

Biden’s State Of The Union Was Beyond Belief

As we have raised in previous Discussion Points, we place a great deal of importance on believability of messaging. If a message is not believable, it will not have standing with voters, and this is why much of the current political messaging on both sides falls flat. The White House seem perplexed as to why President Biden’s economic arguments have not moved voters, but as our previous work has found, voters do not believe many of the statements. We recently [tested a Biden campaign ad](#) and found that over a third of the electorate did not believe any of its statements, with the ad having no impact in moving voters. In the same way, many statements from last week’s State of the Union address were based on concepts that voters do not believe. The chart below takes four statements from the SOTU and matches them up to prior statements made by the President or the White House. We tested these in the February 24-25 Winning the Issues survey to see if voters did or did not believe them.

Biden Statements Made in SOTU	Overall (Believe-do not believe)
1.) “Wages keep going up. Inflation keeps coming down. Inflation has dropped from 9 percent to 3 percent — the lowest in the world and trending lower. The landing is and will be soft.”	
Grocery prices are coming down.	15-78
Wages are now increasing at a greater rate than inflation.	23-61
2.) “Folks, I inherited an economy that was on the brink. Now our economy is literally the envy of the world. Fifteen million new jobs in just three years — a record, a record. Unemployment at 50-year lows.”	
The economy was in freefall prior to President Biden taking office.	33-52
The economy has created almost 15 million jobs since President Biden took office.	37-45
In the last Congress, Democrats passed legislation that prioritized our economic recovery and now the United States is leading the world’s economic growth.	27-51
3.) “That’s why I determined to turn things around so the middle class does well.”	
President Biden is fighting for the middle class and Main Street, not special interests and Wall Street.	35-50
After two years of record inflation, high gas prices and grocery costs, policies under President Biden are not working.	57-31
4.) “For years, people have talked about it, but finally we got it done and gave Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices on prescription drugs, just like the V.A.’s able to do for veterans.”	
President Biden has passed laws to lower the cost of medicines.	49-31

In the first statement about wages going up and inflation coming down, voters think inflation is getting worse (54%) rather than better (21%) or not changing (23%). Nearly 8 out of 10 do not believe *grocery prices are coming down* (15-78 believe-do not believe), and 6 in 10 do not believe that *wages are now increasing at a greater rate than inflation* (23-61). The President has repeatedly made the case that the economy was in freefall when he took office, and more than half the country does not believe this (33-52). On the statement that *the economy has created almost 15 million jobs since President Biden took office*, voters tend not to believe this (37-45) although the percentage not believing is under 50%. On the Democrats’ claim that their legislation prioritized the economic recovery and the US is leading the world’s economic growth, voters don’t believe this by about 2:1 (27-51).

On a third statement about turning things around for the middle class, 50% of voters do not believe Biden is fighting for the middle class and Main Street. On a Republican statement that President Biden’s policies are not working, a majority of voters overall (57%) and independents (59%) do find that believable. However, an area where the President does have some standing is lowering drug costs, as voters did believe that *President Biden has passed laws to lower the cost of medicines* by 49-31.

If the Biden campaign hopes to move the President’s re-election numbers, they must start making arguments that voters find believable and not simply repeat assertions that voters will tune out. For more on the State of the Union, see David’s latest [Roll Call column](#).

Have a good weekend.

David & Myra