CITIZEN DATA   issue one™

April 19, 2023

TO: Interested Parties
FR: Citizen Data
RE: Overwhelming public support for federal funding of elections.

A recent national poll commissioned by Issue One found that the vast majority of Americans — 69% — think the federal government should be equally, if not more, responsible than local municipalities and states when it comes to funding elections. This is a significant finding as election administrators call for increased federal funding in advance of the 2024 election.

The poll also highlights an existing trend over the past year in Americans' increased confidence in our elections, with two-thirds (65%) now likely to trust the results of the 2024 election. The biggest concern for voters is politicians not accepting election results. This response surpassed concerns around fraud and corruption, indicating the declining effectiveness of election disinformation.

Key Takeaways

- **Americans across party lines agree that the federal government should be more responsible for election funding.** Seven out of ten (69%) Americans believe the federal government should be just as, if not more, responsible for election funding than local municipalities and states.
- **Trust in elections has increased in the last year.** Two-thirds (65%) of Americans will likely trust 2024 election results, compared to just over half (54%) in April last year.[1]
- **The most common election concern is "politicians not accepting election results with no evidence of fraud or foul play."** Four out of ten (39%) Americans put this among their top three election concerns, ahead of other concerns relating to fraud and corruption.
- **Federal funding could be invested in measures that further strengthen trust in elections.** Access to election audits was the top proposal for Democrats (25%), nonpartisan Independents (25%), and Republicans (21%), when asked about a range of measures which would increase their trust in elections. Ballot tracking and live streaming also enjoyed strong cross-partisan support.
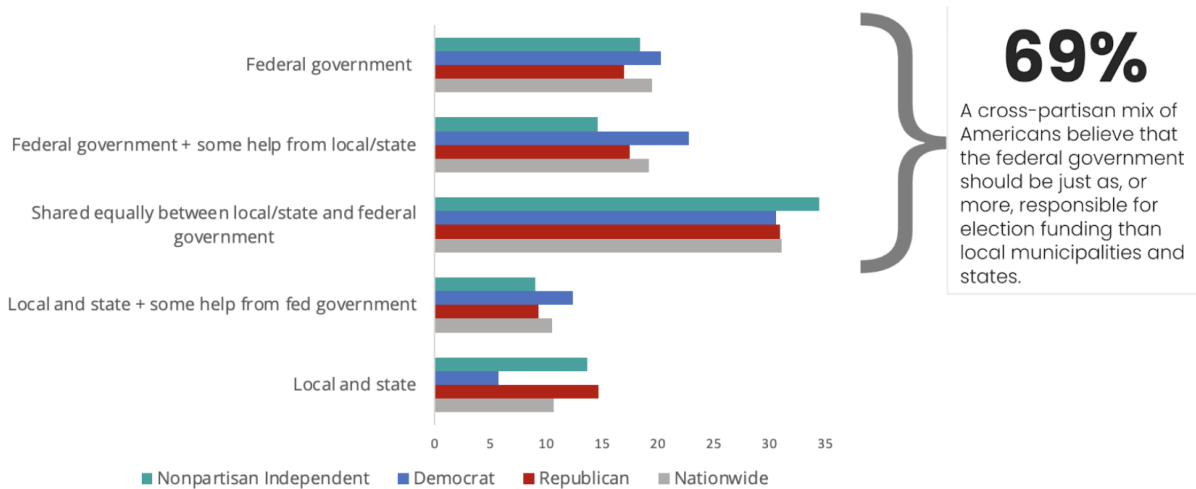
KEEP READING FOR FURTHER CONTEXT >>>

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[1] SOURCE: On behalf of the Democracy Communications Collaborative, Citizen conducted an online survey from April 10 - April 24, 2022, among a random nationwide sample of 4,010 Americans. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 1.5 percentage points.

Across party lines, Americans agree that the federal government should be more responsible for funding elections.

Just one in ten (11%) Americans believes that local municipalities and states should be solely responsible for funding elections. When it comes to funding for elections, there is cross-partisan consensus that the federal government should take more responsibility than it currently does.

69%

A cross-partisan mix of Americans believe that the federal government should be just as, or more, responsible for election funding than local municipalities and states.

Chart categories: Federal government; Federal government + some help from local/state; Shared equally between local/state and federal government; Local and state + some help from fed government; Local and state

Legend: ■ Nonpartisan Independent ■ Democrat ■ Republican ■ Nationwide

Two thirds (66%) of Republicans believe that the federal government should be equally or more responsible than local municipalities and states when it comes to funding elections. 68% of nonpartisan Independents, and 74% of Democrats agree.

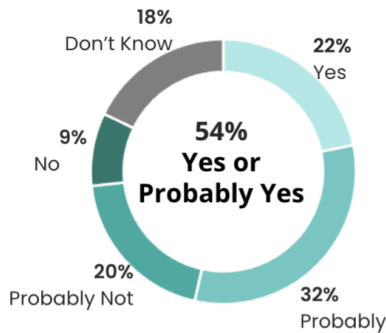## Trust in elections has increased in the last year.

In April 2022, just over half (54%) of Americans said that they would "definitely" or "probably" trust in elections.[2] **A year later, in March 2023, this number increased to 65%.** Additionally, we see a four percentage point decrease in those who will "definitely" or "probably" not trust in 2024 (from 29% to 25%) as well as a seven percentage point decrease in those who "don't know" (from 18% to 11%).

Since last year, Republicans are 10% more likely to trust election results. Just 35% said they would likely trust the 2024 results back in April 2022. In our new poll, almost half (45%) said they are likely to trust the outcome.
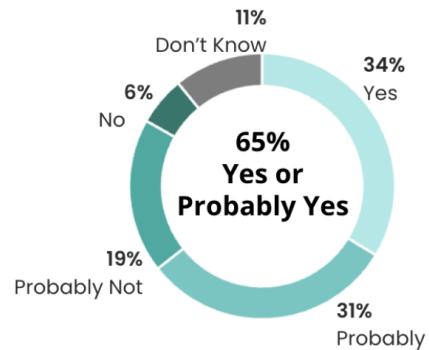
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[2] SOURCE: On behalf of the Democracy Communications Collaborative, Citizen conducted an online survey from April 10 - April 24, 2022, among a random nationwide sample of 4,010 Americans. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 1.5 percentage points.

April 2022

18% Don't Know · 22% Yes · 9% No · 20% Probably Not · 32% Probably · **54% Yes or Probably Yes**

March 2023

11% Don't Know · 34% Yes · 6% No · 19% Probably Not · 31% Probably · **65% Yes or Probably Yes**

We observe a similar trend when it comes to belief in President Joe Biden's win. Back in April 2022, 53% of Americans believed Biden won, while 21% had some doubts.[3] In March 2023, 57% believed Biden won and just 18% had doubts. Importantly, those who do not believe Biden won have decreased from 23% to 17%. For Republicans, the number who do *not* believe Biden won has decreased from 42% in April last year to 36% in March 2023.

While these positive trends are important wins for the pro-democracy movement, there is still more to be done to increase trust among Americans. Only 15% of Republicans, for instance, will "definitely" trust in 2024. Younger Americans are also less likely to trust in 2024; just 28% of the 18-34 age group will definitely trust in 2024, compared to 39% of those aged 55+. Moving forward, it will be important to reassure these groups in order to further strengthen trust in elections.

The most common election concern is: "Politicians not accepting election results with no evidence of fraud or foul play"

We asked Americans which three things concerned them most about elections. **The most common response was "politicians not accepting election results with no evidence of fraud or foul play"** (two in five Americans, or 39%, put this in their top three). This response surpassed concerns such as corrupt election officials and vote tampering, which were previously ahead in an April 2022 poll.[4] In addition to being the most common concern nationwide, it was the most common concern for Democrats, and the second most common among nonpartisan Independents. This is another signal that pro-democracy efforts are moving the needle.

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[3] SOURCE: On behalf of Issue One, Citizen conducted an online survey from April 21 - April 27, 2022, among a random nationwide sample of 1,000 Americans. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.
[4] SOURCE: On behalf of Issue One, Citizen conducted an online survey from April 21 - April 27, 2022, among a random nationwide sample of 1,000 Americans. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

However, other concerns followed closely behind, including corrupt election officials and poll workers (36%) and vote tampering and tampering with electronic voting machines (33%). This is a sign that when it comes to increasing trust in elections, the work needs to continue.

Cross-partisan consensus shows that access to election audits can increase trust in elections.

When asked what would increase trust in elections, **the plurality of Americans — almost one in four (23%) — selected "having access to election audit reports,** which verify that the voting system operated accurately, election officials complied with regulations, and any discrepancies were resolved." This response was followed by the option of watching a livestream of the results counted in real-time (13%) and receiving election results as quickly as possible (12%), **highlighting a desire for more transparency.**

Election audits were the top proposal across parties, with 25% of Democrats, 25% of nonpartisan Independents, and 21% of Republicans selecting this measure as the most important for increasing their trust.

When we explore those who opted *not* to select any of the proposed measures, we find more reassuring data for election trust. Just 6% responded that they have lost so much faith in elections that no measures will impact their trust, compared with twice as many (13%) who said that nothing will have an effect because they already have complete trust in elections.

Research goal and methodology

The goals of this survey were to gain insights into how trust in elections has changed over time, learn which aspects of elections Americans are most concerned about, and explore which proposed measures would make the biggest impact in building trust in elections.

This was a nationwide survey conducted by Online Text to Mobile and online panel from March 4 -7, 2023, among a random sample of 1,047 U.S. citizens. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points, and has been weighted by political party, 2020 vote choice, age, education, and race to be nationally representative.

About Citizen Data

Founded in 2019, Citizen Data is a nonpartisan democracy organization that provides data, insights, and tools to our partners as they unite to bridge divides and advance meaningful change. We bring nonpartisan, best-in-class data, analytics, research, and strategic support to people and organizations who are working to solve some of our nation's toughest modern challenges. Over the last three years, we've partnered with and provided research to over 70 pro-democracy organizations, including working intimately with election organizations, officials and experts to build and rebuild trust in our elections.

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Your data for democracy partner.

About Issue One

Issue One is the leading crosspartisan political reform group in Washington, D.C. We unite Republicans, Democrats, and independents in the movement to fix our broken political system and build an inclusive democracy that works for everyone.