

---

## Midterm elections in two months: abortion and education issues likely to affect the vote substantially

(From New York) The US Midterm elections will be held in less than two months, next November 8, when US voters will be called to determine which party will win a majority of 435 House of Representative seats and 35 of the 100 senators that are up for election, while voters in 36 out of 50 States will elect a governor. There is still great uncertainty in the US as to which party will control Congress in the next two years; while it is certain that November's Midterm vote will be a referendum on former president **Donald Trump** and his MAGA (Make America great again) movement, due to determine not only the balances of power in the Republican Party, but also the future course of the race for the White House. US President **Joe Biden**, who bounced back in approval ratings after having passed bipartisan legislation on gun control, on support to help veterans exposed to toxic burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with a several hundred- billion bill of federal funding to increase US semiconductor production and make a decisive transition to renewables, is now facing the highest rate of inflation in four decades and sky-high gasoline prices that are likely to impact voters' choices in November. According to a US historical pattern, the President's party almost always loses its majority Congress seats in the Midterm vote, however, this time the Democrats hope to contain the damage and keep a hold on at least one House. New York State's primary elections would appear to prove them right: they won in otherwise deemed Republican-leaning precincts.

The issues of abortion and education are bound to have a major impact on the elections.

After the Supreme Court overturned the Roe vs. Wade ruling that guaranteed federal constitutional right to abortion, Democrats have made abortion protection a major campaign issue, thus garnering votes and support even in conservative States such as Kansas, where constituents rejected a proposed amendment to the State's pregnancy law. Republicans have taken no significant position on the issue, with some candidates declaring themselves pro-life but against a national ban on abortion. By contrast, in Florida, the Republican stance on education that should be decided by parents and not by school districts, especially with regard to questions of gender, sexual orientation, and faith, is holding sway. The campaign started by Governor DeSantis and embraced by many conservative candidates in the Midwest States proved successful, including in the party primaries. According to the conservative Wall Street Journal, the hopes of a Republican victory are bound to be dashed by the Trump factor, especially given the FBI's search of the former president's estate, where classified documents that should have been handed over to the National Archives were found. While the sloppy, uncooperative and even irresponsible behaviour of withholding highly classified documents is motivating the Democrats in their election campaign, Mr Trump is not expected to face criminal indictment for the "mishandling of documents". Conversely, he risks being made into "a political martyr" by his political base. After several days of strained talks between the Justice Department and a Federal judge over whether the FBI's statement on the necessity of the search should be published, the released version expresses only a strong concern that the documents will end up in the wrong hands, yet no crime is currently being charged against the former US president, who is currently the focus of the Commission of Inquiry's investigation into the storming of Capitol Hill on January 6, when Trump incited his hard-line supporters to confrontation by refusing to accept the outcome of the vote and work to overturn it instead. If the term 'unique' were to be used in these elections, it should be applied to the overwhelming presence of a defeated former president who is still trying to conquer the political stage and overthrow the very party that brought him victory in the 2016 election. For **Tania Christina Tetlow**, the first woman and layperson to be president of Fordham University, the Jesuit university in New York, there have always been two competing instincts in American political values that are at play in the Midterm elections: individualism and

---

communitarianism. "Individualism drives the search for opportunity and human freedom while communitarianism defines a common good and teaches us civic virtue," Tetlow explains in the Jesuit review "America." While the balance of these values has served the country well in its development, Fordham's president argues, "right now, unchecked individualism is trouncing our communitarian norms, poisoning our political discourse with unfettered selfishness that refuses to see our neighbours as one human family, deserving of respect and dignity," while the US needs those common values to push back against growing movements of hatred and political violence that are undermining not only the Midterm elections, but also the country's democratic foundations.

Maddalena Maltese