

THE SOFT BIGOTRY OF NO EXPECTATIONS ON TRUMP

WaPo has an editorial out, purporting to compare the policy platforms of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. Its punchline is that Kamala can lift up politics by going deep on policy, something it admits Trump has not done.

Ms. Harris says she wants to elevate American politics, an imperative that Mr. Trump has again shown little interest in. She therefore has an opportunity to lift up her campaign by going deep on substance.

This comparison lists five policies from Trump, seven from the Vice President, plus the common no tips on taxes:

Trump

1. Building the border wall
2. Conducting mass deportations
3. Raising tariffs
4. Ending the green energy transition
5. Challenging traditional alliances while going easy on rivals such as Russian President Vladimir Putin

Common

- Waiving taxes on tips

Harris

1. Capping insulin costs

2. Continuing Biden's climate plan
3. Boosting housing supply
4. Enhancing effective anti-poverty programs such as the child tax credit and the earned-income tax credit
5. [Protecting] Justice Department independence
6. Seeking robust protections for reproductive rights
7. Strengthening U.S. alliances such as NATO

WaPo ignores some obvious policies from Trump, such as his tax cuts for billionaires (though that is alluded to in its observation that Trump would add \$5.8 trillion to the nation debt, as compared to \$1.2 trillion for Kamala), or his determination to eliminate protections for civil service workers and use DOJ for what he calls revenge but which is in reality forced loyalty. Plus, they count "deport millions" as a stated policy goal of Trump, without noting that he has never provided, never even been asked to provide, details about how he would pay for it, how he'd make up for shortfalls in things like Social Security, how he'd ensure food gets picked and houses get built.

This editorial, on its face, shows that Harris has provided more detail on policy than Trump has.

Yet even though WaPo can identify more policy proposals from Kamala than Trump, it nevertheless holds her accountable for providing more.

Aside from certain specifics – such as building the border wall, conducting mass deportations and raising tariffs – Mr. Trump has never detailed much of an agenda. (His supporters at Project 2025

have prepared a pointedly conservative plan for his second term, though Mr. Trump distanced himself from it after it became a political liability.) As for Ms. Harris, the charitable view is that she has had little time to develop detailed proposals. The less generous take is that she wants to avoid revealing many specifics, lest she alienate one constituency or another. Coasting on “vibes” has worked well for her so far; she has taken a slim lead in national polling, and surveys suggest she has become competitive in all the battleground states.

But the novelty of Ms. Harris’s campaign is wearing thin as an excuse for releasing only the schematics of a platform. She promises “a new way forward,” pitching herself as a change agent, even though she is the sitting vice president and takes credit for the elements of the Biden agenda with which she wants to be associated, such as a cap on seniors’ insulin costs and the administration’s climate plan.

Trump has been running for 21 months; his campaign is more than 90% over. The Vice President has been running 43 days; her campaign still has almost 60% to go.

And yet they’re putting demands on the woman in the race, making no such demand on the white male former President.

The press has gone 21 months without throwing this kind of tantrum with Donald Trump. Given that, this column says more about the failures of journalists to hold Trump accountable than it does any shortcoming on Kamala’s part.

At some point, the traditional media needs to explain why it is so much more rabid about getting policy from Kamala than Trump.

Journalists need to come to grips, publicly,

with why they apply this soft bigotry of no expectations to Donald Trump. Is it because they know he'll deny them access if they make similar demands on him? Is it a (justifiable) fear he'll sic a violent supporter on them, as he did the other night in Johnstown, with Trump observing, "beautiful, that's beautiful, that's alright, that's okay, no, he's on our side. We get a little itchy, David, don't we? No, no, he's on our side," as the man was tased? Is it a resignation to the fact that Trump will just lie anyway?

Whatever the explanation for *why* the press applies so much lower expectations on the former President, who has been running for 21 months, than it does on Kamala Harris, just over a month into her campaign, the explanation is a far, far more important story to tell voters than precisely how the Vice President plans to restore the Child Tax Credit.

The only thing this comparison has done is make visible WaPo's – and the press corp's, generally – soft bigotry with Donald Trump, the double standard they are applying in their expectations for Kamala Harris as compared to none for Trump.

The lesson of this editorial, contrary to WaPo's preferred punchline, is that the press is misdirecting where their attention should be focused.

Update: Tweaked to reflect that Trump is a white male former President, not a former white male.