority of the U.S. president to defend the United States of America from this horrible invasion that is taking place right now.”

Trump largely avoided talking about [a verdict](#) delivered by a jury in a defamation case Friday, ordering him to pay an additional \$83.3 million to columnist E. Jean Carroll, who he called a liar for accusing him of sexual assault.

The former president, who is getting closer to securing the Republican presidential nomination, said he was the victim of the Biden administration weaponizing law enforcement against him as he faces [91 criminal charges in four indictments](#) accusing him of trying to overturn the 2020 presidential election, mishandling classified documents and arranging payoffs to a porn star.



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign event Saturday, Jan. 27, 2024, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher)

“What they’re doing with elections and election interference as an example of what they do with me,” he said. “Look at yesterday, look at all this crap that’s going on, but we keep marching forward, we just keep going and somehow it all works out.”

Annabelle Weislocher, 51, a nurse who retired from the Navy and the Air Force Reserve, said she felt the cases against Trump are attempts to weaken him and drain him from his resources.

“They know he’s leading. They know he’s strong. And they’re doing everything just to lower him,” she said. “That’s what they’re trying to do, take his money thinking he won’t have enough funds to campaign. That’s the goal.”

Trump’s support among Hispanics has grown since he first ran in 2016. And on Saturday, he drove that point, drawing loud cheers when he claimed he was doing very well in that voter demographic.



FILE - A woman cheers as Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign event Jan. 27, 2024, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/John Locher, File)

The Republican candidate said Hispanic and Black families hurt the most from the arrival of migrants into the country and said President Joe Biden should not have ended restrictions implemented during the Trump administration to deter migration.

“I’ll get it solved and I’ll get it solved and start the process on day one — on day one, we will start that process,” he said. “That’s why we’re going to win the record share of Latino votes.”

The [historic number of migrants](#) arriving at the U.S. border with Mexico during Biden’s term is one of the main challenges of his reelection campaign.

Immigration was a top issue during Iowa’s Republican caucuses earlier this month, when Trump won. An [AP VoteCast survey](#) found about 9 in 10 caucusgoers backed building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, with about 7 in 10 expressing strong support for the idea.

Rob Williams, a 25-year-old voter who attended the Las Vegas rally, said he was glad Texas was defying the Biden administration over immigration.

“The good Texan people are stepping up to the plate, other states as well,” he said. “They’re going to show the fight over there in Texas.”

Trump is running without any major opposition in Nevada after the state GOP decided to award delegates in a party-run caucus on Dec. 8 instead of a state-run primary a day earlier.

The decision, which was pressed by Trump's allies in the party to help him amass as many delegates as possible, has caused confusion for some voters, who are receiving mail ballots without Trump's name on them.

Trump repeatedly pressed voters to caucus for him and ignore the primary.

"Your primary vote doesn't mean anything," he said. "Don't worry about the primary, just do the caucus"

Trump's only remaining major GOP rival, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, is competing in the primary but not the caucus, which makes her ineligible for delegates who will formally select a nominee at the Republican National Convention. ____

Gomez Licon reported from Miami.