

WILLOW VALLEY DEMOCRATS PLUS NEWSLETTER

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**Paid for by Willow Valley Democrats Plus Club
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Addressing the Issues

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If you are not already on our mailing list, contact Jen Porter at jenporter@comcast.net.

Biden's Withdrawal Letter

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

July 21, 2024

My Fellow Americans,

Over the past three and a half years, we have made great progress as a Nation.

Today, America has the strongest economy in the world. We've made historic investments in rebuilding our Nation, in lowering prescription drug costs for seniors, and in expanding affordable health care to a record number of Americans. We've provided critically needed care to a million veterans exposed to toxic substances. Passed the first gun safety law in 30 years. Appointed the first African American woman to the Supreme Court. And passed the most significant climate legislation in the history of the world. America has never been better positioned to lead than we are today.

I know none of this could have been done without you, the American people. Together, we overcame a once in a century pandemic and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. We've protected and preserved our Democracy. And we've revitalized and strengthened our alliances around the world.

It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, 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.

I will speak to the Nation later this week in more detail about my decision.

For now, let me express my deepest gratitude to all those who have worked so hard to see me reelected. I want to thank Vice President Kamala Harris for being an extraordinary partner in all this work. And let me express my heartfelt appreciation to the American people for the faith and trust you have placed in me.

I believe today what I always have: that there is nothing America can't do – when we do it together. We just have to remember we are the United States of America.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joe Biden", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Trump Steals Spotlight from J D Vance

From: Robert Hubbell - Today's Edition Newsletter

Today's Edition Newsletter

Defying the odds, Trump steals spotlight from JD Vance (and not in a good way)

August 1, 2024

ROBERT B. HUBBELL

Trump's interview at the National Association of Black Journalists convention was an unmitigated disaster of campaign-altering dimensions. The only person in the US happy with Trump's miserable performance was JD Vance—who will enjoy a few minutes out of the spotlight.

It is easy to mock Trump for his calamitous interview—**and we should**. Taking Trump down a few notches by making clear that he is a cringe-worthy, awkward, bloviating narcissist is a good development. But he is also filled with rage, prejudice, and hate, as his answers make clear. Both aspects of Trump's 32-minute interview deserve to be highlighted—because both demonstrate that he is unfit for office (or even for polite company).

[Aaron Rugar](#) has compiled a ten-minute “super-cut” of the interview that is worth watching in its entirety. See YouTube, [Trump self-immolates at National Association Black Journalists convention: a supercut](#).

Rachel Scott of ABC began the interview by asking Trump a tough question about Trump's prior statements about minorities, which sent Trump into a black hole of rage. Scott asked,

You have pushed false claims about people like President Barack Obama, saying he was not born in the United States, which is not true.

You have told four congresswomen, women of color who were American citizens, to go back to where they came from.

You have used words like ‘animal’ to describe Black district attorneys.

You've attacked Black journalists, calling them a loser, saying the questions that they ask are quote, ‘stupid and racist.’

You've had dinner with a white supremacist at Mar-a-Lago.

So my question, sir, now that you are asking Black supporters to vote for you, why should Black voters trust you after you have used language like that?

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Trump Steals Spotlight from Vance (cont'd)

Trump never recovered from that question, immediately pivoting to attacking Rachel Scott as “rude,” “nasty,” and “horrible,” saying that she worked for “*fake news ABC*.”

Among the many horrible things Trump said during the interview was to question Kamala Harris’s identification as a Black woman and an Indian woman. *Mother Jones* covered Trump’s challenge to Kamala Harris’s identity with this headline: [White Man Tells Black Journalists His Black Opponent Is Not Black](#). Trump said,

*She was always of Indian heritage. She was only promoting Indian heritage, I didn’t know she was Black until a number of years ago **when she happened to turn Black**, and now she wants to be known as Black. So I don’t know, **is she Indian or is she Black?***

After offending Black Americans, Indian Americans, and all multi-racial Americans, Trump doubled-down on his insensitive comments by posting on Truth Social [the following statement](#):

Crazy Kamala is saying she’s Indian, not Black. This is a big deal. Stone cold phony. She uses everybody, including her racial identity!

Racial identity is a sensitive and personal issue. Trump not only failed to show any sensitivity or understanding, but he also tried to shame Kamala Harris for her identity as a daughter of a Black father and an Indian mother. Based on social media posts and statements by Trump surrogates, it is clear the campaign believes that focusing on Kamala Harris’s racial identity is a winning strategy. Only a white billionaire living in a bubble of sycophants would believe that strategy will increase his chances of election.

Trump also said he would pardon January 6 insurrectionists *convicted* of beating police officers and that he would give immunity to police officers charged with killing citizens.

None of the above captures Trump’s boorish, insulting, aggressive behavior toward the three Black female journalists who attempted to interview him. You should watch the video to see that behavior. At one point, Trump reached over to take the bottle of water belonging to Rachel Scott, appearing to screw the lid tightly—apparently to make it difficult for Scott to open the bottle (?). Whatever the reason, it was a weird, aggressive way to act out Trump’s anger toward Scott.

Most importantly, the event reminded us of the daily chaos and ugly confrontations that typified life during the Trump administration. The Harris campaign issued a statement that made that point:

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Trump Steals Spotlight from Vance (cont'd)

Statement on Donald Trump Showing Exactly Who He Is at NABJ

The hostility Donald Trump showed on stage today is the same hostility he has shown throughout his life, throughout his term in office, and throughout his campaign for president as he seeks to regain power and inflict his harmful Project 2025 agenda on the American people.

Trump lobbed personal attacks and insults at Black journalists the same way he did throughout his presidency-while he failed Black families and left the entire country digging out of the ditch he left us in.

Donald Trump has already proven he cannot unite America, so he attempts to divide us.

Today's tirade is simply a taste of the chaos and division that has been a hallmark of Trump's MAGA rallies this entire campaign.

It's also exactly what the American people will see from across the debate stage as Vice President Harris offers a vision of opportunity and freedom for all Americans.

All Donald Trump needs to do is stop playing games and actually show up to the debate on September 10.

Trump and Vance are both stumbling as Kamala Harris projects confidence and inspires enthusiasm. That does not guarantee that we will win, but it certainly places Democrats in a strong position for the last 97 days of the campaign.

The Republican plan to withhold certification of election results

Rachel Maddow did a report on Monday evening about local Republican officials who are election deniers who will attempt to withhold certification of the votes on November 5. Rachel Maddow's program went viral. Several dozen readers sent me copies or links to the program, asking me to comment. Many were concerned that Republicans would win the election by cheating, regardless of strong turnout by Democrats.

It is essential to understand the context of this story because it will likely be around for the rest of the campaign. It would be unfortunate and wrong for Democrats to believe that their votes are meaningless because a handful of election-denying local officials wrongly believe they can withhold certifications. They cannot. Understanding why they cannot arbitrarily withhold certification of votes at the county level is an important part of the story.

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Trump Steals Spotlight from Vance (cont'd)

Rachel's program focused on the threat—but did not discuss the remedies available to Democrats. Those remedies include court orders compelling local officials to perform the ministerial act of certifying local vote totals. I hope you will stick with me as I explain the details.

Nothing I say should be construed to mean that the threat is not real or that we should ignore it. My point is that we are not helpless victims. We have remedies, and we should be prepared to pursue them. But the worst outcome of this story would be spreading the belief that our votes won't matter because a handful of election-denying local officials will try to override the will of the American people. That won't happen—as long as we are prepared to pursue our remedies in court.

I was heartened by Professor Laurence Tribe's [tweet](#) on Wednesday:

The supposedly novel threat of refusing to certify election results isn't new at all. We've got this. Don't let it scare you into passivity. That's the tyrant's game. Don't fall for it!

Rachel Maddow's program was based on an article in *Rolling Stone Magazine*, [These Swing State Election Officials Are Pro-Trump Election Deniers](#). I will address the article rather than Rachel's program because the article contains additional detail and support for Rachel's reporting.

The scale and nature of the problem.

Rolling Stone partnered with a voting rights advocacy group, American Doom, to search the social media pages of Republican election officials. They identified 70 Republican election officials who posted election denialist statements on social media.

While that is concerning, it is one thing to post statements on social media. It is another to refuse to perform a mandatory statutory duty. *Rolling Stone* did **not** identify a conspiracy among these 70 officials; it merely reviewed their social media.

Nor is it clear that any of these officials could, on their own, delay certification. Some are members of election boards who hold one vote out of several, while others are subordinate officials.

The closest that *Rolling Stone* comes to identifying the scope of the threat is to say that the officials identified by their survey are in “*at least 16 counties across the six key battleground states.*”

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Trump Steals Spotlight from Vance (cont'd)

So, the universe of threatened counties identified by *Rolling Stone* is sixteen. We know which counties those are. Not all of them will refuse to certify the election because Trump will win in some counties and it is possible that the officials will follow the law in others. So, based on the *Rolling Stone* survey, there are perhaps **a dozen or fewer counties at risk**. (The real number might be more or less; I am simply referring to the *Rolling Stone*'s reporting.) Democrats have proven they can handle voting litigation at that scale.

Refusal to certify elections is not common but neither is it a novel threat

As Professor Tribe notes, the threat of refusing to certify results "isn't new at all." In fact, as noted in the *Rolling Stone* article,

Republicans have refused to certify election results at least 25 times since Trump lost the 2020 election to President Joe Biden.

When local officials refuse to certify elections, the remedy is to seek a court order compelling the local official to certify the results. As Professor Tribe writes, "*We've got this. Don't let it scare you into passivity.*"

Here is the most important sentence in the *Rolling Stone* article that has gotten **zero** coverage in reporting on the article:

[R]efusals and delays of certification have not held up in court

So, there is a threat of refusing to certify results; it occurs with some regularity, and when it occurs, those "*refusals and delays of certification do not hold up in court.*"

That is the takeaway from the *Rolling Stone* article but is not the impression that most readers took from Rachel Maddow's reporting on the topic.

Can local officials refuse to certify results?

The short answer is, "No." As the *Rolling Stone* article states,

Certification of election results is what legal experts consider a "ministerial task," and one required by state and local law.

If a local official refuses to perform a "ministerial duty," courts can order the official to do so. Indeed, as *Rolling Stone* notes, the 25 attempts to refuse to certify elections since Joe Biden was elected "*have not held up in court.*"

For example, the group Protect Democracy says that

Georgia state law stipulates certification "is a mandatory, ministerial duty, meaning that officials have no discretion to refuse to certify election results."

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Trump Steals Spotlight from Vance (cont'd)

Rolling Stone notes that Professor Derek Muller at the University of Notre Dame, who has written on the subject of certification, says

"I doubt any court will find that election officials can refuse to certify election results beyond the narrow reasons set forth in state law."

The Electoral Count Reform Act of 2022 provides additional protections

In 2022, Congress passed the Electoral Count Reform Act. The Act provides a number of protections specifically designed to prevent withholding of certification by state officials. Among the relevant provisions, the Act stipulates that

*The electors of President and Vice President shall be appointed, in each State, **on election day**, in accordance with **the laws of the State enacted prior to election day**.*

The Act also provides that if the Executive of a state does not certify the electors six days before the Electoral College meets in December, any party may file an action in federal court before a three-judge panel. That panel consists of one district court judge and two judges from the relevant court of appeals. Any appeal from the panel goes directly to the Supreme Court, which must resolve the matter *"on or before the day before the time fixed for the meeting of electors."*

Conclusion

The relevant state and federal laws do not provide a guaranty that Republicans will not interfere with certification and count of the electoral ballots on January 6, 2025. But the weight of history and law strongly suggest that any attempt to delay certification for partisan purposes will be stopped in court.

We have strong remedies; we are not defenseless; merely because some Republican officials are posting election denialist statements on their social media pages does not mean there is a conspiracy; and it certainly does not mean that they will succeed in frustrating the will of the people as expressed in accordance with the Constitution.

As Professor Tribe tweeted, *"We've got this. Don't let it scare you into passivity. That's the tyrant's game. Don't fall for it!"*

CARTOONS



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Hopefully
this depicts
Trump's
Presidential
run

CARTOONS



Coming Events

Join our
Understanding Democracy Series
on Tuesday, August 13th

10 AM Cultural Center Education Room

Project 2025 in Action: A View From the States

Project 2025 is an initiative organized by the Heritage Foundation with the aim of promoting a collection of conservative and right-wing policy proposals to reshape the United States government and consolidate executive power should Donald Trump win the 2024 presidential election.

But we don't have to wait until the election to see how this might affect us as many of these policies are already being piloted in various states. We hope you can join us as we watch a video of state legislators discussing what is happening in these states today.

Everyone is welcome.

Note that this is the first of several sessions on Project 2025

Join our General Meeting on Wednesday, August 28

10 AM Cultural Center Education Room

Guest speaker is **Izzy Smith Wade-El**, Democratic State Representative from Pennsylvania House District 49.

Don't miss this stimulating speaker!

How Do You Pronounce Her Name?



It's pronounced like

"Comma, La."

Thanks to @nycjayjay on
Threads for this one

How'd you like to be our next Membership Chairperson?

We're looking for candidates to take over being our Dems Plus Club Membership Chairperson.

The objective of the role of Membership Chair is to recruit, maintain and grow Club membership. This entails recruiting new members, following-up with new visitors and prospective new members, welcoming new members, maintaining a list of current members, following up with those who have not yet committed to renew their membership. It also includes getting to know recruits and finding areas of interest for their Club participation.

This opening is effective January 1, 2025. Interested candidates should contact Jen Porter at 717-464-4449 or jenporter@comcast.net.

How'd you like to be our next Webmaster?

We're looking for candidates to take over being our Dems Plus Club webmaster.

The objective of the role of the webmaster is to create and maintain our Dems Club website. This opening is effective January 1, 2025. Interested candidates should contact Jen Porter at 717-464-4449 or jenporter@comcast.net.