

# [***Interview With Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCJ-N3V1-JCS1-63X6-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

NEIL CAVUTO, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Say it ain`t so, Joe. Joe Manchin disappointing many in the No Labels movement looking for a third independent way as a presidential alternative to a repeat of the last election, the West Virginia Democrat opting out of that, saying he wasn`t interested, that he hasn`t committed to the two front-running candidates, either Donald Trump right now on the Republican side or Joe Biden on the Democratic side.

Senator, very good to have you.

Why now? Why say now is the time...

SEN. JOE MANCHIN (D-WV): Thanks, Neil. Good being with you.

CAVUTO: Same here, sir.

Why now? Why opt out now, when you were getting good buzz and a lot of attention?

MANCHIN: Well, Neil, I have been going around the country, as you know, and talking to people, and trying to find out how they believe and what they`re feeling and what -- what -- why they`re so disenchanted with what we have available right now.

And if you`re handicapping it, it looks like we`re going to have the two major candidates as a repeat from the 2020 election. And you`re finding out, I found out that about 55 percent of the people are really stuck right in the middle. They`re center-left, center-right, Grand Old Party and the old responsible Democrat Party that had compassion.

But they`re not clear to the extremes, and they`re getting pushed to the extremes. They don`t like that. They have no options. They don`t like it at all. And so I have said I`m looking everywhere I can to be involved, to be helpful. And I have come to the conclusion, you`re not going to change Washington inside of Washington.

When I saw my friends who I think the world of, they`re very close to me, my Republican friends, walk away from a border deal that I thought was probably the best border deal that we have seen before us in the last two decades, border security, and James Lankford, one of the most conservative, one of the best human beings I have ever met, moral values unbelievable, and worked like the dickens on that, and really has a great bill.

That, when Donald Trump basically said he`d rather not have this bill right now, it`s not -- and then he gave every reason why he didn`t think it was good, which were all wrong. He was erroneous on his whole evaluation. He just wanted to wait until the next election.

And when I saw that, that kind of took the wind out of my sail a little bit. And I just said, I better get out there and see what I can do...

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: But certainly -- it certainly couldn`t have surprised you, right? It couldn`t have surprised you, right, Senator?

I mean, he does have this grip on the Republican Party, to the degree to which surprises lots of folks, yourself included.

MANCHIN: Well, I -- it surprised me that I would think... CAVUTO: So, that was a given, wasn`t it?

MANCHIN: Well, no, it wasn`t, Neil.

I -- it surprised me that, first of all, the border crises that we have are Joe Biden`s fault. Starting from day one, I disagreed. And we have been arguing about this back and forth. I think then, in defense of Joe Biden, their discussion and their basically explanation is that the world was in a flux after the pandemic.

A lot of people were hurting around the world. We wanted to make sure we could help as many as humanly possible. And the border was overrun, unbelievably overrun. And then catch-and-release is horrible. So they have waited too long. But now they have come to the table to fix a horrific problem that we have.

And saying that we have to wait another 10 months for the ***politics*** to be right for somebody is wrong. That`s as wrong, if not worse, as what -- getting to this position. So we have a chance to fix it. We should fix it as quickly as possible.

And I`m hoping that good-minded people will come together. We have the ability to fix it, Democrats and Republicans working together.

CAVUTO: But you said that this frustration with how this all sort of evaporated kind of just soured you on ***politics*** as you see it, maybe even a presidential run.

MANCHIN: Well...

CAVUTO: But why would it sour you on a run if you -- and there was talk of a bipartisan ticket, maybe you and Mitt Romney together, all sorts of combinations mentioned. Why walk away from that?

MANCHIN: Well, you know, I have mentioned -- and Mitt`s a dear friend of mine. I`d love to see him run. And I would -- maybe I`d be his running mate. We have talked about so many things.

We have had a lot of good discussions and kind of a lot of fun with this. And there`s so many good people. Take the Rob Portmans of the world that have left early, the best of the best. They always were the ones that are sitting there in a bipartisan way, putting the country before themself or their party, trying to find a pathway forward.

I enjoyed so much working with him. And Rob has left.

CAVUTO: Well, you didn`t find -- well, it sounds like you didn`t find that pathway.

I mean, were you just sort of stringing us along, Senator?

MANCHIN: Oh...

CAVUTO: I mean, or was there frustration that so far No Labels is on 16 state ballots? It`s a long way from having the type of oomph you would need to get 270 electoral votes, which is what you need for president, that that frustrated you, and you just said the hell with it?

MANCHIN: Not really, Neil.

I wish -- I mean, I have been with No Labels from day one.

CAVUTO: Right.

MANCHIN: They are a great group of people with a great determination to give us the middle of the country.

And I`m going to do everything I can with our group now called Americans Together working to bring the country together, giving people options. I just -- it didn`t feel right for me. It just didn`t feel right.

CAVUTO: With a No Labels candidate, Senator? With a No Labels candidate? If you don`t like Joe Biden yet, you`re not committed to Donald Trump -- I think ever since the January 6 insurrection, you had said, I love my country too much to vote for Donald Trump.

So I assume you still maintain that position. So it sounds like you would be open to a No Labels candidate to vote for.

MANCHIN: Oh, I`m open to whatever we put forward that has a chance of taking and bringing our country back together.

Right now, I don`t see it. And I`m hoping Joe Biden would come back to what he said he was in 2020, the person I have known forever, and be more centrist, center-left maybe, but center...

CAVUTO: But he`s not. He`s not doing that. He`s not doing that.

MANCHIN: ... rather than going so far to the left.

Well, you had better hurry up. Better hurry up.

CAVUTO: OK.

So there are other names mentioned. There`s even the possibility of Nikki Haley if it doesn`t work out for her on the Republican side. She faces an uphill battle. Maybe she will garner some interest. It doesn`t look like she is too interested, but slim pickings now.

Is it -- is this No Labels has just sort of run out of gas?

MANCHIN: I don`t know. You have got people out there now. Neil, you have got people out there now talking around, whether it be the Bobby Kennedy or -- or Cornel West and all different types of people. I understand that.

I don`t want to be a spoiler. I don`t want to get into something that I would think that I would be a spoiler, and not have that pathway clear to victory. And that`s what I was concerned about.

CAVUTO: I see.

MANCHIN: I have come to the conclusion that I didn`t want to be put in that position.

And I`m not running for Senate again. And I`m going to be involved. I got a lot of gas in the tank still left. The lord gave me good health, and I feel energetic, and I`m going to do all I can to explain to people, change the primary process you have in your state. Make sure you have an open primary or a majority or what we call ranked-choice voting.

Make sure people can get into this process that have never been able to because they`re not part of the establishment of any party machine. They don`t have all the money in the world to do it, self-funded. And then I have come to the total conclusion, Neil, that we -- it`s time. It is truly time to have, basically, the ballots from the standpoint of how long we can be in office, term limitations.

I have come to the conclusion, term limits, it`s time for that now, term limits. And I say that because we`re not getting the turnover that we need and the right type of turnover.

CAVUTO: Well, let me ask you a little bit about what it`s time for too.

A lot of people said decency might be a good idea, to return to just civil discourse here. Nikki Haley...

MANCHIN: Civility. Wouldn`t civility be something?

CAVUTO: Well, it would be a concept.

MANCHIN: Civility would be.

CAVUTO: Because I have raised it, sir, because Nikki Haley, in talking -- in speaking today to supporters, she was bringing up criticism that President Trump had of her husband, and it got fairly emotional.

I want you to respond to this.

MANCHIN: Sure.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NIKKI HALEY (R), U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: I wish Michael was here today, and I wish our children would see him tonight. But we can`t.

He`s serving on the other side of the world, where conflict is the norm, where terrorists hide among the innocent, where Iran`s terrorist proxies are now attacking American troops.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CAVUTO: She was responding to Donald Trump`s criticism of her husband not campaigning with him -- with her, as if under some nefarious intentions.

It sickened a lot of people, and she responded this way today. Do you think someone who makes those kind of charges has the moral fiber to be president of the United States?

MANCHIN: The charges that Donald Trump has made on Nikki`s husband, and not even having the civility or decency to say, my heart and prayers go out to the Navalny family -- the Navalny family, just common decency that most Americans have, absolutely not.

CAVUTO: So, if he doesn`t respond to these events as maybe typical human beings might -- now, that might vary. It`s worked for him. He s still very popular Republican Party.

If he becomes president, obviously, without your support as things stand now, do you have any fears for the country? Well, how -- would he be worse than Joe Biden, who economically and some would tell you on some other matters has been a disaster? What do you say?

MANCHIN: Let me just say this.

Whenever our president is elected, duly elected by the people, which Joe Biden was done, which Donald Trump was done in 2016, I`m going to do everything I can to help my president be successful. That`s the position. I`m giving you my position now as the candidates that we have.

If Joe Biden becomes the president again, I will do everything, as I have done in the past, to help him be as successful as he can. If my president does well, my country does well. And the bottom line is, is once they`re there, they`re there. This is ***politics***.

CAVUTO: So, you would apply that -- wait a minute. I want to be clear. You would apply that to Donald Trump, who you said, "I love my country too much to vote for Donald Trump," that you would give him a second chance?

MANCHIN: I`m not going to vote for Donald...

CAVUTO: Some in your party are worried -- I understand. Some are saying it will be a vendetta tour, and that that`s something to worry about. Do you subscribe to that?

MANCHIN: Well, you would have to oppose -- I would -- you would hope that we could have reason, sit down and make sure he doesn`t use the vengeful, vindictive tone he`s been touting right now, and use a common decency that we all have and have to have in this type of civility, in a civil country that we have.

So, let`s see what happens there. I do not -- I will not support someone who`s told me what they`re going to do and how they`re going to govern. But if they`re in that position, I`m going to try to work with them to bring them back to common sensibility.

We have to have some -- I mean, just some decency, just decency. You can`t call people names. You can`t make fun of other people. You can`t tell other countries you hope you`re going to turn big, bad Russia loose on them. You can`t do that and be the superpower of the world or basically the hope of the whole world.

And the reason we are so strong -- and I have said this, Neil, that Vladimir Putin understands the strength of NATO more than Donald Trump. He understands. Vladimir Putin understands. That`s why we are the superpower of the world. That`s why they never could become the superpower that they would want to have been. And that`s because other people have our values.

And if the people have values willing to fight and die for you and with you because of the freedoms that they cherish, then you have Ukraine. And the best investment we can make is to continue to support Ukraine, because, if Vladimir Putin has his way moving through Ukraine, Neil, he`s going to move on. He`s not stopping there.

His quest to put mother Russia back together, that, when the Iron Curtain came down, kind of splintered it, and he`s made that very clear. That means American and American lives, men and women, are going to be in harm`s way, and our blood will be shed then. We can prevent that now by supporting Ukraine.

CAVUTO: All right, but he has a passionate base, that is, Donald Trump, that doesn`t care about a lot of the stuff that you just mentioned and outlined, that they see where you`re coming from, but they much prefer Donald Trump, because, in the White House, he was a no-nonsense, take- charge leader, and the very behavior was what endeared him to them.

What do you tell them?

MANCHIN: I think what you need to do is talk to all his Cabinet members that left. How many of them are supporting him? How many of them that really know the operations inside are still there?

I`m not here talking about -- people are going to make their mind up. I respect that. And whoever is the president, I`m going to do everything I can to make sure that America that we know, America that I love and you love and all of us, there`s a certain civility that we have for each other, respect for each other.

We have got to put that back in government. We have got to tone this down.

CAVUTO: All right.

MANCHIN: This is not normal, Neil. This is not normal. And it cannot be accepted as the new norm.

CAVUTO: Senator Manchin, thank you very much. Very good seeing you again.

Keep us posted on what your next plans are.

MANCHIN: You too, Neil. Keep in touch.

CAVUTO: All right, Senator Joe Manchin.

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