

State of the Nations: Canadians fear for the impacts of another Trump term as U.S. Election 2024 looms

Half say United States may be on its way to becoming an authoritarian state

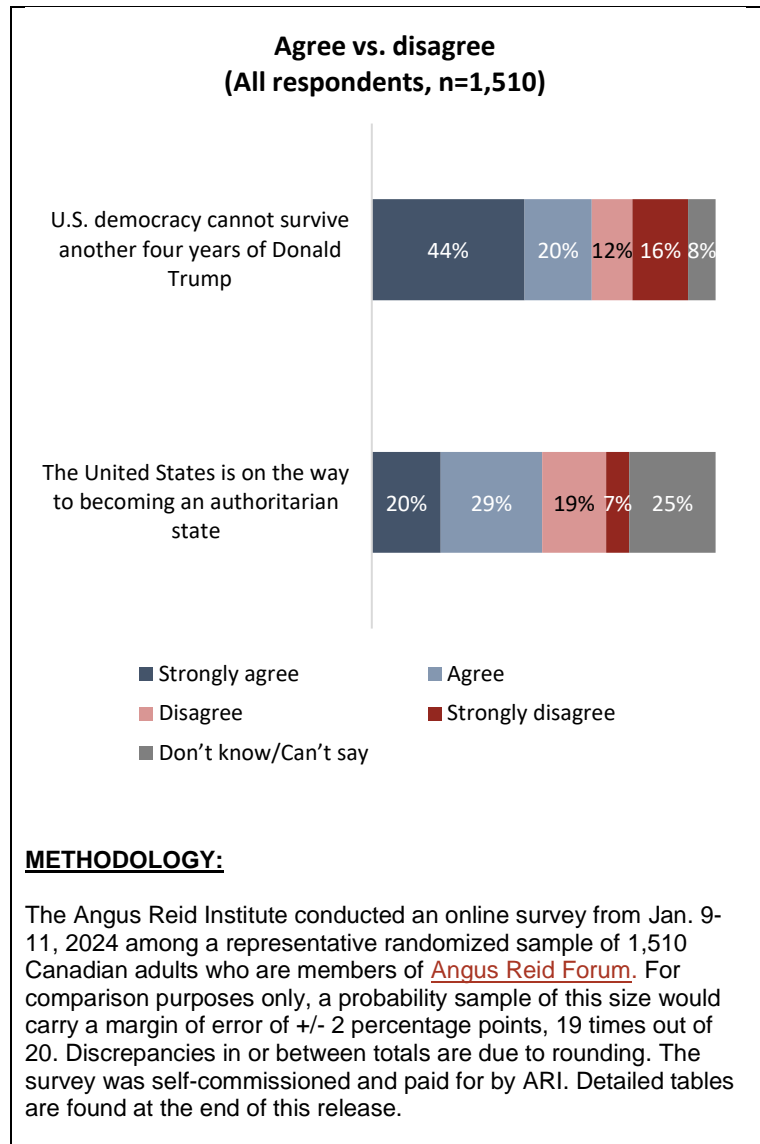
January 15, 2024 – The 2024 American Presidential election looks starkly familiar to the 2020 edition, as it is expected that Joe Biden and Donald Trump will represent the Democratic and Republican Parties respectively. For Canadians, a repeat outcome from 2020 would be welcome, while a Trump victory has many predicting dire consequences for both sides of the 49th parallel.

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds two-thirds of Canadians concerned American democracy will not be able to survive another four years of Trump at the helm. Trump himself has publicly mused about his plans for “[retribution](#)” if he wins again, after being impeached twice in his first four years and continuing to claim that the last election was “[rigged](#)” against him.

In this report – the first in a three-part series looking at the state of democracy in Canada and the United States – half of Canadians say they worry that their southern neighbour could be on the way to becoming an authoritarian state, something [recent studies](#) have suggested as a growing global trend.

In terms of domestic impacts, Canadians are three times as likely to say that a Biden victory would be better for the Canadian economy (53%) than a Trump win (18%). A significant number (29%) aren't convinced it would matter either way for Canada. The same trends are true when considering each outcome and the impact on Canada's defense agreements with the U.S., global peace and security, and the overall Canada-U.S. relationship, with most saying Biden would be better for Canada, and the rest divided between indifference or a preference for Trump.

As observers cast their gaze toward November and the electoral contest to come, Canadians [join many Americans](#) in worrying about election security. Just 12 per cent of Canadians say they have full confidence that elections will be safe and secure, while twice as many (23%) say they have no



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confidence at all. Another two-in-five have doubts (38%), with 27 per cent also saying they're more confident than not.

Among those who lack confidence, half (49%) say both Republican and Democratic states are a source of concern, while the rest are twice as likely to say they're primarily worried about Red States (34%) rather than Blue ones (17%).

More Key Findings:

- One-in-five Canadians (22%) say that they believe the “American Age” of geopolitical dominance is already over, while 33 per cent say it is on its last legs.
- Past Canadian Conservative voters are more likely (by a slight margin) to say that Trump winning the presidency would be beneficial to Canada's economy (37%), while 33 per cent say neither candidate would make a difference and 27 per cent say Biden would be better. Just four per cent of past Liberals and seven per cent of past New Democrats say Trump would be better, while the vast majority prefer Biden.
- Seven-in-ten Canadians (71%) say that the idea that “the rule of law applies equally to everyone” in the United States is weakening.

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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Part One: Canadians see Biden as better for their interests

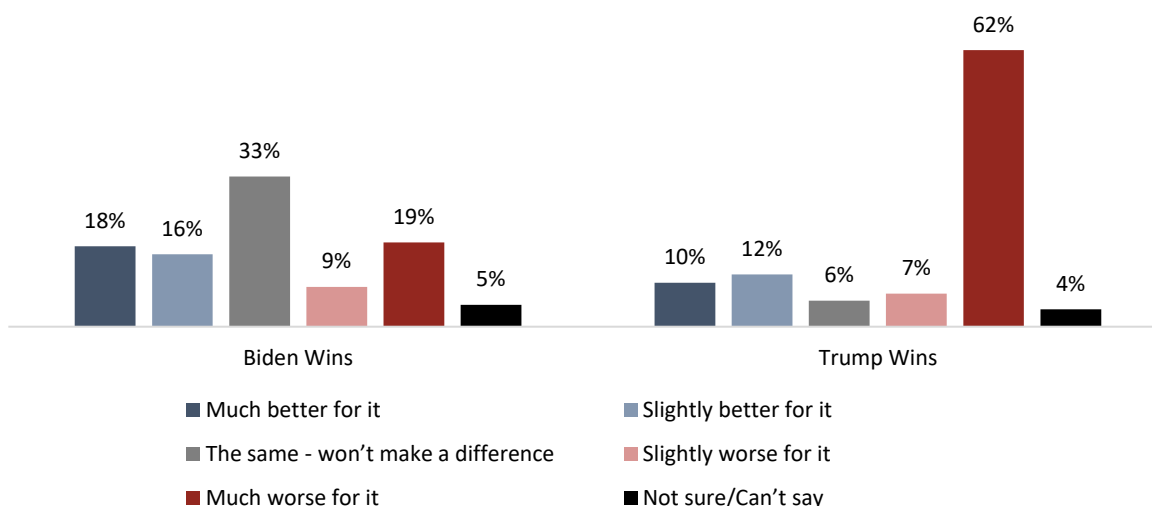
The 2024 U.S. election has been described as the “[battle for America’s soul](#)”. Already the election is mired in controversy as [the Supreme Court deliberates](#) on whether or not Trump, [the frontrunner for the Republican nomination](#), can be struck from the ballot due to his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol Attack. Trump has warned that “[it’ll be bedlam in the country](#)” if it’s ruled he is unable to run to return to the Oval Office.

Consequences for U.S. viewed as dire if Trump wins

Many Canadians worry that if Trump runs and wins, the U.S. will be worse for it. Three-in-five (62%) believe America will be “much worse” if Trump wins the 2024 election. A handful of one-in-five (22%) disagree and believe the U.S. will be better off if the former president wins again.

In the scenario that Biden wins a second term in office, Canadians lean towards believing the U.S. will be better (34%) than worse (28%), but one-third (33%) expect extending Biden’s presidency won’t have an effect either way:

**Consider these two scenarios for the presidential race in 2024. How do you think that will affect America overall? Will the U.S. be better or worse if...
(All respondents, n=1,510)**

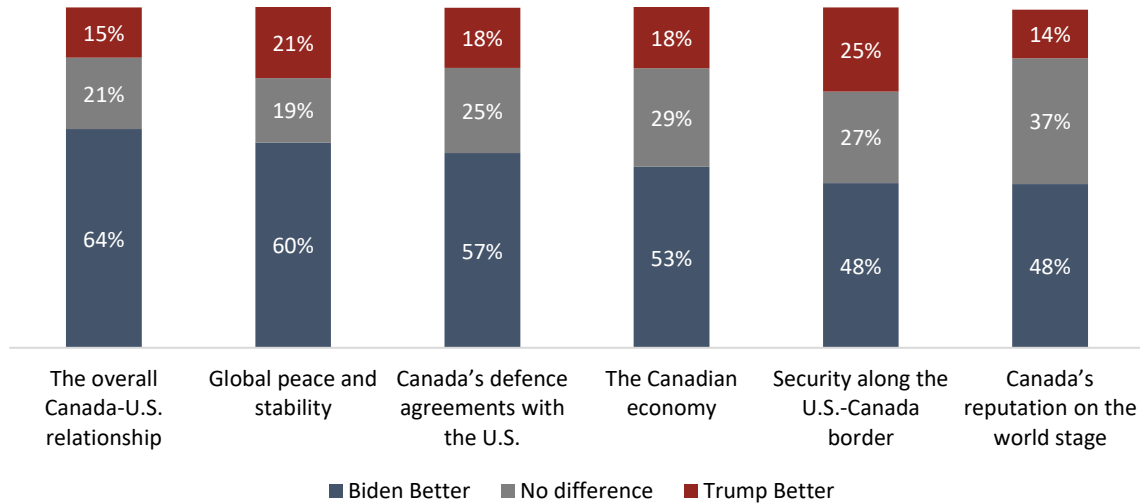


Biden win viewed as more beneficial to Canada

Despite some ambivalence to the effect a second Biden term will have on the U.S., Canadians are more likely to view a Biden win as the best-case scenario for their own country. Majorities believe a second Biden term will be better for Canada’s relationship with the U.S. (64%), global peace and stability (60%), defence agreements between the two countries (57%) and the Canadian economy (53%). Half believe a Biden victory is preferred to a Trump one when it comes to security along the U.S.-Canada border (48%) and Canada’s reputation on the world stage (48%).

On each measure at least one-in-five believe neither candidate would make a difference, while Trump is seen as the better option on each front by between one-in-seven and one-quarter of Canadians:

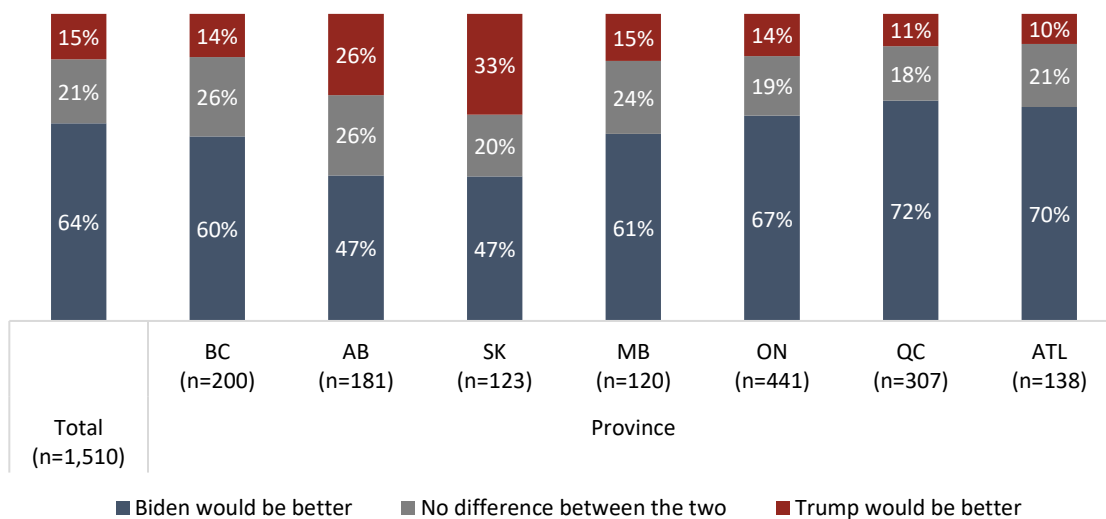
**Considering the same scenarios for this year's presidential race – which winner do you think would be better for each of the following:
(All respondents, n=1,510)**



Biden viewed as more stable for Canada-U.S. relationship

Few across the country believe Trump is the better option when it comes to the overall relationship between Canada and the U.S. Albertans (26%) and those living in Saskatchewan (33%) are most likely to believe this is the case, though still at a minority level:

Which winner do you think would be better for the Canada-U.S. relationship overall:



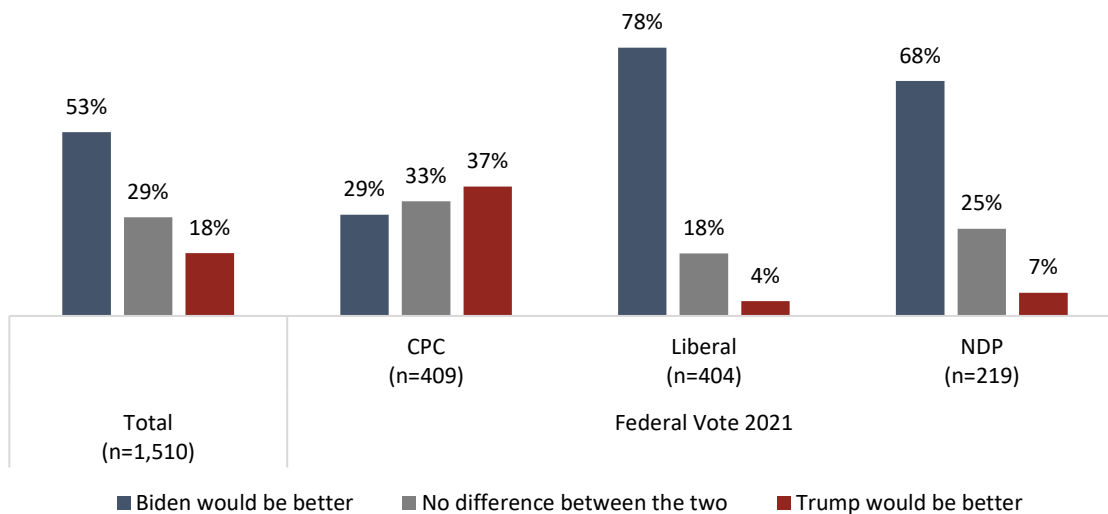
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Political perspectives on better economic bet

Past Conservative voters are more skeptical when it comes to a potential second Biden term and its effect on the Canadian economy. Trump is viewed as the best choice on that front by a plurality of those who voted CPC in 2021 (37%). Past Liberal (78%) and NDP (68%) voters overwhelmingly view another Biden term as the preferred option for Canada’s economy:

Which winner do you think would be better for the Canadian economy:



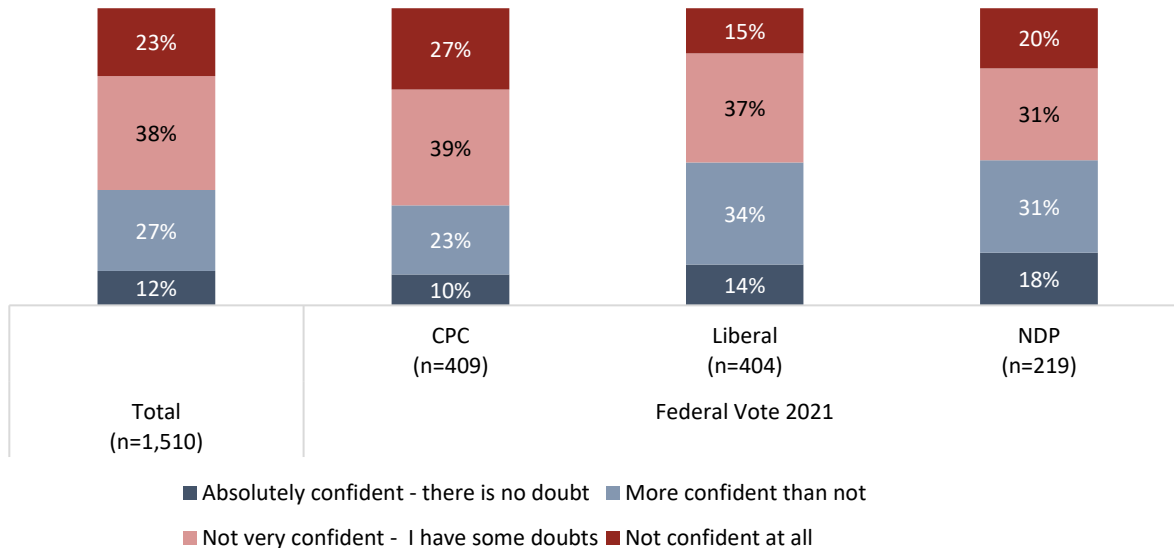
Part Two: Concerns over safeguards to American elections

Democracy in the United States has been shaken in recent elections by claims of voter fraud. The genesis of many of these claims is former President Donald Trump, who alleged thousands of ballots in the swing state of Georgia were fraudulent, costing him the presidency in the 2020 election. These claims and allegations have been widely debunked, though there are ongoing court cases still unsettled regarding the security of voting machines used in Georgia.

There are evidently many Canadians who have their doubt about the security and safety of American elections. One-quarter say they are “not confident at all” that the 2024 election is secure against fraud and cheating. Nearly as many say they have doubts (38%) as express confidence (39%) that the necessary safeguards are in place to ensure a fair election.

Past CPC voters are less confident the 2024 election will be secure than past NDP and Liberal voters, but confidence does not rise to a majority level among any group of past voters:

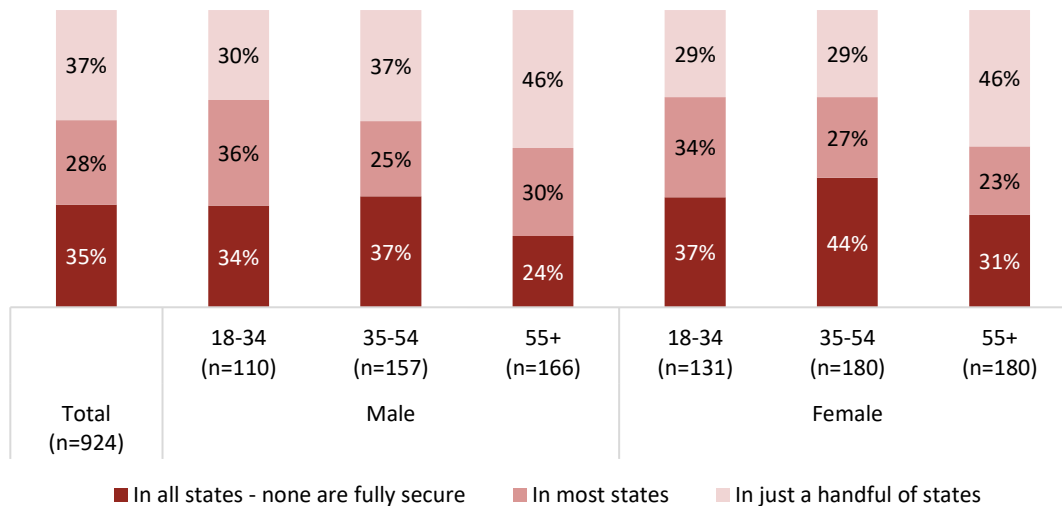
How confident are you that the necessary safeguards are in place to prevent widespread fraud and cheating in the 2024 election?



Majorities of all age groups are not confident the 2024 election is safeguarded against fraud, but it is women aged 35 to 54 who are the most likely to express no confidence this year's American election is protected from cheating ([see detailed tables](#)).

Further, for those who have their doubts about the security of the 2024 American election, one-third are worried the vulnerabilities are widespread. Three-in-ten (28%) believe most states' ballots are at risk. Two-in-five (37%) believe just a handful of states do not have the safeguards in place to ensure a fair election. Again, it is 35- to 54-year-old women who express the most concern:

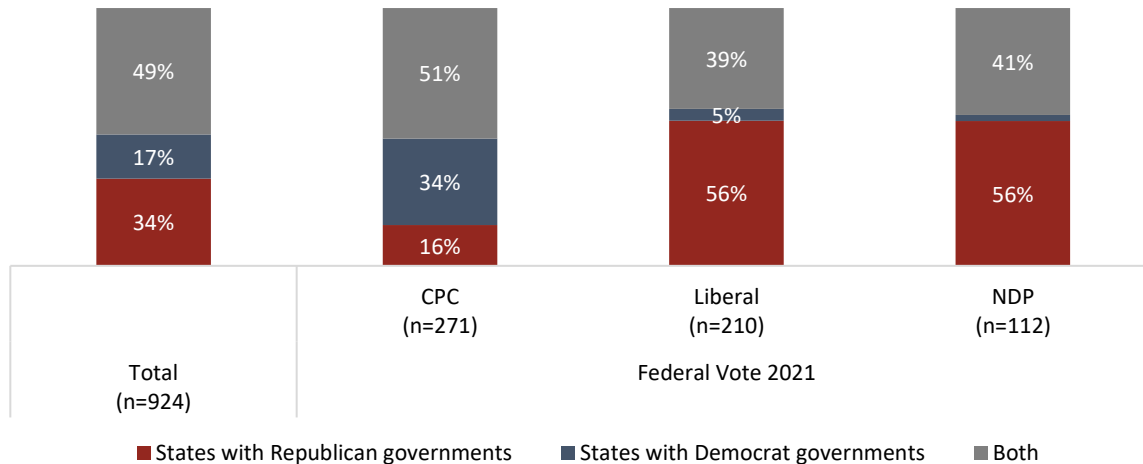
**Where are you concerned cheating may take place?
(Among those who say they are not confident the necessary safeguards
are in place for the 2024 election)**



Canadians concerned the 2024 election may not be conducted fairly appear to be more suspicious of Red states than Blue ones. One-third (34%) of those who are not confident the 2024 election is safeguarded against fraud believe cheating is more likely to happen in states controlled by Republicans, twice the number of those (17%) who believe states controlled by Democrats are more at risk. Half (49%) believe states controlled by both parties are at risk.

Past CPC voters are more likely to believe cheating in the 2024 election is more likely to happen in Democratic states, while majorities of past NDP (56%) and Liberal (56%) voters believe election fraud is more likely to be in Republican-controlled states:

**And do you think this cheating is more likely to happen in
(Among those who say they are not confident the necessary safeguards are in place for the 2024 election)**



Part Three: The state of the States

As another pivotal election nears in the United States, Canadians were asked to assess their southern neighbour on a number of fronts. On more measures than not, Canadians are critical of America. Seven-in-ten (68%) view the U.S. as a prosperous country. Canadians are split on whether or not the U.S. is a positive force for good globally but lean towards believing that's not the case. Majorities believe Americans do not have a good system of government (65%), is not a caring society (65%) and is a country that is on the wrong track (63%). Three-in-five (62%) say the values of the United States are not their own ([see detailed tables](#)).

Canadians see U.S. backsliding on rule of law, democratic principles

Meanwhile, Canadians are also critical of the standing of democratic pillars south of the 49th parallel. Two-in-five (44%) feel politics is becoming more exclusionary in the United States, double the number who disagree. Majorities feel elections are becoming less free and fair in the U.S. (61%), protections on human rights are weakening (65%), the power is becoming less vested in the people (60%) and the rule of law is not being equally applied (71%) in that country ([see detailed tables](#)).

Is the 'American Age' over?

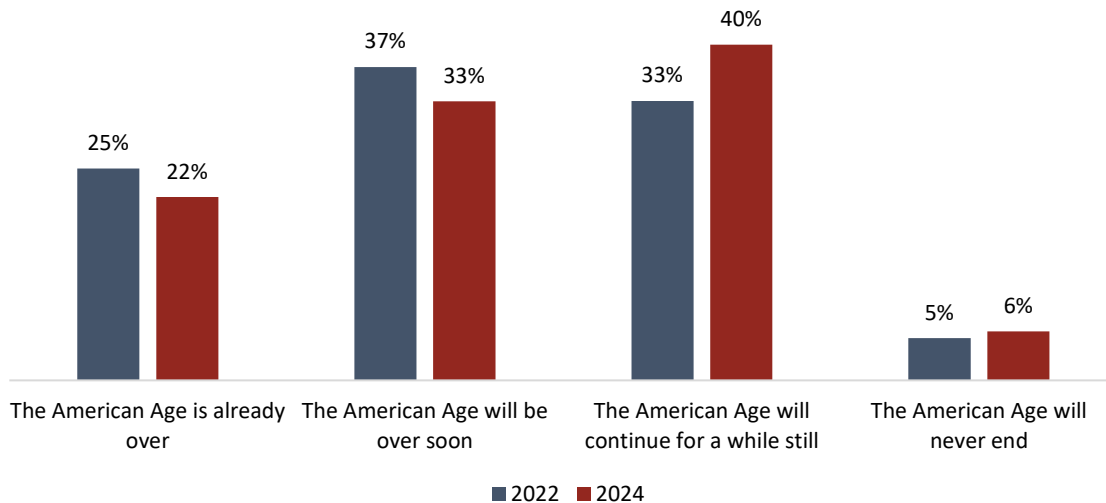
The dominance of the United States on the global stage over matters of trade, diplomacy, economics, and culture has led some historians to classify most of the last 100 years as [the American Age](#). That dominance is [viewed as waning](#) in recent years in the wake of internal turmoil in the U.S. and the increasing power of China on the global stage.

A majority (55%) of Canadians are of the view that either America's time of global dominance is already over or will pass soon. However, two-in-five (40%) believe the end is not nigh for the American Age, while one-in-20 (6%) believe there will be no end to American hegemony. There has been slight shifts in this opinion in the two years since ARI first asked this question. In 2022, Canadians were slightly more likely to believe the American Age would soon be over, if it wasn't already:

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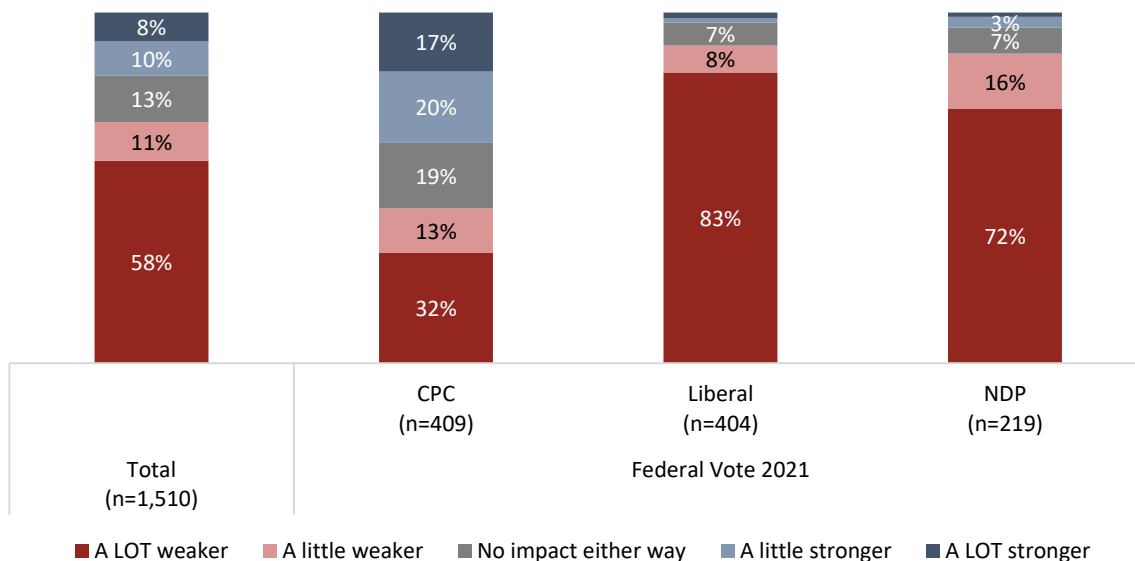
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In your belief, is the American Age over, or will it continue for the foreseeable future?



At issue for many Canadians appears to be a worry of the effect of a second Trump presidency. A majority of Canadians feel democracy would be severely weakened by another four years of Trump. This is the overwhelming view of past Liberal and NDP voters, but a smaller proportion of those who voted Conservative in 2021.

Suppose Donald Trump won this year’s presidential election. In this instance, do you think democracy in America would grow ...



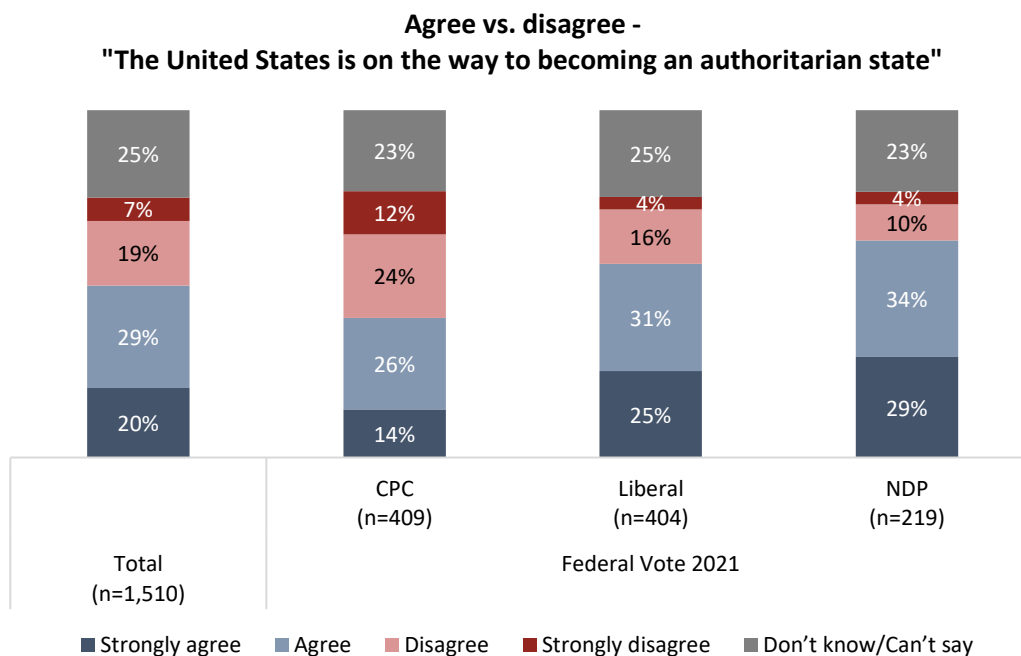
Further, a majority (64%) of Canadians believe American democracy “cannot survive” another four years with Trump as president. Past CPC voters are less likely to hold this view ([see detailed tables](#)).

Four more years of Biden is much less likely to be viewed by Canadians as a detriment to American democracy, but it isn't viewed as a significant benefit, either. The plurality view (44%) is a second Biden term will have no impact either way on democracy in the United States. Nearly as many feel it will have a negative effect on democracy in that country (27%) as a positive one (29%).

Half (48%) of past Conservative voters feel Biden winning in 2024 will be damaging to American democracy, while half (48%) of those who voted Liberal in 2021 believe the opposite ([see detailed tables](#)).

Half see road to authoritarianism

The spectre of authoritarianism hangs over Trump's pursuit to return to the White House. Trump has said "retribution" would be part of his agenda if he were to be re-elected. Half of Canadians (49%) share those fears, believing the U.S. is "on the way to becoming an authoritarian state," double the number (26%) who disagree. Men older than 54 are the most likely to see the U.S. as treading the path towards authoritarianism ([see detailed tables](#)). Majorities of past Liberal (56%) and NDP (63%) in the 2021 federal election believe authoritarianism is gaining ground in the United States. Past CPC voters are more divided – two-in-five (40%) say the U.S. is on the path to authoritarianism; 36 per cent disagree:



Coming next

The second and third parts in this three-part series on the state of democracy in Canada and the United States will examine how Americans feel about their own country heading into the presidential election and how Canadians assess the strength of their own democracy.

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

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