



ELECTION 2024

DID YOU KNOW?

Joe Biden was a US senator from Delaware from 1973–2009, served as Vice President from 2009–2017, and became President in 2021.

A rare decision



The end of Joe Biden's campaign came later than that of any other US President who has decided not to seek re-election. Biden dropped out of the race with 183 days left in his first term. Lyndon B. Johnson (above) ended his campaign in 1968 with 295 days left. In 1952, Harry S. Truman ended his with 297 days left.



Kamala Harris at a campaign event in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on July 23



Biden exits Presidential race

Joe Biden, the 46th US President, announced on July 21 that he is ending his re-election campaign. He had been expected to accept the Democratic party's official nomination for a second four-year term and to run against the Republican nominee, former President Donald Trump, in the election on November 5.

What happened?

Biden announced his decision to step down in a letter posted on social media. "It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President," he wrote. "And while it has been my intention to seek re-election, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term." Shortly after, he endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris as the new Presidential nominee and encouraged Democrats to rally behind her.

Why did Biden step down?

Biden was under intense pressure from Democratic elected officials and other party members to withdraw from the race. He is the oldest President in US history at age 81, and concerns about his

fitness for office increased after he struggled in a debate against Trump on June 27. Polls showed that 74% of voters thought Biden was too old for the job. Biden initially refused calls to step down.

Who will replace him on the ticket?

The likely nominee is Harris, age 59. More than 200 Democratic officials endorsed her after Biden did, and when *The Week Junior* went to press on July 23, no one had challenged her for the role. Harris is from California, and her previous positions have included attorney general (a state's top lawyer) and US senator from that state. In 2020, she became the first woman, first Black person, and first South Asian American to be elected Vice President of the US.

To formally become the nominee, Harris must be chosen by at least 1,976 of the Democratic Party's 3,949 delegates (people who represent voters from all 50 states). When *The Week Junior* went to press, news reports said she had the support of 2,887 delegates. A vote is required to make that official, and party leaders said it would be held online by August 7. The nominee will attend the Democratic National Convention from August 19–22 in Chicago, Illinois.

How did people react to Biden's announcement?

Harris praised Biden for a "selfless and patriotic act" in withdrawing from the race and said, "I will do everything in my power to unite the Democratic Party—and unite our nation—to defeat Donald Trump." Presidential historian Jon Meacham said Biden's decision showed he was putting the nation ahead of his own personal ambition. "Biden has decided this campaign is not about him but about us," Meacham told MSNBC. After Biden's announcement, supporters gathered outside the White House, chanting "We love you!" and carrying signs with messages like "Thank you, Joe." Meanwhile, Trump said on social media that "Joe Biden was not fit to run for President."

What will happen next?

Harris has begun traveling the US to make her case to voters. On July 23, her team said more than 1.1 million donors had given more than \$100 million to her campaign since Biden's announcement. Once the Democratic nominee is officially named, that person will choose a candidate for Vice President to join the race with them. Several prominent Democrats have been suggested for that position. The Democratic nominee may participate in a Presidential debate with Trump, although that has not been confirmed.



A Biden supporter outside the White House on July 21