

# [***Trump Invigorated By Win Of Iowa Caucuses; DeSantis Projected To Take Second In Iowa; Trump Facing Legal Perils Amid Primary Season; Trump Quickly Secures Victory In Iowa Caucuses; Immigration And Economy Among Iowan's Top Issues***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B46-P6N1-JCS1-617V-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

TRACE GALLAGHER, FOX NEWS HOST: And good evening again, I'm Trace Gallagher. It's 1:00 AM on the East Coast, 10:00 here in Los Angeles, and this is continuing coverage of America's late news, Fox News at Night.

And there is breaking news if you are just joining us. The voters in and former President Trump took a commanding and historic lead in the Iowa caucuses tonight, winning by the largest margin ever in that state. In fact he won it six points larger than the largest margin ever in that state. He told Fox News he is honored and invigorated by the results.

Meantime, also huge news, Ron DeSantis projected to win the Iowa silver. Meaning he comes in second place with Nikki Haley, a few points behind it third place, and Vivek Ramaswamy come in fourth has now suspended his campaign and is endorsing Donald Trump. He did that in one sentence, suspended and endorsed at the same time. We will have continuing analysis throughout the hour from Steve Hilton, Erin Perrine, and many more.

But we begin with Team Fox coverage, Jeff Paul with an update on Trump's legal trouble and what to expect in the lead up to Super Tuesday, but first to the senior national correspondent Rich Edson. He is live in Des Moines with more. Rich, good evening.

RICH EDSON, FOX NEWS SENIOR NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Yes. Good evening, Trace. Well, this is the result that Team Trump has been looking for. After months, several months of leading in the polls by a wide margin, they needed to get voters out to the caucuses to get a result that looked a lot like what they're seeing in the polls, and that's what they got this evening.

You know, Trump's team had really tried downplaying. Trump campaign official told us ahead of the caucuses that they would just be happy with a win here. That's what they were looking to do. But obviously they wanted a lot more out of it. They got it. Smiling Trump took to the podium shortly after to address his crowd here. And also congratulated and mentioned complimented his Republican rivals.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP (R), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: I want to congratulate Ron and Nikki for having a good time together. We're all having a good time together. And I think they both actually did very well. I really do. I think they both did very well. We don't even know what the outcome of second places. I also want to congratulate the Vivek because he did a hell of a job.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

EDSON: Florida Governor Ron DeSantis went to all 99 counties in Iowa. He spent a lot of time, a lot of money, a lot of effort in this state. Also, former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley made a late push in this state, both of them finished well behind the front runner.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RON DESANTIS (R), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: GALLAGHER: You helped us get a ticket punched out of the Hawkeye State. We have a lot of work to do but I can tell you this, as the next president of the United States, I am going to get the job done for this country.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

EDSON: The field has narrowed a bit. Businessman Vivek Ramaswamy, he has dropped out of this race. He's endorsed the former president as well. Here's Vivek.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

VIVEK RAMASWAMY (R), FORMER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: As of this moment, we are going to suspend this presidential campaign. And this is going to have to be there is no path for me to be the next president.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

EDSON: Another Republican Trump rival has also backed the former president, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, who dropped out of the race earlier. He was on stage tonight with Trump and endorsed him as well.

For now Trump is headed to New Hampshire, where he has rally tomorrow night as this primary moves on. Trace?

GALLAGHER: Rich Edson live for us in Des Moines, Iowa. Rich, thank you.

Let's bring in our Election Night Power Panel, Fox News contributor Steve Hilton, and Axiom Strategies' Erin Perrine. Thank you both for coming on.

Steve. I mean, you talked about this, but this campaign, this ongoing campaign to stop the former president is failing. It is failing dramatically.

STEVE HILTON, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Well, it's not just failing. It's helping him. It's clearly helping him. And that is what is so astonishing. I mean, I was in Europe over the summer visiting friends and family in England, and people say, how is it possible? They don't follow it closer. How can it be that Donald Trump looks like the favorite to become the next candidate, let alone the next president. Now, after tonight's withdrawals, that's clearly the case.

The answer is that the Republican Party has become a populist party. He has led that transformation. Towards the end of his first term, I remember doing some pieces looking at the significance of the Trump era. And I said this, which is real power in ***politics*** doesn't just come from the office you hold. It comes from your ability to change the way people think.

Very few leaders actually do that. You can point to Mrs. Thatcher in the UK, Ronald Reagan here who really bring a long term change in a political party. Donald Trump is one of those people. He's transformed the party, the populism that he represents, America first as he calls it. That's what the party wants.

GALLAGHER: Yes. And Steve brings up a very good point, Erin Perrine, because he really is changing the way people think. And when you ask people how they think, they believe with all their hearts, that he is getting a raw deal, and they believe that they're next in line to get a raw deal from the federal government.

ERIN PERRINE, AXIOM STRATEGIES: And that's because the federal government has shown people, including conservatives and Republicans, that they will go after them. We've seen the Department of Justice targeting parents at school board meetings, we've seen the IRS under Democrats targeting conservatives. This is not something new.

And the fact that now you're seeing the Department of Justice also going after Elon Musk and Donald Trump, two of the most powerful people in the world. Speaking wise, you see this, of course, the American people should be worried that there's a weaponization of government against them, and they want someone who is actually going to do the work to stop that for them and prevent that.

Donald Trump has a record and certainly the rhetoric to say that he would be the one to do it. Ron DeSantis has that record as well. So if we're looking at the larger primary field here about who Americans believe will stand up and fight for them. You've seen Ron DeSantis fire rogue prosecutors who weren't abiding by the law and holding it up. He's the only one who's done that.

So when it comes to this kind of race of who could do it, the Republican Party has changed fundamentally as to what is the driving force. And it's the American people who have felt abandoned and left behind by the DC swamp. They want that up ended and they want someone who can do it. If that's Trump, DeSantis or Nikki, they want that change.

GALLAGHER: Now let's talk about second and third place here. Elise Stefanik released the following statement, "I am calling on every other candidate, all of whom have no chance to win to drop out so we can unify and immediately rally behind President Trump so that we can focus 100% of our resources on defeating Joe Biden to save America."

Well, I mean, listen, Ron DeSantis is going no -- Vivek is out. Ron DeSantis is going nowhere and Nikki Haley is going nowhere for now.

HILTON: Well, let's just, I mean, of course, you know, it's understandable that she would say that. Seems to be from her various statements over the past few weeks, she's auditioning for the vice presidential slot on the Trump ticket. But, you know, Trump said the same thing tonight. Let's get - - he said it in a more diplomatic way. Let's get together. Let's bring people together. Hint, get out of the race.

But when you look at Ron DeSantis, who's had a good night and emerges with more momentum than Nikki Haley, he's the one, out of all the others, that matches what we were just talking about what the Republican Party wants today. He's got a fantastic record as governor, that is absolutely right.

And so, the case for him staying in the race is, well, what if something should happen in terms of these legal cases with Donald Trump don't need a backup. That's his argument. And he does fit what the party wants in a way that I think Nikki Haley clearly doesn't.

GALLAGHER: Yes. And it's not just fit, Erin Perrine, because you look at the Fox News voter analysis. And when you ask Republicans, when you ask these strong Trump supporters, who is their number two choice. By and far, it is Ron DeSantis.

PERRINE: It absolutely is. When it comes to where the Republican Party stands and knows the Republican electorate are looking at in the primary field, you're really nibbling at the edges for discernible policy differences. These people fully believe that you need a strong border, that you need a strong economy, that we should be having parameters for support for Ukraine and not just having that be endless, that we should be supporting Israel.

When it comes to these core beliefs of the Republican Party, it's negligible differences that exist between them. But it's true, Governor DeSantis has led in the style of what was seen as a Trumpian style leadership, this unapologetic, unabashed, unafraid to get in the fight kind of leadership that really paid off for Florida. I mean, more people are moving to Florida than almost anywhere else in the country.

Republicans want people who are unafraid to take the fight on and not step back from having that fight. Because there are too many politicians who pay lip service to showing up for the American people and making it better. The American people now look back at the Trump era with nostalgia and they feel good about it. And that's helping propel him as well in this primary.

GALLAGHER: Speaking of looking back, let's look back 13 days to when Nikki Haley was in New Hampshire and she was talking about the Iowa caucuses, talking about the correcting. I think we still have this soundbite, Kevin. If we can play this, we'll have Steve respond. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NIKKI HALEY (R), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: I trust you. I trust every single one of you. You know how to do this. You know Iowa starts it. You know that you correct it. You know that you continue to go.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: Little did she know, Steve, that that she needs New Hampshire to correct it now.

HILTON: Oh she does. That's exactly what she needs. And, you know, looking at the polls, she'll get there'll be a bit of a correction. But, look, even in New Hampshire, which is her best state, Donald Trump is miles ahead. Ron DeSantis has done the smart thing and said, look, we're not really even competing. He's going to South Carolina. And he's got the money in the organization, I think, in the other states as well.

So I don't know, she's going to have her night probably. We'll be here talking about it next week.

GALLAGHER: We will. We will.

HILTON: But even if she has a fantastic night in New Hampshire, there's no real path because there's a ceiling on her support. Going back to what we've said all night long, and Erin as well, which is that the party wants the style and the policies, and the attitude, and the approach of Donald Trump was the big winner tonight. But also Ron DeSantis, who got that second prize.

GALLAGHER: Do you think that comment, Erin, came back to bite Nikki Haley at all that she said in New Hampshire a couple of weeks ago?

PERRINE: Absolutely. You can't be diminishing of voters when you go and then ask them for your support. You can't be diminishing of Iowa, because Democrats have said Iowa aside and said that's not going to be first in the nation for us. Iowa is very proud to be one of the first nations to vote in the presidential primary and caucus process in this country.

And so to belittle them and diminish them, Nikki kind of said the quiet part out loud, which was that she didn't really think there was a chance for her in Iowa to do very well. And so she was going to New Hampshire. She's always had those eggs in that basket. That was really an unforced error. And unfortunately for Nikki, we've seen multiples of those where she's made these unforced errors. And people have been able to use those to their benefit.

The DeSantis team ran and add on her Iowa comments, and that blanketed Iowa airways in those days coming up. It might have really stilted that growth she saw to hit her ceiling at kind of a week too early, maybe, for Iowa caucuses. And that's why she ended up in a in a close third at this point.

GALLAGHER: OK. The last minute, let's roll the dice a little bit here, Steve Hilton, because we talked about also we got Doug Burgum was that the president's, former president's speech tonight. You wonder, there's a lot of people like maybe some vice presidential things there. You mentioned Elise Stefanik making that comment. A lot of people have mentioned a lot of names. Who else might be in the Vivek stakes?

Hilton: Well just on Doug Burgum. I thought it's really interesting, not just that he was on stage for the victory speech. Seems to me he is well qualified for and maybe now likely to get should there be another Trump administration energy secretary. That's what I think he's going for, and he will be well qualified to have.

In terms of vice presidency, I mean, look, as I'm seeing tonight, look, one of the things that Trump supporters have been saying for years, is that their dream ticket would be Trump-DeSantis, actually.

GALLAGHER: OK.

HILTON: Now, I don't know what the future will hold but that is certainly something that would make Trump supporters very happy.

GALLAGHER: Yes, kind of hard to call your vice president DeSanctimonious, but I guess you could probably get over that. Erin Perrine. What are your thoughts on the Vivek stakes?

PERRINE: It could be any number of people. The former president has indicated that he already has someone in mind to be the VP. It's really an important role and would be a huge contrast points if Donald Trump becomes the Republican nominee. Because if you look at Joe Biden, who would be the oldest president and Kamala Harris, who has abysmal approval ratings and has done absolutely nothing other than put her foot in her mouth, whoever Donald Trump should he be the nominee selects as a vice presidential candidate. That's someone that not only needs to help paint the picture of the complete contrast between Trump and them and Biden, but also be the complete antithesis of Kamala Harris there.

I mean, when you look at this, it could -- there are so many great qualified Republicans to run not only as president but vice president. This would be a choice that could really help paint the contrast and policy, and vision for the country. And that's something that considering how bad Joe Biden's approval ratings are, Donald Trump or any Republicans should be much more ahead of him in the general polling right now. And they aren't -- it shows weakness. So VP could really help with that.

GALLAGHER: Yes. Erin Perrine, congrats to your Buffalo Bills. Thank you for coming on tonight.

Perrine: Yes, go Bills. Thank you.

GALLAGHER: Steve Hilton, thank you as well. We appreciate it.

Meantime, one of the biggest stories of this primary season how will former President Trump juggle his campaign schedule multiple upcoming days in different courts? Jeff Paul is live with that side of the election night story. Jeff. Good evening.

JEFF PAUL, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Well, good evening, Trace. And the former president could face not one but as many as four criminal trials this year. Sprinkle in a few campaign events that are run for the White House, it's going to be a very hectic year for Trump to say the least.

Now Tuesday morning, it's the beginning of the defamation trial involving brighter E. Jean Carroll. A judge recently ruled Trump could testify. From that point on you got primary elections, New Hampshire is next week, followed by Nevada on February 6, South Carolina on the 24th and Michigan a few days later. But March is where things could get very tricky for the former president.

On March 4th, that's when Trump's federal January 6 election case could start. The following day, March 5th, is Super Tuesday. Former President Trump addressed his upcoming schedule saying if his name is on it, he'll be there.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUMP: I want to go to all of my trials. These are all, again, these are all set up by Biden and the Democrats. This is -- they are -- this is their new form of cheating. Every single just about case that I'm involved in is set up by Biden. They're doing it for election interference. And in a way, I guess you'd consider it part of the campaign.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

PAUL: After Super Tuesday, Trump's criminal hush money trial in New York is supposed to begin on March 25th. His federal classified document case in Florida is next slated for May 20th. And then after that, in July, you've got the Republican National Convention, then his Georgia election case is penciled for the beginning of August.

Now, again, I want to stress all of these trial dates could change or could be delayed, depending on what happens in court prior to the trial start.

GALLAGHER: Jeff Paul, thank you. Let's bring in former Deputy Assistant Attorney General and Cal Berkeley Law Professor John Yoo. I'm really concerned, John, about that March 4 thing, right? It is the day before Super Tuesday. Listen, I don't believe that it's going to be detrimental to the former president because it looks like he has turned all of these court appearances into victories. And he will likely do the same there.

But it seems to me that somewhere some judge is going to say there's a fairness aspect and we're not abiding by that. What do you think, John?

JOHN YOO, LAW PROFESSOR, UC BERKELEY LAW: The interesting thing about that March case is that's the case being brought by the special counsel in Washington DC before Judge Chutkan. Right now, that trial has been suspended, while President Trump litigates whether he has immunity from criminal prosecution.

As we've discussed before on the show, that's a tough case for Donald Trump to win but it could go all the way to the Supreme Court. And then while that is up there, this trial has to suspend itself. There's another issue. The Supreme Court has also decided to hear the central charge against Donald Trump and against most of the January 6 protesters, whether that can be used in such a situation.

If that's the case, I think that trial has to push back even farther. But the problem is, what if the trial actually starts in July? What if it actually starts in August? Can Donald Trump actually campaign in the general election, July, August, September, while he also had to show up in court? That's going to be a tough problem for him.

I expect that he's going to demand that that trial, but be at that point, put over until after the election. But the special counsel and the trial judge here don't seem to show any flexibility. They're going to give the president on scheduling.

GALLAGHER: Yes. It's amazing to me because you kind of go through the list of all the trials, and then you look at the Alvin Bragg case, and then the Manhattan DA. And you think, Alvin Bragg is like, you know what, you guys do your trials first and we'll get ours because he knows there's not a -- he has -- all of these are misdemeanors that were trumped up. They were past the -- they were past the statute of limitations. It was it was just mistake after mistake, after mistake.

And I think Trump would love to get into court and see that one because that would benefit him more than any of them.

YOO: When you look at these two cases going on in New York City, the one that's just concluded claiming fraud that's brought by the attorney general of New York, and then you're right, the 1 billion brought by the DA in Manhattan about this alleged mis-accounting of hush money, none of that has anything to do with President Trump and what he did in office or January 6, or anything. There's no reason any of those cases, any of those issues have to be done before November.

If there's any case that should be brought up, it is the one involving the special counsel. All these other ones are state Das harassing Donald Trump to try to knock him off his game as we're getting into the November election. It's really not what state officials should be doing trying to interfere with a national federal election that way.

GALLAGHER: Yes. When you talk to these Iowa voters, as we did in our voter analysis, and you find out that all of these indictments actually solidified their support for Trump, it's kind of telling. I mean, you know, the whole concept here was to make him just popular enough to win the nomination so he would lose to Joe Biden. Well, now you've made him more popular than you had hoped to in the first place.

YOO: And I think the voters also probably haven't lost the hypocrisy or contradiction of the incumbent administration saying they're defending democracy, that they're holding off the hearts, but at the same time trying to go to the courtroom to knock President Trump off the ballot with this disqualification case. That's going to be heard at the Supreme Court in just about three weeks, and then also trying to use a special prosecutor to get a conviction before a jury in Washington DC in the summer during the election.

GALLAGHER: Yes, it really is. And lastly, this whole Georgia case, we've talked about this before, where you have the DA there in Fulton County now being accused of a variety of things. Bringing in a prosecutor that she was involved with romantically, paying him so an exorbitant amount of money and that he has no experience prosecuting certainly RICO cases, but really no experience prosecuting, period.

YOO: It's really raised as yet another question about the propriety of pursuing Donald Trump in a storage estate case, claiming that his entire re-election was some kind of massive criminal conspiracy raises severe free speech problems, First Amendment problems, problems about the proper role of the state governments and the federal courts. And now, it's been wrapped up in this sorted, you know, divorce proceeding. It really shows I think it'll help Donald Trump get this case suspended or kicked out of court so that he can run for office as a federal election -- in the federal election.

GALLAGHER: Yes, I think it will too. John Yoo, great of you to come on staying up with us. Thank you, sir. We appreciate it.

And coming up the latest from the Iowa caucuses, Trump wins, DeSantis and Haley move on. And Ramaswamy gets out and endorses the former president. We are continuing our special coverage. Breaking news, the analysis of the Iowa caucuses next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GALLAGHER: We're back with our special coverage of tonight's Iowa caucuses where former President Donald Trump became the clear front runner taking the lion's share of the delegates in that state and winning with record numbers of 51%. And the Fox News Decision Desk projects that Ron DeSantis will take second place tonight ahead of Nikki Haley. Meaning for at least now, the Florida Governor has emerged as Trump's main rival for the Republican nomination.

Vivek Ramaswamy, who finished in fourth suspended his campaign and endorsed the former president. And now the race moves to New Hampshire, the first in the nation primary. And that, of course, is next week and we will have coverage right after that. We can guarantee that.

Bringing in now the Iowa ***politics*** podcast host, Jeff Stein, and the spectator Politico reporter, Matthew Foldi. Gentlemen, thank you for coming on again.

I want to put this up because this just came across the Washington Post says the following, "Iowa was Trump's to win, can anyone stop his march to the nomination." It goes on to say, "Trump's challengers must strike quickly otherwise his Iowa victory could begin the same kind of consolidation around him, which would add to the pressure on Haley and DeSantis to fall in line. If Trump wins New Hampshire, he will be the first non-incumbent Republican to carry the first two states on the calendar since the caucuses gained prominence in the 1970s, stopping him after that will become more difficult by the week."

Jeff, that's a fair statement because he's going to be hard to stop now. And after New Hampshire and after South Carolina, if he takes both of those, it's kind of like Don Meredith used to say, turn out the lights, right?

JEFF STEIN, IOWA ***POLITICS*** PODCAST HOST: And in between New Hampshire and South Carolina, don't forget, you've got that mess in Nevada where the Democrats in the legislature voted a primary in place on the 6th. But the Republicans said nuts to that. We still want to have a caucus on the 8th and told the candidates they could not participate in both, they had to choose.

Nikki Haley chose the primary with no delegates. Donald Trump and Ron DeSantis chose the caucus two days later. That's where the delegates are. And so, he could come into her home state of South Carolina, winning New Hampshire, winning delegates in Nevada. And then where does she go on top of the problems that DeSantis may have?

GALLAGHER: Matthew Foldi, it's kind of interesting that when you look at the Washington Post and their analysis, the fact that they're saying, listen, DeSantis and Haley need to kick it into high gear. It's in high gear. They've been kicking into high gear now for months, there's not much more they can do.

MATTHEW FOLDI, POLITICO REPORTER: I mean, in a rarity, the Washington Post is correct here. That's actually one of my takeaways from tonight is consolidation, consolidation, consolidation. There were some carrots that Trump handed out at his feet today to some of his longest supporters, state senator here, Brad Zaun, who endorsed Trump before Trump even decided to run for president. And you saw a lot of Trump's surrogates, longtime Trump surrogates like his former Attorney General Matt Whittaker up on stage with him. You also saw Senate candidates who want Trump's support in the primary, like Tim Sheehy.

And the reason I think you were seeing all of this is because Trump's kind of saying you guys need to get on the bandwagon now before it's too late. And I think he appreciated that. Vivek Ramaswamy got on board today. And he's saying to DeSantis and Nikki Haley, come on in the water's warm, but it won't be for long.

That's why Doug Burgum got a perch on the stage at his victory party tonight. He's saying, look, guys, I'm going to remember you're with me early because it's going to be easy to be with me when, you know, I've won the (inaudible).

GALLAGHER: Meantime over on MSNBC, I was joking earlier that I watched for like three minutes and I only heard the word dictator like seven or eight times. Here's Rachel Maddow for 20 seconds as a soundbite. Watch and I'll get your response.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RACHEL MADDOW, MSNBC: There is an authoritarian movement inside Republican ***politics*** that isn't being bamboozled by Trump. They are pushing Trump to get more and more extreme. Because the more extreme things he says, the more they adhere. And that is coming from a very large proportion of the American right that appears to the Republican Party.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: There you go. Those MAGA Republicans again, Jeff.

STEIN: Interesting. Some of their own exit polls showed that only half of those who showed up tonight turned themselves a MAGA Republican. So again, MSNBC preaching to the choir, and I believe also Joy Reid was complaining that Iowa was bad because we had too many white Christians here. So MSNBC, that train just keeps rolling along toward the bottom of the ratings.

GALLAGHER: Yes. And here's the thing, because the Fox News voter analysis on this one, Matthew, it says here, how much change would you like to see in how the country is run? You look at the numbers here, no change at all is 1%. Look at the last two columns, substantial change, complete and total upheaval. Add them together, that's 88% of the voters, of the Republican voters in Iowa want significant substantial, big time upheaval change. And they don't really care much what MSNBC thinks about their opinion.

FOLDI: Yes. I mean, you were watching MSNBC. That was like half of their viewership tonight. I think that one thing that that's super important to remember is we still don't know who won the Iowa caucus in 2020 for the Democrats. And we have almost every single vote in for the Republicans today.

Joe Biden obviously did horribly in Iowa and all of his presidential campaigns. And he's a very bitter, angry old man. And so the Democrats have basically walked away from Iowa. There's a male in caucus that no one is taking seriously here. And it's allowed Republicans to basically dominate the state.

It wasn't that long ago that Democrats had three of the four US House seats. They had a Senate seat here. They were competitive and statewide elections. There's only one Democrat elected statewide here in Iowa. And I think that the Republicans kind of doubling down on the caucus has been, a huge advantage for them there.

And I think, look, to your point about the polls about substantial change. I mean, any Republican running for president compared to Joe Biden would be a substantial change. So it's not shocking to me that 80% of Republican voters and I were looking for that.

GALLAGHER: Yes. Matthew Foldi, Jeff Stein, get some sleep, thank you for staying up. We very much appreciate it.

Well, coming up, we'll look at some of the top issues for voters and how that impacted the results in Iowa next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GALLAGHER: Lot of issues in the minds of Iowa voters tonight like the economy and crime, but the number one issue is the border. Jeff Paul is live with a closer look at the Fox News Voter Analysis numbers. Jeff?

PAUL: Good evening, Trace. Yes. Our Fox News Voter Analysis Election Survey talk with more than 1,500 likely caucus-goers. First, we know Iowa Republicans are laser-focused when it comes to the issues, most say the top issue facing the country is one of two things. One is immigration, 4 in 10 say that. The other, the economy, and more than 3 in 10 put that on top. All other issues are single digits.

Next up, how do they feel about their family's finances? Almost all Iowa Republicans say they are either holding steady or falling behind financially. Only 1 in 10 feel they're getting ahead. And on immigration, how do caucus-goers feel about immigrants to the country today? Most feel immigrants to the US do more hurt or harm to the country about 75%, that's three times as many people who say they help.

Meanwhile, almost all want at least substantial change in the way that things are done with 1/3 favoring complete and total upheaval, an overwhelming majority say it's very important that GOP candidate has the mental capability to serve effectively, almost as many say the same about being a strong leader. Another 82% wants someone who can win.

Now finally, one hot button issue among Republicans is what is being taught in schools. We asked about three issues, and here is what they had to say. About half say K through 8 schools are teaching too much about racism. But, look, close to three quarters of caucus attendees think that schools are focusing too much on sexual orientation and gender identity.

So we can't expect to hear much more about the economy, immigration and education as we head into New Hampshire. Trace?

GALLAGHER: Jeff, thank you. Let's bring in Criminal Defense Attorney and Federal Litigator Vikas Bajaj and Board Certified Medical Doctor Houman Hemmati. Thank you both for coming on. We appreciate it.

To you first, Vikas, the president tonight in his speech, he was very low key and he was talking about deportation. And he said, you know what, this is something we have to do. We're going to deport like we've never done it before. Is that something that the President has the power to quickly do?

VIKAS BAJAJ, CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY: Well, let me just add a footnote to what his comment was. It was, let's talk about President Eisenhower. Now in 1955, in a project by the deportation specialists at that time, they deported approximately 1.3 million Mexicans at that point in time who came into the United States illegally. And not only did that cause a lot of bad feelings towards the Mexican population in the United States, but it was something that actually happened.

Now, I would ask everyone to look back to 2016 when Trump took office. He said, we're going to move deportations, we're not letting people just hanging out in the United States with a criminal record. And as a criminal practitioner throughout the United States, I will tell you this, his words were true. And people were put into deportation proceedings. You can prolong those for quite a while. And then of course, Biden won. So everyone's on their couch relaxing.

But to answer your question, Trace, absolutely. Yes, it can be put into play.

GALLAGHER: Yes. And, you know, Dr. Hemmati has been on vacation for multiple weeks. And I don't know who allowed this but he has been on the show. We haven't really had a chance to talk about the whole idea that, you know, Gavin Newsom, the governor here in California, has said to 750 illegal migrants, we're going to give you all healthcare.

HOUMAN HEMMATI, BOARD-CERTIFIED MD: Well, that was a nice plan when the state had $100 billion surplus. And when you look at it now, we have a $68 billion deficit in California and growing. Newsom denies it, he says it's only 30. He's the guy who created the deficit to begin with. So I don't think I trust his math.

GALLAGHER: Right.

HEMMATI: But coming back to the health insurance, there are people who are legally here who cannot afford their health insurance, right? We were mandated to have health insurance through Obamacare, and people can't afford that. And they're in trouble because of that, or they do pay for it but then they can't afford housing or food, and they have to choose.

And so when we have those problems here within the state among people who are voting, and then we see that we're giving it for free to other people who just show up randomly, that doesn't make people feel great. I think we need to strike a balance here. If people are here, we got to take care of the ones who didn't come here willingly. If they're children, give them healthcare.

It doesn't cost a lot for children, by the way. It's dirt cheap and it pays for itself. But for the adults, we got to figure something else out because with a deficit like that, it's no longer something we can just start paying for without any consequences.

GALLAGHER: Yes. I want to hit you with a couple of voter analysis questions now. First, the border wall to you, Vikas, it's do you favor or oppose each of the following; building a wall along the US-Mexico border. Strongly somewhat favor 88%, strongly somewhat opposed 12%. So that right in Trump's alley. It goes back to 2016, Vikas, where all of a sudden, the numbers are as robust as they were back then.

They dropped a lot in 2020, 2022 kind of the same. And now people are like, OK, enough is enough, even Democratic governors in this country.

BAJAJ: The funny games are over, Trace. You know, the opportunity to run for election or reelection and say, hey, we want to fight for the good guys, the small guys and misleading the constituency to believe that the small guys and the people that need the help are those who are committing crimes and coming into the country illegally. That facade is gone.

GALLAGHER: Yes.

BAJAJ: People understand that there are real effects. We talk about economy, we talk about immigration. They are really part and parcel to the same entity, Trace, because to save the economy, we have to stop spending upwards of $120 billion on illegal immigrants into the United States. They go hand in hand.

GALLAGHER: Yes. Fox News Voter Analysis, abortion -- which comes closest to your opinion on abortion, should abortion be legal? In all most cases 31%, illegal in almost cases 67%. We didn't hear a lot about it but clearly, when you're talking about Republican voters, they are still very much against the issue.

HEMMATI: Well, Trace, this, I think, is it attributable to the fact that there's a lot of misinformation regarding abortion. You have both sides, trying to scare their voters on their side, as well as the other to believing that late term abortions that happen right before the time of birth happen all the time. And they're simply not occurring.

I don't think there's a doctor alive who's going to go and abort a baby right at the point of viability at the end of, you know, just about nine months. That's just not happening. But Democrats are trying to get people to believe on their side that that's happening because it gets them to vote more for the Democrats. And Republicans are getting people to believe on their side that is happening because it gets people on their base to vote for Republicans. And the problem is it's fake.

And I think if people really look at the data and see that the numbers of late term abortions third trimester especially are extremely low and the later you get, the more and more becomes rare to the point where they just don't happen at that later, later stage where people are scaring people into believing.

People's perceptions may change. A lot of other folks will say, you know what, yes, I'll support abortion up until 16 weeks, 24 weeks. I just don't want it happening past 30 weeks, for example. Whatever the threshold may be, if we start talking about it in a more nuanced way, rather than a black and white way, you'll see things changing a lot, especially among Republican women who I think want to have some degree of choice available and right now they have to choose between yes or no.

GALLAGHER: And a lot of them are concerned that the law actually supports that you can have an abortion, maybe they're not happening but you can have them at later terms, which bothers a lot of Republicans. Fair?

HEMMATI: Yes. But you know, what, if there, you can always say don't do it at that very late stage. And guess what, you're not going to be reducing the number of abortions by anything, so let them do it.

GALLAGHER: OK Dr. Houman Hemmati, Vikas Bajaj, gentlemen, thank you both.

Coming up, more of the late breaking details from Iowa, a great night for the former President Donald Trump. We will be right back with the final round of our special coverage of the Iowa caucuses.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GALLAGHER: We are back with our special coverage of tonight's Iowa caucuses where former President Donald Trump became the clear front runner taking the lion's share of the delegates in that state. If you haven't seen it, there it is record breaking numbers, 51% for the former president. And there you have on the other side, Ron DeSantis at 21, Nikki Haley at 19.1%. Meaning for now, at least, Ron DeSantis is kind of the second place, placeholder, until at least we get into New Hampshire.

And with that, let's bring -- oh, by the way, Vivek Ramaswamy, if you didn't hear he finished fourth. He suspended his campaign, endorsed the former president. And now the race moves to New Hampshire with the first in the nation primary one week away. Let's bring in California GOP Chairwoman Jessica Milan Paterson with that.

It's kind of fascinating. The Washington Post said the following here, brand new, just off the presses. It's, "The Last Remnants of the Republican Party Died in Iowa. It's fair to ask whether the candidates wasted their time even coming to Iowa. Trump skipped the debates and did minimal campaigning here, and the old notion that retail ***politics*** in Iowa can propel little known candidates to glory seemed no longer to apply. It was never a contest."

JESSICA MILLAN PATTERSON, CALIFORNIA GOP CHAIRWOMAN: Iowa matters, democracy matters, and the people voting matter. And that's why this is important. We need to make sure -- and we saw this field has narrowed down significantly over the last 11 months and will continue to narrow down as we get through more of these contests.

GALLAGHER: This whole thing and that's how democracy works, right? You go out there and you battle. And if you lose, you, sometimes, you pull out or you go on to the next battleground. It's like football. And in the whole thing is that during his speech tonight, the president, the former president said that we need to get rid of mail-in ballots. And my thing would be doesn't -- the former president need to embrace mail-in ballots and anything that can get votes into the various precincts.

MILLAN PATTERSON: I think what you've seen from President Trump, he has already endorsed the Bank You Vote program, and this is something that's critical. We need to make sure that, taking your football analogy, we're not just playing in the last quarter. We got to play all three quarters. And in places like California, we have an entire month of voting. And if you allow only Democrats to turn in their ballots in that month, you are playing at a disadvantage.

GALLAGHER: Yes. Nikki Haley's campaign tonight, were you somewhat disappointed at the numbers? Was she somewhat disappointed? Do you think that she looks at that, like, it's a bump in the road? She was polling to come in ahead of Ron DeSantis and she came two points, a little more than two points behind. It's a big number when you're only talking about 22%, for 21%, 19%.

MILLAN PATTERSON: I think Ambassador Haley is a fighter.

GALLAGHER: OK.

MILLAN PATTERSON: And I think what you're going to see in New Hampshire is that same type of infrastructure that Governor DeSantis built in Iowa, she has a New Hampshire. She thinks she really has a shot to win this. And she's going to be working hard over this next week to make that happen.

GALLAGHER: OK. So Ron DeSantis is going to go right to South Carolina first, maybe he goes up to New Hampshire after that. He's going to South Carolina. He's kind of banking on South Carolina, which is her home state. So let's say you're right and Nikki Haley comes in second in New Hampshire. And then Ron DeSantis is in South Carolina. What happens down in South Carolina? And how far does this keep going?

MILLAN PATTERSON: We'll see a collection of these delegates, right tonight was only 40 delegates. In California alone, we have over 160 delegates, right? So the delegate number is what's going to matter. You're going to see if the money continues to follow them whether or not they're going to be able to continue their campaigns.

GALLAGHER: Will this go beyond Super Tuesday? You think Super Tuesday is pretty much it?

MILLAN PATTERSON: I think Super Tuesday is going to be a big ticket day when you have states like California and Texas the most in the nation. That's going to be a huge day. And I think we should have a pretty good indicator of who our nominee is.

GALLAGHER: And it'll be interesting to see what court date Trump goes to and what state he goes to after the court date then on March 4th, because Super Tuesday, of course, is March 5th with that. Jessica Millan Patterson, it's great to have you on as always. We appreciate it.

And thank you for watching America's late news Fox News at Night. I'm Trace Gallagher in Los Angeles. That ends our continuing coverage of the Iowa caucuses. Mike Emanuel, Gillian Turner up next. You are in good hands to continue the breaking news coverage. We'll see you back here tomorrow.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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