

Release date: Wednesday September 16, 2020. Survey field dates August 25-September 13

## About the 2020 USC Dornsife Daybreak Poll

The USC Dornsife Daybreak 2020 Tracking Poll is the result of a collaboration between researchers in two USC research Centers: the Center for the Political Future and the Center for Economic and Social Research, both in the Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters. Arts and Sciences. Some of the questions in the survey were developed in collaboration with researchers from the Santa Fe Institute and MIT.

On August 11, 2020, USC's Center for Economic and Social Research (CESR) invited 8,355 eligible voters who are active members of CESR's Understanding America Study (UAS) probability-based internet panel to participate in an ongoing election tracking survey. At the time of this analysis, 6,828 eligible voters had completed the intake survey and 6,547 (96%) agreed to participate every other week on an assigned day.

The analysis associated with this release is based on a sample of 5,272 responses across the 14 assigned days of the tracking survey's second wave, which began on August 25. As part of wave 2, tracking poll participants also answered poll questions after answering the vote questions on their assigned day. The poll (UAS 308) took an average of 11 minutes to complete, and participants were paid a nominal fee for participation.

## Tracking Study Design

Each study member who agreed to participate was randomized to respond on a pre-assigned day of the week, distributed so that our full sample participates over a 14-day period. Respondents have until their next assigned wave day (or 14 days after their assigned date) to complete the survey. Data for the full sample is nearly complete after the first 14 days, but not final until the end of the full 28-days.

Participants in the election tracking survey answer questions about their voting intentions twice a month. USC researchers use these data to calculate three types of estimators of the presidential vote: probability-based personal voting, expectations about voting of participants' friends and other people in their state, and a categorical vote estimation among a group of likely voters. Eligible voters also estimate their chances of voting in the election for president and for Congress, as well as their probability of voting for a Democrat or a Republican in their House and Senate races.

State deadlines for registration and early voting are also factored into the design; automatically triggering questions about registration status and whether the participant has already voted. Unregistered voters who pass the deadline are given a zero likelihood of voting, and those who voted already are asked for whom they voted, how they voted, and asked to rate their experience of voting.

## Weights

The method for creating sample weights for the tracking survey follows a customized version of the general procedure for UAS surveys described in [CESR's online methodology documentation](#).

Sample weights are constructed in two steps. First, we calculate a base weight that corrects for unequal probabilities of recruitment of different households into the UAS. Second, we generate post-stratification weights, which align sample distributions of key demographics, namely gender, race/ethnicity, age, education, geographic location, urbanicity, and voting in the 2016 election, with their population counterparts.

Population benchmarks are derived from the Basic Monthly Current Population Survey (CPS), the American Community Survey (ACS), the Election Project, and the Federal Election Commission. The provided sample weights bring the sample in line with the adult population of U.S. citizens along these dimensions, if the entire sample is used. For some results, the weighting contains a third step where weights are scaled such that State populations are matched.

We provide more details about variables used and sources for benchmarking in our overall *Tracking Poll Methodology* document, available on the Center for Economic and Social Research's [elections data page](#).

## Documentation and Data Dissemination

### Interactive graphic results

The survey design allows us to provide daily updates to graphs on our tracking survey website <https://election.usc.edu>. These are refreshed just after 3am PDT every day of the week. On the site, viewers can choose to view aggregated results from each of the models. The graphs may be run for overall results, or among categories of party registration or location (States that voted for Democrats, Republicans or were “battlegrounds” in 2016, urbanicity). Each data point on the graphic represents the previous seven days of participation.

### Graphics and aggregate data files

The aggregated data used to create the graphics is available from the [tracking graph website](#) in csv format, along with the charts themselves, in several graphic formats. Please contact us for more information if you are interested in using these data or embedding them in other sites.

### Documentation

Survey questionnaires, topline, press releases, and graphics will be made available from our [2020 Election Data](#) page, along with details about how we sample and weight the tracking poll.

### Public Use Data files

De-identified daily microdata files will be made publicly available to registered UAS data users for download from the [UAS election pages](#). Data that includes more detail, and codes that may be used to link to other UAS data are also available to researchers who provide an additional data use agreement. To learn more or to register as a UAS data user, visit our main site at <https://uasdata.usc.edu>

## About the Understanding America Study Internet Panel

The Understanding America Study (UAS) is an ongoing national research panel that started in 2014. We recruit study members in waves using household addresses obtained from Marketing Systems Group frames which cover all zip codes in the United States. To ensure full coverage of the U.S. population, we provide internet-connected tablets to households that were not already online. Our panel includes U.S. residents who have cell phones, landlines, or no phone at all. Study members are compensated for their participation.

For more information about the UAS panel, including weighting details; panel sampling procedures; recruitment protocols, survey and recruitment response rates; panel attrition rates; panel management protocols; and microdata files (including nonresponse and paradata), please visit the Understanding America Study panel website at [UASdata.usc.edu](https://UASdata.usc.edu).

## About the Center for Economic and Social Research

The Center for Economic and Social Research (CESR), part of the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, conducts basic and applied research in economics, psychology, demography, education, and sociology. The center's name signifies the breadth of the research, which encompasses numerous disciplines, topics and methodologies. The Center's multi-disciplinary philosophy fosters a productive and innovative research environment focused on understanding and informing important societal issues. It is led by economist and online panel expert Arie Kapteyn, founding director of the CentERpanel in the Netherlands, the oldest existing probability Internet panel in the world, as well as the RAND American Life Panel before he moved on to create CESR.

## About the Center for the Political Future

The mission of the USC Dornsife Center for the Political Future is to advance civil dialogue that transcends partisan divisions and explores solutions to our most pressing national and global issues. The Center is led by two of the nation's most experienced and respected political experts, Robert Shrum and Michael Murphy.

Shrum is the Carmen H. and Louis Warschaw Chair in Practical Politics at USC. He has a storied career as an author and campaign adviser to Democratic candidates. His numerous clients included Edward Kennedy, Joe Biden, John Glenn, and Barbara Mikulski in their Senate campaigns, and John Kerry and Al Gore in their presidential races.

Murphy is one of the Republican Party's most successful political consultants. Murphy has led more than 20 statewide campaigns to victory, including gubernatorial races for Jeb Bush, Mitt Romney, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Christine Todd Whitman, John Engler, and Tommy Thompson as well as dozens of Senatorial, United States House, and other races.

### CESR Dornsife Daybreak Poll Team

**Jill E Darling** is Survey Director of the poll, and for the Understanding America Study at CESR

**Arie Kapteyn** is Professor of Economics and the Executive Director of CESR

**Tania Gutsche** is CESR's Managing Director and Study Manager of the Understanding America Study

**Bas Weerman** is CESR's Director of Information Technology

**Erik Meijer** is a CESR Econometrician, and sampling/weighting statistician

**Ying Liu** is a CESR Statistician

For questions about this survey, please contact [uas-l@usc.edu](mailto:uas-l@usc.edu)

**The USC Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research is a proud member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research's [Transparency Initiative](#).**

The survey is funded by the USC Dornsife College of Arts, Letters and Sciences and additional funding from research grants.

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## Topline Tables

Selected questions from UAS308: August/September Poll

**Impression: In general, what is your impression of:**

	Extremely unfavorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Somewhat favorable	Extremely Favorable	Haven't heard enough to say	Obs	MOSE
Joe Biden:	34	13	28	22	3	4528	+/-2
Donald Trump:	47	12	16	24	1	4528	+/-2

**trust\_:** Regardless of who you plan to vote for in the election, which of the two main candidates for president do you think would make better decisions handling:

	Joe Biden	Donald Trump	Obs	MOSE
trust_econ: Best decisions--Jobs/economy	48	52	4523	+/-1
trust_covid: Best decisions-- Coronavirus	57	43	4522	+/-1
trust_unite: Best decisions--Uniting country and healing racial division	62	38	4522	+/-1
trust_china: Best decisions-- China relations	52	48	4522	+/-1
trust_healthcare: Best decisions--Healthcare	56	44	4521	+/-1
trust_enforce: Best decisions--Law enforcement/criminal justice	53	47	4519	+/-1
trust_immigration: Best decisions--Immigration	53	47	4522	+/-1
trust_environ: Best decisions--Climate change	64	36	4517	+/-1
trust_appoint: Best decisions—Political/Supreme Court appointments	55	45	4522	+/-1

**issues\_1:** Which of the following issues is most important to you when it comes to deciding which candidate to vote for in the election for president?

	%
issues_1: Jobs/ the economy	33
issues_1: Response to covid-19 Pandemic	13
issues_1: Uniting country and healing racial division	21
issues_1: U.S.-China Relations	1
issues_1: Healthcare	9
issues_1: Law enforcement/criminal justice	10
issues_1: Immigration	2
issues_1: Climate change	4
issues_1: Cabinet/Supreme Court Appointments	6
	Obs: 4521 MOSE: +/-4

**trust\_vote:** What number would you choose to represent how confident you are that all of the votes in your precinct will be accurately counted in the presidential race in November? Please select a number on the scale below from 0 to 100 where 0 means you have no confidence and 100 means you have complete confidence.

	Mean	Obs	MOSE
trust_vote: Level of confidence votes will be counted in precinct	71	4523	+/-1

**facebook: Which of the following best describes your use of Facebook?**

	I do not have an account	I have an account, but never use it	I have a Facebook account, and use it once in a while	I have a Facebook account, and use it everyday or almost everyday	Obs	MOSE
Facebook:	22	9	26	43	4525	+/-2

**fb\_posts: Facebook ads: When you visited Facebook recently, were the posts, comments on posts, or political advertisements about Joe Biden and/or Donald Trump more negative, more positive, or about the same as they were last month?**

	Posts and Ads are more Negative now	Posts and Ads are more Positive now	Posts and Ads are about the same	Don't see any ads or posts about Biden	Obs	MOSE
Joe Biden:	21	17	36	27	3184	+/-2
Donald Trump:	29	12	35	24	3184	+/-2

**influence: How much would you say the political system in the United States allows people like you to have an influence on what the government does**

	Not at all	Very little	Some	A lot	A great deal	Obs	MOSE
influence: Influence on government	12	45	32	8	3	4525	+/-1

**cand\_reason: Thinking about voting in November's presidential election, if you do vote in the election, which of the following comes closest to representing your view?**

	My vote will mainly be an expression of support for my candidate	My vote will mainly be an expression of opposition to the other candidate	Obs	MOSE
cand_reason: Support Candidate or Oppose other Candidate	65	35	4520	+/-1

**vp\_choice: Does Joe Biden's choice of U.S. Senator Kamala Harris as his vice presidential running mate make you more likely to vote for Joe Biden for President, less likely to vote for Biden, or did his choice of Harris not affect your vote one way or another?**

	Much more likely	Somewhat more likely	Neither more or less likely	Somewhat less likely	Much less likely	Obs	MOSE
vp_choice: Biden choice of Harris Affect Vote?	15	11	44	7	24	4522	+/-2

**rate\_: On a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 is the most liberal and 100 is the most conservative, what number would you give to:**

	Mean	Obs	MOSE
rate_biden: Rate Biden from liberal to conservative	35	4507	+/-1
rate_harris: Rate Harris from liberal to conservative	32	4505	+/-<1
rate_self: Rate yourself from liberal to conservative	56	4512	+/-1
rate_trump: Rate Trump from liberal to conservative	69	4500	+/-< 1

**religion: What is your present religion, if any?**

	%
religion: Evangelical Protestant	17
religion: Mainline Protestant	13
religion: Other Protestant	6
religion: Catholic	20
religion: Orthodox Christian	1
religion: Mormon/ Church of Latter Day Saints	1
religion: Seventh Day Adventist/ Jehovah Witness	<1
religion: Other Christian faith	8
religion: Jewish	2
religion: Muslim	1
religion: Buddhist	1
religion: Hindu	<1
religion: Spiritual /Unitarian/Deist/Humanist	2
religion: Other non-Christian religion	1
religion: Atheist	4
religion: Agnostic	4
religion: Nothing in particular	19
<i>Obs: 4514</i>	

**evangel: Would you describe yourself as:**

	"Born-again" and/or "evangelical" Christian	Not born again or evangelical Christian	Obs	MOSE
evangel: Evangelical or born again?	44	56	2615	+/-1