

## Missing the Point – Selling Joe Biden

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One more time, Joe. Until the chaos dissipates. (Shutterstock)

Don't misunderstand my motivation for writing this.

On one hand, I believe... Wait. I need to be more assertive. *I'm certain* that electing a Republican President of the United States – whether it be Donald Trump on the crazy end of the spectrum or someone more rational like Chris Christy or John Sununu – would only encourage the Nutball Party.

Yes, if it were up to me, the iconic elephant mascot would be replaced with, let's say, the walnut. No, no. I like walnuts on my chocolate nut sundaes. Let's go with the filbert. To quote from Nutshop.com, *"Although they are not at the top of the popularity list when it comes to raw nuts, filberts can be eaten raw. Filberts have a definite crunch to them. They also have a rather intense nutty flavor."* Yes. Much better.

Seriously folks, a successful Republican candidate at the top of the ticket could result in Republicans controlling both the House, the Senate *and* the White House. And that would be awful.

Unfortunately, Joe Biden is a terrible candidate that no qualified Democrat, including California's Governor Gavin Newsom, my personal favorite, is willing to challenge.

What's wrong with Joe Biden? Pretty much everything. While his heart is in the right place, President Biden's time has come and gone. Long gone. He looks old. He

walks old. And he's a poor, uninspiring speaker. He's 80 years old which might not be a serious shortcoming for someone more vigorous, physically and intellectually. The thing is, he presents old. Joe is one Chevy Chase pratfall or, heaven forbid, mini stroke away from a widespread loss of support from which no politician can recover. The simple fact is that the American people – including many of the elderly themselves – have had it with their country being run by old men. It's not a good look. It doesn't inspire confidence or project the strength we need in the oval office.

The late and great comedic actor Tim Conway, famously of the Carol Burnett Show, used to play an old man who would walk by taking tiny steps, I guess because, that way, he'd be less likely to fall over. Have you ever watched Joe Biden leave a press conference? He really needs to pick up the pace. It was funny schtick when Tim did it. Seeing it for real in the White House is a real problem given what this particular actor does for a living.

Left well enough alone, the only way Joe beats his Republican opponent is if the alternative Republican is unacceptable to a substantial majority of Independents and Democrats in swing states. Notice I said "states." Because winning states is how you become President. We elect Presidents through an electoral college. There is no such thing as a national popular vote. [In 2016](#), Hillary Clinton won the popular vote 65,853,514 (48.2%) to Trump's 62,984,826 (46.1%), but lost the election with 232 votes in the Electoral College to Trump's 306. So much for the concept of "majority rule."

Joe likes to tell us not to compare him to the Almighty, but to the alternative. He thinks that advice is funny, but it's not. He's right. It's an accurate, practical observation, but isn't a powerful enough argument to get him re-elected.

And so, his advisors and Democrat-leading journalists and pundits keep whining about how President Biden isn't getting the credit he deserves for how well our economy is doing. They're missing the point.

When the President and his supporters talk about our economy, they're trying to focus public opinion on jobs creation. Let's assume, for the sake of discussion, that the government's monthly jobs data are valid – that the number of new jobs is, in fact, *net* of jobs lost for whatever reason. Who's taking all these new jobs? I ask because the rate of new jobs creation seems to be greater than population growth.

In the less than three years President Biden has been in office, he says the economy has created [13.9 million jobs](#). Net jobs. Jobs *net* of jobs lost. Our population isn't growing that fast. According to the [Bureau of the Census](#), our population has increased by only 3.7 million people over the same period. The difference could be that people who left the labor force during the worst of the COVID outbreak are coming back into the labor market. 10.2 million people in just the last three years? Maybe, but then why are so many companies, large and small, reporting staffing shortages?

People seem to be moving from one job to another inside the economy. That's an adjustment, not growth.

In any case, net jobs creation benefits the un- and under-employed who are, collectively, only a relatively small portion of the total voting public. Even if they were all Biden supporters, thankful to Joe for no longer being un- or under-employed, there aren't enough of them to move the polls in Joe's favor. Inflation, on the other hand, is something we all experience every day, every time we go to the grocery store, to Target and Walmart, out to lunch and dinner or buy school supplies and clothes for our kids. Or borrow money to buy a new house or car.

Politically speaking, the negatives of significant widespread inflation are more hurtful to a President than the positive benefits of jobs creation in a mostly full-employment economy. And for Joe, the worst is yet to come. All those increases in interest rates that the Fed has been mandating? Well, there are lags in the timing of their impact on our economy that President Biden and his advisors don't seem to understand. Lags that will, eventually, have a negative effect on jobs creation, quite probably next year, before the election.

And then there's the adage, "When things are going well, nothing matters. When things are going poorly, everything counts." Voters tend to blame whoever happens to be in office for the anxiety they feel. For inflation. For crime. For the annoying effects of bad weather. For Russia attacking Ukraine. For Hamas attacking Israel. For chaos in the House, even though it's not his party that's lost its way. It's all on Joe.

That the Republicans blame Joe for everything, whether or not any of it is his fault, isn't helping. Voters don't care that Republicans aren't offering any solutions of their own. That argument is for policy wonks and never wins elections.

So how do we sell Joe Biden? It's simple – and the timing of the Republican's mess in the House couldn't be better. We sell Joe using precisely the same messaging that got him elected in the first place when Trump was in far less trouble and House still had a Speaker.

*"Ladies and gentlemen," Joe needs to tell the voters. "I promised last time to be a 'transitional President.' What I didn't realize then, to be honest, is that the transition would take longer than a single term. Longer for Republicans to resolve the chaos they've created and get back to work. Longer than we need to shed the mess that my predecessor created and restore civility and productivity to Congress."*

*"I'm still that same effective, transitional President I promised I would be. I'm not perfect. No President is, but decades of experience have made me very good at what I do. ...have enabled our government to do even better than expected for the vast majority of Americans, despite the array of difficult problems we're facing and a dysfunctional opposition party in Congress."*

*I'm still the transitional President you elected last time. It's just going to take a second term to get the job done. Progressively, but safely, with calm, reasoned judgement and civility as the basis for continuity instead of chaos, as quickly as we can."*

-Les Cohen

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