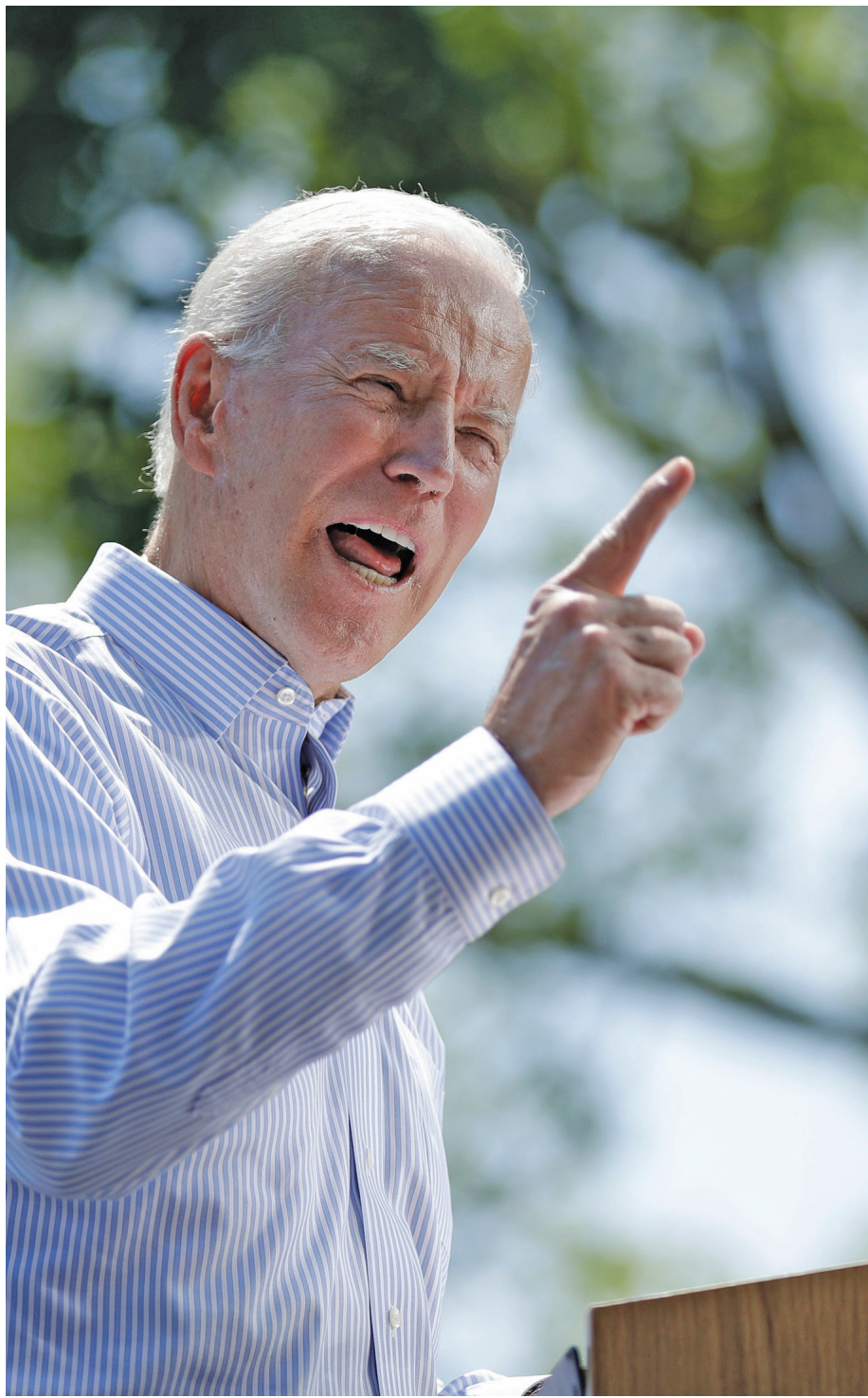


# Will attacks by Democrats on Biden help reelect Trump in 2020?



AP Photo/Matt Rourke

Former Vice President Joe Biden speaks during a campaign rally at Eakins Oval in Philadelphia.



AP Photo/Nati Harnik

President Donald Trump speaks at Southwest Iowa Renewable Energy, an ethanol producer, in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

## PRO: Biden may survive primary attacks by progressives, but they will help reelect Trump

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump's presidential luster has diminished only slightly since he formally declared his 2020 candidacy in April.

But that hasn't kept other Democrats — more than 20 of them, at last count — from jumping into the presidential race to oppose former Vice President Joe Biden, the current front-runner.

That sets up an interesting dynamic: From now until the conclusion of the Democratic primaries, nearly two dozen candidates will be running to drag down Biden's poll numbers, mostly from his left.

His top challengers are identity-politics progressives and a socialist — Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who honeymooned in the Soviet Union. Even if they fail, they could weaken Biden ahead of a general election matchup against President Donald Trump.

Biden's chief asset is that he can appeal to the working-class whites who live in the industrial states like Michigan and Pennsylvania that narrowly handed Trump the 2016 presidential election.

That's because Biden is respectful of their cultural conservatism, even if he doesn't share it and is generally a throwback to older Democratic politics from less Trumpy and tumultuous times.

Many on the left, however, want to match Trump tweet for tweet. They are angry at the status quo and want a Democratic nominee who shares their anger. They also want an unapologetic defense of abortion rights, even in later stages of pregnancy, rather than outreach to blue-collar Catholics in the Rust Belt.

They see climate change and gun violence as existential crises to be confronted head-on, not wedge issues to be carefully messaged to hunters and coal miners in swing states. If it was up to these progressives, Trump won't even be on the ballot come 2020, because he will already have been impeached.

Democrats know they can run to the left of Bill Clinton and win. Barack Obama proved it. What is less certain is how far to the left of Obama can they go and still win — but progressives would like to find out.

Many Democrats are running not on Obamacare but Medicare for all. Some would abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement; most would go further than Obama did in liberalizing immigration laws. The price tag of the Green New Deal makes Obama's stimulus program look miserly.

Yet the objective won't be to emphasize Biden's commonalities

with Obama, who is still mostly beloved by progressives. It will be to tie him to the Clintons' centrist politics, which are increasingly rejected by the Democratic base and failed in the last election.

Biden was chummy with Republicans and even Southern Democrats who had once supported segregation. And as the

top Democrat on both the Senate Judiciary and then Foreign Relations committees, Biden bore more responsibility for the 1994 crime bill and the war in Iraq than did Hillary Clinton.

A strong progressive push against Biden may force him to apologize for issue positions that resonate with the voters likely to decide the election and abandon the bipartisan tone that contrasts him so favorably with Trump.

It will also help Trump hit Biden on Iraq, the crime bill, trade and other issues the president previously used successfully against Hillary Clinton.

Some Democrats won't vote, others will go third-party and a few in the right places might even pull the lever for Trump as a result.

Progressives will undoubtedly argue that this is why Democrats should not nominate a presidential candidate who would be vulnerable to Trump on these issues in the first place and turn to one of their preferred contenders instead.

But that strategy also is risky: what if progressives are wrong in their belief that the country is ready to elect a president to the left of Obama?

Socialism, reparations for slavery, programs that may require tax increases on families who are not wealthy, even impeachment could all backfire at the ballot box or inspire a third-party centrist to run, handing Trump a second term.

W. James Antle III is the editor of *American Conservative* magazine.



W. JAMES ANTLE III

## CON: Progressive attacks on Biden and Trump will clear path for a new president in 2020

SEATTLE — Though Joe Biden's presidential runs in 1988 and 2008 were abject failures, he's currently leading the polls.

But despite the polls, it isn't just Democratic progressives who are attacking Biden; they're joined by leftist media, civil rights activists and, of course, his Democratic opponents.

During his time as the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Biden ushered the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 through Congress using fear-shaping "super-predator" rhetoric.

South Carolina Democratic Rep. Jim Clyburn recently warned audiences on CNN to "do a little more research and see exactly how we got to where we are." And Clyburn is not the only outspoken Democrat who's attacked Biden. Many of his primary opponents also are mounting vigorous attacks, including New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, California Sen. Kamala Harris, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio.

It's not just the crime bill that will haunt Biden among citizens who desire to see a positive transformation of our criminal justice system. It's a string of laws that Biden sponsored during his time as chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

Biden needs to be criticized and citizens should not hesitate to call him out on his politics for fear of Trump continuing to be power. Trump doesn't have enough support to be reelected regardless of attacks on Biden. Trump's

loss of the presidency will be a result of his failure in the role of chief executive.

Trump's negligence in protecting marginalized groups, failure to fulfill his own campaign promises and inability to honorably represent America around the world have all contributed to his decline in popularity.

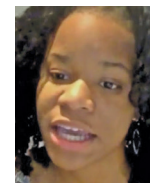
Getting Trump out of office does not hinge on Democrats uniting in support of Biden, even with his reported leadership in polls.

Voting power isn't about picking the lesser of two evils; it's about organizing as a community in support of policies that serve the collective. Neither Biden nor Trump serves the collective.

During Biden's "mass incarceration era" we saw prison populations explode in growth. We cannot be satisfied with just an end to the mass incarceration era. We need a decarceration era. And Biden, the champion of "tough on crime" legislation, is incapable of leading the coming era of decarceration. Democratic progressives are insistent on addressing the hundreds of thousands of cases of individuals who've been swallowed up by the beast that Biden shaped with his '90s politics.

The ineffective leadership of both Biden and Trump is clearing the path for a more viable candidate who will respond to the needs of the people in ways that these two are incapable of fulfilling.

Amani Sawari is a leading champion of prisoners' rights.



AMANI SAWARI

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