



DIVISIVENESS AND COLLABORATION IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

A HIDDEN COMMON GROUND REPORT

By Will Friedman and David Schleifer
2019

INTRODUCTION

This inaugural Public Agenda/USA Today/Ipsos Hidden Common Ground survey examines how Americans view divisiveness and partisan divides in public life and offers a number of solutions to build a more collaborative society, despite our social and political differences.

Overall, the research shows a good deal of cross-partisan agreement on the need to move beyond the divisiveness that Americans believe plagues our politics and public life. Encouragingly, there is common ground across party lines on some specific approaches to move beyond this friction. Based on a nationally representative survey of American adults, key findings include the following:

1. Overwhelmingly, Americans say divisiveness and gridlock are big problems facing the nation. Almost a third report that divisiveness has affected them personally, citing depression, anxiety and sadness as examples of this. But Americans also believe that there is more common ground among the public than leaders and the media typically portray.
2. Differences of opinion are less of a problem than not knowing how to discuss differences productively, most Americans say. For a plurality of Americans, both thoughtless, hurtful talk and a fear of speaking one's mind are equally significant problems.
3. Both Republicans and Democrats indicate that they could imagine finding common ground with many people of the opposite party. Divisions also exist within political parties: Republicans and Democrats see about a quarter of those in their own parties as so extreme they could not imagine finding common ground with them.

4. A third of Republicans and a quarter of Democrats say they do not have a good way to understand the views of the opposing political party. Heavy consumption of certain news outlets is correlated with viewing more members of the other side as extreme.
5. Most Americans think divisiveness is driven more from the top-down than the bottom-up. Journalism, national political leaders, and social media are the institutions that Americans think stand to gain from divisiveness, while respondents believe ordinary Americans stand to lose. None of the institutions or actors asked about were viewed as more constructive than destructive, suggesting a “constructiveness desert” in American public life.
6. Americans across the political spectrum agree on several approaches to reducing divisiveness, including teaching conflict resolution, making it easier for third-party and independent candidates to run for office, and shifting more decisions from the federal to the local level.
7. Most Americans across the political spectrum say it is important for the candidate they vote for to unify the country and reduce divisiveness. Almost 40 percent of Republicans and almost 50 percent of Democrats would be very or somewhat tempted to cross party lines to vote for a candidate who could unify the country.

METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

This report summarizes findings from a nationally representative survey of 1,548 adult Americans 18 years and older. The survey was fielded October 14th to 21st, 2019 by Ipsos using the probability-based web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. Respondents completed the survey in English or Spanish. The survey was weighted to match Census figures to ensure representativeness of the American people.

The research also draws from three demographically diverse focus groups that Public Agenda conducted in May and June 2019 in New Rochelle, New York; Jackson, Mississippi; and Cincinnati, Ohio. For a complete survey methodology, the topline with full question wording and cross tabulations by political affiliation, please go to www.publicagenda.org/reports/divisiveness-and-collaboration-in-american-public-life or email research@publicagenda.org.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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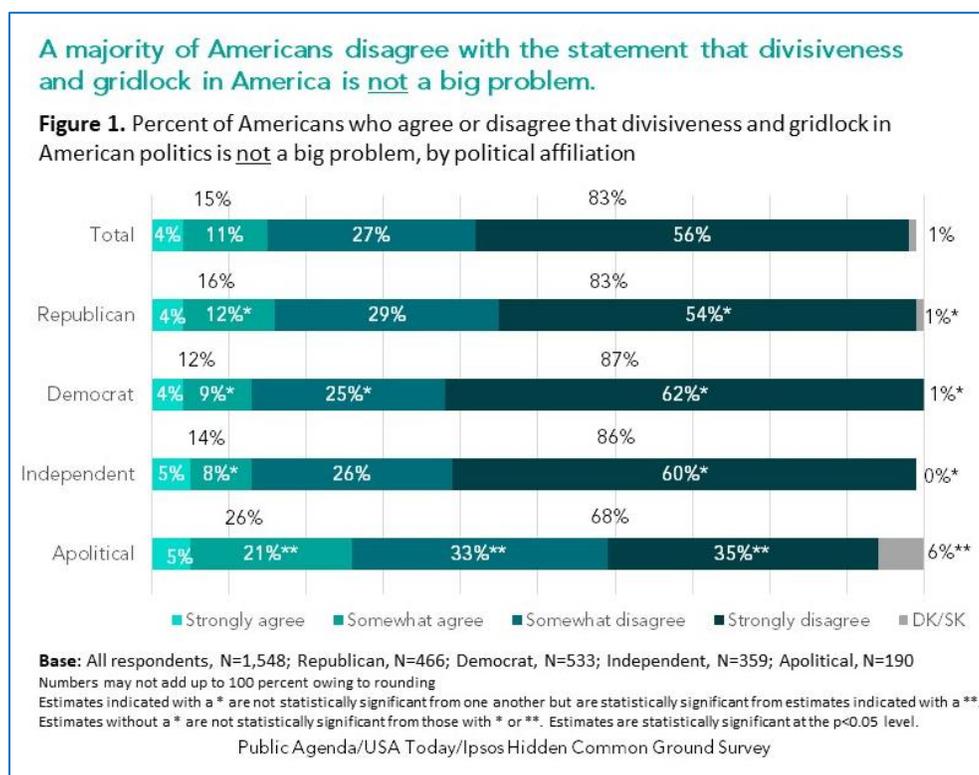
The Kettering Foundation, which served as a research partner for this project.

USA Today, which is not only our chief media partner in Hidden Common Ground 2020, but our creative partner as well.

Ipsos, which not only fielded the survey but collaborated with Public Agenda on developing the survey instrument, analyzing the data and writing this report.

FINDING 1: OVERWHELMINGLY, AMERICANS SAY DIVISIVENESS AND GRIDLOCK ARE BIG PROBLEMS FACING THE NATION. ALMOST A THIRD REPORT THAT DIVISIVENESS HAS AFFECTED THEM PERSONALLY, CITING DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND SADNESS AS EXAMPLES OF THIS. BUT AMERICANS ALSO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS MORE COMMON GROUND AMONG THE PUBLIC THAN LEADERS AND THE MEDIA TYPICALLY PORTRAY.

The inaugural *Public Agenda/USA Today/Ipsos Hidden Common Ground* survey finds that a large majority of Americans (83 percent) think divisiveness and gridlock in America is a big problem; see Figure 1.¹



DIVISIVENESS HAS DIRECTLY AFFECTED THE LIVES OF ALMOST A THIRD OF AMERICANS.

Divisiveness does not just affect the workings of government and the tenor of public life. Almost a third of Americans say destructive partisan disagreements and divisiveness have affected their personal lives – with more Democrats (37 percent) than

¹ The Independent subgroup includes those who self-identify as Independents (N=330) or (in a small handful of cases) with another party (N=9). The “apolitical” subgroup includes those who have no preference towards political affiliation (N=210) or skipped the question (N=6), “Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as...”.

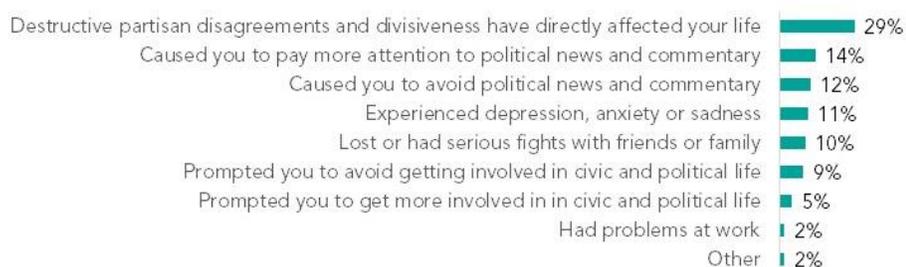
Republicans (26 percent), Independents (22 percent) or “apolitical” respondents (10 percent) saying divisiveness has affected them.

These fissures bleed into how people consume news. Approximately equal portions of Americans say that America's divisiveness has caused them to pay more attention to political news and commentary (14 percent) or to pay less attention (12 percent). And about 1 in 10 Americans (11 percent) -- representing something like 24 million Americans -- say divisiveness in American society has caused them to experience anxiety, sadness, or depression; see Figure 2.

“Why should I get involved? What am I getting out of it? All I’m going to do is get upset. My blood pressure goes up.” – Jackson, MS; in his 50s; Black; Democrat²

Almost one-third of Americans feel directly affected by divisiveness. The most common effects are paying more attention to political news; paying less attention; and depression, anxiety or sadness.

Figure 2. Percent of Americans who say destructive partisan disagreements and divisiveness has affected their lives in each of the following ways



Base: All respondents, N=1,548, asked of Americans who say destructive partisan disagreements and divisiveness has affected their life N=479

Public Agenda/USA Today/Ipsos Hidden Common Ground Survey

MOST AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT DIVISIVENESS HAS GOTTEN WORSE, BUT THERE IS NO CONSENSUS OVER WHETHER OR NOT IT WILL IMPROVE IN THE FUTURE.

Across partisan lines, 74 percent of Americans believe that over the past ten years the country has become more destructive in dealing with disagreements. But Americans have a range of opinions on whether the nation will become more constructive (22 percent), more destructive (39 percent) or stay the same over the next ten years (38 percent) -- with little difference by political affiliation in these views.

² Focus group quotes have been minimally edited for clarity.

MOST AMERICANS SAY THERE IS MORE COMMON GROUND AMONG THE PUBLIC THAN THE MEDIA AND LEADERS PORTRAY.

One of the animating impulses behind the Hidden Common Ground Initiative is to explore the possibility that the dominant narrative of a profoundly, even hopelessly, divided America is being overstated to the point of being self-fulfilling and self-defeating. Does the general public believe there is more common ground than is typically acknowledged or leveraged? Our data show that the public largely thinks so, with three in four saying there is more common ground among the American people than the news media and political leaders typically portray; see Figure 3.

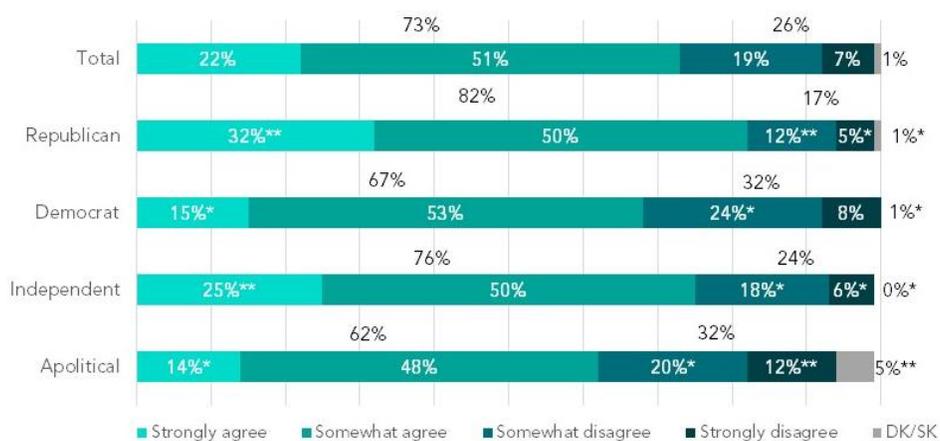
“We all have the same concerns. We care about people. We all bleed red.” – Jackson, MS; in his 60s; Black; Republican

“I personally think you have more people respecting each other than not respecting each other. We all have the same needs here. We just want to make sure that everything is taken care of.” – Cincinnati, OH; in his 50s; White; Republican

“I think we have more in common than separates us.” – Jackson, MS; in his 50s; Black; Democrat

Three-quarters of Americans think there is more common ground among the public than is commonly portrayed.

Figure 3. Percent of Americans who agree or disagree that there is more common ground among the American people than the news media and political leaders portray, by political affiliation



Base: All respondents, N=1,548; Republican, N=466; Democrat, N=533; Independent, N=359; Apolitical, N=190
 Numbers may not add up to 100 percent owing to rounding
 Estimates indicated with a * are not statistically significant from one another but are statistically significant from estimates indicated with a **. Estimates without a * are not statistically significant from those with * or **. Estimates are statistically significant at the p<0.05 level.

Public Agenda/USA Today/Ipsos Hidden Common Ground Survey

FINDING 2: DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ARE LESS OF A PROBLEM THAN NOT KNOWING HOW TO DISCUSS DIFFERENCES PRODUCTIVELY, MOST AMERICANS SAY. FOR A PLURALITY OF AMERICANS, BOTH THOUGHTLESS, HURTFUL TALK AND A FEAR OF SPEAKING ONE'S MIND ARE EQUALLY BIG PROBLEMS.

Overall, 69 percent of Americans think our country deals with disagreements in a destructive way. But for the most part, Americans do not think our nation has too many irreconcilable differences. Forty-three percent worry more about Americans not knowing how to talk about their disagreements and conflicts in constructive ways, while only 10 percent worry that fundamental disagreements and conflicting values are a more pressing issue. Another 38 percent worry equally about both of those problems; see Figure 4.

“I think we need different points of view. That’s what makes our country great is that everybody is giving their opinions for everyone to listen, *if* everybody will listen to one another.” – Cincinnati, OH; in her 50s; Black; Independent

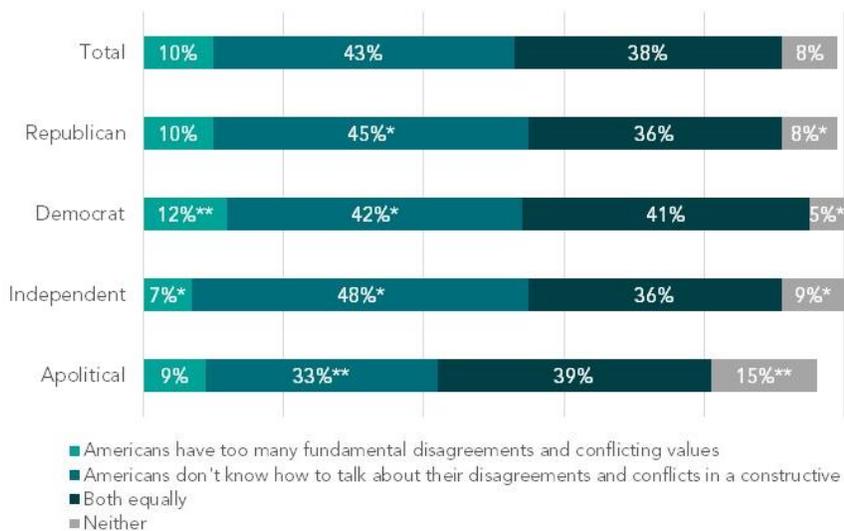
“I think diversity is the key to democracy [but] there’s a problem with people respecting other people’s opinions.” – Cincinnati, OH; in his 60s; Black; Republican

“People don’t know how to have a discussion without getting offended first.” – New Rochelle, NY; in her 30s; Asian; Democrat

“Certain people are ready to just argue instead of first listening to everyone’s opinions and then talking out their differences. People just don’t know how to have discussions anymore.” – New Rochelle; in her 30s; Black; Democrat

Differences of opinion are less of a problem than not knowing how to discuss differences productively, most Americans say.

Figure 4. Percent of Americans who worry more about each of the following, by political affiliation



Base: All respondents, N=1,548; Republican, N=466; Democrat, N=533; Independent, N=359; Apolitical, N=190. Numbers may not add up to 100 percent owing to rounding and the less than 1-4 percent of respondents who refused the question and are not represented in the figure.

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BOTH THOUGHTLESS, HURTFUL TALK AND A FEAR OF SPEAKING ONE'S MIND ARE EQUALLY BIG PROBLEMS, A PLURALITY OF AMERICANS SAY.

There are many things undermining Americans' ability to talk through our differences productively. Among them, this survey explored the tension between speaking freely and fears of offending others. Are Americans concerned that people are afraid to speak their mind honestly and say what they really mean for fear of criticism? Or do they think the bigger issue is that people speak thoughtlessly without regard for harming other people? A plurality of Americans (46 percent) think both are equal problems, with the remainder split between which is a bigger problem; see Figure 5.

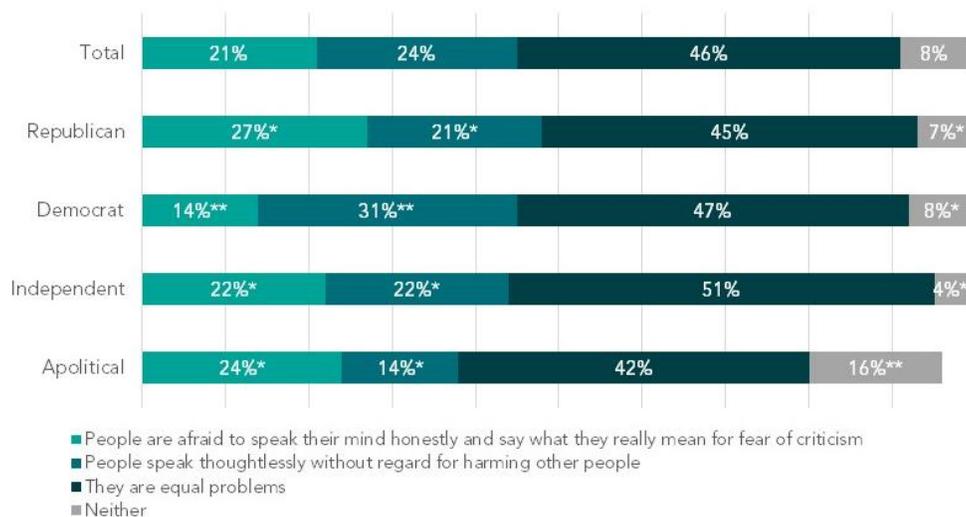
“Right now anything political is being turned very negative. People are just either trying to avoid it and not stating their opinions. Or they’re voicing their opinions and then it’s just straight arguments. I think people are having a really hard time trying to say where they stand.” – Cincinnati, OH; in her 20s; Hispanic; Democrat

“A lot of people just don't listen. They say what they want to say and if you try to voice your opinion they don't even hear what you're saying.” – Jackson, MS; in his 20s; White; Republican

“The way people treat each other now, people just say what's on their mind, how they truly feel now. I guess it's better. At least you know what you're going up against.” – Jackson, MS; in his 50s; Black; Democrat

For a plurality of Americans, people being afraid to speak their mind for fear of criticism is as much of a problem as people speaking thoughtlessly without regard for others.

Figure 5. Percent of Americans who think each of the following is a bigger problem or that both are equal problems, by political affiliation :



Base: All respondents, N=1,548; Republican, N=466; Democrat, N=533; Independent, N=359; Apolitical, N=190

Numbers may not add up to 100 percent owing to rounding and the less than 1-3 percent of respondents who refused the question and are not represented in the figure.

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FINDING 3: BOTH REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS INDICATE THAT THEY COULD IMAGINE FINDING COMMON GROUND WITH ABOUT HALF OF THOSE WHO IDENTIFY WITH THE OPPOSING PARTY. REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS ALSO SEE ABOUT A QUARTER OF THOSE IN THEIR OWN PARTY AS SO EXTREME THEY COULD NOT IMAGINE FINDING COMMON GROUND WITH THEM.

Despite the persistent portrayal of the American public as profoundly polarized, our findings suggest that Americans think they could collaborate with a significant number of people across partisan lines. On average, Republicans and Democrats alike think that about half of the people in the other party are “misguided but worth trying to find common ground with.” Independents have a similar view of people in both major parties; see Figures 6 and 7.

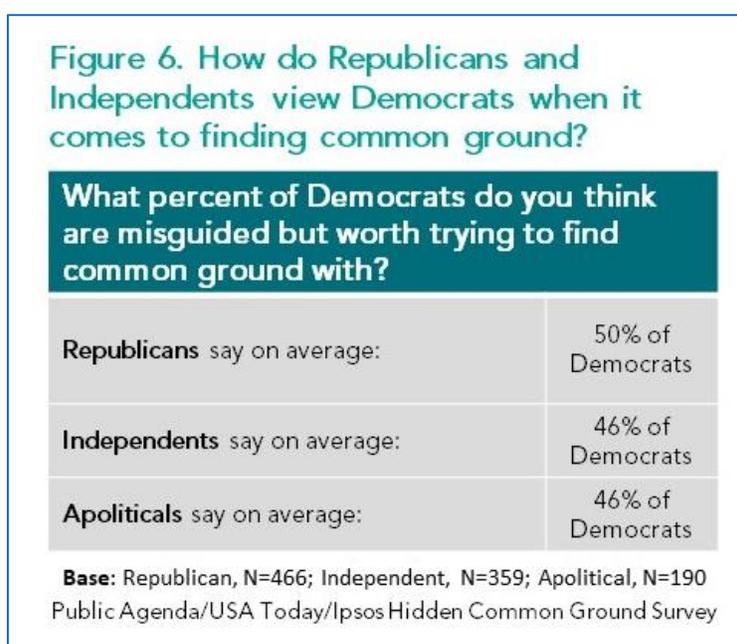


Figure 7. How do Democrats and Independents view Republicans when it comes to finding common ground?

What percent of Republicans do you think are misguided but worth trying to find common ground with?

Democrats say on average:	48% of Republicans**
Independents say on average:	45% of Republicans
Apolitical say on average:	42% of Republicans*

Base: Democrat, N=533; Independent, N=359; Apolitical, N=190
Public Agenda/USA Today/Ipsos Hidden Common Ground Survey

AMERICANS ALSO SEE ABOUT A QUARTER OF THE PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN PARTIES AS SO EXTREME THEY COULD NOT IMAGINE FINDING COMMON GROUND WITH THEM.

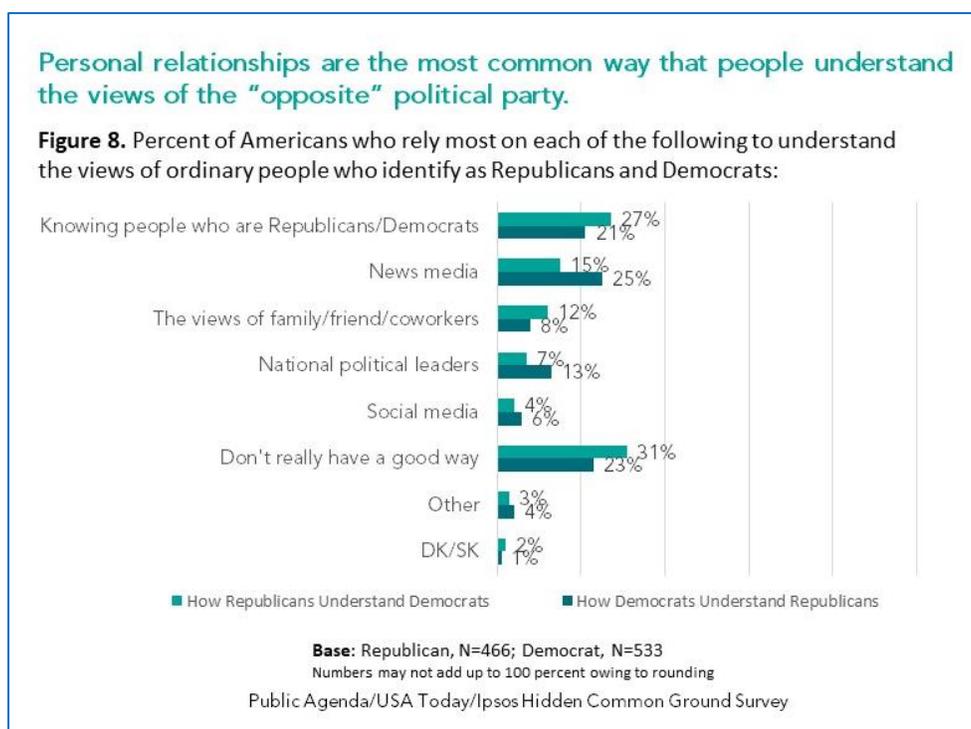
Notably, both Republicans and Democrats say that a little over a quarter of their fellow party members are “so extreme that they can’t imagine finding common ground with” them. Democrats say that about 27 percent of their fellow-Democrats; Republicans say it about 27 percent of their fellow-Republicans.

FINDING 4: A THIRD OF REPUBLICANS AND A QUARTER OF DEMOCRATS SAY THEY DO NOT HAVE A GOOD WAY TO UNDERSTAND THE VIEWS OF THE OPPOSING POLITICAL PARTY. HEAVY CONSUMPTION OF CERTAIN NEWS OUTLETS IS CORRELATED WITH VIEWING MORE MEMBERS OF THE OTHER SIDE AS EXTREME.

Reliable sources to consume or understand the views of other political parties are few and far between, according to Americans. A third of Republicans say they do not really have a good way to understand the views of Democrats, while a quarter of Democrats say the same about the views of Republicans. For their part, around a quarter of Independents say they do not have a good way to understand the views of either of the two major parties, while around 4 in 10 people who are apolitical say the same. These findings suggest a need for constructive cross-partisan contact and dialogue.

Among those who believe they have ways to understand the opposing party, the largest share of Republicans (27 percent) say that they rely most on personal relationships to understand the views of Democrats. Twenty-one percent of Democrats rely most on personal relationships to understand the views of Republicans.

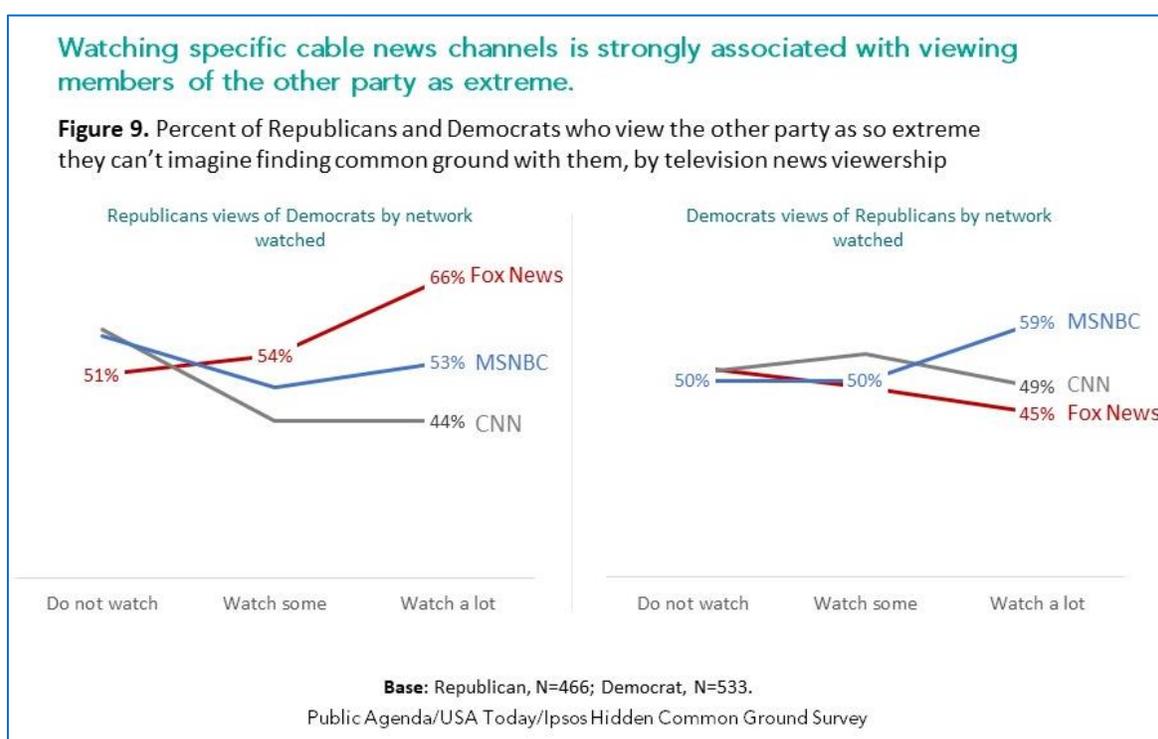
The largest share of Democrats (25 percent) say that they rely most on the news media to understand the views of Republicans. Only 15 percent of Republicans say they rely most on the news media to understand the views of Democrats; see Figure 8.



THE TYPE OF TV NEWS PEOPLE WATCH CORRELATES WITH HOW PEOPLE VIEW EACH OTHER ACROSS PARTY LINES.

Viewing certain cable news channels, meanwhile, appears to be linked to extreme perceptions of the opposing party. Among Republicans, frequent viewership of Fox News is strongly correlated with viewing Democrats as extreme. Among Democrats, frequent viewership of MSNBC is correlated with viewing Republicans as extreme; see Figure 9.

“Now it depends on what channel and what station you watch. It’s like the media now has an opinion. Wasn’t the media supposed to be neutral, to report on facts? Now it seems like the media is about their agenda, what they’re for. It’s political now.” – New Rochelle, NY; in her 50s; Hispanic; Independent



FINDING 5: MOST AMERICANS THINK DIVISIVENESS IS DRIVEN MORE FROM THE TOP-DOWN THAN THE BOTTOM-UP. JOURNALISM, NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA ARE THE INSTITUTIONS THAT AMERICANS THINK STAND TO GAIN FROM DIVISIVENESS, WHILE ORDINARY AMERICANS ARE VIEWED AS STANDING TO LOSE. NONE OF THE INSTITUTIONS OR ACTORS ASKED ABOUT WERE VIEWED AS MORE CONSTRUCTIVE THAN DESTRUCTIVE, SUGGESTING A “CONSTRUCTIVENESS DESERT” IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE.

Most Americans (76 percent) say that our inability to constructively disagree is driven from the top down, i.e. that leaders set an example that people follow. Only 21 percent of Americans say that our inability to constructively disagree is driven from the bottom up, that is, leaders are just replicating behaviors that the general public already exhibits.

“We need a strong group of leaders leading us and showing the way for the country. We’re divided right now because the leaders are not setting a good example.” – Cincinnati, OH; in her 20s; Hispanic; Democrat

“The hardest thing with the climate in the government is, they can’t even sit down and have a discussion. They can’t work out anything. They storm out. It’s tit for tat. I’m going to throw this mud at you, you’re going to throw that mud back. It’s like they can’t even work on anything.” – New Rochelle, NY; in her 50s; Hispanic; Independent

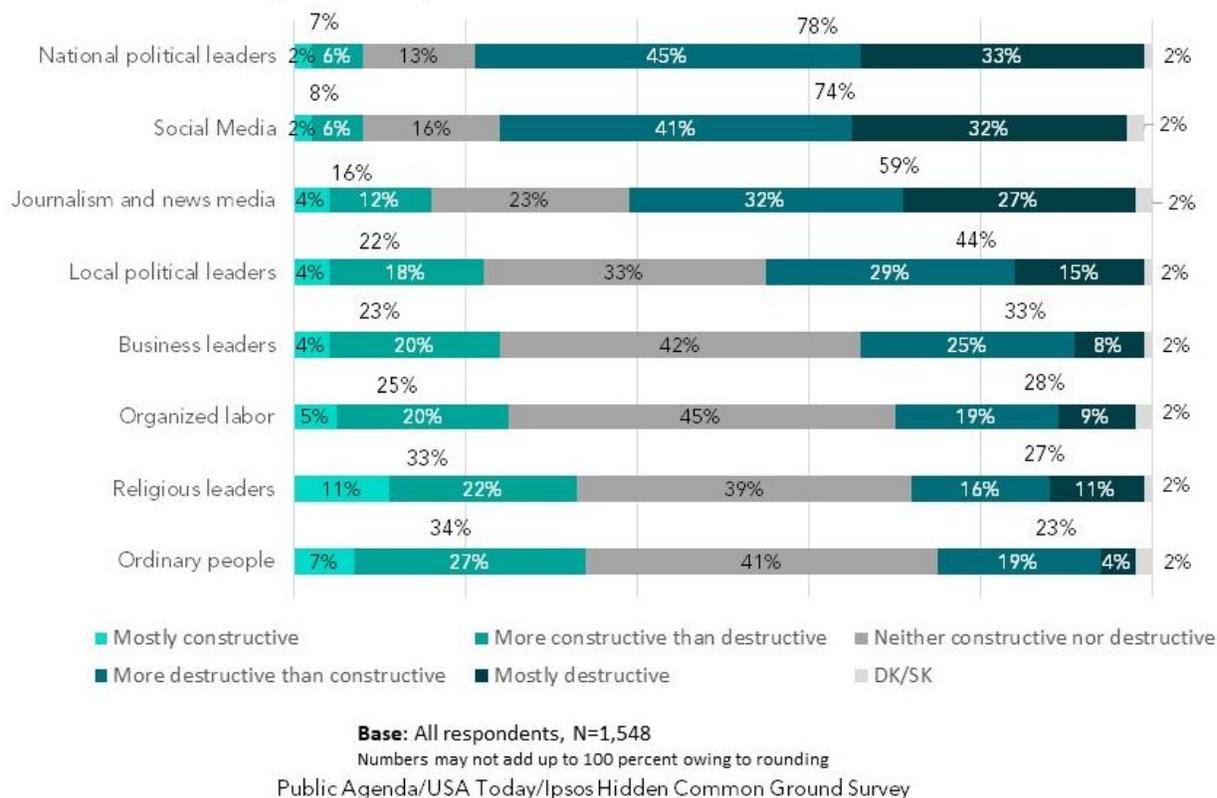
The public does take some responsibility for the divisiveness of American public life: 12 percent strongly agree, and 30 percent somewhat agree that our political leaders are divided because there is not much common ground among the American people -- although 57 percent of Americans strongly or somewhat disagree with that view.

The view of this smaller proportion of Americans -- that divisions among leaders are simply a reflection of divisions among the public -- is consistent with the finding that, on average, Republicans and Democrats think over a quarter of people in their own party are so extreme that they can't imagine finding common ground with them; see Finding 3 above. That is, they may be saying that some members of the public share responsibility with national political leaders and media for the divisiveness affecting American public life.

Across partisan affiliations, national political leaders and social media are viewed as promoting destructive forms of public debate. Opinion is split across partisan affiliations about the destructiveness or constructiveness of journalism and the news media: large majorities of Republicans (84 percent) and Independents (65 percent) view journalism as promoting mostly destructive debate, compared to only 38 percent of Democrats; see Figure 10.

Republicans and Democrats both agree that national political leaders and social media promote destructive debate.

Figure 10. Percent of Americans who say each of the following promote mostly constructive or mostly destructive public discussion and debate



NONE OF THE INSTITUTIONS OR ACTORS THAT THIS SURVEY ASKED ABOUT WERE VIEWED AS MORE CONSTRUCTIVE THAN DESTRUCTIVE, SUGGESTING A “CONSTRUCTIVENESS DESERT” IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE.

Of the eight institutions or actors that this survey asked about (see Figure 10, above) there is none that a majority of Americans rate as more constructive than destructive, suggesting Americans perceive a “constructiveness desert” in civic and political life.

“The saying used to be that sex sells. Now it’s just negativity sells. That’s the only message that we’re given. That’s all the country is seeing. I think we have a negative space right now.” – Jackson, MS; in his 30s; Black; Independent

JOURNALISM, NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA ARE THE INSTITUTIONS THAT AMERICANS ARE MOST LIKELY TO SAY STAND TO GAIN FROM DIVISIVENESS, WHILE ORDINARY AMERICANS ARE VIEWED AS STANDING TO LOSE.

Not surprisingly, people believe that some of the same actors driving divisiveness in public life also standing to gain from divisiveness. Forty-four percent of Americans say that journalism and the news media have more to gain than to lose from partisan disagreements and divisiveness -- including 41 percent of Democrats and 50 percent of Republicans. Thirty-eight percent of Americans say social media has more to gain from divisiveness, including similar percentages across political affiliations; see Figure 11.

Americans who are the most familiar with social media, such as those who use Twitter at least daily, are more likely to say social media is destructive, with 46 percent of them thinking social media has more to gain from destructive debate.

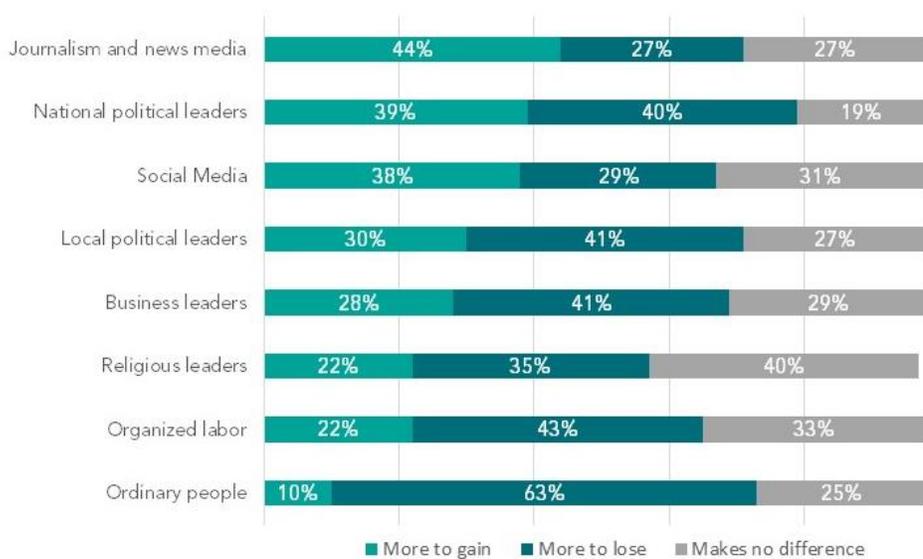
Americans are almost evenly divided over whether national political leaders have more to gain (39 percent) or more to lose (40 percent) from divisiveness, with little variation across political affiliation in these views.

“I think they [politicians] divide us with their rhetoric. Because if we ever come together, we’ll kick their butts out.” – Jackson, MS; in his 60s; Black; Republican

Who do Americans think stands to lose from partisan disagreements and divisiveness? Of the eight institutions and actors that we asked about and across partisan affiliations, most agree that “ordinary people” have the most to lose.

Most Americans say ordinary people have the most to lose from divisiveness while the media has the most to gain from it.

Figure 11. Percent who think each of the following has more to gain or more to lose from partisan disagreements and divisiveness in America



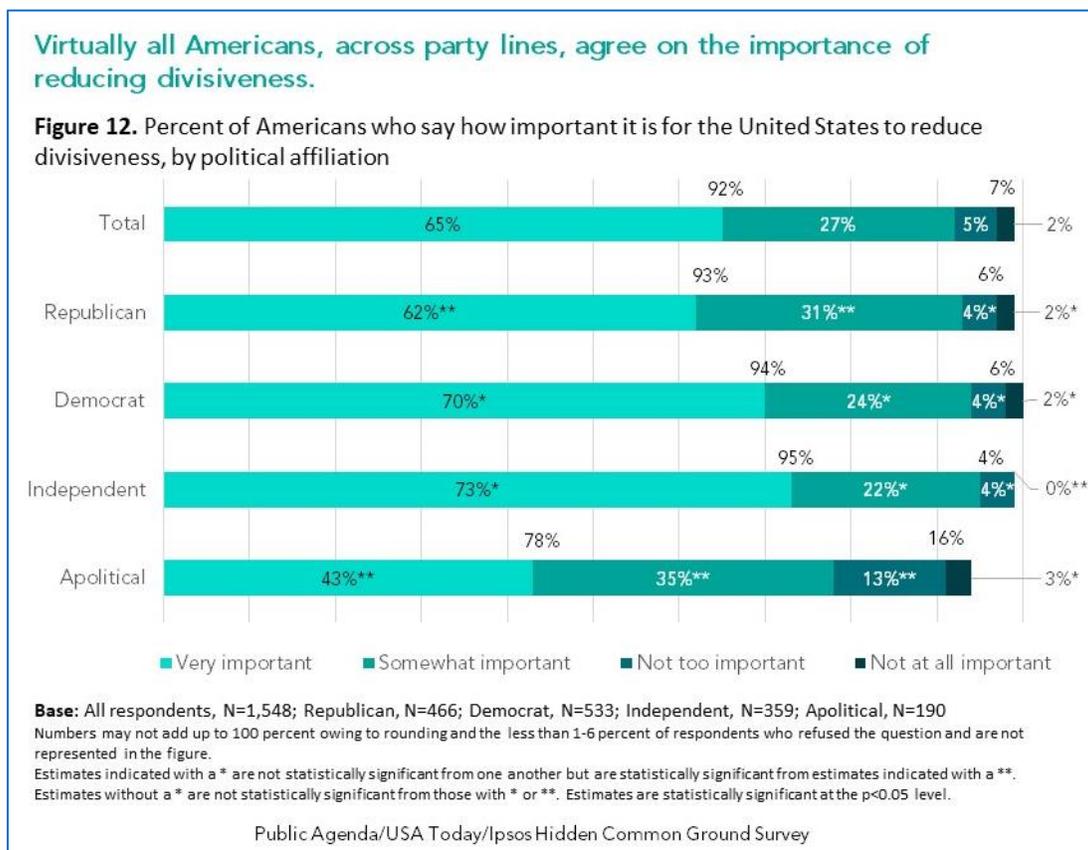
Base: All respondents, N=1,548

Numbers may not add up to 100 percent owing to rounding and the less than 1-7 percent of respondents who refused the question and are not represented in the figure.

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FINDING 6: AMERICANS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM AGREE ON SEVERAL APPROACHES TO REDUCING DIVISIVENESS, INCLUDING TEACHING CONFLICT RESOLUTION, MAKING IT EASIER FOR THIRD-PARTY AND INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES TO RUN FOR OFFICE, AND SHIFTING MORE DECISIONS FROM THE FEDERAL TO THE LOCAL LEVEL.

An overwhelming ninety-two percent of Americans say it is important to reduce divisiveness in the United States, including 65 percent who say it is a very important measure. Independents feel somewhat more strongly in their view on this question while “apolitical” respondents feel somewhat less strongly, but overall this is a consensus view in America; see Figure 12.

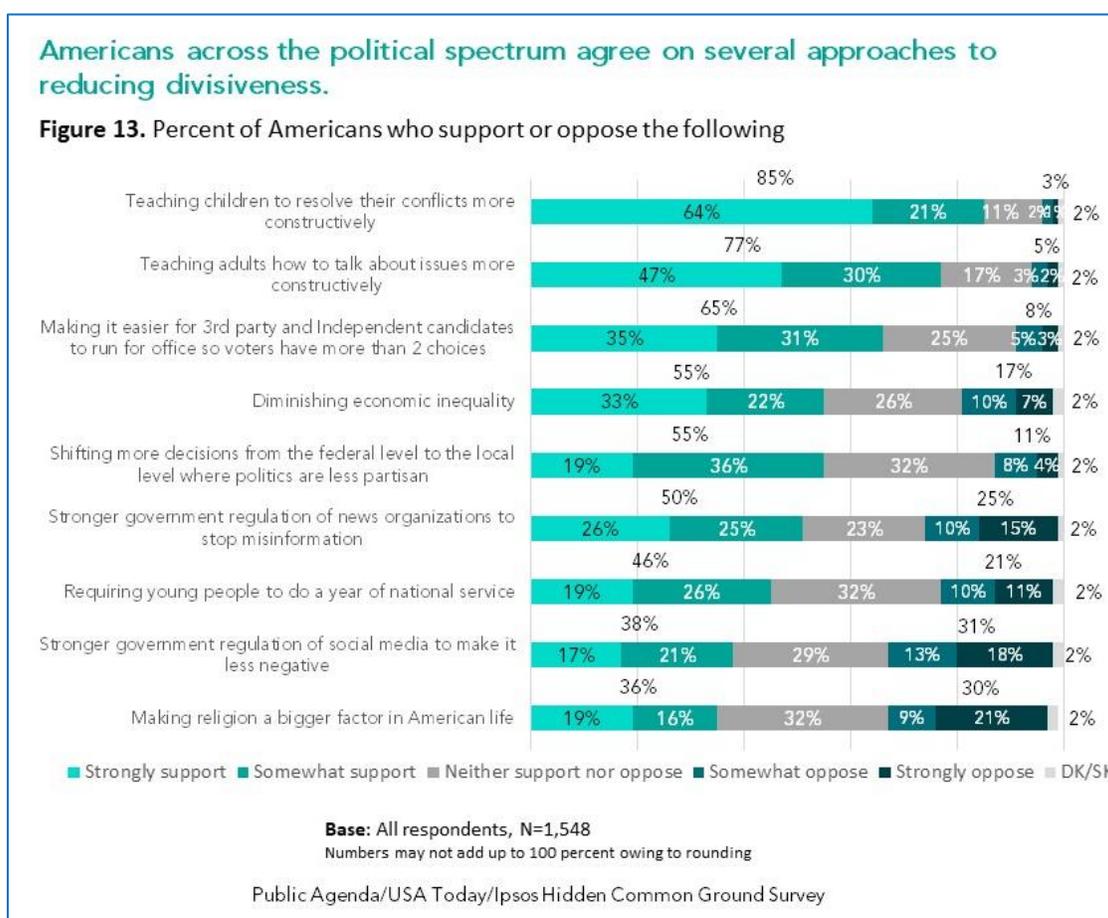


When asked about specific ideas or policies for reducing divisiveness or destructive disagreements, 64 percent of Americans strongly support, and another 21 percent somewhat support teaching children to resolve conflict constructively. Almost half strongly support teaching adults to resolve conflict constructively and another third somewhat support doing so; see Figure 13.

“There seems to be a lot of divisiveness in Mississippi. So as long as you can find common ground and then raise awareness however that may be, I think that it is one way to at least make progress.” – Jackson, MS; in his 20s; White; Republican

In addition to such behavioral and skills-based approaches, many Americans also support changes to our political system to reduce divisiveness or destructive division. For example, two-thirds support making it easier for third-party and Independent candidates to run for office, with Independents supporting this more than other respondents. Just over half of Americans strongly or somewhat support shifting more decisions from the federal to the local level where politics are less partisan, with Republicans and Independents more likely than others to strongly support this; see Figure 13.

Economic inequality, however, is one issue where significant partisan differences surface. Whereas 55 percent of Americans overall support diminishing economic inequality as a way to reduce divisiveness, more than twice as many Democrats (76 percent) than Republicans (33 percent) agree, with Independents in the middle (55 percent).

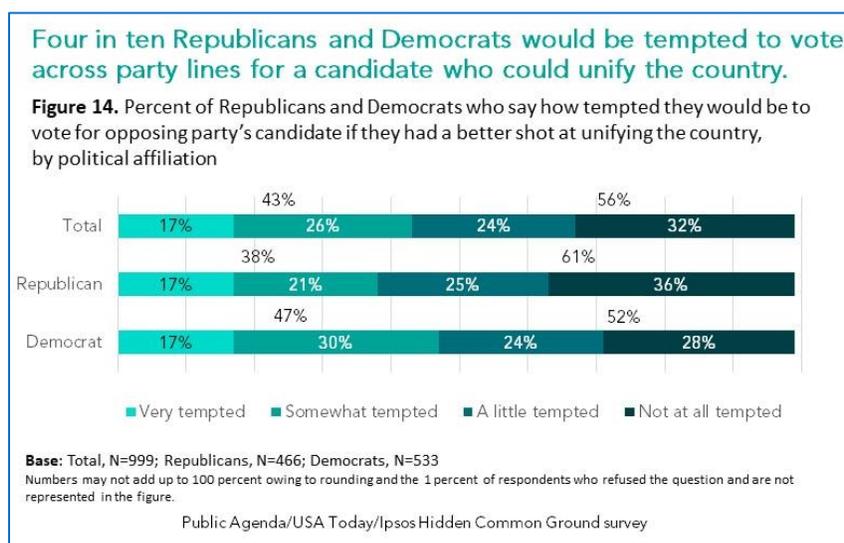


FINDING 7: MOST AMERICANS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM SAY IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE CANDIDATE THEY VOTE FOR TO UNIFY THE COUNTRY AND REDUCE DIVISIVENESS. FOUR IN TEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS WOULD BE TEMPTED TO CROSS PARTY LINES TO VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE WHO COULD UNIFY THE COUNTRY.

While many factors combine in determining who people vote for, this survey's findings suggest that it is deeply important to most Americans that their candidate unifies the country rather than divide it. With only minor partisan differences, 89 percent of Americans say it is important that the candidate they vote for works toward unifying the country, including 56 percent who say it is very important and another 33 percent who say it is somewhat important.

Tellingly, a full 55 percent of Republicans and 51 percent of Democrats do not know whether they would still vote for their own party's candidate if he or she were running a divisive campaign. Even more dramatically, 38 percent of Republicans and 47 percent of Democrats would be very or somewhat tempted to vote for the opposing party's presidential candidate if they thought he or she had the best shot at unifying the country. This includes 17 percent of both Republicans and Democrats who say they would be very tempted to cross party lines for a more unifying candidate; see Figure 14.

“If both parties work together, maybe they can focus on the everyday problems and stop saying ‘I believe this and I believe that’ and just get to the problem, make solutions and keep going.” – Jackson, MS; in her 20s; Black; Democrat



SUMMARY

Findings from the inaugural Public Agenda/USA Today/Ipsos Hidden Common Ground survey suggest that there is a powerful yearning among the American people for a less divisive, more collaborative brand of politics and public life. Across partisan affiliations and demographic groups, strong majorities agree that today's divisiveness is a huge problem that should be addressed.

According to most Americans, divisiveness is less about people having too many irreconcilable differences than about our nation's inability to deal with those differences constructively. Americans blame in equal parts thoughtless and hurtful speech, along with fear of speaking honestly as two major obstacles to productively talking about divisiveness in the country today.

Leadership is a central factor that people believe can either exacerbate or ameliorate divisiveness. Our data suggests a substantial share of Americans are tempted to take this into account as they head to the voting booth.

Political leadership is not the only factor that Americans think can help the nation move beyond the unproductive forms of divisiveness they see undermining the nation and affecting them personally in a significant number of cases. They show strong support for behavioral and educational measures, such as teaching kids and adults how to better resolve conflicts, as well as for more structural reforms, such as creating more choices than our two-party system now gives them and bringing more decisions to the local level where politics may be less ideological.

Most Americans believe there is more common ground among the public than is typically acknowledged and believe they could find common cause with a significant number of people across partisan lines. Forthcoming studies throughout the Hidden Common Ground 2020 Initiative will explore this proposition across several thorny public issues, including health care, immigration, and economic opportunity and inequality.

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The Kettering Foundation is a nonprofit operating foundation rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research. Established in 1927 by inventor Charles F. Kettering, the foundation is a 501 (c)(3) organization that does not make grants but engages in joint research with others. The interpretations and conclusions in this publication represent the views of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, its directors, or its officers. More information may be found at www.kettering.org.



ABOUT NATIONAL ISSUES FORUM

Based in Dayton, Ohio, the National Issues Forums Institute (NIFI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that serves to promote public deliberation about difficult public issues. Its activities include publishing the issue guides and other materials used by local forum groups, encouraging collaboration among forum sponsors, and sharing information about current activities in the network.



ABOUT THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. The Foundation invests in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Its goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which the Foundation believes are essential for a healthy democracy.

For more, visit kf.org.



ABOUT THE CHARLES KOCH FOUNDATION

The Charles Koch Foundation supports research, educational programs, and civil discourse to advance an understanding of how people can best live together in peace and prosperity. The Foundation provides grants to support a wide range of inquiry on issues including criminal justice and policing reform, free speech and open inquiry, foreign policy, economic opportunity, and those addressed through its Courageous Collaborations initiative among others.



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