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The Daily 202

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By **James Hohmann**  
with Mariana Alfaro  
[Email](#)

## Biden cleans up oil spill after debate, spotlighting Democratic divisions and governing challenges

The congealing conventional wisdom across the mainstream media is that Thursday's final debate was a draw and will not change the trajectory of a race that President Trump is losing. This is probably correct. But Joe Biden's unforced error during the final segment in Nashville has handed valuable ammunition to the incumbent with 11 days to go.

During an extended discussion about climate change, Trump asked Biden: "Would you close down the oil industry?"

"Yes," Biden said. "I would transition."

“Oh, that’s a big statement,” said Trump.

“It is a big statement,” said Biden. “Because the oil industry pollutes, significantly. ... It has to be replaced by renewable energy over time. ... I’d stop giving to the oil industry. I’d stop giving them federal subsidies.”

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Trump grinned like a child on Christmas morning. “Basically, what he is saying is he’s going to destroy the oil industry,” the president said. “Will you remember that, Texas? Will you remember that, Pennsylvania? Oklahoma? Ohio?”



Biden responded that Trump takes “everything out of context” and that “we have to move toward net zero emissions.” Before he boarded his private jet for the flight home to Delaware, though, the pool of reporters that follows the former vice president was summoned over. Standing under the wing of his plane, Biden emphasized that he was talking about ending federal subsidies for the oil and gas industry and not calling for a ban on the fuels themselves. He added that his climate plan calls for the U.S. to have net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, which is 30 years away.

“We’re not getting rid of fossil fuels,” Biden said at the airport. “We’re getting rid of the *subsidies* for fossil fuels, but we’re not getting rid of fossil

fuels for a long time.” Asked if that would mean millions of people in those industries would lose their jobs, Biden responded: “Well, they're not going to lose their jobs. ... And, besides, there are a lot more jobs that are going to be created in other alternatives.”

The Democratic nominee did not engage with reporters after the first debate in Cleveland. He had nothing to clean up. The fact that his team put him out there to clean up his comments seemed to reflect a recognition that his onstage gaffe could become problematic, especially in areas like western Pennsylvania. It was especially head-scratching because Biden has gone to great lengths this fall to say that he would not ban fracking outside of public lands.

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Around 11:30 p.m., during a conference call for reporters in lieu of the traditional spin room, Biden deputy campaign manager Katie Bedingfield insisted that he was clearly talking about subsidies and noted that President George W. Bush also said in 2006 that the U.S. should move away from fossil fuels. “I think, you know, writ large, the idea of transitioning off of oil is nothing new,” she said.

Two House Democrats in competitive reelection contests quickly distanced themselves from Biden after the debate. Both Reps. Kendra Horn (Okla.) and Xochitl Torres Small (N.M.) [flipped GOP-held seats](#) in the 2018 midterms and represent districts that depend on oil extraction jobs:



During the debate, Trump accused Biden of supporting the Green New Deal legislation that has been co-sponsored by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, which he referred to “AOC plus three.” Biden has expressed general support for bold action on climate change, but he has not specifically endorsed her plan. Ocasio-Cortez pushed back on the president’s comments by highlighting the broad support for her bill in Congress:



The daylight between Ocasio-Cortez on the left and Horn and Torres Small in the middle foreshadows potential governing challenges for Democrats should Biden take office next year. Polls show Americans overwhelmingly want to address climate change, but support goes down when you drill deep into particulars and emphasize the costs of such action. A decade ago, a bunch of House Democrats in coal country states like West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio lost their seats because they were pushed to vote for an unpopular cap-and-trade bill that never even came to the floor in the Senate.

Republicans are seizing on these tensions, including Trump’s former Energy secretary:



Trump has taken recently to claiming that he the best president for the environment since Teddy Roosevelt, which is [not just false but laughably so](#). Much of what the president said about climate change during

Thursday's debate at Belmont University was preposterous. For example, he claimed Biden's plan to fight climate change would cost \$100 trillion. In [fact](#), the Biden proposal is to spend \$2 trillion over four years. He exaggerated what Biden has said about fracking. And Trump reiterated his own longstanding animosity toward renewables.

"I know more about wind than you do," Trump told Biden. "It is extremely expensive, kills all the birds, it's very intermittent, it's got a lot of problems, and they happen to make the windmills in both Germany and China. And the fumes coming up, if you're a believer in carbon emission, the fumes coming up to make these massive windmills is more than anything that we are talking about with natural gas."

"Find me a scientist who says that," said Biden.

"I love solar, but solar doesn't quite have it yet," Trump continued. "It is not powerful yet to really run our big, beautiful factories."

This 12-minute tussle was the lengthiest exchange two presidential candidates have [ever had](#) on climate change.



Even Biden advisers admitted that Trump fared better in the second debate than the first. This is part of a historical pattern. Presidents often stumble in their first debate when running for reelection because they're rusty and insulated before bouncing back in the second. This happened for Presidents Barack Obama in 2012, George W. Bush in 2004 and, most memorably, Ronald Reagan in 1984.

Behaving like an underdog, Trump was more disciplined than he has been in a while about trying to reclaim the outsider mantle that worked to his advantage in 2016. "He's been in government 47 years," Trump said of his opponent, who was first elected to the Senate in 1972. Almost every time

Biden promised to do something as president, Trump responded with some variation of: “Why didn't he do it four years ago?”

Trump also attacked Biden over the 1994 crime bill that he championed in the Senate and for not passing significant criminal justice reform as vice president. “You had eight years with Obama,” said Trump. “You’re all talk and no action.”

As compelling as this talking point might sound at first blush, though, Trump cannot credibly portray himself as an outsider anymore. He is a president who has serially mishandled the worst public health crisis since 1918, the worst economic crisis since 1933 and the worst racial unrest since 1968. No incumbent has [ever](#) been reelected to the White House with a job approval rating of 43 percent, which is where Gallup’s latest poll places him.

Biden noted at the top of the debate that more than 220,000 Americans have died from the coronavirus this year. “If you hear nothing else I say tonight, hear this: Anyone who’s responsible for that many deaths should not remain as president of the United States of America,” Biden said.

Trump remained in denial and exaggerated the progress of vaccine development. “I take full responsibility, but China brought it here. It’s not my fault,” he said. When the president said people are “learning to live” with the coronavirus, Biden replied: “People are learning to die with it.”

Biden also pushed back hard on Trump’s efforts to caricature him as beholden to the wing of the party led by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.). “He’s very confused,” Biden said of Trump. “He thinks he’s running against someone else. He’s running against Joe Biden.”

Trump also seemed to confuse his opponents again. The president accused Biden of referring to Black people as “super predators.” That was a

comment that Hillary Clinton made in the 1990s, which he got a great deal of mileage out of in 2016. But Trump is not running against Clinton.

There was no love lost between them. Trump referred to Biden derisively as “Joe.” Biden referred to Trump as “this guy.” When the president talked about race, Biden muttered: “Oh God.”

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## Quote of the day

*After Trump said he has done more for African Americans than any president ever, “with the exception of Abraham Lincoln — possible exception,” Biden retorted: “Abraham Lincoln’ here is one of the most racist presidents we’ve had in modern history!”*

The president often tried to attack Biden on both sides of the same issue. “At one point, Trump accused Biden of being too close to Wall Street because he’s raked in donations from bankers. ... About an hour later, Trump went a different route, saying that the stock market would crash if Biden is elected, suggesting that the country’s financial institutions would be hostile to his presidency,” Annie Linskey [observed](#).

 Joe and Jill Biden arrive at the New Castle airport in Delaware early Friday morning after returning from the presidential debate in Nashville. (Demetrius Freeman/The Washington Post)

Joe and Jill Biden arrive at the New Castle airport in Delaware early Friday morning after returning from the presidential debate in Nashville. (Demetrius Freeman/The Washington Post)

For his part, Biden seemed to distance himself from his former boss during a discussion about the Obama administration’s failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform. “It took too long to get it right,” Biden said, referring to the 2013 bill. But he said next time would be different: “I’ll be president of the United States, not vice president,” Biden said.

Trump often seemed to give the same answers he gave four years ago — before he became president. For example, he said he will release his tax

returns as soon as he is no longer under audit and accused the IRS of treating him worse than the tea party. It's almost word for word what he was saying in the summer of 2015.

The president failed to repeal Obamacare when the GOP had control of both chambers of Congress. Now his administration is asking the Supreme Court to throw out the entirety of the Affordable Care Act, and Judge Amy Coney Barrett has been outspoken in her criticism of the law. Against that backdrop, the president insisted that he is going to offer a great plan to replace the 2010 law – just like last time. “So I’d like to terminate Obamacare, come up with a brand-new, beautiful health care,” he said.

Biden noted that Trump has made all these promises before. “He’s been talking about this for a long time,” Biden said. “He’s never come up with a plan. I guess we’re going to get the preexisting condition plan the same time we get the infrastructure plan that we waited for in ’17, ’18, ’19, ’20.”

Trump said he could pass a health-care overhaul in a second term because Republicans “might” control the House next year: “I think we’re going to win the House, you’ll see. But I think we’re going to win the House.” Handicappers don’t think the House is in play.

CNN’s instant poll of 585 debate watchers on Thursday [found](#) that 53 percent thought Biden won the matchup, while 39 percent thought Trump did. But, but, but: Biden's margin over Trump is just 1 point wider than Clinton's win over Trump in CNN’s poll of viewers after the final debate in 2016. And we know how that ended.

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## More debate coverage



## From our reporters:

- The Fact Checker team rounded up 25 of the most noteworthy claims during the debate. “Trump yet again broke the fact-check meter ... while [Biden] made relatively few gaffes,” [per Glenn Kessler, Salvador Rizzo and Meg Kelly](#).
- “It came down to muting the president. That’s what it took to stage a reasonably civil debate,” writes critic-at-large [Robin Givhan](#). “That’s not normal and that’s nothing to be pleased about. But at least it worked.”
- “If the latest polls are accurate, the president has considerable ground to make up, but a path still exists for him to win another electoral college majority, one that is essentially identical to the narrow path he followed to victory four years ago,” writes chief correspondent [Dan Balz](#).
- [Aaron Blake’s takeaways](#): 1. Trump offered no course correction on coronavirus. 2. Biden sharpened his coronavirus closing argument. 3. Trump tried to make an issue of Hunter Biden, in fits and starts.
- [Toluse Olorunnipa, Amy Wang and Josh Dawsey](#): “Second Trump-Biden debate has fewer interruptions but more counterpunches.”
- [Sean Sullivan](#): “Union leaders have Biden’s back on fracking. But in Pennsylvania, their members aren’t so sure.”
- [Annie Gowen](#): When Biden talks about “transitioning” away from oil, towns like Greensburg in Kansas are what he means. Flattened by a tornado, it built back green.
- [Jenna Johnson](#): “Amid a year of debate over inequity and police violence, Trump and Biden spar over race.”
- [Philip Bump](#): “To defend taking immigrant kids from their parents, Trump blamed Biden.”
- [Cat Zakrzewski](#): “Biden’s pledge to ‘Dreamers’ highlights stark contrast with Trump over immigration.”
- [Paul Sonne and Matt Viser](#): “Trump campaign trots out former business associate of Hunter Biden ahead of debate.”
- [Paige Cunningham](#): “‘Bidencare’ makes its debut.”
- [Joe Marks](#): “Biden condemned election interference while Trump continued to mislead.”

- [Tory Newmyer](#): “Trump undercuts his own effort to tie Biden to Wall Street in final debate.”

### Commentary from the opinion page:

- [Dana Milbank](#): “The only thing worse for Trump than an unwatchable debate is a watchable one.”
- [Alyssa Rosenberg](#): “Trump is definitely not a ‘typical politician.’ America could use one right now.”
- [Gary Abernathy](#): “Trump’s performance Thursday encapsulated what makes him frustrating for those who want him to succeed. This is the version of Trump many of his supporters want to see more often – smart, informed and even presidential. Sadly, he doesn’t show up often enough.”
- [Jen Rubin](#): “The good news is that we likely will never be forced to endure another debate featuring President Trump.”
- [Mary Trump](#), the president’s niece: “Psychiatrists know what’s wrong with my uncle. Let them tell voters.”

### How it’s playing elsewhere:

- Chris Wallace, who moderated the first debate, said he was jealous. “I would’ve liked to have been able to moderate that debate and get a real exchange of views instead of hundreds of interruptions,” Wallace said on [Fox News](#).
- Moderator Kristen Welker was widely praised. “Such an amazing moment for her and for all who know of her hard work and dedication to journalism,” said PBS’s [Yamiche Alcindor](#).
- “Biden did not do a face plant. That is all he needed to do,” [tweeted](#) handicapper Charlie Cook.
- Trump “delivered the lines with a fluency and consistent focus that was missing from his scattershot first debate,” [writes](#) Politico founding editor John Harris. “No need to get too carried away on this flight of fancy. Trump is who he is.”
- “Trump once again mischaracterized the Black Lives Matter movement by falsely linking it to an anti-police chant,” writes BuzzFeed’s [Tasneem Nashrulla](#).

- Trump is "incapable of discussing race outside of the prism of violence, because he appears to see Black people as being inherently violent," writes Mother Jones's [Nathalie Baptiste](#). "Only a racist thinks solely about prison and crime upon merely hearing the phrase 'Black people' or learning that the topic to be discussed was race in America."
- "Trump's claim that only immigrants with 'the lowest IQ' follow the law was unconscionable," writes Vox's [Aaron Rupar](#). "Not only is the insinuation that only less intelligent people follow the law corrosive to the rule of law, but the specific claim Trump made is entirely false."
- "The temper tantrum that caused Trump to boycott the second of the three planned presidential debates was a costly unforced error that deprived him of a moment to halt his downward trajectory," writes the New Republic's [Walter Shapiro](#).
- "This debate made it clear what an incredible mistake Trump made in the first debate by behaving like a jerk. Had he been this Trump, rather than that Trump, he would be in a stronger position today," writes the New York Post's [John Podhoretz](#).
- "By deriding aspects of Biden's personal life, Trump underscores how removed he is from the experiences of many people in the country he wants to continue to lead," writes HuffPost's [Akbar Shahid Ahmed](#).
- "Trump tossed out handfuls of buzzwords for various conspiracy theories, Greek to those who left their Fox News decoders at home," writes Talking Points Memo's [Kate Riga](#). "For those of us who don't live in those worlds, it can be impossible to figure out what he's talking about."

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## More on the coronavirus



### **The U.S. logged more than 73,000 new infections on Thursday.**

That's the highest daily count since late July. Twelve states – including Indiana, Oklahoma, Idaho and Montana – reached their highest seven-day

average for new cases, [Antonia Farzan reports](#). More than 222,000 Americans have died of the virus.

- Although studies continue to show that the coronavirus can be detected on contaminated objects after days or weeks, a consensus has emerged among scientists that the virus is rarely transmitted through contact with tainted surfaces. They say that means it's safe to stop taking such extreme measures as quarantining your mail or wiping down your groceries. ([Elizabeth Chang](#))
- All 62 residents of a nursing home tested positive for the virus, and 10 are dead. Staff members have also tested positive at the privately owned facility in Norton, Kan. ([Health](#))
- At least 49 cases have been linked to a church gathering in Maine, authorities said. Masks were not widely worn. ([WABI5](#))
- Macy's said Santa Claus won't be greeting kids at its New York store this year due to the coronavirus, interrupting a holiday tradition started nearly 160 years ago. ([AP](#))

### **Experts debate the FDA's planned standards for quickly clearing a vaccine for broad use.**

“The FDA advisory committee, in an all-day virtual meeting, did not consider any specific vaccine. The session served in large part as a venue for the agency to try to reassure the public that any vaccine will be held to a high standard, not the relatively low bar used this year for emergency use authorization for treatments. The FDA said that though it probably will grant emergency use authorizations — which can be handed out faster than full approvals — for the early vaccines, it will use robust criteria similar to those applied in regular approvals,” [Laurie McGinley and Carolyn Johnson report](#). “But committee members, and some individuals during the public hearing part of the meeting, weren't all convinced. Some questioned whether there should be longer minimum follow-up of people in clinical trials to detect more possible side effects before a vaccine is cleared for broader use. The FDA has said it wants a median of two months follow-up. The panel also debated whether trials that are designed primarily to

measure whether vaccines prevent any cases of disease, which could be just mild illness, might result in a product that doesn't prevent hospitalizations and severe cases.”

- Vaccine trials have been closely watched to ensure they reflect the diversity of the U.S. population, and Moderna's enrollment was slowed in September to recruit more minorities. Now, 37 percent of participants are minorities and people over 65, another population that's at high risk, make up 25 percent. ([Johnson](#))
- Cincinnati Children's Hospital expanded its Pfizer vaccine trial to include 12-year-olds to 15-year-olds. ([WLWT](#))
- The FDA approved the use of remdesivir for treating covid-19. The antiviral, which Trump received while hospitalized, was already being used to treat patients under an emergency use authorization. ([Financial Times](#))

### **Senate Republicans fume as Steven Mnuchin gives ground to Nancy Pelosi in relief talks.**

“Mnuchin has committed to a top-line figure of around \$1.9 trillion, much too high for many Senate Republicans to swallow. That includes at least \$300 billion for state and local aid, also a non-starter for many in the GOP. The Treasury secretary is also giving ground on multiple specific policy issues, such as reducing payments that Republicans wanted to go to farmers so that some of the money would go for food boxes instead,” [Erica Werner and Jeff Stein report](#). “He has left open the possibility of allowing even more money to flow to states and localities via Community Development Block Grants sought by Democrats. ‘He negotiates harder with his own side than he does with her. Folks over here are sick of it,’ said one Senate GOP aide who added that Republicans were ‘reaching a boiling point with him.’ ... The complaints come as Pelosi (D-Calif.) voices optimism about her ongoing talks with Mnuchin, making clear that she believes she has leverage because President Trump wants a big new deal with less than two weeks remaining until the election. ... She said she and Mnuchin had just about come to terms on a national coronavirus testing

strategy Democrats have been pushing. But Pelosi acknowledged that other major issues were still unsettled, including aid to state and local governments and liability protections for businesses sought by Republicans.”

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## More on the election



### **Trump releases an early video of his “60 Minutes” interview with Lesley Stahl.**

“Trump was interviewed by Stahl at the White House on Tuesday but abruptly ended the interview,” [Jeremy Barr and Elahe Izadi report](#). “Trump was combative with Stahl throughout the interview, saying at one point, ‘You’re so negative. You’re so negative.’ When asked about his comments urging suburban women to vote for him, Trump called it a ‘misleading question.’ When Stahl was skeptical about Trump’s claims about his administration’s accomplishments, he responds, ‘You’re really quite impossible to convince.’ One particularly prickly exchange began when Stahl first asked Trump about calling Anthony S. Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and other health officials ‘idiots’ before asking whether he thinks masks work. ‘Where did I call him an idiot?’ Trump asked, then shrugged and added, ‘Well, he’s been wrong. I like him, but he’s been wrong a lot.’ ... At the end of the video clip, Trump spends several minutes complaining to Stahl about her questions and then tells her, “That’s no way to talk.””

### **Trump issues a sweeping order to remove civil service protections for federal workers.**

“The directive, issued late Wednesday, strips long-held civil service protections from employees whose work involves policymaking, allowing them to be dismissed with little cause or recourse, much like the political

appointees who come and go with each administration,” [Lisa Rein and Eric Yoder report](#). “Federal scientists, attorneys, regulators, public health experts and many others in senior roles would lose rights to due process and in some cases, union representation, at agencies across the government. The White House declined to say how many jobs would be swept into a class of employees with fewer civil service rights, but civil service experts and union leaders estimated anywhere from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands in a workforce of 2.1 million. ...

“The order fast-tracks a process that gives agencies until Jan. 19 to review potentially affected jobs. That’s a day before the next presidential inauguration. [A Biden administration] would be unlikely to allow the changes to proceed. Still, the order ... represents a stunning effort to reshape large parts of the nonpartisan government, which is supposed to serve as a cadre of subject-matter experts for every administration. ... Rep. Don Beyer (D), whose Northern Virginia district includes about 85,000 federal workers, said the order, if enacted, would usher in loyalty tests and further politicize agencies that have become deeply partisan workplaces under Trump. ‘It’s an attempt to redefine the civil service as a political arm of the presidency rather than public servants who work for the American people,’ Beyer said, calling the result ‘open cronyism that does not benefit the country, but the president.’”

- The U.S. joined Uganda, Egypt, Hungary, Brazil and Indonesia to co-sponsor an international antiabortion declaration, in a rebuke of United Nations human rights bodies that have sought to protect abortion access. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo participated in the virtual signing ceremony. “There is no international right to abortion,” he said. ([Miriam Berger](#))
- Attorney General Bill Barr is preparing to announce a new effort to withhold federal grant money from police departments that don’t meet certification standards on the use of force. The idea carries few specifics, so far, with a draft document broadly defining how the

Trump administration intends to apply an executive order signed by the president. ([Devlin Barrett](#))

## **Russia continues to pose a more potent threat than Iran for election interference.**

“While the Trump administration has highlighted the threat Iran poses to the U.S. election, a different foe — Russia — remains the more potent adversary, and has in recent months stolen data from at least two county systems in California and Indiana, according to U.S. officials,” [Ellen Nakashima, Shane Harris and Barrett report](#). “In one case, no election data was known to have been taken. In the second, a small sample of publicly available voter information was stolen, the officials said. That level of activity pales in comparison with 2016 ...

“Though Iran’s actions were fairly amateurish, according to analysts, they nonetheless riled Democratic voters who received the emails. ‘In the grand scheme of things, it was pretty minor,’ one official said. ‘But you had to nip it in the bud.’ ... The emphasis on Iran is consistent with the Trump administration’s animosity toward Tehran, whose economy it has squeezed through crippling sanctions aimed at limiting the regime’s nuclear program and curbing its actions in the region. On Thursday, the administration imposed sanctions on the Bayan Rasaneh Gostar Institute, which is linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, for interfering in the 2020 election. The institute, a U.S. official said, was behind the faked emails to voters. The Treasury Department also levied sanctions for election interference on four other entities, including the IRGC.”

## **Early-voting counts show a record level of civic participation before Election Day.**

“At least 47.1 million people have voted nationwide. At this point in 2016, 23 million votes had been cast early,” [Brittany Renee Mayes and Kate Rabinowitz report](#). “Registered Democrats are outvoting Republicans by a large margin in states that provide partisan breakdowns of early ballots.

Republicans, however, are more likely to tell pollsters they intend to vote in person, and the GOP is counting on an overwhelming share of the Election Day vote going to Trump. ... At least 23 million people have voted in battleground states. ... The critical question for Democrats is whether these 2020 early ballots are additional voters or just people who would have voted on Election Day anyway.”

- The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is dispatching 59 lawmakers and a staff of 16 to monitor voting in 10 U.S. states. ([Carol Morello](#))
  - A surge of early voting in Fairfax County, Virginia’s largest, has meant two-hour waits for some voters to cast ballots. ([Antonio Olivo and Lola Fadulu](#))
  - Trump’s campaign has been videotaping voters at ballot drop boxes, a tactic that Pennsylvania’s Democratic attorney general says could amount to illegal voter intimidation. ([NYT](#))
  - Hogan Gidley, the Trump campaign’s national press secretary, had his Twitter account suspended after he claimed on the platform that he received absentee ballot materials intended for someone else. Gidley was temporarily suspended for violating Twitter’s rules against posting misleading information. He was given his account back after he deleted the post. ([Fox News](#))
  - A 19-year-old from North Carolina allegedly plotted to kill Biden. He was charged with child pornography possession last month, and federal authorities arrested him with a cache of guns and explosive materials. Investigators then discovered that he had traveled within four miles of Biden’s home and had posted online: “should I kill Joe Biden?” ([ABC News](#))
  - A gusher of money flowed into Democratic Senate campaigns after Republicans announced plans to fill the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s seat, [Alyssa Flowers reports](#). Seven times as many people donated to Democratic candidates the day after her death than the day before.
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## Other news that should be on your radar

 Derek Chauvin poses for a mug shot. (Minnesota Department of Corrections/Reuters)

Derek Chauvin poses for a mug shot. (Minnesota Department of Corrections/Reuters)

- A Minnesota judge dismissed a third-degree murder charge against Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer who pressed his knee on George Floyd's neck, but the judge upheld the more serious second-degree unintentional murder and second-degree manslaughter charges. ([Holly Bailey](#))
- Goldman Sachs agreed to pay \$2.9 billion to settle federal charges over its involvement in a Malaysian bribery scheme. Prosecutors charged the bank with conspiracy to violate the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. ([Jacob Bogage](#))
- Walmart sued the Justice Department and DEA in a pre-emptive strike as the government prepares to take civil action against the world's largest retailer, seeking big financial penalties, for the role its pharmacies may have played in the opioid crisis. ([AP](#))
- Jeffrey Epstein's onetime partner, Ghislaine Maxwell, insisted in a newly unsealed 2016 deposition that she had no knowledge of the deceased financier having sexual contact with minors. Maxwell was charged earlier this year with trafficking minors in concert with Epstein and with lying under oath. ([Rosalind Helderman](#), [Shayna Jacobs](#), [Beth Reinhard](#) and [Barrett](#))
- A California appeals court sided with a lower-court judge on an August ruling ordering Uber and Lyft to stop classifying drivers as independent contractors. "Uber and Lyft were given 30 days from an expected later filing to come into compliance with the order. That will effectively require the companies to make drivers employees unless a November ballot measure aimed at codifying their status as independent contractors renders the ruling moot, or a subsequent appeal to the state Supreme Court is successful," [Faiz Siddiqui reports](#).
- A wildfire in Colorado exploded sixfold in size over 24 hours, growing to about 170,000 acres and extending deeper into Rocky Mountain

National Park. Hundreds were forced to quickly evacuate. ([Andrew Freedman](#))

- Chinese leader Xi Jinping commemorated the Korean War as a victory over the United States. The tidy narrative favoring the Chinese has overwhelmed the country's state newspaper and dominated the airwaves as the Communist Party rolled out a week of celebratory events and coverage to mark 70 years since Chairman Mao Zedong sent Chinese forces across the Yalu River to counter American forces. ([Gerry Shih](#))
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## Social media speed read

After Biden challenged him during the debate, Trump tweeted video of Biden talking negatively about fracking during the Democratic primaries:



Musician Kid Rock and golfer John Daly attended the debate as Trump's guests:



One of our photographers captured this scene last night on a commercial flight:



In 2020, casting a ballot from space may be [easier](#) than casting one on Earth:



## Videos of the day

Seth Meyers doesn't think Trump did himself any favors by posting the "60 Minutes" interview on his Facebook page:



And Jimmy Kimmel said Trump is the only president to ever get praised for being on good behavior:



President Gerald Ford drank martinis on Air Force One after surviving an assassination attempt. As part of her weekly video series, Mary Beth Albright shows how you can make one after your next bad day:



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