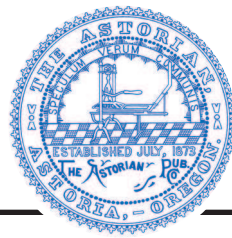


OPINION



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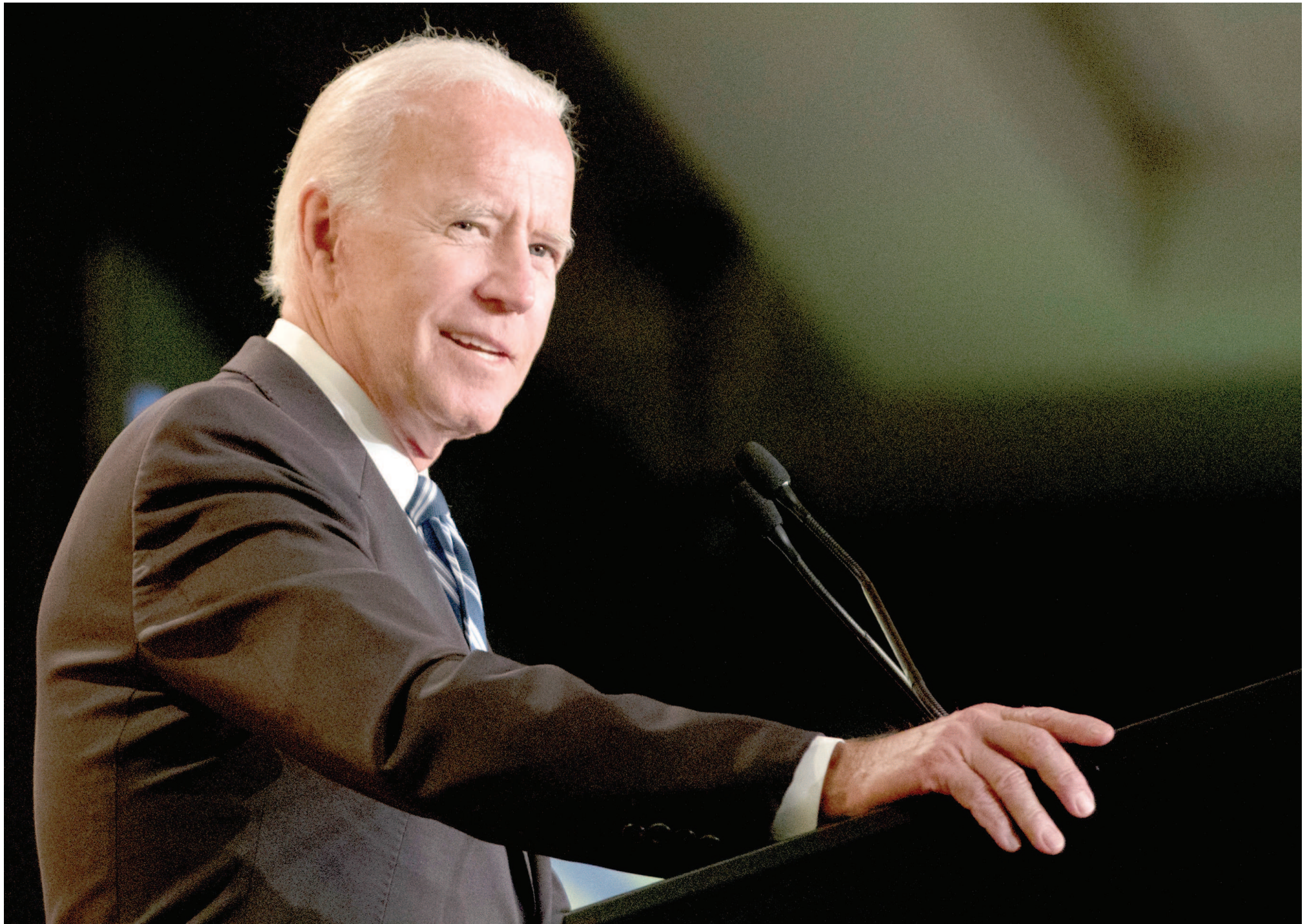
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PRO-CON

Does Biden have the best chance to beat Trump?



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

Former Vice President Joe Biden speaks at the International Association of Firefighters in Washington, D.C.

PRO: In a Democratic race with mostly progressive candidates, Biden clearly is the best

TAMPA, Fla. — Politics are getting pretty weird when The New York Times, the nation's leading champion of liberalism, trashes former Vice President Joe Biden, the only progressive who stands a real chance of routing Donald Trump in a Democratic presidential field chock full of recently anointed celebrity politicians.

Yet that's exactly what the august Times did recently when it argued that Biden was racially biased because he once was "an ardent" opponent of busing to desegregate Delaware's racially segregated schools.

Delaware, nicknamed the First State, because it was the first of the original 13 to ratify the Constitution, did drag its feet on desegregation, but finally approved busing for racial balance in 1967.

The governor then was Charles Terry, known as the "Great Divider" because of his hardline stance against fair housing and keeping the National Guard on the streets of Wilmington long after the rioting that exploded after the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In 1968, Biden, a Democrat, supported liberal Republican Russell Peterson for governor. Peterson defeated Terry.

The case against forced busing eventually dissolved in 1974 when the Supreme Court held that students in Detroit's 53 suburban school districts could not be bused into Detroit to offset that city's largely black school enrollment.

Bradley v. Milliken (the state's governor at the time) held that school districts were not compelled to desegregate unless it had been proven that they had drawn specific lines to prevent desegregation.

The Times, in its recent blast against Biden, argued that his stance against forced busing of school children would help attract "the white, blue collar workers who rejected Hillary Clinton in favor of Donald Trump."

It noted that Biden believes he could have won that crucial sector in 2016, "and he thinks he can win them now." And it argued that

Biden was "a staunch defender of Middle American interests" and that "he could lead the Democrats to victory over Trump, but his political style might affirm the assumptions behind Trumpism."

That charge was a particularly low blow against the man who was Barack Obama's vice president for two terms.

In other words, The New York Times actually argues that Biden might be too electable because he supports Middle American values that a majority of Americans likely believe in.

Those who find comfort in middle-class values and supported Trump in 2016 were hoodwinked.

Many annually saw refunds on their federal taxes. This year they found they owe the IRS. Trump's gangbusters economy was largely inherited from Obama. Trump's unwise tariff wars, continued export of quality jobs overseas, and failure to rein in prescription drug costs and other health care services may have made billions for his uber-wealthy pals, but have placed the economy on a house of cards.

Biden gets that. Biden would restore stability in the economy and markets without constantly embarrassing America with clown-like antics on the international stage. Biden doesn't even need to respond to "low IQ" taunts by someone who refuses to release their school and college grades. It is also likely that Biden would continue the best policies of Barack Obama while, at the same time, avoiding some of Obama's mistakes.

One other plus for Biden: He cut his congressional eye-teeth by serving on the House Energy and Commerce Committee chaired by Michigan's John Dingell — a man who knew how to mold bipartisan coalitions to support key legislation that helped all Americans.

The New York Times aside, what's not to like?

Wayne Madsen is a journalist whose opinion pieces have appeared in European and American newspapers.



Wayne Madsen

CON: Biden should stand down and support the best woman in the race

BALTIMORE — For the first time since the four-term reign of President Franklin Roosevelt, Democrats have a chance to pick a real progressive and could well make history by nominating a woman.

Now a moderate like Joe Biden is close to entering the Democrats' already crowded field, but his policies smack more of the moderation of Barack Obama, the man he served as vice president for eight years.

At this point, the nation needs the progressive promises of free health care and higher education, not the same old, same old.

Biden has done well with women voters over the years and likely would do well again next year with moderate women who voted for him and Obama in 2008 and 2012.

By staying out of the race, Biden could set the stage for well-qualified women like Sens. Elizabeth Warren, Amy Klobuchar, Kirsten Gillibrand and Kamala Harris.

As president, such a woman would not shy away from raising tax rates on wealthy individuals and corporations or repairing the damage done the country by four years of Donald J. Trump.

"The value of having multiple women candidates is that they force us to think about women candidates in a way that is not monolithic," noted Kelly Dittmar, a scholar at the Center for American Women and Politics.

The women already running for president may soon be joined by others.

Popular talk-show host Oprah Winfrey has been mentioned repeatedly over the last few weeks, but significantly has never issued the Sherman-

esque oath named for the Union Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman. When his name was mentioned as a GOP candidate, he declined saying: "I will not accept if nominated and will not serve if elected."

And Hillary Clinton, who twice ran unsuccessfully against Obama, has repeatedly said she does not intend on throwing her hat in the ring.

Most people say they take her at her word, but they are aware of the famous quip by Democratic Rep. Morris "Mo" Udall, a candidate against Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson and Georgia Gov.

Jimmy Carter in the 1976 presidential campaign. "The only cure for presidential fever is embalming fluid."

At this stage in the 2020 campaign, it doesn't seem likely Udall's quip will be heard again.

Vermont's Bernie Sanders is the oldest candidate at 77, but recently gave a two-hour speech to 15,000 supporters in a Brooklyn park and didn't miss a beat. Biden is a year behind at 76.

None of the women in the Democratic primary come close, with Elizabeth Warren the oldest at 69.

Watching her campaign performances in person or on TV, she seems considerably younger.

The second-oldest woman candidate is Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar at 58, but a candidate's age doesn't appear to be a major concern this time around.

May the best man or woman win. Whitt Flora is a former Washington correspondent for the Columbus Dispatch and Space Aviation and Technology Magazine.



Whitt Flora