

# [***Joe Biden Faces Onslaught From Left-Wing Media***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BB7-PC41-JBR6-90M0-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** A recent article by The New York Times editorial board took aim at the president's response to questions about his age.

**Body**

President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is facing an onslaught from left-wing media as news outlets criticize the president's response to questions about his age and his mental capacity.

Biden has [*dismissed concerns*](https://www.newsweek.com/president-joe-biden-jokes-about-age-memory-after-robert-hur-doj-report-1869229?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) about his age and joked about his memory following the publication of Special Counsel Robert Hur's report that described the president as an "elderly man with a poor memory."

Left-leaning media outlets, including *The New York Times,* have raised questions about Biden's age in light of Hur's report and criticized the president's response to concerns about his age.

Biden is 81 years old and the oldest serving president in U.S. history. If he is re-elected in November, Biden will be 82 on inauguration day 2025 and 86 when his second term ends.

The special counsel's report said that [*criminal charges were not warranted*](https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-joe-biden-classified-documents-report-robert-hur-willful-no-charges-1868423?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) against Biden following a probe of his handling of classified documents but the report also commented on Biden's memory, saying the president "did not remember, even within several years, [*when his son Beau died*](https://www.newsweek.com/maga-pounces-biden-doj-questions-mental-fitness-report-1868376?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)."

The president responded to the claim with anger during a televised press conference on February 8 just hours after the report was published.

"There's even a reference that I don't remember when my son died. How in the hell dare he raise that?" Biden said, adding that he has worn his son's rosary "since the day he died."

An opinion piece by the editorial board of *The New York Times* published on February 9 raised concerns about Biden's age, pointing to the Hur report and the president's press conference responding to it.

*Newsweek* has reached out to the White House via email for comment.

"Mr. Biden's performance at his news conference on Thursday night was intended to assure the public that his memory is fine and argue that Mr. Hur was out of line; instead, the president raised more questions about his cognitive sharpness and temperament," the editorial board wrote.

*The New York Times* is widely considered a leading liberal newspaper.

The newspaper wrote that Biden had given "emotional and snappish retorts in a moment when people were looking for steady, even and capable responses to fair questions about his fitness."

"His assurances, in other words, didn't work," the editorial said, adding that the president "must do better" because of the high stakes in the 2024 election.

**Trump and Biden**

Questions about the president's age come as former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), who is 77 years old, remains the leading contender for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination and leads Biden in the most recent polling following the Hur report.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted from February 9 to 12 showed Trump with 37 percent support to Biden's 34 percent among the 1,237 adults surveyed. The margin of error was 2.9 percent.

Trump has been indicted on 91 criminal charges in four separate cases related to alleged mishandling of classified material, obstruction of justice, conspiring to overturn the 2020 election, and falsifying business records. He has denied all wrongdoing in every case.

The Biden campaigned [*attacked Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-slurring-donald-trump-nra-speech-1868751?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on Friday and highlighted the former president's apparent slurring and confused state on X, formerly [*Twitter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/twitter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), during his speech at a National Rifle Association ([*NRA*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nra?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)) convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

**Biden's Age**

*The New York Times has* also published [*opinion pieces*](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13071135/joe-biden-new-york-times-warning.html) focused on Biden's age by liberal columnist Maureen Dowd, political analyst Ross Douthat, and political commentator David French.

Pointing to the special counsel's report, French wrote that "age is not a challenge that improves with time. It's likely that Biden's memory and energy are better now than they'll be next year, not to mention four years from now."

*The New Republic,* a magazine that describes itself as "founded in 1914 to bring liberalism into the modern era," published an op-ed by staff writer Walter Shapiro on February 12 that called Biden "selfish."

"We are stuck with Biden and the age issue," Shapiro wrote. "With the president having made the ego-mad decision to run for another term despite his obvious deficiencies as a candidate, the most realistic hope is that negative polarization will drag the Biden-Harris ticket across the finish line."

Writing in *The Guardian* on February 13, Ben Davis, who worked on the data team for Senator [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/bernie-sanders?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)' 2020 presidential campaign, said Biden "needs to quell the fears and doubts about his age and acuity, a tall order, or the party should be preparing a way out to win the election."

Davis argued that the Democratic National Committee "need to prepare a plan to move towards alternatives" to Biden.

Also on February 13, *The Atlantic* published an op-ed by Damon Linker, senior lecturer in political science at the University of Pennsylvania, arguing that [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) "should pick a new presidential candidate now."

"Biden is putting his own self-regard ahead of the good of the country," Linker wrote.

**No Longer Taboo**

Political scientists who spoke to *Newsweek* on Wednesday suggested that discussion of the president's age was here to stay.

"The 'Overton window' regarding accusations about Biden's failing mental state is starting to crack," said Thomas Gift, founding director of the Centre on U.S. ***Politics*** at University College London, referring to whether it is acceptable to discuss certain issues.

"What began as a right-wing talking point on [*Fox News*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox-news?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and [*Newsmax*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/newsmax?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) has suddenly gone mainstream," Gift told *Newsweek.*

"It's no longer taboo to raise questions about Biden's mental acuity, even in reliably left-leaning outlets like *The New York Times,*" he said. "Much of this change reflects growing concern, if not alarm, among progressives at the recognition that Biden's candidacy has never looked weaker."

"The Hur report, which offered a scathing condemnation of Biden's allegedly lapsed memory, has only thrust the issue more into the headlines," he added.

**A Bad Day for Biden**

The conclusions of Special Counsel Hur's report were damaging for the president and potentially beneficial to former President Trump, according to Mark Shanahan, an associate professor in ***politics*** at the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom and co-editor of *The Trump Presidency: From Campaign Trail to World Stage.*

"The Hur report at the end of last week prompted considerable knee-jerk reaction from media that has, largely, been supportive of the president to date. However much Special Counsel Robert Hur's comments around Biden's perceived cognitive decline were a politically motivated hit-job, they definitely hit home," Shanahan told *Newsweek.*

"Whichever way you look at it, February 8 was a bad day for President Biden and a very good day for former President Trump," he added. "SCOTUS appeared to lean towards keeping Trump on the ballot, and the cherry on Trump's cake arrived from Hur."

**Sowing Doubt**

Shanahan told *Newsweek* that the special counsel's report "has sown seeds of doubt in the minds of voters in the half-dozen swing states that will decide the next president."

"Will they be voting for Joe Biden or Vice President [*Kamala Harris*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kamala-harris?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) as president? It will be massively disappointing for the Biden campaign that much of the liberal media provided an unquestioning echo chamber for Hur's sentiments," Shanahan said.

"Biden needs to keep as much of the media onside as possible since every campaign is driven by confidence," Shanahan told *Newsweek.*

"Whatever legal travails Trump faces, he projects 100 percent belief in his ability to win—and that transmits to his supporters, and to the few undecideds who will be key in this race," he went on.

"If Biden is being undermined by those who should be supporting the more centrist candidate, it provides a massive drag on his campaign. The next month will be crucial for the incumbent. Can he do enough to rebut the Hur slur, or, to save the election, will he have to pass the baton?" Shanahan added.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2348945/joe-biden-speaks-white-house.jpg)

**Graphic**

Joe Biden Speaks at the White House

Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images

U.S. President Joe Biden speaks on the Senate's recent passage of the National Security Supplemental Bill, which provides military aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, in the State Dining Room of the White House on February 13, 2024 in Washington, DC. The president's age has been the subject of much recent media discussion.

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