



# IS THERE A BEST WAY TO RESPOND TO THE NEXT PANDEMIC CRISIS? EVIDENCE FROM NATIONAL COVID- 19 RESPONSES, 2020-2023

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# WHY DID THE US RESPOND THE WAY IT DID TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS AND HOW DOES THE RESPONSE AFFECT UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS?

- Policy Capacity
- Trust
- Institutional Impediments
- Political Leadership



# I. WHAT IS A CRISIS?

- Sudden, temporary, disturbance in the rhythm of social life
- Turbulence – Ambiguity – Urgency
- Either adverse consequences or lack of adequate responses
- E. g., Natural disasters, e.g., Hurricane Katrina, or floods, earthquakes
- E.g, manmade, war, or near war, e.g., Cuban missile crisis

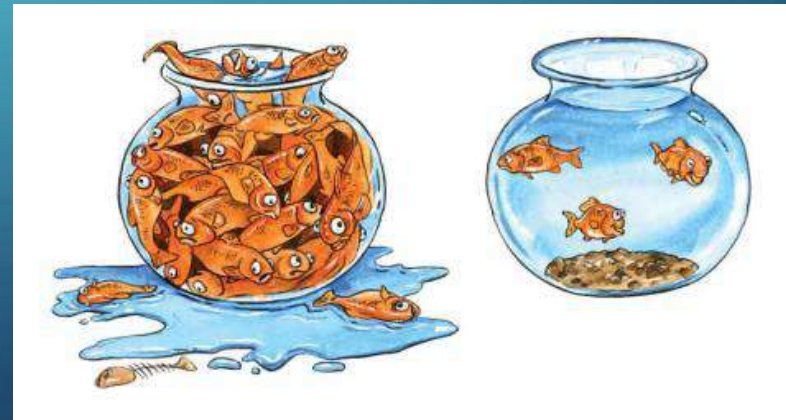
# IS A PANDEMIC A CRISIS?

- Pandemic is an epidemic, i.e., an outbreak of a disease, that has spread over national borders
- Pandemics are relatively common, and some are very lethal
- E.g., the plague in 6<sup>th</sup> (30-50 million) and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (25 million people), the Spanish flu of 1918 (50 million)
- Diseases that affect the respiratory system are most contagious because they are transmitted by droplets in the air
- Pandemics create crises because of the need to respond
- Citizens turn to government for relief and safety



# WHAT IS POLICY CAPACITY

- The human and physical capital a government has at its disposal to address a given crisis
- Bureaucracy-agencies
- Health system (number of hospitals, equipment, technology)
- Experts (doctors, nurses).
- Money
- Capacity likely fosters resilience.



# WHAT IS TRUST?

- Trust is the expectation citizens have of government
- It's a perception, not a physical attribute, so it changes over time
- If capacity constitutes the supply - what can government do, trust constitutes the demand - what do citizens expect government to do
- Trust in government – do you think they can do it?
- Trust in health care – how good is the system?
- Trust in doctors/nurses – how well trained are they?

# INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS?

- Federalism v unitary systems
  - Federal systems require coordination and sometimes duplication, which may lead to conflict
  - Unitary systems can be corrupt because they are centralized and NOT in touch.



# WHAT IS POLITICAL LEADERSHIP?

- The ability of individuals in authority positions to motivate a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal
- Leaders think, frame, motivate, inspire, persuade, delegate, coordinate, and coerce
- Democratic ones are also accountable and are judged by results

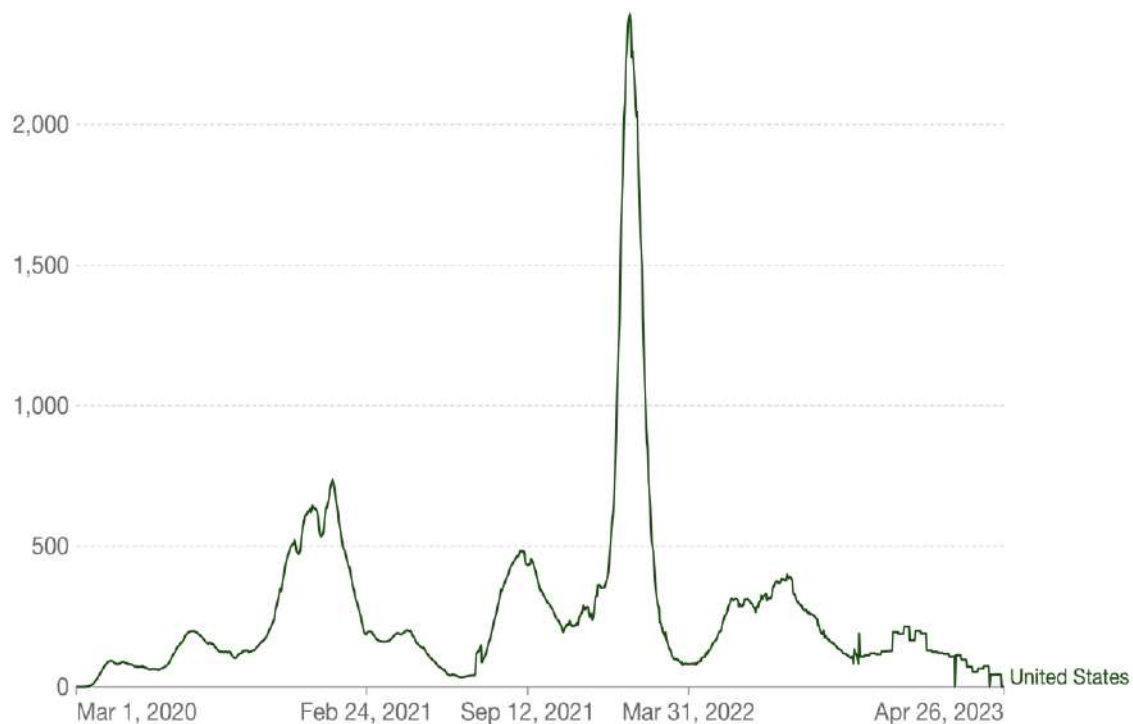


# US CASES AND DEATHS

(C=103.8M; D=1.12M; VAC 81.8%, 1D) JH RESOURCE

## Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people

7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing, the number of confirmed cases is lower than the true number of infections.

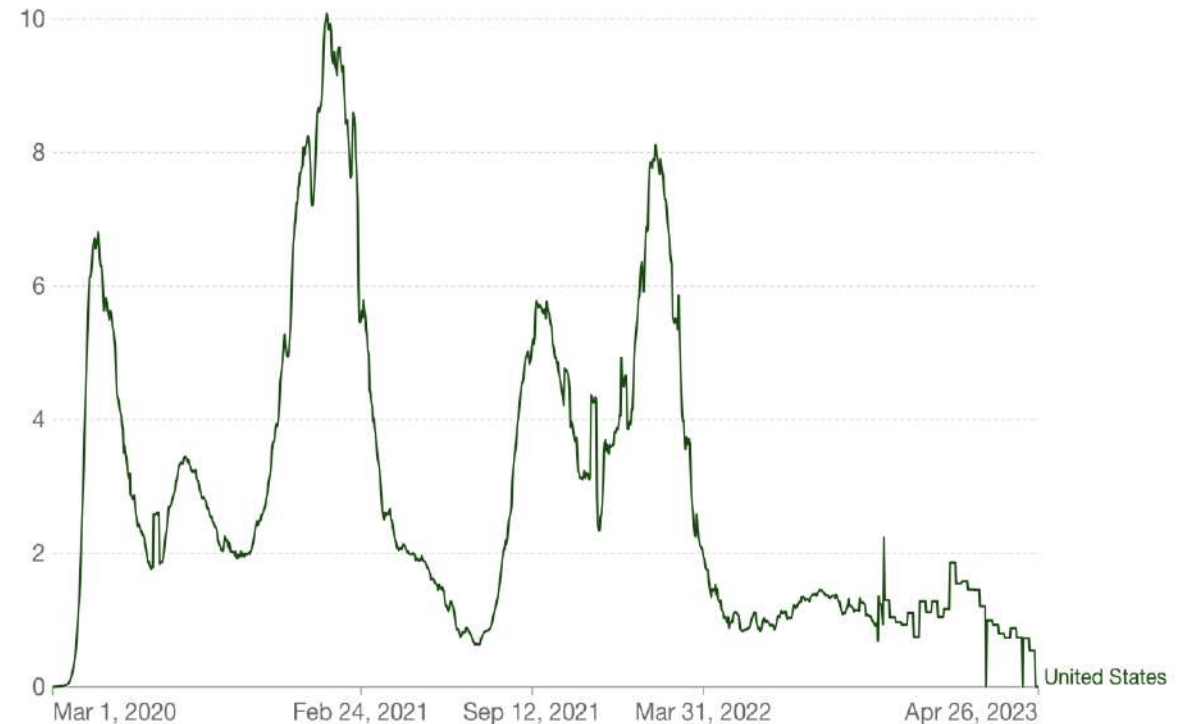


Source: WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

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## Daily new confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million people

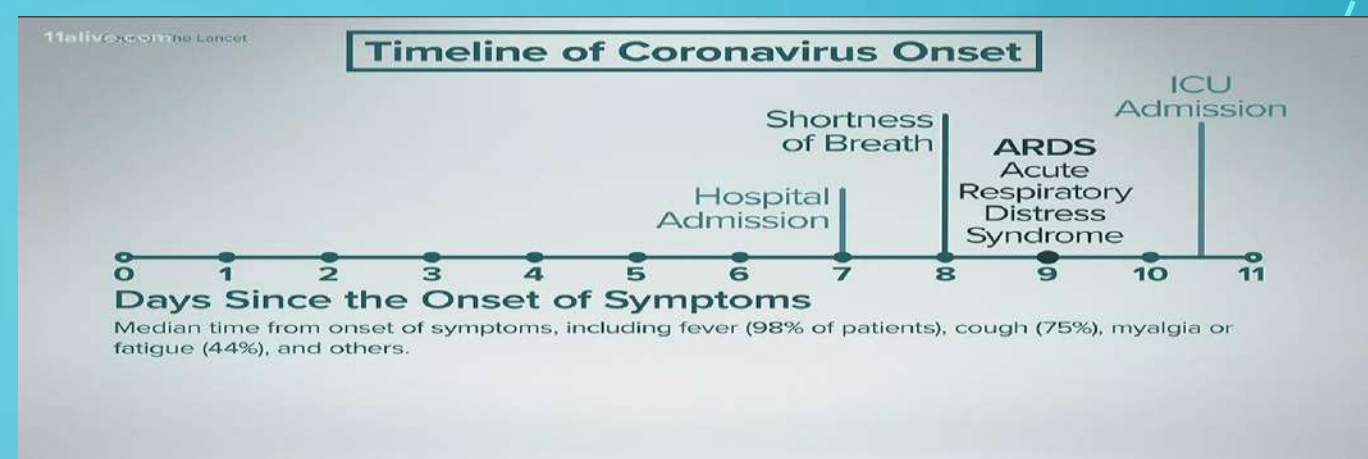
7-day rolling average. Due to varying protocols and challenges in the attribution of the cause of death, the number of confirmed deaths may not accurately represent the true number of deaths caused by COVID-19.



Source: WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

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# THE UNITED STATES



- Capacity – high (expertise), CDC, FEMA
- Politically motivated response – travel ban initially, not UK even though it was getting worse at the time
- Feeble and confusing (no measures; CDC issues guidelines; undermined by WH)
- States are left to fend for themselves
- Pres. Trump argues to keep the economy open while cases multiply; no mask
- **Trade off between economy and public health**
- Local measures; uneven response; wide spread
- Decentralization (chaos), many resources, no message
- Vaccination good but treatments available



# BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

- Stress vaccines; not good rates relative to other countries
- Large portion of population unvaccinated 30% (2 doses)
- Federal subsidies during the pandemic cut in 2022
- Serious concern for future pandemics

# EFFECTS ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (NOVEMBER 2024)

- We are in election mode now
- Primaries v general elections

# ELECTIONS

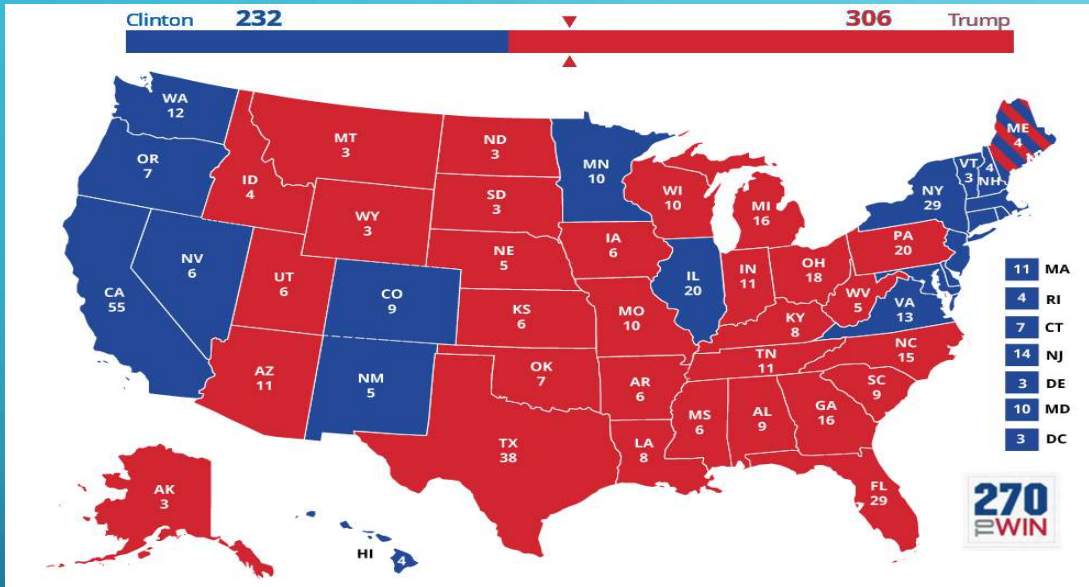
- President (and Vice President) – every four years
- Senators – every six years
- Representatives – every 2 years
- State Governors/legislators – every four years



# PRIMARIES, GENERAL ELECTION

- Primaries
  - Get the nomination
- General election
- Single member districts winner take all
  - Need to be more partisan (primaries) and less so in general
  - The key is turnout

- 538 electoral votes, 270 votes to win



## ELECTORAL COLLEGE BETWEEN FEDERALISM AND THE MASSES

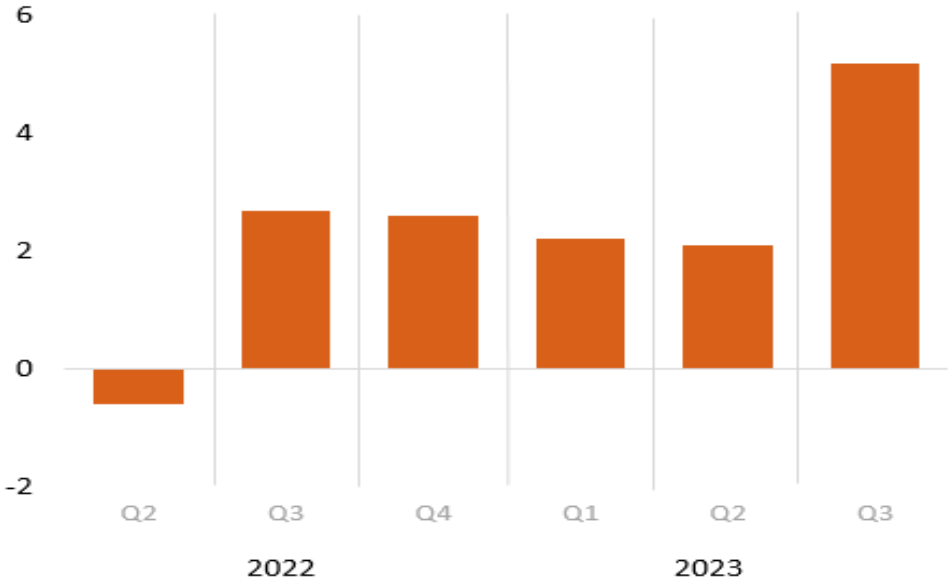
# PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

- Trump will likely win the Republican nomination
- No opponent in sight (de Santis)
- Has hold on party – organization and leadership
- But some Republicans are starting to think he is too radical
- Split party? Turnout?
- If economy goes well, Biden will win
- It's the economy stupid



# GDP, INFLATION AND TRADE

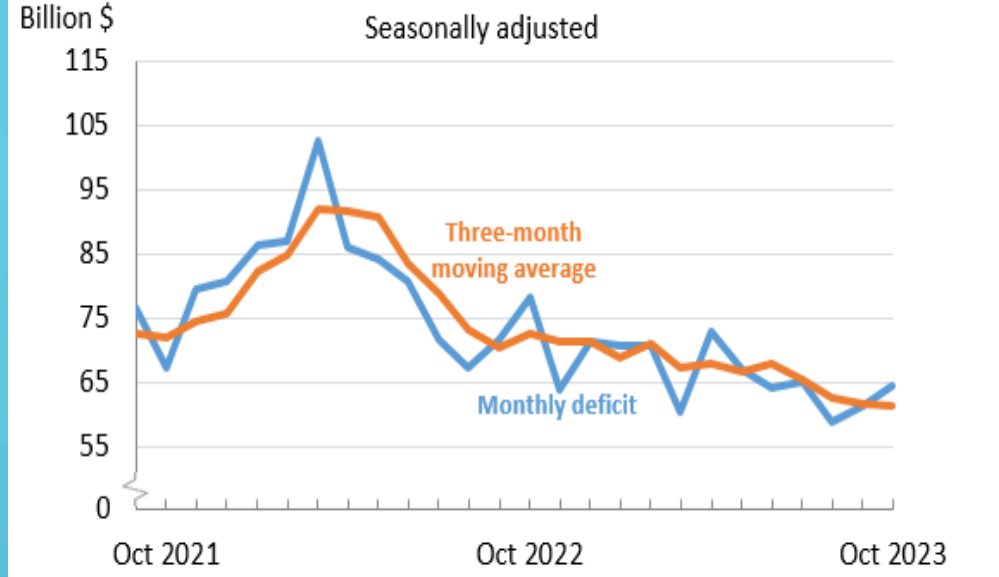
### Real GDP: Percent change from preceding quarter



U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Seasonally adjusted annual rates

### Goods and Services Trade Deficit



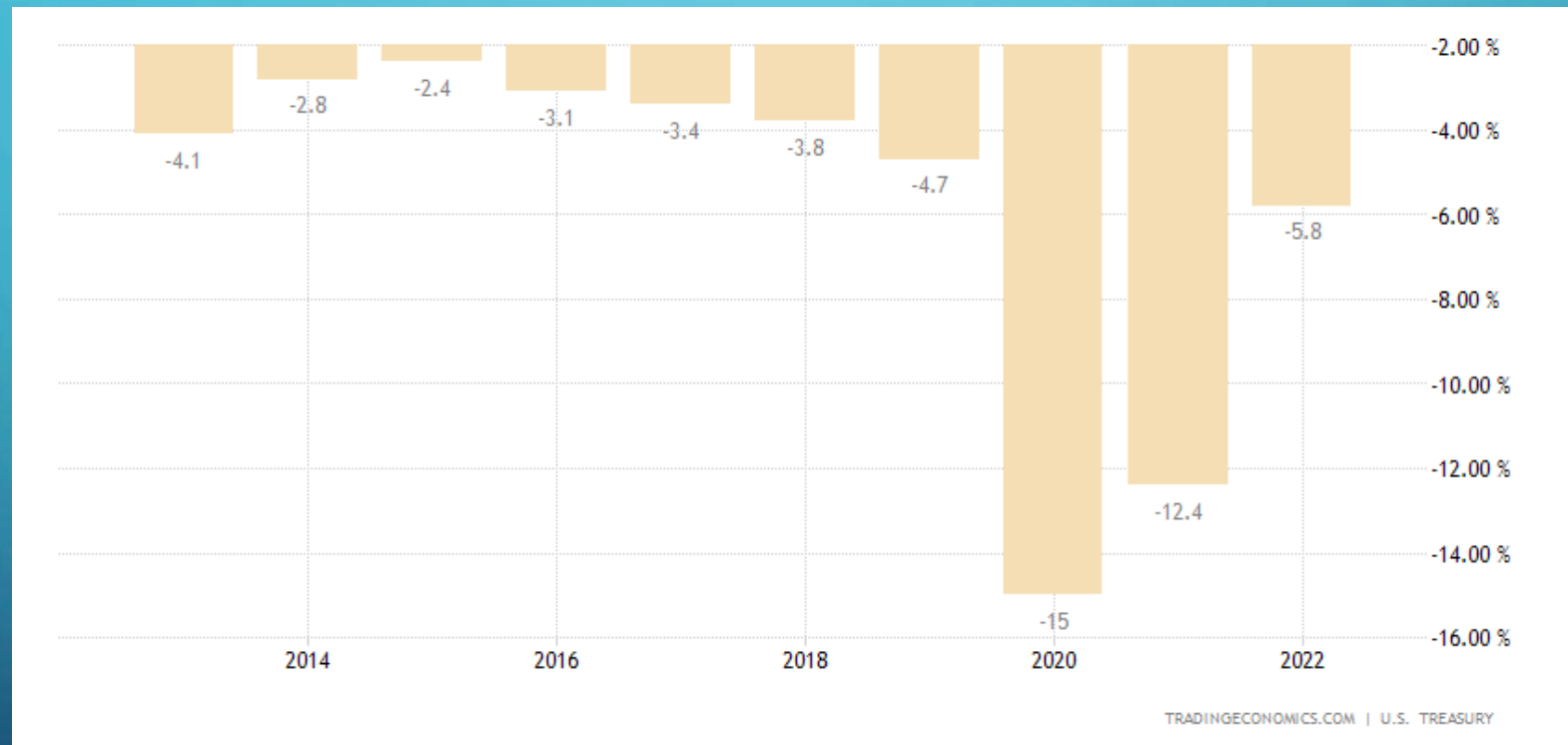
U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis  
U.S. Census Bureau

U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services  
December 6, 2023



TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

# BUDGET DEFICIT



# SO WHAT?

- Approval ratings are low (in the 40s)
- Biden has age problem
- Republicans are in disarray
- Covid-19 is just a memory (Ukraine and Israel are issues in addition to economy)
- 50/50?

# CONCLUSIONS

- Is there a best way to respond?
- Is trust essential?
- Political leadership
- State has grown big
- Vaccination make difference?
- Negative electoral impact? No



• Ερωτήσεις?

