

# Ramaswamy seeks 'independence' from China

## Ohioan would focus on building prosperity in US

**Anna Staver and Kayla Bennett**

State Bureau  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Describing China as the adversary of America, Ohio presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy laid out his plan Thursday for a new “declaration of independence” from the communist country.

"What we are laying out here is a clear and pragmatic vision for how we will actually, finally at long last declare economic independence from China while actually advancing American prosperity at home," the biotech investor told a crowd gathered at Axium Packaging in New Albany, near his sub-



## Ramaswamy



urban Columbus home.

To do this, Ramaswamy gave four steps he would take if elected president:

**Ramaswamy** ● Declare “independence from the climate change agenda” that Ramaswamy described as both a “farce” and “hoax.”

- Achieve independence from Taiwan by increasing production of U.S. semiconductors, the “little chips” that power our phones, satellite systems, medical devices and other communication devices.

- Increase military spending to “defend our own homeland.”

- Move away from Chinese-controlled pharmaceutical supply chains out of concern that China “could lace our legal pharmaceutical supply chain

with poison, including fentanyl.”

The first major company Ramaswamy founded had a Chinese subsidiary, but the business quietly exited China as “his eyes were opened to the real risks of doing business there.” His next major business, Strive, was based in Columbus and was committed to not doing business in China.

"I think the problem is the U.S. government, whose job it is to actually look after U.S. security interests," Ramaswamy said. "We can't rely on companies to do it. That's the job of a U.S. president, that's the role I'm running for, and that's why I'm able to say, in an unencumbered way, what many other people who are captured by business interests cannot. We have to declare economic independence from China."

Ramaswamy has surged in the Republican presidential primary race after

his performance in the first debate last month. A new CNN poll has him second in New Hampshire, ahead of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. The next debate is Sept. 27 in California.

The 38-year-old has positioned himself as a vocal supporter and heir apparent to former President Donald Trump's brash style of "tell it like it is" politics. He's promised to pardon Trump if he wins; proposed raising the legal voting age to 25 unless voters can pass a citizenship test or serve in the U.S. military; and would expand fracking, coal and nuclear energy to spur economic growth.

*Anna Staver and Kayla Bennett are reporters for the USA TODAY Network Ohio Bureau, which serves the Columbus Dispatch, Cincinnati Enquirer, Akron Beacon Journal and 18 other affiliated news organizations across Ohio.*

# FEMA coordinator to oversee response to train derailment

## Eric Marotta

Akron Beacon Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A coordinator appointed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency will oversee long-term recovery efforts in East Palestine after the train derailment and chemical spill left the community struggling with cleanup and the monitoring of water, soil and air eight months later.

Last week's executive order by President Joe Biden directing FEMA to appoint a Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator also includes steps to ensure Norfolk Southern Railroad continues to meet its obligations to remedy the damage caused Feb. 3, when about 50 cars, including 10 carrying hazardous materials, derailed in a fiery crash.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, called the order "overdue but welcome."

"There is still much more work to do to make this community whole and I will continue to push the administration to deliver for East Palestine and hold Norfolk Southern accountable," he said.

U.S. Rep. Emilia Sykes, D-Akron.

called on the House to pass a railroad safety reform measure she has introduced.

“Thankfully, President Biden announced additional actions today to help ensure residents of East Palestine can access critical federal resources that will aid their recovery, but Congress still must act. Americans can’t wait any longer – we must pass the Rail Act now to protect communities across the nation from future train derailments.”

The Rail Act, which would require updated safety rules and increased inspections of trains among other changes, is supported by 11 out of Ohio's 15 representatives.

Under Biden's executive order, the federal disaster recovery coordinator is directed to conduct a comprehensive assessment of any unmet needs that are not addressed by Norfolk Southern and would qualify for federal assistance. The coordinator is also directed to collaborate with the federal, state and local governments, the private sector and voluntary, faith-based and community organizations supporting the recovery.

If FEMA receives new information

from Ohio, including needs that are not being addressed by Norfolk Southern, the executive order directs FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell to submit a recommendation on whether the state's request for a major disaster declaration is warranted.

Under the executive order, the Environmental Protection Agency will continue to direct removal of contaminated soils and wastewater from the derailment site and will ensure that any remaining contamination in surface stream sediments is addressed, and that air and water monitoring continue.

The executive order also directs the agency to prepare a report on the status of air, soil, and water monitoring and whether Norfolk Southern continues to comply with the Federal Unilateral Administrative Order to address the imminent and substantial endangerment caused by the company's derailment. Updated reports are required every 60 days until the cleanup and monitoring requirements are completed.

The Health and Human Services Administration has been given 60 days to prepare a report summarizing key con-

clusions from the public health testing and assessment conducted to date, and what resources HHS and the CDC have provided to address any health conditions related to the derailment.

HHS is directed to continue working with Ohio and Pennsylvania in monitoring the public health consequences of the derailment, including to determine whether any acute medical conditions develop. If such medical conditions develop, HHS and EPA will each evaluate whether a public health emergency should be declared. It is also directed to work with the states should either or both consider submitting a proposal for services through the Medicaid program for individuals affected by the derailment.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has 60 days to issue a report detailing the actions the Department is taking in response to the disaster. This report will be updated within 120 days of the final National Transportation Safety Board investigation, and DOT will provide the president a preliminary set of follow-on actions to ensure accountability.

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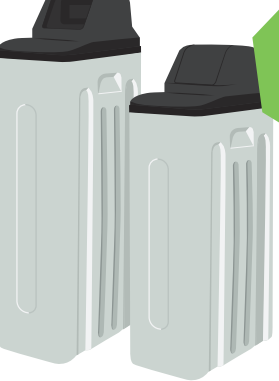
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