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David Binder Research

# Voters Want the U.S. to Take the Lead in Vaccinating the Rest of the World

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# Executive Summary

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Data for Progress conducted a late-May survey of 1,304 likely voters nationally to assess voter attitudes towards global vaccination efforts. Our survey was centered on findings from a focus group conducted by David Binder Research with voters in Limerick, Pennsylvania on May 6, which asked respondents who were partially or fully vaccinated and were Independent swing voters who voted for Donald Trump in 2016 and Joe Biden in 2020 for their opinions on the U.S.' role in getting the entire world vaccinated. The focus group results showed clear support from these respondents for the US to help other nations vaccinate their people. Data for Progress' poll found that these results are consistent with the opinions of likely voters nationwide — strong majorities of voters want the U.S. to be a world leader in equipping other nations with the resources to vaccinate as many people as possible.

## Focus group key findings:

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**Focus group respondents firmly believe that we won't be out of the pandemic until the entire world is vaccinated.** Members of the focus group had no illusions that they will be safe as soon as the U.S. is vaccinated. They know that variants exist and that visitors will always be coming to the country to visit family or for work. Because of this, there is a natural desire to see the world vaccinated and not just the U.S.

*"They're coming over here anyway, so if we have extra, let's give it to them. It's going to come back to us." -Female*

*"We give money to other countries, so why not a vaccine." -Female*

**Most focus group respondents believe that the U.S. should be helping the world to get vaccinated.** Some respondents said that the U.S. has a humanitarian obligation to help with saving lives around the world. Some feel that the U.S. won't be able to return to normal if the rest of the world continues to struggle with variants. Some also noted that the U.S. can improve its standing in other countries, since our reputation took a hit internationally during the previous administration.

*"The opportunity is here for everyone to get one in the U.S. People are making that choice, and at this point, if we can save another life we should." -Female*

These high-level findings prompted Data for Progress to conduct a nationally representative poll of 1,304 likely voters from May 28 to June 1, 2021. The primary goals of the survey were to 1) understand likely voter attitudes towards global Covid-19 vaccination efforts and the world's recovery from the pandemic and 2) assess voter support for the U.S. leading global vaccine efforts to help vaccinate countries around the world.

## NATIONAL POLL KEY FINDINGS:

- ▶ Almost 9 out of 10 likely voters agree that pharmaceutical companies, governments, and countries around the world should work collaboratively to help us recover from the pandemic as quickly as we can.
- ▶ Broadly, voters think we should help other countries who are struggling with the virus and that may not have the resources to vaccinate their people. Voters also support providing these countries with extra vaccines that the U.S. has in excess.
- ▶ Voters overwhelmingly support both the U.S. helping global vaccination efforts and being the *leader* to help vaccinate countries around the world. This high level of support remains consistent even as voters are exposed to negative framing around why the U.S. should **not** engage in these efforts.

Our findings show that voters understand that the recovery in the U.S. is tied to progress around the globe. With the White House setting July 4th as the goal to return to normalcy, recovery efforts in the U.S. have been largely successful. Nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults have received at least one shot of a Covid-19 vaccine, and the country has seen declines in cases across states. Other countries, however, continue to struggle not only with vaccination efforts, but with coronavirus mutations, posing an enormous challenge to a full global recovery. Our survey findings also underscore that voters understand what needs to be done to fully recover from the pandemic — including seeing more vaccinations in other countries, governments working together with pharmaceutical companies to hasten the global recovery, and, importantly, the U.S. leading efforts to vaccinate the world.

# Voter Attitudes on the Global Pandemic Recovery

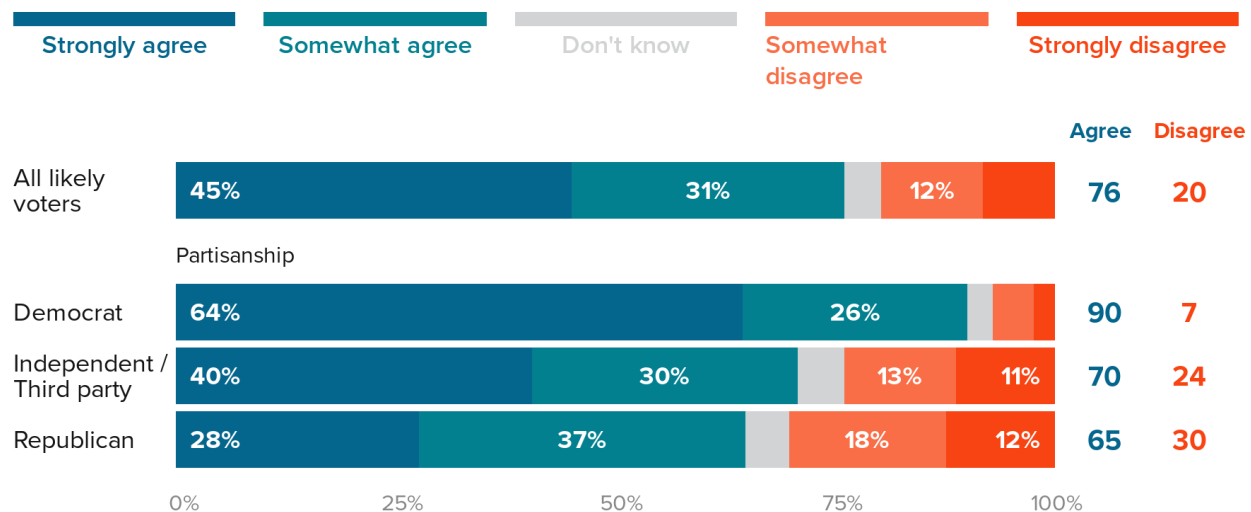
First, we measured voter attitudes on the global recovery from the coronavirus pandemic in general. As vaccination rates continue to increase in the U.S. and as states roll back pandemic restrictions, some parts of the country have already started seeing a return to pre-pandemic normalcy. We first measured whether voters viewed vaccinations in the U.S. as constituting a full recovery from the pandemic, or if a full recovery also included world-wide vaccinations. Moreover, we also measured voter attitudes toward a collaborative approach to ending the pandemic.

We find that by a margin of 56-points, three-fourths of likely voters agree with the statement that a full recovery involves countries around the world getting vaccinated, and not just the U.S. This sentiment is consistent across party self-identification, where Democrats, Independents, and Republicans agree with the statement by a margin of 83-points, 46-points, and 35-points, respectively.

## A Majority of Voters Agree That Pandemic Recovery Requires Global Vaccination

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

"We won't fully recover from the Covid pandemic until countries around the world, not just the U.S., are vaccinated."



May 28–June 1, 2021 survey of 1,304 likely voters

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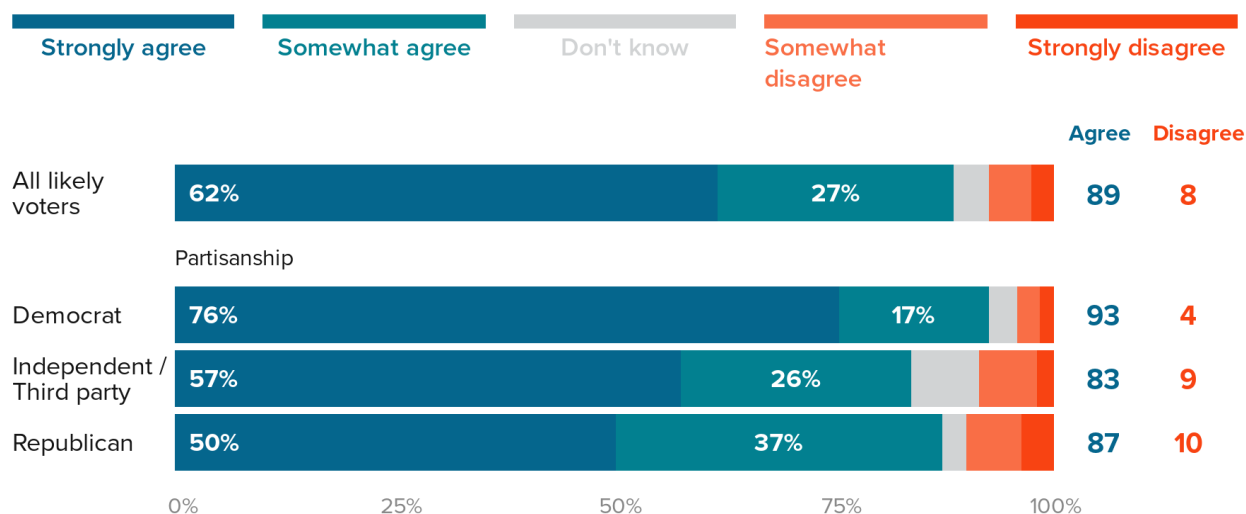
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We also find strong backing among likely voters for a collaborative approach to ending the pandemic. When asked whether they agree or disagree that pharmaceutical companies and governments should work together to bring about a rapid end to the pandemic, 89 percent of likely voters agreed. Across party identification, Democrats, Independents, and Republicans very closely share this sentiment, where 93 percent, 83 percent, and 87 percent agree with the statement, respectively. These findings suggest that voters view the coronavirus pandemic as a global issue that needs a global solution, and one that cannot be tackled without collaboration and cooperation.

## Voters Overwhelmingly Agree That Pharmaceutical Companies and Governments Should Respond Collaboratively to Covid

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

"Pharmaceutical companies, governments, and countries around the world should work together to get us all out of the pandemic as quickly as possible."



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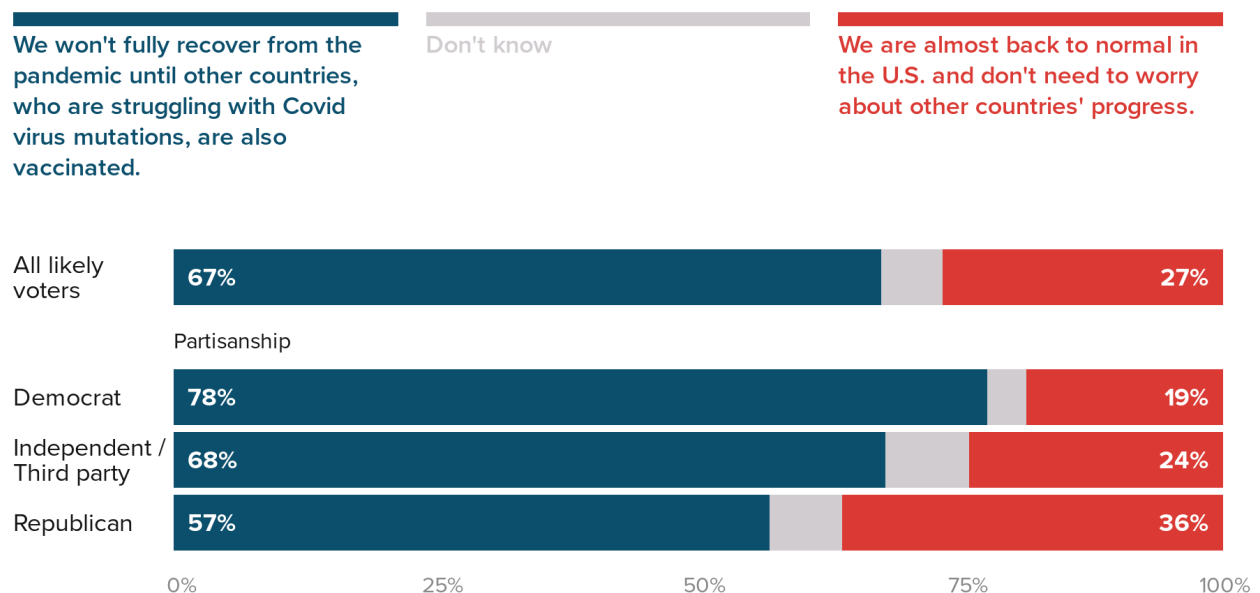
# Voters Think That We Should Help Countries Who Are Struggling Rather Than Waste Resources

We then tested voter support for helping other nations who are struggling with their own coronavirus outbreaks, including those dealing with more infectious mutations. Specifically, we asked voters a range of questions including 1) whether they thought a full recovery will require vaccinating countries struggling with mutations, 2) views on sharing excess doses of vaccines with limited shelf life, and 3) if the U.S. should contribute to helping nations, such as India, that are overwhelmed by the pandemic.

We find that by a margin of 40-points, a majority of voters think we won't be able to recover from the pandemic until countries struggling with mutations are vaccinated, rather than believe we should only be concerned about the U.S.' progress. Across partisanship, majorities of voters share the same view albeit at varying levels. Seventy-eight percent of Democrats say we won't fully recover unless nations struggling with mutations are fully vaccinated, while 68 percent of Independents and 57 percent of Republicans say the same.

## Voters Believe Pandemic Recovery Requires Addressing Virus Mutations Abroad

Which of the following comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



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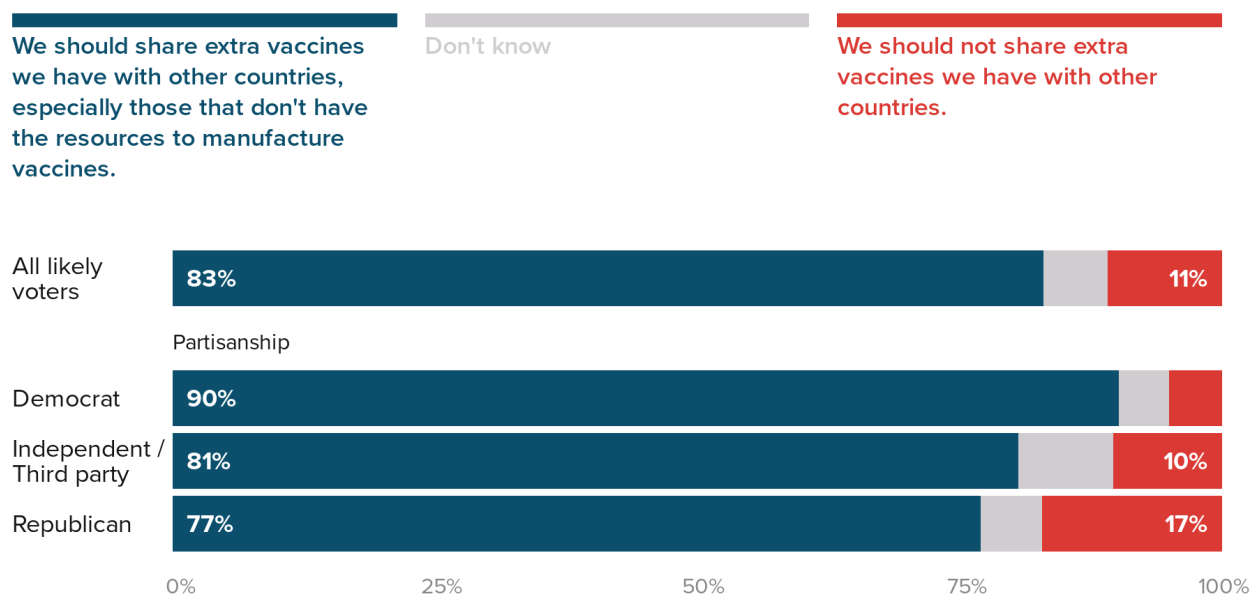


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We also asked voters about sharing excess Pfizer and Moderna vaccine doses with countries that lack the capacity to domestically manufacture vaccines. Voters were informed of these two vaccines' limited shelf life and how doses are thrown away if not used by a specific expiration date. We find that rather than waste these vaccines, an overwhelming majority of voters (83 percent) say we should share excess vaccines with countries that have limited resources to manufacture them. More than three-fourths of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans support this initiative, each saying we should share excess vaccines at rates of 90 percent, 81 percent, and 77 percent, respectively.

## Voters Want the U.S. to Share Extra Vaccines With Other Countries

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have a limited shelf life and sometimes have been thrown away if they are not used after a certain amount of time passes. When thinking about this, which of the following comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



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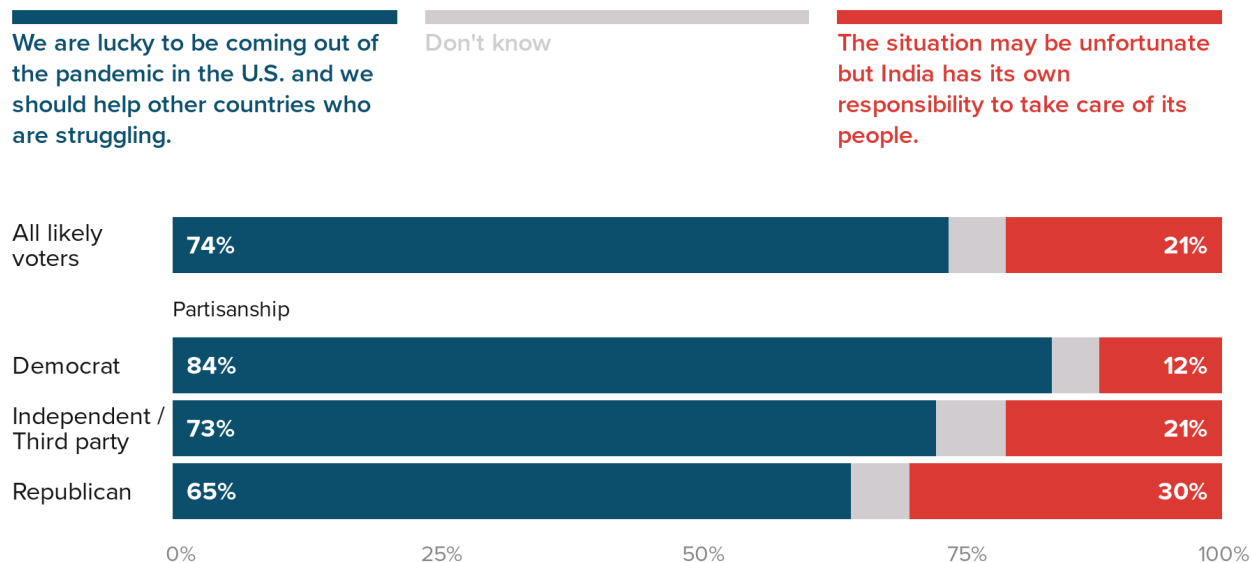


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We finally tested whether voters — in their support for the U.S. helping to vaccinate the world — were empathetic to other countries who are still struggling with local coronavirus outbreaks while the U.S. trends successfully in the direction of normalcy. In this last question, we used a specific example by drawing on the experiences in India, one such country that has recently experienced high levels of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. We find that support levels are relatively consistent, where 74 percent of likely voters think we should be helping countries like India as we are coming out of our own pandemic conditions, while 21 percent say these countries should take care of their own people. Across partisanship, 84 percent of Democrats say we should help struggling countries and 73 percent of Independents say the same. Republicans, meanwhile, think we should offer help by a 35-percentage-point margin (65 percent say we should help, 30 percent say India should take care of itself). These results reveal that voters broadly support the U.S. taking concrete steps to aid countries struggling with outbreaks and that are unable to manufacture their own vaccines. Instead of letting excess vaccine doses go to waste, voters want to help countries who are struggling to get them.

## Voters Overwhelming Support Helping Nations Struggling With the Coronavirus Pandemic

Recent reports show India is currently overwhelmed in its response to Covid infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. When thinking about this, which of the following comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



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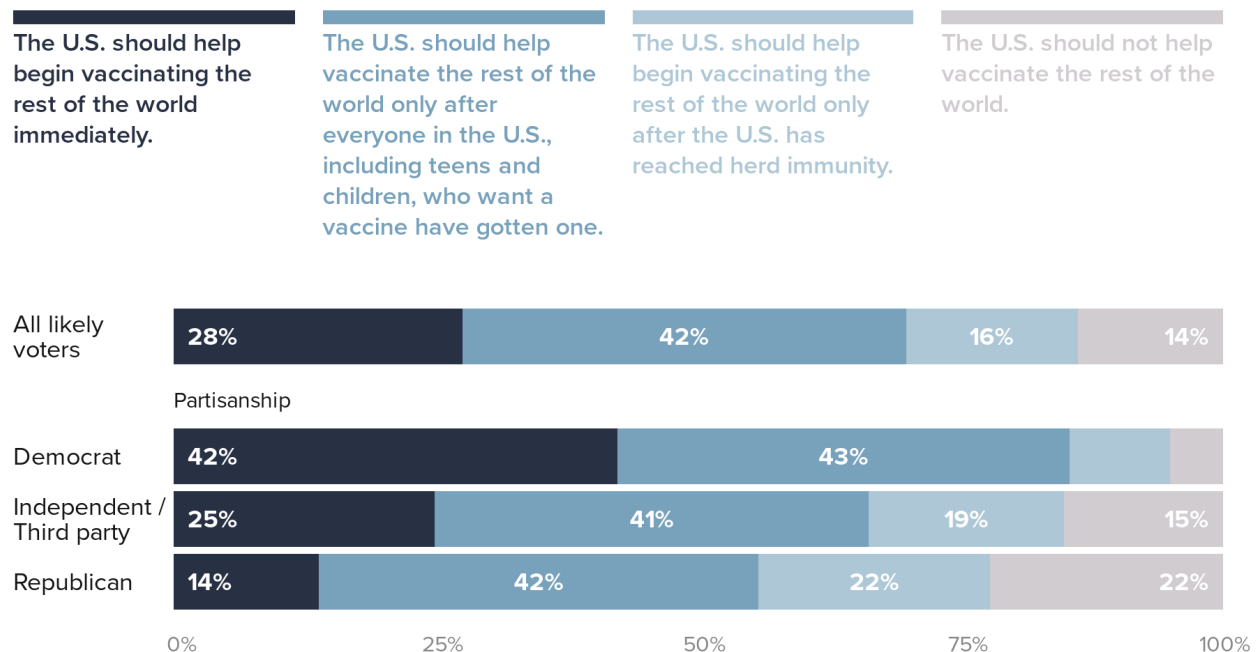


# Voters Want the U.S. to be a Leader in Vaccinating the World

To examine attitudes on the U.S.'s role in vaccine efforts more directly, we first asked if and when the U.S. should help vaccinate the rest of the world. A plurality of likely voters (42 percent) believe that the U.S. should begin helping with global vaccination efforts only after people in the U.S. — including teens and children — who want a vaccine have gotten one. Almost a third of voters (28 percent), however, believe the U.S. should help begin vaccinating the rest of the world immediately. We find that Democrats in particular are split on this issue, where 42 percent of Democrats support immediate help and 43 percent of Democrats want the U.S. to help only after we have vaccinated everyone who wants one. Only 14 percent of likely voters believe that the U.S. should *not* help with global vaccination efforts.

## A Plurality of Voters Think the U.S. Should Help Vaccinate Other Countries After Every American Who Wants a Vaccine Gets One

When thinking about the global Covid vaccine efforts, which of the following comes closer to your view?



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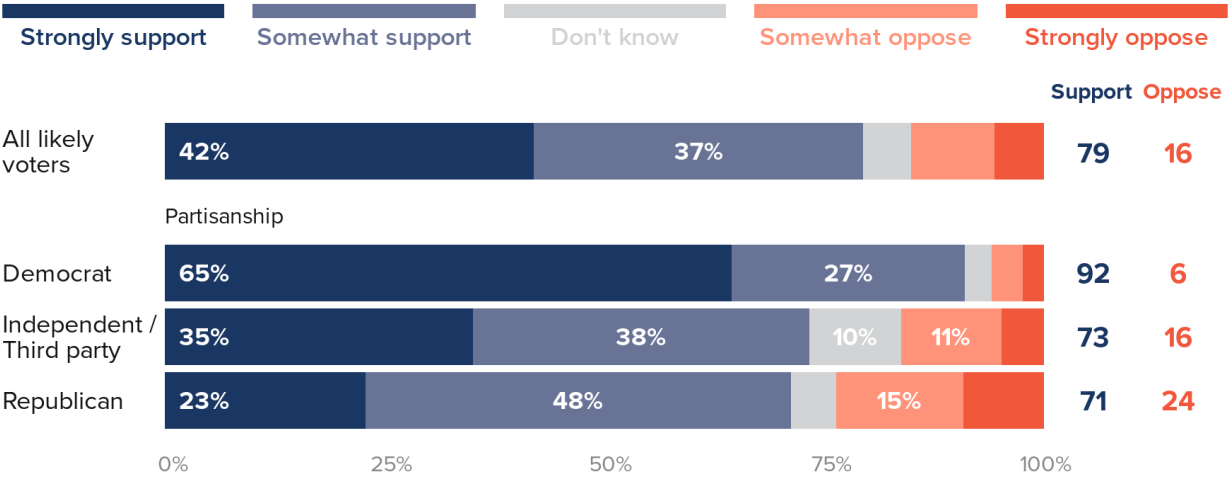


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Next we asked if voters support or oppose the U.S. helping global efforts to vaccinate countries around the world. Seventy-nine percent of voters support the U.S. doing so. We additionally find overwhelming support across parties: 92 percent of Democrats, 73 percent of Independents, and 71 percent of Republicans are in favor of the U.S. doing so.

## Voters Across Parties Want the U.S. to Help Distribute Vaccines Globally

Do you support or oppose the U.S. helping global Covid vaccine efforts to vaccinate countries around the world?



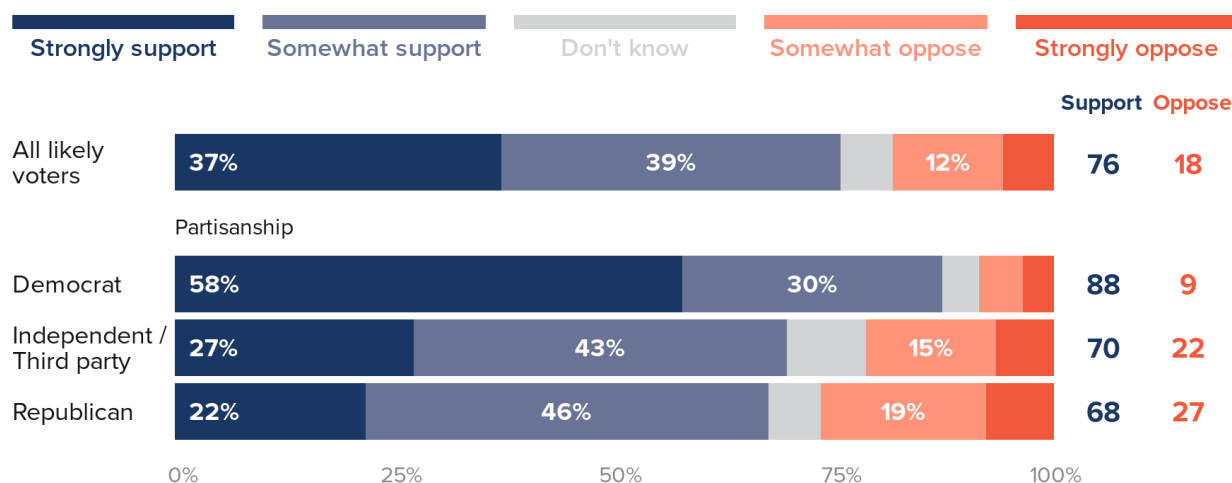
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More directly, we find that voters enthusiastically support the U.S. being the leader in global vaccine efforts to help vaccinate countries around the world. Seventy-six percent of likely voters support the U.S. leading these efforts. We find strong support again across parties with enthusiastic backing among Democrats (88 percent), and support from a majority of Independents and Republicans by a 48-point margin and 41-point margin, respectively.

## Voters Want the U.S. to Lead Global Covid Vaccine Efforts

Do you support or oppose the U.S. being the leader in global Covid vaccine efforts to help vaccinate countries around the world?



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We lastly tested different framings around why the U.S. should take on the responsibility of leading vaccination efforts around the world. We split our respondent sample into three different groups, all of which saw the following argument against the U.S. taking on the responsibility of leading global vaccination efforts:

*Opponents of this proposal say that it will be too costly to help the rest of the world get vaccinated, and there is no guarantee that the U.S. will benefit from this kind of investment. We should not help other countries get vaccinated.*

We then tested three different frames in support of the proposal. A third of respondents read the following frame around the moral duty of the U.S. to help:

*Supporters of this proposal say that even though infections in the U.S. are falling, the pandemic is not over. We have a moral obligation to help countries that don't have as many resources as we do where the virus is quickly spreading and mutating.*

The second group read the following frame around the common struggle of the pandemic:

*Supporters of this proposal say we've all faced the same challenges in lockdown. We should help other countries get the vaccines they need so they can be with families and loved ones, travel, and return to normal — just like we're starting to in the U.S.*

The last frame was centered on the economic impacts of global vaccine efforts:

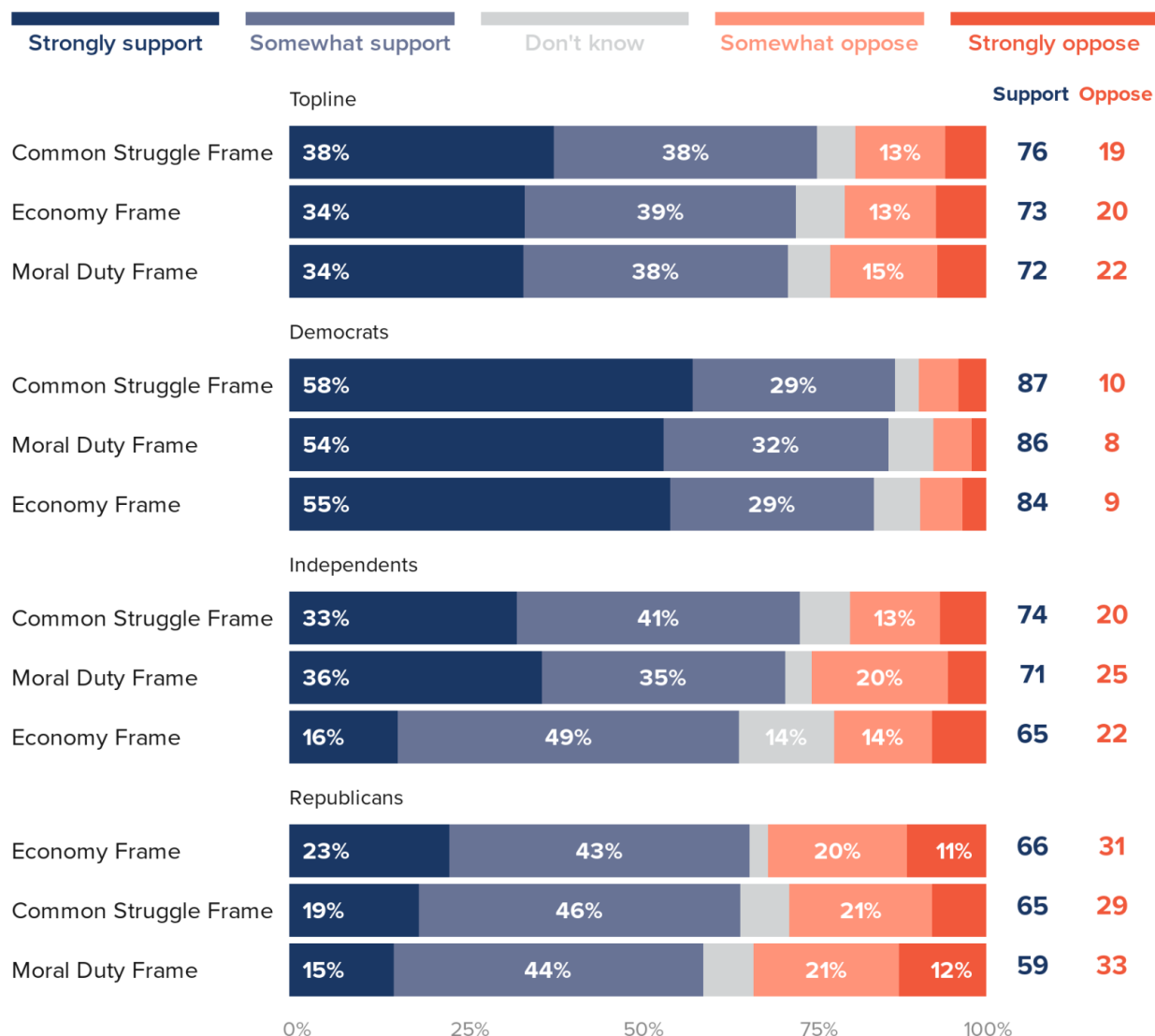
*Supporters of this proposal say that it could take some countries years to vaccinate everyone. We need countries around the world to be safe as quickly as possible so that we can focus on getting the U.S. economy and global economy back on track.*

We find that likely voters consistently support the U.S. being a leader in vaccinating the world across the three frames. Focusing on the common struggles we've all faced in the pandemic — and particularly emphasizing how we in the U.S. are reuniting with our families and returning to normal — results in higher support by a 3-point margin compared to the economic frame, and a 4-point margin compared to the moral duty frame.

We find varying patterns when examining support levels by partisanship. Democrats enthusiastically back the U.S. taking on a leadership role at support levels above 80 percent across all three frames. However, the common struggle framing performs the best among Democrats (87 percent support), and also among Independents (74 percent support). We find that support among Independents dips slightly when using framing on the economy — though it still remains a strong majority at 65 percent. In contrast, the economic framing results in the highest support among Republicans at 66 percent. Among Republicans, the common struggle framing also performs comparably well at 65 percent support. Broadly, our findings show that voters enthusiastically support the U.S. leading global vaccination efforts — and do so with the understanding that while the U.S. is coming out of the pandemic, there are still countries struggling to do so.

# Voters Support the U.S. Taking the Lead in the Effort to Vaccinate the World Across Three Different Frames

Voters were told about a proposal that would see the U.S. to take on leadership in the global vaccination effort, and then read arguments from supporters and opponents before selecting their support or opposition to the plan. A third of the sample read a support frame themed around a moral duty to help other nations. Another third of the sample read a frame on common struggles during the pandemic and how we should help others. The last third read a frame focusing on the importance of global vaccinations to the world economy.



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# Conclusion

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In this survey, we tested voter attitudes towards global coronavirus vaccination efforts, the world's recovery from the pandemic, and what role the U.S. should play in that effort. We find that likely voters overwhelmingly link a pandemic recovery in the U.S. to a global recovery, one which involves vaccinating countries around the world. Moreover, nine out of ten voters want governments and pharmaceutical companies across the world to collaborate to end the pandemic. We also find that voters think that we should help countries who are struggling with coronavirus outbreaks and mutations, and want the U.S. to take a leading role in this effort. Specifically, 83 percent of voters want to share excess vaccine doses in the U.S.' stockpile that would otherwise expire unused, and three-fourths want the U.S. to help countries like India who are overwhelmed by Covid-19. Furthermore, three-fourths of likely voters also want the U.S. to take a leading role in the global initiative to vaccinate countries across the world, with high levels of support across partisanship. These levels of support remain consistent even as voters are presented with messaging against U.S. engagement in these efforts, demonstrating a desire among likely voters to see the U.S. become highly involved in promoting equitable global vaccine access to end the coronavirus pandemic.

Global vaccine efforts have been insufficient to ensure countries are vaccinated as quickly as possible. The global vaccine facility, COVAX, has only distributed 80.8 million vaccine doses to 129 countries around the world. That is the equivalent of the total vaccines administered in just seven U.S. states thus far.

While the work of COVAX is critical, it is falling far short of its initial goal of delivering 2 billion doses by the end of the year and still lacks the donor funding to procure and distribute this amount. Additionally, as rich countries continue to hoard millions of doses beyond their population needs and as pharmaceutical companies have little incentive to enter a global market, there continues to be a major shortfall in the number of vaccines that can currently be produced and made available to low- and middle-income countries.

The sheer scale of the global vaccine dilemma calls for bold action by the U.S. and other wealthy countries. President Biden has taken promising steps to start leading these efforts, most recently pledging to distribute 25 million doses of surplus vaccine abroad, and 80 million doses by the end of June. There is, however, much more that needs to be done and can be done to ensure that countries around the world, especially lower-income countries, can vaccinate their people, kickstart their recovery, and contribute to the global economy. The Biden Administration must act *now*, beyond the essential pledge to share excess doses, to support a bold global vaccine initiative that includes: scaling up global financing and dose sharing; supporting technology transfer and intellectual property reform; and increasing global manufacturing capacity, especially in the Global South. The Biden Administration should lead these efforts and can do so with the overwhelming support of U.S. voters.

## METHODOLOGY

From May 28 to June 1, 2021, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 1,304 likely voters nationally using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is  $\pm 3$  percentage.

Toptines are available [here](#).

## RESOURCES

[Oxfam Report](#)

[Public Citizen Report](#)

[Partners in Health](#)

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