



**School of Public &
International Affairs**

Survey Research Center

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

SPIA GOP PRIMARY POLL

CONDUCTED BY THE SPIA SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER

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M.V. HOOD III

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

AND

DIRECTOR, SPIA SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER

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Media contact: Professor M.V. (Trey) Hood III

th@uga.edu

706-583-0554

The SPIA Survey Research Center at the University of Georgia fielded a live interviewer telephone survey of 736 likely 2022 Republican primary voters in the State of Georgia. This survey contained a specially designed experiment in which respondents were randomly assigned to one of two groups. One group (treatment) was informed which candidate former President Trump had endorsed before being asked their vote choice, while the other group (control) did not receive this information when asked about their vote choice. Respondents were asked about five statewide Republican primary contests in which Trump has made an endorsement: Governor; U.S. Senate; Lt. Governor; Secretary of State; and Insurance Commissioner (For more detailed information see the attached Methodology Statement).

Governor's Race

The results from the governor's race are housed in the table below. In this highest profile race featuring incumbent Brian Kemp, there is little effect from a Trump endorsement. There is a 1.7-point difference in Kemp's estimated vote share comparing the treatment and control groups. The vote for David Perdue, the Trump endorsee, is 2.0-points higher in the treatment group as compared to the control group.

Candidate	No Endorsement [Control]	Endorsement [Treatment]
Kemp (I)	47.9%	46.2%
Perdue*	37.2%	39.2%
Taylor	2.1%	4.2%
Davis	0.9%	0.6%
Williams	0.1%	0.0%
Undecided	11.8%	9.8%

*Trump endorsee; I=Incumbent

U.S. Senate

In the U.S. Senate primary Herschel Walker is the overwhelming favorite among both groups. In the control group that was not told which candidate Trump endorsed, Walker's estimated vote share was 64.3%, compared to 76.0% among those in the treatment group who were told that Walker was endorsed by the former president. The 11.7-point difference is certainly notable, but in this particular race does not look to be a deciding factor. Outside of Trump's endorsement Walker is already a well-known commodity in the Peach State, having won the Heisman Trophy and participating on a national championship team while at the University of Georgia. Unlike the governor's race, nearly a quarter (23.9%) of those in the control group were undecided. This figure is only fifteen percent for the treatment group. This is at least some indication that a subset of these Republican primary voters, in the absence of other information, are relying on Trump's endorsement as a cue to vote for Walker. In the final analysis, Trump's endorsement, while having an effect on this race, is not by any means a deciding factor as Walker appears to be outpacing all others in this contest.

Candidate	No Endorsement [Control]	Endorsement [Treatment]
Walker*	64.3%	76.0%
Black	7.7%	7.5%
Clark	0.4%	0.1%
King	1.6%	0.4%
McColumn	0.2%	0.1%
Saddler	1.9%	1.2%
Undecided	23.9%	14.7%

*Trump endorsee; I=Incumbent

Lt. Governor

In the open seat race for Lt. Governor, Burt Jones leads among the candidate field. In the control group, which was not informed that Trump endorsed him, Jones had 29.7% of the vote, as compared to 58.9% for the treatment (endorsement) group—a 29-point difference. It is clear that many likely Republican voters are still deciding who to vote for in this contest as more than half (54.2%) are undecided in the control group. Similar to the U.S. Senate contest, it would appear some voters are using Trump's endorsement in the Lt. Governor's race as a voting cue. Compared to the control group, the number of undecideds is twenty-four points lower for the treatment group.

Candidate	No Endorsement [Control]	Endorsement [Treatment]
Jones*	29.7	58.9
McGregor	4.4	1.8
Miller	10.6	8.2
Seaver	1.0	1.2
Undecided	54.2	29.8

*Trump endorsee; I=Incumbent

Secretary of State

The race for Secretary of State is further down the ballot, but does contain an incumbent, Brad Raffensperger. Raffensperger may be better known to voters than other down-ticket candidates as he was one of the individuals at the center of post-election events in 2020. For the treatment group, which was not informed of Trump's endorsement in this race, Raffensperger was at 22.7% compared to Trump endorsee and current U.S. House member Jody Hice at 30.3%. In this contest, four in ten Republican primary voters (39.0%) reported they were undecided. Among the treatment group, which learned that Trump had endorsed Hice, the percentage of undecideds is only 18.5%. Hice's vote share on the other hand, at 60.3%, is double what it is for the control group. Raffensperger's support among the treatment group is 6.4-points lower as compared to the control group.

Candidate	No Endorsement [Control]	Endorsement [Treatment]
Raffensperger (I)	22.7	16.3
Hice*	30.3	60.3
Hudson	3.9	3.4
Belle Isle	4.1	1.5
Undecided	39.0	18.5

*Trump endorsee; I=Incumbent

Insurance Commissioner

Finally, even further down the ballot we have the race for Insurance Commissioner. In this contest John King is the incumbent, having been appointed by Kemp to this position. In this race Trump has endorsed challenger Patrick Witt. In the control group, which was not informed of Trump's endorsement, no candidate has a commanding lead and fully 71% of primary voters have yet to make up their minds. For the treatment group that was informed of who Trump had endorsed in the race, Witt's vote share was 51.8% and the number of undecideds stands at 36.5%. As with other down-ticket contests, primary voters who have yet to make up their minds appear to be relying on Trump's endorsement as a voting heuristic.

Candidate	No Endorsement [Control]	Endorsement [Treatment]
Cowart	9.6%	4.5%
King (I)	10.6%	7.2%
Witt*	8.3%	51.8%
Undecided	71.4%	36.5%

*Trump endorsee; I=Incumbent

General Observations

In the high-profile race for governor featuring a Republican incumbent, Trump's endorsement appears to have little impact either in terms of denting Kemp's vote share or in changing the overall direction of the race (Kemp leads among both groups). Most voters in this contest have made up their minds, with or without Trump's endorsement. In the GOP primary race for U.S. Senate, Trump's endorsement appears to have a notable effect (especially for those who may be undecided), but substantively matters little given Walker's commanding lead. In the down-ticket races for Lt. Governor (open seat), Secretary of State, and Insurance Commissioner it is possible that Trump's endorsement could be impactful. Most Republican primary voters have a favorable opinion of Trump and want him to run again for the nomination in 2024

(see section below). In the absence of other information, many may rely on Trump's endorsement in determining their votes in these races. Of course, it should be noted that they will need to seek out this information ahead of time as Trump's endorsement will not appear on the Republican primary ballot.

Questions Asked of All Respondents:

Three-fifths (59.6%) of likely GOP primary voters reported that recent changes to Georgia's election laws *greatly* or *somewhat increased* their confidence in the state's election system. And 66.2% indicated that they were *very* or *somewhat confident* that the November 2022 general election will be conducted fairly and accurately (31% reported they were *not so confident* or *not at all confident*). This, given the fact that almost three-quarters (72.7%) believe Biden won the presidential election in Georgia as a result of fraud.

Most Georgia Republican primary voters, 84.2%, still have a favorable opinion of Trump, with 60.5% indicating that he should run for the GOP presidential nomination again in 2024 (32.8% thought Trump should not run).

Regarding the 2022 Georgia midterm, 40.5% said a Trump endorsement would make them *much more* or *somewhat more likely* to vote for a particular candidate, compared to half (50.5%) who said an endorsement would make *no difference* in their choice, and 7.7% who reported they would be *somewhat less* or *much less likely* to vote for a Trump-endorsed candidate.

In terms of most important problems highlighted by GOP primary voters in 2022, inflation took the top spot at 33.2%, followed by elections and voting at 21.2%, and more general concerns about the economy and jobs at 17.5%.

Finally, when asked about the January 6th riot at the U.S. Capitol, 83% indicated that it was time to move on, while 12.6% said this event should never be forgotten.



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General Information:

The SPIA GOP Primary Poll was a live interviewer telephone survey conducted March 20–April 8, 2022 that included a total of 736 likely Republican primary voters in Georgia. Likely primary voters were respondents who had voted in the 2018 and/or 2020 statewide Republican primaries, who indicated they were currently registered to vote in Georgia, and were *definitely* or *probably* going to vote in the 2022 Republican Primary election in May. The survey was administered by the School of Public and International Affairs Survey Research Center at the University of Georgia. Interviews were conducted in English. A dual-frame statewide random sample consisting of approximately 80% cell phone numbers and 20% landline numbers was obtained through L2 (L2 is a sampling vendor that maintains a database constructed from state voter registration lists. Through commercial sources, phone numbers have been appended to the individual records (registrants) that make up these lists). The survey results were weighted using iterative proportional raking in order to ensure the sample was representative of the 2022 GOP primary electorate in terms of race, sex, age, and education. The calculated margin of error for the total sample is +/-3.6 points at the 95% confidence level.

This survey contains an embedded experiment in which respondents were randomly assigned to one of two groups. The treatment group was informed who former President Trump had endorsed in each election contest before being asked how they planned to vote. Those in the control group did not receive any information on Trump endorsements and were simply asked how they planned to vote. As an example, here are the questions for the governor's race:

Control Group:

If the election to choose a Republican candidate for Governor were being held TODAY, and the candidates were [candidate list], for whom would you vote?

Treatment Group:

In the Republican primary race for Governor, former President Trump has endorsed David Perdue. If the election to choose a Republican candidate for Governor were being held TODAY, and the candidates were [candidate list], for whom would you vote?

The calculated margin of error for the control group is +/-5.4 points and for the treatment group it is +/-4.9 points (both at the 95% confidence level).

Note: This survey is designed as an attempt to test the effect of a Trump endorsement on vote choice. Due to the fact that some respondents received different information from others, the vote choice questions for the treatment and control groups should not be combined.