

Joe Biden's weak, forgettable State of the Union won't help his abysmal poll numbers

The speech had a few bright spots – the call to fund police and a nod to America's drug crisis – but Biden needed a pivot. And he failed to deliver.

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[President Joe Biden's State of the Union](#) address offered a chance for a flagging presidency to reset and pivot, perhaps giving his party a new message to sell in the upcoming midterms.

But for Democrats, the chance was missed. The president offered nothing new. In fact, if you had seen no news about this presidency and just watched the speech cold Tuesday night, you might assume that, politically, everything is fine for Biden.

But the reality is much different. [Biden's approval ratings](#) in many national polls are in the upper 30s, low 40s, a terrible omen for Democratic candidates up and down the ballot. Many [generic ballots show Republicans](#) with huge leads, which portends the possibility of a wave that ushers Republicans into office who never even dreamed they had a chance when they filed to run.

Biden won't target Putin where it hurts

And Biden did nothing about it. His message on Russia was perfectly fine, calling for American [resolve and solidarity](#) behind the people of Ukraine. But there was nothing new, such as the idea that many Republicans are floating – [banning all oil and gas imports](#) from Russia.

At the same time we are sending various kinds of aid to the brave Ukrainians (and planning for more), the United States is still [importing hundreds of thousands](#) of barrels of oil each day from Russia. It begs the question: How serious is Biden when it comes to fully isolating Putin?

The sanctions and measures taken by the Western world are severe, to be sure. And there's evidence that the powerful Russian oligarchs are [starting to feel the pain \(or soon will\)](#).

Even so, even [Canada has banned Russian crude imports](#), revenues from which support the Putin regime and the lifestyle of the oligarchs Biden [singled out](#) in his speech. Why can't we do this?

And why can't Biden relent on [his war on American domestic fossil fuel production](#) to help supply our European allies at a time that they, too, need to cut off Russian oil imports as much as possible?

Biden appears to care more about his green energy agenda – championed by the progressives in his party – than he does about sticking the knife as far in Putin’s back as possible. Perhaps we could stop the madman more quickly if we were as committed to that as Biden is to a liberal agenda that has no chance of passing this Congress or the next.

Happy talk won't cut it

The rest of the speech was mostly a laundry list of ideas that appear in legislation already dead. The inflation section was flat, and that issue alone has put an anvil on his ability to improve his political position.

I was surprised that he didn’t bring any new ideas to the table on the issues killing his party, and that he continues to try to use "[17 Nobel laureates](#)" to convince Americans paying over [\\$100 to fill their tanks](#) that things are just fine. Happy talk simply won’t cut it when it doesn’t match voters’ lived experiences.



This presidency needs a hard reset or it faces being remembered as one of the worst of the modern era. Think Bill Clinton’s 1996 State of the Union address, in which he declared “[the era of big government is over.](#)” While Clinton had already taken his [midterm lumps](#) before his pivot, surely Biden can see what’s coming if he doesn’t do something drastic to change direction.

There were a few bright spots in the speech worthy of praise. [His call to fund the police](#) was politically smart, as the radicals in his party who want to defund the police are [dragging down all Democrats](#) with their irresponsible rhetoric. The nod to America's drug crisis and to those in recovery is an issue that affects millions of families, in every state.

And the story of the little boy with diabetes was a memorable touch on a key issue. Those kinds of personal stories often stand the best chance of lingering in the minds of viewers.

But this speech is likely to be forgotten quickly as we turn our attention back to the atrocities being committed by the Russians and the inflation crisis that is punishing the American people.

Republicans won't find much to like here, and even some congressional Democrats were pre-planning to go their separate ways, with representatives from the [Congressional Progressive Caucus](#) and the [Congressional Black Caucus](#) set to give their own responses to a Democratic president's speech.

As for the GOP, [Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds in her response](#) stuck to the issues that you will see time and again in Republican ad campaigns this fall – schools, crime, inflation, and how Republican leadership can change the country's dismal direction. Her party's candidates would be wise to follow her example and not chase bizarre agendas or other wild goose chases emanating from Florida.

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