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Walz On EVs: No One Is Mandating Anything

With 25 days left until the general election, the barrage of campaign stops in Michigan continues, this time with vice presidential candidate Minnesota Governor Tim Walz on the campaign trail at Macomb Community College.

Walz appeared alongside United Auto Workers members to discuss the plans a potential Harris Administration has for supporting manufacturing jobs in Michigan and across the United States.

"This is a defining arc of America's economic story," he told the crowd. "People came here to Michigan from across the nation and across the world for a shot at a better future for their families, and in the process, they built the engine that built this country."

Walz took aim at former President Donald Trump's comments about Detroit Thursday while visiting the Detroit Economic Club. Trump said that if Harris is elected president the whole country would end up like Detroit (See [Gongwer Michigan Report, October 10, 2024](#)).

"If the guy would have ever spent any time in the Midwest, like all of us know, he'd know Detroit's experiencing an American comeback and renaissance," Walz said. "But those guys, all they know about manufacturing is manufacturing bullshit."

Walz called Trump's first administration a "disaster for working people," citing the auto plants that were closed and the number of auto jobs lost during Trump's term.

He also discussed electric vehicles, saying that he believed that EVs should be made affordable and available, but that people should have a choice.

"Nobody is mandating anything to you," he said. "But this is about the future of the auto industry. (Harris) wants to make sure that it's not just EVs are made in China, but they're made here in the United States by United Auto Workers."

Republicans have hammered Democratic candidates on EVs, saying the current Biden Administration and officials throughout the country are mandating the manufacturing of EVs.

Walz then discussed an "American Forward" strategy for manufacturing that would build on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the CHIPS Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

"One that empowers American workers, revitalizes manufacturing communities, leads us into industries of the future and to keep out-innovating and out-competing the rest of the world," he said. "We never fear the future. You build the future, and this gives us the opportunity to do it."

The plan would involve tax credits and increased investment in strategic industries. Companies would be rewarded for guaranteeing workers the right to unionize and for eliminating unnecessary degree requirements. He also said federal contracts would go toward hiring union labor and American workers.

"What happens then is the middle class rises. People start to not just get by, they thrive," Walz said. "That's the goal."

In a statement responding to Walz's visit, the Trump campaign criticized Harris for not doing anything to change the Biden Administration's policies while serving as vice president.

"Today, Tim Walz has to explain to Michiganders how Kamala Harris will bring change while saying there's nothing she'd do differently to change the policies that have devastated our state over the past 3.5 years. That's a tall order, because there's a lot of Michiganders who would have liked things to be done differently," Team Trump Michigan Communications Director Victoria LaCivita said in a statement. "Michiganders want leadership that is able to lower inflation, cut taxes, protect our automobile industry, and close our southern border. Kamala wasn't able to do any of this over the last three and a half years - and clearly she doesn't have any intention to do so now."

During his visit, Walz then pivoted to talking about Project 2025, saying that it would be a nightmare for the country.

"His project 2025 would repeal the bipartisan infrastructure law, the Inflation Reduction Act— that would threaten hundreds of thousands of new manufacturing jobs, including those right here in Michigan," he said.

Trump has repeatedly distanced himself from Project 2025, but Trump's former director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, Russ Vought, runs an organization which sits on the Project 2025 advisory board. Vought also serves as the policy director of the Republican National Convention's platform committee, an appointment Trump's campaign signed off on (See [Gongwer Michigan, August 29, 2024](#)).

Still, the Trump campaign has said he does not support Project 2025.

Walz also criticized Trump's plan to increase tariffs, saying that it would increase the cost of everyday goods, such as groceries and prescription drugs.

"That's the choice that we're up against," Walz said. "This election, we've got a chance to turn a page. A new generation of leadership with Kamala Harris ... This is all gas, no breaks, sleep when you're dead type of attitude."

— By Elena Durnbaugh

[Back to top](#)



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