



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 3, 2020

Democrats Continue Push to Cancel Presidential Debates

Last week's [opinion piece by Joe Lockhart at CNN](#) confirmed, if any confirmation was necessary, that Democrats are frightened by the prospect of "Sleepy Joe" Biden mixing it up in nationally televised presidential debates with President Trump.

Lockhart is CNN's political analyst and former White House press secretary during President Bill Clinton's administration. He warned Biden: "Whatever you do, don't debate Trump."



He explained that it would be "a fool's errand to enter the ring with someone who can't follow the rules or the truth. [You] will undoubtedly take heat from Republicans ... for skipping the debates. But it's worth the risk as trying to debate someone incapable of telling the truth is an impossible contest to win."

Besides, penned Lockhart, "There is nothing Trump can do at this point to win it on his own. He has to depend on [you] faltering over the next three months to get reelected."

The Democrats' "cancel the debates" theme first popped up at the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* early in July. Thomas Friedman, writing in the *Times*, said Biden should declare he would only debate Trump if he released his tax returns and allowed a "fact-checking" team to comment in real time on the candidates' factual accuracy after each segment.

Karen Tumulty, writing in the *Post*, was even more vacuous. The debates should be canceled altogether because it's hard to find dates "that are not on Friday or Saturday [and] do not conflict with sports or other events." She added that finding proper venues is another reason to cancel: "Finding venues is a challenge as well, particularly this year."

Elizabeth Drew [picked up the theme at the New York Times on Monday](#), demanding, "Let's Scrap the Presidential Debates" because "they've become unrevealing quip contests."

Of course, this allegedly has nothing to do with concerns over Biden's mental-health issues. She wrote, "Scrap them altogether. And not for health reasons."

She said the presidential debates "have never made sense," and that they "resemble professional wrestling matches." She added, "There is no suspense any more to these pointless, lobbyist-funded infomercials, and television audiences find them boring."

But the American people don't find the debates boring. The first debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon in 1960 was watched by more than 66 million people out of a population of 180 million. 84 million people watched the first Trump-Clinton debate in 2016, and that number doesn't include those watching it online.

Drew incredulously said her suggestion "isn't written out of any concern that Donald Trump will prevail over Joe Biden in the debates; Mr. Biden has done just fine in a long string of such contests."

Longtime Democrat strategist and former Hillary Clinton advisor Zac Petkanas chimed in: "Biden



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shouldn't feel obligated to throw Trump a lifeline by granting him any debates at all. This is not a normal presidential election and Trump is not a legitimate candidate."

It didn't take Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien long [to respond](#). He not only wants the debates to occur as scheduled (September 29, October 15, and October 22), but he wants more than three and he wants them to begin sooner. And for a good reason: "The American people in 16 states are going to be voting before September 29 [and] they're the ones who want to see the candidates on the debate stage ... [they] deserve a chance to see their options right in front of them on the debate stage, and we join them in that push."

Either way, Biden loses. If there are no debates, every voter in the country will know why. And if they are held, every voter in the country will know why the Democrats wanted to cancel them.

Photo: AP Images

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