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Trump's Influence Keeps Huizenga Out of Michigan Senate Race, Secures GOP House Strategy

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Representative Bill Huizenga of Michigan has opted not to challenge former Congressman Mike Rogers in the 2026 U.S. Senate race, following direct consultation with President Donald Trump. The decision underscores Trump's strategic push to secure vulnerable House seats ahead of the midterms, where he aims to preserve Republican control and avoid a repeat of the 2018 losses.

Huizenga had been preparing to enter the Michigan Senate race but ultimately announced his withdrawal after a private meeting at the White House. “After careful consideration... as well as in consultation with President Trump, I have decided against a bid for U.S. Senate in Michigan,” he stated. The move reflects Trump’s broader effort to consolidate power by keeping GOP incumbents in winnable House seats rather than risking them in uncertain Senate or gubernatorial contests.

Trump’s political team has taken an increasingly hands-on approach, with the president personally influencing primary dynamics in key battleground states. In *Iowa*, Representative Zach Nunn abandoned gubernatorial ambitions following talks with Trump, choosing instead to run for re-election. Similarly, *New York* Congressman Mike Lawler decided against a statewide run after meeting with Trump. Lawler confirmed that Trump “encouraged me to run for reelection to the House... That’s where his focus is.”

The strategy highlights a calculated attempt to prevent what happened during Trump’s first term, when Republicans lost the House in the 2018 midterms. Trump’s influence now appears even more potent as the party aligns with his vision to maintain control through discipline and coordination. As Lawler explained, “These competitive districts are going to be determinative of the outcome. Of course, the president has a focus on wanting to keep these seats and avoid unnecessary primaries.”

Despite operating in a so-called lame duck term, Trump is intensifying his control over House races. This includes discouraging sitting members from vacating potentially vulnerable seats and, where appropriate, greenlighting runs in safer districts. Representative Elise Stefanik of New York, representing a strongly Republican area, is still exploring a gubernatorial bid with Trump’s blessing. Meanwhile, Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who was considering a Senate campaign, eventually declined after initial support from Trump.

This top-down coordination has become increasingly critical to Republican strategy, especially given Trump’s continued popularity among the GOP base. The party aims to replicate his turnout model, acknowledging that many of his voters don’t show up when Trump isn’t on the ballot.

Huizenga’s decision not to run against Rogers is particularly significant in Michigan, a key battleground state. Some within the party had voiced concerns over Rogers’ electability given his previous loss, even as Trump carried the state by nearly 80,000 votes.

Nonetheless, Rogers has assembled a team of Trump-aligned operatives, including campaign co-manager Chris LaCivita, positioning himself as the presumptive front-runner.

Huizenga, who won his House seat by just under 12 points in the last election, has not yet officially confirmed a re-election campaign. According to spokesman Brian Patrick, “Every two years, Bill sits down with his wife to discuss what is best for their family. This election cycle is no different.”

Others have not followed Trump’s playbook. Representative John James of Michigan is running for governor, vacating another competitive House seat. During a recent event, Trump joked about the move, saying, “Do we have somebody good to take your seat? ‘Cause otherwise we’re not letting him run for governor,” hinting at his disapproval.

Still, James’ team remains confident in Trump’s support. “He’s a proven winner, and President Trump backs winners who’ve stood by him,” said spokeswoman Hannah Osantowske, noting that James had earned Trump’s endorsement in previous races.

Trump’s influence goes beyond personnel decisions. In *Texas*, he has pushed for redrawing congressional maps to create as many as five additional Republican-leaning districts. While a bold move, it carries the risk of energizing Democratic turnout.

Interestingly, Trump has remained more reserved in the Senate landscape, where he has yet to endorse candidates in contentious primaries in battleground states like *Georgia*, *North Carolina*, and *Texas*. In the Lone Star State, Attorney General Ken Paxton, a close Trump ally, is challenging Senator John Cornyn, a move that has raised concerns among establishment Republicans who fear Paxton could falter in a general election.

In Michigan, Rogers is expected to proceed largely unchallenged in the Republican primary for Senate, at least for now. While Trump has not formally endorsed Rogers, his quiet support and behind-the-scenes maneuvering have cleared the path.

The Trump team’s more disciplined approach to 2026 includes rigorous vetting of prospective endorsers, evaluating campaign infrastructure, fundraising ability, and loyalty. It’s a calculated return to structure, following past cycles where impulsive endorsements sometimes yielded poor results.

Trump’s ongoing influence reflects a GOP still deeply shaped by his leadership, strategic when necessary, forceful when needed, and always watching the map two moves ahead.

