



Opinion US midterm elections 2022

Republicans are trying to win by spreading three false talking points. Here's the truth

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Republicans want midterm voters to believe lies about crime, inflation and taxes. This is what they're claiming - followed by the facts



Research has repeatedly shown that crime is rising faster in Republican, Trump-supporting states. Photograph: J Scott Applewhite/AP

Republicans are telling three lies they hope will swing the midterms. They involve crime, inflation, and taxes. Here's what Republicans are claiming, followed by the facts.

1. They claim that crime is rising because Democrats have been "soft" on crime

This is pure rubbish. Rising crime rates are due to the proliferation of guns, which Republicans refuse to control.

Here are the facts:

While violent crime rose 28% from 2019 to 2020, gun homicides rose 35%. States that have weakened gun laws have seen gun crime surge. Clearly, a major driver of the national increase in violence is the easy availability of guns.

The violence can't be explained by any of the Republican talking points about "soft-on-crime" Democrats.

Lack of police funding? Baloney. Democratic-run major cities spend 38% more on policing per person than Republican-run cities, and 80% of the largest cities increased police funding from 2019 to 2022.

Criminal justice reforms? Wrong. Data shows that wherever bail reforms have been implemented, re-arrest rates remain stable. Data from major cities shows no connection between the policies of progressive prosecutors and changes in crime rates.

The biggest domestic culprits for inflation are big corporations

Research has repeatedly shown that crime is rising faster in Republican, Trump-supporting states. The thinktank Third Way found that in 2020, per capita murder rates were 40% higher in states won by Trump than in those won by Joe Biden.

Let's be clear: it's been Republican policies that have made it easier for people to get and carry guns. Republicans are lying about the real cause of rising crime to protect their patrons - gun manufacturers.

2. They claim that inflation is due to Biden's spending, and wage increases

Baloney. The major cause of the current inflation is the global post-pandemic shortage of all sorts of things, coupled with Putin's war in Ukraine and China's lockdowns.

The major domestic cause of the current inflation is big corporations that have been taking advantage of inflation by raising their prices higher than their increasing costs.

Here are the facts:

Inflation can't be explained by any of the Republican talking points.

Biden's spending? Rubbish again. That can't be causing our current inflation because inflation has broken out everywhere around the world, often at much higher rates than in the US.

Besides, heavy spending by the US government began in 2020, before the Biden administration, in order to protect Americans and the economy from the ravages of Covid-19 - and it was necessary.

American workers getting wage increases? Wages can't be pushing inflation because wages have been increasing at a slower pace than prices - leaving most workers worse off.

The biggest domestic culprits are big corporations using inflation as an excuse to raise prices above their own cost increases, resulting in near-record profits.

US corporate profits are at the highest margins since 1950 - while consumers are paying through the nose.

Let's be clear: the biggest domestic cause of inflation is corporate power. Republicans are lying about this to protect their big corporate patrons.

3. They say Democrats voted to hire an army of IRS agents who will audit and harass the middle class

Nonsense. The IRS won't be going after the middle class. It will be going after ultra-wealthy tax cheats.

Here are the facts:

The Inflation Reduction Act, passed in July, provides funding to begin to get IRS staffing back to what it was before 2010, after which Republicans diminished staff by roughly 30%, despite increases since then in the number of Americans filing tax returns.

The extra staff are needed to boost efforts against high-end tax evasion - which is more difficult to root out, because the ultra-wealthy hire squads of accountants and tax attorneys to hide their taxable incomes.

The treasury department and the IRS have made it clear that audit rates for households earning \$400,000 or under will remain the same.

Let's be clear: the IRS needs extra resources to go after rich tax cheats. Republicans are lying about what the IRS will do with the new funding to protect their ultra-wealthy patrons.

None of these three lies is as brazen and damaging as Trump's big lie. But they're all being used by Republican candidates in these last weeks before the midterms.

Know the truth and share it.

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