



October 21, 2024 – For Immediate Release

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Suffolk University/USA TODAY National Poll of Likely Voters: Harris Leads By a Single Point, Despite a 29-Point Lead Among Those Who Have Already Voted

Abortion rights a driving issue for early voters

BOSTON—With just two weeks until the election, the race for president remains deadlocked and within the margin of error, according to a new Suffolk University/USA TODAY national poll of likely voters for president taken October 14-18.

In a five-way ballot test, Harris (45%) led Trump (44%), followed by independent Cornel West, Green Party candidate Jill Stein, and Libertarian Chase Oliver, each receiving 1%, with 5% undecided and 3% refusing a response. When undecideds, third-party voters, and refusals were probed for their preferences in just a two-way matchup between Harris and Trump, Harris continued to lead 50%-49%, with 1% undecided.

In a late August Suffolk University/USA TODAY poll fielded after the Democratic National Convention, Harris led Trump 48%-43% with the three third-party candidates combining for 3% and 5% undecided, a finding also within the margin of error.

Harris leads Trump by a commanding 63%-34% among the small subset of respondents who have already voted. Asked what they consider the most important issue, 19% of those who have already voted cited “abortion/women’s rights,” second only to “economy/inflation” (25%). Other issues cited were “democracy/constitution” (12%), “honesty/integrity/character” (9%), “immigration/border security” (8%), and “Donald Trump” (7%).

“Harris’ strength among those who have already voted serves two purposes,” said David Paleologos, director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center. “First, large Harris voter leads are being banked every day not only for the office of president, but also for Democratic candidates for Congress and those for whom abortion rights is an important issue.

Second, it gives the Harris campaign some time to persuade Election Day voters, including some previously reliable Democratic voters who have drifted away over the past few weeks, like young Black and Latino men.”

Also 63% of those who have already voted are choosing the Democratic candidates for Congress, compared to 33% for Republican congressional candidates, in sharp contrast to all likely voters nationally where 47% are planning to vote for the Democratic candidate versus 45% for the Republican.

With time running short, a majority of likely voters (57%) say that Harris has not done enough to explain the specific policies she would pursue in the White House, while 37% said she has done enough. Nearly half of likely voters (49%) say that Trump has done enough to explain his specific policies, while nearly as many (48%) disagreed.

A majority of likely voters see Donald Trump as the better choice as president to handle the economy (53% vs 43% for Harris), immigration (51% vs 44% for Harris), and foreign policy (51% vs 45% for Harris), but that Harris was the better choice on abortion (56% vs 36% for Trump) and healthcare (54% vs 39% for Trump). Harris also was seen as the far better option on “healing the nation’s political divisions,” where she bested Trump 48%-31%.

Methodology

The nationwide Suffolk University/*USA TODAY* survey was conducted October 14-18, through live interviews of 1,000 likely voters, residing in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Quota and demographic information—including region, race, and age—were determined from 2020 national census data and exit polling from similar elections. States were grouped into four general regions. Surveys were administered in English and Spanish. The margin of sampling error for results based on the total sample is +/-3.1 percentage points. 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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