

# As Harris campaigns with Liz Cheney, Bernie Sanders hails war criminal Joe Biden in New Hampshire

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With the US presidential election two weeks away, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders appeared Tuesday alongside outgoing President Joe Biden and several other Democratic politicians at a White House-organized event in Concord, New Hampshire.

Vice President Kamala Harris was not present for the event, as she continued to crisscross battleground states with arch-conservative warmonger and former Wyoming Representative Liz Cheney. The Democrats are deploying the daughter of George W. Bush's Vice President Dick Cheney, who has likewise endorsed Harris, in a bid to appeal to influential Republicans who view former President Donald Trump as too unreliable to manage rising class conflict at home and the expanding global war in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and ultimately China.

Appearing at an event with Liz Cheney and Maria Shriver in Oakland County, Michigan, on October 21, Harris touted her time on the Senate Foreign Intelligence Committee and attacked Trump for campaigning on ending the war in Ukraine.

"He would surrender; he would have Ukraine surrender its fight against an aggressor," Harris said. Cheney expanded on Harris's response, saying that there has been an "embrace of isolationism" within the Republican Party.

To this, Harris added that "Trump's approach would be to surrender." She continued, "Understand what that would mean. That is signaling to the president of Russia, he can get away with what he has done. Understand, look at the map, Poland would be next."

While Harris and Cheney campaigned on defending US imperialism, Tuesday's event at Concord Community College in New Hampshire was focused on the "progress" the Biden White House and the Democratic Party have made in lowering prescription drug prices

through the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. The legislation was passed along party lines, with all Democrats and those that caucus with them voting in favor.

The bill was sold as a major advance in the fight against global warming, inequality and inflation control. In reality, the pro-corporate legislation does nothing of the sort. Inflation continues to devour workers' paychecks, and the number of billionaires in the US increased from 704 in 2022 to 748 in 2023, according to *Forbes*. A March report from *inequality.org* found that in the last four years, three of which encompass the Biden-Harris administration, billionaire wealth in the US almost doubled, increasing from \$2.947 trillion to \$5.529 trillion.

The impotent efforts to combat climate change included in the bill are in the form of tax credits and handouts for so-called "green energy" projects, such as geothermal plants that use hydraulic fracking and tax credits for electric vehicle purchases. The bill provides no caps on greenhouse gas emissions or enhanced penalties for major polluters.

All of the significant social reform measures were stripped out of the final legislation, leaving only a few changes at the margins in contrast to the billions in handouts to corporations. Among the tepid reforms that remained in the bill was empowering Medicare to negotiate some prescription drug prices with the major pharmaceutical companies, which other government agencies, including the Veterans Administration, have been able to do for decades.

The ineffectual character of the legislation was borne out in the politicians' remarks. While Sanders praised the bill as a step forward in the reduction of drug costs, the

Vermont senator was forced to admit that the “top 10 pharmaceutical companies made over \$110 billion in profit last year and paid their CEOs exorbitant compensation packages,” while “one in four Americans cannot afford the medicine their doctors prescribe.”

In fact, the five largest pharmaceutical companies reported a market capitalization of \$81.9 billion in 2022, an increase of over \$8 billion from 2021, according to a 2023 analysis by Accountable.US.

A June report from *Fierce Pharma* found that Eli Lilly, the largest pharmaceutical company in the world, paid its CEO Dave Ricks \$26.6 million in 2023. Johnson & Johnson CEO Joaquin Duato was the highest paid pharma CEO in 2023, pulling in \$28.4 million, a 116 percent leap in pay from the previous year.

Merck CEO Robert Davis received an 8 percent pay increase in 2023, to \$20.3 million, up from \$18.7 million the year before. Former AbbVie CEO Richard Gonzalez, who retired in July of this year, took home \$25.7 million in 2023. Finally, Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla was paid \$21.56 million in 2023 on top of the staggering \$33 million he was paid in 2022.

All of the CEOs’ pay was greatly increased due to huge increases in the stock prices of each of the corporations. Between 2021 and 2022, the five firms combined to spend \$6.9 billion on stock buybacks and dividend payments. From 2019 through 2021, the top five drug companies spent \$13 billion more on stock buybacks on dividends than they spent on research and development over the same period, according to Accountable.US.

This reality did not prevent Sanders and Biden from praising themselves for passing the Medicare negotiation provision. “We are making some progress,” Sanders declared.

The real progress Sanders and Biden have made is in increasing the wealth of the richest people on the planet, even as millions of people in the US ration or go without medical care. The phony “socialist” Sanders opposes the nationalization of the pharmaceutical industry and its transformation into a public utility under the democratic control of the working class.

In his remarks, Sanders studiously avoided any talk of the Gaza genocide, the expansion of the Israeli slaughter into Lebanon, the imminent war against Iran, or the proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, all of which have been made possible by US arms, money and political support under

Biden.

Instead, after praising Biden, he appealed to Republicans and Democrats in Congress to “do the right thing,” “ignore all the lobbyists” and “campaign contributions,” and “lower the costs of drugs in America” by voting to expand subsidies included in the Affordable Care Act, which Trump and the Republicans have campaigned on eliminating entirely.

In his remarks, Biden touted the \$35 cap on insulin for Medicare patients, while noting that it only costs \$10 to manufacture and that the inventor of insulin purposely did not patent it in the hope that it would be freely available to all who needed it. Under the Inflation Reduction Act, as Biden noted, companies making insulin “are still making a profit. They are making 350 percent profit.”

“Look, I’m a capitalist,” Biden declared three separate times.

While the event was focused on lowering prescription drug costs, Biden ended his remarks by touting his “experience in foreign policy” and calling for a vote for Harris.

“If America walks away, who leads the world? Who?” Biden shouted.

After Biden concluded his remarks, Sanders came on stage and put his arm around him. The president raised Sanders’ hand and pointed to him. Biden leaned into Sanders and said, loud enough for the microphones to pick up, “We’ve been doing this a long time, pal.” Sanders smiled and laughed.

The friendly event in New Hampshire completely exposes all the pseudo-left elements and forces who claimed that a vote for Biden in 2020, with Sanders by his side, would “push” Biden and the Democrats to the left. Throughout the Biden-Harris administration, Sanders has provided a left cover for the right-wing policies enacted, including the defense by both parties of the for-profit healthcare system.

In the 2024 presidential election, the only campaign that is fighting to unite the working class on the basis of an independent socialist program that will guarantee healthcare for all is that of the Socialist Equality Party and its candidates, Joseph Kishore and Jerry White.



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