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The Impact of Conflicting Ideological Opinions on Policy Making

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the inner conflict within the Democratic Party, as well as develop a solution to that problem so that Democrats can make progress towards enacting the Build Back Better Act. Throughout the essay, I will be discussing the issues that are most important to Moderate Democrats, and which issues are most important to Progressive Democrats. The issues that I found to be most important to Moderates are national debt, the pandemic, and big business. The issues that I found to be most important to Progressives are matters of human infrastructure, which includes climate change, education, and research and development. Since Moderates and Progressives are prioritizing opposing issues, this proved to me to be the main problem dividing the Democratic Party. The solution that I will suggest in my conclusion is to appease Moderate Democrats by promoting a more budget-friendly version of BBB. This solution would not only help the Democratic Party avoid realignment, but it would prevent the party from imploding.

1. Introduction

According to the climate clock in New York City, there is a little over seven years until the effects of climate change are irreversible. Within a decade, the world could be facing harsh natural disasters such as famine, and displacement if citizens do not work to alleviate climate change.

Amanda came across this climate clock in New York during a trip to the city. Noticing how close the world is to irreversible climate change, Amanda panicked. Amanda, who is a Progressive Democrat, has been married to her husband for five years now and they are ready to start a family. She has dreamed of becoming a mother all her life and, at 37 years old, wants to have children fairly soon out of fear of facing complications during birth as a high maternal aged woman. However, the fear of irreversible climate change is causing her to hesitate over the idea of having children. Amanda does not want to be selfish and bring children into a world that could be facing severe natural disasters and dangerous living conditions in the near future.

As a Progressive Democrat, Amanda believes that climate change reform should be enacted soon for her to be comfortable with bringing children into an environmentally safe world. On the other hand, Amanda's husband is a Moderate Democrat who believes enacting climate change reform is not a priority right now. He fears that issues such as COVID-19 and the failing economy are more likely to impact their chances of having children soon. The conflicting views between Amanda and her husband are impacting their decision to have children or not. Should they be more worried about fast-approaching climate change, or the current problems of the pandemic and national debt?

President Biden is facing the same issue as Amanda and her husband, but within his own party. Progressive Democrats fervently support

the Build Back Better Act proposed by the Biden administration because of its plan to deal with issues relating to human infrastructure. However, Moderate Democrats are hesitant to support the bill because they believe its enactment will hinder the effort to solve more current issues within the economy and in healthcare. The ideological divide within the Democratic Party needs to be solved in order to decide whether Build Back Better will be passed into law. This dilemma is what inspired the research question that intends to be answered throughout the paper.

2. Research Question

The research question that I will be answering within this paper is: What role does ideology play in the potential passage of the Build Back Better Act? The Build Back Better Act (BBB) is a piece of legislation that Biden has been encouraging since the latter half of 2021. The introduction of BBB came after the introduction of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. As made obvious by its name, the purpose of this legislation is to fund infrastructure projects throughout the U.S. The act was signed into law November 2021 and was passed with bipartisan approval.¹

Since President Biden was successful in enacting this bipartisan bill, the hope was that the same could be achieved with BBB. BBB intends to focus funds in areas such as infrastructure, the economy, and climate change. The provision of BBB that addresses climate change efforts such as ensuring safe drinking water, establishing energy-efficiency projects, promoting wildfire prevention, addressing drought relief, making conservation efforts, and conducting climate change research.²

¹Congress.gov. "H.R.3684 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act." November 15, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684>.

²Congress.gov. "H.R.5376 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Build Back Better Act." November 19, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house->

Therefore, BBB is a crucial element in this thesis as it pertains to how President Biden is choosing to deal with human infrastructure issues like climate change. During the process of conducting initial research, several articles represented the conflicting opinions over Biden's decision to address climate change in BBB. An article from the Pew Research Center claimed Republicans are not completely closed to the idea of climate change reform, despite their tendency to view it as a low priority issue.³ This article inspired the initial research question for this study. The question was, how is polarization impacting politicians from each party and their opinion on passing BBB? In order to specify this idea into a more concrete research question, dealing with conflicting opinions of politicians within the Democratic Party was appealing. That is how I decided to delve into the conflict between Democrats with different ideological perspectives, and how it impacts the chances of BBB getting passed.

3. Hypothesis

In order to answer the research question, I wanted to make a comparison between the issues Moderate Democrats and Progressive Democrats each view as high-priority issues. This comparison would hopefully show the negative impact that polarization within a political party has on achieving the goals that President Biden has set with BBB. Through the research that was conducted, I found that Moderate Democrats were more focused on subjects such as national debt, the pandemic, and big business. While perusing the congressional website, evidence that Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) cosponsored

bill/5376.

³Tyson, Alec. "On Climate Change, Republicans Are Open to Some Policy Approaches, Even as They Assign the Issue Low Priority." Pew Research Center (blog). Accessed January 28, 2022. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/07/23/on-climate-change-republicans-are-open-to-some-policy-approaches-even-as-they-assign-the-issue-low-priority/>

certain amendments and bills that dealt with the finances of America and COVID-19 were found. Joe Manchin is a key Moderate figure in the Democratic Party. He is also known for being one of the main figures behind the delay in BBB's passing.

An important amendment that Manchin cosponsored established a fund that allowed the President to create a website representing the amount of funds used for COVID-19 relief⁴. This proved that Moderate Democrats, like Joe Manchin, are concerned with where money is being focused and how money is being used to address the pandemic.

However, also on the congressional website was the types of legislation Progressive Democrats are supporting. It became clear to me that Progressive Democrats were cosponsoring a multitude of reforms that deal with climate change, education, and research and development. A bill that U.S. House of Representative of New York, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), cosponsored was the Climate Resistance Workforce Act that aims to enforce businesses and people in the workforce to be environmentally conscious⁵. Ocasio-Cortez is a well-known Progressive figure that is not afraid to voice her opinion therefore, finding evidence that proved her support for human infrastructure issues was easy. After gathering information on Moderate and Progressive Democrats, the hypothesis was created. The answer to my research question is: Moderate Democrats are focused on issues such as decreasing the national debt, combatting the pandemic, and protecting big business whereas Progressive Democrats are focused on reme-

ding human infrastructure issues. Therefore, the ideological conflict between Moderate and Progressive Democrats plays a divisive role in determining whether the Build Back Better Act is passed into law.

4. Terms and Definitions

In order for readers to fully understand the research question and hypothesis, it would be useful to define certain terms that were utilized. The term "ideology" in the research question refers to the political perspective of politicians. The political perspective that an individual chooses lies within a spectrum between left-leaning Liberals and right-leaning Conservatives. This thesis paper focuses on comparing political perspectives that are more left-leaning (Progressives) and that are still on the left but more central (Moderates). Progressivism is focused on creating social reform, while Moderates are focused on compromise and not subjecting to extreme views on either side of the political spectrum.

As stated earlier, this paper will also be discussing the Build Back Better Act (BBB). The Build Back Better Act was introduced by President Biden to "...set the United States on course to meet its climate goals, create millions of good-paying jobs, enable more Americans to join and remain in the labor force, and grow our economy from the bottom up and the middle out."⁶ The bill was introduced in Congress in September 2021, and it was passed by the House in November 2021. BBB is still currently waiting to be passed by the Senate.

Another term that is used in the hypothesis is "human infrastructure." Human infrastructure refers to the institutions or systems that ensure the well being and progress of humans. Examples of human infrastructure include education, health,

⁴Congress.gov. "S.Amdt.816 to S.Con.Res.5 - 117th Congress (2021-2022)." February 4, 2021.

<https://www.congress.gov/amendment/117th-congress/senate-amendment/816>.

⁵Congress.gov. "Text - H.R.6492 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Climate Resilience Workforce Act." February 8, 2022.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/6492/text>.

⁶The White House. "The Build Back Better Framework." Accessed March 12, 2022.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/build-back-better/>.

and research and development.⁷ Human infrastructure is mentioned because it is one of the key issues that Biden and Progressives are aiming to improve through legislation.

Lastly, the term “divisive” that is used in the hypothesis means to cause friction or disagreement between people. This term is meant to emphasize my claim that the conflicting opinions of Progressive and Moderate Democrats, negatively impact the chances of BBB becoming a law.

5. Time Frame of Paper

As stated earlier, BBB was introduced in September of 2021 into the House. So, the time frame of this thesis will begin in September of 2021. The end of the time frame will be the present, since BBB has yet to become a law. Another reason as to why the time frame begins in 2021, is that certain bills and amendments that were proposed in Congress during 2021 will be mentioned. The Democratic Party is currently negotiating the structure of the bill within its faction in order to ensure that Democrats can get BBB passed in the Senate. Certain portions of BBB have already been cut out to appease Moderate Democrats, such as free community college.⁸ The Democratic Party is also considering to cut the bill into smaller sections so that more people are likely to vote in favor of passing BBB. Therefore, the time frame must stretch to the present so information about what is currently taking place within the government, helps create the most up to date analysis of BBB’s chances of getting passed.

⁷The Office of Majority Leader Steny Hoyer. “Hoyer Floor Remarks on House Action to Advance the Build Back Better Agenda,” November 6, 2021. <https://www.majorityleader.gov/content/hoyer-floor-remarks-house-action-advance-build-back-better-agenda>.

⁸Nadworny, Elissa. “White House Drops Free Community College from Its Spending Bill.” NPR, October 20, 2021, sec. Education. <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/20/1047609415/white-house-drops-free-community-college-from-its-spending-bill>.

6. Literature Review

The information and research that will be incorporated into the paper are a mix of qualitative and quantitative data. However, the initial research that was done to create the literature review consisted only of qualitative data. In order to determine what the topic of the thesis would be, I originally focused on researching climate change. The first article that I analyzed during the research process was aimed at answering the question, why is the issue of climate change policy not as widely accepted as energy policy? The answer was that increased polarization was the main problem impacting the effort to alleviate climate change.⁹ This article appeared to be important because it revealed the gaps in climate reform that have led people to opposing it.

The next article that was analyzed aimed at answering the question, can the Green New Deal improve the global issue of climate change? There was no definitive answer presented in the article, it instead posed pros and cons meant to help youth figure out their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the Green New Deal.¹⁰ I thought that the article could be used to relate the pros and cons of the Green New Deal, with present pros and cons of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This comparison would have shown that either President Biden is implementing positive environmental changes that citizens agree with, or that he is failing to address the concerns of those opposed to climate change reform.

The next article that came up during the research process aimed to answer the question, will the increasing effects of climate change result in a

⁹Bang, Guri. “The United States: Conditions for Accelerating Decarbonisation in a Politically Divided Country.” *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 21, no. 1 (March 2021): 43–58. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-021-09530-x>.

¹⁰Seitz, R. Zackary, and Daniel G. Krutka. “Can the Green New Deal Save Us? An Interdisciplinary Inquiry.” *The Social Studies* 111, no. 2 (March 3, 2020): 74–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2019.1677547>.

monetary loss for America? The answer that was clearly presented in the article was that the more disasters that occur because of climate change, the less relief money banks and the government will have to fund clean-ups or rebuilding.¹¹ This article was significant because it showed that climate change should be a serious bipartisan issue, since a fiscal crisis would not only affect everyone in the U.S. but it would also impact nations with economic ties to America.

The next source that I viewed aimed to answer the question, why are climate litigations like *Juliana v. United States* not being addressed or heard by the judicial branch? The main answers to this question were that people deny the existence of climate change, do not understand the risk of climate change, or do not trust those in government who are addressing climate change.¹² I found this article to be important because it outlined the most popular arguments used today to argue against climate change.

The last article that was viewed dealt with the question, will state and local governments become more active in creating climate change reform? According to the article, states usually create certain policies depending on the majority opinion in their state. Therefore, in areas where there are large interest groups enthusiastic about alleviating climate change, the state would most likely develop climate change policies.¹³ I thought that this article could be used in the paper to reveal the

shortcomings of the federal government, by showing what states can accomplish if they address climate change on their own. Gathering all of these articles during the initial research for the literature was helpful, however all but one of the articles were not used in the actual body of the paper.

The actual data that was incorporated into the paper was qualitative and quantitative data used to show that Moderate Democrats are concerned with the national debt, the pandemic, and big business. Specifically, the paper will reference bills and amendments that Manchin has cosponsored. News articles, speeches, and social media posts that iterate Manchin's concerns over certain provisions within BBB and why he is hesitant to accept the bill in its entirety will also be mentioned. To show that Progressive Democrats are in support of tackling issues regarding human infrastructure, the information provided will focus on Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders. Bernie Sanders is a U.S. Senator from Vermont, who is another popular Progressive Democrat known for things such as cofounding the Congressional Progressive Caucus. Bills and amendments that both Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders have cosponsored that deal with human infrastructure topics will be mentioned throughout the paper. In addition to that, information from articles, speeches, and social media posts that discuss Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders' concerns and opinions will be inputted. I deliberately added information from social media since it has become an innovative tool in politics. Former President Donald Trump was known for popularizing the use of social media to engage constituents. Even after Trump's presidency, the use of social media continued to be appreciated by politicians because of its efficiency and effectiveness in promoting a political agenda. In addition to the qualitative data being provided, the quantitative data that will be inputted include polls from the Pew Research Center or Gallup. Incorporating quantitative data will help provide an easy understanding of certain topics such as President Biden's approval rating, the impact of polarization

¹¹Saha, Sagatom, and Brody Viney. 2020. "How Climate Change Could Spark the Next Financial Crisis." *Journal of International Affairs* 73 (1): 205–16.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=aph&AN=141655744&site=eds-live>.

¹²Kempf, Chloe N. 2021. "Why Did So Many Do So Little? Movement Building and Climate Change Litigation in the Time of *Juliana v. United States*." *Texas Law Review* 99 (5): 1005–40.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=sso&db=aph&AN=150057134&site=eds-live>.

¹³Rai, Saatvika. "Policy Adoption and Policy Intensity: Emergence of Climate Adaptation Planning in U.S. States." *Review of Policy Research* 37, no. 4 (July 2020): 444–63. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ropr.12383>.

on political parties, and Congress' approval rating.

I also found it necessary to preface why Sanders is being considered a Progressive Democrat in this paper. Although Sanders identifies as an Independent and not a Democrat, he meets with the Senate Democratic Caucus. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate that information on Sanders be lumped with information on Ocasio-Cortez since their opinions and actions often align with one another. Now, in order to provide a clearer understanding of the research question and hypothesis more detail and elaboration is necessary.

To reiterate, the research question being asked is: What role does ideology play in the potential passage of the Build Back Better Act? This question is important because of the acknowledgement of polarization. Political polarization, "... occurs when subsets of a population adopt increasingly dissimilar attitudes toward parties and party members (i.e., affective polarization), as well as ideologies and policies (ideological polarization)."¹⁴ Polarization seems to be the new norm in politics today, not only between parties, but between ideologies. According to a Pew Research Center study, in recent years both parties have shifted away from the middle of the ideology spectrum.¹⁵ Since polarization has become a part of politics, it is now a roadblock that politicians will encounter when proposing legislation. Within the Democratic Party, Moderates and Progressives are battling over what issues should be top priority for the government. That is why legislation like BBB is still being negotiated, since the Democratic Party is unable to unite its own members in support of

the bill's passage. So, the only way that BBB can be signed into law by President Biden, is if the conflict between ideologies within the Democratic Party is managed. To offer the ways in which the ideological conflict is impacting the passage of BBB, the hypothesis lays out which issues Moderate and Progressive Democrats are more concerned with.

As previously stated the hypothesis is: Moderate Democrats are focused on issues such as decreasing the national debt, combatting the pandemic, and protecting his business whereas Progressive Democrats are focused on remedying human infrastructure which includes climate change. Therefore, the conflict between Moderate and Progressive Democrats plays a divisive role in determining whether the Build Back Better Act is passed into law. It is clear that if both ideologies have different opinions on what is ailing the country most right now, then each will have a different stance on what types of legislation should be passed. For example, Moderates would be partial to supporting laws that limit government spending or that works towards alleviating COVID-19 related issues. In addition to that, Progressives would be partial to supporting laws that improve the education system, promote socioeconomic equality, or that addresses climate change. The next step would then have to be figuring out whether Democrats should continue to try and compromise between the wishes of the Progressives and the Moderates, or appease one side in fear of losing the support of the other. It will be a difficult decision to make, but is a necessary one in order to determine the fate of BBB. The longer that it takes for the bill to be dealt with, the more time there is for argumentation between supporters and opposers of the bill. A prolonged decision will allow for polarization to grow and create lasting impacts on the policy making process and politics in general. The rest of this paper will be used to lay out information on what has contributed to the dilemma between Progressive and Moderate Democrats. Lastly, I will analyze the conflict be-

¹⁴Heltzel, Gordon, and Kristin Laurin. "Polarization in America: Two Possible Futures." *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences* 34 (August 2020): 179–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2020.03.008>.

¹⁵DeSilver, Drew. "The Polarization in Today's Congress Has Roots That Go Back Decades." Pew Research Center (blog). Accessed April 16, 2022. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/03/10/the-polarization-in-todays-congress-has-roots-that-go-back-decades/>. Accessed April 16, 2022 at 3:30pm.

tween Progressive and Moderate Democrats, and offer a possible solution to the problem in order for the fate of BBB to finally be decided.

7. Discussion

The Build Back Better Act was first introduced by President Biden in September of 2021. The intention behind the act is to rebuild the middle class, which has been claimed to be the backbone of the country. Rebuilding the middle class is planned to be achieved through investing in child-care and caregiving, eliminating climate change, broadening affordable healthcare, and bringing down costs to prevent inflation.¹⁶ BBB's plan is to also ensure that high-income individuals and entities pay their fair share of money in society. Biden hopes that the BBB framework will not only improve the life of middle-class individuals, but that it will help lower-class individuals move up the socioeconomic ladder. Merely two months after the bill was introduced, BBB was passed in the House by a 220-213 vote. All 220 of the votes in support of the bill were made by Democrats. Only one Democrat, Jared Golden from Maine, voted against the bill along with 212 Republicans in the House. Although the House has passed the bill, it has yet to be passed by the Senate. The date that the Senate votes on BBB has continued to be delayed, as it originally was meant to be heard in January of 2022. Joe Manchin is one of the main reasons as to why the Senate vote has been delayed. In December of 2021, Manchin himself declared that he does not support the version of BBB that was passed by the House.

Manchin's support is crucial for Democrats to pass the bill in the Senate and eventually sign it into law, because the Senate is so evenly split over BBB. The ideal scenario that Democrats hope will occur, is that there will be a tie between Democrats and Republicans. A tie will call for Vice President Harris to be the tiebreaker, leading her to vote in favor of BBB. President Biden has made public ef-

forts to communicate with Manchin and convince him to support the bill. In a statement from President Biden released by the White House in December 2021, Biden ensured that he continues to discuss with Manchin the necessary changes that need to be made within BBB. However, Biden claims that it takes time to finalize anything and firmly decide on when the Senate will vote on the bill.¹⁷ The ambiguity surrounding when the Senate vote will occur can only mean that convincing Manchin to support BBB is proving to be a tough task. This begs the question, what is stopping Manchin from supporting BBB? It is now important to delve into what Manchin, as a Moderate Democrat, views as the high-priority issues in America.

Joe Manchin has made it known that he does not support the current version of BBB that has been passed in the House. In early January, Manchin claimed in an interview that no conversations were being had with him and the White House regarding BBB. He made it clear that his stance against BBB remains as COVID-19, inflation, and issues with Russia pose greater concerns.¹⁸ In addition to this statement, Manchin has been vocal on social media platforms, like Twitter, about what the government should be focusing on. In a tweet made by Manchin on February 17, 2022 it states, "Avoiding a federal government shutdown in the middle of a pandemic and agreeing to a reasonable budget must continue to be our top priority... We have a responsibility to prevent economic catastrophe for the American people on top of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Manchin is clearly claiming that protecting the economy by enforcing a budget on

¹⁷The White House. "Statement from President Biden on the Build Back Better Act," December 16, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/16/statement-from-the-president-on-the-build-back-better-act/>.

¹⁸Sanford, Claire. "Joe Manchin Says 'No Negotiation' on Build Back Better Transcript." Rev (blog), January 4, 2022. <https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/joe-manchin-says-no-negotiation-on-build-back-better-transcript>.

¹⁶The White House, Op. cit.

the government is a high-priority issue especially during a health crisis. Therefore, Manchin's opinion on what problems the government should be concerned with right now, limits his ability to support BBB which promotes change in areas that require long-term attention. His support for addressing the nation debt, COVID-19, and big business has also been made prevalent through his actions in Congress.

Manchin has cosponsored a multitude of bills and amendments that relate to the current issues that concern Moderate Democrats. A concurrent resolution that was introduced in February 2021 deals with setting a Congressional budget for the fiscal year 2021, and agreeing to budgetary levels for the U.S. government for the fiscal years 2022-2030.¹⁹ Manchin cosponsored an amendment to this resolution a few days after the resolution was proposed. The amendment requests that a reserve fund be created to ensure President Biden keeps the public informed on how money is being spent on COVID-19 relief. Information would be posted through a website stating the amount of funds being allocated to relief aid, and how much of those funds have been spent. The amendment was successfully agreed to in the Senate by a voice vote.²⁰ This amendment that Manchin has cosponsored intends to make the actions of the President transparent to the public. The amendment also intends to set a tracker on government spending to ensure that the government does not operate on a deficit during the fiscal year. President Biden has attempted to reassure the public that enacting BBB will not contribute to inflation or increase the national debt. In a tweet that he posted on September 25, 2021 it claims, "My Build Back Better Agenda

¹⁹Congress.gov. "S.Con.Res.5 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): A concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2021 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2022 through 2030." February 5, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-concurrent-resolution/5>.

²⁰Congress.gov. "S.Amdt.816 to S.Con.Res.5 - 117th Congress (2021-2022).", Op. cit.

costs zero dollars. Instead of wasting money on tax breaks, loopholes, and tax evasion for big corporations and the wealthy, we can make a once-in-a-generation investment in working America."²¹ Although Biden claims that BBB will not hurt the economy, Manchin continues to favor limiting the government's ability to spend substantial amounts of money. Therefore, Manchin's support of this amendment shows his concern for the economy and COVID-19.

Manchin also showed his support for an amendment to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. In March 2021, the amendment that was proposed intends to use \$800,000,000 of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund towards providing services to homeless youth during the COVID-19 pandemic.²² Manchin was one of five senators and one of two Democrats to cosponsor the amendment. Despite it being a significant amount of money, Manchin was willing to support an amendment that provided COVID-19 relief aid. This shows that he is dedicated to combatting the impacts of the pandemic at any cost, so long as the government is making an active effort to alleviate COVID-19 related issues. In addition to that, since dealing with national debt and the pandemic are both current issues, this proves that Manchin wants the government to primarily focus on dealing with prevalent issues impacting America. That is why supporting a bill like BBB may not be Manchin's biggest concern right now, because it disregards the financial issues currently facing America. Another cause that Manchin has decided to support that opposes BBB, is the effort to allow greater freedom to big business.

In November 2021 Senator Mike Braun from

²¹Twitter. "https://Twitter.Com/Potus/Status/1441924106765602819." Accessed April 24, 2022. <https://twitter.com/potus/status/1441924106765602819>.

²²Congress.gov. "S.Amdt.1233 to S.Amdt.891 to H.R.1319 - 117th Congress (2021-2022)." March 5, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/amendment/117th-congress/senate-amendment/1233>.

Indiana (R-IN) introduced a joint resolution that disapproves a rule created by the Department of Labor. The rule relates to the “COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing; Emergency Temporary Standard”. This standard requires that employers who have one hundred or more employees must require their in-person workers to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, or go through weekly COVID-19 testing. The joint resolution was cosponsored by Manchin, who also happened to be the only Democrat to cosponsor.²³ Although Manchin has claimed to be concerned with the impact of the pandemic, his support of this joint resolution seems contradictory to his beliefs.

If Manchin is truly worried about pandemic related problems in America, why is he supporting a joint resolution that wants to get rid of mandatory COVID-19 vaccination and testing policies that work to limit the spread of COVID-19? One answer to this question is that Manchin is also concerned with protecting big business. The rule by the Department of Labor poses a significant impact on the operation of large businesses. If the rule were enforced, large businesses may not have enough employees to work if they are not vaccinated; or if employees test positive for COVID-19 they would then have to wait until they test negative to come back to work. Not having enough labor would hinder the efficiency and operation of a business. Although Manchin is concerned with protecting big business, one of the main functions of BBB is to limit the actions of big business.

Part of the framework of BBB claims that it, “Stops large, profitable corporations from paying zero in tax and tax corporations that buyback stock rather than invest in the company.”²⁴ President

²³Congress.gov. “S.J.Res.29 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to “COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing; Emergency Temporary Standard.” December 9, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-joint-resolution/29>.

²⁴The White House, Op. cit.

Biden’s plan with BBB in regard to large businesses is to equalize the proportion of what profitable corporations pay in taxes and what middle-class citizens pay in taxes. This limitation on big business prevents corporate executives from solely benefitting from profit. Manchin’s disapproval of BBB could have roots in Biden’s attempt to regulate big business. Since Manchin is concerned with keeping large companies at a working capacity necessary to smoothly operate during the pandemic, one would assume that he would not approve of the government strongly overseeing big business to ensure economic equality. Therefore, because Manchin is concerned with the national debt, COVID-19, and big business, supporting BBB would conflict with his efforts to address the subjects that he views as high-priority issues. In contrast to Moderate Democrats like Joe Manchin, Progressive Democrats are more concerned with a separate set of issues impacting the human infrastructure of American society.

To reiterate what the term “human infrastructure” entails, it refers to the institutions and systems within America that ensure the well being and progress of all human beings. Examples of human infrastructure are healthcare, the educational system, and research and development.²⁵ Protecting the human infrastructure within the U.S. is the main priority of Progressive Democrats today. This has been made clear by the actions of politicians such as Ocasio-Cortez. She has cosponsored a variety of bills that deal with protecting the health of current and future generations of America. The Medicare for All Act of 2021, which was introduced in March 2021, intends to develop a national health insurance program through the Department of Health and Human Services.²⁶ The main function of this bill is to make healthcare more accessible, especially

²⁵Hoyer, Op. cit.

²⁶Congress.gov. “H.R.1976 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Medicare for All Act of 2021.” May 18, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1976>.

to low-income individuals. Ocasio-Cortez's support of this bill shows her concern for improving the health and wellbeing of all individuals. BBB is also concerned with making healthcare more available to and affordable for all citizens. The framework of BBB claims it, "Strengthens the Affordable Care Act and reduces premiums for 9 Million Americans."²⁷ Therefore, since Ocasio-Cortez and Biden have a similar interest in improving health for all humans, it is clear that she would be more likely to support the passage of BBB. In addition to affordable healthcare, Ocasio-Cortez has supported efforts to protect the long-term health of citizens through combatting climate change.

The Federal Agency Climate PREP Act, which was introduced in October 2021, intends to require federal agencies to enact plans "... responding to, mitigating, and adapting to climate change..."²⁸ This means that the bill focuses on minimizing the negative impact climate change has on the operation of federal agencies, by requiring them to actively combat climate change. Enforcing government entities to address and accept climate change will allow the issues of sudden-onset and slow-onset risks of climate change to be dealt with. Ocasio-Cortez was one of thirteen Democrats to cosponsor this bill.

A more recent bill that Ocasio-Cortez has cosponsored is the Climate Resilience Workforce Act that was introduced in January 2022.²⁹ The legislation aims to enforce businesses and people in the workforce to adopt environmentally conscious programs and regulations that actively combat climate change. Her support of this legislation shows that she is concerned with environmental issues, specifically how the government

deals with addressing and alleviating those environmental issues. Ocasio-Cortez made her stance on climate change evident through social media as well.

In a tweet posted on February 28, 2022 Ocasio-Cortez claimed, "The IPCC report is meant to be a tough wake-up call. But for those of us fighting to stop climate change, there is also hope. We can still eliminate planet-warming pollution in 3 decades & keep warming to ~1.5C. The fight isn't over. It's never been more important to keep going."³⁰ The IPCC report is an assessment of climate change and its causes, impacts, and potential solutions to combat it, based on research compiled by the United Nations. In this tweet, the congress woman emphasizes the need for immediate action while there is still time to reverse the effects of global warming. Her concerns regarding climate change, coincides with BBB's effort to combat climate change. BBB intends to make America more environmentally friendly by providing middle-class individuals the chance to afford being sustainable. Ocasio-Cortez's consistent record of supporting actions that combat climate change shows that she views this topic as a high-priority issue the government needs to promptly address. Therefore, in regard to her stance on BBB, it is quite obvious that she would support a bill that prides itself on improving human infrastructure through alleviating the effects of climate change. Ocasio-Cortez is not the only Progressive Democrat that has voiced their concern for improving human infrastructure. Bernie Sanders is a key Progressive figure, widely known for his push for free college education. Like Ocasio-Cortez, Sanders has a long record of proof to show his commitment to enhancing several types of human infrastructure.

Education is a vital part of ensuring a person's wellbeing and proper development. In school one is taught the foundations of morality, how the hu-

²⁷White House, Op. cit.

²⁸Congress.gov. "Text - H.R.5477 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Federal Agency Climate PREP Act." December 2, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5477/text>.

²⁹Congress.gov. "Text - H.R.6492 - 117th Congress (2021-2022)", Op. cit.

³⁰Twitter. "https://Twitter.Com/Repaoc/Status/1498418928640577537." Accessed April 20, 2022.

<https://twitter.com/repao/status/1498418928640577537>.

man body functions, and general skills such as critical thinking. These important lessons teach an individual how to live in society, how to take care of themselves physically, and how to interpret new information that they learn. Therefore, the educational system becomes a critical tool in improving human infrastructure because of its beneficial impact on people's understanding of the world. Bernie Sanders (D-VT) is a well-known advocate of improving the education system through his efforts to making it more available to students. In April 2021, Sanders sponsored a bill known as the College for All Act of 2021. Made obvious through its name, the bill intends to make higher education more accessible by eliminating or decreasing the impact of demanding fees.³¹ Sanders' concern with improving the education system by giving more students the opportunity to obtain higher education, shows his support for government action that advances human infrastructure. Another system within human infrastructure that Sanders supports is research and development.

The process of conducting research contributes to the development of society because it expands an individual's understanding of a certain topic. Once greater understanding is achieved, it can lead to improvement within an already established system, offer solutions to an impending issue, or provide answers to questions about an unfamiliar topic. Therefore, research and development are crucial to the human infrastructure because it allows people to grow in knowledge, and figure out ways to make life more efficient. Bernie Sanders has supported action within the government to implement more of an effort to conduct research and development. In January of 2022, a bill known as the Technology Assessment for Air Quality Management Act of 2022 was introduced in the Senate. This piece of legislation aims to improve how the act of ensuring better air quality is

³¹Congress.gov. "Cosponsors - S.1288 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): College for All Act of 2021." April 21, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/1288/cosponsors>.

managed within the government, in order to promote the safety of all communities. Some of the ways that the bill proposes to enhance the management of air quality include investing in monitoring technology and utilizing data.³² Finding proficient monitoring technology and gathering data will require vast amounts of research. The government must make the effort to find high-quality monitoring technology and gather the most accurate data regarding the condition of air quality in various locations. Through the help of in-depth research, the government will be better equipped to develop a strategy that achieves long-lasting good air quality. Sanders was one of eleven politicians to cosponsor the bill. His support of this type of legislation shows his concern for improving research and development, which are key aspects of advancing human infrastructure. Similarly to Ocasio-Cortez, Sanders advocates for combatting climate change because it will positively impact human infrastructure in America.

The Environmental Justice Act of 2021 was introduced in August 2021 by its sponsor, Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ). This bill requires federal agencies to address the disproportionate effects of environmental issues seen within disadvantaged and minority communities. Some of the ways that the bill requires federal agencies to promote environmental justice is through developing and enforcing "... rules, regulations, guidance, standards, policies, plans and practices..."³³ This piece of legislation will hold federal agencies accountable for ensuring equality in the realm of environmental law, so that disadvantaged communities have the opportunity to improve human health and their surroundings. Sanders was one of thir-

³²Congress.gov. "Text - S.3507 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Technology Assessment for Air Quality Management Act of 2022." January 13, 2022. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/3507/text>.

³³Congress.gov. "Text - S.2630 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Environmental Justice Act of 2021." August 5, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2630/text>.

teen senators to cosponsor this act. His support for this bill shows his concern for preserving human health for all, specifically through combatting climate change. As previously stated, human health is an important component of human infrastructure. Therefore, it has become fairly evident that through the types of reforms that Sanders has supported, he is dedicated to addressing the issues impacting human infrastructure. However, not only has Sanders supported specific legislation but he has also made his stance on human infrastructure topics evident through social media.

On April 14, 2022 Sanders tweeted, “Canceling all student debt is not a radical idea. Saddling 46 million Americans with \$1.8 trillion in debt for the “crime” of pursuing an education — now that’s a radical idea.”³⁴ Made obvious through this tweet, Sanders feels strongly about making the education system more accessible and affordable. On July 2, 2021 Sanders crafted another tweet claiming, “Climate change is the existential threat to our planet at this moment. And we are seeing it with our own eyes right now. My colleagues ask if we can afford to act as boldly and aggressively as the situation demands — I ask, how can we afford not to?”³⁵ Sanders is clearly stating that climate change is one of the high-priority issues that the government must address now. Through the use of social media, constituents have been able to see more clearly the opinions of politicians. Creating a post forces an individual to be concise and comprehensible, so social media has been a platform for controversial and blatant comments that make politicians’ viewpoint explicit. Now that the concerns of Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders have been laid

out, it is important to determine how they relate to the potential passage of BBB.

Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders have supported the passage of legislation that deals with human infrastructure. The bills and amendments that they supported dealt with topics such as improving the education system, improving healthcare, and promoting research and development. The entire framework of BBB is also concerned with topics related to human infrastructure. BBB intends to invest in the development of children, improve caregiving resources, combat climate change, expand affordable healthcare, and strengthen the middle class. So, through the information provided it is clear that Progressive Democrats, like Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders, are concerned with issues regarding human infrastructure similarly to President Biden. It is also clear that Moderate Democrat, Joe Manchin, is more concerned with other issues such as national debt, the pandemic, and big business. Therefore, the conflicting opinions between Progressive and Moderate Democrats over what the high-priority concerns are right now, contributes to the reasons why BBB has not been passed into law.

Since the split between opposers and supporters of BBB is evenly split between the major political parties, a divide within the Democratic Party will help the Republican Party to come out on top. Without a united front of Democrats supporting BBB, the united front against BBB will lead to President Biden’s primary legislation being shut down. The issue now is, should President Biden continue to try and reach a compromise between Progressive and Moderate Democrats, or should he side with one ideology and risk losing support? In order for BBB to be passed in the Senate and eventually be signed into law, it is essential to settle the conflict between Progressives and Moderates.

³⁴Twitter. “<https://twitter.com/Berniesanders/Status/1514675313346854917>.” Accessed April 22, 2022. <https://twitter.com/berniesanders/status/1514675313346854917>.

³⁵Twitter. “<https://twitter.com/Berniesanders/Status/1411003734839021569>.” Accessed April 22, 2022. <https://twitter.com/berniesanders/status/1411003734839021569>.

8. Analysis

Analyzing why the conflict between Progressive and Moderate Democrats needs to be settled, will entail mentioning the potential repercussions that could occur if the conflict is not settled. One major repercussion that can occur is realignment away from the Democratic Party. Realignment is known as a momentous change in patterns of support for a particular party. Which means, realignment is caused when voters or constituents switch to favoring a different party than the one previously in power. Realignment has already occurred throughout American history. During the Civil War time period, African Americans showed support for the Republican Party and its leader Abraham Lincoln who issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It was during Lincoln's administration that rights for African Americans were finally solidified into the U.S. Constitution. However, soon after during the Jim Crow Laws Era, Black people in America deviated from the Republican Party because of the racist reforms implemented in the Republican South.³⁶ If the Democratic Party is unable to rally enough support on its side for the passage of BBB, constituents will lose their faith in Democrats and realign themselves with the Republican Party. Data shows that the Democratic Party and Biden have already lost support.

After Congress failed to pass President Biden's Infrastructure Bill, the approval rating of Congress has fallen to 18% which is the lowest it has been since January 2021.³⁷ Since the Democratic Party is the majority party in Congress, this

³⁶History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives, Office of the Historian, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2007*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008. "Party Realignment," <https://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Essays/Temporary-Farewell/Party-Realignment/>. Accessed April 23, 2022

³⁷Inc, Gallup. "Congressional Approval Sinks to 18% as Democrats Sour Further." Gallup.com, January 21, 2022. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/389096/congressional-approval-sinks-democrats-sour-further.aspx>.

means that the Democratic majority has hit the lowest approval rating during the period of 2021-2022. In addition to that, according to a poll curated by Gallup the overall approval rate of President Biden's has steadily decreased since February of 2021.³⁸ The decline in Biden's approval rating is concerning, especially with the Midterm Elections approaching. Republicans could regain the majority in Congress during the 2022 Midterms if approval of Biden and the Democratic Party continues to dwindle. In order for Biden and his party to regain support action needs to occur, whether it be in favor of the opinion of the Progressives or the Moderates. The longer it takes for BBB to be passed into law the more it will cause voters to lose faith in the Democratic Party. Therefore, to stop realignment away from the Democratic Party, the issue between Progressives and Moderates over BBB needs to be settled. Since a compromise between Progressives and Moderates appears to be unlikely, I will propose another solution to resolving the conflict.

Having a Democratic Party with differing opinions will only deter constituents because it would seem like Democrats do not have the power to compromise and enforce reform. As of now there has not been a complete rupture within the Democratic Party, but the concerns of Progressives and Moderates will need to be addressed before BBB is enacted or at least while Democrats have the majority. Ultimately, Progressives want immediate change and Moderates want to implement change in increments. However, whichever way the Democratic Party chooses to act it will not impact the Progressive's agenda. If the Democratic Party appeases the Progressives, it risks backlash from voters who are not as deeply concerned as Progressives in certain issues. If the Democratic Party appeases the Mod-

³⁸Inc, Gallup. "Biden's Job Rating Still Tepid; COVID-19, Russia Handling Up." Gallup.com, March 22, 2022. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/390953/biden-job-rating-tepid-covid-russia-handling.aspx>. Accessed March 3, 2022 at 5:25 pm.

erates, Progressives can tackle high-priority issues on a smaller scope in Democratic districts.³⁹ This means that the agenda of Moderate Democrats may not be as acknowledged within the federal government. However, the agenda of the Progressives is more widespread because of their ability to gain local support in the States. So, if Biden's plan is to avoid an ideological rupture in the Democratic Party, it may be crucial to enforce a more incremental change within the national government to please Moderates since Progressives can promote more immediate change within state or local governments. An example of how Biden can alter BBB to be more appealing to Manchin and other Moderate Democrats, is by rebranding the bill altogether.

9. Conclusion

BBB is widely associated with Biden's previous plan to spend about \$6 trillion dollars on his infrastructure bill. Since some of the main concerns of Moderate Democrats are to prevent inflation and lessen the national debt, it is important that BBB is rebranded into being budget-friendly.⁴⁰ As much as Moderate Democrats are concerned with the economy, every citizen in America is also concerned by issues within the economy because inflation impacts everyone. If inflation occurs, no average citizen would be immune to paying increased prices in gas, groceries, and other basic necessities. So, if Biden promotes a budget-friendly version of BBB, it will promote

³⁹Washington Post. "Opinion — The Democratic Rift between Progressives and Moderates Is Unresolvable." Accessed April 3, 2022.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/08/24/democratic-rift-between-progressives-moderates-is-unresolvable/>.

⁴⁰Sullivan, Sean and Seung M. Kim.

"Biden Still Touts Build Back Better, but what does that Mean?" WP Company LLC d/b/a The Washington Post. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2630425708/52302D/B00FAD46FBPQ/3?accountid=13793&parentSessionId=oZMUPTNGw4MNGp%2Fxz2Z3UzlGnQ9RE5Fy0v9rQFdACsI%3D>

more of an incremental change rather than an immediate change that results in spending substantial amounts of money. This proposed solution allows both Moderates and Progressives to be satisfied, and gives Biden a viable solution that will end the stalemate over the passage of BBB. Now that the concerns and opinions of Moderate and Progressive Democrats have been made clear, it is President Biden's job to settle the conflict between ideologies so that the Democratic Party can work to maintain its supporters and the fate of the Build Back Better Act can finally be decided.

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