

www.covidstates.org

THE COVID STATES PROJECT:

A 50-STATE COVID-19 SURVEY

REPORT #52: PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR VACCINE REQUIREMENTS

USA, May 2021

Matthew A. Baum, Harvard University
Alexi Quintana, Northeastern University
Matthew Simonson, Northeastern University
David Lazer, Northeastern University
Katherine Ognyanova, Rutgers University
Hanyu Chwe, Northeastern University
Roy H. Perlis, Harvard Medical School
Jon Green, Northeastern University
James Druckman, Northwestern University
Jennifer Lin, Northwestern University
Mauricio Santillana, Harvard Medical School
Ata Uslu, Northeastern University













Report of May 14, 2021, v.1

The COVID States Project

From: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States

A joint project of:

Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University

Authors: Matthew A. Baum (Harvard University); Alexi Quintana (Northeastern University); Matthew Simonson (Northeastern University); David Lazer (Northeastern University); Katherine Ognyanova (Rutgers University); Hanyu Chwe (Northeastern University); Roy H. Perlis (Harvard Medical School); Jon Green (Northeastern University); James Druckman (Northwestern University); Jennifer Lin (Northwestern University); Mauricio Santillana (Harvard Medical School), and Ata Uslu (Northeastern University)

This report is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation under grants SES-2029292 and SES-2029297. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

This research was partly supported by a grant from the *Knight Foundation*.

We also received generous support from the Russell Sage Foundation.

Our data collection was supported in part by Amazon.











COVER MEMO

Summary Memo — May 14, 2020

The COVID States Project

From: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States

Partners: Northeastern University, Harvard University/Harvard Medical School, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University

Authors: Matthew A. Baum (Harvard University); Alexi Quintana (Northeastern University); Matthew Simonson (Northeastern University); David Lazer (Northeastern University); Katherine Ognyanova (Rutgers University); Hanyu Chwe (Northeastern University); Roy H. Perlis (Harvard Medical School); Jon Green (Northeastern University); James Druckman (Northwestern University); Jennifer Lin (Northwestern University); Mauricio Santillana (Harvard Medical School), and Ata Uslu (Northeastern University)

From April 2020 through May 2021, we conducted multiple waves of a large, 50-state survey, some results of which are presented here. You can find previous reports online at covidstates.org.

Note on methods:

Between April 1 and May 3, 2021, we surveyed 21,733 individuals across all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. The survey was conducted by PureSpectrum via an online, nonprobability sample, with state-level representative quotas for race/ethnicity, age, and gender (for methodological details on the other waves, see covidstates.org). In addition to balancing on these dimensions, we reweighted our data using demographic characteristics to match the U.S. population with respect to race/ethnicity, age, gender, education, and living in urban, suburban, or rural areas. This was the latest in a series of surveys we have been conducting since April 2020, examining attitudes and behaviors regarding COVID-19 in the United States.

Contact information:

For additional information and press requests contact:

- Matthew A. Baum at matthew baum@hks.harvard.edu
- David Lazer at <u>d.lazer@neu.edu</u>
- Katherine Ognyanova at <u>katya.ognyanova@rutgers.edu</u>
- Roy H. Perlis at rperlis@mgh.harvard.edu
- James Druckman at <u>druckman@northwestern.edu</u>
- Mauricio Santillana at msantill@fas.harvard.edu

Or visit us at www.covidstates.org.

Contents

Contents	4
Public Support for Vaccine Requirements	5
I. National Level Findings	6
Support for Mandatory Vaccination for All Americans	6
Support for Mandatory Vaccination to Get on an Airplane	8
Support for Requiring Children to be Vaccinated to Attend School	9
Support for Requiring Vaccines to Attend College	11
II. State-Level Findings	12
Appendix: State-Level Data	16

Public Support for Vaccine Requirements

As more Americans are being vaccinated, politicians, institutional leaders, and individual members of the public are debating in what contexts vaccine requirements are appropriate and who should be allowed to set the rules. For example, an increasing number of colleges and universities are <u>announcing</u> that they will require that students be vaccinated before returning to campus in the fall. On the other hand, lawmakers in <u>at least 40 states</u> are seeking to prohibit universities, government agencies, or businesses from doing so.

To explore this question, our April 2021 survey (N=21,733 respondents) included a series of questions asking respondents whether or not they approved of local, state, or federal governments mandating vaccines for everyone, and, more narrowly, whether they supported a vaccine requirement to board an airplane, attend (K-12) school in person, or return to college. In this report, we explore public support for such requirements in the aggregate and broken out by demographic subgroups of the population, as well as at the state level.

Several key findings include:

- A majority of Americans (62%) support "Requiring everyone to get a COVID-19 vaccine." Even higher percentages support mandatory vaccines "to get on an airplane" (67%) and "to go back to university" (65%).
- A majority of respondents in every state support some form of vaccine requirement. Air travel requirements are the most popular, with majority support in all 50 states, followed by university requirements (supported by majorities in 49 states), and finally requirements for children to return to school (majority support in 43 states). Men are more supportive of each potential vaccine requirement than women. This mirrors the gender divide we see in vaccine hesitancy (see Report #48) and willingness to vaccinate one's own children (see Report #45).
- Higher income, more highly educated, and non-White (particularly Asian American) respondents show greater support for vaccine requirements. Nevertheless, a majority of people in every racial, educational, and income

group supports requiring "everyone" to get vaccinated, as well as supporting mandatory vaccines for boarding airplanes, children attending schools, and returning to universities.

Despite widespread efforts by Republican politicians to <u>mobilize</u> <u>opposition</u>, more than four in ten Republican respondents support requiring everyone to get vaccinated (42%). Support among Democrats is nearly twice that (81%).

I. National Level Findings

Support for Mandatory Vaccination for All Americans

A majority (by 62% to 38%) of Americans support the idea of federal, state, and local governments requiring that "everyone get a vaccine" (Figure 1). Indeed, a plurality (38%) "strongly" approve of such a requirement. Men are more likely to support a vaccine mandate "somewhat" or "strongly" (65% for men vs. 58% for women).

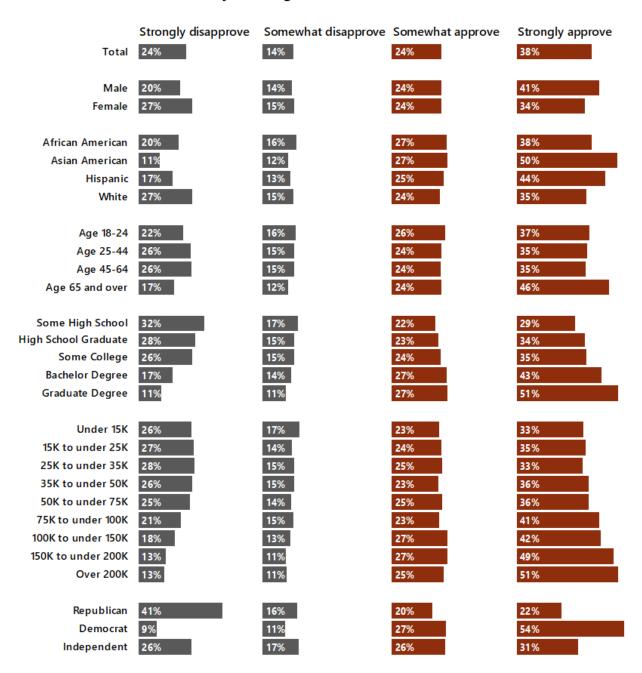
We also see sharp racial divides. White respondents are least supportive (59%). At the opposite extreme, Asian Americans are 19 percentage points more supportive, with 77% either somewhat or strongly supporting mandatory vaccines. Black (65%) and Hispanic (69%) respondents fall in between. These divides mirror the racial divides in vaccine hesitancy (see Report #45). In contrast, we find only minimal generational differences, with support ranging a high of 63% among the youngest respondents (age 18-24) to a low of 59% among respondents ages 45-64.

We find much larger gaps based on education level, with support increasing in a stepwise fashion with education, from a low of 51% among respondents without a high school diploma to a high of 78% among respondents with a graduate degree.

When we separate respondents by income level, we again find substantial differences between less wealthy respondents and their wealthier counterparts. Among respondents earning under \$50,000 per year, the percentage of respondents strongly or somewhat approving of vaccination requirements for everyone varies only slightly, from 56% to 59%. Among wealthier respondents, however, support for mandatory vaccination again increases in a stepwise fashion, reaching a high of 76% among respondents earning \$150,000 or more.

Finally, we find large partisan gaps, with Democrats 39 percentage points more approving of mandatory vaccination than Republicans (81% to 42%). As is frequently the case, Independents fall in between, at 57% approval. This gap again mirrors the partisan gaps we see in Americans' willingness to get themselves or their children vaccinated (see Reports 45 and 48).

Figure 1: Do you approve of the federal, state and local governments requiring everyone to get a COVID-19 vaccine?

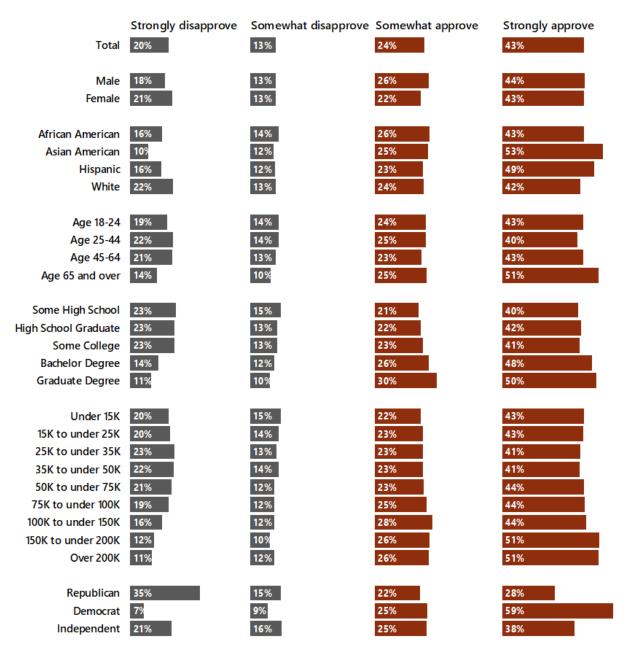


National sample, N = 21,733, Time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021

Support for Mandatory Vaccination to Get on an Airplane

When we ask the narrower question of whether respondents support mandatory vaccines for boarding airplanes (Figure 2), perhaps unsurprisingly we find somewhat higher support levels, with 67% of respondents approving somewhat or strongly.

Figure 2: Do you approve of the federal, state and local governments requiring a COVID-19 vaccine to get on an airplane?



National sample, N = 21,733, Time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021

Men are again more supportive than women, albeit in this case only modestly so (70% to 65%). White respondents are again the least supportive racial/ethnic group, at 66% support, while Asian Americans are again the most highly supportive group, at 78%, with Black and Hispanic respondents falling in between, at 69% and 72%, respectively.

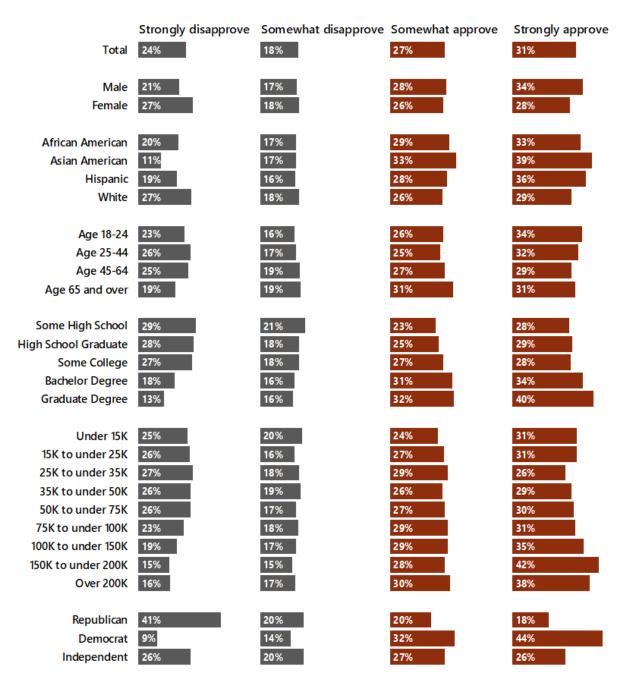
Patterns by age cohort, education, and income groups are strikingly similar to those described above for a universal vaccine mandate. As before, differences by age cohort are smaller, ranging from a low of 65% among respondents between ages 25 and 44 to a high of 76% among respondents over age 65. Education again matters more. At the low end, among respondents without a high school diploma, 61% support mandatory vaccines for getting on an airplane. At the opposite extreme, 80% of respondents with graduate degrees support such a mandate. Looking across income groups, we again see only minimal differences among respondents earning under \$50,000 per year, with support hovering at around 65%, and then increasing at higher income levels, to a high of 77% among those earning more than \$150,000 per year. Finally, Republicans are again far less supportive than Democrats, though in this instance, half of Republicans support a vaccine mandate for flying (50%), compared with 84% of Democrats and 63% of Independents.

Support for Requiring Children to be Vaccinated to Attend School

Curiously, slightly fewer Americans support "Requiring children to get a COVID-19 vaccine in order to be allowed in school" than support requiring vaccination for "everyone" (58% versus 62%). It's possible that some respondents had not thought of children when they answered the "everyone" question (which came first) and that the notion of vaccinating children is particularly sensitive.

Whatever the reason, similar patterns arise across demographic groups: (1) men are more supportive than women (62% to 54%); (2) White respondents are least supportive and Asian Americans most supportive (55% and 72%, respectively); (3) support levels vary little across age cohorts, ranging from a low of 56% among respondents age 45-64, to a high of 62% among respondents over age 65; (4) support increases with education in a stepwise fashion, from a low of 51% among respondents without a high school diploma to a high of 72% among respondents with graduate degrees; and (5) across income groups, we find hardly any variation among those earning below \$100,000 per year (between 55% and 60% approval), followed by substantial increases at higher income levels, reaching a high of 70% among respondents earning between \$150,000 and \$200,000 per year (with the highest earnings slightly behind at 68%). Finally, we once again see large partisan differences, with a 38 percentage point gap between Republicans (38% approval) and Democrats (76% approval), and Independents again falling in between (53% approval).

Figure 3: Do you approve of the federal, state and local governments requiring children to get a COVID-19 vaccine in order to be allowed in school?

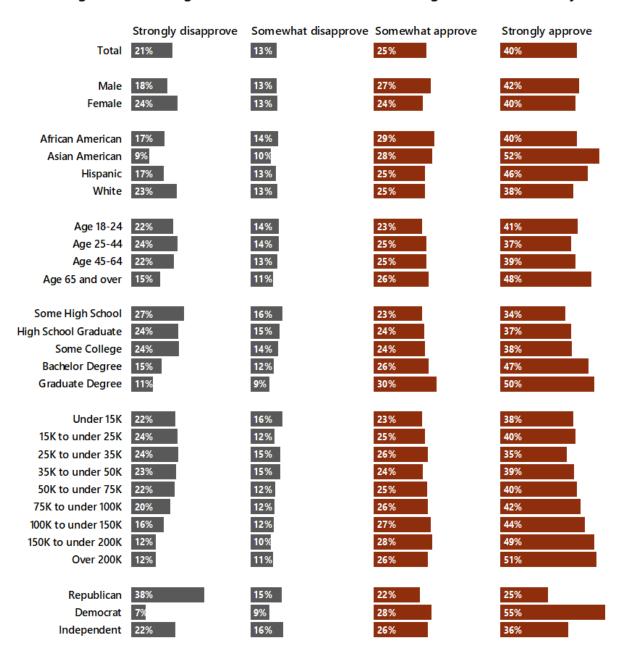


National sample, N = 21,733, Time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021

Support for Requiring Vaccines to Attend College

Overall, about two-thirds of respondents (65%) support government mandates for vaccines in order to attend college (Figure 4), with men again being more supportive than women (69% to 64%).

Figure 4: Do you approve of the federal, state and local governments requiring college students to get a COVID-19 vaccine in order to go back to university?



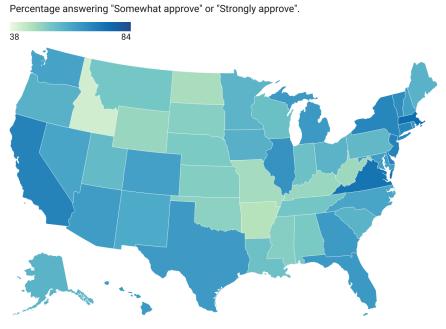
National sample, N = 21,733, Time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021

The demographic breakdowns are again quite similar: (1) White respondents are least supportive (63% support), while Asian Americans are the most supportive racial/ethnic group (80%); (2) with one exception, we find little variation across age cohorts, with support ranging only between 62% and 64% for respondents below age 65, but increasing to 74% among respondents age 65 or older; (3) support again increases in a stepwise fashion with education, from a low of 57% among respondents without a high school diploma to a high of 80% among respondents with graduate degrees; and (4) there again emerges little variation among lower income groups, with support ranging from 61% to 65% for respondents earning below \$75,000 per year, but then steadily increasing to a maximum of 77% among respondents earning over \$150,000 per year. Finally, a substantial partisan gap again emerges on this question, with 47% of Republicans, 83% of Democrats, and 62% of Independents approving of local, state, or federal governments requiring vaccines to return to college.

II. State-Level Findings

We find fairly dramatic variation across the states in support for requiring all Americans to be vaccinated (Figure 5), ranging from lows of 42% in Idaho, 46% in Arkansas, and 47% in North Dakota, to highs of 83% in the District of Columbia, 75% in Massachusetts, and 74% in Virginia.

Figure 5: Do you approve of the federal, state and local governments requiring everyone to get a COVID-19 vaccine?



National sample, N = 21,733, Time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021

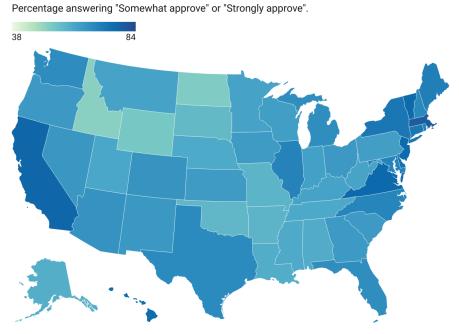
Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org

• Created with Datawrapper

Overall, there are nine states in which at least two thirds of respondents support such mandates (with the other six including, from highest to lowest support, Delaware, California, New Jersey, Connecticut, New York, and Vermont). On the other hand, there are only seven states in which a majority of respondents *do not* support such mandates (with the others being Missouri, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Wyoming).

We find quite similar sets of states at the high and low ends of support for requiring vaccination to board an airplane (Figure 6), for children to attend school (Figure 7), and to return to college (Figure 8). Beginning with boarding planes, majorities of respondents in every state support such a requirement, with the District of Columbia again coming out on top, with 82% support, followed by Massachusetts at 80%. Three-quarters or more of respondents in five additional states support this mandate, including California (77%), Virginia (77%), New Jersey (76%), Vermont (76%), and Hawaii (76%). At the low end, fewer than 60% of respondents in 7 states support a vaccine mandate for air travel: Idaho (51%), North Dakota (52%), Wyoming (53%), South Dakota (57%), Oklahoma (57%), Arkansas (58%), and Missouri (58%). Notably, majorities in all 50 states support this mandate.

Figure 6: Do you approve of the federal, state and local governments requiring a COVID-19 vaccine to get on an airplane?

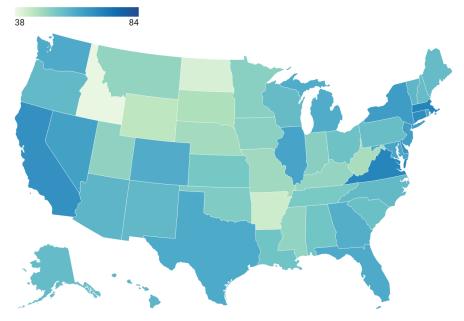


National sample, N = 21,733, Time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021

Approval patterns for requiring vaccination before children can attend school essentially mirror the patterns for boarding airplanes. At the high end, with two-thirds or higher public approval, are, again, the District of Columbia (79%), Massachusetts (70%), Virginia (70%), Connecticut (68%), and California (67%). At the low end, fewer than half of respondents in 8 states approve of mandatory vaccines to attend school, including Idaho (39%), North Dakota (41%), Arkansas (43%), Wyoming (45%), South Dakota (47%), West Virginia (47%) Nebraska (48%), and Missouri (48%).

Figure 7: Do you approve of the federal, state and local governments requiring children to get a COVID-19 vaccine in order to be allowed in school?





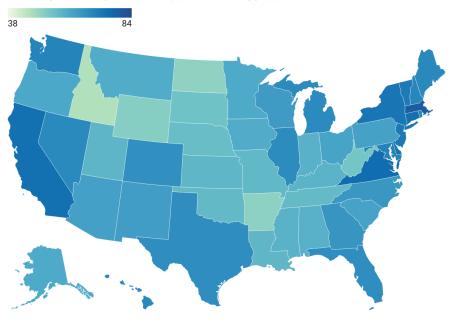
National sample, N = 21,733, Time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021

Source: The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States (A joint project of: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University) www.covidstates.org • Created with Datawrapper

We turn, finally, to mandatory vaccines for returning to college. Once again, the results are strikingly similar, with a nearly identical set of states at the high and low ends of public approval. Three-quarters or more of respondents in five states approve of this mandate, including the District of Columbia (81%), Massachusetts (79%), Virginia (75%), Connecticut (75%), and California (75%). Conversely, the 6 states with the lowest levels of support are Idaho (46%), North Dakota (50%), Arkansas (51%), Wyoming (51%), South Dakota (54%) and West Virginia (54%). Notably, majorities of respondents in all but one state (Idaho) support requiring vaccines to attend college.

Figure 8: Do you approve of the federal, state and local governments requiring college students to get a COVID-19 vaccine in order to go back to university?

Percentage answering "Somewhat approve" or "Strongly approve".



National sample, N = 21,733, Time period: 04/01/2021-05/03/2021

Appendix: State-Level Data

Do you approve or disapprove of the following measures which federal, state, and local governments could take to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the next 30 days?

Somewhat approve + Strongly approve

Margins of error in parentheses

State	Requiring everyone to get a COVID- 19 vaccine	Requiring a COVID-19 vaccine to get on an airplane	Requiring children to get a COVID-19 vaccine to attend school	Requiring college students to get a COVID- 19 vaccine
National	62 (1)	67 (1)	58 (1)	66 (1)
AK	58 (9)	60 (9)	57 (9)	61 (9)
AL	53 (6)	60 (6)	54 (6)	59 (6)
AR	46 (7)	58 (7)	43 (7)	51 (7)
AZ	64 (7)	66 (7)	58 (7)	63 (7)
CA	70 (4)	77 (4)	67 (4)	75 (4)
СО	63 (5)	66 (5)	60 (5)	67 (5)
СТ	69 (6)	73 (6)	68 (6)	75 (5)
DC	83 (5)	82 (5)	79 (5)	81 (5)
DE	70 (6)	74 (6)	66 (7)	74 (6)
FL	65 (4)	67 (4)	60 (4)	68 (4)
GA	64 (6)	64 (6)	60 (6)	66 (6)
н	64 (6)	76 (5)	58 (6)	69 (6)
IA	59 (6)	64 (6)	51 (6)	60 (6)

ID	42 (6)	51 (6)	39 (6)	46 (6)
IL	66 (5)	70 (5)	62 (5)	68 (5)
IN	55 (6)	63 (6)	51 (6)	59 (6)
KS	52 (6)	64 (6)	53 (6)	58 (6)
КҮ	49 (6)	62 (6)	50 (6)	58 (6)
LA	55 (7)	60 (7)	54 (7)	57 (7)
MA	75 (5)	80 (5)	70 (5)	79 (5)
MD	64 (6)	70 (6)	62 (6)	70 (6)
ME	59 (5)	71 (5)	56 (5)	69 (5)
МІ	65 (5)	67 (5)	60 (5)	68 (5)
MN	58 (6)	62 (6)	51 (6)	60 (6)
МО	48 (6)	58 (6)	48 (6)	57 (6)
MS	52 (6)	60 (6)	50 (6)	59 (6)
MT	54 (7)	62 (6)	50 (7)	60 (6)
NC	62 (5)	70 (5)	57 (5)	65 (5)
ND	47 (7)	52 (7)	41 (6)	50 (7)
NE	53 (6)	61 (6)	48 (6)	56 (6)
NH	63 (5)	69 (5)	56 (5)	69 (5)
ИJ	70 (5)	76 (5)	63 (5)	73 (5)
NM	61 (7)	65 (6)	57 (7)	64 (7)
NV	62 (7)	65 (7)	63 (7)	68 (7)
NY	69 (4)	73 (4)	64 (4)	73 (4)
ОН	58 (5)	65 (5)	55 (5)	62 (5)
ОК	51 (7)	57 (7)	52 (7)	57 (7)

OR	59 (7)	65 (6)	57 (7)	61 (7)
PA	57 (5)	63 (4)	56 (5)	63 (4)
RI	66 (6)	71 (6)	62 (6)	70 (6)
sc	58 (6)	64 (6)	55 (6)	62 (6)
SD	51 (7)	57 (7)	47 (7)	54 (7)
TN	54 (6)	61 (6)	53 (6)	57 (6)
тх	64 (4)	68 (4)	61 (4)	67 (4)
UT	57 (6)	61 (6)	50 (6)	58 (6)
VA	74 (5)	77 (5)	70 (5)	75 (5)
VT	67 (6)	76 (6)	58 (7)	72 (6)
WA	62 (6)	68 (6)	60 (6)	70 (6)
WI	55 (5)	63 (5)	56 (5)	64 (5)
wv	49 (7)	62 (7)	47 (7)	54 (7)
WY	49 (8)	53 (8)	45 (8)	51 (8)