

**David Sirota:** Everyone. It's David Sirota. Before we get to today's show, just a brief programming note. Today, we're relaunching Lever Time with a brand new format and our new senior podcast producer, Arjun Singh. Arjun comes to the lever from The Washington Post.

He's as much an old school journalist as he is a podcast guy. As you'll hear, this is going to be a more reported and more produced podcast each week, where we start integrating not only interviews, but also original reporting and storytelling into what we bring you. As always, send your feedback to podcasts at [atlevernews.com](http://atlevernews.com) to give us any news tips, story ideas, criticism, or other feedback. Okay. Here we go.

The first episode of the brand new Lever Time.

**David Sirota:** From the levers reader supported newsroom, this is Lever Time. I'm David Sirota. Since 2008, the Democratic Party machine has sold Liberals on the idea that primaries are bad because they supposedly weaken general election nominees. Party officials have changed rules to make it harder to primary incumbents, and they've even threatened punishment against those who consider mounting a primary.

And when the occasional primary challenge does happen down the ballot, that machine has dumped huge money into crushing them. And so here we are on the eve of a general election in which we're told that the survival of democracy is on the line and the Democratic Party's success in suppressing any serious primary challenge has produced a nominee, Joe Biden, who is a wildly unpopular incumbent. He's so unpopular that he's emerged from a barely contested democratic primary with a significant number of his own party's voters voting uncommitted, and potentially poised to either not show up to vote in the general election or vote 3rd party. If you're like me and you don't wanna see Donald Trump become president again, this feels like not a great situation. And the Democratic party's message telling voters that they should just be more grateful for the economy, That doesn't feel like a compelling message.

It feels desperate. It feels very 2016 ish. But, of course, that prospect is not yet destiny. Biden recently seemed to wake up to the political problem. He delivered a state of the union address that positioned himself as a crusader against economic wrongs, rather than a personification of them.

But that story needed to be told a long time ago. Today on Lever Time, senior podcast producer Arjun Singh and I explore the big political questions of this moment. Why does Joe Biden seem like such a weak nominee right now? Why are voters so unhappy with his economic record despite decent macroeconomic data? And what has changed about democratic party culture in the last 40 years?

**David Sirota:** When I was born in the mid 19 seventies, tough fought presidential primaries were relatively commonplace, especially against incumbent presidents looking weak in the polls. Back in that era, Eugene McCarthy, Ronald Reagan, and Ted Kennedy, they all ran very tough primaries against unpopular presidents of their own parties.

**Walter Cronkite:** By any political measure though, president Johnson has suffered a major psychological setback in New Hampshire. Every prominent democratic leader in the state supported the well organized write in campaign for him. By contrast, Eugene McCarthy was scarcely known in the Granite State a few months ago. Yet with an army of college age volunteers, McCarthy made himself known and his political weight fell.

**David Sirota:** For a long time, primaries in America were spirited affairs. Crescendoing in 2008 and 2016, when both parties' challengers ran vicious campaigns, destroying the establishment's handpicked quasi incumbents.

**Barack Obama:** Well, senator Clinton, I think, equates experience with longevity in Washington. I don't think the American people do, and I don't, think that if you look at the judgments that we've made over the last several years, that that's the, accurate measure.

**Bernie Sanders:** The reality is that we have a corrupt campaign finance system which separates the American people's needs and desires from what congress is doing. So to my mind, what we have got to do is wage a political revolution.

**David Sirota:** Sitting here in 2024, it might be hard to remember that Obama himself was an insurgent, and so was Donald Trump. Today, things are much different. The culture of primaries seems to have been snuffed out of both parties. Trump, now the cult figure at the center of his party, he easily won his party's nomination despite being wildly unpopular. Similarly, polls suggest Joe Biden is the weakest Democratic nominee since Jimmy Carter.

The question we explore on today's show is, what changed? And what will that change mean for the 2024 election? A personal admission of bias here. I believe that in general, competitive contested primaries are a good thing for parties and for democracy. It's why I worked for Ned Lamont when he primary Joe Lieberman in 2006, and it's why I worked as Bernie Sanders speechwriter in his 2020 primary against Joe Biden, who was the immediate past Democratic vice president, was always the likely nominee.

I reject the idea that tough primaries weaken general election nominees. I think it's the opposite. Primaries let voters express their policy and political preferences inside the safety of their party, where, unlike a general election, their votes against a candidate they don't like can't end up helping the other party's candidate that they absolutely loathe. But that view is not widely shared in the Democratic party that's actively tried to make it harder to run primaries. Democratic leaders have changed rules to make it more difficult to primary incumbents, and that machine has even threatened punishment against those who consider mounting a primary.

And when the occasional primary challenge happens down the ballot, that machine has dumped huge money into trying to crush them.

**News Announcer:** The New York Times is reporting tonight that a Democratic candidate for Senate in Michigan was offered a \$20,000,000 contribution to drop out of the race and instead run against congresswoman Rashida Tlaib for her seat in the house.

**David Sirota:** Look, maybe Democrats preventing a serious primary against Joe Biden would have made sense if he was super popular, but polls suggest he isn't. So that's where we're gonna start. We're gonna go to Levert Time's senior podcast producer Arjun Singh to unpack why Biden seems like such a weak nominee, why voters aren't happy with his economic record despite decent macroeconomic data? And what has changed about democratic party culture in the last 40 years?

**Arjun Singh:** Lately, I've been having a lot of phone calls that sound a little like this.

**Arjun Singh:** You excited for this election?

**Anya:** No. I'm not excited.

**Arjun Singh:** That's my friend Anya. She's in her thirties, lives in Boston, and like a lot of people, she tends to vote in every presidential election. This year, though, she's already sick of hearing about the presidential election.

**Anya:** I mean, I think it means that we're going over the same issues that we were going over 4 years ago. Like, there's no progress that we can now make. Like, there's nothing we can like, there's no debates, which means we can't, like, stuff out, like, platforms, I think, and, like, get, like, a sense of what the actual people want and no primaries. So I think, like, there's no voice that, like, actual people get to, like, express and what they want the platforms to be.

**Arjun Singh:** I talk to a lot of people about politics. And in these polarized times, it's usually hard to find a consensus on anything. But one thing that I hear from people all over the political spectrum is this.

**Anya:** No. I don't know anybody who's excited about either. And I have, like, acquaintances who considers them themselves to be Republicans who have to always say, you know, I'm I don't support Trump. You know? Like, they always have to caveat, like, their opinion with, like, I'm not a fan of Trump.

But, so, yeah, I think I don't know anyone on either side of the spectrum who is excited about the options.

**Arjun Singh:** To be honest, I don't either. And it's not just the people that I know. The week we aired this episode, neither Biden nor Trump were liked by more than 45% of the country according to polling averages. Now knowing this, Republicans still went ahead and elected Donald Trump for a third run at the White House. But things were a little different for Democrats.

Even though Biden had 2 primary opponents, Minnesota congressman Dean Phillips and Marianne Williamson, most people barely heard of them. And in some cases, Democratic party officials actually blocked them from appearing on ballots. We'll talk about that a little bit later in the show. But first, I wanted to understand an issue I know has long divided Biden and the public, his handling of the economy.

**Joe Biden:** Now our economy is literally the envy of the world. 15,000,000 new jobs in just 3 years. A record. A record.

**Heather Long:** If you step back for a minute, 2023 was really a miracle year for the economy. Obviously, heading into 2023, lots of predictions of a recession, some very dire outcomes. Would we be able to get inflation down? It was a pretty scary time. And none of the doom stories came to pass.

Not only did that not happen, we actually had a pretty good year by economic terms. And what I mean by that is over 3,000,000 jobs were added, which, again was sort of unthinkable at the start of the year when we were predicting job losses.

**Arjun Singh:** Heather Long is an opinion columnist for The Washington Post, and she frequently writes about the economy. I asked Heather to help explain why economists, the White House, and media reports frequently say that we are experiencing a strong economy.

**Heather Long:** Inflation cooled dramatically. Obviously, it had hit, you know, almost 10% in the middle of 2022, and those gas prices were super high. And by the end of 2023, we're hanging out somewhere around 3%, depends what metric you're looking at and exactly what month. But that's a pretty dramatic cooling that's going on. And then even on the growth side, again, you know, thinking about, hey.

We were predicting this recession, and these are signs of confidence. We continue to see a lot of job creation. And so we sort of got back into a more balanced supply and demand situation, if you remember, if anybody took Economics 101. I think it's important to remind people of that, even though it is also valid to acknowledge that people still feel a lot of anxiety and frustration with the economy. And it's you can have both of those things side by side.

**Arjun Singh:** Have those gains been wide spread across every sector or are there some industries that are doing better than others right now?

**Heather Long:** I think surprisingly the gains have been very widespread, certainly the job gains. So that's the encouraging sign, and similarly, wage growth. It's undeniable that wage growth has

skyrocketed the most for people who were under \$20 an hour. You know, that's where the biggest benefits are. So the bargaining power in that sense has really shifted.

Now you're right, there's a long term problem of, of, does the job come with what benefits? But even so, if you, talk to folks who run things like indeed.com or these various job sites, they'll tell you that anybody who's not offering at least some basic benefits, even in a hospitality job, gets, like, no applicants.

**Arjun Singh:** And it's not to say that people haven't noticed all of these gains. Consumer sentiment and confidence in the economy is rising, but it's still below pre pandemic levels. And a majority of people still say they don't think the economy is working. So I asked Heather if some of that could be because housing is expensive and mortgage rates are still high.

**Heather Long:** It's a good question. We don't have the latest data specifically on mobility in terms of like, usually that takes decades to kind of study, and those statistics, I think everybody knows, have certainly been worsening over time in the United States. Now, it's kind of interesting, the pandemic. Obviously, so much craziness happened in the pandemic. For people who were able to get in, like what you're saying, to buy the homes just before the pandemic, there has been a huge wealth surge in this country, you know, with home values have shot up, and and that doesn't matter whether you own the multimillion dollar mansion, you know, on the California coast, or whether you own a very modest bungalow in my hometown in the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania area.

The prices have really skyrocketed. And so people are literally wealthier than they were if they were able to get in. And, you know, there's 2 thirds of Americans own their homes. So in that sense, when, you know, you sort of it's a two sided story that people who were able to put away some money or were able to get on the housing ladder have really benefited in in in kind of historic ways, and that flowed across every income group, and across every racial group in ways that were very beneficial. But like you're saying, if you didn't get in, it really feels like the door was slammed in your face.

And that's, you know, that's true, because obviously, the prices the home prices are up, and normally what happens when we see the interest rates and the mortgage rates and the borrowing costs be this high is prices come back down. That hasn't happened because of very funky dynamics that are going on in the market, and so you're getting hit both ways. The prices are high for the cars and for the homes, and your borrowing costs are, you know, the highest we've seen in a long, long time. And so you're right. Getting your foot on that first step feels really impossible right now, and there doesn't seem to be any relief coming anytime soon.

**Arjun Singh:** And those borrowing costs can add up. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Saint Louis, the personal savings rate or the percentage of disposable income people are saving every month is just sitting at below 4%. To put that in perspective though, in February of 2020, it was almost 8%.

**Heather Long:** What is different is what you're describing is the precarious bottom, bottom 33%. And that's where it looks very alarming. That's where you've seen this huge shoot up in credit card borrowing and this huge shoot up in the buy now, pay later space. You've also seen some really high auto loan payments, and you're starting to see high upticks of auto loan delinquencies, meaning, you know, people could get their car repossessed in the coming months. So those things are very, very alarming, and as we were just talking about the savings for that group, the cushion that they had from stimulus payments, unemployment payments, you know, just not going out as much during the pandemic is now gone.

So they don't have that cushion anymore. Then it's particularly alarming that many people feel they need those loans to pay their basics.

**Arjun Singh:** Right. And added to that, there was this massive expansion of the safety net in the early part of Biden's term. But a lot of those things, like food stamps and subsidies for childcare centers and even the pause of the of student loan debt, Those have all expired now, and that has to be creating, like, an economic whiplash. Right?

**Heather Long:** Yeah. You're a 100% right. The other one to add is the expanded child tax Credit, which was changed in a way temporarily in 2021 to really benefit lower income and lower earning families. And, you know, look, we have the data. That was one of the biggest uplifts of children in this country out of poverty ever, that we have ever seen, you know, since the war on poverty was declared, you know, however half century ago, and then it went away.

And so you're right. There's again, there's a there there, that if you're someone who's in, you know, let's say the under \$20 an hour bracket, okay. You know, the White House is trying to tell you, but but but you got all these wage increases, but but but it's really easy to get a job. But you're right. There's not a lot that's been done in terms of making it easier to get a job if you also have to deal with childcare and you're struggling to find the childcare situation.

If you look at there's been huge gains in women rejoining the labor force. You know, for all the talk of the women led recession, she cessioned, during the pandemic, you know, it's been a huge success story to bring women back. But when we did a deeper dive on this in The Washington Post, it's overwhelmingly women with college degrees who've been benefiting from the hybrid work trends, that they can work from home, and it just makes childcare and balancing work and life a lot easier, and of course, people who are in some of these tougher sectors, hospitality, you know, you don't get to work from home, generally, and so they haven't been able to benefit, and you can really see, like you're saying, some backsliding even happening. And I was just with some bankers recently, and they were reiterating that their data is showing that, all pandemic savings for the bottom you know, even the bottom half is now gone.

**Arjun Singh:** So the White House is correct when they highlight that wages are rising, unemployment's at a historic low, and there have been positive gains. But at the same time, getting a loan for something like a car or purchasing a home, that's still pretty expensive. Meanwhile, Biden's handling over the war in Gaza has added even more frustration and anger

towards his administration. So after the break, we're gonna look at what happened when Democrats were in a similar position in the 1980 election and see what lessons that could teach us now.

**Arjun Singh:** In the short span of political life, it feels like it's been centuries since an incumbent president faced a real challenge from within their own party.

Okay. It hasn't quite been that long, but it has been decades. And for the Democrats, that year was 1979.

**Ted Kennedy:** I was taught long ago that politics is a noble occupation, that public service is among the most honorable of professions.

Arjun Singh: The voice you're hearing is senator Ted Kennedy.

**Song:** Hey, Massachusetts. Ted bills a bill and what

Arjun Singh: The youngest child in the famous Kennedy family behind John and Bobby.

**Song:** A young, strong, and a, low, fair minded man. He's ready and willing to fight for you as no other candidate canceled.

Arjun Singh: Like his brothers, a lot of people wanted Ted to run for president, and it was a persistent question throughout the 19 seventies.

Interviewer: Would you deep down like to be president?

Kennedy: Yes.

Interviewer: You would.

**Arjun Singh:** The only problem is that when Kennedy decided to run, there was already a Democratic president in the White House.

**Jimmy Carter:** In my first term, we've not found all the answers, and we've made some mistakes. But it's fair to say that we've made responsible choices for America.

**Arjun Singh:** Jimmy Carter, a moderate Democrat, had surprised political insiders by winning both the Democratic nomination and the White House in 1976, and he was intent on doing it again in 1980.

**Jimmy Carter:** But first, I'm looking forward to being an even better president in my 2nd term. But first, of course, I'll need your vote on November 4th.

**Arjun Singh:** But Carter had also seen a year of terrible poll numbers. The economy was experiencing high unemployment and rising inflation, a concept that was known as stagflation. On top of that, there was an energy crisis that had a severe impact on day to day life.

**News Anchor:** Gasoline shortages are spreading across the country. Odd even service, gasoline lines, and closed gas stations are becoming increasingly common. And the news from overseas tonight gives no promise of quick relief. President Carter and other western leaders agreed in Tokyo to limit oil imports to try to reduce dependence on OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

**Arjun Singh:** And like a lot of people, Kennedy was pretty frustrated with Carter's leadership.

**Ted Kennedy:** But when present difficulties grow so large that they threaten the essential confidence of the nation, The energies of our people must be marshaled towards a larger purpose, and that can only be done from the White House.

Arjun Singh: And in that moment, he saw an opportunity and took it.

**Ted Kennedy:** And therefore, I take the course compelled by events and by my commitment to public life. Today I formally announce that I'm a candidate for president of the United States.

**Mark Longabaugh:** That would probably be more analogous to the to the times because I mean I'm gonna support Joe Biden for president this fall, But if you're being honest about his political standing right now, it's very much in Jimmy Carter territory.

**Arjun Singh:** Mark Longabaugh is a political strategist and a partner at the firm Divine Mulvey and Longabaugh, and he's worked on several Democratic presidential primary campaigns, including for Bernie Sanders in 2016.

**Mark Longabaugh:** And and I will say I I voted for I voted for Ted Kennedy in that primary against Carter when I was a kid.

**Arjun Singh:** Given that comparison to Jimmy Carter, I wanted to ask Mark, why wouldn't anyone else jump into the race against Biden? It's felt like almost as soon as Biden entered the White House, there's been this open chatter about whether someone else should be at the top of the ticket in 2024.



**Fareed Zakaria:** He's rounding out his 1st year in the White House with the lowest end of 1st year approval ratings of any elected president in modern times with the exception of Donald Trump.

**Savannah Guthrie:** 2 thirds of voters in our exit poll said they do not want president Biden to run for reelection.

**Mark Longabaugh:** And a question that just keeps popping up lately. You know what it is. Could Biden be replaced on the 2024 Democratic ticket?

**Arjun Singh:** You've probably heard about alternatives to Biden even if you haven't been closely following the election. There's Gavin Newsom, Gretchen Whitmer, JB Pritzker. All 3 of them are governors whose names the media relentlessly zeroed in on as having the potential to change the gears of the Democratic party if they chose to, but none of them took a shot. Just take a listen to Gavin Newsom on Meet the Press.

**Kristen Welker:** Have you gotten any calls, governor, for asking you to run?

**Gavin Newsom:** It's all idle chatter. It's all it's you know what? That's a sideshow. I think what Democrats need to do is worry less, do more, continue to

**Arjun Singh:** These are ambitious people. And if there was ever a moment for change, it seems like this year voters aren't just open to it but would actually embrace it. So what's stopping them?

**Mark Longabaugh:** There very much is a sense of careerism at work, and and I don't mean that necessarily in a bad way. But I mean, the talent that you would suspect would run if Biden had stepped aside, don't wanna risk damage to their career by taking on a sitting president and losing, possibly causing Trump's reelection or at least being blamed for Trump's reelection and destroying their future inside of the party.

**Arjun Singh:** And even though Biden looks like he's having a Jimmy Carter moment, Mark was pretty quick to point out that back in 1980, Ted Kennedy wasn't just a political rock star. He was basically American royalty. Seriously, some people still refer to the Kennedy era as Camelot.

**Song:** Kennedy. Kennedy. Kennedy. Kennedy. Kennedy.

**Mark Longabaugh:** There was a sort of nostalgia for the Kennedys that that emanated from JFK's murder and then always led the part. There was a significant faction of the party that always wanted a Kennedy restoration. The party doesn't really have a figure like a Ted Kennedy who has such enormous positioning and power inside of the Democratic party to contemplate taking on Joe Biden at this point.

**Arjun Singh:** Kennedy's bid was ultimately unsuccessful. He took his campaign all the way to the national convention and lost in a delegate vote to Carter, and Jimmy Carter would eventually lose to Ronald Reagan. And in 1981, the Reagan era officially began. Some of Kennedy's critics have said that his run hurt Carter, but Carter was already pretty weak when Kennedy jumped in. One thing is certain though.

**Arjun Singh:** Kennedy captured an energy in that party.

**Ted Kennedy:** May it be said of our campaign that we kept the faith.

**Arjun Singh:** One that called out for change, and he had a chance to fight for that vision.

**Ted Kennedy:** May it be said of our party in 1980 that we found our faith again.

**Arjun Singh:** In fact, today, Kennedy's speech at the DNC where he suspended his campaign is usually considered one of the best of his career.

**Ted Kennedy:** For all those whose cares have been our concern, the work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die.

**Arjun Singh:** But it's not 1980 anymore. It's 2024. And today, the Democratic Party is really different. And the Democratic National Committee is a lot more influential.

**Mark Longabaugh:** I was there with Bernie Sanders from the very, very beginning, you know, throughout original conversations in 2014, then into 15 when we started building the campaign straight through 16. And it just so happens I was the guy who was nominated to be the liaison with the DNC. So, you know, helped run the convention, the platform committee and all of that.

**Arjun Singh:** Here's Mark Longabaugh again.

**Mark Longabaugh:** I was, throughout the course of that campaign, butting up against the DNC and the establishment on a constant basis, and it got so bad at one point we actually sued the DNC over our access to our own voter file which we had paid them for. The idea that we had to do that, I just find just unbelievable. So the party could be and should be more open and more welcoming to new talent, especially younger folks who who get involved. And and that's one of the things that I think sometimes is unfortunate that they come in with a lot of energy and and idealism and, you know, they get pushed back on.

**Arjun Singh:** I think that last point Mark made is crucial. One of the groups Joe Biden does very poorly with are young people. And according to the US Census Bureau, millennials and Gen z now make up nearly half of the population. Those young voters also make up a large part of the Democratic Party's base, and a primary is the exact venue where you can make your discontent heard. But if you were living in, say, North Carolina or Tennessee, you may not have even seen another option on your ballot.

That's because the state Democratic party only submitted Joe Biden's name. And if you're a young person living in Florida, your state party didn't even bother to hold a primary. Party officials defended their decisions, and they said that they were allowed to only submit Biden's name on the ballot. But that's a pretty revealing statement in and of itself. The heads of at least 3 state Democratic parties said their processes allowed for party insiders to come together and block candidates from even appearing as a choice.

**Arjun Singh:** A quick note here for our Lever Premium subscribers. If you wanna hear the full interview I did with Mark, you can get that in your premium feed. And if you wanna sign up, go to [levernews.com](https://www.levernews.com) and subscribe. Alright. Back to the show.

**Arjun Singh:** Given this lack of a primary and the discontent with Biden, I was curious how this could impact Biden's campaign. So I sat down with the Leverage editor in chief and founder, David Sirota.

**David Sirota:** Well, Arjun, you're such a millennial. You're you feel so entitled to actually have a say in your political process. I know. I know.

**Arjun Singh:** I know. I was just sitting on Instagram all day complaining about the price of avocado toast.

**David Sirota:** Right. And feeling like you have a right to participate. I mean, who do you think you are? In all seriousness, I think that the more rough and tumble, the more debate, the more vigorous exchange, the more you are battle testing your party, the more you are battle testing your ultimate general election nominee for, that battle with the Republicans. And I look back to 2,008.

**Hilary Clinton:** You talked about Ronald Reagan being a transformative political leader. I did not mention his name.

**Barack Obama:** Your husband did.

**Hilary Clinton:** Well, I'm here. He's not.

**Barack Obama:** Well, I can't tell who I'm running against sometimes.

**Arjun Singh:** Yeah. That primary was vicious. I feel like people don't remember just how tense things got between the Clinton and Obama teams. Like, if you read accounts from back then, you see just how much vitriol there was between both of them in in personally too.

**David Sirota:** Absolutely. And and the same thing with the 1992 primary. I mean, that was a brutal primary between Bill Clinton and Mario Cuomo was potentially gonna run and Jerry Brown. I don't think those primaries weakened those general election nominees. I think they

battle tested those general election nominees, and I think those general election nominees came out stronger, and better and more suited to win the general election.

But I feel like, honestly, I feel like that view is in the minority of the Democratic party.

**Arjun Singh:** Right. And sans a serious primary taking place. You've seen voters so hungry to express their dissatisfaction with Biden, particularly over how he's approaching the war in Gaza. You know, strategically, in Wisconsin and Michigan, 2 pretty big battleground states that are often considered part of the Democrats, quote, blue wall, even though I kinda hate that term. The uncommitted or undeclared protest vote far surpassed his margin of victory over Trump in 2020 in both of those states.

I guess, David, do you think, though, there's a way to turn that ship around that not only is he a better alternative to Donald Trump, but that there is a compelling reason to give him a second term in office.

**David Sirota:** I mean, to be clear, I I do think the Biden administration, CFPB, the CFPB, and it's essentially declaration of war on the credit card industry for ripping people off. I think as you mentioned before, the Federal Trade Commission, it's fight against corporate monopolies that are ripping everyone off. I think the Biden administration, some of its policies on labor law to empower unions, to take on the corporations that are ripping people off. I think all of that gives the Biden administration and and Joe Biden as a candidate a story to tell. Whether he can tell it in a vigorous way, whether he can be the delivery man for that message in a compelling way, that, to me, is a big question.

And and, look, I concede. I can I know that there are people listening right now who say, well, what about the war in Gaza? What about this policy? What about that policy? I agree with you.

Joe Biden look. I worked on Bernie Sanders primary to Joe Biden. I spent my days trying to have Bernie Sanders win the primary in 2020 against Joe Biden. So I know all of the criticisms of Joe Biden. I've written about them.

I'm I'm there with you. But I'm still saying there's a story to be told, but whether he can be the delivery vehicle for that story was the thing that needed to be tested in a Democratic primary, and it wasn't tested. And I think that puts the Democratic party in peril. I think that puts the country in peril of electing Donald Trump.

**Arjun Singh:** Thanks for listening to another episode of Lever Time. If you liked what you heard, consider becoming a member. It's only \$8 a month and you'll get access to premium content and reporting you won't find in any other media outlet. You can find a link to our subscription page in our show notes or go to [levernews.com](https://www.levernews.com). Lever Time is a production of The Lever.

This episode was produced and engineered by me, Arjun Singh, and edited by David Sirota. We'll be back next week with another episode.