



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 2, 2021

Democrat Pollster Tells New York Times: “We Have a Problem”

A center-left think tank, Third Way, asked Democrat pollster Brian Stryker to explore the reasons why Glenn Youngkin beat Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe in a surprise upset on November 2. He invited Virginia voters to attend focus groups to find out. He discovered, based on his findings, that “We [Democrats] have a problem.”

There are many problems facing the Democrats in the upcoming midterms, but Stryker exposed the primary one. [In an interview with the New York Times](#) he said, “We’ve got a national branding problem that is probably deeper than a lot of people suspect. Our party thinks maybe some things we’re saying aren’t getting through, but I think it’s much deeper than that.”



AP Images

The “national branding problem,” according to Stryker, is that Democrats are focusing on issues they care about, not on issues that voters care about. They are not talking to the voters, but only to themselves. Said Stryker, “We’re more focused on social issues than the economy, and the economy is the No. 1 issue right now.”

He expanded:

The No. 1 issue for women right now is the economy, and the No. 1 issue for Black voters is the economy, and the No. 1 issue for Latino voters is the economy.

I’m not advocating for us ignoring social issues, but when we think broadly about voters, they actually all want us talking about the economy and doing things to help them out economically.

The problem is simple, according to Stryker: “[Voters] just see costs going up and don’t feel like there’s any progress being made yet.”

That problem was deliberately and intentionally created on the very first day of the Biden administration. On that day, Biden signed two executive orders: one, shutting down the Keystone XL Pipeline and curtailing fracking and offshore oil and gas exploration; two, halting the construction of the wall on the nation’s southern border.

The consequences of each were easy to predict: higher gas prices along with higher grocery prices, thanks to higher shipping costs and the impact higher oil and shipping prices have on more than 6,000 common-use products (from golf balls to bicycle tires, from refrigerators to clothing, from shoes to electric blankets).



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The open-borders policy launched by the administration has allowed a mass inflow of illegal immigrants, many of them dangerous criminals and others simply incapable of contributing usefully to the American economy. Instead, they will be a drag and a dead weight, raising law-enforcement and education costs. This is increasingly annoying to those immigrants who got into the country the right way: legally.

The disconnect between the Democratic Party's messaging and those it needs to stay in power continues to widen, and it's showing up in the polls. According to the Cook Political Report, independent voters are turning away from the party in droves.

As Cook noted:

According to Gallup polling, for example, Biden's overall job approval rating has dropped from 57 percent in February to 42 percent today, a slide of 15-points. That drop-off has been driven almost entirely by independent voters....

The most recent polls from Marist, Quinnipiac, Washington Post/ABC, Fox and Monmouth, show Biden's job approval ratings among independents in a similar place; from 29 percent to 44 percent approval.

More ominously for Biden, the strong disapproval ratings among independent voters have also increased over these past few months.

For example, back in April, 27 percent of independent voters in the Quinnipiac poll said they strongly approved of the job Biden was doing, compared to 38 percent who strongly disapproved.

In the November polling, just 12 percent of independents strongly approved to 46 percent who strongly disapproved; a swing of 23 points more strongly negative.

According to Cook, Biden's job-approval ratings among independent voters are lower than Barack Obama's at the same point in their administrations.

The problem, said Cook, is this: "Once the honeymoon ends for many of these voters, it's over." Whatever political capital Biden had on inauguration day has long since been spent.

[The latest poll from Trafalgar Group](#) released on Wednesday provides additional proof that the honeymoon is over. While Biden's job-approval rating dropped further among all voters, with a negative spread of 23 points (36 percent approving, 59 percent disapproving), it's even worse among independents: a 33-percent negative spread (29 percent approving, 62 percent disapproving).

The *Times'* interview with Stryker followed a *Times'* in-house analysis of the Democratic Party's woes that it published last Saturday. It lamented that "the president's central promise of healing divisions and lowering the political temperature has failed to be fruitful." It noted that "among some of his core constituencies ... [there are] double-digit declines among Black, Latino, female and young voters," precisely the group the party needs to retain its grip on Congress.

As Cook wrote:

Independent voters are like the "check engine" light in American politics: when that light goes on, you are in trouble.

Right now, that light is blinking red.



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That's a terrible sign not just for Biden but for Democrats [as well].

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