

# ONE COUNTRY

## RURAL PLAYBOOK

Connecting with Rural Communities in 2022



# 2022 RURAL PLAYBOOK

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At the start of 2022, the midterm election outlook was dim for Democrats, especially among voters in rural America. A [Morning Consult poll](#) found a significant majority of rural voters held unfavorable opinions of the Democratic Party ahead of the midterm elections with 65% of rural voters viewing the Democratic Party negatively. The governor's races in Virginia and New Jersey in 2021 saw the Democratic vote in rural areas plummet, costing Democrats one seat and narrowly holding on to the other in an unexpectedly close election. Historical trends and early 2022 polling indicated that Democrats were in for some big losses in the 2022 midterms.

Primary enthusiasm seemed to confirm that Democrats were facing serious political headwinds. Over the course of primary season, the [One Country Project](#) (OCP) examined rural voter turnout in six key states: Georgia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina, North Dakota, and Nevada. We first looked at rural turnout in the last midterm election six years ago in 2018, and then compared those numbers to rural turnout this year in 2022. We did this for both Democrats and Republicans. From there, we found the net gain both parties made in each state. Here are some of the key takeaways we found:

- Democratic rural turnout is low. In Georgia and Pennsylvania, Democrats have increased turnout in rural areas since 2018. However, Democrats fallen behind in Ohio, North Dakota, and Nevada by as much as 48 percent since 2018.
- Republican turnout has increased in rural areas. In Georgia, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, North Dakota, and Nevada, Republicans increased their rural primary turnout by as much as 92 percent since the last midterm cycle in 2018.
- Even where we've made gains – Democrats are still lagging behind. Despite the Democratic gains made in Georgia and Pennsylvania, Republicans have nearly doubled their rural turnout in those states.
- In every state we examined, Republicans increased turnout. The range of these increases varied, but across the board Republicans gained.

State Sources: State election sites	2018 Dem Rural	2022 Dem Rural	2022 +/- D	2018 Republican Rural	2022 Republican Rural	2022 +/- R	Republican Gain
<a href="#">Georgia</a>	71,661	85,726	+14,065 (+16.4%)	169,622	328,440	+158,818 (+51.6%)	+35%
<a href="#">Pennsylvania</a>	101,101	164,171	+63,070 (+38.4%)	185,736	368,090	+182,354 (+49.5%)	+11%
<a href="#">Ohio</a>	108,666	63,118	-45,548 (-41.9%)	263,503	267,491	+3,988 (+1.5%)	+43%
<a href="#">North Carolina</a>	56,289	54,020	-2,269 (-4.0%)	56,941	109,759	+52,818 (+92.7%)	+96%
<a href="#">North Dakota</a>	12,821	6,553	-6,168 (-48.9%)	28,133	32,506	+4,373 (+15.5%)	+64%
<a href="#">Nevada</a>	1,369	1,064	-305 (-22.3%)	4,043	4,968	+925 (+22.9%)	+45%

But, as we near election day, the tide seems to have turned and the red wave may not be the tsunami that Democrats feared, and Republicans were hoping for.

The Democrats in Congress and the Biden Administration have recently secured legislative wins that helped to shift this dismal outlook. In addition, people have started to see that the policies Democrats in Congress and the Biden Administration put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic— the American Rescue Plan and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—are having a positive impact on the U.S. economy. When President Biden took office, over 18 million Americans were receiving unemployment benefits, now the unemployment rate has dropped to 3.5%-- the lowest rate in 50 years. Our economy has recovered all jobs lost during the pandemic and even begun to add jobs. These facts illustrate Democrats economic policies are doing what they were intended to do—rebuild and strengthen our economy.

For Democrats to continue making progress, they need to win elections and “win the wins” they have secured. If they do not, Republicans seem happy to. Every Republican in Congress voted against the American Rescue Plan that has enabled our country’s economic return, yet Republicans have been touting elements of the bill [they voted against](#) to their constituents and campaigns. The same goes for the infrastructure projects many Republicans voted against. [CNN’s ‘The Lead with Jake Tapper’](#) found at least 14 congressional Republicans who voted against the infrastructure bill have tried to take credit for projects made possible by it. Democrats must call out Republican hypocrisy when they see it. Democrats have been the ones delivering and they need to take credit for it if they want to win on election day.

To win with rural voters, Democrats need to be proactive and go into rural communities to have in-person conversations with rural residents not only about what legislation they have passed in Washington, but how it impacts their community today and in the future. The Biden

Administration has demonstrated a commitment to reconnecting more directly with rural America. For example, following the passage of the *Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act*, the Biden Administration released the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Rural Playbook](#) in an effort to help local, state, and tribal leaders unlock the historic investments the law made in rural communities. Coinciding with this announcement came the news that President Biden and senior administration officials would be embarking on a nationwide tour to connect directly with rural Americans. This level of commitment is what rural and tribal communities deserve, and what Democrats must do if they are to rebuild their relationship with rural America.

As Democrats go into rural communities in the lead up to the 2022 midterm elections, they have a good story to tell and many accomplishments to tout. For example,

- As constituents are grappling with inflation, explain how the [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#) will help to lower healthcare costs. The bill caps seniors' out of pocket spending for prescription drugs at \$2,000 per year and will help Americans covered under the *Affordable Care Act (ACA)* save on their health insurance premiums. Because seniors disproportionately choose to live in rural America, rural Americans stand to disproportionately benefit from the *Inflation Reduction Act* as it lowers prescription drug costs for seniors on Medicare. This is in stark contrast to the [Republican agenda](#) that allows corporate greed to supersede the well-being of everyday Americans and aims to put Social Security and Medicare on the chopping block.
- Biden promised to reach across the aisle to work with Congressional Republicans and make progress, and he has as is evidenced by the passage of the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)*, bipartisan support for aid to Ukraine in their brave stand against Russian aggression, and the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act—the most comprehensive piece of gun reform legislation to pass Congress in almost 30 years.
- With the passage of the *PACT Act*, Democrats and the Biden Administration demonstrated that they would follow through on expanding disability and health benefits to veterans and on their commitment to advance the Unity Agenda President Biden put forth for the nation during this year's State of the Union address.
- Many women across the country are reeling in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that reversed the *Roe v. Wade* decision and stripped women of a right they had known for nearly 50 years—the right to choose. Democrats are committed to restoring the protections of *Roe v. Wade* and want to move women's rights forward by supporting and elevating policies that address equal pay and paid family leave. Whereas, Republicans in Congress have introduced a national abortion ban. This ban would bar women from making their own health care choices in every state in the nation and is just another example of Republican's undermining women's rights, opportunities, and health. This is especially concerning for the [18 million women of](#)

[reproductive age](#) living in rural areas, where maternity care is disappearing, and pregnancy and childbirth are becoming more complicated — and more dangerous.

The reaction to the Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* has given a clear indication that the American people do not want to have their rights taken away by the whims of an unelected and unaccountable Supreme Court. In Kansas, voters turned out in stunning numbers – around [910,000 voters](#) voted in the primary compared with [473,438 in 2018](#) – to vote down a referendum to allow the legislature to restrict or ban access to abortion. Even the reddest counties, which Trump dominated in 2020, saw a surge of voters coming out to support women’s reproductive rights. In Hamilton County, where 81 percent of voters supported President Trump in 2020, less than [56 percent of voters](#) chose the anti-abortion position this past month.

The Republican hypocrisy that lies at the core of *Dobbs v. Jackson* is reinforced by Republican Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy’s new road map for House Republicans branded as the “[Republican Commitment to America](#)”. For example, Republicans claim they are committed to “Modernize and personalize healthcare to provide affordable options that fit individual need”, without any plan to deliver that beyond the simple repeal of the ACA. In other words, the McCarthy plan boils down to “you’re on your own.” The IRA will dramatically reduce prescription drug costs and make healthcare more affordable for individuals and seniors. Yet, every Republican in the Senate and House voted against it.

Similarly, Republicans attack Democrats for supporting open borders, but Trump never built his wall and their plan would slash the number of agents working on the border. The plan Republicans are campaigning on calls for [cutting federal jobs by 25%](#). For Customs Border Patrol that would mean eliminating over [4,800 border patrol agents](#). In sharp contrast, the Biden Administration has invested \$293 million for Customs Border Patrol to prevent fentanyl smuggling and to combat the opioid crisis, that has impacted towns across America, particularly [rural communities](#).

Although Red Wave concerns may have quelled a bit over the past few months, Democrats still have to fight to capitalize on the political momentum that has been gained over the summer and convert it into political wins.

OCP’s mission is to ensure rural America’s priorities and values are heard, understood, well-represented and reflected in policy in Washington. OCP’s Rural Playbook provides a guide to the issues impacting rural voters and how Democrats can best connect with them on the key issues of the economy, inflation, abortion, immigration, crime, and others in the lead up to Election Day 2022.

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# STIMULATING THE RURAL ECONOMY & COMBATING INFLATION

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## LOWERING PRICES AT THE PUMP

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Rural America needs an energy policy that diversifies fuel production, invests in the local economy, reduces our dependence on foreign oil, and lowers gas prices.

We need reliable fuel sources that are resilient in the face of price shocks and don't raid families' pockets at the pump. Republicans have offered no ideas to meaningfully reduce gas prices.

- Following Putin's invasion of Ukraine, the United States banned the import of Russian oil, to condemn and deter additional Russian aggression in Ukraine. Both Democrats and Republicans agreed this was the right thing to do, although it resulted in increased costs here at home.
- The Biden Administration took swift action to fill the gap created by this action and the subsequent rising prices, President Biden announced an unprecedented release of oil from U.S. reserves. This helped to fill the gap that was created by banning the import of Russian oil, as well as increase U.S. oil production, which has lagged behind in recent years.
  - Earlier this year, the oil and gas industry was sitting on more than 9,000 unused but approved permits for production on federal lands and more than 12 million unused acres.
  - Oil and gas production was [occurring on less than half](#) of the more than 26 million acres of land already under a federal lease by the end of fiscal 2019, according to the most recent federal Bureau of Land Management data, which doesn't include millions of acres leased in the Trump administration's final year.
  - The U.S. plans to restock barrels in the reserve when oil prices are lower, which could help further incentive domestic oil production in the years ahead.
  - These steps helped to reduce gas prices while also putting an onus on oil companies to increase supply.
- To address rising gas prices, Democrats also expanded the usage of homegrown biofuels by allowing E15 gasoline—gasoline that uses a 15 percent ethanol blend—to be sold this summer. It is estimated this action could help an American family save 10 cents per gallon of gas, which is important for all Americans, but especially those in rural areas who tend to drive longer distances to access goods and services.

- Allowing American farmers to produce more biofuels here at home will help to create jobs, lower energy costs, bolster our national security and enhance America's energy independence.
- The historic investments in domestic biofuels in the *IRA* will also be instrumental in decreasing our dependence on foreign oil and diversifying America's energy portfolio.
- While gas prices have maintained a downward trend since the summer, global tensions remain, and the future is uncertain. But Democrats have demonstrated their commitment to lowering the price at the pump for Americans.

## REPUBLICANS POINT FINGERS TO DEFLECT FROM THEIR LACK OF A PLAN

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- Republicans claim we need more oil and gas production opened but fails to account for the U.S. setting oil production records under President Biden.
- Republicans have blocked efforts to prevent speculative trading on oil futures that drive up prices at the pump and create more price volatility.
- Republicans claim that the canceled Keystone Pipeline would lower gas prices but fail to explain why the pipeline was not built when President Trump was in office.
- Republicans also fail to explain how Canadian tar sands sent through the Keystone Pipeline to ports in Texas and shipped to other countries would increase the U.S. supply of energy and lower domestic fuel prices.

## REDUCING UTILITY BILLS

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We need to lower Americans' utility bills while also creating efficiencies that reduce energy consumption. Republicans have vilified these efforts and doubled down on failed ideas.

- The *IRA* invests \$4.5 billion in the long-term resiliency, reliability, and affordability of rural electric systems, helps families save money on utility bills, provides opportunities for low and middle-income families to receive high efficiency appliances, and expands rural opportunities in the clean energy economy.
- The *IRA* will lower energy costs – saving families \$500 per year on energy bills.
- The *IRA* also includes significant investments in Indian Country to help Tribal Nations respond to the challenges of extreme drought and build up the resilience of communities and the ecosystems they depend on, as well as investments in Tribal communities for energy efficient housing, new energy projects, and connecting homes that have never been connected to the grid to clean energy.

- The *IRA* provides incentives for clean energy deployment and manufacturing in economically disadvantaged, tribal, and energy communities.

## **REPUBLICANS STAND OPPOSED TO SOLUTIONS**

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- Every single Republican voted against the *IRA*, choosing party line votes instead of supporting policies that will meaningfully lower American's utility bills.
- Republicans continuously vilify clean energy development, despite clean energy projects overwhelmingly benefiting rural communities with jobs and investments.

## **KEEPING FOOD COSTS DOWN**

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We need a domestic food supply chain that keeps farmers on their farms and allows consumers to feed their families without straining their finances. Republicans offer no solutions to rising food costs and would force more farmers off their land by continuing the failed strategy of get big or get out that has reduced competition and created regional monopolies in the agricultural economy.

No American should have to struggle to put food on the table. Rural America plays a vital role in ensuring a supply of affordable and healthy food.

- The *IRA* provides funding to keep disadvantaged farmers at risk of losing their operations farming to increase the food supply and diversify the supply chain.
- President Biden doubled the investment in domestic fertilizer production, lowering input costs for farmers and prices consumers see on the shelves.
- Increased assistance for precision farming to ensure crops have the maximum yield without wasting inputs that drive up costs.
- Expanding the number of counties eligible to participate in the double planting crop insurance program, increasing the amount of food planted and harvested to lower consumer prices.

## **REPUBLICANS HAVE NO IDEAS TO COMBAT RISING FOOD COSTS**

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- The Republican stimulus bills under President Trump did more to fuel inflation than any other economic program in the last decade.
- The failure to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic created economic and supply chain disruptions that are still roiling the global economy and exacerbating inflationary pressures.
- Republican's insistence that President Biden's legislative agenda is fueling inflation have no explanation for inflation rising in other countries at rates even greater than here in the

## **REDUCING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS COSTS**

We need to guarantee no one goes broke trying to pay for their prescription drugs. Republicans are still focused on repealing the *ACA* and making access to life saving medication even harder.

No American should have to worry that their medications are too expensive. This is especially true in rural America, where more senior citizens live.

- The *IRA* will lower prescription drug costs for millions of Americans on Medicare by drastically lowering the price of prescription drugs by letting Medicare negotiate pricing.
- The *IRA* caps the cost of insulin for Medicare patients at \$35 per month.
- The *IRA* limits the total out-of-pocket cost for prescription drugs at \$2,000 per year for seniors.
- A disproportionately large share of senior citizens live in rural America, and they stand to benefit from the *IRA* as it lowers prescription drug costs for seniors on Medicare.

## **REPUBLICANS ARE OUT-OF-TOUCH ON DRUG PRICING**

- Republicans claim that lowering drug prices would stifle innovation but cannot explain why foreign based drug makers can run profitably without charging exorbitant prices for drugs outside of the US market.

## **MAKING HEALTHCARE MORE AFFORDABLE**

We need to guarantee affordable access to basic medical care. Republicans are still focused on repealing the *ACA* and making access to life saving medication even harder.

No American should be stuck trying to pay for a health insurance premium they can't afford. Many rural counties have a single insurance provider available and no price competition to prevent prices from rising to unaffordable levels.

- The *IRA* will lower healthcare costs – 13 million Americans will save up to \$800 a year in savings on their health insurance premiums.

## **REPUBLICANS ARE STILL STUCK ON ACA REPEAL AS THEIR ONLY HEALTHCARE POLICY**

- Instead of focusing on how to get more Americans access to affordable health insurance, Republicans are still stuck on repealing the *ACA* with absolutely no plan to replace it.

## **MAKING IT IN AMERICA**

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We need to build more products and invent more new technologies here in America. Republicans have talked about Making America Great, but have no plans to actually create new jobs, support new industries, or expand opportunity in rural America.

Supply chain disruptions have been the major driver of inflation and product shortages. Preventing these disruptions and reducing America's over-reliance on foreign made goods and products is vital to reinvigorating rural economies and combating inflation.

- The nearly \$60 billion investment the *IRA* makes to create manufacturing jobs here in the U.S. will ease supply chain complications that are driving inflation.
- The passage of the *Chips and Science Act (CHIPS Act)* has spurred over \$50 billion in new investments to build microchip and semiconductor manufacturing facilities, many of them in rural communities.
- Over 20 percent of funding for research and development of next generation microchips will be in Rural states, creating new high-tech industries and diversifying rural economies.

## **REPUBLICANS TALK ABOUT MAKING IT IN AMERICA BUT HAVE NO POLICY TO BACK IT UP**

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- Republicans remain focused on cutting taxes for the wealthy and expanding tax policies that have encouraged jobs to be offshored.
- Republicans continue to push the lie that regulations destroy jobs while doing nothing to support new and emerging businesses.

## **BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW**

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- The pandemic highlighted the importance of connectivity and access. The *BIL* provides a once-in-a-generation federal investment so that all rural Americans gain access to clean drinking water, can use high-speed broadband Internet for education and business, and have safe roads and bridges for both people and goods. Infrastructure that will create the level of access and connectivity rural residents and economies needs to thrive in the future.
- The passage of these bills has demonstrated the Biden Administration's commitment to deliver real results for rural America.
- Investing in rural America will strengthen the entire economy and will help ensure that historically under-served parts of America receive the funds necessary to combat the economic, environmental, and health challenges it faces.

## **REPUBLICANS CONTINUALLY VOTE AGAINST RURAL INTERESTS, AND INSTEAD SIDE WITH CORPORATE INTERESTS**

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- Republicans in Congress have offered no plan to address inflation. Instead, they intend to raise taxes on millions of working-class and middle-class Americans, repeal the ACA, put Social Security and Medicare on the chopping block, and put hundreds of other programs that help low and middle-income Americans at risk of defunding.
- Every Republican in Congress voted against the American Rescue Plan that has enabled our country's economic return. They voted against creating millions of jobs, safely reopening schools and our economy, expanding access to healthcare, and lowering costs for American families as they dealt with the pandemic.
- Every Republican in the Senate and House voted against the Inflation Reduction Act, which will dramatically reduce prescription drug and energy prices, along with reducing the deficit and lowering inflation by ensuring huge corporations and billionaires pay their fair share of taxes.

## **DEMOCRATS' ECONOMIC POLICIES ARE DOING WHAT THEY WERE INTENDED TO DO—REBUILD AND STRENGTHEN OUR ECONOMY**

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- President Biden has created more than 10 million jobs, with a competent COVID vaccination response and the passage of the *American Rescue Plan (ARP)*. A sharp contrast to President Trump who lost 3 million jobs on his watch.
- When President Biden took office, over 18 million Americans were receiving unemployment benefits, today the unemployment rate has dropped to 3.5%- the lowest rate in 50 years.
- Our economy has recovered all jobs lost during the pandemic and begun to add jobs. The legislative wins the Democrats have secured this summer like the passage of the *CHIPS Act* will help to continue this positive trend by spurring the creation of more manufacturing jobs here at home.
- While the job market is doing well, average wage growth continues to lag behind the rate of inflation and [rural Americans](#) are concerned by rising costs and inflation. Food, household goods, and energy cost more in rural areas and individuals tend to spend more money filling up their tanks to travel longer distances to access everyday items like groceries or services like daycare or healthcare.

- Democrats have been able to advance policies that address rising costs through holding special interests accountable, and making billionaires and corporation pay their fair share.
- The American people are starting to get some relief from high prices, and the *IRA* that Democrats in Congress passed, and the President signed, will also help bring prices down.
- Democrats' economic agenda has been about generating more growth and more innovation by giving America's middle-class more opportunities and more financial security, and by investing in expanding the productive capacity of our economy.

# SAFEGUARDING RURAL RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

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## IMMIGRATION

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We need a secure border and real action to deal with illegal immigration. Republicans make promises to get tough on the border and then break them.

Rural America needs an immigration policy that secures our border, takes a practical approach to the workforce, and strengthens legal immigration.

- A strong border that combines security measures, funding for border agents, resources for the system to swiftly process immigration cases, and a stronger legal immigration system.
- U.S. and Mexican law enforcement agencies will partner to address the shared priority of disabling human trafficking and human smuggling organizations. Mexico is also increasing border checkpoints and has deployed more than 12,000 security personnel to southern Mexico.
- Extreme approaches won't work. We can't just shut off immigration and we shouldn't loosen restrictions or get rid of border enforcement without a plan.
- A comprehensive approach to securing our borders will help to fix our immigration system in a way that protects our nation from bad actors, but also provides the millions of undocumented workers, caregivers, students, and children who are an essential part of our economies, with a legal pathway to citizenship.

## REPUBLICANS HAVE TALKED TOUGH ON THE BORDER, BUT THAT'S ALL

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Republicans are trying to point the finger at Democrats and create a narrative that open border policies have created a crisis of mass illegal immigration, people coming to America to get taxpayer benefits and hiding from the law in sanctuary cities. But while Democrats have taken real action, Republicans have failed to live up to their tough talk.

- Under the Trump administration only [80 miles](#) of wall was built where there weren't already barriers.
- Not only did Mexico not pay for the wall, but what little did get built, cost taxpayers about [five times more per mile](#) than fencing built under the Bush and Obama administrations.
- Even worse, the billions wasted was siphoned away from men and women in uniform and the [Department of Defense](#) that were intended to keep us safe.

- Now, the plan Republican's are campaigning on calls for [cutting federal jobs by 25%](#). For Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), that would mean [eliminating over 4,800 border patrol agents](#). Slashing border patrol is hardly the way to secure the border.

## **FIGHTING FENTANYL AND THE OPIOID CRISIS**

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Democrats are taking real action to stop the surge of fentanyl over the border that started under President Trump and fighting to turn the tide in rural communities.

For rural America to thrive, the opioid crisis must be addressed. That means stopping the flow of illegal drugs into our country and making sure people fighting addiction get the help they need.

- Democrats need to follow through on the Biden Administration's work to partner with our allies to [target](#) and [disrupt](#) the [transnational criminals](#) that traffic fentanyl and profit from pain in rural communities.
- Efforts to step up seizures and busts at the border need to continue, and law enforcement should be provided with the resources they need to get the job done like the [\\$293 million](#) provided to CBP to step up anti-smuggling efforts.
- The federal government needs to continue to have the backs of local law enforcement by [providing money](#), manpower, and [guidance](#) to local police departments trying to break up fentanyl trafficking in their communities.
- To help communities deal with the damage of the epidemic, we should build on the \$5 billion provided in the American Rescue Plan for treatment services by making telehealth treatment more available to reach rural areas and taking steps to ensure that litigation settlements against prescription drug companies are used to directly benefit communities fighting overdoses and addiction.

## **REPUBLICANS TRY TO SCORE POLITICAL POINTS TO DEFLECT FROM THEIR OWN FAILURES**

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- Republicans try to claim that the influx of fentanyl is part of a "Biden border crisis," but the fact is that the influx of these deadly, illegal drugs began [under President Trump](#). From January 2020 to January 2021, under President Trump, America suffered 95,000 opioid deaths, and border officials were on pace to seize record levels of fentanyl in 2021 prior to the Biden administration.
- This epidemic escalated under Republican rule and they would rather make political attacks that solve the problem.

- [The plan Republicans are running on](#) would eliminate federal programs to fight substance abuse in five years – taking the legs out from under local efforts to stem the tide of addiction when they need it most.

## FAST FACTS

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- [Over 108,000 Americans](#) died of drug overdoses in 2021, translating to roughly one fatal overdose every five minutes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Of the more than 108,000 overdose deaths last year, [more than two thirds](#) were linked with fentanyl.
- [Fentanyl is typically produced in Mexico](#) with precursors made in China and trafficked via the southern border. Fentanyl seizures at the southern border jumped a concerning 200% this July.
- According to the CDC, the effects of the opioid epidemic are [more intense in rural communities](#), with the drug overdose death rate in rural towns now higher than that of both suburban and urban areas. The [American Farm Bureau Federation and National Farmers Union](#) conducted a survey of rural America and found that seventy-four percent of farmers have been directly impacted by opioid abuse. Not only is the opioid crisis hurting families, limiting individuals' lifespans and potential, but also rural economies.

## CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

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Our police officers are dedicated professionals who put their lives on the line to keep us safe, and they have been asked to do too much with too little support for too long. That's particularly true for rural departments who often have more ground to cover with fewer resources. Democrats have the backs of our local law enforcement and are fighting for the resources they need to do their jobs.

- Democrats have already delivered critical resources to local law enforcement with \$10 billion in ARP funds going to support policing efforts. As a result, 2021 was one of the biggest years on record for federal financial support of law enforcement and public safety.
- Democrats need to take the next steps with a tough, targeted, and effective approach that:
  - Provides federal funds to increase officer pay allows departments to hire more officers.
  - Supports efforts by local police departments to reach out and recruit new talent to law enforcement.
  - Make sure to specifically steer federal resources to small, rural police departments

that need extra help with training, purchasing equipment like body cameras, and providing retention bonuses and pay increases to narrow the gap with urban police forces.

## **REPUBLICANS ATTACKS TRY TO HIDE THEIR FAILURES**

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Republicans are attacking Democrats for being soft on crime and running lawless communities. But the record shows Republicans have failed to fight crime. Their campaign plan would slash funding for small police departments.

- Per capita murder rates in 2020 were [40% higher in states won by Donald Trump](#) than those won by Joe Biden, and Bakersfield, CA (represented by Minority Leader McCarthy) has a murder rate two times San Francisco's. The Republican run city of Jacksonville, FL has a murder rate three times greater than New York City.
- Under the Republican campaign plan to cut [federal jobs by 25%](#), nearly [50,000 federal law enforcement personnel would lose their jobs](#).
- The 25 largest Democrat-run cities employ [75% more police officers per capita](#) than the 25 largest Republican-run cities, and the 25 largest Democrat-run cities spend 38% more on policing per capita than the 25 largest Republican-run cities.

## **FAST FACTS**

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- According to the *Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)*, about half of law enforcement departments have fewer than 10 officers, and about [70% serve communities of fewer than 10,000](#).
- While small and rural departments face the same law enforcement challenges as in larger metro areas, they do so with fewer resources.
- [Challenges identified by rural police departments](#) include:
  - Recruiting problems and competing with urban department salaries
  - Lack of staffing for joint efforts
  - Expense of body cameras and mobile equipment
  - Lack of resources for dealing with mental health issues

# ENERGY, CLIMATE, AND NATURE

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Energy is inextricably tied to the rural way of life. Energy production creates rural jobs and stable, affordable energy is vital to farms and rural businesses. We need an energy policy that protects the rural economy today, unlocks the next wave of rural prosperity, and conserves clean air and water for sport and recreation.

- Rural communities are on the frontline of climate change. We need to focus our efforts on combating climate change in a way that protects and creates jobs and preserves the rural way of life. We can do that with a practical approach that doesn't require an "all-out mobilization" or Green New Deal.
- There are steps we can take now to benefit the rural bottom line and make the transition to a clean economy:
  - The Growing Climate Solutions Act would create new opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and landowners to generate revenue and be a key part of the climate change solution by making it profitable for farmers to capture carbon in their soil and adopting climate-smart practices. Producers across the country already utilize [climate-smart practices](#) to grow healthier crops, reduce carbon emissions, and mitigate the impact of global warming events such as drought, flooding, and tornadoes. They should be paid for it.
  - We also need to make sure that rural communities get their share of the clean energy economy and create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the process. By installing renewable energy systems and producing biofuels rural America can feed the world AND power it.
  - Significant investments in the new climate economy can create [hundreds of thousands](#) of new rural jobs, [provide new opportunities](#) for fossil energy workers facing job loss, [reduce rural energy bills](#) by 25%, and stem [crop losses](#) caused by increasing extreme weather.

## REPUBLICANS BLAME REGULATION, IGNORE THE MARKET

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Republicans try to blame regulations and drilling bans for energy problems, but the market has spoken.

- When Republicans had the chance, they [failed to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline](#).
- Domestic oil production is [up under President Biden](#).
- There are 3 [Liquid Natural Gas \(LNG\) import terminals](#) approved but not built and

there are 16 LNG export [terminals approved but not built](#).

- Oil companies have [millions of available acres](#) for exploration that they are not using.
- The fact of is that the energy economy is moving forward, and Republicans have no plan to make sure rural America doesn't get left behind.

## FAST FACTS

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- The *BIL* [will help to restore and improve waterways](#) and the investments made will help to ensure communities, including Tribal communities, have clean drinking water and the improved fish habitats that rural areas rely on for subsistence and strong recreation economies.
- The Administration also invested [a record \\$1.5 billion](#) in annual funding through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program to support state and local outdoor recreational opportunities, and wildlife and habitat conservation efforts. These efforts will help to continue America's hunting and fishing traditions and help power the continued growth of the nation's outdoor economy.
- The [nearly \\$40 billion](#) investment the Inflation Reduction Act makes in agriculture, forestry, and energy provisions will help rural communities tackle the climate crisis, lower energy costs, and create clean energy jobs across rural America.
  - The law invests in rural communities to expand access to affordable clean energy and energy efficiency upgrades, create good-paying jobs through climate-smart agriculture and conservation, and protect communities from intensifying climate risks like wildfires and extreme heat.
- The *IRA* boosts the long-term resiliency, reliability, and affordability of rural electric systems, helps families save money on utility bills, and expands rural opportunities in the clean energy economy.
- The *IRA* protects communities from the risks of wildfires and makes public and private lands more resilient in the face of climate change.
- The *IRA* includes significant investments in Indian Country to help Tribal Nations respond to the challenges of extreme drought and build up the resilience of communities and the ecosystems they depend on, as well as investments in Tribal communities for energy efficient housing, new energy projects, and connecting homes that have never been connected to the grid to clean energy. It also provides incentives for clean energy deployment and manufacturing in economically disadvantaged, tribal, and former energy producing and mining communities.

# WOMEN

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Women across the country are reeling in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that reversed the *Roe v. Wade* decision and stripped women of a right they had known for nearly 50 years—the right to choose.

- Democrats are committed to restoring the protections of *Roe v. Wade* and want to move women's rights forward by supporting and elevating policies that address equal pay and paid family leave.
- Whereas, Republicans in Congress have recently introduced a call for a nationwide abortion ban. This ban would bar women from making their own health care choices in every state in the nation and is just another example of Republican's extremist social agenda and constant undermining of women's rights, opportunities, and health.

## DOBBS V. JACKSON IMPACTS

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The Supreme Court ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* has left many women, including those in rural areas, at risk, scared for their health, livelihoods, and safety.

- This ruling has put in place scenarios where a woman that has a miscarriage could not only have to deal with the incredible physical and emotional toll of losing a potential child, but the reality of being put behind bars because her body and nature took its course.
- Women living in rural counties will be disproportionately impacted by the overturning of the *Roe v. Wade*, as they already have limited access to healthcare.
- This is especially concerning for 18 million women of reproductive age living in rural areas, where maternity care is disappearing, and pregnancy and childbirth are becoming more complicated — and more dangerous.
- Women across the U.S. are strong and important leaders of our families, communities, and economy, and they should be empowered to make their own decisions, regardless of where they live or how much money they have.

## A SCARY TIME TO BE A WOMAN IN AMERICA

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- Republicans' extreme social agenda includes banning abortion nationwide, with little concern for exceptions for rape and incest, which should dispel any notion of care Republicans claim to have for women and families.
- The COVID-19 pandemic shined a spotlight on the challenges our society and

women, particularly those in the workforce, face when it comes to raising children.

- In order to help women and families, the *ARP* included provisions that expanded access to and affordability of childcare to ensure women can be better equipped to achieve their potential in and outside of the home.
- Every Republican in Congress voted against the *ARP*—further illustrating Republican’s lack of support for women and modern-day families, even during a pandemic.

## **REPUBLICANS UNDERMINING WOMEN’S POTENTIAL**

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Republicans’ efforts to undermine women’s potential have not gone unnoticed by voters. Since the reversal of *Roe* voters have mobilized to protect women’s rights at the ballot box.

- In Kansas, voters turned out in stunning numbers for a primary – [around 910,000 voters voted in the primary](#) compared with [473,438 in 2018](#) – to vote down a referendum to allow the legislature to restrict or ban access to abortion. Even the reddest counties, which Trump dominated in 2020, saw a surge of voters coming out to support women’s reproductive rights.
- Women and those that love and appreciate them need to show up in November to vote for leaders that will fight for policies and vote for laws that protect women’s health, value, and rights.