

To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group and GBAO, on behalf of Navigator Research
Date: March 25, 2020

Public Opinion on Coronavirus: Navigator Daily

Welcome to NAVIGATOR – a project designed to better understand the American public’s views on issues of the day and help advocates, elected officials, and other interested parties understand the language, imagery, and messaging needed to make and win key policy arguments.

This is a dynamic time, and as a result, Navigator has transitioned to a daily tracking poll on the coronavirus crisis. For the foreseeable future, we will be tracking public opinion every weekday, releasing on a Tuesday-Saturday schedule. In addition, future editions will provide more messaging guidance to the progressive community. Follow [@NavigatorSurvey](#) on Twitter and sign up for updates [here](#)).

This edition of our daily tracking release features findings from a national online survey of 1,012 registered voters conducted March 21-24, 2020 and a national online survey of 1,038 registered voters conducted March 20-23, 2020.

Key takeaways:

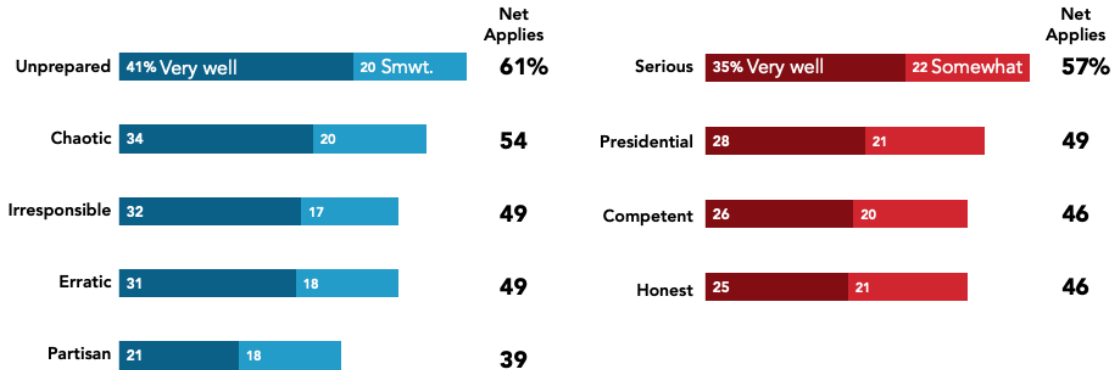
- Americans believe the president has been “unprepared” and “chaotic” in his response to the coronavirus pandemic.
- As it stands today, the public is more troubled by Trump’s lack of preparation and early mistakes than his current response to the pandemic.
- Effective communication speaks to frustrations with Trump’s early inaction and connects it to present consequences and fallout.
- For now, Trump’s approval rating on the coronavirus response is positive, while his overall approval rating is underwater.

Americans feel the president’s response to coronavirus has been “unprepared” and “chaotic.” They also say it has been “serious” – but not quite “presidential.”

Americans largely feel Trump is “unprepared” and give him low marks for being “honest.” When presented with a series of words and asked to select which best describes Trump’s handling of coronavirus, “unprepared” emerges as the top descriptor, with 61% saying it applies to the president’s response. Other top words include “chaotic” (54%) and “erratic” (49%), which are themes the public has registered about the Trump presidency in previous Navigator surveys. On the other hand, “serious” emerges as the second most chosen word (57%), though fewer than half see his handling as “competent” (46%), “presidential” (49%), or “honest” (46%).

How Americans Describe Trump’s Response

Please indicate how well each of the following words or phrases apply to Donald Trump’s response to Coronavirus.



Nationwide Research survey of 1,012 registered voters; March 21-24, 2020
For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org



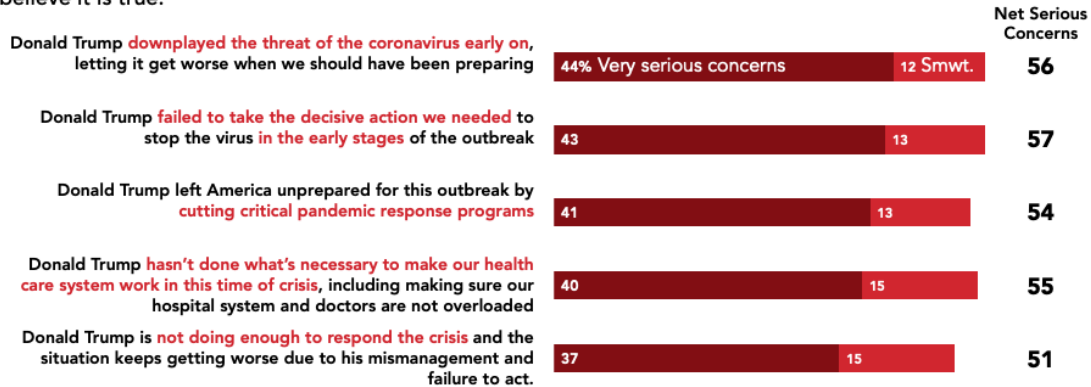
Right now, the public is more troubled by Trump’s lack of preparation and early mistakes than they are by his current response to the pandemic.

Americans fault the Trump administration for its early response to the crisis. When asked what concerns them most about Trump’s actions related to coronavirus, more Americans (43%) choose “Trump was unprepared and made mistakes early on in the crisis that let it grow into a bigger problem” than say Trump’s current actions (23%), while another 34% say neither. That margin is especially large among independents (52% say early mistakes, 18% say current actions).

Trump’s early inaction and downplaying of the threat are the top concerns currently held by Americans, while the idea that Trump is not “doing enough” right now is lower on the list. Navigator presented respondents with statements about Trump’s response to the pandemic and asked which they found concerning. While every criticism raises “serious concerns” for a majority of Americans, the top three revolve around Trump’s lack of preparedness, including downplaying the threat early on which let it get worse (56% serious concerns) and failing to take decisive action early in the pandemic (57%). Americans are just slightly less concerned about issues relating to present mismanagement (51%). On a related issue, many show more confidence in their state and local government’s handling of the crisis (48%) than in the Trump administration and federal government (35%).

What Concerns Americans About Trump’s Response

Below are some criticisms of Donald Trump around issues relating to the coronavirus pandemic. Please indicate whether it raises very serious concerns, somewhat serious concerns, minor concerns, or if you don’t believe it is true.



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As the crisis continues, progressives need to hold Trump accountable for what is happening now by reminding Americans of the role he played in how we got here.

While Americans express greater concerns about Trump’s early mistakes, communicating about current failures due to past missteps can help hold the administration responsible. Americans are especially worried about the danger medical professionals now face because of a shortage of protective gear (72% serious concerns) and the failure of the U.S. to keep up with the pace of testing and preparation in other countries (70%). These are two examples of important and compelling ways to connect past mistakes to present consequences.

Cuts and Consequences

Please indicate whether these statements about the Trump administration and the coronavirus pandemic raise very serious concerns, somewhat serious concerns, minor concerns, or if you don’t believe it is true.

Statements:

Statement	Very serious concerns	Very/ Somewhat serious
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is telling nurses and doctors to use bandanas and scarves to protect themselves because they do not have enough masks and other protective gear to provide to health care workers.	52%	72%
Two months ago, South Korea and the United States each identified their first confirmed case of coronavirus. South Korea has tested more than 274,000 people and is reducing the spread of the virus while the United States has tested less than 40,000* people and the virus keeps spreading.	51	70
Other countries were able to mass produce coronavirus tests, masks for doctors, and provide ventilators to help save those who get sick while the United States remains far behind in the production of all of these things.	49	68
The Trump administration tried to cut the global health section of the CDC, laying off staff and closing 80% of pandemic centers that were designed to combat public health crises like this one.	49	63
In 2018, the Trump administration fired the entire U.S. pandemic response team in the White House that would have been in place to respond to the current outbreak.	49	62
As the coronavirus pandemic goes on, the Trump administration is continuing a lawsuit that would repeal the health care coverage of 20 million Americans and drive up the cost of prescription drugs.	48	64
While most Americans have been unable to get a test for coronavirus, tests have been available for Members of Congress, visitors at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago golf course, and major sports figures.	48	67

*With testing increasing every day, communicators should consult relevant data sources for the most up-to-date numbers.

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So far, President Trump receives a positive approval rating for the coronavirus response, but he remains underwater on his overall job performance.

While several criticisms of the administration's response resonate with Americans, Trump's rating on handling the coronavirus pandemic remains positive for now. A slight majority approve of his handling of the pandemic (52% approve; 43% disapprove). This rating is higher than the 46% who approve of the job he is doing as president generally (51% disapprove). A key driver in Trump's approval on coronavirus is greater approval from Democrats: 23% of Democrats approve of his handling of it, as do 25% of Democratic women and 35% of non-liberal Democrats. When it comes to views of Trump's presidency in general, just 12% of Democrats approve.

About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO along with an advisory committee, including: Andrea Purse, progressive strategist; Arkadi Gerney, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; Delvone Michael, Working Families; Felicia Wong, Roosevelt Institute; Mike Podhorzer, AFL-CIO; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak, Center for American Progress Action Fund; Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood.

To learn more about Navigator: <http://navigatorresearch.org>