

# [***Trump turns attention to Michigan and Wisconsin, the 'blue wall' states he won, then lost***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPF-G0B1-DY7V-G006-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

April 2, 2024 Tuesday 10:00 AM GMT

Copyright 2024 Cable News Network All Rights Reserved

**Length:** 1032 words

**Byline:** By Steve Contorno, Kristen Holmes and Alayna Treene, CNN

**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; [*Donald Trump*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/president-donald-trump-45) will return to the campaign trail on Tuesday with events in Michigan and Wisconsin, [*two critical Midwest battlegrounds*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/02/politics/biden-coalition-election-trump/index.html) that he won eight years ago but that have mostly vexed Republicans ever since.

The former president is scheduled to first appear in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he is expected to deliver remarks about the US-Mexico border. From there, Trump will travel to Green Bay, Wisconsin, for his first rally in the Badger State since [*launching his third White House bid*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/15/politics/trump-2024-presidential-bid/index.html).

The visits come amid a notable lull in Trump's campaign activity in the weeks since he became the presumptive GOP presidential nominee. Trump has held two campaign events since Super Tuesday - while the same time period has seen a surge in political activity from President Joe Biden, including his own stops in Michigan and Wisconsin. Trump, meanwhile, has unleashed a [*flurry of social media posts*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/31/politics/trump-dangerous-rhetoric-analysis/index.html) in recent weeks, [*attacking his Democratic rival*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/30/politics/trump-biden-video-truth-social-violent-rhetoric/index.html) and the judges and prosecutors overseeing the various legal cases against the former president.

Along with Pennsylvania, Trump's stunning 2016 victories in Michigan and Wisconsin produced a seismic crack in the so-called blue wall of states Democrats had relied on in every election going back to 1992. Trump's particular success with blue-collar voters gave Republicans optimism for a political realignment that could turn the Rust Belt red for the foreseeable future.

Instead, Republicans have struggled to replicate Trump's initial success in subsequent elections, including in 2020 when Biden narrowly won all three states en route to victory. Democrats in that time also took over the governors' offices in Michigan and Wisconsin and [*flipped a Senate seat in Pennsylvania*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/10/politics/how-john-fetterman-won-pennsylvania) in 2022 that proved crucial to maintaining control of the chamber.

Still, gone are the days when Democrats could comfortably count on these states to deliver in national elections. Early polls suggest [*Michigan*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/22/politics/cnn-poll-michigan-pennsylvania/index.html) and Wisconsin pose a challenge for Biden and an opportunity for Trump to mine for electoral votes in the upper Midwest.

Biden won Michigan in 2020 by more than 150,000 votes. The margin was much tighter in Wisconsin, where he came out ahead by about 21,000 votes - a victory of about 0.7 percentage points.

In both states, efforts to subvert the 2020 election - including by [*enlisting fake electors*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/18/politics/michigan-2020-fake-trump-electors-case/index.html) - have roiled Republican ***politics***, at times aided by Trump. The former president attacked Wisconsin State Assembly Speaker [*Robin Vos*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/20/politics/donald-trump-wisconsin-2020-presidential-election/index.html) in 2022 for refusing to decertify the state's presidential result, which he did not have the power to do.

On Monday, Trump continued to stoke lies about the result in Wisconsin, telling a local radio show he performed better there in 2020 than in 2016 - a claim disproved by the outcome.

The Biden campaign's Wisconsin spokeswoman, Brianna Johnson, immediately seized on the remarks, accusing Trump of "spreading the same lies that inspired a mob to assault police officers and try to violently overturn an election he knows he lost."

"Trump is reminding voters he has nothing to offer but resentment, revenge, and retribution - and no vision or plan to make life easier for Wisconsin families," she said in a statement.

One senior adviser to Trump described Wisconsin as a "must-win state" in 2024, adding that there would be a "robust volunteer-driven" organization this cycle and insisting that the campaign had learned from mistakes of four years ago that led to Trump's razor-thin defeat there.

However, Trump's campaign has yet to air a single ad in the state. Republicans have been slow to invest in key battlegrounds as they scramble to [*make up a fundraising deficit with Democrats*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/21/politics/takeaways-campaign-finance-february-biden-trump/index.html). And Trump himself has not appeared in the state since August 2022. Meanwhile, Johnson insisted Wisconsin Democrats "never stopped reaching voters after key wins in 2022 and 2023."

But the state party's [*most significant recent defeat*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/09/politics/ron-johnson-wisconsin-midterm-reelection/index.html) was against Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, whose reelection two years ago was aided by Chris LaCivita, a veteran GOP strategist and now a top adviser to Trump.

Trump's courtship of voters in Michigan and Wisconsin is already taking shape, focused on the themes that helped fuel his surprise performance in 2016: immigration and crime.

In Michigan, Trump's campaign says he will deliver remarks about Biden's "border bloodbath," resurfacing a term he recently deployed - to much criticism from Democrats - while warning about the future of the auto industry and country under a second Biden term. He intends to elevate examples of violent crimes allegedly committed by people in the country illegally, sources familiar with his planned remarks told CNN.

On Monday, Trump invited to his Michigan event the family of Ruby Garcia, who officials say was killed by an undocumented immigrant she was romantically involved with.

"I'd love to have her family there if they'd like to be there," Trump said during an interview with a local radio show in Michigan. "It would be my honor."

Though Michigan is some 1,500 miles from the US-Mexico border, Republicans there have thrust immigration into the forefront. Ahead of Trump's visit, state GOP chairman Pete Hoekstra said in a news release that suburban families in West Michigan "are now facing the fact that the worst issues of the Southern Border have now made their way into our backyard."

In a [*recent CNN poll*](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/24496678-cnn-michigan-poll), 15% of registered voters in Michigan said immigration was their top priority, trailing only the economy and "protecting democracy."

Ahead of the former president's visit, the Biden campaign on Tuesday launched a new ad focused on abortion rights in the Wolverine State. It also pointed to Trump helping to kill [*a bipartisan Senate deal*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/07/politics/senate-border-ukraine-israel-aid-vote/index.html) that would have brought more investments for border security.

"It was Donald Trump who ordered his MAGA allies to kill it because he thinks it helps him politically," Alyssa Bradley, the Biden campaign spokeswoman in Michigan, said in a statement. "He doesn't actually care about border security."

CNN's Kate Sullivan contributed to this report.

By Steve Contorno, Kristen Holmes and Alayna Treene, CNN

TM & © 2024 Cable News Network, Inc., a Time Warner Company. All rights reserved.

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2024

**End of Document**