



DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS
ASSOCIATION

DemocraticGovernors.org

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Marshall Cohen, DGA Political Director
MEMO: Status Of The Massachusetts GOP Primary
DATE: October 15, 2021

Things are heating up in the Massachusetts race for Governor in 2022, and Republicans seem to be heading towards a nasty primary fight. After Donald Trump endorsed a primary challenger to incumbent Republican Charlie Baker, the DGA commissioned a poll to gauge where the GOP primary stands today and gain perspective on the views of Republican base voters in Massachusetts, believing they may be different from other parts of the country.

What we found surprised us. Not only do Massachusetts Republican primary voters pledge their loyalty to Trump and adhere to toxic and extreme views, but their extremism has made Charlie Baker deeply unpopular and in serious trouble of losing the GOP nomination fight.

Baker is Massively Underwater with Republican Primary Voters

Despite being a two-term incumbent, Gov. Baker is in for a rude awakening. Among Republican Primary voters, Charlie Baker is badly underwater, with 54% of respondents having an unfavorable opinion of the Governor and only 30% having a favorable opinion.

Our poll confirms that Geoff Diehl is not only a serious threat but is probably the front-runner for the GOP nomination. He holds a commanding 21 point lead over Baker, including breaking the crucial 50% threshold. When Republicans learn of Trump's endorsement, Diehl's lead jumps to 32 points (25% Baker/ 57% Diehl). The sitting Republican governor cannot earn 40% of the vote among a single demographic group of Republican primary voters.

If the primary were held today, Governor Charlie Baker would lose 'bigly.'

Donald Trump Leads the Massachusetts GOP

For observers of Republican primary politics, it may be no surprise that Trump maintains a strong grip on the GOP. The former president is the key driver and motivator for Republican base voters and the measuring stick for judging candidates. Among GOP primary voters, 81% are favorable to the former president, with only 13% unfavorable.

Donald Trump's popularity is not limited to his personality. A similar overwhelming number of voters support his right-wing agenda - despite its toxicity. This means the eventual nominee cannot sway from the former president's unpopular policies.

We asked these voters about what type of candidate they would like to support in the general election. When asked, would you be more likely to support a candidate who continued to embrace Trump's agenda or a candidate who appealed to the rapidly diversifying commonwealth – by a whopping 75% to 16%, Republican voters want their nominee to stay loyal to Trump and his policies in a general election. This closes the door to any post-primary pivot the GOP nominee could make by endangering their base support.

The 'Big Lie' Is a Motivating Factor

For base Republican voters, the 'Big Lie' achieved Trump's end goal of casting doubt on the election results. Their passionate belief in his false and dangerous conspiracy theories is the number one reason Massachusetts Republicans give as their reason to vote.

The level of resentment seeps into their perspective on the violent events at the Capitol on January 6th. Among Republicans in Massachusetts, fully 68% say Biden was not legitimately elected. Nearly 3 in 4 (72%) of Massachusetts Republicans describe the deadly events on January 6th as a false flag operation by Antifa, compared to just 13% who said it was a violent insurrection encouraged by Trump.

Conclusion

As he decides whether to seek a third term, Governor Baker is in danger of losing his own party's nomination. Republicans in Massachusetts are loyal to Trump, passionately believe the 'Big Lie,' and will force any gubernatorial candidate to take positions in a primary that make them unelectable statewide.

Baker's path to victory has never had to go through the Republican base, a group that sees him as out of touch and rates him unfavorably. These poll results show Geoff Diehl is the likely GOP nominee in 2022, regardless of whether Charlie Baker tries to run for a third term.

If Charlie Baker decided to run for a third term, he would be running from behind, as the fringe candidate. In order to start winning back support from Geoff Diehl's supporters, he would have to start bending backward and embracing Donald Trump's agenda. However, we know that any appeasement of the MAGA agenda makes Charlie Baker, or any other candidate, unelectable in the General Election - as we saw in 2018 when Geoff Diehl lost by 24 points in the General Election.



Massachusetts Survey Results

- Q1** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Donald Trump?
- Favorable* 81%
 - Unfavorable* 13%
 - Not sure* 7%
- Q2** Next year there will be a primary election in Massachusetts for Governor and other important offices. Will you be voting in the Republican primary or the Democratic primary, or will you not be voting in the primary election?
- Republican primary* 100%
 - Democratic primary* 0%
 - Won't be voting in the primary election* 0%
- Q3** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Charlie Baker?
- Favorable* 30%
 - Unfavorable* 54%
 - Not sure* 16%
- Q4** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Geoff Diehl?
- Favorable* 37%
 - Unfavorable* 14%
 - Not sure* 49%
- Q5** The Republican candidates for Governor next year are likely going to be Charlie Baker and Geoff Diehl. If the primary election were held today, who would you vote for?
- Charlie Baker* 29%
 - Geoff Diehl* 50%
 - Not sure* 21%
- Q6** Would you prefer the Republican nominee for Governor in the general election to embrace Donald Trump's agenda, or would you prefer them to appeal to Massachusetts' diverse electorate?
- Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to embrace Donald Trump's agenda* 75%
 - Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to appeal to Massachusetts' diverse electorate* 16%
 - Not sure* 9%
- Q7** Did you know that Donald Trump endorsed Geoff Diehl recently, saying he is a "true patriot", or not?
- Yes* 42%
 - No* 38%
 - Not sure* 20%
- Q8** Now that you know that Donald Trump has made an endorsement in the Governor's race in Massachusetts, let me ask you again: If the primary election for Governor were held today, and the candidates were Charlie Baker and Geoff Diehl, which candidate would you vote for?
- Charlie Baker* 25%
 - Geoff Diehl* 57%
 - Not sure* 17%





Q9 I'm going to read you two statements, and ask you which one you agree with more. Here's the first statement: What happened at the Capitol on January 6th was a false flag operation by Antifa rioters. Here's the second statement: What happened at the Capitol on January 6th was a violent insurrection encouraged by Donald Trump. Which do you agree with more?

Agree more that what happened at the Capitol on January 6th was a false flag operation by Antifa rioters 72%

Agree more that what happened at the Capitol on January 6th was a violent insurrection encouraged by Donald Trump 13%

Not sure 15%

Q10 Do you believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected President in 2020, or not?

Believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020 22%

Do not believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020 68%

Not sure 10%

Q11 Many states are undertaking audits of the election, like Arizona did, to try to prove Donald Trump had the election stolen from him. Governor Charlie Baker has resisted similar calls in Massachusetts. Do you want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts, or not?

Want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts 57%

Do not want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts 33%

Not sure 10%

Q12 When it comes to vaccines for coronavirus, are you fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, not yet vaccinated but still planning to get the vaccine, or not vaccinated and have no plans to get the vaccine?

Fully vaccinated 71%

Partially vaccinated 2%

Not yet vaccinated but still planning to get the vaccine 2%

Not vaccinated and have no plans to get the vaccine 24%

Q13 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman 47%

Man 53%

Q14 If you are white, press 2. If African-American, press 2. If other, press 3.

White 87%

African-American 5%

Other 8%

Q15 If you are 18-45 years old, press 1. If 46-65, press 2. If older than 65, press 3.

18 to 45 31%

46 to 65 41%

Older than 65 29%

Q16 What is the highest level of education you have received: high school graduate or less, some college but did not finish, 2-year college degree, 4-year college degree, or post-graduate degree?

High school graduate or less 27%

Some college but did not finish 23%

2-year college degree 11%

4-year college degree 22%

Post-graduate degree 18%

Q17 Mode

Landline 50%

Text 50%





	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Trump Favorability			
Favorable	81%	82%	79%
Unfavorable	13%	13%	12%
Not sure	7%	5%	9%

	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Baker Favorability			
Favorable	30%	30%	30%
Unfavorable	54%	49%	58%
Not sure	16%	21%	12%

	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Diehl Favorability			
Favorable	37%	33%	40%
Unfavorable	14%	15%	14%
Not sure	49%	52%	46%





	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Baker / Diehl			
Charlie Baker	29%	32%	27%
Geoff Diehl	50%	44%	55%
Not sure	21%	24%	18%

	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Prefer Nominee to Embrace Trump's Agenda / Appeal to Diverse Electorate			
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to embrace Donald Trump's agenda	75%	76%	74%
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to appeal to Massachusetts' diverse electorate	16%	13%	18%
Not sure	9%	11%	8%

	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Know That Trump Endorsed Diehl Yes / No			
Yes	42%	38%	45%
No	38%	42%	35%
Not sure	20%	20%	20%





	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Informed Baker / Diehl			
Charlie Baker	25%	27%	24%
Geoff Diehl	57%	53%	61%
Not sure	17%	20%	15%

	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Agree More That January 6th Was False Flag / Violent Insurrection			
Agree more that what happened at the Capitol on January 6th was a false flag operation by Antifa rioters	72%	73%	71%
Agree more that what happened at the Capit- ol on January 6th was a violent insurrection encouraged by Donald Trump	13%	12%	14%
Not sure	15%	15%	14%





	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Believe Biden Legitimately Elected Yes / No			
Believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	22%	17%	27%
Do not believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	68%	71%	65%
Not sure	10%	12%	8%

	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Want MA to Audit 2020 Election Yes / No			
Want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	57%	58%	56%
Do not want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	33%	28%	38%
Not sure	10%	13%	7%





	Bas- e	Gender	
		Wom...	Man
Vaccination Status			
Fully vaccinated	71%	72%	71%
Partially vaccinated	2%	3%	2%
Not yet vaccinated but still planning to get the vaccine	2%	1%	3%
Not vaccinated and have no plans to get the vaccine	24%	24%	25%

	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Trump Favorability				
Favorable	81%	79%	96%	84%
Unfavorable	13%	14%	-	10%
Not sure	7%	7%	4%	6%

	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Baker Favorability				
Favorable	30%	32%	14%	19%
Unfavorable	54%	51%	73%	65%
Not sure	16%	16%	14%	16%





	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Diehl Favorability				
Favorable	37%	34%	53%	57%
Unfavorable	14%	15%	21%	2%
Not sure	49%	51%	25%	41%

	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Baker / Diehl				
Charlie Baker	29%	31%	10%	23%
Geoff Diehl	50%	48%	72%	60%
Not sure	21%	21%	18%	17%

	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Prefer Nominee to Embrace Trump's Agenda / Appeal to Diverse Electorate				
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to embrace Donald Trump's agenda	75%	73%	96%	79%
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to appeal to Massachusetts' diverse electorate	16%	17%	-	11%
Not sure	9%	10%	4%	11%





	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Know That Trump Endorsed Diehl Yes / No				
Yes	42%	41%	35%	49%
No	38%	38%	59%	33%
Not sure	20%	21%	6%	18%

	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Informed Baker / Diehl				
Charlie Baker	25%	27%	13%	14%
Geoff Diehl	57%	56%	72%	59%
Not sure	17%	16%	15%	26%





	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Agree More That January 6th Was False Flag / Violent Insurrection				
Agree more that what happened at the Capitol on January 6th was a false flag operation by Antifa rioters	72%	71%	91%	69%
Agree more that what happened at the Capit- ol on January 6th was a violent insurrection encouraged by Donald Trump	13%	14%	-	10%
Not sure	15%	14%	9%	21%

	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Believe Biden Legitimately Elected Yes / No				
Believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	22%	24%	4%	17%
Do not believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	68%	66%	86%	75%
Not sure	10%	10%	9%	9%





	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Want MA to Audit 2020 Election Yes / No				
Want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	57%	57%	62%	58%
Do not want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	33%	34%	29%	30%
Not sure	10%	10%	8%	12%

	Bas- e	Race		
		Whit- e	African- Americ...	Othe- r
Vaccination Status				
Fully vaccinated	71%	71%	61%	78%
Partially vaccinated	2%	2%	12%	4%
Not yet vaccinated but still planning to get the vaccine	2%	2%	-	-
Not vaccinated and have no plans to get the vaccine	24%	25%	28%	19%





	Base	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Trump Favorability				
Favorable	81%	77%	80%	86%
Unfavorable	13%	12%	16%	9%
Not sure	7%	11%	5%	6%

	Base	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Baker Favorability				
Favorable	30%	23%	32%	37%
Unfavorable	54%	60%	56%	44%
Not sure	16%	17%	12%	20%

	Base	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Diehl Favorability				
Favorable	37%	36%	40%	33%
Unfavorable	14%	16%	12%	15%
Not sure	49%	48%	48%	52%





	Bas- e	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Baker / Diehl				
Charlie Baker	29%	23%	29%	36%
Geoff Diehl	50%	54%	53%	42%
Not sure	21%	23%	18%	22%

	Bas- e	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Prefer Nominee to Embrace Trump's Agenda / Appeal to Diverse Electorate				
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to embrace Donald Trump's agenda	75%	73%	75%	76%
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to appeal to Massachusetts' diverse electorate	16%	16%	17%	14%
Not sure	9%	11%	8%	10%





	Bas- e	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Know That Trump Endorsed Diehl Yes / No				
Yes	42%	41%	42%	42%
No	38%	44%	38%	32%
Not sure	20%	15%	20%	26%

	Bas- e	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Informed Baker / Diehl				
Charlie Baker	25%	21%	25%	31%
Geoff Diehl	57%	57%	62%	52%
Not sure	17%	22%	13%	18%





	Bas- e	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Agree More That January 6th Was False Flag / Violent Insurrection				
Agree more that what happened at the Capitol on January 6th was a false flag operation by Antifa rioters	72%	73%	71%	73%
Agree more that what happened at the Capit- ol on January 6th was a violent insurrection encouraged by Donald Trump	13%	15%	14%	12%
Not sure	15%	13%	15%	16%

	Bas- e	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Believe Biden Legitimately Elected Yes / No				
Believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	22%	22%	22%	21%
Do not believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	68%	69%	66%	69%
Not sure	10%	8%	12%	10%





	Bas- e	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Want MA to Audit 2020 Election Yes / No				
Want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	57%	62%	56%	53%
Do not want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	33%	32%	33%	34%
Not sure	10%	6%	11%	13%

	Bas- e	Age		
		18 t- o 45	46 t- o 65	Older than ...
Vaccination Status				
Fully vaccinated	71%	64%	67%	86%
Partially vaccinated	2%	2%	2%	4%
Not yet vaccinated but still planning to get the vaccine	2%	3%	2%	-
Not vaccinated and have no plans to get the vaccine	24%	31%	29%	10%





	Base	Education				
		High school graduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year college degree	4-year college degree	Post-graduate degree
Trump Favorability						
Favorable	81%	95%	85%	75%	70%	69%
Unfavorable	13%	2%	8%	15%	22%	22%
Not sure	7%	3%	7%	11%	8%	9%

	Base	Education				
		High school graduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year college degree	4-year college degree	Post-graduate degree
Baker Favorability						
Favorable	30%	24%	24%	29%	40%	38%
Unfavorable	54%	57%	59%	60%	47%	47%
Not sure	16%	20%	16%	11%	14%	15%

	Base	Education				
		High school graduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year college degree	4-year college degree	Post-graduate degree
Diehl Favorability						
Favorable	37%	34%	37%	38%	39%	39%
Unfavorable	14%	16%	10%	12%	19%	13%
Not sure	49%	50%	53%	50%	43%	48%





	Bas- e	Education				
		High school gr- aduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year colleg- e degree	4-year colleg- e degree	Post-graduat- e degree
Baker / Diehl						
Charlie Baker	29%	30%	23%	23%	38%	30%
Geoff Diehl	50%	49%	56%	50%	48%	46%
Not sure	21%	21%	20%	27%	14%	24%

	Bas- e	Education				
		High school gr- aduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year colleg- e degree	4-year colleg- e degree	Post-graduat- e degree
Prefer Nominee to Embrace Trump's Agenda / Appeal to Diverse Electorate						
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to embrace Donald Trump's agenda	75%	92%	80%	70%	60%	64%
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to appeal to Massachusetts' diverse electorate	16%	5%	10%	11%	30%	25%
Not sure	9%	4%	10%	19%	10%	12%





	Bas- e	Education				
		High school gr- aduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year colleg- e degree	4-year colleg- e degree	Post-graduat- e degree
Know That Trump Endorsed Diehl Yes / No						
Yes	42%	44%	39%	39%	45%	38%
No	38%	35%	34%	39%	41%	44%
Not sure	20%	20%	26%	22%	15%	18%

	Bas- e	Education				
		High school gr- aduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year colleg- e degree	4-year colleg- e degree	Post-graduat- e degree
Informed Baker / Diehl						
Charlie Baker	25%	23%	19%	21%	35%	28%
Geoff Diehl	57%	59%	64%	61%	51%	51%
Not sure	17%	18%	17%	17%	14%	21%





	Bas- e	Education				
		High school gr- aduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year colleg- e degree	4-year colleg- e degree	Post-graduat- e degree
Agree More That January 6th Was False Flag / Violent Insurrection						
Agree more that what happened at the Capitol on January 6th was a false flag operation by Antifa rioters	72%	90%	75%	69%	60%	57%
Agree more that what happened at the Capit- ol on January 6th was a violent insurrection encouraged by Donald Trump	13%	3%	9%	17%	25%	18%
Not sure	15%	7%	15%	14%	15%	25%

	Bas- e	Education				
		High school gr- aduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year colleg- e degree	4-year colleg- e degree	Post-graduat- e degree
Believe Biden Legitimately Elected Yes / No						
Believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	22%	7%	15%	27%	40%	29%
Do not believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	68%	88%	78%	59%	45%	56%
Not sure	10%	4%	6%	14%	15%	16%





	Base	Education				
		High school graduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year college degree	4-year college degree	Post-graduate degree
Want MA to Audit 2020 Election Yes / No						
Want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	57%	76%	59%	52%	45%	43%
Do not want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	33%	15%	31%	34%	48%	46%
Not sure	10%	10%	10%	14%	7%	11%

	Base	Education				
		High school graduate or less	Some college but did not finish	2-year college degree	4-year college degree	Post-graduate degree
Vaccination Status						
Fully vaccinated	71%	61%	69%	62%	81%	83%
Partially vaccinated	2%	2%	5%	2%	1%	1%
Not yet vaccinated but still planning to get the vaccine	2%	4%	2%	-	1%	2%
Not vaccinated and have no plans to get the vaccine	24%	33%	25%	36%	17%	13%

	Base	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Trump Favorability			
Favorable	81%	82%	79%
Unfavorable	13%	13%	12%
Not sure	7%	4%	10%





	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Baker Favorability			
Favorable	30%	36%	25%
Unfavorable	54%	49%	58%
Not sure	16%	15%	17%

	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Diehl Favorability			
Favorable	37%	37%	37%
Unfavorable	14%	20%	8%
Not sure	49%	43%	55%

	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Baker / Diehl			
Charlie Baker	29%	36%	22%
Geoff Diehl	50%	49%	51%
Not sure	21%	15%	26%





	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Prefer Nominee to Embrace Trump's Agenda / Appeal to Diverse Electorate			
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to embrace Donald Trump's agenda	75%	76%	73%
Would prefer the Republican nominee for Governor to appeal to Massachusetts' diverse electorate	16%	16%	16%
Not sure	9%	8%	11%

	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Know That Trump Endorsed Diehl Yes / No			
Yes	42%	44%	39%
No	38%	37%	40%
Not sure	20%	19%	21%

	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Informed Baker / Diehl			
Charlie Baker	25%	32%	19%
Geoff Diehl	57%	55%	60%
Not sure	17%	13%	21%





	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Agree More That January 6th Was False Flag / Violent Insurrection			
Agree more that what happened at the Capitol on January 6th was a false flag operation by Antifa rioters	72%	70%	74%
Agree more that what happened at the Capit- ol on January 6th was a violent insurrection encouraged by Donald Trump	13%	15%	12%
Not sure	15%	15%	14%

	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Believe Biden Legitimately Elected Yes / No			
Believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	22%	25%	19%
Do not believe that Joe Biden was legitimately elected president in 2020	68%	66%	69%
Not sure	10%	9%	12%





	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Want MA to Audit 2020 Election Yes / No			
Want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	57%	54%	60%
Do not want to see an audit of the 2020 election in Massachusetts	33%	36%	30%
Not sure	10%	10%	9%

	Bas- e	Mode	
		Landli...	Text
Vaccination Status			
Fully vaccinated	71%	83%	60%
Partially vaccinated	2%	3%	2%
Not yet vaccinated but still planning to get the vaccine	2%	2%	2%
Not vaccinated and have no plans to get the vaccine	24%	13%	36%

