# Misconceptions vs. Facts: American Voter Views on Economy Misaligned with Reality



### Voter Perceptions and Economic Realities Clash Ahead of November Election

A Harris-Guardian poll conducted in May 2024 has shown that many Americans hold misinformed views about the current state of the U.S. economy. Despite consistent economic growth over the past two years, 55% of respondents believe the economy is shrinking, and a similar proportion think the country is in a recession. This perception persists despite the U.S. economy outperforming other advanced economies and surpassing pre-pandemic growth forecasts.

Unemployment rates are another area of misinformation. Roughly half of the respondents believe that unemployment is at a 50-year high. In contrast, unemployment has been below 4% for more than two years, marking the longest period of low unemployment since the Nixon administration. Additionally, about 49% of those surveyed think stock markets are down since the start of the year, whereas the S&P 500 has risen by over 10%, hitting new all-time highs.

This misconception extends beyond the economy to other areas such as crime and war. For instance, 42% of respondents believe that the 2020s are the worst decade for crime, which contradicts available data. Similarly, 28% believe the 1940s had the "most war," and 19% mistakenly think the current decade is the most war-torn, despite no major conflicts involving the U.S. on the scale of World War II or the Vietnam War.

Political and media influences play significant roles in shaping these erroneous beliefs. The poll indicates a partisan bias, with 45% of Republicans and 19% of Democrats labeling the 2020s as the worst decade economically. Media narratives that focus predominantly on negative news contribute to these skewed perceptions, which in turn affect voters' views on political leaders and their policies.

In conclusion, the discrepancy between public perception and actual economic indicators presents a challenge for policymakers and candidates in the upcoming election. It highlights the need for clearer communication on economic realities and a more balanced media portrayal to inform the electorate accurately.