

January 12, 2022

National Policy Survey

Summary: Researchers at the University of South Florida – in collaboration with researchers at Florida International University – conducted a national survey of 1,000 eligible voters to measure public opinion on a variety of current policy issues. The results presented in this report address the COVID-19 pandemic, the most important issues facing the United States today, and presidential job approval. The survey included a representative sample of Americans, fielded between January 6th and 10th, 2022. Topline results are reported below with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/- 3.1.

Amid the Omicron surge, Americans still view COVID-19 as the most important issue facing the country. A plurality of respondents (32.5%) say that the COVID-19 pandemic is the most important issue facing the United States today. Comparatively, less than 15% said the same about the economy (14.4%) and inflation (7.1%). Three-quarters (74.2%) are either “somewhat” or “very concerned” about emerging variants of the virus.

Americans are divided on the issue of vaccine mandates, and most hold strong opinions on the matter. When asked about President Biden’s proposed vaccine mandate, respondents were relatively divided, with 52.6% indicating some support for the proposal, and 47.4% opposing it. Overall opinions on the matter were quite strong, with roughly a third of respondents saying that they “strongly support” (35.2%) the measure, and a similar number (35.6%) saying that they “strongly oppose” it.

A majority of Americans would support a vaccine requirement for domestic air travel, though a third strongly oppose such measures. Among the survey respondents, 60.3% said that they would either “strongly” or “somewhat support” a policy that required all passengers on domestic flights in the United States to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19. In contrast, another 29.1% indicated that they “strongly oppose” such a policy.

Sharp partisan divisions persist when it comes to COVID-19. Republicans and Democrats differ significantly when it comes to COVID-19 mitigation and response policies. For example, 88.1% of Democrats voiced support for President Biden’s proposed vaccine mandates, compared with only 35.6% of Republicans. Democrats are more likely to agree that measures such as mask wearing/social distancing are still necessary (94.4% compared to 49.9% of Republicans) and that vaccines have been effective in protecting Americans from the virus (83.5% compared to 41.0% of Republicans).

A majority of Americans expressed dissatisfaction with the President’s handling of key issues.

Following recent trends, President Biden was found to have high disapproval ratings in several key areas, including his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic (51.8% disapprove), jobs and the economy (51.3%), immigration and border security (58.7%), foreign policy (52.2%), and his effectiveness at unifying Americans (54.4%).

Americans view the national debt and political polarization as being among the most significant threats to the country’s future.

A bipartisan majority (87.9%) indicated that the national debt is a significant threat the America’s future. A similar majority (87.4%) said the same about rampant partisanship and political polarization. There was somewhat less agreement on issues such as climate change (73.5%), racism (73.3%) and inequality (69.7%).

Partisans have different concerns about the future. Republicans were most likely to view the national debt (93.9%) and foreign adversaries (90.0%) as significant threats to America’s future, while Democrats were most likely to say the same about climate change (93.4%) and racism (91.8%).

(See pages below for full tabular results)

Summary of Responses

*President Biden has proposed an executive order that would require all Americans who work at large companies (i.e. 100 employees or more) to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of their employment. **Do you support or oppose this requirement?***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	352	35.2
Somewhat Support	174	17.4
Somewhat Oppose	118	11.8
Strongly Oppose	356	35.6

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 88.1%; Independents = 49.1%; Republicans = 22.2%)

Would you support or oppose a policy that required all passengers on domestic flights in the United States to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19?

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	428	42.8
Somewhat Support	175	17.5
Somewhat Oppose	106	10.6
Strongly Oppose	291	29.1

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 89.4%; Independents = 56.7%; Republicans = 34.5%)

How concerned are you about emerging variants of the COVID-19 virus, such as the “Omicron variant”?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Concerned	439	43.9
Somewhat Concerned	303	30.3
Not Very Concerned	145	14.5
Not at All Concerned	113	11.3

N=1,000 (Very/Somewhat Concerned: Democrats = 93.7%; Independents = 69.7%; Republicans = 59.4%)

*Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: **When it comes to COVID-19, the worst is behind us.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	94	9.4
Somewhat Agree	169	16.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	304	30.4
Somewhat Disagree	234	23.4
Strongly Disagree	199	19.9

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 16.2%; Independents = 25.6%; Republicans = 39.9%)

Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***I feel more prepared to protect myself from COVID-19 than I did when the outbreak began.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	335	33.5
Somewhat Agree	391	39.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	195	19.5
Somewhat Disagree	47	4.7
Strongly Disagree	32	3.2

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 81.2%; Independents = 70.6%; Republicans = 69.3%)

Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***I believe that contracting COVID-19 could result in severe health consequences for myself or a member of my household.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	336	33.6
Somewhat Agree	277	27.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	190	19.0
Somewhat Disagree	125	12.5
Strongly Disagree	72	7.2

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 79.2%; Independents = 56.7%; Republicans = 46.4%)

*Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: **I believe that prevention measures such as wearing masks indoors and social distancing are still necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	508	50.8
Somewhat Agree	205	20.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	98	9.8
Somewhat Disagree	87	8.7
Strongly Disagree	102	10.2

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 94.4%; Independents = 69.1%; Republicans = 49.9%)

*Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: **I believe that COVID-19 vaccines have been effective in protecting Americans from the virus.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	322	32.2
Somewhat Agree	264	26.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	137	13.7
Somewhat Disagree	119	11.9
Strongly Disagree	158	15.8

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 83.5%; Independents = 55.6%; Republicans = 41.0%)

Do you approve or disapprove of the job that President Joe Biden is doing in each of the following areas? (As a percentage of total respondents by row)

	Total Approval	Strongly Approve	Somewhat Approve	Total Disapproval	Somewhat Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove	Unsure
Jobs and the Economy	42.8	15.5	27.3	51.3	13.5	37.8	5.9
Foreign Policy	36.7	13.1	23.6	52.2	15.9	36.3	11.1
Race Relations	39.6	14.3	25.3	48.9	17.8	31.1	11.5
Immigration/Border	32.2	9.3	22.9	58.7	18.0	40.7	9.1
COVID-19 Pandemic	44.1	20.1	24.0	51.8	17.3	34.5	4.1
Climate Change	39.4	14.9	24.5	45.8	17.3	28.5	14.8
Unifying Americans	33.7	11.8	21.9	54.4	15.6	38.8	11.9

N=1,000; (Statistically significant differences in approval exist across each policy area by political partisanship. Detailed partisanship data are available upon request.)

In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing the United States today?

	Frequency	Percentage
COVID-19 Pandemic	325	32.5
Economy	144	14.4
Government Corruption	130	13.0
Inflation	71	7.1
Healthcare	58	5.8
Climate Change	56	5.6
Immigration	48	4.8
Unemployment/Jobs	30	3.0
Crime	25	2.5
Race Relations	24	2.4
National Debt	21	2.1
Education	14	1.4
Other	54	5.4

N=1,000 (Statistically significant differences in perception of the most important issue exist by political partisanship. Detailed partisanship data are available upon request.)

In your opinion, how significant of a threat are each of the following to America's future?
National Debt.

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Significant	510	51.0
Somewhat Significant	369	36.9
Not Very Significant	95	9.5
Not at All Significant	26	2.6

N=1,000 (Very/Somewhat Significant: Democrats = 86.5%; Independents = 87.6%; Republicans = 93.9%)

In your opinion, how significant of a threat are each of the following to America's future?
Partisanship/Political Polarization.

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Significant	492	49.2
Somewhat Significant	382	38.2
Not Very Significant	109	10.9
Not at All Significant	17	1.7

N=1,000 (Very/Somewhat Significant: Democrats = 89.8%; Independents = 90.0%; Republicans = 85.0%)

In your opinion, how significant of a threat are each of the following to America's future?
Racism.

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Significant	408	40.8
Somewhat Significant	325	32.5
Not Very Significant	182	18.2
Not at All Significant	85	8.5

N=1,000 (Very/Somewhat Significant: Democrats = 91.8%; Independents = 69.1%; Republicans = 57.1%)

In your opinion, how significant of a threat are each of the following to America's future?
Inequality.

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Significant	342	34.2
Somewhat Significant	355	35.5
Not Very Significant	218	21.8
Not at All Significant	85	8.5

N=1,000 (Very/Somewhat Significant: Democrats = 90.8%; Independents = 65.6%; Republicans = 50.2%)

In your opinion, how significant of a threat are each of the following to America's future?
Climate Change.

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Significant	463	46.3
Somewhat Significant	272	27.2
Not Very Significant	162	16.2
Not at All Significant	103	10.3

N=1,000 (Very/Somewhat Significant: Democrats = 93.4%; Independents = 74.7%; Republicans = 49.8%)

In your opinion, how significant of a threat are each of the following to America's future?
Foreign Adversaries (i.e. China and Russia)

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Significant	375	37.5
Somewhat Significant	475	47.5
Not Very Significant	127	12.7
Not at All Significant	23	2.3

N=1,000 (Very/Somewhat Significant: Democrats = 82.1%; Independents = 84.1%; Republicans = 90.0%)

Survey Information

1,000 eligible U.S. voters were surveyed via an online web-panel using Prodege MR, an industry leading market research provider. The survey was fielded from January 6th through 10th, and the results are reported with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of +/- 3.1. Respondents were selected via a stratified, quota sampling approach to ensure a representative sample. Quotas for gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education were determined based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 ACS survey. Quotas were stratified by Census region to ensure geographical representativeness.

Sample Comparison	USF Survey Sample	Census Demographics*
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	50.5%	51.1%
Male	48.9%	48.9%
Other	0.6%	-
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	11.1%	11.9%
25-34	17.9%	17.8%
35-44	16.1%	16.5%
45-54	16.1%	16.0%
55-64	17.1%	16.6%
65+	21.7%	21.2%
<i>Race</i>		
Black/African American	15.1%	15.1%
White/Caucasian	74.6%	76.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.8%	7.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.9%	0.8%
Other	2.6%	0.2%
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Hispanic	19.1%	17.5%
Non-Hispanic	80.9%	82.5%
<i>Education</i>		
High School Diploma or Less	37.7%	39.0%
Some College/Associates Degree	31.6%	30.4%
4-Year College Degree	19.6%	19.3%
Professional/Graduate Degree	11.1%	11.4%
<i>Political Affiliation (registered voters only, n=904)</i>		
Democrat	33.5%	33.0%
Independent/Other	37.6%	38.0%
Republican	28.9%	29.0%
<i>Region</i>		
Northeast	17.5%	17.3%
Midwest	21.8%	20.8%
South	38.3%	38.1%
West	22.4%	23.8%

*Gender, race, ethnicity, education, and region quotas based on U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2019): <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/news/updates/2019.html> ; Political affiliation data based on Pew Research Center <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/06/02/democratic-edge-in-party-identification-narrows-slightly/>

About our Research Team

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