



PROGRESSIVE PLAYBOOK 2022

MESSAGES TO BUILD POWER



A PROJECT OF THE PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS ACTION FUND

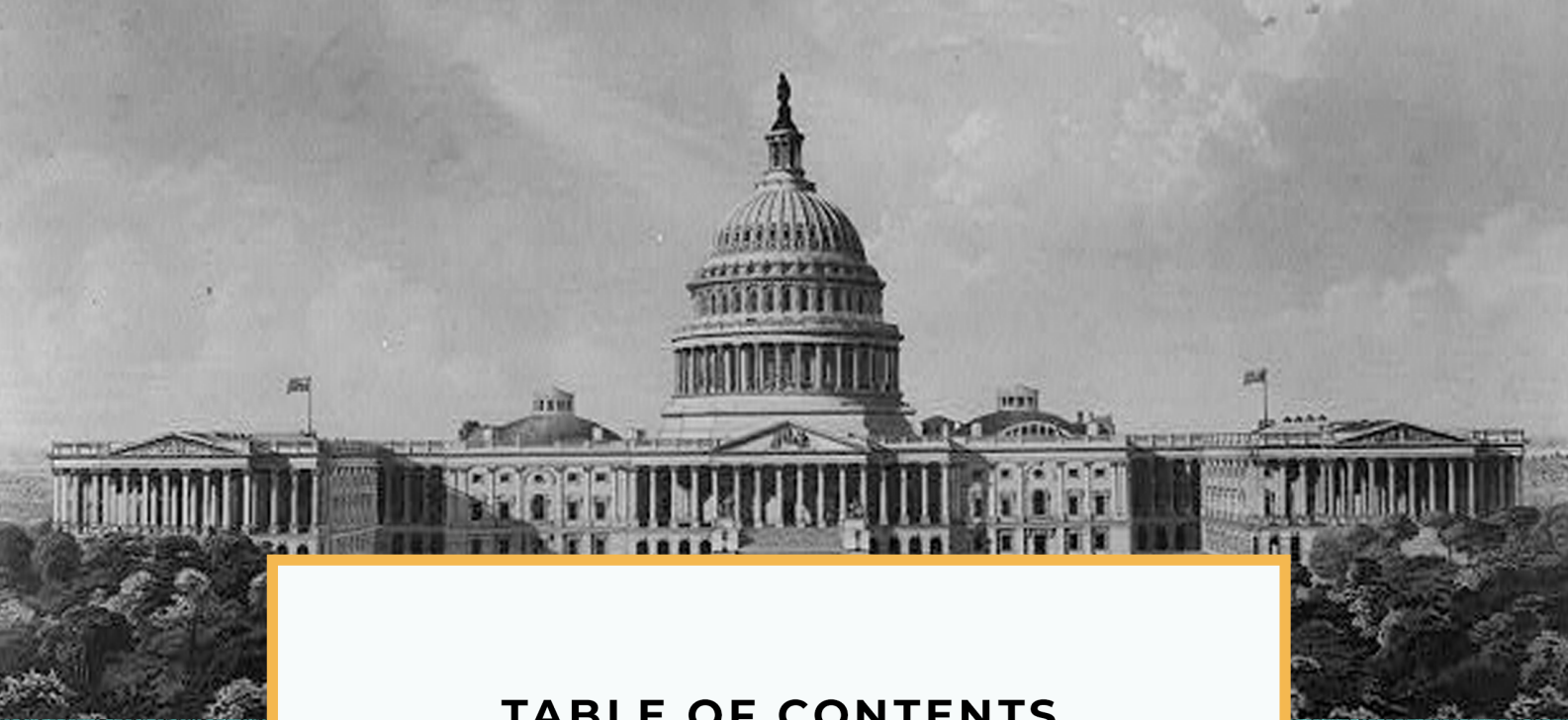


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The strategic messaging approach outlined in the updated Progressive Playbook reflects a commitment to the fight for the progressive policy changes that protect our communities, strengthen our democracy and make sure every person can live a safe, healthy, dignified and full life.

The Progressive Playbook is designed to be your go-to messaging resource as you fight for progressive policy change.

Inside this guide - and available 24/7 on our website - you'll find research and battle-tested message guidance, including a core progressive narrative framework that resonates across our movement.

The Playbook also includes a thorough catalog of issue-focused resources including messaging guidance, new data and polling, and words that work. Our growing list of pages include reproductive freedom and justice, gun violence prevention, climate, the care economy, the freedom to vote, and many more.

The Playbook can live on your desk or homepage, and includes links to communications tools, policy explainers, and educational resources that meet the moment and help to move hearts and minds.

Whether you're an advocate, organizer, public official, or volunteer, the Playbook is your one-stop shop for the tools you need.

We hope it aids you in this fight.

- Progressive Caucus Action Fund

PART I

BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH

The following core progressive framework is shaped by the insights of the Race Class Narrative, and indebted to the research and battle-tested messaging strategies developed by ASO Communications, Race Class Narrative Action and We Make The Future.

This tool is also shaped by the voices and brilliant resources created by the more than fifty progressive organizations who shared stories, messaging, data, and insights with us to create the Progressive Playbook.

In June 2022, a series of focus groups and national poll were conducted in consultation with HIT Strategies to test major portions of this framework.

Both the focus groups and poll found that while people feel angry and frustrated at our country's current state, particularly the issue of rising prices, they are drawn to progressive goals, ideas, and policy solutions to make our way forward. Many expressed anxiety about the future and disappointment that our government hasn't done more to help their families, but they also shared a common belief in the possibility for change when everyday people come together and fight for change

Overwhelmingly, these respondents want bolder action, less corporate influence, and leaders who will bring people together to get the job done.

For a more in-depth guide on the research behind this core framework, visit the "Why Progressive Messages" page at progressiveplaybook.org

THE CORE NARRATIVE

Our Challenge

Whether you're Black or white, young or old, in big cities or small towns, **many of us have endured crisis after crisis by relying on each other over the last few years.**

In the face of adversity, we found new ways to care for one another. **We checked in on our neighbors, marched and protested for justice, donated food to food banks, fought alongside and for essential workers** and came together at the polls to elect leaders that care for all of us.

Together we won survival checks that kept millions of us afloat, a tax credit that brought child poverty to a record low and expanded health care for millions of Americans. More jobs were created than in any other year in U.S. history, and people's paychecks grew at the fastest pace we've seen in decades.

Begin by specifically acknowledging the real pain many are going through. Following trauma from the pandemic and the loss of loved ones, many families continue to struggle with their cost of living as prices for gas and groceries have climbed.

Our research shows people are looking for hope, and they find it in everyday heroes. Remind them of the power of people working together — to get through the pandemic, other compounding crises, persevere and pull together to create a society that works for us all.

THE CORE NARRATIVE

We won clean drinking water, internet access for kids in rural communities, and funding to restore our crumbling roads and bridges nationwide — while creating millions of good union jobs in the process. We've made progress but there is still so much we need to do with and for each other.

But at every turn, corporate special interests and the politicians who serve them have obstructed and delayed policies that would uplift millions more families. At the same time, a handful of extremists are attacking our basic freedoms, like our freedom to decide if and when we grow our families and our freedom to vote in fair elections.

We can't stop here. We've got more work to do.

Connect policy to tangible changes people can see and experience in their own families, neighborhoods, and communities. Bills passed in the last Congress kept small businesses afloat at the height of the pandemic, provided support to hospitals, and upgraded our drinking water systems.

By a significant margin, respondents to our poll believe politicians have failed to fully deliver on their promises or been too moderate. They want leaders to bring the country together to pass policies that serve the people.

"A full economic recovery will require politicians to put the American people first – not corporate donors and special interests – by fighting back against greedy corporations that gouge prices and rake in the profits, while regular people can't afford gas, groceries, or rent."

A message focused on corporate greed was among the highest performing messages in our poll.



THE CORE NARRATIVE

Our Choice

While too many of us struggled to make ends meet, **the ultra-wealthy and greedy corporations raised prices while they pocketed record profits, ripping us off and profiting from our pain.** And a handful of corporate-funded politicians kept putting tax giveaways for the wealthy few ahead of providing paid leave, affordable child care and acting on climate. **the rest of us.**

Then they tell us there simply isn't enough money to bring down the cost of health care and child care. That Americans can't escape a mountain of student debt, and that we can't afford to close the racial wealth gap or pass on a livable planet to our children.

People understand that corporate, special interests have rigged the economy to their benefit. In fact, a plurality (41%) of respondents in our poll blame greedy corporations for inflation.

A top-performing message tested in our research centers the role of politicians who will "fight back" against greedy corporations and CEOs on behalf of those who can't make ends meet and are stuck with higher prices for the things our families need.

Inflation Spotlight – Who Is To Blame?

Greedy corporations are to blame for rampant inflation because they are price gouging and raking in record profits, even as many Americans struggle to afford gas and basic necessities.

41%

Factors out of our control, like the global pandemic and the war in Ukraine, are to blame for rampant inflation, and swings like this are just how the markets function.

38%

The Biden Administration and Democrats in Congress are to blame for rampant inflation because of wasteful spending and inaction on our economic problems.

22%

THE CORE NARRATIVE

Our Choice

And as big corporations use the pandemic to put holes in our pockets, **corporate-backed politicians and the ultra-wealthy try to distract us** by pointing fingers at immigrants, Black people and people struggling to make ends meet.

Even self-identified “moderates” and “conservatives” overwhelmingly agreed in our poll that we need politicians who focus on urgent crises, not those who divide and distract.

The old racist strategy is clear: pit white people against Black people, straight people against gay people, people born here against people who came here as immigrants. **They use hate to distract and divide us because they don't want us to notice that they have no plan to bring down costs, keep our families healthy, and give our kids a better future.**

We see through their worn out attempts to get us to turn on each other — instead of coming together to fight for the things we need. And we won't let them win.

“We are facing several urgent crises, from inflation to climate change to gun violence. We need leaders who will stand up, fight hard, and deliver for the American people on real issues, not bend to political pressure, make excuses for not delivering, or make our children and families pawns in their extremist worldview.”



THE CORE NARRATIVE

Our Vision

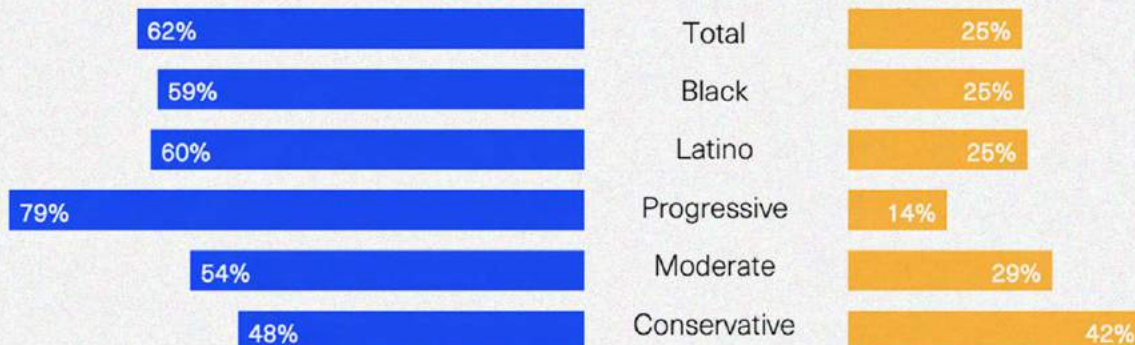
Whether we're Black or white, young or old, in big cities or small towns, most of us want the same things. We all want to be safe, to pursue our dreams and for our friends and family to thrive. Today, only a tiny slice at the top get to live their best lives. But, there are a lot more of us than there are of them.

A message about forward progress, recalling a larger shared struggle, resonates, especially with self-identified progressives. People feel hope in the story of everyday heroes – people who step up for their communities for real change.

From the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement, this country has only ever made progress towards upholding our highest ideals when working people have come together to fight for what's right.

As a nation, we've fought hard for the progress we've made and we won't go back.

"As Americans, we have joined together to win some hard-fought freedoms: to love who we love, to have all of our votes be counted, and to make our own healthcare decisions. The fact is, we have further to go to ensure everyone can keep food on the table, roofs over their families, live life with dignity, and be treated equally under the law. We will make progress the same way we always have: by coming together across our differences to fight for the things we all need to thrive."



THE CORE NARRATIVE

Our Vision

We won't settle for a rigged economy that only benefits the wealthy. We won't settle for mob violence instead of free and fair elections. We won't settle for anyone taking away our freedom to decide if and when to grow our families. We won't settle for school-yard bullies calling the shots about which books our kids read or who they take to the school dance.

Instead, we will move forward together.

When we join together — Black, white, brown, Indigenous, and Asian — we can build a country where everyone's basic needs are met, every family belongs, everyone's basic rights are protected and our kids can inherit healthy, safe and thriving communities.

In focus groups, participants regularly expressed hopelessness, anxiety, and loneliness. The past two years have been traumatic, but what gives people hope is the sense that they are in this together with other people like them. Along with a rigged economy, our top-performing tested message centered this theme of coming together.

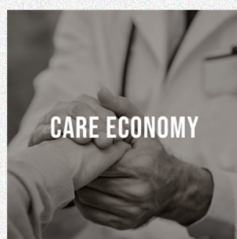
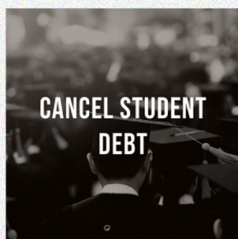
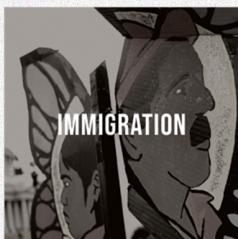
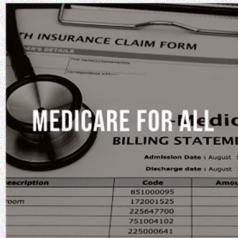
Along with a message focused on corporate greed, our message on the power of people working together was the highest performing message in our poll.

[TOGETHER]

Rich or poor, young and old, most Americans agree that we have to focus on our common ground in order to solve our biggest problems. But today, too many of our leaders refuse to work together to get things done. We must raise our voices to demand leaders who will focus on solving the kitchen table issues that really matter, like lowering prescription drug costs, and making sure families can feed their babies and fill their gas tanks. By coming together across our differences, we can demand leaders who will stand up, fight hard, and deliver what they promise, not bend to political pressure, make excuses, or cater to special interests.

THE CORE NARRATIVE

Issue by Issue



Scan the QR code to visit our issues list on the Playbook website.



PART II

ADVOCATE RESOURCES

The explainers included in this section were written by the staff of the Progressive Caucus Action Fund to assist the public, policymakers and stakeholders.

They provide critical information on select legislative and policy battles of the moment, from Supreme Court reform to repealing Title 42, as well as educational resources to assist in navigating the legislative process.

You can find more resources like these at progressivecaucusactionfund.org/our-work.



USING MUST-PASS BILLS AS A VEHICLE FOR PROGRESSIVE CHANGE

It is common to hear members of Congress, their staff, and other stakeholders refer to certain bills as “must-pass” — e.g., “Congress will definitely act on that bill before it recesses for the year, because that’s a ‘must-pass’ bill.”

But what is a must-pass bill, and why is it so important that it passes?

Scan the QR code to read our explainer, *Understanding Must-Pass Bills*.



SUPREME COURT REFORM: EXAMINING KEY ISSUES AND PROPOSALS

As lawmakers, scholars, and advocates have grappled with the question of how to restore the Supreme Court's legitimacy, myriad recommendations have emerged.

Among the most discussed are proposed reforms concerning the Court's size and justices' ethical conduct.

Scan the QR code to read our explainer, *Supreme Court Reform: Examining Key Issues and Proposals*

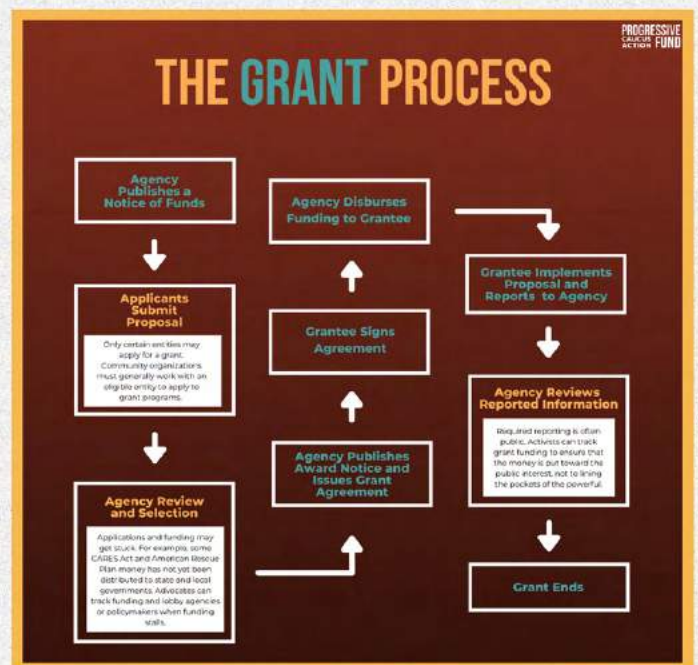
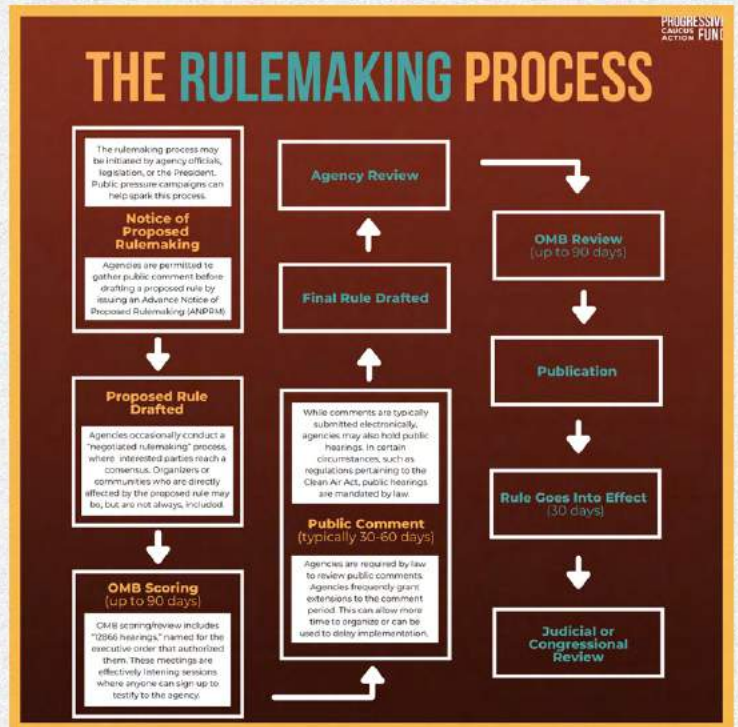


OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES

Activists, organizers, and everyday people fight hard for policies that ensure every family has the chance to thrive.

However, our communities will only experience the full benefits of a law if it is implemented in a way that puts equity first.

Scan the QR code to read our explainer, *Delivering Results: An Overview of Federal Implementation Processes*.



THE HISTORY OF XENOPHOBIA BEHIND TITLE 42

In 2020, Donald Trump and Stephen Miller achieved their long-standing goal of closing our border to people seeking safety, using public health to disguise a xenophobic policy which subverts U.S. code and international treaties.

In May 2022, a Trump-appointed federal judge enforced the law's stay against President Biden's executive action to end the policy.

Scan the QR code to read our explainer, *Restoring the Legal Right to Seek Asylum: The Case for Ending Title 42*.



Photo: Chinese immigrant workers building the Transcontinental Railroad, between circa 1863 and 1869

THE JUSTICE IS IN THE DETAILS: MAXIMIZING EQUITY AND JUSTICE IN PUBLIC POLICY

Both intentionally and unintentionally, public policy can reinforce and compound social and economic inequities, including systemic oppression, such as racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, and ableism.

The Justice Is In The Details is intended to support organizers, advocates, and policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels as they weigh the impacts of policy.



How Well Do You Know Congress?

Match each Congressional term to its definition.

Parliamentarian

Whip

Ranking Member

Dais

Congressional Research Service

Dear Colleague

Congressional Budget Office

Cloakroom

Chair

A nonpartisan entity that provides Congress with information about the effects legislation will have. That information is sometimes called a ___ "score."

The member of the majority party that presides over that committee's proceedings and sets its agenda. They are often the majority member with the most seniority, but not necessarily.

Rooms members use to await votes, grab a snack, talk on the phone, and, yes, leave their coats and belongings while voting.

Employs experts that members and staff can call as they draft and consider legislation for nonpartisan analysis regarding virtually any issue.

In committee rooms, members are seated on these in order of seniority, with the most senior members seated at the top.

This is a letter that a member sends to other members, typically to ask their colleagues to do something like cosponsor a bill.

The House and Senate each have one of these; they advise the chamber on its rules, procedures, and precedents.

The minority party member that leads their fellow minority members on a committee. They often organizes the minority members around a message, amendment strategy, and vote recommendations.

The member of a party's leadership responsible for counting votes on a measure that will be put before the body and ensuring, to the extent possible, that the party is united