



Republican vice presidential nominee Sen. JD Vance of Ohio and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, the Democratic vice presidential nominee, greet each other before taking part in their first and only debate at the CBS Broadcast Center in New York City Oct. 1. (OSV News/Reuters/Brendan McDermid)



by Brian Fraga

Staff Reporter

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In a vice presidential debate marked by civility and focused on policy, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz and U.S. Sen. JD Vance tussled on questions pertaining to immigration, abortion rights, foreign policy and the economy, among other issues.

With a little more than a month left before Election Day, the Oct. 1 debate in New York City provided the latest national venue for the campaigns to differentiate themselves as various polls show a [tight race](#) between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump.

The debate featured lively back-and-forth exchanges about immigration, which polls have indicated is a top issue for voters. Vance criticized Harris for what he called "wide open border" policies, and Walz accused the Trump campaign of dehumanizing migrants.

Asked about the Trump campaign's promise to use the United States military to carry out mass deportations of undocumented migrants, Vance described a "massive immigration crisis" that he blamed for undercutting American workers' wages and flooding communities with fentanyl.

"We have to stop the bleeding," Vance said. He vowed that a second Trump administration would build a wall at the U.S. southern border and restart deportations of migrants in the country without legal documents.

Vance suggested that the first step would be to focus on undocumented immigrants who had committed violent crimes. "Start with deportations on those folks, then make it harder for illegal aliens to undercut wages for Americans," he said.

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While saying that most Americans want to solve the immigration issue, Walz criticized Trump for torpedoing a bipartisan Senate bill earlier this year that would have heightened border security.

Walz further accused the Trump campaign of dehumanizing and blaming migrants for the country's problems. He blasted Vance for amplifying [unsubstantiated claims](#) that legal Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, were eating their neighbors' pets.

"I believe Sen. Vance wants to solve this, but by standing with Donald Trump and not working together to find a solution, it becomes a talking point, and when it becomes a talking point like this, we dehumanize and villainize other human beings," he said.

Walz cited [Mathew 25:40](#) ("Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me") during his remarks.

Abortion rights, Walz said, "is what's on everyone's mind." He highlighted the stories of women in states with abortion restrictions who have had to drive hundreds of miles to access care they needed. He also mentioned the story of a 12-year-old girl who was raped and impregnated by her stepfather in Kentucky.

"Mind your own business. Things worked best when *Roe v. Wade* was in place," Walz said.

Vance accused Democrats of having a "radical pro-abortion stance" that would force "Catholic nuns to violate their consciences" in health care settings. But he said he did not support a national abortion ban.

"The proper way to handle this, as messy as democracy is, is to let voters make these decisions, let individual states set their own abortion policy," Vance said. He added that the Republican Party had "to do a better job in getting Americans' trust back on this issue."

"I want us as a Republican Party to be pro-family in the fullest sense of the word," Vance said.

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Asked about climate change, Vance said the issue required the United States to create more domestic energy production and manufacturing. "If we care about getting cleaner air and cleaner water, the best thing to do is to double down on American workers and American manufacturing," he said.

Walz noted that Trump has referred to climate change as a "hoax," and he touted President Joseph Biden's administration for its "massive investment" in the renewable energy sector.

In one of the debate's more poignant moments, Walz said his teenage son had witnessed a shooting at a recreation center in Minnesota. Walz made that statement while answering a question about gun violence. He said the episode affected his son: "Those things don't leave you."

This story appears in the **Election 2024** feature series. [View the full series](#).