

# Biden goes to Surfside to promote bipartisan cover-up of Florida condo collapse

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US President Joe Biden spent Thursday in Surfside, Florida, to meet with state and local politicians, first responders and family members of those who were buried in the catastrophic collapse of the Champlain Towers South condominium in the small town north of Miami Beach one week ago.

Biden landed at Miami International Airport in the morning and proceeded to the St. Regis Hotel Resort in nearby Bal Harbour for a series of scripted meetings designed to provide maximum media coverage. The president and first lady also made an unscheduled visit to the “Surfside Wall of Hope & Memorial,” two blocks from the condo site in Surfside, which has been erected to honor those who have lost their lives or remain unaccounted for prior to heading back to Washington, D.C.

In his first meeting of the day, the political purpose of Biden’s visit was made plain. Attending the Thursday command briefing on the building collapse, Biden sat between Florida Republican Governor Ron DeSantis and Democratic Party Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava with news media present. Republican Senators Rick Scott and Marco Rubio along with Democratic Representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz were on the other side of the table.

As Mayor Levine Cava was effusively praising and thanking Governor DeSantis, Biden interrupted, put his hand on DeSantis’s arm and said, “You know what’s good about this? The way you have cooperated and it’s really important. ... We come together. This is life and death. I just got back from 12 days in Europe and they wonder whether we can do this. And you’re doing it, just the simple act of everybody doing whatever needs to be done. And it really makes a difference.”

Biden’s praise was returned by DeSantis, who said, “Thank you Mr. President. You have recognized the

severity of this tragedy from day one and you’ve been very supportive.” This from a governor who has refused to state clearly whether Biden was elected legitimately and as recently as May 25 called Biden an “absentee president” during a Fox News interview.

While Biden was nattering on about how the two parties of American capitalism are cooperating and working together, he was sitting across the table from a senator who attempted to block the certification of votes in Congress on January 6. Senator Rick Scott voted to reject the certification of electors from the state of Pennsylvania following the attempted coup by a fascist-led mob incited by Trump that attacked the US Congress. Scott voted against certification on the grounds that Democrats had “tipped the scales” in favor of Biden and were “in defiance of state law” in counting Pennsylvania for the Democrat.

The number of confirmed dead from the condominium collapse rose to 18 on Thursday with 145 others still unaccounted for. The latest bodies pulled from the debris were those of two children, ages 4 and 10. The around-the-clock search-and-rescue effort continued for the seventh day with workers combing through the pile of rubble.

Eighty rescue workers—who are working 12-hour shifts—are on the pile at a time and they have not reached the bottom yet. Heat, humidity and rain have all slowed down the process as the workers listen, including with underground sonar technology, and dig tunnels into the debris looking for victims.

Disaster officials have requested that families of the missing provide DNA samples and unique identifying characteristics such as tattoos and scars to help identify their loved ones found in the wreckage. An audit of the list of those accounted and unaccounted for is also being conducted, since the process of verifying all 145

individuals is complex and difficult

Conditions for the rescue workers continue to be extremely dangerous. Their work was suspended for 15 hours on Thursday when indications emerged that the remaining tower of the condo complex might also collapse. Mayor Levine Cava was quick to emphasize that the search-and-rescue was not halted due to the arrival of President Biden.

The president's second meeting at the Bal Harbour resort was before noon and with a group of 50 first responders. As he expressed sympathy for the psychological impact on the emergency workers, Biden of course said nothing about how such a catastrophe could take place in the United States.

Biden then met with groups of family members of the victims of the collapse. While these sessions were closed to the media, a 10-minute Instagram video post by one of the attendees recorded the president's comments in a St. Regis Hotel ballroom. As family members are heard sobbing in the background, the president repeated at length his well-rehearsed and tearful story about the death of his wife and daughter in a car accident in 1972 and gave empty "prayers and thoughts" to those in attendance. As the smartphone video pans across the room, Governor DeSantis can also be seen standing near the entrance to the room while Biden is talking.

Biden finished the trip with a press conference. When asked if he had learned anything from the engineers about the collapse, he gave a rambling response and said, "I don't think at this point there is any definitive judgement as to why it collapsed and what can be done to prevent it from happening and what other buildings may have to be inspected to determine if they have the same problems."

The president then said he had needed to leave in order to "catch up with the governor" and proceeded to shut down the press conference.

Biden's statement in the morning that the cooperation of the Democrats and Republicans in responding to the collapse of the condo in Surfside is a "life and death" matter was not in reference to the circumstance that led to the collapse of the building, which has likely killed more than 150 people. Biden was arguing, as he has done since taking office last January, for bipartisanship as a "life and death" matter in relationship to the defense of American capitalism.

The desperation and crisis of the US political establishment in the aftermath of the Surfside catastrophe is evident in the details of Biden's trip to Florida. As has been proven throughout the coronavirus pandemic, the tiny financial elite—which has grown obscenely wealthy over the 40 years since the Champlain Towers South condominium was originally built—is uninterested in and hostile to the health and safety of the public. No manner of sympathy and crocodile tears from President Biden is going to change this.



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