

The confidence question US economy

Majority of Americans wrongly believe US is in recession - and most blame Biden

Exclusive Harris poll for the Guardian shows 55% believe economy is shrinking, in troubling sign for president's re-election bid

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Nearly three in five Americans wrongly believe the US is in an economic recession, and the majority blame the **Biden administration**, according to a Harris poll conducted exclusively for the Guardian. The survey found persistent pessimism about the economy as election day draws closer.

The poll highlighted many misconceptions people have about the economy, including:

- 55% believe the economy is shrinking, and 56% think the US is experiencing a recession, though the broadest measure of the economy, gross domestic product (GDP), has been growing.
- 49% believe the S&P 500 stock market index is down for the year, though the index went up about 24% in 2023 and is up more than 12% this year.
- 49% believe that unemployment is at a 50-year high, though the unemployment rate has been under 4%, a near 50-year low.

The poll underscored people's complicated emotions around inflation. The vast majority of respondents, 72%, indicated they think inflation is increasing. In reality, the rate of inflation has fallen sharply from its post-Covid peak of 9.1% and has been fluctuating between 3% and 4% a year.

In April, the inflation rate **went down** from 3.5% to 3.4% - far from inflation's 40-year peak of 9.1% in June 2022 - triggering a stock market rally that pushed the Dow Jones index to a **record high**.