

# [***Donald Trump Poised to Be First Republican to Win Popular Vote in 20 Years***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9K-DNG1-DY68-1000-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** In November Donald Trump could become the first Republican to win the popular vote in a presidential election since 2004.

**Body**

Donald Trump could receive a major boost to his political authority if he's selected as the Republican presidential candidate and wins the popular vote in November, according to a prominent political scientist.

Professor James Vike, an expert in United States ***politics*** who teaches at Widener University, told *Newsweek* such a victory would enable Trump to "wield the popular mandate card in hopes of convincing legislators and rivals to consent to presidential wishes."

This follows the publication of an [*NBC*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nbc?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) News poll on Sunday, which put Trump on 47 percent of the vote, against just 42 percent for incumbent [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), with the remainder either backing another candidate or unsure.

*Newsweek* reached out to representatives of [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) for comment via email.

Should this be replicated in November, it would give Trump the popular vote victory over Biden, something he notably failed to secure versus [*Hillary Clinton*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hillary-clinton?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in November 2016 when the Democrat secured nearly three million more votes but lost due to the electoral college. No Republican presidential contender has won the popular vote since 2004 when incumbent President [*George W. Bush*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/george-w.-bush?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) was re-elected with the backing of 50.73 percent of those who cast a ballot.

The NBC News poll found Trump has a 16-point lead over Biden when voters are asked which of the two likely contenders is the most "competent and effective." However, it also found the incumbent has a two-point lead should Trump be convicted of a felony. Both Trump and Biden are by some margin the favorite to run for their respective parties in November.

"While the electoral vote determines the victor, winning the popular vote is often referenced by the victor as an indicator of a mandate from the American people to go forth and pursue policies championed during the campaign," Vike said.

"They wield the popular mandate card in hopes of convincing legislators and rivals to consent to presidential wishes in that early period. This argument seems most compelling when the victor receives a majority, rather than prevailing in a plurality vote."

Dr Mark Shanahan, who teaches American ***politics*** at the University of Surrey, agreed winning the popular vote would give Trump "a stronger mandate" but said this would be a "pipe dream" for the Republican frontrunner despite the NBC News poll.

"Winning the popular vote would need an alliance of young voters, women and minorities to vote for Trump. That's unlikely. A win of a majority of voters would give him a stronger mandate, legitimizing his position as America's choice," Shanahan told *Newsweek*.

"But it is wishful thinking on his part. His core MAGA base gives him 30-35 percent of the vote. Above that, the reality is that he'll be playing the political game and trying to pick off particular groups in key swing states. For someone as divisive as Trump, winning the national vote would mean having to win the big populous states on the east and west coasts. That remains a pipe dream."

Heath Brown, an associate professor of public policy at City University of New York told *Newsweek* it is important not to read too much into any one poll at this stage in the campaign.

"Overall, if Donald Trump and Joe Biden are the two candidates, it's going to be a tight race and winning the popular vote a goal of both candidates," he said.

In January, both Biden and Trump won their party's respective [*caucuses in Iowa*](https://www.newsweek.com/ron-desantis-ends-2024-campaign-endorses-donald-trump-1862599?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and [*primaries in New Hampshire*](https://www.newsweek.com/fact-check-donald-trump-win-record-votes-new-hampshire-1863680?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), making them the overwhelming favorites to carry their party's respective banners in November.

The NBC News poll contradicts a report [*released by Moody's Analytics*](https://www.newsweek.com/2024-election-map-predicts-joe-biden-will-beat-trump-even-bigger-margin-1866042?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in January, which concluded that if Biden and Trump face off in November, the Democratic incumbent will win with a bigger electoral college victory than he got in November 2020.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2347095/donald-trump-first-republican-popular-vote-20years.jpg)

**Graphic**

Donald Trump First Republican Popular Vote 20Years

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