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USA

A Biden-Trump Rematch? So it Seems

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While it is still a year and seven months until the next U.S. presidential election, the race is beginning to shape up as a rematch between President Joe Biden and former president Donald Trump. Biden, saying he is fighting for “freedom” and “our democracy,” formally announced that he will be a candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for president in 2024—and he is sure to win the primary barring any serious health problem that might arise. Biden, who is now 80 years old and certified by his physician to be in good health, would be 86 at the end of a second term. Despite the fact that most Americans think he is too old and only half of all Democrats think he should run, he has thrown his hat in the ring and it seems unlikely any serious candidate will challenge him.

Donald Trump, who is now on trial in two cases, a criminal case for falsifying business records regarding his \$130,000 hush money pay off to porn star Stormy Daniels with whom he is alleged to have sex, and a civil trial where he is accused of raping journalist E. Jean Carroll in the mid-1990s. He is also under investigation in Georgia for having interfered in the 2020 election and in Washington, D.C. for having played a leading role in the January 6, 2021 insurrection in the capital and also for mishandling of government documents. Still 70 percent of all Republicans support Trump and he is 15 percentage points ahead of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis as first choice for the Republican nomination. In fact, Trump, who claims that he is being persecuted by the “far left radical Democrats,” has used the charges against him to raise \$18.8 million dollars for his campaign.

Biden should be able to win a rematch if he can get young voters, women, Blacks and Latinos to the polls, but there is not much enthusiasm at the moment. But Republicans are busy working to restrict voting rights and to make it more difficult for students, Blacks, and Latinos to vote. The Democrats’ campaign seems so far to focus on the fight for abortion rights, while Republicans have decided to make denying trans people their rights a central issues. While gender will be at the center of both campaigns it seems, the biggest issue in voters’ minds is usually the economy, and if the economy slows, Biden will face an uphill battle.

The goal of Biden and Trump will be to win over independent voters. According to a 2022 poll of adults in the U.S., 28% identify as Republicans and 28% as Democrats, but 41% of U.S. adults consider themselves to be independents.

You may wonder, are there no other possible Democratic presidential candidates? Well, Bernie Sanders who ran twice, in 2016 and 2020, not only announced that he will not run has declared his support for Biden. Vice President Kamala Harris will be Biden’s running mate, and so not a presidential candidate, but in any case, she is unpopular with the electorate in general and progressive Democrats don’t like her because of her background in law enforcement. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, leader of “The Squad” of progressive Democrats, will turn 35 just before election day, making her legally eligible, but she is perceived by most as too young and inexperienced and by others as too far left, not to mention the race and gender prejudice that being Latina she would face.

To the left of the Democrats is the Green Party, but its presidential candidate in 2020, Howie Hawkins, who was also the presidential candidate of the Socialist Party, won only 404,084 votes or 0.3% of the national vote. Many voters fear that casting a vote for the Greens or Socialists might lead to a Republican victory.

The Democratic Socialists of America, with 92,000 members in fifty states, has adopted a strategy of supporting progressive Democrats rather running its own candidate. While DSA will hold its convention this summer, it seems unlikely that the fundamental strategy will change. In a Biden versus Trump race, DSA members will back Biden.

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