



Where Do the Candidates Stand on Issues That Matter to Young Voters?

The choice: “The 2024 presidential election will give voters a stark choice between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump, two candidates who couldn't be further apart on a number of policies” [\(NBC\)](#)

Sources: As much as possible, we have drawn the information below from sources we believe to be non-partisan. We have attempted to note where a source tends one way or the other. We encourage readers to check these sources and our assessment of their non-partisan nature.

ISSUES	Harris	Trump
<p><u>Abortion / Reproductive Rights</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Supports right to abortion * Opposed <i>Dobbs</i> ruling. Supports a federal law to restore Roe v. Wade's national standard of abortion legality up to viability. Advocated for protecting abortion access, including for travel, privacy, emergency care, and bodily autonomy * Biden's FDA revised restrictions on medication abortion pills, allowing dispensing via certified pharmacies and telehealth. * Biden administration issued guidance affirming that abortions performed to stabilize the health of people experiencing pregnancy-related emergencies are protected by the federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA), even in states that ban abortions. * Strengthened HIPAA protections for data privacy, added nondiscrimination protections for people seeking abortion care, and defends right to travel to seek abortion. * Biden administration revoked Trump's Mexico City Policy restrictions. * As U.S. senator, opposed restrictions on abortion care (Hyde Amendment), co-sponsored Women's Health Protection Act (would 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pursued restrictions on abortion as President. * Takes credit for overturning <i>Roe v. Wade</i> by appointing three anti-choice judges to the Supreme Court, claiming, “After 50 years of failure, with nobody coming even close, I was able to kill <i>Roe v. Wade</i>.” * Would consider a national 15 or 16-week ban on abortion, but now supports leaving abortion policy to states, which allows full bans to stay in effect. * Supports exceptions in cases of rape, incest, and to save the life of the pregnant woman. * Stated that he would generally not use the Comstock Act to ban mail delivery of medication abortion pills, but not specifics * Administration blocked clinicians from providing counseling including abortion information or referrals in clinics that receive federal Title X family planning funds. * Reinstated and expanded Mexico City Policy prohibiting U.S. global health funds from going to foreign NGOs that perform or promote abortions.

	<p>have blocked states from imposing restrictive policies limiting access to abortion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * As attorney general in California, supported state’s Reproductive FACT Act, requiring so called crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) to post information about availability of free and low-cost contraceptives and abortion services in the state. 	
<u>Climate Change</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Calls climate change an existential threat; US needs to act urgently * 2019 released \$10 trillion plan to invest in renewable energy, holding polluters accountable * As VP: tie breaking vote for Inflation Reduction Act provided \$370 billion to cut greenhouse gasses * As Calif. AG: prosecuted oil companies for environmental environmental violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Called climate change a “hoax” (invented by China) in 2022. Suggested that wind turbines cause cancer. * During four years in office, targeted and rolled back over 125 rules and policies designed to protect environment and lower planet-warming emissions * In 2024, asked oil / gas executives to contribute \$1 billion to campaign “because, if elected, he would roll back environmental rules that he said hampered their industry”¹ * Has walked back “hoax” statements (see BBC analysis): As president... adopted an ambiguous, inconsistent stance in interviews and speeches, e.g. “<i>I don't think there's a hoax. I do think there's probably a difference. But I don't know that it's man-made (CBS interview, October 2018)</i>”
<u>Democracy: Transfer of Power²</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Committed to accepting results of 2024 election. Will not use position as sitting VP to intervene in counting for certification. * Supported Biden Electoral Count Act – established VP role as ceremonial. * Backed 2020 election outcome * On voter discrimination: Supports John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act: Act would update landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act by restoring a provision requiring state and municipalities with a history of voter discrimination to obtain federal “preclearance” before changing voting laws). Passed the House in 2021: All Democrats voted in favor and all Republicans voted against 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Still questions legitimacy of 2020 election outcomes. Defends false claim of rigged election. No evidence of fraud close to widespread to change outcome in any state. Fraud claim viewed as debunked by Forbes, rejected by judges across political spectrum, including by Trump-appointed judges. * Vance refuses to acknowledge Trump lost 2020 election and to condemn Jan 6 riot. * False claims and actions³ in preparation to undermine 2024 elections and challenge potential 2024 defeat. Includes false claims, e.g. widespread voting by non-citizens, election officials use early voting to commit fraud.

¹ On request to oil / gas executives, see also [Politico](#) and [Business Insider](#).

² See “30 Days Until the Election: Here’s what you need to know.” *NYT (Special Section)*, Oct 6, 2024.

³ Draws on *The Hill*, which is rated as “center” by *All Sides* [assessment](#) of media bias.

		* On voter discrimination: Republicans opposed John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.
<u>Democracy: Voting Rights</u>	* Supported John Lewis Voting Rights Act (restore preclearance section of Voting Rights Act) * Supported Freedom to Vote Act (set floor for voting access in federal elections (e.g. automatic voter registration))	* Opposed Freedom to Vote and John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Acts * Attacked mail voting * Spread unfounded conspiracy theories about voting equipment security
<u>Student Financial Aid / Debt</u>	* Reduce student loan debt: Supported lowering interest on and/or forgiving student loans: erased \$168.5 billion in student loan debt for 4.76 million borrowers. * Continue support Biden’s Plan B / SAVE (Save on a Valuable Education) under which borrowers automatically placed in interest-free payment pause (“forebearance”). Challenged in court by two groups of Republican-led states. * Strong support for / expansion of <i>Public Service Loan Forgiveness</i> programs.	* Generally opposed help on student debt: Proposed big cuts to all federal education funding but especially to programs helping students and student loan borrowers. opposed to * Replace SAVE with single income-driven repayment (IDR) plans (Project 2025 proposal): would generally increase monthly payments for borrowers relative to SAVE and other current options; remove the loan forgiveness option; under current IDR plans, borrowers can get forgiveness after 20 or 25 years of payments * Campaign proposal to make <i>Public Service Loan Forgiveness</i> more difficult. Vance opposed loan forgiveness with “every ounce of our energy.” Project 2025 emphasizes benefits of private sector work and calls for termination of public sector work.
<u>Executive Power and Government Reform</u>	* Biden rescinded Trump’s Executive Order creating Schedule F category of civil servants exempt from traditional employment protection. Opposition based on research findings that tenure protection, as well as impartiality, meritocratic recruitment, and professionalism “are strongly associated with higher government performance and lower corruption.” * Supports DOJ independence.	* In October 2020, Trump issued Executive Order creating Schedule F category stripping protection from civil servants. Traditionally, such flexibility applied only to small number of positions filled by political appointees. * Would end norm of DOJ independence; vows to use govt to punish political opponents *Vowed overhaul of federal bureaucracy blamed for blocking his first term agenda. Replace “deep state” with loyalists . ⁴

⁴ “Loyalist” emphasis from *The Conversation*. [Described](#) as a “leaning left,” independent not-for-profit digital news source featuring expert analysis from academics and professionals on ongoing or hot-button issues.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pledges to strip civil service protections, fire “rogue bureaucrats. ” Involves plans to quickly purge thousands of federal employees if reelected. Through Schedule F, estimated plans⁵ to remove up to 50,000 career federal workers in “confidential, policy-determining, policy-making or policy-advocating” jobs from the General Schedule into new job classification where virtually all of their civil service protections were absent, essentially making them at-will employees. * Pledges to terminate the Education Department, curtail the independence of regulatory agencies like the Federal Communications Commission as part of effort to cut government waste and red tape * Preceding are key items in Project 2025.
<u>Contraception</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Supports ACA contraceptive coverage requirement * Biden restored rules of federal Title X family planning program requiring participating entities to offer full range of contraceptives, pregnancy options counseling and re-allowing clinics that also offer abortion services (with non-federal funds) to qualify for the program. * Administration’s FDA approved first over-the-counter oral contraceptive pills and supports increased access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Prohibited family planning clinics such as Planned Parenthood that also offer abortion services (with separate funding) from receiving funds from the federal Title X family planning program, leading to disqualification or departure of @ 1000 sites – about 25% of participating clinics. * Issued regulations allowing nearly any employer with a religious or moral objection an exemption from the ACA’s contraceptive coverage requirement. * Approved Texas’s Medicaid program waiver blocking Medicaid payments to Planned Parenthood and other clinics for non-abortion family planning services and excluding coverage of emergency contraceptive pills in state’s family planning program.
<u>LGBTQ Health</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Campaign commitment to pass Equality Act - provide non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people. * Worked to expand and protect LGBTQ rights and access to health care as attorney general of California, as U.S. senator from California, and in Biden administration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Issued revised regulations on ACA removing protections in health care based on gender identity and sexual orientation. * Created Division of Conscience and Religious Freedom at HHS; directed federal agencies to expand religious protections allowing opportunities for LGBTQ-based discrimination in certain circumstances.

⁵ This source, Government Executive, is rated by [Media Bias / Fact check](#) as follows: “Overall, we rate Government Executive Left-Center Biased based on editorial positions that slightly favor the left. We also rate them High for factual reporting due to proper sourcing and a clean fact-check record.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * As U.S. senator, introduced bill to include LGBTQ identity in the U.S. Census, which has implications for identifying health care trends for the population; cosponsored The Health Equity and Accountability Act and the Equality Act, bills seeking to promote equity, access, and data collection, including in health care for LGBTQ people, among others * Biden-Harris administration issued guidance and regulations on ACA providing the broadest protections to date in health care based on gender identity and sexual orientation, for transgender people, and for gender-affirming care. * The administration rescinded Trump administration regulatory expansions of conscience regulations that had created potential opportunities for LGBTQ-based discrimination (which multiple federal courts had found to be unlawful). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sought to curtail data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity in federal surveys. * Proposes prohibiting gender-affirming care for young people and limiting use of federal funds for these services.
<p><u>Affordable Care Act / Obamacare</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Helped enact American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) - temporarily expanded eligibility for and increased ACA Marketplace subsidies. These extended by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) through 2025. * Biden administration fixed the “family glitch,” allowing dependents of people with unaffordable employer-based family coverage to receive ACA subsidies. * Biden reversed Trump administration expansion of short-term plans and restored outreach and enrollment assistance and funding. Results: Administration had record-high enrollment in ACA Marketplace plans. * Proposes to build on provisions in the IRA by making permanent the expanded ACA subsidies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Unsuccessful attempts in 2017 to repeal and replace ACA; proposed plans that would uninsure Americans to 51 million * During administration, multiple efforts to roll back ACA (cut outreach funds and opportunities to enroll in exchanges; cut subsidies to insurance companies offering coverage on exchanges; provided access to lower-cost but lower-quality insurance options than previously allowed; insurance; promoted waivers to cut ACA enrollments and weaken regulatory structure; reduced funding for outreach, which may have contributed to enrollment stagnating; expanded non-ACA-compliant short-term plans, which restrict coverage for pre-existing conditions; deprioritized enforcement of the individual mandate tax penalty, then reduced the penalty to \$0; Stopped payments for cost-sharing subsidies (CSRs), which contributed to premiums increasing). * As candidate for 2024 election, proposed “concept of a plan,” called to “never give up” on repealing the ACA; added “Obamacare Sucks” and would replace it with

		<p>“much better healthcare.” Later said not running on terminating the ACA and would make it “much much better and far less money.” No specifics – only though has provided no specific plans.</p> <p>* Budget plans proposed changes to the ACA that would weaken pre-existing protections</p>
<u>Hurricane preparedness</u>	<p>Congress approved \$20 billion for FEMA's disaster relief fund as part of a stopgap spending bill to fund the government through December 20. But the measure left out billions of dollars in requested supplemental disaster funding.</p> <p>The Senate approved the measure by a 78-18 vote on September 25 after it passed the House in a 341-82 vote</p>	
	<p>All Democrats voted in support of FEMA funding.</p>	<p>* Republicans supplied the no votes in both chambers. Many of these later claimed⁶</p> <p>* Trump claims of weak federal response challenged</p>
<u>Healthcare / Medical: Gun Violence</u>	<p>* Tighten: Wants to implement gun safety laws to reduce gun violence, including red flag laws, universal background checks, and a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Recently stated, “It is a false choice to suggest that you’re either in favor of the Second Amendment or you want to take everyone’s guns away...in favor of the Second Amendment and we need an assault weapons ban.”</p> <p>* Opposed Supreme Court decision to overturn the banning of bump stocks, used in the 2017 Las Vegas mass shooting at a music festival... statement</p> <p>* The Biden-Harris administration supported and signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act into law - enhanced background checks for individuals under 21, funds crisis intervention orders, and invests in mental health services, including school-based mental health services.</p> <p>* The administration issued executive actions including rules to curb the proliferation of “ghost guns,” promote the use of Extreme Risk Protection Orders or “red flag laws.”</p> <p>* The administration launched cross-jurisdictional strike forces to reduce illegal firearm trafficking in key regions affected by gun</p>	<p>* Loosen: Reversed Obama-era regulations that made it easier for gun-safety devices to be more widely accessible and that required those eligible for Social Security Administration mental disability payments be blocked from buying guns and</p> <p>* Asked the Supreme Court to overturn New York City’s restrictions on transporting handguns</p> <p>* Has suggested that armed citizens could stop mass shootings</p> <p>* Banned bump stocks in response to the 2017 Las Vegas mass shooting, though ban since been overturned by the Supreme Court. Campaign stated, “The Court has spoken and their decision should be respected.”</p> <p>* Has attributed community gun violence and violent crime to both mental illness and immigration, stating that “they’re not humans, they’re animals.”</p>

⁶ For a list of Republicans voting against FEMA funding bill, see [here](#). In Georgia, these include Richard McCormick, Marjorie Taylor Greene, Mike Collins Andrew Clyde.

	<p>violence and stepped up enforcement against firearm dealers who sold guns illegally or ignored background check laws</p>	
<p><u>Healthcare / Medical:</u> <u>Prescription drug prices</u></p>	<p>* As VP cast the tiebreaking vote in Senate for the Inflation Reduction Act, which requires the government to negotiate prices for some Medicare-covered drugs (with the number growing over time), requires drug companies to pay rebates if prices rise faster than inflation, caps out-of-pocket drug spending, limits monthly insulin costs to \$35 for Medicare beneficiaries in Part B and all Part D plans, improves financial assistance for low-income beneficiaries, and other changes.</p> <p>* Proposes to accelerate Medicare price negotiation of drugs (the Democratic platform calls for 50 drugs per year) and extend \$35 insulin copay cap and drug out-of-pocket cap to all Americans.</p> <p>* Stated will increase competition and transparency, starting with cracking down on pharmaceutical companies blocking competition and abusive practices of drug middlemen.</p>	<p>* Established a voluntary model for participating Medicare Part D plans to limit monthly insulin costs to \$35. Plan began 2021 expired 2023</p> <p>* Created new pathway to allow states to import prescription drugs from Canada.</p> <p>* Proposed to eliminate drug rebates in Medicare Part D; projected to increase Part D premiums and Medicare spending while lowering out-of-pocket costs (implementation delayed until 2032).</p> <p>* Proposed system of international reference prices for some Medicare-covered drugs</p> <p>* Proposed several Medicare Part D benefit design changes, including an out-of-pocket cap and weaker formulary standards (proposals not implemented).</p>
<p><u>Economy:</u> <u>Immigration</u></p>	<p>* Supported bipartisan compromise Immigration Reform Bill opposed by Trump and Republicans. Bill would have included tougher asylum standards, hiring more border agents, more immigration judges and more asylum officers. Pledges to bring back and sign bill into law.</p> <p>* Continue Biden executive order (June 2024) to ban asylum for those who cross illegally and increase prosecutions of those who illegally cross the border — including potential felony charges for repeat offenders,.</p> <p>* Move to harsher position from more lenient immigration stance as presidential candidate in 2019, when supported decriminalizing border crossings. Plan harsher than bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill.</p> <p>* Intends to protect DACA and proposes plans for DACA road to citizenship.</p>	<p>* Encouraged Republicans to reject bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill</p> <p>* Proposes mass deportation of 8.3 million unauthorized immigrants: “largest domestic deportation operation in American history,” including plans to build large detention facilities to hold migrants awaiting deportation.</p> <p>* Plans to Use 1807 Insurrection Act to allow use of military to arrest unauthorized migrants.</p> <p>* Renewed plans to “build the wall” US-Mexico border</p> <p>* More extreme immigration restriction, including ending birthright citizenship for DACA – US-born children of unauthorized immigrants.</p>

<u>Economy: Tariffs⁷</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Argues that Trump across-the-board tariffs constitute a sales tax on Americans. Proposes more “strategic,” i.e. targeted tariffs, but specific targets and levels not yet clear. * Biden administration has kept some of Trump tariffs and recently raised tariffs on Chinese imports, especially EVs and battery parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 10 percentage point additional tariff on all trading partners and a 60 percentage point additional tariff on China.*⁸
<u>Economy: Federal Reserve Independence</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Maintain independence of Federal Reserve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * No clear policy but strong suggestion of need for presidential influence⁹ on Fed decisions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Peterson Institute analysis of Trump package (deportation, tariffs, Fed independence) distinctly negative (no equivalent overall analysis of Harris plan) * Committee for Responsible Federal Budget (nonpartisan) analysis: Trump tax and spending plans could add as much as \$15 trillion to national debt. 2x more than Harris plans 	
<u>Ukraine / Russia</u>	<p>Clear stand against Russia with Ukraine¹⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probable continuity with Biden policies, including renewal of major treaties (e.g. START) Strong NATO supporter. Told Trump that Putin was “a dictator who would eat you for lunch.” Associated with Biden policies, promised at Democratic convention she “will stand strong with Ukraine and our NATO allies.” Backs Biden determination “to provide Ukraine with the support it needs to win.” But not clear what winning actually means. No permission for Ukraine to strike further into Russian territory. Resists security guarantees for Ukraine as this could involve US in direct conflict with Russia if it attacks Ukraine again. Biden policy seems to be to provide Ukraine with enough support so that it does 	<p>Unclear/mixed¹¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Has strongly criticized Biden’s handling of war but has not offered on policies he would reverse. * On the one hand, Trump has praised Putin and asserted he believed Putin over own intelligence agencies over whether Russia interfered in 2016 elections. Yet administration imposed waves of sanctions on Russia due to election interference. * Weakened 50-year-old arms control regime (e.g. pulled out of 1987 treaty on IRBM and 2002 Open Skies) * Ended Obama ban on supplying Ukraine with lethal defensive weapons in Donbas fight with Russia, but told Zelensky that US would withhold security aid to Ukraine unless Ukraine provided damaging information on Hunter

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, information for Trump positions on immigration, tariffs and Federal Reserve from [Peterson](#) Institute, 2024, *The International Economic Implications of a Second Trump Presidency*

⁸ [Forbes](#) draws on Moody’s, Goldman Sachs and other economist to highlight potential of Trump tariff proposal to increase inflation and unemployment. [Peterson](#) provides similarly negative assessment.

⁹ In August 2024 press conference, Trump [stated](#): “I feel that the president should have at least [a] say in there, yeah. I feel that strongly. I think that, in my case, I made a lot of money. I was very successful and I think I have a better instinct than, in many cases, people that would be on the Federal Reserve or the chairman.”

¹⁰ Unless noted, info draws on Brookings, [“How Would Trump and Harris Handle the Ukraine War?.”](#)

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	<p>not lose, but not with the wherewithal to win and eject Russia from Ukrainian territory.</p>	<p>Biden business dealings in Ukraine (leaked phone call led to Trump impeachment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Stated in 2024 that he'd tell Russia to do "whatever the hell they want" to any NATO member that doesn't meet spending guidelines.* Claimed Russia would not have invaded Ukraine had he been president and that he would stop the war 24 hours after being elected. No details provided* Vance more explicitly opposed aid to Ukraine. Called for an immediate end to assistance; proposed peace plan involving Ukraine demilitarizing all territory currently controlled by Russia and agree to permanent neutrality. Not clear on who would control this territory - plan similar to Putin's call for Ukraine to cede the territory now occupied by Russia and agree never to join NATO
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