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NATIONAL: FEW APPROVE OF HUNTER BIDEN PARDON

Opinion is similar for Trump pardons, but move hurts Democrats’ credibility

West Long Branch, NJ – Most Americans give a thumbs down to President Joe Biden’s pardon of his son, with few agreeing that Hunter Biden’s case was treated more harshly because of who he is. At the same time, the **Monmouth (“Mon-muth”) University Poll** finds that public opinion is similarly negative about President-elect Donald Trump’s pardons of close associates in his first term as well as the potential pardons of Jan. 6 rioters in his second. Still, most Americans feel the Biden pardon undermines Democrats’ credibility when criticizing Trump for similar actions.

HUNTER BIDEN PARDON		
	Approve	Disapprove
TOTAL	32%	58%
Republicans	12%	81%
Independents	27%	64%
Democrats	65%	24%


MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY
Monmouth University Poll
National adults
Dec. 5-10, 2024

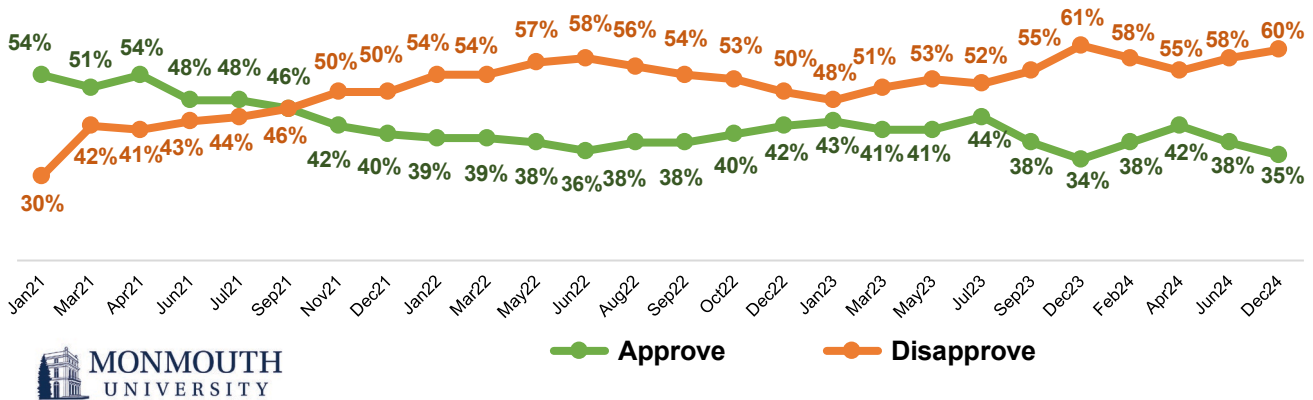
Barely 1 in 3 Americans (32%) approve of Biden’s decision to pardon his son Hunter, while 58% disapprove. While most Democrats (65%) stand by the president’s move, few independents (27%) and Republicans (12%) look favorably on the action. The president’s stated rationale for the pardon is that the younger Biden was treated differently by the justice system. However, just 35% of the American public says he was treated more harshly because of who he

is while 47% say his case was treated the same as similar cases.

“This is one of Biden’s final acts as president. Whatever the motivation, it certainly isn’t going to help his legacy,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Opinion of Biden’s job performance as president – 35% approve and 60% disapprove – is nearly identical to his prior low mark (34% approve and 61% disapprove in December 2023). Moreover, Biden’s current job rating is practically a mirror image of where he started his term in January 2021 when a majority of 54% approved of his performance and just 30% disapproved. While Biden maintains a 79% approval rating among his fellow Democrats, he only musters a 26% positive rating among independents and 7% among Republicans.


President Biden Job Rating



The poll finds that public displeasure with use of the pardon power for family members is not limited to the incumbent president. Just 29% approve of pardons issued by Trump during his first term for people close to him, including his daughter’s father-in-law. A majority (56%) disapprove of these pardons, although the partisan script is flipped from opinion about the Biden pardon. While 74% of Democrats and 58% of independents disapprove of Trump’s first-term pardons of close associates, just 32% of Republicans agree. Moreover, 52% of all Americans disapprove of Trump nominating people he pardoned to high-level government positions in his new administration. Just 14% approve of such appointments and 31% say this does not matter to them. [Note: Trump has nominated Charles Kushner, his daughter’s father-in-law whom he pardoned, as Ambassador to France, but this was not specifically mentioned in the poll question.]

Taken together, 33% of the American public disapproves both of Biden’s pardon of his son and Trump’s pardons of his close associates. Another 25% disapprove only of Biden’s pardon and 22% disapprove only of Trump’s pardons. At the other end of the spectrum, 11% of Americans approve of both presidents’ pardons. Among independents, 42% disapprove of both sets of pardons. They are joined in this view by 29% of Republicans and 21% of Democrats. A majority of Republicans (52%) disapprove only of Biden’s pardon and a similar number of Democrats (54%) disapprove only of Trump’s pardons.

TRUMP FIRST-TERM PARDONS		
	Approve	Disapprove
TOTAL	29%	56%
Republicans	44%	32%
Independents	28%	58%
Democrats	16%	74%



Monmouth University Poll
National adults
Dec. 5-10, 2024

Looking ahead, most Americans (61%) would disapprove of Trump pardoning people who were convicted of attacking the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Just 34% would approve of this move.

Interestingly, Republicans show more support for Trump pardoning Jan. 6 rioters (64%) than say they approve of his first-term pardons for close associates (44%).

“If Trump follows through on pardoning some of the Jan. 6 rioters, he will please his base and not much else. However, that may be all he is concerned about since Biden’s move to protect his own son has made it harder for Democrats to claim the moral high ground,” said Murray.

A majority of Americans (57%) say Biden’s pardon of his son makes it harder for Democrats to criticize similar actions by Trump. Just 37% say it has no effect on Democrats’ credibility in this area. Among members of the public who identify as a Democrat, 37% say Biden’s action undermines their party’s credibility while 52% say it has no effect.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone and online from December 5 to 10, 2024 with 1,006 adults in the United States. The question results in this release have a margin of error of +/- 3.9 percentage points for the full sample. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

[Q1-8 held for future release.]

9. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Joe Biden is doing as president?

Trend:	Dec. 2024	June 2024	April 2024	Feb. 2024	Dec. 2023	Sept. 2023	July 2023	May 2023	March 2023	Jan. 2023
Approve	35%	38%	42%	38%	34%	38%	44%	41%	41%	43%
Disapprove	60%	58%	55%	58%	61%	55%	52%	53%	51%	48%
(VOL) No opinion	5%	4%	3%	5%	5%	7%	4%	6%	8%	9%
(n)	(1,006)	(1,106)	(808)	(902)	(803)	(814)	(910)	(981)	(805)	(805)

Trend:	Dec. 2022	Oct. 2022	Sept. 2022	Aug. 2022	June 2022	May 2022	March 2022	Jan. 2022	Dec. 2021	Nov. 2021	Sept. 2021	July 2021	June 2021	April 2021	March 2021	Jan. 2021
<i>Continued</i>																
Approve	42%	40%	38%	38%	36%	38%	39%	39%	40%	42%	46%	48%	48%	54%	51%	54%
Disapprove	50%	53%	54%	56%	58%	57%	54%	54%	50%	50%	46%	44%	43%	41%	42%	30%
(VOL) No opinion	8%	7%	8%	7%	6%	5%	7%	7%	11%	9%	8%	8%	9%	5%	8%	16%
(n)	(805)	(808)	(806)	(808)	(978)	(807)	(809)	(794)	(808)	(811)	(802)	(804)	(810)	(800)	(802)	(809)

[Q10-17 held for future release.]

18. Have you heard that President Biden recently issued a pardon for his son Hunter, or have you not heard anything about this until now?

	Dec. 2024
Yes, have heard	89%
No, have not heard	11%
(n)	(1,006)

19. Do you approve or disapprove of Biden’s pardon? [Do you approve/disapprove strongly or just somewhat?]

	Dec.
	2024
Strongly approve	17%
Somewhat approve	15%
Somewhat disapprove	21%
Strongly disapprove	37%
(VOL) Don't know	9%
(n)	(1,006)

20. Do you think Hunter Biden’s criminal case was treated the same as similar cases or was he treated more harshly because of who he is?

	Dec.
	2024
Same as similar cases	47%
More harshly	35%
(VOL) Don't know	18%
(n)	(1,006)

21. In your view, does President Biden’s pardon of his son make it harder for Democrats to criticize similar actions by incoming President Trump, or does it have no effect on their own credibility when criticizing Trump?

	Dec.
	2024
Makes it harder	57%
Has no effect	37%
(VOL) Don't know	6%
(n)	(1,006)

22. During his first term in office, President Trump pardoned a number of people close to him, including his daughter’s father-in-law. Thinking back, do you generally approve or disapprove of those pardons?

	Dec.
	2024
Approve	29%
Disapprove	56%
(VOL) Don't know	15%
(n)	(1,006)

23. Do you approve or disapprove of Trump nominating people he pardoned to high-level government positions in his new administration, or doesn’t this matter to you?

	Dec.
	2024
Approve	14%
Disapprove	52%
Does not matter	31%
(VOL) Don't know	3%
(n)	(1,006)

24. Would you approve or disapprove of Trump pardoning people who were convicted of attacking the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021?

	Dec.
	2024
Approve	34%
Disapprove	61%
(VOL) Don't know	5%
(n)	(1,006)

[Q25-26 held for future release.]

METHODOLOGY

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from December 5 to 10, 2024 with a probability-based national random sample of 1,006 adults age 18 and older. Interviews were conducted in English, and included 208 live landline telephone interviews, 540 live cell phone interviews, and 258 online surveys via a cell phone text invitation. Telephone numbers were selected through a mix of random digit dialing and list-based sampling. Landline respondents were selected with a modified Troidahl-Carter youngest adult household screen. Interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, with sample obtained from Dynata (RDD, n=637), Aristotle (list, n=115) and a panel of prior Monmouth poll participants (n=254). Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. The full sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on US Census information (ACS 2022 one-year survey). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.9 percentage points adjusted for sample design effects (1.63). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Demographics (weighted)

Party (self-reported): 27% Republican, 47% Independent, 26% Democrat

Sex: 49% men, 50% women, 1% other

Age: 29% 18-34, 33% 35-54, 38% 55+

Race: 62% White, 11% Black, 17% Hispanic, 10% Asian/other

Education: 38% high school or less, 29% some college, 18% 4 year degree, 15% graduate degree

MARGIN OF ERROR		unweighted sample	moe (+/-)
TOTAL		1,006	3.9%
REGISTERED VOTER	Yes	946	4.1%
	No	60	16.2%
SELF-REPORTED PARTY ID	Republican	252	7.9%
	Independent	453	5.9%
	Democrat	296	7.3%
IDEOLOGY	Liberal	254	7.9%
	Moderate	387	6.4%
	Conservative	338	6.8%
GENDER	Male	475	5.7%
	Female	515	5.5%
AGE	18-34	201	8.8%
	35-54	327	6.9%
	55+	472	5.8%
CHILDREN IN HOME	Yes	219	8.5%
	No	778	4.5%
RACE	White, non-Hispanic	707	4.7%
	Other	276	7.5%
COLLEGE GRADUATE	No degree	459	5.8%
	4 year degree	542	5.4%
WHITE COLLEGE	White, no degree	330	6.9%
	White, 4 year degree	374	6.5%
INCOME	<\$50K	239	8.1%
	\$50 to <\$100K	296	7.3%
	\$100K+	412	6.2%

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Monmouth University Poll -- NATIONAL -- 12/11/24

		TOTAL	REGISTERED TO VOTE		PARTY ID			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Lib	Mod	Con
9. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Joe Biden is doing as president?	Approve	35%	35%	34%	7%	26%	79%	60%	42%	10%
	Disapprove	60%	59%	65%	92%	67%	15%	36%	49%	89%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	6%	1%	1%	8%	6%	3%	9%	1%

		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY			CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
9. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Joe Biden is doing as president?	Approve	33%	37%	28%	32%	41%	32%	35%	31%	40%
	Disapprove	66%	54%	64%	62%	55%	63%	59%	66%	51%
	[VOL] Dont know	2%	9%	8%	6%	3%	5%	6%	3%	9%

		COLLEGE GRAD		WHITE COLLEGE DEGREE		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	White no degree	White college	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
9. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Joe Biden is doing as president?	Approve	30%	43%	24%	44%	38%	35%	33%
	Disapprove	64%	52%	73%	52%	55%	59%	65%
	[VOL] Dont know	6%	5%	3%	4%	6%	6%	2%

		TOTAL	REGISTERED TO VOTE		PARTY ID			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Lib	Mod	Con
18. Have you heard that President Biden recently issued a pardon for his son Hunter, or have you not heard anything about this until now?	Yes, have heard	89%	91%	73%	90%	89%	87%	89%	88%	91%
	No, have not heard	11%	9%	27%	10%	11%	13%	11%	12%	9%

		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY			CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
18. Have you heard that President Biden recently issued a pardon for his son Hunter, or have you not heard anything about this until now?	Yes, have heard	90%	88%	86%	88%	92%	88%	89%	92%	85%
	No, have not heard	10%	12%	14%	12%	8%	12%	11%	8%	15%

		COLLEGE GRAD		WHITE COLLEGE DEGREE		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	White no degree	White college	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
18. Have you heard that President Biden recently issued a pardon for his son Hunter, or have you not heard anything about this until now?	Yes, have heard	86%	95%	90%	95%	83%	89%	95%
	No, have not heard	14%	5%	10%	5%	17%	11%	5%

Monmouth University Poll -- NATIONAL -- 12/11/24

		TOTAL	REGISTERED TO VOTE		PARTY ID			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Lib	Mod	Con
19. Do you approve or disapprove of Bidens pardon? [PROBE: Do you approve/disapprove strongly or just somewhat?]	Strongly approve	17%	18%	16%	5%	12%	40%	25%	20%	8%
	Somewhat approve	15%	16%	13%	7%	15%	25%	25%	18%	7%
	Somewhat disapprove	21%	20%	27%	17%	24%	18%	22%	21%	18%
	Strongly disapprove	37%	38%	30%	64%	40%	6%	17%	30%	61%
	[VOL] Dont know	9%	8%	15%	7%	9%	11%	12%	11%	6%

		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY			CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
19. Do you approve or disapprove of Bidens pardon? [PROBE: Do you approve/disapprove strongly or just somewhat?]	Strongly approve	16%	19%	8%	14%	27%	18%	17%	12%	26%
	Somewhat approve	19%	12%	16%	14%	16%	13%	16%	16%	15%
	Somewhat disapprove	18%	22%	28%	21%	15%	19%	21%	22%	18%
	Strongly disapprove	40%	35%	30%	46%	36%	40%	36%	43%	28%
	[VOL] Dont know	7%	11%	19%	5%	5%	9%	9%	6%	14%

		COLLEGE GRAD		WHITE COLLEGE DEGREE		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	White no degree	White college	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
19. Do you approve or disapprove of Bidens pardon? [PROBE: Do you approve/disapprove strongly or just somewhat?]	Strongly approve	18%	16%	12%	13%	23%	15%	15%
	Somewhat approve	13%	21%	11%	24%	15%	15%	19%
	Somewhat disapprove	20%	22%	22%	24%	18%	25%	19%
	Strongly disapprove	40%	32%	49%	33%	36%	32%	42%
	[VOL] Dont know	9%	9%	6%	7%	9%	13%	6%

		TOTAL	REGISTERED TO VOTE		PARTY ID			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Lib	Mod	Con
20. Do you think Hunter Bidens criminal case was treated the same as similar cases or was he treated more harshly because of who he is?	Same as similar cases	47%	47%	51%	66%	52%	20%	37%	43%	62%
	More harshly	35%	35%	32%	16%	26%	68%	46%	40%	19%
	[VOL] Dont know	18%	18%	18%	18%	22%	11%	18%	17%	18%

		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY			CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
20. Do you think Hunter Bidens criminal case was treated the same as similar cases or was he treated more harshly because of who he is?	Same as similar cases	51%	45%	46%	51%	46%	54%	45%	50%	42%
	More harshly	35%	34%	29%	30%	43%	26%	37%	33%	38%
	[VOL] Dont know	14%	21%	25%	20%	11%	20%	18%	17%	19%

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		COLLEGE GRAD		WHITE COLLEGE DEGREE		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	White no degree	White college	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
20. Do you think Hunter Bidens criminal case was treated the same as similar cases or was he treated more harshly because of who he is?	Same as similar cases	51%	39%	54%	44%	47%	47%	48%
	More harshly	30%	44%	28%	42%	34%	34%	38%
	[VOL] Dont know	19%	16%	18%	14%	19%	19%	14%

		TOTAL	REGISTERED TO VOTE		PARTY ID			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Lib	Mod	Con
21. In your view, does President Bidens pardon of his son make it harder for Democrats to criticize similar actions by incoming President Trump, or does it have no effect on their own credibility when criticizing Trump?	Makes it harder	57%	57%	51%	66%	62%	37%	45%	54%	69%
	Has no effect	37%	36%	45%	27%	35%	52%	49%	38%	27%
	[VOL] Dont know	6%	6%	4%	7%	3%	12%	6%	7%	4%

		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY			CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
21. In your view, does President Bidens pardon of his son make it harder for Democrats to criticize similar actions by incoming President Trump, or does it have no effect on their own credibility when criticizing Trump?	Makes it harder	58%	55%	54%	67%	50%	66%	54%	61%	50%
	Has no effect	38%	37%	39%	30%	42%	30%	39%	35%	41%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	8%	7%	3%	8%	4%	7%	4%	9%

		COLLEGE GRAD		WHITE COLLEGE DEGREE		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	White no degree	White college	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
21. In your view, does President Bidens pardon of his son make it harder for Democrats to criticize similar actions by incoming President Trump, or does it have no effect on their own credibility when criticizing Trump?	Makes it harder	56%	58%	62%	59%	47%	62%	60%
	Has no effect	37%	38%	33%	38%	43%	33%	37%
	[VOL] Dont know	7%	5%	5%	3%	10%	4%	3%

		TOTAL	REGISTERED TO VOTE		PARTY ID			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Lib	Mod	Con
22. During his first term in office, President Trump pardoned a number of people close to him, including his daughters father-in-law. Thinking back, do you generally approve or disapprove of those pardons?	Approve	29%	29%	30%	44%	28%	16%	20%	23%	44%
	Disapprove	56%	56%	51%	32%	58%	74%	68%	63%	38%
	[VOL] Dont know	15%	15%	19%	24%	13%	9%	12%	14%	18%

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		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY			CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
22. During his first term in office, President Trump pardoned a number of people close to him, including his daughters father-in-law. Thinking back, do you generally approve or disapprove of those pardons?	Approve	34%	26%	20%	33%	34%	30%	29%	31%	26%
	Disapprove	56%	54%	60%	56%	52%	54%	56%	53%	60%
	[VOL] Dont know	10%	21%	20%	11%	15%	16%	15%	16%	14%

		COLLEGE GRAD		WHITE COLLEGE DEGREE		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	White no degree	White college	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
22. During his first term in office, President Trump pardoned a number of people close to him, including his daughters father-in-law. Thinking back, do you generally approve or disapprove of those pardons?	Approve	34%	21%	36%	22%	30%	30%	27%
	Disapprove	50%	66%	46%	65%	53%	56%	61%
	[VOL] Dont know	16%	13%	18%	13%	17%	14%	12%

		TOTAL	REGISTERED TO VOTE		PARTY ID			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Lib	Mod	Con
23. Do you approve or disapprove of Trump nominating people he pardoned to high-level government positions in his new administration, or doesnt this matter to you?	Approve	14%	14%	10%	28%	11%	3%	6%	10%	24%
	Disapprove	52%	51%	61%	15%	55%	84%	73%	64%	23%
	Does not matter	31%	31%	29%	49%	32%	11%	19%	24%	48%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%	4%	0%	7%	3%	1%	3%	2%	5%

		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY			CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
23. Do you approve or disapprove of Trump nominating people he pardoned to high-level government positions in his new administration, or doesnt this matter to you?	Approve	17%	10%	7%	19%	13%	16%	13%	16%	10%
	Disapprove	47%	56%	63%	44%	50%	49%	53%	48%	59%
	Does not matter	34%	29%	28%	34%	31%	33%	31%	33%	29%
	[VOL] Dont know	3%	4%	2%	3%	5%	2%	4%	4%	3%

		COLLEGE GRAD		WHITE COLLEGE DEGREE		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	White no degree	White college	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
23. Do you approve or disapprove of Trump nominating people he pardoned to high-level government positions in his new administration, or doesnt this matter to you?	Approve	16%	9%	19%	10%	15%	13%	12%
	Disapprove	46%	65%	40%	61%	51%	53%	56%
	Does not matter	35%	23%	37%	25%	30%	31%	29%
	[VOL] Dont know	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%

Monmouth University Poll -- NATIONAL -- 12/11/24

		TOTAL	REGISTERED TO VOTE		PARTY ID			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY		
			Yes	No	Rep	Ind	Dem	Lib	Mod	Con
24. Would you approve or disapprove of Trump pardoning people who were convicted of attacking the U.S. Capitol on January 6th, 2021?	Approve	34%	35%	26%	64%	33%	6%	11%	23%	64%
	Disapprove	61%	61%	67%	27%	62%	94%	87%	71%	32%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	5%	7%	9%	5%	0%	3%	6%	5%

		GENDER		AGE 3-WAY			CHILDREN IN HOME		RACE	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Yes	No	White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth
24. Would you approve or disapprove of Trump pardoning people who were convicted of attacking the U.S. Capitol on January 6th, 2021?	Approve	42%	27%	22%	42%	37%	40%	32%	41%	22%
	Disapprove	54%	67%	73%	53%	59%	54%	63%	54%	73%
	[VOL] Dont know	4%	6%	5%	5%	4%	6%	4%	5%	4%

		COLLEGE GRAD		WHITE COLLEGE DEGREE		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	White no degree	White college	<\$50K	\$50-100K	\$100K+
24. Would you approve or disapprove of Trump pardoning people who were convicted of attacking the U.S. Capitol on January 6th, 2021?	Approve	37%	28%	47%	30%	28%	33%	39%
	Disapprove	58%	68%	47%	66%	68%	61%	56%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	5%	6%	4%	3%	6%	4%