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TRUMP

about his commitment to keeping discussions of race, gender and sexuality out of schools while fighting to protect religious freedom in education.

As one of the battleground states likely to determine the outcome of this year's presidential election, North Carolina has won significant attention from both the Trump and Harris campaigns.

Last week, Trump's running mate, U.S. Sen. JD Vance, campaigned in Wilmington and Harris' running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, visited Durham and Winston-Salem alongside former President Bill Clinton.

Clinton continued on a bus tour of Eastern North Carolina, making stops in Wilmington, Fayetteville, Wilson, Greenville and Rocky Mount.

Below are updates from Trump's North Carolina visit:

TRUMP CLOSES BY URGING PEOPLE TO VOTE

8:05 p.m. Trump said he will work to keep discussions of sexuality and race out of schools.

"On day one I will sign an executive order banning schools from promoting critical race theory," Trump said. "I will take historic action to defeat the toxic poison of gender ideology and reaffirm that God created two genders, male and female. I will keep men out of women's sports. I will sign a law banning child sexual mutilation... and we will proudly say 'Merry Christmas' again."

Trump closed his remarks by urging Christians to vote early and "take back the nation that we love."

'WHAT I'VE DONE IN TERMS OF RELIGION'

7:52 p.m. Trump reiterated his support for Israel and spoke about his 2017 decision to move the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. It was a move long-desired by pro-Israel politicians in Washington, D.C., Reuters reported in 2018.

Trump also said he has worked toward ending religious persecution worldwide.

"Nobody's done what I've done in terms of religion, in terms of Christianity," he said. "I will keep on fighting for our cherished American values."

'WE DON'T TELL CHRISTIANS TO GET LOST'

7:43 p.m. Trump was interrupted multiple times with chants of "Jesus." And he called the crowd "lively."

"At Trump rallies, we don't tell Christians to get lost. We tell Christians to get out and vote," he said in a reference to an interaction at a Harris rally in Wisconsin last week.

At that rally, Harris reportedly told student protesters that they were at the wrong rally when they yelled "Jesus is lord" at those around them.

"I'm here to deliver a simple message to Christians across America," Trump said. "It's time to stand up and save your country."

After detouring to other topics, Trump then delivered a familiar line: "Kamala, you're fired."

TRUMP ON RELIGION, ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

7:33 p.m. Trump spoke about growing up going to a Presbyterian church in the New York City neighborhood of Jamaica, Queens. Trump said his faith "took on a new meaning" when he survived the assassination attempt in July.

"I now recognize it's been the hand of God"

leading me to where I am today," Trump said. "I like to think God saved me for a purpose and that's to make our country greater than ever before."

He was told after the attempt how lucky he was to avoid the bullet. The event strengthened his and his sons' faith, Trump said.

TRUMP REPEATS FALSE FEMA CLAIMS

7:18 p.m. Trump began his speech by speaking about the devastation left by Helene after his visit to Western North Carolina earlier Monday. He reiterated false claims for the third time Monday that FEMA allocated disaster funds to migrant services rather than Helene victims.

Trump also said voters in areas hard-hit by Helene have been turning out to vote for him.

"These are Trump people," he said. "Those are great, great people."

BEN CARSON SAYS USING WORD 'DISINFORMATION' IS LIKE CENSORSHIP

7:08 p.m. Ben Carson, the former U.S. secretary for Housing and Urban Development, said the election is not about Republicans and Democrats, but about whether the nation is secular or "one nation under God."

Carson referenced Bible verses often while on stage, saying the country was built by people of faith.

Carson said labeling things as "disinformation" is akin to censorship and is an attempt to attack Trump.

Carson urged attendees to vote, and criticized people who say the election is a choice between two evils.

"Unless Jesus Christ is on the ballot you're always choosing between the lesser of two evils," Carson said.

FRANKLIN GRAHAM PRAYS FOR DONALD TRUMP

6:48 p.m. Evangelical leader Franklin Graham took the stage after Eric Trump and said God is the most important factor in the election.

He asked attendees to stand and pray out loud for Trump for two minutes.

Attendees created a clatter of prayer across the venue. Some asked God to protect and listen to Trump's prayers and help save America. As Graham walked off, the crowd chanted "Jesus."

"Rallies and positive poll numbers are not going to win this election," he said. "It's going to be God. There is a spiritual element at work here."

ERIC TRUMP SPEAKS IN CONCORD

6:44 p.m. Eric Trump, the Republican presidential nominee's second son, said he was confident his father would win the election and spoke about the importance of religion and God in the country and in education.

"We need God in our life, we need God in our society... we need God in our schools," he said. "We will always be a nation of faith."

Eric Trump said his father was behind a curtain just off stage as he spoke.

"He's an inspiration to our entire family," Eric Trump said. "I have never been more proud to stand on the stage with anyone, and I will stand on the stage with him until I literally die."

CONGRESSIONAL NOMINEE MARK HARRIS LEADS CROWD IN CHANT

5:22 p.m. After a prayer, the pledge of allegiance and a performance of the national anthem, former NFL player Scott Turner took the stage to



Former President Donald J. Trump addresses the media in Swannanoa, NC on Monday, October 21, 2024, following his tour of damage caused by Hurricane Helene in the local area.

greet attendees and spoke about the Bible and religious rights in America.

Turner previously served as the executive director of the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council under Trump.

"We have the freedom to assemble together, the freedom to worship together, the freedom to pray together," Turner said.

TRUMP ON THE DEPORTATION

4 p.m. Much of

Trump's remarks centered on stopping illegal immigration and sending migrants to other countries.

"When I win on Nov. 5, the migrant invasion ends and the restoration of our country begins," Trump said.

"The United States is now an occupied country, but on Nov. 5, 2024, we will be a liberated country."

"I will launch the largest deportation program in American history," Trump said later. "I will rescue every town across America that has been invaded and conquered."

Trump also called for the death penalty "for any illegal immigrant that kills an American citizen."

CROWD GATHERING IN CONCORD

5 p.m. Lively crowds lined up outside and danced to music inside the Concord Convention Center near Charlotte as they awaited Trump's remarks at an 11th Hour Faith Leaders Meeting with his son, Eric Trump, Ben Carson and faith leaders.

A news release by the Trump campaign ahead of the event said Trump is a defender of religious freedom and supporter of Jewish people.

"Under President Trump's leadership, the government reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that religious freedom remains a cornerstone of the nation," the release states.

"He has consistently prioritized the protection of faith communities, whether through combatting antisemitism or defending the rights on Christians."

But a spokesperson from the Democratic National Committee criticized comments previously made by Trump and faith leaders in attendance.

"Donald Trump is relying on anti-choice extremists and conspiracy theorists to make his closing pitch to voters while he goes on unhinged rants threatening our freedoms and our democracy,"

spokesperson Aida Ross said in a statement to The Charlotte Observer.

"Trump's surrogates today include far-right MAGA allies who, like Trump, have pushed reckless lies about the response to Hurricane Helene and rallied against our reproductive freedoms, even calling abortion 'the greatest evil in our country.'"

The event was organized by Clay Clark, who wrote a false claim on social media that the government manipulated weather to cause Hurricane Helene to access lithium deposits in North Carolina, Media Matters first reported.

TRUMP LEAVES STAGE, PROMISING TO 'SAVE AMERICA'

4:20 p.m. Trump wrapped up his Greenville rally by making a variety of promises for his second

term in office, including to end the war in Ukraine and to get "critical race theory and transgender insanity" out of schools.

"With your vote this November, we are going to fire Kamala Harris, we are going to save America and we're going to restore the greatness of our nation," he said.

TRUMP TAKES THE STAGE IN GREENVILLE

3:15 p.m. Former President Trump appeared shortly after 3 p.m. as "God Bless the USA" played, walking around the stage for the full length of the song.

The crowd chanted, "USA," and Trump asked: "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" The crowd yelled: "No."

Later, Trump got big cheers when he said: "Kamala, you're fired."

Trump said if he returns to the White House America will be "bigger, better, bolder and safer than ever before."

Trump said illegal immigration is the biggest problem the country faces, even bigger than inflation.

"We want people to come into our country but they have to come in legally," he said.

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Trump claimed Harris' recent "60 Minutes" interview was election interference, calling it "the biggest scandal in the history of broadcasting."

The show has denied Trump's claim that it selectively edited an answer from Harris. At the rally, Trump asked: "Can you imagine if that happened with me? It would be over — the electric chair."

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TRUMP ON HELENE DEVASTATION

3:25 p.m. Trump noted in Greenville that he saw the damage from Hurricane Helene earlier in the day in Western North Carolina.

"Our hearts are with you and we are praying for you, and we will come back, and we will be here on Jan. 20," he said of those affected by the storm.

"You didn't get the proper support from this administration — they spent their money on illegal migrants."

FEMA has refuted the false claims that the agency diverted disaster relief funds to immigrants in order to conflate FEMA's disaster fund with other pots of money.

Trump also thanked billionaire Elon Musk for providing Starlink internet access to Western North Carolina.

"I did 26 years in the Army and a year in combat and I've never seen courage like that," she said. "... You're gonna see a fighter in me too."

Buckhout's opponent,

U.S. Rep. Don Davis, campaigned with Harris last week at the same arena.

Buckout and Davis' race is the only competitive congressional contest in the state and could be crucial in determining which party takes control of the U.S. House.

IN GREENVILLE, ATTENDEES FILL ARENA

1 p.m. Attendees eagerly awaited Trump's arrival at the Minges Coliseum in Greenville, filling the arena with several hours until the former president's expected remarks.

John Heath, a Goldsboro resident, said he considered himself socially liberal, but agreed with Trump on the economy and military.

"He can only do so much to change that kind of thing," Heath said when asked about potential changes to social policy under Trump. "He's gonna be so busy fixing other stuff that he's not even gonna worry about it."

He said his concern with Vice President Kamala Harris is that she doesn't seem prepared for the presidency, pointing to her performance in TV interviews.

"She sounds like me trying to give a book report in sixth grade," Heath said.

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Trump said if he still supports Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson for governor, he said he hasn't been keeping up with the state's gubernatorial election.

Robinson's campaign was rocked last month after CNN reported on racist and sexually explicit comments he allegedly made years ago on a pornography website's message board.

CONGRESS, FEMA STORM RESPONSE

12:18 p.m. Trump said in response to a reporter's question he's in favor of Congress reconvening to allocate more federal aid for Helene victims. Congress isn't scheduled to be back in session until after the election.

He said FEMA has mismanaged its storm response.

"It's a shame ... I think it's a disgrace," he said.

Trump said FEMA spent "hundreds of millions" on things it wasn't supposed to, including undocumented immigrants. He didn't provide any additional detail during Monday's news conference about the claim, but he's made the allegation at rallies and online before. FEMA says it has not diverted disaster relief money to people living in the country without authorization.

Asked whether his continued negative comments about FEMA could be contributing to threats against the agency in North Carolina, Trump said honest people in the region are saying the agency's response has been poor.

"I think you have to let people know how they're doing," he said.

TRUMP TALKS ABOUT NC ELECTIONS AFTER HELENE

12:13 p.m. Trump encouraged those impacted by the storm to still find ways to vote, including using early voting or mail-in ballots. North Carolina

SEE TRUMP, 13A