

Awkward moment gormless-looking Biden shuffles away from lectern as Hawaii Democrat tries to speak to him minutes after giving tone-deaf speech to victims of Maui's killer wildfires

By David Averre Updated 07:30 EDT 22 Aug 2023



- Biden had a cringeworthy moment with Democrat Hawaii Sen. Brian Schatz

President [Joe Biden](#) compounded his disastrous trip to [Hawaii](#) in the wake of devastating wildfires with yet another gaffe, blatantly ignoring a [Democrat](#) senator before gormlessly shuffling off at the end of an uninspiring speech yesterday.

The 80-year-old had a particularly awkward moment with Democratic Hawaii Sen. Brian Schatz when, at the conclusion of a press conference, Schatz offered him a sip of water.

Biden completely blanked the senator and turned his back on him. He then began shuffling off, mouth hanging open and gazing listlessly into

the crowd, while his wife Jill and Hawaii Governor Josh Green ushered him away from the lectern.

Furious Hawaiians had already greeted the President with ire, shouting 'f*** you' at his motorcade and brandishing signs telling him to go home as the 80-year-old and his wife toured the island of Maui 13 days after the inferno broke out.

The awkward scene came shortly after Biden had delivered a meandering, tone-deaf speech in which he compared the wildfires - which have killed at least 114 people and left 850 missing - to his experience of a small kitchen fire.

Gormless-looking Biden shuffles away from lectern after speech





Biden had a particularly awkward moment with Democratic Hawaii Sen. Brian Schatz when, at the conclusion of a press conference, Schatz offered a sip of water to Biden and gestured beside the lectern at a bottle of water



The President completely blanked the senator and turned his back on him. He then began shuffling off



His wife Jill and Hawaii Governor Josh Green ushered him away from the lectern



President Biden told Maui the nation 'grieves with you' in his first visit to the island since wildfires ravaged the city of Lahaina and the surrounding community



Biden and first lady Jill Biden look at a burned car with Hawaii Gov. Josh Green and his wife Jaime Green as they visit areas devastated by the Maui wildfires



People watch as the motorcade carrying President Joe Biden to visit areas devastated by the Maui wildfires passes by. One local gives the president a thumbs down

The President and his wife were not greeted warmly by residents of Hawaii yesterday.

As their motorcade drove through Maui, several people lined the streets waving Trump 2024 flags and shouting obscenities at the passing cars.

One person brandished a sign contrasting the money spent on Ukraine with the assistance sent to Hawaii - calculating that each Ukrainian has received over \$1,700 since the war broke out in February 2022.

Meanwhile, the White House announced that each affected household in Hawaii will receive \$700 - a sum many islanders considered insulting.

Locals' fury mounted on Sunday when Biden, who was asked about the fires as he relaxed on a Delaware beach, simply replied: 'No comment.'

And last week, he appeared to forget the name of Maui, repeatedly referring to fires blazing on 'the Big Island'.

Biden interrupted his Lake Tahoe vacation on Monday to fly five hours to the island, and insist that the federal government was there for the islanders, despite the announcement of the paltry sum of compensation for each household.

Even Democrats were demanding to know why the federal aid had been slow to arrive and so meagre, joining their Republican colleagues in questioning Biden's delay in arriving in Maui.

The death toll in Maui has topped 114, with some 850 people still missing feared dead.

But Biden waited 13 days since the outbreak of the fires to visit the island.



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Biden embraces with Hawaii Gov. Josh Green



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People hold signs as U.S. President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden visit the fire-ravaged town of Lahaina



People watch as the motorcade carrying President Joe Biden to visit areas devastated by the Maui wildfires passes by

Biden FINALLY surveys devastation in Maui after deadly wildfires





Biden and first lady Jill Biden walk with Hawaii Gov. Josh Green and his wife Jaime Green as they visit areas devastated by the Maui wildfires



The Bidens paused their summer vacation at Lake Tahoe in Nevada on Monday to visit Hawaii



President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden greet Hawaii Governor Josh Green (C) upon arrival at Kahului Airport in Kahului, Hawaii

'The devastation is overwhelming, to date 114 dead,' Biden acknowledged in remarks yesterday, before launching into a lengthy anecdote about his own loss of his first wife Naomi and one-year-old daughter in a car accident in 1972.

Standing against a backdrop of charred vehicles and debris, Biden told a crowd: 'We're focused on what's next as rebuilding a long, long term rebuilding for long term and doing it together to help get us back on our feet to rebuild the way we want to rebuild.

'By making sure your voices are heard, by respecting your traditions, by understanding the deep history and meaning the sacred ground and establishing your community not to change his character but reestablish it.

'We're also going to bring the capabilities to help you rebuild. So your critical infrastructure is more resilient in the future.'

He also praised 'stories of hope, and heroism of the aloha spirit.'

Biden had touched down in Kahalui hours earlier, visiting those who lost homes and loved ones during the disaster.

The 114 person death toll already makes the inferno one of the nation's deadliest in history - and an estimated 1,000 people are still unaccounted for.

Officials are still analyzing the factors that contributed to the massive inferno, including problems with its electrical grid.