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A National Poll About Donald Trump by Carter Wrenn

Overview

In both the 2024 general election, and the 2024 Republican presidential primary, former President Donald Trump is skating on thin ice. In the general election, Trump is underwater with Independent voters – the swing voters who decide the election. In the Republican primary, the ice is cracking beneath Trump’s feet: Republican primary voters believe a “fresh face” would be a stronger candidate to defeat Joe Biden.

Joe Biden is not popular – until he’s compared to Trump. As many Independents dislike Biden as like him but, with the same Independent voters, Trump is underwater – 56% are Unfavorable to Trump, only 39% are Favorable. That’s the reason Biden won the presidential election and why Democrats won the Georgia special elections: Democrats made both elections referendums on Trump.

I. Key Points

Republicans want a “fresh face” in 2024: Trump’s position in the 2024 nomination contest is fragile. For years, Trump has been the most prominent Republican in the country. Now, however, looking at 2024, most Republican voters believe a “fresh face” would be a stronger candidate to defeat Joe Biden than Trump. Just one-third (33%) of the Republicans see Trump as the strongest candidate to beat Biden – while 52% view a “fresh face” as a stronger candidate.

That is a major shift since our first national poll taken in April. Then, 50% of the primary voters said Trump would be the strongest candidate to defeat Biden while 36% said another candidate would be stronger. That’s a shift of

17 points away from Trump and 16 points to a “fresh face” – a 33-point swing.

Even a third of Trump’s most ardent supporters – Republican primary voters who are Very Favorable to Trump – now say a fresh face would be a stronger candidate against Biden than Trump. Of Republican primary voters who are less ardent Trump supporters – voters who are Somewhat Favorable to Trump – 69% said a fresh face would be a stronger candidate.

Pence prevails over Trump on January 6 Electoral College vote counting: This is potentially a critical point of inflection for 2024. In January, after claiming “the election was stolen,” Trump ordered Mike Pence to throw out state-certified Electoral College votes in key states. Pence refused, saying that to do so was unconstitutional. *62% of all voters agree with Pence – only 14% agree with Trump. Republican primary voters also agree with Pence (43%) while only 23% agree with Trump.*

Of Republican primary voters who vote for Trump, almost a quarter (23%) say Trump was wrong to tell Mike Pence to reject Electoral College votes. Undecided voters in the 2024 GOP presidential race also agree with Pence and disagree with Trump by a margin of 58% to 7%.

Republican primary voters also believe Trump should have taken stronger steps to stop the rioters when they entered the Capitol (Agree 46%, Disagree 41%). A third (31%) of Trump’s Very Favorables, and a third of Trump’s voters in the 2024 primary, say Trump should have taken stronger steps to stop the rioters.

Trump Organization indictments are damaging to Trump: 45% of all voters say the indictments of Trump’s companies for tax evasion and other charges make them less favorable to Trump; 7% said the indictments make them more favorable; 44%, said the indictments make no difference. That 44% “no difference” figure is a cloud hanging over Trump’s head. If criminal charges in the Manhattan or other investigations continue to mount, they have the potential to become much more harmful. This is a baseline from which to measure further developments in the New York and other ongoing investigations.

The 2020 election was *not* stolen: Trump claims the election was stolen. For instance, he said more people voted in Detroit than lived in Detroit. But the Republican-led Michigan State Senate oversight committee concluded Trump was wrong – only half the voters who live in Detroit voted. 64% of all voters now say Biden won the election and “is truly President” – an increase of 5 points since April. Only 29% agree with Trump – a drop of 4 points.

In addition, despite Trump’s claims “the election was stolen,” 68% of the voters now believe their votes will be counted fairly in the next election. And, again, even Republican primary voters agree their votes will be counted fairly in the next election, 54% to 37%.

Over the years, Trump has claimed that three presidential elections – the 2012 general election; Hillary Clinton winning the 2016 general-election popular vote; and the 2020 general election – were “stolen.” Voters disagree with Trump’s claim 61% to 21%.

II. All Voters Nationally – 2024 General Election

Trump’s responsible: 59% of voters say Trump was responsible for Republican defeats in the Georgia Senate special elections this January; 62% say Trump shares responsibility for the Capitol riots; and 68% say Trump should have taken stronger steps to stop the rioters.

Voters disapprove of Trump’s character and reality show politics: Trump has given the nation reality show politics. The result: Right now, of all voters, 92% say Trump “brags and boasts.” By 2 to 1, voters agree Trump “lies.” (Agree 63%, Disagree 31%).

When asked what they like least about Trump, 79% of the voters answered and almost all mentioned Trump’s character.

When asked if they ‘Like Both Trump’s Policy and Personality’ – 26% said Yes; asked if they like Trump’s ‘Policy but **not** his Personality’ – 25% said Yes; 44% said they Dislike **Both** Trump’s Policy and Personality. In all, 69% of the voters **dislike** Trump’s personality or character – Trump’s biggest negative.

Trump did not have coronavirus under control: 64% of voters say President Trump was wrong last year when he claimed he had coronavirus under control. (Agree with Trump – 28%; Disagree with Trump – 64%.)

Moreover, by 2 to 1 voters disagree with Trump’s claim last year that his handling of coronavirus rated a “10 out of 10.” (Agree Trump 31%, Disagree 61%.)

Comparing Biden and Trump: In a hypothetical 2024 general election, Biden leads Donald Trump 46% to 43% – little change since April.

Biden is Favorable 49%, Unfavorable 48%, very little change since the April poll. With Independents – the key voters – Biden is Favorable 45%, Unfavorable 47% while, with the same voters, Trump is underwater by 17 points. (Favorable 39%, Unfavorable 56%.)

Trump is Favorable 44%, Unfavorable 53%. Again, little change.

III. Republican Primary Voters Nationally – 2024

January 6 Trump’s own voters disagree with him on the rioters and Mike Pence: 31% of Trump’s own voters say he should have taken stronger steps to stop rioters. 62% of the undecided voters (in the 2024 primary) say Trump should have taken stronger steps to stop rioters.

23% of Trump’s own voters say Pence was right and Trump was wrong. 58% of undecided voters in the 2024 primary say Trump was wrong.

Trump Organization Indictments: The indictment of Trump’s companies made 37% of the undecided voters in the 2024 Republican primary Less Favorable to Trump; 47% said the indictment made No Difference; 5% said it made them More Favorable. The indictments and other possible criminal charges are also a cloud hanging over Trump with Republicans.

Republican primary voters also disapprove of Trump’s character and reality show politics: Trump has also injected reality show politics into the Republican party. The result: 89% of the Republican primary voters say Trump “brags and boasts” and 38% say Trump “lies.”

It's surprising that 38% of the Republican primary voters agree that a former Republican president "lies" – those voters overwhelmingly do not vote for Trump in the primary. 54% of the primary voters disagree that Trump lies – but a third (35%) do not vote for Trump either.

In addition, 20% of Trump's voters say Trump lies. And 61% of undecided voters in the primary agree Trump lies (to 24% disagree).

46% of the primary voters like 'Both Trump's policy and his personality'; 38% like 'Trump's policy but not his personality'; 12% dislike both Trump's personality and policy. In all, 50% of the Republican primary voters **dislike** Trump's personality.

In fact, 27% of primary voters who are Very Favorable to Trump dislike his personality – another crack in Trump's support. 68% of primary voters who are Somewhat Favorable to Trump dislike his personality.

There are other significant cracks in Trump's base: A third (31%) of the primary voters who say they "Like **Both** Trump's personality and policies" do not vote for Trump; of primary voters who like "Trump's Policies but **Not** his Personality" 68% do not vote for Trump.

In the 2020 general election, Republican primary voters overwhelmingly voted for Trump against Biden. Now, only 46% would vote for Trump in the 2024 Republican primary. 54% do not vote for Trump.

When asked whether they believed a "fresh face" would be a stronger candidate to defeat Biden than Trump, 26% of Trump's own voters agreed, and 63% of the undecided voters also agreed.

Republicans believe their votes will be counted fairly: 54% of Republican primary voters believe their votes will be counted fairly in the next election – 65% do not vote for Trump in the primary. 37% of primary voters do not believe their vote will be counted fairly – but 40% do not vote for Trump. Another crack in Trump's base.

Broken politics: 62% of Republican primary voters now blame both parties for broken politics – an increase since the last poll. Of those voters only 39% vote for Trump in the primary – 61% do not vote for Trump.

Trump did not have coronavirus under control: Republican primary voters are split on Trump's claim last year that he had coronavirus under control (Agree 47%, Disagree 40%). However, 24% of Trump's voters in the primary say Trump was wrong. And 65% of undecided voter in the primary say Trump was wrong.

Trump shares responsibility for the Republicans' defeats in the Georgia Special Election. 21% of Trump's own voters say Yes. 52% of undecided voters in the primary say Yes.

Ideology: 40% of the Republican primary voters describe themselves as "Very Conservative." Almost half (47%) do not see Trump as "Very Conservative." But they do support Trump more than other groups. That Trump is not the strongest candidate to defeat Biden moves "Very Conservative" primary voters away from Trump. So does showing Trump is not "Very Conservative": For example, Trump told Pence to throw out the Electoral College votes which was unconstitutional. Would a conservative do that?

Trump's base is not monolithic: 56% of Republican primary voters describe themselves as "Very Favorable" to Trump; 20% are Somewhat Favorable; 21% are Unfavorable to Trump. Overall, Trump's total Favorable (with primary voters) has increased slightly (3 points) since April.

Primary voters who are favorable to Trump are not monolithic. 31% of Trump's Very Favorables do not vote for Trump in the primary and 32% of Trump's Very Favorables believe a "fresh face" would be a stronger candidate against Biden.

71% of Trump's Somewhat Favorables do not vote for him.

Loyalty to Trump: Republican primary voters overwhelmingly (86%) say a candidate's stands on issues matters more to them than a candidate's loyalty to Trump (9%). Even primary voters who are Very Favorable to Trump say a candidate's stands on issues matter more than a candidate's loyalty to Trump by 79% to 15%.

Trump endorsement is of little utility: 47% of the primary voters said it makes no difference to them when Trump endorses a candidate in a primary

– even 38% of Trump’s ‘Very Favorable’ supporters said Trump’s endorsement makes no difference. 20% of the primary voters said they would definitely vote for the candidate Trump endorses; 17% said they’d be more likely to vote for the candidate; 13% would be more likely to vote against the candidate Trump endorses.

Other Issues/Problems for Trump: 25% of the voters in Republican primaries are Independents – they vote: Trump 24%, Not Trump 76%.

Part of Trump’s voters and part of the undecided voters in the 2024 primary also disagree with Trump rating his handling of coronavirus a 10 out of 10, and disagree with Trump saying the 2012, 2016 (Clinton winning the popular vote) and 2020 elections were all stolen.

37% of Republican primary voters believe Biden is ‘truly president’ while 53% disagree.

IV. Conclusion

In the General Election Trump needs to win Independents to defeat Biden – but he is disliked by Independents (Favorable 39, Unfavorable 56) and is much less popular than Biden. A Republican without Trump’s negatives would be a stronger candidate to defeat Joe Biden.

In the Republican Primary: Trump is walking on eggshells – his character and personality hurt him, his reality show politics hurts him, boasts, brags, lies and inability to defeat Biden hurt him.

Under scrutiny by competing candidates, Trump will have trouble presenting himself as a conservative.

For example, Trump switched parties five times. Would a conservative do that? Trump said he hated abortion but, at the same time, he was pro-choice. Would a conservative do that? Trump didn’t take strong steps to stop rioters when they stormed into the Capitol on January 6. Would a conservative have done that?

Methodology: This was a telephone survey of Likely General Election voters. The survey – 1000 samples – has a margin of error of +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence interval.