

HOME › US POLITICS

## Will Voting For The “Lesser Evil” Stop Trump?

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By Greyson Van Arsdale



It's hard to believe that it's almost been four years since the 2020 election – but it's even harder to believe how little has changed. **Trump and Biden are *still* the oldest people to ever run for President, besting their own record. Trump is *still* a heinous fraudster with the worst of intentions for working people and the oppressed. Biden is *still* a veteran centrist member of the establishment with very little to offer workers and youth who elected him out of sheer desperation to avoid right-wing despotism.**

In fact, it's possible that the only thing of significance that's changed in the US electoral scene is how few people have faith, or at least cautious optimism, in Biden. This has been an exercise in show, not tell – not only has Biden presided over a huge increase in the cost of living, he's cut off sources of financial relief to working people by ending pandemic-era assistance programs like the Child Tax Credit and expanded unemployment. He's the President under which *Roe v Wade* was ended, the President who broke the rail strike, and the President who failed to enact any serious debt relief or expansions in access to healthcare as promised.

But most recently, youth have gone into revolt against Joe Biden over his staunch support of Israel, backed up by billions of dollars in taxpayer funds, which has undoubtedly emboldened Netanyahu in his months-long genocidal assault on Gaza. This has been only compounded by Biden's vocal support of extreme police repression of student protests in the last month.

You'd be hard pressed to find someone who is excited to vote for Biden. Only 28% of Americans say he is a good or great President, 50% say he is bad or terrible. Young people are sickened by their choices, with 63% of younger voters saying they're dissatisfied with their options. It's likely that most young people won't vote this November. But for those who are planning to vote for Biden this fall, the more commonplace attitude is that people must "hold their nose" and vote for him, to prevent a takeover by the "greater" evil – Donald Trump.

But is this approach actually effective at preventing the right wing from taking power?

## **Who's Responsible For Trumpism?**

We have seen the rise of brutal right populism (and even outright fascist ideas) in recent years the world over. In Argentina, the Netherlands, Greece, Brazil, and elsewhere far-right politicians have risen to prominence.

It is not a natural progression of society that we move further and further to the right. The ascendance of these ideas is directly connected to broader crises in the system. When the political establishment fails to meaningfully resolve major issues facing the majority of society, support

for more radical ideas – including quite reactionary ideas – can grow. **In the US in 2016, it was precisely the Democratic Party's failure to meet the needs of working and middle-class people under the Obama years that allowed Trump to demagogically appeal to millions of voters whose living standards had been falling for years.**

Socialist Alternative has maintained since Biden's election in 2020 that unless a serious left-wing alternative to the Democrats was built, the space for Trump and his brand of right-populism would continue to grow.

There's no argument that Trump is a disaster for working-class people, and in many respects more immediately destructive than Biden. His unpredictability could have disastrous results on a world stage in the context of the new era of war that has emerged since he left office.

But why, if Trump is so bad, have even some of the most marginalized demographics in the US moved to support him over Biden?

Support for Trump among Black Americans has spiked enormously since 2020. That election, only 4% of Black voters supported him – but in the last four years, that number has risen by nineteen percentage points, according to a [New York Times](#) poll. That number is even greater among the Latino population with 39% support for Trump, beating out Biden's 34%.

That may not make sense at first, given Trump's clear record of nods to white supremacy and his consistent whipping up of anti-immigrant sentiment. But Biden's gutting of financial assistance programs, refusal to support a \$15 federal minimum wage, and failure to address the rapid increase in the cost of living has a visceral impact on poor communities of color. There are many people who, for reasons flowing from their concrete experiences, simply do not feel like they have been better off under his presidency.

In short: by failing to provide a real alternative to the program of the right wing, Biden's Presidency has in important ways *strengthened* the position of Trump.

Moreover, Biden's immense failures have given Trump room to campaign. Trump is no friend to the people of Gaza and recently made a statement

encouraging Israel to “finish the job” – but when a chant of “Genocide Joe” broke out at his rally, what was his response? A shrug and a “they ain’t wrong” – sending cheers through the crowd.

Because of Biden, Trump gets to pose as the anti-war candidate – particularly in relation to the increasingly unpopular war in Ukraine. This is an enormous obstacle for the actual anti-war movement, which must fight to differentiate itself from the “America-first” nationalism of the right wing.

Youth and workers poured their hearts and souls into getting out the vote for Biden in 2020 to oust Trump from office. But their effort has been betrayed by Biden and his unflinchingly establishment politics, which have handed Trump an enormous amount of momentum. Voting for Biden in 2024 won’t solve the problem either.

The most important fight lies beyond November, in building a working-class party in which workers and youth can democratically participate; a party made up of workers and young people, unions and social movements. This is the path that must be taken in order to prevent kicking the proverbial can down the road – further into the camp of Trump’s right wing.

## How To Catch A Liar

What does it actually look like to de-fang Trump’s politics?

Trump is the model of a successful right-wing populist. His core skill is to judge a crowd and say exactly what they want to hear – usually pandering to both left- and right-wing impulses, not worrying about whether or not he’s called on a lie later. Because who cares, if his campaign opponents also never fulfill their promises?

But that strategy can’t work against someone who genuinely fights in the interest of working people. If a serious Presidential candidate didn’t just talk about protecting Social Security and Medicaid, but instead made a vocal campaign to tax the rich to fund social services, willingly alienating big business to build a working-class movement, it would expose Trump’s long-running con. Trump wouldn’t be able to pose as an anti-war candidate next to someone who actually campaigned to end wars and US military aid.

He'd be forced to either support demands in a material way, against his actual politics, or admit he's not serious.

Voting for the lesser-evil but still evil option election after election has not gotten us any closer to defeating the right. In fact, it has allowed the right to get much scarier.

That means that voting for Biden isn't "a step in the right direction", if still inadequate – he's another step into a downward spiral that reinforces the far right. The best choice for working-class people and youth in the 2024 election isn't Biden. It's an independent candidate with a real working-class program.

Independent candidates Cornel West and Jill Stein have both vocally campaigned against US military aid to Israel and for an end to the massacre in Gaza – Stein was actually arrested by police at a student encampment in April. Both of these candidates need to fight to engage the broadest amount of working people, assembling the campaign infrastructure for thousands, not hundreds, of volunteers. Voting for either of them, weaknesses included, is a vast improvement on the failed strategy of voting for Biden.

If Trump wins in November, it will not be the fault of working people who could not stomach voting for Biden. It will be the fault of the Democrats for failing at every single opportunity to do anything to improve the lives of working people here in the US, and for signing off on the death and destruction of innocent people abroad.