

# President Biden pardons his son Hunter Biden on gun and tax felonies

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President Joe Biden on Sunday issued a full and unconditional pardon for his son Hunter—including not only the tax evasion and gun possession charges for which he has been convicted, but any offenses he may have committed over the past 10 years.

The action preempts Hunter Biden's upcoming sentencing hearings, set for later this month, in Delaware for illegally purchasing a gun when he was banned from doing so as a convicted felon (for drug possession), and in California, on nine counts of tax evasion, based on concealing income he used to fuel his drug addiction and lavish lifestyle.

Biden repeatedly denied, throughout his administration, that he would ever pardon his son, claiming he stood on the principle of non-interference in the activities of the Department of Justice. These assertions were redoubled during his abortive reelection campaign, when Biden and his aides professed to be outraged over press inquiries about a potential pardon.

Even after his campaign collapsed, following his obvious incapacity demonstrated during his debate with Donald Trump last June, and Biden withdrew and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris as his replacement, he and his aides continued to deny that there was any possibility of a pardon for Hunter Biden.

All this changed, of course, with the defeat of Harris November 5, the election of Trump, and the transformation of Biden into a lame duck, counting down the days before his political enemies will take over full control of the federal government: the White House, both houses of Congress and the Supreme Court.

At that point, Biden moved to protect his son and, indirectly, his brother James Biden, who was Hunter's partner in a number of shady business ventures, and himself. The blanket pardon was described by media commentators and legal experts as the most sweeping such presidential action since Gerald Ford pardoned

Richard Nixon in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, which led to Nixon's forced resignation from the presidency and Ford's elevation to the White House.

Hunter Biden was pardoned, not only for the offenses for which he has been convicted, but for any offenses committed since January 1, 2014. This date is revealing, since only a few months later Hunter Biden took a lucrative position on the board of directors of Burisma Corp., a Ukrainian energy company, at the time when his father, then Vice President Biden, had been given charge of US policy in Ukraine by President Barack Obama.

Similarly, Gerald Ford pardoned Nixon, not only of the Watergate-related crimes for which he was about to be impeached, but for any other crimes he might have committed during his presidency. This potentially included actions far more criminal and dangerous than authorizing the burglary of the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate complex and seeking to block the prosecution of the burglars by having the CIA intercede with the FBI and the Department of Justice.

Nixon could have been prosecuted for the secret and illegal bombing of Cambodia, a massive war crime which ultimately brought the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime of Pol Pot to power; for countless actions in relation to Vietnam; and for other attacks on democratic rights within the United States, including multiple cases of political spying and "dirty tricks" against his opponents.

Hunter Biden is, of course, a far less consequential figure than Nixon, and his crimes hardly compare to those of an American president—including the crimes perpetrated by Joe Biden in his role as "commander-in-chief" of US imperialism. If President Biden were to be brought to justice, facilitating his son's influence peddling by trading on the family name would be only a misdemeanor in comparison to facilitating Israeli genocide in Gaza, instigating the US-NATO war against

Russia in Ukraine, or authorizing mass spying on the people of the United States and the entire world.

Biden claimed that he was pardoning his son because he had been “selectively, and unfairly, prosecuted,” adding, “No reasonable person who looks at the facts of Hunter’s cases can reach any other conclusion than Hunter was singled out only because he is my son—and that is wrong.”

While it is true that the Republican Party, and Trump in particular, seized on Hunter Biden’s sleazy activities as a means of undermining his father’s political fortunes, it is notable that Biden chooses to protect his son from potential retaliation from the incoming Trump-Vance administration while doing nothing to protect any other likely victims of this government of fascists, billionaires and conspiracy theorists.

There are no presidential pardons for the Dreamers, the nearly 1 million immigrants brought to the United States as children, who have grown up as part of American society. Executive orders issued by Barack Obama and renewed by Biden have allowed these mainly young people to work and attend college without fear of mass deportations, but they have been compelled to register their status with the federal government, an action that now makes them vulnerable to the mass roundups and expulsions threatened by Trump.

These immigrants are being left to the mercy of fascist xenophobes and bigots like Stephen Miller and Tom Homan, who will lead the campaign of mass detention and deportation that Trump has pledged to launch on “day one” of his second administration.

Homan has already threatened to jail Democratic mayors who refuse to cooperate with the mass deportation regime, but Biden has not suggested that he will seek to preempt such an attack on democratic rights—even for elected officials of his own party.

On the contrary, at a meeting welcoming Trump to the White House last month, where he displayed a mixture of servility and senility, Biden pledged the “smoothest” transition from his own government to that of a man he had labeled a fascist only weeks before.

The pardon of Hunter Biden is a political gift to Trump, since it amounts to legitimizing the use of the presidential pardon power for political and personal gain. Trump responded immediately by denouncing the pardon as an abuse of power, while at the same time suggesting he would now move ahead with pardoning those who attacked the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, seeking to block congressional certification of his defeat in the 2020 presidential election. He called these fascist thugs the “J-6

hostages.”

Trump has, of course, already used the pardon power in the same fashion as Biden, to reward his own cronies and accomplices. In the waning days of his first administration, he pardoned Charles Kushner, father of his son-in-law Jared Kushner, who served a lengthy prison term for tax evasion, witness tampering and extortion. He also pardoned several political agents, including former campaign chair Paul Manafort and longtime adviser and January 6 co-conspirator Roger Stone, a former provocateur for Richard Nixon.

There is another yardstick to measure the decay and crisis of the US political system. President Biden has pardoned his son after four years in which he has pardoned fewer victims of the US criminal justice system than any president in two centuries (not counting two presidents, William Henry Harrison and James A. Garfield, who died early in office before issuing any pardons).

Biden’s 26 pardons demonstrate a particularly mean attitude towards the doling out of official mercy. Looking back at the 20th century, Franklin Roosevelt in his 13 years in office pardoned 3,687, followed by Woodrow Wilson, 2,480, Harry Truman, 2,044, and Calvin Coolidge, 1,545. Herbert Hoover delivered 1,345 pardons in his one four-year term, the same tenure as Biden.

None of these administrations were paragons of justice, and many of those pardoned were corrupt high officials or political cronies of the president of the day, but the number of actual pardons has steadily declined since the 1960s, from four digits to three digits, to 237 under Trump in his first term and now 26, the lowest of any president to serve his full term since John Adams.



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