

Blueprint

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Blueprint
DATE: January 10, 2024
RE: **The War on Prices: Biden's Untapped Triumphs**

OVERVIEW

Our message is simple: Biden needs to embrace and loudly champion his anti-inflation agenda. Right now, his victories are not breaking through to voters, a key drag on his 2024 chances.

As demonstrated by [our very first poll](#)—and numerous others—“lowering prices” consistently ranks as a top priority for voters, and President Biden is being perceived as weak on the issue. This points to Biden’s shortcomings in taking credit for key wins he has achieved on cost-of-living concerns.

In our latest poll, we find fertile ground for better messaging and opportunities for effective jobs against Trump, especially on gas prices. Voters see a number of President Biden’s accomplishments as effective policies that will benefit them and reduce inflation. However, these winning policies are not ones that they are hearing as frequently from the president.

The Biden campaign must make 2024 a war on high prices—one that they have an upper hand in. Rather than waiting for onlookers to award them points, the campaign must put these wins up on the scoreboard itself.

✓ Policies that voters believe will benefit them and simultaneously reduce inflation are not getting through to voters. These include investing in agriculture supply chains, banning junk fees, using antitrust to enforce laws against price gouging, and more.

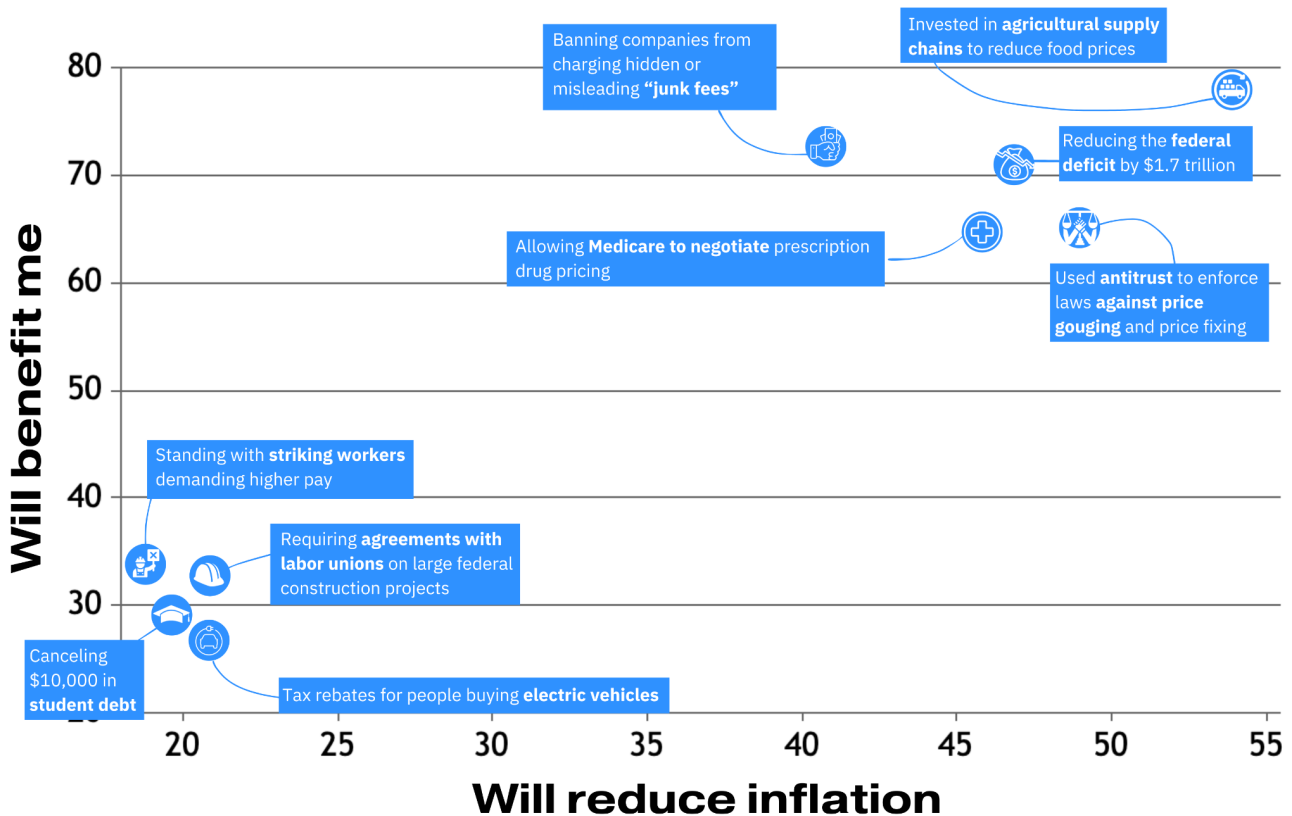
✓ The Biden campaign has been highlighting price-reducing policies that do not connect well with voters, including the electric vehicle tax rebates. Only 27% of voters believe tax rebates for EVs will benefit them, and only 21% believe it will reduce inflation, while 45% believe it will increase inflation.

✓ The voters Biden needs to win are highly attuned to gas prices. Biden’s full energy record—if known to these voters—would bolster the perception that the president is fighting for them when it comes to gas prices. Voters’ priorities on gas prices and energy policy align with Biden more than Trump. However, voters have only a partial picture of Biden’s record, and, as a result, are not giving him the credit he deserves when it comes to bringing down gas prices.

Blueprint

PRICES, PRICES, PRICES

Voters view a number of President Biden’s accomplishments as effective policies that will benefit them and reduce inflation; however, these policies have not broken through in campaign messaging. For instance, 78% of voters believe [investing in agriculture supply chains](#) will benefit them, and 54% believe it will reduce inflation. However, this policy has not been clearly and consistently communicated to voters. On the other hand, only 27% of voters believe [tax rebates for EVs](#) will benefit them, and only 21% believe it will reduce inflation, while 45% believe it will increase inflation. Similarly, only 29% of voters believe [canceling student debt](#) will benefit them, but 45% believe it will increase inflation (20% believe it will reduce inflation). Even among young voters (those under 30), only half say student debt cancellation will benefit them, far fewer believe that supply chains, junk fees, and deficit reduction will benefit them.



Blueprint

We asked voters which of Biden’s accomplishments will benefit them and which will not. We then asked whether they thought those same policies would help reduce inflation. What we conclude is that the administration is centering policies in its economic messaging that voters do not think will either benefit them or ease inflation.

BIDEN POLICY ACHIEVEMENT	WILL BENEFIT ME	WILL REDUCE INFLATION
Invested in agricultural supply chains to reduce food prices	78%	54%
Reducing the federal deficit by \$1.7 trillion	65%	49%
Used antitrust to enforce laws against price gouging and price fixing	71%	47%
Allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug pricing to lower the cost of prescription drugs	65%	46%
Approving more permits for domestic oil and gas drilling than any previous president	55%	45%
Banning companies from charging hidden or misleading “junk fees” for products and services	73%	41%
Capping insulin costs at \$35 per month for seniors	33%	33%
Capping out-of-pocket Medicare prescription drug spending at \$2,000 a year	54%	28%
Expanding Social Security benefits	68%	25%
Passing a bipartisan bill to invest in new infrastructure	57%	25%
Requiring agreements with labor unions on all large federal construction projects	33%	21%
Tax rebates for people buying electric vehicles	27%	21%
Canceling \$10,000 in student debt	29%	20%
Standing with striking workers demanding higher pay	34%	19%

By combining voter perceptions of whether a policy will benefit them and whether it will reduce inflation, we can identify strong messaging opportunities around accomplishments such as investing in agricultural supply chains, banning “junk fees,” and allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices. They all leave President Biden with multiple ways to sell his wins on prices to different groups of voters.

Blueprint

Prices are going down, but no one will connect this positive news to the president unless he gives himself credit.

A BIDEN ENERGY WIN

Declining gas prices represent another opportunity for President Biden to build momentum for his re-election campaign, but an apparent messaging vacuum on his energy policy leaves voters placing themselves closer to Trump on this issue of oil and gas.

60% of voters described their preferred approach to energy policy as “we should use an all-of-the-above strategy that includes fossil fuels and renewable energy sources.” 25% said “we should end the use of fossil fuels and switch exclusively to renewable energy sources,” and just 15% said, “we should rely mostly on fossil fuels to power our economy.” This “all-of-the-above” strategy was the majority preference of Democrats, young people, and Black voters.

This is fertile ground for better messaging: Biden is doing exactly what the American people want on energy—pursuing energy independence policies, unlocking resources to tackle gas prices, and investing in a clean energy future—while Trump is leaning into an outdated and out-of-step “[drill baby drill](#)” message.

The Biden campaign should take full advantage of this alignment and work to close the gap between perception and reality. Only 43% of voters believe Biden shares their “all of the above” vision (33% of independents), and 47% believe Biden wants to switch entirely to renewable energy (including 59% of independents). 40% of voters (including 50% of independents) believe that Trump supports an all-of-the-above energy approach.

Blueprint’s first poll asked voters: “What would you most like to see improved in the economy?” 64% of voters, including 50% of Democrats and 70% of independents, said that they would most like to see lower prices on goods, services, and gas. That poll also showed that voters are not aware that, under President Biden, oil and gas exploration has increased dramatically to all-time highs.

To be clear, this is not about stepping on Biden’s climate record, which is impressive and popular with key Democratic voter blocs. Introducing Biden’s full record on energy more widely, and framed around costs, is an important way for Biden to drive a message that he is focused on bringing down gas prices and earn him the credit with voters that he deserves.

As our polling shows, President Biden has achieved potentially campaign-winning policy victories while in office; policies that 1) align with where voters see themselves, 2) will benefit them personally, and 3) will reduce inflation. However, there is a significant gap between what Biden has done and

Blueprint

what voters believe that he is focused on. It's a disconnect that the campaign cannot afford to ignore any longer.

TRANSLATING POLLING INTO PRACTICE

For Democrats running in safer districts appealing to progressive voters we need to <i>mobilize</i> :	Play up supply chain victories, antitrust enforcement against big corporate actors, and cracking down on hidden fees.
For Democrats running in competitive districts that Biden won, balancing <i>mobilization and persuasion</i> :	Focus on prescription drug prices and Medicare fee caps. These are bread-and-butter Democratic issues that will unite our base and persuade.
For Democrats in tough districts , who need to mobilize but also need <i>a big chunk of persuadable voters</i> :	This constituency is highly attuned to gas prices; Biden's record on delivering more oil and gas drilling is a winner with persuadable voters and combines well with Medicare negotiating prescription drug prices and bipartisan supply chain efforts.

#