

HAMPTON UNIVERSITY/AP-NORC POLL SHOWS A MAJORITY OF VIRGINIA VOTERS PLAN TO CAST BALLOTS BEFORE ELECTION DAY

Most Virginia registered voters support restrictions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

HAMPTON, VA, October 26, 2020 — More than four times as many registered Virginia voters plan on voting before Election Day than have done so previously, according to a new Hampton University/AP-NORC Poll.

Fifty-nine percent of registered voters say they plan to vote either by mail or in person before November 3 compared with 13% who report typically having voted early in previous elections.

Democrats are more likely to vote early or by mail, and they tend to cite concerns about the coronavirus as a major factor. In contrast, a majority of Republicans plan to vote in person on Election Day, and they are more likely to doubt their ballot would be delivered by mail.

In the final days of the election season –

- 52% of registered voters in Virginia view Biden favorably, while 39% view Trump favorably.
- Only 29% feel confident that the results of the national election will be reported accurately.
- About two-thirds of Election Day voters say that they don't trust their ballot to be delivered by mail, they're concerned a mail ballot wouldn't be counted accurately, or they have always voted in person on Election Day.
- The largest concern for mail voters is the coronavirus outbreak: 84% say that is a major reason they are voting by mail. An additional 33% are worried about long lines on Election Day.

The poll shows a majority of Virginia voters say their personal financial circumstances are good or very good, but less than half hold a similar view about the economy in their community, state, or the country.

A majority also believe the economic situation will stay the same or worsen in the next year at all levels.

“Virginia voters are not optimistic about either the local or national economy,” said Kelly Harvey Viney, Director of Hampton University’s Center for Public Policy. “However, most of the registered voters surveyed continue to support the current economic restrictions to prevent furthering the spread of COVID-19.”

Nearly two-thirds of registered voters prioritize using restrictions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, even if the economy suffers.

At the same time, most registered voters are reluctant about getting vaccinated, with 19% saying they will not get a vaccine and 38% saying they are not sure.

The survey also examines registered voters’ views on racism and finds that 61% consider racism in the United States an extremely or very serious problem. Most think race relations are more strained now than in recent years.

Younger generations of voters are more likely than older voters to perceive racism as a problem in their own communities and the Commonwealth. For example, 41% of those age 18-44 view racism as a serious problem in Virginia, compared to 26% of those aged 45 and older.

“The contrast of the perception of racism among the young and older voters here in Virginia illustrates the divisiveness gripping the nation and the Commonwealth of Virginia regarding racism and race relations and how it continues to be problematic,” said Viney.

Other findings from the poll include:

- More registered voters in Virginia believe that a Biden administration would do well handling the coronavirus (42% vs. 27%) and race relations (43% vs. 24%) than the Trump administration; in contrast, voters are more likely to say that a Trump administration would handle the economy well (38% vs. 32%).
- Although two-thirds of registered voters say they are spending less since the coronavirus outbreak, 67% report not paying down debts any faster than usual, and 55% say they are not saving more money than usual.
- In the wake of the pandemic, a large majority of registered voters say small businesses (74%) and individuals (70%) have not had enough financial help from the government.
- Less than half of registered voters approve of protests in response to police violence against Black Americans.

- 77% of Republicans support Judge Amy Coney Barrett’s confirmation while 76% of Democrats oppose it.
- Incumbent Senator Mark Warner is seen more favorably than unfavorably (50% vs. 35%), while 49% of registered voters in Virginia say they do not know enough about the Republican Senate candidate, Daniel Gade, to have an opinion of him.

“As there continue to be upticks in coronavirus infections across the nation and in Virginia, the pandemic is having a significant impact on the public’s attitudes,” said Trevor Tompson, director of The AP-NORC Center. “There is still a great deal of hesitancy when it comes to getting a COVID-19 vaccine when one becomes available. Concerns about side effects and the vaccine development process are driving the skepticism.”

About the Study

The statewide, probability-based survey was conducted between October 6-12, 2020 by Hampton University and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Interviews were conducted online and via telephone with 887 registered voters in Virginia. The margin of sampling error is +/- 4.6 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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