Lindsey Graham Calls For Cognitive, Physical Tests for Biden and Trump

In a move that's raising eyebrows across the political spectrum, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) has called for mandatory cognitive exams for all presidential nominees and politicians in the line of succession. During an appearance on CBS' "Face the Nation," Graham emphasized how we, as a nation, need to make sure anyone who may assume the role of commander-in-chief is mentally fit.

Is Our National Security at Risk?

Graham pointed to the national security implications of President Joe Biden's health, which have come under scrutiny following a particularly disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump. "We need to make sure that the people who are going to be in the line of succession are capable of being commanders in chief under dire circumstances," Graham explained.

"This is a wake-up call for the country," Graham told guest host Robert Costa. He stressed that the stakes are incredibly high regarding national security and that the cognitive abilities of those in key leadership positions must be beyond reproach.

With the recent spotlight on President Joe Biden's health and performance, questions about the mental fitness of those in power have become more pressing. Graham emphasizes the national security risks tied to these concerns, particularly when world leaders observe any signs of weakness in the United States' leadership.

Graham's Cognitive Testing Proposal

Under Graham's proposal, all presidential nominees and politicians in the line of succession would undergo cognitive testing as part of an overall physical exam. This includes Biden and Trump, Vice President Harris, House Speaker Mike Johnson, and President Pro Tempore of the Senate Patty Murray. Even members of Biden's Cabinet could be subjected to these exams.

It's important to note that Senator Graham's proposal is not merely about age but about capability. Graham cited his predecessor, Strom Thurmond, as an example of why cognitive testing is necessary further down the line of succession. Thurmond was president of the Senate as he approached his 100th birthday, with Graham referring to him as a "vigorous man."

The Current Debate Climate

President Biden's recent interview with ABC News aimed to address growing concerns within his party. However, it seems the interview did little to quell the unease among House Democrats and top Democratic operatives. Biden attributed his poor debate performance to factors like exhaustion and bad preparation, sidestepping the question of taking a cognitive exam.

Despite Biden's reassurances, some Democrats are anxious about his ability to lead effectively. Senators Bob Casey and John Fetterman have voiced their continued support. Still, the potential for Vice President Kamala Harris to step up if Biden steps down remains a topic of speculation.

Are Biden and Trump Both Missing the Mark?

According to his annual physical back in February, President Biden remains "fit for duty." Dr. Kevin O'Connor noted that Biden is adjusting well to a device for sleep apnea and maintains a rigorous exercise routine, working out five times a week. Despite these reassurances, Biden, the oldest president in U.S. history, would be 86 by the end of a second term—should he win one.

While Trump's numerous legal issues have dominated headlines, his cognitive lapses haven't gone unnoticed. From referring to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán as the prime minister of Turkey to confusing Nikki Haley with Nancy Pelosi, Trump's gaffes have also raised questions about his mental sharpness.

Public sentiment reflects these concerns. A survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 63% of respondents are not confident in Biden's mental capability to serve effectively. Similarly, 57% expressed doubts about Trump's cognitive abilities.

What Can Voters Do?

Issues like age and mental competence could play a more prominent role in the upcoming presidential election than in any previous political contest. With both Biden and Trump facing scrutiny over their cognitive abilities, the pressure is on both parties to address these concerns transparently.

Senator Graham's call for cognitive tests for presidential nominees and leaders in the line of succession speaks to the high stakes of national leadership. Whether these tests will be implemented remains to be seen, but one thing is clear—American voters are paying close attention.