

# **The Effects of Political Shocks on Aggregate Vote Preferences in the 2024 Election**

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## **Abstract**

The 2024 presidential election campaigns were shaken by series of extraordinary events, among them Donald Trump's felony conviction in May, Joe Biden's disastrous debate performance in June, Trump's attempted assassination and Kamala Harris's replacement of Biden in July, and Harris's superior performance the September debate with Trump. These events made headlines and provided fresh information about the candidates that invited voters to reassess their choices. To what extent did they do so? I address this question through analysis of data from more than 320 surveys taken over the course of the campaign that asked respondents how they intended to vote in the presidential election. I find that the shocks had statistically significant but, with one exception, very small substantive effects on the prospective major-party votes of the electorate as a whole. Viewing support for each candidate separately, the shocks had a much stronger effect on support for the Democratic candidate than on support for Trump. The shocks left partisans largely unmoved; independent voters were much more responsive and thus accounted for most of movement in overall aggregate preferences that followed each event. These results reflect a calcified, deeply polarized electorate in which the vast majority of partisans are unwilling to cross party lines even when they acknowledge and accept new positive or negative information about the candidates. A similar pattern is now emerging in response to the Trump administration's radically disruptive policy initiatives.

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During the first five months of 2024, the presidential contest seemed fated to remain a dreary and unwelcome rerun of the 2020 contest between two unusually unpopular candidates, President Joe Biden and former president Donald Trump.<sup>1</sup> Beginning in late spring, that prospect was upended by a series of events that made headlines and provided fresh information about the candidates that invited voters to reassess their choices. To what extent did they do so? My purpose here is to answer this question and then to explain the answer.

I begin by reviewing the major events that held the potential to change voters' minds, and thus the election's trajectory, and considering why they might have been expected to do so. I then analyze the results of more than 320 surveys conducted during the election year to determine how the aggregate vote intentions of all prospective voters and of partisan subgroups shifted in response to these events.<sup>2</sup> To anticipate, I find that these "shocks"—a label I apply for convenience to all the events although some obviously delivered a stronger jolt than others—had a significant but, with one exception, quite small substantive effects on the prospective votes of electorate as a whole. Partisans were largely unmoved; independent voters were much more responsive to new information about the candidates and thus accounted for most of movement that followed the shocks. I then take a closer look at partisan reactions to specific shocks and show that, even when partisans acknowledged fresh negative information about their party's candidate, only a tiny percentage were ready to defect to the other side. The final section notes that such resolute partisanship is a well-documented long-term development, fueled by deepening antipathy toward the other party and its candidates, with consequences not only for the trajectory of the 2024 election but also for the public's reaction to the second Trump administration, now busy delivering a deluge of new political shocks.

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<sup>1</sup> Nathaniel Rakich, "Have Americans Ever Hated Two Candidates as Much as Biden and Trump?" ABC News, April 1, 2024, <https://abcnews.go.com/538/americans-hated-candidates-biden-trump/story?id=108655435>; Seung Min Kim and Linley Sanders, "'Uniquely horrible choice:' Few US Adults Want a Biden-Trump Rematch in 2024, an AP-NORC Poll Shows," AP News, December 14, 2023n, <https://apnews.com/article/biden-trump-2024-campaign-democrats-republicans-440088966619e68dbf89f745788bb372>; Shanay Gracia and Joseph Copeland, "Biden, Trump are Least-Liked Pair of Major Party Presidential Candidates in at Least 3 Decades," Pew Research Center June 14, 2024. In the weekly *Economist*/YouGov polls taken during the first quarter of 2024, net favorability (percent favorable minus percent unfavorable) averaged -9 for Trump, -11 for Biden.

<sup>2</sup> For a list of the survey sources used here, see the Appendix.

## The Shocks

The shocks examined here will be familiar to anyone even casually attentive to political news in 2024:

1. Trump's felony conviction on May 30;
2. The Biden-Trump debate on June 27;
3. The attempt to assassinate Trump on July 13;
4. Biden's withdrawal in favor of Kamala Harris on July 21;
5. The Harris-Trump debate on September 10;
6. The vice presidential debate on October 1.

### 1. Trump's Felony Conviction

On May 30, 2024, Trump was convicted by a New York jury on all 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to cover up his payment of hush money to a porn star to keep news of their tryst from the 2016 electorate.<sup>3</sup> This was Trump's fourth major court defeat within the past year,<sup>4</sup> so the verdict was not particularly surprising, but the election-year felony conviction of a former president and current nominee was historically unique and at least potentially a setback to his cause. Most Americans thought the crime was serious, and the share deeming Trump guilty as charged grew from a 47.3 percent plurality to a 52.6 percent majority after his conviction (Table 1). But crucially, the increase was confined to Democrats and independents. Among Republicans, belief in Trump's guilt did not become more common, while the proportion denying it grew from 65.1 percent to 72.0 percent. An even larger majority of Republicans said the trial had been unfair, and most did not believe the alleged crime was serious anyway.

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<sup>3</sup>Lazaro Gamio, Karen Yourish, Matthew Haag, Jonah E. Bromwich, Maggie Haberman, and K.K. Rebecca Lai, "The Trump Manhattan Criminal Verdict, Count By Count," *New York Times*, 20 May 2024.

<sup>4</sup>In May 2023, a jury found him liable for sexually abusing journalist E. Jean Carroll and in January 2024 a second jury ordered Trump to pay her \$83 million in damages for defamation; the judge in these cases said Trump had, in the common meaning of the term, raped her. In September 2023, a New York judge ruled that Trump's real estate company had for years fraudulently manipulated its property's values to get better insurance and tax rates and subsequently ordered it to pay more than \$450 million in penalties and interest. See Benjamin Weiser, Jonah E. Bromwich, Maria Cramer, and Kate Christobek, "Jury Orders Trump to Pay Carroll \$83.3 Million After Years of Insults," *New York Times*, 26 January, 2024; Aaron Blake, "Judge Clarifies: Yes, Trump Was Found to Have Raped E. Jean Carroll," *Washington Post*, 19 July 2023; Jonathan O'Connell, "Hefty Fines, Penalties Will Rock Trump Family's Business and Fortune," *Washington Post*, 14 February 2024. .

**Table 1. Opinions on Trump’s Falsifying Business Records in the Stormy Daniels Hush Money Case**

|  | All        |           | Democrats  |           | Independents |           | Republicans |           |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
|  | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Yes</i>   | <i>No</i> | <i>Yes</i>  | <i>No</i> |
| <i>Before verdict:</i> Trump did something illegal/should be indicted/is guilty (40) | 47.3       | 33.7      | 79.9       | 11.0      | 44.6         | 32.0      | 15.3        | 65.1      |
| <i>After verdict:</i> approve verdict/is guilty (23)                                 | 52.6       | 34.5      | 88.7       | 5.0       | 50.5         | 28.0      | 15.5        | 72.0      |
| Change   | 5.3        | 0.8       | 8.8        | -6.0      | 5.9          | -4.0      | 0.2         | 6.9       |
| Trial was fair (15)  | 50.3       | 38.8      | 87.1       | 6.2       | 49.3         | 33.9      | 13.1        | 78.3      |
| Crime alleged is serious (20)  | 55.4       | 34.9      | 85.0       | 10.5      | 51.2         | 35.6      | 27.8        | 61.9      |

*Note:* The number of surveys averaged is in parentheses.

*Source:* ABC News, AP NORC, CBS News/YouGov, Data for Progress, *Economist*/YouGov, Fox News, Harris X, Ipsos, Monmouth University, Navigator Research, *New York Times*/Sienna College, *Politico*, Survey Monkey, and Yahoo/YouGov polls.

Earlier survey data had suggested that, in the abstract, a felony conviction would severely damage if not totally wreck a candidate’s chances.<sup>5</sup> Once Trump had become one, however, many more people decided they were open to voting for a convicted felon. In the two YouGov surveys taken a month before and just after his conviction, the proportion of Republicans saying they were willing to vote for a felon rose from 49 percent to 74 percent; among 2020 Trump voters, the increase was from 52 to 85 percent.<sup>6</sup> It was thus not clear how damaging, if at all, Trump’s felony convictions would be to his support; past court defeats had, after all, done nothing to derail his quest for the nomination.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. The Biden-Trump Debate

The next shock was delivered, unintentionally, by Joe Biden. Sagging in the polls and eager to reassure worried Democrats and others who doubted his capacity to win and serve another term, Biden challenged Trump to an early debate. Trump accepted, and they debated on

<sup>5</sup> Gary C. Jacobson, “Popular Reactions to Donald Trump’s Indictments and Trials: Implications for the 2024 Election,” prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 5-8 September 2024.

<sup>6</sup> YouGov surveys, “before” April 1-8, 2024, “after” May 31-June 2, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Jacobson, “Popular Reactions to Trump’s Indictments and Trials.”

June 27.<sup>8</sup> Biden's debate performance, in which he appeared at times both physically fragile and mentally unfocused, had an effect exactly opposite to what he had intended. On average in the eleven polls posing the question, 59 percent said Trump won the debate, 21 percent, Biden; 23 percent of Democrats conceded the debate to Trump, as did 60 percent of independents and 91 percent of Republicans.<sup>9</sup> The proportion of Democratic voters wanting Biden to stay in the race fell immediately after the debate and dropped even further when reviews of his performance by the media and Democratic leaders came in; most Democrats now said he was too old and wanted him to step aside.<sup>10</sup> Biden did so reluctantly under pressure from Democratic congressional leaders and major campaign contributors who feared he would lose badly and drag down the whole party ticket.<sup>11</sup> He stood down on July 21, endorsing vice president Kamala Harris as his successor.

Most studies have found that the effects of presidential debates on vote intentions, if any, are usually modest and ephemeral.<sup>12</sup> Still, "debates change public opinion to the extent that one candidate's performance is so clearly superior that many even of those who oppose him must acknowledge the reality of his victory."<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the debates considered in previous studies occurred after Labor Day—the earliest was September 21 in 1980—rather than prior to the nominating conventions, when voters' preferences are arguably more unsettled. More to the

<sup>8</sup> Arnie Parnes, "Democrats Cheer Biden Decision to Take on Trump in Early Debate," *The Hill*, May 15, 2024, <https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/4666239-democrats-cheer-biden-decision-to-take-on-trump-in-early-debate>.

<sup>9</sup> Gary C. Jacobson, "The 2024 Presidential and Congressional Elections: Small Wave, Seismic Damage," *Political Science Quarterly* 140:3 (Fall 2025), 1-25.

<sup>10</sup> During 2024 before the debate, an average of 42 percent of Democrats thought he was too old for the job (N=11); after the debate, it was 51 percent (N=6); before the debate, 60 percent of Democrats wanted him to run again, 29 percent did not (N=11); a week after the debate, the comparable figures were 43 percent and 49 percent (N=8); data from ABC News/Ipsos, AP NORC, CBS News/YouGov, Data for Progress, Echelon, *Economist*/YouGov, Fox News, Gallup, HarrisX, Ipsos, *New York Times*/Sienna, Quinnipiac, and Yahoo/YouGov polls.

<sup>11</sup> Carl Hulse, "How Biden's Senate Allies Helped Push Him From the Race," *New York Times*, 29 August 2024; Seema Mehta, "Public Deference, Private Power: How Nancy Pelosi Navigated the Biden Withdrawal," *Los Angeles Times*, 23 July 2024; June Kim, Blacki Migliozi, K.K. Rebecca Lai, Neil Vigdor and Lily Boyce, "How the Pressure Grew for Biden to Drop Out," *New York Times*, 21 July 2024; Kenneth P. Vogel, Theodore Schleifer, and Lauren Hirsch, "Major Democratic Donors Devise Plans to Pressure Biden to Step Aside," *New York Times*, 4 July 2024

<sup>12</sup> Robert S. Erikson and Christopher Wlezien, *The Timeline of Presidential Elections: How Campaigns Do (and Do Not) Matter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Caroline Le Penne and Vincent Pons, "How Do Campaigns Shape Vote Choice? Multicountry Evidence from 62 Elections and 56 TV Debates," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (2023):703-766, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjad002>; Daron R. Shaw, "A Study of Presidential Campaign Event Effects from 1952 to 1972," *Journal of Politics* 61:2 (May, 1999):387-422.

<sup>13</sup> Peter R. Scrott and David J. Lanoue, "The Power And Limitations of Televised Presidential Debates: Assessing the Real Impact of Candidate Performance on Public Opinion And Vote Choice," *Electoral Studies* 32:4 (December 2013):684-692; see also Thomas M. Holbrook, *Do Campaigns Matter?* (Thousand Oak CA: Sage Publications 1996).

point, no previous debate had gone so badly that the losing candidate had to quit the race because his party's leaders thought his performance had doomed his candidacy.

### 3. The Attempted Assassination of Trump

Another shock landed on July 13, after the debate but before Biden withdrew, when Trump narrowly escaped an assassination attempt at a rally in Pennsylvania. The image of his blooded face and defiantly raised fist cemented his heroic stature among his supporters, but otherwise, its potential effect on the election trajectory was unclear. Most Americans did think it would help Trump's cause; responding to an *Economist*/ YouGov poll taken shortly after the event, 57 percent (including 46 percent of Democrats and 74 percent of Republicans) thought it increased his chance of winning; only 3 percent thought it decreased them.<sup>14</sup> Professional observers were not so sure it would make any difference.<sup>15</sup> The proportion of Americans with favorable views of Trump rose on average only 1 point, from 42 percent in polls taken the two weeks before the attempt on his life (N=14) to 43 percent in the two following weeks (N=15).<sup>16</sup> But if nothing else, his near martyrdom helped turn the Republican convention (July 15-18) into an energized and enthusiastic celebration of all things Trump. Conventions typically provide a sustained bump a candidate's support, although the average net effect has been estimated to be only 0.1 percentage points because the two conventions usually offset one another.<sup>17</sup> In 2024, however, whatever measurable effect the Republican convention might have had on voters' preferences was overshadowed by the next shock, Harris's replacement of Biden on the Democratic ticket.

### 4. Biden Withdraws in Favor of Harris

Kamala Harris had not been a particularly popular figure among Democrats and was held in low esteem by independents until, on July 21, she became Biden's successor and to most

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<sup>14</sup> *Economist*/YouGov Poll, July 21-23, 2024, [https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/econTabReport\\_brdog5G.pdf](https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/econTabReport_brdog5G.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> 2024, <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2024-07-17/trump-was-shot-will-it-impact-the-election>; Ed Kilgore, "Trump Assassination Attempt Makes 2024 Election More Bonkers Than Ever. But will it cinch a victory for him?" *New York Magazine*, July 15, <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/trump-shooting-2024-election-effects.html>; Jonathan Allen, "Attempt on Trump's life shakes a presidential election like no other," NBC News, July 14, 2024, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/attempt-trumps-life-shakes-presidential-election-rcna161739>.

<sup>16</sup> Data from sources listed in the Appendix.

<sup>17</sup> Erikson and Wlezien, *Timeline of Presidential Elections*, 75-79.

people who dreaded another Trump presidency the only feasible way to prevent it. Her favorability ratings rose sharply among both groups. From the beginning of 2024 until July 21, her favorable-unfavorable ratio averaged 81:19 among Democrats and 23:77 among independents, (N=65). After she replaced Biden, the average ratios became 93:7 and 44:56, respectively (N=71).<sup>18</sup> Ordinary Democrats as well as party elites were clearly relieved when Biden withdrew, and Harris was the beneficiary; her campaign raised a one-day record \$81 million the very next day.<sup>19</sup> In polls taken during the following week, averages of 87 percent of Democrats approved of Biden's departure, 86 percent endorsed Harris's nomination, and 76 percent thought convention delegates should go ahead and unite behind her rather than consider other candidates.<sup>20</sup> They did; 99 percent voted for Harris in a virtual roll call vote held August 1-5, and she came out of the Democratic convention later that month with a united, energized, and newly hopeful party behind her.<sup>21</sup> Insofar as the Democrats enjoyed a "convention bounce," it was effectively realized before the convention when Harris replaced Biden on the ticket.

## 5. The Trump-Harris Debate

Trump was clearly unnerved by losing Biden as his foil and adjusted awkwardly to his new opponent. He agreed to debate Harris on the September 10 date previously scheduled for a second debate with Biden. Harris's goal, only partially achieved, was to direct attention to Trump's character and record and away from her past positions and the Biden administration's shortcomings. Maintaining a calm, mocking demeanor, Harris peppered Trump with belittling points that pricked his ego, put him the defensive, and goaded him into the florid mendacity typical of his stump speeches but off putting to people outside the MAGA fold. Her composure contrasted with his angry scowls and furious rants, helping Harris to appear "presidential" before an audience who did not know her well. Majorities in every post-election poll viewed her as the

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<sup>18</sup> Republicans were entirely unmoved with favorable-unfavorable ratios of 7:88 before and 8:89 after she became the candidate; all respondents, the ratio went from 38:53 before (N=80) to 47:48 afterward (N=80);, for more details, see Jacobson, "2024 Elections," figure 4; for sources, see the Appendix.

<sup>19</sup> Harris's campaign received 888,000 donations from individuals that day, 500,000 of them from first time donors in the 2024 election cycle; Stephen Peoples, "Kamala Harris smashes fundraising record with stunning \$81 million haul over 24 hours," ApNews, 22 July 2024, at <https://apnews.com/article/kamala-harris-fundraising-democrat-president-biden-trump-434a55ea1eb29e5da92cc9b1f9cb401f>.

<sup>20</sup> These three questions were asked by 5, 5, and 4 surveys, respectively; sources were ABC/Ipsos, AP NORC, CNN, Ipsos/Reuters, NPR/Marist, Marquette University, *New York Times*/Sienna and Quinnipiac surveys.

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey M. Jones, "Democrats Drive Surge in Election Enthusiasm," Gallup Report, 29 August 2024 at <https://news.gallup.com/poll/649397/democrats-drive-surge-election-enthusiasm.aspx>.



winner, with an average of 56 percent compared to the 33 percent who named Trump, inverting the June debate pattern. Reactions to the second debate were of course also highly partisan, but an average of 17 percent of Republicans thought Harris had been more effective, not far below the share of Democrats who had said Trump bested Biden in the June debate; 56 percent of independents and 94 percent of Democrats also deemed Harris the winner.<sup>22</sup> Again, it was the kind of lopsided outcome that in the past has shifted public opinion in the winner's favor, at least temporarily.

## 6. The Vice Presidential Debate

After that experience Trump refused to debate Harris again, but the two vice presidential candidates, Republican J.D. Vance and Democrat Tim Walz, agreed to hold the final debate of the campaign on October 1. It turned out to be a much more civil affair than either presidential debate. Vance had more to gain from their joint appearance than Walz, and he did so to a modest degree. He was deemed the winner on average in the seven post-debate surveys that asked the question, 46 percent to 41 percent.<sup>23</sup> Vance's favorable-unfavorable ratio improved from 36:47 (N=20) in the month before the debate to 38:45 (N=14) over month after it. Walz's favorability ratio moved to a similar extent in the other direction, from 42:38 before the debate to 40:40 after, although he narrowly remained the better regarded of the two. Shaw's analysis of the effects of vice presidential debates from 1952 through 1992 found that they typically boosted the Democrats' share by about 3 points (the Democrat had usually performed better in these debates), but the effect disappeared in less than a week.<sup>24</sup>

The vice presidential debate was the last prominent campaign event before the election. Two weeks earlier, another effort to assassinate Trump had been foiled, but this event had no significant effect on the electorate or any subset of it that I could detect, so I do not include it the analyses reported in the next section.

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<sup>22</sup> From CNN, Leger, *Economist*/YouGov, Ipsos, IDB Tipp, Yahoo/YouGov, Harrisx, Civiqs, and Echelon polls.

<sup>23</sup> Average from Data for Progress, *Economist* YouGov, CBS/YouGov, Yahoo/YouGov, Politico, CNN, and J.L. Partners/*Daily Mail* polls taken during the week after the debate.

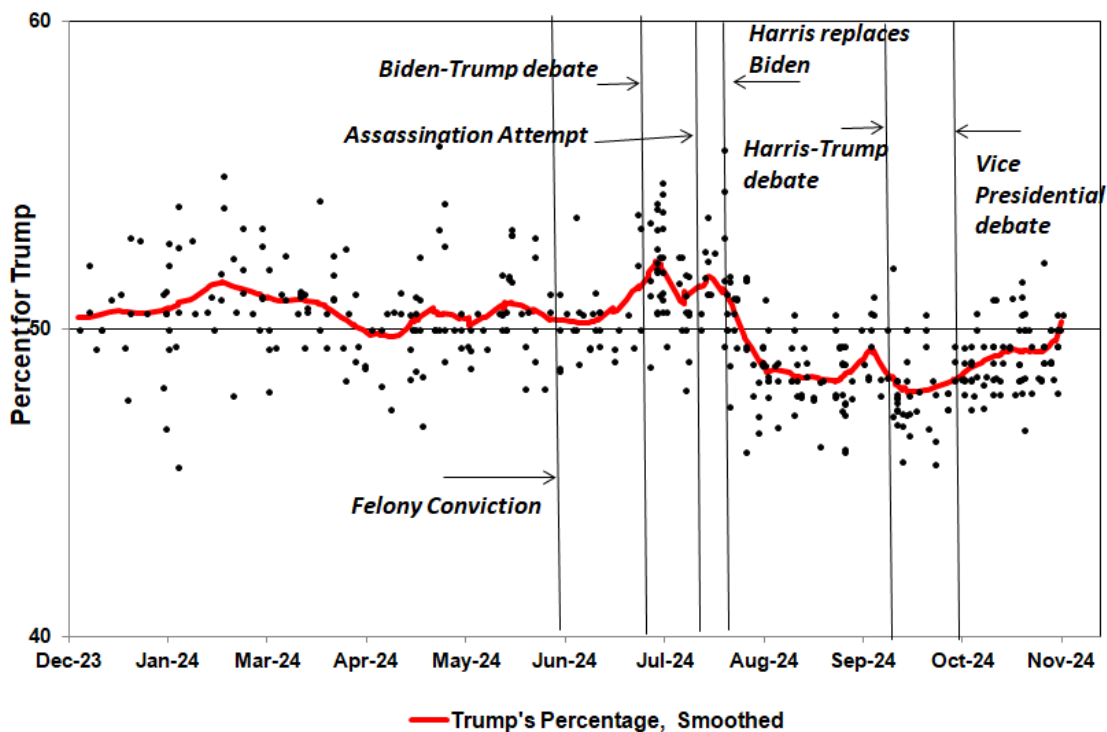
<sup>24</sup> Daron R. Shaw, "A Study of Presidential Campaign Event Effects from 1952 to 1992," *Journal of Politics* 61:2 (May, 1999):387-422.



### The Effects of these Events on Intended Votes

How did this sequence of shocks affect voters' presidential preferences? Figure 1, which displays Trump's share of prospective major party votes in surveys from January through the end of the campaign in November and its lowess-smoothed trend, provides visual evidence that in most cases, aggregate preferences did move in the expected direction following each shock.<sup>25</sup> Trump's conviction had no apparent effect, but his numbers went up after the first debate and assassination attempt and fell when Harris replaced Biden and after the second presidential debate. Trump's share rose after the vice presidential debate, although it is doubtful that rise was the product of Vance's modest edge. I think it is better interpreted as a reassertion of the election's fundamentals, consistent with the finding in literature on campaign effects that events may knock the election's trajectory off the equilibrium shaped by basic political conditions—the state of the economy and assessments of the current administration—but unless they occur

**Figure 1. Donald Trump's Share of Major Party Preferences in 2024 Pre-Election Polls**



<sup>25</sup> See the Appendix for a list of data sources.

shortly before the election day, they do not keep the fundamentals from prevailing.<sup>26</sup> These fundamentals clearly favored Trump in 2024, with most voters unhappy with the direction of the country and the Biden's administration's performance and regarding the inflationary economy and the sharp increase in undocumented immigrants under Biden as the top two election issues.<sup>27</sup> In the end, the Trump's smoothed vote share in these surveys was about where it had been before any of the shocks had landed.

To get a numerical estimate of how the aggregate electorate responded to shocks in 2024, I regressed the 442 observations from pre-election surveys represented in Figure 1 on a set of dummy variables taking values of 0 before and 1 after each event or shock. Although primitive methodologically, the procedure is adequate to my purposes here, providing a simple and straightforward approximation of the size of the electoral shifts that followed each event. As Figure 1 makes abundantly clear, surveys reported widely varying results at any given period during the campaign season. The noisiness of the data reflects sizable house effects as well as how the vote questions was posed—with or without explicit options including non-major party candidates—and how survey reports treated respondents who were uncertain about how they would vote. I therefore estimate the equations with both survey sponsor and question fixed effects. Another issue is that about half of the surveys provide two observations by asking both the major-party candidate and multi-candidate questions. I deal with it by arbitrarily weighting the two observations from the same survey at 0.75, with the rest at 1.0, hence the smaller weighted N's reported in the tables; this adjustment has minimal effects on the substantive results.

The first column in Table 2 lists the estimated effects of the shocks on Trump's share of prospective major party votes (the point entries in Figure 1). The coefficients indicate that every shock except Trump's felony conviction was followed by a statistically significant shift in the expected direction, but with the exception of Harris's replacement of Biden, it was quite small, no more than 1.0 percentage point. Biden's debate disaster and Trump's near martyrdom together added an estimated 1.4 points to Trump's vote share. Harris's replacement of Biden reduced that share by 2.9 points and her superiority in the second debate reduced it another point. Trump regained that point after the vice presidential debate. Overall, Trump lost 1.5 points over

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<sup>26</sup> Erikson and Wiezien, *Timeline of Presidential Elections*; Gary C. Jacobson, "How Do Campaigns Matter?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 18 (May 2015):31-47.

<sup>27</sup> Jacobson, "Elections of 2024."

the period covered and is predicted to end up with 49.1 percent of the vote. The equation does not pick up the swing toward Trump in the last couple of weeks of the campaign visible in Figure 1, where the smoothed trend ends up at 50.2 the day before the election. Trump's actual two-party share was 50.8 percent.

**Table 2. Aggregate Vote Preferences During the 2024 Presidential Campaign (All Respondents)**

|                              | Trump 2-Party % |             | Biden/Harris % |             | Trump %       |             |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
|                              | <u>Coeff.</u>   | <u>S.E.</u> | <u>Coeff.</u>  | <u>S.E.</u> | <u>Coeff.</u> | <u>S.E.</u> |
| Trump convicted (5/30)       | 0.0             | 0.2         | 0.3            | 0.4         | 0.4           | 0.4         |
| Biden debates Trump (6/27)   | 0.7*            | 0.3         | -1.1*          | 0.5         | 0.0           | 0.5         |
| Assassination attempt (7/13) | 0.7†            | 0.4         | -0.8           | 0.6         | 0.4           | 0.6         |
| Harris replaces Biden (7/21) | -2.9***         | 0.3         | 5.7***         | 0.6         | 0.7           | 0.6         |
| Harris debates Trump (9/11)  | -1.0***         | 0.2         | 1.9***         | 0.4         | -0.1          | 0.4         |
| Walz debates Vance (10/1)    | 1.0***          | 0.2         | -0.3           | 0.4         | 1.6***        | 0.4         |
| Constant                     | 50.6***         | 0.1         | 42.7***        | 0.2         | 43.7***       | 0.2         |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>      | .59             |             | .77            |             | .65           |             |
| N (unweighted, weighted)     | 442, 419        |             | 442, 419       |             | 442, 419      |             |

*Note:* Equations are estimated with survey sponsor and question wording fixed effects.

*Source:* 329 surveys from 44 polling organizations listed in the Appendix.

†p<.10 \*p<.05; \*\*\*p<.001.

For the other two equations in Table 2, the dependent variable is the share of reported votes for the Democrat and for Trump as a proportion of all responses reported in the survey (including third party, don't know, and won't vote responses). The results tell an important story: Intentions to vote for Trump remained, in aggregate, remarkably stable and impervious to shocks, while prospective support for either Democrat remained fluid and responsive to them. The first debate did not increase the proportion of respondents opting for Trump, and Harris's replacement of Biden and the second debate did not reduce it. Only the vice presidential debate was followed by a significant increase in support for Trump. This is probably best interpreted as Trump's cashing in on favorable fundamentals among voters who had been on the fence about him. In contrast, the prospective Democratic vote dropped by a significant -1.1 points after the first debate, and rose sharply, by 5.7 points after Harris replaced Biden, and by another 1.9 points after her debate with Trump. With the exception of the vice presidential debate, then, the shocks affected only the Democrat's prospective vote share; the variations shown in Figure 1 and

estimated in the first equation were thus driven almost entirely by shifts in support for the Democratic candidate.

Given the limitations of the data, I did not attempt to estimate the duration of the various shock effects, but a visual examination of Figure 1 suggests that most of them did begin to decay before the next shock, although at varying rates. Erikson and Wlezien make the distinction between the “bumps” and “bounces” produce by campaign events; the former have durable effects on vote intentions, the latter’s effects decay over time.<sup>28</sup> Harris’s replacement of Biden is looks the most like a bump, while the effects of the other shocks look more like bounces. Harris was evidently unable to sustain the bounce from her debate with Trump, and no further shocks, no “October surprise,” came to her rescue.

### **Partisan Differences**

Estimating the equations for partisan subgroups provides additional insight into the diverse effects of the shocks on 2024 vote intentions (Table 3). First, the prospective votes of self-identified independents tended to be much more responsive to shocks than were those of partisans.<sup>29</sup> In the equations estimating Trump’s share of major-party preferences, only one of the coefficients projects as much as a 1.1 point shift in either direction among Democratic or Republican identifiers. Among independents, in contrast, we observe significant 2+ point swings to Trump after the first debate and after attempt on Trump’s life; that violent incident and Trump’s defiant reaction to it evidently affected only the preferences of independents. They then swung sharply to Harris (by an estimated 7.4 points) when she became the Democratic candidate. It is of course no surprise that independents, lacking the anchor of partisanship, would respond much more readily to fresh positive or negative information about the candidates. With their greater openness to change, independents were responsible for a highly disproportionate share of the aggregate variation over time in the reported preferences of the electorate as a whole in 2024.

When the Biden/Harris vote and Trump vote are analyzed separately for partisan subgroups, we again observe that the shocks tended to have a much more pronounced effect on the level of support for the Democratic candidate. Few Democrats said they would vote for

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<sup>28</sup> Erikson and Wlezien, *Timeline of Presidential Elections*, 44-46.

<sup>29</sup> With a few exceptions the independent category in these surveys includes those who lean toward one of the parties.

Trump at any time, and the only coefficient exceeding 1 point has the “wrong” sign, with Democrats *less* inclined to vote for Trump after the first debate. In contrast, their support for the

, Table 3. Aggregate Vote Preferences During the 2024 Presidential Campaign, by Party ID-

|                              | Trump 2-Party % |             | Biden/Harris % |             | Trump %       |             |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
|                              | <u>Coeff.</u>   | <u>S.E.</u> | <u>Coeff.</u>  | <u>S.E.</u> | <u>Coeff.</u> | <u>S.E.</u> |
| <b>Democrats</b>             |                 |             |                |             |               |             |
| Trump convicted (5/30)       | -0.4            | 0.3         | 1.6*           | 0.6         | -0.3          | 0.3         |
| Biden debates Trump 6/27)    | -0.9*           | 0.5         | -0.9           | 0.8         | -1.0*         | 0.5         |
| Assassination attempt (7/13) | 0.2             | 0.6         | -1.5           | 1.0         | -0.0          | 0.5         |
| Harris replaces Biden (7/21) | -0.8            | 0.5         | 7.0***         | 0.9         | -0.3          | 0.5         |
| Harris debates Trump (9/11)  | -0.7†           | 0.4         | 2.1**          | 0.7         | -0.6†         | 0.4         |
| Walz debates Vance (10/1)    | -0.0            | 0.4         | 0.6            | 0.7         | 0.1           | 0.4         |
| Constant                     | 6.7***          | 0.2         | 84.7***        | 0.3         | 6.2***        | 0.1         |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>      | .69             |             | .76            |             | .68           |             |
| N (unweighted, weighted)     | 376, 351        |             | 376, 351       |             | 376, 351      |             |
| <b>Independents</b>          |                 |             |                |             |               |             |
| Trump convicted (5/30)       | -1.2            | 0.7         | 1.0            | 0.9         | -0.6          | 0.9         |
| Biden debates Trump 6/27)    | 2.1*            | 1.0         | -2.6*          | 1.2         | 0.2           | 1.2         |
| Assassination attempt (7/13) | 2.2†            | 1.3         | -1.7           | 1.5         | 1.0           | 1.5         |
| Harris replaces Biden (7/21) | -7.4***         | 1.1         | 9.2***         | 1.3         | -0.2          | 1.3         |
| Harris debates Trump (9/11)  | -0.3            | 0.8         | 2.9**          | 1.0         | 1.6           | 1.0         |
| Walz debates Vance (10/1)    | 0.6             | 0.9         | 0.4            | 1.0         | 1.7†          | 1.0         |
| Constant                     | 53.5***         | 0.3         | 34.3***        | 0.4         | 39.0***       | 0.4         |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>      | .39             |             | .74            |             | .71           |             |
| N (unweighted, weighted)     | 376, 350        |             | 375, 350       |             | 375, 350      |             |
| <b>Republicans</b>           |                 |             |                |             |               |             |
| Trump convicted (5/30)       | 0.2             | 0.3         | -0.2           | 0.3         | 0.5           | 0.5         |
| Biden debates Trump 6/27)    | 0.9*            | 0.4         | -0.8*          | 0.4         | 1.7**         | 0.7         |
| Assassination attempt (7/13) | 0.2             | 0.5         | -0.3           | 0.5         | -0.0          | 0.8         |
| Harris replaces Biden (7/21) | -1.1*           | 0.4         | 1.2**          | 0.4         | 1.1           | 0.7         |
| Harris debates Trump (9/11)  | -0.7*           | 0.3         | 0.7*           | 0.3         | -0.1          | 0.6         |
| Walz debates Vance (10/1)    | 0.3             | 0.4         | -0.2           | 0.3         | 1.3*          | 0.6         |
| Constant                     | 94.4***         | 0.1         | 5.2***         | 0.1         | 87.2***       | 0.2         |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>      | .46             |             | .47            |             | .68           |             |
| N (unweighted, weighted)     | 376, 351        |             | 376, 351       |             | 376, 351      |             |

Note: Equations estimated with survey sponsor and question wording fixed effects.

Source: 329 surveys from 44 polling organizations listed in the Appendix.

†p<.10 \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001.

Democratic candidate increased significantly after all three shocks that favored their side but did not fall significantly after events expected to benefit Trump. The patterns suggest that a fraction of Democratic inclined voters were hesitant to commit to Biden, reflecting doubts about his capacity to win or serve and unhappiness with some aspects of his job performance.<sup>30</sup> Some were evidently moved to support him nonetheless when Trump's felony conviction reminded them of Trump's moral squalor and unfitness to serve. The main surge in support, however, occurred after Harris replaced Trump on the Democratic ticket, a switch greeted by most Democratic voters with enthusiasm, and Harris enjoyed an additional boost after her superior debate performance. According to these equations, over the course of the campaign, Democrats' support for their party's candidate rose from the baseline 87.4 percent to 93.6 percent, while their support for Trump fell from 6.2 percent to 4.1 percent.<sup>31</sup> Measured by major-party preference, Democrats' support for their party's candidate grew from 93.3 to 95.9 percent.

Among Republican voters, changes in aggregate vote intentions for either the Democratic candidate or Trump were quite small. Prospective votes for the Democrat fell significantly after the first debate and rose significantly with Harris's arrival and the second debate, but the largest estimated shift was only 1.2 points. Their inclination to vote for Trump was enhanced by the two debates won by their side but not by any other election-year event. Over the course of the campaign, Republican support for Trump rose from the baseline 87.2 by 4.5 points, to 91.7 percent, while their support for the Democratic candidate scarcely moved (up 0.4 points to 5.6 percent). Measured by the two-party vote, Republican support for Trump barely budged, ending up at 94.2 percent, 0.2 points lower than the pre-conviction baseline.

Among independent voters, the substantial variations over time in Trump's major-party vote were driven almost entirely by shifts in intentions to vote for the Democratic candidate. The intended Trump vote varied little with events; only the 1.7 point shift to Trump after the vice presidential debate approaches statistical significance. In contrast, aggregate independent support for the Democratic candidate responded to both presidential debates and, most strongly, to Harris's replacement of Biden, raising the Democratic vote by an estimated 9.2 points. By

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<sup>30</sup> Gary C. Jacobson, "Joe Biden's Public Standing and its Implications for 2024," prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 4-7, 2024.

<sup>31</sup> Some of this change reflects the decline in the proportion of polls offering the multi-candidate option toward the end of the campaign; in polls without the option, the Democratic vote for their party's candidate grew from 88.4 percent to 94.3 percent over the period; in polls including it, the respective figures were 82.0 percent and 93.7 percent.

2024, independents had developed decidedly negative opinions of the Biden and they seemed especially happy to him go.<sup>32</sup> Among independents in the combined weekly *Economist/YouGov* polls taken during the election year before his withdrawal, for example, Biden's favorable-unfavorable ratio averaged 32:67 (N=14,315) and his approval-disapproval ratio averaged 31:66 (N=14,339). Before his withdrawal, Harris had been at least as unpopular as Biden among independents. But as noted earlier, once she became the candidate, many independents evidently took a second look; her favorability among independents immediately improved by more than a dozen points and her favorable-unfavorable ratio in the *Economist/YouGov* surveys averaged 41:57 for the rest of the campaign, nearly identical to Trump's 42:58 ratio in these surveys. The substantial increase in the share of independents intending to vote Democratic reflects this change. The equation estimates that over the course of the campaign as a growing proportion of independents made up their minds, the independent vote for the Democrat rose a net 9.2 points, from the 34.3 baseline to 43.5 percent, while the vote for Trump rose a net 3.7 points, from 39.0 percent to 42.7 percent. Trump's projected share of the major-party independent vote dropped from 53.5 percent to 49.5.<sup>33</sup>

### A Calcified Electorate?

Returning to the first equation in Table 2 (estimating Trump's share of intended major party votes), what stands out is how small the apparent effects of unprecedented, headline-grabbing events—a candidate's felony conviction, a near assassination on the campaign trail, sharply asymmetrical debate performances—seem to have been. Only Harris's replacement of Biden moved the aggregate needle more than a single percentage point. Unlike in any previous analyses of trends in the intended vote over an election season, the 2024 data actually cover two separate contests—one between Trump and Biden, the other between Trump and Harris. The baseline evidently changed when Harris took over, but before and after, voters' preferences were in aggregate very stable. The voting behavior literature supplies a ready explanation for this stability: increasingly polarized partisanship creating inflexible voting habits, a process aptly termed “calcification” by Sides, Tausanovitch, and Vavreck in their landmark account of the

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<sup>32</sup> In five surveys that asked the question during the week following Biden's exit (NPR/Marist, Ipsos/Reuters, CNN, New York Times/Sienna College and Marquette University polls), an average of 85 percent of independents said they favored the move.

<sup>33</sup> Trump's share of major party votes among independents in the ANES, CES, AP\_NORC, and National Exit Poll averaged 48.4 percent.



2020 election.<sup>34</sup> As voters' political and social identities, ideological leanings, and issue preferences have moved into closer alignment over the last several decades, partisans' political attitudes have become more consistent internally and more distinct and distant from their counterparts in the rival party. Consequently, and egged on by an increasingly fragmented and aggressively partisan information regime, their feelings toward the other side have grown much more negative.<sup>35</sup> Thus Americans now exhibit "less willingness to defect from their party, such as breaking with their party's president or even voting for the opposing party. There is thus less chance for new and even dramatic events to change people's choices at the ballot box."<sup>36</sup>

Partisan rigidity in the face of "new and even dramatic events" is clearly manifest in the 2024 survey data and is reiterated from a slightly different perspective when we examine prospective party loyalty in these surveys. As the first two columns in Table 4 show, both Democrats and Republicans displayed very high levels of party loyalty throughout the campaign. Some events had statistically significant effects on partisan vote intentions, but they were substantively small. The largest shift among Democrats was the (anomalous) 0.9 point increase in loyalty after the Biden's disastrous performance in the first debate. Overall, estimated Democratic loyalty grew from 93.3 to 95.9 percent from May through Election Day. Shocks shifted prospective Republican loyalty at most 1.1 points (downward when Harris replaced Biden) and, as with Democrats, their candidate's inferior debate performance actually increased support for him. Over the period analyzed, Republican loyalty fell 0.3 points to end at 94.4 percent. The major Post-election surveys—the Cooperative Election Study, the National Exit Poll, and the American National Election Study—all reported record levels of party loyalty for their surveys, ranging from 94.6 to 96.8 percent; average loyalty among Democrats was 96.5 percent, among Republicans, 94.8 percent.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> John Sides, Chris Tausanovitch, and Lynn Vavreck, *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Election and the Challenge to American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).

<sup>35</sup> Alan I. Abramowitz and Steven W. Webster, "Negative Partisanship: Why Americans Dislike Parties But Behave Like Rabid Partisans," *Political Psychology* 39 (February 2018): 119-135; Shanto Iyengar and Masha Krupenkin, "Partisanship as Social Identity: Implications for the Study of Party Polarization," *The Forum* 16 (2018:1): 23-45; Gary C. Jacobson, "Partisan Media and Electoral Polarization in 2012: Evidence from the American National Election Study," *American Gridlock: The Sources, Characters and Impact of Polarization*, ed James A. Thurber and Antoine Yoshinaka. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 259-286.

<sup>36</sup> Sides, Tausanovitch, and Vavreck, *Bitter End*, 6.

<sup>37</sup> Brian Schaffner, Marissa Shih, Stephen Ansolabehere, and Jeremy Pope, "Cooperative Election Study Common Content, 2024," <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/X11EP6>. Harvard Dataverse, V4; American National Election Studies. 2025. ANES 2024 Time Series Study Preliminary Release: Combined Pre-Election and Post-Election Data [dataset

**Table 4. Party Loyalty During the 2024 Presidential Campaign**

|                              | Democratic Loyalty |             | Republican Loyalty |            | Independent Vote<br>for Trump |            |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------|
|                              | <u>Coeff.</u>      | <u>S.E.</u> | <u>Coeff</u>       | <u>S.E</u> | <u>Coeff.</u>                 | <u>S.E</u> |
| Trump convicted (5/30)       | 0.4                | 0.3         | 0.2                | 0.3        | -1.2                          | 0.7        |
| Biden debates Trump 6/27)    | 0.9*               | 0.5         | 0.9*               | 0.4        | 2.1*                          | 1.0        |
| Assassination attempt (7/13) | -0.2               | 0.6         | 0.2                | 0.5        | 2.2†                          | 1.2        |
| Harris replaces Biden (7/21) | 0.8                | 0.5         | -1.1*              | 0.4        | -7.4***                       | 1.1        |
| Harris debates Trump (9/11)  | 0.7†               | 0.4         | -0.7*              | 0.3        | -0.3                          | 0.8        |
| Walz debates Vance (10/1)    | -0.0               | 0.4         | 0.3                | 0.4        | 0.6                           | 0.9        |
| Constant                     | 93.3***            | 0.2         | 94.4***            | 0.1        | 53.5***                       | 0.3        |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>      | .69                |             | .46                |            | .39                           |            |
| N (unweighted, weighted)     | 376, 351           |             | 376, 351           |            | 375, 350                      |            |

*Note:* The dependent variable is measured by major party vote preference; the equations estimated with survey sponsor and question wording fixed effects.

*Source:* 329 surveys from 44 polling organizations listed in the Appendix.

†p<.10 \*p<.05; \*\*\*p<.001.

The third column in the table repeats the estimates for independents from Table 3 to underline the point that, with partisans so reluctant to cross party lines, independents were responsible for most of the variation in aggregate voting preferences reported by the electorate as a whole following the campaign's successive shocks.

### **A Digression: Shocks and the Generic Congressional Vote**

One important reason Democratic elites wanted Biden to withdraw was fear that his defeat could bring down the whole party ticket. This fear was entirely justified; federal elections have become highly nationalized affairs, with straight ticket voting reaching 95 percent and district-level House and presidential vote shares correlating at .99 in recent elections.<sup>38</sup> I was thus curious as to whether the election year shocks affected the prospective House vote as reported in generic pre-election polls (asking which party's candidate the respondent would vote for if the election were held today or which party they wanted to control the House after the

and documentation]. April 30, 2025 version. [www.electionstudies.org](http://www.electionstudies.org)); Election 2024: Exit Polls, CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/election/2024/exit-polls/national-results/general/president/>.

<sup>38</sup> Gary C. Jacobson, "The Presidential and Congressional Elections of 2000: A National Referendum on the Trump Administration," *Political Science Quarterly* 136 (Spring, 2021):11-45

election). Table 5 reports the results of regressing the percentage Republican of major-party House preferences on the successive election year shocks. The shocks generally had notably smaller effects on the prospective House vote than on the prospective presidential vote, although except for the Biden-Trump debate, the signs on the coefficients for the entire electorate match those for presidential preferences shown in Table 2. The assassination attempt had a slightly larger effect on the prospective House vote; Harris's replacement of Biden had a slightly smaller one, but Biden's withdrawal did evidently benefit of down-ballot Democrats. On the whole, the House results look like an attenuated echo of the presidential results.

**Table 5. Generic House Vote Choice, 2024 (Percent Voting Republican, Major Party Voters)**

|                              | All           |             | Democrats     |             | Independents  |             | Republicans   |             |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
|                              | <u>Coeff.</u> | <u>S.E.</u> | <u>Coeff.</u> | <u>S.E.</u> | <u>Coeff.</u> | <u>S.E.</u> | <u>Coeff.</u> | <u>S.E.</u> |
| Trump convicted (5/30)       | 0.4           | 0.4         | -0.2          | 0.5         | -1.8          | 1.5         | 0.0           | 0.5         |
| Biden debates Trump 6/27)    | -0.7          | 0.6         | -0.0          | 0.7         | -0.4          | 2.1         | 0.1           | 0.8         |
| Assassination attempt (7/13) | 1.7*          | 0.8         | -0.5          | 1.0         | 3.6           | 3.0         | 0.6           | 1.1         |
| Harris replaces Biden (7/21) | -1.9*         | 0.8         | 0.4           | 0.9         | -5.6†         | 2.9         | -1.1          | 1.0         |
| Harris debates Trump (9/11)  | -0.2          | 0.4         | -0.2          | 0.5         | 1.8           | 1.5         | 0.1           | 0.5         |
| Walz debates Vance (10/1)    | 0.3           | 0.3         | 0.3           | 0.4         | 0.6           | 1.2         | -0.2          | 0.4         |
| Constant                     | 49.6***       | 0.2         | 2.8***        | 0.2         | 52.4***       | 0.6         | 97.2***       | 0.2         |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>      | .25           |             | .61           |             | .08           |             | .30           |             |
| N                            | 107           |             | 95            |             | 95            |             | 95            |             |

*Note:* Equations estimated with survey sponsor fixed effects.

*Source:* Surveys listed in the Appendix

†p<.10; \*p<.05; \*\*\*p<.001.

Again, independents are the predominant source of movement in the polls after each shock, although the estimates of effects are imprecise. The intentions of partisan House voters remained, in aggregate, very stable amidst the turmoil in the presidential race, with none of the shocks having substantively large or statistically significant impact. We would naturally expect a question about a generic House vote to elicit highly partisan responses; without more specifics (such as named candidates), self-identified partisans would have little reason to desert their party. Still, the equations' constants point to exceedingly high levels of party loyalty in the 2024 House elections, and on average, 97.5 percent of Democrats and 97.1 percent of Republicans said they planned to vote for their own side, loyalty rates that were stable over the course of the campaign. Straight ticket voting intentions were also stable and very high, with averages of 96.8 percent of Biden/Harris voters and 97.1 percent of Trump voters also opting for the same party's

House candidate.<sup>39</sup> Post-election surveys reported only slightly lower numbers. In the ANES, the party loyalty rate in House elections was 95.0 percent, straight-ticket voting, 95.3 percent; in the CES, the respective rates were 95.4 percent and 94.9 percent.

### **How Party Loyalty Cushioned the Shocks**

The House data reinforce the idea that potential impact of the dramatic events that shook the American political world in 2024 was blunted by strong partisan priors in the electorate. The limited effect of campaign shocks on partisan voting intentions in 2024 suggests that negative information about their own party's candidate, or positive information about the other party's candidate, even when acknowledge and believed, rarely changes present-day partisan minds. A more detailed look at several of the cases supports this supposition.

For Republicans, the most discordant message was Trump's conviction on 34 felony counts in the Stormy Daniels hush money case. As noted earlier, most Republicans simply refused to believe he was guilty as charged, considered the process unfair, denied that the crime charged was serious, and were willing to vote for a convicted felon if his name was Trump. But even those who held him culpable and considered a felony conviction disqualifying rarely supported Biden. As the entries in Table 6 show, the minorities of Republicans who believed Trump guilty, endorsed the jury's decision, and said that a felon should not be allowed to serve were larger, sometimes much larger, than the tiny fraction who, in the same surveys, said they would vote for Biden. Among those who said they were voting for Trump (the table's second column), between 4 and 19 percent did so despite acknowledging that he had been rightly convicted. Eighteen percent of Republican voter in the ANES study said the jury had made the right decision; two thirds of them nonetheless voted for Trump.<sup>40</sup>

For Democrats, the most discordant information was delivered by Biden's woeful debate performance. After the debate, substantial proportions of Democrats and prospective Biden voters said he was too old, unfit to serve another term, wanted him to drop out, and deemed his mental fitness to be of more concern than Trump's criminal conviction (Table 7). But in these

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<sup>39</sup> Party loyalty is averaged from 96 surveys, ticket splitting, from 83 surveys.

<sup>40</sup> Only 5 percent of Democrats in the ANES study thought the jury had reached the wrong decision, and 69 percent of them voted for Harris anyway; overall, only 1 percent of Democrats both thought the decision was wrong and voted for Trump.

**Table 6. Republicans' and Prospective Trump Voters' Views of Donald Trump and Vote Intentions after his Felony Convictions (Percentages)**

|  | Republicans agree | Trump voters agree | Republicans voting for Democrat |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Economist/YouGov (June 2-4):</i>                    |                   |                    |                                 |
| A felon should not be allowed to serve as president    | 14                | 5                  | 3                               |
| Approve of Trump's conviction                          | 10                | 4                  | 3                               |
| <i>Yahoo! News/YouGov (June 3-6):</i>                  |                   |                    |                                 |
| Hush money verdict was correct                         | 16                | 11                 | 3                               |
| Trump committed a crime                                | 23                | 15                 | 3                               |
| Trump paid hush money                                  | 22                | 19                 | 3                               |
| <i>Economist/YouGov (June 9-11):</i>                   |                   |                    |                                 |
| Approve of jury's decision to convict Trump            | 10                | 6                  | 3                               |
| <i>Fox News (June 14-17):</i>                          |                   |                    |                                 |
| Approve of the verdict                                 | 16                | 15                 | 3                               |
| <i>New York Times/Sienna College (June 28-July 2):</i> |                   |                    |                                 |
| Approve of the verdict                                 | 12                | 10                 | 3                               |
| <i>ANES Time Series</i>                                |                   |                    |                                 |
| "Manhattan jury made the right decision"               | 19                | 13                 | 8                               |

**Table 7. Democrats' and Prospective Biden Voters' Views of Joe Biden and Vote Intentions after the June 27 Debate (Percentages)**

|  | Democrats agree | Biden voters agree | Democrats voting for Trump |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Yahoo! News/YouGov (June 28-July1):</i>   |                 |                    |                            |
| Biden not "up to the challenges facing the U.S."                                       | 20              | 16                 | 4                          |
| Biden not "fit to serve another term"  | 23              | 15                 | 4                          |
| Biden is too old for another term as president   | 40              | 39                 | 4                          |
| <i>New York Times/Sienna College (June 28-July 2):</i>                                 |                 |                    |                            |
| "There should be a different Democratic nominee"                                       | 47              | 47                 | 3                          |
| "Joe Biden is just too old to be an effective president" (agree strongly)              | 26              | 29                 | 3                          |
| <i>Ipsos/Reuters (July 16):</i>  |                 |                    |                            |
| At 81, Biden is too old to work in government  | 58              |                    | 3                          |
| Biden should drop out of the race for president  | 39              |                    | 3                          |
| <i>Echelon Insights ( July 19-21):</i>   |                 |                    |                            |
| "Joe Biden' age and mental fitness" of more concern than "Trump's criminal conviction" | 26              |                    | 6                          |
| Biden should drop out  | 28              |                    | 6                          |
| Biden should resign presidency   | 26              |                    | 6                          |

same surveys, only a tiny share of Democrats said that they planned to defect to Trump, and many who planned to vote for Biden did so despite believing him too old and unfit to serve.

Neither did sympathy for Trump after his near martyrdom in Pennsylvania move Democrats to revise their vote intentions. A YouGov survey taken immediately after the event found that 31 percent of Democrats thought that “Trump deserves sympathy for the attack” and that the same proportion thought “Trump showed courage during the attack,”<sup>41</sup> but the proportion of Democrats viewing him favorably barely changed. On average, 6.7 percent expressed a favorable opinion of him in polls taken during the two weeks before the attack (N=14), 7.9 percent in the two weeks after it (N=14), an insignificant increase ( $p=.371$ ).<sup>42</sup> And as observed in Table 3, whatever sympathy they had for Trump did not alter Democrats’ voting intentions. Nor did it improve his already lofty standing among Republicans by more than a small fraction; averages of 85.4 percent viewed him favorably before, 85.9 percent after in these surveys. As noted earlier, the proportion of Republicans planning to vote for Trump, already very high, did not increase. Some Republicans claimed that the Trump’s response to the assassination attempt assured his victory,<sup>43</sup> but if it did, it was by mobilizing voters who were already on his side and raising his support a couple of points among independents. A second thwarted assassination attempt on September 15 had no significant effect on either partisan opinions of Trump or on the voting intentions. The impact of the shocking attempts on Trump’s life that some observers thought should “transform the campaigns”<sup>44</sup> was severely muted by pre-existing partisan identities and firmly entrenched opinions of him.

Harris’s candidacy following Biden’s withdrawal had a noticeable effect on the vote intentions of Democrats and independents, but her support among Republicans barely budged, even though they cheered Biden’s exit. In five surveys taken over the next week, an average of

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<sup>41</sup> Jamie Ballard and David Montgomery, “What Americans Believe about the Attempted Assassination on Donald Trump, YouGov, July 24, 2024, <https://today.yougov.com/politics/articles/50154-what-americans-believe-about-attempted-assassination-donald-trump-poll>.

<sup>42</sup> Averages from AP NORC, CNN, Data for Progress, Echelon, Fox News, Harris X. Ipsos/Reuters, NPR/Marist College, *New York Times*/Sienna College, Quinnipiac University, Suffolk University, YouGov, Yahoo /YouGov, and *Economist* /YouGov polls.

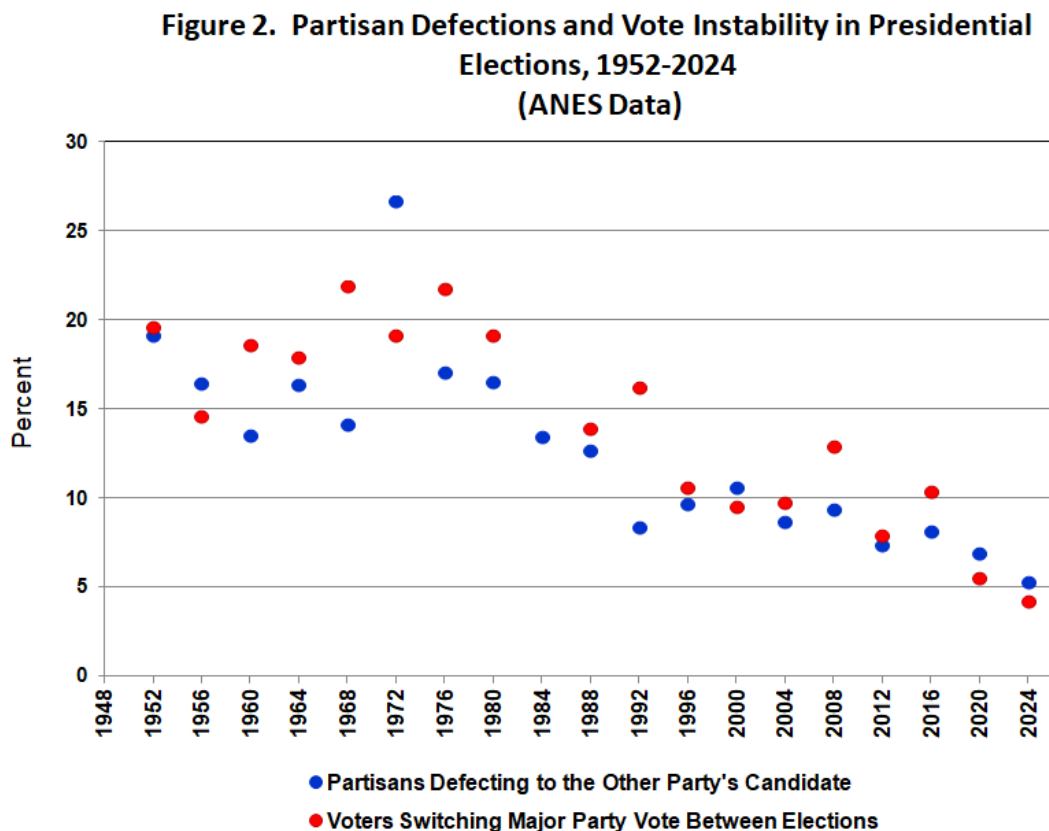
<sup>43</sup> Olivia Beavers and Jordain Carney, “‘He Just Won the Election’: Hill Republicans Predict Trump Rally Shooting will Ease Path to White House.” *Politico*, July 13, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/07/13/hill-republicans-trump-rally-shooting-0016799>.

<sup>44</sup> Jeffrey Basu, “Trump’s Martyr Moment: Assassination Attempt Transforms Campaign,” *Axios*, July 14, 2024, <https://www.axios.com/2024/07/14/trump-assassination-attempt-martyr-rnc>.

82 percent of Republicans favored the move, but only 6 percent in the same surveys said they supported Harris.<sup>45</sup> The Democratic ticket gained little Republican support after the switch because Republicans viewed Harris as negatively as Biden. In the weekly *Economist/YouGov* surveys taken in 2024 through July, 93 percent of Republicans expressed very (83 percent) or somewhat (10 percent) unfavorable opinions of Biden.<sup>46</sup> The comparable figures for Harris in the surveys taken after she became the candidate were virtually identical (92 percent, 83 percent, and 9 percent, respectively).

### Party Loyalty and the Stability of Vote Decisions between Presidential Elections

In sum, the successive shocks favoring one side inspired very few voters on the other side to reconsider their presidential choice in 2024, and in the end, partisan defections reached an all time low, illustrated by Figure 2, which displays reported rates of partisan defection (voting for



<sup>45</sup> See footnote 20 for sources.

<sup>46</sup> N=18,959; the numbers are virtually identical for the job approval question.



the other major party's presidential candidate) and party switching (from one major party's candidate to the other's between elections) in ANES surveys taken since 1952. Party loyalty among presidential voters has been growing for decades but, as noted earlier, reached a new extreme in 2024, when only about 5 percent of party identifiers said they defected to the opposition.

Increasing partisan rigidity is also manifest in the growing stability of voters' choices from one election to the next. Evidence regarding inter-election stability derives mainly from voters' memories of who they voted for last time. The accuracy of such memories was called into serious question when 66 percent of respondents reporting their 1960 vote in the 1964 ANES survey remembered having voted for the martyred John F. Kennedy, who had actually received barely half the vote.<sup>47</sup> Panel studies suggest that 1964 was an aberration, however; voters do have a tendency to misremember their previous presidential vote to align it with their current choice, but this tendency has diminished over time and in recent year has been very small. Table 8 displays the results from the four ANES panel studies that allow comparison of the vote reported in the first wave with the memory of that vote reported in the second wave four years later among major party voters in both elections. Memories are imperfect—and about 80 percent of the errors do match the current vote choice—but this does not seem to be a major problem, especially in this century. Thus the declining share of voters who report changing major party sides between presidential elections displayed in Figure 2 can be taken as real; in 2024, a record low of only 4.2 percent of ANES respondents who vote for president in 2020 and

**Table 8. Actual and Remembered Stability of Presidential Votes (Percent)**

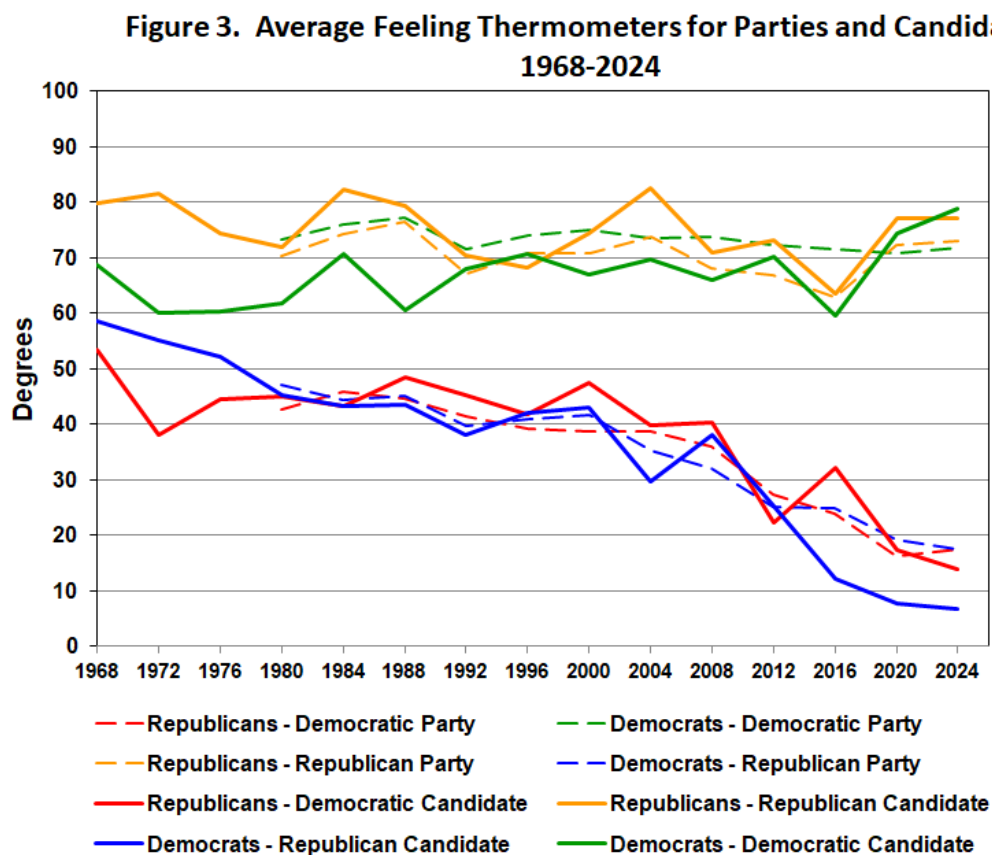
|            | Actual<br>stability | Remembered<br>stability | Memory<br>accuracy | Stability exaggerated by<br>faulty memory |
|------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---|
| ANES Panel |                     |                         |                    |   |
| 1956-1960  | 77.2                | 80.2                    | 89.4               | 3.0                                       |
| 1972-1976  | 75.6                | 78.4                    | 94.1               | 2.9                                       |
| 2000-2004  | 89.3                | 90.4                    | 95.5               | 0.7                                       |
| 2016-2020  | 94.4                | 94.7                    | 98.6               | 0.3                                       |

*Note:* The ANES panel studies are archived at <https://electionstudies.org/data-center/>.

<sup>47</sup> Similarly, in Gallup's main 1964 pre-election election poll, 65 percent remembered voting for Kennedy.

2024 reported switching from Biden to Trump or vice versa.<sup>48</sup>

Two additional charts pinpoint the main explanation, well documented in the literature, for growing partisan rigidity: the deepening dislike of the other party and its presidential candidates.<sup>49</sup> The ANES has asked voters to rate their feelings toward presidential candidates since 1968 and toward the parties since 1980 on a “thermometer” scale of 0 to 100 degrees, where 100 is feeling most warmly and 0 most coldly toward them.<sup>50</sup> As Figure 3 shows, as measured by this scale, average affect toward the respondent’s own party and candidates



<sup>48</sup> The comparable figure from the 2024 CCE is 4.3 percent. Aggregate data also document increasing stability; from 1952 through 1996, the correlation across states between the major-party presidential vote in the current and immediately prior election averaged .59, from 2000 through 2024, .96; in 2020 and 2024, it was .99.

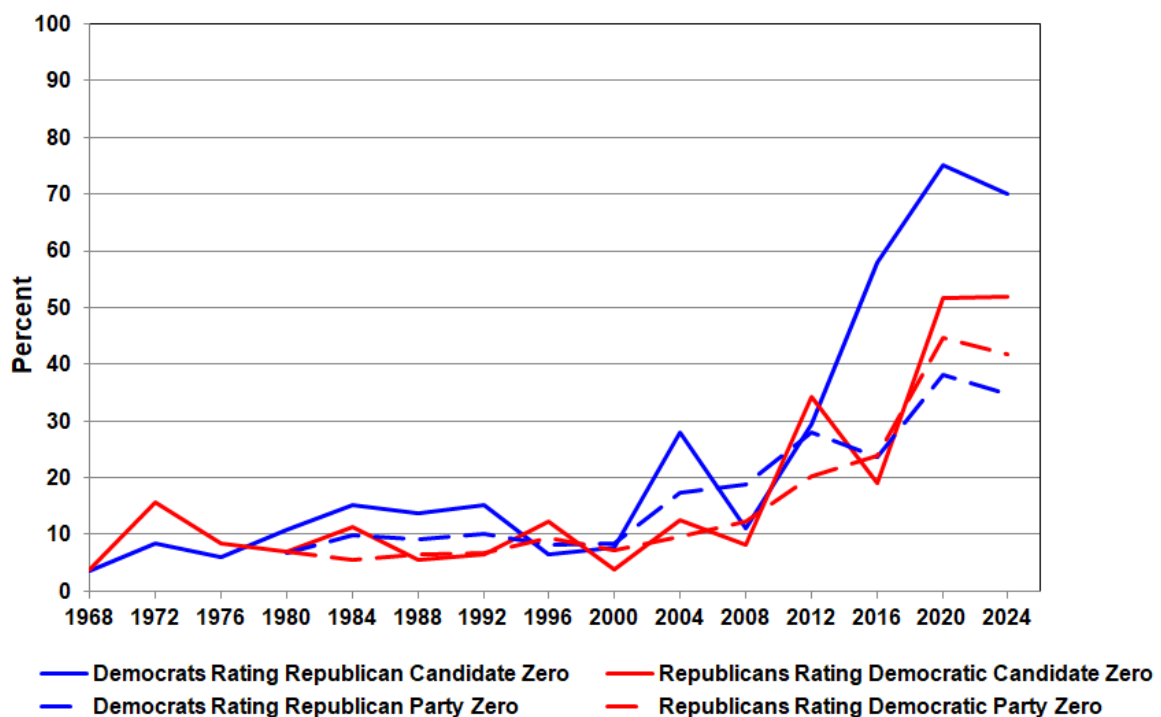
<sup>49</sup> Abramowitz and Webster, “Negative Partisanship”; Iyengar and Krupenkin, “Partisanship as Social Identity”; Shanto Iyengar, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew Leenduusky, Neil Malhotra, and Sean J. Westwood, “The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 22 (2019):129-146; James N. Druckman and Jeremy Levy, “Affective Polarization in the American Public,” *Political Science and Public Policy* 2022, Elgaronline (August 19, 2022):257-270..

<sup>50</sup> For a validation of this measure, see Matthew Tyler, and Shanto Iyengar, “Testing the Robustness of the ANES Feeling Thermometer Indicators of Affective Polarization,” *American Political Science Review* 118 (2024:3):1570-1576.

has remained quite stable over time, averaging 72 degrees for the former and 71 degrees for the latter. In contrast, affect toward the other party and its presidential candidate has plummeted. In 2024, Republican voters on average rated Harris at a frosty 14 degrees, and Democratic voters on average viewed Trump an even icier 7 degrees. The thermometer ratings of the parties by rival party identifiers in 2024 were only a bit warmer, both averaging 18 degrees.

An even more striking sign of sharply increased hostility toward the other party and its presidential candidates is the growing share of voters choosing the most negative rating allowed by the scale, zero degrees, offered by 51 percent of Republicans for Harris and 70 percent of Democrats for Trump (Figure 5). Trump is clearly in a class by himself in turning off the other party's adherents, but Harris received the highest percentage of zero ratings from Republicans of any Democratic candidate. A substantial share of partisans also rated the rival party at zero in 2024. Overall, affective polarization as measured by the difference between thermometer

**Figure 4. Percentage of Voters Rating the Rival Party and its Presidential Candidate at Zero on the 101-Point ANES Feeling Thermometer, 1968-2024**



ratings of one's own side and the other side reached record levels in 2024, with gaps of 68 degrees for the candidates, 55 degrees for the parties.

In light of these data, the limited impact on vote intentions of the dramatic events of 2024 is not at all aberrant. Whatever new negative information about their own side's candidate or positive information about the other side's is delivered by events, shocking or otherwise, the vast majority of today's partisans will not reconsider their presidential preference because supporting the other party's candidate has become unthinkable. At most, shocks strengthen or weaken support for their own party's candidate—a not unimportant consequence, as it may affect turnout decisions, which are crucially important in an era of very closely balanced parties. But for the most part, only voters in the narrow subset who lack firm partisan attachments were open to changing their candidate preferences when shocked with potentially unsettling new information.

### **Implications for Reactions to Trump's Policy Shocks**

If the 2024 election was not lacking political shocks, neither was the first seven months of Trump's second administration, which delivered a barrage of new jolts, hugely disruptive of national and international politics, all deliberately inflicted by Trump and his allies. An incomplete list would include:

1. The mass firing of federal workers and the attempted dismantling of numerous federal agencies and programs by a newly conjured Department of Government Efficiency led by the world's richest man, Elon Musk;<sup>51</sup>
2. The erratic and fitful imposition of tariffs, some potentially very high, on trading partners around the globe, threatening to disrupt supply chains, raise domestic prices, and slow economic growth in the U.S. and worldwide;<sup>52</sup>
3. Pursuing the reactionary dream of undoing more than a half-century of progress in protecting the civil rights of racial and sexual minorities and banning any further

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<sup>51</sup> Jessica Riedl, "The Actual Math Behind DOGE's Cuts," *The Atlantic*, May 8, 2025, <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty-research/policy-topics/democracy-governance/analyzing-doge-actions-one-month-trumps-second>; Elena Shao and Ashley Wu, "The Federal Work Force Cuts So Far, Agency by Agency," *New York Times*, May 12, 2025.

<sup>52</sup> Elisabeth Buchwald, Rachel Wilson, Amy O'Kruk and Eleanor Stubbs, "Timeline: What to Know About Trump's Global Tariff Rollout, CNN, June 6, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/business/tariffs-trump-timeline-dg>; Penn Wharton Budget Model, "The Economic Effects of President Trump's Tariffs," April 10, 2025, <https://budgetmodel.wharton.upenn.edu/issues/2025/4/10/economic-effects-of-president-trumps-tariffs>

attempts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion by anyone, anywhere, public or private;<sup>53</sup>

4. Issuing financial and other threats against prominent universities, law firms and news organizations that the administration deems insufficiently deferential to Trump or MAGA dogma.<sup>54</sup>
5. Drastic cutbacks in funds for scientific and medical research, interrupting numerous ongoing research programs and threatening lasting damage to American science;<sup>55</sup>
6. The indiscriminant arrest, confinement, and expulsion, without any pretense of due process, of undocumented residents regardless of their age, years in the U.S., family ties to citizens, value to the economy, or lack of criminal records;<sup>56</sup>
7. Termination of all federal efforts to understand or address the threat of global climate change while promoting the use of fossil fuels guaranteed to make a dire problem worse;<sup>57</sup>
8. The appointment of grossly unqualified people, among them cranks and conspiracy mongers, to positions of power over health care, law enforcement, and national security;<sup>58</sup>
9. A chaotic approach to foreign affairs that features enmity toward European allies, vacillating support for Ukraine, praise for dictators, disdain for international institutions,

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<sup>53</sup> Zachary B. Wolf, “Trump Turns Civil Rights Upside Down in ‘Biggest Rollback’ Since Reconstruction,” CNN, May 2, 2025. <https://www.cnn.com/2025/05/02/politics/trump-civil-rights-rollback-what-matters>; Nikole Hanna-Jones, “How Trump Upended 60 Years of Civil Rights in Two Months,” *New York Times*, June 27, 2025.

<sup>54</sup> Luke Broadwater, “Trump’s Threats Force Institutions to Choose: Cut a Deal or Fight Back,” *New York Times*, April 16, 2025

<sup>55</sup> Meagan Cantwell, “How the Trump Administration is Dismantling Science in the U.S.” *Science*, April 30 2025, <https://www.science.org/content/article/how-trump-administration-dismantling-science-u-s>.

<sup>56</sup> Ashley Wu and Albert Sun, “How Trump Has Targeted New Groups for Deportation,” *New York Times*, May 30, 2025; Ali Bianco, “A Complete Sea Change’: Trump’s Immigration Crackdown Goes Into Hyperdrive,” *Politico*, June 7, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/06/07/donald-trump-immigration-agenda-ice-00392530>; Myah Ward, “Behind Trump’s Push to Erode Immigrant Due Process Rights,” *Politico*, June 7, 2025. <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/04/28/trump-immigration-100days-due-process-00307435>.

<sup>57</sup> Benjamin Storrow and Jean Chemnick, “How Trump Gutted Climate Policy in 30 Days,” *Politico*, February 22, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/21/trump-gutted-climate-policy-across-federal-government-00204998>; Simone Shah, “Here Are All of Trump’s Major Moves to Dismantle Climate Action,” *Time*, March 5, 2025, <https://time.com/7258269/trump-climate-policies-executive-orders/>.

<sup>58</sup> Doyle McManus, “Trump’s Worst Cabinet Picks Aren’t Just Unqualified, They’re Part of a Bigger Power Grab,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 18, 2024; Ellie Quinlan Houghtaling, “Trump’s Latest Appointments Are Some of the Least Qualified Yet” *The New Republic*, December 2, 2024, <https://newrepublic.com/post/188908/donald-trump-appointments-kushner-boulos>.

and bizarre but menacing proposals to bring Greenland, Panama, Canada, and Gaza under American control;<sup>59</sup>

10. Pardons for the convicted felons who had invaded and trashed the Capitol, assaulting and injuring police, and pardons and commutations for white-collar criminals whose friends and relatives have contributed to Trump's election committees, invested in his family's money-making schemes, and lavished praise on him;<sup>60</sup>
11. Monetizing his presidency by enriching his family and business organization through the sales of a cryptocurrency and other Trump-branded products and through real estate deals with foreign governments;<sup>61</sup>
12. And in all of these and other actions, ignoring constitutional limits, disdaining democratic norms and processes, vilifying uncooperative judges and elected officials, threatening Democratic leaders with prosecution for treason, and spouting endless lies in pursuit of personal aggrandizement, authoritarian powers, and revenge against anyone who has sought to hold him accountable.

How is the public responding to these shocks? Reactions so far are entirely predictable from responses to the shocks that disturbed the 2024 campaign: they have left partisans' views of Trump almost entirely untouched. With the exception of some components of the immigration crackdown, very few of these actions receive majority popular support.<sup>62</sup> Assessments are of course highly polarized along party lines, with large majorities of Republicans consistently in support and large majorities of Democrats consistently in opposition, but even in cases where substantial proportions of Democrats support or Republicans oppose Trump's initiatives, opinions of Trump and his overall job performance remain unperturbed. For

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<sup>59</sup> Ishaan Tharoor, "For Trump, Gaza Becomes Latest Target of U.S. Manifest Destiny," *Washington Post*, February 4, 2025; Cat Zakrzewski and Mariana Alfaro, "Trump's Expansionist Designs Prompt Worried Responses From Foreign Leaders," *Washington Post*, January 12 2025.

<sup>60</sup> Zolan Kanno-Young and Luke Broadwater, "Trump Gives Clemency to More Than Two Dozen, Including Political Allies," *New York Times*, May 30, 2025

<sup>61</sup> The Editorial Board, "A Comprehensive Accounting of Trump's Culture of Corruption," *New York Times*, June 7, 2025; Ed Pilkington, "'This is the Looting of America': Trump and Co's Extraordinary Conflicts of Interest in his Second Term," *The Guardian*, June 16, 2025.

<sup>62</sup> For data on popular opinions on various components of Trump's agenda and actions, see the *Economist/YouGov* polls of January 18-21, 26-28, February 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, March 1-4, 9-11, April 5-8, 13-15, 19-22, 25-28, May 9-12, and July 11-14, 17-21, 28-25, 2025; Quinnipiac University polls January 23-27, February 13-17, March 3-10, and July 10-14, 2025; and Ipsos/Reuters polls January 20-21, February 13-18, and March 11-12, 2025.

example, many Democrats approve of Trump's immigration crackdown, although the proportion varies widely according to its targets and methods; in response to questions without further elaboration, nearly a quarter of Democrats typically support the idea of deporting illegal immigrants wholesale.<sup>63</sup> Similar proportions of Republicans oppose Trump's tariff actions, the mass firing of civil servants, and pardons for the January 6 Capitol invaders. Even larger proportions oppose taking over Canada, Greenland, Panama, and Gaza. Yet Democratic approval of some administration actions and Republican disapproval of others has yet to affect their basic opinions of Trump and his job performance.

This is evident from Figure 5, which displays Trump's job approval ratings overall and by party and issue area taken between April 2—Trump's designated "liberation day"<sup>64</sup>—and mid August 2025.<sup>65</sup> Democrats rating his performance higher on immigration than on any other issue and are even more supportive of some of his border moves, but only 6 percent approve of his overall performance. In contrast, Republicans rate his overall job performance higher than his handling of any domain except immigration; lower support for his tariff actions or managing the economy does not reduce their overall level of approval for his presidency. The result is extreme partisan polarization regarding Trump's overall job performance, an 80-point partisan gap matched historically only during the last year of Trump's first term. His favorability ratings are equally polarized, with averages of 86.2 percent of Republicans and 6.5 percent of Democrats viewing him favorably in surveys taken over the same period (N=50). So far, Trump has retained the approval and affection of Republicans even when they do not particularly like what he is doing, thus keeping Congressional Republicans in line and giving him space to carry out a broadly unpopular agenda without seeing his support collapse.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Average from seven CBS News/YouGov (2), *Economist/YouGov*, AP NORC, Quinnipiac, NPR/Marist, and *Washington Post/Ipsos* polls taken between January and April 2025.

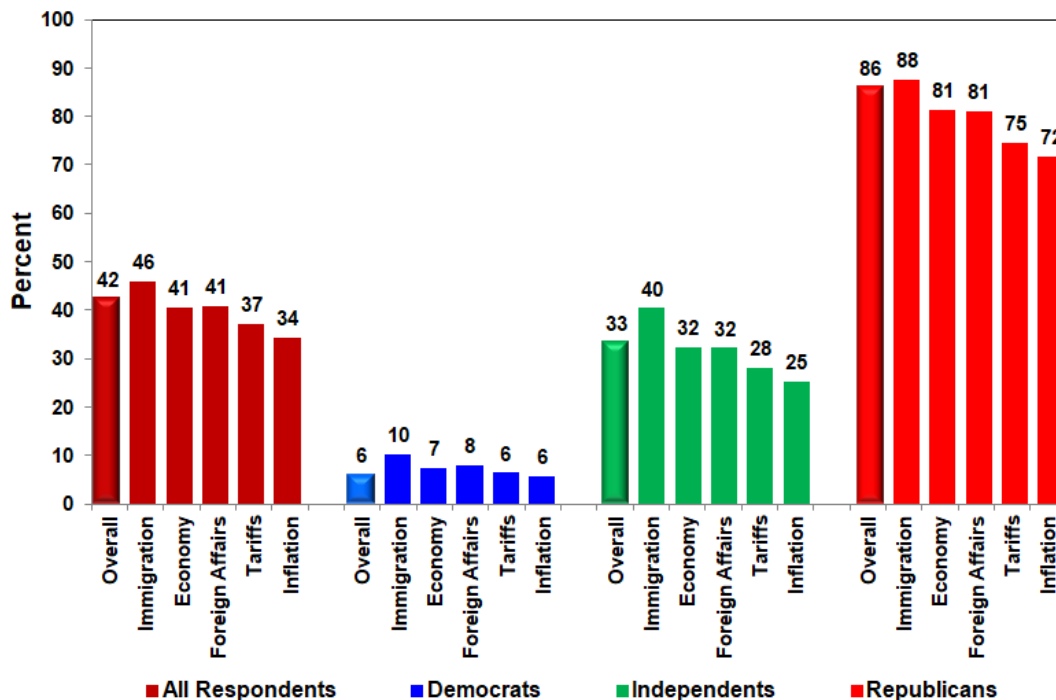
<sup>64</sup> Wyatt Grantham-Philips, "Trump has dubbed April 2 'Liberation Day' for his tariffs. Here's what to expect," AP News, March 31, 2024 <https://apnews.com/article/trump-reciprocal-tariffs-liberation-day-april-2-86639b7b6358af65e2cbad31f8c8ae2b>.

<sup>65</sup> The numbers of surveys averaged for the entries in Figure 5 are 90 for general job approval, 68 for immigration, 72 for the economy, 35 for foreign affairs, 45 for tariffs, and 49 for inflation; from surveys listed in the Appendix.

<sup>66</sup> A telling example is provided by the Republicans' evaluations of Trump's handling of the government's files on Jeffrey Epstein, the pedophile and sex trafficker to the wealthy who apparently killed himself while in jail for his crimes. In seven polls taken in July and August 2025 at the height of the controversy, a average of 32 percent of Republicans disapproved of how Trump or his administration were handling the matter, while only 41 percent approved; nonetheless, from 86 to 90 percent of Republicans in these same polls approved of Trump's overall job performance (Quinnipiac Poll, July 10-14, *Economist/YouGov* polls, July 17-21, July 25-28, and August 1-4, CBS News/YouGov Poll, July 16-18, Ipsos/Reuters Poll July 15-16, and Emerson College Poll July 21-22).



**Figure 5. Average Approval of Donald Trump's Job Performance, by Domain (April - August 2025)**



Reflecting these patterns, early polling on the 2026 House vote again reports very high levels of prospective party loyalty, averaging 96.9 percent for Democrats, 95.6 percent for Republican (N=35). At this point, the threat to Trump and his party for the midterm lies in the reactions of independents. As documented here, independents respond to new information much more readily than partisans and comprise most of the movable voters. So far, independents have been more inclined to oppose than support Trump's initiatives, viewing only some of Trump's immigration moves more favorably than not. As a result, less than a third of independents approve of Trump's handling of any specific issue domain except immigration, and an average of only 33 percent approve of his overall job performance. This is 3 points lower than Trump's average approval rating among independents during his first midterm year (2018), 6 points lower than the average for the final year of his first term (2020) and only 1 point higher than Biden's rating among independents in 2024 before his withdrawal. In the early generic House vote polls, an average of 56.2 percent of independents expressing a preference have opted for the Democrat; in 2024, that average was 49.4 percent. With the parties so evenly balanced and the great

majority of partisans unwilling to cross party lines under almost any provocation, partisan turnout is always crucial and will be so again in 2026. But from the evidence presented here, it will be mainly the reactions of independents that determine how the shocks delivered by Trump’s disruptive, reactionary, and authoritarian projects affect the 2026 midterms.

## APPENDIX: SURVEY SOURCES

Survey data used in this paper were acquired from survey reports and data accessed through the FiveThirtyEight, Silver Bulletin, and Real Clear Politics websites, the Roper Center, news reports, and the survey sponsors’ websites.

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| ABC News/Ipsos                   | Harvard Harris                                  |
| ABC News/ <i>Washington Post</i> | IDB Tipp  |
| American Perspectives Survey     | Ipsos   |
| ANES 2022 Pilot Study            | Ipsos/Reuters                                   |
| AP-NORC                          | Leger   |
| Atlas Intel                      | Marquette University                            |
| Big Village                      | Monmouth University                             |
| CBS News                         | Morning Consult                                 |
| CBS News/YouGov                  | Navigator Research                              |
| Civiqs                           | NBC News/ <i>Wall Street Journal</i>            |
| CNBC                             | <i>New York Times</i> /Sienna                   |
| CNN                              | NPR/Marist College                              |
| Data for Progress                | Pew Research Center                             |
| Echelon Insights                 | Redfield and Wilson                             |
| <i>Economist</i> /YouGov         | Quinnipiac University                           |
| Emerson College                  | Suffolk University                              |
| Fairleigh Dickenson University   | Survey USA                                      |
| Fox News                         | <i>Wall Street Journal</i> /GBAO                |
| Gallup                           | <i>Washington Post</i> / University of Maryland |
| Georgetown University            | <i>Washington Post</i> / Ipsos                  |
| Grinnell College                 | Yahoo News/YouGov                               |
| Harris X                         | YouGov  |