

# Biden's Unpopularity: Virginia Gubernatorial Elections in 2021, Let's Go Brandon and Covid-19

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Virginia's gubernatorial race of the 2021 election drew so much attention that its outcome could be exaggerated or wrongly analyzed as a misleading temperature check on the national environment for the 2022 midterm election. Virginia had been a state that has moved strongly in Democrats' favor for both statewide offices and in presidential contests over the last decade. Former incumbent McAuliffe had taken a comfortable lead to much less-known business man named Youngkin. However, this Republican candidate swept the election by 50.06% over 48.6%<sup>1</sup> of McAuliffe's vote, which was never dreamt of at the outset of the campaign. The main disturbing element is not candidate himself but the fussy and tumultuous existence (or a ghost) of the former President and his counterparts.

The battles for New Jersey governor and New York City mayor are the other high-profile offices on the ballot of November 2021. Across the US, voters will elect mayors in major cities — including Minneapolis, where efforts to restructure policing after more than a year of protests also face a major test at the polls. After Democrats' win in New Jersey, this worldwide mass media clamor subsided abruptly. However, plunge of Biden popularity has been long on topics and broadcast ever since.

This paper tries to overview Biden's unpopularity on a statistical dimension and see how fragile and intricate the political threads of American electorate with frenzy mass media intertwined with a phenomenal "Let's go Brandon." episode which swept American pop culture around the election, which can be termed Republican minuteman phenomenon. To verify unpopularity of Joe Biden, some statistical analysis will be conducted with reference to Covid-19 death toll trend to see if this is also an influential element as cited by critics.

## 1. Let's Go Brandon

"Let's Go Brandon" is a political slogan which has been widely used as a minced oath for "Fuck Joe Biden" in reference to Joe Biden, the 46th president of the United States.

Chants of "Fuck Joe Biden" were first heard at sporting events in early September 2021. "Let's Go Brandon" came into use after Kelli Stavast incorrectly described a chant of "Fuck Joe Biden" by spectators at a NASCAR race as "Let's go, Brandon" during a televised interview of driver Brandon Brown on October 2, 2021. The slogan has become well known through use by Republican politicians and critics of Biden. The phrase quickly spread to popular culture, with rap songs using the phrase placing high on record charts.<sup>2</sup>

The surprisingly huge coverage of broadcast of this movement all the sudden took the media right after the election of 2021 mainly by ABC. ABC also broadcast the plumage of Biden's supporting rate following days.

In the eyes of 'poised' Japanese viewers, the fact that this frenzy movement is publicly broadcast widely seems rather intentional. Moreover, it seems strange that major Japanese media, including NHK and TBS followed suit. It seems TV media unnecessary exaggerated the event and broadcast superfluous analysis and prospect saying former-President Trump is sure to be the Republican Presidential candidate in 2024.

## 2. Virginia Gubernatorial Elections in 2021

Virginia Gubernatorial election in 2021 was something like a replay of 2020 Presidential election in its development. As a popularity trend graph by Ballot Pedia shows, Democrats had taken a comfortable lead for more than 3 months. Only at the last moments, the trend reversed itself in the last minute. Even in the last days, ballot projections were close.

Only pro-Republican Fox News predicted Youngkin's victory correctly. This showed how in the last minutes, heated Republicans reversed the leaning. What can be concerned in this trend is sort of 'Republican minuteman spirit' among frustrating white middle class American voters. 'Minutemen' were originally civilian colonists who independently formed militia companies self-trained in weaponry, tactics, and military strategies, comprising the American colonial partisan militia during the American Revolutionary War. They were known for being ready at a minute's notice, hence the name.<sup>3</sup> Minutemen provided a highly mobile, rapidly deployed force that enabled the colonies to respond immediately to war threats. However, this phenomenon has been cited as a potential political threat as 'instantly heated up and immediately withdrawn' as the U.S. speedy retreat from the European front right after the World War II. However this Virginia atmosphere seems much shallow and superficial.

Biden's Unpopularity

November 19. *The Atlantic* carried a story titled Six Theories of Joe Biden’s Crumbing Popularity<sup>4</sup>. In this article, main stumbling blocks are ‘simple gravity’ which is imbedded in the Presidential popularity mechanism, Afghanistan, Covid influence, inflation, especially gas prices and disarray in Democrats themselves.

Among these, most verifiable dataset, Covid death toll and Biden’s unpopularity rates will be analyzed.

Table 1 shows the result of a poll of Joe Biden’s approval rate by Gallup<sup>5</sup> from January 2021 to November. Surely, disapproval exceeded approval. The trend is the worst in the presidential history save for former President Donald Trump.

However, if seen by according to party identification, the situation seems much different as Table 2 shows. The disapproval rate by Republicans and approval rate by Democrats have not shown much fluctuations. Only the shifting can be recognized among Independents. So the correlation between Covid death toll and Independents was calculated by the author.

Death toll column in the Table 2 was calculated average death toll of the poll taken period based on CDC’s published data<sup>6</sup>. The correlation coefficient between Independent approval rates and Covid-19 death toll is only 0.198101, almost meaningless.

Table 1.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as president?

	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Disapprove</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	%	%	%
<b>2021</b>			
2021 Nov 1-16	42	55	3
2021 Oct 1-19	42	52	6
2021 Sep 1-17	43	53	4
2021 Aug 2-17	49	48	3
2021 Jul 6-21	50	45	5
2021 Jun 1-18	56	42	2
2021 May 3-18	54	40	6
2021 Apr 1-21	57	40	3
2021 Mar 1-15	54	42	6
2021 Feb 3-18	56	40	5
2021 Jan 21-Feb 2	57	37	6

GALLUP

Table 2.

Joe Biden's Job Approval by Party Identification

	Republicans	Independents	Democrats	Death toll	
	%	%	%		
<b>2021</b>					
2021 Nov 1-16	6	37	90	1074	
2021 Oct 1-19	4	34	92	1476	
2021 Sep 1-17	6	37	90	1821	
2021 Aug 2-17	7	43	93	804	
2021 Jul 6-21	12	48	90	275	
2021 Jun 1-18	11	55	95	350	
2021 May 3-18	8	54	92	577	
2021 Apr 1-21	11	58	94	693	
2021 Mar 1-15	8	50	94	1210	
2021 Feb 3-18	12	53	96	2389	Corr=
2021 Jan 21-Feb 2	11	61	98	3985	0.198101
GALLUP					

Approval rates are from Gallup.

Covid death average and correlation coefficient were calculated by the author using CDC data.

As has been seen, there is no correlation between Covid death toll and Biden's unpopularity among Independents statistically. Then what can be the cause? The answer is the hidden frustration among the middle and lower class mainly white Americans who can be Republican minuteman at the slightest provocation sparked by Mass media's incitement. This is the atmosphere Americans must be vigilant in constructing their authentic democracy.

1. [2021 Election Results | CNN Politics](#)
2. [Let's Go Brandon - Wikipedia](#)
3. [Minutemen - Wikipedia](#)
4. [What's Causing Joe Biden's Horrible Approval Rating? - The Atlantic](#)
5. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/329384/presidential-approval-ratings-joe-biden.aspx>
6. [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#)