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US midterm elections: 'Angry, petrified'... US voters share their fears

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US midterm elections 2022



More than 100 million Americans are voting in these congressional elections but a majority of them are pessimistic about the direction the country is heading. Why?

The number of dissatisfied voters rose to 85% in the summer, according to an AP/ Norc survey. Both Republicans and Democrats share this gloom but for different reasons.

We asked a mix of voters to share their worst fears and best hopes for what may unfold.



Karen Kemp-Prosterman has a mixed race family in the north-east US. She says that protecting democracy and ensuring voting rights is her biggest focus this election cycle, followed by inflation.

What's the worst thing that can happen?

Republicans get both houses. Nothing will get done - people will be turned off that their voice won't matter. The stagnation will make people jaded and becoming apathetic is the worst thing. If Republicans take both chambers, my biggest concern is that people didn't prioritise democracy - which is discouraging. I'd be stunned and despondent. If nothing gets done, the country will see it's not just Democrats' fault.

Are there reasons to be hopeful?

If those who ran honest, good campaigns win, like Tim Ryan in Ohio or John Fetterman in Pennsylvania win, it will show me America is not as lost and cynical as I feared.

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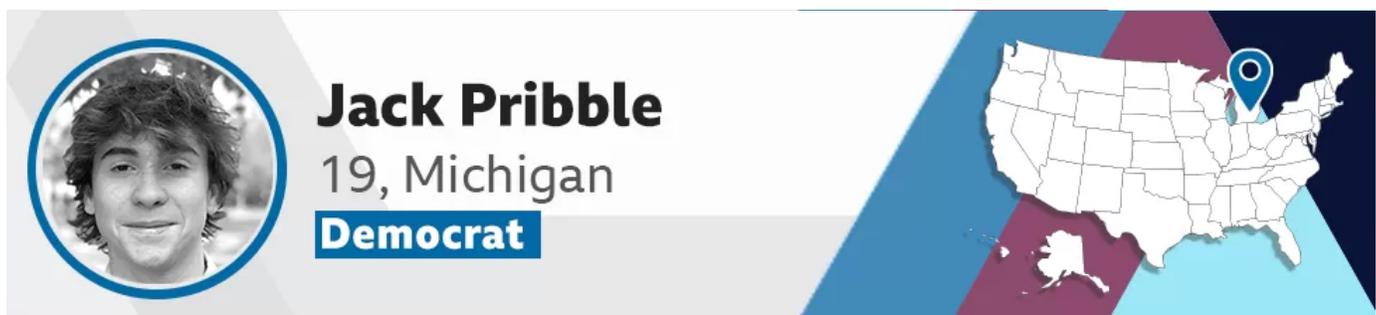
Tracy Ries is a libertarian who says growing up in Texas influenced many of her political beliefs. She is dismayed with the state of polarised American politics but lists inflation and the economy as the most important issues.

What's the worst thing that can happen?

They are all terrible options to vote for. It is so divided. There are so many crazy people on both sides, it's a little worrisome. I'm a bit concerned about reactions from people on either side if their candidates don't win. I think it could be bad in terms of safety - there might even be riots. Everyone is so revved up. I'm dreading Wednesday morning - I don't want to see the news that Pennsylvania is in flames. The sad thing is that no matter what happens Election Day, come Wednesday they'll ramp it up for the presidential election. We won't get a break till 2024.

Are there reasons to be hopeful?

It will be a minor win if the Republican candidates win in Minnesota. I voted on the economy and on safety.



Jack Pribble is a liberal college student who says he's "super-excited" to be voting in his first election. He says he is further left than the Democratic Party and abortion rights are his number one election priority.

What's the worst thing that can happen?

I would feel deflated if Republicans took both chambers, but I feel like my generation will fight back in 2024. Elections are so cyclical. This always

happens. Long term I think there will be pushback.

I'm a gay man and the abortion ruling is indicative of how regressive American policies are getting. My sister is in her 20s and the majority of my friends are young women, yet a country that is run by 70-year-old white men can dictate what they do with their bodies. My dad is an emergency room physician and if Michigan doesn't vote yes on Proposal 3, a law from 1931 could be enacted and ban abortion. This could open up the possibility for doctors to be prosecuted under the new law if they provide an abortion.

Are there reasons to be hopeful?

I'm not that confident Democrats will win nationally, but I am confident about Michigan elections. I'm hopeful that my generation will break the cycle to not just vote on the economy - my generation is more politically active and engaged on how something will impact them. They know their rights are at stake when 80-year-olds are in power. Democrats might not win these midterms but hopefully in the future.

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Mike Bales is an evangelical Christian who considers himself a conservative Republican. The Bible is his biggest influence and the cost of living his biggest issue - he can no longer afford to buy the healthy food he used to earlier.

What's the worst thing that can happen?

The worst thing that could happen for America, for Americans' finances, crime, the southern border, would be for the Democrats to retain control of at least one if not both chambers of Congress. I would be feeling petrified for the future of my family, loved ones and for this nation. I would also be very surprised if that happened based on polling numbers. If the Democrats win both chambers, I'm afraid the US will fall into a great depression with food shortages and crime off the charts.

Are there reasons to be hopeful?

Republicans are raising issues like inflation, rising gas [petrol] costs, high energy costs, higher crime, border security, indoctrination of the public school curriculum and other everyday issues that all Americans deal with. Democrats, on the other hand, are raising issues like abortion access, transgender rights, restrictive gun laws, defunding the police and January 6. And though a lot of Americans see those as important issues, they are not on the forefront of their minds and aren't pressing issues, but feeding their families is. That's why the Republicans will be taking over both the House and Senate.



Tina Ricker is a first-generation immigrant with a father from Yugoslavia and describes herself as a moderate "old school Democrat". Abortion access and gun reform are important to her but without a healthy democracy, no other issues matter, she says.

What's the worst thing that can happen?

It's a very troubling time. I'm just scared and angry. Our country was built on democracy, women and people of colour fought for freedom and the right to vote. It feels like everything is going backwards. Congress will probably turn Republican. I'm afraid of what will happen if that does become the case - what will happen to voting rights, women rights, same sex marriage? Our best interests are not being represented.

Are there reasons to be hopeful?

My gut feeling is that people are going to come out and turn out - that the will of people is going to be heard. Women are going to come out very strong. I believe in the goodness of people.

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Luke Gordon is a conservative college student attending a liberal university in New England. His top issues are the economy and immigration.

What's the worst thing that can happen?

I would be feeling quite nervous for the future. For me personally, I would fear that it further complicates efforts to get hired after graduation and build my career, as the Democrats have shown little care or restraint in massive federal spending programmes that do little beyond earning political points, satisfying special interests, and fuelling inflation. Beyond that, I would feel very anxious for the safety and lives of pain-capable prenatal babies, as "privately pro-life" Joe has pledged to override states' constitutionally grounded rights to protect life through federal pro-abortion until birth legislation if his party gains sufficient majorities.

Are there reasons to be hopeful?

I'm optimistic Republicans can gain a majority but watching the Senate closely. With that being said, not that much can happen in the next two years if Republicans win, they can only stop Democrats.

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