



Back to Normal Barometer WAVE 17 Highlights:

A SOCK TO THE GUT DEPRESSES ATTITUDES, BUT PEOPLE PLOD ON AND CONTINUE TO LET DOWN THEIR GUARD

- Fielding in the immediate aftermath of the holidays, in between the early January events at The Capital, and the inauguration, amid continuing increases in COVID deaths/cases, we find major barometer drivers/attitudes plunge vs. wave 16 December data, even as the vaccine rolled out:
 - Overall Barometer is down to 29, its low point since August, spurred on by a 7 point plummet among future expectations
 - **All time lows for a number of component statements**, including:
 - I'm better off now than I was four years ago
 - America is better off now than it was four years ago
 - Despite the polarized politics,the US will excel in years to come
 - I'm confident that I will have enough money to retire in comfort
 - Before the end of 2021, the economy will add jobs
 - People will go back to spending freely on luxuries again
- **People are more scared about COVID**
 - Only 26% strongly agree that the prospect of catching COVID is not as scary now as it was at the start of the pandemic...down from 40% in December
 - Less than a quarter (22%) strongly feel that COVID is less of a threat to Americans than it was this Summer....down from 38% in wave 14 and 36% last month
 - Just 22% strongly agree that "If I catch COVID, it's not a big deal", down significantly from 30% last month
 - Only 25% strongly feel that if others around them are vaccinated but they are not vaccinated, they will be comfortable returning to normal daily activities
 - And only 28% strongly agree that they will be comfortable returning to normal daily activities if they are personally vaccinated, whether or not others around them have been
 - Only 24% strongly believe that the distribution process for the vaccine is going well in their area. Men, and those in urban areas are more likely to feel that it is going well.



- As the calendar turned, past month/holiday activity continued to increase for many activities, with **new highs for** :
 - Taking a trip of 50 miles—20%
 - Commercial flights—21%
 - Live sporting events—21%
 - Retail stores—74%
- And **only 40% stayed home for the full holidays, less than we saw for Thanksgiving (48%), Labor Day (54%) or July 4th (63%)**
- A majority of assurance seekers and breakthroughs would immediately re-engage if all "customer facing" staff were vaccinated for COVID 19
 - If all staff that I would come in contact with had received a COVID-19 vaccination---53.4%
 - If I had received a COVID-19 vaccination--45.8%
 - Neither--24.4%
- **Those who strongly agree that they will definitely get a COVID vaccine is down to a low of 45%**
- And **people are letting down their guards, more than ever**
 - Less than half trust themselves to take the necessary steps so I don't catch COVID-19—47% down from 65% last month
 - Only 44% believe that they have strictly followed protocols in place in their area, down from 57% last month
 - Only 29% strongly believe that people in general are following protocols and guidelines in place; down from 41% last month
 - Only 28% strongly believe that the public has done a good job handling the outbreak; and a similar %age trust others around them to take the necessary steps so they don't catch COVID—both down significantly from last month
- **Workplace changes**--A barometer low 43% are now working mostly or strictly from home
 - A plurality of 42% of those working from home, are now eager to return to their workplaces, though 16% strongly disagree
 - 39% will return to their place of work, once they have been vaccinated, even if others in their office are not. A nearly equal 39% will return once they AND all of their coworkers are vaccinated, while 22% will return only after the workplace has been reconfigured to maintain social distancing



- And substantial percentages of the population have seen **mental health impacts of the pandemic**
 - 30% have seen the mental health of those they know gotten much worse
 - 28% have seen their own mental health gotten much worse
 - 34% feel strongly that their mental health will be much better as more Americans get vaccinated in 2021
- The majority of Americans feel that congress should either take a wait and see approach (37%) or no more spending (19%), while a plurality (44%) think Congress should act without delay to approve more stimulus spending.
- **Less than a third strongly agree that athletes should use their visibility to express their attitudes about political and social issues**