



## **Economic Narrative for 2022**

*What this is:* An economic narrative for 2022, considering where we are in April. The narrative draws includes main topic paragraphs and a number of bullets, which allow communicators to choose from a variety of way of effectively telling our story. It is informed by opinion research.

### *Where we start:*

After two years of personal and national stress from the pandemic Americans remain on edge, even as they hope to move forward. The pandemic's heightening of stress and insecurity results in making even more acute the natural tendency for people, even in normal times, to overreact to bad news and downplay good news. That applies to the economy too; an effective economic narrative for 2022 must start with that understanding.

The good news is that most Americans are working again, often at higher wages and with more flexibility than before the pandemic. The bad news is that soaring prices, particularly on basics like food, gas, utilities, and rent, are overpowering the benefits of higher wages and keeping it hard to get from paycheck to paycheck. When you don't know how much more you'll pay for gas or how much bigger your grocery bill will be, that's more uncertainty. And the war in Ukraine is fueling not just higher prices but feelings of worry and stress.

### *In this context we need to communicate three things:*

- We understand the continued stress and insecurity and in particular the toll that high prices are taking on pocketbooks and psyches.
- Make it clear that we are doing and will continue to do, everything we can to improve people's ability to care and support their families, that we are on the side of everyday Americans. In doing that, tell a positive story about how when everyday Americans and small businesses do well, our communities and country do well.
- Prove that our opponents are not on the side of working and middle-class Americans. They are on the side of price-gouging corporations and the super-rich and oppose the policies that will make people's lives better for narrow political gains.

## **NARRATIVE:**

Quest: We can create an America that works for all of us, where we can care for and support our families, where the everyday Americans and small businesses that power our economy thrive

- As we move forward from the pandemic, we want more stability, with the security that from now on, we can care for and support our families.

Problem: Just as we are moving forward from the pandemic –small businesses open, people back at work, our kids back in school – we started seeing prices go through the roof on basics like gas and groceries. Why? Because too many wealthy corporations are using the pandemic as cover to pad their profits by forcing us to pay more for the basics. And now Putin's war is giving them another excuse to make more money.

- The supply-side problems showed us what happens when big corporations put profits ahead of American workers and communities. For years, wealthy corporations shipped our jobs overseas and stomped out competition from American small businesses, leaving us vulnerable to the supply problems that they are now using to price gouge and jack-up their profits even higher. It's time we brought jobs home and gave our small businesses a chance to compete.
  - Too many CEOs are using supply-side problems to jack up their prices and profits. Everyday Americans are paying more for gas, groceries and rent while CEOs brag to Wall Street about their record profits. We must put a stop to that.
  - The wealthy corporations that are price-gouging refuse to pay our country what they owe in taxes. They make themselves even richer instead of rewarding working people for the true value of our work.
- A key to getting us through the pandemic was action by our government – at first with bipartisan support – to stimulate the economy by putting money in our pockets. But after President Biden's election, most Republicans abandoned the policies that were helping people and small businesses get through financially, even ones like stimulus checks they supported before.
  - And today every Republican in Congress opposes plans to lower prescription drug costs, cap the cost of insulin, continue tax credits for families with kids, keep down health insurance premiums and take the steps we need today to save us from more climate disasters.
- We need all our elected officials to put our families and small businesses ahead of politics. But too many Republicans, beholden to price-gouging corporations and the super-rich, try to distract and divide us by fueling fears based on our skin color, accent, or faith. It's time to reject these divisions and demand that all our elected leaders put supporting our families first.

Solution: Our first priority is being able to care for and support our families, starting with good, quality jobs in our communities that pay wages that keep up with the cost of living. With affordable health care, quality education for our children and a secure retirement. When everyday Americans and small businesses do well, our communities and our country do well.

- A key to getting us through the pandemic was action by our government – at first with bipartisan support – to stimulate the economy by putting money in our pockets. Stimulus checks meant we could pay the rent or mortgage or car payment or had the security of a rainy-day fund. Payroll protection money kept people working and small businesses open. Our government deferred student loans and got banks and landlords to put off mortgage and rent payments. Tax credits to families with children and lower health premiums made life more affordable for millions of us.
  - Today, 97% of Americans in the workforce have a job; 6.6 million jobs were created last year alone. 219 million of us are fully vaccinated. We saw our economy grow at the fastest rate in 40 years.
  - The infrastructure bill is putting millions of Americans to work providing roads, bridges, clean water, high-speed internet, and more affordable, clean energy.
  - The huge government investment in rapid development of vaccines meant that they were delivered in record time.
- We need to “make it in America,” “build it in America” and “buy American.” We can create more good-paying jobs by bringing jobs back to America, including jobs that pay enough to raise a family without having to get a college degree.
  - The more we create affordable clean energy at home, the more we will reduce our dependence on foreign oil.
- We need our government to keep its focus on raising wages and lowering costs, because when our families and small businesses thrive, that delivers economic growth and prosperity.

How to Get There: The good news is that unemployment is down and wages for many people are up. But wages still aren’t keeping up with costs and there’s a lot more that our government is doing and can do to help change that.

- To lower prices and make our lives more affordable, (President Biden/our government) cleaned up bottlenecks at the nation’s ports so we got our holiday presents on time. (He/we) drew from the strategic petroleum reserve to keep gas prices from going even higher before Putin’s price hike. (He/our government) is fighting price gouging by wealthy corporations by helping small ranchers join together against the huge meat monopolies and investigating price gouging in groceries and gas prices.
- (We need to/President Biden/Democrats in Congress) is/are taking on the big drug companies to lower prescription drug prices and cap how much people pay for insulin. (He’s pushing/we need) to lower the cost of childcare, health care and caring for an elderly or disabled family member and to continue tax credits for families who are raising children. (His plan/we need) to fight climate change will create more jobs in America and lower the cost of heating and cooling homes and businesses with clean, renewable energy.

- (President Biden/we need to) is focused on “make it in America,” “build it in America” and “buy American.” We do that by ending tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas, supporting more manufacturing at home, building new roads, bridges, public transit, and high-speed Internet and by making sure every American has clean water. We do that by creating jobs providing clean, renewable, affordable energy in the U.S. And by guaranteeing that whenever our government spends money directly or through businesses that are buying American.
- It’s well past time that we raised taxes on the ultra-rich and closed the loopholes on wealthy corporations, so that they start paying what they owe to our country. Billionaires must no longer be allowed to pay lower taxes than their secretaries and wealthy corporations can’t be allowed to get away paying little or no taxes at all.
  - We need to make wealthy corporations pay what they owe, starting with a price-gouging penalty on Big Oil to pay for more stimulus checks to our families to help make up for what we are paying at the pump.

Call to Action: We can create an America that works for all of us, where we can care for and support our families, where the everyday Americans and small businesses that power our economy thrive.

- We demand that our elected officials stand up to price-gouging corporations and bring down prices for groceries, gas and energy, prescription drugs. We demand that elected officials put aside partisan politics and vote together to make health care, child and elder care more affordable so we can care for and support our families.
- When it comes to politics, it comes down to knowing which politicians are on the side of everyday Americans and who sides with the very wealthy and CEOs? Who in politics will put our families ahead of partisanship? It’s up to you, to all of us, to decide.
- We can create an America that works for all of us, where we can care for and support our families, where the everyday Americans and small businesses that power our economy thrive