

In Service of Our Democracy

Voting Trends and Civic Duty Among Military and Veteran Families

Executive Summary | October 2024



Blue Star Families
is a member
of the Vet the Vote
Coalition



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“We need to protect our democracy! I fought for my country and what the United States stands for.”

Veteran and/or Retired Service Member

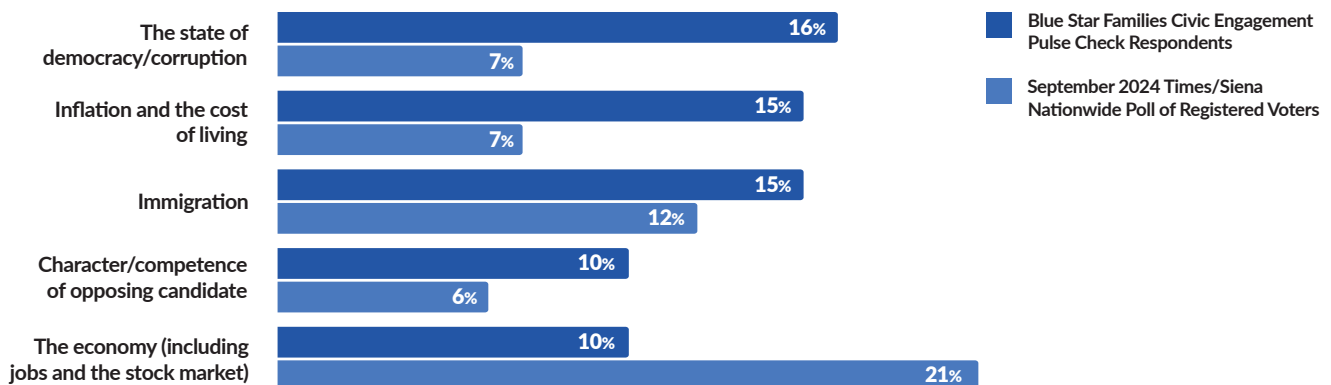
The need to save American democracy and the 2024 presidential election as a means of accomplishing that task has been a consistent refrain across the political spectrum recently.¹ For military and Veteran families, the promise to defend democracy doesn’t end with their or their service member’s military service. Through voting, poll work, and for some, running for political office themselves, military and Veteran families continue to participate in the democratic process outside their military service.

The Presidential Election

Nearly all military-affiliated registered voter respondents (97%, n=2877) indicated they are “almost certain” or “very likely” to vote in the presidential election in November in contrast to 85% of registered voters nationwide.² Emphasizing military and Veteran families commitment to putting country first, the most commonly reported main issues impacting respondents’ voting choice is “the state of democracy/corruption (16%),” “inflation and the cost of living” (15%), and “immigration” (15%). Whereas registered voters nationwide indicate “the economy (including jobs and the stock market)” (21%), “abortion” (14%), and “immigration” (12%) as the issue deciding their vote.³

What one issue is most important in deciding your vote this November?

Military- and Veteran-affiliated registered voters (n=2,780)



¹ Swenson, A., & Sanders, L. (2024, August 8). Majority of US adults say democracy is on the ballot but they differ on the threat: AP-NORC poll . The Associated Press. <https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/spotlights/2024/majority-of-us-adults-say-democracy-is-on-the-ballot-but-they-differ-on-the-threat-ap-norc-poll>

² Toplines: July 2024 Times/Siena poll of registered voters nationwide. (2024, July 3). The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/us/elections/times-siena-poll-toplines.html>

³ Ibid



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Importance of Voting

For respondents, voting is important not only as a civic duty but also as a way to guide the direction of the country or their local community, and is the way to have their voice be heard. The overwhelming majority of military-affiliated respondents (93%) report that voting can influence the direction of the country “some” or “a lot.”

Why, if at all, is voting important to you?

“To squander the privilege would dishonor the many who have sacrificed so much to guarantee the right.”

Veteran and/or Retired Service Member

“I have children and grandchildren that deserve a better chance at the American dream than I had and the only way to guarantee that is to be an active citizen. Voting is not a privilege, it is a right and a responsibility that is too often overlooked by the masses. If you don’t vote, you shouldn’t be complaining, you had your chance.”

Veteran and/or Retired Service Member

Election Safety

Aligning with Americans overall,⁴ the majority (69%) of military-affiliated registered voter respondents report feeling that elections are safe and confidential where they vote. Concerns related to the casting, collection, and counting of ballots are present regardless of feelings on election safety, though at disparate rates. Nearly all (95%) of the respondents who feel that elections are not safe and confidential report being “somewhat concerned” or “very concerned” about “biased or inaccurate counting of ballots,” in comparison to 58% of their counterparts who feel elections are safe and confidential.

Poll Work

Poll work, like military service, may be a family tradition. The presence of Veterans and military-affiliated individuals at the polls increases confidence in the security of the election.

**1 in 5 (21%)
respondents have served
as a poll worker.**

⁴ Allen, J., Harbath, K., Orey, R., & Sanchez, T. (2024, February 26). Who voters trust for election information in 2024 | Bipartisan Policy Center. [bipartisanpolicy.org](https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/who-voters-trust-election-information-2024).



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Nearly half (43%) of the respondents who are unsure if elections are safe or do not think elections are safe indicated that having Veterans or military-connected individuals working the polls would change their opinion.

For those that have previously served or will serve in November as poll workers, “patriotism” (39%), “civic duty” (24%), and “a desire to gain a better understanding of the election process/insure an honest election process” (15%) were the most commonly reported reasons behind that service.

What role, if any, does patriotism play in your decision to be a poll worker?

“It does because I want people to feel their votes are valued and necessary even if their beliefs are different from mine.”
Spouse of a Veteran

“I have devoted my adult life to service of my country. I am about to retire from military service. My oath to the Constitution does not expire.”
National Guard Service Member

Likelihood to Recommend Service

One-quarter of respondents indicate that the outcome of the election selecting the next commander-in-chief would impact their likelihood to recommend military service, but the majority of respondents (60%) would recommend service regardless of election outcome.

“I care deeply about who our commander-in-chief will be. The direct ramifications on my husband’s job is very clear.”
Spouse of an Active-Duty Service Member



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Respondents

3,184

respondents



Poll conducted

August 1 – 12, 2024

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Blue Star Families

Blue Star Families is the nation's largest community-based organization supporting military-connected families. Its research-driven approach builds strong communities through innovative solutions. Blue Star Families is a member of the Vet the Vote Coalition.

Blue Star Families fielded a Civic Engagement Pulse Check from August 1 – 12, 2024, reaching more than 3,100 military-affiliated respondents. This poll is not generalizable to the overall military or Veteran population due to convenience sampling methodology. Recruitment for the poll was targeted to military and Veteran family members who are registered to vote. For more information on this survey, please contact survey@bluestarfam.org. For media inquiries, please contact media@bluestarfam.org.