



## Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation

### December 2023 Public Opinion Poll – English Excerpt

Released:

**December 29, 2023**

**Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation (TPOF)** today released the result of its December 2023 nation-wide poll. This marks the 89th monthly survey conducted by the TPOF aimed at tracking the development and changes in Taiwan’s public opinion. It is also the final TPOF poll released ahead of Taiwan’s January 2024 presidential and legislative elections. The full release in Chinese language is available on our official website.

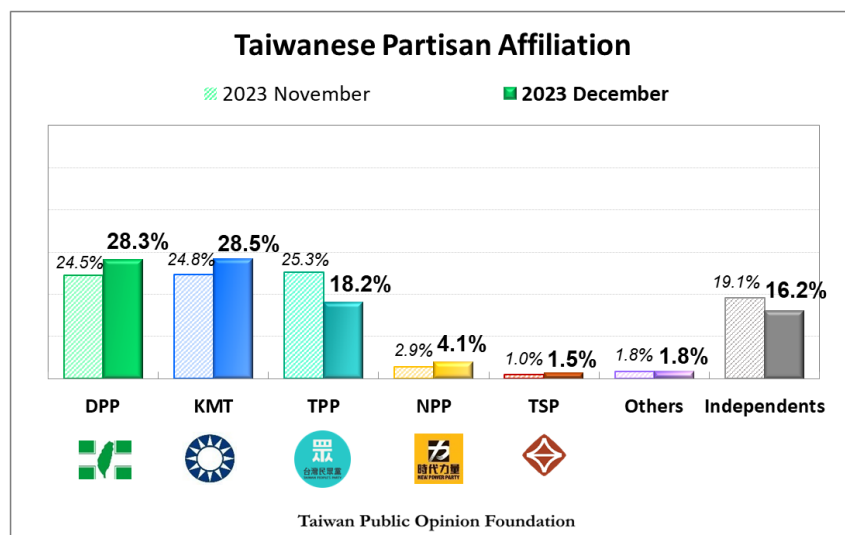
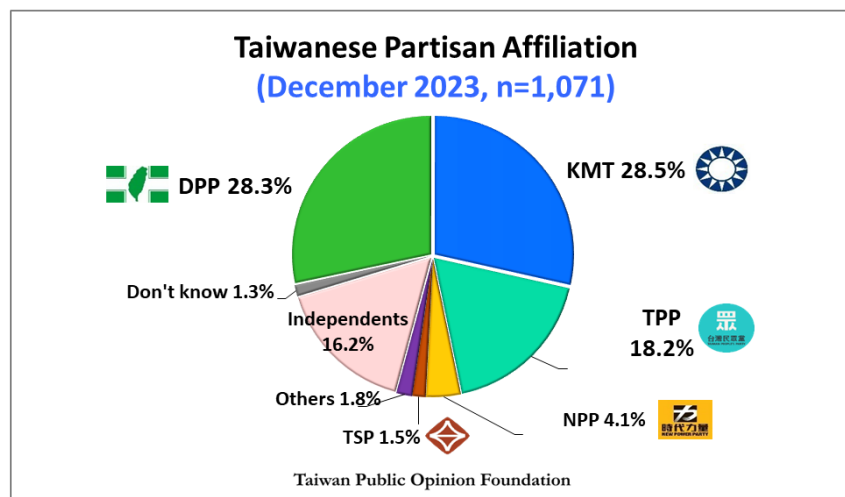
#### **How the Survey was Conducted**

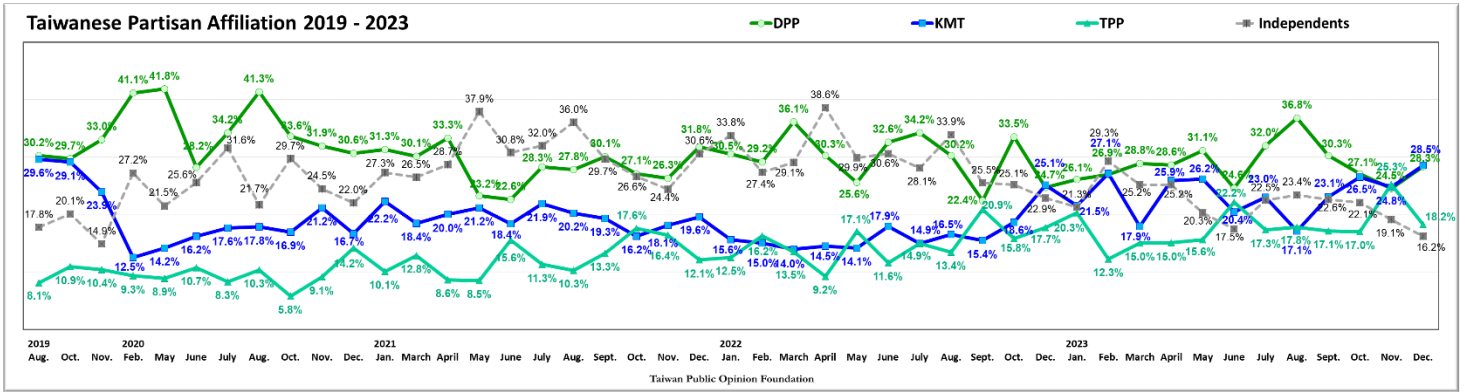
This survey was conducted on December 22-24, 2023, with a sample size of 1,071. Adults 20 years of age and older residing in Taiwan were interviewed by telephone using live interviewers. Landline and cellphone numbers were drawn through dual-frame random sampling with a proportion of 70% from landlines and 30% from cellphones. Samples were demographically weighted to adjust for gender, age, education and the district of residency based on the latest statistics published by the Ministry of the Interior. Sampling error is around  $\pm 2.99$  percentage points with 95% level of confidence.

## Main Findings:

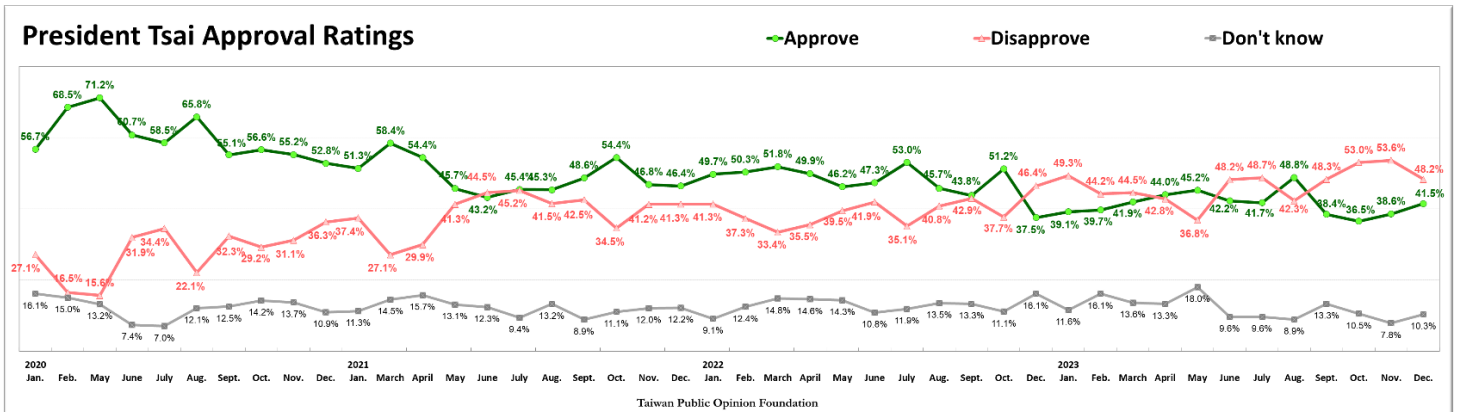
1. On political party affiliation, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 28.5% support the Kuomintang (KMT), 28.3% support the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), 18.2% support the Taiwan People's Party (TPP), 4.1% support the New Power Party (NPP), 1.5% support the Taiwan State-building Party (TSP), and 16.2% respondents identified themselves as independents. With just 19 days before the general election, the opposition KMT has now overtaken the ruling DPP as the most popular political party, albeit within a tiny margin. But this does mean voters who oppose the ruling DPP have now coalesced around the KMT. The TPP on the other hand suffered a major setback in party support consistent with Ko's drop in presidential support.

As partisan affiliation is a direct indicator of electoral strength in legislative elections, the KMT overtaking the DPP in this final poll is an alarm bell for the ruling party's attempt to maintain its legislative majority next year.

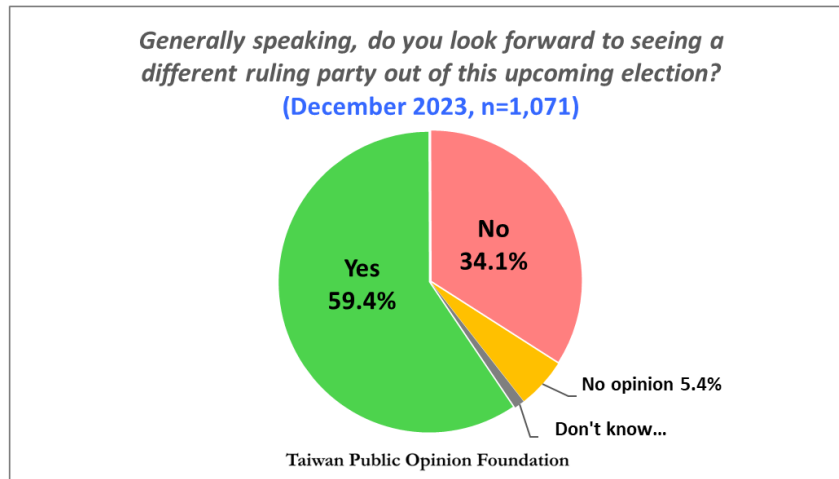




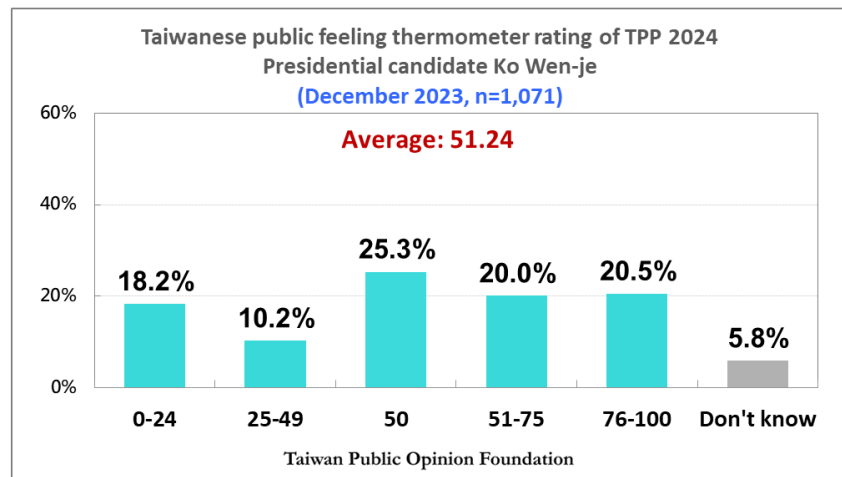
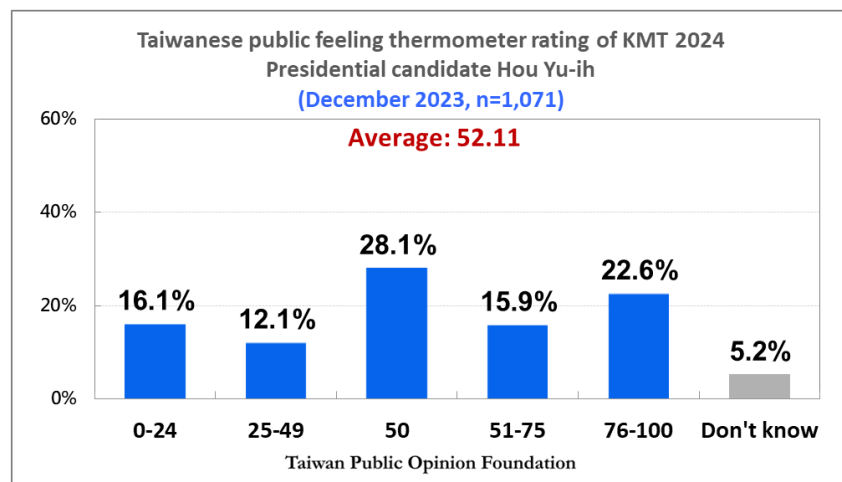
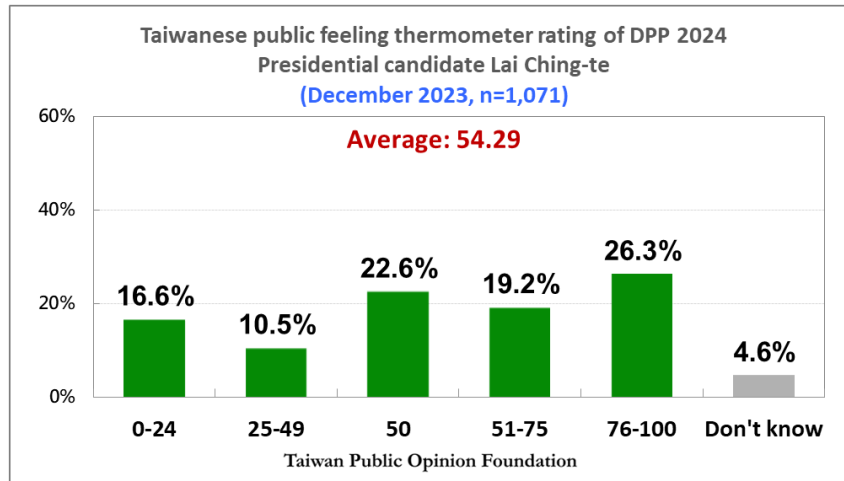
2. On Presidential job approval rating, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 48.2% disapproved of the way Tsai Ing-wen is handling her job as the President, while a minority of 41.5% approved of her. Compared to last month's poll, the number of those who disapproved of Tsai's noticeably decreased but still have the majority. With election day closing in, this majority disapproval of the ruling DPP government will have some negative impact on DPP presidential candidate Lai's support, as well as the prospects of DPP's legislative candidates.



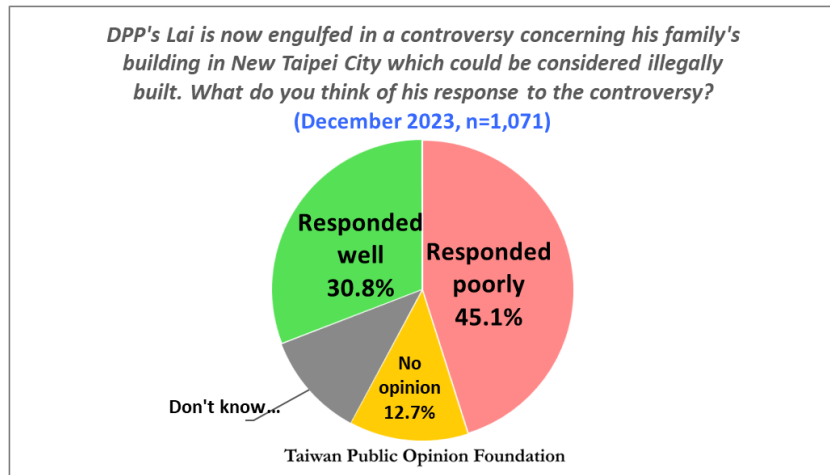
3. The poll asked whether respondents are interested in seeing a change of ruling party in the upcoming election. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 59% said they would like to see a change in ruling party, while a minority of 34% do not. This means that a majority of Taiwanese public desire to see a different ruling party after eight years of Tsai's DPP governance.



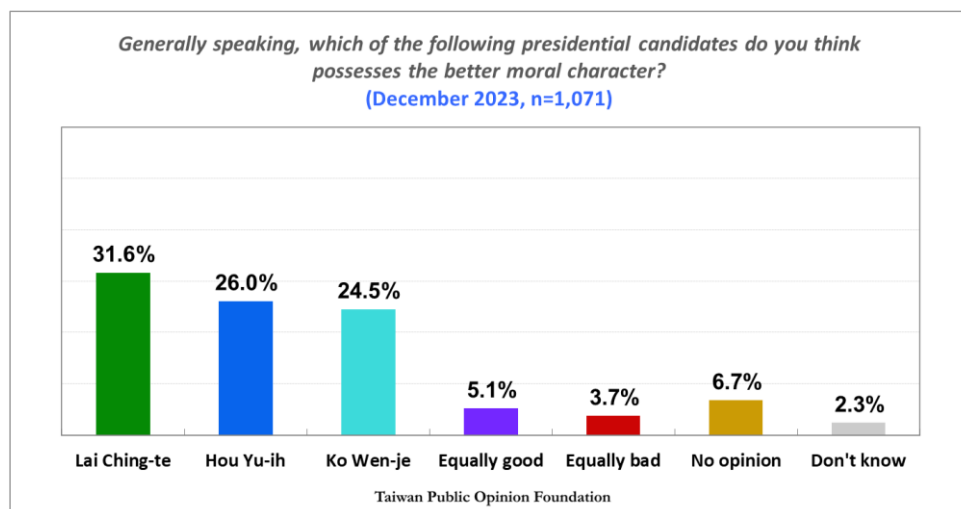
4. The poll asked respondents to rate three major presidential candidates on a *feeling thermometer* between 0 and 100 – whereas 0 is the most negative and 100 is the most positive. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, it was found that:
- Lai Ching-te received an average temperature of 54 – the highest among all three presidential candidates. However, this level of feeling indicates a relative lack of enthusiasm and adoration among the public comparing to previous successful presidential candidates including Tsai Ing-wen (who had 57.9 in 2020 election) and Ma Ying-jeo (who had 57.6 in 2012).
  - Hou You-ih received an average temperature of 52. Hou has recovered somewhat from earlier in 2023, when he received an average temperature as low as 48. However, he has yet to reclaim his former popularity when he was as high as 68 back in December 2022.
  - Ko Wen-je received an average temperature of 51, the lowest among all three candidates. While still higher than 50, Ko has not won the hearts and minds of the majority of Taiwanese public, regardless of his strength with the youngest voters.
  - Overall, all three candidates receive average temperatures around the lower 50s, which indicates none of them has Taiwanese majority’s adoration. If we assume the outcome of the election is determined by a popularity contest, it can be said that no candidate right now has a clear and decisive advantage in popularity over other candidates.



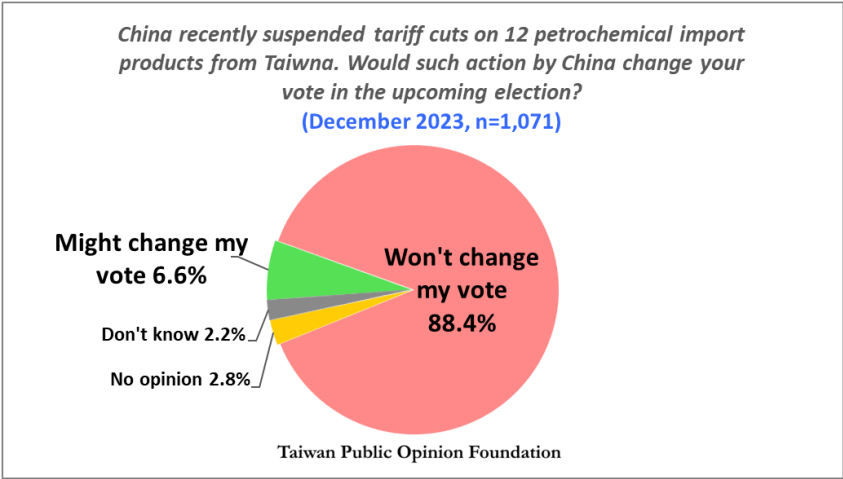
- DPP's presidential candidate Lai Ching-te has recently been engulfed in a [controversy](#) concerning his family's building which is accused to have contained illegally built structures. The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 45% said they perceived Lai's response to the controversy as poor or inadequate while only 30% thought he responded well.



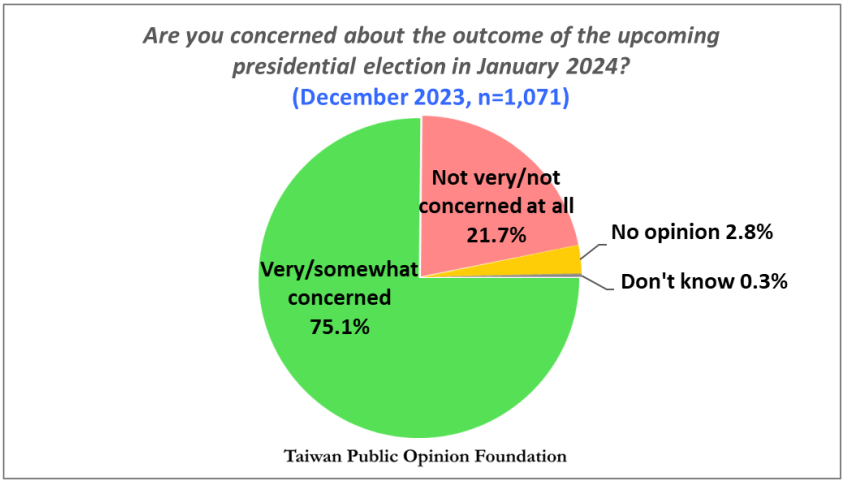
6. The poll asked respondents which presidential candidate they think possesses better moral character. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, Lai received the most endorsement with 31.6%, followed by Hou at 26%, and Ko came last at 24.5%. As the presidential campaign heated up, all three candidates have come under various attacks regarding their personal past, behaviors, and finances. This result indicates that Lai still has the relative majority endorsement of his character, despite the ongoing allegations and controversy surrounding him.

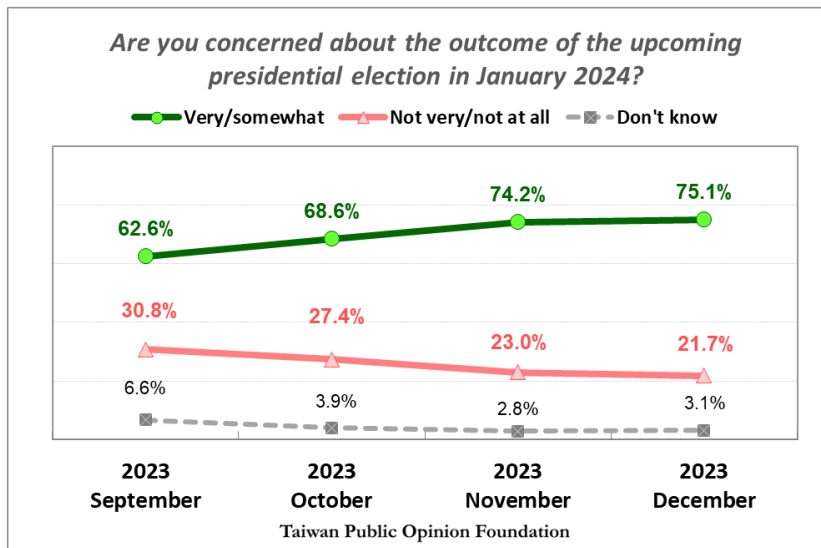


7. China recently announced it would end tariff cuts on petrochemical import products from Taiwan, an act that Taiwan ruling government criticized as “meddling in Taiwan’s election.” The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a mass majority of 88% said such move by China would not change their vote in the upcoming election, while only 6% said it might. This means that the so-called “coercive” techniques employed by China have negligible effect on Taiwanese voters in the election.

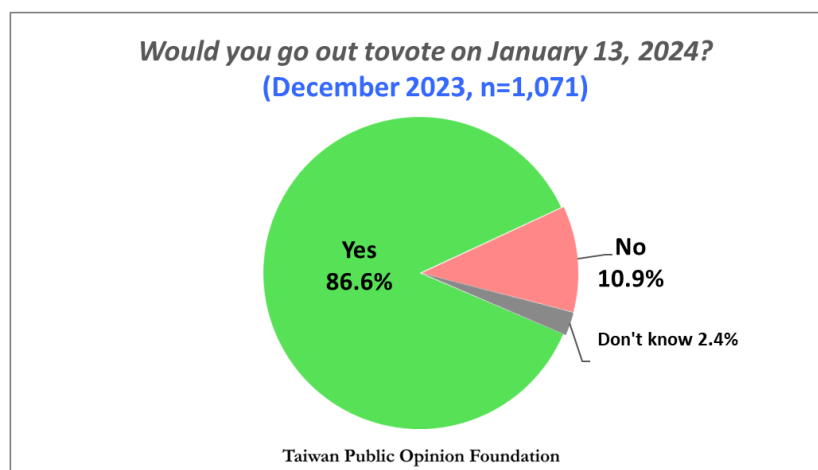


8. Taiwan is scheduled to hold the next presidential election on January 13, 2024. The poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 75.1% said they are concerned about the outcome of the election, while 21.7% are not concerned. Compared to results from November, the number of people who are concerned continues to increase, and by now fully three-quarters of the Taiwanese public are concerned about this upcoming election.





9. Regarding voter turnout, the poll asked respondents whether they would vote on January 13, 2024. Among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a mass majority of 86.6% said they would go out to vote, while only 10.9% said they would not. While this is a high percentage of people committed to vote, it is less than the pre-election poll done in 2020 when 92% said they would go to vote, but still higher than 2016 when only 85% said they would vote. Considering the actual turnout has usually been less than the percentage who said they would vote in pre-election polls, the turnout in this upcoming election could very well dip below 70%.

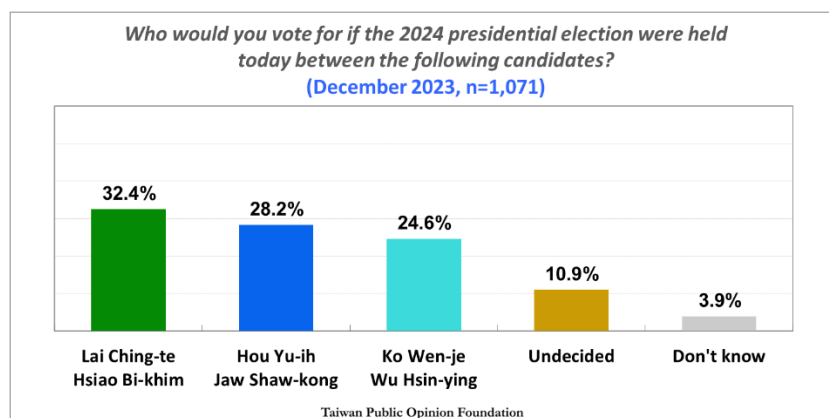


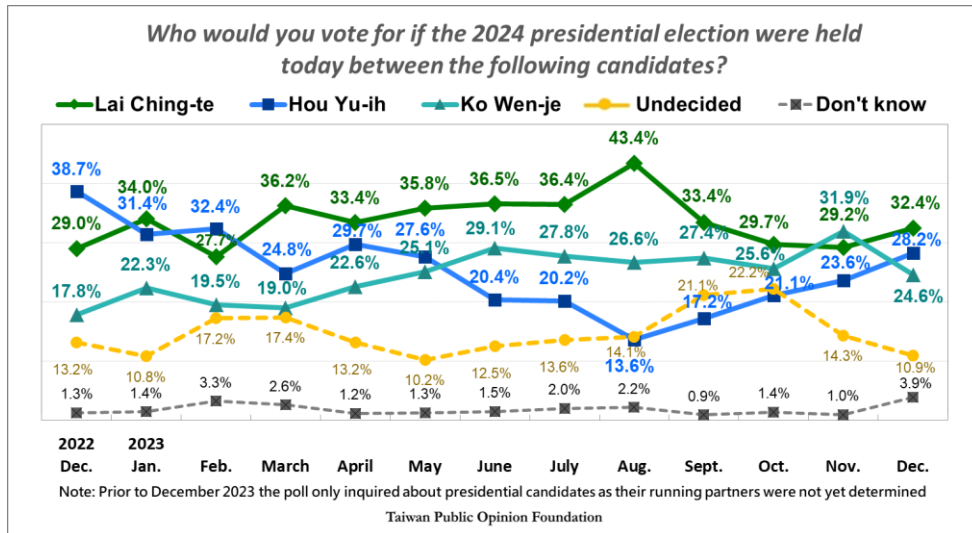
10. On the 2024 presidential election, the poll finds among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, Vice President Lai Ching-te of the ruling DPP leads at 32.4%, while New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih of the KMT came second at 28.2%, and former Taipei City Mayor Ko Wen-je of the TPP came third at 24.6%. This is also the first TPOF poll done after all three candidates' vice presidential picks were



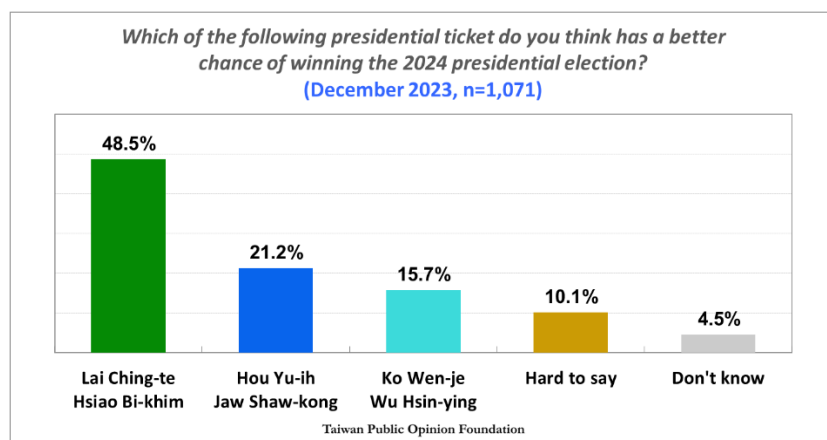
announced. With just 19 days until election, Lai has held onto a small lead of just 4% above KMT's Hou, while Ko clearly suffered a significant drop in support since November. Some additional observations:

- Supporters of all three parties have now coalesced around their nominated candidates. However, KMT supporters are still the most hesitant in supporting their candidate as only 78% said they would vote for Hou. Among independents, 18% said they would vote for Ko, 17% for Lai, and 10% for Hou.
- Ko maintains a dominant lead among young voters from 20-44. Hou has the relative advantage among mid-age voters of 45-54, while Lai has the most support among older voters above 55. Among those 65 and above, 43% support Lai, 35% support Hou, and only 4.7% support Ko.
- In terms of education attainments, Ko leads among the most educated population with college and above, while Hou leads among those with vocational education, and Lai leads among those with the least education attainments.
- In terms of professions, Lai leads among business owners, stay-at-home moms, industrial workers, and unemployed people. Ko finds the most support among white collar workers and students. Surprisingly Hou is leading among farmers, a group that DPP traditionally dominated.



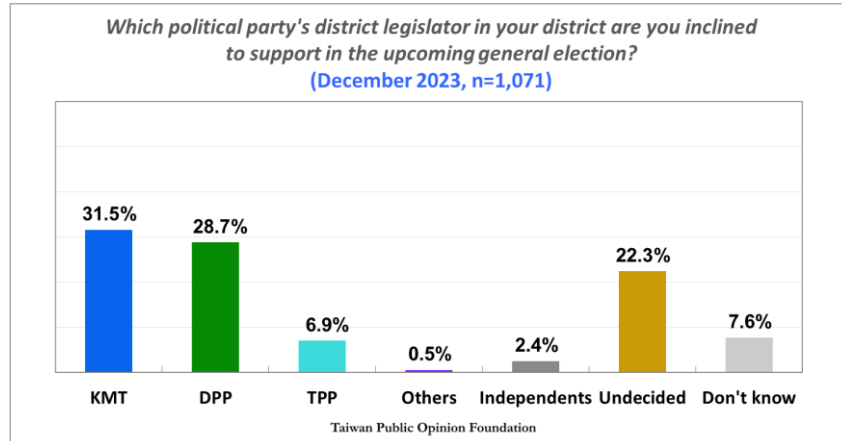


11. The poll found among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, a majority of 48.5% think Lai will win the 2024 presidential election, while only 21.2% think Hou will win, and 15.7% think Ko will win. With just days to go until election, most Taiwanese clearly see the ruling DPP’s Lai as the frontrunner most likely to win.



12. Taiwan’s general election on January 13, 2024 will also elect a new set of legislators for Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan, which is Taiwan’s unicameral parliament. Approximately two-third of the legislators are of district legislators, who are elected from their respective, single-member districts via a first-past-the-post voting system. The poll found among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 31.5% said they plan to vote for KMT’s district legislator candidates, while 28.7% plan to vote for DPP’s, and only 6.9% plan to vote for TPP’s. Despite DPP’s presidential candidate Lai is leading the race, the ruling party is still lagging the KMT in district legislative races. This also means there is a high

likelihood that the DPP will lose its legislative majority in the upcoming election. Due to having nominated much fewer candidates in district races, the TPP expectedly only received a small support in this poll.



13. Approximately one-third of Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan legislators are elected through a party-list system where voters would vote for one preferred political party and the available seats are distributed to parties in proportion to votes received. The poll found among Taiwanese adults aged 20 years and older, 31.5% said they plan to vote for KMT’s party-list, while 28.9% support the DPP, and 18.4% support the TPP. The KMT is leading not only in the district races but also the party-list race, while the TPP might win a sizeable portion of the party-list given its support. Based on the current balance, the KMT might win fourteen out of the thirty-four seats, while DPP might win twelve, and TPP the remaining eight.

