

## Kennedy Pulls Out of Iowa Event Citing 'Increased Security Concerns'

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Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (Photo by Dan McCue)

WASHINGTON — Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has canceled plans to speak at the Des Moines Register's Political Soapbox at the Iowa State Fair citing "increased security concerns."

Kennedy had originally been scheduled to speak about mid-afternoon on Saturday on the Soapbox stage which is located on the fair's Grand Concourse.

"I believe the campaign wanted Mr. Kennedy to speak at the Des Moines Register Political Soapbox and worked hard to make that happen, and the Iowa State Fair has always worked diligently to accommodate all candidates' needs," Register Executive Editor

Carol Hunter told the newspaper's Brianne Pfannenstiel for this morning's edition.

"But the campaign's understandable security concerns in the end couldn't be satisfactorily addressed."

Though no specific threat has been publicly reported, Kennedy was granted Secret Service protection following the shooting at a Donald Trump rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, last month and the agency may have recommended against his appearing at an open air event.

Following the shooting in Pennsylvania, during which Trump suffered an ear injury, The Washington Post reported the Secret Service encouraged his campaign to stop scheduling outdoor rallies or other outdoor events with big crowds.

Since then Trump has made fewer public appearances, though he is scheduled to headline a rally at Montana State University Friday night.

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and her running mate, Tim Walz, attended an open air rally in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on Wednesday.

Kennedy has spoken at the Register's Soapbox before, appearing in 2023, when he was running for president as a Democrat.

His canceled appearance comes less than a week after a curious social media **post**, in which he revealed he dumped a dead bear cub in New York City's Central Park a decade ago, and staged it as a bicycle accident.

Kennedy has said he released the video, which also features the comedian Rosanne Barr, to preempt an impending article in the New Yorker magazine.

In the **video**, Kennedy explained that he was on his way to go falconing in the Hudson Valley in New York in 2014 when a van in front of him hit and killed the bear.

The candidate said he immediately stopped and picked up the bear, planning to skin it and save its meat in his refrigerator.

“This was the little bit of redneck in me,” he said.

Kennedy goes on to say his plan unraveled when a dinner that night in New York City ran late and he had to catch a plane immediately afterward.

“We thought it would be amusing for whoever found it or something,” Kennedy said, explaining why he thought of disposing of the cub in the park.

But, he said, “The next day, it was on every television station, it was the front page of every paper.”

“Luckily, the story died down after a while and it stayed dead for a decade,” Kennedy said.

While the admission of the bear incident became instant fodder for late night comics, the candidate is actually facing real trouble in a courtroom in Albany, New York.

On Tuesday and Wednesday he testified in a case that will determine whether he can remain on the New York State ballot.

If he loses, the case could have a domino effect, leading to legal challenges to his candidacy in other states.

The lawsuit filed by four New York State voters claims that Kennedy falsely claimed to be a New York resident and used a false address — that of a friend’s home in Katonah — when he circulated nominating petitions.

If the court agrees, the signatures on his petitions would be invalid. And if that's the case, other lawsuits could be filed in which his campaign used the same address on his petitions.

Kennedy swore under oath on Tuesday that he did in fact live in Katonah, a small town about an hour's drive north of New York City. At the same time, he maintained that those who signed his petitions "were signing up to support me" and "did not care" about the address.

Lawyers for the voters maintain Kennedy has been living on the West Coast for the past decade, and at one point during his testimony he admitted to voting in 2016 while being registered at an address which a family member, his sister Kerry, no longer owned.

Keith Corbett, the lead attorney for the plaintiffs, suggested this was voter fraud.

Kennedy disagreed.

"I don't believe what I did was voter fraud. But I could be wrong," he said.

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