

For First Time Ever, More Americans Are Republican Than Democrat

Liam Archacki

For the first time in recorded history, more Americans are identifying with the Republican Party in the third quarter of a presidential election year than the Democratic Party — and are aligning with the GOP on key issues heading into November. Gallup released an in-depth analysis this week revealing that 48% of adults in the U.S. either identify as Republican or lean towards the Republican Party, compared to only 45% who identify as Democrat or lean towards the Democratic Party.

“Party affiliation and voting are strongly predictive of individuals’ vote choices, with the vast majority of identifiers and leaners voting for the candidate of their preferred party,” Gallup noted. The analytics giant continued, *“At the aggregate level, there are typically more Democrats and Democratic leaners than Republicans and Republican leaners in the U.S. adult population.”* In observing prior elections, **Gallup pointed out that Democrats have typically won the White House when they have had “larger-than-normal advantages in party affiliation.”**

For example, 52% of Americans identified with the Democratic Party in 1992, as opposed to 40% who allied themselves with the Republican Party, and Bill Clinton, then the Democratic Governor of Arkansas, won the presidency. The margin was a little lower in 1996, when 50% of Americans identified with the Democratic Party and 41% with the GOP, but Clinton won reelection. The margin was significantly narrower in 2000 (48% Democrat, 43% Republican) when Texas Governor George W. Bush, a Republican, beat incumbent Vice President Al Gore, a Democrat. In 2004, the nation was evenly split (47% identifying with the Democratic Party, 47% with the Republican Party), yielding another Bush win.

From that point forward, the margins between the two party identifications stayed fairly close, but still with a decided Democratic advantage. Barack Obama took the White House in 2008 (49% identifying with the Democratic Party, 41% with the Republican Party) and was reelected in 2012 (47% identifying with the Democratic Party, 43% with the Republican Party). Donald Trump ascended to the presidency four years later, with 46% of Americans identifying with the Democratic Party and 43% with the GOP, the slimmest margin seen since 2000. In 2020, 48% of Americans affiliated themselves with the Democratic Party and only 43% with the Republican Party and former Vice President Joe Biden was sworn in as president.

Now, more Americans not only identify with the Republican Party than the Democratic Party, but more Americans identify with the Republican Party than have identified with the Democratic Party over the past 16 years. Gallup noted, *“Republicans previously have not had an outright advantage in party affiliation during the third quarter of a presidential election year, and they have rarely outnumbered Democrats in election and nonelection years over the past three decades.”*

Beyond party identification, Gallup discovered that **Americans have greater confidence in the GOP’s handling of issues voters consider important — namely, the economy and inflation, immigration, and government** — than in the Democratic Party’s, by a five-point margin, which Gallup classifies as a “strong” advantage in the context of previous presidential elections.

The Republican Party is also leading on economic issues. As Gallup noted, ***“Americans currently give the Republican Party a six-percentage-point edge, 50% to 44%, as the party they think would do a better job of keeping the country prosperous.”*** The party which has held an advantage on this question in the past has won 12 out of 16 presidential elections. Americans also give the economy a rating of -28, with only 22% saying that economic conditions under President Joe Biden are “excellent” or “good.” Gallup added, ***“Republicans hold a more substantial advantage of 14 points (54% to 40%) as the party Americans believe is better able to keep the nation safe from terrorism and other international threats.”***

Additionally, only 22% of Americans say that they are satisfied with how things are going in the U.S. currently, a low unrivaled since 13% said the same in 2008. Gallup observed, “Satisfaction levels this low have been associated with incumbent presidents losing their reelection bids in 1980 (19%), 1992 (22%) and 2020 (28%).”

Biden's low favorability ratings (39%, significantly lower than former President Donald Trump's 46% heading into the 2020 election) are less likely to impact the 2024 election, Gallup anticipates, since he dropped out of the presidential race. But Gallup noted, "***Biden's unpopularity could still affect the election to the extent voters transfer their frustrations with the Biden administration to Vice President Kamala Harris.***"

The survey analysis from Gallup follows news that ***Republican voter registration is on the rise***, outpacing Democratic voter registration in several historically-Democratic districts, and Republicans are accounting for a significantly ***higher percentage of early voting turnout than in previous years***. Historically, early voting and mail-in voting have been dominated by Democrats, with Republicans voting on election day itself.

In its analysis, Gallup concluded, "***The political environment suggests the election is Trump's and Republicans' to lose (SIC)***. Nearly every indicator of the election context is favorable to the Republican Party, and those that aren't are essentially tied rather than showing a Democratic advantage."