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*Editor's Note: This column was ranked #1 in OpEdNews and is reprinted with permission from Robert Weiner, former White House spokesman and a member of The PuLSE Institute National Advisory Panel.*

By Robert Weiner and August Clarke

President Biden's one-year news conference Wednesday opened with the President talking about his "challenges". Biden's White House bid finally meant that Democrats could control Washington. His prodigious Build Back Better bill, a campaign promise, is meant to improve 'social infrastructure' by enacting various domestic policies and combating climate change.

The individual issues Build Back Better aims to resolve are popular amongst voters, whose support Democrats desperately need for future electoral success. However, after a year of what the Washington Post has characterized as "the Manchinema factor", the two Democratic Senators have been hesitant to pull through on Biden's marquee initiative. Every Senate Democrat must be on board to pass the legislation, given unanimous Republican opposition, and yet this unison appears impossible when both seem bought by the "kill factor" of corporate power.

Now, Democrats find themselves in an ever-shorter window of time; less than a year before off-year elections with a two-week Easter break and both months of August and October dedicated to district work. This makes passing Build Back Better untenable if not outright impossible with obstructionists like Sen.

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**PULSE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
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Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) to interfere in the Democratic efforts. Build Back Better needs a solution that works.

Now is the time for Democrats to act quickly and adopt a new strategy.

At his Wednesday two-hour news conference, Biden said, “I’m confident we can get big chunks of the Build-Back-Better bill enacted into law.” He added later, “It’s clear we have to break it up.”

In fact, this new strategy opens opportunities for progressives to win critical victories and have a series of fantastic messages, not just for one big package bill.

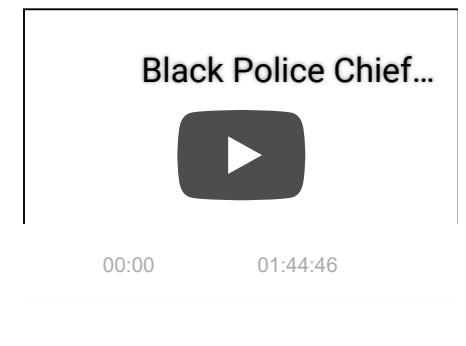
Get a victory — on child tax credits to keep cutting child poverty by half. Get a victory on prescription price negotiating so insulin costs \$35 not \$1000. Get a victory on universal pre-K so children grow up adjusted and parents go back to paying taxes sooner. Get a victory on climate change so coal workers have green jobs and give states like West Virginia a few billion dollars just as we paid farmers in past years not to grow sugar or tobacco — it’s not a unique compromise approach to get votes. Get a victory supporting home health care so seniors are not dumped into nursing homes and our grandmothers with their glazed bored eyes do not cry and ask you, “How do you expect me to act in a place like this?” Get a victory on college grants so we can compete with China.

Get victories on these individual bills, send them to the President for signature, and Congress and the President can be proud of their

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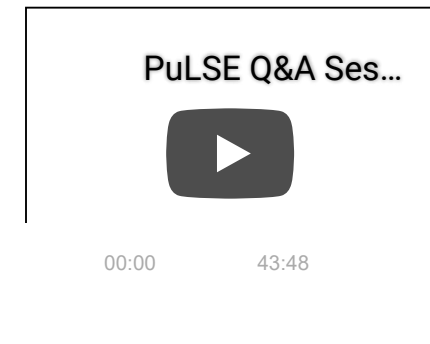
accomplishments.

The anticipated Democratic performance in the 2022 midterms is worrying, with NBC News predicting it will be a “shellacking” paralleling what Obama called the 2010 midterms. It’s beyond time to look past a one-time, laundry-list Build Back Better package bill, which has only produced more party infighting, with fault-finding senators leaving it in a political cul-de-sac. If congressional Democrats re-approach their strategy and pass each policy piecemeal, than they can work with the party’s current dynamics, not against it.

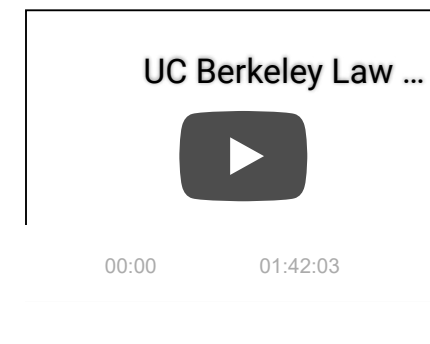
The debate on a package like BBB versus single bills is not new. Back in the ’70s, Sen. Frank Moss had twenty different nursing home-reform bills, and House Aging Committee Chairman Claude Pepper combined them into one. You can do it either way.

This gradual method would force detractors like Sen. Manchin and Sinema to come along on Build Back Better’s key issues since they are more popular when not shared under the same umbrella. For instance, combating climate change, expanding child tax credit, offering paths to universal pre-k, lowering prescription drug costs, and issuing parental leave individually poll higher than Build Back Better, which has never wavered below 55 percent support according to Data For Progress. Climate change alone is more or less at 70 percent support in nearly every poll. Yet, it is the political delivery that is stymying Washington’s efforts.

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## UN UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL DR. NATALIA KANEM ADDRESSES

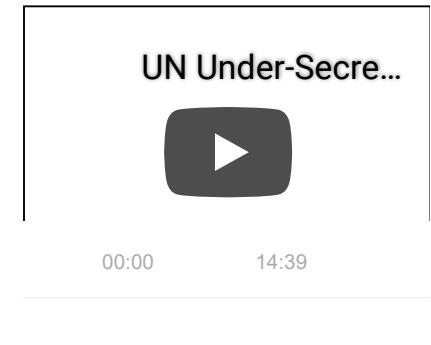
When discussing a one-by-one approach, Moderate Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) has recently come out in support of the piecemeal as it is the best alternative for Build Back Better. This casts doubt on the consensus that Congress has not bought in on the piecemeal strategy and shows there's a willingness to revive Build Back Better among Democrats who understand a new path must be followed.

Adopting the piecemeal strategy is practical, not idealistic, and may also yield considerable benefits. Democratic moderates up for reelection in November 2022 – especially from swing districts – could use the legislative track record and the momentum of to mobilize their district's base.

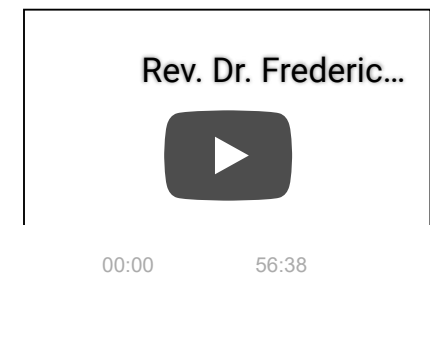
At the same time, progressives can finally turn out policies they've wanted all along. Not to mention, this approach allows for the building of bi-partisan support, as each individual issue is now open for amending, unlike if it were stuck in its current unchangeable one-and-done style law. This may be politically advantageous for a President who has emphasized his role to 'heal the soul of the nation.' In turn, given the popularity of these issues, congressional Democrats could avoid the vast deficits this midterm is likely to create by getting Build Back Better done, even if it isn't passed in one grand sweep.

President Biden's approval rating, which has not recovered since his botched departure from Afghanistan, rests on his ability to pass Build Back Better. A CBS News/ YouGov poll found that 24% of respondents said their opinion of President Biden's performance would improve if it got passed, making it

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clearer why it must be made into a series of smaller bills and passed one by one.

Democrats have no time to waste. Build Back Better needs to be re-approached in order to be revived. If the issues were passed piecemeal, it would help their prospects in the upcoming midterms by having something to show. It would help Republicans too who support the legislation. Congress must accept the current dynamic and work with it, however frustrating or strenuous that may be.

Get It done! Go for Individual victories on child credit, drugs, climate, home care, pre-k, and college. Build Back Better can happen that way, too.

*Robert Weiner was a spokesman in the Clinton and George W. Bush White Houses. He was Communications Director of the House Government Operations Committee, and Senior Aide to Four-Star Gen/Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey and Reps. John Conyers, Charles Rangel, Claude Pepper, and Ed Koch, and Sen. Ted Kennedy. August Clarke is Senior Policy Analyst at Robert Weiner Associates and Solutions for Change Foundation.*

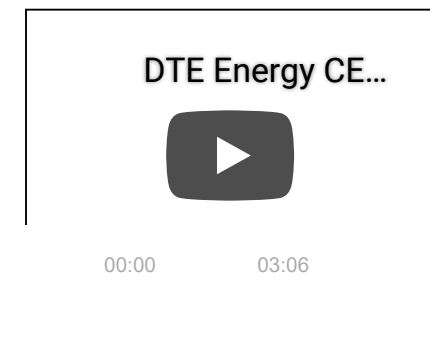
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