
Pro-Iraq War, Wall Street-Friendly Joe Biden Joins 2020 Presidential Race

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The former VP also faces backlash about his propensity for touching and kissing strangers at political events, with several women coming forward to say he had made them feel uncomfortable.

Former United Vice President Joe Biden launched a bid for the 2020 presidential race Thursday, now one of about 20 Democrats running against incumbent far-right President Donald Trump.

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Biden announced his third presidential bid in a YouTube video and across other social media, drawing a stark contrast between himself and [President Donald Trump](#) in a contest he said was a fight for the future of U.S. democracy.

"We are in the battle for the soul of this nation," he said. "I believe history will look back on four years of this president and all he embraces as an aberrant moment in time. But if we give Donald Trump eight years in the White House, he will forever and fundamentally alter the character of this nation, who we are, and I cannot stand by and let that happen."

Trump responded in a post on Twitter, slamming Biden's "intelligence" and vowing to meet him "at the Starting Gate" if the Democrat wins his party's "nasty" nomination fight.

The 76-year-old moderate, who has made his appeal to working-class voters who deserted the

Democrats in 2016 a key part of his political identity, is considered too centrist for a Democratic Party yearning for fresh faces and increasingly propelled by its more vocal liberal wing by critics.

Biden is one of the few Democratic candidates who voted in favor of the Iraq War. He has also come out in favor of Wall Street

In 2016 Biden was asked about Bernie Sanders, which is likely to be his main challenger in the primaries, he responded: "I love Bernie, but I'm not Bernie Sanders," Biden confirmed in a speech in May 2018. "I don't think 500 billionaires are the reason we're in trouble. The folks at the top aren't bad guys."

Critics also said his standing in polls is largely a function of name recognition for the former U.S. senator from Delaware, whose more than four decades in public service includes eight years as the object of President Barack Obama's bromance in the White House.

Biden will travel across the country in the coming weeks to detail his plans to "rebuild the middle class," kicking off his tour with a visit Monday to Pittsburgh, his campaign said. On May 18, he will hold a rally in Philadelphia to "lay out his vision for unifying America with respected leadership on the world stage—and dignified leadership at home."

Pennsylvania, not far from Biden's home state of Delaware, is a key battleground state and former industrial hub that backed Trump in 2016. The Republican president is seeking to capture the state again though Democrats saw wins there in the 2018 midterm congressional election which tilted the House of representatives against his favor.

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As speculation about his bid mounted, Biden faced new questions about his propensity for touching and kissing strangers at political events, with several women coming forward to say he had made them feel uncomfortable.

Biden struggled in his response to the concerns, at times joking about his behavior. Ultimately, he half-apologized saying he recognized standards for personal conduct had evolved in the wake of the [#MeToo movement](#), an international campaign for women's rights to exist without gender violence which has stripped powerful men of their prestige and celebrity -- like Harvey Weinstein, Les Moonves, and others -- who sexually assaulted and harassed women only to lose their personal empire, or [multi-million dollar severance package](#) in their downfall.

Still looming in his past is the ghost of the mishandling of Anita Hill's hearing in which Hill, an attorney and university professor, testified against U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas, her supervisor at the United States Department of Education and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accusing him of sexual harassment.

Biden, as the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee at the time, was in charge of handling the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas. Two other women willing to testify against Thomas were not called to the table.

"Joe Biden, chair of the Judiciary Committee, was precisely the person who could have prevented the abuse Hill endured. He could have allowed Angela Wright and Sukari Hardnett—both former employees of Thomas's, both willing to speak to corroborate Hill's testimony—to appear before the committee after Hill did," Megan Garber wrote for The Atlantic.

Though as far as is known, he never offered Hill a simple, direct apology. In 2017 he said, "What I do feel badly about is the bad taste that got left in the mouth of some of the people around Anita Hill, and maybe even Anita, about whether or not the witnesses should have been called who were called and weren't called, etc."

The case was later compared with the 2018 confirmation hearing of Brett Kavanaugh and the testimony of sexual assault relayed by Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, who was subjected to public scrutiny and humiliation. Key witnesses were not called on and Kavanaugh was confirmed anyway.

Even so, Biden has argued that his background, experience and resume best positioned him to take on Trump next year.
