

Joe Biden to speak about Social Security

CHICAGO (AP) Former President Joe Biden returns to the national stage Tuesday to elevate liberal concerns that President Donald Trump's agenda is threatening the health of Social Security.

The 82-year-old Democrat has largely avoided speaking publicly since leaving the White House in January, which is typically the tradition for immediate past presidents. That's even as Trump frequently blames Biden for many of the nation's problems, often attacking his predecessor by name.

Biden is expected to fight back in an early evening speech to the national conference of Advocates, Counselors and Representatives for the Disabled in Chicago. While Biden has made a handful of public appearances in recent weeks, Tuesday's high-profile address focuses on a critical issue for tens of millions of Americans that could define next year's mid-term elections.

"This is an all hands on deck moment, which is why President Biden's voice in this moment is so important," Democratic House leader Hakeem Jeffries said in a call with reporters ahead of Biden's speech.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, meanwhile, took a shot at the



Then-President Joe Biden speaks in Charleston, S.C., Jan. 19.

former president's age when asked about his speech.

"I'm shocked that he is speaking at nighttime," Leavitt said during Tuesday's White House press briefing. "I thought his bedtime was much earlier than his speech tonight."

She said that Trump, who is 78 years old, would sign a presidential memorandum Tuesday afternoon "aimed at stopping illegal aliens, and other ineligible people, from obtaining" Social Security benefits. The memorandum will expand the Social Security Administration's fraud prosecutor program to at least 50 U.S. attorney offices, and establish Medicare and Medicaid fraud prosecution

programs in 15 U.S. attorney offices, Leavitt said.

Despite such moves, the Social Security Administration has been plagued by controversy under Trump's leadership.

The Republican president almost immediately began slashing the government workforce upon his return to the White House, including thousands of employees at the Social Security Administration.

Along with a planned layoff of 7,000 workers and contentious plans to impose tighter identity-proofing measures for recipients, the SSA has been sued over a decision to allow Trump adviser Elon Musk's Department of Gov-

ernment Efficiency to access individuals' Social Security numbers and other personally identifiable information.

Musk, the world's richest man and one of Trump's most influential advisers, has called Social Security "the biggest Ponzi scheme of all time."

At the same time, Social Security recipients have complained about long call wait times as the agency's "my Social Security" benefits portal has seen an increase in outages. Individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income, including disabled seniors and low-income adults and children, also reported receiving a notice that said they were "not receiving benefits."

The agency said the notice was a mistake, and the White House has vowed that it would not cut Social Security benefits, saying any changes are intended to reduce waste and fraud.

Biden will be joined in Chicago by a bipartisan group of former elected officials, including former Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., former Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., and former Social Security Administrator Martin O'Malley.

"Social Security is a sacred promise between generations," O'Malley said. "We are deeply grateful to the Presi-

dent for joining us at ACRD to discuss how we can keep that promise for all Americans."

Biden is not expected to make frequent public appearances as he transitions into his post-presidency. He still maintains an office in Washington, but has returned to Delaware as his regular home base. Trump has revoked his security clearances.

While Biden may be in a position to help his party with fundraising and messaging, he left the White House with weak approval ratings. Biden also faces blame from some progressives who argue he shouldn't have sought a second term. Biden ended his reelection bid after his disastrous debate performance against Trump and made way for then-Vice President Kamala Harris, who lost to Trump in the fall.

Just 39% of Americans had a favorable opinion of Biden in January, according to a Gallup poll taken shortly after Trump's inauguration.

Views of the Democratic former president were essentially unchanged from a Gallup poll taken shortly after the November election. They broadly track with the steadily low favorability ratings that Biden experienced throughout the second half of his presidential term.

Dozens of student pilots sue United Airlines and its flight school over fraud allegations

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dozens of former student pilots who say they racked up tens of thousands of dollars in debt for tuition are suing United Airlines and its flight school in the Arizona desert, saying it didn't have enough teachers or aircraft to properly train and graduate its students.

The federal lawsuit accuses United and the school, United Aviate Academy, of falsely promoting a well-equipped, intensive training program that would put students on a path to becoming commercial pilots after a year. In reality, the students said in an amended complaint filed last week, their flight time was limited due to the staffing shortages and frequent staff turnover. In some cases, students were teaching other students, according to the lawsuit.

Some of the students said they ultimately left the program when it became clear they would not finish training after a year. But many of them alleged in the lawsuit that they were wrongly expelled from the school for "taking too long to advance" through the program.

Around the time of the pandemic, United purchased the pilot school in the Phoenix suburb of Goodyear to address a critical prob-

lem facing the industry: not enough pilots. Airlines have complained about the shortage for years, but they made it worse during the COVID-19 outbreak by encouraging pilots to take early retirement when air travel collapsed in 2020.

In a statement, Chicago-based United said it couldn't comment on specific allegations, citing the ongoing lawsuit, but it defended its pilot school.

"We have the highest confidence in the rigorous curriculum and flight training program provided at United Aviate Academy and are proud of the school's hundreds of graduates," the statement said.

The lawsuit claims the school had an enrollment cap of 325 students "to ensure sufficient resources." Instead, according to the complaint, there were more than 380 students

enrolled in the program in March 2024.

Within months, the school's accrediting body issued a warning letter to the flight school, in part because of its enrollment numbers, according to the lawsuit.

Around this time, the lawsuit claims that United Aviate Academy began expelling students from the program "in order to comply with the enrollment cap."

By August of that year, the school was placed on probation by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges, according to the lawsuit. The school voluntarily withdrew its accreditation in January.

United told The Associated Press that it "is exploring an alternative accreditation that better meets the needs of the flight school."

Richard Levy, a retired

captain who flew for a major international airline for 41 years and who now works as a flight instructor in Texas, said a one-year program is in line with industry training standards. He said students who want to fly commercial jets will typically train for about a year and then go on to work for a regional airline to log additional flying time — up to 1,500 hours — before flying for a major airline.

What's important, Levy said, is that students are flying frequently and following a structured, uniform program during their training.

But the lawsuit says that at one point there were roughly 20 aircraft for the hundreds of students enrolled in United's flight school. One student said he was able to fly just once or twice over several months and was repeatedly reassigned

instructors. He was eventually expelled for "taking too long to advance" through his courses, the lawsuit alleges.

Another expelled student said she had a different instructor during each of her first four flights. During her eighth flight, she said, her instructor was a fellow student of the program.

"It was students teaching students," the lawsuit says. It also alleges that students were sometimes evaluated by instructors who were not pilots themselves.

Levy said he's "never heard of" non-pilots evaluating student pilots.

Most of the students

suing said they took out loans with the expectation that they were attending a one-year program that would lead to "gainful employment." Many of them had to relocate to Arizona to attend the program.

One student sold his home, according to the lawsuit. Another left his job of 21 years to "pursue his dream" of becoming a pilot while his husband stayed behind at their home in Texas.

The lawsuit was filed in federal court in Phoenix on behalf of 29 former students from states across the country, including Florida, Texas, California, Colorado, Nevada and Connecticut.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE BOIL WATER ADVISORY GREENUP WATER DEPARTMENT

Due to a 6 inch PVC water main leak there is a boil water advisory at Smithbranch Road. Approximately 60 customers are affected.

Roger Harris
City of Greenup
Line Foreman

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The City of Ashland hereby advises, without further notice, that any person or entity claiming ownership of or holding interest or other encumbrances in the property described below is notified that the structures have been found unsafe and unfit for human habitation or use. All structures are to be repaired or demolished within thirty (30) days of the publication of this notice.

Failure to repair, demolish, or obtain a restraining order within thirty (30) days will result in the City of Ashland razing and removing all structures. A lien for all associated notification, legal, and demolition expenses will be charged against the real estate.

2449 Clinton Street, Ashland, KY 41101

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