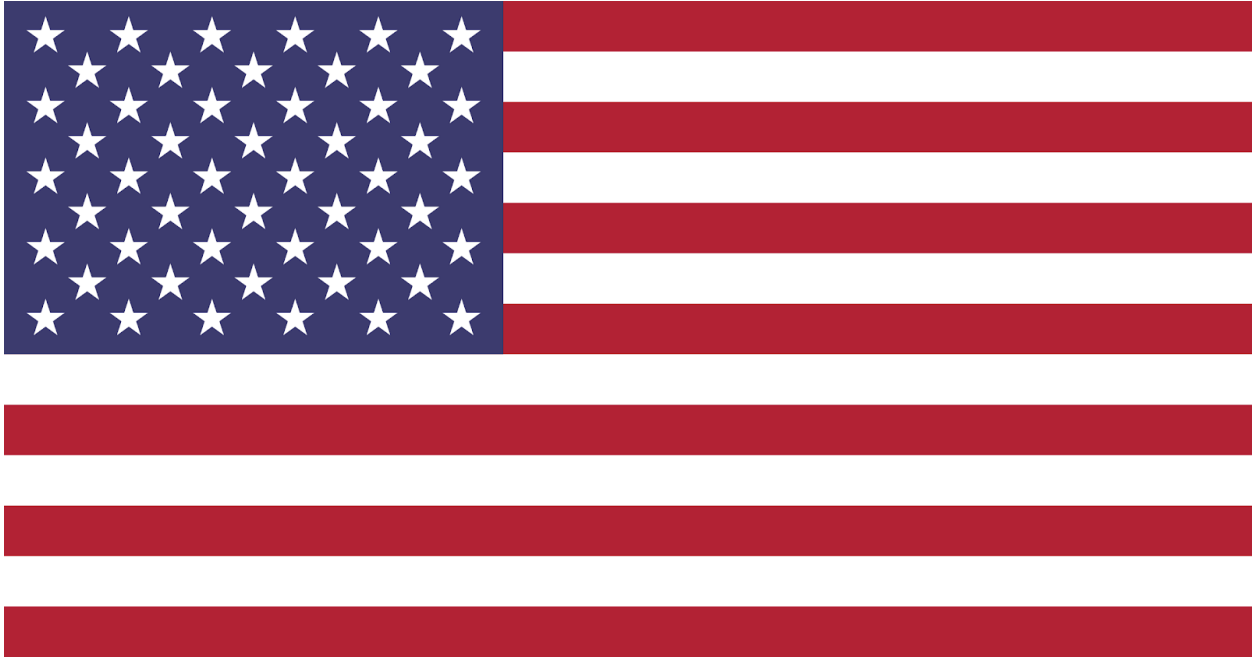


United States Senate



MADMUN XIII

About the Chairs and Sim

Hello Delegates! My name is Mason Bauer and I am very excited to chair the United States Senate and work with you all to make an incredible sim. We will talk about some of the most important challenges our nation currently faces and I'm sure we will all find incredible solutions to all of them. I am currently serving as Secretary with Middleton Model United Nations. This is my 2nd time chairing for MADMU as well as my 4 and final year as a part of Middleton Model United Nations and I am hoping to make it the best one yet with all of you guys!

Hey everybody! My name is Nikki Maly, I'm a senior at McFarland High School, and I'm incredibly excited to act as chair for the US Senate at this year's MADMUN. I joined Model UN my freshman year to indulge my passion for geopolitics, but it's only gotten worse - MADMUN will be the fifteenth conference I've participated in. Of the wide variety of conferences, committees, and specific styles in MUN, I can promise the US Senate is always one of the most interesting to participate in. The issues we've selected to discuss in this committee are not simply relevant in our nation, but dominate today's politics in an environment that is becoming ever more fraught with political tension and division. With this in mind, as well as the fact that we can't simply nuke our opponents like the members of the GA and UNSC can, I hope we can have some interesting (and, theoretically, productive) debate. Please do not hesitate to reach out (my email is malyn@mcfbsd.org) with any questions or concerns regarding the committee and I look forward to seeing you all in December!

Hello! My name is Sheel Gupta. I'm really excited to be a SIM this year. It's a really fun role and I think everyone should get a chance to be able to do it. It allows a lot of creativity and I really enjoy that type of stuff. I actually joined MUN on a whim and ended up really enjoying it. I did well and had a great time learning all the parliamentary procedures and meeting so many new people. Making friends was definitely the best part of joining MUN for me because I ended up making really close friends. I really like the topics that we chose since gun control and inflation are very relevant and important to talk about. I think that it will be really interesting to see how everything will play out.

Positions:

Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY, Minority Leader)
Sen. John Thune (R-SD, Minority Whip)
Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI)
Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)
Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT)
Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL)
Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)
Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)
Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY)
Sen. Ben Sasse (R-NE)
Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO)
Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL)
Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY, Majority Leader)
Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL, Majority Whip)
Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV)
Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)
Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)
Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)
Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-GA)
Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT, caucuses with Democrats)

Each delegate should consider many aspects of their assigned position, including their party affiliation, relation to their party, political history, and personal opinions/action on the issues at hand, as well as the role they may play in committee (ex. a party leader will seek to maintain party unity on an issue, while a moderate may attempt to work with members of the other party to compromise).

Topic 1: Healthcare

Healthcare has been one of the most contested issues in U.S. politics for decades now. From the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau in the 1860s, directly after the American Civil War, to today's debates of insurance and Medicare-for-All, the issue has been a longstanding heavyweight in American politics (a concise timeline can be found [here](#)). However, the issue is increasingly at the forefront of Americans' minds, with a whopping 86% of Americans considering healthcare costs a very big or moderately big problem today^[1]. For many, regular healthcare has become virtually inaccessible due to skyrocketing costs, poor insurance coverage, and logistical difficulties; even now, approximately 31 million Americans have no healthcare insurance^[2].

There are multiple aspects to today's healthcare crisis: astronomical prices for medical care and life-saving pharmaceuticals, difficulty in obtaining or affording health insurance which frequently fails to meet all needs, and wildly expensive administrative costs that drive the price of healthcare up at an astounding rate. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused or exacerbated a number of other issues, as well; staffing shortages and insufficient hospital resources have become severe and widespread across the nation in recent years. Not all of these issues can be easily solved with legislative solutions, especially given the prevalence of private insurance programs that are somewhat resistant to governmental interference; however, the Senate should attempt to address as many parts of the problem as possible (especially with the heightened political pressure of the upcoming midterm elections).

The US healthcare system is complex and multifaceted - while much of the population relies on private health insurance purchased or provided through an employer, public options such as Medicare and Medicaid also offer government-sponsored health insurance to specific populations. Other specific programs, such as the health care provided to veterans through the US government's Veterans' Affairs program, serve as additional considerations. The 2010 Affordable Care Act, signed into law by then-President Barack Obama, made several advances in ensuring access to affordable health insurance across-the-board; among other things, it required employers (of a certain size) to provide health coverage to their employees, expanded qualifiers for Medicaid assistance, regulated the ability of insurers to deny coverage based on the presence of pre-existing conditions, and initiated research into outcomes of the health system^[4].

Current political debates have posed a number of other potential solutions. A small number of politicians, overwhelmingly from the political left, have proposed a single-payer Medicare-for-All system similar to the Beveridge model that would abolish private insurance in favor of government funding (through taxation) for healthcare services with no out-of-pocket cost for the patient. In theory, the single-payer system would result in significantly decreased administrative work and would reduce the attached costs. However, many politicians across the aisle are opposed to this proposal due to its (approximately) estimated \$30 trillion price tag^[5]. An alternative suggestion, frequently pitched during the campaigns of the 2020 Democratic presidential primary and deemed "Medicare-for-all-who-want-it," is a public option to work

alongside existing private insurers, extending coverage accessibility while maintaining the option of private insurance. This option has been explicitly supported by many moderate-left politicians, including now-Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg during their 2020 bids for the Democratic presidential nomination^[6]. Current President Joe Biden's healthcare ambitions are much more conservative than those of most current Democratic politicians, with his plan being mainly based on expansion to the existing governmental programs and building on the Affordable Care Act, including extending the current salary cutoffs to Medicaid.

In sharp contrast to these dramatically-expanding healthcare programs proposed by the political left, many conservative politicians are looking to decrease existing benefits and reduce the involvement of the federal government in health insurance. The 2020 election cycle included the creation of plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act and decrease the reach of Medicaid coverage. Other Republican healthcare policies have, in the past, included increasing the upper limit of health savings accounts, allowing greater investment and placing a greater emphasis on the states' role in providing aid (or refusing to) rather than taking action at the federal level. As of recently, though, Republicans have not put forward a large-scale, unified healthcare proposal to Congress.

The critical importance of insurance is, in part, due to the astronomical price of medical care. Hospitals searching for profit have the ability to inflate prices, especially those with a monopoly on the areas they serve, and with insurance companies unable to deny payment to major hospitals, no real check exists as normally would in a free market. These costs are high when an individual has sufficient insurance coverage, but for the uninsured millions, costs of medical care, especially hospital stays or complex procedures, can reach the tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. A similar issue exists with the prices of prescription drugs, prime examples being insulin and epinephrine. Both drugs, treating diabetes and allergic reactions, respectively, are critical for survival. Neither is expensive to manufacture, with a vial of insulin costing around two to six dollars to make but being sold by retailers for hundreds of dollars^[11]. Most analysts attribute this discrepancy to price-gouging by pharmaceutical companies - inflating prices due to the reliable demand on the product. The issue is emphasized by the monopoly held by the three companies that produce insulin globally today. Lack of competition (and initiative to develop a generic brand) leads to consumer dependence on these brands, allowing them to drastically increase prices. Epinephrine - EpiPens - is estimated to cost less than twenty, thirty dollars to produce, but are often sold for upwards of \$500 for a two-pack. While generic alternatives exist - at a significantly lower price - lack of widespread availability and even awareness of these options maintains the EpiPen monopoly.

The US Senate is one of the only bodies with significant power to address these troubling and even life-threatening issues. Especially with the proximity to the 2022 Congressional (and gubernatorial) elections, the stakes are extremely high. Action must be taken to address the current situation, but senators

must be sure to act in accordance with their party at a time of high political tensions. We look forward to seeing your plans of action to combat this crisis.

Aspects to consider

- Ensuring healthcare *and* health insurance are accessible to as much of the population as possible
- Addressing price-gouging by private corporations and its relation to increasing healthcare and drug costs
- Keeping in mind factors such as cost, logistics, and public support in designing solutions
- Staffing and resource shortages in healthcare may also be addressed if time allows

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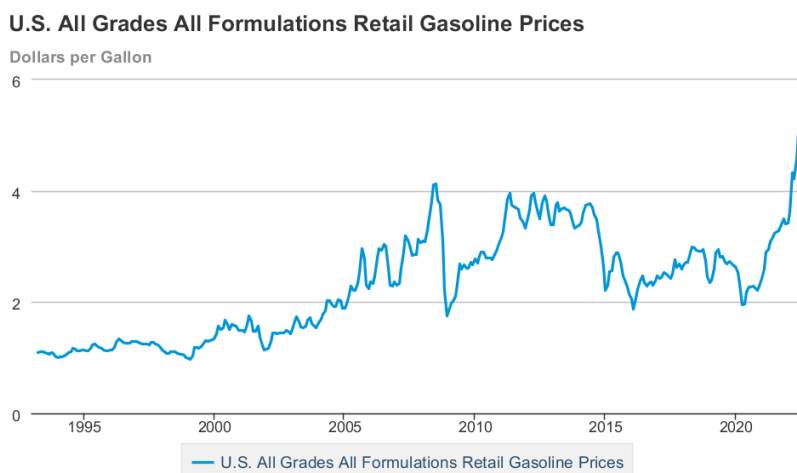
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2. [National Health Statistics Reports | CDC](#)
3. [Health Care Reform: Learning From Other Major Health Care Systems | Princeton Public Health Review](#)
4. [The Affordable Care Act: A Brief Summary - March 2011](#)
5. [How Much Will Medicare for All Cost? | Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget](#)
6. [The real differences between the 2020 Democrats' health care plans, explained](#)
7. [A group of Republicans has unveiled its healthcare plan. Here is what's new and what isn't](#)
8. [The Trump and Republican 2020 Health Care Plan](#)
9. [6 Reasons Healthcare Is So Expensive in the U.S.](#)
10. [Why health-care costs are rising in the U.S. more than anywhere else](#)
11. [Insulin prices: How much does insulin cost?](#)

Topic 2: Gas Prices

Since the beginning of 2022, American Gas prices have begun to skyrocket. The combination of various factors such as the Russian war in Ukraine and environmentalism have all made gas harder and harder to obtain. While some see the gas prices as a fleeting issue that will eventually reside, others see it as a permanent shortcoming of the current government. Nevertheless, action needs to be taken to lower gas prices for Americans.

Gas prices had hit an astonishing low during the Covid-19 pandemic. From that point, as Covid regulations eased, gas prices slowly fell back to pre-pandemic levels. After the conclusion of the Trump Presidency and the birth of the Biden office, gas prices continued to remain steady until January of 2022 when prices began to skyrocket to record highs.

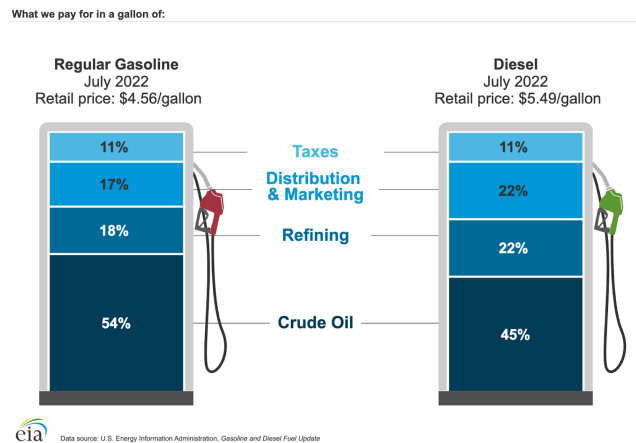
Statement Of Issue: While there are numerous factors as to why gas prices are so incredibly high right now ranging from the Russian invasion of Ukraine to worsening tropical storms damaging American oil refineries in the gulf of Mexico, all eyes and blame have been on the government. With each passing day the gas prices are this high, the more money is siphoned from the pocket of Americans and combined with rising inflation, people are really feeling the pressure when at the pump. Action needs to be taken to curb the rising gas prices, or else this government's already wavering reputation will only continue to worsen in the eyes of the American People.



 Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Current Action: The Biden presidency has been moving to temporarily suspend the gas tax, which would take a couple cents off of the cost of gas. The Biden presidency has also been negotiating more with Saudi Arabia and other oil producing Arabian nations. While these actions may decrease the price of gas by a handful of cents, many Americans criticize the government for stimulating a foreign oil industry instead of America's own.

Possible Solutions: Many people have expressed support for the United States to become self-reliant in its oil industry, which would mean ramping up drilling and processing efforts. While this is good in the long term, it will take quite some time in order for that infrastructure to be constructed. The environmental impact may also be a point of concern. Others have pushed for more use of electric vehicles, however power for such vehicles still needs to be produced and renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar have proven negligible when compared to fossil fuels.



Bio Positions: Democrats need to find a way to solve the gas price issue as it is their party and government that has taken the brunt of the public’s criticism. Whether the solution comes in the form of increased oil drilling or brokering a deal with another nation, environmental impacts are a big concern for the party and need to be considered. Republicans also want to lower gas prices but not in the same way as Democrats. Republicans have been far less hesitant to bolster domestic production of oil and passing a new, working policy could serve as a huge political win for the Republican Party.

Conclusion: No matter what side of the isle you may find yourself on, gas prices are affecting everyone everywhere in the nation, so a bi-partison, cooperative solution maybe the best answer to the issue

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