



Public Wise

Democracy in the 2024 election

Sara Moore, PhD

Deputy Director of Research

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Key Takeaways

1

Older Democrats are currently the core constituency motivated by protecting democracy, but it is still a key issue among many Democrats and those who plan to vote Biden in 2024.

2

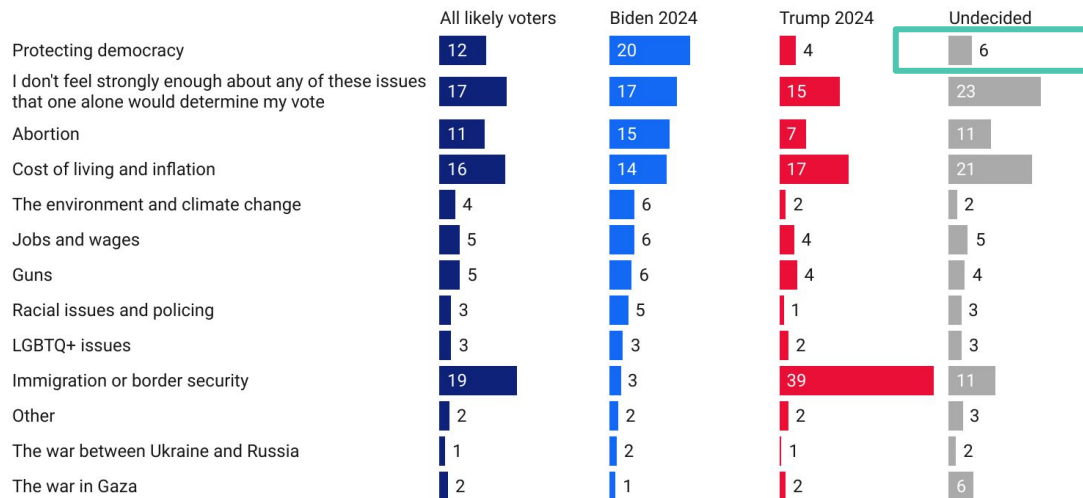
Although protecting democracy is not the singularly motivating issue for most likely voters, many recognize that democracy is threatened by election denialism, with key tenets of the movement rising to the top among a wide range of potential threats to US democracy.

3

The issue of democracy could motivate a wider group of likely voters. But we have to explicitly connect democracy to the issues they care about. They recognize that democracy is under threat: we need to show them that the issues they care about are what's at stake if democracy loses.

Who is motivated by protecting democracy?

Some people feel so strongly about an issue that they will vote for or against a candidate for president based on that issue alone. Below is a list of issues. Please indicate if there is any one issue on this list that is so important to you that you would vote for or against a candidate based only on their position on that issue:



Among all likely voters, protecting democracy was **#4**

It was **#1** among **Biden 2024** and **Democrat** likely voters

Only **6%** undecided likely voters chose protecting democracy

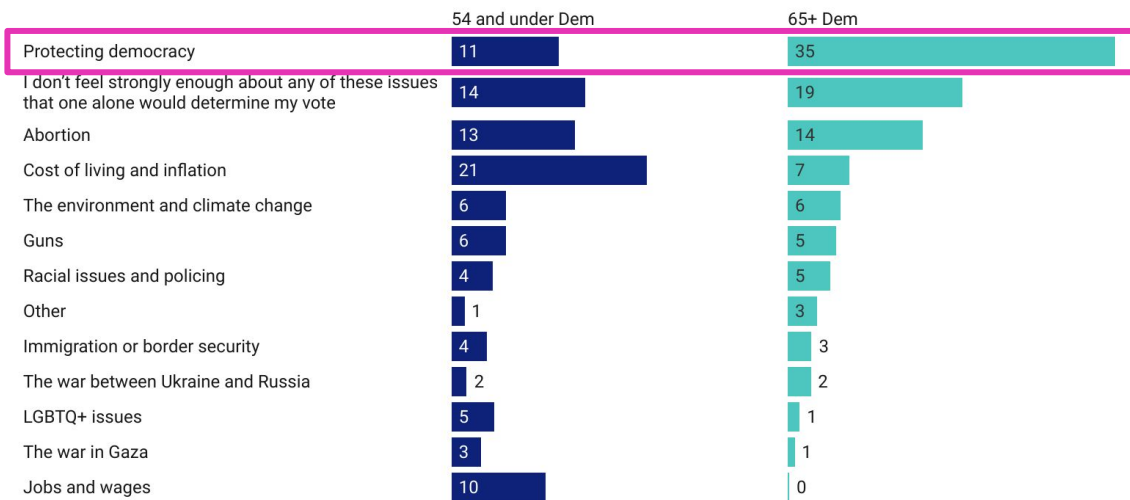
Source: Public Wise/YouGov survey of registered voters. Likely voters n=4,797.

Created with Datawrapper



Older Democrats are especially motivated by protecting democracy

Some people feel so strongly about an issue that they will vote for or against a candidate for president based on that issue alone. Below is a list of issues. *Please indicate if there is any one issue on this list that is so important to you that you would vote for or against a candidate based only on their position on that issue.*



35% of older Democrats say protecting democracy is so important to them that they will base their vote on that issue alone

Likely voters under 55 are less likely to cite protecting democracy as a singularly motivating issue, even among Democrats



Who else cares about democracy?

Whether likely voters say something is the deciding issue upon which they will base their vote is not the only metric for issue importance

95% of likely voters agree that **elections aren't just about one issue** and that **candidates should be evaluated across a range of issues**

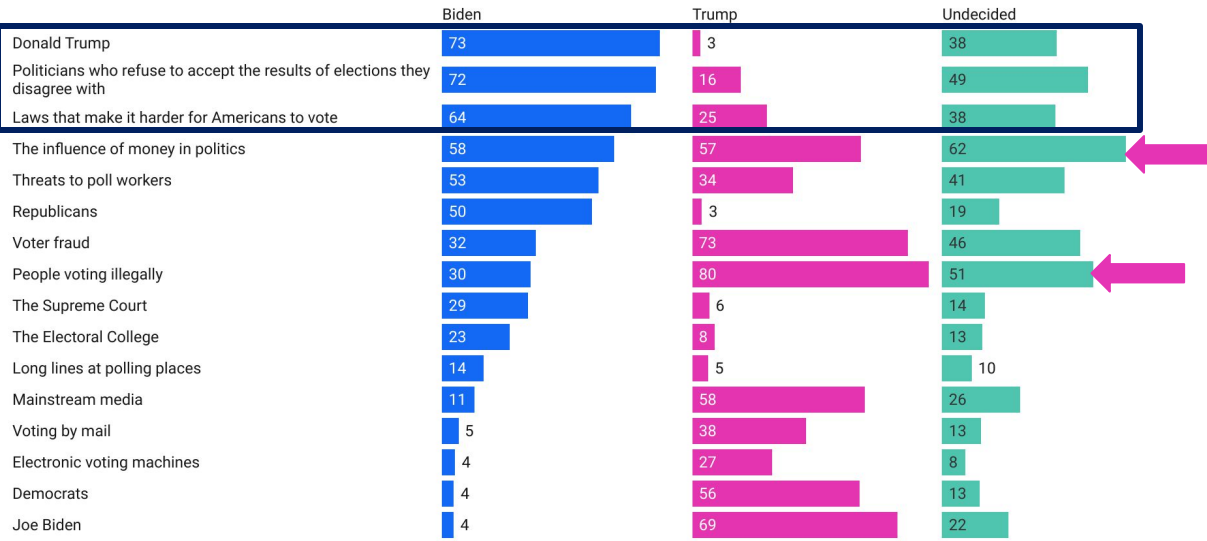
The word **democracy may not evoke the same ideas for everyone**, even if they actually hold pro-democracy views



Many likely voters recognize key threats to democracy

In recent years, some have characterized democracy in the United States as under threat. Please indicate the extent to which you feel each of the following is a threat to our democracy.

Percent of likely voters saying "major threat to democracy" by 2024 vote intention



For Biden 2024 voters and Democrats, **election denialism rose to the top among all potential threats to democracy**

Election denialism also ranks high among major threats to democracy for undecided voters

But not as high as the **influence of money in politics (#1)**

Or as high as **people voting illegally (#2)**

Source: Public Wise/YouGov survey of registered voters. Likely voters = 4,797.

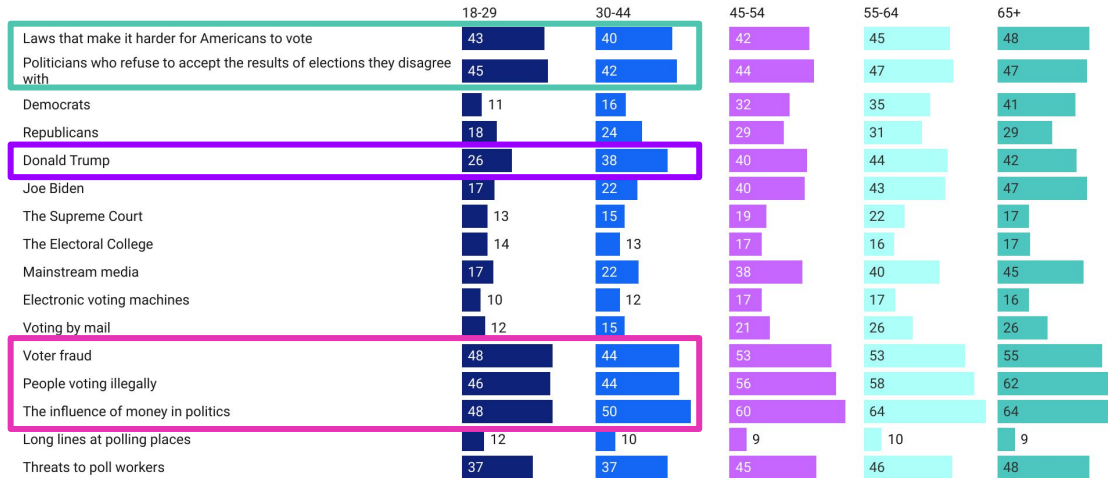
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Despite not ranking “democracy” highly, young likely voters recognize key threats

In recent years, some have characterized democracy in the United States as under threat. Please indicate the extent to which you feel each of the following is a threat to our democracy.

Percent of likely voters saying "major threat to democracy" by age group



Source: Public Wise/YouGov survey of registered voters. Likely voters n = 4,797.
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Core features of election denialism even rank among the top 5 major threats for younger likely voters

But voter fraud and people voting illegally also rise to the top

And Trump doesn't rise to the top

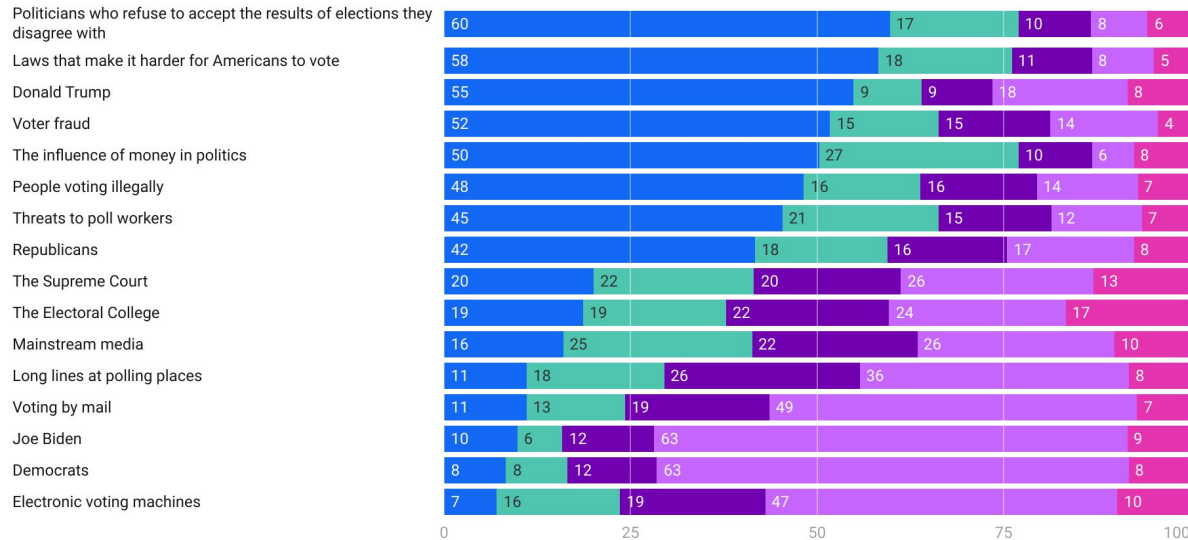


Despite not ranking “democracy” highly, Black likely voters recognize key threats too

In recent years, some have characterized democracy in the United States as under threat. Please indicate the extent to which you feel each of the following is a threat to our democracy.

Percent of Black likely voters

Major Somewhat Minor Not a threat Not sure



11% of Black likely voters selected protecting democracy as a single issue

But voter suppression, election denialism, and Trump are the top major threats to democracy

Though, here again, we see voter fraud and people voting illegally among the top threats as well

Half of Black likely voters also see the influence of money in politics as a major threat to democracy

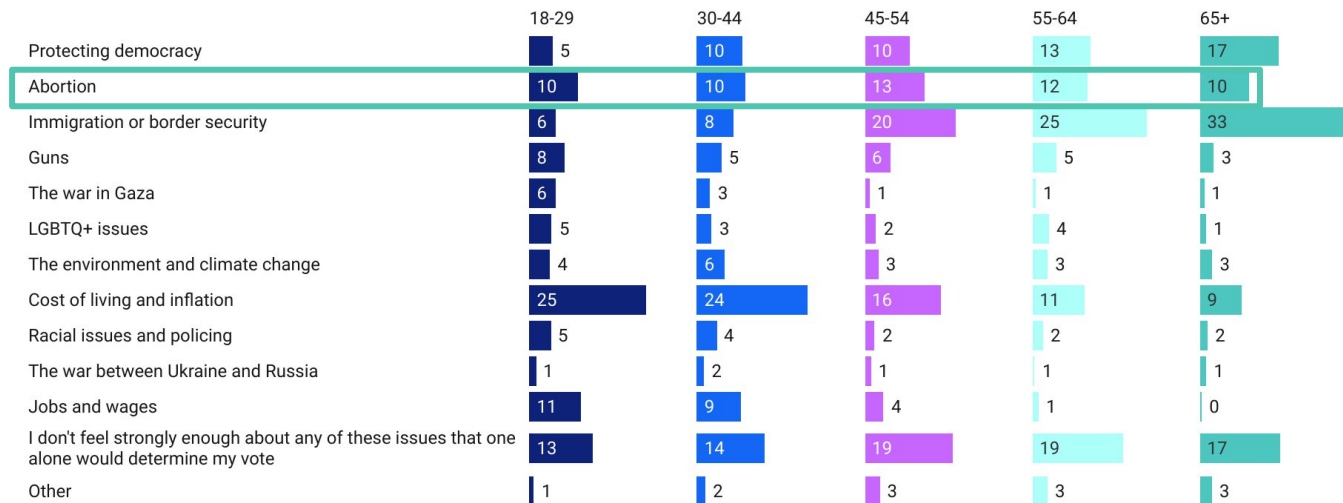


**All issues are democracy
issues**

Linking democracy to salient issues: abortion

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Among likely voters by age



Abortion ranks in the top 5 singularly motivating issues, including among young likely voters

Ballot initiatives have shown that abortion is highly motivating

Source: Public Wise/YouGov survey of registered voters. Likely voters n = 4,797.

Created with Datawrapper



Linking democracy to salient issues: abortion

71% of Americans support the right to an abortion in all or most cases, yet abortion is currently banned or severely restricted in 21 states due to

1. An unelected Supreme Court filled with corrupt far right appointees
2. Gerrymandered state legislatures enacting policies in direct opposition to the preferences of constituents

Republicans attack voting rights and democracy because they know that when Americans actually have a say, they vote to uphold abortion rights every time



Linking democracy to salient issues: abortion

- Since the Dobbs decision, Americans in 6 states have voted in favor of abortion rights
 - California, Kentucky, Kansas, Michigan, Montana, and Vermont
- States where it's on or likely to be on the ballot in 2024
 - On: Colorado, Florida, Maryland, and South Dakota
 - Likely: Arizona, Arkansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Nevada
- Attempts to make ballot initiatives harder to pass
 - Ohio recently rejected one
- Connect these dots for voters
 - Republicans are making it harder to vote and denying the results of legitimate elections because the outcomes under democracy do not benefit them



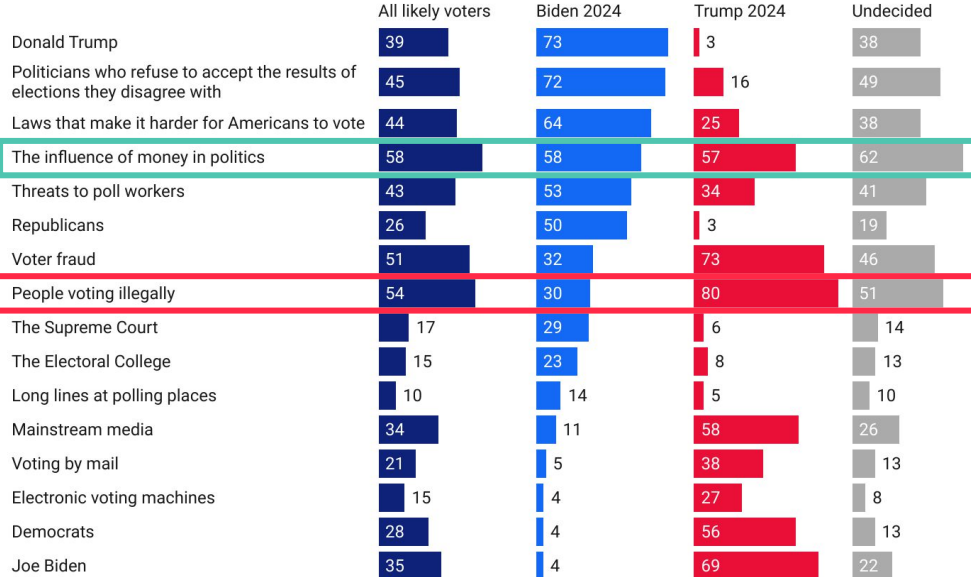
The influence of money in politics



Linking democracy to salient issues: threat of money in politics

In recent years, some have characterized democracy in the United States as under threat. Please indicate the extent to which you feel each of the following is a threat to our democracy.

Share of each group saying item is a **major** threat to democracy



The influence of money in politics was the **highest ranking major threat for undecided voters**

The **second highest ranking threat: people voting illegally**, which shifts undecided voters away from a pro-democracy stance

These voters are up for grabs and if we don't do something to grab them, the other side will



Linking democracy to salient issues: threat of money in politics

- The wealthy and large corporations pour exorbitant sums of money into politics to **increase their influence over policy**
 - Elections, lobbying, even the conservative justices on the Supreme Court
- This influence **drowns out the voices of everyday Americans**
 - Which allows them to lobby for policies that rig the rules in their favor
 - Prevents the government from responding to the needs of everyday Americans



WASHINGTON—The 21% U.S. corporate tax rate is the biggest single variable in the sprawling 2025 tax debate, and the two parties are trying to turn that dial in opposite directions with major consequences for companies' profits and federal revenue.

The rate could climb as high as 28% if Democrats sweep November's elections and move as low as 15% if Republicans gain full power.

President Biden's plan for a 28% rate would reverse half of Republicans' 2017 rate cut, pushing the U.S. corporate rate back near the highest among major economies. A 15% rate—some Republicans are heading that way, but the party hasn't settled on a plan—would match the lowest level since 1935, boosting profits and rewarding shareholders. Presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump told corporate executives last week that he wanted a 20% rate.

Each percentage point is worth more than \$130 billion over a decade in tax revenue, creating a \$1 trillion-plus gap between the poles of the parties' positions and giving the largest U.S. companies an outsize interest in the election's outcome.



Linking democracy to salient issues: threat of money in politics

- Remind voters **who wants to reduce the influence of money in politics** to ensure government is responsive to their needs
- **Democrats have introduced plans** to crack down on the influence of money in politics
 - The DISCLOSE Act
 - The Freedom to Vote Act
- Biden supports both of these plans, but **Republicans have been blocked them**



Linking democracy to salient issues

Make the connection between democracy and key issues **explicit**

Remind voters that efforts to undermine democracy are ultimately about **denying everyday Americans the right to vote for and obtain the policies they want on the issues they care about**

Highlight instances when **voting has brought or could create specific and tangible wins for everyday Americans** on their key issues



Supplementary materials



Racial breakdown of likely voters

What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

Race	Share (weighted)
White	74
Black	11
Hispanic*	7
Asian	2
Native American	1
2+ races	2
Other	2
Middle Eastern/North African (MENA)*	<1

Percents may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*Does not account for additional questions about Hispanic/Latino/Spanish or MENA origin.