

The American public finally got the civil debate they deserved, but it wasn't without a bit of malarkey, as former Vice President Joe Biden might say.

President Donald J. Trump and Joe Biden debated last night for the final time before Election Day, and unlike their first meeting, this one was noticeably more debate-esque. The first debate, held on September 29th, was marred by continuous interruptions by both candidates. To avoid a similar result, the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates muted the candidates after their allotted two minute introductory statements were up. The result was a calmer debate, allowing voters to focus on Trump and Biden's policy plans, not where the mute button was on their remote.

Unlike the rapid-fire nature of the first debate, this debate seemed to slog on lethargically, and not all of the predetermined topics were given equal time. On the topic of the now surging coronavirus, the discussion quickly turned to vaccines. A handful of pharmaceutical companies have vaccines in late-stage clinical trials, although no company has committed to having a vaccination ready for use before the end of the year. Mr. Trump claimed the vaccine was "ready" and "going to be delivered" within weeks, but health officials have repeatedly said a vaccine will likely not be available or widely administered until mid-2021.

On the topic of American families, health care took center stage. Mr. Trump blasted Obamacare, saying he'd like to "terminate" it, and repeatedly said he had a "beautiful" health care plan ready to go. Despite the President's claims, no such plan has been released by the White House. In response to the President, Mr. Biden detailed how he would pass Obamacare with a public option – something he dubbed "Bidencare." He also clarified that people with private health insurance wouldn't lose their coverage in the new plan – a direct rebuttal to Trump's claim that 180 million people's insurance would go away.

President Trump, guilty of more interruptions in September's debate, struck a much quieter tone this time around. Whether it was the threat of being muted or the added exigence to improve his polling numbers, he stayed relatively calm throughout the night's deliberations. As the evening wore on, he did become more aggressive, interjecting into Biden's responses or interrupting moderator Kristen Welker of NBC News.

One of Trump's go-to interruptions was to chide Biden on his record and history in Washington D.C. As Biden detailed various policy plans he'd implement if elected president, Trump would interject and ask "why didn't you get it done?" or say "you're all talk and no action," both references to Biden's eight years as vice president. In response to these quips, Biden pointed to the Republican Congress that stonewalled many of the policies the Obama/Biden administration put forth.

Mr. Biden, up by double digits in certain national polls, was largely gaffe-free during the debate. He continued his direct appeals to the American public, looking directly into the camera and speaking as if he was sitting with the families he so often referred to. When Trump started questioning Biden about his son Hunter's foreign interactions in Ukraine, Biden made it clear his son shouldn't be the focus of the debate, saying "It's not about his family or my family. It's about your family."

As the debate concluded, both candidates were given the opportunity to preview what they'd say on Inauguration Day to the people who didn't vote for them. Trump talked about how success would bring people together. Biden took a different approach, saying "I'm the American president. I represent all of you, whether you voted for me or against me. And I'm going to make sure that you're represented. I'm going to give you hope." He concluded by saying decency,

honor, respect, and treating people with dignity was what this election was all about – all things the American people have been without under Trump.