




Democrats May Need the Courage of a Hugh Scott Moment

Hours after President Joe Biden's feeble  debate performance Thursday night that left voters across the country stunned, two of Pennsylvania's most powerful Democrats, Gov. Josh Shapiro (D-Pa.) and Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pa.), pushed back against calls for Biden to step down from his reelection campaign.

Salena Zito

Shapiro appeared on MSNBC and CNN and was repeatedly asked if he thought Biden should step aside. He admitted that Biden had a bad debate, but given the possibility of a second term for former President Donald Trump, Shapiro said the stakes are too high for Biden to step aside.

Fetterman admonished Democrats on X more bluntly, telling them to "chill the f*** out" and saying he "refused to join the Democratic vultures on Biden's shoulder after the debate." Also: "No one knows more than me that a rough debate is not the sum total of the person and their record."

Both Shapiro and Fetterman, known individually for their straight talk and not pulling any punches, are not following the admirable example of a former U.S. senator from Pennsylvania, Republican Hugh Scott, a one-time Senate minority leader. In 1974, Scott and two other Republican leaders had the courage to visit embattled President Richard Nixon to tell him the Watergate scandal made impeachment imminent and that he should resign.

Nixon announced his resignation the next day.

David Urban, a former 2016 Trump campaign adviser and western Pennsylvania native, said you cannot tell voters to deny what they saw with their own eyes last night.

"People just cannot unsee what happened right in front of them," said Urban, a CNN contributor who was at the debate Thursday night in Atlanta.

"I don't think there is anyone with the political courage that Hugh Scott had to step forward to tell Biden it is time go," he said, adding, "I can imagine if it were such a person like that, it has to be someone from his family."

Jill Biden, the president's wife, showed no signs of doing that when she took the stage with the president after the debate in front of supporters, gushing, "Joe, you did such a great job. You answered every question."

Youngstown State University political science professor Paul Sracic said no Hugh Scott has stepped up because at least Nixon had someone palatable to both the president's party and the general public as his vice president.

"The difference here is there's no [Vice President] Gerald Ford," Sracic explained. "There's nobody. They don't know who's waiting in the wings who can actually defeat Trump."

Salena Zito is a CNN political analyst, and a staff reporter and columnist for the Washington Examiner. She reaches the Everyman and Everywoman through shoe-leather journalism, traveling from Main



Written by [Salena Zito](#) on July 2, 2024

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