JFK Centennial Poll

Conducted on Behalf of University of Virginia Center for Politics via Reuters/Ipsos Poll

5.25.2017

These are findings from a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted May 11-15, 2017 on behalf of the University of Virginia Center for Politics. For the survey, a sample of roughly 1,472 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. Further methodological details are at the end of this document. Data from 2012 collected by Hart Research Associates on behalf of the UVA Center for Politics, with 2,009 interviews carried out online among adults June 7-13, 2012.

Q1. Suppose you could bring back any of the U.S. presidents, living or dead, to be the next president of the United States. Who would you most want to be the next president? [TREND]

(In 2012, this question was open-ended)

	2012	**2017**
Ronald Reagan	*24%*	23%
John Kennedy	*13%*	22%
Barack Obama	*5%*	21%
Abraham Lincoln	*9%*	12%
Franklin Roosevelt	*6%*	7%
Bill Clinton	*21%*	6%
No response	*5%*	9%

Q2. The following is a list of U.S. presidents who served between 1950 and 2000. Please rate each president on a scale from zero to 10 using the scale below. If you do not have an opinion of that particular president, please just check that box. [TREND]

	0 – One of our country's worst presidents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – One of our country's best presidents	No opinion
John F. Kennedy	1%	1%	1%	3%	5%	8%	9%	12%	13%	12%	24%	10%
Ronald Reagan	5%	3%	4%	5%	5%	9%	9%	8%	11%	10%	20%	11%
Dwight Eisenhower	2%	2%	3%	4%	6%	12%	11%	13%	11%	7%	8%	22%
Bill Clinton	9%	6%	7%	6%	7%	11%	9%	11%	11%	7%	9%	7%
Gerald Ford	3%	4%	6%	7%	12%	20%	10%	8%	6%	3%	3%	21%
George H.W. Bush	9%	5%	5%	8%	10%	13%	10%	11%	11%	5%	5%	8%
Lyndon Johnson	4%	4%	6%	8%	10%	17%	10%	7%	5%	3%	3%	22%
Jimmy Carter	8%	5%	5%	6%	10%	12%	11%	9%	8%	5%	5%	16%
Richard Nixon	19%	9%	10%	9%	9%	11%	7%	6%	4%	2%	3%	12%

	Mean Score 2012	**Mean Score 2017**
John F. Kennedy	*7.6*	7.4
Ronald Reagan	*6.9*	6.5
Dwight Eisenhower	*6.8*	6.3
Bill Clinton	*6.7*	5.3
Gerald Ford	*5.0*	5.0
George H.W. Bush	*4.9*	5.0
Lyndon Johnson	*4.9*	4.8

Jimmy Carter	*4.6*	5.0
Richard Nixon	*3.7*	3.5

Q3. From that same list of presidents who served between 1950 and 2000, which one or two stand out in your mind as the best president(s)? [TREND]

	2012	**2017**
John F. Kennedy	*41%*	53%
Ronald Reagan	*46%*	43%
Bill Clinton	*46%*	28%
Dwight Eisenhower	*14%*	13%
George H.W. Bush	*14%*	13%
Jimmy Carter	*7%*	10%
Lyndon Johnson	*6%*	4%
Richard Nixon	*3%*	3%
Gerald Ford	*1%*	2%

Q4. How familiar are you with President John F. Kennedy?

	2017
Very familiar	30%
Somewhat familiar	53%
Not very familiar	11%
Not at all familiar	4%
NET: Very/Somewhat	83%
NET: Not very/Not at all	15%
Don't know	2%

Q5. Would you say you are generally favorable or unfavorable towards President John F. Kennedy?

	2017
Very favorable	33%
Somewhat favorable	30%
Lean towards favorable	24%
Lean towards unfavorable	5%
Somewhat unfavorable	3%
Very unfavorable	5%
NET: Favorable	87%
NET: Unfavorable	13%

Q6. How much impact do you think President Kennedy had on our country in terms of his policies and their legacy? [TREND]

	2012	**2017**
Impacted a great deal	*29%*	35%
Impacted a fair amount	*42%*	37%
Impacted just some	*17%*	15%
Did not impact much	*3%*	3%
Did not impact at all	*1%*	1%
NET: Great deal/Fair amount	*71%*	72%
NET: Not much/Not at all	*4%*	4%
No opinion	*8%*	10%

Q7. The following are words and phrases that some people have used to describe John F. Kennedy. For each item, please use the scale below to indicate how well you personally feel the phrase describes John F. Kennedy. [TREND]

	0 – Does not describe JFK well	1	2	3	4	5 – Neutral feelings	6	7	8	9	10 – Describes JFK very well	Don't know enough to say
Charismatic	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	10%	5%	8%	15%	14%	36%	5%
Patriotic	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	10%	7%	10%	17%	14%	33%	5%
A strong leader	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	9%	8%	10%	17%	13%	32%	5%
Courageous	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	13%	8%	12%	16%	14%	25%	5%
Inspirational	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	12%	8%	12%	15%	15%	28%	5%
Optimistic	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	13%	8%	15%	17%	12%	23%	5%
Wealthy and privileged	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	18%	7%	12%	13%	12%	26%	5%
Concerned about the average person	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	16%	11%	13%	15%	9%	21%	6%
Immoral	19%	7%	10%	7%	6%	19%	7%	6%	4%	3%	5%	6%
Immoral/bad role model	23%	7%	10%	8%	6%	18%	6%	5%	4%	3%	4%	6%
Arrogant	18%	8%	8%	9%	8%	19%	6%	6%	4%	3%	4%	7%
Anti-business	13%	5%	8%	6%	9%	32%	5%	3%	2%	1%	2%	14%
Reckless	19%	9%	10%	9%	8%	18%	7%	5%	3%	2%	3%	7%
Just another politician	20%	7%	10%	9%	8%	22%	6%	4%	3%	2%	4%	5%
Unproductive and did not accomplish much	24%	10%	12%	11%	6%	16%	5%	3%	2%	1%	2%	7%

	Mean Score 2012	**Mean Score 2017**
Charismatic	*8.6*	8.0
Patriotic	*8.4*	8.0
A strong leader	*8.2*	7.9
Courageous	*8.1*	7.6
Inspirational	*8.1*	7.7
Optimistic	*8.0*	7.5
Wealthy and privileged	*7.9*	7.4
Concerned about the average person	*7.5*	7.2
Immoral	*4.2*	3.9
Immoral/bad role model	*3.9*	3.6
Arrogant	*3.8*	3.8
Anti-business	*3.7*	3.9
Reckless	*3.6*	3.6
Just another politician	*3.1*	3.6
Unproductive and did not accomplish much	*2.1*	2.9

Q8. To the best of your knowledge, during what period did John F. Kennedy serve as President of the United States?4

	2017
The early 1940s	1%
The early 1950s	8%
The early 1960s	78%
The early 1970s	4%
Don't know	8%

Methodology

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted May 11-15, 2017 on behalf of Thomson Reuters and the University of Virginia Center for Politics. For the survey, a sample of roughly 1,472 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. These findings are compared to 2012 results with a sample of 2,009 adults conducted June 7-13, 2012.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos's online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Amparo Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2013 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.9 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=1,472, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=4.4). For 2012, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our Public Opinion Polling and Communication page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

How to Calculate Bayesian Credibility Intervals

The calculation of credibility intervals assumes that Y has a binomial distribution conditioned on the parameter θ\, i.e., Y|θ~Bin(n,θ), where n is the size of our sample. In this setting, Y counts the number of "yes", or "1", observed in the sample, so that the sample mean ($\bar{y}$) is a natural estimate of the true population proportion θ. This model is often called the likelihood function, and it is a standard concept in both the Bayesian and the Classical framework. The Bayesian [1] statistics combines both the prior distribution and the likelihood function to create a posterior distribution. The posterior distribution represents our opinion about which are the plausible values for θ adjusted after observing the sample data. In reality, the posterior distribution is one's knowledge base updated using the latest survey information. For the prior and likelihood functions specified here, the posterior distribution is also a beta distribution (π(θ/y)~β(y+a,n-y+b)), but with updated hyper-parameters.

Our credibility interval for ϑ is based on this posterior distribution. As mentioned above, these intervals represent our belief about which are the most plausible values for ϑ given our updated knowledge base. There are different ways to calculate these intervals based on π(θ/y). Since we want only one measure of precision for all variables in the survey, analogous to what is done within the Classical framework, we will compute the largest possible credibility interval for any observed sample. The worst case occurs when we assume that *a*=1 and *b*=1 and y=*n/2*. Using a simple approximation of the posterior by the normal distribution, the 95% credibility interval is given by, approximately:

$$\bar{y} \mp \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$$

For this poll, the Bayesian Credibility Interval was adjusted using standard weighting design effect 1+L=1.3 to account for complex weighting[2]

Examples of credibility intervals for different base sizes are below. Ipsos does not publish data for base sizes (sample sizes) below 100.

Sample size	Credibility intervals
2,000	2.5
1,500	2.9
1,000	3.5
750	4.1
500	5.0
350	6.0
200	7.9
100	11.2