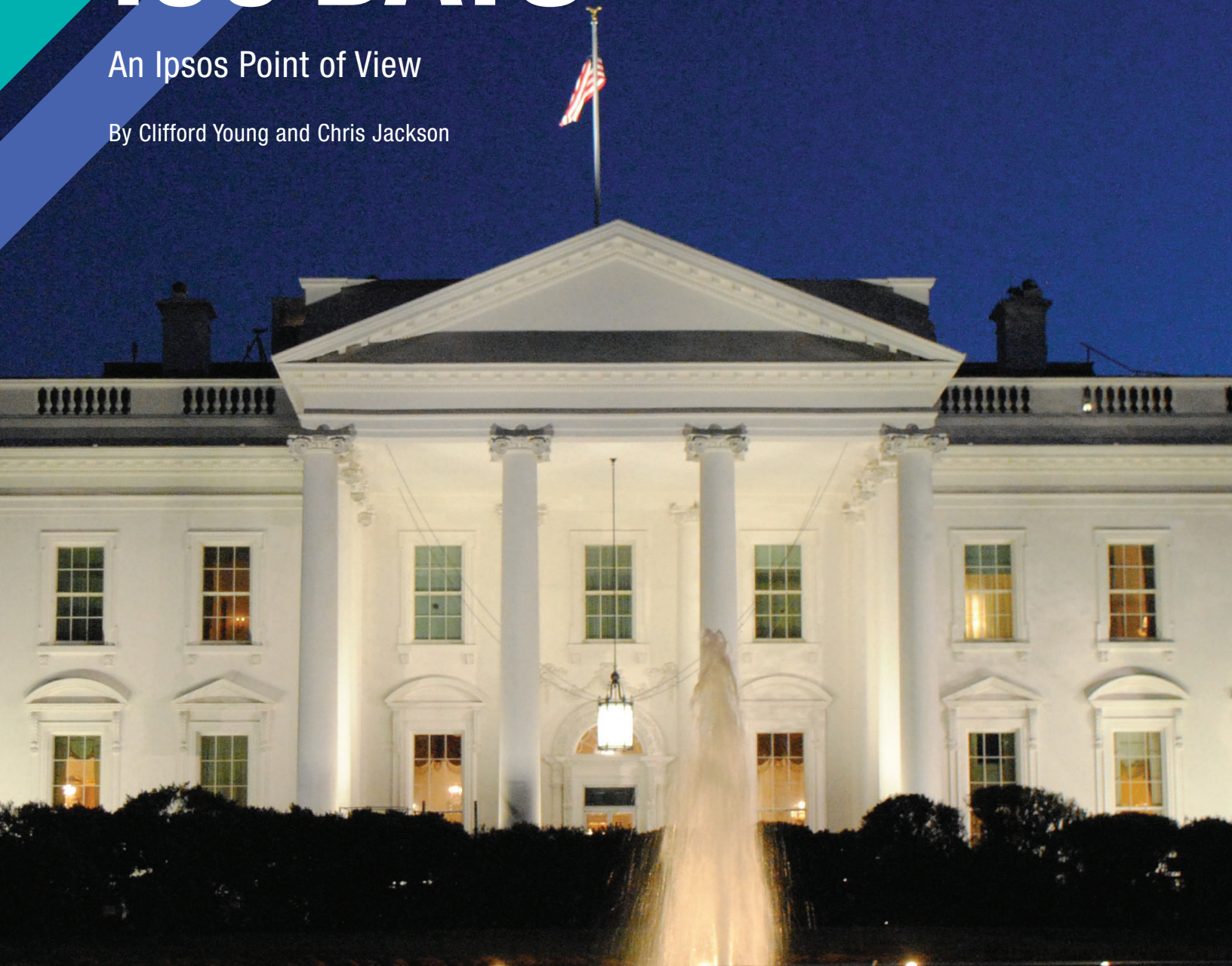


BIDEN'S FIRST 100 DAYS

An Ipsos Point of View

By Clifford Young and Chris Jackson



GAME CHANGERS



BIDEN'S FIRST 100 DAYS

Overview:

America has undergone enormous change over the last year with the coronavirus pandemic, mass protests, an unprecedented election, and an assault on the seat of government.

However, public opinion data suggests the first 100 days of President Joe Biden's administration mark an inflection point in the American experience. Just a few months ago, people were reeling from a staggering death toll and had a very bleak view of the country. Yet three months later, optimism is picking up speed, vaccinations are now widely available, and people are beginning to reemerge from their homes.

But, problems remain. Large segments of the population are unvaccinated, which presents a major challenge to stopping the spread of new strains and outbreaks. Beyond this, the country is still grappling with the inequitable economic impact of the pandemic and fractured partisan landscape.

Biden's 100 Days:

- Americans moving out of survival mode
- The race to vaccinate
- The economic recovery
- Unifying the country

AMERICANS ARE MOVING OUT OF SURVIVAL MODE

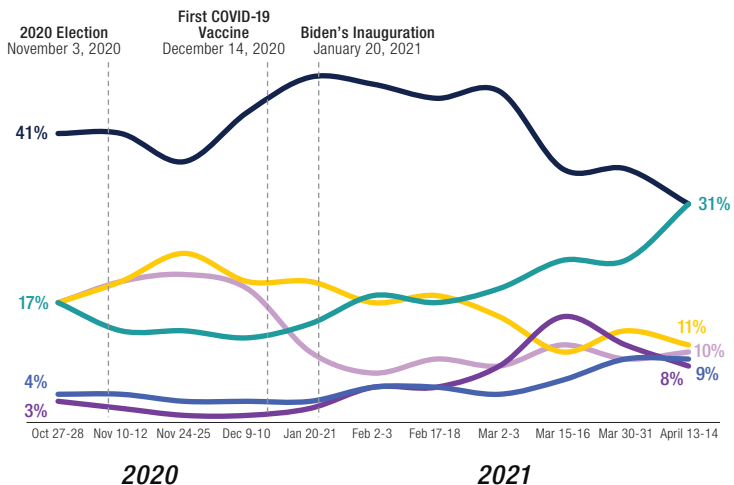
Since President Biden took office in late January, Americans are growing more optimistic about the future. Just under half (45%) think that within the next six months life will return to something like a pre-COVID normal, including the 17% who say they'll resume their pre-COVID life within the month, or have already done so. This marks a sea change compared to the one in four (26%) who felt the same at the end of January, according to tracking from the [Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index](#).

As a result of this growing optimism, people are changing their routines and engaging in pre-pandemic activities at an increasing rate. When Biden was inaugurated 17% of people said that they were doing most of the things they did before COVID hit. By the middle of April, that number nearly doubled to 31%.

Americans begin moving out of survival mode

There are often several phases or stages that people go through when times are hard. Which one of the following phases do you feel best describes your current situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic?

- I have adapted to the restrictions and settled into new routines
- I am doing some things that are restricted/I am doing most of the things that I did before COVID
- I am reacting day-by-day to the restrictions and establishing new routines
- The pandemic has not reached my area and there are no restrictions/I am preparing for new restrictions
- It seems that restrictions will soon be lifted in my area
- I feel that the pandemic is behind me and I am moving on with life



© Ipsos | Source: Ipsos Consumer COVID Tracker, Waves 16-26

The growing hope across the country is clear across multiple indicators. Optimism about the future of the economy rose to a 19-year high, while consumer confidence regained levels seen before the March 2020 lockdowns. After deep lows over the past year, when unemployment hit double digit numbers, economic sentiment is now near pre-pandemic levels.





THE END OF THE PANDEMIC?

The growing optimism and movement outside of the home come as COVID-19 vaccines become widely available to the public. As of mid-April, 56% of Americans have personally received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, up from nine percent at the end of January. However, despite the breakneck clip of vaccinations, many obstacles remain in the way of fully vaccinating the country and reemerging. Looking ahead, inequitable access to the vaccine and the culture war surrounding the vaccination campaign will continue to be obstacles in reaching herd immunity.

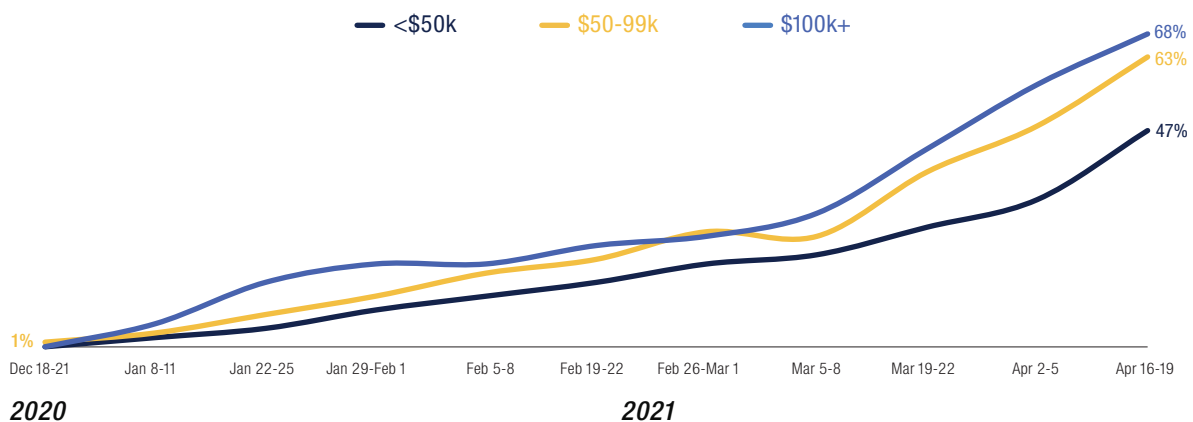
Vaccination inequalities

Disparate access to the vaccine remains a persistent issue. When asking people in the [Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index](#) if they personally received the COVID-19 vaccine, significant differences by race and income emerge. Just under half (47%) of people making under \$50K have received the vaccine, while 68% who earn \$100k or more have received the vaccine.

Gap between rich and poor widens for vaccine access

Do you personally know anyone who has already received the COVID-19 vaccine?

% who have personally received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine



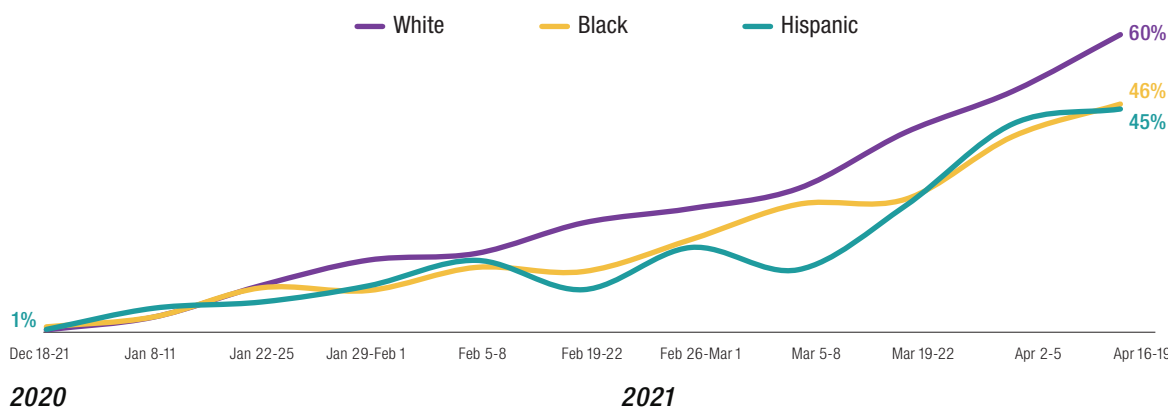
© Ipsos | Source: Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index

A slightly smaller but notable gap also persists by race. About three in five (60%) white U.S. adults have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, while only 46% of Black and 45% of Hispanic Americans are in the same boat. That remains true even as COVID-19 has disproportionately infected and killed Black and Hispanic communities.

Disparate access to vaccine across race and ethnicity

Do you personally know anyone who has already received the COVID-19 vaccine?

% who have personally received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine



© Ipsos | Source: Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index

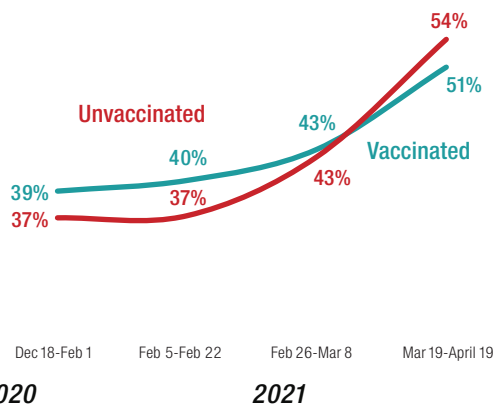
The vaccination race

Even as vaccination rates increase, unvaccinated people are also increasingly going out of the home, contributing to the continuation of the pandemic. According to the [Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index](#), 54% of unvaccinated Americans report visiting friends and family in mid-April, three points ahead of people who have received at least one dose of the vaccine. At the same time, the vaccinated and unvaccinated are going out to eat at similar rates, with just under half of both groups reporting doing so.

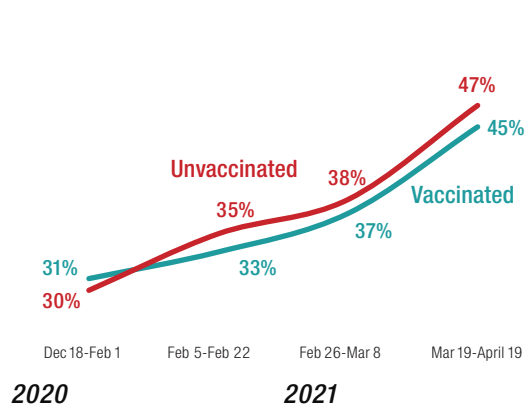
Vaccinated people are now leaving their homes, so are unvaccinated people

Have you done the following in the last week?

% who have visited friends or family



% who have gone out to eat



© Ipsos | Source: Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index | Vaccinated people include all those who have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine

The vaccination culture war

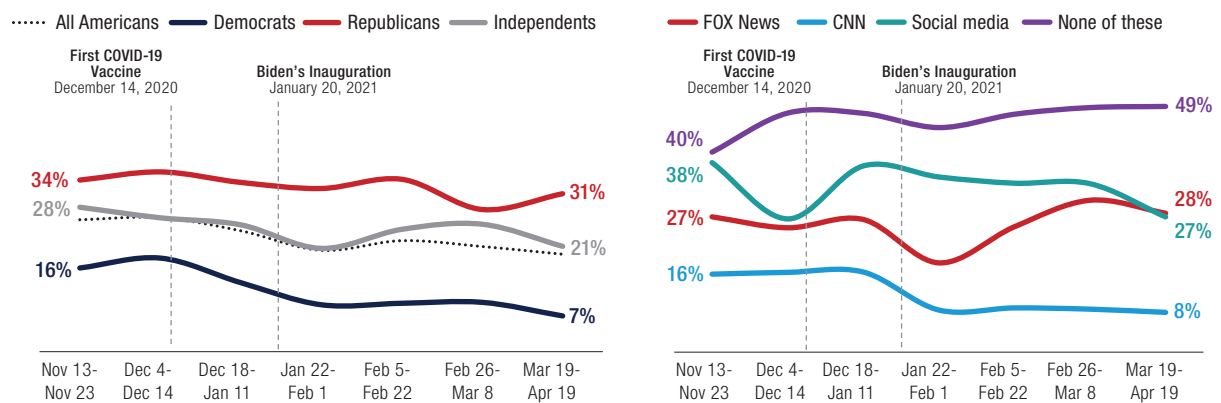
As much of the country gets the vaccine, another issue is emerging: the vaccine wall. As of late April, one in five Americans say they are definitively not going to get the vaccine. As we near the end of Biden's first 100 days, partisanship and news source appears to be the strongest drivers of vaccine resistance, a testament to the ongoing effect of partisanship and media bubbles.

As of the middle of April, one in three Republicans and over a quarter (28%) of people whose primary news source is FOX News say they are not at all likely to get any COVID-19 vaccine. But even more stark, among those who don't consume major news or only use very alternative news sources, 49% are not at all likely to get a vaccine.

Misinformation, partisanship top barriers for vaccination effort

How likely, if at all, are you to get the first generation COVID-19 vaccine, as soon as it's available?

Percent **not at all likely** to get vaccine by PID and main source of news



© Ipsos | Source: Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index

In his first 100 days, Biden and his administration have successfully navigated the logistical challenges to make all Americans able to access the vaccine. But now comes the harder part of pushing through inequity and misinformation to get those that are resistant on board.





THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

This burgeoning vaccine campaign is buoying not just spirits but the economic recovery too. More Americans are beginning to feel safer about a post-COVID future and are eager to engage in activities that they could not do during the height of the pandemic.

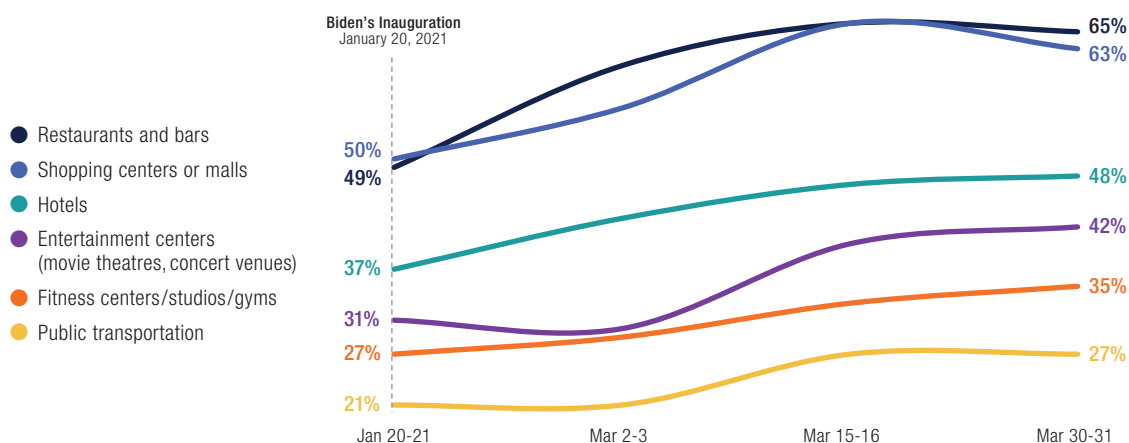
Americans want to go out

Now, about half of Americans believe they will start going to restaurants and bars the same or more than they did before the pandemic. Almost across the board, we have seen significant increases in the desire to do a whole range of consumer activities since November, according to the [Ipsos Consumer COVID Tracker](#).

Americans begin to feel safer about reengaging with the world

When do you think you will feel safe enough to start using each of the following services and activities?

*Percent who have already started using the following, or plan to sometime in the near future**



© Ipsos | Source: Ipsos Consumer COVID Tracker "who responded "yes" to "Now/I already am," "Within the next month," and "1-3 months from now."

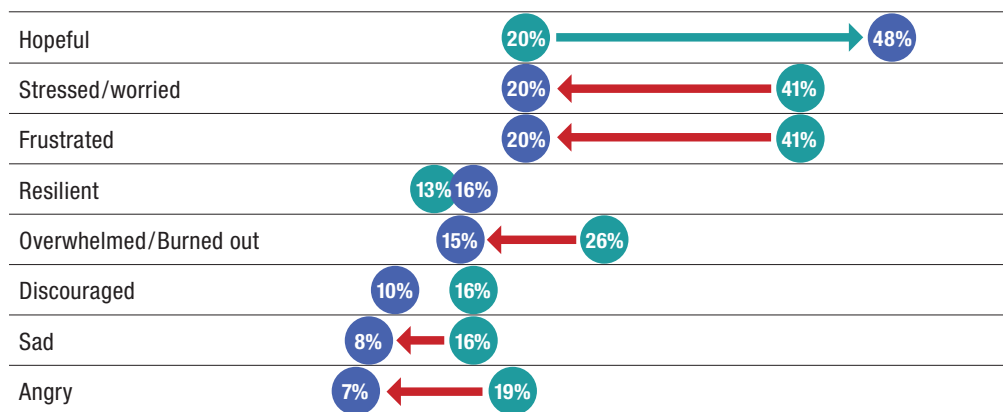
People believe better times are ahead

The rosy consumer outlook is part of people's expanding sense of optimism. Americans were glad to put 2020 behind them. A year into the pandemic, Axios/Ipsos asked Americans what their dominant emotions for the past year had been. Most responded with negative feelings, like stressed or worried (41%), or frustrated (41%). But when asked about their mood now, hope dominates with half of Americans (48%) expressing optimism.

Increasing optimism

Americans reflect on emotions felt within the past year versus today

● Felt over the past year ● Feeling today



© Ipsos | Source: Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index





Despite improving national outlook, inequitable economic impact of the pandemic lingers

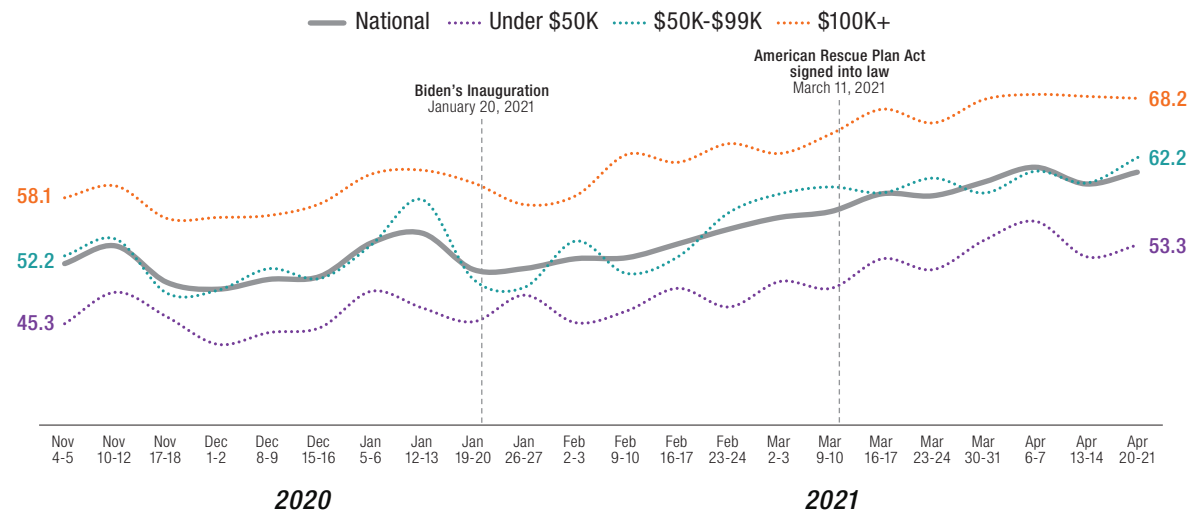
Yet, even as the economy is recovering, some people continue to fall behind.

In addition to a public health crisis, the pandemic was an economic crisis. And less affluent Americans were much harder hit by the economic impact of the pandemic. Throughout 2020, the economic confidence of Americans who make under \$50,000 in household income barely improved, even as wealthier Americans started feeling better as early as the summer of 2020.

Since Biden's inauguration, less affluent Americans have started feeling better about the shape of the economy, but they continue to lag behind the more affluent, showing how the recovery hasn't been felt equally by all.

Lower-income Americans show greater economic confidence under the Biden administration, but still lag behind

Consumer confidence by income level



© Ipsos | Source: Ipsos-Forbes Advisor U.S. Consumer Confidence Tracker

REESTABLISHING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

National priorities

First and foremost, Americans had one task for Biden as he came into office: handle the pandemic. In addition, Biden was expected to deal with the economy and employment and jobs that had also been pummeled, according to [Ipsos polling](#).

However, just one in four Republicans want Biden to prioritize the pandemic. More believe that the emphasis should be on immigration, the economy, and employment and jobs. In contrast, close to half of Democrats believe that Biden should be focused on the pandemic, while racial inequality and the economy vie for second place.

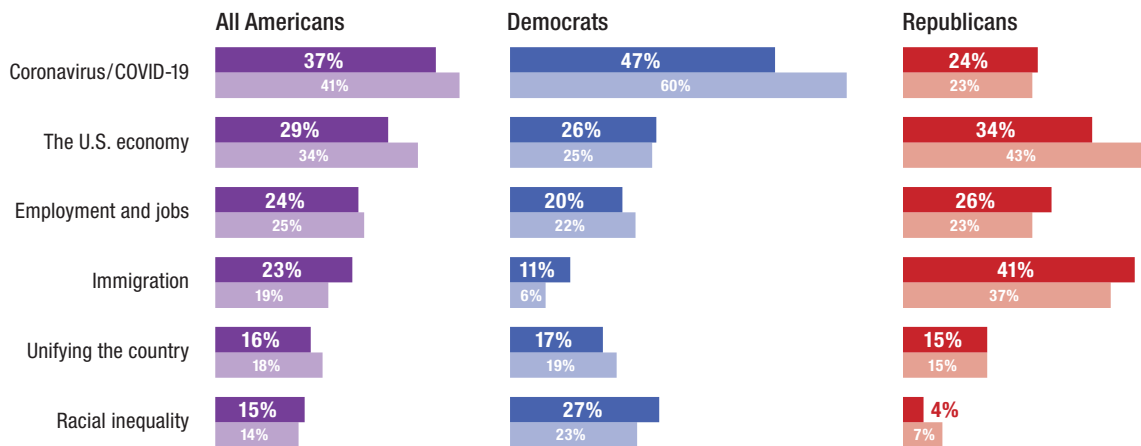
The gulf across the parties on what matters most underscore some of the challenges Biden faces in developing a national agenda that can bring a fractured public together.

Prioritization of the issues changes from March to April

What do you want President Joe Biden to prioritize? Choose the top 2 issues most important to you.

● April 14–15, 2021

● March 17–18, 2021



© Ipsos | Source: Ipsos Core Political, March–April 2021



Biden is delivering on his mandate despite societal rifts

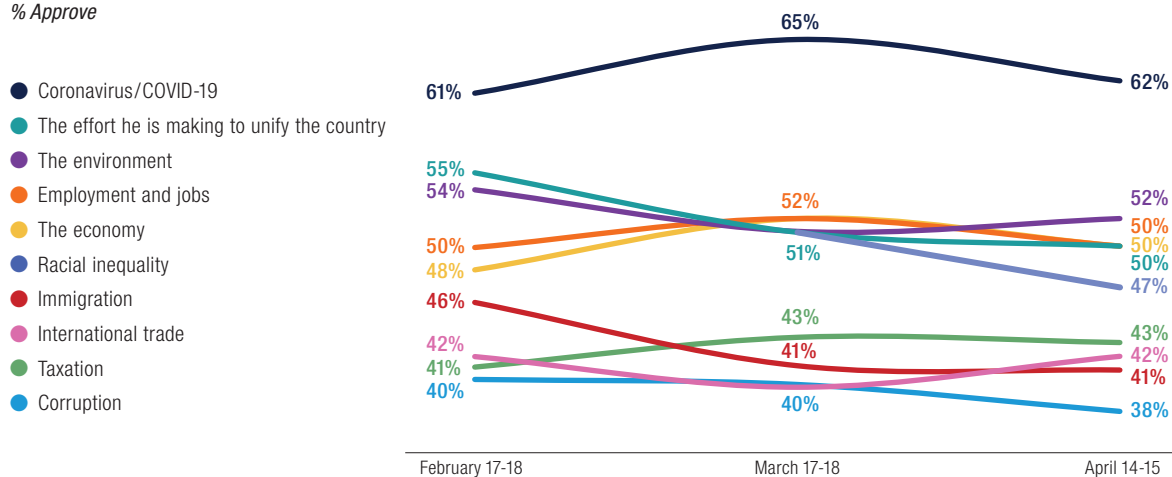
Despite these divisions in trust and priorities, the public largely approved of Biden's performance during his first 100 days. A majority of Americans approve of his handling of the coronavirus, including 84% of Democrats and 39% of Republicans. There is no other issue for the president that wins such a relatively high level of support from Republicans. Given the broader, hyper-polarized context, these numbers are significant.

Biden was elected on a clear mandate to address the coronavirus pandemic, and his current approval rating suggests that the public believes he is delivering.

Biden performs best on COVID

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling the following issues?

% Approve

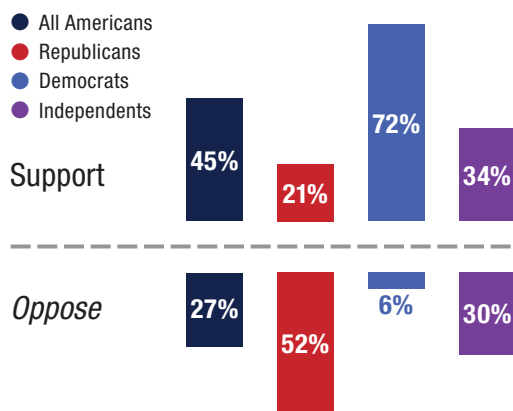


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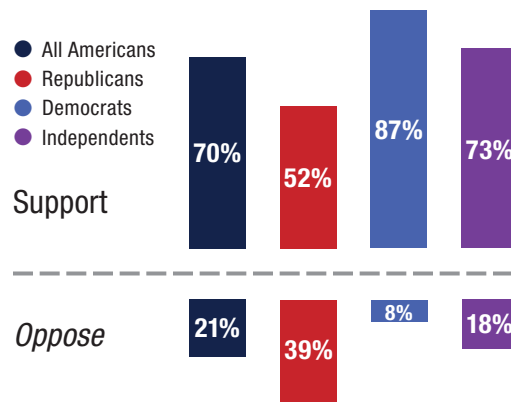
Americans are also supportive of Biden's American Rescue Plan, according to [Reuters/Ipsos polling](#). It has strong majority support from Democrats and Independents, while just over half of Republicans are on board. Biden's infrastructure proposal, the Americans Jobs Plan, though similarly sweeping in scope, elicits less support and much more partisan division.

COVID response popular, will infrastructure be?

Do you support or oppose the jobs and infrastructure plan, also known as the American Jobs Plan, recently released by the Biden administration?



Do you support or oppose the American Rescue Plan, which would spend \$1.9 trillion in taxpayer dollars for vaccines and medical supplies and send a new round of emergency financial aid to households, small businesses, and state and local governments?



© Ipsos | Source: Ipsos survey of 1,005 Americans, conducted March 31–April 1, 2021; Reuters/Ipsos survey of 1,005 Americans conducted March 8–9, 2021



Trust in the federal government restored?

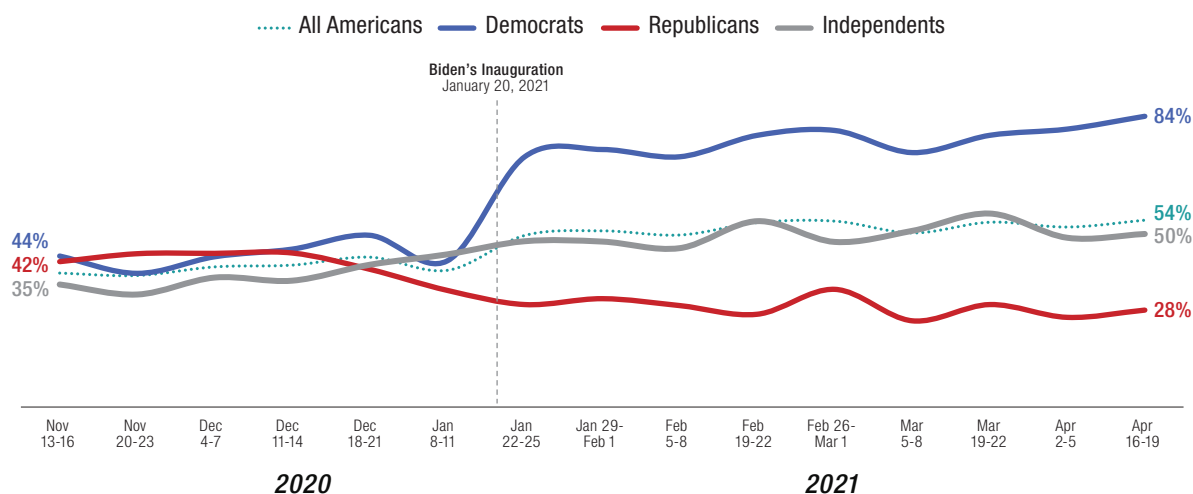
In the five months following the election, the number of Americans who say they trust the federal government to provide them with accurate information about the novel coronavirus improved, climbing from 39% to 54%, according to the [Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index](#).

This shift occurred following Biden's inauguration, when the initial vaccine rollout and distribution took off. The success to date of the vaccine campaign is likely influencing the newly positive views of the federal government. But, a closer look at the data reveals that trust hinges on what political party someone supports.

Between the 2020 election and the middle of April, Democrats' trust in the federal government improved 40 points while Republican confidence in the federal government fell by 14 points. This divide illustrates how partisanship mediates reality for Americans.

Democratic trust in government surges as Republican fades

How much trust do you have in the federal government to provide you with accurate information about coronavirus or COVID-19?



© Ipsos | Source: Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index

Trust in other federal agencies follows a similar trajectory, with partisan confidence in institutions, like the CDC, falling between November and April. As of mid-April, there was a 40-point gap in trust among Democrats and Republicans. Democrats' trust in the CDC is now at 91%, while Republican confidence fell to 51%.

Varying levels of trust in the federal government and agencies tasked with guiding the nation out of the pandemic speak to the ongoing challenge of reassuring vaccine skeptics and getting the country on the same page. The increasing polarization around trust in the federal government and the growing vaccine wall is a testament to how complicated legislating and communicating in the next phase of the pandemic will be.

WHAT'S NEXT

America is beginning to reemerge. Between increasing vaccine access and rising optimism among the public, America is in a better place 100 days into Biden's presidency.

Yet, for the better part of the past year, Americans were split on how dangerous the pandemic was, what to do about it, and who to trust. This fundamental dynamic has not changed over the past 100 days. Those fractures will remain a problem as the country tries to reemerge and inoculate vaccine skeptics.

Ultimately, the complicated legacy of the pandemic frames this moment as an inflection point for the country. And for President Biden, this current honeymoon phase probably represents one of his best opportunities to drive forward the most ambitious items on his agenda, those that would have the most lasting and direct impact on American lives. But how long this period will last is the real question.

Problems Past the First 100 Days:

- Social distance fatigue among the unvaccinated
- The vaccine wall
- Economic recovery and the wealth gap
- Politicized trust in federal government
- Little to no bipartisan consensus on the issues of the day
- Republican refocusing on nativism and immigration
- Democrats prioritize racial justice and equality

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