



The Canvass Capitol Hill: February 2024 Edition

A survey of senior Capitol Hill staffers on the true issues driving Washington

Presented by Punchbowl News & LSG

Methodology



Public Opinion Survey

- N=118 respondents
- Survey of Capitol Hill chiefs of staff, legislative directors, communications directors, press secretaries, and staff directors
- Conducted online by LSG February 5-23, 2024

Summary of Key Findings

- 1 Most Capitol Hill senior staffers – including a majority of Republicans – believe Mike Johnson is **INEFFECTIVE** as speaker of the House.
- 2 Most accurately **PREDICTED** that 2024 would be Sen. Mitch McConnell’s final year as Senate Republican leader, and they believe that Sen. John Thune is **MOST** likely to succeed him.
- 3 Most senior staffers believe the bipartisan tax package is **LIKELY** to pass, while nearly all believe the bipartisan Senate border security and immigration package is **UNLIKELY** to pass.
- 4 Senior staffers believe **immigration, inflation/rising cost of living, the economy**, and **abortion** will be **MOST** the important issues to voters as they consider who to vote for in this year’s elections.
- 5 Most senior staffers believe Joe Biden will **WIN re-election** this year, and the vast majority believe **REPUBLICANS** will take control of the Senate, while **DEMOCRATS** will flip the House.



Legislative Issues

The vast majority of senior Capitol Hill staffers believe Rep. Mike Johnson is **INEFFECTIVE** as speaker of the House

How effective or ineffective do you believe Mike Johnson is as speaker of the House?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
EFFECTIVE (NET)	18%	7%	28%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	8%	2%	14%
INEFFECTIVE (NET)	74%	91%	58%



Most believe it is UNLIKELY that Rep. Mike Johnson will be removed as speaker before the end of this Congress

How likely or unlikely is it that Rep. Mike Johnson will be removed as speaker of the House before the end of this Congress?



	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
LIKELY (NET)	32%	40%	25%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	11%	11%	11%
UNLIKELY (NET)	57%	50%	64%

Most accurately PREDICTED 2024 would be Sen. Mitch McConnell's final year as Senate Republican leader

Do you believe 2024 will be Sen. Mitch McConnell's final year as Senate Republican leader?



	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Yes	59%	51%	67%
No	28%	34%	22%
I don't know	13%	15%	11%

Sen. John THUNE is seen as most likely to succeed McConnell as Senate Republican leader

If Sen. Mitch McConnell steps down as Senate Republican leader, who is most likely to succeed him?



	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
John Thune	59%	67%	52%
John Cornyn	23%	19%	27%
John Barrasso	13%	13%	13%
Joni Ernst	2%	2%	3%
Rick Scott	2%	0%	3%
Tom Cotton	0%	0%	0%
Shelly Moore Capito	0%	0%	0%
Someone else	1%	0%	2%

A majority believe another continuing resolution is the MOST likely government funding outcome by the March deadline

Which of the following outcomes regarding government funding is most likely to occur by the March deadline?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Another continuing resolution is passed	56%	56%	57%
A comprehensive spending bill is passed	28%	32%	24%
No agreement is reached, leading to a government shutdown	13%	10%	16%
I don't know	3%	2%	4%



Issues most likely to be addressed this year: additional Israel, Pentagon, Ukraine, & border security funding, and Farm Bill reauthorization

How likely or unlikely is it that Congress will pass legislation to address each of the following issues this year? (TOTAL LIKELY)

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Additional Israel funding	87%	84%	90%
Additional Pentagon funding	80%	87%	74%
Additional Ukraine funding	50%	54%	46%
Additional funding for border security	50%	51%	49%
Farm Bill Reauthorization	48%	51%	45%
Humanitarian funding for Gaza	35%	53%	17%
China competition	30%	24%	36%
Regulation of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs)	23%	21%	24%
Artificial intelligence (AI) regulation	14%	15%	12%
Changes to immigration laws	12%	11%	12%
State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction	6%	5%	7%
Banking for the marijuana industry	6%	11%	1%
Changes to Medicare	3%	0%	7%
Credit Card Competition Act	2%	5%	0%



Most members **SUPPORT** the bipartisan tax package and most senior staffers believe it is **LIKELY** to pass

Does the member of Congress you work for support or oppose the bipartisan tax package?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
SUPPORT (NET)	80%	85%	75%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	10%	10%	9%
OPPOSE (NET)	11%	5%	16%

How likely or unlikely is it that the bipartisan tax package will pass this Congress?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
LIKELY (NET)	77%	75%	78%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	10%	9%	10%
UNLIKELY (NET)	14%	16%	11%



Most senior staffers OPPOSE the Biden administration's handling of the southern border crisis

Does the member of Congress you work for support or oppose the Biden administration's handling of the southern border crisis?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
SUPPORT (NET)	27%	55%	0%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	13%	27%	0%
OPPOSE (NET)	60%	19%	100%



Most GOP lawmakers **OPPOSE** the bipartisan border security package and senior staffers believe it is **UNLIKELY** to pass

Does the member of Congress you work for intend to support or oppose the bipartisan Senate border security and immigration package?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
SUPPORT (NET)	39%	69%	8%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	18%	15%	20%
OPPOSE (NET)	44%	15%	72%

How likely or unlikely is it that the bipartisan Senate border security and immigration package will pass this Congress?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
LIKELY (NET)	5%	6%	4%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	5%	7%	3%
UNLIKELY (NET)	90%	86%	93%



The vast majority are CONCERNED that Ukraine may fall to Russia if the U.S. does not renew funding to Ukraine quickly

How concerned or unconcerned is the member of Congress you work for that Ukraine may fall to Russia if the U.S. does not renew funding to Ukraine as quickly as possible?



	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
CONCERNED (NET)	83%	95%	70%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	7%	0%	14%
UNCONCERNED (NET)	11%	5%	16%

Nearly half of Democratic senior staffers believe UKRAINE is winning the war, while a plurality of GOP senior staffers are unsure

Who do you believe is winning the war in Ukraine?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Ukraine	42%	49%	35%
Russia	22%	20%	24%
I don't know	36%	31%	41%



Members of Congress are SPLIT on whether future tax cuts should offset so they do not add to the federal deficit

Does the member of Congress you work for believe future tax cuts should offset so they do not add to the federal deficit?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Yes	38%	40%	37%
No	36%	36%	37%
I don't know	25%	24%	26%



Most do not know if the Fed's approach to capital reform will change significantly before being finalized by regulators

Do you believe the Fed's approach to capital reform, also known as the Basel III endgame, will change significantly before being finalized by regulators?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Yes	24%	20%	27%
No	15%	17%	13%
I don't know	61%	63%	60%



Senior staffers believe immigration, inflation, the economy, and abortion will be MOST important to voters this year

What issues do you believe will be MOST important to voters as they consider who to vote for in this year's presidential and congressional elections? (COMBINED CHOICE – TOP THREE)

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Immigration	67%	40%	95%
Inflation and the rising cost of living	63%	65%	61%
The economy	61%	59%	63%
Abortion	53%	81%	26%
Crime and public safety	27%	18%	36%
Voting rights/protecting democracy	12%	20%	3%
National security/foreign policy	7%	3%	11%
Health care	6%	10%	2%



Senior staffers believe financial regulation, trade/tariff policies, & income inequality will be among the LEAST important issues to voters

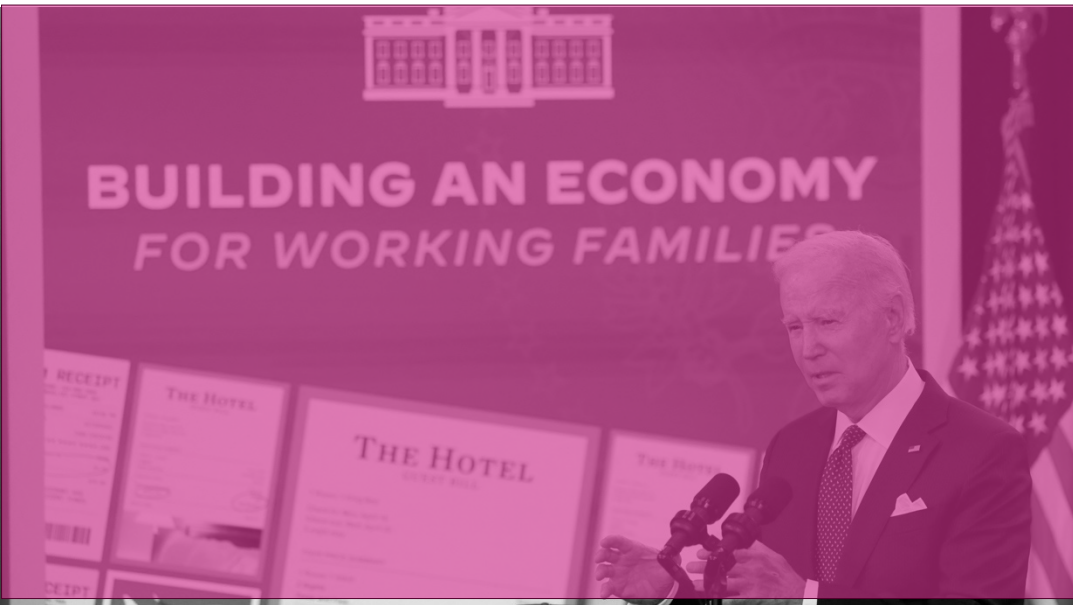
What issues do you believe will be MOST important to voters as they consider who to vote for in this year's presidential and congressional elections? (COMBINED CHOICE – TOP THREE)

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Energy	1%	2%	0%
Education	1%	0%	2%
The environment	1%	2%	0%
Judges and the judiciary	1%	2%	0%
Taxes	1%	0%	1%
Infrastructure	0%	0%	0%
Gun policy	0%	0%	0%
Social justice	0%	0%	0%
Income and wealth inequality	0%	0%	0%
Trade and tariff policies	0%	0%	0%
Financial regulation	0%	0%	0%



Most Democratic members believe the economy will **IMPROVE** this year, while most GOP members are **UNSURE**

Does the member of Congress you work for believe the economy will improve or worsen between now and the end of 2024?



	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
IMPROVE (NET)	54%	85%	22%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	33%	15%	51%
WORSEN (NET)	13%	0%	26%

Most Democratic staffers believe pro-Palestinian protests will HARM Democrats, while GOP staffers believe they will HELP Republicans

Do you believe the ongoing pro-Palestinian protests around the country will help or harm **Democrats** in the 2024 elections? (DEMOCRATS ONLY)

Democrats	DEM
HELP (NET)	3%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	27%
HARM (NET)	69%

Do you believe the ongoing pro-Palestinian protests around the country will help or harm **Republicans** in the 2024 elections? (REPUBLICANS ONLY)

Republicans	GOP
HELP (NET)	83%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	18%
HARM (NET)	0%



A majority believe Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war will HARM him and have a negative or no impact on congressional Dems in 2024

Do you believe President Joe Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war will **help or harm him** in the 2024 presidential election?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
HELP (NET)	7%	7%	7%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	34%	44%	24%
HARM (NET)	59%	48%	69%

Do you believe President Joe Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war will **help or harm House and Senate Democrats** in the 2024 congressional elections?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
HELP (NET)	5%	6%	3%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	53%	63%	43%
HARM (NET)	43%	31%	55%





Around the Hill

Senior staffers expect the pharmaceutical, financial services, defense, & airline industries to increase their spending MOST in 2024

Which of the following industries or sectors do you expect to increase their lobbying spending MOST in 2024? (COMBINED CHOICE – TOP THREE)

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Pharmaceuticals and health products	49%	47%	50%
Financial services	39%	31%	47%
Defense/national security	33%	31%	34%
Airlines and air transportation manufacturers	31%	28%	33%
Oil and gas	26%	20%	32%
Cryptocurrency	25%	27%	22%
Online/internet businesses	23%	27%	20%
Health insurance/HMOs	17%	21%	14%
Agriculture	13%	11%	15%
Hospitals	10%	7%	13%



Most do NOT expect the education, auto, real estate or insurance industries to increase their spending as much as others

Which of the following industries or sectors do you expect to increase their lobbying spending MOST in 2024? (COMBINED CHOICE – TOP THREE)

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Renewable energy	8%	9%	7%
Electronics manufacturing and equipment	6%	7%	5%
Electric utilities	6%	10%	2%
Telecom	6%	10%	2%
Insurance (excluding health insurance)	4%	6%	2%
Real estate	2%	4%	0%
Automotive	2%	2%	2%
Education	0%	0%	0%



After the 2024 elections, most believe REPUBLICANS will take control of the Senate, while DEMOCRATS will flip the House

Who do you believe will be in control of **the Senate** after the 2024 elections?

Control of the Senate	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Republicans	82%	69%	95%
Democrats	18%	31%	5%

Who do you believe will be in control of **the House** after the 2024 elections?

Control of the House	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Democrats	83%	98%	69%
Republicans	17%	2%	31%



Both Democratic and GOP Capitol Hill senior staffers believe the MODERATE wing of their party will help them more in 2024

Which of the following do you believe is MORE likely to help **Democrats** in the 2024 general election? The political strategy of the...

	DEM
Moderate Democrats	81%
Progressive Democrats	19%

Which of the following do you believe is MORE likely to help **Republicans** in the 2024 general election? The political strategy of the...

	GOP
Moderate Republicans	76%
Conservative Republicans	24%



Most Capitol Hill senior staffers believe Joe BIDEN or the Democratic candidate will win the 2024 presidential election

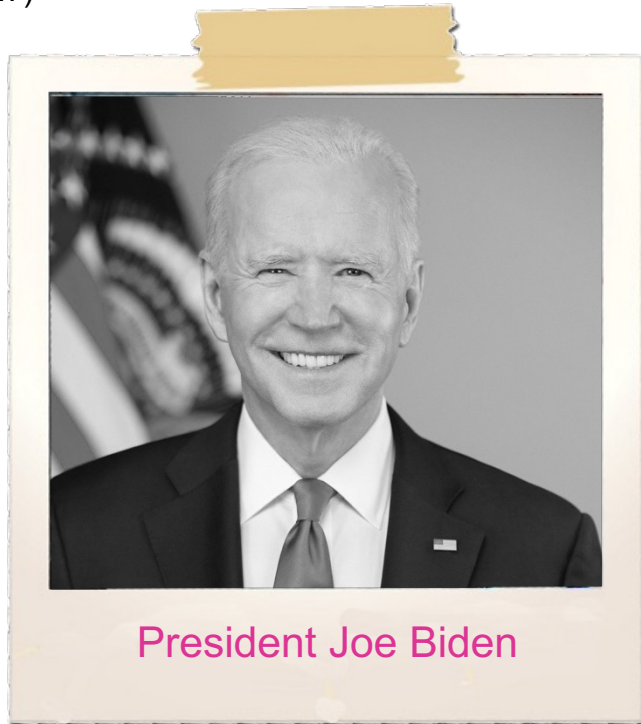
Who do you believe will win the 2024 presidential election?

	TOTAL	DEM	GOP
Joe Biden or the Democratic candidate	67%	98%	37%
Donald Trump or the Republican candidate	33%	2%	63%



A majority of Democratic senior staffers AGREE Biden is the party's best option for winning the 2024 election

Do you agree or disagree that President Joe Biden is the Democratic Party's best option to win the 2024 presidential election? (DEMOCRATS ONLY)



	DEM
AGREE (NET)	71%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	8%
DISAGREE (NET)	21%

Most Dem senior staffers think HARRIS, WHITMER, or NEWSOM is most likely to be the Democratic candidate if not Biden

If President Biden is not the Democratic nominee, who is most likely to be the party's nominee for president in 2024? (COMBINED CHOICE – TOP TWO)



	DEM
Kamala Harris	49%
Gretchen Whitmer	36%
Gavin Newsom	30%
Pete Buttigieg	24%
J.B Pritzker	15%
Roy Cooper	6%
Cory Booker	2%
Elizabeth Warren	2%
Others	0%
I don't know	19%

Nearly all Republican senior staffers believe Donald TRUMP will be the GOP nominee for president in 2024

Who is MORE likely to be the Republican nominee for president in 2024? (REPUBLICANS ONLY)

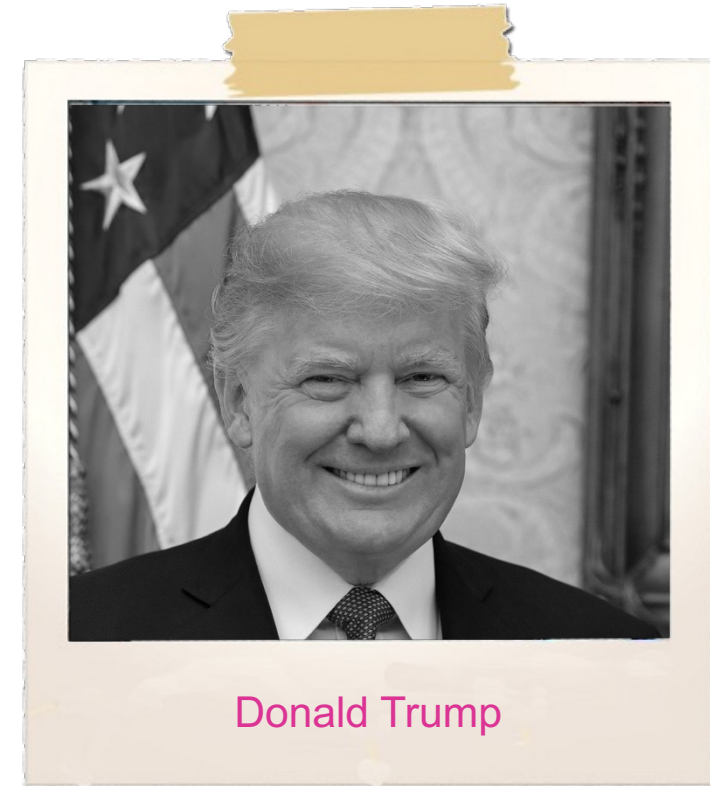


	GOP
Donald Trump	98%
Nikki Haley	0%
I don't know	2%

Most Republican senior staffers still do NOT believe Trump is the party's best option for winning the 2024 election

Do you agree or disagree that former President Donald Trump is the Republican Party's best option to win the 2024 presidential election?
(REPUBLICANS ONLY)

	GOP
AGREE (NET)	28%
NEITHER/I DON'T KNOW	6%
DISAGREE (NET)	66%



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 **CANVASS**

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