Why Biden Is Better Than Trump for the Economy

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The presumption that Republicans are better than Democrats at economic stewardship is a longstanding myth that must be debunked. For all Americans who care about their and their children’s future, the right choice this November could not be clearer.

NEW YORK – Joe Biden has consistently held a wide polling lead over US President Donald Trump ahead of November’s election. But, despite Trump’s botched response to the COVID-19 pandemic – a failure that has left the economy far weaker than it otherwise would have been – he has maintained a marginal edge on the question of which candidate would be better for the US economy. Thanks to Trump, a country with just 4% of the world’s population now accounts for more than 20% of total COVID-19 deaths – an utterly shameful outcome, given America’s advanced (albeit expensive) health-care system.

The presumption that Republicans are better than Democrats at economic stewardship is a longstanding myth that must be debunked. In our 1997 book, Political Cycles and the Macroeconomy, the late (and great) Alberto Alesina and I showed that Democratic administrations tend to preside over faster growth, lower unemployment, and stronger stock markets than Republican presidents do.

In fact, US recessions almost always occur under Republican administrations – a pattern that has persisted since our book appeared. The recessions of 1970, 1980-82, 1990, 2001, 2008-09, and, now, 2020 all occurred when a Republican was in the White House (with the exception of the double-dip recession of 1980-82, which started under Jimmy Carter but continued under Ronald Reagan). Likewise, the Great Recession of 2008-09 was triggered by the 2007-08 financial crisis, which also occurred on the GOP’s watch.

This tendency is not random: loose regulatory policies lead to financial crises and recessions. And, compounding matters, Republicans consistently pursue reckless fiscal policies, spending as much as Democrats do, but refusing to raise taxes to make up for the resulting budget shortfalls.

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