

Biden is 'humiliated, devoid of confidence and painfully aware of his frail image', insider claims after nightmare debate

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[Joe Biden](#) is 'humiliated' and 'painfully aware' of his image following his calamitous debate performance, as he is set to discuss the future of his re-election campaign.

The president has [retreated to Camp David](#) with his wife, children and grandchildren to take a break from the campaign trail and weigh his options, [NBC News](#) first reported.

Insiders described Biden's mood as 'humiliated and devoid of confidence' following his face off with [Donald Trump](#) that saw him stumbling over his words and losing his train of thought multiple times.

Biden is said to be 'painfully aware that the physical images of him at the debate — eyes staring into the distance, mouth agape — will live beyond his presidency.'

The retreat comes as his team keeps insisting that the idea of him dropping out of the race would only 'lead to weeks of chaos,' calling the concern of several [Democrats](#) the work of 'bedwetting brigade.'



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© AFP via Getty Images

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'Any discussion about the campaign is expected to be informal or an afterthought, a source told NBC News. 'No one is sitting down for a formal or determinative discussion.'

However, a person familiar with the dynamics told the news outlet there is only one adviser Biden will ultimately listen to.

'The only person who has ultimate influence with him is the first lady,' this person said. 'If she decides there should be a change of course, there will be a change of course.'

'That is the best possible way for Donald Trump to win and us to lose,' Biden's deputy campaign manager Rob Flaherty argued in an email after the president's latest Hamptons visit, which saw the president being faced with people holding signs bearing the same message: drop out.

'First of all: Joe Biden is going to be the Democratic nominee, period. End of story. Voters voted. He won overwhelmingly,' Flaherty went on.



While the discussion at Camp David is said to be informal, an insider claimed there is ultimately only one adviser Biden will listen to



Calls have been growing for the president to drop out of the race, including from a plane bearing a banner reading 'BI-DONE!' (pictured) flying over a Hamptons fundraiser he attended

'And if he were to drop out, it would lead to weeks of chaos, internal foodfighting, and a bunch of candidates who limp into a brutal floor fight at the convention, all while Donald Trump has time to speak to American voters uncontested.'

He added: 'All of that would be in service of a nominee who would go into a general election in the weakest possible position with zero dollars in their bank account.'

'You want a highway to losing? It's that.'

His adamant email came after a plane bearing a banner reading 'BI-DONE!' was spotted flying high over the high-profile Hamptons fundraiser in the afternoon.

'Spotted flying over East Hampton this evening...' Trump tweeted in response.

At the event, the first couple were rubbing shoulders with a slew of moneyed donors - as the Times reported several 'megadonors' in Silicon Valley were trying to reach the first lady to sway her to convince Biden to bow out in favor of a younger candidate.



Biden supporters have claimed the fighting over if Biden should drop out is 'the best possible way for Donald Trump to win and us to lose'

On Friday, Biden continued to defend his cognizance his debate performance the day before, speaking out at a rally in [North Carolina](#). There, he told onlookers that he was still the party's best bet at beating Trump, despite what millions saw on TV.

'I know I'm not a young man, I don't walk as easy as I used to, I don't speak as smoothly as I used to, I don't debate as well as I used to.

'But I know what I do know,' he continued, before receiving a round of uproarious applause.

'I know how to tell the truth. I know right from wrong. I know how to do this job. I know how to get things done.'

'I know, like many of Americans know, when you get knocked down, you get back up,' he concluded.

Biden has not only had to defend his continued candidacy among worried Democrats, but [the media as well](#).

In an editorial over the weekend, the [New York Times](#) beseeched Biden to step aside.

In addition, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution wrote that 'retirement is now necessary' for the 81-year-old incumbent - asking him to pass the torch to a more competent candidate.

Meanwhile, several concerned aides on Saturday told Axios how the commander-in-chief should step down.



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'This is no longer about Joe Biden's family or his emotions,' one fed-up adviser in told the publication. 'This is about our country. It's an utter f***ing disaster that has to be addressed.'

Experts, meanwhile, have said the decision is ultimately up to president this late in the game, despite reportedly being too tired to work past 4 pm and struggling to wake before 10 am.

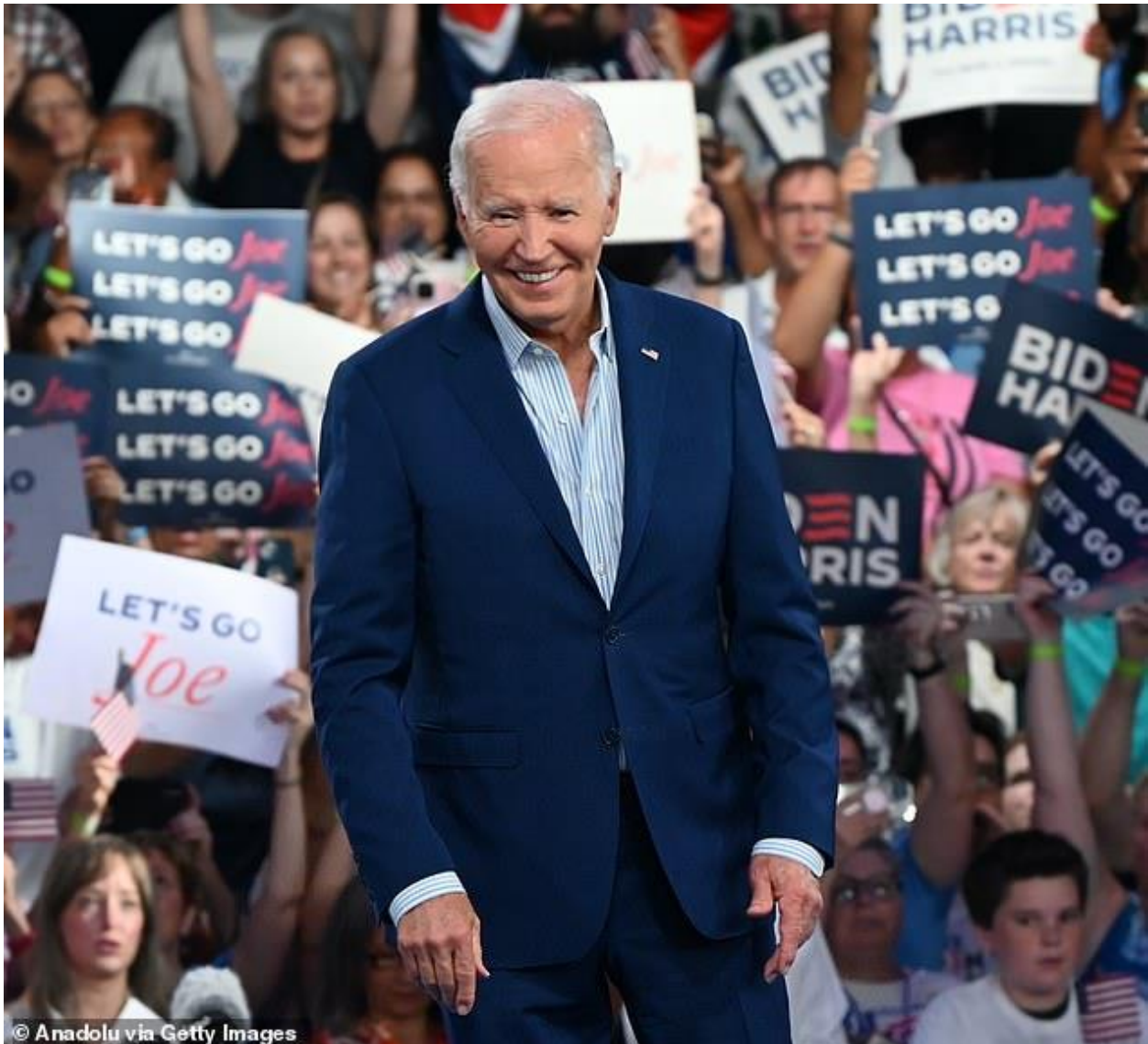
One Democratic House member who spoke to NBC News for its Saturday night piece about how the president will use the visit to reassess his reelection bid said they too believe Biden should drop out, but has yet to call for that publicly.

They said three colleagues expressed the same sentiment during votes on the House floor on Friday, as Biden continued to defend himself in North Carolina.

Members of the house have also not wavered publicly, and their aides have also rejected the idea they are having second-thoughts behind closed doors.

'Speaker [Nancy] Pelosi has full confidence in President Biden and looks forward to attending his inauguration on January 20, 2025,' Ian Krager, a spokesman for the former House speaker said.

'Any suggestion that she has engaged in a different course of action is simply not true.'



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Christie Stephenson, a spokesperson for Hakeem Jeffries, the House minority leader, similarly added that her boss has 'made clear publicly and privately that he supports President Joe Biden and the Democratic ticket from top to bottom.'

Brianna Frias, a spokeswoman for South Carolina's Jim Clyburn, said the rep 'has total confidence in President Joe Biden and the Biden-Harris ticket.'



'Any reports alleging that the Congressman has expressed anything other than firm support of President Biden are completely untrue,' she told NBC News.

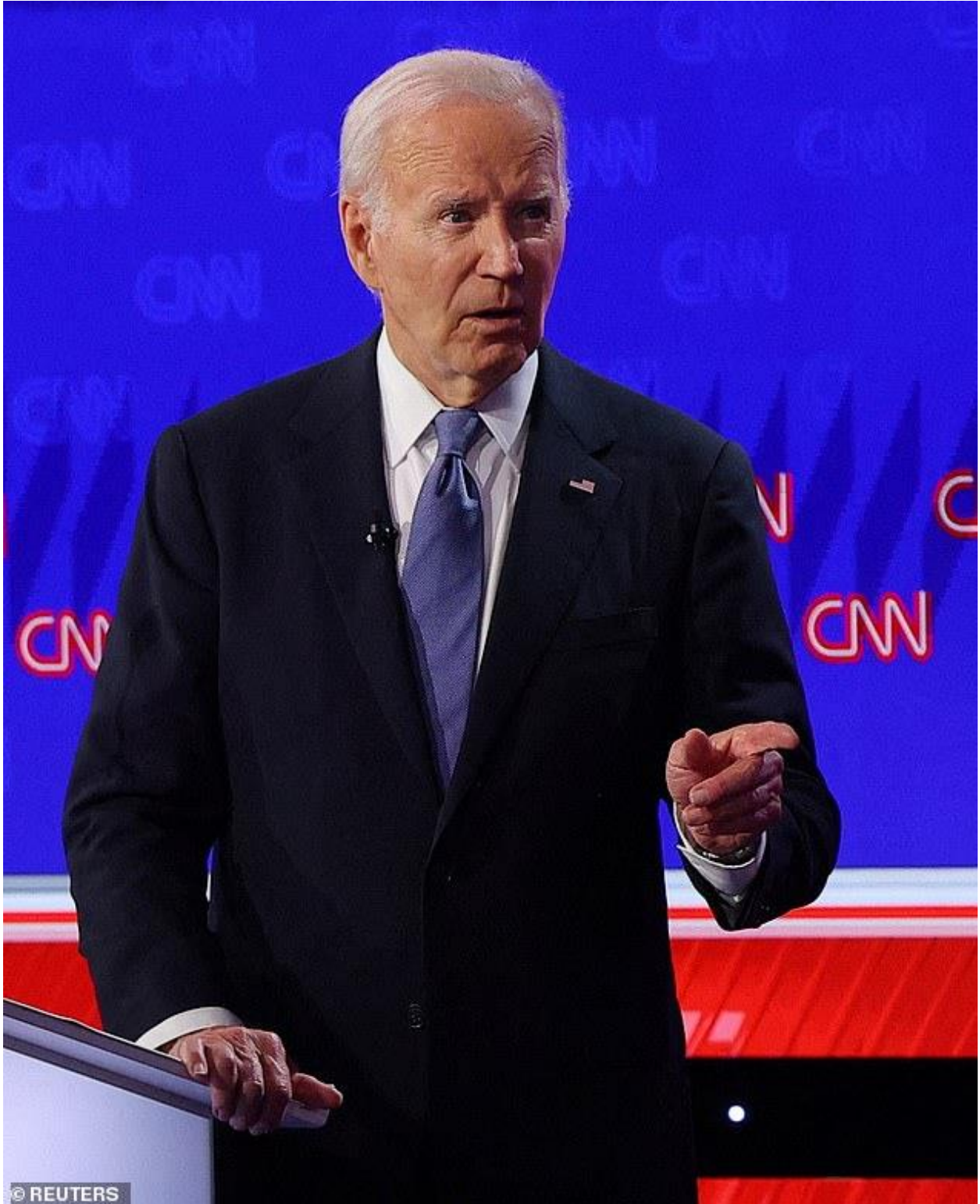
That said, the Democrats could be giving the president space as he mulls his next steps, with Camp David appearing to be a critical juncture in this decision making process as insiders say First Lady Jill holds the most influence out of her husband's inner circle.

'The decision-makers are two people — it's the president and his wife,' one of the sources familiar with the discussions told NBC News of this already known dynamic.

They added: 'Anyone who doesn't understand how deeply personal and familial this decision will be isn't knowledgeable about the situation.'

Another person familiar with the matter echoed the idea Biden will only listen to his wife of almost 50 years, telling the station, 'The only person who has ultimate influence with him is the first lady.'

'If she decides there should be a change of course, there will be a change of course.'



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The statements echoed those from insiders aired earlier in the day, after The New York Times reported that in private, she viewed Biden's bumbling faceoff with his old rival as merely 'a bad night.'

In the interim, Biden's top aides have told his staff to stay strong in meetings, airing the mission statement, 'We'll weather the storm, just like we always have,' according to one senior administration official.

The Democratic National Committee's official procedures for the convention, adopted in 2022, give the committee the authority to [choose a new candidate](#) if either member of the ticket dies or withdraws.

Biden also has the power to bow out of the race himself - by releasing all the pledged delegates he has accumulated.

That's 3,894 of 3,937 so far, according to a tally by The Associated Press.