YVO Most Important Problem Data

YVO SURVEY CHARACTERISTICS

A joint project of Your Vote Ohio and the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at The University of Akron, the survey was conducted by the Center for Marketing and Opinion Research. It was a random sample of 1,037 registered voters in Ohio, administered 100 percent online between June 24 and July 15, 2020. The margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

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In the YVO poll we asked this open-ended question: "To you personally, what is the MOST important issue facing the country right now?"

This question was partly as a check on the closed-ended questions on the priorities of 16 specific issues developed earlier from the listening sessions, but also to get a sense of what was on people's minds when the poll was taken (June-July 2020).

The open-ended responses were coded using a set of categories developed for open-ended questions in the 2016 election and amended for 2020 as needed. The data were coded using the first problem mentioned (sometimes a respondent listed more than one problem).

Here is a summary of the coded responses:

COVID	**32.4**	
Political Process Problems	**20.4**	20.4
Other Political Process Problems		9.0
Trump		8.5
Democrats Liberals Biden		2.9
Public Order Problems	**19.1**	19.1
Race Relations		9.1
Unrest Disorder		6.2
Other Public Order Problems		3.8
Economic Problems	**16.6**	
Domestic Policy Problems	**9.6**	9.6
Healthcare		6.0
Other Domestic Policy Problems		3.5
Foreign Policy Problems	**2.0**	
Total	**100.0**	

- Clearly, the most important problem was COVID-19, with almost one-third (32.4%) of respondents listing this issue. (The pandemic also appears as a secondary mention in other responses as well. If ALL mentions of COVID were included this category would expand to about 40% of respondents.)

- Another one-fifth (20.4%) of respondents mentioned a "political process" problem. These problems included the divisions in the country, corruption, and lack of leadership (9.0%). One frequent mention was President Trump (8.5% of the total responses)—most but not all of these mentions are critical of Trump. (There were no mentions of Republicans or

conservative allies apart from Trump). Another category was Democrats and liberal allies (2.9%). (There were only two mentions of Biden and were included in the Democrats/liberals category.)

- Almost one-fifth (19.1%) of the respondents mentioned a "public order" problem. These problems included race relations (9.1%) and unrest/disorder (6.2%), plus a wide variety of other problems (3.8%), ranging from crime to abortion.

- About one-sixth (16.6%) of the respondents mentioned an economic problem, including the economic impact of the pandemic.

- About one-tenth (9.5%) mentioned a domestic politics problem, where the most numerous mentions concerned healthcare (6.0%), plus a wide variety of other policy areas, ranging from government spending to infrastructure (3.5%).

- Two percent of respondents mentioned a foreign policy problem, including immigration.

Further observations on how the most important problem question results fit with the

- First, the COVID problem dominates the open-ended responses and fits well with COVID as an issue priority (question b.).

- Other of the 16 issues have clear counterparts in the problem data: criminal justice (a.), addiction (c.), economy (d.), foreign policy (f.), race (g.), social services (e.), food h.), education (i.), environment (j.), healthcare (l.), sustainable income (o.), and immigration (p.). The number of mentions in these categories were often quite small.

- There were no direct mentions of infrastructure (k.), mental health (m.), or housing (n.).

- The listening group data had a clear focus on domestic policy problems. However, political process is especially prominent in 2020.

Relationship of most important problems and presidential preference:

Collapsed Problem code * vote2020a Crosstabulation

% within vote2020a

		Strong Trump	Medium Trump	Weak Trump	Undecided	Other Candidates	Weak Biden	Medium Biden	Strong Biden	Total
Collapsed Problem code	COVID	**25.4%**	**31.5%**	26.2%	**41.1%**	**28.6%**	**42.1%**	**42.2%**	34.0%	**32.4%**
	Other Political Process Problems	11.7%	9.3%	11.9%	8.9%	16.1%	10.5%	2.9%	7.0%	**9.1%**
	Trump	0.4%			1.8%	3.6%	10.5%	5.9%	**22.0%**	**8.4%**
	Democrats Liberals	**8.9%**	1.9%		1.8%	1.8%			0.3%	**2.8%**
	Unrest Disorder	6.5%	8.3%	9.5%	3.6%	12.5%	13.2%	12.7%	10.0%	**9.1%**
	Race Relations	12.5%	8.3%	4.8%	5.4%	7.1%	2.6%	2.0%	2.3%	**6.2%**
	Other Public Order Problems	4.4%	2.8%	11.9%	3.6%		5.3%	4.9%	2.7%	**3.8%**
	Economic Problems	**19.0%**	**25.9%**	**28.6%**	25.0%	21.4%	13.2%	**23.5%**	5.0%	**16.5%**
	Healthcare	4.4%	5.6%		3.6%	7.1%		4.9%	10.0%	**6.1%**
	Other Domestic Policy Problems	2.0%	4.6%	4.8%	5.4%	1.8%		1.0%	5.7%	**3.6%**
	Foreign Policy Problems	4.8%	1.9%	2.4%			2.6%		1.0%	**2.0%**
Total		**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

- COVID was the dominant across all voter categories, but it was most prominent for the undecided and Biden supporters.

- Economic problems were more common for Trump backers.

- President Trump himself was mentioned as a major problem by 8.5% of respondents. These responses are concentrated among Biden supporters, especially strong Biden backers.

Problem Types * vote2020a Crosstabulation

% within vote2020a

		vote2020a								
		Strong Trump	Medium Trump	Weak Trump	Undecided	Other Candidates	Weak Biden	Medium Biden	Strong Biden	Total
Problem Types	COVID	25.5%	32.1%	26.2%	41.1%	27.6%	42.1%	42.2%	33.9%	**32.4%**
	Political Process Problems	21.1%	10.4%	11.9%	12.5%	22.4%	21.1%	8.8%	29.2%	**20.3%**
	Public Order Problems	23.5%	19.8%	26.2%	12.5%	20.7%	21.1%	19.6%	15.3%	**19.3%**
	Economic Problems	19.0%	26.4%	28.6%	25.0%	20.7%	13.2%	23.5%	5.0%	**16.5%**
	Domestic Policy Problems	6.1%	9.4%	4.8%	8.9%	8.6%		5.9%	15.6%	**9.5%**
	Foreign Policy Problems	4.9%	1.9%	2.4%			2.6%		1.0%	**2.0%**
Total		**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

- Beyond COVID, Trump supporters were more likely to list public order and economic problems, while Biden supporters were more likely to list political process and domestic policy problems.