

FOR RELEASE AUGUST 10, 2023

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington

Americans' views of progress on racial equality, different forms of protest and what needs to change

BY Juliana Horowitz

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

Kim Parker, Director, Social Trends Research
Juliana Horowitz, Associate Director, Research
Tanya Ardit, Communications Manager

202.419.4372

www.pewresearch.org

RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, August 2023, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan, nonadvocacy fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world. It does not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, computational social science research and other data-driven research. It studies politics and policy; news habits and media; the internet and technology; religion; race and ethnicity; international affairs; social, demographic and economic trends; science; research methodology and data science; and immigration and migration. Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

© Pew Research Center 2023

How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to explore how Americans view the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and the United States' progress on racial equality 60 years after the March on Washington, which took place on Aug. 28, 1963.

This analysis is based on a survey of 5,073 U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023. Everyone who took part is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. Address-based sampling ensures that nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. [Read more about the ATP's methodology.](#)

Read more about the [questions used for this report](#) and the report's [methodology](#).

Terminology

References to White, Black and Asian adults include those who are not Hispanic and identify as only one race. Hispanics are of any race.

All references to party affiliation include those who lean toward that party. Republicans include those who identify as Republicans and those who say they lean toward the Republican Party. Democrats include those who identify as Democrats and those who say they lean toward the Democratic Party.

Table of Contents

About Pew Research Center	1
How we did this	2
Terminology.....	3
Overview	5
1. How Americans see the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.....	8
2. Views of the country’s progress on racial equality	14
3. Achieving racial equality	19
Acknowledgments	24
Methodology.....	25

Martin Luther King Jr.’s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington

Americans’ views of progress on racial equality, different forms of protest and what needs to change

On Aug. 28, 1963, about 250,000 people gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., for the [March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom](#), where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his historic [“I Have a Dream” speech](#) advocating for economic and civil rights for Black Americans.

As the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington approaches, we asked Americans about their views on:

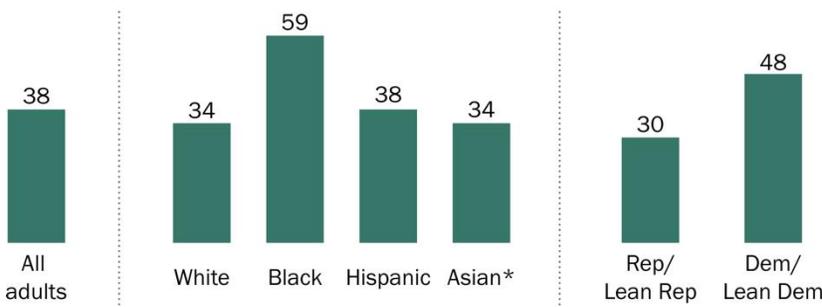
- [King’s legacy](#)
- [The country’s progress on racial equality](#)
- [What needs to change in order to achieve racial equality](#)

For this report, we surveyed 5,073 U.S. adults from April 10 to April 16, 2023, using Pew

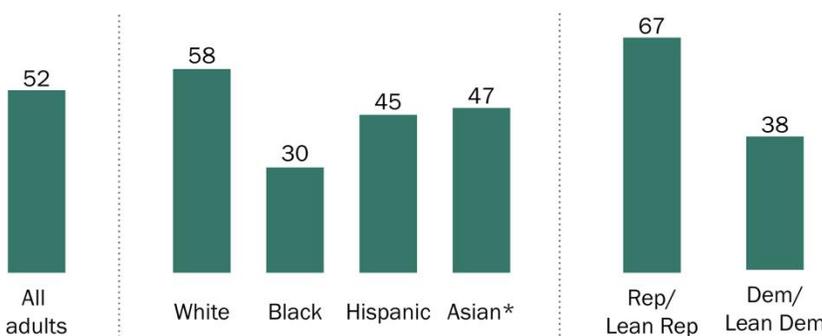
Views on King’s legacy and the country’s progress on racial equality differ by race, ethnicity and party

% saying ...

Their personal views on racial equality have been influenced by Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy a great deal or a fair amount



The U.S. has made a great deal or a fair amount of progress in ensuring racial equality in the last 60 years



* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.
 Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.
 “Martin Luther King Jr.’s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington”

Research Center's [American Trends Panel](#).¹

Key findings:

- **Most Americans say King has had a positive impact on the country, with 47% saying he has had a *very* positive impact.** Fewer (38%) say their own views on racial equality have been influenced by King's legacy a great deal or a fair amount.
- **60% of Americans say they have heard or read a great deal or a fair amount about King's "I Have a Dream" speech.** Black adults are the most likely to say this at 80%, compared with 60% of White adults, 49% of Hispanic adults and 41% of Asian adults.
- **52% of Americans say there has been a great deal or a fair amount of progress on racial equality in the last 60 years.** A third say there's been some progress and 15% say there has been not much or no progress at all. Still, more say efforts to ensure equality for all, regardless of race or ethnicity, haven't gone far enough (52%) than say they have gone too far (20%) or been about right (27%).
- **A majority (58%) of those who say efforts to ensure equality *haven't gone far enough* think it's unlikely that there will be racial equality in their lifetime.** Those who say efforts *have been about right* are more optimistic: Within this group, 39% say racial equality is extremely or very likely in their lifetime, while 36% say it is somewhat likely and 24% say it's not too or not at all likely.
- **Many people who say efforts to ensure racial equality *haven't gone far enough* say several systems need to be completely rebuilt to ensure equality.** The prison system is at the top of the list, with 44% in this group saying it needs to be completely rebuilt. More than a third say the same about policing (38%) and the political system (37%).
- **70% of Americans say marches and demonstrations that don't disrupt everyday life are always or often acceptable ways to protest racial inequality.** And 59% say the same about boycotts. Fewer than half (39%) see sit-ins as an acceptable form of protest. And much smaller shares say the same about activities that disrupt everyday life – such as shutting down streets or traffic (13%) and actions that result in damage to public or private property (5%).

¹ Read more in the [Methodology](#) section of the report.

Demographic and partisan differences

These survey findings often differ by race, ethnicity and partisanship – and in some cases also by age and education.

Some examples:

- 59% of Black Americans say their personal views on racial equality have been influenced by Martin Luther King Jr. a great deal or a fair amount. Smaller shares of Hispanic (38%), White (34%) and Asian (34%) Americans say the same.
- Adults ages 65 and older and those with at least a bachelor's degree are more likely than younger adults and those with less education to be highly familiar with King's "I Have a Dream" speech.
- 58% of White adults say there has been a great deal or a fair amount of progress on racial equality in the last 60 years. This compares with 47% of Asian adults, 45% of Hispanic adults and 30% of Black adults. Republicans and those who lean Republican (67%) are more likely than Democrats and Democratic leaners (38%) to say this.
- 83% of Black adults say efforts to ensure equality for all, regardless of race and ethnicity, haven't gone far enough. This is larger than the shares of Hispanic (58%), Asian (55%) and White (44%) adults who say the same. Most Democrats (78%) say these efforts haven't gone far enough, compared with 24% of Republicans. Some 37% of Republicans say these efforts have gone *too far*.
- Black Americans, Democrats and adults younger than 30 who say efforts to ensure racial equality *haven't gone far enough* are among the most likely to say several systems, ranging from the economic system to the prison system, need to be completely rebuilt to ensure equality.

1. How Americans see the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

Most U.S. adults (81%) say Martin Luther King Jr. has had a positive impact on the country, with 47% saying King has had a *very* positive impact. Some 38% say their own views on racial equality have been influenced by King's legacy a great deal or a fair amount.

King's impact on the country

By race and ethnicity

Some 53% of Black adults say Martin Luther King Jr. has had a very positive impact on the country, compared with 46% each among White and Hispanic adults and 43% of Asian adults.

Asian (10%), White (6%) and Hispanic (6%) adults are all more likely than Black adults (2%) to say they don't know enough about King's impact to answer.

By age

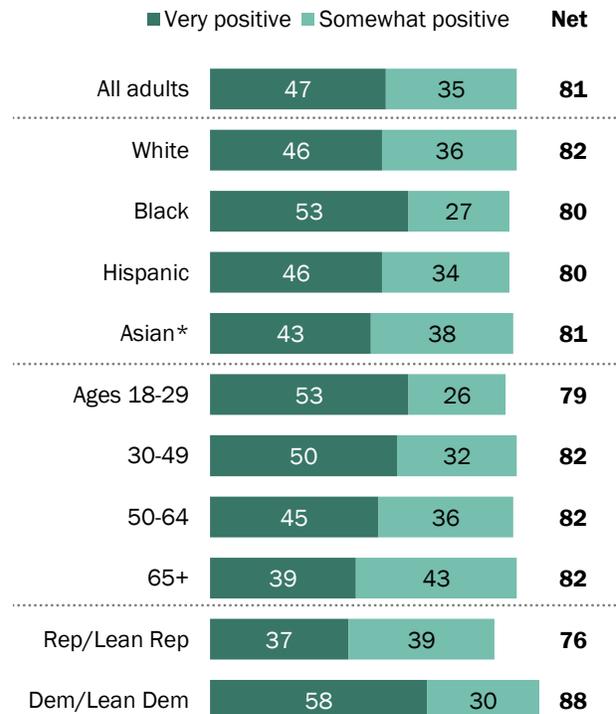
Adults younger than 50 are more likely than those who are older to say King has had a very positive impact on the country. This overall variance is mostly due to the differing views of older and younger White Americans.

Some 54% of White Americans younger than 50 say King's impact has been very positive, compared with 40% of White Americans ages 50 and older. The opposite is true among Black Americans: 60% of those 50 and older say King has had a very positive impact, compared with 49% of Black Americans younger than 50.

There are no differences by age among Hispanic Americans, and the sample of Asian Americans is too small to analyze by age group.

Views on King's impact on the country differ widely by party

% saying Martin Luther King Jr. has had a ___ impact on our country



* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Other response options included "Neither positive nor negative," "Somewhat negative," "Very negative" and "Don't know enough to say."

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023. "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

By partisanship

A majority of Democrats and Democratic leaners (58%) say King has had a very positive impact on the country, compared with 37% of Republicans and those who lean to the GOP.

Ideological differences among Democrats

Liberal Democrats (68%) are far more likely than moderate and conservative Democrats (50%) to say King has had a very positive impact on the country.

There is no difference on this question between conservative Republicans and moderate and liberal Republicans.

King's impact on personal views on racial equality

By race and ethnicity

A majority of Black Americans (59%) say Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy has influenced their own views on racial equality a great deal or a fair amount. Far smaller shares of Hispanic (38%), White (34%) and Asian (34%) Americans say the same.

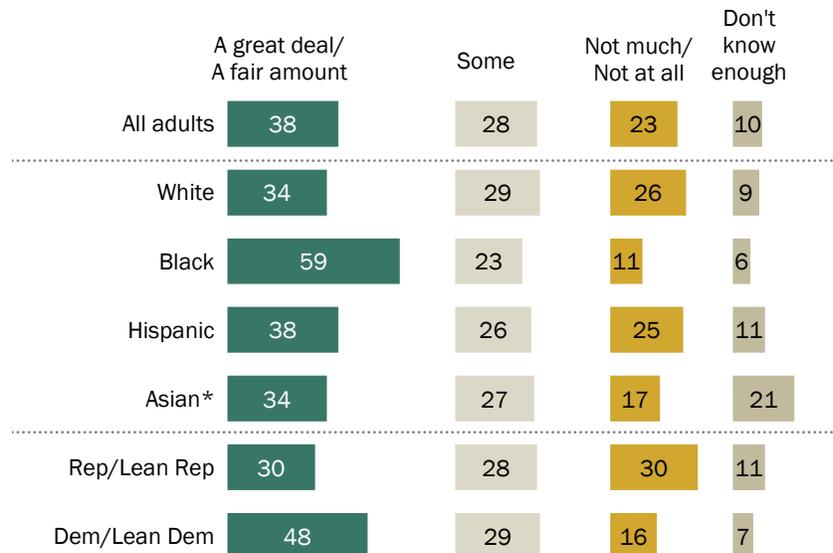
About one-in-five Asian adults (21%) say they don't know enough about King's legacy to say how it's impacted their own views. This is larger than the shares of Hispanic (11%), White (9%) and Black (6%) adults who say they don't know enough to answer.

By partisanship

About half of Democrats (48%) say King's legacy has

A majority of Black Americans say their own views on racial equality were influenced by King's legacy

% saying their personal views on racial equality have been influenced by Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy ...



* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer are not shown. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.

"Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

influenced their own views on racial equality a great deal or a fair amount; 29% say King's legacy has influenced their views some; and 16% say it hasn't influenced their views much or at all.

Republicans are more mixed: 30% say King's legacy has influenced their own views on racial equality a great deal or a fair amount; 28% say it has influenced their views some; and 30% say it hasn't had much influence or hasn't influenced their views at all.

Racial and ethnic differences among Democrats

A majority of Black Democrats (63%) say King's legacy has had a great deal or a fair amount of influence on their views on racial equality. Far smaller shares of White (46%), Hispanic (41%) and Asian (40%) Democrats say the same.

In their own words: What Americans say about Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy

(Selected written responses to an open-ended question)

“He wanted equality for all people, not just for blacks. He wanted all poor people to have a better life in this country. He was against the war in Vietnam. He fought for voters’ rights. He loved all people in this country.”
– *Black Democrat*

“At the time he was a radical, hated by a majority of white folks. He advocated for equality not just in racial acceptance but by changing the economic system to lift up the poor.” – *White Democrat*

“MLK, Jr. pushed for equality among all people, regardless of skin color, not because of skin color. He did not intend for the outcome of his fight to be an emphasis on race, as we are seeing today, but rather, he sought a world in which race is irrelevant.” – *White Republican*

“MLK Jr was remembered for civil disobedience and peaceful protests, but people often forget he was a radical and was not some quiet pastor. He was a man of the people and he was killed for advocating for human rights.” – *Asian Democrat*

“He didn’t only want equality for black people; he advocated for all. He also didn’t tear down white people to make his point; he knew and said that it took their involvement for change as well.” – *Black Republican*

“MLK believed in a meritocracy rather than affirmative action, or worse, reparations.” – *White Republican*

“The popular conception of MLK was that he was someone who cared solely about racial equality. In fact, King viewed economic injustice and racial injustice as interlinked and inseparable. King supported radical redistribution of wealth, strengthening the safety net and, yes, reparations for black Americans.” – *White Democrat*

“His legacy, which was far more radical in his day than is recognized now, has largely been whitewashed to one carrying a ‘love everyone but don’t change anything systemic’ message. His views on economic equality, the ones he espoused shortly before his death, are still radical today.” – *Black Democrat*

“He believed true equality is colorblind and that the goal is equal opportunity, not equal outcomes. He would very much disagree with the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement. He believed ALL LIVES MATTER, and that it is not racist to say so.” – *White Republican*

“He tried to get both black and white people (and other colors) to get along because we’re not different races, rather one race, the Human Race. Sadly, I think only some people understand that and live it, others try to use race as a tool to divide us.” – *Hispanic Republican*

“I think about how much he’s been whitewashed and how many people quoting him today would have hated him back then. I think of how he wanted equality for all, most notably for Black people, but also for all marginalized people.” – *White Democrat*

“When I think of what MLK taught, the first things that come to mind are ideas rooted in finding commonality in each other, uniting people on the principle of being equal, and fostering mutual respect and appreciation for one another.” – *White Republican*

Familiarity with King’s ‘I Have a Dream’ speech’

Most U.S. adults (60%) say they have heard or read a great deal or a fair amount about Martin Luther King Jr.’s [“I Have a Dream” speech](#).

About a quarter (27%) have heard or read some, and 13% haven’t heard or read much or anything at all about the speech.

By race and ethnicity

Eight-in-ten Black adults say they’ve heard or read a great deal or a fair amount about the speech, followed by 60% of White adults, 49% of Hispanic adults and 41% of Asian adults.

About a quarter of Asian (25%) and Hispanic (23%) adults say they haven’t heard much or anything at all about King’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

By age

Adults ages 65 and older – all of whom were at least 5 years old when King gave the speech in 1963 – are the most likely to say they’ve heard or read a great deal or a fair amount about it: 68% say this, compared with shares ranging from 53% to 61% among younger groups.

Most Americans have read or heard a great deal or a fair amount about King’s ‘I Have a Dream’ speech

% saying they have read or heard ___ about Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech

	A great deal/ A fair amount	Some	Not much/ Nothing at all
All adults	60	27	13
White	60	29	11
Black	80	14	6
Hispanic	49	27	23
Asian*	41	34	25
Ages 18-29	53	31	16
30-49	57	28	14
50-64	61	26	13
65+	68	23	8
High school or less	53	27	20
Some college	61	27	11
Bachelor’s+	66	27	7

* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Share of respondents who didn’t offer an answer are not shown. The question noted that Martin Luther King Jr. gave this speech at a civil rights march in Washington, D.C., almost 60 years ago. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. “Some college” includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.

“Martin Luther King Jr.’s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

By education

About two-thirds (66%) of adults with a bachelor's degree or more education say they've heard or read a great deal or a fair amount about the speech. Smaller shares of those with some college (61%) or with a high school diploma or less education (53%) say the same.

Differences by education are evident among White and Hispanic adults, but not among Black adults. Eight-in-ten Black Americans with at least a bachelor's degree say they've heard or read a great deal or a fair amount about the speech, as do 83% of those with some college and 77% of Black Americans with a high school diploma or less education. There aren't enough Asian adults in the sample to analyze by education.

2. Views of the country's progress on racial equality

About half of U.S. adults (52%) say that, in the last 60 years, the country has made a great deal or a fair amount of progress in ensuring equal rights for all people, regardless of race or ethnicity. A third say the country has made some progress, and 15% say the country hasn't made much progress or any progress at all.

About half of adults (52%) also say efforts to ensure equal rights for all people haven't gone far enough. About a quarter (27%) say efforts have been about right, while 20% say they've gone too far.

The country's progress on racial equality in the last 60 years

By race and ethnicity

White adults are the most likely to say the country has made a great deal or a fair amount of progress in ensuring racial equality (58% say this). In turn, Black adults are the *least* likely to say there's been a lot of progress (30%).

About a third of Black Americans (32%) say the country hasn't made much progress or any progress at all on racial equality in the last 60 years. This is larger than the shares of Hispanic (19%), White (11%) and Asian (11%) Americans who say the same.

By partisanship

Two-thirds of Republicans and those who lean Republican say

Majority of White adults and Republicans say the country has made a great deal or a fair amount of progress on racial equality in the last 60 years

% saying that, in the last 60 years, the U.S. has made ___ in ensuring equal rights for all people in the U.S., regardless of race or ethnicity

	A great deal/ A fair amount of progress	Some progress	Not much/ No progress at all
All adults	52	33	15
White	58	30	11
Black	30	38	32
Hispanic	45	35	19
Asian*	47	41	11
Rep/Lean Rep	67	22	10
Dem/Lean Dem	38	43	19

* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer are not shown. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.

"Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

the country has made a great deal or a fair amount of progress on racial equality in the last 60 years. A far smaller share (38%) of Democrats and those who lean Democratic say the same.

Democrats are about twice as likely as Republicans (19% vs. 10%) to say there hasn't been much progress or there's been no progress at all on this.

Ideological differences among Republicans

About seven-in-ten conservative Republicans (72%) say the country has made a lot of progress on racial equality in the last 60 years. A smaller majority of moderate and liberal Republicans (59%) share this view.

There is no difference on this question between liberal Democrats and moderate and conservative Democrats.

CORRECTION (Sept. 29, 2023): In a previous version of this report, the chart "Majority of White adults and Republicans say the country has made a great deal or a fair amount of progress on racial equality in the last 60 years" included the wrong figure for the share of Asian adults who say the country has made not much or no progress in ensuring equal rights for all people in the U.S. The report text cited the correct figure (11%).

Efforts to ensure equal rights for all, regardless of race or ethnicity

By race and ethnicity

A large majority of Black Americans (83%) say efforts to ensure equality haven't gone far enough. This compares with 58% of Hispanic Americans, 55% of Asian Americans and 44% of White Americans.

About a quarter of White Americans (24%) say these efforts have gone *too far*. Some 19% of Asian Americans and 15% of Hispanic Americans agree, compared with 7% of Black Americans.

By partisanship

About eight-in-ten Democrats (78%) say efforts to ensure racial equality haven't gone far enough. Views are more

divided among Republicans: 24% agree that these efforts haven't gone far enough, while larger shares say they've gone too far (37%) or have been about right (39%).

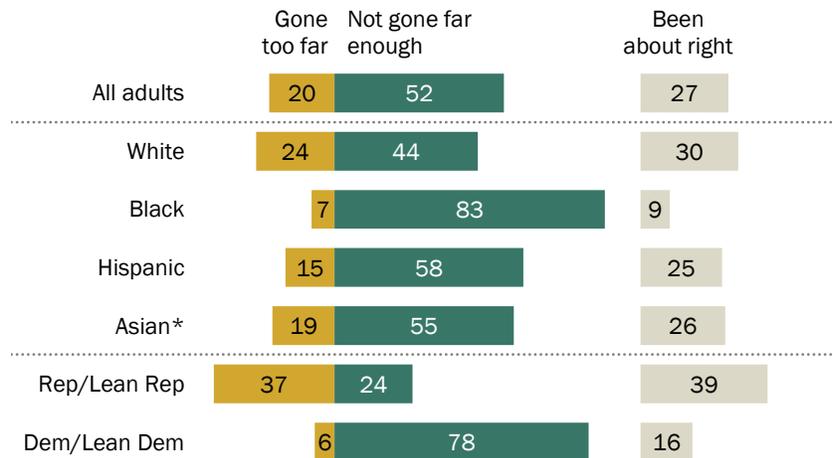
Ideological differences among Republicans and Democrats

Some 43% of conservative Republicans say efforts to ensure racial equality have gone too far; 41% say these efforts have been about right; and 15% say they haven't gone far enough.

Among moderate and liberal Republicans, more say these efforts haven't gone far enough (38%) or have been about right (35%) than say they've gone too far (27%).

Most Black adults and Democrats say efforts to ensure racial equality haven't gone far enough

% saying efforts to ensure equal rights for all people in the U.S., regardless of race or ethnicity, have ...



* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer are not shown. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.

"Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

While large majorities of Democrats across ideologies say efforts to ensure equality haven't gone far enough, liberal Democrats (86%) are more likely moderate and conservative Democrats (71%) to say this.

The future of racial equality

Thinking about the future, more Americans say they are pessimistic (44%) than say they are optimistic (28%) about the country's ability to ensure equality for all people, regardless of race or ethnicity.

We also asked people who say efforts to ensure racial equality *haven't gone far enough* or *have been about right* if they think there will be equality in their lifetime. Those who say efforts to ensure equal rights *haven't gone far enough* are particularly pessimistic – a majority (58%) say racial equality is unlikely, while 33% say it's somewhat likely and only 8% say it's extremely or very likely.

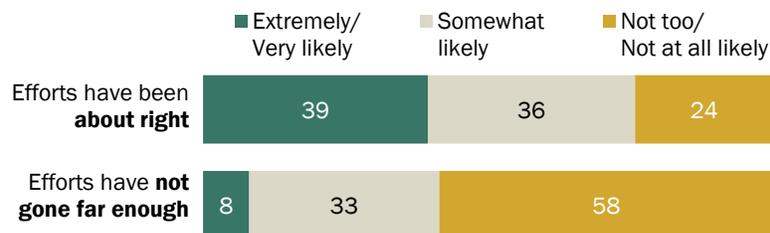
Among those who say efforts to ensure equality *have been about right*, 39% say it's extremely or very likely that there will be racial equality in the U.S. in their lifetime; 36% say it's somewhat likely; and 24% say this is unlikely to happen.

Opinions on this don't vary much by race or ethnicity among those who say efforts to ensure equality *haven't gone far enough*. (The number of Black, Hispanic and Asian adults who say efforts have been about right is too small to analyze separately.) There are also no major differences by party among those who say efforts haven't gone far enough.

Among those who say efforts to ensure equality *have been about right*, Republicans (46%) are more likely than Democrats (29%) to say it's extremely or very likely that

58% of Americans who say efforts to ensure racial equality haven't gone far enough say it's unlikely there will be equality in their lifetime

Among those who say efforts to ensure equal rights for all people in the U.S., regardless of race or ethnicity, *have been about right* or *not gone far enough*, % saying it is ___ that there will be equality for all in their lifetime



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.

"Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

there will be racial equality in their lifetime. In turn, 31% of Democrats in this group say this is unlikely, compared with 19% of Republicans.

3. Achieving racial equality

We asked people who say efforts to ensure equal rights *haven't gone far enough* how much they think each of the following needs to change to ensure equality for all people, regardless of race and ethnicity:

- The prison system
- Policing
- The political system
- The health care system
- The courts and judicial process
- The economic system

Within that group of respondents, majorities of 80% or more say each of these requires at least major changes, with shares ranging from 25% to 44% saying they need to be completely rebuilt.

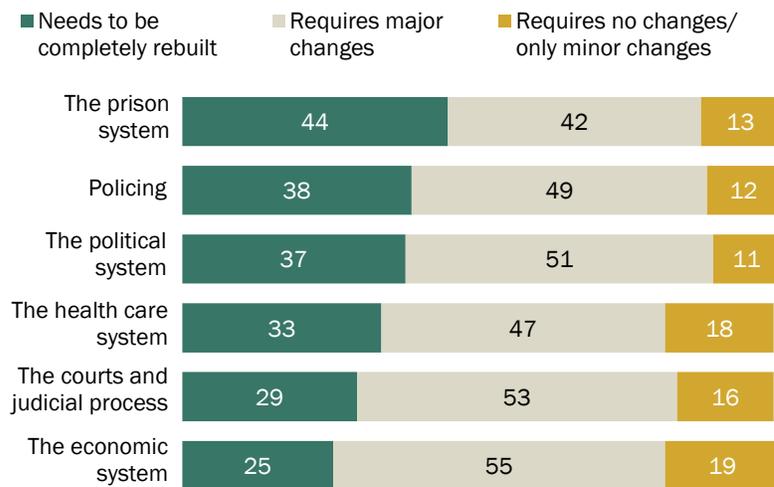
On nearly every item, the shares saying the system needs to be completely rebuilt to ensure racial equality (among those who say efforts to ensure equality *haven't gone far enough*) vary by:

Race and ethnicity: Black Americans are more likely than White, Hispanic and Asian Americans to say most of these systems need to be completely rebuilt.

Age: Adults ages 18 to 29 are more likely than those 30 and older to say most of these systems need to be completely rebuilt. On most items, there are also differences between those ages 30 to 49 and those 50 and older, with the younger group more likely to say the system in question needs to be rebuilt.

Many who say not enough has been done to ensure racial equality say certain systems need to be rebuilt

Among those who say efforts to ensure equal rights for all people in the U.S., regardless of race or ethnicity, *haven't gone far enough*, % saying each of the following ___ to ensure equality for all



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.

"Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Partisanship: Democrats and those who lean Democratic are more likely than Republicans and Republican leaners to say several of these systems need to be completely rebuilt. In turn, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say no changes or only minor changes are required (though majorities of Democrats and Republicans who say efforts to ensure equality *haven't gone far enough* say each of these systems requires at least major changes).

Views of systems that need to be rebuilt to ensure racial equality differ by race, ethnicity, age and party

Among those who say efforts to ensure equal rights for all people in the U.S., regardless of race or ethnicity, *haven't gone far enough*, % saying each of the following **needs to be completely rebuilt** to ensure equality for all

	The prison system	Policing	The political system	The health care system	The courts and judicial process	The economic system
All*	44	38	37	33	29	25
White	41	32	32	31	24	19
Black	55	54	50	36	45	37
Hispanic	41	37	38	37	31	27
Asian**	37	41	27	39	17	21
Ages 18-29	57	54	44	46	36	33
30-49	45	43	36	34	33	26
50-64	36	28	36	29	24	20
65+	35	24	32	23	21	19
Rep/Lean Rep	30	24	32	27	25	21
Dem/Lean Dem	48	43	38	35	30	25

* All who say efforts to ensure racial equality haven't gone far enough.

** Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Response options also included "Requires major changes," "Requires only minor changes" and "Requires no changes."

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.

"Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Protests against racial inequality

We also asked Americans about their views on some activities aimed at protesting racial inequality.

Majorities say the following are *always or often acceptable*:

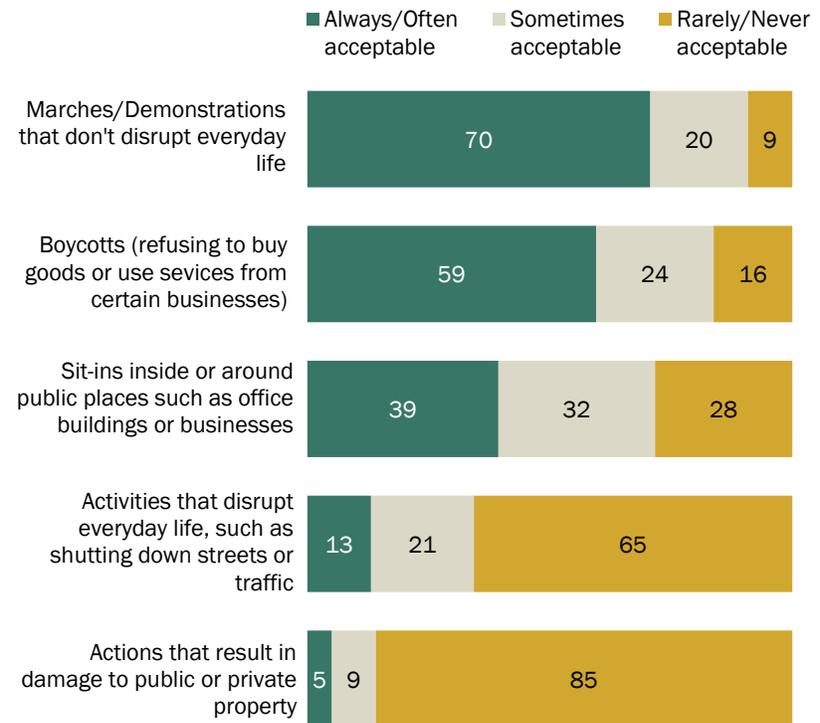
- Marches or demonstrations that don't disrupt everyday life (70%)
- Boycotts, or refusing to buy goods or use services from certain businesses (59%)

In turn, most see these activities as *rarely or never acceptable*:

- Actions that result in damage to public or private property (85%)
- Activities that disrupt everyday life (65%)

Majorities of Americans say marches that don't disrupt everyday life and boycotts are acceptable ways to protest racial inequality

% saying it is ___ for people to protest racial inequality by participating in each of the following



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.
 "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

On some of these, the shares saying the activity is acceptable differ by:

Race and ethnicity: Black Americans are more likely than White, Hispanic and Asian Americans to say sit-ins and activities that disrupt everyday life are always or often acceptable. Black, Asian and Hispanic Americans are more likely than White Americans to say the same about actions that cause damage to public or private property, even though small shares of each group say this.

By age: Adults ages 18 to 29 are more likely than those 30 and older to see most types of protests, including those that result in property damage, as always or often acceptable.

By partisanship: Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say each of these forms of protest is always or often acceptable.

People who say efforts to ensure racial equality *haven't gone far enough* are more likely than those who say these efforts *have been about right* or *have gone too far* to say most of these protest activities are always or often acceptable.

Shares saying certain types of protest against racial inequality are always or often acceptable differ by race, ethnicity, age and partisanship

% saying it is **always or often acceptable** for people to protest racial inequality by participating in each of the following

	Marches/Demonstrations that don't disrupt everyday life	Boycotts (refusing to buy goods or use services from certain businesses)	Sit-ins inside or around public places	Activities that disrupt everyday life	Actions that result in property damage
All adults	70	59	39	13	5
White	71	60	37	10	3
Black	68	64	50	25	10
Hispanic	64	53	37	14	6
Asian*	71	56	39	14	7
Ages 18-29	76	71	57	22	11
30-49	73	64	44	15	5
50-64	69	55	32	9	3
65+	61	45	24	7	1
Rep/Lean Rep	62	50	23	4	3
Dem/Lean Dem	78	69	56	22	7

* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Response options also included "Sometimes acceptable," Rarely acceptable" and "Never acceptable."

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 10-16, 2023.

"Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy 60 Years After the March on Washington"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Acknowledgments

Senior Researcher Kiana Cox and Research Associate Khadijah Edwards played a lead role in developing the survey questionnaire. This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at pewresearch.org/topic/race-ethnicity/.

Kim Parker, *Director of Social Trends Research*
Juliana Horowitz, *Associate Director, Research*
Kiana Cox, *Senior Researcher*
Khadijah Edwards, *Research Associate*
Isabel Goddard, *Research Associate*
Kiley Hurst, *Research Analyst*
Dana Braga, *Research Assistant*
Alex Cahn, *Intern*
Shannon Greenwood, *Senior Digital Producer*
John Carlo Mandapat, *Information Graphics Designer*
Abby Stafford, *Intern*
David Kent, *Senior Copy Editor*
Anna Jackson, *Editorial Assistant*
Tanya Arditi, *Communications Manager*
Julia O'Hanlon, *Communications Associate*
Mimi Cottingham, *Communications Associate*

In addition, the project benefited greatly from the guidance of the Pew Research Center methodology team: Courtney Kennedy, Andrew Mercer, Ashley Amaya, Dorene Asare-Marfo, Dana Popky, Anna Brown and Arnold Lau. This project also benefited from feedback by the following Pew Research Center staff: Mark Hugo Lopez, Monica Anderson and Jocelyn Kiley.

Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from ATP Wave 126, conducted from April 10 to April 16, 2023, and includes an [oversample](#) of Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, non-Hispanic Asian adults, and adults who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual in order to provide more precise estimates of the opinions and experiences of these smaller demographic subgroups. These oversampled groups are weighted back to reflect their correct proportions in the population. A total of 5,073 panelists responded out of 5,802 who were sampled, for a response rate of 87%. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 5,073 respondents is plus or minus 1.7 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	1,501
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	881
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	433
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS	9,396	8,778	4,116
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS	5,900	4,720	1,467
June 1 to July 19, 2020; Feb. 10 to March 31, 2021	ABS	3,197	2,812	1,541
May 29 to July 7, 2021; Sept. 16 to Nov. 1, 2021	ABS	1,329	1,162	787
May 24 to Sept. 29, 2022	ABS	3,354	2,869	1,694
	Total	42,894	30,283	12,420

Note: RDD is random-digit dial; ABS is address-based sampling. Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Sampled households receive mailings asking a randomly selected adult to complete a survey online. A question at the end of the survey asks if the respondent is willing to join the ATP. In 2020 and 2021 another stage was added to the recruitment. Households that did not respond to the online survey were sent a paper version of the questionnaire, \$5 and a postage-paid return envelope. A subset of the adults who returned the paper version of the survey were invited to join the ATP. This subset of adults received a follow-up mailing with a \$10 pre-incentive and invitation to join the ATP.

Across the five address-based recruitments, a total of 23,176 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 20,341 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, one adult was selected and asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 30,283 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 12,420 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.² The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was non-institutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii. It featured a stratified random sample from the ATP in which Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, non-Hispanic Asian adults, and adults who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual were selected with certainty. The remaining panelists were sampled at rates designed to ensure that the share of respondents in each stratum is proportional to its share of the U.S. adult population to the greatest extent possible. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

² AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#)."

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was April 10 to April 16, 2023. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on April 10.

Invitations were sent out in two separate launches: soft launch and full launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on April 10. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled panelists were included in the full launch and sent an invitation on April 11.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to two SMS reminders.

Invitation and reminder dates, ATP Wave 126

	Soft launch	Full launch
Initial invitation	April 10, 2023	April 11, 2023
First reminder	April 13, 2023	April 13, 2023
Final reminder	April 15, 2023	April 15, 2023

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center’s researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, one ATP respondents was removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. These weights are then rescaled and adjusted to account for changes in the design of ATP recruitment surveys from year to year. Finally, the weights are calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Age x Gender	
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanic and Asian adults	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	2021 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2021 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	
<i>Additional weighting dimensions applied within Black adults</i>	
Age	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Gender	
Education	
Hispanic ethnicity	
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th

percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

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.

Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 126

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	5,073	1.7 percentage points
White	2,717	2.1 percentage points
Black	803	4.9 percentage points
Hispanic	954	5.0 percentage points
Asian	368	7.8 percentage points

Note: This survey includes oversamples of Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, and non-Hispanic Asian adults, and adults who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions, ATP Wave 126

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	5,073
Logged on to survey; broke off	2.12	71
Logged on to survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	48
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	607
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	2
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		1
Screened out		0
Total panelists sampled for the survey		5,802
Completed interviews	I	5,073
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	727
Non-contact	NC	2
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		5,802
AAPOR RR1 = I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)		87%

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Cumulative response rate as of ATP Wave 126

	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	71%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 126	48%
Response rate to Wave 126 survey	87%
Cumulative response rate	3%

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A note about the Asian adult sample

This survey includes a total sample size of 368 Asian adults. The sample primarily includes English-speaking Asian adults and, therefore, may not be representative of the overall Asian adult population. Despite this limitation, it is important to report the views of Asian adults on the topics in this study. As always, Asian adults' responses are incorporated into the general population figures throughout this report.

© Pew Research Center 2023