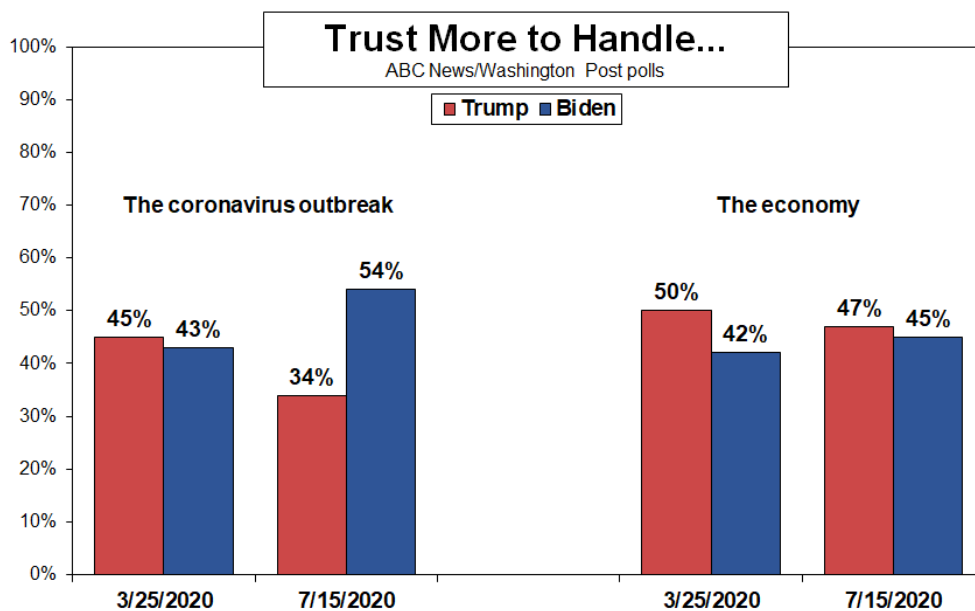


Pandemic Surge Damages Trump, Boosting Biden's White House Bid

Public preference for Joe Biden over Donald Trump in trust to handle the coronavirus pandemic has soared since March in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll, boosting Biden – along with other measures – in the race for the White House.

Three and a half months ago the two candidates were virtually even in trust to handle the pandemic, Trump +2 percentage points, 45-43 percent. Today, with COVID-19 cases surging around the nation, Biden leads Trump on the issue by a 20-point margin, 54-34 percent.

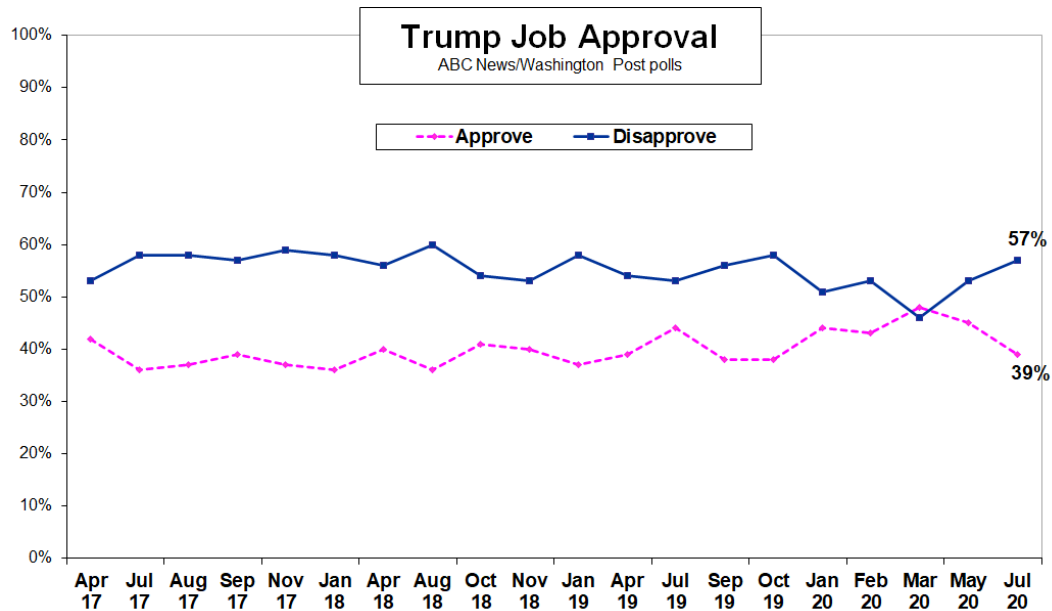
Biden's also advanced, nearly to par with Trump, in trust to handle the economy, after trailing in March. Biden leads Trump by 9 points on handling crime and safety, a focal point of Trump's in recent weeks. And on race relations, Biden leads by his largest margin, 25 points, 58-33 percent.



Biden has his own risks, particularly a pronounced lack of enthusiasm for his candidacy. Yet the impact of that deficit remains to be seen: For two-thirds of his supporters, it's chiefly not about electing Biden, but about defeating Trump.

The president, moreover, has other challenges, ranging from performance assessments to personal attributes. As reported Friday, approval of his handling of the pandemic has fallen from 51 percent in late March to 38 percent now, with disapproval up 15 points. He's lost 7 points in approval of his handling of the economy, to 50 percent, with disapproval up 9.

Trump’s overall job approval rating is 39 percent in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#) – down 9 points in the course of the pandemic, with disapproval up 11. Trump remains the first president in modern polling never to achieve majority approval for his work in office, with the lowest career average on record.



Rising disapproval of Trump’s job performance is broadly based. It’s up 22 points since March among those very worried about catching the coronavirus, to 82 percent. It’s also up in two of his key support groups, +20 points among rural Americans and +12 points among evangelical white Protestants, to 45 and 30 percent, respectively. Disapproval also is up especially among Southerners (+18 points); and Blacks, women, moderates and suburbanites, all up 15 to 16.

By partisanship, Democrats now disapprove nearly unanimously of Trump’s work in office, up 17 points in three and a half months to 95 percent; 56 percent of independents also disapprove, up 11. Among Republicans, 16 percent disapprove, up 10 points from late May.

Beyond job approval, Biden leads Trump by 26 points in being seen as having the better personality and temperament to serve as president. In a related finding, a vast 76 percent of Americans say Trump, in talking about people he disagrees with, “crosses the line in terms of what’s acceptable.” Fifty points fewer, 26 percent, say Biden does the same.

Sixty-one percent say Trump has done more to divide than to unite the country, more than said so about either of his two predecessors in office. When asked which candidates would do more to unite Americans, Biden leads by another wide margin, 57-33 percent.

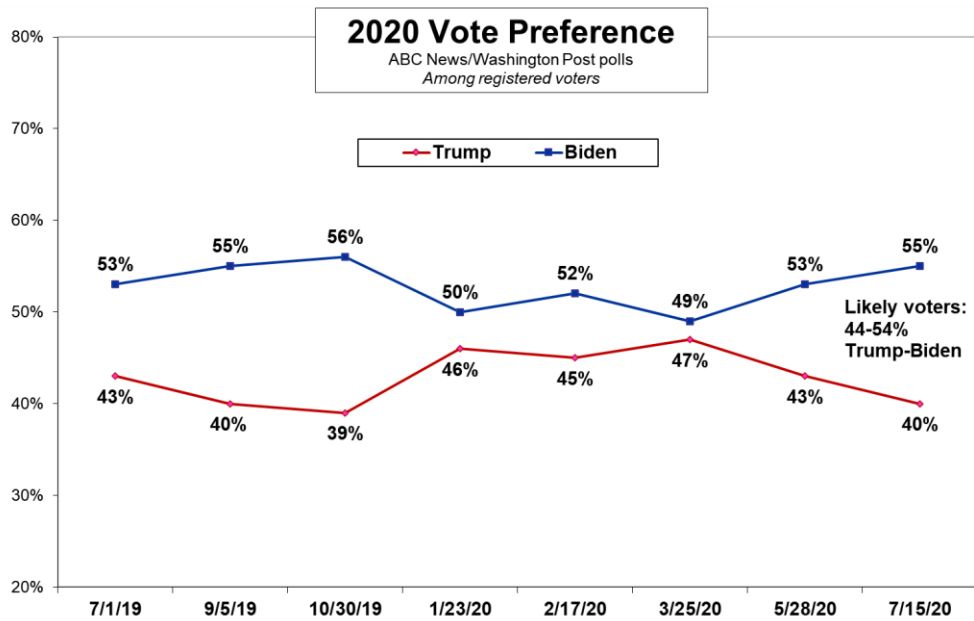
Biden leads by double digits on other personal attributes as well – better understanding the problems of people like you (+17 points), being more honest and trustworthy (+14), better representing your personal values (+12) and having a better idea of what America should stand

for (+10). Trump pushes to parity on just one, who's the stronger leader, an even 45-45 percent split.

Candidate Attributes				
	All		Likely voters	
	Trump	Biden	Trump	Biden
More honest and trustworthy	35%	49%	40%	51%
Better understands the problems of people like you	35	52	43	50
Has better personality and temperament for presidency	33	59	42	53
Is the stronger leader	45	45	51	43
Has a better idea of what America should stand for	40	50	41	55
Better represents your own personal values	38	50	41	53
Would do more to unite Americans rather than divide	33	57	38	57

While views are similar among registered voters, Biden loses ground on three of these items among those who are likeliest to vote. In the largest difference, he goes from a 26-point lead among all adults in having the personality and temperament needed to serve as president to a slight 11-point edge among likely voters, 53-42 percent. He also slips among likely voters in who better understands their problems and who's the stronger leader.

VOTE PREFERENCE – These gaps in views of the candidates inform their current standings: Americans divide 54-39 percent in Biden's favor if the election were today. Among registered voters, the margin's the same, 55-40 percent. Among likely voters Biden still leads, albeit by a closer 10 points, 54-44 percent, signaling the customary GOP advantage in turnout – potentially one of Trump's strongest weapons.



Biden's advantage among registered voters is up from a virtual dead heat, 49-47 percent, in late March, before the spiraling pandemic situation hammered Trump's ratings. Biden, similarly, was

just +4 among registered voters in January, as economic sentiment hit a 20-year high. That said, what comes can go: Biden led Trump by 17 points last October and 15 in September, leads that he then relinquished, only to fully regain his footing now.

Trump's retreat since the early days of the coronavirus outbreak has been largest in one of his core groups, rural Americans, with his lead among registered voters in this group shrinking from 47 points in late March to 18 points now, 56-38 percent. As noted Friday, his rating for handling the pandemic also has fallen especially sharply in rural areas. (The race is 52-43 percent, Biden-Trump, among suburbanites, and 68-27 percent in urban areas, both essentially steady.)

Regional shifts also are substantial. Biden's advanced in the Midwest, from a dead heat to a 17-point lead. It's close in the South, 50-44 percent, Biden-Trump, compared with a 13-point Trump lead in late March. And Biden is ahead by 15 points in the Northeast and a broad 30 points in the West.

In a key center group, Biden leads by 54-37 percent among independents, unchanged from May but up from an even split in March.

Biden now leads by 25 points among women, double his margin in late March, and is a non-significant +4 among men, compared with -9 among men then. This includes a broad 60-36 percent Biden lead among suburban women, compared with a virtual dead heat among suburban men, 49-45 percent, Trump-Biden.

Biden holds a 30-point lead among college graduates, 63-33 percent, vs. +15 points in late March. (Hillary Clinton won this group by just 10 points in 2016, 52-42 percent.) And Trump has gone from an 18-point lead among white registered voters to a scant 4 points now, while 94 percent of Black registered voters support Biden.

White Catholics, potentially a swing voter group, divide essentially evenly, 51-47 percent, Trump-Biden, vs. +13 for Trump in March; Trump won white Catholics by 61-37 percent in 2016. Trump currently does better, 61-34 percent, among non-college white men, but this is a group he won with 71 percent four years ago. Across the political spectrum, college-educated white women favor Biden by 60-38 percent, compared with their 51-44 percent vote for Clinton over Trump in 2016.

Trump retains support from 90 percent of registered voters who say they voted for him in 2016, but loses 8 percent of them to Biden. Biden, for his part, wins 95 percent of Clinton's 2016 supporters, with 3 percent going to Trump.

Notably, too, Biden wins registered voters who are very worried about catching the coronavirus by an overwhelming 82-14 percent, and those who are somewhat worried by a narrower 53-41 percent. Those who are less worried, by contrast, prefer Trump, 69-26 percent.

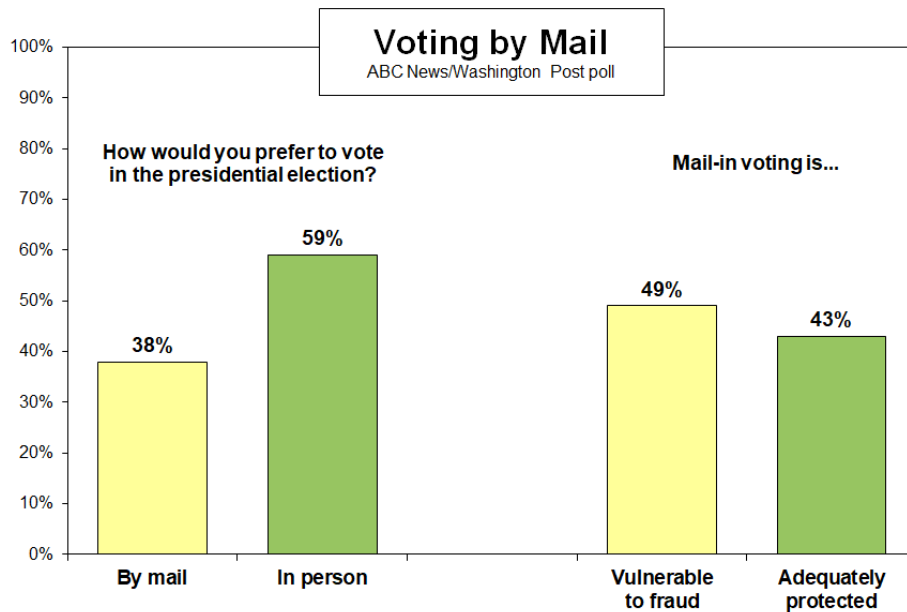
Indeed, in a statistical analysis called regression, being worried about catching the coronavirus is a significant independent predictor of vote preference, controlling for other factors including partisanship, ideology and demographics.

MAIL IT? – Eighty-six percent of registered voters say they’re certain to cast a ballot in the November election, somewhat higher than typical at this point in recent cycles – it was 79 to 81 percent in July 2016, 2012 and 2008 alike.

In what manner they’ll vote is another question. Thirty-eight percent of Americans say they’d prefer to vote by mail, 59 percent in person. In 2016, for context, 24 percent voted by mail, according to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

It’s a key point of interest given efforts by some states to encourage mail-in voting as a way to avoid virus infection at in-person polling places. If mail balloting does surge, counting those ballots could delay the vote count beyond election night.

Trump has pushed back against mail-in voting, alleging that it’s open to fraud, and the argument has some resonance: Forty-nine percent see voting by mail as vulnerable to significant levels of fraud, while 43 percent think adequate protections against significant fraud are in place.



Partisanship divides these views. Among Biden supporters, just 28 percent see mail-in voting as vulnerable to substantial fraud, and 54 percent say it’s how they prefer to vote. Among Trump supporters, by contrast, 78 percent see mail-in voting as vulnerable, and only 17 percent prefer to vote that way.

Among people who prefer to vote by mail, 23 percent see it as vulnerable to significant fraud. This soars to 67 percent of those who prefer to vote in person.

Other factors come into play. Preference to vote by mail is much higher in the West, 56 percent, likely reflecting its prevalence there, vs. as low as 25 percent in the Northeast. It’s also much higher among college graduates than non-graduates.

From how people vote to whom they vote for, the course of the pandemic is a clear wildcard in the November election. So, as noted, is the question of enthusiasm. Among registered voters who support Trump, 69 percent are very enthusiastic about doing so, much better than it was for him in 2016. That compares with 39 percent enthusiasm for Biden among his supporters. To the extent that enthusiasm translates to turnout, this could put Biden’s current lead in jeopardy.

Then again, motivation for Biden may come from another direction. Among Trump’s supporters, 72 percent say it’s more important to them to re-elect Trump than to defeat Biden. Among Biden’s supporters, it’s almost the opposite: Sixty-seven percent say their main interest is to defeat Trump.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone July 12-15, 2020, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,006 adults, including 845 registered voters. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points for the full sample and 4.0 points among registered voters, including design effects. Partisan divisions are 30-24-39 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling and data collection by Abt Associates of Rockville, Md. See details on the survey’s methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Gary Langer.

Allison De Jong, Christine Filer, Steven Sparks and Sofi Sinozich contributed to this report.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com. Join our [mailing list](#) to get updates on all new poll releases.

Media contacts: [Van Scott](#) (212-456-7243) or [Caragh Fisher](#) (212-456-3437).

Full results follow.

15-19 previously released. 20-29 held for release. *= less than 0.5 percent

1. I'd like you to rate the chances that you will vote in the presidential election in November: Are you absolutely certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or less than that?

	Certain to vote	Probably vote	Chances 50/50	Less than that	Don't think will vote (vol.)	Already voted (vol.)	No op.
7/15/20	75	6	7	8	3	NA	1
7/15/20 RV	86	5	5	2	*	NA	1
5/28/20 RV	84	9	4	2	1	NA	*
4/25/19 RV	85	8	6	1	*	NA	1
10/31/16 RV	72	4	4	3	1	16	0
10/30/16 RV	72	5	4	3	1	15	0
10/29/16 RV	73	6	4	3	1	14	0
10/28/16 RV	76	5	4	3	1	11	0
10/27/16 RV	77	6	4	3	1	9	*
10/26/16 RV	78	6	4	3	*	8	*

10/25/16	RV	79	6	5	3	*	6	*
10/24/16	RV	78	7	5	4	1	5	*
10/23/16	RV	79	7	5	3	1	5	*
10/22/16	RV	80	7	5	2	1	5	*
10/13/16	RV	85	6	5	3	1	1	0
9/22/16	RV	83	7	6	3	*	0	*
9/8/16	RV	81	8	6	5	1	NA	*
8/4/16	RV	81	8	6	4	1	NA	*
7/14/16	RV	79	10	5	3	1	NA	1
6/23/16	RV	79	8	7	4	2	NA	*
5/19/16	RV	80	9	5	3	2	NA	*

Call for full trend.

2. If the 2020 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were (Donald Trump, the Republican) and (Joe Biden, the Democrat), for whom would you vote? Would you lean toward (Trump) or (Biden)?

NET LEANED VOTE PREFERENCE - GEN POP

	Trump	Biden	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
7/15/20	39	54	2	3	1	1
5/28/20	40	53	1	2	2	1
3/25/20	44	50	*	2	1	2
2/17/20	44	52	*	2	1	1
1/23/20	44	51	*	2	2	1
10/30/19	39	56	*	2	2	1
9/5/19	38	54	*	4	3	1
7/1/19	41	55	*	2	1	1

NET LEANED VOTE PREFERENCE - REG VOTERS

	Trump	Biden	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Would not vote (vol.)	No opinion
7/15/20	40	55	2	2	1	1
5/28/20	43	53	1	1	*	1
3/25/20	47	49	*	2	1	1
2/17/20	45	52	0	2	1	1
1/23/20	46	50	*	2	1	1
10/30/19	39	56	*	2	2	*
9/5/19	40	55	*	2	2	1
7/1/19	43	53	*	1	*	1

3. (ASK IF NAMED TRUMP) Would you say you are very enthusiastic about supporting Trump, somewhat enthusiastic, not so enthusiastic or not enthusiastic at all?

	NET	--- Enthusiastic --- Very	--- Somewhat	NET	--- Not enthusiastic --- Not so	--- Not at all	No opinion
7/15/20	91	62	29	8	5	3	*
7/15/20 RV	94	69	25	6	4	2	*
5/28/20	87	64	23	11	7	4	1
5/28/20 RV	90	69	21	9	5	3	2
3/25/20	86	53	32	14	6	8	*
3/25/20 RV	86	55	31	13	6	7	*

2016 trend:

10/31/16	RV	83	48	34	17	11	6	1
10/30/16	RV	83	51	32	16	10	6	*

10/29/16	RV	84	51	33	15	10	6	*
10/28/16	RV	83	52	31	17	11	6	*
10/27/16	RV	82	51	31	17	10	7	1
10/24/16	RV	83	51	32	17	10	7	1
10/23/16	RV	84	51	33	16	10	6	*
10/13/16	RV	78	44	34	22	13	9	*
9/22/16	RV	88	49	39	11	6	5	1
9/8/16	RV	83	46	37	17	11	6	*

4. (ASK IF NAMED BIDEN) Would you say you are very enthusiastic about supporting Biden, somewhat enthusiastic, not so enthusiastic or not enthusiastic at all?

	--- Enthusiastic ----			--- Not enthusiastic ----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	
7/15/20	77	36	41	22	12	10	1
7/15/20 RV	79	39	40	20	10	10	1
5/28/20	74	31	43	25	13	12	*
5/28/20 RV	76	34	43	23	11	13	1
3/25/20	74	24	49	26	14	11	1
3/25/20 RV	74	28	46	26	14	11	*

5. (ASK IF NAMED TRUMP) What's more important to you personally - (re-electing Trump) or (defeating Biden)? Is re-electing Trump/defeating Biden extremely important to you, very important, or somewhat important?

	----- Re-electing Trump -----				----- Defeating Biden -----				Both (vol.)	No op.
	NET	Extrmly	Very	Smwt	NET	Smwt	Very	Extrmly		
7/15/20	72	42	20	10	19	2	7	10	4	5
7/15/20 RV	72	47	19	7	21	2	7	11	4	4

6. (ASK IF NAMED BIDEN) What's more important to you personally - (electing Biden) or (defeating Trump)? Is electing Biden/defeating Trump extremely important to you, very important, or somewhat important?

	----- Electing Biden -----				----- Defeating Trump -----				Both (vol.)	No op.
	NET	Extrmly	Very	Smwt	NET	Smwt	Very	Extrmly		
7/15/20	24	10	7	7	65	5	16	43	6	5
7/15/20 RV	24	11	8	6	67	4	14	48	6	3

7. How would you prefer to vote in the presidential election - (by mail) or (in person)?

	Mail	In person	Won't vote (vol.)	No opinion
7/15/20	38	59	1	2

8. Do you think mail-in voting (is vulnerable to significant levels of fraud) or do you think it (has adequate protections against significant levels of fraud)?

	Vulnerable to fraud	Adequate protections	No opinion
7/15/20	49	43	7

On another topic...

9. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

----- Approve -----	----- Disapprove -----	No
---------------------	------------------------	----

	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
7/15/20	39	28	11	57	9	48	3
5/28/20	45	32	12	53	11	42	3
3/25/20	48	34	15	46	11	35	6
2/17/20	43	31	12	53	11	42	4
1/23/20	44	35	10	51	9	42	4
10/30/19	38	30	8	58	10	48	5
9/5/19	38	27	11	56	8	48	6
7/1/19	44	32	12	53	8	45	3
4/25/19	39	28	12	54	9	45	6
1/24/19	37	28	9	58	9	49	5
11/1/18	40	28	12	53	9	43	8
10/11/18	41	29	12	54	7	46	6
8/29/18	36	24	12	60	7	53	4
4/11/18	40	25	15	56	10	46	4
1/18/18	36	24	13	58	9	49	5
11/1/17	37	25	12	59	8	50	4
9/21/17	39	26	13	57	9	48	4
8/20/17	37	22	15	58	13	45	5
7/13/17	36	25	11	58	10	48	6
4/20/17	42	27	15	53	10	43	5

10. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Trump is handling the economy? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
7/15/20	50	36	14	47	11	36	3
5/28/20	52	37	15	44	13	30	4
3/25/20	57	38	19	38	13	24	6
2/17/20	52	NA	NA	40	NA	NA	7
1/23/20	56	NA	NA	38	NA	NA	6
9/5/19	46	NA	NA	47	NA	NA	7
7/1/19	51	NA	NA	42	NA	NA	6
10/11/18	49	35	14	46	11	35	5
8/29/18	45	30	15	47	12	36	8
4/11/18	46	30	16	48	12	36	6
9/21/17	43	27	16	49	13	36	8
7/13/17	43	26	17	41	12	29	16

11. Overall do you think Trump has done more to (unite the country), or has done more to (divide the country)?

	Unite	Divide	No opinion
7/25/20	35	61	4
9/21/17	28	66	6
11/14/16*	44	49	6
Obama:			
11/14/16**	50	43	7
9/7/14	38	55	7
5/19/13	47	45	8
Bush:			
6/5/05	43	55	2
9/8/04 RV	48	44	8
8/29/04 RV	47	48	5
4/18/04	50	48	2
3/7/04	48	49	3
12/21/03	58	36	6

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12. Who do you think [ITEM] - (Trump) or (Biden)?

7/15/20 - Summary Table

	Trump	Biden	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
a. is more honest and trustworthy	35	49	1	12	3
b. better understands the problems of people like you	35	52	*	10	3
c. has the better personality and temperament to serve as president	33	59	2	4	2
d. is the stronger leader	45	45	1	5	5
e. has a better idea of what America should stand for	40	50	*	7	2
f. better represents your own personal values	38	50	*	8	3
g. would do more to unite Americans rather than divide them	33	57	*	7	3

*half sample asked items c-d, other half asked e-g

13. Who do you trust more to handle [ITEM] - (Trump) or (Biden)?

7/15/20 - Summary Table

	Trump	Biden	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
a. the economy	47	45	1	4	2
b. the coronavirus outbreak	34	54	*	8	3
c. crime and safety	41	50	1	6	2
d. race relations	33	58	*	7	2

Trend where available:

a. the economy

	Trump	Biden	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
7/15/20	47	45	1	4	2
3/25/20	50	42	1	5	2

b. the coronavirus outbreak

	Trump	Biden	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
7/15/20	34	54	*	8	3
3/25/20	45	43	1	6	5

c-d No trend.

14. When [ITEM] talks about people he disagrees with, do you think he generally (stays within acceptable boundaries), or (crosses the line in terms of what's acceptable)?

7/15/20 - Summary Table

	Stays within boundaries	Crosses the line	No opinion
a. Trump	21	76	3
b. Biden	63	26	11

*** END ***