



To: Mark Riddle, Future Majority
From: Stephen Clermont, Change Research
Date: January 16, 2022
Re: Swing State Survey Results

After one year in control of the White House and Congress Democrats should have a lot to crow about: 6.4 million jobs created, +5% growth in the GDP, +4.7% growth in wages, 207 million vaccinated enabling businesses, schools and stadiums to re-open, the passage of a massive bi-partisan infrastructure bill, and the Rescue Package.

Despite the success of “Delivering for the People,” the Democrats head into the midterm election behind in the generic horserace and in key measures, including President Biden’s job approval.

4 key factors are at play:

1. Historical trends of midterm elections
2. Continued health/economic/education battle against the coronavirus
3. Democrats 50-year brand deficit on economic issues
4. Discipline of the right-wing media machine

To begin to put together a winning coalition in 2022, Democrats need to start by addressing the fractures within the party and win back the Independents that have turned against the President and the party since the 2020 election. Our recommendations are as follows and backed up by the following pages:

- Message Discipline from the White House to the precinct captain centered on “Democrats Deliver.”
- Focus paid messages - starting yesterday – to unite a fractured Democratic Party and earn back the Independents that voted for Biden (including likely drop off voters from 2020).
- Hammer the Republicans on their radicalism and highlighting their votes against the Infrastructure Bill and Rescue Plan.

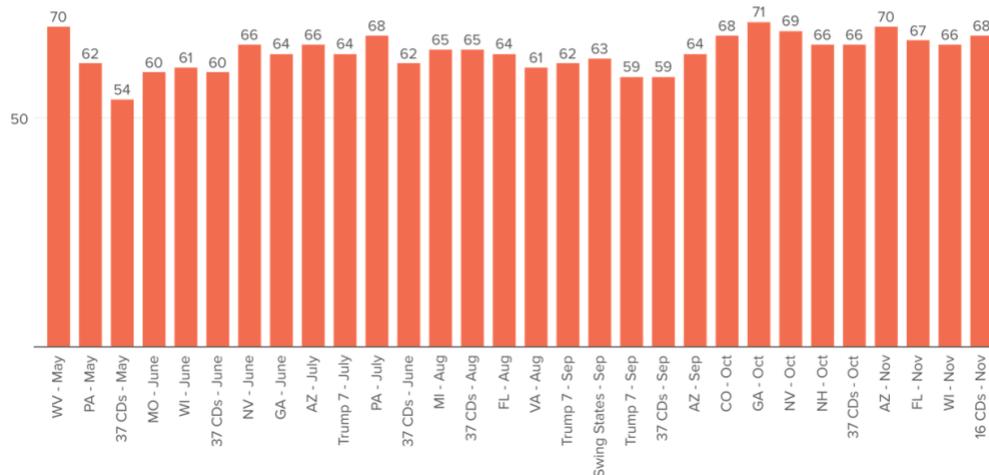
How Tough is the Electoral Environment?

- **Voters are dissatisfied with the direction the country is going in** - 79% overall, 43% of Democrats, 57% of Independents, and 96% of Republicans. Only 12% are satisfied (35% of Democrats, 15% of Independents, and 0% of Republicans).

Polling for this memo was conducted online from December 15-20, 2021. Using its Dynamic Online Sampling to attain a sample reflective of the electorate, Change Research surveyed 2946 voters in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin. Since the 2020 election the Future Majority-Change Research project has polled 64,241 voters in battlegrounds, and since 2017 and 139,136 voters in battlegrounds.

- **Voters believe today’s children will grow up worse off than people are now -** 68% overall, 47% of Democrats, 71% of Independents, and 83% of Republicans. Just 6% think they will be better off (12% of Democrats, 6% of Independents, and 1% of Republicans).
- **Two-thirds (67%) say that their income is falling behind the cost of living -** 47% of Democrats, 71% of Independents, and 83% of Republicans. We have found this consistently across the country this year.

% Falling Behind the Cost of Living



- **In a recent Change Research poll of middle-income voters nationwide, voters are deeply pessimistic about 2022.** Of those making between \$30K and \$100K per year:
 - 88% think that the price of household items will continue to rise.
 - 78% see housing prices as likely to rise.
 - 82% feel that COVID variants will continue to develop and spread.
- **Republicans have a clear edge in credibility on creating jobs, rebuilding the economy, lowering the cost of living, and pro-family policies. They are seen as better able to deliver on the economy, jobs, growth, prosperity, and safety. These are built in Republican brand strengths they have cultivated successfully for decades and need to be chipped away.**
 - Democrats are viewed as most credible in stopping the spread of COVID and better able to deliver on clean energy, reducing student debt, building infrastructure, and lowering health care and prescription drug costs.

	Dems	GOP	Nei-ther	Not Sure	Net Dem	% Choosing Dems among		
						Dems	Inds	GOP

Which party do you think is more credible on the following issues?

Stopping the spread of COVID 19	44	21	30	4	23	91	39	4
Fighting corruption	30	29	38	3	1	74	18	1
<i>Building the future</i>	38	39	20	4	-1	83	29	1
<i>Investing in the future</i>	38	39	18	4	-1	89	29	0
Pro-family policies	37	42	17	4	-5	81	28	3
Cutting taxes for middle class families	36	41	21	3	-5	79	28	1
Creating jobs	37	44	15	3	-7	84	29	1
Rebuilding the economy	37	46	14	3	-9	84	28	1
Lowering the cost of living	30	40	27	3	-10	70	22	1

Which party do you think is more likely to deliver on the following?

Clean energy transition	49	16	29	6	33	90	46	11
Reducing student debt	41	12	41	6	29	79	36	10
Protecting/cleaning up environment	48	21	27	5	27	89	47	9
Defeating COVID	41	20	34	5	21	87	36	3
Increasing Social Security payments	40	22	30	9	18	81	34	7
Lowering health care costs	39	27	30	4	12	82	33	3
Lowering the cost of prescription drugs	38	28	28	6	10	80	32	4
Building America by investing in our families and infrastructure	42	36	18	5	6	87	37	2
Lowering taxes on working families with children	40	38	18	4	2	85	36	1
Cleaning up corruption	26	27	43	4	-1	65	15	0
Leveling the playing field so small business can better compete with large corporations	33	35	26	5	-2	75	24	2
Creating middle class jobs	36	43	17	4	-7	81	29	1
Growth	34	43	17	6	-9	80	24	0
Rebuilding America's economy	36	46	14	4	-10	84	27	1
Prosperity	30	42	22	6	-12	75	18	0
Tackling inflation and lowering the cost of living	29	41	25	5	-12	70	19	1
Protecting your freedoms	33	46	18	3	-13	79	22	1
Fixing supply chain disruptions	29	42	22	7	-13	68	20	1
Support for veterans	33	47	15	5	-14	77	23	0
Keeping your community safe from violent crime	25	44	26	5	-19	62	14	0
Security	27	48	19	6	-21	67	16	0
Protecting the United States from terrorism	26	48	20	7	-22	64	16	0

The Question: “How do Democrats retain power?” – which many rightly fear that losing the levers of power will pave a way for Trump in 2024.

In this research – backed up by the trends we have seen in previous data - we profiled SIX different groups of voters. They are based on which party voters find most credible or better able to deliver on the 30 items in the chart on the previous page.

1. **Low Connected Democrats** – 15% of self-identified Democrats. They select Democrats as most credible or best able to deliver on half or fewer of these items. They are younger, less educated, more Hispanic and less white than the medium and high connected Democrats. They get news primarily online and do not watch CNN or MSNBC. They are the Democrats least motivated to vote in 2022.
2. **Medium Connected Democrats** – 24% of self-identified Democrats. They choose the party as best 50% to 80% of the time. Half are under 50. The whitest and most college educated of these groups. More likely to watch cable TV and read local newspapers than low connected Democrats but not as much as high connected Democrats.
3. **High Connected Democrats** – 61% of self-identified Democrats. They are disproportionately older, more African-American, and contain a higher share of men than the low and medium connected Democrats. They consume news most in the traditional way – watching television, listening to the radio, and reading newspapers.
4. **Independents Leaning Democrat** – 32% of self-identified Independents. Choose Democrats as more credible or best able to deliver most often. More than half (57%) are over 50, they are the most educated group of Independents, the least white, and are split equally by gender. They get news most from local television, network television, CNN, MSNBC, radio, and newspapers.
5. **Independents Leaning Republican** – 34% of self-identified Independents. Choose Republicans as more credible or best able to deliver most often. A majority (61%) are over 50, they are the least educated group of Independents, the whitest, and are predominantly male. They get news most from Fox News and local television. They consume fewer news sources overall than other Independents.
6. **Completely Disconnected Independents** – 34% of self-identified Independents. Explicitly selected neither party as more credible or best able to deliver most often. They are young – 65% under 50 – and whiter than Independents who lean Democrat and more Hispanic than those who lean Republican. They watch much less cable news than other Independents. They are the Independent who are least motivated to vote in 2022.

Part I. Democrats

Who Are the Democrats Most Alienated from the Party?

Low connected Democrats see the party as having the most credibility on stopping COVID and investing in the future and the least on lowering the cost of living and fighting corruption. In terms of delivering, low connected Democrats give the highest assessments on clean energy transition, protecting the environment, and defeating COVID.

Low and medium connected Democrats share the most negative views on the party’s ability to deliver on protecting the United States from terrorism, cleaning up corruption, security, fixing supply chain disruptions, keeping your community safe from violent crime, and tackling inflation and lowering the cost of living. Almost no low connected Democrat sees the party as best able to deliver on prosperity. Few regard Republicans as the better option. But they might not vote, which is a problem. Higher connected Democrats don’t see any issues with the party on any of these measures.

% of Democrats Selecting Democrats as Most Credible or Best Able to Deliver

	Connection to the Party			
	All Dems	Low (15%)	Med (24%)	High (61%)
Credibility				
Stopping the spread of COVID 19	91	57	91	100
<i>Investing in the future</i>	85	50	86	95
Pro-family policies	81	36	75	95
<i>Building the future</i>	83	35	82	97
Creating jobs	84	31	80	99
Cutting taxes for middle class families	79	29	71	95
Rebuilding the economy	84	29	82	99
Lowering the cost of living	70	17	48	92
Fighting corruption	74	17	59	94

Delivering

Clean energy transition	90	57	88	100
Protecting/cleaning up environment	89	48	88	99
Defeating COVID	87	42	86	99
Building America by investing in our families and infrastructure	87	37	89	100
Reducing student debt	79	32	62	97
Lowering taxes on working families with children	85	31	84	99
Increasing Social Security payments	81	31	72	97
Lowering health care costs	82	27	76	99
Lowering the cost of prescription drugs	80	27	71	98
Rebuilding America’s economy	84	24	83	99
Support for veterans	77	20	61	97
Creating middle class jobs	81	17	77	99
Protecting your freedoms	79	17	73	97
Growth	80	17	73	99
Protecting the United States from terrorism	64	13	31	91
Leveling the playing field so small business can better compete with large corporations	75	12	64	97
Cleaning up corruption	65	9	39	90
Security	67	9	37	94
Fixing supply chain disruptions	68	8	41	95
Keeping your community safe from violent crime	62	7	35	86
Prosperity	75	7	62	97
Tackling inflation and lowering the cost of living	70	6	49	95

The low connected Democrats are younger, less educated, more Hispanic, and less white than the medium and high connected Democrats. High connected Democrats are older, more male, and less Hispanic.

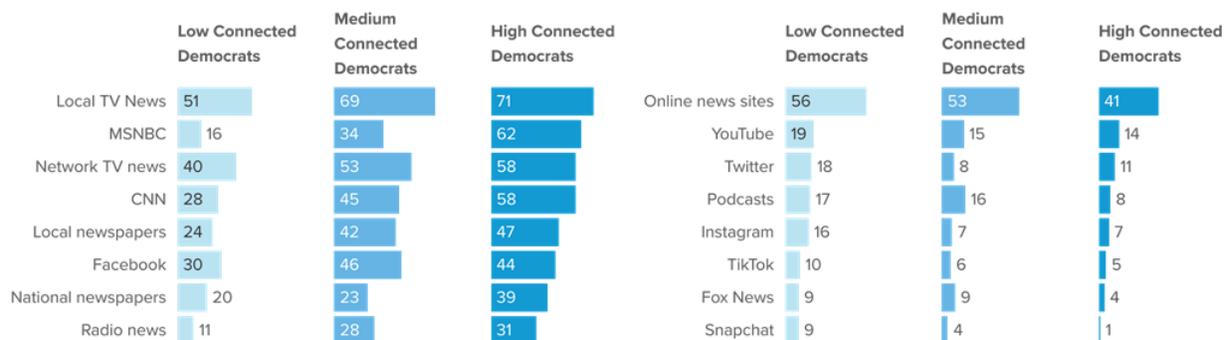
Profile of Democrats

	Connection to the Party			
	All Dems	Low (15%)	Med (24%)	High (61%)
Male	36	30	32	41
Female	64	70	68	59
18-34	19	39	26	10
35-49	21	24	27	16
50-64	28	20	26	31
65+	31	17	21	42
Under 50	41	63	53	27
Over 50	59	37	47	73
High School or Less	12	21	3	12
Some College/Associates	39	38	34	39
College Graduate	27	26	33	25
Post Graduate	22	16	30	24
White	64	60	72	66
Black	21	19	14	22
Hispanic	12	15	11	9

High connected Democrats are significantly more likely to watch cable television news, read local newspapers, listen to the radio for news, and consume Facebook news content than other Democrats. Low connected Democrats receive news more online, particularly from YouTube, Twitter, podcasts, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat than more connected Democrats.

Sources of News

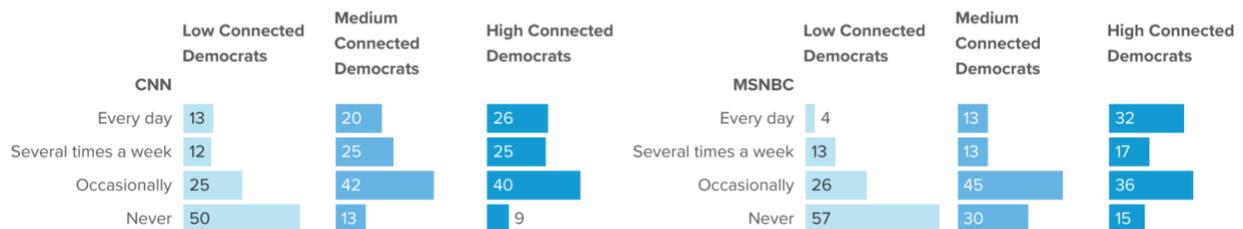
% Selecting



Not only do low connected Democrats identify MSNBC and CNN as sources of news far less often than medium and high connected Democrats, those that do watch these networks do so

far less often. **Trying to reach these voters through national newspapers and friendly cable television will prove mostly futile.** Republican superiority on social media since the 2016 election continues to be a problem. This is further compounded by the fact that just 42% of low connected Democrats trust the news media in general (58% distrust, and here there is some crossover with Independents and even Republicans) compared to 69% of medium connected and 87% of high connected Democrats.

Cable News Consumption



What Do Low Connected Democrats Think?

Low connected Democrats largely reject Donald Trump and the Republican Party. Few show any inclination to defect in either the 2022 House or Senate contests. However, as compared to medium and high connected Democrats, these voters are largely dissatisfied with the direction of the country, believe children in the future will grow up worse off, have incomes falling behind the cost of living, and are lukewarm, at best, about Joe Biden. Some highlights:

- Low connected Democrats are substantially less motivated to vote in 2022.** Just 50% rate their motivation a '10' while over four-fifths of most connected Democrats do. Given how more than 80% of these low connected Democrats say they will vote for their party's candidate in 2022, any decrease in motivation will kill Democratic candidates as Republicans are primed to vote this year (83% w/motivation of 10).
- Just 42% of low connected Democrats have a favorable opinion of Joe Biden and a bare majority (57%) approve of the job he is doing.** Kamala Harris is viewed similarly. Even fewer have strongly positive views of Biden. Two-fifths (40%) believe the President has kept few or none of his promises. High connected Democrats universally approve of Biden and believe he has kept at least some of his promises. More than one in 10 (13%) of low connected Democrats regret their vote for Joe Biden.
- While low connected Democrats have a more favorable view of Alexandria Ocasio Cortez than either Joe Biden or Kamala Harris, they view her less favorably than medium or high connected Democrats do.**
- Low connected Democrats are 20 points more likely to say their income is falling behind the cost of living than medium and high connected ones.** Just 4% are satisfied with the direction of the country and 5% believe today's children will be better off than people are now. Trying to convince them that things are better than the

“news media” is portraying them is doomed to fail as is citing macroeconomic statistics. Joe Biden and Democratic candidates for Congress need to lay out a more compelling vision for America’s future than they are currently doing, particularly in addressing the economic challenges in less prosperous communities.

Political Attitudes of Democrats

	Party Connection				Party Connection		
	Low (15%)	Med (24%)	High (61%)		Low (15%)	Med (24%)	High (61%)
2022 Vote Motivation				Income/Cost of Living			
10 - Highest	50	82	89	Falling Behind	74	55	55
Biden Favorable				Biden Job			
<i>Very Favorable</i>	17	38	74	<i>Strongly Approve</i>	11	27	62
Favorable	42	83	96	Approve	57	86	97
Unfavorable	28	3	1	Disapprove	40	14	3
Harris Favorable				Biden Promises Kept			
<i>Very Favorable</i>	15	35	64	Most	6	22	56
Favorable	43	73	92	Some	45	60	38
Unfavorable	31	8	1	Few/None	40	16	5
AOC Favorable				Satisfaction w/Country			
<i>Very Favorable</i>	37	47	61	Satisfied	4	15	37
Favorable	52	79	87	Not Satisfied	82	67	45
Unfavorable	14	5	3	Not sure	14	18	18
Trump Favorable				Future Children			
Favorable	8	1	1	Better off	5	8	16
Unfavorable	91	99	97	About the Same	19	14	25
				Worse off	62	61	41
2020 President Vote				Not sure	14	17	18
Biden	88	100	99	Regret Biden Vote			
Trump	9	0	0	Yes	13	3	1
Other/No Vote	3	0	1				
2022 House Vote				2022 Senate Vote			
Democrat	81	100	99	Democrat	82	96	99
Republican	10	0	0	Republican	7	0	0
Not sure	9	0	1	Not sure	11	3	1

To flesh out our idea of “low connected”, let’s probe a bit more deeply into how Democrats view Joe Biden: a majority (59%) of low connected Democrats (again, 15% percent of all Democrats) do not believe that Joe Biden cares about them. Just 41% believe he does compared to 87% of medium connected Democrats and 97% of high connected Democrats. Majorities of low connected Democrats agree that he is “too old” and “hasn’t done all that much and isn’t acting with much urgency.” Other weaknesses with these voters include “continuing

Trump’s harsh and inhumane immigration policies,” “not focused on the economy and the rising cost of living,” and “focused on the wrong priorities.” What medium connected Democrats agree with each other on most is that he “handled the withdrawal from Afghanistan incompetently” and also that he is “too old” and for “continuing Trump’s harsh and inhumane immigration policies.” High connected Democrats largely reject all of these.

On the positive side, majorities of low connected Democrats do *not* think that Biden is “too focused on Washington DC and not on what is going on in the rest of the country,” “won’t stand up to China,” “promised to end COVID and the virus is just getting worse,” “weak and is being led around by his liberal staff,” and “cares too much about what woke liberals want.”

Agreement with Statements about Biden among Democrats

Party Connection

Low	Med	High	
(15%)	(24%)	(61%)	
55	37	16	Too old
50	23	4	Hasn’t done all that much and isn’t acting with much urgency
47	35	15	Continuing Trump’s harsh and inhumane immigration policies
47	26	4	Not focused on the economy and the rising cost of living
45	14	6	Focused on the wrong priorities
41	13	3	Has no clear ideas on how to build the future
40	13	3	Not the leader the country needs right now
39	39	18	Handled the withdrawal from Afghanistan incompetently
37	20	4	Doesn’t understand how inflation is impacting people’s lives
35	20	9	Not taking the threats to our democracy seriously
32	9	1	Not up to the job
32	6	3	Weak on foreign policy
29	13	3	Too focused on Washington DC and not on what is going on in the rest of the country
29	13	2	Won’t stand up to China
23	4	3	Promised to end COVID and the virus is just getting worse
23	5	1	Weak and is being led around by his liberal staff
19	6	4	Cares too much about what woke liberals want

Covid

To mitigate COVID, Democrats are largely united on school mask mandates. Among other COVID mitigation policies, low connected Democrats are more likely than other Democrats to oppose vaccine mandates for children, for government offices and other large venues, and for private businesses. Nearly every high and medium connected Democrat supports these, while between a fifth and a quarter of low connected Democrats oppose these.

The divide among Democrats is strongest on schools. A majority of low connected Democrats agree that “it’s time we open up schools fully, five days a week, going forward so that students aren’t left behind. Shutting them down and going to remote learning does more harm than good.” Majorities of medium and high connected Democrats disagree with this. Democrats oppose the nihilistic Republican argument to move on from COVID (Republicans agree with this by a 94%-6% margin). However, more than two and a half times as many low connected

Democrats than high ones agree with this sentiment. Combined with disconnected Independents, discussed later, the people we need to persuade in 2022 are over COVID and want to move on even in the midst of omicron.

COVID Attitudes of Democrats

	Party Connection				Party Connection		
	Low (15%)	Med (24%)	High (61%)		Low (15%)	Med (24%)	High (61%)
Vaccine Mandates in Govt & Large Venues				School Mask Mandate			
Support	74	93	98	Support	90	99	98
Oppose	25	7	1	Oppose	10	0	1
Vaccine Mandates for Private Businesses				Vaccine Mandates for Schools			
Support	69	86	97	Support	79	93	98
Oppose	27	12	1	Oppose	17	4	1
"Even though the virus continues to spread, it is time to get on with our lives and return to the way we lived our lives before COVID."				"It's time we open up schools fully, five days a week, going forward so that students aren't left behind. Shutting them down and going to remote learning does more harm than good."			
Agree	44	29	17	Agree	53	44	32
Disagree	43	67	82	Disagree	35	53	62

Democracy

Democrats see America's democratic institutions as strong enough to stand up to the threats posed against them while Independents and Republicans don't. Three-fifths (60%) see them as strong while 36% rate them as weak, much higher than Independents (24% strong, 71% weak) and Republicans (16% strong, 78% weak). Within the Democratic Party, divisions exist on this as low connected Democrats view democratic institutions as weak (29% strong, 64% weak), medium connected are split (50% strong, 45% weak) and high connected Democrats overwhelmingly see them as strong (70% strong, 26% weak).

Despite this assessment of these institutions as weak, low connected Democrats are less excited about voting for a candidate for office who makes strengthening America's democratic institutions the centerpiece of their campaign. Just over half (59%) say they would be more likely to vote for this candidate while the rest say it doesn't matter (32%) or they would vote for someone else (9%). Medium (74% more likely to vote for) and high connected Democrats (98% more likely to vote for) show more enthusiasm. The difference becomes starker when looking at the intensity of the response. Only 15% of low connected and 26% of medium connected Democrats say they would be *much more* likely to vote for this candidate, compared to 57% of high connected Democrats. Focusing on this will help drive the intensity of the voters most likely to vote and vote Democratic in 2022, but will be less effective in building intensity across the party.

BBB

A majority of voters overall support the \$1.75 trillion Build Back Better plan whether it is described as new ‘spending’ or ‘investments.’ Low connected Democrats support it at an 80% to 85% level with medium and high connected Democrats universally behind the bill. We tested what essentially is the Joe Manchin “strategic pause” message. Support overall holds at 50% while dropping more with medium and high connected Democrats than low connected.

Attitudes of Democrats towards Build Back Better

Party Connection			Party Connection		
Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High
(15%)	(24%)	(61%)	(15%)	(24%)	(61%)

The U.S. House recently passed a \$1.75 trillion in new spending/investments over the next 10 years to expand Medicare benefits, invest in preschool education, community college, child care, more affordable college, and fund efforts to address climate change. Do you support or oppose this plan?

Spending				Investments			
<i>Strongly Support</i>	60	85	94	<i>Strongly Support</i>	62	84	93
Support	80	98	99	Support	85	100	97
Oppose	16	2	1	Oppose	15	0	1

Critics of this plan say that the threat posed by record inflation to the American people is getting worse and that Congress should take a “strategic pause” on new spending like this until Congress has more time to assess the effects of the nearly \$5 trillion COVID stimulus spending in 2020 and earlier this year. Supporters of this plan quote leading economists who say the plan is likely to reduce inflation. After hearing this do you support or oppose this plan?

<i>Strongly Support</i>	40	55	70
Support	72	80	79
Oppose	16	12	14

Democrats say under their economic plan, taxes will only go up on families making more than \$400,000/year.

Believe them	40	76	88
Don't believe them	29	9	3
Not sure	32	15	9

Joe Biden and the Democrats say that over time their Build Back Better plans pay for themselves and don't increase the deficit.

Yes, believable	40	66	87
No, not believable	27	8	3
Not sure	33	26	9

Democrats say that passing their economic plan will help ease the rising cost of living. Do you:

Believe them. Costs will go down	15	38	81
Don't believe them. Bill won't impact costs one way or the other	32	28	6
Don't believe them. Costs will go up	20	6	1
Not sure	33	28	11

How much did the American Rescue Plan help you and your family?

A lot/Some	42	71	79
Not too much/At all	56	28	18

The challenge comes from low connected Democrats who do not find it believable that taxes won't go up on those making less than \$400,000 a year, that the cost of living will go down, and that BBB will not increase the deficit. Most troubling, a majority (56%) of low connected Democrats do not believe the American Rescue Act helped their family while other Democrats do. The current way we talk about both bills will not help us persuade sympathetic skeptics.

Opportunities to Change the Conversation

Democrats see current economic statistics differently. What might elicit positive responses from high connected Democrats will produce the opposite for low connected Democrats, especially if the statement about the present contradicts their lived experience. Never lead with this:

	Party Connection			
	Low (15%)	Med (24%)	High (61%)	
"America's economy is growing again and setting records. Wages are going up. Social Security payments are going up. America's workers are getting stronger."	Total Agree	32	57	80
	Total Disagree	62	36	16
	Net Agree	-30	21	64

To effectively speak to all Democrats, focus on what future we want to achieve and explicitly make the case that it is doable, affordable, and reflects what America is all about.

	Party Connection			
	Low	Med	High	
"I am tired of politicians who do nothing but complain and tell us why we can't do things. I want to vote for leaders who have a vision for the future and will tell us how they will create more opportunities for everyone to live a better life."	Total Agree	93	89	94
	Total Disagree	3	5	5
	Net Agree	90	84	89
"We must invest in America because Americans are worth it. When you invest in Americans, our potential is limitless."	Total Agree	86	88	94
	Total Disagree	10	8	4
	Net Agree	76	80	90
"America is the wealthiest nation on earth. We can afford to invest in everyone's future if we make it a priority."	Total Agree	81	86	91
	Total Disagree	16	12	7
	Net Agree	65	74	84
"America is the greatest country on earth when we confidently invest in the success of every American."	Total Agree	69	66	85
	Total Disagree	27	29	13
	Net Agree	42	37	72
"Investing in America allows us to bake a bigger pie, so everyone can eat a larger slice. The American Dream is big enough for everyone and America's potential is limitless despite what some politicians say."	Total Agree	66	77	88
	Total Disagree	32	18	10
	Net Agree	34	59	78
"In America, there's more than enough for everyone."	Total Agree	60	66	78
	Total Disagree	38	27	20
	Net Agree	22	39	58

Investment messages must be linked to what positive change the investment will bring, specifically rebut the unaffordability charge, and link to a positive emotion about America and what we should strive to be. These are all important as the opposition’s arguments, especially when they hit on insecurity and resentment, divides our coalition. This makes it doubly important for us to make our strongest, positive case at the outset and not from a defensive crouch.

	Party Connection			
	Low (15%)	Med (24%)	High (61%)	
“When politicians say they are going to ‘invest’ in something, they are really talking about taking my money and giving it to someone else.”	Total Agree	57	32	28
	Total Disagree	37	61	67
	Net Agree	20	-29	-39
“In America, there’s no free lunch. Someone has always got to pay, and that’s usually people like me.”	Total Agree	54	35	37
	Total Disagree	36	61	58
	Net Agree	18	-26	-21
“The Government has limited funding and can’t do everything.”	Total Agree	48	53	39
	Total Disagree	48	45	56
	Net Agree	0	8	-17
“In America, giving more resources to one group of people always means taking them away from other people.”	Total Agree	48	34	30
	Total Disagree	48	63	65
	Net Agree	0	-29	-35
“I am focused on myself and my family’s success. The best thing the government can do is leave us alone.”	Total Agree	42	10	11
	Total Disagree	54	87	85
	Net Agree	-12	-77	-74
“America is a land of opportunity, where anyone can achieve if they put their mind to it.”	Total Agree	31	39	57
	Total Disagree	67	61	41
	Net Agree	-36	-22	16

Don’t expect to win over low connected Democrats with pro-government or “move to the left” arguments. They have a more conservative view of the role of government than other Democrats:

	Party Connection		
	Low (15%)	Med (24%)	High (61%)
Which do you think the role of government should be in American life?	64	80	90
	35	14	8
Be there to assist in times of trouble, or to clear barriers, but mostly stay out of the way			
Play an active role in guaranteeing equal opportunity for all			
How effective do you think federal government investments in skills, training, and infrastructure are in creating the conditions for a pro-growth economy that will raise wages and increase jobs?	55	83	91
	36	14	7
Effective			
Not Effective			

In addition, pro-America statements will fall flat on their own. Only high connected Democrats agree that “America is a land of opportunity, where anyone can achieve if they put their mind to it.” They have to be paired with specific and achievable goals.

Winning Messages that Unite Democrats

The following messages work most effectively with all types of Democrats. We presented them both as generic candidates and as a Democrat. They get the highest share of Democrats of all types saying they would be likely to vote for them. In all three of them, we center a specific policy, spotlight the future benefits, and connect the individual to a larger vision of what America should be:

- “We need to invest in every child’s future. That includes universal preschool so young children can start school ready to learn, fully funding K-12 education and paying quality teachers a living wage, affordable four-year college for those who want to attend, and free job-training and apprenticeship programs so that so everyone can make their own opportunities and be equipped to fill the jobs of the future – or create their own.” (96% of Democrats are likely to vote for this candidate)
- “Investing in roads, bridges, broadband, and rail creates good American jobs that can’t be sent overseas which helps businesses grow and supply chains keep up with roaring demand as we emerge from the worst of the pandemic. These investments will make “Made in America” a real policy, not just a catchy bumper sticker. It’s just common sense.” (95% of Democrats are likely to vote for this candidate)
- “What makes America special are the small and family-run businesses that serve every corner of America and bind communities together. I will invest in small town America, Main Street America, family-farm America, so that everyone will have the opportunity to start and grow a business without being crushed by giant corporations who refuse to play by the rules.” (90% of Democrats are likely to vote for this candidate)

When contrasting with Republicans, Democrats in all groups find the following statements most persuasive. In each one, we state a clear goal, connect the goal to values, outline what America will look like if the goal is achieved, and say what the impact will be if the Republicans block it. These are more persuasive than statements centered around job growth, the American Rescue Act, and Biden’s work to lower gas prices.

- “Democrats believe investing in America will grow America’s economy. By transitioning to clean energy, improving public education, universal broadband internet, manufacturing, a new electrical grid, among many other investments, Democrats will keep America on the cutting edge of global technology while creating millions of American jobs to create American products to be sold all over the world. America will be stronger than ever.” (80% of disconnected Democrats, 95% of all Democrats find this persuasive)
- “Democrats say that their policies invest in America through the greatest investment in infrastructure - rebuilding of crumbling roads, bridges, airports, ports, broadband - since the

creation of the interstate highway system. Because of failed Republican policies of giving tax cuts to billionaires instead of rebuilding America, we have even more we need to get done. Democrats will invest in America because we believe in American greatness and the potential of every American child to succeed. Democrats will invest in Americans, not corporations and banks.” (77% of disconnected Democrats, 96% of all Democrats find this persuasive)

- “Democrats believe nothing comes ahead of educating our children. We respect parents by fighting for full funding for public education in every community in America. Democrats will invest in preschool so every young child is ready to begin kindergarten ready to learn, fully fund K-12 education and pay teachers what they are worth, make community college tuition free, expand job training and apprenticeship programs, and bring down the cost of higher education so we are not saddling future generations with crushing debt. The Republicans fight against all of this. They would have state governments take over schools and dictate what teachers can teach while Democrats support local control of schools.” (73% of disconnected Democrats, 90% of all Democrats find this persuasive)

In developing the narrative for 2022, we have found two other additional areas that hold potential for Democrats. Throughout 2021, we tested variations of the following contrast - thinking about the next election, which candidate message would you support:

- A candidate who is For the People and has delivered on building America by investing in infrastructure and families, creating millions of middle-class jobs, cracking down on corruption, and defending democracy and freedom.
- A candidate who will get inflation under control by cutting the out-of-control government socialist spending, getting people back to work, cracking down on violent crime, is against the teaching of Critical Race Theory, and will secure the southern border with Mexico.

Framing the election this way, in our November poll of similar swing states, moved the generic US House of Representatives vote by 10 net points (44% GOP-42% Dem to 51% Dem-43% GOP) overall. It moves Independents by 12 net points (46% Dem-45% GOP).

We are in a moment when people are reconsidering work and what they want out of their lives. Democrats are positioned to offer greater opportunities for people to start and grow a business. In a recent national poll Change Research did of adults making between \$30 and \$100K a year, 45% of those currently working for someone else told us they would start a business and work for themselves if they had the resources to do so. The reasons most commonly cited include needing a lifestyle change to escape burnout, feeling a lack of purpose in their current role, desire the ability to work remotely or travel more often, and wanting to shift careers or industries. The overwhelming obstacle to doing so is the money needed to start it, and lack of financial security. Democrats should lean into the new dynamics of the “great resignation” and propose a whole suite of policies that put people and small businesses ahead of corporations. This could include increasing access to capital and reducing barriers so these entrepreneurs can flourish. This can be paired with eliminating a whole host of corporate tax breaks such as the corporate jet loophole, among many others. This will allow us to talk about job creation and the future of the American worker that is both consistent with our values that make them the hero of the story and allows us to offer fresh and new policies and to use new language.

Part II. Independents

Who Are Independents That Are Disconnected from Both Parties?

The table below shows just the Independents who see neither party as most credible or best able to deliver ('Completely disconnected Independents'). They see Democrats as most credible in stopping the spread of COVID 19 (only 7% choose Republicans). However, just 3% see Democrats as most credible in fighting corruption while 89% see neither party as credible on this measure. Democrats may have to focus on Republican votes on the anti-corruption parts of HR1 in 2022.

% Seen as Most Credible/Best Able to Deliver among Completely Disconnected Independents

Credibility	Dems	GOP	Nei-ther	Not Sure
Stopping the spread of COVID 19	29	7	59	5
Pro-family policies	16	21	55	9
<i>Investing in the future</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>6</i>
Creating jobs	11	17	64	8
Rebuilding the economy	11	19	63	7
Lowering the cost of living	9	6	82	4
<i>Building the future</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>4</i>
Cutting taxes for middle class families	8	15	72	6
Fighting corruption	3	4	89	4
Delivering				
Protecting/cleaning up environment	35	2	58	4
Clean energy transition	34	1	61	5
Defeating COVID	24	2	67	7
Building America by investing in our families and infrastructure	22	6	65	7
Lowering taxes on working families with children	21	8	67	3
Reducing student debt	21	1	73	5
Increasing Social Security payments	20	2	67	10
Lowering health care costs	18	1	77	4
Lowering the cost of prescription drugs	15	5	72	7
Protecting your freedoms	8	21	67	5
Rebuilding America's economy	7	17	70	6
Creating middle class jobs	7	10	76	7
Leveling the playing field so small business can better compete with large corporations	7	6	80	7
Support for veterans	6	30	57	7
Growth	6	9	73	13
Fixing supply chain disruptions	5	12	77	6
Tackling inflation and lowering the cost of living	5	7	83	5
Protecting the United States from terrorism	3	24	64	9
Security	2	25	64	9
Prosperity	2	9	82	7
Keeping your community safe from violent crime	1	19	75	5
Cleaning up corruption	1	3	94	2

As with low connected Democrats, completely disconnected Independents are substantially younger than those who lean towards a party. Biden and the Democratic Party have lost the most ground with younger voters and they disproportionately make up these two key groups. In terms of race and ethnicity, completely disconnected Independents are whiter than Independents who lean Democrat and more Hispanic than those who lean Republican. All three groups are similar in gender and education.

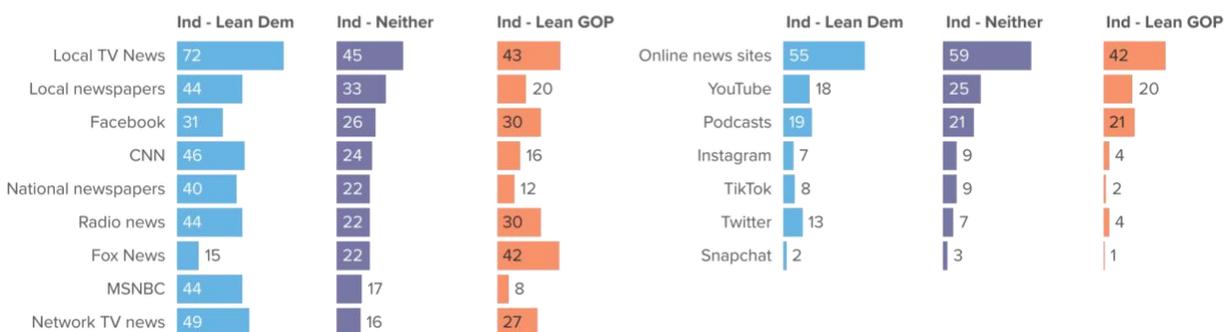
Profile of Independents

	Lean Dem	Neither	Lean GOP
Male	50	46	62
Female	50	54	38
18-34	22	39	14
35-49	22	26	25
50-64	33	22	26
65+	24	13	34
Under 50	43	65	39
Over 50	57	35	61
High School or Less	10	14	14
Some College/Associates	45	51	51
College Graduate	27	24	21
Post Graduate	18	11	14
White	66	72	78
Black	16	6	8
Hispanic	13	10	5

Few of the completely disconnected Independents get news from cable television whether it is CNN, Fox News, or MSNBC. They are most likely to consume local TV news, local newspapers, and online. In terms of different websites, completely disconnected Independents are slightly more likely to watch YouTube than other Independents. They consume other sites at about the same rate.

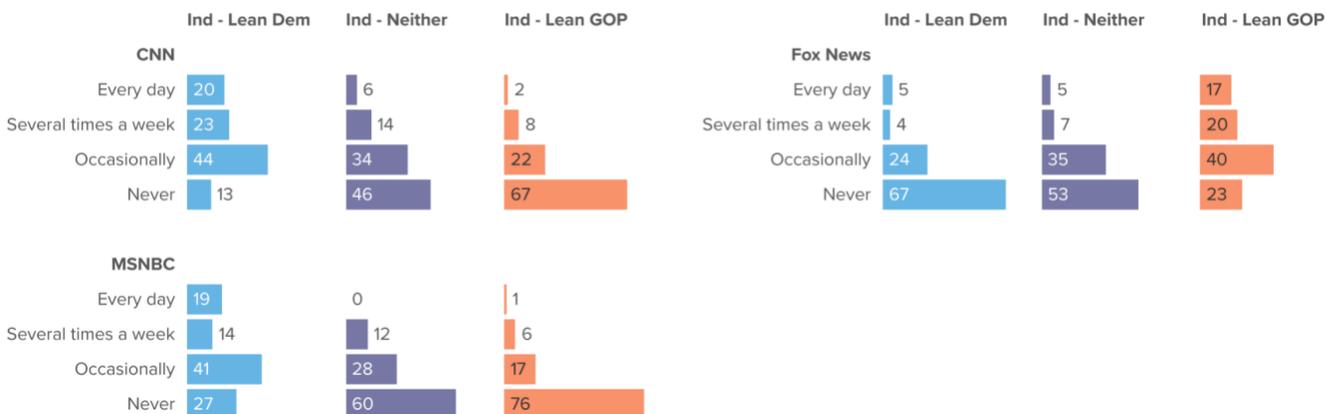
Sources of News

% Selecting



Completely disconnected Independents don't watch cable news. Just 6% say they watch CNN every day, 5% Fox News, and 0% MSNBC. These voters will not be reachable this way.

Cable News Consumption



What Do Completely Disconnected Independents Think?

These Independents largely reject everyone - Biden, Harris, Trump, McCarthy, and AOC. Neither party has the edge in either the 2022 House or Senate contests. However, as compared to medium and high connected Democrats, these voters are largely dissatisfied with the direction of the country, believe children in the future will grow up worse off, and have incomes falling behind the cost of living. Some highlights:

- Completely disconnected Independents are substantially less motivated to vote in 2022.** Just 49% rate their motivation a '10,' lower than Democratic and Republican learners. As with people who identify with the two parties, independent Republicans are more motivated than Independent Democrats.
- These voters feel negatively towards Biden, Harris, Trump, McCarty, MTG, and AOC.** Two-thirds have unfavorable views of Biden, Harris, and Trump. Hardly any have very favorable views of them. These voters have more positive views, and less negative ones, of AOC than Biden or Kamala but just 26% rate her favorably. Nearly three-fourths (72%) believe Biden has not kept his promises. Hardly any disconnected Independent has a positive view of Kevin McCarthy or Marjorie Taylor Greene. Independent Democrats dislike MTG more than McCarthy.
- Independent leaning Democrats and Republicans plan to stay with the party in races for U.S. House and Senate in 2022.** Disconnected Independents split in 2020 (37% Biden, 36% Trump, 22% someone else/no vote), split 39%-39% in U.S. House races in 2022, and tilt Republican 34%-28% in U.S. Senate races. These voters are **not** Republicans. However, they often make up the difference when Democrats lose.

- Disconnected Independents are much closer to Republican than Democratic leaners in assessing the state of the country negatively.** Nearly all of them (92%) are not satisfied with the direction of the country, 74% believe children in the future will be worse off than people today, and 67% believe their income is falling behind the cost of living. What we are doing now as a party isn't working with them.

Political Attitudes of Independents

	Lean Dem	Nei-ther	Lean GOP		Lean Dem	Nei-ther	Lean GOP
2022 Vote Motivation				Income/Cost of Living			
10 - Highest	69	49	83	Falling Behind	63	67	76
Biden Favorable				Biden Job			
Very Favorable	35	2	0	Strongly Approve	30	2	0
Favorable	72	13	1	Approve	82	16	1
Unfavorable	10	70	96	Disapprove	15	80	98
Harris Favorable				AOC Favorable			
Very Favorable	26	3	1	Very Favorable	42	16	0
Favorable	59	15	1	Favorable	72	26	1
Unfavorable	15	69	96	Unfavorable	6	48	92
Trump Favorable				Biden Promises Kept			
Favorable	1	23	77	Most	32	1	1
Unfavorable	96	67	10	Some	46	20	5
				Few/None	16	72	93
McCarthy Favorable				Satisfaction w/Country			
Favorable	1	5	35	Satisfied	25	1	0
Unfavorable	67	37	14	Not Satisfied	51	92	99
				Not sure	24	7	1
MTG Favorable				Future Children			
Favorable	2	6	43	Better off	15	3	2
Unfavorable	82	49	15	About the Same	17	14	4
				Worse off	54	74	87
2020 President Vote				Not sure	14	9	7
Biden	94	37	3	Regret Biden Vote			
Trump	1	36	88	Yes	2	19	n/a
Other/No Vote	4	28	9	2022 Senate Vote			
				Democrat	1	28	92
2022 House Vote				Republican	83	34	0
Democrat	1	39	97	Not sure	17	38	7
Republican	91	39	1				
Not sure	8	22	2				

The top critique of Joe Biden with these voters is that he doesn't understand how inflation is impacting people's living. The empathy that won him the election in 2020 has not been evident here as just 20% believe that Joe Biden cares about them. Four-fifths (79%) say he does not.

These voters also cite focusing on the wrong priorities, Afghanistan, lack of accomplishments, not being the leader for the moment, no clear ideas on building the future, and being too old as other concerns.

Agreement with Statements about Biden among Completely Disconnected Independents

74	Doesn't understand how inflation is impacting people's lives
73	Focused on the wrong priorities
73	Handled the withdrawal from Afghanistan incompetently
72	Hasn't done all that much and isn't acting with much urgency
72	Not the leader the country needs right now
70	Not focused on the economy and the rising cost of living
69	Has no clear ideas on how to build the future
69	Too old
64	Not up to the job
61	Weak on foreign policy
61	Too focused on Washington DC and not on what is going on in the rest of the country
59	Not taking the threats to our democracy seriously
58	Weak and is being led around by his liberal staff
57	Won't stand up to China
52	Cares too much about what woke liberals want
49	Continuing Trump's harsh and inhumane immigration policies
48	Promised to end COVID and the virus is just getting worse

On COVID, these Independents are mostly supportive of school mask mandates and split on vaccine mandates to attend school in-person. A majority oppose mandates for adults. For the most part, a strong majority believe it is time to move on from COVID.

Support Oppose

43	54	Vaccine Mandates in Govt & Large Venues
40	57	Vaccine Mandates for Private Businesses
54	43	School Mask Mandate
49	48	Vaccine Mandates for Schools

Agree Disagree

67	27	"It's time we open up schools fully, five days a week, going forward so that students aren't left behind. Shutting them down and going to remote learning does more harm than good."
60	38	"Even though the virus continues to spread, it is time to get on with our lives and return to the way we lived our lives before COVID."

Democratic Credibility: BBB

These Independents support Build Back Better whether it is described as new spending (53%) or new investments (60%). Support holds at 51% after the "strategic pause" argument. Saying the plan won't increase taxes, will reduce the cost of living, and won't add to the deficit does not help. These voters don't believe it: 59% don't believe taxes won't go up for those making under \$400,000 a year, 77% don't believe that cost of living will decrease, and 61% don't

believe that the deficit won't increase with the passage of the bill. A majority (56%) of these Independents do not think the American Rescue Plan has helped them much. They must be reached on this issue.

Completely disconnected Independents will not believe someone who says that "America's economy is growing again and setting records. Wages are going up. Social Security payments are going up. America's workers are getting stronger." We will not get the voters we need to be if we say this:

Agree	Disagree	Net	
15	77	-62	"America's economy is growing again and setting records. Wages are going up. Social Security payments are going up. America's workers are getting stronger."

The investment arguments that work with Democrats also work with these Independents. These should be the core of what we say to voters in 2022.

Agree	Disagree	Net	
83	9	74	"I am tired of politicians who do nothing but complain and tell us why we can't do things. I want to vote for leaders who have a vision for the future and will tell us how they will create more opportunities for everyone to live a better life."
76	17	59	"We must invest in America because Americans are worth it. When you invest in Americans, our potential is limitless."
62	29	33	"In America, there's more than enough for everyone."
54	35	19	"Investing in America allows us to bake a bigger pie, so everyone can eat a larger slice. The American Dream is big enough for everyone and America's potential is limitless despite what some politicians say."
54	40	14	"America is the wealthiest nation on earth. We can afford to invest in everyone's future if we make it a priority."
51	41	10	"America is the greatest country on earth when we confidently invest in the success of every American."

Leading with these positive investment arguments are even more important with Independents as these voters are more susceptible to conservative frames than many Democrats. We should not hesitate to challenge these myths head on while making our positive case. In addition, 58% think the role of government should be there to assist in times of trouble, or to clear barriers, but mostly stay out of the way compared to 32% who believe government should play an active role in guaranteeing equal opportunity for all. A majority (53%) believe federal government investments in skills, training, and infrastructure are not effective in creating the conditions for a pro-growth economy that will raise wages and increase jobs.

Agree	Disagree	Net	
68	26	42	"The Government has limited funding and can't do everything."
68	27	41	"When politicians say they are going to 'invest' in something, they are really talking about taking my money and giving it to someone else."
61	33	28	"In America, there's no free lunch. Someone has always got to pay, and that's usually people like me."
59	34	25	"I am focused on myself and my family's success. The best thing the government can do is leave us alone."
58	37	21	"In America, giving more resources to one group of people always means taking them away from other people."
54	44	10	"America is a land of opportunity, where anyone can achieve if they put their mind to it."

Winning Messages for Independents

The following messages work most effectively with completely disconnected Independents. The first three messages are the same as the ones that work in uniting Democrats plus one that tries to put the need for investment in the traumas of the last two decades.

- "What makes America special are the small and family-run businesses that serve every corner of America and bind communities together. I will invest in small town America, Main Street America, family-farm America, so that everyone will have the opportunity to start and grow a business without being crushed by giant corporations who refuse to play by the rules." (74% of disconnected Independents are likely to vote for this generic candidate, 62% are likely to vote for this Democratic candidate)
- "For the last 20 years, since 9/11, America has been reacting to events, not leading. We reacted to 9/11 by launching a failed war in Iraq. We reacted to the global financial meltdown by bailing out Wall Street banks and not people losing their homes. We are reacting to COVID by fighting with each other as the virus spreads. Enough. I will put America first by rebuilding our infrastructure, growing American manufacturing, investing in the American worker, and confronting China's unfair trade practices." (72% of disconnected Independents are likely to vote for this generic candidate, 59% are likely to vote for this Democratic candidate)
- "Investing in roads, bridges, broadband, and rail creates good American jobs that can't be sent overseas which helps businesses grow and supply chains keep up with roaring demand as we emerge from the worst of the pandemic. These investments will make "Made in America" a real policy, not just a catchy bumper sticker. It's just common sense." (69% of disconnected Independents are likely to vote for this generic candidate, 62% are likely to vote for this Democratic candidate)
- "We need to invest in every child's future. That includes universal preschool so young children can start school ready to learn, fully funding K-12 education and paying quality teachers a living wage, affordable four-year college for those who want to attend, and free job-training and apprenticeship programs so that so everyone can make their own opportunities and be equipped to fill the jobs of the future – or create their own." (66% of disconnected Independents are likely to vote for this generic candidate, 54% are likely to vote for this Democratic candidate)

The following is the least effective message with these Independents by a wide margin. This one centers on a present that people are not experiencing. We will win by focusing on the future, not debating the past or present.

- “Short-term investments in the American Rescue Plan kept America afloat during the worst of the pandemic. The investments in small businesses and communities are leading to record growth in job creation and wages. While there are higher costs for some products, there are also huge increases in wages and more jobs than can be filled. There is a lot of work ahead, but the worst thing we can do now is stop and go back to failed policies that left us vulnerable to the virus and let our infrastructure decay.” (47% of disconnected Independents are likely to vote for this generic candidate, 29% are likely to vote for this Democratic candidate)

When contrasting with Republicans, Independents concur with Democrats in finding messages around education, investing in infrastructure, and growing the economy most persuasive. We must always state a clear goal, connect the goal to values, outline what America will look like if the goal is achieved, and say what the impact will be if the Republicans block it.

- “Democrats believe investing in America will grow America’s economy. By transitioning to clean energy, improving public education, universal broadband internet, manufacturing, a new electrical grid, among many other investments, Democrats will keep America on the cutting edge of global technology while creating millions of American jobs to create American products to be sold all over the world. America will be stronger than ever.” (49% of disconnected Independents find this persuasive – Democrats have a 13-point edge over Republicans with these voters on this)
- “Democrats believe nothing comes ahead of educating our children. We respect parents by fighting for full funding for public education in every community in America. Democrats will invest in preschool so every young child is ready to begin kindergarten ready to learn, fully fund K-12 education and pay teachers what they are worth, make community college tuition free, expand job training and apprenticeship programs, and bring down the cost of higher education so we are not saddling future generations with crushing debt. The Republicans fight against all of this. They would have state governments take over schools and dictate what teachers can teach while Democrats support local control of schools.” (49% of disconnected Independents find this persuasive – Democrats have a 12-point edge over Republicans with these voters on this)
- “Democrats say that their policies invest in America through the greatest investment in infrastructure - rebuilding of crumbling roads, bridges, airports, ports, broadband - since the creation of the interstate highway system. Because of failed Republican policies of giving tax cuts to billionaires instead of rebuilding America, we have even more we need to get done. Democrats will invest in America because we believe in American greatness and the potential of every American child to succeed. Democrats will invest in Americans, not corporations and banks.” (46% of disconnected Independents find this persuasive – Democrats have a 10-point edge over Republicans with these voters on this)

Conclusion

To address the mismatch between President Biden and the Democrats' accomplishments in 2021 and the current political mood, we recommend the following:

- Message Discipline from the White House to the precinct captain centered on "Democrats Deliver."
- Focus paid messages - starting yesterday – to unite the Democratic Party and earn back the Independents that voted for Biden. (Including likely drop off voters from 2020)
- Hammer the Republicans on their radicalism and highlighting their votes against the Infrastructure Bill and Rescue Plan.
- Give a clear guide to what future voters will have under Democrats versus their future under Republicans.

We have the vision and policies that invest in all Americans to move past this COVID moment and win America's future.