

TO: Interested Parties
FR: Mark Riddle, Future Majority President
DT: April 7, 2022
RE: Tell the Story

Since its founding, Future Majority has surveyed 144,488 voters across America. We have surveyed voters in battleground states and congressional districts, rural, urban, and suburban areas, and conducted deep-listening research in Florida, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas. The data presented in this memo is from a March 24-28, 2022 survey of 2,875 likely voters in the states of Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, New Mexico, and Wisconsin. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 2.3%.

As Mark Twain once commented, “the report of my death was an exaggeration.” It is apt today for Democrats as the clickbait culture and DC chattering class have already written Democrats’ 2022 obituary. However, the data shows us a different conclusion. Midterms are tough, but these are no ordinary times. This memo features objective data and Future Majority’s recommendations for Democrats, because like Twain, the reports of their death are exaggerated.

For Democrats to succeed, they must unite and communicate *how* they are delivering for voters. Then, Democrats must draw sharp contrasts with the Reckless Republicans. This discipline will help improve President Biden’s struggling approval rating, which must rise for Democrats to have a chance to win. In addition, Democrats cannot let Republicans shout “inflation,” yet scamper away, held unaccountable for their votes against helping families with cost of living concerns.

As President Obama said on Tuesday at the White House, Democrats have a story to tell, now go tell it.

- A message of “delivering for the people to build a stronger America” **tests 9-points better** than the MAGA message. It puts Democrats in key battleground states into the low 50’s. (more below).
 - Democrats need to stop the failed strategy of attacking fellow Democrats or crowing about what hasn’t been done or is yet to be passed and rather focus on the tremendous accomplishments passed to date with President Biden’s leadership.
 - Democrats must shout from the mountaintop every day and twice on Sunday big wins like impending Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson (a huge promise kept – and a strong contrast to the GOP recklessness) and passing historic investments in infrastructure (another contrast) broadly supported by voters.
- Democrats must acknowledge cost of living challenges – especially with 71% of voters saying they are falling behind and another 23% saying they are staying even. Yes, 94% is an iceberg of a number. Democrats should continue to pass narrow bills to fix problems, build momentum, and hold Republicans to account for voting against them and the will of the American people. Example: 193 House Republicans voted against a \$35 insulin cap; which is supported by a whopping 89% of the voters.
 - **A sobering statistic for those in power:** 65% of voters say they do not feel like they matter in America, including 54% of Democrats, 73% of independents, and 71% of Republicans. This explains much of the sour mood and must be addressed. Division and Identity politics do not work. Meet voters where they are and acknowledge them.

- The reckless Republican agenda should be a top attack point for every Democrat. Make the Republicans own Sen. Rick Scott's release of the GOP plan to raise taxes on millions of Americans and repeal popular programs like Social Security and Medicare. These are a big loser in the eyes of voters. Don't let Republicans off this hook. Scott is part of the Republican leadership team, not a fringe member like Marjorie Taylor Green. This is the Republican agenda, period.

Note: Throughout this memo, we sometimes present an important and relevant subset of survey data to reflect only voters who believe Joe Biden received more votes in 2020. Voter opinion on the issues shifts significantly when focusing on this segment of voters who do not believe Donald Trump's Big Lie. Democrats should focus their governing strategy on these gettable voters.

Democrats' Policies Supported, Republican Policies Scorned by Voters:

- **The For the People message remains a winner with voters.** When asked what candidate message they would support, 53% chose "A candidate who is For the People and delivered on building a stronger America by investing in infrastructure and families, creating millions of middle-class jobs, cracking down on corruption, and defending democracy and freedom" versus 44% who chose "A candidate who will make America great by getting inflation under control by cutting the out-of-control government 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."
- **PASS THIS NOW: 89% of voters support proposals in Congress to cap insulin prices at \$35 per month and hold pharmacy benefit managers accountable for what they charge consumers for life saving drugs.** Just 6% oppose the proposal.
 - When asked who they believe is most to blame for the high cost of healthcare, 52% of voters said insurance companies / pharmacy benefit managers, 20% said the government, 14% said drug manufacturers, 3% said hospitals, and 10% said other causes.
- **PASS THIS NOW: 80% of voters (including 82% of Democrats and 75% of Independents) say is important to them for Congress to pass, on a bipartisan basis, the competitiveness with China bill** which would guarantee American industry competes globally by investing tens of billions reshoring the semiconductor industry, so that the US become less vulnerable to foreign control of supply chains and more innovative.
- **58% of voters support the Build Back Better proposal.** Respondents were asked "The U.S. Congress is considering one trillion dollars in investments over the next 10 years, known as the Build Back Better Act, to expand Medicare benefits, invest in preschool education, community college, childcare, more affordable college, and fund efforts to combat climate change. Do you support or oppose this plan?" 39% oppose the plan, and 3% are not sure.
 - FM recommends Democrats should be cautious if they pursue another attempt to pass Build Back Better. President Biden did not win because of BBB – he won because he could get our country up and running. Due in large part to rising costs, voters are wary of more big spending. Delivering 8 million jobs and enabling people to live their lives once again is the winner, not large pieces of legislation that Democrats nearly always fail to message.

- Two notes of caution:
 - 60% of voters say that they do not believe the bill will reduce their costs over the next two to three years. Just 25% say they believe it will reduce costs.
 - 62% of voters say they agree with the statement: “If we do not get government spending under control now, huge tax increases are coming.”
- However, If Democrats want to do a version of BBB, FM strongly recommends reframing this legislation under Senator Bob Casey’s Freedom & Children framework, which is supported by [70% of swing district voters](#). Democrats should also seriously consider a major stand-alone climate package. Doing this forces Republicans to vote against energy security instead of allowing this hollow Republican talking point to continue. Putin’s war and Putin’s effort to wreak havoc on global prices, aided by the Chinese and Saudis, in hopes to get Trump again, is reason enough to play offense on climate.
- **The GOP 2022 PLATFORM to sunset federal programs like Social Security and Medicare and raise taxes on half of Americans is opposed by 70% of voters in the key states, including 56% who strongly oppose it.** Just 16% of voters express support for the proposal, and only 6% strongly support it.
 - When asked, “Would you support or oppose a proposal for all laws and programs to automatically expire after five years, including Social Security and Medicare, unless Congress votes to renew them?”, **87% of Democrats, 62% of Independents, and 58% of Republicans say they oppose the proposal.**
 - **The proposal is rejected by voters across all demographics.**
 - 82% of voters age 65+, 74% of voters age 50-64, 63% of voters age 35-49, and 49% of voters age 18-34 oppose the proposal.
 - 69% of white voters, 75% of Black voters, and 69% of Hispanic voters oppose the proposal.
 - 75% of women and 64% of men oppose the proposal.
 - 55% of voters who identify as conservative, 70% of voters who identify as moderate, and 89% of voters who identify as liberal oppose the proposal.
 - **70% of voters agree with the statement “Any elected official or candidate who supports imposing a new federal income tax on half the population and ending programs like Social Security and Medicare is waging open war on working families.”** 54% of voters strongly agree with the statement.
 - 80% of Democrats, 66% of Independents, and 64% of Republicans agree with the statement.

TWO CRITICAL RED FLAGS FOR DEMOCRATS - CONTROL AND COSTS:

FLAG 1: Cost of living and inflation continue to drive voter sentiment. 80% of voters say they are “uncomfortable” with the cost of living these days. Just 19% say they are “comfortable.”

- **“The rising cost of goods like groceries and gas” is the top issue that will influence their vote in November.** 63% of voters rate this as a key issue, including 43% of Democrats, 68% of Independents, and 79% of Republicans.
 - Among the voters who do not believe the Big Lie, 55% rate it as a top issue priority.
- **71% of voters say their income is falling behind the cost of living. 23% say their income is staying about even with the cost of living. Just 4% say their income is going up faster than the cost of living.**
- **Voters do not think lawmakers are doing enough to address the cost of living.** 60% of voters say President Biden is not doing much or nothing at all, 63% voters say Democrats in congress are not doing much or nothing at all, and 72% of voters say Republicans are not doing much or nothing at all.
 - 51% of voters agree with the statement “Inflation is being driven by the big spending Democrats and the debt they continue to rack up. We need to get spending under control and get people back to work instead of living off government handouts.”
 - **63% of voters who do not believe the Big Lie** disagree with the statement, including 51% who strongly disagree.
- **When asked who or what voters think is most responsible for the cost of living, the blame is split.** 42% say President Joe Biden is most responsible, 38% place the most blame on big corporations gauging customers, 14% say foreign governments influencing the global market, 4% say increased supply and demand due to the pandemic, and 2% say labor shortages.
- **66% of voters say the recent increases in the price of gasoline has been hard on their family's finances.** 33% say it has not been hard. **Notably, more than half (52%) of voters say a decrease in gas prices going down will make no difference in favorability of President Biden.** This includes 55% of Independents. 47% say they would have a more favorable view of the president if gas prices go down.

FLAG 2: Voters, especially Independents, feel like they do not matter in America. 65% of voters say they do not feel like they matter in America, including 54% of Democrats, 73% of independents, and 71% of Republicans.

- When asked where voters feel like they have control these days, voters said:
 - 62% say they have control as a consumer
 - 37% say they have control with their kids
 - 23% say they have control within their community

- 18% say they have control over their ability to achieve the American Dream
- 5% say they have control over their lawmakers
- 4% say they have control over their government
- **64% of voters say it is more important to them that a candidate “shows clear understanding of the problems their family and community face” versus 27% who say it is more important to them that a candidate “gives clear plans and makes promises for what they will do.”**
 - **79% of voters say their opinion should matter when it comes to what kids are taught in schools.** 52% say their opinion should matter a lot.
 - However, just 49% say their opinion matters when it comes to what kids are taught in schools, including 49% of Democrats, 49% of Independents, and 50% of Republicans.
 - This lack of control/agency over government and feeling of control over corporations as a consumer, over their kids, and over their communities should serve as a cautionary yellow light for those messaging on education who might be assumed to be taking away control from parents and for those looking to blame and/or wrest control from corporations – if this is where voters have a sense of control, it may be a tougher sell. Please see FM’s [recommendation](#) on how to speak to Americans given these realities, and make Americans the hero of the story.
 - Note: Previous [studies](#) have shown that voters blame corruption as a primary factor in limiting their freedom and opportunity. Because of this, FM continues to recommend Democrats push a clear anti-corruption agenda.

PLAY OFFENSE: We are often asked, “how do Democrats improve their numbers.” **President Biden can restore his favorability with voters by showing how he and the Democrats are delivering on key issues. And fixing false narratives like the President does in his budget that Democrats are actually the ones investing in public safety and funding police.** The following data includes responses only from voters who have a not very favorable or unfavorable view of President Biden:

- 90% of voters say that “Cracking down on corporations that are using monopoly power to drive up prices” will improve their view the president.
- **88% of those voters say that if “Congress passes and Joe Biden signs a bill to cap the cost of insulin at \$35 a month,” they will have a more favorable view of the president.**
 - HAMMER: 193 congressional Republicans vote “no” to lower the cost of insulin, while every Democrat voted “yes.”
- 80% of those voters say that if Biden successfully “Helps Ukraine effectively drive Vladimir Putin and the Russian army out of their country” they will have a more favorable view of the president.

- **74% of those voters say that if “The US economy continues creating 100,000 new jobs a month or more” they will have a more favorable view of President Biden. The President is *already* delivering this, but voters are generally unaware.**
- **JUST DO IT NOW: 70% of those voters, including 55% of Independents, say that if “The Biden Administration forgives \$50,000 of student loan debt,” they will have a more favorable view of the president.**
- Note: Among swing state voters in a previous FM [study](#), independent voters responded positively and found messages around education, investing in infrastructure, and growing the economy most persuasive. Democrats held a 13-point edge over Republicans on these investments.

Lay of the Land: Tough, But Why Campaigns Exist

- **While Democrats have an enthusiasm deficit, the national enthusiasm gap is not reflected in these key states.** 96% of Republicans and 92% of Democrats say they are motivated to vote in the 2022 elections. 73% of Independents say they are extremely motivated to vote. This is a far cry from the [narrative](#) featured in a number of national news outlets and espoused by many political insiders.
 - **Similarly, a narrow gap exists in a generic congressional ballot where Republicans maintain a 45%-43% advantage over Democrats.**
 - **Among key voting blocs in the Democrats’ coalition**, Black voters choose the Democrat over Republican 66% to 20%, Hispanic voters choose the Democrat over Republican 45% to 43%. The Democrats have work to do, especially to fight the disinformation spewing into Hispanic households.
 - **NBC News reports that Democrats hold a 38-point lead among women with college degrees.** The reckless Republicans – especially in state legislatures – need to pay a price for their actions. Democrats must continue to drive this wedge. Doug Sosnik’s recent [memo](#) sheds more light on how Republicans are losing the suburbs and college-educated women.
- **President Biden’s favorability remains in the low-40s, with a big caveat.** While President Biden’s favorability among all voters is 40% **it rises to 54% when you exclude the Big Lie crowd**. The data shows that Biden has a lot of room to grow if the Democrats unite and tell their story. It is important for Democrats to understand how much impact and intensity the Big Lie has on the state of the governing landscape.
 - **A whopping 37% of voters responded that they still believe the Big Lie that Donald Trump received more votes in the 2020 election than Joe Biden.** This includes 80% of Republicans, 30% of Independents, and 2% of Democrats. 9% say they are not sure.
 - **On disinformation:** There is no shortage of reporting that Hispanic voters are [being targeted](#) with disinformation. This effort appears to be paying off for the malicious actors perpetrating these tactics. 38% of Hispanic voters say they believe Donald Trump received more votes in 2020 than Joe Biden, more than double the 17% of Black voters and nearly the same as the 40% of white voters who say the same.

- The only way to offset the intensity of the Big Lie voting group is for Democrats to unite and motivate Democrat voters, and then persuade the 70% of independent voters. **It is the only path.** If Democrats remain divided, they will lose their governing majority. A Change Research [report](#) about the 2021 election results in VA and NJ is an excellent proof point.
- **When it comes to the pandemic, 74% of voters say they believe “We are getting the virus under control.”** 19% say they are not sure, and just 8% say things are “Getting worse. We are not doing enough to get the virus under control.”
- **Voter responses to top priorities for Congress to address show another significant deviation between the general electorate and those who reject Trump’s Big Lie: Immigration.**
 - Among all voters, 63% identified “The rising cost of goods like groceries” as their top issue priority for Congress to address, 50% identified “voter suppression and fraud,” 41% identified “illegal immigration and the situation at the U.S.-Mexico border,” and 40% identified “the shortage and delays of goods and supply chain problems.”
 - **Big Lie believers drive the illegal immigration and situation at the Southern Border as a top concern. Among those voters who do not believe Trump’s Big Lie, the issue ranks as 15th most important with just 24% rating it as a top issue.**
 - Stop giving the Republicans easy talking points. Fix the problem - or have a better message plan.
 - However, among voters who do not believe the Big Lie, 55% identified “The rising cost of goods like groceries” as their top issue priority for Congress to address, 49% said “voter suppression and fraud,” 41% identified “The Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade and state governments banning abortion,” and 41% said “The cost of housing.”
 - **Contrast Opportunity:** Democrats in key Senate states have an additional opportunity to frame a stark contrast between their position of protecting Roe v. Wade, which is rated as a top issue among voters who do not believe Trump’s Big Lie, and the Republican-led efforts to outlaw reproductive freedom.

Numbers on the Russian Invasion of Ukraine:

- **A glaring difference on President Biden’s approval on handling the situation in Ukraine among voter segments.**
 - 48% of voters approve and 47% disapprove of Biden’s handling of the conflict.
 - However, **65% of voters who do not believe the Big Lie approve of President Biden’s handling of the Russian military invasion**, another stark example of the influence of the Big Lie on the governing landscape.

- When asked “During the course of the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, do you think Joe Biden has exhibited strength, weakness, or neither one,” 43% of voters chose Strength, 44% chose Weakness, and 13% said Neither one.
 - However, **among voters who do not believe the Big Lie, 57% of voters said they believe President Biden has exhibited Strength.**
- **Despite this divide, voters broadly support President Biden’s specific decisions regarding the situation in Ukraine.**
 - 79% of all voters approve of imposing tough sanctions on Russia and oligarchs close to Russian president Vladimir Putin. 17% disapprove (32% of Republicans, 20% of Independents, and 1% of Democrats).
 - 78% of all voters approve of keeping America’s allies united against Putin’s aggression. 16% disapprove.
 - 77% of all voters approve of not putting American troops on the ground in Ukraine. 17% disapprove.
 - 77% of all voters approve of providing weapons to the Ukrainian military. 19% disapprove.
 - 69% of all voters approve of finding alternative sources of energy to replace Russian oil and gas. 27% disapprove.
 - 55% of all voters approve of refusing to impose a “no fly zone” that could cause direct military engagement with Russian aircraft. 33% disapprove.
- **Voters want sanctions to remain regardless of Russia’s decisions.** When asked “If the Russian military left Ukraine tomorrow, should the United States and allies continue sanctions on the Russian economy and oligarchs close to Vladimir Putin,” 67% of voters said the sanctions should remain. 18% said they should not, and 15% said they were not sure.
- **Voters believe Republicans are playing political games with Ukraine.** 45% of voters said they think Republicans in Congress are “more interested in playing politics, even if it risks undermining President Biden’s goals in Ukraine.” 34% say “Republicans are mostly opposed to Biden’s actions because they believe he is responsible for Putin’s invasion and has made things worse.”
 - Among those voters who do not believe the Big Lie, 58% say the Republicans are more interested in playing political games.
- **48% of voters think Donald Trump is most supportive of Russia compared to 35% who said Ukraine. 17% responded they were Not sure.**
- 44% of all voters think Republican media personalities like Tucker Carlson are most supportive of Russia compared to 31% who said Ukraine. 25% responded they were Not sure.
- **Voters are concerned that the war in Ukraine will spread wider into Europe and lead to the use of nuclear weapons.** 82% of voters responded that they were concerned about this possibility, including 90% of Democrats, 79% of Independents, and 75% of Republicans.

- **Democrats maintain a +13-point advantage on “Defending Ukraine.”** 36% of voters say Democrats have done a better job at defending Ukraine, 23% say Republicans, 31% say Neither, and 10% are not sure.

January 6th is a potent issue for key voting groups. FM believes that January 6th, the situation in Ukraine, and Republican efforts to undermine the freedom to vote are intertwined. The stakes are too high.

As demonstrated above, a significant portion of the electorate thinks Donald Trump won the election. Unless otherwise specified, this section includes only data from the voter segment who do not believe Trump’s Big Lie that the election was fraudulent and that he received more votes:

- **89% of voters agree with the statement “It is important to get all the facts on what happened that day at the Capitol so nothing like it ever happens again.”**
- **71% of voters agree with the statement “Donald Trump and those supporting him acted recklessly on January 6th to keep power at all costs. They knew Trump lost fair and square and tried to find every loophole to prevent the peaceful transfer of power. When they failed, they unleashed violence to get their way.**
 - 70% of voters agree with the statement “Donald Trump enjoyed the violence and chaos that unfolded that day and only got upset when people told him to try and stop it.”
 - 70% of voters agree with the statement “Donald Trump and the organizers of the January 6th riot are guilty of the crime of inciting a riot to overturn the U.S. election.”
- **73% of voters believe that Donald Trump knows that Joe Biden received more votes nationwide and in the states that decided the election and is claiming that the election was rigged to distract people from his loss.** 13% say they think Trump believes he won the election and has evidence of fraud no one is paying attention to and no court will address.
- 56% of voters say they expect to learn new things when the January 6th Committee releases its report and holds public hearings. 35% say they do not expect to learn new things.
- We asked voters “How well do you think each of the following describe what happened on January 6th”:
 - **Reckless:** 82% say it describes the events well, 15% say not well.
 - **Political violence:** 77% say it describes the events well, 21% say not well.
 - **A riot:** 76% say it describes the events well, 22% say not well.
 - **An attempt to overthrow the election:** 69% say it describes the events well, 27% say not well.
 - **An attack on democracy:** 69% say it describes the events well, 28% say not well.

- **A crime committed by Donald Trump and his allies:** 67% say it describes the events well, 30% say not well.
- **An insurrection:** 67% say it describes the events well, 29% say not well.
- **Treason:** 66% say it describes the events well, 30% say not well.
- **An attempted coup:** 66% say it describes the events well, 31% say not well.
- **An attack on police:** 61% say it describes the events well, 35% say not well.
- **31% of all voters in the survey say they would vote for Donald Trump again in 2024 if he were to be found guilty of inciting a riot to overturn the U.S. Election, including 70% of Republicans, 26% of Independents, and 0% of Democrats.**

In conclusion: If they unite, Democrats still have time to share the story of how they have delivered for voters. But this will require discipline and a focus on contrasting themselves with the reckless agenda of the Republicans. Democrats cannot continue their circular firing squad on issues they have disagreements about and must focus their messaging resources into defining themselves as delivering for the people and the Republicans as waging a war on working families.

- **Make the American worker the hero of the story.** Democrats must remember that Americans see themselves as the hero of the story, not politicians in Washington. As President Biden said, "America is strong because Americans are strong." This ethos should be the foundation of all Democrat-driven messaging to voters as they share how they have delivered for hardworking Americans.
- **Democrats must contrast themselves with Republicans, not each other.** While Democrats may have internal policy disagreements, they must immediately focus their messaging on how they differ with the reckless Republicans and their agenda that will declare open war on America's working families.
- **Hispanic voters need a specific strategy to counter disinformation.** With 38% of Hispanic voters saying they believe Trump's Big Lie, Democrats must move swiftly to engage and restore their standing among this voting bloc that is a key part of their voting coalition.

If Democrats continue to deliver and successfully tell their story, they can retain their governing majority in 2022. But this will depend upon Democrats uniting around their shared values and not falling into the trap of obsessing over headlines or what is trending on Twitter.

We end this memo where it started: Democrats have a story to tell, they just have to tell it.