

Are Republicans Losing Focus On Inflation?

This week, two BLS inflation numbers for August were reported. The first one was the Producer Price Index coming in at 2.6%, down from 3.1% in July. Following that report, the [White House statement](#) from Karoline Leavitt was that *“the latest PPI report shows there is no inflation.”* The following day, the Consumer Price Index was reported at 2.9%, up from 2.7% in July.

From our latest research (August 30-September 1), inflation is still widely felt, with some slight increase since the June survey in the belief that inflation may be getting worse. In June, 49% believed inflation was getting worse rather than better (27%) or not changing (21%), with our latest numbers showing 52% believe inflation is getting worse (23% better, 22% not changing.)

Inflation was the issue that got Republicans elected last fall. From our [2024 post-election report](#):

- *An overwhelming 75% of the electorate said inflation had posed some level of hardship for them and their families. 22% said inflation had been a severe hardship; 53% said a moderate hardship; while 24% said there had been no hardship.*
- *Additionally, voters were asked who they trusted more to handle the economy Trump or Harris; Trump won 53-46.*
- *In the Winston Group post-election survey of 1,250 respondents who voted, economy/inflation was the top issue at 40%, with immigration a distant second at 12%, and abortion right behind at 11%. No other issue was in double digits.*

In terms of messages heard from Republicans over August, only 6% of the electorate heard an inflation message, with 9% hearing an inflation message from Democrats. As a result, there has been erosion in economic and inflation issue handling, and this is a serious problem if Republicans allow these issue advantages to slip away.

The Republican lead on economy issue handling is down to +1, having been at +11 coming out of last November’s election and having consistent double digit leads all of last year. Even more concerning is the drop in inflation issue handling as Republicans had double digit leads last year going into the election. Republicans are now down to -3 on inflation.

Issue Handling (R-D)	2024 Election	April	June	Now
Inflation	+12	+3	+1	-3
Economy	+11	+1	+3	+1

Democrats see an opening for 2026. The [Washington Post](#) quoted House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries: *“In 2024 there was a failure to adequately address the high cost of living environment, and as a result, a price was paid. ... That’s a mistake that can never be made again.”*

While Republicans should be concerned about these issue handling trends, they can regain standing on economic issues with message and policy focus. Republicans want to show progress on the economy, but need to be careful to avoid the Biden administration’s mistake of not staying in tune with voter economic concerns. If Republicans lose focus on inflation, they do so at their own political peril.

Have a good weekend.

David & Myra