



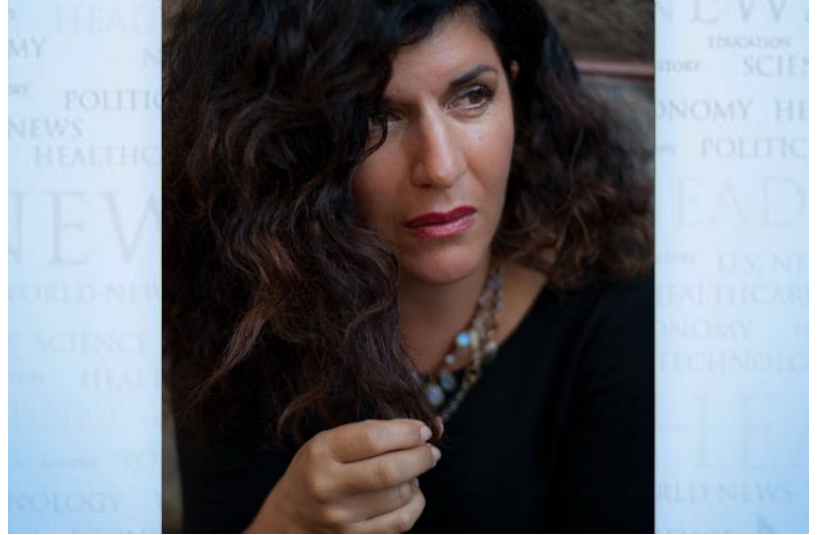
Written by [Salena Zito](#) on August 22, 2023

## Biden's Pattern of Behavior Lacks the Empathy He Promised

On Sunday, after spending several hours on Rehoboth Beach in Delaware, President Joe Biden was asked by a member of the press pool about the rising death toll in Hawaii.

Bloomberg reporter Justin Sink tweeted Biden's "no comment" response as the president left for his home in Delaware.

With over 100 people dead and 10 times that number still unaccounted for, how hard would it have been for Biden to say something evoking the empathy the people of Hawaii need, the country needs, in those brief moments as he walked in the sand from his day at the beach?



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But he didn't. And we've seen this craven indifference before.

Almost to the day two years ago, a chaotic two-week evacuation of 125,000 people from Kabul resulted in the horrific deaths of 13 American service members; it took Biden over a week for him to address the deaths to the public, and when he did in a speech to the nation, he spent the entire 23 minutes forcefully rejecting any criticism of his decision and hailed the effort as an "extraordinary success."

In fact, despite the terrorist bombing killing 13 service members at the Kabul airport during a tumultuous rush to leave the country, Biden said he believed with "all of my heart" that he had made a wise decision and stubbornly dismissed any assessment that he should have conducted that final moment evacuating people in a "more orderly manner."

He projected to the American public, and to the families by proxy, a sordid lack of empathy, compassion and indifference.

Eighteen months later, the White House continued that chilling tone when spokesman John Kirby shrugged and smiled in reaction to the publication of the Biden administration's report on the Afghanistan withdrawal and said he didn't notice any mayhem. "For all this talk of chaos, I just didn't see it, not from my perch," Kirby, the National Security Council's coordinator for strategic communications, said.

In February when a Norfolk-Southern train derailed in East Palestine, Ohio, causing the spillage of thousands and thousands of gallons of hazardous chemicals in the air, soil and water in Columbiana County, Ohio, arguably changing their lives for at least a generation, it took Biden a whopping 18 days to make any kind of public statement about the situation.

Newsweek searched through the 380 messages released from the White House press pool from the date of the crash (Feb. 3, 2023) to Feb. 22, 2023, a deep dive that revealed no direct statements from Biden.

It wasn't until Feb. 21 that Biden said anything, finally tweeting about the derailment. Biden once again stubbornly refused to concede any morsel of compassion. Even when pressed about when he would visit



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the site of the derailment and subsequent controlled burn, he said on Feb. 27 he had no plans to go there.

Five days later, he said he now would go to East Palestine in the future, but that was the last he mentioned the massive disaster.

In February 2020, Biden tweeted a clip of him in a moody ad filled with warm and fuzzy scenes of him interacting with voters as music crescendoed when he bragged that his promise as Empathizer-in-Chief would be fulfilled if voters elected him.

“Empathy matters,” he said. “Compassion matters. We have to reach out to one another and heal this country, and that’s what I’ll do as president.”

By noon on Aug. 14, many days after the Hawaii fires broke, Biden (or an aide) tweeted, “As residents of Hawai’i mourn the loss of life and devastation taking place across their beautiful home, we mourn with them. Like I said, not only our prayers are with those impacted-but every asset we have will be available to them.”

Less than an hour later, the White House said Biden would be traveling to Lake Tahoe for a week, leaving Friday and returning Thursday — not all that different than when he chose to go to Ukraine rather than going to East Palestine.

When Biden was running, the narrative coming from the Democrats, Republicans weary of Trump, and the media looking for signs of grace during the pandemic was that Biden was the standard-bearer of empathy because he had lost his first wife and daughter early in his career in a car crash and lost his son Beau to glioblastoma while he was vice president.

And yet despite all of the empathy hype, when it comes to the people he serves, in particular the working class, he has failed miserably in conveying he feels their pain. The nation has noticed, and his job approval ratings have never recovered from September 2021 when voters saw him as he really was, not as he wanted you to believe he was.

Heck, he even pretended his own granddaughter did not exist until New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd scolded him for his callousness, and he changed course in a Friday afternoon news dump.

By Monday afternoon, the White House defended Biden’s response and said the president is “deeply concerned” and sending federal aid as the nation looks on to a president who gave the impression of being emotionally detached about the fires, mounting deaths and overall emotional and economic devastation.

For Biden, the chance at redemption has vanished. At least when it comes to showing empathy, his misreading of what the country needs when a crisis affects fellow Americans has gone from a one-off to a pattern of behavior that chills even some of his most ardent supporters.

*Salena Zito is a CNN political analyst, and a staff reporter and columnist for the Washington Examiner. She reaches the Everyman and Everywoman through shoe-leather journalism, traveling from Main Street to the beltway and all places in between. To find out more about Salena and read her past columns, please visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).*

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