

Dems air anxieties after Biden's brutal NBC poll

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Illustration: Aïda Amer/Axios

Democrats across the political spectrum are panicking about [a recent NBC News poll](#) showing President Biden's approval rating at the lowest levels yet — 40%.

Why it matters: Moderate and progressive Democrats, particularly in the House, are fearful of an electoral tsunami this November. They tell Axios they're unsure whether the party can repair the damage in time.

- "People are extremely discouraged, there's no doubt," said Rep. Annie Kuster (D-N.H.), a moderate and leading member of the New Democrat

Coalition.

- Kuster was among the NDC members who met with President Biden on Wednesday and urged the administration to take action on supply chain and inflation issues, gas prices and a budget reconciliation bill.
- Rep. Susan Wild (D-Pa.), a swing-district member, told Axios's Andrew Solender the poll gives credence to her distancing herself from Biden: "It's always a concern when the president's numbers are bad and you're in the same party."
- "In my district, and I think in most frontline districts, you win your campaign because people know you know what work you've done, ... and they also know that I don't always vote in line with the party."

Leading moderate Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.) told Axios: "It's an alarm bell for the commonsense, bipartisan solutions we should be focused on ... The president talked about a lot of this at the State of the Union, and now we have to get it done."

- "Democrats have got to talk about, one, that this is real, and own up to this being real," frontline Democrat Rep. Haley Stevens (D-Mich.) said. "And then, own up to having a plan to deal with [price pressures and inflation]."
- Rep. Mondaire Jones (D-N.Y.), a prominent progressive, told Axios: "A substantial explanation for the president's relatively low approval is that Democrats are dissatisfied with the lack of progress we've made on certain issues."

Driving the news: Members say the NBC poll — specifically the anemic 33% approval of Biden's handling of the economy — is especially disheartening.

They felt the president's stature was improving after his initial handling of

[Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#) and delivery of the [State of the Union address](#) resulted in better poll numbers.

- That bump was short-lived.
- The most positive scenario, optimistic Democrats argue, is that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine settles down in the next few months.
- Then, in turn, gas prices recede, inflation falls and the economy continues to chug along with low unemployment and high job growth.
- They also hold out hope Democrats can reach a deal with holdouts like Sens. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) to pass some sort of revamped Build Back Better package.

Reality check: All of these things have to happen, and within a short time frame.

- Party strategists said Democrats need to string together a series of wins by the end of July or early August to make any potential gains in the November midterms.

What they're saying: Jones is among those calling on Biden to take matters into his own hands.

- "I think that the president has to look at that poll and do what he can using executive action, whether it is canceling student debt, or stopping subsidies when it comes to fossil fuel infrastructure ... which would materially improve the lives of the American people, and, I think, buoy his approval as we get closer to November."