

Washington, D.C., Elections

Himes on Harris (in Brief)

— Juliann Ventura, 7.27.2024



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

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Nearly a week after Vice President Kamala Harris stepped in as the Democratic nominee for president following President Joe Biden’s decision to leave the race, Rep. Jim Himes championed Harris in an interview with the CT Examiner for her appeal to portions of the electorate and her being part of a younger generation.

Himes, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, threw himself completely behind Harris, and also defended her strong ties to Silicon Valley.

His endorsement of Harris came **earlier** this week, one day after Biden stepped aside and endorsed the Harris to lead a new slate. Himes was the **first and only** lawmaker from Connecticut to have called on Biden to leave the race, citing the president’s polling numbers.

Biden's approval rating dipped to 36% right as he announced his exit, according to a Gallup **poll** conducted almost entirely before he stepped down. Biden's approval rating sat at almost 39% as of this month, **according** to 538 Politics.

Meanwhile, Harris' approval rating **appears** to begin almost where Biden left off, at about 38%. In the interview, Himes said that he believes her approval numbers will improve as the election nears.

Harris' **relationship** with Silicon Valley dates back to the start of her political career as she ran for state attorney general in California more than a decade ago. Now, as she begins her presidential bid, the tech giants in Silicon Valley have already given her **millions** in financial support, helping her raise more than \$100 million in 48 hours.

The interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.

CT Examiner: One of the main reasons for breaking with Biden a couple weeks ago was that his approval rating was on the lower side. Harris' approval rating appears to be in a similar zone to Biden's. How do you see this differently for Harris versus Biden?

Rep. Himes: The one I saw was meaningfully higher. So I'd have to look... but I think there's tremendous upside with the vice president. I think she's already galvanizing young people. I think she's galvanizing African Americans, particularly women. I think she's driving a contrast between, you know, an energetic, younger, you know, person on the rise versus a grouchy, angry, dark, old man. And I think that contrast in the next 110 days is going to be extremely powerful.

I also think as vice president, she's going to be sort of naturally tied to the president. That's sort of the definition of the vice president's job. Now she's out there defining herself. This week in Washington, the Democratic caucus, it was like a huge weight had been lifted from people's shoulders, almost universally. I didn't hear anybody, not a single person in Washington said, 'Oh, man, did we ever make a mistake?' So, I think you're going to start to see – it's going to take a little time, it was only less than a week ago that the President made his decision, but I think that Kamala Harris has just tremendous upside.

CT Examiner: Harris has fairly strong ties to Silicon Valley and the Big Tech groups there. Given your position as the leading Democratic member on the House Intelligence Committee, do you see this relationship having any impact on the way she decides to regulate or advance different technologies like artificial intelligence or crypto?

Rep. Himes: I think it's generally true that the younger you are and the more familiar you are with our innovative ecosystems – yes, that's California, but it's also Boston and Austin – the more likely you are to be open minded and excited by the potential of technology. I can't predict what a President Harris would do about crypto, but there is a generational difference in how people think about innovations. It's just true that, to some extent, the younger you are, the more fluent and conversant and more of a consumer you are of technologies. So I do think that there will be a difference there. I resist the notion that she used to, as a senator, represent Silicon Valley, so somehow she's going to be captive. That's nonsense. I have one of the most financial services intensive districts in the country and I was one of the authors of the Dodd-Frank Act, you know. So, I think most of my colleagues, certainly, Kamala Harris, is capable of being thoughtful and principled about things like financial regulation and cryptocurrency, etc.

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