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# POLL: CORONAVIRUS HAS CUT INCOME FOR NEARLY HALF OF MASS. RESIDENTS

Suffolk University/WGBH News/Boston Globe survey shows nearly 3 in 4 Bay Staters support mail-in voting for primaries and general election

Nearly half of Massachusetts residents (46 percent) say the coronavirus has diminished their regular income, according to a Suffolk University/WGBH News/Boston Globe poll of Massachusetts residents. This is an increase of 10 points compared to a March poll, when 36 percent said their incomes were diminished in the face of layoffs and pandemic business closures.

The survey also examined:

- Support for extension of the stay-at-home advisory and closing of nonessential businesses
- State and national leadership during the pandemic
- Perceptions about compliance with wearing masks and social distancing
- Comfort level for resuming certain activities
- Mail-in voting

## Leadership decisions

Gov. Charlie Baker's extension of the nonessential business closure order and stay-at-home advisory for Massachusetts until May 18 is supported by 85 percent of residents.

Baker's handling of the coronavirus crisis has earned the Republican governor 84 percent job approval in an overwhelmingly Democratic state. Meanwhile, 66 percent of Massachusetts residents disapprove of President Trump's handling of the pandemic, and 25 percent approve.

## **Adherence to preventive measures**

Respondents saw themselves as more vigilant about social distancing than their neighbors, with 69 percent saying they are very strict about social distancing and 24 percent saying they are pretty strict. However, when asked how strict other people are, only 12 percent said very strict and 51 percent pretty strict.

Nearly 41 percent of respondents say they wear a mask or face covering any time they are outside of their homes, including walking outdoors, and 52 percent said they wear masks when they are inside public spaces like grocery stores. Seven percent said they rarely or never wear masks or face coverings.

## **Anticipating eased restrictions**

In terms of what activities Massachusetts residents will engage in when restrictions lift, more than seven in 10 will see family members and shop. However, only 23 percent said they would feel comfortable attending a sporting event, while 18 percent would ride a bus, subway or commuter train. Even if there were a vaccine for COVID-19, nearly 1 in 4 still would not attend a sporting event or take public transportation.

“These data can inform politicians, sports team owners and business organizations as they consider how to emerge from the current restrictions once public health indicators deem it safe,” said David Paleologos, director of the Suffolk University Political Research Center in Boston. “The large percentages of people who rule out going to an athletic event or riding public transportation suggest that even as businesses reopen it will not be business as usual.”

## **Voting by mail**

Weighing in on mail-in voting, 74 percent of residents supported conducting upcoming Massachusetts elections entirely by mail, and 21 percent opposed. The response broke sharply along party lines, with 84 percent of Democrats and 82 percent of independents supporting it, compared to 14 percent of Republicans.

## Methodology

The statewide Suffolk University survey was conducted through live interviews of cell phone and land line users. All respondents indicated that they were residents of Massachusetts. The survey of 500 respondents was conducted April 29– May 2. The margin of error is +/- 4.4 percentage points at a 95 percent level of confidence. [Results \(/academics/research-at-suffolk/political-research-center/polls/massachusetts\)](#) are posted on the [Suffolk University Political Research Center \(/academics/research-at-suffolk/political-research-center\)](#) website. For more information, contact David Paleologos at 781-290-9310, [dpaleologos@suffolk.edu \(mailto:dpaleologos@suffolk.edu\)](mailto:dpaleologos@suffolk.edu).

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