

Bill Kaplan: Trump renominated amid horrendous disasters

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Trump, amid horrendous disasters, accepted his renomination at the White House, shredding the line between “governing and politicking” (Washington Post). In keeping with Trump’s attempt to downplay COVID-19, there was no social distancing and few attendees wore masks. Earlier, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow referred to COVID-19 and the pandemic depression in the past tense. But no sleight of hand can make the misery disappear.

There are over 6 million COVID-19 cases nationally, and over 75,000 in Wisconsin. U.S. deaths are approaching 200,000 and over 1,100 in Wisconsin. As schools and universities reopen nationally, thousands of cases have been confirmed among students and staff. And, in Wisconsin, rural Iron, Marinette and Sawyer Counties are seeing serious outbreaks. COVID-19 has not disappeared.

“Even as reality continues to intrude, ... Trump has either largely dismissed or ignored his science and medical advisers. And, the result is that the economy ... which he hoped would (lead) him to a second term, has been devastated” (John Barry, author, “The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History”). The headlines illuminate reality: “Millions on brink of poverty, as stimulus, benefits vanish” and “Relief efforts reach few” (WP). The NYT reported that the economy “is losing steam”. Hiring has stalled and new layoffs are mounting. Farmers, still reeling from Trump’s trade wars, face uncertainty. Over 2,000 Wisconsin dairy farms are gone.

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Declining revenues hit local and state governments hard. Millions of government workers could lose their jobs. Wisconsin Democratic Governor Tony Evers has applied for Trump's new jobless aid program, \$300 per week. The catch: Wisconsin will receive only 3 weeks of federal funding from disaster-hurricane relief money as catastrophic weather wallops the U.S.

A derecho left Iowa prostrate, \$4 billion in damage. It pulverized farmland, ruining crops and killing livestock. Trump made a 1-hour airport visit, dribbling out aid. Meanwhile, California is burning, 1 million acres. Trump told the state to rake leaves. Lunacy! And, to top it off a Category 4 hurricane devastated the Louisiana coastline. New Orleans would be gone if the storm had made landfall there. "Experts (e.g., Jim Kossin, UW-Madison): Storm's progression indicates global warming" (WP).

As if there isn't enough to worry about, a Kenosha policeman shot Jacob Blake 7 times in the back. Another Black person struck down. No, this is not acceptable: the policeman should be fired, while the criminal justice system investigates. Joe Biden spoke for many when he comforted Blake's family and condemned the violence of some protesters. Biden said: "As I said after George Floyd's murder, protesting brutality is a right and absolutely necessary. Burning down communities is not protest, it's needless violence. ... That's wrong".

However, Wisconsin GOP Assembly Speaker Robin Vos grotesquely slandered Governor Evers over the killing of 2 protesters by an Illinois teenager. The murderous assailant, who delusionally imagined he was a militiaman protecting property, is responsible, Vos and Trump must stop politically exploiting fear and racism.

Other Republicans, seeing the horrendous disasters under Trump, are endorsing Biden in droves.

— Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C., for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 - 2009.