

Weekly Commentary 33A

Biden Quits and Sort of Endorses Kamala Harris

The war monger has been forced out! This is time for celebration. I was early by a few days, but this is completely predictable! With that said, it is historic. The NYT carries the announcement:

Biden Drops Out of Presidential Race and Endorses Harris

After intense pressure from within his own party, President Biden said he was ending his campaign and backing Vice President Kamala Harris to run in his place. Ms. Harris said she would seek the nomination, adding: “Together, we will fight. And together, we will win.”

I should mention that in the initial letter to drop out, Biden did not mention his endorsement for the VP. It was apparently corrected, but it does not look good.

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[Michael D. Shear](#)

Biden’s decision throws the 2024 race into disarray. Here’s the latest.

President Biden, 81, abandoned his bid for re-election on Sunday, throwing the 2024 presidential contest into chaos as he caved to relentless pressure from his closest allies to drop out of the race amid deep concerns that he was too old and frail to defeat former President Donald J. Trump. Vice President Kamala Harris said she would seek the nomination in his place, and many Democrats quickly lined up behind her after Mr. Biden gave her his endorsement.

“While it has been my intention to seek re-election, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and focus entirely on fulfilling my duties as president for the remainder of my term,” Mr. Biden said in a statement. He called it “the greatest honor of my life to serve as your president.”

Here’s what else to know:

- **Biden backs Harris:** Mr. Biden gave Ms. Harris his “full support and endorsement” in a social media post. “Democrats — it’s time to come together and beat Trump,” he added. “Let’s do this.” Ms. Harris said she was “honored” by Mr. Biden’s endorsement and that her intention was to “earn and win” the party’s nomination. “Together, we will fight, she said in a statement. “And together, we will win.” After getting off to a rocky start as vice president, Ms. Harris now stands at the brink of leading her party’s ticket.
- **A sudden withdrawal:** Mr. Biden’s decision ends a political crisis that began when the president delivered a calamitous debate performance against Mr. Trump on June 27. For weeks, the president insisted that he would remain in the race, but a senior administration official familiar with Mr. Biden’s thinking

said he changed his mind, in part because he had tried for weeks to flip the attention from his debate performance last month back to Mr. Trump.

- **Harris picks up endorsements:** Mr. Biden's endorsement of Ms. Harris set off a flood of support from his fellow Democrats. Among them: former President Bill Clinton; Hillary Clinton, the former secretary of state and Democratic nominee in 2016; Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, the chairwoman of the Progressive Caucus; Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, who is facing re-election in a critical presidential battleground state; and Representative Andy Kim, a New Jersey Democrat running for Senate.
- **Important Democrats mum on Harris:** Four of the party's most influential figures issued statements praising Mr. Biden, but stayed silent on Ms. Harris: Senator Chuck Schumer and Representative Hakeem Jeffries, the New York Democrats who lead their party in Congress; former President Barack Obama; and Representative Nancy Pelosi of California, the former House speaker. Mr. Obama was said to be maintaining the policy of neutrality he established during the 2020 primaries; he said in a statement he was confident the party's leaders would "create a process from which an outstanding nominee emerges."
- **A political first:** No sitting American president has dropped out of a race so late in the election cycle. The Democratic National Convention, where Mr. Biden was to have been formally nominated by 3,939 delegates, is scheduled to begin Aug. 19 in Chicago. That leaves less than a month for Democrats to decide who should replace Mr. Biden on the ticket and just under four months for that person to mount a campaign against Mr. Trump. Here's a look at how Democrats will pick a new nominee.
- **Uncertainty surrounds process:** Democrats are gaming out the scenarios for a new nominee, even if Ms. Harris has certain built-in advantages — including with the "Biden for President" campaign committee officially filing paperwork to rename itself "Harris for President." One crucial question: What happens to the \$96 million already in the Biden campaign's coffers? It seems likely that Ms. Harris can inherit it.
- **Praise for Biden:** After weeks of deep concerns about his age and ability to win again roiled the party, Democrats hailed Mr. Biden's accomplishments as president. Ms. Harris praised his "big heart," while four governors who have been mentioned as possible nominees applauded his legacy. Mr. Biden's son Hunter said that "unconditional love" had been his father's "North Star." Jill Biden, the first lady, responded to her husband's statement with only a heart emoji. Here's a look at what will be Mr. Biden's legacy.
- **Trump reacts:** Mr. Trump seized on the moment to criticize Mr. Biden, saying he was never fit to be president, and denounced the Washington political establishment and the news media, saying they "did everything they could to protect" him

Biden quitting the race is an attempt to save the Democratic Party but the way it was done essentially destroys it. First of all, it has taken what was obvious too long. The debate that crashed the Biden presidency was on the last Thursday of June, nearly a

month ago. During this time, every bad thing has been said about the ability of the Democratic Party to make wise and correct decisions leading many Americans to believe that they have been hoodwinked by the Democrats. He was obviously not in a mental state to run the country, much less lead it another term. It took more gaffes for the powers that be in the Party to put their foot down and pulled the plug on Joe Biden. And believe me, that's what it was. It was an American coup, led by Party elder (maybe leader?) Barack Obama. Biden was kicked out.

And in the statement released last night, the "endorsement" for Harris is, in my opinion, at best lukewarm. And Kamala Harris is not necessary the candidate that can win against a revitalized Republican party, led by Donald Trump and JD Vance. Her poll ratings are not favourable. Here is what the NYT says of the vice president:

After a Shaky Start, Harris Is Suddenly on Brink of Leading Democratic Ticket

Vice President Kamala Harris got off to a rocky start in office. She is now at the heart of a political drama that could make her the first woman of color to become a major party presidential nominee.

By Michael D. Shear

Reporting from Washington

July 21, 2024

Vice President Kamala Harris, who has struggled for nearly four years in President Biden's shadow, was thrust on Sunday into the center of a remarkable political drama that could culminate with her becoming the first woman of color at the top of a major-party presidential ticket.

Mr. Biden's decision to abandon his re-election bid and endorse Ms. Harris to succeed him puts her in a powerful, but not certain, position to become the new face of the Democratic Party, charged with preventing former President Donald J. Trump from returning to the Oval Office for another four years.

"Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year. Democrats — it's time to come together and beat Trump," Mr. Biden wrote in a social media post after he announced his decision to step aside. "Let's do this."

Ms. Harris and her team are likely to move swiftly to try to seize that mantle even as uncertainty swirled about whether other Democrats would seek to challenge her for the nomination at the party's convention in Chicago next month.

In a statement, Ms. Harris thanked Mr. Biden for the endorsement, saying that his "legacy of accomplishment is unmatched in modern American history." She vowed to "earn and win this nomination" and to keep Mr. Trump from serving another four years in the White House.

“We have 107 days until Election Day,” Ms. Harris wrote. “Together, we will fight. And together, we will win.”

Should she become the nominee, she would have only a few months to boost her own weak approval ratings, make a case for a Harris presidency and rally voters against Mr. Trump, whom Democrats have branded as an existential threat to democracy and a supporter of dangerous positions on guns, abortion, immigration, taxes, education and trade.

If Ms. Harris becomes the Democratic nominee, she would assume responsibility for the Biden administration’s legislative successes as well as its failures. Credit...Erin Schaff/The New York Times

If Ms. Harris becomes the nominee, she would immediately flip the generational argument on Mr. Trump, who has spent years deriding Mr. Biden as a doddering old man. Ms. Harris, at 59, is 19 years younger than Mr. Trump, who is 78.

Ms. Harris would have little choice but to run on the Biden-Harris administration’s record over the past four years, which Mr. Trump has attacked relentlessly. As the party’s nominee, she would be able to take some credit for the president’s legislative successes, like new laws boosting infrastructure spending, but would also be vulnerable to attack for his failures, like the botched withdrawal from Afghanistan, a surge in inflation and the difficulty of controlling the stream of migrants across the Southern border.

After a first two years in office in which Ms. Harris was often derided as out of her depth, many Democrats have given her higher marks more recently. The Supreme Court decision overturning the right to abortion enshrined in *Roe v. Wade* led her to step out as a prominent advocate for abortion rights and women’s rights more generally. She was seen as more effective at defending Mr. Biden after his disastrous debate performance than Mr. Biden was himself.

As the Democratic nominee, she might be able to appeal more successfully than Mr. Biden would to key constituencies in the Democratic Party: people of color, young voters and progressives, all of whom have expressed dissatisfaction with Mr. Biden for more than a year.

In a post on social media, Ron Klain, Mr. Biden’s former chief of staff, wrote: “Now that the donors and electeds have pushed out the only candidate who has ever beaten Trump, it’s time to end the political fantasy games and unite behind the only veteran of a national campaign — our outstanding @vp, @KamalaHarris!! Let’s get real and win in November!”

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The arc of Ms. Harris’s political career took her from local prosecutor to the top law enforcement official in California to United States senator, breaking racial and gender barriers along the way with a melting pot story that encompassed her Jamaican-born father, a mother born in India and her marriage to a white, Jewish man.

She would be the first Black woman and the first South Asian woman to be nominated for the presidency by either the Democrats or the Republicans.

In California and Congress, she was a rising star whose ambition led her to seek the presidency in the 2020 race, joining a crowded field of contenders seeking the chance to oust Mr. Trump from office.

She did not do well. After struggling to translate her personal story and governing agenda into support on the campaign trail, she dropped out of the race in December of 2019, weeks before the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary.

In August of the next year, Mr. Biden rescued her political career, tapping Ms. Harris to be his vice-presidential nominee. He called her a “fearless fighter for the little guy, and one of the country’s finest public servants.” Overnight, she became a potential heir in a Democratic Party already looking to the future.

In a speech after she and Mr. Biden claimed their victory, Ms. Harris said that “while I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last. Because every little girl watching tonight sees that this is a country of possibilities.”

But as vice president, those lofty possibilities seemed to fade quickly. She struggled with the limits imposed on any occupant of the vice presidency. And she bristled at the lack of clear direction or support from Mr. Biden and his team at the White House.

As vice president, Ms. Harris struggled with the limits of her role and bristled at the lack of clear direction or support from Mr. Biden and his team at the White House. Credit...Kenny Holston/The New York Times

Early mistakes cost her dearly. After being asked by Mr. Biden to address the root causes of immigration — a directive that was widely interpreted as making Ms. Harris the country’s de facto border czar — she stumbled in the face of large surges of families at the border. Under pressure from Republicans to visit the area, she told NBC’s Lester Holt that she didn’t understand why that would be important.

“I haven’t been to Europe,” Ms. Harris said. “And I mean, I don’t understand the point you’re making.”

The vice president’s approval numbers sank and have never really recovered. A recent polling average on the website FiveThirtyEight.com shows her approval rating at just over 38 percent. More than half of the people surveyed disapprove of the job she has done.

Allies of Ms. Harris say that could now change quickly as she seeks to assume the top spot on the ticket and voters give her a second look, with much more at stake.

But the memory of her rapidly faltering 2020 campaign remains on the minds of many activists and others in the party, who are already worried about whether Ms.

Harris has the popularity and charisma to carry Democrats across the finish line in the race against Mr. Trump and the effort to win control of Congress.

To do that, her team will likely seek to take over the campaign apparatus built over the last year to elect Mr. Biden again. But she will also need to quickly prove that she can stand on her own against Mr. Trump, whose campaign has already begun ramping up their attacks on her.

And before she can be the nominee, she will have to navigate the tricky politics of the Democratic Party and arcane — but now suddenly important — rules that dictate how the party ratifies its nominee.

Harris is not confirmed as the presidential candidate for the Democratic yet. The convention is still to come, on Aug 19 and if the James Carville strategists have influence, as well as the elders of the party, including Pelosi who has not said anything, there will be another fight until they come up with the final candidate for the Nov election. It is not over. Political infighting in the Democratic Party will hand the presidency and Congress to the Republicans.

I will stick with my prediction. Trump will win in November. Hands down.

Yeong, Wai-Cheong, CFA

Fintech Entrepreneur, Money Manager and Blogger

Un-Influencer in a World full of Hubris

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