



October 2020

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

Trump's and Biden's Platforms

As a heated election cycle wraps up, the differences between President Donald Trump and Democratic candidate Joe Biden are clearer than ever. Here's a rundown of the candidates' positions on ten policy areas.

	President Donald Trump on key issues	Former Vice President Joe Biden on key issues
CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM	Justice Department has pushed for more severe sentencing and brought back federal death penalty; also supported 2018 bipartisan reform law.	Pledges to end mandatory minimums, private prisons and cash bail; supports federal investigations of police misconduct.
OBAMACARE	Supports repealing and replacing the ACA; promises support for preexisting conditions but backs a lawsuit that would wipe out those protections.	Supports the ACA and expanding the law, passed when he was vice president, to include a public option. Supports lowering Medicare age from 65 to 60.
LABOR	Rolled back measures including accountability for wage violations and pay equity disclosure requirements.	Supports expanding union rights and increasing federal government's ability to fine employers for labor violations.
TAX POLICY	Supports additional tax cuts and increasing tax incentives like the Opportunity Zones program.	Supports tax hikes including raising the corporate tax rate to 28 percent, raising taxes on high-income households. Supports cuts for low-income people.
TRADE	Continuation of first-term policies, which have heightened tensions with China, and pushing for changes at the WTO to benefit U.S. trade policy.	Supports "Buy American" policies. Would likely cut tariffs set by Trump administration and would pressure China via multilateral action.
DEFENSE	Supports drawdown in Afghanistan, extending arms control treaty with Russia, increasing the Pentagon budget.	Supports ending wars in the Middle East, reinstating Iran nuclear agreement, preserving Russia arms agreement and reducing the nuclear reserve and Pentagon budget. Would consider reversing Trump's troop withdrawal from Germany.
IMMIGRATION	Supported family separation, sending asylum-seekers back to Mexico and building a border wall. Has attempted to end DACA and reduce overall immigration.	Supports restoring DACA, providing a path to citizenship, expanding green card program, accepting additional refugees. Opposes Trump's border wall.
ENERGY/ ENVIRONMENT	Withdrew the U.S. from the Paris climate accord and eased rules on fossil fuels. Has made progress on addressing marine pollution in trade agreements.	Would rejoin the Paris agreement and supports stricter pollution regulations. Climate plan outlines transition to clean energy by 2035.
TECH	Has threatened to repeal Section 230 liability shield law for tech companies. Supports antitrust investigations into large tech companies.	Supports increasing antitrust oversight, forcing social media companies to combat disinformation.
PANDEMIC	Has played down severity of Covid-19 and questioned the efficacy of preventive measures such as masks. Withdrew the U.S. from the WHO near the start of the pandemic.	Supports a coordinated response to the pandemic, including encouraging people to wear masks and rejoining the WHO.

OBAMACARE

Trump campaigned in 2016 on a pledge to repeal Obamacare "on Day One" — but the Republican Congress spent most of 2017 failing to repeal and replace the law. Congress did eliminate the individual mandate penalty in the 2017 tax bill, and Trump has erroneously equated that with getting rid of the whole law. The president has frequently promised to unveil his own health plan within a matter of weeks but has yet to produce anything. And while he's vowed to protect people with preexisting conditions, his administration is backing a Supreme Court challenge to the 2010 law that would scrap those protections and lead to 20 million people losing coverage.



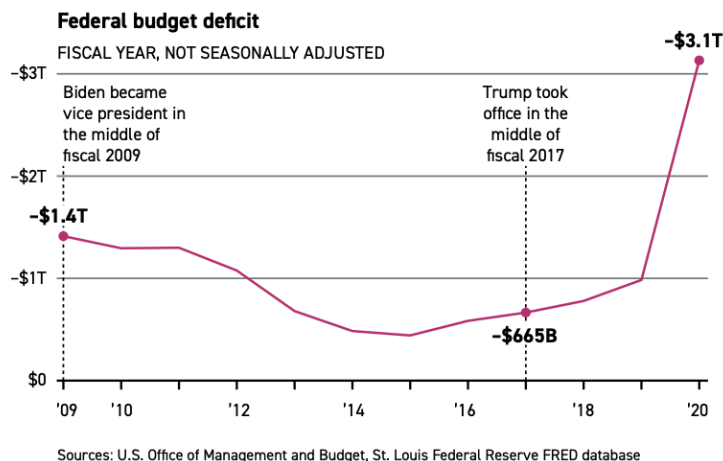
Biden, meanwhile, has been a staunch defender of the Affordable Care Act, the Obama administration's signature domestic policy achievement. He campaigned in the primary on shoring up Obamacare, rather than replacing it with a single-payer, "Medicare for All" system favored by progressives. But Biden has moved left on how he would expand the ACA. He now favors a more robust public option — a government-run insurance alternative that would compete with private health plans. And he wants to let people start getting Medicare at age 60 instead of 65.

TAX POLICY

Trump has promised additional tax cuts to follow up on the 2017 law slashing corporate and individual income rates. But he hasn't presented a plan beyond vague statements. He said he may want to further lower the corporate rate to 20 percent from 21 percent — calling 20 an "even number." He has also said he wants to lower the capital gains rate, cut taxes on the middle class and expand the "opportunity zones" program, which allows investors to defer capital gains taxes by investing in low-income areas.

Biden has put out a far more detailed plan. Most of his 50-odd proposals are aimed at raising taxes on businesses and on households making over \$400,000, and his plan would raise about \$2.4 trillion in new federal revenue over a decade, according to the Tax Policy Center.

Biden would lift the corporate tax rate to 28 percent — lower than the 35 percent rate in place for years — and impose a new minimum tax on companies. He'd also raise taxes on corporations' foreign earnings. On the individual side, Biden would increase the top income tax rate to 39.6 percent from 37 percent and raise the top capital gains rate to be equivalent to income taxes.



TRADE POLICY

Trade tensions with China are expected to remain high. Trump would likely continue to use tariffs as leverage in negotiations, with one potential target being countries like France that are planning new taxes against major American tech companies. He's also expected to continue pushing for a change in WTO rules that allow developing countries, including China, to impose higher tariffs on U.S. exports than the U.S. levies on their goods.

Biden would beef up "Buy American" policies that give preference to domestic manufacturers and products in federal public works projects. He says he won't put a priority on negotiating new trade agreements, but he'd have to decide what to do about talks with the U.K. and Kenya that Trump has already started. Biden would rely less on tariffs but says he wants to work with allies to pressure



China to make trade reforms, and he's unlikely to lift the tariffs Trump has imposed without additional concessions from Beijing.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Trump has seized on widespread protests this year to cast himself as the "law-and-order" candidate. But he also bills himself as a reformer, touting the 2018 bipartisan criminal justice law easing federal sentencing. At the same time, his Justice Department regularly pushes for the most severe sentences possible, including on lower-level drug offenses. His administration has also brought back the federal death penalty after 17 years.

Biden has sought a middle ground on these issues. The primary forced him to wrangle with his role in drafting the 1994 crime bill cracking down on violent offenders. Biden says parts of the legislation — which directed money to states to build more prisons, leading to criticism that it led to the mass incarceration of Black men — were a mistake.

Now he's pledging to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent crimes, rescind the death penalty, abolish private prisons and end cash bail. And he has promised to bring back the sprawling Justice Department investigations into alleged police misconduct common under the Obama administration.

DEFENSE

Trump wants to accelerate the drawdown of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, but he hasn't spelled out a longer-term plan for forces in Iraq and Syria. At the same time, he has approved large increases to the Pentagon budget, including funding boosts for nuclear weapons and for research to prepare for future warfare.

Trump has walked away from the 2015 Iran nuclear accord, and Tehran has rejected his strict conditions for rejoining it. And he has pulled out of nuclear and other arms treaties with Russia. Trump does want to extend an arms control treaty with Russia before it expires in February.

Biden says he wants to "bring our forever wars to a responsible end," though he would leave some troops in the Middle East. Like Trump, he has been vague about a broader strategy for the region. He has also signaled he might reverse Trump's decision to withdraw 12,000 troops from Germany and reposition some of them elsewhere in Europe.

Biden also wants to reinstate the nuclear agreement with Iran and revive arms-control treaties with Russia. He would propose a smaller defense budget and has said he wants to spend those funds more efficiently by replacing older and more expensive weapon systems with new technologies.

IMMIGRATION

Trump started sending asylum-seekers back to Mexico while they await hearings and tried to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program protecting millions of young people illegally brought to the U.S. He imposed a ban on travel from certain countries. He has also sought to limit legal immigration, imposing a wealth test on green-card applicants and making it harder to obtain a work-based visa. He set a limit on refugees that the U.S. will accept this year at 18,000, a record low.

Congress blocked Trump's requests for border-wall funding, but he declared a national emergency so he could use Defense Department money to construct new barriers on the border with Mexico.

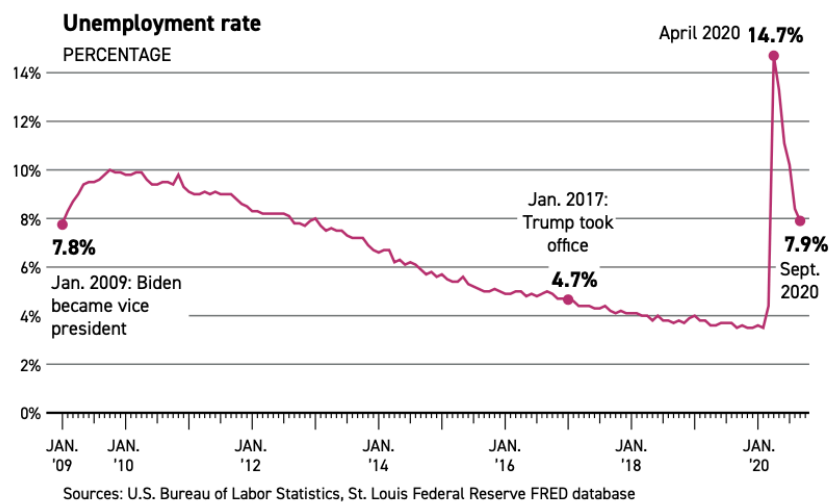


Biden has promised to reverse nearly every Trump immigration policy, including by restoring DACA and revoking the new green-card restrictions. He wants to provide a path to citizenship for the roughly 11 million undocumented people in the country, award more employment-based green cards, eliminate caps on immigrants from certain nations and make it easier for international students at U.S. schools to become citizens. He says he wouldn't build "another foot of wall," instead relying on technology to protect the border. And he has pledged to take in 125,000 refugees a year.

LABOR

The Trump administration has spent the past three years enacting pro-employer policies that make it harder for businesses that contract out work to be held liable for wage violations and for gig workers to be covered under federal labor laws. The administration also reduced the pay data that employers have to provide to the government on race and gender.

Biden has promised to reverse many of Trump's policies with an agenda to significantly boost workers' rights. His first priority would likely be enacting the PRO Act, which would rewrite seven decades of labor law, vastly expand workers' ability to form unions and allow the federal government to fine employers for violations of labor rights.



ENVIRONMENT

Trump has scoffed at scientific assessments of climate change and likened Democrats' proposals to combat it to an attack on American businesses. His administration has eased rules on oil, coal and natural gas production.

Trump is also withdrawing the U.S. from the Paris accord, a voluntary international agreement to cut greenhouse emissions. But he has taken some modest steps on marine pollution — his renegotiated trade agreement with Canada and Mexico includes provisions for the countries to work together to clean up the oceans.

Biden has stressed the urgency of addressing climate change and put forward a \$2 trillion plan to battle it with stricter regulations and financial incentives. He has pledged to rejoin the Paris pact and aims to rid the U.S. power system of greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. He wants to restore Obama-era rules on tailpipe emissions that Trump rolled back and make them more stringent.

BIG TECH

Tech companies can expect increased scrutiny no matter who wins on Nov. 3. Trump, who regularly accuses Silicon Valley of censoring conservatives, has signaled he would review or even try to repeal Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act, which shields tech companies from liability for posted content. Trump is also certain to keep up his administration's drumbeat of antitrust investigations into the likes of Google and Facebook.



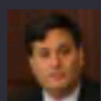
Biden is also skeptical of Big Tech. He has endorsed beefing up both antitrust oversight and online privacy rules. He also wants to pressure social media companies to crack down on the spread of false information. Still, the Obama administration was fairly tech-friendly, and Biden has resisted joining other Democrats in calling for major companies to be broken up, saying they should be investigated first.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Trump has taken a hands-off approach to the coronavirus pandemic, leaving states to set up their own contact-tracing operations and even to compete for supplies. Contracting the disease himself appears to have only strengthened his conviction that Democrats are overreacting to it. Trump says the U.S. is “rounding the corner” on the virus, even as Biden warns that Americans are facing a “dark winter.”

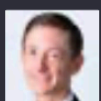
Biden pledges a coordinated national response to the pandemic. He says he would urge all Americans to wear masks and that he would work with governors on mask mandates at the state level. Biden has also promised to restore the U.S. contribution to funding the World Health Organization. Trump cut ties with the WHO this year, accusing the organization of failing to make reforms and of treating China’s Communist Party too leniently in the early days of the pandemic.

POWER PLAYERS



Ron Klain

Klain was Biden’s chief of staff as vice president and led the response to the Ebola crisis. He is widely tipped to become chief of staff if Biden wins the White House.



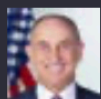
Bruce Reed

Another former Biden chief of staff, Reed headed up the 2010 Simpson-Bowles Commission — a deficit-reduction effort that puts him at odds with the progressive wing of the party.



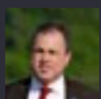
Jared Bernstein

Bernstein was Biden’s chief economist during his time as vice president. He has advocated expanding tax breaks for low- and middle-income people, like the Earned Income Tax Credit.



Chris Liddell

Liddell, a Trump adviser and the deputy chief of staff in charge of coordinating policy, leads one of the smoothest-running offices in the White House and has been handling planning for the transition or a second Trump term.



Derek Lyons

Lyons is Trump’s staff secretary, a key official handling the flow of documents to the president.



Steven Mnuchin

The Treasury secretary has taken on new importance in 2020, spearheading the White House’s efforts to limit economic damage from the coronavirus and leading the administration’s negotiations with congressional Democrats on stimulus measures.