

# US presidential election heads toward Trump-Biden contest

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The victory of ex-president Donald Trump in the Republican presidential primary in New Hampshire reinforces the likelihood that the US presidential election in November will be a contest between the fascist Republican and the incumbent Democrat Joe Biden, instigator of war against Russia in Ukraine and Israeli genocide in Gaza.

This is a “choice” that repels the vast majority of the US population. According to opinion polls, more than half of all Americans say they will never vote for Trump. At the same time, Biden’s popularity has plunged to only 40 percent, with 57 percent disapproving of his actions as president.

While the capitalist two-party system and the ruling class of corporate bosses and financial oligarchs are moving to the right, the working class, and especially young people, are moving to the left. This political dichotomy is expressed in mounting strike action and the continued protests against the US-backed Israeli slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza.

Despite his victory in the first two contests for the Republican presidential nomination, Trump is hardly in a powerful position. He won 51 percent of the Republican vote in the Iowa caucuses, and 54 percent of the combined Republican and independent vote in the New Hampshire primary, just over half in each case.

As a result, press commentaries are warning that he has yet to consolidate his own party’s voters, let alone make significant inroads among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents. Trump defeated his sole remaining opponent for the nomination, former South Carolina governor and UN ambassador Nikki Haley, among registered Republicans in New Hampshire, winning 74-25, but won only 31 percent of Republican-leaning independents, a smaller percentage

than he received in 2020.

As for Biden, Dan Balz of the *Washington Post* wrote, “His greatest asset is that his likely opponent does more to motivate the Democratic base and some anti-Trump independents than Biden himself does.”

In New Hampshire, Biden easily defeated Representative Dean Phillips, despite not being on the ballot because of a squabble between the national and state parties over New Hampshire’s claim to be the first primary, while Biden and the national party insisted on making South Carolina first.

Some 72 percent of Democratic voters in New Hampshire wrote in Biden’s name, while only 20 percent voted for Phillips, who has been attacking Biden from the right. The Minnesota congressman has hinted that he might bolt the party and seek the nomination of the No Labels campaign, a front group set up by several billionaires to operate in the tiny space that separates the Democrats and the Republicans.

The vast majority of the opposition to Biden among Democratic voters is from the left, particularly on the question of his effusive and unstinting support for the Israeli onslaught on Gaza. The administration has funneled billions in weaponry to the Netanyahu government in Israel, financing and arming its campaign of mass murder, now in its fourth month.

Biden’s campaign appearances have been dogged by protesters waving Palestinian flags and denouncing the president as “Genocide Joe.” One such protest took place at a campaign rally Tuesday with Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris just outside of Washington, devoted to promoting the Democratic Party as the defender of abortion rights.

Protesters likewise interrupted Biden’s speech

Wednesday at the United Auto Workers legislative conference in Washington, where Biden accepted the union's endorsement in the presidential contest. The assembled UAW bureaucrats drowned out the protesters with chants of "UAW! UAW!" making clear their support both for the Democratic Party and the Gaza genocide.

Both the Trump and the Biden campaigns declared that, for all intents and purposes, the New Hampshire results mark the end of the contests for the party nominations and the start of the general election campaign, more than seven months before voters actually go to the polls.

Trump denounced Haley for continuing her campaign, with his usual mix of obscenity, personal vilification and threats of retaliation. Biden issued a statement from the White House declaring, "It is now clear that Donald Trump will be the Republican nominee. And my message to the country is the stakes could not be higher."

He went on to claim that democracy, personal freedom, and the supposed economic recovery from COVID were all at stake, but made no mention of the central focus of his administration: continuing the war against Russia in Ukraine and supporting Israel's obliteration of Gaza.

A Trump-Biden contest, version 2.0, begins on an even more right-wing terrain than the 2020 campaign ended. Trump enters the general election campaign with a full-throated defense of his fascist supporters who stormed the US Capitol building on January 6, 2021, seeking to halt congressional certification of Trump's defeat and maintain him in the White House as president-dictator.

Biden has put into practice the essence of the Democratic critique throughout Trump's first term—that he was too conciliatory towards Russian President Vladimir Putin—by instigating a war with Russia in Ukraine, into which the US government has already poured over \$100 billion. In order to obtain another \$60 billion for this war from the House of Representatives, now controlled by the Republicans, Biden is preparing to drastically escalate the war against migrants seeking to cross the US-Mexico border.

At the same time, all his promises of substantial social reforms and increased spending on health care and other vital services have gone by the wayside.

Biden's pledge to be a "pro-labor" president has, however, materialized in his repeated use of the trade unions to strangle workers' struggles, either by selling out strikes, blocking them altogether, or, as in the case of the railworkers, stalling them until Congress could pass anti-strike legislation.

In return for recognizing the unions' role as valued industrial policemen, Biden has been endorsed by every major union, including the UAW on Wednesday. The unions will spend tens of millions of dollars and mobilize their bureaucratic apparatus, particularly in key "battleground" states like Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Georgia, in support of the Democratic campaign.

The unions' support for Biden is an even greater betrayal of workers than any strike sellout. They seek to tie the working class to a government which is increasingly hated, not only in America, but around the world, as the spearhead of imperialist war, attacks on democratic rights, and the destruction of jobs, living standards and social benefits.

The central political task of American workers, together with their allies in the working class around the world, is to mobilize their great strength against the American ruling class and its reactionary two-party system. They must oppose Trump and Biden with equal force and equal hostility. There is no "lesser evil" in this contest between fascistic authoritarianism and genocidal war.

The working class must fight for a political alternative to the capitalist two-party system and to capitalism as a whole, based on a revolutionary socialist and anti-war program.



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