

Release date: Wednesday October 14 2020

Survey field dates September 22-October 12

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 5,010 responses across the 14 assigned days of the tracking survey's fourth wave, which began on September 22. The sample includes 4,518 registered voters, and 58 voters who did not complete the entire survey as of October 12, 2020. As part of wave 4, tracking poll participants also answered poll questions after answering the vote questions on their assigned day. The poll (UAS 313) took an average of 12 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.

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

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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Dornsife 2020 Daybreak Tracking Poll # 2 Topline Tables

Selected questions from UAS313: September/October Poll

PROBABILTY VOTE ESTIMATE:

prob_vote: What is the chance that you will vote for _____?

| | Probability Aug/Sept | Probability Sept/Oct |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Joe Biden | 53 | 54 |
| Donald Trump | 42 | 42 |
| | Obs: 4525 MOSE: +/-2 | Obs: 4992 MOSE: +/-2 |

CATEGORICAL VOTE ESTIMATE:

today_vote: If the election were held today, who would you vote for?

| | % Aug/Sept | % Aug/Sept (voters) | % Sept/Oct | % Sept/Oct (voters) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Joe Biden | 48 | 49 | 51 | 52 |
| Donald Trump | 40 | 41 | 40 | 40 |
| Jo Jorgensen | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Howie Hawkins | <1 | <1 | <1 | <1 |
| Undecided | 9 | 9 | 6 | 6 |
| Would not vote for any candidate | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Would not vote in this election | 1 | - | <1 | - |
| | Obs: 4530 MOSE: +/-2 | | Obs: 4497 MOSE: +/-2 | |

EARLY VOTE:

early_vote: Have you voted already?

| | Have not voted | Already Voted | Obs | MOSE |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|------|------|
| Have you voted? | 94 | 6 | 5010 | +/-2 |

dp005: If you have already voted, who did you vote for?

| | Joe Biden | Donald Trump | Other | Obs | MOSE |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|-------|-----|------|
| Who did you vote for | 68 | 31 | 1 | 242 | +/-7 |

ASKED OF THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY VOTED:

ev_method: If you have already voted, what method did you use to cast your ballot?

| | Drop Ballot off Early | In Person Early Voting | Mail | Other | Obs | MOSE |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------|-------|-----|------|
| Method of voting | 19 | 14 | 66 | 1 | 266 | +/-7 |

ASKED IF RESPONDENT HAS NOT VOTED YET:

intend_method: How do you intend to vote?

| | Drop Ballot off Early | In Person Early Voting | In person on election day | By Mail | Other | Obs | MOS E |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------|-------|----------|----------|
| Intended method of voting | 17 | 19 | 33 | 30 | 1 | 423 8 | +/-2 |

TRUMP/BIDEN IMPRESSIONS:**Impression_:** In general, what is your impression of:

| | Extremely unfavorable | Somewhat unfavorable | Somewhat favorable | Extremely Favorable | Haven't heard enough to say | Obs | MOSE |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------|------|
| Aug/Sept | | | | | | | |
| Joe Biden: | 34 | 13 | 28 | 22 | 3 | | |
| Donald Trump: | 47 | 12 | 16 | 24 | 1 | | |
| | | | | | | 4528 | +/-2 |
| Sept/Oct | | | | | | | |
| Joe Biden: | 32 | 15 | 30 | 20 | 2 | | |
| Donald Trump: | 49 | 11 | 15 | 24 | 1 | | |
| | | | | | | 4474 | +/-2 |

ELECTION ISSUES:**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 |
|---|-----------|--------------|------|------|
| August/ September Poll | | | | |
| Best decisions--Jobs/economy | 48 | 52 | 4523 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions—Coronavirus | 57 | 43 | 4522 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions--Uniting country and healing racial division | 62 | 38 | 4522 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions-- China relations | 52 | 48 | 4522 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions—Healthcare | 56 | 44 | 4521 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions--Law enforcement/criminal justice | 53 | 47 | 4519 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions--Immigration | 53 | 47 | 4522 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions--Climate change | 64 | 36 | 4517 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions—Political/Supreme Court appointments | 55 | 45 | 4522 | +/-2 |
| September / October Poll | | | | |
| Best decisions--Jobs/economy | 48 | 52 | 4469 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions—Coronavirus | 60 | 40 | 4471 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions--Uniting country and healing racial division | 65 | 35 | 4462 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions-- China relations | 52 | 48 | 4471 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions—Healthcare | 58 | 42 | 4469 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions--Law enforcement/criminal justice | 53 | 47 | 4472 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions—Immigration | 52 | 48 | 4471 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions--Climate change | 68 | 32 | 4468 | +/-2 |
| Best decisions—Political/Supreme Court appointments | 55 | 45 | 4468 | +/-2 |

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?

| | % Aug/Sept | % Sept/Oct |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jobs/ the economy | 33 | 31 |
| Response to covid-19 Pandemic | 13 | 15 |
| Uniting country and healing racial division | 21 | 19 |
| U.S.-China Relations | 1 | 1 |
| Healthcare | 9 | 11 |
| Law enforcement/criminal justice | 10 | 9 |
| Immigration | 2 | 3 |
| Climate change | 4 | 5 |
| Cabinet/Supreme Court Appointments | 6 | 6 |
| | Obs: 4521 MOSE: +/-2 | Obs: 4468 MOSE: +/-2 |

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 |
|---|------|------|------|
| August/September | | | |
| Level of confidence votes will be counted in precinct | 71 | 4523 | +/-2 |
| September/October | | | |
| Level of confidence votes will be counted in precinct | 70 | 4404 | +/-2 |

pp01/2: In general, what is your impression of the:

| | Very Favorable | Somewhat favorable | Neither | Somewhat Unfavorable | Very Unfavorable | Obs | MOSE |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------------------|------|------|
| October 2018 | | | | | | | |
| Democratic Party | 12 | 27 | 23 | 16 | 22 | 5131 | +/-2 |
| Republican Party | 12 | 20 | 19 | 19 | 29 | 5151 | +/-2 |
| Sep/Oct 2020 | | | | | | | |
| Democratic Party | 15 | 27 | 14 | 15 | 30 | 4474 | +/-2 |
| Republican Party | 17 | 22 | 16 | 16 | 30 | 4474 | +/-2 |

ASKED IF SOMEWHAT/VERY UNFAVORABLE IMPRESSION:

pp01/2a: Would you say the _____ Party's policies are so misguided that they threaten the nation's well-being, or wouldn't you go that far?

| | Threaten the nation's well being | Would not go too far | Obs | MOSE |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|------|------|
| October 2018 | | | | |
| Democratic | 62 | 38 | 2150 | +/-3 |
| Republican | 67 | 33 | 2393 | +/-2 |
| Sep/Oct 2020 | | | | |
| Democratic | 78 | 22 | 2045 | +/-3 |
| Republican | 75 | 25 | 2187 | +/-2 |

econ_: On a scale from 0 meaning complete economic collapse to 100 meaning complete economic prosperity, what number would you pick to represent how you think the economy would be doing by the end of his four year presidential term, if _____ was elected in November?

| | Mean | Obs | MOSE |
|--------------|------|------|------|
| Joe Biden | 49 | 4455 | +/-2 |
| Donald Trump | 54 | 4455 | +/-2 |

pandemic_status: What number would you choose to rate the current state of the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S., on a scale of 0-100, with zero being the worst possible situation and 100 being a full recovery?

| | Mean | Obs | MOSE |
|-----------------|------|------|------|
| Pandemic Status | 46 | 4471 | +/-2 |

FACEBOOK ADVERTISING:

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 |
|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|------|------|
| Aug/Sept | 22 | 9 | 26 | 43 | 4525 | +/-2 |
| Sept/Oct | 22 | 10 | 25 | 44 | 4471 | +/-2 |

ASKED IF HAVE A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT AND USE IT ONCE IN A WHILE OR MORE:

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 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|------|------|
| Aug/Sep | | | | | | |
| Joe Biden: | 21 | 17 | 36 | 27 | 3184 | +/-2 |
| Donald Trump: | 29 | 12 | 35 | 24 | 3184 | +/-2 |
| Sept/Oct | | | | | | |
| Joe Biden: | 16 | 15 | 42 | 27 | 3096 | +/-2 |
| Donald Trump: | 29 | 8 | 37 | 26 | 3097 | +/-2 |

VOTE BY MAIL ISSUES:**cpf_vtmail: When comparing mail-in-voting to in person voting, the chance of:**

| | Greatly Increases | Somewhat Increases | Neither | Somewhat Decreases | Greatly Decreases | Obs | MOSE |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|-------------------|------|------|
| Votes being lost or never counted | 29 | 38 | 27 | 3 | 3 | 4456 | +/-2 |
| Fraudulent voting by voters | 30 | 27 | 36 | 3 | 4 | 4456 | +/-2 |
| Fraudulent voting at precinct | 24 | 25 | 43 | 5 | 4 | 4453 | +/-2 |
| Voters being discouraged from voting | 6 | 14 | 44 | 23 | 13 | 4456 | +/-2 |
| Opportunities to vote | 38 | 26 | 28 | 5 | 3 | 4457 | +/-2 |
| Voter safety from Covid | 39 | 24 | 29 | 6 | 3 | 4456 | +/-2 |

FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE September 29**ASKED BEFORE THE DEBATE:****debate_watch_before: Are you planning to watch, read or hear about the debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden that will take place on September 29?**

| | Will not watch | Will watch most or all | Will watch most or all later | Will not watch, but plan read/hear about in detail | Will not watch but plan on reading/hearing news coverage | Obs | MOSE |
|--|----------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|------|------|
| Plan on watching/reading about debate: | 16 | 46 | 13 | 11 | 15 | 2476 | +/-2 |

debate_bef: On a scale from 0 = the worst possible and 100 = the best possible, what number represents how you think _____ will do in the debate?

| | Mean | Obs | MOSE |
|--------------|------|------|------|
| Joe Biden | 50 | 2376 | +/-2 |
| Donald Trump | 51 | 2376 | +/-2 |

ASKED AFTER THE DEBATE:**debate1_watch: Did you happen to watch, read or hear about the debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden on September 29?**

| | Did not watch or read about | Watched some, but not all | Watched all | Did not watch, but read/heard about in detail | Did not watch, but read/heard news reports about it | Obs | MOSE |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---|---|------|------|
| Did you watch/read/hear about debate | 15 | 26 | 32 | 8 | 20 | 2476 | +/-2 |

deb_: On a scale from 0 = the worst possible and 100 = the best possible, what number represents how you feel _____ did in the debate?

| | Mean | Obs | MOSE |
|--------------|------|------|------|
| Joe Biden | 46 | 2474 | +/-2 |
| Donald Trump | 33 | 2473 | +/-2 |

MENTAL/PHYSICAL FITNESS TO LEAD:**mfit:** In your opinion, is _____ mentally fit enough to handle the job of president?

| | Yes | No | Not sure | Obs | MOSE |
|--------------|-----|----|----------|------|------|
| Joe Biden | 46 | 37 | 17 | 4495 | +/-2 |
| Donald Trump | 41 | 48 | 10 | 4495 | +/-2 |

pfit: In your opinion, is _____ physically fit enough to handle the job of president?

| | Yes | No | Not sure | Obs | MOSE |
|--------------|-----|----|----------|------|------|
| Joe Biden | 47 | 28 | 25 | 4460 | +/-2 |
| Donald Trump | 54 | 29 | 17 | 4460 | +/-2 |

GENERAL FEELINGS ABOUT THE CANDIDATES:**Care:** In your opinion, does _____ care about all Americans equally?

| | Yes | No | Not sure | Obs | MOSE |
|--------------|-----|----|----------|------|------|
| Joe Biden | 52 | 30 | 18 | 4460 | +/-2 |
| Donald Trump | 33 | 57 | 10 | 4460 | +/-2 |

happy_: On a scale from 0 meaning entirely unhappy to 100 meaning entirely happy, what number would you pick to represent how happy or unhappy you would be if _____ was elected in November

| | Mean | Obs | MOSE |
|--|------|------|------|
| Joe Biden | 52 | 4455 | +/-2 |
| Donald Trump | 43 | 4455 | +/-2 |
| For comparison: question asked about Donald Trump in January 2017, scale was 0 to 10 | 49 | 4264 | +/-2 |