



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 8, 2020

Biden and Harris Flip-flop on Fracking for Votes in Pennsylvania

Both Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his running mate, Kamala Harris, have walked back past statements that advocated banning fracking.

During a July 2019 Democratic presidential primary debate, CNN's Dana Bash asked Biden, "Would there be any place for fossil fuels, including coal and fracking in a Biden administration?" Biden replied: "No, we would work it out. We would make sure it's eliminated."



During a CNN Climate Town Hall held last year, Jesse Bluethorn, a climate activist from New York City and a member of the organization 350.org, asked Harris, "Will you commit to implementing a federal ban on fracking your first day in office — adding the United States to the list of countries who have banned this devastating practice?"

Harris replied without hesitation, "There is no question I'm in favor of banning fracking."

However, politicians are known for changing their positions on issues according to which way the wind is blowing. And one key swing state that is a key prize for presidential candidates is Pennsylvania, which President Trump carried in 2016 by less than one percent of the vote.

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There is a wide range of political views in the Keystone State, with Philadelphia and environs being a Democratic stronghold, but with blue-collar voters in the western part of the state whose jobs depend on industry — particularly energy-related industries such as coal and, of course, fracking — very protective of their source of income. A writer for the *Wall Street Journal* quoted Alan Benyak, a Democratic State Committee member in Southwestern Pennsylvania, following Biden's selection of Harris as his running mate. Benyak said: "I think she's a great choice for him nationally, and I think she'll help him in Pennsylvania, certainly in Philadelphia, but in the [blue] collar counties around Pittsburgh, not much."

With Pennsylvania being such a key prize, and with voters in at least the western third of the state being so economically tied to the energy industry, Harris's history of favoring environmentalists over energy producers is bound to cost the Biden-Harris ticket votes.

Less than two hours after Harris was named Joe Biden's running mate, Trump stated about Biden's choice: "She is against fracking. She's against petroleum products. I mean, how do you do that and go into Pennsylvania or Ohio or Oklahoma or the great state of Texas? She's against fracking. Fracking's a big deal."

Now, realizing the political danger in being an "anti-fracker" in Pennsylvania, Harris is taking a cue from Biden, who said a week ago while campaigning in Pennsylvania: "I am not banning fracking. Let me say that again: I am not banning fracking. No matter how many times Donald Trump lies about me."



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Harris [recently said](#) she is comfortable with Biden's new position in support for fracking because it provides "good-paying jobs in places like Pennsylvania." But last year Harris said, "There is no question I'm in favor of banning fracking."

If that isn't flip-flopping, nothing is.

Photo: AP Images

Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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