

# THE PUBLIC'S PRIORITIES FOR COVID-19 IN A CHANGING WORLD

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**POLITICO**



**HARVARD**  
**T.H. CHAN**  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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This report, based on a new POLITICO-Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health poll, examines the public’s priorities for addressing COVID-19 in a changing world. The poll has three major findings:

- Public attitudes about ending Title 42, a pandemic-era public health rule allowing U.S. immigration officials to return migrants to their home countries, are driven to a large extent by their views about the desirability of future immigration to the U.S. from other countries.
- A majority of the public places a high priority on continued federal spending domestically for the uninsured and underinsured in the U.S. to receive COVID-19 vaccination, treatment, and testing. The public is less supportive of U.S. government spending on COVID-19 vaccination and testing for developing countries.
- However, the public places a far higher priority on legislation to limit a patient’s cost for insulin than on these other health proposals.

## Part I. The Public’s Attitudes About Ending the Use of Title 42

The new POLITICO-Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health poll examines public attitudes about Title 42, a pandemic-era rule allowing U.S. immigration officials to return migrants to their home countries, citing the need to protect the U.S. in a public health emergency. The poll finds that a majority (55%) oppose ending the use of Title 42 to prevent migrants from entering the U.S., while 45% favor ending its use (Table 1).

**Table 1. The Public’s Views on Ending the Use of Title 42 to Prevent Migrants from Entering the U.S., by Preferred Level of Future Immigration and Party Identification, in percent**

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>
Total U.S. adults	45	55
By preferred level of future immigration to the U.S. from other countries		
Should be decreased	23	<b>77</b>
Should kept at its present level	51	49
Should be increased	<b>72</b>	28
By party identification		
Dem	<b>64</b>	36
Rep	19	<b>81</b>
Ind	48	52

POLITICO/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, The Public’s Priorities for COVID-19 in a Changing World. May 6 – 9, 2022. Base: U.S. adults.

The findings suggest that people’s views about ending the use of Title 42 are driven by their views about the desirability of future immigration to the U.S. from other countries. Among those who believe that immigration in the future should be increased, 72% favor ending the use of Title 42 to prevent migrants from entering the U.S. However, among those who believe future

immigration to the U.S. from other countries should be decreased, more than three-fourths (77%) oppose ending the use of Title 42. Those who believe future immigration should be kept at its present level are nearly evenly split: 51% favor ending the use of Title 42, while 49% are opposed.

Overall, 41% of the public believes future immigration should be decreased, 24% that it should be increased, and 35% that it should be kept at its current level. Two-thirds of Republicans (67%) prefer a decreased level of immigration, while Democrats are more likely not to favor decreasing immigration (Table 2).

**Table 2. The Public’s Preferences for the Level of Future Immigration to the U.S. from Other Countries, by Party Identification, in percent**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Should be decreased	41	<b>16</b>	<b>67</b>	41
Should be kept at its present level	35	45	24	34
Should be increased	24	39	9	25
Don’t know/Refused/Web blank	*	-	-	*

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## Part II. The Public's Priorities for Federal Government Spending to Address COVID-19

The poll also finds that a majority of the public (57%) believes it is extremely or very important that proposed new federal spending to address COVID-19 include continued funding for the uninsured and underinsured in the U.S. to receive COVID-19 vaccination, treatment, and testing (Table 3).

**Table 3. The Public's Views on the Importance of Continued Federal Funding for the Uninsured and Underinsured in the U.S. to Receive COVID-19 Vaccination, Treatment, and Testing, by Party Identification, in percent**

	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind
Extremely important	35	59	17	30
Very important	22	28	14	23
Somewhat important	22	12	23	28
Not too important	11	1	25	10
Not important at all	9	-	21	9
Don't know/Refused/Web blank	1	-	*	-

POLITICO/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, The Public's Priorities for COVID-19 in a Changing World. May 6 – 9, 2022. Base: U.S. adults.

A smaller proportion, but still about half of U.S. adults (48%), believe it is extremely or very important that the U.S. federal government continue substantial funding for COVID-19 vaccination and testing for developing nations around the world (Table 4).

**Table 4. The Public's Views on the Importance of Continued U.S. Government Funding for COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing for Developing Nations, by Party Identification, in percent**

	Total	Dem	Rep	Ind
Extremely important	25	45	7	24
Very important	23	33	13	23
Somewhat important	26	18	31	28
Not too important	11	4	16	13
Not important at all	15	*	33	12
Don't know/Refused/Web blank	-	-	-	-

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However, the poll also finds that more than six in ten U.S. adults (62%) believe that continuing substantial federal spending to address COVID-19 will lead to increased inflation. This is important, because current polls show that the public considers inflation to be the most important problem facing the country today.<sup>1</sup> Majorities of both Republicans (84%) and Independents (63%) believe such spending will lead to increased inflation, but a majority of Democrats do not (59%) (Table 5)

**Table 5. The Public’s Views on Whether Continuing Substantial Federal Spending to Address COVID-19 Will Lead to Increased Inflation, by Party Identification, in percent**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Yes	62	39	<b>84</b>	<b>63</b>
No	37	<b>59</b>	16	37
Don’t know/Refused/Web blank	1	2	-	-

POLITICO/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, The Public’s Priorities for COVID-19 in a Changing World. May 6 – 9, 2022. Base: U.S. adults.

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<sup>1</sup> FiveThirtyEight/Ipsos poll, April 27 – May 5, 2022, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/we-asked-2000-americans-about-their-biggest-concern-the-resounding-answer-inflation/>.

### Part III. The Public’s Priority for Legislation to Limit Patients’ Costs for Insulin

To put the public’s views about these two COVID-19 spending proposals in perspective, it is important to note that neither proposal rates as highly as a priority among the public as limiting insulin costs. The new POLITICO-Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health poll finds that more than three-fourths of the public (79%) believes it is extremely or very important that the Congress pass legislation to limit a patient’s cost for insulin. Such a proposal would not require increased federal spending and can be seen as dealing with one aspect of higher prices (Table 6).

**Table 6. The Public’s Views on the Importance of Legislation to Limit a Patient’s Cost for Insulin Being Passed by Congress, by Party Identification, in percent**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Extremely important	54	68	45	51
Very important	25	23	27	25
Somewhat important	16	8	22	16
Not too important	3	*	2	5
Not important at all	2	1	3	3
Don’t know/Refused/Web blank	*	-	1	-

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Unlike the two COVID-19 spending proposals, where there is a large partisan split between the views of Democrats and Republicans, majorities of Democrats (91%), Republicans (72%), and Independents (76%) see limiting a patient’s cost for insulin as extremely or very important.

## METHODOLOGY

The results are based on polling conducted by *Politico* and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Representatives of the two organizations worked closely to develop the survey questionnaires and analyze the results of the polls. *Politico* and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health paid for the surveys and related expenses.

The project team was led by Robert J. Blendon, Sc.D., Professor of Public Health and Professor of Health Policy and Political Analysis Emeritus, at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and Dan Goldberg, Deputy Health Care Editor at *Politico*. The Harvard research team also included John M. Benson and Chelsea Whitton Pearsall.

Interviews were conducted online and via telephone (cell phone and landline) with a nationally representative sample of 1,025 randomly selected U.S. adults by SSRS of Glen Mills, Pennsylvania. The interviewing period was May 6 – 9, 2022. The interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

When interpreting these findings, one should recognize that all surveys are subject to sampling error. The margin of error for the full sample is  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points. The margin of error for questions asked of half-samples is  $\pm 4.8$  percentage points.

Possible sources of non-sampling error include non-response bias, as well as question wording and ordering effects. Non-response produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population. To compensate for these known biases and for variations in probability of selection within and across households, sample data are weighted by household size, cell phone/landline use, party identification, and demographics (sex, age, race/ethnicity, education, and region) to reflect the true population.

## ***Politico*/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Poll**

### **THE PUBLIC'S PRIORITIES FOR COVID-19 IN A CHANGING WORLD**

This survey was conducted for *Politico* and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health online and via telephone (cell phone and landline) by SSRS, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted **May 6 – 9, 2022**, among a nationally representative sample of 1,025 adults. The margin of error for total respondents is  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. More information about SSRS can be obtained by visiting [www.ssrs.com](http://www.ssrs.com)

POLQ8. Title 42 is the CDC's public health regulation that during the Covid-19 pandemic has limited migrants from other countries from entering the U.S. to protect against the spread of the disease.

The Biden Administration has proposed ending the use of Title 42 as a means of preventing migrants from entering the U.S. Opponents say that Title 42 should be kept in place because it is needed to keep large numbers of migrants from entering the U.S.

Do you favor or oppose ending the use of Title 42 to prevent migrants from entering the U.S.?

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Favor ending use of Title 42	45	64	19	48
Oppose ending use of Title 42	55	36	81	52
Don't know/Refused/Web blank	*	-	-	*

POLQ7. Currently, there is a debate in Congress about U.S. immigration policy. In the future, do you think immigration to the United States from other countries should be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased?

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Present level	35	45	24	34
Increased	24	39	9	25
Decreased	41	16	67	41
Don't know/Refused/Web blank	*	-	-	*



**(Asked of half-sample A; n=492)**

POLQ3. The federal government was providing funding for the uninsured and underinsured in the U.S. to receive COVID-19 vaccination, treatment, and testing. This funding has expired. As the Biden Administration asks Congress for more Covid-19 aid, how important do you think it is that new funding for these services be included in that request? Is it...

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Extremely important	35	59	17	30
Very important	22	28	14	23
Somewhat important	22	12	23	28
Not too important	11	1	25	10
Not important at all	9	-	21	9
Don't know/Refused/Web blank	1	-	*	-

**(Asked of half-sample B; n=533)**

POLQ4. Currently the U.S. government provides funding for Covid-19 vaccination and testing for developing nations around the world. This funding for developing nations expires in the next few months. How important do you think it is for the U.S. federal government to continue substantial funding for these efforts in the future? Is it...

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Extremely important	25	45	7	24
Very important	23	33	13	23
Somewhat important	26	18	31	28
Not too important	11	4	16	13
Not important at all	15	*	33	12
Don't know/Refused/Web blank	-	-	-	-

**(Asked of total sample)**

POLQ5. Thinking ahead to next year, do you think continuing substantial federal spending to address Covid-19 will lead to increased inflation or not?

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Yes	62	39	84	63
No	37	59	16	37
Don't know/Refused/Web blank	1	2	-	-

POLQ6. The U.S. Congress is currently considering legislation to limit a patient's cost for insulin, used by many diabetics. How important do you think it is for this legislation to be passed by Congress? Is it...

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>
Extremely important	54	68	45	51
Very important	25	23	27	25
Somewhat important	16	8	22	16
Not too important	3	*	2	5
Not important at all	2	1	3	3
Don't know/Refused/Web blank	*	-	1	-