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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Update:
Wednesday, April 28

Navigating The First 100 Days:
Assessing President Biden



Methodology

On April 22, 2021, GBAO conducted three online focus groups online with the following three audiences. Respondents varied across demographics—age, gender, and race/ethnicity.



Democrats who think the Dem party should stay in the same direction or move in a more moderate direction in Florida



Republicans <\$75K HH income who aren't very unfavorable toward Biden or very favorable toward Trump in Texas



Democrats who think the Dem party should go in a more progressive direction in Nevada

Key Takeaways

- The change in administration drives Democrats to feel “relieved” and Republicans “uncertain.”
- Most see Biden as “quieter” than Trump, but Democrats are much clearer that this is a good thing.
- Vaccines and stimulus checks dominate current assessments of Biden’s record so far, while partisans mostly divided.
- There is generally more awareness among Democrats of early Biden accomplishments—particularly on climate and economic relief.
- Further discussion reveals some knowledge gaps, particularly with Republicans.
- Democrats are not in disarray, but pragmatic, even if some wish for Biden to move leftward.

Mostly Driven By A Change In President, Democrats Feel “Relief” While Republicans Feel “Anxious”

“Finish the sentence: I feel BLANK about the way things are going today.”

Optimistic

Relieved

Hopeful

Step in the right direction.

Encouraged

Things are getting to a better place.

Starting to see more jobs called back.

Anxious. Not liking the decisions people are making for us.

I’ve had a lot of friends lose their jobs.

Apathetic. Feeling that you can’t really have any effect.

Skeptical. Critical. I have hope, but I’m not excited.

Both Progressive And Moderate Democrats Feel Positive About Biden's Progress; Republicans Expectedly More Mixed

What's one word or phrase to describe how President Biden is doing so far?

Relieved is where I think the country is moving.

Relieved and happy

Unsure

I feel proud.

Cautiously optimistic

Nervous

Too early to judge. Got to let it play out.

Disappointed

Relieved

Very hopeful better days are ahead.

Negative

Motivated

Relieved

People See Biden As “Quieter” Than Trump, Which Strikes Partisans Differently

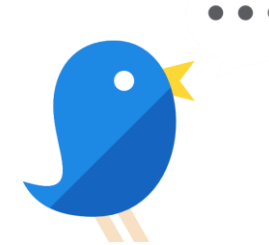
“I don’t feel like I have to doom scroll through my feed to see what the next thing is.” (FL man)

“He’s not on Twitter, ranting and all that.” (FL woman)

“Almost immediately as soon as he took office, everything just kind of calmed down and everyone's like, “Okay, we have a normal person there.” I think that everybody, whether you like Trump or not, he's not a normal person, and he wasn't a normal president.” (NV man)

“He’s been awfully quiet... I’m almost having a PTSD reaction... He doesn’t tweet. [Moderator: Is this a good thing or a not so good thing?] It feels like it might be a not good thing, but I'm not sure if that's just comparatively. I felt like we were bombarded every day throughout the day with news of new policies and new things and things that were being changed and things that were being overthrown and how badly people didn't like them and how many people it was hurting. And so I expected him to come in with the white hat and go to work.” (TX woman)

“I guess I was thinking too, that he would come in and be more presidential and more of a standup guy that would be taking charge. And I don't feel like he takes charge of anything... More authoritative, more sure of himself, decision-making, motivated to make changes that are actually going to be helping people. And I haven't been seeing any of that at all.” (TX woman)



Many Cite Vaccines And The Stimulus As Biden's Top Accomplishments



"People are not dying as much as last year. And he's taking the virus very seriously." (FL woman)

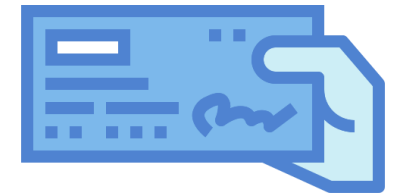
*"He passed a stimulus plan...and he did 100 million doses in the first 90 days, which goes hand in hand with recovery. **We've got to get past COVID to recover the economy.** So I think those two things combined." (FL man)*

"Well, he promised 100 million vaccines in people's arms in the first 100 days, and he did 200. He got his stimulus package out that he wanted to 1400 to make it the 2000." (FL woman)

*"Pretty much everyone that wants a vaccine can get it now. And then, the economic stimulus payments. Those are **the two things that I was thinking.**" (FL woman)*

*"Accomplishment, the only thing I would say is **the stimulus check.**" (TX man)*

"Well, his main promise was to effectively and efficiently and rapidly roll out a coronavirus vaccine program that would get Americans vaccinated and safe. And that to me was the key to the beginning of our nation starting to have a sense of easing some of our anxieties." (NV man)



Beyond Vaccines And Stimulus Checks, Some Recall Biden's Actions On Climate Or Other Relief

"I'm a single parent. I have my daughter all the time. There's the child tax credit that starts in the summer." (FL man)

"Some of the parents said that they were able to stay home and do virtual school with their kids because of the unemployment and the food stamp increase as well. That's a pretty big deal." (TX woman)

*"Well, firstly, to deal with the coronavirus. Another promise that he made was to toughen up on Russia. Another promise that he made was to get back into the **Paris Climate Accord**. And another thing that he had talked about is the immigration system. And I feel like **he's been following through** on all four of those issues." (NV man)*



NV women

*"And even the Paris Climate, I mean, **he's making strides wherever he can** and he's not ignoring anything." (NV woman)*

*"The people that own apartments, giving them time with the eviction and stuff like that. **I think that's going to really help.**" (NV woman)*

Discussion Of Accomplishments Reveals Some Knowledge Gaps, Particularly With Republicans

[What has President Biden done for small businesses?] "I don't really follow that part of politics that much." (FL woman)

[On what issues has President Biden been focusing?] "It's hard to say, and I'm going to be completely honest. I am not following this stuff as closely as I did a few months ago." (TX woman)

"As a senior citizen he's not doing anything or I guess I haven't heard him address anything about that." (TX woman)

"I think we still don't have anything for our small businesses." (TX woman)

*[One million new jobs were created in March. What do you think of that?]
"I don't think that's it. I'm sitting here racking my brain, trying to figure it out. Delivery drivers?" (TX woman)
"I don't see it." (TX man)*

"Like student loan forgiveness, I went to nursing school and I've got tons of them. That's the only thing that really benefits me, but he kind of threw it away." (TX man)



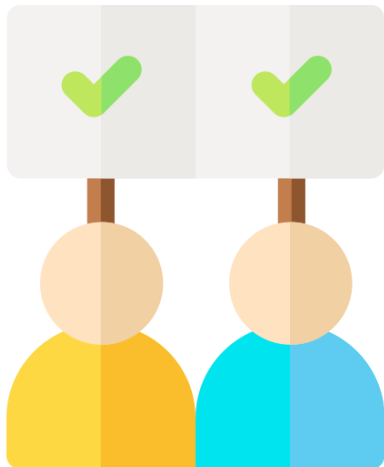
TX women

Democrats Are Not In Disarray—They Are Pragmatic, Even If Some Wish He Would Go Further Left

“That’s really, besides the Trump thing, why I voted for him because I’m a moderate. And I think he’s doing a good job at protecting, but he’s got people on the far left, really pushing, pushing, pushing for some stuff. I think he’s doing a good job trying to stay a little, mostly in the middle.” (FL man)

“I was willing to take that [minimum wage] off the table to get the economy package passed.” (FL woman)

“That’s [cutting child poverty in half] a good start right there, because you have to start slow.” (FL man)



“I know he has to try and unite the country, and I know our previous president was very much the opposite of trying to do that. And I know he has to do that, but I wish he would maybe speak out a little more on some things [that] happen. Like with the police brutality and the murders happening, maybe speak out a little more on that issue. But I know he can only do so much, but still, I feel like he should be doing a little more when it comes to that.” (NV man)

“I think he was always going to be practical because he comes from that time when Republicans and Democrats would sit down and negotiate and compromise just like you do in any relationship... He, to me, has the experience and track record of being able to actually work on both sides of the aisle and has extended that. But he’s got a very tough road ahead and I’m counting on his muscle memory from his time served on the Obama Administration where not to expect much support.” (NV man)

Three online focus groups of Democrats in Florida (who want their party to stay in same direction or a more moderate direction), Republicans <\$75K household income in Texas, and Democrats in Nevada (who want their party to move in a more progressive direction). Groups conducted April 22, 2021. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org

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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; Joel Payne, 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 Action Fund.

About the Study

GBAO conducted online focus groups on April 22, 2021, with voters in three states: Florida (Democrats who think the party should move in a more moderate direction or stay in the same direction), Texas (Republicans with a household income of <\$75K and are neither very unfavorable toward Biden nor very favorable toward Trump), and Nevada (Democrats who think the party should move in a more progressive direction). Some quotes have been lightly edited for brevity. Qualitative results are not statistically projectable.

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