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Suffolk/*Boston Globe* Massachusetts Poll: Threats to Democracy Is Top Presidential Election Issue

Following Baltimore Bridge Collapse, Nearly 80% Support Bay State Infrastructure Review; 3 in 10 Experience Bridge Anxiety

BOSTON—The future of American democracy is the most important issue facing the country, according to a new Suffolk University/*Boston Globe* poll of Massachusetts voters. This is the second consecutive poll in which the future of democracy emerged as voters’ top concern.

In today’s poll, 28% of voters selected the future of American democracy ahead of immigration and border security (21%), the economy/inflation (18%), abortion (8%), healthcare and foreign policy (6% each), gun control 5%, and climate change (4%).

“The future of American democracy has eclipsed major issues like the economy and immigration among Massachusetts voters,” said David Paleologos, director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center. “By putting democracy into focus, people are making this a major voting issue not only for the presidential race, but for all offices up and down the ballot.”

Immigration in Massachusetts

On the issue of immigration, the state’s “right to shelter” law—which requires the state to provide shelter and other necessities to pregnant women, homeless parents with children, and, more recently, migrants living in the state—is supported with certain stipulations or not at all. Slightly more than a third of voters (36%) support the law as is, while a majority support limits or stipulations: 28% say there should be limits on how long families can remain in the shelters and 26% say that migrant families should be excluded. Additionally, 8% do not support the law as it is being used today.

However, voters do not seem ready to blame Governor Maura Healey for the recent influx of newly arrived migrants. When asked who is most responsible for the situation in Massachusetts, a majority said either President Joe Biden (25%) or Congress (31%). Less than one in five voters held either Healey, the Massachusetts Legislature, or Mayor Michelle Wu responsible.

Healey maintained a respectable 57% job approval rating among voters, versus 30% disapproval.

Biden lead continues to grow; Warren still dominates her race

Although President Biden gets mixed reviews for his job performance among Bay Staters (50% approve, 45% disapprove), in a head-to-head matchup he holds a 30-point lead over Trump (Biden 52%, Trump 22%), with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. at 8%, other candidates combined for 3%, and 13% undecided. Biden's lead over Trump is significantly higher than his 45%-26% lead in February.

US Senator Elizabeth Warren's job approval ranks somewhere between Healey and Biden: The senior senator had a job approval of 55% and 35% disapproval, and she led a generic Republican candidate in her bid to be reelected this November 53%-33%.

Public record requests, municipal issues also on voters' minds

Over three quarters of voters (77%) say Massachusetts should allow public record requests for all three branches of government, following the leads of other states. Currently Massachusetts is the only state in the nation in which the state legislature, governor, and judiciary are all exempt from public record requests. Additionally, 72% support a specific ballot question to allow the state auditor to audit the accounts, programs, commissions, vouchers, and other records of the state legislature.

The poll revealed that the March 26 Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse in Baltimore has had an impact on Massachusetts voters. Nearly eight in ten (79%) said they would be very or somewhat likely to support a statewide infrastructure review, even if it leads to temporary disruptions in daily commutes. More than three in ten voters reported suffering from "bridge anxiety"—the feeling of being stressed while crossing a bridge.

Just over half of Massachusetts voters said they would support a property tax override to support their local schools, correlating with an overall positive view of the Massachusetts economy. Among those voters who rated the Massachusetts economy is excellent/good, 62% would support an override.

Methodology

The Suffolk University statewide survey of 500 residents was conducted April 16-20, and is based on live interviews of registered voters in Massachusetts who indicated they were very or somewhat likely to vote this November. Each area's quota and demographic information—

including party affiliation, gender, race, and age—were determined from presidential exit polls and 2022 census data. The 14 Massachusetts counties were grouped into four general regions. The margin of sampling error for results based on the total sample is +/- 4.4 percentage points. Poll students Avinash Yadav Kalasani, Samuel Kluger, Rick Paoletti, and Nia Caines contributed to the execution of this survey, under the direction of Adjunct Professor Mikaela Linder. Marginals and full cross-tabulation data are posted on the [Suffolk University Political Research Center](#) website. For more information, contact David Paleologos at 781-290-9310, dpaleologos@suffolk.edu.

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