

# The Delray Democrat

## Debunking the Republican Big Lie That Biden Has Been “Captured by ‘The Left’”<sup>1</sup>

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If President Biden sounds more progressive than the centrist Democrat he’s been for decades, it’s because he’s been listening to what the American people say they need and trying to respond to those needs. To conclude that he has been “captured by the ‘Left’” (scare quotes) simply because those needs happen to align with policies advocated by progressives is to confuse correlation with causation.

The American Jobs Plan was designed to address the urgent need to repair our decaying infrastructure and the even more urgent need to respond to the existential threat of climate change. Despite its price tag (over \$2 trillion), polls showed strong public support for the plan, with a 64-34 margin reported in a *New York Times* [poll](#) and a 60-22 margin in a *Politico* [poll](#).

Asked specifically about the importance of “passing a bill to address climate change and its effects,” 64% of respondents to the *Politico* poll rated it “important” or a “top priority” (versus 27% who rated it “unimportant” or “not worth doing”). The *Times* poll also found 65% of Americans supported funding the bill by raising taxes on large corporations. Thus not only the bill but the portions most identified with the Left were supported by substantial majorities of Americans.

Despite having added \$1.9 trillion to the deficit with Trump’s *unfunded* tax cuts enjoyed predominantly by the largest corporations and wealthiest Americans, Republicans rejected a bill that addressed urgent public needs and was actually *funded*. Their counterproposal was barely one-quarter the bill’s original size. Biden ultimately turned negotiations over to a bipartisan group of senators, who removed the climate change and tax provisions. The bill that passed the Senate was less than half its original size. So much for being controlled by the Left

A standoff in the House emerged as progressives refused to support the neutered bill without a vote on the “human infrastructure” bill known as the Build Back Better Act that was languishing in the Senate.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Delray Democrat](#), December 2021, page 1.

## Build Back Better

The tortuous path of BBB also gives the lie to the claim Biden is in thrall to “the Left.” Bernie Sanders initially proposed spending as much as \$6.5 trillion over 10 years, but the version that emerged from his committee was priced at \$3.5 trillion. It included paid family and medical leave, a universal pre-K program, and an expansion of Medicare to include dental, vision, and hearing coverage. It was to be funded by raising taxes on capital gains exceeding \$1 million, raising the corporate tax rate from 21% to 25%, and reducing Medicare costs by allowing the government to negotiate lower drug prices.

[Polls](#) again showed substantial levels of public support for the cost, the importance of finally taking meaningful action to address climate change, and the tax provisions (*all by 61-30 margins*). Once again, however, the bill had no traction in the Senate.

Because BBB was delaying passage of the bipartisan infrastructure bill in the House, Biden announced a version that was literally half the size (\$1.75 trillion). It passed November 19, but only because “the Left” abandoned their months-long demand that the two bills be considered together. That’s not what I’d call persuasive evidence of a Biden in thrall to the Left.

And now Build Back Better is again languishing in the Senate because the entire Republican party (along with a small number of Democrats) consider their constituents to be the people who fund them rather than the people who vote for them. Biden is not controlled by the Left, but Congress is controlled by lobbyists, and the American people are the losers.

Further cuts are coming in order to satisfy Senators Manchin and Sinema. Manchin is now saying that there may not be enough time to pass Build Back Better this year. Indeed, despite the clear wishes of the American people, we have to face the possibility it may never pass.

That’s because we don’t have a real democracy, *but a democracy that falls short of the ideal is still better than no democracy at all*. And if we weaken Biden and lose the midterms, that is what is coming.

That’s why I am sick and tired of hearing from centrist Democrats that Biden must disavow the progressive agenda he has been spearheading. It capitulates to the false Republican narrative, and it relinquishes our strongest argument going into the midterms, namely, that Democrats are working for the American people while Republicans are working for the 0.001%.

It’s time to stop apologizing. It’s time to celebrate what Biden and the Democrats have done for the American people since taking office during the worst public health crisis in a century and the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression:

- 5,875,000 jobs created in ten months
- 5.5% GDP estimated for the year
- 4.2% unemployment (6.3% in January)
- 69.7% of Americans over 12 fully vaccinated
- 86.5% of Americans over 65 fully vaccinated

We should celebrate the bipartisan infrastructure bill, which addresses an urgent need even if it ignores a more urgent need. We should never stop reminding voters that Marco Rubio and Rick Scott were so afraid of the traitor in residence at Mar-A-Lago that they voted against the interests of Floridians.

Finally, we progressives should celebrate that Biden accomplished as much as he has despite our razor-thin majority. We are, and should be, disappointed that he was unable to accomplish more, but we need to refrain from blaming Biden or Democrats for that.

The Affordable Care Act polled weakly because the questions were binary, “yea” or “nay.” Pollsters are now only asking people whether they “approve” or “disapprove” of Biden. They really don’t care why, and we won’t get a chance to explain our answer. So if you’re asked to rate Biden’s job performance or his handling of the economy, give him the highest grade available. Our democracy, our freedoms, and our planet depend on it.