

HAMPTON UNIVERSITY/AP-NORC POLL SHOWS VIRGINIA VOTERS ARE MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR COMMUNITY AND STATE THAN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE

More voters have confidence in how Donald Trump would handle the economy than Biden, but more believe Joe Biden would better deal with the coronavirus outbreak.

HAMPTON, VA, September 29, 2020 — Registered voters in Virginia have more positive views of how things are going in their local community and state than the country as a whole, according to a new Hampton University/AP-NORC Poll. Only a quarter say the country is headed in the right direction, but 65% feel things are on the right track in their community and 48% feel the same about their state.

Similarly, voters are more likely to see election security and police violence as national problems than as state or local problems.

The survey shows that Virginia could see a surge in voting by mail for the upcoming presidential election, as 32% plan to do so this year compared to just 5% who report typically doing so in the past.

As they look ahead to the election –

- 41% of Virginia voters trust a Trump administration to handle the economy well compared 30% who say the same about a Biden administration.
- 36% think a Biden would handle the coronavirus outbreak well versus 28% who say so about a Trump administration.
- Overall, 47% view Joe Biden favorably and 37% view Donald Trump favorably.

Virginia voters support a host of policies aimed at reducing police violence, but few favor reducing funding for law enforcement. The poll also highlights varying levels of support on a range of prominent policy issues related to gun control measures, removing confederate statues and names from public places, and whether to re-open schools amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

“Most Virginians are pleased with how things are going in their community, but few registered voters are happy with the direction of the country on a variety of key issues,” said Kelly Harvey Viney, Director of Hampton University’s Center for Public Policy. “While partisanship plays a role in how people feel about their communities and state, it is particularly divisive when people think about the country overall.”

Among registered voters in Virginia, 53% are confident that votes in their county will be counted accurately compared to 42% who say the same about votes in Virginia and just 24% for the country overall.

Likewise, 54% say police violence against the public is a serious problem at the national level compared to 24% who say it is a problem in Virginia and just 15% who say it is a problem in their community.

When asked about possible reforms, 93% favor requiring body cameras for on-duty police officers and 83% favor prosecuting police officers who use excessive force, but only 23% favor reducing funding for law enforcement agencies.

Other findings from the poll include:

- 9% of Democrats say they typically vote by mail, but 45% say they plan on voting by mail in November. Just 3% of Republicans say they typically vote by mail, and 17% say they plan to in November.
- More feel strongly that Biden has good judgment compared to Trump (33% vs. 26%), while more say Trump stands up for what he believes in (55% vs. 40%).
- The clear driving force among Biden supporters is opposition to Trump: 83% say that opposing Trump is very or extremely important to their vote choice.
- Mandatory reporting for lost or stolen guns (82%), in-person classes to get a concealed carry permit (82%), and required background checks on all gun purchases (79%) enjoy high support, but fewer support a nationwide ban on AR-15s and similar automatic rifles (49%) or a law to support administrators and school teachers to be armed at schools (45%).
- While 60% support banning the Confederate flag on government property, Virginia voters are more evenly divided on removing Confederate statues (46% favor and 42% oppose) and renaming public places named after Confederate leaders (44% favor and 43% oppose).
- When thinking about whether or not to reopen K-12 schools for in-person instruction, parents of children in grades K-12 express the most concern about the effectiveness of virtual learning for K-8 students (61%), children falling behind academically (59%), and how working parents will handle child care (59%).

“The coronavirus appears to be dramatically changing how Virginians plan to vote as nearly a third of the electorate expects to vote by mail when only a small percent did so in the past,” said Trevor Tompson, director of The AP-NORC Center. “There are strong partisan differences as Democrats are more likely than Republicans to plan to vote by

mail. It is important the public, media, and politicians recognize the potential for such differences in vote choice between mail and in-person voters when looking at voting results on Election night.”

About the Study

The statewide, probability-based survey was conducted between September 8-14, 2020 by Hampton University and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Interviews were conducted online and via telephone with 830 registered voters in Virginia. The margin of sampling error is +/- 4.4 percentage points.

This survey was conducted with funding from Hampton University.

About Hampton University

The HU Center for Public Policy (CPP) is an objective, non-partisan source for information and solutions on a variety of topics. Along with HU’s mission of education and service, the Center for Public Policy stands to serve as the pulse of the people of Virginia and is poised to meet the challenge by contributing publications, speakers, forums and new age social media engagement that advances the current and future ideas and trends in the public policy arena. Our polling is conducted using the highest quality methodological standards including innovative new formats for better accuracy in the industry.

Established in 2008 by visionary Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey, the aim was to create the Center for Public Policy to help facilitate a connection for students between classroom theory and practical application in the real-world. Moving forward into the 21st century and beyond, the CPP is meeting the emerging needs of the global community by expanding into a research focused institution.

For Topline results, the executive summary and more information on the Hampton University Center for Public Policy call 757-727-5426 or visit <http://www.hamptonu.edu/cpp/polls/>.

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The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

www.apnorc.org

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The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

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