



Written by [Salena Zito](#) on July 9, 2024

In Pennsylvania Comeback Tour, Biden Says Dark Brandon Is Back

HARRISBURG, Pennsylvania — Pretty much every elected Democrat in Pennsylvania was out in force on Sunday standing shoulder-to-shoulder with President Joe Biden at different venues as he made his way from Philadelphia to the state capital, starting what his supporters here called his comeback moment.

Speaking to campaign volunteers and supporters at a Biden-Harris campaign office in Philadelphia, one woman told Biden, “We need Dark Brandon back.”

Biden’s off-the-cuff answer to her, “Dark Brandon is coming back,” delighted the volunteers at the campaign office, who have spent the last 11 days trying to deal with calls from opinion pages and prominent Democrats for him to halt his run for reelection.

Biden began the morning at Philadelphia’s airport, where he was greeted by Sens. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) and John Fetterman (D-Pa.) and two members of Pennsylvania’s Democratic congressional delegation, Reps. Brendan Boyle (D-Pa.) and Madeleine Dean (D-Pa.). Former congressmen Patrick Murphy and Bob Brady and Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker were also there.

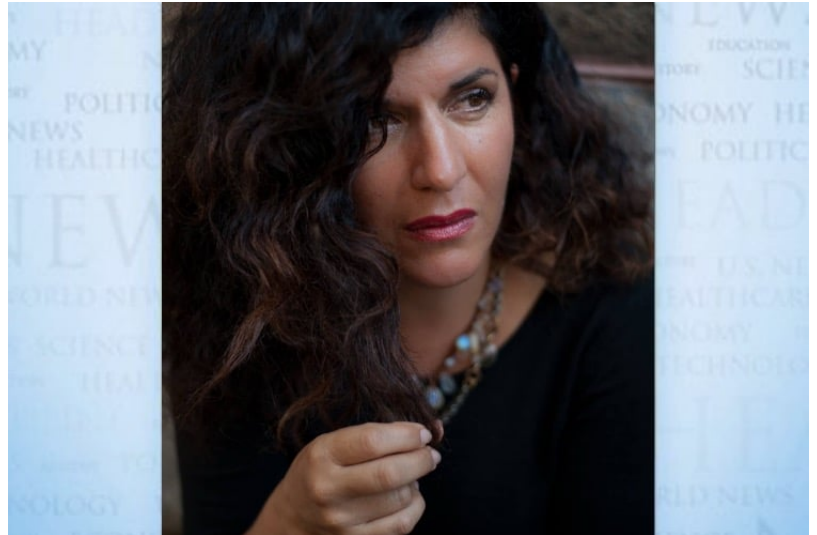
Biden then attended a service at Mount Airy Church of God in Christ, a Black church in Philadelphia, where Bishop J. Louis Felton gave a fiery defense of the president during his sermon.

Felton’s speech was reminiscent of an equally fiery effort that Biden received four years ago from another prominent Black Democrat, Rep. James Clyburn (D-S.C.). Clyburn’s support for Biden is widely credited with resurrecting Biden’s 2020 campaign. Before South Carolina, Biden had lost four primary contests in a row.

The symbolism of the moment was hard to miss. Biden was clearly embarking on a comeback tour and chose Pennsylvania — where he was born, where he has campaigned the most (eight visits since January), and where he enjoys the support of every statewide-elected Democrat here.

It is also the state where he is trailing former President Donald Trump by 7 percentage points in the latest Morning Consult poll.

Murphy, who served in Congress representing Bucks County from 2007 to 2011 and met Biden at the tarmac on Sunday morning, said Biden was in fighting spirits ahead of the daylong trip across half of Pennsylvania. The first Iraq War veteran in Congress said there is a big difference between what the political class in Washington is saying about Biden and what voters are saying in states like this one.



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“Coastal elites always downplay ‘not flashy’ Pennsylvania,” he said, adding, “They continue to underestimate our resolve and one (of) our own in Joe Biden.”

Murphy, the 32nd undersecretary of the Army, said Biden is not a great orator like Presidents John F. Kennedy, Barack Obama or Ronald Reagan, “but he is a workhorse, not a show horse, delivering bipartisan results for our families.”

After meeting with congregants at Mount Airy, who encouraged him to stay in the race, followed by a visit with campaign volunteers at a field office, Biden was joined by Fetterman on a trip to an event in Harrisburg with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, where several hundred volunteers, community activists and union members showed up to give Biden their support.

Both Fetterman and Lt. Gov. Austin Davis (D-Pa.), the state’s first Black lieutenant governor and the youngest one in the country, gave brief but fiery remarks at the event, with Davis saying that as the young father of a new baby girl, the stakes could not be higher for Democrats to show their support for Biden.

“I trust Joe Biden with my daughter’s future, so what we need to do as Democrats is we need to not worry. We need to work,” he said, pressing the importance of door-knocking and getting involved with the Biden campaign.

“What happens when we do that?” Davis, a gifted orator, asked the crowd, adding emphatically, “We are going to win.”

Biden then joined Gov. Josh Shapiro (D-Pa.), a popular Democrat who enjoys a strong approval rating in the state among voters on both sides of the aisle, for a private conversation at a city coffee shop in the shadow of the state Capitol.

Shapiro has also not wavered in his support for Biden.

Keystone College professor Jeff Brauer said if there were a place both emotionally and politically that would be the perfect spot for Biden to try to mount a comeback, it would be Pennsylvania. However, Brauer cautions that while Pennsylvania may be the perfect place for a comeback, it doesn’t guarantee that it will happen.

“If Biden has any chance of turning the corner from his June debate performance, it is in Pennsylvania. In fact, it is a must for him,” Brauer said, adding that the trifecta of top statewide-elected Democrats going all in for him helps.

“So if Biden can’t convince Pennsylvanian voters that he is ready and capable of four more years, then it is highly unlikely he will convince enough of the rest of the country to reach the 270 electoral votes needed to keep the presidency,” he explained.

While Biden was attempting to bring back “Dark Brandon,” there was an uneasy split screen happening in Washington, where it was reported that Biden’s base of support among congressional Democrats was collapsing during a virtual meeting of House ranking members.

Rep. Susan Wild (D-Pa.) was one of the House members who expressed concerns about Biden’s electability during Sunday’s call. She was one of several congressional Democrats from Pennsylvania, including Reps. Matt Cartwright, Dwight Evans, Mary Gay Scanlon, Chrissy Houlahan, Chris Deluzio and Summer Lee, who did not show up to meet Biden at the tarmac.

Clearly piqued that her questioning of Biden was made public, Wild told reporters: “It is not helpful to



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the country for this difficult process to play out amidst leaks and rumors.”

Murphy, who is heading to Arizona on Monday for a Veterans for Biden event in that swing state, said the president is resolute in his decision to not leave the race: “Joe Biden doesn’t take crap from anyone and isn’t going to listen to elites telling him what is best for the party. He cares about what is best for the country.”

By the end of the day, the resolve behind the private call started to collapse, with many House members issuing clarifying statements that left the entire revolt against Biden shrinking from a wave of rebellion to a feeble whimper.

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.

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