



I discorsi del Presidente Biden durante la campagna per le elezioni di metà mandato 2022

Selena Grimaldi

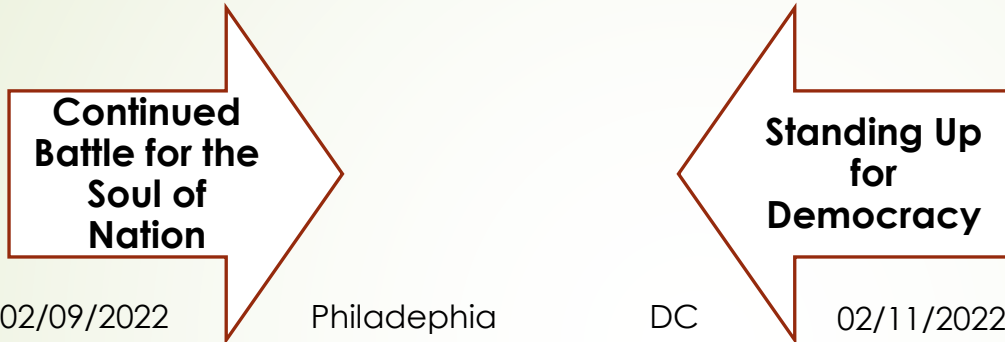
Università di Macerata



Elementi di contesto

- **Elezioni di midterm** generalmente sono a sfavore del Presidente in carica e anche nel 2022 i Rep erano in vantaggio secondo i sondaggi
- La vittoria dei Dem sembrava a rischio soprattutto perché in difficoltà sui temi economici e in particolare **sull'inflazione** che sono temi che tendenzialmente i Rep controllano meglio
- La **polarizzazione politica** negli USA è stata a lungo ridotta MA dal 2008 la polarizzazione è cresciuta enormemente (spaccatura sulle principali issues politiche e nessuna volontà di accordo con l'altra parte) → Capitol Hill 06/01/2021
- Il presidente si mobilita nelle elezioni di Midterm a causa del connubio tra alcuni elementi istituzionali e strutturali che caratterizzano gli USA (**governo separato** e poteri presidenziali) e altri contingenti o politici (**governo diviso**)

I due discorsi che aprono e chiudono la campagna elettorale



- Due discorsi identitari
- focalizzati sui valori che definiscono gli USA e in particolare il diritto di voto e il rispetto della rule of law
- che segnalano che la democrazia è sotto attacco
- che vedono nei Maga Rep la principale minaccia per la democrazia
- Molti degli slogan usati in questi discorsi saranno riproposti da Biden in tutta la campagna

"I ran for President because I believed we were in a battle for the soul of this nation".

"For democracies are more than a form of government. They're a way of being, a way of seeing the world — a way that defines who we are, what we believe, why we do what we do".

"I hope you'll ask a simple question of each candidate you might vote for: Will that person accept the legitimate will of the American people and the people voting in his district or her district? Will that person accept the outcome of the election, win or lose?"



Domande di ricerca

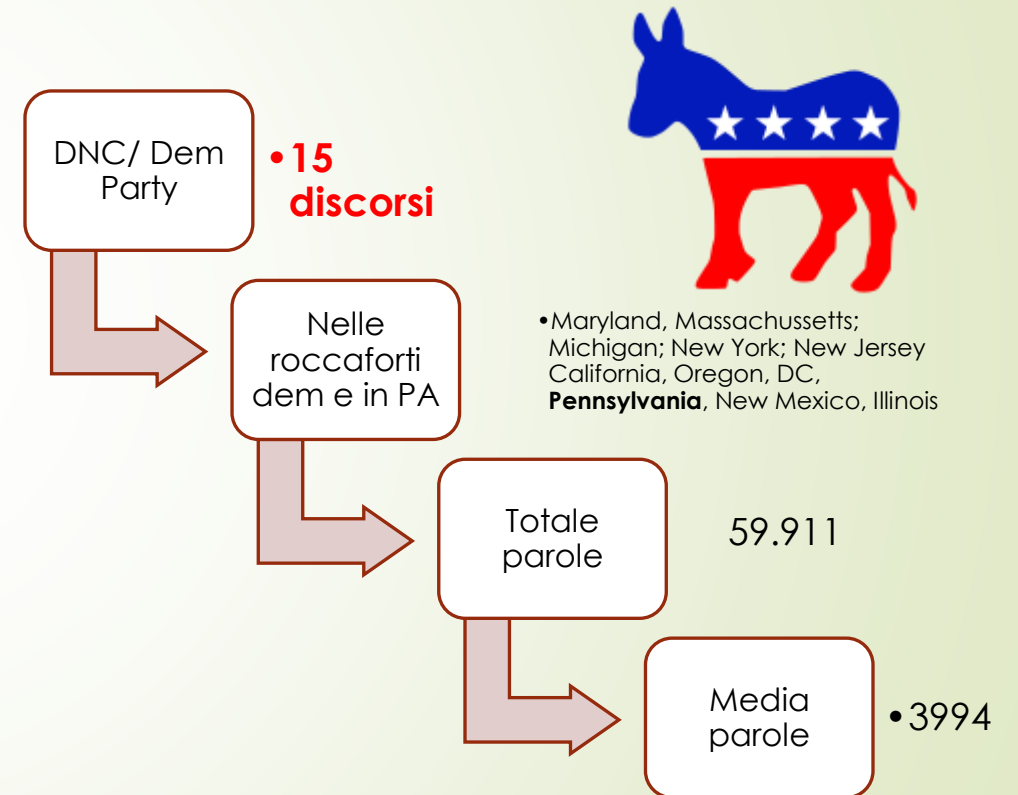
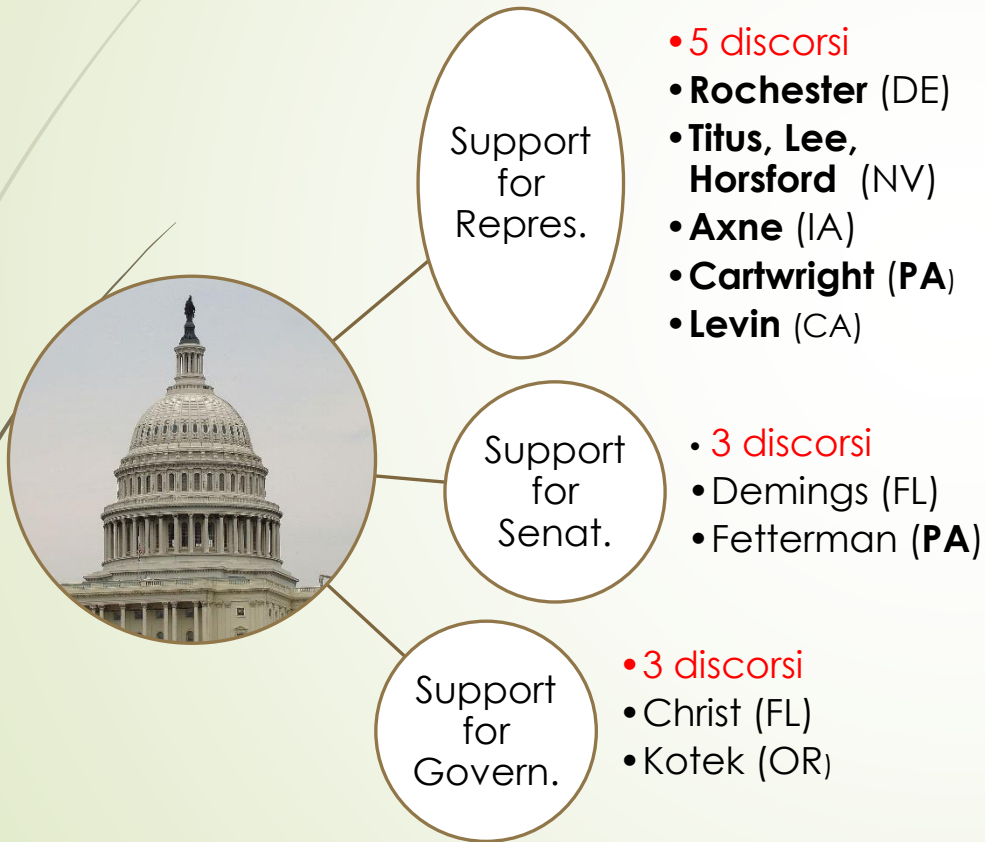
- **La situazione politica incide sulla comunicazione dei principali attori politici durante la campagna elettorale?**
- Quali sono i temi politici più presenti nella campagna elettorale da parte dei dem? L'economia è davvero in secondo piano?
- La polarizzazione crescente innesca una strategia avversariale volta all'identificazione del nemico?
- Emergono riferimenti valoriali per rafforzare e integrare la comunità politica?

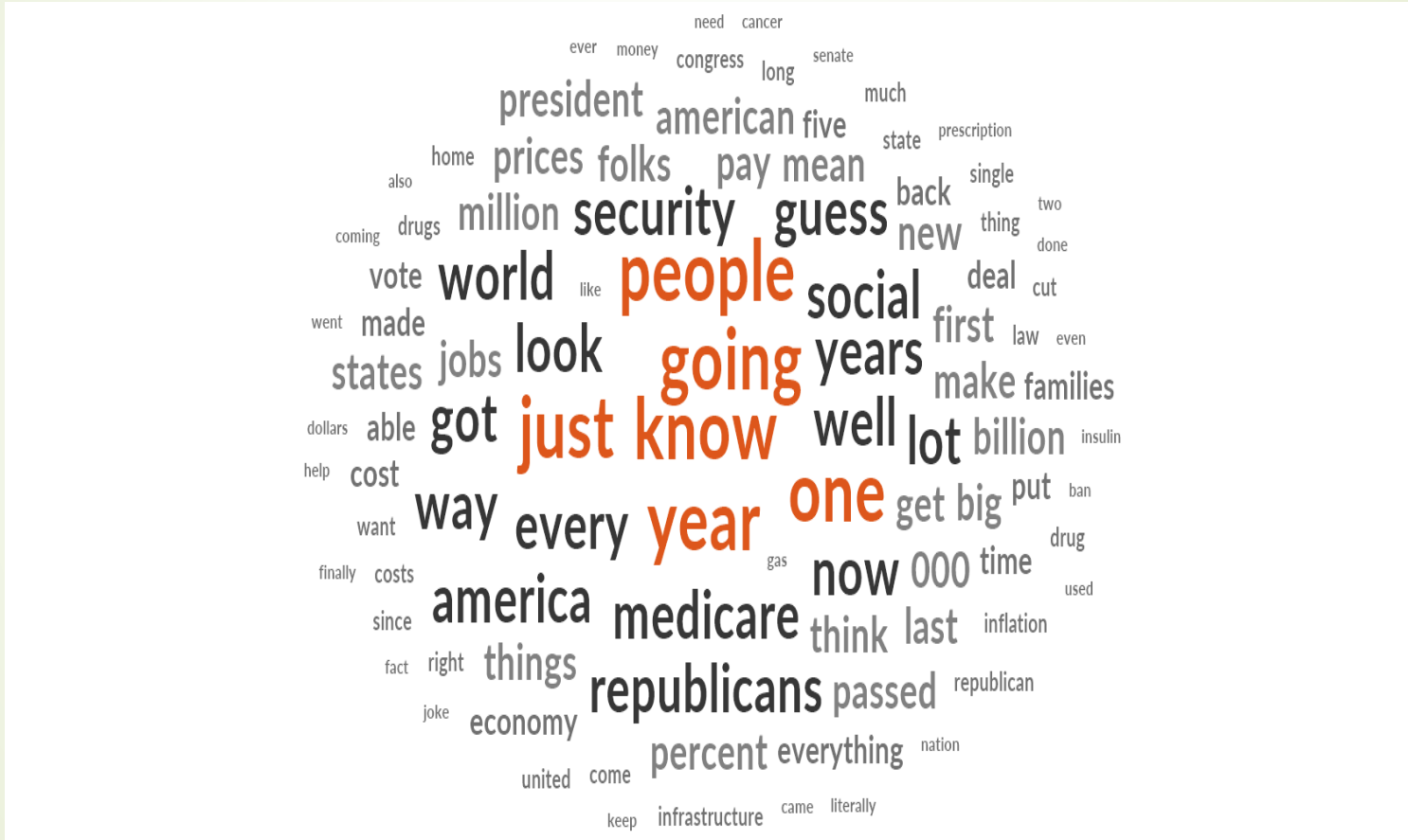


Strategia di ricerca e Metodo

- In questa ricerca si sono utilizzati i discorsi di Biden durante la campagna elettorale (16 su 102) dal 1 settembre al 5 novembre (non monotematici)
- METODO: Analisi del contenuto qualitativa con support informatico di 15 discorsi trascritti
- Coding scheme: policy sectors; valori politici; riferimenti espliciti a Dem e Rep.
- Analisi descrittiva delle frequenze dei coding references

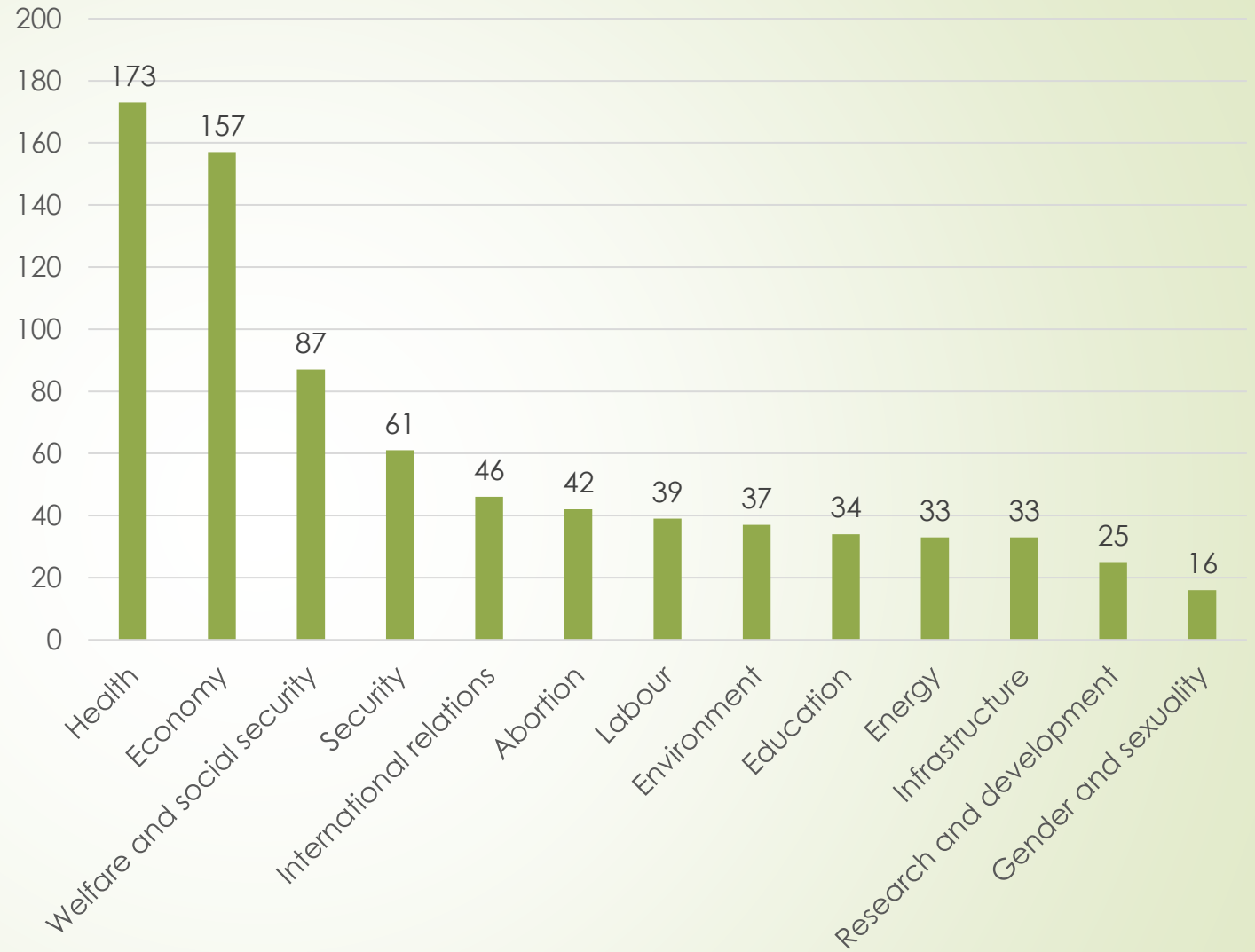
Focus sui discorsi della campagna elettorale (N=15 su 26)





Most frequent words per 1000 (Minimum lenght 3 letters)

Policy
issues per
numero di
referenze
codificate



Dentro le politiche: 4 Major Topics

Sanità

8943 parole cod

"Folks, we pay the highest **prescription drug prices** of anywhere in the world. But we finally get Medicare the ability to negotiate lower drug price"
(28/10/22)

Economia

7657 parole cod.

"The **economy is up**. The price of **inflation is down**. Real incomes are up. **Gas prices are down** and need to come down further. [...]: [...] We're **exporting products we made rather than jobs**". (03/11/22)

"On my watch, **"Made in America"** isn't just a slogan, it's a reality". (24/10/22)

Sicurezza sociale

5046 parole cod.

"Look, in my State of the Union Address, I put forward a Unity Agenda that **included taking care of veterans** who were exposed to those burn pits. [...] They need medical assistance to provide compensation. And we also have to provide compensation for those families that lost a soldier"
(08/09/22)

Sicurezza

2893 parole cod.

"I signed the most significant gun safety law in nearly 30 years. I proposed over 100,000 new police officers. The one thing **we don't need** to do is, in my view, **defund the cops**. But here's the deal: **We have to hold them responsible**".
(4-5/11/22)

Dentro le politiche: temi distintivi

Aborto

1930 parole cod.

"Republicans are going to pass a national ban on abortion if they control the Congress. I'll veto it right away, but if we elect more Senate Democrats and keep control of the House, **we're going to codify Roe v. Wade** in January for all the nation". (24/10/22)

Istruzione

1745 parole cod.

"And, folks, I took the actions I promised I'd do to **ease the burden of student debt** for millions of working-class and middle-class people". (28/10/22)

"We'll pass **universal pre-K**". (09/09/22)

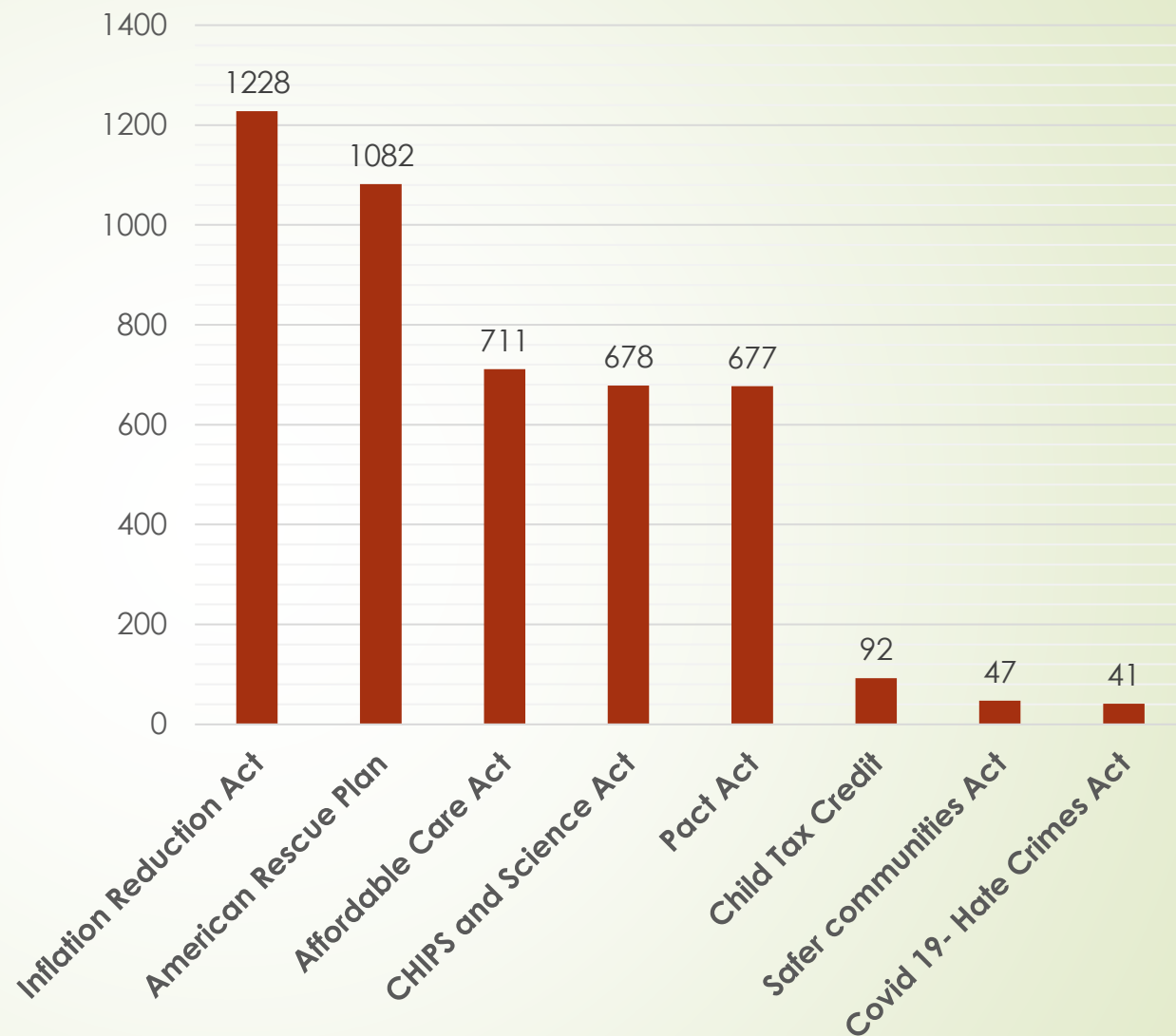
Ambiente

1307 parole codi.

"There's **not a lot of** total **climate deniers anymore** after they've seen what happened this year. [...] Look, the law makes the biggest investment ever [...] to deal with climate crisis". (23/09/22)

"the **survival of our planet** from global warming is literally on the ballot". (14/09/2022)

I successi
legislativi
democratici
rivendicati

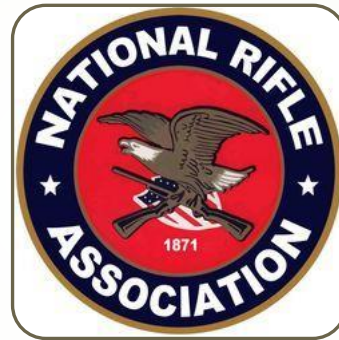


Per numero di parole codificate

La difesa degli interessi della classe media vs. le Big corporations



"We tried and tried, but finally we beat Big Pharma".
"We're finally making the biggest corporations begin to pay their fair share". (24/10/2022)



"The first major gun violence piece of legislation passed in a long time. We got it passed. We took on the NRA, and we beat them. And guess what? I'm going to ban assault weapons, I promise you". (21/09/2022)



"My objective was to build an economy from the bottom up and the middle out –an economy that rewards work, not just wealth; an economy that works for everybody, so the poor have a ladder up, the middle class do well. And when that happens, the wealthy still do very well, man. They don't need our help" (05/11/22).

La politica estera come grande assente

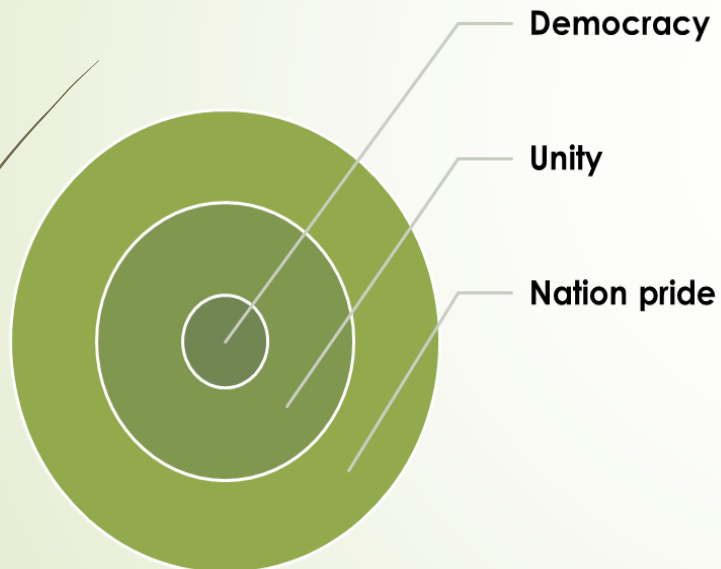
- Citata ma sviluppata pochissimo
- Biden **«makes it personal»**: mette in luce le sue capacità in politica estera rivendicando il suo precedente ruolo di Vice Presidente.
- Parla ripetutamente di 2 episodi: il G7 del giugno 2021 e dei suoi incontri con Xi Jinping.
- La guerra (di Putin) in Ucraina è solo citata mai approfondita.
- In effetti, la maggioranza degli americani non vogliono un coinvolgimento americano diretto.

"You know, I do a lot of foreign travel in my business. I spend an awful lot of time and I know virtually every head of state. When I went to the first G7 meeting in England of the largest democracies in the world, I sat down and I said [...], "America is back." (15/09/22)

"I've spent more time with Xi Jinping of China than any world leader has, when I was Vice President all the way through to now. Over 78 hours with him alone. Eight — nine of those hours on the phone and the others in person, traveling 17,000 miles with him around the world, in China and the United States. (14/10/22)

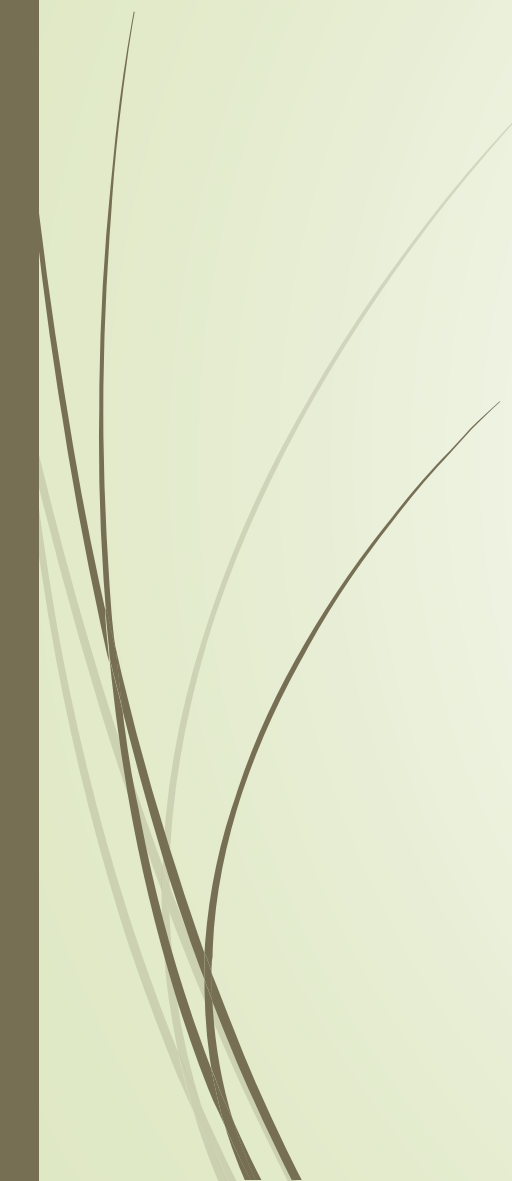
But, folks, in addition to inheriting a failed MAGA Republican economy, we also confronted a global pandemic and Putin's war in Ukraine, and that's driven the global inflation we see today. (23/09/2022)

Word Cloud dei valori



place choose optimism like democrats
literally point across long elections much
want capacity republicans days thought
state go back went
pro win things look mean let make
ballot every joke just nothing states court women
violence get just think vote never protect
see stake going think world lot believe two
better deal right house america united got now based
maga word idea democracy know one well really come
way still anything election people together beyond last
god americans nation folks american hate
summit whether country able done
thing senate even remember years law president
optimistic around mainstream stronger first
parliament

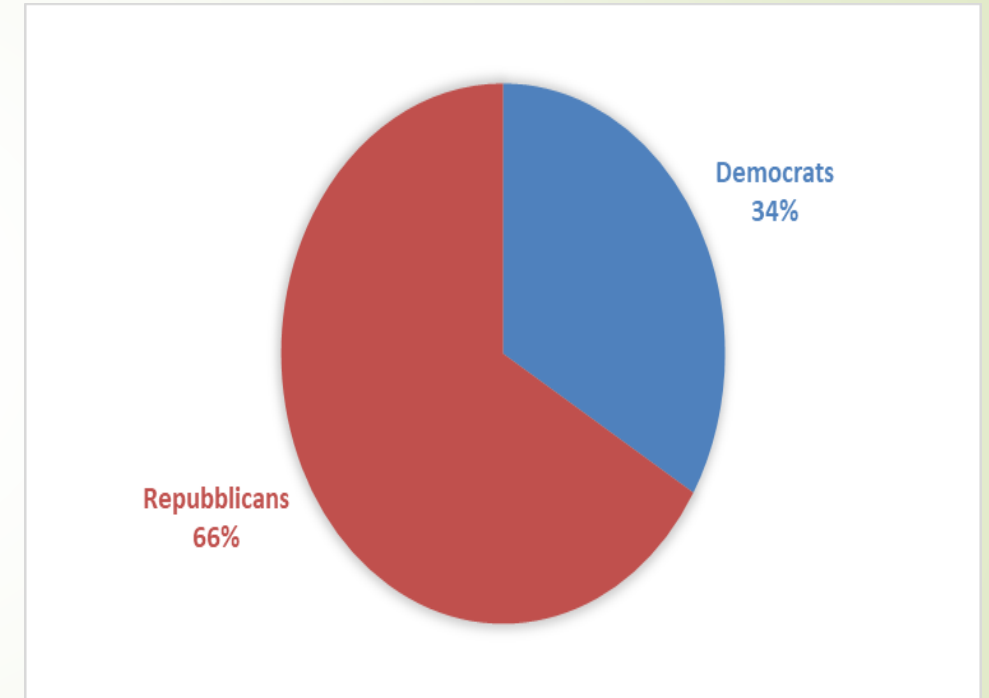
Democrazia & Unità



- ▶ Folks, **democracy is — not figuratively — literally on the ballot this year.** It's on the ballot, along with your right to choose and your right to privacy. 28/10/22
- ▶ We have more than half the American **people worried about the sustaining of American democracy.** Did you ever think you'd see that in the polling data? 14/10/22
- ▶ That's why those who love this country — Democrats, independents, mainstream Republicans — we got to be stronger, more determined, **more committed to saving American democracy** than the extreme MAGA Republicans are to destroying American democracy 14/09/22
- ▶ I believed **our story is to unite as people of one nation and one America.** When those folks came out ... holding Nazi flags. And I thought to myself, "My God, this is the United States of America" "How could it happen?" 15/09/22 [Charlottesville]
- ▶ And together, Democrats, independents, **and mainstream Republicans** can choose a different path forward to **a future of unity** and hope 8/9/22
- ▶ We have to **stand united against** hate-fueled violence — because it's real, and you know it better than anyone — to affirm that an attack on one group of us is literally an attack on all of us 15/09/22

La retorica: *Us and Them*

- Tutti i discorsi di Biden mostrano una spiccatissima **logica avversariale** del *Noi contro Loro* che si applica sia ai temi di policy sia ai valori.
- Ma è fortissimo sui temi economici e quando si parla di **tasce**.
- I riferimenti sui Repubblicani sono nettamente maggiori rispetto a quelli sui Democratici
- I **Maga republicans** sono accusati di
 1. Essere una minaccia per la democrazia e di fomentare la violenza
 2. Di voler solo smantellare quanto fatto da Biden
 3. Di non avere alcuna piattaforma programmatica.



Esempi

Minaccia
democrazia

Smantellare
le leggi dem

Nessun
progetto

- ❖ Extreme MAGA Republicans just don't threaten our personal and economic rights; they embrace political violence. Think about it. They refuse to accept the will of the people. They threaten our very democracy. They — and that's not hyperbole. To this day, they defend the mob that stormed the Capitol on January 6th. (08/09/2022)
- ❖ And folks, look, if Republicans get control, their number-one priority — they've stated it very straightforward — is repeal the Inflation Reduction Act. Medicare's power to negotiate: gone. Two-thousand-dollar cap: gone. Thirty-five-dollar cap on insulin: gone. The biggest climate investment in all of history: gone. The 15 percent corporate tax: gone. (14/10/2022)
- ❖ Find me something that the Republican Party is running on. What are they for? I'm not joking now. Find any place where you can look up — text — I mean, go online: "The Republican platform for 2022." See what you come up with. (13/09/2022)

Logica avversariale su economia e tasse

Deficit e disoccupazione

Tasse

Prestiti studenteschi

Look, you know **Republicans love to call Democrats “big spenders”** and claim they’re for less government spending. [...] Just look at the facts. The federal deficit went up every single, solitary year in the Trump administration. [...] It went up before the pandemic. It went up during the pandemic. It went up every single year on his watch. 24/10

Look, I don’t want to hear from **the MAGA Republicans** who **blew up the debt**. **We’re the ones bringing it down**. They’d shot it up. And by such a massive reduction in debt, we’re able to help working- and middle-class families in America. 05/11

We’ve created more jobs than any President has in American history. [...] Ten million new jobs just since we started. 04/11

- ▶ Democrats are making sure the biggest corporations begin to pay not their fair share, but at least a bigger share than they’ve been paying. **Fifteen percent** [...]. **And Republicans will allow some of the biggest corporations to go back to paying zero** — zero — in federal taxes, after having made \$40 billion, leaving the burden to teachers, nurses, firefighters, working folks to pay more of their fair share to keep things going. 24/10
- ▶ Under Donald Trump, the Republicans had no problem enacting a \$2 trillion **tax cut basically going to the top 1 percent**. It mainly benefited big corporations. 08/09/22
- ▶ The same MAGA Republicans who took hundreds of thousands of dollars, and even millions of dollars, in the pandemic relief loans — had their loans forgiven — are trying now to **block student loans**. 05/11 [Marjorie Taylor Green]

I nemici ricorrenti nei discorsi di Biden



House Min
Leader
**Kevin
McCarthy**: F:
18 e 13 ref.

Contro
Affordable Care Act
Inflation Reduction Act



Sen. **Rick
Scott** (FL):
F: 34 e 20
ref.

Opportunità di tagliare
la previdenza sociale e
l'assistenza sanitaria
ogni 5 anni

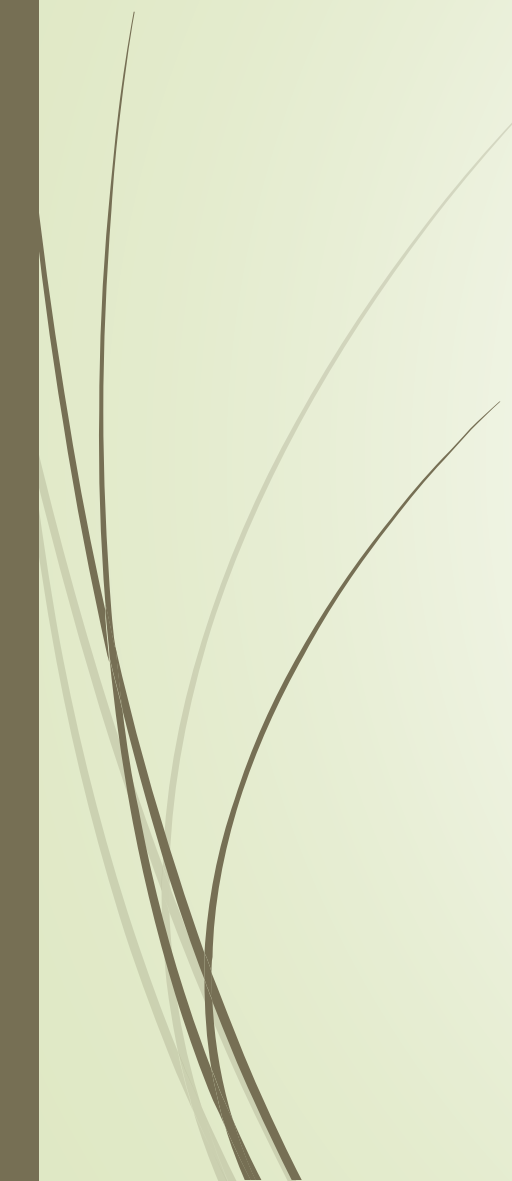


Sen. **Ron
Johnson**
(WI):
F: 22 e
17 ref.

Opportunità di tagliare
la previdenza sociale e
l'assistenza sanitaria
ogni anno



Slogan ricorrenti



- **Inflection Point**
 - **Backwards and Forward**
 - **The Soul of America**
 - **America is back**
 - **Compare me with the alternative**
 - **Optimistic**
- We're at a real inflection point in this country. What happens in the next four to six years is going to determine what happens for the next three or four generations. (13/10/2022)
 - America has to choose: Are we going to move forward or backwards? Are we going to build the future or obsess about the past? To be a nation of unity and hope and optimism or a nation of division, violence, and hatred? (08/09/2022)
 - We're at a very serious moment in our nation's history. We remain in the battle for the soul of America in the literal sense. (14/09/2022)
 - I said, "America is back." And they looked at me and they said, "For how long?" (08/09/2022)
 - As I said earlier, my dad used to say, "Don't compare me to the Almighty. Compare me to the alternative." (23/09/2022)
 - I've never been more optimistic about America. I really haven't. [...] I really mean it. I'm absolutely confident. There's not a damn thing we can't do. Not a damn thing we can't do if we remember who in the hell we are. (14/10/2022)

Stile, performance e variabili di contesto

- Non si dimostra un oratore molto abile
- Fatica a mantenere la coerenza narrativa
- A volte sbaglia i nomi dei candidati che dovrebbe supportare e i loro incarichi
- Fa molte gaffe
- Alcuni dei suoi slogan sono deboli (*America is back* e *Compare me with the Alternative*)
- Il getting personal non è sempre efficace (Beau Biden)
- L'attacco a Pelosi lo avvantaggia.
- La vicenda di suo figlio Hunter no.

Le gaffes durante la campana

- Parlando del G7 del 2021 ha confuso Merkel con Scholz
- Ha sbagliato la data delle elezioni nel discorso *Battle for the Soul of Nation*
- Ha affermato di aver parlato con l'inventore dell'insulina (ma sono morti entrambi)
- Ha detto di avere il cancro forse intendeva che lo ha avuto in passato.
- Alla conferenza *Hunger, Nutrition, and Health* (28/09/22) ha chiesto a voce alta "Where's Jackie?" ma la deputata dell'Indiana Jackie Walorski era morta 8 settimane prima.



Conclusioni

- La strategia di Biden è stata quella di **puntare sui temi classici cari ai democratici** (Sanità, Sicurezza sociale, Istruzione, Ambiente) rivendicando i maggiori successi legislativi ottenuti. L'immigrazione non è mai citata e la politica estera mai approfondita.
- Il **tema economico** e delle tasse è presente e Biden qui ha sfruttato al massimo **la logica avversariale**
- Inoltre, ha posto al centro della campagna il valore e la lotta per la **democrazia** che -data la forte polarizzazione politica e gli episodi di violenza (da ultimo l'attacco a Paul Pelosi)- è percepita anche da molti americani come un problema imprescindibile.
- Anche il tema **dell'aborto** è stato importante perché spinge gli elettori progressisti al voto. Biden qui si rivolge alle **donne**.
- Sui valori tenta un minimo di integrazione della comunità politica ma non con i MAGA Rep
- Tuttavia, il suo **stile oratorio** mette in luce tutta una serie di problematiche che tendono a **depotenziare il going public** come potere informale efficace in mano al Presidente.