

The Biden agenda is meeting a dead end

[Alayna Treene](#) 6 hours ago - [Politics & Policy](#)



Voting reform looks as unlikely this year as Build Back Better:

- Although President Biden is now championing voting protection as the most pressing domestic issue, top Democratic lawmakers see little path to passage of anything like what the party's base is demanding.

Why it matters: As midterm campaigning ramps up, Biden's biggest accomplishments could well be in his rear-view mirror.

- "All the Democrats in the Senate are anxious about delivering on our promises," Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) told Axios. "We know what's at stake. And we're working hard to try to find a path to get

there. But it's hard."

- "It's a lot of hope, not a lot of detail at this moment," Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-N.Y.) told Axios' Andrew Solender.
- "Frustration, in Washington, D.C.?" Sen. Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.) sarcastically said when asked about Democrats' strategy. "I've been here about 14 months now. The U.S. Senate — the organization — doesn't run like anything else I've ever seen before."
- Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) [told the Guardian](#) "it's absolutely important that we do a major course correction."
- "People can understand that you sometimes don't have the votes. But they can't understand why we haven't brought up important legislation that 70% or 80% of the American people support," Sanders said.

Driving the news: Biden used his bully pulpit in Georgia on Tuesday in a last-ditch effort to build public pressure, not so much on Republicans but on his own party.

- He urged his fellow Democrats to take advantage of their full control of Congress and the White House to pass sweeping voting rights legislation — but his effort will be largely futile.
- The Freedom to Vote Act he pitched is likely going to fail, given united opposition from Republicans, and a refusal by Sens. Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) to lower the filibuster threshold to get around that partisan blockade.
- Biden's signature \$1.75 trillion Build Back Better social and climate agenda also remains on life support amid high inflation and continued opposition from similar forces: Republicans and Manchin.

Between the lines: Democrats have passed a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package and a \$1.25 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill — the biggest in modern history — during Biden's first year.

- Neither was a small feat in the current hyper-polarized congressional environment.
- They're also primed to pass — with help from Republicans — updates to the Electoral Count Act, a century-old law Trump supporters tried to use to reverse the 2020 election results.

What they're saying: Those successes give hope to some Democrats.

- "We can run on [the American Rescue Plan]. We can run on BIF. Hopefully, we can run on BBB, as well," Bowman told Axios.
- White House spokesman Andrew Bates told Axios: "The president's leadership just delivered the best year for job creation in American history and reduced the unemployment rate to 3.9%."
- "He's fighting to protect the most American right — the vote — and the rule of law against the worst threat to the integrity of our elections since the Civil War. ... Like he said [Tuesday], 'Keep the faith.'"