Elon University Poll

Americans expect higher prices, economic disruptions and negative impacts on small businesses as a result of tariff increases

A national survey conducted by the Elon University Poll found deep divisions about Trump administration economic policies and immigration enforcement. Americans also expressed concerns about the tech oligarchy, but are ready to do away with the penny.

A new national public opinion survey conducted by the Elon University Poll reveals profound divisions among Americans regarding tariffs, economic policies, immigration enforcement, and expectations for the Trump administration. The survey, conducted Feb. 6-11, 2025, highlights significant partisan and demographic differences on key issues as the Trump administration pursues an aggressive agenda in its first weeks.

Tariff increases

A substantial majority of Americans anticipate rising costs due to import tariffs. More than 80% of respondents said they believe tariffs will lead to **increased prices**, with 45% expecting significant hikes. The impact on **small businesses** is a major concern, as 50% of respondents look for negative consequences, while only 19% expect a positive impact.

The partisan divide is stark, with 93% of Democrats and 79% of Independents saying tariffs will lead to higher prices, compared with only 69% of Republicans.

Two thirds of Americans said they expect **U.S. producers will suffer** because of higher costs for imported parts and materials and 69% expect **other countries will retaliate** with tariffs on U.S. goods, penalizing American exporters. With higher tariffs, 48%

expect manufacturers to shift their production back to the United States and 50% say America will become less reliant on foreign imports.

Many Americans (44%) believe Trump's economic policies will result in **shortages of goods** due to supply chain disruptions, with the biggest concerns in the Northeast region. A total of 74% of Democrats expect that the supply of goods will worsen, compared with only 13% of Republicans.

"A majority of those who voted for Trump anticipate tariffs will lead to higher prices for consumers and challenges for U.S. exporters," said Jason Husser, director of the Elon University Poll and assistant provost for academic excellence and integrity. "However, this is offset by a majority of Trump voters who see tariffs as something that will strengthen American manufacturing and jobs."

Economic outlook

Beyond tariffs, the broader economic outlook remains divided. While 40% expect the rate of **inflation will increase** because of Trump administration policies, 35% said inflation will fall. The partisan divide is stark, with 70% of Democrats expecting higher inflation and 71% of Republicans expecting lower inflation.

Beyond inflation, 44% of respondents said that Trump administration policies will strengthen the economy overall while 37% expect those policies to have the opposite effect. The outlook for **large businesses** is strong, with 47% predicting better conditions for U.S. manufacturing, 46% looking for more favorable taxes on large companies and 43% expecting stronger U.S. oil and gas production. In contrast, 40% look for **higher taxes on small businesses**, while only 29% expect lower taxes.

In line with President Trump's announced policies, Americans expect a negative impact on environmental protection, steps to address climate change and renewable energy production.

Immigration

Immigration policy continues to be one of the most divisive issues. The poll found that 53% of Americans support **mass deportations** of people who came to the United States illegally, with Republicans (89%) and older Americans (60%) showing the strongest support for deportations. Democrats (57%) and Black Americans (42%) have the highest rate of opposition for mass deportations.

Opinions are quite different concerning long-term undocumented people in the U.S., with 44% opposing deporting people who have lived in this country for more than 10 years, compared with only 35% who favor deportation and 22% who are unsure.

When asked about the potential consequences of mass deportations, 61% of respondents expect major industry sectors such as agriculture and construction to face significant **labor shortages**. There was a sharp partisan divide, with 78% of Democrats expecting labor shortages compared with only 41% of Republicans. Overall, 55% expect that more Americans will have job opportunities as a result of mass deportations.

Additionally, 51% of respondents think **crime rates will go down** as a result of mass deportations, with 85% of Republicans expecting lower crime, compared with only 23% of Democrats.

The effects of mass deportations could be even more far-ranging. Among all Americans: 47% think deportations are likely to result in healthcare costs going down; 43% think they will likely result in decreased local school spending; 38% say tax revenues and contributions to Social Security are likely to decrease; and 33% think housing prices will fall.

On a personal level, 23% of poll respondents said they know someone who fears they may be deported because of President Trump's promise of mass deportations. Of those who know someone in fear of deportation, 66% do not believe that person should be deported.

Government efficiency

Americans are divided on whether Trump Administration efforts will succeed in improving government efficiency, with 39% saying efficiency will get better, 33% saying efficiency will worsen and 14% expecting little change. A strong majority of Republicans (77%) expect better government efficiency while 60% of Democrats expect worse government efficiency.

Birthright citizenship

In contrast to the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which grants citizenship to children born in the United States regardless of their parents' citizenship status, 47% percent of poll respondents **oppose citizenship for children of parents who are in the country without documentation**, compared to 38% who favor granting citizenship. There was a strong partisan divide, with 61% of Democrats favoring citizenship for those children while 76% of Republicans oppose it. Opposition to birthright citizenship was strongest among whites, men and those above age 45.

By a 75% to 15% margin, Americans favor granting citizenship to children of those here as permanent residents (Green Card holders). When it comes to those here on student or temporary work visas the favorability margin is 47% to 39%.

Additionally, the poll found strong support for immigration opportunities for foreign citizens who have special expertise, such as technology or medical skills, and for foreign students who complete degrees in needed fields at U.S. universities.

The tech oligarchy

The poll also addressed growing concerns about corporate influence in politics. In response to former President Joe Biden's warning about a rising oligarchy of ultrawealthy technology leaders gaining power and threatening basic rights, 59% of Americans reported being concerned about this issue, including 36% who were very concerned.

Concerns were highest among Democrats, with 86% expressing concern about a growing oligarchy, compared with 60% of Independents and only 30% of Republicans.

President Trump approval rating

Public opinion on President Trump's overall job performance reflects deep national polarization. While 45% of Americans approve of his leadership, 41% disapprove. Republican respondents overwhelmingly support the president, with 88% approving of his performance, compared with 36% of Independents and only 11% of Democrats.

Trump's approval ratings were highest among whites (53%), men (52%), middle-income Americans (51%), those living in the South (50%) and those without a four-year college degree (48%).

"Maintaining support within the electoral base is key for any President's policy agenda," Husser said. "President Trump campaigned with promises to place tariffs on imports from certain countries and greatly accelerate the pace of deportations. Those who voted for him in 2024 are having mixed reactions now that those promises are becoming reality. Nonetheless, voters in the Trump coalition are still siding with the President's trade and immigration policies on the whole despite many of them seeing tradeoffs. We see this translated to a robust approval rate among Republicans. Meanwhile, President Trump's early second term is continuing the modern trend of polarization with dismal approval among Democrats."

The penny

In addition to major economic and political issues, the poll also gauged public opinion on a literal pocketbook question: the future of the penny. Amid debates on whether to discontinue the one-cent coin due to rising production costs, 51% of respondents supported rounding up or down to higher-value coins, while 32% found pennies useful enough to keep in circulation. Notably, younger respondents and those with higher

education levels were more likely to support eliminating the penny, while older Americans and Black Americans tended to favor keeping it in use.

There were no significant party divides on this question.

Poll Methodology

Access the poll topline and methodology at: www.elon.edu/elonpoll

The survey was developed by the Elon University Poll in partnership with the American City Business Journals and fielded by the international marketing and polling firm **YouGov** as an online, web-based survey, self-administered with online panels. Between February 6 and February 11, YouGov interviewed 1,101 U.S. adults aged 18 and older. These respondents were then matched down to a sample of 1,000 to produce the final dataset.

Throughout this report, the analysis of partisan differences compares the views of Republicans plus those who lean Republican in their voting preference with Democrats plus those who lean Democratic. A sample composition file from the survey provides more details. The margin of error for this poll (adjusted for weights) is +/-3.51%.