

Washington, D.C., News

Himes Breaks With Biden

— Juliann Ventura, 7.12.2024



U.S. Capitol Building (Credit: Google Map Data, 2024)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Jim Himes became the first lawmaker from Connecticut to urge Biden to end his presidential reelection bid, releasing a statement only minutes after President Joe Biden’s highly-anticipated press conference following the NATO summit Thursday night.

“The 2024 election will define the future of American democracy, and we must put forth the strongest candidate possible to confront the threat posed by Trump’s promised MAGA authoritarianism,” Himes said in a **post** on X. “I no longer believe that is Joe Biden, and I hope that, as he has throughout a lifetime of public service, he will continue to put our nation first and, as he promised, make way for a new generation of leaders.”

Himes was the first of at least three members of Congress who asked Biden to step aside last night after the president’s press conference, making the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee one of at least 18

lawmakers openly breaking with Biden. This split from Himes comes amid growing calls from legislators on the Hill urging the president to drop out of the presidential race, highlighting a growing rift within the Democratic party on the Hill.

Meanwhile, Connecticut's other House lawmakers have seemingly remained staunch in their support for Biden's candidacy, while in the last week, however, both U.S. senators have **somewhat** backed away from completely defending Biden. Sen. Chris Murphy expressed concerns about the president's reelection bid, saying in a Sunday **interview** on CNN that Biden needed to prove himself to skeptics. On Monday, Sen. Richard Blumenthal said in a statement to CT Examiner that he backed the president and didn't express any concerns, but two days later, on Wednesday, the senator told **MSNBC** that he was "deeply concerned" about Biden.

In an interview on CNN Thursday night, Himes added to his reasoning for asking Biden to step down, arguing that Biden's campaign messaging hasn't been strong enough to garner more support.

"If you believe that the problem that the Democrats have is that we haven't gotten our message across ...and if you also believe that the president has the biggest megaphone, you have to drop the emotion and the loyalty and love and say, 'in the next four or five months, is that story going to be told with such precision and poetry and beauty, that you will turn around all the numbers that say we are going to lose?'" Himes asked, mentioning a **report** from The Cook Political Report that shows the House may be a toss-up for Democrats in November and citing a separate **poll** from Reuters/Ipsos showing a 37% approval rating for the president.

The Connecticut Democrat said that, for him, he doesn't see the numbers flipping in the president's favor.

However, during the president's press conference, Biden questioned how accurate the polls are.

"The bottom line is, all of the polling data right now, which I think is premature because the campaign hasn't even really started, I mean it hasn't started in earnest yet ... So, a lot can happen," Biden said. "But ... I

believe I'm the best qualified to govern and I think I'm the best qualified to win."

"But there are other people who could beat Trump, too," he said with a warning that any candidate who begins now would have to start from scratch while his campaign already has more than **\$200 million**.

A PBS News/NPR/Marist **poll** from this morning found that 50% of registered U.S. voters would vote for Biden compared to 48% who said they would vote for Trump if the election was held today. The difference falls within the margin of error.

In contrast, a New York Times/Siena **poll** taken the week after the presidential debate on June 27 showed Trump leading Biden 49% to 41% among registered voters asked who they would vote for if the election were held on one of the days between June 28 to July 2.

The New York Times/Siena poll surveyed 1,532 registered voters compared to 1,174 registered voters for the PBS/NPR/Marist poll.

Himes has represented Connecticut's 4th Congressional District for 15 years, since 2009.

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