



JD VANCE VISITS ARIZONA'S 2 LARGEST METRO AREAS IN BID FOR HISPANIC VOTERS - CRONKITE NEWS

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Sen. JD Vance took to the stage to speak on Oct. 9, 2024, in Mesa.

God, conservative values, immigration and Donald Trump.

Those were the main talking points at the Conservative Political Action Conference in Mesa on Wednesday, where former President Donald Trump's running mate, Sen. JD Vance, made his second appearance in Arizona after attending a Tucson rally earlier in the day.

Vance's rival, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, [was also in Arizona](#) on Wednesday campaigning on behalf of his running mate, Vice President Kamala Harris.

The appearances highlight the parties' increasing endeavors to win the battleground state and secure its 11 electoral votes.

Wednesday's CPAC event put specific emphasis on Hispanic voters for Trump. Prior to Vance taking the stage, Betty Cardenas, a Latinas for Trump-Vance Coalition adviser and president of [Bienvenido Action PAC](#), spoke about her support.

"This is really an election of good versus evil," Cardenas said. "This is an election that is parents and church against the liberal woke agenda."

Arizona voted for Donald Trump in 2016, but swung blue for Joe Biden in 2020 - the first time the state went for a Democrat since 1996. Biden's victory over Trump was by a mere 0.3%, or 10,457 votes.

Hispanics make up roughly 33% of the state's population and are one of the fastest growing demographics in Arizona. Securing this bloc could mean victory in the battleground state.

When asked about how he and Trump would support police, Vance redirected the question back to the Hispanic community.

"One of the coolest things I've noticed about our law enforcement community is how many Gonzales and Hernandez, and how many Latinos are serving as law enforcement officers every single day and keeping us safe," Vance said. The Phoenix Police Department, the largest police force in Arizona, has over 2,500 officers, [21% of whom are Hispanic](#).

In June, the Department of Justice concluded a [nearly three-year investigation](#) into Phoenix police. The report found = police routinely used excessive and unjustified deadly force, and infringed on the rights of lawful protesters, many of whom were people of color.

DOJ leaders have pushed for the Phoenix police department to enter a consent decree, which would require the department to agree to specific reforms, and would have an independent monitor that reports on the department's progress.

Republicans have often been wary of consent decrees, saying it's too much federal oversight and prevents officers from fully being able to do their jobs. During Trump's presidency, [the Session guidelines](#) significantly restricted the power of consent decrees, and no new consent decrees were issued while Trump was in office.

In 2021, under Attorney General Merrick Garland, the Department of Justice rescinded the Sessions memo and restored the DOJ's authority to more actively seek consent decrees to address systemic police misconduct.

Numerous police departments have agreed to consent decrees since then, including the city of Minneapolis. The agreement was in part because of the murder of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man whose death in police custody was recorded by bystanders and seen around the world. Both Vance and Trump have been critical of Walz's handling of the riots that took place afterwards in the city contradicting praise Trump gave Walz in 2020 for sending national guard troops in to quell protesting.

"This is very simple actually," Vance said. "You just have to support law enforcement, make it easier for them to do their job. Give our cops the pay and benefits they need, 'cause as you know, we're losing a lot of good police officers."

Kari Lake, who is running for U.S. Senate in Arizona, also took to the stage. Like Vance, Lake spoke about preserving traditional values and her rival, Congressman Ruben Gallego - whom she debated later that day.

"The 'America First movement' is a movement of putting our country first, and getting us back on track," Lake said. "We have the policy to do it - and you know how we know that? Because we saw it, we saw it 3-and-a half years ago with President Trump."

"We saw how he handled danger across the globe, we saw how he handled an economy that wasn't doing great when he got in and he turned it around," Lake continued. "We saw how our lives were better."

[Joe Kennedy](#), a high school football coach from Washington who was fired after praying during a game, took the stage to pray with Vance. After a 2023 Supreme Court decision in his favor, Kennedy later won a settlement against the school.

In his closing speech, Vance reminded the audience of the short time left before the election, and urged them to vote for Trump. "You could make a difference between having a pro-religious liberty and anti-illegal immigrant and a pro-common sense guy like Donald Trump as your president, or you can elect the person who I think violates all of our values and disagrees with us on fundamental issues."