

# Biden launches massive ‘law and order’ ad campaign

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The presidential campaign of Joe Biden released a new TV ad on Wednesday that denounces anti-police-violence protesters who engage in vandalism or looting and places the blame for violent clashes between police and demonstrators in cities such as Kenosha, Wisconsin and Portland, Oregon on President Trump.

The sixty-second ad sums up the law-and-order message of the speech given Monday in Pittsburgh by the Democratic candidate. That hastily arranged appearance was in response to the fascist denunciations of protesters and portrayal of Biden and the Democrats as beholden to socialist rioters and arsonists that dominated last month's Republican convention.

The ad begins with video of Biden speaking in Pittsburgh interspersed with photos of burnt-out cars and stores and video of confrontations between protesters and riot police. Biden states: “I want to make it absolutely clear. Rioting is not protesting. Looting is not protesting. It’s lawlessness, plain and simple. And those who do it should be prosecuted.”

Biden goes on to say, “Fires are burning and we have a president who fans the flames. He can’t stop the violence because for years he’s fomented it... Donald Trump adds fuel to every fire.”

The ad is part of a massive \$45 million one-week television and digital purchase that is by far the campaign’s largest to date. The ad will air nationally on cable television and in local markets in nine battleground states: Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

The Trump campaign has launched two new law and order ads of its own around the theme “Communities not criminals. Jobs not mobs.” They will air in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The Biden ad comes on the eve of a quickly organized visit by Biden and his wife Jill to Kenosha, Wisconsin set for Thursday. On Tuesday, Trump visited the city, met with police and National Guard officials and reiterated his defense of killer cops and far-right vigilantes who attack crowds protesting against police violence and racism.

Kenosha is a city of 100,000 that has been devastated by decades of plant closures. It has become a focal point of demonstrations against police violence that have been ongoing across the country since May, following the brutal police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Protests erupted in Kenosha last month after the August 23 police shooting of 29-year-old Jacob Blake, an African American worker and father of six. Officer Rusten Sheskey, a seven-year veteran of the police force, shot the unarmed Blake point-blank seven times in the back as the victim was trying to get into his car, where three of his children were seated. Blake remains hospitalized, paralyzed from the waist down.

The Democratic governor of Wisconsin has called in some 1,500 National Guard troops and the Democratic mayor of Kenosha has overseen a brutal police crackdown against overwhelmingly peaceful protesters, involving mass arrests and the use of tear gas, rubber bullets and military-grade armored vehicles.

On August 25, during the Republican convention, 17-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse, a Trump enthusiast and would-be cop, heeded a call by the Kenosha Guard militia group to come to the city and carry out an armed confrontation with protesters. Rittenhouse shot and killed two peaceful protesters and injured a third.

Biden’s ad makes no mention of the murder of two protesters by a pro-Trump vigilante in Kenosha or the open coordination between the militia members and the

Kenosha police, captured on cell phone video viewed by millions around the world.

In responding to the fascistic ravings of Trump and the Republicans by seeking to establish their own law-and-order credentials, Biden and the Democratic Party are following the demands of their backers on Wall Street and within the intelligence and national security apparatus, as articulated by the *New York Times*.

On Tuesday, the *Times*' print edition carried an op-ed piece by columnist Brett Stephens headlined "Unwitting Progressives for Trump: Does Joe Biden have the nerve to stand up to the far left?"

The article denounced protesters in Washington DC who jostled Republican Senator Rand Paul and his wife as they were leaving the White House following Trump's acceptance speech at the Republican convention. It complained that Biden's Pittsburgh speech did not go far enough and urged him to "call out far-left ugliness," visit burned-out businesses in Kenosha, and telephone the family of a right-wing activist killed last Saturday in Portland.

This was followed Wednesday by a prominently placed commentary by the *Times*' leading columnist Thomas Friedman calling Biden's "looting is not protesting" speech a "good start," but demanding that he more forcefully denounce calls to "defund the police." Friedman, among the *Times*' most direct conduits to Wall Street and US intelligence, went on to say that "Biden, if he frames it right, can be the real 'law and order' candidate in this election. Because he's not for disbanding the police, but for improving them."

The *Washington Post* cited Ed Rendell, the former Pennsylvania governor and senior figure in the Democratic Party, described by the *Post* as a "Biden friend," as praising the Pittsburgh speech but warning, "He has to give that message over and over."

Biden's Pittsburgh speech and the new campaign ad are part of a further shift of his campaign to the right. The ad is intended to reassure the American ruling elite that he can be relied on to suppress growing social opposition intensified by the criminally incompetent and callous response of the entire political establishment to the coronavirus pandemic, and the social catastrophe that is unfolding as a result of the subordination of workers' health and lives to corporate profits and Wall Street stock prices.

It makes a mockery of the attempts by Biden and the Democrats to posture as allies of youth and workers confronted by police violence and racism. It points to the fact that the Democrats' promotion of racial politics is aimed at dividing the working class and defending the capitalist ruling class and the state institutions, such as the police, that safeguard its wealth and power.



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