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To: Interested Parties
From: Bryan Bennett, Navigator Research & Margie Omero, GBAO
Re: Announcing Navigator Dial Groups and Setting the Stage for President Biden's Address
Date: February 23, 2022

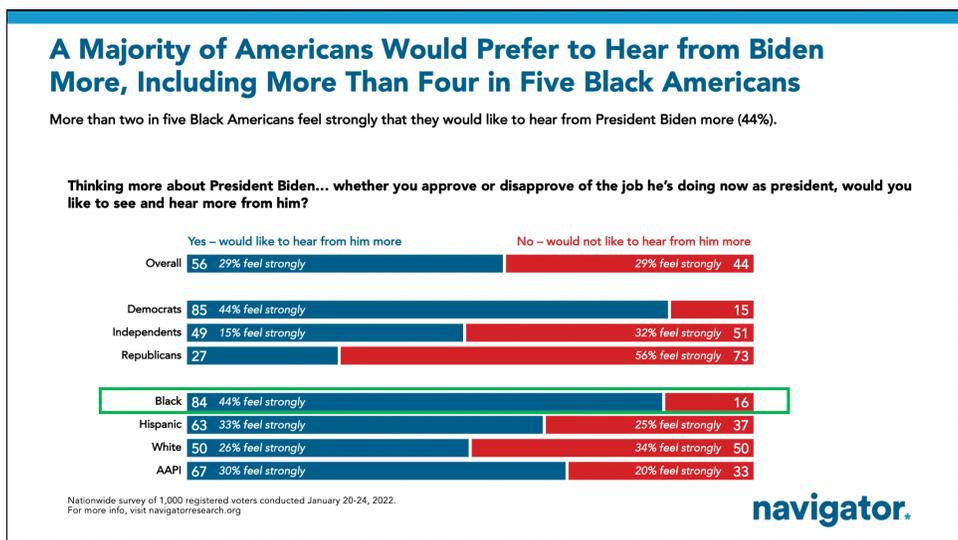
Announcing Navigator Research Dial Groups

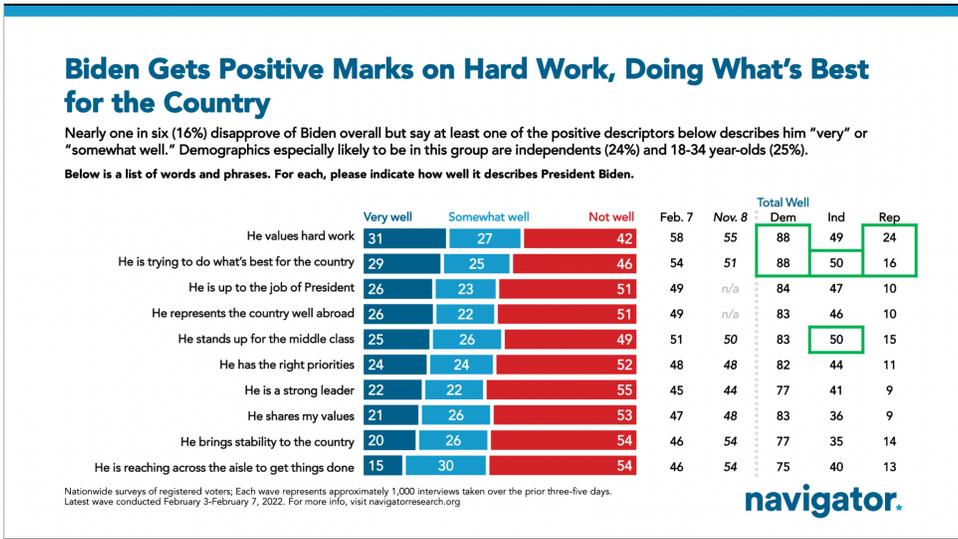
This is a pivotal moment for Joe Biden's presidency: as we move toward a new stage of the pandemic, joined by economic pessimism, fears of inflation, and a stall in federal legislation, the American people want to know how to prepare for what is next, and this is President Biden's opportunity to tell them. **During the State of the Union on March 1, 2022, Navigator Research will be conducting dial groups in Colorado to understand how the public receives President Biden's address. This group will include approximately 30 swing voters from the Denver-metro area including a mix of soft partisans and independents without a partisan lean.** These participants will provide real-time reactions to the President's speech, and we will ask for their assessments of Biden both before and after the speech to glean an initial understanding of what impact his speech had with this profile of Americans.

Setting the Stage: President Biden's Opportunity With the State of the Union

Over the course of the past year, Navigator Research has conducted surveys and focus groups aimed at understanding public perception of President Biden, the coronavirus pandemic, the economy, and the Biden administration's legislative agenda. While we have seen a significant decline in Biden's approval since last summer—now a net 12 points underwater [in our latest survey](#) (43 percent approve – 55 percent disapprove)—we have also measured an appetite for hearing more from the president (56 percent would like to hear from him more). This is particularly true among constituencies that largely backed him in the last election where his approval rating has eroded: 84 percent of Black voters and 67 percent of those under the age of 35 want to hear more from him.

Additionally, Biden also earns significantly higher positive associations on a number of attributes than his approval rating, including valuing hard work (58 percent say this describes the president well), trying to do what's best for the country (54 percent well), and standing up for middle class families (51 percent well).





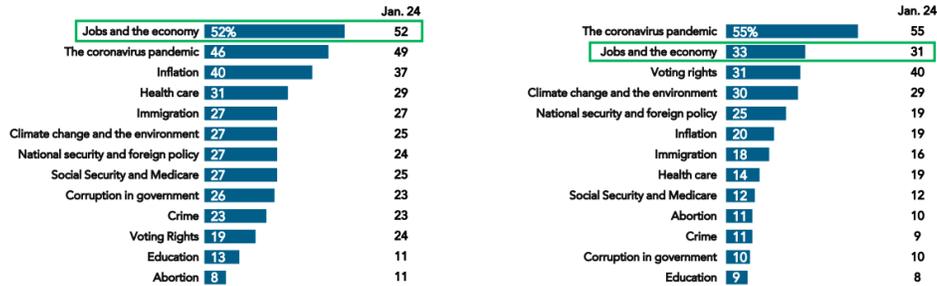
Next Tuesday's State of the Union will likely be the largest audience and best forum for President Biden to communicate directly with the American people about his agenda, and our data suggest he would be best served by talking about the economy. For the better part of the last year, majorities of Americans have rated jobs and the economy as the top priority in need of more focus from President Biden and Congress (52 percent), with the pandemic slightly behind (46 percent) and the issue of inflation and rising costs emerging a top-tier priority (40 percent, up from 18 percent in September).

- On the economy, Americans see a misalignment on Biden's priorities.** While Americans continue to view Biden and Congress focused on the coronavirus pandemic (55 percent) in line with how they prioritize it (46 percent), far fewer believe they are focused on jobs and the economy overall (33 percent), 19 points lower than the share who say it is important for them to focus there, with a similar delta on the issue of inflation (40 percent think it should be the priority, but only 20 percent believe Biden and Congress are focused on it). It is important for him to speak to the disconnect between his priorities and the public's perception in this address.
- Most personally feel the impacts of inflation and are concerned about rising costs.** President Biden also has the opportunity to acknowledge the rising costs of everyday goods and how his administration is addressing these concerns. Americans continue to feel like the costs of everyday goods are going up significantly: more than nine in ten Americans believe the costs of everyday goods like groceries are going up (92 percent), and three in four Americans believe these costs are going up "a significant amount" (77 percent). Concerns around climbing inflation remain high for Americans. 95 percent of Americans report being concerned about the rate of inflation, with 64 percent saying they are "very concerned."

Fewer See Biden and Congress Focused on Economy While the Economy and Pandemic Continue to Be Top Priorities

Majorities say "jobs and the economy" (52%) and the pandemic (46%) are top priorities for Biden and Congress, and while Americans say they are focused on the pandemic (55%), fewer see Biden and Congress focused on jobs and the economy (33%).

Select the top four issues that you feel are most important for President Joe Biden and Congress to focus on. Which of these issues do you feel President Joe Biden and Congress are actually most focused on?



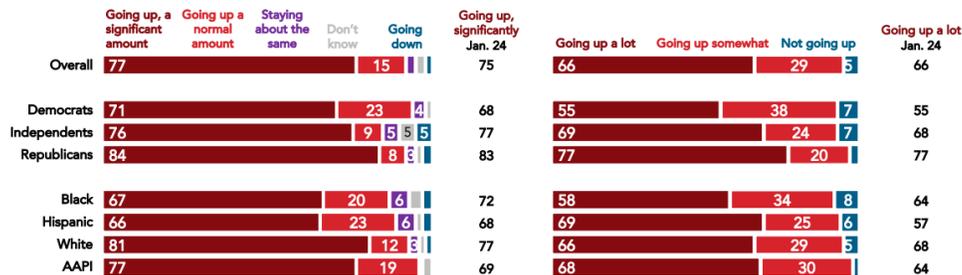
Nationwide surveys of registered voters; Each wave represents approximately 1,000 interviews taken over the prior three-five days. Latest wave conducted February 3-February 7, 2022. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org

Most Americans Continue to Feel the Costs of Everyday Goods Like Groceries and Gas Are Climbing

On a separate metric, two in three (64%) say they are "very concerned" the rate of inflation will climb in the coming months, including 51% of Democrats, 65% of independents, and 78% of Republicans.

When it comes to the costs of everyday goods like groceries, do you think costs are:

Do you feel the price of gas is going up?



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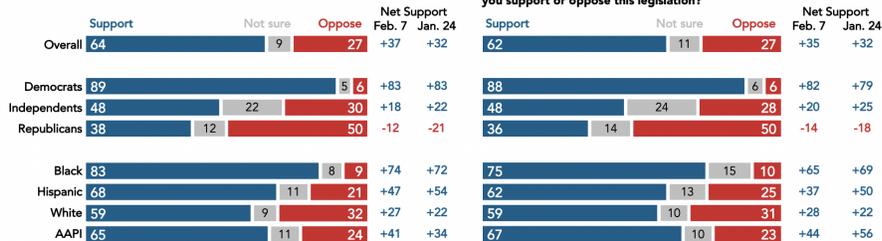
However, the president is on safe ground to communicate about his economic agenda, which continues to earn support from two in three Americans. When communicating that the president is focused on an economic plan that will establish a universal pre-K program, allow Medicare to negotiate lower drug costs, and expand Medicare to seniors to include hearing coverage while making the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share in taxes, Americans continue to support this by a greater than two-to-one margin (net +35; 62 percent support - 27 percent oppose).

Three in Five Support Biden and Democrats' New Economic Plan With or Without Hearing Proposals of How to Pay for It

A plurality of independents support the plan by a 20-point margin (48% support/28% oppose).

As you may know, Biden and Democrats' new economic plan is expected to cost \$1.75 trillion and will establish a universal pre-K program, expand Medicare for seniors to include hearing coverage, and lower health care costs by allowing Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices. Knowing this, do you support or oppose this new economic plan?

Biden and Democrats' new economic plan would be paid for by increasing taxes on billionaires and multi-millionaires with income over \$10 million, creating a minimum 15% tax on corporate profits, adding an additional 1% tax on corporations that use profits to buy back their own stock, and cracking down on tax evasion. Knowing this, do you support or oppose this legislation?



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Moreover, it is important to recognize that with the heightened negative economic sentiment, some indicators are better to communicate than others when talking about an economic recovery. Our latest research revealed that indicators about jobs and growth in particular were the only ones recognized by a majority of Americans as being good indicators of the economy getting better. 54 percent agreed that more than 6 million jobs being a record-setting year of job growth was a good indicator, and 51 percent saying 5.7 percent GDP growth—the fastest in nearly four decades—is a good indicator.

Job Creation and Rate of Economic Growth Are Top Indicators For Americans That the Economy is Recovering

Among economically persuadable Americans*, the most compelling indicators are that more than 6 million jobs were created last year and that the American economy grew faster than China's.

For each statement, please indicate how good you find that piece of information as an indicator that the economy is getting better.

	*** Split sample			Total Positive Indicator				
	Excellent indicator	Good indicator	Fair/Not good indicator	Total	Dem	Ind	Rep	Econ Pers.*
More than 6 million jobs were created last year, the largest number of any year on record*	22	33	46	54	78	40	32	57
For the first time ever, the U.S. created 7 million jobs in 12 months	20	31	49	51	71	43	31	47
More than 6 million jobs were created last year**	20	29	51	49	70	40	26	49
Last year, the U.S. economy (GDP) grew 5.7%, which is the highest rate of growth in almost 40 years**	19	34	47	53	75	45	31	48
For the first time in 20 years, the U.S. economy has grown faster than China's	19	30	51	49	69	38	30	51
The unemployment rate fell from 6.2% to 3.9% in 2021	18	31	51	49	71	36	27	46
2021 saw the biggest drop in people receiving unemployment benefits in a single year, from 18 million at the start down to only 2 million	17	29	54	46	66	38	26	43
Last year, the U.S. economy (GDP) grew 5.7%**	17	31	53	47	65	36	30	46
Since Biden took office, 1.36 million small business jobs have been created	17	31	52	48	74	35	21	40
There are millions of job openings across the country	16	26	59	41	59	35	22	38
Last year, more than 5 million new business applications were filed	16	33	52	48	67	39	29	46

**Economically persuadable Americans* are those who disapprove of Biden's handling of the economy, but support new economic legislation on separate questions. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted February 3-February 7, 2022. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org

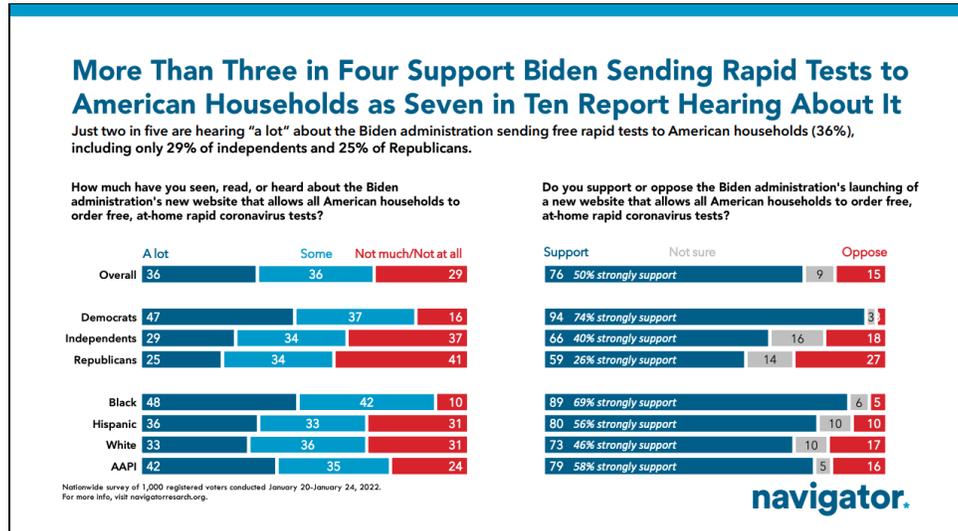
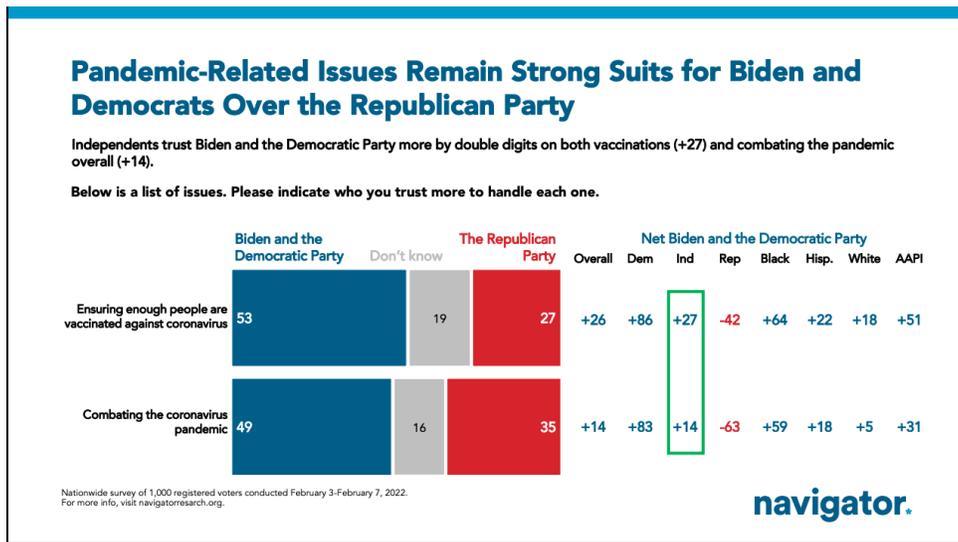
When it comes to the coronavirus, Americans trust President Biden and the Democratic Party to combat the pandemic, and he should also contrast his successes with Republicans' approach. Americans trust President Biden and the Democratic Party more than the Republican Party to ensure enough people are vaccinated against the coronavirus pandemic by a 26-point margin (53 percent Biden/Democrats – 27 percent Republicans) and to combat the coronavirus pandemic by a 14-point margin over the Republican Party (49 percent Biden/Democrats – 35 percent Republicans).

- Mitigation efforts by President Biden and the administration have been extremely popular: more than three in five Americans approve of the vaccine rollout so far (62 percent approve – 31 percent disapprove)—which was net negative when President Biden took office and improved

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dramatically since—and more than three in four Americans also support Biden sending rapid tests to American households (76 percent support – 15 percent oppose).

- Additionally, public support for vaccine mandates remains strong, consistent, and resilient. The public supports vaccine mandates generally by a 19-point margin (57 percent support – 38 percent oppose), consistent with our prior tracking.
- Arguments that call out Republicans for not listening to science and putting public health at risk or that Republicans are taking away the freedom for vaccinated Americans to work and go to school without rising their health are both effective by nearly 20-point margins to rebut critiques that Democrats are threatening personal freedoms with mask and vaccine mandates.



Americans Agree More With Democrats Who Criticize Republicans for Ignoring Pandemic Science

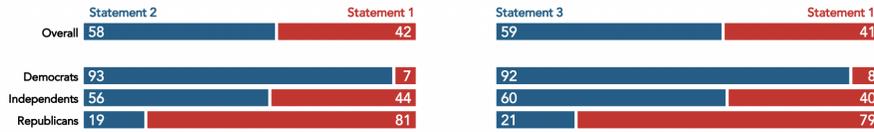
Whether the progressive response focuses on Republicans ignoring science or Republicans taking away the freedom of vaccinated Americans, each progressive lane is more effective by double digits than a Republican critique.

Which do you find more convincing?

Statement 1: Republicans who say Democrats are taking away our freedom with mask and vaccine mandates.

Statement 2: Democrats who say Republicans aren't listening to science and are putting public health at risk by opposing vaccine and mask requirements.

Statement 3: Democrats who say Republicans are taking away the freedom for vaccinated Americans to work and go to school without risking their health through exposure to unvaccinated Americans.



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Ahead of the State of the Union, a popular issue President Biden can lean into that earns broad public support is canceling student loan debt. Canceling a portion of student loan debt enjoys widespread support by more than a two-to-one margin (63 percent support – 30 percent oppose), including by those who have never had any student loan debt (55 percent support – 37 percent oppose). Navigator polling also recently found that if Biden were to cancel a portion of federal student loan debt, it would increase the perception that he has kept his campaign promises: initially, Americans are split evenly on whether he has kept his promises (50 percent) or broken them (50 percent), but when asking how that assessment would change were he to cancel a portion of student loan debt, perceptions Biden has kept his campaign promises by 8 points overall (to 58 percent promises kept), including an 11-point increase among those under the age of 35 (from 53 percent promises kept to 64 percent).

Canceling a Portion of Federal Student Loan Debt Increases Perception Biden Has Kept Campaign Promises

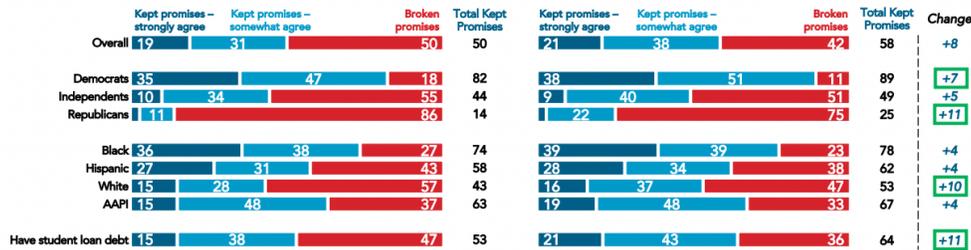
The greatest increases in perceptions that Biden has kept his campaign promises occur among Democrats (+7), Republicans (+11), and those who currently have student loan debt (+11).

Which do you agree with more?

- Joe Biden has mostly **kept** the promises he made during the campaign
- Joe Biden has mostly **broken** the promises he made during the campaign

After Reading Student Loan Debt Messaging: Assume Congress and Biden canceled at least a portion of federal student loan borrowers' debt. Which do you agree with more?

- Joe Biden has mostly **kept** the promises he made during the campaign
- Joe Biden has mostly **broken** the promises he made during the campaign



*Student loan debt status is defined by self-report on a separate question of whether respondents currently have student loan debt, have ever had student loan debt, or have never had student loan debt. Nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted February 3-February 7, 2022. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org.

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