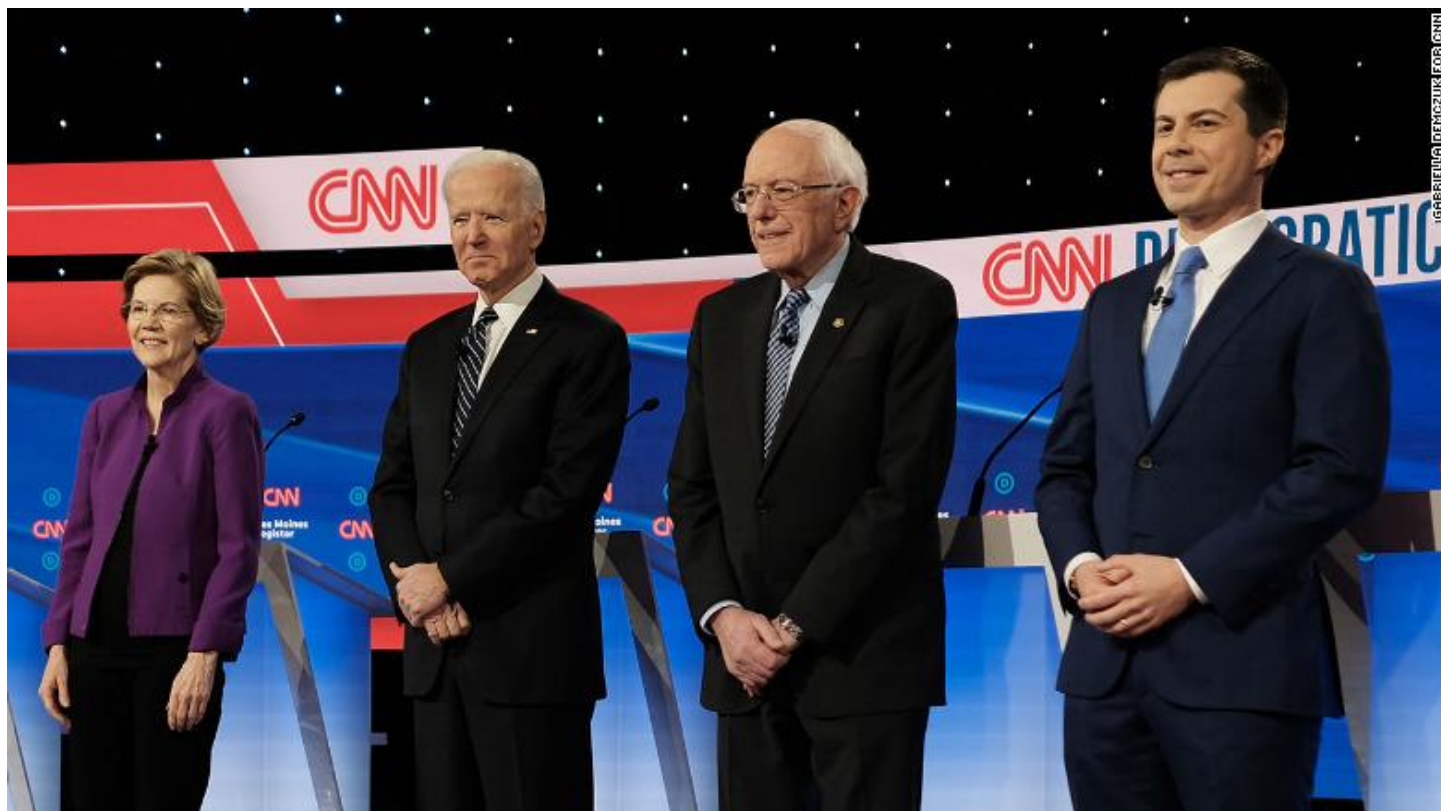


# Biden adopts signature tactics from former primary rivals as he prepares for general election against Trump

By [Arlette Saenz](#) and [Eric Bradner](#), CNN

Updated 10:00 AM ET, Sat May 23, 2020



**(CNN)** — [Joe Biden](#) is adopting some of his former Democratic presidential primary rivals' best-known tactics as he seeks to bridge the party's gaps headed into his general election match-up against President [Donald Trump](#).

He consulted with [Pete Buttigieg](#) as his campaign turned the former South Bend, Indiana, mayor's "Rules of the Road" -- a set of values for his campaign and its supporters -- into Biden's own new "[Campaign Code](#)."

Last week he [dialed supporters](#) with [Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren](#), for whom the tactic -- and the videos it helped produce on social media -- was a keystone as she shunned traditional high-dollar fundraisers.

And he and Buttigieg hosted a virtual "grassroots" fundraiser, a small-dollar event modeled after the events Buttigieg often held, on Friday.

The efforts offer Biden a chance to tap into the popularity and excitement surrounding his former rivals. Part of the aim, a Biden adviser said, is to appeal to the cultural components of past campaigns that are important to those supporters while also maintaining an authentic feeling for Biden and his campaign.

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It all comes as Biden's campaign morphs from a largely offline primary effort, where support from older voters, especially African Americans, catapulted him to the Democratic nomination, into one that is attempting to unite the party and gear up for what the [coronavirus pandemic](#) could force to be a general election battle that's fought over the internet and airwaves.

to Duckio, national press secretary for the Biden campaign. "It's because of this kind of cooperation and unity that we will beat Donald Trump this November."

The calls with Warren and the code borrowed from Buttigieg both align with the image of Biden that his campaign has sought to portray: an empathetic figure who is motivated by the personal connections he makes and stories he hears on the campaign trail.

"These tactics work because they're authentic to Joe Biden," said Lis Smith, the Buttigieg strategist who said she and other former staffers have been in contact with Biden's campaign.

"It doesn't come across as pandering. He's doing it in a way that is authentic to him and that is authentic to his campaign, and that's why I think it's so powerful," she said.

Adopting some of his former rivals' tactics is part of Biden's broader effort to bring Democrats together after a bruising primary campaign. Biden and [Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders](#), his strongest rival in the party's primary, have assembled a

series of working groups on policy issues.

Biden's team has been deliberate in welcoming supporters of past opponents. This includes helping produce graphics for members of Buttigieg's "Team Pete" and [Kamala Harris](#)' "KHive" now on board with the former vice president's campaign -- a move that allows those people to maintain their identities as supporters of Biden's former rivals while lining up behind the party's choice to take on Trump.

As a gesture of thanks to Buttigieg's supporters on Super Tuesday, the Biden campaign's press shop [learned a dance](#) to the song "High Hopes" by Panic! at the Disco, which had become a light-hearted joke among Buttigieg's followers. And Biden himself sought to extend olive branches to Sanders' supporters as the primary wound down, frequently praising the Vermont senator and courting his supporters in speeches.

Buttigieg's "Rules of the Road" were the first prominent example of Biden -- who has had to grow his staff for the general election while at home in Delaware, with aides working from their homes, as well -- adopting a former rival's tactics.

Biden and Buttigieg have spoken several times in recent months, and Biden's campaign asked for Buttigieg's feedback and sign-off before making public its "Campaign Code."

"It was really smart to have Pete that involved in this process, because it signals to Pete's supporters that the Biden campaign wasn't just paying Pete's campaign and Pete's supporters lip service," Smith said.

This week Buttigieg emailed his campaign's list to invite them to his first grassroots fundraiser with Biden. It's the sort of event that could bring new online donors into Biden's campaign -- and allow the campaign to hit those donors again and again for contributions.

"Grassroots fundraisers are really important to me. They are based on the idea that the experience of a political fundraiser, often regarded as high-dollar closed-door events in the past, should be equally available to folks chipping in \$5, \$25 at a time," he said.

Biden's embrace of his rival's campaigns extends to policy and staffing as well. Biden campaign manager [Jen O'Malley Dillon](#), who took over leading the team in March, initially ran former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke's presidential bid. And several other O'Rourke staffers now fill prominent roles in Biden's campaign.

This week, Biden's campaign announced the hiring of Julie Chavez Rodriguez, the former co-national political director for the Harris campaign, as a senior adviser focusing on Latino outreach and state operations. The

Biden's advisers maintain frequent contact with the teams of former opponents. Rob Flaherty, Biden's digital director who is an alum of O'Rourke's campaign, has coordinated digital and social media efforts, and a trio of top advisers -- Cristóbal Alex, Stef Feldman and Symone Sanders -- work with outside groups and former rivals' teams on policy issues.

Biden has already made policy overtures to past campaigns, including embracing [Warren's bankruptcy plan](#) and teaming up with the Massachusetts senator to highlight possible corruption in the Trump administration's coronavirus relief efforts. He's credited Sanders and his supporters for "laying the groundwork" on two of Biden's recent policy commitments -- lowering the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 60 and forgiving student loan debt for low-income and middle-class borrowers who attended public colleges and universities, historically black colleges and universities, and other institutions geared toward students of color.

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The Biden and Sanders' teams have set up unity task forces aiming to work together on six key policy areas. New York Rep. [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#), an ardent Sanders supporter, is co-chairing the group focusing on climate change along with Biden backer former Secretary of State John Kerry.

As Democrats turn their attention to the general election, the Biden campaign is working to maximize the use of former rivals in virtual fundraising and events. [New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker](#), Buttigieg, Harris and Klobuchar have all participated in recent fundraisers for the former vice president.

[New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand](#), Harris, Klobuchar and O'Rourke, have headlined virtual campaign events and calls for the campaign. Klobuchar, Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee and Andrew Yang have appeared on Biden's podcast "Here's the Deal."

Biden made his own calls to grassroots donors occasionally during the primary, but he's aimed to make those personalized calls more frequently since he became the presumptive Democratic nominee. Like Warren once did, his team dangles the possibility of a call from Biden in many of its fundraising pitches.

Biden and Warren recently teamed up to call those grassroots donors together.

"I wanted to call to say thank you for contributing to Vice President Biden's campaign. You're one of the people we're counting on," Warren said in a video of the calls. "Today I've got a special guest ... take it away Joe."

"Carroll, this is Joe Biden," the former vice president said. "I was kidding with the senator a moment ago. I said, you know I used to call my contributors, but I never had as many until she endorsed me," said Biden. "I'm counting on her a great deal not just for her endorsement, but for her ideas and her leadership."



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