

*THE PULSE*

# COUNTDOWN:

THE 2024 SMALL BUSINESS VOTE

August 2024

Data Catalyst Institute

ICE CREAM





# INTRODUCTION

Adding to a particularly contested 2024 U.S. national election season, two major “July surprises” have disrupted campaign strategies, public expectations, and global perspectives on America. One surprise was the attempted assassination of Donald Trump in Pennsylvania on July 13, 2024; then, barely a week later, the Democratic Party effectively substituted Kamala Harris for Joe Biden in response to the latter’s July 21 announcement that he would not stand for reelection.

Owners and senior leaders of the approximately 33 million small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) across every U.S. state have unique perspectives on politics because, in many cases, their work lives are heavily intertwined with their personal lives. They tend to be independent-minded and pragmatic and are close to the “ground-level truth” of the economy.

Because SMB owners and senior leaders tend to vote based on a special combination of what they believe will be best for themselves, family, friends, and community, as well as their businesses and customers, we wished to understand their unique perspective on recent election-related events. To take their pulse, we conducted a three-day survey of our exclusive panel of senior decisionmakers at U.S. small and medium-sized businesses.

This report contains quantitative and qualitative information about which presidential candidates they plan to support and what the top issues they care about are. The data is broken down by political party, gender, and other factors.





# THE CANDIDATES

SMB LEADERS WHO PREFER TRUMP MAY BE MORE PRAGMATICALLY FOCUSED ON THE ECONOMY

## HARRIS VOTERS

### FEMALE VOTERS

“Although I would prefer it if Hillary Clinton would run again, I think the vice president Harris is the next best alternative. I would support her in her bid to become president.”

–Pennsylvania, Democrat, Black



## TRUMP VOTERS

“I don't like Trump; but, if you do a side-by-side comparison of Trump, Harris, & Kennedy, I don't see an alternative.”

–New Mexico, Democrat, White (retired)



### MALE VOTERS

“I like her a lot, and liked her when she was a Senator. I'll vote for any D at the top of the ticket because Trump must never hold any public office and definitely not the presidency again.”

–Wisconsin, Democrat, White



“[Trump] fixed the US ECONOMY ONCE HE CAN DO IT AGAIN. ALSO HE HAS FOREIGN POLICY LIKE NONE OTHER.”

–Nevada, Republican, Hispanic



Who are you voting for, and in a few words, why do you support that candidate?



# THE CANDIDATES

CANDIDATE PREFERENCE IS LARGELY ALONG PARTY LINES, THOUGH INDEPENDENT SMB LEADERS DON'T APPEAR TO HAVE A STRONG PREFERENCE RIGHT NOW



## IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE, IF THE ELECTION FOR PRESIDENT WERE HELD TODAY, FOR WHOM WOULD YOU VOTE?

	Total (N=82)	Democrats (N=39)	Independents (N=18)	Republicans (N=24)	Men (N=47)	Women (N=34)
Kamala Harris	52%	85%	50%	0%	57%	44%
Donald Trump	39%	13%	28%	92%	34%	47%
Other	4%	0%	11%	4%	2%	6%
Undecided	4%	3%	6%	4%	6%	0%



# THE ISSUES

MULTI-ISSUE VOTERS: MANY SMB LEADERS CONSIDER ECONOMICS, NATIONAL SECURITY, AND SOCIAL ISSUES IMPORTANT TO THEIR VOTING CHOICE

FEMALE VOTERS

“Women have the right to choose. The economy needs to be addressed immediately so that we can get this country back. SMBs need access to capital to run our businesses.”

–Pennsylvania, Democrat, Black (Harris)



“Inflation and protecting democracy have the most effect on my day-to-day living.”

–Washington, Independent, White/American Indian (RFK)

“I am trying to recover from a disaster fire. So, Inflation, Social Security, and Climate are of paramount importance to me. And, frankly, my pocketbook was fuller during Trump.”

–New Mexico, Democrat, Retired, White (Trump)



MALE VOTERS

“We allow too many immigrants into the US each month, the world is becoming dangerous, our constitutional rights are going to be threatened if Trump gets back into office.”

–California, Democrat, White/American Indian (Harris)

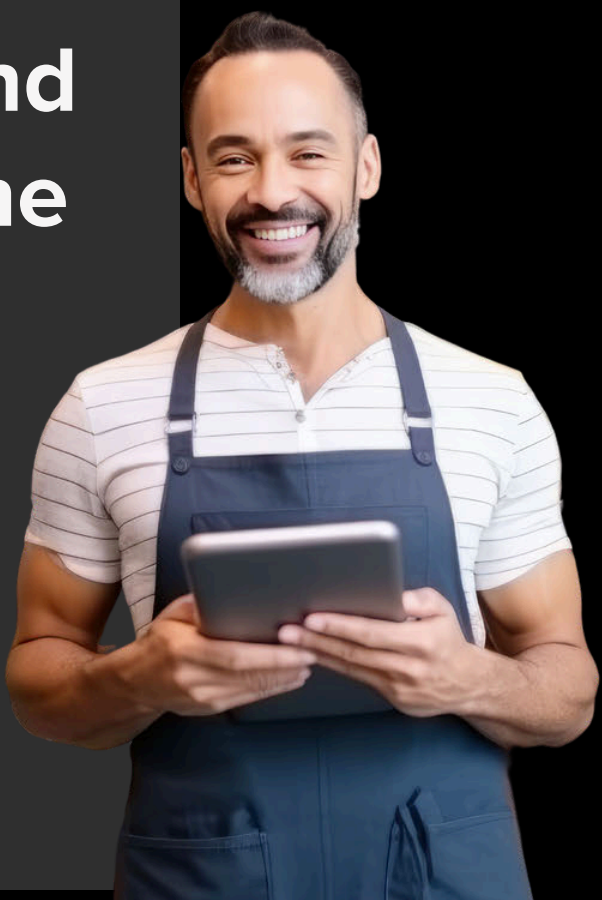
“Abortion is a fundamental moral issue, immigration relates to the security of the nation, and the economy is heading in a very bad, untenable situation.”

–Wisconsin, Republican, White (Undecided)



“Inflation, immigration and border security, and national security are the core issues.”

–Nevada, Republican, Hispanic (Trump)



Which three issues are most important to your vote and why?



# THE ISSUES

THE ECONOMY IS THE TOP SMB ISSUE, FOLLOWED BY IMMIGRATION, DEMOCRACY, ABORTION, & CLIMATE – WITH NOTICEABLE PARTISAN AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

NOW, WHICH OF THESE ISSUES ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOUR VOTE IN NOVEMBER? (PICK UP TO THREE)

	Total (N=82)	Democrats (N=39)	Independents (N=18)	Republicans (N=24)	Men (N=47)	Women (N=34)
The economy/ inflation	51%	38%	50%	75%	47%	59%
Immigration or border security	35%	18%	33%	67%	38%	32%
Protecting democracy or constitutional rights	28%	26%	50%	17%	32%	24%
Abortion	22%	36%	11%	8%	15%	32%
Energy, environment, and climate	22%	31%	22%	8%	15%	32%
National security/ homeland security	18%	13%	11%	33%	23%	12%

For simplicity, not all response options are shown.





# METHODS

For this edition of *THE PULSE*, The Data Catalyst Institute (DCI) surveyed via email our exclusive panel of owners and senior decision makers at small and medium-sized businesses (SMB) that sell physical goods. The survey was open from July 22-24, 2024. DCI contacted 350 people and 95 responded, with 82 completing the questionnaire.

Panels are primarily for qualitative purposes and are voluntary in nature. While DCI does present quantitative information from the survey as directionally interesting, the findings are not necessarily nationally representative, as the sample size is relatively small and unweighted.

For more information, send an email to [editor@datacatalyst.org](mailto:editor@datacatalyst.org).





## About ***THE PULSE*** by DCI

*THE PULSE* is the Data Catalyst Institute's series that tracks sentiment and analyzes qualitative and quantitative data from key audiences. Topics covered include breaking news, the digital and innovation economy, and issues of strategic importance to government, business, and nonprofit leaders.

## About the **Data Catalyst Institute (DCI)**

You operate in a world in which data is the most important commodity, in which the digital realm has become more important than the physical one, in which disruption is the rule and not the exception. A world in which influencers must be understood, opinions and perceptions are being shaped, and innovation, market, and regulatory landscapes are constantly shifting. A world in which risks and opportunities seem obvious...until they aren't. And you have zero room for error.

In an era of global turbulence and uncertainty, professionals need access to multidisciplinary intelligence and expertise that helps them navigate significant technological, economic, political, and societal change. DCI analyses complex battles at the intersection of innovation, business, the law, and public opinion by synthesizing insights from original research and our unique community of academics, analysts, and practitioners. Leaders use DCI's intelligence and experts to "see around corners" when they need novel solutions to complex situations involving minimizing risk and maximizing opportunities.

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