

Atlanta Urban Debate League

Environmental Justice [Middle School Novice]

SY 2021 - 2022



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Environmental Justice 1AC (Argument Overview)

Summary

The Environmental Justice Affirmative contains four parts: a plan, Inherency, Solvency, and an Environmental Justice Advantage. The purpose of the Affirmative is to remove lead, a toxic substance, from drinking water. The plan calls for the United States federal government to fully fund a program that replaces and removes old water pipes, which are a primary source of lead pollution.

Inherency: Inherency is the problem in the status quo (the current state of things) that the affirmative plan will help to alleviate/fix and proof that the plan is not already being done. In this 1AC, Snider evidence concludes that the bipartisan Senate infrastructure deal will not spend enough money to protect the drinking water of low-income communities. In particular, the author argues that the \$15 billion spent by the Senate deal is much less than the \$60 billion plus required to solve the problem.

Solvency: Solvency is proof of why the proposed plan will work and solve the harms/problems that would happen without the plan. In this 1AC, the Filippelli evidence makes two arguments. First, lead pipes are dangerous and a key source of lead poisoning in children. Second, the cost of removing and replacing lead pipes in Flint, Michigan proves that the full cost of solving the problem is much greater than current estimates. In fact, the number of lead pipes could be much larger than expected, since many cities do not have maps of where lead pipes are.

Advantage (Environmental Justice): An advantage explains the benefits gained from doing the plan and is sometimes called “Harms” because the plan avoids something harmful that would happen in the status quo. Advantages end with an **Impact**.

In this 1AC, the Environmental Justice Advantage makes two claims. First, the Khazan evidence concludes that the Flint water crisis was not unique. In fact, over 5 million Americans currently drink contaminated water, causing a serious public health crisis. Second, the Kalala evidence concludes that lead poisoning is fundamentally immoral because it unequally affects children of color. In particular, lead poisoning traps people of color in a cycle of poverty by greatly increasing the risk of arrest and lowering academic success. As a result, the judge has a moral obligation to fight racism and vote for the plan.

Spending Disadvantage (Argument Overview)

Summary

The Spending Disadvantage contains three parts: Unique-Link, Internal Link, and Impact. A Disadvantage argues that the costs of the Affirmative plan are more important than (outweigh) the potential benefits (advantages). In particular, the Spending Disadvantage argues that, by spending money not funded by taxes (deficit spending), the plan lowers the value of the dollar (inflation) and harms the economy.

Uniqueness / Link: Uniqueness is the argument that the status quo (current state of things) is good now but could take a turn for the worse if the plan were to happen. A link is the negative change to the status quo made by the Affirmative plan. The Egan evidence is a Unique-Link, which makes both a uniqueness argument and a link argument. In particular, the author cites a report by Moody's Analytics, which says President Biden's agenda will boost the economy by investing in infrastructure and the social safety net. However, the report concludes that new deficit spending (government spending not funded by taxes) could lower the value of the dollar (inflation).

Internal Link: An Internal Link is the series of events that takes place between the change made by the plan (Link) and the ultimate negative consequence of that change (Impact). In the Spending Disadvantage, the Cox evidence cites historical examples like pre-World War II Germany and Zimbabwe to prove that extremely high rates of inflation (hyperinflation) will destroy the economy. In essence, governments that spend money they do not have are forced to print more money to pay off their debt.

Impact: An Impact is the ultimate negative consequence of the change to the status quo made by the plan. In the Spending Disadvantage, the Liu evidence argues that economic decline leads to hatred of minority groups and foreign countries. As a result, economic decline risks war, as countries scapegoat (blame) other countries for their problems.

Environmental Justice Affirmative (1AC Shell)

Environmental Justice 1AC — 1/4

Greetings! My partner and I propose the following plan:

The United States federal government should substantially increase its protection of water resources in the United States by fully funding a program to remove harmful pollutants from drinking water.

Contention One is Inherency:

The infrastructure deal isn't enough. Full funding is necessary to protect the drinking water of low-income communities

Snider 8/2 – Journalist For Politico

(Annie, Journalist For Politico. Biden Says Bipartisan Deal Will Solve The Country's Lead Problem. It Won't. Politico. August 2, 2021.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/08/02/biden-lead-problem-502149>)

President Joe Biden vows that the bipartisan infrastructure deal would eliminate lead from the nation's drinking water systems, particularly in low-income and communities of color that disproportionately suffer exposure to the potent neurotoxin. **But the \$1 trillion legislation** unveiled Sunday evening **won't come close** to fulfilling that promise. **The bill** unveiled by Senate negotiators **tags just \$15 billion for the lead removal initiative** — a fraction of the \$45 billion that the White House initially called for to accomplish its signature goal, and **far less than the \$60 billion that the drinking water industry says it would take. And half of the money** provided by the bill **would come in** the form of **loans** that communities have to repay, **putting a large share** of the funding **beyond the reach of many** of the **communities** that need it most. "What's needed is at least \$45 billion to solve the problem of lead service lines. That, absolutely, is going to be necessary to resolve this issue," said Erik Olson, head of the Natural Resources Defense Council's health program. But the White House maintains the deal will be enough to get the job done, arguing that in addition to the \$15 billion, another \$11 billion other funds in the bill could be put toward the goal: "The bipartisan agreement will eliminate all lead drinking water pipes and service lines in the United States with this unprecedented funding — full stop," Deputy White House Press Secretary Andrew Bates said in a statement to POLITICO. In a statement last week ahead of the bill's release, Biden said the deal "will put plumbers and pipefitters to work replacing all of the nation's lead water pipes so every child and every American can turn on the faucet at home or school and drink clean water — including in low-income communities and communities of color that have been disproportionately affected by dangerous lead pipes." Rep. Peter DeFazio of Oregon, a founding member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, called the president's claim laughable. "We're seeing a lot of spin out of the White House, which is just unbelievable," he said on a call with reporters last week, noting that the \$15 billion senators had said was tagged for lead removal "of course would not replace all the lead pipes." DeFazio shepherded a major transportation and water bill, H.R. 3684 (117), through the House last month that would provide the White House's full \$45 billion request for lead. Public health advocates hope the bipartisan bill's funding is just a down payment for additional dollars that could come from a second, Democrats-only reconciliation bill being prepared by Senate leaders. But it is unclear if the political impetus will be there since progressives are focused on advancing climate goals in a second measure — and because Biden and the White House are declaring that the first bill solves the lead problem.

EPA estimates there are 6 million to 10 million lead service lines across the country but since many communities don't have maps of which lines are made of which materials, **the extent of the lead problem — and the cost of fixing it — could be far higher. Without full funding,** advocates say **the low-income communities where lead lines are more likely to be present are apt to end up on the short end of the stick.**

Contention Two is Solvency:

Fully investing in water infrastructure is critical to fight lead poisoning. The plan is a key step to avoid future crises

Filippelli 5/4 – Director of the Center for Urban Health

(Gabriel, Director of the Center For Urban Health At Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Biden's Infrastructure Plan Targets Lead Pipes That Threaten Public Health Across The U.S. Public Broadcasting Service. May 4, 2021.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/bidens-infrastructure-plan-targets-lead-pipes-that-threaten-public-health-across-the-us>)

President Joe Biden's infrastructure plan includes a proposal to upgrade the U.S. drinking water distribution system by removing and replacing dangerous lead pipes.

As a [geochemist and environmental health researcher](#) who has studied the heartbreaking impacts of lead poisoning in children for decades, I am happy to see due attention paid to this silent killer, which [disproportionately affects poor communities of color](#). Biden's proposal [includes US\\$45 billion](#) to eliminate all lead pipes and service lines nationwide. The funding would go to [programs administered](#) by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This effort would affect an estimated [6 million to 10 million homes](#), along with [400,000 schools and child care facilities](#). I see it as one of the nation's best chances to finally get the lead out of the nation's drinking water, and its children. Lead poisoning does permanent damage. Lead poisoning is a major public health problem, because lead has permanent impacts on the brain, particularly in children. Young brains are [still actively forming](#) the amazing network of neurons that comprise their hardware. Neurons are designed to use calcium, the most abundant mineral in the human body, as a transmitter to rapidly pass signals. Lead is able to penetrate the brain because lead molecules look a lot like calcium molecules. If lead is present in a child's body, it can impair neuron development and cause permanent neural damage. Children with lead poisoning have lower IQs, poor memory recall, high rates of attention deficit disorder and low impulse control. They tend to [perform poorly at school](#), which reduces their earning potential as adults. They also face increased risk of [kidney disease, stroke and hypertension](#) as they age. Research has found strong connections between lead poisoning and [incarceration for violent crimes](#). The prevalence of childhood lead poisoning has [declined significantly in the U.S.](#) over the past 50 years. That's largely due to the elimination of leaded gasoline in the 1980s and the banning of most lead-based paints. In the 1970s, nearly 90% of children in the U.S. ages 1 to 5 had blood lead levels [above 10 micrograms per deciliter of blood](#), which then was the "level of concern" under federal health guidelines. Today, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials, [roughly 2% of U.S. children](#) have elevated blood lead levels. This decline is a public health success story – but researchers estimate that [about 500,000 U.S. children](#) still have elevated blood lead levels. In 2012 the CDC adopted a new blood lead "reference value" of [5 micrograms per deciliter or above](#), which identifies children in the highest 2.5% of those tested for lead in their blood. Health experts widely agree that there is [no known "safe" blood lead concentration](#). And as long as lead water pipes remain in service, children and families are vulnerable. No maps of lead service lines. Like many U.S. bridges, roads and ports, America's water systems are old. Much of the drinking water infrastructure in older cities was [built before 1950](#), before researchers started to grapple with the toxicity of lead. Most American cities have countless miles of lead service lines buried beneath streets and sidewalks and feeding into people's homes. Utilities don't know where many of these aging lines are and don't have enough data to map them. Replacing them will require significant analysis, modeling, data and some guesswork. Old service lines have repeatedly caused lead poisoning outbreaks in places like Washington, D.C.; [Flint, Michigan](#); and [Newark, New Jersey](#). [The chemistry is a bit different](#) in each case. Lead service lines typically develop a protective "plaque" of minerals on their inside walls after a short time, which effectively separates the toxic lead pipe from the water flowing through it. This coating, which is called scale, remains stable if the chemistry of the water coursing through it doesn't change. But if that chemistry is altered, disaster can ensue. In 2002, Washington, D.C., shifted from chlorine to chloramine for treating its water supply. Chloramine is a more modern disinfectant that does not [form dangerous reactive chlorinated byproducts](#) as chlorine can. This rapidly corroded the protective plaque lining the city's pipes, flushing highly absorbable lead into homes. [Tens of thousands of children were exposed](#) over two years before the problem was adequately identified and fixed. In Flint, state-appointed managers decided to save money during a fiscal crisis in 2014 by switching from Detroit water to water from the Flint River. Flint river water has completely different corrosivity than Detroit water, but officials [did not require enough chemical analysis](#) to determine what additives should be used to maintain the pipe plaque. One egregious and ultimately toxic decision was to forgo the typical step of adding phosphate, which binds chemically with lead and prevents it from leaching out of pipes, in order to save [about \\$100 per day](#). Corrosion chemistry is well controlled in

many U.S. cities, but it is not a perfect science. And utilities don't always have detection systems that adequately alert water suppliers to dangers at the tap. That's why **removing lead pipes is the only sure way to avoid the threat of more water crises.** Cities will need to innovate **While \$45 billion is a huge investment**, in my view **it probably isn't enough to replace all lead pipes nationwide. Take Flint** as an example. **The estimated cost of replacing all of the city's lead service lines is about \$50 million.** As a rough calculation, then, for \$45 billion, the nation theoretically could remedy slightly fewer than 1,000 Flints. **But there are literally thousands of U.S. cities to fix. Some** are smaller than Flint and thus likely cheaper to remediate, but others **are much larger.** My own city, **Indianapolis, has a population of about 850,000. That's roughly 10 times as big as Flint, which means 10 times as many households and water distribution end points. What's more, officials have only a rough idea of where to find the city's lead service lines. There are ways to statistically model the likelihood that a given portion of the water system has lead service lines,** using information such as water main sizes, locations and construction dates, **but they are imperfect.** Cities will need to get creative to make whatever funds they get go as far as possible. As one example, I am working with colleagues to develop a citizen science project that will provide thousands of tests for lead at taps around Indianapolis. This effort, a partnership with the University of Notre Dame funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, may augment modeling with real data on levels of lead in homes, and will increase public awareness of this issue. Lead water pipes are ticking time bombs in cities across the U.S. Other important sources of lead exposure, such as [soil and dust contamination](#), also require urgent attention. But I believe **fixing water systems is a critical step toward protecting children from the lifelong burdens of lead poisoning.**

Environmental Justice 1AC — 3/4

The Advantage is Environmental Justice:

First, the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan was not unique. Millions of Americans are drinking unsafe, contaminated water. It's a public health disaster

Khazan 2019 – Staff Writer at *The Atlantic*

(Olga, Staff Writer At The Atlantic. The Trouble With America's Water. The Atlantic. September 11, 2019.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2019/09/millions-american-homes-have-lead-water/597826/>)

The city of **Newark**, New Jersey, **is racing to replace** all of **its lead pipes** after a public outcry over the high levels of lead in its water. After exceeding a federal lead limit **three times in a row**, the city began to provide water filters to certain residents in 2018. But some of the filters were found to be ineffective, and as of the end of last month, thousands of the city's residents were still advised to drink bottled water. **The situation** is said to have **"echoes"** of **the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan**, a few years ago. As in Flint, a change in the chemical composition of Newark's water allowed the lead contamination to occur. And like Flint, Newark is predominantly populated by people of color. Officials in Newark initially denied there was a lead problem in the water, according to reports from The New York Times, even after high lead levels were found in half the city's schools. A sample of Newark children under the age of 6 tested in 2016 found that about a quarter had measurable levels of lead in their blood. The following year, more than 22 percent of drinking-water samples tested in the city were found to have levels of lead exceeding the federal standard. Newark's mayor, Ras Baraka, defends the city's response. "We gave out filters as soon as we got the report," he told me. "We never denied there was lead in the water." He said the children's blood-lead levels were elevated due to lead paint, not lead in water. The city is now replacing all of its lead service lines, including in parts of the city that weren't affected by the lead problem. **Newark is far from the only city that has struggled to keep its drinking water free from lead.** Drinking water in the United States is **mostly safe**, but **between 2015 and 2018, about 5.5 million Americans** in communities around the nation **got their water from systems that exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency's lead action level** of 15 parts per billion, according to a **report** from the Natural Resources Defense Council. **The widespread presence of lead** in water in certain areas **points to** what advocates call **a serious failure to upgrade water infrastructure** in recent decades. "The U.S. has not been investing in its drinking-water infrastructure for generations," says Erik Olson, the senior director for health programs at NRDC, which filed a lawsuit against Newark last year. **A lot of our pipes are 50 or 100 years old or more, and many are lead.** And water-treatment plants are still using World War I-era technology for treatment. **Few substances threaten public health** quite **like lead**. **In adults, lead can cause heart and kidney disease; in children, it can permanently lower IQ and lead to behavioral problems.** **Lead's damage to the body is difficult to reverse and can last a lifetime.** **When researchers examined fertility before and after Flint's lead crisis, they found** what they **called** a **"horribly large" increase in fetal deaths and miscarriages.**

Second, the impact is environmental justice. Lead poisoning traps people of color in a cycle of poverty. You have a moral obligation to fight racism and vote for the plan

Kalala 2019 – Student at Macalester College

(Honor, Undergraduate Student At Macalester College Studying Sociology And Psychology. Environmental Injustice: High Lead Levels In Children Can Have Devastating Effects. Minnesota Post. May 3, 2019.

<https://www.minnpost.com/community-voices/2019/05/environmental-injustice-high-lead-levels-in-children-can-have-devastating-effects/>)

In an article in The Washington Post titled, [“Freddie Gray’s life a study on the effects of lead paint on poor blacks.”](#) Terrence McCoy writes that **lead poisoning can “diminish cognitive function, increase aggression and ultimately exacerbate the cycle of poverty”** that is already exceedingly difficult to break.” As a child, he reports, Gray was put into special education classes and started running into trouble with the law early. These symptoms, of aggression and difficulty in traditional schooling, are ones that our society associates with “problem students” — a term too often coded to mean black and brown students. **The unequal exposure to lead** (primarily from lead containing paint) **for poor and black communities is an environmental injustice because it perpetuates some of the worst issues these communities face.** Gray’s case highlights an important intersection between the environmental justice movement and the rising Black Lives Matter movement. The Black Lives Matter movement was created out of outrage over the acquittal of George Zimmerman, the man who killed Trayvon Martin in 2013. Since then, it has evolved to refer mainly to the unfair and harmful treatment of black men by the police. **Because there is an over-representation of police in communities of color** and an already strained relationship between the community and law enforcement, **lead poisoning** doesn’t only pose a health risk cognitively, but it **can also be the trigger for increased police brutality.** Too often punished, kicked out of school Thousands of poor, primarily black, children are now growing up with this reality of undiagnosed or unrecognized lead poisoning, and are expected to develop at the same rates as their healthy peers. And then these sick children are punished, kicked out of school, and too often incarcerated shortly after, when they fail to do so. **A child’s life and chances of success can be vastly decreased if they are poisoned with lead. They are,** wrote McCoy in the Post article on Gray, “... **seven times more likely to drop out of school and six times more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system.”** [The American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) describes this school-to-prison pipeline](#) as a “national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.” Because the lead poisoning epidemic has been so ignored in inner cities, **lead-poisoned students** who display a difficulty focusing, aggression, and poor decision-making **are criminalized as opposed to treated with accommodations** for the disabilities they now have. **This** introduction to the criminal justice and law enforcement system at a young age only **increases recidivism and perpetuates this cycle of violence and crime,** which could have been avoided if people like Freddie Gray had gotten the help they needed as children. [Freddie Gray was arrested](#) on April 12, 2015, after he “fled unprovoked” from officers. He was accused of possessing an illegal switchblade. Gray was shackled and placed in the back of a police van. Forty-five minutes later he was found unconscious and unresponsive, his spinal cord nearly severed. He died one week later, on April 19, in the hospital. His death, and **the larger issue of lead poisoning in black and low-income communities, is an injustice greater than any individual act of racism or prejudice.** [Information about the number of children and young adults affected by lead poisoning is accessible.](#) Examples like Gray testing far above the “elevated” lead level as a young child are available. **Lack of action or concrete solutions** to this epidemic **is a conscious disregard for the health, safety, and livelihood of low income, minority communities.** This needs to be an issue that is at the top of many more people’s concerns. Therefore, I urge all those reading this to think about this epidemic and its implications when deciding who will earn your political support in both local elections and the upcoming 2020 presidential election.

Environmental Justice Affirmative (2AC)

2AC Case (Advantage)

Even if lead levels are declining, lead poisoning still uniquely affects low-income people of color

Lui et al. 2020 – Medical Researcher at the University of Hong Kong

(Kelvin, Member of the Department of Medicine at the University of Hong Kong. Man-Fung Tsoi, University of Hong Kong. Tommy Tsang Cheung, University of Hong Kong. Ching-Lung Cheung, University of Hong Kong. Bernard MY Cheung, Department of Medicine at the University of Hong Kong. Are Blood Lead Levels In the United States Still Declining? The US National Health Nutrition and Examination Survey (NHANES) 1999-2016. Research Square. March 17, 2020. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-17481/v1>. Note: This evidence has been modified for clarity.)

Despite the substantial decline in BLLs [blood lead levels], disparities between different income and ethnic groups remain. From our analysis, we found in NHANES 2015-2016, for the first time, that there was no longer a disparity

between high- and low-income families in the proportion of children aged 1 to 5 years with EBLLs. This is a very encouraging finding. Lead affects neurocognitive development in children and BLL may partly lead to a poverty trap in which children from poor families will remain poor when they grow up. The elimination of income disparity in EBLLs is likely to be a result of targeted screening in high-risk children. Until 2014, black children (below age of 18) were twice as likely to live in poverty as white children [30]. Black children in poverty are also more likely to live in substandard housing and hence, at a higher risk of exposure to lead paint at home and lead pollutants from nearby factories [31, 32]. **The racial and income disparity**

has been historically important in blood lead monitoring. In 1982, Mahaffey and colleagues first reported higher BLLs in young children who were black and from low-income families in a national estimate (NHANES II, 1976-1980) [33]. Since then, the observation was confirmed in numerous studies and the disparities persisted over the past four decades [22–4, 27, 33–36]. **In 2013-2014, the mean**

BLLs in black children was still 36% higher than in white children [29]. Children at the age of 1-5 years that were non-Hispanic black, from a low-income family and living in housing built before 1950 were in the highest risk groups for lead poisoning [24, 34, 35].

The black-white disparity in higher BLLs has been found to be independent of income level, housing quality and environmental conditions [38]. Targeted prevention strategies have been implemented such as

increased screening on these high-risk groups and identification of high-risk environment [17]. **the percentage of non-Hispanic black children with EBLL is still higher compared to other ethnicities, and so more efforts to reduce the environmental exposure to lead,** particularly by removing lead paint and lead plumbing in houses, **are necessary.**

Drinking water is a key source of lead poisoning

Schmit and Hall 2016 – Investigative Journalists

(Silke / Dee, Journalists At The Wisconsin Center For Investigative Journalism. Lead In Drinking Water Remains A Danger. Post Crescent. January 31, 2016. <https://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/investigations/2016/01/31/lead-drinking-water-remains-danger/79462854/>)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency acknowledged the contribution of water to the nation's lead exposure in 1991 when it **estimated** that **drinking water accounts for about 20 percent of average lead exposure, but as much as 85 percent of exposure for infants** consuming formula made with tap water. Because of the dangers of lead, the United States started [phasing out leaded gasoline](#) in 1973 until it was virtually eliminated in 1988. The use of lead-based paints [steadily decreased after 1950](#) until the additive was banned from the market in 1978. The use of lead for plumbing was outlawed in 1986, although until January 2014, "lead-free" indoor plumbing components could legally contain up to 8 percent lead. Officials at the nation's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and [Wisconsin's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](#) attribute childhood lead exposure almost exclusively to deteriorating lead-based paint and lead dust in older homes. But lead paint is not the only hazard of old housing stock. **For decades** beginning in the late 1800s, **lead was a commonly used material in the pipes that carry drinking water** from the water main to individual homes, also known as lead service lines. There are an estimated 176,000 such lead pipes in Wisconsin, where greatly elevated levels of lead of at least 100 parts per billion — or more than six times the federal safety level — have been detected in public water systems in 24 of the 72 counties. **Recognizing the danger posed by lead in water,** some **scientists have argued** for years **that the focus of health officials on lead-contaminated paint** and dust as the cause of childhood lead poisoning **is too narrow and that water should be investigated as another significant exposure source.** Yanna Lambrinidou, a researcher and instructor at Virginia Tech, said **the CDC** and public health community **are "doing tremendous damage" by failing to require testing for lead in drinking water when a child is lead poisoned. "It's putting generations of kids in harm's way for absolutely no good reason,"** she said.

First, the Disadvantage is non-unique. Government spending is out of control

Cole 8/15 – Journalist for *The Gazette*

(Althea, Journalist For The Gazette. Federal Spending Is Out of Control Because We Allow It. The Gazette. August 15, 2021.

<https://www.thegazette.com/opinion/federal-spending-is-out-of-control-because-we-allow-it/>)

That's exactly what they did, though. **Last Tuesday, the U.S. Senate secured passage of a \$1 trillion "hard" infrastructure bill,** helped along with an "aye" from Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley. Sen. Joni Ernst voted no. **Less than 24 hours after** passing their "bipartisan" spending bill, **the Senate turned around and passed a resolution calling for even more spending — about \$3.5 trillion more.** That was not at all a bipartisan effort. Every single Republican voted no, including Grassley, who, although obviously capable of letting us down on occasion, hasn't (completely) abandoned the taxpayer. The second bill passed only with a tiebreaking vote from Vice President Kamala Harris. With the framework for the second spending bill in place, **Democrats can now start drafting formal plans to spend \$3.5 trillion dollars of money that we don't have** and do it with only a simple majority. Our government wants to spend money like we have it. But we don't have it. Not enough to satisfy the wants of these bills, anyway. **The budget plan** released in May by the White House **proposed a federal budget of \$6.011 trillion for the fiscal year 2022,** which begins on Oct. 1. **Despite that price tag, the government only expects to take in \$4.174 trillion in revenue. That creates a budget deficit of \$1.837 trillion.** When there's a budget deficit, the government borrows money to cover it, which affects the national debt. Currently, the national debt is about \$28.6 trillion. These numbers can be a bit bewildering, but I'd be lying if I said they were shocking. Many of us, myself included, have grown used to the idea that government spending is out of control, and has been for a long time. **In the last 52 years, the U.S. has had a budget surplus for only five of them,** the last being over two decades ago. **The spending is out of control** because we allow it. The infrastructure bill is a perfect example of how. "Infrastructure" is a beguiling word. It deceives us into giving politicians the OK to spend gobs of money on the promise of things like new roads and better bridges. Want for all of that blurs the line between the Democratic and Republican parties, one of which supposedly opposes reckless spending in favor of fiscal conservatism. (Or so it claims.)

Second, no link and turn. Deficit spending is key to economic growth

Seurkamp 4/21

(Danielle, Certified Financial Planner. When Should We Start Worrying About Deficit Spending?. Forbes. April 28, 2021.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielseurkamp/2021/04/28/when-should-we-start-worrying-about-deficit-spending/?sh=244eab035369>)

While we often think of deficits as a burden being laid at the feet of future generations, MMT argues that **periods of high deficits have correlated to subsequent increases in wealth and incomes for future generations. For example, the period after World War II represented a major growth period in our economy despite the high deficits** that were **incurred during the War.** Kelton attributes that to the fact that during WWII, the government focused on maximizing resources and output to make things like planes and guns and food, irrespective of the deficit (just as MMT would have us do now). **More recently, government stimulus helped the country (slowly) recover from the depths of the Great Recession** such that unemployment fell to historically low levels **without causing inflation.** **Many economists** including Kelton **believe that had the US done more deficit spending following the Great Recession, the recovery would have been even faster** and more effective. This is likely an influence on the current administration who has opted for larger government spending in hopes of accelerating the recovery.

Environmental Justice Negative (1NC)

1NC Disadvantage (Spending) – 1/2

First is the Unique Link: Biden's agenda will strengthen the economy, but new deficit spending risks inflation

Egan 7/21 – Journalist for *CNN Business*

(Mark, Journalist For CNN Business. Biden's Sweeping Agenda Is Unlikely To Cause High Inflation, Moody's Analytics Says. CNN Business. July 21, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/21/economy/inflation-biden-infrastructure/index.html>)

The bipartisan infrastructure plan and President Joe Biden's \$3.5 trillion proposal to widen the social safety net won't cause runaway inflation if passed by Congress, according to a new report by Moody's Analytics. "Worries that the plan will ignite undesirably high inflation and an overheating economy are overdone," Mark Zandi, the chief economist at Moody's Analytics, wrote in the report [released](#) Wednesday. The analysis, first reported by [Axios](#), pushes back on one of the main attack lines against Biden's ambitious agenda at a time when Americans are [getting hit by prices rising](#) at the [fastest pace since 2008](#). "This concern cannot be dismissed, but it is likely misplaced," Zandi wrote. Rather than inflame inflation, the analysts point out that new spending on items such as rental housing for low-income Americans, reducing prescription drug costs and making childcare more affordable is aimed at cooling prices off and easing shortages. **"Much of the additional fiscal support being considered is designed to lift the economy's long-term growth potential and ease inflation pressures,"** Zandi wrote. Indeed, economists, including Zandi, have [told CNN Business](#) that **Biden's Build Back Better Agenda is unlikely to cause inflationary problems** because it is largely focused on adding much-needed supply, not boosting demand. **Crucially, Moody's Analytics notes that the Biden plan does not call for enormous deficit spending that could boost inflation. "The legislation is more-or-less paid for on a dynamic basis through higher taxes on multinational corporations and the well-to-do and a range of other pay-fors,"** Zandi wrote. Moody's Analytics said the proposals, if passed by Congress, will "strengthen long-term economic growth," with most of the benefits going to lower and middle-income Americans. Zandi, [like the White House](#) and [top Federal Reserve officials](#), has argued that **inflation is largely going to cool off as the economy reopens.** Yet some leaders on Wall Street, including BlackRock ([BLK](#)) CEO Larry Fink and JPMorgan Chase ([JPM](#)) boss Jamie Dimon, have warned recently that inflation may not be temporary.

Second is the Internal Link: Deficit spending like the plan risks hyperinflation and economic collapse. It's basic history

Cox 2019 – Journalist for *CNBC*

(Jeff, Journalist For CNBC. Fed Analysis Warns of 'Economic Ruin' When Governments Print Money To Pay Off Debt. CNBC. November 26, 2019. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/11/25/fed-economists-warn-of-inflation-and-economic-ruin-if-mmt-is-adopted.html>)

Federal Reserve economists warn that printing money to pay for deficit spending has been a disaster for other nations that have tried it. In a paper that discusses [the burgeoning U.S. fiscal debt](#), Fed experts note that high levels are not necessarily unsustainable so long as income is rising at a faster pace. They note that countries that have gotten into trouble and looked to central banks to bail them out haven't fared well. **"A solution some countries with high levels of unsustainable debt have tried is printing money. In this scenario, the government borrows money by issuing bonds and then orders the central bank to buy those bonds by creating (printing) money,"** wrote Scott A. Wolla and Kaitlyn Frerking. **"History has taught us, however, that this type of policy leads to extremely high rates of inflation (hyperinflation) and often ends in economic ruin."** They cite Weimar-era

Environmental Justice (Middle School Novice)

SY 2021 – 2022 (Atlanta Urban Debate League)



Germany, Zimbabwe in the 2007-09 period and Venezuela currently. All three faced massive deficits that led to hyperinflation due to money printing.

Third is the Impact: Economic collapse risks global war

Liu 2018 – Economist

(Qian, Economist. From Economic Crisis To World War III. Project Syndicate. November 8, 2018.

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/economic-crisis-military-conflict-or-structural-reform-by-qian-liu-2018-11>)

EIJING – The next economic crisis is closer than you think. But what you should really worry about is what comes after: **in the current** social, political, and technological **landscape**, a **prolonged economic crisis**, combined with rising income inequality, **could** well **escalate into a major global military conflict**. **The 2008-09 global financial crisis almost** bankrupted governments and **caused systemic collapse**. Policymakers managed to pull the global economy back from the brink, using massive monetary stimulus, including quantitative easing and near-zero (or even negative) interest rates. But monetary stimulus is like an adrenaline shot to jump-start an arrested heart; it can revive the patient, but it does nothing to cure the disease. Treating a sick economy requires structural reforms, which can cover everything from financial and labor markets to tax systems, fertility patterns, and education policies. Policymakers have utterly failed to pursue such reforms, despite promising to do so. Instead, they have remained preoccupied with politics. From Italy to Germany, forming and sustaining governments now seems to take more time than actual governing. And Greece, for example, has relied on money from international creditors to keep its head (barely) above water, rather than genuinely reforming its pension system or improving its business environment. The lack of structural reform has meant that the unprecedented excess liquidity that central banks injected into their economies was not allocated to its most efficient uses. Instead, it raised global asset prices to levels even higher than those prevailing before 2008. In the United States, housing prices are now 8% **higher** than they were at the peak of the property bubble in 2006, according to the property website Zillow. The price-to-earnings (CAPE) ratio, which measures whether stock-market prices are within a reasonable range, is now **higher** than it was both in 2008 and at the start of the Great Depression in 1929. As monetary tightening reveals the vulnerabilities in the real economy, the collapse of asset-price bubbles will trigger another economic crisis – one that could be even more severe than the last, because we have built up a tolerance to our strongest macroeconomic medications. A decade of regular adrenaline shots, in the form of ultra-low interest rates and unconventional monetary policies, has severely depleted their power to stabilize and stimulate the economy. If history is any guide, the consequences of this mistake could extend far beyond the economy. **According to Harvard's Benjamin Friedman, prolonged periods of economic distress have been characterized also by public antipathy toward minority groups or foreign countries – attitudes that can help to fuel unrest, terrorism, or even war.** For example, during the Great Depression, US President Herbert Hoover signed the 1930 Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, intended to protect American workers and farmers from foreign competition. In the subsequent five years, global trade shrank by two-thirds. Within a decade, World War II had begun. To be sure, WWII, like World War I, was caused by a multitude of factors; there is no standard path to war. But there is reason to believe that high levels of inequality can play a significant role in stoking conflict. According to **research** by the economist Thomas Piketty, a spike in income inequality is often followed by a great crisis. Income inequality then declines for a while, before rising again, until a new peak – and a new disaster. Though causality has yet to be proven, given the limited number of data points, this correlation should not be taken lightly, especially with wealth and income inequality at historically high levels. **This is all the more worrying in view of** the numerous **other factors stoking** social unrest and diplomatic **tension, including** technological disruption, a record-breaking migration crisis, anxiety over globalization, **political polarization, and rising nationalism**. All are symptoms of failed policies that could turn out to be trigger points for a future crisis. Voters have good reason to be frustrated, but the emotionally appealing populists to whom they are increasingly giving their support are offering ill-advised solutions that will only make matters worse. For example, despite the world's unprecedented interconnectedness, multilateralism is increasingly being eschewed, as countries – most notably, Donald Trump's US – pursue unilateral, isolationist policies. Meanwhile, proxy wars are raging in Syria and Yemen. **Against this background, we must take seriously the possibility that the next economic crisis could lead to a large-scale military confrontation.**

The American Jobs Plan will replace 100% of lead water pipes

Chawaga 4/5 – Reporter for *Water Online*

(Peter, Reporter For Water Online. Biden Administration Proposes 100% Replacement of Lead Drinking Water Infrastructure. Water Online. April 5, 2021. <https://www.wateronline.com/doc/biden-administration-proposes-to-replace-of-lead-drinking-water-infrastructure-0001>)

As President Biden introduces sweeping legislation to shape the country in the vision of his administration, it has become clear that drinking water infrastructure will be a major aspect of his plans. Specifically, **lead drinking water pipelines are a major part of the multi-trillion-dollar American Jobs Plan** Biden introduced last week. **“The Biden administration wants to take a huge swing at the problem of lead water pipes, proposing to replace 100% of the nation’s lead pipes and service lines.”** [Bloomberg](#) reported. **“To fund the plan, Biden said he’ll ask Congress to invest \$45 billion** in the EPA’s Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and in Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) grants.” **Lead-based drinking water pipelines** are some of the country’s most outdated infrastructure and **have caused** some of its most **pervasive and harmful contamination issues**. Most notably, lead pipelines leached the contaminant into drinking water in Flint, MI for years, leading to an emergency declaration and mistrust in water systems that has persisted to this day.

Lead paint, not drinking water, is the primary cause of lead poisoning

Dignam et al. 2019 – Health Scientist at the CDC

(Timothy, Health Scientist At The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. Rachel B. Kaufmann, PhD/ MPH. Lauren LeStourgeon, MPH. Mary Jean Brown, ScD/ RN. Control of Lead Sources in the United States, 1970-2017: Public Health progress and Current Challenges to Eliminating Lead Exposure. Journal of Public Health, Management, and Practice. January / February 2019. Vol. 25, p. S13-S22.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6522252/> Note: This evidence has been modified for clarity.)

In the United States today, deteriorating lead-based paint in older homes and buildings is the most highly concentrated and significant source of lead exposure among children, accounting for up to 70% of elevated childhood [blood lead levels] BLLs.⁷² Lead dust and paint chip hazards arise through the following: friction between interior surfaces, such as doorframes or windowsills, home renovations that disturb lead paint, and transport from outdoor sources, such as soil and exterior paint, and lead can be transferred from surfaces to hands and ingested by young children via normal hand-to-mouth activity. At least 2 areas in the United States (Washington, District of Columbia, and Maryland) require residential rental properties built before 1978 to meet lead risk reduction standards.^{73,74} Recent events involving lead-contaminated drinking water have highlighted the need to remove lead service lines; however, corrosion control water treatments remain an important component to lead-safe water. The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN Act; PL 114-322), enacted December 16, 2016, provides for several provisions across multiple agencies to improve water resources and critical infrastructure in the United States.

Studies prove lead levels are declining. We're safer than Canada and South Korea!

Tsoi et al. 2016 (Man-Fung, Medical Researcher At The University of Hong Kong. Ching-Lung Cheung, PhD. Tommy Tsang Cheung, MRCP. Bernanrd Man Yung Cheung, PhD. Continual Decrease In Blood Lead Level In Americans: United States National Health Nutrition and Examination Survey 1999 – 2014. The American Journal of Medicine. Volume 129, Issue 11. P. 1213-1218. November 1, 2016.)

Previous studies have reported a decreasing trend in blood lead levels in the US populations among different age groups and ethnicities. [13](#), [16](#), [21](#), [22](#) Our analysis confirmed this decreasing trend and showed that there were further decreases in recent years. This is encouraging and demonstrates the effectiveness of long-term measures to reduce lead exposure in the United States. Compared with the results of the Canadian Health and Measures Survey and the Korean National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey in the corresponding age groups, the mean blood lead levels in NHANES were lower. [23](#), [24](#) We found that less than 1% of children had a blood lead level ≥ 5 [micrograms per deciliter] $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ in 2013-2014. There were no pregnant women in the sample population with an elevated blood lead level. It may be timely to revise the blood lead reference level to reflect the decrease in blood lead levels in the United States. Our analysis suggested that the upper reference level for blood lead should be reduced to 3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$.

Environmental Justice Negative (2NC / 1NR)

2NC / 1NR Disadvantage (Impact – Turns Case)

Disadvantage turns the case. Inflation uniquely impacts the poor. The plan causes economic injustice

Pittinsky 6/20 – Professor of Technology

(Todd, Professor of Technology At SUNY Stony Brook. Inflation Disproportionately Hurts the Poor. Wall Street Journal. June 20, 2021.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/inflation-disproportionately-hurts-the-poor-11624207206>)

Inflation, always a key economic metric, is especially important to watch now as it **threatens to undermine**, if not completely erode, the Biden administration's gargantuan spending thus far on behalf of poor and working-class Americans—its **“economic justice”** agenda (**“Inflation Jumps to 13-Year High.”** Page One, June 11). **The effects of inflation** not only **are** greater, but **disproportionately greater, for poorer people. Those with higher incomes often offset price increases** (goods, services) **with increased income.** Furthermore, **prices often increase more for basic needs** than for luxury items, **a phenomenon economists call “inflation inequality.”** Simply put, **low-income families’ budgets will stress and strain as they confront** the coming **rising costs of the essentials** they need (food, energy, transport, child care). The economic well-being of the most economically vulnerable Americans too often tends to be discussed as a matter of the latest Washington program or policy. **Those acting in the name of “economic justice” need to pay more attention to basic economic indicators** such as employment rates by demographic group, incomes and, yes, inflation, if we want to truly understand what's happening not just to the economy in a general sense but specifically to the most vulnerable within it. As coming waves of inflation will demonstrate, **the fundamentals**—and not the latest federal government initiative—**will most directly** characterize and **affect the economic well-being of the most economically vulnerable in our country.**

New deficit spending tanks the economy; expert evidence

Boskin 6/23 – Professor of Economics at Stanford University

(Michael J., Professor of Economics At Stanford University. Beware America's Soaring Public Debt. Project Syndicate. June 23, 2021.

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/biden-spending-plan-large-deficits-inflation-risk-by-michael-boskin-2021-06>)

Some argue that the US has nothing to worry about. **Deficits supposedly don't** much **matter** when an economy borrows in its own currency; the US Federal Reserve just needs to buy up the debt from the Treasury. And with government-borrowing rates lower than the projected growth rate, the debt can be rolled over forever. Deficit finance becomes a "free lunch." **These claims merit considerable skepticism.** The reasons why are highlighted in recent technical papers by [me](#), my Hoover Institution colleague, [John Cochrane](#), [Greg Mankiw](#) and [Laurence Ball](#) (of Harvard University and Johns Hopkins University, respectively), and Boston University's [Larry Kotlikoff](#), along with his [co-authors](#). **Historically, huge debt buildups have** usually **been followed by serious problems: sluggish growth, an uptick in inflation, a financial crisis, or all of them**. We cannot be certain which problems will occur or what debt-to-GDP ratio will signal trouble for which countries. And the US does have the advantage of issuing the world's leading reserve currency. But **inflation risks are rising – a trend that more deficit-financed spending will only accelerate.** **Higher debt** also **increases the temptation to stoke inflation,** particularly if foreigners hold a large share of it. The grossly simplistic assumption that debtors are rich and creditors are poor is likely to reinforce this temptation, especially in a political climate where many politicians and voters support tax and other policies that target the wealthy. Yet another problem is that **more public debt will eventually push interest rates higher, crowding out investment and harming the economy's potential growth.** The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [expects](#) ten-year Treasuries to rise sooner and faster than the Biden budget does.