



## **More Say Coronavirus Pandemic, Not Election Outcome, is the Biggest Threat to the Economy**

*57% say they are spending less due to economic threats*

NEW YORK – October 14, 2020 – As the 2020 election approaches, more than two in five (44%) Americans think the coronavirus pandemic is the biggest threat to the economy in the next six months while 34% point to the election outcome, according to a new Bankrate.com report. These were the top two choices among every age group, income bracket, gender, race, employment status, political affiliation, and geographic location, more than things like political or economic instability overseas (7%), a decline in the stock market (6%), an unexpected rise in interest rates (3%), terrorism (3%), or something else (1%). Just 1% see no immediate threat to the economy. Click here for more information:

<https://www.bankrate.com/surveys/biggest-threat-to-economy-october-2020/>

Adding an unprecedented global pandemic to the mix, the likelihood to point to the outcome in Washington is significantly down compared to just before the 2016 election, in which the runaway winner was the outcome of the presidential vote (61% in September 2016). Similarly, the political environment in Washington was selected most often in 2017-2019 when a pandemic was not on the radar (38% in April 2017, 36% in September 2017, 43% in November 2018, and 44% in April 2019).

However, Republicans and Democrats do not see eye-to-eye in viewing the top two threats to the economy. Nearly half of Republicans (48%) cited the election outcome as the biggest economic threat in the next six months, compared to 26% of Democrats. Conversely, more than half of Democrats (54%) cited the coronavirus pandemic as the biggest economic threat, compared to 29% of Republicans.

Opinions of the overall top two threats to the economy also differ between age groups and income levels. Millennials (ages 24-39) were significantly more likely to cite the coronavirus pandemic as the biggest threat to the economy in the next six months (42%) compared to the election outcome (28%), while both Gen Xers (ages 40-55) and baby boomers (ages 56-74) were more evenly split between the two (pandemic: 45% each; election outcome: 37% and 40%, respectively).

The lowest income households (under \$30,000 annually) were twice as likely to say the coronavirus pandemic is the biggest economic threat (48%) compared to the outcome of the presidential election (24%). Likelihood to cite the coronavirus pandemic as the biggest economic threat decreases with income, while identifying the election outcome increases with income level. The top economic threat for the highest income households (\$75,000+ annually) is the election outcome (42%), not the coronavirus pandemic (39%).

More than half (57%) of those citing a threat to the economy say it is causing them to spend less than they normally would, while 42% aren't spending less. The percentage of those cutting

spending is more than twice as high as previous polls (25% in April 2019 and 23% in November 2018).

“The pandemic and the outcome of the presidential election are the two biggest immediate threats to the economy in the eyes of most Americans,” said Bankrate.com chief financial analyst, Greg McBride, CFA. “What’s concerning is that Americans are cutting back spending because of these threats at more than twice the pace seen in 2018 and 2019. While that is likely a byproduct of the recession, it becomes an obstacle to economic recovery.”

Gen Xers who identified an economic threat were the most likely (66%) age group to cut their spending, compared to 56% of baby boomers and 52% of millennials.

In terms of income, nearly two thirds (65%) of the lowest income households identifying economic threats are also spending less than they would normally due to these concerns, compared to only 49% of the highest income households.

Finally, Democrats were nearly twice as likely to say potential economic fears have caused them to spend less than they normally would (63% vs. 34% who say it has not caused them to do so). Republicans were more evenly split, with 47% spending less compared to 52% who are not.

### **Methodology:**

This study was conducted for Bankrate via telephone by SSRS on its Omnibus survey platform. The SSRS Omnibus is a national, weekly, dual-frame bilingual telephone survey. Interviews were conducted from September 16-20, 2020 among a sample of 1,010 respondents in English (974) and Spanish (36). Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (304) and cell phone (706, including 423 without a landline phone). The margin of error for total respondents is +/- 3.68% at the 95% confidence level. All SSRS Omnibus data are weighted to represent the target population.

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