

Corporate Joe: Biden Enters the Presidential Race

By [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#)

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Theme: [History](#)

Values, values and more values. Another dreary dish added to the smorgasbord of Democratic hopefuls for the White House. This one is a bit cured and worn, smoked by history. Biden, having performed the role of Vice President for Barack Obama and senator for Delaware, is making his third attempt to not so much gallop as crawl into the US executive.

That said, there was initial promise, a teaser sent out to media outlets that the venue of his launch on Wednesday would be Charlottesville, Virginia. Memories of August 2017, with the death of protestor Heather Heyer at the white-supremacist riot, hung heavy. "That's daring," thought Joan Walsh at first blush, [writing](#) in *The Nation*. "Maybe he's going to run a campaign that's in step with the new, multiracial, progressive Democratic Party." Not so, as Walsh and the rest of the campaign watchers found out. First came the video launch on Thursday. Then it was Pittsburgh. Unions; blue-collar focused.

His [video](#) was far from impressive. For one, it did the inexplicable by actually giving a platform for the very individuals he wished to condemn: far right, torch-bearing yahoos which he associated with the vile history of 1930s Europe. Then he did what many a US politician has done: thrown in good lashings of Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence. Taking such a moral high ground suggests that he has little intention of winning Trump supporters so much as seducing them; they remain, in Democratic-speak, that thatched "basket of deplorables". (Biden's own words referred to President Donald Trump's "very fine people".)

Another term of Trump, he warns, "will forever and fundamentally alter the character of the nation." This is undue flattery, given that the inexorable decline of the US Republic was well and truly fast-tracked by Biden's own legislative record across a range of social policies, one that left the ground rich for Trump's debut.

Then comes the more insidious element to the Biden campaign. To woo the unions, he will have to tantalise and deceive by enlisting the bidding of corporate America. He will throw in references to the spirit of D-Day and Iwo Jima while embracing, warmly, the robbing titans on Wall Street. For Biden, USA Inc. is a political home from which he can speak to distant, blue-collar folk who are less people than electoral units. In his 2008 campaign, he gave a prototypic example, fed by Washington lobbyists and PACs nourished by the likes of T-Mobile, eBay and Bank of America.

His love affair with credit and its agents is known and, if not, should be run on incessant loop through the advertising campaigns of his opponents. MBNA, a financial services company with Delaware origins, has been particularly keen to oil the wheels of Biden's efforts. In 2008, the company had already been supplying largesse to the then Senator for two

decades. Mutual back scratching [extended](#) to Biden's son, Hunter, gaining a position at MBNA and becoming a lobbyist for the company. But that was not all.

As is a matter of legislative record, Biden threw in his lot with the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005. He was one of the first Democrats to the plate in supporting it, and added his vote four times through the course of its final passage in March 2005. The bill made it harder for consumers to file for bankruptcy protection, a measure cheered on by those in the financial services industry concerned that profits were being eaten into.

David Wade, a spokesman for then Senator Barack Obama [suggested](#) that the level of enthusiasm shown by the Delaware senator for the bill was constructive, designed to blunt its sharper edges in the name of accommodation. (Obama, for his part, did oppose the legislative measure.)

“Senator Biden took on entrenched interests and succeeded in improving the bill for low-income workers, women and children.”

But Wade did not stop there, adding a few more fictional baubles to his sale:

“Senator Biden has a 35-year record fighting for people against powerful interests, whether it's drug companies, oil companies or insurance companies.”

Such obfuscation [did not trick](#) *The New York Times*. His voting record was more than amenable to those “entrenched” interests he had supposedly battled with avid courage; Biden “joined Republicans to defeat attempts by his Democratic colleagues, including Mr Obama, to soften the bill's impact on those same constituencies.” In one instance, Biden, along with five other Democrats, voted against a proposal mandating credit companies to more effectively warn consumers about paying only the minimum due each month. Protections for those forced into bankruptcy by being deep in medical debt, and even those in the military, were also deemed unnecessary.

The tradition is set to continue. On Thursday, Biden kept company at a fundraiser in with Comcast Senior Executive Vice President David Cohen and health insurance executive Daniel Hilferty. Within twenty-four hours, he had netted \$6.3 million in contributions, \$700,000 of which [came](#) from the Philadelphia fundraiser.

His appearance as a contender for the Democratic nomination stirred rival **Senator Elizabeth Warren** to [tell](#) those attending an event in Iowa that, “Joe Biden was on the side of the credit card companies.” Her 2014 autobiography broadened that claim. Split in the Senate, “Democratic powerhouse Joe Biden” and a few other Democrats were keen to back the bill. “Never mind that the country was sunk in an ugly recession and millions of families were struggling – the banking industry pressed forward and Congress obliged.”

Biden's entry into a race that now chokes with some 20 Democratic contenders is unlikely to put President Trump off his stroke. It is another sign that the Democrats will, when the time comes, consume themselves in acts of self-mutilation and saturnalia, something they have become rather adept at doing. With Biden weakening the progressive line, the likes of Warren and Senator Bernie Sanders have herculean feats to perform.

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Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research and Asia-Pacific Research. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

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