

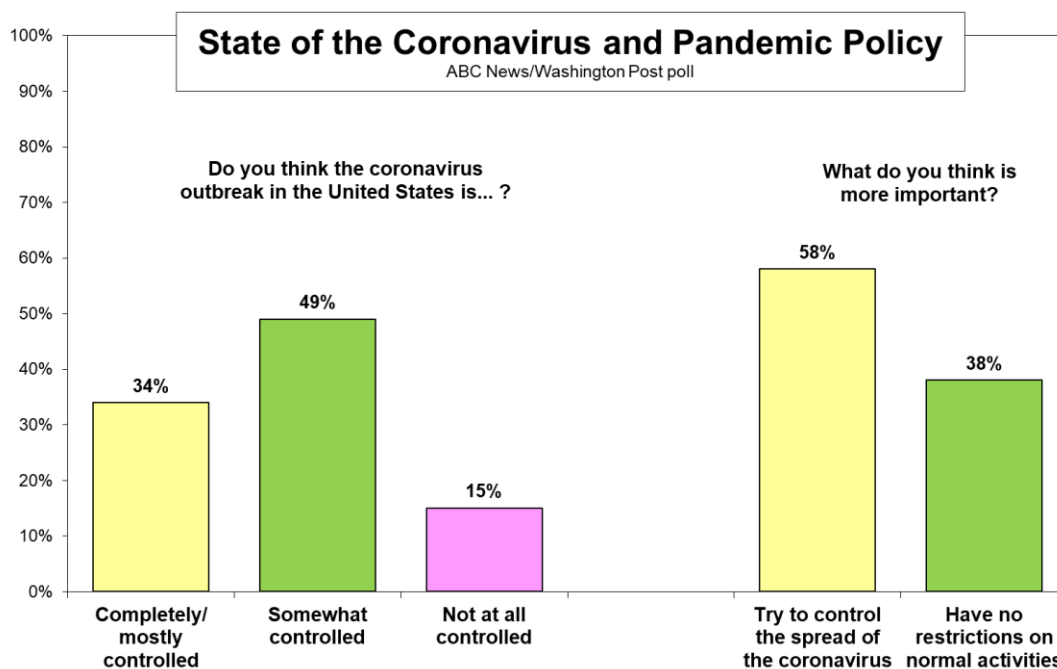
Even as Pandemic Restrictions Ease, Six in 10 Prioritize COVID-19 Controls

Even as the pandemic situation sharply improves and protective mandates are lifted, just a third of Americans see the coronavirus as mainly controlled – and six in 10 say it’s more important to try to contain the virus than to lift restrictions on normal activities.

Fifty-eight percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll continue to prioritize controlling the spread of the virus, 20 percentage points more than the share, 38 percent, who say it’s more important to discontinue restrictions.

That’s informed by continued concern about an unpredictable virus that has taken nearly [950,000](#) American lives and continues to infect nearly 70,000 and kill 1,700 daily. Thirty-four percent see the outbreak as completely or mostly controlled, up from about two in 10 last month (in a Fox News poll of registered voters), but still far from a majority. Half instead say it’s “somewhat” under control.

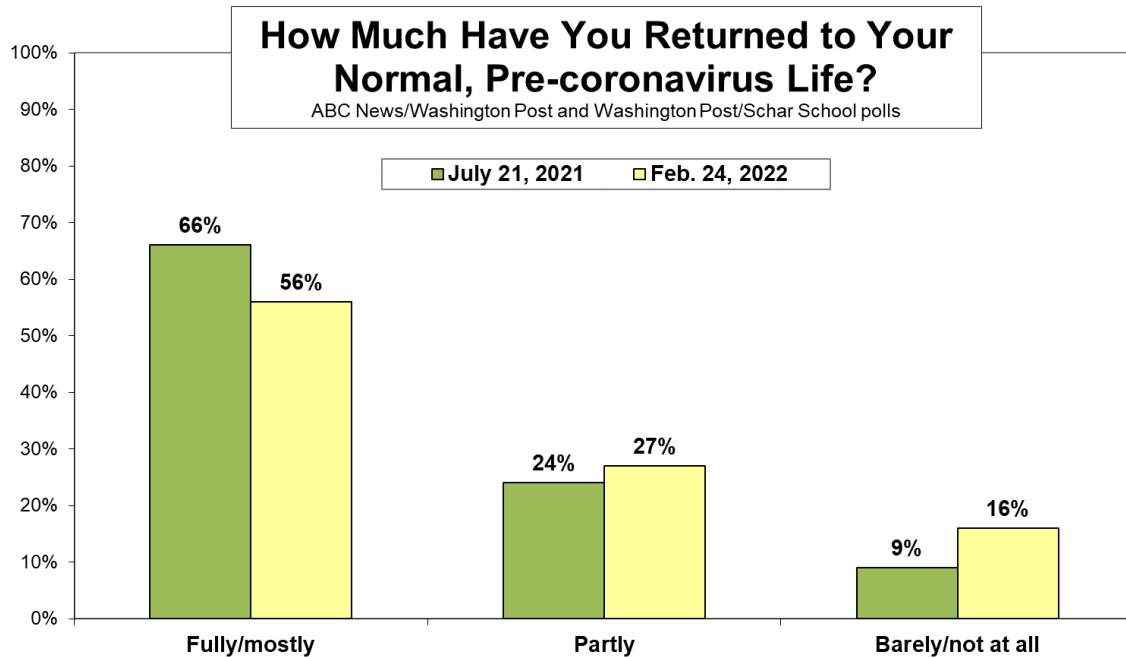
That said, the most dire views have improved sharply. Just 15 percent now say the outbreak is “not at all” under control, down sharply from 41 percent last month, when the Omicron surge was in full swing, with a seven-day average of as many as 800,000 daily cases.



The poll, produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#), was completed a day before the CDC dropped its recommendation of indoor masking for the roughly seven in 10 people who

live in areas with low or medium transmission levels. Nearly all states with mask requirements had already discontinued them.

NORMAL LIFE – Another result points to cautious re-emergence. While 56 percent say they’ve fully or mostly resumed their pre-coronavirus life, that’s 10 points below its level in July, before the Delta and Omicron strains spurred record levels of infections. About a quarter say they’ve partly returned to normal; and 16 percent, barely or not at all. The latter is up from 9 percent last July.



Returning to normality is associated strongly with views of the pandemic. Among people who see the outbreak as completely or mostly controlled, seven in 10 report having largely resumed their pre-coronavirus life. That falls to 29 percent who say it’s not at all controlled. Indeed, 48 percent in this group barely have returned to normal life, if at all.

GROUPS – Partisanship and ideology continue to be the main dividing lines. Just more than eight in 10 Democrats and liberals alike say it’s more important to control the virus, even if that means having some restrictions on normal activities, than to do away with restrictions. Most moderates (66 percent) and independents (59 percent) agree. Instead, 64 percent of Republicans and 63 percent of conservatives prefer no restrictions, even if that harms efforts to control the virus.

Sixty-three percent of Republicans and as many conservatives say they’ve largely resumed their pre-coronavirus life, compared with 44 percent of Democrats and liberals. Independents and moderates are closer to Republicans and conservatives on this measure, at 58 and 57 percent.

Notably, there’s much less of a political division on whether or not the virus has been fully or mostly controlled – 41 percent of Republicans say so, as do similar numbers of independents (32

percent) and Democrats (29 percent). Majorities across partisan lines instead say the virus is somewhat or not at all under control – 56 percent of Republicans, 66 percent of independents and 70 percent of Democrats hold this view.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Feb. 20-24, 2022, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,011 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 4.0 percentage points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 27-26-40 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 Allison De Jong.

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

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Full results follow.

1-17, 21-24 previously released. *= less than 0.5 percent

18. Do you think the coronavirus outbreak in the United States is completely under control, mostly under control, somewhat under control or not at all under control?

	-- More under control --			---- Less under control ---			
	NET	Completely	Mostly	NET	Somewhat	Not at all	No opinion
2/24/22	34	6	27	64	49	15	2
4/21/21	28	6	22	71	55	15	1
1/13/21	11	3	8	88	36	52	1
10/9/20 RV	21	5	17	78	43	35	1
8/15/20	14	3	10	85	39	46	1
7/15/20* RV	20	8	12	78	27	51	2
6/16/20 RV	23	7	16	75	43	33	2
5/20/20 RV	21	5	15	78	43	35	1

*7/15/20 and previous: Fox News, “coronavirus in the United States”

19. What do you think is more important - (trying to control the spread of the coronavirus, even if it means having some restrictions on normal activities), or (having no restrictions on normal activities, even if it hurts efforts to control the spread of the coronavirus)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	---- Control spread -----			---- No restrictions ----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
2/24/22	58	35	23	38	8	30	5

Compare to:

What do you think is more important - (trying to control the spread of the coronavirus, even if it hurts the economy), or (trying to restart the economy, even if it hurts efforts to control the spread of the virus)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	---- Control spread ----			---- Restart economy ----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
1/13/21	62	48	14	33	6	28	5
7/15/20	63	52	11	33	7	26	5
5/28/20	57	41	16	37	11	26	6

20. How much have you returned to your normal, pre-coronavirus life? Fully returned to normal, mostly returned to normal, partly returned to normal or barely returned to normal?

	----- More -----			----- Less -----			Not at	No
	NET	Fully	Mostly	NET	Partly	Barely	all (vol.)	opinion
2/24/22	56	21	35	41	27	14	2	1
7/21/21*	66	30	35	31	24	7	2	2

*Washington Post-Schar School

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