

Poll: Ohio voters unfamiliar with Republican U.S. Senate candidates, strongly dislike President Joe Biden

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – Ohio's three main Republican U.S. Senate candidates have a lot of ground to make up to become better known to voters ahead of next year's elections, according to a new poll.

But Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown still appears likely to face a difficult reelection contest, in part due to President Joe Biden's deep unpopularity here.

The survey of 850 self-identified registered Ohio voters by Baldwin Wallace University found a majority said they'd never heard of two of the Republican Senate candidates, state Sen. Matt Dolan and businessman Bernie Moreno, while a plurality was unfamiliar with Secretary of State Frank LaRose, the only one of three to have won a statewide election. The lack of familiarity was true with voters across party lines.

Meanwhile, a plurality of voters said they like Sen. Sherrod Brown, with 44% saying they had a favorable opinion of the longtime Ohio Democrat, versus 38% who said they view him as unfavorable.

But a whopping 61% of voters said they had an unfavorable opinion of Biden, including 48% who said "very unfavorable." A majority, 52%, also said they had an unfavorable opinion of ex-President Donald Trump, but Trump's favorability rating was 48%, ten percentage points higher than Biden's.

Tom Sutton, a political scientist at Baldwin Wallace University, said the results portend that Trump is on track to win Ohio again, while Brown's faces a tough road, despite his Republican challengers' low name identification. Trump won Ohio by 8 percentage points in 2016 and 2020.

He also said the results point to a deluge of TV ads ahead of the Republican primary election in March. It's an open question whether LaRose will be able to afford campaign ads [following a weak fundraising report filed over the weekend](#). But Dolan, whose family owns the Cleveland Guardians and Moreno, a former luxury car

dealer, each are independently wealthy and, along with their outside contributions from donors, have millions to spend in their campaign accounts.

“Unfortunately, a survey like this is going to prompt them to release a lot of ads come January,” Sutton said.

Among Republican Senate candidates, LaRose fared the best, with 31% of voters saying they had a favorable opinion of him versus 27% who said they had an unfavorable opinion. But 43% said they were unfamiliar, even though LaRose was reelected just last year by a wide margin.

Twenty-one percent said they had a favorable opinion of Dolan, compared to 23% who said unfavorable, and 56% who said they were unfamiliar.

And as other polls have found, voters were least familiar with Moreno, whose name has never appeared on a ballot. Sixteen percent of voters had a favorable opinion while 23% had an unfavorable one. Sixty-one percent had never heard of him.

Just 18% of voters said they were unfamiliar with Brown, who’s represented Ohio in the Senate since 2007 and who’d held elected office before that, mostly uninterrupted, for decades.

JD Vance, who was elected to the U.S. Senate last year after a bruising Republican primary, was viewed favorably by about 36% of respondents. More than 40% said they had an unfavorable view of Vance, while nearly a quarter of respondents said they were unfamiliar with their junior senator.