

# [***Why RFK Jr. Could Hurt Biden More Than Trump As Democrats Launch Anti-Third Party Campaign***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BGX-BFR1-DXVP-50MN-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 841 words

**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Kennedy Jr. s campaign said he qualified for the general election ballot in Nevada.

**Body**

**Topline**

The Democratic National Committee is launching a campaign to counter Robert F. Kennedy Jr. s longshot presidential bid the latest indicator the former Democrat poses a real threat to President Joe Biden s reelection chances.

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Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. hosts a fireside chat with rapper and producer Eric B. at The Gentleman's Factory on February 18, 2024 in New York City. (Photo by John Nacion/Getty Images)

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

The Democratic National Committee has hired a team of top operatives, including veteran Democratic strategist Lis Smith, to devise a communications strategy against Kennedy Jr. and other third-party candidates, underscoring the party s anxiety that the race is expected to be so closely contested that any voter loss could sway the election in Trump s favor,NBCfirst reported.

The effort comes after Kennedy Jr. s campaign announced earlier this month it collected enough signatures to put him on the ballot in Nevada, after he qualified for the Utah ballot in January, while the American Values super PAC supporting his candidacy also claims to have the signatures to secure his spot on the ballots in Arizona, Georgia and South Carolina.

Kennedy Jr. s ***politics*** are somewhat of an enigma: he is a scion of perhaps the world s most famous Democratic family, a background likely to appeal to some Democratic voters though his anti-vaccine advocacy could deter them, in the same way it could attract GOP voters looking for a Trump alternative.

A November Siena Collegepollof voters in six battleground states (Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin) found slightly more Democrats than Republicans (18% versus 16%) would back Kennedy Jr., indicating he could draw more votes from Biden than Trump.

Anotherpoll, by Quinnipiac University in February, found Biden loses more points than Trump (11 versus eight) with Kennedy Jr., independent Cornel West and Green Party candidate Jill Stein on the ballot.

Without Kennedy Jr., West and Stein on the ballot, Biden would beat Trump by four points, but with them, Biden s lead narrows to one point, the Quinnipiac poll found similarly, a December Reuters/Ipsossurveyfound Trump s lead over Biden widens from two points to five when Kennedy Jr. is on the ballot, and a January Harvard CAPS-Harrispollfound Trump expands his lead over Biden from six to eight points with Kennedy Jr. on the ballot.

**Big Number**

3. That s how many points Trump leads Biden by with Kennedy Jr. and West on the ballot, according to RealClearPolitics polling average, compared to two points in ahead-to-head matchup.

**Chief Critic**

We re facing an unprecedented election and we know the GOP is already working to prop up third-party candidates like Robert Kennedy Jr. to make them stalking horses for Donald Trump, spokesperson for the DNC s anti-third party effort, Matt Corridoni, told NBC.

**Crucial Quote**

Kennedy s name may be well-known, but his policy positions are not, Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute,said. However, it s not clear that knowing those positions will move his support levels either up or down.

**Contra**

A December Wall Street Journalsurveyfound Kennedy Jr. s candidacy costs Trump more votes than it does Biden, while a December Monmouth Universitypollfound Kennedy Jr. pulls support equally from both candidates. Independent candidates rarely win enough votes (typically 1% or less of the popular vote) to sway presidential elections.

**Key Background**

Kennedy Jr. announced his candidacy on the Democratic ticket in April last year, before switching his party affiliation to independent in October, drawing criticism and concerns from Trump allies, including Trump spokesperson Steven Cheung, who called his candidacy nothing more than a vanity project for a liberal Kennedy looking to cash in on his family s name. Kennedy Jr., a former environmental lawyer and founder of the anti-vaccine advocacy organization Children s Health Defense, has largely centered his campaign around his criticism of the federal response to the Covid-19 pandemic, while emphasizing voters dissatisfaction with both Trump and Biden. The two are headed for a rematch in November after securing their respective parties nominations on Super Tuesday.

**What To Watch For**

Kennedy Jr. said he will announce his running mate March 26.He toldCNN in a March 12interviewhe has met with New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers and former Minnesota Gov. Jesse Venture about joining his ticket. The networksubsequently reportedRodgers spread the far-right conspiracy that the 2012 Sandy Hook elementary shooting was an inside job by the government, a claim he did not directly address in responding to the report in a statement that said I am not and never have been of the opinion that the events did not take place. Rodgers drew headlines during the Covid-19 pandemic for his refusal to be vaccinated,admittingafter he tested positive for the virus that he misled reporters to believe he had been vaccinated.

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