

OCTOBER 15, 2018

# Little Partisan Agreement on the Pressing Problems Facing the U.S.

## *Wide gaps in how younger and older voters view the midterms*

With less than four weeks until the midterm elections, Republican and Democratic voters differ widely in views of the seriousness of numerous problems facing the United States, including the fairness of the criminal justice system, climate change, economic inequality and illegal immigration.

Majorities of registered voters who support Democratic candidates for Congress rate 13 of 18 issues as “very big” problems facing the country. Among voters who favor the Republican candidates in their districts, majorities rate only five issues as very big problems.

More striking, several of the issues that rank among the most serious problems among Democratic voters – including how minorities are treated by the criminal justice system, climate change, the rich-poor gap, gun violence and racism – are viewed as very big problems by fewer than a third of Republican voters.

For example, 71% of Democratic voters say the way racial and ethnic minorities are treated by the criminal justice system is a very big problem for the country, compared with just 10% of Republican voters. Other issues have a similarly large partisan gap: Democratic voters are 61 percentage points more likely than Republican voters to say climate change is a very big problem and are 55 points more likely to say this about the gap between the rich and poor.

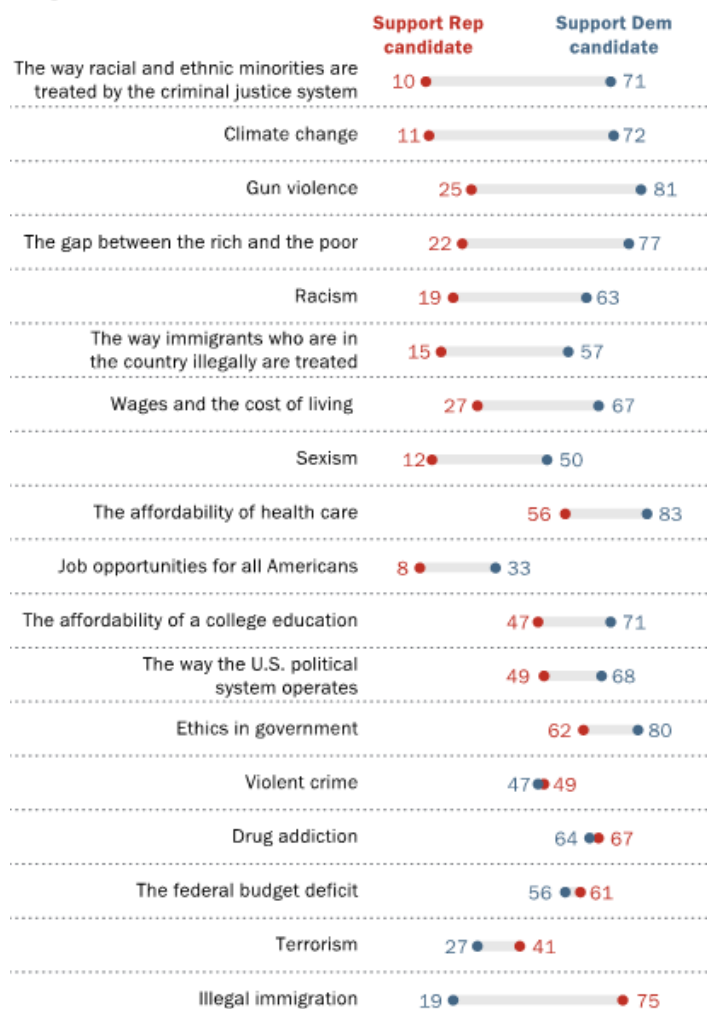
By contrast, illegal immigration is the highest-ranked national problem among GOP voters, but it ranks lowest among the 18 issues for Democratic voters (75% and 19%, respectively, say it is a very big problem).

The new national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7 among 10,683 adults, including 8,904 registered voters, finds that majorities of GOP voters view several issues as either very big or moderately big problems facing the country. For example, while only 22% say the rich-poor gap is a very big problem, 61% say it is at least a moderately big problem for the country; 39% say it is either a small problem or not a problem at all. Among Democratic voters, 95% say the rich-poor divide is a very big or moderately big problem.

However, there are several issues that majorities of Republican voters say either are small problems or not problems at all. These include the treatment of people in the U.S. illegally (64% say it is small problem or not a problem at all); job opportunities for all Americans (61%); how minorities are treated by the criminal justice system (61%); and sexism (56%).

### With few exceptions, wide partisan differences over the seriousness of problems facing the United States

% of registered voters who say each is a 'very big' problem in the country today ...



Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Among voters who support the Democrat in their congressional district, 89% say sexism is a very big or moderately big problem, compared with 43% of GOP voters. And Democratic voters are about four times as likely as Republicans to say sexism is a *very big* problem for the country (50% vs. 12%).

The partisan divide in opinions about whether sexism is a serious problem is wider than the gender gap in these views. Nearly eight-in-ten women voters (79%) say sexism is at least a moderately big problem; 40% say it is very big problem. Among men voters, 58% say sexism is a very or moderately big problem (26% very big).

*The survey was conducted amid the controversy over Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court and the Senate testimony on Sept. 27 of Kavanaugh and Christine Blasey Ford.*

*Overall, the shares viewing sexism as a very big problem were little changed over the field period of the survey, but the share of women who back Democratic candidates saying this rose, from 53% in interviews conducted Sept. 24-27 to 61% in surveys conducted afterward; there was little change in the views of men (Democratic or Republican) or Republican women over this period.*

Reflecting their [strongly positive views of the economy](#), just 8% of Republican voters say job opportunities for all Americans are a very big problem in the country today; this issue ranks relatively low for Democratic voters as well (33% very big problem). However, 67% of Democratic voters say wages and the cost of living are a very big problem for the country, compared with just 27% of Republican voters.

There are a few issues that similar shares of voters in both parties regard as major national problems. About six-in-ten (61%) Republican voters say the federal budget deficit is a very big problem, as do 56% of Democrats. In addition, there are modest differences on violent crime (49% of Republicans, 47% of Democrats) and drug addiction (67% of Republicans, 64% of Democrats).

Among the survey's other major findings:

**Majorities in both parties say partisan control of Congress 'really matters.'**

Three-quarters of voters who favor the Democratic candidate (75%) and Republican candidate (74%) say it "really matters" which party controls Congress after this fall's elections.

**Young voters and the 2018 midterms.** Only about half of registered voters younger than 30 (48%) say partisan control of Congress really matters, the lowest percentage for any age group and nearly 40 points lower than the share of voters 65 and older (83%) saying this. Young voters also are less likely than older voters to say they know a great deal or fair amount about the candidates running in their districts and to express satisfaction with the quality of candidates.

**Partisans optimistic about their midterm prospects.** Overall, registered voters are divided on which party will control the House after next month's elections: 50% say the Republicans will control the House, while 47% say the Democrats. Large majorities in both parties (82% of voters who favor the GOP candidate and 77% of those who support the Democrat) say they expect their party to hold a House majority. Republicans are more bullish than Democrats about Senate control: 87% of Republican voters expect the GOP to hold a Senate majority; 62% of Democratic voters expect their party to have the majority.

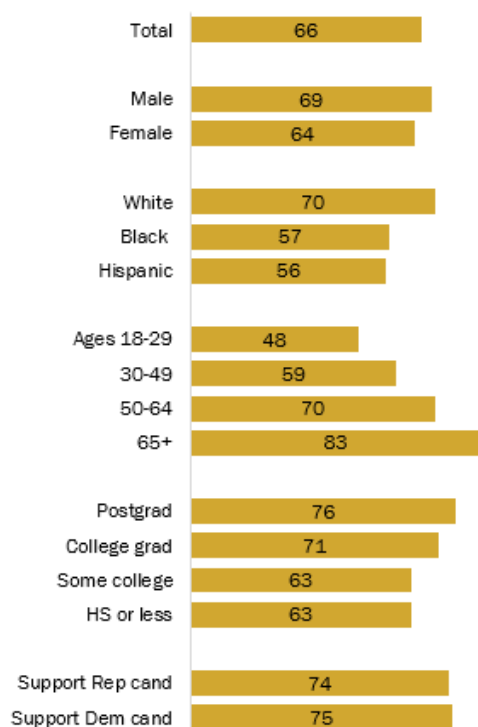
**More say they'd be disappointed than angry over a midterm defeat.** A sizable majority of voters who support the Republican candidate in their district (74%) say they would be disappointed if Democrats win a majority in the House; far fewer (20%) say they

would be angry. Among Democrats, 69% say they would be disappointed if the GOP wins a majority in the House, while 28% say they'd be angry.

## Most voters see high stakes for outcome of midterm elections

### Young voters less likely to say it 'really matters' which party wins Congress

*% of registered voters who say it really matters which party wins control of Congress ...*



Notes: Based on registered voters. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Less than a month away from the midterm elections, most registered voters say it really matters which party wins control of Congress this fall. On a four-point scale from “it really matters which party wins control of Congress” to “it doesn’t really matter which party wins control of Congress,” 66% of registered voters select the highest-importance option (and just 7% select the lowest importance option). The share placing the highest level of importance on the midterm outcome is about the same as it was in August (68%).

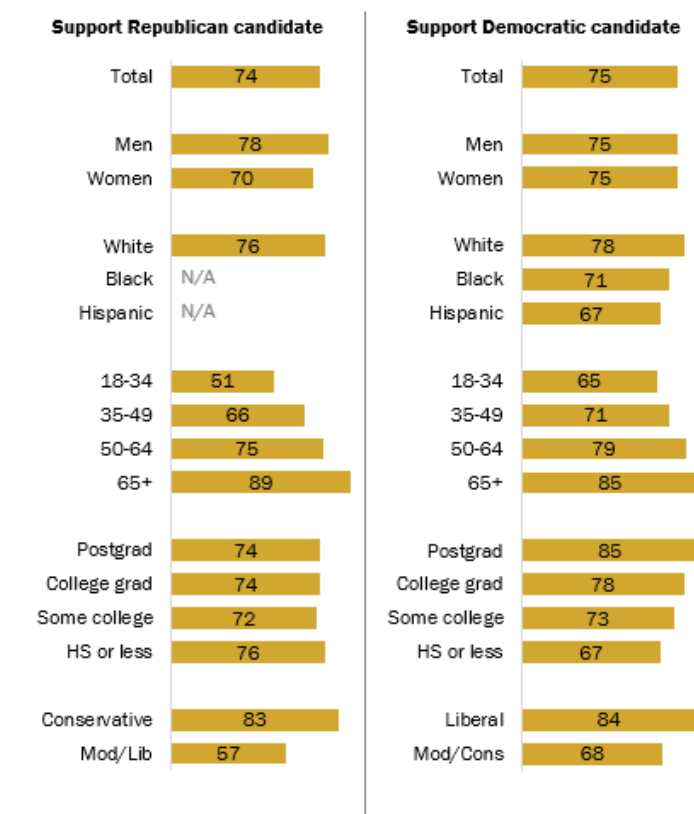
Registered voters who support the Democratic candidate in their district (75%) and those who support Republican candidates (74%) are about equally likely to say it really matters which party controls Congress.

There continue to be wide demographic differences on how much partisan control of Congress matters. Just 48% of voters younger than 30 say it “really matters” which party wins control of Congress. The share placing high importance of partisan control increases with age, reaching 83% among voters 65 and older.

About three-quarters of postgraduates (76%) and 71% of college graduates say it really matters which party wins control of Congress this fall. This view is shared by somewhat smaller majorities of those with some college experience and those with no college experience (63% each).

### Wide education divide among Democratic voters in shares saying it really matters who wins in 2018

% of registered voters who say it really matters which party wins control of Congress ...



Notes: Based on registered voters. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The overall education gap in views of the stakes of the 2018 midterms is driven largely by divides among those who support Democratic candidates for Congress in their district. Overall, 85% of Democratic voters with a postgraduate degree say it really matters which party wins control of Congress this fall, compared with 67% of Democratic voters with no college experience. There are no significant education divides among voters who support Republican candidates for Congress in their district.

Younger voters are less likely than older voters to say the 2018 outcome really matters within both party coalitions. But Democratic voters ages 18 to 34 (65%) are more likely than their young Republican counterparts (51%) to select the highest importance option on the four-point scale.

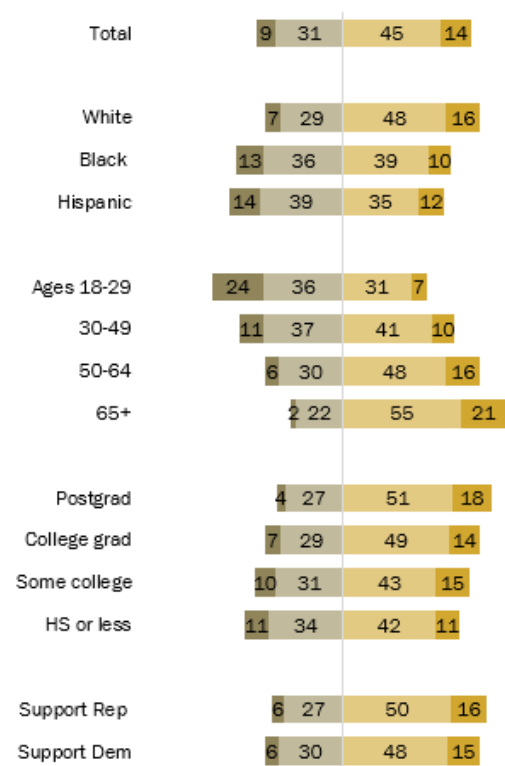
### Voters' candidate knowledge and satisfaction

About six-in-ten registered voters (59%) say they know either a great deal (14%) or a fair amount (45%) about the candidates running for Congress in their district. However, four-in-ten say they know not too much (31%) or nothing at all (9%) about the candidates in their district.

### Most young voters say they know little about candidates in their district

% of registered voters who say they know \_\_\_\_ about the congressional candidates in their district

■ Nothing at all ■ Not too much ■ Fair amount ■ Great deal



Notes: Based on registered voters. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

As with views on the importance of the midterm outcome, there are significant differences in views by age and education.

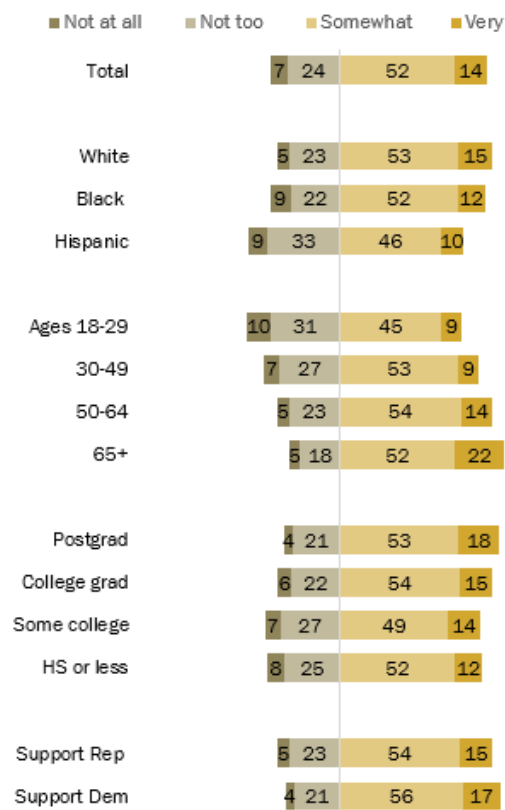
Voters ages 18 to 29 are the only age group in which more say they know little or nothing about the candidates running for Congress in their district (60%) than say they know at least a fair amount (39%). Awareness increases with age: Fully 76% of voters ages 65 and older say they know a great deal or fair amount about their district's candidates.

The level of candidate awareness is also greater among those with higher levels of education. Among those with no college experience, 54% say they know at least a fair amount about the candidates running for Congress in their district; this compares with 59% of those with some college experience, 62% of college graduates and 69% of postgraduates.

There are no significant differences in candidate knowledge between Republican and Democratic voters.

### Candidate satisfaction higher among older, better-educated voters

% of registered voters who are \_\_\_ satisfied with the choice of congressional candidates in their district



Notes: Based on registered voters. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Two-thirds of registered voters say they are either somewhat (52%) or very (14%) satisfied with their choice of candidates for Congress in their district this November; 31% say they are not too (24%) or not at all (7%) satisfied with their choices.

Younger voters – who express some of the lowest levels of candidate knowledge – also are among those least satisfied with their choices this fall. Overall, 54% of voters ages 18 to 29 say they are at least somewhat satisfied with their choices, compared with 42% who say they are not too or not at all satisfied. Among all older age groups, larger majorities express satisfaction with the candidates, including 74% of voters ages 65 and older.

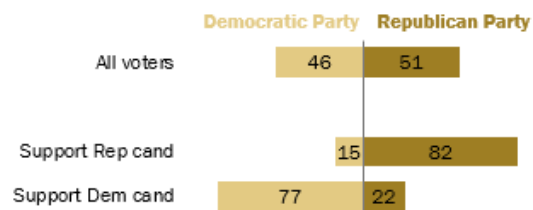
Those who have graduated from college are more satisfied with the candidate choices than those who have not. Still, majorities across educational groups say they are at least somewhat satisfied with their choices.

There is no significant divide on this question between Republican and Democratic voters.

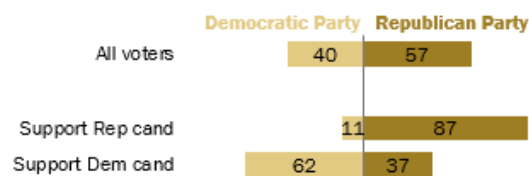
## Voters' expectations for 2018 midterm elections

### Voters split on party expected to control House; more expect GOP to hold Senate

% of registered voters who think \_\_\_\_ will hold a majority in the House after November elections ...



% of registered voters who think \_\_\_\_ will hold a majority in the Senate after November elections ...



Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

When asked about their own expectations for 2018, registered voters are about evenly split in terms of who they think will win the majority in the House of Representatives. By comparison, more voters say the GOP will hold a majority in the Senate than expect the Democratic Party to take control of that chamber.

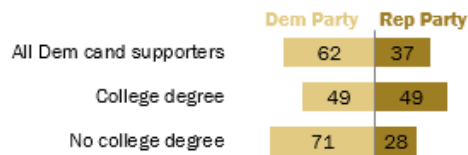
Overall, 51% of registered voters say they think the Republican Party will hold a majority in the House, while slightly fewer (46%) say the Democratic Party will hold a majority in the 116th Congress. Partisans are about equally confident that their own party will have the majority: 82% of those supporting Republican candidates say they expect the GOP to hold the House majority; 77% of those supporting Democratic candidates say they expect their party to win the most seats.

The balance of expectations about the future partisan control of the Senate tilts to the GOP: 57% of voters expect the GOP to hold a majority of seats in the Senate, while 40% expect Democrats to take the majority. Republicans overwhelmingly say that their party will hold the Senate majority (87%), with just 11% saying they expect the Democratic Party will take control of the Senate. Among Democrats, 62% expect the Democratic Party to control the chamber in January, but 37% expect the GOP will maintain a majority in the Senate.



## Democratic college graduates split on expectations for Senate

% of registered voters who support Democratic candidate in district who think \_\_\_\_ will hold a majority in the Senate after November elections



Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Among Democratic voters, those with a college degree are more skeptical about their party's chances in the Senate than are those without a college degree. As many college graduate Democratic voters expect the GOP to win a majority in the Senate as say they expect the Democratic Party to win the most seats (both 49%).

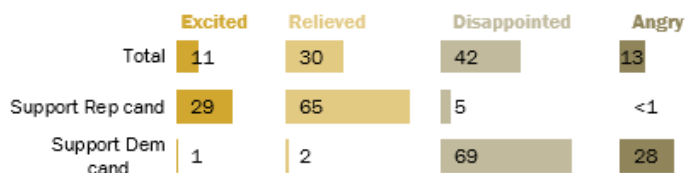
By contrast, a majority of Democratic voters without a college degree (71%) expect the party to win a majority in the Senate this fall. There are no educational differences among Democrats in expectations for the House and there no significant differences among Republican voters by education in expectations for the House or Senate.

## Feelings about partisan control of the House after 2018

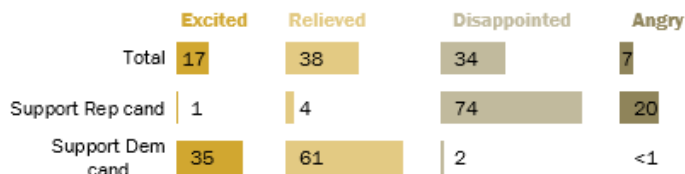
### Republicans and Democrats would both be more relieved than excited to see their party control House

% of registered voters who say they would be \_\_\_\_ if the ...

#### Republican Party keeps control of the U.S. House of Representatives



#### Democratic Party gains control of the U.S. House of Representatives



Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

When voters are asked how they would react if the Republican Party keeps control – or if the Democratic Party gains control of the House – the most common sentiments overall are disappointment or relief, rather than excitement or anger.

Among voters who support Republican candidates, about two-thirds (65%) say they would be relieved if the Republican Party maintains its majority in the House. Roughly three-in-ten (29%) say they would be excited. Few (5%) would have a negative reaction.

Voters who support Democratic candidates are similarly more likely to say they would be relieved (61%) than excited (35%) if their party gained control of the House. Somewhat more Democratic than Republican voters express excitement at the prospect of their party holding the House majority (35% vs. 29%).

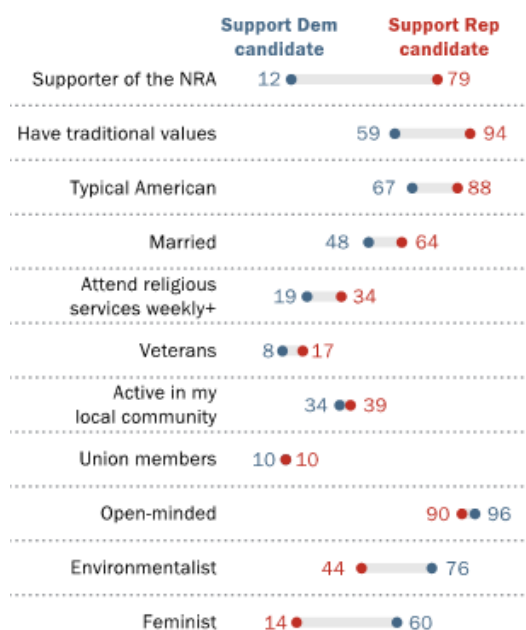
Large shares of both parties' supporters say they would be disappointed if the other party had control of the House after the election (69% of Democratic voters say this of a potential GOP win, 74% of Republican voters say it about the prospect of a Democratic win). Two-in-ten GOP voters say they would be angry if the Democrats regained control of the House, while a somewhat larger share of Democratic voters (28%) say the same about the Republican Party holding their majority in that chamber.

## How voters describe themselves

Not only do Republican and Democratic voters differ in their views of national problems and their [policy preferences and values](#), they also differ in their self-described characteristics and personal backgrounds.

### Partisan differences in self-described identities and affiliations

*% of voters with each characteristic or who say each describes them 'well'*



Notes: Based on registered voters. Married, religious attendance, veteran, union based on demographic questions. Other items are those who say this statement describes them well (see topline). Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Nearly eight-in-ten voters who support Republican congressional candidates (79%) say that “supporter of the NRA” describes them well; just 12% of Democratic voters say this.

Republican voters also are 35 percentage-points more likely than Democratic voters to say they “have traditional values” (94% vs. 59%) and are 21 points more likely to say “typical American” describes them well (88% vs. 67%).

Republican voters also are also significantly more likely to be married than Democratic voters (64% vs. 48%) and about twice as likely to attend religious services weekly or more often (34% vs. 19%).

And while military veterans are a relatively small share of voters overall, 17% of those who back GOP candidates say they are veterans, compared with 8% of Democratic voters.

Democratic voters (60%) are much more likely than Republican voters (14%) to say “feminist” describes them well. And while about three-quarters of Democratic voters (76%) say “environmentalist” is a good description of themselves, less than half of Republican voters (44%) say the same.

Similar shares of supporters of both Republican and Democratic candidates describe themselves as active in their local community. And nine-in-ten or more in both parties consider themselves to be open-minded.

[Next: Methodology](#)[← PREV PAGE](#)

1 2

[NEXT PAGE →](#)

## SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

[SIGNUP](#)

## MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT OUR WORK

[DONATE](#)

OCTOBER 18, 2018

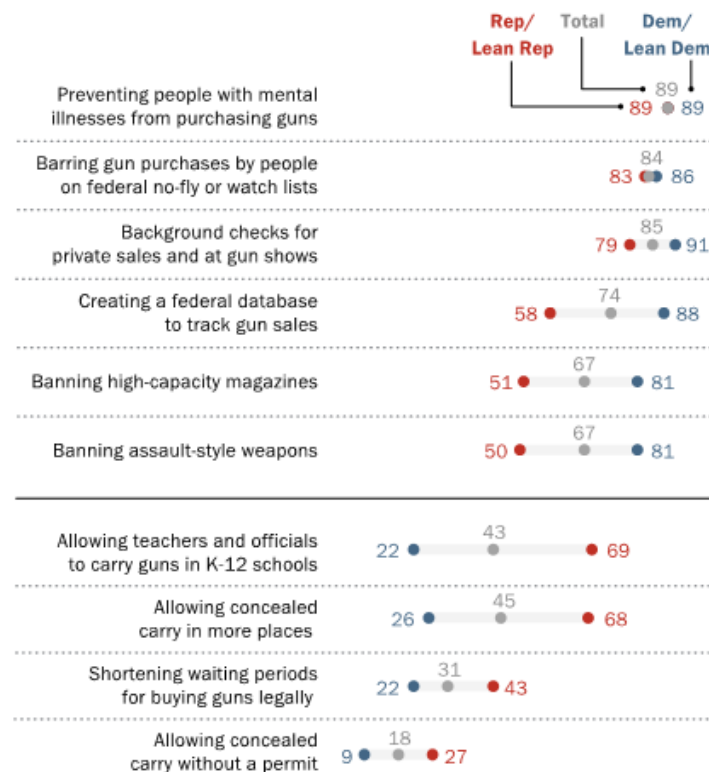
# Gun Policy Remains Divisive, But Several Proposals Still Draw Bipartisan Support

*More prioritize controlling gun ownership than protecting gun rights*

The partisan divide that for years has defined public opinion about the nation's gun policies remains firmly in place. Yet there continue to be several specific policy proposals that draw broad support from both Republicans and Democrats.

## Partisans agree on several gun restrictions, but differ widely on assault weapons ban, 'concealed carry'

% who strongly or somewhat favor ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Overwhelming majorities of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents and Democrats and Democratic leaners (89% each) say mentally ill people should be barred from buying guns. Nearly as many in both parties (86% of Democrats, 83% of Republicans) favor barring gun purchases by people on federal watch lists. And sizable

majorities also favor making private gun sales and sales at gun shows subject to background checks (91% of Democrats, 79% of Republicans).

Yet there is a 30-percentage-point difference between Democrats and Republicans in support for an assault weapons ban (81% of Democrats, 50% of Republicans) and even wider gaps on two other proposals: arming teachers and school officials in elementary and high schools and allowing people to carry concealed weapons in more places.

Large majorities of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents favor both of these proposals (69% arming school officials, 68% expanded concealed carry), compared with only about a quarter of Democrats and Democratic leaners (22% arming school officials, 26% expanded concealed carry).

Opinions on these and other gun policy proposals have changed little in the year since Pew Research Center conducted a major study of guns in the U.S. (See [“America’s Complex Relationship with Guns.”](#)) Still, the new survey, conducted [Sept. 24–Oct. 7](#), finds modest changes in some public attitudes on gun policy:

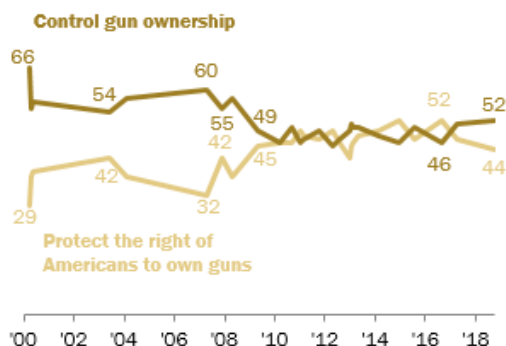
**A majority of Americans say gun laws should be stricter.** The share of Americans who say gun laws in this country should be stricter has increased somewhat since last year. Currently, 57% say gun laws should be more strict than they are currently, compared with 31% who say they are about right, while just 11% say they should be less strict. Last year, 52% supported stricter gun laws.

**Stark partisan divisions on impact of more gun limits on frequency of mass shootings.** Nearly half of Americans (47%) say there would be fewer mass shootings if it was harder for people to legally obtain guns in the U.S. Slightly more say making gun ownership more difficult either would make no difference (46%) or this would lead to more mass shootings (6%). Two-thirds of Democrats (67%) say making it harder for people to obtain guns would result in fewer mass shootings; an identical share of Republicans say it would not make a difference.

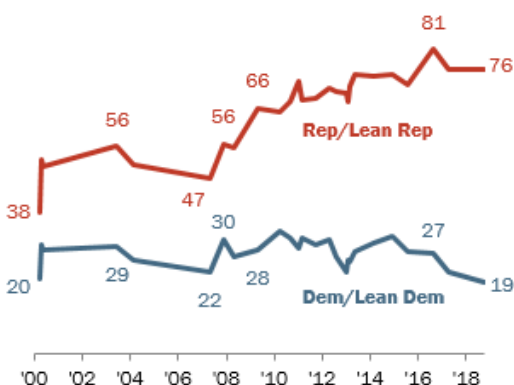
**Modest shift in views of gun rights vs. gun control.**

## More now prioritize controlling gun ownership than protecting gun rights

% saying it is more important to ...



% who say it is more important to protect the right of Americans to own guns ...



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 18-24, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Opinions about whether it is more important to control gun ownership or protect gun rights have been closely divided for several years. Today, somewhat more say it is more important to control gun ownership (52%) than to protect the right of Americans to own guns (44%), according to a separate national survey, conducted Sept. 18-24 among 1,754 adults.

These attitudes, like many related to gun policy, have long been deeply divided along partisan lines. But the partisan gap has widened: In 2010, Barack Obama's second year in office, Republicans were about twice as likely as Democrats to prioritize gun rights rather than gun control (65% vs. 33%). Today, Republicans are four times more likely than Democrats to say gun rights are more important (76% vs. 19%).

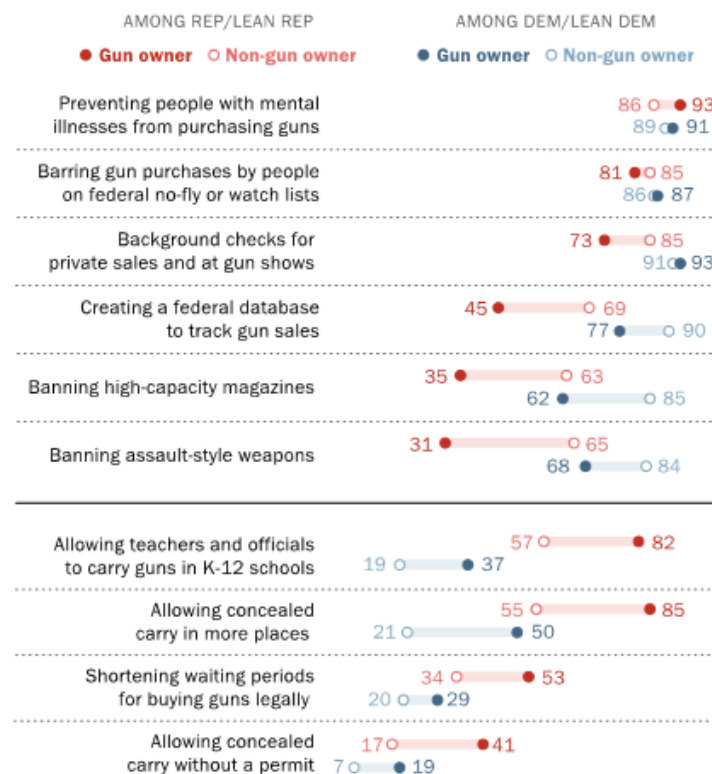
There also is a wide gender divide in these views. By close to two-to-one (62% to 33%), women say it is more important to control gun ownership than to protect the right of Americans to own guns. Men, by a smaller margin (55% to 41%), say it is more important to protect gun ownership.

## In views of gun policies, partisanship and gun ownership are factors

Like partisanship, gun ownership also impacts views of specific policy proposals. Overall, gun owners are more likely than non-gun owners to support measures that expand access to guns, and less likely to support restrictions on gun use and ownership.

### In both parties, divides between gun owners, non-gun owners in views of gun policies

% who somewhat or strongly favor ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

About four-in-ten Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (41%) say they personally own a gun, compared with 17% of Democrats and Democratic leaners.

These differences in views by gun ownership are evident among members of both parties, though they are more pronounced among Republicans than Democrats.

The roughly 50-50 split in views of Republicans overall on banning high-capacity magazines and assault-style weapons reflects sharp differences between Republicans who own guns and those who do not. Among Republicans, non-gun-owners are about 30 percentage points more likely than gun owners to favor each of these proposals.

Yet Democrats also are divided on the basis of gun ownership. This is particularly evident in opinions about proposals to allow people to carry concealed weapons in more places and arm teachers and other school officials. Half of Democratic gun owners favor expanded concealed carry, compared with just 21% of Democrats who do not own guns.

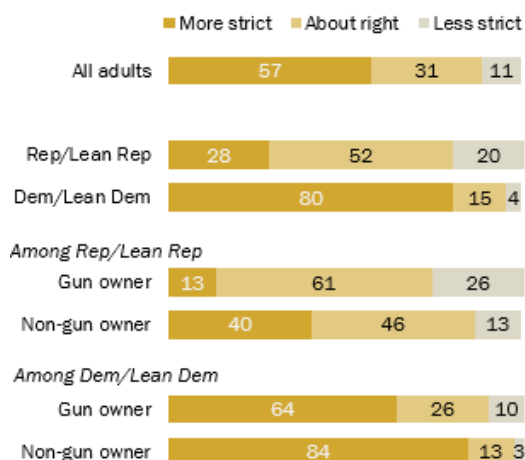
And Democratic gun-owners are about twice as likely as Democrats who do not own guns to favor arming teachers and other school officials in K-12 schools (37% vs. 19%).

## Majority of public supports stricter gun laws

Nearly six-in-ten Americans (57%) say gun laws should be more strict than they are today, 31% say they are about right, and 11% say they should be less strict. Last year, 52% favored stricter laws; 30% said they were about right and 18% said should be less strict.

### Majority of adults say gun laws should be stricter than they are today

% saying gun laws should be \_\_\_\_ than they are today



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Democrats are more than twice as likely as Republicans to say gun laws in the U.S. should be stricter than they are today (80% vs. 28%). About half of Republicans say current laws are about right (52%), while 20% say they should be less strict.

Like attitudes on specific gun proposals, gun ownership also impacts views of the strictness of gun laws. Within each party, non-gun owners were more likely than gun owners to say laws should be more strict.

Democrats – regardless of whether they personally own a gun – overwhelmingly say stricter laws are needed, though fewer Democratic gun owners than non-gun-owners favor making laws stricter (64% vs. 84%).

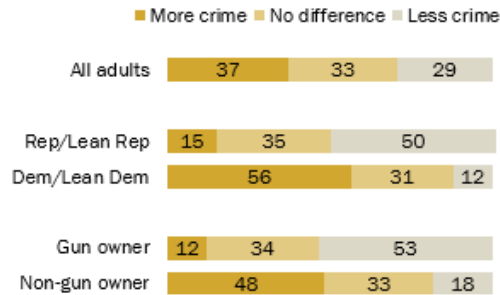
And while Republicans generally oppose stricter gun laws, support for tougher laws is more widespread among Republican non-gun owners (40%) than gun owners (13%).

## Impact of changes in access to guns on crime, mass shootings

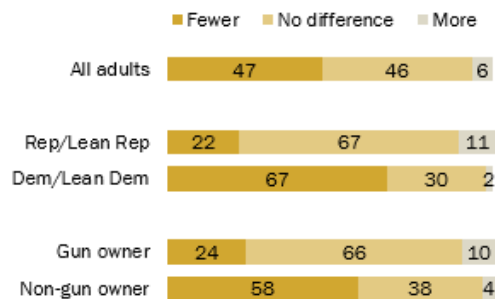


## Public split on whether making it harder to own guns would cut mass shootings

% who say if more Americans owned guns, there would be ...



% who say if it was harder for people to legally obtain guns in the U.S., there would be \_\_\_ mass shootings



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The public is mixed when it comes to the potential impact that more Americans owning guns would have on crime in the U.S. Comparable shares say that if more Americans owned guns, there would be more crime (37%) or there would be no impact on the amount of crime (33%). About one-in-three say there would be less crime.

Republicans and Democrats are deeply split on the possible impact of more Americans owning guns. Half of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say there would be less crime (50%), while a majority of Democrats say there would be more crime (56%).

Mirroring the gap among partisans, gun-owners and non-gun owners are also deeply divided. A small majority of gun owners say more gun ownership would lead to less crime while nearly half of non-gun owners say there would be more crime.

The public also is divided over the impact of making it *harder* to legally own guns on mass shootings in the U.S. Nearly half of adults (47%) say that if it was harder for people to legally obtain guns in the United States, there would be fewer mass shootings in this country. An equal share (46%) say it would make no difference in the number of these incidents, and 6% say it would result in more mass shootings.

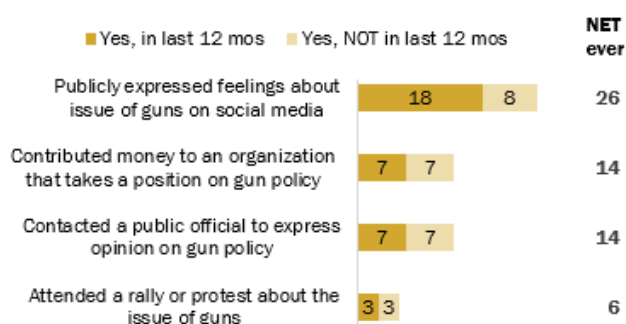
Overall, public views are little changed since the question was last asked in 2017. However, the share who say there would be more mass shootings if it were harder to own guns is smaller – from 13% in a year ago to 6% today.

## Gun policy activism: Modest partisan gaps, except on attending protests

Relatively few Americans say they have ever expressed their feelings about the issue of guns by either posting on social media (26%), contributing money to an organization that takes a position on gun policy (14%), contacting a public official to express an opinion on guns (14%) or attending a rally or protest about the issue of guns (6%).

### More say they express feelings about gun policy on social media than donate money or contact officials

% who have ever done any of the following ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Even smaller shares say they have done any of these activities in the past year.

On two behaviors surveyed in 2017 and today – contributing money to an organization or contacting a public official – the share who report having done either is little changed. In 2017, 6% of adults said they had contacted a public official in the previous year to express an opinion on gun policy. Today, 7% of adults say they have contacted an official in the past 12 months.

Similarly, in 2017, 7% of adults said they had contributed money to an organization in the past year. Today, an equal share (7%) say the same.

There are no significant differences in expressions of views on gun policy by age or gender, but larger differences by gun ownership and partisanship.

Gun owners were more likely than non-gun owners to say they had publicly expressed feelings about the issue of guns on social media (22% vs. 16%) or contributed money to an organization that takes a position on gun policy (13% vs. 5%) in the past 12 months.

Differences between gun owners and non-gun owners are particularly pronounced among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. A quarter of Republican gun-owners said they had posted about guns on social media in the last year (25%), contributed money

to an organization (16%) or contacted a public official (9%). Among non-gun owning Republicans, fewer reported engaging in these activities.

In contrast, there are few differences between gun owning and non-gun owning Democrats.

And while Republicans and Democrats overall report similar levels of engagement in expressive activities on guns, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say they had attended a rally or protest about the issue of guns in the past 12 months (5% vs 1%, respectively).

**Democrats more likely than Republicans to have attended a protest or rally on guns; slight differences on contacting public officials, donating to gun policy groups**

*% who say they have done the following in the last 12 months ...*

	Publicly expressed feelings about issue of guns on social media	Contributed money to an organization that takes a position on gun policy	Contacted a public official to express opinion on gun policy	Attended a rally or protest about the issue of guns
All adults	18	7	7	3
Gun owner	22	13	8	2
Non-gun owner	16	5	7	4
Rep/Lean Rep	18	8	6	1
Gun owner	25	16	9	1
Non-gun owner	12	3	3	1
Dem/Lean Dem	19	7	9	5
Gun owner	18	8	6	4
Non-gun owner	20	6	9	5

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct.7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Next: Methodology

← PREV PAGE

1 2

NEXT PAGE →



**SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER**

Email address

SIGNUP

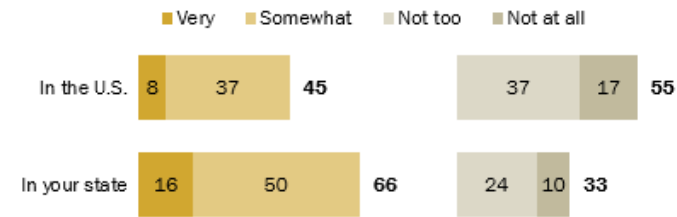
OCTOBER 29, 2018

# Elections in America: Concerns Over Security, Divisions Over Expanding Access to Voting

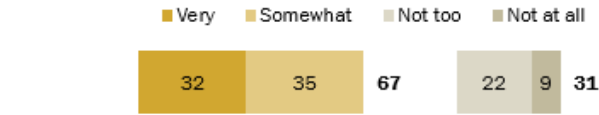
*Views of voting access linked to opinion on diversity in the U.S.*

## Majority of Americans are not confident that U.S. election systems are secure from hacking

% who say they are **confident** that election systems are secure from hacking and other technological threats



% who say it is **likely** that Russia or other foreign governments will attempt to influence the U.S. congressional elections in November



Note: No answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

With a week to go before Election Day, Americans are confident their local election authorities are up to the essential tasks of making sure that elections are run smoothly and that votes are counted accurately. Nearly nine-in-ten (89%) have confidence in poll workers in their community to do a good job, and majorities say the same about local and state election officials.

Yet the public expresses less confidence that elections across the United States will be handled as well as local ones. And Americans are deeply concerned about whether the midterms will be secure from foreign hacking.

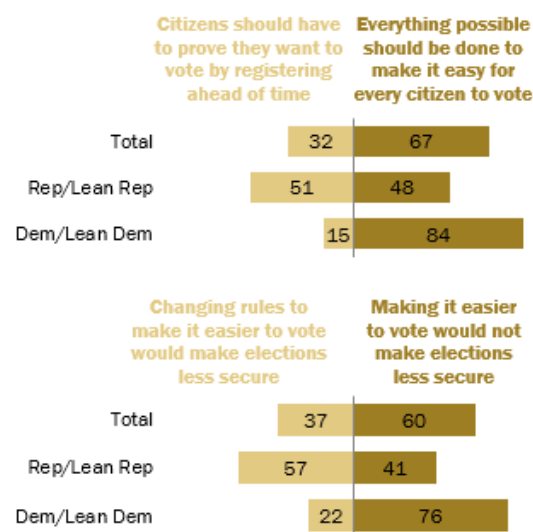
Two years after Russia interfered with the 2016 presidential election, 67% of Americans say it is very or somewhat likely that either Russia or other foreign governments will try to influence the midterm elections.

Fewer than half (45%) are very or somewhat confident that election systems are secure from hacking, with just 8% saying they are *very* confident in the security of election systems nationwide.

A major new survey of public attitudes on voting and elections in the U.S. was conducted by Pew Research Center from Sept. 24-Oct. 7 among 10,683 adults, supported by a grant from the Democracy Fund. It finds that, despite concerns over election security, Americans have very positive feelings about voting: Fully 91% say voting in elections is “important,” while 68% say that “voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things.”

### Far more Democrats than Republicans favor making it easy for all to vote

% who say ...



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

In addition, a substantial majority (80%) of adults say they expect it will be very or somewhat easy for them to vote in next week’s congressional elections, though just 38% anticipate the experience will be *very* easy.

These sentiments are notably bipartisan. For example, identical shares in both parties (69% each) say voting gives people a say in government. Yet there are deep partisan disagreements over other aspects of elections in this country, and many are centered on fundamental questions about the voting process.

Perhaps the most telling partisan divisions are on how easy voting *should be* in the United States. Overall, two-thirds of the public (67%) says “everything possible should be done to make it easy for every citizen to vote,” while only about a third (32%) say citizens “should have to prove they want to vote” by registering in advance.

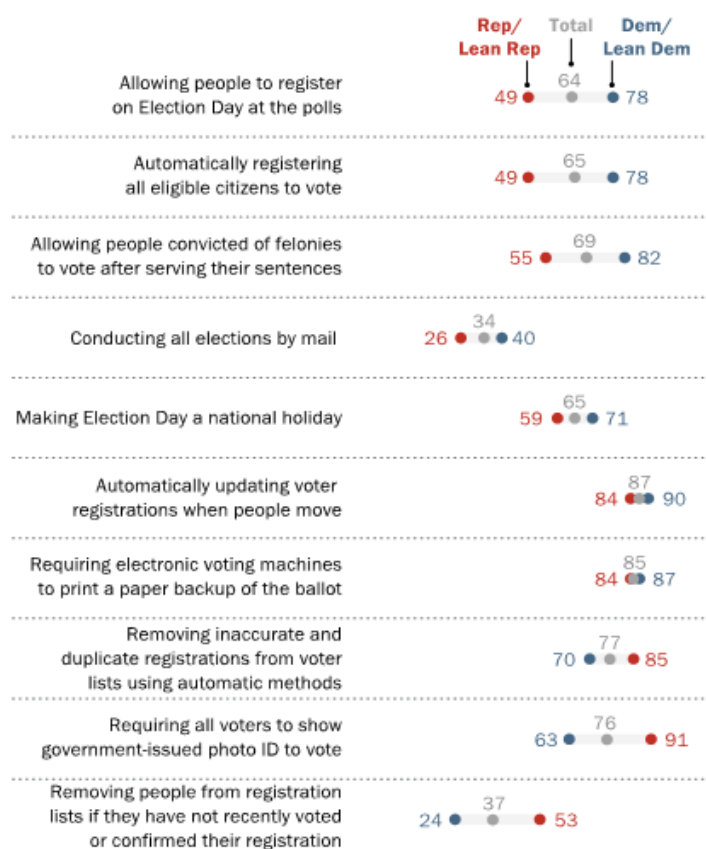
More than eight-in-ten Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (84%) say “everything possible should be done to make it easy for every citizen to vote.” By contrast,

only about half of Republicans (48%) say this. A similar share of Republicans (51%) think people should have to prove they want to vote by registering ahead of time.

The Republicans' skepticism about making it easier to vote – and expanding the franchise – is seen across multiple measures in the survey. A majority of Republicans (57%) say that if election rules were changed to make it easier to register and vote, this would result in elections being less secure. Among Democrats, fewer than half as many (22%) express this view; a sizable majority of Democrats (76%) say easing election rules would not make elections less secure.

### Wide partisan gaps in views of automatic voter registration, removing inactive voters from the rolls

% who strongly/somewhat favor ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

These differences also are reflected in how Republicans and Democrats view proposals for changing the way people register to vote and cast ballots. Nearly eight-in-ten Democrats favor allowing people to register to vote on Election Day at the polls and automatically registering all eligible citizens to vote (78% each). Among Republicans, only about half favor each of these proposals (49% each).

The partisan gap is nearly as wide in support for allowing people convicted of felonies to vote after serving their sentences (82% of Democrats favor this, compared with 55% of Republicans).

And while majorities in both parties favor using automatic methods to remove inaccurate and duplicate registrations from voter lists, Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to support removing people from voter lists if they have not recently voted or confirmed their registrations. About half of Republicans (53%) favor this, compared with 24% of Democrats.

As previous surveys have found, there is broad public support (76% favor) for requiring all voters to show a government-issued photo ID to vote; Republicans are much more supportive of this than are Democrats (91% vs. 63%), though majorities in both parties support a photo-ID requirement.

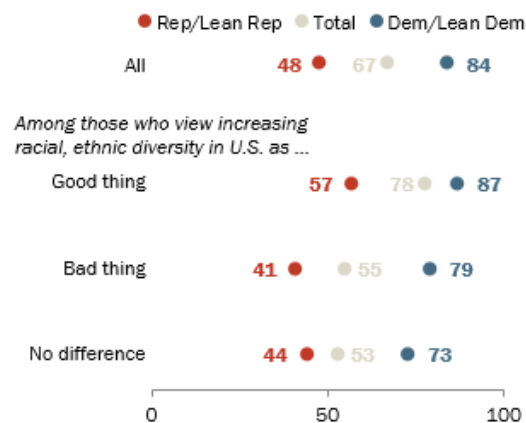
Some proposals for changing how voting is conducted do engender broad bipartisan backing, including automatically updating people's voter registration when they move and requiring electronic voting machines to print a paper backup of the ballot.

And majorities in both parties favor the idea of making Election Day a national holiday, though Democrats are more likely than Republicans to favor this (71% of Democrats, 59% of Republicans).

Among the survey's other major findings:

### Support for making the voting process easier tied to views on diversity in U.S.

*% who say everything possible should be done to make it easy for every citizen to vote ...*



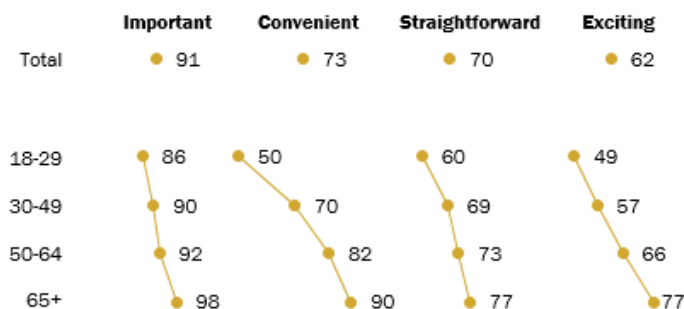
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Opinions on easing the voting process are linked to views of country's ethnic diversity.** Among the roughly one-third of Republicans who say increasing racial and ethnic diversity is a good thing for the U.S., a 57% majority says everything possible should be done to make it easy for all citizens to vote. Among Republicans who view the nation's increasing diversity negatively, or say it has no effect, fewer than half (43%) favor doing everything possible to make voting easy. A similar gap is evident among Democrats, though large majorities who take a positive view of growing racial and ethnic diversity (87%) – and those who do not (76%) – favor doing everything to make voting easy.

## Only half of adults younger than 30 say voting in elections is 'convenient'

% who say voting in elections is ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

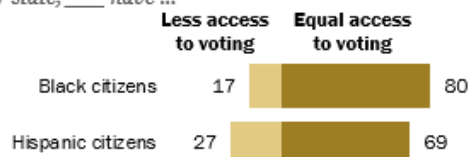
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Young people are less likely to say voting is 'convenient.'** Young people have long been less likely than older adults to vote in elections, [especially midterm elections](#). The new survey finds that young people are more skeptical than older adults about whether voting gives people a voice in government. In addition, young people are less likely to view voting as convenient. Just 50% of adults under 30 say voting is convenient – by far the lowest share of any age group.

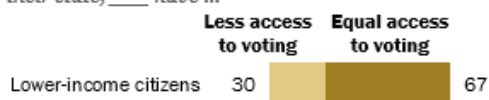
**More concern about eligible voters being prevented from voting than ineligible voters casting ballots.** More people say it would be “major problem” if eligible voters are prevented from voting than if ineligible voters vote in an election. These differences hold across several hypothetical scenarios: 58% say it would be a major problem if even one voter (in an election of 1 million people) who meets all requirements is prevented from voting; 41% say it would be a major problem if one ineligible voter casts a ballot (again, in an election of 1 million).

## Nearly a third say lower-income citizens in their state have less access to voting

% who say, compared with white citizens in their state, \_\_\_\_ have ...



% who say, compared with middle-income citizens in their state, \_\_\_\_ have ...



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**State voting rules are seen as fair, but nearly a third say lower-income people have less access.** An overwhelming majority of Americans (83%) say the election rules in their state are fair. Yet nearly one-in-five (17%) say black citizens in their state have less

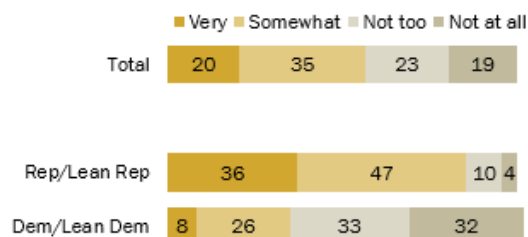


access to voting than whites, 27% say Hispanics have less access than whites and 30% say lower-income citizens have less access to voting than middle-income people.

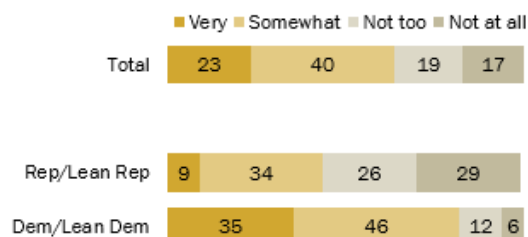
**Little confidence in tech companies to prevent election interference.** A large majority of the public (76%) – including sizable shares in both parties – say technology companies like Facebook, Google and Twitter have a responsibility to prevent misuse of their platforms to influence the midterms. However, just a third (33%) say they are very or somewhat confident that the technology companies will achieve this objective; 66% say they are not too or not at all confident.

### Broad partisan mistrust of the opposing party's commitment to fair elections

% who say the **Republican Party** is \_\_\_ committed to making sure elections in the U.S. are fair and accurate



% who say the **Democratic Party** is \_\_\_ committed to making sure elections in the U.S. are fair and accurate



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Views of parties' commitment to fair elections.** While 62% of Americans say the Democratic Party is at least somewhat committed to fair and accurate elections, just 23% say it is very committed to this objective. A narrower majority (56%) says the Republican Party is very or somewhat committed to fair and accurate elections, with 20% saying the GOP is very committed.

In part, these views reflect deeply cynical views among members of both parties about the other party. Majorities of both Democrats (64%) and Republicans (56%) say the opposing party has little or no commitment to fair and accurate elections in the U.S.

*CORRECTION (Dec. 13, 2018): In the section "Racial differences in views of election administration," the data for those who say they are confident in local officials and those who say they are confident in state-level officials were transposed. The section, including the chart "Nearly nine-in-ten expect workers in their communities to do a good job during the elections," has been corrected to read that 32% are very confident in officials in their local area, 51% are somewhat confident, 12% are not too confident and 3% are*



SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Email address

SIGNUP



MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT OUR WORK

DONATE

REPORT MATERIALS
Complete Report PDF
Topline
American Trends Panel Wave 38 Dataset

TABLE OF CONTENTS

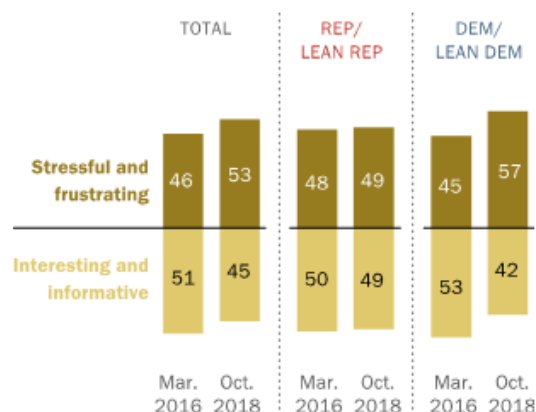
NOVEMBER 5, 2018

# More Now Say It's 'Stressful' to Discuss Politics With People They Disagree With

*Liberal Democrats most likely to say it is stressful*

## More Democrats say talking politics with those on other side is 'stressful'

% who say that talking about politics with people they disagree with is generally ...



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Over the past two years, Americans have become more likely to say it is “stressful and frustrating” to have political conversations with those they disagree with. The change in opinions has come largely among Democrats: 57% now say that talking about politics with people they disagree with is stressful and frustrating, up from 45% two years ago.

By contrast, Republicans’ feelings about political conversations with people they disagree have changed very little. About half (49%) continue to find such conversations stressful and frustrating.

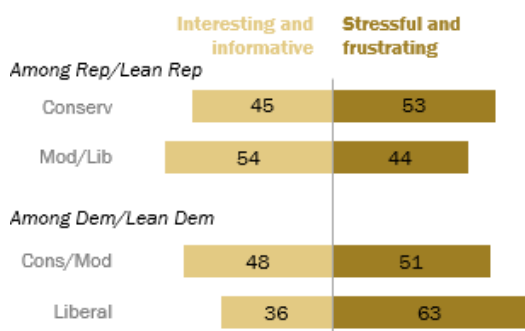
Overall, 53% of Americans say talking about politics with people they disagree with is generally stressful and frustrating; fewer (45%) say such conversations are usually “interesting and informative.” In March 2016, during the presidential primaries, slightly more found such conversations interesting and informative (51%) than stressful and frustrating (46%).

The national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted Sept. 24 to Oct. 7, also finds that a majority of Americans (63%) say that when discussing politics with people they disagree with they find they usually have *less* in common politically than they thought.

Views of whether such conversations lead to more common ground politically – unlike opinions about whether they are informative or stressful – do not differ by partisanship. Majorities in both parties say they find they usually have less in common politically when discussing politics with those who have differing views.

### Liberal Democrats most likely to find political conversations with people they disagree with to be 'stressful'

*% who say that talking about politics with people they disagree with is generally ...*



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

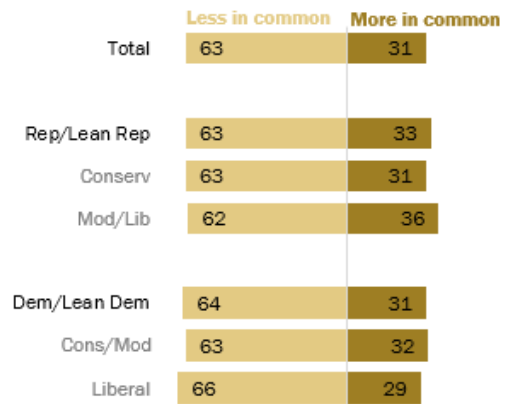
In both parties, there are ideological differences in views of whether conversations with those they disagree with politically are stressful or not. Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, 63% of liberals say such conversations are stressful and frustrating, compared with 51% of conservatives and moderates.

Among Republicans and Republican leaners, somewhat more conservatives (53%) than moderates and liberals (44%) say it is stressful to discuss politics with those they disagree with.

### Majorities of Republicans and Democrats say talking politics with people whose views differ does not lead to more common ground

**Few find that when talking to those with differing views, they have more in common than they thought**

*% who say that when talking about politics with people they disagree with, they usually find they have \_\_\_\_ politically than they thought*



Note: No answer not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A majority of Americans (63%) say that when they talk about politics with people they disagree with, they usually find they have “less in common” politically than they thought previously. Fewer than a third of Americans (31%) say they find they have more in common with people they disagree with politically.

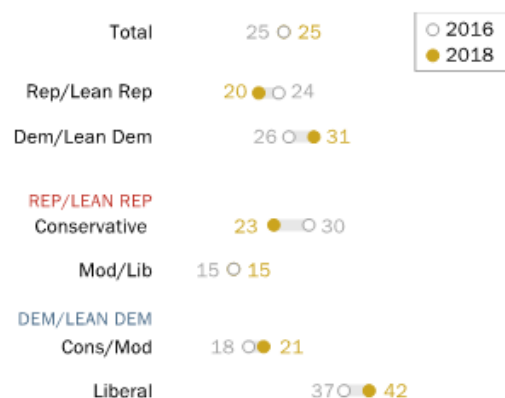
These opinions have changed only modestly since 2016, when 63% said that when discussing politics with people they disagreed with, they had less in common than they thought.

There is little division across the partisan and ideological spectrum: More than six-in-ten in each group say they find that when they discuss politics with people they disagree with, they usually find they have “less in common” politically than they thought.

**Trump remains as big a topic of conversation today as he was shortly after the 2016 election**

## Trump a focal point of conversations more for liberal Dems than others

% who say Trump's presidency and policies have come up in conversations "very often"



Note: In 2016, question was worded: "How often has Donald Trump's election and plans for his presidency come up in the conversations you have, either in person, over the phone or online?"  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Currently, a majority (62%) of Americans say Donald Trump's presidency and policies come up very often (25%) or somewhat often (37%) in conversation. Far fewer (38%) say Trump comes up not too often or not at all often.

That is similar to people's views of how often Trump came up in conversation in December 2016, shortly after his presidential victory. At that time, 25% said Trump's election and plans for his presidency came up in conversations very often, while 40% said they were topics somewhat often.

As was the case in late 2016, Trump is a more frequent topic of conversation for liberal Democrats than for other Democrats or among Republicans. Currently, 42% of liberal Democrats say Trump's presidency comes up in conversations very often; that is double the share of conservatives and moderates who say this.

Among Republicans, Trump comes up more in conversation among conservatives (23% very often) than among GOP moderates and liberals (15%). The share of conservative Republicans who say Trump comes up very often in conversation has slipped since 2016, from 30% then to 23% now.



### SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

SIGNUP



JANUARY 17, 2019



# Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues

*Among Republicans, Gen Z stands out in views on race, climate and the role of government*

BY **KIM PARKER** ([HTTPS://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/STAFF/KIM-PARKER/](https://www.pewresearch.org/staff/kim-parker/)), **NIKKI GRAF** ([HTTPS://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/STAFF/NIKKI-GRAF/](https://www.pewresearch.org/staff/nikki-graf/)) AND **RUTH IGIELNIK** ([HTTPS://WWW.PEWRESEARCH.ORG/STAFF/RUTH-IGIELNIK/](https://www.pewresearch.org/staff/ruth-igielnik/))



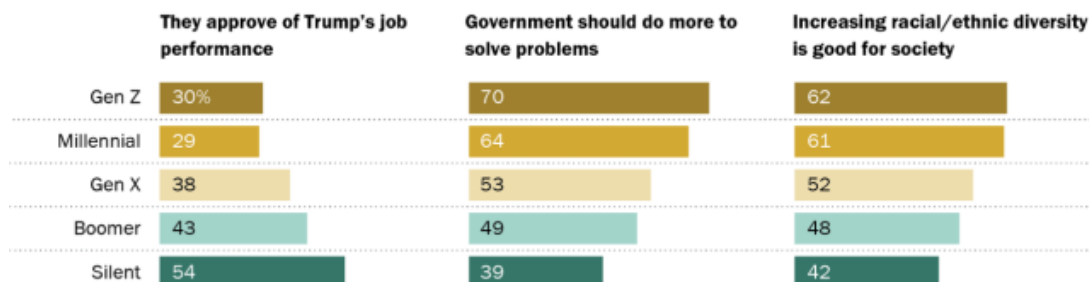
No longer the new kids on the block, Millennials have moved firmly into their 20s and 30s, and a new generation is coming into focus. **Generation Z** (<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>) – diverse and on track to be the most well-educated generation yet – is moving toward adulthood with a liberal set of attitudes and an openness to emerging social trends.

On a range of issues, from Donald Trump’s presidency to the role of government to racial equality and climate change, the views of Gen Z – those ages 13 to 21 in 2018 – mirror those of Millennials.<sup>1</sup> In each of these realms, the two younger generations hold views that differ significantly from those of their older counterparts. In most cases, members of the Silent Generation are at the opposite end, and Baby Boomers and Gen Xers fall in between.<sup>2</sup>



## Gen Z and Millennials differ from older generations in views on Trump, role of government and growing diversity in U.S.

% saying ...



Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.

"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

It's too early to say with certainty how the views of this new generation will evolve. Most have yet to reach voting age, and their outlook could be altered considerably by changing national conditions, world events or technological innovations. Even so, two new Pew Research Center surveys, one of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 and one of adults ages 18 and older, provide some compelling clues about where they may be headed and how their views could impact the nation's political landscape.

[https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-01/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-01/) Only about three-in-ten Gen Zers and Millennials (30% and 29%, respectively) approve of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president. This compares with 38% of Gen Xers, 43% of Boomers and 54% of Silents. Similarly, while majorities in Gen Z and the Millennial generation say government should do more to solve problems, rather than that government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals, Gen Xers and Boomers are more evenly divided on this issue. For their part, most Silents would like to see a less activist government.

When it comes to views on race, the two younger generations are more likely than older generations to say that blacks are treated less fairly than whites in the United States today. And they are much more likely than their elders to approve of NFL players kneeling during the national anthem as a sign of protest.

The younger generations are also more accepting of some of the ways in which American society is changing. Majorities among Gen Z and the Millennial generation say increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. is a good thing for society, while older generations are less convinced of this. And they're more likely to have a positive view of interracial and same-sex marriage than their older counterparts.

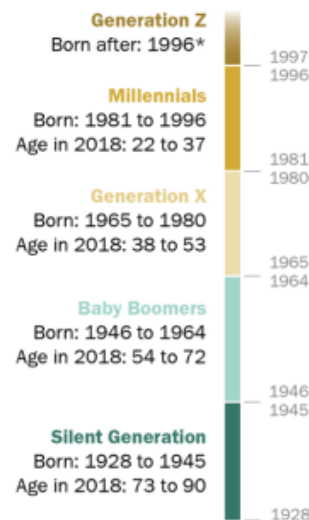
As a [recent Pew Research Center report](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/11/15/early-benchmarks-show-post-millennials-on-track-to-be-most-diverse-best-educated-generation-yet/)

<https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/11/15/early-benchmarks-show-post-millennials-on-track-to-be-most-diverse-best-educated-generation-yet/>, highlighted, Gen Z is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation we have seen, but this isn't all that's driving the attitudes of this generation when it comes to issues surrounding race and diversity. There are significant, if more modest, generational differences on these issues even among non-Hispanic whites.

### Roughly a third of Gen Zers know someone who uses gender-neutral pronouns

[https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-02/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-02/) While Generation Z's views resemble those of Millennials in many areas, Gen Zers are distinct from Millennials and older generations in at least two ways, both of which reflect the cultural context in which they are coming of age. Gen Zers are more likely than Millennials to say they know someone who prefers that others use gender-neutral

### The generations defined



\*No chronological endpoint has been set for this group. In this analysis, Generation Z includes those ages 13 to 21 in 2018.

"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



pronouns to refer to them: 35% say this is the case, compared with a quarter of Millennials. Among each older generation, the share saying this drops: 16% of Gen Xers, 12% of Boomers and just 7% of Silents say this.

The youngest generation is also the most likely to say forms or online profiles that ask about a person's gender should include options other than "man" or "woman." Roughly six-in-ten Gen Zers (59%) hold this view, compared with half of Millennials and four-in-ten or fewer Gen Xers, Boomers and Silents.

These findings seem to speak more to exposure than to viewpoint, as roughly equal shares of Gen Zers and Millennials say society should be more accepting of people who don't identify as either a man or a woman.

Members of Gen Z also stand out somewhat in their views on the role social media plays in modern news consumption. These teens and young adults are much less likely than older generations to say the fact that more people are getting their news from social media is a bad thing for society – 39% of Gen Zers hold this view, compared with about half among each of the older generations.

### Among Republicans, Gen Z stands out on some key issues

While they are young and their political views may not be fully formed, there are signs that those in Generation Z who identify as Republican or lean to the Republican Party diverge somewhat from older Republicans – even Millennials – in their views on several key issues. These same generational divides are not as apparent among Democrats.

([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-22/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-22/)) On views about race relations, Gen Z

Republicans are more likely than older generations of Republicans to say that blacks are treated less fairly than whites. Among Republicans, 43% of Gen Zers say this, compared with 30% of Millennials and roughly 20% of Gen Xers, Boomers and Silents. Gen Z Republicans are also much more likely than their GOP counterparts in older generations to say increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. is a good thing for society. On each of these measures, Democrats' views are nearly uniform across generations.

In addition, the youngest Republicans stand apart in their views on the role of government and the causes of climate change. Gen Z Republicans are much more likely than Republicans in older generations to say government should do more to solve problems. And they are less likely than their older counterparts to attribute the earth's warming temperatures to natural patterns, as opposed to human activity.

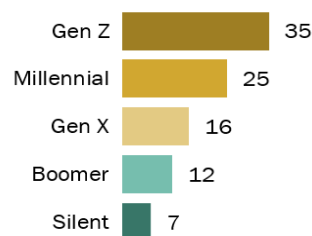
While younger and older Americans differ in many of their views, there are some areas where generation is not as clearly linked with attitudes. When it comes to the merits of having more women running for political office, majorities across generations say this is a good thing for the country. Majorities in each generation also say that, on balance, legal immigrants have had a positive impact on the U.S.

This analysis is based on a survey of 920 U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted online Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018, combined with a nationally representative survey of 10,682 adults ages 18 and older conducted online Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, using Pew Research Center's [American Trends Panel](https://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/american-trends-panel/) (<https://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/american-trends-panel/>)

<sup>3</sup> Findings based on Generation Z combine data from the teens survey with data from the 18- to 21-year-old respondents in the adult survey.

## Gen Z more familiar with gender-neutral pronouns

*% saying they personally know someone who prefers that others refer to them using gender-neutral pronouns*



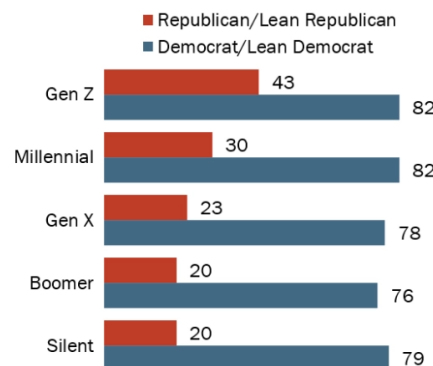
Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.

"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Gen Z Republicans more likely than other Republicans to say blacks aren't treated fairly

*% saying that overall in our country today, blacks are treated less fairly than whites*



Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.

"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Gen Zers and Millennials share views on politics and policy; large generational gaps among Republicans

When it comes to views on political issues and the current political climate, younger generations have consistently held more liberal views (<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/20/a-wider-partisan-and-ideological-gap-between-younger-older-generations/>) than older generations in recent years. Today, members of Generation Z hold many similar views to Millennials, and both tend to be more liberal than older generations.

([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-04/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-04/)) Seven-in-ten Gen Zers say the government should do more to solve problems in this country, while just 29% say the government is doing too many things that are better left to individuals and businesses. Gen Zers are slightly more likely to favor government activism than Millennials, and significantly more likely than older generations: 53% of Gen Xers, 49% of Baby Boomers and 39% of Silents favor government involvement over businesses and individuals.

Among Republicans and those who lean to the Republican Party, the generational divides are even starker. Roughly half (52%) of Gen Z Republicans say they think the government should be doing more to solve problems, compared with 38% of Millennial Republicans and 29% of Gen Xers. About a quarter of Republican Baby Boomers (23%) and fewer GOP Silents (12%) believe the government should be doing more.

Among Democrats, however, these generational divides largely disappear. Roughly eight-in-ten Gen Z (81%) and Millennial Democrats (79%) say the government should do more to solve problems, as do about seven-in-ten Democratic Gen Xers, Boomers and Silents.

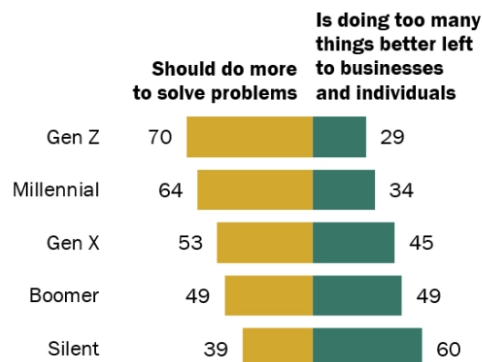
([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-05/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-05/)) Gen Zers' views about climate change are virtually identical to those of Millennials and not markedly different from Gen Xers. About half in all three generations say the earth is getting warmer due to human activity. Boomers are somewhat more skeptical of this than Gen Zers or Millennials. Members of the Silent Generation are least likely to say this (38%) and are more likely to say the earth is warming mainly due to natural patterns (28%) than are Gen Zers, Millennials and Gen Xers.

Among Republicans, Gen Z stands out from older generations as the least likely to say the earth is warming because of natural patterns – 18% say this. By comparison, 30% of Millennial, 36% of Gen X and roughly four-in-ten Boomer (42%) and Silent Generation Republicans (41%) say the same. Almost no generation gap exists among Democrats in views on this issue.

When it comes to views of Donald Trump, there are sizable generational divides, particularly among Republicans. Nine-in-ten Republicans in the Silent Generation approve of the job the president is doing, as do 85% of Baby Boomer Republicans and 76% of Gen X Republicans; smaller majorities of GOP Millennials (65%) and Gen Zers (59%) think he's doing a good job.

### Gen Z and Millennials see bigger role for government

% saying government ...

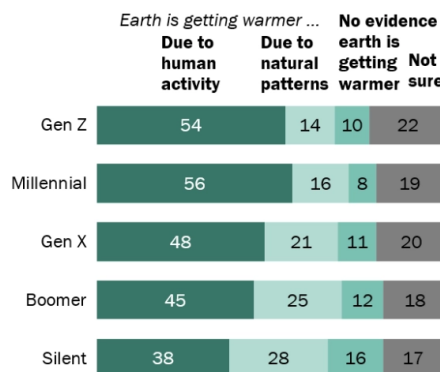


Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018. "Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### Gen Z, Millennials most likely to see link between human activity, climate change

% saying ...



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018. "Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

[https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-06/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-06/)) Younger generations also have a different view of the U.S. relative to other countries in the world. While pluralities of nearly all generations (with the exception of the Silent Generation) say the U.S. is one of the best countries in the world along with some others, Gen Zers and Millennials are the least likely to say the U.S. is better than *all* other countries. Only 14% and 13%, respectively, hold this view, compared with one-in-five Gen Xers, 30% of Boomers and 45% of Silents.

Roughly three-in-ten Gen Zers and Millennials say there are other countries that are better than the U.S.

In their views about the general direction of the country, Gen Zers are mostly downbeat, but they're not alone in that assessment. Among Gen Zers, Millennials and Gen Xers, two-thirds or more say things in this country are generally going in the wrong direction. About six-in-ten Boomers (61%) say the same. Members of the Silent Generation have a less negative view (53% say things are going in the wrong direction).

Today's 13- to 21-year-olds are only slightly more likely than Millennials to say ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Washington (53% of Gen Zers say this vs. 46% of Millennials). And their views on this issue don't differ much from those of Gen Xers, Boomers or Silents (50%, 58% and 58%, respectively, say citizens can have a lot of influence on the government).

**Stark generational gaps in views on race**

Younger generations have a different perspective than their older counterparts on the treatment of blacks in the United States. Two-thirds of Gen Z (66%) and 62% of Millennials say blacks are treated less fairly than whites in the U.S. Fewer Gen Xers (53%), Boomers (49%) and Silents (44%) say this. Roughly half of Silents (44%) say both races are treated about equally, compared with just 28% among Gen Z.

The patterns are similar after controlling for race: Younger generations of white Americans are far more likely than whites in older generations to say blacks are not receiving fair treatment.

Younger generations also have a different viewpoint on the issue of NFL players kneeling during the national anthem as a protest. Majorities among Gen Z (61%) and the Millennial generation (62%) approve of the protests. Smaller shares of Gen Xers (44%) and Baby Boomers (37%) favor these actions. Members of the Silent Generation disapprove of the protests by a more than two-to-one margin (68% disapprove, 29% approve).

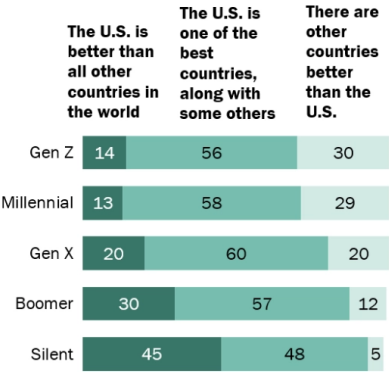
[https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-08/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-08/)) Gen Zers and Millennials share similar views about racial and ethnic change in the country. Roughly six-in-ten from each generation say increased racial and ethnic diversity is a good thing for our society. Gen Xers are somewhat less likely to agree (52% say this is a good thing), and older generations are even less likely to view this positively.

Younger Republicans again stand out in this regard. Half of Gen Z Republicans (51%) say increased racial and ethnic diversity is a good thing for the country. This compares with 38% of Millennial, 34% of Gen X, 30% of Boomer and 28% of Silent Generation Republicans. Among Democrats, there is widespread agreement across generations.

Though they differ in their views over the changing racial and ethnic makeup of the country, across generations most Americans agree about the impact that legal immigrants have on society. On balance, all generations see legal immigration as more positive than negative. Across most generations, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say legal immigrants are having a positive impact. However, within Gen Z there is no partisan gap on this issue.

**About three-in-ten Gen Zers, Millennials say there are other countries that are better than the U.S.**

% saying ...



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.  
"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

When it comes to views about how careful people should be in using potentially offensive language, members of Gen Z are divided over whether people need to be more careful or if concerns about political correctness have gone too far. Some 46% of Gen Zers say people need to be more careful about the language they use to avoid offending people with different backgrounds, while 53% say too many people are easily offended these days over the language that others use.

Gen Zers' views are only modestly different from those of Millennials and Gen Xers on this topic: 39% and 38%, respectively, say people need to be more careful about the language they use, while about six-in-ten say people are too easily offended these days. Interestingly, members of the Silent Generation are closer to members of Gen Z in their views on this topic than they are to Boomers, Gen Xers or Millennials.

## Gen Z and Millennials have similar views on gender and family

([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-09/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-09/)).

([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-10/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-10/)) Since they first entered adulthood, Millennials have been at the leading edge of [changing views](#)

(<https://www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>) on same-sex marriage. In 2014, when a narrow majority of all adults (52%) said they favored allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally, 67% of Millennials held that view. Today, members of Generation Z are just as likely as Millennials to say allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry has been a good thing for the country (48% of Gen Zers and 47% of Millennials hold this view). One-third of Gen Xers say this is a good thing for the country, as do 27% of Baby Boomers. Members of the Silent Generation are the least enthusiastic (18% say this is a good thing).

Relatively few Gen Zers or Millennials (15%) say same-sex marriage is a bad thing for society. Boomers and Silents are much more likely to view this change negatively (32% and 43%, respectively, say this is a bad thing). Across generations, about four-in-ten say allowing gays and lesbians to marry hasn't made much of a difference for the U.S.

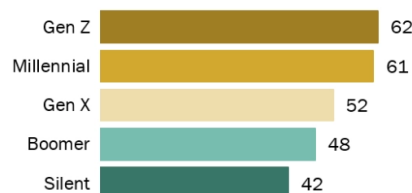
In other ways, too, Gen Zers and Millennials are similar in their openness to changes that are affecting the institutions of marriage and family. Roughly half (53%) from each generation say interracial marriage is a good thing for our society. Gen Xers are somewhat less likely to agree (41% say this is a good thing), and older generations are much less likely to view interracial marriage positively. Relatively few across generations say this trend is bad for society; majorities of Silents (66%) and Boomers (60%) say it doesn't make much difference, as do 53% of Xers.

When it comes to couples living together without being married, roughly two-thirds of each generation (with the exception of Silents) say this doesn't make much of a difference for society. About one-in-five Gen Zers and Millennials say cohabitation is a good thing for society – higher than the shares for older generations. Fully 41% of Silents say this is bad thing for the country, as do about a quarter of Boomers.

Compared with their views on cohabitation, the youngest generations have a more negative assessment of the impact of single women raising children: 35% among Gen Z and 36% of Millennials say this is a bad thing for society; roughly four-in-ten Gen Xers and Boomers and 48% of Silents say the same. About half of Gen Zers and Millennials say this doesn't make much difference for society, while relatively few (15%) view it as a good thing.

## Younger generations see increased diversity as good for society

*% saying increasing racial and ethnic diversity is a good thing for our society*



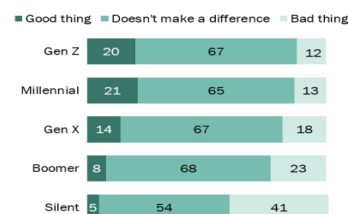
Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.

"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

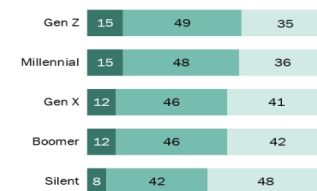
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Most generations are indifferent about cohabitation but have a more negative view of single motherhood

*% saying couples living together without being married is a \_\_\_\_ for our society*



*% saying single women raising children on their own is a \_\_\_\_ for our society*



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.

"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Across generations, majorities say financial and child care responsibilities should be shared

([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-11/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-11/)) In their views about gender roles within couples, members of Generation Z are virtually identical to Millennials and Gen Xers and quite similar to Baby Boomers. Large majorities in all four groups say that, in households with a mother and a father, the responsibility for providing for the family financially should be shared equally. About one-in-five Gen Zers, Millennials and Gen Xers – and a quarter of Boomers – say this responsibility should fall primarily on the fathers. Very few say mothers should be mostly responsible for this. Silents are the outliers on this issue: 40% say fathers should be mostly responsible for providing for their families financially, while 58% say this responsibility should be shared between mothers and fathers.

For the most part, there are no notable gender gaps in views on this issue; the Silent Generation is the exception. Among Gen Zers, Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers, male and female respondents are largely in agreement that mothers and fathers should share family financial responsibility. Among members of the Silent Generation, roughly half of men (49%) but 33% of women say fathers should be mostly responsible for providing for the family financially.

Large majorities (84% or more) across generations say that responsibility for taking care of children should be shared by mothers and fathers in households with two parents. Some 13% among Gen Z say this responsibility should fall mainly to mothers; similar shares of each of the other generations say the same. Very few say raising children should fall mostly to dads. Male and female respondents across generations have similar views on this issue.

Widespread enthusiasm across generations for more women entering politics

([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-12/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-12/)) A majority of Americans, regardless of generation, view the increasing number of women running for public office as a positive change for our society. Roughly two-thirds of Gen Zers, Millennials and Gen Xers say this is a good thing, as do 61% of Boomers and 55% of Silents. About four-in-ten in the Silent Generation (39%) say this trend doesn't make much difference for society, somewhat higher than the share among the three youngest generations (roughly three-in-ten).

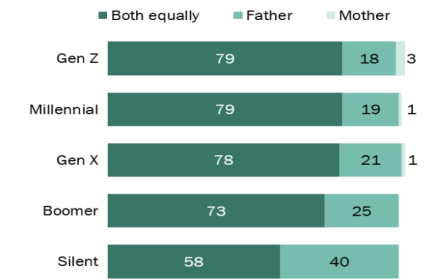
There are significant gender gaps on this question, with female respondents expressing much more enthusiasm about the growing number of women running for office in each generation except the Silents. Among Gen Zers, 76% of young women, versus 57% of young men, say the fact that more women are running for office is a good thing for society. The pattern is similar for Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers. However, among Silents, roughly equal shares of men (57%) and women (54%) say this is a good thing.

Gen Zers most likely to say forms or online profiles should offer gender options beyond 'man' and 'woman'

The recognition of people who don't identify as a man or a woman has garnered increased attention amid changing laws concerning gender options on [official documents](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/27/nyregion/gender-neutral-birth-certificate.html) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/27/nyregion/gender-neutral-birth-certificate.html>) and growing usage of [gender-neutral pronouns](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/03/28/the-singular-gender-neutral-they-added-to-the-associated-press-stylebook/) (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/03/28/the-singular-gender-neutral-they-added-to-the-associated-press-stylebook/>).

Majorities across generations say financial responsibilities should be shared in two-parent households

% saying \_\_\_\_ should be mostly responsible for providing for the family financially in households where there's a mother and father

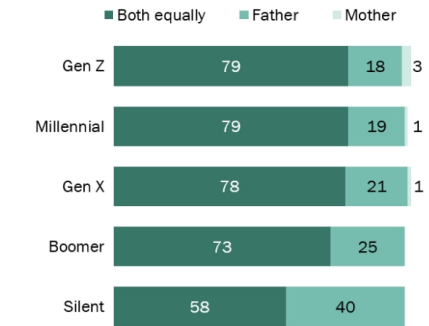


Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Less than 1% of Boomer and Silent respondents answered Mother. Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018. "Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Majorities across generations say financial responsibilities should be shared in two-parent households

% saying \_\_\_\_ should be mostly responsible for providing for the family financially in households where there's a mother and father



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Less than 1% of Boomer and Silent respondents answered Mother. Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018. "Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-13/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-13/)) There are stark generational differences in views on these issues. Generation Z is the most likely of the five generations to say that when a form or online profile asks about a person's gender it should include options other than "man" and "woman"; a 59% majority of Gen Zers say this. Half of Millennials say forms or online profiles should include additional gender options, as do about four-in-ten Gen Xers (40%) and Boomers (37%) and roughly a third of those in the Silent Generation (32%).

These views vary widely along partisan lines, with generational differences evident within each party coalition, but sharpest among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. About four-in-ten Republican Gen Zers (41%) think forms should include other gender options, compared with 27% of Republican Millennials, 17% of GOP Gen Xers and Boomers and 16% of Republican Silents. Among Democrats and Democratic leaners, half or more in all generations say this, including 71% of Gen Zers and 55% of Silents.

### Gen Zers and Millennials have similar views on treatment of people who don't identify as a man or woman

([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-14/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-14/)) When it comes to how accepting society in general is of people who don't identify as either a man or a woman, the views of Gen Zers and Millennials differ from those of older generations. Roughly half of Gen Zers (50%) and Millennials (47%) think that society is not accepting enough. Smaller shares of Gen Xers (39%), Boomers (36%) and those in the Silent Generation (32%) say the same.

A plurality of the Silent Generation (41%) say society is *too accepting* of people who don't identify as a man or woman. Across all generations, roughly a quarter say society's acceptance level is about right.

Again, there are large partisan gaps on this question, and Gen Z Republicans stand apart to some extent from other generations of Republicans in their views. Among Republicans, about three-in-ten Gen Zers (28%) say that society is not accepting enough of people who don't identify as a man or woman, compared with 20% of Millennials, 15% of Gen Xers, 13% of Boomers and 11% of Silents. Democrats vary little by generation in shares holding this view.

### Generations differ in their familiarity and comfort with using gender-neutral pronouns

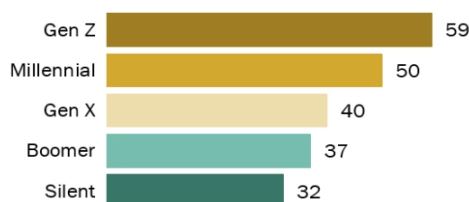
([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-15/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt_1-17-19_generations-15/)) Gen Zers and Millennials are much more familiar than their elders with the idea that some people may prefer gender-neutral pronouns: 74% of Gen Zers and 69% of Millennials say they have heard "a lot" or "a little" about people preferring that others use gender-neutral pronouns such as "they" instead of "he" or "she" when referring to them, with about three-in-ten saying they have heard a lot about this. Most Gen Xers (62%) also have heard a lot or a little about people preferring gender-neutral pronouns.

There is less awareness of this among older generations. Still, half of Boomers and 45% of Silents say they have heard at least a little about gender-neutral pronouns.

Gen Zers are also the most likely among the five generations to say they personally know someone who goes by gender-neutral pronouns, with 35% saying so, compared with 25% of Millennials. Each of these younger generations is more likely than Gen Xers (16%), Boomers (12%) and Silents (7%) to say they personally know someone who prefers that others use

## About six-in-ten Gen Zers say forms should offer other gender options

% saying that when a form or online profile asks about a person's gender it should include options other than 'man' and 'woman'



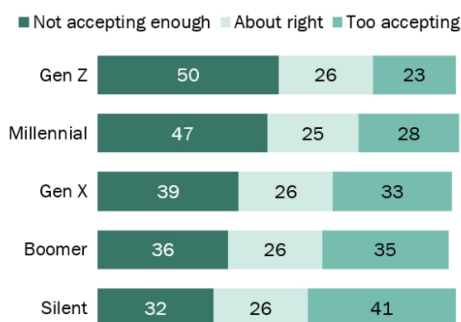
Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.

"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## About half of Gen Zers, Millennials say society isn't accepting enough of people who don't identify as a man or woman

% saying that society is \_\_\_ of people who don't identify as either a man or a woman



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.

"Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

gender-neutral pronouns when referring to them. This generational pattern is evident among both Democrats and Republicans.

([https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/psdt\\_1-17-19\\_generations-16/](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/)) In addition to their greater familiarity with gender-neutral pronouns, Gen Zers and Millennials express somewhat higher levels of comfort with using gender-neutral pronouns, though generational differences on this question are more modest. Majorities of Gen Zers (57%) and Millennials (59%) say they would feel “very” or “somewhat” comfortable using a gender-neutral pronoun to refer to someone if asked to do so, including about three-in-ten (32% of Gen Zers, 31% of Millennials) who say they would be very comfortable doing this. By comparison, Gen Xers and Boomers are evenly divided: About as many say they would feel at least somewhat comfortable (49% and 50%, respectively) as say they would be uncomfortable.

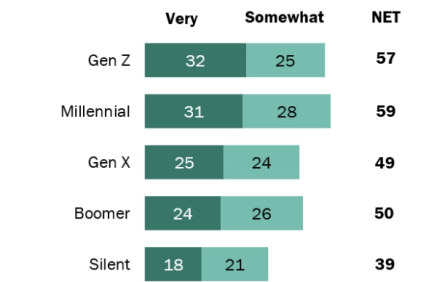
Silents are the only group in which more say they would feel uncomfortable (59%) than say they would feel comfortable (39%) using a gender-neutral pronoun to refer to someone.

There are wide party gaps on this measure across generations. Within each generation, Democrats come down on the side of feeling comfortable, rather than uncomfortable, using a gender-neutral pronoun to refer to someone if asked to do so. In contrast, for each generation of Republicans, majorities say they would feel uncomfortable doing this.

Across generations, knowing someone who goes by gender-neutral pronouns is linked to comfort levels in using these pronouns. Three-quarters of Millennials and about two-thirds of Gen Zers, Gen Xers and Boomers who personally know someone who goes by gender-neutral pronouns say they would feel very or somewhat comfortable referring to someone with a gender-neutral pronoun. Those who don’t know someone are roughly 20 percentage points less likely to say the same (51% of Gen Zers, 54% of Millennials, 46% of Gen Xers and 48% of Boomers who don’t know someone say this).<sup>4</sup>

**Majorities of Gen Zers and Millennials would feel comfortable calling others by gender-neutral pronouns**

% saying they would feel \_\_\_\_ comfortable using a gender-neutral pronoun to refer to someone if asked to do so



Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.  
“Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues”  
**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

# FACTANK

NEWS IN THE NUMBERS

FEBRUARY 13, 2019

## 8 facts about love and marriage in America

BY A.W. GEIGER AND GRETCHEN LIVINGSTON



(Gary Friedman/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images)

The landscape of relationships in America has shifted dramatically in recent decades. From cohabitation to same-sex marriage to interracial and interethnic marriage, here are eight facts about love and marriage in the United States.

**1** Half of Americans ages 18 and older were married in 2017, a share that has remained relatively stable in recent years but is [down 8 percentage points since 1990](#). One factor driving this change is that Americans [are staying single longer](#). The median age at first marriage had reached its highest point on record: 30 years for men and 28 years for women in 2018, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

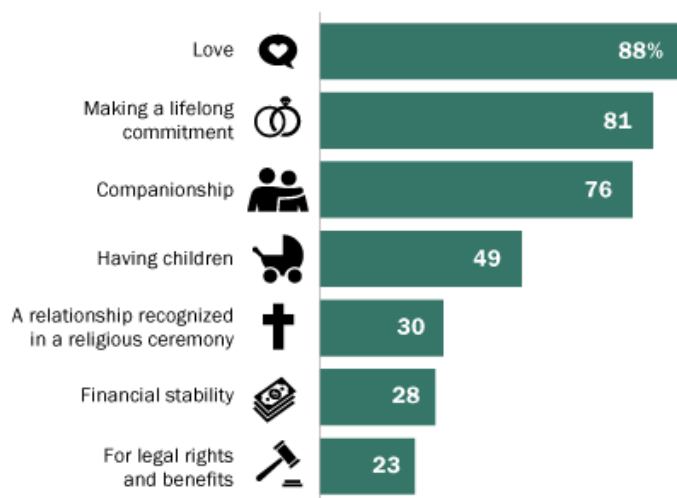
As the U.S. marriage rate has declined, divorce rates [have increased among older Americans](#). In 2015, for every 1,000 married adults ages 50 and older, 10 had divorced – up from five in 1990. Among those ages 65 and older, the divorce rate roughly tripled since 1990.

**2**



## Why get married?

% of the general public saying \_\_\_ is a very important reason to get married



Source: Survey conducted May 10-13, 2013 (online poll).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Love tops the list of Americans' reasons to marry.** About nine-in-ten Americans (88%) cited love as a very important reason to get married, ahead of making a lifelong commitment (81%) and companionship (76%), according to a [2013 Pew Research Center survey](#). Fewer said having their relationship recognized in a religious ceremony (30%), financial stability (28%) or legal rights and benefits (23%) were very important reasons to marry.

However, being a [good financial provider](#) was seen as particularly important for men to be a good husband or partner, according to a 2017 survey by the Center. About seven-in-ten adults (71%) said it was very important for a man to be able to support a family financially to be a good husband or partner, while just 32% said the same for a woman to be a good wife or partner.

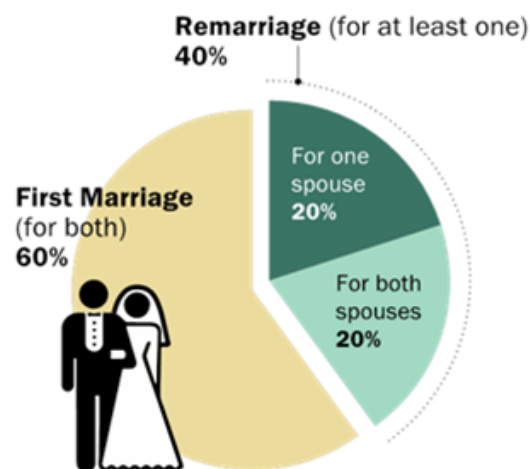
As far as [what helps people stay married](#), married adults said in a 2015 survey that having shared interests (64%) and a satisfying sexual relationship (61%) were very important to a successful marriage. More than half (56%) also named sharing household chores.

**3 The number of U.S. adults cohabiting with a partner is on the rise.** In addition to the half of U.S. adults who were married, 7% were cohabiting in 2016. The number of Americans [living with an unmarried partner](#) reached about 18 million in 2016, up 29% since 2007. Roughly half of cohabiters are younger than 35 – but cohabitation is rising most quickly among Americans ages 50 and older.

Large majorities of Generation Zers, Millennials, Generation Xers and Baby Boomers say couples living together without being married doesn't make a difference for our society, according to a [2019 Pew Research Center report](#). While 54% of those in the Silent Generation say cohabitation doesn't make a difference in society, about four-in-ten (41%) say it is a bad thing, compared with much smaller shares among younger generations.

## 4 Four-in-ten new marriages involve remarriage

% of new marriages in 2013



Note: "New marriages" are marriages that began in the past 12 months. A first marriage is one in which neither spouse has been previously married. A remarriage includes at least one spouse who has been married before. Based on couples, not individuals, where at least one spouse is age 18 or older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Remarriage is on the rise.** In 2013, 23% of married people [had been married before](#), compared with just 13% in 1960. Four-in-ten new marriages in 2013 included a spouse who had said "I do" (at least) once before, and in 20% of new marriages both spouses had been married at least once before.

Remarriage is more common among men than women. Among previously married men (those who were ever divorced or widowed), 64% took a second walk down the aisle, compared with 52% of previously married women, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 Census Bureau data. One possible reason for this disparity is that women are less interested than men in remarrying. Among previously married women, 54% said in a 2014 Pew Research Center survey that they did not want to marry again, compared with 30% of men.

## 5

## Since 1967, a steady increase in U.S. intermarriage

*% of newlyweds who are intermarried*



Note: Data prior to 1980 are estimates. See Methodology for more details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2008-2015 American Community Survey and 1980 decennial census (IPUMS).

"Intermarriage in the U.S. 50 Years After Loving v. Virginia"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**One-in-six newlyweds (17%) were [married to someone of a different race or ethnicity](#) in 2015.** This reflects a steady increase in intermarriage since 1967, when just 3% of newlyweds were intermarried, according to a 2017 Pew Research Center analysis.

While Asian (29%) and Hispanic (27%) newlyweds are most likely to intermarry in the U.S., the most dramatic increases in intermarriage have occurred among black newlyweds, 18% of whom married someone of a different race or ethnicity, up from 5% in 1980. About one-in-ten white newlyweds (11%) are married to someone of a different race or ethnicity.

Among both Gen Zers and Millennials, 53% say people of different races marrying each other [is a good thing](#) for our society, compared with 41% of Gen Xers, 30% of Boomers and 20% of those in the Silent Generation, according to the Center's 2019 report.

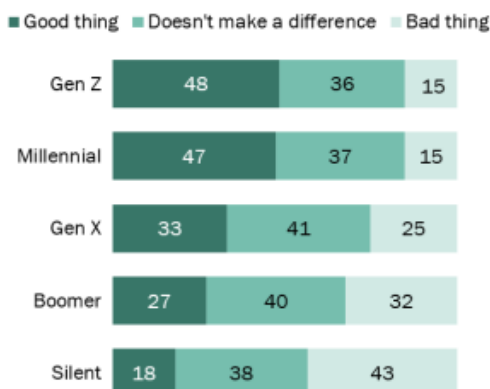
**6 Support for the legalization of same-sex marriage [has grown in the past 10 years](#).** In 2007, Americans opposed legalizing same-sex marriage by a margin of 54% to 37%. In 2017, [more favored](#) (62%) than opposed (32%) allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally.

Surveys [conducted by Gallup](#) found that about one-in-ten LGBT Americans (10%) were married to a same-sex spouse in 2017. Now, a majority (61%) of all same-sex couples who live together are married.

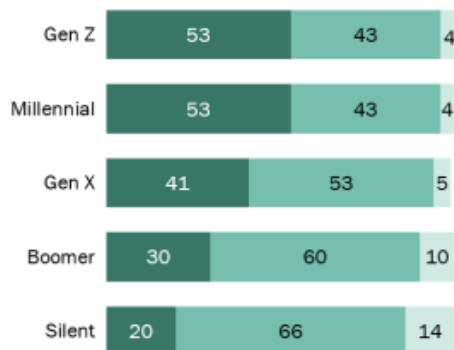
**7**

## About half of Gen Zers and Millennials say same-sex marriage, interracial marriage are good for society

% saying gay and lesbian couples being allowed to marry is a \_\_\_\_ for our society



% saying people of different races marrying each other is a \_\_\_\_ for our society



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.  
 Source: Surveys of U.S. adults ages 18 and older conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018, and U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 conducted Sept. 17-Nov. 25, 2018.  
 "Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Millennials and Generation Z have been at the vanguard of [changing views on same-sex marriage](#).** About half of Gen Zers and Millennials say gay and lesbian couples being allowed to marry is a good thing for our society, while 33% of Gen Xers, 27% of Boomers and 18% of Silents say the same, according to the 2019 report.

**8 Sizable minorities of married people are members of a different religious group than their partner, but marriages and partnerships across political party lines are relatively rare.** About four-in-ten Americans who have married since 2010 (39%) have [a spouse who is in a different religious group](#), compared with only 19% of those who wed before 1960, according to a 2014 Pew Research Center survey. Many of these interfaith marriages are between Christians and those who are religiously unaffiliated.

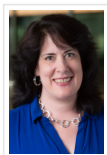
When it comes to politics, a 2016 Pew Research Center survey found 77% of both Republicans and Democrats who were married or living with a partner said their spouse or partner [was in the same party](#).

Topics [Lifestyle, Family and Relationships](#), [Marriage and Divorce](#)



**A.W. Geiger** is a former associate digital producer and writer for Pew Research Center.

[POSTS](#) | [BIO](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [EMAIL](#)



**Gretchen Livingston** is a former senior researcher focusing on fertility and family demographics at Pew Research Center.

[POSTS](#) | [BIO](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [EMAIL](#)



## SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

SIGNUP



## MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT OUR WORK

DONATE

### RELATED

REPORT | MAR 9, 2017

## Led by Baby Boomers, divorce rates climb for America's 50+ population

REPORT | FEB 6, 2014

## New census data show more Americans are tying the knot, but mostly it's the college-educated

REPORT | APR 6, 2017

## Number of U.S. adults cohabiting with a partner continues to rise, especially among those 50 and older

FACT TANK | FEB 14, 2020

# FACTANK

NEWS IN THE NUMBERS

SEPTEMBER 5, 2019

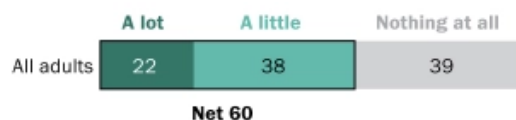
## About one-in-five U.S. adults know someone who goes by a gender-neutral pronoun

BY **A.W. GEIGER** AND **NIKKI GRAF**

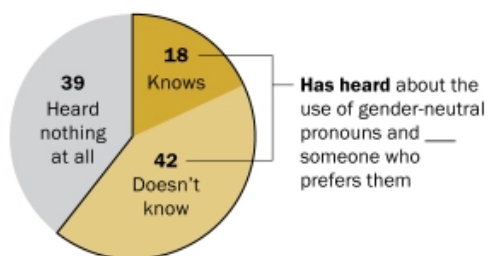
As the experiences of people who don't identify as a man or a woman have [gained attention](#), a majority of Americans say they have heard at least a little about the use of gender-neutral pronouns. And about one-in-five (18%) say they personally know someone who goes by such pronouns.

## About one-in-five Americans say they personally know someone who prefers a pronoun other than 'he' or 'she'

% of U.S. adults saying they have heard \_\_\_\_\_ about the use of gender-neutral pronouns



% of U.S. adults saying they personally know someone who prefers that others use a gender-neutral pronoun when referring to them



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

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

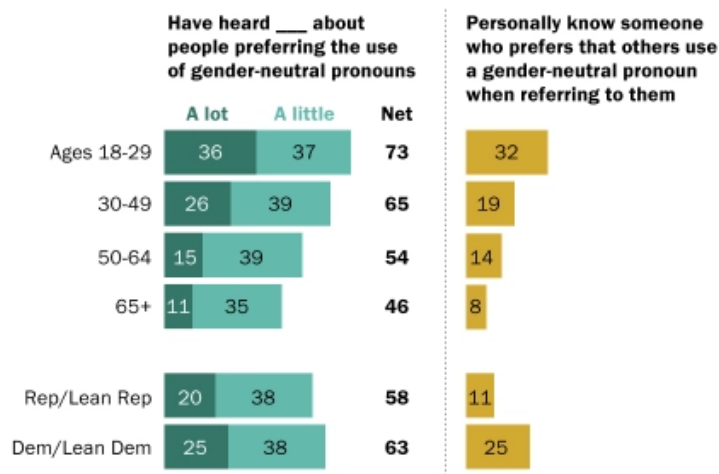
Overall, six-in-ten Americans say they have heard at least a little about people preferring that others use gender-neutral pronouns such as “they” instead of “he” or “she” when referring to them, including 22% who say they have heard *a lot* about preferences for such pronouns, according to a [Pew Research Center survey](#) conducted in fall 2018.

**See also:** [About four-in-ten U.S. adults say forms should offer more than two gender options](#)

Age and political affiliation are major factors in Americans’ awareness of the use of gender-neutral pronouns.

## Younger Americans are more likely to be familiar with the use of gender-neutral pronouns

% of U.S. adults saying they ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Younger adults are more likely than older adults to say they have heard of people preferring gender-neutral pronouns and to know someone who goes by these pronouns. Roughly three-quarters of Americans ages 18 to 29 (73%) say they have heard a little or a lot about people preferring nonbinary pronouns, compared with about two-thirds of those 30 to 49 (65%) and smaller shares of those ages 50 to 64 (54%) and 65 and older (46%). Meanwhile, about three-in-ten adults ages 18 to 29 (32%) personally know someone who goes by these types of pronouns, compared with smaller shares of older adults.

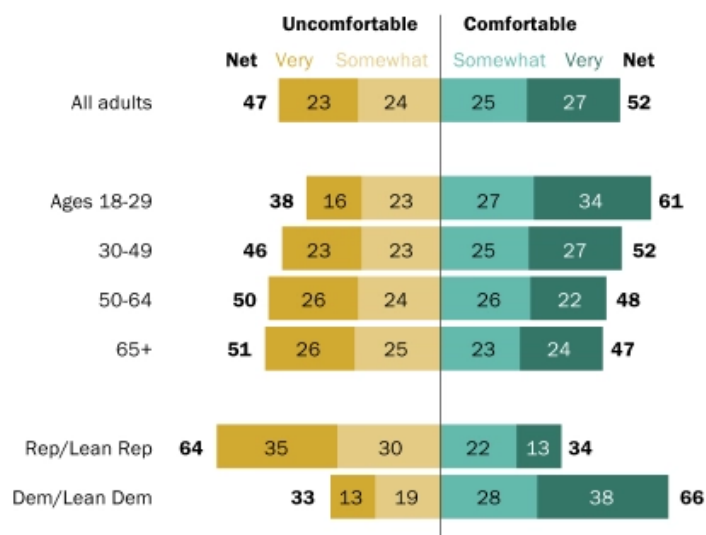
While majorities of both Democrats and Republicans have heard at least a little about people going by gender-neutral pronouns, there is a larger gap between partisans in whether they personally know someone who identifies in this way. A quarter of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say they know someone who prefers being referred to using gender-neutral pronouns, versus 11% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. Party differences remain even when looking only at young adults: About four-in-ten Democrats ages 18 to 29 (39%) say they know someone who goes by gender-neutral pronouns, compared with 22% of Republicans of the same age.

### Are Americans comfortable with the use of gender-neutral pronouns?



## Americans are split on comfort level with using gender-neutral pronouns

% of U.S. adults saying they would be \_\_\_\_ using a gender-neutral pronoun to refer to someone if asked to do so



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Americans are divided when it comes to their comfort with using gender-neutral pronouns. As is the case with some other questions on nonbinary pronoun use, there are notable differences by age and party on whether Americans feel comfortable using gender-neutral pronouns to address those who ask for it, with young adults and Democrats more likely than older Americans and Republicans to express comfort.

Overall, roughly half of Americans (52%) say they would be somewhat or very comfortable using a gender-neutral pronoun to refer to someone, while 47% say they would be somewhat or very uncomfortable doing so.

Among Americans ages 18 to 29, about six-in-ten (61%) say they would feel somewhat or very comfortable using a gender-neutral pronoun to refer to someone if they asked them to do so. By comparison, roughly half of those ages 30 to 49 (52%) and 50 and older (48%) express comfort.

About two-thirds of Democrats (66%) say they would be somewhat or very comfortable using these pronouns to refer to someone if asked to do so, compared with 34% of Republicans. Party divides are present among young adults, too: Roughly seven-in-ten Democrats ages 18 to 29 (72%) say they would be comfortable referring to others with nonbinary pronouns, compared with 44% of Republicans in this age group.

*Note: Findings on these questions were previously released as part of a [report](#) that explored generational differences in views of political and social issues. That report combined data from two surveys: a survey of U.S. adults ages 18 and older and a survey*

of teens ages 13 to 17. The findings in this post are based only on the survey of adults ages 18 and older. See full [topline results](#) and [methodology](#).

Topics [Gender](#), [Social Values](#), [Lifestyle](#), [Language](#)



**A.W. Geiger** is a former associate digital producer and writer for Pew Research Center.

[POSTS](#) | [BIO](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [EMAIL](#)



**Nikki Graf** is a former research associate focusing on social and demographic trends at Pew Research Center.

[POSTS](#) | [BIO](#) | [EMAIL](#)



## SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

SIGNUP



## MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT OUR WORK

DONATE

### RELATED

REPORT | DEC 18, 2019

About four-in-ten U.S. adults say forms should offer more than two gender options

REPORT | OCT 3, 2016

Americans are divided over which public bathrooms transgender people should use

REPORT | DEC 13, 2019

19 striking findings from 2019