

THE WHITE HOUSE

MEMO

TO: White House Senior Staff
FROM: Mike Donilon, Senior Advisor to the President
SUBJECT: The Cost of the GOP's Partisanship
DATE: February 16, 2021

GOP's Strategy Shrinking Their Support

There seems to be a growing conventional wisdom that it is either politically smart – or, at worst, cost-free – for the GOP to adopt an obstructionist, partisan, base-politics posture. However, there is lots of evidence that the opposite is true: that it isn't politically smart for the GOP to be going down this road. And rather than being cost-free, this approach has been quite damaging to them.

Just look at today's Morning Consult poll:

- Just 23% of the country thinks the Republican Party is heading in the right direction – with 63% saying the party is on the wrong track ([page 23](#)).
- Just 30% of the country has a favorable opinion of the GOP – with 62% rating them unfavorably ([page 150](#)).
- Mitch McConnell's favorability is at 19% ([page 129](#)).
- Kevin McCarthy's favorability is at 21% ([page 157](#)).
- This at a time when President Biden's approval rating is at 62% ([page 10](#)).

If you couple today's Morning Consult findings along with voters dropping their GOP registration all across the country as [reported by the New York Times](#), [Gallup's latest favorable ratings](#) (37% favorable), and a five point drop in self-reported party ID seen in [The Economist/YouGov poll](#) since the November election (from 42% to 37%), you see a party shrinking its appeal in this country – not growing it.

GOP at Odds with American People

Opposing President Biden's American Rescue Plan only exacerbates Republicans' predicament. By opposing the American Rescue Plan, the GOP is putting itself at odds with a rescue package supported overwhelmingly by the American people.

Recent polls have put support for the ARP from 68% to 82% ([CBS/YouGov](#) 83%, [Quinnipiac](#) 68%, [Navigator](#) 72%), depending on question wording. That is an extraordinary level of support that few major legislative packages have seen in recent years in the country.

The America people – all across the political spectrum – support it. State and local elected officials – all across the political spectrum – support it. The only block of opposition is among Republicans in Congress. Opposition to the ARP isn't political smart or cost-free – it's politically isolating.

The Bottom Line

The country is looking for action. For progress. For solutions. On COVID. On the economy. You see it and hear it all over the country. Voters are hurting – and they're looking for leadership that comes forward with plans and solutions. This is not a moment in the country when obstructionism will be rewarded.

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