

# Police bar pro-Palestinian protesters outside of Hollywood fundraiser for Biden

## More than \$30 million raised for the presidential campaign of “Genocide Joe”

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While police kept anti-genocide protesters at bay outside a downtown Los Angeles theater, Hollywood actors, directors and producers, and hundreds of state and local Democratic Party officeholders, gathered Saturday to raise money for the reelection campaign of President Joe Biden. Seats at the event cost anywhere from \$250 to \$500,000—an amount that some of those in attendance could fork over as though tipping the valet.

Organizers claimed that the fundraiser at the Peacock Theater, where the Emmy Awards ceremony is held, had raked in more than \$30 million, eclipsing a similar event held on Broadway two months ago, which raised \$26 million. Former President Barack Obama joined Biden on stage, while the appearance was emceed by nighttime talk show host Jimmy Kimmel, who combined fawning comments toward Biden with sarcastic sallies against Donald Trump.

The importance of the event for the Democratic Party and the Biden campaign was shown in Biden’s decision to leave the G7 meeting of imperialist leaders in Italy Friday, skipping the final dinner, and flying across ten time zones with a stop for refueling in Washington D.C. to make his date in Los Angeles, where he arrived Saturday morning local time.

The *New York Times* reported: “Aides said the taxing schedule made clear that even at age 81, he still demonstrates the endurance to manage his many duties.”

The audience was remarkable in that it included both members of the SAG-AFTRA union who participated in last year’s lengthy and bitter strike, and members of

the Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), the bosses’ group that provoked the walkout and made use of the union’s collaboration to crush it.

Among these was Jeffrey Katzenberg, both a Hollywood mogul and a leading fundraiser for and political backer of the Biden-Harris reelection campaign. The former head of Disney Studios and later co-founder of DreamWorks is one of the wealthiest men in Hollywood and one of the most lavish financiers of the Democratic Party.

Biden, of course, purports to support the workers, but actually relies on the union apparatus to keep the workers in check—sharing that perspective with liberal capitalists like Katzenberg.

While Biden took the opportunity of the fundraising event to warn ominously about the threat to democracy from Trump and his reactionary appointees who now dominate the Supreme Court, outside the theater the Los Angeles police, under the command of Democratic Mayor Karen Bass, were carrying out their own assault on democratic rights, lining up against several hundred pro-Palestinian protesters opposing Biden’s support for the genocide in Gaza. One local press report cited protesters chanting, “Biden Biden you’re a liar, we demand a ceasefire.”

A report by the *New York Times* read:

Outside the theater complex on Olympic Boulevard, a line of black-clad police in helmets stood guard as about 100

protesters—wearing T-shirts reading “Cease-Fire Now” and carrying signs saying “Stop the Gaza Homicide”—shouted at arriving guests. “There is blood on your hands!” they said.

“People are going in to fund Biden’s reelection campaign while he is arming Israel and funding a genocide against the people in Palestine,” said one of the demonstrators, Jodie Evans, 70, a political activist and documentary producer who lives in the Venice neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Inside the hall, actor and co-host Julia Roberts warned the audience nervously that there might be actual protesters seated among them, so great was the concern in high places that the money-raising might be even slightly disrupted by opposition to mass murder and ethnic cleansing. As it happened, there was no apparent interruption, and no one was arrested either inside or outside the hall.

The anti-genocide campaign nonetheless had an effect on the gathering. The other co-host, actor George Clooney, is married to Amal Clooney, a human rights lawyer who worked on the International Criminal Court (ICC) case that resulted in the issuance of arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

After Biden denounced the warrants as “outrageous” and leading Democrats and Republicans slandered the ICC as a nest of terrorist sympathizers, George Clooney reportedly contacted the White House to complain. With the US government considering sanctions against the ICC, his wife could well have found herself a target.

But to his discredit, Clooney continued in his capacity as co-host of the fundraiser, welcoming Jimmy Kimmel to emcee the proceedings. Kimmel in turn invited Biden, Obama and other imperialist war criminals on stage and turned the event over to them.

Besides his difficult electoral position in relation to Trump, who holds a narrow lead in the polls despite his role in the first-ever attempt by a sitting president to overthrow the Constitution and seize power and his distinction as the first former president convicted on felony charges, Biden is also beginning to lose his lead in the money race, which he dominated through the first quarter of 2024.

In April, Trump outraised him, \$76 million to \$51 million, although Biden still has more campaign cash in his warchest. Both candidates are focusing on the super-rich, with Trump holding two fundraisers last week in southern California, with tickets ranging up to \$100,000 in Newport Beach and \$250,000 in Beverly Hills.

Biden’s previous trip to Los Angeles, in February, included a fundraiser at the home of billionaire cartoon media boss Haim Saban, again with a top ticket price of \$250,000.

The Peacock Theater event, far from giving a popular boost to Biden, was a stark embodiment of the deeply reactionary and anti-democratic character of the Biden campaign and the Democratic Party. It will only fuel the growing disgust, disillusionment, anger and opposition among youth and sections of workers.



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