

# [***Joe Manchin will not run for president***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBN-V661-JBSS-S0FX-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; West Virginia Sen. [*Joe Manchin*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/28/politics/joe-manchin-biden-president-no-labels/index.html) announced Friday that he will not mount a 2024 campaign for president.

"I will not be seeking a third-party run. I will not be involved in a presidential run," the retiring Democratic senator said in a speech at West Virginia University in Morgantown.

Manchin has been on a national listening tour as he weighed jumping in as a [*third-party presidential candidate*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/17/politics/joe-manchin-no-labels-new-hampshire/index.html), potentially on the No Labels ticket. He has criticized [*President Joe Biden*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/joe-biden) for being too liberal but also said that he would refuse to be part of any effort that would help [*Donald Trump*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/president-donald-trump-45) return to the White House.

Manchin had previously set a deadline of this spring to make a decision, but he is pulling the plug now to instead focus on a new group, Americans Together, which promotes moderate ***politics***.

Manchin, a centrist, has found himself at odds with members of his party throughout his congressional tenure, which began in 2010 after he [*won a special election*](https://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/11/02/election.main/index.html) for a vacant Senate seat. While he helped Biden notch some key legislative wins in the first half of his presidency, Manchin has also been an outspoken critic of the president - especially on issues such as the environment, energy and the economy.

In his speech Friday, Manchin torched both parties, though Republicans in Washington and Trump got more of his ire. He ripped into the [*collapse of the bipartisan border deal*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/07/politics/senate-border-ukraine-israel-aid-vote/index.html) last week [*amid a torrent of attacks*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/25/politics/gop-senators-angry-trump-immigration-deal/index.html) on the legislation by top House Republicans and Trump, who has made the border a central campaign issue in his presidential bid.

"So many good friends of mine, so many people I thought were there to do the right thing, they cowered to former President Donald Trump's request not to fix the border," Manchin said. "As guilty as Joe Biden is for letting it happen, Donald Trump is ten times worse for not letting us fix it."

Manchin said Washington needs to move on commonsense ideas that are widely popular in the country, including codifying abortion rights that had been protected by Roe v. Wade, eliminating the national debt and more gun safety.

On the last point, he invoked the recent [*shooting at the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl celebration rally*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/16/us/kansas-city-chiefs-rally-shooting-friday/index.html) as the latest example of how much gun laws need more of an update.

"I'm not trying to ban anything. I'm just trying to make sure that responsible people know how to use guns responsibly. And that certain guns shouldn't be in the hands of people. That's just common sense," Manchin said.

He also scolded liberal Democrats for trying to push too many cultural changes on the country.

"You're not going to make me accept things I don't believe in. But on the other side, I'm not going to let you criticize and ostracize something for what they believe in," the senator said.

Manchin accused the Democratic Party of restricting competitiveness, pointing to presidential candidate [*Robert F. Kennedy Jr.*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/13/politics/rfk-jr-democrats-trump-attacks/index.html)'s trouble getting taken seriously at party events.

"If a person whose last name is Kennedy ... can't even participate in the Democratic Party in today's world," Manchin said, "it tells you the system is broken. The system is controlled and broken."

Kennedy [*launched a Democratic primary challenge*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/04/05/politics/robert-kennedy-president-democratic-nomination/index.html) to Biden last spring but [*switched to an independent run*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/09/politics/kennedy-independent-campaign/index.html) in October.

Just a few months ago, with speculation spiking about a No Labels presidential unity ticket, Manchin was at the top of the list of potential candidates. So was Larry Hogan, the Republican former governor of Maryland.

But in one measure of where things stand with the group, in addition to Manchin's decision, Hogan [*opted for a Senate run*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/09/politics/larry-hogan-senate-maryland/index.html) in the Old Line State last week.

"No Labels has spent 14 years working to create a movement for America's commonsense majority and we welcome Senator Manchin's efforts to strengthen it," group leaders said in a statement Friday responding to Manchin's announcement.

The statement added that the group was speaking "with several exceptional leaders" and "will announce in the coming weeks whether we will offer our line to a Unity ticket."

Group officials have told CNN and others that their deadline is mid-March. But with weeks to go, the group has still not said anything about who will make the decision, or how.

Not a 'Washington Democrat'

Manchin [*announced in November*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/09/politics/joe-manchin-wont-run-for-reelection/index.html) that he would not seek a third full Senate term this fall, dealing a blow to Democratic chances of maintaining their narrow majority in the chamber.

In an [*interview with CNN's Kaitlan Collins*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/15/politics/joe-manchin-democratic-party-2024/index.html) in November, he wouldn't rule out a departure from his party.

"I've never considered myself a Washington Democrat. I've been a very independent person," he said when asked if he would leave the party.

He told Collins he would not want to play "spoiler" in a potential Biden-Trump rematch. But he said another Trump presidency would be a threat to the country: "I think we lose democracy as we know it" if Trump wins a second term, "because he has no regard whatsoever for the rule of law."

Over the past several months, Manchin has made public stops in states such as New Hampshire, South Carolina and Georgia, saying he believed there's a role for him as a national icon in the "fiscally responsible and socially compassionate" middle, comparable with the role Vermont Sen. [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/08/politics/bernie-sanders-gloria-borger-interview-cnntv/index.html) plays for the progressive left.

Polls have shown that both Biden and Trump remain unpopular nationwide. A [*recent CNN/SSRS survey*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/01/politics/cnn-poll-trump-biden-election-2024/index.html) found that 59% of Americans held an unfavorable view of Biden, and 55% felt the same way about Trump.

But while polling consistently shows that the idea of a [*third-party or independent candidate*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/17/politics/third-parties-elections-what-matters/index.html) for president is popular, in reality, third-party bids rarely generate as much support as pre-election polling would suggest.

This story has been updated with additional information.

CNN's Kaitlan Collins, Shania Shelton, Aaron Pellish and Ariel Edwards-Levy contributed to this report.

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