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Suffolk University/*USA TODAY* National Voter Poll: Trump Leads But Voter Sentiment Growing More Favorable on Economy Under Biden

BOSTON—A new Suffolk University/*USA TODAY* national poll shows former President Donald Trump slightly leading President Joe Biden after last week’s State of the Union address, but voter sentiment on the strength of the economy is rising from the depths that have plagued the Biden presidency.

Currently, one-third of all registered voters polled (33%) say the US is in an economic recovery, compared to 62% who say it is either stagnant, in recession, or depression. In July 2022, the number of voters who viewed the economy as recovering was just 9%. Since that time, those numbers have steadily increased and currently stand at the highest of the Biden presidency, according to a series of Suffolk University/*USA TODAY* polls conducted since Biden took office in January 2021.

More confidence in the economy, however, was not enough to boost Biden over Trump as a favored 2024 presidential candidate. The former president edged out the current president, 40%-38%. Still, the change in voter views on the economy should not be discounted, said David Paleologos, director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center in Boston.

“This data point is particularly important to track,” he said. “If the trend continues, more voters could connect the economic recovery to President Biden, especially if the economy continues to dominate other issues as we get closer to November.”

The economy (29%) is the most important issue on voters’ minds, the poll showed, eclipsing immigration (24%), threats to democracy (23%), abortion (10%), the Russia-Ukraine war (4%), the Israel-Hamas conflict (3%), and China policy (1%).

With Trump and Biden sharing nearly 80% of the vote, a seven-way ballot test showed limited support for other candidates, placing independent Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. at 9%, independent

Cornel West, a No Labels candidate, and Green Party Jill Stein at 2% each, a Libertarian Party candidate at 1%, with 5% of voters still undecided.

Approval ratings still lagging among both Trump, Biden

Both Trump and Biden have 55% unfavorable ratings, but more voters approve of the Trump presidency (49% approve-47% disapprove) than the current Biden presidency (41% approve-55% disapprove). Republican voters have significantly higher enthusiasm for Trump's nomination than Democrats have for Biden's nomination, with 43% describing themselves as "excited." Only 22% of Democrats said they were excited for an August re-nomination of Biden. One wild card could be the 25% of voters who say it is possible they will switch their allegiance before the November elections.

Voters divided on effects of State of the Union address

A majority of voters (56%) watched all or part of President Biden's State of the Union speech last Thursday night, while 44% did not watch. Among those who watched, 33% said they had a better view of Biden after the speech, 28% said worse, and 39% said the speech did not affect their view of Biden.

Methodology

The nationwide Suffolk University/*USA TODAY* survey was conducted from March 8-11, 2024, through live interviews of 1,000 registered voters, residing in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Quota and demographic information—including region, race, and age—were determined from 2020 national census data. States were grouped into four general regions. Surveys were administered in English and Spanish. The margin of sampling error for results based on the total sample is +/-3.1 percentage points. Marginals and full cross-tabulation data are posted on the [Suffolk University Political Research Center](#) website. For more information, contact David Paleologos at 781-290-9310, dpaleologos@suffolk.edu.

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