



World Justice  
Project

A photograph of the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol building at sunset. The sky is filled with warm, orange and yellow clouds. The Washington Monument is in the foreground on the left, and the U.S. Capitol building is visible behind it on the right.

# The Rule of Law in the United States

Key Findings from the WJP General Population Poll 2024

# Acknowledgements

*The Rule of Law in the United States: Key Findings from the WJP General Population Poll 2021* was produced by the World Justice Project under the research oversight of Alejandro Ponce and the executive direction of Elizabeth Andersen.

The production of this report was led by Ana María Montoya and Tanya Primiani. This report was prepared by Santiago Pardo, Hannah Rigazzi, Victoria Thomaides, and Carlos Toruño.

The findings in this report are taken from the General Population Poll (GPP) conducted for the World Justice Project in 2021. The GPP's conceptual framework and methodology were developed by Mark David Agrast, Juan Carlos Botero, and Alejandro Ponce. The production of this iteration of the country report series was developed by Ana María Montoya, Santiago Pardo, Alejandro Ponce, Tanya Primiani, Hannah Rigazzi, Natalia Rodríguez Cajamarca, Victoria Thomaides, and Carlos Toruño Paniagua with the support of Said Aarji, Erin Campbell, James Davis, Joshua Fuller, Skye Jacobs, and Moss Woodbury.

Sampling, fieldwork, and data processing in the United States was conducted by YouGov, Nordic. Mariana Lopez was the graphic designer for this report. FlitStudio served as lead website developer for the online version of this report with assistance from Natalia Jardon, Mariana Lopez, and Enrique Paulin. Photo for cover provided by YayaErnst via iStock.

© Copyright 2024 by the World Justice Project.

Requests to reproduce this document should be sent to:

Alejandro Ponce  
World Justice Project  
1025 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20005, USA  
Email: [aponce@worldjusticeproject.org](mailto:aponce@worldjusticeproject.org)

## WASHINGTON, DC

1025 Vermont Avenue  
NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20005  
USA  
**P** +1 (202) 407-9330

## MEXICO CITY

Gobernador José  
Guadalupe Covarrubias  
57-20, San Miguel  
Chapultepec, 11850,  
Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico  
City  
[worldjusticeproject.mx](http://worldjusticeproject.mx)

 [worldjusticeproject.org](http://worldjusticeproject.org)

 [facebook.com/thewjp/](https://facebook.com/thewjp/)

 [twitter.com/TheWJP](https://twitter.com/TheWJP)

 [@the-world-justice-project](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-world-justice-project)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## About this Report

- 5 About this Report
- 6 Executive Findings

## Section I: Rule of Law and Trust

- 9 Perceptions on the Rule of Law
- 10 Government Accountability
- 11 Authoritarianism
- 14 Trust

## Section II: Perceptions on the 2024 Presidential Elections

- 18 Integrity of the Electoral Process
- 19 Hypothetical Situations

## Project Design

- 23 Methodology

## Appendix

- 26 Methodological Materials
- 27 About the World Justice Project
- 28 Other Publications

## About this Report

- 5 About this Report
- 6 Executive Findings

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

**EFFECTIVE RULE OF LAW** reduces corruption, combats poverty and disease, and protects people from injustices large and small. Strengthening the rule of law is an important objective for governments, donors, and civil society organizations around the world. To be effective, rule of law development requires clarity about the fundamental features that define the rule of law, as well as an adequate basis for its evaluation and measurement.

*The Rule of Law in the United States: Key Findings from the WJP General Population Poll 2021* presents question-level data drawn from the General Population Poll (GPP), an original data source designed and collected by the World Justice Project. To provide a more in-depth view of trends in perceptions of rule of law in the United States, this report also presents select findings over time and compared to other countries in the international Group of 7 (G7).

The GPP was conducted through online interviews to a nationally representative sample of 1,258 U.S. households in 2021. This poll was designed to capture data on the experiences and perceptions of ordinary people regarding a variety of themes related to the rule of law.

*This report represents the voices of people in the United States and their experiences with the rule of law in their country.*

The data derived from the General Population Poll is presented in this report as thematic briefs, each one highlighting a different dimension of the rule of law from the perspective of people in the United States. These thematic briefs focus on the current rule of law ecosystem in the United States while simultaneously illuminating changes over time and comparisons across the following peer countries in the G7: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. The sections of this report describe people's perceptions of and attitudes towards the following topics: accountability, authoritarianism, fundamental freedoms, corruption, trust in institutions, the criminal justice system and its actors, crime victimization, security, police performance, and discrimination.

# EXECUTIVE FINDINGS

*Consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Quis vel eros donec ac odio tempor orci. Nullam ac tortor vitae purus faucibus ornare suspendisse sed. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis. Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean. Amet volutpat consequat mauris nunc congue nisi. Amet nisl purus in mollis nunc sed id. Quisque id diam vel quam elementum pulvinar.*

## SECTION 1

### Rule of Law and Government Accountability

#### 1. Rule of Law

*Consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Quis vel eros donec ac odio tempor orci. Nullam ac tortor vitae purus faucibus ornare suspendisse sed. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis. Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean.*

#### 2. Government Accountability

*Consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Quis vel eros donec ac odio tempor orci. Nullam ac tortor vitae purus faucibus ornare suspendisse sed. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis.*

## SECTION 2

### Elections and News Consumption

#### 3. Voting and Registration

*Consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Quis vel eros donec ac odio tempor orci. Nullam ac tortor vitae purus faucibus ornare suspendisse sed. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis. Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean.*

#### 4. Integrity of the Electoral Process

*Consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium.*

*Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis. Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean.*

#### 5. Hypothetical Situations

*Consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis. Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean.*

## **6. News Consumption**

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Quis vel eros donec ac odio tempor orci. Nullam ac tortor vitae purus faucibus ornare suspendisse sed. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae.

## **SECTION 3**

### **Elections and News Consumption**

#### **7. Authoritarianism**

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Quis vel eros donec ac odio tempor orci. Nullam ac tortor vitae purus faucibus ornare suspendisse sed. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis. Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean.

#### **8. Fundamental Freedoms**

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Quis vel eros donec ac odio tempor orci. Nullam ac tortor vitae purus faucibus ornare suspendisse sed. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis. Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean.

## **SECTION 4**

### **Corruption and Trust**

#### **9. Corruption and Trust**

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada famesd. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis. Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean.

## **SECTION 5**

### **Law Enforcement**

#### **10. Police**

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Quis vel eros donec ac odio tempor orci. Nullam ac tortor vitae purus faucibus ornare suspendisse sed. Viverra accumsan in nisl Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean.

#### **11. Criminal Justice System**

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas sed tempus urna. Quis vel eros donec ac odio tempor orci. Nullam ac tortor vitae purus faucibus ornare suspendisse sed. Viverra accumsan in nisl nisi scelerisque eu ultrices vitae. Nec ullamcorper sit amet risus nullam eget felis. Sapien eget mi proin sed libero enim sed faucibus turpis. Vehicula.

## Section I: Rule of Law and Trust

9 Perceptions on the Rule of Law

10 Government Accountability

11 Authoritarianism

14 Trust

# Perceptions on the Rule of Law

## Chart 1

### Top Terms Associated to Rule of Law in the United States

Most frequent terms used by people when...

Asked about the term Rule of Law



Asked to describe the current state of the rule of law



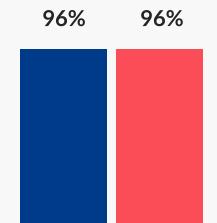
Source: WJP General Population Poll 2024

## Chart 2

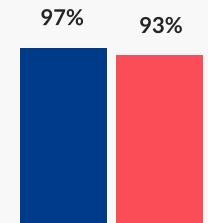
### Relevance of the Rule of Law, by Political Affiliation

Percentage of respondents who believe that the Rule of Law is essential or important in the following topics...

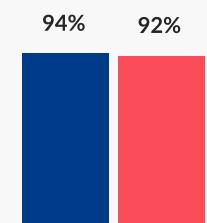
The future of the United States



US democracy



Your own life



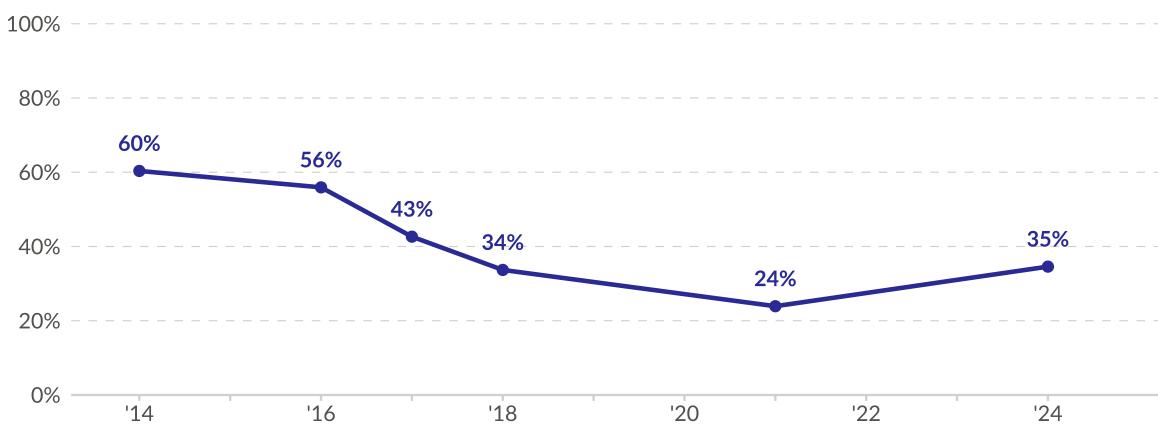
Source: WJP General Population Poll 2024

# Government Accountability

Chart 3.1

## Perceptions of Accountability in the United States over Time

*Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree that high-ranking government officials would be held accountable for breaking the law...*

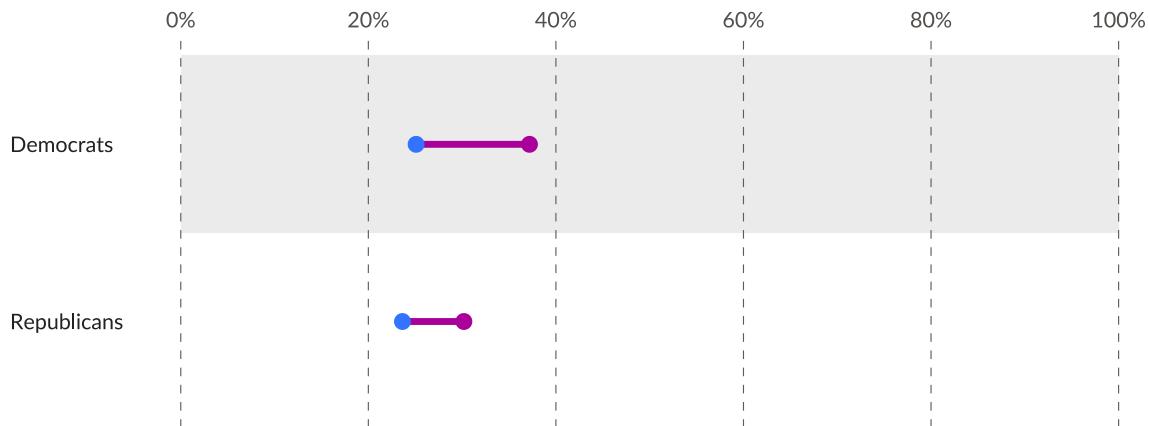


Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021, and 2024

Chart 3.2

## Perceptions of Accountability, by Political Affiliation

*Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree that high-ranking government officials would be held accountable for breaking the law...*



Source: WJP General Population Poll 2021 and 2024

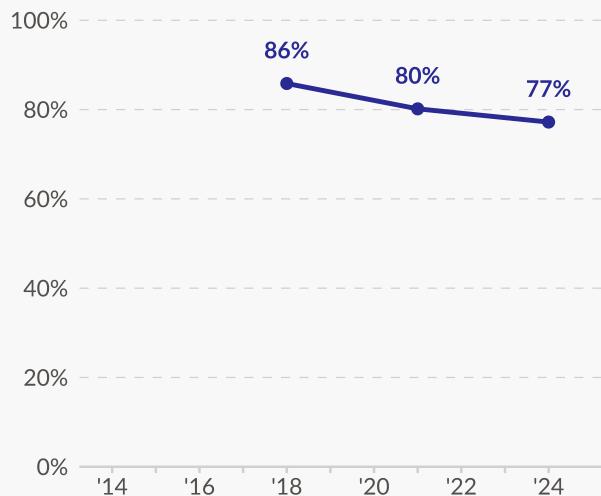
# Authoritarianism

Chart 4

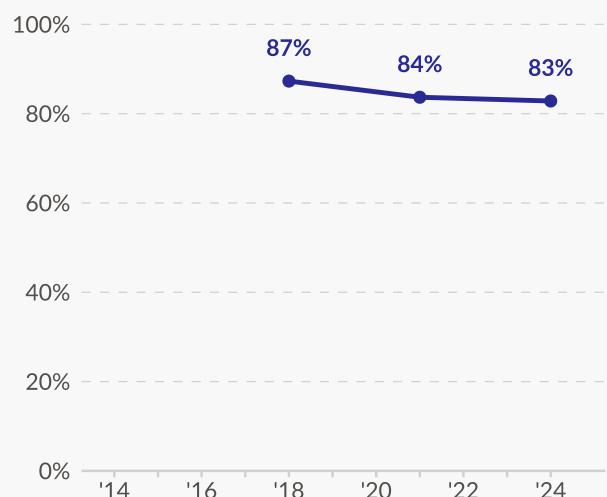
## Attitudes Towards Authoritarianism and Rule of Law over Time

Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with the following statements...

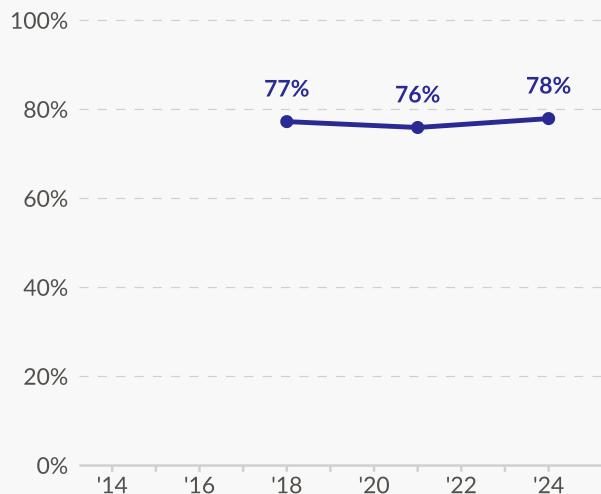
| It is important that citizens have a say in government matters, even at the expense of efficiency.



| The President must always obey the law and the courts.



| It is important to obey the government in power, no matter who you voted for.



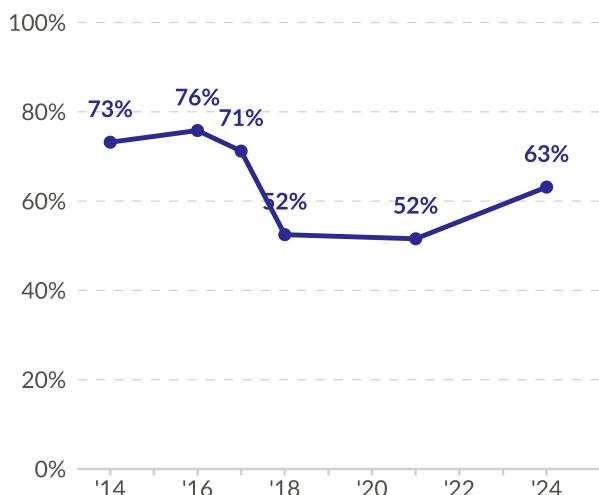
## Chart 5

### Perceptions of Constraints on Government Powers over Time

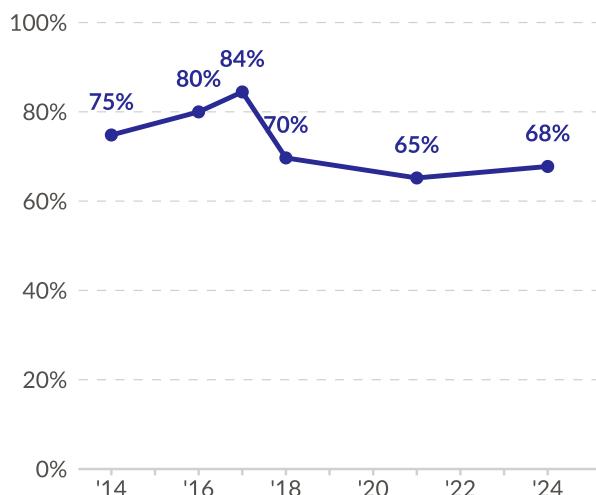
Percentage of respondents in the United States who believe that various actors could hypothetically stop the President's illegal actions

...

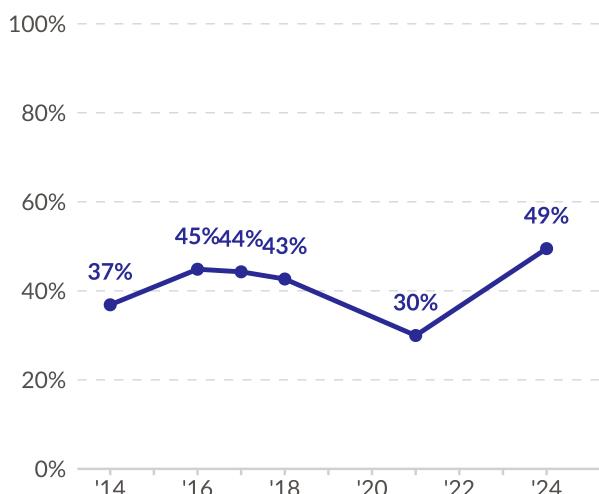
#### Congress



#### Courts



#### Citizens



Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021, and 2024

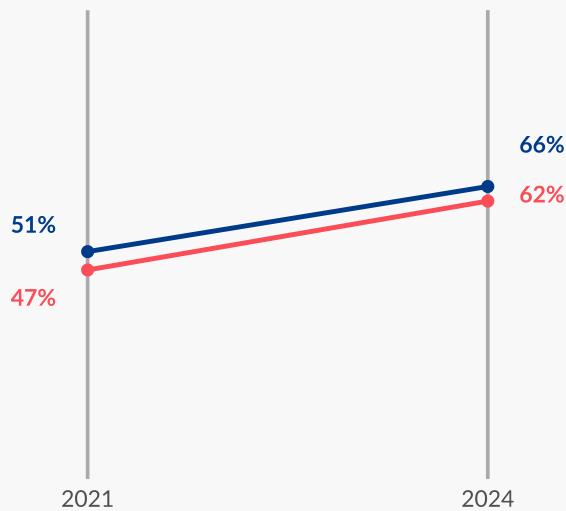
### Chart 6

#### Perceptions of Constraints on Government Powers, by Political Affiliation

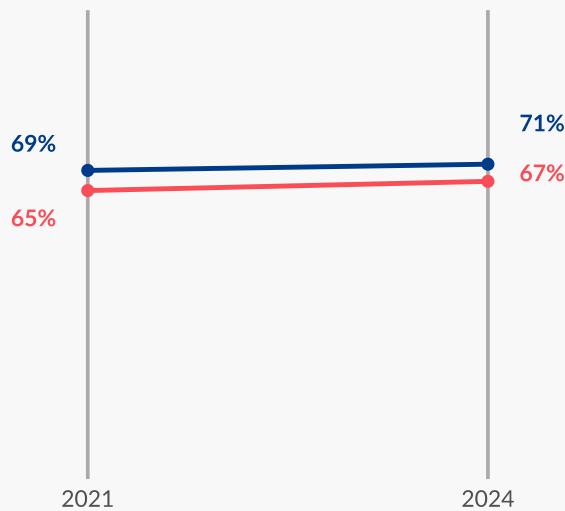
Percentage of respondents in the United States who believe that various actors could hypothetically stop the President's illegal actions

...

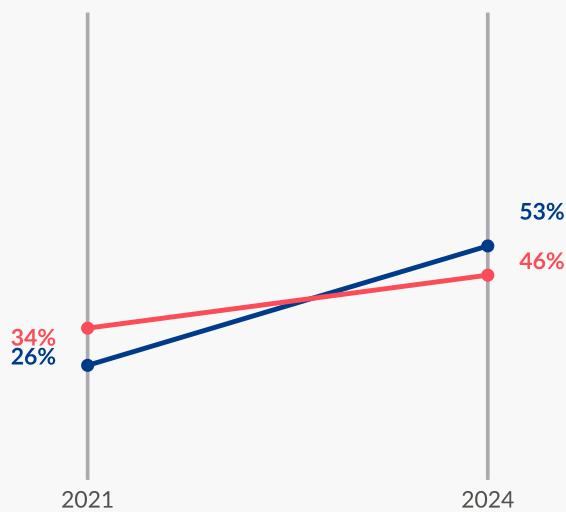
##### Congress



##### Courts



##### Citizens



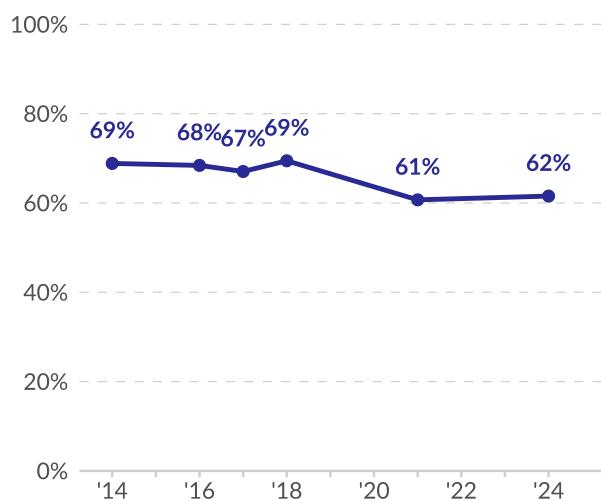
# Trust

Chart 7

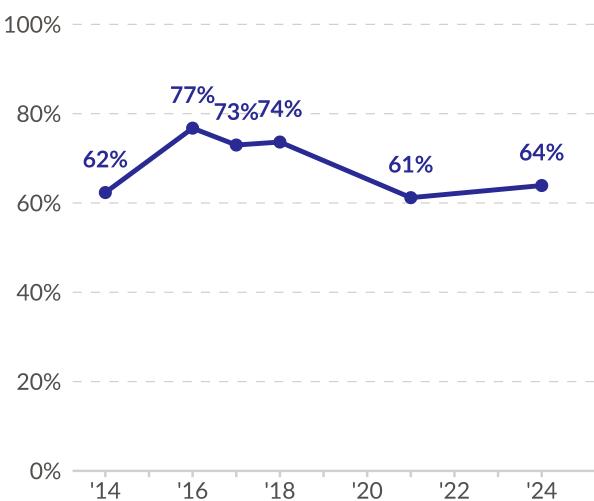
## Trust in Institutions over Time

Percentage of respondents who have a lot or some trust in...

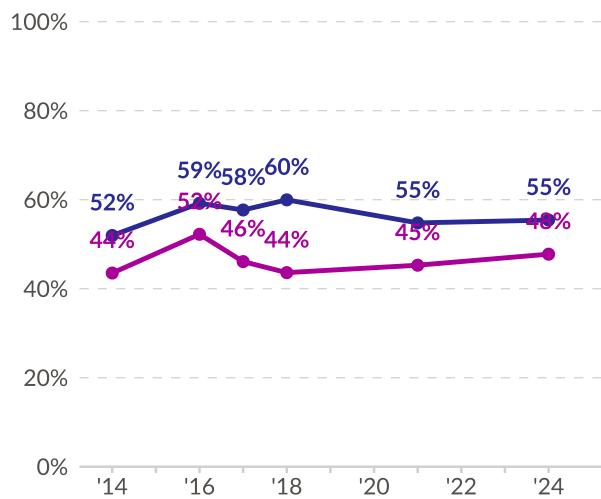
### People Living in Their Country



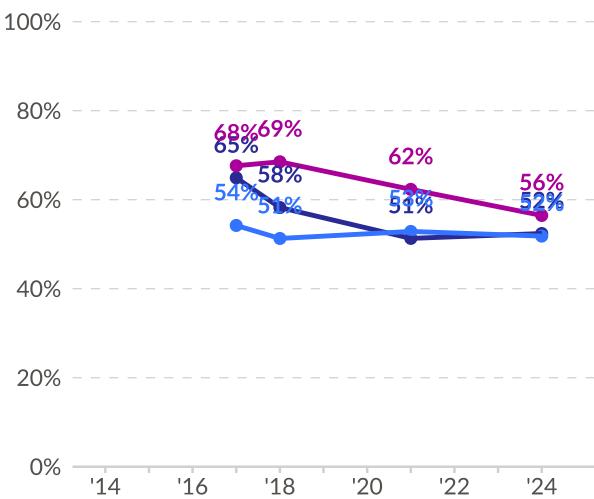
### Police Officers



### Executive



### Justice System



Source: WJP General Population Poll 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021, and 2024

### Chart 8

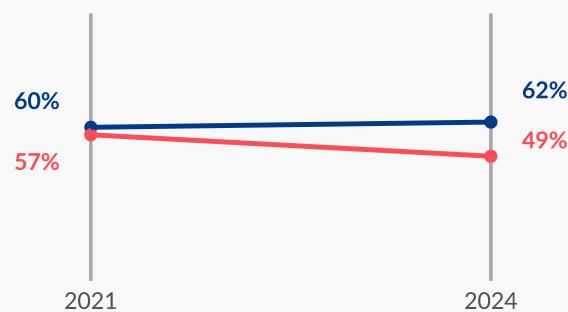
## Trust in Institutions over Time, by Political Affiliation

Percentage of respondents who have a lot or some trust in...

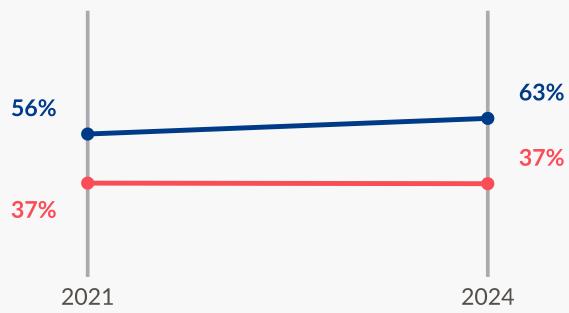
Police Officers



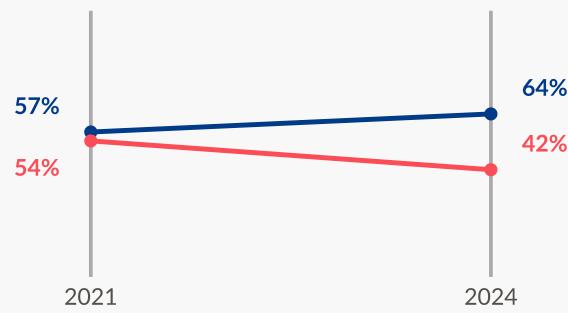
Local Government Officers



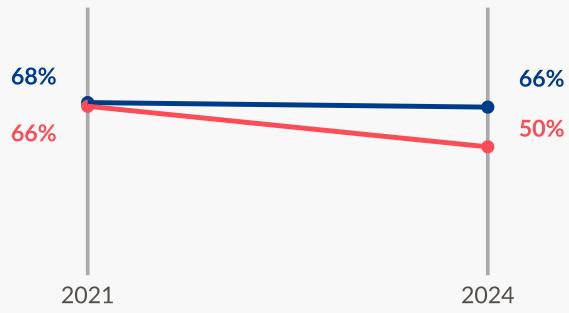
National Government Officers



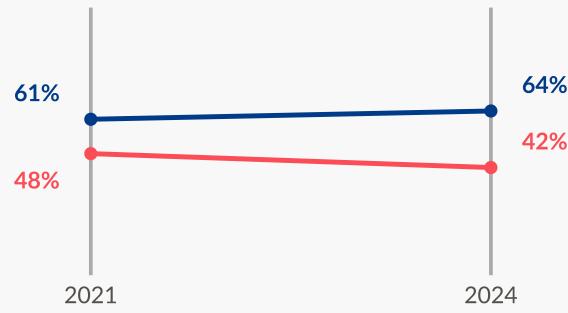
Prosecutors



Judges and Magistrates



Public Defense Attorneys



## **Section II: Perceptions on the 2024 Presidential Elections**

18 Integrity of the Electoral  
Process

19 Hypothetical Situations

# Integrity of the Electoral Process

Chart 9

## Integrity of the Electoral Process, by Political Affiliation

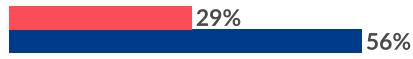
Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with the following statements...

### Electoral Process

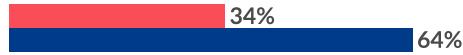
The process is free from foreign interference



The process is free of corruption



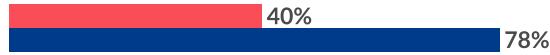
The process is safe from cyberattacks



Electoral rules are impartial



The process prevents fraud



### Voting Rights

Political entry barriers are low



People are able to vote conveniently



Voting access is equal for all citizens



Ballot secrecy is guaranteed

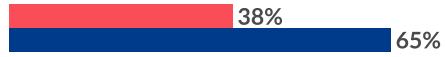


### Electoral Authorities

Election officials are free of corruption



Complaint mechanisms are transparent and impartial



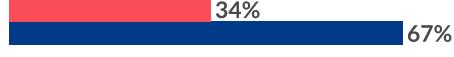
Checks and balances ensure electoral confidence



The electoral authority is impartial and effective



Election officials are trustworthy



### Electoral Results and Vote Counting

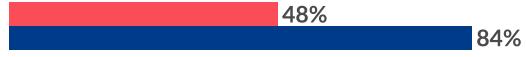
Candidates and parties avoid misinformation



Losing candidates accept the results as legitimate



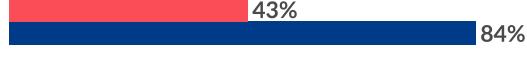
Election results are transparently available



Monitors can oversee voting and counting



Votes are counted accurately

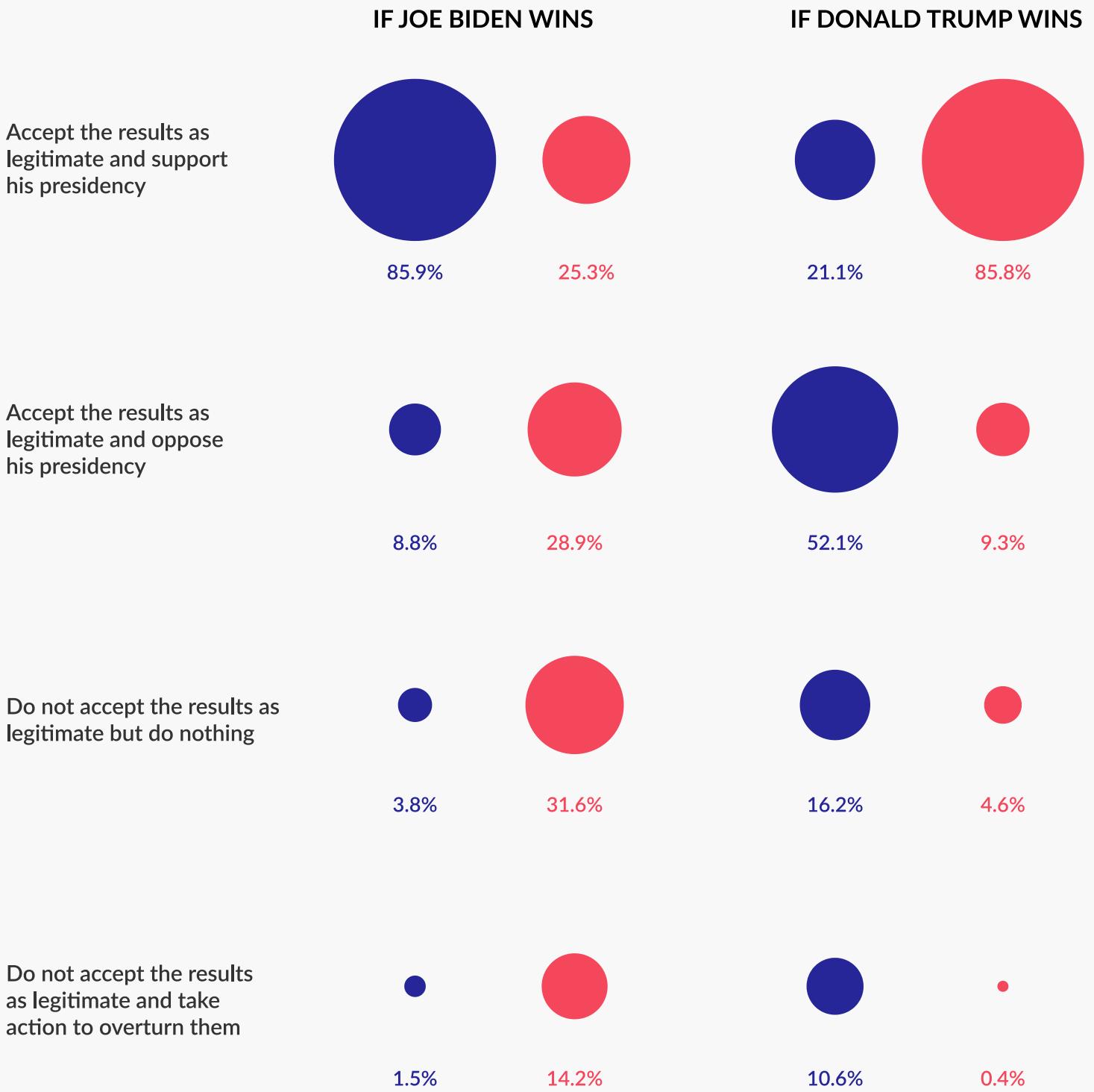


# Hypothetical Situations

Chart 10

## Acceptance of Election Results, by Political Affiliation

None



Source: WJP General Population Poll 2024

Chart 11

## Trust in Institutions to Ensure Fair Election Results, by Political Affiliation

Percentage of respondents who has a lot or some trust that the following institutions would fairly determine the election results...

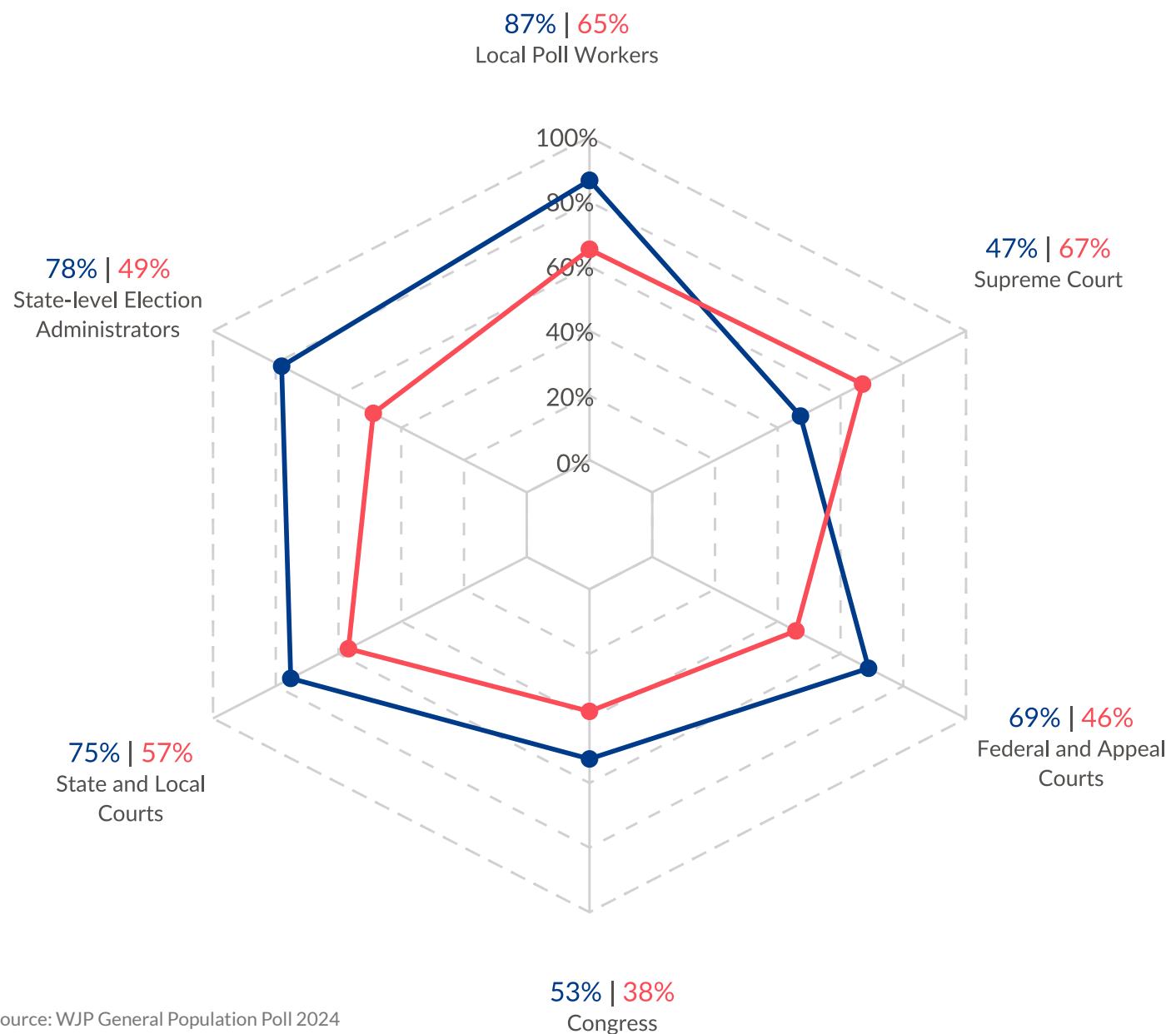


Chart 12

## Role of the Judiciary in the Electoral Process, by Political Affiliation

Percentage of respondents that agree or strongly agree that the following institutions would be impartial if having to decide on...

