

DCCC chair to Dems: Let's face it, we're the problem

[Ed Morrissey](#) Mar 14, 2022 12:01 PM ET



Sean Maloney, meet [Cassandra](#) and [Jeremiah](#). Whatever polling the DCCC chair has seen must be devastating. Fresh off a comment last week that Democrats had to [stop talking like jerks](#), he's now trying to warn his fellow party members that they're obsessing on issues voters mostly couldn't care less about at the moment.

The Washington Post calls this the "[toughest job in politics](#)." Unpopular prophecy usually is:

"If they agree with us on the issues," the DCCC chairman asked, "why don't they like us more?"

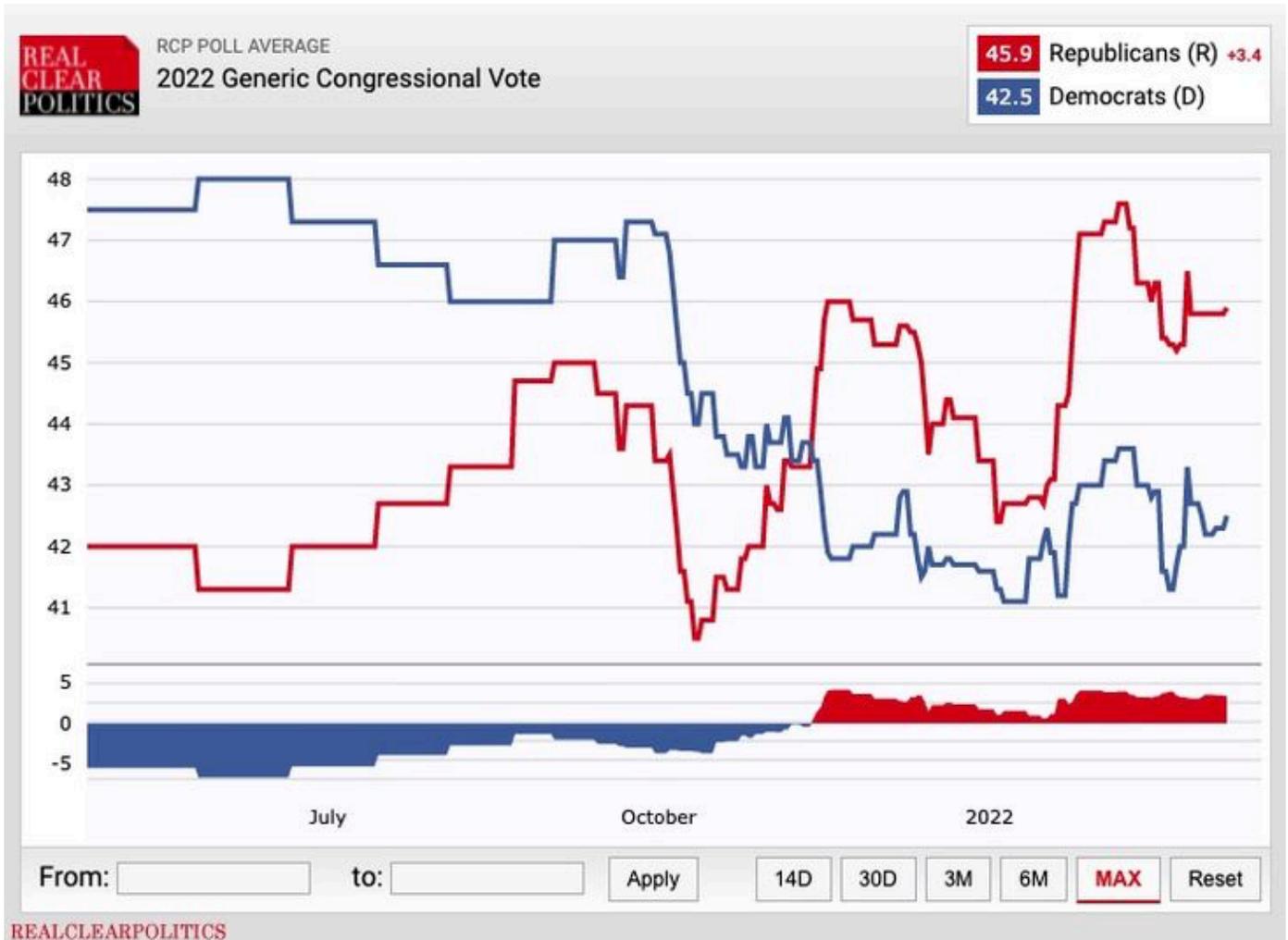
Maloney, 55, is in his 10th year representing parts of the Hudson Valley north of New York City, which voted for Donald Trump in 2016 and President Biden in 2020, and has found some “answers that aren’t comfortable” for his party to hear. He has taken on the role of truth teller, trying to get his caucus shifted away from issues that he thinks repel swing voters.

“They think that we’re divisive and too focused on cultural issues. They think that we’re preachy. They think that we act like we know better than parents when it comes to their kids in schools,” Maloney said in an interview here during a conference designed to try to forge some unity. “The problem is not the voters,” he added. “The problem is us.”

Maloney can count himself lucky. Unpopular prophets who delivered uncomfortable truths ended up dead in more ancient times. Fortunately we live in a more civilized era, where people just scoff at the warnings ahead of the disaster to come:

Not all members agree with his assessment. Many “front liners,” or those lawmakers facing tough midterm races, skipped the conference, sending the message that they trust their own instincts over those of national party operatives and Maloney.

Where have their own instincts led them so far? The [RealClearPolitics aggregate](#) on the generic congressional ballot hasn’t changed since last week, but let’s take another look at it again:



The party's "instincts" have produced a fairly recognizable prophecy of doom on their own. Republicans rarely lead on the generic question thanks to structural issues of polling on the topic, so anything inside of a D+5 usually indicates a potential win for the GOP, especially in the midterms of a Democratic presidency. Not only are Republicans leading on this measure in most national polling, they're up by 3.4 in the national aggregate and have been ahead for *five solid months*.

During that entire time, Democrats have insisted that this is a messaging problem rather than a substantive rejection of their agenda. Maloney, for all his accuracy on the core problem, buys into that argument as well. His solution is for Democrats to embrace Biden's rhetorical centrism while continuing to embrace their progressive substance:

Rather than coaching incumbents to distance themselves from the politically unpopular president, Maloney wants these Democrats to embrace Biden's style.

"He is that person that in many ways we need to become," Maloney said, explaining Biden's interactions with voters. "If there's a kid with a stutter, the president's gonna fall all over him. If there's a cop or a firefighter whose had a tough time, Joe Biden's gonna wrap his arm around him."

That's almost as out of touch as Maloney diagnoses his colleagues to be. Voters might *like* that approach in general, but they have much bigger issues on tap than presidential or congressional geniality. They're dealing with 40-year highs on inflation, a generational high on crime, supply chain shortages, as well as the substantive issues of parental marginalization in schools. Democrats' answer to that is mainly the hair of the dog that bit 'em, along with a heapin' helping of Putin:



[Republicans are particularly chuffed](#) to hear that Democrats want to run on Joe Biden in November, too. Set phasers on *pounce* rather than *seize*, CBS reports:

Republicans ridiculed — and welcomed — a Democratic campaign strategy that relies on Mr. Biden's agenda and record.

"As long as Democrats push Biden's failed agenda, they can expect to

keep losing. Democrats up-and-down the ballot are in lockstep with Biden and will be held accountable for his failures in November," said RNC spokesperson Emma Vaughn.

Let's see how well Pelosi's "you gotta spend more to get out of debt and whip inflation" message sells, too. That may not be a Democrat talking like a jerk, but it's certainly Democratic leadership assuming voters are jerks. It doesn't take a Cassandra to predict how that will work out.