

# [***Trump rally postponed due to concerns over severe weather in North Carolina***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BV9-3VN1-DY7V-G07B-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Former President Donald Trump's rally in North Carolina - set to be his first since the start of his hush money criminal trial began in New York - was postponed Saturday due to concerns over severe weather.

Trump called into the Wilmington rally from his airplane, with his message played over loudspeakers at the rally.

"We're devastated that this could happen, but we want to keep everybody safe," Trump told supporters. "There seems to be some thunder and lightning and it's a pretty big storm so if you don't mind, I think we're going to have to just do a raincheck, I'm so sad."

Despite the postponement, [*Trump*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/president-donald-trump-45), largely confined to a Manhattan courtroom for most of the past week, still reemerged on the campaign circuit here in North Carolina, where the stakes of the Republican's [*trial*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/13/politics/donald-trump-hush-money-trial-explained/index.html)-to-trail presidential campaign are especially high.

He held a fundraiser in Charlotte, and he also posted several times on Truth Social about how he thinks presidents should be immune from prosecution. His flurry of posts comes as the Supreme Court is set to hear arguments on April 25 over whether Trump may claim immunity from prosecution in the federal election subversion case.

Saturday capped an unprecedented week in American ***politics*** as the first criminal trial of a former president kicked off. The trial, which will determine whether Trump illegally sought to undermine the 2016 election through a scheme to pay off women with whom he allegedly had extramarital affairs, is expected to begin with opening statements on Monday.

The task ahead in New York for Trump is clear: Convince seven men and five women on the jury he is innocent of the 34 charges he faces. In battlegrounds like North Carolina, the challenge for Trump is less straightforward but similarly daunting: He must persuade voters in these states to overlook whatever details emerge from his New York trial when determining the country's next president. That includes evidence of alleged hush money payments as well as testimony from his former lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen, a former Playboy playmate and an adult film star.

Appearing in Greensboro, North Carolina, ahead of the state's primary last month, Trump remarked on his legal peril at length. He told the crowd that the 91 charges he then faced (it's now down to 88) were "not legit." He baselessly claimed the case against him in New York, which was brought by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, was "being run by the Department of Justice for election interference - knock out your political opponent."

"The one thing they didn't know is the people of our country hear about it from me," Trump asserted then.

Trump handily won the primary days later during a convincing Super Tuesday performance. Yet, former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley managed to win support from 23% of Republican primary voters in North Carolina, with many in Trump's party saying they could not overlook the vast legal challenges he faces. Three in 10 GOP voters said Trump would not be fit for the presidency if he was convicted of a crime - a troubling sign for the former president in a state he won over President Joe Biden by only 1.3% four years ago.

Trump's campaign pointed to [*poll numbers*](https://apnorc.org/projects/as-trumps-hush-money-case-begins-about-a-third-believe-he-has-done-something-illegal/) that showed two-thirds of Americans don't believe he has broken any laws.

"Polling shows the American people see right through the Stalinist tactics employed by Crooked Joe and his allies," Trump campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt told CNN in a statement. "President Trump and our team will continue fighting for truth in the courtroom, while working to earn votes on the campaign trail."

Throughout the dramatic first week of his trial - marked by a series of stunning moments, including potential jurors brought to tears by the intense pressure of their duty and a man who set himself on fire outside the courthouse - Trump made clear he intends to make sure people continue to hear about the case from him. In theatrical news conferences in front of courthouse cameras and aggressively posting on social media, Trump repeatedly lashed out at the judge overseeing the case and tested the boundaries of the gag order intended to keep him from intimidating jurors and witnesses.

Without cameras inside the courtroom, Trump has also challenged the narratives that have emerged from those watching the proceedings. In a fundraising text to supporters, Trump claimed he stormed out of the courtroom during the first day of the trial - a statement not supported by those who witnessed him walk out. Trump posted on Truth Social that "I was PRAYING not sleeping!!" when multiple news outlets reported the former president appeared to doze off during the proceedings.

The judge overseeing the case, Judge Juan Merchan, is requiring Trump to appear in the courtroom during the trial, which could last several weeks. Court is in session every weekday except Wednesdays, leaving Trump with smaller windows to travel, making weekend events like Saturday's postponed Wilmington rally a focal point of his campaign calendar.

"I'm supposed to be in New Hampshire. I'm supposed to be in Georgia. I'm supposed to be in North Carolina, South Carolina. I'm supposed to be a lot of different places campaigning," Trump told reporters outside the courtroom this week. "But I've been here all day on a trial that really is a very unfair trial."

Trump's statement, however, overlooks that the former president has often voluntarily appeared at proceedings for his civil cases rather than campaign. Trump also kept a notably light political schedule throughout the GOP primary when the legal cases against him had yet to reach this stage.

Regardless of where Trump is spending his time, his campaign insists it is readying a robust operation, including paid teams and volunteers in every battleground state.

"Our aggressive and experienced operation is focused on turning out votes and highlighting the contrast between Joe Biden's weakness and failures with President Trump's record of success," Leavitt said.

By Steve Contorno and Kate Sullivan, CNN

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