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Jay Carney: Joe Biden's son accepted position with Ukrainian gas company as 'private citizen'

by Susan Crabtree | May 13, 2014 04:26 PM

Hunter Biden

Vice President Joe Biden's son, Hunter Biden, has accepted a position with Ukraine's largest private gas producer, but that in no way means the White House signed off on or endorses his hiring, presidential spokesman Jay Carney said Tuesday.

Burisma Holdings announced Tuesday that Hunter Biden, Biden's youngest son, would serve on the company's board of directors.

The company in a news release on its website said Hunter Biden will be in charge of the Burisma's legal unit and will “provide support” among international organizations. The Moscow Times first reported the news Tuesday.

Asked about the hiring by a reporter Tuesday, Carney referred questions about it to the vice president's office and noted that it did not indicate that Obama was involved or approved of it.

“Hunter Biden and other members of the family are obviously private citizens and where they work is not an endorsement by the president or vice president,” he said.

Kendra Barkoff, a spokeswoman for the vice president, did not respond to questions about whether Hunter Biden discussed the job with his father or sought his approval before accepting it.

Instead, she echoed Carney's earlier statement and referred questions to Hunter Biden's New York law office.

“Hunter Biden is a private citizen and a lawyer," she said. "The vice president does not endorse any particular company and has no involvement with this company. For any additional questions, I refer you to Hunter’s office."

A spokeswoman for Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP, a national law firm based in New York where Hunter Biden works, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Amid the escalating tensions between Ukraine and Russia in recent weeks, the European Commission, the executive body of the European Union, has tried to step in to try to prevent Russia from halting natural gas shipments to Ukraine unless it pays $3.5 billion in debts.

Ukraine has so far refused to pay in protest of Moscow's decision to nearly double the price it charges Kiev for gas imports.

In the company's release, Alan Apter, the chairman of the company's board of directors, said: “The company’s strategy is aimed at the strongest concentration of professional staff and the introduction of best corporate practices, and we're delighted that Mr. Biden is joining us to help us achieve these goals."

In addition to his work at the New York law firm, Hunter also is a co-founder and a managing partner of investment advisory company Rosemont Seneca Partners and serves as director of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, a network of 400 businesses, nonprofits and foreign policy experts, and the chairman of the advisory board for the National Democratic Institute, a non-profit that works to support democratic institutions and elections around the world.

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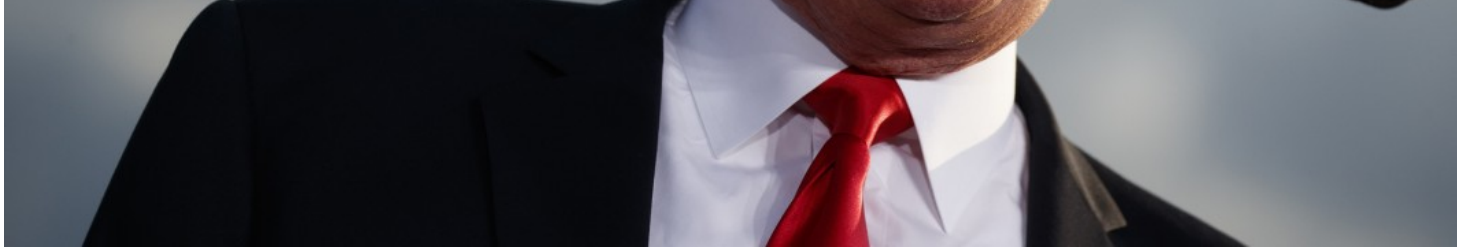

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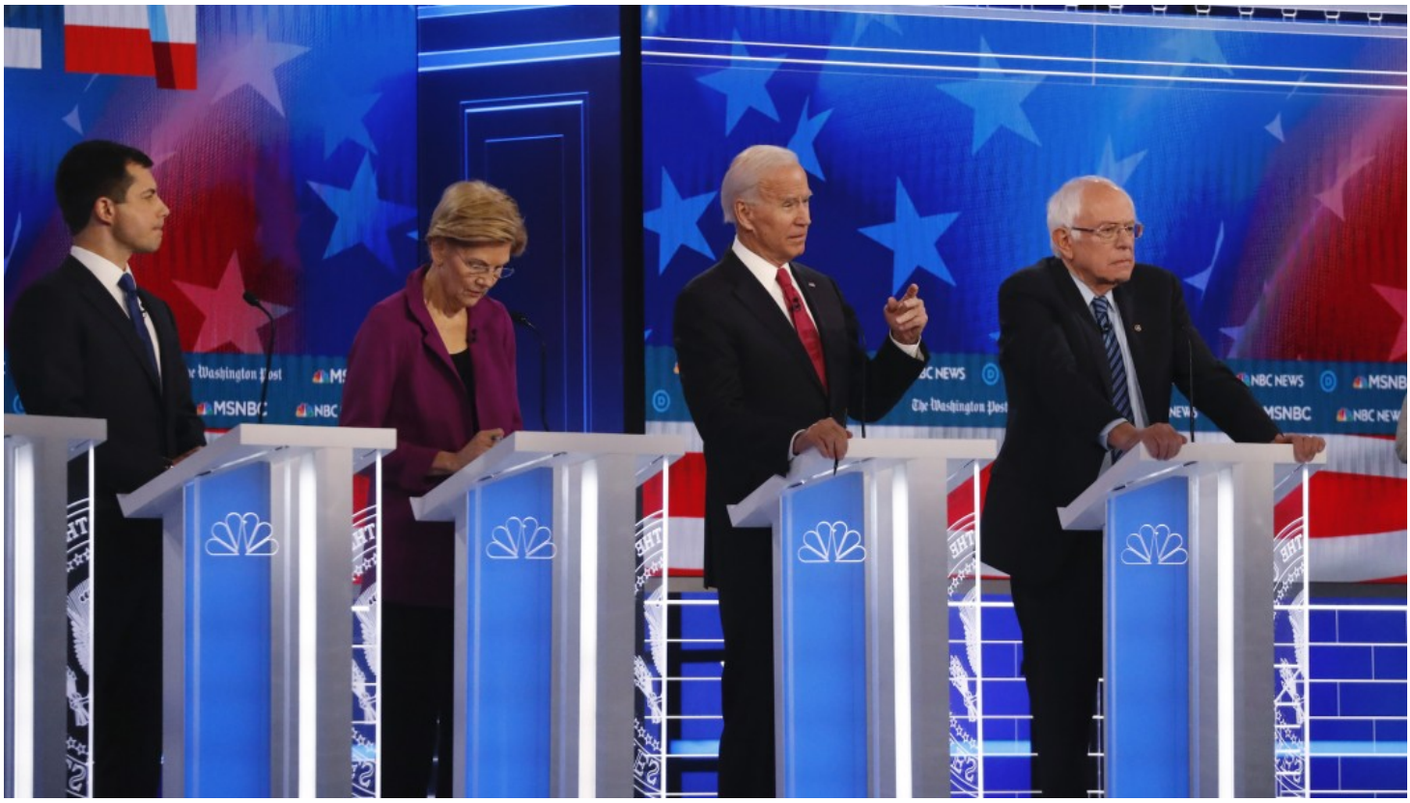

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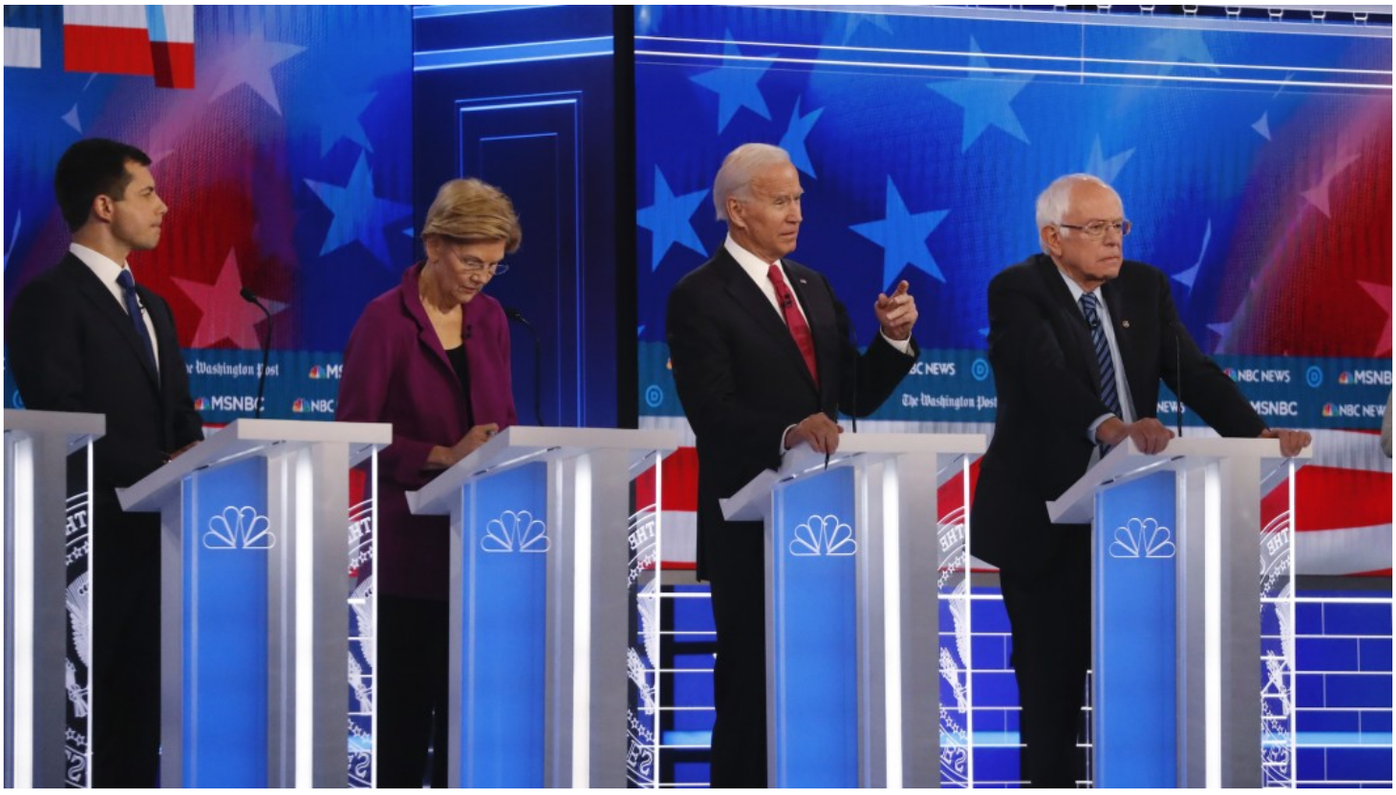

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