



The Trump Comeback no one's talking about

Description

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Still Teflon: After leaving office on down note, Trump is kingmaker in 2022 — and in pole position for 2024

By Aaron Kliegman

Former President Donald Trump now enjoys the highest favorability rating among the seven U.S. political leaders tracked in the RealClearPolitics (RCP) polling average, marking a striking political transformation from where he was 15 months ago while leaving office.

Trump has a favorability rating of 45.8%, more than three points higher than President Joe Biden's rating of 42.6%, according to the [RCP average](#).

The other five political leaders polled — Vice President Kamala Harris, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) — all have lower favorability numbers than both Trump and Biden.

Trump also has a lower unfavorability rating than all the other figures except for McCarthy and Schumer. (One reason Trump doesn't have the lowest is both McCarthy and Schumer garner significantly more responses of "don't know" or "unsure" than Trump.)

Even with such favorable results for Trump, they may not tell the full story of public support for the 45th president.

Indeed, Trump tends to do better in job approval ratings than favorability ratings. The latter tend to incorporate more personal feelings beyond evaluating a subject's performance in office. Throughout

Trump's time in the White House, [polling](#) showed the public approved of his job as president more than they approved of him as a person.

The elections of 2016 and 2020 also showed that mainstream polling [tended](#) to undercount Trump's support significantly, either because pollsters [undercounted](#) Republicans or because of shy Trump voters who didn't want to disclose their support for him — until entering the voting booth.

Despite the potential for undercounting, Trump is now besting Biden in head-to-head matchups in a hypothetical 2024 presidential race.

The [RCP average](#), for example, which hasn't been updated since last month, has Trump beating Biden by nearly four points. The polling analysis website FiveThirtyEight shows [similar results](#), with Trump beating Biden more often than not — and by bigger margins — in polling over the last month.

Additionally, a new Redfield and Wilton poll released Thursday [shows](#) Trump edging out Biden by two points.

Biden's approval rating has remained [stuck](#) in the low 40s for months and has even [dropped](#) into the 30s in several polls.

Polling has also shown Trump comfortably [beating](#) Harris in 2024, sometimes by double digits.

These results indicate a remarkable turnaround, given where Trump stood just over a year ago leaving the White House — defeated, impeached a second time, and reviled by political and media elites as an insurrectionist in the wake of the Jan. 6 Capitol breach.

Two months after losing the 2020 presidential election, Trump was impeached by the Democrat-led House for allegedly inciting the events of Jan. 6, 2021. He was acquitted of the charges, and legal experts [noted](#) he never mentioned violence or called for his supporters to do anything at the Capitol other than peacefully protest the results of the election.

Still, Trump ended his presidency with his lowest approval rating ever, [29%](#) and [34%](#) according to Gallup and the Pew Research Center, respectively. His RCP average was in the [high 30s](#). Most polls indicated a sharp decline in the final weeks of his term.

Over the past year, however, Trump has gone from the lowest point of his political career to being as relevant as ever — both as a major force in the 2022 midterm elections and as a potential frontrunner in the 2024 presidential election.

In states across the country, Republican candidates have been eagerly [seeking](#) the endorsement of Trump, who's been playing the role of [kingmaker](#) in many races.

In Ohio, for example, Senate candidate J.D. Vance saw his support in the GOP primary skyrocket and propel him to a 7-point lead after receiving Trump's endorsement, according to recent [polling](#).

One apparent reason for this Trump effect is that the 45th president is strongly positioned as Republican voters' preferred candidate in 2024 should he choose to run.

Trump easily [won](#) the Conservative Political Action Conference's straw poll for the 2024 Republican

presidential primary back in February, with 97% of attendees saying they approve of the job he did as president.

More recently, a Morning Consult poll from last week [showed](#) Trump with a comfortable lead over other Republicans in key battleground states. A new YouGov poll from this week [found](#) Trump has the highest net favorability rating among more than a dozen prominent Republican figures polled.

In virtually all these polls, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) is the second most popular potential 2024 presidential candidate among Republicans, trailing only Trump.

If Republicans perform well this November, especially the candidates endorsed by Trump, then the 45th president will have even more wind at his back heading into the 2024 election cycle.

Whether he chooses to remain a kingmaker for other Republicans or opts to run himself in 2024, it appears Trump has proven once again he's the Teflon Don.

Category

1. Main
2. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

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