

FOR RELEASE APRIL 26, 2018

# The Public, the Political System and American Democracy

*Most say ‘design and structure’ of government need big changes*

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**RECOMMENDED CITATION**

Pew Research Center, April, 2018, “The Public, the Political System and American Democracy”

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# Table of Contents

<b>The Public, the Political System and American Democracy.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Democracy and government, the U.S. political system, elected officials and governmental institutions .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2. Views of American democratic values and principles .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3. Elections in the U.S.: Priorities and performance .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4. Democracy, the presidency and views of the parties .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>5. The Electoral College, Congress and representation .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>6. Quality and responsiveness of elected officials.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>7. Democratic debates and the stakes of politics .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>8. The tone of political debate, compromise with political opponents.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>9. The responsibilities of citizenship.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>10. Political engagement, knowledge and the midterms.....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Methodology.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Appendix A: Measures and scales .....</b>	<b>117</b>

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# The Public, the Political System and American Democracy

## Most say ‘design and structure’ of government need big changes

At a time of growing stress on democracy around the world, Americans generally agree on democratic ideals and values that are important for the United States. But for the most part, they see the country falling well short in living up to these ideals, according to a new study of opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of key aspects of American democracy and the political system.

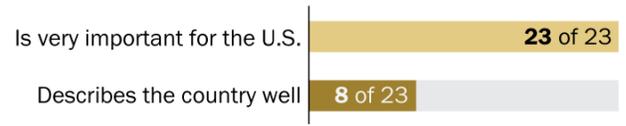
The public’s criticisms of the political system run the gamut, from a failure to hold elected officials accountable to a lack of transparency in government. And just a third say the phrase “people agree on basic facts even if they disagree politically” describes this country well today.

The perceived shortcomings encompass some of the core elements of American democracy. An overwhelming share of the public (84%) says it is very important that “the rights and freedoms of all people are respected.” Yet just 47% say this describes the country very or somewhat well; slightly more (53%) say it does not.

Despite these criticisms, most Americans say democracy is working well in the United States – though relatively few say it is working *very* well. At the same time, there is broad support for making sweeping changes to the political system: 61% say “significant changes” are needed in the fundamental “design and structure” of American government to make it work for current times.

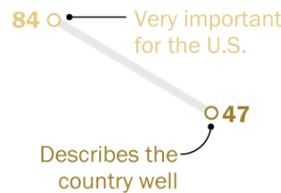
### Democracy in America: Ideals vs. reality

Across 23 items assessing the democratic system in U.S., number with a majority saying each ...



.....  
% who say ...

#### Rights and freedoms of all people are respected



#### Elected officials face serious consequences for misconduct



#### People are free to peacefully protest



#### Congressional districts are fairly drawn



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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The public sends mixed signals about *how* the American political system should be changed, and no proposals attract bipartisan support. Yet in views of how many of the specific aspects of the political system are working, both Republicans and Democrats express dissatisfaction.

To be sure, there are some positives. A sizable majority of Americans (74%) say the military leadership in the U.S. does not publicly support one party over another, and nearly as many (73%) say the phrase “people are free to peacefully protest” describes this country very or somewhat well.

In general, however, there is a striking mismatch between the public’s goals for American democracy and its views of whether they are being fulfilled. On 23 specific measures assessing democracy, the political system and elections in the United States – each widely regarded by the public as very important – there are only eight on which majorities say the country is doing even somewhat well.

The new survey of the public’s views of democracy and the political system by Pew Research Center was conducted online Jan. 29-Feb. 13 among 4,656 adults. It was supplemented by a survey conducted March 7-14 among 1,466 adults on landlines and cellphones.

Among the major findings:

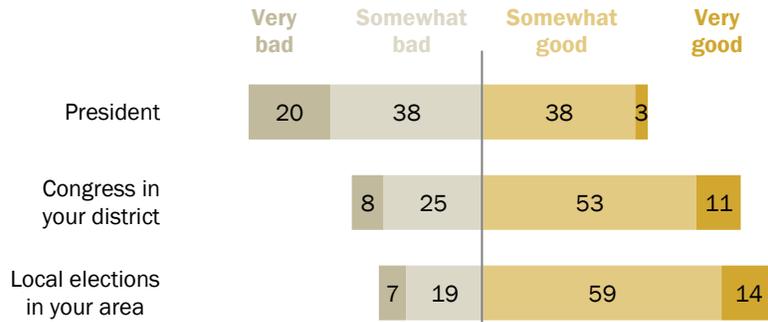
**Mixed views of structural changes in the political system.** The surveys examine several possible changes to representative democracy in the United States. Most Americans reject the idea of amending the Constitution to give states with larger populations more seats in the U.S. Senate, and there is little support for expanding the size of the House of Representatives. As in the past, however, a majority (55%) supports changing the way presidents are elected so that the candidate who receives the most total votes nationwide – rather than a majority in the Electoral College – wins the presidency.

**A majority says Trump lacks respect for democratic institutions.** Fewer than half of Americans (45%) say Donald Trump has a great deal or fair amount of respect for the country’s democratic institutions and traditions, while 54% say he has not too much respect or no respect. These views are deeply split along partisan and ideological lines. Most conservative Republicans (55%) say Trump has a “great deal” of respect for democratic institutions; most liberal Democrats (60%) say he has no respect “at all” for these traditions and institutions.

**Government and politics seen as working better locally than nationally.** Far more Americans have a favorable opinion of their local government (67%) than of the federal government (35%). In addition, there is substantial satisfaction with the quality of candidates running for Congress and local elections in recent elections. That stands in contrast with views of the recent presidential candidates; just 41% say the quality of presidential candidates in recent elections has been good.

### Views of candidate quality much less positive for presidential elections than for local contests

*% who say, in general, the quality of candidates running for \_\_\_\_\_ in the last several elections has been ...*



Note: Each respondent asked about candidates in one type of office (sample randomly divided). See topline for full question wording. No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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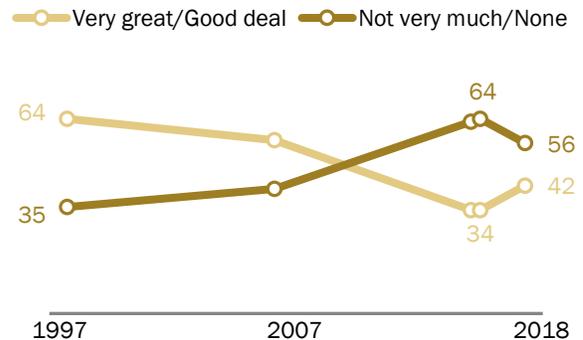
**Few say tone of political debate is ‘respectful.’** Just a quarter of Americans say “the tone of debate among political leaders is respectful” is a statement that describes the country well. However, the public is more divided in general views about tone and discourse: 55% say too many people are “easily offended” over the language others use; 45% say people need to be more careful in using language “to avoid offending” others.

**Americans don't spare themselves from criticism.** In addressing the shortcomings of the political system, Americans do not spare themselves from criticism: Just 39% say “voters are knowledgeable about candidates and issues” describes the country very or somewhat well. In addition, a 56% majority say they have little or no confidence in the political wisdom of the American people. However, that is less negative than in early 2016, when 64% had little or no confidence. Since the presidential election, Republicans have become more confident in people's political wisdom.

**Cynicism about money and politics.** Most Americans think that those who donate a lot of money to elected officials have more political influence than others. An overwhelming majority (77%) supports limits on the amount of money individuals and organizations can spend on political campaigns and issues. And nearly two-thirds of Americans (65%) say new laws could be effective in reducing the role of money in politics.

### Most have little or no confidence in political wisdom of the American people

*% saying they have \_\_\_ of trust and confidence in the wisdom of American people in making political decisions*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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### Varying views of obligations of good citizenship.

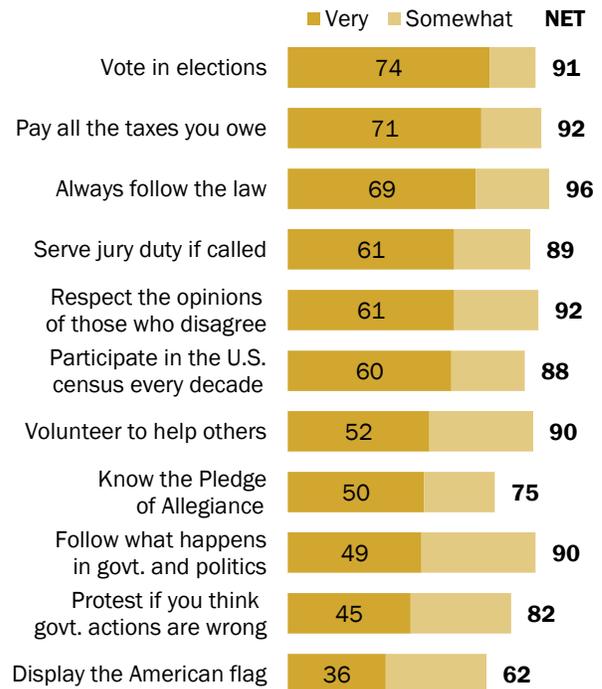
Large majorities say it is very important to vote, pay taxes and always follow the law in order to be a good citizen. Half of Americans say it is very important to know the Pledge of Allegiance, while 45% say it is very important to protest government actions a person believes is wrong. Just 36% say displaying the American flag is very important to being a good citizen.

### Most are aware of basic facts about political system and democracy.

Overwhelming shares correctly identify the constitutional right guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution and know the role of the Electoral College. A narrower majority knows how a tied vote is broken in the Senate, while fewer than half know the number of votes needed to break a Senate filibuster. ([Take the civics knowledge quiz.](#))

## What's important to good citizenship? Voting, paying taxes, following the law

*% who say it is \_\_\_ important to what it means to be a good citizen to ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## Democracy seen as working well, but most say ‘significant changes’ are needed

In general terms, most Americans think U.S. democracy is working at least somewhat well. Yet a 61% majority says “significant changes” are needed in the fundamental “design and structure” of American government to make it work in current times. When asked to compare the U.S. political system with those of other developed nations, fewer than half rate it “above average” or “best in the world.”

Overall, nearly six-in-ten Americans (58%) say democracy in the United States is working very or somewhat well, though just 18% say it is working *very* well. Four-in-ten say it is working not too well or not at all well.

Republicans have more positive views of the way democracy is working than do Democrats: 72% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say democracy in the U.S. is working at least somewhat well, though only 30% say it is working very well. Among Democrats and Democratic leaners, 48% say democracy works at least somewhat well, with just 7% saying it is working very well.

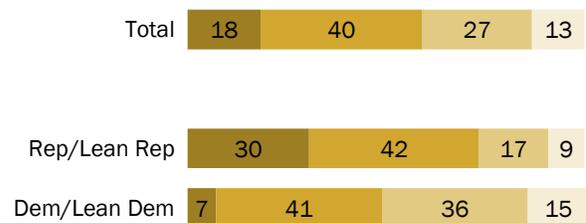
More Democrats than Republicans say significant changes are needed in the design and structure of government. By more than two-to-one (68% to 31%), Democrats say significant changes are needed. Republicans are evenly divided: 50% say significant changes are needed in the structure of government, while 49% say the current structure serves the country well and does not need significant changes.

The public has mixed evaluations of the nation’s political system compared with those of other developed countries. About four-in-ten say the U.S. political system is the best in the world (15%) or above average (26%); most say it is average (28%) or below average (29%), when compared

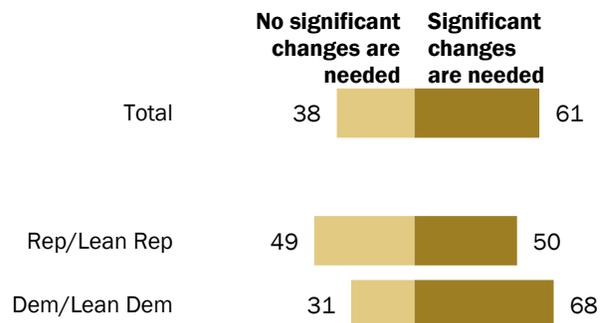
### Most Democrats favor major changes in ‘design’ of govt.; Republicans are split

% who say democracy is working \_\_\_ in the U.S. today

■ Very well ■ Somewhat well ■ Not too well ■ Not at all well



Thinking about the fundamental design and structure of American government, % who say that ...



Note: Don't know/no answer responses not shown.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13 and March 7-14, 2018.

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with other developed nations. Several other national institutions and aspects of life in the U.S. – including the military, standard of living and scientific achievements – are more highly rated than the political system.

Republicans are about twice as likely as Democrats to say the U.S. political system is best in the world or above average (58% vs. 27%). As recently as four years ago, there were no partisan differences in these opinions.

## Bipartisan criticism of political system in a number of areas

Majorities in both parties say “people are free to peacefully protest” describes the U.S. well. And there is bipartisan sentiment that the military leadership in the U.S. does not publicly favor one party over another.

In most cases, however, partisans differ on how well the country lives up to democratic ideals – or majorities in both parties say it is falling short.

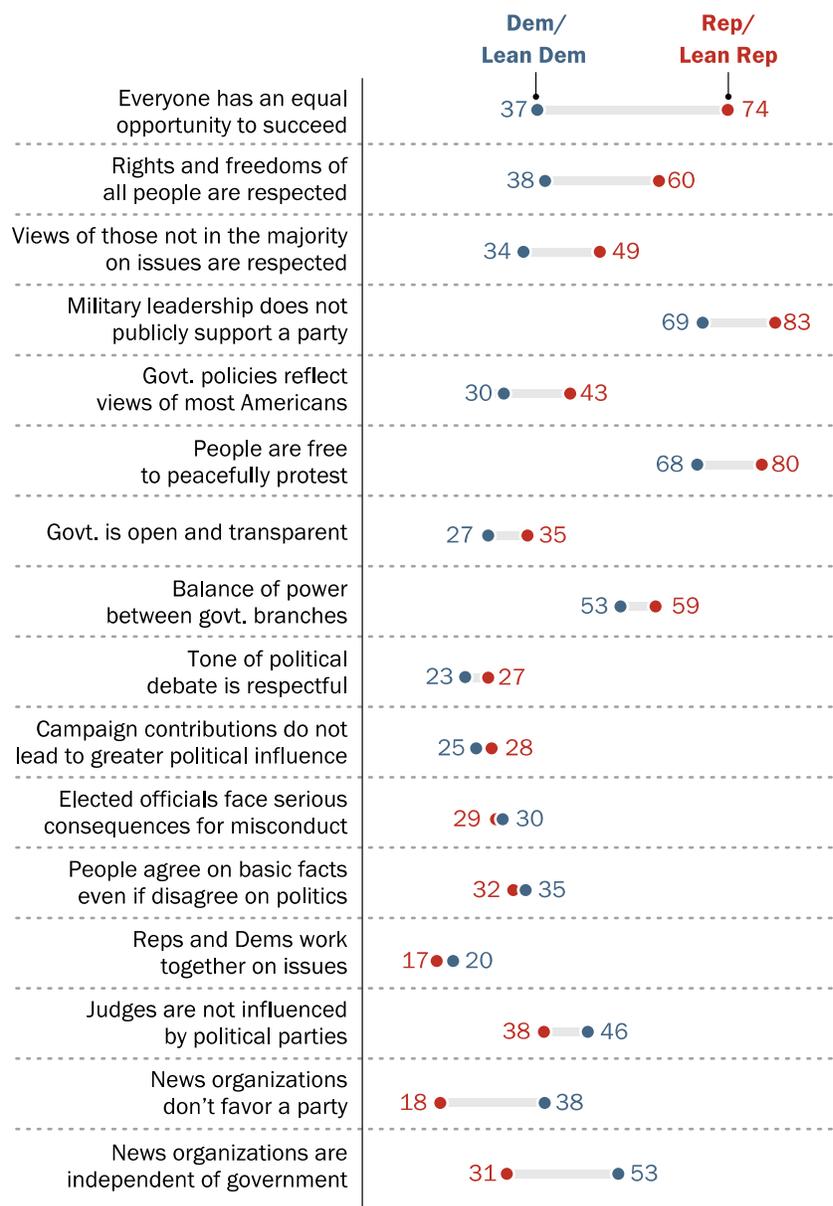
Some of the most pronounced partisan differences are in views of equal opportunity in the U.S. and whether the rights and freedoms of all people are respected.

Republicans are twice as likely as Democrats to say “everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed” describes the United States very or somewhat well (74% vs. 37%).

A majority of Republicans (60%) say the rights and freedoms of all people are respected in the United

### Wide partisan gaps in views of some aspects of political system, criticism from both parties on others

% of \_\_\_ who say each describes the country *very/somewhat* well ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29- Feb.13, 2018.

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States, compared with just 38% of Democrats.

And while only about half of Republicans (49%) say the country does well in respecting “the views of people who are not in the majority on issues,” even fewer Democrats (34%) say this.

No more than about a third in either party say elected officials who engage in misconduct face serious consequences or that government “conducts its work openly and transparently.”

Comparably small shares in both parties (28% of Republicans, 25% of Democrats) say the following sentence describes the country well: “People who give a lot of money to elected officials *do not* have more political influence than other people.”

Fewer than half in both parties also say news organizations do not favor one political party, though Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say this describes the country well (38% vs. 18%). There also is skepticism in both parties about the political independence of judges. Nearly half of Democrats (46%) and 38% of Republicans say judges are not influenced by political parties.

## Partisan gaps in opinions about many aspects of U.S. elections

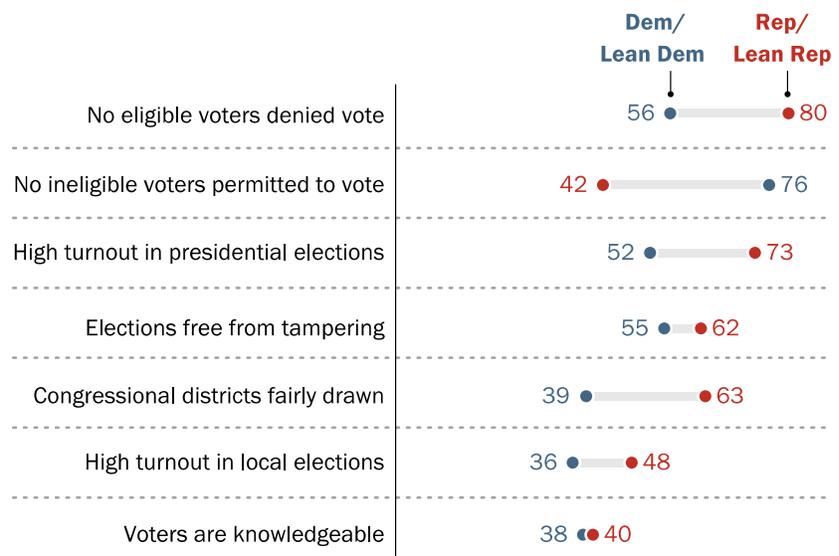
For the most part, Democrats and Republicans agree about the importance of many principles regarding elections in the U.S.

Overwhelming shares in both parties say it is very important that elections are free from tampering (91% of Republicans, 88% of Democrats say this) and that voters are knowledgeable about candidates and issues (78% in both parties).

But there are some notable differences: Republicans are almost 30 percentage points more likely than Democrats to say it is very important that “no ineligible voters are

### Republicans, Democrats have starkly different perceptions of voting by eligible and ineligible voters

*% who say each describes U.S. elections very/somewhat well ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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permitted to vote” (83% of Republicans vs. 55% of Democrats).

And while majorities in both parties say high turnout in presidential elections is very important, more Democrats (76%) than Republicans (64%) prioritize high voter turnout.

The differences are even starker in evaluations of how well the country is doing in fulfilling many of these objectives. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say that “no *eligible* voters are prevented from voting” describes elections in the U.S. very or somewhat well (80% vs. 56%). By contrast, more Democrats (76%) than Republicans (42%) say “no *ineligible* voters are permitted to vote” describes elections well.

Democrats – particularly politically engaged Democrats – are critical of the process for determining congressional districts. A majority of Republicans (63%) say the way congressional voting districts are determined is fair and reasonable compared with just 39% of Democrats; among Democrats who are highly politically engaged, just 29% say the process is fair.

And fewer Democrats than Republicans consider voter turnout for elections in the U.S. – both presidential and local – to be “high.” Nearly three-quarters of Republicans (73%) say “there is high voter turnout in presidential elections” describes elections well, compared with only about half of Democrats (52%).

Still, there are a few points of relative partisan agreement: Majorities in both parties (62% of Republicans, 55% of Democrats) say “elections are free from tampering.” And Republicans and Democrats are about equally skeptical about whether voters are knowledgeable about candidates and issues (40% of Republicans, 38% of Democrats).

# 1. Democracy and government, the U.S. political system, elected officials and governmental institutions

Americans are generally positive about the way democracy is working in the United States. Yet a majority also says that the “fundamental design and structure” of U.S. government is in need of “significant changes” to make it work today.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say U.S. democracy is working at least somewhat well, and less likely to say government is in need of sweeping changes.

And far more Republicans than Democrats say the U.S. political system is “best in the world” or “above average” when compared with political systems of other developed nations.

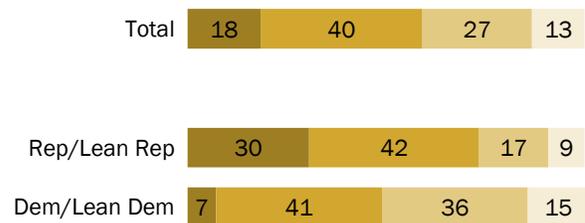
Overall, about six-in-ten Americans say democracy is working well in the U.S. today (18% very well, 40% somewhat well); four-in-ten say it is not working well (27% not too well and 13% not at all well).

About seven-in-ten (72%) Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say U.S. democracy is working very or somewhat well, compared with 48% of Democrats and Democratic leaners. Relatively small shares in both parties (30% of Republicans and just 7% of Democrats) say democracy in the U.S. is working very well.

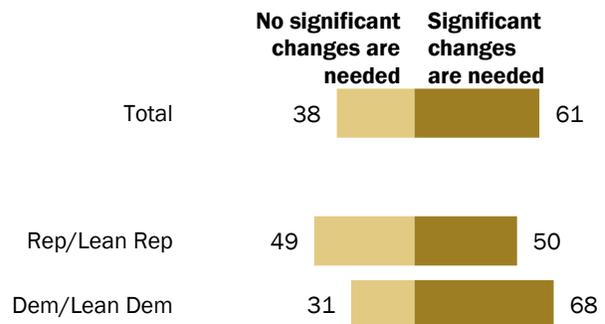
## Most Americans say nation’s democracy is working at least ‘somewhat well’

*% who say democracy is working \_\_\_ in the U.S. today*

■ Very well ■ Somewhat well ■ Not too well ■ Not at all well



*Thinking about the fundamental design and structure of American government, % who say that ...*



Note: Don't know/no answer responses not shown.  
Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13 and March 7-14, 2018.

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While a majority of Americans say democracy in this country is working well, about six-in-ten (61%) say significant changes to the fundamental design and structure of government are needed to make it work for current times; 38% say the design and structure of government serves the country well and does not need significant changes.

By roughly two-to-one (68% to 31%), Democrats say significant changes are needed, while Republicans are divided (50% to 49%) over whether or not extensive changes are needed.

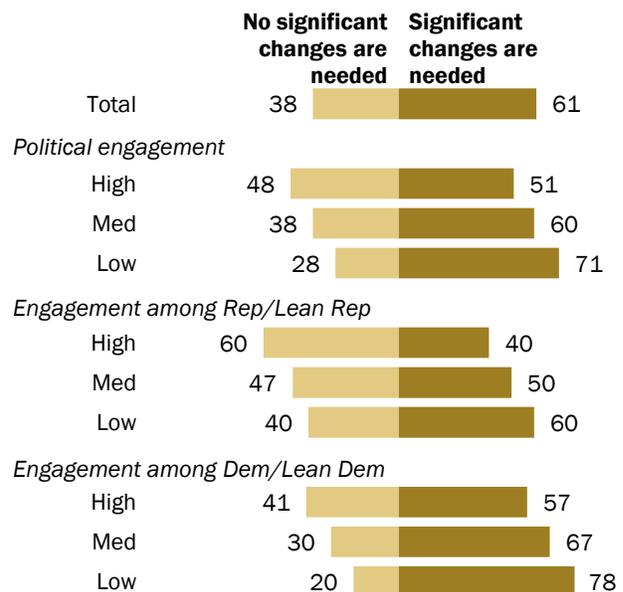
Although the view that significant changes are needed is widely held, those with higher levels of political engagement are less likely to say this than people who are less politically engaged.

Overall, those with high levels of political engagement and participation are split over whether significant changes are needed or not (51% vs. 48%). Views that the American system of government needs far-reaching reforms are more widespread among those with lower levels of engagement: 60% of those with a moderate level of engagement say this, along with 71% of those who are relatively unengaged with politics.

This pattern is evident within both partisan coalitions: 40% of Republicans and Republican leaners who are highly engaged with politics say the fundamental design and structure of American government needs significant reform, compared with 60% of low-engagement Republicans. Similarly, while a 57% majority of highly engaged Democrats and Democratic leaners say significant changes are needed, that share rises to 78% of the least politically engaged Democrats.

### Support for sweeping change in govt. is higher among less politically engaged

*Thinking about the fundamental design and structure of American government, % who say that ...*



Notes: See appendix for details of political engagement scale.

No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Across demographic groups, there are only modest differences in the shares saying that democracy is working at least somewhat well, but there are more pronounced differences on whether changes are needed to the fundamental design and structure of government.

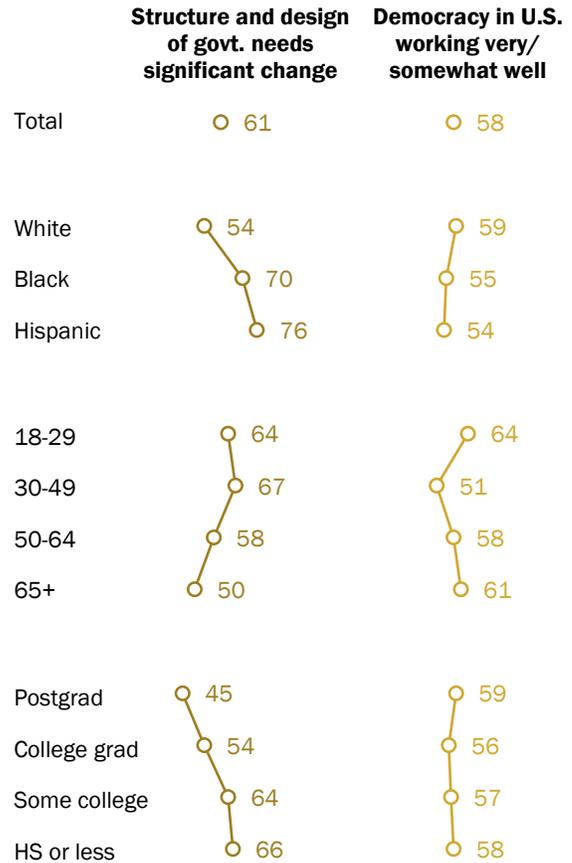
Whites (54%) are less likely than blacks (70%) and Hispanics (76%) to say the government needs significant change, but the three groups have similar assessments of American democracy's performance.

There also are significant age gaps over whether extensive change is needed to the structure and design of government, with 66% of adults younger than 50 saying this, compared with 58% of those ages 50 to 64 and 50% of those 65 and older. But age groups differ little in their evaluations of how well democracy is functioning.

Educational groups also differ little in their overall opinions of how well democracy is working. But those without a bachelor's degree (65%) are more likely to say the government needs significant change than those with a college degree (54%) or a postgraduate degree (45%).

### Racial, educational, age gaps in views of need for 'structural' change in govt.

% who say ...



Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13 and March 7-14, 2018.

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## Americans give their political system mixed grades

When asked to compare the U.S. political system with others in developed countries, only about four-in-ten Americans (41%) say it is “best in the world” or “above average.” Most (57%) say it is “average” or “below average.”

Several other national institutions and aspects of life in the U.S. are more highly rated than the political system. Nearly eight-in-ten (79%) say the U.S. military is either above average or the best in the world compared with militaries in other developed nations – with 38% calling it best in the world.

Larger shares also say the U.S. standard of living, colleges and universities, scientific achievements and economy are at least above average internationally than say that about the political system. Only the nation’s health care system (30% best in the world or above average) and public schools (18%) are rated lower.

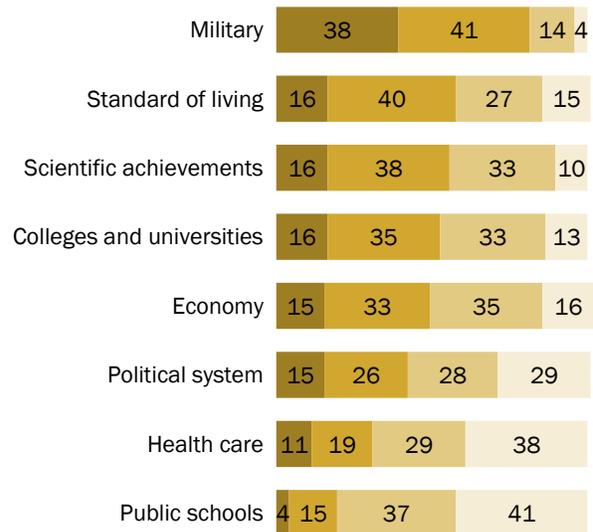
### Republicans and Republican-leaning

independents generally give the U.S. better marks for its performance on these issues than Democrats and Democratic leaners. About six-in-ten Republicans say the country’s political system is above average or the best in the world (58%), compared with about a quarter of Democrats (27%). Republicans also give the country much higher marks than Democrats on its standard of living, health care and economy.

### U.S. political system seen as no better than average compared with others

*% who say, compared with other developed nations, the United States is \_\_\_ in its ...*

■ Best in world ■ Above average ■ Average ■ Below average



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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The shares of Republicans and Democrats giving the U.S. high marks on several of these national institutions and aspects of American life have diverged sharply since 2014.

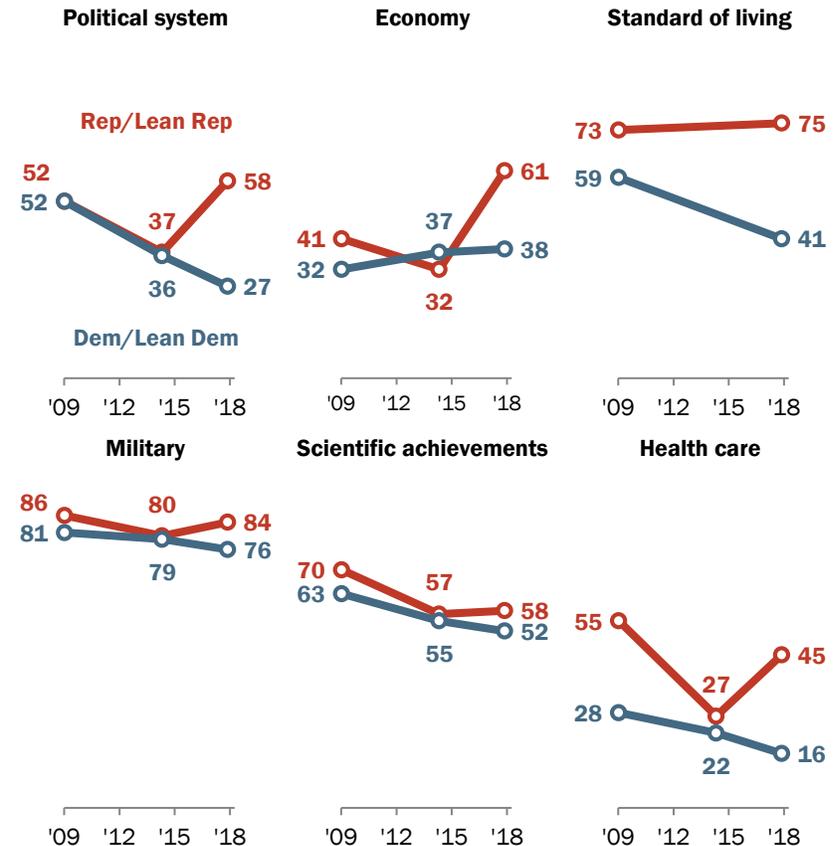
Today, Republicans are about twice as likely as Democrats to say the U.S. political system is above average or the best in the world (58% vs. 27%).

In 2014, about four-in-ten members of both parties gave the political system a positive rating (37% of Republicans, 36% of Democrats); in 2009, identical shares of Republicans and Democrats (52% each) said the U.S. political system was at least above average.

Partisan divides are growing in other areas as well. For example, 61% of Republicans and just 38% of Democrats describe the U.S. economy as best in the world or above average. Partisan differences in these assessments were much more modest in 2014 and 2009.

### Wider partisan gaps in views of how U.S. political system, other sectors compare internationally

*% who say the U.S. is best in the world or above average compared with other developed nations in its ...*



Notes: Standard of living not asked in August 2014. In previous years, question asked about U.S. relative to other “industrialized nations.”

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Little public confidence in elected officials

Americans express little confidence in elected officials to act in the best interests of the public. Just a quarter say they have a great deal (3%) or fair amount (22%) of confidence in elected officials.

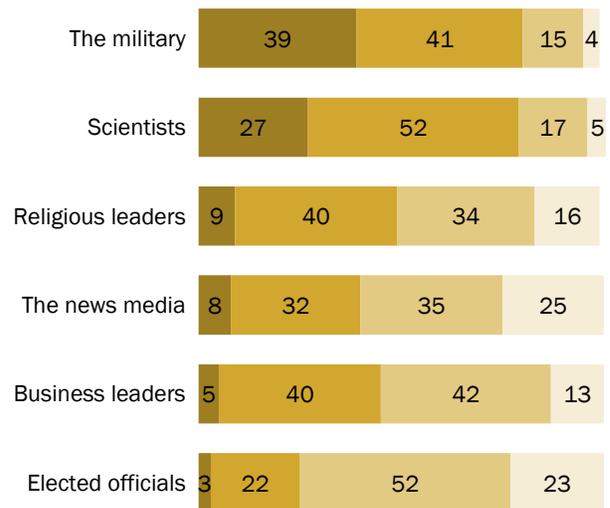
That is by far the lowest level of confidence in the six groups included in the survey. Large majorities say they have a great deal or fair amount of confidence in the military (80%) and scientists (79%). In addition, higher shares express confidence in religious leaders (49%), business leaders (44%) and the news media (40%).

Overall public confidence in these groups is little changed since 2016, but in some cases – including elected officials – the views among Republicans and Democrats have shifted.

### Elected officials draw less confidence than other institutions and leaders

*% who say they have \_\_\_ confidence in each to act in the best interests of the public*

■ Great deal ■ Fair amount ■ Not too much ■ None at all



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Though majorities of both Republicans and Democrats continue to express little or no confidence in public officials, Republicans (36%) are more likely than Democrats (17%) to express at least a fair amount of confidence in elected officials to act in the public interest. Two years ago, more Democrats (32%) than Republicans (22%) had confidence in elected officials.

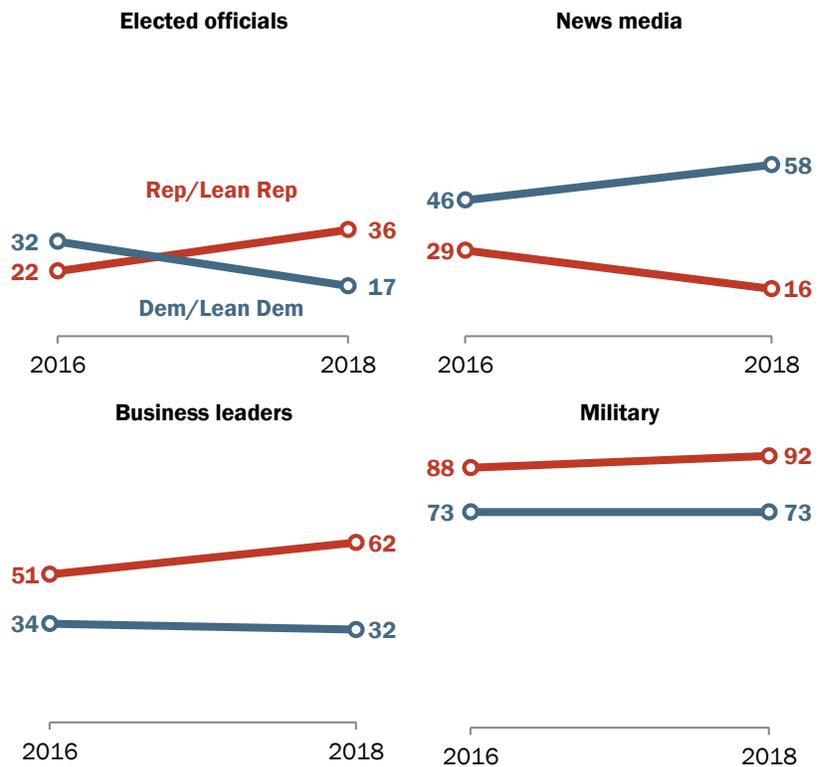
The partisan gap in confidence in the news media also has widened considerably. Today, 58% of Democrats and just 16% of Republicans are confident in the news media to act in the public interest. Since 2016, the share expressing at least a fair amount of confidence in the news media has increased 12 percentage points among Democrats, while falling 13 points among Republicans.

And more Republicans have confidence in business leaders than did so two years ago (62% now, 51% then). Far fewer Democrats express confidence in business leaders (32%), and their views are little changed from two years ago.

Republicans also express more confidence in the military (92%) than do Democrats (73%), and the gap has not changed much since 2016.

### Republicans and Democrats diverge in views of elected officials, news media, business leaders

*% who say they have great deal or fair amount of confidence in \_\_\_ to act in the best interests of the public*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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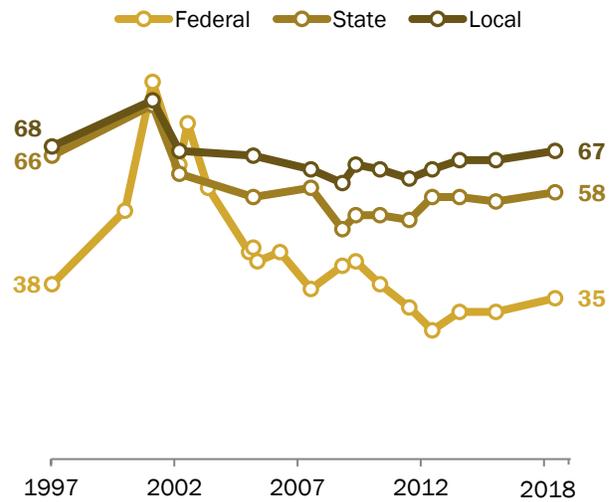
## State, local governments viewed more favorably than federal government

Americans have more favorable opinions of their state and local governments than the federal government in Washington. Two-thirds say they view their local government favorably, and 58% have favorable views of their state government. Only 35% of adults report a favorable opinion of the federal government.

Views of federal, state and local government have changed little over the past decade. Favorable opinions of the federal government have fallen significantly since peaking in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

### Federal government consistently viewed less favorably than state and local govt.

*% who have a favorable opinion of \_\_\_ government*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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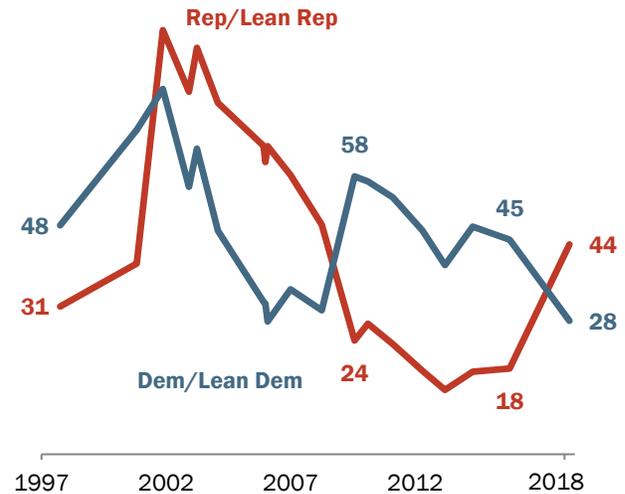
While overall views of the federal government in Washington are largely unchanged from late 2015, Republicans and Democrats have moved in opposite directions since then.

Today, 44% of Republicans and Republican leaners have a favorable opinion of the federal government, compared with 28% of Democrats and Democratic leaners. In 2015, views of the federal government were reversed: 45% of Democrats had a favorable view versus 18% of Republicans. Republicans' and Democrats' views of the federal government also flipped between 2008 and 2009, when Barack Obama won the presidency.

There are much smaller partisan differences in favorability toward states and local government. Majorities in both parties (61% of Republicans, 55% of Democrats) have favorable impressions of their state government; similar shares in both parties (69% of Republicans, 68% of Democrats) view their local governments favorably.

## Favorable views of federal govt. among Republicans have risen since election

*% who have a favorable opinion of federal government*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Views of Congress and the Supreme Court

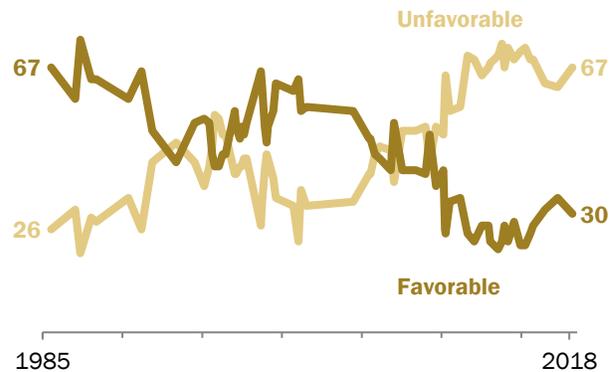
Views of Congress remain extremely negative: Two-thirds of Americans say they have an unfavorable view of Congress, compared with 30% saying their view is favorable. The share expressing unfavorable views has increased slightly from a year ago (62%).

With their party in control of both houses of Congress, Republicans' views are slightly more favorable than Democrats: 37% of Republicans and Republican leaners say this versus 24% of Democrats and Democratic leaners.

Republican's attitudes are more negative than a year ago, when 44% had a favorable opinion. Views among Democrats are mostly unchanged.

### Ratings of Congress remain negative

% who have a \_\_\_ view of Congress



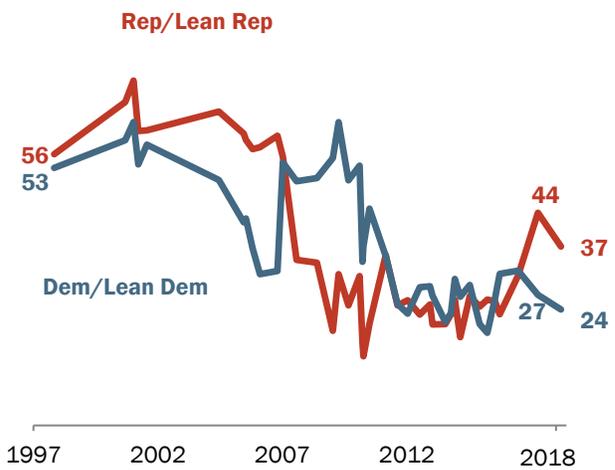
Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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### Republicans' views of Congress are less favorable than a year ago

% who have a favorable view of Congress



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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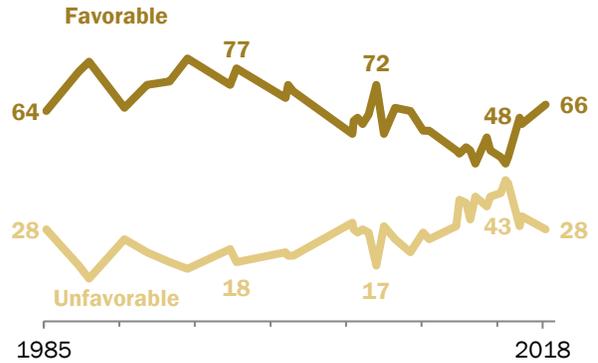
Attitudes toward the Supreme Court continue to improve [after reaching 30-year lows in 2015](#). Republicans' views, in particular, are now more positive than three years ago.

Two-thirds of the public says they view the court favorably, and about three-in-ten (28%) hold unfavorable views. The share of the public saying it has a favorable view of the Supreme Court has increased 18 percentage points since 2015 (48%).

Most Republicans viewed the Supreme Court unfavorably after its decisions on the Affordable Care Act and same-sex marriage in summer 2015: Just a third of Republicans viewed the court favorably, compared with about six-in-ten Democrats (61%). Today, more Republicans (71%) hold a favorable view of the Supreme Court than Democrats (62%). Favorable views among Democrats have fallen since 2016.

### Most view Supreme Court favorably

*% who have a \_\_\_ view of the Supreme Court*



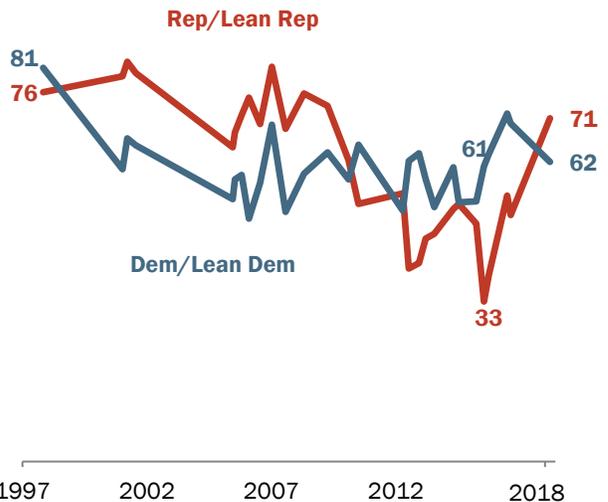
Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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### Republicans' views of Supreme Court now more favorable than Democrats'

*% who have a favorable view of Supreme Court*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## 2. Views of American democratic values and principles

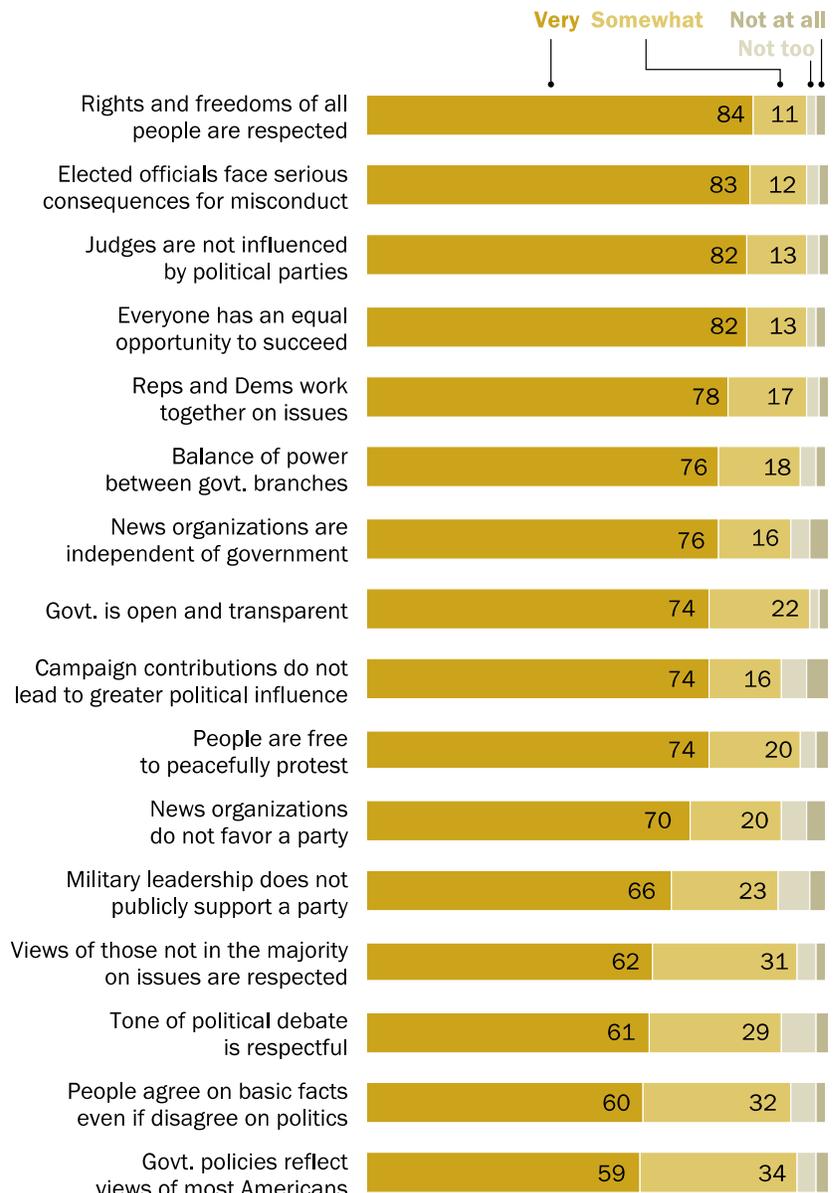
The public places great importance on a broad range of democratic ideals and principles in the United States today. Across 16 democratic values asked about in the survey – including respecting the rights of all, having a balance of power across government branches and having officials face serious consequences for misconduct – large majorities say these are very important for the country.

But evaluations of *how well* the country is upholding these values are decidedly mixed. And when it comes to ideals more squarely in the political arena, such as an unbiased news media, partisan cooperation and respectful political debate, broad majorities of the public – including large shares of both Republicans and Democrats – say the country is falling short.

Nine-in-ten or more say each of the 16 items is at least somewhat important for the country. About eight-in-ten or more say it is *very*

### Public sees a variety of democratic values as very important to the country

% who say it is \_\_\_ important for the country that ...



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb.13, 2018.

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important for the country that the rights and freedoms of all are respected (84%), officials face serious consequences for misconduct (83%), that judges are not influenced by political parties (82%), and that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed (82%).

Majorities place great importance on partisan cooperation (78% very important), independent news media (76%) and the right to peaceful protest (74%).

Comparably large shares also say it is very important that the government is open and transparent (74%) and that people who give a lot of money to elected officials do not have more political influence than other people (74%).

The public is relatively less likely to emphasize the importance of respecting the views of those who are not in the majority, respectful tone in political discourse, shared acceptance of basic facts, and government policies that reflect the views of most Americans. Still, roughly 90% call these principles at least somewhat important, including about six-in-ten who say each is very important.

About three-quarters say the U.S. is described very or somewhat well by the phrases “military leadership does not publicly express support for one party over the other” (74%) and “people are free to peacefully protest” (73%).

More than half (55%) say the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government keep the others from having too much power; and 52% think the country is described well by the phrase “everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.”

However, for the remaining 12 of 16 democratic ideals and principles included in the survey, majorities say they describe the country as doing not too or not at all well.

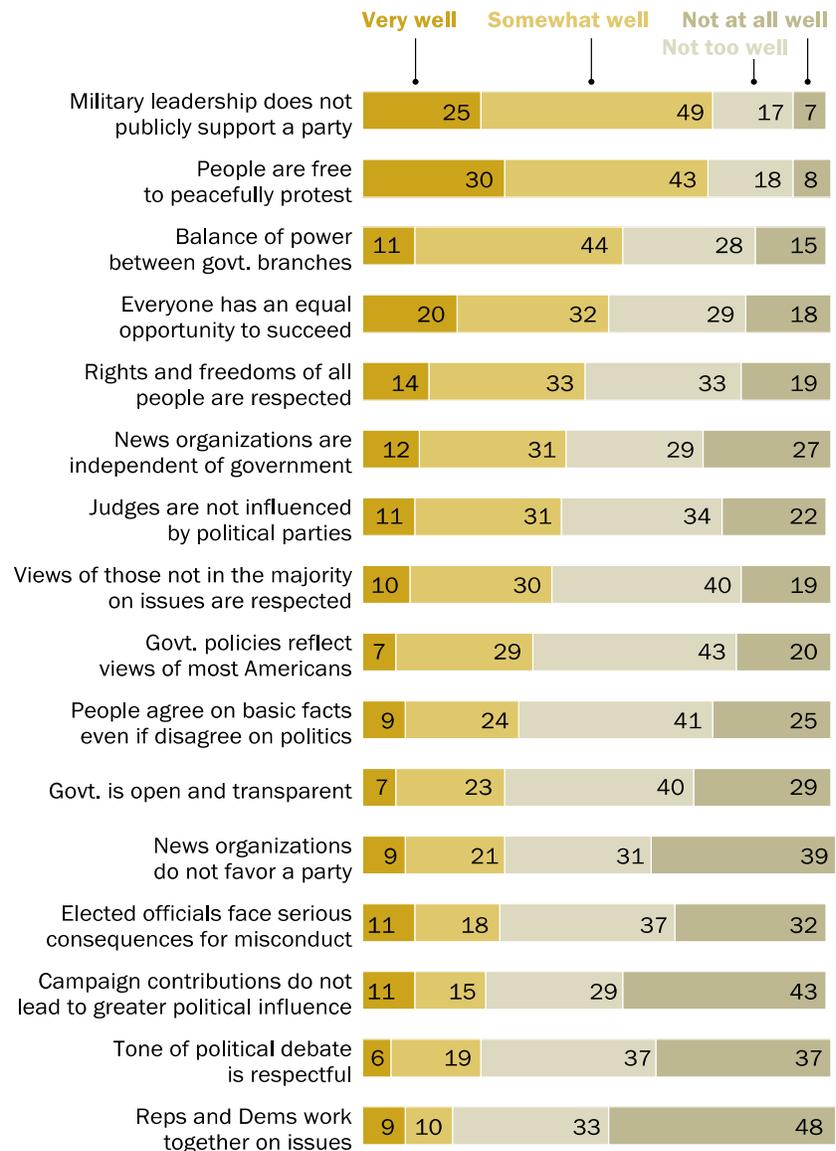
For instance, on such core principles as an independent judiciary, just 43% say that “judges are not influenced by political parties” describes the country well; 56% say this describes the country not too or not at all well.

Larger majorities say that an open and transparent government (69%) and news organizations that do not favor a political party (70%) do not describe the country well.

Some of the public’s most negative judgements are reserved for values that are

**Public deeply skeptical about partisan cooperation, tone of debate, influence of major political donors**

*How well does each of the following describe the country? (%)*



Note: Don't know/No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb.13, 2018.

most squarely in the political sphere. Large majorities do not see partisan cooperation (80%) or respectful political debate (74%) as describing the country well. Similarly, 72% say the country is not well described as a place where people who contribute to campaigns do not have more influence than other people; 69% also say the phrase “elected officials face serious consequences for misconduct” does not describe the country well.

### Country viewed as falling short on a range of widely supported democratic values

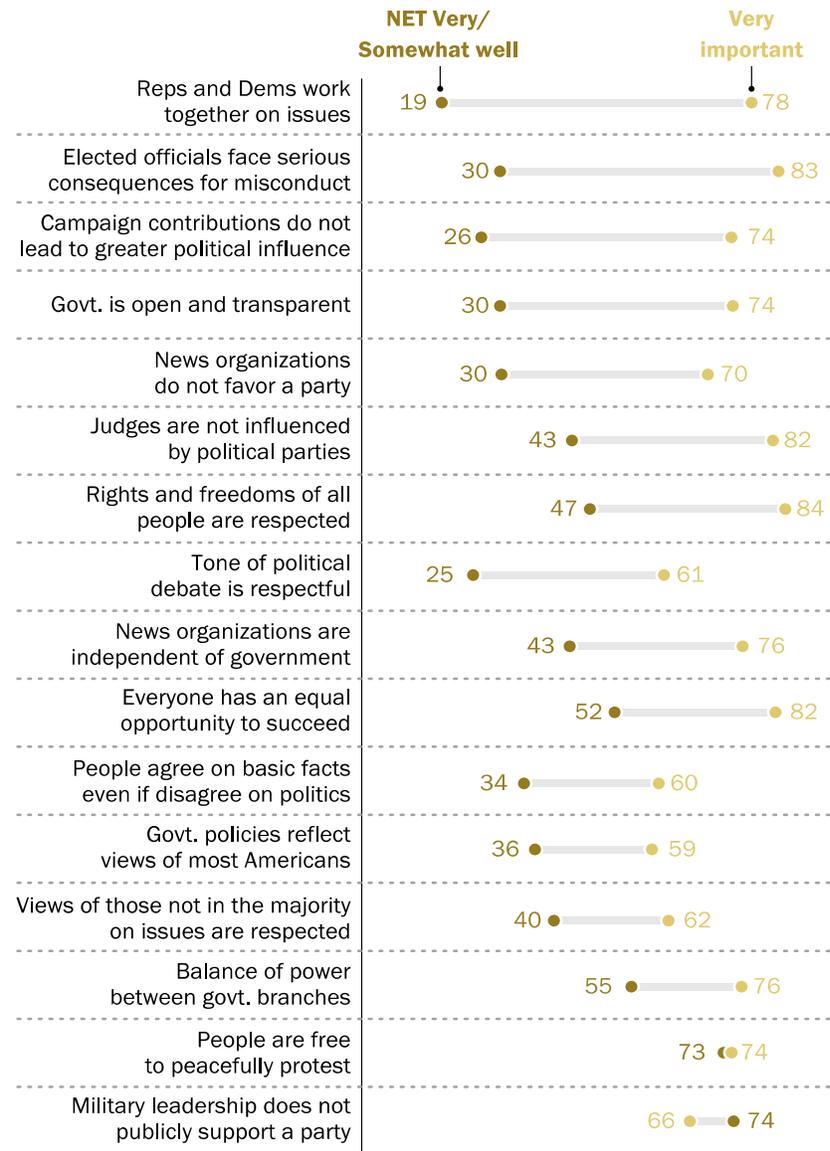
% who say each is **very important** for the U.S. and **describes** the country **very/somewhat well** ...

In general, there are wide gaps between the importance the public places on a value and public perception of how well the country reflects that value.

Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) say it is very important for Republicans and Democrats to work together on issues, but the public is 59 percentage points less likely to say partisan cooperation describes the country very or fairly well (19%). Such wide gaps characterize a range of issues across dimensions.

For instance, 84% say it is very important for the country that the rights and freedoms of all people are respected, but far fewer (47%) say this describes the country well. And few (34%) think that people in the country agree on basic facts, even though most (60%) think this is very important.

There are a few exceptions to this pattern. There is no gap in the shares who say the right to peaceful protest is very important (74%) and say it describes the country well (73%). And nonpartisan military leadership is the only democratic ideal for which



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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more say this describes the country very or somewhat well (74%) than say it is very important (66%).

## Partisan differences in views of democratic values

On the whole, Republicans and Democrats largely agree on the importance of many democratic values. A majority within each partisan coalition says that each of the 16 items included in the survey is *very* important to the country.

For instance, comparably large shares of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (84%) and Democrats and Democratic leaners (83%) say it is very important that judges are not influenced by political parties. Similarly, 77% of Democrats and 75% of Republicans say it is very important for there to be a balance of power across branches of government.

However, there are a handful of significant differences between the views of partisans. One of the largest is over the importance of the right to protest. About eight-in-ten Democrats and Democratic leaners (82%) say it's very important that people are free to peacefully protest, compared with a smaller 64% majority of Republicans and Republican leaners (another 29% of

### Partisans agree on importance of many democratic values, differ on right to peaceful protest

% of \_\_\_ who say it is very important for the country that ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Republicans say this is somewhat important).

Democrats also are somewhat more likely than Republicans to say it is very important that the views of those who are not in the majority on issues are respected (66% vs. 56%).

By contrast, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say it is very important that news organizations do not favor one political party (77% vs. 66%).

## Sizable partisan gaps on whether all have an equal opportunity for success, people’s rights are respected

There are bigger gaps between the views of Republicans and Democrats when it comes to how well the country is doing in living up to many democratic ideals and principles.

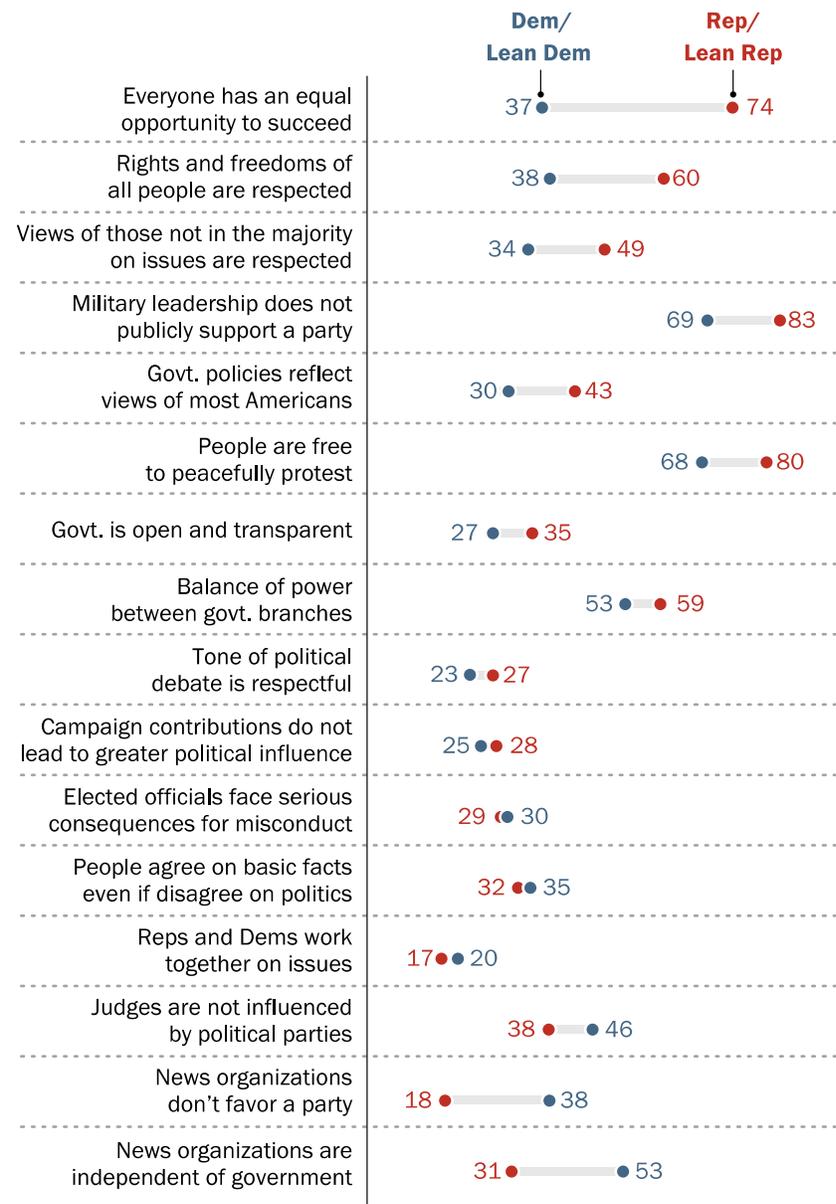
Most Republicans and Republican leaners say the phrases “everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed” (74%) and “the rights and freedoms of all people are respected” (60%) describe the country well.

Democrats and Democratic leaners disagree: Just 37% think the country merits being described as a place with equal opportunity, and only 38% say the country is described well as a place where the right and freedoms of all are respected.

Larger majorities of Republicans than Democrats also say the country is described well as a place where military leadership does not publicly express partisan preferences (83% vs. 69%) and where people are free to peacefully protest (80% vs. 68%). About half of Republicans (49%) think the

### Far more Republicans than Democrats say respect for rights of all, equal opportunity describe country today

% of \_\_\_ who say each describes the country *very/somewhat* well ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb.13, 2018.

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description of the U.S. as a place where the views of those not in the majority are respected applies; about a third of Democrats (34%) say the same.

Democrats are more positive than Republicans when it comes to questions about bias and independence among news organizations. Overall, 53% of Democrats say “news organizations are independent of government influence” describes the country well. Far fewer Republicans (31%) say the same. And while relatively small shares of both parties say the country is described well as having news organizations that don’t favor one political party, Democrats (38%) are more likely to say this than Republicans (18%)

However, there are a number of values on which there is little difference in the views of Republicans and Democrats. In particular, similar shares of those in both parties say descriptions of partisan cooperation, respectful political debate, basic agreement on facts, limits on the political influence of money and serious consequences for official misconduct do not describe the country well.

## Political engagement, partisanship and assessments of democratic values

In several areas, especially on items related to news organizations, partisan differences are even larger among those who are highly engaged politically.

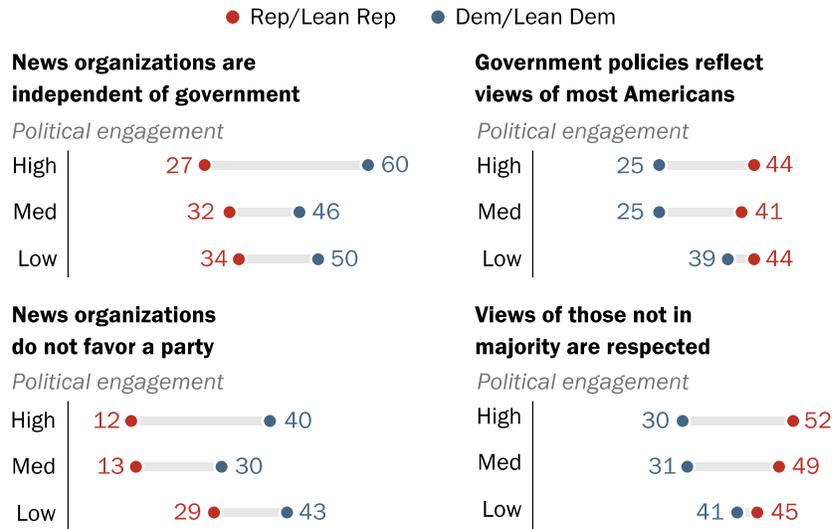
When it comes to whether news organizations in the country are independent of government influence, 60% of highly engaged Democrats say this describes the country very or fairly well, compared with just 27% of highly engaged Republicans – an opinion gap of 33 percentage points. Divides in views are more modest between Republicans and Democrats with medium (14 points) or low (16 points) levels of political engagement.

There also is a substantial partisan divide among those with high or medium levels of political engagement over whether government policies in the country today reflect the views of most Americans and whether the views of those not in the majority are respected. However, among Republicans and Democrats with low levels of political engagement, there are very modest differences in views.

Similar patterns are seen in views of equal opportunity and whether the rights and freedoms of all are respected. More politically engaged Democrats are less likely than less engaged Democrats to say these descriptions apply to the U.S.

### Highly engaged partisans disagree over independence of news media in U.S.

% of \_\_\_ who say each describes the country *very/ somewhat* well by level of political engagement ...



Note: See appendix for political engagement scale.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb.13, 2018.

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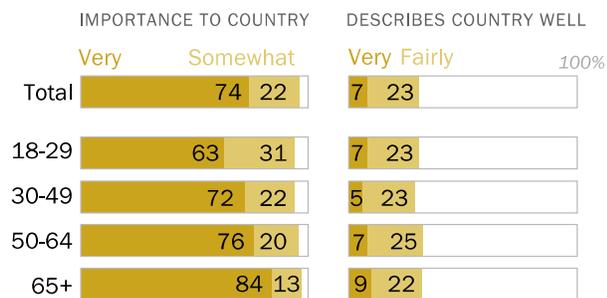
## Age and views of democratic ideals and principles

There is general agreement across age groups about the importance of key democratic values. Large majorities of both old and young say each of the 16 items included in the survey is very or somewhat important for the U.S. However, on many items, there are differences in the shares describing a number of values as “very important,” with older adults more likely to place higher levels of importance on an item than younger adults.

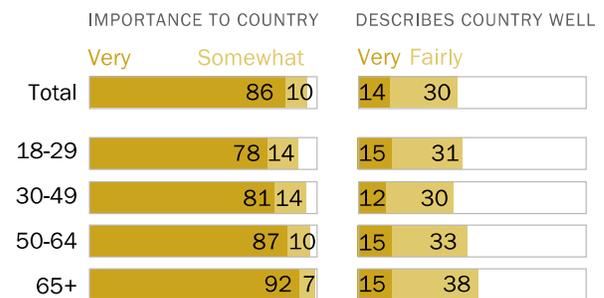
### Wide majorities across age groups see key aspects of democracy as important, but older adults are more likely to regard several as ‘very’ important

% who say each is \_\_\_ important for the U.S. and that each describes the U.S. \_\_\_ well ...

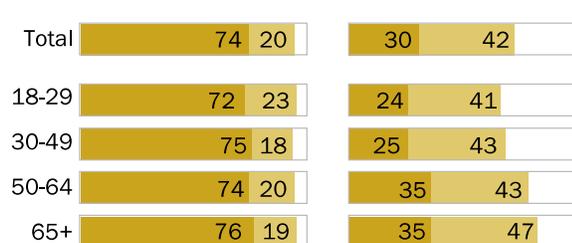
#### Government is open and transparent



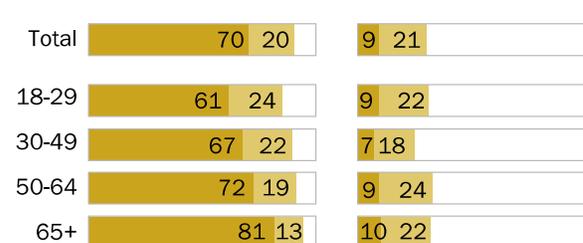
#### Rights and freedoms of all people are respected



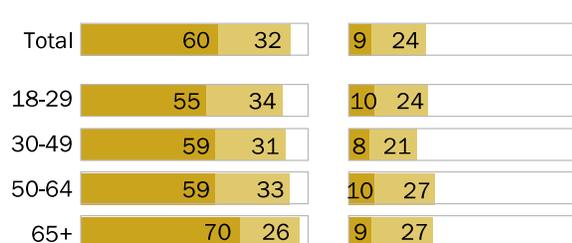
#### People are free to peacefully protest



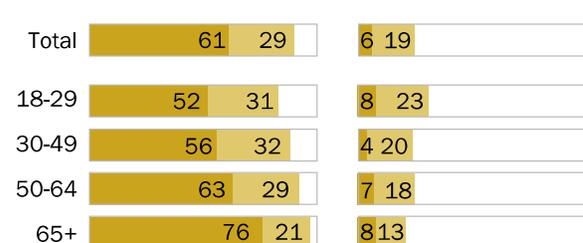
#### News organization do not favor a party



#### People agree on basic facts, even if disagree on politics



#### Tone of political debate is respectful



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb.13, 2018.

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For example, while large majorities of 90% or more say transparent governance is important, those 65 and older are more than 20 percentage points more likely than those under 30 to call this *very* important (84% vs. 63%). In views of people agreeing on “basic facts” even if they disagree on politics, sizable majorities across age categories regard this as important, but 70% of those 65 and older say it is very important, compared with no more than about six-in-ten in younger age groups.

However, there are exceptions to this general pattern. There are no significant differences in views of the importance of people having the right to protest peacefully – about three-quarters in each category regard this as very important.

There are modest age differences in evaluations of how well the country is doing in living up to these democratic values. On the right to peacefully protest, for example, about eight-in-ten of those 50 and older (79%) say it describes the U.S. well, compared with a smaller majority (68%) of those under 50.



### 3. Elections in the U.S.: Priorities and performance

As is the case with overall views of the political system, the public sees a range of objectives as important for U.S. elections. However, assessments of how well these goals are being achieved vary widely – and many evaluations are deeply divided along partisan lines.

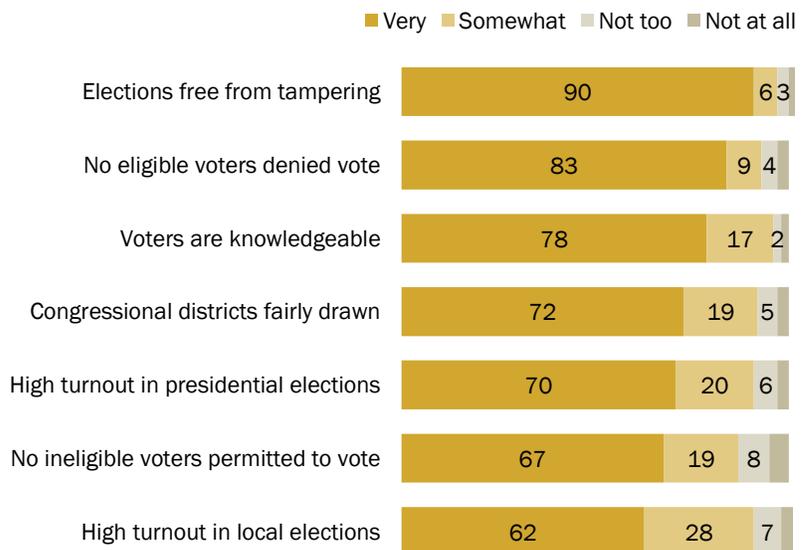
Overwhelming majorities of Americans – including most Republicans and Democrats – say it is very important that elections are free from tampering (90% say this) and that no eligible voters are prevented from voting (83%).

Large majorities also say it is very important that voters are knowledgeable about candidates and issues (78%), the way congressional districts are determined is fair and reasonable (72%) and there is high voter turnout in presidential elections (70%).

And two-thirds (67%) say it is very important that no ineligible voters are permitted to vote, while 62% prioritize high turnout in local elections.

#### Large shares say it is very important that elections are free from tampering, no eligible voters are denied vote

% saying each is \_\_\_\_ important for elections in the U.S. ... (%)



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Nearly all Americans say each of these items is very or somewhat important. Very few – no more than about 10% in any case – say they are not too important or not at all important.

Yet the public has mixed views on whether these goals are being fulfilled. Majorities say several describe elections in the United States very or somewhat well, but relatively few say they describe elections *very* well.

Roughly two-thirds think the statement “no eligible voters are prevented from voting” describes elections in the U.S. very (29%) or somewhat (36%) well; about a third say this describes U.S. elections not too well (21%) or not at all well (12%).

Similarly, about six-in-ten (61%) say “no ineligible voters are permitted to vote” describes elections very (29%) or somewhat (32%) well; 37% say this does not describe U.S. elections well.

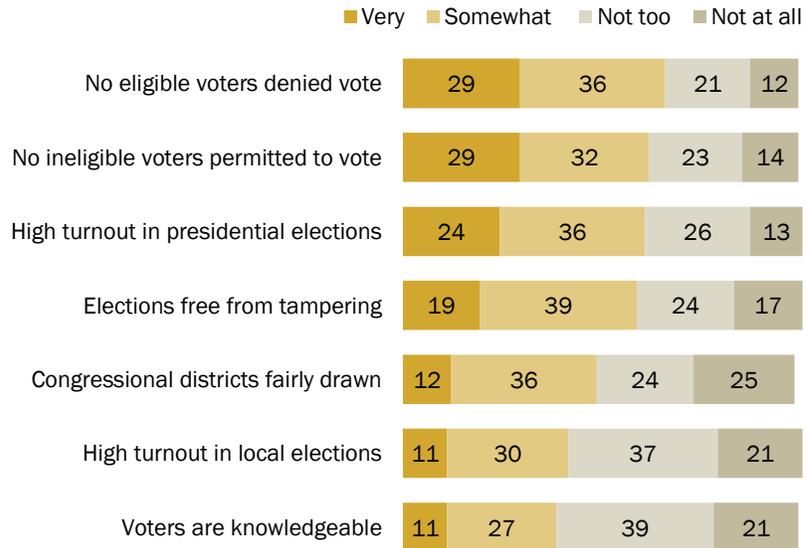
Most also say there is high voter turnout in presidential elections (24% say this describes elections very well, 36% somewhat well), and that elections in the U.S. are free from tampering (19% very well, 39% somewhat well).

Opinions are more divided about whether congressional districts are fairly determined: 49% say fairly drawn congressional districts describes U.S. elections very or somewhat well; just as many (49%) say this describes U.S. elections not too or not at all well (49%).

And fewer than half say “there is high voter turnout in local elections” (41%) and “voters are knowledgeable about candidates and issues” (39%) describe elections well.

### Only about half say U.S. congressional districts are drawn in a fair and reasonable way

*How well does each describe elections in the U.S. ... (%)*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

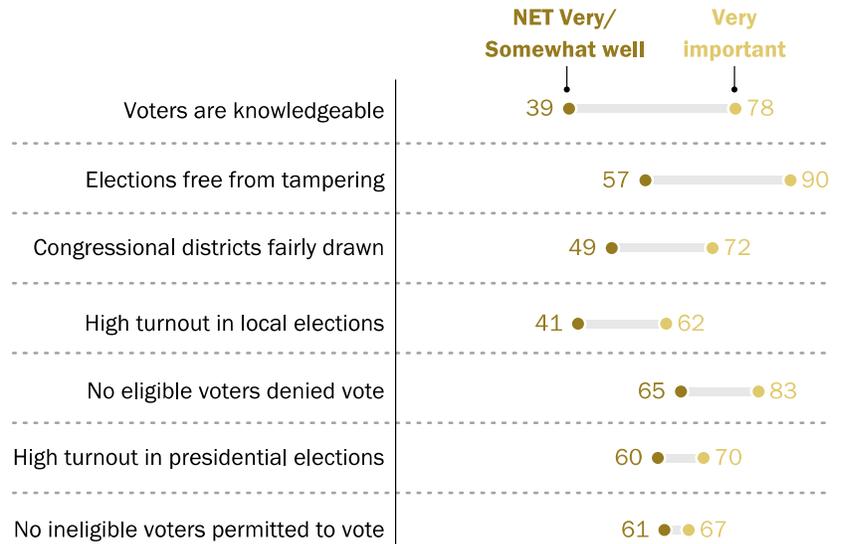
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The mismatch between the public’s priorities for elections and its view of reality is most apparent in views of voters being knowledgeable. About three-quarters (78%) rate this as very important, but only half as many (39%) say this describes elections very or somewhat well.

And while 90% say it is very important that elections are free from tampering, a much smaller majority (57%) says this describes elections well – with just 19% saying it describes elections very well.

**Most say it’s very important for voters to be knowledgeable; far fewer say they are knowledgeable**

*Thinking about U.S. elections, % who say ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## Partisans share goals for elections, with a few exceptions

Republicans and Democrats widely agree on the most important electoral components for the U.S. Nearly nine-in-ten across both parties say it is very important that elections are free from tampering: 91% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say this, as do 88% of Democrats and Democratic leaners.

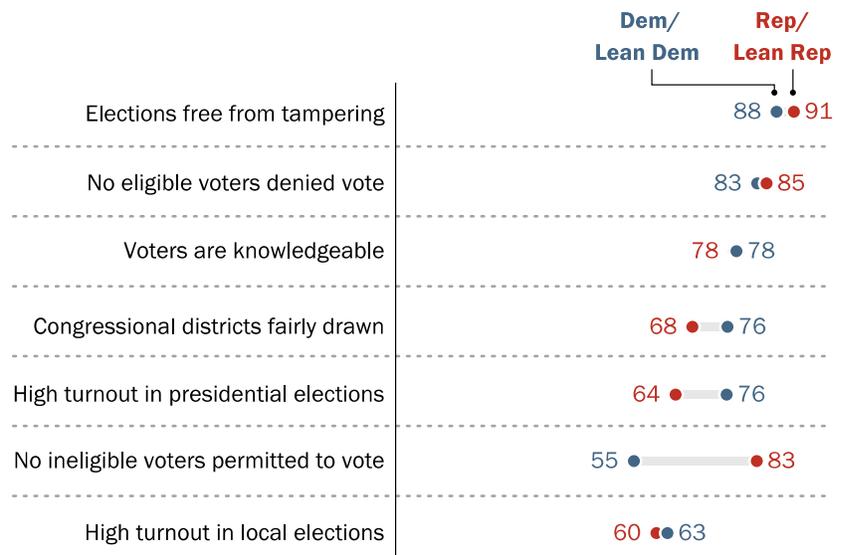
Comparable majorities in both parties also say it's very important that no *eligible* voters are prevented from voting (85% of Republicans, 83% of Democrats).

Partisans are deeply divided, however, over the importance of preventing *ineligible* voters from casting ballots. More than eight-in-ten Republicans (83%) cite this as very important, compared with 55% of Democrats (27% of Democrats say this is somewhat important).

More Democrats (76%) than Republicans (64%) view high turnout in presidential elections as very important, and Democrats are also more likely to prioritize having a fair process for determining congressional districts (76% of Democrats, 68% of Republicans).

### Republicans more focused on preventing those not eligible from voting, Democrats on high voter turnout

% who say each is 'very important' for elections in the U.S. ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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While there is broad agreement over the important aspects of U.S. elections, there are deep divisions when it comes to how they are actually being conducted today.

In particular, Republicans and Democrats have vastly different assessments of U.S. elections when it comes to perceptions of whether ineligible voters are permitted to vote, and whether eligible voters are prevented from voting.

A large majority of Republicans (80%) say “no eligible voters are prevented from voting” describes U.S. elections very or somewhat well. A much narrower majority of Democrats (56%) agree.

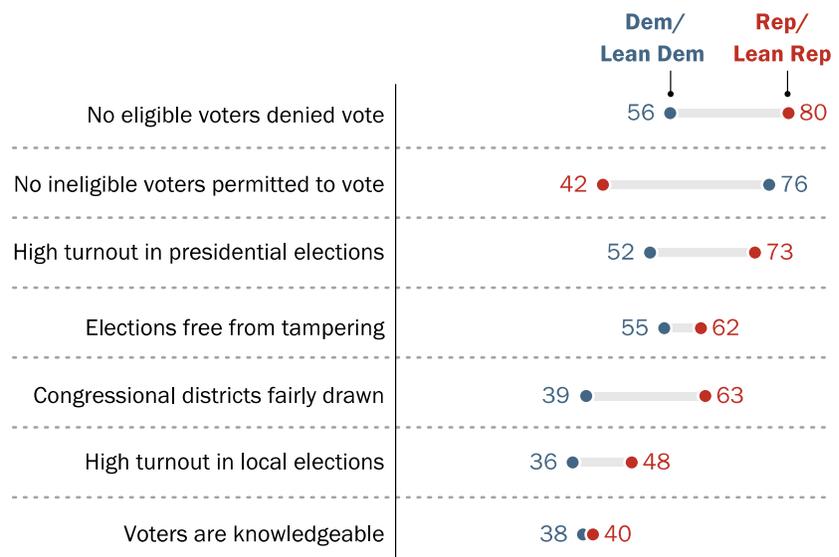
By contrast, when it comes to not allowing any ineligible voters to vote, Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to think the U.S. is doing at least somewhat well. Roughly three-quarters of Democrats and Democratic leaners say this (76%), compared with just 42% of Republicans and Republican leaners.

The divide in views of whether congressional districts are drawn fairly is nearly as wide. A 63% majority of Republicans say fair and reasonable determination of voting districts describes the U.S. at least somewhat well. By contrast, a majority of Democrats (58%) say this does *not* describe the U.S. well; 39% say it does.

And while nearly three-quarters of Republicans (73%) say “there is high voter turnout in presidential elections” describes elections well, only about half of Democrats (52%) view turnout as “high.” More Republicans also say turnout in local elections is high (48% vs. 36%).

### Republicans, Democrats have starkly different perceptions of voting by eligible and ineligible voters

*% who say each describes U.S. elections very/somewhat well ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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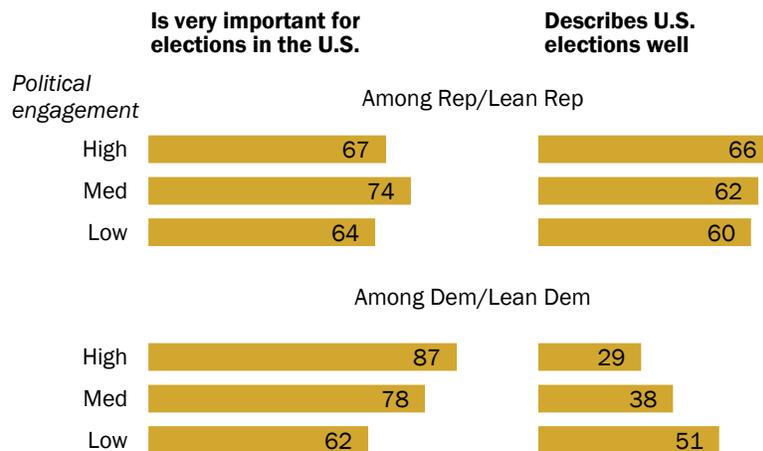
## Politically engaged Democrats highly critical of process for determining congressional districts

Politically engaged Democrats attach a great deal of importance to the issue of fairly drawn congressional districts. And they are decidedly skeptical about whether this goal is being achieved.

Nearly nine-in-ten Democrats who are highly politically engaged (87%) say it is very important that the way congressional districts are determined is fair and reasonable. Smaller shares of less engaged Democrats – and Republicans of differing levels of political engagement – say this is very important.

### Politically engaged Democrats are most critical of how congressional districts are mapped

*% who say 'the way congressional voting districts are determined is fair and reasonable' ...*



Note: See appendix for details on political engagement scale.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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And just 29% of the most politically engaged Democrats give positive evaluations of whether districts are being determined fairly and reasonably. Larger shares of less politically engaged Democrats – including 51% of the least engaged – say this describes U.S. elections well. Among Republicans, majorities across all levels of political engagement say districts are being fairly determined.

In considering whether no *ineligible* voters are permitted to vote, Republicans and Republican leaners with high levels of engagement are most skeptical: Just about a third (34%) say the U.S. is doing at least somewhat well. By contrast, Republicans with low levels of political engagement are much more positive: A slim majority (54%) thinks this describes the U.S. at least somewhat well.

Among Democrats, the highly engaged overwhelmingly think the U.S. does at least somewhat well in this area (85%), and the partisan gap stands at 51 percentage points. A smaller majority of low-engagement Democrats (68%) think this describes the U.S. well; the gap among those with low levels of engagement is just 15 points.

Similarly, the partisan gap is wider among the highly engaged in views of whether eligible voters are prevented from voting. While Republicans across the board think the U.S. does well when it comes to ensuring eligible voters are not prevented from voting, highly engaged Democrats are somewhat less likely than those with lower levels of engagement to think this.

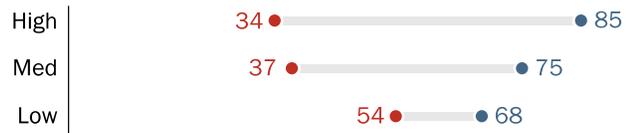
## Partisan gaps over ballot box access greater among politically engaged

*% who say each describes elections in the U.S. very/somewhat well ...*

● Rep/Lean Rep ● Dem/Lean Dem

### No ineligible voters permitted to vote

*Political engagement*



### No eligible voters prevented from voting

*Political engagement*



Note: See appendix for details on political engagement scale.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## 4. Democracy, the presidency and views of the parties

The American public has doubts about Donald Trump's level of respect for the country's democratic institutions and traditions. Like all views of Trump, attitudes are deeply partisan; Republicans give the president positive marks in this regard, while Democrats are highly negative.

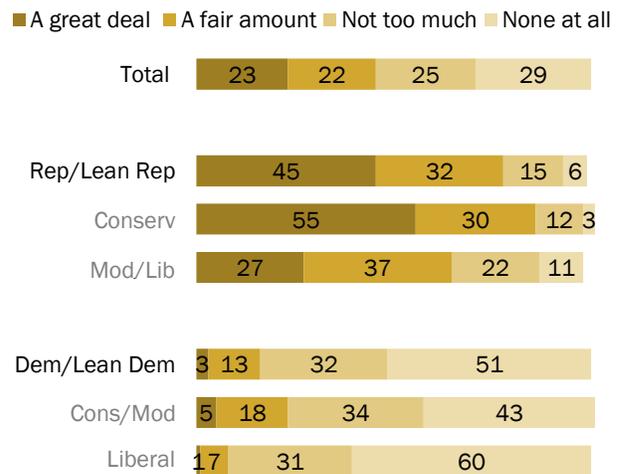
Overall, 54% say Trump has not too much (25%) or no respect at all (29%) for the nation's democratic institutions and traditions; somewhat fewer (45%) say he has a great deal (23%) or a fair amount (22%) of respect for them. The share saying Trump has at least a fair amount of respect for the country's democratic institutions is slightly higher than it was in February 2017, when just 40% took this view.

Republicans and Republican-leaning independents are confident in Trump's respect for the country's democratic institutions and traditions: About three-quarters (77%) say he has at least a fair amount of respect for them, including 45% who say he has a great deal of respect. There is a divide among Republicans on this question by ideology. Conservative Republicans (84%) are much more likely than moderates and liberals (64%) to say Trump respects the country's democratic institutions; and conservative Republicans are about twice as likely as moderate and liberal Republicans to say Trump has a great deal of respect for the country's democratic system (55% vs. 27%).

Democrats and Democratic leaners are highly critical of Trump's regard for the nation's democratic system. Just 16% think he has at least a fair amount of respect for the country's democratic institutions and traditions; 51% say he has none at all, and another 32% say he has not too much. There also are ideological differences among Democrats on this question; liberals (60%) are more likely than moderates and conservatives (43%) to say Trump has no respect at all for the country's democratic institutions and traditions.

### Divide over whether Trump has respect for country's democratic institutions

% who say Donald Trump has \_\_\_ respect for this country's democratic institutions and traditions



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Public sees risks in granting greater presidential powers

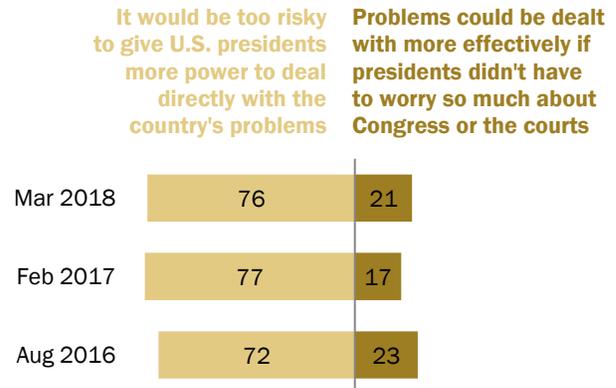
A large majority of Americans say it's important for there to be a balance of power between the three branches of the federal government.

Consistent with this view, most oppose the idea of strengthening the power of the executive branch. Just 21% say that many of the country's problems could be dealt with more effectively if the president didn't have to worry so much about Congress or the courts. About three-quarters (76%) say that it would be too risky to give U.S. presidents more power to deal directly with the country's problems.

Public opposition to strengthening the powers of the presidency has held steady over the past few years. In two previous surveys – conducted in August 2016, during Barack Obama's final year in office, and in February 2017 – similar shares of the public said it would be too risky to give U.S. presidents more power.

### Majority says it would be too risky to give U.S. presidents more power

*% who say ...*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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Most Republicans and Democrats oppose expanding the powers of the presidency. However, in the current survey, opposition to this is somewhat higher among Democrats and Democratic leaners (83%) than among Republicans and Republicans leaners (70%). By contrast, in August 2016, when Obama was president, a greater share of Republicans (82%) than Democrats (66%) opposed granting the president expanded powers at the expense of Congress and the courts.

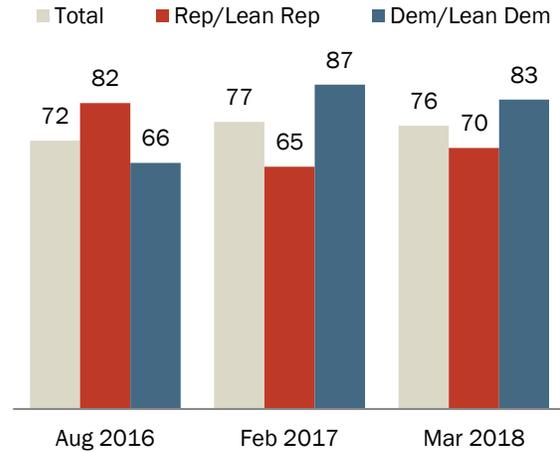
On the whole, younger adults are more cautious about expanding executive power than older adults.

Among those ages 18 to 29, 85% say it's too risky to give presidents more power. By comparison, a smaller majority of those 65 and older say the same (62%).

This age dynamic exists within both parties. While partisans across age cohorts say it would be too risky to give presidents more power to deal directly with the country's problems, Democrats and Republicans younger than 50 are more likely than their older counterparts to hold this view.

### Republicans and Democrats oppose expanded presidential powers

*% who say it would be too risky to give U.S. presidents more power to deal directly with the country's problems*

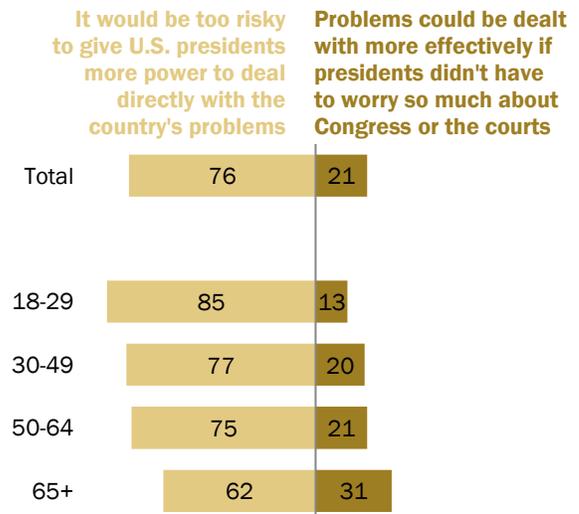


Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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### Modest age differences over increasing presidential power

*% who say ...*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Most say the president has large impact on U.S. standing, national mood

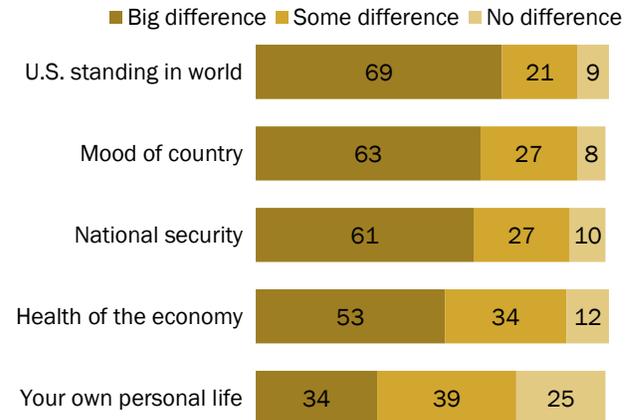
Most Americans say the president has a big impact in areas such as national security and U.S. standing in the world, but relatively few say the occupant of the executive office makes a big difference in their personal lives.

Overall, 69% say that who is president makes a big difference on the standing of the U.S. in the world; most also say the president makes a big difference for the mood of the country (63%) and national security (61%). About half (53%) say that who is president makes a big difference for the economy.

By contrast, far fewer (34%) think who is president makes a big difference in their own personal lives; 39% say it makes some difference and a quarter say it makes no difference.

### Relatively few think who is president has a big impact on their personal life

*% who say that who is president makes \_\_\_ on each of the following ...*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

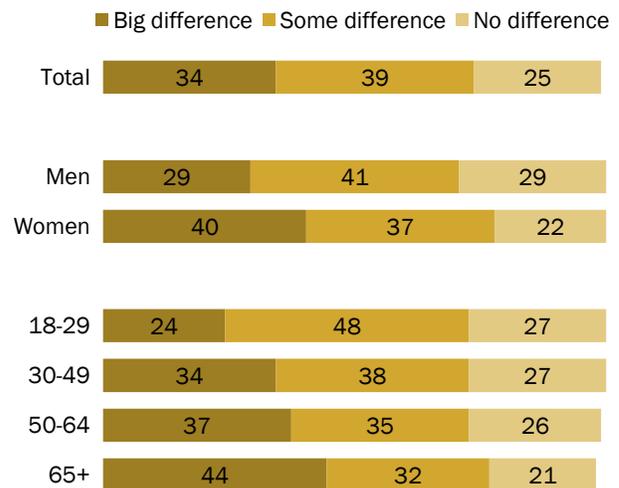
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Women are more likely than men to say who is president makes a big difference in their own personal lives. Four-in-ten women say this compared with about three-in-ten men (29%).

Young adults ages 18 to 29 are less likely than older adults to say that who is president makes a big difference for their own personal life. Just 24% of those 18 to 29 say this, compared with 34% of those ages 30 to 49, 37% of those 50 to 64 and 44% of those 65 and older.

### Many women, older adults say who is president makes big difference in life

*% who say that who is president makes a \_\_\_ on 'your own personal life' ...*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Favorability ratings of the Republican and Democratic parties

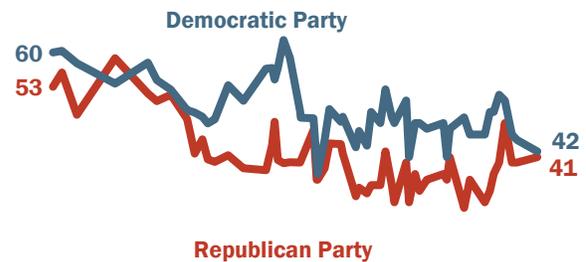
On balance, the public offers negative ratings of both the Republican and Democratic parties. By 55%-41% more take an unfavorable than favorable view of the Republican Party. Views of the Democratic Party are similar: 54% have an unfavorable view, compared with 42% who rate the party favorably.

Ratings of the Republican Party are now higher than they were for much of 2015 and 2016, prior to the election of Donald Trump. However, they are down from a recent high of 47% in January 2017, immediately after the election.

By contrast, views of the Democratic Party are about as low or lower than they were at any point during the run-up to the 2016 election. Favorable ratings of the Democratic Party reached 52% in October 2016 and were about that high in January 2017, before declining in the spring of that year.

### Neither party viewed favorably by a majority of Americans

*% who have a favorable view of the ...*



'00 '02 '04 '06 '08 '10 '12 '14 '16 '18

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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Declining views of the Democratic Party are tied, in part, to more negative ratings among those who lean toward the Democratic Party but do not identify with it.

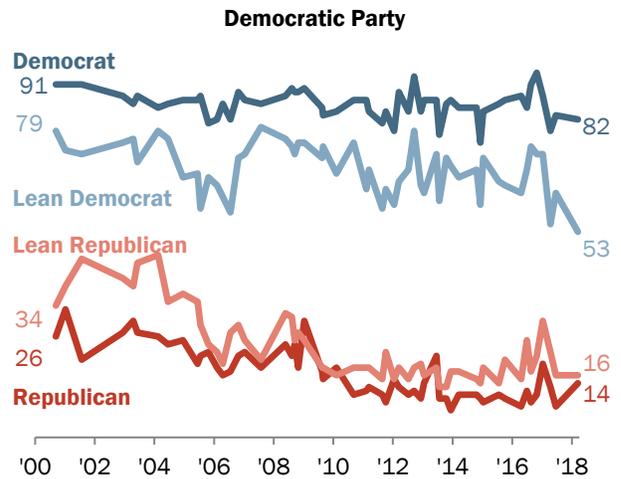
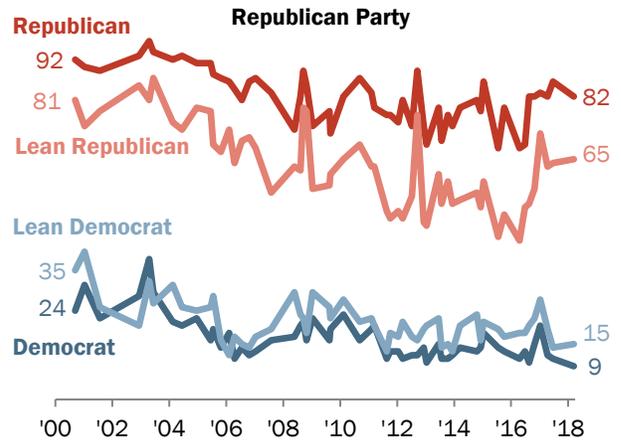
Overall, 53% of Democratic leaners hold a favorable view of the party, down from 73% who said this in January 2017. The current ratings of the party among Democratic leaners are as low as they have been at any point in Pew Research Center surveys conducted over the past two decades.

By contrast, about two-thirds (65%) of Republican leaners view the GOP favorably. These ratings are down somewhat from a post-election high, but remain far more positive than at most other points over the past several years.

There is no difference between how self-identifying Republicans and Democrats rate their own parties. Overall, 82% of Republicans and the same share of Democrats say they view their respective party favorably.

**Democratic leaners turn more negative in their views of the Democratic Party**

*% who have a favorable view of the ...*



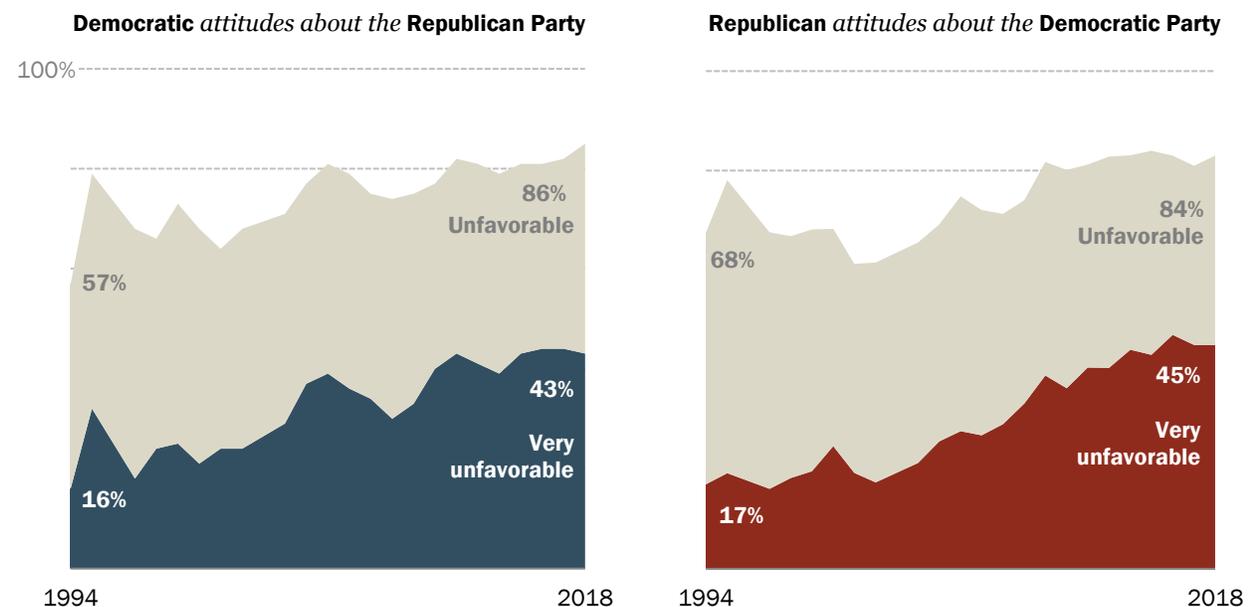
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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For the past several decades, members of both parties have expressed predominantly unfavorable views of the opposing party. But the intensity of these attitudes is much higher today than it was 10 or 20 years ago.

Overall, comparable majorities of Democrats and Democratic leaners (86%) and Republicans and Republican leaners (84%) say they hold unfavorable views of the opposing party. Among Republicans, 45% say they hold a very unfavorable view of the Democratic Party; a similar share of Democrats (43%) has a very unfavorable view of the GOP. In 1994, just 17% of Republicans and 16% of Democrats said they viewed the opposite party very unfavorably; and as recently as 2009, only about a third of both groups held intensely negative views of the other political party.

### Large majorities of Democrats and Republicans view other party unfavorably; many take a very unfavorable view



Note: Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents; Republicans include Republican-leaning independents.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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Recent Pew Research Center surveys have found that [antipathy toward the other party is a key driver of an individual's own party identification](#). Majorities of Republicans and Democrats – as well as Republican and Democratic leaners – cite harm from the opposing party's policies as a major reason for their own partisan orientation.

With the public holding relatively dim views of both major political parties, almost a quarter (24%) now have unfavorable views of *both* the Republican and Democratic parties.

The share with unfavorable views of both parties was just 6% back in 1994; it is now as high as it has ever been in Pew Research Center surveys dating to that year.

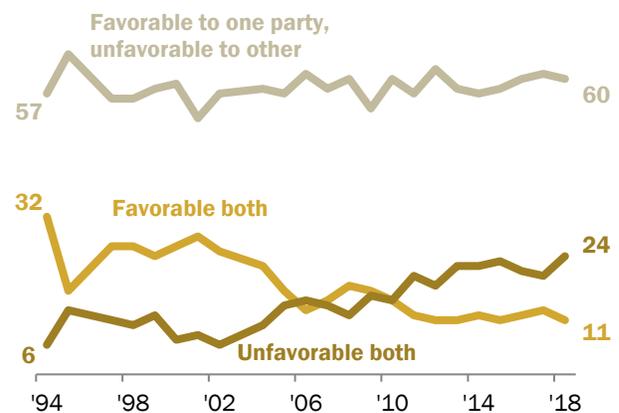
Just 11% of the public say they have a favorable view of both major parties – down from 32% in 1994.

Most Americans (60%) continue to view one party favorably and the other unfavorably. The share with this combination of views has stayed relatively steady over the past few decades as unfavorable views toward both parties have increased and favorable views of both parties have decreased.

Most of those with unfavorable views of both parties identify as independents (63%); Democratic-leaning independents make up a slightly larger share than Republican-leaning independents. A plurality (41%) describe themselves as moderate; 28% are conservative and 28% say they are liberal. Those who have an unfavorable opinion of both major parties also tend to be relatively young (59% are under age 50).

### Nearly a quarter of public now holds an unfavorable view of both major parties

Views of Republican and Democratic parties ... (%)



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## 5. The Electoral College, Congress and representation

A majority (55%) of Americans say the Constitution should be amended so that the candidate who wins the most votes in the presidential election would win, while 41% say the current system should be kept so that the candidate who wins the most Electoral College votes wins the election.

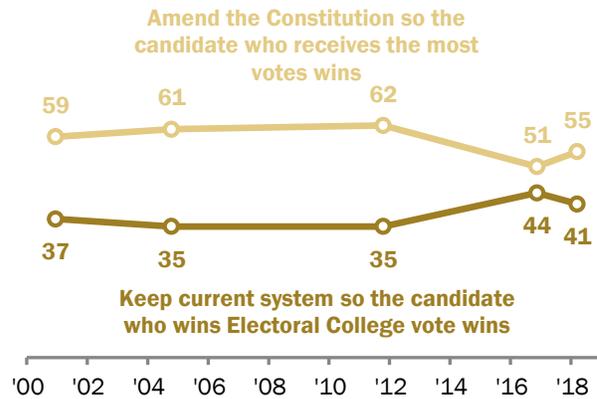
These views are little changed since a CNN/ORC survey conducted in the weeks following the 2016 presidential election in which Donald Trump won the Electoral College but lost the popular vote. But the public expresses somewhat less support for moving to a popular vote than it did in 2011 (62%).

The movement in overall opinion since 2011 has been driven by changes among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. Seven years ago Republicans were more divided in their views (43% keep current system, 54% change to popular vote). But in the wake of the 2016 election, the share of Republicans supporting a constitutional amendment to move to a popular vote dropped to just 27%. Today, 32% of Republicans say the Electoral College should be eliminated, while 65% say the current system should be maintained.

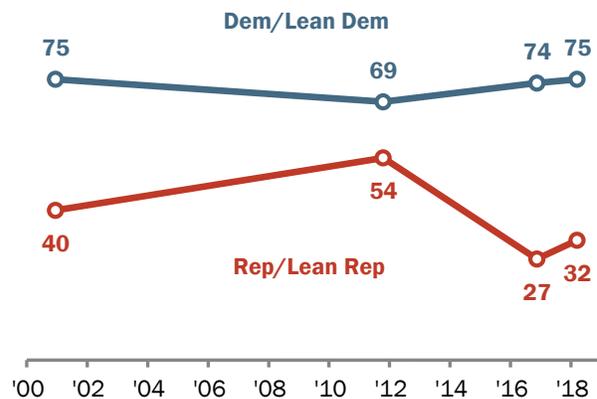
Three-quarters of Democrats and Democratic leaners (75%) say the Constitution should be amended so the candidate with the most overall votes wins, little different than in prior surveys conducted over the past 18 years (the question was first asked shortly after the 2000 election, in which George W. Bush became president after winning a majority of votes in the Electoral College; Al Gore narrowly won the popular vote).

### Continued partisan gap in views of Electoral College versus popular vote

Thinking about the way the president is elected in this country, would you prefer to ... (%)



% who say Constitution should be amended so the candidate who receives the most nationwide votes wins



Notes: 2000-2011 data from Gallup; 2016 data from CNN. Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

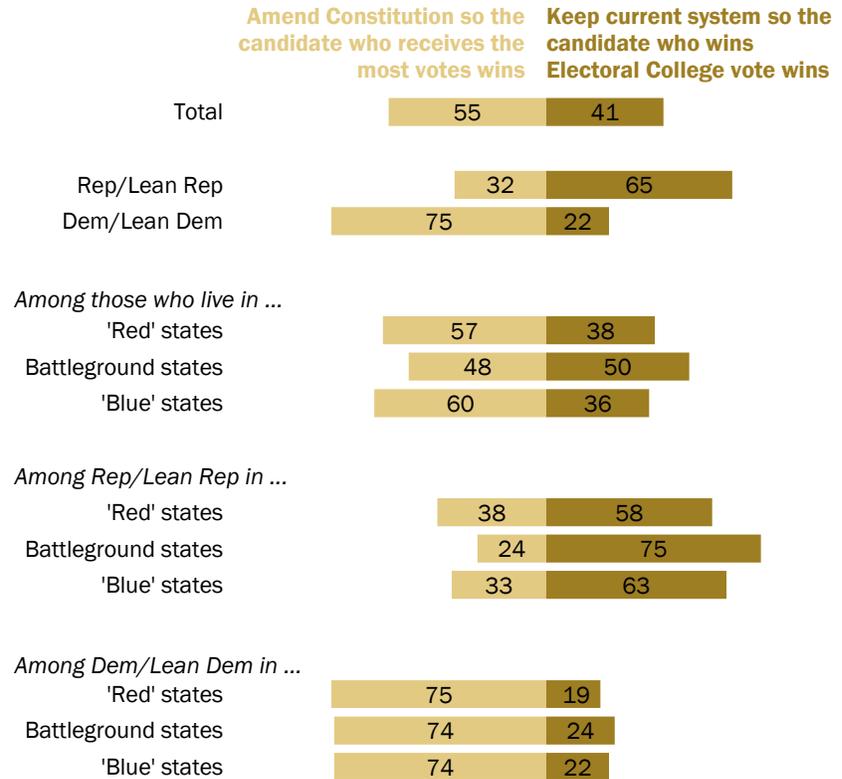
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Public support for shifting to the popular vote to determine the winner of presidential elections is higher in states that are less politically competitive under the current system. About six-in-ten of those in both “red” (57%) and “blue” (60%) states (those that solidly vote either Republican or Democratic, respectively) support moving to a popular vote. By contrast, only about half (48%) of those living in battleground states say this.

In particular, Republicans in battleground states are significantly more likely than other Republicans to say the system should stay as it is: 75% of Republicans who live in battleground states say this, compared with about six-in-ten Republicans who reside in either red (58%) or blue (63%) states. Attitudes of Democrats in battleground states are no different from those of Democrats in less competitive states.

**Majorities who live in ‘blue’ and ‘red’ states favor popular vote; those in ‘battleground’ states are divided**

*% who say ...*



Notes: Don't know responses not shown. See appendix for details on state definitions. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Should the allocation of Senate seats or the size of the House be changed?

Most Americans reject the idea of changing the way Senate seats are allocated. Public attitudes about this question of representation are only modestly different when respondents are presented with information about how the gap in population between the largest and smallest states has changed since the early days of the republic.

Overall, 75% say the current system of equal representation of states should be maintained and 24% say the Constitution should be amended to give states with larger populations more representation in the Senate.

### Most oppose changing Senate's allocation of seats, even when state population disparities are mentioned

*The Constitution requires that all states have two U.S. senators, regardless of how many people live in the state. Which comes closer to your view? (%)*

- All states should continue to have two senators regardless of population
- Constitution should be amended so larger pop. states have more senators



#### Additional context provided:

*When the first Congress met, the state with the largest population had about 10 times as many people as the state with the smallest population. Currently, the state with the largest population has about 66 times as many people as the state with the smallest population.*



Notes: Respondents were randomly asked the question with or without the additional information. See topline for full question wording. No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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When the question includes additional information about how relative population sizes have shifted over time (the wording: “*When the first Congress met, the state with the largest population had about 10 times as many people as the state with the smallest population. Currently, the state with the largest population has about 66 times as many people as the state with the smallest population.*”), opinion shifts modestly in the direction of support for changing the allocation of Senate seats. Still, just 29% of Americans say they favor changing Senate seat apportionment when the question includes this information, while about two-thirds (68%) say it should not be changed.

Majorities across all partisan and ideological groups say all states should continue to have two U.S. senators, regardless of population size (and in both versions of the question). But there is a partisan gap in these views.

When the question asks about the current structure of the Senate without additional information, 85% of Republicans and Republican leaners and 68% of Democrats and Democratic leaners say the current system of equal representation of states should be maintained. About one-in-three Democrats (31%) and just 14% of Republicans think the Constitution should be amended so states with larger populations have more senators than smaller states.

Republicans' views are no different between the versions of the question with and without additional historical information about the population distribution. Among Democrats, however, there is somewhat more support for amending the Constitution to change

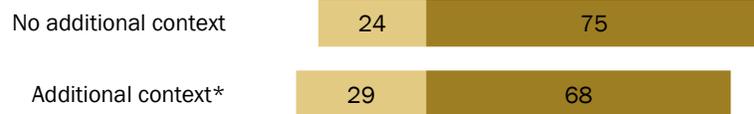
senatorial apportionment when the changing population distribution is made salient, though this remains a minority position among Democrats (39% support these changes in that case, compared with 31% in the version of the question without that information).

### Democrats more likely than Republicans to favor allocating Senate seats by a state's population

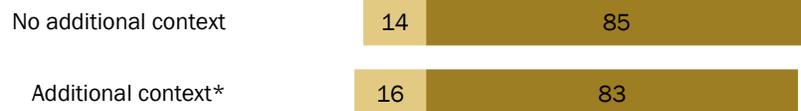
*The Constitution requires that all states have two U.S. senators, regardless of how many people live in the state. Which comes closer to your view? (%)*

- All states should continue to have two senators regardless of population
- Constitution should be amended so larger pop. states have more senators

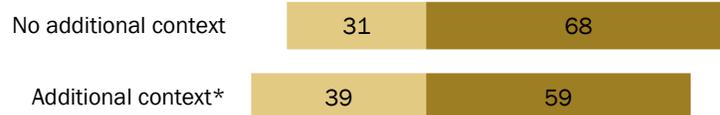
#### Total



#### Among Rep/Lean Rep



#### Among Dem/Lean Dem



Notes: Respondents were randomly asked the question with or without the additional information. See topline for full question wording. No answer not shown.

\*Additional context: "When the first Congress met, the state with the largest population had about 10 times as many people as the state with the smallest population. Currently, the state with the largest population has about 66 times as many people as the state with the smallest population."

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## Senate allocation and House size survey experiments

This study includes several survey experiments that present different versions of the same question to different subsets of respondents. One set of experiments involves questions designed to illustrate whether additional information about population influences attitudes about whether changes should be made to the way the number of seats are apportioned in the U.S. Senate or whether the overall size of the U.S. House should be changed.

Respondents were randomly assigned to either a question about the Senate or the House and one of two conditions:

**House**

**Intro (all)**  
As you may know,

**Additional context (shown in one condition)**  
when the first Congress met, there were 65 members, each of whom represented an average of about 60,000 people. Currently,

**Baseline text (all)**  
there are 435 members of the House of Representatives in Washington, each of whom represents an average of more than 700,000 people.

**Response options:**  
Do you think the number of members in the House of Representatives should be ...

- 1) Increased
- 2) Decreased
- 3) Stay the same

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**Senate**

**Intro (all)**  
As you may know,

**Baseline text (all)**  
the Constitution requires that all states have two U.S. senators, regardless of how many people live in the state.

**Additional context (shown in one condition)**  
When the first Congress met, the state with the largest population had about 10 times as many people as the state with the smallest population. Currently, the state with the largest population has about 66 times as many people as the state with the smallest population

**Response options:**  
Which comes closer to your view?

- 1) The Constitution should not be changed, and all states should continue to have two senators regardless of the size of their population
- 2) The Constitution should be amended so that states with larger populations have more senators than smaller states

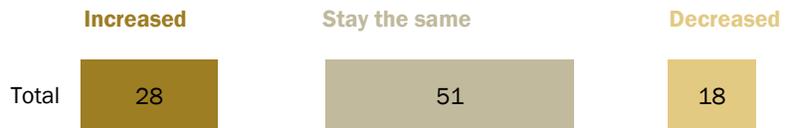
When asked about the number of representatives in the U.S. House relative to the number of people they represent, about half of Americans (51%) say the lower chamber's size should remain unchanged, while 28% say it should be increased and 18% say it should be decreased.

The public's views shift modestly in the direction of increasing the size of the House in a version of the question that provides additional historical context. When the question notes that there were both fewer members of the House when the first Congress met than there are today (65 then, 435 now) and that each representative then represented a smaller number of constituents (roughly 60,000 then,

700,000 now), 34% say its size should be increased (compared with 28% without the historical sizes). Still, a plurality (44%) say the size should remain the same even with this additional information. The share saying the size of Congress should be decreased also remains about the same (21%).

### Relatively few favor expanding size of House, but providing historical context increases support

*There are 435 members of the House of Representatives, each of whom represents an average of 700,000 people. Do you think the number of members in the House of Representatives should be ... (%)*



#### Additional context provided:

*When the first Congress met, there were 65 members, each of whom represented an average of about 60,000 people ...*



Notes: Respondents were randomly asked the question with or without the additional information. See topline for full question wording. No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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In the version of the question without additional historical context, 55% of Republicans and Republican leaners say the size of the U.S. House should remain the same, while the remainder are about evenly divided: 21% say the number of members should be increased and 22% say decreased. The view that the size should not change also is held by about half of Democrats and Democratic leaners (49%). But Democrats who think the House's size should change are far more likely to say it should be increased than decreased (34% vs. 14%).

Republicans' views are no different with the addition of information about the historical size of the House. However, the balance of Democratic opinion shifts somewhat when this information is provided. In this case, 44% of Democrats say the House's size should be increased (up from 34% without the additional context), while a smaller share say the size should stay the same (39%, down from 49% without the additional context). There is no difference in the share of Democrats across the two conditions who say the House's size should be decreased.

### When provided with historical representation, Democratic support for expanding House edges higher

*There are 435 members of the House of Representatives, each of whom represents an average of 700,000 people. Do you think the number of members in the House of Representatives should be ... (%)*

	Increased	Stay the same	Decreased
<i>Total</i>			
No additional context	28	51	18
Additional context*	34	44	21
<i>Among Rep/Lean Rep</i>			
No additional context	21	55	22
Additional context*	22	51	26
<i>Among Dem/Lean Dem</i>			
No additional context	34	49	14
Additional context*	44	39	16

Notes: Respondents were randomly asked the question with or without the additional information. See topline for full question wording. No answer not shown.

\*Additional context: "When the first Congress met, there were 65 members, each of whom represented an average of about 60,000 people."

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## 6. Quality and responsiveness of elected officials

In general, Americans have low regard for elected officials. And when asked about candidates running for office in the last several elections, only about half (47%) say the quality of candidates overall has been good, with just 7% saying they have been “very good”; about as many (52%) take a negative view.

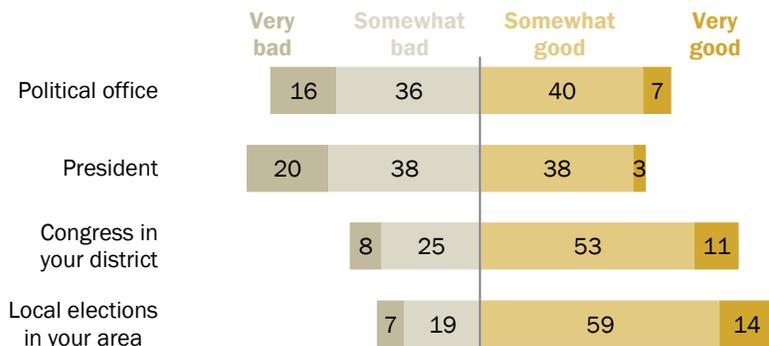
Yet the public makes clear distinctions in evaluations of candidate quality, depending on whether they are running for president, Congress or a local office.

Ratings of the field of presidential candidates in recent elections are similar to ratings of generic candidates for political office: 41% rate the quality of recent presidential candidates at least somewhat good (just 3% say very good), while 58% say they have generally been bad.

But the public offers more positive views of those running for offices closer to home: 64% say the quality of candidates running for Congress in the last several elections in their district has generally been at least somewhat good, while nearly three-quarters (73%) rate candidate quality in local elections (such as for mayor or county government) positively.

### Views of candidate quality much less positive for presidential elections than local contests

*% who say, in general, the quality of candidates running for \_\_\_\_\_ in the last several elections has been ...*



Notes: No answer not shown. Each respondent randomly asked about just one type of candidate. See topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

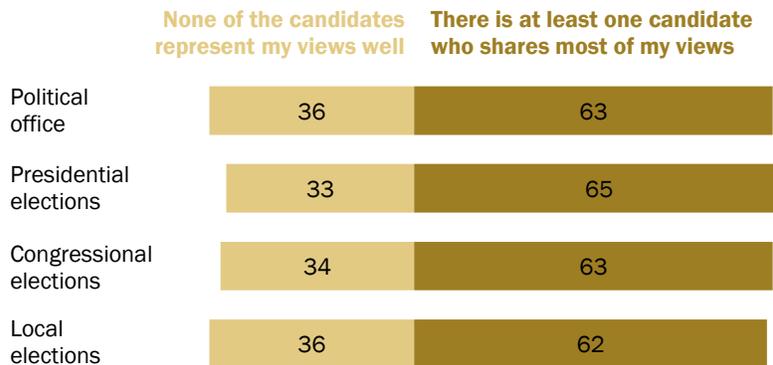
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Across different types of elections, about six-in-ten Americans say that they “usually feel like there is at least one candidate who shares most of my views.”

When asked generally about candidates for political office, 63% of Americans say there is usually at least one candidate who shares their views. That figure does not vary much when they are asked about specific offices: 65% say at least one presidential candidate usually represents most of their views, and 63% say the same about congressional candidates and 62% about candidates for local political office.

### Across different types of elections, most say there is usually at least one candidate who shares their views

Which comes closer to your view of candidates for ... (%)



Notes: No answer not shown. Each respondent randomly asked about just one type of candidate. See topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Overall, Republicans and Republican-leaning independents are more likely than Democrats and Democratic leaners to say the quality of candidates running for president has been good in recent years (49% vs. 35%). Conversely, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to rate their recent slates of local candidates positively (77% vs. 69%). Partisans view their recent congressional candidates similarly (67% of Republicans and Republican leaners say they have been good, compared with 63% of Democrats and Democratic leaners).

Within both partisan coalitions, however, those who identify with the party are significantly more likely than those who do not (and instead “lean” to the party) to view the quality of recent candidates positively. This pattern is evident across presidential, congressional and local contests.

For example, while 77% of those who identify as Republicans say that the quality of candidates running for Congress in their district has been at least somewhat good in recent elections, just 53% of those who lean toward the Republican Party say the same. There is a similar gap between Democrats (74%) and Democratic leaners (48%).

Partisan identifiers also are more likely than independents to say that in these types of elections they usually feel that at least one candidate represents their views. Asked about candidates for political office generally, about seven-in-ten Republicans (71%) and Democrats (73%) say this; by comparison, 61% of Republican-leaning independents and 49% of Democratic-leaning independents say the same.

### Partisans have more positive views than leaners about the quality of candidates in recent elections

*% who say, in general, the quality of candidates running for \_\_\_\_\_ in the last several elections has been good*

	President	Congress in your district	Local elections in your area
Rep/Lean Rep	49	67	69
Dem/Lean Dem	35	63	77
<i>Among Rep/Lean Rep</i>			
Republican	59	77	75
Lean Republican	37	53	61
<i>Among Dem/Lean Dem</i>			
Democrat	41	74	83
Lean Democrat	27	48	68

Notes: No answer not shown. Each respondent randomly asked about just one type of candidate. See topline for full question wording.

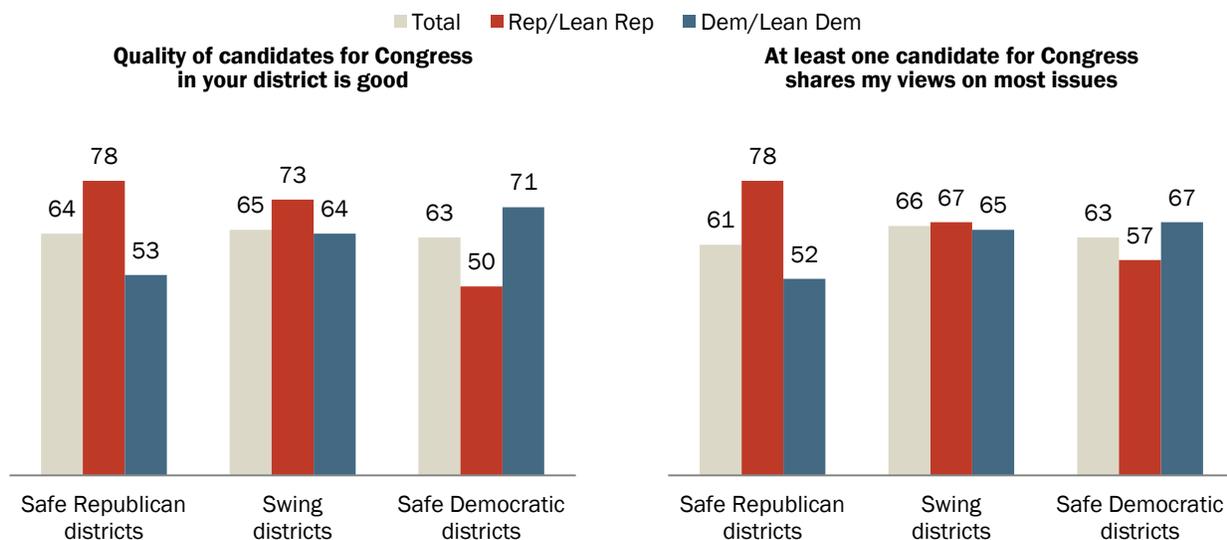
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Evaluations of the congressional candidate field vary based on the degree to which partisans “fit” the partisan cast of their district. For instance, among Republicans and Republican leaners who live in districts that have voted for Republican congressional candidates by wide margins in recent elections, about eight-in-ten (78%) say the quality of candidates in their district is good. Among those who live in more politically mixed (“swing”) districts, 73% say this, as do just 50% of Republicans who live in overwhelmingly Democratic districts.

## Republicans, Democrats who live in districts dominated by their party are more satisfied with the quality of candidates running for Congress

% who say ...



Notes: Safe districts are those where the winner of the election in 2016 won more than 60% of the two-party vote. Swing districts are those where the winner won with less than 60% of the two-party vote.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018. District-level election returns come from Gary Jacobson’s database of congressional election results.

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Among Democrats there is a similar, if less dramatic, pattern. About seven-in-ten (71%) living in heavily Democratic districts say the quality of candidates running in their districts is good, compared with 64% of Democrats who live in swing districts and 53% who live in predominantly Republican districts.

Nearly identical patterns are evident in reports of whether or not people think at least one candidate in congressional elections in their district shares their values.

## Expectations about the responsiveness of elected officials

About six-in-ten Americans say that if they contacted their member of the U.S. House of Representatives with a problem it is either not very likely (40%) or not likely at all (21%) they would get help addressing it. Just 7% say their representative would be very likely to help, while 30% say this would be somewhat likely.

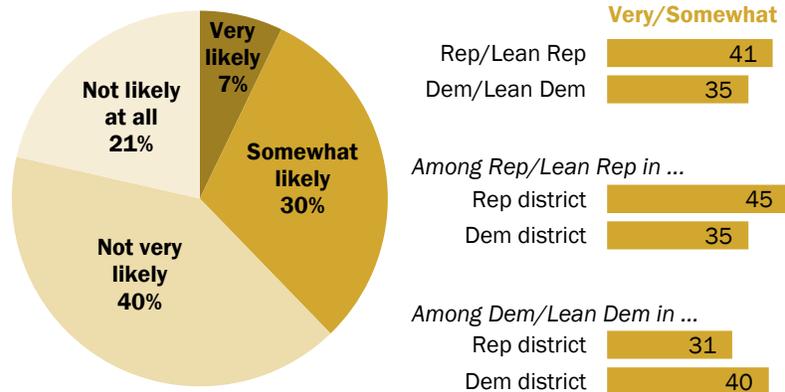
Overall, Republicans are somewhat more likely than Democrats to say that their congressional representative would be at least somewhat likely to help them address an issue (41% of Republicans vs. 35% of Democrats).

But these perceptions vary across districts. In both parties, those who live in districts represented by a member of their same party are more likely to anticipate that their member of Congress would help them with a problem. For instance, while 35% of Republicans living in districts represented by Democrats say they would expect assistance, that rises to 45% among Republicans living in districts with a GOP representative. Similarly, Democrats who live in districts represented by a Democrat are more likely than Democrats in districts represented by Republicans to say their congressional representative would respond if contacted (40% to 31%, respectively).

Overall, adults who are politically engaged are more likely than those who are less engaged to expect that their representative would address an issue if contacted. This pattern holds true controlling for both partisanship and the partisanship of the district's representative.

### Most say it is unlikely their representative would help them address a problem if contacted

Suppose you contacted your member of the U.S. House of Representatives with a problem. How likely do you think it is that they would help you address it? (%)



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29–Feb. 13, 2018. Congressional district information comes from Gary Jacobson's database of congressional election results.

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## What should happen when the majority and a governor's supporters don't agree?

Three-quarters of Americans (75%) say that when a new bill is supported by a majority of people in a state – but opposed by the governor's supporters – the governor should follow the will of the majority and sign the legislation. And while there are no differences between Republicans and Democrats in these views when the governor's party is not specified, partisans' answers do differ when the partisanship of the governor (and the governor's supporters) is mentioned.

Using a survey experiment in which subsets of the public were presented with and without partisan descriptions of the governor and the governor's supporters, wide majorities in every condition of the experiment support the governor signing a bill that most of the people in the state support even though the governor's own supporters (or co-partisans) oppose the bill. (See box below for full details of the experiment.)

Majorities of both Republicans and Democrats say – in this hypothetical – that the governor should sign the bill, regardless of the partisanship assigned to the governor and the governor's supporters. However, partisan support for going along with the majority view is substantially lower when the example provided results in their own party's position being given less priority.

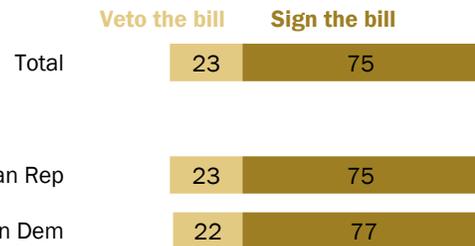
For example, when given no party reference, 75% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say the governor should follow the will of the majority, but when told that the governor is also a Republican and that Republicans oppose the bill, a narrower majority (66%) of Republicans say that the governor should sign the bill.

A nearly identical pattern is seen among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents: 77% support signing in the generic case, compared with 68% when the governor and supporters are identified as Democrats.

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### Most say a governor should heed their state's people – not political backers

*If most people in a state support a new bill passed in a state, but most people who voted for the state's governor oppose it, what should the governor do? (%)*



Notes: No answer not shown. See topline for full question wording.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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But partisans differ in their response to the example of a governor of the *opposing* party. Presented with an example of a bill on the desk of a Republican governor that is opposed by Republicans but supported by the majority of the state, the same share of Democrats say the governor should follow the will of the majority as say this when not provided any cues about the party of the governor or the governor's supporters (77% in both cases).

By contrast, when Republicans are presented with a hypothetical Democratic governor, with Democrats opposed to the bill, they are substantially more likely to say that the governor should follow the will of the majority of the state rather than the governor's supporters (90% say this) than they do in either the generic condition (75%) or when the governor and governors' supporters are Republicans (66%).

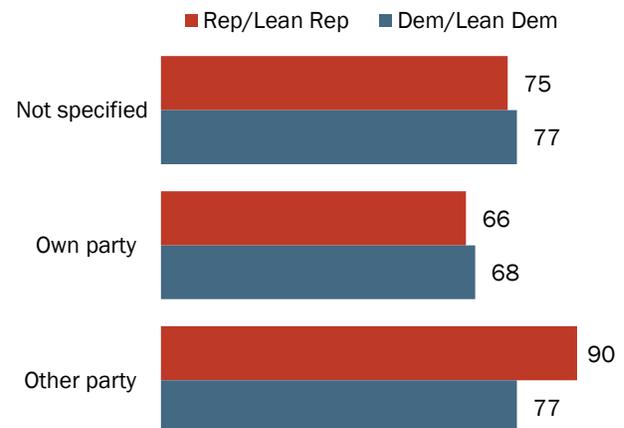
### Broad support for will of majority, but partisanship has an effect

*% who say a governor should sign a bill supported by most of the state when most of governor's supporters oppose it*

*When the governor and supporters are identified as ...*



*Among partisans, when the governor and supporters are identified as ...*



Notes: Respondents were randomly assigned to a condition: No party specified, Republican governor/supporters or Democratic governor/supporters. See topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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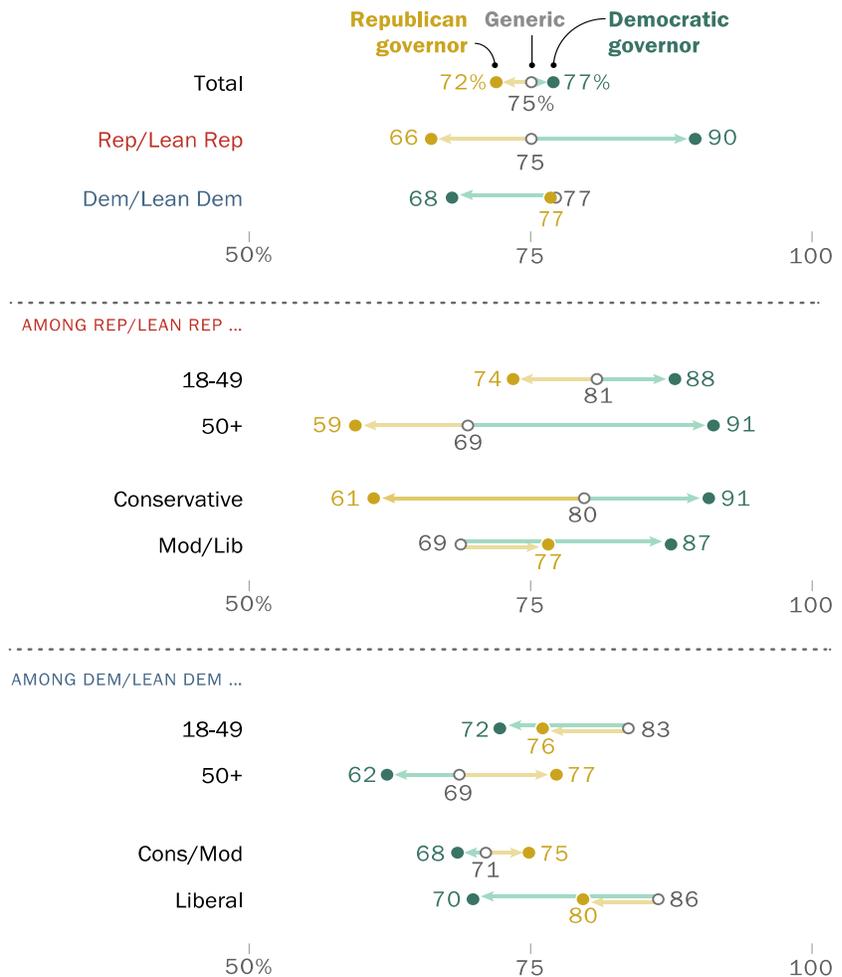
Among Republicans, the difference in the shares who say the governor should sign the legislation under different partisan conditions is particularly pronounced among older and conservative Republicans.

Older Republicans are less likely than younger Republicans to say the bill should be signed when the governor is a Republican and Republicans are in opposition (59% of those 50 and older say this, compared with 74% of those under 50). There is a similar-sized age gap in the case of a generic governor (81% vs. 69%). About nine-in-ten Republicans and Republican leaners across all age groups say the bill should be signed by a Democratic governor, even though most Democrats oppose the legislation.

A similar pattern is evident by ideology: While 77% of moderate and liberal Republicans say a bill with majority statewide support should be signed even if most Republicans in the state oppose it, that falls to 61% among conservative Republicans. There is no ideological difference among Republicans when the governor and supporters are identified as Democrats.

**In both parties, older adults less likely to support will of majority over partisan goals**

*% who say the governor should sign the bill if a majority of people support it even if a majority of the governor's supporters oppose it*



Notes: Respondents were randomly assigned to a condition: No party specified, Republican governor/supporters or Democratic governor/supporters. See topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Among Democrats, age differences are similar to those in the GOP: Older Democrats are somewhat less likely than younger Democrats to back the signing of a bill by a Democratic governor if Democrats oppose the legislation (62% of those 50 and older, compared with 72% of those under 50) and to support the bill's signing in the case of a generic governor and supporters (69% vs. 83%). But about three-quarters in all age groups say this when the governor is identified as a Republican.

There are no significant ideological differences among Democrats in the shares who say the governor should sign the bill in either the Republican or Democratic conditions. However, liberal Democrats are more likely than conservative or moderate Democrats to say the bill should be signed when no partisan indicators are given (86% vs. 71%).

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## The veto survey experiment

This study includes several survey experiments that present different versions of the same question to different subsets of respondents. This experiment is designed to illustrate how people balance majority support for a policy when most members of the party of the executive oppose that policy.

Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three conditions:

### Generic governor/supporters

Thinking about a new bill passed in a state ...

If most people in the state support the bill, but most people who voted for the governor oppose it, what should the governor do?

#### Response categories:

1) Sign the bill or 2) Veto the bill

### Republican governor/supporters

Thinking about a new bill passed in a state with a Republican governor ...

If most people in the state support the bill, but Republicans in the state oppose it, what should the governor do?

1) Sign the bill or 2) Veto the bill

### Democratic governor/supporters

Thinking about a new bill passed in a state with a Democratic governor ...

If most people in the state support the bill, but Democrats in the state oppose it, what should the governor do?

1) Sign the bill or 2) Veto the bill

*There is a fourth condition that reverses support and opposition to the generic case and is not illustrated here. Its results are inverse of the generic version; results and question wording can be found in the topline.*

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## Only about two-in-ten say government is run for the benefit of all

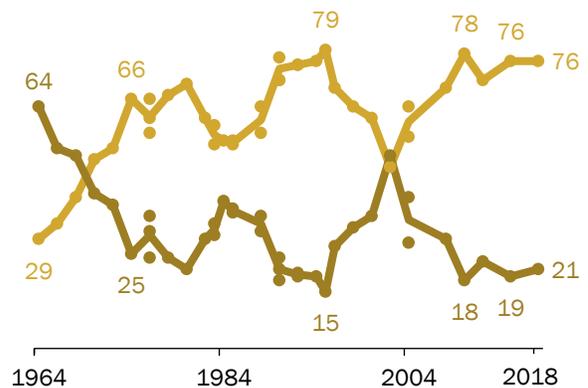
A large majority of Americans (76%) say the government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves; fewer than a quarter (21%) say it is run for the benefit of all the people. Since the early 1970s, most Americans have generally said the government is run by a few big interests, and the share saying this is unchanged from 2015.

Most Republicans (71%) and Democrats (84%) say the government is run by a few big interests. More Democrats say this now than in 2015 (71% then vs. 84% now). Views among Republicans have moved in the opposite direction (81% then to 71% now).

### Most continue to say government run by a few big interests

% who say the government is run ...

- By a few big interests looking out for themselves
- For the benefit of all people



Notes: Data points indicate individual surveys, line shows yearly averages. Trend includes data from other organizations. See topline for full details.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Public continues to back limiting campaign spending

A wide majority of Americans continue to believe that there should be limits on the amount of money political candidates can spend on campaigns: Roughly three-quarters (77%) feel that such limits are appropriate. A somewhat smaller majority (65%) think that new campaign finance laws could be effective in limiting the amount of money in political campaigns. These overall views are little changed from 2015.

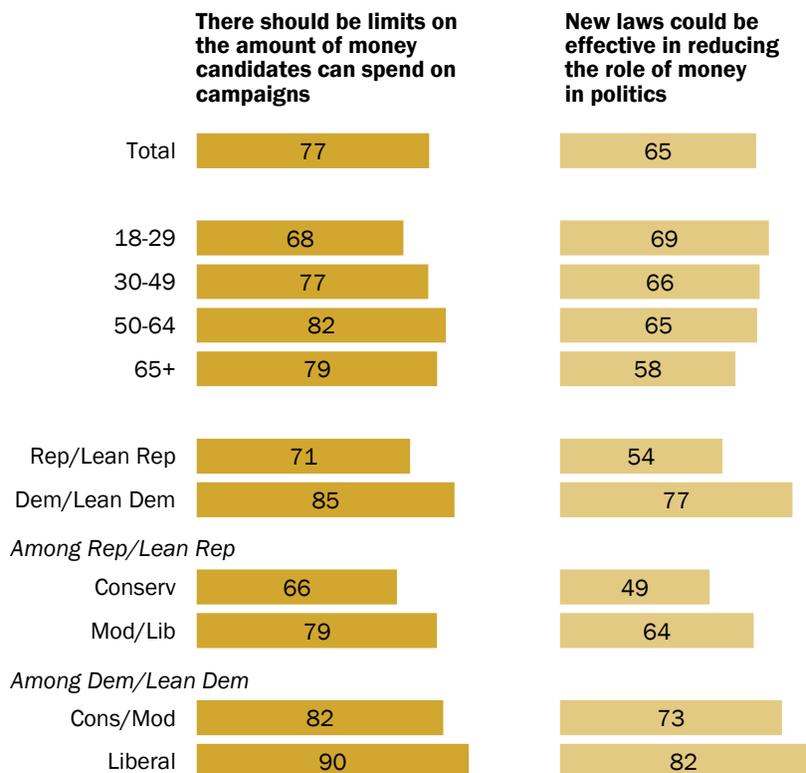
While majorities of Americans in all age groups endorse limiting the amount of money in political campaigns, those older than 30 are substantially more likely than younger adults to hold this view (79% of those older than 30 say that there should be limits,

compared with 68% of those under 30). Conversely, while majorities in all age groups are optimistic about how effective new campaign finance laws would be in limiting the role of money in politics, that sentiment is somewhat less widespread among those 65 or older (58% say this, compared with 65% or more among younger age groups).

Though Democrats are more likely than Republicans to support limiting the amount of money in political campaigns, wide majorities in both parties say there should be limits (85% of Democrats, 71% of Republicans). Republicans are substantially more skeptical than Democrats about the effectiveness of new laws. About half (54%) of Republicans say that new laws could be effective while 77% of Democrats say the same.

### Widespread support for limiting money in campaigns; about two-thirds say such laws would be effective

*% who say ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Views about the public's influence on government

Overall, most adults see voting as an avenue to influence the government: 61% say that “voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things.”

However, on a more general measure of political efficacy, the public is more divided: 52% say ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence government if they make an effort, while 47% say “there’s not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Washington.”

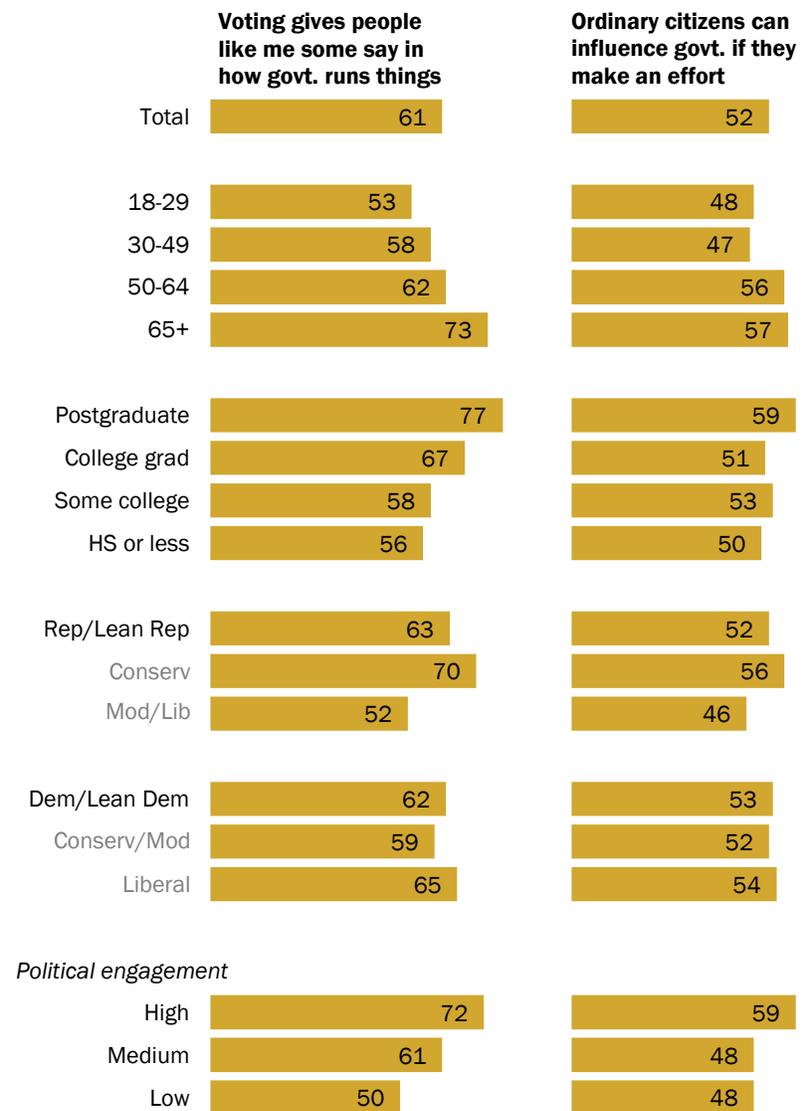
On both measures, younger and less-educated adults are more skeptical about the impact of participation.

The view that voting gives people some say increases with age; while just 53% of adults under 30 say this, that compares with nearly three-quarters of those 65 and older (73%). This age gap is seen in both parties.

Similarly, those under 50 are less likely than their elders (ages 50 and older) to say ordinary citizens can influence government if they make an effort (48% vs. 56%).

### Younger adults less likely to say they can influence government, have a voice through the ballot box

*% who say ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Education is also associated with a sense of political efficacy: 77% of postgraduates say voting gives people some say, compared with two-thirds of those with a bachelor's degree (67%) and 57% of those with less education.

Political engagement is highly correlated with attitudes about voting. Highly engaged adults are considerably more likely to see the value of participation and the potential of "ordinary citizens" to influence governmental policy.

In both parties, those who are more ideological – conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats – are also more likely to view voting as a way for them to have a voice.



## 7. Democratic debates and the stakes of politics

Two-thirds of Americans (67%) now say that, when it comes to “the way things have been going in politics over the last few years on issues that matter” to them, their side has been losing more often than it has been winning. Just 29% feel they have generally been winning more often than losing on the issues that matter to them in politics.

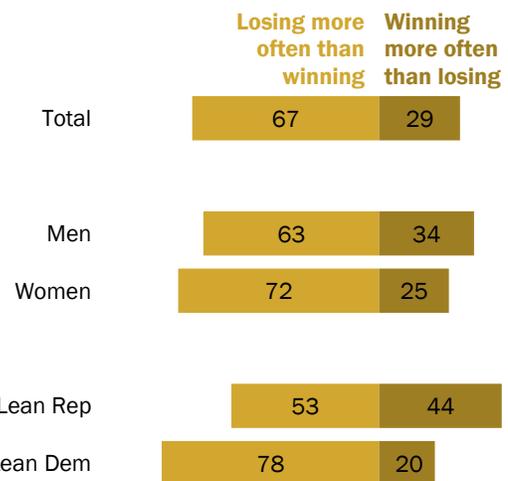
The share of Americans who say they are losing more than winning has increased 8 percentage points since 2016 (from 59% to 67% today).

Women are now more likely than men to say that, on balance, they are losing (72% vs. 63%); in early 2016, slightly more men (62%) than women (57%) felt like their political side was losing.

Partisans’ views also have shifted since before the 2016 election: 78% of Democrats and Democratic leaners now say they are losing more often than winning, up from 49% two years ago. Today, Republicans and Republican leaners are about evenly split (53% say losing more often, 44% say winning). In 2016, 75% of Republicans said they felt they were losing on the issues that mattered to them.

### Women more likely than men to say they are ‘losing’ on important issues

*Thinking about the way things have been going in politics over the last few years on issues that matter to you, would you say your side has been ... (%)*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

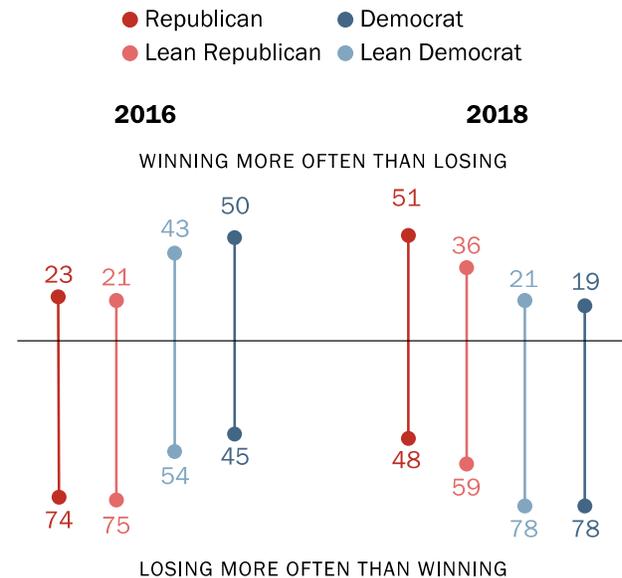
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In the current survey, those who identify with the GOP are more likely than those who lean toward the Republican Party to say their side has been winning more often than losing (51% vs. 36%). Two years ago, there were no significant differences in these views.

Among Democrats, equally large majorities of those who identify with the party and those who lean Democratic (78% each) say they are losing more often than winning in politics. In 2016, more Democratic identifiers (50%) than leaners (43%) said their side was winning more often.

## Republicans now split over whether their side is losing or winning more often

*Thinking about the way things have been going in politics over the last few years on issues that matter to you, would you say your side has been winning more often than losing?*



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## Perceptions of the public's political wisdom and ability

About half of the public (51%) says that ordinary Americans would not do a better job solving the country's problems than elected officials, compared with slightly fewer (44%) who think they would do a better job. This marks a shift from 2015, when most (55%) said they thought ordinary Americans would do better than elected officials and just 39% said they could not do better.

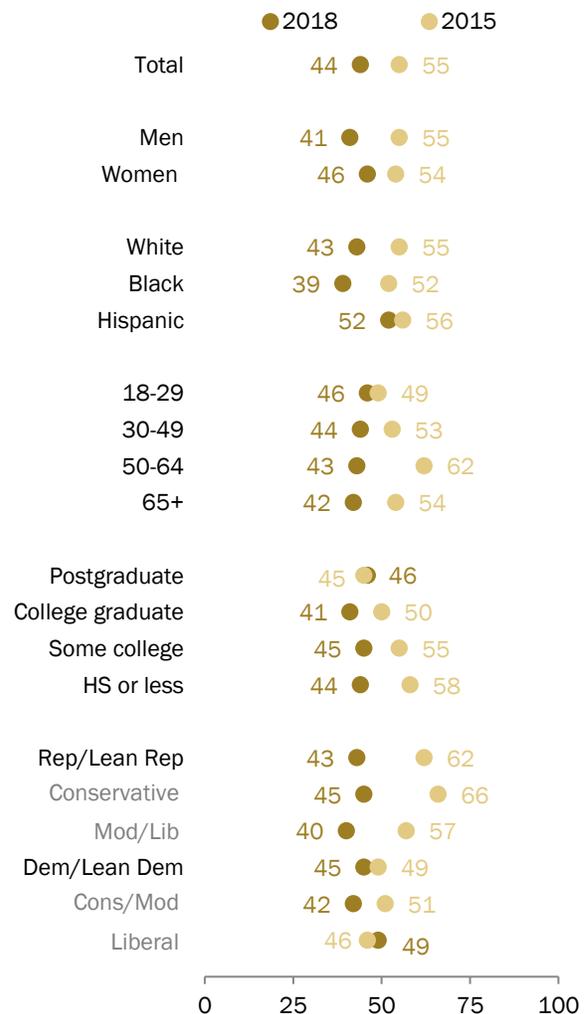
This shift in views has been especially pronounced among Republicans and Republican leaners. Today, 43% of Republicans think ordinary Americans would do a better job than elected officials, down sharply from 62% who said this in 2015, during Barack Obama's administration.

There has been little change in views among Democrats and Democratic leaners on this question: About as many are skeptical that ordinary Americans would do better than elected officials today (45%) as said this in 2015 (49%).

Older adults and those without a college degree have also become more skeptical about the public's ability to do better than elected officials.

### Fewer Republicans now say ordinary people would do better than officials

*% who say ordinary Americans would do a better job solving the country's problems than elected officials*



Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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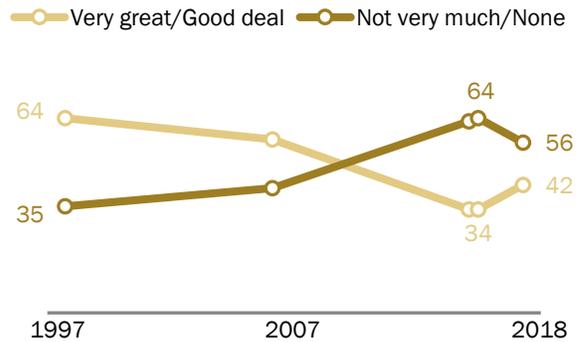
The public has become less confident in the ability of ordinary Americans to outperform elected officials, but they have become somewhat more positive when it comes to assessments of the political wisdom of the American people.

Today, 56% say that they have not very much or no confidence at all in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions; 42% say they have a very great deal or good deal of confidence. While opinion is negative on balance, it is more positive than it was two years ago: In 2016, nearly two-thirds (64%) said they had not very much or no confidence in the public’s political wisdom.

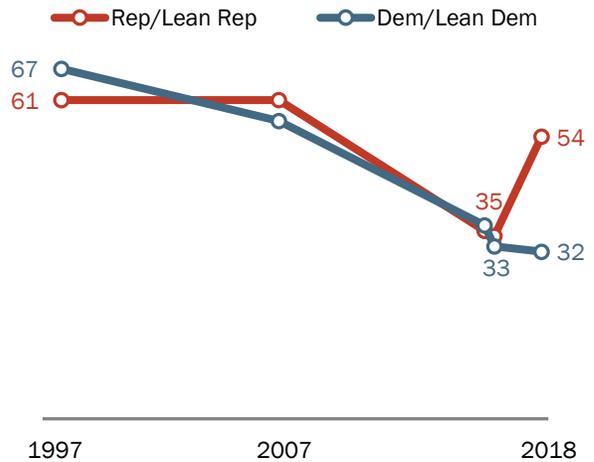
Republicans and Republican leaners have driven this shift in overall views. In the current survey, 54% say they have a very great or good deal of confidence in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions. In the spring of 2016, just 35% said this. By contrast, views among Democrats and Democratic leaners have not changed over the last two years: Just 33% expressed confidence in the public’s political wisdom in 2016 and about the same percentage says this today (32%).

**Republican confidence in public’s political wisdom up since 2016**

*% who say they have \_\_\_ of trust and confidence in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions*



*% who say they have a very great/good deal of trust and confidence in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Majority of public says politics is not a struggle between right and wrong

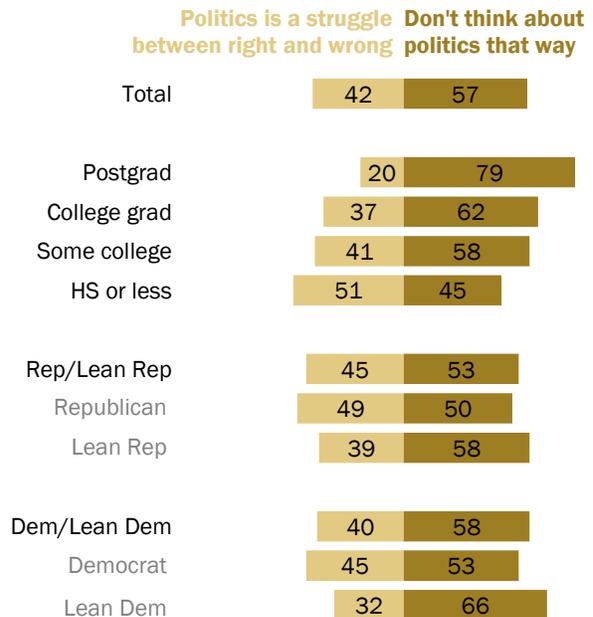
Overall, 42% of Americans say they think about politics as a struggle between right and wrong, while a majority (57%) doesn't think of politics in that way.

Just 20% of those with a postgraduate degree say they think about politics as a struggle between right and wrong, while 79% say they do not. Narrower majorities of those with bachelor's degrees (62%) and those with some college experience (58%) also say they generally do not think about politics in these terms. In comparison, those with a high school education or less are divided: 51% say they think about politics in these terms, 45% say they do not.

Republicans and Democrats are about equally likely to say they see politics as a struggle between right and wrong. But partisan identifiers in both coalitions differ from those who say they lean toward (but do not identify with) the party. For instance, while 45% of Democratic identifiers say they think about politics as a struggle between right and wrong, just 32% of Democratic leaners say the same.

### Educational divide over whether politics is a struggle between right and wrong

% who say ...



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## How clear are the solutions to the country's issues?

Just over half of Americans see the major issues facing the country today as complicated: 54% say that most big issues don't have clear solutions, while 44% say the solutions are clear. This sentiment is little changed in the overall public over the past few years, but there have been shifts in how both conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats view the country's problems.

In years past, conservative Republicans and Republican leaners were more likely than either Democrats or moderates and liberals in the GOP coalition to say that there were clear solutions to most of the big issues facing the country. Today, liberal Democrats and Democratic leaners are somewhat more likely

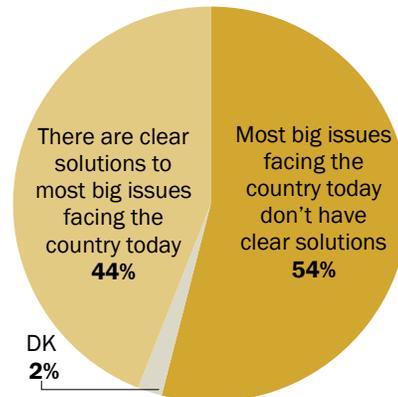
than those in other groups to say solutions are clear.

Last year, 47% of conservative Republicans and 35% of liberal Democrats said solutions to most of the country's big problems were clear.

Today, half (50%) of liberal Democrats say this, compared with 43% of conservative Republicans. Within both parties, views among the less ideological wings of the parties have not shifted over the last three years.

### Most say major issues facing the country don't have 'clear solutions'

*% who say ...*

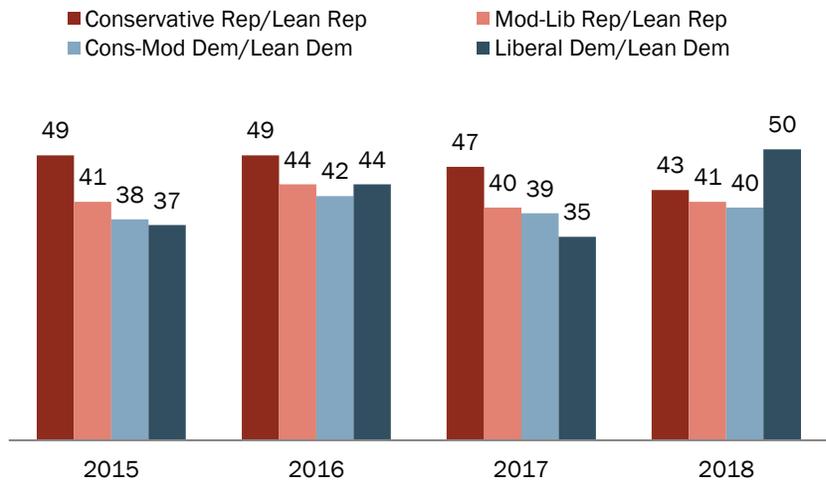


Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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### Liberal Dems, conservative Reps shift on whether clear solutions exist for most big national issues

*% who say there are clear solutions to most big issues facing the country today ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

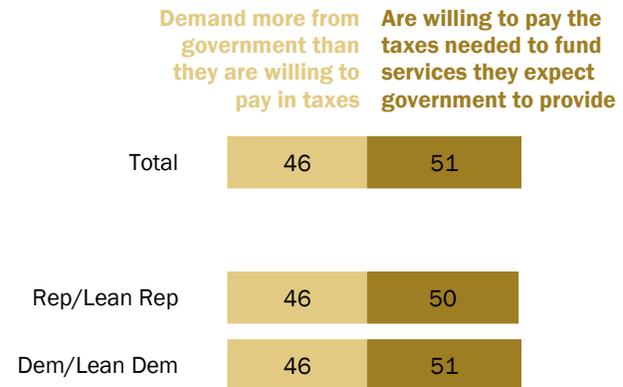
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Americans are currently about evenly divided on the question of whether the public is willing to pay the taxes needed to provide the government services they expect (51%) or whether the public demands more from the government than they are willing to pay (46%). In 2015, Americans were slightly more likely to say the public usually demands more than it is willing to pay for (52%) than to say it was willing to pay for expected services.

As was the case in 2015, there is no partisan gap on this question. There also are no significant differences in these views across demographic groups today; this represents a change from 2015, when younger, more educated and higher-income people were more likely than others to say the public demanded more than it was willing to pay taxes for.

### Public split over people's willingness to pay for government services

*% who say most Americans ...*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## More say constitutional interpretation should address current meaning

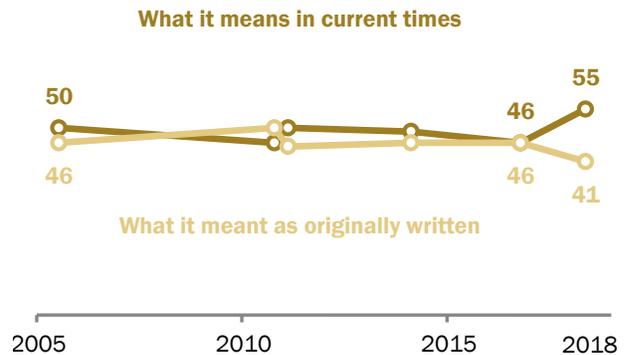
A 55% majority of the public now says the U.S. Supreme Court should make its rulings based on what the Constitution “means in current times,” while 41% say the court should base its rulings on what the Constitution “meant as originally written.”

This reflects a shift in public opinion: In surveys dating back more than a decade (from 2005 to 2016), the public was roughly evenly divided in its views of how the Supreme Court should interpret the Constitution. When the question was last asked in October 2016, 46% said that the court should base its rulings on what the Constitution means in current times; the same share (46%) said rulings should be based on what the Constitution meant when it was originally written.

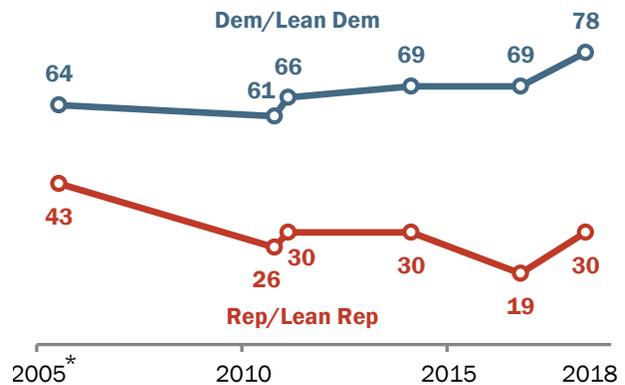
Nearly eight-in-ten Democrats and Democratic leaners (78%) now say rulings should be based on the Constitution’s current meaning, higher than at any previous point and up 9 percentage points from 2016. Just three-in-ten Republicans (30%) currently say the same; this reflects an 11-point increase from the fall of 2016, but is little different from GOP views in 2010 and 2011.

### Shift in public views of how Supreme Court should interpret Constitution

*% who say the Supreme Court should base its rulings on what the Constitution ...*



*% who say the Supreme Court should base its rulings on what the Constitution means in current times*



\*2005 data based on partisans (not including leaners).

Notes: Don't know responses not shown. 2010 data from Kaiser/Washington Post/Harvard. 2005 from ABC/Washington Post.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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Conservative Republicans continue to overwhelmingly say the Constitution should be interpreted based on its original meaning (77%) rather than its meaning in current times (21%). But moderate and liberal Republicans and Republican leaners are more divided in their views: 50% say original meaning, 46% current times. There is a more modest ideological gap among Democrats, though liberal Democrats are more likely than conservatives and moderates to think the court should base its rulings on current meaning (88% vs. 70%).

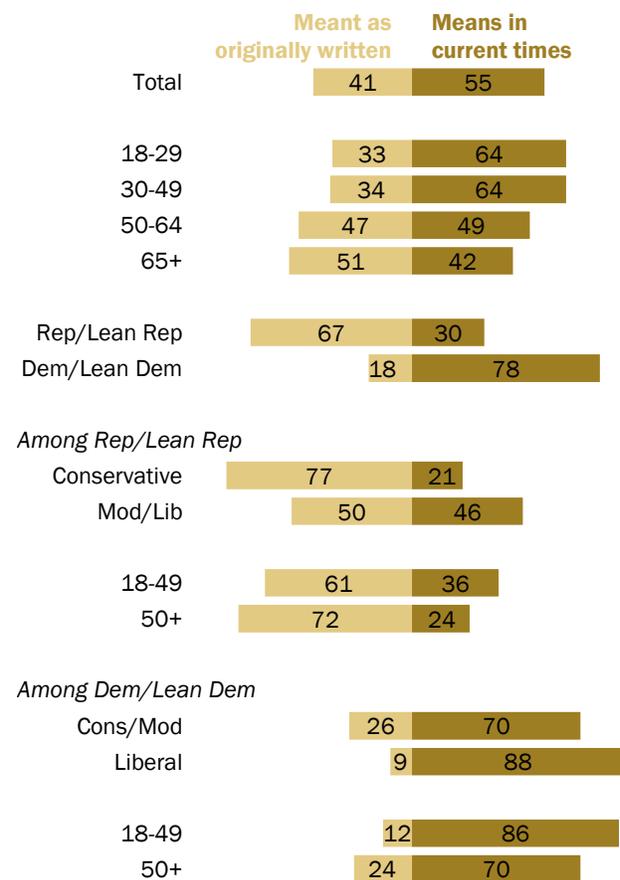
There is a substantial age gap in these views: More than six-in-ten Americans younger than 50 (64%) say the high court should take current context into account when interpreting the Constitution. By comparison, only about half of those 50 and older (47%) say the same.

Although majorities of Republicans in all age groups say the Constitution should be interpreted as it was originally written, younger Republicans are somewhat less likely than older Republicans to hold this view (61% of Republicans ages 18 to 49 compared with 72% of those 50 and older).

Similarly, while wide majorities of Democrats of all ages say the Supreme Court should base its rulings on its view of the Constitution's current meaning, older Democrats (70% of those 50 and older) are less likely than younger Democrats (86% of those 18 to 49) to say this.

## Partisan, ideological divides on how Supreme Court should base its rulings

% who say the Supreme Court should base its rulings on what the Constitution ...



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## 8. The tone of political debate, compromise with political opponents

About two-thirds of Americans (68%) say that personally insulting political opponents is never fair game in politics, while 31% say insults are sometimes fair game.

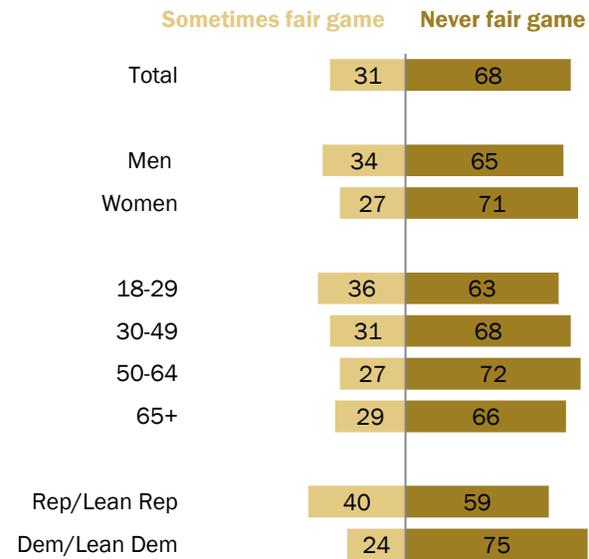
Overall, there is a modest gender gap in these views, with women somewhat more likely than men (71% vs. 65%) to view personal insults as unacceptable. There are no significant differences in these views by age or across racial and ethnic groups.

As in the past, Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are considerably more likely than Republicans and Republican leaners to say insults are never fair game. Three-quarters of Democrats (75%) now say this, compared with 59% of Republicans.

Current views are on par with those in the spring of 2016, but the share saying insults are not acceptable is higher than it was in the immediate weeks before the 2016 election: In October 2016, a narrower majority of voters (54%) said insulting opponents was never fair game in politics.

### Most say personally insulting political opponents is ‘never fair game’

*% who say personally insulting political opponents is ...*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## Partisan gap on ‘political correctness’ debate grows wider

Overall, 55% of Americans currently say that “too many people are easily offended these days over the language that others use,” while 45% say that “people need to be more careful about the language they use to avoid offending people with different backgrounds.”

Since 2016, there has been a 6-percentage-point rise in the share who say people should be more careful with language (from 39% to 45%). At that time, the balance of public opinion was more clearly tilted to the view that people are too easily offended (59% said this, while 39% said people should be more careful about language).

While roughly eight-in-ten Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (81%) take the position that people are too easily offended by the language others use, about two-thirds of Democrats and Democratic leaners (65%) take the opposing view that people need to be more careful with language to avoid offenses.

Although this partisan divide is not new, it has widened since 2016. Republican attitudes are virtually unchanged over the past two years.

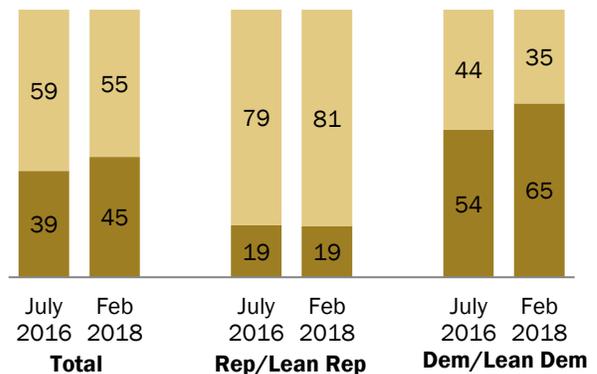
But the share of Democrats now holding the view that people need to be more careful with language has increased 11 percentage points (up from 54% two years ago).

While the view that people should be more careful is held by majorities of Democrats in all ideological groups, it is particularly prevalent among liberals. Today, 72% of liberal Democrats and Democratic leaners take this position, compared with 59% of conservatives and moderates in the party. There are no significant differences in the views of Republicans by ideology.

### Most Republicans say too many are ‘easily offended’ over others’ language

% who say that ...

- Too many are easily offended over language others use
- People need to be more careful to avoid offending



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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As in 2016, there remain significant gaps in these opinions between men and women and between blacks and whites.

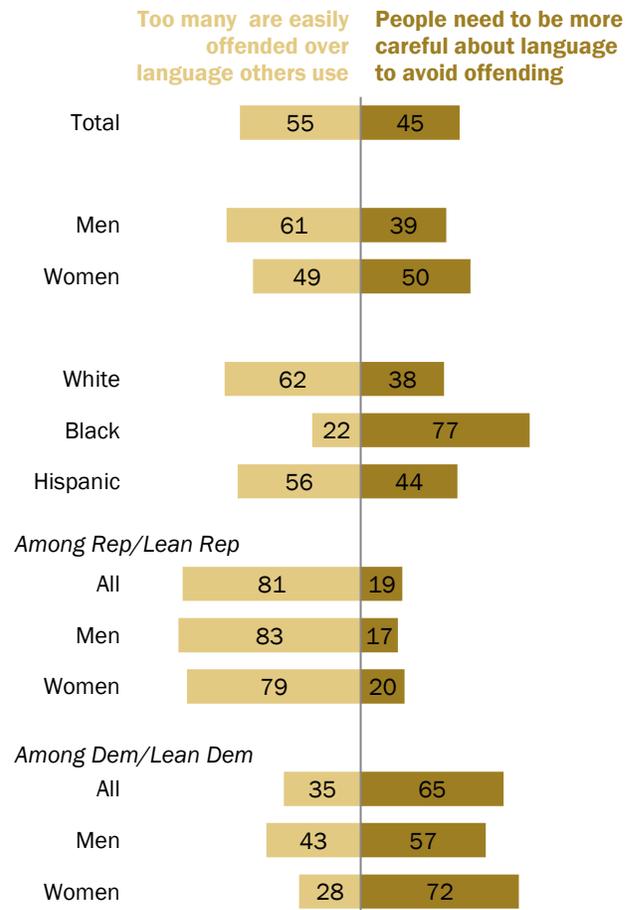
While a 61% majority of men say that too many people are easily offended these days over the language others use, women's views are split: 50% say people should be more careful, 49% say too many people are easily offended.

However, the gender gap is concentrated among Democrats. While 72% of Democratic women say people need to be more careful about language to avoid offending others, a more modest majority (57%) of Democratic men say this. There are no significant differences in these views between Republican men and women.

Black people remain significantly more likely than either whites or Hispanics to hold the view that people need to be more careful about language to avoid offending those with different backgrounds. Today, 77% of African Americans say this, compared with 38% of whites and 44% of Hispanics.

## Racial, gender divides over need to be more careful with language

*% who say ...*



Notes: No answer not shown. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb.13, 2018.

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## Wide majority rejects bending the rules in politics

A majority of Americans (79%) say that in politics, “it is important to respect the rules, even if it makes it harder to get things done.” Just 19% say it is “sometimes necessary to bend the rules in order to get things done.”

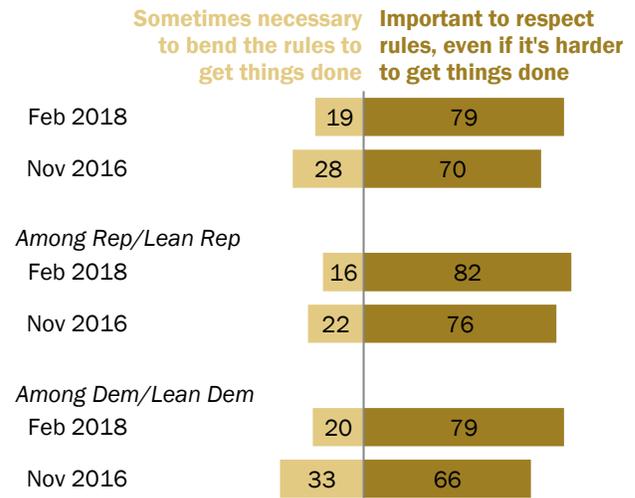
The share saying it is important to respect the rules has grown – among Republicans and Democrats alike – since just prior to the 2016 presidential election. While Republicans were somewhat more likely than Democrats to say this in November 2016, there is now no partisan gap in these views: 79% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents and 82% of Republicans and Republican leaners now say it’s important to respect political rules, even if it makes it harder to get things done.

While there are no significant differences in these views across partisan or demographic groups, there are modest differences related to levels of civic knowledge.

Nearly nine-in-ten Americans with high levels of civic knowledge (88%) say it’s important to respect the rules even if that makes it harder to get things done, while just 10% believe that it is sometimes necessary to bend the rules. Among those with relatively low levels of civic knowledge, a narrower – though still substantial – majority (69%) says respect for the rules is important, while about three-in-ten (29%) say that bending the rules is sometimes acceptable in order to get things

### Growing majorities in both parties say it is important to respect rules

*% who say that, in politics, it is ...*

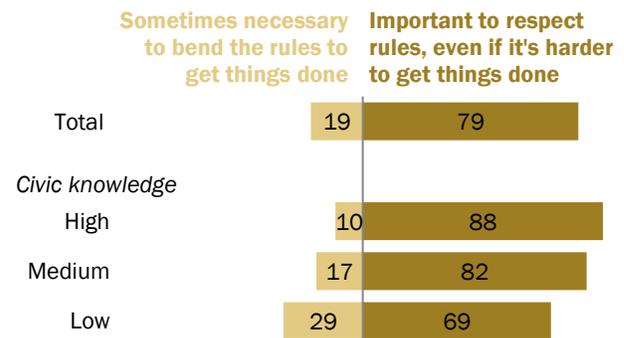


Notes: November 2016 survey conducted prior to the presidential election. No answer not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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### Civic knowledge associated with rejecting ‘rule bending’ in politics

*% who say that, in politics, it is ...*



Notes: No answer not shown. See appendix for details on civic knowledge index. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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done. These differences are evident even when controlling for partisanship.

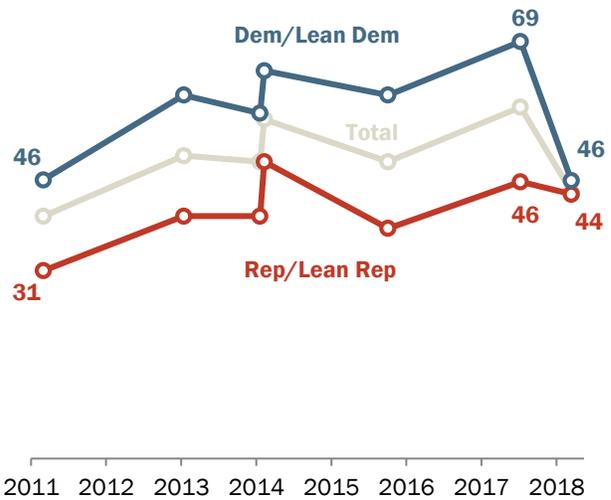
## Democratic views shift on making compromises in politics

Roughly half of Americans say they prefer politicians who stick to their positions (53%), while slightly fewer say they like those who make compromises with people they disagree with (44%). This represents a substantial shift from July 2017, when 58% of the public said they preferred politicians who compromised compared with 39% who said they liked politicians who stick with their positions.

There is now no difference between Republicans and Democrats in their views of compromise. In six previous surveys conducted since 2011, Democrats were consistently more likely than Republicans to say they liked those who compromised. As recently as last July, 69% of Democrats said they preferred elected officials who made compromises; today just 46% say this. These views are little changed among Republicans and Republican leaners in recent years: Today, 44% say they like elected officials who make compromises, while 46% said this in July 2017.

### Long-standing partisan gap over views of compromise disappears

*% who say they like elected officials who make compromises with people they disagree with*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

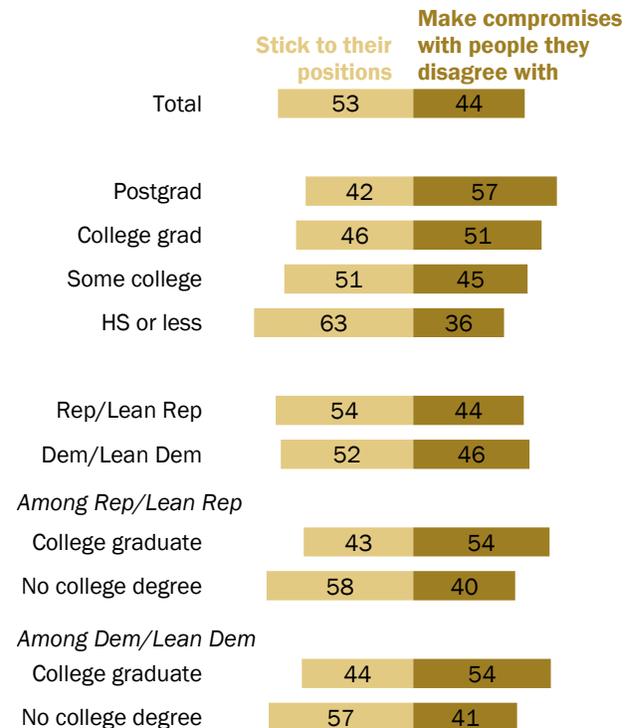
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There are substantial educational differences in views of compromise in politics. A majority of those with postgraduate degrees say they like elected officials who make compromises with people they disagree with over those who stick to their positions (57% vs. 42%). Among those with bachelor's degrees and those with some college experience, these views are roughly evenly divided. Among those with no college experience, most prefer politicians who stick to their positions: 63% say this, while just 36% say they prefer elected officials who make compromises with people they disagree with.

This pattern is seen in both parties, with slight majorities of college graduates saying they prefer politicians who make compromises (54% in both parties) and the balance of opinion reversed among those without college degrees (58% of Republicans and 57% of Democrats without bachelor's degrees say they prefer elected officials who stick to their positions).

### In both parties, sizable education gap in views of politicians who compromise

*% who say they like elected officials who ...*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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## 9. The responsibilities of citizenship

When it comes to what it takes to be a good citizen, the public has a long list of traits and behaviors that it says are important. And there's a fair amount of agreement across groups about what it takes to be a good citizen.

Still, there are differences when it comes to which aspects are considered *very* important (as opposed to somewhat important), and points of emphasis differ by party identification as well as by age.

Overall, 91% say it is either very (74%) or somewhat (17%) important to vote in elections in order to be a good citizen; just 8% say this is not too or not at all important.

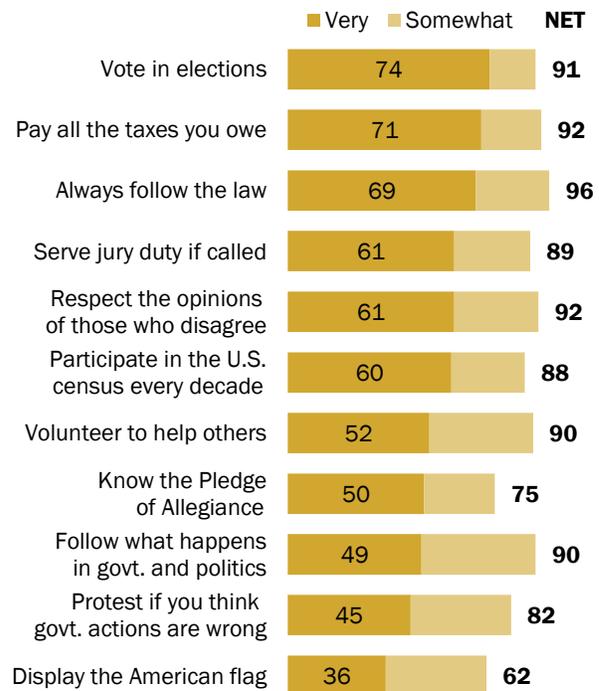
Large shares also say it is important to pay all the taxes you owe (92%) and to always follow the law (96%), including about seven-in-ten who say each is very important (71% and 69%, respectively).

For several other traits and behaviors, about nine-in-ten say they are at least somewhat important to good citizenship. However, the share saying each is very important varies significantly. For example, 89% say it's important to serve jury duty if called, including 61% who say this is very important. While a comparable 90% say it's important to follow what's happening in government and politics as part of good citizenship, a smaller share (49%) says this very important.

Protesting government actions you think are wrong and knowing the Pledge of Allegiance are considered important parts of what it means to be a good citizen, though they rank somewhat lower on the public's list. Displaying the American flag ranks last among the 11 items tested in the survey. Still, a majority says this is either a very (36%) or somewhat (26%) important part of what it means to be a good citizen.

### Voting, paying taxes, following law top public's list of good citizenship traits

% who say it is \_\_\_ important to what it means to be a good citizen to ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Republicans and Democrats largely agree on the importance of most responsibilities of citizenship.

About three-quarters of Republicans and Republican leaners (76%) and Democrats and Democratic leaners (75%) say it's very important to vote in elections.

Similarly, comparable majorities of Republicans and Democrats say it's very important to pay all the taxes you owe, serve jury duty if called, respect the opinions of those you disagree with and participate in the census. There also are no partisan divides over the importance of volunteering to help others and following what's going on in government and politics.

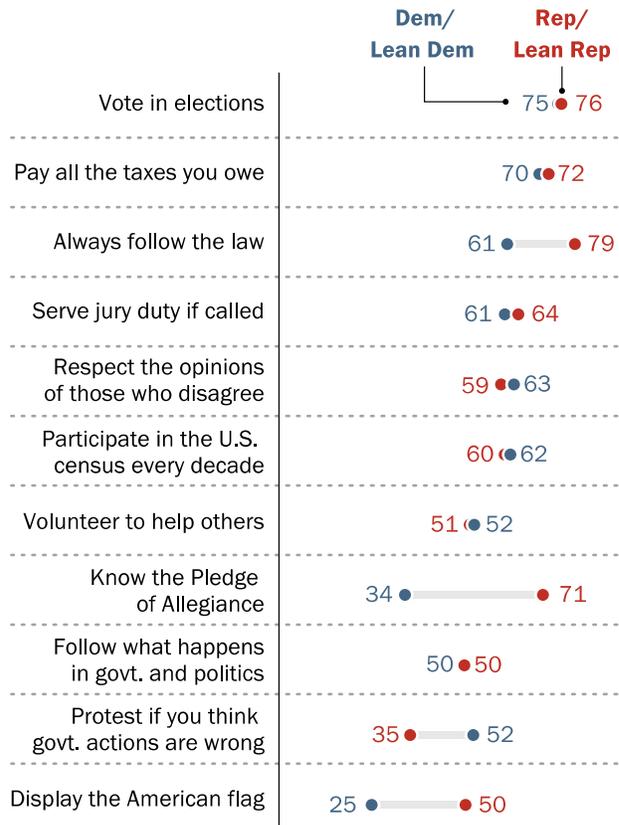
However, Republicans (79%) are more likely than Democrats (61%) to say it's very important to always follow the law to be a good citizen.

Knowing the Pledge of Allegiance ranks higher on Republicans' list (71% say it's very important) than Democrats' (just 34% say it's very important). In addition to placing greater importance on the Pledge of Allegiance, Republicans are twice as likely as Democrats to say it is very important to display the American flag (50% vs. 25%).

By contrast, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to think it is very important to protest if government actions are believed to be wrong: About half of Democrats (52%) this is very important to what it means to be a good citizen, compared with just about a third (35%) of Republicans.

### Republicans and Democrats agree on many aspects of good citizenship

*% who say it is very important to what it means to be a good citizen to ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## Partisans and ‘leaners’ differ over importance of aspects of citizenship

On many items, the views of independents that lean toward one of the two major parties diverge from those of self-identifying Republicans and Democrats. In general, partisan leaners tend to be less likely than straight Republicans and Democrats to view a range of responsibilities as important to what it means to be a good citizen.

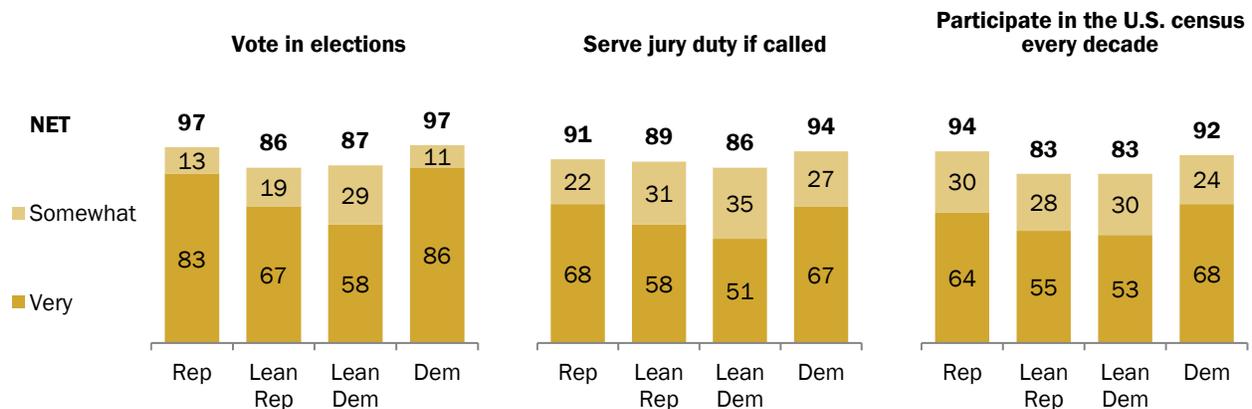
Overall, 83% of Republicans say voting in elections is a very important aspect of being a good citizen, compared with a smaller majority of Republican leaners (67%). There is an even wider 28-point gap between the share of Democrats (86%) and Democratic leaners (58%) who say this is very important.

Similarly, roughly two-thirds of both Republicans (64%) and Democrats (68%) say participating in the U.S. census every 10 years is very important to being a good citizen; slightly fewer Republican leaners (55%) and Democratic leaners (53%) say the same.

This pattern is seen across other items as well: Those who identify with a party are more likely than independents who lean to a party to say it is very important to serve jury duty if called, pay all owed taxes and to follow what is happening in government.

### Independents who lean toward a party are less likely than party identifiers to see voting, jury duty and census participation as ‘very important’ to good citizenship

*% who say it is \_\_\_ important to what it means to be a good citizen to ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

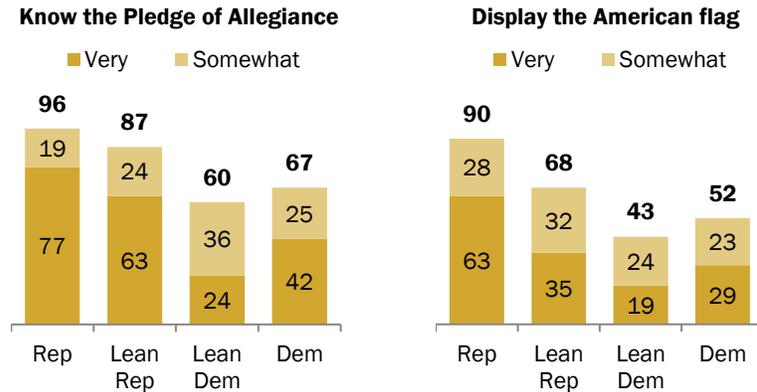
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While large shares of Republicans (96%) and Republican leaners (87%) say it is important to know the Pledge of Allegiance, Republican identifiers are somewhat more likely than leaners to say this is very important to good citizenship.

By comparison, smaller majorities of Democrats (67%) and Democratic leaners (60%) say it's important to know the pledge. Self-identifying Democrats (42%) are significantly more likely to say knowing the pledge is a very important part of good citizenship than Democratic leaners (24%).

### Large shares of Republican identifiers say knowing pledge, displaying flag are important to citizenship

*% who say it is \_\_\_ important to what it means to be a good citizen to ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

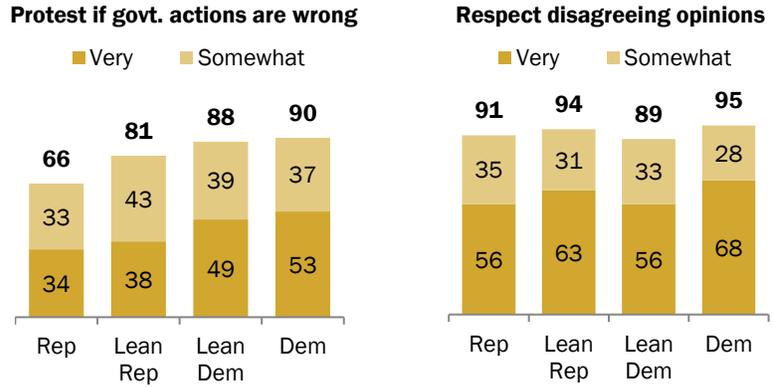
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There is a 22-point gap between the share of Republicans (90%) and Republican leaners (68%) who say displaying the American flag is at least somewhat important to being a good citizen. And 63% of Republicans call this very important, compared with 35% of Republican leaners. About half of Democrats (52%) think this is a very or somewhat important aspect of good citizenship; 43% of Democratic leaners say the same.

In contrast to the patterns seen on many items, Republican leaners (81%) are more likely than Republicans (66%) to say protesting government actions you think are wrong is an important part of being a good citizen. The views of Republican leaners place them closer to those of Democrats and Democratic leaners in terms of the overall importance they place on this aspect of citizenship.

**Republican leaners diverge from Republicans over importance of protesting if government is wrong**

*% who say it is \_\_\_ important to what it means to be a good citizen to ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## Age differences in views of the responsibilities of citizenship

Young adults place less importance on many aspects of citizenship than older adults, especially when it comes to the share that describes a trait or behavior as *very* important for being a good citizen.

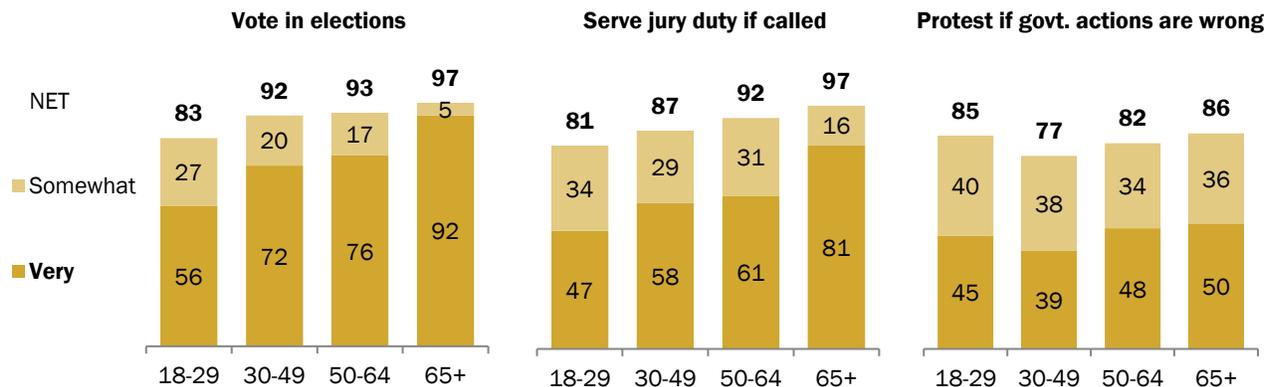
Majorities of adults across all ages say it is very important to vote in elections in order to be a good citizen. Still, a smaller majority of those under 30 say this (56%), compared with larger shares of those ages 30 to 49 (72%), 50 to 64 (76%) and 65 and older (92%).

And while fully 81% of those 65 and older say that to be a good citizen it is very important to serve jury duty if called, just about half (47%) of those under 30 say the same.

On other items, the pattern is similar. Young adults are less likely to call paying the taxes you owe, following the law, participating in the census, and following government and politics very important. Still, large majorities of young adults say each of these is at least somewhat important to being a good citizen.

### Older adults emphasize importance of voting, jury duty for good citizenship

% who say it is \_\_\_ important to what it means to be a good citizen to ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

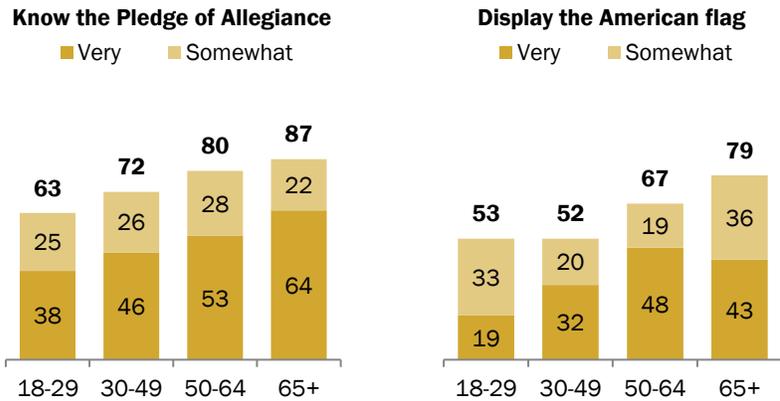
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There is no meaningful age gap in views of the importance of protesting government actions you think are wrong. Overall, 85% of those ages 18 to 29 say this is either very (45%) or somewhat (40%) important to being a good citizen. Views among those ages 65 and older are similar (50% very important, 36% somewhat important).

Displaying the American flag and knowing the Pledge of Allegiance do not rank particularly highly for young adults on their list of important characteristics for good citizenship. Among those ages 18 to 29, 63% say it is important to know the Pledge of Allegiance (38% very important) and 53% say it is important to display the American flag (19% very important). These items do not top the list of older adults either, though those 65 and older are more likely than the youngest adults to say both are important parts of being a good citizen.

**Few young adults say knowing pledge or displaying American flag are very important to good citizenship**

*% who say it is \_\_\_ important to what it means to be a good citizen to ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## 10. Political engagement, knowledge and the midterms

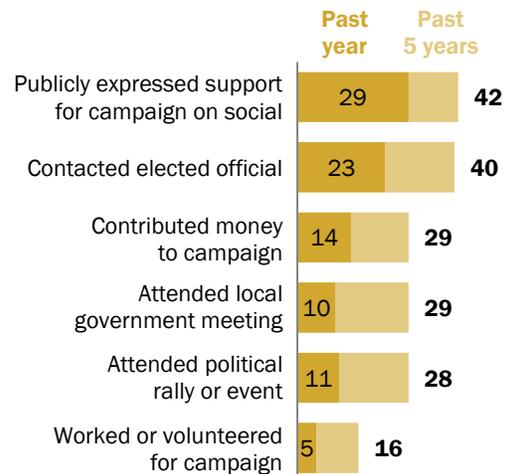
Many Americans participate in politics, either by volunteering for or donating to campaigns, attending protests or meetings, contacting officials or expressing their views on social media. Overall, a large majority (67%) reports having engaged in at least one of these activities in the past five years; nearly half (46%) say they have done so in the past year alone.

About four-in-ten Americans (42%) say they have publicly expressed support for a political campaign on social media in the past five years, and 29% say they have done this in the past year.

Nearly as many (40%) say they have contacted an elected official in the past five years, while 23% have done so in the past year. Smaller shares – slightly less than a third – report making donations to campaigns (29%), attending local government meetings (29%) or attending political rallies or events (28%) in the past five years. And 16% say they have worked or volunteered for a political campaign in the past five years (5% in the past year).

### More engage with politics digitally than by volunteering or attending rallies

*% who say they have done each of the following activities in the ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

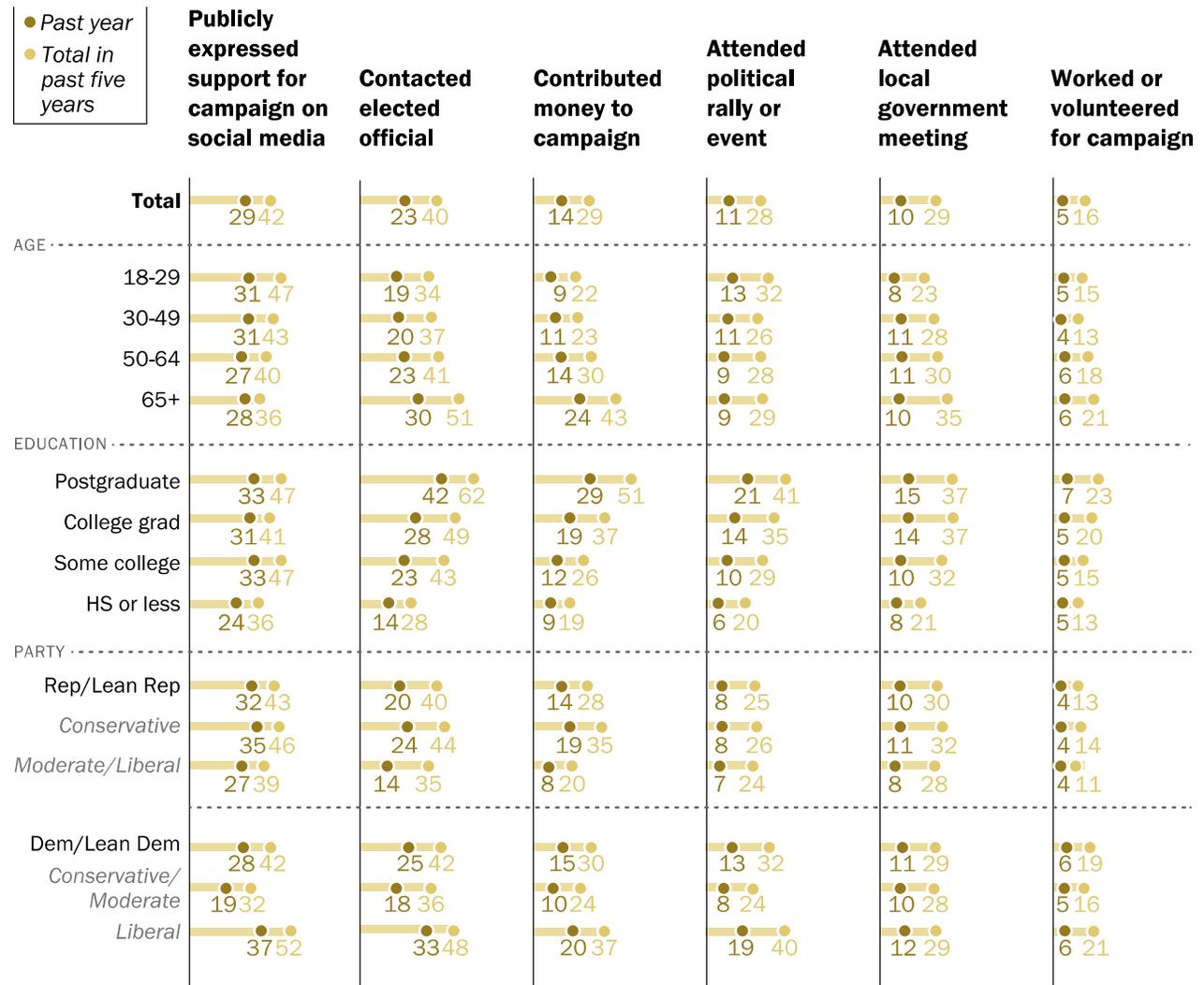
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## Demographic and educational differences in political engagement

Overall, older, more educated and more ideological Americans tend to report having engaged in more forms of political activism than younger, less educated and less ideological adults. But there

### Liberal Democrats are far more likely than those in other ideological groups to say they have attended a political rally in the past year

% who say they have done each of the following in the past



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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are some notable exceptions to these patterns.

Contacting political officials and donating to political campaigns are activities that are dominated by older and better educated people. About four-in-ten of those with at least a four-year college degree (43%) say they have contributed money to a political candidate or a group working to elect a candidate in the past five years, about double the share of those who have not completed college (22%). The gap in political donations is about as wide between adults 65 and older and those younger than 30.

By contrast, young adults are more likely than the oldest adults to have attended a political rally, speech or campaign event. Those under 30 are also about as likely as older adults to have publicly expressed support for a political campaign on social media in the last year (and more likely to have done so in the last five years). While those who have never attended college are less active politically on social media than those who have attended college, the differences on this measure of engagement are fairly modest.

Overall, Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are about as likely to engage in most political activities as Republicans and Republican leaners. But in some cases, such as donating to campaigns and contacting elected officials, the parties are divided along ideological lines. Liberal Democrats are more likely than conservative and moderate Democrats to engage in both activities; similarly, conservative Republicans are more likely than moderate and liberal Republicans to give money to candidates and contact elected officials.

And liberal Democrats stand out from other ideological groups in their attendance at political rallies or events. About one-in-five liberal Democrats (19%) say they have attended a political rally, event or speech in the past year, more than double the shares of conservative and moderate Democrats (8%), conservative Republicans (8%) or moderate and liberal Republicans (7%).

## Campaign contributions: Most are less than \$250

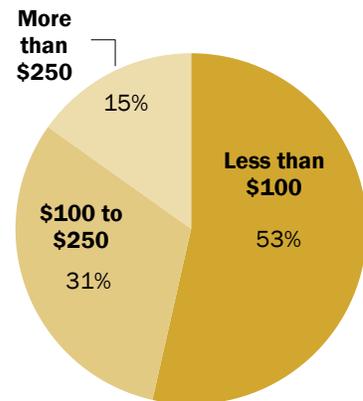
Most who report contributing money to a candidate or campaign in the past year say their contributions added up to less than \$250. About half (53%) say they gave less than \$100 and 31% say they gave \$100 to \$250. Only 15% say they gave more than \$250.

Republicans and Democrats who have made donations report contributing similar amounts: 53% of Republicans and Republican leaners and 55% of Democrats and Democratic leaners say they gave less than \$100.

People with higher incomes who donate to political campaigns are more likely to say they gave in greater amounts than those with lower incomes. More than a quarter (27%) of those with family incomes of more than \$100,000 who have made a political contribution in the past year have donated more than \$250, which is a much larger share than contributors in lower income categories.

### About half of donors say they gave less than \$100

*% of those who contributed money to a campaign in the last year that gave ...*



Note: No response answers not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## About half of Americans talk about politics at least weekly

About half of the public (51%) say they discuss politics with others at least a few times a week, including 18% who say they have discussions touching on politics nearly every day. A third say they have them a few times a week. Those who talk politics less regularly are about evenly split between having these discussions a few times a month (23%) or less often (26%).

As with many forms of political participation and activism, those who talk about politics more frequently are older and better educated.

Nearly two-thirds of those older than 65 (63%) say they have these discussions at least weekly, and slightly more than half of those ages 50 to 64 say the same (54%). Just 45% of those 18 to 29 and 30 to 49 say they talk about politics with others at least weekly.

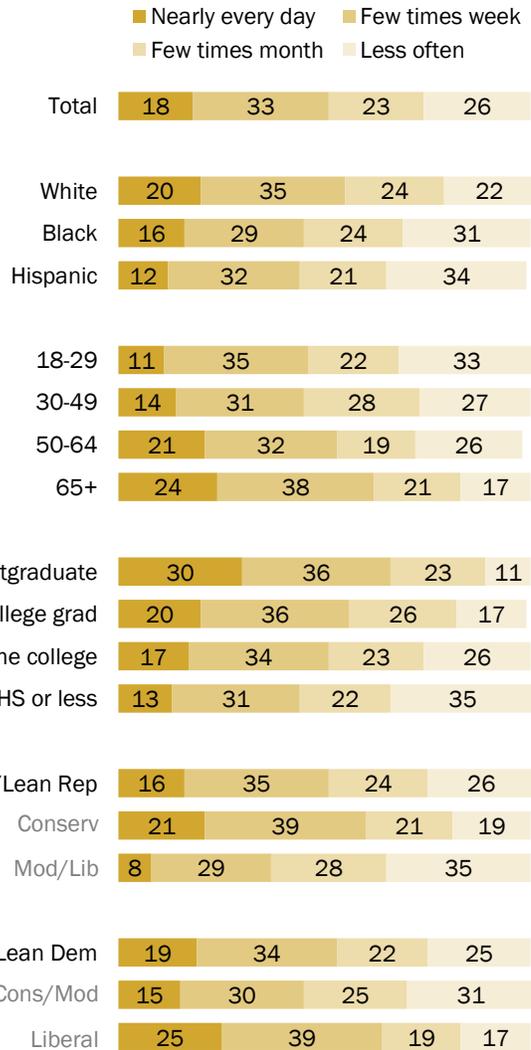
More educated Americans report talking about politics more as well. Two-thirds of those who have a postgraduate degree (66%) say they talk politics at least weekly, as do nearly six-in-ten college graduates (57%). Those with some college experience talk less about politics (51%) than those holding a college degree, but they are more likely than those with a high school degree or less (43%) to have weekly conversations on politics.

Similar shares of Republicans and Republican leaners (51%) and Democrats and Democratic leaners (53%) report discussing politics with others at least weekly. Conservative

Republicans and liberal Democrats talk about politics more regularly than others within their

### Those who talk about politics most often are older, better educated

% who say they discuss politics and govt. with others ...



Note: No answer not shown. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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parties. Six-in-ten conservative Republicans say they talk politics at least a few times a week, compared with 37% of moderate and liberal Republicans. Overall, 63% of liberal Democrats also say they discuss politics at least weekly; 45% of conservative and moderate Democrats say the same.

## Most voters say partisan control of Congress ‘really matters’

With months to go before the 2018 midterm election, most voters say it “really matters” which party wins control of Congress. Given a four-point scale on the importance of partisan control of Congress, a majority of registered voters (65%) place themselves at the top of the scale – meaning it really matters to them which party gains control.

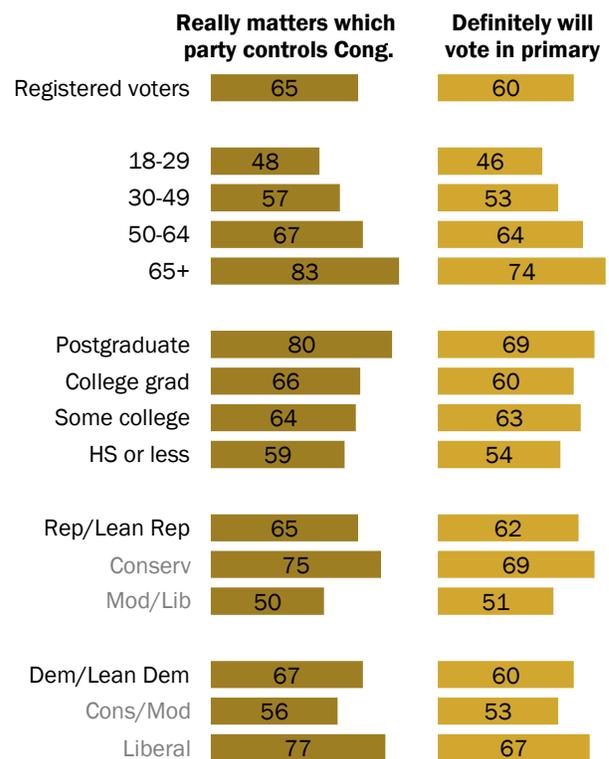
There are substantial age differences in these opinions. More than eight-in-ten voters 65 and older (83%) say partisan control really matters as do 67% of those 50 to 64. That compares with 57% of those 30 to 49 and only about half (48%) of registered voters under 30.

An overwhelming majority of voters with postgraduate degrees (80%) say control of Congress really matters, compared with 66% of those with a college degree, 64% of those with some college experience and 59% of those with no more than a high school education.

Republicans (65%) and Democrats (67%) are about equally likely to say that it really matters who controls Congress. Three-quarters of conservative Republicans say this compared to half of moderate and liberal Republicans. Similarly, 77% of liberal Democrats say it really matters versus 56% of conservatives and moderates in the party.

### Wide age differences on importance of partisan control of Congress in 2018

% of registered voters who say that ...



Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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There are similar patterns when it comes to the share of registered voters who say they will definitely vote in the primary elections for Congress this year. Older voters are more likely than younger voters to say they will definitely cast a ballot in the primaries. Voters with no more than a high school education are much less likely than those with at least some college experience to say they will definitely vote. And conservative Republicans (69%) and liberal Democrats (67%) are more committed to voting in the primaries than moderate and liberal Republicans (51%) and conservative and moderate Democrats (53%).

## The public's civic and political knowledge

Public knowledge on civic and political questions varies widely by issue. Large majorities are familiar with the First Amendment and the role of the Electoral College, but the public struggles when asked about other topics such as the filibuster and tie-breaking procedures in the Senate. ([Take the civics knowledge quiz.](#))

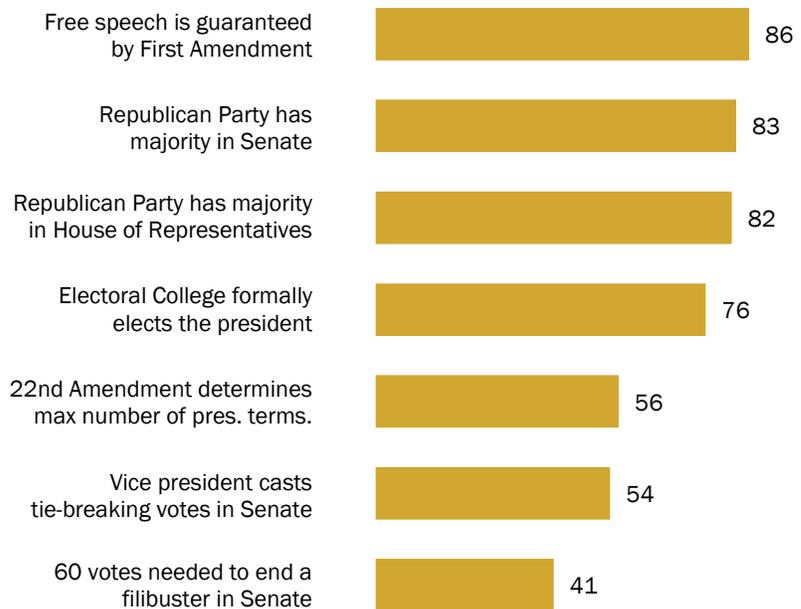
A majority of Americans (86%) correctly identify free speech as a right guaranteed by the First Amendment. On another constitutional question, about three-quarters (76%) of the public are able to identify the Electoral College as the assembly that formally elects the president.

When it comes to two questions about the current political dynamics in Washington, 83% know that the Republican Party holds a majority in the Senate and about the same share (82%) knows that the GOP also controls the House of Representatives. When taken together, 75% of the public can correctly name the majority party in both the House and Senate.

The public does less well on other questions about the structure of American government. Overall, 56% know that the number of terms a president can serve is determined by the 22nd Amendment; 54% can correctly identify the vice president as the person who casts the tie-breaking vote in a deadlocked Senate.

### Most know free speech granted by First Amendment, but far fewer are familiar with Senate filibuster rule

*% answering correctly that ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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Fewer than half (41%) are aware that 60 votes are needed to end a filibuster in the U.S. Senate, the lowest level of public knowledge on any of the seven questions included in the survey

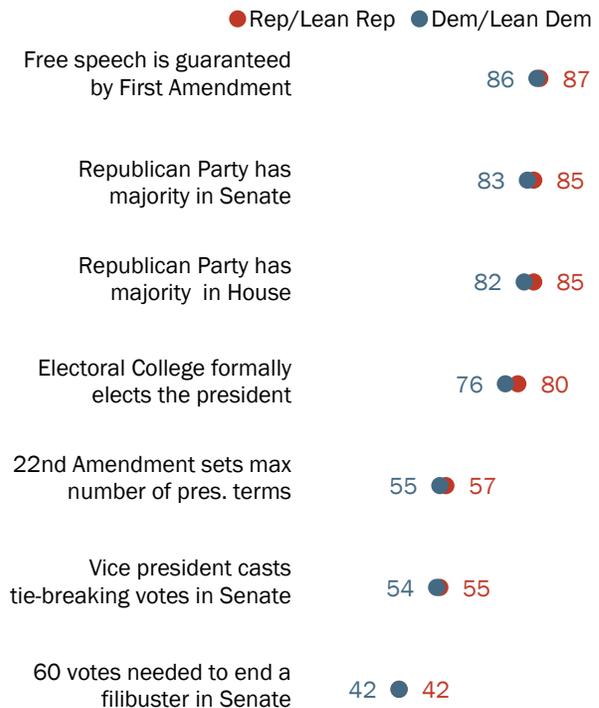
Republicans and Democrats perform about equally well on the civic and political knowledge questions included in the survey. For example, nearly identical shares of Republicans and Republican leaners (87%) and Democrats and Democratic leaners (86%) know that the First Amendment guarantees the right to free speech.

There are no significant divides between Republicans and Democrats on most questions and 4 percentage points is the most that separates the two groups on any single item (80% of Republicans can correctly identify the Electoral College, compared with 76% of Democrats).

---

### Partisans do equally well on questions about civic and political knowledge

*% answering correctly that ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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A three-point index based on responses to questions about the Electoral College, filibuster, Senate tie-break procedure and presidential term limits shows overarching demographic patterns in civic knowledge. Overall, 23% of the public scores high on this scale of civic knowledge, while 44% have a medium level of knowledge and 32% have a low level.

There are clear demographic differences in civic knowledge with older and better educated adults performing better than younger and less-well educated adults.

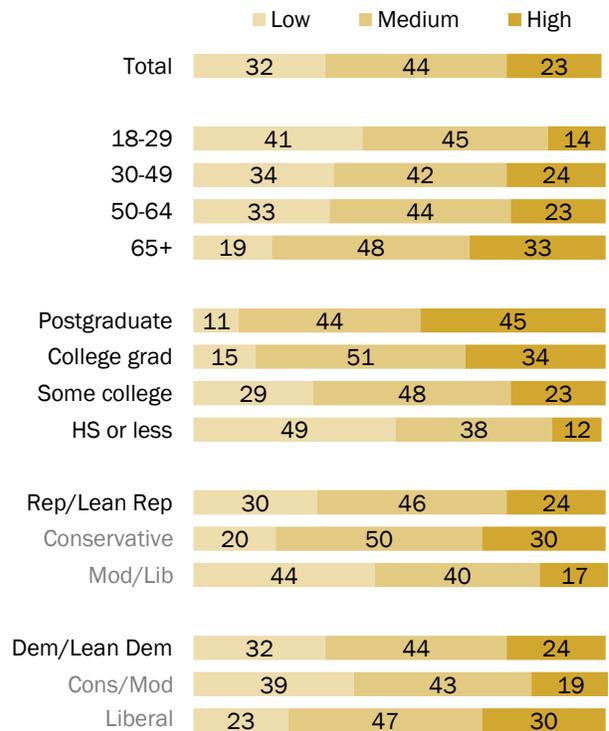
Among those 65 and older, 33% have high levels of civic knowledge, while another 48% have medium levels. Civic knowledge is lower among younger adults and it is particularly low among those ages 18 to 29, just 14% of whom score high on the index.

Civic knowledge varies across levels of education: 45% of those with a postgraduate degree have a high level of civic knowledge compared with 34% of college graduates, 23% of those with some college experience and just 12% of those with no college experience. Nearly half (49%) of those with no college experience score low on the index of civic knowledge.

While there are no major differences between Republicans and Democrats in responses, there are significant divides by ideology within both parties. Conservative Republicans are more likely than moderate and liberal Republicans to score high on the index (30% vs. 17%). Among Democrats, liberals are more likely to be in the top tier of civic knowledge than moderates and conservatives (30% vs. 19%).

### Demographic differences in levels of civic knowledge

*% who fall into each tier, based on a 4-question index of civic knowledge ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

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## Acknowledgements

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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## Methodology

### Survey conducted January 29-February 13, 2018

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by the Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults recruited from landline and cell phone random digit dial surveys. Panelists participate via monthly self-administered Web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by GfK.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted January 29-February 13, 2018, among 4,656 respondents. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 4,656 respondents is plus or minus 2.4 percentage points.

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from several large, national landline and cellphone random digit dial (RDD) surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted January 23 to March 16, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate.<sup>1</sup> The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Pew Research Center Survey on Government, conducted August 27 to October 4, 2015. Of the 6,004 adults interviewed, all were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate.<sup>2</sup> The third group of panelists was recruited from a survey conducted April 25 to June 4, 2017. Of the 5,012 adults interviewed in the survey or pretest, 3,905 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 1,628 agreed to participate.<sup>3</sup>

The ATP data were weighted in a multi-step process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on a number of dimensions. Gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region parameters come from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey.

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<sup>1</sup> When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of 25%, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, 83% of non-internet users were invited to join the panel.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after February 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Pew Research Center Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

<sup>3</sup> White, non-Hispanic college graduates were subsampled at a rate of 50%.

The county-level population density parameter (deciles) comes from the 2010 U.S. decennial census. The telephone service benchmark comes from the July-December 2016 National Health Interview Survey and is projected to 2017. The volunteerism benchmark comes from the 2015 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement. The party affiliation benchmark is the average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys. The internet access benchmark comes from the 2017 ATP Panel Refresh Survey. Respondents who did not previously have internet access are treated as not having internet access for weighting purposes. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the American Trends Panel is predominantly native born and English speaking.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

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*Survey conducted January 29-February 13, 2018*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	4,656	2.4 percentage points
Quarter form	1,155 (min.)	4.8 percentage points
Republican/Lean Republican	1,978	3.7 percentage points
Conservative	1,317	4.5 percentage points
Moderate/Liberal	640	6.5 percentage points
Democrat/Lean Democrat	2,577	3.2 percentage points
Conservative/Moderate	1,113	4.9 percentage points
Liberal	1,429	4.3 percentage points

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The January 2018 wave had a response rate of 85 % (4,656 responses among 5,509 individuals in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10.0%) and attrition from panel members who were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the wave is 2.4%.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.

**Survey conducted March 7-14, 2018**

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted March 7-14, 2018, among a national sample of 1,466 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (384 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,082 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 653 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted under the direction of ICF Incorporated. A combination of landline and cellphone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Marketing Systems Group. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The combined landline and cellphone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2016 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the decennial census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2016 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

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*Survey conducted March 7-14, 2018*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,466	3.0 percentage points
Half form	707 (min.)	4.3 percentage points
Republican/Lean Rep	655	4.5 percentage points
Half form Rep/Lean Rep	317	6.4 percentage points
Democrat/Lean Dem	682	4.4 percentage points
Half form Dem/Lean Dem	319	6.4 percentage points

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Pew Research Center undertakes all polling activity, including calls to mobile telephone numbers, in compliance with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act and other applicable laws.

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## Appendix A: Measures and scales

### Political engagement

Throughout this report, a three-category measure of political engagement is used. The scale combines how often respondents follow politics, how often they vote and whether they have engaged in any of five political activities in the last five years. The scale is weighted to favor more recent participation (within the last year).

The five activities are: attending a political event or rally, volunteering for a political

campaign, contacting an elected official, contributing money to a candidate or campaign and attending a government or community meeting. The scale has a range of zero to 12. High engagement individuals score between 4 and 12 on the scale; medium engagement score between 2 and 3 and low engagement score under 2.

#### Political engagement categories

	Total	Rep/ Lean Rep	Dem/ Lean Dem
	%	%	%
High (4-12)	36	35	39
Medium (2-3)	27	31	24
Low (0-2)	<u>37</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>37</u>
	100	100	100

### Civic knowledge

This report uses a three-category measure of civic knowledge. The scale combines four questions about civic knowledge. The questions are who casts tie-breaking votes in the U.S. Senate (Vice President), how many votes are needed to end a filibuster (60), which amendment to the U.S. Constitution determines the number of terms a president can serve (22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment) and what is the Electoral College (assembly that formally elects the president).

Respondents receive one point on the scale for each correct answer, with a maximum score of four.

#### Civic knowledge categories

	Total	Rep/ Lean Rep	Dem/ Lean Dem
	%	%	%
<b>High</b> Answered all 4 questions correctly	23	24	24
<b>Medium</b> Answered 2-3 questions correctly	44	46	44
<b>Low</b> Answered 0-1 questions correctly	<u>32</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>32</u>
	100	100	100

### Congressional district competitiveness scale

For the purposes of this analysis, congressional districts are classified according to the proportion of the two-party vote (i.e., excluding third party candidate vote totals from the denominator). Safe Republican districts are those in which the Republican candidate either ran unopposed or won more than 60% of the two-party vote. Safe Democratic districts are defined as those in which the Democratic candidate either ran unopposed or won more than 60% of the two-party vote.

Remaining districts are classified as “swing” districts (the winner of the election won less than 60% of the two-party vote).

Researchers obtained data at the congressional district level in updated replication materials for Gary Jacobson’s “It’s Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in U.S. House Elections,” published in the *Journal of Politics*.

### **2016 presidential election competitiveness scale**

States are coded according to their competitiveness in the 2016 presidential election. States classified as “red” are solidly Republican states. Those classified as “blue” are solidly Democratic states. “Battleground” states are those where the election was expected to be more competitive. For the purposes of this report, battleground states are: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin. “Red” states are: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming. “Blue” states are: California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington. The pattern of results noted in chapter 5 holds even if borderline cases (e.g., the states of the upper Midwest) are categorized differently.

**2018 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL  
WAVE 31 JANUARY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
January 29 – February 13, 2018  
TOTAL N=4,656**

**ASK ALL:**

SATISF All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?

Jan 29- Feb 13 2018		Apr 4-18 2017	Feb 28- Mar 12 2017 <sup>1</sup>	Sep 27- Oct 10 2016	Jun 7- Jul 5 2016 <sup>2</sup>	Sep 15- Oct 3 2014
36	Satisfied	26	32	23	19	25
63	Dissatisfied	73	68	75	80	75
1	No Answer	0	0	2	1	0

**ASK ALL:**

CONF How much confidence, if any, do you have in each of the following to act in the best interests of the public? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>A great deal of confidence</u>	<u>A fair amount of confidence</u>	<u>Not too much confidence</u>	<u>No confidence at all</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
a. Elected officials					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	3	22	52	23	*
May 10-Jun 6, 2016	3	24	54	19	1
b. The news media					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	8	32	35	25	*
May 10-Jun 6, 2016	5	33	40	21	1
c. The military					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	39	41	15	4	*
May 10-Jun 6, 2016	33	46	15	5	1
d. Religious leaders					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	9	40	34	16	1
May 10-Jun 6, 2016	13	39	32	14	1
e. Business leaders					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	5	40	42	13	*
May 10-Jun 6, 2016	4	37	44	14	1
f. Scientists					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	27	52	17	5	*
May 10-Jun 6, 2016	21	55	18	4	1

<sup>1</sup> The W24.5 Mode Study survey was administered by web and phone. Results reported here are from web mode only.

<sup>2</sup> SATISF in the W18 survey was asked to a random half of the sample assigned to Form 2 [N=2,366].

**ASK ALL:**

POL1DT Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

**ASK IF ANSWERED POL1DT (POL1DT=1,2):**POL1DTSTR Do you [**IF POL1DT=1:** approve; **IF POL1DT=2:** disapprove] of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President...

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>		Aug 8-21 <u>2017</u>	Apr 4-18 <u>2017</u>	Feb 28- Mar 12 <u>2017</u> <sup>3</sup>
38	NET Approve	36	39	44
29	Very strongly	26	27	30
9	Not so	10	12	13
	strongly			
*	No answer	*	*	*
60	NET Disapprove	63	61	56
48	Very strongly	49	45	43
12	Not so	13	15	12
	strongly			
*	No answer	*	*	*
2	No Answer	1	1	1

**ASK ALL:**

FOLGOV Would you say you follow what is going on in government and public affairs...

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>		Sep 27- Oct 10 <u>2016</u>	Sep 9- Oct 3 <u>2014</u>
48	Most of the time	40	34
33	Some of the time	37	39
13	Only now and then	16	17
6	Hardly at all	7	11
*	No Answer	1	0

**ASK ALL:**

OFTVOTE How often would you say you vote?

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>		Sep 27- Oct 10 <u>2016</u>	Sep 9- Oct 3 <u>2014</u>
46	Always	43	35
26	Nearly always	26	27
10	Part of the time	11	11
18	Seldom	19	25
1	No Answer	1	1

<sup>3</sup> The W24.5 Mode Study survey was administered by web and phone. Results reported here are from web mode only.

**ASK ALL:**

MATTERSCONG Thinking about how you feel about the 2018 congressional election, where would you place yourself on the following scale?

**[PROGRAMMING NOTE: PLEASE FLIP THE LABELS FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS LEAVING THE SCALE ALWAYS 1→4; CAPTURE RANDOMIZATION]**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

57	1 = Really matters which party wins control of Congress
19	2
10	3
12	4 = Doesn't really matter which party wins control of Congress
1	No Answer

**DO NOT ASK IF RSTATE=11 DC, ELSE ASK ALL [N=4,642]:**

CONG If the elections for the U.S. House of Representatives were being held TODAY, who would you vote for? **[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 AND 2]**

**ASK IF 'NOT SURE' (CONG=4) OR NO RESPONSE TO CONG (CONG=99) DO NOT ASK IF RSTATE=11 DC:**

**[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 AND 2, KEEPING THEM IN THE SAME ORDER AS CONG]**

CONGA As of TODAY, who do you LEAN more to for the U.S. House of Representatives?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=4,053]**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

		Oct 3 – 27 <u>2014<sup>4</sup></u>	Sep 15 – Oct 3 <u>2014</u>	May 30- Jun 30 <u>2014</u>
38	Rep/Lean Rep	39	42	38
47	Dem/Lean Dem	43	47	42
5	Another/Lean to another	4	5	5
10	Not sure	12	6	14
*	No Answer	*	*	*

<sup>4</sup> In Wave 8 survey and in previous surveys, question was worded: "If the elections for U.S. Congress were being held TODAY, would you vote for [RANDOMIZE: "the Republican Party's candidate" OR "the Democratic Party's candidate"] for Congress in your district?"

**ASK ALL:**

Now, thinking about the people you talk with, whether in person, over the phone, or electronically...

TALKPOL How often do you discuss government and politics with others? **[DISPLAY IN ORDER]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>		Mar 2-28 <u>2016</u>	Mar 19- Apr 29 <u>2014</u> <sup>5</sup>
18	Nearly every day	23	13
33	A few times a week	35	29
23	A few times a month	18	26
26	Less often	23	32
*	No Answer	1	*

**ASK ALL:**

COREUSDEM Thinking about the fundamental design and structure of American government, which comes closer to your view? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>	
61	Significant changes to the design and structure are needed to make it work for current times
38	The design and structure serves the country well and does not need significant changes
2	No Answer

**ASK ALL:**

IMPTUS Now we're going to ask you about the importance of a number of things for the United States.

For each of the following, HOW IMPORTANT is it for the country that... **[SPLIT OVER TWO SCREENS, RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not too important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
a. Government policies generally reflect the views of most Americans Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	59	34	4	3	1
b. The government conducts its work openly and transparently Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	74	22	2	2	*

<sup>5</sup> In Wave 1 (Mar 19-Apr 29, 2014), 407 non-Internet panelists were surveyed by phone.

**IMPTUS CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not too important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
c. The executive, legislative and judicial branches of government each keep the others from having too much power Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	76	18	3	2	1
d. People who give a lot of money to elected officials do not have more political influence than other people Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	74	16	5	5	1
e. The tone of debate among political leaders is respectful Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	61	29	7	3	*
f. Republican and Democratic elected officials work together on important issues Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	78	17	3	2	*
g. Elected officials face serious consequences if they engage in misconduct Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	83	12	3	2	*
h. Judges are not influenced by political parties Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	82	13	3	2	*

**ASK ALL:**

WELLUS

Now thinking about how things actually are in the U.S. today, HOW WELL does each of the following describe the country? **[SPLIT OVER TWO SCREENS, RANDOMIZE ITEMS IN SAME ORDER AS IMPTUS]**

	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Somewhat well</u>	<u>Not too well</u>	<u>Not at all well</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
a. Government policies generally reflect the views of most Americans Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	7	29	43	20	1

**WELLUS CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Somewhat well</u>	<u>Not too well</u>	<u>Not at all well</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
b. The government conducts its work openly and transparently Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	7	23	40	29	1
c. The executive, legislative and judicial branches of government each keep the others from having too much power Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	11	44	28	15	1
d. People who give a lot of money to elected officials do not have more political influence than other people Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	11	15	29	43	1
e. The tone of debate among political leaders is respectful Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	6	19	37	37	1
f. Republican and Democratic elected officials work together on important issues Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	9	10	33	48	*
g. Elected officials face serious consequences if they engage in misconduct Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	11	18	37	32	1
h. Judges are not influenced by political parties Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	11	31	34	22	1

**ASK FORM 1 [N=1,157]:**

GOVVOTEREP Thinking about a new bill passed in a state with a Republican governor...

If most people in the state support the bill, but most Republicans in the state oppose it, what should the governor do? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

72

Sign the bill

25

Veto the bill

3

No Answer

**ASK FORM 3 [N=1,172]:**

GOVVOTEDEM Thinking about a new bill passed in a state with a Democratic governor...

If most people in the state support the bill, but most Democrats in the state oppose it, what should the governor do? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

77

Sign the bill

21

Veto the bill

2

No Answer

**ASK FORM 2 [N=1,172]:**

GOVVOTEGEN Thinking about a new bill passed in a state...

If most people in the state support the bill, but most people who voted for the governor oppose it, what should the governor do? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

75

Sign the bill

23

Veto the bill

2

No Answer

**ASK FORM 4 [N=1,155]:**

GOVVOTEGENREV Thinking about a new bill passed in a state...

If most people in the state oppose the bill, but most people who voted for the governor support it, what should the governor do? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

22

Sign the bill

77

Veto the bill

2

No Answer

**ASK FORMS 2 AND 4 [N=2,327]:**POLCRCT Which comes closer to your own views – even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>		Jun 7- Jul 5 <u>2016</u>
45	People need to be more careful about the language they use to avoid offending people with different backgrounds	39
55	Too many people are easily offended these days over the language that others use	59
*	No Answer	2

**ASK FORMS 1 AND 3 [N=2,329]:**POLRULES Which comes closer to your view? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>		Oct 25- Nov 8 <u>2016</u>
19	In politics, it's sometimes necessary to bend the rules in order to get things done	28
79	In politics, it's important to respect the rules, even if it sometimes makes it harder to get things done	70
1	No Answer	2

**ASK ALL:**CITIZ\_INFL Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right? **[PROGRAMMING NOTE: RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>		Nov 29- Dec 12 <u>2016</u>
52	Ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Washington if they are willing to make the effort	58
47	There's not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Washington	40
1	No Answer	2

**ASK ALL:**VOTING Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right? **[PROGRAMMING NOTE: RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>	
61	Voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things
38	Voting by people like me doesn't really affect how government runs things
1	No Answer

**ASK ALL:**  
IMPTUS2

Now thinking again about the importance of a number of things for the United States.

For each of the following, HOW IMPORTANT is it for the country that... **[SPLIT OVER TWO SCREENS, RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not too important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
j. The rights and freedoms of all people are respected Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	84	11	2	2	*
k. Everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	82	13	2	2	*
l. The views of people who are not in the majority on issues are respected Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	62	31	4	2	1
m. The military leadership does not publicly express support for one party over the other Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	66	23	7	3	1
n. People are free to peacefully protest Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	74	20	3	3	*
o. News organizations don't favor one political party Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	70	20	5	4	*
p. People agree on basic facts even if they disagree politically Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	60	32	5	2	1
q. News organizations are independent of government influence Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	76	16	4	4	1

**ASK ALL:**

WELLUS2

Now thinking about how things actually are in the U.S. today...

HOW WELL does each of the following describe the country? **[SPLIT OVER TWO SCREENS, RANDOMIZE ITEMS IN SAME ORDER AS IMPTUS2]**

	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Somewhat well</u>	<u>Not too well</u>	<u>Not at all well</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
j. The rights and freedoms of all people are respected Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	14	33	33	19	*
k. Everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	20	32	29	18	1
l. The views of people who are not in the majority on issues are respected Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	10	30	40	19	1
m. The military leadership does not publicly express support for one party over the other Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	25	49	17	7	1
n. People are free to peacefully protest Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	30	43	18	8	1
o. News organizations don't favor one political party Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	9	21	31	39	1
p. People agree on basic facts even if they disagree politically Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	9	24	41	25	1
q. News organizations are independent of government influence Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	12	31	29	27	1

**ASK ALL:**

DISTRESULT

Thinking about elections for U.S. House of Representatives in the district where you live. What is your impression? **[RANDOMIZE]**Jan 29-  
Feb 13  
2018

33

They are usually close contests

64

One candidate usually wins easily

3

No Answer

**ASK ALL:**

CNTCT\_RE

Suppose you contacted your member of the U.S. House of Representatives with a problem. How likely do you think it is that they would help you address it?

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

7	Very likely
30	Somewhat likely
40	Not very likely
21	Not likely at all
1	No Answer

**ASK FORMS 1 AND 2 [N=2,329]:**

HOUSESZ

**[FORM 1:** As you may know, when the first Congress met, there were 65 members, each of whom represented an average of about 60,000 people. Currently] **[FORM 2:** As you may know,] there are 435 members of the House of Representatives in Washington, each of whom represents an average of more than 700,000 people.

Do you think the number of members in the House of Representatives should be...

**[RANDOMIZE 1 & 2, KEEP 3 LAST]**

**BASED ON FORM 1 ONLY (N=1,157):**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

34	Increased
21	Decreased
44	Stay the same
1	No Answer

**BASED ON FORM 2 ONLY (N=1,172):**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

28	Increased
18	Decreased
51	Stay the same
3	No Answer

**ASK FORMS 3 AND 4 [N=2,327]:**

SENATESZ As you may know, the Constitution requires that all states have two U.S. senators, regardless of how many people live in the state. **[FORM 3:** When the first Congress met, the state with the largest population had about 10 times as many people as the state with the smallest population. Currently, the state with the largest population has about 66 times as many people as the state with the smallest population.]

Which comes closer to your view? **[RANDOMIZE]**

**BASED ON FORM 3 ONLY (N=1,172):**

Jan 29-  
Feb 13  
2018

68	The Constitution should not be changed, and all states should continue to have two senators regardless of the size of their population
29	The Constitution should be amended so that states with larger populations have more senators than smaller states
2	No Answer

**BASED ON FORM 4 ONLY (N=1,155):**

Jan 29-  
Feb 13  
2018

75	The Constitution should not be changed, and all states should continue to have two senators regardless of the size of their population
24	The Constitution should be amended so that states with larger populations have more senators than smaller states
1	No Answer

**ASK FORMS 2 AND 4 [N=2,327]:**

ELECTIMPT Thinking about elections in the United States, HOW IMPORTANT is each of the following?  
**[RANDOMIZE]**

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not too important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
a. Elections are free from tampering Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	90	6	3	2	*
b. No INELIGIBLE voters are permitted to vote Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	67	19	8	5	*
c. No ELIGIBLE voters are prevented from voting Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	83	9	4	3	1

**ELECTIMPT CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not too important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
d. The way congressional voting districts are determined is fair and reasonable Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	72	19	5	3	1
e. Voters are knowledgeable about candidates and issues Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	78	17	2	2	1

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=1,172]**

f.F2 There is high voter turnout in presidential elections Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	70	20	6	3	*
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**ASK FORM 4 ONLY [N=1,155]**

g.F4 There is high voter turnout in local elections Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	62	28	7	3	1
--	----	----	---	---	---

**ASK ALL FORMS 2 AND 4 [N=2,327]:**

ELECTWELL Next still thinking about elections, HOW WELL does each of the following describe elections in the United States? **[RANDOMIZE IN SAME ORDER AS ELECTIMPT]**

	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Somewhat well</u>	<u>Not too well</u>	<u>Not at all well</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
a. Elections are free from tampering Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	19	39	24	17	2
b. No INELIGIBLE voters are permitted to vote Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	29	32	23	14	2
c. No ELIGIBLE voters are prevented from voting Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	29	36	21	12	2
d. The way congressional voting districts are determined is fair and reasonable Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	12	36	24	25	2
e. Voters are knowledgeable about candidates and issues Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	11	27	39	21	2

**ELECTWELL CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Somewhat well</u>	<u>Not too well</u>	<u>Not at all well</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
<b>ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=1,172]</b>					
f.F2 There is high voter turnout in presidential elections					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	24	36	26	13	1

**ASK FORM 4 ONLY [N=1,155]**

g.F4 There is high voter turnout in local elections					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	11	30	37	21	1

**ASK FORMS 1 AND 3 [N=2,329]:**

WINLOSE Thinking about the way things have been going in politics over the last few years on the issues that matter to you, would you say your side has been...

<u>Jan 29-Feb 13 2018</u>		<u>Apr 5-May 2 2016</u>
29	Winning more often than losing	35
67	Losing more often than winning	60
4	No Answer	5

**ASK FORMS 1 AND 3 [N=2,329]:**

CITIZENIMPORT Thinking about what it means to be a good citizen, how important is it to...  
**[SPLIT OVER TWO SCREENS, RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not too important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
a. Vote in elections					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	74	17	4	4	1
b. Follow what is happening in government and politics					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	49	42	6	3	1
c. Volunteer to help others					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	52	38	7	3	1
d. Serve jury duty if called					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	61	28	6	4	1
e. Participate in the U.S. Census every 10 years					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	60	27	8	3	1
f. Pay all the taxes you owe					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	71	22	4	3	1
g. Always follow the law					
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	69	27	3	1	*

**CITIZENIMPORT CONTINUED...**

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not too important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
<b>ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=1,157]</b>					
h.F1 Display the American flag Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	36	26	21	16	1
<b>ASK FORM 3 ONLY [N=1,172]</b>					
i.F3 Know the Pledge of Allegiance Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	50	26	13	11	*
<b>ASK FORMS 1 AND 3 [N=2,329]</b>					
j. Respect the opinions and beliefs of those you disagree with Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	61	31	4	3	1
k. Protest if you think government actions are wrong Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	45	37	13	4	1

**ASK IF FORM 1 [N=1,157]:**

CANQUALPRES In general, would you say the quality of the candidates running for president in the last several elections has been...

Jan 29-  
Feb 13  
2018

3	Very good
38	Somewhat good
38	Somewhat bad
20	Very bad
1	No Answer

**ASK IF FORM 2 [N=1,172]:**

CANQUALLCL In general, would you say the quality of the candidates running in local elections (such as for mayor or county government) in the last several elections in your area has been...

Jan 29-  
Feb 13  
2018

14	Very good
59	Somewhat good
19	Somewhat bad
7	Very bad
1	No Answer

**ASK IF FORM 3 [N=1,172]:**

CANQUALCONG In general, would you say the quality of the candidates running for Congress in the last several elections in your district has been...

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>	
11	Very good
53	Somewhat good
25	Somewhat bad
8	Very bad
3	No Answer

**ASK IF FORM 4 [N=1,155]:**

CANQUALPOL In general, would you say the quality of the candidates running for political office in the last several years has been...

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>	
7	Very good
40	Somewhat good
36	Somewhat bad
16	Very bad
*	No Answer

**ASK FORM 1 [N=1,157]:**

CANMTCHPRES Which comes closer to your view of candidates for presidential elections, even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>	
65	I usually feel like there is at least one candidate who shares most of my views
33	I usually feel like none of the candidates represent my views well
2	No Answer

**ASK FORM 2 [N=1,172]:**

CANMTCHLCL Which comes closer to your view of candidates for local elections for positions like mayor or county government, even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>	
62	I usually feel like there is at least one candidate who shares most of my views
36	I usually feel like none of the candidates represent my views well
3	No Answer

**ASK FORM 3 [N=1,172]:**

CANMTCHCONG Which comes closer to your view of candidates for congressional elections, even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-  
Feb 13  
2018  
63

I usually feel like there is at least one candidate who shares most of my views

34 I usually feel like none of the candidates represent my views well  
3 No Answer

**ASK FORM 4 [N=1,155]:**

CANMTCHPOL Which comes closer to your view of candidates for political office, even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-  
Feb 13  
2018  
63

I usually feel like there is at least one candidate who shares most of my views

36 I usually feel like none of the candidates represent my views well  
1 No Answer

**ASK ALL:**

CIVIC\_ENG\_ACT Here's a list of activities some people do and others do not. Please indicate if you have done each of the following activities. **[RANDOMIZE]**

	Yes, in the <u>past year</u>	Yes, in the last 5 years, but not <u>in the past year</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
a. Attended a political rally, speech or campaign event Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	11	18	71	1

**NO ITEM b**

c. Worked or volunteered for a political party, candidate or campaign Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	5	11	83	1
--	---	----	----	---

**NO ITEMS d THROUGH f**

g. Contacted any elected official Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	23	18	59	1
h. Contributed money to a candidate running for public office or to a group working to elect a candidate Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	14	15	71	1

**CIVIC\_ENG\_ACT CONTINUED...**

	<u>Yes, in the past year</u>	<u>Yes, in the last 5 years, but not in the past year</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
<b>NO ITEM I</b>				
j. Publicly expressed your support for a political campaign on Facebook, Twitter or other social media Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	29	13	57	1
k. Attended government meetings in your community, such as city or town council meetings Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	10	19	70	1

**ASK CONTRIBUTORS (CIVIC\_ENG\_ACT\_h=1) [N=1,032]:**

CONTRHOWMUCH Thinking about the contributions you have made to a candidate running for public office or to a group working to elect a candidate in the past year, would you say all of those contributions added up to...

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>	
53	Less than \$100
31	\$100 to less than \$250
15	More than \$250
*	No Answer

**ASK FORM 1 AND 4 [N=2,312]:**

SHAREVIEWS Which of the following statements best describes you?

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u>		Mar 19- Apr 29 <u>2014</u> <sup>6</sup>
36	Most of my close friends share my views on government and politics	35
40	Some of my close friends share my views, but many do not	39
23	I don't really know what most of my close friends think about government and politics	26
1	No Answer	*

<sup>6</sup> In Wave 1 (Mar 19-Apr 29, 2014), 407 non-Internet panelists were surveyed by phone.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a...

**ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3 or 4 or REFUSED) [N=1,707]:**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to...

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Something else</u>	<u>No answer</u>	<u>Lean Rep</u>	<u>Lean Dem</u>
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	23	33	29	14	3	18	23

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

The next few questions are a little different. For each, please answer the questions as best as you can. If you don't know the answer to a question, just move on to the next one. We will reveal the correct answers at the end of the survey.

**[RANDOMIZE KNOWCIV1-HOUCONTR WITH SENCONTR AND HOUCONTR ALWAYS NEXT TO EACH OTHER]****ASK ALL:**

KNOWCIV1 In the case of a tied vote in the U.S. Senate, is the deciding vote cast by...

**[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	
54	The vice president ( <i>Correct</i> )
9	The president
24	The Senate majority leader
8	The Senate parliamentarian
7	No Answer

**ASK ALL:**

KNOWCIV2 As you may know, a filibuster in the U.S. Senate can be used to prevent legislation from coming to a vote. Of the 100 U.S. senators, how many votes are needed to end a filibuster?

Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	
32	51
41	60 ( <i>Correct</i> )
10	67
7	70
10	No Answer

**ASK ALL:**KNOWCIV3 How is the number of terms a president can serve determined? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

25	Article II of the U.S. Constitution
6	Custom and precedent
56	The 22 <sup>nd</sup> Amendment of the Constitution ( <i>Correct</i> )
3	There is no limit to the number of terms a president can serve
10	No Answer

**NO ITEM KNOWCIV4****ASK ALL:**KNOWCIV5 The U.S. Electoral College... **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

5	Trains those who run for political office
7	Supervises the presidential debates
6	Is another name for the U.S. Congress
76	Is an assembly that formally elects the president ( <i>Correct</i> )
6	No Answer

**ASK ALL:**KNOWCIV6 Which of the following rights is guaranteed by the FIRST Amendment to the Constitution? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 29-

Feb 13

2018

86	The right of free speech ( <i>Correct</i> )
6	The right to bear arms
3	The right to privacy
3	The right to remain silent
2	No Answer

**[RANDOMIZE SENCONTR AND HOUCONTR]****ASK ALL:**

SENCNTR

Do you happen to know which political party currently has a majority in the U.S. Senate? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2; PRESENT REP/DEM PARTY IN SAME ORDER FOR SENCONTR, HOUCONTR]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u> <sup>7</sup>		Jun 7- Jul 5 <u>2016</u>
83	Republican Party ( <i>Correct</i> )	56
13	Democratic Party	14
-	Don't know	28
4	No Answer	2

**[RANDOMIZE SENCONTR AND HOUCONTR]****ASK ALL:**

HOUCONTR

Do you happen to know which political party has a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives? **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2; PRESENT REP/DEM PARTY IN SAME ORDER FOR SENCONTR, HOUCONTR]**

Jan 29- Feb 13 <u>2018</u> <sup>8</sup>		Jun 7- Jul 5 <u>2016</u>
82	Republican Party ( <i>Correct</i> )	58
14	Democratic Party	10
-	Don't know	30
5	No Answer	2

<sup>7</sup> The Don't know response was not included for question SENCONTR in the Wave 31 survey.

<sup>8</sup> The Don't know response was not included for question HOUCONTR in the Wave 31 survey.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
MARCH 2018 POLITICAL SURVEY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
MARCH 7-14, 2018  
N=1,466**

**QUESTIONS 1, 2 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****NO QUESTIONS 3-6****ASK ALL:**

Q.7 We'd like you to compare the United States to other developed nations in a few different areas. (First,) what about... **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? [READ FOR FIRST ITEM, THEN AS NECESSARY: Do you think the U.S. is the BEST IN THE WORLD, above average, average or below average in [ITEM]?]**

		<u>Best in the world</u>	<u>Above average</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Below average</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
a.	Its scientific achievements					
	Mar 7-14, 2018	16	38	33	10	4
	Aug 15-25, 2014 <sup>9</sup>	15	39	34	9	3
	Apr 28-May 12, 2009	17	47	26	5	4
b.	Its political system					
	Mar 7-14, 2018	15	26	28	29	3
	Aug 15-25, 2014	12	22	32	31	3
	Apr 28-May 12, 2009	19	31	29	16	5

**NO ITEMS c-d****ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=759]:**

e.F1	Its economy					
	Mar 7-14, 2018	15	33	35	16	1
	Aug 15-25, 2014	7	26	36	29	2
	Apr 28-May 12, 2009	12	22	33	31	3
f.F1	Its health care					
	Mar 7-14, 2018	11	19	29	38	3
	Aug 15-25, 2014	9	16	32	39	3
	Apr 28-May 12, 2009	15	23	32	27	2
g.F1	Its colleges and universities					
	Mar 7-14, 2018	16	35	33	13	3

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=707]:**

h.F2	Its public schools					
	Mar 7-14, 2018	4	15	37	41	4
i.F2	Its military					
	Mar 7-14, 2018	38	41	14	4	4
	Aug 15-25, 2014	39	37	15	5	3
	Apr 28-May 12, 2009	42	39	13	3	3
j.F2	Its standard of living					
	Mar 7-14, 2018	16	40	27	15	1
	Apr 28-May 12, 2009	22	41	26	9	2

<sup>9</sup> In 2014 and 2009 surveys, question was worded: "We'd like you to compare the United States to other industrialized nations in a few different areas."

**NO QUESTIONS 8-11****ASK ALL:**

Q.12 How well would you say democracy is working in the United States today **[READ]**?

Mar 7-14

2018

18	Very well
40	Somewhat well
27	Not too well
13	Not at all well
3	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**NO QUESTION 13****ASK ALL:**

Q.14 In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions? A very great deal, a good deal, not very much, or none at all?

Mar 7-14  
2018

10	Very great deal
32	Good deal
44	Not very much
12	None at all
2	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

Mar 17-26  
2016

Aug 27-  
Sep 13  
2015

January  
2007

October  
1997

*Gallup*  
September  
1964

9	9	13	11	14
25	26	44	53	63
51	49	34	32	19
14	14	8	3	1
2	2	1	1	3

**ASK ALL:**

Q.15 Thinking generally ... Does who is president make a big difference, some difference or no difference for **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**? How about **[INSERT NEXT ITEM]**? **[IF NECESSARY: Does who is president make a big difference, some difference or no difference for [ITEM]?**

		Big <u>difference</u>	Some <u>difference</u>	No <u>difference</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	Your own personal life				
	Mar 7-14, 2018	34	39	25	1
	Oct 20-25, 2016	39	38	21	2

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=759]:**

b.F1 The mood of the country

Mar 7-14, 2018	63	27	8	2
Oct 20-25, 2016	64	26	8	2
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON<sup>10</sup>:</b>				
Time: August, 1984	52	34	9	5
Time: January, 1984	65	28	4	2
Time: September, 1983	70	24	4	2

c.F1 National security

Mar 7-14, 2018	61	27	10	2
Oct 20-25, 2016	71	21	7	2

<sup>10</sup>

In Time 1983 and 1984 surveys, question was worded: "Keeping in mind that we have had five different presidents in the past 20 years, please tell me whether WHO is President makes a BIG difference, SOME difference, or NO difference on each of the following" for all items included here as a trend for comparison.

## Q.15 CONTINUED...

		Big <u>difference</u>	Some <u>difference</u>	No <u>difference</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
<b>ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=707]:</b>					
d.F2	The standing of the United States in the world				
	Mar 7-14, 2018	69	21	9	1
	Oct 20-25, 2016	75	18	6	2
	<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>				
	Time: August, 1984	67	24	5	5
	Time: January, 1984	79	17	2	2
	Time: September, 1983	84	13	2	1
e.F2	The health of the economy				
	Mar 7-14, 2018	53	34	12	1
	Oct 20-25, 2016	60	30	8	2
	<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>				
	Time: August, 1984	54	33	9	4
	Time: January, 1984	68	27	4	2
	Time: September, 1983	70	25	3	1

## NO QUESTIONS 16-23

## ASK ALL:

Q.24 How much respect do you think Donald Trump has for this country's democratic institutions and traditions? **[READ IN ORDER]**

Mar 7-14 <u>2018</u>		Feb 7-12 <u>2017</u>	Oct 20-25 <u>2016</u>
23	A great deal	18	16
22	A fair amount	22	24
25	Not too much	25	28
29	None at all	34	31
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	1

## QUESTIONS 25-27 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

## NO QUESTIONS 28-39

## ASK ALL:

Q.40 Next, would you say your overall opinion of **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-d IN BLOCK FOLLOWED BY RANDOMIZED ITEMS e-g IN BLOCK]** is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very UNfavorable? **[INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]** How about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[IF NECESSARY: Just in general, is your overall opinion of [ITEM] very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very UNfavorable?]** **[INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]**

a.	The Republican Party	----- Favorable -----			---- Unfavorable ----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
		Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
	Mar 7-14, 2018	41	10	31	55	25	30	*	4
	Jun 8-18, 2017	40	10	31	54	27	26	*	5
	Apr 5-11, 2017	40	10	30	57	27	30	0	3
	Jan 4-9, 2017	47	12	35	49	20	29	*	5
	Oct 20-25, 2016	40	10	31	55	23	33	*	5
	Aug 9-16, 2016	38	9	29	56	26	31	0	6
	Jun 15-26, 2016	35	9	26	60	30	29	*	5
	Apr 12-19, 2016	33	9	24	62	32	30	*	5

## Q.40 CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.) Never	(VOL.) Can't rate/
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	heard of	Ref
Aug 27-Oct 4, 2015	37	6	31	58	26	32	*	5
Jul 14-20, 2015	32	7	26	60	28	32	*	7
Jan 7-11, 2015	41	9	32	53	24	29	*	6
Dec 3-7, 2014 (U)	37	9	28	57	26	32	*	6
Oct 14-20, 2014	38	7	31	54	25	29	*	8
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	37	7	30	55	24	31	*	7
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	35	8	27	59	28	31	0	6
Oct 9-13, 2013	38	5	32	58	26	32	*	4
Jul 17-21, 2013	33	7	25	58	25	34	*	9
Jun 12-16, 2013	40	8	32	55	23	33	*	5
Jan 9-13, 2013	33	6	28	58	27	31	1	8
Dec 5-9, 2012	36	7	28	59	23	36	*	5
Sep 12-16, 2012	42	12	30	50	25	26	*	8
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	36	9	27	56	28	28	*	8
Mar 7-11, 2012	36	7	30	56	27	29	*	8
Jan 11-16, 2012	35	7	27	58	28	30	*	7
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	36	7	29	55	27	28	*	9
Aug 17-21, 2011	34	5	29	59	27	32	*	7
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	42	9	32	51	22	28	1	7
Feb 2-7, 2011	43	8	35	48	19	29	*	9
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	43	8	35	49	21	28	*	8
July 1-5, 2010	39	10	29	49	24	25	*	12
April 1-5, 2010	37	8	29	53	26	27	*	9
Mar 18-21, 2010	37	5	32	51	20	31	*	12
Feb 3-9, 2010	46	5	41	46	14	32	0	8
Aug 20-27, 2009	40	6	34	50	19	31	*	10
Aug 11-17, 2009	40	7	33	50	18	32	*	10
Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	40	7	33	51	17	34	0	9
Jan 7-11, 2009	40	5	35	55	21	34	*	5
Late October, 2008	40	10	30	50	23	27	*	10
Mid-September, 2008	47	11	36	46	22	24	*	7
August, 2008	43	9	34	49	18	31	1	7
Late May, 2008	39	7	32	53	20	33	*	8
July, 2007	39	7	32	53	22	31	0	8
Early January, 2007	41	9	32	48	21	27	1	10
Late October, 2006	41	9	32	50	20	30	*	9
July, 2006	40	10	30	52	23	29	1	7
April, 2006	40	10	30	50	21	29	*	10
February, 2006	44	11	33	50	24	26	*	6
Late October, 2005	42	12	30	49	24	25	*	9
July, 2005	48	13	35	43	18	25	*	9
June, 2005	48	11	37	44	20	24	0	8
December, 2004	52	15	37	42	17	25	0	6
June, 2004	51	12	39	40	14	26	0	9
Early February, 2004	52	14	38	42	16	26	*	6
June, 2003	58	14	44	33	10	23	0	9
April, 2003	63	14	49	31	10	21	*	6
December, 2002	59	18	41	33	11	22	*	8
July, 2001	48	11	37	42	15	27	*	10
January, 2001	56	13	43	35	13	22	*	9
September, 2000 (RVs)	53	11	42	40	12	28	0	7
August, 1999	53	8	45	43	12	31	*	4
February, 1999	44	7	37	51	15	36	0	5
January, 1999	44	10	34	50	23	27	0	6
Early December, 1998	46	11	35	47	20	27	*	7

## Q.40 CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.) Never	(VOL.) Can't rate/
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	heard of	Ref
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	52	9	43	42	14	28	0	6
Early September, 1998	56	9	47	37	11	26	*	7
March, 1998	50	10	40	43	12	31	*	7
August, 1997	47	9	38	47	11	36	*	6
June, 1997	51	8	43	42	11	31	1	6
January, 1997	52	8	44	43	10	33	*	5
October, 1995	52	10	42	44	16	28	*	4
December, 1994	67	21	46	27	8	19	*	6
July, 1994	63	12	51	33	8	25	*	4
May, 1993	54	12	42	35	10	25	0	11
July, 1992	46	9	37	48	17	31	*	6
b. The Democratic Party								
Mar 7-14, 2018	42	8	35	54	24	30	*	4
Jun 8-18, 2017	44	12	32	50	24	26	*	5
Apr 5-11, 2017	45	11	34	51	26	25	*	4
Jan 4-9, 2017	51	13	38	45	18	26	*	4
Oct 20-25, 2016	52	15	37	45	22	22	*	4
Aug 9-16, 2016	49	15	35	46	22	24	*	5
Jun 15-26, 2016	49	17	33	46	23	23	*	5
Apr 12-19, 2016	45	14	31	50	27	23	*	4
Aug 27-Oct 4, 2015	45	10	35	50	24	26	*	5
Jul 14-20, 2015	48	12	36	47	22	25	0	5
Jan 7-11, 2015	46	12	34	48	21	28	*	6
Dec 3-7, 2014 (U)	41	11	30	54	26	28	*	5
Oct 15-20, 2014	47	11	35	46	21	25	*	7
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	46	12	34	47	23	24	*	7
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	47	15	32	48	24	24	*	5
Oct 9-13, 2013	47	9	39	48	22	27	0	4
Jul 17-21, 2013	41	10	31	50	23	28	*	9
Jun 12-16, 2013	51	14	37	45	19	26	0	5
Jan 9-13, 2013	47	13	34	46	18	28	*	7
Dec 5-9, 2012	48	11	37	47	23	25	1	4
Sep 12-16, 2012	53	21	32	40	18	22	*	7
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	47	14	33	45	21	24	*	8
Mar 7-11, 2012	49	14	36	43	18	25	*	7
Jan 11-16, 2012	43	13	29	51	23	28	*	7
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	46	13	32	45	19	26	*	9
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	9	34	50	21	29	*	7
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	48	14	34	45	18	27	*	6
Feb 2-7, 2011	47	13	35	46	17	29	*	6
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	50	13	36	44	20	24	*	7
July 1-5, 2010	44	12	31	45	22	23	*	11
April 1-5, 2010	38	9	29	52	27	25	*	9
Mar 18-21, 2010	40	8	32	49	25	24	*	11
Feb 3-9, 2010	48	9	39	44	17	27	*	8
Aug 20-27, 2009	48	11	37	43	19	24	*	10
Aug 11-17, 2009	49	12	37	40	16	25	*	10
Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	59	15	44	34	13	21	*	7
Jan 7-11, 2009	62	19	43	32	12	20	*	6
Late October, 2008	57	19	38	33	15	18	*	10
Mid-September, 2008	55	18	37	39	14	25	*	6
August, 2008	57	16	41	37	13	24	*	6
Late May, 2008	57	14	43	37	14	23	*	6
July, 2007	51	13	38	41	14	27	0	8

## Q.40 CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.) Never	(VOL.) Can't rate/
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	heard of	Ref
Early January, 2007	54	15	39	35	12	23	*	11
Late October, 2006	53	13	40	36	11	25	*	11
July, 2006	47	13	34	44	13	31	2	7
April, 2006	47	12	35	42	14	28	*	11
February, 2006	48	14	34	44	17	27	0	8
Late October, 2005	49	14	35	41	15	26	*	10
July, 2005	50	15	35	41	14	27	*	9
June, 2005	52	12	40	39	13	26	*	9
December, 2004	53	13	40	41	14	27	*	6
June, 2004	54	12	42	36	11	25	0	10
Early February, 2004	58	14	44	37	9	28	*	5
June, 2003	54	11	43	38	10	28	0	8
April, 2003	57	13	44	36	11	25	*	7
December, 2002	54	15	39	37	10	27	*	9
July, 2001	58	18	40	34	10	24	*	8
January, 2001	60	18	42	30	9	21	1	9
September, 2000 (RVs)	60	16	44	35	12	23	*	5
August, 1999	59	14	45	37	9	28	*	4
February, 1999	58	11	47	37	11	26	0	5
January, 1999	55	14	41	38	12	26	0	7
Early December, 1998	59	18	41	34	10	24	0	7
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	56	11	45	38	9	29	*	6
Early September, 1998	60	13	47	33	8	25	*	7
March, 1998	58	15	43	36	10	26	*	6
August, 1997	52	11	41	42	10	32	0	6
June, 1997	61	10	51	33	8	25	*	6
January, 1997	60	13	47	35	7	28	*	5
October, 1995	49	9	40	48	11	37	0	3
December, 1994	50	13	37	44	13	31	*	6
July, 1994	62	13	49	34	7	27	*	4
May, 1993	57	14	43	34	9	25	0	9
July, 1992	61	17	44	33	9	24	*	6
c. Congress								
Mar 7-14, 2018	30	4	26	67	27	40	*	3
Apr 5-11, 2017	34	5	29	62	24	38	*	4
Jun 15-26, 2016	31	10	22	63	29	34	*	5
Sep 22-27, 2015	27	4	23	69	29	40	0	4
Jul 14-20, 2015	25	5	20	69	31	38	*	5
Mar 25-29, 2015	22	4	18	72	34	38	*	5
Dec 3-7, 2014 (U)	22	4	18	71	34	37	*	7
Jul 8-14, 2014	28	5	23	69	28	41	*	4
Feb 12-Feb 26, 2014	23	5	18	72	35	37	*	5
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	27	6	21	67	32	35	*	6
Oct 9-13, 2013	23	4	19	73	32	42	0	4
Jul 17-21, 2013	21	3	18	70	33	37	*	9
Jan 9-13, 2013	23	4	19	68	32	36	*	9
Dec 5-9, 2012	27	4	22	67	24	43	1	6
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	27	5	22	65	30	35	*	8
Jan 11-16, 2012	23	5	18	69	33	36	*	8
Aug 17-21, 2011	25	4	21	70	30	40	4	6
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	34	4	30	57	21	36	1	8
July 1-5, 2010	33	6	27	56	23	33	*	11
April 1-5, 2010	25	3	22	65	30	36	*	9
Mar 18-21, 2010	26	3	23	62	23	39	*	12

## Q.40 CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.) Never	(VOL.) Can't rate/
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	heard of	Ref
Feb 3-9, 2010	41	3	38	50	17	34	0	9
Aug 20-27, 2009	37	4	33	52	20	32	*	11
Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	50	10	40	43	15	28	*	7
Jan 7-11, 2009	40	5	35	52	20	32	*	8
Late May, 2008	41	6	35	51	17	34	0	8
July, 2007	41	6	35	51	16	35	0	8
Early January, 2007	53	11	42	38	9	29	1	8
Late October, 2006	41	5	36	46	15	31	*	13
February, 2006	44	6	38	47	14	33	0	9
Late October, 2005	45	7	38	45	13	32	*	10
July, 2005	49	6	43	40	11	29	*	11
June, 2005	49	6	43	40	10	30	*	11
June, 2004	56	7	49	33	7	26	*	11
July, 2001	57	7	50	32	8	24	*	11
March, 2001	56	6	50	36	10	26	1	7
January, 2001	64	10	54	23	5	18	1	12
September, 2000 (RVs)	61	8	53	32	5	27	*	7
August, 1999	63	8	55	34	7	27	*	3
June, 1999	56	9	47	39	9	30	*	5
February, 1999	52	4	48	44	8	36	0	4
January, 1999	48	7	41	45	15	30	0	7
Early December, 1998	52	11	41	41	12	29	0	7
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	62	7	55	33	8	25	0	5
Early September, 1998	66	7	59	27	5	22	0	7
October, 1997	53	5	48	44	11	33	0	3
August, 1997	50	6	44	44	11	33	0	6
June, 1997	52	4	48	42	8	34	0	6
May, 1997	49	5	44	42	10	32	*	9
February, 1997	52	6	46	40	9	31	*	8
January, 1997	56	6	50	40	8	32	*	4
June, 1996	45	6	39	50	12	38	*	5
April, 1996	45	6	39	50	13	37	0	5
January, 1996	42	4	38	54	16	38	*	4
October, 1995	42	4	38	55	13	42	0	3
August, 1995	45	5	40	47	13	34	*	7
June, 1995	53	8	45	42	11	31	*	5
February, 1995	54	10	44	37	10	27	0	9
July, 1994	53	7	46	43	9	34	*	4
May, 1993	43	8	35	48	13	35	0	9
November, 1991	51	7	44	43	9	34	0	6
March, 1991	66	16	50	26	7	19	0	8
May, 1990	59	6	53	34	9	25	1	6
May, 1988	64	8	56	28	5	23	0	8
January, 1988	64	6	58	29	4	25	0	7
May, 1987	74	10	64	20	4	16	*	6
January, 1987	59	7	52	31	8	23	0	10
July, 1985	67	9	58	26	5	21	*	7
d. The Supreme Court								
Mar 7-14, 2018	66	11	55	28	8	20	*	5
Aug 9-16, 2016	60	11	48	32	10	22	*	8
Jun 15-26, 2016	62	16	47	29	9	20	1	8
Sep 22-27, 2015	50	8	42	42	17	25	1	7
Jul 14-20, 2015	48	9	39	43	17	26	*	9
Mar 25-29, 2015	50	8	42	39	12	26	1	11

## Q.40 CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
Jul 8-14, 2014	52	8	44	38	14	24	1	9
Apr 23-27, 2014	56	11	44	35	12	23	*	9
Jul 17-21, 2013	48	7	41	38	14	24	1	13
Mar 13-17, 2013	52	7	45	31	10	21	2	15
Dec 5-9, 2012	53	8	45	36	12	24	1	10
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	51	10	41	37	14	23	1	11
Apr 4-15, 2012	52	11	41	29	10	20	*	18
July 1-5, 2010	58	9	49	25	8	17	1	16
Feb 3-9, 2010	58	8	50	27	8	19	*	15
Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	64	8	56	21	6	15	0	15
April, 2008	65	15	50	25	7	18	*	10
July, 2007	57	12	45	29	9	20	0	14
January, 2007	72	18	54	17	3	14	2	9
July, 2006	63	7	56	27	8	19	1	9
February, 2006	60	16	44	28	10	18	*	12
Late October, 2005	62	12	50	27	10	17	*	11
July, 2005	61	12	49	28	10	18	*	11
June, 2005	57	8	49	30	8	22	*	13
July, 2001	70	15	55	20	6	14	*	10
March, 2001	72	15	57	20	5	15	*	8
January, 2001	68	18	50	21	8	13	1	10
October, 1997	77	13	64	18	6	12	*	5
May, 1997	72	16	56	22	5	17	0	6
July, 1994	80	18	62	16	3	13	*	4
May, 1993	73	17	56	18	4	14	0	9
November, 1991	72	18	54	21	5	16	0	7
May, 1990	65	10	55	25	7	18	1	9
January, 1988	79	14	65	13	2	11	*	8
May, 1987	76	13	63	17	2	15	*	7
Roper: March 1985	64	17	47	28	7	21	--	8
e. The federal government in Washington								
Mar 7-14, 2018	35	5	30	61	21	40	*	4
Oct 16-20, 2015	32	6	26	63	28	34	*	5
Apr 23-27, 2014	32	7	26	62	27	36	*	5
Mar 13-17, 2013	28	4	24	65	30	35	2	5
Apr 4-15, 2012	33	7	26	62	25	37	*	5
Feb 2-7, 2011	38	6	32	57	19	37	*	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	43	6	38	50	16	34	*	7
Jul 22-26, 2009	42	4	38	50	18	31	*	8
April, 2008	37	6	31	58	21	37	1	4
January, 2007	45	7	38	46	15	31	1	8
February, 2006	43	6	37	50	16	34	*	7
December, 2005	46	7	39	49	18	31	*	5
Late October, 2005	45	6	39	48	16	32	*	7
February, 2004	59	10	49	36	11	25	*	5
April, 2003	73	14	59	22	5	17	0	5
December, 2002	64	11	53	27	7	20	*	9
Mid-November, 2001	82	17	65	15	3	12	0	3
Late October, 2000 (RVs)	54	7	47	40	10	30	*	6
October, 1997	38	4	34	59	18	41	0	3

**Q.40 CONTINUED...**

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
f. Your STATE government								
Mar 7-14, 2018	58	10	48	39	14	25	*	3
Oct 16-20, 2015	56	11	46	38	13	25	*	5
Apr 23-27, 2014	57	13	45	39	17	22	*	3
Mar 13-17, 2013	57	10	47	38	16	22	*	5
Apr 4-15, 2012	52	11	42	42	15	27	*	6
Feb 2-7, 2011	53	10	42	42	14	28	*	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	53	9	44	41	14	27	0	6
Jul 22-26, 2009	50	6	44	44	16	28	*	6
April, 2008	59	9	50	37	16	21	0	4
December, 2005	57	8	49	37	11	26	*	6
December, 2002	62	15	47	31	10	21	1	7
Mid-November, 2001	77	15	62	18	4	14	*	5
October, 1997	66	10	56	29	7	22	*	5
g. Your LOCAL government								
Mar 7-14, 2018	67	12	56	29	10	19	*	4
Oct 16-20, 2015	65	13	52	30	10	20	*	5
Apr 23-27, 2014	65	16	49	31	12	19	*	4
Mar 13-17, 2013	63	12	51	32	12	20	*	5
Apr 4-15, 2012	61	13	48	31	9	22	*	7
Feb 2-7, 2011	63	15	48	32	10	22	1	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	64	11	53	30	10	20	*	6
Jul 22-26, 2009	60	8	52	32	9	23	0	8
April, 2008	63	11	52	33	12	21	1	3
December, 2005	66	12	54	28	10	18	*	6
December, 2002	67	16	51	25	9	16	*	7
Mid-November, 2001	78	15	63	17	4	13	*	5
October, 1997	68	12	56	25	7	18	*	7

**QUESTIONS 41-42 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****NO QUESTIONS 43-45****ASK ALL:**

Q.46 Thinking about spending on political campaigns and issues, which comes closer to your view [**READ AND RANDOMIZE**]?

Mar 7-14 <u>2018</u>		Aug 27-Sep 13 <u>2015</u>
20	Individuals and organizations should be able to spend as much money as they want	20
77	There should be limits on the amount of money individuals and organizations can spend	77
3	Don't know/Refused ( <b>VOL.</b> )	3

**ASK ALL:**

Q.47 In general, do you think new laws COULD BE written that would be effective in reducing the role of money in politics, OR don't you think any new laws would be effective?

	Yes, new laws would <u>be effective</u>	No, new laws would not <u>be effective</u>	(VOL.) Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
Mar 7-14, 2018	65	31	4
Aug 27-Sep 13, 2015	62	35	3
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:<sup>11</sup></b>			
October, 2006	51	37	12
February, 2002	55	34	11
February, 2000	59	34	7
September, 1997	62	32	6
<i>Center for Responsive Politics:</i>			
April 1997	62	32	6

**QUESTIONS 48-52 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****ASK ALL:**

Q.53 Thinking for a moment about the way in which the president is elected in this country, which would you prefer – to amend the Constitution so the candidate who receives the most total votes nationwide wins the election, or to keep the current system, in which the candidate who wins the most votes in the Electoral College wins the election?

	Amend Constitution <u>to total votes</u>	Keep current Electoral College system	(VOL.) <u>Both/Neither</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Mar 7-14, 2018	55	41	-	4
<i>Gallup:</i> Nov 28-29, 2016	49	47	1	3
<i>CNN/ORC:</i> Nov 17-20, 2016	51	44	2	3
<i>Gallup:</i> Oct 6-9, 2011	62	35	1	3
<i>Gallup:</i> October, 2004	61	35	1	3
<i>Gallup:</i> December, 2000	59	37	1	3
<i>Gallup:</i> November, 2000	61	35	2	2

**NO QUESTION 54**

<sup>11</sup> The question was asked in very different contexts in earlier surveys that warrant caution when making comparisons.

**ASK ALL:**

Q.55 As I read some pairs of statements, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views — even if neither is exactly right. The first pair is **[READ AND RANDOMIZE PAIRS; FOR ITEMS a.-e., RANDOMIZE STATEMENTS WITHIN PAIRS. FOR ITEM f., READ STATEMENTS IN ORDER]**. Next, **[NEXT PAIR]? [IF NECESSARY: "Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?"**

	I like elected officials who make compromises with <u>people they disagree with</u>	I like elected officials who <u>stick to their positions</u>	(VOL.) Both/Neither/ DK/Ref	
a.				
	Mar 7-14, 2018	44	53	3
	Jun 27-Jul 9, 2017	58	39	4
	Aug 27-Oct 4, 2015	49	47	3
	Jan 23-Feb 9, 2014	56	39	5
	Jan 15-19, 2014 <sup>12</sup>	49	48	3
	Jan 9-13, 2013 <sup>13</sup>	50	44	6
	Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	40	54	7
	Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	40	55	5

	Ordinary Americans would do a better job solving the country's problems than <u>elected officials</u>	Ordinary Americans would do no better solving the country's problems than <u>elected officials</u>	(VOL.) Both/Neither/ DK/Ref	
b.				
	Mar 7-14, 2018	44	51	5
	Aug 27-Sep 13, 2015	55	39	6

**NO ITEM c.**

	There are clear solutions to most big issues facing <u>the country today</u>	Most big issues facing the country today don't have <u>clear solutions</u>	(VOL.) Both/Neither/ DK/Ref	
d.				
	Mar 7-14, 2018	44	54	2
	Jun 27-Jul 9, 2017	41	56	3
	Aug 9-16, 2016	44	52	3
	Aug 27-Sep 13, 2015	41	56	3

	Most Americans demand more from the government than they are <u>willing to pay taxes for</u>	Most Americans are willing to pay the taxes needed to fund services they expect government to <u>provide</u>	(VOL.) Both/Neither/ DK/Ref	
e.				
	Mar 7-14, 2018	46	51	4
	Sep 16-Oct 4, 2015	52	44	4
	Gallup: Sep 13-16, 2010	56	41	3

<sup>12</sup> In January 2014 and earlier, response items were not randomized.

<sup>13</sup> In January 2013, question asked as a stand-alone item.

**Q.55 CONTINUED...**

	Many of the country's problems could be dealt with more effectively if U.S. presidents didn't have to worry so much about <u>Congress or the courts</u>	It would be too risky to give U.S. presidents more power to deal directly with many of the country's <u>problems</u>	(VOL.) Both/Neither/ DK/Ref	
f.				
	Mar 7-14, 2018	21	76	3
	Feb 7-12, 2017 <sup>14</sup>	17	77	6
	Aug 9-16, 2016 <sup>15</sup>	23	72	5

**NO QUESTIONS 56-58****ASK ALL:**

Q.59 Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?

	Few big interests	Benefit of all	(VOL.) Don't know/ Refused
Mar 7-14, 2018	76	21	3
Aug 27-Sep 13, 2015	76	19	4
CBS/NYT: Feb 5-10, 2010 <sup>16</sup>	78	18	4
CBS/NYT: July, 2004	64	28	8
CBS/NYT: August, 1995	79	15	6
CBS/NYT: March, 1992	75	19	5
CBS/NYT: Late October, 1990	77	18	5
CBS/NYT: Early October, 1990	71	21	8
CBS/NYT: November, 1988	57	35	8
NYT: December, 1985	54	37	9
CBS/NYT: February, 1985	55	36	9
NYT: November, 1983	59	30	11
NYT: June, 1983	54	33	12
CBS/NYT: Late October, 1976	57	35	8
CBS/NYT: Early October, 1976	61	31	9

**TREND FOR COMPARISON:**

NES	2012	71	23	6
	2008	69	29	2
	2004	56	40	4
	2002	48	51	2
	2000	61	35	5
	1998	64	32	4
	1996	69	27	3
	1994	76	19	5
	1992	75	20	4
	1990	71	24	5
	1988	64	31	5
	1984	55	39	6

<sup>14</sup> In February 2017, item was asked as a standalone question.

<sup>15</sup> In August 2016, the first statement read: "Many of the country's problems could be dealt with more effectively if U.S. presidents didn't have to worry so much about Congress or the Supreme Court."

<sup>16</sup> Selected trend points excluded due to context concerns.

**Q.55 TREND FOR COMPARISON CONTINUED...**

		Few big interests	Benefit of all	(VOL.) Don't know/ Refused
<i>NES</i>	1982	61	29	10
	1980	70	21	9
	1978	67	24	9
	1976	66	24	10
	1974	66	25	9
	1972	53	38	9
	1970	50	41	9
	1968	40	51	9
	1966	33	53	13
	1964	29	64	7

**NO QUESTION 60****ASK ALL:**

Q.61 Should the U.S. Supreme Court base its rulings on its understanding of what the U.S. Constitution meant as it was originally written, or should the court base its rulings on its understanding of what the U.S. Constitution means in current times?

	What it meant <u>as originally written</u>	What it means <u>in current times</u>	(VOL.) <u>Somewhere in between</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Mar 7-14, 2018	41	55	1	3
Oct 20-25, 2016	46	46	2	7
Feb 12-26, 2014	46	49	2	3
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	45	50	2	4
<i>Kaiser/Harvard/WaPo</i> : October, 2010	50	46	1	3
<i>ABC News/WaPo</i> : July, 2005	46	50	3	1

**NO QUESTION 62****ASK ALL:**

Q.63 And thinking about politics and elections, would you say that personally insulting political opponents is [READ; RANDOMIZE]?

Mar 7-14 <u>2018</u>		(RVs) Oct 20-25 <u>2016</u>	Mar 17-26 <u>2016</u>
31	Sometimes fair game	43	31
68	Never fair game	54	67
*	Other/Depends (VOL.)	1	1
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	2	1

**NO QUESTIONS 64-89**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.90 In general, do you think about politics as a struggle between right and wrong or don't you think about politics in this way?

Mar 7-14 <u>2018</u>		Sep 16-Oct 4 <u>2015</u>
42	Think about politics as a struggle between right and wrong	44
57	Don't think about politics in this way	54
2	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	2

**NO QUESTIONS 91-93**

**QUESTIONS 94-95 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

**ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

					(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	preference	No	Other	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Mar 7-14, 2018	26	28	41	3	*	1	17	18	
Jan 10-15, 2018	26	33	34	3	1	3	12	18	
Nov 29-Dec 4, 2017	20	32	40	4	1	3	13	19	
Oct 25-30, 2017	22	32	41	3	1	2	17	19	
Jun 8-Jul 9, 2017	25	31	39	3	1	2	16	18	
Apr 5-11, 2017	24	31	42	2	1	*	17	20	
Feb 7-12, 2017	23	34	37	3	1	2	15	18	
<b>Yearly Totals</b>									
2017	23.6	31.4	39.4	3.3	.6	1.7	15.8	18.7	
2016	25.4	32.0	36.5	3.4	.5	2.2	14.6	17.0	
2015	23.7	30.4	40.1	3.6	.4	1.8	16.4	17.3	
2014	23.2	31.5	39.5	3.1	.7	2.0	16.2	16.5	
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0	
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1	
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6	
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1	
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7	
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2	
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0	
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1	
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9	
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4	
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6	
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6	
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6	
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4	
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5	
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7	
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5	
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1	
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1	
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9	
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5	
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2	
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9	
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5	
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8	

**PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...**

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean <u>Rep</u>	Lean <u>Dem</u>
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

**Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:**


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(U) Pew Research Center/USA Today polls

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