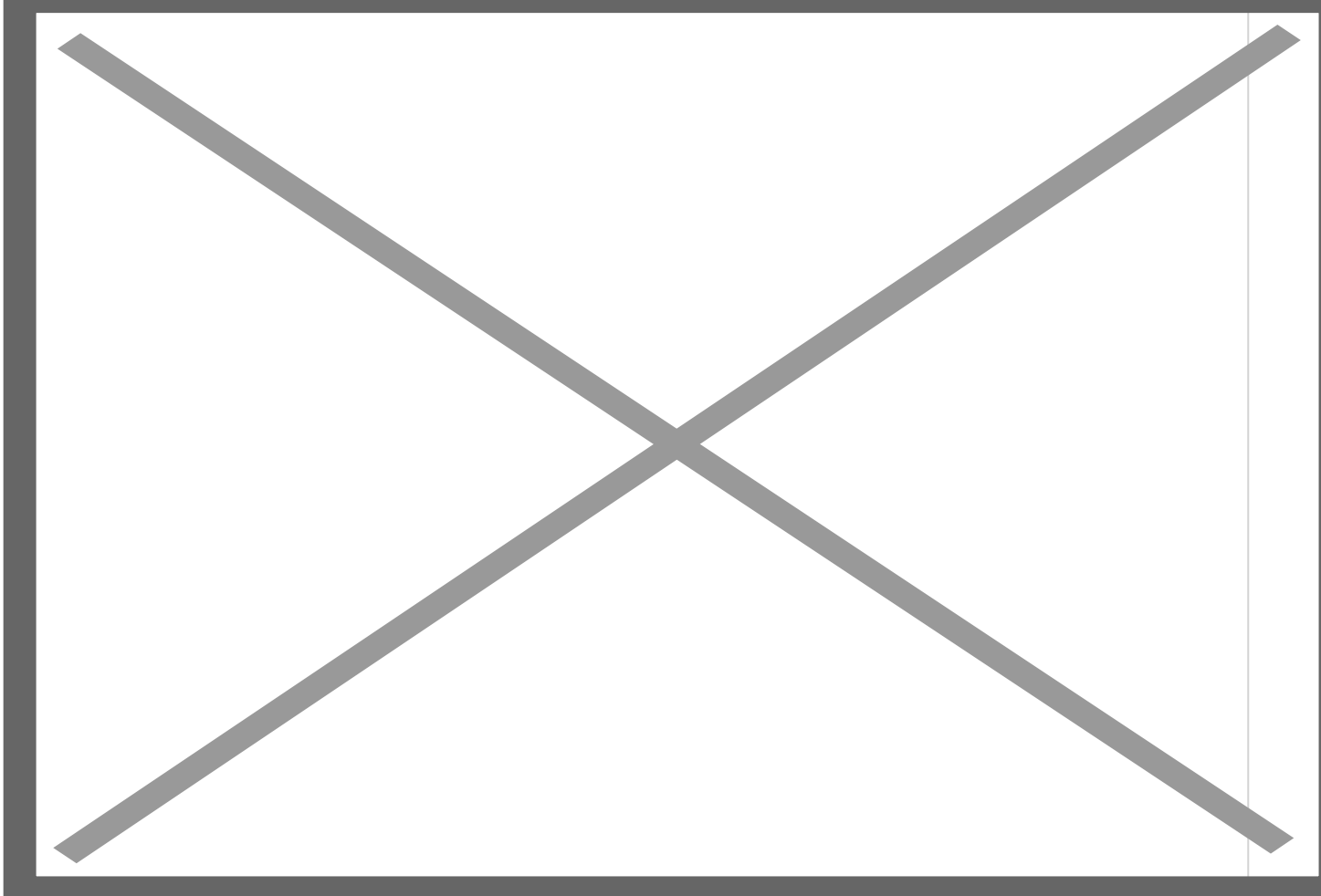


Trump's vice presidential pick JD Vance defends spreading false story about migrants

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Top US Republican politicians continue to repeat debunked rumours about Haitian immigrants eating pets in Ohio town. Republican US vice presidential nominee JD Vance speaks to reporters in front of the United States border wall with Mexico [File: Justin Sullivan/AFP]

Washington, September 16 (RHC)-- Former President Donald Trump's running mate in the U.S. election, Republican Senator JD Vance, has defended amplifying false stories about migrants stealing and eating pets in the United States, saying in an interview that the political ends justify the means.

During several television appearances on Sunday, Vance was questioned about the unfounded claims he and Trump have made about Haitian migrants in the city of Springfield, Ohio, as part of a wider attack on the immigration policies of the Democratic presidential candidate, Vice President Kamala Harris.

Trump had touted the false story during his first -- and likely only debate -- with Harris last week, with 67 million viewers tuning in. Local officials have repeatedly said they have received no evidence to support the rumours.

But Vance remained defiant on Sunday, saying in an interview with CBS News that he had received "verifiable and confirmable" accounts from residents of the Ohio community, without providing further evidence of the alleged incidents.

"Everybody who has dealt with a large influx of migration knows that sometimes there are cultural practices that seem very far out there to a lot of Americans," he said. "Are we not allowed to talk about this in the United States of America?"

In another exchange on CNN, Vance was asked to "affirmatively say" that there is no evidence to support the stories about Haitian migrants eating pets.

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