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ACTION



To: Interested Parties

From: Battle Born Collective, Sunrise Movement, United We Dream Action, Justice Democrats

Re: Progressives Holding the Line for Biden

Date: September 27, 2021

We are at an interesting moment in American politics: so-called “moderate” members of Congress—many of whom happen to be leading recipients of donations from Big Pharma, fossil fuel CEOs and PACs, and other corporate interests—are trying to derail the extremely popular policies of a moderate president, while progressives are pulling out all the stops to keep the signature components of Biden’s agenda that will define his presidential legacy. At the outset of 2021, few might have suspected that this is where we would find ourselves by the fall. Yet here we are.

Let’s review.

The Biden agenda is the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill and the reconciliation bill, also known as the Build Back Better Act. Not either/or. The infrastructure bill is a glorified highway and transportation appropriations bill for the 21st Century. Far more of Biden’s signature policy priorities are contained in the reconciliation package. This is the agenda Biden ran—and won—on. From universal Pre-K, to investments in sustainable infrastructure and job creation, to combating the climate crisis, to a pathway to citizenship for millions, to prescription drug pricing reforms, the provisions in the Build Back Better Act are what Biden campaigned on—and what Americans voted for.

To enact this agenda, Democrats agreed on a “two-track” strategy to get both bills to the president’s desk. Speaker Nancy Pelosi committed to it, Leader Chuck Schumer committed to it, and most importantly, President Biden was quoted saying in [June](#) while announcing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework: “if only one comes to me, I’m not signing it. It’s in tandem.” The process progressives are holding the line on is in fact the process the president himself has outlined and endorsed, and conservative Democrats can’t be allowed to get away with saying otherwise.

Failure to pass the Build Back Better Act is a failure to enact the FULL Biden agenda.

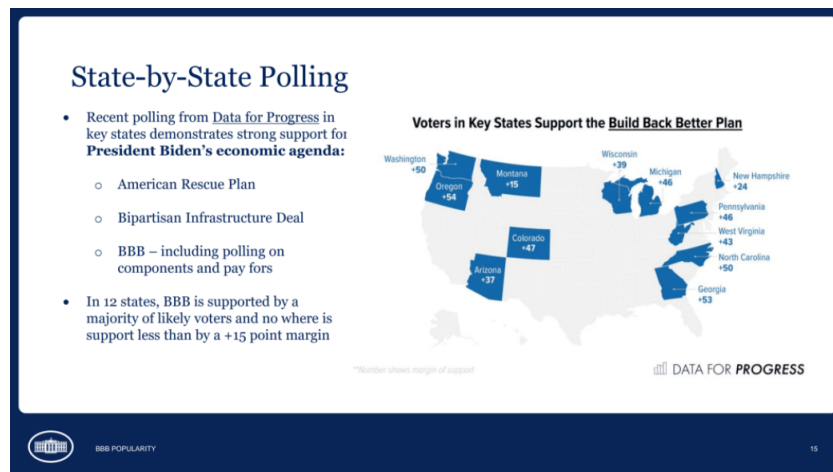
Progressives are doing everything in their power to save the Biden agenda by holding the line on the plan, while conservative Democrats in the House and Senate have sought

to delay, oppose, or water down the Build Back Better Act. Progressives are keeping their word to Biden to help him succeed in securing his full agenda.

Furthermore, the Build Back Better Act is exceedingly popular. According to polling by Data for Progress, among all voters, the Build Back Better plan is [backed by a margin](#) of +32 points, this includes a +78 point margin among Democrats and +25 among Independents. The same poll found that a majority of voters supported every provision of the plan, including:

- 73% of all voters support the measure to allow Medicare to negotiate the cost of prescription drugs, compared to just 17% who oppose
- 73% support modernizing school buildings
- 79% support investments in long-term care for seniors and people with disabilities
- 74% support modernizing the electric grid
- 59% support universal Pre-K
- 58% support the creation of a Civilian Climate Corps
- 70% of ALL likely voters support a pathway to citizenship

The Biden administration and Democratic leadership want this to pass because it will improve lives—and because it is popular and will win votes in 2022 and 2024. That’s why the Biden Administration is [touting](#) the popularity of the Build Back Better agenda, especially in critical Senate states, using this polling.



By jeopardizing a piece of legislation this popular—and threatening to rob the president and the American people of a massive and much-needed win—weak Democrats are committing political malpractice. And it’s hurting the party and the very people that elected them. If Democratic voters do not turn out in 2022, swing district Democrats—including many of the same conservative Dems now standing in Biden’s way—will be the first to go. On top of this, weak Democrats hailing from districts the president won convincingly in 2020 are sabotaging the entire Democratic Party’s brand with voters by repeating corporate lobbyist-created Republican talking points referring to extremely popular and good policies as “controversial” and casting unfounded concerns about the legislation’s impact on the economy. This is a self-defeating strategy, to put it kindly.

Imagine how different the politics of this reconciliation package would be if instead of threatening to tank it, these same weak Democrats went back to their districts and held town halls touting this already wildly popular legislation.

The so-called moderates threatening to derail the Biden agenda have lost track of where the “middle” truly is. Senator Sinema’s commitment to sabotaging prescription drug reform that almost four-fifths of Americans support (*including [Senator Sinema just days before the 2020 election](#)*) is not “moderate.” Rep. Gottheimer’s brazen attempts to obstruct the Biden agenda that has the support of more than 60% of voters are not “moderate.” The media should stop portraying the opposition to this bill as moderate because it is not—the *Biden agenda* is already a moderate compromise.

History is repeating itself: Weak Democrats’ self-defeating tendencies hurt President Obama and all Democrats in 2010. During his first two years in office, weak Democrats twice undercut then-President Obama’s agenda in ways that hurt all Democrats. First, they forced Democrats to lower the cost of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, despite economists’ warnings that it would be insufficient. This led to a more sluggish economic recovery, which hurt all Democrats – including those who urged a smaller price tag. Then, they forced Democrats to abandon the public option and shrink the size of the subsidies offered under the Affordable Care Act. Once the bill became law, many families were hurt by the higher premiums because the government wasn’t providing enough subsidies. Moderates not only hurt the president by adding to the bill’s complexity, but they also made his signature policy worse for American families and more politically toxic.

While moderates in 2021 are repeating past mistakes, progressives have learned the right lessons. Instead of undercutting the president ahead of an election year, progressives are the ones keeping the full Biden agenda on track. The Democratic trifecta is precarious, and the best way to ensure that it has a fighting chance of survival is to head into next year with a robust list of accomplishments to show to voters and a popular president buoyed by successfully delivering results.