

Commentary

The Michigan Results Are in, And It's Official: Joe Biden Has a Serious Problem

By C. Douglas Golden
February 28, 2024

For weeks, Arab-Americans angry at how President Joe Biden has kinda sorta backed Israel in its war against Hamas have been launching a campaign to let the White House know they mean business. In Michigan, a hotspot for the Arab-American community, anti-Israel groups had hoped to send Biden a message in the primary by voting “uncommitted.” Their target, according to a Monday article in The Wall Street Journal, was modest. But they were aiming to send Biden a message as he gears up for a likely rematch with former President Donald Trump in November.

“The groups, which have been holding rallies and conducting phone-banking, have set a goal of capturing 10,000 votes, noting that Trump took Michigan in 2016 by about that margin. (Four years later, Biden won the state by more than 150,000 votes),” the Journal noted. They captured quite a bit more than that. In fact, they added another zero to that goal of 10,000 votes.

As of about 7 a.m. Wednesday Eastern Time, with 95 percent of the vote counted, 100,960 of the Michigan Democratic primary votes were “uncommitted” — a total of 13.3 percent of the count, according to The New York Times. Biden was the winner, taking home a little over 80 percent. It’s rare when an 80 percent performance is a pyrrhic victory, but this very much was. It is, in effect, two-thirds of Biden’s winning margin in the state in 2020 telling him they’re going to stay home in November unless he throws himself behind Hamas.

And keep in mind, according to the RealClearPolitics polling aggregate, Biden was consistently ahead in Michigan back in 2020. The polling average showed him up by 4.2 percent, and he ended up winning by 2.8 percent.

The 2024 Michigan polls, according to the RealClearPolitics aggregate? As of Wednesday morning, Trump holds an average lead of just over 5 points in a

rematch. It's unclear whether Arab-American dissatisfaction with Biden is baked into the polling results already — but regardless, the results of Tuesday night should be a stark wake-up call when it comes to Biden's chances of repeating in a state where the 15 electoral votes could swing a tight presidential race.

Consider, for instance, the reaction of CNN's John King to the early vote tallies out of Dearborn, a city that's 54 percent Arab-American. Possibly distracted by the size of the rebuke to Biden, King wrote the vote results in the wrong places, putting the "uncommitted" vote in the slot next to Minnesota Rep. Dean Phillips. (To be fair, Phillips' picture appeared to be out of place, too. But suffice it to say, Phillips would have loved to have gotten the votes "uncommitted" did.)

"That's a 'wow,'" King said. "This is just the city of Dearborn, but that is the biggest pocket of the Muslim American, the Arab-American population. This is a place President Biden carried big time in 2020. This is key to his chances of defeating Donald Trump in Michigan." That, ladies and gentlemen, is the sound of an anvil thumping inside the studios of the official cable enablers of the Biden administration. And here's the kicker: It's not as if Biden has much of a choice in the matter.

Aside from being morally reprehensible and utterly indefensible from the standpoint of decency, abandoning Israel in support of the murderous terrorists who love to slaughter Jews would lead to a swift kick in the pants from the Jewish vote, which skews heavily Democratic, as well.

Not only that, a complete U-turn on the Israel-Hamas war and demands for a ceasefire would essentially kill any possibility of an omnibus defense-spending bill that includes aid for Ukraine — a practically sacrosanct item on the Biden administration's agenda, but one tied up with funding for Israel and border security, among other things.

The most Biden can do — and, indeed, has done — is chastise Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and urge him to exercise restraint. However, given the lack of love lost between these two men, it's difficult to see this having any short-term effect.

The point here isn't to back the "uncommitted" vote, mind you; any cause that has Democrat Rep. Rashida Tlaib backing it is almost never a worthy one.

However, it shows the number of people on the left who are willing to sit this one out. That uncommitted vote is astounding. The last time a Democratic incumbent was running for re-election, in 2012, there were only 20,000 "uncommitted" votes against then-President Barack Obama, even though the shambolic economy had hit Rust Belt states the hardest.

Logically, then, Biden has to walk a rhetorical tightrope until November. And, as you might have noticed from the endless number of gaffes that drop out of his mouth, Joe Biden is not quite a Flying Wallenda. when it comes to rhetorical tightropes.

He can tongue-lash Benjamin Netanyahu all he wants. Netanyahu can — and likely will — ignore most of what he says. Any presidential call for a cease-fire, however, will make him radioactive among Jewish Democrats the same way that the aftermath of Oct. 7 has made him radioactive among Arab-American Michigan Democrats.

And, as for the "uncommitted" crowd, Biden can perhaps try to placate them with vague language. But that's unlikely to work. Take the words of Adam Abusalah, an uncommitted voter and 2020 Biden campaign volunteer who spoke with Axios. In his words, his vote was "a warning to Biden like, get your s*** together or you're going to lose."

That's the thing, though: On so many levels, Biden needs to get his stuff together. Three years of chickens are coming home to roost. Michigan is the first time during the primary season where the alarm klaxons can no doubt be heard inside the Biden bubble.

What he chooses to do about it, if anything, could get him and America into deeper trouble. That's the nature of this president and his presidency — and if it seems like it's too late to turn the ship around, that might just be because it is.