UMass Lowell
Survey of Likely Voters in the
2020 US Presidential Election (National Sample)

October 5-12, 2020

N=819 Likely Voters

The sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-4.3%

See http://uml.edu/polls for full questionnaire/topline results and detailed methodology disclosure.

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Do you have a question about this poll? If so, tweet @UML_CPO and we'll get back to you.
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HIGHLIGHTS

Biden leads Trump by 10 nationally

Former Vice President Joe Biden has a 10-point lead over President Donald Trump in the contest for the White House in a new poll of likely voters released by the UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion. Biden's double-digit lead signals that the President's hopes of reelection are dwindling, with less than three weeks until election day and many voters already voting early and by mail.

With minor party candidates included on the ballot, Biden polls at 53%, Trump at 43%, other candidates at 2%, and only 3% of likely voters say they are still undecided.

The relatively low number of undecided voters is underscored by the fact that 16% of likely voters have already voted. Just over two-thirds of voters plan to eschew their traditional Election Day polling place in 2020 and either vote by mail (45%) or vote early in person (22%).

Biden leads among voters with a college degree, 62% to Trump's 36%. Among those with no bachelor's degree, Biden leads 49% to Trump's 46%. However, among white respondents without a degree, Trump leads Biden 61% to 36%, while Biden leads Trump among whites with a college degree 60% to 38%.

The gender gap in this poll also reveals a gap on par with historic averages. Biden does about 10 points better among women than men. Biden leads Trump 57% to 38% among women and 49% to 48% among men.

While Trump trails Biden by double digits nationally, his approval rating has not undergone a precipitous decline vis-à-vis the national average, which has hovered between 40 and 45 percent for most of the last three years. Overall, 44% of likely voters approve of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president and 56% disapprove. But, nearly half of the electorate (47% of likely voters) say they *strongly disapprove* of the way the President has handled his job.

Because there's no approval rating for Biden, we can more easily compare Biden and Trump using favorability ratings. Notoriously, in 2016, both candidates, Trump and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had net negative approval ratings in polling averages heading into the 2020 election. Here, we see a different pattern. Trump continues to have a net negative favorability rating of -13; 42% find him favorable, 55% unfavorable and 3% have no opinion. Biden, however, is net positive +9; 50% find him favorable, 41% unfavorable and 9% have opinion. Interestingly, Clinton is still net negative at -17 (35% favorable, 52% unfavorable, 12% no opinion), which goes to show that Democrats have a much more generally popular nominee in 2020.

The Coronavirus Election

With Trump's coronavirus-positive diagnosis on Oct. 2, the campaign became fully focused once again on the president's handling of COVID-19. Overall, a majority of likely voters (57%) are not satisfied the way the federal government has handled the pandemic, compared to 43% who say they are satisfied. This stands in stark contrast to state governments who get much higher marks – 59% of Americans say they are satisfied with their state government's response compared to only 41% who say they are unsatisfied.

Asked who they trust more to handle the COVID-19, 52% of likely voters say Biden compared to 36% of voters who say Trump. Furthermore, on the question of whether Donald Trump could have avoided contracting COVID-19 by wearing a mask more often, 71% of Americans say yes (43% definitely yes, 28% probably yes) while 29% of Americans say no (19% probably no, 11% definitely no).

Other Findings from the poll

- With Supreme Court hearings taking place this week, nominee Amy Coney Barrett has a -1 net negative favorability rating among likely voters – 31% favorable, 32% unfavorable, 25% no opinion, and 12% never heard of.
- Asked whom they think will win the 2020 presidential election, likely voters give Biden the edge: 45% say Biden will win and 41% say Trump will win.
- Asked hypothetical alternative trial-heat matchups, Biden leads Pence 54% to 41% with 4% undecided and Harris leads Pence 50% to 43% with 6% undecided.
- Just 30% of Americans think things are headed in the right direction, while 70% say things are off on the wrong track.

- On Trump's signature issue, the economy, Biden leads on "who is better suited to handle the economy?" 47% Biden to 42% Trump.
- Biden also leads Trump on "who best represents American values?" 48% to 37%; "who is a more devout Christian?" 39% to 29%; "who is better suited to handle race relations?" 49% to 34%; "who is more honest and trustworthy?" 49% to 32%; "who will better handle America's reputation abroad?" 51% to 37%; "who is better suited to handle police reform?" 46% to 38%; "who is more suited to handle healthcare?" 51% to 35%; and "who is more of a good man?" 50% to 31%. Trump leads on two metrics – "who is more of a bully?" 67% to 16% and "who is more corrupt?" 50% to 34%.