

JD Vance on Meet The Press | August 25, 2024

Auto-transcribed by <https://aliceapp.ai> on Sunday, 25 Aug 2024.
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Words	3,986
Duration	00:18:54
Recorded on	2024-08-25 22:06:17 UTC
Uploaded on	2024-08-25 22:06:17 UTC
Last update	
At	Unknown location
Using	Alice iOS app

Speakers:

Kristen Welker - 30.01%

JD Vance - 69.99%

Notes:

Summary by ChatGPT

- Tariffs and Economic Policy: JD Vance defended Donald Trump's proposed tariffs, arguing that they would not lead to increased costs for consumers but would instead bring back manufacturing jobs to the U.S. and stabilize supply chains. He challenged the idea that tariffs would harm the middle class, emphasizing the need for economic policies that prioritize American workers over foreign interests.

- Endorsement of RFK Jr.: Vance expressed strong support for Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s endorsement of Donald Trump, highlighting that Kennedy's values, particularly on free

speech and anti-censorship, align more with Trump's Republican Party than the current Democratic Party. He acknowledged differences with RFK Jr. on some issues but praised the endorsement as a sign of the Republican Party's broad appeal.

- Abortion and Federalism: Vance committed that neither he nor Donald Trump would support a federal ban on abortion if elected. He emphasized that abortion policy should be determined by individual states rather than the federal government, contrasting this view with the position of Kamala Harris and the Democratic Party.

- Immigration and Border Security: Vance criticized the current administration's handling of border security, claiming that Kamala Harris's policies have led to a significant increase in illegal immigration. He supported a mass deportation effort, starting with violent criminals, and argued that the administration's policies have already resulted in family separations due to poor border management.

- Election Integrity and 2024 Election: Vance addressed concerns about election integrity, aligning with Trump's focus on ensuring that all legal votes are counted and illegal votes are not. He expressed confidence that the 2024 election would be free and fair, despite Trump's rhetoric casting doubt on the electoral process.

Kristen Welker

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Senator JD Vance, welcome back to Meet the Press.

JD Vance

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Thank you. Thanks for having me.

Kristen Welker

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Thank you for having us here in Cincinnati. Let's start off with the Democratic National Convention. Some of what we heard this past week. Vice President Kamala Harris, in making her case, said that the tariff plans that Donald Trump is proposing will hurt the middle class. Here's what she said specifically, quote, he intends to enact what, in effect, is a national sales tax, call it a Trump tax, that would raise prices on middle class families by almost \$4,000 a year.

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Now, the estimates vary, but how do you respond to that charge that Trump's tariffs would hurt the middle class?

Yes, if you step back a little bit, Kristen, there's this whole thing that Kamala Harris did at the convention where she made a bunch of claims about what would happen and not enough actually reflection on what already happened. Right. Because Donald Trump was already president. He used tariffs to bring manufacturing jobs back to our country.

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And I think he'll do it again. And he did it while keeping prices extremely low. Because if you go back to the Trump presidency, we had 12,000 factories that were built during Donald Trump's presidency. Inflation never really ticked above 2%. His entire administration, in fact, was sort of around one and a half percent most of the time he was president.

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So when Kamala Harris says, if we do the thing that Trump already did, it's going to be way worse than it was last time, I just don't think that makes a lot of sense.

Kristen Welker

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Well, let's talk about Trump's record during his first term. He didn't post rounds of tariffs, and it cost americans nearly \$80 billion in new taxes. Do you acknowledge that imposing more tariffs will ultimately cost consumers?

JD Vance

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Well, what it really does is it penalizes importers from bringing goods outside the country into the country. And I think that's just a necessary thing. We know that China and a number of other countries are using, effectively, slave labor to undercut the wages of american workers. Donald Trump thinks that has to stop.

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But again, what Kamala Harris is saying, Kristen, is that if you do this, you're somehow gonna cause skyrocketing inflation. In reality, Donald Trump already did it. He brought a lot of jobs back, and it didn't cause inflation, but it.

Kristen Welker

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Caused consumers to pay more. They paid more in taxes, \$80 billion. Do you acknowledge that consumers ultimately will pay more if there are more tariffs? So economists, you just acknowledge that.

JD Vance

00:02:37

No, I don't, Kristen, because I think economists really disagree about the effects of tariffs

because there can be a dynamic effect right. So what some economists will say is what you just said, that it will actually raise costs for consumers. But what other people say, and I think the record supports this other view, is that it causes this dynamic effect where more jobs come into the country.

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Anything that you lose on the tariff from the perspective of the consumer, you gain in higher wages. So you're ultimately much better off. You have more take home pay, you have better jobs. And also we have more reliance because one of the things we learned during COVID I don't, by the way, blame democrats for this, but one of the things we learned during COVID Kristen, is that if our supply chains are really, if we depend on the Chinese to make too much of our stuff, then prices can skyrocket at a time of crisis.

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The economists who say that tariffs are bad, they don't take that into account. We've all learned it the hard way.

Kristen Welker

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And it is economists across the board, really, the Wall Street Journal says economic data show that Donald Trump's trade war with China did not achieve its objectives of reversing the declines in US manufacturing or restoring factory jobs. I hear what you're saying. It's a complicated picture. But just on that bottom line point, you can't guarantee that Americans won't wind up paying a penny more, can you?

JD Vance

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Well, I think that what you can guarantee is that if you don't bring more manufacturing jobs back into this country, you don't make our supply chains more stable, you're gonna cause higher prices over the long term. I think that is what is absolutely true.

Kristen Welker

00:04:02

But you acknowledge they could wind up paying more.

JD Vance

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What I acknowledge, Kristen, is that unless we bring more manufacturing jobs back to this country, we are gonna end up paying more in the long term. Remember the whole promise? Again, this was a bipartisan thing. My own party was as wrong about it as Democrats were, and Donald Trump was right about it.

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What they said is that if you shipped all of our manufacturing to East Asia and to Mexico, Americans would pay lower prices. Well, here we are now, and Americans are paying higher prices. And just one more thing on this, Kristin, because it's really important to go up with what Kamala Harris actually said in her convention speech.

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She says that she wants to stand up to China on behalf of American workers. If you're not willing to impose tariffs on companies that are manufacturing in China, using slave labor in China, you're not standing up to the Chinese, and Americans are really going to suffer.

Kristen Welker

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And on pricing and prices right now, inflation obviously at its lowest level since 2021. But let's move on. Robert F. Kennedy, the big news yesterday, he suspended his campaign, announced he's endorsing Donald Trump. He is also known as someone who has blamed vaccines for autism, antidepressants for school shootings, and recently said, quote, he won't take sides on what happened on 9/11.

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Do you have any hesitation about accepting his endorsement?

JD Vance

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No, Chris, and I don't, because we're going to disagree on issues. Right. There are things that Robert Kennedy has said that I disagree with. I'm sure there are things that he said or that I've said, excuse me, that he's going to disagree with. But I think what his endorsement represents is that Donald J.

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Trump's Republican party is a big tent party. I was raised by two grandparents who were sort of classified, classic blue dog Democrats. They believed in having a border. They believed that you shouldn't have censorship in the United States of America. They believed in common sense economic policies. They may have disagreed with Donald Trump about tax policy, but they believed in some fundamental American values.

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And I think what RFK's endorsement really shows is that the Kennedy Democrats are actually more at home in the Republican Party of Donald Trump. And unfortunately, Kamala Harris party, higher price, is doing nothing to fight back against the Chinese, to say nothing of a wide open border. That is not JFK's Democratic Party.

It's not RFK's Democratic Party. We're thrilled to have the Kennedy Democrats where they belong.

Kristen Welker

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Well, and some of the Kennedy family have stepped forward to say that they sharply disagree with this endorsement. But let's just go back very quickly. He says he isn't taking sides on 911. Do you agree with that statement?

JD Vance

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Well, of course I don't agree with that, Kristen. Now, to be clear, I don't know what RFK actually said there. Maybe there was additional context. Of course, you actually have to see what people say before you agree or disagree with it. I certainly have taken sides in 911. I'm the pro America side.

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I don't think that we should have been attacked. And I certainly think hitting back against the terrorists was justified. I don't know what RFK said there, but what I do know is that RFK said a lot of very interesting and important things, that the Democratic Party has become too pro censorship, that the Democratic Party, especially in the wake of COVID became really anti freedom and anti trial.

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When you have Democrats saying that we should be masking toddlers, their schools, even though we knew it caused developmental disabilities, I agree with RFK that that was crazy.

Kristen Welker

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Well, to be fair, there was a lot of information that scientists were grappling with as it came in. And masks were perceived to stop the spread of the disease. Let's move on.

JD Vance

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Totally fair. But the one thing before we move on that I would say on that is there were important leaders. Donald Trump was among them. RFK was among them, who were saying, some of this stuff is crazy. And if we had listened to them, I think our kids would have been much better off in the way compared.

Kristen Welker

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To, I mean, scientists did show that masks help to stop the spread of the disease. Let's talk about another big issue, responsibilities for toddlers.

Right. We have to be able to balance this stuff. And I think the way that RFK struck that balance was much smarter, unfortunately, than the way that Kamala Harris did it.

Kristen Welker

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Let's talk about another big issue. It was talked about at the Democratic National Convention. It's being talked about on the campaign trail. Abortion. Democrats made the case this week and beyond this week that Donald Trump, if elected, will impose a federal ban on abortion if he wins. Now, Donald Trump says he won't.

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But can you commit, Senator, sitting right here with me today, that if you and Donald Trump are elected, that you will not impose a federal ban on abortion?

JD Vance

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I can absolutely commit that, Kristen, Donald Trump has been as clear about that as possible. I think it's important to step back and say what Donald Trump actually said on the abortion question and how is it different from what Kamala Harris have said? Donald Trump wants to end this cultural war over this particular topic.

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If California wants to have a different abortion policy from Ohio, then Ohio has to respect California and California has to respect Ohio. Donald Trump's view is that we want the individual states and their individual cultures and their unique political sensibilities to make these decisions because we don't want to have a non stop federal conflict over this issue.

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The federal government ought to be focused on getting food prices down, getting housing prices down, issues, of course, where Kamala Harris has been a total disaster. So I think Donald Trump is right. We want the federal government to focus on these big economic and immigration questions. Let the states figure out their own abortion policy.

Kristen Welker

00:08:58

Let me just follow up with you a little bit on that point, because I've been talking to Republicans, including Senator Lindsey Graham just last week, who've made it very clear that if Donald Trump is elected, if you are elected, they will continue to press this point. Senator Graham said to me, I'm going to keep saying that there should be a federal ban if such a piece of legislation landed on Donald Trump's desk.

Would he veto it?

JD Vance

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I think it would be very clear he would not support it. I mean, he said that. Yeah. I mean, if you're not supporting it as the president of the United States, you fundamentally have to veto it.

Kristen Welker

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He would veto a federal abortion ban?

JD Vance

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I think he would. He said that explicitly that he would.

Kristen Welker

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And I don't think he's ever said explicitly he would.

JD Vance

00:09:36

He said that to you? Lindsey Graham, Kristen, I would be surprised. I need to see the context of what Lindsey Graham said because Lindsey Graham himself has not advocated a federal abortion ban. Lindsey Graham has advocated a federal minimum standard. Now, to be clear, that is not Donald Trump's view. Donald Trump disagrees with Lindsey Graham on this, but no Republican, at least no Republican with any reasonable power, is saying that we should have a complete national abortion ban.

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I haven't heard that from any of my colleagues. Clear. Donald Trump, I think, has staked his position and made it very explicit. He wants this to be a state decision. States are going to make this determination themselves.

Kristen Welker

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All right, let's talk about women voters more broadly. The Census Bureau estimates there are 22 million women between the ages of 20 and 40 who, for whatever reason, do not have children. What do you say to those women who hear some of your comments, including childless cat lady comments, which you've been asked about, but who feel as though you won't represent them?

JD Vance

00:10:33

Well, I'd say, first of all, I will represent you. I want to be the vice president for the whole

country, and I want to represent everybody. And yes, I made a sarcastic comment years ago that I think that a lot of Democrats have willfully misinterpreted. But what I've simply said is that I think that it's really a profound change that's happened in our country where we become anti family.

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And I would like to change that. And I think if you talk to young women, whether they have children or I want to have children, what you consistently hear is that a lot of young women feel like they don't have options. I saw this with my own wife, who's a working mother, who's a very, very accomplished litigator.

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She has three beautiful kids and always felt like she was having to balance being a good mom with being the kind of litigator that she wanted to be. I just want women to have more choices. I've seen that very personally in my own family, and I think it's something that is broken about our country.

Kristen Welker

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Let me just out a little bit. You're calling it a sarcastic comment, and yet some women and you got the feedback in real time. Felt like it was a gut punch to them personally. Do you regret making that comment?

JD Vance

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Look, I regret certainly that a lot of people took it the wrong way, and I certainly regret the DNC and Kamala Harris lied about it.

Kristen Welker

00:11:42

Do you regret what you said, senator?

JD Vance

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Kristen? I'm gonna say things from time to time that people disagree, agree with. I'm a real person. I'm gonna make jokes. I'm gonna say things sarcastically. And I think that what's important is that we focus on the policy. There are certainly gonna be things that I say if I'm elected vice president, people are gonna say, well, I wish he had said that differently.

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I think it's most important to actually be the person I actually am and to say those sarcastic comments were made in the service of a real substantive point. This country has become

too anti family. It's too expensive to afford a house. It's too expensive to afford groceries. Donald Trump and I want to change that.

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And unless we get better leadership, we're not going to.

Kristen Welker

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But again, just very quickly, given that people have told you directly, have spoken out, have said that they were offended, they were hurt by those comments, do you wish you never made those childless cat lady comments?

JD Vance

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I think that it's much more important for me to just be a normal human being who sometimes says, no regrets. I have a lot of regrets, Kristen, but making a joke three years ago is not a top ten list.

Kristen Welker

00:12:41

All right. Another big topic in this race is immigration. There has been a lot of discussion about Donald Trump's plans for mass deportation. According to one estimate, more than 11 million us citizens live in households with mixed immigration status, including more than 5 million children. If you and former President Trump were elected, would you separate families as a part of your mass decade transportation effort?

JD Vance

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Well, we have to start with the foundational issue here, which is we have 25 million illegal aliens in this country right now because Kamala Harris has refused to do it.

Kristen Welker

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DHS says it's much lower. It's closer to 8 million.

JD Vance

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I don't know.

Kristen Welker

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Where do you get the 25 million from?

JD Vance

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I think the 25 million are the people that should have been deported, that maybe weren't

deported. Plus you had another twelve to 15 million that have come in since Kamala Harris.

Kristen Welker

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Whatever the number is, that number, for the record, they say closer to eight to.

JD Vance

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But I think there are reasons to think that DHS is underestimating whatever the real number is. It's way too high. Right? It's millions upon millions of illegal immigrants. That have come in just since Kamala Harris became the border czar a few years ago.

Kristen Welker

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She was put in charge of the root causes of migration.

JD Vance

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Well, the root causes of migration, I would say, Kristen, is the Kamala Harris refuses to do her job as border czar. And let's just start there. I want to answer your question, but I think it's important to sort of sequence this in the right way. So if you want to get control of the illegal immigration process, you have to stop the bleeding.

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You have to stop so many people from coming here illegally in the first place. And that means undoing everything that Kamala Harris did practically on day one of the administration. You have to reimpose deportations. You have to stop catch and release, stop granting asylum to every single person who comes in here and says that they need asylum and stop granting mass parole.

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These policies are why we have the immigration crisis that we have. So I think focus on fixing the problem before we even fix the problem. We've got to stop the problem from getting worse.

Kristen Welker

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And as you know, President Biden passed a series of executive actions, and illegal border crossings are now at their lowest levels in about five years, so much so that Greg Abbott is no longer busing people to other cities. Let me ask fundamental questions, please. Fundamental question. Will families be separated under your mass deportation?

And again, because you made a point here, I do want to answer this question about families and about deportations, but you made this point that border crossings are lower. Border crossings at the southern border are lower because the Harris administration is sending more immigrants through the ports of entry. So instead of coming through the southern border, they're now being flown at taxpayer expense to the ports of entry all over our country.

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The number of illegal crossings, Chris, and this is a really important point. They're not any lower. They're just shuffling how the people are coming into the country in the first place. And this is very important.

Kristen Welker

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But, but Greg Abbott's not setting up, Kristen.

JD Vance

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I don't want a border czar who makes it more efficient for illegal immigrants to come to this country. That's why we have the problem that.

Kristen Welker

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We have, senator, to this question, because so many people want to know the answer to this. Will families be separated under your mass deportation policy?

JD Vance

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I think that families are currently being separated, and you're certainly going to have to deport some people in this country. Now, I think you start with, you start with the most violent criminals in our country. Those people need to be deported. That's where you focus federal resources. I think you, of course, have a number of children who are currently living with drug cartel members, not actually their families.

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We need to, of course, find their families and get them back to their families. But it's very interesting here because what Kamala Harris says is that Donald Trump wants to separate families. Kamala Harris's policies have led to thousands upon thousands of migrant children living with sex traffickers and drug cartels. That is the consequence of her policy.

Kristen Welker

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But there's not a policy. But to separate families. There's not a policy to separate families.

If you know that your policies will lead to family separation, you don't get to claim, Kristen, this is important. Kamala Harris cannot claim that. She doesn't know that her policies are leading to family separation. They are, and everybody knows it. And she has to take responsibility for that. That's what real leadership is.

Kristen Welker

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There are some families who have been separated, as you say, some because their parents are criminals. But of course, under the Trump administration, there was a zero tolerance policy, which is an actual policy. But let's move on.

JD Vance

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No, no, please, because this is so important.

Kristen Welker

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We are running out of time.

JD Vance

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There was a zero, I'll give you more time. There was a zero tolerance policy during the Trump administration, and that led to less family separation than under Kamala Harris's border policies. That's what's so striking about this. Actually enforcing our border is the most humane thing for children. And certainly, but I don't hear you.

Kristen Welker

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Denying that families will be separated. Let's move on to something that Donald Trump said in North Carolina. And yet again Friday night, he said, quote, our primary focus is not to get out the vote. It's to make sure they don't cheat because we have all the votes you need. You can see it.

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Why is Donald Trump casting doubt on the election before it's even happened?

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JD Vance

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I don't think that's with Donald Trump.

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I don't think that's with Donald Trump.

Kristen Welker

00:17:29

Well, that's what he's doing.

00:17:29

Well, that's what he's doing.

JD Vance

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That's what he says here.

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That's what he says here.

Kristen Welker

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I have to make sure they don't cheat.

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I have to make sure they don't cheat.

JD Vance

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I think that what he's saying is that we want to pursue a set of policies in the Republican Party that make it easier for every legal ballot to be cast and counted, but make it harder for illegally cast ballots to be counted. Now, we can disagree about how many of those there are, whether there are a few hundred, a few thousand, maybe more.

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But just in the last week. Okay, so just in the last week, once in Arizona and once in Pennsylvania, there were major court wins that make our ballot process more secure and more effective. I think that's what Donald Trump is talking about is we have to pursue, sometimes through litigation, sometimes through better policy at the state or national level, a set of rules that make sure every ballot is legally counted.

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Kristen Welker

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Well, it's very different from your message, which is you said, and I'll quote you back to yourself, we have to work as hard as possible to persuade Americans to vote for us. Are you on the same page as Donald Trump? Because again, he seems to be casting doubt, of course, of the election before it's even happened.

00:18:12

Well, it's very different from your message, which is you said, and I'll quote you back to yourself, we have to work as hard as possible to persuade Americans to vote for us. Are you on the same page as Donald Trump? Because again, he seems to be casting doubt, of course, of the election before it's even happened.

JD Vance

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Of course we're on the same page, krista. We talk all the time. I guarantee you, if you sat here and said, mister president, Donald Trump, do you believe that we need to do that? Your campaign needs to persuade voters as much as possible. Of course he's going to say yes. That's not inconsistent with thinking that.

00:18:29

Of course we're on the same page, krista. We talk all the time. I guarantee you, if you sat here and said, mister president, Donald Trump, do you believe that we need to do that? Your campaign needs to persuade voters as much as possible. Of course he's going to say yes. That's not inconsistent with thinking that.

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We need to pursue a set of approaches that makes sure legal ballots get counted, illegal ballots don't get counted.

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We need to pursue a set of approaches that makes sure legal ballots get counted, illegal ballots don't get counted.

Kristen Welker

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Do you have faith the 2024 election will be free and fair?

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Do you have faith the 2024 election will be free and fair?

JD Vance

00:18:53

I do, Kristen. I do think it's gonna be free and fair. And we're gonna do everything that we can to make sure that happens. We're gonna pursue every pathway to make sure, again, legal ballots get counted. But I feel very good about where we are. I think we're gonna win this race, and I think we're gonna win it in a very good election.

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I do, Kristen. I do think it's gonna be free and fair. And we're gonna do everything that we can to make sure that happens. We're gonna pursue every pathway to make sure, again, legal ballots get counted. But I feel very good about where we are. I think we're gonna win this race, and I think we're gonna win it in a very good election.

Kristen Welker

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All right, Senator JD Vance.

00:19:07

All right, Senator JD Vance.

JD Vance

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Thanks, Chris.

00:19:09

Thanks, Chris.

Kristen Welker

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Thank you so much for your time this afternoon.

00:19:10

Thank you so much for your time this afternoon.

JD Vance

00:19:12

Likewise.

Likewise.

Kristen Welker

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Really appreciate it. Thank you.

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Really appreciate it. Thank you.