



Focus group reacts to Trump claim that migrants are 'eating the dogs' in Ohio town

The claims went viral online this week



By **Adam Shaw** Fox News

Published September 11, 2024 11:52am EDT

Voters across party lines in Fox News' focus group reacted to a moment in Tuesday night's presidential debate when [former President Trump](#) declared that Haitian migrants are "eating the dogs" in an Ohio town — despite pushback from local officials on the claim.

"In Springfield, they're eating the dogs, the people that came in, they're eating the cats," Trump said. "They're eating the pets of the people that live there. And this is what's happening in our country, and it's a shame."

When Trump made the claim, approval from all groups — Republicans, independents and Democrats — dipped, with the strongest dips coming from independents and Republicans, while Democratic approval remained low.

FOCUS GROUP REACTS TO TRUMP SAYING HE WANTED TO SEND A 'MAGA HAT' FOR COPYING HIS POLICIES

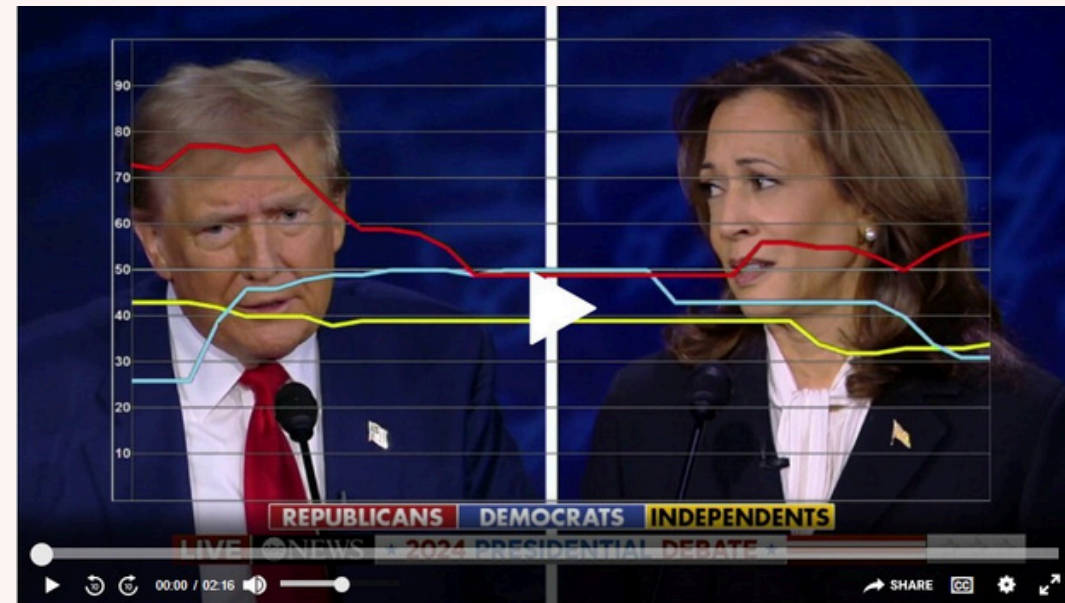
The claim was based on a number of online reports that had gone viral in recent days. Springfield has seen a significant increase in the number of [Haitian migrants](#) arriving in the town, sparking complaints from a number of local residents.

Among those claims are a number of unsubstantiated reports that migrants have eaten ducks or pets. One claim appears to be based on an incident in [Canton, Ohio](#), where a woman had allegedly eaten a cat — but there was no indication she was Haitian.

In response to a query from Fox News Digital, local officials pushed back against the claims surfacing online.

"In response to recent rumors alleging criminal activity by the immigrant population in our city, we wish to clarify that there have been no credible reports or specific claims of pets being harmed, injured or abused by individuals within the immigrant community," the city said.

TRUMP FACT CHECKS HARRIS ON CHARLOTTESVILLE RIOT ACCUSATION: 'DEBUNKED'



Trump claims migrants killing pets in Ohio town: They're so embarrassed



But a number of Republicans have continued to push the claims, including pointing to a report of a police call that claimed migrants had stolen geese.

At the debate, Trump's approval rose again from Republicans and independents after the exchange as he started to talk more broadly about the border crisis, accusing Vice President Kamala Harris of "destroying this country" and warning that the U.S. "doesn't have a chance of success" if she is elected.

But it dropped again [among Democrats](#) and independents, and rose slightly among Republicans, when Trump was challenged on his claim by the moderators and stood by it.

"The people on television are saying, 'My dog was taken and used for food,'" he said.



Adam Shaw is a politics reporter for Fox News Digital, primarily covering immigration and border security

He can be reached at adam.shaw2@fox.com or on [Twitter](#)