

# [***What Do Young Voters Care About? Not Israel and Gaza, Poll Shows***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWD-FDY1-DY68-1004-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Harvard's annual polling of Americans aged 18-29 reveals insights about what issues they find most important.

**Body**

Younger Americans are far more likely to prioritize bread-and-butter economic issues over causes like climate change and the Israel-Gaza conflict this election year, according to recent polling from Harvard University.

The annual [*Harvard Youth Poll*](https://iop.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/2024-04/240415_Harvard_IOP_Spring_2024_Topline_Final.pdf), run by the Institute of ***Politics*** (IOP) at Harvard's Kennedy School, surveys Americans between the ages of 18- and 29-years-old about the issues that matter most to them. This year's poll found that young people are much closer in their concerns to the broader electorate than media reports may suggest, with inflation, health care and housing topping their list, followed by gun violence.

The survey identified 16 current issues facing the U.S., asking respondents which of two randomly paired issues most concerned them. Inflation came out on top, with 64 percent of respondents rating it as more important than whatever issue it was matched against.

The conflict in the Middle East ranked near the bottom of young Americans' concerns at 15th, with 34 percent of respondents choosing it over whatever randomly selected issue it was matched against. The only issue that ranked lower was student debt, which came in dead last at 26 percent.

Climate change, another issue often cited as a concern for Gen Z and Millennials, ranked just a touch higher than Israel, at 13th—about the same as taxes.

When it came to the war in Gaza, respondents did have strong feelings about how it is being conducted, with 5-to-1 support for a permanent ceasefire. That result was consistent across subgroups, from gender to education to race and ethnicity. Just 18 percent said they supported President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)'s handling of the war.

The results come as a [*current surge*](https://www.newsweek.com/map-shows-pro-palestinian-college-protests-across-us-1894206?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in anti-Israel protest activity on some of the country's most elite campuses has dominated headlines on how the war is being viewed by younger Americans.

The numbers could be a potential bright spot for Biden, who many pundits believe is at risk of [*losing a share of the youth vote*](https://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-2024-election-trump-israel-polling-young-voters-1853769?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in November over his administration's support of Israel and its war against [*Hamas*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hamas?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). But the poll also flashed red warning signs for Biden and his reelection campaign.

The president leads former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) by 13 points, 50 percent-37 percent, among registered voters under 30, a significant margin but one that's also notably lower than four years ago. The same poll conducted in 2020 found Biden edged Trump by a full 30 points among younger registered voters. Among all respondents, regardless of their voting history, Trump cuts Biden's lead to eight points.

The results also show Trump making inroads with some key demographics within the cohort of young people, particularly white voters (Biden +3), and those without a college degree (even). Among non-white young voters, Biden trounces Trump by 43 points.

"As the Biden/Trump rematch takes shape, we see strong levels of engagement and interest in voting among young Americans," John Della Volpe, IOP Polling Director, said in a press release accompanying the results.

"Make no mistake, this is a different youth electorate than we saw in 2020 and 2022, and young voters are motivated by different things. Economic issues are top of mind, housing is a major concern—and the gap between young men's and young women's political preferences is pronounced."

*Newsweek* reached out to the IOP for further comment about the results.

The Harvard Youth Poll surveyed 2,010 young Americans between 18- and 29 years old nationwide between March 14-21. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2383958/berkeley-protests.jpg)

**Graphic**

Berkeley protests

Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

A pro-Palestinian protester uses a bullhorn during a demonstration in front of Sproul Hall on the UC Berkeley campus on April 22, 2024 in Berkeley, California. Recent polling from Harvard suggests the Israel-Hamas war is not among the top issues for young voters this November.

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