

## RFK Jr. Suspends Presidential Bid — but Only in Swing States

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Independent Presidential Candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. at a campaign event. (Photo by Dan McCue)

WASHINGTON — Independent presidential hopeful Robert F. Kennedy Jr. suspended his presidential campaign on Friday and announced in a grievance-laden speech that he is endorsing Republican nominee former President Donald Trump.

The announcement, which came during a news conference in Phoenix, Arizona, initially baffled many in attendance.

Kennedy said he would remove his name from ballots in 10 swing states where he said he had no chance of winning, but he would remain on the ballots he's qualified for in strongly blue or red states.

“In my heart, I no longer believe that I have a realistic path to electoral victory in the face of this relentless, systematic censorship and media control,” Kennedy said after accusing both Democrats and the media of “not giving him a fair shake.”

“So I cannot in good conscience ask my staff and volunteers to keep working their long hours, or ask my donors to keep giving when I cannot honestly tell them that I have a real path to the White House,” he said.

But while he was bowing out of the race, he also encouraged his supporters to still vote for him there — appearing to suggest that if there were an electoral tie between Trump and Democratic Presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris, he could still, somehow, become president.

Amid the mixed signals, Kennedy’s campaign team reportedly began the effort to remove his name from several ballots, and a Pennsylvania court filing earlier in the day noted Kennedy’s looming endorsement of Trump.

However, members of the campaign later distanced themselves from that filing, saying the inclusion of the Trump-related language hadn’t been approved by them.

Despite the muddled air surrounding the Kennedy announcement, this much was clear: He was upset with the Democratic Party, and he derided the elevation of Harris to nominee in President Joe Biden’s place as a “palace coup.”

Finally, his campaign released a statement, leaving no doubt as to where Kennedy now stands.

“Last summer, it looked like no candidate was willing to negotiate a quick end to the Ukraine war, to tackle the chronic disease epidemic, to protect free speech and restore our

constitutional freedoms, to clean corporate influence out of government, or to defy the neocons and their agenda of endless military adventurism,” he said in the statement. “But now, one of the two candidates has adopted these issues as his own, to the point where he has asked to enlist me in his administration to tackle those issues. I am speaking, of course, of Donald Trump.”

Kennedy went on to describe the “existential threat” posed by these issues and declared his intention to join Trump’s cabinet to address them.

Members of Kennedy’s large and world-famous extended family blasted their sibling after his announcement, calling his endorsement of Trump a “betrayal of the values that our father and our family hold most dear.”

“We want an America filled with hope and bound together by a shared vision of a brighter future,” Kerry Kennedy wrote in a statement released with several family members. “We believe in Harris and Walz.”

They added: “It is a sad ending to a sad story.”

Kennedy was expected to join Trump at a rally in Glendale, Arizona, later on Friday.

Meanwhile the **Harris** campaign released a brief statement responding to the endorsement that made not a single mention of Kennedy himself.

Instead, it essentially invited disaffected voters to take a look at the vision the new Democratic candidate was offering the nation.

“For any American out there who is tired of Donald Trump and looking for a new way forward, ours is a campaign for you,” campaign Chair Jen O’Malley Dillon said in the statement. “In

order to deliver for working people and those who feel left behind, we need a leader who will fight for you, not just for themselves, and bring us together, not tear us apart. Vice President Harris wants to earn your support.

“Even if we do not agree on every issue, Kamala Harris knows there is more that unites us than divides us: respect for our rights, public safety, protecting our freedoms, and opportunity for all,” she added.

Kennedy, a longtime environmental attorney, entered the race as a Democrat in April 2023, but opted to continue the race as an independent six months later, because, he said, the Democratic Party’s nominating rules made it too difficult to compete against an incumbent member of the party like Biden.

*Dan can be reached at [dan@thewellnews.com](mailto:dan@thewellnews.com) and [@DanMcCue](https://www.instagram.com/DanMcCue)*

