

JD Vance on New York Times The Interview | Oct 12, 2024

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Speakers:

Lulu Garcia Navarro - 21.49%

JD Vance - 78.51%

Notes:

Summary by ChatGPT

- **Evolving Views on Trump:** Vance explains his shift from being critical of Trump to becoming a supporter, attributing the change to a growing belief that Trump's confrontational style addresses the flaws in American media and political culture.

- **Media and Soundbites:** He critiques the media's focus on soundbites, arguing that selective clips often misrepresent him and contribute to a skewed public perception.

- Political Divisiveness: Vance discusses how he initially blamed Trump for increasing divisiveness but later came to view it as a reaction to an American media and political landscape disconnected from the public.

- Strategic Debate Tactics: He reflects on his debate approach, suggesting that his style varies depending on the opponent and the issues, and explains his rationale for not being overly aggressive with certain individuals.

- Cultural Discontent: Vance expresses a belief that Trump's rhetoric, which he initially saw as problematic, is necessary to address underlying frustrations and grievances among Americans who feel overlooked by mainstream institutions.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:00:00

Senator Vance, thank you so much for doing this. I appreciate your time.

JD Vance

00:00:02

Thank you.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:00:03

Uh, before we get into policy, I do want to sort of ask you a few questions about how you got here.

JD Vance

00:00:08

Sure.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:00:08

And your worldview a little bit. You know, one of the things that many people said to me in advance of this interview is which JD Vance, um, is gonna show up, and I think that speaks to sort of this persistent question that people have about you.

JD Vance

00:00:24

Sure.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:00:24

Which is they saw you on the debate stage and you seemed more empathetic, more moderate. And then there's the JD Vance we've seen on the campaign trail, the JD Vance we've heard on right wing podcasts, who can sound more aggrieved, more angry. How

would you explain that contrast?

JD Vance

00:00:40

Well, isn't that how most people are? Right? Sometimes they're frustrated with what's going on in the country. Sometimes, uh, they are a little bit more optimistic. Sometimes it's both. Right. You're maybe optimistic about the country, about its people, people, about its resources, about its beauty, but also frustrated by its leadership. And I think it's sort of the nature of being an American in 2024, at least in my political persuasion, is that you have some, uh, I think, deep and abiding love for this nation. You have a certain. At least I have a certain optimism and hope rooted in my trust and faith in its people. But I am very frustrated by what's going on, uh, with our leadership and some of our public policy. So I think it's just all of these things that all these things are true, uh, at once. And I think that's just how most people are.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:01:28

So you weren't frustrated at the debate?

JD Vance

00:01:30

Um, well, sometimes I got frustrated. Right. I criticized Kamala Harris's immigration policies. I got a little frustrated at the, uh, what I thought was the artificial fact check there. Uh, but again, that frustration, I think, coexists with, uh, a lot of other feelings, too. And I try to sort of try to show that to everybody. I think that if you watched, you know, a 45 minutes JD Vance rally, you, um, would not have been surprised by the debate performance. I think what happens is that if you take a clip out of context from four years, and that's the only way you've ever been introduced to me, then sure, the debate performance might have been surprising, but I don't think most people were surprised by it.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:02:07

Your own campaign, though, said that you were doing Minnesota. Nice to sort of throw off Tim Waltz, who was expecting perhaps a more combative version of you. So it was a tactic?

JD Vance

00:02:19

Well, I mean, look, uh, I guess that's a distinction to me, without a difference is, again, sometimes you're going to try to discuss the issues of the day. Sometimes you're going to be pushing back a little bit more aggressively. I think what was interesting about how we did the debate is I try to be conversational with Tim Walsh, because, to be honest, I don't know Tim Walsh that well. I don't have a strong view of him. There's a lot of disagreements I have, policy wise. Uh, my real disagreement is with Kamala Harris, with the way that she's led the country, with some of her views and some of her opinions. And so, in some ways, I

don't know if combative is the right word, but I was certainly disagreeable vis a vis Kamala Harris's policies. But I didn't feel this need to sort of go in and light into Tim waltz. That's just not how I feel about him.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:03:05

Why do you think, though, so many people have that thought about you, that they don't know which version of you they're gonna get? And, you know, there's been think pieces about this, there's been podcasts about this, um, people who are trying to understand who you are.

JD Vance

00:03:22

Sure. Well, I think a lot of it. I mean, who knows? Um, but my best guess on this is that if you're a New York Times reader or you're broadly center left, most of what you've read about me has come from some version of, um, something that was planted by a political opponent. Now, let's say I do a two hour podcast interview, and you see the 45 seconds where I say the most contentious thing that I said in that entire two hour interview. But I think if you watch the entire two hour interview, you wouldn't be surprised with what I've said on the debate stage, with what I've said at my rallies, with what I've said during my press conferences and so forth. So I think that it's the nature of political media in 2024 is because you can sort of take a clip and make it go viral on social media, or you can write a news story about that viral clip. Um, we're just not sort of digesting the long form conversation that I think most people. Again, if you were to ask the normal middle class american whether they agree with me or disagree with me, two hour conversation about politics, and you went through a dozen different issues, I think, that you'd see, well, sometimes they'd be pissed off about something, sometimes they'd be pleased with something. Sometimes they'd agree or they'd disagree. But I just think that the way that we do political media is really built around soundbites. Maybe that's always been true, but it's certainly true in 2024.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:04:45

Yeah, I mean, I do think that there's something else going on, though, which is you have obviously shifted some of your viewpoints. You've acknowledged that.

JD Vance

00:04:54

Look, I mean, yeah, like, look, there's certainly the. I was anti Trump, and now, obviously, I'm running as Donald Trump's running mate. But it's something that, again, if you watched the two hour podcast interview, you wouldn't be surprised about. Cause I talk about it, and I know that's part of what we're doing today.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:05:06

Yeah, it is. I, um, mean, just to remind people, you called Trump, um, America's Hitler, and I'm sure you possibly don't like that quoted back at you at every single moment. And I read a really fascinating interview that you gave, um, to the American conservative in 2016.

JD Vance

00:05:25

Okay.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:05:26

Where you said, Donald Trump, and I'm quoting here, um, he has dragged down our entire political conversation. He spent way too much time appealing to people's fears. Why do you feel more comfortable with his approach today?

JD Vance

00:05:40

Well, I think there are a few reasons. I mean, one is I was pretty optimistic right after Trump's election. So you sort of go back a little bit. You know, I was. The book really took off right before he was elected.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:05:53

Hillbilly.

JD Vance

00:05:54

Yeah. Hillbillyology. And it had kind of like this second wind that was somehow even bigger than the first win. And I remember I was doing all of these interviews the night of the election. I think it was ABC, where I spent most of that night. And I was talking to people sort of privately, but then, of course, I was going on TV. And the biggest takeaway that I had from that moment is that it was genuinely a shock to the senses for most of America's political and media class. They really were certain that he was going to lose. I mean, to be fair, I didn't think he was going to win. Better chance than most people. But in the immediate aftermath, there was this sort of sense of, okay, well, we misunderstood something. We got something wrong. Maybe we should try to understand where this, like, underlying frustration and sense of grievances in the population writ large. And that lasted for all of about a month. And then it was like, very quickly, it was the academic studies that said that, well, Donald Trump's voters were not motivated by any sort of legitimate concern. They were only motivated by racism. And then, of course, the media kind of laundered that in to the mainstream discourse. And then, of course, there was the Russia, Russia, Russia cycle where it was, well, the only reason Donald Trump won is because he was like, you know, collaborating with Vladimir Putin, which even when I was anti-Trump, I thought that narrative was absurd. And I guess that what I slowly learned is that if you believe the American political culture is fundamentally healthy, but maybe biased towards the left, then Donald Trump is not the right solution to that problem. If, as

I slowly developed a viewpoint that the american political culture was, like, deeply diseased and the american media conversation had become so deranged that it couldn't even process the frustrations of a large share, maybe even a. A close to majority of the country, then when you say, well, I don't like Donald Trump's language, well, Donald Trump's language actually maybe makes a whole lot more sense if you assume that the institutions are much more corrupted than they were before. So the point that I got to was, if Donald Trump didn't talk like this, and if Donald Trump wasn't going directly, directly at the institutions, then he wouldn't be able to get anything done. And most importantly, he wouldn't be able to illustrate how broken the american political and media culture is right now. And so what I saw in 2016 as a fault of Donald Trump's, by 2018, 2019, I very much saw as an advantage.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:08:33

That's interesting. So what I'm hearing you say is that in 2016, you felt that the divisiveness and the language was, um, a symptom of perhaps a problem with Donald Trump. And by 2018, you saw it as a solution to the problem.

JD Vance

00:08:49

I put it slightly differently. I think that in 2016, I saw the divisiveness in american politics as at least partly Donald Trump's fault. And by 2018 2019, I saw that divisiveness as the fault of an american political and media culture that couldn't even pay attention to its own citizens. And Donald Trump was not driving the divisiveness. He was merely responding to it and giving voice to a group of people who had been completely ignored. And he was doing it in a way that really did poke his eye at that diseased media culture. And I think Donald Trump is, you know, not just. I put it this way, I don't know that anybody else in 2016 possibly could have done what trump did. And I think his rhetoric actually was a necessary part of it.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:09:44

I mean, one of the reasons I am focusing in on this initially, which sort of JD Vance comes out is because earlier, uh, this year, the Times published a series of email and text exchanges, um, from 2014 to 2017, between you and your Yale Law school friend, Sophia Nelson, uh, who is transgender. And that friendship eventually ended her telling, uh, because of your support for a ban on gender affirming care for minors in Arkansas.

JD Vance

00:10:13

Yep.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:10:14

The tone of that early correspondence was respectful. It was affectionate. Even though

you didn't always agree with her, were you more open to differences at that time in your life?

JD Vance

00:10:26

No, I don't think so. I mean, look, uh, I think I'd like to think we're having a respectful conversation. But what? I disagree with people. Sometimes I'm a little sarcastic. But that was true ten years ago, right? Sometimes I like to make fun of the political and media environment that we're in, but that was true ten years ago, too. Again, all of these things exist at the same time. Most people are complicated. They're not just, like, happy go lucky or really engage in dialogue. Right. Sometimes they're making jokes, sometimes they're more serious. I just think that's how I am. I think it's how most people are, too. But look, I mean, Sophia. I'm not gonna sit here and criticize Sophia. I love Sophia. I am very sad about what happened between me and Sophia. Um, I think that going back 2013, 2014, she's my friend, she's transgender. I didn't fully understand it. I just thought, I love this person and I care about her, and I don't have to agree with every medical decision that she makes or even understand it to say, well, I love you, I care about you. I'm still going to hang out with you. We're still going to talk about football, um, sort of be friends. And I think we had this conversation, I can't remember when. It was maybe around the time my Senate campaign. It was maybe before, but I had children at that point, and we were talking about gender affirming care for minors. I think a, uh, more honest way to say is not gender affirming care, but chemical experimentation on minors. And my affection for her didn't mean that I thought this was a reasonable thing to do to eleven year old children who were confused. Sometimes confused by social media, uh, sometimes confused because it's really hard to be an eleven year old, certainly in today's media environment. And, yeah, we had a very strong disagreement about whether the proper response to that was humility. I would say it's humility. Don't give life altering care to these kids. Potentially life destroying care to these kids. And she disagreed with me. She thought it was sort of a front to transgender rights. Now, what I would have done normally in that situation is to say, you know, we can agree to disagree. I mean, Sophie and I disagreed about a whole host of issues over our long friendship, and sometimes we would do it aggressively, but ultimately, we're going to be friends despite that. And I think it was to be clear. I mean, yeah, she leaked my emails, and I think that's a violation of trust, and I'm frustrated by that. But I would still be Sophia's friend today, even though I feel very strongly that she's not just wrong, but very dangerously wrong about chemical experimentation on minors.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:13:10

I guess what I'm asking is, have you, like, you came to see Donald Trump's approach as a necessary means to an end? Did you come to see that as a necessary approach for yourself? I mean, you talked about in Hillville Elegy and the power of persuasion through empathy, but you also bring a much different approach to many of the things that you do

now. So, again, I think it was very jarring for people to see those emails and see a, ah, JD Vance, that, frankly, hasn't been on display.

JD Vance

00:13:41

Well, they say it's jarring to see the emails, but they say it's jarring to see some of my rally performances, and then it's jarring to see my debate. Maybe the problem isn't that I'm, you.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:13:51

Know, but do you see it as necessary now to be more abrasive?

JD Vance

00:13:55

So I don't answer that question, but maybe the thing that they're actually noticing is that if you see somebody in all their complexity, they don't fit the caricature. But it's not some big change that I've made. And, yes, I've changed my views, I'll be honest about that on certain things. But there's not some, like, major change. It's just that they're seeing, sometimes they're forced to see the non caricature version of me. And I think that's certainly going on. Um, but no, I mean, look, I think, look, President Trump's approach is President Trump's approach, his style is his style. Do I think that his style and his approach is a necessary corrective to what's broken about american society? Yes, I do. That doesn't mean I'm going to try to be Donald Trump, because, one, nobody can be Donald Trump. I think he's a uniquely, um, interesting and charismatic figure, but it's just not who I am. Right. Fundamentally, he and I are gonna have different styles. But I think if you were to say, take Donald Trump's style, and the way that he criticizes the media, and the way that I'm criticizing the media to you right now, I think those criticisms are actually pointing at the exact same direction. We're just putting it in slightly different ways in our own sort of distinctive perspectives. But I've never felt like I need to somehow copy somebody else's style.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:15:11

I mean, it wasn't just the tone of those exchanges, though. You did express some beliefs that are different than the ones you hold today. I mean, you said, like, what do you mean, I hate the police? And so I'm wondering, did you write that? Why did you write that? What had happened to make you feel that way?

JD Vance

00:15:29

First of all, um, have you ever said something in a private conversation that, out of context wouldn't necessarily translate to a public conversation? I think 100% of people would say yes. Uh, I don't exactly remember when I sent that email, but I strongly suspect that what happened is. So when Usha and I lived in San Francisco for a couple of years, and when we

first moved, uh, this is such. I get frustrated even thinking about it right now. When we first moved, there was a break in in the car that I had, and it was stupid. I shouldn't have left her suitcase in the car to begin with, but I did. And it had a ton of, like, completely priceless things. I'm not talking about priceless, as we paid a lot of money, but, like, the necklace her grandmother gave her that she bought in India that she gave her on, like, the morning of our wedding, things like that that were stolen. And I went to the police in San Francisco, and it was. Have you ever seen the movie the big Lebowski when the guy's car is stolen? Okay, so I love the big Lebowski when, like, the dude has his car stolen. He says, hey, are you, like, investigating it? And the cop kind of chuckles and says, yeah, we got a couple detectives down at the cardinal. That was kind of the response that I got to, are you guys gonna try to recover this stuff? I was frustrated at the police. I fired off a frustrated email to a friend. And again, this is why I think it's, like, a violation of trust is. Do I think that is at all representative of my views in the police? Do I think it was representative of my views of the police writ large in 2016 or 2014 or whenever I sent that email? No, of course not. You sent something to a friend. Hey, I'm uh, pissed off about this. I think it's very ridiculous for the media to say, well, JD used to be like a, ah, defund the police guy, because in a private email, I expressed some frustration about a distinctive police officer. Come on.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:17:20

So, just to be clear, Senator Vance, the reason we ask about this is because it is a window into your evolving views, and that is important for people to know who they're going to be voting for.

JD Vance

00:17:30

I think it's totally reasonable for you to ask about it. I'm saying the political. Certain political members who have said, oh, this reveals, like, somehow Jdeheh didn't support police officers ten years ago. I just think it's a preposterous argument.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:17:44

After you left Yale, you went to Silicon Valley, the world of venture capital you worked for, and became close with Peter Thiel in 2016. 2017. He had an enormous influence on you, dear friend. Um, by 2021, you were running for Senate as a support of Trump. And right in between that, in 2019, you converted to Catholicism.

JD Vance

00:18:05

Yeah.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:18:05

I'm a fellow Catholic. I find this very interesting, and I would love for you to describe what

appealed to you about the catholic faith.

JD Vance

00:18:14

Yeah. So, one, before I answer that question, I just offer a caveat out there. So what I really hate, and I've seen this with some converts, is they come into the faith, they act like they know everything. They speak for all Catholics. I'm never going to do that. I never want to do that. Look, I mean, I think there are a couple of things that really appealed about it to me. I mean, first of all, generally, Christianity, I was thinking about the big questions, thinking about 2019, but, you know, 2017 to 2019, when I was thinking about reengaging with my faith, I became a father. During that period, you know, I was very successful professionally. Instead of thinking about the working class family that I'd grown up in, uh, I had a lot more money than I ever thought I would have. I had my own venture capital firm. And there was this weird way where I felt like I had succeeded at climbing the ladder of meritocracy. But I had also found the values of the meritocracy, frankly, deeply wanting and deeply lacking. And when I started thinking about the big things, what do I actually care about in my life? I really want to be a good husband. I really want to be a good father. I really want to be sort of a good member of the community. I wanted to be a virtuous human being. In other words, that was sort of the thing that I kept on coming back to, was how to be virtuous and I thought that Christianity that I had discarded as a young man answered the questions about being a virtuous person better than the logic of the american meritocracy. And then that sort of led me on a journey of, okay, well, I'm gonna be a Christian again. What church do I actually wanna raise my children in? What church do I wanna be a participant of? And I just kept coming back for very personal reasons. Um, friends of mine who I thought were just good people, not all of them, but a lot of them were Catholics. And I talked to them about their faith and about what appealed to them about their faith. And, uh, that eventually led me to getting baptized in 2019. And the other thing I'll say about is Usha was raised in kind of a hindu household, but not especially religious household. And, um, she was, like, really into it, meaning she thought that thinking about the question of converting and getting baptized and becoming a Christian, she thought that they were good for me, like, in sort of a good for your soul kind of way. And I don't think I would have ever done it without her support because I felt kind of bad about it. You didn't sign up for a weekly church goer? I feel terrible for my wife because we go to church almost every Sunday unless we're on the road.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:20:31

And does she go with you?

JD Vance

00:20:33

I mean, she does, yeah, she does.

Has she converted?

JD Vance

00:20:35

No, she hasn't? No. That's why I feel bad about it is she's got three kids. Um, obviously I help with the kids, but because I'm kind of the one going to church, she feels like more responsibility to keep the kids quiet in the church. And I just. I felt kind of bad, like, oh, you didn't sign up to marry a weekly churchgoer? And are you okay with this? And she was sort of more than okay with it, and that was a big part of, I guess, the confirmation that this was the right thing for me.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:21:02

So, um, I'm really interested about your conversion also, because you wrote a lot in hillbilly elegy about the chaos of your family life as a child. Your mother was an alcoholic and a drug addict. Shes been sober for nearly ten years now, we should say. Um, you talk about being raised by your grandmother and your older sister and having a rotating sort of cast of untrustworthy parental figures, um, specifically men in your life. How much of your draw to Catholicism do you think is related to the appeal of the strong family values, of the focus on the nuclear family?

JD Vance

00:21:42

That's a big part of it, especially the stability of it. I'm not just talking about the stability of the nuclear family, but the stability of an institution that has endured over 2000 years. Right? I mean, I'm like most people, very aware of my mortality. And I kind of like the idea of being part of something that's existed over many generations and hopefully will endure for many, many generations to come. But, yeah, I mean, when I talk about being a good husband, being a good father, the way I've often put it, is the american dream to me was never making a lot of money, buying a big house, driving a fast car. It was having what me and Usha have right now.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:22:22

It's strange that you went into venture capital then, but go on.

JD Vance

00:22:24

No, sure. I mean, look, I wanted to make money. I'm not saying, uh, I'm anti making money, but when I thought about what I really wanted out of my life, what I really wanted was what Ushan I have right now and then I wanted to raise our kids in stability. I wanted our kids to know something that really bothered me when I was a kid was like, people would ask me my address and I would give them my address, not knowing if they wrote me a letter a month from then whether I would still have that same address. I hated the fact that I had these different addresses, which is something that really bothered me as a

kid. And I think it was sort of reflective of the broader instability in my life. Um, you know, our kids have had. My son Ewan, I guess, has had a couple, but the other two of Brady Greenwich only had their Cincinnati address their entire lives. And that's like a very, very important and good thing for me. And, yeah, that's certainly part of the appeal of the catholic faith.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:23:21

Um, your position on those family values have gotten a lot of scrutiny lately.

JD Vance

00:23:26

Sure.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:23:27

Uh, you've talked about childless cat ladies. Um, you've called childless people sociopathic, psychotic, deranged. And I know that you've said that those comments were sarcastic, but it's hard to hear those words entirely as a joke. What do you actually think of childless women in society?

JD Vance

00:23:48

Well, as I said when I made those comments, and look, they were dumb comments, uh, I certainly, um. I think most people probably who watched this have said something dumb, have said something that they wish they had put differently.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:24:01

And you said it over several. In several different venues in a very.

JD Vance

00:24:05

Very short period of time. It was sort of a thing that I picked up on. I said it a couple of times in a couple of interviews and look, yeah, I mean, I certainly wish that I had said it differently. I mean, what I was trying to get at is that, look, I'm not talking about people who. It just didn't work out right. For medical reasons, for social reasons. Set that to the side. We're not talking about folks like that. Um, what I was definitely trying to illustrate, and ultimately a very inarticulate way, is that I do think that our country has become almost pathologically anti child. I put this in a couple of different ways. Right. So, uh, there's one. It was actually when I was in law school, it was on a train between New York and New Haven. I think I was doing like law firm interviews or something. And obviously I didn't have kids then. And there's this young girl gets on the train, she's probably 21 or 22, she's young, black, female, clear leg. By the way she was dressed. She didn't have a whole lot of money. She had a couple of kids with her. And I remember just watching her and

thinking, this is a really unbelievably patient mother for being literally younger than I was. The reason I noticed her is because her kids, like a lot of kids that age, are complete disasters, especially on public transportation. They turn it up to eleven. But she was being so patient. But then, like, everybody around her was also noticing the kids being misbehaved. And they were so angry and, you know, they were, ah, uh, and sighing and staring every time her two year old made a noise. And I. That was sort of a moment that kind of stuck with me. And then, of course, I've had similar experiences writing with my own kids on the various modes of public transportation. And again, it just sort of hit me like, okay, this is really, really bad, this thing that we do where we make motherhood or fatherhood, or we just. There's this. Again, I do think that there's this pathological frustration with children that just is a new thing in american society. I think it's very dark. I think you see it sometimes in the political conversation, people saying, well, maybe we shouldn't have kids because of climate change. I've used this word, sociopathic, that I, uh, think is a very deranged idea. The idea that you shouldn't have a family because of concerns over climate change doesn't mean you can't worry about climate change. But in the focus on childless cat ladies.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:26:40

So are you saying that women who don't want to have children.

JD Vance

00:26:43

That's a sense of what I said.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:26:44

Sorry, uh, sorry, I just want to clarify something. So women who don't have children because they're worried about climate change, that's sociopathic.

JD Vance

00:26:51

I think that is a bizarre way of thinking about the future, not to have kids because of concerns over climate change. Um, I think the more bizarre thing is our leadership, who encourages young women and, frankly, young men to think about it that way. Bringing life into the world has totally transformed the way that I think about myself, the way that I think about my wife, the way that I think. I mean, you watch your grandparents interact with grandchildren, it is like a transformatively positive and good thing for there to be children in the world. And if your political philosophy is saying, don't do that because of concerns over climate change, yeah, I think that's a really, really crazy way to think about the world.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:27:34

Uh, I mean, we don't know why Kamala Harris did not have children, but do you include

Kamala Harris in the category of women that you're talking about?

JD Vance

00:27:43

No. I mean, look, it was. Everything I know about Kamala Harris is that I've learned about Kamala Harris is that she's got a stepfamily, she's got an extended family, she's a very good stepmother to her stepchildren. I would never accuse Kamala Harris along these lines. What I would say is that sometimes Kamala Harris, she hasn't quite jumped over the, you shouldn't have kids because of climate change. But I think in some of our interviews, she's suggested there's a reasonableness to that perspective. But again, I don't think that's a reasonable perspective. I think that if your political ideas motivate you to not have children, then that is a bizarre way of looking at the world. Now, again, sometimes it doesn't work out. Sometimes people choose not to have children. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about the political sensibility that's very anti child. And again, I think that what I. What really bothers me about, um, the childless cat lady's comment, aside from the fact that, of course, it offended a lot of people, and I understand that, but it actually distracted my wife and made this point, distracted from the core point of what I was making, which is that there is something very anti family and very anti child that has crept into american society. And you see it. I think if you take your kid on an airplane, you see it. If you take your kid to a restaurant and people huff and puff at you, you see it in some of our political policies. I mean, go back to 2020, and I don't talk about this. This much because most Americans don't care about it. But when those of us who had children were really reacting to what I would call the COVID tyranny. But three year olds being forced to wear masks and not even asking ourselves, well, okay, the main way that three year olds pick up on language development is they see the nonverbal expression that comes along with it. Like, are we completely obliterating the language and social development of children? A lot of parents were thinking that. A lot of our elected leaders were not taking that parent, that parental perspective. And I think because of it, we responded to it in a disastrous way for our kids, our education system. Pretty much everybody will tell you that. Our public schools, in particular, our kids, fell behind in reading, they fell behind in mathematics, our toddlers fell behind when it comes to language development. We have become anti family in this country. I believe that. I think the data is very clear about that. And, yeah, I should have put this in a better way. But the point still remains.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:30:12

I want to talk about another big issue when it comes to women and families, and it has been hard to figure out what, uh, you and former President Trump would do when it comes to reproductive rights.

JD Vance

00:30:21

Sure.

Um, Trump has said he believes abortion laws should be left up to the states. He sometimes supported a six week ban, sometimes he's not supported a six week ban. Uh, he supports exceptions for rape and incest. You have previously come out in favor of federal restrictions in your campaign for the senate, um, with no exceptions except to save the life of the mother. You said Trump wouldn't sign a national abortions ban, but then he said, you, JD vance, don't really know what he'll do. And in last week's debate, you did try to appear somewhat more moderate on the issue. It is all painting, I think, a very confusing picture.

JD Vance

00:31:01

Well, I don't think it should paint a confusing picture. I mean, look, let me just be clear, of course, on abortion policy, President Trump's view is, leave it to the states. His, uh, view is he wants any state to have the three exceptions. He cares very much about that. And national policy should focus, as I said in the debate on expanding the optionality, because, again, I knew a lot of young women who had abortions. Almost always it was motivated by this view that that was the only choice really available to them, that if they had had the baby, it would have destroyed their relationships, their family, their education, their career. And I think that we want to be pro family in the fullest sense of the word. We want to promote more people choosing life and I say this as a person who wants to encourage young women and young families to choose life. But I think that there has to be a balance here, a balance between states that are making their own abortion policies. Of course, California is going to have different policies from Georgia, as we've already seen. And then at, uh, the federal government promoting and increasing the optionality, the choices available, which is gonna make it easier for women to choose life in the first place. And that you, uh, know, look, you talk about being confused. I never came out for a national abortion ban, no restrictions. What I did, to be clear in my Senate campaign, is I endorsed the Lindsey Graham bill that had exceptions. And that would have, after a threshold, I think it was 15 weeks, said with reasonable exceptions. You know, after 15 weeks, that's a reasonable place to kind of draw the line.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:32:37

You said in a podcast, uh, I'm just gonna quote here, that you'd like abortion to be illegal nationally. That was on the podcast, very fine people in 2022. And you've discussed the fact that people might be able to get abortions in other states, and you said you would need some federal response to prevent that from happening. I'm pretty sympathetic to that. That actually.

JD Vance

00:32:57

Well, what Trump has said and what we said on this campaign is states are going to make these choices. Now. Yes, I said in a podcast, I mean, I don't have the podcast in front of

me, but I'm sure that I said, uh, what you said, I said, but that's just reflective of my view expressed in 2022, that I want to protect as much vulnerable life as possible. But we're in a different world than we were in 2022. Number one, of course, uh, we now have this decision, primarily thanks to the Supreme Court, left to the states. I think that's, again, that's where Donald Trump and I think it should be. But also, look, I've learned a little bit about this, and I talked about this in the debate when the Supreme Court threw this back primarily to the states. What all Republicans should have learned is when you see people voting, sometimes even people who describe themselves as pro life, voting for increased access to abortion, the conclusion that we should take from that is we've lost the trust of the american people. And again, in 2023, I guess we had a big referendum, um, in the state of Ohio. I campaigned on one side, the people of Ohio. Not like a super right wing state by any means, but, you know, a center right state. Certainly the state of Ohio voted 60 40 to go in the other direction and to implement, I think a much more liberal abortion regime than certainly the people on the other side were campaigning for. Well, what do you take from that? Right. You can take the lesson that, well, you know, we just didn't campaign hard enough. We didn't make the case hard enough. I don't think that's right. I think the proper thing to take from that is we have lost the trust of the american people. When we went out there and campaigned for our position, they instinctively mistrusted us, and we need to get trust back.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:34:50

What does that mean, though? I've heard you say that, but I don't understand what that means.

JD Vance

00:34:54

I think it's by pursuing these pro family policies. I think it's by making it.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:34:57

So it's not by moderating your position on abortion.

JD Vance

00:35:01

No. Rather than trying to say that we're going to take options away from women, we want to make it easier for young women to choose life. But I think the way that you're going to do that in 2024 in the United States of America is to let the states determine their own abortion policy. Now, again, part of that is protecting the ability of the states to make these decisions. Kamala Harris wants to re nationalize the abortion conversation, go in the exact opposite direction. President Trump are saying yes. President Trump and I are saying yes. Sometimes these issues are messy. Sometimes it's gonna be a little unusual for, say, California to have a different abortion policy than Alabama. But democracy is sometimes messy. We wanna preserve the right of the states to make it.

So you are okay with women traveling to another state to get an abortion? That is something that you would like to see preserved in this country?

JD Vance

00:36:01

Okay.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:36:03

Yes or no?

JD Vance

00:36:03

Uh, it's a lulu. I'm saying I'm okay with the states making these decisions. Now you talk about what I'm okay with. Do I think that the voters of California are going to enact a more liberal policy that I might like to see? Yes. In fact, I'm certainly, um. I accept that as the reality of the state level, state focused regime that President Trump and I are encouraging people to take. Am I okay with it? I don't think that's the right way to look at it. I'm okay with the states making these decisions, even if they make decisions that JD Vance or Donald Trump might not make.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:36:37

I want to move on to immigration.

JD Vance

00:36:39

Sure.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:36:40

Um, it's another place where you have had a bit of a conversion. Uh, you wrote a piece in 2012, while you were still at Yale, criticizing the GOP's immigration positions. And in it, you said, and I'm quoting here. Think, uh, about it. We conservatives rightly mistrust the government to efficiently administer business loans and regulate our food supply, that it can deport millions of unregistered aliens. The notion fails to pass the laugh test. What changed?

JD Vance

00:37:07

Well, three and a half years of Kamala Harris didn't help. Right. You have 25 million people illegally in the country. I think when I wrote that piece.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:37:14

We were probably hosting, we don't know the number.

We were at six or 7 million. Yeah. I mean, look, it's an estimate, right? I think DHS has said it's probably 20 million. I think they're undercounting it for a host of reasons. But whatever it is, it's a hell of a lot higher than it was twelve years ago. And I think that what we've learned is that unless you're serious about deportations, you are never going to meaningfully enforce the border. It's just too easy to come here. Right? So you need two things, fundamentally, you need, whether it's physical or technological, ideally both. You need some sort of physical barrier, a wall, to make it harder for people to come here illegally in the first place. And you need to be willing to deport people, I think, pretty substantially. When you have numbers that are as high as they are today.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:37:57

How long do you think it would take to deport 20 million people? Because President Trump has promised to deport as many people, uh, undocumented people, in this country as there are. So what does that timeline look like for you?

JD Vance

00:38:10

Well, I don't think you even have to deport every single one of them, because a lot of them will actually leave the country willingly if you make it harder for them to work. Right. So I think that you have to combine. And again, President Trump and I really think this is necessary, you have to deport a large number of people. There are way too many illegal aliens in this country. You have to reestablish some deterrence in law enforcement for people coming here illegally. I, uh, think it's certainly reasonable to deport around a million people per year in the United States of America. Now, of course, we have 25 million. So, uh, that would take a long time, 25 years, if my math is correct. But again, I don't think that you have to deport everybody, because if you reestablish some semblance of a reasonable water policy, a lot of those people are going to go home willingly. If you make it harder for american companies to undercut the wages of american workers by hiring illegal labor, a lot of those folks are going to go home. I've, uh, introduced legislation to tax remittances because a lot of what goes on is that people come into the country, they make money, they send a lot of it home to whatever country they came from. If you tax the remittances, then people aren't going to come here to sort of try to work under the table to begin with. I think the focus here is, like, somewhat off because people talk about the logistical difficulty of making this happen. Well, again, we have had large scale deportation efforts in the United States. I mean, look, Barack Obama, to his great credit, deported a hell of a lot more people than Kamala Harris has. So you can deport people in this country who are here illegally. You just have to have the political willpower to do it. But if you don't do this, Lulu, I mean, what are you. You're basically saying the United States doesn't have meaningful border policy. I mean, mexican drug cartels have become the wealthiest criminal organization maybe in the entire world because of what Kamala Harris has done at the border. Not to mention, like, I'm a big believer in the social contract in this country. Like, I benefited sometimes from a generous

United States government, meaning a generous United States taxpayer that made it possible for us to afford things that we wouldn't have always been able to afford. So when you bring in millions upon millions of people, you degrade and destroy the social trust that's necessary to support any kind of a modern support for poor people. Food assistance, housing assistance. You are not going to have that stuff if you allow millions upon millions of people into this country illegally, and then they get to take advantage of it.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:40:33

Well, let's say you were successful in carrying out those mass deportations. One thing that everyone agrees on is that more housing is necessary in this country. Right. Um, the reason that there is a housing crisis is that not enough houses have been built and that we have.

JD Vance

00:40:46

25 million people who shouldn't be here.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:40:48

Well, I mean, this is the thing.

JD Vance

00:40:50

I think it's both.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:40:51

Um, I know you do. I don't think that many, um, people who look into this agree with you, but about a third of the construction workforce in this country is hispanic. Of those, a large portion are undocumented. So how do you propose to build all the housing necessary that we need in this country by removing all the people who are working in construction?

JD Vance

00:41:10

Well, I think it's a fair question because we know that back in the 1960s, when we had very low levels of illegal immigration, Americans didn't buy houses didn't build houses, but of course they did. And I'm being sarcastic, of course, in service of appoint lulu the assumption that because a large number of homebuilders now are using undocumented labor, that that's the only way to build homes.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:41:33

I think, again, this is, the country is much bigger. The need is much bigger. I mean, I'm not arguing in favor of illegal immigration. I'm asking how you would deal with the knock on

effect of your proposal to remove millions of people who work in a critical part of the economy.

JD Vance

00:41:47

Well, I think that what you would do is you would take, let's say, for example, the 7 million prime age men who have dropped out of the labor force, and you have a smaller number of women, but still millions of women, prime age, who have dropped out of the labor force. Um, you absolutely could reengage folks into the american labor market.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:42:07

This is, I think, to work in construction.

JD Vance

00:42:09

Of course you could, as long as you.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:42:11

The unemployment rate is 4.1% unemployment rate.

JD Vance

00:42:14

Lulu, this is important.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:42:15

But most people who don't work can't work in the regular economy. They're in the military, their parents, they're sick, they're old. They might not want to work in construction.

JD Vance

00:42:22

The unemployment rate does not count labor force participation dropouts. And again, this is one of the really deranged things that I think illegal immigration does to our society is it gets us in a mindset of saying we can only build houses with illegal immigrants and we have 7 million just men, not even women, just men, who have completely dropped out of the labor force. People say, well, Americans won't do those jobs. Americans won't do those jobs for below the table wages. They won't do those jobs for non living wages, but people will do those jobs. They will just do those jobs at certain wages. Think about the perspective of an american company, okay? I want them to go searching in their own country for their own citizens. Sometimes people who may be struggling with addiction or trauma get them reengaged into american society. We cannot have an entire american business community that is giving up on american workers and then importing millions of illegal laborers. That is what we have thanks to Kamala Harris's border policies. I think it's one of the biggest drivers of inequality. It's one of the biggest reasons why we have

millions of people who have dropped out of the labor force. Why try to reengage an american citizen in a good job if you can just import somebody from Central America who's going to work under the table for poverty wages. It is a disgrace, and it has led to the evisceration of the american middle class.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:43:44

So this brings us to, ah, another point, because the way that you discuss, um, immigrants has gotten a lot of scrutiny. The Springfield situation in particular, um, where you talked about the haitian immigrant community, which we should say, they are legally here and allowed to work, and you spread a rumor, or helped spread a rumor, that they were, um, eating pets, which turned out to be completely false. Off the back of that, there has been an enormous amount of hate turmoil in that, um, community. Bomb threats, kids not being able to go to school. Was the trade off worth it to you?

JD Vance

00:44:26

Well, there's a lot there that I want to respond to, but I want to pick up on the overall attitude, because when we talk about, of course, we can have a conversation. I think we've had a, uh, nice, respectful conversation here. But, you know, sometimes you can feel happy about the direction of this country, happy about its people, and very frustrated with american leaders. This issue, more than any other, makes me extraordinarily frustrated at american leaders, because american leaders who are talking about haitian immigrants, who have no right to be in this country, and we'll get to that in a second. They talk with such compassion about what's happened to the schools, about what people have been, uh, unable to do. Where is their compassion for american citizens in Springfield, Ohio, who now a community of 60,000 people, there are 1000 children in Springfield schools who do not speak English. For years, I have heard from the american citizens of Springfield, Ohio, that their lives have gotten worse. Have we talked about the fact that many of them have been evicted from their homes? And then haitian migrants are moved in, four families to a home, massively violating zoning laws.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:45:32

They get moved in.

JD Vance

00:45:34

They get subsidies.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:45:35

They have been attracted there because they're working.

They've been attracted there to violate zoning laws. Lulu, they're subsidized by the local authorities, by the federal authorities, by your tax dollars. So now four families are living in.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:45:46

A home, a republican run city. Four families. Republican run state, your state.

JD Vance

00:45:50

Four families are living. I'm talking about federal authorities, federal housing. Right now, four families are living in a home. They are paying way more for rent than an american citizen in Springfield can pay. So the american citizens have been evicted from their homes. They are finding housing unaffordable. They are waiting longer at hospitals. Their children are going to schools that are stressed because there are too many kids there who don't even speak the native language. I am so much more concerned by the american citizens of Springfield, Ohio. And I think that it is disgraceful that american leaders pretend that they care about these migrants more than they care about the people they took an oath of office to actually look after. And when you say that these haitian migrants in Springfield are legal, what you're doing is, I think, making an intentional bait and switch. Because what most people think, when they say legal resident, they think about somebody who comes to America, they get a green card. They come through the proper channels. They wait ten years.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:46:48

There's many ways to come to America.

JD Vance

00:46:50

But what happened, it's not just TPS. It's mass parole, which, by the way, has been challenged in court and is likely illegal. Kamala Harris has facilitated a massive amount of migration into american communities. And it is my job as a United States senator and hopefully as the next vice president, to look after the people who are affected. When you flood their community with millions, the national community, I'm talking about with millions upon millions of people who shouldn't be here, that is our responsibility. And I really don't understand the perspective of an american leadership class that seems to have so much compassion and look a lot.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:47:27

I mean, the 25, and those are Republicans, too. I mean, Mike DeWine came out and criticized you. Um, the governor of your home state.

I'm not talking about Mike DeWine right now, by the way. He endorsed us. But I'm talking about. Okay, you got 20,000 haitian migrants. A lot of them. I'd say most of them are probably very, very good people. But my compassion and my focus and my efforts as a political leader in this country, it is not for people, however good they might be, who don't have the legal right to be in this country. It's for american citizens.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:47:58

Last few questions in the debate, you were asked to clarify if you believe Trump lost the 2020 election. Do you believe he lost the 2020 election?

JD Vance

00:48:07

I think that Donald Trump and I have both raised a number of issues with the 2020 election, but we're focused on the future. I think there's an obsession here with focusing on 2020. I'm much more worried about what happened after 2020, which is a wide open border, groceries that are unaffordable.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:48:23

And look, senator, yes or no? Did Donald Trump lose the 2020 election?

JD Vance

00:48:28

Let me ask you a question. Is it okay that big technology companies censored the Hunter Biden laptop story, which independent analysis have said cost Donald Trump millions of votes?

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:48:38

Senator Vance, I'm going to ask you again. Did Donald Trump lose the 2020 election?

JD Vance

00:48:43

M. Did big technology companies censor a story that independent studies have suggested would have cost Trump millions of votes.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:48:51

Senator Vance, I'm going to ask you again, did Donald Trump lose the 2021?

JD Vance

00:48:55

And I've answered your question with another question. You answer my question, and I'll answer yours.

I have asked this question repeatedly. It is something that is very important for the American people to know. There is no proof, legal or otherwise, that Donald Trump did not lose the 2020 election.

JD Vance

00:49:12

You're repeating a slogan rather than engaging with what I'm saying, which is that when our own technology firms engage, and industrial scale censorship, by the way, backed up by the federal government in a way that independent studies suggest affect the votes, I'm worried about Americans who feel like there were problems in 2020. I'm not worried about this slogan that people throw. Well, every court case went this way. I'm talking about something very discreet, a problem of censorship in this country that I do think affected things in 2020. And more importantly, that led to Kamala Harris's governments, which has screwed this country up in a big way.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:49:48

Senator, would you have certified the election in 2020, yes or no?

JD Vance

00:49:52

I've said that I would have voted against certification because of the concern that I just raised. I think that when you have technology companies.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:49:57

The answer is no.

JD Vance

00:49:58

When you have technology companies censoring Americans at a mass scale in a way that, again, independent studies have suggested affect the vote, I think that it's right to protest against that, to criticize that, and that's a totally reasonable thing.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:50:11

So the answer is no. And the last question, will you support the election results this time and commit to a peaceful transfer of power?

JD Vance

00:50:18

Well, first of all, of course we commit to a peaceful transfer of power. We are going to have a peaceful transfer of power. Uh, I, of course, believe that peaceful transfer of power is going to make Donald Trump the next president of the United States. But if there are problems, of course, in the same way that Democrats protested in 2004 and Donald Trump raised issues in 2020, we're going to make sure that this election counts, that every

legal ballot is counted. We've filed almost 100 lawsuits at the RNC to try to ensure that every legal ballot has counted. I think you would maybe criticize that. We see that as an important effort to ensure election integrity, but certainly we're going to respect the results in 2024, and I feel very confident they're going to make Donald Trump the next president.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:51:01

Senator Vance, thank you so much.

JD Vance

00:51:02

Thank you.

Lulu Garcia Navarro

00:51:05

That was my interview with Senator JD Vance after our conversation. We checked with the Department of Homeland Security on the immigration numbers he cited. DHS says there were 11 million undocumented immigrants in the US in 2022, which is the most recent official estimate. There was an increase of illegal migration after 2022, but there are no official numbers yet. We also asked Senator Vance's campaign for credible sourcing for his claims about haitian migrants and zoning law violations in Springfield, Ohio. It did not provide any. And an additional note, Senator Vance's comments about the police were made in the context of a conversation about body cameras in the wake of the killing of Michael Brown by a police officer in 2014.

JD Vance

00:51:53

Mhm. Subscribe.