

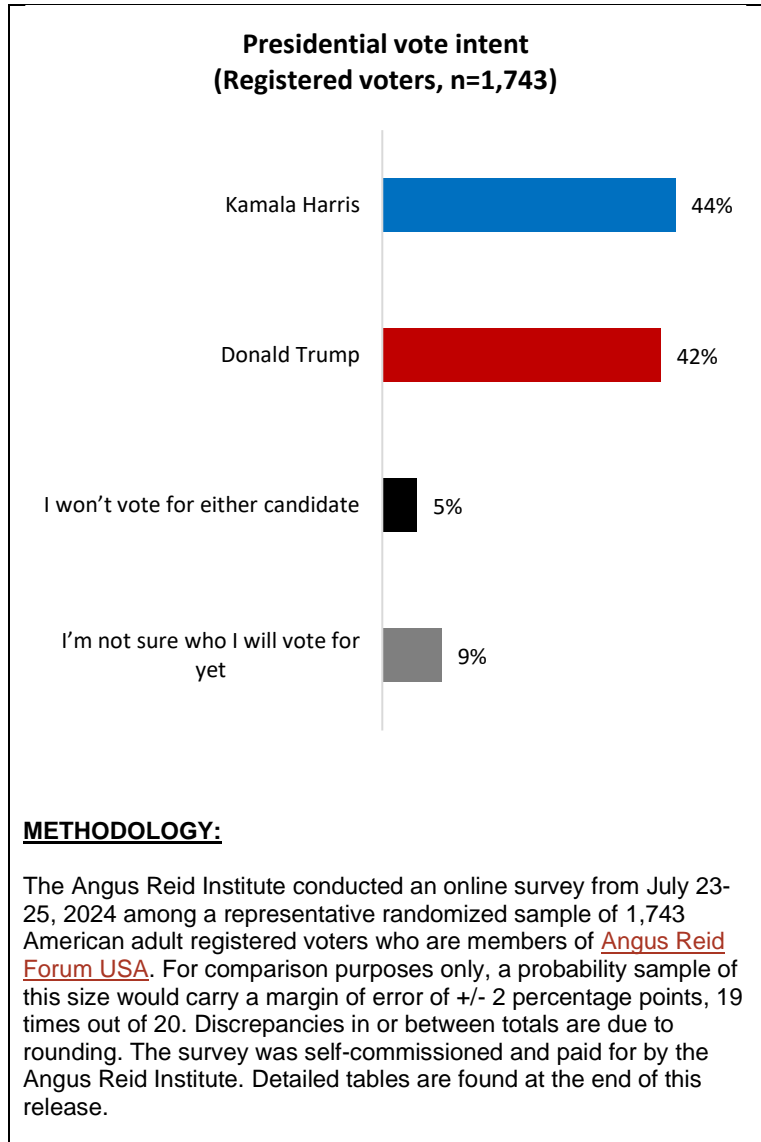
Game Change: Invigorated young Democrats give Harris slight lead over Trump

Four-in-five believe this to be 'one of the most important elections' in American history

July 29, 2024 – A whirlwind month in politics appears to have catalyzed the presidential race, with reports that Kamala Harris has the support of enough delegates to receive the Democratic nomination formally at the party's national convention, which begins on Aug. 19. After President Joe Biden announced he would step aside, his vice president will step up and face former President and Republican nominee Donald Trump for the highest office in the nation.

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Harris energizing the Democratic campaign and entering with a slight overall advantage in vote intent. Currently 44 per cent of American registered voters say they would support her bid, a two-point edge over Trump. Key at play are racial and generational dynamics.

The Harris vote is younger and more diverse, with a massive advantage among non-white would-be voters (56% to 25%) and those younger than 35 years of age (50% to 32%). For Trump, the white vote is stalwart in his favour, as he generates a 14-point advantage over Harris (51% to 37%). While he trails among 18- to 34-year-olds, and is tied among the 35 to 54 group, he holds an eight-point edge among those 55 years of age and older (49% to 40%).



Aside from the battle of personalities, the vast majority of Americans (82%) say this election is one of the most important in the nation's history, while half say is about the issues. For Harris voters this means the future of democracy, reproductive rights, and the battle against climate change. For Trump voters, priorities are the economy, inflation, and security along the southern border.

One key priority for Harris in the coming weeks will be to galvanize voters around one of two ideas – that she is the better qualified candidate, or that she is a bulwark against a worse option. Currently, half of her supporters say they'll vote for her because they like what she stands for, while half say they simply want

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to block Trump. For Trump supporters, 87 per cent say they support him because of what he stands for, a defining difference between these two similarly sized groups.

More Key Findings:

- Asked which leader is better on a host of key issues, Trump holds advantages on economic issues like taxation and inflation, as well as southern border security. Harris is seen as better on reproductive rights, climate change, and upholding democracy. Notably, the candidates are within five points of each other on job creation (46% Trump, 41% Harris).
- Asked about “mass deportation” of southern border migrants, half of Americans support this idea. One-in-five Harris voters (21%) would support this, compared to 87 per cent of Trump voters.
- Harris voters are twice as likely (69% to 31%) to say that they believe the November election will be contested in a free and fair fashion compared to Trump voters

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Part One: Campaign context

The 2024 U.S. presidential race has not only been full of twists of turns – an assassination attempt on former U.S. President and Republican nominee Donald Trump, a disastrous early debate which greased the skids on current U.S. President and presumed Democrat nominee Joe Biden exit from the race – but also loaded rhetoric. Biden said he dropped out despite what he felt was a record that merited re-election because “[nothing can come in the way of saving our democracy](#)”. Trump meanwhile called likely

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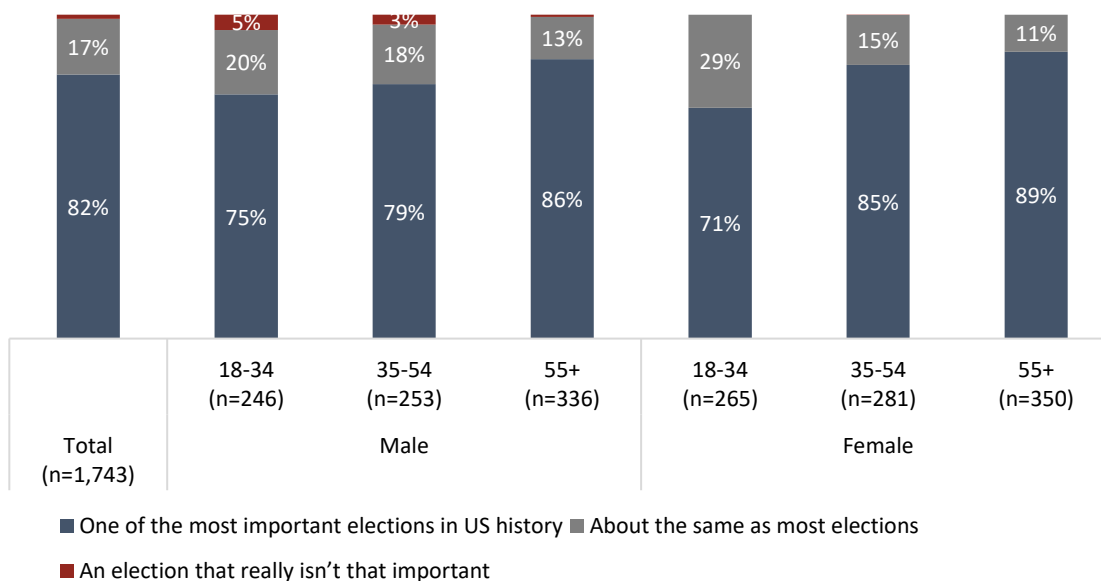
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Democratic nominee, current Vice President Kamala Harris, [a “radical left lunatic” who will “destroy” the country.](#)

Four-in-five say election is one of the most important in nation’s history

With this in the background, perhaps it’s no wonder that an overwhelming majority believe November’s election is “one of the most important elections in U.S. history” by a four-to-one ratio. Older Americans, both male and female, are more likely than younger ones to put elevated import on this contest, but at least seven-in-ten of all age and gender combinations say this is one of the most pivotal elections in American history:

In your view, how important is the outcome of this election:

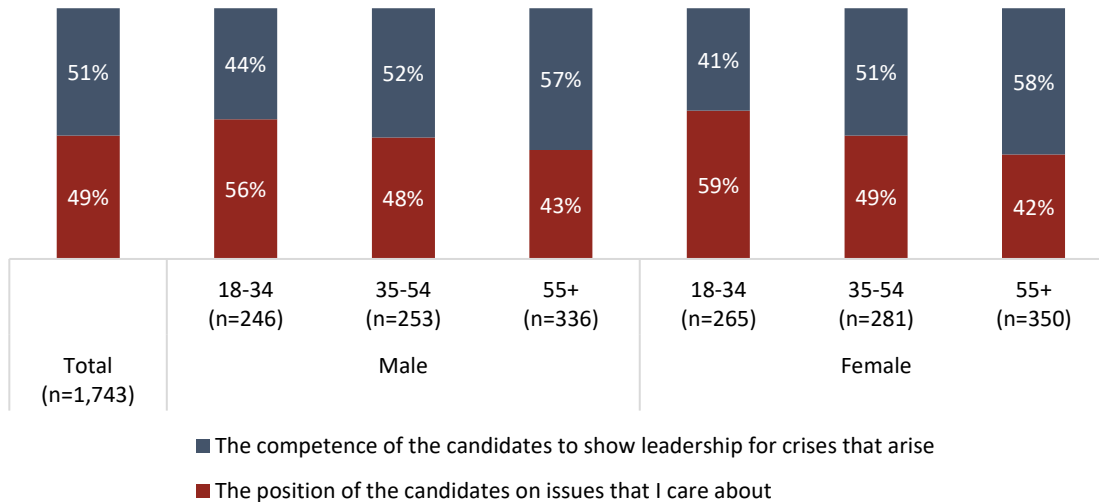


Half say it’s about the candidates, half say it’s about the issues

Prior to Biden’s exit, it appeared the presidential race was going to be a question of candidate competency. There were [plenty of questions of the current president’s capabilities](#) as Biden stumbled through an early debate his own campaign had requested. The issues seemingly were taking a back seat to [a debate over whether Biden was too old](#) for another four years in one of the toughest jobs on the planet. With Biden out, perhaps the issues will rise again in importance.

For their part, Americans are split as to what is more important when it comes to their decision on presidential candidates at the ballot box. Younger Americans are more likely to place value on candidates’ position on issues they care about, while those older than 54 say it is about the candidates’ ability to show leadership when crises arise:

As you think about who to support in the upcoming election for president, what is more important to you:

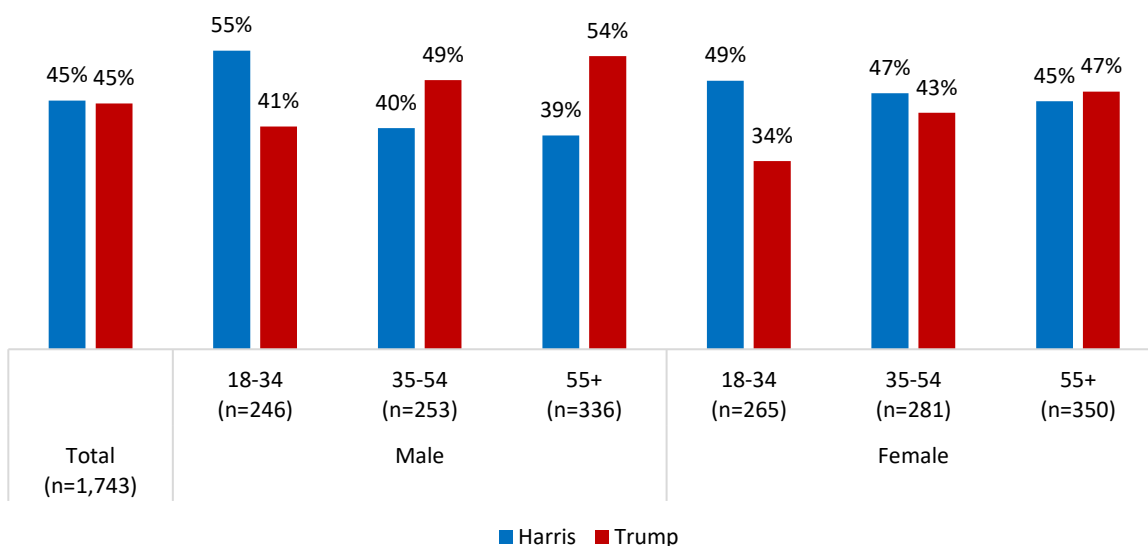


Harris' success appears to hinge on younger voters

The two candidates start the new head-to-head race on even footing when it comes to whether Americans view them favorably (Harris, 45%; Trump, 45%). Trump does carry more negatives than Harris, with half (52%) of Americans saying they have an unfavorable opinion of the former president ([see detailed tables](#)).

Trump generates more positivity from older Americans than younger ones, while the opposite is true of Harris:

Percentage who hold a 'favorable' opinion of the following

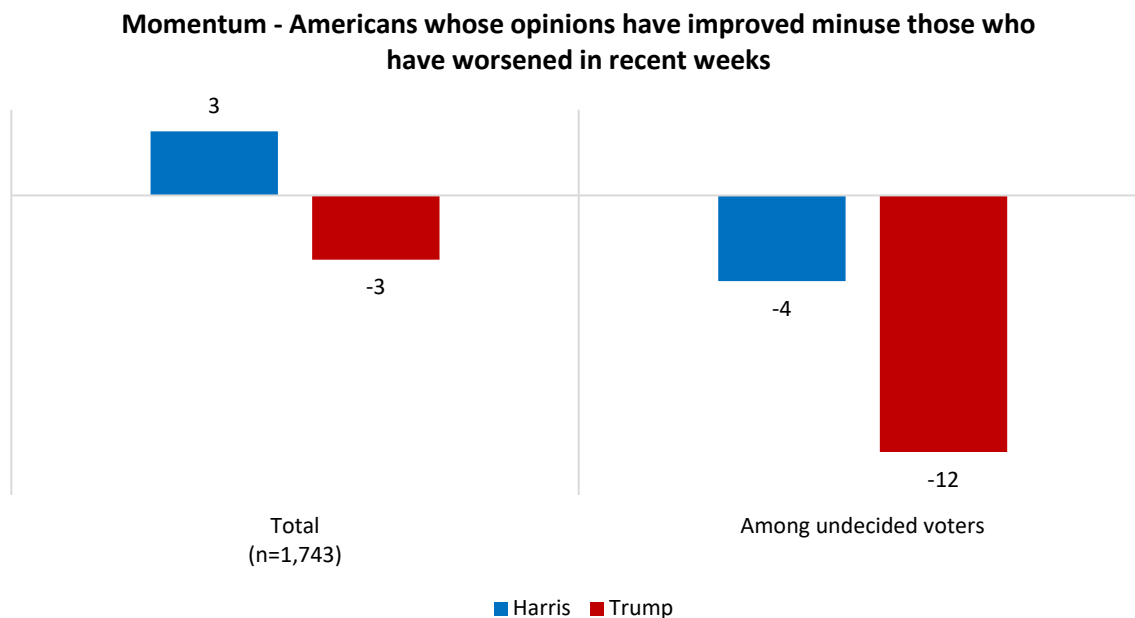


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Momentum favors newer candidate

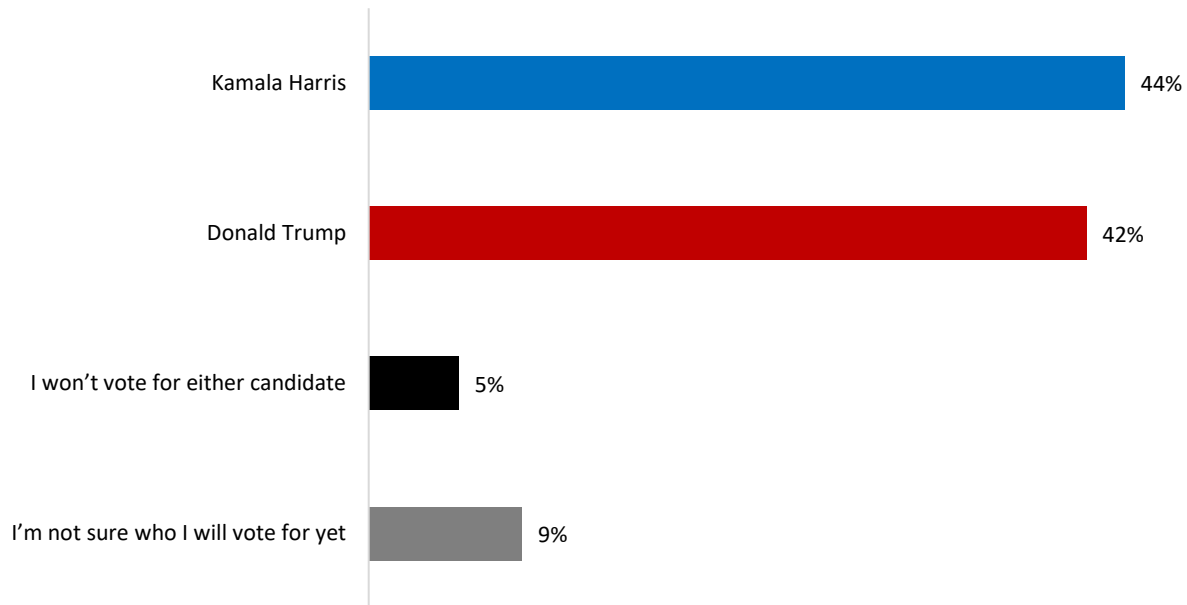
Harris brings with her some positive momentum into the race. There is a three-point difference between those who say their opinion of Harris has improved (36%) and those who say it has worsened (33%). American opinions of Trump, meanwhile, have deteriorated in recent weeks, with a negative three by the same metric. Harris also performs better among undecided registered voters, as one-quarter (27%) in that group say their opinion of Trump has worsened:



Part Two: Current vote intention

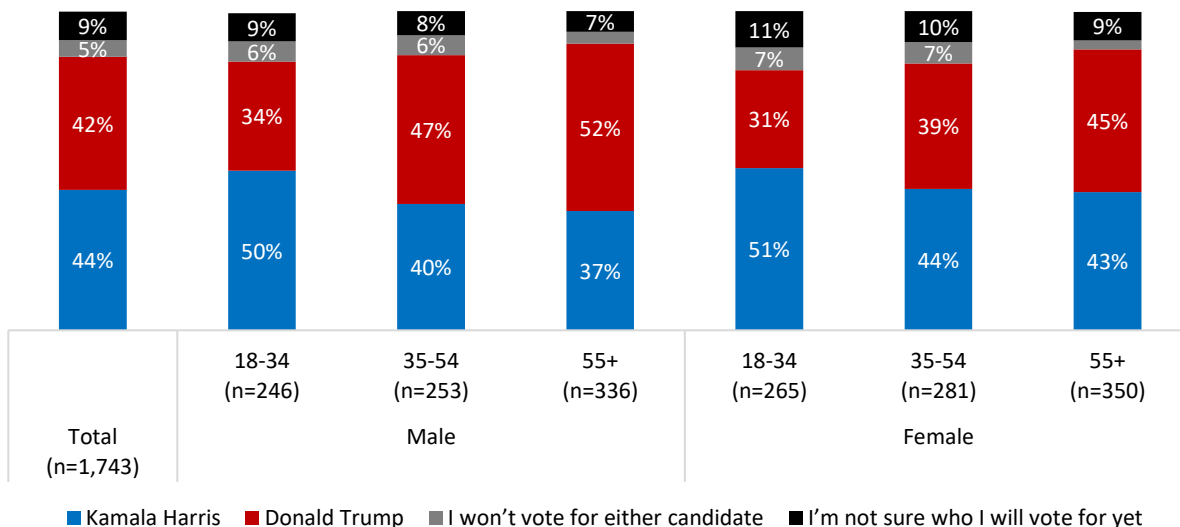
Poor polling – especially in key swing states – increased the pressure that in many ways forced Biden’s exit from the race. Harris starts with a two-point advantage over Trump, with one-in-20 (5%) saying they won’t cast a ballot for either of the two main candidates and one-in-ten (9%) who are undecided. This looks to be a tight race and the latter group will play an important role in determining who wins in November.

**Presidential vote intent
(Registered voters, n=1,743)**



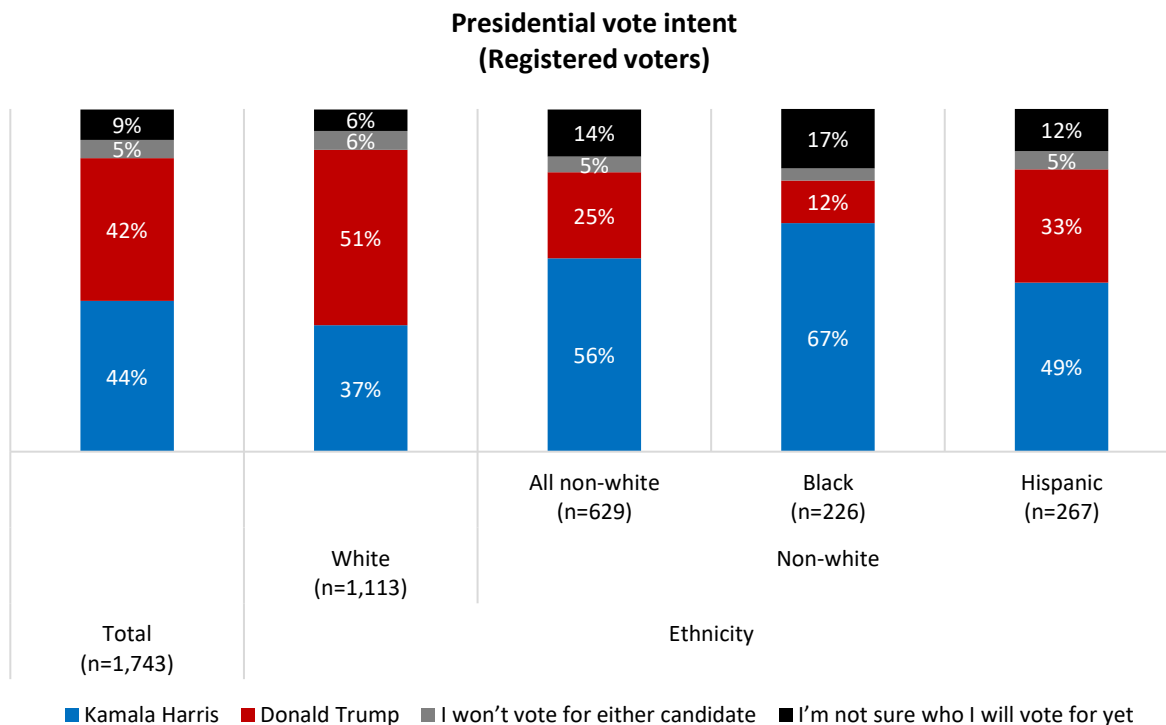
For Harris, turnout among younger Americans will play an important role in this context. In recent elections, [voters have tended to be older](#). Half of 18- to 34-year-olds say they will likely vote for Harris in November. Meanwhile, a majority of men older than 54 say they will vote for Trump. Harris fares better among women that age, who are more divided when it comes to their presidential vote:

**Presidential vote intent
(Registered voters)**



White voters favour Trump, Harris boosted by Black and Hispanic voters

The Biden campaign was struggling on a number of fronts, including among Black voters, who played an important role in the current president’s successful campaign in 2020. Currently, Harris has the overwhelming support of Black voters, with two-thirds (67%) saying they will support her come November. She is also leading among Hispanic voters by a 16-point margin over Trump. There are, however, more non-white voters who say they are currently undecided than among white voters, half (51%) of whom say they intend to vote for Trump:

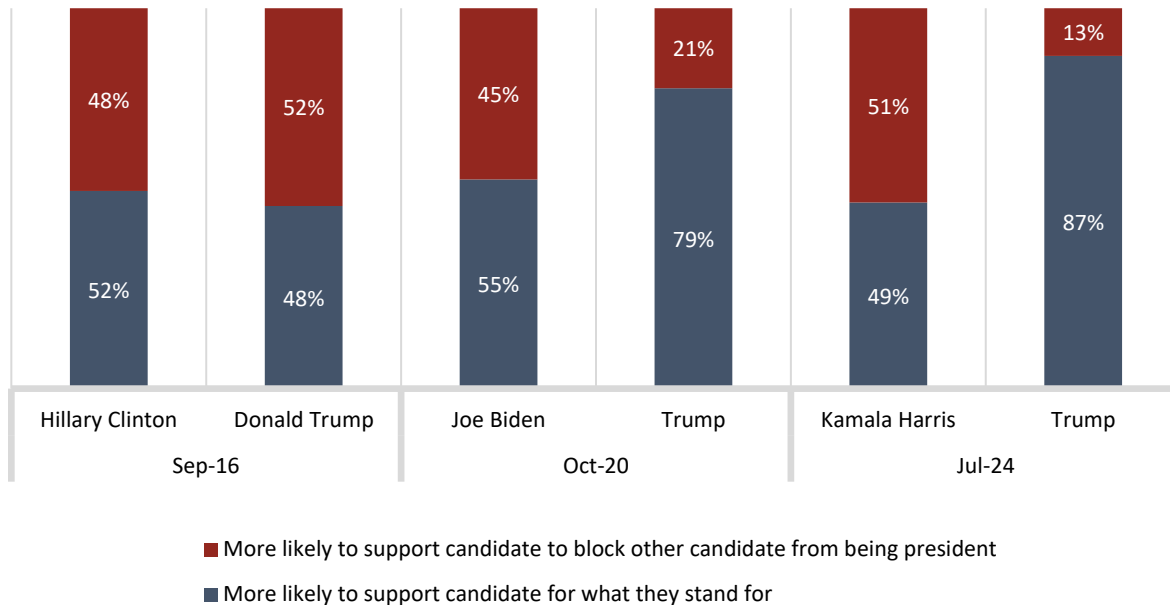


Trump's base loves him, Harris base more likely to vote to block the alternative

As noted above, the Democrats have framed this race as one to stop Trump from destroying democracy in the United States. Stopping Trump has been a strong motivating factor for Democratic voters dating back to 2016 and Hillary Clinton’s unsuccessful campaign against Trump, when half said they were voting for Clinton to prevent Trump from becoming president. In 2020, Biden was more likely to draw support for what he stood for, but still more than two-in-five (45%) said they were voting for him to block Trump from staying in the White House. Harris supporters are evenly split between voting for her because they like what she stands for and voting for her to prevent Trump from winning again.

Trump’s supporters have become more motivated by supporting him for what he stands for as time has gone on. In 2016, his voters were as likely to say they were motivated from stopping Clinton from winning as supporting Trump himself. Now approaching nine-in-ten (87%) say the latter is the more motivating factor:

Vote to support candidate for what they stand for vs. vote to block other candidate



Part Three: Which issues are on voters' minds?

Economic issues hold most weight for potential voters

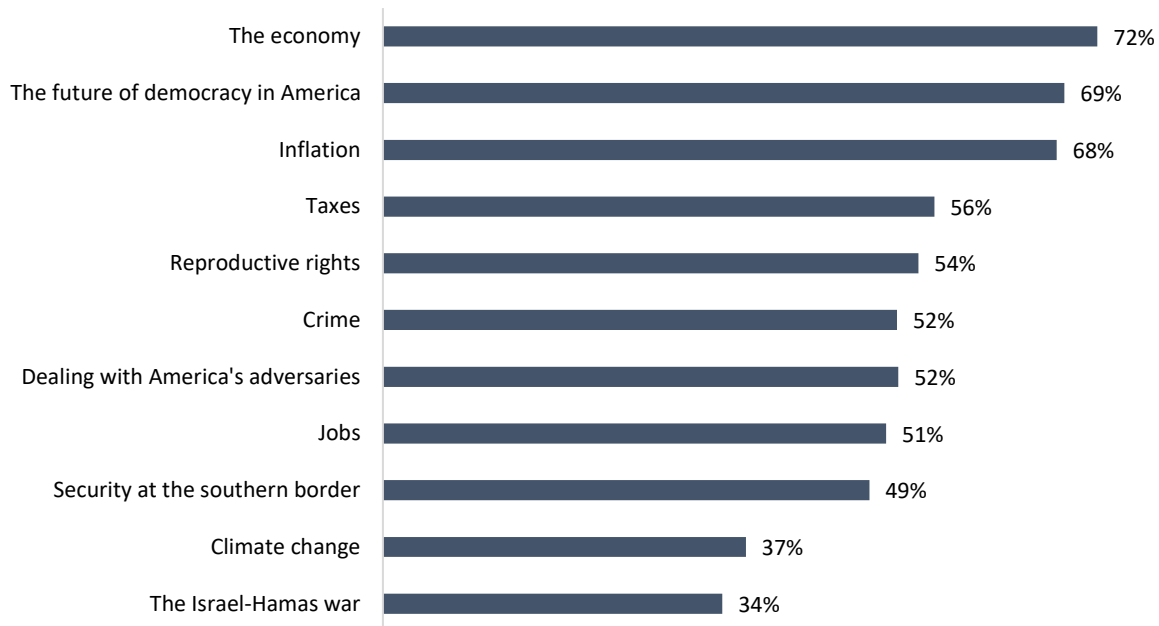
The American economy exited the COVID-19 pandemic under Biden and has performed well by a number of measures – [low unemployment](#), [rising wages](#), [economic growth](#). However, Biden's administration has struggled to convince Americans that is the case, perhaps due to the reverberations still being felt from [a period of high inflation](#). Half (52%) of Americans say their household finances have worsened over the past few years, while two-thirds (63%) believe the American economy as a whole has deteriorated ([see detailed tables](#)).

As Americans prepare to vote in November, registered voters place a “great deal of weight” on economic issues – the economy (72%) generally and inflation (68%) are two of the three most prioritized issues for Americans when it comes to how they will be deciding their presidential vote. The only non-economic issue to rate as highly is “the future of democracy in America” (69%). Much discussed issues such as reproductive rights (54%) and border security (49%) are weighted highly, but not nearly as high as those primary economic concerns:

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**Thinking about deciding who you will vote for as president, how much weight do you give the candidates' policies on each of the following issues:
Percentage who say "great deal" of weight:**



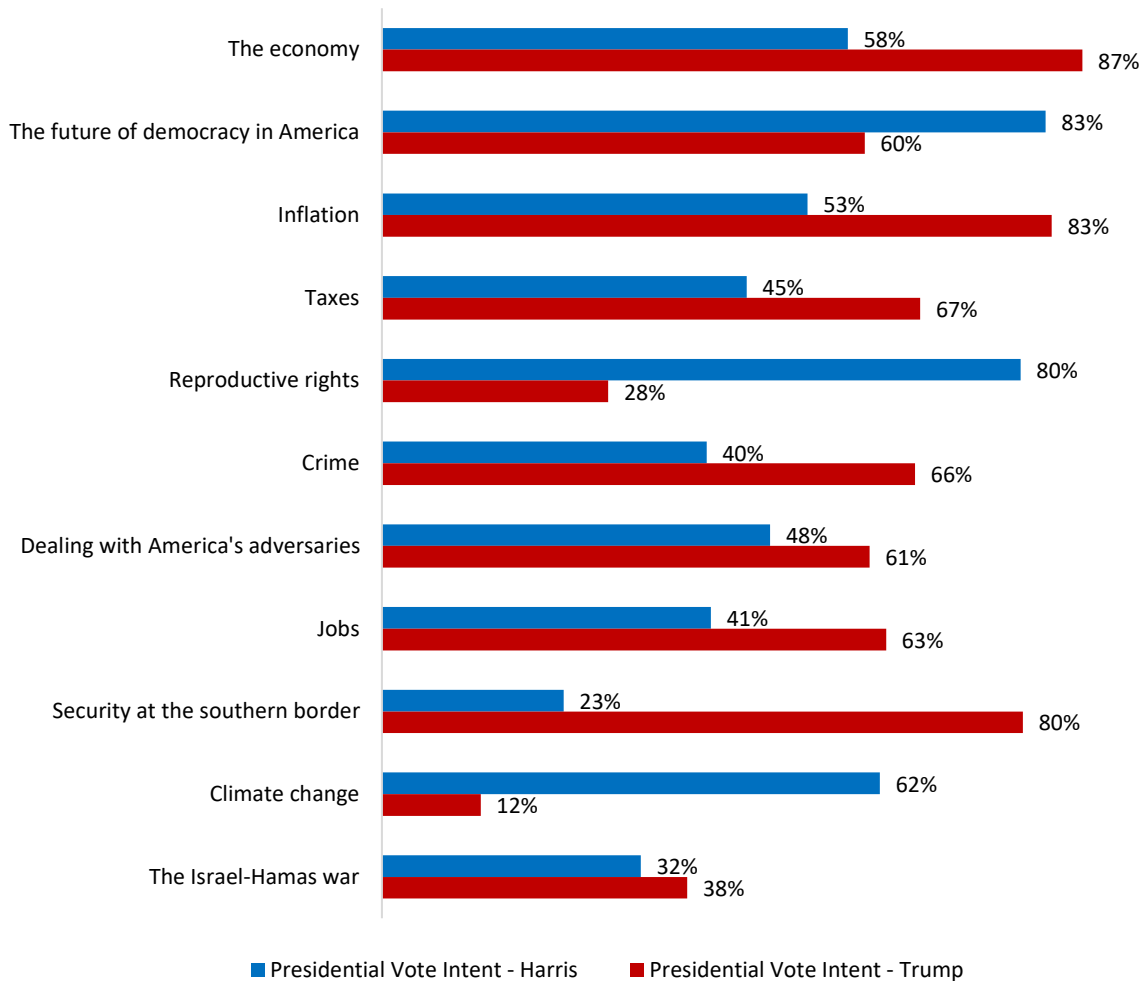
Harris voters more concerned about state of democracy, abortion and climate change

There is a divide between Harris and Trump supporters about which issues are motivating factors. Trump supporters say they are placing a “great deal of weight” on economic issues (economy, 87%; inflation, 83%) followed closely by security at America’s southern border (80%). The latter is given much less consideration by Harris supporters (23%), who instead are concerned with the future of democracy (83%) and reproductive rights (80%) at much higher rates. Potential Harris voters place much more weight on climate change (62%) than those who would support Trump (12%):

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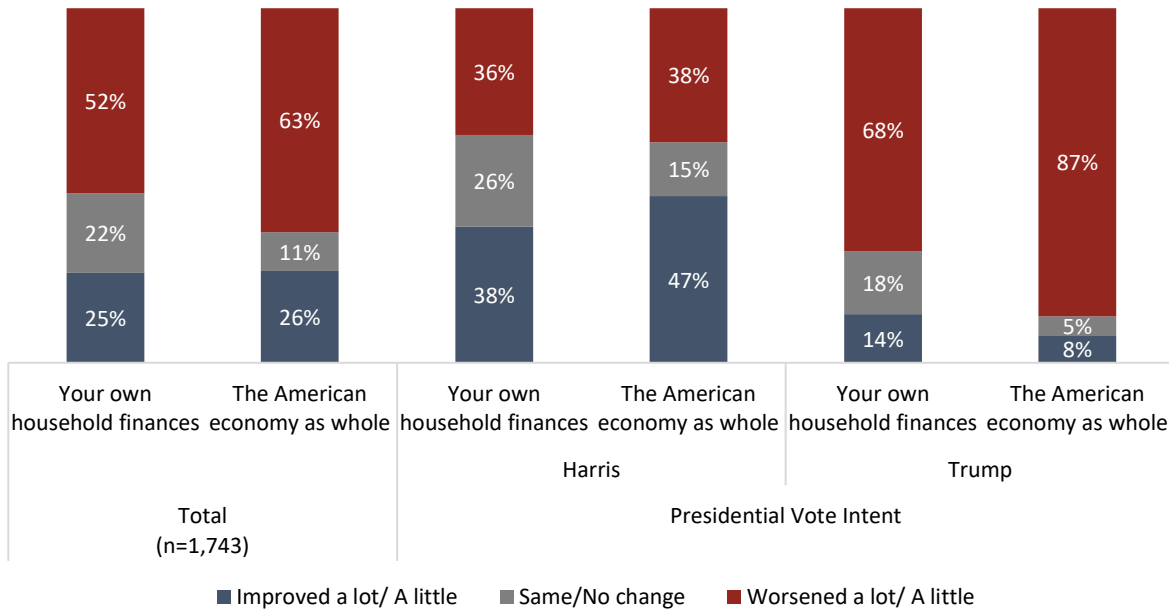
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Percentage who say the place a 'great deal of weight' on the following issues when deciding who their presidential vote



These divergent priorities above perhaps come from the difference in economic assessments between Trump and Harris supporters. Majorities of those who say they will vote Trump believe their household finances (68%) and the American economy as a whole (87%) have worsened over the past few years. While significant portions of Harris supporters say the same, they are much more likely to believe their own and America's financial environment have improved during Biden's term:

Over the past few years or so, would you say things have improved or worsened for:



Harris viewed as better on reproductive rights, climate change; Trump on border security

Climate change, alongside reproductive rights, are viewed as strengths of a potential Harris administration by Americans. Trump, meanwhile, is viewed as the better candidate to secure the border – he has said that on day one of his second term he would close the southern border with Mexico – handle the economy and stand-up to America’s adversaries:

Who do you generally feel would do a better job handling the following issues during the next four years of the Presidency?		
	Harris	Trump
Security at the southern border	32%	52%
Crime	39%	45%
Reproductive rights/abortion	55%	28%
Inflation	39%	47%
Jobs	41%	46%
Taxes	40%	46%
The economy	40%	48%
The Israel-- Hamas war	35%	43%
Dealing with America's adversaries such as Russia and China	38%	47%
Climate change	50%	25%
The future of democracy in America	48%	40%

Part Four: Massive division on policy

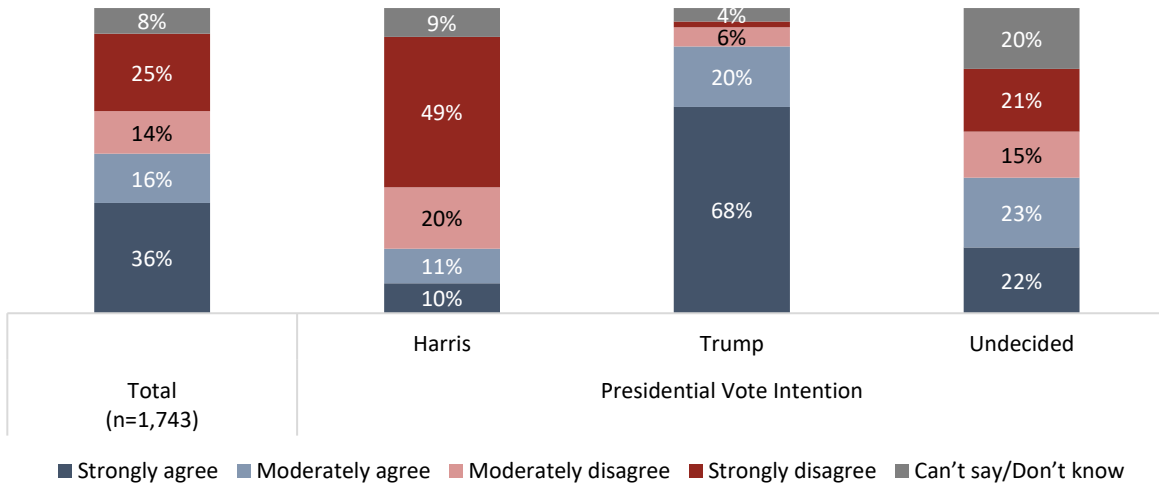
Mass deportation

America's border crisis is an enduring challenge, faced by administration after administration. Perhaps the most illuminating datapoint to show the cross-partisan nature of this issue is the fact that former President Barack Obama [deported more people](#) than Trump. After falling between 2007 and 2019, the number of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. has risen. One call from Republicans is a "[mass deportation](#)" movement to begin if Trump wins re-election. This idea is popular with half of Americans, though would likely lead to significant economic challenges in [replacing an important though undocumented labour force](#). Most Harris voters disagree with this policy, while undecided voters are divided:

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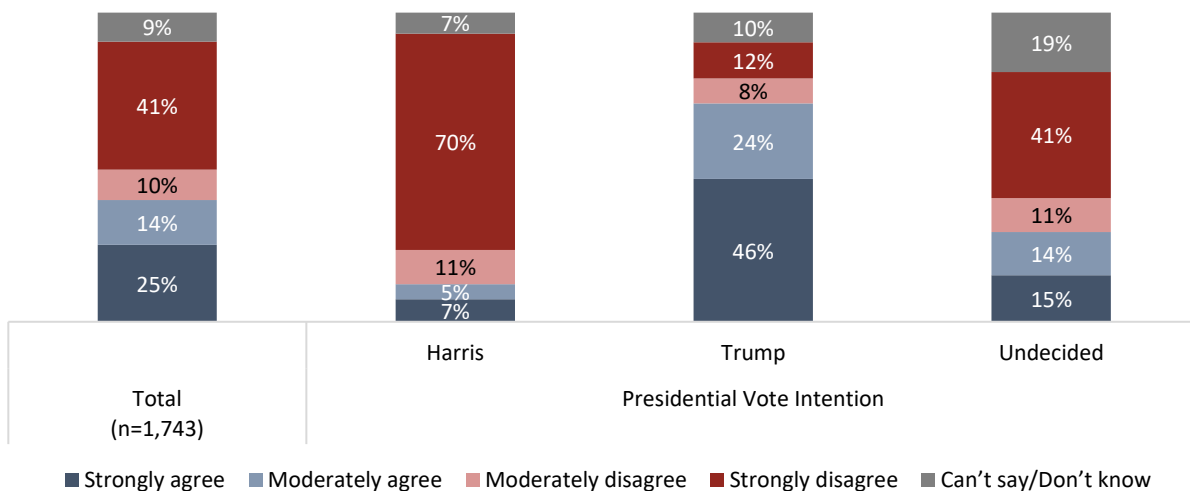
**Agree vs. disagree -
"There should be a mass deportation of migrants who have come through the southern border"**



Abortion

After the Supreme Court overturned Roe vs. Wade in 2022, many Republicans found out the hard way that this is a significant issue for many Americans. That issue has been [an election liability for the right since](#), and looms as a key issue for Harris voters ahead of November. Half of undecided voters say that individual states should not be free to prohibit abortion access, while four-in-five Harris voters agree. Strategists suggest this issue [may encourage turnout](#) to favour the Democrats.

**Agree vs. disagree -
"Individual states should be free to strictly prohibit access to abortion"**

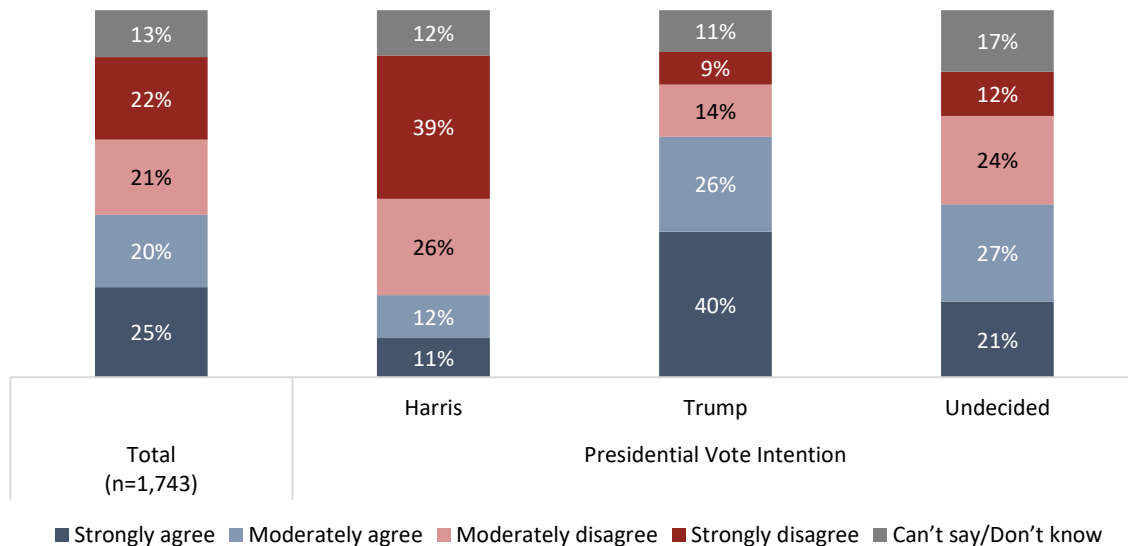


Ukraine

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The Democrat and Republican positions on Ukraine have been diverging as the conflict with Russia and that nation has endured. Trump is expected to cut aid and push for a quick resolution to the conflict, which may lead to favorable terms for Russia and its President Vladimir Putin. Most of Trump's current supporters say this would be the right position to take. Harris has met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky six times, and would be expected by many to continue staunch support for the nation, established under Biden. One-quarter of Harris voters would cut military support to Ukraine, while two-thirds would not:

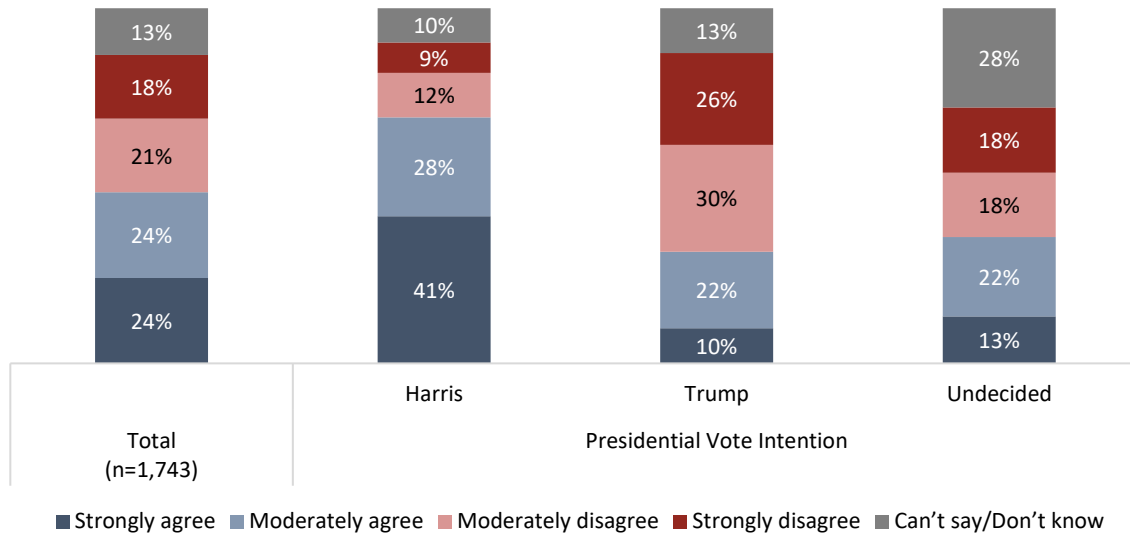
**Agree vs. disagree -
"The US should stop providing military support to Ukraine"**



Election fairness

Trump and many of his surrogates have still yet to concede the 2020 election, raising concerns about what will follow the 2024 contest if Trump is not victorious. Confidence in the 2024 election is low, with just one-quarter of Americans saying they strongly feel that it will be freely and fairly contested. This drops to one-in-10 for both those who say they will support Trump and for undecided voters. Harris supporters are more confident, yet one-in-five say they disagree with the idea that the election will be free and fair:

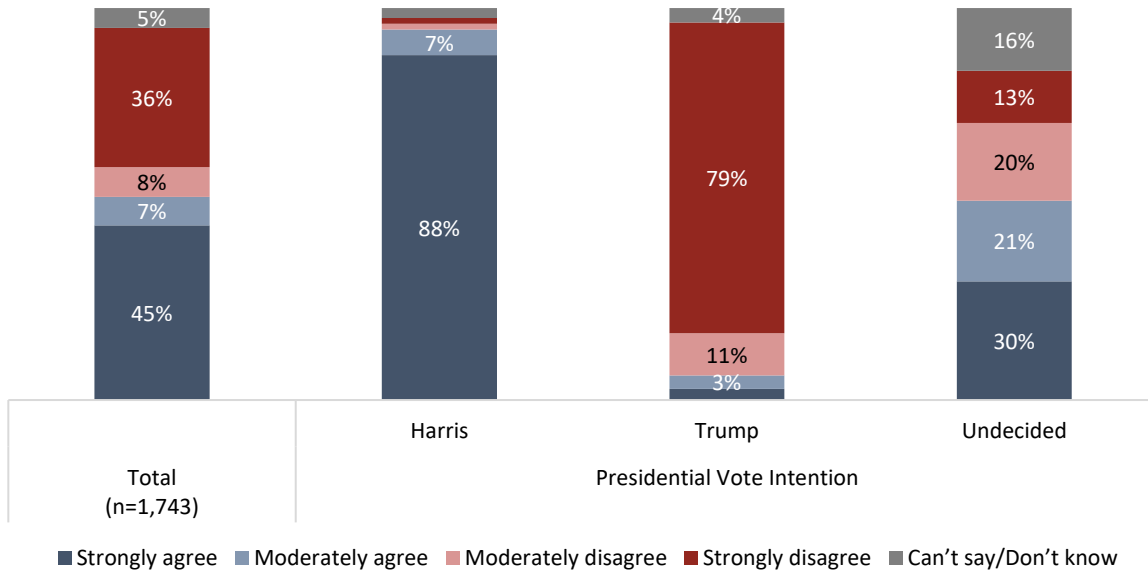
**Agree vs. disagree -
"I'm confident this US election this November will be free and fair"**



Trump's legal challenges

Trump enters this presidential campaign home stretch as [the first former president](#) to be a convicted felon, after he was found [guilty of 34 felony counts](#) of falsifying business records in New York. This appears to be a source of concern for undecided voters, as half of them feel that his character and his convictions in court make him unfit to hold the presidency. As one might expect, partisanship is the story between Harris and Trump voters as to the relevance of these legal issues:

Agree vs. disagree -
"Donald Trump's character and felony convictions make him unfit for
President"



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