

STATE OF THE UNION SCORECARD

Use this scorecard to evaluate and make sense of President Biden's State of the Union address using findings from our latest report, *Civic Virus: Why Polarization Is a Misdiagnosis*. This framework also works to evaluate the Republican response.

www.theharwoodinstitute.org/civic-virus-report

CIVIC VIRUS REPORT FINDING

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

People are experiencing a profound sense of loss of reality and control, leaving them dazed, disoriented, and feeling helpless.

- Does the president speak plainly about what people are experiencing today and acknowledge that policy achievements or proposals alone cannot remedy what ails the country?

Many political leaders and news media are manufacturing polarization to stoke division and pursue their own self-interest, with social media helping to create and amplify these divisions. This is producing overwhelming "surround sound" that engulfs people, pushes them apart, and creates deep anxiety.

- Does the president commit to lowering the temperature of rhetoric in Washington, DC, and seeking common ground where possible? Does he directly challenge Congress to do the same?

People saw vivid examples of community action throughout the pandemic, but are uncertain whether these responses will last. Still, most people believe that change must start in local communities.

- Does the president make a direct ask for people to step forward, come together, and build on the positive community actions that emerged during the pandemic?

People said while being an American is an important part of who they are, being part of America is complicated and strained for many.

- Does the president talk openly about how people with different lived experiences see America differently? Does he call on the American people to shape a shared future together?

Take one more step. Email rich@theharwoodinstitute.org with your thoughts about the address.