

Social Justice Watch 0823

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[Majority of Public Favors Giving Civilians the Power to Sue Police Officers for Misconduct | Pew Research Center](#)

[Voters Rarely Switch Parties, but Recent Shifts Further Educational, Racial Divergence | Pew Research Center](#)

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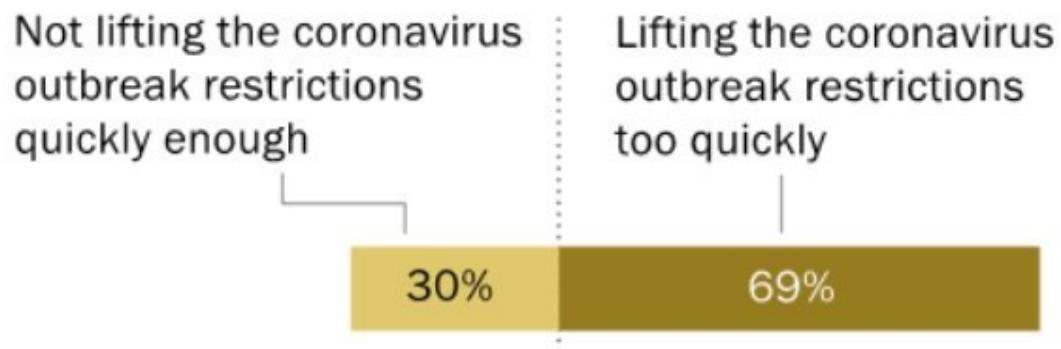
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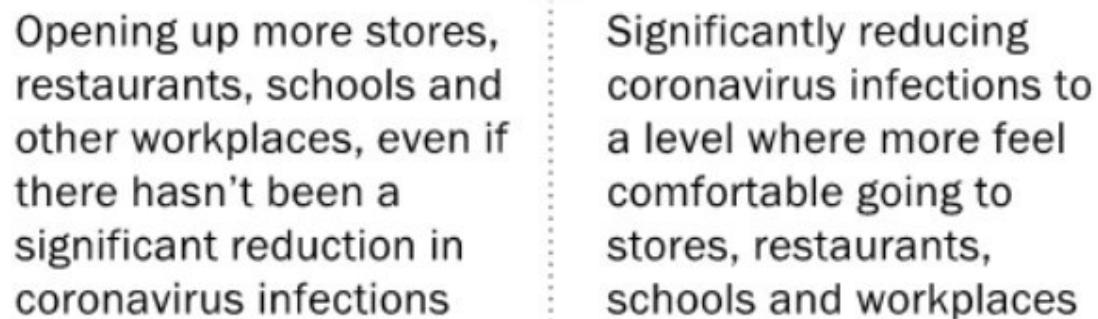
Large share of Americans say COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted too quickly

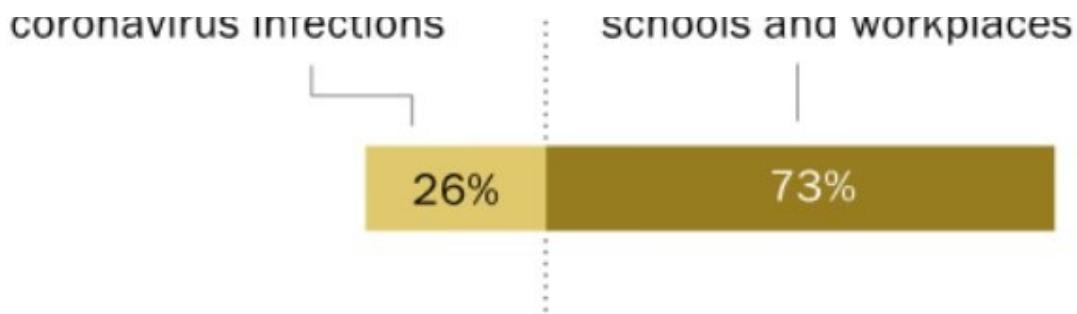
% who say ...

Greater concern is that state governments have been ...

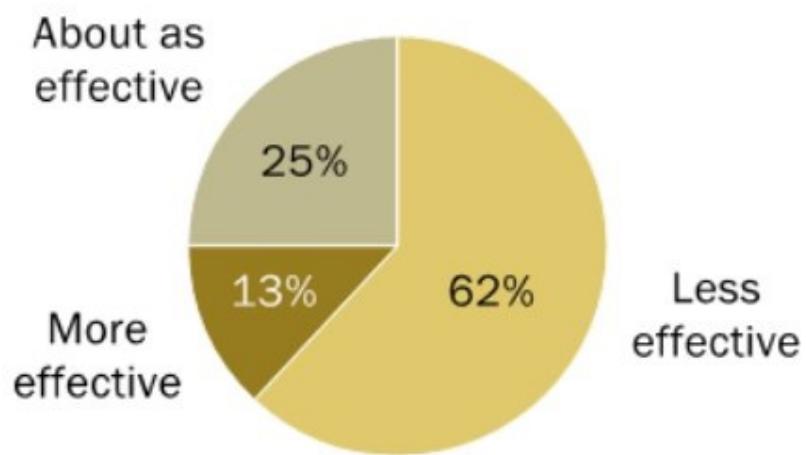


More effective way to help the U.S. economy recover is ...





Compared with other wealthy countries, U.S. response to the coronavirus outbreak has been ...



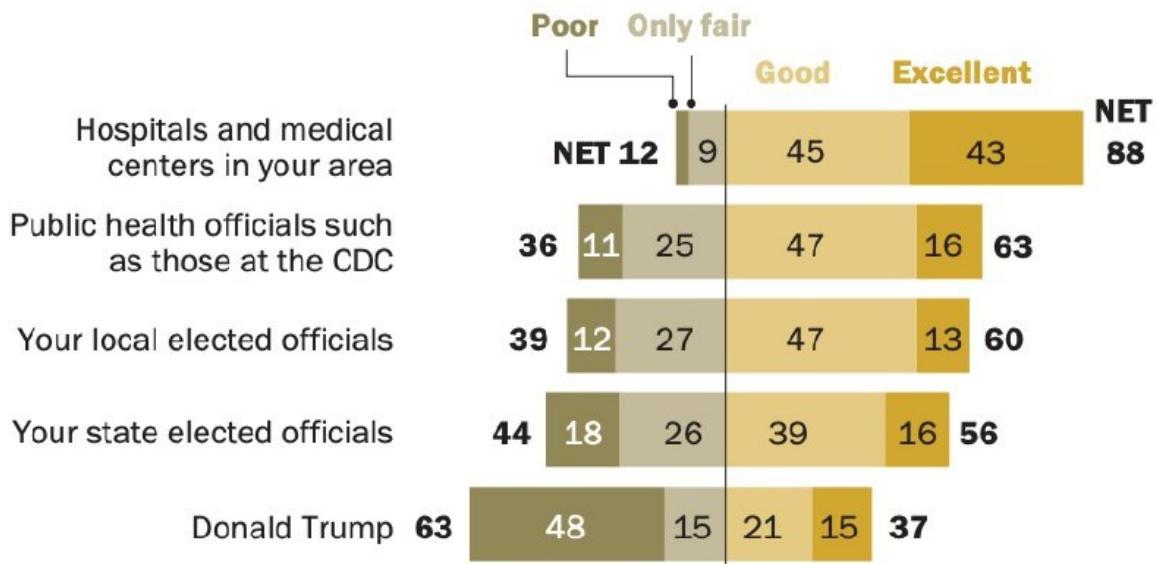
Notes: See topline for full question wording. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

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Majority of Americans are critical of Trump's response to COVID-19; nearly half say he is doing 'poor' job

% who rate the job each of the following is doing responding to the coronavirus outbreak as ...



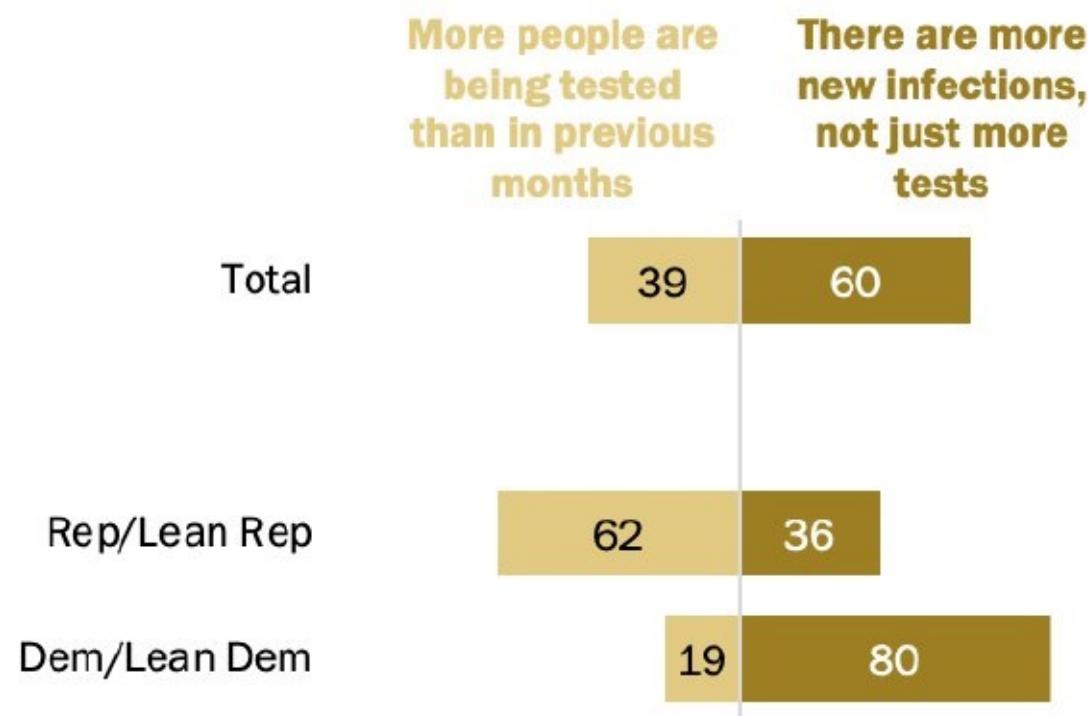
Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

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Majority says COVID-19 cases have risen primarily because of more new infections, not just more testing

*% who say the **primary** reason there are increasing numbers of confirmed cases of coronavirus in the U.S. is that ...*



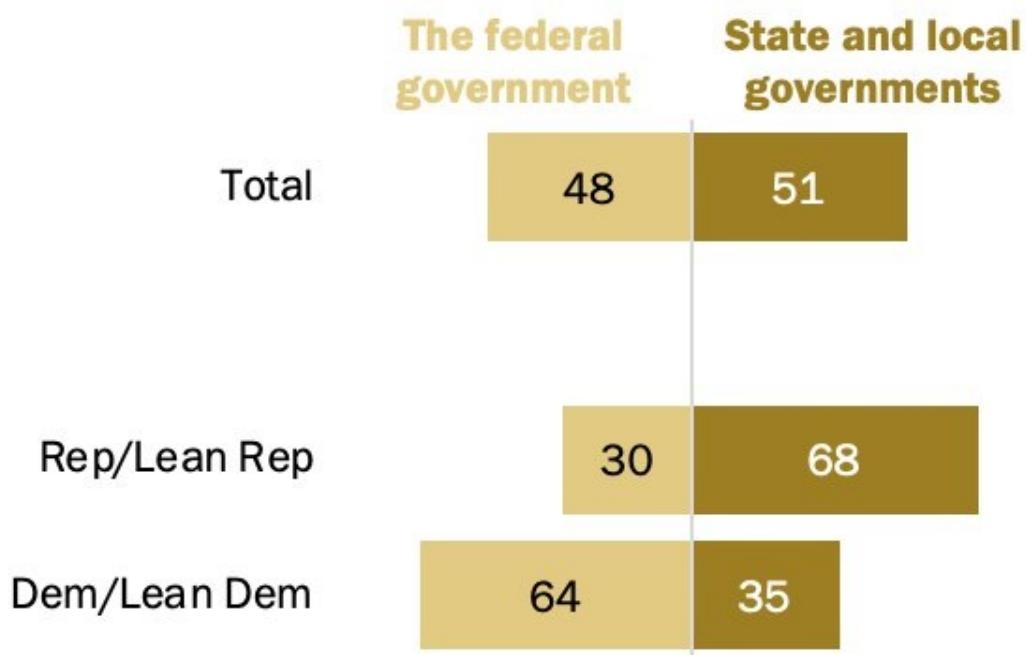
Notes: See topline for full question wording. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

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Public divided over which level of government is primarily responsible for policies to limit the spread of COVID-19

*Which should be **mainly responsible** for developing and executing policies to limit the spread of the coronavirus? (%)*



Note: No answer responses not shown.

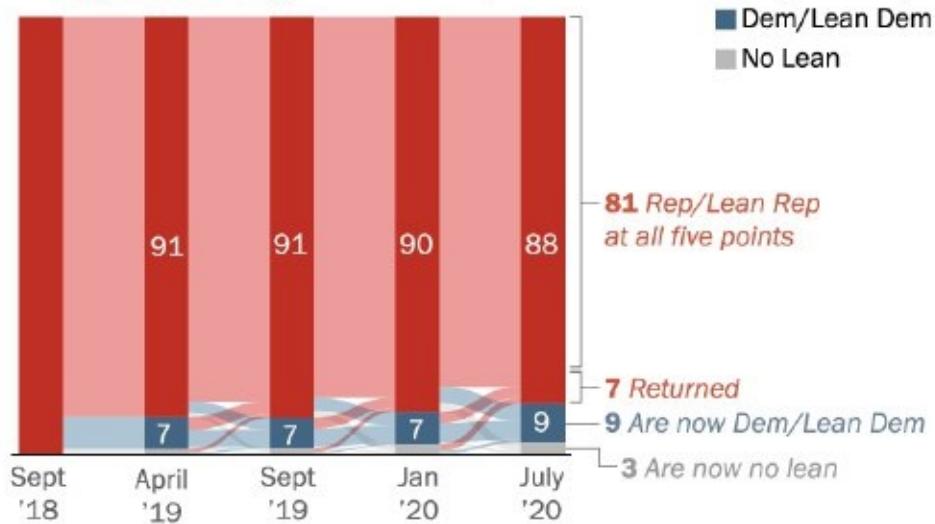
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

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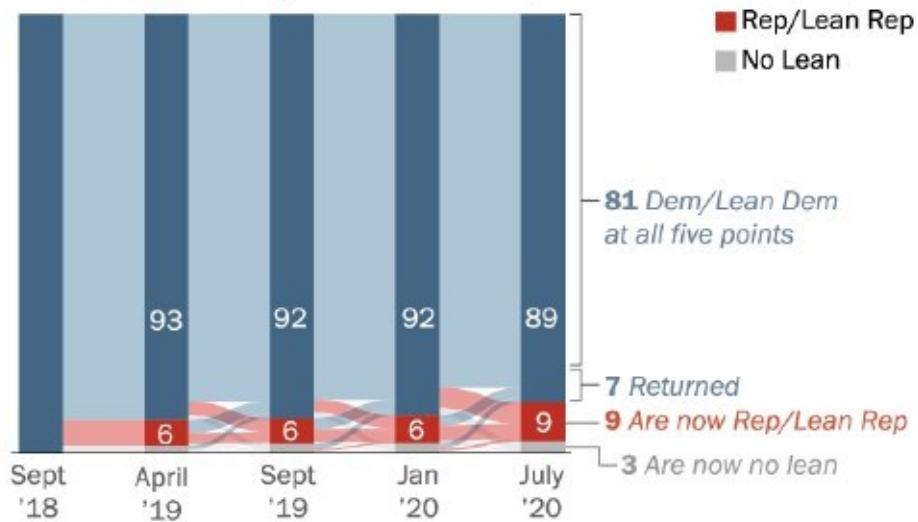
Most in U.S. Say States Have Lifted COVID-19 Restrictions Too Quickly | Pew Research Center [source](#)

Over the past two years, sizable majorities of voters in both major parties have remained with their parties

Among registered voters who in September 2018 identified or leaned toward the Republican Party, % who at each point were ...



Among registered voters who in September 2018 identified or leaned toward the Democratic Party, share who at each point were ...



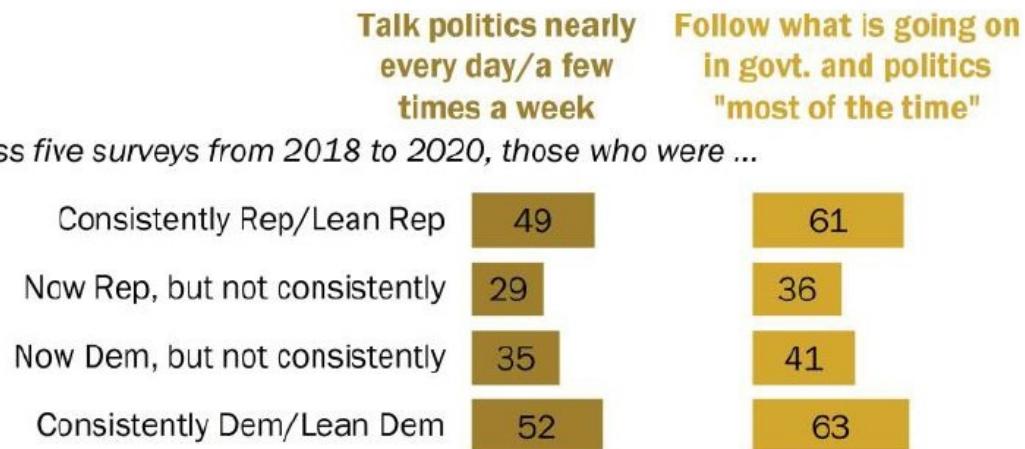
Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted between September 2018 and July 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Fewer than half of voters who have changed parties since 2018 say they follow politics ‘most of the time’

% of registered voters who ...



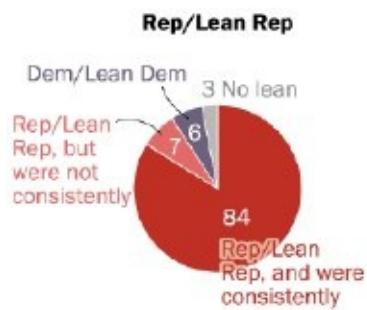
Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted between September 2018 and July 2020.

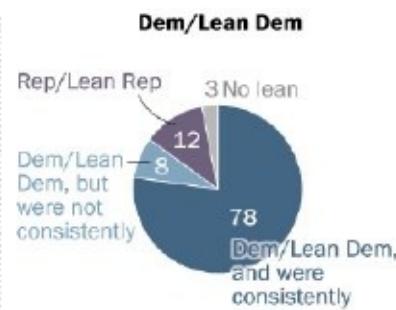
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Since 2018, white non-college voters more likely to stay with GOP; white college grads to stay Democratic

Among white non-college voters who were ___ in September 2018,
% who are now ...

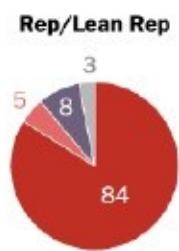


60% of white non-college voters were Rep/Lean Rep in September 2018

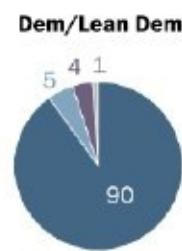


36% of white non-college voters were Dem/Lean Dem in September 2018

Among white college voters who were ___ in September 2018,
% who are now ...

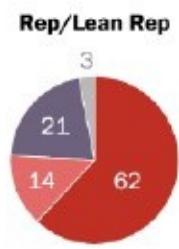


42% of white college voters were Rep/Lean Rep in September 2018

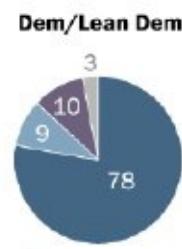


54% of white college voters were Dem/Lean Dem in September 2018

Among nonwhite voters who were ___ in September 2018,
% who are now ...



21% of nonwhite voters were Rep/Lean Rep in September 2018



75% of nonwhite voters were Dem/Lean Dem in September 2018

Notes: Based on registered voters. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.
Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted between September 2018 and July 2020.

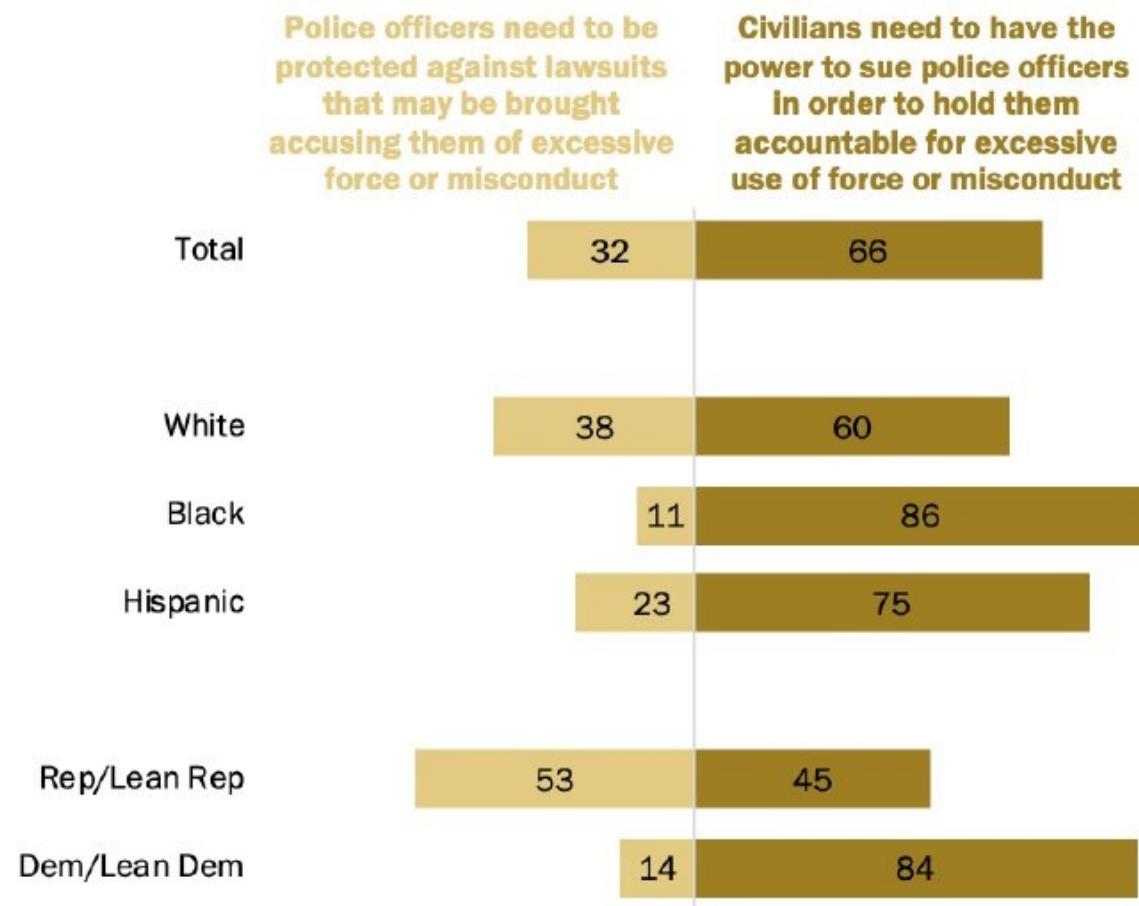
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Voters Rarely Switch Parties, but Recent Shifts Further Educational, Racial Divergence | Pew Research Center [source](#)



Two-thirds of Americans say civilians need to have the power to sue police officers for using excessive force

% who say ...



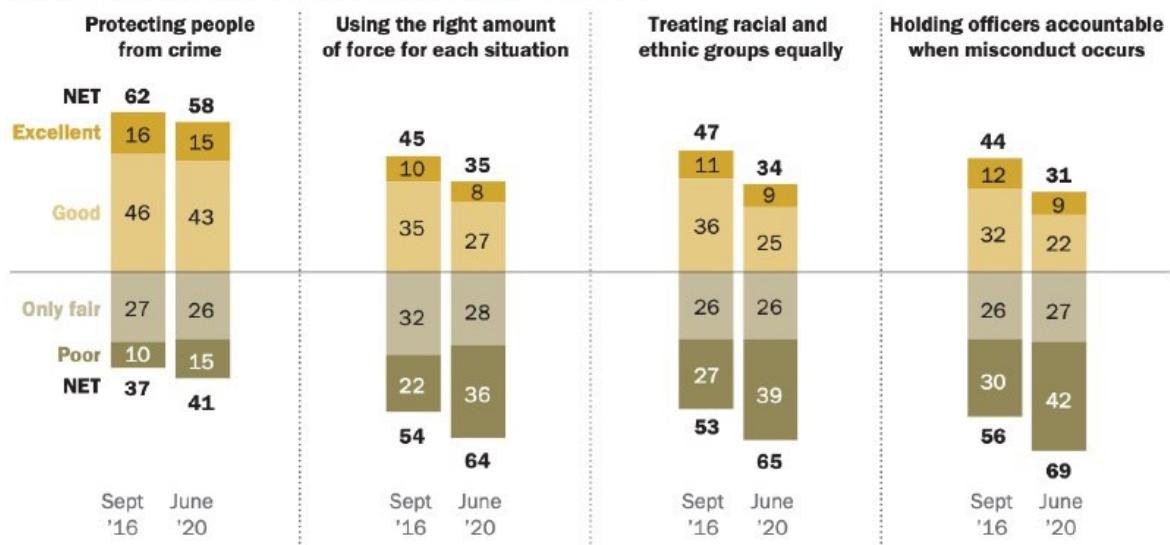
Notes: No answer responses not shown. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. See topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Declining shares of Americans give police forces positive ratings for using force appropriately, treating racial groups equally and holding officers accountable

% who say police around the country are doing an ___ job of ...



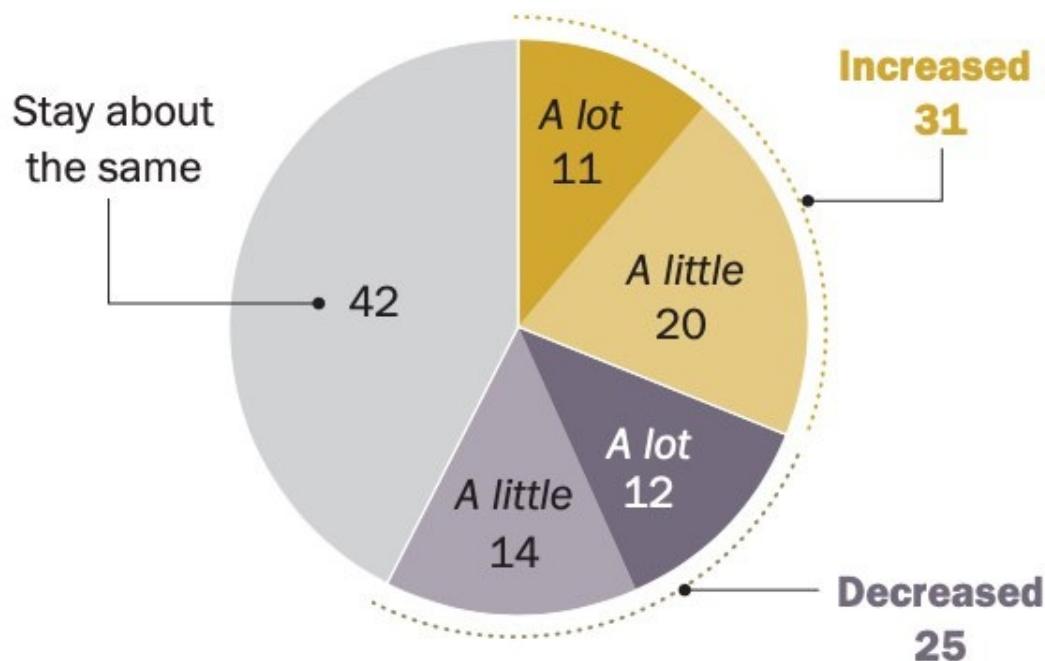
Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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Far more Americans favor keeping spending on policing at current levels – or increasing it – than cutting spending

% who say spending on policing in your area should be ...



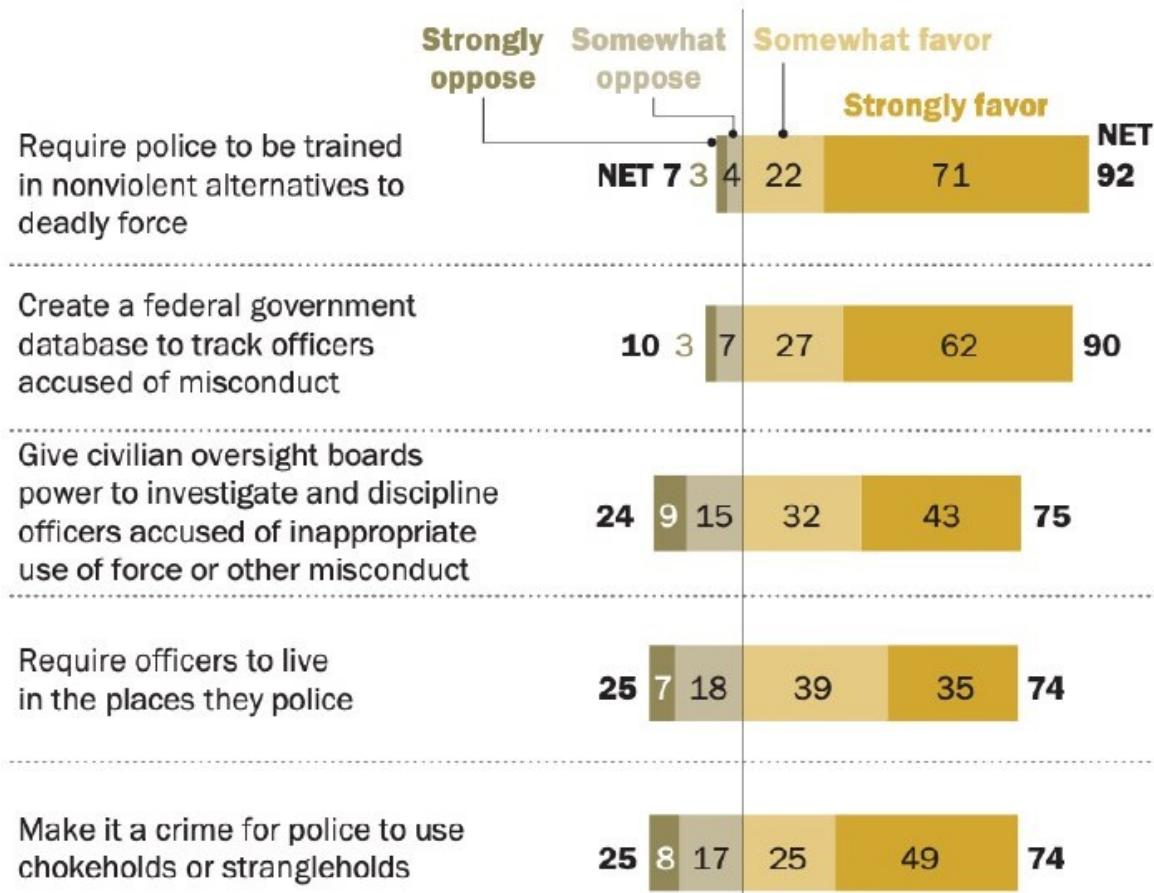
Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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Broad support for several policing policies, including making it a crime for police to use chokeholds

% who __ each of the following proposals about policing in this country



Note: No answer responses not shown.

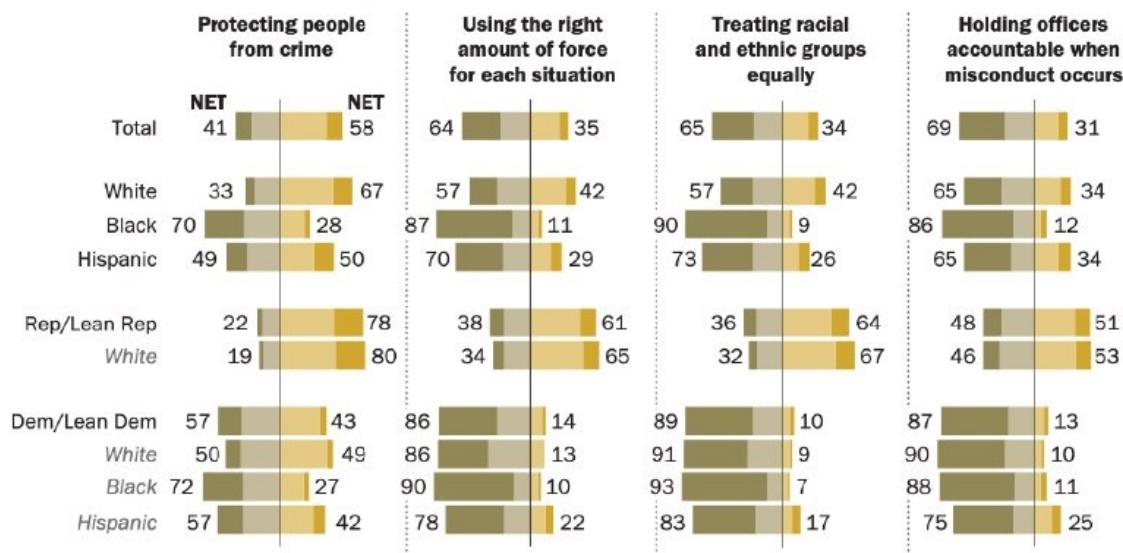
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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Black adults are highly critical of police performance in several areas, including protecting people from crime; far fewer white adults express negative views

% who say police around the country are doing a ___ job of ...

Poor Only fair Good Excellent

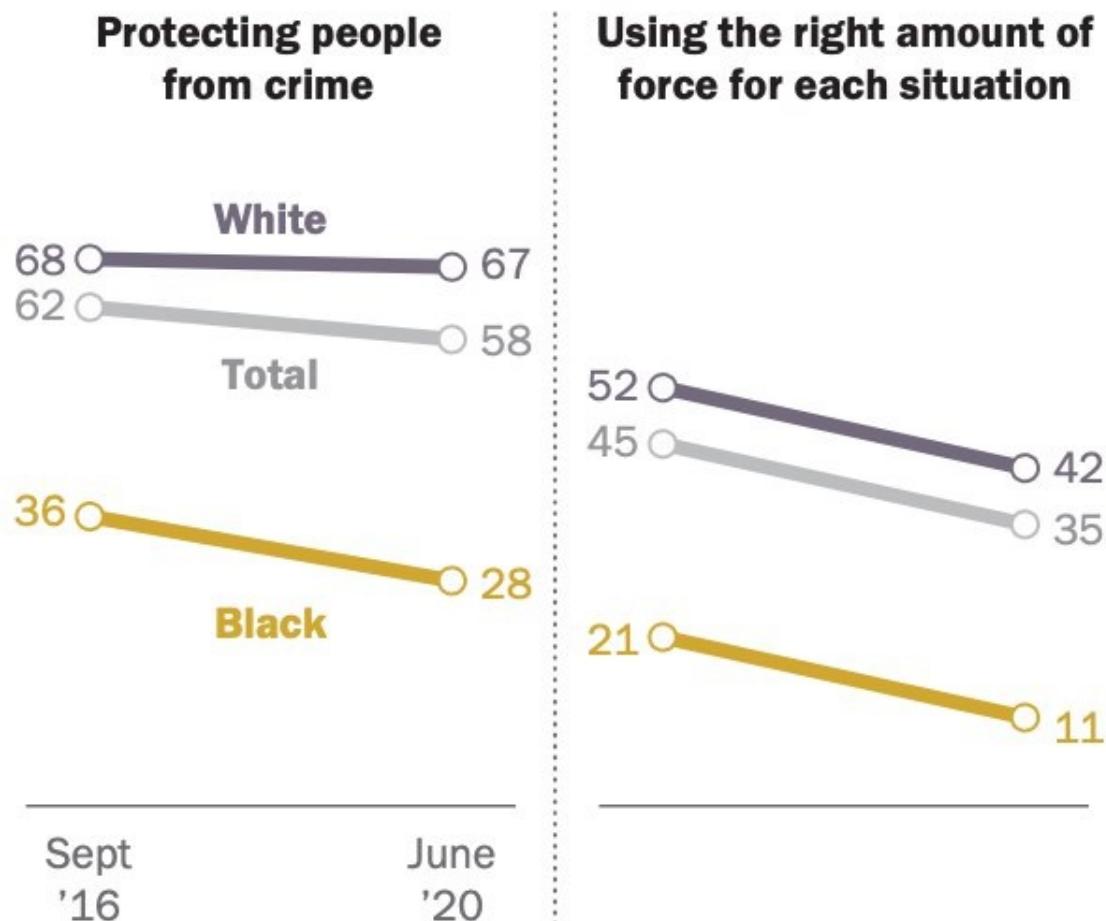


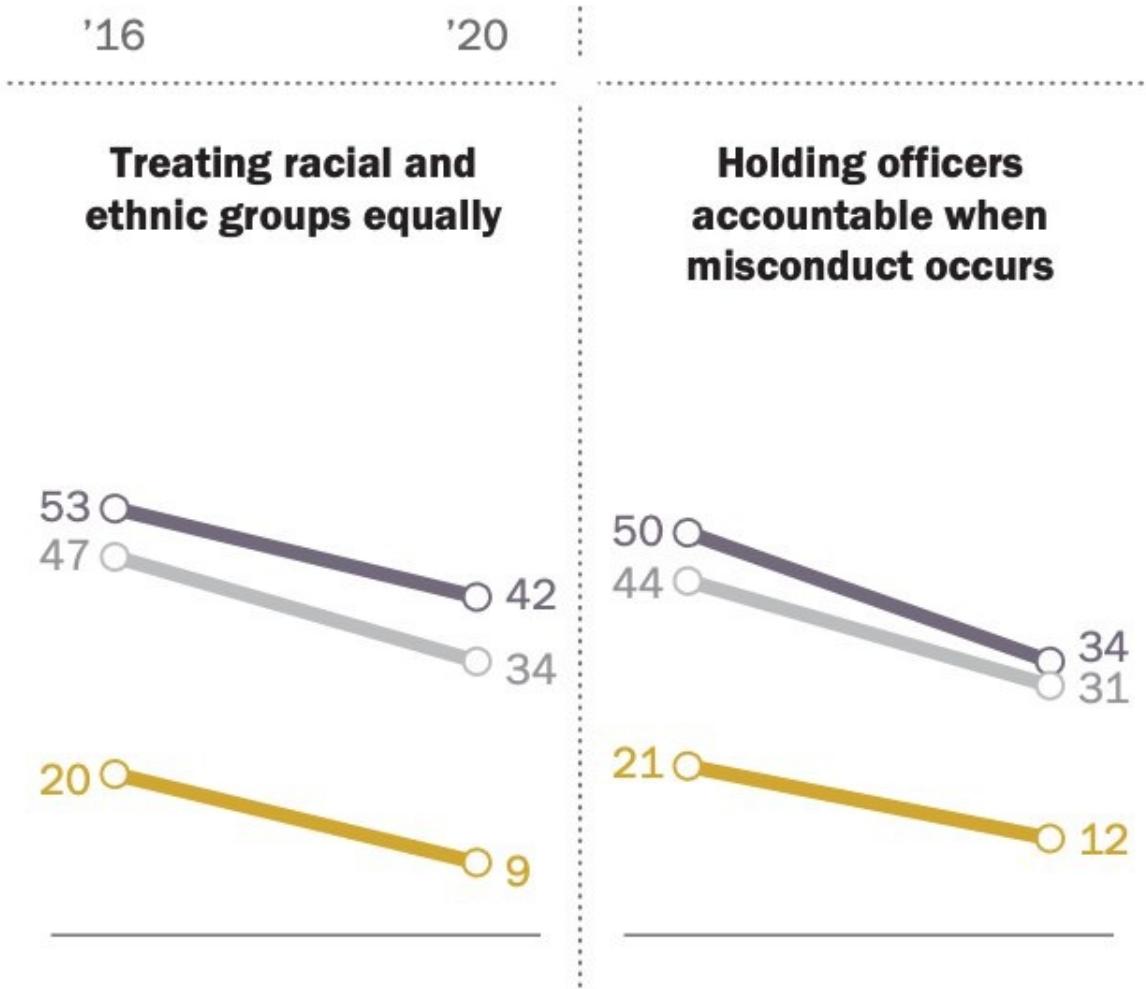
Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Black and white Americans less likely to rate police positively than in fall of 2016

% who say police around the country are doing an excellent/good job of ...





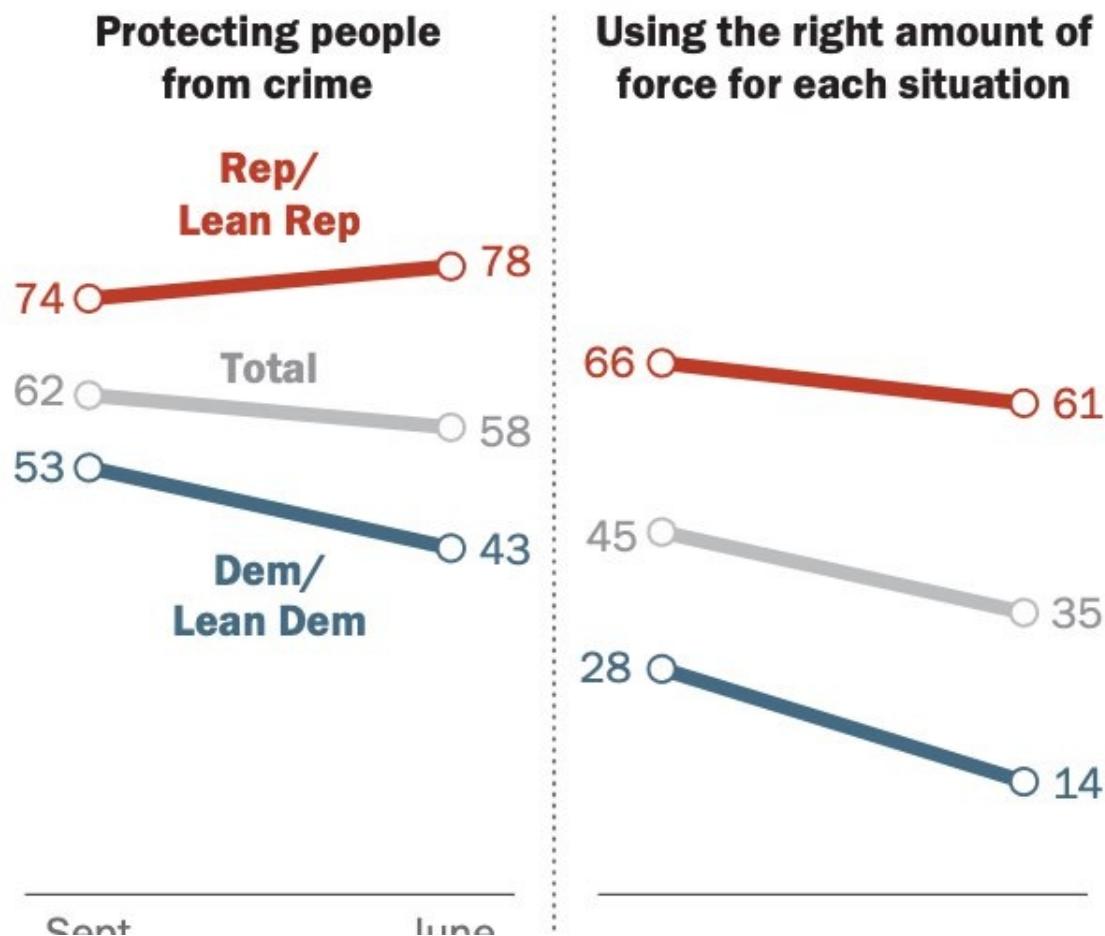
Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic.

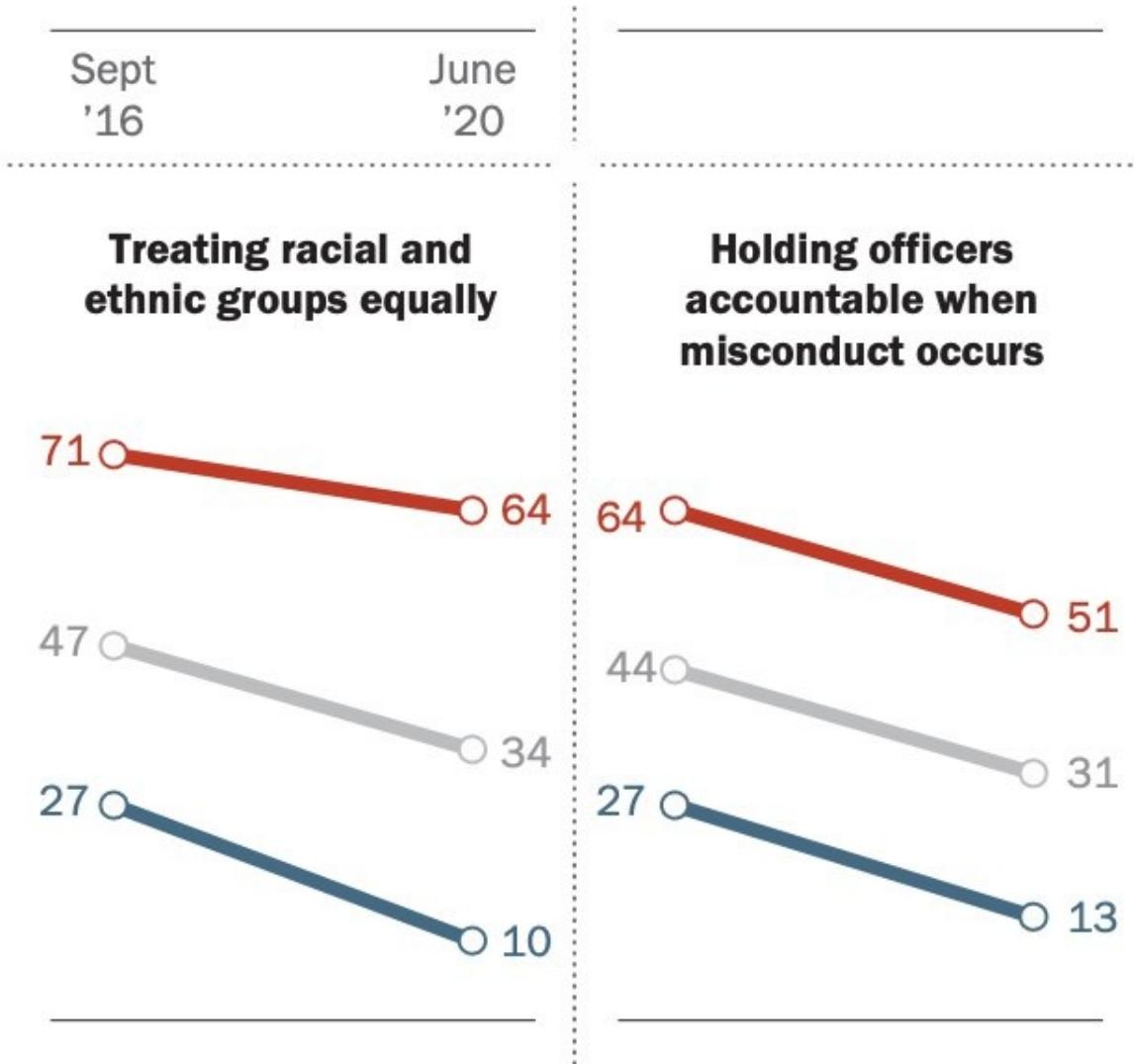
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Partisan gap on several evaluations of police performance wider than in 2016

% who say police around the country are doing an excellent/good job of ...





Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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Majority of Public Favors Giving Civilians the Power to Sue Police Officers for Misconduct | Pew Research Center [source](#)

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telegra.ph/Voters-Rarely-Switch-Parties-but-Recent-Shifts-Further-Educational-Racial-Divergence--Pew-Research-Center-08-23

Telegraph

Voters Rarely Switch Parties, but Recent Shifts Further Educational, Racial Divergence | Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center conducted this study to track how individuals' partisan identities have shifted in recent years. For this analysis, we combined responses to eleven different waves of the American Trends Panel conducted between September 2018 and July...

telegra.ph/Majority-of-Public-Favors-Giving-Civilians-the-Power-to-Sue-Police-Officers-for-Misconduct--Pew-Research-Center-08-23

Telegraph

Majority of Public Favors Giving Civilians the Power to Sue Police Officers for Misconduct | Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center conducted this study to understand how Americans are viewing proposals aimed at addressing policing in the aftermath of the widely covered deaths of several Black people in police custody, as well as widespread protests against racism...

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Majority of Public Favors Giving Civilians the Power to Sue Police Officers for Misconduct | Pew Research Center

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Pew Research Center conducted this study to understand how Americans are viewing proposals aimed at addressing policing in the aftermath of the widely covered deaths of several Black people in police custody, as well as widespread protests against racism and excessive use of force by police. For this analysis, we surveyed 4,708 U.S. adults in June 2020. Everyone who took part is a member of Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about

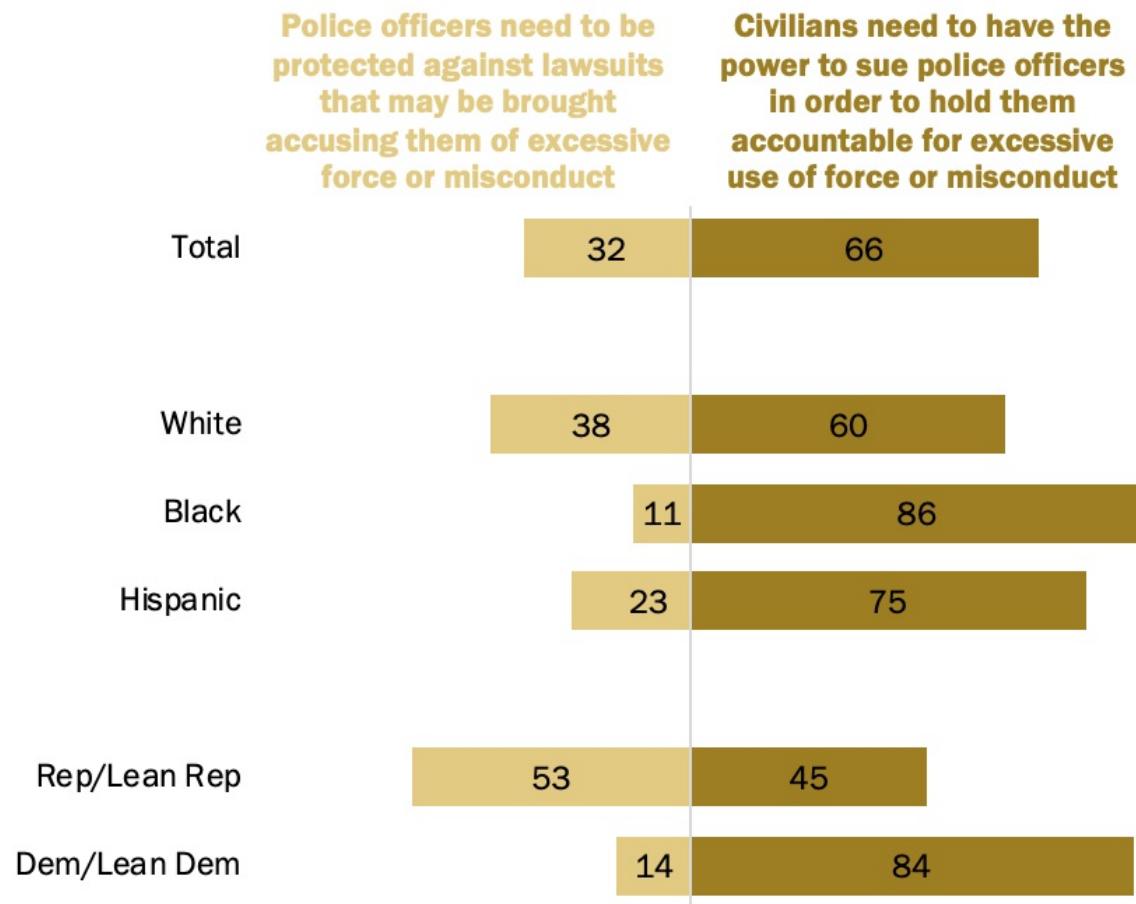
the ATP's methodology.

Here are the questions used for the report, along with responses, and its methodology.

With legislation to address racism and the use of excessive force by law enforcement stalled in Congress, there is broad public support in the United States for permitting citizens to sue police officers in order to hold them accountable for misconduct or using excessive force.

Two-thirds of Americans say civilians need to have the power to sue police officers for using excessive force

% who say ...



Notes: No answer responses not shown. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. See topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The legal doctrine of “qualified immunity” generally protects officers from being held personally liable in lawsuits unless they commit clear violations of law. A proposal to limit qualified immunity has emerged as a stumbling block in the congressional debate over policing.

Two-thirds of Americans (66%) say that civilians need to have the power to sue

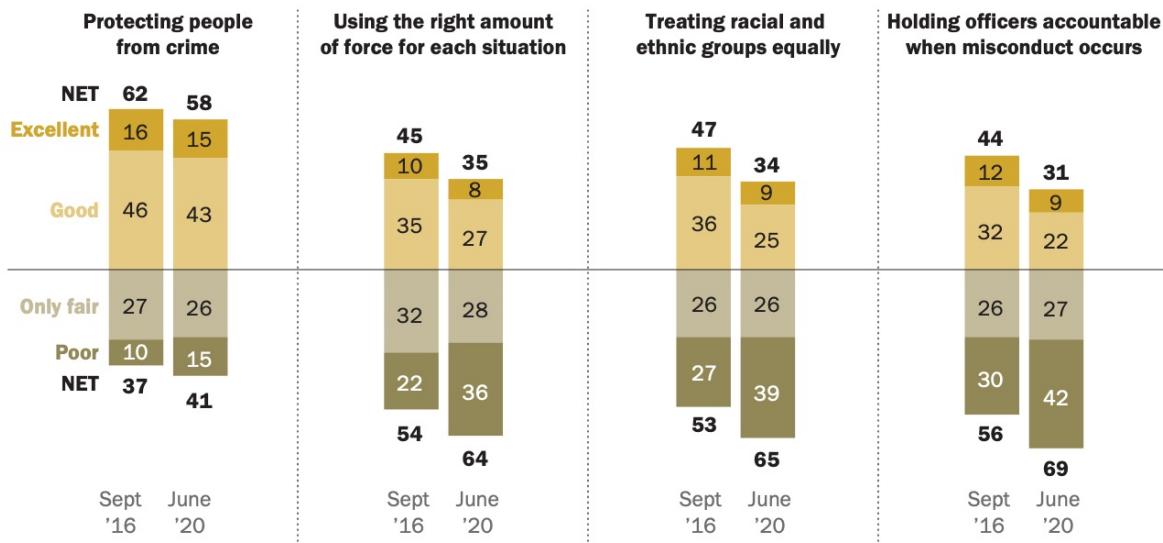
police officers to hold them accountable for misconduct and excessive use of force, even if that makes the officers' jobs more difficult. Just 32% say that, in order for police officers to do their jobs effectively, they need to be shielded from such lawsuits.

About eight-in-ten Black adults (86%) favor permitting citizens to sue police officers to hold them accountable for misconduct, as do 75% of Hispanic adults and 60% of white adults. There also are sizable partisan differences in views of qualified immunity, reflecting the divisions over the issue in Congress. A majority of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (84%) say citizens need the power to sue police officers for the use of excessive force and misconduct, compared with 45% of Republicans and Republican leaners.

The national survey, conducted June 16-22 among 4,708 adults using Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel, finds that the public's evaluations of police performance in several key areas have declined since the Center last explored attitudes among police officers and the public in 2016.

Declining shares of Americans give police forces positive ratings for using force appropriately, treating racial groups equally and holding officers accountable

% who say police around the country are doing an ___ job of ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A 58% majority of Americans say police around the country do an excellent or good job of protecting people from crime, which is little changed from the share who said this four years ago (62%). However, there have been double-digit declines in the shares who say police forces do an excellent or good job of using the right amount of force for each situation (from 45% in 2016 to 35% today), treating racial and ethnic groups equally (47% to 34%) and holding officers accountable when misconduct occurs (44% to 31%).

The declines on all three measures have been comparable among Black and white adults. Democrats are far less positive about police performance than they were in 2016, while the change among Republicans has been less pronounced.

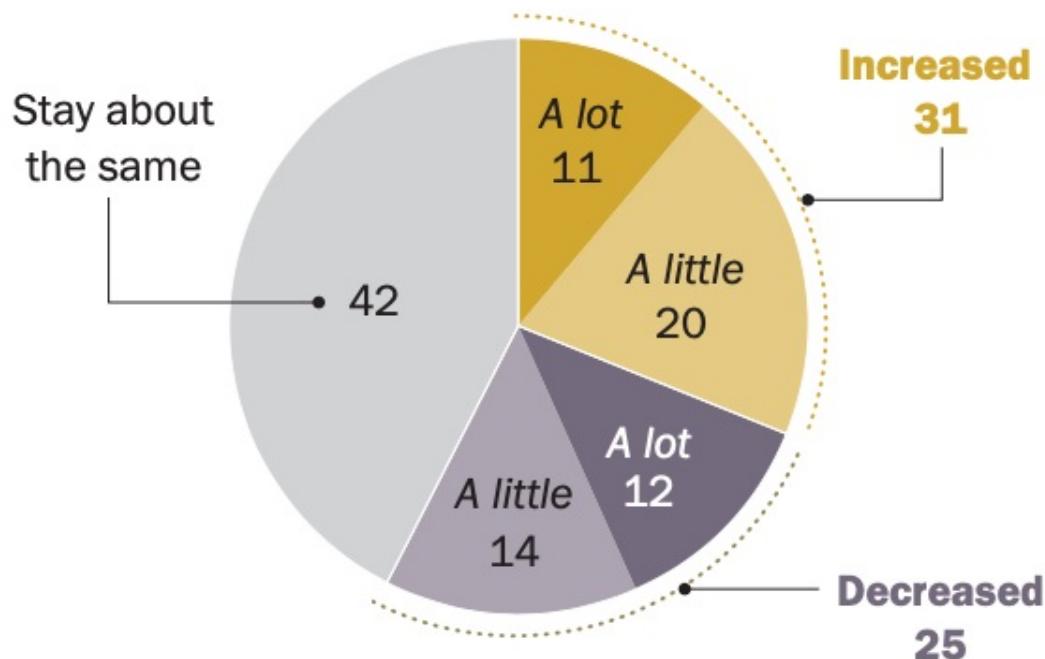
For example, just 10% of Democrats say police around the country do an excellent or good job in treating racial and ethnic groups equally, down from 27% in 2016. Nearly two-thirds of Republicans (64%) have a positive view of how police around the country do in treating racial and ethnic groups equally, which is a modest decline from four years ago (71%).

The survey finds little support for reducing spending on policing. Just 25% of

Americans say spending on policing in their area should be decreased, with only 12% saying it should be decreased a lot; another 14% say it should be reduced a little.

Far more Americans favor keeping spending on policing at current levels – or increasing it – than cutting spending

% who say spending on policing in your area should be ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A 73% majority say that spending on their local police should stay about the same as it is now (42%) or be increased from its current level (31%). While Black adults are more likely than whites to favor cuts in police budgets, fewer than half of Black adults (42%) say spending on policing in their areas should be

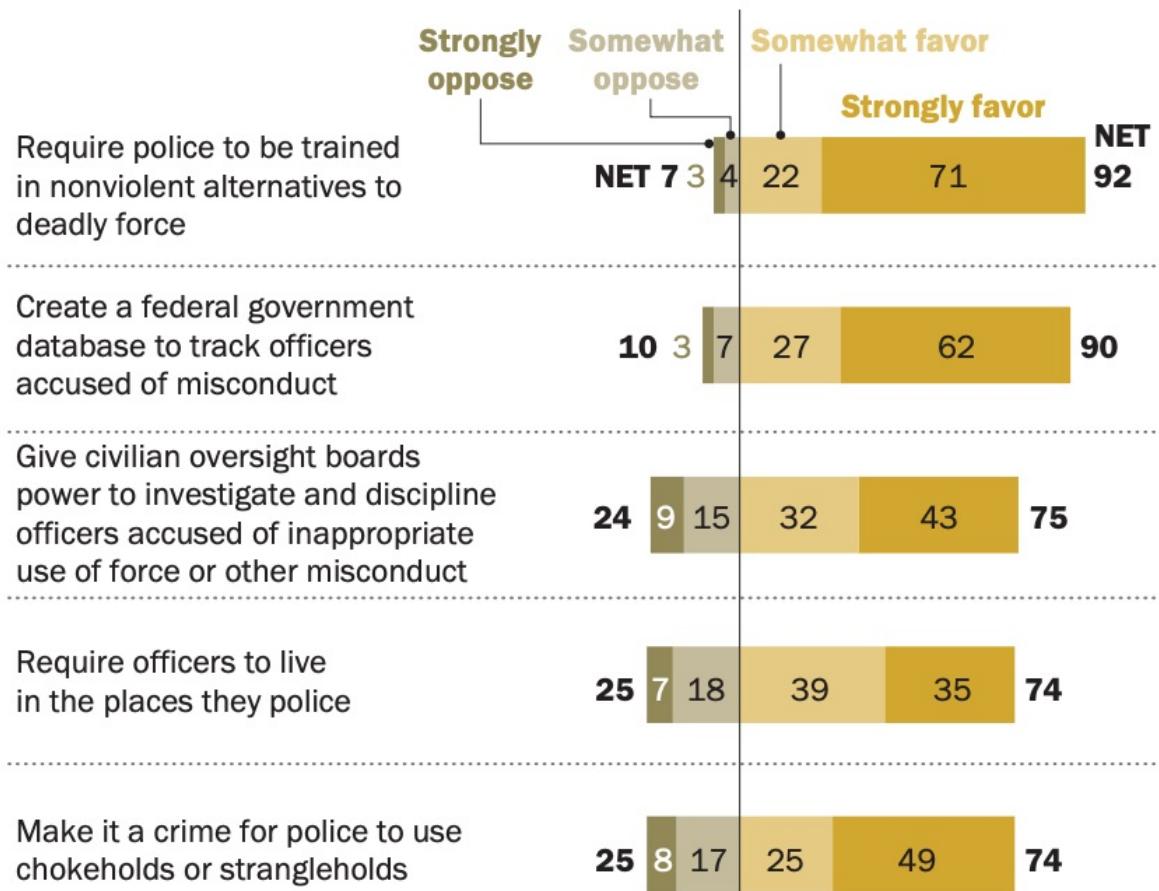
reduced. That is double the share of white adults who favor cutting funding for their local police (21%).

There also are sizable age differences in views of funding for policing. Among both Black and white adults, those under age 50 are far more likely to support decreased funding for police in their areas than are those 50 and older.

The survey finds that Americans overwhelmingly favor requiring police to be trained in nonviolent alternatives to deadly force; 92% support this proposal, including 71% who strongly favor it.

Broad support for several policing policies, including making it a crime for police to use chokeholds

% who __ each of the following proposals about policing in this country



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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Several other policing proposals draw broad support as well: 90% of the public favors a federal government database to track officers accused of misconduct. Three-quarters support giving civilian oversight boards the power to investigate and discipline officers accused of misconduct, and similar shares favor requiring officers to live in the places they police and outlawing police use of chokeholds or strangleholds.

While majorities of both parties and of Black, white and Hispanic adults favor

each of these proposals, there are substantial differences in intensity of support on most of them. For example, while large shares of Black (87%) and white adults (71%) favor outlawing police use of chokeholds or strangleholds, nearly three-quarters of Black adults (74%) *strongly* favor this proposal, compared with fewer than half of white adults (44%).

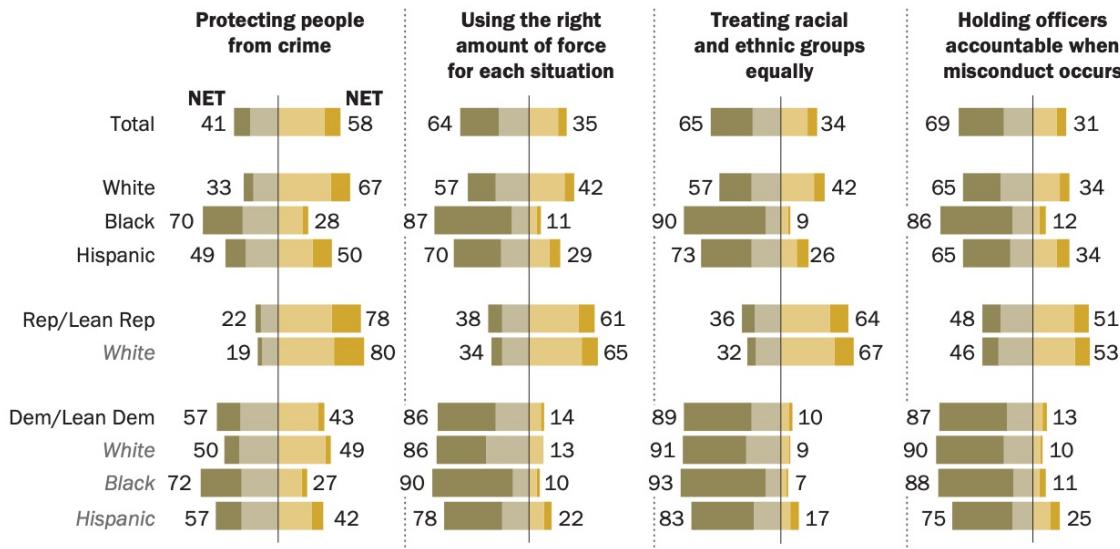
Wide racial, partisan gaps in views of police performance

Americans are divided along partisan and racial lines in their evaluations of police. Across four measures of police performance, white adults are consistently more positive about the performance of police around the country than Black adults, and Republicans are much more positive than Democrats. While the partisan divide in positive evaluations of the police on most of these dimensions is nearly as wide among whites as it is overall, Black Democrats are more likely than their white counterparts to say that the police perform poorly.

Black adults are highly critical of police performance in several areas, including protecting people from crime; far fewer white adults express negative views

% who say police around the country are doing a ___ job of ...

Poor Only fair Good Excellent



Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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Overall, a majority of Americans (58%) say that police around the country are doing an excellent or good job of protecting people from crimes – a view held by 78% of Republicans and Republican leaners but 43% of Democrats and Democratic leaners. Two-thirds of white adults (67%) say the police are doing a good or excellent job of protecting people, while just 28% of Black adults say the same. Half of Hispanic adults say police do an excellent or good job of protecting people.

There are racial and ethnic divides among Democrats in these views: While just 27% of Black Democrats say police do an excellent or good job protecting people from crime (and fully 72% say they do a poor job of this), about half of white Democrats (49%) and 42% of Hispanic Democrats say the same.

Public ratings of the police in three other areas – using the right amount of force for each situation, treating racial and ethnic groups equally and holding officers accountable when misconduct occurs – are considerably more negative, with more than six-in-ten Americans rating police performance in these domains as only fair or poor. Black Americans are especially likely to rate police negatively

in each of these areas.

However, majorities of Republicans say that police are doing an excellent or good job of using the right amount of force for each situation (61%) and treating racial and ethnic groups equally (64%). About half of Republicans (51%) say that police around the country are doing an excellent or good job of holding officers accountable when misconduct occurs. Fewer than two-in-ten Democrats rate police positively in these areas.

While only about one-in-ten white Democrats and Black Democrats rate police performance in these three areas positively, Black Democrats are significantly more likely than white Democrats to say police are doing a *poor* job in each of these areas. For example, three-quarters of Black Democrats say that police are doing a poor job of using the right amount of force for each situation, compared with 46% of white Democrats who say this.

Hispanic Democrats are more positive in their evaluations of police performance in these domains than both white and Black Democrats; still, majorities rate police performance in these areas as only fair or poor.

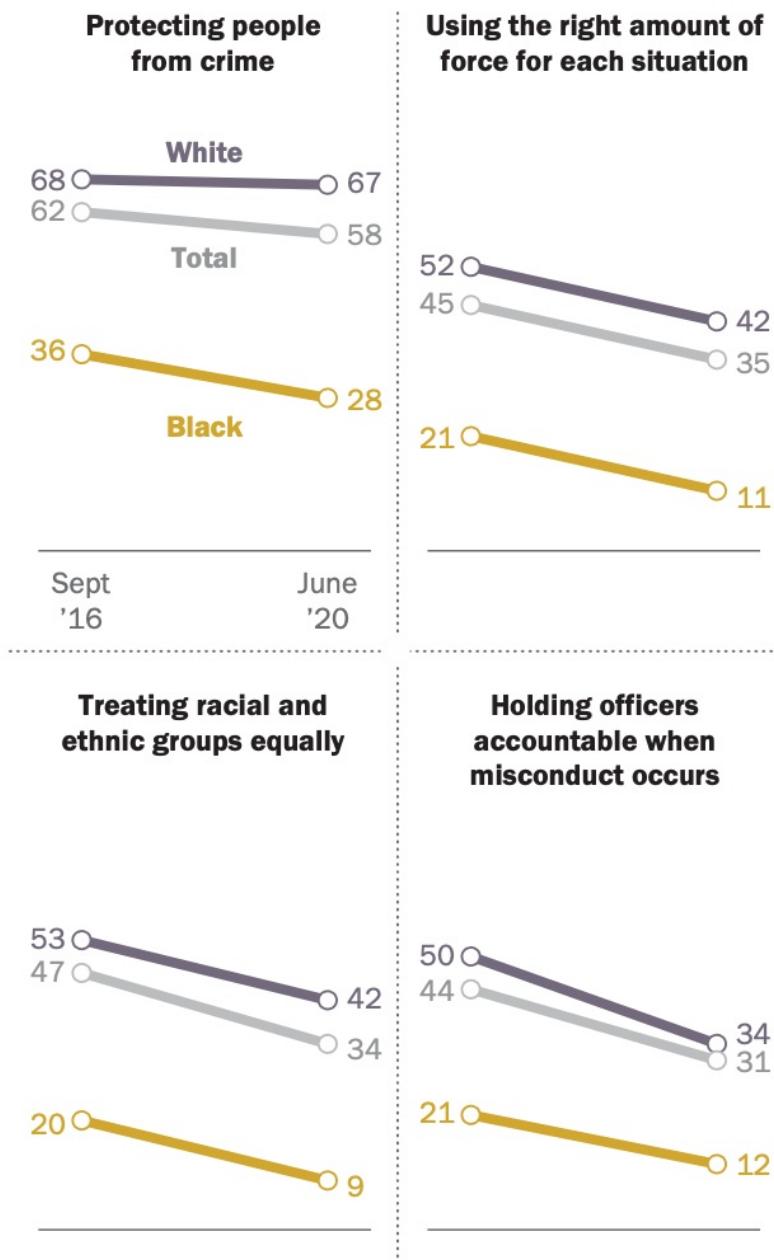
Overall ratings of the police have declined since 2016

Americans' ratings of police performance are lower than they were four years ago, and while substantial racial and partisan divides remain, these declines are largely seen among both white and Black adults.

The share of white Americans who say police are doing an excellent or good job of holding officers accountable for misconduct has fallen from half in 2016 to about one-third today (34%). The share of Black Americans who say this has also declined, from 21% to 12%.

Black and white Americans less likely to rate police positively than in fall of 2016

% who say police around the country are doing an excellent/good job of ...



Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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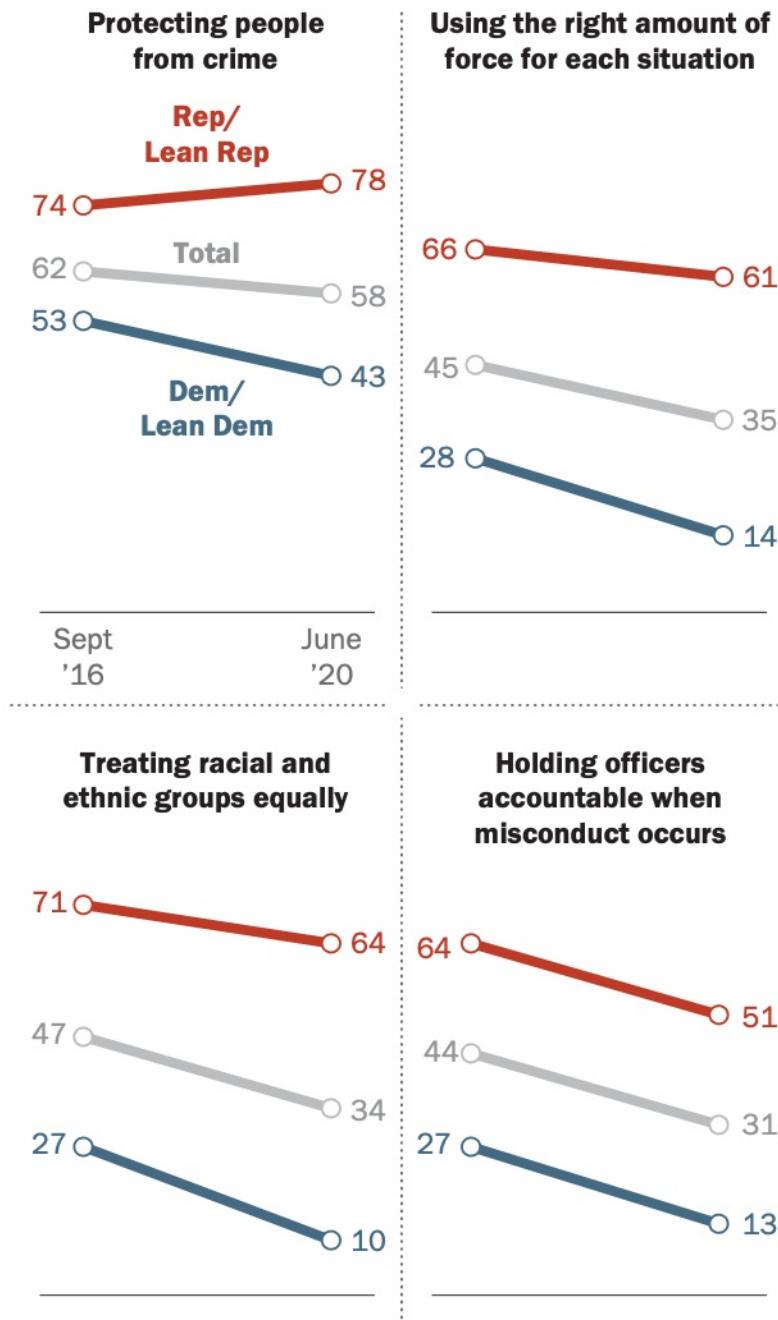
The shares of white and Black adults who say police around the country are doing an excellent or good job of using the right amount of force have declined by identical amounts – 10 percentage points each – since 2016. The shares saying police are doing an excellent or good job of treating racial and ethnic groups equally have also declined by identical amounts (11 points each).

There has been no significant change since 2016 in the shares of white and Black Americans saying that police are doing an excellent or good job of protecting people from crime.

While overall public evaluations of police performance have become more negative since 2016, declines among Democrats have generally been steeper than among Republicans.

Partisan gap on several evaluations of police performance wider than in 2016

% who say police around the country are doing an excellent/good job of ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Republicans today are about as likely to say that police around the country do an excellent or good job of protecting people from crime as they were four years ago (78% today vs. 74% in 2016). Among Democrats, about four-in-ten (43%) say that police do an excellent or good job of protecting people, down from about half (53%) in 2016.

Republicans are only slightly less likely to say police do an excellent or good job of treating racial and ethnic groups equally or using the right amount of force for each situation than they were previously, but Democrats' views on police performance in these areas have shifted downward more substantially. The share of Democrats who say police use appropriate force has decreased from 28% to 14%. And just one-in-ten Democrats now say that police do an excellent or good job of treating racial and ethnic groups equally, compared with about one-quarter (27%) who said this four years ago.

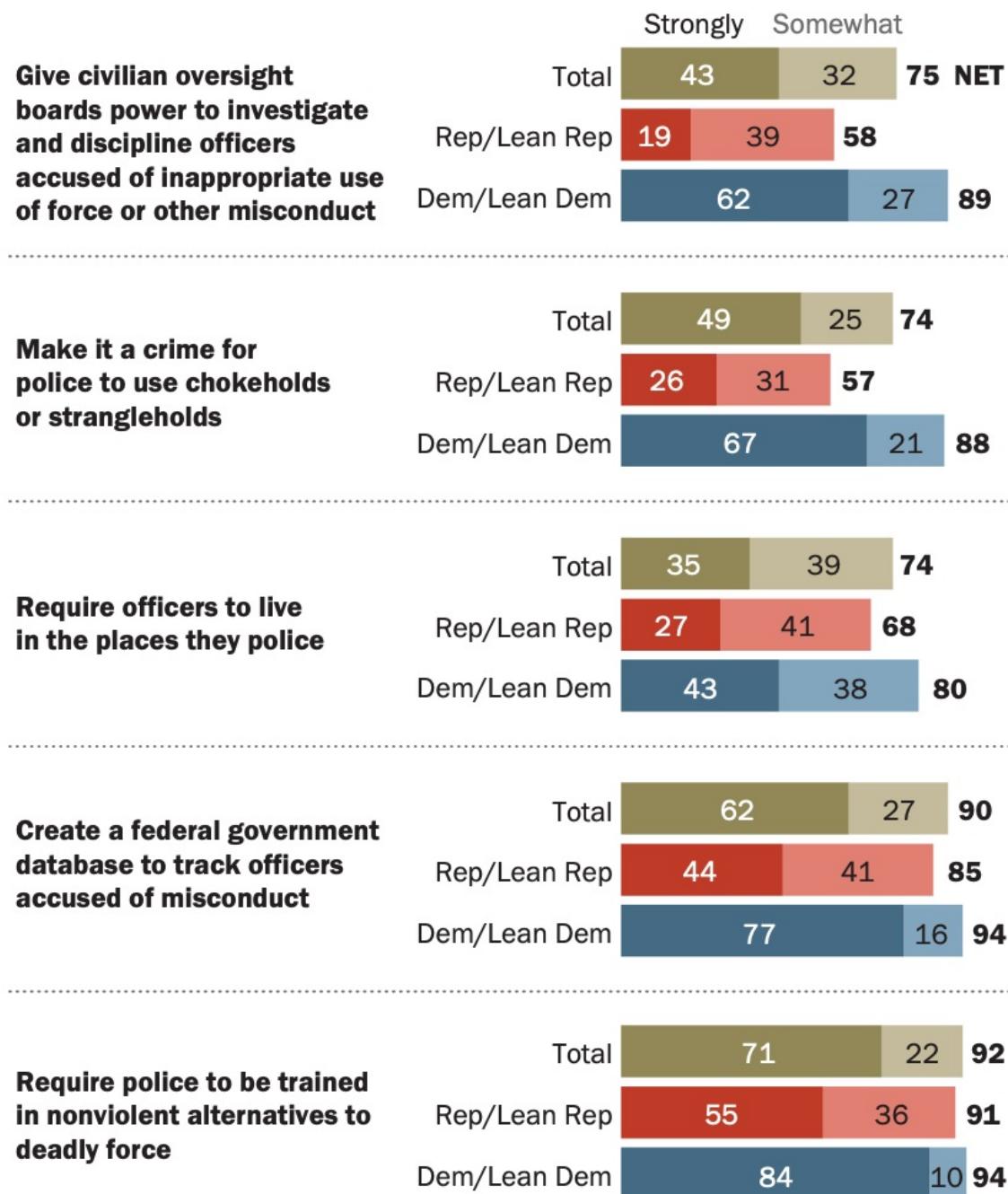
Republicans have changed the most in their views of police accountability. While nearly two-thirds (64%) said that police did an excellent or good job of holding officers accountable when misconduct occurs in 2016, only about half (51%) now say this. The share of Democrats who say police do an excellent or good job of holding officers accountable has decreased by a similar amount, from 27% to 13%.

Broad public support for several policing reform proposals

There is majority support among the public – and in both parties – for five policy proposals about policing included in the survey. However, there are still sizable partisan differences in these views.

Democrats more likely than Republicans to say they favor several police reform proposals

*% who say they **strongly/somewhat** favor each of the following ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Eight-in-ten or more Democrats either strongly or somewhat favor each of the five proposals, while there is more variation among Republicans. Even on policies where there is overwhelming bipartisan support – such as requiring police to be trained in nonviolent alternatives to deadly force, favored by nine-in-ten or more in both parties – Democrats are more likely than Republicans to *strongly* support such a policy (84% vs. 55%).

An overwhelming majority of Democrats (89%) say they favor giving civilian oversight boards power to investigate and discipline officers accused of misconduct, with 62% saying they strongly favor this. A narrower majority (58%) of Republicans say they either strongly or somewhat favor oversight boards (19% strongly favor). There is a similar pattern of opinion about making it a crime for police to use chokeholds or strangleholds (88% of Democrats and 57% of Republicans favor this).

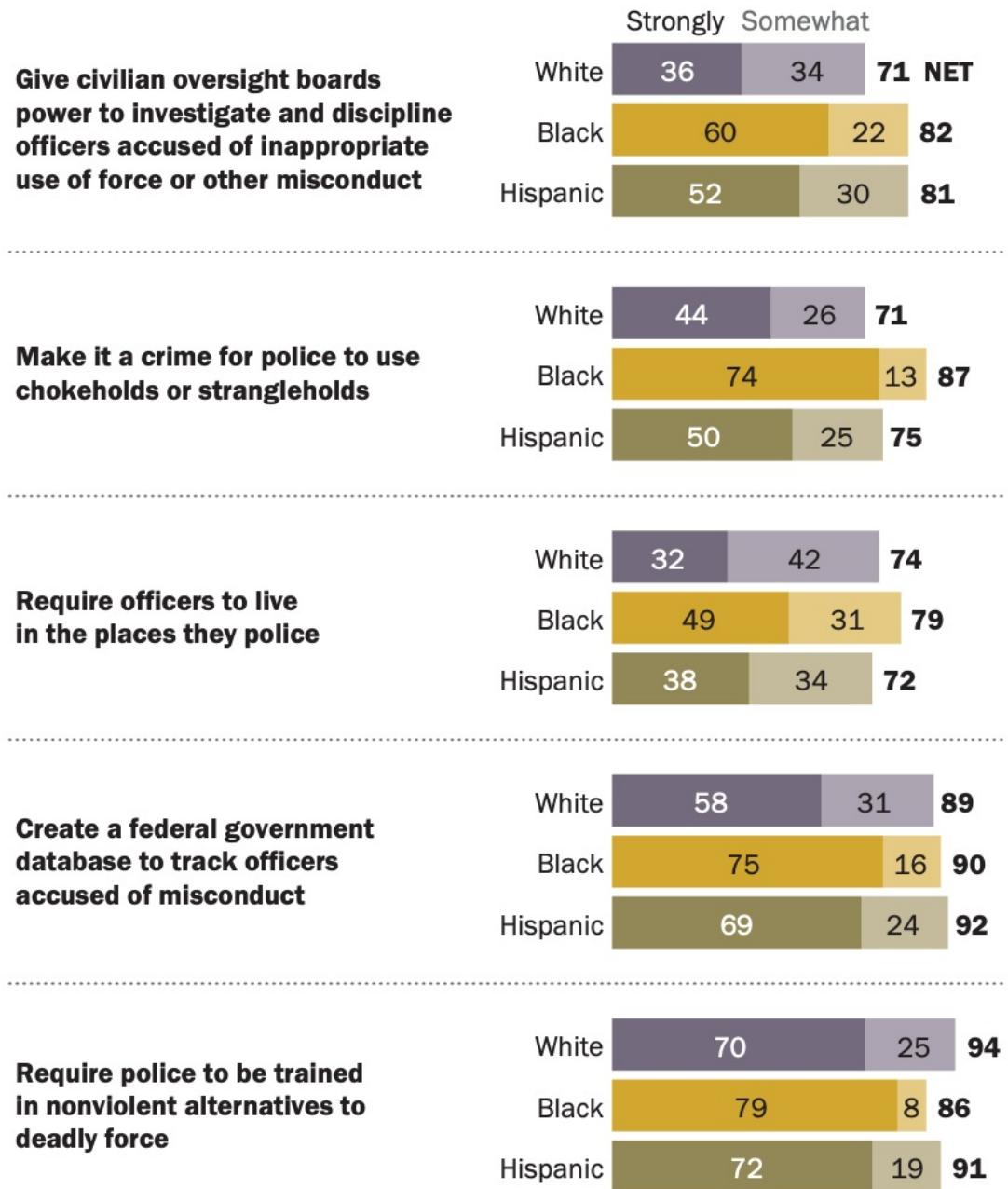
Overwhelming majorities of both Republicans (85%) and Democrats (94%) favor creating a federal government database to track officers accused of misconduct. However, while about three-quarters of Democrats (77%) strongly favor this proposal, fewer than half of Republicans say the same (44%).

Large majorities of Republicans (91%) and Democrats (94%) also favor requiring police to be trained in nonviolent alternatives to deadly force. Among Democrats, 84% say they strongly favor this policy, while slightly more than half of Republicans (55%) say the same.

While majorities of white (71%), Black (82%) and Hispanic (81%) Americans favor giving civilian boards power to investigate and discipline officers, Black and Hispanic Americans are more likely than white Americans to favor this – and to do so strongly.

Black Americans more likely than white Americans to strongly favor several policing proposals

*% who say they **strongly/somewhat** favor each of the following ...*



Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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Nearly nine-in-ten Black adults (87%) favor making it a crime for police to use chokeholds or strangleholds, including 74% who do so strongly. This proposed policy is supported by 71% of white adults and 75% of Hispanic adults.

Seven-in-ten or more white (74%), Black (79%) and Hispanic (72%) adults say they favor requiring officers to live in the places they police, with Black Americans somewhat more likely than Hispanic and white Americans to strongly favor this.

And while the creation of a federal government database to track officers accused of misconduct is supported by wide majorities across racial and ethnic groups, Black adults are more likely than white adults to strongly favor this proposal.

Overwhelming majorities across racial and ethnic groups say they favor requiring police to be trained in nonviolent alternatives to deadly force, with at least seven-in-ten saying they *strongly* favor this.

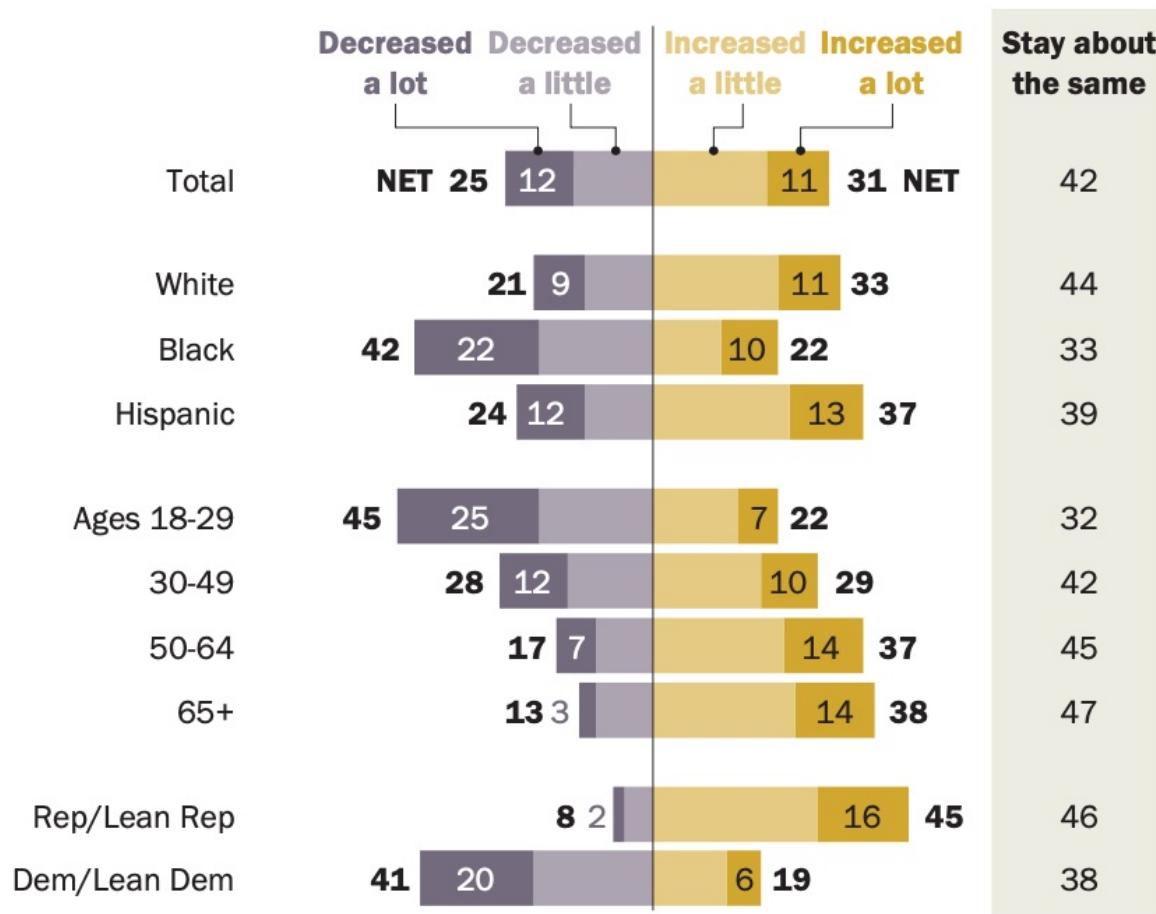
Just a quarter of the public says spending on police should be decreased

About four-in-ten Americans (42%) say spending on policing in their area should stay about the same, while 31% say it should be increased and 25% say it should be decreased.

Support for decreasing spending on policing is higher among younger adults, Black adults, and Democrats and Democratic leaners, though even in these groups fewer than half say spending should be decreased.

Black adults and young people most likely to say spending on police should be decreased

% who say spending on policing in your area should be ...



Notes: No answer responses not shown. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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Adults under 30 are much more likely than others to say that police spending should be decreased: 45% of those ages 18 to 29 say this, while 28% of those 30 to 49 and only 15% of those 50 and older say the same. Those over the age of 50 are more likely than younger Americans to say spending should be *increased* (37% say this, compared with 29% of 30- to 49-year-olds and 22% of those under 30).

About four-in-ten Black adults (42%) say spending on police in their area should decrease, including 22% who say spending should be decreased a lot. One-third of Black adults say spending should stay the same, while 22% say it should be increased.

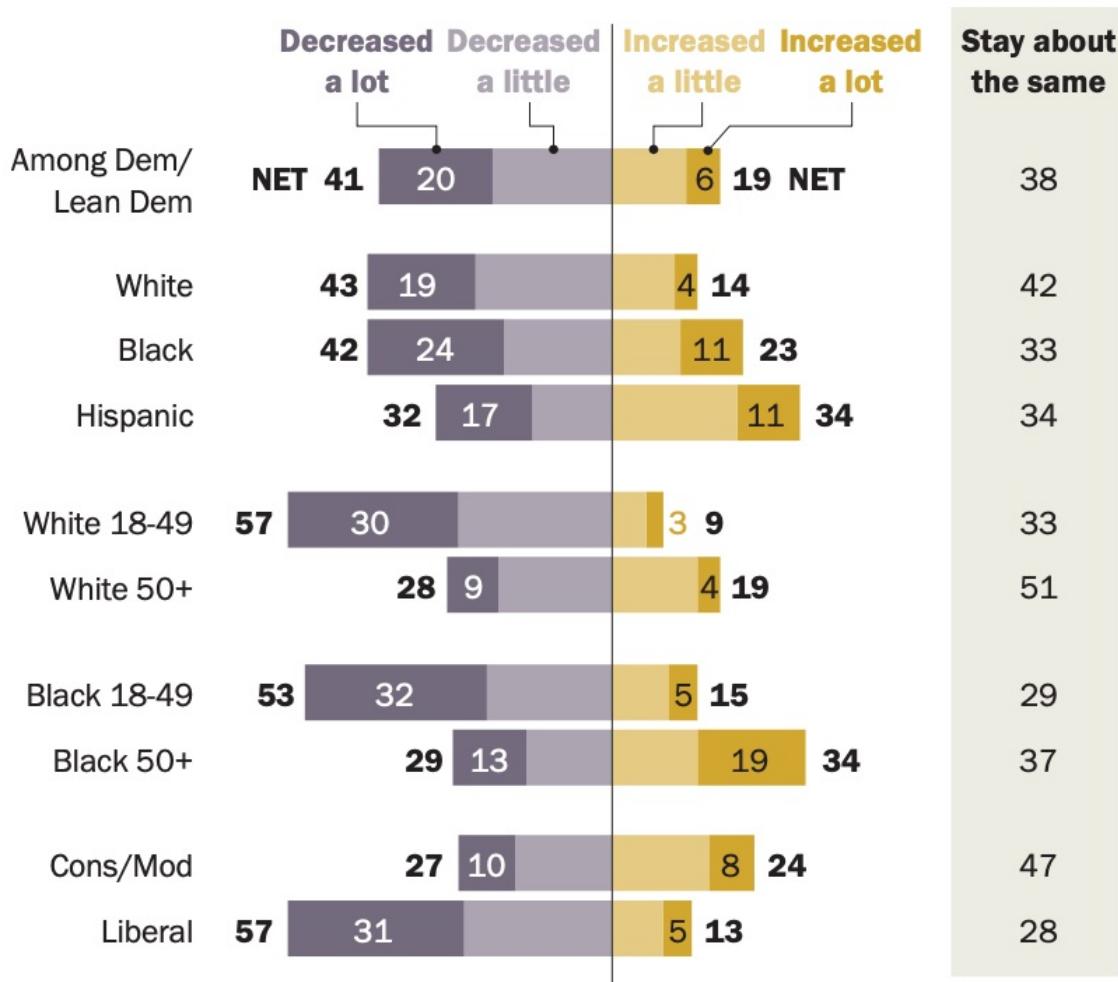
In contrast, about two-in-ten white adults (21%) and a similar share of Hispanic adults (24%) say police spending in their area should be decreased, while larger shares in both groups (33% and 37%, respectively) say spending should be increased.

Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, 41% say spending on the police should be decreased, while just 8% of Republicans say the same. By comparison, 45% of Republicans and just 19% of Democrats that spending on the police should be increased (46% of Republicans and 38% of Democrats say spending should stay the same).

Among Democrats there are sizable age and ideological differences on this question.

Among Democrats, support for cutting police spending higher among liberals, younger adults

% of Dem/Lean Dem who say spending on policing in your area should be ...



Notes: No answer responses not shown. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

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White and Black Democrats are nearly equally likely to say that spending should be decreased (43% and 42% respectively); Hispanic Democrats are somewhat less likely to say this (32%). And while 34% of Hispanic Democrats say funding should be increased, that compares with 23% of Black Democrats and just 14% of white Democrats.

Younger Democrats are far more likely to say that spending on the police should be decreased. Similar majorities of white (57%) and Black (53%) Democrats under the age of 50 say that spending should be decreased, with nearly a third saying it should be decreased a lot (30% and 32%, respectively). By comparison, only about three-in-ten white and Black Democrats ages 50 and older (28% and 29%, respectively) say police spending should be decreased.

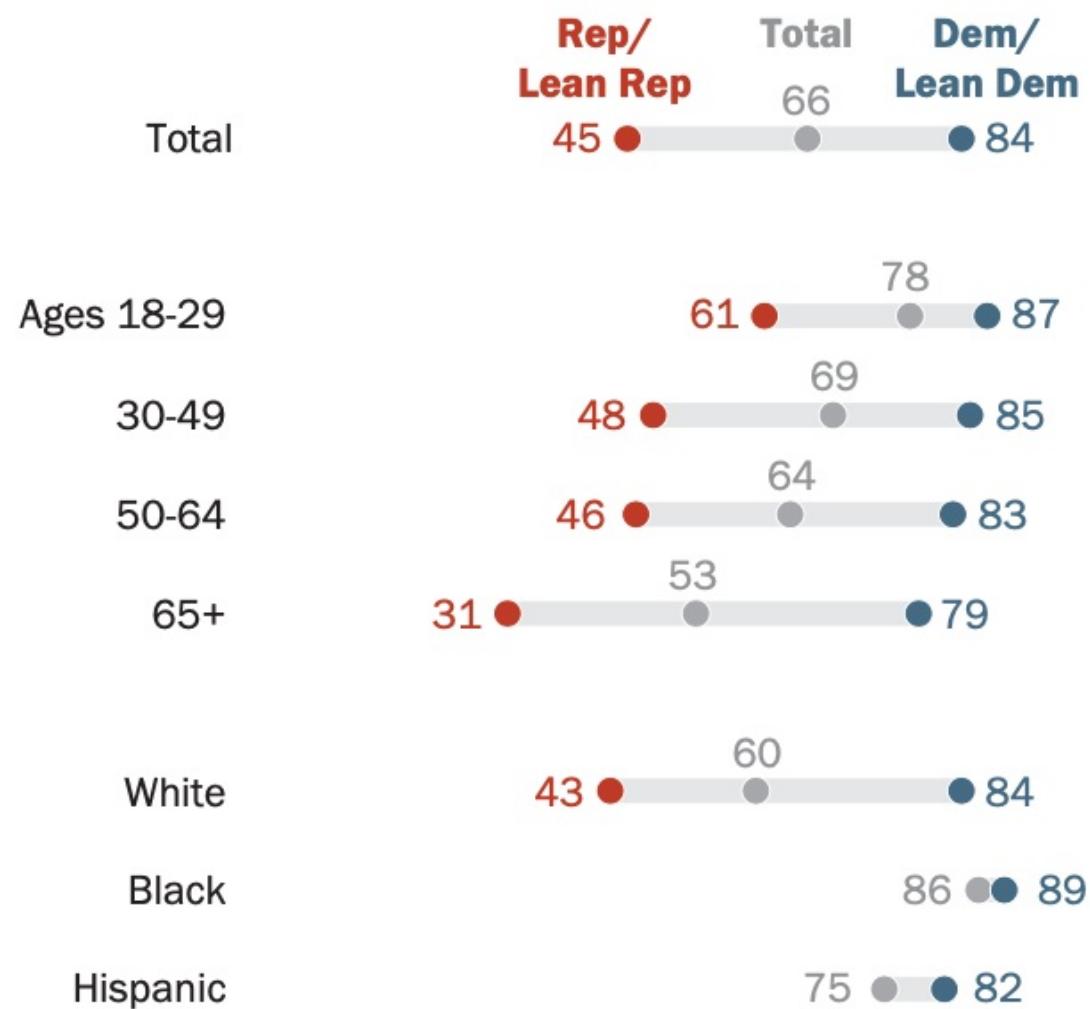
Liberal Democrats are much more likely to say that police spending should be decreased than conservative and moderate Democrats (57% vs. 27%).

Democrats who say they are “very” liberal are particularly likely to hold this view – 68% say funding for police should be decreased, compared with 52% among those who say they are liberal (but not very liberal).

Democrats and younger Republicans back ending qualified immunity

Stark GOP age divide over whether civilians should be able to sue police

% who say, even if it might make police officers' jobs more difficult, civilians need to have the power to sue in order to hold officers accountable



Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-22, 2020.

Among Republicans, there are sizable divides by age when it comes to whether civilians should be able to sue the police: 61% of Republicans ages 18 to 29 say civilians need to have the power to sue police officers in order to hold them accountable, compared with about half of those 30 to 64 (47%) and just 31% of those 65 and older.

While at least three-quarters of Democrats in all age groups say that civilians should be able to sue the police, younger Democrats are more likely to say this: 87% of Democrats ages 18 to 29 say civilians need the power to sue the police, while slightly fewer Democrats 65 and older say the same (79%).

Eight-in-ten or more white (84%), Black (89%) and Hispanic (82%) Democrats say that civilians should have the power to sue police. White Democrats are much more likely than white Republicans to say this (84% vs. 43%).

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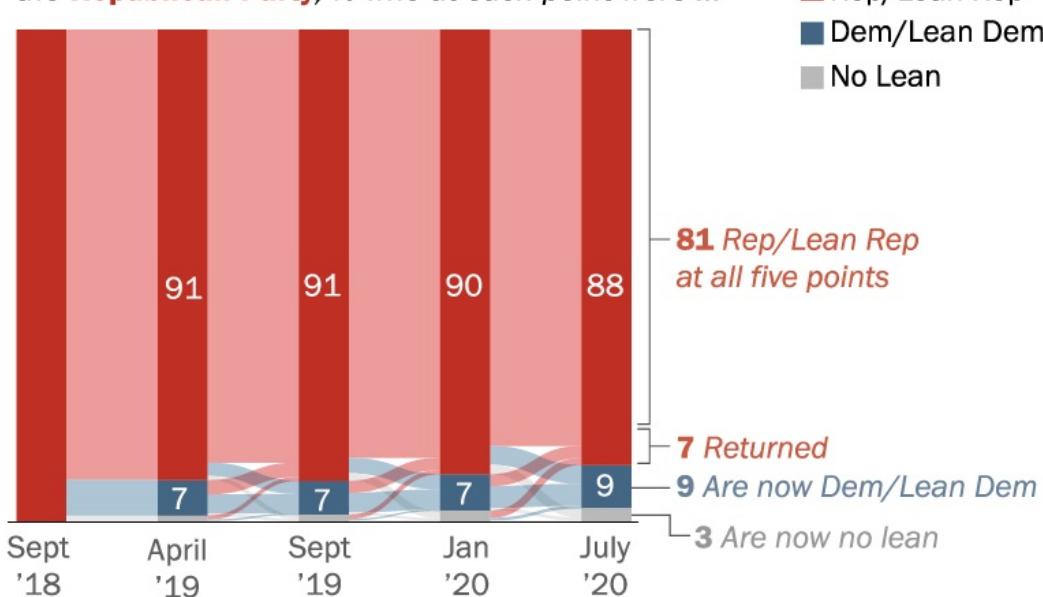
Voters Rarely Switch Parties, but Recent Shifts Further Educational, Racial Divergence | Pew Research Center

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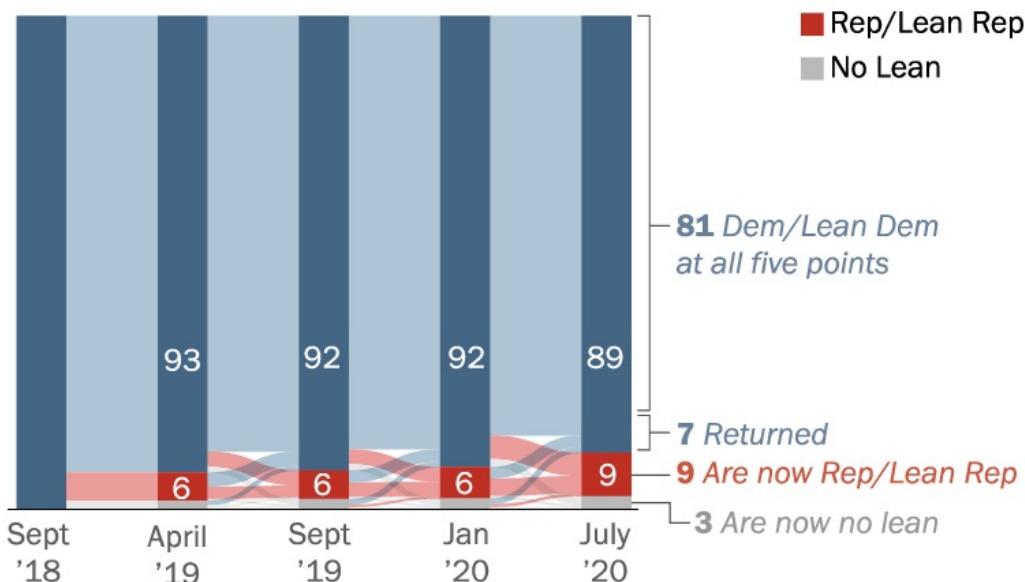
Pew Research Center conducted this study to track how individuals' partisan identities have shifted in recent years. For this analysis, we combined responses to eleven different waves of the American Trends Panel conducted between September 2018 and July 2020. Overall, 11,077 registered voters were included in this analysis. Because not all individuals responded to all 11 waves, we used a method called multiple imputation to fill in missing responses. Multiple imputation allows researchers to account for the uncertainty inherent in applying estimation techniques to missing data. See the methodology statement for more details.

Over the past two years, sizable majorities of voters in both major parties have remained with their parties

Among registered voters who in September 2018 identified or leaned toward the **Republican Party**, % who at each point were ...



Among registered voters who in September 2018 identified or leaned toward the **Democratic Party**, share who at each point were ...



Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted between September 2018 and July 2020.

Overwhelming majorities of both Republican and Democratic voters have retained their party affiliation over the past two years, a tumultuous period marked by a global pandemic, mass protests against racial injustice and a presidential impeachment.

Since 2018, comparably small shares of registered voters in both parties have changed parties. About one-in-ten voters (9%) who affiliated with the Republican Party or leaned Republican in September 2018 now identify as Democrats or lean Democratic. An identical share of voters (9%) who two years ago identified as Democrats or leaned Democratic now align with the GOP.

A new study, conducted on Pew Research Center's nationally representative American Trends Panel, is based on interviews with the same set of 11,077 registered voters on five occasions over the past two years, from September 2018 to July 2020.

While individual-level change has not resulted in a significant net shift in the *overall* balance of party identification in the electorate, that is not the case within demographic groups. For instance, among white voters without a college degree, a larger share of 2018 Democrats now tilt to the GOP than vice versa (12% vs. 6%). The reverse is true among white college graduates: 4% of 2018 Democrats in this group now associate with the GOP, while 8% of 2018 Republicans now associate with the Democratic Party. Among nonwhite voters, 10% of 2018 Democrats have moved to the GOP, while roughly twice that share of 2018 Republicans (21%) have moved to the Democratic Party.

These patterns are similar to those seen in prior years and are consistent with the long-term shifts in the composition of Republican and Democratic voters. A recent Pew Research Center examination of trends in partisan identification since 1994, based on telephone surveys, illustrated that white college-educated voters have moved in a Democratic direction over time, while white voters without a college degree have become more Republican.

For the most part, the partisan leanings of voters do not change over short periods. The current study finds that nearly nine-in-ten voters who leaned toward or identified with a given party in 2018 currently report identifying with or leaning toward that same party – including about eight-in-ten who have consistently reported that affiliation or leaning in five surveys conducted over

the past two years.

Overall, about one-in-five voters made at least some change in their partisanship over the past two years, but these changes have not favored either party. Among all registered voters, 4% identified with or leaned to the GOP in 2018 and now call themselves Democrats or Democratic leaners, while a similar share of all voters (5%) now call themselves Republicans or Republican leaners but had called themselves Democrats or Democratic leaners in the fall of 2018.

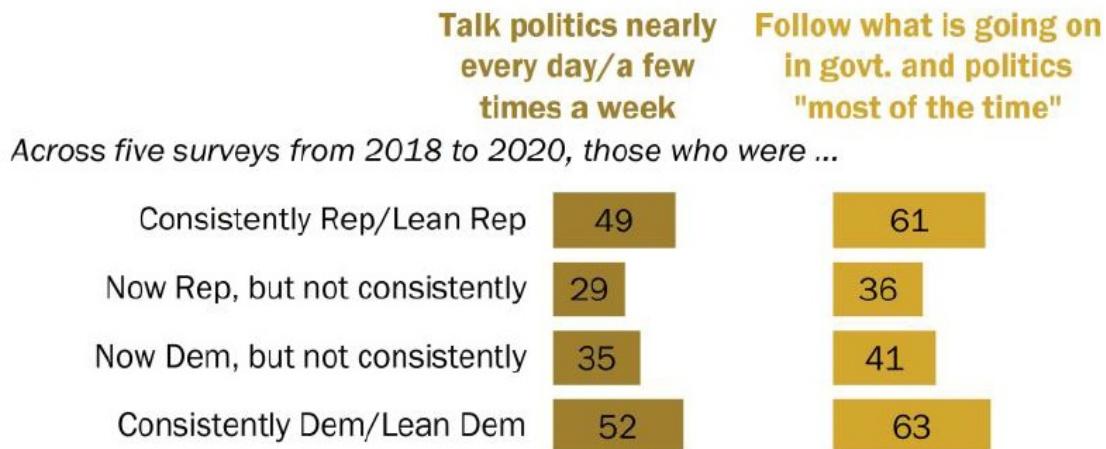
Party switchers are less politically engaged than consistent partisans

Voters who have not wavered in their party loyalty are more engaged in politics and demographically different than those who have changed their party affiliation one or more times over the past few years.

Majorities of both Republican (61%) and Democratic registered voters (63%) who consistently identified with or leaned toward their parties in five surveys between September 2018 and July 2020 say they follow what is going on in government and politics most of the time.

Fewer than half of voters who have changed parties since 2018 say they follow politics 'most of the time'

% of registered voters who ...



Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted between September 2018 and July 2020.

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That compares with 36% of voters who currently align with the Republican Party but had shifted their party identification at some point in the past two years and 41% who are currently Democrats but had changed their party previously.

Consistent partisans are also substantially more likely than others to say they talk about politics at least a few times a week. About half of consistent Republicans (49%) and Democrats (52%) say they talk about politics every day or a few times a week. That compares with only about third of Republicans (29%) and Democrats (35%) who have shifted their party affiliation or leaning over the past two years.

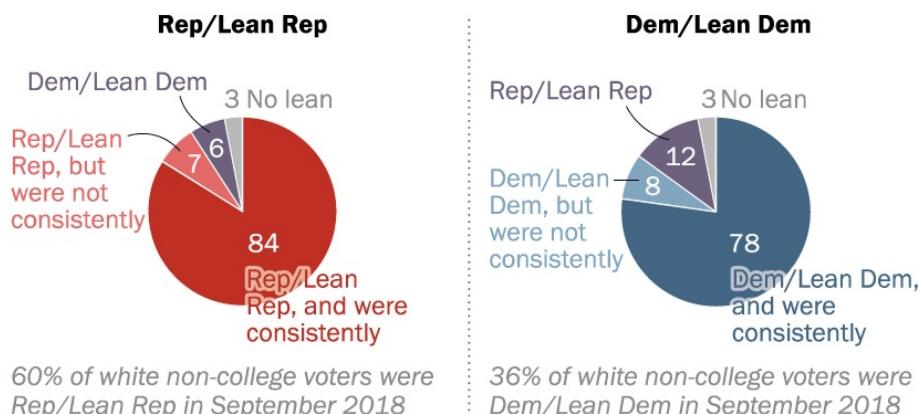
Voters who have been inconsistent partisans also tend to be younger and have less formal education than those who consistently identify with or lean to the same party.

While changes in partisanship, particularly over the short term, are not common, the patterns of switching among the electorate in the past few years are largely

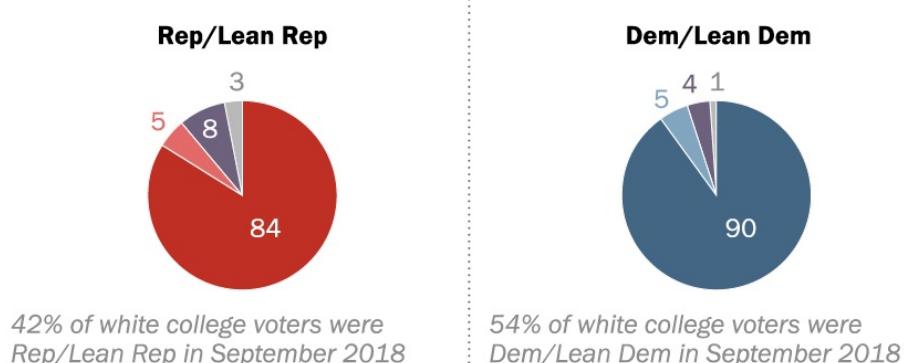
continuations of long-term trends.

Since 2018, white non-college voters more likely to stay with GOP; white college grads to stay Democratic

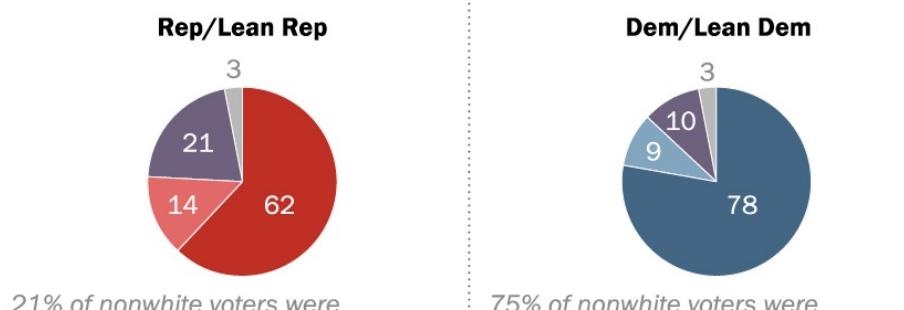
Among white non-college voters who were ___ in September 2018,
% who are now ...



Among white college voters who were ___ in September 2018,
% who are now ...



Among nonwhite voters who were ___ in September 2018,
% who are now ...



Notes: Based on registered voters. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.
Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted between September 2018 and July 2020.

For example, white voters with no college degree have been moving steadily toward the Republican Party over the past 10 years, and in this analysis white voters with no college degree who were Republicans in 2018 are significantly more likely to have remained consistent Republicans throughout this time period than white Democrats with no college degree were to have remained Democrats (84% vs. 78%).

At the same time, white voters with a college degree have trended toward the Democratic Party. White voters with a college degree who were Republicans in 2018 are about twice as likely to have left their party than white voters with a college degree who were Democrats in 2018 (8% of white, college-educated voters who were Republicans in 2018 are now Democrats, versus 4% of white college-educated voters who were Democrats in 2018 but are now Republicans).

Nonwhite voters who were Republicans in 2018 were much less likely to stick with the Republican Party than were nonwhite voters who were Democrats.

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