

White House Press Conference

03/25/21

1:31:23 p.m.

27 seconds

ZEKE MILLER: You mentioned your progress on COVID-19. I'd like to ask about some of the other issues facing your presidency. One of the defining challenges you face in the coming months is how to deliver on your promise to Americans on issues like immigration control, gun control, voting rights, climate change. All of those right now are facing stiff, united opposition from Republicans on Capitol Hill. How far are you willing to go to achieve those promises that you made to the American people?

(...)

1:34:03 p.m.

10 seconds

MILLER: If I can follow-up, Mr. President. Can your presidency be a success if you can't make progress on those four challenges, climate change, immigration reform, gun control, voters' rights?

(...)

1:34:58 p.m.

35 seconds

YAMICHE ALCINDOR: You said over and over again that immigrants shouldn't come to the country right now. This isn't the time to come. That message is not being received. Instead, the perception of you that got you elected a moral, decent man is the reason a lot of immigrants are coming to this country and are trusting you with unaccompanied minors. How do you resolve that tension and how are you choosing which families can stay and which can go given the fact that even though — with Title 42, there are families that are staying and is there a timeline you won't see overcrowded facilities run which — run by CBP when it comes to unaccompanied minors?

(...)

1:40:11 p.m.

43 seconds

ALCINDOR: My follow-up question is, one, if you could talk a little bit about which families? Why they're being allowed to stay? What the families that are allowed to stay? Why they're being allowed to stay? And in addition to that, when it comes to the filibuster, which is what Zeke was asking about, there's — immigration is a big issue, of course, when it — related to the filibuster but there's also Republicans who are passing bill after bill trying to restrict voting rights, Chuck

Schumer calling it an existential threat to democracy. Why not back a filibuster rule that at least gets around issues, including voting rights or immigration? Jim Clyburn, someone, of course, who you know very well, has backed the idea of a filibuster rule when it comes to civil rights and voting rights?

(....)

1:46:21 p.m.
7 seconds

SEUNG MIN KIM: To follow-up on the filibuster, so, do you believe it should take 60 votes to end a filibuster on legislation or 51?

(....)

1:47:16 p.m.
53 seconds

CECILIA VEGA: I'd like to circle back to immigration, please. You just listed the reasons that people are coming, talking about in country problems, saying it happens every year. You blamed the last administration. Sir, I just got back last night from a reporting trip to the border when I met nine-year-old Josel [sic], walked near Honduras by himself along with another little boy. He had that phone number on him.

JOE BIDEN: Astounding.

VEGA: We were able to call his family. His mother says that she sent her son to this country because she believes that you are not deporting unaccompanied minors like her son. That's why she sent him alone from Honduras. So, sir, you blamed the last administration, but in your messaging in saying that these children are, and will be allowed to stay in this country and work their way through this process encouraging families like Josel's to come?

(....)

1:50:28 p.m.
3 seconds

VEGA: He's 9. I also met a 10-year-old.

(....)

1:51:19 p.m.
1 minute and 3 seconds

VEGA: A quick follow-up, if I may. Do you want to see these unaccompanied minors staying in

this country? Or should they be deported eventually?

BIDEN: Well, the judgment has to be made whether or not — and in this young man's case, he has a mom at home. There's a overwhelming reason why he'd be put on a plane and flown back to his mom.

VEGA: I don't follow, sir. [BIDEN LAUGHS] You mentioned circumstances that must be horrific. The Customs and Border Protections facility in Texas, I was there, is at 1,556 percent capacity right now —

BIDEN: Yep.

VEGA: — with mostly unaccompanied minors. There are kids sleeping on floors, they are packed into these pods. I spoke to lawyers who say that they — some of these children have not seen the sun in days. What's your reaction? What is your reaction to these images that have come out from that particular facility, is what's happening inside acceptable to you? And when is this going to be fixed?

BIDEN: Is — that's a serious question, right? If it's acceptable to me? Come on.

(....)

1:52:57 p.m.
26 seconds

KEN THOMAS: I wanted to ask you about Afghanistan. You face a May 1st deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from that country. As a candidate in *Foreign Affairs*, you wrote that “it is past time to end these forever wars.” Can you commit to the American people that by May 2nd, the U.S. will no longer have forces in Afghanistan?

(....)

1:54:58 p.m.
11 seconds

THOMAS: You just said, “if we leave.” Do you think it's possible that we —

BIDEN: We will leave. The question is when we leave.

THOMAS: — sir, do you believe, though, it's possible we could have troops there next year?

(....)

1:55:26 p.m.
43 seconds

KRISTEN WELKER: Given the conditions that were just laid out, at the migrant facilities at the U.S. border, will you commit to allowing journalists to have access to the facilities that are overcrowded moving forward?

BIDEN: I will commit when my plan very shortly is under way to let you have access to not just them, but the other facilities as well.

WELKER: How soon will journalists be able to have access to the facilities? We've obviously been allowed to be inside one, but we haven't seen the facilities in which children are packed together to really give the American people a chance to see that. Will you commit to transparency on this issue?

(...)

1:56:38 p.m.
26 seconds

WELKER: Okay and just to be clear. How soon will that be, Mr. President?

BIDEN: I don't know, to be clear.

WELKER: Okay. And do you bear responsibility for everything that's happening at the border now? I hear you talking a lot about the past administration. You decided to roll back some of those policies. Did you move too quickly to roll back some of those policies?

BIDEN: To roll back, what? I'm sorry.

WELKER: Did you move too quickly to roll back some of these executive orders of your predecessor?

(...)

1:57:51 p.m.
14 seconds

WELKER: Can I ask you about foreign policy, Mr. President? Overnight, we learned that North Korea tested two ballistic missiles. What, if any actions, will you take and what is your red line on North Korea?

(...)

1:58:56 p.m.
16 seconds

WELKER: Diplomacy. Can you define what you mean and former President Obama warned the

incoming President Trump that North Korea was the top foreign policy issue, that he was watching. Is that how you assess the crisis in North Korea?

(....)

1:59:26 p.m.
32 seconds

NANCY CORDES: I want to go back to voting rights, and as Yamiche mentioned, Republican legislators across the country are working to pass bills that would restricting voting, particularly Democrats fear impacting minority voters and young voters, the very people who helped you get elected in November. Are you worried that, if you don't manage to pass voting rights legislation that your party is going to lose seats and possibly lose control of the House and the Senate in 2022?

(....)

2:01:27 p.m.
50 seconds

CORDES: Is there anything else you can do about it, besides passing legislation?

BIDEN: The answer is, yes, but I'm not going to lay out a strategy in front of the whole world and you now.

CORDES: And, then, on a related note, have you decided whether you are going to run for re-election in 2024? You haven't set up a re-election campaign yet as your predecessor had by this time.

BIDEN: My predecessor. What did he do? He did too. My predecessor. Oh, god. I miss him.

CORDES: Have you — have you —

BIDEN: No. The answer is, yes. My plan is to run for re-election. That's my expectation.

CORDES: — and then on one other note. On bipartisanship, your old friend Mitch McConnell says you have only spoken to each other once since you took office. And that you have moved far left since taking office. Do you see it the same way he does? Have you rejected bipartisanship?

(....)

2:03:36 p.m.
26 seconds

KAITLAN COLLINS: I have a question for you but first I'd like to follow-up on a question from

Yamiche and that's on the filibuster.

BIDEN: That counts as a question. But go ahead.

COLLINS: Okay, I'll make it quick. It's a quick question.

BIDEN: No, no, you can.

COLLINS: Regarding the filibuster, at John Lewis' funeral, President Barack Obama said he believed the filibuster was a relic of the Jim Crow era. Do you agree?

BIDEN: Yes.

COLLINS: And if not, why not abolish it, if it's a relic of the Jim Crow era?

(...)

2:04:34 p.m.

39 seconds

COLLINS: It sounds like you're moving closer to eliminating the filibuster. Is that correct?

BIDEN: I answered your question.

COLLINS: You also just made news saying you are going to run for re-election.

BIDEN: I said that is my expectation.

COLLINS: So is that a yes, you are running for re-election?

BIDEN: Look, I don't where you guys come from, man. I've never been able to travel. I'm a great respecter of faith. I've never been able plan three and a half, four years ahead for certain.

COLLINS: And if you do — and if you do run, will Vice President Harris be on your ticket?

BIDEN: I would fully expect that to be the case. She's doing a great job. She's a great partner. She's a great partner.

COLLINS: And do you believe you'll be running against former President Trump?

(...)

2:09:06 p.m.

31 seconds

JUSTIN SINK: I wanted to ask about your relationship with China now that you've been in office a couple months. There was obviously the meeting in Alaska that — a little theatrical, and there's continued human rights abuses. So, today, I'm wonder, are you more likely than you were when you came into office to maintain tariffs on China? Are you considering banning imports of forced labor products? And would you consider cutting off U.S. investment or Chinese access to international payment systems?

(...)

2:16:39 p.m.
10 seconds

SINK: Alright, just a follow-up on the meeting of democracies. Is that where you expect, in a multilateral way, to make decisions about sanctions or — or —

(...)

2:18:19 p.m.
27 seconds

SINK: And then, Mr. President, I'm sorry. I know you have another chance to address the tragedies in Georgia and Colorado. You had said to stay tuned for actions that you might take on gun control. I'm wondering if you'd make a decision either about sending the manufacturer liabilities bill that you had promised day one to Capitol Hill? Or if executive actions like going after ghost guns or giving money to cities and states to — to battle gun control?

(...)

2:24:34 p.m.
25 seconds

JANET RODRIGUEZ: We too have been reporting at the border and just like Cecilia, we ran into a pair of siblings came in Monday, were detained by CBP, had the phone number for their number, who lives in the U.S. We have contacted the mother. That's only way they know her kids are here, because CBP today, Thursday, has not contacted the mother. So, when can we expect your promise of things getting better with contacting and expediting the process?

(...)

2:26:34 p.m.
15 seconds

RODRIGUEZ: As you well know, treating the root causes in Latin America doesn't change things overnight. How do you realistically and physically keep these families from coming to the U.S. when things will not get better in their countries right away?

(....)

2:29:04 p.m.

15 seconds

RODRIGUEZ: If I may ask one last question. Have you had any talks with Senate Republicans, who are threatening this administration with not considering the immigration legislation that was passed in the House until the situation at the border has been resolved?

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