

Biden to Campaign for Gov. Newsom Before California Recall Election

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By Jill Cowan and Michael D. Shear

Published Aug. 25, 2021 Updated Sept. 15, 2021

Gavin Newsom wins the California recall election. Follow our live coverage.

LOS ANGELES — Although he is mired in a political crisis about the withdrawal from Afghanistan, President Biden still plans to campaign for Gov. Gavin Newsom, who is facing a recall election in California, Mr. Biden’s press secretary said on Wednesday.

The president had previously indicated he would try to help Mr. Newsom retain his job. But some political activists had wondered whether Mr. Biden would back out of the trip because of the turmoil in Afghanistan.

Jen Psaki, the press secretary, said Mr. Biden still planned to go to California. “I don’t have a date for you at this point in time,” she said, “but that is still certainly his plan.”

Mr. Newsom, the Democratic governor of the nation’s most populous state, is fending off an effort to remove him from office that began as a long shot initiated by Republicans dissatisfied with his policies on immigration and the death penalty. But as the coronavirus pandemic wore on and frustration built over prolonged restrictions, the recall gathered steam and, thanks in part to an extended deadline, enough signatures to trigger an election.

Now Mr. Newsom and his allies are working to get the attention of the state’s enormous Democratic base, hoping to counteract enthusiasm for his ouster among Republicans.

All of the state’s some 22 million registered voters were set to receive ballots by mail. On those ballots, they will be asked whether they think Mr. Newsom should be recalled, and if so by whom. The leading candidate to replace Mr. Newsom is Larry Elder, a conservative radio host from Los Angeles who some Democrats have described as an agent of a far-right power grab.

Mr. Biden has already voiced support for Mr. Newsom. The president said on Twitter that the governor was “leading California through unprecedented crises — he’s a key partner in fighting the pandemic and helping build our economy back better.”

Vice President Kamala Harris is set to return to the Bay Area this week to stump for the governor of her home state. Senator Elizabeth Warren, the prominent progressive from Massachusetts, has for weeks appeared in television ads warning that “Trump Republicans” are “coming to grab power in California.”

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