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## Inside Track

### Dems Say Anybody but Biden in 2024



*Gage Skidmore*

A CNN poll released February 13 confirms President Biden's troubles: Nearly three out of every four Democrats want someone other than Sleepy Joe to run in 2024. And they don't really care who Democrats run in 2024, so long as it isn't Biden!

Bernie Sanders got five percent support, while Michelle Obama received four percent. Kamala Harris received a nearly invisible two percent from those even willing to offer an alternative to Biden. Most of those polled couldn't come up with a viable alternative. Falling into the "virtually invisible" category to replace him were Pete Buttigieg, Elizabeth Warren, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Oprah Winfrey, Cory Booker, Stacey Adams, and Amy Klobuchar.

When pressed by pollster SSRS, the 1,500-plus respondents didn't think Biden could run successfully against whomever the Republicans run. A third said he was too old (he's 79 now and will turn 82 in November 2024), while the rest of them couldn't come up with a good reason — they just want him gone.

It gets worse: Republicans can hardly wait for 2024 to rid themselves of the Democratic disaster. According to SSRS, more than eight out of 10 Republicans were looking forward to 2024, while barely four out of 10 Democrats were.

Democrats know the shellacking they are likely to take. If the 2022 midterms shape up the way current polls are showing, 2024 could be an utter and complete disaster for them and their party.

Under Trump, Americans saw a glimpse of how great America could become, given the right policies while following the Constitution. They can hardly wait for the chance to rid themselves of the fallout of failed Democratic policies and put the nation back on the path to greatness.

By Bob Adelman



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## Sweden Declares COVID-19 Pandemic Over



*inese online/GettyImagesPlus*

Sweden, a Scandinavian nation that never imposed mandatory lockdowns or mask mandates, declared on February 9 that, for all intents and purposes, it considers the COVID-19 pandemic to be over.

The government announced that it was suspending the few remaining pandemic restrictions, including getting rid of the nation's vaccine-passport system, allowing bars and restaurants to remain open beyond 11 p.m., and abolishing most COVID testing rules.

Earlier this week, Sweden's National Health Agency claimed that the overuse of testing was not cost effective. The nation of approximately 10.4 million people had been spending in excess of \$55 million per week on testing in the first weeks of 2022, and since the pandemic began has spent more than \$2.6 billion on testing.

The government declared that readily available vaccinations and the far less-severe Omicron variant of the virus have effectively ended the pandemic as far as government restrictions for the Nordic country are concerned.

"As we know this pandemic, I would say it's over," Minister of Health Lena Hallengren told Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* February 9. "It's not over, but as we know it in terms of quick changes and restrictions it is."

Sweden follows in the footsteps of fellow Scandinavian country Denmark, which decided to drop all restrictions at the beginning of February, with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen declaring, "We are ready to step out of the shadow of the coronavirus. We say 'goodbye' to restrictions and 'welcome' to the life we knew before."

Norway has also dropped most of its COVID-19 measures, including curfews on how late bars and restaurants can remain open and their limit of 10 visitors in private homes. Norway made its adjustments despite a recent surge in infections.

COVID-19 restrictions are easing elsewhere in Europe, as well. In the south, Italy and Spain have recently dropped their outdoor mandates, and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has called upon the European Union to begin treating COVID-19 as an endemic illness akin to the flu.



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By James Murphy

## Tennessee Democrats “Facing Extinction”



*Oleksii Liskoni/iStock/Getty Images Plus*

After announcing that he will retire from the House of Representatives in December, Representative Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.) told the Nashville Scene February 8, “The Democratic Party in Tennessee is basically facing extinction ... we’ve been on a long downhill slide for a long time.”

And that slide is likely to continue, said the retiring congressman: “As usual, Democrats are not alert to future dangers. The biggest danger we face in an off-year election after we won the White House is the 100-year trend toward the other party. [Our success in] redistricting [to favor Democrats] is small potatoes compared to that historical trend.”

Reversal of that 100-year trend isn’t likely to happen in 2022, either: “Most of the rhetoric you hear [from Democrats] is: ‘Let’s double down. Let’s force it down their throats.’ That’s not the way to win votes.”

Gallup, the polling organization that has been tracking political preferences and issues for more than a quarter of a century, was surprised by that trend showing up so dramatically in 2021.

Their audience of 12,000 U.S. adults was asked repeatedly in 2021, “In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an independent?... Do you lean more to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?” A year ago, Democrats held a commanding nine-percentage-point lead over Republicans: 49-40.

Beginning in April, the shift to Republicans began, and caught Gallup off guard: “A dramatic shift [took place], from a nine-percentage point Democratic advantage in the first quarter to a rare five-point Republican edge in the fourth quarter.... [These] are among the largest Gallup has measured for each party in any quarter since it began measuring party identification and leaning in 1991.... The political winds continued to become more favorable to Republicans in the fourth quarter, giving the GOP an advantage over Democrats larger than any they had achieved in more than 25 years.”

Representative Jim Cooper from Tennessee was the 29th Democrat to announce his retirement as of February.



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By Bob Adelman

## **Cartels Use Social Media to Recruit American Teens as Smugglers**



*Moore Media/iStock/Getty Images Plus*

Smugglers, who proliferate at the U.S. border with Mexico, are actively recruiting American teenagers to drive illegal immigrants, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) revealed.

According to a February 9 CBP press release, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are turning to social media to recruit minors for their smuggling operations. That ongoing trend was identified by the Rio Grande Valley Sector (RGV) Border Patrol, which encountered the largest number of illegal aliens in the past year.

RGV Border Patrol agents seized more than 11,000 pounds of narcotics in 2021, which is approximately 43 percent of all narcotics seized by the U.S. Border Patrol across the nation between ports of entry.

The CBP press release goes on to note, “With an increase in illicit activity, TCOs require more manpower to carry out their operations. Social media has become an avenue for human smugglers to target juvenile drivers.”

The cartels lure teens with the promise of easy cash and assure them that because they’re juveniles, they won’t face severe consequences if they’re caught by the police or Border Patrol. The young recruits are also told that if they flee, the agents likely won’t chase them because that would create a highly dangerous road situation.

The CBP warning continues, “The result is an increase in erratic driving by inexperienced drivers, often observed exceeding posted speed limits, and driving against oncoming traffic. The use of social media has allowed local smugglers to expand their network’s reach. New recruits are not only from the Rio Grande Valley. Authorities have arrested drivers from San Antonio, Houston, and other areas, some as young as 13-years old.”

Since October 2021, RGV agents have engaged in nearly 100 vehicle pursuits in order to stop human- and drug-smuggling attempts. In fiscal year 2021, RGV agents reported 257 vehicle pursuits. Most of them, the CBP noted, involve vehicles loaded with migrants well over the manufacturers’ intended



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passenger limit in order to maximize monetary gain.

By Veronika Kyrylenko



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