

# AMERICANS' FINANCIAL OUTLOOK AND THE 2024 ELECTION







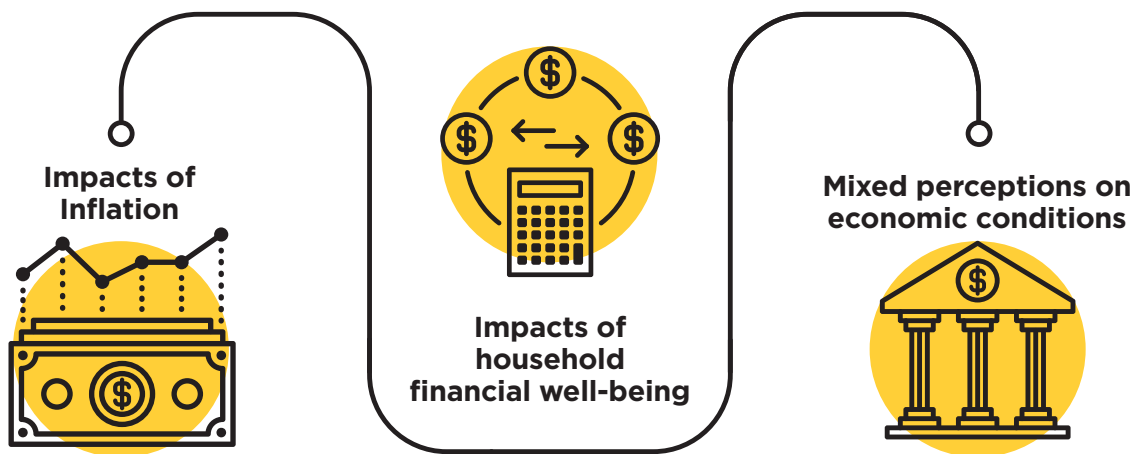
The November 2024 election will choose the next president and may shift control of one or both chambers of Congress. The political parties and their candidates offer different views on the nation's current state and future, including the economy, taxes and government safety net programs.

This election comes at a time when surveys continue to show weak consumer sentiment,<sup>1,2</sup> despite four consecutive years of economic growth and job creation. Surveys highlight the impact of inflation, which, while easing, continues to strain household finances and create mixed perceptions of overall economic conditions and personal financial well-being.

The current financial mindset is not just about the past four years; the country may face an inflection point in the next four years. Economic and electoral uncertainty has led many Americans to defer major financial decisions until after the election, with the sense that the outcome could impact both the overall economy and their personal finances.

To better understand the financial dynamics of the 2024 election season, CFP Board’s Research team surveyed Americans. The 12-question survey examined how the intersection of politics and economics was affecting respondents’ personal financial outlooks. The survey, conducted in early August 2024, generated responses from 1,005 Americans, the data from which serves as the basis of this report.

## SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS



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1. University of Michigan Index of Consumer Sentiment, <http://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/>

2. The Conference Board U.S. Consumer Confidence Index, <https://www.conference-board.org/topics/consumer-confidence>

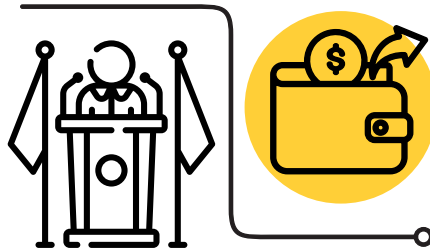
# 58%

of Americans expect the November election will **positively impact** the U.S. economy.



# More than 3 in 5 Americans

are **deferring financial decisions** until after the election.



# Nearly 4 in 5 Americans

expect their **personal finances will deteriorate** should their preferred candidate fail to win the presidency.



# Inflation



is at the top of Americans' minds when choosing their preferred political candidate.

# 1 in 8 Americans

have **partnered with a financial planner** specifically to guide them on the impact of the current political environment.





A majority of Americans are optimistic about their personal financial outlook. Fifty-six percent of survey respondents indicate they have a positive financial outlook, selecting either a 4 or 5 rating on a 5-point scale. Another quarter of Americans hold a neutral financial outlook, while the remaining 17% are pessimistic.

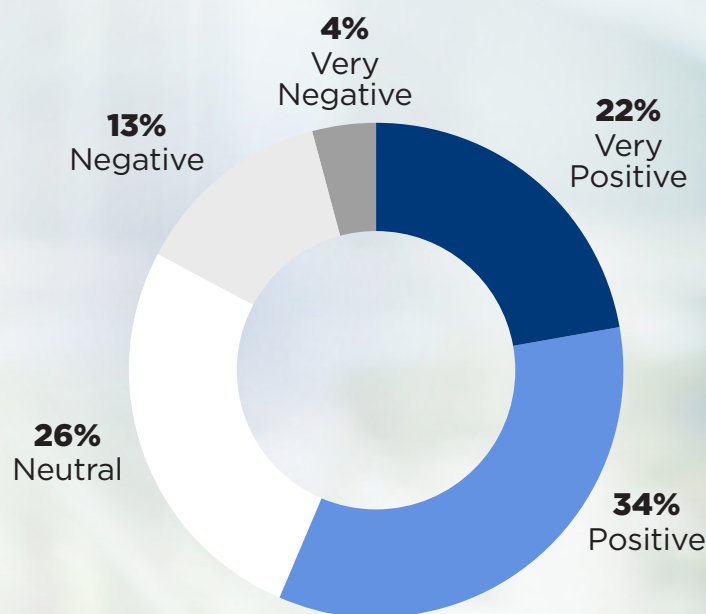
Men and younger Americans are significantly more likely to hold an optimistic view. Sixty-six percent of male survey respondents have a positive financial outlook, compared to only 50% of female survey respondents with a similar outlook. Similarly, Americans aged 45 and under (62%) are more likely to have a positive financial outlook than those over age 45 (46%).

Finally, people who view themselves as Democrats (61%) are somewhat more likely to have a positive financial outlook than Republicans (56%) and independents (50%).

### Nearly 3 in 5 Americans

Have a Positive Personal Financial Outlook

(Percentage Distribution)



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Nearly half of Americans (45%) feel anxious about the November election. Beyond anxiety, many Americans are experiencing frustration (26%) and pessimism (17%) about the election. However, not everyone has a negative outlook regarding this November: Nearly 2 in 5 Americans feel optimistic (37%) about the upcoming election, with another 22% feeling confident and 17% happy. Fewer than 1 in 10 survey respondents are disinterested in the upcoming election.

Emotions about the November election run along party lines. Democrats shared more positive emotions about the election than Republicans and independents. For example:

### Positive emotions:

- Optimistic (46% Democrats vs. 36% Republicans vs. 22% of independents)
- Happy (22% Democrats vs. 16% Republicans vs. 11% of independents)
- Confident (26% Democrats vs. 22% Republicans vs. 16% of independents)

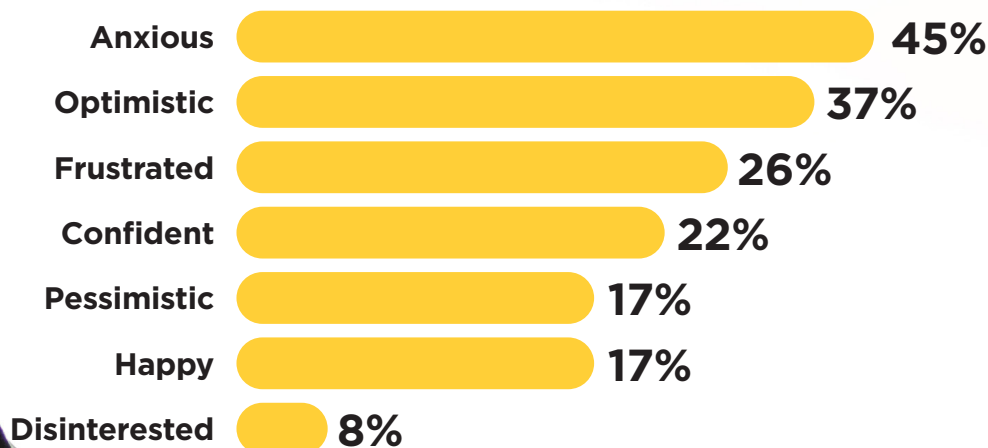
### Negative emotions:

- Anxious (45% Democrats vs. 47% Republicans vs. 43% of independents)
- Frustrated (21% Democrats vs. 29% Republicans vs. 49% of independents)
- Pessimistic (15% Democrats vs. 19% Republicans vs. 20% of independents)



## Nearly Half of Americans Are Anxious About the November Election

(Percent of Respondents)





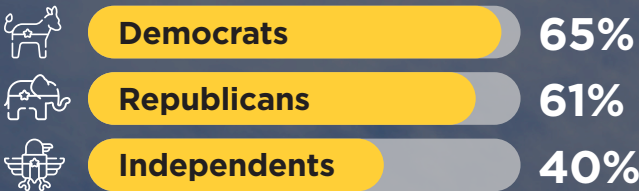
# AMERICANS BELIEVE THE ELECTION WILL POSITIVELY IMPACT THEIR PERSONAL FINANCES AND THE ECONOMY

**CFP BOARD**

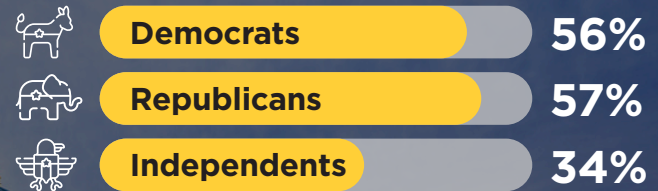
Americans largely expect that the results from the November presidential and congressional elections will positively impact the U.S. economy and their *personal* financial well-being. Nearly 3 in 5 Americans (58%) believe the November election will have a positive impact on the U.S. economy, while about half believe the same about the election’s impact on inflation (53%), the stock market (53%) and interest rates (50%). Similarly, about half (51%) are bullish about the election’s impact on their *personal* financial well-being.

Democrats and Republicans are more likely than independents to expect positive financial outcomes from the election on:

### The U.S. economy:



### Their own personal financial well-being:



Further, men are more optimistic than women that the November election will result in a positive outcome:

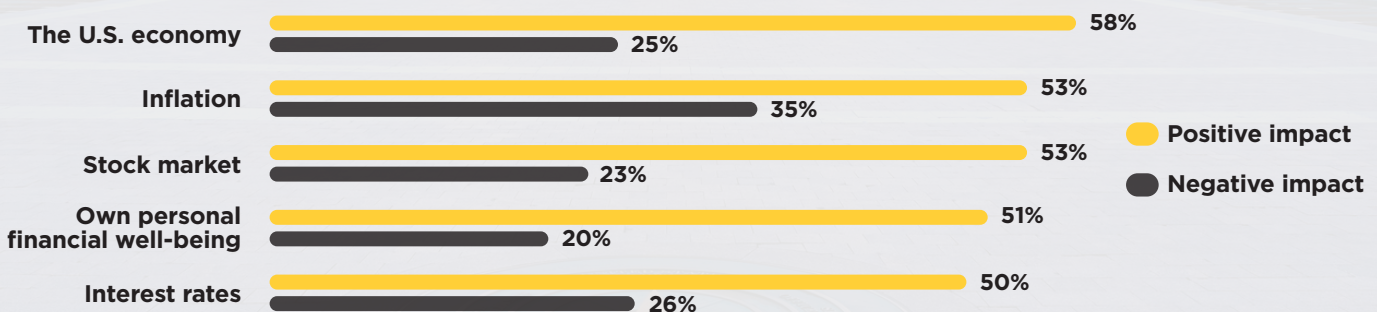
### The U.S. economy:



### Their own personal financial well-being:



## 58% of Americans Expect the November Election Will Positively Impact the U.S. Economy



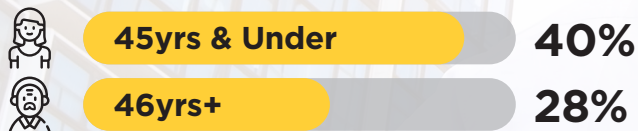


Three-quarters of Americans are taking financial actions in anticipation of the November election. For many people, this means adding to one's nest egg. Thirty-seven percent of Americans are increasing their personal savings, including emergency savings, in anticipation of the November presidential and congressional elections.

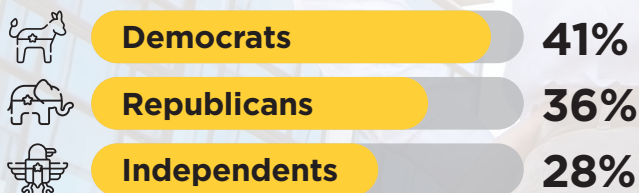
Men are more likely than women to be increasing their savings ahead of the November election:



Similarly, more Americans aged 45 and under have increased their savings than older Americans:



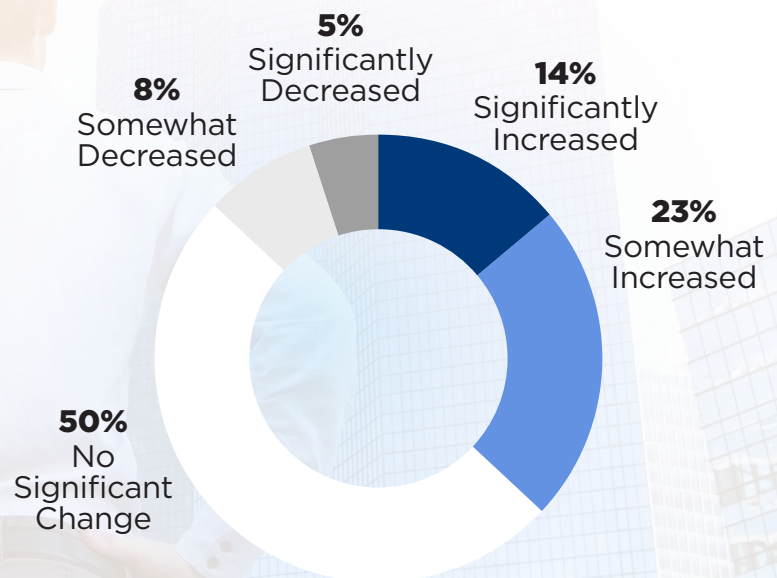
The percentage of survey respondents increasing their savings by political preference is as follows:



## Nearly 2 in 5 Americans

Are Increasing Their Personal Savings in Anticipation of the Election

(Percentage Distribution)



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.



In addition, more than a third of Americans (34%) are decreasing spending, with another quarter (24%) seeking additional sources of income. Notably, about 1 in 8 Americans (12%) say they are seeking the counsel of a financial planner in the face of the election.

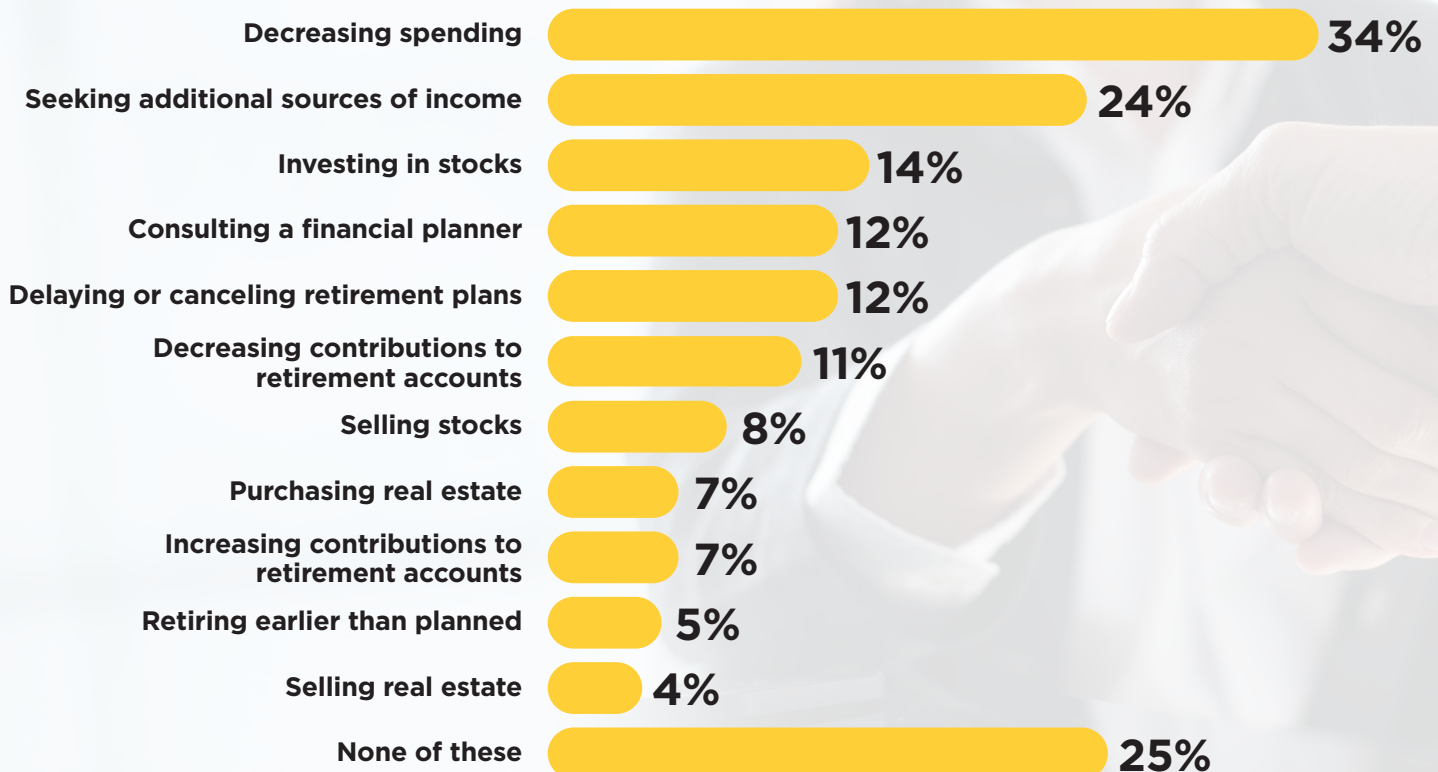
Other decisions that Americans are making as they look ahead to the election include the following:

- Investing in stocks (14%)
- Delaying or canceling retirement plans (12%)
- Decreasing contributions to retirement accounts (11%)
- Selling stocks (8%)
- Purchasing real estate (7%)
- Increasing contributions to retirement accounts (7%)
- Retiring earlier than planned (5%)
- Selling real estate (4%)

### **3 in 4 Americans**

#### **Are Taking Financial Actions in Anticipation of the Election**

(Percent of Respondents)



An uncertain electoral outcome has led many people to delay major financial actions. Sixty-three percent of Americans are deferring financial decisions until after the November election. About a quarter of Americans (26%) are putting off taking a vacation until after the November election, and about one-fifth are holding off on buying a car (21%) or home (20%).

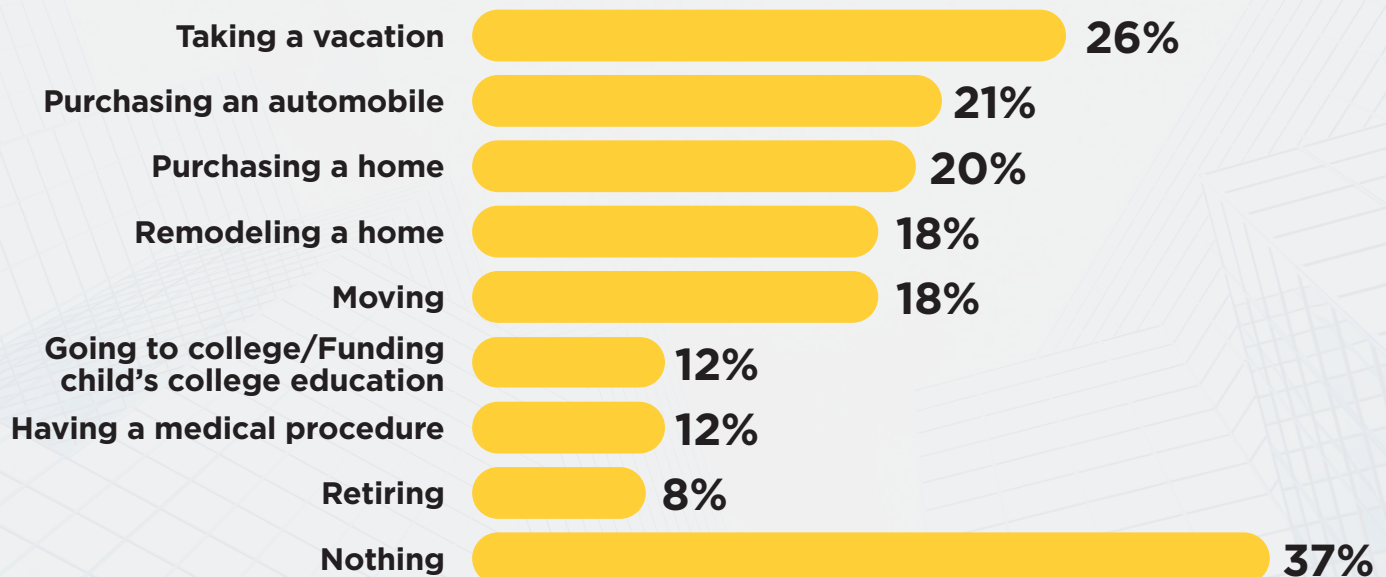
Other decisions that Americans are deferring until after the election include the following:

- Remodeling home (18%)
- Moving (18%)
- Going to college/Funding child's college education (12%)
- Having a medical procedure (12%)
- Retiring (8%)

### **More Than 3 in 5 Americans**

#### **Are Deferring Financial Decisions Until After the Election**

(Percent of Respondents Deferring a Financial Decision Until After the Election)





Financial factors will also weigh on Americans when they vote in the November election, with prices top of mind. More than 9 in 10 Americans say that the cost of living and inflation are important considerations as they choose who to vote for this fall.

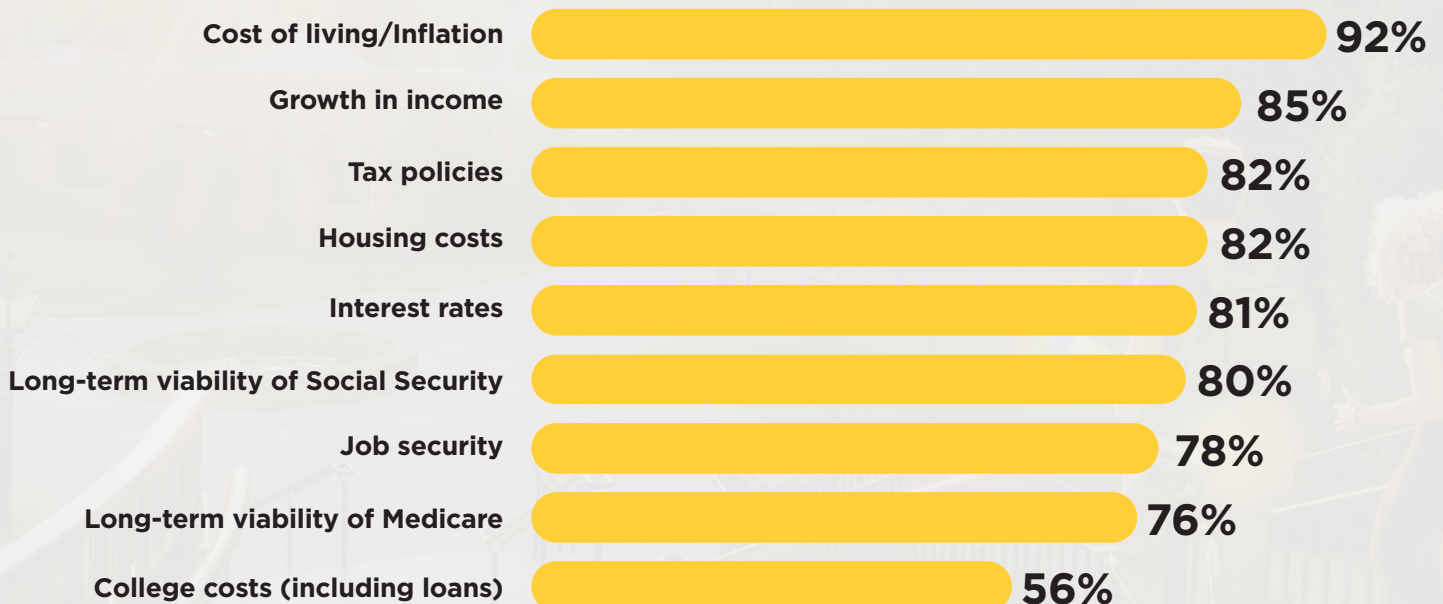
Many other financial issues Americans consider important when casting their vote for are related to the expenses and cash affecting households. Notably, at least 3 in 4 Americans consider the following financial issues to be important when choosing who to vote for in the November election:

- Personal income growth (85%)
- Tax policies (82%)
- Housing costs (82%)
- Interest rates (81%)
- Long-term viability of Social Security (80%)
- Job security (78%)
- Long-term viability of Medicare (76%)

While *only* 56% of Americans consider college costs (including loans) important when evaluating candidates, two-thirds of survey respondents under 30 see it as a critical issue.

### Inflation is the Most Common Financial Issue for Voters in 2024

(Percent of Respondents Indicating Issue is Important)



**The big question is what happens next.** Voters are likely to feel optimistic if their preferred candidate wins, but what if their preferred candidate loses? Nearly 4 in 5 Americans fear financial decline if the opposing candidate wins, and half say they would feel less financially secure if their candidate loses.

Republicans are more likely to anticipate negative financial outcomes of nearly all types if their preferred candidate loses the election, especially an increase in taxes (47%) compared to Democrats (34%) or independents (33%). Meanwhile, Democrats are more likely to anticipate higher health-care costs (36%) than Republicans (27%) or independents (28%) should their preferred candidate fail to be elected.

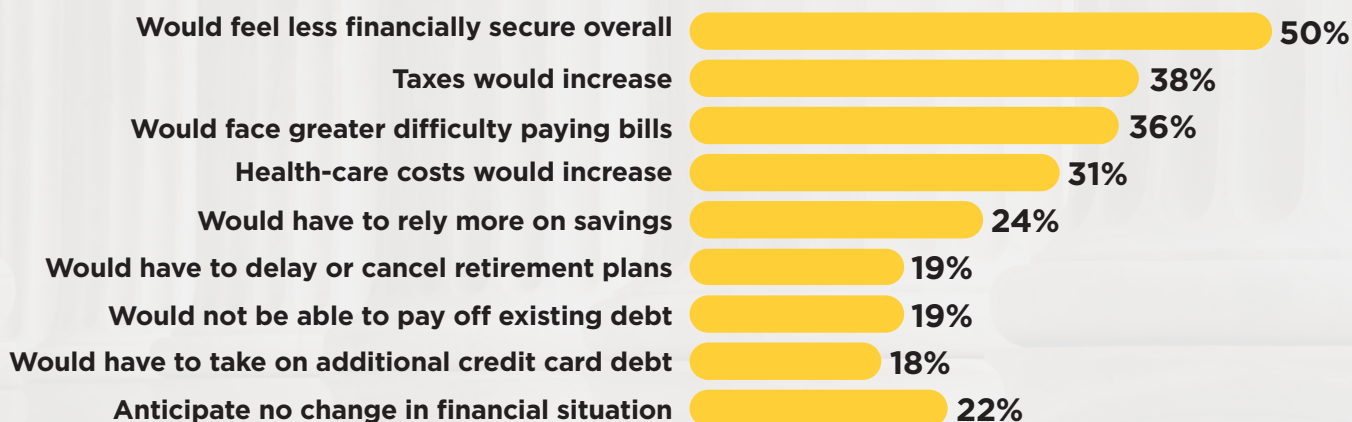
Other issues that Americans anticipate if their preferred candidate loses the November election are as follows:

- Facing greater difficulty paying bills (36% overall; 33% Democrats vs. 43% Republicans vs. 30% independents)
- Having to rely more on savings (24% overall; 24% Democrats vs. 26% Republicans vs. 21% independents)
- Having to delay or cancel retirement plans (19% overall; 18% Democrats vs. 21% Republicans vs. 19% independents)
- Not being able to pay off existing debt (19% overall; 17% Democrats vs. 23% Republicans vs. 14% independents)
- Having to take on additional credit card debt (18% overall; 17% Democrats vs. 20% Republicans vs. 14% independents)

### **Nearly 4 in 5 Americans**

Expect Their Financial Situation to Deteriorate  
if Their Preferred Candidate Fails to Win the Presidency

(Percent of Respondents)





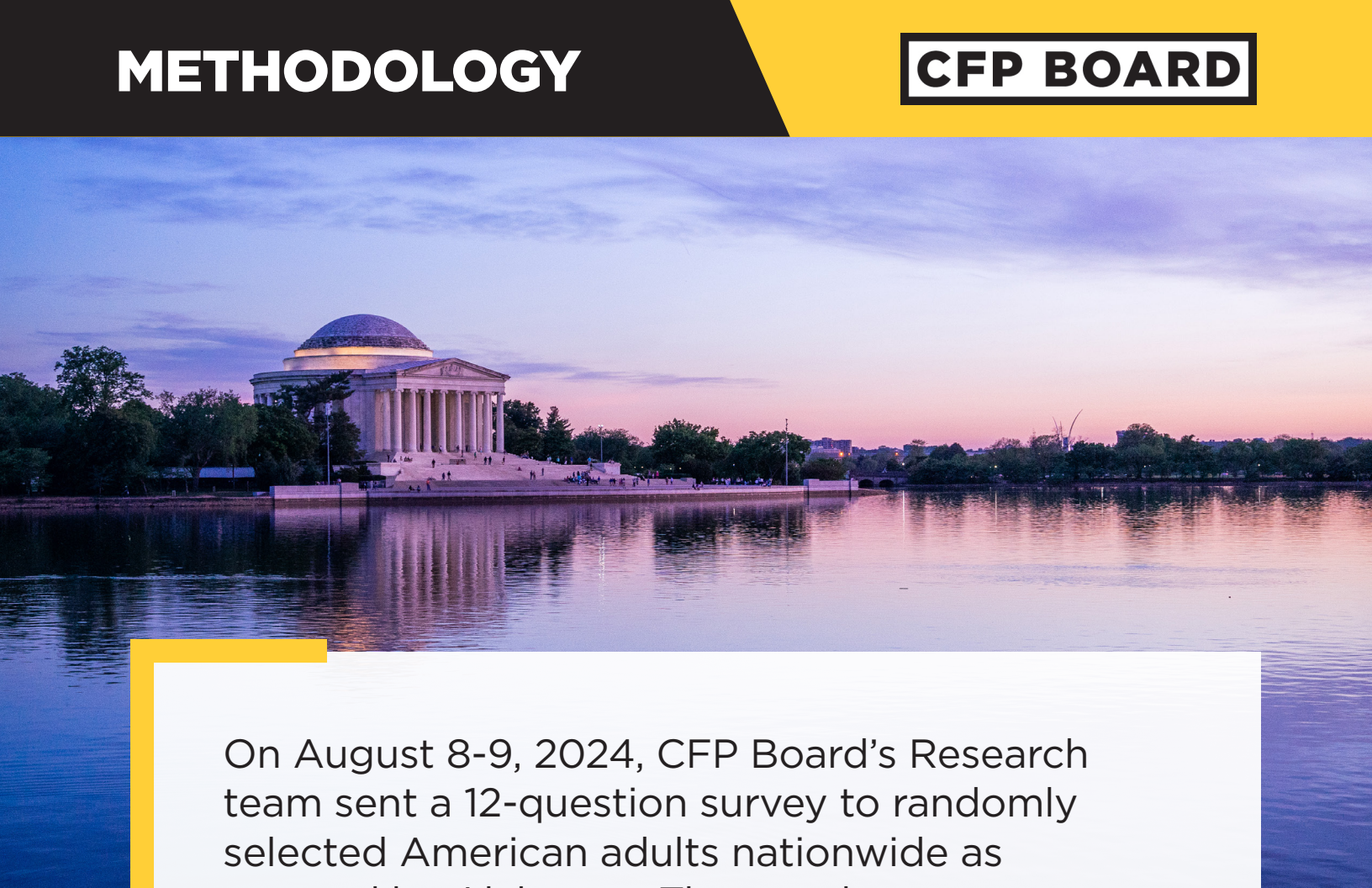


Most Americans have a positive personal financial outlook, yet nearly half feel anxious about the November election. This is not just about economic indicators — many survey respondents expect significant financial harm if their preferred candidate loses.

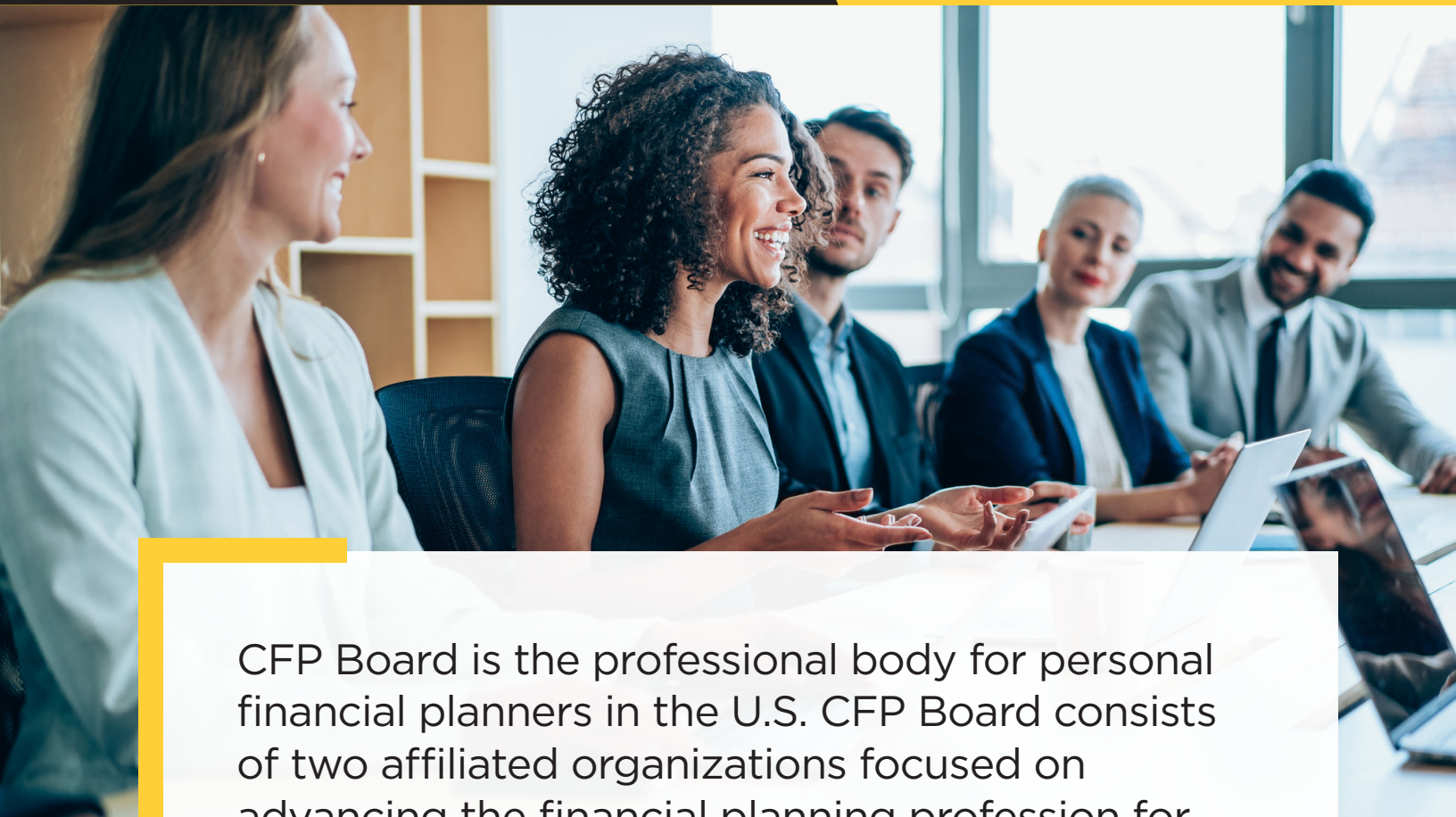
Americans' financial situations have grown increasingly complex in recent years. While economic indicators like unemployment and inflation have improved since their post-pandemic lows, not everyone has felt the benefits. As a result, many Americans are delaying major financial actions until after the November election. With the economic instability of the last four years and the uncertainty ahead, Americans want to avoid making adverse financial decisions.

This uncertainty can help explain why many people are preparing financially for the November election. Three-quarters of Americans are taking at least one financial step in anticipation of the November election, whether it's adding to personal savings or reducing spending. More than 3 in 5 Americans are delaying financial decisions until after the election. Further, many Americans are confiding in a trusted financial planner, such as a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professional, to give them confidence today and a more secure tomorrow. CFP® professionals work with their clients to identify and prioritize goals and map out strategies to achieve financial security.





On August 8-9, 2024, CFP Board's Research team sent a 12-question survey to randomly selected American adults nationwide as sourced by Alchemer. The panel ensures that the data collected reflects a reliable demographic and geographic representation of the U.S. population. The survey generated 1,005 responses, the data from which serves as the basis of this report and is subject to a sampling error of +/-3.1% at the 95% confidence interval.



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