



# USA OK? My FAQs about Trump, Biden, the election and what happens next

I think the Democratic nominee will win the White House on Tuesday. Here's how and why – and what the president will do



Joe Biden pauses while speaking to supporters in front of an Arizona state flag, in Phoenix this month. Photograph: Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images

You've been in or around politics for more than 50 years. How are you feeling about Tuesday's election?

☛ I'm more frightened for my country than I've ever been. Another four years of Donald Trump would be devastating. Still, I suspect Biden

will win.

But in 2016, the polls ....

☛ Polling is better now, and Biden's lead is larger than Hillary Clinton's was.

What about the electoral college?

☛ He is also leading in the so-called "swing" states that gave Trump an electoral college victory in 2016.

Will Trump contest the election?

☛ Undoubtedly. He'll claim fraudulent mail-in ballots in any swing state Biden wins where the governor is a Republican – states such as Florida, Georgia, Ohio and Arizona. He'll ask those governors not to certify Biden electors until fraudulent ballots are weeded out.

Biden is going to be a transitional rather than a transformational president

What's his goal?

☛ To deny Biden a majority of electors and throw the decision into the House of Representatives, where Republicans are likely to have a majority of state delegations.

## Will it work?

➤ No, because technically Biden only needs a majority of electors already appointed. Even if disputed ones are excluded, I expect he'll still get a majority.

## What about late ballots?

➤ Trump has demanded all ballots be counted by midnight election day. It's not up to him. It's up to individual state legislatures and state courts. Most will count ballots as long as they're postmarked no later than election day.

## Will these issues end up in the supreme court?

➤ Some may, but the justices know they have to appear impartial. Last week they turned down a request to extend the deadline for receiving mail-in ballots in Wisconsin but allowed extensions to remain in place in Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

## But the supreme court decided the 2000 election for George W Bush.

➤ The last thing John Roberts, the chief justice, wants is another Bush v Gore. With six Republican appointees now on the court, he knows its legitimacy hangs in the balance.

## Trump has called for 50,000 partisans to monitor polls while people vote, naming these recruits the "army for Trump". Do you expect violence or intimidation?

➤ Not enough to affect the outcome.

## Assume you're right and Biden wins. Will Trump concede?

➤ I doubt it. He can't stand to lose. He'll continue to claim the election was stolen from him.

## Will the Democrats retake the Senate?

➤ Too close to call.

## If not, can Biden get anything done?

➤ Biden was a senator for 36 years and has worked with many of the current Republicans. He believes he can coax them into working with him.

Trump and Fox News will continue to be the most powerful forces in the GOP, at least for the next four years

## Is he right?

➤ I fear he's overly optimistic. The GOP isn't what it used to be. It's now answerable to a much more conservative, Trumpian base.

## If Republicans keep the Senate, what can we expect from a Biden administration?

➤ Reversals of Trump executive orders and regulations — which will restore environmental and labor protections and strengthen the Affordable Care Act. Biden will also fill the executive branch with competent people, who will make a big difference. And he'll end Trump's isolationist, go-it-alone foreign policy.

## And if Democrats retake the Senate?

➤ Helpful, but keep your expectations low. Both Bill Clinton and Barack Obama had Democratic Congresses for their first two years yet spent all their political capital cleaning up economic messes their Republican predecessors left behind. Biden will inherit an even bigger economic mess plus a pandemic. With luck, he'll enact a big stimulus package, reverse the Trump Republican tax cuts for the wealthy, and distribute and administer a Covid vaccine. All important, but nothing earth-shattering.

## If Biden wins, he'll be the oldest man to ever be president. Will this be a problem for him in governing?

➤ I don't see why. He's healthy. But I doubt he'll seek a second term, which will affect how he governs.

## What do you mean?

➤ He's going to be a transitional rather than a transformational president.

He won't change the underlying structure of power in society. He won't lead a movement. He says he'll be a "bridge" to the next generation of leaders, by which I think he means that he'll try to stabilize the country, maybe heal some of the nation's wounds, so that he can turn the keys over to the visionaries and movement builders of the future.

## Will Trump just fade into the sunset?

➤ Hardly. He and Fox News will continue to be the most powerful forces in the GOP, at least for the next four years.

## And what happens if your whole premise is wrong and Donald Trump wins a second term?

➤ America and the rest of the world are seriously imperiled. I prefer not to think about it.

□ Robert Reich, a former US secretary of labor, is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of *Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few* and *The Common Good*. His new book, *The System: Who Rigged It, How We Fix It*, is out now. He is a columnist for Guardian US

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