



Critical Insights on MaineTM

*The **Voice** of Maine*



About Critical Insights on Maine™

Introduction

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each spring and fall, Digital Research, Inc. (DRI) conducts the <i>Critical Insights on Maine™</i> tracking survey, a comprehensive, statewide public opinion poll of registered voters in the state that covers a variety of topics of interest to business leaders, policymakers, and the public at large.• <i>Critical Insights on Maine™</i> has been documenting the attitudes, perceptions, and preferences of Maine’s residents for more than 25 years, making it the longest-running consistently-administered tracking survey in the Northeast.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In addition to general-interest items (the results of which are released to media outlets through the distribution of this report), <i>Critical Insights on Maine™</i> also serves as an omnibus survey, providing a vehicle for interested parties to gain insight into key issues by including proprietary items as part of the poll. The results of omnibus questions are provided only to the sponsoring entities.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The current wave of the poll included a total of 604 participants across the state who were surveyed by phone (291 study participants) and online (313 respondents) in the Fall of 2024 (September 10th to October 7th).<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All survey participants were required to be registered voters in Maine and living most of the year in the state.• Data and results discussed in this report reflect the demographic make-up of Maine’s voting population and were statistically weighted to appropriately balance results according to gender, age, level of education, geographic region of residence, and voter registration profile (see Sample Profile on page 4).• With a total sample of 604 participants, the results discussed here have an associated sampling error of +/- 4.0 percentage points at a 95% level of confidence. Findings based on subsets of the total sample (such as results according to Congressional District) are less precise due to sample size limitations.• The entire survey took the average participant approximately 18 minutes to complete – including both the general interest questions reported here, as well as proprietary items included in the poll on behalf of sponsoring entities.

Sample Profile

- Data in this report have been weighted to reflect the make-up of the state's population. The sample has been balanced according to gender, age, level of education, geographic region of residence, and voter registration profile.

Gender Identification	
Female	50%
Male	50%
Non-binary/Other	<0.5%
Prefer not to answer	<0.5%

Self-Reported Age	
Under 35	19%
35-44	20%
45-54	17%
55-64	17%
65 or over	28%

Educational Attainment	
Less than a four-year college degree	65%
Four-year college or more	35%

Congressional District	
One	50%
Two	50%

Self-Reported Party Registration	
Democrat	35%
Republican	30%
Other*	7%
Unenrolled	28%
Prefer not to answer/Don't know	1%

* Includes Green Independent, Libertarian, No Labels, or some other party not listed.

- Party affiliation data are shown for the total sample; some variation exists according to Congressional District, in accordance with current registration information made available by the Office of the Secretary of State.

Polling Results

Views on the Direction of Maine and the Nation

More than one-third of voters surveyed in the Fall of 2024 believe Maine is headed in the *right direction*, a level of optimism not seen in more than three years.

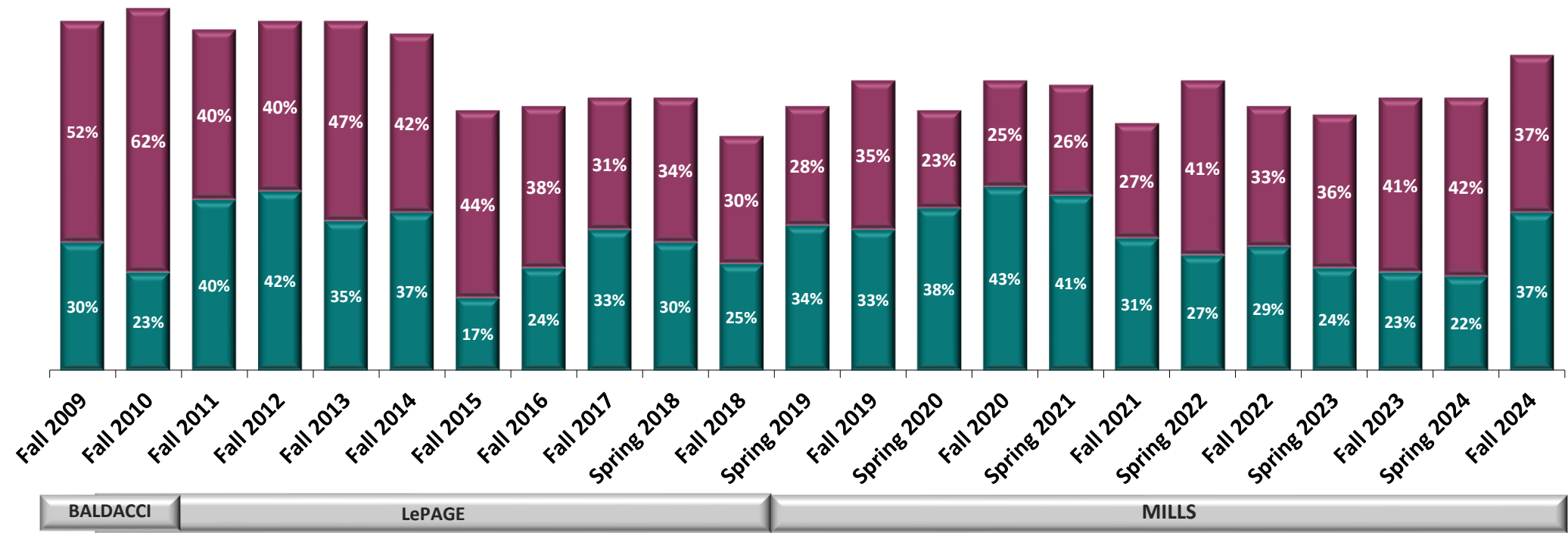
Direction of Maine

Views on the direction of the state tend to vary widely according to a person’s reported level of educational attainment, with favorable views on Maine’s direction continuing a trend of increasing steadily along with residents’ level of educational attainment. Conversely, those with lower levels of educational attainment tend to be less optimistic about the direction of Maine.

Among other subsets of the voting population, the perception of the state being on a positive track is most robust among Democrats (60%), older residents age 65+ (50%), those earning at least \$75,000 annually (46%), and residents of the 1st Congressional District (42%).

In an illustration of persistent polarization among Maine residents, two-thirds of registered Republicans believe the state is on the *wrong track* (66%), compared to fewer than two-in-ten Democrats (17%) expressing a similar sentiment.

The figure of 66% reflects a slight decline in pessimism and a return to levels seen a year ago, when 62% of GOP voters expressed this sentiment.



Fall 2024: (n=604)

All in all, do you think things in Maine are generally headed in the right direction, or do you feel that things are off on the wrong track?

Participants could also select response options of “Not sure” and “Mixed.” The proportions selecting those options are not shown.

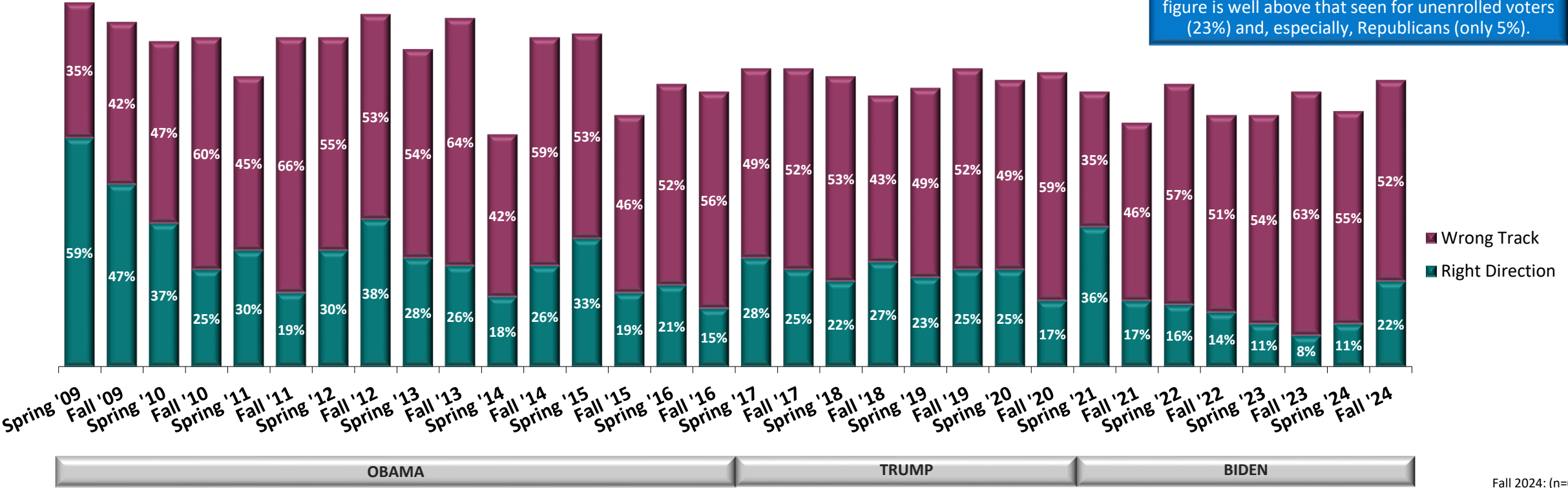
After hitting a near historic high in the Fall of 2023 at 63%, a year later, the proportion of Maine people who believe the nation is on the wrong track has declined slightly, but still stands at 52%. While just two-in-ten participating voters feel the nation is heading in the right direction, that figure is the highest observed since early in the Biden administration.

Direction of the Nation

Residents on the younger end of age spectrum (under age 35, age 35-44) are more pessimistic about where they see the nation headed, with strong majorities of each group viewing the nation as being on the wrong track.

As has been observed over the past several rounds of polling, fully eight-in-ten Republicans believe the nation is on the wrong track, while fewer than three-in-ten Democrats (28%) express similar sentiments.

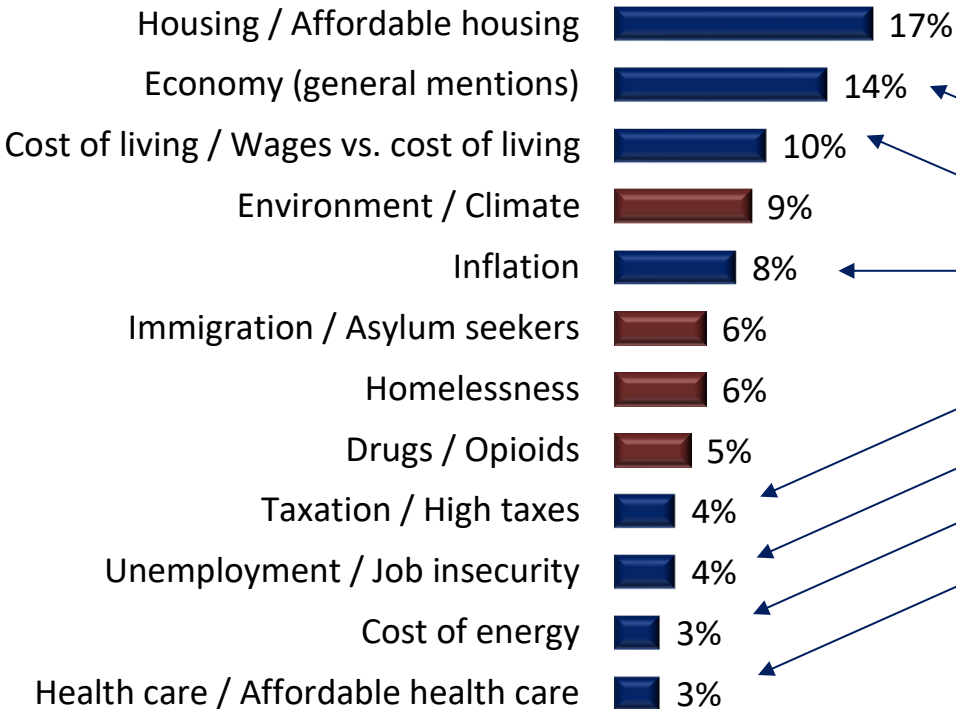
While just under four-in-ten Democrats in Maine see the country as on the right path (38%), that figure is well above that seen for unenrolled voters (23%) and, especially, Republicans (only 5%).



Despite an uptick in optimism seen in the current poll, financial and economic worries continue to be concerns for Maine voters. Non-economic and societal issues do emerge, but monetary concerns continue to weigh most heavily on the minds of Maine people.

Most Important Issues Facing Maine

Percentage naming each issue
(Top Mentions)



Economic-related concerns continue to account for the lion's share of issues keeping Maine people up at night.

Concerns about **housing** remain even more common among Democrats (24% cite housing as a chief worry), as well as among younger people, under age 35 (28%).

Environmental concerns (13%) and issues around **health care** (6%) are also more common mentions among Democrats.

Concerns about the **economy** in general (26%) and **inflation**, specifically (16%) are significantly more common among Maine Republicans.

Interestingly, those voters who are unenrolled are the most likely to cite the state's **aging population** and related issues as a key issue facing Maine.

The issue of **immigration** is equally concerning to both these unenrolled voters (7%) and to Republicans (8%), much more so than to registered Democrats (4%).

* All items mentioned by at least 3% of participants in the current round of measurement are shown.

Feelings about the economy's future path have taken a sharp turn over the past year, with pessimism dropping by greater than half – from fully 54% in the Fall of 2023 to 24% currently. Meanwhile, a larger proportion (31%) currently feel the economy will get better, a figure that is the highest observed since early in the Biden administration, when fully half of poll participants felt things would improve.

Democrats (44%) are much more likely than both unenrolled voters (27%) and Republicans (21%) to believe the economy will improve over the next 12 months.

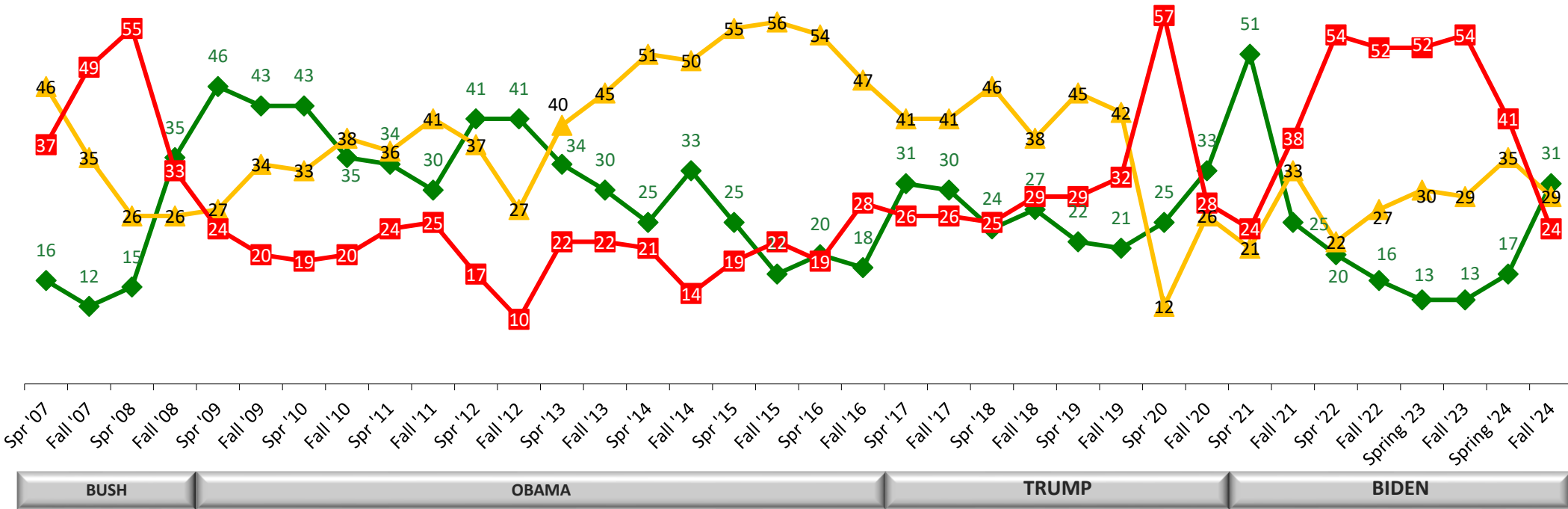
While optimism among GOP voters still lags, the current figure of 21% represents a sharp increase relative to six months ago (when just 8% felt things were getting better).

Optimism About the Economy

% predicting the economy will be:

Better **About the Same** **Worse**

As seen in past polls, optimism about the future of the economy continues to vary widely according to a person's age, with favorable perspectives increasing significantly along with residents' reported age (42% of those age 65+ feel the economy is improving, compared to just 20% of those under the age of 35).

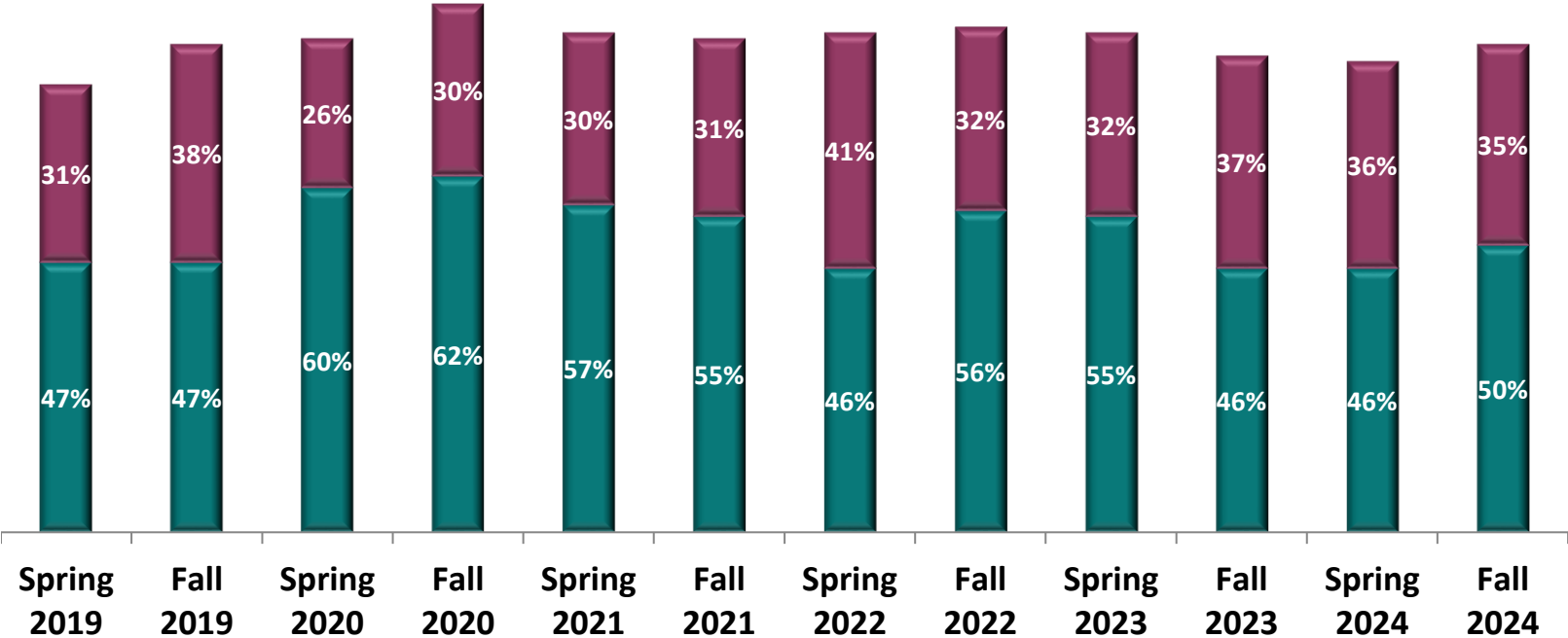


Fall 2024: (n=604)

Views on Political Figures

Half of Maine voters approve of the way Governor Mills is handling her job, a small uptick from a year ago, but well below the high-water mark of her first term in office (a 62% job approval rating seen four years ago, in the Fall of 2020).

Job Approval for Governor Janet Mills



The Governor’s current approval rating of 50% remains on par with her historical numbers (52% approval, on average) and remains ahead of the results for her predecessor.

Across Paul LePage’s time in office, the *Critical Insights on Maine™* tracking survey reported job approval ratings between 31% and 47%.

Consistent with past results, fully three-quarters of Democrats approve of the Governor’s job performance (76%), compared to only two-in-ten Republicans who approve (20%).

In line with these party-line differences, Governor Mills again does better with voters in the 1st Congressional District (58% approve) and remains less favorably viewed in the more conservative 2nd District (42%).

Governor Mills continues to do especially well with older Maine residents, age 65+ (68% approve), as well as with more highly-educated residents holding at least a college degree (66%).

■ Disapprove
■ Approve

Fall 2024: (n=604)

More than half of voters polled approve of the job Angus King is doing in the U.S. Senate, rebounding to levels seen in polling from the Fall of 2022.

Sen. King continues to poll well among 1st District voters, where 58% approve of his job performance.

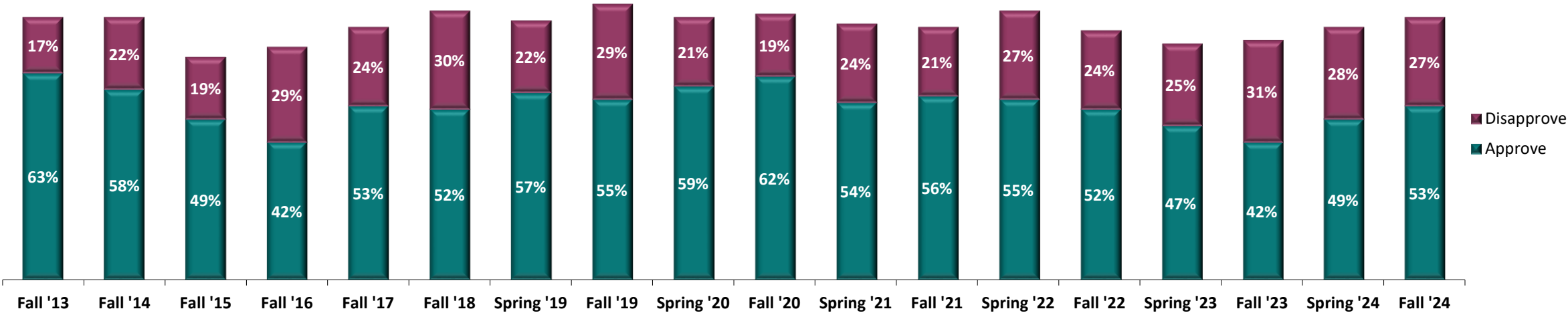
The Senator also does well with women (59% approve of his work), as well as among older residents, age 65+ (70%), college-educated voters (66%), and those in higher-earning households (60%).

Overall, Sen. King’s positives in job approval have outpaced his negatives in every round of the *Critical Insights on Maine™* tracking survey .

	Timing of Measurement				
Party	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Fall 2024
Democrat	72%	74%	73%	75%	71%
Republican	31%	25%	19%	25%	29%

Having returned to job approval levels seen two years ago, unevenness in Sen. King’s ratings in the intermittent time can be tied to declines in his job approval numbers among Republican voters.

Job Approval for U.S. Senator Angus King



Fall 2024: (n=604)

Job approval numbers for Senator Susan Collins remain mired in the upper 30% range, with disapproval numbers currently sitting at 42%.

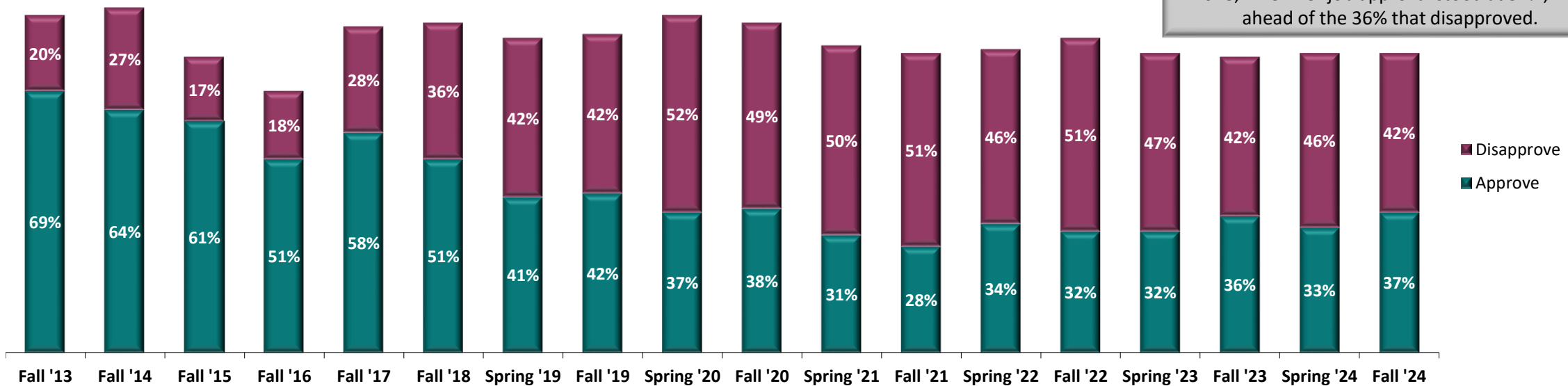
While Sen. Collins’s current approval numbers are highest among Republicans, the figure is just slightly above that of unenrolled voters and figures are quite modest with voters across all political affiliations.

Democrat	Republican	Unenrolled
29%	43%	38%

Job Approval for U.S. Senator Susan Collins

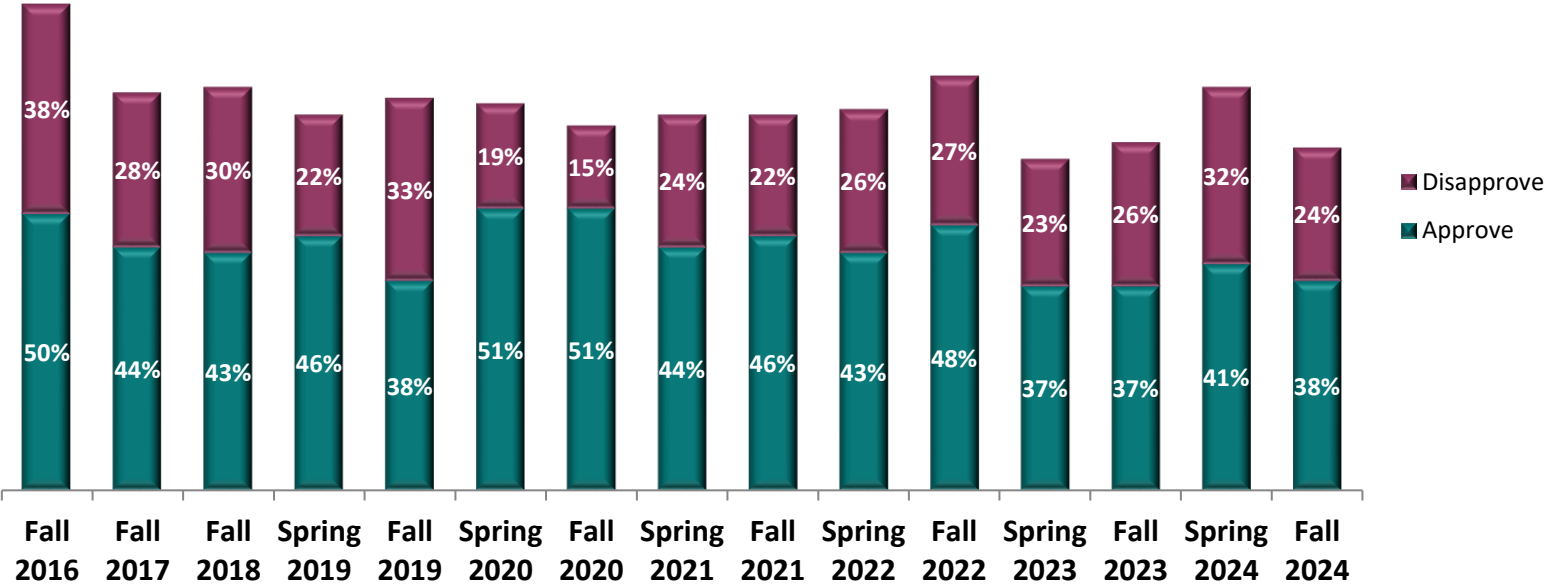
Senator Collins does better among older voters age 65+ (45% approve), while she continues to struggle a bit with voters under the age of 35, where fully one-third (32%) say “Don’t know” when asked to rate the Senator’s work and just 30% approve.

Overall, Sen. Collins has not exceeded 40% in job approval since the Fall 2019 round of the *Critical Insights on Maine™* tracking survey. Her negatives have been notable since the Fall of 2018, when her job approval stood at 51%, well ahead of the 36% that disapproved.



Close to four-in-ten 1st Congressional District constituents of Rep. Chellie Pingree approve of her performance, consistent with approval numbers seen in the last three cycles of polling, dating back to the Spring of 2023.

Job Approval for U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree
(Among voters in the First Congressional District*)



Consistent with past polls, a majority of Democrats in the District approve of Rep. Pingree’s job performance, with approval figures lower among unenrolled voters and, especially, Republicans.

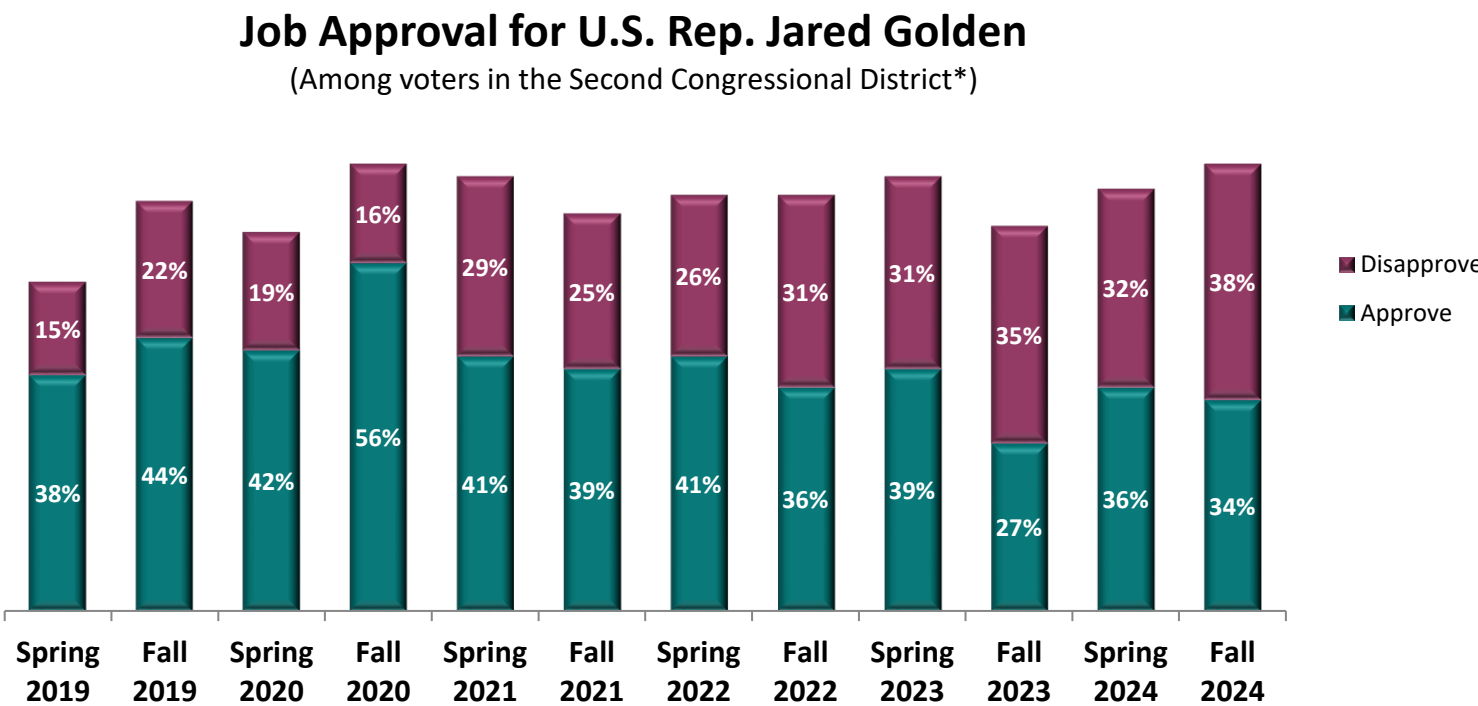
Democrat	Republican	Unenrolled
58%	20%	33%

In the current round of tracking, it is striking that half of 1st District unenrolled voters (49%) claim they “Don’t know” how to rate the Congresswoman’s job performance. While more approve (33%) than disapprove (18%), the large proportion of this bloc of voters who are unsure how to rate the Congresswoman is notable.

Rep. Pingree does particularly well with voters age 55 or older (55% approve), while struggling a bit with voters under the age of 35, where nearly two-thirds (63%) say “Don’t know” when asked to rate her work.

*Fall 2024: (n=303)

After a sharp drop in approval seen a year ago, roughly one-third of Rep. Jared Golden’s constituents in the 2nd Congressional District now approve of his job performance. However, Rep. Golden’s negatives (38%) now slightly outpace his positives (34%), with 27% unsure.



A year ago, much of Rep. Golden’s drop in job approval could be attributed to some erosion of support among Democrats, but a year later, approval numbers have rebounded somewhat among his Democratic base.

Currently, close to six-in-ten Democrats approve of Golden’s work in Congress; a year ago, just 34% of Democrats approved and fully 41% weren’t sure.

Democrat	Republican	Unenrolled
57%	19%	26%

Rep. Golden’s numbers are a bit more uneven among unenrolled voters, where just one-quarter approve of the job he’s doing and fully 39% say “Don’t know” when asked to assess his work.

In the present measurement, Rep. Golden sees his most robust approval numbers among older residents, age 65+ (52% approve), as well as among lower-earning voters, those making under \$35,000 annually (45%).

*Fall 2024: (n=301)

Despite a small uptick, only four-in-ten Maine voters currently approve of President Biden’s job performance.

With a job approval mired in the low 30% range for the last several polling cycles, the President’s current approval numbers – while still low – mark the highest figures seen since the Fall 2022 round of *Critical Insights on Maine™*.

While not entirely surprising, the President’s current job approval numbers across stated party affiliation are a continuing indication of political polarization.

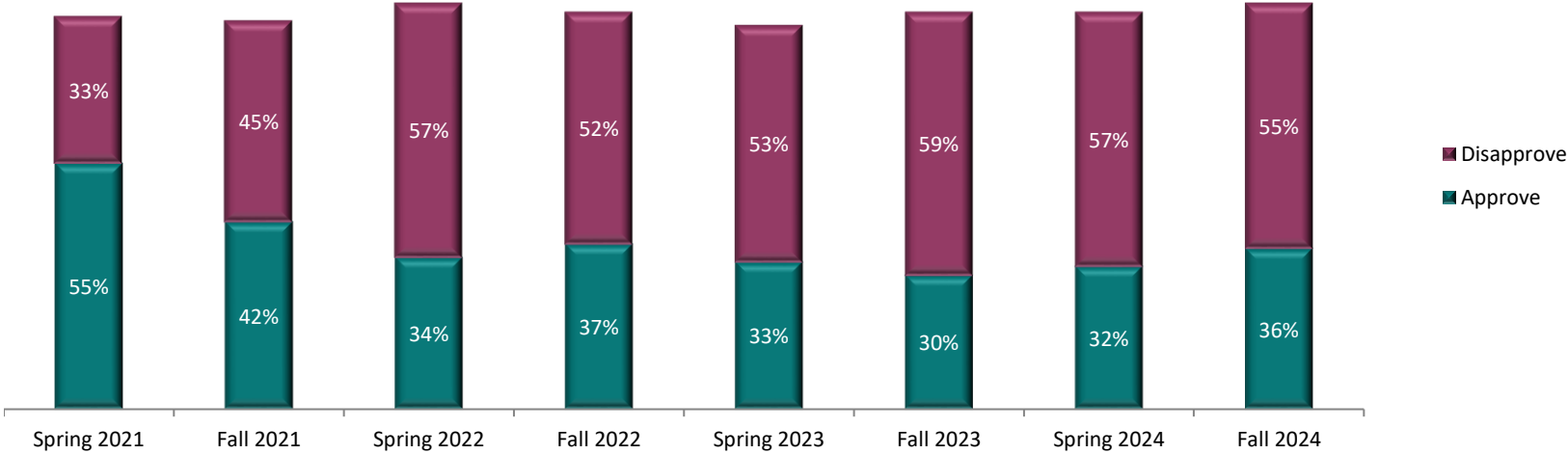
Democrat	Republican	Unenrolled
67%	7%	31%

Job Approval for President Joe Biden

As seen in past polls, favorable views of the President’s job performance increase along with the age of voters, with the highest approval numbers coming from those age 65+ (54% approve).

Scores are also linked to educational attainment, with higher approval numbers coming from those with at least a college degree (47%).

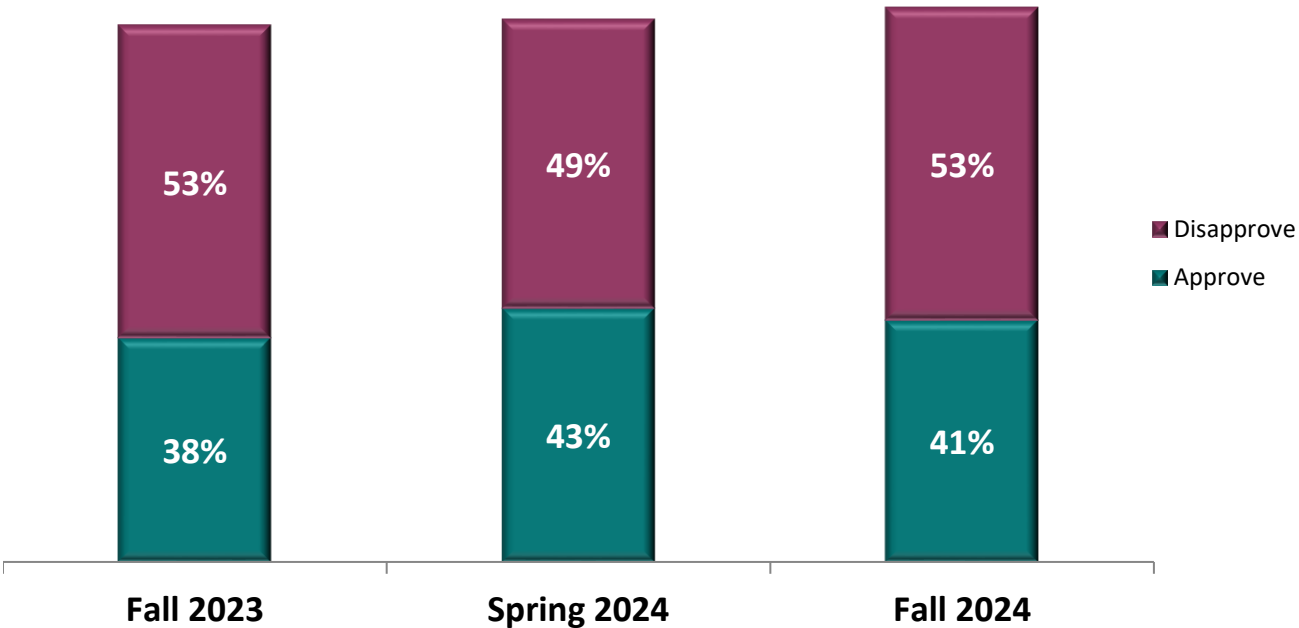
Approval scores are also significantly better in the 1st Congressional District (43%).



Fall 2024: (n=604)

When considering his administration in retrospect, approval of Donald Trump’s job performance as President is consistent with results seen in the Fall of 2023 round of *Critical Insights on Maine™*. Trump’s retrospective approval figures continue to exceed President Biden’s job approval numbers.

Post-Presidency Job Approval for Donald Trump



Not surprisingly, an overwhelming majority of Republicans look back and approve of Donald Trump’s job while in office, while just a handful of Democrats express similar sentiments.

Retrospective job approval numbers among unenrolled voters are a closer reflection of the sentiment among voters overall, at 34% approval.

Democrat	Republican	Unenrolled
11%	83%	34%

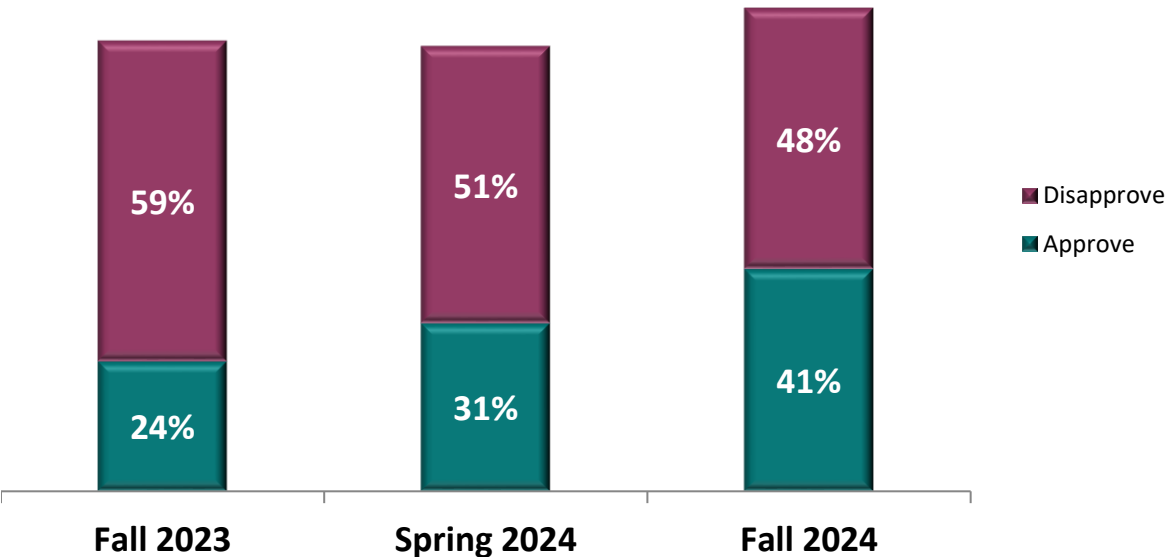
Approval numbers for the former President are more robust in the 2nd Congressional District (51% approve) and among non-college educated voters (also 51%).

Interestingly, numbers are more favorable among those voters with children (< age 18) in the household (53%), a finding that could be attributable to directionally more positive results from younger voters under age 55, an age group more likely to have children at home.

Fall 2024: (n=604)

Four-in-ten voters in Maine approve of Vice President Harris’s job performance, a 10-percentage point uptick from the Spring 2024 findings and a marked improvement over results from a year ago.

Job Approval for Vice President Harris



The rise in Vice President Harris’s approval numbers can be attributed to a marked increase in favorable sentiments from Democrats, where a 20-percentage point increase is seen in her job approval numbers, compared to the Spring of 2024 (prior to her becoming the party nominee for President).

	Timing of Measurement	
Party	Spring 2024	Fall 2024
Democrat	54%	74%
Republican	10%	12%
Unenrolled	27%	34%

The Vice President’s numbers are significantly more favorable in the 1st Congressional District (50% approve) vs. the 2nd District (where only 32% approve and fully 55% disapprove of her job performance).

Vice President Harris has better approval figures among women (47%), those age 55+ (56%), and those with a college degree (50%). Job approval figures are lower for men, younger voters, and less highly-educated voters.

Fall 2024: (n=604)

November 2024 Races

A fairly tight presidential race appears upcoming, with results indicating that Kamala Harris will take the statewide vote in Maine, as well as the 1st District’s electoral college vote. Findings also suggest that Donald Trump could secure the 2nd District’s single electoral vote.

- A sample ranked choice voting (RCV) ballot for Maine in the 2024 Presidential race (including eligible candidates at the time of the poll slated to appear on the November ballot) was integrated into the online survey, with participants provided the same instructions for ballot completion and candidate ranking as would be employed in November. For the telephone portion of the study sample, participants were provided the same list of candidates and simply asked to indicate their 1st choice.

Sample Ranked Choice Ballot

To rank your candidate choices, fill in the circle by clicking that option:

- In the 1st column for your 1st choice for President
- In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice for President, and so on.

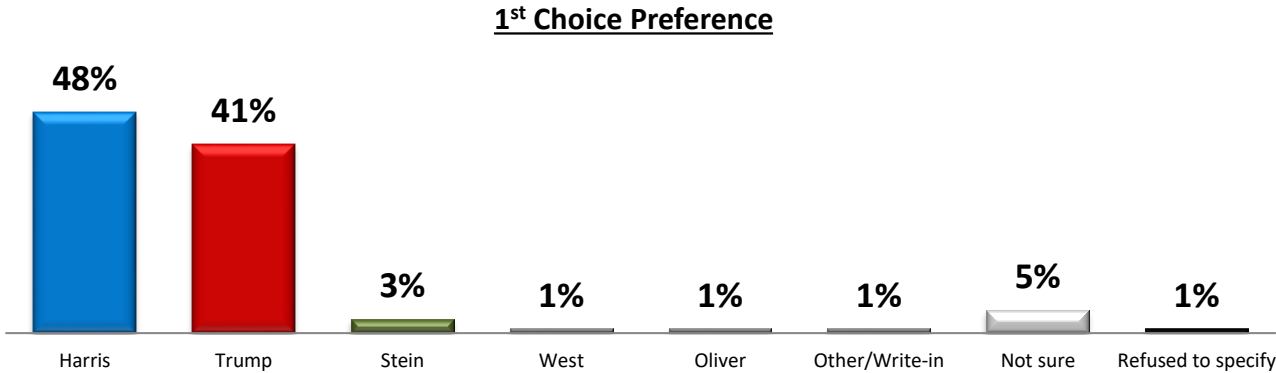
Continue until you have ranked as many or as few candidates as you like.

Fill in/select no more than one circle for each candidate or column.

To rank a write-in candidate, type the person's name in the write-in space and select the circle for the ranking of your choice.

President	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice
Harris, Kamala Democrat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oliver, Chase Libertarian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stein, Jill Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trump, Donald Republican	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
West, Cornell Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-in _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- When the 1st choice selections from the ranked choice voting exercise in the online survey are combined with responses from the 1st choice preference item included in the phone survey, Kamala Harris garners close to a majority of support across the entire polling sample. With the use of RCV in Presidential elections in Maine, these “1st choice” results suggest that Harris is likely to win the statewide vote.

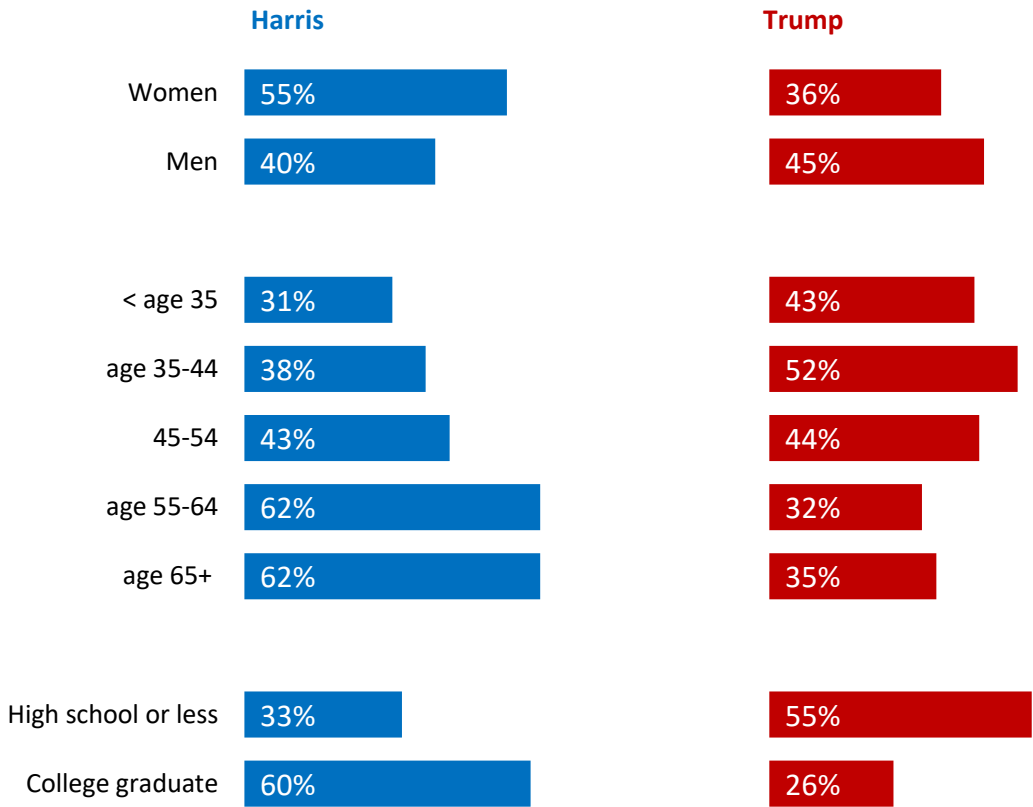


Congressional District	Harris	Trump
“First choice” in 1st Congressional District	56%	33%
“First choice” in 2 nd Congressional District	40%	49%

Because Maine splits its electoral votes, poll results suggest that in addition to the statewide popular vote, Vice President Harris is likely to carry the 1st Congressional District, while former President Trump could capture the 2nd District’s electoral vote, though results are still within the margin of error.

Fall 2024: (n=604)

Analysis of first choice results shows women, 55+ voters and college-educated voters trending significantly toward Harris, while men, younger voters, and those less highly-educated trend significantly toward Trump.



Additional analysis suggests the following:

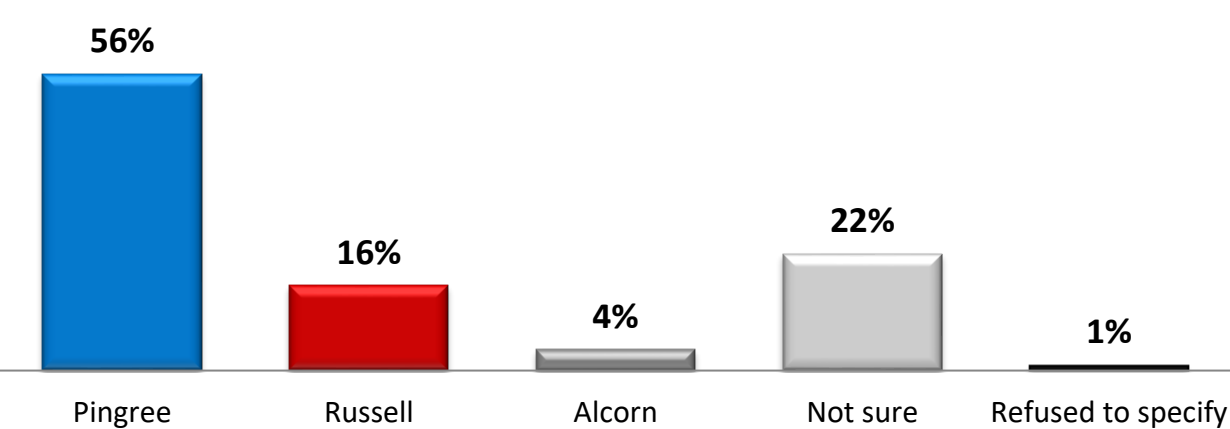
- ✓ Those who believe things are going in the right direction nationally are more likely to favor Kamala Harris, while those who feel things are on the wrong track nationally overwhelmingly favor Donald Trump.
- ✓ Similarly, those who believe the economy will improve in the coming 12 months are also significantly more likely to select Harris as their 1st choice, while those believe things will get worse overwhelmingly choose Trump.
- ✓ A majority of Harris supporters believe President Biden is doing a good job, while nearly all Trump voters disapprove of the President's performance.

Looking back and considering Trump's presidency, the vast majority of Harris 1st choice voters disapprove of his time in office, while nearly all of Trump's current 1st choice supporters approve of his job performance as President.

In the 1st Congressional District race, poll results suggest that incumbent U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree is poised to win re-election by a sizeable margin over her two challengers.

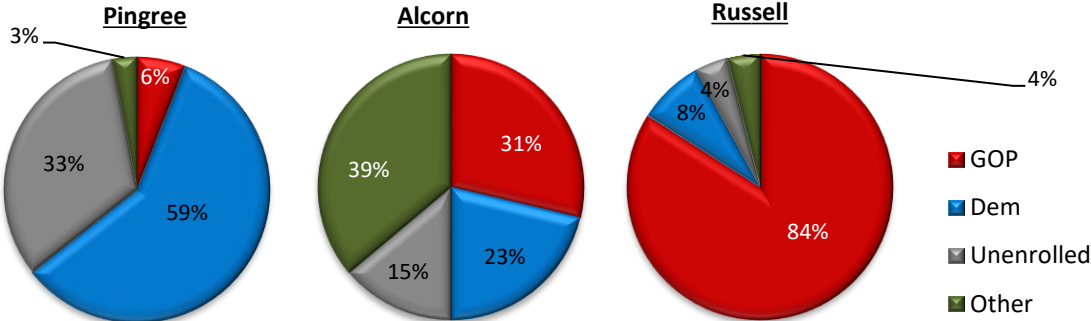
- While ranked choice voting will be employed in the upcoming races for the U.S. House of Representatives, participants in both the online and the phone survey were simply asked to indicate their “1st choice” preference.

1st Choice Preference



While both major party candidates receive a majority of 1st choice votes from those voters within their own party, Rep. Pingree also picks up fully one-third of her 1st choice preference support from unenrolled voters in the District.

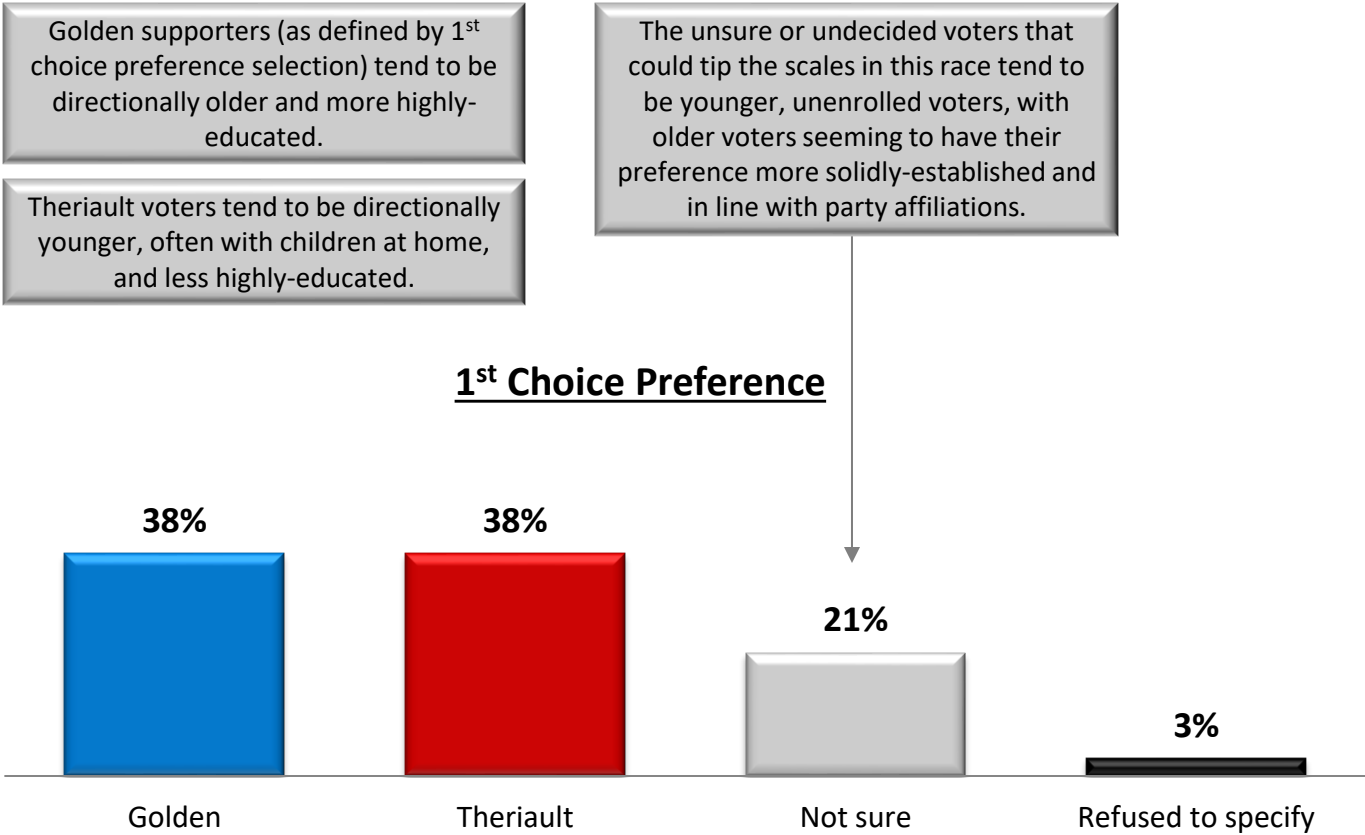
Meanwhile, while garnering most of his support from Republicans, challenger Ron Russell captures only 4% of his support from unenrolled voters.



In examining party affiliation vote share, Rep. Pingree secures more than nine-in-ten 1st choice votes (94%) from registered Democrats, as well as a similar proportion of the 1st choice votes of unenrolled voters (93%).

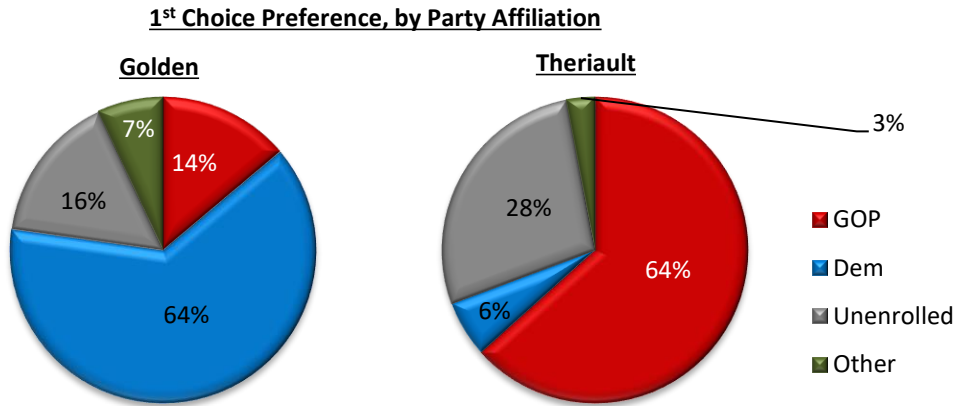
In the 2nd Congressional District, poll results show incumbent U.S. Rep. Jared Golden in a near-literal dead heat with his challenger, state representative Austin Theriault. Results suggest that a sizeable bloc of unsure voters will ultimately decide the race.

- Again, while ranked choice voting will be employed in the race for the U.S. House of Representatives, participants in both the online and the phone survey were simply asked to indicate their “1st choice” preference.



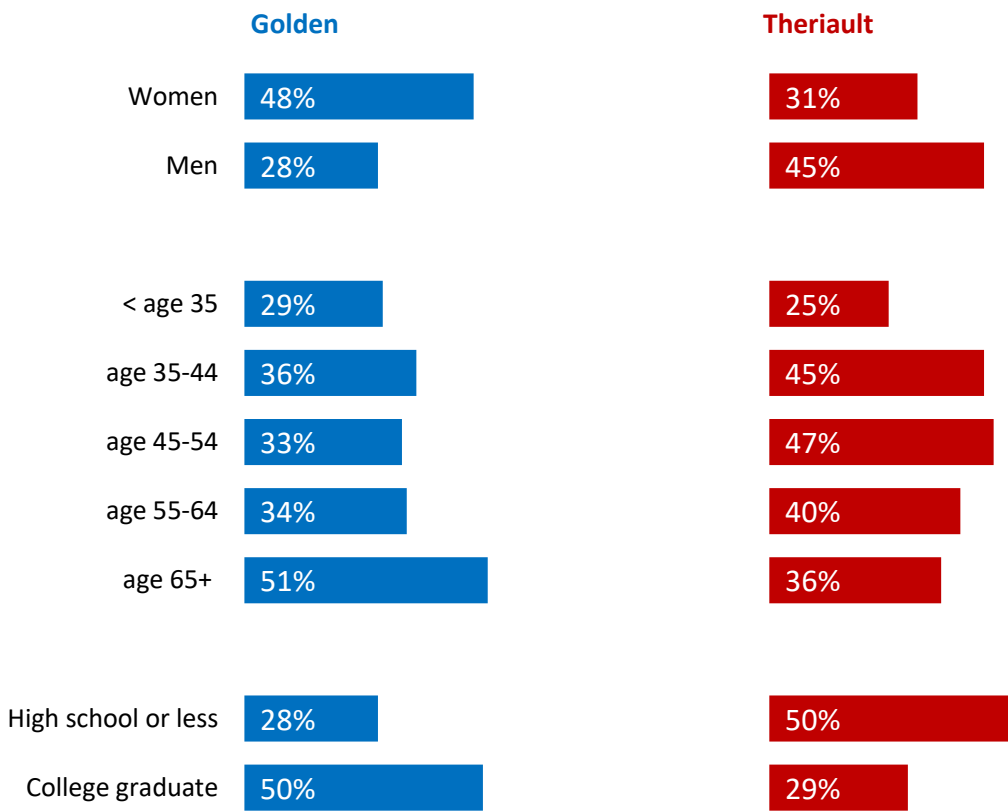
While each candidate receives the majority of 1st choice votes from those in his own party, Rep. Golden picks up slightly more votes from Republicans than Theriault does from Democrats.

While Theriault picks up few votes from Democrats and from off-party voters, he does secure more than a quarter of his 1st choice support from unenrolled voters.



In examining the party affiliation vote share, while Rep. Golden receives the vast majority of Democratic 1st choice votes (91%) and Theriault gets 82% of 1st choice votes from registered Republicans, it is notable that among poll participants, Theriault is also the 1st choice of nearly two-thirds (64%) of unenrolled voters in the sample.

In findings reminiscent of differences seen in Presidential preference, analysis of first choice results in the 2nd District race shows women, those age 65+ and college-educated voters trending significantly toward Golden, while men, younger voters, and those less highly-educated trend toward Theriault.



Additional analysis suggests the following:

- ✓ Golden’s 1st choice supporters are significantly more likely than Theriault’s to see the arc of the economy as either improving or staying the same in the next year, with few seeing it getting worse. Meanwhile, Theriault voters are significantly more pessimistic on the economy than are Golden supporters, with more than four-in-ten seeing it as getting worse in the coming 12 months.
- ✓ Similarly, a majority of Golden supporters see the path of the nation either positively, or at worst, mixed. Just one-third see things on the wrong track. This perspective and outlook is similar when considering only Maine, specifically.

And in results consistent with their economic pessimism, nearly eight-in-ten of 1st choice Theriault voters see the nation as being on the wrong track. Most of these Theriault supporters also see Maine as being on the wrong path as well.

- ✓ Eight-in-ten of 1st choice Golden voters also support Kamala Harris for President, while fully nine-in-ten 1st choice Theriault voters support Donald Trump.



For more information about the poll,
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