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Americans See Health Care Costs, Deficit, Inflation as Big Problems Facing the Nation

Share of those who say illegal immigration is a very big problem has dropped since the start of Trump's second term

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About this research

This Pew Research Center analysis examines Americans' views of problems facing the country.

Why did we do this?

Pew Research Center conducts research to help the public, media and decision-makers understand important topics. We have studied Americans' views of politics and major policy issues for decades.

Learn more [about Pew Research Center](#).

How did we do this?

We surveyed 5,103 U.S. adults from April 20 to 26, 2026. Everyone who took part in this survey is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel. The survey represents the views of the full U.S. adult population.

Here are the [survey questions](#) used for this analysis, the [detailed responses](#) and the [survey methodology](#).

Americans See Health Care Costs, Deficit, Inflation as Big Problems Facing the Nation

Share of those who say illegal immigration is a very big problem has dropped since the start of Trump's second term

Economic issues continue to dominate Americans' ranking of the top problems facing the country. And over the course of the last year, the shares who view issues like health care affordability and the budget deficit as very big problems have risen.

- **73% of adults now say the affordability of health care is a very big problem for the country**, up 6 percentage points from [February of last year](#).

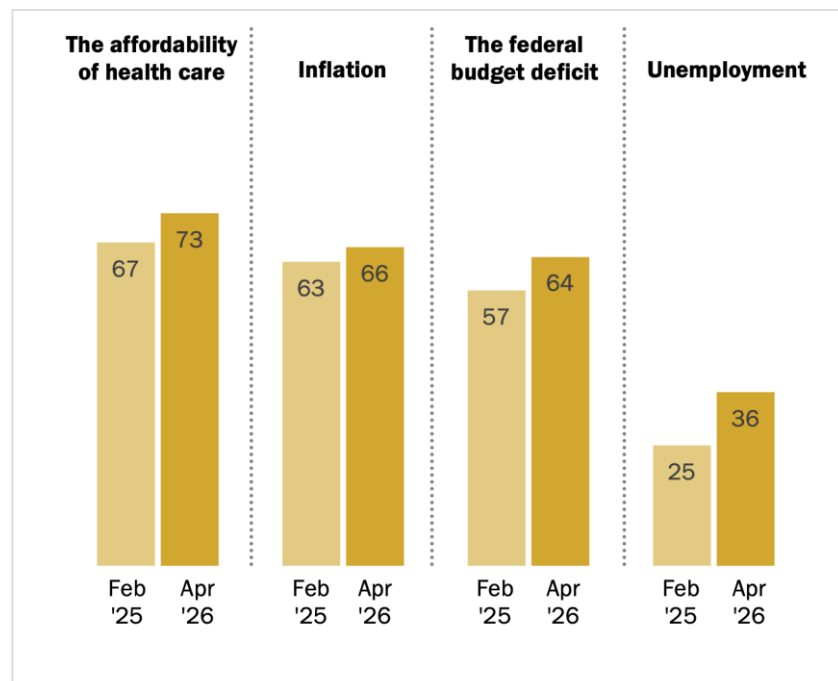
- 64% view the federal budget deficit as a very big problem, up 7 points from last February.

Inflation also continues to loom large for the public: 66% say inflation is a very big problem, up modestly from 63% last year.

And while a far smaller share sees unemployment as a very big problem in the country today (36%), this is also up (by 11 points) from early 2025.

Large – and growing – shares see key economic issues as very big problems

% who say ___ is a very big problem for the country today



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 20-26, 2026.

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The national survey by Pew Research Center – conducted April 20-26 among 5,103 U.S. adults – also finds shifting partisan dynamics on several of these issues.

Across the board, Democrats are now more likely to say each economic issue we asked about is a very big problem than they were in the weeks after Donald Trump's inauguration last year.

For the most part, Republicans' views have not changed much in this period, with one exception: **Republicans are now far less likely to say inflation is a very big problem than they were last year.**

Affordability of health care

Most Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (85%) say the affordability of health care is a very big problem for the country – up 12 points since February 2025.

A smaller majority of Republicans and GOP leaners (60%) call this a very big problem, essentially unchanged from last year. But Republicans remain more likely to see health care costs as a problem than they were from 2020 to 2024.

Federal budget deficit

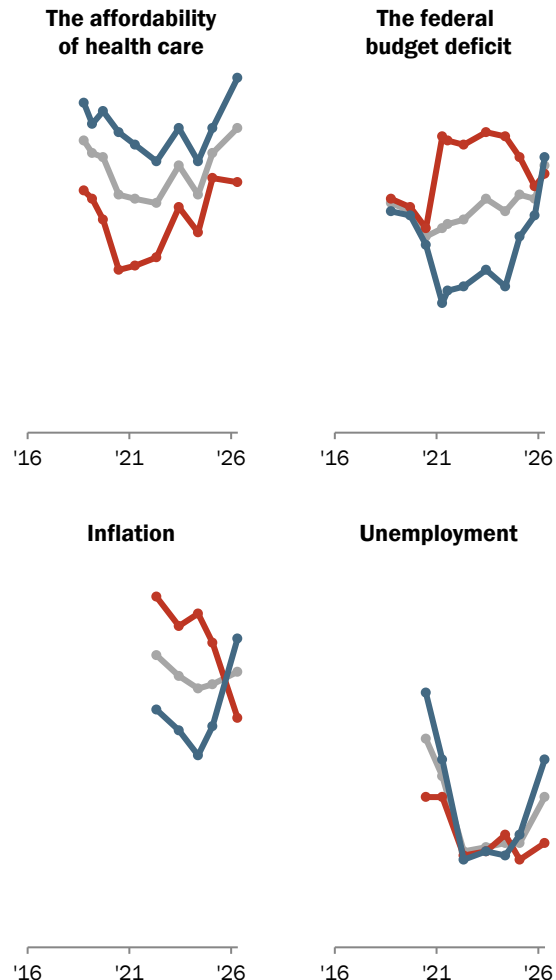
During Joe Biden's presidency, Republicans were about twice as likely as Democrats to describe the federal deficit as a very big problem.

That is no longer the case:

- 66% of Democrats now say the federal budget deficit is a very big problem – the highest share since we began asking this question in 2018.
- The share of Democrats who say the deficit is a very big problem is up 19 points since last February, and 31 points since May 2024.

Share of Democrats saying federal budget deficit is a top problem spikes

% who say ___ is a very big problem for the country today



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 20-26, 2026.

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- In contrast, the share of Republicans saying the deficit is a very big problem has dropped by 9 points since May 2024 (from 71% to 62%).

Inflation

About three-quarters of Democrats (74%) today rate inflation as a very big problem, compared with 55% of Republicans.

In May 2024, the partisan gap was even wider. But the positions were reversed: 80% of Republicans saw inflation as a very big problem, compared with 46% of Democrats.

Unemployment

Unemployment is not as widely seen as a very big problem by either party. However, the share who view it as a problem has grown over the last year – largely driven by a shift in views among Democrats.

A year ago, 21% of Republicans and 27% of Democrats said unemployment was a very big problem for the country. Today, 25% of Republicans – but 47% of Democrats – hold this view.

Other problems facing the nation

Americans continue to say the role of money in politics is a top problem for the country – 74% say this. This view is widely held across the political spectrum: 79% of Democrats and 70% of Republicans see money in politics as a very big problem.

There is also a broad, and largely bipartisan, view that the ability of Democrats and Republicans to work together is a very big problem. Nearly two-thirds of adults say this (64%), including majorities in both parties, though Democrats are somewhat more likely to say this than Republicans (69% vs. 60%).

There are wider partisan gaps on other issues:

Higher-ranking issues for Republicans

Republicans continue to be far more likely than Democrats to view illegal immigration as a very big problem for the country (60% vs. 17%.)

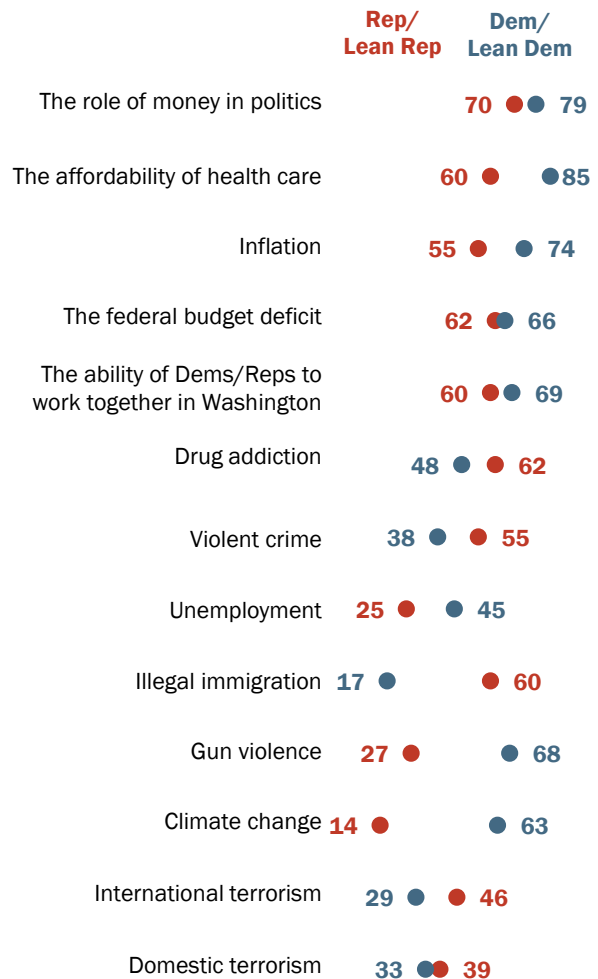
Republicans are also more likely than Democrats to see violent crime, drug addiction, and international and domestic terrorism as very big problems – though these gaps are more modest.

Higher-ranking issues for Democrats

Gun violence (68%) and climate change (63%) rank among the top concerns for Democrats and Democratic leaners. But these are among the lowest ranked problems by Republicans.

Money in politics is widely viewed as a big problem for the U.S.; partisan gaps are far larger on other issues

% who say ____ is a very big problem for the country today



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 20-26, 2026.

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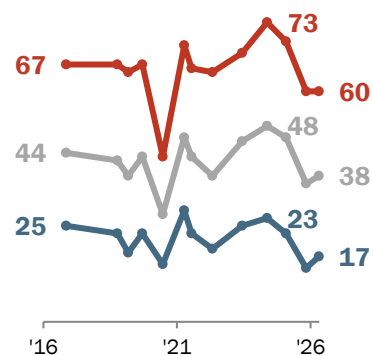
Illegal immigration

Americans are less likely to see illegal immigration as a very big problem for the country than they were at the start of Trump's second term.

- Overall, 38% say it is a very big problem – down from 48% in February 2025
- 60% of Republicans now see it as a top national problem, down from 73% who said this last February.
- 17% of Democrats now view illegal immigration as a very big problem, down from 23% in early 2025.

Illegal immigration seen as less of a problem than in early 2025

*% who say illegal immigration is a **very big problem** for the country today*



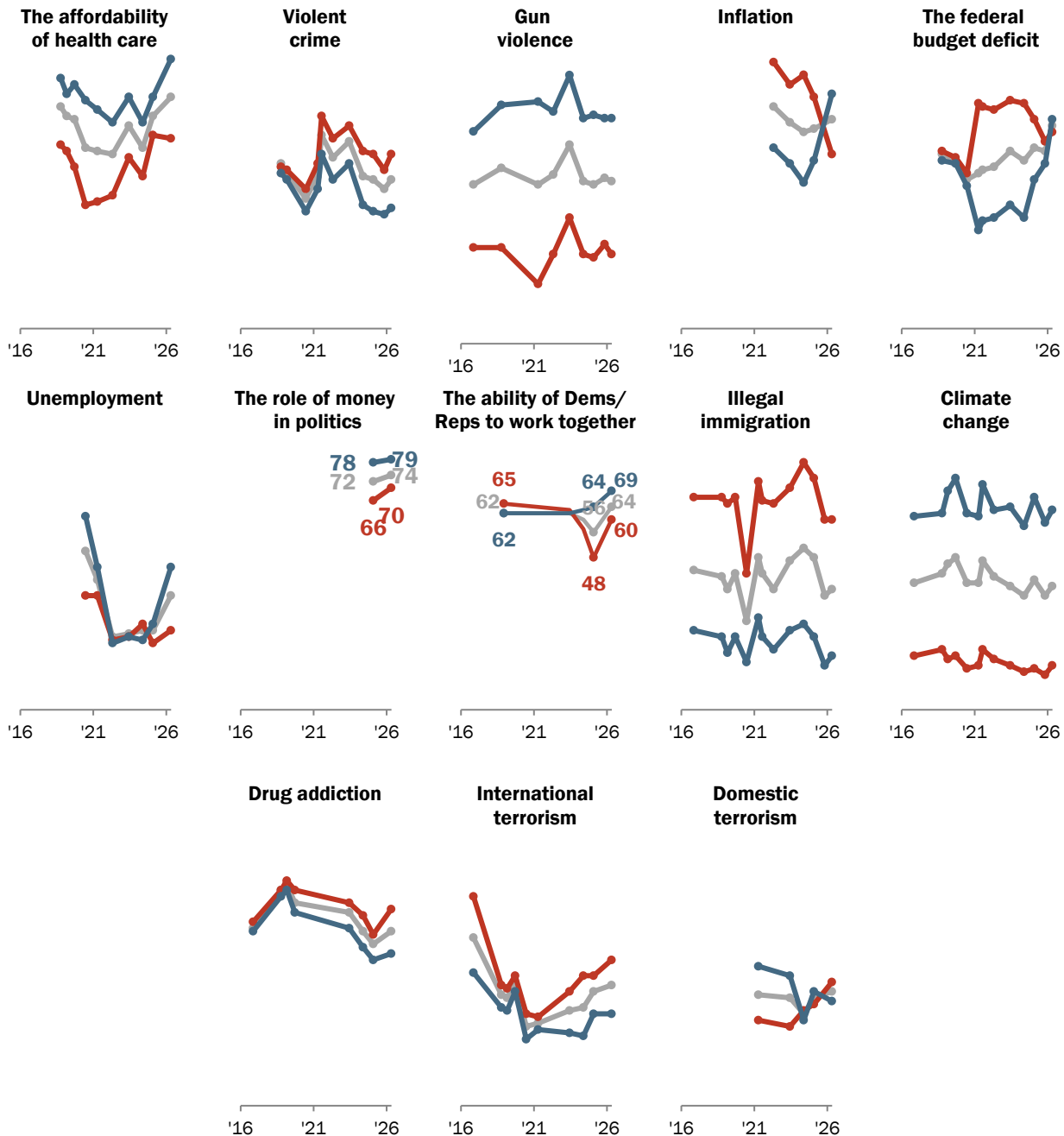
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 20-26, 2026.

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Appendix: Additional charts

How views of the problems facing the nation have shifted over time

% who say ____ is a *very big* problem for the country today

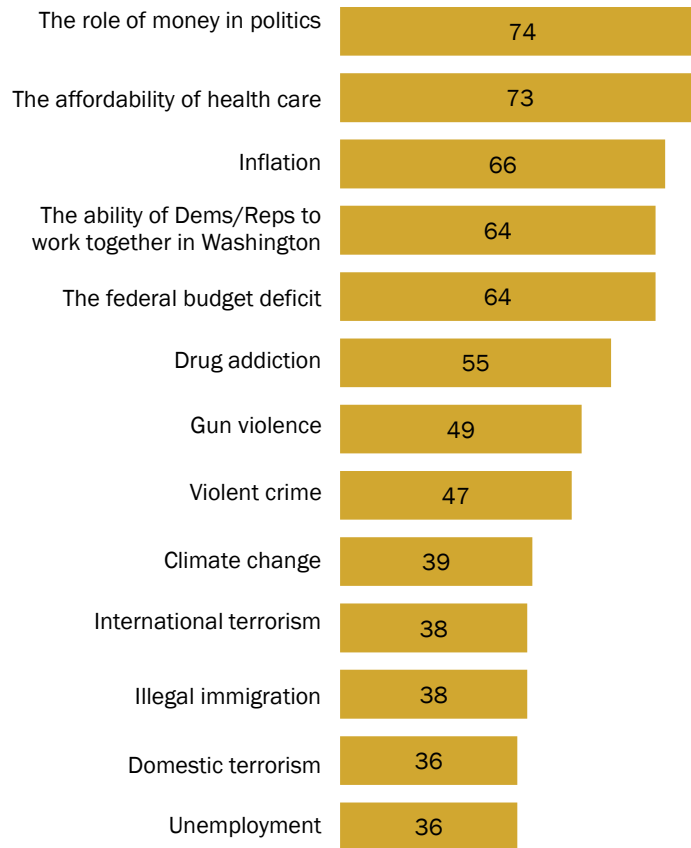


Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 20-26, 2026.

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Money in politics, health care affordability rank as top national problems

*% who say ___ is a **very big problem** for the country today*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 20-26, 2026.

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View of national problems by age, race and ethnicity

*% who say ____ is a **very big problem** for the country today*

	Ages 18-				White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
	29	30-49	50-64	65+				
The role of money in politics	70	74	77	76	79	75	63	59
The affordability of health care	73	72	76	71	73	78	73	69
Inflation	70	71	66	55	62	79	70	63
The federal budget deficit	54	60	69	71	64	67	62	59
The ability of Dems/Reps to work together in Washington	52	59	69	78	68	65	55	55
Drug addiction	49	55	58	56	54	59	62	41
Gun violence	50	43	50	56	44	64	57	58
Violent crime	45	44	45	54	43	57	57	39
Climate change	46	38	33	40	36	50	47	37
International terrorism	23	34	45	51	37	37	44	37
Illegal immigration	28	35	44	45	41	32	32	33
Domestic terrorism	30	33	36	45	34	46	42	27
Unemployment	44	39	32	29	28	58	47	38

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 20-26, 2026.

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Acknowledgments

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

Data in this report comes from Wave 192 of the American Trends Panel (ATP), Pew Research Center’s nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. The survey was conducted April 20-26, 2026. A total of 5,103 panelists responded out of 5,898 who were sampled, for a survey-level 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 5,103 respondents is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points.

The survey includes [oversamples](#) of non-Hispanic Asian adults and Hispanic validated Trump voters 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.

SSRS conducted the survey for Pew Research Center via online (n=4,900) and live telephone (n=203) interviewing. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about the ATP, read “[About the American Trends Panel](#).”

Panel recruitment

Since 2018, the ATP has used address-based sampling (ABS) for recruitment. A study cover letter and a pre-incentive are mailed to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service’s Computerized Delivery Sequence File. This Postal Service file has been estimated to cover 90% to 98% of the population.¹ Within each sampled household, the adult with the next birthday is selected to participate. Other details of the ABS recruitment protocol have changed over time but are available upon request.² Prior to 2018, the ATP was recruited using landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys administered in English and Spanish.

¹ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. “[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#).”

² Email pewsurveys@pewresearch.org.

A national sample of U.S. adults has been recruited to the ATP approximately once per year since 2014. In some years, the recruitment has included additional efforts (known as an “oversample”) to improve the accuracy of data for underrepresented groups. For example, Hispanic adults, Black adults and Asian adults were oversampled in 2019, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was noninstitutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the United States. It featured a stratified random sample from the ATP in which the following groups were oversampled: non-Hispanic Asian adults and Hispanic validated Trump voters. 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.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with SSRS. The web program used for online respondents was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the SSRS project team and Pew Research Center researchers. The SSRS project 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 gift code to Amazon.com, Target.com or Walmart.com. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$15 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 20-26, 2026. Surveys were conducted via self-administered web survey or by live telephone interviewing.

For panelists who take surveys online:³ Postcard notifications were mailed to a subset on April 20.⁴ Survey 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 20. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled online panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on April 21.

**Invitation and reminder dates for web respondents,
ATP Wave 192**

	Soft launch	Full launch
Initial invitation	April 20, 2026	April 21, 2026
First reminder	April 23, 2026	April 23, 2026
Final reminder	April 25, 2026	April 25, 2026

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Panelists participating online were sent an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages were sent an SMS invitation with a link to the survey and up to two SMS reminders.

For panelists who take surveys over the phone with a live interviewer:

Prenotification postcards were mailed on April 17. Soft launch took place on April 20 and involved dialing until a total of five interviews had been completed. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled phone panelists' numbers were dialed throughout the remaining field period. Panelists who take surveys via phone can receive up to six calls from trained SSRS interviewers.

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, Center researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for whether respondents left questions blank at very high rates or always selected the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, three ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

³ The ATP does not use routers or chains in any part of its online data collection protocol, nor are they used to direct respondents to additional surveys.

⁴ Postcard notifications for web panelists are sent to 1) panelists who were recruited within the last two years and 2) panelists recruited prior to the last two years who opt to continue receiving postcard notifications.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the panel survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of recruitment into the panel. These weights are then 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.

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.

American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2024 American Community Survey (ACS)
Age x Gender	
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Race/Ethnicity x Gender	
Race/Ethnicity x Age	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metropolitan status	
Volunteerism	2023 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Frequency of internet use	2025 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Religious affiliation	
Party affiliation x Race/Ethnicity	
Party affiliation x Age	
Validated 2024 presidential election turnout and vote choice	Candidate vote share is based on official results from the Federal Election Commission. Turnout is based on estimates from the Election Lab at the University of Florida. The size of the voting-eligible population is based on the 2023 ACS.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on noninstitutionalized adults. For weighting to the 2024 presidential election results, panelists are considered validated voters if their self-report of having voted was confirmed after matching to a national voter registry.

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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 sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to

Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 192

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %	Plus or minus ...
Total	5,103		1.6 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	2,368	46	2.3 percentage points
Half form	At least 1,254		3.2 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	2,537	48	2.2 percentage points
Half form	At least 1,183		3.2 percentage points

Note: This survey includes oversamples of non-Hispanic Asian adults and Hispanic validated Trump voters. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. Refer to the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

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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 192

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	5,103
Logged in (web) / Contacted (CATI), but did not complete any items	2.11	149
Started survey; broke off before completion	2.12	40
Never logged on (web) / Never reached on phone (CATI)	2.20	603
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	0
Other noninterview	2.30	0
Completed interview but was removed for data quality	2.90	3
Total panelists sampled for the survey		5,898
Completed interviews	I	5,103
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	189
Noncontact	NC	603
Other	O	3
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		5,898
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		87%

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Cumulative response rate, ATP Wave 192

	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	74%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 192	40%
Response rate to Wave 192 survey	87%
Cumulative response rate	3%

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**2026 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 192 POLITICS APRIL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
April 20-26, 2026
N=5,103**

Note: This survey was conducted primarily online, with some interviews conducted by live telephone. This topline shows the programming language for online administration. For details on how questions were slightly modified for phone administration, visit the questionnaire.

American Trends Panel surveys conducted between October 2016 and June 2024 were conducted fully online (with tablets and data plans provided to adults without home internet). American Trends Panel surveys conducted prior to October 2016 were conducted primarily online, with some respondents completing by mail. For additional details, visit the Methodology.

* "No answer" includes web respondents who do not answer the question as well as telephone respondents who refuse to answer or who say that they don't know how to answer. In cases where "not sure" was offered as an explicit option to web and telephone respondents, the "no answer" category includes only web skips and telephone refusals.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

NATPROBS How much of a problem do you think each of the following are in the country today?
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

		A very big <u>problem</u>	A moderately <u>big problem</u>	A small <u>problem</u>	Not a problem <u>at all</u>	No <u>answer*</u>
ASK FORM 1 [N=2,534]						
IMM	Illegal immigration					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	38	27	28	6	1
	Nov 17-30, 2025	36	28	29	6	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	48	26	22	5	*
	May 13-19, 2024	51	26	20	3	*
	Jun 5-11, 2023	47	26	21	6	*
	Apr 25-May 1, 2022	38	26	27	8	*
	Jul 8-18, 2021	43	29	23	5	*
	Apr 5-11, 2021	48	29	19	3	*
	Jun 16-22, 2020	28	29	33	9	*
	Sep 3-15, 2019	43	27	24	6	*
	Feb 19-Mar 4, 2019	38	28	28	6	*
	Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	42	26	25	6	*
	Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016	44	30	21	5	1
INFL	Inflation					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	66	25	7	1	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	63	27	8	1	*
	May 13-19, 2024	62	29	8	1	*
	Jun 5-11, 2023	65	27	6	1	*
	Apr 25-May 1, 2022	70	23	6	1	*
ITERR	International terrorism					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	38	36	21	4	1
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	36	38	22	3	1
	May 13-19, 2024	31	39	25	4	1
	Jun 5-11, 2023	30	40	26	3	1

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Apr 5-11, 2021		26	41	29	3	1
NATRPOBS CONTINUED ...			A		Not a	
		A very big	moderately	A small	problem	No
		<u>problem</u>	<u>big problem</u>	<u>problem</u>	<u>at all</u>	<u>answer*</u>
TREND FOR COMPARISON:						
<i>Terrorism</i>						
	Jun 16-22, 2020	25	38	31	5	1
	Sep 3-15, 2019	39	39	20	2	*
	Feb 19-March 4, 2019	34	40	23	2	*
	Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	35	37	25	3	*
	Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016	53	30	13	3	1
HC	The affordability of health care					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	73	21	5	1	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	67	25	6	1	*
	May 13-19, 2024	57	32	9	2	*
	Jun 5-11, 2023	64	27	7	2	*
	Apr 25-May 1, 2022	55	32	12	1	*
	Apr 5-11, 2021	56	30	11	2	1
	Jun 16-22, 2020	57	31	10	2	*
	Sep 3-15, 2019	66	26	6	2	*
	Feb 19-March 4, 2019	67	26	5	2	*
	Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	70	23	5	2	*
GUN	Gun violence					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	49	27	18	4	1
	Nov 17-30, 2025	50	30	17	3	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	48	29	18	4	*
	May 13-19, 2024	49	27	19	4	*
	Jun 5-11, 2023	60	23	13	4	*
	Apr 25-May 1, 2022	51	25	20	4	*
	Apr 5-11, 2021	48	24	22	6	*
	Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	53	28	14	4	*
	Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016	48	27	20	4	*
MNPOL	The role of money in politics					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	74	19	5	1	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	72	21	6	2	*
ASK FORM 2 [N=2,569]						
DEF	The federal budget deficit					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	64	27	6	2	1
	Nov 17-30, 2025	56	35	8	1	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	57	33	8	2	1
	May 13-19, 2024	53	34	11	1	1
	Jun 5-11, 2023	56	32	9	2	1
	Apr 25-May 1, 2022	51	33	13	3	*
	Jul 8-18, 2021	50	34	11	3	1
	Apr 5-11, 2021	49	33	14	3	1
	Jun 16-22, 2020	47	38	12	3	1
	Sep 3-15, 2019	53	38	8	1	*
	Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	55	35	8	2	1
VCRI	Violent crime					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	47	36	16	1	*
	Nov 17-30, 2025	44	41	14	1	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	47	36	16	1	*
	May 13-19, 2024	48	36	15	1	*
	Jun 5-11, 2023	59	30	10	1	*
	Apr 25-May 1, 2022	54	34	10	1	*
	Jul 8-18, 2021	61	29	9	1	*
	Apr 5-11, 2021	48	36	15	1	*

NATRPOBS CONTINUED ...

		A very big <u>problem</u>	A moderately <u>big problem</u>	A small <u>problem</u>	Not a problem <u>at all</u>	No <u>answer*</u>
VCRI	Violent crime					
	Jun 16-22, 2020	41	38	20	2	*
	Feb 19-March 4, 2019	49	37	13	1	*
	Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	52	33	13	1	*
UNEM	Unemployment					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	36	39	22	3	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	25	37	32	5	*
	May 13-19, 2024	25	36	32	6	*
	Jun 5-11, 2023	24	39	29	8	*
	Apr 25-May 1, 2022	23	38	30	10	*
	Apr 5-11, 2021	41	41	16	2	*
	Jun 16-22, 2020	50	35	12	2	*
COMP	The ability of Democrats and Republicans to work together in Washington					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	64	26	7	2	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	56	31	10	2	1
	May 13-19, 2024	60	31	7	2	1
	Jun 5-11, 2023	62	29	6	2	1
	Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	62	28	7	2	*
DRG	Drug addiction					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	55	33	10	1	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	51	38	10	2	*
	May 13-19, 2024	55	34	9	1	*
	Jun 5-11, 2023	61	31	8	*	*
	Sep 3-15, 2019	64	28	6	1	*
	Feb 19-March 4, 2019	70	26	4	1	*
	Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	68	25	6	1	*
	Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016	56	32	9	2	1
CLIM	Climate change					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	39	26	20	15	*
	Nov 17-30, 2025	36	28	21	14	*
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	41	24	20	15	*
	May 13-19, 2024	36	28	22	13	*
	Jun 5-11, 2023	39	27	20	12	*
	Apr 25-May 1, 2022	42	27	19	11	1
	Jul 8-18, 2021	47	23	18	11	*
	Apr 5-11, 2021	40	25	22	12	*
	Jun 16-22, 2020	40	26	21	13	1
	Sep 3-15, 2019	48	24	17	10	*
	Feb 19-March 4, 2019	46	27	18	9	*
	Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	43	28	20	9	*
	Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016	40	26	21	12	1
DTERR	Domestic terrorism					
	Apr 20-26, 2026	36	36	23	4	1
	Jan 27-Feb 2, 2025	34	38	24	3	1
	May 13-19, 2024	29	39	27	4	1
	Jun 5-11, 2023	34	37	24	4	*
	Apr 5-11, 2021	35	40	21	3	1

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a...

ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3,4 OR REFUSED):PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to...⁵

<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Something else</u>	<u>No answer*</u>	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Lean Dem</i>
28	27	30	14	1	18	22

⁵ PARTY and PARTYLN asked in a prior survey.