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Suffolk University/*USA TODAY* Poll: Three Years After January 6 Attack, Voters Are Worried About Threats to US Democracy

BOSTON—Three years after the January 6 attacks on the US Capitol, nearly half—or 46%—of registered Republican voters are not confident that the nation’s ballots will be accurately counted and reported in 2024, according to the latest Suffolk University/*USA TODAY* poll.

More than half of Donald Trump supporters (52%) said they lacked confidence that ballots will be accurately tallied, an indication that unsubstantiated claims of a rigged 2020 election may carry forward with Trump voters in the coming November 2024 election.

There is a deep partisan divide among voters regarding the electoral process, with 81% of Democrats saying they are “very” confident the 2024 elections will be fair, while only 14% of Republicans say they felt as sure, according to the national poll of registered voters.

But the poll found that fears about the future of democracy extend across party lines, with the vast majority of voters expressing concerns, although for different reasons. More than eight in ten voters (83%) said they worry about threats to democracy in the United States. Top responses about the greatest threat included Donald Trump (18%), government corruption/dysfunction (10%), and immigration/open borders (8%). Asked which party is more responsible for threatening democracy, 40% of respondents said Democrats and 40% said Republicans.

The survey, which was completed shortly before the third anniversary of the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by supporters of President Trump, showed sympathy for the rioters has increased among the voting public over the past several years.

Only 48% of voters overall said they thought the rioters were “criminals,” a significant drop from the 70% of voters who thought so in a Suffolk survey conducted just weeks after the attacks. Those who agreed that “they went too far, but they had a point” rose to 37% from 24%, and 6% called their actions “appropriate,” when in 2021 just 2% did.

According to the new poll, a majority of registered voters (59%) see the criminal prosecution of more than 700 people for crimes connected to the attack as the “appropriate work of the justice system.” Just 32% said the legal actions against the participants were inappropriate and should be reversed.

However, the passage of time has had a limited impact on voters’ assessment of Trump’s role in the attacks. In 2021, 48% said Trump bore “a lot of the blame” for the attacks, while 43% said the same in the new poll. Nearly three in ten (28%) said then and now that Trump bore “no blame” for the attack.

When respondents were asked to weigh in on the federal and state indictments facing Trump, 52% (driven by 96% of Democrats) said the legal actions against him are the “appropriate work of the justice system,” while 43% said that the legal actions against Trump were inappropriate and should be reversed (driven by 85% of Republicans).

“The all-important independents were split on this issue,” said David Paleologos, director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center. “With 48% saying ‘appropriate,’ 42% ‘not appropriate,’ and 9% undecided, the jury remains out on the political impact of Trump’s four criminal indictments.”

Despite his legal woes, the Suffolk University/*USA TODAY* poll shows Trump leading President Joe Biden 44%-43% in a two-way ballot test, 39%-37% in a three-way ballot test with 17% opting for a third-party option, and 37%-34% in a seven-way ballot test including mostly named candidates such as independent Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. (10%), among others.

Methodology

The nationwide Suffolk University/*USA TODAY* survey was conducted from December 26-29, 2023, 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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