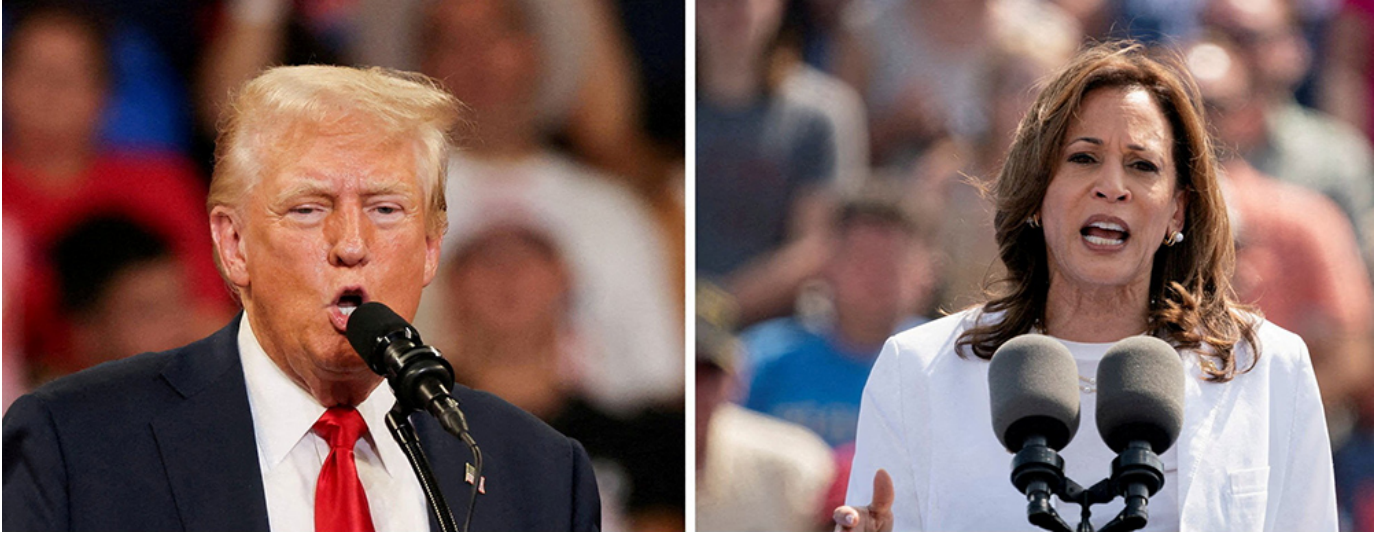


[News](#)



A combination photo shows Republican presidential nominee and former President Donald Trump speaking during a campaign rally in Atlanta Aug. 3, and Democratic presidential candidate Vice President Kamala Harris speaking during a campaign event in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, Aug. 7. (OSV News/Umit Bektas/Erica Dischino, Reuters)



by Camillo Barone

NCR staff reporter

[View Author Profile](#)

cbarone@ncronline.org

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

September 10, 2024

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

Among Catholic voters, Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris has a slight advantage over Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, according to a [poll](#) conducted by RealClear Opinion Research and EWTN.

The survey's sample of 1,000 American Catholic voters Aug. 28-30 shows that 50% of Catholic voters plan to vote for Harris, compared to 43% who support Trump. When undecided voters are taken into account, Harris' lead rises to 54%, while Trump's support rises to 45%.

The poll, with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points, reveals a significant gender gap. Among female Catholic voters, Harris has an advantage over Trump, with 56% of support compared to Trump's 37%. In contrast, 49% of male Catholic voters favor Trump while 43% support Harris. This division mirrors other polls taken in recent months on a national scale.

In addition to the presidential race, the poll sheds light on Catholics' preferences in congressional contests. Forty-nine percent of Catholic voters say they would support Democratic candidates for Congress, while 41% say they support Republicans. This 8-point margin suggests that Catholics may favor Democrats in runoff races, although the presidential race remains competitive.

Hispanic Catholics, in particular, largely support Democratic candidates. Sixty-two percent of Hispanic Catholics say they will vote for Democrats in congressional races, compared to just 29% who plan to support Republicans. This contrasts with white Catholic voters, who are more evenly divided, although their preference for Democrats is lower.

The approval rating for President Joe Biden, who is Catholic, was at 41% with Catholic voters while 49% disapprove of him. This relatively high disapproval rating reflects the broader national trend of Biden's approval ratings fluctuating in the run-up to the 2024 elections.

However, despite Biden's low approval rating, Harris remains competitive in the presidential race, indicating that voters may be making a distinction between the two leaders. However, with 6% of Catholic voters undecided, there is a possibility that support will change as the election approaches.

Advertisement

The economy is the dominant issue for Catholic voters, with 51% identifying it as their main concern in the run-up to the election. This emphasis on economic issues is not directly dependent on age and demographic groups, as voters of all generations cite inflation, jobs and interest rates as their top concerns.

Border security and immigration rank second, cited by 13% of Catholic voters as the most important issue, followed by abortion at 10%.

Among Hispanic Catholics, the economy is an even greater concern, with 57% identifying it as a top priority, compared to 47% of white Catholics. Border security is a more important issue for white Catholics (16%) than for their Hispanic counterparts (11%).

On the issue of abortion, the Catholic electorate is divided on who should define this policy. Some voters (38%) believe that neither individual states nor the federal government should be responsible for setting abortion laws. In contrast, 34% believe state legislatures should set policy, while 29% believe the federal government should take responsibility.

The poll also addresses Catholic voters' views on other hot-button social issues that could influence their decisions at the ballot box. A majority of Catholic voters (67%) oppose allowing transgender women athletes to compete in women's sports, while 18% support this policy. In addition, 50% of Catholic voters do not support puberty blockers or intersex hormone therapies for minors.

On the death penalty — for the first time since 2004, proposed abolition [does not appear](#) on the Democrats' agenda — Catholic voters remain divided. Fifty-six percent support the death penalty for those convicted of murder, while 23% oppose it and 21% are uncertain. These views are especially noteworthy when considering the official position of the Catholic Church against the death penalty, as [expressed](#) by Pope Francis.

In terms of foreign policy, Catholic voters have mixed views on the role of the United States in global conflicts. Regarding the ongoing war in Ukraine, 37% of Catholic voters believe the United States is providing too much support to Ukraine, while 36% think the current level of aid is adequate. Twenty-eight percent say the United States should provide more support to Ukraine, revealing a division within the Catholic electorate over America's involvement in the conflict.

Catholic voters also view China as a significant threat to national security, with 48% saying the country poses a significant or serious threat to the United States. Only 6% believe that China does not pose a threat. This concern about China's growing influence reflects broader national security anxieties that are likely to influence voters' decisions in November.

RealClear Opinion Research and EWTN plan to conduct another survey of Catholic voters in October.

This story appears in the **Election 2024** feature series. [View the full series.](#)