THREATS TO AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AHEAD OF AN UNPRECEDENTED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Findings from the 2023 American Values Survey

PRRI
Survey Methodology

• Conducted August 25-30, 2023, among a representative sample of 2,525 adults who are part of the Ipsos Knowledge Panel.
• The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 2.19 percentage points.
• Designed in partnership with the Brookings Institution.
• Supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, with additional support from the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, and the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock.
State of the Country: Pessimism, Political Violence, and Paranoia
The Future of Democracy and the 2024 Election, by Party Affiliation

The future of American democracy is at stake in the 2024 presidential election

Since the 1950s, American culture and way of life has mostly changed for the worse
America's best days are now behind us

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Americans</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mainline/non-evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Catholic</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Catholic</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Protestant</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian religion</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiously unaffiliated</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political Violence Might be Necessary, by Party Affiliation

Because things have gotten so far off track, true American patriots may have to resort to violence in order to save our country.
Political Violence Might be Necessary, by Religious Tradition

Because things have gotten so far off track, true American patriots may have to resort to violence in order to save our country

Source: PRRI Surveys 2021-2023.
Attitudes Correlated with Support for Political Violence

Because things have gotten so far off track, true American patriots may have to resort to violence in order to save our country.

Rise in QAnon Believers, 2021-2023

Source: PRRI Surveys 2021-2023.
QAnon Believers, by Party Affiliation

CRITICAL AND LITMUS TEST ISSUES
Top Critical Issues for Democrats

Percent who say the following are critical issues:

- Climate change: Democrat 66%, Republican 12%
- Access to guns and gun safety: Democrat 66%, Republican 25%
- Increasing costs of housing and everyday expenses: Democrat 63%, Republican 60%
- Health care: Democrat 59%, Republican 38%
- The health of our democracy: Democrat 58%, Republican 44%
- Growing gap between rich and poor: Democrat 57%, Republican 19%
- Mental health: Democrat 54%, Republican 31%
- Abortion: Democrat 49%, Republican 32%

Top Critical Issues for Republicans

Percent who say the following are critical issues:

- Increasing costs of housing and everyday expenses: 63% Republicans, 60% Democrats
- What children learn in public school: 38% Republicans, 59% Democrats
- Crime: 45% Republicans, 57% Democrats
- Immigration: 30% Republicans, 57% Democrats
- Human trafficking: 46% Republicans, 54% Democrats

Litmus Test Issues for Candidates, by Party Affiliation

Percent who say they would ONLY vote for a candidate who shares their views on:

- Abortion
- Access to guns
- Climate change
- LGBTQ rights
- Immigration

ASSESSMENTS OF 2024 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES
Preferences for Presidential Candidate Priorities, by Party Affiliation and Religious Tradition

Percent who prefer a presidential candidate who can best:

- Manage the economy
- Protect and preserve American culture and the American way of life

All Americans

- 51% prefer managing the economy
- 46% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

Democrats

- 57% prefer managing the economy
- 40% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

Independents

- 53% prefer managing the economy
- 45% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

Republicans

- 40% prefer managing the economy
- 58% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

Religiously unaffiliated

- 63% prefer managing the economy
- 35% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

Hispanic Catholics

- 57% prefer managing the economy
- 41% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

Non-Christians

- 55% prefer managing the economy
- 44% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

Other Christians

- 51% prefer managing the economy
- 43% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

White Catholics (mainline/non-evangelical)

- 46% prefer managing the economy
- 53% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

Black Protestants

- 44% prefer managing the economy
- 52% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

White Evangelicals

- 42% prefer managing the economy
- 59% prefer protecting and preserving American culture and the American way of life

## Favorability of 2024 Presidential Candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Very favorable</th>
<th>Somewhat favorable</th>
<th>Somewhat unfavorable</th>
<th>Very unfavorable</th>
<th>Have not heard of/Skipped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe Biden</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Trump</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron DeSantis</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Pence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Scott</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Christie</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Manchin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornel West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Firmness of Support for Biden vs. Trump

Among Biden Supporters
- Joe Biden could do something to lose my support: 2%
- There's almost nothing Joe Biden could do to lose my support: 39%

Among Trump Supporters
- Donald Trump could do something to lose my support: 2%
- There's almost nothing Donald Trump could do to lose my support: 53%

There is credible evidence that Donald Trump committed serious federal crimes. It is likely that former president Donald Trump broke the law to try to stay in power after losing the 2020 election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>All Americans</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is credible evidence that Donald Trump committed serious federal crimes.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is likely that former president Donald Trump broke the law to try to stay in power after losing the 2020 election.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Most trust mainstream news:** 80%
- **Most trust Fox News:** 26%
- **Most trust far-right news:** 3%

Source: PRRI 2023 American Values Survey.
Presidential Vote Preferences in Two-Way Election, by Religious Tradition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Joe Biden</th>
<th>Donald Trump</th>
<th>DK/Skipped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Americans</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Protestant</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiously unaffiliated</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian religion</td>
<td></td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mainline/non-evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Catholic</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If _____ wins the 2024 election, democracy is broken and we may need a new form of government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Americans</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Republican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donald Trump</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Biden</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black Protestant</th>
<th>Religiously unaffiliated</th>
<th>White Catholic</th>
<th>White mainline/non-evangelical Protestant</th>
<th>White evangelical Protestant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donald Trump</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Biden</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the Other Findings
Pessimism about the Value of a College Education, 2016-2023, by Party Affiliation

A college education is more of a gamble that may not pay off in the end

Sources: PRRI 2016-2023 Surveys.
Support for Installing Dangerous Physical Deterrents at Border, by Party Affiliation and Religious Tradition

Installing deterrents such as walls, floating barriers in rivers, and razor wire to prevent immigrants from entering the country illegally, even if they endanger or kill some people

- **All Americans**: 44%
- **Republican**
- **Independent**: 44%
- **Democrat**: 15%
- **White evangelical Protestant**: 74%
- **White mainline/non-evangelical Protestant**: 58%
- **White Catholic**: 56%
- **Religiously unaffiliated**: 33%
- **Hispanic Catholic**: 27%
- **Non-Christian religion**: 26%
- **Black Protestant**: 25%

Perceptions of Transgender Advocacy, by Party Affiliation, Religious Tradition, and Media Trust

- People advocating for the rights of transgender people have gone too far in recent years
- Restricting the rights of transgender people is just another form of discrimination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>All Americans</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>White evangelical Protestant</th>
<th>White Catholic</th>
<th>White mainline/non-</th>
<th>Religiously unaffiliated</th>
<th>Far-right news</th>
<th>Fox News</th>
<th>No TV news</th>
<th>Mainstream news</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People advocating for the rights of transgender people have gone too far in recent years</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricting the rights of transgender people is just another form of discrimination</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support for Bans in Public Schools, by Party Affiliation

Percent who favor banning _____ in public schools:

- The discussion of sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- Social and emotional learning programs
- High school courses like AP African American History
- Books depicting slavery

We should teach our children both the good and bad aspects of our history so that they can learn from the past.

We should not teach children history that could make them feel uncomfortable or guilty about what their ancestors did in the past.

Public school teachers and librarians are professionals whom we should trust to provide our kids with appropriate curriculum and books that teach the good and bad of American history.

Public school teachers and librarians should not be allowed to develop curriculum and teach books that wrongly portray America as a racist country.
THREATS TO AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AHEAD OF AN UNPRECEDENTED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Findings from the 2023 American Values Survey
Presidential Vote Preferences in Four-Way Election

Among Registered Voters

- Scenario 1: No Labels (Manchin)
- Scenario 2: No Labels (Hogan)

Re-Election of Trump/Biden Poses a Threat to Democracy, by Party Affiliation and Religious Tradition

Percent who agree the re-election of ___ to the White House poses a threat to American democracy and way of life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Donald Trump</th>
<th>Joe Biden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Americans</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Protestant</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiously unaffiliated</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White mainline/non-evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Catholic</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Re-Election of Trump/Biden Poses a Threat to Democracy, by Race and Generation

**Percent who agree the re-election of ___ to the White House poses a threat to American democracy and way of life**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Donald Trump</th>
<th>Joe Biden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Americans</strong></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White, college graduate</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White, non-college graduate</strong></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gen Z</strong></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Millennials</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gen X</strong></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boomers</strong></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PRRI 2023 American Values Survey.
### Denial of Systematic Racism, by Party Affiliation and Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Americans</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>White, non-college graduate</th>
<th>White, college graduate</th>
<th>AAPI</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree: The recent killings of Black Americans by police are isolated incidents</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree: Generations of slavery and discrimination against minorities have given white people unfair economic advantages</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Society as a whole has become too soft and feminine:

- All Americans
- Republican
- Democrat

Sources: PRRI 2016-2023 Surveys.