

Marquette University: New Marquette Law School Poll finds strong partisan divisions on Afghanistan, COVID policies, and election results

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New Marquette Law School Poll finds strong partisan divisions on Afghanistan, COVID policies, and election results

Please note: Complete Poll results and methodology information can be found online at law.marquette.edu/poll

MILWAUKEE — A Marquette Law School Poll survey of adults nationwide finds a mixed set of views on the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. President Joe Biden's handling of the withdrawal receives a 36% approval rating and a 63% disapproval rating. Among the same set of respondents, however, 74% support the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan with 26% opposed to ending the U.S. presence. Further, 25% say the war was worth it, while 74% say it was not worth it. As for the fate of Afghan refugees, 58% support admitting as many refugees to the United States as possible, while 42% are opposed to this.

The survey was conducted September 7-16, 2021, interviewing 1,411 adults nationwide, with a margin of error of +/-3.4 percentage points.

There are substantial partisan differences in these opinions. Table 1 shows approval of Biden's handling of the withdrawal, with two-thirds of independents disapproving

and nearly a third of Democrats disapproving of their party's president's handling of the situation. More than 90% of Republicans disapprove.

All results in the tables below are stated as percentages; the precise wording of the questions can be found in the online link noted above.

Table 1: Approve or disapprove of Biden's handling of withdrawal from Afghanistan, by party identification, Sept. 2021

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While critical of Biden’s handling of the withdrawal, large majorities of Democrats and independents in Table 2 say they support the removal of U.S. troops, while Republicans divide evenly on the question.

Table 2: Favor or oppose withdrawing all US troops from Afghanistan, by party identification, Sept. 2021

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Table 3 shows deep misgivings about America’s long commitment in Afghanistan, with majorities of each partisan group saying the war was “not worth it.”

Table 3: Was the war in Afghanistan worth it, by party identification, Sept. 2021

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Nearly two-thirds of Republicans in Table 4 are opposed to admitting as many Afghan refugees as possible, while solid majorities of independents and Democrats favor doing so.

Table 4: Support or oppose admitting as many Afghan refugees as possible, by party identification, Sept. 2021

REPUBLICAN

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Biden's job approval has declined

Biden's overall job approval also has suffered in the wake of the Afghanistan situation, with 48% saying they approve of how he is handling his job and 52% saying they disapprove. In the July Marquette Law School national survey, 58% approved and 42% disapproved.

Biden's approval declined among all partisan groups from July to September, as shown in Table 5. Already-low approval among Republicans fell by half, while independents reversed their majority approval to majority disapproval. High approval among Democrats also fell by 7 points.

Table 5: Biden overall job approval, nationwide, by party identification, July & Sept. 2021

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While the number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths have sharply increased since early July, Biden's handling of the pandemic remains a strong point for him. Among respondents, 56% approve of his handling of the response, while 43% disapprove.

Table 6 shows that, on this issue, a majority of independents approve of Biden's handling of the coronavirus response and Democratic approval is over 90%. While Republicans are sharply disapproving, Biden receives a higher approval from them on this than for his overall job or his handling of the Afghanistan withdrawal. (This item was not asked in July, so trends are unavailable.)

Table 6: Approve or disapprove of Biden's response to coronavirus, by party identification, Sept. 2021

Views of pandemic policies differ by partisanship

A majority of respondents, 69%, support requiring teachers and students to wear masks in public schools, with 30% opposed to such mask mandates. Table 7 shows that Republican parents of children under 18 are the most opposed to a policy of masks in schools, with less than 30% in favor. In all groups, non-parents are more supportive of masks than are others of the same party who have children in the household. The differences are minimal for independents and less than 10 points among Democrats.

Table 7: Support or oppose mask requirements in schools, by party and parental status, Sept. 2021

REPUBLICAN

REPUBLICAN
DEMOCRAT
INDEPENDENT

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Requiring students at public universities to be vaccinated is supported by 64% of

respondents and opposed by 36%. Partisan views of this requirement are shown in Table 8. While over 60% of Republicans oppose this requirement, over 60% of independents support it. Nearly 9 in 10 Democrats favor requiring college students to be vaccinated.

Table 8: Support or oppose requiring vaccination for college students, by party identification, Sept. 2021

REPUBLICAN
INDEPENDENT
DEMOCRAT

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Views of the seriousness of the current level of coronavirus cases in the respondent's state affect approval of Biden's handling of the pandemic, even within party camps. Table 9 shows that approval of Biden's response to coronavirus is over four times higher among Republicans who think the current level of the pandemic is a serious problem than it is among Republicans who think it is not. And among independents who think this, approval of Biden's handling is double that of those who don't. While Democrats have high approval of Biden's response, it is also higher among those who think the current level of cases in their state is a serious problem.

Table 9: Approval of Biden response to coronavirus, by opinion whether coronavirus is a serious problem in the respondent's state and by party identification, Sept. 2021

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There are large partisan differences in opinion among respondents as to whether the coronavirus is a serious current problem in their state. Republicans are evenly divided, while almost two-thirds of independents think it is serious, as well as 90 percent of Democrats, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Whether current level of coronavirus cases is a serious problem in the respondent's state, by party identification, Sept. 2021

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In this survey, 76% say they have received at least one vaccine dose and 23% say they have not been vaccinated. As of the end of the survey field period, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 76% of those 18 years old or older had been vaccinated.

There are partisan differences in vaccination rates, shown in Table 11. Table 12 shows that these vaccination rates also are related to how serious a problem the respondent thinks the coronavirus is. Among the 50% of Republicans who think coronavirus is not a serious current problem in their state, fewer than half have been vaccinated. Among Republicans who think it is a serious current problem, more than 80 percent have received at least one dose of the vaccine. Such thinking of the current seriousness of the problem also accompanies higher vaccination rates for independents and Democrats.

Table 11: Vaccination status, by party identification, Sept. 2021

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Table 12: Vaccination status, by opinion whether coronavirus is a serious problem in the respondent's state and by party identification, Sept. 2021

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