

Trump doubles down on fascist provocations in final stretch of midterm campaign

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With 10 days remaining before the midterm elections, and the Republican Party facing likely loss of control in both the House and Senate, President Donald Trump is intensifying his embrace of violence, racism and fascist political appeals.

At a campaign rally in South Carolina Wednesday, where Trump was stumping for Senator Darline Graham, he hailed the violent attack on a protester who sought to heckle him from the audience. A Trump supporter punched the protester in the face and then sheriff's deputies dragged the victim away—not the attacker.

Trump crowed: “Wow, thank you. That was great—man. Who’s the guy that threw that punch? You are ... The guy stood up, and he just let that little—and he got whacked. Wow.” The crowd responded by chanting “Darline” and “USA, USA,” as though the US Constitution did not contain a First Amendment protecting the right of free speech.

There were multiple acts of physical violence by Trump supporters against protesters who interrupted Trump during his 90-minute, typically meandering paean of self-praise. It is significant that he was heckled so extensively in a state long dominated by the Republican Party, and which he carried in all three of his presidential campaigns. Even more significant was the response of his supporters, openly encouraged by Trump, who called the protesters “terrible people,” to physically attack the hecklers.

State police intervened repeatedly to remove anti-Trump protesters, but did nothing to stop the violence by Trump supporters.

Darline Graham was appointed to fill the seat of her late brother Senator Lindsey Graham, after he died suddenly during the summer. Trump backed her in the Republican primary, then went to the state again when

polls began to show a tight race against Democratic challenger Dr. Annie Andrews.

Trump also weighed in on the degraded campaign advertisement issued by the Republican candidate for Ohio governor, tech billionaire Vivek Ramaswamy, against his Democratic opponent, Dr. Amy Acton, former state health director. The Ramaswamy campaign posted an online ad featuring Acton’s mother denouncing her own daughter as a liar, but it quickly emerged that Acton has had no contact with her mother for 48 years, because the mother sided with Acton’s stepfather after he was indicted for rape of Acton when she was 12 years old.

While media pundits and many Republicans—including outgoing Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Iowa Senate candidate Ashley Hinson—condemned the ad as a vicious attempt to exploit a family tragedy in which Acton was the child victim, Ramaswamy has declared he will spend \$4 million to run the ad on television, and both Trump and Vice President JD Vance supported his action.

Trump enthusiastically endorsed the ad, calling it “pay dirt” and denounced DeWine for speaking out against it, calling him “disloyal.” “Vivek should keep it up, and let everyone listen to the mother of a defective, dishonest, and incapable Candidate, explain how the daughter is a DISASTER who, uncontrollably, lies, cheats, and steals!” Trump wrote on social media.

Acton said in a television interview that her mother is the one lying. “It’s awful to see her this way, and it’s even more incredible to see that my opponent has taken advantage of someone who’s clearly not well, who is older, and this is totally in line with who he is,” she said.

The *Columbus Dispatch*, the main daily newspaper in the state capital, endorsed Acton on Wednesday, and

called Ramaswamy's ad "revolting and unsettling." The editorial declared, "It should go without saying that sexual violence against children should not be politicized or taken as lightly as Ramaswamy appears to take it."

Ohio Republican Party Chairman Alex Triantafilou posted what appeared to be a threat against any criticism of the campaign ad. "The final days of a tough campaign are always the best time to find out who is really with you and who just posts and pretends," he wrote. "Yes—we are keeping score." Ramaswamy's campaign manager, Jonathan Ewing, characterized the ad as "a campaign-ending moment for Amy Acton."

In neighboring Michigan, Trump and Republican Senate candidate Mike Rogers have accused Democrat Abdul El-Sayed of being a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood and a "jihadist" or "terrorist," merely because El-Sayed's parents are of Egyptian descent and El-Sayed himself, born in the Detroit area, is a practicing Muslim.

At the final debate in the Senate campaign, on Wednesday night, Rogers claimed that El-Sayed had been "bought off" by the Muslim Brotherhood. "Are you for America, or are you for these terrorist groups overseas?"

The national Republican Party and pro-Israel lobbies like AIPAC have pumped tens of millions of dollars into the Michigan race, based largely on appeals to anti-Muslim bigotry. El-Sayed would be the first Muslim member of the US Senate.

Alongside encouragement of violence, bigotry and smear tactics of the lowest order, Trump has directed the Department of Justice to step up its efforts to disrupt early and mail-in voting in Democratic-run states. Attorney General Todd Blanche said there would be more lawsuits like the one filed in California last week, seeking to force states to use lists of non-citizens created by the Department of Homeland Security to block voters from casting ballots, even though the lists have not been verified and are riddled with errors.

In North Carolina, the Republican-controlled State Board of Elections and the Guilford County board refused early voting sites at North Carolina A&T State University and the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG), though both had campus polling places in 2024. On October 15, the first day of early voting, hundreds of students from A&T, UNCG and

Bennett College marched about 45 minutes to the nearest early voting site, at times in the street where sidewalks were missing. The state board has also eliminated the campus site at Western Carolina University, where students without cars must walk nearly two miles, partly along a four-lane highway, to vote.

The Democratic Party's answer is to go to court. On Wednesday, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and the party's Senate, House and governors' campaign committees asked a federal court in Washington to bar the administration from forcing states to purge eligible voters. It is their second such suit in a month. When they sued in September over Trump's threats to send ICE and FBI agents to polling places, they said Trump was attacking the right to vote "because he knows his cost-raising agenda is deeply unpopular," and promised to "defeat Trump in court yet again."

The Democrats speak for a section of the ruling class that fears a popular movement against Trump far more than it fears Trump. A president who cheers the beating of a protester, calls a Muslim Senate candidate a "Terrorist Sympathizer" and turns the Justice Department against the vote is presented as a problem of unpopular prices and legal procedure. They leave it to judges and a Supreme Court that has cleared the way for third-country deportations and much else. Beyond urging people to vote early, they have made no appeal to the population to defend its democratic rights. That defense falls to the working class, which must organize independently of both parties of the corporate oligarchy.



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