

# SETTLING FOR BIDEN



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In November 2021, millions of people across the U.S. held their breath as they anticipated the long awaited election results. Would we be subject to another four years of Donald Trump's presidency or would Joe Biden triumph? When the results came in announcing that Trump's reign had finally come to an end, many people sighed in relief. Optimism coursed through with cautious hope that our country would put together what had been dismantled the last few years. However, when we flash forward nearly a year and a half, we simply are not where we had hoped to be in terms of implementing more progressive, action-oriented policies. While progress has been made that we ought to appreciate, it is equally as important to look to where improvements can be made.

We as a nation need to understand that regardless of the party being represented during a presidency, when unjust decisions are made we must stand against them. However, it is worth considering whether we have grown complacent after four years of tirelessly fighting against the decisions made by the Trump Administration. It seems as if we have settled for mere annoyance rather than action when we are faced with news that would have fared worse if under the Trump Administration.

Prior to the election, several sexual assault accusations arose against Biden. However, overall public response was different compared to the public outcry in reaction to numerous accusations against Trump. An Economist poll at this time stated that "three in 10 Americans (31%) ... say the recent allegations against Biden are credible." However, for

Trump, the numbers were different as "about two in five Americans (41%) ... describe the allegations against Trump as credible." The question arises: did we choose to believe these allegations are less serious because we needed to believe that Biden is better than Trump?

Charlotte Alter wrote in Time magazine that during Trump's era, there was a movement of "nationwide protests urging women to abandon the Republican Party and demanding that GOP leadership un-endorse Donald Trump." While there was definitely backlash and outrage to Biden's sexual assault accusations, the public backlash did not compare to that against Trump. The reason for this may be that Biden's accusations were never as numerous. However, the underlying theme may be that we turn a blind eye to these issues when we are trying to focus on the good. There was a huge push during election time, particularly, on social media to "settle for Biden." But when we settle, do we forget that we must still hold sexual assailants as accountable as ever?

Looking to more positive changes, there still is a lot to be noted that has marginally improved under Biden's presidency: the most significant change being the stance Biden has taken towards combating climate change. Eli Stokols, writer for the LA Times, discusses the promises that Biden intended to fulfill in his first 100 days of presidency. He notes that "Biden signed an executive order on his first day in office to begin the 30-day process for the United States to rejoin the five-year-old global pact to reduce carbon emissions. The U.S. officially did so in February." We can see that there are promises that were made during his campaign that were fulfilled to an extent, but there is still uncertainty on how we deal with unfulfilled promises and incomplete actions.

During the early days of Biden's campaign he was adamant about imposing a more long term

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solution for immigration and ending inhumane detention centers. However, this is a classic case of an unfulfilled promise given that "nearing the end of Biden's first year in office, Trump's signature border policies remain in place, and the new Administration, despite the President's explicit promises, has not restored any semblance of asylum" (according to Johnathan Blitzer, staff writer for the New Yorker). Regardless of the party in office, reminding officials of their campaign promises and advocating for fulfillment of those promises should be an expectation rather than an exception. While there are certainly numerous factors that impede decision making, the overarching message remains the same: we must continue to demand change until we witness a satisfactory systemic change.

A core component of Biden's campaigning centered on compromise. With fear of being anything but moderate, Biden focused on meeting halfway between the individuals that had been hoping for Bernie Sanders as a candidate and the GOP individuals wary of Biden yet fed up with Trump. Jennifer Graham of Desert News wrote, "Liberal Democrats who wanted Sen. Bernie Sanders in the White House, but were willing to give Biden a chance, said they would hold the former vice president accountable for making good on some of his more progressive campaign promises. Similarly, Republicans who crossed party lines to vote for Biden said they would watch closely to ensure that he would be the consensus-seeking moderate and the unifier he promised to be." We need to remember accountability whenever we start to get too relaxed. Jeff Cohen, co-founder of Roots Action, an advocacy group writes, "Comfortable liberals — or those not paying close attention — may believe that replacing Trump is all that was needed. But unless this administration

delivers for working families bigly and quickly, the faux-populist GOP will come storming back into power in 2022 and 2024."

Accountability was embedded into Biden's presidency from even the beginning of the campaign. As we draw towards the halfway mark of his presidency, we must go back to the beginning and remember why he was voted into office. Yes, he may in several ways be better than another four years of Trump, but that is not enough to be deemed a successful president. As Martin Luther King Jr. mentions, "The white moderate is the biggest threat to civil rights." Remaining complacent only leads to more stagnancy and yet another missed opportunity to truly better our country.

We may have settled for Biden during the election, but we cannot remain settled for another two years.

