

Councillor campaigns in swing state ahead of 'incredibly close' US election

An Edinburgh councillor has travelled to America to campaign for Kamala Harris ahead of what he said looked likely to be an "incredibly close election".

Kevin Lang offered his support to the Democratic Party candidate by flying to the swing state of Michigan to knock doors in Detroit last week.

With "big implications for the world" from climate change to security, Edinburgh Council's Liberal Democrat group leader said he wanted to "do my bit" to help the Vice President win the White House.

It comes as British politicians face criticism for getting involved in another country's election. Around 100 Labour activists have made the journey across the pond to offer support to the Harris-Walz campaign. The move has led to Donald Trump's team filing a complaint with the Federal Election Commission alleging foreign interference. But deputy Labour leader Angela Rayner dismissed the attack, saying people can "do what they want to do with their own time, with their own money".

Furthermore the Scottish Lib Dem leader is in Pennsylvania, another state where polls look on a knife-edge, to knock doors for Harris.

Former Lib Dem leader Jo Swinson said it counted as a “holiday” for Alex Cole-Hamilton, a “political nerd”.

She said: “This is commonplace, campaign volunteers going to help in different places and get different expertise.”

Reflecting on the differences between canvassing in Edinburgh and Detroit, Cllr Lang told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: “There are obviously lots of differences with the UK. First and foremost the amount of money spent on TV and radio political advertising. As a Liberal Democrat, it’s also weird to campaign in a place where it’s illegal to hand deliver leaflets. I hope that doesn’t catch on here.

“But there are many similarities, especially on door to door engagement with voters, motivating supporters, and getting out the vote.”

Lang also attended a rally held by Kamala Harris, where singer Lizzo made an appearance.

He said: “Confession time though, I had to ask my kids who Lizzo was. They seemed more impressed their dad was metres away from a pop superstar rather than the vice president of the US!”

He added: “It’s clear this US election has big implications for the world. On climate change, on trade, on the conflict in Ukraine, who wins the White House really matters. It’s why I wanted to do my bit and spend a few days campaigning there.

“Overall, it all has the look and feel of being another incredibly close election. The US is a deeply divided country politically, so it simply comes down to which party’s supporters show up.”

By Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter