

America's Hidden Common Ground on Renewing Democracy

Public Agenda

Representative surveys of U.S. adults

Fielded May 24 to 27, 2021

Data collected by Ipsos

Released July 2021

<https://www.publicagenda.org/reports/renewing-democracy/>

Methodology and Topline

The survey results below appear in the Public Agenda report “America’s Hidden Common Ground on Strengthening Democracy” which summarizes findings from a national survey of 1,260 adult Americans ages 18 and older from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii. The survey was fielded online May 24 to 27, 2021 by Ipsos in English. The Kettering Foundation served as a collaborator in this research. This research is supported in part by the Charles Koch Institute and Civic Health Project. When referencing this report, please cite Public Agenda.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos’ online panel (see [link](#) for more info on “Access Panels and Recruitment”), partner online panel sources, and “river” sampling (see [link](#) for more info on the Ipsos “Ampario Overview” sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2018 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Posthoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability surveys. All sample surveys and surveys may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online surveys is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the survey has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=1,260, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-4.6 percentage points). The survey has a credibility interval of plus or minus 5.6 percentage points for Democrats, plus or minus 6.4 percentage points for Republicans, plus or minus 6.4 percentage points for Independents, and plus or minus 7.2 percentage points for politically unaffiliated individuals.

Some questions in this survey are trended with a survey conducted September 14 to October 15, 2018, for Public Agenda by Wiese Research Associates, Inc. and released August 2019. That survey was based on a nationally-representative probability sample of adults aged 18 or older (n=1,000) and conducted over the phone and online. Further information about the 2018 survey can be found at <https://www.publicagenda.org/reports/strengthening-democracy-what-do-americans-think/>.

America’s Hidden Common Ground on Renewing Democracy

Some questions in this survey are trended with a survey conducted November 6 to December 28, 2019, for Public Agenda by Wiese Research Associates, Inc. and released July 2020. That survey was based on a nationally-representative probability sample of adults aged 18 or older (n=1,000) and conducted over the phone and online. Further information about the 2019 survey can be found at <https://www.publicagenda.org/reports/greater-voice-greater-impact/>.

The 2018 and 2019 surveys were fielded via telephone interviews. In 2021, the survey was fielded online. While significant changes in data points from the telephone surveys to the online survey can largely be attributed to the changing environment, switching from a phone to online approach may have also generated a mode effect. Questions that allowed telephone respondents to volunteer “Don’t know” as a response in the telephone surveys also included “Don’t know” as an explicit response category in the online survey. The topline includes this “Don’t know” option for all questions that included it as an explicit response category in the online survey. The topline denotes questions that included “Don’t know” as an explicit response category in the telephone surveys but did not include “Don’t know” in the online survey with a dash (-), indicating null or missing values. Insignificant values of less than 0.5% are indicated with an asterisk (*).

Full Annotated Questionnaire

1. The United States is meant to be a democracy, where citizens have a voice, rights are protected, and laws are fairly enforced. These days, would you say that our country's democracy is:

<i>Trending</i>	9/14-15, 2018	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
In crisis	39%	39%	36%
Facing serious challenges but not in crisis	42%	41%	50%
Doing well	15%	16%	14%
Don't know	3%	4%	-
Refused	1%	1%	-

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=1,260)	Democrats (N=405)	Republicans (N=306)	Independents (N=307)	Politically unaffiliated (N=242)
In crisis	36%	25%	48%	36%	36%
Facing serious challenges but not in crisis	50%	55%	46%	47%	51%
Doing well	14%	20%	6%	17%	13%

2. And would you say this is likely to:

<i>Trending</i>	9/14-15, 2018	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
Get better in the next few years	24%	31%	27%
Stay the same	20%	35%	31%
Get worse in the next few years	44%	31%	42%
Don't know	12%	12%	-
Refused	*	1%	-

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Get better in the next few years	27%	48%	14%	21%	21%
Stay the same	31%	33%	23%	35%	33%
Get worse in the next few years	42%	20%	63%	44%	46%

3. Do you think the design and structure of our nation’s government is fine as long as we elect the right people to represent us or needs significant change no matter who we elect to represent us?

Trending	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
Needs significant change no matter who we elect to represent us	52%	47%
Is fine as long as we elect the right people to represent us	40%	53%
Don’t know	4%	-
Depends	3%	-
Refused	1%	-

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Needs significant change no matter who we elect to represent us	47%	55%	52%	55%	63%
Is fine as long as we elect the right people to represent us	53%	48%	53%	45%	37%

4. Is each of the following a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason why you think our nation’s government needs significant change?

Trending	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
So that ordinary people can have more of a voice	69%	71%
So that government can solve problems more effectively	67%	63%

Major Reason Summary

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
So that our political system can become less divisive and more constructive	75%	74%	72%	83%	68%
So that ordinary people can have more of a voice	71%	72%	63%	77%	66%
So that government can solve problems more effectively	63%	64%	55%	66%	65%
So that communities can solve problems without government getting in the way	47%	38%	58%	45%	50%
So that businesses can prosper without government getting in the way	46%	38%	61%	44%	41%

a. So that ordinary people can have more of a voice

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Major reason	71%	72%	63%	77%	66%
Minor reason	24%	24%	29%	18%	28%
Not a reason	5%	3%	7%	5%	7%

b. So that government can solve problems more effectively

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Major reason	63%	64%	55%	66%	65%
Minor reason	29%	29%	35%	27%	22%
Not a reason	9%	7%	10%	7%	14%

c. So that communities can solve problems without government getting in the way

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Major reason	47%	38%	58%	45%	50%
Minor reason	40%	43%	30%	46%	36%
Not a reason	14%	20%	12%	9%	14%

d. So that businesses can prosper without government getting in the way

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Major reason	46%	38%	61%	44%	41%
Minor reason	36%	41%	31%	35%	34%
Not a reason	19%	21%	8%	21%	25%

e. So that our political system can become less divisive and more constructive

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Major reason	75%	74%	72%	83%	68%
Minor reason	20%	18%	26%	14%	27%
Not a reason	5%	9%	2%	3%	6%

5. In order to create a healthier democracy, how important, if at all, is each of the following?

Total Important Summary

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
That people have accurate, trustworthy news and information	91%	92%	92%	91%	88%
That elections are fair, secure and hassle-free	91%	93%	92%	93%	83%
That government is efficient and effective	90%	91%	93%	90%	82%
That government respects individual liberty and responsibility	90%	90%	91%	90%	86%
That communities and government work together more effectively to solve problems	90%	93%	90%	90%	87%
That political leaders put aside destructive partisan divisiveness	88%	91%	88%	88%	77%
That government serves ordinary people, not the rich and powerful	88%	91%	91%	86%	82%
That ordinary people put aside destructive partisan divisiveness	84%	86%	84%	87%	73%
That racism is not a barrier to political participation	84%	90%	80%	84%	80%
That ordinary people get more involved in civic and political life	82%	88%	85%	78%	73%
That communities make decisions without the federal government getting in the way	79%	75%	85%	78%	76%

a. That people have accurate, trustworthy news and information

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	74%	72%	80%	75%	69%
Somewhat important	17%	20%	13%	16%	19%
Not too important	5%	5%	6%	4%	6%
Not important at all	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%
Don't know	2%	2%	1%	2%	5%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>88%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>7%</i>

b. That ordinary people put aside destructive partisan divisiveness

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	58%	60%	56%	62%	50%
Somewhat important	26%	26%	29%	25%	23%
Not too important	7%	7%	8%	4%	11%
Not important at all	3%	2%	1%	5%	4%
Don't know	6%	5%	6%	5%	11%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>84%</i>	<i>86%</i>	<i>84%</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>73%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>16%</i>

c. That political leaders put aside destructive partisan divisiveness

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	67%	69%	67%	69%	59%
Somewhat important	21%	22%	21%	20%	19%
Not too important	5%	5%	5%	5%	8%
Not important at all	2%	1%	3%	2%	6%
Don't know	5%	4%	3%	5%	10%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>77%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>13%</i>

d. That racism is not a barrier to political participation

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	64%	70%	54%	67%	61%
Somewhat important	21%	20%	26%	17%	19%
Not too important	6%	4%	9%	7%	5%
Not important at all	5%	2%	6%	6%	3%
Don't know	4%	3%	4%	3%	12%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>84%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>84%</i>	<i>80%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>8%</i>

e. That elections are fair, secure and hassle-free

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	75%	73%	83%	74%	68%
Somewhat important	16%	20%	9%	19%	15%
Not too important	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%
Not important at all	2%	1%	4%	2%	1%
Don't know	3%	3%	1%	1%	11%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>93%</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>93%</i>	<i>83%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>5%</i>

f. That ordinary people get more involved in civic and political life

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	44%	49%	45%	43%	36%
Somewhat important	38%	39%	39%	35%	37%
Not too important	11%	7%	9%	15%	14%
Not important at all	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Don't know	4%	3%	3%	4%	10%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>82%</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>73%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>17%</i>

g. That government is efficient and effective

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	70%	71%	74%	68%	60%
Somewhat important	21%	20%	18%	22%	22%
Not too important	5%	5%	3%	6%	7%
Not important at all	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%
Don't know	3%	3%	1%	3%	9%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>93%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>82%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>8%</i>

h. That government serves ordinary people, not the rich and powerful

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	69%	71%	69%	71%	64%
Somewhat important	19%	20%	22%	15%	18%
Not too important	6%	5%	4%	8%	5%
Not important at all	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%
Don't know	3%	2%	3%	2%	8%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>86%</i>	<i>82%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>9%</i>

i. That government respects individual liberty and responsibility

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	68%	64%	75%	69%	61%
Somewhat important	22%	25%	17%	21%	25%
Not too important	4%	6%	3%	4%	4%
Not important at all	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%
Don't know	4%	3%	2%	4%	7%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>86%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>

j. That communities make decisions without the federal government getting in the way

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	40%	35%	50%	38%	37%
Somewhat important	39%	40%	36%	40%	38%
Not too important	13%	15%	8%	14%	14%
Not important at all	4%	5%	3%	4%	2%
Don't know	5%	6%	4%	3%	8%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>76%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>16%</i>

k. That communities and government work together more effectively to solve problems

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Apolitical
Very important	64%	64%	66%	62%	62%
Somewhat important	27%	29%	25%	27%	24%
Not too important	5%	3%	6%	8%	4%
Not important at all	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	0%	6%
<i>Important (Net)</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>93%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>87%</i>
<i>Not important (Net)</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>7%</i>

6. Of those, which if the single most important to create a healthier democracy? Please choose one.

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
That government serves ordinary people, not the rich and powerful	16%	19%	12%	14%	18%
That political leaders put aside destructive partisan divisiveness	15%	14%	17%	17%	10%
That elections are fair, secure and hassle-free	11%	6%	19%	12%	6%
That government is efficient and effective	9%	10%	10%	8%	5%
That communities and government work together more effectively to solve problems	9%	10%	8%	4%	16%
That people have accurate, trustworthy news and information	8%	7%	8%	8%	9%
That government respects individual liberty and responsibility	8%	5%	9%	10%	6%
That racism is not a barrier to political participation	6%	11%	2%	5%	4%
That ordinary people put aside destructive partisan divisiveness	4%	6%	2%	5%	4%
That ordinary people get more involved in civic and political life	4%	5%	2%	4%	4%
That communities make decisions without the federal government getting in the way	2%	1%	3%	1%	3%
Don't know	9%	7%	6%	11%	15%

7. When it comes to problems facing communities or the nation, which of the following statements comes closer to your own view?

Trending	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
It's mostly our responsibility as Americans to help find solutions – it's not enough to just vote and pay taxes	64%	59%
It's mostly the government's responsibility to find solutions – that's why we vote and pay taxes	28%	41%
Don't know	6%	-
Refused	1%	-

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
It's mostly our responsibility as Americans to help find solutions – it's not enough to just vote and pay taxes	59%	53%	64%	62%	59%
It's mostly the government's responsibility to find solutions – that's why we vote and pay taxes	41%	47%	36%	38%	41%

8. When it comes to how problems are addressed at the national level, which of the following statements comes closer to your own view?

Trending	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
When enough people get involved, they have a lot of influence over how the nation addresses problems	55%	58%
Ordinary people have little influence over how the nation addresses problems	41%	42%
Don't know	4%	-
Refused	3%	-

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
When enough people get involved, they have a lot of influence over how the nation addresses problems	58%	68%	55%	52%	52%
Ordinary people have little influence over how the nation addresses problems	42%	32%	45%	48%	48%

9. [Asked if Q8 = “Ordinary people have little influence over how the nation addresses problems”] Is each of the following a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason why ordinary people have little influence over how the nation addresses problems?

<i>Trending</i>	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
Special interests dominate the political process	76%	66%
Ordinary people are too divided	52%	47%
Ordinary people do not care enough	36%	33%

Major Reason Summary

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=543)	Democrats (N=138)	Republicans (N=136)	Independents (N=148)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Elected leaders do not respect ordinary people’s opinions	73%	67%	77%	76%	70%
Special interests dominate the political process	66%	64%	66%	71%	60%
Ordinary people are too divided	47%	54%	46%	43%	47%
There are few meaningful ways for people to have an influence	45%	44%	35%	49%	54%
Getting involved is too complicated and time-consuming	34%	32%	30%	39%	33%
Ordinary people do not care enough	33%	37%	31%	31%	33%

a. Special interests dominate the political process

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=543)	Democrats (N=138)	Republicans (N=136)	Independents (N=148)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Major reason	66%	64%	66%	71%	60%
Minor reason	26%	30%	25%	25%	26%
Not a reason	7%	6%	8%	4%	13%

b. Ordinary people do not care enough

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=543)	Democrats (N=138)	Republicans (N=136)	Independents (N=148)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Major reason	33%	37%	31%	31%	33%
Minor reason	47%	50%	44%	46%	50%
Not a reason	21%	13%	26%	23%	17%

c. Ordinary people are too divided

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=543)	Democrats (N=138)	Republicans (N=136)	Independents (N=148)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Major reason	47%	54%	46%	43%	47%
Minor reason	39%	37%	35%	42%	41%
Not a reason	14%	9%	19%	14%	12%

d. Elected leaders do not respect ordinary people's opinions

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=543)	Democrats (N=138)	Republicans (N=136)	Independents (N=148)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Major reason	73%	67%	77%	76%	70%
Minor reason	21%	23%	18%	21%	24%
Not a reason	6%	10%	5%	3%	7%

e. There are few meaningful ways for people to have an influence

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=543)	Democrats (N=138)	Republicans (N=136)	Independents (N=148)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Major reason	45%	44%	35%	49%	54%
Minor reason	45%	43%	52%	43%	36%
Not a reason	11%	13%	13%	8%	10%

f. Getting involved is too complicated and time-consuming

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=543)	Democrats (N=138)	Republicans (N=136)	Independents (N=148)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Major reason	34%	32%	30%	39%	33%
Minor reason	46%	49%	54%	38%	41%
Not a reason	20%	19%	15%	23%	25%

10. [Asked if Q8 = “When enough people get involved, they have a lot of influence over how the nation addresses problems”] Is each of the following a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason why when enough people get involved, they have a lot of influence over how the nation addresses problems?

<i>Trending</i>	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
Ordinary people can pressure elected leaders to pay attention to them	63%	63%
Elected leaders care about ordinary people’s opinions	37%	46%

Major Reason Summary

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=717)	Democrats (N=267)	Republicans (N=170)	Independents (N=159)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Ordinary people can pressure elected leaders to pay attention to them	63%	63%	70%	63%	49%
There are many things people can do to address problems, whether or not elected officials are involved	57%	62%	58%	51%	57%
Elected leaders care about ordinary people’s opinions	46%	53%	49%	37%	42%

- a. Ordinary people can pressure elected leaders to pay attention to them

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=717)	Democrats (N=267)	Republicans (N=170)	Independents (N=159)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Major reason	63%	63%	70%	63%	49%
Minor reason	31%	32%	25%	32%	37%
Not a reason	6%	5%	5%	5%	14%

- b. Elected leaders care about ordinary people’s opinions

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=717)	Democrats (N=267)	Republicans (N=170)	Independents (N=159)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Major reason	46%	53%	49%	37%	42%
Minor reason	40%	36%	40%	44%	44%
Not a reason	13%	11%	12%	18%	14%

- c. There are many things people can do to address problems, whether or not elected officials are involved

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=717)	Democrats (N=267)	Republicans (N=170)	Independents (N=159)	Politically unaffiliated (N=121)
Major reason	57%	62%	58%	51%	57%
Minor reason	39%	36%	41%	44%	32%
Not a reason	4%	3%	2%	6%	11%

11. When it comes to how problems are addressed in local communities, which of the following statements comes closer to your own view?

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
When enough people get involved, they have a lot of influence over how their community addresses problems	73%	73%	74%	75%	70%
Ordinary people have little influence over how their community addresses problems	27%	27%	26%	25%	30%

12. [Asked if Q11 = “Ordinary people have little influence over how their community addresses problems”] Is each of the following a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason why ordinary people have little influence over how their community addresses problems?

Major Reason Summary

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=328)	Democrats (N=104)	Republicans (N=74)	Independents (N=71)	Politically unaffiliated (N=79)
Elected leaders do not respect ordinary people’s opinions	59%	61%	45%	69%	58%
Special interests dominate the political process	55%	51%	59%	60%	50%
Ordinary people are too divided	45%	46%	45%	43%	44%
There are few meaningful ways for people to have an influence	40%	47%	26%	47%	38%
Ordinary people do not care enough	33%	31%	31%	37%	30%
Getting involved is too complicated and time-consuming	32%	38%	22%	37%	25%

a. Special interests dominate the political process

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=328)	Democrats (N=104)	Republicans (N=74)	Independents (N=71)	Politically unaffiliated (N=79)
Major reason	55%	51%	59%	60%	50%
Minor reason	39%	47%	38%	32%	35%
Not a reason	6%	2%	3%	8%	15%

b. Ordinary people do not care enough

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=328)	Democrats (N=104)	Republicans (N=74)	Independents (N=71)	Politically unaffiliated (N=79)
Major reason	33%	31%	31%	37%	30%
Minor reason	49%	57%	55%	35%	49%
Not a reason	18%	12%	14%	27%	22%

c. Ordinary people are too divided

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=328)	Democrats (N=104)	Republicans (N=74)	Independents (N=71)	Politically unaffiliated (N=79)
Major reason	45%	46%	45%	43%	44%
Minor reason	40%	45%	42%	34%	41%
Not a reason	15%	10%	12%	23%	16%

d. Elected leaders do not respect ordinary people's opinions

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=328)	Democrats (N=104)	Republicans (N=74)	Independents (N=71)	Politically unaffiliated (N=79)
Major reason	59%	61%	45%	69%	58%
Minor reason	34%	32%	45%	26%	34%
Not a reason	7%	7%	9%	5%	8%

e. There are few meaningful ways for people to have an influence

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=328)	Democrats (N=104)	Republicans (N=74)	Independents (N=71)	Politically unaffiliated (N=79)
Major reason	40%	47%	26%	47%	38%
Minor reason	50%	49%	62%	41%	50%
Not a reason	10%	4%	13%	12%	12%

f. Getting involved is too complicated and time-consuming

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=328)	Democrats (N=104)	Republicans (N=74)	Independents (N=71)	Politically unaffiliated (N=79)
Major reason	32%	38%	22%	37%	25%
Minor reason	51%	43%	62%	45%	57%
Not a reason	17%	19%	15%	18%	18%

13. [Asked if Q11 = “When enough people get involved, they have a lot of influence over how their community addresses problems”] Is each of the following a major reason, minor reason, or not a reason why when enough people get involved, they have a lot of influence over how their community addresses problems?

<i>Trending</i>	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
Ordinary people can pressure elected leaders to pay attention to them	62%	62%
Elected leaders care about ordinary people’s opinions	43%	46%

Major Reason Summary

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=932)	Democrats (N=301)	Republicans (N=232)	Independents (N=236)	Politically unaffiliated (N=163)
Ordinary people can pressure elected leaders to pay attention to them	62%	66%	67%	58%	49%
There are many things people can do to address problems, whether or not elected officials are involved	58%	62%	60%	53%	52%
Elected leaders care about ordinary people’s opinions	46%	53%	49%	38%	44%

a. Ordinary people can pressure elected leaders to pay attention to them

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=932)	Democrats (N=301)	Republicans (N=232)	Independents (N=236)	Politically unaffiliated (N=163)
Major reason	62%	66%	67%	58%	49%
Minor reason	32%	26%	30%	36%	41%
Not a reason	6%	7%	4%	5%	10%

b. Elected leaders care about ordinary people’s opinions

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=932)	Democrats (N=301)	Republicans (N=232)	Independents (N=236)	Politically unaffiliated (N=163)
Major reason	46%	53%	49%	38%	44%
Minor reason	41%	39%	38%	45%	47%
Not a reason	12%	8%	13%	17%	9%

c. There are many things people can do to address problems, whether or not elected officials are involved

5/24-27, 2021	Total (N=932)	Democrats (N=301)	Republicans (N=232)	Independents (N=236)	Politically unaffiliated (N=163)
Major reason	58%	62%	60%	53%	52%
Minor reason	37%	34%	36%	39%	37%
Not a reason	6%	4%	3%	8%	11%

14. Let's say there is an issue in your local community that you feel needs to be addressed. Would you be more or less likely to get involved...?

Total More Likely Summary

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
If elected leaders worked closely with your community to address the issue	72%	74%	76%	67%	67%
If the process was convenient, efficient and easy to understand	72%	74%	79%	68%	65%
If the community could make the final decision about how to address the issue	67%	65%	75%	65%	58%
If the process involved building common ground among community members with different ideas and perspectives	65%	69%	66%	61%	63%
If you could contribute your skills and experiences to addressing the issue	61%	65%	64%	57%	55%
If the process was fun and creative	54%	58%	52%	50%	57%
If you could participate entirely online	49%	55%	48%	43%	46%
If process involved a meeting where everyone got two minutes at the microphone to voice their opinion to public officials	47%	49%	55%	39%	43%
If the process involved watching a debate between Democratic and Republican public officials	35%	46%	40%	25%	23%

a. If elected leaders worked closely with your community to address the issue

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Much more likely	37%	43%	37%	31%	38%
A little more likely	35%	32%	39%	36%	29%
Would make no difference	18%	17%	16%	21%	18%
A little less likely	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%
A lot less likely	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%
Don't know	5%	5%	4%	5%	7%
<i>More likely (Net)</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>67%</i>
<i>Less likely (Net)</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>

b. If the community could make the final decision about how to address the issue

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Much more likely	33%	34%	39%	28%	30%
A little more likely	33%	31%	36%	37%	28%
Would make no difference	20%	23%	15%	21%	23%
A little less likely	5%	4%	4%	6%	6%
A lot less likely	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Don't know	6%	6%	3%	6%	11%
<i>More likely (Net)</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>58%</i>
<i>Less likely (Net)</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>8%</i>

c. If you could contribute your skills and experiences to addressing the issue

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Much more likely	25%	30%	25%	19%	26%
A little more likely	36%	35%	40%	38%	29%
Would make no difference	26%	20%	22%	33%	28%
A little less likely	5%	4%	7%	3%	8%
A lot less likely	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%
Don't know	6%	8%	3%	6%	7%
<i>More likely (Net)</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>55%</i>
<i>Less likely (Net)</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>10%</i>

d. If the process was fun and creative

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Much more likely	24%	29%	24%	18%	26%
A little more likely	30%	29%	28%	31%	31%
Would make no difference	32%	26%	34%	37%	31%
A little less likely	6%	7%	6%	5%	4%
A lot less likely	3%	4%	4%	4%	1%
Don't know	5%	5%	4%	4%	7%
<i>More likely (Net)</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>57%</i>
<i>Less likely (Net)</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>5%</i>

e. If the process was convenient, efficient and easy to understand

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Much more likely	39%	41%	43%	34%	36%
A little more likely	33%	32%	36%	33%	30%
Would make no difference	17%	15%	13%	23%	19%
A little less likely	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%
A lot less likely	2%	1%	2%	2%	4%
Don't know	5%	6%	3%	4%	8%
<i>More likely (Net)</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>65%</i>
<i>Less likely (Net)</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>8%</i>

f. If the process involved watching a debate between [ROTATE (Democratic and Republican/Republican and Democratic)] public officials

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Much more likely	14%	20%	16%	8%	7%
A little more likely	21%	26%	23%	17%	16%
Would make no difference	35%	33%	32%	39%	34%
A little less likely	13%	9%	12%	16%	13%
A lot less likely	11%	5%	12%	14%	19%
Don't know	6%	6%	4%	6%	11%
<i>More likely (Net)</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>23%</i>
<i>Less likely (Net)</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>31%</i>

g. If the process involved building common ground among community members with different ideas and perspectives

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Much more likely	29%	36%	24%	24%	29%
A little more likely	36%	33%	41%	37%	34%
Would make no difference	23%	18%	24%	28%	21%
A little less likely	5%	5%	5%	4%	7%
A lot less likely	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Don't know	5%	7%	4%	4%	8%
<i>More likely (Net)</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>66%</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>63%</i>
<i>Less likely (Net)</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>8%</i>

h. If process involved a meeting where everyone got two minutes at the microphone to voice their opinion to public officials

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Much more likely	18%	22%	20%	14%	14%
A little more likely	29%	27%	35%	25%	29%
Would make no difference	32%	31%	28%	38%	26%
A little less likely	10%	8%	9%	12%	11%
A lot less likely	6%	5%	4%	6%	10%
Don't know	6%	7%	4%	5%	10%
<i>More likely (Net)</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>49%</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>43%</i>
<i>Less likely (Net)</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>21%</i>

i. If you could participate entirely online

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Much more likely	24%	28%	24%	20%	23%
A little more likely	25%	27%	24%	23%	23%
Would make no difference	31%	29%	29%	36%	31%
A little less likely	7%	4%	7%	8%	9%
A lot less likely	8%	4%	12%	8%	7%
Don't know	6%	7%	3%	6%	8%
<i>More likely (Net)</i>	<i>49%</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>46%</i>
<i>Less likely (Net)</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>16%</i>

15. The following are new systems for making decisions that some local governments have implemented. For each, do you think your local government should implement it, should not implement it, or you are not sure?

<i>Trending</i>	11/6-12/28, 2019	5/24-27, 2021
Ordinary people vote directly on whether to approve laws or regulations	54%	59%
A small representative group of ordinary people is appointed to study an issue and make recommendations to elected leaders	50%	57%
Ordinary people develop ideas for spending tax dollars and then vote on which ideas to fund	50%	54%
Ordinary people go online to share ideas for solving problems, comment on other people's ideas, and prioritize their favorites	37%	53%

Your Local Government Should Implement Summary

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Creating well-organized opportunities for people to get together and discuss different ideas for addressing problems	65%	65%	67%	66%	56%
Creating councils of community members and elected officials, who make decisions together about local issues	62%	65%	62%	65%	52%
Ordinary people vote directly on whether to approve laws or regulations	59%	62%	65%	53%	53%
A small representative group of ordinary people is appointed to study an issue and make recommendations to elected leaders	57%	60%	60%	57%	46%
Ordinary people develop ideas for spending tax dollars and then vote on which ideas to fund	54%	56%	59%	52%	47%
Ordinary people go online to share ideas for solving problems, comment on other people's ideas, and prioritize their favorites	53%	57%	55%	52%	42%
Using computer programs, algorithms and artificial intelligence to make more government decisions	24%	33%	22%	17%	23%

a. Ordinary people develop ideas for spending tax dollars and then vote on which ideas to fund

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Your local government should implement	54%	56%	59%	52%	47%
Your local government should NOT implement	21%	24%	21%	19%	18%
Not sure	25%	20%	20%	29%	36%

b. Ordinary people vote directly on whether to approve laws or regulations

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Your local government should implement	59%	62%	65%	53%	53%
Your local government should NOT implement	19%	19%	19%	20%	14%
Not sure	23%	19%	16%	27%	34%

c. A small representative group of ordinary people is appointed to study an issue and make recommendations to elected leaders

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Your local government should implement	57%	60%	60%	57%	46%
Your local government should NOT implement	18%	18%	19%	17%	20%
Not sure	25%	22%	21%	25%	35%

d. Ordinary people go online to share ideas for solving problems, comment on other people's ideas, and prioritize their favorites

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Your local government should implement	53%	57%	55%	52%	42%
Your local government should NOT implement	21%	21%	23%	20%	21%
Not sure	26%	22%	22%	28%	37%

e. Using computer programs, algorithms and artificial intelligence to make more government decisions

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Your local government should implement	24%	33%	22%	17%	23%
Your local government should NOT implement	46%	43%	49%	49%	38%
Not sure	30%	24%	29%	34%	39%

f. Creating well-organized opportunities for people to get together and discuss different ideas for addressing problems

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Your local government should implement	65%	65%	67%	66%	56%
Your local government should NOT implement	14%	16%	14%	12%	17%
Not sure	21%	19%	19%	23%	27%

g. Creating councils of community members and elected officials, who make decisions together about local issues

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Your local government should implement	62%	65%	62%	65%	52%
Your local government should NOT implement	16%	16%	17%	14%	16%
Not sure	22%	19%	21%	21%	32%

16. Which of the following statements comes closer to your view about civic and political life in the United States today?

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
All Americans have an equal opportunity to participate regardless of race	56%	42%	80%	54%	48%
Racism can make it difficult for some Americans to participate	44%	58%	20%	46%	52%

17. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Total Agree Summary

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
The federal government should make sure that voting is simple, convenient and hassle-free for everyone in every state	86%	92%	83%	86%	81%
Overcoming racism is now more important than ever	75%	91%	60%	71%	76%
There is more common ground among the American people than the news media and political leaders portray	72%	64%	86%	70%	68%
Overcoming racism requires more than changing people's attitudes, it requires fundamental changes in our laws and institutions	68%	88%	46%	67%	70%
Corporations should use their influence to discourage states from making it harder for people of color to vote	66%	84%	46%	67%	63%
Most people have good intentions even if they are sometimes racially biased	64%	62%	70%	64%	57%
Accusing people of racism is often really a way to silence debate	61%	51%	73%	61%	60%
The main reason our political leaders are divided is because there is not much common ground among the American people	56%	64%	46%	55%	57%
Sometimes it is best to ignore race altogether because it is too divisive	56%	44%	65%	58%	58%
Racism is largely a problem of the past; it is unproductive to focus on it today	45%	34%	56%	47%	45%
Overcoming racism is hopeless	30%	38%	26%	27%	30%

- a. There is more common ground among the American people than the news media and political leaders portray

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	26%	15%	42%	26%	19%
Somewhat agree	46%	49%	44%	44%	49%
Somewhat disagree	22%	27%	12%	23%	23%
Strongly disagree	6%	9%	2%	7%	9%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>86%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>68%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>32%</i>

- b. The main reason our political leaders are divided is because there is not much common ground among the American people

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	17%	22%	12%	14%	21%
Somewhat agree	39%	42%	34%	41%	36%
Somewhat disagree	31%	28%	36%	30%	30%
Strongly disagree	13%	7%	18%	15%	14%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>57%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>43%</i>

- c. Corporations should use their influence to discourage states from making it harder for people of color to vote

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	32%	48%	16%	27%	34%
Somewhat agree	34%	35%	30%	39%	29%
Somewhat disagree	15%	8%	17%	16%	20%
Strongly disagree	19%	8%	37%	17%	17%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>66%</i>	<i>84%</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>63%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>37%</i>

- d. The federal government should make sure that voting is simple, convenient and hassle-free for everyone in every state

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	59%	65%	60%	55%	53%
Somewhat agree	27%	26%	24%	31%	28%
Somewhat disagree	10%	8%	11%	10%	12%
Strongly disagree	4%	1%	5%	4%	6%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>86%</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>86%</i>	<i>81%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>19%</i>

e. Overcoming racism requires more than changing people's attitudes, it requires fundamental changes in our laws and institutions

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	34%	51%	13%	33%	40%
Somewhat agree	34%	36%	32%	35%	31%
Somewhat disagree	20%	10%	28%	22%	19%
Strongly disagree	12%	2%	26%	11%	11%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>70%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>30%</i>

f. Overcoming racism is now more important than ever

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	42%	61%	25%	37%	44%
Somewhat agree	33%	30%	35%	34%	32%
Somewhat disagree	15%	7%	21%	19%	14%
Strongly disagree	10%	2%	19%	10%	10%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>76%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>24%</i>

g. Overcoming racism is hopeless

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	9%	12%	7%	7%	11%
Somewhat agree	21%	26%	19%	20%	19%
Somewhat disagree	33%	29%	32%	39%	28%
Strongly disagree	37%	33%	42%	34%	42%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>70%</i>

h. Sometimes it is best to ignore race altogether because it is too divisive

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	24%	18%	30%	23%	27%
Somewhat agree	32%	27%	36%	35%	31%
Somewhat disagree	20%	22%	20%	19%	19%
Strongly disagree	24%	34%	15%	23%	23%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>58%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>42%</i>

i. Most people have good intentions even if they are sometimes racially biased

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	14%	17%	14%	10%	15%
Somewhat agree	50%	45%	56%	54%	42%
Somewhat disagree	25%	27%	18%	27%	29%
Strongly disagree	11%	11%	11%	9%	13%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>57%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>43%</i>

j. Racism is largely a problem of the past; it is unproductive to focus on it today

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	21%	16%	28%	19%	21%
Somewhat agree	24%	17%	28%	28%	24%
Somewhat disagree	24%	20%	29%	25%	25%
Strongly disagree	31%	47%	16%	27%	30%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>45%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>66%</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>55%</i>

k. Accusing people of racism is often really a way to silence debate

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
Strongly agree	29%	17%	46%	28%	23%
Somewhat agree	32%	33%	27%	34%	36%
Somewhat disagree	23%	30%	15%	23%	22%
Strongly disagree	16%	19%	12%	16%	18%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>60%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>49%</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>40%</i>

18. Which of the following comes closest to your view?

5/24-27, 2021	Total	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Politically unaffiliated
The U.S. can both make voting simple, convenient and hassle-free for everyone AND prevent voter fraud	68%	64%	67%	73%	70%
Making voting simple, convenient and hassle-free for everyone is a bigger priority than preventing voter fraud	17%	25%	10%	13%	18%
Preventing voter fraud is a bigger priority than making voting simple, convenient and hassle-free for everyone	15%	11%	23%	14%	12%