

# [***Who Could Replace Joe Biden? Four Possible Candidates***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BC9-R181-DY68-100B-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** It's too late for new candidates to enter most of the Democratic primaries, but speculation continues about Biden's future.

**Body**

President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) continues to face speculation about his political future amid concerns about his age following the publication of a special counsel's report that questioned his memory.

Biden is the presumptive Democratic nominee for president in 2024 and he's won every primary contest and every available delegate so far this year ahead of his party's convention in August. However, he has [*faced strong criticism*](https://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-faces-onslaught-left-wing-media-1869793?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in op-eds published by left-leaning news outlets following Hur's report, which described the president as an "elderly man with a poor memory."

Some commentators have been calling for him to provide greater reassurance to Americans, or to step aside entirely, while 48 percent of respondents to a Monmouth University poll said they believed it was likely that [*Biden could be replaced*](https://www.newsweek.com/could-joe-biden-replaced-2024-election-poll-1870671?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on the November ballot.

The president has given no indication that he intends to step down and it would be very difficult for [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) to replace him at this late stage. The filing deadline to run in Democratic primaries has already passed in 44 states, meaning no new candidate can qualify for those primaries.

*Newsweek* has reached out to the Biden campaign via email about calls for him to replaced.

Selecting a new candidate would have to take place at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, which will be held from August 19 to 22, but this process could only realistically happen [*if Biden chooses to bow out*](https://www.newsweek.com/can-joe-biden-replaced-senior-democrats-face-tough-decision-1870234?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) of the race, according to political scientists who spoke to *Newsweek* last week.

That hasn't prevented speculation about potential replacements, including from those wagering money on the election.

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,* told *Newsweek* on Monday that the Democrats could be facing a problem.

"Joe Biden remains determined to be the Democrats' candidate for the upcoming election, and the biggest threat to the party retaining the White House is the lack of a plan B if he can't make it to election day," Shanahan said.

Former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) remains the frontrunner for his party's nomination.

According to betting odds comparison site Oddschecker, Biden continues to have the best odds of being the nominee. Nonetheless, some bettors are taking a chance on other options.

Here are four possible replacement candidates who've been winning bettors' attention.

**Michelle Obama**

Former first lady [*Michelle Obama*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/michelle-obama?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is in the running to succeed Biden, if bookmakers' odds are any indication. Obama, a Harvard-educated attorney and author, is the wife of former President [*Barack Obama*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/barack-obama?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and she's has been the subject of years-long speculation about her potential political ambitions.

However, Obama has never held or sought elected office and she's never publicly expressed any interest in doing so.

Thomas Gift, founding director of the Centre on U.S. ***Politics*** at University College London whose home state is Pennsylvania, told *Newsweek* that an Obama candidacy is a fantasy.

"Michelle Obama is the option many Democrats hope will parachute in from left field and save the party. Only in a progressive Fantasyland does that happen," he said.

Mark Shanahan told *Newsweek* that Obama "is very different."

"She has a massive positive profile among liberals and eight years of White House lived experience," he said. "But she has never held political office, is a very divisive figure for conservatives, and having lived the FLOTUS life for eight years, why would she want to put herself under so much more pressure?"

**Kamala Harris**

Vice President [*Kamala Harris*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kamala-harris?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) may seem like an obvious choice to succeed Biden as the Democratic presidential candidate, but her low approval ratings could pose a problem.

Analysis from poll tracker FiveThirtyEight found that the vice president's approval rating stood at just 36.7 percent as of February 18, while 51.9 percent of Americans disapproved of her.

President Biden had an approval rating of 39.4 percent as of February 18, according to FiveThirtyEight, while 55.9 percent of Americans disapproved of the job the president is doing.

Harris has been the target of [*severe criticism from Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/kamala-harris-poll-joe-biden-democrats-problem-2024-election-1798060?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) over her role in dealing with the U.S.-Mexico border—she had been tasked early on with addressing the "root causes" of migration into the U.S. from Mexico and the so-called Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

In 2021, the vice president [*faced an exodus of staff from her office*](https://www.newsweek.com/kamala-harris-staffing-exodus-symone-sanders-latest-high-profile-exit-1655201?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) amid reports that she was difficult to work with, and that there existed a rift between her and Biden due to a number of apparent errors in the vice president's messaging and rumors of dysfunction in her office.

"If there's one name on that list who shouldn't - and won't - excite many Democrats, it's Kamala Harris," Thomas Gift told *Newsweek.* "If you're going to swap out an unpopular presidential nominee, the last thing you want to do is replace him with an even more unpopular choice."

"Many think that Biden would feel compelled to throw his backing behind Harris because he's his VP. Why? Let her compete like everyone else," he added.

Shanahan told *Newsweek* that Harris "is the obvious replacement, but she has never polled well since first announced as Biden's VP running mate in 2020."

"The United States remains a very small-c conservative country, and it's far harder for a woman, and especially a woman of color to make the breakthrough with voters," he said.

"Democrats will be wary of a Clinton repeat from 2016, especially if they're up against Trump. Harris is competent with all the right experience - yet that may simply not be enough to win over skeptical voters," Shanahan went on.

**Gretchen Whitmer**

Michigan Governor [*Gretchen Whitmer*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/gretchen-whitmer?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) leads a crucial swing state that handed wins to Trump in 2016 and Biden to 2020. Michigan's Electoral College voters are of major importance in the upcoming election.

Whitmer won the governor's race in 2018 and was re-elected in 2022 and she is one of the vice chairs of the Democratic National Committee (DNC). In 2020, she was chosen to give her party's response to then President Trump's State of the Union address. In addition, Whitmer served as co-chair of Biden's 2020 campaign.

Trump has referred to Whitmer as "that woman from Michigan."

"Gretchen Whitmer would be an intriguing choice, but she hasn't been scrutinized under the bright lights of the national media," Gift told *Newsweek.*

"As we saw with [*Ron DeSantis*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/ron-desantis?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), statewide appeal doesn't necessarily translate to popularity with a country-wide electorate," he said.

Shanahan told *Newsweek* that Whitmer could face the same problems as Harris, saying she was "a highly-effective governor and seen as a thorn in the Republican side."

"But she currently lacks the national profile that she might gain from being a VP or cabinet secretary," he said.

**Gavin Newsom**

California Governor [*Gavin Newsom*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/gavin-newsom?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is one of the most well-known Democrats in the country and he easily survived an attempt to remove him from office in 2021 in a recall election. He then won re-election to a second term in the 2022 gubernatorial election.

Newsom also made headlines in December for a debate on [*Fox News*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox-news?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) with Florida's Republican Governor Ron DeSantis, who had been seen as a potential GOP presidential nominee for 2024, and the Democrat [*appeared to mock*](https://www.newsweek.com/celebrities-react-ron-desantis-dropping-presidential-race-donald-trump-1862671?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) DeSantis when he dropped out of the Republican primary race last month.

Newsom has been the subject to significant criticism for his policies, most recently from mental health advocates who have questioned [*his approach to homelessness*](https://www.newsweek.com/gavin-newsom-backlash-solution-homeless-crisis-1869992?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), while conservatives have taken aim at his liberal ***politics***.

"By far, Gavin Newsom is the most battle-tested and nationally vetted of this group," Gift told *Newsweek*. "He'd be able to throw punches back at Trump as quickly as he'd receive them. The problem is that many voters perceive him as too Hollywood, too smooth, too Left Coast."

"Newsom is interesting, and like Whitmer, has definitely been on maneuvers recently," Shanahan told *Newsweek.* "But, perhaps also like [*Pete Buttigieg*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/pete-buttigieg?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), he'll more likely hold fire until the 2028 cycle."

"No-one has emerged as an obvious alternative candidate to Biden - and thereby hangs the trickiest of issues for the Democrats if he has to drop out of the race," Shanahan added.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2350893/presiden-biden-speaks-roosevelt-room.jpg)

**Graphic**

Presiden Biden Speaks in the Roosevelt Room

Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images

U.S. President Joe Biden delivers remarks on the reported death of Alexei Navalny from the Roosevelt Room of the White House on February 16, 2024 in Washington, DC. Biden has faced calls to step aside as the Democratic candidate following questions about his age.

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