

# Will it be 2024 or 1984?

By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As many in the United States and across the world rue the thought of a second Donald Trump presidency, current President Joe Biden announced on July 21 that he was dropping out of his reelection campaign and endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris to run in his place against Republican nominee Donald Trump.

After Biden's lacklustre debate against Trump on June 27, the calls for him to drop out only intensified over the weeks that followed. While one has to admire Biden for finally seeing the writing on the wall and stepping back from his reelection campaign, I just hope he hasn't made the same mistake that Prime Minister Brian Mulroney made back in 1993, by waiting too long to step back and leaving his successor, Kim Campbell, too little time to make enough of an impact on voters to win the election. Now, Kamala Harris has been vice president for the past three and a half years, but still, leaving only three and a half months for her to campaign and win against Trump is a tall order, although I truly hope she's successful.

The other fly in the ointment is that some prominent Democrats haven't endorsed Harris to campaign against Trump, although that is changing, with former President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle, and former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi all endorsing Harris in recent days. Hopefully the Democrats run with Harris and give her all the support they can, and not waste time fighting to nominate someone else to campaign against Trump. First, whomever else they'd choose wouldn't have access to the funds that the Biden campaign has already raised, and secondly, by the time they nominate someone else, would that person have the same level of name recognition and appeal to voters that Harris has? Maybe so, maybe not, but with so little time until November, delaying the campaign against Trump even a few weeks to nominate somebody else and get them into campaign mode is too much time wasted, potentially giving Trump the traction to get back into the White House. The good news is that the Democrats have approved a virtual vote to pick their nominee by Aug. 7, instead of waiting until their national convention later in the month, and according to a recent Ipsos poll, Harris has a large majority of support from her party.

The reason Americans, (both democrats and all those who care about democracy and don't want to see theirs vanish) need to get out and support Harris or whomever the democratic nominee turns out to be is that the prospect of a second Trump term as president is very alarming. There are so many reasons for this, not the least of which is his loathing of a free press and his desire to reinterpret libel laws to make it much easier to sue reporters speaking truth to power for defamation, potentially bankrupting those reporters and their news organizations. Not a big surprise as this was what Trump's good buddy Vladimir Putin did when he came to power in Russia over 20 years ago, and what the other authoritarian leaders he so admires have done in their own respective fiefdoms.

Trump's hatred of a free and independent press is bad enough, but another recent quote from the former president is especially terrifying. Making a speech at The Believers Summit 2024 on July 26, he told attendees that they "won't have to do it anymore, four more years, you know what? It'll be fixed, it'll be fine. You won't have to vote anymore. You've got to get out and vote. In four years, you don't have to vote again. We'll have it fixed so good, you're not going to have to vote."

Not a very comforting thought, is it folks? Sounds more like a totalitarian regime than American democracy to me. Hello to a real-life version of George Orwell's 1984. And the effects of a probable U.S. descent into totalitarianism wouldn't be confined to its borders, but would bleed over into Canada, as we live right next door. Ukraine would also be horribly affected, when Trump "ends the war in a day," as he promises to do, by all but abandoning military aid and handing it over to Putin. So too would the rest of world be deleteriously affected in many ways, as America's influence extends far and wide across the globe.

I'd hate to have to read the obituary for U.S. democracy in the coming months, but it sounds like a vote for Trump would all but condemn it to death. So, I urge all my American friends down south and abroad, and Americans of all stripes, to make an informed decision in November and preserve your democracy by voting for Kamala Harris or whomever the democratic nominee is, and not

Donald Trump. The free world and indeed history will thank you!