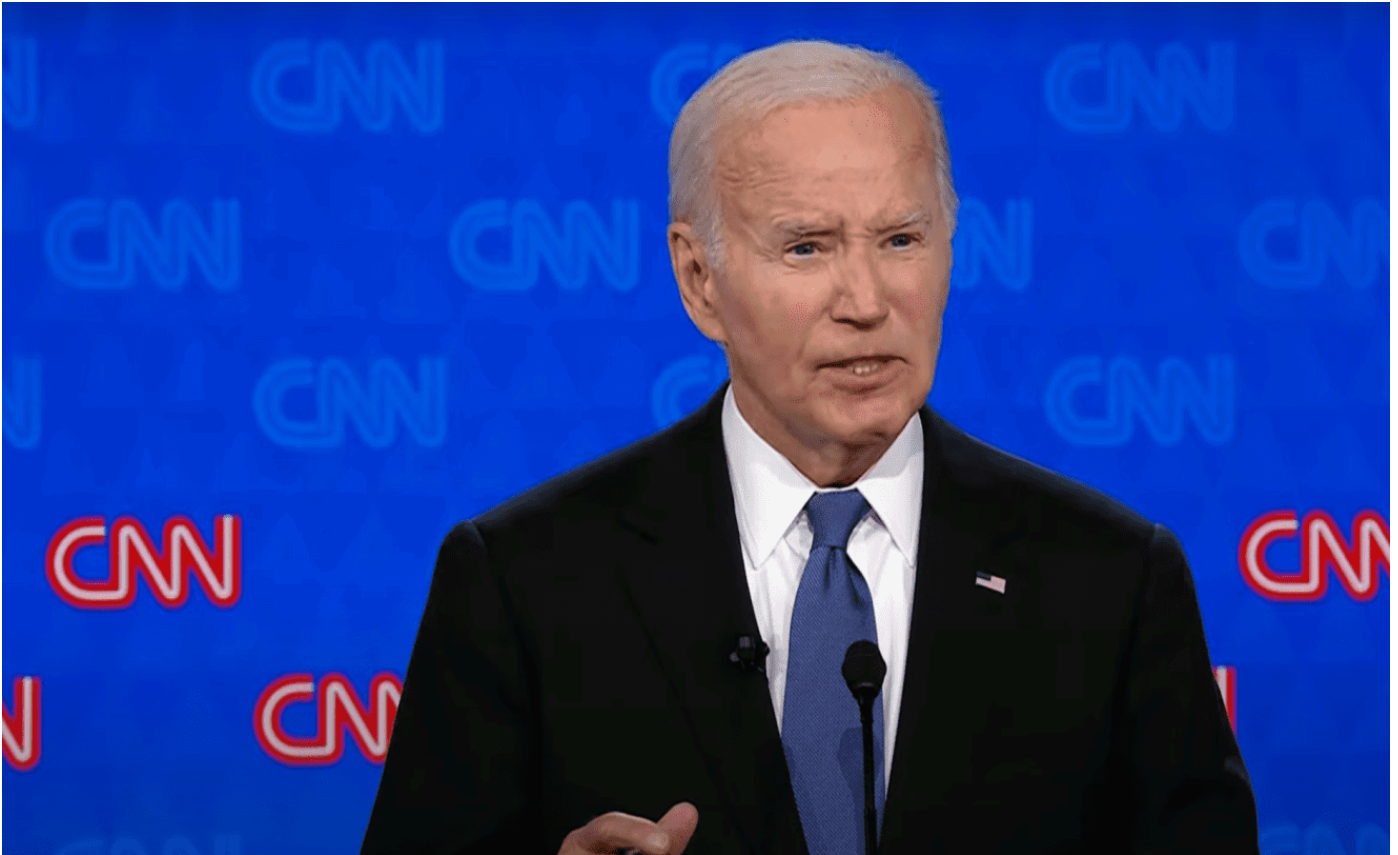


Washington, D.C., Elections

Murphy, Blumenthal Torn by Biden Reelection Bid

— Juliann Ventura, 7.8.2024



President Joe Biden at Thursday's presidential debate (Credit: CNN)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In a **letter** to Democrats on the Hill sent Monday morning, President Joe Biden reaffirmed his intention to run for president despite **reports** that many members of Congress have either directly asked Biden to drop out or raised concerns about the president running again. And while Sen. Richard Blumenthal appears to have fallen in line and continues to back Biden, Sen. Chris Murphy has taken a slightly different tack, **saying** on CNN's State of the Union that if Biden can't prove himself to skeptics, "then he's got a decision to make about what the path forward is."

Nine Democrats on the Hill have called on Biden to drop out, and 16 have voiced concerns regarding the president's ability to serve, according to The

Washington Post's **tracker**. Of those 16, three are senators, and one is Murphy.

After Murphy's CNN interview, he released a statement that walked the line between supporting Biden and addressing voter concerns which have exploded after a faltering debate performance on June 27.

"I support Joe Biden. Period, stop. But I know that there are a lot of voters out there that need to be convinced that Thursday night's debate performance was a bad night," Murphy said. "And, ultimately, I'm supporting Joe Biden, I'm going to vote for Joe Biden, but the President needs millions of votes and I think the President needs to make some moves this week to put himself out there in a position to answer those questions."

Murphy added that while he believes that Biden can be the Democratic nominee, "the clock is ticking" on Biden proving himself to voters, but noted – similarly to Biden's own campaign messaging throughout this election cycle – the president's legislative accomplishments, like the **2022 gun bill**, and that former President Donald Trump "presents an existential threat to democracy."

Like Murphy, Blumenthal underscored in a statement the stakes of the coming election in policy terms.

"The election will be about the four years ahead, not a single night of debate," said Blumenthal.

"Joe Biden will fight to protect women's reproductive health, cut inflation, and build America's strength against extremism and autocratic aggression," said Blumenthal.

Biden still has top Democrats in his corner, including Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware and Maryland Democratic Gov. Wes Moore, who have both addressed Biden's debate performance and support his decision to stay in the race.

Polling so far has been mixed, but suggests significant concerns about Biden's electability.

A Reuters and Ipsos **poll** taken after the debate found that both Biden and Trump maintained 40% of their support among registered voters, perhaps showing that the president's debate performance held no significance for voters.

The survey also asked respondents how they thought other Democrats would do in a hypothetical matchup against Trump and results showed that no other notable Democrat – like Vice President Kamala Harris or California Gov. Gavin Newsom – did statistically better than Biden.

In contrast, A New York Times and Siena College **poll** taken the week after the debate found that 49% of likely voters would vote for Trump, compared to 43% who said they would vote for Biden. This is a three-point increase for Trump based on data from before the debate.

The poll also found that 74% of voters think that Biden is too old to be president, which is an increase of five percentage points following the debate. Among Democrats, that number increased by eight percentage points, to 59%.

A new Emerson College **poll** shows Trump improving his position since the debate and holding leads across six swing states.

Democrats in both chambers of Congress have been convulsed in the days since the debate. On Sunday, CNN **reported** that House Democrats told Democratic Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries from New York in a call that Biden needs to end his reelection bid.

Only days before this, **The Washington Post** reported that Democratic Senator from Virginia Mark Warner was attempting to get a group of Democratic senators together to ask Biden to drop out. A spokesperson for Warner did not confirm nor deny if Warner thinks that Biden should step down and only issued a statement – similar to Murphy's – saying that the senator believes these are "critical days" and made that clear to The White House.

In an interview with George Stephanopoulos of ABC News on Friday, the host mentioned the bleak polling for Biden, who denied it. He also

dismissed concerns about his debate performance, saying “it was a bad episode. No indication of any serious condition.”

“I have no doubt I – and we – can and will beat Donald Trump,” Biden said in the letter to Democrats on the Hill on Monday, effectively reiterating what he said in his interview on Friday.

But while Murphy voiced support for Biden, he urged the president to do more.

“I think the President needs to do more,” Murphy said in the statement. “I’m not advising this campaign, but if I were, I would probably suggest that the President get out there and do a town hall, that he do a press conference, that he show the country that he is still the old Joe Biden, one of the best retail politicians this country has ever seen. The President says he can do that. I trust that he can.”

But Murphy also warned, “If he can’t do that, then of course, he’s going to have to make a decision about what’s best for the country and what’s best for the party.”

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