

Nevada Election Survey Project



2022 Primary Election Survey Results

Topline Report

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1 SUMMARY

The Nevada Election Survey Project (NESP) conducts surveys of Nevadans on their political and policy views. In May 2022, researchers from the University of Nevada, Reno conducted a survey of Nevadans ahead of the 2022 Nevada Primary Election. This study is designed to measure Nevadans' views on primary candidates, general election support, attitudes towards political figures and institutions, and views on several policy issues.

This survey was conducted while mail-in ballots began arriving in Nevadan's mailboxes. The survey closed the day before early voting began.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

The entire survey sample consists of two samples. The first is a random sample of people 18 ages and up in Nevada. It consists of 1048 individual responses and has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.5%. The margin of error for subgroups is larger due to smaller sample sizes. By design, 25% of the sampling frame is of Hispanic/Latino voters in the state.

The second sample is a random sample of rural voters in Nevada. Researchers randomly selected 2500 people from the Nevada voter file and sent them a postcard with a link to the survey. We had a response of 3% with 79 complete responses. The summary findings presented here include both samples. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

The survey instrument was developed by researchers Jeremy Gelman and Christina Ladam in spring 2022; the online portion was administered to a panel of Nevadans by the company Lucid between May 17–27, 2022. To generalize to the state of Nevada, we weighted the data based on demographics including age, race/ethnicity, income, education, gender, and location in Nevada (Washoe, Clark or Other). Weight targets were calculated using the American Community Survey (ACS) and the state of Nevada voter file (as of May 5, 2022). We use these weights for all analyses unless otherwise noted. The average time it took a respondent to complete the survey was approximately 10 minutes. The authors can be contacted at nesp@unr.edu.

1.2 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was funded by the University of Nevada, Reno's College of Liberal Arts through the Scholarly and Creative Activities Grant Program as well as the University of Nevada, Reno's Department of Political Science.

2 PRIMARY ELECTION RACES

TABLE 1: “HOW MUCH THOUGHT HAVE YOU GIVEN TO THE UPCOMING JUNE PRIMARY ELECTIONS IN NEVADA?”

	%
None at all	12
A little	24
A moderate amount	29
A lot	16
A great deal	20
<i>Observations</i>	1,105

TABLE 2: “STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION DAY IN NEVADA IS TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 2022. EARLY VOTING FOR THE PRIMARY ELECTION BEGINS SATURDAY, MAY 28 AND RUNS THROUGH FRIDAY, JUNE 10. HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO VOTE IN THESE ELECTIONS?”

	%
Extremely unlikely	10
Somewhat unlikely	8
Neither likely nor unlikely	12
Somewhat likely	24
Extremely likely	46
<i>Observations</i>	1,104

TABLE 3: “IN NEVADA’S PRIMARY ELECTIONS, ONLY THOSE VOTERS REGISTERED WITH A POLITICAL PARTY CAN PARTICIPATE IN THEIR PARTY’S PRIMARY ELECTION. WHICH POLITICAL PARTY’S PRIMARY ELECTION ARE YOU LIKELY TO VOTE IN, OR WILL YOU NOT PARTICIPATE IN A PRIMARY ELECTION?”

	%
The Democratic Party’s Primary	44
The Republican Party’s Primary	35
I won’t participate in a primary election	21
<i>Observations</i>	1,110

2.1 REPUBLICAN GUBERNATORIAL RACE

For respondents who plan to participate in the Republican Party’s primary, we asked questions about the Republican primary elections for Governor and US Senate. These questions were only asked of Nevadans who indicated they would participate in the Republican primary.

TABLE 4: “HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR OF NEVADA?”

Candidate	% Very familiar or Extremely familiar
Joe Lombardo	48
Dean Heller	42
John Lee	20
Joey Gilbert	17
Tom Heck	13
Guy Nohra	10
Barak Zilberberg	10
Fred Simon	9
Amber Whitley	8
Seven Achilles Evans	7
Eddie Hamilton	7
Stan Lusak	7
Edward O’Brien	7
William “Dock” Wells	6
Gary “Radar” Evertsen	5

TABLE 5: “WHICH REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR OF NEVADA DO YOU PLAN ON VOTING FOR IN JUNE’S PRIMARY ELECTION?”

	%
Joe Lombardo	47
Dean Heller	14
Joey Gilbert	12
John Lee	9
Fred Simon	3
Guy Nohra	2
Tom Heck	2
Gary “Radar” Evertsen	2
William “Dock” Wells	2
Stan Lusak	2
Edward O’Brien	2
Barak Zilberberg	1
Amber Whitley	1
Eddie Hamilton	1
Seven Achilles Evans	<1
<i>Observations</i>	368

2.2 REPUBLICAN SENATE RACE

TABLE 6: “HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES FOR US SENATE IN NEVADA?”

Candidate	% Very familiar or Extremely familiar
Adam Laxalt	41
Sam Brown	20
Sharelle Mendenhall	8
Bill Hockstedler	7

TABLE 7: “WHICH REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR US SENATE DO YOU PLAN ON VOTING FOR IN JUNE’S PRIMARY ELECTION?”

	%
Adam Laxalt	57
Sam Brown	31
Sharelle Mendenhall	7
Bill Hockstedler	5
<i>Observations</i>	368

2.3 GOVERNOR TRIAL HEAT POLLS

We asked all respondents a series of questions about November’s general election. These trial heat questions ask respondents who they would vote for in the general election for both Governor and US Senate. We conducted these trial heats for the leading candidates in the Republican party.

TABLE 8: “IF THE NEVADA GOVERNOR’S ELECTION WAS HELD TODAY, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE FOR?”

	%
Steve Sisolak	43
Joe Lombardo	31
Someone else	11
Unsure/Don’t know	16
<i>Observations</i>	1,091

TABLE 9: “IF THE NEVADA GOVERNOR’S ELECTION WAS HELD TODAY, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE FOR?”

	%
Steve Sisolak	44
Dean Heller	21
Someone else	16
Unsure/Don’t know	18
<i>Observations</i>	1,094

TABLE 10: “IF THE NEVADA GOVERNOR’S ELECTION WAS HELD TODAY, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE FOR?”

	%
Steve Sisolak	43
Joey Gilbert	17
Someone else	20
Unsure/Don’t know	19
<i>Observations</i>	1,090

2.4 SENATE TRIAL HEAT POLLS

TABLE 11: “IF THE NEVADA US SENATE ELECTION WAS HELD TODAY, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE FOR?”

	%
Catherine Cortez Masto	48
Adam Laxalt	27
Someone else	11
Unsure/Don’t know	14
<i>Observations</i>	1,098

TABLE 12: “IF THE NEVADA US SENATE ELECTION WAS HELD TODAY, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE FOR?”

	%
Catherine Cortez Masto	47
Sam Brown	24
Someone else	13
Unsure/Don’t know	16
<i>Observations</i>	1,098

3 NEVADA AND THE NATION

In addition to questions about the primary elections, we also asked respondents for their views on various political figures, institutions, and policy issues.

3.1 APPROVAL OF POLITICAL FIGURES AND INSTITUTIONS

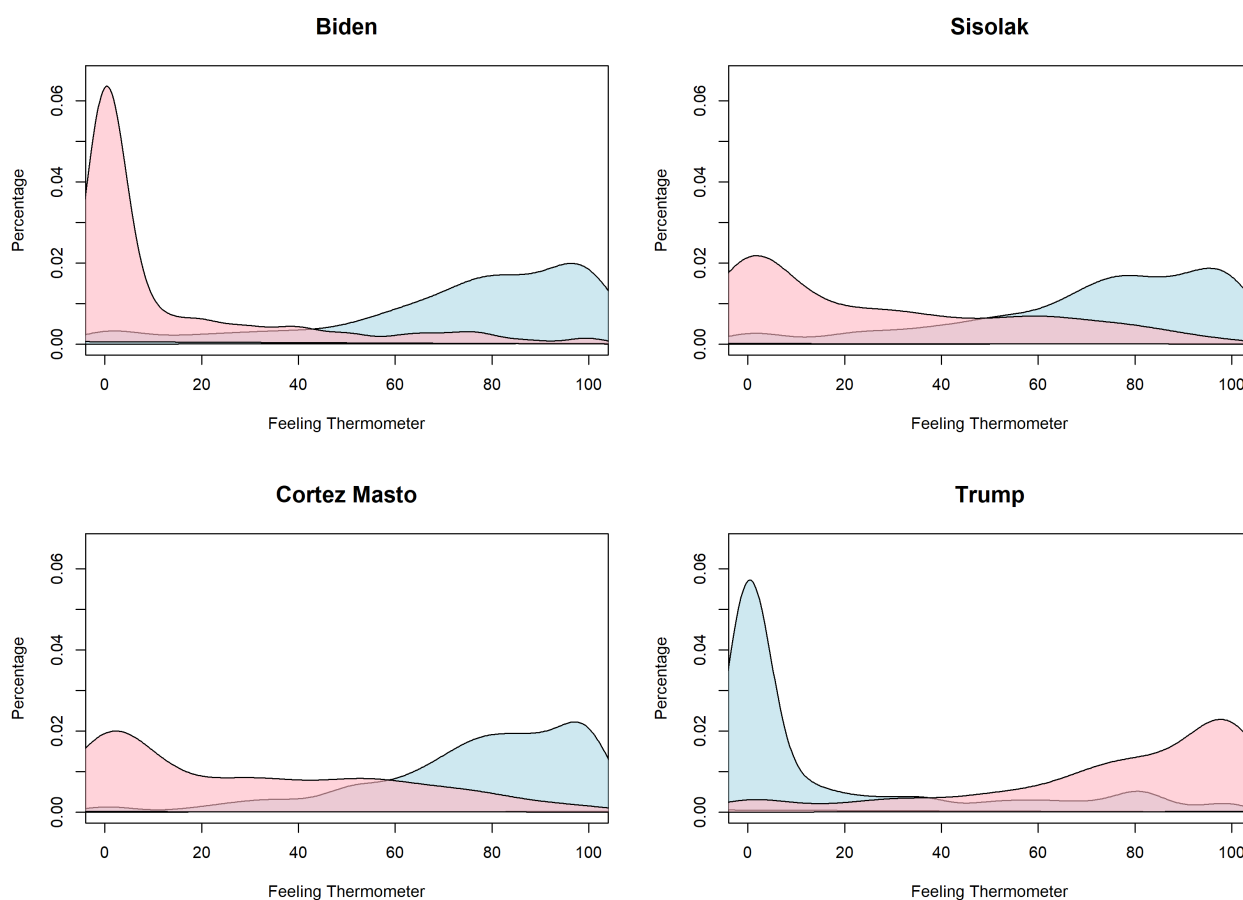
TABLE 13: “HOW MUCH DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE WAY THAT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IS HANDLING THEIR JOB?”

	% Approve/Strongly approve	% Neither Approve/Disapprove
President Joe Biden	26	26
Governor Steve Sisolak	34	31
Senator Catherine Cortez Masto	39	29
Senator Jacky Rosen	45	25

TABLE 14: FEELING THERMOMETER - RESPONDENTS ARE ASKED TO RATE POLITICIANS ON A SCALE BETWEEN 0 AND 100, WHERE 0 MEANS THEY VIEW THE PERSON VERY UNFAVORABLY AND 100 MEANS THEY VIEW THE PERSON VERY FAVORABLY.

Political Figure	All Avg.	Dems Avg.	Reps Avg.	Ind Avg.
Joe Biden	44	71	17	34
Kamala Harris	45	72	15	35
Steve Sisolak	53	72	29	46
Catherine Cortez Masto	56	77	32	44
Donald Trump	42	20	73	39
Mike Pence	43	31	60	41
Ron DeSantis	48	34	69	42
Bernie Sanders	49	72	24	42
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez	47	69	22	33

We graphed the partisan feeling thermometer distributions of Joe Biden, Steve Sisolak, Catherine Cortez Masto, and Donald Trump, which shows how intensely partisans like or dislike a particular politician.

FIGURE 1: PARTISAN FEELING THERMOMETERS**TABLE 15: “HOW MUCH DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE WAY THAT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IS HANDLING ITS JOB?”**

	% Approve/Strongly approve	Neither Approve/Disapprove
United States Congress	21	27
United States Supreme Court	27	34
Nevada State Legislature	33	39
Your local police department	33	47
Your local school board	27	28
Your local election administrator	42	37

TABLE 16: “HOW MUCH DO YOU APPROVE OF THE WAY THAT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING HAS HANDLED THE **COVID-19** PANDEMIC?”

	% Approve/Strongly approve	Neither Approve/Disapprove
President Joe Biden	33	19
Governor Steve Sisolak	34	26
Local officials in your community	32	33
Business owners in your community	43	35
Your neighbors	35	38

3.2 ISSUE IMPORTANCE AND OWNERSHIP

To understand which issues are most important to Nevadans, we created a list of policy topics. Every respondent was presented five randomly-generated pairwise comparisons where they rated one topic as more important than another. Based on over 5,000 comparisons, we calculated which issues are most important to all Nevadans, Democrats, and Republicans, as well as how much more important some topics are than others. This analysis is calculated using a Bradley-Terry model and uses the unweighted data.

In Figure 2, the issues are ordered by importance, with the most important at the top. Each issue’s size corresponds to its relative importance. For example, inflation is 1.15x more important to Nevadans than health care and 1.5x more important than crime.

FIGURE 2: PERCEIVED ISSUE IMPORTANCE

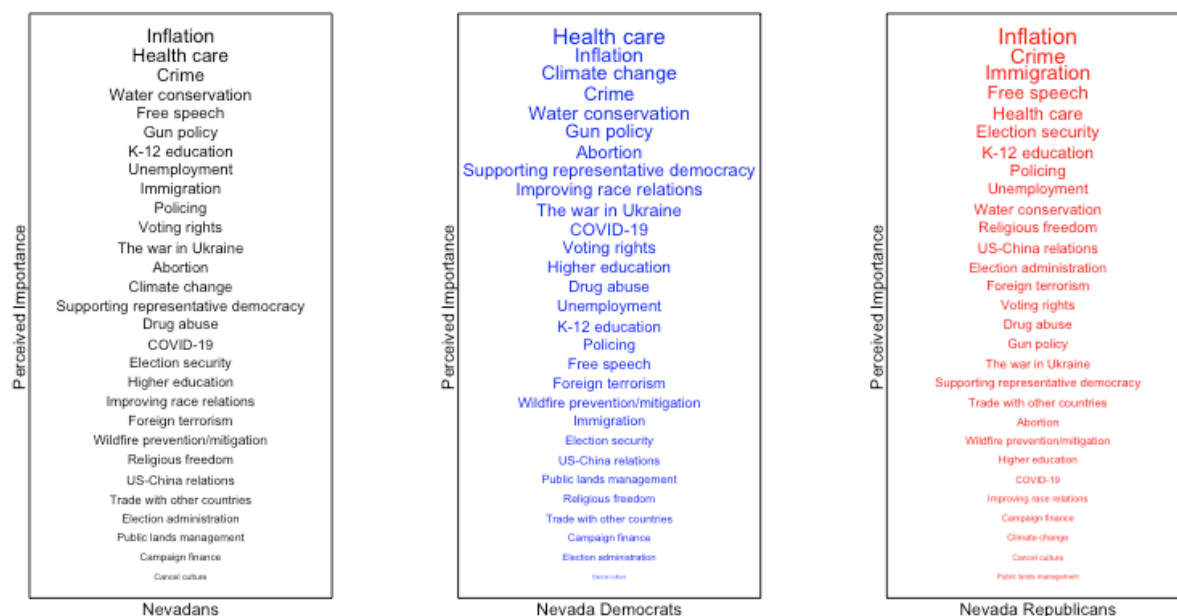


TABLE 17: MOST AND LEAST IMPORTANT ISSUES:

		All Respondents	Democrats	Republicans
Most	1)	Inflation	Health Care	Inflation
	2)	Health care	Inflation	Crime
	3)	Crime	Climate change	Immigration
	4)	Water conservation	Crime	Free speech
	5)	Free speech	Water conservation	Health care
Least	25)	Trade with other countries	Religious freedom	Improving race relations
	26)	Election administration	Trade with other countries	Campaign finance
	27)	Public lands management	Campaign finance	Climate change
	28)	Campaign finance	Election administration	Cancel culture
	29)	Cancel culture	Cancel culture	Public lands management

We also asked respondents which party they trusted more to handle the economy, election administration, education, abortion, and COVID-19.

TABLE 18: “WHICH PARTY DO YOU TRUST TO BETTER HANDLE:”

	% Democratic Party	% Republican Party
the economy	50	50
election administration	56	44
education	56	44
issues related to abortion	63	37
issues related to Covid-19	57	43

4 CURRENT POLITICAL ISSUES

We asked respondents more in-depth questions about abortion and election administration. With the Supreme Court expected to overturn *Roe v. Wade* later this summer, we polled Nevadans about their views on abortion and the state’s current abortion law. We also asked respondents about election administration, in particular whether they believe votes are counted accurately and if President Biden won the 2020 presidential election.

4.1 ABORTION RIGHTS

TABLE 19: “DO YOU THINK ABORTION SHOULD BE:”

	%
legal in all cases	20
legal in most cases	37
illegal in most cases	7
illegal in all cases	36
<i>Observations</i>	1,099

TABLE 20: “FOR THOSE RESPONDING LEGAL/ILLEGAL IN MOST CASES: DO YOU THINK ABORTION SHOULD BE LEGAL OR ILLEGAL IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS?”

	% Legal	% Illegal	% It depends
Pregnancy threatens women’s life or health	80	6	14
Pregnancy result of rape	76	9	15
Baby likely born with severe disabilities or health problems	49	13	38

TABLE 21: “CURRENTLY NEVADA LAW ALLOWS FOR LEGAL ABORTIONS UNTIL 24 WEEKS OF PREGNANCY. IF GIVEN THE CHOICE, WOULD YOU VOTE TO KEEP THE LAW AS IS OR REDUCE THE NUMBER OF WEEKS DURING A PREGNANCY THAT ABORTION IS LEGAL?”

	% Keep As Is	% Reduce # Weeks	% Don't know
Nevadans	53	34	12
Democrats	73	19	9
Republicans	33	56	11
Independents	42	30	28

TABLE 22: “IN THE EVENT THAT SOME STATES ADOPT LAWS THAT MAKE ABORTION ILLEGAL, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS AN APPROPRIATE PENALTY FOR SOMEONE WHO GETS AN ABORTION IN A STATE WHERE IT IS ILLEGAL TO DO SO?”

	%
None	46
Community service	12
Pay a fine	15
Up to 1 year in prison	10
More than 1 year in prison	11
Other	6
<i>Observations</i>	1,105

4.2 ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

TABLE 23: “HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS?”

	% All	% Dem	% Rep	% Ind
Votes in the US are counted fairly and accurately	58	82	34	41
Votes in Nevada are counted fairly and accurately	63	87	37	43
Votes in my county are counted fairly and accurately	63	86	39	46

Percent who responded Agree or Strongly agree.

TABLE 24: “HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION?”

	% All	% Dem	% Rep	% Ind
Biden won enough votes to be elected president	62	92	32	48
Confident votes counted fairly and accurately in Nevada	64	89	37	49
Confident votes counted fairly and accurately throughout US	58	86	30	40

Percent who responded Agree or Strongly agree.