

The State of the Union & U.S. national identity

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President Biden at the 2023 State of the Union

Hailey Brown - The State of the Union is a much anticipated [yearly speech given by the President](#). It offers a reflection of the past year and a trajectory of U.S. goals. This year, along with the expected Biden administration policy update, the speech featured a [glaring reminder of the growing disconnect in U.S. national identity](#).

[National Identity](#), while shared amongst a group, is built on the individual level. Each person has a unique attachment to the country in which they live, creating a shared sense of belonging amongst people. This identity tends to supersede other facets of identity, such as religion or political party. However, in the U.S. the phenomena known as affective polarization has grown extensively over the last few decades, so much so that it has become increasingly difficult for people across the aisle from each other — especially politicians — to identify positively with each other. This year's State of the Union was a reminder of this loss in common identity. What is usually a moment of shared sense of pride in what it means to be an American became a culmination of us versus them, as Biden called out republicans, and in turn, republican legislators broke typical conventions, yelling in disagreement and booing during his speech. The disconnect between Americans of different political identities has shaken U.S. national identity, and members of government seem reluctant to attempt to bridge the gap.

Despite the identity struggle, the speech still delivered an updated U.S. [geopolitical code](#). The State of the Union is an important element of America's geopolitical code, as it

is a time for the President to justify what the government's foreign policy has been and will be in the future to the public. So, while the state of national identity may be rocky, Biden reassured that the U.S. still has its sights set high for the country's place in the world and for the prosperity of its people.

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