

Stumping for “America First” Republicans, Trump holds campaign rally in Macomb County, Michigan

Jacob Crosse
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Seeking to cement his grip on the increasingly fascistic Republican Party ahead of the 2022 midterms and the 2024 presidential election, Donald Trump held a campaign-style “Save America” rally in Macomb County, Michigan, on Saturday night, his first rally in the state in over 17 months.

The event was held in Washington Township. Macomb County voted narrowly for Trump in 2020, with Washington Township giving him his biggest margin of victory in the county. The rally was at an indoor venue holding about 5,500 people, making the turnout considerably smaller than at Trump rallies earlier this year in South Carolina, Texas and Arizona.

The event took place less than a month before a Michigan Republican Party nominating convention and served as an opportunity for Trump to promote his preferred batch of Republican candidates for the 2022 midterms.

His fascistic diatribe lasted for nearly two hours, during which he repeatedly claimed that the 2020 election had been stolen. He warned the far-right crowd that the “biggest danger” facing the country was not from “Russia or China,” but from “sick and radical politicians” who “knowingly and unknowingly... want to destroy our country.”

Trump attacked President Joe Biden for the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan and coming to power of the Taliban. He claimed that Biden’s “weakness” encouraged Russian President Vladimir Putin to invade Ukraine, something Putin would never have dared to do under his watch.

As in all of his stump speeches, Trump focused on anti-immigrant incitement. He denounced the “corrupt media” for hiding the supposed fact that the US southern border was being “invaded” by “criminals.” He accused Biden

and the Democrats (falsely) of cutting funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, thereby allowing “nests of killers” to pour into the country.

Other Republicans speaking at the rally echoed Trump’s fascistic attacks on immigrants and pledged their loyalty to the former president and would-be dictator, especially his central claim that the 2020 election was stolen by Democratic officials who needed to be held “accountable.” Trump lost Michigan by over 154,000 votes and was outpolled nationally by Biden by a margin of 7 million votes.

Nearly every speech at the event, including Trump’s, included anti-Semitic insinuations against Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and the supposedly corrupting influence of his donations to the 2020 election process.

The threat of fascistic violence permeated the rally, with frequent calls from the crowd to “lock up” Trump’s political opponents, including Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Attorney General Dana Nessel and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. In light of the ongoing trial of the far-right militia members who sought to kidnap and possibly kill Whitmer in advance of the November 2020 elections, these threats are deadly serious.

Trump endorsed state-level Republican candidates Kristina Karamo, who is running for secretary of state, and Matthew DePerno, who is seeking the Republican nomination for attorney general. Both candidates advanced Trump’s lies following Biden’s victory that the election had been stolen and have since repeatedly claimed that the Biden presidency is illegitimate, earning Trump’s approval.

Trump’s intervention into the Republican primaries is part of a nationwide strategy to control the election apparatus in every battleground state.

In a report titled “Replacing the Refs,” States United

Action found that as of March 1, 2022, 53 “election deniers” were running for governor in 24 states. The authors of the report defined an “election denier” as a candidate who either claimed that Trump was the winner of the 2020 election, participated in a “Stop the Steal” rally, or called for a “forensic audit” of the presidential vote.

The report also found there were 11 “election deniers” running for attorney general in 11 states and at least 22 “election deniers” running for secretary of state in 18 different states. Michigan is one of several states that has “election deniers” running in all three races.

In pledging his support to “election deniers” DePerno and Karamo, Trump said they would “protect us from a corrupt election.”

Karamo is a 36-year-old Christian fascist who gained Trump’s favor after claiming she had witnessed election fraud at the TCF center in Detroit during the 2020 election. Karamo was one of the plaintiffs in the Texas lawsuit that reached the US Supreme Court in December 2020, seeking to invalidate millions of votes in Michigan, Georgia, Wisconsin and Arizona, four states Trump lost to Biden.

In a podcast she hosts called “Solid Food,” Karamo has stated her opposition to “all” mandatory vaccines as well as the teaching of evolution in schools. She asserts that the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol was not led by pro-Trump militias, but was instead perpetrated by “Antifa” radicals.

Building her bona fides with the fascists, Karamo appeared last October with other “America First” Trump-backed secretary of state candidates, such as Nevada’s Jim Marchant and Arizona’s Mark Finchem, at a QAnon conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In her speech Saturday, Karamo incited terrorist violence against Benson, whom she called an “authoritarian leftist” who “doesn’t care about the US Constitution.” Karamo drove the crowd into a frenzy when she declared she had the “right to redress my grievances to my government without being called an insurrectionist, without being called a ‘big lie’ proponent.” Echoing Trump, she attacked the “corrupt media” for “protecting [Democratic House Speaker] Nancy Pelosi” and Benson.

The Trump-endorsed candidate for Michigan attorney general, Matthew DePerno, spoke after Karamo. He promised that he would “hold Whitmer, Benson and Nessel accountable for everything they have done,” prompting shouts of “Lock them up!” from the crowd.

DePerno blamed Benson for letting “Zuckerberg into our state with \$8 million in illegal campaign finance violations.” He continued: “She allowed him to control your elections. She allowed him to put his collection boxes in Democratic-controlled locations and destroy your election. We will hold her accountable.”

Backing the militias that stormed the Capitol in Lansing in April 2020 to oppose any measures to stem the spread of the coronavirus, DePerno pledged to end mask and vaccine mandates. He also attacked critical race theory as “unconstitutional,” and vowed to “no longer allow these Democrats to teach our children to hate God, hate their country and hate their family.”

Trump-endorsed candidate for Michigan’s 3rd congressional district John Gibbs spoke of his desire to oust “RINOs” (“Republicans In Name Only”), such as incumbent Republican Rep. Peter Meijer, who was one of 10 Republicans who voted to impeach Trump following the January 6 attack in Washington D.C.

The Republican speakers attacked immigrants, LGBTQ persons, coronavirus vaccines, mask mandates, critical race theory and their alleged “socialist/communist” opponents in the Democratic Party.

That Trump is free to continue to cultivate a fascist movement hell-bent on overturning democratic forms of rule is entirely the fault of the Biden administration, the Democratic Party and Attorney General Merrick Garland. Trump and the Republican Party are working to place the election machinery in every state in the hands of Trump acolytes who are committed to overturning elections that go the “wrong” way. They are being enabled by the Democrats, who have refused to prosecute the ringleaders of the coup attempt, beginning with the ex-president, and are engaged in a cover-up of the January 6 coup and the ongoing preparations for a new coup.

In an interview Sunday on ABC’s “This Week with George Stephanopoulos,” White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain refused to confirm reporting in the *New York Times* that Biden had privately called for Trump to be prosecuted for inciting a coup. He told Stephanopoulos that he had “never heard the president advocate for the prosecution of any person.”



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