

# [***Biden casts the election as prom night for the voters who 'brung me to the dance'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKM-XH21-JC5B-G1D8-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

WASHINGTON — When President Joe Biden talks to his supporters, he can make the presidential election sound like a high school prom.

“You guys brought me to the dance in 2020,” he told [*Irish Americans*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-ireland-irish-patricks-varadkar-e120354333924e4e1a7bea36161c5a64) on a campaign call Friday, suggesting these are the voters who got him where he is today, on the verge of his last waltz in ***politics***.

But those aren’t the only devoted dance partners for Biden (who claims to have two left feet).

Look who else he says brought him to the dance: Black Americans. Unions. Bigwig donors. Environmentalists. Jewish Americans. Teachers. And, obviously, his Delaware-based campaign staff.

“These are the folks, as that saying goes up in Claymont, who ‘brung me to the dance,’” he said in a February visit to his campaign headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware, just 15 minutes south of Claymont, where he attended high school.

He told the [*United Auto Workers*](https://apnews.com/article/biden-auto-workers-endorsement-trump-election-ef4b26cd00fc67c4915f22e54b885866) in Michigan that same month that they “brung me to the dance ... and I never left you." He said the same to donors in Virginia last September, adding, “I wouldn't be here without you.”

Biden’s grateful shout-outs to a wide array of dance-floor besties are meant to make different blocs of voters feel important to the cause. But they also speak more seriously to the [*conflicting coalitions*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-biden-2024-election-nominee-polling-f80f8d7193e7901768b1bf67378c442a) that the president and presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump need to assemble to win in November.

The Biden campaign says the president's statements show his ability to bond with a vast group of voters. Trump's campaign argues they're a sign the Democrat is struggling to keep his coalition together.

“The president’s secret weapon has always been his ability to connect with people,” said Biden campaign spokesman Kevin Munoz. “Donald Trump has spent his entire political career dividing Americans."

Trump's campaign maintains that it is siphoning support away from Biden.

“Joe Biden no longer has a base, as key Democrat constituencies such as African Americans, Hispanic Americans and women are supporting President Trump,” said Karoline Leavitt, the Trump campaign’s press secretary.

While recent surveys suggest that some nonwhite voters aren’t willing to commit to a Biden vote right now, that doesn’t mean large majorities of those groups are decisively swinging toward Trump. And with more than six months until the general election, there is plenty of room for movement in the polls.

To win a second term, Biden needs to reassemble the winning coalition of college graduates, union households, younger voters and Black and Hispanic Americans who helped him in 2020.

But Biden has relatively weak polling among many groups. He entered the White House with near universal approval among Democrats, yet only 74% of people within his own party approved of his performance last month, according to a survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs.

Over the course of his presidency, approval among Black adults has tumbled from 94% at the start to 58% in February. A mere 38% of Hispanic adults approve of him now, down from 70% in January 2021. And just 35% of those under the age of 45 approve of him now, down from 63% in January 2021. Those low readings have generated concerns about Biden's chances in November.

Hence, his interest in convincing members of various constituencies that they hold the very key to his reelection because of their shared values. He wants to merge his election year story with their own.

To Irish Americans, Biden said the election is about preserving “honesty, decency, dignity, equality." Tapping into his ancestry, he told them, “Irish Americans have always stepped up in that fight. For real. That’s who we are.”

He told the auto workers in Michigan: “Unions are growing — the single biggest reason why the economy is growing — because you are the best workers in the world. That’s not hyperbole. No, you really are."

Trump, for his part, has a fervent base of supporters who follow him to rallies, often decked out in gear that bears his name and visage. He honors the loyalties of some — such as the Jan. 6, 2021, rioters who were convicted of crimes and are labeled at Trump's events as “hostages.” In 2016, he declared his love of the “poorly educated.”

So far, election results show his base has been deep but comparatively narrow. AP VoteCast found that nearly 9 in 10 in 2020 were white, and almost two-thirds were older than 50. Trump has won the Electoral College once, but he has never won more than 46.8% of the national popular vote and has previously tried to frighten [*“suburban housewives”*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-campaigns-race-and-ethnicity-ap-top-news-elections-6433ef01c190799f046482e178e85e48) into supporting him.

Trump often deploys the word “love,” which is sometimes a compliment, sometimes the start of an insult and sometimes a comment on his own track record. But it's usually geared toward his base.

“I love Alabama, but they understand we don’t have to be there," he said at a [*Saturday rally in Ohio*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-ohio-moreno-senate-social-security-3b450dcfc24a02c8cac3a3feb657ddc8). "We have to be in places that are a little closer than that.”

“I love California — one of the most beautiful places,” he said of the Democratic-controlled state at the same rally. “They’re destroying it. They’re destroying California.”

But if Biden is about trying to show some love to his base, Trump is intent on telling supporters that they love him.

“You love the job I did for four years,” Trump told rallygoers.

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