



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 16, 2019

It's Not Biden's Gaffes but His Age That Concerns Democrats

Democrat presidential candidate Joe Biden's gaffes have provided entertainment for many and grist for others, calling into his question his presidential run. But Biden's real problem is something that cannot be fixed: He's old and getting older. He'll be 78 just weeks after the November 2020 election.



Biden's verbal flubs, such as getting dates, cities, and the British prime minister's name wrong, have provided material for conservative commentators and for some of Biden's rivals. And the president has no doubt been collecting them in a special file to be rolled out during presidential debates next year if Biden survives the primaries.

Pressure on Biden's staff [to cut back on his public appearances](#) in order to reduce the chances for additional verbal blunders and misstatements would not effectively hide from the public the one thing that cannot be fixed: Biden is getting older and he is slowing down, both mentally and physically.

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Alan Feirer, Democrat Party chair in Madison County, Iowa, told the *Washington Post*: "Joe Biden can resonate with the working-class voters that Trump fooled in the last go-around. And that's what we need: he's close to the middle. He's a known quantity. He appeals to middle-class voters."

"But," he added, "boy, he's old.... You don't like to say it but he isn't as compelling verbally. There is starting to be a real fear that he cannot hold his own in the debate against Donald Trump."

Tracy Freese, Democrat Party chairwoman in Grundy County, agrees: "I wish he'd get his mojo back. I know he has it; I just haven't seen it. Where did that guy go? I'm not seeing him right now."

Left-liberal *Vanity Fair* tried to downplay the issue by supporting the idea of giving Biden fewer public appearances (and thus fewer opportunities to misspeak) and more time to rest. Such a change, said the magazine, "would appear to serve two purposes: to give his opponents, both in the primary and potentially in the general election, fewer blunders to capitalize on, and to give him more time to rest ahead of what may be a grueling race for the 76-year-old."

Opinion poll consultant Nate Silver thinks the strategy "might work." Biden maintains a healthy lead over his rivals despite his gaffes, and putting him away for a while would allow his rivals to duke it out among themselves, while he waits on the sidelines and gathers his strength for the real battle to come against Trump. Silver says that it isn't the gaffes that concern him, it's the front-runner's age: "Biden's age is perhaps his biggest risk factor — bigger, in my view, than his policy positions."

Those gaffes have been costing Biden support, said Democratic strategist Basil Smikle: "In light of



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ascending candidates Warren and Booker who seem to be getting a stronger voice, the gaffes give credence to voters on the fence about him.” However, that loss of support has yet to show up in the latest polls. Nationally Biden leads Elizabeth Warren by 13 points while polls in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, South Carolina, Texas, and Massachusetts show him leading Warren in every state by as much as 23 points.

Biden isn’t likely to take this well-intentioned advice. Kate Bedingfield, his deputy campaign manager, responded to pressure to reduce the candidate’s public exposure by cutting back on his schedule: “Joe Biden has spoken his mind his entire life, which voters know and love about him. He’s a real person, he’s authentic, and that will never change. He’s going to continue to keep taking on Trump and making the case to voters about the stakes we face in this election.”

So expect more gaffes, more corrections, more coverups by Democrat commentators, and more angst among Democrats as those critical independent voters increasingly ask themselves: Do I really want an old man like Biden taking on the responsibilities of chief executive in today’s world?

Gaffes can be covered up or explained away. Age cannot.

Image of Joe Biden: [Screenshot from a Joe2020 ad](#)

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