

# Biden in private: Sharp, at times forgetful

Those who see the president behind closed doors share observations after disastrous debate.

BY COLLEEN LONG, ZEKE MILLER, MICHAEL BALSAMO, AAMER MADHANI AND SYLVIE CORBET

WASHINGTON — President Biden’s conduct behind closed doors, in the Oval Office, on Air Force One and in meetings around the world is described in the same dual way by those who regularly see him in action. He is often sharp and focused. But he also has moments, particularly later in the evening, when his thoughts seem jumbled and he trails off midsentence or seems confused. Sometimes he doesn’t grasp the finer points of policy details. He occasionally forgets people’s names, stares blankly and moves slowly.

Biden’s occasional struggles with focus may not be unusual for someone his age. But with the 81-year-old Biden seeking another four years in the White House, the moments when he’s off his game have taken on a fresh resonance after his disastrous debate performance against Republican Donald Trump. The president appeared pale, gave jumbled answers on some questions, and often started off or lost his train of thought.

The June 27 debate alarmed Democrats and Biden’s financial backers, in part because he seemed so much worse than during the almost routine moments when he’s not at his sharpest. And that has raised questions about whether he’s up for a campaign that’s going to get only nastier, and whether he can effectively govern for another four years if he wins.

“We understand the concerns. We get it,” White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said this week. But Biden has no intention of stepping away from the campaign, she said. “The president is clear-eyed and he is staying in the race.”

There have been other notable signs in recent weeks that Biden is struggling, such as his con-

[See Biden, A10]

## L.A. Democrats’ mixed feelings

After the debate, some say Biden should bow out of the race. Others defend him. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

# Learn to be grateful. It could help you live longer, researchers find

BY KAREN KAPLAN

Death may be inevitable, but that hasn’t stopped health researchers from looking for ways to put it off as long as possible. Their newest candidate is something that’s free, painless, doesn’t taste bad and won’t force you to break a sweat:

gratitude. A new study of nearly 50,000 older women found that the stronger their feelings of gratitude, the lower their chances of dying over the next three years.

The results are sure to be appreciated by those who are naturally inclined toward giving thanks. Those who aren’t may be grateful

to learn that with practice, they might be able to enhance their feelings of gratitude and reap the longevity benefits as well.

“It’s an exciting study,” said Joel Wong, a professor of counseling psychology at the University of Indiana who researches gratitude interventions and practices

[See Longevity, A5]



ZOE CRANFILL Los Angeles Times



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI Associated Press



JOSEPH PREZIOSO AFP/Getty Images

## MARKING INDEPENDENCE DAY

Celebrations were held across the nation Thursday. Clockwise from top left, Donna Morici watches Huntington Beach’s parade; American Heritage Girls ride on a float in Firestone, Colo.; and a colonial reenactment is performed in Gloucester, Mass.

# Cloud over Oakland City Hall adds to community’s troubles

Mason Ma wanted Korean barbecue.

On June 20, the PG&E employee was about to step into Jong Ga House near Lake Merritt when he was struck three times in a mass shooting that injured 13 others.

The incident shocked the city. But it was quickly eclipsed by news of an FBI raid the next day on the Oakland mayor’s house.

Ma watched it unfold from his hospital room, feeling like he was living in a city in crisis. Oakland has struggled with a mounting budget deficit, crime and safety issues driving out businesses and a contentious mayoral recall. And that was before FBI agents marched through the mayor’s home with TV cameras rolling.

“This is not what it’s supposed to be like,” said Ma, adding that police have not even spoken with him since the shooting. When he

## Public safety fears, a recall effort and budget deficit already loomed when FBI raided mayor’s home

BY NOAH GOLDBERG



RAY CHAVEZ MediaNews Group

**FBI AGENTS** remove boxes from a home associated with Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao on June 20.

called, he said, they told him they didn’t have the resources to send someone.

Since the FBI raid of Mayor Sheng Thao’s home, the political climate in the city has intensified.

Thao gave a fiery speech three days later denying any wrongdoing. “I want to be crystal clear: I have done nothing wrong. I can tell you with confidence that this investigation is not about me,” she said.

She did not speak about the investigation, but suggested the raid was related to a conspiracy between federal officials and forces closer to home who want her out of office.

“The timing of all this is troubling, and we should all be concerned,” the mayor said. “I want to know more about the handful of billionaires from San Francisco and Piedmont who are hell-bent on running me out of-

[See Oakland, A5]

# How much screen time?

Many parents allow children more than double the TV and tablet exposure that experts recommend.

BY JENNY GOLD

Parents are bombarded with a dizzying list of orders when it comes to screen time and young children: No screens for babies under 18 months. Limit screens to one hour for children under 5. Only “high-quality” programming. No fast-paced apps. Don’t use screens to calm a fussy child. “Co-view” with your kid to interact while watching.

The stakes are high. Every few months it seems, a distressing study comes out linking screen time with a growing list of concerns for young children: Obesity. Behavioral problems. Sleep issues. Speech and developmental delays.

Maya Valree, the mother of a 3-year-old girl in Los Angeles, understands the risks and constantly worries about them. But limiting her daughter’s screen time to one hour feels impossible as she juggles life as a working parent, she said.

Over the last few years, her child’s screen time has ranged up to two to three hours a day, more than dou-

[See Screen, A7]

## Hurricane Beryl threatens Mexico

The storm weakens for now after causing death and destruction in the Caribbean. **PERSPECTIVES, A2**

## A sweltering Fourth of July

Triple-digit temperatures and high fire risk grip the Southland. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

## Weather

Sunny and hot. L.A. Basin: 92/67. **B6**

For the latest news, go to **latimes.com**.

## Where student loan relief stands

GOP lawsuits cast a shadow over Biden’s plan, but some help is available. **BUSINESS, A6**

Printed with soy inks on partially recycled paper.



Get more of the news you need.  
Download the app.

