

Nation

Mutual contempt on display at first Trump-Biden debate

By TODD J. GILLMAN
TNS

CLEVELAND — Two topics were inescapable at the first debate between President Donald Trump and former vice president Joe Biden: death and taxes.

And there was much to learn, if you could get past the mutual bickering and Trump's relentless interruptions, at times halting his chatter as Biden paused, then resuming as soon as Biden tried to continue.

"It's hard to get any word in with this clown," Biden said midway through Tuesday's 90-minute debate, a sneering, snarling clash between rivals who made no effort to conceal their contempt for each other.

"People understand. It's 47 years, you've done nothing," Trump said again and again, complaining that the public would understand just how great his presidency has been if not for "the fake news."

... They give me bad press, because that's the way it is."

The COVID-19 crisis was at top of the agenda as the rivals met in Cleveland on Tuesday night, along with late-breaking revelations that Trump paid no federal income tax in most of the last 20 years and reported staggering losses from ventures that supposedly made him a billionaire. Trump did not dispute that he paid just \$750 in federal income tax each of his first two years as president.

"Show us your tax returns," Biden said.

"You'll see it as soon as it's finished," said Trump, the first president in decades to not disclose his tax returns. "One year. I paid \$27 million."

Biden highlighted the contrast by releasing his own 2019 tax return hours before the clash in Cleveland, showing that he paid nearly \$300,000 on income of just under \$1 million.

Although they called each other "Joe" and "Donald," it

took little time for bickering to set in.

"I'm not here to call out his lies. Everybody knows he's a liar," Biden said early in the evening. Later, he said: "He's Putin's puppy."

Trump aggressively interrupted, over and over, obviously trying to halt Biden's rehearsed attack lines and derail his train of thought.

"Will you shut up, man. This is so unrepresentative," Biden finally blurted out 15 minutes into the debate.

"It's a huge deal," Julián Castro, housing secretary during the Obama administration and a former San Antonio mayor who faced Biden in this year's Democratic primaries, said before the debate, referring to a report on Trump's taxes.

Calling Trump's tiny tax bills "outrageous," he noted that teachers, nurses, police officers and restaurant workers struggling to survive the pandemic-induced recession "are

paying more in taxes than our president, who says that he's a multimillionaire. And now we know why he was hiding his taxes."

Trump arrived in Cleveland trailing Biden in national polls but with fresh excitement among his base after Saturday's nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, and the possibility of tilting the court rightward for a generation after the death of liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Part of that fight is over fairness — should Trump get to fill the seat so close the election — but there are huge issues at stake, including abortion, religious freedom and gun rights, that motivate Republicans.

"The election has already started. Tens of thousands of people have already voted," Biden said.

"People already had their say," Trump responded. "I'm not elected for three years. I'm elected for four years."

The president went out of his way to hit Biden on health care, asserting that his plan to expand Obamacare would kick 180 million people off private health insurance.

"That's simply not true," Biden responded.

"Your party wants to go socialist. ... And they're going to dominate you, Joe, you know that," Trump asserted, weaving in two of his favorite lines of attack — that Democrats would put the country on a path to Cuba-style socialism and that Biden is a "puppet" of the left.

Moments later, Biden hit back. "He's been promising a health care plan since he got elected. ... He doesn't have a plan," Biden said. "This man doesn't know what he's talking about."

Trump's interruptions earned repeated warnings and pleas from the Chris Wallace of Fox News, who reminded the president numerous times that he was the moderator.

ROTARY

from A1

something about this park, about fixing it up.' Well, someday I might."

Now, that day has come, Ausere said. He said he drives by the skate park all the time and sees kids there each time.

Right now, there are funds to add lights for the park, he said, but the grand vision for the project is a complete remodeling.

A lot of the space around the current park layout is open for expansion, he said, including space behind the halfpipe and a large grass corner of the opposite the street corner. A bowl, new ramps, and possibly a track are just some of the additions Ausere is hoping to make.

"There's a lot of things that can happen, it's just money," Ausere said. "It's just going to come down to how much

money we can bring in."

Grindline Skateparks, a Seattle-based company specializing in concrete-based skate park installations, came up with a preliminary rendering of a possible new layout for the park.

Donations will be taken in until Dec. 31. After that planning will move ahead based on the funds raised. Past projects the Rotary Club has funded include a new van for the senior center's meal delivery program, a renovation for the New Hope domestic violence shelter and a new playground at McCosh Park. In the last 10 years, he said, more than \$500,000 in community projects have been completed through the club.

This year's project could be the biggest to date if the funds can be raised, Ausere said.

A link to the Rotary Club's GoFundMe for the skate park can be found on the organization's Facebook page.



Steve Ausere/courtesy graphic

A rendition of a possible layout for the new skate park in Moses Lake created by Grindline Skateparks Inc., a Seattle-based company, for the Rotary Club of Moses Lake who are raising money for their community service project this year.

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