

To: Fight Corporate Monopolies
 From: GBAO
 Re: Recent Polling
 Date: June 7, 2022

Widespread Concern About Corporate Influence & Support For Its Remedies

Our recent national polling and focus groups show economic issues like inflation are top of mind, with reigning in corporate malfeasance seen as a top-tier remedy. Not only do voters want elected officials to take on bad corporate actors, corporate accountability is a higher priority than culture-war topics. Further, a variety of specific punitive policies receive strong majority support. This issue set is an opportunity for Democrats already fighting for the middle class.

This memo reflects the findings of four focus groups conducted online and in-person April 7 (Wisconsin) and April 21 (Phoenix) with Black voters, white non-college women, white non-college men, and Latino voters. Focus groups are directional and not statistically projectable. The survey was conducted online with 1,000 likely 2022 voters using a panel, May 4-9, 2022.

Key Findings

- Rising Costs and Corporate Influence Are Voters' Top-Tier Concerns.** Inflation, of course, is voters' top priority in our survey (as in most other public surveys), with 73% naming it a "very serious problem." However just below inflation is "a political system corrupted by corporate influence" (60% very serious). Just behind health care (52% very serious) is "the ability for large corporations to avoid accountability" (49% very serious).
- Voters Across Party Lines Say Strong Policies Would Persuade.** Voters find a long list of over a dozen strong corporate accountability policies persuasive. In particular, cracking down on price gouging, increasing prosecution and penalties, banning secret deals, and closing loopholes are all top-tier. It's worth noting, of course, this list was designed to

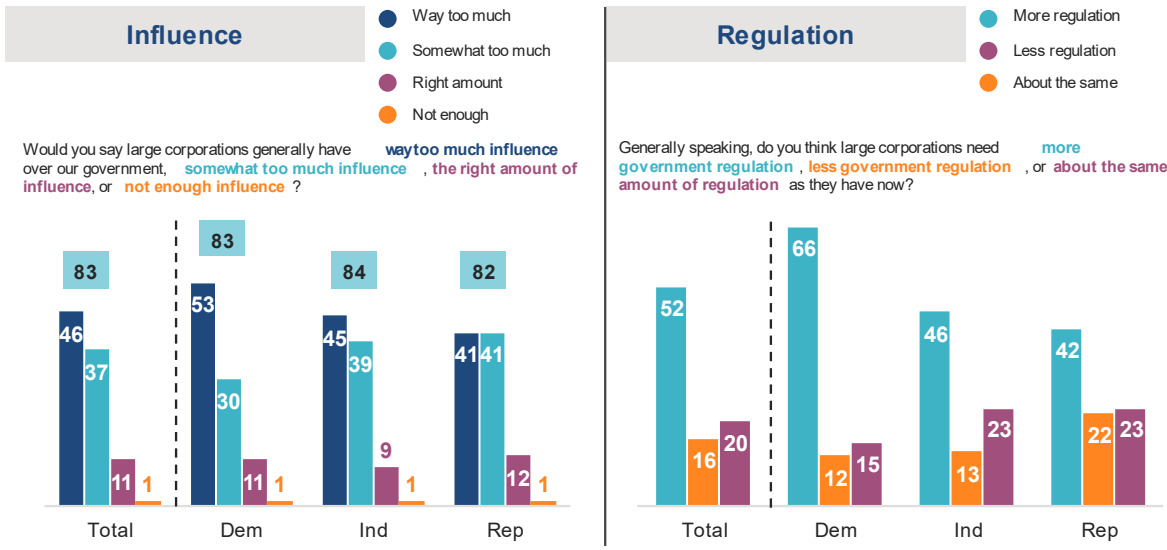
Strong Policies Can Persuade



compare policies to each other, rather than simulate a campaign back-and-forth environment. That said, there is hardly any difference across party lines in engagement on these policies, suggesting an opportunity for either party to define itself as a champion on corporate accountability.

- Broad Spectrum of Public Wants Politicians to Better Regulate Large Corporations.** Not only is concern about corporate accountability top-tier, voters across key demographic groups support stronger regulations on large corporations. Nearly all (83%) say corporations have too much influence over our government, with only modest differences in intensity between Democrats and Republicans (53% Democrats and 41% Republicans say “way too much” influence). And half—including a plurality of Republicans—think corporations need more regulation.

Concern About Corporate Influence And Support For More Regulation Transcend Partisan Lines



- Inflation Is A Top Frame For Discussing Corporate Greed.** Given the salience of inflation, it’s no surprise it is a top way to discuss corporate greed and accountability. In a MaxDiff exercise—a series of forced-choice questions yielding a clear ranking—a message centered on inflation (“Large corporations are raising prices and making record profits while many Americans struggle to afford bills and daily costs.”) is the most compelling. Similarly, from our list of policies, cracking down on price gouging is the most popular, particularly when it includes an example of oil and gas company profits.

Voters See Linkages Between Corporate Greed, Higher Prices

Corporate Greed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporations were generally seen as greedy, especially with price hikes during and since COVID. Other areas that were cited as examples of corporate greed were resistance to raising the minimum wage, tax evasion, and how corporations used profits.
Wisconsin Black woman	"I think there was an initial price hike when companies, rightfully so, wanted to recoup some of the gains they lost because of COVID, but the prices people were paying skyrocketed. Convenient excuse to line pockets."
Phoenix Latina	"There is a greed factor in the raising of prices. I think they go up whether there's a pandemic or not, but companies are covering their losses from the last couple of years."
Phoenix Latino	"Profitability is not reinvested to their employees, the environment, or into the country, or to educate; it is built into share price. They want to increase that to the point that it's greedy. It has a very real impact on how and what we pay for."
Wisconsin white non-college woman	"If these multibillion-dollar corporations were paying their fair share in taxes, maybe our taxes wouldn't be as high. Maybe it would even be the playing field just a little bit and make things a little easier for those of us who aren't billionaires."
Wisconsin Black woman	"They could stop fighting against raising the minimum wage. If they want to help the common people. Corporations are making record profits, but nobody is reflecting that, except the executives."

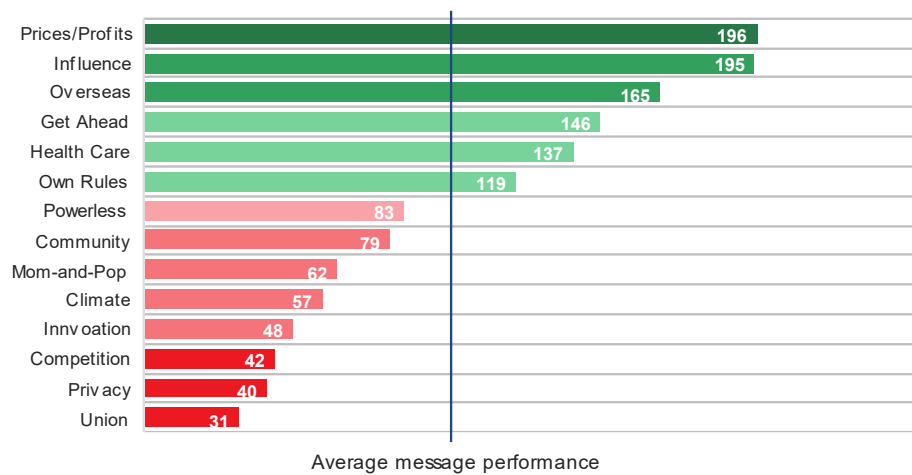
Focus groups participants further explain how they connect corporations to increased prices, using the words "greed" and not "paying their fair share."

- Voters Rate Several Frames on Corporate Accountability Highly.** Inflation is not the only way voters connect to the issue of corporate accountability. As noted above, many worry about the influence corporations have in politics today. Our MaxDiff exercise shows this message ("Large corporations are influencing our government by paying for lobbyists and electing candidates who will protect their own corporate profits.") to resonate as strongly as inflation. Other strong messages focus on fairness for the middle class—jobs being shipped overseas, and CEOs making billions while others "struggle to afford the basics."

Most Effective Messages Focus on Corporate Greed and Influence

MaxDiff Statements

Mean Score = Average MaxDiff score indexed to 100. Scores above 100 perform better than average, below 100 are less than average.



- **“Culture War” Is Bottom-Tier.** Arguably, there is more public debate about the importance of “cancel culture” to the campaign climate than about corporate accountability. Yet our poll shows “woke politics and cancel culture” to be a bottom-tier concern (37% very serious). Even Republicans are more concerned about corporate corruption of our politics than about cancel culture (60% and 54% “very serious” concern, respectively).

Conclusions

- Inflation is top of mind, and voters are already connecting it to corporate accountability and consolidation.
- Many also lament corporate influence on our politics and are open to increased regulation.
- Voters across party lines want politicians to support stronger corporate accountability.