

THEN VS. NOW: THE STATE OF TWO DIFFERENT UNIONS!

March 2024

THE ISSUE

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan famously asked the American people, “Are you better off now than four years ago?” Back then, the American people answered yes resoundingly.

As the president prepares to deliver this State of the Union Address, it is critical the American people ask themselves that basic question, “Are you better off now than you were during the Trump administration?” When it comes to the economy, personal finances, crime, immigration, and world affairs, the answer is a resounding “NO!”

During the Biden Administration, Americans have endured record-high inflation, out-of-control crime across major U.S. cities, new wars and global instability, and an unmanageable number of illegal immigrants crossing our porous border. Compare that to during the Trump Administration – pre-pandemic – America’s economy was booming, our cities were safe, there were no new wars due to peace through strength, and the border was becoming increasingly secure. The policy differences between administrations could not make this clearer, and as our survey shows, Americans feel the same – our Nation needs the policies that put Americans first.

THE AMERICA FIRST SOLUTION

- ★ **Make the greatest economy in the world work for all Americans**
- ★ **Secure the border, end human trafficking, and defeat the drug cartels**
- ★ **Provide safe and secure communities so all Americans can live their lives in peace**

TOP LINES

APPROVAL RATINGS

- ★ **According to the RealClearPolitics Average, the American people overwhelmingly disapprove of Joe Biden's performance in office.**
 - **55% disapprove** of Joe Biden's job performance.
 - **Nearly two-thirds (66%)** of Americans think our country is on the wrong track.

- ★ **Americans don't like Biden's handling of just about every major issue, according to RCP Average.**
 - **57% of Americans disapprove** of Biden's handling of the economy (-18% compared to those who approve).
 - **62% disapprove** of his handling of inflation (-25%).
 - **65% disapprove** of his handling of immigration (-33%).
 - **55% disapprove** of his handling of crime (-16%).
 - **59% disapprove** of his handling of foreign policy (-22%).
 - **56% disapprove** of his handling of the Israel-Hamas conflict (-21%).
 - **53% disapprove** of his handling of the Russia-Ukraine conflict (-10%).

- ★ **For all the talk about political division in our country, Americans are united about one thing—we are worse off than we were in 2019 (KAConsulting).**

- ★ **Most Americans are worried about being able to afford groceries, filling up at the gas pump, and making their paychecks stretch to cover the basics of everyday life.**
 - **Nearly two-thirds (63%)** think the economy is worse.
 - **Two-thirds (66%)** think the situation at the southern border is worse.
 - **3 out of 4** think the risk of war is worse.
 - **6 in 10** think the threat of terror is worse.
 - **Two-thirds (66%)** think crime and their safety is worse.

PRO-TIP

- ★ **When asked what is the first thing that should be done to lower prices, talk about lowering energy prices.**
 - “Nothing has done more to decrease poverty across the world than access to low-cost energy and free-market capitalism. Increasing the supply of energy will lower inflation, lower food costs, and put our Nation back on the path to prosperity.” Rick Perry, Chair, Center for Energy & Environment, America First Policy Institute.

QUICK STATS

ECONOMY/ INFLATION

- ★ **Economic statistics are not going to change how people “feel.” They feel worse off every time they go to the grocery store or gas station or look at the bank balance at the end of the month.**
 - People can’t afford Bidenomics—and they know it.
 - Prices have skyrocketed **three times faster** under the Biden Administration compared to the previous administration.
 - Gasoline still costs, on average, **\$3.52 per gallon** (\$1.13 more per gallon than when the Biden Administration took office).
 - Groceries cost **21% more** than in January 2021.
 - **75% of working-class Americans** say they cut back on entertainment and eating out last year due to high prices.
 - **Nearly half (45%)** say “Bidenomics” has mostly negatively impacted them and their families, and **just 1 in 4 (26%)** say “Bidenomics” has mostly positively impacted them or their families. (KAConsulting)
 - **Most Americans**, including a majority of Hispanics, Independents, Moms, and Suburban voters, believe “Bidenomics” has “delayed the American Dream.” (KAConsulting)
 - **More than half of Americans** think they and their families were better off financially under the America First policies of the previous administration. (KAConsulting)
 - It’s a fact that, things just **cost less** when we had America First leadership.
 - **Inflation was 1.4%** when the Biden Administration took office.
 - Gasoline cost **\$2.39 per gallon**.
 - Prices have gone **up 3% more** than peoples’ paychecks.

IMMIGRATION

★ **There is no question, America has a crisis at the southern border.**

- Since the Biden Administration has taken office **11 million illegal immigrants** have entered the U.S.
 - That’s greater than the population of **38 states**.
 - Biden is on pace to allow more illegal immigrants into the country **in each of the last 3 years**, than **all four years** of the Trump Administration **combined**.

★ **The American people are rightfully concerned about the Biden Administration’s border crisis.**

- The border crisis/immigration ranks as the **second most important issue to voters**—only trailing the economy.
- **Only 1-in-4 Americans** think Joe Biden is doing a better job of handling the border than President Trump.
- Joe Biden and his administration took **94 executive actions** during their first 100 days in office to undo the border security measures put into place by the Trump Administration.
- When it comes to the border, the numbers **speak for themselves**.

Nationwide Border Apprehensions			
Trump Admin		Biden Admin	
2017	423 K	2021	1.95 M
2018	525 K	2022	2.76 M
2019	982 K	2023	3.2 M
2020	460 K	2024 (YTD)	1.23 M
TOTAL	2.4 M	TOTAL	11 M (9.2 M + 1.8M “Gotaways”)

Known or Suspected Terrorists			
Trump Admin		Biden Admin	
2017	2	2021	16
2018	6	2022	98
2019	0	2023	172
2020	3	2024 (YTD)	59
TOTAL	11	TOTAL	345

CRIME/PUBLIC SAFETY

★ **It is not just about the economy and people’s personal finances; people feel less safe now than they did prior to the pandemic.**

- **More than three-quarters of Americans**, including the vast majority of nearly all demographics, say the “risk of war across the globe” is *worse* today than in 2019.
- **More than 6-in-10**, including most Independents, Blacks, Hispanics, Moms, and suburban voters, say crime and public safety, the situation at the U.S.-Mexico border, the U.S. reputation and standing in the world, and global terrorism are *worse* today than they were in 2019.

★ **Just turn on TV News; it's no wonder many people feel unsafe right now.**

- **Half of Americans (49%)** believe President Trump did a better job of handling crime than Joe Biden.
 - It was Joe Biden and the radical Left that supported **“defund the police.”**
 - It was Joe Biden and the radical Left that let **criminals out of jail** without posting bond.
 - It was Kamala Harris and others on the radical Left who fundraised to get **BLM protesters out of jail** in the summer of 2020.
- Americans should never forget the image of illegal migrants who allegedly attacked NYPD officers, walking out of jail without posting bail, and flipping the bird to Americans before fleeing to California.
- People feel less safe and definitely less safe in big cities than they did under the previous administration.
 - Washington, D.C., had the highest number of homicides since 1997—**up 36% from 2022.**
 - Kansas City recorded its **deadliest year on record.**
 - Homicides in Chicago are up more than **23% compared to 2019.**
 - Murders in New York City are up **23.1% from 2019** levels.
- It's not just murders and aggravated assaults but car theft, retail theft, and many other crimes that are out of control due to the Biden Administration's soft-on-crime policies.
 - Nationwide, the U.S. experienced near-record levels of auto theft.
- In many areas, you can't even go to the store because things are locked behind locked cases, or the stores closed because of theft.
 - **One-quarter of retailers** reported closing at least one location due to retail crime, while nearly half reduced operating hours.
 - **Nearly two-thirds of small business owners** said they have had to increase prices to compensate for losses due to retail theft.

IF PRESSED

- ★ **The economy was a mess when Joe Biden entered office.**
 - **Hogwash. Inflation was 1.4%. Gas prices were \$2.39 per gallon. Jobs were coming back from the pandemic.** Recall that former Obama Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers warned the Biden administration its unnecessary COVID-19 relief bill would cause inflation. They ignored him. Historic inflation followed a few months later.
- ★ **The only thing the Trump Administration did for the economy was pass massive tax cuts for billionaires and corporations.**
 - **Not true. According to a study of IRS tax data, people with an income below \$50,000 received a 16% tax cut.** People making \$50,000–\$100,000 received a 15% tax cut. And people making \$100,000–\$500,000 received a 12% cut. Those tax cuts are double the tax relief that people making more than a million dollars received.
- ★ **Congress needs to act to fix the problems at the border.**
 - **Nonsense. The Biden Administration signed 94 executive actions during the first 100 days to undo the border security measures of the previous administration.** For example, Congress changed no laws between December 2020 and December 2023. Our country had 40,000 illegal immigrants come across the southern border in 2020 compared to 302,000 crossings in 2023. The administration created this problem without Congress, and they can fix it without Congress.
- ★ **Republicans in Congress blocked the Biden Administration's request for more border patrol officers.**
 - **The Biden Administration and the so-called bipartisan bill requested more funding for officers to process illegal immigrants into our country, not deter them.** The House passed a measure in 2023 (HR2) that would actually secure the border, but the Senate refuses to take it up for a vote.
- ★ **Conservatives don't support police; they attacked them on January 6.**
 - **January 6 was a dark day, but there is no comparison with the summer 2020 BLM riots,** which, according to media analysis, resulted in 15 times more injured police officers, 19 times as many arrests, and an estimated 740 times more damages than those on January 6.

POLLING**THEN VERSUS NOW: OVERALL**

Imagine the 2024 presidential election is taking place today. Which candidate would you vote for?

- **39% | Republican Donald Trump**
- **35% | Democrat Joe Biden**
- 8% | Independent Robert Kennedy, Jr.

What are the most important issues facing Americans?

- **45% | Economy/ Inflation**
- **24% | Immigration & Border Security**
- 13% | Politicians/ Corruption
- **12% | Crime**
- 12% | Health Care
- 11% | Government Spending/ Debt

When it comes to the most pressing issues facing you and your family, do you believe Joe Biden is making things worse, better, or has he had no impact?

- **46% | Joe Biden has made things worse for me and my family**
- 24% | Joe Biden has made things better for me and my family
- 24% | Joe Biden has had no impact on me and my family
- 6% | Depends/ Unsure

And looking back at Donald Trump's presidency, when it came to the most pressing issues facing you and your family, do you believe Donald Trump made things worse, better, or did he have no impact?

- 38% | Donald Trump made things worse for me and my family
- **42% | Donald Trump made things better for me and my family**
- 15% | Donald Trump had no impact on me and my family
- 5% | Depends/ Unsure

Is the reputation of the U.S. and standing in the world better or worse today than it was five years ago in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 12% | Better
- **64% | Worse**
- 20% | About the Same
- 4% | Depends/ Unsure

Is racial unity in the U.S. better or worse today than it was five years ago in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 10% | Better
- **49% | Worse**
- 36% | About the Same
- 4% | Depends/ Unsure

Is political division in the U.S. better or worse today than it was five years ago in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 4% | Better
- **76% | Worse**
- 17% | About the Same
- 3% | Depends/ Unsure

Is the quality of public education in your community better or worse today than it was five years ago in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 10% | Better
- **43% | Worse**
- 41% | About the Same
- 6% | Depends/ Unsure

Regardless of how you feel about the individuals, which president do you believe did a better job delivering results that helped working class families?

- **47% | Trump**
- 43% | Biden
- 10% | Depends/ Unsure

The following statement was made by a politically independent voter. Do you agree or disagree?

“I used to think there was chaos and crisis during the Trump Administration, but it was mostly over tweets and stray comments. Now, we have chaos and crisis that impact my daily life. Chaos at the southern border, chaos at the gas pump and grocery store, and chaos overseas. The Biden Administration has delivered true chaos and real crises.”

- **60% | Agree**
- 35% | Disagree
- 5% | Depends/ Unsure

The following statements have been researched and are true. For each, please indicate if you were better off under America First policies or Joe Biden’s policies.

“Last year under Joe Biden, 2.5 million migrants crossed the border. In 2019, under America First policies, just 850,000 migrants crossed the border.”

- **53% | Better off under America First policies**
- 20% | Better off under Joe Biden’s policies
- 15% | About the same
- 11% | Depends/ Unsure

“The average inflation rate under Joe Biden is 5.5%. From 2017 to 2020, under America First policies, the average inflation rate was 1.9%.”

- **55% | Better off under America First policies**
- 20% | Better off under Joe Biden’s policies
- 13% | About the same
- 11% | Depends/ Unsure

“Under Joe Biden’s leadership, America relies heavily on using our strategic petroleum reserves and actively seeks more oil from the Middle East. Under America First policies from 2017 to 2020, America was energy independent and, for the first time in nearly 70 years, became a net energy exporter.”

- **52% | Better off under America First policies**
- 21% | Better off under Joe Biden’s policies
- 14% | About the same
- 13% | Depends/ Unsure

“Under America First policies, Donald Trump was the first president in 72 years not to start a new war involving America. However, under Biden, the Taliban seized Afghanistan, Russia invaded Ukraine, Hamas attacked Israel, and China consistently taunted the U.S. about taking Taiwan daily.”

- **52% | Better off under America First policies**
- 21% | Better off under Joe Biden’s policies
- 15% | About the same
- 12% | Depends/ Unsure

After learning those facts, and regardless of how you feel about the two men personally, do you agree or disagree that Donald Trump’s America First policies from 2017 to 2020 made America more prosperous and safer than Joe Biden’s policies?

- **61% | Agree**
- 31% | Disagree
- 8% | Depends/ Unsure

And after learning those facts, regardless of how you feel about the individual, do you mostly prefer America First policies or Joe Biden’s policies?

- **54% | America First policies**
- 28% | Joe Biden’s policies
- 13% | Prefer Neither
- 5% | Depends/ Unsure

THEN VERSUS NOW: ECONOMY & INFLATION

On a scale of “1” to “10” with “1” being “poor” and “10” being “excellent,” how do you rate the current state of the U.S. economy under President Joe Biden?

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| • 25% 1 (Poor) | • 8% 6 |
| • 7% 2 | • 11% 7 |
| • 10% 3 | • 11% 8 |
| • 7% 4 | • 5% 9 |
| • 8% 5 | • 6% 10 (Excellent) |

Are your finances about the same, better off, or worse off than they were five years ago in 2019?

- 23% | Better Off
- 30% | About the Same
- **46% | Worse Off**
- 2% | Depends/ Unsure

In general, have President Biden's economic policies, a.k.a. "Bidenomics," mostly positively or negatively impacted you and your family?

- 26% | Positively
- **45% | Negatively**
- 21% | Neither
- 8% | Depends/ Unsure

Looking back, in general, did President Donald Trump's economic policies mostly positively or negatively impact you and your family?

- **47% | Positively**
- 29% | Negatively
- 19% | Neither
- 6% | Depends/ Unsure

Is the state of the U.S. economy better or worse today than it was five years ago, in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 18% | Better
- **63% | Worse**
- 16% | About the Same
- 3% | Depends/ Unsure

Is your personal financial freedom better or worse today than it was five years ago in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 18% | Better
- **45% | Worse**
- 33% | About the Same
- 3% | Depends/ Unsure

Regardless of how you feel about the individuals, which president do you believe did a better job handling inflation and cost of living?

- **55% | Trump**
- 35% | Biden
- 10% | Depends/ Unsure

Regardless of how you feel about the individuals, which president do you believe did a better job handling the economy overall?

- **54% | Trump**
- 39% | Biden
- 8% | Depends/ Unsure

THEN VERSUS NOW: IMMIGRATION & BORDER SECURITY

Is the situation at the U.S.-Mexico border better or worse today than it was five years ago in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 6% | Better
- **66% | Worse**
- 23% | About the Same
- 6% | Depends/ Unsure

Is drug use and overdoses in your community better or worse today than it was five years ago, in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 5% | Better
- **59% | Worse**
- 30% | About the Same
- 6% | Depends/ Unsure

Regardless of how you feel about the individuals, which president do you believe did a better job handling border security?

- **59% | Trump**
- 27% | Biden
- 13% | Depends/ Unsure

THEN VERSUS NOW: CRIME & PUBLIC SAFETY

Are crime and public safety better or worse today than they were five years ago in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 7% | Better
- **66% | Worse**
- 25% | About the Same
- 3% | Depends/ Unsure

Is global terrorism better or worse today than it was five years ago, in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 6% | Better
- **62% | Worse**
- 26% | About the Same
- 7% | Depends/ Unsure

Is the risk of war across the globe better or worse today than it was five years ago in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 4% | Better
- **75% | Worse**
- 17% | About the Same
- 4% | Depends/ Unsure

Are crime and public safety better or worse today than they were five years ago in 2019, before the COVID-19 global pandemic?

- 7% | Better
- **66% | Worse**
- 25% | About the Same
- 3% | Depends/ Unsure

Regardless of how you feel about the individuals, which president do you believe did a better job handling crime?

- **49% | Trump**
- 35% | Biden
- 17% | Depends/ Unsure

Regardless of how you feel about the individuals, which president do you believe did a better job handling national security?

- **53% | Trump**
- 36% | Biden
- 11% | Depends/ Unsure

Source: KAConsulting, LLC on behalf of America First Policy Institute National Survey among 1,000 Registered Voters Conducted February 2024.

POLICY

- ★ **RESEARCH REPORT: AN ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY AGENDA TO BOOST WORKERS**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/fact-sheet-an-economic-productivity-agenda-to-boost-workers>
- ★ **OP-ED: INFLATION'S UP... CREDIT CARD DEBT TOPS \$1 TRILLION... AND AMERICANS DRAIN 401(K)S TO MAKE ENDS MEET...**
<https://prosperity.americafirstpolicy.com/reform/op-ed-inflations-up-credit-card-debt-tops-1-trillion-and-americans-drain-401ks-to-make-ends-meet/>
- ★ **EXPERT INSIGHT: THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S ANTI-WORKER ECONOMY**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/the-biden-administrations-anti-worker-economy>
- ★ **CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY: HIDDEN COST: THE TRUE PRICE OF FEDERAL DEBT TO AMERICAN TAXPAYERS**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/hidden-cost-the-true-price-of-federal-debt-to-american-taxpayers>
- ★ **POLICY: AFPI DEBT CEILING DEAL POLICY TAKEAWAYS**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/afpi-debt-ceiling-deal-policy-takeaways>
- ★ **OP-ED: BIDENOMICS IS A DISASTER, BUT PRESIDENT IS STILL TRYING TO RUN ON IT**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/bidenomics-is-a-disaster-but-president-is-still-trying-to-run-on-it>
- ★ **OP-ED: BIDENOMICS SPIN VS ECONOMIC REALITY**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/bidenomics-spin-vs-economic-reality>
- ★ **FACT SHEET: FY2023 BORDER STATISTICS BREAKDOWN**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/fact-sheet-fy-2023-border-statistics-breakdown>
- ★ **FACT SHEET: CURRENT AUTHORITIES THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION IS NOT USING TO SECURE THE BORDER**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/current-authorities-the-biden-administration-is-not-using-to-secure-the-border>
- ★ **FACT SHEET: CORRECTING THE RECORD: BIDEN ADMINISTRATION BLAMES CONGRESS FOR BORDER CRISIS**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/correcting-the-record-biden-administration-blames-congress-for-border-crisis>

- ★ **EXPERT INSIGHT: FY2023 – THE WORST YEAR ON RECORD FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/expert-insight-fy-2023-the-worst-year-on-record-for-illegal-immigration>
- ★ **EXPERT INSIGHT: THE BORDER NUMBERS DON'T LIE: BIDEN ADMINISTRATION POLICIES FUELING CRISIS**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/expert-insight-the-border-numbers-dont-lie-biden-administration-policies-fueling-crisis>
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<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/what-donald-trumps-ukraine-strategy-could-look-like>
- ★ **OP-ED: IRAN'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM IS ACCELERATING BECAUSE OF JOE BIDEN**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/irans-nuclear-weapons-program-is-accelerating-because-of-joe-biden>
- ★ **OP-ED: WHAT ISRAEL NEEDS FROM AMERICA...AND WHAT IT IS GETTING FROM JOE BIDEN**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/op-ed-what-israel-needs-from-america-and-what-it-is-getting-from-joe-biden>
- ★ **OP-ED: THE FLOOR IS FALLING OUT FROM UNDER BIDEN'S UKRAINE POLICY**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/the-floor-is-falling-out-from-under-bidens-ukraine-policy>
- ★ **OP-ED: BIDEN TURNS ON NETANYAHU AHEAD OF 2024**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/biden-turns-on-netanyahu-ahead-of-2024>
- ★ **OP-ED: TOO MUCH TO ASK? WHEN WILL BIDEN STAND UP TO HOUTHİ REBELS?**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/too-much-to-ask-when-will-biden-stand-up-to-houthi-rebels>
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<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/a-glaring-sign-of-rot-within-the-cia>
- ★ **OP-ED: FENTANYL A LETHAL ENEMY TO U.S., LET'S FIGHT IT THAT WAY**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/fentanyl-a-lethal-enemy-to-u.s-lets-fight-it-that-way>
- ★ **FACT SHEET: COMBATting FENTANYL – THE AMERICA FIRST ACTION PLAN**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/combating-fentanyl-the-america-first-action-plan>
- ★ **FACT SHEET: 2022 YEAR-END REVIEW: CRIME IN AMERICA – A PREVENTABLE CRISIS**
<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/2022-year-end-review-crime-in-america>

AMERICA FIRST POLICY INSTITUTE



★ **OP-ED: THE WAY TO END THIS VIOLENT EPIDEMIC WREAKING HAVOC ON AMERICA'S CITIES**

<https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/op-ed-the-way-to-end-this-violent-epidemic-wreaking-havoc-on-americas-cities>

To find more information on the policies that put America and Americans First, visit americafirstpolicy.com



AMERICA DESERVES A BETTER AND BRIGHTER FUTURE.

American citizens need policies that put them first instead of policies that stand in their way. Learn more about our plan for establishing policies that keep **America First, Always.**

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