

# Obama rallies young voters for Harris in Pennsylvania

Jeff Mason  
REUTERS

PITTSBURGH – Former President Barack Obama made a passionate case against Donald Trump and in favor of Vice President Kamala Harris on Thursday during a rally at a Pittsburgh college campus aimed in part at spurring young people to show up for the Nov. 5 election.

Obama has been a vocal supporter of Harris since she ascended to the top of the Democratic ticket after President Joe Biden stepped aside in July following a poor debate performance against Trump, the Republican former president.

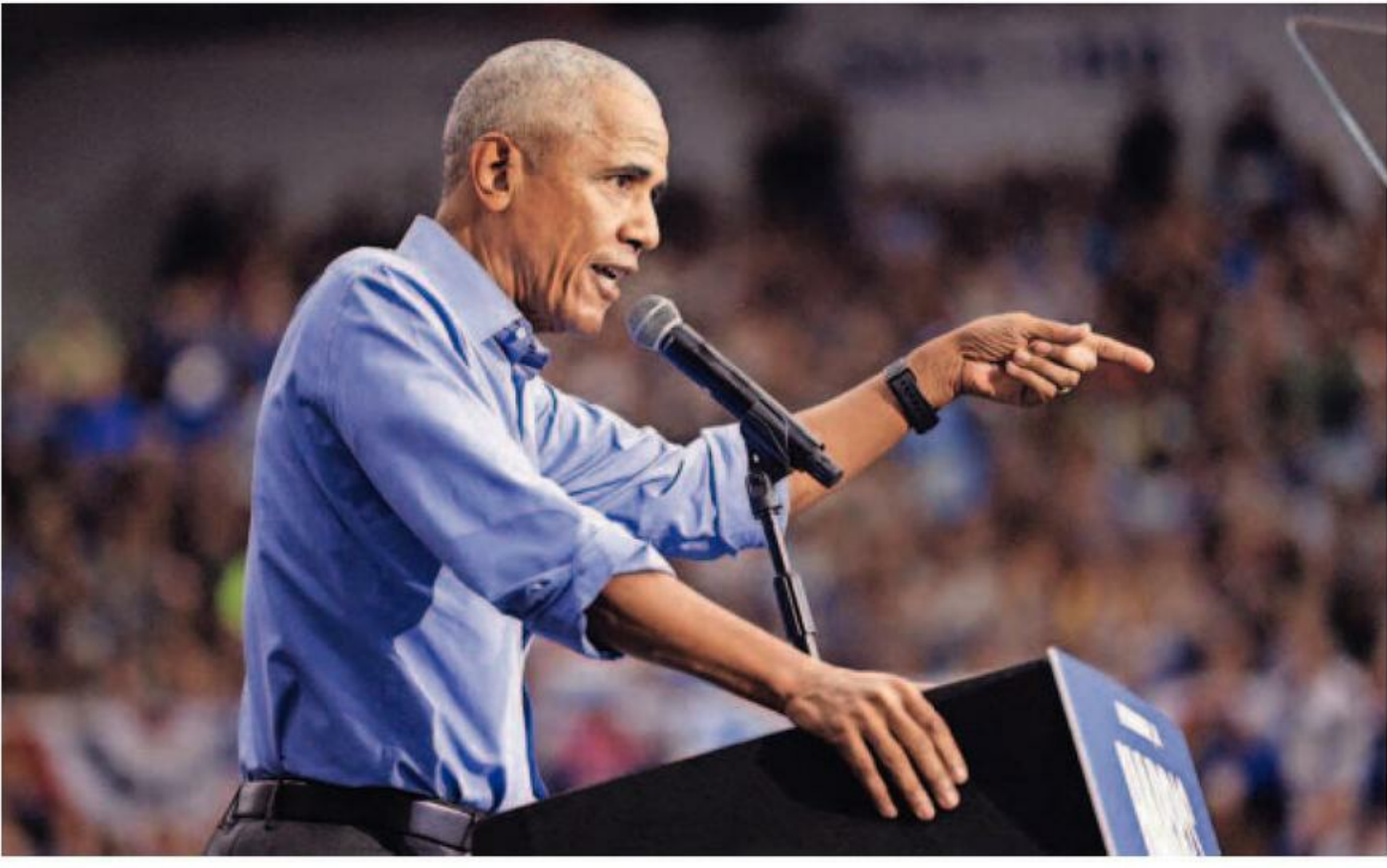
Obama, whose White House term ended in 2017, is still popular with his party's base. The rally he headlined at the University of Pittsburgh, held while Harris campaigned in Nevada and Arizona, is the first of several events he plans to do in battleground states in the coming weeks.

"I get it why people are looking to shake things up," Obama said to a crowd of supporters. "I understand people feeling frustrated, feeling 'we can do better.' What I cannot understand is why anybody would think that Donald Trump will shake things up in a way that's good for you, Pennsylvania."

Obama, who argued that Trump only cared about his own ego and money, stressed that Harris was raised in the middle class and believes in American values. "Kamala is as prepared for the job as any nominee for president has ever been."

Obama is not the only former president the Harris campaign intends to deploy on the campaign trail.

Bill Clinton, like Obama a two-term Democratic president, and a former Arkansas governor, will make stops in Georgia on Sunday and Monday before traveling to North Carolina for a bus tour later in the week in an effort to reach ru-



Former President Barack Obama speaks at a campaign event in support of Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris in Pittsburgh on Thursday. QUINN GLABICKI/REUTERS

ral voters.

Youth are among a critical part of the coalition that the Harris campaign hopes will propel her to victory. But voter registration among young people in 34 states is down compared with four years ago, according to data updated in September from the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University.

The number of people between the ages of 18 and 29 registered to vote in Pennsylvania in September was 15% lower than it was on Election Day in 2020, the center's data showed.

"I understand why certain younger people feel discouraged and maybe not as passionate about politics or an interest in voting," said rally attendee AJ Herzog, 27, citing the wars in Gaza and Ukraine.

"I think people feel, like, hopeless in certain cases where no matter who they vote for, it's a lot of the same. But I do think there is more opportunity for change with Kamala Harris as president than there is going back to Donald Trump."

Obama's engagement could help get young people motivated in the campaign's final stretch. The former presi-

dent has sought to serve as a closer for Democratic candidates before, with events for Hillary Clinton in 2016 and for Biden in 2020, especially at the end of the election cycle when early voting had begun, as it has now.

Obama is focused on voters who can put the White House, the House of Representatives and the Senate in Democratic hands, an aide said. The former president has helped raise \$80 million for the 2024 presidential campaign.

Obama and his wife, Michelle, gave rousing speeches in support of Harris at the Democratic National Convention in August; the former first lady is expected to campaign further for Harris as well.

Harris was an early supporter of Obama's own 2008 presidential bid, and he has helped her behind the scenes as the party's 2024 standard-bearer, encouraging her to tap talent to bolster her campaign, which she did.

Obama is viewed by some as having helped usher Biden out of the race after Democrats' worries about the 81-year-old leader's age and abilities skyrocketed after his June debate against Trump.

## Trump courts auto workers with proposals

Nora Eckert and David Shepardson  
REUTERS

DETROIT – Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on Thursday proposed making interest on car loans tax-deductible and preventing Chinese automakers from selling vehicles in the United States, in a push to appeal to auto workers in the final weeks of election campaigning.

In a speech to the Detroit Economic Club that ran for about two hours, Trump criticized electric vehicles, the United Auto Workers union that represents auto workers, and even the city of Detroit where he was speaking.

Polls show Trump and Democratic nominee Kamala Harris are locked in a tight race ahead of the Nov. 5 election, with the outcome expected to be decided by slim margins in battleground states like Michigan, of which Detroit is the largest city.

He alluded to the city's economic struggles in his speech while taking a jab at Harris.

"The whole country is going to be like, you want to know the truth, it'll be like Detroit. Our whole country will end up being like Detroit if is your president," Trump said.

The plan on car loans – which would treat interest paid on vehicle loans like home mortgages on federal tax returns – is the latest in a long string of potential tax cuts the former president has floated during the final weeks of his campaign against Harris.

The speech focused on the U.S. auto industry, which is headquartered in De-



Former President Donald Trump speaks in Detroit on Thursday. JEFF KOWALSKY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

troit. Trump said he would impose new tariffs to prevent Chinese automakers from building cars in Mexico and exporting them to the United States.

Trump, who on Sunday said he would slap tariffs as high as 200%, suggested he could impose even higher tariffs on vehicles.

"I will impose whatever tariffs are required – 100%, 200%, 1,000%," Trump said. Mexico exported just over 2.5 million vehicles to the United States last year.

He also said he will formally notify Mexico and Canada of his intent to renegotiate a North American free trade deal to address concerns about Chinese vehicles.

Harris, the vice president, has also said she plans to invoke the renegotiation provision if elected.

Critics say the free trade deal approved during Trump's term allowed the Detroit Three automakers to continue to produce hundreds of thousands of vehi-

cles in Mexico and export them to U.S. buyers.

### Stimulating production

Congress in 1986 repealed the federal deduction for interest paid on auto and other consumer loans as part of a tax reform bill. In September, buyers paid an average interest rate of 7.1% on new cars and 11.2% on used cars, according to car research company Edmunds.

Trump said the tax cut "will stimulate massive domestic auto production, and make car ownership dramatically more affordable for millions and millions of working American families."

If elected, Trump will need congressional support to pass changes of tax laws.

President Joe Biden last month proposed prohibiting key Chinese software and hardware in vehicles with internet connectivity on American roads due to national security concerns, a move that would effectively bar Chinese cars and trucks from the U.S. market.

Biden separately announced new 100% tariffs on all Chinese EVs effective Sept. 27 – on top of a 25% import tariff on all Chinese vehicles that Trump imposed. Trump also said he will close loopholes around Chinese cars being allowed into the U.S.

Biden last month also proposed barring Chinese automakers from testing autonomous vehicles on U.S. roads.

### IN BRIEF

#### 1 dead, 12 trapped underground at Colo. mine tourist attraction

One person was dead and 12 others were trapped 1,000 feet underground on Thursday following an elevator failure at a former Colorado gold mine that is now a tourist attraction, officials said.

Another 11 people were rescued from the Mollie Kathleen Gold Mine attraction in Cripple Creek, Colorado, Teller County Sheriff Jason Mikesell told reporters.

Emergency responders were attempting to repair the elevator to bring back the 11 tourists and one tour guide who were trapped starting around midday, Mikesell said.

With one tour group below ground, the elevator experienced some type of mechanical failure with another group aboard while it was about halfway down the mine shaft. This resulted in one fatality while four other people suffered minor injuries, Mikesell said without providing details of how the person died.

That group was able to return to the surface on the elevator, which has since been out of commission, the sheriff said.

Responders had radio communication with the people trapped below, and they had water, blankets and chairs to keep them comfortable, Mikesell said.

Engineers from the state, mine safety experts and firefighters were on hand.

#### Two judges decline to extend voter registration after storms

Two federal judges have declined to extend voter registration in Florida and Georgia for the Nov. 5 election following Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

Civil rights groups had argued the storms, which have collectively killed more than 200 people and cut power supply to millions, left residents with "hardships" that hindered their ability to register to vote ahead of the deadlines.

Despite this, U.S. District Judge Eleanor Ross in Atlanta denied a request by the state's NAACP chapter, the Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda and New Georgia Project on Thursday to extend the state's voter registration up to Oct. 14.

In a bench ruling, that was not immediately available online, Ross said arguments made by the plaintiffs "lacked clarity and detail," according to CNN.

"We did not hear from anyone specifically who could not register to vote," Ross said.

The ruling came a day after U.S. District Judge Robert Hinkle in Tallahassee denied a similar request made by the League of Women Voters of Florida and the state NAACP chapter to extend the Oct. 7 deadline by 10 days.

#### Man pleads guilty to vandalizing Islamic center at Rutgers

WASHINGTON – A New Jersey man has pleaded guilty to a federal hate crime for vandalizing property at Rutgers University's center for Islamic life. The incident took place in April on Eid.

"This defendant is being held accountable for Islamophobic-fueled acts of hate," Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke said on Thursday.

The defendant, Jacob Beacher, 24, broke into the center and damaged its property, including religious artifacts and items containing language from the Koran, the Justice Department said, adding he also stole a Palestinian flag.

Rights advocates have noted rising threats against American Muslims, Arabs and Jews since the eruption of Israel's wars in Gaza and Lebanon following an Oct. 7, 2023, attack by Palestinian Hamas militants.

Reuters

## Cluster of drug-resistant mpox variant identified in five states

Julie Steenhuysen  
REUTERS

CHICAGO – U.S. health officials have identified a cluster of cases caused by an mpox variant that are resistant to Sigma Technologies' antiviral tecovirimat, branded as TPOXX, in five U.S. states, federal and state researchers reported on Thursday.

The cases involved a total of 18 individuals infected with clade II mpox between Oct. 6, 2023, and Feb. 15, 2024, who had never taken the treatment before, according to the report published in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality

Weekly Report.

Clade II mpox cases, which are endemic to West Africa, sparked a global outbreak in 2022 that prompted the World Health Organization to declare a public health emergency, and cases continue to spread at low levels in some countries.

The drug-resistant mpox cases followed an initial, unrelated cluster reported in California in late 2022 through early 2023, and are the first involving multiple states, according to the report.

Health officials said the latest cases are likely to have been underestimated because not all cases of mpox undergo genetic sequencing to determine the

variant causing the infection.

Study authors said routine surveillance is needed to monitor for the emergence of drug resistance to safeguard the effectiveness of TPOXX, one of the few treatments approved for treatment of mpox.

CDC officials advised doctors to closely follow the protocol for TPOXX use, ensure that patients take the drug properly and stress that they can still spread the virus while taking the drug. The findings also underscore the need for additional mpox treatments, the study authors said.

The clade II strain is separate from the ongoing outbreak in Africa of a new

variant called clade Ib, which prompted the WHO to declare a second public health emergency in August.

A U.S. government-backed study evaluating the use of TPOXX in clade Ib cases released in August showed the treatment was not effective at helping patients recover more quickly than a placebo.

Mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, is a viral infection that causes flu-like symptoms and pus-filled lesions. Although usually mild, the virus can be deadly in some individuals with weakened immune symptoms. Mpox is transmitted through close physical contact, including sexual contact.