

# [***Joe Biden Should Endorse Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Step Aside | Opinion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BF6-9DP1-JBR6-90XY-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** President Joe Biden could save the country he loves and has served faithfully for five decades by endorsing Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in this year's presidential election.

**Body**

In Chicago in 1968, amid toxic national divisions, on a sweltering August day, Democratic party leaders chose someone other than the sitting U.S. president as their nominee. By following Lyndon Johnson's example of stepping aside, and endorsing Michigan Gov. [*Gretchen Whitmer*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/gretchen-whitmer?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in this year's election, President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) could save the country he loves and has served faithfully for five decades.

Another [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) presidency would be a global disaster. Trump is a criminal defendant who will destroy [*NATO*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nato?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), encourage China and Russia to harm our allies, mutate the U.S. into an authoritarian country by continuing to sabotage democracy, and use the government as a tool for his enrichment. Yet despite the risks, polls suggest Biden's age gives Trump a decent chance of winning in November.

Biden is perfectly capable of making good decisions, and on his worst day is infinitely more reliable a steward than the conman Trump. He has successfully shepherded a post-pandemic economic recovery, helped Ukraine to thwart Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/vladimir-putin?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)'s imperial visions, and is finally moving to somehow ease the border crisis—despite a faction of House [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) whose organizing principle is nihilism.

But having been born with a debilitating stutter, losing his first wife at 30 in a car accident and his older son—who was only 46—to cancer, Biden knows the fates are fickle. Fairly or not, many voters believe Biden, already the oldest president, is too old. Maybe the televised glimpses of him sounding confused, seeming frail and looking tired are not representative. Maybe hostile media (and the mob on social media) are overly focused on it. But this is the time we live in.

Moreover, the Israeli response to [*Hamas*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hamas?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)' Oct. 7 massacre has saddled Biden with a particular problem. Again, fairly or not, progressive and Muslim-American voters demand he restrain Israel. Simultaneously, outraged at "progressive" antisemites and elite college hypocrisy, Jewish and moderate voters want the opposite. So, the Democratic coalition is split, and Biden struggles both in Michigan and my home state of Pennsylvania. If Trump flips either, he probably wins.

In fact, in all the swing states—the only ones that matter for America's bizarre and antiquated Electoral College system—polls show Trump is generally ahead. Meanwhile, the same polls show Trump losing to [*almost any generic Democrat*](https://news.yahoo.com/bidens-2024-odds-look-shaky-would-a-different-democrat-have-a-better-chance-against-trump-223356166.html).

So, just as Biden's case in 2020 was that he was the one who could beat Trump—a challenge because of the fanaticism of the MAGA cult—now he is the one who just possibly cannot. Like Tony Stark in *Avengers: Endgame*, Biden can decide to sacrifice himself for the good of the universe.

Biden can seriously influence the nominating process, though. There's no question he will arrive in Chicago with the race locked up. But by attempting to pledge his delegates to Whitmer, he would fulfill his original promise to be a transition figure, cement a great legacy, and model for future generations the importance of choosing country over personal ambition.

He would have avoided a costly and debilitating primary fight, though there would still be some uncertainty. Delegates could nominate a new candidate from the convention floor. Behind the scenes there would likely be maneuvering. Vice President [*Kamala Harris*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kamala-harris?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) might factor in (but she has failed to impress). California's Gov. [*Gavin Newsom*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/gavin-newsom?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) will be heard from (but he is hobbled by his state). An experienced politician like Biden should know how to manage this—as did Johnson in his day. Sure, Hubert Humphrey lost, but we had other problems then.

Why Whitmer? For one thing, she would be the first female president, and it's about time. She would not be hobbled by the baggage of [*Hillary Clinton*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hillary-clinton?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), and has executive experience, a centrist mindset, decency, relative youth, and evident intelligence.

Prior to serving as governor, she served in the Michigan House of Representatives and later as a state senator, crafting and implementing policies aimed at improving health care, education, and infrastructure, among other areas. As governor, she garnered national attention for handling the COVID-19 pandemic and the [*Flint water crisis*](https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/news/press-releases/2020/12/30/governor-whitmer-signs-bipartisan-flint-settlement-bill).

She has advocated for science-based approaches to public health and has worked to expand access to health care for Michigan residents, and prioritized investments in infrastructure and education. A pragmatic and bipartisan approach, track record of results, and lack of glaring absurdities, make her the ultimate anti-Trump.

Like Biden himself, the 52-year-old Whitmer can point proudly to not having attended Harvard (as [*Elise Stefanik*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/elise-stefanik?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) has), Yale (JD Vance), Stanford (Josh Hawley), or Princeton (Ted Cruz). After law school, she did not clerk for a [*Supreme Court*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/supreme-court?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) justice. Like many Americans, she's had to navigate divorce. Unlike Trump, she appears to have found success the second time around.

If suburban moms and centrist Latinos, who will determine the result of this election, had any doubts about his state of mind, Trump's inevitable sexist rants on Truth Social should serve to underscore the case for Whitmer. Or, to be fair, almost anyone else.

To further push the GOP back on its feet the [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) could nominate someone from Texas for vice president; former Tennessee Titans linebacker Colin Allred would offer yet another contrast to the lickspittle Trump will chose as his sycophant. Or they might try to lock up a classic swing state—like aforementioned Pennsylvania, whose Gov. Josh Shapiro might become the first Jewish veep.

One might ask: What about the issues? The issues are always important, and they point in all directions. The Democrats are [*more aligned with American majorities*](https://www.newsweek.com/if-democrats-call-this-winning-id-hate-see-losing-opinion-1761899?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on gun control, abortion rights, and healthcare—but the Republicans can benefit from the [*culture wars*](https://www.newsweek.com/our-story-diversity-inequity-exclusion-opinion-1858305?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and have a strong case on [*immigration*](https://www.newsweek.com/democrats-are-handing-trump-gift-immigration-opinion-1863634?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). But 2024 is simply not about the issues. It is about preventing enormous damage to America and the world.

Yes, the calls to step aside can seem unfair to Biden. Nearly 11 million jobs have been created, including 750,000 manufacturing jobs, under his watch. Inflation is coming down. Entrepreneurs have started a record number of small businesses and the stock market is booming. He's overseen an [*array of achievements*](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2024/02/02/joe-biden-30-policy-things-you-might-have-missed-00139046), from preventing discriminatory mortgage lending to forcing Chinese companies to open up their books. Even his signature failing—the chaotic and disastrous pullout from Afghanistan—was essentially decided on by his predecessor, the same Trump.

Moreover, he is not running against some spry young person. While Trump does exude a satanic form of energy, he too can also seem quite confused, and his speech is often incoherent. And when it *is* coherent, that's more disturbing still, as we know.

Yet because of the Electoral College, which over-represents rural areas that these days are solidly conservative, the Democratic candidate needs to win big to win at all. In 2020 Biden won over 7 million more votes than Trump for a margin of almost 5 percent—yet a few thousand ballots in a handful of swing states could have kept Trump in the White House.

And that was a different Biden. Anyone who views [*his speech at Clinton's 2016 coronation*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=zK8NuU2N_Rc&ab_channel=PBSNewsHour) cannot fail to notice the dramatic difference (here's [*a lampoon on Italian TV*](https://twitter.com/EndWokeness/status/1761552726570188957)). I am very sensitive to ageism, having called it [*one of humanity's greatest and most idiotic scourges*](https://www.newsweek.com/ageism-stupidest-prejudice-all-opinion-1830774?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in these very pages. But this is not ageism—it is a reasonable concern. It will be increasingly an issue in ***politics***, because of expanding lifespans.

Despite the challenges fate has thrown in his way, Biden found spectacular success; he has had a fantastic run and is now a part of America's history. He could attach true greatness to that part by pulling out of the race at the right moment. What was once unthinkable may be a must to save the country.

*Dan Perry is the former Cairo-based Middle East editor and London-based Europe/Africa editor of the Associated Press. Follow him at* [*danperry.substack.com*](http://danperry.substack.com/)*.*

*The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.*

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2354848/replacing-biden.jpg)

**Graphic**

Replacing Biden?

MANDEL NGAN/AFP via Getty Images

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer waves as President Joe Biden speaks to members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at the UAW National Training Center, in Warren, Michigan, on Feb. 1.

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