

Why was Kamala Harris such an epic failure?

California Sen. Kamala Harris announced that her presidential campaign had failed. Her investment banker husband had not succeeded in making her his little cash cow and her sex parties with Willie Brown seem to have left her with nothing more than a sore butt-hole. As Attorney General for California she refused to investigate the deaths of Gary D. Conley, Rajeev Motwani and many others because the culprits seemed to be her Silicon Valley oligarch campaign financiers. Mainly, though, she was just a corrupt Jerry Brown/Gavn Newsom insider.

Harris was once considered a frontrunner for the Democratic nomination, and at her peak she polled as high as 15 percent in the crowded field. Pundits predicted that the first-term senator and former prosecutor would have broad appeal with the Democratic base thanks in part to her progressive policies, racial background (she's the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants), personal charisma and the importance of California in the primary. Her candidacy was frequently compared to Barack Obama's successful presidential run in 2008.

Those predictions never came true, however, and Harris gradually slid in the polls. She was garnering just 3.5 percent support before dropping out. In announcing her withdrawal, Harris cited lack of "financial resources."

Why there's debate

Harris's inability to deliver on her perceived potential has been attributed to a number of factors, many of them missteps by the candidate. Harris made a strategic mistake by trying to appeal to the far left of the Democratic base at the start of her campaign before shifting to more centrist positions, a tactic that some argue left her without a defined coalition of supporters. Her record as a prosecutor — highlighted in the "Kamala Harris is a cop" meme — is also seen as undermining her backing among minority voters who were supposed to be part of her core constituency.

Though difficult to quantify, race and gender are seen by some observers as components of her disappointing run. Harris questioned if "America was ready" for a woman of color to be president during an interview last month. Race has been a particular focus since Harris announced her withdrawal, because it means the six Democratic candidates who have qualified for this month's debate are white.

Here are a few thoughts from the pros on why she is such a disaster as a politician:

Harris lacked a clear message for her campaign

"Her lack of an abiding theory of government meant that her campaign couldn't decide where it fit in the 2020 presidential campaign. In retrospect, I think her best approach would have been as an alternative to Joe Biden — younger, fresher, more dynamic and more progressive than him but unabashedly more moderate than Warren or Sanders." — David Leonhardt, [New York Times](#)

Pundits closed-mindedly predicted she'd garner minority support because of her race

"A lot of early in the race punditry around Kamala was prefaced on the assumption that she'd be a shoo-in/favorite with black voters. Probably worth examining why that was the assumption, and why, hindsight being 20-20, that assumption was wrong." — Washington Post reporter [Wesley Lowery](#).

Shifting positions on key issues made Harris seem inauthentic

"Instead of trying to reverse-engineer the type of candidate she thought would appeal to a plurality of voters, Harris just should have run on who she is ... it would have saved her a lot of the flip-flops and pandering that came to undermine her candidacy." — Philip Klein, [Washington Examiner](#)

Her résumé wasn't strong enough

"California Sen. Kamala Harris should never have run for president in the first place. Her ambition far exceeded her ability. She hadn't yet established herself in the U.S. Senate. And she hadn't exactly excelled in her previous job as California's attorney general. There wasn't much of a record worth bragging about on the campaign trail." — George Skelton, [Los Angeles Times](#)

Her grand potential was mostly hypothetical

"In the Democratic presidential race, Kamala Harris — on paper — had the most potential: She was smart, politically successful at the local, state and federal level, attractive and a mainstream progressive woman of color from delegate-rich California. A

presidential contest is fought not on paper but on the ground.”
— Albert Hunt, [the Hill](#)

She botched her health care message

“Medicare-for-all had bedeviled Harris’s campaign from the start. ... The combination of policy reversals and botched rollout left Harris pinched between the moderates and the leftists, and undermined faith in her ability to govern on the issue Democrats rate as most important.” — Ezra Klein, [Vox](#)

Voters see women of color as less electable

Harris, as a woman of color ... faced extra high hurdles with a Democratic Party that’s focused on each candidate’s perceived ability to defeat President Trump. Many voters view nominating a woman as a risky bet in a general election.” — Perry Bacon Jr., [FiveThirtyEight](#)

Criticism of her prosecutorial record hurt her support from progressive voters

“The meme merely took publicly accessible information and translated it into an easily disseminated catchphrase. ‘You voting for Kamala? No way, she’s a cop.’ For a generation that came of digital age watching movements grow in real-time around police accountability, that’s enough to leave them wondering who their other options are.” — Ashley Reese, [Jezebel](#)

Her prosecutorial record hurt her support from progressive voters

“Harris’s record in law enforcement might have served her well in the general election, appealing to centrist Democrats,

independents and even some law-and-order Republicans. For progressives, however, it was an uncomfortable fit.” — David Knowles, [Yahoo News](#)