The 2024 University of Akron Bliss Institute Buckeye Poll

Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics
The University of Akron

Executive Summary

The 2024 University of Akron Bliss Institute Buckeye Poll provides an unusual portrait of the attitudes and characteristics of Ohio registered voters (see **About the Survey** below). Key findings include:

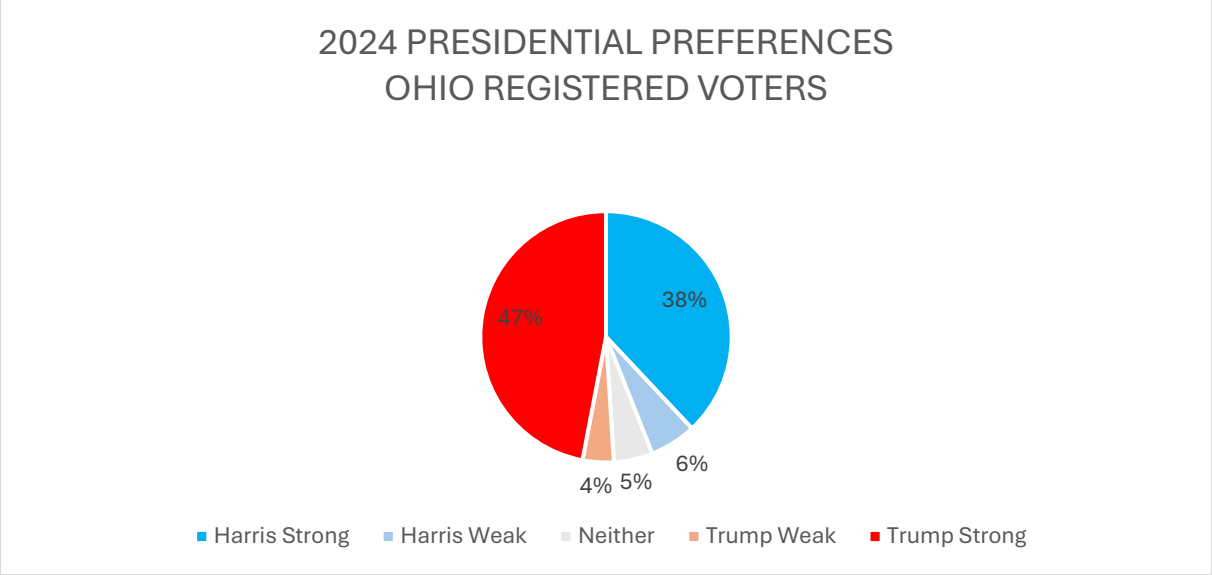
- In the presidential race, Republican Donald Trump leads Democrat Kamala Harris by 7 percentage points, 51 to 44 percent. In the U.S. Senate race, Democrat Sherrod Brown leads Republican Bernie Moreno by 2 percentage points, 46 to 44 percent.
- Ohio voters are strongly polarized by partisanship. In both races, the major party candidates have largely consolidated their respective partisans. Independents on balance favor Trump over Harris but are more evenly divided between Brown and Moreno.
- Ohio voters backing the major party candidates want their side to win control of the White House and the U.S. Senate, but for different reasons: the Democratic voters see their party as having better policies and ideas, but the Republican voters view the Democratic incumbents as having done a poor job in office. Candidate quality does not figure prominently as a reason for party control.
- Ohio voters backing Democratic candidates have more favorable views of the condition of the country than Republican voters who have very negative views.
- Ohio voters are sharply divided on a wide range of policy issues. For example, more than four-fifths of Harris' backers are pro-choice on abortion and favor allowing transgender women to compete in women's sports, while two-thirds of Trump's backers are pro-life on abortion and three-fifths oppose transgender women competing in women's sports. On immigration, seven-in-ten Trump supporters favor tighter restrictions and more than eight-in-ten Harris supporters favor less restrictive approaches.
- Ohio voters have strongly positive views of their candidates and strongly negative views of their rivals. Some concerns, such as Trump's age and legal problems, are concerns for his opponents. Both sides worry about threats to democracy posed by the other side, but Harris' gender is not much of a concern even for Trump supporters.

About the Survey

The 2024 University of Akron Bliss Institute Buckeye Poll was conducted by the Center for Marketing and Opinion Research for the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at The University of Akron. It is a random sample of Ohio registered voters drawn from the State of Ohio's official voter database at intervals in the fall of 2024. The sample was then matched for emails and telephone numbers, which were used to contact the respondents repeatedly between September 12 and October 24, 2024, with an invitation to complete the online survey. The total number of respondents was 1,241, for a margin of error of plus or minus 2.8 percentage points. These data were weighted to match the parameters of the sample. Analysis of the resulting data while the survey was in the field closely parallels the results of other surveys conducted in Ohio during this timeframe.*

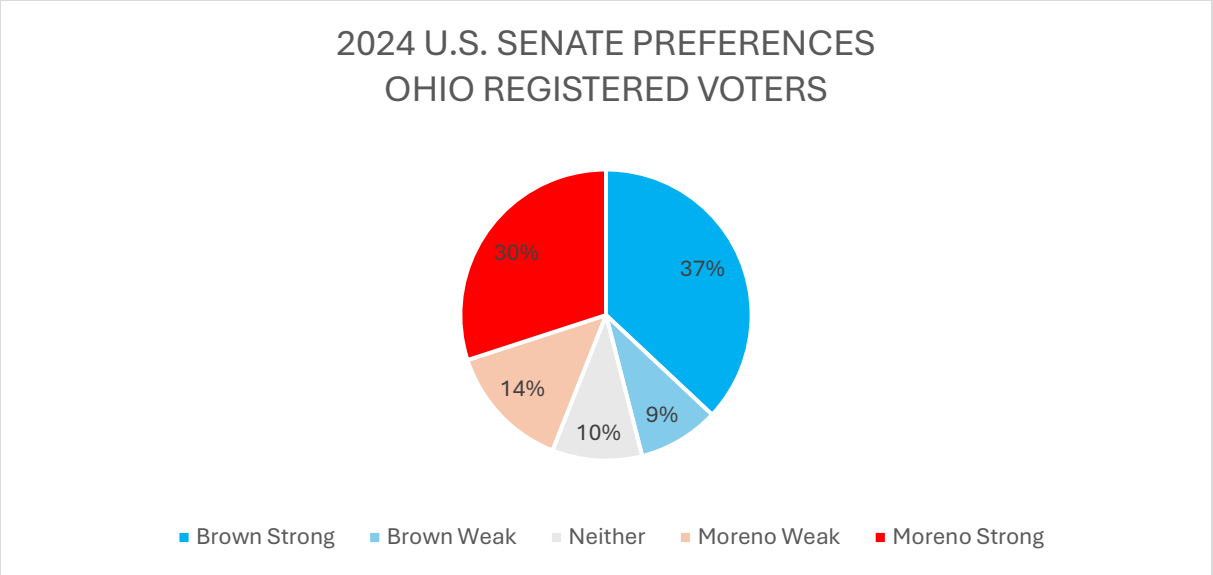
CANDIDATE PREFERENCES AMONG OHIO REGISTERED VOTERS

Among Ohio registered voters, 51 percent prefer Republican Donald Trump for president (including 47 percent with a strong preference and 4 percent with a weak preference), while 44 percent prefer Democrat Kamala Harris (including 38 percent with a strong preference and 6 percent with a weak preference). The remaining 5 percent backed neither of the major party candidates (including supporters of other candidates and those who were undecided).



Meanwhile, 46 percent of Ohio registered voters prefer Democrat Sherrod Brown for the U.S. Senate (including 37 percent with a strong preference and 9 percent with a weak preference), and 44 percent prefer Republican Bernie Moreno (including 30 percent with a strong preference and 14 percent with a weak preference). The remaining 10 percent backed neither of the major party candidates.

* See https://www.realclearpolling.com/polls/senate/general/2024/ohio/brown-vs-moreno



Overall, nearly three-fifths of Ohio registered voters say they are paying a great deal of attention to the presidential campaign (measured as a score of 10 on a ten-point scale). However, more Trump supporters (63 percent) report paying a great deal of attention to the campaign than Harris supporters (55 percent).

ATTENTION TO CAMPAIGNS AND VOTING PREFERENCES

Attention to Presidential Campaign	*% Most Attention*	*Mean Score*
Harris	55%	8.8
Neither	22%	5.9
Trump	63%	8.6
Attention to Senatorial Campaign		
Brown	42%	7.9
Neither	12%	4.9
Moreno	41%	7.7

Overall, less than two-fifths of Ohio registered voters say they are paying a great deal of attention to the senatorial campaign (scoring a 10 on a ten-point scale). However, about the same proportion of Brown (42 percent) and Moreno (41 percent) report paying attention to the campaign.

CANDIDATE PREFERENCES AND PARTISANSHIP

The major party presidential candidates have substantially mobilized their core partisans. For example, 92 percent of Strong Democrats back Harris and 95 percent of Strong Republicans back Trump. Harris does a bit better among less strong Democrats (including Independents who lean Democratic) than Trump does with comparable groups of less strong Republicans. However, Trump does better among Independents (39 to 24 percent).

	PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCES					
PARTY IDENTIFICATION	*Harris Strong*	*Harris Weak*	*Neither*	*Trump Weak*	*Trump Strong*	**Total**
STRONG DEMOCRAT	**92%**	7%	1%	0%	0%	**100%**
DEMOCRAT	71%	16%	1%	1%	10%	**100%**
LEAN DEMOCRAT	86%	11%	2%	0%	1%	**100%**
INDEPENDENT	24%	10%	23%	4%	**39%**	**100%**
LEAN REPUBLICAN	4%	1%	9%	12%	75%	**100%**
REPUBLICAN	5%	4%	2%	13%	76%	**100%**
STRONG REPUBLICAN	2%	1%	0%	2%	**95%**	**100%**
TOTAL	**38%**	**6%**	**5%**	**4%**	**46%**	**100%**

A weaker but similar pattern holds for the major party senatorial candidates, with 85 percent of Strong Democrats backing Brown and 67 percent of Strong Republicans backing Moreno. Brown does better among less strong Democrats than Moreno does among less strong Republicans. Independents are divided between these candidates, with the largest portion (33 percent) supporting neither candidate.

	SENATORIAL PREFERENCES					
PARTY IDENTIFICATION	*Brown Strong*	*Brown Weak*	*Neither*	*Moreno Weak*	*Moreno Strong*	**Total**
STRONG DEMOCRAT	**85%**	11%	3%	1%	0%	**100%**
DEMOCRAT	63%	26%	5%	3%	3%	**100%**
LEAN DEMOCRAT	85%	7%	2%	4%	1%	**100%**
INDEPENDENT	22%	14%	33%	10%	20%	**100%**
LEAN REPUBLICAN	6%	1%	17%	21%	55%	**100%**
REPUBLICAN	5%	4%	17%	29%	44%	**100%**
STRONG REPUBLICAN	6%	2%	1%	24%	**67%**	**100%**
TOTAL	**37%**	**9%**	**10%**	**14%**	**30%**	**100%**

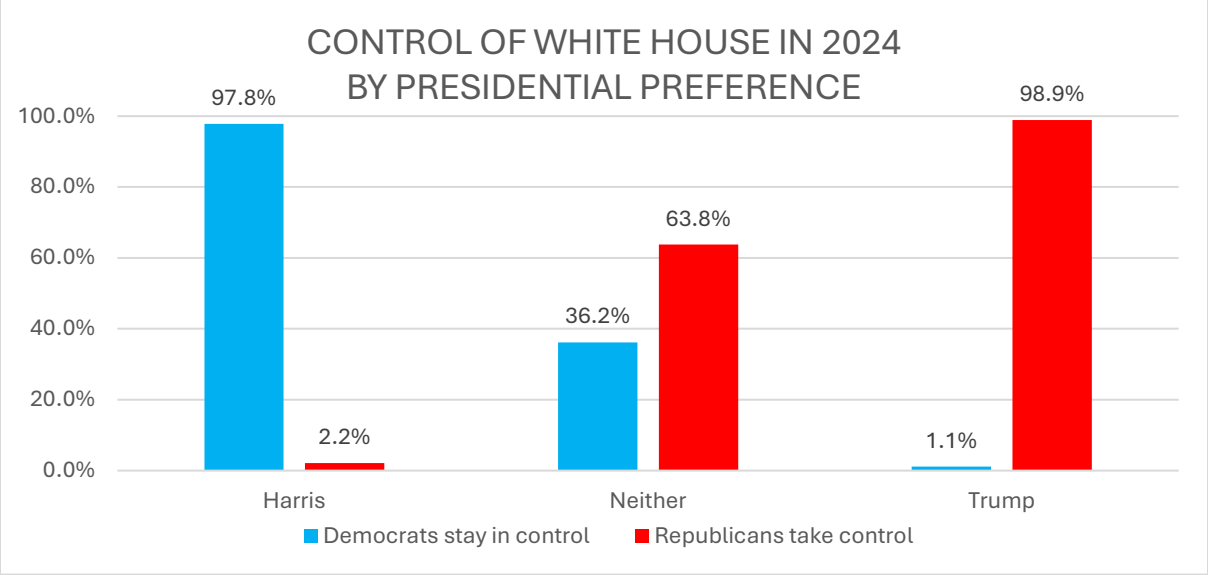
The extent of this partisan polarization is illustrated by the overlap of voter preferences for the major party candidates, where 42 percent of Brown's supporters also support Harris, and 42 percent of Moreno supporters also support Trump.

OVERLAP OF 2024 PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATORIAL PREFERENCES

	% Registered Voters
BROWN AND HARRIS	42%
BROWN, HARRIS UNDECIDED	1%
BROWN AND TRUMP	3%
BROWN UNDECIDED, HARRIS	2%
FULLY UNDECIDED	2%
MORENO UNDECIDED, TRUMP	6%
MORENO AND HARRIS	1%
MORENO, TRUMP UNDECIDED	1%
MORENO AND TRUMP	42%

PARTY CONTROL OF THE WHITE HOUSE AND U.S. SENATE

There are also stark differences between supporters of major party candidates when asked about their preferences for party control of the White House in 2024: *"In the 2020 election, the Democrats won control of the White House. In 2024, would you like to see the Democrats continue to control the White House or would you like to see the Republicans take control of the White House for a change?"*



Not surprisingly, Harris backers (97.8 percent) were nearly unanimous in their preference that the Democrats stay in control of the White House, while the Trump backers (98.9 percent) had a nearly unanimous preference for the Republicans to take control.

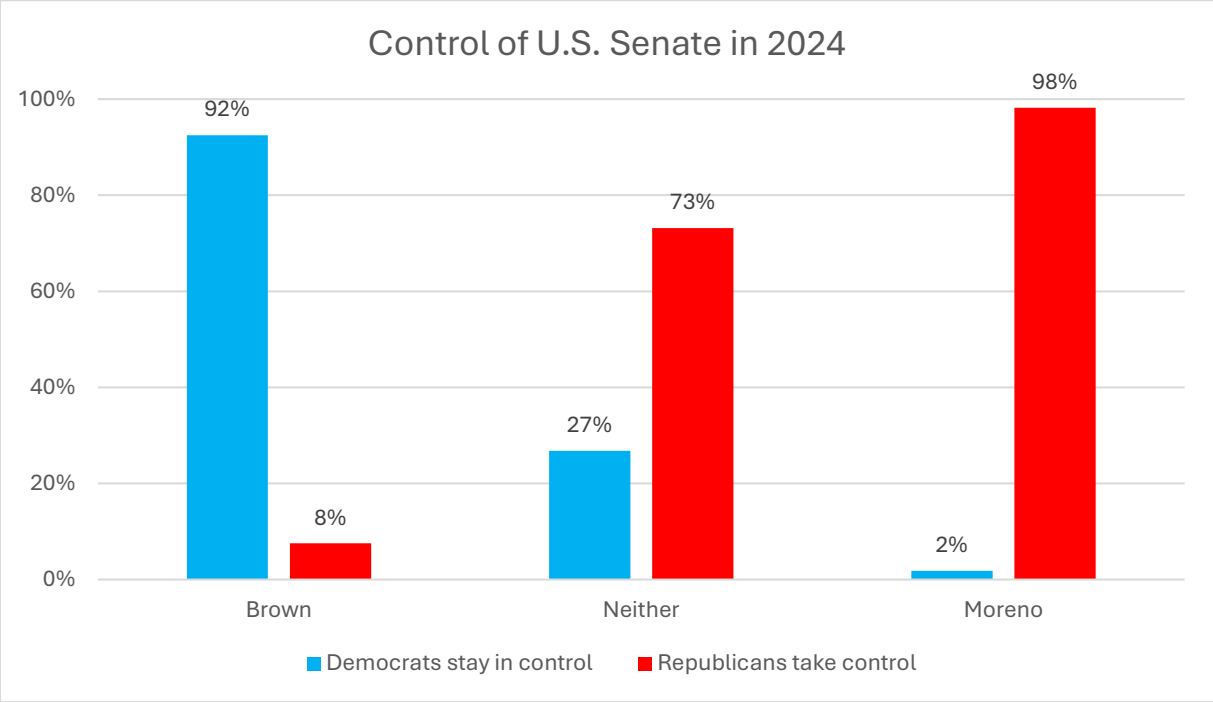
However, supporters of the major candidates have substantially different reasons for their preferences for White House control. On balance, Democratic candidate supporters are more likely to say good policies as a reason for control of the White House and the U.S. Senate, while Republican candidate supporters are more likely to stress poor job performance of Democrats in the White

House and U.S. Senate. Interestingly, the qualities of the major party candidates are less salient to voters than policies or job performance.

For example, more than three-fifths of Harris supporters (63 percent) say, "The Democrats have better policies and ideas than the Republicans," while another 22 percent say, "The Democrats have the best qualified candidates," and the remaining 15 percent say, "The Democrats have done a good job and deserve to stay in office."

In contrast, some three-fifths of Trump supporters (59 percent) say, "the Democrats have done a poor job and deserve to be replaced," while another 32 percent say, "The Republicans have better policies and ideas than the Democrats," and the remaining 9 percent say, "The Republicans have the most qualified candidates."

A similar pattern holds when respondents were asked an analogous question about control of the U.S. Senate: *"In the 2022 election, the Democrats won control of the U.S. Senate. In 2024, would you like to see the Democrats continue to control the U. S. Senate or would you like to see the Republicans take control of the U. S. Senate for a change?"*



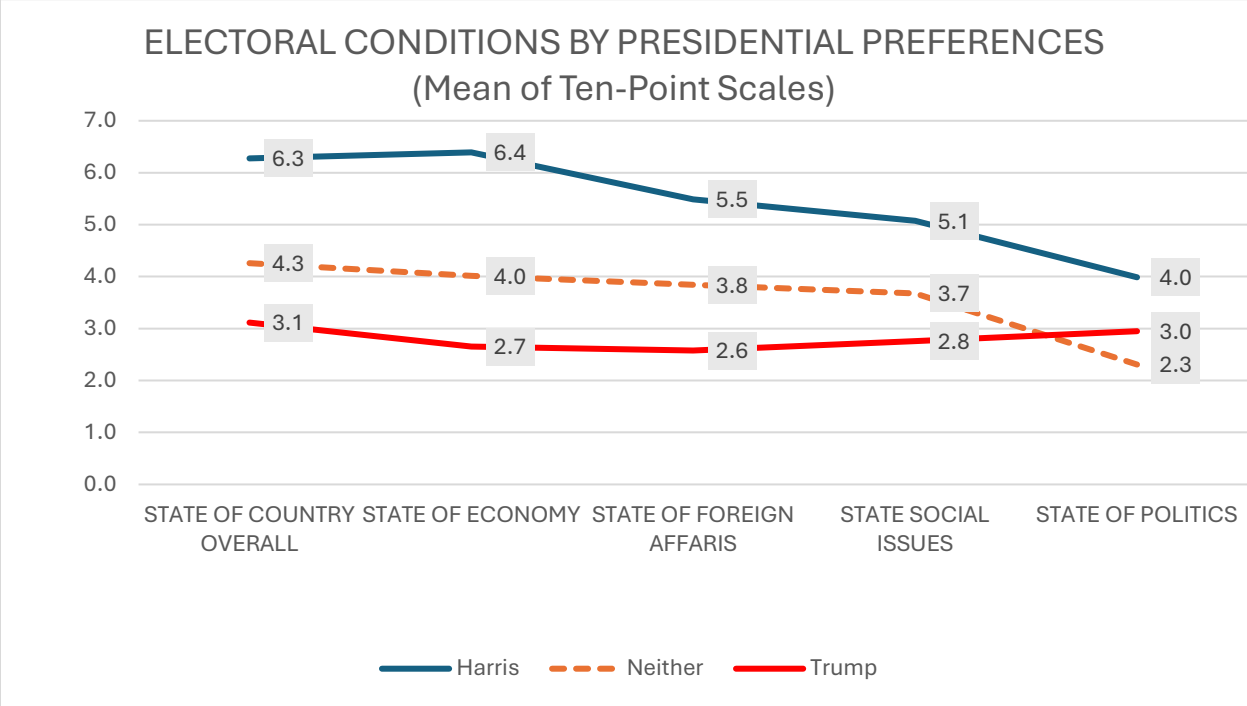
Nearly all Brown supporters (92 percent) say the Democrats should stay in control of the U.S. Senate in 2024, and when asked why, a majority (67 percent) say, "The Democrats have better policies and ideas than Republicans," while another 19 percent say ,"The Democrats have done a good job and deserve to stay in office," and the remaining 14 percent say, "The Democrats have the best qualified candidates."

In contrast, nearly all Moreno backers (98 percent) say the Republicans should take control of the U.S. Senate, and when asked why, 54 percent say, "the Democrats have done a poor job and deserve

to be replaced," another 38 percent say, "The Republicans have better policies and ideas than the Democrats," and 8 percent say, "The Republicans have the most qualified candidates."

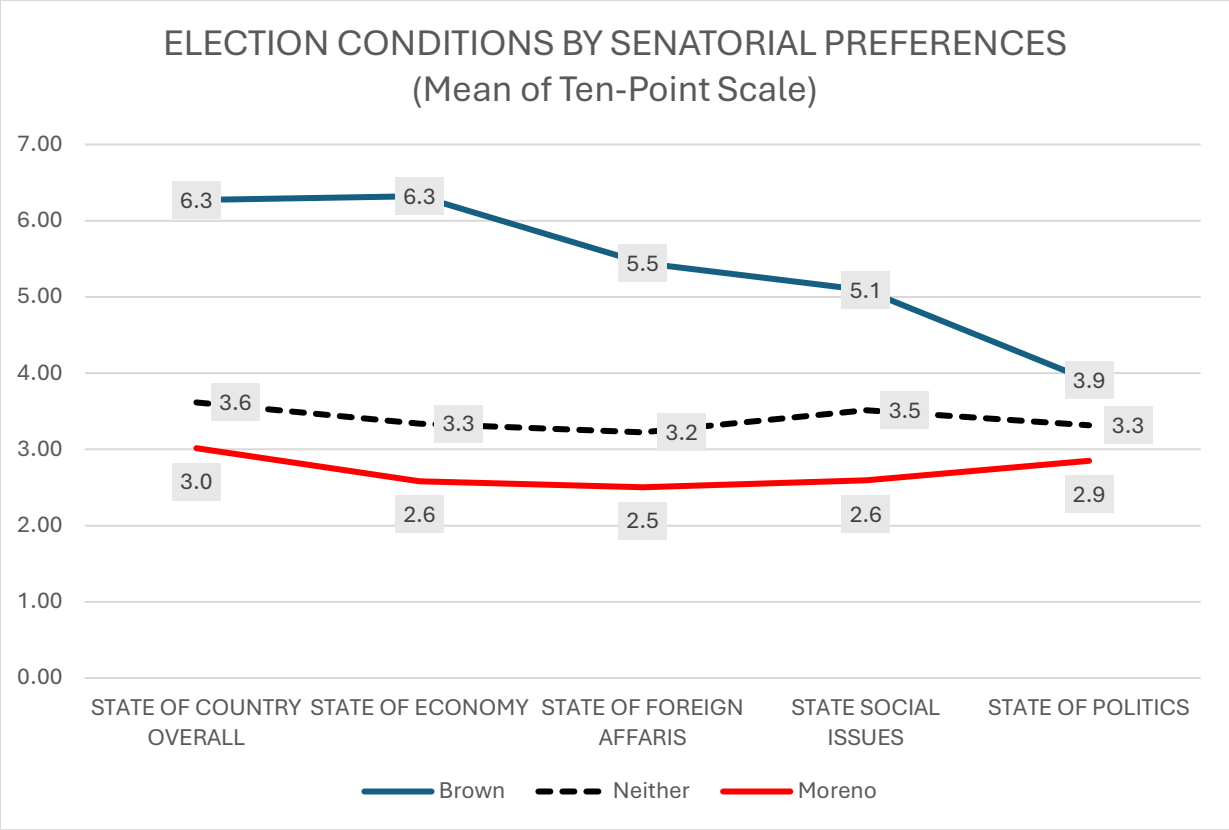
PERCEIVED ELECTORAL CONDITIONS AND CANDIDATE PREFERENCES

Historically, the party in power in Washington D.C. has been rewarded or punished by voters for the perceived conditions during an election. Ohio registered voters are divided on the conditions affecting the 2024 election. For example, the respondents give a mean rating of 4.6 for the overall "state of the country" (measured on a ten-point scale, where 1 is the most negative and 10 the most positive perception). Similar evaluations occur for the "state of the economy" (4.4), "the state of foreign affairs" (3.9), the "state of social issues" (3.8), and the "state of politics" (3.3).



Underlying these evaluations are substantial differences among supporters of the major presidential candidates. Harris supporters have substantially higher mean scores than Trump supporters. For example, Harris backers give the state of the country a mean rating of 6.3 compared to 3.1 by Trump backers. Similar differences between the Harris and Trump supporters occur on the economy (6.4 to 2.7), foreign policy (5.5 to 2.6), and social issues (5.1 to 2.8). An exception to these patterns is for the state of politics, where the most negative evaluations occur for all three groups—and especially those registered voters who support neither major party candidate.

A very similar pattern occurs among supporters of the major party senatorial candidates. Brown backers have a more positive overall evaluation of the state of the country than Moreno backers (6.3 to 3.0). Comparable differences also occur on the economy (6.3 to 2.6), foreign policy (5.5 to 2.5), social issues (5.1 to 2.6), and politics (3.9 to 2.9).

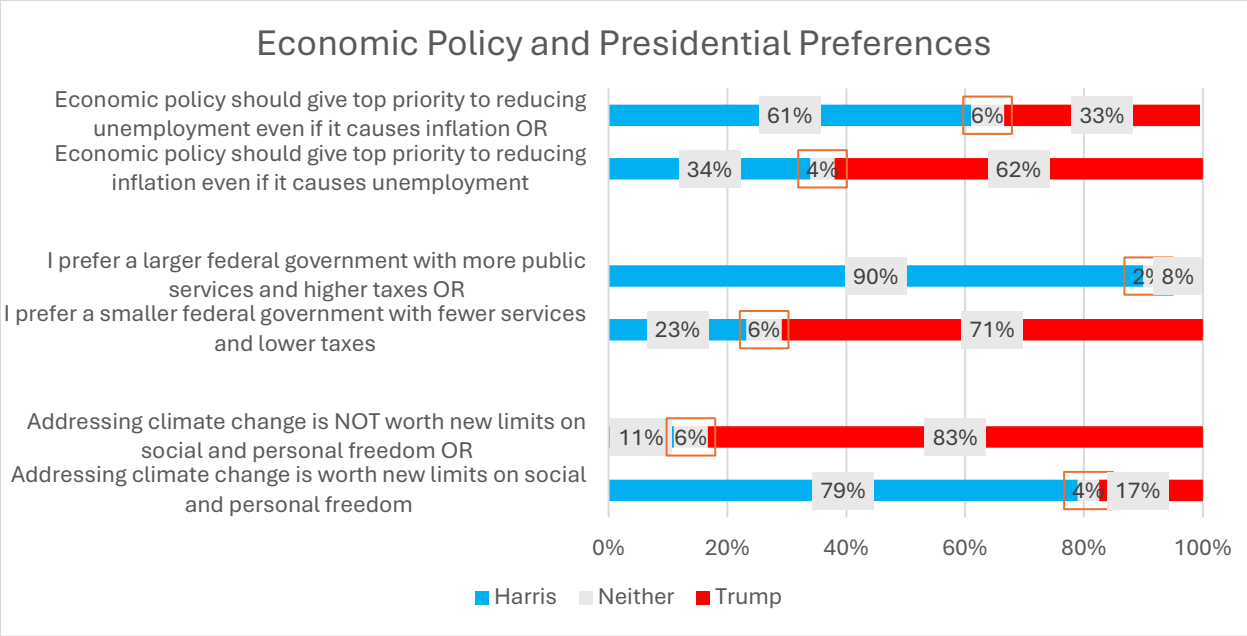


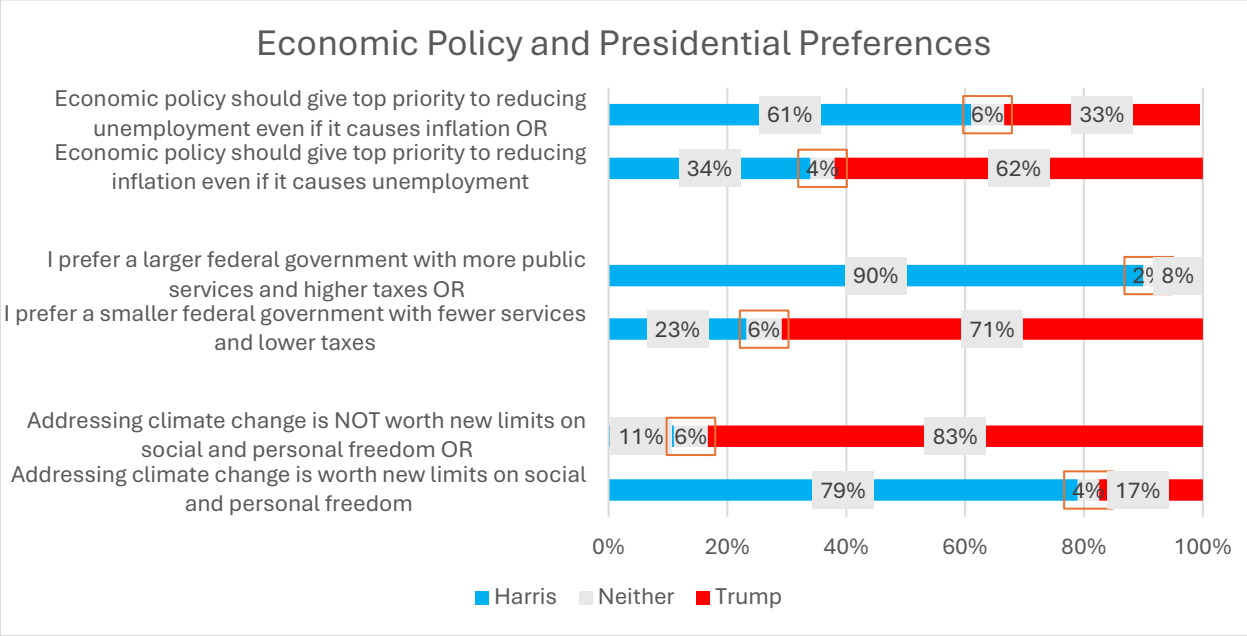
CANDIDATE PREFERENCES AND POLICY ISSUES

Typically, candidates take positions on public policy issues to attract support among voters. Ohio registered voters are divided on many of the issues raised in 2024, especially in the presidential campaign, and include a mix of economic, foreign policy, nationalism, and social issues. On most of these issues, supporters of the major party senatorial candidates have very similar patterns.

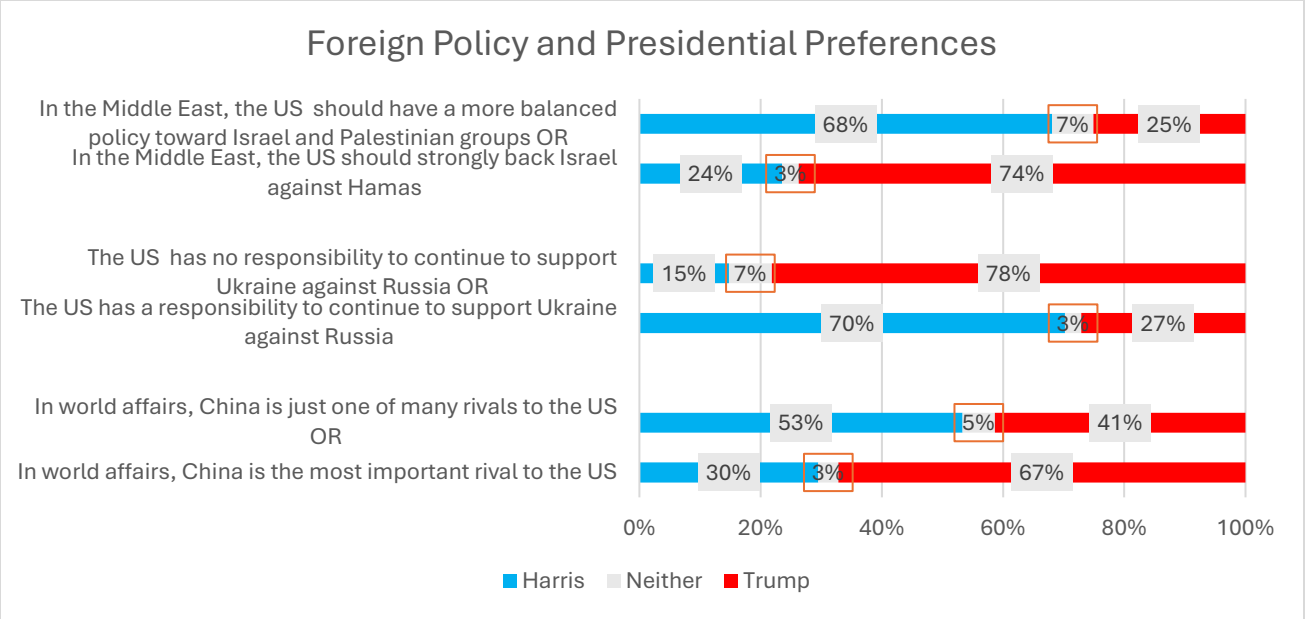
On economic issues, the supporters of the major party presidential candidates are on opposite sides of the traditional trade-off between unemployment and inflation, with the Harris backers giving priority to reducing unemployment (61%) and the Trump backers giving priority to reducing inflation (62 percent).

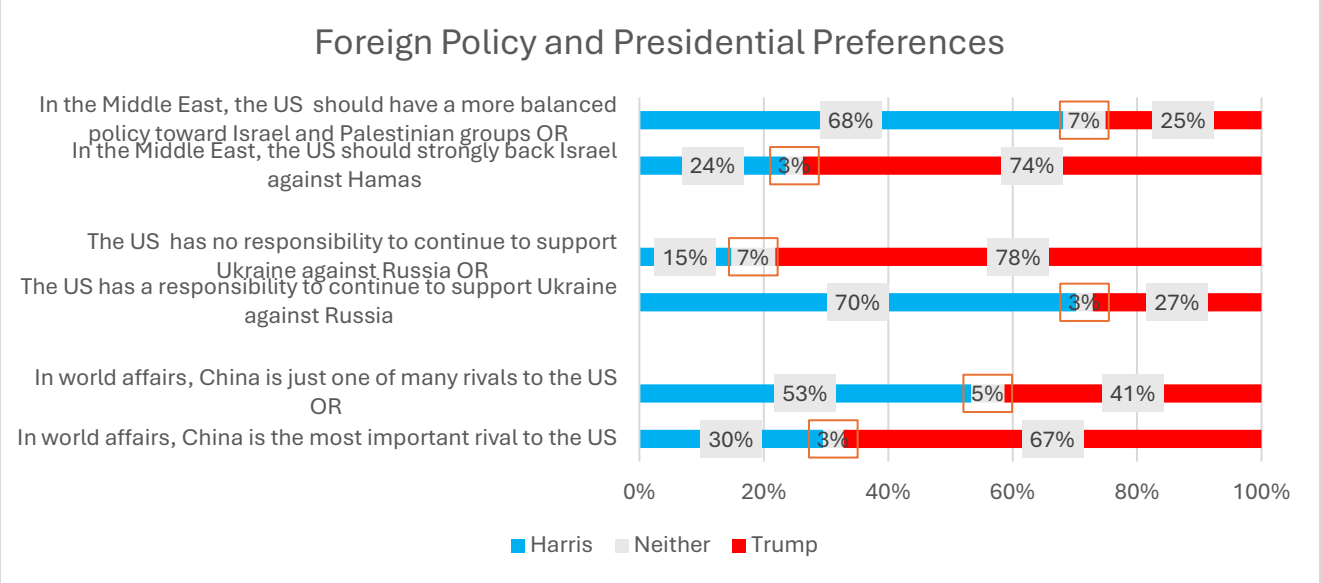
The two candidates' supporters are much further apart on the perennial trade-off between public services and taxes, with the Harris backers favoring public services (90%) and the Trump backers favoring lower taxes (71 percent). There is also a deep division over the relatively new issue of climate change, with Harris supporters agreeing that addressing climate change is worth the costs (79 percent), while the Trump supporters disagree (83 percent).





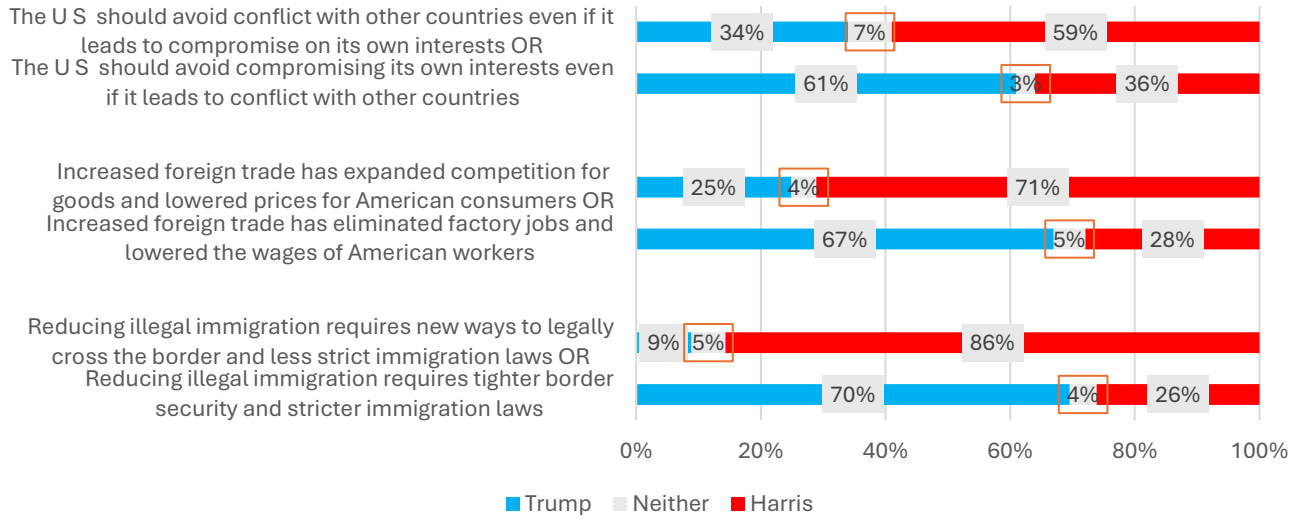
There are also sharp divisions on foreign policy issues among the supporters of the major party presidential candidates. For example, Harris backers favor a more balanced approach in the Middle East (68 percent), while Trump backers favor strong support for Israel (74 percent). Harris backers also favor continued support for Ukraine against Russia (70 percent) and Trump backers are skeptical of continued support for Ukraine (78 percent). Finally, Harris backers see China as just one of many rivals to the United States in foreign affairs (53 percent) and Trump backers see China as the most important rival to the U.S. (67 percent).



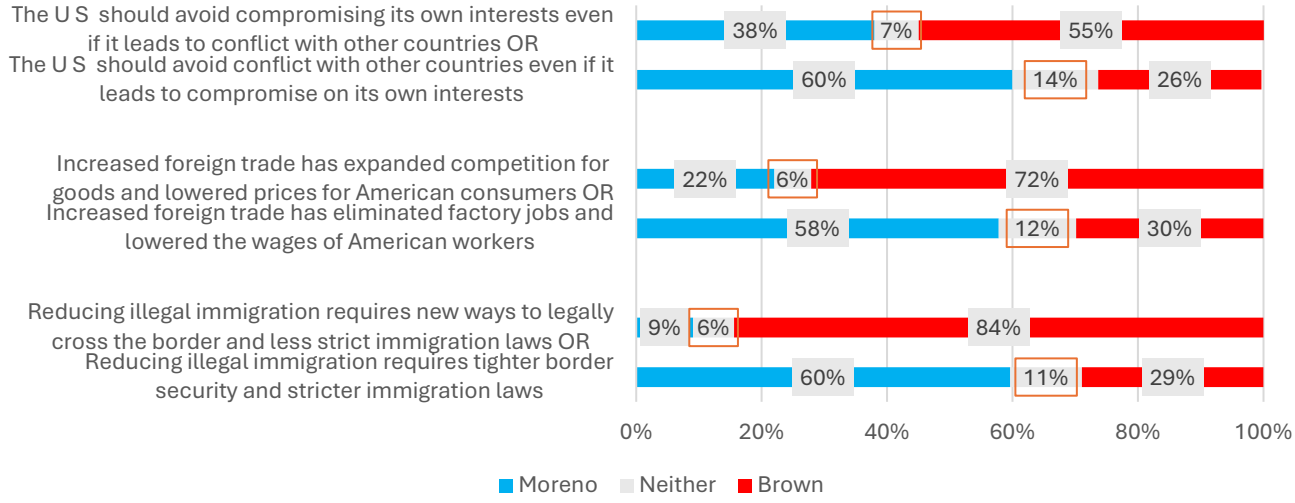


Ohio voters are also divided on nationalism issues. For example. Trump backers favor pursuing American interests even if it leads to conflict with other countries (61 percent), while Harris backers favor avoiding conflict with other countries even if it means compromising American interests (59 percent). Meanwhile, Trump backers see foreign trade in negative terms (67 percent) while Harris backers see foreign trade in positive terms (71 percent). And Trump backers favor restrictions on the border (70 percent) while Harris backers favor fewer border restrictions (86 percent).

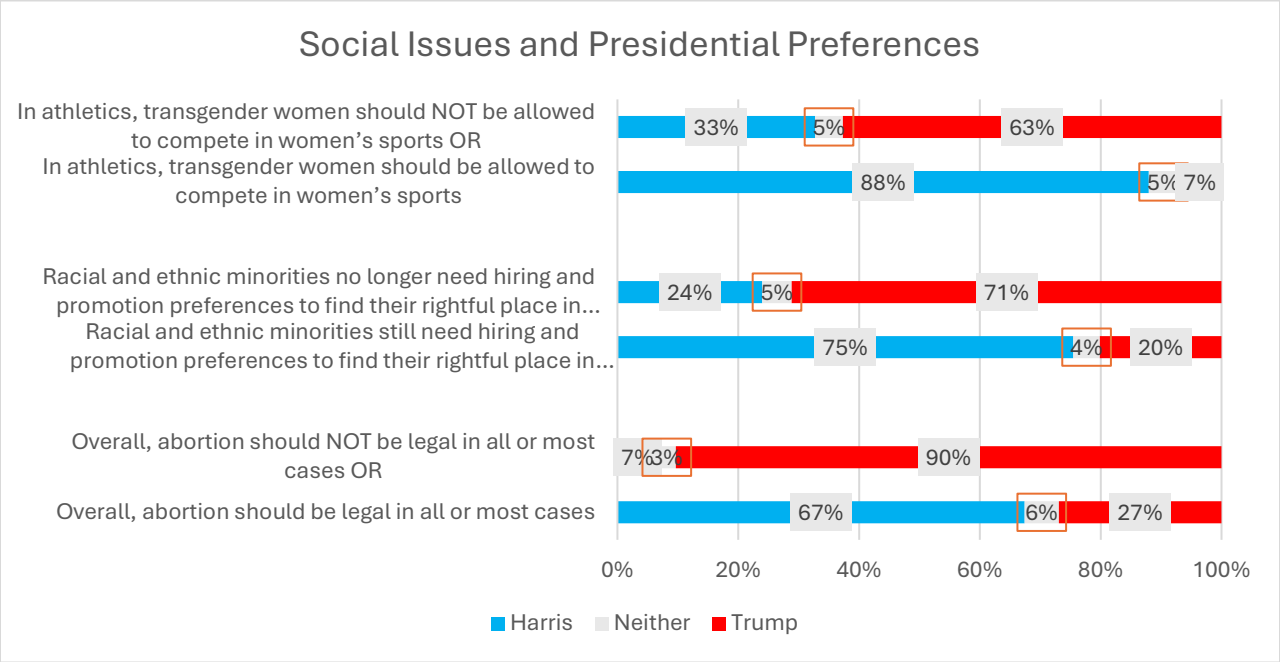
Nationalism Issues and Presidential Preferences

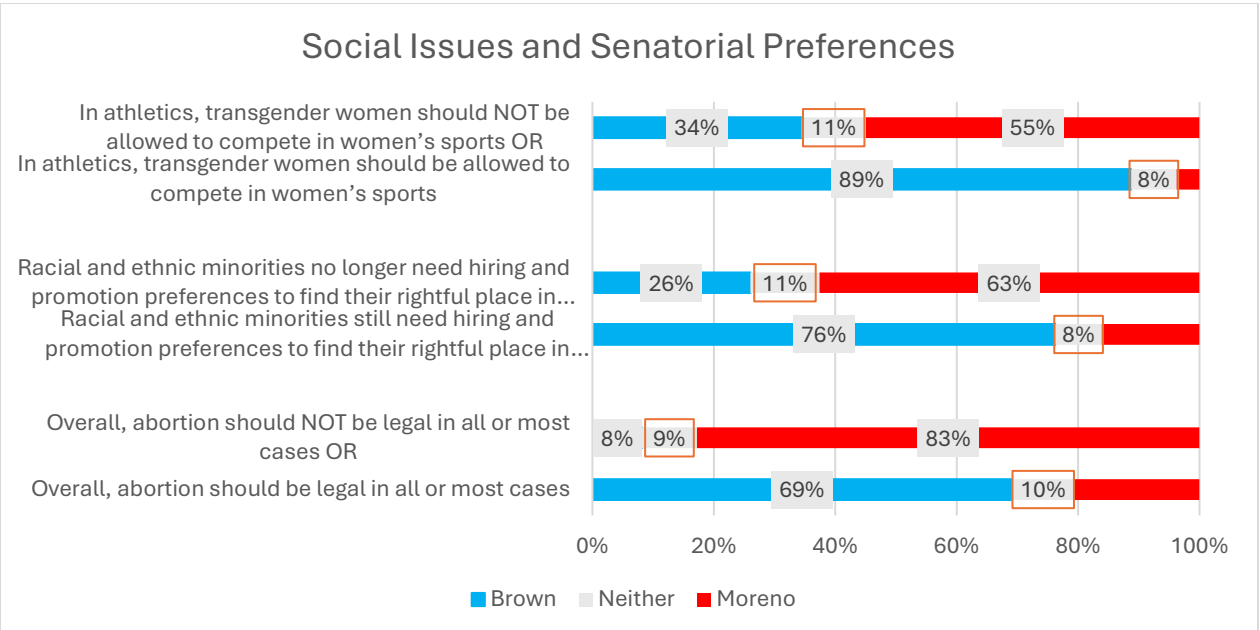


Nationalism Issues and Senatorial Preferences

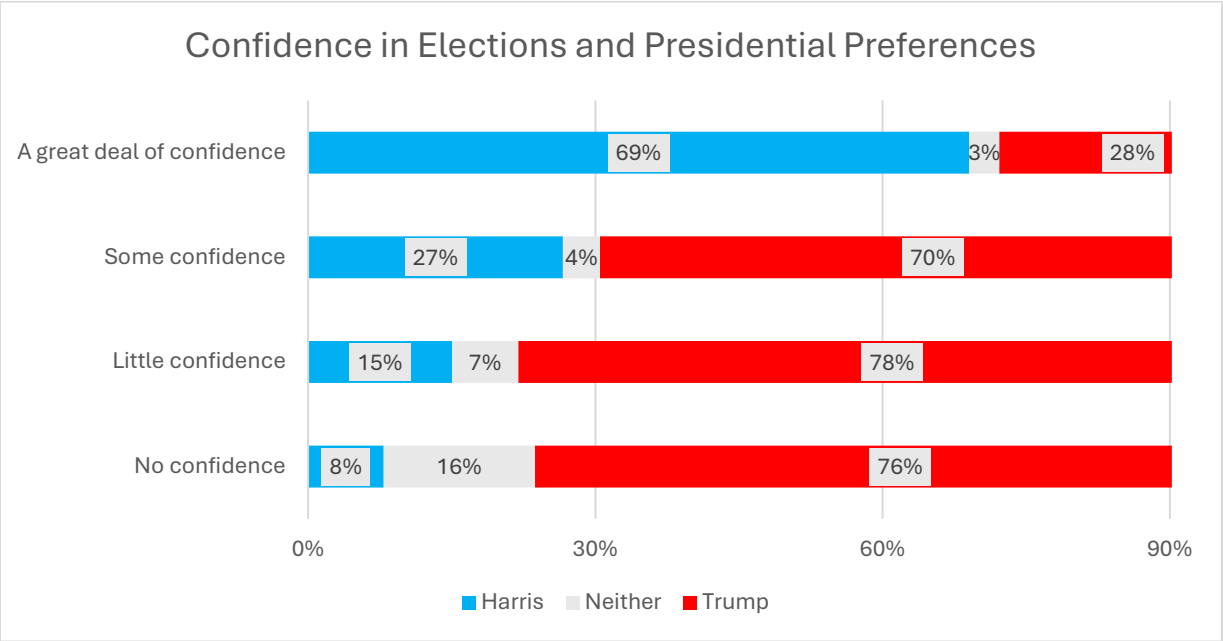


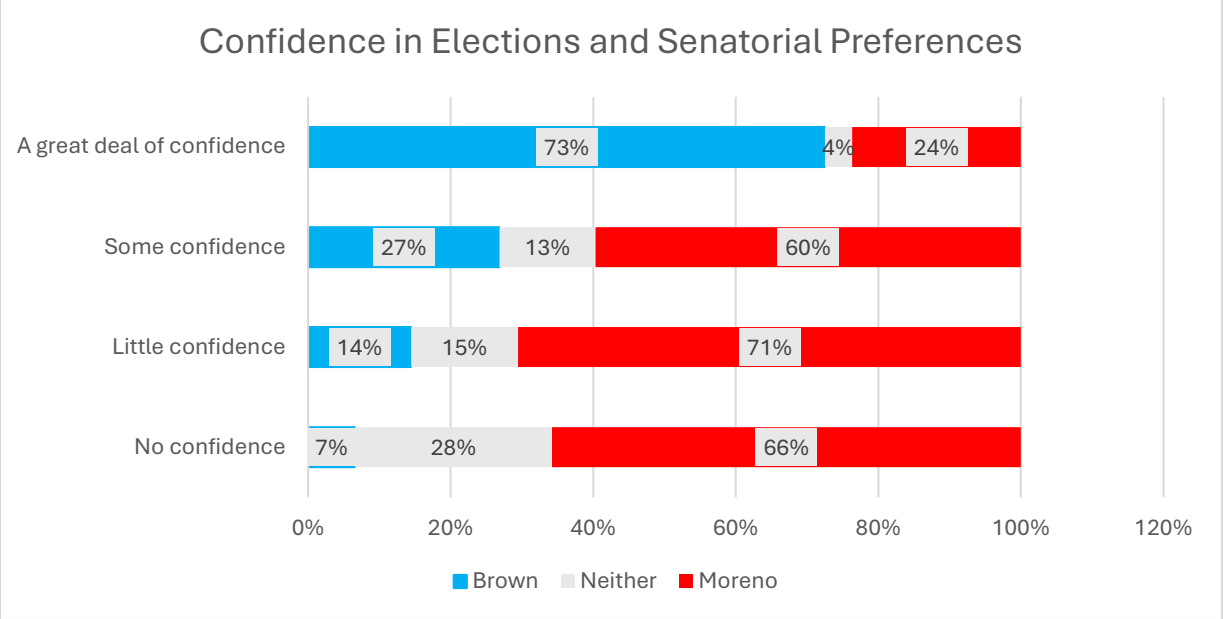
There are also sharp differences on social issues among Ohio voters. Harris backers hold strongly pro-choice positions on abortion (90 percent), while Trump supporters tend to hold pro-life views (67 percent). Likewise, Harris backers strongly support transgender women participating in women's sports (88 percent), and Trump supporters tend to oppose such inclusion (63 percent). And Harris backers see a need for policies to assist racial and ethnic minorities (75 percent), but Trump backers disagree with the need for such policies (71 percent).





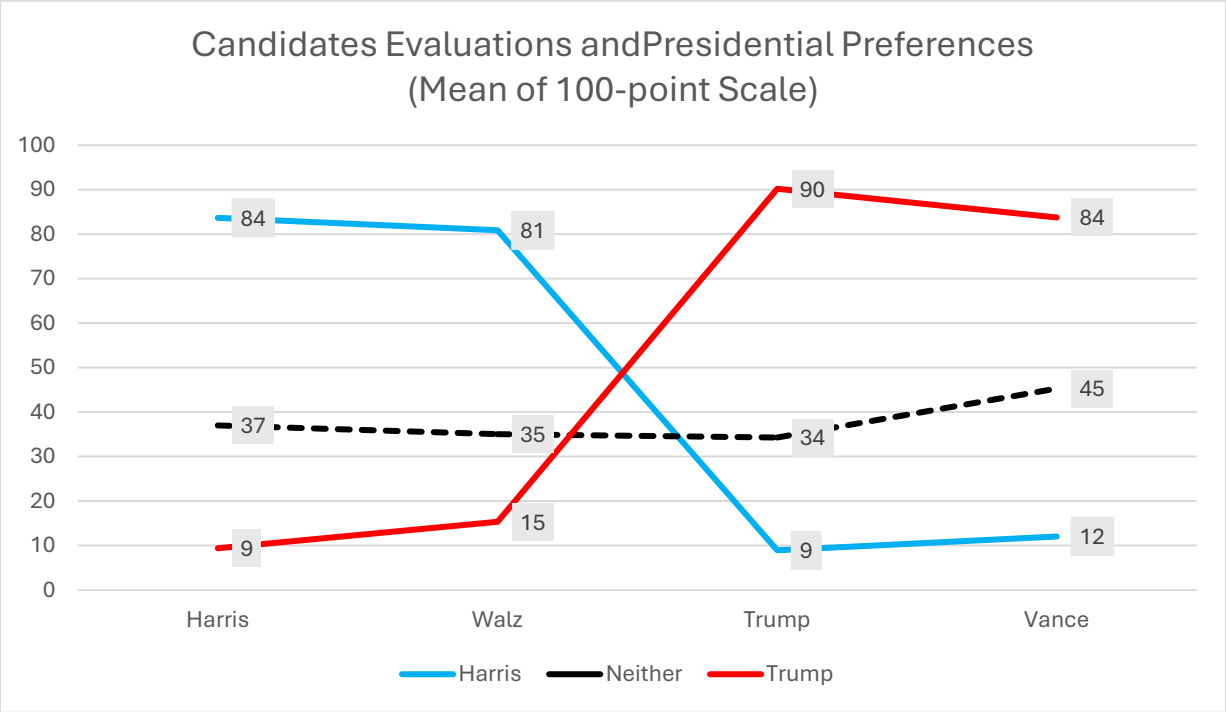
Finally, Trump supporters have much less confidence in the administration of Ohio elections than Harris supporters, with only 28 percent of the former versus 69 percent of the latter expressing “a great deal of confidence” that their 2024 votes will be counted fairly.

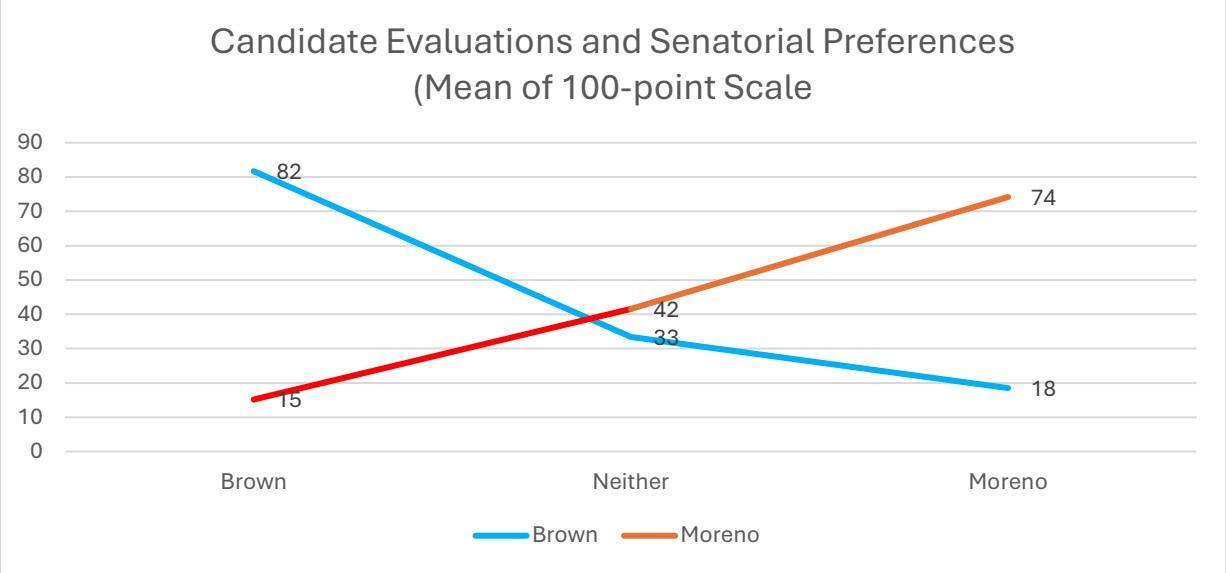




CANDIDATE EVALUATIONS AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE CANDIDATES

Although candidate quality was not a major reason for Ohioans preferences of party control of the White House and the U.S. Senate, views of the major party candidates have clear patterns. For example, Harris supporters have strongly positive views of Vice-President Harris and her running mate Governor Tim Walz—and highly negative views of former President Trump and his running mate, Senator J.D. Vance. Trump backers held the opposite view of their candidates and rivals. A similar pattern holds for the backers of the major party senatorial candidates.





Beyond candidate evaluations, how do Ohio registered voters view various concerns that have been raised about the major party candidates? One concern is age, originally sparked by the controversy surrounding President Joe Biden. Trump, at 78 years old, is only a few years younger than Biden and many Harris supporters say they are "very concerned" about Trump's age (82 percent), but most Trump supporters are "not at all concerned" about Trump's age (64 percent). Harris's age (60) is not a concern for most voters, including one-half of the Trump backers.

CANDIDATE CONCERNS AND PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCES

Trump's Age	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
Harris	**82%**	13%	3%	3%
Neither	**36%**	21%	14%	29%
Trump	1%	10%	25%	**64%**
Harris's Age				
Harris	2%	3%	13%	**82%**
Neither	9%	16%	28%	**47%**
Trump	15%	7%	28%	**50%**
Trump's Legal Problems				
Harris	**78%**	16%	2%	4%
Neither	29%	20%	17%	**34%**
Trump	3%	3%	18%	**76%**
Harris's Gender				
Harris	2%	3%	6%	**89%**
Neither	5%	5%	17%	**73%**
Trump	17%	10%	17%	**56%**
Trump's Threat to Democracy				
Harris	**92%**	5%	1%	1%
Neither	**39%**	14%	19%	28%
Trump	3%	7%	15%	**74%**
Harris' Threat to Democracy				
Harris	4%	6%	18%	**72%**
Neither	26%	**29%**	22%	22%
Trump	**76%**	16%	5%	4%

More than three-quarters (78 percent) of Harris supporters are "very concerned" about Trump's legal problems, but three-quarters (76 percent) of Trump supporters are "not at all concerned." Meanwhile, very few Ohio voters are concerned about Harris's gender, with more than one-half of the Trump supporters not concerned at all.

There is much more concern about threats to the democratic process posed by both Trump and Harris: 92 percent of Harris backers are "very concerned" about Trump in this regard, and 76 percent of Trump supporters are similarly "very concerned" about Harris.

In contrast, fewer Ohio voters are concerned about the senatorial candidates Brown and Moreno. Just over one-half of Brown backers say they are "very concerned" about Moreno's lack of experience in public office (56 percent) and the perspective he will bring if elected (53 percent); about one-half of the Moreno backers are "very concerned" about Brown's perspective (51 percent).

CANDIDATE CONCERNS AND SENATORIAL REFERENCES

	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
Brown's Age				
Brown	3%	6%	29%	**62%**
Neither	8%	20%	25%	**48%**
Moreno	18%	17%	20%	**45%**
Moreno's Age				
Brown	11%	11%	31%	**48%**
Neither	6%	18%	25%	**51%**
Moreno	2%	5%	19%	**74%**
Brown's Experience				
Brown	3%	5%	16%	**76%**
Neither	8%	25%	28%	**38%**
Moreno	26%	17%	23%	**34%**
Moreno's Experience				
Brown	**56%**	22%	13%	9%
Neither	13%	27%	23%	**36%**
Moreno	2%	10%	34%	**54%**
Brown's Perspective				
Brown	5%	12%	32%	**51%**
Neither	25%	24%	22%	**30%**
Moreno	**51%**	23%	10%	16%
Moreno's Perspective				
Brown	**53%**	17%	15%	15%
Neither	13%	29%	24%	**34%**
Moreno	8%	13%	29%	**50%**

DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS AND MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATE PREFERENCES

Key demographic groups among Ohio registered voters back the major party candidates in largely expected ways. For example, Harris does better among non-white, younger, well-educated, and less religious voters, while Trump does better among white, older, less well-educated, and more religious voters.

One surprising exception is women voters, where Harris (48 percent) and Trump (49 percent) are essentially tied. Gender still affects Ohio voters' preferences, with more men (53%) supporting Trump. Yet this pattern is at odds with national polls that show a stronger "gender gap" with women strongly for Harris and men strongly for Trump—a pattern found in the senatorial race, where Brown has a 48 to 40 percent lead over Moreno among women.[*] As expected, Trump and Moreno do better among men than their Democratic rivals.

PRESIDENTIAL AND SENATORIAL PREFERENCES, KEY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

	Harris	Neither	Trump	Brown	Neither	Moreno
GENDER						
Man	41%	6%	**53%**	44%	7%	**49%**
Woman	48%	3%	**49%**	**48%**	12%	40%
RACE						
White	43%	4%	**53%**	45%	10%	45%
Non-white	**57%**	8%	35%	**54%**	12%	34%
AGE						
18-24	**49%**	10%	41%	**47%**	25%	28%
25-44	**47%**	6%	46%	**50%**	7%	43%
45-64	39%	4%	**57%**	42%	8%	**50%**
65 and over	46%	2%	**52%**	**46%**	10%	43%
EDUCATION						
High School Grad or Less	42%	3%	**54%**	42%	14%	**44%**
Some College	37%	7%	**56%**	40%	9%	**51%**
College Graduate or More	**55%**	4%	41%	**58%**	4%	38%
WORSHIP ATTENDANCE						
High	30%	5%	**65%**	32%	7%	**62%**
Medium	41%	5%	**54%**	43%	10%	**47%**
Low	**53%**	4%	43%	**54%**	11%	35%

[*] It is worth noting that another recent survey of Ohio voters also finds Trump edging Harris among women 46 to 45 percent. See: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=depo