

## EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:00AM EDT // THURSDAY, SEPT. 24

To Our Fellow Citizens:

We are former public servants who have devoted our careers, and in many cases risked our lives, for the United States. We are generals, admirals, senior noncommissioned officers, ambassadors, and senior civilian national security leaders. We are Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. We love our country. Unfortunately, we also fear for it. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven America needs principled, wise, and responsible leadership. America needs a President who understands, as President Harry S. Truman said, that “the buck stops here.”

We the undersigned endorse Joe Biden to be the next President of the United States. He is the leader our nation needs.

We believe that Joe Biden is, above all, a good man with a strong sense of right and wrong. He is guided by the principles that have long made America great: democracy is a hard-won right we must defend and support at home and abroad; America’s power and influence stem as much from her moral authority as it does from her economic and military power; America’s free press is invaluable, not an enemy of the people; those who sacrifice or give their lives in service of our nation deserve our respect and eternal gratitude; and America’s citizens benefit most when the United States engages with the world. Joe Biden will always put the nation’s needs before his own.

Those who have served know empathy is a vital leadership quality – you cannot do what is best for those you lead if you do not know their challenges. Joe Biden has empathy born of his humble roots, family tragedies and personal loss. When Americans are struggling, Joe Biden understands their pain and takes it upon himself to help.

We believe America’s president must be honest, and we find Joe Biden’s honesty and integrity indisputable. He believes a nation’s word is her bond. He believes we must stand by the allies who have stood by us. He remembers how America’s NATO allies rushed to her side after 9/11; how the Kurds fought by our side to defeat ISIS; and how Japan and South Korea have been steadfast partners in countering North Korean and Chinese provocations. Joe Biden would never sell out our allies to placate despots or because he dislikes an allied leader.

While some of us may have different opinions on particular policy matters, we trust Joe Biden’s positions are rooted in sound judgment, thorough understanding, and fundamental values.

We know Joe Biden has the experience and wisdom necessary to navigate America through a painful time. He has grappled with America’s most difficult foreign policy challenges for decades, learning what works – and what does not – in a dangerous world. He is knowledgeable, but he also knows that listening to diverse and dissenting views is essential, particularly when making tough decisions concerning our national security. Many of us have briefed Joe Biden on matters of national security, and we know he demands a thorough understanding of any issue before making a decision – as any American president should.

Finally, Joe Biden believes in personal responsibility. Over his long career, he has learned hard lessons and grown as a leader who can take positive action to unite and heal our country. It is unthinkable that he would ever utter the phrase “I don’t take responsibility at all.”

The next president will inherit a nation – and a world – in turmoil. The current President has demonstrated he is not equal to the enormous responsibilities of his office; he cannot rise to meet challenges large or small. Thanks to his disdainful attitude and his failures, our allies no longer trust or respect us, and our enemies no longer fear us. Climate change continues unabated, as does North Korea's nuclear program. The president has ceded influence to a Russian adversary who puts bounties on the heads of American military personnel, and his trade war against China has only harmed America's farmers and manufacturers. The next president will have to address those challenges while struggling with an economy in a deep recession and a pandemic that has already claimed more than 200,000 of our fellow citizens. America, with 4% of the world's population suffers with 25% of the world's COVID-19 cases. Only FDR and Abraham Lincoln came into office facing more monumental crises than the next president.

Joe Biden has the character, principles, wisdom, and leadership necessary to address a world on fire. That is why Joe Biden must be the next President of the United States; why we vigorously support his election; and why we urge our fellow citizens to do the same.

Sincerely,

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William F. Wechsler, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Todd A. Weiler, former Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Lieutenant General Jack Weinstein, USAF (Ret)  
General Joe Went, USMC (Ret)  
Ambassador Joseph Westphal, former Under Secretary of the Army  
Rear Admiral Hugh Denworth Wetherald, USN (Ret)  
Major General Deborah C. Wheeling, USA (Ret)  
Ambassador Barry B. White  
Rear Admiral Robert A. Whitney, Jr., DVM, MS, USPHS (Ret)  
Sheila Widnall, former Secretary of the Air Force  
Sergeant Major Alexander Williams, USMC (Ret)  
Ambassador Bisa Williams (Ret)  
Chief Master Sergeant Calvin D. Williams, Sr., USAF (Ret)  
Kayla M. Williams, former Director, Department of Veterans Affairs  
General Michael Williams, USMC (Ret)  
Major General Margaret C. Wilmoth, Ph.D., MSS, RN, FAAN, USA (Ret)  
Douglas B. Wilson, former Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Rear Admiral Jesse A. Wilson, Jr., USN (Ret)  
General Johnnie E. Wilson, USA (Ret)  
Ambassador Duane E. Woerth

Sergeant Major Bobby B. Woods, USMC (Ret)  
Bill Woodward, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State  
Matice Wright-Springer, former Principal Director, Department of Defense  
Brigadier General Stephen N. Xenakis, MD, USA (Ret)  
Ambassador Johnny Young (Ret)  
Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch (Ret)  
Dov S. Zakheim, former Under Secretary of Defense  
Patricia J. Zarodkiewicz, former Senior Executive to the Secretary of the Air Force  
Peter D. Zimmerman, Ph.D., former Chief Scientist, Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (Ret), former Commander U.S. Central Command  
Robert B. Zoellick, former U.S. Trade Representative  
Admiral Paul Zunkuft, USCG (Ret), former Commandant of the Coast Guard  
Brigadier General Peter B. Zwack, USA (Ret)