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This release is also available online.

New Marquette Law School Poll finds strong partisan divisions on Afghanistan, COVID policies, and election results

Please note: Complete Poll results and methodology information can be found online at law.marquette.edu/poll

MILWAUKEE — A Marquette Law School Poll survey of adults nationwide finds a mixed set of views on the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. President Joe Biden’s handling of the withdrawal receives a 36% approval rating and a 63% disapproval rating. Among the same set of respondents, however, 74% support the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan with 26% opposed to ending the U.S. presence. Further, 25% say the war was worth it, while 74% say it was not worth it. As for the fate of Afghan refugees, 58% support admitting as many refugees to the United States as possible, while 42% are opposed to this.

The survey was conducted September 7-16, 2021, interviewing 1,411 adults nationwide, with a margin of error of +/-3.4 percentage points.

There are substantial partisan differences in these opinions. Table 1 shows approval of Biden’s handling of the withdrawal, with two-thirds of independents disapproving and nearly a third of Democrats disapproving of their party’s president’s handling of the situation. More than 90% of Republicans disapprove.

All results in the tables below are stated as percentages; the precise wording of the questions can be found in the online link noted above.

Table 1: Approve or disapprove of Biden’s handling of withdrawal from Afghanistan, by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Approve	Disapprove
Republican	6	94
Independent	33	66
Democrat	68	32

While critical of Biden’s handling of the withdrawal, large majorities of Democrats and independents in Table 2 say they support the removal of U.S. troops, while Republicans divide evenly on the question.

Table 2: Favor or oppose withdrawing all US troops from Afghanistan, by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Support	Oppose
Republican	50	49
Independent	78	22
Democrat	89	11

Table 3 shows deep misgivings about America’s long commitment in Afghanistan, with majorities of each partisan group saying the war was “not worth it.”

Table 3: Was the war in Afghanistan worth it, by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Worth it	Not worth it
Republican	42	58
Independent	22	78
Democrat	15	85

Nearly two-thirds of Republicans in Table 4 are opposed to admitting as many Afghan refugees as possible, while solid majorities of independents and Democrats favor doing so.

Table 4: Support or oppose admitting as many Afghan refugees as possible, by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Support	Oppose
Republican	36	64
Independent	58	42
Democrat	78	22

Biden’s job approval has declined

Biden’s overall job approval also has suffered in the wake of the Afghanistan situation, with 48% saying they approve of how he is handling his job and 52% saying they disapprove. In the July Marquette Law School national survey, 58% approved and 42% disapproved.

Biden’s approval declined among all partisan groups from July to September, as shown in Table 5. Already-low approval among Republicans fell by half, while independents reversed their majority approval to majority disapproval. High approval among Democrats also fell by 7 points.

Table 5: Biden overall job approval, nationwide, by party identification, July & Sept. 2021

Party ID	Survey	Approve	Disapprove
Republican	7/16-26/21	16	84
Republican	9/7-16/21	9	90
Independent	7/16-26/21	57	43
Independent	9/7-16/21	43	57
Democrat	7/16-26/21	96	3
Democrat	9/7-16/21	89	11

While the number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths have sharply increased since early July, Biden’s handling of the pandemic remains a strong point for him. Among respondents, 56% approve of his handling of the response, while 43% disapprove.

Table 6 shows that, on this issue, a majority of independents approve of Biden’s handling of the coronavirus response and Democratic approval is over 90%. While Republicans are sharply disapproving, Biden receives a higher approval from them on this than for his overall job or his handling of the Afghanistan withdrawal. (This item was not asked in July, so trends are unavailable.)

Table 6: Approve or disapprove of Biden’s response to coronavirus, by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Approve	Disapprove
Republican	18	81
Independent	55	45
Democrat	92	8

Views of pandemic policies differ by partisanship

A majority of respondents, 69%, support requiring teachers and students to wear masks in public schools, with 30% opposed to such mask mandates. Table 7 shows that Republican parents of children under 18 are the most opposed to a policy of masks in schools, with less than 30% in favor. In all groups, non-parents are more supportive of masks than are others of the same party who have children in the household. The differences are minimal for independents and less than 10 points among Democrats.

Table 7: Support or oppose mask requirements in schools, by party and parental status, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Parent	Support	Oppose
Republican	Yes	33	67
Republican	No	46	54
Independent	Yes	67	33
Independent	No	68	32
Democrat	Yes	91	9
Democrat	No	98	2

Requiring students at public universities to be vaccinated is supported by 64% of respondents and opposed by 36%. Partisan views of this requirement are shown in Table 8. While over 60% of

Republicans oppose this requirement, over 60% of independents support it. Nearly 9 in 10 Democrats favor requiring college students to be vaccinated.

Table 8: Support or oppose requiring vaccination for college students, by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Support	Oppose
Republican	38	62
Independent	62	38
Democrat	89	10

Views of the seriousness of the current level of coronavirus cases in the respondent's state affect approval of Biden's handling of the pandemic, even within party camps. Table 9 shows that approval of Biden's response to coronavirus is over four times higher among Republicans who think the current level of the pandemic is a serious problem than it is among Republicans who think it is not. And among independents who think this, approval of Biden's handling is double that of those who don't. While Democrats have high approval of Biden's response, it is also higher among those who think the current level of cases in their state is a serious problem.

Table 9: Approval of Biden response to coronavirus, by opinion whether coronavirus is a serious problem in the respondent's state and by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Current COVID levels a serious problem	Approve	Disapprove
Republican	Serious problem	30	70
Republican	Not serious problem	6	93
Independent	Serious problem	67	33
Independent	Not serious problem	35	65
Democrat	Serious problem	93	6
Democrat	Not serious problem	80	20

There are large partisan differences in opinion among respondents as to whether the coronavirus is a serious current problem in their state. Republicans are evenly divided, while almost two-thirds of independents think it is serious, as well as 90 percent of Democrats, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Whether current level of coronavirus cases is a serious problem in the respondent's state, by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Serious problem	Not serious problem
Republican	49	51
Independent	64	36
Democrat	90	10

In this survey, 76% say they have received at least one vaccine dose and 23% say they have not been vaccinated. As of the end of the survey field period, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 76% of those 18 years old or older had been vaccinated.

There are partisan differences in vaccination rates, shown in Table 11. Table 12 shows that these vaccination rates also are related to how serious a problem the respondent thinks the coronavirus is. Among the 50% of Republicans who think coronavirus is not a serious current problem in their state,

fewer than half have been vaccinated. Among Republicans who think it is a serious current problem, more than 80 percent have received at least one dose of the vaccine. Such thinking of the current seriousness of the problem also accompanies higher vaccination rates for independents and Democrats.

Table 11: Vaccination status, by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Vaccinated	Not vaccinated
Republican	64	35
Independent	74	25
Democrat	90	9

Table 12: Vaccination status, by opinion whether coronavirus is a serious problem in the respondent's state and by party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Current COVID levels a serious problem	Vaccinated	Not vaccinated
Republican	Serious problem	84	16
Republican	Not serious problem	45	54
Independent	Serious problem	81	18
Independent	Not serious problem	60	39
Democrat	Serious problem	92	8
Democrat	Not serious problem	71	20

Reluctance to be vaccinated in the future remains high among the unvaccinated. Among those not yet vaccinated, 58% say they will definitely not get the shot and 24% say they probably won't, with 17% saying they definitely or probably will get vaccinated.

Views on election accuracy continue to be sharp

Beliefs about the accuracy of the 2020 presidential election outcome continue to divide the population. Sixty percent say they are very or somewhat confident that the election votes were accurately counted, while 40% say they are not too or not at all confident about the election result.

While these views clearly divide partisans, there are also differences within the Republican Party among strong partisans and not so strong ("weak") partisans and independents who lean to the Republican party. While the strongest Republican identifiers are nearly unanimous in saying they lack confidence in the election, that unanimity decreases as partisan strength declines, as shown in Table 13. The proportion of those who doubt the election outcome falls from over 9-in-10 among strong Republicans, to 3-in-4 among "weak" Republicans and just under 6-in-10 independents who lean to the Republican party. Among independents who don't lean to either party, more than 6 in 10 express confidence in the election outcome, as do almost all Democrats of any strength of identification.

Table 13: Confidence in 2020 election count, by strength of party identification, Sept. 2021

Party ID	Confident	Not confident
Strong Republican	8	92
Weak Republican	29	71
Lean Republican	39	61
Independent	61	39
Lean Democrat	88	12
Weak Democrat	90	10
Strong Democrat	96	4

About the Marquette Law School Poll

The survey was conducted Sept. 7-16, 2021, interviewing 1,411 adults nationwide, with a margin of error of +/-3.4 percentage points. Interviews were conducted using the SSRS Opinion Panel, a national probability sample with interviews conducted online. The detailed methodology statement, survey instrument, topline results, and crosstabs for this release are available at <https://law.marquette.edu/poll/category/results-and-data/>.

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