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EXCLUSIVE DETAILS

Dems finally admit Biden botched border after 2024 election loss: ‘We destroyed ourselves’

By

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WASHINGTON — Democrats spent Thanksgiving eating crow — privately confessing that President Biden’s handling of the border crisis fueled voter outrage and the Republican sweep of the White House and both chambers of Congress.

Lawmakers, aides and sources close to powerful Dems finally admitted after President-elect Donald Trump’s resounding victory over Biden’s successor, Vice President Kamala Harris, that the party’s permissive lurch on the border helped doom them in 2024.

“We destroyed ourselves on the immigration issue in ways that were entirely predictable and entirely manageable,” a Democratic senator [confided to The Hill](#) under the condition of anonymity.

“We utterly mismanaged that issue, including our Democratic caucus here. That’s political malpractice. That’s not someone else’s fault. That’s not the groups pushing us around.”

A source close to New York City Mayor Eric Adams also told The Post that fellow Democrats should have listened to him after he “warned for two years” that a porous border “would overburden cities and alienate working class people — and they did not listen.”

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A House Democratic source suggested to The Post that the only way forward would be for party bosses “to get back to basics and simply admit to the American people ‘crime and illegal immigration are bad.’”

Trump campaigned on launching a mass-deportation effort, though he emphasized that his first targets would be those convicted of crimes — an initiative that polling showed [a majority of Hispanic voters support](#).

Harris, 60, touted herself as a “border-state prosecutor” and lashed out at congressional Republicans for not cooperating to pass a sweeping immigration package that five Senate Democrats also helped torpedo — while resisting questions about her past support for decriminalizing border crossings and providing taxpayer-funded sex-reassignment surgeries to incarcerated migrants.

The Republican ultimately carried heavily Hispanic areas of South Texas and South Florida and made massive gains in Democratic strongholds such as New York.

The soon-to-be 47th president won a majority of Hispanic male voters, according to exit polls, and made gains among black men in critical swing states — including by proposing a slate of economic reforms such as the elimination of taxes on overtime pay and tips and tax deductions for domestic car loan interest.

Polls showed immigration near the top of voter concerns after frustration about the economy, including high inflation and elevated interest rates — aiding Trump’s comeback.

Before the election, some Senate Democrats had more gently opposed Biden’s border policies, which [helped doom Harris’ candidacy](#) against Trump, who frequently noted that the retiring president tapped Harris to reduce illegal immigration in early 2021, only for it to explode to new record highs.

Another unnamed Democratic senator vented to The Hill in particular about Biden’s decision to end construction of the 45th president’s US-Mexico border wall, terminate his “Remain in Mexico” policy for asylum seekers and impose a 100-day moratorium on deportations.

“Why would you do that? Who are you trying to play to? What’s the benefit to that?” a second Senate Democrat told The Hill, saying that the issue was Biden’s “Achilles’ heel.”

Two prominent internal party critics — Sens. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona and Joe Manchin of West Virginia — dropped their Democratic Party affiliation and are now independents, ruling them out as the outlet’s anonymous sources.

Democratic Sens. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Bob Casey of Pennsylvania and Jon Tester of Montana lost re-election on Nov. 5 as Trump carried their states.

Key figures in Biden’s White House and re-election campaign, which was inherited by Harris when he dropped out in July, still brushed off concerns about the border.

In a heated January 2023 discussion, Adams had especially warned Biden’s future campaign manager, Julie Chavez Rodriguez, that working-class black and Hispanic voters were simmering with outrage over the mass influx of low-skill asylum seekers, who were given work permits, temporary lodging and cellphones at taxpayer expense.

Chavez at the time [abrasively rebuked Adams](#), who had cited his familiarity with minority communities in the Big Apple. Sources say she accused him of spouting Republican talking points in a dressing-down that prompted the mayor to go public with his concerns.

“Now Democrats are paying the price and there is a clear mandate from Americans and New Yorkers to fix our broken immigration system as Adams proposed,” the source close to Adams added.

The House Democratic source further told The Post that frustration with the party’s leadership is bicameral.

“The story of this election and Donald Trump ultimately winning isn’t complicated. It came down to three things: inflation, the border and crime, and woke bullshit,” the source said.

“Biden wasn’t playing with a full deck during his term and was coopted by the far left on all three of these issues,” the source added. “Sadly, the socialist left has taken over the party, so I wouldn’t hold my breath.”

Border crossings hit an all-time record monthly high last December — with roughly 302,000 that month — before dropping after the outgoing president in June adopted a policy throttling asylum processing after a certain threshold, in a move widely seen as a tactic to improve his party’s standing in the election.

Over time, an increasing share of those encountered at the border were allowed into the US to press their claims within the [badly backlogged](#) asylum system.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in January that [more than 85%](#) of those detained for illegally crossing the border were being released into the US — up from 71% that October and 74% last November.

Republicans accused the Biden-Harris administration of cooking the books by also allowing many asylum seekers into the country through legal points of entry through the CBP One app — calling it an unlawful expansion of “parole” authority for migrants.