

# [***Biden makes fresh appeals to Black voters, hoping they can return him to the White House***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C22-33F1-JBSS-S017-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Washington (CNN) &#8212; [*President Joe Biden*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/joe-biden) is working to reverse an erosion of support among Black voters this week, placing renewed focus on a group he hopes can once again help propel him to the White House like they did four years ago.

A string of events designed to commemorate civil rights milestones and address the next generation of leaders at Martin Luther King Jr.'s alma mater comes amid polls showing Black voters flocking from Biden, frustrated by what they regard as inaction on their top priorities and turned off by his handling of the economy and the Israel-Hamas war.

In marking the anniversary of the historic Brown v. Board of Education case that found laws promoting segregation unconstitutional, Biden hopes to reiterate his commitment to promoting and advancing historic gains by the Black community over the past 70 years.

And a speech at Morehouse College in Atlanta on Sunday, already the subject of controversy amid nationwide campus protests, will aim to uplift the next generation of Black men - a voting group where Biden's decline in support has been most marked.

Since the Civil Rights era, Democratic presidential candidates have enjoyed wide support from Black voters. Yet leaders of several Black grassroots organizations have warned the president [*should not take for granted the support of Black Americans*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/01/politics/biden-black-voters-2024/index.html).

In the months before November, Biden is hoping both to underscore his own record and to reinvigorate the memories of all voters about what life was like under a Trump presidency.

"He has to answer two questions: Why go out and bother to vote, which is almost the same question of what's in it for me for voters," said Biden campaign co-chair Cedric Richmond. "And then he has to answer the Janet Jackson test of: 'What have you done for me lately?'"

In a radio interview taped Tuesday, Biden urged Black voters to "remember who Trump is."

"He falsely accused the Central Park Five," Biden told Darian "Big Tigger" Morgan on V-103.3 in Atlanta. "He's a founder of birtherism, he tried to repeal Obamacare the first time - now he's promised to do even more damage."

Sharpening the contrast with Trump has been of vital importance for Biden as he works to improve his standing in polls. Nowhere is that imperative more critical than with Black Americans. Many polls have found them more disconnected from the Democratic Party than they have been in decades.

Biden often cites issues like infrastructure investments and canceling student debt when promoting his record to Black voters. He's also taken steps on loosening rules on marijuana, [*including Thursday when the Justice Department*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/16/politics/joe-biden-marijuana-rules/index.html) formally began the process of rescheduling the drug.

On other issues, however, his campaign promises have fallen short, including a push for sweeping legislation to protect voting rights.

While Biden often cites issues like infrastructure investments, his pardons of federal marijuana offenders and canceling student debt, on other issues his campaign promises have fallen short, including a push for sweeping legislation to protect voting rights.

A [*New York Times/Siena College survey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/13/us/politics/biden-trump-battleground-poll.html) of battleground states released this week found Trump winning more than 20% of Black voters in a two-way matchup with Biden, which would amount to a historic high if it translates to votes in November. Trump won roughly 1 in 10 Black voters nationally in 2020, according to multiple estimates, including 12% in [*CNN's exit poll*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results).

"There are people in the Black community who are feeling like not a lot has changed," Bernice King, the daughter of the late civil rights leader, told Bloomberg this week.

Black voters have historically been a rock-solid portion of Biden's voter base and the president's history with the community runs deep. The president was inspired to run for political office by the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and served as vice president to the country's first Black president. Those deep connections have faced tests throughout Biden's decadeslong career but proved critical in launching him to the White House in 2020.

That deep relationship is sure to be crucial again this year for the president's hopes of retaining his spot in the White House, especially in battlegrounds like Georgia and Michigan - both states that Biden has on his travel schedule over the next few days.

"I got involved in ***politics*** because of the African American community," he told a mainly Black audience in Wisconsin earlier this month.

On Thursday, Biden met in the Oval Office with plaintiffs in the key Supreme Court case that overturned racial segregation in schools. On Friday, he sought to strike a sharp contrast with Trump in remarks at the National Museum of African American History and Culture before a meeting with members of the Divine Nine, a collection of historic Black fraternities and sororities.

"My predecessor and his extreme MAGA friends are now going after diversity, equity and inclusion all across America. They want a country for some - not for all," Biden said.

"My predecessor and extreme MAGA friends are responsible for taking away other fundamental freedoms: from the freedom to vote to the freedom to choose. But I've always believed that the promise of America is big enough for everyone to succeed - and I mean that - everyone to succeed. That's what Brown is all about," he continued.

After his Morehouse commencement address in Atlanta on Sunday, he'll travel to Detroit to address an NAACP Fight for Freedom dinner.

Speaking after the meeting between Biden and the plaintiffs in the Brown case - during which those plaintiffs and their relatives urged the president to make the anniversary of the decision a national holiday - NAACP President Derrick Johnson dismissed the polling that showed an erosion of support for the president among Black voters.

"Polls have proven themselves to be untruthful the last four election cycles," Johnson said. "What I do believe is, we are at a crisis of our democracy. We must decide whether we're going to have a functioning democracy that's representing all of the citizens, or something less than that."

Originally inspired to run in 2020 by the 2017 rally of White supremacists in Charlottesville, Biden has not shied away from mentioning the United States' history of racism - at times being even more explicit about the way the country has failed its Black citizens than former President Barack Obama.

During his inaugural address in January 2021, Biden explicitly denounced White supremacy and terrorism while appealing to the country to heal its deepening racial divisions.

"A cry for racial justice, some 400 years in the making, moves us," Biden said during his inauguration. "The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer."

And earlier this year, Biden made a pilgrimage to South Carolina - the state with a strong Black Democratic coalition that helped propel Biden to the Democratic nomination in 2020, and eventually, the presidency.

Speaking at the Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, the site of a 2015 mass shooting by a White supremacist, Biden credited Black people in South Carolina, and especially Rep. Jim Clyburn, for placing him in the White House.

"It's because of this congregation and the Black community of South Carolina - and it's not an exaggeration - and Jim Clyburn that I stand here today as your president. And I've done my best to honor your trust," he said.

White supremacy, Biden said in that speech, is "a poison."

"Throughout our history, it's ripped this nation apart. This has no place in America. Not today, tomorrow or ever," the president said.

But the base of support Biden has traditionally enjoyed from Black voters hasn't been without its tests.

While running for president in 2020, Biden suggested in an interview with Charlamagne tha God that Black supporters struggling to choose between him and Trump "ain't Black." He later acknowledged [*he should not have said that*](https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/22/politics/biden-charlamagne-tha-god-you-aint-black/index.html).

As he runs for reelection, Biden has sought to underscore accomplishments that have benefited Black Americans. In the radio interview conducted this week, Biden pointed to Covid-19 vaccinations, $1,400 checks during the pandemic, increases in Black homeownership, efforts to fight racial bias in home appraisal, efforts to bolster Black small businesses, HBCU support, health care and tackling junk fees.

Trump, Biden said, "has a fundamentally different view of Americans than I do. And it's all about hate, retribution," he said of his predecessor.

Biden's advisers argue reminding voters of the Trump presidency, including transforming the Supreme Court into a conservative majority with the appointment of three justices, and warning what a second term could look like will be key to their work in the coming months.

"People may not believe, but a court case can be revisited," said Richmond, a former congressman and White House senior adviser. "Trump's court would absolutely put Brown vs. Board of Education back in play. They may put Plessy vs. Ferguson back in play."

Pressed on a lack of voter enthusiasm for the November election, Biden said that many Americans aren't yet focused on voting and complained that it is "hard to get legitimate information from news sources."

But voters may soon become more engaged: Biden and Trump are set next month for their [*first debate of the 2024 campaign cycle.*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/15/politics/joe-biden-debate/index.html)

This story has been updated with additional reporting.

CNN's Betsy Klein contributed to this report.

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