

The IRA Cuts Dangerous Inflation Rates, Saving Lives

The Inflation Reduction Act has nearly eliminated bursts of overinflation, reducing serious injury to American balloon artists.

by Pumpy Nullifidian



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The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act seeks to reduce high rates of overinflation that can lead to sudden and dangerous pops, such as the one pictured here.

Subcutaneous emphysema from blowing up a giant link-o-loon.

A case of Gillespie's Pouches developed after a career of ballooning with bad technique.

Eye damage—or, Gosh forbid, blindness—inflicted by exploding latex.

There's no question that overinflation comes with hazards aplenty—ever since Professor Michael Faraday masterminded the rubber balloon in 1824.

Luckily, President Joe Biden's landmark legislation, the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), may be alleviating some of

this intraocular pressure.

Twist and ... ouch!

"I was 'poofing' the tail of a poodle at a birthday party when the 'poof' popped," recounted an anonymous balloon artist on [BalloonHQ's](#) website. "Periodically the 'poof' pops, and you need to be far enough away so it doesn't do any damage."

A sudden poof pop such as this is a classic indicator of overinflation.

On top of the obvious threat that unexpected popping poses to bystanders,

overinflation can bring about acute and lifelong injury to the artists themselves. Millions of balloon benders, twisters, and clowns around the world over-presurize their eyes, ears, head, and lungs hundreds—if not thousands—of times per day, inducing all sorts of short- and long-term damage.

“There are ways to avoid many of these complications,” advised another anonymous BalloonHQ contributor, “like using a pump instead of mouth-blowing, keeping the balloon away from your face, and/or wearing glasses.”

Pump it!

Manual and electric inflation pumps, which experts warn can come with a carpal-tunnel-syndrome tradeoff, eradicate mouth-blowing risks and so are certainly part of a lower-pressure solution. But to fully address overinflation, we must discourage all artists—no matter their inflation method—from blowing up balloons past their limits, chasing that perfect twist.

What we need is a change in “pop” culture.

To animate this vision of an America with safer balloon sculpting, the IRA expanded tax breaks for air pumps and set aside funding for state apprenticeship agencies to create robust balloon-artist tutelage programs.

Since the law’s enactment, the Balloon Blowing and Pumping Safety Association has reported a 75% decrease in serious injury due to overinflation and has also documented early evidence of a decline in repetitious, high-octane activities among its members—though the industry group clarifies, “It remains to be seen whether the legislation will shrink chronic overinflation in the coming years.”

“Listen to the fools”

Many in the balloon-twisting world consider this a clear victory for the Biden Administration, but the president appeared deflated when asked about the Inflation Reduction Act at a recent event.

“I wish I hadn’t called it that,” he sighed, bemoaning the fact that literally everyone other than actual clowns thinks the law is about the other kind of dangerous inflation. And although that type has also declined in the U.S. (for mostly unrelated reasons), many people who have never twisted a balloon before are having a laugh at the law’s expense, saying that despite the environmental progress it’s made (which is laudable and not a laughing matter!), the historic legislation hasn’t had much of a hand—at least so far—in achieving the one goal actually in its name.

“Folks, we’ve got to listen to the fools here!” Biden shouted vigorously during his State of the Union address. “I’m working my patoot off fighting overinflation from greedflation with shrinkflation-omics! I’m not clowning around here!”

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