

Pew Trusts Public Mistrust of Congress Evidence Card

Tag Line

7 in 10 Americans have unfavorable view of Congress and 85% don't think elected officials care what people like them think

Verbal Citation

Claudia Deane from the Pew Charitable Trusts reports that 'Congress has faced a growing decline in confidence. Around 7 in 10 Americans have an unfavorable view of Congress, an institution that has run in the red on this front for well over a decade. And a whopping 85% of Americans say they don't think elected officials care what people like them think.' Deane provides broader context about institutional trust, noting that 'Americans' trust in the federal government has been low for decades now' and that 'In a spring 2024 Center survey, only 22% of U.S. adults said they trust the federal government to do the right thing just about always or most of the time.' The research shows this mistrust is widespread, with Deane explaining that 'In a 2018 Center survey, 3 in 4 said public confidence in the federal government was shrinking. And about 2 in 3 U.S. adults agreed that a low level of trust in the government makes it harder to solve the nation's problems.' She notes that 'majorities said the federal government unfairly benefits some people over others, doesn't respond to the needs of ordinary Americans, and isn't adequately careful with taxpayer money.'

What the evidence says in context

The Pew Charitable Trusts research demonstrates historically low levels of public trust in Congress and the federal government. The 85% figure of Americans who believe elected officials don't care about ordinary people is particularly striking, showing a profound disconnect between citizens and their representatives. This institutional mistrust has persisted for over a decade and spans partisan divides.

Impact

This evidence provides the crucial context of why congressional insider trading reforms are so urgently needed. When 85% of Americans believe elected officials don't care about them, policies that appear to allow lawmakers to profit from their positions only deepen public cynicism and distrust. Restoring faith in democracy requires addressing both the reality and appearance of corruption through comprehensive congressional trading bans.

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