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This release is also available online.

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## **New Marquette Law School national survey finds hypothetical Biden-Trump rematch remains close with candidates splitting registered, likely voter samples**

*Biden holds slight edge among likely voters against both Trump, DeSantis, but faces deficit among registered voters against each*

*Please note: Complete Poll results and methodology information can be found online at [law.marquette.edu/poll](http://law.marquette.edu/poll)*

MILWAUKEE – A new Marquette Law School Poll national survey finds a close presidential race: former President Donald Trump receives 51% and President Joe Biden gets 48% among registered voters, while Biden has a 51% advantage over Trump’s 49% among likely voters—those who say they are certain they will vote in the presidential election. The difference in advantage shows how the outcome of the election may be determined by the success of respective efforts to mobilize voters over the coming 13 months.

Table 1 shows vote choice by how likely respondents say they are to vote. Those who say they are absolutely certain to vote make up 80% of registered voters and give Biden an edge, while the 20% of the sample who say they are less than certain to vote strongly favor Trump. (All results in the tables are stated as percentages; the precise wording of the questions can be found in the online link noted above.)

Table 1: Presidential vote, by likelihood of voting, September 2023

Among registered voters

Likelihood of voting	Vote		
	Donald Trump	Joe Biden	Wouldn't vote
Total	51	48	0
Absolutely certain	49	51	0
Less than certain	62	37	1

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: If the 2024 election for president were held today between Former President Donald Trump, the Republican, and President Joe Biden, the Democrat, would you vote for Donald Trump or for Joe Biden?

Question for respondent initially selecting "Someone else" or "Wouldn't vote": If you had to choose, would you vote for Trump or for Biden?

Question: What are the chances that you will vote in the November 2024 general election for president, Congress, and other offices -- are you absolutely certain to vote, very likely to vote, are the chances 50-50, or don't you think you will vote?

Biden is also favored among those who pay the most attention to politics, while Trump has the advantage among those less engaged by politics, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Presidential vote, by attention to politics, September 2023

Among registered voters

Attention to politics	Vote		
	Donald Trump	Joe Biden	Wouldn't vote
Total	51	48	0
Most of the time	48	52	0
Less often	54	45	1

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: If the 2024 election for president were held today between Former President Donald Trump, the Republican, and President Joe Biden, the Democrat, would you vote for Donald Trump or for Joe Biden?

Question for respondent initially selecting "Someone else" or "Wouldn't vote": If you had to choose, would you vote for Trump or for Biden?

Question: Some people seem to follow what's going on in politics most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. How often do you follow what's going on in politics?

In contrast, those who say they are very or somewhat enthusiastic about the 2024 elections favor Trump, while those with less enthusiasm favor Biden, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Presidential vote, by enthusiasm about voting, September 2023

Among registered voters

Enthusiasm	Vote		
	Donald Trump	Joe Biden	Wouldn't vote
Total	51	48	0
Very enthusiastic	54	46	0
Somewhat enthusiastic	53	47	0
Not too/not at all enthusiastic	45	53	1

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: If the 2024 election for president were held today between Former President Donald Trump, the Republican, and President Joe Biden, the Democrat, would you vote for Donald Trump or for Joe Biden?

Question for respondent initially selecting “Someone else” or “Wouldn’t vote”: If you had to choose, would you vote for Trump or for Biden?

Question: How enthusiastic are you about voting in the elections in November 2024 for president and other offices? Would you say you are very, somewhat, not too, or not at all enthusiastic?

The Marquette Law School Poll has seen a close race among registered voters since May, with the trend shown in Table 4. Likely voters were identified for the first time in this cycle in the September poll, so that trend comparison is not available.

Table 4: Presidential vote choice, Biden v. Trump, May-September

Among registered voters

Poll dates	Vote	
	Donald Trump	Joe Biden
9/18-25/23	51	48
7/7-12/23	50	50
5/8-18/23	52	47

Marquette Law School Poll, national surveys

Question: If the 2024 election for president were held today between Former President Donald Trump, the Republican, and President Joe Biden, the Democrat, would you vote for Donald Trump or for Joe Biden?

Question for respondent initially selecting “Someone else” or “Wouldn’t vote”: If you had to choose, would you vote for Trump or for Biden?

In a choice between Biden and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, DeSantis is the choice of 51% to Biden’s 48% among registered voters. Like against Trump, Biden holds a small edge among likely voters, with 51% compared to 48% for DeSantis. The trend among registered voters for the DeSantis–Biden choice is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Presidential vote choice, Biden v. DeSantis, May-September

Among registered voters

Poll dates	Vote	
	Ron DeSantis	Joe Biden
9/18-25/23	51	48
7/7-12/23	51	48
5/8-18/23	52	48

Marquette Law School Poll, national surveys

Question: If the 2024 election for president were held today between Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, the Republican, and President Joe Biden, the Democrat, would you vote for Ron DeSantis or for Joe Biden?

Question for respondent initially selecting “Someone else” or “Wouldn’t vote”: If you had to choose would you vote for Biden or for DeSantis?

### Reluctant voters

A significant share of voters are initially reluctant to choose between Biden or Trump. The share of reluctant voters had remained around 20-25% since the head-to-head question was first posed in November 2021. In the current poll, it has declined modestly, with 12% who say they would vote for someone else and 4% who say they wouldn’t vote. The full trend is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Reluctant to vote for Biden or Trump, Nov. 2021-Sept. 2023

Among registered voters

Poll dates	Initial vote			
	Donald Trump	Joe Biden	Someone else	Wouldn't vote
9/18-25/23	44	39	12	4
7/7-12/23	38	37	19	5
5/8-18/23	41	34	19	7
3/13-22/23	38	38	20	4
1/9-20/23	40	40	17	3
11/15-22/22	34	44	19	4
9/7-14/22	36	42	19	3
3/14-24/22	38	43	16	4
1/10-21/22	33	45	18	4
11/1-10/21	35	43	18	4

Marquette Law School Poll, national surveys

Question: If the 2024 election for president were held today between Former President Donald Trump, the Republican, and President Joe Biden, the Democrat, would you vote for Donald Trump or for Joe Biden?

When pressed to choose, almost all respondents will make a choice of Biden or Trump. In September, among initially reluctant registered voters, 10% said they would definitely pick Trump and 32% said they would probably vote for Trump, while 15% would definitely vote for Biden and 41% would probably support Biden.

The trend since May in choices among these “reluctant voters” (i.e., registered voters initially saying “Someone else” or “Wouldn’t vote”) is shown in Table 7. Biden has had a small edge with these reluctant voters in each poll.

Table 7: Choice among initially reluctant voters, May-Sept. 2023

Among registered voters who initially don't pick Biden or Trump

Poll dates	Vote when pushed to choose	
	Donald Trump	Joe Biden
9/18-25/23	42	55
7/7-12/23	48	51
5/8-18/23	47	51

Marquette Law School Poll, national surveys

Question: If you had to choose, would you vote for Biden or for Trump?

To look at the characteristics of these reluctant voters, we can combine the May, July, and September polls.

Strength of party identification plays a strong role in reluctance to choose Biden or Trump. Over 60% of independents are reluctant to choose, but under 15% of either Republicans or Democrats are similarly reluctant. Independents who lean to a party are much less reluctant than independents who say they are not closer to either party, but they remain more reluctant than are partisans, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Reluctant to choose, by strength of party identification, May-September 2023

Among registered voters

Strength of party ID	Reluctant to choose	
	Reluctant	Not reluctant
Total	22	78
Republican	14	86
Lean Republican	21	79
Independent	63	37
Lean Democrat	34	66
Democrat	12	88

Marquette Law School Poll, combined national surveys, May, July, September 2023

Those who follow politics most of the time are less reluctant than those who pay less attention, shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Reluctant to choose, by attention to politics, May-September 2023

Among registered voters

Attention to politics	Reluctant to choose	
	Reluctant	Not reluctant
Total	22	78
Most of the time	13	87
Less often	28	72

Marquette Law School Poll, combined national surveys, May, July, September 2023

Younger voters are more likely to express reluctance to choose between Biden and Trump—shown in Table 10—as are non-white voters—Table 11.

Table 10: Reluctant to choose, by age, May-September 2023

Among registered voters

Age	Reluctant to choose	
	Reluctant	Not reluctant
Total	22	78
18-29	36	64
30-44	23	77
45-59	20	80
60+	17	83

Marquette Law School Poll, combined national surveys, May, July, September 2023

Table 11: Reluctant to choose, by race and ethnicity, May-September 2023

Among registered voters

Race & ethnicity	Reluctant to choose	
	Reluctant	Not reluctant
Total	22	78
White	19	81
Black	28	72
Hispanic	24	76
Other/Multiple	25	75

Marquette Law School Poll, combined national surveys, May, July, September 2023

Feelings about the candidates themselves are, unsurprisingly, powerful. A substantial 22% say they have unfavorable views of both Biden and Trump, and this group is overwhelmingly reluctant to choose either candidate. Those with a favorable view of Trump and unfavorable view of Biden are especially less likely to be reluctant. Those favorable to Biden and unfavorable to Trump are somewhat more reluctant, though less than the overall average reluctance. The results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Reluctant to choose by favorability to Biden and Trump, May-September 2023

Among registered voters

Biden & Trump favorability	Reluctant to choose	
	Reluctant	Not reluctant
Total	22	78
Biden fav, Trump unfav	12	88
Biden unfav, Trump fav	5	95
Biden unfav, Trump unfav	62	38

Marquette Law School Poll, combined national surveys, May, July, September 2023

### Views of third parties

While a number of voters express reluctance to choose one of the two major party candidates, there are other parties that regularly appear on the presidential ballot. Table 13 shows the favorability ratings for the Republican, Democratic, Libertarian, and Green parties, plus the “No Labels” political group. The

major parties are far better known than the other groups, with the new “No Labels” group especially little known.

Table 13: Favorability ratings of parties

Registered voters

Party	Favorability				
	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	Haven't heard enough
The Democratic Party	16	26	20	34	3
The Republican Party	16	27	19	34	4
The Libertarian Party	2	26	23	16	33
The Green Party	3	17	19	17	44
The No Labels political group	1	7	11	11	71

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: Do you have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of the following political organizations or haven't you heard enough yet to have an opinion?

### Candidate characteristics and issues

Registered voters view Trump as better able to handle the economy, immigration, inflation, creating jobs, and foreign relations, while Biden is seen as better at handling Medicare and Social Security, abortion policy, and climate change. A significant share say there is no difference or that neither candidate would be good on each issue. The full set of issues is shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Who would handle issues better

Registered voters

Issue	Who better on issue			
	Biden	Trump	Both about the same	Neither good
Inflation	27	50	11	12
The economy	28	52	9	11
Immigration and border security	28	52	7	13
Creating jobs	30	49	12	9
Foreign relations	38	43	7	11
Medicare & Social Security	39	37	11	12
Abortion policy	43	34	9	14
Climate change	44	24	15	18

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: Do you think Joe Biden or Donald Trump would do a better job handling each of the following issues?

Age of the candidates has received a lot of attention, but the perceptions of each candidate's characteristics vary quite a lot. Table 15 shows how people describe Biden and Table 16 shows the same for Trump.

Table 15: How well does the phrase describe Biden

Registered voters (Sorted by % “Very well”)

Description	How well describes			
	Very well	Somewhat well	Not too well	Not at all well
Has a strong record of accomplishments as president	15	25	22	38
Understands the problems of ordinary people	17	24	19	39
Shares your values	17	26	17	40
Has behaved corruptly	29	16	25	30
Is too old to be president	53	24	13	9

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: How well does each of the following phrases describe Joe Biden?

Table 16: How well does the phrase describe Trump

Registered voters (Sorted by % “Very well”)

Description	How well describes			
	Very well	Somewhat well	Not too well	Not at all well
Understands the problems of ordinary people	20	24	14	43
Shares your values	21	24	12	43
Is too old to be president	22	30	27	21
Has a strong record of accomplishments as president	32	19	16	33
Has behaved corruptly	44	17	18	20

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: How well does each of the following phrases describe Donald Trump?

## Economic perceptions

Registered voters have a negative view of the economy, with 32% rating it poor and 45% saying “not so good,” while 20% say it is good and only 3% say it is excellent. Republicans and independents are quite negative and Democrats somewhat more positive. Table 17 shows opinion of the economy overall and by party identification.

Table 17: View of the economy, by party identification, September 2023

Among registered voters

Party ID	View of the economy			
	Excellent	Good	Not so good	Poor
Total	3	20	45	32
Republican	1	5	42	52
Independent	1	9	63	27
Democrat	6	35	45	14

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023



Partisanship also strongly affects views of the economy regardless of respondent’s personal financial situation. Table 18 shows views of the economy by family financial situation and by party.

Table 18: View of the economy, by financial situation and by party identification

Among registered voters

Financial situation	View of the economy			
	Excellent	Good	Not so good	Poor
Living comfortably				
Republican	1	9	49	42
Independent	0	11	69	19
Democrat	11	56	29	4
Just getting by				
Republican	1	5	45	48
Independent	2	12	62	25
Democrat	3	23	55	18
Struggling				
Republican	0	1	21	78
Independent	0	1	55	44
Democrat	0	14	57	28

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: How would you describe the state of the nation's economy these days?

Question: Thinking about your family's financial situation, would you say you are living comfortably, just getting by, or struggling to make ends meet?

Respondents are more likely to say they have paid a lot of attention to news about inflation than to news about unemployment. The survey asks about the latest estimates of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the unemployment rate for the most recent month available at the time of the survey, August in this case. Table 19 shows attention paid to this news for inflation and for unemployment.

Table 19: How much heard about economic news

Registered voters

Issue	How much heard or read		
	A lot	A little	Nothing at all
Inflation rate	49	40	10
Unemployment rate	25	55	20

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: Here are some recent topics in the news. How much have you heard or read about each of these?  
News reports that consumer prices (inflation) rose by 3.7% over the past 12 months (as of August)

Question: Here are some recent topics in the news. How much have you heard or read about each of these?  
News reports that the unemployment rate was 3.8% (as of August)

## Attention to news

In addition to economic news, the survey asked how much respondents had heard or read about the indictment of Hunter Biden, Trump’s four indictments and pending trials, and the House of Representatives opening an impeachment inquiry into Joe Biden. These are shown in Table 20.

Table 20: How much heard about indictments and impeachment inquiry

Registered voters

Issue	How much heard or read		
	A lot	A little	Nothing at all
Trump indictments	78	20	3
Hunter Biden indictment	49	43	9
Impeachment inquiry	41	43	16

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: Here are some recent topics in the news. How much have you heard or read about each of these? Donald Trump’s indictments and pending trials in four cases in New York, Florida, Washington D.C., and Georgia

Question: Here are some recent topics in the news. How much have you heard or read about each of these? A special counsel’s indictment of Hunter Biden

Question: Here are some recent topics in the news. How much have you heard or read about each of these? The House of Representatives opening a formal impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden

Asked about the indictment of Trump in federal court in the District of Columbia in connection with his actions following the 2020 election, 52% say Trump did something illegal, 24% say he did something wrong but not illegal, and 24% say he did nothing wrong. Table 21 shows these results by party identification, where sharp differences of opinion appear.

Table 21: View of Trump indictment in connection with efforts to overturn 2020 election, by party identification

Among registered voters

Party ID	Opinion of Trump's actions		
	Something illegal	Something wrong but not illegal	He didn't do anything wrong
Total	52	24	24
Republican	13	37	50
Independent	50	38	12
Democrat	89	10	1

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: As you may know, Donald Trump has been indicted by the federal government concerning his actions following the 2020 vote. In connection with those actions, do you think Trump did something illegal, he did something wrong but not illegal, or do you think he didn’t do anything wrong?

Among all registered voters, 59% say the the Department of Justice’s treatment of Donald Trump has been motivated by partisan politics, while 41% say it has not been motivated by partisan politics. Table 22 shows these views by party identification.

Table 22: Is Department of Justice treatment of Trump motivated by partisan politics, by party identification

Among registered voters

Party ID	Opinion of DOJ motivation	
	Motivated by partisan politics	Is not motivated by partisan politics
Total	59	41
Republican	85	15
Independent	63	34
Democrat	33	67

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: Do you think the Department of Justice’s treatment of Donald Trump is motivated by partisan politics, or not?

The House of Representatives impeachment inquiry concerns Joe Biden’s conduct in relation to his son Hunter’s business dealings. Among registered voters, 47% say Joe Biden did something illegal related to that business, 27% say he did something wrong but not illegal, and 25% say he did nothing wrong. These views are shown by party identification in Table 23.

Table 23: Did Joe Biden do something illegal related to his son's business, by party identification

Among registered voters

Party ID	Opinion of Biden conduct		
	Something illegal	Something wrong but not illegal	He didn't do anything wrong
Total	47	27	25
Republican	82	15	3
Independent	45	37	17
Democrat	15	37	49

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: Related to his son’s business dealings, do you think Joe Biden did something illegal, he did something wrong but not illegal, or do you think he didn’t do anything wrong?

### Primary preferences

Table 24 shows the preferences for the Republican nomination for president among registered voters who are Republican or independents who lean Republican. In September, Trump’s support has increased compared to July, while DeSantis’s support has continued to decline, as it has since his high point in March, but he remains in second place. Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley now appears to be in third place but remains in single digits. (This poll was completed before the second GOP debate on September 27th.)

Table 24: Support for Republican 2024 presidential nomination  
Among registered Republicans and independents who lean Republican

Candidate	Poll dates			
	9/18-25/23	7/7-12/23	5/8-18/23	3/13-22/23
Donald Trump	56	46	46	40
Ron DeSantis	12	22	25	35
Nikki Haley	6	6	4	5
Vivek Ramaswamy	4	1	3	-
Mike Pence	4	7	2	5
Tim Scott	2	4	1	*
Chris Christie	1	1	1	*
Doug Burgum	*	1	-	-
Larry Elder	*	*	1	-
Will Hurd	*	*	-	-
Asa Hutchinson	0	1	*	*
Perry Johnson	0	-	-	-
Undecided/Other	15	12	16	12

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

\*less than .5%, - Not included in poll

Question: Here are some candidates for the Republican presidential nomination. If the primary were today, whom would you vote for?

Among registered voters who are Democrats or independents who lean Democratic (hereafter “Democratic voters”), Biden is the choice for the nomination of 53%, with 12% for Robert F. Kennedy Jr., 3% for Marianne Williamson, and 31% who are undecided. There has been little change in preferences since July, as shown in Table 25.

Table 25: Support for Democratic 2024 presidential nomination  
Among registered Democrats and independents who lean Democratic

Candidate	Poll dates		
	9/18-25/23	7/7-12/23	5/8-18/23
Joe Biden	53	54	51
Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.	12	14	13
Marianne Williamson	3	6	6
Undecided	31	27	30

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: Here are some candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination. If the primary were today, whom would you vote for?

Approval of how Biden is handling his job as president declined to 39% in September, from 42% in July. Disapproval was 61%, up from 57% in July. The full trend for Biden job approval in the Marquette Law School Poll is shown in Table 26. Note that approval is measured among all adults, not registered voters only.

Table 26: Approval of Biden's handling his job as president

Among adults

Poll dates	Biden job approval	
	Approve	Disapprove
9/18-25/23	39	61
7/7-12/23	42	57
5/8-18/23	39	61
3/13-22/23	39	61
1/9-20/23	43	56
11/15-22/22	45	55
9/7-14/22	45	55
7/5-12/22	36	64
5/9-19/22	42	57
3/14-24/22	44	55
1/10-21/22	46	53
11/1-10/21	49	51
9/7-16/21	48	52
7/16-26/21	58	42

Marquette Law School Poll, national survey, Sept. 18-25, 2023

Question: Overall, how much do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as president?

### About the Marquette Law School Poll

The survey was conducted Sept. 18-25, 2023, interviewing 868 registered voters nationwide, with a margin of error of +/-4.4 percentage points. For likely voters, the sample size is 690 with a margin of error is +/-4.9 percentage points. For registered voters who are Republican or independents who lean Republican, the sample size is 381 and the margin of error is +/-6.7 percentage points; for registered voters who are Democrats or independents who lean Democratic, the sample size is 400 and the margin of error is +/-6.3 percentage points. Presidential job approval is measured among all adults regardless of registration status. For the adult sample the sample size is 1007 respondents nationwide, with a margin of error of +/-4.1 percentage points. See the methodology statement for weighted and unweighted sample sizes.

Interviews were conducted using the SSRS Opinion Panel, a national probability sample with interviews conducted online. Certain other data from this survey (focusing on those about public views of the Supreme Court) were released yesterday, on Oct. 4. The detailed methodology statement, survey instrument, topline results, and crosstabs for this release are available at the [Marquette Law Poll website](https://www.marquette.edu/news-center/marquette-law-poll).

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