

Hunter Biden plea deal intensifies political warfare in Washington

Kevin Reed
21 June 2023

On Tuesday, federal prosecutors filed papers in a Wilmington, Delaware court that said Hunter Biden, the son of President Joe Biden, had tentatively agreed to plead guilty to two misdemeanor tax offenses and accept the facts of a gun charge against him.

In an email to the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware, U.S. Attorney David Weiss wrote that Robert Hunter Biden agreed to plead guilty to two counts of “willful failure to pay federal income tax” and agreed to enter a “Pretrial Diversion Agreement” on one count of “possession of a firearm by a person who is an unlawful user of or addicted to a controlled substance.”

While the deal requires approval by a federal judge, both the prosecutors and defense attorneys have requested a court hearing in which the 53-year-old Biden can enter his plea. The date of the Delaware hearing has been set for July 26. The likely result of the arrangements with the US Justice Department (DoJ) is that Hunter Biden will not serve any jail time.

The diversion agreement on the gun charge means Biden would not technically be pleading guilty to that crime, since courts offer this option to nonviolent offenders with substance abuse problems. In the end, prosecutors will likely recommend two years of probation and the gun charge will be removed from Biden’s record after a specified period.

At the same time, prosecutor Weiss has stated that the investigation into Hunter Biden—which has been ongoing since 2018 and was started by the DoJ during the Trump administration—“is ongoing.” This suggests that other criminal charges could be pending against him.

In the charges against the president’s son, also released on Tuesday by the DoJ, Weiss wrote that Hunter Biden received taxable income “in excess of

\$1,500,000.00” with an “income tax in excess of \$100,000.00” in both 2017 and 2018. The indictment also says that Biden “did willfully fail” to pay the income tax that was due.

On the gun charge, prosecutor Weiss wrote that Hunter Biden, “knowing that he was an unlawful user of and addicted to a controlled substance,” possessed a .38 Special pocket revolver in October 2018 in violation of multiple US laws.

The plea deal between Hunter Biden and the DoJ amounts to a political maneuver by the Biden administration to take the federal investigation of the president’s son off the table in the lead-up to the 2024 presidential elections.

That Hunter Biden is now, in the words of his attorney Chris Clark, going to “take responsibility for these mistakes he made during a period of turmoil and addiction in his life” after a five-year investigation, shows that the Democratic Party president considered the matter a potential liability during his campaign for reelection in 2024.

Advisers to President Biden have presented his son as a recovering addict who may well be guilty of relatively minor offenses that would have been dropped long ago except for his family name. However, details of Hunter Biden’s business dealings show that while his father was vice president, consulting firms he controlled were paid millions of dollars in retainer and other fees by Chinese and Ukrainian energy companies.

The *Washington Post* reported in March 2022 that, over the course of 14 months in 2017 and 2018, CEFC China Energy paid \$4.8 million in fees as part of a consulting agreement signed by Hunter Biden. The business opportunity being discussed was “a \$40 million joint venture to produce liquified natural gas in Louisiana,” according to the *Post*.

It is significant that the plea agreement makes no mention of these issues, even though the income that Hunter Biden earned and failed to pay taxes on was derived in part from these transactions.

From the standpoint of American capitalist politics, profiteering such as that engaged in by Hunter Biden is the norm rather than the exception. By comparison, Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of Donald Trump, secured a \$2 billion investment from a fund led by Mohammed bin Salman, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, six months after leaving the White House.

The Republican Party, Donald Trump and the fascist right have all gone on the offensive in response to the announcement of the plea deal. The *Wall Street Journal* published an editorial on Tuesday declaring that the “lenient treatment” of Hunter Biden is “firing up Republican claims of two-tiered justice.”

Trump, who was indicted earlier this month on 37 federal charges of illegally possessing highly sensitive national security information at his home and private resort in Florida, posted on social media that the DoJ had “just cleared up hundreds of years of criminal liability by giving Hunter Biden a mere ‘traffic ticket.’ Our system is **BROKEN!**”

The agreement by prosecutor Weiss, who was appointed by Trump and agreed to stay on during the Biden administration to complete his probe of Hunter Biden, was bound to intensify the internal conflict between the different factions of the US political establishment in the run-up to the 2024 elections.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact