

Where Kamala Harris Stands on the Issues: Abortion, Immigration and More



By **Maggie Astor**

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With Vice President [Kamala Harris](#) poised to replace President Biden on the Democratic ticket, her stances on key issues will be scrutinized by both parties and the nation's voters. She has a long record in politics: as district attorney of San Francisco, as attorney general of California, as a senator, as a presidential candidate and as vice president. Here is an overview of where she stands.

Abortion

Ms. Harris supports legislation that would protect the right to abortion nationally, as *Roe v. Wade* did before it was overturned in 2022, in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. After the *Dobbs* ruling, she became central to the Biden campaign's efforts to keep the spotlight on abortion, given that Mr. Biden — with his [personal discomfort](#) with abortion and his support for restrictions [earlier in his career](#) — was a flawed messenger. In March, she made what was believed to be the first official visit to an abortion clinic by a president or vice president. She consistently supported abortion rights during her time in the Senate, including [cosponsoring legislation](#) that would have banned common state-level restrictions, like requiring doctors to perform specific tests or have hospital admitting privileges in order to provide abortions. As a presidential candidate in 2019, she [argued](#) that states with a history of restricting abortion rights in violation of *Roe* should be subject to what is known as pre-clearance for new abortion laws — those laws would have to be federally approved before they could take effect. That proposal is not viable now that the Supreme Court has overturned *Roe*.

Climate change

Ms. Harris has supported the Biden administration's [climate efforts](#), including legislation that provided hundreds of billions of dollars in tax credits and rebates for renewable energy and electric vehicles. "It is clear the clock is not just ticking, it is banging," she said in [a speech last year](#), referring to increasingly severe and frequent disasters spurred by climate change. "And that is why, one year ago, President Biden and I made the largest climate investment in America's history." During her 2020 presidential campaign, she emphasized the need for [environmental justice](#), a framework that calls for policies to address the adverse effects that climate change has on poor communities and people of color. She [has emphasized that](#) as vice president as well. In 2019, Ms. Harris, then a senator, and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Democrat of New York, [introduced legislation](#) that would have evaluated environmental rules and laws by how they affected low-income communities. It would have also established an independent Office of Climate and Environmental Justice

Accountability and created a “senior adviser on climate justice” within several federal agencies. In 2020, Ms. Harris [introduced](#) a more sweeping version of the bill. None of the legislation was passed.

Democracy

Ms. Harris [was tasked with leading](#) the Biden administration’s efforts to secure voting rights legislation, a job [she asked for](#). The legislation — which went through several iterations but was ultimately [blocked in the Senate](#) — would have countered voting restrictions in Republican-led states, limited gerrymandering and regulated campaign finance more strictly.

This year, she met with voting rights advocates and [described a strategy](#) that included creating a task force on threats to election workers and challenging state voting restrictions in court.

She has condemned former President Donald J. Trump’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election results. In [a speech in 2022](#) marking the anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, she said that day had showed “what our nation would look like if the forces who seek to dismantle our democracy are successful.” She added, “What was at stake then, and now, is the right to have our future decided the way the Constitution prescribes it: by we the people, all the people.”

Economic policy

In campaign events this year, Ms. Harris has promoted the Biden administration’s economic policies, including the infrastructure bill that Mr. Biden signed, funding for small businesses, a provision in the Inflation Reduction Act that capped the cost of insulin for people on Medicare and student debt forgiveness.

She indicated [at an event](#) in May that the administration’s policies to combat climate change would also bring economic benefits by creating jobs in the renewable energy industry. At [another event](#), she promoted more than \$100 million in Energy Department grants for auto parts manufacturers to pivot to electric vehicles, which she said would “help to keep our auto supply chains here in America.”

As a senator, she introduced legislation that would have provided [a tax credit of up to \\$6,000](#) for middle- and low-income families, a proposal she emphasized during her presidential campaign as a way to address income inequality.

Immigration

One of Ms. Harris’s mandates as vice president has been to address the root causes of migration from Latin America, like poverty and violence in migrants’ home countries. Last year, she [announced](#) \$950 million in pledges from private companies to support Central American communities. Similar commitments made previously totaled about \$3 billion.

In 2021, she visited the U.S.-Mexico border and [said](#): “This issue cannot be reduced to a political issue. We’re talking about children, we’re talking about families, we are talking about suffering.”

More recently, she backed a bipartisan border security deal that Mr. Biden endorsed but Mr. Trump, by urging [Republican lawmakers to kill it](#), effectively torpedoed. The legislation would have closed the border if crossings reached a set threshold, and it would have funded thousands of new border security agents and asylum officers. “We are very clear, and I think most Americans are clear, that we have a broken immigration system and we need to fix it,” [Ms. Harris said in March](#).

Israel and Gaza

Ms. Harris [called in March](#) for an “immediate cease-fire” in Gaza and described the situation there as a “humanitarian catastrophe.” She said that “the threat Hamas poses to the people of Israel must be eliminated” but also that “too many innocent Palestinians have been killed.”

In [an interview later that month](#), she emphasized her opposition to an Israeli invasion of Rafah, the city in southern Gaza to which more than a million people had fled. “I have studied the maps,” she said. “There’s nowhere for those folks to go, and we’re looking at about 1.5 million people in Rafah who are there because they were told to go there, most of them.”

She has said on multiple occasions that she supports a two-state solution.

Racial justice

Racial justice was a theme of Ms. Harris's presidential campaign. In [a memorable debate exchange in 2019](#), she denounced Mr. Biden's past work with segregationist senators and opposition to school busing mandates. [She has called](#) for ending mandatory minimum sentences, cash bail and the death penalty, which disproportionately affect people of color.

Amid the protests that followed the police killing of George Floyd in 2020, she was one of the senators who [introduced](#) the Justice in Policing Act, which would have made it easier to prosecute police officers, created a national registry of police misconduct and required officers to complete training on racial profiling. It was not passed.

[Her record](#) as a prosecutor also came into play during her presidential campaign. [Critics noted](#) that as attorney general of California, she had generally avoided stepping in to investigate police killings.

[Maggie Astor](#) covers politics for The New York Times, focusing on breaking news, policies, campaigns and how underrepresented or marginalized groups are affected by political systems. [More about Maggie Astor](#)