

The “Great American State Fair” debacle: Trump’s megalomania and extreme isolation

David Walsh
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As part of its celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the Trump administration has planned out a series of “festivities” this year in keeping with its intensely ignorant, reactionary and backward character. A government dedicated to the principle that “all men are *not* created equal,” and that a few of them should, in fact, possess nearly everything, can only go terribly wrong when charged with marking the anniversary of the famous revolutionary and egalitarian document. And so far things have gone terribly wrong.

The anniversary events include the mintage of commemorative coins, with proposed designs including one featuring Donald Trump on the \$1 coin (no decision on that yet). In March 2026, the “Commission of Fine Arts” approved a design for a gold coin featuring the president on the obverse.

Incredibly, one of the centerpieces of the anniversary is UFC Freedom 250, a mixed martial arts cage match produced by the Ultimate Fighting Championship scheduled to take place June 14 on the South Lawn of the White House.

CNN noted June 1 that construction crews were building the fight cage

and the White House is now dwarfed by a massive arched lighting grid, which the Ultimate Fighting Championship calls “The Claw.” When the fighters strap on their gloves and climb into the cage, more than 90,000 people will descend on the White House grounds to watch them battle it out.

Construction on “The Claw” came into view in late May over the top of the White House briefing room, where reporters began taking notice. The massive structure is now nearly impossible to miss, even blocks from the White House.

Another pillar of the celebration was to be the “Great

American State Fair,” a 16-day “national exposition” running from June 25 through July 10. The celebration, according to a press release, “will unite and showcase all 56 U.S. states and territories in a single World’s Fair-scale event. This is an opportunity for visitors from across America to experience an unforgettable celebration of the people and traditions that define our nation. Our nation unites diverse states and territories to form the strongest country in the world.”

What objects or personalities, if any, are being gathered from all 56 states and territories is unclear at this point. We do know that this two-week supposed extravaganza, planned for the National Mall in Washington, which jumped from a “state fair” to a “World’s Fair-scale event” in the space of one breathless paragraph, has subsequently, like Alice (during her adventures in Wonderland) on following the instructions “Drink me,” magically shrunk to 10 inches tall or less.

On May 27, Freedom 250, a “White House-connected public-private partnership and fundraising arm established to organize and celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States’ independence,” grandly announced the “First Round of Star-Studded Entertainment & Activations for the Great American State Fair.” This “first wave of participants, performers” included, among others, country singer Martina McBride, pop duo Milli Vanilli (famed for their lip-syncing escapades), rapper Young MC, aging R&B group The Commodores, Morris Day and The Time and Bret Michaels of Poison. Not a crowd likely to electrify contemporary audiences.

Making matters far worse for the administration, all the above promptly dropped out. McBride said she had been under the impression it was a “non-partisan” event, but added that “what we were told is, in fact, not what is happening.” Michaels, a Trump supporter, observed that the event “has evolved into something much more divisive than what I agreed to be a part of.” Young MC was quoted as asserting that “the artists were never told about any political involvement” and that he read in SPIN magazine that the

event was “Trump-backed.” Day said simply, “It’s a no for me.” The Commodores, or what remains of the group, explained, “Our music has always been our voice and we choose not to publicly affiliate with any single political party ... We support the betterment of all Americans.”

For his part, the all-but-forgotten Vanilla Ice declared that he would perform for anyone,

according to a high-energy TikTok that he appears to have recorded from a construction site. He promises to “bring back the ’90s” during this “magical event” to celebrate America’s “two-fiddy.” [*Washingtonian* magazine]

Elsewhere, Vanilla Ice explained his even-handed approach: “And I’ll go play for Putin and I’ll play in Iran if you want. It don’t matter.”

Vanilla Ice and Fab Morvan of Milli Vanilli are apparently the only acts left standing, which seems a little thin for a 16-day festival.

Trump responded to the embarrassment with typically outraged and deranged comments on social media. The “star-studded entertainment” had sunk in his estimation.

I understand Artists are getting “the yips” having to do with their performance on Wednesday, so I am thinking about bringing the Number One Attraction anywhere in the World, the man who gets much larger audiences than Elvis in his prime, and he does so without a guitar, the man who loves our Country more than anyone else, and the man who some say is the Greatest President in History (THE GOAT!), DONALD J. TRUMP, to take the place of these highly paid, Third Rate “Artists,” and give a major speech, rallying the Country forward like I have done ever since being President!

And later

We should have a giant MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN RALLY, for 250, instead of having overpriced singers, who nobody wants to hear, whose music is boring, and yet who do nothing but complain. Cancel it, just like I canceled my involvement with the failing and unsafe to be in Kennedy Center.

This is the president of the United States.

Washingtonian magazine commented

Now, the Great American State Fair seems to be melting down, in a bizarre situation that involves dueling semiquincentennial celebrations, a congressional probe into possibly shady fundraising practices, apparently empty concert stages, and one very weird rant recorded to Instagram from the toilet.

MS Now suggested that the withdrawal of McBride had some objective significance.

She isn’t some over-the-hill casino entertainer. The 59-year-old songstress is a traditional, conservative-coded country artist. McBride has sold many millions of records over her decades-long career, with songs that frequently mix classic country themes of God and faith with heartbreak, hope and resilience.

But something, clearly, has shifted ... [H]er decision highlights in the starkest of terms just how culturally corrosive Trump has become during his second term. That’s what a war of choice, soaring gas and food prices, stagnating inflation, and an aggregate job approval rating in the 30s can lead to.

There may be some truth to this, as well as an element of liberal wishful thinking. But, in any case, there’s no doubt Trump is widely despised, by tens of millions of people, and the “shrinkage” of the Great American State Fair indicates something about the administration’s intense isolation. How does Trump remain in power? Through the complicity and cowardice of the Democratic “opposition party,” which is no such thing, and its wider orbit, the trade unions, fake “left” DSA politicians and the rest. They fear a working class movement from below a hundred times more than all the right-wing and fascist conspiracies past, present and future.



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