

Presidential Election Study - August 2020



Sample 2,005 U.S. Adults
Conducted August 24-31, 2020
Margin of Error ±2.8%

1. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs ...

Most of the time	25%
Some of the time	38%
Only now and then	23%
Hardly at all	13%
Don't know	0%

2. About how often do you hear or read something in the news that makes you angry?

A few times a day	26%
Once a day	27%
Once a week	22%
Once a month	10%
Rarely	15%

3. Would you say things in this country today are...

Generally headed in the right direction	23%
Off on the wrong track	64%
Not sure	12%

4. Do you feel that things in this country these days are:

Under control	14%
Out of control	73%
Not sure	13%

5. Compared with a few years ago, do you get angry...

More often than I used to	44%
About as often	37%
Less often	19%

6. Have you ever heard the phrase "politically correct"?

Yes	87%
No	13%

7. In general, do you think being "politically correct" is a good thing or a bad thing?

A good thing	27%
A bad thing	36%
Not sure	37%

8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? A big problem this country has is being politically correct.

Agree strongly	25%
Agree somewhat	25%
Disagree somewhat	15%
Disagree strongly	11%
Not sure	21%
Prefer not to say	3%

9. In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?

Very liberal	8%
Liberal	16%
Moderate	32%
Conservative	19%
Very conservative	12%
Not sure	13%

10. Which comes closest to your view?

Our lives are threatened by terrorists, criminals, and illegal immigrants and our priority should be to protect ourselves.	31%
It's a big, beautiful world, mostly full of good people, and we must find a way to embrace each other and not allow ourselves to become isolated.	51%
Not sure	18%

11. Do you think there is too little or too much government regulation of businesses?

Too much	29%
About the right amount	26%
Too little	21%
Not sure	24%

12. Would you say that immigration...

Helps the United States more than it hurts	48%
Hurts the United States more than it helps	30%
Not sure	22%

13. Do you think the number of immigrants allowed to come to the U.S. should be increased or decreased?

Increased	19%
Kept the same	32%
Decreased	31%
Not sure	18%

14. Which comes closest to your view about illegal immigrants who are living in the U.S.?

They should be allowed to stay in the U.S. and apply for citizenship.	55%
They should be allowed to stay in the U.S., but not become citizens.	13%
They should be required to leave the U.S.	32%

15. Do you think gun control laws should be made more or less strict than they are now?

Guns should be banned completely	11%
More strict	42%
Kept the same	24%
Less strict	11%
There should be no restrictions on gun ownership	6%
Not sure	7%

16. Are you in favor or opposed to the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?

Favor the death penalty	50%
Opposed to the death penalty	26%
Not sure	24%

17. Do you think the death penalty is imposed too often or not often enough?

Too often	17%
About right	19%
Not often enough	36%
Not sure	28%

18. Would you call yourself "pro-life" or "pro-choice"?

Pro-life	27%
Pro-choice	29%
Both pro-life and pro-choice	25%
Neither	9%
Not sure	11%

19. When do you think abortion should be legal?

Abortion should always be legal. There should be no restrictions on abortion.	21%
Abortion should be legal, but with some restrictions (such as for minors or late-term abortions).	32%
Abortion should only be legal in special circumstances, such as when the life of the mother is in danger.	34%
Abortion should be illegal. It should never be allowed.	12%

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20. How concerned are you about climate change?

Very concerned	35%
Somewhat concerned	30%
Not so concerned	15%
Not concerned at all	15%
Not sure	5%

21. Do you support or oppose carbon-emissions targets for power plants?

Strongly support	26%
Somewhat support	22%
Somewhat oppose	12%
Strongly oppose	10%
No opinion	29%

22. Randomized amount shown to respondent

\$50	25%
\$100	25%
\$500	24%
\$1000	26%

23. Would you support or oppose a carbon tax which would cost the average family [\$50 / \$100 / \$500 / \$1000] per year to reduce carbon emissions?

Respondents were shown one of four amounts that a carbon tax might cost the average family

Strongly support	11%
Somewhat support	21%
Somewhat oppose	17%
Strongly oppose	32%
No opinion	19%

24. Please tell us whether you favor or oppose the following things.

	Favor	Oppose	Not sure
Increasing taxes on families earning over \$250,000 per year	58%	25%	18%
Raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour	60%	26%	14%
Banning assault weapons, like AK-47s	58%	27%	14%
Building a wall on the US-Mexico border to stop illegal immigration	42%	46%	12%
Raising tariffs on goods imported from China	42%	26%	32%
Overturning the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade	22%	42%	36%
Legalizing marijuana	54%	31%	15%
Limiting the amount that can be paid to CEOs of large corporations	58%	23%	19%

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25. Would you favor or oppose making the federal income tax a "flat tax," where everyone receives a standard deduction and pays the same tax rate on all other income.

Favor	33%
Oppose	31%
Not sure	36%

26. Are you in favor or opposed to a guaranteed annual income, where each person would receive about \$12,000 to cover their basic living expenses?

Favor	45%
Oppose	30%
Not sure	25%

27. Are you in favor or opposed to cities having rent controls that prohibit landlords from raising rents?

Favor	54%
Oppose	21%
Not sure	24%

28. Should the federal government not allow drugs to be sold that have not been proven to be safe and effective, even if there are people who want access to these drugs?

Favor	44%
Oppose	23%
Not sure	33%

29. Here are some government programs. Which of these would you like to see expanded or reduced?

	Expanded	Kept the same	Reduced	Eliminated
Social Security	59%	35%	4%	2%
Federal student loans	26%	39%	22%	13%
Space exploration (NASA)	32%	47%	17%	4%
Foreign Aid	12%	40%	37%	10%
CIA	11%	64%	21%	4%
National defense	31%	45%	22%	2%
Food stamps (TANF)	35%	39%	22%	5%
Farm price supports	33%	49%	13%	5%
National Institutes of Health (NIH)	40%	47%	9%	3%

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

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Patients should have more access to experimental medical treatments, even if it means they have less protection from treatments that were unsafe or ineffective.	44%	24%	32%

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People should be allowed to use drugs recreationally, even if it means that some people would hurt themselves from drug misuse.	31%	46%	24%
People should have the freedom to own guns, even though some people will accidentally hurt themselves or a family member.	53%	31%	16%
People should have the right to say what they think, including racist or sexist remarks that others don't want to hear.	47%	37%	17%
Colleges and universities have been doing a good job in balancing the freedom of students and professors to say what they think with the desire of others to be protected from hateful speech.	35%	32%	33%
State and local governments should be able to limit people's right to protest when there is a danger that COVID-19 will spread when large groups assemble.	52%	28%	20%
People who want to work should not be prevented from doing so by state and local governments trying to protect everyone from the risk of COVID-19.	49%	32%	20%
State governments should protect [public / private] property from damage, even if this restricts the right to protest.	61%	17%	23%
People should be allowed to work as part-time contractors, even if it means that they would not have the same job protections that full-time employees have.	59%	16%	25%
People should have more freedom to travel when and where they want, even if it means that the overall risk of COVID-19 infections in the population increased.	31%	53%	16%
Employers should be required to provide workers with health insurance, even if it means that employers will hire fewer workers and pay lower take-home wages.	40%	31%	29%
Public schools should have more freedom to fire teachers who are doing a bad job, even if it reduces the ability of unions to protect teachers who are doing a good job.	60%	15%	25%
[State and local governments / The federal government] should regulate businesses operations more strictly to prevent the spread of COVID-19, even if it means that more workers will have their pay cut or lose their jobs.	38%	38%	25%
I would prefer more public policy tradeoffs to be made by [my state / the federal] government because [my state / the federal] government better reflects my opinions.	23%	28%	50%
Courts should have greater leeway in interpreting laws, even if it means judges sometimes go beyond what was intended when the laws were passed.	22%	45%	33%
It is important for the federal government to set uniform national standards for product safety, since some states would choose different standards.	63%	11%	25%

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I would prefer greater freedom and individual liberty in making [financial / health] decisions, even if it means the government gave me less protection against [financial / health] risks. 41% 24% 35%

31. Would you describe yourself as...

Poor 19%
 Working class 34%
 Middle class 38%
 Upper middle class 8%
 Rich 1%

32. For someone to get ahead in America, what do you think is more important?

Luck 9%
 Hard work 39%
 Both equally important 47%
 Not sure 5%

33. How hard is it for someone from a middle-class background to become rich in America?

Impossible 8%
 Very hard 58%
 Not at all hard 18%
 Not sure 17%

34. Which do you think is the better system?

Socialism 15%
 Capitalism 42%
 Not sure 43%

35. When you think of socialism, what comes closest to your idea of what socialism means?

A large welfare state and significant government regulation, funded by high progressive taxation 32%
 An economic system where most property is owned collectively and not by individuals .. 20%
 A centrally planned economy with an oppressive one party state 16%
 Don't know 32%

36. Do you think Democrats are socialists?

Yes 32%
 No 37%
 Not sure 31%

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37. Over the past five years, has your personal financial situation gotten better or worse?

Gotten better	30%
No change	45%
Gotten worse	25%

38. Have you been unemployed at any time during the last five years?

Yes	52%
No	48%

39. In which year (or years) were you unemployed? Check all that apply.

Asked of those who have been unemployed at any time during the last five years

2016	51%
2017	49%
2018	51%
2019	48%
2020	64%

40. Compared to other people, would you say that you've done better or worse than average over the past few years?

Better than average	23%
About the same	57%
Worse than average	19%

41. Over the next five years, do you expect your personal financial situation to get better or worse?

Get better	39%
No change	44%
Get worse	18%

42. How worried are you about losing your job?

Very worried	13%
Somewhat worried	23%
Not very worried	64%

43. If you lost your job, how hard would it be for you to find a new job that paid as much as you are making now?

Very hard – I would probably have to take a pay cut.	26%
Somewhat hard – It might take a while before I found a job that paid as much.	26%
Not very hard	19%
Not sure	29%

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44. Overall, do you think the economy is getting better or worse?

Getting better	21%
About the same	19%
Getting worse	47%
Not sure	13%

45. Do you think the US economic system favors the wealthy or is fair to most Americans?

Favors the wealthy	59%
Is fair to most Americans	27%
Not sure	13%

46. How fair do you think the federal income tax system?

Very fair	5%
Somewhat fair	29%
Somewhat unfair	39%
Very unfair	27%

47. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Not sure
Rich people are able to evade taxes using accountant.	42%	30%	10%	5%	13%
A lot of people cheat on their taxes and are never caught.	28%	38%	12%	5%	17%
The federal income tax should be made more progressive.	21%	25%	10%	11%	34%

48. Do you own any stocks or mutual funds?

Yes	28%
No	66%
Not sure	6%

49. Do you own or rent the place where you live?

Own with a mortgage	29%
Own without a mortgage	24%
Rent	37%
Live without paying rent	10%

50. Have you ever received benefits from any of the following government programs. Check all that apply.

Social Security	31%
Medicare	27%
Medicaid	19%
Unemployment Insurance	20%
Food Stamps	24%
Disability Insurance	8%
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	4%
None of the above	34%

51. Do you currently have health insurance?

Yes	78%
No	18%
Not sure	4%

52. Which of the following is your MAIN source of health insurance coverage? Is it a plan through your employer, a plan through your spouse's employer, a plan you purchased yourself either from an insurance company or a state or federal marketplace, are you covered by Medicare or Medicaid, or do you get your health insurance from somewhere else?

Asked of those who are covered by health insurance

Plan through your employer	30%
Plan through your spouse's employer	10%
Plan you purchased yourself	7%
Medicare	30%
Medicaid	14%
Somewhere else	3%
Plan through your parents/mother/father	5%
Don't know	2%

53. Do you approve or disapprove of the Affordable Care Act, also known as "Obamacare"?

Strongly approve	30%
Somewhat approve	19%
Somewhat disapprove	12%
Strongly disapprove	24%
Not sure	16%

54. What do you think are the chances that you personally will become infected by the coronavirus?

Very likely	8%
Somewhat likely	36%
Somewhat unlikely	36%
Very unlikely	20%

55. How did the shutdown of the economy impact your monthly income in April and May?

My income has decreased 27%
 No effect on my income 66%
 My income has increased 7%

56. How much of your income did you LOSE in April and May because of the shutdown?

My income has increased 7%
 No effect on my income 66%
 Income decreased by less than 10% 4%
 Income decreased 10-25% 9%
 Income decreased 25-50% 5%
 Income decreased 50-75% 3%
 Income decreased by more than 75% 6%

57. What comes closest to your view about "shelter-in-place" orders?

They are the only way to stop the spread of COVID-19. 70%
 The cure is worse than the disease. 30%

58. When do you think it will be safe to end social distancing measures and reopen businesses as normal?

Now 16%
 In a few months 13%
 At the end of 2020 18%
 In 2021 or later 53%

59. If these places were open, do you feel it would be safe for you and your family to go back to them now?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Parks and beaches	58%	29%	13%
Restaurants	45%	41%	14%
Bars	22%	66%	12%
Concerts	20%	70%	11%
Professional sporting events	19%	67%	13%
Churches	35%	50%	14%
Schools	30%	55%	15%
Retail stores	57%	28%	15%
Gyms	27%	58%	15%

60. Do you see the Confederate flag more as a symbol of Southern pride or more as a symbol of racism?

Southern pride 44%
 Symbol of racism 38%
 Not sure 18%

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61. Should statues of Confederate generals on public property be removed?

Yes	33%
No	50%
Not sure	17%

62. Should statues of American presidents who were slaveholders, like Washington, Jefferson, and Jackson, be removed?

Yes	17%
No	63%
Not sure	20%

63. Do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs designed to increase the number of Black and minority students on college campuses?

Favor	37%
Oppose	32%
Not sure	31%

64. When you think about the future of the country, are you generally optimistic or pessimistic?

Optimistic	35%
Pessimistic	37%
Unsure	28%

65. How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?

Very important	60%
Somewhat important	27%
Not important	13%

66. How likely is it Republicans and Democrats in Congress can come together to solve the country's problems?

Very likely	4%
Somewhat likely	18%
Somewhat unlikely	36%
Very unlikely	42%

67. Do you think it is better for the country to have a president who comes from the same political party that controls Congress or better to have a president from one political party and Congress controlled by another?

Same party	28%
Different party	23%
No difference	49%

68. Should anyone who wants to be allowed to vote by mail in 2020?

Yes	60%
No	23%
Not sure	17%

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69. How widespread is voter fraud?

It happens frequently in many places	33%
It happens occasionally	37%
It is extremely rare	30%

70. Are you in favor or opposed to limits on the amount of money that a person can contribute to a political campaign?

Favor	55%
Oppose	16%
Not sure	29%

71. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?

Just about always	6%
Most of the time	17%
Some of the time	77%

72. Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?

Few big interests	70%
Benefit of all	11%
Not sure	19%

73. Do you feel that almost all of the people running the government are smart people, or do you think that quite a few of them don't seem to know what they are doing?

Know what they're doing	21%
Don't know what they're doing	61%
Not sure	19%

74. Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked?

Quite a few	64%
Not many	19%
Hardly any	5%
Not sure	13%

75. How often are special interests able to get what they want by contributing money to political campaigns?

Always	17%
Most of the time	39%
Some of the time	19%
Occasionally	7%
Never	3%
Not sure	17%

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76. How often do government and big business work together in ways that hurt most of the public?

Most of the time	32%
Some of the time	54%
Rarely	14%

77. When running for office, how often do you think politicians lie about what they will do if elected?

Always	21%
Most of the time	39%
Some of the time	23%
Occasionally	9%
Never	1%
Not sure	7%

78. If you had to choose, would you rather have a member of Congress who...

Compromises to get things done.	61%
Sticks to their principles, no matter what.	39%

79. Would you favor or oppose having a 12 year limit on the amount of time that a person can serve in the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate?

Favor	64%
Oppose	13%
Not sure	22%

80. Is it unfair that every state gets two U.S. Senators regardless of their population?

Yes	21%
No	52%
Unsure	26%

81. How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?

	A lot	Some	A little	None
Congress	5%	25%	41%	29%
Corporations	5%	31%	37%	27%
Universities	12%	37%	31%	20%
The judiciary	9%	43%	34%	14%
The police	29%	33%	21%	17%
The media	9%	25%	27%	39%
Churches and organized religion	22%	31%	26%	22%
My local government	12%	41%	31%	16%
My state government	13%	38%	31%	18%
Unions	10%	34%	32%	25%
The United Nations	12%	33%	29%	26%
Public schools	14%	41%	32%	13%

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82. How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in America?

Very satisfied	9%
Somewhat satisfied	43%
Somewhat dissatisfied	34%
Very dissatisfied	15%

83. How important are the following things for being truly American?

	Very Important	Somewhat important	Not important
To have parents or grandparents born in the country	21%	24%	54%
To have been born in the country	29%	29%	42%
To be able to speak English	52%	30%	18%
To believe in freedom and equality	79%	17%	4%
To be a Christian	23%	23%	54%

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

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
I would rather be a citizen of the United States than of any other country in the world	65%	15%	21%
There are some things that make me ashamed of the United States	69%	19%	13%
Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil	54%	25%	21%
Interest groups have too much influence over political decisions	72%	8%	20%
Our country would be governed better if important decisions were left up to experts	48%	21%	31%

85. Do you think President Trump withheld military aid to Ukraine until they agreed to conduct investigations into his political opponents?

Yes	40%
No	30%
Not sure	30%

86. Did you favor or oppose the impeachment of President Trump?

Strongly favored	35%
Somewhat favored	9%
Neither favored nor opposed	17%
Somewhat opposed	6%
Strongly opposed	34%

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87. Are you registered to vote?

Yes	63%
No	31%
Don't know	6%

88. Which candidate did you vote for in the 2018 midterm election for the U.S. House of Representatives in the congressional district where you live?

The Democratic Party candidate	30%
The Republican Party candidate	24%
Someone else	1%
Don't remember	3%
I did not vote in that race	42%

89. Who did you vote for in the election for President in 2016?

Hillary Clinton	28%
Donald Trump	27%
Gary Johnson	2%
Jill Stein	1%
Evan McMullin	1%
Other	1%
Did not vote for President	41%

90. Which candidate did you vote for in the 2012 Presidential election?

Barack Obama	32%
Mitt Romney	20%
Gary Johnson	2%
Jill Stein	1%
Other candidate	1%
I did not vote	46%

91. In the past, how often have you voted for candidates of the following parties?

Asked of registered voters

	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Occasionally	Never
Democrat	26%	21%	10%	23%	21%
Republican	16%	22%	9%	26%	27%
Other	2%	2%	3%	34%	59%

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92. In the future, how often do you think that you will vote for candidates of the following parties?

Asked of registered voters

	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	Occasion-ally	Never
Democrat	28%	19%	6%	18%	30%
Republican	21%	20%	7%	18%	34%
Other	2%	3%	5%	39%	52%

93. How much attention have you been paying to the 2020 election campaign for president?

A lot	34%
Some	30%
Only a little	24%
None at all	12%

94. Did you vote in the Democratic or Republican Presidential primary or caucus in your state in 2020?

Asked of registered voters

Democratic primary/caucus	43%
Republican primary/caucus	31%
Neither one	23%
Not sure	3%

95. In the Democratic presidential primary or caucus in your state, who did you vote for?

Asked of registered voters who voted in a Democratic Presidential primary or caucus in 2020

Michael Bennet	0%
Joe Biden	45%
Mike Bloomberg	3%
Pete Buttigieg	6%
John Delaney	1%
Tulsi Gabbard	3%
Amy Klobuchar	1%
Deval Patrick	0%
Bernie Sanders	22%
Tom Steyer	0%
Elizabeth Warren	17%
Andrew Yang	2%

96. In the election for U.S. Congress in November, which party's candidate will you vote for?

Asked of registered voters

The Democratic Party candidate	47%
The Republican Party candidate	40%
Other	1%
Not sure	10%
I would not vote	2%

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97. Who will you vote for in the Presidential election in November?

Joe Biden	49%
Donald Trump	44%
Other	4%
Will not vote	3%

98. Next, think of the person you talk to most frequently. Do you know how they plan to vote?

Yes	64%
No	36%

99. How does this person plan to vote in the election for president in November?

Among those who know how the other person will vote

Joe Biden	51%
Donald Trump	44%
Other	2%
Will not vote	4%

100. If you had to guess, how do you think this person will vote in the election for president in November?

Among those who do not know how the other person will vote

Joe Biden	30%
Donald Trump	26%
Other	3%
Will not vote	41%