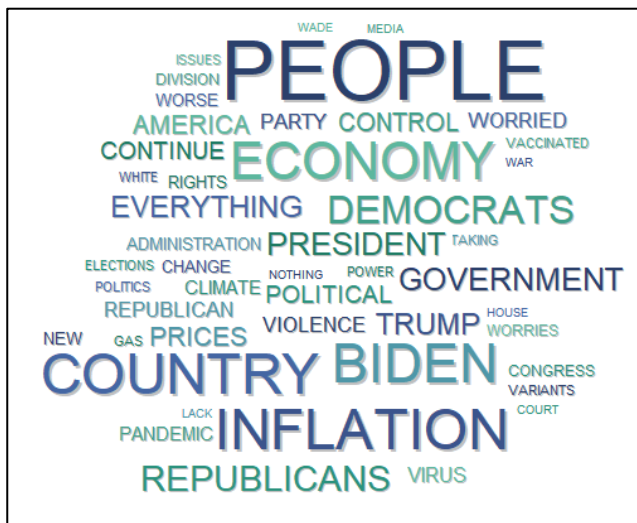


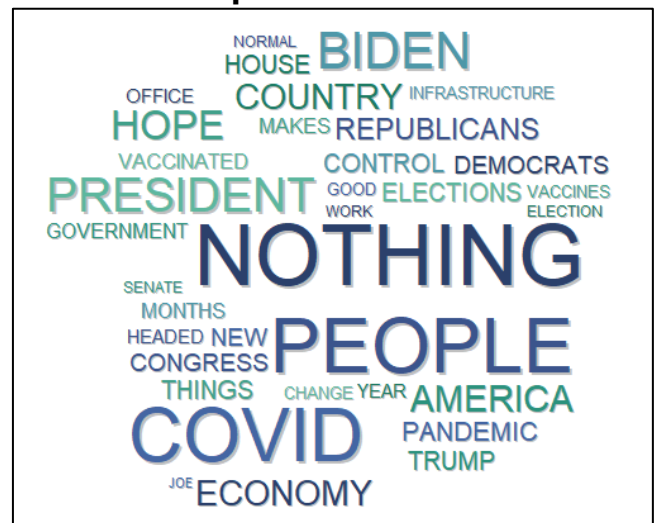
In their own words: Americans are more worried than hopeful heading into 2022; here's why

Jan. 12, 2022

Inflation, the economy and politics worry Americans in 2022



Plurality of Americans can't name anything to be hopeful about in 2022



Question: "Looking ahead, what makes you most hopeful about where America is headed in the next 12 months?" and "Looking ahead, what worries you most about where America is headed in the next 12 months?" Word clouds depict highest frequency words in verbatim answers.

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of McCourtney Institute's Mood of the Nation Poll, Nov. 30-Dec. 7, 2021; N = 1,200 U.S. adults age 18 or older.

Summary and key findings

Among other issues, the December 2021 Mood of the Nation Poll seeks to gain insight on Americans' hopes and worries for where the country is headed in the next year. The poll includes open-ended questions that allow respondents to identify what makes them most hopeful and what makes them most worried about the country's immediate future, and then give a rating of how hopeful or worried they feel about it.

Overall, this poll finds that 55% of American adults feel extremely worried about where the country is headed in the next year, while only 18% feel extremely hopeful.

- This is only the second time since the Mood of the Nation Poll began in 2016 that the proportions of Democrats, Independents and Republicans who said they are “extremely worried” about the country were all above 50%.
- When combining those who said they were either “extremely” or “very” worried, 84% of American adults feel high levels of worry. In a response to a separate question only 42% indicated they were either “extremely” or “very” hopeful; half the proportion of who feel high levels of worry.
- Twenty-six percent of American adults say that nothing makes them feel hopeful about where the country is headed in 2022.
- While levels of worry remain consistent across different demographics, Black Americans and older Americans appear to be more hopeful than others.

When asked what makes them most hopeful or most worried, a majority of poll respondents gave answers that included references to the same three topics for both: politics, COVID-19 and the economy.

Hopes

- About one-third of respondents said that politics made them most hopeful about the immediate future of the country.
 - Forty-five percent of all Republicans said that they are most hopeful about something related to politics, compared to only 27% of Democrats and 23% of Independents.
- One in 5 respondents say that something related to COVID-19 makes them most hopeful about the country's immediate future, and 1 in 10 respondents cite the economy as what makes them most hopeful.

- Democrats cite COVID-19 and the economy as the source of their hopefulness at significantly higher proportions than Republicans. Independents are closer to Republicans when it comes to the proportion that feels hopeful about COVID-19, but they are closer to Democrats when it comes to the economy.

Worries

- About one-third of respondents also said that they are most worried about politics regarding where the country is headed in the next year.
 - Republicans (40%) are more worried about politics than Democrats (33%) and Independents (27%).
- About one-fifth of respondents, each, cited COVID-19 and the economy as the thing that makes them most worried about where the country is headed.
 - Roughly one-quarter of Democrats (28%) say they are worried about COVID-19, compared to only 15% of Independents and 14% of Republicans.
 - Roughly one-quarter of Republicans and Independents say they are worried about the economy, compared to only 1 in 10 Democrats.

Introduction

Penn State's nonpartisan McCourtney Institute for Democracy regularly conducts the nationally representative Mood of the Nation Poll to gauge how Americans are feeling about various aspects of American politics and society.¹

Giving us a snapshot of how Americans are feeling on the cusp of the New Year, the December poll, as with previous polls, included a series of questions regarding what makes the public most hopeful and most worried about the future of the country:

- 1a. Looking ahead, what makes you most hopeful about where America is headed in the next 12 months?

[Open-ended question: Verbatim answers recorded]

- 1b. You said [previous answer] makes you most hopeful. How hopeful does that make you feel?
- Extremely hopeful
 - Very hopeful
 - Somewhat hopeful
 - Just a little hopeful
 - Nothing made me hopeful

- 2a. Looking ahead, what worries you most about where America is headed in the next 12 months?

[Open-ended question: Verbatim answers recorded]

- 2b. You said [previous answer] worries you the most. How worried does that make you feel?
- Extremely worried
 - Very worried
 - Somewhat worried
 - Just a little worried
 - Nothing made me worried

To see whether Americans' opinions on these topics vary according to demographic, social and economic characteristics, we analyzed the results of each question by gender (women, men), age (four groups), race and ethnicity (four groups are available in this survey: White, non-

¹ For additional information about the Mood of the Nation Poll see the appendix to this brief. For additional details about this survey's methodology, please see <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/surveys>

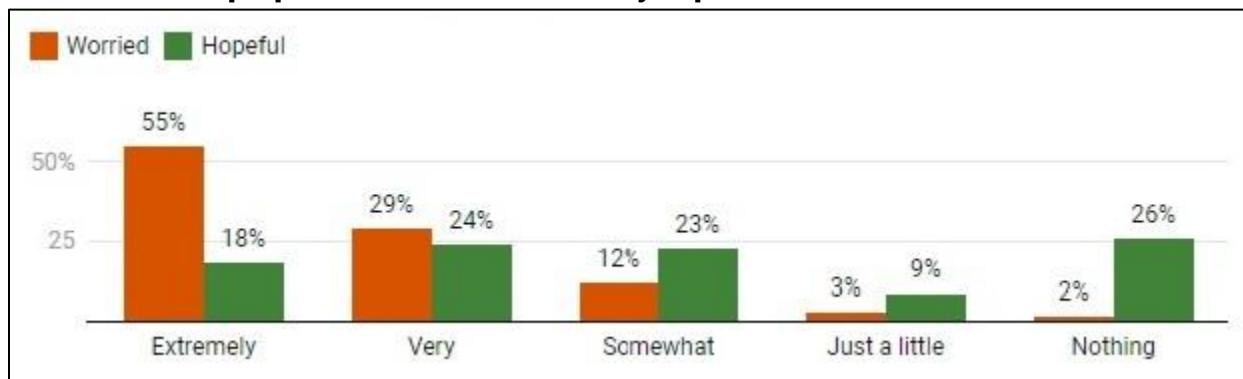
Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; Hispanic; Other), educational attainment and political affiliation (Republican, Independent, Democrat as derived from self-placement or derived from self-placement on a seven-category scale ranging from “Strong Democrat” to “Strong Republican”). The number of respondents in each group are detailed in the methodology report that accompanies this brief.

Americans' feelings of hope and worry

Heading into 2022, Americans are feeling high levels of worry and much more temperate levels of hope. According to the December Mood of the Nation Poll, over half of the American public (55%) is “extremely worried” about where the country is headed over the next 12 months, while about one-fifth (18%) is “extremely hopeful.”

Combining those who report feeling extremely worried or hopeful and those who report feeling very worried or hopeful, 84% of Americans say they feel high levels of worry for the immediate future of the country, while half that proportion (42%) feel high levels of hope. Roughly one-quarter of Americans (26%) report that nothing makes them feel hopeful, which is significantly higher than the only 2% of Americans who say that nothing makes them worried.

Over half of Americans disapprove are “extremely worried” about the country in 2022, three times the proportion who are “extremely hopeful”



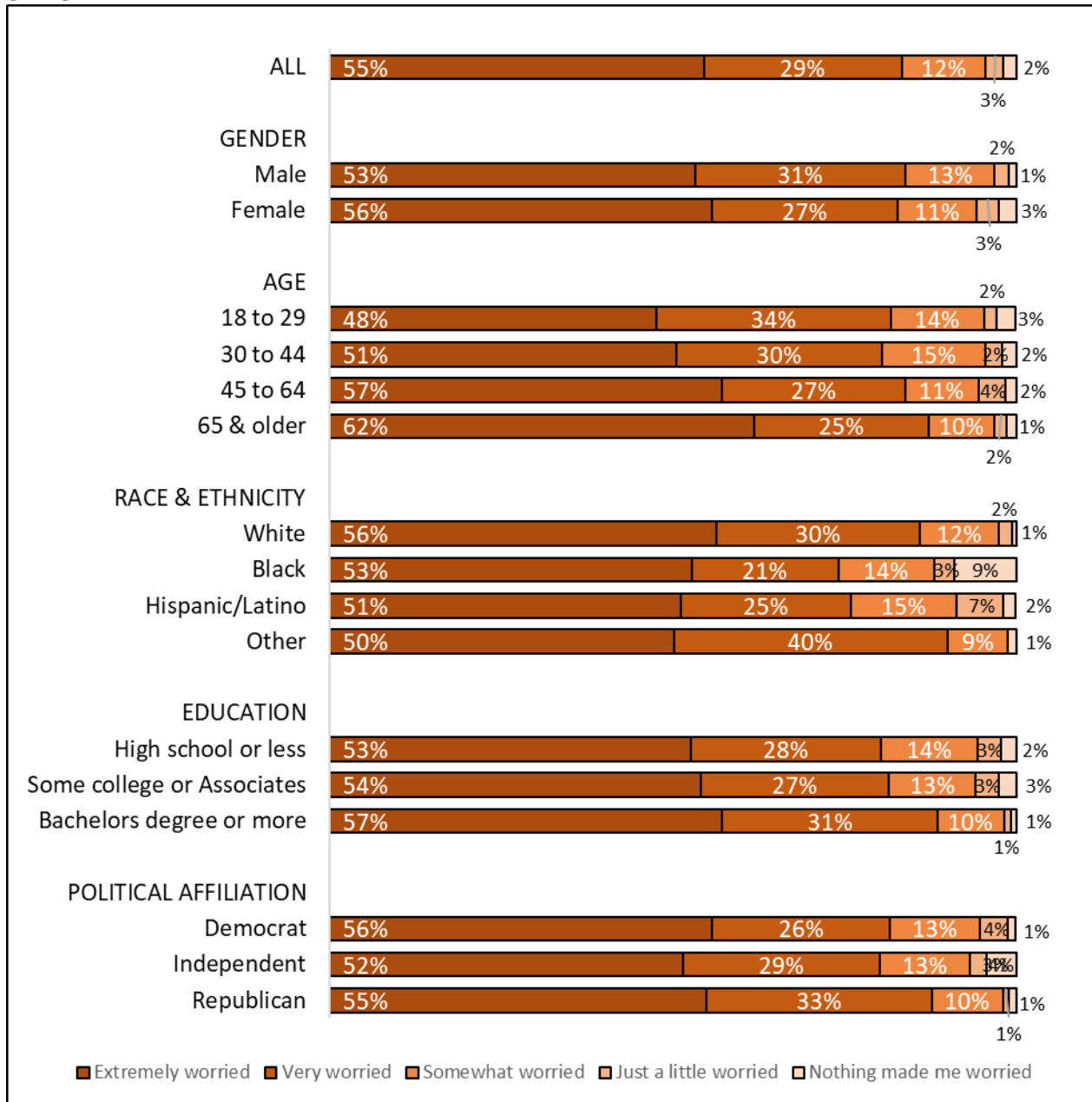
Question: “You said [short phrase] make you most hopeful. How hopeful does that make you feel?” and “You said [short phrase] makes you most worried. How worried does that make you feel?”

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of McCourtney Institute’s Mood of the Nation Poll, Nov. 30-Dec. 7, 2021. N = 1,200 U.S. adults age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ± 3.7 percentage points, and is larger for subgroups.

Levels of worry remain remarkably consistent across party affiliation, gender, age, education and race, with no significant differences among them. Roughly half of all groups indicate they are “extremely worried” regardless of gender, age, race and ethnicity, level of educational attainment or political affiliation.

When it comes to hope, Black Americans and, to a lesser extent, older Americans appear more hopeful than others. For example, while 19% of all Americans are extremely hopeful about the immediate future of the country, 35% of Black Americans and 23% of seniors (Americans 65 and older) report feeling extremely hopeful. And only 19% of seniors report that nothing made them hopeful, seven percentage points less than the average (26%).

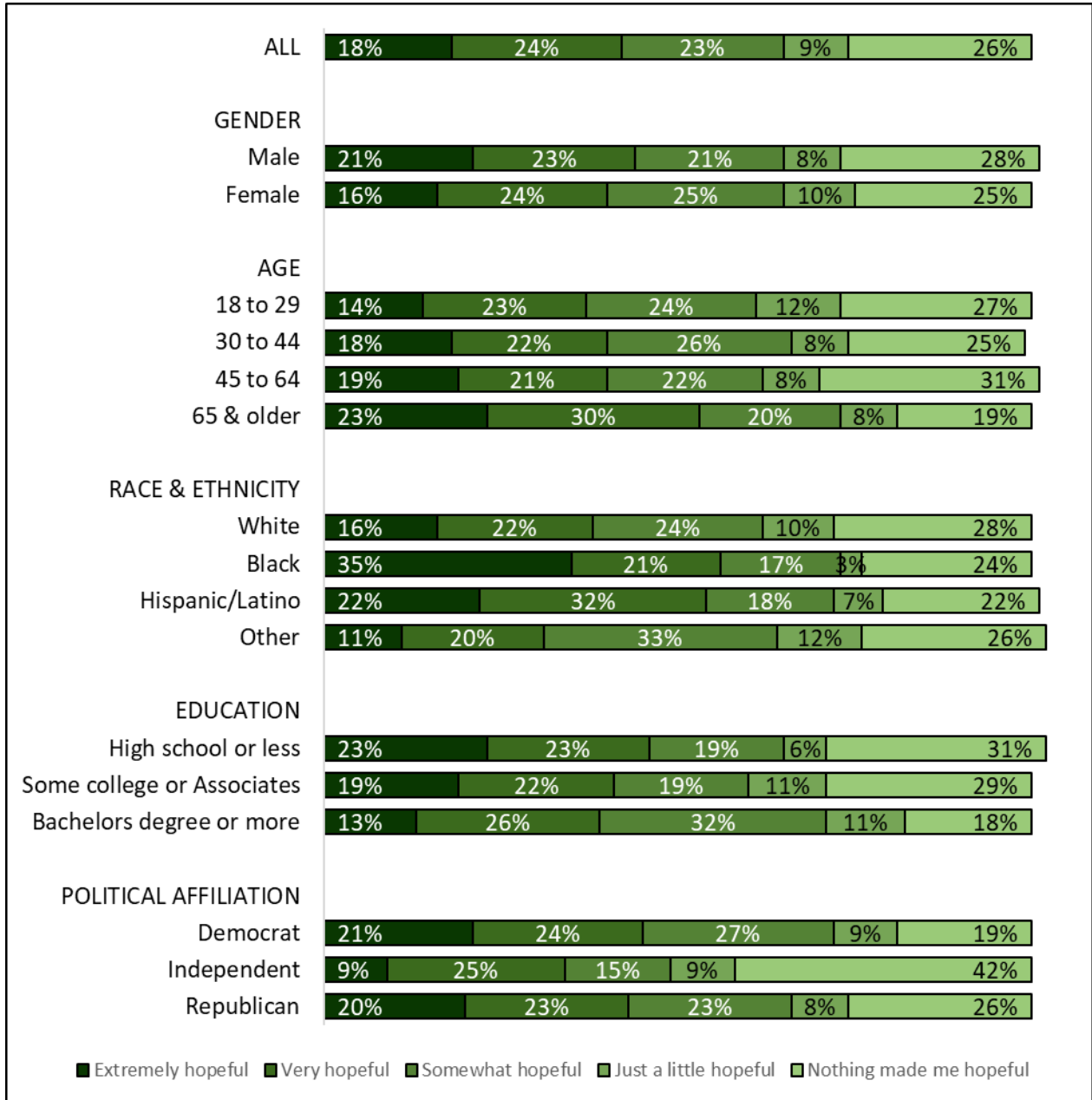
More than half of all Americans are “extremely worried” about where the country is headed in 2022; this level remains relatively consistent across various demographic groups



Question: "You said [short phrase] makes you most worried (about where America is headed in the next 12 months). How worried does that make you?"

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of McCourtney Institute’s Mood of the Nation Poll, Nov. 30-Dec. 7, 2021. N = 1,200 U.S. adults age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ±3.7 percentage points, and is larger for subgroups.

Only 1 in 5 Americans is extremely hopeful about the country in 2022; Black and older Americans are more hopeful than others



Question: "You said [short phrase] make you most hopeful about where America is headed in the next 12 months. How hopeful does that make you?"

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of McCourtney Institute's Mood of the Nation Poll, Nov. 30-Dec. 7, 2021. N = 1,200 U.S. adults age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ±3.7 percentage points, and is larger for subgroups.

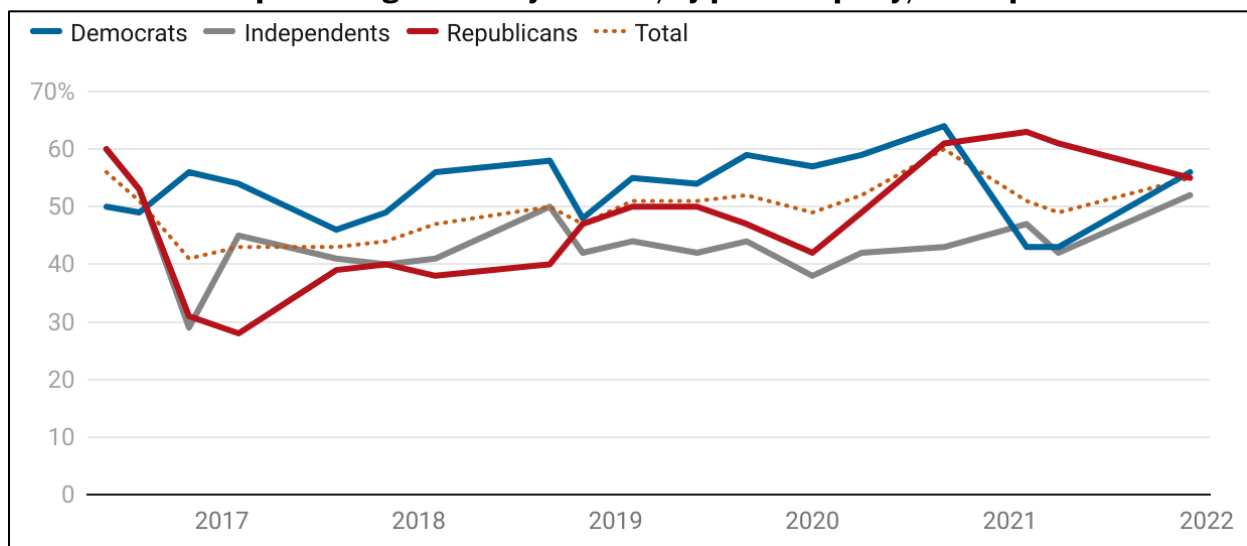
Level of worry near all-time high, regardless of party

The proportion of all Americans who report feeling extremely worried, 55% is near an all-time high for the Mood of the Nation Poll. Sixty percent of Americans felt extremely worried in September 2020 and a nearly similar 56% felt extremely worried in June 2016.

Furthermore, the similar proportions of Democrats (56%), Independents (52%) and Republicans (55%) that report being extremely worried is noteworthy: It is only the second time since the Mood of the Nation Poll began in 2016 that all three political affiliations registered a level of “extremely worried” above 50%--the first time was in August of 2016.

A higher proportion of Democrats than Republicans indicated that they were extremely worried from the time that Trump was elected president (Nov. 2016) until just before Trump lost the 2020 election. The exception to this difference came in and around the time of the 2018 mid-term elections when Democrats gained control of the U.S. House. At that time the proportion of Democrats indicating they felt “extremely worried” temporarily fell while the proportion of Republicans indicating they were “extremely worried” increased.

Americans who report being extremely worried, by political party; 2016-present



Question: “You said [short phrase] worries you the most (about where America is headed in the next 12 months). How worried does that make you feel?” Data represents proportion of respondents who answered “extremely worried.”

Source: McCourtney Institute’s Mood of the Nation Poll, June 2016 through December 2021.

Americans describe their hopes and worries for the country in 2022

The Mood of the Nation Poll asked respondents to identify both the thing that makes them most hopeful about where the country is headed in the next 12 months and the thing that makes them most worried.

By analyzing the larger themes in the open-ended answers, we can get a snapshot of the preoccupations of Americans at the end of 2021 and the dawn of the new year. Entering 2022, Americans are by and large hopeful and worried about the same three things: politics, COVID-19 and the economy.

Hopes

Respondents to the Mood of the Nation Poll were most inclined to name politics as the thing that made them most hopeful; 32% of respondents gave an answer that fell into this category. Among those who indicated that they were either extremely or very hopeful, an even higher percentage (40%) mentioned something related to politics when asked what made them most hopeful about where America is headed in the next year.

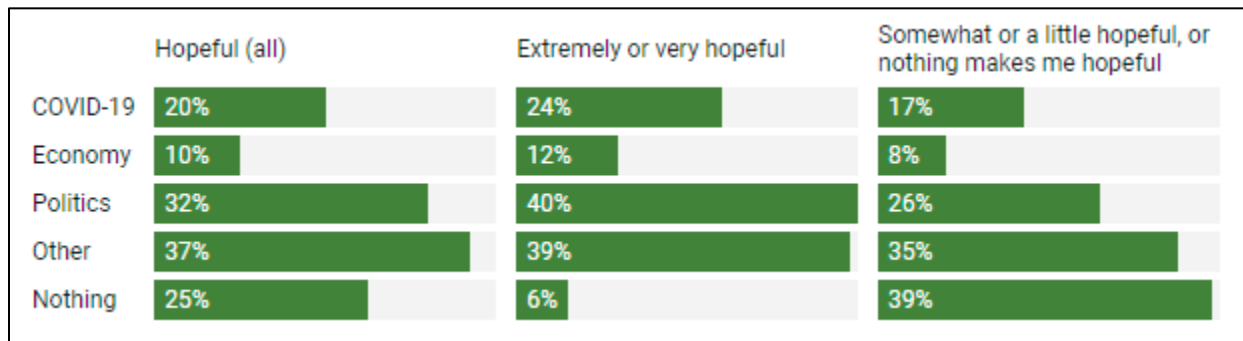
Forty-five percent of all Republicans mentioned something related to politics when asked what makes them most hopeful about where the country is headed in the next year, compared to only 27% of all Democrats and 23% of Independents. Of all Republican respondents who say they feel extremely or very hopeful about the country, 59% cite politics as the thing they are most hopeful about. The proportion of extremely or very hopeful Democrats (31%) and Independents (28%) who mention politics, however, only increases by a few percentage points.

Democrats tended to be hopeful about who currently holds office, while Republicans were hopeful about the 2022 midterm elections and the possibility of Republicans taking control of Congress. For example:

“Current leadership in White House and congress.” – 42-year-old White man from Nevada, Democrat, extremely hopeful.

“I am most hopeful that the Republicans will win the majority of seats in the House and Senate.” – 56-year-old White woman from Georgia, Democrat, extremely hopeful.

What Americans say makes them most hopeful about where the country is headed in 2022



Question: “Looking ahead, what makes you most hopeful about where America is headed in the next 12 months?” Graph shows main themes coded from open-ended comments, with some respondents’ answers included in more than one of the top 3 categories (COVID-19, Economy and Politics). Coded answers are cross tabulated with the answers to the subsequent question, “You said [short phrase] makes you most hopeful (about where America is headed in the next 12 months.) How hopeful does that make you?”

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of McCourtney Institute’s Mood of the Nation Poll, Nov. 30-Dec. 7, 2021. N=1,200 U.S. adults age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ± 3.7 percentage points, and is larger for subgroups.

Respondents also are hopeful that the country will be able to get the pandemic under control in the year ahead, and the majority specifically mentioned vaccines and vaccination progress. One-quarter of all Democrats mention something related to COVID-19 as the thing that makes them most hopeful, including 32% of Democrats who say they are extremely or very hopeful about where the country is headed in the next year. By comparison, only 16% of Republicans and 14% of Independents mention something related to COVID-19 as the thing that makes them most hopeful about the year ahead.

“The increase in vaccination rates.” – 78-year-old Hispanic woman from Texas, Democrat, extremely hopeful.

“I’m hopeful that COVID will be under control and that people can start visiting with friends and family more often.” – 33-year-old White woman from Kansas, Independent, very hopeful.

“Increases in COVID vaccinations.” – 25-year-old White man from Florida, Democrat, extremely hopeful.

One in 10 respondents feel hopeful about the economy. Democrats (13%) and Independents (10%) are far more inclined than Republicans (5%) to give an answer related to the economy as the thing that makes them most hopeful about where the country is headed in the next year.

“I firmly believe the majority of people in the U. S. want to do the right thing. They will continue to follow the COVID rules, get vaccinated and work and get educated either in trade schools or college. The economy will begin to level out as supplies increase and inflation decreases. I believe COVID is here to stay and we will begin to learn to live differently in terms of our health and how we treat others.” – 68-year-old Hispanic woman from California, Independent, very hopeful.

“As a whole, that much of the infrastructure will be repaired which will also provide jobs.” – 58-year-old White woman from Idaho, Democrat, very hopeful.

“Due to vaccine of COVID-19, economy will be good.” – 26-year-old Black man from Texas, Republican, extremely hopeful.

When asked what makes them most hopeful about where the country is heading, a substantial proportion—one-quarter—of respondents replied “Nothing” or something very similar. Independents give this answer at a significantly higher proportion, 41%, than either Republicans (25%) or Democrats (18%).

Worries

Politics, COVID-19 and the economy also are the source of Americans’ worries for 2022. Many respondents voiced multiple concerns in their answer, and far fewer responded that “nothing” concerns them as compared to their responses to the question of what makes them hopeful (11% compared to 25% overall).

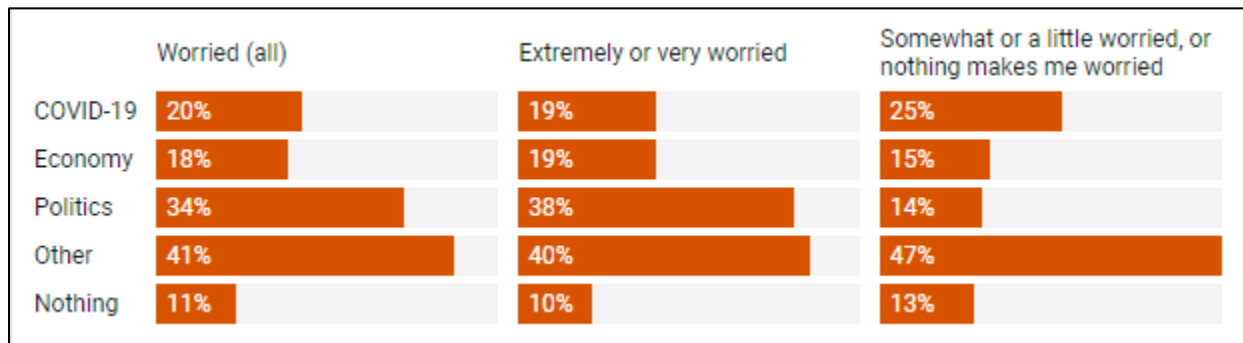
Thirty-four percent of respondents gave an answer that mentions something to do with politics as the thing that makes them most worried about the country in the year ahead, making it the most common theme that emerged from the responses. Intriguingly, while more Republicans than Democrats are hopeful about politics, Republicans (40%) are also more worried about politics than Democrats (33%) and Independents (27%).

“The division. We are a nation divided. The governmental overreach in all aspects of our lives. Inflation and higher taxes.” – 46-year-old White man from Ohio, Republican, extremely worried.

“That America continues on the polarization in politics that dramatically divides our country.” – 64-year-old White man from Florida, Democrat, extremely worried.

“The disinformation spreading in the country and its impact on our democracy and ability to conquer COVID.” – 42-year-old White woman from Colorado, Independent, extremely worried.

What Americans say makes them most worried about where the country is headed in 2022



Question: "Looking ahead, what worries you most about where America is headed in the next 12 months?" Graph shows main themes coded from open-ended comments, with some respondents' answers included in more than one of the top 3 categories (COVID-19, Economy and Politics). Coded answers are cross tabulated with the answers to the subsequent question, "You said [short phrase] makes you most hopeful about where America is headed in the next 12 months. How hopeful does that make you?"

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of McCourtney Institute's Mood of the Nation Poll, Nov. 30-Dec. 7, 2021. N=1,200 U.S. adults age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ± 3.7 percentage points, and is larger for subgroups.

Unlike with the hopeful responses, COVID-19 and the economy are relatively tied in terms of the proportion who say they are worried about them. This is because terms related to the economy are present in 18% of the responses concerning Americans' worries compared to only 10% of responses about Americans' hopes. And, although, these two categories are less prevalent than politics, the terms "COVID," "economy" and "inflation" are among the most frequently occurring single terms in the "worried" verbatim answers.

While 1 in 5 respondents say that they are most worried about something related to COVID-19, a little over one-quarter of all Democrats (28%) say they are most worried about the pandemic, compared to 15% of Independents and 14% of Republicans.

"Politicization of the pandemic prolongs [it] and causes unnecessary death and illness."
– 44-year-old Asian woman from Michigan, Democrat, extremely worried.

"More COVID outbreaks." – 26-year-old White woman from Kentucky, Republican, extremely worried.

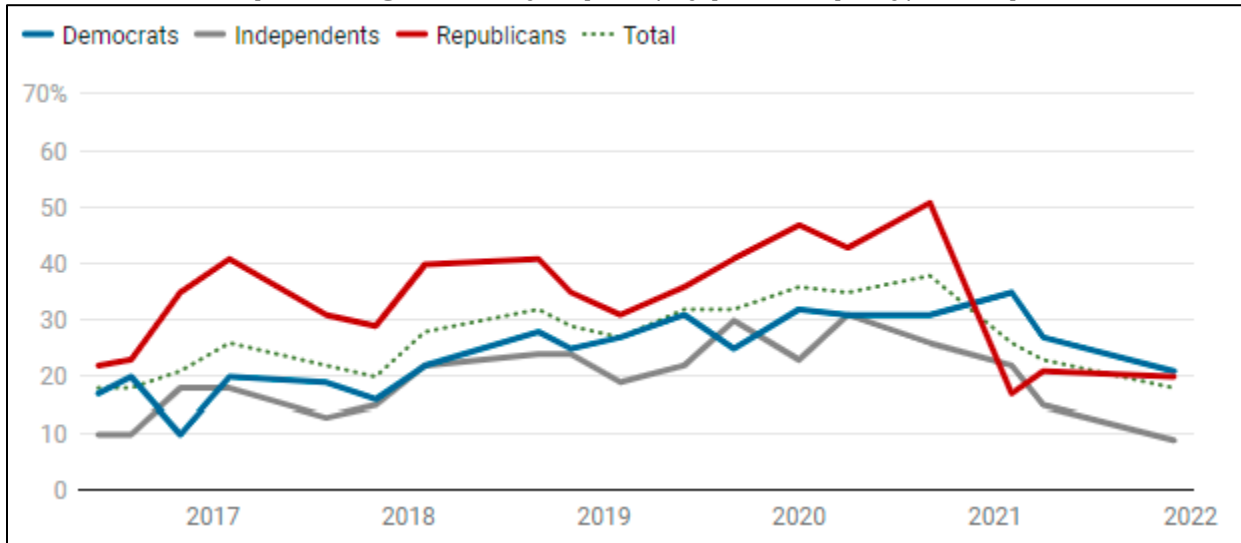
Nearly one-quarter of all Republicans (24%) and 22% of all Independents mention something related to the economy as what most worries them, compared to only 1 in 10 Democrats (11%). When looking at just those who say they are extremely or very worried, one-quarter, each, of Republicans (25%) and Independents (25%) mention the economy, while only 10% of Democrats do so.

“Economy, gas and grocery prices, climbing insurance premiums and deductibles, climate change.” – 59-year-old Hispanic man from Michigan, Republican, extremely worried.

“The economy is suffering. Prices are going up, up, up and wages are not.” – 20-year-old White woman from Ohio, Independent, extremely worried.

Appendix

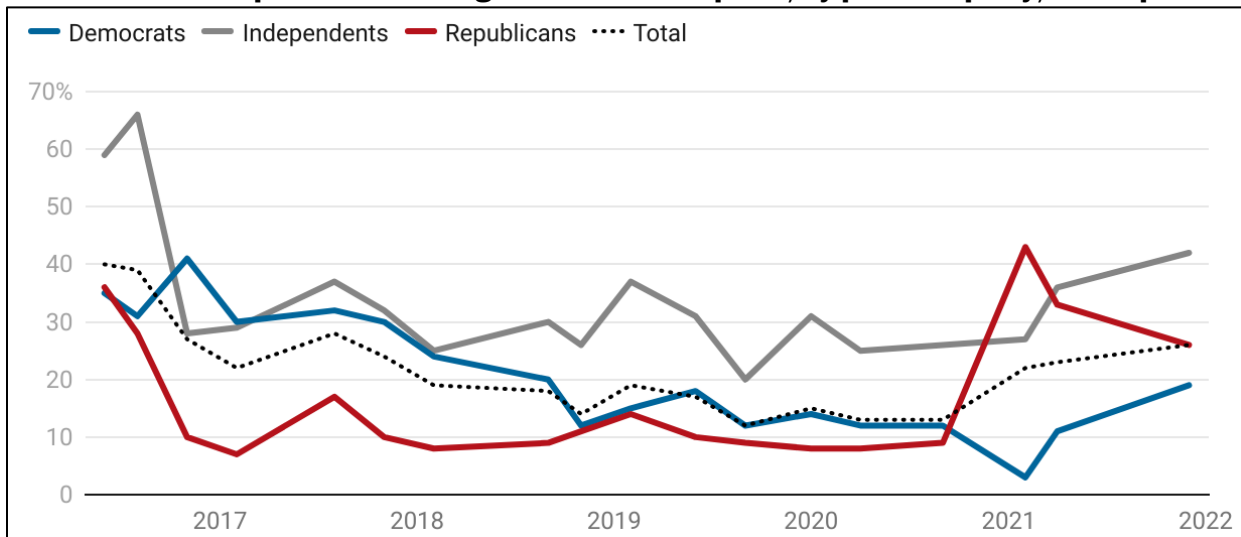
Americans who report being extremely hopeful, by political party; 2016-present



Question: "You said [short phrase] makes you most hopeful (about where America is headed in the next 12 months). How hopeful does that make you feel?" Data represents proportion of respondents who answered "extremely hopeful."

Source: McCourtney Institute's Mood of the Nation Poll, June 2016 through December 2021.

Americans who report that nothing makes them hopeful, by political party; 2016-present



Question: "You said [short phrase] makes you most hopeful (about where America is headed in the next 12 months). How hopeful does that make you feel?" Data represents proportion of respondents who answered "nothing made me hopeful."

Source: McCourtney Institute's Mood of the Nation Poll, June 2016 through December 2021.

Examples of reasons given by those who are extremely or very hopeful about where the country is headed in the next 12 months

Comment	Age	Sex	Race	State	Political affiliation
President Joe Biden, along with VP Harris, leading Democrats to pass his signature bills and tell us the truth about COVID.	55	Female	White	CA	Democrat
Current leadership in White House and Congress.	42	Male	White	NV	Democrat
The continued leadership of the Democratic Party is what makes me hopeful about where America is headed in the next 12 months.	45	Male	Black	OH	Democrat
Trump isn't president.	28	Female	White	MD	Democrat
With President Biden it is getting better.	67	Female	Hispanic	TX	Democrat
I'm hopeful about Congress being able to pass sweeping new legislation that will help the country head in the right direction.	47	Female	Asian	CA	Democrat
As a whole - that much of the infrastructure will be repaired which will also provide jobs.	58	Female	White	ID	Democrat
The fact that despite the challenges we may face in the next 12 months, we have a strong leader in the White House who cares about the American people.	53	Male	White	NC	Democrat
The peace and quiet the Biden Administration has brought has made me feel much better. The steady progress on COVID 19 and the progressive agendas coming from Congress make me feel much more assurance in our future.	58	Male	White	GA	Democrat
What makes me most hopeful about where America is headed in the next 12 months is knowing that President Biden, Vice President Harris, their administration, and the Democrats in Congress are succeeding in getting legislation passed which will benefit all Americans, regardless of their political affiliation.	39	Female	White	OR	Democrat
The Build Back Better plan being passed by the House.	21	Female	White	NC	Democrat
The Senate passing the infrastructure bill with bipartisan support.	26	Female	White	GA	Democrat

That Trump isn't President and Biden seems like he's making a lot of positive things happen.	46	Female	White	OR	Democrat
The upcoming mid-term elections.	73	Male	White	OR	Independent
Every time I read a story about people working in their communities to solve social problems, even when the government tells them not to, my hope grows that we will take care of each other and be good to each other and not let government divide us.	51	Female	Other	AK	Independent
That we will get rid of some of the Trump followers in congress and hold Trump responsible for January 6th insurrection.	71	Female	White	FL	Independent
Re-elect Trump.	69	Male	White	UT	Independent
That many liberals will be replaced with conservatives in the 2022 election.	72	Female	White	KS	Independent
The mid-term elections have the promise of reversing the Biden agenda.	54	Male	Hispanic	AZ	Independent
The possibility that the Democrats can lose the House and Senate in 2022.	75	Female	White	TN	Republican
That we have the chance to elect new people next November to replace those that are taking the USA into a dreadful direction.	60	Male	White	PA	Republican
Republican president.	84	Female	White	NH	Republican
I am most hopeful that the Republicans will win the majority of seats in the House and Senate.	56	Female	White	GA	Republican
That the Republicans take control in Nov. 2022 and return us to some kind of normal.	83	Female	White	CO	Republican
The 2022 midterm elections where Republicans will take back both House and Senate.	38	Female	Black	MD	Republican
To get rid of COVID and Biden and get a new administration in.	55	Female	Hispanic	FL	Republican
The election results for the 2021 election in Virginia.	25	Male	White	VA	Republican
Hopefully Trump running for office again and more Republicans making decisions	29	Female	White	VA	Republican

That more and more folks/ages are getting vaccinated.	60	Female	White	MD	Democrat
The fact that Joe Biden is president gives me hope that things will start to return to a semi normal America. With actual policies to help stop COVID we're already doing better than the last president.	26	Female	White	CA	Democrat
A cure for COVID-19, people going back to work, family outings, better education for our children.	41	Female	Black	OH	Democrat
More research will be done on cures for diseases. Hopefully, better vaccines and treatments will help more people.	37	Male	Black	GA	Democrat
Seeing the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.	28	Male	Asian	NV	Democrat
The increase in vaccination rates.	78	Female	Hispanic	TX	Democrat
That more people are being vaccinated against COVID-19 which will help socially and economically.	63	Female	Two or more races	NC	Democrat
I am hopeful that America will combat the Omicron variant of COVID-19 with science and previous knowledge from the original COVID-19.	21	Male	Asian	CA	Democrat
I hope the COVID-19 goes away.	25	Male	Hispanic	CT	Independent
I hope everyone takes COVID for the deadly virus it is & do their part to help stop it.	68	Female	White	MS	Independent
I'm hopeful that COVID will be under control and that people can start visiting with friends and family more often.	33	Female	White	KS	Independent
Despite all the negative press, I firmly believe the majority of people in the U. S. want to do the right thing. They will continue to follow the COVID rules, get vaccinated and work and get educated either in trade schools or college. The economy will begin to level out as supplies increase and inflation decreases. I believe COVID is here to stay and we will begin to learn to live differently in terms of our health and how we treat others.	68	Female	Hispanic	CA	Independent
That the coronavirus will eventually just disappear and the world can get back to normal	54	Female	White	OH	Republican

I hope we get a handle on the coronavirus pandemic and reel in government spending.	63	Female	White	GA	Republican
The availability of booster injections and the effort to get Americans vaccinated.	62	Male	Black	FL	Republican
Everything is opening up again after COVID.	47	Male	Hispanic	TX	Republican
What makes me hopeful is the fact that there are a lot of jobs on the market because people just don't want to work.	52	Female	Black	AL	Democrat
More educated communities, more jobs and happier people.	34	Male	Black	CA	Democrat
We may overcome COVID finally. Employment opportunities are coming back. Infrastructure investments are finally here. Hoping voting rights are finally protected.	61	Female	Hispanic	FL	Democrat
The COVID spread is slowly grinding to a halt. The economy will pick up since people will be going back to work.	37	Female	White	KY	Democrat
The economy seems to be getting stronger and some government spending on infrastructure and renewable energy should speed growth	53	Male	White	CA	Democrat
Improvement to infrastructure, prospect of paid family leave, immigration reform, child tax credits.	39	Female	White	MI	Democrat
Knowing that at least for now we still are working toward better infrastructure and universal childcare.	37	Female	Black	TX	Democrat
If the Build Back Better deal passes many jobs will be created the infrastructure will improve for everyone.	59	Male	White	IN	Democrat
I am hopeful that the pandemic is over next year, more jobs and that inflation goes down.	34	Female	Hispanic	NJ	Democrat
Biden. He passed the infrastructure bill, and now seems focused on addressing the global supply chain challenges and planning/taking steps to address inflation. He is also doing what he can to get more people vaccinated with mandates, which could prevent more COVID-19 illness, death and more harmful mutations.	50	Female	Hispanic	CA	Democrat

Because people are getting jobs and heading to work and investing in the economy, government and community.	26	Male	Black	NY	Democrat
The infrastructure bill was passed so finally starting to improve our roadways and electrical system.	41	Male	White	ME	Independent
The economy seems fairly stable.	61	Male	White	IN	Independent
Jobs are more abundant now.	46	Female	White	FL	Republican
Due to vaccine of COVID 19, economy will be good.	26	Male	Black	TX	Republican
Hopefully the economy will be stable.	43	Male	White	TX	Republican
If we can control the virus and straighten the economy out.	66	Male	White	WI	Republican

Question: "Looking ahead, what makes you most hopeful about where America is headed in the next 12 months?" Examples taken from answers coded under Politics, COVID-19 and Economy, and those who said they were either extremely or very hopeful about the thing that makes them most hopeful.

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of McCourtney Institute's Mood of the Nation Poll, Nov. 30-Dec.7, 2021. N=1,200 U.S. adults age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ±3.7 percentage points, and is larger for subgroups.

Examples of reasons given by those who are extremely or very worried about where the country is headed in the next 12 months

Comment	Age	Sex	Race	State	Political affiliation
GOP taking the House and Senate back.	60	Male	White	AZ	Democrat
Trump's radical fanatics destroying our democratic processes and attacking our elected officials. Unfair bigoted treatment of minorities by white supremacists.	61	Female	Hispanic	FL	Democrat
The insanity that continues to reign in the Republican Party and the serious risk of Democrat loses in the midterm elections.	58	Male	White	VA	Democrat
That America continues on the polarization in politics that dramatically divides our country.	64	Male	White	FL	Democrat
Donald Trump being reelected.	57	Female	White	MD	Democrat
I am worried that we are so split that we can't live and govern together.	76	Female	White	MA	Democrat
The continued effort by the Republican party to overturn voting rights for all people.	75	Female	White	TX	Democrat
Trumpism and the Republican Party.	66	Male	White	FL	Democrat
Republican gerrymandering to cheat on elections. The packed Supreme Court. Republicans convincing supporters to remain unvaccinated.	55	Female	White	CA	Democrat
A Supreme Court that is unbalanced, that laws mean nothing even if they are a part of the Constitution. Why should we respect the law when a party can change what has already been established as law.	59	Female	Other	NV	Democrat
The way our politicians chose to ignore or try to validate January 6.	58	Female	White	SC	Democrat

We are a polarized country and becoming more so by the day. Only the Democratic Party is functional. Facing the huge problems of climate change and the pandemic without both parties engaged is very disheartening.	77	Female	White	IL	Democrat
American democracy giving way to authoritarianism.	33	Female	White	VA	Democrat
Repeal of Roe v Wade, loosening/no change in gun ownership laws, more conservatives taking political seats.	26	Female	Asian	CA	Democrat
The majority of legislators represent the rich and corporations.	73	Female	Hispanic	FL	Democrat
Not hopeful, the Democrats are not acting on any of their promises and the Republican crazy base is only radicalizing more.	28	Female	White	MA	Democrat
Extreme polarization escalating toward political violence.	43	Female	Other	AZ	Democrat
Congressional gridlock to pass any meaningful legislation; the upcoming decisions by the Supreme Court; Republican leadership of this country.	38	Female	Asian	OR	Democrat
The filibuster preventing Democrats in the Senate from passing things.	21	Female	White	NC	Democrat
That it's 12 more months in which the incompetent, corrupt Biden administration can continue to foul things up.	50	Male	White	CT	Independent
That so many from politicians, media, educators, and general population are so comfortable being untruthful. Seems the mentality is the end justifies the means.	72	Female	White	KS	Independent
Americans will continue the long march towards a welfare state and totalitarian government.	36	Male	White	FL	Independent
I am afraid our democracy is going to be lost. There will be a lot of violence.	78	Female	White	MS	Independent
The insane authoritarian Leftist agenda being forced onto the citizenry of the Republic.	49	Male	White	TX	Independent
Those running the country are not doing enough especially the Congress.	58	Male	Black	CA	Independent
That we have people in Congress that identify as socialist.	55	Male	White	UT	Independent

That Roe v wade might be overturned, the economy is going to crash worse than the 2007-2008, that the government is going to use this COVID-19 thing to take away more of our rights.	53	Male	White	ID	Independent
The Democrats have veered hard left. We have an incompetent President and a Congress that no longer answers to the People, but to special interests.	56	Male	Hispanic	FL	Independent
Our political climate.	34	Female	White	MD	Independent
Incompetent over-reaching government.	67	Male	Two or more	WA	Republican
That the House & Senate stays in the hands of the Democrats & they continue spending this nation into bankruptcy!	75	Female	White	TN	Republican
Political mandates, election fraud, open borders, inflation, government financial overreach, ILLEGAL immigrant citizenship, Build Back Better bill corruption.	68	Female	White	IA	Republican
The border crisis, the price of food, the price of gas, the president and the Democrats are out of touch with the American people.	56	Female	White	NJ	Republican
We are becoming a socialist nation and Biden and the Democrats are ruining our country.	59	Female	White	NC	Republican
The vaccine mandates and the runaway spending that Biden and the Democrats keep pushing.	57	Female	White	OK	Republican
The division. We are a nation divided. The governmental overreach in all aspects of our lives. Inflation and higher taxes.	46	Male	White	OH	Republican
Democrats winning elections.	59	Male	White	GA	Republican
Illegal aliens will spread disease, viruses, germs, move into my community, many people will die, Biden may win the next presidential election.	29	Male	White	NV	Republican
Democrats retaining legislative majorities.	40	Male	White	CO	Republican
Biden's lack of leadership and complacency with China.	26	Male	White	OH	Republican

The lack of morals and decent values is shocking. Politicians are seeking to destroy the freedom and faith that America was built upon.	42	Female	White	NY	Republican
Biden is completely destroying the economy with no cure in sight. Biden's complete pull out of troops in Afghanistan was the worst presidential move in a very long time.	63	Male	White	CO	Republican
The Democrats will continue to destroy our nation. I would be happy if they decided to move to an already communist nation to live their lives.	63	Male	White	KY	Republican
BLM, antifa, Biden, Democrats, Fauci, the further degradation of morals and trashing of the constitution and of the founding principles of this country. Although disgust and anger are closer words than worry.	24	Female	Other	TN	Republican
More gun killings, easy access to guns, that Roe vs. Wade will get overturned, and people will not get vaccinated and people will continue to die from it.	56	Female	White	MI	Democrat
The division, spreading of COVID and how many people refuse to get vaccinated.	82	Female	Black	AZ	Democrat
Increased political polarization heading into midterms and continuing concerns over COVID-19 variants.	53	Male	White	CA	Democrat
Anti-vaxxers, science denial, downfall of Roe v. Wade, gun violence, book banning, racism.	39	Female	White	MI	Democrat
Politicization of the pandemic prolongs and causes unnecessary death and illness.	44	Female	Asian	MI	Democrat
What worries me the most about where America is headed is that people won't listen to reason and science and this pandemic will continue.	44	Female	Other	OR	Democrat
COVID variants that evade vaccines. Donald Trump running for president again.	61	Female	White	MT	Democrat

I'm worried about the people who refuse to be vaccinated. I'm worried about the current case before the Supreme Court and the possibility of Roe v Wade being overturned or weakened. I'm worried about how Republicans have been gerrymandering worse after the census and passing tons of voter restriction bills that will make it even harder to beat them in elections and we will have more and more minority rule and they will use power to keep ensuring more power. I'm worried about the amount of the population that doesn't even support democracy, doesn't care about empathy, science, facts, or reason, and thinks it's ok to shoot people and incite violence. I feel like events in the next year will likely make it so the country is no longer a democracy within my lifetime.	31	Female	White	MN	Democrat
No serious action on climate change, the Republicans are likely to regain power in the Midterms, no significant spending on trains and public transit, COVID variants and people refusing vaccines, growing wealth inequality	19	Male	White	CT	Democrat
More strains of COVID, more Americans dying from it	21	Male	White	OH	Democrat
The economy will crash, the virus will get out of control and millions die, more natural disasters, and people will go crazy.	21	Female	Native American	NM	Democrat
That we will not be able to get past COVID and will continue to deal with waves every few months.	42	Female	White	CA	Democrat
I am worried that there might be some resistance or misinformation in the fight to combat the Omicron variant of COVID-19.	21	Male	Asian	CA	Democrat
Virus. Inflation. The climate. The future. Housing. Get paid fairly. The next election because all the politicians suck.	57	Female	White	NM	Independent
How often COVID is mutating and how divided the country is on common sense issues.	31	Female	Other	IL	Independent

People not wearing masks or getting vaccinated.	41	Male	Black	NY	Independent
New COVID variant, high food/gas/utility/home prices.	35	Male	White	IN	Independent
COVID never ending, conservative violence.	25	Male	White	WA	Independent
The overreaching mandates that the Biden regime is likely to try imposing, high inflation, poor national security.	51	Male	Other	PA	Independent
The COVID virus will mutate and not be affected by current vaccines.	64	Male	White	PA	Republican
COVID, the economy, inflation.	50	Female	Hispanic	NY	Republican
Biden's Vaccine Mandate and government tyranny.	24	Male	White	ID	Republican
Millions of Americans are not vaccinated yet.	62	Male	Black	FL	Republican
Inflation stripping purchasing power from people like me on a fixed income retirement.	75	Male	White	AZ	Democrat
That prices, specifically rent and grocery prices will continue to rise.	62	Female	White	OR	Democrat
I'm worried that inflation will kill America's way of life in the next 12 months.	29	Male	Hispanic	TX	Democrat
I am most anxious that the economy might not grow fast enough.	76	Female	Two or more	CA	Democrat
Boy, inflation, worried about the economy generally as far as working people go.	37	Female	Black	IL	Democrat
Since it seems that absolutely nothing will be done to address the core economic issues that have been crushing the working class for decades, and the Democratic party (the so-called "party of the people") continues on the same path of pandering to the wealthy (alongside the Republican Party), more disillusioned, angry, and bitter working class people will look to anybody offering them something different and we will find ourselves ruled over by someone worse than Trump.	43	Female	White	CO	Independent
Inflation, shortages, lockdowns, economy, job availability, mandates	44	Female	White	MI	Independent

Raising gas prices, economic uncertainty, add a little COVID, shaken, not stirred, rising cost of living, no living wage jobs, kids to raise in this mess	44	Female	Other	NJ	Independent
Inflation will make it harder for people to pay rent and bills & businesses will struggle and may not last.	24	Male	Two or more	CA	Independent
The US economic decline has almost no hope of stopping with inflation continuing and tough times ahead.	54	Male	Hispanic	AZ	Independent
Not being able to afford to live. Increasing costs of housing, food, gas.	61	Female	White	NC	Republican
Economic recession.	48	Male	White	MO	Republican
That the Biden Administration continues to ruin our economy even worse than it is now.	74	Female	White	TX	Republican
More inflation. No deflation. Paychecks are not rising. Working is only providing for those few executives that reap and keep.	39	Male	White	MS	Republican
The economy is being struck hard and there is a catastrophic recession coming.	33	Female	Hispanic	OK	Republican
Inflation, government spending, crime, sadness/anxiety/stress among friends and family	55	Female	White	NJ	Republican
The Biden administration wrecking the economy and reducing our freedoms.	58	Male	White	TX	Republican

Question: "Looking ahead, what worries you most about where America is headed in the next 12 months?" Examples taken from answers coded under Politics, COVID-19 and Economy, and those who said they were either extremely or very worried about the thing that makes them most worried.

Source: APM Research Lab analysis of McCourtney Institute's Mood of the Nation Poll, Nov. 30-Dec.7, 2021. N=1,200 U.S. adults age 18 or older; the maximum overall margin of error is ±3.7 percentage points, and is larger for subgroups.

About the APM Research Lab

The APM Research Lab is a department within American Public Media that informs the public about challenges and opportunities facing families, communities and organizations throughout the nation. Our mission is to foster an engaged democracy by inspiring curiosity, inquiry and discussion through fact-driven, credible research and analysis. Our Values: Independent, Useful, Informative, Non-partisan.

The Lab is a member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research's Transparency Initiative and abides by its standards. See <https://www.aapor.org/Standards-Ethics/Transparency-Initiative/>.

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About the McCourtney Institute for Democracy

The McCourtney Institute for Democracy at Penn State promotes scholarship and practical innovations that defend and advance democracy in the United States and abroad. Through teaching, research and public outreach, the Institute leverages the resources of Penn State and partners around the world to foster a model of deliberation, policymaking and responsiveness that is passionate, informed and civil.

The Mood of the Nation Poll offers a unique approach to public opinion polling. It allows Americans to speak in their own words through open-ended questions that focus on emotions like anger and hope, as well as commitment to constitutional principles.

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About the survey

Data collection for this Mood of the Nation Poll was conducted online by YouGov (<https://today.yougov.com/>). The YouGov panel includes over 1.8 million individuals who agree to complete occasional surveys. The 1,200 individuals who completed the April Mood of the Nation Poll were matched to the joint distribution from the Census's American Community Survey in terms of age, sex, race and ethnicity, and years of education. The frame was augmented by matching to the November 2010 Current Population Survey and the Pew Religious Life Survey in order to include voter registration, political interest and party identification in the selection model.

For additional details about the sample and survey methodology, as well as transparency disclosures relevant to the American Association of Public Opinion, the Roper Center and CNN, please see:

<https://www.apmresearchlab.org/surveys>.

Acknowledgments

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