

Last night the *Boston Globe* published a leaked email from a top volunteer with the Trump campaign, former Massachusetts Republican Party vice chair Tom Mountain, telling volunteers that the Trump campaign “no longer thinks New Hampshire is winnable” and is “pulling back” from that important swing state. He urged volunteers to turn their attention instead to Pennsylvania. After the story dropped, the Trump campaign cut ties with Mountain.

Stephen Collinson of CNN and Isaac Arnsdorf, Josh Dawsey, and Marianne LeVine of the *Washington Post* reported today that Trump’s team has given up on trying to get Trump to talk about the economy and other issues voters care about. The former president has decided to spend the rest of the campaign attacking Vice President Harris to destroy her popularity and drive voters away from her, rather than trying to attract them to himself. The *Washington Post* reporters noted that likely voters view Trump unfavorably and his team has concluded that while he can’t improve his own standing, he can damage hers.

Collinson dubbed Trump’s plans a “feral political offensive.”

It is not clear that this will work. As Collinson notes, Harris has refused to get dragged into the gutter with Trump, and Sarah Longwell of *The Bulwark*, who studies focus groups, notes that voters appear to want to put the nastiness of the past several years behind them. Still, the media-tracking company AdImpact reported that between August 23 and August 29, 57% of the total television spending for political ads was on Republican attacks on Harris.

Trump also continues to demand that Republicans support his attempt to suppress voting. Having failed to pass any of the necessary appropriations bills before going on August recess, Congress will be in a rush when it comes back into session next week. It needs to fund the government before the end of the fiscal year on September 30 in order to prevent a partial shutdown. Last Thursday, Trump told right-wing podcast host Monica Crowley that he would “shut down the government in a heartbeat” unless the government funding package includes the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act—which would give credence to

the idea that noncitizens are voting in national elections despite the fact it is already illegal—and a bill restricting legal immigration.

Zeeshan Aleem of MSNBC today took public notice of Trump’s “deteriorating ability to clearly communicate.” His speeches “seem to be growing more discursive and difficult to comprehend by the day,” Aleem wrote. “Those speeches are making it hard, if not impossible, for people listening to them to understand what he wants to do with his power in office, and they’re reportedly turning off voters.” A reporter for *The Guardian* pointed out that attendees at Trump’s rallies are leaving as he rambles for nearly two hours, and complaining that he is “babbling.”

For his part, Trump says his wandering speech is deliberate. He calls it “the weave.” I’ll talk about, like, nine different things, and they all come back brilliantly together, and it’s like, and friends of mine that are, like, English professors, they say, ‘It’s the most brilliant thing I’ve ever seen.’”

Aleem notes that this less-focused, less-capable Trump would be exceptionally dangerous in office a second time. And yet, he was dangerous enough the first time. Today Adam Klasfeld and Ryan Goodman of *Just Security* released a study showing at least twelve times that Trump used the power of the presidency to retaliate against his political enemies. They note that there is no evidence that President Joe Biden or anyone else at the Biden White House ever took similar actions.

John McCain’s son Jimmy today announced that he has switched his voter registration from Republican to Democrat and will work to elect Vice President Harris and Minnesota governor Tim Walz in 2024. The younger McCain enlisted in the Marine Corps at 17 and is now an intelligence officer in the 158th Infantry Regiment of the Arizona Army National Guard. He said he is speaking out because Trump’s conduct at Arlington National Cemetery was a “violation.”

Last Friday, just before the long weekend, Trump announced that he would vote against a Florida ballot measure that would essentially enshrine in the Florida state

constitution the abortion rights formerly protected by the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. When Trump had bowed to popular support for abortion rights and expressed uneasiness at the state's current six-week ban—a cutoff reached before most women know they're pregnant—antiabortion activists launched fierce attacks on him. So, on Friday, Trump switched his position and announced he would vote against restoring access to abortion in Florida.

That announcement has given wings to the Democrats' messaging about Republicans' determination to end abortion rights. It did not help the Republicans that more videos have been unearthed in which Republican vice presidential nominee J.D. Vance said that “a childless elite” is ruling the country. He went on to excoriate this elite for what he claimed was their pride that they didn't have children and that they had abortions, and said “they look down on people who invest their time and their future in their children. And that is a dangerous place to live as a country.” Even a right-wing Newsmax interviewer suggested that he was “painting this group with perhaps a broad brush?”

On October 1, in Louisiana, a law will go into effect that reclassified the drug misoprostol as a controlled dangerous substance. Misoprostol can be used for abortion. It is also used for routine reproductive care and during medical emergencies to treat postpartum hemorrhage. It is on the World Health Organization's list of essential medications, a list containing those medications that are the most effective and safe to meet a health care system's most important needs. After antiabortion activists targeted the drug, Louisiana governor Jeff Landry signed a law reclassifying it as a controlled dangerous substance. The reclassification means that the drug will no longer be easily available on obstetric hemorrhage carts.

“Take it off the carts?” one doctor said to Lorena O'Neil of the *Louisiana Illuminator*. “That's death. That's a matter of life or death.”

The Harris campaign said: “Let's be clear: Donald Trump is the reason Louisiana women who are suffering from miscarriages or bleeding out after birth can no longer receive the critical care they would have received before Trump overturned

Roe. Because of Trump, doctors are scrambling to find solutions to save their patients and are left at the whims of politicians who think they know better. Trump is proud of what he's done. He brags about it. And if he wins, he will threaten to bring the crisis he created for Louisiana women to all 50 states.”

Vice President Harris's campaign started its “Fighting for Reproductive Freedom” bus tour today in Palm Beach, Florida, where it drove past the Trump Organization's Mar-a-Lago club. The bus will make at least 50 stops across the country.

Pollster Tom Bonier today continued his examination of new registrants to vote. This time his focus was North Carolina. The pattern he has found across the country continues: “surges in registration are being driven by women.” In North Carolina, he writes, the number of registrants was almost 50% higher during the week of July 21 than in the same week in 2020, and the gender gap was +12 women, compared to +6 women in 2020. The new registrants were +6 Democratic, and 43% were younger than 30.

The Harris-Walz campaign today joined the Democratic National Committee in announcing a transfer of nearly \$25 million to support Democratic candidates in down-ballot state and federal races. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee will get \$10 million each in hopes of supporting a Democratic majority in each chamber of Congress in the new administration.

The Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, the organization devoted to winning state legislatures, will receive \$2.5 million. The Democratic Governors Association and the Democratic Attorneys General Association will get \$1 million each.

Finally, today, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction to stop the Trump campaign from playing the song he likes to dance to at his rallies: “Hold On, I'm Coming.” The estate of Isaac Hayes Jr., the artist who co-wrote the song, filed a copyright infringement lawsuit against Trump, his campaign, and a number of his

allies, noting that they have never obtained a public performance license for the song although they have used it at least 133 times.