



A Resolution for the Biden Administration

The new year often feels like an opportunity to correct past mistakes — for example, improving one’s diet or quitting smoking. This explains why 25% of Americans, and 40% of those under 30, make New Year’s resolutions. Based on the latest poll from The Economist and YouGov, the Biden administration should adopt a New Year’s resolution too. In particular, it should reconsider its domestic policy agenda. Americans aren’t buying it.



Veronique de Rugy

YouGov is an influential international research data and analytics group headquartered in London. Pollsters asked 1,500 American adults about the state of the economy, the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation and more. Their findings show that people aren’t particularly happy right now.

When asked whether the country is headed in the right direction, only 23% of respondents said yes, while 62% think we’re on the wrong track. Black Americans seem more content than most, with 38% answering yes, as opposed to only 22% of Hispanics. There is also a small gender disparity in these opinions: 33% of white male college grads believe the country is heading in the right direction, while only 22% of white female college grads have the same optimistic view. Meanwhile, only 17% of white, non-college grads of all genders are happy with the country’s current direction.

Not surprisingly, 91% of Trump voters believe the country is now heading in the wrong direction. Biden voters are more divided; 40% believe the country is heading in the right direction, 39% believe we are heading in the wrong direction and 22% aren’t sure what they think.

Either way, this isn’t great news for the administration heading into this year’s midterm election, especially because only 22% of Americans believe that the current state of the economy is “good” or “excellent.” Forty percent believe it to be “poor.”

This is a big deal, as 96% of Biden voters think the economy and jobs are “very important” and “somewhat important” issues. They also rate this issue third in terms of importance after climate change and health care. The poll shows that inflation is another concern, including among many Biden voters, which is understandable with rates reaching levels unseen since 1982.

This anxiety is bound to continue. The administration prefers blaming the surge in prices on corporations, especially in the oil industry, rather than on its own policies — like the unnecessarily extravagant \$2 trillion COVID-19 relief bill that passed in January 2021 and flooded the economy with fresh cash. More spending and taxes will inevitably follow such a large government expansion, and like most other Americans, 88% of Biden voters think these are both important issues.

During a recent address to the country, Biden noted that there is no federal solution to this pandemic,



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yet he declared his administration's commitment to a legally dubious vaccine mandate for private employers. This could be explained by the fact that while Americans are equally divided on requirements by private employers to ask for proof of vaccination, 83% of his voters approve.

The poll could also help explain Biden's seemingly contradictory support for in-person schooling. More people are against requiring proof of vaccination to attend in-person classes than are for it (though women are more supportive than men are of such measures). Fifty-seven percent of Americans are against asking for proof of a booster to attend in-person classes.

Based on these numbers, there are some obvious resolutions Biden's team could adopt. With a strong majority of Americans believing 2021 was one of the worst years of this nation's history, the president and his party can't afford to continue down their current path.

Of course, most Americans don't follow through on their New Year's resolutions and quickly return to their old habits. If the administration follows this pattern, it will be at its own risk.

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