

How Democrats Should Be Talking About Energy Prices



Mary Sagatlova
Senior Advocacy Advisor
[@MarySagatlova](https://twitter.com/MarySagatlova)



Emily Becker
Deputy Director of Communications for the Climate & Energy Program
[@ThirdWayEnergy](https://twitter.com/ThirdWayEnergy)



Ellen Hughes-Cromwick
Senior Resident Fellow for Climate and Energy Program
[@EllenHughesCrom](https://twitter.com/EllenHughesCrom)

Third Way is closely monitoring the unfolding conflict in Israel and Gaza to assess the effects on energy markets. We will update this document as relevant insights emerge.

We understand the temptation to tout historically low unemployment rates, near-record job creation, and booming clean energy when voters raise economic concerns. All these things are true. For many Americans, however, the most tangible sign of a healthy economy is at the gas pump and on their utility bills, not in the jobs report. With volatile gas prices making headlines again, these positive metrics can feel distant. The data bears that out: not only do the majority of Americans think the economy is getting worse, but many express greater trust in Republicans and former President Donald Trump to address economic challenges.

The most compelling messaging on our economy doesn't just cite low unemployment and falling inflation. Instead, it meets voters where they are and addresses their pressing concerns like high gas prices and other cost of living issues. In this guide, we'll help you do just that.

Topline Message

With energy prices ticking upward, Democrats are mobilizing on all fronts. By taking immediate action to boost domestic oil and gas production, we're cutting costs for hard-working Americans *today*. Democrats know that the United States must stop being susceptible to price shocks on the global market. That's why they're making smart investments in reliable and secure American-made clean energy to build long-term energy security.

Engagement Recommendations

Last summer, Third Way partnered with Global Strategy Group to gauge how key voter groups in battleground districts were thinking about rising energy prices. Here are three insights from our opinion polling that Democrats should keep in mind as they talk to Americans about the economy:

- **Give Voters Some Relief.** When talking about short-term solutions, tell voters about policies you're promoting that will alleviate costs *now*, like producing more domestic oil and unlocking access to oil reserves to bring prices down.
- **Promote Long-Term Stability and Energy Independence.** Our data shows that messaging emphasizing policies that advance a reliable, secure, and independent energy sector resonates well with voters when talking about long-term policy. This includes a wide range of policies, including increased domestic oil and gas production, holding companies and OPEC+ nations accountable for price manipulation, or the expansion of clean energy infrastructure. Think creatively and emphasize the importance of stability and independence for our energy sector.
- **Show that you're taking action and be loud about it!** Democrats need to consistently and clearly communicate their accomplishments and intentions to lower costs for American families today and in the future. Short-term actions – like past releases from the strategic petroleum reserve – and longer-term actions – like efforts to boost domestic oil and gas to meet demand – should be celebrated as part of a broader effort to listen to working families and cut costs.

Supporting Messages

Over the last few months, energy prices have been slowly ticking up, rising 5.6% this fall. This is largely due to market manipulation by OPEC+, whose decision to strategically cut exports and curtail production by 3 million barrels a day is driving up gas prices across the country.

Democrats are tackling rising energy costs from every angle:

- The US just set the record for domestic oil production at 13 million barrels a day under President Biden, a historic level of production.
- Thinking further ahead, the Biden Admin has also approved over 8,000 permits for oil or gas drilling to ensure adequate domestic supply.
- The US has risen as the top exporter of liquified natural gas (LNG), surpassing major players like Russia and Qatar, and is expected to increase production even further.

And that strategy has paid off, with oil prices down \$30 since last summer and gas prices down to \$3.83 per gallon, just shy of where they were prior to the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine.

And the Biden administration is doing it all while laying the groundwork for America's clean energy transition through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act.

The most durable way to achieve energy security and stability is through localized, domestic clean energy generation. By cultivating domestic clean energy manufacturing sources, the United States can insulate families and businesses

from the kinds of price hikes we're currently experiencing at the hands of OPEC+ and position the US economy to compete in the global marketplace.

In the face of rising energy prices, Democrats are stepping up to meet the moment—addressing today's challenges head-on while placing the building blocks we need for a more affordable, reliable, secure, and most importantly, *energy-independent* future.