



Post 90 Gazette

October 2020

Edited by Amy Ostler and Harvey Hefley

Upcoming Events

Virtual Benefits

Workshops

Tuesdays at 10 AM

Thursdays at 2 PM

Register at jobs.utah.gov



TRUMP vs. BIDEN

The American Legion – September 29, 2020

Greater access to VA health care. COVID-19.

Unemployment. Protests and violence in U.S.

cities. Military readiness.

When veterans go to the polls in November, these key issues will determine how they vote.



In this exclusive Q&A, two candidates for the U.S. presidency – incumbent Republican President Donald Trump, and Democratic nominee and former Vice President Joe Biden – outline their positions on some of the main issues of interest to The American Legion and its members.

See full summary on page 3

Public Contact assistance is available to Utah Veterans.

As we all know, COVID has impacted our ability to meet with our Utah Veterans and customers.

We have established a procedure to be able to meet with our clients on the phone. This process will allow us to better assist our Utah Veterans and Families. **See details on page 10**

To prevent the spread of the coronavirus, and to accommodate social distancing requirements, Election Day in person voting will be held at the:

Dixie Convention Center
1835 Convention Center Dr.
St George UT 84790

Polls open at 7am and close at 8pm on Election Day.

Registration by provisional ballot will be available.



Commander's Column

Marti Bigbie

The September 11th event honoring FIRST RESPONDERS and their family at the St George Town Square was well received (for being the 1st which will become an annual event). Thanks to the Veterans who were there to hold the 13 Patriotic flags (sorry you had to stand the whole time) from American Legion Post 142, Post 90, Marine Corp and Riders. We were honored with the bagpipes being played by John Mayer. Music by David Cash "Thank you for your service" closed out the evening.

Event was sponsored by the City of St George, American Legion, St George Exchange Club with many businesses donating services, gift cards, food cards for the First Responders.

For those members who have not sent in your 2021 renewal dues I encourage you to go online at mylegion.com and use a credit card to make the annual dues payment of \$40.00 or you can send in the renewal dues to PO Box 910931. St George, Utah 84791. IF you are not planning to renew please let me know as soon as possible so that you will not receive requests from National.

The American Legion Ritual Team/Honor Guard Team have been very busy these past months. Now with the cooler weather we hope to see more of the Ritual Team members come out to the funerals.

Commander Department of Utah

Marti Bigbie

Thanks to everyone (members, Posts, Districts, Areas and Department Personnel) we were able to reach and make the September Goal and are now working on October/November Goals.

Buddy Checks are still important when you talk to members about dues, their health and general wellbeing to be sure that everything is okay and check if help is needed. Stay Safe and Stay Healthy!

VOTE Center Locations:

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St George UT 84790
(Google Maps)

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Registration by provisional ballot will be available.

This Vote Center will have an electronic voting machine available to assist voters with sight or mobility issues. An individual with a disability who is not able to vote a manual ballot by mail may obtain information on voting in an accessible manner from the county's website (Election Info) or by contacting the county clerk @ 435-986-3399 or send an email to elections@utah.gov.

Kim M Hafen
Washington County Clerk/Auditor



Gaslighting

Have you ever asked yourself, 'am I crazy?' If you have ever asked yourself that, you're not crazy. You're most likely being gaslighted. Gaslighting is a form of psychological abuse aimed at controlling a person by altering reality to the point where the person will doubt their own sanity.

The term "gaslighting" comes from a 1930's play called Gas Light. The main character in the play literally tries to drive his wife crazy by gradually dimming the gas-powered lights in their home. When she notices the lights dimming, her husband not only denies that the lights are dimming, he convinces her that she is imagining it to the point where she questions her own sanity.

We are living in a perpetual state of gaslighting. The reality that we are being told by the media is at complete odds with what we are seeing with our own two eyes. And when we question the false reality that we are being presented, or we claim that what we see is that actual reality, we are vilified as racist or bigots or just plain crazy. You're not racist. You're not crazy. You're being gaslighted.

New York State has twice as many deaths from Covid-19 than any other state, and New York has accounted for one fifth of all Covid-19 deaths, but we are told that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has handled the pandemic better than any other governor. But if we support policies of Governors whose states had only a fraction of the infections and deaths as New York, we're called anti-science and want people to die. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

We see mobs of people looting stores, smashing windows, setting cars on fire and burning down buildings, but we are told that these demonstrations are peaceful protests. And when we call this destruction of our cities, riots, we are called racists. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

We see the major problem destroying many inner-cities is crime; murder, gang violence, drug dealing, drive-by shootings, armed robbery, but we are told that it is not crime, but the police that are the problem in the inner-cities. We are told we must defund the police and remove law enforcement from crime-riddled cities to make them safer. But if we advocate for more policing in cities overrun by crime, we are accused of being white supremacists and racists. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

The United States of America accepts more immigrants than any other country in the world. The vast majority of the immigrants are "people of color", and these immigrants are enjoying freedom and economic opportunity not available to them in their country of origin, but we are told that the United States is the most racist and oppressive country on the planet, and if we disagree, we are called racist and xenophobic. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

Capitalist countries are the most prosperous countries in the world. The standard of living is the highest in capitalist countries. We see more poor people move up the economic ladder to the middle and even the wealthy class through their effort and ability in capitalist countries than any other economic system in the world, but we are told capitalism is an oppressive system designed to keep people down. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

Communist countries killed over 100 million people in the 20th century. Communist countries strip their citizens of basic human rights, dictate every aspect of their lives, treat their citizens like slaves, and drive their economies into the ground, but we are told that Communism is the fairest, most equitable, freest and most prosperous economic system in the world. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

The most egregious example of gaslighting is the concept of "white fragility". You spend your life trying to be a good person, trying to treat people fairly and with respect. You disavow racism and bigotry in all its forms. You judge people solely on the content of their character and not by the color of their skin. You don't discriminate based on race or ethnicity.



But you are told you are a racist, not because of something you did or said, but solely because of the color of your skin. You know instinctively that charging someone with racism because of their skin color is itself racist. You know that you are not racist, so you defend yourself and your character, but you are told that your defense of yourself is proof of your racism. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you're being gaslighted.

Gaslighting has become one of the most pervasive and destructive tactics in American politics. It is the exact opposite of what our political system was meant to be. It deals in lies and psychological coercion, and not the truth and intellectual discourse. If you ever ask yourself if you're crazy, you are not. Crazy people aren't sane enough to ask themselves if they're crazy. So, trust yourself, believe what's in your heart. Trust our eyes over what we are told. Never listen to the people who tell you that you are crazy, because you are not, you're being gaslighted.

TRUMP vs. BIDEN

American Legion Magazine

SEP 29, 2020

Greater access to VA health care. COVID-19. Unemployment. Protests and violence in U.S. cities. Military readiness.

When veterans go to the polls in November, these key issues will determine how they vote.

In this exclusive Q&A, two candidates for the U.S. presidency – incumbent Republican President Donald Trump, and Democratic nominee and former Vice President Joe Biden – outline their positions on some of the main issues of interest to The American Legion and its members.

With no clear end in sight to the COVID-19 pandemic and elderly veterans among those at greatest risk, what is your plan to lead VA through the crisis?

TRUMP: VA has been critical to our COVID response, serving veterans tirelessly and effectively while assisting as a backup health-care system for all Americans. We took early action with VA to protect our entire veteran population, testing hundreds of thousands of veterans, treating thousands, maintaining critical personal protective equipment, and hiring over 10,000 additional employees after providing additional authority to hire retired doctors and nurses.

We gave special focus to our elderly veterans, particularly those at our 134 VA-run nursing homes, and deployed VA personnel to struggling state-run nursing homes to assist them, as well. We utilized and expanded telehealth technology to continue to treat veterans safely wherever they might be, shifted Veterans Benefits Administration exams to virtual, and reached more than 1 million veterans through telephone town halls.

In coordination with FEMA, over 45 states and territories requested assistance with COVID-19 response from VA. We opened VA beds in New York City and New Jersey to civilians as those hospital systems faced strain. Through effective leadership, VA has been instrumental in COVID response and will continue to serve veterans and the nation.

BIDEN: COVID-19 is a public-health challenge turned into a crisis by a total failure of leadership from the Trump administration. It underscores that challenges to our nation's security can come from things like pandemics and climate change, in addition to the political-military threats we face from China, Russia and others. VA has unique operational capacity to support our response to this pandemic, especially when it comes to protecting elderly veterans living in community living centers and state-run veterans homes. But the key to solving the public-health crisis is following the science with clear public-health guidance from our government, rapidly expanding our capacity for testing and contact tracing, ensuring essential workers have the personal protective equipment they need, and focusing on developing and equitably distributing therapeutics and a safe and effective vaccine, when one becomes available. I will ensure VA has the necessary resources and leadership to guarantee veterans have access to testing and the care they have earned, while also ensuring VA is ready to fulfill its fourth mission: improving our nation's ability to respond in times of crisis.

How will your administration move forward to improve regular access to VA health care and timeliness for appointments at a time of such high demand – and shortages of nurses and other key medical providers?

BIDEN: I commit to always providing high-quality care for veterans enrolled in VA health care. I will use the full power of the federal government to protect veterans from the threat of COVID-19 and to ensure that those who are infected receive the best possible care. My administration will strike the right balance between VA and community care, providing true accountability along with timely, quality care to veterans. This administration has underperformed on the rollout of the MISSION Act, constantly underfunding the community care program and creating unnecessary headaches for veterans with referrals, scheduling and payment. I will work to ensure that caregivers are fully integrated into the veteran's care team and prioritize research for emerging service-connected conditions like toxic exposures and traumatic brain injury. I will expand VA eHealth and telemedicine to provide rural veterans access to the best providers. I will provide VA with the flexibility and tools to hire and retain top medical talent and invest in creating training opportunities to ensure a pipeline of needed health-care professionals.

TRUMP: VA has been totally transformed by my administration, and veterans can see it. Veteran trust ratings are reaching all-time highs. At the end of the Obama-Biden administration, veteran overall trust in VA stood at 60 percent; it's now at 80 percent. Even better, 90.1 percent of veterans now trust the VA health care they receive, and in a Veterans of Foreign Wars survey, nearly three-quarters of veterans reported improvements at their local VA. VA has done more internal appointments than ever before: 59.9 million in fiscal 2019. Ratings by respected outside experts show that for access and quality of care, VA meets or exceeds private standards. During COVID-19, we granted VA additional authorities to hire more than 10,000 additional medical professionals to provide for veterans and address the pandemic.

We've also passed groundbreaking legislation to give veterans real choice to go where it's in their best interest to be treated. Veteran's Choice, my nickname for the MISSION Act, is so good the press continues to claim it was a creation of the Obama-Biden presidency when their policy was a stop-gap emergency response to their administration's scandalous treatment of veterans. Democrats fought for years to limit outside access to care. My Veteran's Choice policy, promised to you in 2016, recognized that we could support both care within VA and in the community with a focus on the veteran's best interest: it is permanent, simplifies eligibility, expands access, and has all-new options such as urgent care without prior authorizations. It's no wonder veterans love it.

Suicide prevention and mental health care remain top concerns of The American Legion. What is your plan to improve the situation?

TRUMP: We are fighting to end veteran suicide like no one ever has before, marshalling every resource of the federal government and civil society. I want to thank The American Legion for calling on Congress to pass Senate Bill 785, and I call upon the Democrats to immediately pass this life-saving bill without additional delay tactics.

In 2019, I signed an executive order creating the PREVENTS (President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide) Task Force, an interagency task force dedicated to ending veteran suicide. The task force presented its roadmap to me earlier this year, and its primary areas of focus are a national communications campaign to change the culture around seeking help for mental health care, innovative research that teaches us more about risk factors that lead to suicide, and partnerships with civil society so we can reach the seven out of 10 veterans who die by suicide who have no connection to VA health care.

That's why my administration has supported programs that empower civil society groups – like The American Legion and others – to receive grants to provide suicide-prevention services. A bill that would do just that passed the Senate unanimously, has tremendous support from VSOs, and is now sitting in the House. It's now up to Vice President Biden to call upon House Democrats to put the bill up for a vote without more delay.

BIDEN: As a society, we need to work together to eliminate discrimination against those who are suffering and struggling with mental health. Veterans are at an elevated risk of dying by suicide – and the rates for veterans exceed the national averages and continue to rise among our youngest veterans. Even one death by suicide is devastating, and we must stem this tide. Within the first 200 days of taking office, my administration will publish a comprehensive, public health and cross-sector approach to addressing suicide in veterans, servicemembers and their families.

The Trump administration has grossly mismanaged VA, at one point leaving millions of dollars dedicated to suicide prevention efforts unused. It's wrong. In a Biden administration, DoD's Suicide Prevention Office and VA will have the resources and staff they need to make smart investments with allocated funds. I will ensure that all those in need of care have quality and timely support by strengthening coordination with stakeholders and the private sector.

My administration will also tackle the issues that contribute to higher suicide risk, such as PTSD, sexual assault and harassment. We will develop better interventions to mitigate pain and economic vulnerability and address safe firearm

storage. I will increase access to mental health treatment by enforcing full mental health parity and ensuring all Americans have access to high-quality mental health care, regardless of their insurance coverage.

VA's effort to launch digital electronic health-care records management stalled in 2020 due to the pandemic. What will your administration do to get VA-DoD-integrated medical records management back on track?

BIDEN: The agency charged with meeting the needs of veterans – their health care and earned benefits, and the cemeteries that memorialize their honor in death – should not be limited by obsolete tools and outdated management practices. My administration will upgrade VA's delivery systems by leveraging commercial best practices and modern technologies that meet the unique demands of a public-sector mission.

VA's new electronic health-care records (EHR) system simply must succeed. Achieving success requires transparency and truth telling – inside VA, to Congress and to veterans. VA must transparently report what functionality will, and will not, be implemented at the initial (so-called IOC) sites, and how well that functionality is working. We know from DoD's experience that the initial deployment of new EHRs can be hampered by inadequate training and poor communications between clinicians and patients. Even today, DoD still does not have full data exchange between its legacy system and the new one.

In my administration, VA will ensure that the new system is safe and useful for clinicians, and that veterans will continue to be able to access their information no matter where they receive care. We will move forward to new installations only when all three conditions – safety, utility and access – are completely met, rather than rushing to declare success at the expense of veterans' health.

TRUMP: Many of this administration's fundamental changes to VA will never be visible. VA's transition to electronic medical health records is one of the most exciting technological changes in our history and will enable a veteran to have one combined, lifelong medical record from their first day at boot camp. VA is working tirelessly to release this technology as soon as possible.

Substantial progress has been made to reduce the backlog of undecided VA benefits claims, but much of that has been slowed by the pandemic, and thousands of claims are hung up in the remand or appeals processes. What needs to happen now?

TRUMP: We've made historic progress at reducing backlogs in VA benefits claims. I signed the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, and VA modernized the process for appealing VA decisions to provide more timely and consistent outcomes. In the last fiscal year, VA completed more than 95,000 appeals decisions, a record high, and they are on pace to exceed that number this fiscal year despite the challenges of COVID-19. As of July, VA has reduced the appeals backlog left by the Obama-Biden administration from more than 400,000 to 200,000 in just 18 months. Under my presidency, average processing times have gone from 130 days to 90 days.

BIDEN: No veteran should have to wait indefinitely for a claim to be decided. During the Obama-Biden administration, the VBA, with strong support from the White House, transformed and digitized the claims process, resulting in the elimination of nearly 90 percent of a decades-old backlog. Unfortunately, the backlog has exploded to nearly 200,000 under Trump's mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic. A Biden-Harris administration will fix the problem.

VA's decision to suspend all in-person disability exams due to the pandemic has only worsened this concern. VA must develop and release a plan to safely resume compensation and pension exams. This may include opening contract sites where their sole purpose is well-person care in areas where it is now safe to do so. It may also require plans to conduct exams, or portions of the exam, virtually.

Ensuring timely processing and consideration of all claims is essential. We should work toward eliminating any backlog, anywhere it exists in the process. A Biden-Harris administration will use performance data to ascertain the nature of the problem and develop sensible solutions.

VA should have the ability to employ appropriate tools for managing surges and responding during emergencies. This will require a balance of on-site and remote options for employees and offering or mandating overtime as needed to clear backlogs. In a Biden administration, VA will expand tele-exams and telehealth, especially to reach rural veterans or those at risk from COVID-19.

Veteran unemployment – as with most of the workforce in the pandemic – is rising again. What can you do to improve the job outlook?

BIDEN: Veteran unemployment is too high, and I will work hard to expand economic opportunities and create meaningful jobs for veterans. When the Obama-Biden administration began, during the Great Recession, post-9/11 veteran unemployment was above 10 percent. The Obama-Biden administration worked hard with DoD, VA, the nonprofit sector and the private sector, to build partnerships and bring people together to hire veterans and their family members. Between April 2011 and January 2017, the Joining Forces initiative secured commitments from employers to hire more than 1.5 million veterans and military spouses.

A Biden-Harris administration will:

- Ensure DoD, VA and the Department of Labor continue to improve the Transition Assistance Program so it's relevant to today's job market.
- Ensure that more transitioning servicemembers are able to access job training and placement services prior to the end of active duty. By expanding private-sector relationships through programs like SkillBridge, we will give qualified transitioning servicemembers the opportunity to start building meaningful civilian careers as early as possible.
- Work with the Department of Labor to enforce the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA) hiring benchmark among federal contractors and subcontractors.
- Support and promote hiring of veterans and military spouses, as well as corporate mentorship between veteran-owned businesses and existing contractors to support veteran entrepreneurship.
- Work with schools to ensure veterans and family members affected by COVID-19 can use their benefits.
- Crack down on fraud and unfair business practices targeting veterans and the military.
- Close the 90/10 loophole on GI Bill and Tuition Assistance dollars to keep for-profit bad actors from raiding benefits servicemembers and veterans have earned.

TRUMP: My administration's relentless focus on the economy led to some of the best employment numbers in history among all groups, including veterans. While pressed by COVID, we will continue to fight for our economy by reducing taxes, slashing bureaucracy and regulations that hinder business development, and providing support to programs that benefit veterans.

For veterans who are suffering, we suspended collection of veteran debts to VA so veterans can focus on staying safe and healthy during a time of economic anxiety.

As racial tensions last summer grew to a head, calls were made to defund the police. How can you close the divide between law enforcement and the public, especially in cities where protests and violence have occurred?

TRUMP: The violence tearing apart our inner cities is ruining the opportunities of vulnerable Americans, and we will not stand for it. At The American Legion's 1962 national convention, part of your shared definition of Americanism was that "law and order are essential to the preservation of Americanism while lawlessness and violence are distinctly un-American." I couldn't agree more.

In June, I signed an executive order to address some of the core issues and begin bridging that divide. With a focus on certification and credentialing, information sharing, officer training for mental health, homelessness and addiction issues, and a grant program to assist in use-of-force training and de-escalation techniques, we are approaching the issue holistically and vigorously.

Generations of Americans, like yourselves, have marched, fought, bled and died to safeguard the promise of our founding document and protect our shared inalienable rights. We will not fail you.

BIDEN: I began my campaign with the recognition that we're in a battle for the soul of the nation. Four more years of division and intolerance from our nation's leadership could forever fracture the important bond between police officers and the communities they serve and protect. The discord we face today is made so much worse by our current president, who leads through division. I will not drive a wedge between the police and communities that they faithfully serve, because the division we see in our country is only going to make life worse for police, not better. It will make it harder to patrol dangerous areas, not easier.

As a nation, we must continuously strive to improve our policing tactics and strategies while maintaining our commitment to keep our communities safe, enforce the law, and meet the needs of victims of crime. Black mothers and fathers should feel confident that their children are safe walking the streets of America. And when a police officer pins on that shield and walks out the door, the officer's family should know they'll come home at the end of the day.

It is in the public's interest and in law enforcement's interest to hold all officers to the highest standards and to ensure swift action to address abuses of power. We should give police departments the resources needed to implement meaningful policies – policies we all agree on, like increased body-worn cameras and diversity on the force. And we need to condition other federal dollars on completing those reforms and others, like adopting a national use-of-force standard. Additionally, I will reinvigorate the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program with a \$300 million investment so police departments have enough money to hire a sufficient number of officers so their officers can get out of their cruisers and walk the streets, engaging with and getting to know members of their communities.

We need to prevent 911 calls in scenarios where police should not be our first responders. Every time the police are called to be a social worker, marriage counselor or mental health professional is a lost opportunity to further a proactive investigation or address violent crime. This requires making serious investments in mental health services, drug treatment and prevention programs, and services for people experiencing homelessness. That certainly makes more sense than eliminating police departments or defunding the police.

President Trump is the candidate defunding the police. He is proposing to cut more than \$465 million in Justice Department aid to state and local law enforcement.

What will be your approach going forward to reduce illegal immigration?

BIDEN: Trump has waged an unrelenting assault on our values and our history as a nation of immigrants. It's wrong, and it stops when I'm elected president. The challenges we face will not be solved by a constitutionally dubious "national emergency" to build a wall, by separating families, or by denying asylum to people fleeing persecution and violence. Addressing the Trump-created humanitarian crisis at our border, bringing our nation together, reasserting our core values and reforming our immigration system will require real leadership and real solutions. I am prepared on day one to deliver both.

As president, I will forcefully pursue policies that safeguard our security, provide a fair and just system of immigration that keeps families together, help grow and enhance our economy, and secure our cherished values. Like every nation, the United States has a right and a duty to secure our borders and protect our people. But we know immigrants and immigrant communities are not a threat to our security, and the government should never use xenophobia or fear tactics to scare voters for political gain. Nor are walls the right solution for our border. A wall is not a serious deterrent for sophisticated criminal organizations that employ border tunnels, semi-submersible vessels and aerial technology to overcome physical barriers at the border. We need smart, sensible policies that will strengthen our ability to catch the real threats we face by investing in new technology and improving screening procedures at our legal ports of entry.

We also know that the worst place to deal with irregular migration is at our own border. Rather than working in a cooperative manner with countries in the region to manage the crisis, Trump's erratic, enforcement-only approach is making things worse. The best way to solve this challenge is to address the underlying violence, instability and lack of opportunity that is compelling people to leave their homes in countries like El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in the first place. As vice president, I was the architect of a major program of U.S. assistance to advance reforms in Central America and reduce the number of people trying to come to our border by addressing the key factors driving migration. It was working until President Trump gutted the program. We must also work in partnership with neighboring countries on a regional and humane response to migration needs so that people don't feel the need to come in the first place.

TRUMP: Border security is national security. We are committed to safeguarding our borders. I was just at the wall in August; they've added 300 more miles. And they are funded for 733 miles. Seven hundred thirty-three miles are paid for. I promised I would build a wall, and it's being built to keep Americans safe and prosperous. Borders are a noncontroversial reality of every sovereign nation, and we will defend ours.

Customs and Border Patrol also prioritizes veteran hires. Roughly a third of CBP's staff has served in the military. CBP believes that veterans embody the CBP's core values of vigilance, integrity and service to country.

How will your administration work with the U.S. military to defend against multiple threats to national security and U.S. interests abroad?

TRUMP: Last year, I was proud to sign into law the largest-ever investment in the U.S. military. Before I came into office, the military endured deep and devastating budget cuts. Our military was depleted, and the Obama-Biden administration failed to give our military forces what they needed.

As candidate for president in 2016, I promised to reverse these crippling cuts and to ensure our military remains unchallenged and unrivaled anywhere in the world.

This year provides \$738 billion to ensure we are ready to take on near-peer competitors. That's an all-time record. In the history of our country, that's the highest amount we've ever spent on our military. And that's after \$700 billion in my first year, and \$716 billion in my second.

The American military has never been stronger thanks to our historic investments. We have reversed years of neglect by focusing on modernization and improving readiness. As our men and women have demonstrated, they are prepared to fight and win when called upon. With the help of allies, we destroyed the ISIS caliphate and killed its leader, al-Baghdadi, an acknowledged terrorist leader. We created a new military branch, the U.S. Space Force, to ensure our national security by strategically protecting our interests in expanding landscapes of cyberspace and space.

We are prepared and willing to fight when and wherever needed to protect American lives and interests. The warriors who keep us safe have now, and always, my undying commitment.

BIDEN: Defending the security of our nation is the first and highest responsibility of any president and his or her administration. A Biden-Harris administration will draw on all elements of U.S. national power, including the military, to secure our country against potential threats. We will use our military strength to deter adversaries from taking aggressive action and to underwrite other elements of our national power. As president, I will never hesitate to defend the American people, including through the use of force when necessary. But the use of force should be our last resort, not our first – used only to defend our vital interests, when the objective is clear and achievable, and with the informed consent of the American people.

What will the United States do under your administration to strengthen alliances with other nations against common global threats?

BIDEN: Immediately after taking office, a Biden-Harris administration will call our democratic allies together to address how we will harness our shared values and capacities, military and otherwise, to ensure our mutual security and to strengthen our collective ability to meet the threats we face around the world. After years of threats, bullying and outright hostility from the Trump administration toward our closest friends and partners, there is much repair work to be done. But our allies know me, and I know them. I've spent years working closely with world leaders, first in the Senate, including as chairman or ranking member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, then as vice president. Our NATO alliance and our alliances and partnerships in Asia will be critical to our success in dealing with Russia and China, as well as Iran, North Korea, violent extremist groups, and any other threats that emerge. A Biden-Harris administration will also leverage our alliances and partnerships to advance our economic security, combat climate change and address the threat of future pandemics. I will protect American interests by drawing on all the tools of our power, working alongside – not against – those who share our interests and values.

TRUMP: As I promised in 2016, we would form global alliances to solve global problems to defeat challenges like ISIS. Over 70 nations formed the Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve, led by the United States, to defeat ISIS once and for all so we can return our troops home and return our focus to investing in the continued growth and prosperity of the United States.

This summer, we brokered the first Middle East peace agreement in over 25 years between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, a historic Mideast peace deal that eluded the Obama-Biden administration. And now Afghan negotiators, under the purview of our United States special representative, have begun intra-Afghan peace negotiations between the Taliban and Afghan government to end America's longest war.

Public Contact assistance is available to Utah Veterans.

As we all know, COVID has impacted our ability to meet with our Utah Veterans and customers.

We have established a procedure to be able to meet with our clients on the phone. This process will allow us to better assist our Utah Veterans and Families.

The Salt Lake City VA Regional Office now has a local telephone number where Utah Veterans, Family Members and authorized 3rd parties can contact the VA and receive assistance. We do not want this to substitute for the National Call Center. This number is to emulate the services that we would normally provide to walk-in clients.

If you have a client that would like to have us meet with them on the phone, please have them call-- 801-708-8229 and listen to the message and provide a date and time for a call back from one of our very knowledgeable VA Representatives.

We will typically be able to call the person back and set up an interview within 2 hours.

This is a tremendous opportunity for us to remain in contact with our Utah Veterans.

This process does not preclude you, the POA/Stakeholder, from reaching out to us, this just allows our customers to get a real person on the phone.

Thanks for letting us provide this opportunity to serve you and Utah's Veterans.

Here is what you will hear on the phone— *it will ring 6-7 times before the message will play*

THE TELEPHONE VOICEMAIL:

Hello, you have reached the virtual interview appointment line for the VA Salt Lake City Regional Benefits Office. This extension facilitates the scheduling of virtual interviews for customers in Utah.

At the tone, please speak slowly and clearly state your first and last name, reason for calling, provide your geographical location and a telephone number. An employee will respond to your request within 2-hours. If your message is received after 2:30pm, or on a holiday, or on the weekend, you will be notified the next business day of your scheduled virtual interview date/time.

Thank you for calling. Have a great day.

*****End*****