



DATA FOR **PROGRESS**

To: Interested Parties
From: Data for Progress
Date: April 15, 2022
Re: Message Testing on Inflation

From April 7 to April 11, Data for Progress and Blue Rose conducted research of public messages around inflation. We tested unique public statements from President Biden, Sen. Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Jen Psaki and other influential figures.

The **best testing public statements on inflation** had the following themes:

- **Lowering prices:** Messages focused on lowering prices generally, addressing inflation, healthcare costs, drug prices, and taxes. Reducing the national deficit also features in very strong messages, though ones that focus exclusively on the deficit, however, have limited success.
- **Supply chains:** Statements focused around **keeping supply chains in the U.S** also performed very well. Focusing on the potential for new jobs does slightly better than focusing on making goods “faster and cheaper,” but both perform strongly overall.
- **Holding corporations accountable:** Talking points focused around taxing corporations, and a message from Sen. Manchin around taxing “people at the top end of the food chain,” as well as holding oil companies accountable all performed well with voters. We also find statements critiquing oil companies and focusing on solutions to hold these companies accountable prove effective with voters.
- **Bipartisan Infrastructure plan:** Messages touting the bipartisan infrastructure plan and its impact in combating inflation also resonated strongly with voters.

The **least effective** public statements on inflation had the following themes:

- **Blaming inflation on Republican obstructionism, global economics, and COVID were all shown to be ineffective with voters,** including statements like “Republicans in Congress are standing in the way of qualified nominees to the Federal Reserve to help address inflation.”



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- **Downplaying inflation also proves ineffective.** Messages suggesting that inflation isn't impacting the working class fell flat, including statements like "While inflation is a problem, the mainstream media is blowing it out of proportion."

Additionally, we tested unique public statements on **inflation attacks from Republicans** and found that:

- **Republican attacks against Democrats on inflation perform well with voters**, particularly Republican messages that pointed out the historic level of current inflation and those that simply state inflation is historically bad and Democrats are responsible.
- Though Democratic pushback on Republican attacks generally did not resonate with voters, those that tested the best focused on the risks to health care costs, and the GOP's Republicans' defense of corporations and wealthy individuals.
- Additionally, though Republican attacks performed well with voters, **the best performing Democratic messages are still more persuasive than the best performing Republican messages**, which shows that Democrats still have a slight advantage on this issue.

Democrat messages we tested this week, included (in rank order of most effective to least effective in moving voters):

Supply chains: Democrats believe that we need to bring back manufacturing jobs in the United States to drive down prices. Our supply chains need to be housed here at home, rather than outsourced abroad.

Lowering costs: Democrats have a plan to curb inflation by cutting taxes for families and lowering the cost of healthcare, child care, and energy, while creating jobs and getting Americans back to work.

Tax reform (Sen. Manchin): We've got to get our financial house in order to roll back inflation. Corporations and all the people at the top end of the food chain should be paying taxes too. A tax reform bill will help our economy back on track by reducing the national debt.



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Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: President Biden and Republicans passed a bipartisan deal to invest in America's infrastructure. Democrats say this will strengthen our supply chains, help goods get to market, and lower costs for consumers.

Lowering costs (White House Communications Office): Democrats are doing everything in their power to lower costs at home by: addressing short-term supply chain issues, increasing oil supply, pushing for lower prescription drug prices, child care costs, and promoting competition.

Supply chain (President Biden): Democrats plan to fight inflation by making goods faster and cheaper in America instead of relying on foreign supply chains.

Holding corporations accountable (Sen. Warnock): Democrats will hold oil and gas companies accountable for raising prices to a record high, giving them record profits while working families suffer.

Lowering costs (Sen. Schumer): Democrats will continue offering a number of solutions that will lower costs and leave more money in people's pockets, including working to lower the cost of child care, prescription drugs, and semiconductors.

Holding corporations accountable: Corporations are recording record profits while Americans are paying higher prices. Democrats say we need a fairer economy where workers and consumers, not CEOs and shareholders, come out ahead.

Holding corporations accountable: Democrats believe that we need to raise taxes on wealthy corporations to lower the cost of prescription drugs, reduce the deficit and make America energy secure.

Lowering costs (President Biden): Democrats have a better plan to fight inflation that will work to lower your costs, not your wages. And, they will work to create more jobs where you can earn a good living in America.

Job growth (White House Communications Office): Unemployment is down to 3.6% and the economy created 431,000 jobs in March. President Biden's first year in office was the largest year of job growth in American history.

Holding corporations accountable (Rep. Demmings): Democrats know exactly how important a dollar is to so many families, and that's why they must hold big corporations accountable for exploiting crises to profiteer off hard working Americans.



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Energy independence: Gas prices are increasing because of America's dependence on foreign oil. Democrats want to make America energy-independent, lowering costs for consumers and creating jobs.

Lowering costs + Republicans: Democrats are fighting to lower costs and cut taxes while Republicans want to raise taxes on over half of all Americans and spike the cost of health care.

Energy independence: Inflation is happening because of unpredictable global markets for oil and gas. Democrats say we should invest in producing clean and reliable American-made energy.

Holding corporations accountable: Corporations haven't been paying workers their fair share, leaving businesses unable to handle high demand. If we treat workers better, we can lower prices.

America COMPETES + poll: Democrats are working to pass the America COMPETES Act, which 76% of voters support. Democrats are doing what voters want by working to lower costs for working families with this vital investment in American competitiveness.

Supply chain (Jen Psaki): Democrats are working to pass the America COMPETES Act, which will help us tackle supply chain disruptions and inflation head-on.

Reducing the deficit: President Biden is passing legislation that would reduce the deficit by \$600 billion dollars, putting the nation's fiscal house in order and reducing inflation.

Holding corporations accountable (Sen. Peters): The companies that received huge tax breaks are earning huge profits and increasing their prices, taking advantage of the American people while making astronomical profits.

Holding corporations accountable: President Biden is considering a plan to mandate that companies stop increasing prices on consumers, through a mechanism called price controls.

Holding corporations accountable: Oil companies are earning record-breaking profits as they jack up prices at the pump for consumers. Biden is working to rein in corporate profiteering and reduce gas prices.



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Holding corporations accountable + Republicans (Speaker Pelosi): As wealthy corporations hike prices on the backs of working families, Republicans are fighting tooth and claw to prevent corporate giants from paying their fair share.

Lowering costs: Democrats grew up in families where the price at the pump was felt in the kitchen. They know food prices are up, and are working to bring them down.

Holding corporations accountable + Republicans (Rep. Ryan): Companies are raising prices while racking up profits with Trump-era tax breaks passed by Republicans, letting the shareholders and the CEOs rake in more money while putting strain on workers.

Challenge + families' budgets (President Biden): Democrats have been using every tool at their disposal, while remembering that Americans' budgets are being stretched in ways that create real stress at the kitchen table, and there are signs that they will make it through this challenge.

Covid: Price increases are mainly because of temporary bottlenecks and shortages due to the pandemic. Getting the coronavirus under control is the best way to reduce inflation.

Inflation + Republicans (Brown): Republicans have no solutions to the inflation problem. They refused to show up to a vote about President Joe Biden's five nominees to the Federal Reserve, whose mission is to control inflation.

Semiconductors (President Biden): Democrats plan to fight inflation by making more cars and semiconductors, a critical component of manufacturing, in America.

Covid: Democrats put enormous efforts into ending the COVID crisis. COVID-19-afflicted supply chain is to blame for current levels of inflation and inflation will decrease if we end the COVID crisis.

Inflation + global (Jen Psaki): Over the past six months, price increases in the United States and Europe have basically run neck and neck. Inflation is a global phenomenon and driven by global issues.

Downplaying inflation: While inflation is a problem, the mainstream media is blowing it out of proportion. Real wages are up for Americans with high school degrees and down for people with graduate degrees. The media elites are telling a slanted story because they're not getting their way.



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Inflation + Republicans (White House Communications Office): Republicans in Congress are standing in the way of qualified nominees to the Federal Reserve to help address inflation.

Republican messages we tested this week, included (in rank order of most effective to least effective in moving voters):

Democrats' Inflation + price increases (Sen. McConnell): The worst inflation in 40 years is fleecing American consumers from the gas pump to the grocery store. Democrats' policies have prices rising faster than wages.

Biden's inflation (Moore): Americans overwhelmingly feel Biden's failing policies everywhere they turn at the gas pump, grocery store, local restaurants & small businesses.

Democrats' Inflation + Ukraine (Sen. McConnell): Democrats' policies have prices rising faster than wages. The American people know one month of war in Europe doesn't explain 12 months of rising inflation on Democrats' watch.

Price increases (Rep. Carey): Inflation continues to burden American families. A new report on the rise in food prices is another sign that reckless spending must stop.

Democrats' Inflation + Biden budget (Sen. McConnell): Democrats' massive inflation is hammering working families. Yet President Biden just proposed a new budget that would dramatically increase liberal spending and slap the biggest tax hikes on American history.

Democrats' Inflation (Sen. McConnell): Democrats' massive inflation is hammering working families. It's badly hurt our entire economy.

Biden's inflation (Rep. Moore): Joe Biden's inflation is hammering the American people's wallets & will now cost the average American household OVER \$5,000.

Democrats' spending (Sen. Cruz): Joe Biden and the Democrats' out-of-control spending has resulted in CRUSHING inflation on the American people.

Biden's inflation (Sen. Rulli): President Joe Biden's inflation is one of the biggest tax increases in American history.

Inflation (Rep. Stefanik): Inflation is a tax on EVERY American.

Inflation + trans rights (Sen. Cotton): To President Biden, promoting transgender surgery for kids appears to be a bigger priority than fighting inflation. No wonder the American people are fed up with this administration.

Methodology:

The rank order of messages presented is based on topline modeled results across subgroups. The topline results incorporate performance with swing voters, as well as the likelihood of causing new defections from previously Republican voters, the likelihood of preventing defections from previously Democratic voters, and other optimizations. The rank order of messages presented here, based on the topline results, is the clearest guide for deciding which messaging to prioritize in a national, audience-generic context to maximize benefits on the outcome metric — in this case, Biden Approval.