



Insight

Arizona: Policy Priorities and the Election

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

Methodology

On August 29-31, 2020, Basswood Research conducted a survey of likely general election voters in Arizona for the American Action Forum. The survey was conducted by live professional interviewers by telephone. The sample size was 800, with a margin of error of +/- 3.5%, at a 95% confidence interval. Interviews were geographically distributed to reflect actual voter distribution in Arizona general elections.

[Arizona Policy Survey - Top Lines](#)

[Arizona Policy Survey - Crosstabs](#)

Key Findings

- **When asked to prioritize between eliminating the coronavirus and economic recovery, voters are split along partisan lines.**

When given a list of four topics and asked, “Which do you consider the most pressing domestic policy issue?” “eliminate the coronavirus” was selected by a 37% plurality of voters, while “economic recovery” was close behind at 32%. However, this narrow gap masks large partisan differences. Republicans prioritize economic recovery at 49% over coronavirus elimination at 30%. Democrats prioritize virus elimination at 47%, followed by “social justice and equality” at 23% and “climate change” at 16%, before economic recovery at only 12%. In the president election, those who prioritize coronavirus first are voting for Joe Biden over Donald Trump 63%-32%, while those who prioritize economic recovery first are voting for Trump over Biden 83%-13%.

- **Arizona voters are closely divided in attitudes about lockdown measures.**

Q: Are you more worried that lockdown measures will be lifted too soon and we will risk a second wave of virus outbreaks, or that lockdown measures will be left in place too long and we will risk further economic hardship?

A: 46% Too soon/outbreak

44% Too long/hardship

9% Don't know/refused

Similar partisan division exists here. Republicans are more concerned about keeping the economy locked down too long by 70%-20%. Independents are on the same side, but by only 48%-41%. Democrats, by contrast, are more worried about lifting lockdown measures too soon by 76%-14%.

- **By about a 2:1 margin, Arizona voters favor additional federal stimulus spending, notwithstanding incurring additional debt.**

Q: Do you support or oppose increasing the national debt by at least one trillion dollars in order to help stimulate economic recovery?

A: 60% Support

33% Oppose

7% Don't know/refused

Democrats heavily favor additional spending/debt 80%-15%; Independents favor it too, although less so at 52%-38%. Republicans are nearly evenly divided on the question, favoring higher spending for economic recovery 48%-44%.

- **Voters prefer spending reductions over tax increases, but large numbers support and oppose both.**

Q: The federal debt is now more than twenty-six trillion dollars. In order to reduce this debt, should the next president and Congress . . .

A: Raise taxes 12%

Slow the growth in spending 30%

Do both 29%

Do neither 21%

Don't know/refused 9%

Depending on how one elects to group responses for both, one can find 59% in favor of slowing spending growth or 41% in favor of raising taxes. As a general proposition, reducing spending is overall palatable to more voters than raising taxes. The Republican split is pronounced, with 42% favoring slower spending and only 5% favoring raising taxes, although 25% of Republicans also favor doing both.

- **There is little present interest in dealing with entitlements.**

When told that the largest contributors to future federal deficits are projected to be spending on Social Security and Medicare, and asked what should be done about that, 64% of Arizona voters preferred neither reducing future costs nor raising taxes. Twenty-seven percent favored reducing costs, raising taxes, or both. There was little difference on this question based on party registration. Voters under age 40 favored action by ten points more than voters over age 65, but even 50% of younger voters opted to “do neither.”

- **Tariffs on Chinese goods have broad support.**

Q: Tariffs raise the price that Americans pay for imported products from other countries. President Trump has increased tariffs on products from China. Would you like to see those trade tariffs on China continued or reversed?

A: 56% Continued

36% Reversed

7% Don't know/refused

Likely in part because of the inclusion of President Trump's association with the policy, Republicans overwhelming support continued China tariffs 81%-14%. Independents also favor the policy by almost 2:1, 60%-32%. Even 27% of Democrats favor continuing the tariffs, a number that likely would come out higher if Trump was not part of the question. Voters without college degrees favored continuing the tariffs by a 33-point margin, while voters with a college degree favored it by an 11-point margin.

- **Voters broadly favor increasing regulation on the tech industry but oppose federal content regulation.**

When asked a general question about whether big technology companies are regulated too much, too little, or about the right amount, a 58% majority said “too little.” Twenty-eight percent said, “about right,” and only 5% said they are regulated “too much.” The “too little” regulation position cut across party lines nearly evenly.

However, when asked whether the federal government should regulate the content of what is allowed on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook, overall response was negative by 56%-35%. This opposition skews slightly rightward, but not strongly so. Those who support content regulation are voting for Biden over Trump 53%-42%. Those who oppose content regulation are voting for Trump over Biden 50%-44%.

- **Neither end of the spectrum on climate change carries majority support.**

About climate change, we asked which view came closer to those of Arizona voters among three options. One option that was embraced by 37% of voters was “climate change is a very large threat and addressing it should be a top priority.” Another option, selected by 36% of voters, was “climate change is not a priority, and we should focus much more on creating jobs and making the economy grow.”

In between those almost equally supported and opposite positions, was a middle ground that was favored by 24%. That was, “climate change should be addressed, while balancing it against the need to strengthen the economy.” This could be viewed as 61% saying climate change requires action. Or it could be viewed as 60% saying climate change is not a top priority and action must significantly account for economic impacts.