

Biden, Democrats Lose Ground in Latest Poll

WASHINGTON—President Biden and his fellow Democrats have lost ground to Republicans on several of the issues most important to voters, a new Wall Street Journal poll finds, a troubling sign for the party seeking to extend its controlling majority of Congress for another two years.

The new survey showed that 57% of voters remained unhappy with Mr. Biden’s job performance, despite favorable marks for the president’s response to [the Russian invasion of Ukraine](#) and a recent [State of the Union speech](#), which provided him an opportunity to directly speak to millions of Americans. Just 42% said they approved of Mr. Biden’s performance in office, which was virtually unchanged from [the previous Journal poll](#) in mid-November.

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Voters also gave Democrats poor marks for handling inflation and the economy, which 50% cited as the top issue they want the federal government to address. The Ukraine conflict was No. 2, with 25% of voters saying it was most important.

A majority of voters, 63%, said they disapproved of Mr. Biden's handling [of rising costs](#), the president's worst rating on six policy issues surveyed in the poll.

Meanwhile, 47% of voters said Republicans were better able to handle inflation, compared with 30% who preferred Democrats.

Underscoring the political problem for Democrats: More voters said that Republicans had a better plan to improve the economy, 45% to 37%, even though Sen. Mitch McConnell and Rep. Kevin McCarthy, the party's leaders in each chamber, have advanced few specific economic-policy proposals they would pursue if they controlled Congress.

Since the last Journal poll, Americans have been confronted with [a spike in Covid-19 cases](#) from the highly contagious [Omicron variant](#), bottlenecks in [supply chains](#) that left gaps in store shelves in January and [surges in gasoline](#) and other consumer prices that have driven inflation to a 40-year high.

"The mood of the country hasn't gotten any better since the last poll. In fact, it's gotten a little worse," said Democratic pollster John Anzalone, who was the lead pollster for Mr. Biden's 2020 presidential campaign and whose company conducted the Journal survey along with the firm of Republican pollster Tony Fabrizio.

Still, the challenges for Democrats haven't significantly changed how voters said they expect to vote this year: 46% of voters said they would back a Republican candidate for Congress if the election were today, compared with 41% who favored a Democrat, with Republicans gaining support among Black and Hispanic voters since the last Journal poll.

That 5-point GOP edge compared with a 3-point lead in November. Democrats currently hold a narrow edge in the House and control the 50-50 Senate, because Vice President [Kamala Harris](#) can break ties.

One bright spot for Democrats in the Journal poll: Mr. Biden's handling of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has included [imposing tough sanctions](#) to increase economic pressure on Moscow and rallying allies in the West to support Kyiv.

Some 50% of voters said they approved of how the president has dealt with Russia, compared with 44% who disapproved. Asked a separate question on their view of how Mr. Biden has handled the crisis in Ukraine, 47% of voters said they approved and 46% disapproved.

A partisan divide emerged on questions about the U.S. involvement in Ukraine. Overall, 35% of voters said the U.S. was doing the right amount and 46% wanted the nation to do more. But among Democrats, 54% said the U.S. was doing the right amount while 61% of Republicans said the country wasn't doing enough.

Despite that divide, there was broad consensus when it came to picking sides in the conflict. Just 4% of voters said they had a favorable view of Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#), compared with 90% who said they viewed him unfavorably. There was almost no statistical difference in opinions about Mr. Putin by political party or demographic breakdowns.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was viewed favorably by 65% of voters, while 8% viewed him unfavorably.

There was also bipartisan agreement on the main areas of engagement in Ukraine. A majority of voters, 55%, said they would favor sending more military aid to Ukraine. The same percentage said they would favor placing more economic sanctions on Russia. Those majorities held up among Democratic and Republican voters.

Despite the attention on Eastern Europe, 73% of voters said China was the nation's largest economic threat and 52% said it presented the biggest security threat.

The survey also found Republicans making gains among minority groups. By 9 percentage points, Hispanic voters in the new poll said they would back a Republican candidate for Congress over a Democrat. The two parties had been tied among Hispanic voters in the Journal's survey in November.

Democratic margins also eroded among Black voters, who favored a Democrat for Congress by 35 percentage points in the new survey, down from 56 points in

November. Support for a Republican candidate rose to 27% among Black voters, up from 12% in November.

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