

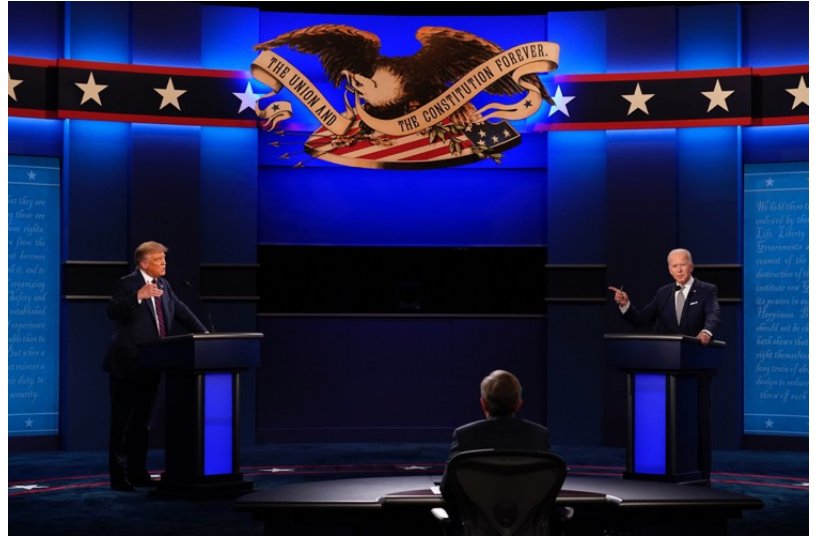


Written by [Steve Byas](#) on September 30, 2020

## Trump, Biden, Stage Fierce Debate in Cleveland

One of the most difficult jobs in America was that held by Chris Wallace of Fox News, in trying to moderate a debate between President Donald Trump and former vice president Joe Biden, held in Cleveland, Ohio, at Case Western University on Tuesday.

The debate began with no handshake due to concerns about Covid-19, and viewers could sense very quickly there would be no handshake at the end of the debate, as the nominees of the Republican and Democratic Parties clashed repeatedly, exchanging insults and charges.



AP Images

Wallace began the debate with a question for both candidates on whether Trump had a right to nominate Amy Coney Barrett to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the Supreme Court, considering that we are so close to the election on November 3. Trump's response was, "We won the election. We have the Senate." He added that Barrett was a "top" academic, and that the Democrats "would not even think about not doing it [picking a new member of the Court]."

Biden countered, "The American people have a right to have a say," arguing that we should "wait" until after the election. Biden warned the future of the Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare) was "at stake," as there is a case challenging the constitutionality of the law that will soon be decided by the Supreme Court, and that Barrett has already written that the ACA is unconstitutional.

Trump came back and said that the people have already had their say — electing him president in 2016 and adding Republican senators in the 2018 mid-terms. Trump quoted Ginsburg, who once said that a president is elected for four years, not three.

Biden also argued that Barrett would join with other justices already on the court in reversing *Roe v. Wade*, but Trump said, "You don't know her view on *Roe v. Wade*."

It did not take long for the debate to degenerate from any semblance of a calm airing of differences on the great issues of the day into exchanges of accusations and insults. Biden said of Trump, "Everyone knows he's a liar," and, "This man doesn't know what he's talking about." Later in the debate, after Trump had interrupted him, Biden said, "It is hard to get a word in with this clown."

For his part, Trump called Biden on his claims that he attended Delaware State for college, asserting that that has been disproven, and that if Biden had been president thousands more would have died from Covid-19 because Biden opposed Trump's ban on immigration from China after the virus' outbreak. He has also accused Biden's son Hunter of getting rich off his father's connections as a senator and especially as vice-president. Trump defended his record on the coronavirus outbreak by noting that Dr. Anthony Fauci had said that Trump's quick actions saved thousands of lives.

When Biden said of Trump, "We don't trust him on a vaccine," moderator Chris Wallace asked him if he and his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris of California, were contributing to fear of a vaccine by such statements.



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Biden predictably played the race card, charging that Trump used a “dog whistle” (a popular expression that someone is saying something to get a message across to racists that he shares their bigoted viewpoints, without having to actually say so). Trump countered that Biden’s crime bill was particularly damaging to the African-American community.

When Wallace asked Trump why he opposed programs such as sensitivity training and critical race theory, Trump retorted because “they are teaching people to hate our country.”

Wallace asked Biden why he never called upon the mayor of Portland and the governor of Oregon to use the National Guard to quell the riots that lasted over 100 days, Biden did not answer, but did say that he was “totally opposed” to defunding the police.

When both candidates were asked why voters should elect him over his opponent, Trump cited the record low unemployment numbers (before the virus outbreak and state government-imposed shutdowns of the economy), the rebuilding of the military, the fixing of the VA (which Trump said was a “mess” under Obama and Biden), and most important of all, the selection of 300 new federal judges and at least two, if not three, new Supreme Court justices.

Biden’s response was more of an attack upon Trump than anything he was going to do, arguing that America is now “weaker, sicker, and more violent.” Biden claimed that he and Obama left Trump with a “booming economy,” concluding that Trump was “Putin’s puppy.”

When Wallace asked about the raging forest fires in the West, Trump blamed them on lack of good forest management (because the forests are filled with dead trees that western state governments refuse to remove). Biden, of course, blamed the fires on climate change, and promised to rejoin the Paris Climate Accord, from which Trump had withdrawn.

The two candidates exchanged contrary views on mail-in ballots, with Biden arguing that Trump was trying to “scare people from voting.” In response to the question of whether they would accept the results of the election, Trump pointed out that the Democrats gave him “no transition” after his 2016 election, and in fact, “tried to run a coup.” Turning to Biden, Trump said that it was Vice President Biden who had recommended using the Logan Act to ensnare General Flynn during the Trump transition.

Perhaps the lowest point of the debate for Biden was when Chris Wallace asked him if he supported the idea of packing the Supreme Court by creating new justices, should Biden win and the Democrats win the Senate. Wallace also asked about the call by many Democrats to end the Senate filibuster. Ominously, Biden said, “I’m not going to answer the question.”

Biden denied that the Green New Deal was his environmental plan, then moments later, described it as “my plan.” Later, he reiterated that the Green New Deal was not his plan.

All in all, Biden survived the debate without any other major gaffes, which many Republicans had been predicting. That could be perhaps because Trump often interrupted Biden, and did not give him enough opportunity to make some of the outlandish statements that Biden has been prone to make. Biden also interrupted Trump at times, probably making the debate points difficult to follow for the average voter. Two more debates are scheduled between Trump and Biden.



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