TOPLINE & METHODOLOGY

538/Washington Post/Ipsos Republican Post- Debate Survey

Conducted by Ipsos using KnowledgePanel®
A survey of Republican primary voters and debate watchers (18+)
Interview dates: September 27-28, 2023
Number of interviews: 2,262

Margin of error: +/- 2.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level for all respondents
Margin of error: +/- 4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level for debate watchers

*NOTE: * = less than 0.5%, - = no respondents, N/A = not applicable*

Annotated Questionnaire:

Q1. Thanks for taking our survey! First, did you watch the Republican primary debate on Wednesday, September 27th?

	Total (N=2,262)
Yes (net)	32%
Yes, I watched all of it	14%
Yes, I watched some of it	18%
No, I did not watch it	68%
Skipped	-

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Q2. What did you do instead of watching the debate on Wednesday from 9 to 11 p.m. Eastern Time? (Select all that apply)

Base: Did not watch debate

	Non-debate watchers (N=1,532)
Watched something else on TV or watched a movie	35%
Spent time with a family member	22%
Slept	21%
Worked	10%
Cleaned or did other housework	8%
Ate	7%
Read a book	6%
Watched Donald Trump's speech in Michigan	4%
Took care of an animal or pet	4%
Drove/Traveled	3%
Exercised	3%
Cooked or baked	3%
Worked on a craft	2%
Attended a meeting	2%
Paid bills	2%
Worked on a vehicle	1%
Shopped	1%
Attended class	1%
Something else	15%
None of these	3%
Skipped	*

Q3. Did you watch any of Trump's speech in Michigan on Wednesday, September 27?
Base: Did not watch the debate or reported watching Trump's speech in Michigan in Q2

	Base: (N=1,865)
Yes (net)	12%
Yes, I watched all of it	2%
Yes, I watched some of it	10%
No, I did not watch it	88%
Skipped	*

Base for Q4-Q10: Watched all or some of the debate

Q4. What moment of the debate was most memorable to you?
Open-ended responses provided separately.

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Q5. No matter how you plan to vote, who do you think performed best in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Ron DeSantis	33%
Nikki Haley	18%
Vivek Ramaswamy	15%
Chris Christie	6%
Tim Scott	6%
Mike Pence	3%
Doug Burgum	2%
None of these	9%
Don't know	8%
Skipped	*

Q6. Why do you think [INSERT RESPONSE Q5] performed the best in the Republican debate on Wednesday?

Base: Respondents who watched all or some of the debate and said one of the candidates performed best

Open-ended responses provided separately.

Q7. Who do you think performed the worst in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Chris Christie	24%
Mike Pence	20%
Doug Burgum	11%
Vivek Ramaswamy	10%
Nikki Haley	7%
Ron DeSantis	5%
Tim Scott	4%
None of these	3%
Don't know	16%
Skipped	*

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Q8. And thinking more specifically, how would you rate the performance of each of the candidates who participated in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

Total Excellent/Very good Summary

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Ron DeSantis	54%
Nikki Haley	44%
Vivek Ramaswamy	40%
Tim Scott	30%
Doug Burgum	19%
Chris Christie	18%
Mike Pence	11%

Total Poor/Terrible Summary

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Mike Pence	48%
Chris Christie	43%
Doug Burgum	34%
Vivek Ramaswamy	23%
Nikki Haley	20%
Tim Scott	19%
Ron DeSantis	15%

Q8_1. Ron DeSantis - And thinking more specifically, how would you rate the performance of each of the candidates who participated in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	54%
Excellent	21%
Very good	33%
About average	27%
Poor/Terrible (net)	15%
Poor	8%
Terrible	7%
Don't know	3%
Skipped	1%

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Q8_2. Mike Pence - And thinking more specifically, how would you rate the performance of each of the candidates who participated in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	11%
Excellent	2%
Very good	9%
About average	37%
Poor/Terrible (net)	48%
Poor	32%
Terrible	16%
Don't know	4%
Skipped	*

Q8_3. Doug Burgum - And thinking more specifically, how would you rate the performance of each of the candidates who participated in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	19%
Excellent	3%
Very good	17%
About average	35%
Poor/Terrible (net)	34%
Poor	26%
Terrible	8%
Don't know	12%
Skipped	1%

Q8_4. Chris Christie - And thinking more specifically, how would you rate the performance of each of the candidates who participated in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	18%
Excellent	3%
Very good	15%
About average	35%
Poor/Terrible (net)	43%
Poor	23%
Terrible	20%
Don't know	4%
Skipped	*

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Q8_5. Nikki Haley - And thinking more specifically, how would you rate the performance of each of the candidates who participated in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	44%
Excellent	15%
Very good	29%
About average	31%
Poor/Terrible (net)	20%
Poor	12%
Terrible	8%
Don't know	5%
Skipped	*

Q8_6. Vivek Ramaswamy - And thinking more specifically, how would you rate the performance of each of the candidates who participated in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	40%
Excellent	10%
Very good	30%
About average	31%
Poor/Terrible (net)	23%
Poor	16%
Terrible	7%
Don't know	5%
Skipped	1%

Q8_7. Tim Scott - And thinking more specifically, how would you rate the performance of each of the candidates who participated in the Republican primary debate on Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	30%
Excellent	6%
Very good	25%
About average	44%
Poor/Terrible (net)	19%
Poor	14%
Terrible	5%
Don't know	6%
Skipped	*

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Q9. How would you rate the performance of the moderators of the Republican primary debate, held Wednesday?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	31%
Excellent	9%
Very good	22%
About average	41%
Poor/Terrible (net)	26%
Poor	18%
Terrible	7%
Don't know	3%
Skipped	*

Q10. Do you think the Republican primary debate on Wednesday did a good or poor job covering the following topics?

Total Excellent/Very good Summary

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Dealing with immigration	39%
How to build the American economy	30%
Reducing crime and promoting public safety	29%
Wokeness or political correctness	19%
Donald Trump's indictments	8%

Total Poor/Terrible Summary

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Donald Trump's indictments	39%
Wokeness or political correctness	32%
How to build the American economy	22%
Reducing crime and promoting public safety	21%
Dealing with immigration	18%

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Q10_1. How to build the American economy - Do you think the Republican primary debate on Wednesday did a good or poor job covering the following topics?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	30%
Excellent	5%
Very good	25%
About average	43%
Poor/Terrible (net)	22%
Poor	17%
Terrible	5%
Don't know	5%
Skipped	*

Q10_2. Dealing with immigration - Do you think the Republican primary debate on Wednesday did a good or poor job covering the following topics?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	39%
Excellent	9%
Very good	29%
About average	38%
Poor/Terrible (net)	18%
Poor	14%
Terrible	5%
Don't know	4%
Skipped	1%

Q10_3. Reducing crime and promoting public safety - Do you think the Republican primary debate on Wednesday did a good or poor job covering the following topics?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	29%
Excellent	5%
Very good	24%
About average	44%
Poor/Terrible (net)	21%
Poor	17%
Terrible	4%
Don't know	5%
Skipped	1%

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Q10_4. Wokeness or political correctness - Do you think the Republican primary debate on Wednesday did a good or poor job covering the following topics?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	19%
Excellent	4%
Very good	15%
About average	38%
Poor/Terrible (net)	32%
Poor	23%
Terrible	8%
Don't know	11%
Skipped	*

Q10_5. Donald Trump's indictments - Do you think the Republican primary debate on Wednesday did a good or poor job covering the following topics?

	Debate watchers (N=730)
Excellent/Very good (net)	8%
Excellent	3%
Very good	5%
About average	32%
Poor/Terrible (net)	39%
Poor	25%
Terrible	14%
Don't know	19%
Skipped	1%

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Q11. After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

Total Favorable Summary

	Total (N=2,262)
Donald Trump	60%
Ron DeSantis	58%
Nikki Haley	46%
Tim Scott	39%
Vivek Ramaswamy	38%
Mike Pence	34%
Chris Christie	23%
Doug Burgum	19%
Asa Hutchinson	9%
Will Hurd	6%

Total Unfavorable Summary

	Total (N=2,262)
Chris Christie	55%
Mike Pence	53%
Donald Trump	34%
Vivek Ramaswamy	27%
Ron DeSantis	26%
Asa Hutchinson	25%
Nikki Haley	23%
Doug Burgum	21%
Tim Scott	20%
Will Hurd	17%

Q11_1. Donald Trump - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	60%
Very favorable	40%
Somewhat favorable	21%
Unfavorable (net)	34%
Somewhat unfavorable	11%
Very unfavorable	23%
Heard of, no opinion	4%
Never heard of	*
Skipped	2%

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Q11_2. Ron DeSantis - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	58%
Very favorable	25%
Somewhat favorable	33%
Unfavorable (net)	26%
Somewhat unfavorable	13%
Very unfavorable	14%
Heard of, no opinion	10%
Never heard of	5%
Skipped	2%

Q11_3. Mike Pence - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	34%
Very favorable	6%
Somewhat favorable	27%
Unfavorable (net)	53%
Somewhat unfavorable	26%
Very unfavorable	27%
Heard of, no opinion	11%
Never heard of	1%
Skipped	2%

Q11_4. Doug Burgum - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	19%
Very favorable	4%
Somewhat favorable	15%
Unfavorable (net)	21%
Somewhat unfavorable	12%
Very unfavorable	9%
Heard of, no opinion	23%
Never heard of	35%
Skipped	2%

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Q11_5. Chris Christie - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	23%
Very favorable	4%
Somewhat favorable	18%
Unfavorable (net)	55%
Somewhat unfavorable	24%
Very unfavorable	31%
Heard of, no opinion	14%
Never heard of	8%
Skipped	2%

Q11_6. Nikki Haley - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	46%
Very favorable	16%
Somewhat favorable	30%
Unfavorable (net)	23%
Somewhat unfavorable	15%
Very unfavorable	9%
Heard of, no opinion	14%
Never heard of	15%
Skipped	1%

Q11_7. Will Hurd - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	6%
Very favorable	1%
Somewhat favorable	5%
Unfavorable (net)	17%
Somewhat unfavorable	10%
Very unfavorable	8%
Heard of, no opinion	29%
Never heard of	46%
Skipped	1%

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Q11_8. Asa Hutchinson - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	9%
Very favorable	1%
Somewhat favorable	8%
Unfavorable (net)	25%
Somewhat unfavorable	12%
Very unfavorable	13%
Heard of, no opinion	32%
Never heard of	33%
Skipped	1%

Q11_9. Vivek Ramaswamy - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	38%
Very favorable	12%
Somewhat favorable	26%
Unfavorable (net)	27%
Somewhat unfavorable	14%
Very unfavorable	13%
Heard of, no opinion	14%
Never heard of	20%
Skipped	1%

Q11_10. Tim Scott - After watching the primary debate Wednesday, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of each of the following Republican presidential candidates?

	Total (N=2,262)
Favorable (net)	39%
Very favorable	10%
Somewhat favorable	30%
Unfavorable (net)	20%
Somewhat unfavorable	13%
Very unfavorable	7%
Heard of, no opinion	19%
Never heard of	21%
Skipped	1%

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Q12. And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

Total Considering Summary

	Total (N=2,262)
Donald Trump	63%
Ron DeSantis	51%
Nikki Haley	36%
Vivek Ramaswamy	27%
Tim Scott	26%
Mike Pence	23%
Chris Christie	15%
Doug Burgum	8%
Asa Hutchinson	4%
Will Hurd	3%

Total Not considering Summary

	Total (N=2,262)
Will Hurd	73%
Asa Hutchinson	73%
Doug Burgum	71%
Chris Christie	71%
Mike Pence	65%
Vivek Ramaswamy	54%
Tim Scott	54%
Nikki Haley	45%
Ron DeSantis	36%
Donald Trump	29%

Q12_1. Donald Trump - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	63%
Not considering	29%
Don't know	6%
Skipped	1%

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Q12_2. Ron DeSantis - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	51%
Not considering	36%
Don't know	12%
Skipped	1%

Q12_3. Mike Pence - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	23%
Not considering	65%
Don't know	11%
Skipped	1%

Q12_4. Doug Burgum - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	8%
Not considering	71%
Don't know	20%
Skipped	1%

Q12_5. Chris Christie - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	15%
Not considering	71%
Don't know	13%
Skipped	2%

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Q12_6. Nikki Haley - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	36%
Not considering	45%
Don't know	18%
Skipped	1%

Q12_7. Will Hurd - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	3%
Not considering	73%
Don't know	22%
Skipped	1%

Q12_8. Asa Hutchinson - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	4%
Not considering	73%
Don't know	21%
Skipped	1%

Q12_9. Vivek Ramaswamy - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	27%
Not considering	54%
Don't know	17%
Skipped	1%

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Q12_10. Tim Scott - And now, which of the following Republican candidates for president are you considering voting for in the Republican primary?

	Total (N=2,262)
Considering	26%
Not considering	54%
Don't know	18%
Skipped	1%

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About the Study

The post-debate wave of the 538/Washington Post/Ipsos poll was conducted September 27 to 28, 2023, by Ipsos using the probability-based KnowledgePanel®. The pre-debate wave of this poll was based on a nationally-representative probability sample of adults age 18 or older fielded September 19 to 26, 2023, screened to those indicating they are likely to vote in the upcoming Republican primary or caucus (N=5,002). The post-debate wave, which this topline reports, was administered to the same sample of respondents who took part in the pre-debate wave. Of those, N=2,262 responded to the post-wave survey and N=730 reported watching all or part of the debate.

The margin of sampling error among those who responded to the post-debate survey is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The margin of sampling error among those who watched all or part of the debate is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points. The margin of sampling error takes into account the design effect, which was 1.28 for respondents and 1.30 for debate watchers. The margin of sampling error is higher and varies for results based on sub-samples. Sampling error is only one potential source of error. There may be other unmeasured non-sampling error in this or any poll. In our reporting of the findings, percentage points are rounded off to the nearest whole number. As a result, percentages in a given table column may total slightly higher or lower than 100%. In questions that permit multiple responses, columns may total substantially more than 100%, depending on the number of different responses offered by each respondent.

The post-debate survey weight factors are the same as those from the pre-debate. As such, the weighted total for post-debate respondents and debate watchers do not match their respective sample sizes. The weights for the post-debate respondents were not adjusted to account for the nonresponding pre-debate sample.

The survey was conducted using KnowledgePanel, the largest and most well-established online probability-based panel that is representative of the adult U.S. population. Our recruitment process employs a scientifically developed addressed-based sampling methodology using the latest Delivery Sequence File of the USPS – a database with full coverage of all delivery points in the U.S. Households invited to join the panel are randomly selected from all available households in the U.S. Persons in the sampled households are invited to join and participate in the panel. Those selected who do not already have internet access are provided a tablet and internet connection at no cost to the panel member. Those who join the panel and who are selected to participate in a survey are sent a unique password-protected log-in used to complete surveys online. As a result of our recruitment and sampling methodologies, samples from KnowledgePanel cover all households regardless of their phone or internet status and findings can be reported with a margin of sampling error and projected to the general population. KnowledgePanel members receive a per survey incentive, usually the equivalent of $1 (though for some it is $2) in points, that can be redeemed for cash or prizes. No prenotification email for this study was sent prior to field. Panelists receive a unique login to the survey and are only able to complete it one time. No reminder emails were sent for this study.

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The study was conducted in both English and Spanish. The full sample, pre screening, was weighted to adjust for gender by age, race/ethnicity, education, Census region, metropolitan status, household income, and party identification. The demographic benchmarks came from 2022 Current Population Survey (CPS) from the U.S. Census Bureau. Party ID benchmarks are from recent ABC News/Washington Post telephone polls. The weighting categories were as follows:

- Gender (Male, Female) by Age (18–29, 30–44, 45–59, and 60+)
- Race/Hispanic Ethnicity (White Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Other or 2+ Races Non-Hispanic, Hispanic)
- Education (High School graduate or less, Some College, Bachelor and beyond)
- Census Region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West)
- Metropolitan status (Metro, non-Metro)
- Household Income (Under $25,000, $25,000-$49,999, $50,000-$74,999, $75,000-$99,999, $100,000-$149,999, $150,000+)
- Party ID (Democrat, Republican, Independent, Something else)

No respondents were removed from the final data for refusing all of the survey items.

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About Ipsos

Ipsos is one of the largest market research and polling companies globally, operating in 90 markets and employing over 18,000 people.

Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. Our 75 solutions are based on primary data from our surveys, social media monitoring, and qualitative or observational techniques.

Our tagline "Game Changers" sums up our ambition to help our 5,000 customers move confidently through a rapidly changing world.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has been listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and Mid-60 indices and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP www.ipsos.com