

Kamala Harris CNN's Town Hall | October 24, 2024

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Speakers:

Anderson Cooper - 20.6%

Kamala Harris - 53.8%

Kamala Harris - 19.08%

Annalise Kean - 0.8%

Beth Samberg - 1.55%

Rob McPherson - 2.43%

Taneisha Spall - 1.75%

Notes:

Summary by ChatGPT

- Donald Trump's Stability: Kamala Harris asserts that Donald Trump is "increasingly

unstable and unfit to serve," citing high-ranking individuals from his administration who have expressed concerns about his ability to govern.

- Constitutional Threats: Harris emphasizes that key figures, including former Chief of Staff John Kelly, have warned that Trump has "contempt for the Constitution" and poses a danger to the country's democratic framework.

- Dictatorial Tendencies: She mentions Trump's admiration for dictators and references military officials' concerns, noting that Trump would not be constrained if re-elected, unlike during his first term when certain officials restrained his actions.

- Palestinian Conflict: Harris acknowledges the tragic loss of life in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and stresses the need for a two-state solution, ensuring security and dignity for both Palestinians and Israelis.

- Anti-Semitism and Hate Crimes: Harris discusses the rise in anti-Semitism, particularly on college campuses, emphasizing the need for laws to deter hate crimes and the importance of addressing the roots of hate through education and consequences.

Anderson Cooper

00:00:00

And welcome. We are live from Chester Township, Pennsylvania, Delaware county, one of the critical counties around Philadelphia that will help determine who wins the White House. Welcome to CNN's presidential town hall with the democratic nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris. I'm Anderson Cooper. Now, in this room, we have assembled a group of 32 Pennsylvania voters who say they are still undecided or persuadable.

Anderson Cooper

00:00:20

All of them are registered to vote. Some cast votes for Joe Biden in 2020, others for Donald Trump. Some didn't vote at all. And for some, this is their first election. Many are leaning right now to one candidate or another, but they all say they have yet to make their final choice. Now, we found these voters working with a nonpartisan research firm as well as business and religious groups, universities and other civic organizations.

Anderson Cooper

00:00:44

These voters are asking their own questions tonight, selected by CNN to cover a variety of topics. You may see them holding a piece of paper when they're asking their question. It has their question on it. That is a question they have come up with. It has not been edited in any way by CNN.

We also invited former President Donald Trump to participate in a town hall or a debate. He declined. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Vice President Kamala Harris. And vice president, thank you. Appreciate it. Thanks. You have a mic right here.

Kamala Harris

00:01:15

Thank you.

Anderson Cooper

00:01:16

Thank you so much.

Kamala Harris

00:01:17

Good evening, everyone. Good evening.

Anderson Cooper

00:01:18

Thanks so much for being with us. We're going to get to the audience in just a second. I want to start by asking you, though, for weeks, you have been calling Donald Trump unstable, unhinged. You call him dangerous. You've quoted General Milley recently who called him a fascist. Today, you quoted General Kelly who said that Trump repeatedly praised Hitler.

Anderson Cooper

00:01:34

Yeah, but there are tens of millions of Americans right now who have heard all those things and they don't buy it. Or even if they do, they're still going to vote for Donald Trump. He's arguably more popular now than ever. You have 13 days to go. What do you say to those voters to convince them?

Anderson Cooper

00:01:51

Because some of them are in this room.

Kamala Harris

00:01:52

Sure. And I thank you all for taking the time to be here. And you could be doing a number of other things with your time. So this really is proof that we love our country. People are engaged, Anderson, and really want to talk about the issues. And so the issue that you raise, yes, I do believe that Donald Trump is unstable, increasingly unstable and unfit to serve.

Kamala Harris

00:02:14

And I don't necessarily think that everyone has heard what you and I have heard

repeatedly, which is the people who know Donald Trump best, the people who worked with him in the White House, in the Situation Room, in the Oval Office, all Republicans, by the way, who served in his administration, his former chief of staff, his national security advisor, former secretaries of defense, and his vice president have all called him unfit and dangerous.

Kamala Harris

00:02:47

They have said explicitly he has contempt for the constitution of the United States. They have said he should never again serve as president of the United States. We know that is why Mike Pence is not running with him again, why the job was empty. And then today we learned that John Kelly, a, uh, four star Marine general who was his longest serving chief of staff, gave an interview recently in the last two weeks of this election talking about how dangerous Donald Trump is.

Kamala Harris

00:03:19

And I think one has to think about, why would someone who served with him, who is not political, a four star Marine general, why is he telling the american people now? And frankly, I think of it as hes just putting out a 911 call to the american people, understand what could happen if Donald Trump were back in the White House.

Kamala Harris

00:03:42

And this time, we must take very seriously those folks who knew him best and who were career people are not going to be there to hold him back. At least before, there were folks who, we know what he would say, but they would restrain him. Imagine now Donald Trump in the Oval Office, in the Situation room.

Kamala Harris

00:04:07

He who has openly admired dictators, said he would be a dictator on day one. The former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has said he is a.

Kamala Harris

00:04:17

Fascist to the core.

Kamala Harris

00:04:20

So I think that when the american people reflect, especially those who are undecided, on who you should listen to, don't take my word for it. In fact, go online and listen to John Kelly, his voice, talking about what he thinks of Donald Trump two weeks before the election. Because I think we all know, to your point, Anderson, it is close, but there are undecided voters who clearly, by being here, have an open mind, want to talk in a way that

is grounded in issues and fact.

Kamala Harris

00:04:51

And when they hear these facts, I.

Kamala Harris

00:04:53

Think it compels a lot of people.

Kamala Harris

00:04:55

To be concerned about the future of our country with Donald Trump at the lead.

Anderson Cooper

00:05:00

Robert, you've quoted General Milley calling Donald Trump a fascist, used that word to describe him. M let me ask you tonight, do you think Donald Trump is a fascist?

Kamala Harris

00:05:09

Yes, I do.

Kamala Harris

00:05:10

Yes, I do. And I also believe that the people who know him best on this subject should be trusted.

Kamala Harris

00:05:18

Again, look at their careers.

Kamala Harris

00:05:21

These are not people, with the exception, I think, of only Mike Pence. These were not politicians. These are career people who have served in, uh, the highest roles in national security, who have served as generals in our military, who are highly respected, talking about the person who would be commander in chief, not to mention what we know and what they've told us about, how he talks about the military servicemen and women, referring to them as suckers and losers, how he demeans people who have taken an oath to sacrifice their life for our country.

Kamala Harris

00:06:04

And I do believe, Anderson, that part of this is why even just this week, I traveled this state and others with Liz Cheney, former Congress member who was a very high ranking Republican. She has endorsed me. Her father, the former vice president of the United

States, Dick Cheney, is voting for me. Over 400 members of previous members of the administration, from Ronald Reagan to both presidents Bush to Donald Trump, even have endorsed my candidacy.

Kamala Harris

00:06:39

And the reason why, among them is a legitimate fear, based on Donald Trump's words and actions, that he will not obey an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. He himself has said he would terminate the Constitution of the United States and wants to earn your vote, to stand.

Kamala Harris

00:07:00

Again behind the seal of the president of the United States. No one standing behind the seal of the president of the United States of America should be in that position, saying they want to terminate the Constitution of the United States.

Anderson Cooper

00:07:20

This is Anneliese Keene. She's from Philadelphia. She works as a fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity. She's registered with no party affiliation. She says she's a Democrat. She's leaning toward voting for you, but says she's yet to make her final decision, in part because of the conflict in the Middle east. Anneliese.

Annalise Kean

00:07:34

Thank you and good evening, Madam Vice president.

Kamala Harris

00:07:36

Good evening.

Annalise Kean

00:07:36

My question is, as president, what would you do to ensure not another Palestinian dies due to bombs being funded by us tax dollars?

Kamala Harris

00:07:45

So I will say, and I think this is, to your point, far too many innocent palestinian civilians have been killed. It's unconscionable. And we are now at a place where, with Sin Maar's death, I do believe we have an opportunity to end this war, bring the hostages home, bring relief to the palestinian people, and work toward a, uh, two state solution where Israel and the Palestinians, in equal measure, have security, where the palestinian people have dignity, self determination, and the safety that they so rightly deserve.

What do you say to voters who are thinking about supporting a third party candidate or staying on the couch, not voting at all because of this issue?

Kamala Harris

00:08:38

Uh, listen, I am not going to deny the strong feelings that people have. I don't know that anyone who has seen the images, um, who would not have strong feelings about what has happened, much less those who have relatives who have died and been killed. And I know people, and I've talked with people, so I appreciate that.

Kamala Harris

00:09:03

But I also do know that for many people who care about this issue, they also care about bringing down the price of groceries. They also care about our democracy and not having a president of the United States who admires dictators and as a fascist. They also care about the fact that we need practical, common sense solutions from a leader who is willing to work across the aisle on behalf of the American people and not themselves.

Kamala Harris

00:09:31

Uh, they want a president who cares about a fundamental freedom to make decisions about your own body. Understanding that we're not trying to change anyone's belief, but let's not have the government telling women what to do with their body.

Anderson Cooper

00:09:43

I want you to meet Beth Samberg. She's a realtor, a mom of four from Ball Kinwood, Pennsylvania. She's a registered Democrat. Says she's undecided because of concerns about anti-Semitism.

Beth Samberg

00:09:52

Beth, hi. Thank you for being here. Thank you for remembering. We need to bring the hostages home.

Kamala Harris

00:09:57

Of course.

Beth Samberg

00:09:57

The rise of anti-Semitism and violence. The rise of anti-Semitism and violence from anti-Semitism has risen greatly on college campuses and on our city streets in the last year. How would you combat this growing trend and protect our young adults?

Thank you. Beth, you, um, are right, and I will say that we have seen a rise in anti-Semitism. It is something that we have to be honest about and we have to deal with as attorney general, I actually published a hate crimes report, um, on a regular basis, and anti-Semitism was among the highest forms of hate in our country, and this was before October 7.

Kamala Harris

00:10:35

And we know what we've seen since. Part of what we've got to do is talk with people so that they understand what are the tropes, what are the roots of what we are seeing, um, so that we can actually have people be more understanding. We need to have laws in place that make those who would commit crimes on behalf of anti-Semitism and hate that they pay a serious consequence.

Kamala Harris

00:11:03

We need to have the deterrence so that doesn't happen. We need to ensure that college students are safe in their school and feel safe to be able to go to class. But I'm going to tell you what doesn't help. Again, I invite you to listen and go online to listen to John Kelly, the former chief of staff of Donald Trump, who has told us, Donald Trump said, why, essentially, why aren't my generals like those of hitlers, like Hitler, who has referred several times, weve heard the reports for years.

Anderson Cooper

00:11:46

Do you believe Donald Trump is anti semitic?

Kamala Harris

00:11:48

I believe Donald Trump is a danger to the wellbeing and security of America.

Anderson Cooper

00:11:54

He has said that hehes casting himself as a protector of Israel. Do you believe you would be more pro Israel than Donald Trump?

Kamala Harris

00:12:01

I believe that Donald Trump is dangerous. I believe that when you have a president of the United States who has said to his generals who work for him because he is commander in chief, these conversations, I assume many of them took place in the Oval office. And if the president of the United States, the commander in chief, is saying to his generals, in essence, why cant you be more like hitlers generals?

Kamala Harris

00:12:28

Anderson, come on. This is a serious, serious issue. And we know who he is. He admires dictators, sending love letters back and forth with Kim Jong un, talks about the president of Russia. And then most recently, the reports are that in the height of COVID when most Americans could not get their hands on a COVID test, Americans were dying by the hundreds a day.

Kamala Harris

00:12:58

He secretly sent Covid tests to the president of Russia for his personal use. So, again, this election in 13 days is presenting the american people with a very significant decision. And on the one side on this issue of who is going to model what it means to use the bully pulpit of the president of the United States in a manner that in tone, word and deed, is about lifting up our discourse, fighting against hate, as opposed to fanning the flames of hate, which Donald Trump does consistently.

Kamala Harris

00:13:46

I'm going to tell you, we are an incredible country, and we love our country. Y'all wouldn't be here unless we love our country. And there are certain things where we've just got to come together and realize that we do believe in the importance of healthy debate on real issues, but there are certain standards we've got to have.

Kamala Harris

00:14:12

And, you know, another point that even John Kelly talked about, I believe, and many have, is January 6, where you have the president of the United States defying the will of the people in a free and fair election and unleashing a violent mob who attacked the United States Capitol. 140 law enforcement officers were attacked.

Kamala Harris

00:14:35

Some were killed. And so I say that to say the american people deserve to have a president who encourages healthy debate, works across the aisle. M not afraid of good ideas wherever they come from, but also maintains certain standards about how we think about the role and the responsibility, and certainly not comparing oneself in a clearly admiring way to Hitler.

Anderson Cooper

00:15:07

And we are back with Vice President Kamala Harris, I, uh, want you to meet Rob McPherson. He's the chief marketing officer for a local organization. He's registered Republican from media, Pennsylvania, who told us he's leaning towards voting for you, but has concerns about what he calls shifts in your policy positions.

Rob, thank you. Thank you for being here. Vice President Harris. Um, so welcome to Delco.

Kamala Harris

00:15:27

Thank you.

Rob McPherson

00:15:27

Um, here in Delco, uh, we pride ourselves on being authentic. And, um, much of what we have seen, much of what you've been saying with regard to issues like law and order and fracking, uh, reflect a more centrist view than what people are used to hearing from Kamala Harris. Um, leaving some voters to wonder about the authenticity of your current more moderate positions.

Rob McPherson

00:15:52

Uh, can you talk a little bit about how your positions have shifted and why?

Kamala Harris

00:15:56

Sure.

Kamala Harris

00:15:57

And thank you. Um, so, first of all, on fracking, I've been very clear. We kind of dispensed with this. In 2020, I am not going to ban fracking. I did not. As vice president. In fact, as vice president, I cast the tie breaking vote that now has opened up more fracking leases. My value on the issue of what we need to do to invest in a clean energy economy and a clean energy future has not changed.

Kamala Harris

00:16:21

But frankly, I now have the experience and perspective of having been vice president for almost four years. I've traveled the country. I know that we can invest in a clean energy economy and still not ban fracking and still work toward what.

Kamala Harris

00:16:36

We need to do to create more.

Kamala Harris

00:16:38

Jobs and create us based jobs in a way that will be globally competitive. On the issue of law and order, as you mentioned, I think there's just a whole lot of misinformation, to be honest with you, I have personally prosecuted very serious crime. It's how I started my career. I spent most of my career as a prosecutor, not in Washington, DC, and as my first

priority had, uh, and remains as a first priority to me, the safety of the american people.

Kamala Harris

00:17:08

So that has not changed. And sadly, I think that there's a bit of misinformation, if not more than a bit. Um, but I'm glad that you raised the subject so that I can address it. But just, if you don't mind, just let me just finish, because I think the spirit of your question is really important, and I'm glad you raised it.

Kamala Harris

00:17:27

Our country deserves to have a president of the United States who is not afraid of good ideas and does not stand on pride. If a perspective needs to be informed by different points of view to build consensus and to have a common sense approach. I'm never going to shy away from good ideas, and I'm not going to feel the need to have pride associate with a position that I've taken when the important thing is to build consensus to fix problems.

Kamala Harris

00:17:58

I believe in fixing problems. I love fixing problems. And so I pledge to you to be a president who not only works for all Americans, but works on getting stuff done. And that means compromise, and it doesn't mean compromising your values or your principles, but it does mean working to get stuff done.

Kamala Harris

00:18:19

And I pledge to you, I will do that.

Anderson Cooper

00:18:21

Just to be clear, though, what he's referring to, and you point out, too, when you were running for vice president 2020, uh, you were not talking about.

Kamala Harris

00:18:27

Banning fracking, but no, no, Anderson, I pledge that I would not ban fracking. Right.

Anderson Cooper

00:18:31

I know you said you would not ban fracking. You know, you had said in a 2019 town hall, there's no question I'm in favor of banning fracking in 2017. You talked about Medicare for all. You talked about, uh, 2019 raised a hand in debate about, uh, if border crossings should be decriminalized. Are all of those issues, which those are not your positions now?

Are all those issues you're saying through consensus and getting stuff done you have evolved on?

Kamala Harris

00:18:57

Well, no. Let's take, for example, the issue of Medicare. My point has always been that access to health care should not just be a privilege of those who can afford it. It should be a right for all people. So that is why I have worked on doing what we have done to, one, allow Medicare to negotiate against the big pharmaceutical companies to bring down the cost of prescription medication.

Kamala Harris

00:19:22

We've achieved that in terms of capping the cost of insulin for seniors at \$35 a month, capping the cost of annual prescriptions at \$2,000 a year for seniors. But my plan moving forward, based on that very principle that I've always had, is, as president, to have that cap be for everyone and not just for our seniors.

Kamala Harris

00:19:42

The work that I have done that has been about recognizing the importance of dealing with border security. As I said, I have prosecuted transnational criminal organizations that I did for years before I ever ran in 2019.

Anderson Cooper

00:19:58

I mean, you did raise your hand saying in a debate when asked if border crossing should be decriminalized. But obviously, that is not your position.

Kamala Harris

00:20:05

I never intended nor do I, uh, will I ever allow America to have a border that is not secure. I believe we need to deal with illegal immigration. There needs to be consequences, which is why part of my plan that I have outlined. And again, please go to [kamala harris.com](https://kamalaharris.com) dot. Sorry to throw a website on you, but why not?

Kamala Harris

00:20:25

Um, and you will see that part of my plan includes what we need to do to actually do more as it relates to putting resources in, including increasing penalties for illegal crossings.

Anderson Cooper

00:20:36

And just finally, on fracking, you said, uh, you're clear you would not ban it as president.

No, I would not ban it as president.

Anderson Cooper

00:20:41

You're clear on that. Do you think it is bad for the environment, though?

Kamala Harris

00:20:44

I think that we have proven that we can invest in a clean energy economy, we can mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. We can work on, uh, sustaining what we need to do to protect this beautiful earth of ours and not ban tracking.

Anderson Cooper

00:21:00

Um, time is short, so I want to get some more voters in. Tanisha spall from Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, she works as an education administration manager for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Registered Democrat who says she's leaning towards supporting you, has yet to make her final decision. Tanisha, welcome.

Taneisha Spall

00:21:12

Thank you, Anderson. Thank you, Madam Vice President, for joining us this evening. I appreciate that you did acknowledge that we are a country that is faced with problems and issues. With the Supreme Court being plagued with issues. Would you be in favor of expanding the court to, say, twelve? So each justice has only one circuit court other than chief justice to assist in making judgments more balanced?

Kamala Harris

00:21:35

Well, to your point, uh, there is no question that the american people increasingly are losing confidence in the Supreme Court, and in large part because of the behavior of certain members of that court and because of certain rulings, including the Dobbs decision, and taking away a, uh, precedent that had been in place for 50 years, protecting a woman's right to make decisions about her own body.

Kamala Harris

00:21:57

So I do believe that there should be some kind of reform of the court, and we can study what that actually looks like. But I do believe. But again, let's just, while you raise the point of the court, understand that again, in 13 days, the american people will decide who is the next president of the United States.

Kamala Harris

00:22:15

In 13 days, you will decide who is sitting in the Oval Office on January 20. And on one hand, you have in Donald Trump someone who has increasingly proved himself to be unstable

and who, as we have established and the people close to him, have established, he is unfit to serve. Somebody who, on January 20, you can be sure, will spend full time, like we know, and we've seen the image mentally of him sitting in the dining room off of the Oval Office, watching for hours as people violently attack the Capitol.

Kamala Harris

00:22:49

You can be sure, because he has said he would weaponize the Department of Justice to go after his political enemies. That you can look at a Donald Trump in the White House after January 20 sitting in that Oval Office plotting his revenge. He has talked about the enemies within. We haven't even raised that subject, Anderson.

Kamala Harris

00:23:07

The enemies within. He's talking about the American people. He's talking about journalists, judges, nonpartisan election officials. He has talked about as John Kelly has talked about can he send the military after peaceful protesters? And he's going to sit there unstable, unhinged, plotting his revenge, plotting his retribution, creating an enemies list. I'm going to tell you, my list will be a list of how I address and continue to address the issues that you all are raising this afternoon and evening.

Kamala Harris

00:23:48

It will be, uh, a to do list about how we can impact the American people and lift up the American people and address some of the challenges that we continue to face.

Anderson Cooper

00:23:59

Mister President Kamala Harris, thank you very much.

Kamala Harris

00:24:01

Thank you.

Anderson Cooper

00:24:01

Appreciate it.