



The Associated Press-NORC  
Center for Public Affairs Research

# MTV/AP-NORC: YOUNG AMERICANS' OUTLOOK AHEAD OF THE MIDTERM ELECTION

Young people who identify as Democrats are more engaged in the midterm elections this year than their Republican counterparts. According to the latest wave of the MTV/AP-NORC Youth Political Pulse survey of young people age 15-34, young Democrats are more inclined than young Republicans to consider their generation as motivated to make changes for the better, more prone to encourage friends to vote, and more likely to plan to vote themselves.

While overall only a third of young people age 18-34 expect to vote on November 6, 41 percent of young Democrats say they are certain to vote compared with 28 percent of young Republicans.

Fifty-four percent of young people say voting in November is very important, including 64 percent of young Democrats and 52 percent of young Republicans. Young Democrats are more apt than young Republicans to encourage a friend to vote: 46 percent compared with 37 percent of young Republicans.

The survey also finds that two-thirds of young people favor universal health care, tuition-free college education for all Americans, and an increased minimum wage. About 6 in 10 would like to see guaranteed employment, an end to government surveillance of private communications, and legalization of recreational use of marijuana. Only about 4 in 10 support reducing government regulation or repealing the income tax. In fact, most young people view government as a source for good in society. Fifty-eight percent regard the federal government as a protector of life and liberty; 39 percent consider the federal government as a threat. And most would like to see Washington do more to assist its disadvantaged citizens. Fifty-six percent think the government should do more to help needy Americans; 42 percent say it can't afford to do anything more.



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## Three Things You Should Know

About the MTV/AP-NORC  
Youth Political Pulse Survey

Among Young People Age 15 to 34:

- 1) Compared to March of this year, fewer young people now say that people like themselves can do little or nothing to affect government policies (62 percent to 52 percent).
- 2) Thirty-nine percent consider the federal government a threat to life and liberty, including 47 percent of young women. Overall, 58 percent regard it as a protector.
- 3) Fifty-four percent get information about this year's candidates from social media, but only about a quarter share their views using that medium.

Most young people think the wealthy, corporate interests, and lobbyists have too much influence in Washington, while the poor, small businesses, minorities, and people like them have too little power.

Sixty-four percent of young people see their generation as making a positive impact on the country. And compared to March of this year, fewer young people now say that people like themselves can do little or nothing to affect government policies (62 percent vs. 52 percent), or that elected officials care little or nothing about what they think (75 percent vs. 64 percent).

Social media and television dominate as the sources of information about candidates ahead of the midterm elections. While more than half of young people get their information about the people running for office this November from social media, only about a quarter are using social platforms to share their views about the election. Thirty-four percent of young Democrats and 23 percent of young Republicans communicate their opinions of the election on social media.

This survey is the fifth and final wave in a series of surveys designed to illuminate the political ideals of the next generation of voters ahead of the November 2018 midterm elections. The nationwide poll by MTV and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research was conducted using AmeriSpeak®, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Interviews were conducted with a total of 1,052 young people, including 893 adults age 18-34 and 159 teens age 15-17.

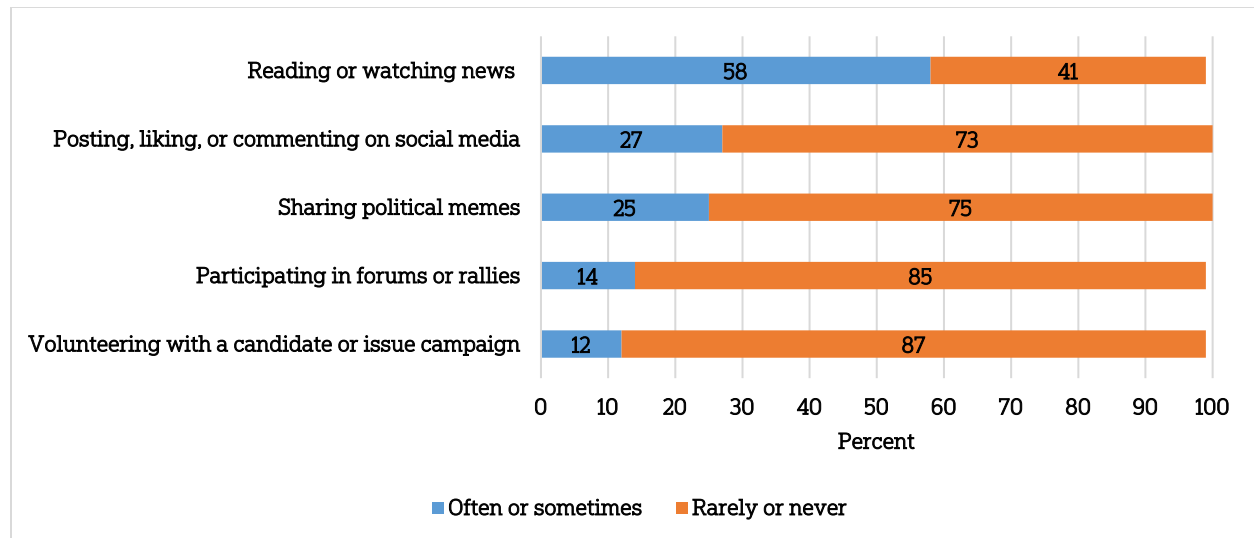
## **INTEREST IN THE ELECTION IS OUTPACING INTENT TO VOTE**

Nearly two-thirds of Americans age 15-34 years say that their generation is feeling motivated to make positive changes in the country, and about 4 in 10 report feeling excited (42 percent) or interested (43 percent) in the election.

However, while 54 percent say that voting is very or extremely important, only 32 percent of young people eligible to vote say they are certain to vote on November 6, while 15 percent say they will definitely not vote. Forty-one percent of young Democrats say they are certain to vote compared with 28 percent of young Republicans.

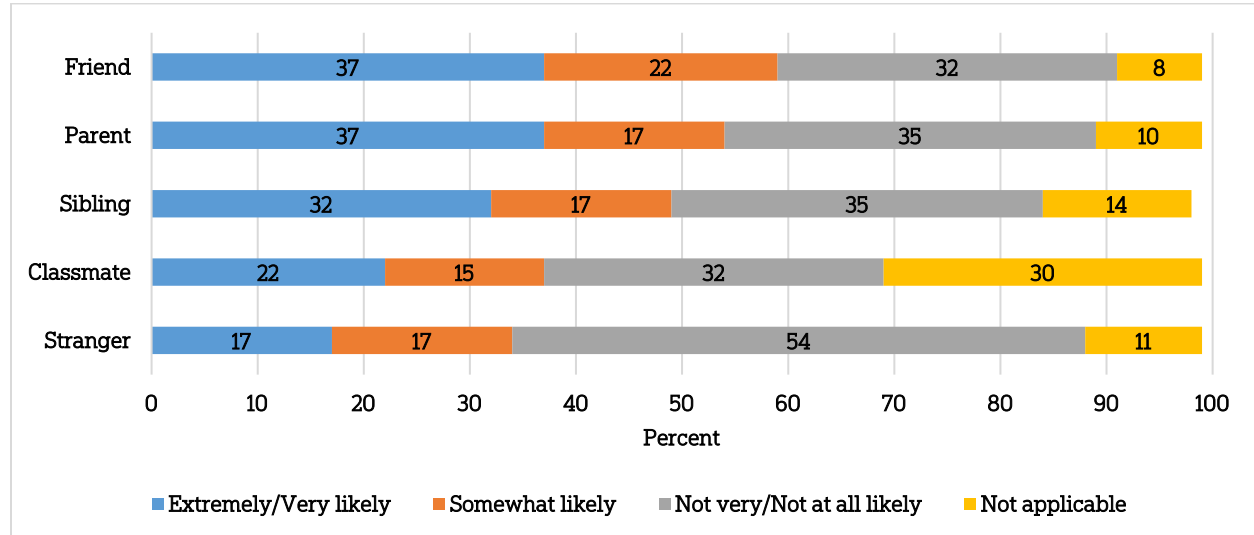
Also, while 6 in 10 young adults are reading or watching news about the midterms, most do not engage in other ways on social platforms, participate in rallies, or volunteer for campaigns.

Young Democrats are more engaged in the midterms this year than young Republicans. Their interest (51 percent vs. 40 percent), news consumption (69 percent vs. 55 percent), and use of social media to share their views about the election (34 percent vs. 23 percent) outpaces young Republicans.

**Most young people do not get personally involved in the midterm elections**

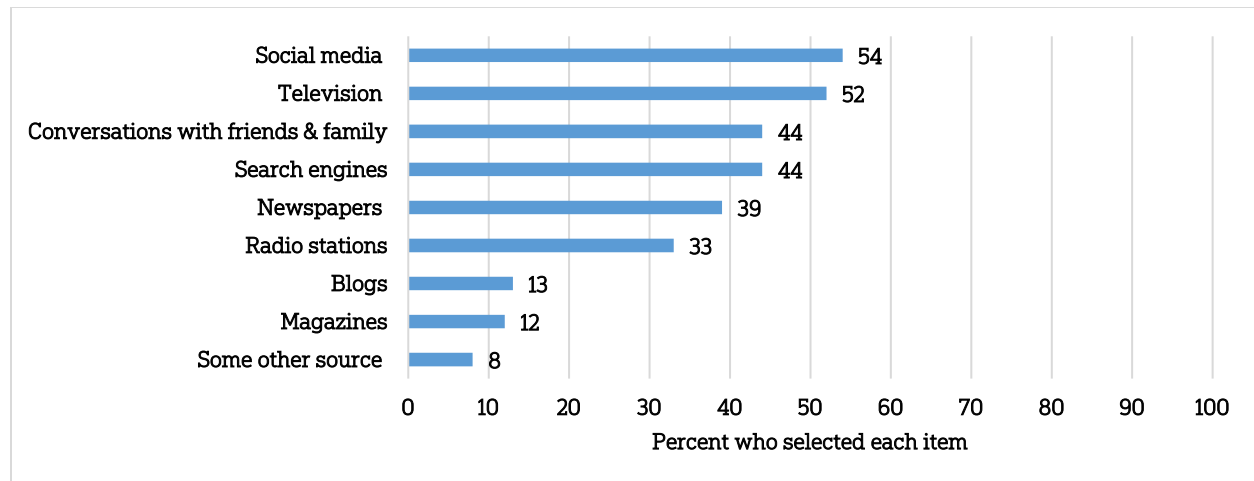
**Question:** Thinking about the 2018 midterm elections in November, how often are you engaged in the following activities?  
**Source:** MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted September 20-October 8, 2018, with 1,052 young people age 15-34 nationwide

While most say they are at least somewhat likely to encourage their friends or parents to vote, less than 40 percent say the same about a classmate or stranger. Young Democrats are more apt than young Republicans to encourage a friend to turn up at the polls in November: 46 percent compared with 37 percent of young Republicans.

**About a third of young people are likely to encourage friends and family to vote.**

**Question:** How likely is it that you will try to encourage any of the following to vote in the upcoming midterm election?  
**Source:** MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted September 20-October 8, 2018, with 1,052 young people age 15-34 nationwide

More than half of young people get their news about the midterms from social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, along with television. About 4 in 10 young Americans get information about the candidates through search engines like Google or Bing, conversations with family and friends, and newspapers.

**Young people prefer social media and TV to get information about the candidates.**

Question: What news sources do you use to get information about the candidates? Please select all that apply.

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted September 20-October 8, 2018, with 1,052 young people age 15-34 nationwide

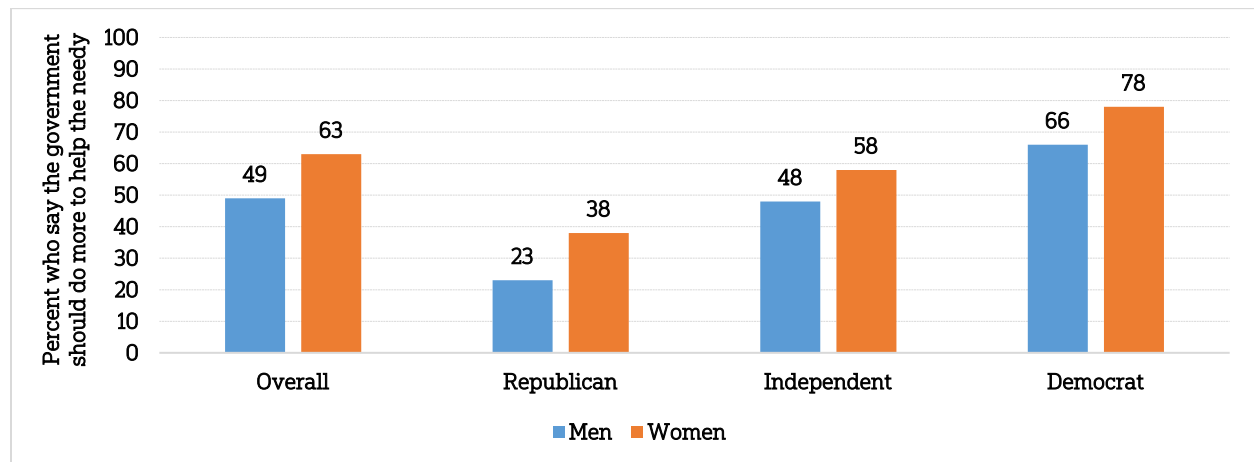
Half of young people learned about the elections that are held between presidential contests in high school, and a third of those age 18 to 34 who attended college were taught about midterms there. Few say they learned about midterm elections through social or religious groups (27 percent), through extracurricular activities (22 percent), or by participating in a campaign or election event (16 percent).

**YOUNG PEOPLE SAY THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HELP THE NEEDY**

A majority (56 percent) of Americans age 15-34 say the government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt, while 42 percent say the government cannot afford to do much to help the needy.

There is, however, a strong party divide when it comes to helping those in need at the expense of taking on more debt. Seventy-three percent of young Democrats say the government should do more to help the needy, while only 30 percent of their Republican counterparts say the same.

There is also a gender difference when it comes to helping the needy, regardless of party identification.

**Women are more likely than men to say the government should do more to help the needy.**

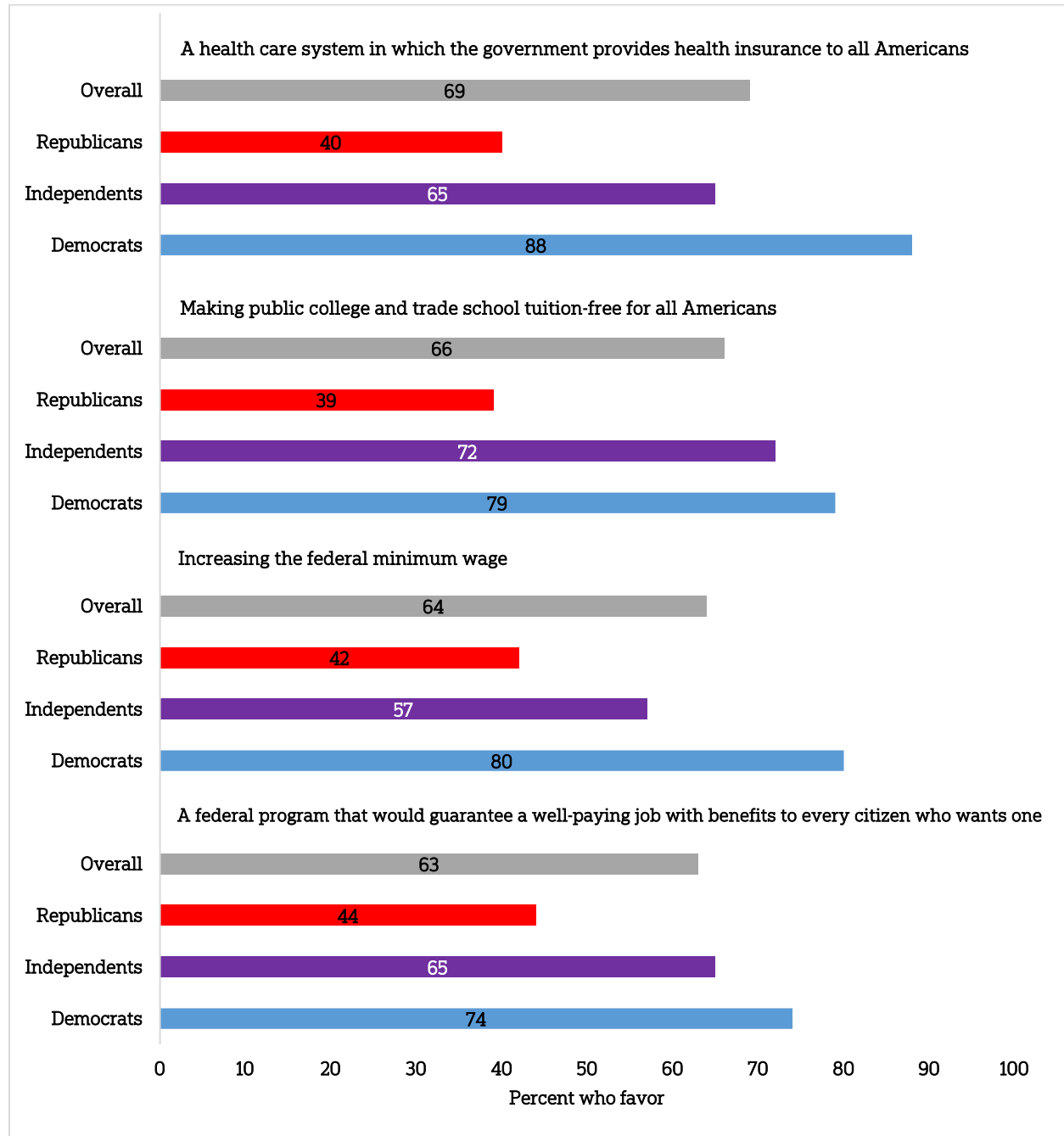
Question: Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right? The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt. The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy.

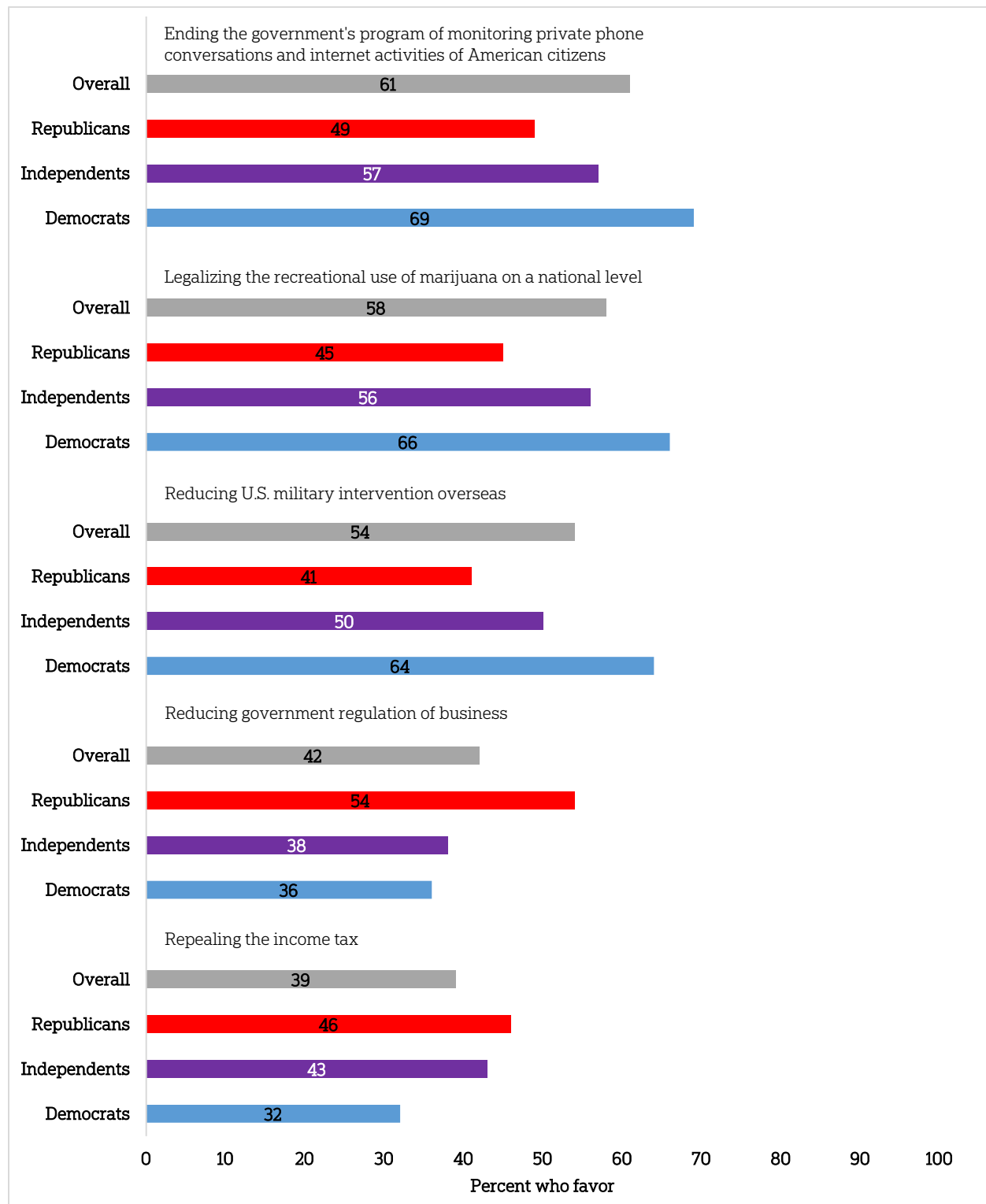
Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted September 20-October 8, 2018, with 1,052 young people age 15-34 nationwide

Overall, young people support universal health care, making tuition-free public colleges and trade schools, a higher minimum wage, guaranteed jobs, a reduction in U.S. military intervention, legalizing recreational use of marijuana, and reducing government surveillance of citizens. There is less support for repealing the income tax and reducing government regulation.

Support for these policy preferences tend to have a heavy partisan divide.

**Democrats are more likely than Republicans to favor most of these policies.**

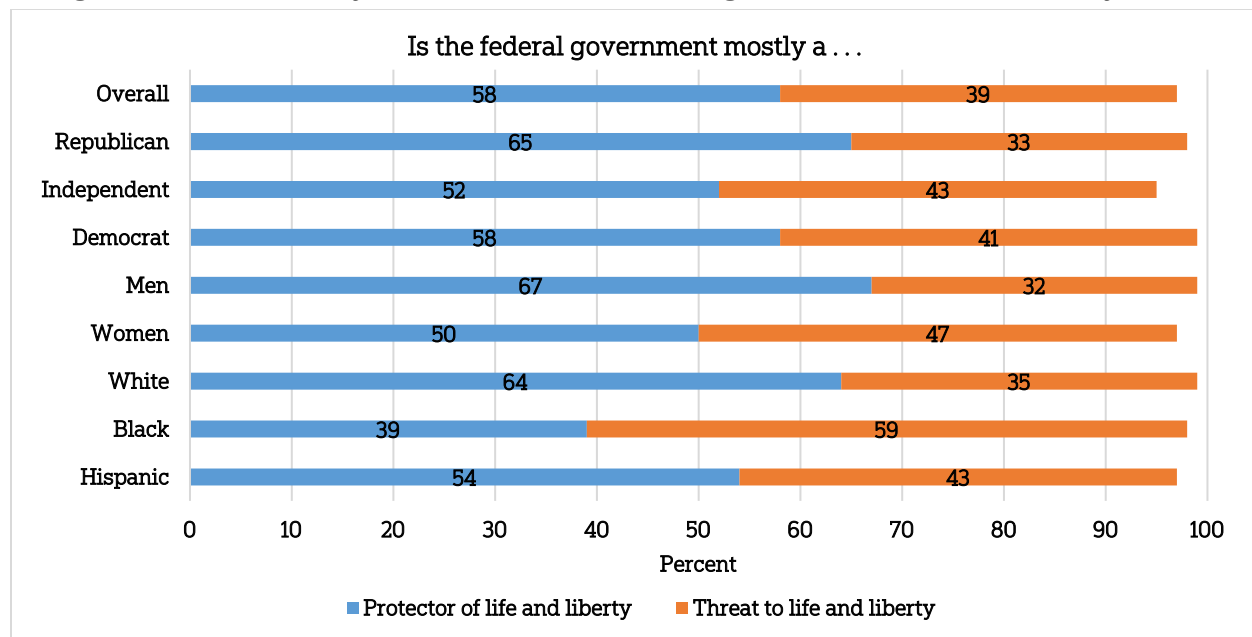




Question: Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose each of the following?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted September 20-October 8, 2018, with 1,052 young people age 15-34 nationwide

While most young people view the federal government as a protector of life and liberty, rather than a threat, some demographic groups have a different view. African American young people are particularly inclined to regard the government as threatening their liberty.

**Young women are more likely than men to view the federal government as a threat to liberty.**

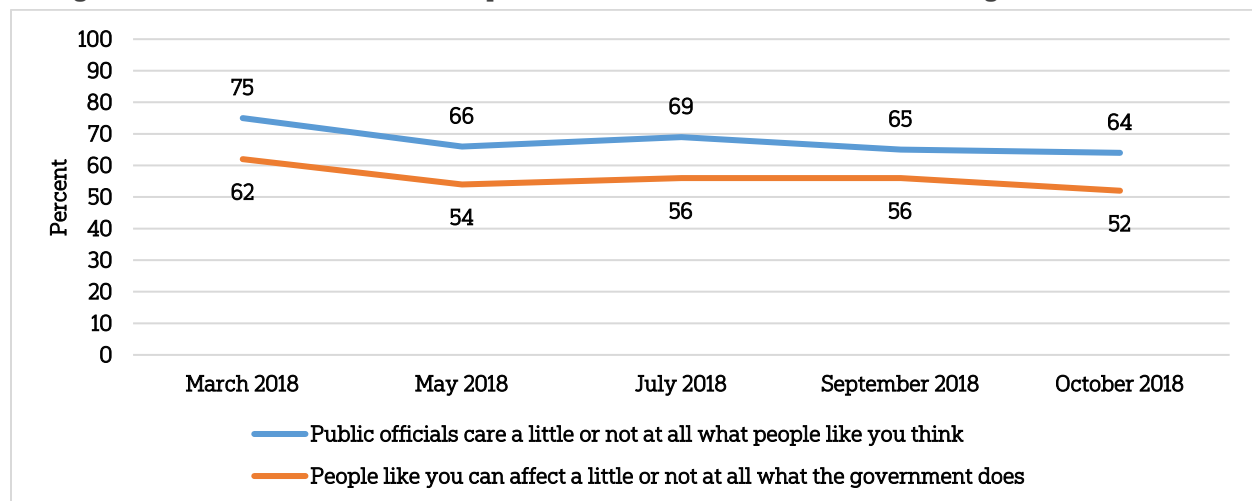
Question: Do you consider the federal government mostly a protector of your life and liberty or mostly a threat to your own life and liberty?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted September 20-October 8, 2018, with 1,052 young people age 15-34 nationwide

## YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BECOME LESS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE WORKINGS OF AMERICAN POLITICS

A majority of young people think American politics is not functioning well; however, over the last six months, this perspective has receded. In March, 70 percent of young Americans thought politics was not functioning very well if at all; in October, 61 percent shared this opinion.

Most think public officials care very little if at all what people like them think or that people like them cannot really affect what the government does. However, this opinion has decreased significantly since early March.

**Young Americans have become less skeptical about their chance to influence the government.**

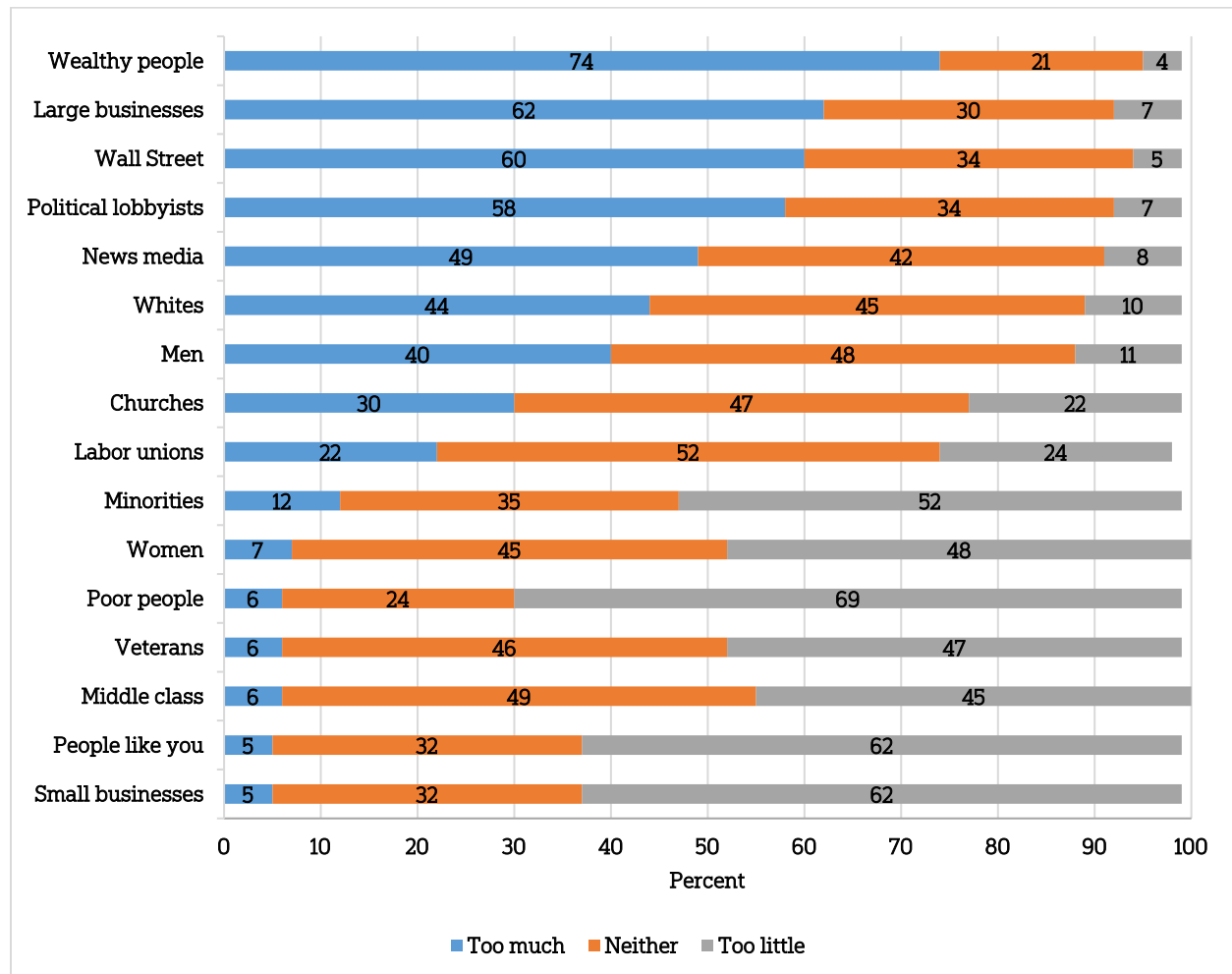
Question: How much do elected public officials care what people like you think? How much can people like you affect what the government does?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted September 20-October 8, 2018, with 1,052 young people age 15-34 nationwide

Three-quarters of young people say Wall Street has too much influence in Washington. A majority also believe political lobbyists, large businesses, and wealthy people have too much power in Washington. And most say minorities, small businesses, poor people, and people like them have too little power.

Young people are more ambivalent when it comes to the amount of power wielded by the news media, churches and religious groups, women, men, whites, and veterans.

**Few young people are satisfied with the balance of power in Washington.**



**Question:** Do you think each of the following has too much, too little, or neither too much nor too little power and influence in Washington?

**Source:** MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted September 20-October 8, 2018, with 1,052 young people age 15-34 nationwide

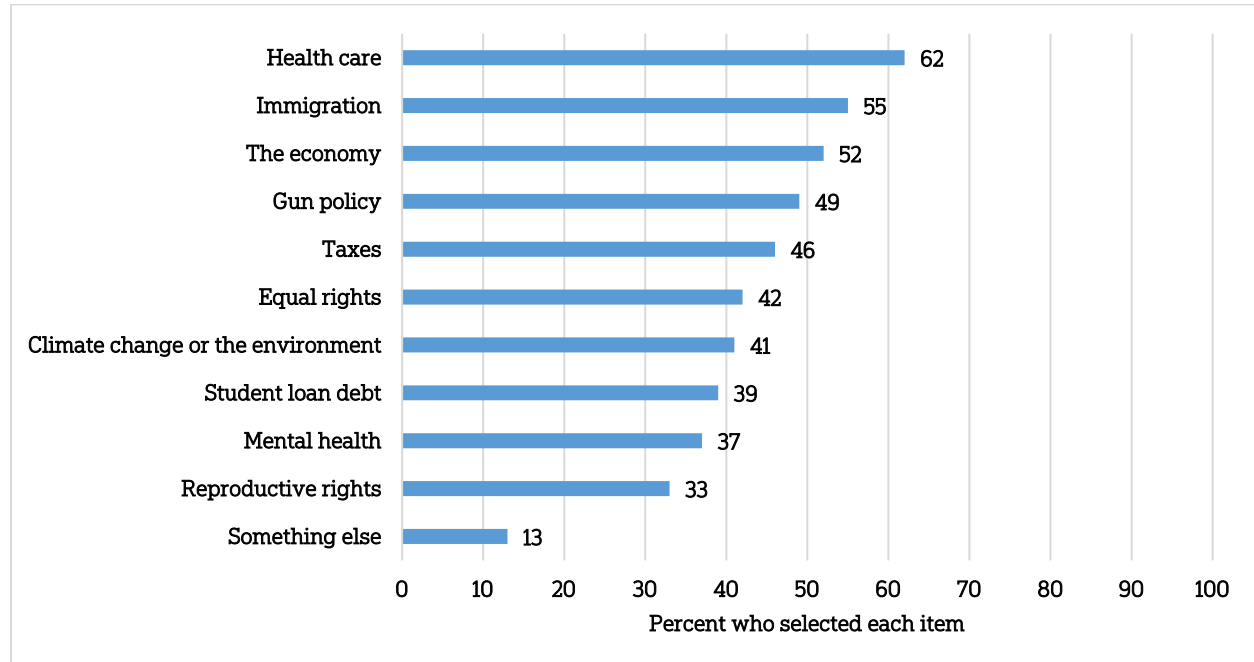
Democrats and Republicans disagree in expected ways but also find agreement. Similar numbers of Democrats and Republicans say that political lobbyists have too much power and that the middle class has the right amount of power. Majorities of both Democrats and Republicans also say that wealthy people have too much power, though Democrats are more likely than Republicans to hold this view (87 percent vs. 58 percent).

Gender differences emerge on the influence of women and men. Women are more likely than men to say that women have too little power (55 percent vs. 41 percent) and that men have too much power (54 percent vs. 27 percent).

## HEALTH CARE, IMMIGRATION, AND THE ECONOMY ARE THE BIGGEST CONCERNS

Health care, immigration, and the economy remain the top issues for young people eligible to vote, with a majority saying they are among the most important in their vote decision. Party differences emerge as health care and immigration are the two most frequently selected issues by young Democrats, while the economy and taxes are the top concerns for young Republicans.

**Young adults find health care, immigration, and the economy to be the most important issues.**



**Question:** What issues are the most important to you in deciding how to vote in this year's (2018) midterm election? Please select all that apply.

**Source:** MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted September 20-October 8, 2018, with 1,052 young people age 15-34 nationwide

When specifically asked about the border crisis where children were separated from their families, 58 percent of young people say the Trump Administration is doing too little to reunite them. Only 8 percent think the government is doing too much to help with family reunification.

## STUDY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and with funding from MTV and NORC at the University of Chicago. Staff from NORC at the University of Chicago, The Associated Press, and MTV collaborated on all aspects of the study.

Data were collected using AmeriSpeak®, NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97 percent of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between September 20 and October 8, 2018, with young people age 15 to 34 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. Adult panel members age 18 to 34 were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 893 completed the survey—877 via the web and 16 via telephone. In addition, teen panel members age 15 to 17 were drawn from AmeriSpeak Teen, and 159 completed the survey—153 via the web and 6 via telephone.

The final stage completion rate is 26.6 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 28.0 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 86.1 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 5.1 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2017 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of young people age 15 to 34.

A comprehensive listing of the questions, complete with tabulations of top-level results for each question, is available on The AP-NORC Center website: [www.apnorc.org](http://www.apnorc.org). For more information, please email [info@apnorc.org](mailto:info@apnorc.org).

## CONTRIBUTING RESEARCHERS

### From NORC at the University of Chicago

Emily Alvarez  
Liz Kantor  
Mariana Meza Hernandez  
Tomas Okal  
William Bonnell  
Marjorie Connelly  
Jennifer Benz  
Trevor Tompson

### From The Associated Press

Emily Swanson  
Hannah Fingerhut

## ABOUT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS-NORC CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

- The Associated Press (AP) is the world's essential news organization, bringing fast, unbiased news to all media platforms and formats.
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest and most respected, independent research institutions in the world.

The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

The founding principles of The AP-NORC Center include a mandate to carefully preserve and protect the scientific integrity and objectivity of NORC and the journalistic independence of AP. All work conducted by the Center conforms to the highest levels of scientific integrity to prevent any real or perceived bias in the research. All of the work of the Center is subject to review by its advisory committee to help ensure it meets these standards. The Center will publicize the results of all studies and make all datasets and study documentation available to scholars and the public.

## **ABOUT MTV**

MTV is the leading youth media brand inspired by music, in nearly 180 countries and 450 million homes around the world, connecting with over 350 million fans across all social media platforms. A unit of Viacom Inc. (NASDAQ: VIAB, VIA), MTV operations span cable and mobile networks, live events, and the new MTV Studios unit, which produces original and reimagined content for SVOD and linear networks based on MTV's library of over 200+ youth titles and franchises.