



Photo by Adam Schultz / Biden for President

BIDEN'S FIRST 100 DAYS

Of course, the biggest change to Washington D.C. is the change in leadership in the White House. With Biden sworn in on Jan. 20, the 46th president inherits some of the biggest challenges any incoming president has ever dealt with. His performance over these first 100 days won't just set the pace for his presidency, but also his popularity.

OSU political science associate professor Stout says this period is considered crucial for any president, since most Americans generally want to see the country succeed and the president hasn't done anything wrong, yet. What Biden does over this period could curtail his agenda. He points to former President Bill Clinton, who slowed down his agenda by pursuing Don't Ask Don't Tell. He adds that Trump immediately upset many Americans by getting in a fight with the National Park Service over how many people attended his inauguration.

Although Biden is another president who's an old white guy, the support he's enlisted is historic. In addition to having the first-ever vice president of Black and South Asian descent, he also has the most diverse picks for a cabinet in U.S. history. If confirmed by the Senate, one-half of the cabinet would be women and a majority would be people of color.

A diverse cabinet could have a drastic impact on governance, Stout says. Diverse cabinet members have a lived experience that past members don't have. "The more diverse cabinet will probably be more focused on inequality than in the past," he says. "Just policy-wise, there's going to be drastic differences in the views of what the government should be doing between Biden's picks and Trump's cabinet officials."

Stout says for Biden to start the first 100 days off right, he needs to champion legislation that everyone can agree on. Obama did it with the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, and Biden's support for a COVID-19 economic relief package could be his popular action. Stout adds that with some Republican lawmakers supporting an increase of

the individual stimulus checks to \$2,000 from \$1,400. If the relief legislation passed Congress, it would be a major win for Biden.

Politically for Biden, getting Congress on board for the COVID-19 relief bill is relatively easier than the other policies he's advocating for. Stout says lowering the age for Medicare, addressing the public option on health care and building green infrastructure will take more political

as strong a stance on the budget deficit this time because so many of them were in support of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. According to a February 2019 report from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the Trump-era tax cut will add \$1.9 trillion to the deficit over 10 years.

As for the atmosphere of the country and the Democrats' views on TARP-like legislation that DeFazio so vehemently opposed at the risk of becoming the "pariah"

'We need to act quickly and show the Americans that there are real results that will not be trickle-down economics or a pittance in everybody's pockets.'

— PETER DEFAZIO, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

capital. But that bigger legislation might not happen in the first 100 days.

Stout says it's a big deal that in Biden's COVID-19 relief proposal a \$15 minimum wage is included. "I don't think that's something Obama would have pushed for," he adds. The growing presence of Black Lives Matter-related protests is also an opportunity for Biden to make some headway on racial equality issues, too, he adds.

Obama did have to deal with the "Taxed Enough Already" Party (Tea Party), but Stout says Republicans can't take

of the party, according to the congressman, the party has changed, Stout says. Thanks to Sanders' presidential campaigns and the progressive movement he helped spark, the Democratic Party is more left than it was when Obama had Summers working on TARP, he adds.

After progressive Democrats pressured Biden to not have Summers in his administration, maybe the party has learned its lesson on how to stay in power, but after Biden's first two years, voters will say how the 46th president fared in the 2022 midterms. ■