



Former President Joe Biden revealed he has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of prostate cancer. JOSH MORGAN/USA TODAY

# Biden's exit takes another sad turn

Cancer diagnosis raises concern, more questions



**Susan Page**  
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Joe Biden's exit from American politics was never going to be easy. After a lifetime in public office that ended with an unprecedented turn-around on whether to seek a second term, the former president has watched his mental acuity increasingly scrutinized and his White House legacy systematically steamrolled by his successor – all this in the four months since he moved out of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Now the announcement that Biden, 82, has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of prostate cancer, one that has metastasized to the bone, has prompted a surge of sympathy and compassion. But it has also underscored growing questions and, among some top Democrats, anger about his initial decision to run for reelection despite signs of physical frailty and the reality of advanced age.

"So far, so good," Biden told USA TODAY in January. "But who knows what I'm going to be when I'm 86 years old?"

In the Oval Office interview, he said he still believed that he could have defeated Donald Trump in 2024, as he had in 2020, if he hadn't pulled out of the contest after a wandering, faltering debate performance last June. His vice president, Kamala Harris, claimed the Democratic nomination but lost the general election.

Among many independent political

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# Fired federal workers try to turn the table

Spurned former employees consider running for office



Protesters rally outside the Labor Department headquarters in Washington, DC, on April 14 after the Trump administration announced widespread reductions in the federal workforce. CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

**Sarah D. Wire**  
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Tony Ruiz was happy to join the Department of Veterans Affairs in February 2024. A disabled veteran himself, Ruiz left the private sector to become a veterans service representative and help people who had served their country get the benefits they deserved.

Despite glowing performance reviews and an "employee of the quarter" award, Ruiz, who lives in Orange County, California, was laid off just days before he had expected to become a permanent employee.

Adrift in the weeks afterward, he came to two realizations, he told USA TODAY: He needed a job, and new people need to run for political office.

"The only way to speak up at this point with everything that's going on – without getting too political here – is to get into power, is to go to some location where there is a Republican and literally running on the platform of 'Hey, I'm one of those federal employees, a veteran, who was cut by the Trump administration.'"

Progressive and Democratic groups that help people run for office



Tony Ruiz, left, with former Veterans Affairs Under Secretary Joshua Jacobs, was fired despite being recognized for his work with the VA. PROVIDED BY TONY RUIZ

## Federal employees on a roller coaster

Thousands get fired, rehired, and may be fired again. **3A**

told USA TODAY former federal employees like Ruiz are contacting them in droves to learn what it would take to run for everything from school board to Congress.

Ruiz said he plans to start with a run for mayor or a seat on the city council, hoping to connect with people in a moderately conservative area of California who aren't happy with the changes President Donald Trump has made, though he hasn't decided where. He called himself a centrist who leans left.

"Everybody's seen now that we're under attack," Ruiz said. "That's my base; people that are veterans, Latinos, Americans in general who feel under attack."

In the three days after federal firings began in February, 1,000 people signed up to run for office with Run for Something, said group co-founder Amanda Litman. The organization supports progressive candidates who want to run for local office.

It was a "huge spike for us," Litman said, adding that the layoffs could represent a pivot point in Trump's presidency that pushes people to get

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# Pope Leo's blighted hometown hoping for a resurrection

## Leo meets with VP Vance, Secretary of State Rubio

Letter from President Donald Trump given to pontiff, inviting him to DC. **6A**

Neighbors and village officials in Dolton, Illinois, hope to turn the home where Pope Leo XIV grew up into a protected landmark. MICHAEL LORIA/USA TODAY



## 'Miracle on 141st Place' creates excitement

**Michael Loria**  
USA TODAY

DOLTON, IL – They said this village didn't have a prayer. Then Leo came along.

Plagued by the tempests of drugs, murder, corruption and other vices of biblical proportion for much of the past five decades, residents in this tiny burg just south of Chicago are seeing a ray of divine hope in their most famous native son, Pope Leo XIV.

"This brings back hope. We went from hell land to holy land because it was a rough several years for our community," Kiana Belcher, a village trustee,

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