

# [***Biden's young voter problem keeps getting worse***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX8-D851-DY7V-G0BF-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Unrest on [*college campuses*](https://www.cnn.com/business/live-news/university-protests-palestine-04-29-24/index.html) is driven in part by an opposition to an unpopular Democratic president's support for Israel. Add in the fact that Democrats are holding their national convention in Chicago this year, and it's not hard to hear echoes of 1968, when the protest movement collided with mainstream ***politics***.

The pro-Palestinian movement in the US today is a far cry from the anti-war movement of the 1960s, but the angst and frustration of young Americans is clear and growing. It extends far beyond their views of the Middle East, and it is a major threat to President Joe Biden's campaign to keep Donald Trump from returning to the White House.

Trump leads Biden among young people

Young voters are part of Democrats' natural base of support, but Biden is actually 11 percentage points behind Trump among young voters 18-34 in a head-to-head match in a [*CNN poll*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/28/politics/cnn-poll-trump-biden-matchup) conducted by SSRS and released over the weekend.

They want other options

Among all Americans, about half - 47% of registered voters in CNN's poll - said they were satisfied with the candidates they have to choose from for president this year. That figure was dragged down by the fact that just 37%of younger voters said they were satisfied.

When other potential candidates are added in, more than one-fifth of registered voters 18-34 say they support Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in his independent bid. Older voters are less likely to say they support Kennedy.

Most see Biden's presidency as a 'failure'

Biden is under water in every issue asked about in the CNN poll, according to Jennifer Agiesta, CNN's polling director. Agiesta writes:

And his worst issue approval rating - for his handling of the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza - yields 28% approval to 71% disapproval, including an 81% disapproval mark among those younger than 35 and majority disapproval among Democrats (53%).

Asked whether they view Biden's presidency as a success or a failure, 68% of younger Americans said it's a failure, more than other age groups - and despite his high-profile efforts to address other issues of importance to young voters, including [*student debt relief*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/08/politics/biden-student-loan-forgiveness-proposals/index.html).

Important context about polling younger people

Biden fares worse in this poll among young voters than other recent CNN polling, according to Agiesta, although she adds some important context that many young people don't vote and their views are not consistently reflected in polls.

**AGIESTA:** Biden's deficit with voters in that group is driven largely by those who did not vote in 2020. With that group excluded, voters between the ages of 18 and 34 in this poll divide 46% for Biden to 47% for Trump.

Although not all polls release crosstabs or use the same age breaks when reporting results, other recent polling has shown a wide range of results for younger voters in testing a matchup between Trump and Biden, ranging from an 18-point Trump advantage among those younger than 30 in the Fox News poll in mid-March up to a 21-point Biden advantage among those younger than 30 in the Pew Research survey earlier this month.

'They don't like anybody'

The Republican pollster Frank Luntz recently shared video with CNN's Erica Hill of focus groups he conducted with young people in which he asked whether they regard American democracy as strong. Few raised their hands.

"They don't like anybody," Luntz told Hill. "They see Joe Biden as being too old. They see Donald Trump as being corrupt. ... They're looking for a role model, looking for someone to aspire to be. And they don't see it. And that's the frustration."

Unhappy with the direction of the country

It's not just Biden and ***politics*** that are turning off young Americans. Just 38% of younger Americans in CNN's poll said they are satisfied with their personal financial situation. Compare that with the 65% of voters 65 and over who are satisfied.

Harvard University conducts a [*nationwide poll of young Americans*](https://iop.harvard.edu/youth-poll/47th-edition-spring-2024) ages 18-29 each year, and in this year's edition, fewer than 1 in 10 said the nation was headed in the right direction, and 58% said the country was going "off on the wrong track." Four years ago, more than 20% in the Harvard poll said the country was headed in the right direction.

The erosion of optimism among this key group during his presidency will be difficult for Biden and Democrats to correct before Election Day.

Analysis by Zachary B. Wolf, CNN

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