

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Jack Pandol, NRCC Communications Director
DATE: June 01, 2023
SUBJECT: Spending Debate was a Successful 2024 Road Test: "Democrats Tied Themselves to an Anchor and Threw It Overboard"



REPUBLICANS WON THE SPENDING AND DEBT DEBATE.

Recent public polling and changing perceptions among voters about President Biden and Speaker Kevin McCarthy demonstrate the public overwhelmingly sides with Republicans on the debate over our nation's spending and debt. House Democrats uniformly dug in on a toxic position – that the country does not have a spending problem – handing Republicans a powerful political cudgel for the 2024 cycle.

POLLING SUGGESTS DEMOCRATS TIED THEMSELVES TO AN ANCHOR AND THREW IT OVERBOARD.

Recent public polling paints a clear picture: most Americans agree with the House Republican position that our country spends too much. After feeling the effects of Democrats' reckless spending as inflation hammered family budgets, responsible spending reforms are broadly popular. Voters believe the debt ceiling is the right opportunity to have a conversation about getting this problem under control, and they disagree with President Biden and House Democrats that the debt ceiling should be raised without any corresponding reforms.

FOX NEWS

- "On the debt negotiations, a majority of 57% says the increase should only happen if there are cuts to government spending, while 27% think the increase should happen no matter what."
- "...voters are slightly more inclined to blame Biden than Congressional Republicans if they fail to reach a deal (47% vs. 44%)."

CNN-SSRS

- "Sixty percent of Americans say Congress should only raise the nation's debt ceiling if it cuts spending at the same time, according to a new CNN poll conducted by SSRS, as the government's June 1 'hard deadline' to avoid economic catastrophe looms large over Washington."
- "Majority support for raising the debt ceiling in some fashion cuts across party lines, but most Republicans (79%) and independents (58%) say the limit should only be raised if spending cuts are enacted at the same time, while Democrats are split between supporting a debt ceiling increase no matter what (46%) and raising it only alongside spending cuts (45%)."

REUTERS-IPSOS

- “51% of Americans said the debt ceiling should not be raised without substantial spending cuts - the position held by Republicans who hold a majority in the House of Representatives. That view was held by 69% of Republicans and 42% of Democrats, the poll found.”

AP-NORC

- “The poll shows about 6 in 10 say they want any increase in the debt limit to be coupled with agreed-upon terms for reducing the federal budget deficit.”

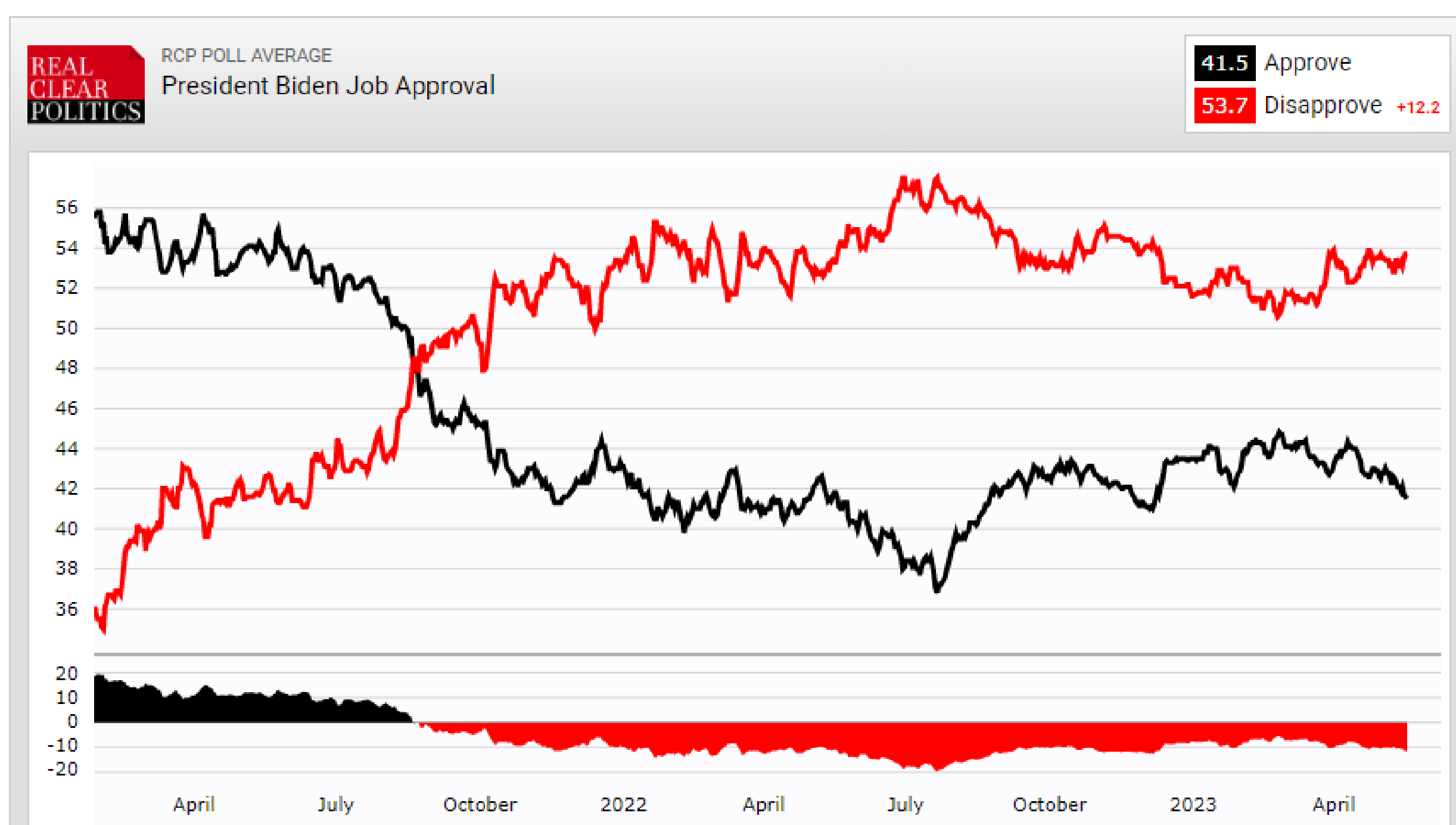
HARVARD-HARRIS

- “60% of voters favor Congress voting to “raise [the debt ceiling] only with restraints on future spending.”
- Only 35% of voters say “President Biden have signaled... willingness to curb spending”
- 63% of voters saying Democrats should “negotiate spending constraints with Republicans” and 62% say Republicans should “hold out for spending constraints”

Democrats should look no further than the public’s changing perceptions of our top political leaders to demonstrate this issue is a political loser. President Biden’s already-anemic approval ratings have dropped to the lowest levels of his presidency in some polls – but the downward trendline is unmistakable. And one recent poll shows Speaker McCarthy’s approval rating at an all-time high, adding 14 points to the Speaker’s positive ratings since January.

It would defy logic that this movement in their respective approval ratings is not tied to the conversation over government spending that has been the dominant political issue over the past months.

JOE BIDEN JOB APPROVAL:



KEVIN MCCARTHY JOB APPROVAL:

ECONOMIST/YOUGOV SURVEY TRENDLINE:

- January: 32% Approve – 37% Disapprove
- February: 35% - 37%
- April: 40% - 33%
- May: 46% - 36%

These trends are not a coincidence. Americans are telling Democrats that their position on spending and debt is extreme. Democrats refuse to listen.

REPUBLICANS ARE SHARPENING OUR KNIVES.

The NRCC will make vulnerable Democrats pay a price for doubling down on an extreme and unpopular position. The Committee already ran ads in the districts of **35 vulnerable House Democrats** – nearly all of its identified pickup opportunities for the 2024 cycle. These ad flights represent a road test for Republican messaging through next fall presenting Democrats as extreme and unserious about fixing a problem they created.



The NRCC's ad, titled "Addicted," says:

Democrats maxed out our nation's credit card with reckless spending, jacking up inflation to historic highs.

Now they refuse to solve the spending crisis they created, voting against a common-sense plan to:

Tackle the government's spending problem, cut red tape, and curb our dependence on China.

Our economy hangs in the balance: 7 million people could lose their jobs.

Extreme Democrats are addicted to spending your money, and you are paying the price.

Republican-aligned outside groups have pressed the advantage, **hammering** vulnerable House Democrats with multiple advertising flights on a similar message.

THIS ISSUE IS NOT GOING AWAY.

Hakeem Jeffries committed a major tactical blunder by forcing his vulnerable Members to go on the record for unchecked government spending. This dead-on-arrival measure is opposed by broad majorities of Americans, including large numbers of Democratic voters. Voters equate a “clean” hike to continuing the country’s unsustainable spending trajectory. Politically, this represents a fresh opportunity to remind voters that Democrats spent trillions of dollars on wasteful projects with total Democratic control of Washington, spiking inflation and hurting their personal pocketbooks. Coupled with House Democrats’ unanimous vote against the Limit, Save, Grow Act – the ads write themselves.

Republicans will continue to press our advantage on this issue to show voters that Democrats are extreme, reckless, and too dangerous to trust with a House majority. Vulnerable Democrats may have surrendered their voting cards to party leaders during the debt ceiling debate, but they will hand over their voting cards to a Republican when they are defeated next fall.