

Politics

Trump Visits Iowa While 2028 Republicans Wait for Their Chance



Children's drawings are taped to a wall at the Campaign Headquarters of US President Donald Trump in Urbandale, Iowa, in January 2024. *Photographer: Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images*

By [Akayla Gardner](#)

July 3, 2025 at 7:51 AM PDT

✦ Takeaways by Bloomberg AI

- President Donald Trump is visiting Iowa to kick off a yearlong celebration leading up to America's 250th anniversary, but his trip also highlights the dynamics of his second term and questions over who will succeed him in 2028.
- Trump's visit to Iowa, a critical state, comes as he has refused to anoint a successor, leaving potential heirs like Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio walking a fine line between seeking the spotlight and avoiding his ire.
- Trump's policies, including a global trade war and tariffs, have put Iowa's rural farmers in a difficult position, and his successor will need to navigate these issues to maintain the party's base and viability.

President Donald Trump's visit to Iowa on Thursday is ostensibly to kick off a yearlong celebration leading up to America's 250th anniversary. But his trip also casts a spotlight on the intense dynamics of his nascent second term as well as questions over who will barnstorm the critical state come 2028 as his successor.

Trump's trip is his first to the Hawkeye State since returning to office. In early 2024, he dominated its caucuses, charting the course that vanquished Florida Governor Ron DeSantis' ambitions to assume the GOP mantel and took back the White House.

While Iowa has morphed into a Republican bastion from a battleground, the state's rural farmers are part of the bedrock of Trump's political base. Yet soon after returning to the White House, Trump initiated a global trade war that potentially puts farmers in the crosshairs after they were placed in a similar situation during his first-term in a tit-for-tat trade dispute with China.

While the president has publicly floated Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio – former critics who transformed into loyalists – as possible heirs, he has refused to anoint a successor with the 2028 campaign season more than a year away. That's left Vance and others walking a fine line between jockeying for the spotlight and avoiding his ire.



US Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio. *Photographer: Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images*

Trump has been able to so far maintain his iron grip on the party, keeping it focused in the moment and not on his lame-duck status. His One Big Beautiful Bill is poised for passage after he strong-armed lawmakers this week. The bill is the centerpiece of his second-term legislative agenda, characterized as a crucial component to his economic elixir when paired with tariffs. Indeed, Trump, 79, and his allies have teased exploring a third term, barred by the Constitution, although in May he indicated he wouldn't pursue another run.

Reigniting that speculation isn't the purpose of his remarks at the Iowa State Fairgrounds on Thursday, according to a person familiar with his expected message. Trump intends to lay out his plans to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary, in addition to emphasizing his bid to codify tax, immigration and welfare reforms in Congress, the person said.

That leaves little room for future Republican standard bearers.

"Our electorate will be looking for more ideas" in 2028, said Jeff Kaufmann, Iowa's Republican party chair. "The million-dollar question is: How do we

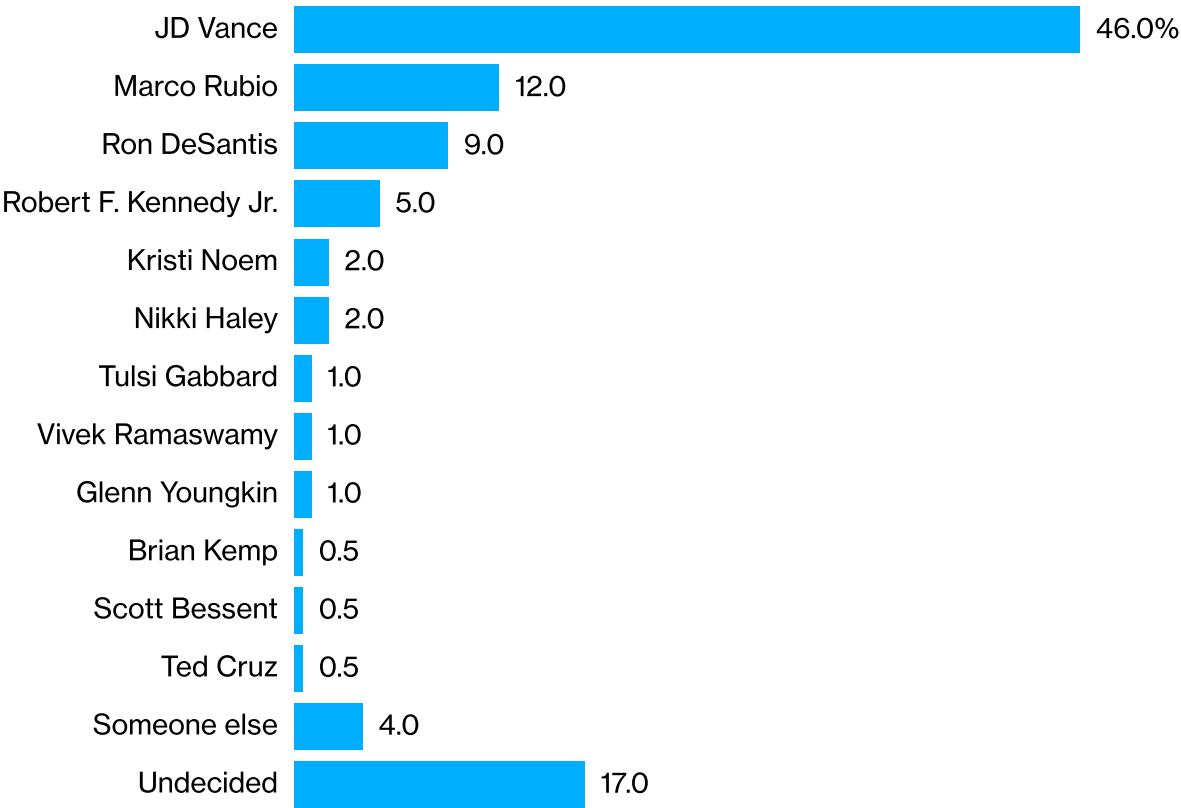
keep our party growing and viable, and our blue-collar roots when Donald Trump is no longer running for an election at all?”

Historically, Iowa’s presidential caucuses have been an early springboard for the primary cycle. While Democrats moved South Carolina to the front-of-the line for their contests, it was still the first state for Republicans as of last year.

Vance has consistently led in early polls among GOP presidential contenders. “The association with Trump gives him an ‘in’ with respect to the MAGA constituency,” said vice-presidential historian Joel Goldstein, referring to Trump’s faithful base.

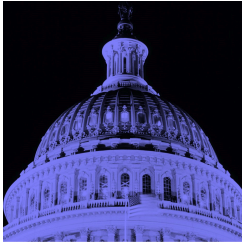
Vance Leads Among 2028 Republican Contenders

Almost half of GOP primary voters prefer the vice president as their presidential nominee, an Emerson College poll shows



Source: Emerson College national survey of voters conducted June 24-25

Still, Vance would have to defend potentially unpopular policies while still in office and have to switch to candidate mode quickly. “He’s in a challenging position in a number of respects,” Goldstein said.



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Trump’s massive tax bill, which is heading to his desk, exemplifies how a decisive victory also holds risks for Republicans in next year’s midterm elections. While the sprawling legislation delivers on key 2024 campaign promises such as a no-tax-on-tips measure and extending the 2017 tax cuts, it adds restrictions to Medicaid and food assistance programs. Most of those polled in a KFF survey in early June – 72% – said they were concerned more adults and children will lose health insurance because of the bill’s changes.

Steve Bannon, a close Trump ally, has urged Republicans to defeat Democratic criticism of the bill by highlighting aspects that are popular with the base, such as adding funds for a border wall. Vance has done that faithfully on social media as the legislation wound its way through Congress.

JD Vance

@JDVance · [Follow](#)



The thing that will bankrupt this country more than any other policy is flooding the country with illegal immigration and then giving those migrants generous benefits.

The OBBB fixes this problem. And therefore it must pass.

8:29 PM · Jun 30, 2025



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Trump is also plowing ahead with his crusade to implement steep tariffs on major US trading partners unless they cut deals by a July 9 deadline. In Iowa, the top corn-producing state, the intersection between Trump's reimagining of global trade and agriculture has unnerved a key base.

Farmers have been hopeful that Trump would expand foreign markets, boosting their sentiment in May to a four-year high, according to Purdue University and CME Group's Ag Economy Barometer. But they have since become less optimistic about whether their agricultural exports would increase over the next five years, according to the latest barometer survey published on Tuesday.

The administration did deliver a win for biofuels producers, boosting a mandate for renewable fuels blending next year by 8% over 2025 levels. Increased use of fuels made from crops such as soybeans and corn would help to offset any volumes lost in export markets.

And Trump said Wednesday that Vietnam would charge no tariffs on US imports under a deal that implements a 20% rate on Vietnamese exports to the US.

"Our farmers are GREAT, but because of their GREATNESS, they are always put on the Front Line with our adversaries, such as China, whenever there is a Trade negotiation or, in this case, a Trade War," Trump wrote on Truth Social in April. "The USA will PROTECT OUR FARMERS!!!"

– *With assistance from Ilena Peng and Michael Hirtzer*

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