

# Here's *\*exactly\** why Joe Biden's poll numbers aren't getting better



(CNN) — Usually when the United States is involved in an international crisis, the president of the United States experiences a bit of a poll bump -- a rally 'round the flag effect that politically benefits the commander-in-chief.

That hasn't happened amid the [Russian invasion of Ukraine](#) for President Joe Biden, who, after a brief bump earlier this month, is back in the low 40s in terms of his job approval rating.

What gives?

While the US has been aiding Ukraine, Biden has been vigilant about keeping American troops out of the conflict because there is very little appetite for military involvement. The residual political impact is that, for the average

American, a war in another country isn't a top-of-mind issue.

What *is* that top-of-mind issue? The economy -- and inflation in particular.

In a [Quinnipiac University poll](#) released Wednesday, 30% of Americans said inflation was the most urgent issue facing the country at the moment. Less than half that number (14%) named the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

That finding is echoed in a [Kaiser Family Foundation survey](#) released Thursday morning. More than half of those polled -- 55% of Americans -- said that the biggest issue facing the country was inflation and rising prices. Just 18% named the Russian invasion of Ukraine as the biggest problem in the country.

So, the economy is front and center. And Biden's approval on the economy is, well, dismal.

Just 1 in 3 Americans (34%) approved of how Biden was handling the economy in the Quinnipiac poll, with 58% disapproving. (That same poll had Biden roughly even -- 44% approve, 45% disapprove -- in terms of how he is handling the conflict in Ukraine.)

The math is simple then. Americans care far more about inflationary costs in their own lives than they do about Russia's invasion of Ukraine. And on that issue, they don't think Biden is doing a very good job.

The news doesn't look likely to improve for Biden -- at least in the near term.

A key measure of inflation, the Personal Consumption Expenditures price index, [soared 6.4%](#) in February as compared to the same period in 2021. That's the fastest increase for the index since January 1982. That's in keeping with the Consumer Price Index, which was also [at its highest level since January 1982](#) in the 12-month period that ended in February.

These numbers should terrify Democrats who are on the ballot this fall, barring a rapid turnaround in inflation, which most economists believe is unlikely. If Biden's job approval numbers don't improve -- and soon -- the party could be looking at an absolute political cataclysm in November.

As of 2018, the average -- yes, average -- House seat loss for a president's party when that president's job approval was under 50% was [37 seats](#). If history repeated itself this fall, Republicans would be back in the majority, with a decent cushion to boot.

What's worse for Biden -- and Democrats -- is that [there's only so much he can do](#) to turn around the inflationary problem. While the President and his administration have recently tried to blame higher prices for gasoline on Russian President Vladimir Putin and his war against Ukraine, it doesn't appear as though the public is convinced.

This latest string of numbers paints a very treacherous political landscape for Democrats. And one that they have very little way of changing.