



## Survey of American Adults March 15-21, 2022

**N = 1000 American Adults; 873 Registered voters**

**The sample has an adjusted margin of error +/-3.4% for American Adults; +/-3.7% for registered voters**

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

A new national survey from the University of Massachusetts Lowell highlights several key issues, including attitudes about the Russian invasion of Ukraine and comfort with American intervention in the war, updated attitudes about the COVID-19 pandemic, political reform, and a preview of a potential 2024 rematch between President Joseph R. Biden and former President Donald Trump.

#### *Ukraine*

*"Americans are united behind Ukraine and against Russia but divided narrowly on America's role in the war and President Biden's execution of it. Americans want Russian troops out of Ukrainian territory and Russian gas out of its automobiles, even if it means more pain at the pump," notes Associate Professor John Cluverius, Associate Director of the Center for Public Opinion.*

Americans clearly support Ukraine as demonstrated by their views of the political leaders of both countries. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has a net positive favorability rating of +46 points (53% favorable, 7% unfavorable, 22% unsure, and 18% have never heard of him). In contrast, Russian President Vladimir Putin has a net negative favorability rating of -80 points (3% favorable, 83% unfavorable, 11% unsure, and 3% have never heard of him).

Americans, however, show less certainty in their leadership and what next steps should be taken. President Biden received a 48% approval rating for his handling of the Russia-Ukraine war with 52% saying they disapprove. Predictably, President Biden's approval on the war breaks down in line with party identification with 85% of Democrats and 12% of Republicans saying they approve. Among independents, however, President Biden is lagging with 40% approval of how he is handling the Russia-Ukraine war.

On the question of whether the United States should establish a no-fly zone and risk escalating the possibility of a nuclear war or leave the airspace alone and risk more civilian casualties, Americans are split – 54% favor leaving the airspace alone and 46% favor establishing a no-fly zone even if that move increases the risk of nuclear war. While the results of President Biden’s approval ratings regarding the Russia-Ukraine war follow party lines for the most part, there are no significant differences between Democrats and Republicans on this question. This may be due, in large part, to the fact that this is a difficult question and party leaders have largely not staked positions.

While inflation and gas prices have become a large part of the national conversation about President Biden, the economy, and international affairs, when asked if the United States should continue to ban Russian oil and gas imports, even if gas prices continue to rise, a majority of Americans, Democrats and Republicans, agree we should: 74% say yes (49% definitely yes, 25% probably yes), compared to 26% who say no (16% probably no, 10% definitely no). While there are only small party differences on this question, the biggest difference comes between those who may be most affected in their pocketbooks by rising gas prices: 70% of those who earn \$100,000 or more a year in family income say definitely yes, compared to 38% of those who earn less than \$50,000 a year in family income.

### *The Upcoming Midterms and a Look Ahead to 2024*

*“Polarization is making the political terrain for political leaders challenging. While President Biden’s approval remains quite low, Republicans and Republican leadership are not viewed positively in contrast. This is creating what appears to be a more competitive midterm environment than we would generally expect with an unpopular incumbent president,” says Professor Joshua Dyck, Director of the Center for Public Opinion.*

With the midterm election less than eight months away, questions remain about whether Democrats will be able to maintain their slim majority in the Congress or whether Republicans will follow the historic pattern of the out-party midterm gains. Presently, 43% of Americans approve of the job President Biden is doing while 57% disapprove. However, the Democrats are still polling ahead of Republicans among registered voters on the generic congressional ballot with 42% saying they will support the Democratic candidate in their district, 40% saying they will support the Republican candidate, and 15% undecided. Therefore, it is unclear how much of a drag Biden’s approval numbers will be on Democrats this Fall.

Part of the reason the Democrats may do well even though President Biden’s approval is low is that none of the active politicians we asked about received positive political ratings. This includes net negative favorability ratings for Vice President Kamala Harris (-15), Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (-23), House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (-15), Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (-16), and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (-47). It also includes a net negative favorability rating for former President Donald Trump (-16) and prospective

Republican presidential candidate, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is -3 in net favorability, but also has a 19% no opinion/18% never heard of rating.

Asked about a potential 2024 rematch between President Biden and former President Trump, 44% of registered voters say they would support President Biden, 42% say they would vote for Trump, and 10% are undecided. It is still very early, but it's evident there is a great deal of built-in polarization in the public that has created a cloud of negativity around national politics and the U.S. political system.

### ***COVID-19***

*“Despite nearly 1,000 Americans dying per day of coronavirus, Americans view their local public schools as much safer than they did 18 months ago. Americans are mixed on the overall federal response but view the government scientists fighting the pandemic more unfavorably than favorably,” says Professor Cluverius.*

Now, more than two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans give the federal government mixed reviews on its response to the virus. However, we also observe how much response to the virus has become politicized. Americans are split with 50% reporting satisfaction with the federal government's response to COVID-19 and 50% reporting dissatisfaction – an increase of seven points from the UMass Lowell October 2020 poll. Satisfaction is largely driven by Democrats, 79% of whom give the federal government positive marks compared to just 24% of Republicans. This is also a reversal from the UMass Lowell October 2020 poll, which was taken when Trump was in office and found 12% of Democrats were satisfied with the federal government response to COVID-19 compared to 81% of Republicans. Satisfaction with state governments has not changed markedly; it now sits at 57% compared to 59% in October of 2020.

We also now find Americans are expressing a greater comfort living with the pandemic. Most Americans (61%) express feelings of safety having public schools open without requiring masks. Owing again to the polarized nature of the pandemic, 87% of Republicans agree it is safe to open public schools without a masking requirement, compared to 40% of Democrats and 65% of independents.

Once a figure of immense popularity, Dr. Anthony Fauci has frequently become the target of attacks from Republican members of Congress and conservative media personalities. The nation's leading infectious disease expert now has a net negative (-2) favorability rating (38% favorable, 40% unfavorable, 15% no opinion, 7% never heard of). The ratings have become entirely partisan, with 75% of Democrats viewing Dr. Fauci in a favorable light and 80% of Republicans viewing him in an unfavorable light.

### ***Political Reform***

*“Our poll suggests Americans are committed to a democracy that is more inclusive – one that would spur greater participation and offer them more choices. The level of institutional dissatisfaction that people feel with their democracy right now should not be understated. Party polarization has taken a toll and while most people have chosen a side, the appetite for reform suggests that many people can imagine another way to live and another way to govern,” notes Professor Dyck.*

Our survey repeated a series of questions asked in October of 2020 about Americans’ appetite for political reform. We still find majority support for expansion of vote-by-mail options (64%); electing the president by national popular vote instead of the Electoral College (59%); implementation of nationwide same-day voter registration (59%); automatic voter registration (58%); and term limits for Supreme Court justices (71%). Most Americans (59%) also say the United States would be better with more than two competitive political parties.

Notably, support for expanding the Supreme Court from nine to 13 justices falls shy of majority support at 47%, down five points from the October 2020 poll. Similarly, support for ranked-choice voting continues to fall short of majority support at 44%, down three points from the most recent national UMass Lowell poll.