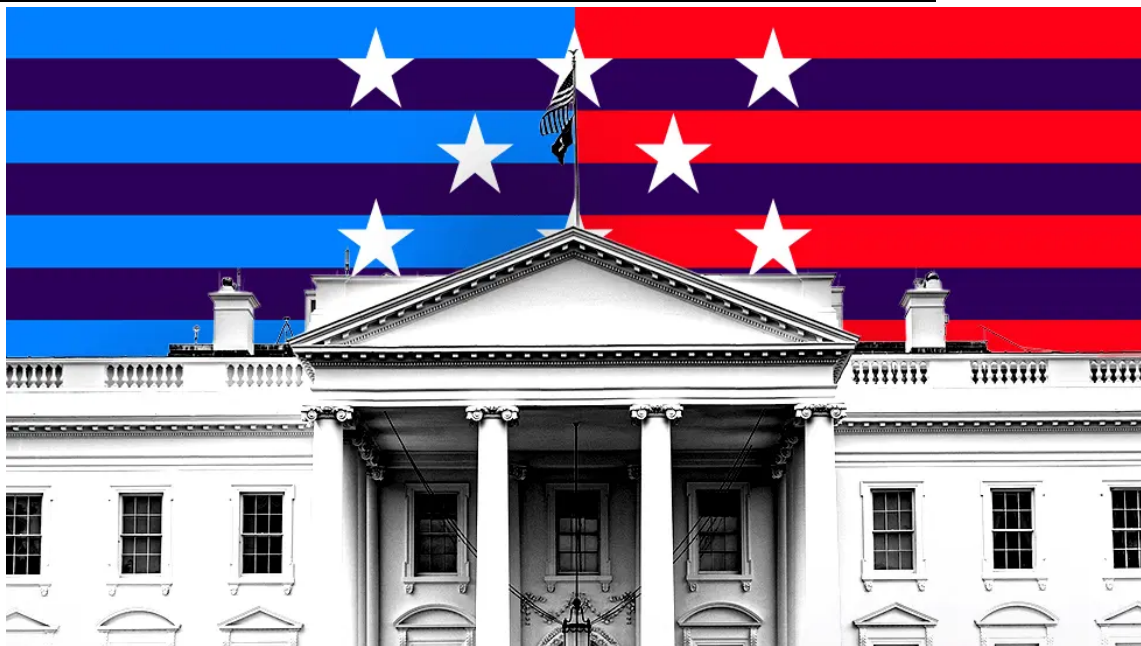# US election 2024: A Simple Guide to the Presidential Vote

September 26, 2024

September 26, 2024: Washington D.C., USA: Americans will head to the polls on Tuesday, 5 November 2024 to elect the next US president and their next Member of **Congress**.

> In USA, the Lower House of Parliament is called the **Congress** and the Upper House of Parliament is called the **Senate**.

The vote will be closely watched around the world. <u>The 2024 election is on Tuesday, 5 November 2024. The presidential candidate, who wins, will serve a term of four years in the White House, starting in January 2025.</u>

US Election-2024: Presidential candidates:

VP **Kamala Harris** (Democratic party) or former President **Trump** (Republican party)

The election was initially a rematch of 2020 but it was **upended** in July 2024, when President **Joe Biden** ended his campaign and endorsed Vice-President **Kamala Harris**.

The big question now is –
will America get its first woman President or a second Donald Trump term?

OPINION POLLs: In the months leading up to **Biden**'s decision to drop out, polls consistently showed him trailing former President **Trump**. But the race tightened when Harris hit the campaign trail and she developed a small lead that she has maintained since.

The two candidates went head-to-head in a televised debate in Pennsylvania on 10 September 2024, that over 67 million people tuned in to watch. A couple of **snap polls released immediately after the debate found that most viewers thought Harris had been the better performer.**

A majority of national polls carried out since then suggest that **Harris** has made some small gains and while her polling average hasn't moved much, her lead increased slightly from 2.5 percentage points on the day of the debate to 2.9 points a week later.

That marginal boost was mostly down to Trump's numbers though. **Trump**'s average had been rising ahead of the debate, but it fell by half a percentage point in the week afterwards.

While these national **polls are** a useful guide as to how popular a candidate is across the country as a whole, they're **not necessarily an accurate way to predict the result of the election.**

The ELECTORAL COLLEGE SYSTEM: The national **polls are not able to predict the result of the election accurately way to predict the result of the election because of the US Electoral College System.**

The US uses an Electoral College System, in which each State is given a number of votes roughly in line with the size of its population. A total of 538 electoral college votes are up for grabs, so a candidate needs to hit 270 to win.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION along the LONG SOUTHERN BORDER: The large illegal immigration through the Mexican border, the tendency of the new illegal immigrants to settle in some States only and their tendency to vote, largely, for the Democratic party creates new hurdles in accuracy for the pollsters of US

Opinion Polls. The Pollsters' face Himalayan difficulties in predicting the name of the next US president when they find that policies for regularizing illegal immigrants differ not only from one State to the other but significant differences also exist between the declared policies of the Federal Government and their implementation in different States.

BATTLEGROUND STATES: There are 50 States in the US but because most of them nearly always vote for the same party, in reality there are just a handful where both candidates stand a chance of winning. These are the places where the election will be won and lost and are known as battleground States.

Who is winning in battleground states?: Right now, the polls are very tight in the seven battleground states, which makes it hard to know who is really leading the race. There are fewer state polls than national polls so we have less data to work with and every poll has a margin of error that means the numbers could be higher or lower.

As it stands, recent polls suggest there are **just one or two percentage points separating the candidates in several states**. That includes **Pennsylvania**, which is key as it has the highest number of electoral votes on offer and therefore makes it easier for the winner to reach the 270 votes needed.

Pennsylvania, **Michigan** and **Wisconsin** had all been Democratic strongholds before **Trump** turned them red on his path to winning the presidency in 2016. **Biden** retook them in 2020 and if **Harris** can do the same this year, then she will be on course to win the election.

On the day **Joe Biden** quit the race he was trailing **Trump** by nearly five percentage points on average in the seven battleground states. **Kamala Harris now leads Trump in all the seven battleground states. But the lead is not large enough to be considered beyond the margin of error.**

VP KAMALA HARRIS' STAND on 10 KEY ISSUES:

Vice-President Kamala Harris has been riding high on a wave of favourable polls and energetic rallies since she became the Democratic Party's nominee for President. But what have we learned about her policies since she has taken on the party mantle?

Ms Harris has released a detailed policy platform in early September 2024 offering voters a look at what a Harris-Walz administration might look like. The

platform page, which focuses on her economic and foreign policy agenda, emphasises her most urgent priority to tackle the cost of living.

FORMER PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP's STAND on 10 KEY ISSUES: **Donald Trump** is the Republican nominee for President for the third consecutive election. What would he do if he wins this time?

When **Donald Trump** was defeated by **Joe Biden** after his first term in office, the country was in the midst of Covid, lockdowns and social unrest. In 2020, **Trump's** campaign focused on restoring both economic health and law and order.

10 KEY ISSUES

1. Economy

This is the biggest issue for voters and it's the pinch of high food and housing costs that seems to be shaping their sentiment rather than the robust growth and low unemployment.

Inflation has fallen steeply from a 40-year high in 2022, but the former New York businessman has retained a persistent polling advantage on the economy over his Democratic opponents.

A President's power to lower prices directly is very limited. **Trump** has pledged to expand US energy production, opening areas such as the Arctic wilderness to oil drilling, which he argues would lower energy costs, though analysts are sceptical.

He says he can reduce housing costs by preventing some undocumented immigrants from getting mortgages and deporting others, and by launching a home building programme on federal land.

2. Taxes

Trump has a raft of tax cuts planned.

Firstly, he wants to extend the cuts he enacted in 2017, which are due to expire next year. That was the biggest tax overhaul in decades, aimed at simplifying the tax code and promoting growth and investment.

The largest cuts went to businesses and the wealthy, which Democrats have called to reverse.

The Republican also wants to shave a further percentage point off corporation tax - and has floated an even bigger cut to 15%.

He has proposed making tipped income tax free, a proposal that his opponent **Kamala Harris** subsequently backed, too.

Trump has also called on abolishing the tax on Social Security payments, a move that would be welcomed by retired Americans but would, at the same time, punch a big hole in the fund.

3. Trade

The former President brought the era of US free trade to a halt when he became President, but his tariffs on Chinese imports were largely retained and even expanded by **Joe Biden**.

This time around **Trump** has proposed new 10-20% tariffs on most foreign goods with imports from China bearing the brunt at 60%.

It is part of his attempt to promote homegrown manufacturers and stop outsourcing, but some economists have warned this could push up prices for consumers.

During the presidential debate with Harris, **Trump** pointed out he imposed tariffs on Chinese goods, and that the **Biden** administration has not removed them.

4. Immigration

This tops his list of priorities as it did in 2016 when "Build the wall" was his signature slogan.

The number of border crossings hit record levels at the end of 2023, but has fallen this election year.

Trump has vowed to seal the border by completing the wall and increasing enforcement.

He has also promised the biggest mass deportations of undocumented migrants in US history.

His vice-president pick, **JD Vance**, said they would start by removing a million people, but deportations on that scale would face huge legal and logistical challenges. There are also claims it could slow economic growth.

Children of undocumented residents would no longer be eligible for citizenship under another **Trump** policy, although this would face significant legal obstacles.

5. Abortion

This is the first presidential election since the Supreme Court overturned the constitutional right to abortion in 2022, and **Trump** has struggled to find a consistent message.

The three judges, **Trump** appointed while president, were pivotal in the landmark decision, which Democrats have used to rally supporters as abortion restrictions have been introduced in numerous States.

Trump himself has regularly said States should be free to decide their own laws on abortion.

But in recent weeks **Trump** has tried to walk a tightrope, taking a more moderate stance while trying not to alienate his conservative base.

Trump criticised **Florida**'s six-week ban, provoking an angry backlash, but also said he would oppose a ballot measure in the State establishing the right to an abortion.

During the presidential debate he said he would not sign a national abortion ban into law.

6. Ukraine and NATO

The Republican has an isolationist foreign policy and wants the US to disentangle itself from conflicts elsewhere in the world.

He has pledged to end the war in Ukraine "within 24 hours" through a negotiated settlement with Russia, a move that Democrats say would embolden **Vladimir Putin.**

"I know **Zelensky** very well, and I know **Putin** very well," he said during the presidential debate. "I think it's the US best interest to get this war finished and just get it done, negotiate a deal."

Trump gave no details on what he thinks each side should give up in such a deal, and the Kremlin has said nothing can be done in 24 hours.

Trump has also said he would stop the cash flowing to Ukraine. Mr **Biden** signed off $61 Bn in military aid for Ukraine in April 2024.

On NATO, he thinks countries that fall short of the advisory 2% of GDP spent on defence should forego the protection that comes with membership.

7. Israel-Gaza war

Trump has positioned himself as a staunch supporter of Israel and condemned pro-Palestinian supporters on US college campuses.

But he has also at times been critical of the way **Israel** has conducted the war.

He has said the war would not have happened if he had been President but offered no details on how he would end it.

As President, he angered Palestinians by moving the embassy to Jerusalem and his administration stopped calling Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which contravene international law, illegal.

8. Healthcare

In his top 20 priorities, Trump promises not to cut Medicare, which is federally provided health insurance for older people.

While President he tried unsuccessfully to dismantle the signature legislation of President Barack Obama, the Affordable Care Act, which extended insurance to millions more people.

He still criticises the law, which remains popular, but in March he said on Truth Social he would not undermine it.

Recently he called for taxpayer-funded fertility treatment, but it's unclear if such a large expense has the support of Republicans in Congress.

9. Crime

He has pledged to demolish drugs cartels, crush gang violence and rebuild Democratic-run cities that he says are overrun with crime.

His Republican policy platform vows to restore safety in neighbourhoods by replenishing police departments and protecting officers from "frivolous lawsuits".

Democrats point to his promise to pardon hundreds of convicted January 6, 2021 rioters as contradictory to his law-and-order stance.

They also point to the fact violent crime was down 6% in 2023 and murders down by 13%, according to FBI data.

10. Climate

As President, Trump rolled back hundreds of environmental protections, including limits on carbon dioxide emissions from power plants and vehicles, and protections for federal waterways.

This time, he is again vowing to cut regulations, particularly as a way to help the American car industry.

He has constantly attacked electric vehicles, promising to overturn **Biden** targets encouraging the switch to cleaner cars.

And he has long railed against offshore wind farms, promising to halt this source of renewable energy as soon as he is elected.   --- by **Dr K N Mistry** in California

Reference: www.bbc.com

****