



Election Matters: TikTok Ban Omnibus Survey

May 9, 2024

Background

Overview

This memo summarizes results of a Weber Shandwick Collective Election Matters 2024 omnibus survey, conducted as a flash poll to assess voter sentiment in response to the TikTok ban passed by Congress.

Research Methodology

KRC Research, the research division of The Weber Shandwick Collective, conducted an online survey among a representative sample of n=1,007 U.S. adults 18 years of age and older. This survey was conducted from May 1 to May 3, 2024.

Key Findings: Gen Z Reactions to the TikTok Ban

There is a generational divide when it comes to the TikTok Ban:

- Gen Z adults (18-27), who are more than twice as likely to use TikTok as other generations, do not trust Congress’s motivations for the ban. When asked about congressional rationale for the ban, members of Gen Z are significantly less likely than other generations to believe that the ban comes from genuine security concerns (39% Gen Z vs. 59% other generations) about the Chinese government spying on Americans.
- Gen Z is also less likely to believe that Congress is motivated by genuine concern that China will promote or suppress certain ideas on TikTok to influence Americans (39% Gen Z vs. 59% other generations). They are also two times as likely to say that the ban comes from a lack of understanding of the technology (13% Gen Z vs. 6% other generations).

- There is also perception among Gen Z that the TikTok ban comes from a desire to limit freedom of speech (21% for Gen Z vs. 13% for non-Gen Z). Six in 10 (59%) say they agree or strongly agree that the ban conflicts with freedom of speech ideals.
- Members of Gen Z are more likely to take some form of action, with just over half saying they’ll perform some form of advocacy as a result of the ban (52% Gen Z vs. 34% other generations). Gen Z is more likely to sign a petition (30% Gen Z vs. 20% other generations), twice as likely to say they’ll voice their opinion on the TikTok ban at political events, rallies, speeches and other local events to raise awareness (18% Gen Z vs. 8% other generations) and nearly four times as likely to participate in a local protest (15% Gen Z vs. 4% other generations).

The American public is broadly aligned in its views of the TikTok ban:

- When asked to select up to three reasons why Congress passed a bill to ban TikTok, most Americans (57%) believe that Congress is legitimately concerned about the Chinese government using TikTok data to spy on individual Americans. Just under half (44%) believe that Congress has a genuine concern that the Chinese government will promote or suppress certain ideas on TikTok to influence Americans’ beliefs (i.e., their voting decisions).
- Just over a quarter of Americans (28%) think the ban was motivated by concern that TikTok gives users access to unfiltered sources of information. A fifth (18%) also perceive the ban as Congress sending a strong message that it will not tolerate any influence.





- Under a fifth of Americans (16%) think the TikTok ban is driven by Congress wanting to remove competition for U.S.-based social media companies (e.g., Facebook/Meta, X/Twitter, Instagram and/or YouTube). Fewer Americans (14%) believe that the ban is Congress’s way of trying to limit freedom of speech. When asked directly if ‘the ban on TikTok conflicts with freedom of speech ideals,’ about 4 in 10 Americans (43%) think it does – 20% strongly so, and 23% somewhat agree.
- If the TikTok ban does go into effect, nearly 4 in 10 Americans (38%) using the platform say they will migrate to another social media app that is like TikTok. Around third of users say they will spend more time on other activities (36%) or plan to shift their time to other social media platforms that are not necessarily like TikTok (31%).
- Less than one fifth (15%) say the ban will result in them drastically cutting back on their social media use and just 6% say they will stop using social media.
- Over a third of Americans (37%) would consider taking action in response to a TikTok ban – the remainder (63%) say they will do nothing. The most common forms of action that TikTok users plan on include signing a petition (21%), sharing their opinion in a social media post or comment (16%), writing their congressperson (10%) and voicing their opinions at a political rally or other local events (9%). Only 5% of current TikTok users would take the more significant action of participating in a protest against the ban.

Findings: Gen Z Reactions

Below are the results for this study by total and by generation. While reading this document, please note that percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Shading indicates statistically significant differences.

1. On a weekly basis, how often do you use TikTok?

Base: All respondents	Total n=1007	Gen Z n=193	Millennials n=268	Gen X n=239	Baby Boomers n=255
Use TikTok (net)	44%	78%	62%	33%	19%
More than 20 hours	3%	7%	5%	2%	1%
11-20 hours	4%	8%	7%	2%	1%
6-10 hours	8%	17%	12%	5%	1%
1-5 hours	15%	30%	20%	13%	6%
Less than 1 hour	13%	15%	18%	12%	10%
Do not use TikTok	56%	22%	38%	67%	81%





Base: All respondents	Total n=1007	Republicans/ Leaners n=379	Independent n=142	Democrat/ Leaners n=398
Use TikTok (net)	44%	41%	47%	44%
More than 20 hours	3%	3%	5%	2%
11-20 hours	4%	4%	3%	3%
6-10 hours	8%	8%	11%	8%
1-5 hours	15%	12%	15%	17%
Less than 1 hour	13%	13%	13%	13%
Do not use TikTok	56%	59%	53%	56%

2. What are the most likely reason(s) that both Democrats and Republicans in Congress passed a bill to ban TikTok if it does not sell to a new, government-approved owner? (Select up to 3)

Base: All respondents	Total n=1007	Gen Z n=193	Millennials n=268	Gen X n=239	Baby Boomers n=255
They are very concerned that the Chinese government could use TikTok data to spy on individual Americans	57%	39%	52%	57%	69%
They have genuine concern that China will promote or suppress certain ideas on TikTok to influence Americans (e.g., their voting decisions)	44%	32%	33%	47%	58%
They are concerned that TikTok gives its users access to unfiltered sources of information	28%	27%	32%	28%	25%
They want to show China that we are strong and won't tolerate their influence	18%	17%	16%	17%	21%
They are trying to remove competition for U.S.-based social media companies (e.g., Facebook/Meta, Instagram, X/Twitter, YouTube)	16%	22%	25%	16%	7%
They want to limit freedom of speech	14%	21%	19%	15%	5%
They do not understand the technology	7%	13%	5%	5%	6%
Some other reason	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
I don't understand the decision	6%	9%	7%	3%	4%
I don't know anything about this issue	11%	13%	9%	12%	10%





Base: All respondents	Gen Z n=193	Non-Gen Z n=762
They are very concerned that the Chinese government could use TikTok data to spy on individual Americans	39%	59%
They have genuine concern that China will promote or suppress certain ideas on TikTok to influence Americans (e.g., their voting decisions)	32%	46%
They are concerned that TikTok gives its users access to unfiltered sources of information	27%	28%
They want to show China that we are strong and won't tolerate their influence	17%	18%
They are trying to remove competition for U.S.-based social media companies (e.g., Facebook/Meta, Instagram, X/Twitter, YouTube)	22%	16%
They want to limit freedom of speech	21%	13%
They do not understand the technology	13%	6%
Some other reason	1%	2%
I don't understand the decision	9%	5%
I don't know anything about this issue	13%	10%

Base: All respondents	Total n=1007	Republicans/ Leaners n=379	Independent n=142	Democrat/ Leaners n=398
They are very concerned that the Chinese government could use TikTok data to spy on individual Americans	57%	61%	56%	60%
They have genuine concern that China will promote or suppress certain ideas on TikTok to influence Americans (e.g., their voting decisions)	44%	47%	39%	50%
They are concerned that TikTok gives its users access to unfiltered sources of information	28%	28%	27%	30%
They want to show China that we are strong and won't tolerate their influence	18%	19%	14%	20%
They are trying to remove competition for U.S.-based social media companies (e.g., Facebook/Meta, Instagram, X/Twitter, YouTube)	16%	16%	16%	18%
They want to limit freedom of speech	14%	13%	11%	15%
They do not understand the technology	7%	7%	7%	6%
Some other reason	1%	1%	5%	1%
I don't understand the decision	6%	5%	10%	3%
I don't know anything about this issue	11%	8%	14%	8%





3. Knowing that a ban of TikTok may occur in the future, what actions are you considering taking?
I will... (Select all that apply)

Base: Use TikTok	Total n=442	Gen Z n=149	Millennials n=162	Gen X n=86	Baby Boomers n=42
Will take action (Net)	78%	85%	80%	81%	54%
Use another platform that is similar to TikTok	38%	34%	34%	52%	43%
Spend more time on other activities, hobbies and interests	36%	39%	42%	30%	24%
Shift some of my time to other social media platforms	31%	33%	32%	34%	24%
Drastically cut back on my social media use	15%	17%	13%	16%	12%
Stop using social media entirely	6%	10%	5%	3%	4%
Find new ways to supplement income that I receive through TikTok	12%	16%	14%	9%	5%
Feel relieved that I no longer have to use TikTok	9%	11%	10%	6%	0%
Another action	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%
I will not take any action in case of a TikTok ban	22%	15%	20%	19%	46%

Base: Use TikTok	Total n=442	Republicans/ Leaners n=151	Independent n=69	Democrat/ Leaners n=174
Will take action (Net)	78%	82%	66%	80%
Use another platform that is similar to TikTok	38%	38%	38%	38%
Spend more time on other activities, hobbies and interests	36%	36%	35%	41%
Shift some of my time to other social media platforms	31%	27%	30%	34%
Drastically cut back on my social media use	15%	14%	10%	18%
Stop using social media entirely	6%	9%	6%	2%
Find new ways to supplement income that I receive through TikTok	12%	16%	7%	12%
Feel relieved that I no longer have to use TikTok	9%	6%	11%	10%
Another action	1%	1%	1%	2%
I will not take any action in case of a TikTok ban	22%	18%	34%	20%



4. What action would you consider taking, if any, against the potential TikTok ban?
(Select all that apply)

Base: Use TikTok	Total n=442	Gen Z n=149	Millennials n=162	Gen X n=86	Baby Boomers n=42
Anything/Will impact (Net)	37%	52%	46%	34%	23%
Sign a petition	21%	30%	24%	22%	13%
Share my opinion on social media in a post or comment	16%	22%	23%	16%	7%
Write or call my congressperson	10%	10%	9%	10%	9%
Voice my opinion at political events, rallies, speeches and other local events to raise awareness	9%	18%	12%	5%	5%
Participate in a local protest	5%	15%	5%	5%	1%
Another action	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Nothing; it won't impact me	63%	48%	54%	66%	77%

Base: Use TikTok	Total n=442	Republicans/ Leaners n=151	Independent n=69	Democrat/ Leaners n=174
Anything/Will impact (Net)	37%	36%	28%	43%
Sign a petition	21%	20%	17%	24%
Share my opinion on social media in a post or comment	16%	14%	16%	19%
Write or call my congressperson	10%	11%	5%	13%
Voice my opinion at political events, rallies, speeches and other local events to raise awareness	9%	10%	7%	10%
Participate in a local protest	5%	5%	4%	6%
Another action	2%	2%	1%	2%
Nothing; it won't impact me	63%	64%	72%	57%



5. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?
I feel that the ban on TikTok conflicts with freedom of speech ideals.

Base: Use TikTok	Total n=442	Gen Z n=149	Millennials n=162	Gen X n=86	Baby Boomers n=42
Agree (Net)	43%	59%	56%	42%	24%
Strongly agree	20%	32%	29%	17%	9%
Somewhat agree	22%	27%	27%	25%	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	31%	24%	26%	35%	36%
Disagree (Net)	26%	18%	18%	23%	40%
Somewhat disagree	8%	5%	6%	6%	14%
Strongly disagree	18%	12%	12%	17%	26%

Base: Use TikTok	Total n=442	Republicans/ Leaners n=151	Independent n=69	Democrat/ Leaners n=174
Agree (Net)	43%	42%	42%	44%
Strongly agree	20%	20%	20%	21%
Somewhat agree	22%	22%	22%	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	31%	26%	35%	31%
Disagree (Net)	26%	32%	24%	25%
Somewhat disagree	8%	8%	5%	12%
Strongly disagree	18%	24%	19%	13%

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