“I got up at 6:30 this morning to go vote," said Twana Matthews showing off her sticker. I want to protect my health care, but I know they’ll win. It won’t even be close… Do you want some of my food?" she asked tilting her plate toward Vice President Joe Biden.

Vice president makes Ohio battleground a 'Landmark'

By FELICIA C. HANEY

Staff Reporter

CLEVELAND – Jaws were dropping at the Landmark diner on St. Clair Avenue at E. 55th Street in Cleveland this afternoon, but it wasn't because of the food. It was in awe of a 20-plus car motorcade toting Vice President Joe Biden, who popped in and surprised patrons as well as the restaurant owners, when he brought his family in for a sit-down.

Upon entering the home-style diner, he greeted some young people seated near the doorway finishing their meals at the counter before shaking hands with customers and even squeezing into a booth or two for some one-on-one conversation with lunch-goers. He even snapped a group photo with the staff in honor of employee Mary Ulisses' 30th birthday.

"What an awesome way to bring in 30! Oops, I mean 21," Ulisses said, jokingly.

By the time he made his way over to the other side of the restaurant to join Twana Matthews and her family, who were enjoying a late breakfast after a troublesome stop at the Justice Center to visit their brother, Matthews' sadness was exchanged for joy as she trembled in utter disbelief.

"Oh my God, I'm shaking," she said of the encounter. "I got up at 6:30 this morning to go vote (showing off her sticker). I want to protect my health care, but I know they'll win. It won't even be

close… Do you want some of my food? (tilting her plate toward Biden)”

After what seemed like the entire diner erupted in laughter, Biden responded telling her that his family was going to sit down for a bite of their own.

Owner Lena Petros scurried to set up the family’s VIP table up front. It appeared no different than everyone else’s. Biden was just one of the ordinary Joe’s as he held conversations with potential voters like Joseph Williams and Joe Pauls about Ohio State’s “tough football team” after introducing himself as “Joe, Jill’s husband,” as opposed to the more popular Barack Obama’s running mate or more formally, the Vice President of the United States.

Accompanied by his wife, Jill, daughter Ashley and two grandchildren – Naomi, the oldest daughter of Hunter and Kathleen, and Natalie, daughter of Beau and Hallie – the Bidens sat down for a quick lunch as Petros summoned her mother to come to the table and tell the Bidens her story of truly living the American dream.

“We’re so honored to have you guys at our restaurant,” said Petros. “My mom is living the American Dream.”

Biden stood with honor to meet Petros’ mother, Kalli Vagras, who came to Cleveland 45 years ago from
Greece
. Vagras feels she has earned her slice of the American pie by working hard and now serves up those slices to her customers every day as an entrepreneur in
Cleveland
’s restaurant business.

Following lunch at Landmark, Biden’s camp departed Cleveland Hopkins Airport where opponents Romney/Ryan’s planes were still parked. Headed west in Air Force 2 to Chicago, the Bidens were off to meet with the Obamas and watch the rest of Election Day unfold. The Romney/Ryan team moved on to
Pittsburgh
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