

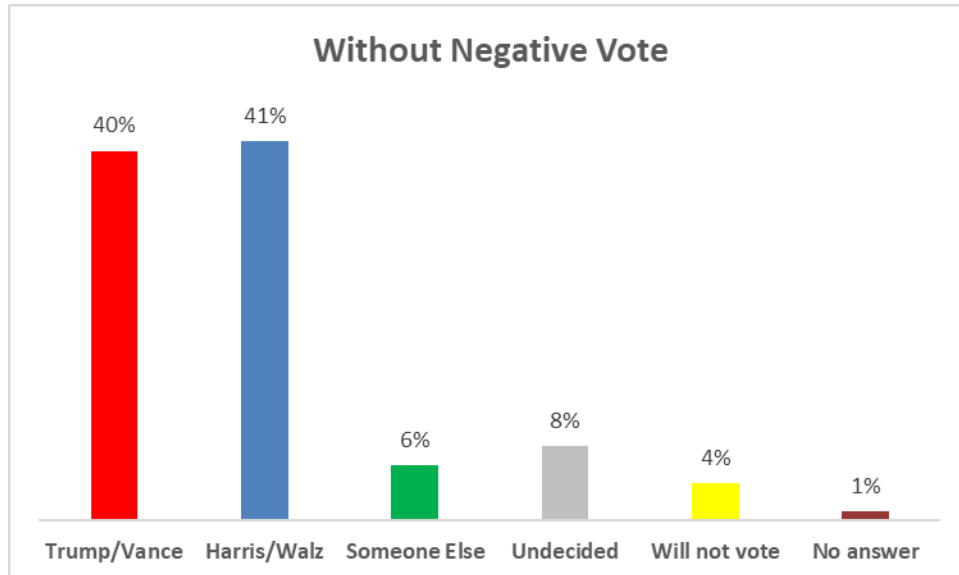
If Americans could vote NO, who would have won?

Voters would have won. Democracy would have won.

Balanced Ballot Alliance (“BBA”) participated in the AmeriSpeak omnibus survey during Oct. 11-14 and here are the results of the three questions we raised.

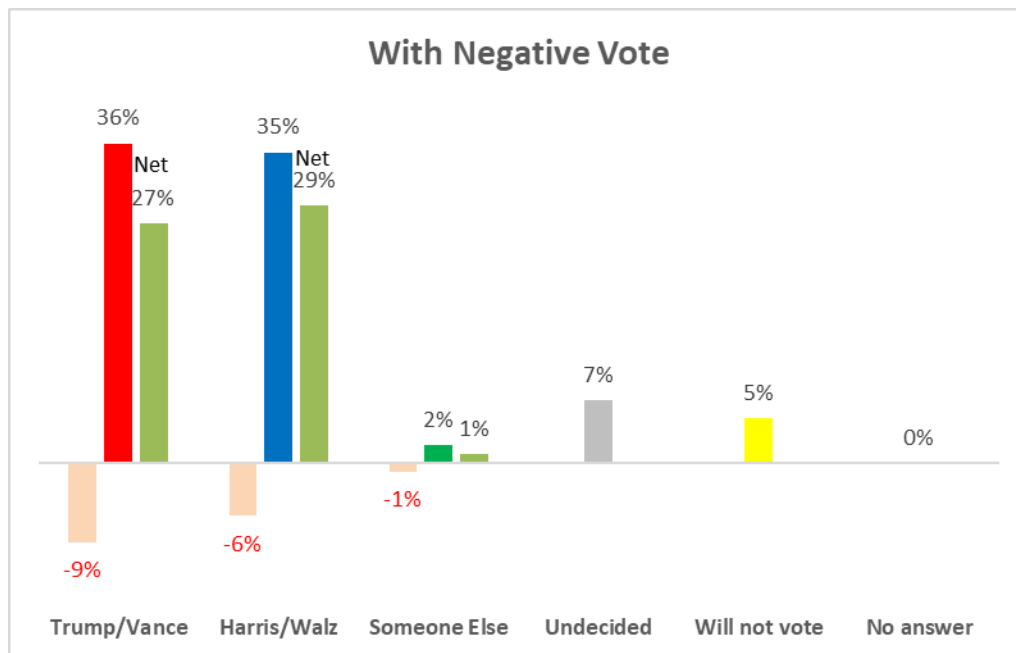
1. If the Presidential election were held today, whom would you vote for right now?

Trump/Vance	40%	} Subtotal 87%
Harris/Walz	41%	
Someone Else	6%	
Undecided	8%	
Will not vote	4%	
Don't know/no answer	1%	



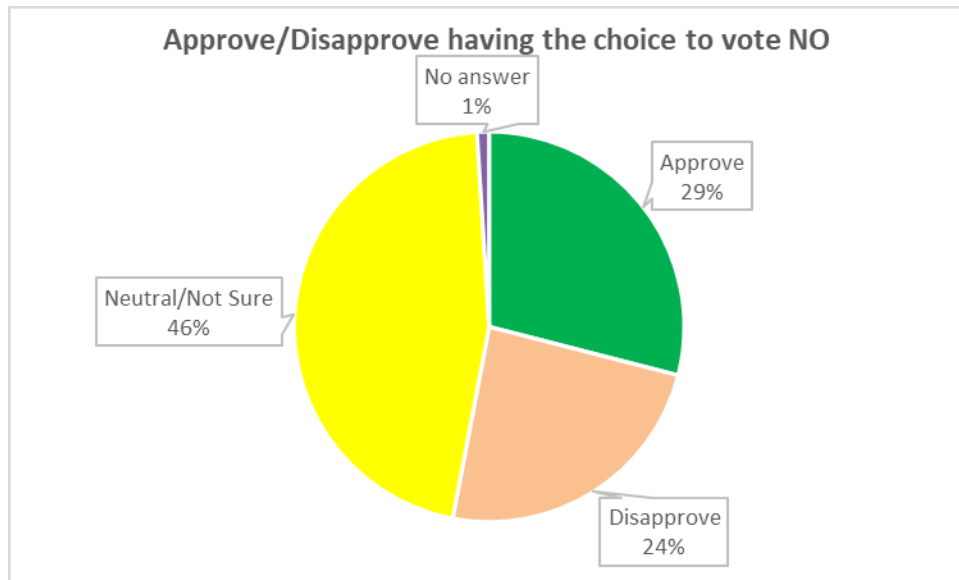
2. How would you vote if you could vote for OR against a candidate?

	YES	NO	Net
Trump/Vance	36%	(9%)	27%
Harris/Walz	35%	(6%)	29%
Someone Else	<u>2%</u>	<u>(1%)</u>	1%
	73%	(16%)	Subtotal 88%
Undecided	7%		
Will not vote	5%		
Don't Know/no answer	0%		



3. Would you approve or disapprove of having the choice to vote Against?

Approve	29%
Disapprove	24%
Neutral or not sure	46%
No answer	1%



The result is too close to call, if you are only concerned with who would win the election. The difference between Harris and Trump is only 1%, well within the margin of error. That margin widens to 2% if voters can vote NO, still within the margin of error.

So why do we say voters would win and democracy would win if voters have the choice to vote NO?

Because it allows voters to **vote sincerely, either FOR someone they genuinely support or AGAINST someone they genuinely despise**, instead of holding their noses to vote for a “lesser evil”. The result would **more truthfully reflect voters’ preferences**. That’s good for democracy. Voters will be happier.

Since each voter still has only one vote, the loyal partisan voters will vote for their candidate of choice. The above numbers show that Trump supporters are more loyal, only 4% out of 40% would change (mainly to vote against Harris). For Harris, 6% out of 41% will change their vote (mainly to vote against Trump). Among those who might vote for a third-party candidate (6%), clearly more would prefer to vote against Trump, and that’s why Trump would end up with the most Negative Votes (-9%) vs Harris’ (-6%). It is also useful to note that even in a two-person race (which this contest is essentially), the winner would not be able to claim “majority mandate” when voters are allowed to vote NO. Therefore, the winner should be humbler, that’s also good for democracy.

Democracy wins when voters have the choice to vote NO because it will increase voter participation. In [the 2016 RAND Corp. survey](#) of the contest between Trump and Clinton, voter participation would be 6.9% higher if voters could vote NO. [In a similar RAND survey of the 12 swing states in the 2020 contest](#) between Trump and Biden, voter participation would be 3.4% higher if voters could vote NO. The increased participation comes from the middle electorate and they will vote against the extremist or the worst candidate. Any small increase in participation can alter the result of a tight race. This will therefore compel candidates move toward the center and reduce the influence of extremists.

A cynical comment we have heard sometimes is that if voter can vote NO then “all candidates will receive net negative votes”. This survey, together with the two previous RAND surveys all showed that will not happen, even if there are just two candidates and both have very high disapproval ratings. That’s because each voter still has only one vote and loyal partisan voters will vote YES for the party nominee. The total YES votes will exceed total NO votes by a wide margin. (73% vs 16% in this survey).

One concern we sometimes hear is that voters might vote against the major parties and some small fringe candidate might win if voters can vote NO. Our researches show that will not happen. Any third-party candidate will still need to have very significant real loyal support, to win in a three-person race. In this survey, the 6% support for “Someone else” drops to 2% when voters can vote NO. That’s clear evidence that many who would vote for “someone else” do so reluctantly because they do not like either of the major party candidates and would prefer to vote NO when that choice is available.

Another comment often raised is that in a two-person race, having the NO option would not make any difference. However, our researches show it does make a difference. This is because of increased participation. [A Boston City Council race in 2019 was decided by just one vote difference](#). If the NO vote were available and two additional voters voted against the leader, another person would have won and the outcome would be more democratic.

[According to Ballotpedia](#), “Through October 2024, Ballotpedia has covered 36,068 elections in 55 states and territories. Of that total, 27,164 (75%) were uncontested and 8,904 (25%) were contested.”

In all these uncontested races, plus all those with just two contestants for one seat, electoral reform proposals such as Ranked Choice Voting or Approval Voting or Proportional Representation or Score Voting would be irrelevant. Having the choice to vote NO would be relevant, powerful, and should be implemented as a basic right of choice.

Who would not win if voters have the choice to vote NO? Polarization would not win. Extremism would not win. Populist would not win. In all the last 3 U.S. Presidential election surveys, Trump is a common factor, Trump also would get the most negative votes and would not win.

About the survey

This survey was conducted over Oct. 11-14, 2024 as part of the AmeriSpeak omnibus survey. A total of 1022 valid responses were received. With 95% confidence level, the margin of error was $\pm 4.27\%$.

About Balanced Ballot Alliance

[Balanced Ballot Alliance](https://www.balancedballotalliance.org/) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to improve democracy. Its focus is to educate the public about a revolutionary electoral reform that is needed in every democracy:

Let voters have the choice to vote Against a candidate and have such vote counted as minus one. Each voter still has only one vote. Winner is the person who gets higher net positive votes.

For more information, visit <https://www.balancedballotalliance.org/>

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