

# Inside the Democratic Party's frantic secret call after Biden's debate disaster

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- **Democratic Party members feel gaslighted by leaders who say Biden is fit**

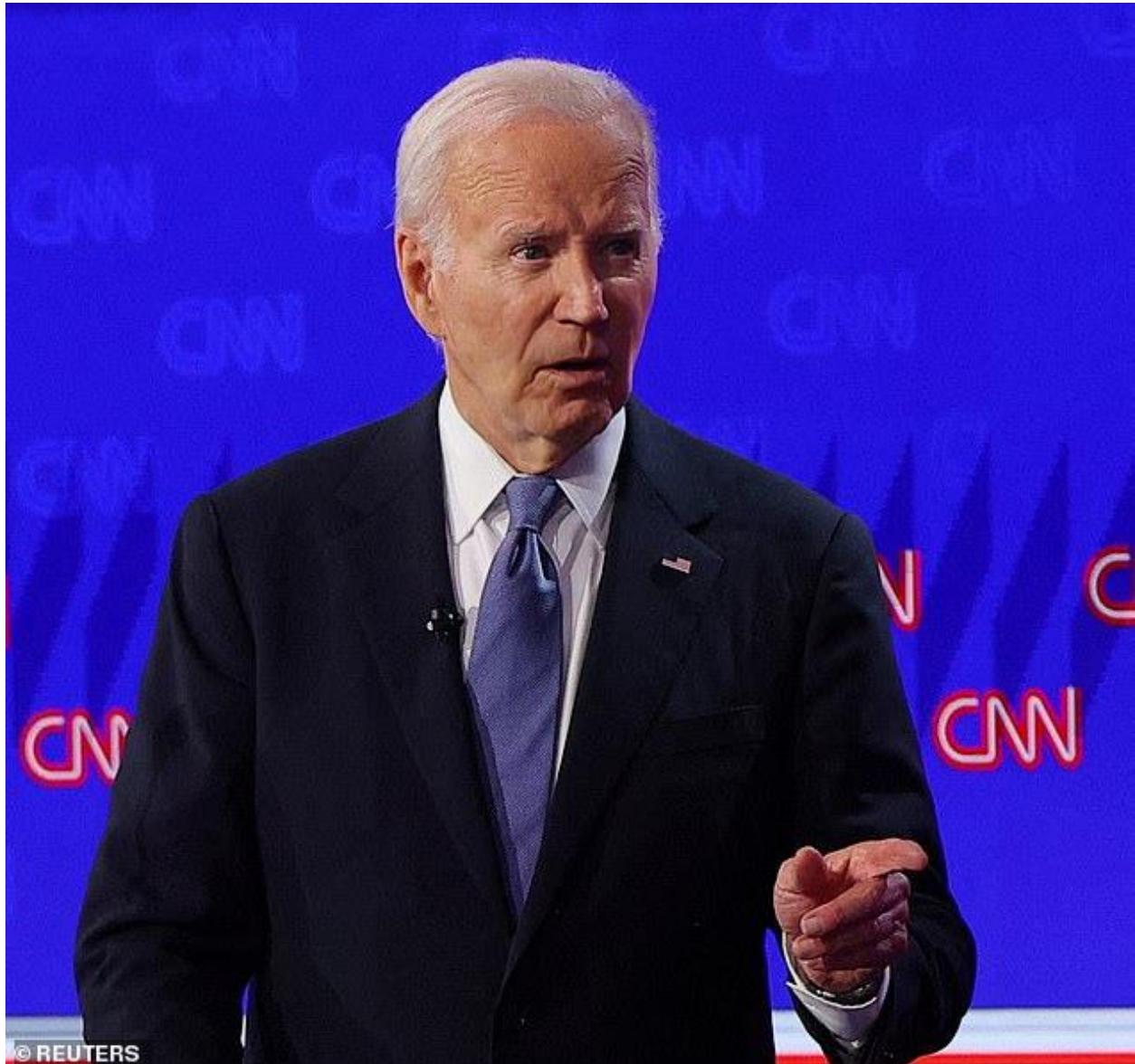
[Democratic Party](#) leaders desperately pleaded with rank and file committee members to not abandon President [Joe Biden](#) despite his train wreck debate performance.

During a secret call after the [CNN](#) debate in Atlanta on Thursday, DNC Chairman Jaime Harrison and Biden's campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez tried to quell concerns over the President's viability as their 2024 candidate.

But those on the call claim leaders are gaslighting them and asking them to ignore obvious signs of mental decline. They believe that Biden, 81, might not be the best one for the job anymore.

With just a month-and-a-half until the Democratic Convention, many Party members, strategists and donors are wondering if they should seek a replacement.

Meanwhile, [Biden is back at Camp David](#) after spending seven days there before the debate to prepare for the showdown. Reports claim he is set to discuss with his family at the presidential retreat his path forward.



Democratic Party members are feeling 'gaslighted' by leaders of the party after they tried to calm concerns over President Joe Biden's debate performance during a call about the upcoming convention

One person described Biden's mood after the debate as humiliated and devoid of confidence, according to a searing NBC News report. And the President is aware that the physical images of him that showed a blank, million-mile stare and agape mouth will live beyond his presidency.

Harrison downplayed the significance of the conference call during an MSNBC interview. He said it was just a regularly scheduled call 'to talk about the state of the race' with elected officials across the country and discuss the upcoming national convention.

Harrison and Rodriguez, two of the most influential members of the Party, ignored Biden's perceived weakness and gave what some call participants described as a rosy assessment of Biden's future.

'I was hoping for more of a substantive conversation instead of, 'Hey, let's go out there and just be cheerleaders,' without actually addressing a very serious issue that unfolded on American television for millions of people to see,' Joe Salazar, an elected DNC member from Colorado who was on the call, said, [according to the Associated Press](#).

He added: 'There were a number of things that could have been said in addressing the situation. But we didn't get that. We were being gaslit.'

While many calls for Biden to step aside have remained private over the last several months, now Democrats are saying the quiet part out loud.

Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) went further than most Democrats when saying: 'There are very honest and serious and rigorous conversations taking place at every level of our party.'

'We're having a serious conversation about what to do,' he said in an interview on MSNBC program Velshi. 'One thing I can tell you is that regardless of what President Biden decides, our party is going to be unified.'

'Whether he's the candidate or someone else is the candidate, he is going to be the keynote speaker at our convention,' he added. 'He will be the figure

that we rally around to move forward and beat the forces of authoritarianism and reaction in the country.'



President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden are back at presidential retreat Camp David in Maryland to discuss the future after his debate. Here the first couple is pictured with granddaughters Finnegan and Natalie Biden after landing in Westhampton Beach, New York on Saturday for a fundraiser

Biden is meant to officially become the Democratic Party's 2024 presidential nominee at the Convention in Chicago, Illinois in mid August. It's unclear if that will still happen.

A sense of concern is growing inside the top ranks of the Democratic Party that leaders of Joe Biden's campaign and the Democratic National Committee are not taking seriously enough the impact of the president's troubling debate performance earlier in the week.

DNC Chairman Jaime Harrison and Biden campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez held a Saturday afternoon call with dozens of committee members across the country, a group of some of the most influential members of the party. They largely ignored Biden's weak showing Thursday night or the avalanche of criticism that followed.

Multiple committee members on the call, most granted anonymity to talk about the private discussion, described feeling like they were being gaslighted — that they were being asked to ignore the dire nature of the party's predicament. The call, they said, may have worsened a widespread sense of panic among elected officials, donors and other stakeholders.

Instead, the people said, Harrison offered what they described as a rosy assessment of Biden's path forward. The chat function was disabled and there were no questions allowed.

Just after Saturday's DNC call, Biden's campaign released a memo claiming the debate had no impact on the election.

'On every metric that matters, data shows it did nothing to change the American people's perception, our supporters are more fired up than ever, and Donald Trump only reminded voters of why they fired him four years ago and failed to expand his appeal beyond his MAGA base,' Biden's senior adviser Jen O'Malley Dillon wrote.

'If we do see changes in polling in the coming weeks, it will not be the first time that overblown media narratives have driven temporary dips in the polls,' she added.