

Joe Cunningham

U.S. Representative for South Carolina's 1st Congressional District, 2018-2020

Biden's 2024 Campaign and the Future of the Democratic Party Former Congressman Joe Cunningham (D-SC) was the first Democrat to publicly say Biden should not seek re-election. He was attacked by his own party for speaking up and going against the highest ranks of Democratic leadership. At the time, he was running for Governor in South Carolina and outwardly saying what many in his own party would tell him privately on the campaign trail. Being a key early primary state for the Democratic Presidential nominee, he believes the missteps in 2024 will play a critical role in the 2028 presidential contest and has called on national Democrats to be honest about the mistakes made. His comments have been referenced by numerous publications, including the New York Times and Politico. Cunningham can speak on, with personal stories while being in politics, the reasons why more leaders do not challenge the status quo. Trust has been lost between voters and the Democratic Party through its failures to both listen and communicate directly with them. Cunningham can speak to the steps necessary to rebuild that trust so the party can move forward and begin to win again. Cunningham has appeared on FOX, CNN, MSNBC, NewsNation and more to discuss how Democrats can win in unwinnable areas. He has written for the Wall Street Journal, the Hill and various other publications. He served in Congress from 2019-2021, was the Democratic nominee for Governor in South Carolina in 2022 and became the National Director of No Labels in 2023.

Healing the Partisan Divide Having served as a Democrat in a heavily Republican district, Joe learned quickly to reach across the aisle and became one of America's most independent members of Congress. As part of a bipartisan group, the Problem Solvers Caucus, Joe was able to forge valuable relationships that allowed his goals to be advanced even in a divided government. The only Democrat in South Carolina's recent history to have been endorsed by Republican mayors, Joe is aware of what it takes to bridge the partisan divide and heal the political wounds in this country.

Environment As a former ocean engineer, Joe has a deep appreciation for our natural resources and fought to protect them. He led the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, which has been called the most significant piece of environmental legislation in our lifetime. Joe's success rested in being able to talk about progressive ideas in a more conservative way that gained bipartisan support in addition to employing creative methods to make his point, like blowing an air horn in a committee hearing to emphasize the dangers of seismic air gun blasting.

Long Shot Victories Joe was able to win a seat in the deep south that no Democrat had won in his lifetime. On election eve, Joe was given a 9% chance of winning by the political pundits. And he was successful in doing so by changing the tone of politics, meeting people where they were and highlighting their common goals as opposed to their differences.