



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on December 11, 2019

Would Biden Seek a Second Term as President? Depends on Whom He's Talking To

If former Vice President Joe Biden wins next year's presidential election, he will be 78 years old upon taking office. Given his age four years hence, would he then run for reelection?

According to [Politico](#), the answer depends on Biden's audience. The ex-veep is telling his advisors privately that, assuming he wins a first term, he won't seek a second one, even as he publicly keeps mum on the subject, "four people who regularly talk to Biden" told the news site's Ryan Lizza on condition of anonymity.

"If Biden is elected," a prominent advisor to the campaign told Lizza, "he's going to be 82 years old in four years and he won't be running for reelection."

Discussion of Biden's age has become more frequent in recent days as Biden has solidified his position as the frontrunner for the Democratic presidential nomination. While other candidates' poll numbers have ebbed and flowed with the political tides, Biden's have remained consistent. He is currently favored in the [vast majority of national polls](#) and the [online betting markets](#).

Some advisors, writes Lizza, believe Biden should make a public pledge not to stand for reelection, arguing that doing so

could help Biden mollify younger voters, especially on the left, who are unexcited by his candidacy and fear that his nomination would serve as an eight-year roadblock to the next generation of Democrats.

By signaling that he will serve just one term and choosing a running mate and Cabinet that is young and diverse, Biden could offer himself to the Democratic primary electorate as the candidate best suited to defeat [President Donald] Trump as well as the candidate who can usher into power the party's fresh faces.

"This makes Biden a good transition figure," the above-quoted advisor said. "I'd love to have an election this year for the next generation of leaders, but if I have to wait four years [in order] to get rid of Trump, I'm willing to do it."

Others think vowing to serve a single term would make Biden seem more statesmanlike, in contrast to (in their view) Trump. A political strategist who recently talked to one of Biden's closest advisors told Lizza that Biden would be "too old" to run for reelection in 2024 and would probably not win. By declaring he only intends to serve four years, Biden would demonstrate "oppositional virtues to the last president," he averred. "We have a presidency that is defined by abject selfishness, self-regard and self-interest. So a one-term pledge would be viewed as an act of selflessness, putting the country ahead of any ambition."





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Not everyone connected with Biden thinks announcing he won't run for reelection is such a good strategy. "That's a weak play," John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign chairman, told Lizza. "I think who his vice president is will be very important because people will be thinking about that. But I don't think I would make a one-term pledge. You've disempowered yourself as president, and I don't think it helps you as a candidate. It accentuates your weakness. It doesn't fix it."

"I think he should make [the one-term pledge] privately to himself and his wife and no one else," one well-known Democratic strategist told Lizza. "You can't let the cat out of the bag.... If you begin your first day as president as a lame duck, it changes everything. Every Cabinet secretary, every subcommittee chairman treats you differently. I wouldn't advise it, just from a governing perspective as well as political."

As for the candidate himself, notes Lizza,

Biden's public statements on running for reelection have shifted over the course of the campaign.

In April, when asked whether he would serve just one term, Biden responded, "No." More recently, Biden has been ambiguous. In October, the Associated Press reported that when "asked whether he would pledge to only serve one term if elected, Biden said he wouldn't make such a promise but noted he wasn't necessarily committed to seeking a second term if elected in 2020."

Thus, for the time being, all discussion of Biden's possible plan to be a voluntary one-term president is relegated to private conversations and strategic leaks — which seems to be the way he likes it.

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