



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

MTV/AP-NORC YOUTH POLITICAL PULSE, MARCH 2018: YOUNG AMERICANS' POLITICAL OUTLOOK AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE TRUMP PRESIDENCY



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according to a new poll of Americans age 15-34 by MTV and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

This survey is the first in a multiwave series of polls highlighting the voices of the youngest generation of voters. These 15-34 year olds, all of whom will be old enough to vote in 2020, represent the most diverse generation in American history and occupy the largest share of the electorate. This Youth Political Pulse series explores the views and priorities of this influential generation regarding the most critical political and social issues impacting the United States, and how their attitudes will shape their voting choices.

Just over a year into the Trump presidency and several months before the 2018 midterm elections, a third of American teens and young adults approve of the president's job performance. A majority of young people across the political spectrum feel disillusioned with the political process, yet this dissatisfaction may be contributing to more action. Most feel that the public has become more engaged with politics and social issues since Donald Trump's election, and many report being more involved themselves,

Three Things You Should Know

About The MTV/AP-NORC Poll of Americans Age 15-34:

- 1) Anger (40 percent) and anxiety (36 percent) are the dominant feelings when it comes to the state of the country in the past month. Only 13 percent feel positive, and 9 percent feel excited.
- 2) Substantial numbers say they're personally paying attention to politics (47 percent), questioning the media (47 percent), having conversations about race and gender issues (42 percent and 34 percent), and engaging in political activism (20 percent) more than they were before.
- 3) Young people are looking forward to the midterm elections. And more than half of those with a negative outlook on current events say they're highly likely to vote.

The results of the first poll reveal that these young Americans are critical of many aspects of President Trump's performance and personal qualities, with 66 percent saying he is not "making America great again," and 72 percent saying that he does not reflect their personal values. At the same time, 54 percent do not feel that he has been treated fairly by the media.

Young people acknowledge that the public has become more interested and involved with politics since Trump's election in 2016. Majorities feel that people are now paying attention to politics (64 percent), questioning the media (62 percent), engaging in political activism (61 percent), and having conversations about race and gender issues (60 percent and 53 percent, respectively) more than they were before.

Half of young Americans are already thinking about the 2018 midterm elections, and majorities support a number of policy changes on issues currently under debate, including student loan debt relief through refinancing (76 percent), finding a way for participants of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to stay in the United States legally (69 percent), a government-funded health care system (67 percent), increasing the federal minimum wage (60 percent), addressing climate change (60 percent), protecting the rights of LGBT citizens and Muslims (59 percent and 58 percent, respectively), and legalizing recreational use of marijuana (55 percent).

This nationwide poll by MTV and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research surveyed a total of 1,027 young people, including 839 adults age 18-34 and 188 teens age 15-17.

MOST YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CRITICAL OF TRUMP'S ACTIONS AND CHARACTER, THOUGH A MAJORITY BELIEVE HE HASN'T BEEN TREATED FAIRLY BY THE MEDIA.

Overall, one-third of Americans age 15 to 34 say they approve of the way Trump is handling his job as president, while two-thirds disapprove. Recent polling shows similar levels of approval in the general population.¹ Young people differ in their levels of approval, with males reporting higher levels of approval (39 percent vs. 27 percent), and whites being more likely to express approval than blacks and Hispanics (43 percent vs. 13 percent and 23 percent).

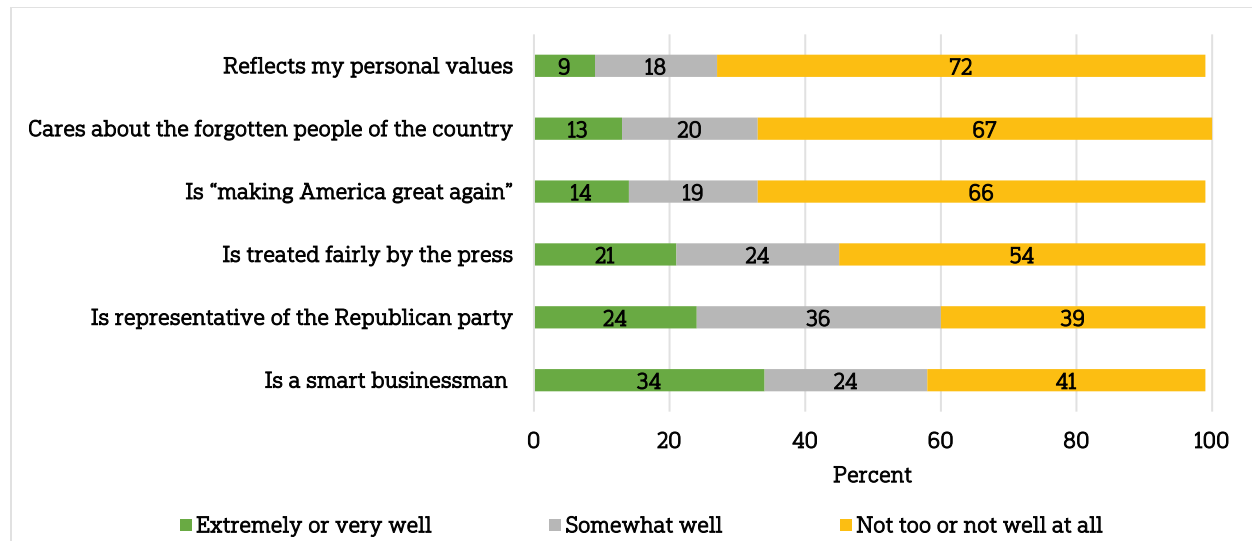
Few young people believe that Trump is upholding two of his campaign promises. Asked a series of statements about the president, just 14 percent say that the characterization that Trump is "making America great again" applies very or extremely well, and 13 percent say the same when asked if he cares about the forgotten people of the country.

Just 9 percent feel that Trump reflects their personal values, while 72 percent say he does not.

However, while most hold critical views of Trump, 54 percent believe he hasn't been treated fairly by the press.

Young people have more mixed opinions when asked to assess Trump's business acumen and how well he embodies the GOP.

¹ The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The February 2018 AP-NORC Center Poll. <http://apnorc.org/projects/Pages/What-Americans-think-about-the-Economy.aspx>

Young people view Trump unfavorably, though most think he has been treated unfairly by the media.

Question: How well do each of the following phrases describe President Trump?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted February 22-March 9, 2018, with 1,027 young people age 15-34 nationwide

A majority of American teens and young adults express critical opinions about Trump's personal qualities. Sixty-three percent believe he is a racist, while 36 percent do not. Sixty-two percent believe he is generally dishonest, while 37 percent say he generally is truthful. Six in 10 young people question Trump's mental fitness to be president, while 38 percent believe he is mentally fit.

Young whites tend to have a more favorable view of Trump than young people of color. Eighty-five percent of blacks say Trump is a racist, compared with 71 percent of Hispanics and 54 percent of whites, mirroring a similar finding from a recent poll among American adults of all ages.² Half of whites say Trump is mentally fit to be president, compared with 31 percent of Hispanics and 10 percent of blacks.

There is less consensus on the impact that Trump's presidency has had on the U.S. economy. Thirty-four percent believe it has helped the economy, 43 percent believe it has hurt the economy, and 22 say it has had no effect.

When it comes to the Russia investigation, few young Americans believe Trump is completely innocent. Thirty-seven percent believe he has done something illegal, 39 percent believe he has done something unethical but not illegal, and 22 percent believe he has done nothing wrong. These results are similar to national poll results from December 2017, which showed that 40 percent of American adults thought Trump had done something illegal, 32 percent thought he had done something unethical but not illegal, and 25 percent thought he had committed no wrongdoing.³

Most young people are not fond of Trump's Twitter feed. Forty-nine percent say they would tell him to "delete your account" if they were his social media advisor, and 37 percent say they would tell him to "take it down a notch." Thirteen percent would tell the President to "keep doing what you're doing!" when it comes to Twitter.

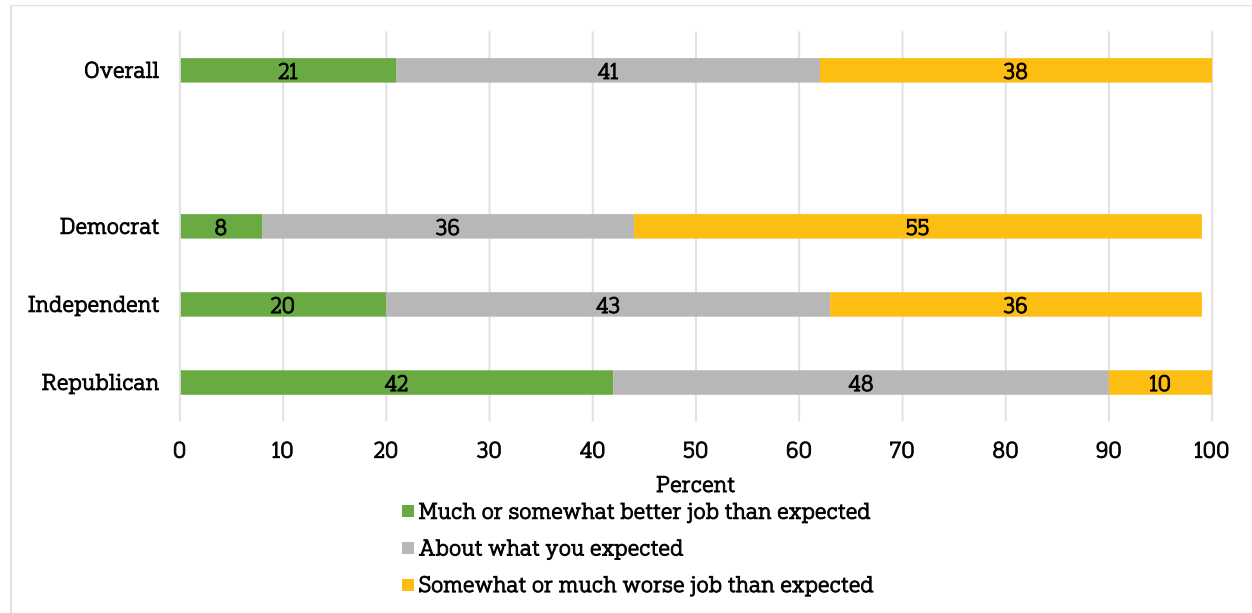
² The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The February 2018 AP-NORC Center Poll. <http://apnorc.org/projects/Pages/Assessing-Race-Relations-under-the-Trump-Administration.aspx>

³ The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The December 2017 AP-NORC Center Poll. <http://apnorc.org/projects/Pages/Americans-Assess-the-Progress-of-the-Russia-Investigation.aspx>

These assessments of Trump are fairly critical overall, with differences largely grounded in party politics. For many of these assessments, Democrats provide harsher evaluations than Republicans.

In general, young people's attitudes about Trump line up fairly well with their expectations about him. Forty-one percent say Trump is doing about as good of a job as they had expected, 21 percent say he's exceeding their expectations, and 36 percent say he's doing worse than they expected. This also varies based on partisanship and race. Most Democrats say Trump is doing as they expected or worse, and most Republicans say he is doing as they expected or better. Blacks are more likely than whites to say Trump is doing a worse job than expected (53 percent vs. 30 percent).

Young Americans largely feel that Trump is performing as anticipated, with slightly larger numbers rating him below expectations compared to above expectations.



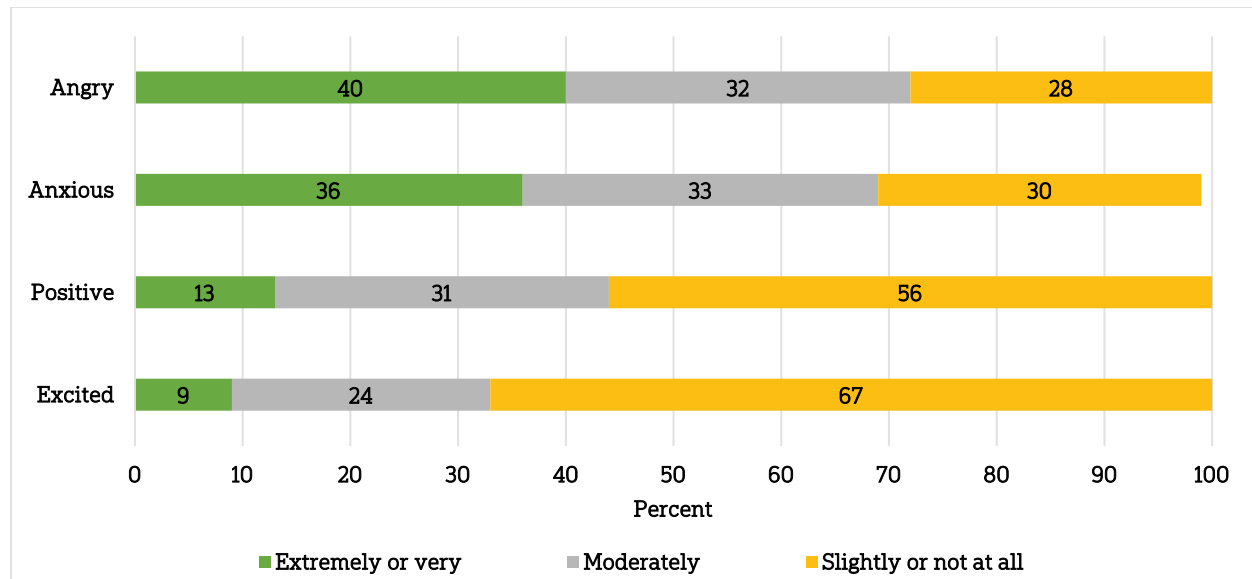
Question: Overall, do you think President Trump is doing a better job as president than you expected, a worse job, or about what you expected?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted February 22-March 9, 2018, with 1,027 young people age 15-34 nationwide

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A GLOOMY OUTLOOK ON CURRENT EVENTS AND THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY.

Young Americans are roughly divided in their outlooks on the future of the United States. Fifty-three percent of young people feel generally pessimistic, but nearly as many (46 percent) are optimistic about the years ahead.

However, when it comes to day-to-day emotions over the past month, far more teens and young adults report feeling negative than enthusiastic. About 4 in 10 report feeling angry or anxious about the state of the country, compared to just 1 in 10 who say they've been positive or excited.

More young Americans feel angry or anxious about the United States than positive or excited.

Question: In the past month...how ____ have you felt about the state of the country?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted February 22-March 9, 2018, with 1,027 young people age 15-34 nationwide

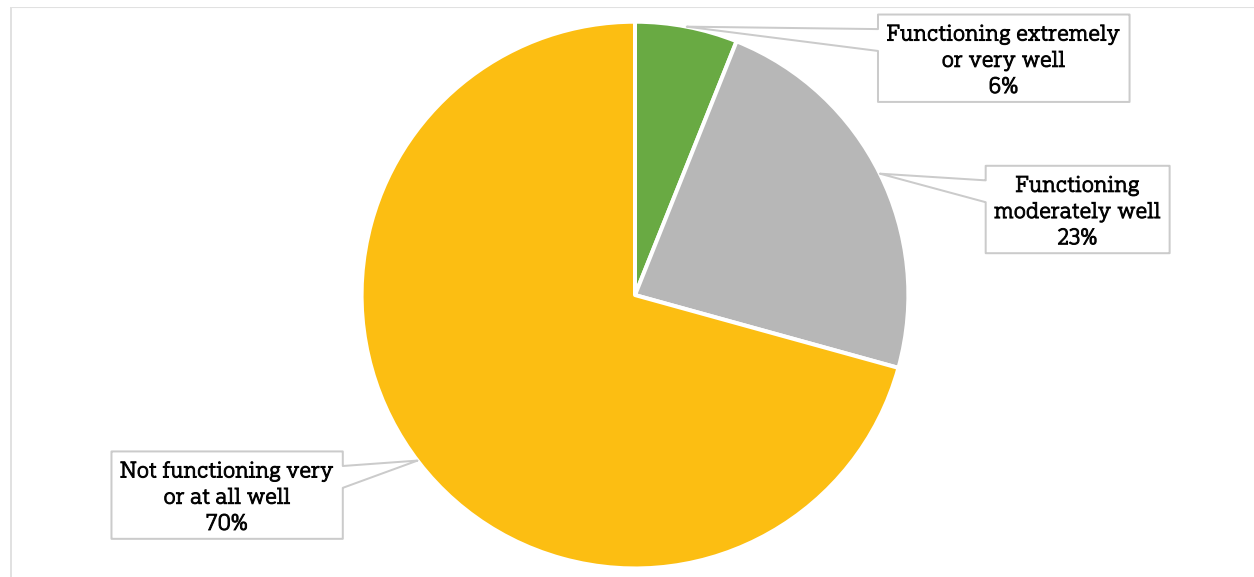
Young people's partisan identities help shape their outlook on the country. While 70 percent of Republicans feel optimistic about the future of the United States, just 45 percent of independents and 32 percent of Democrats feel the same. Similarly, Republicans are less likely than Democrats to report feeling anxious (23 percent vs. 51 percent) or angry (22 percent vs. 55 percent), and more likely to feel positive (28 percent vs. 6 percent) or excited (19 percent vs. 6 percent).

Demographic differences also emerge in these emotional assessments. Hispanics (36 percent) are less likely than whites (49 percent) and blacks (53 percent) to feel optimistic about the future of the United States. In addition, young women are more likely than young men to feel anxious about the state of the country (44 percent vs. 29 percent).

ACROSS PARTY LINES, YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DISILLUSIONED WITH AMERICAN POLITICS.

Many young people see politics as dysfunctional and have little confidence in their ability to influence it. Overall, 7 in 10 say American politics have not been functioning well in the past month. Few say it has been functioning very or even moderately well.

Seven in 10 young people view American politics as dysfunctional.



Question: In the past month, how well do you feel American politics have been functioning?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted February 22-March 9, 2018, with 1,027 young people age 15-34 nationwide

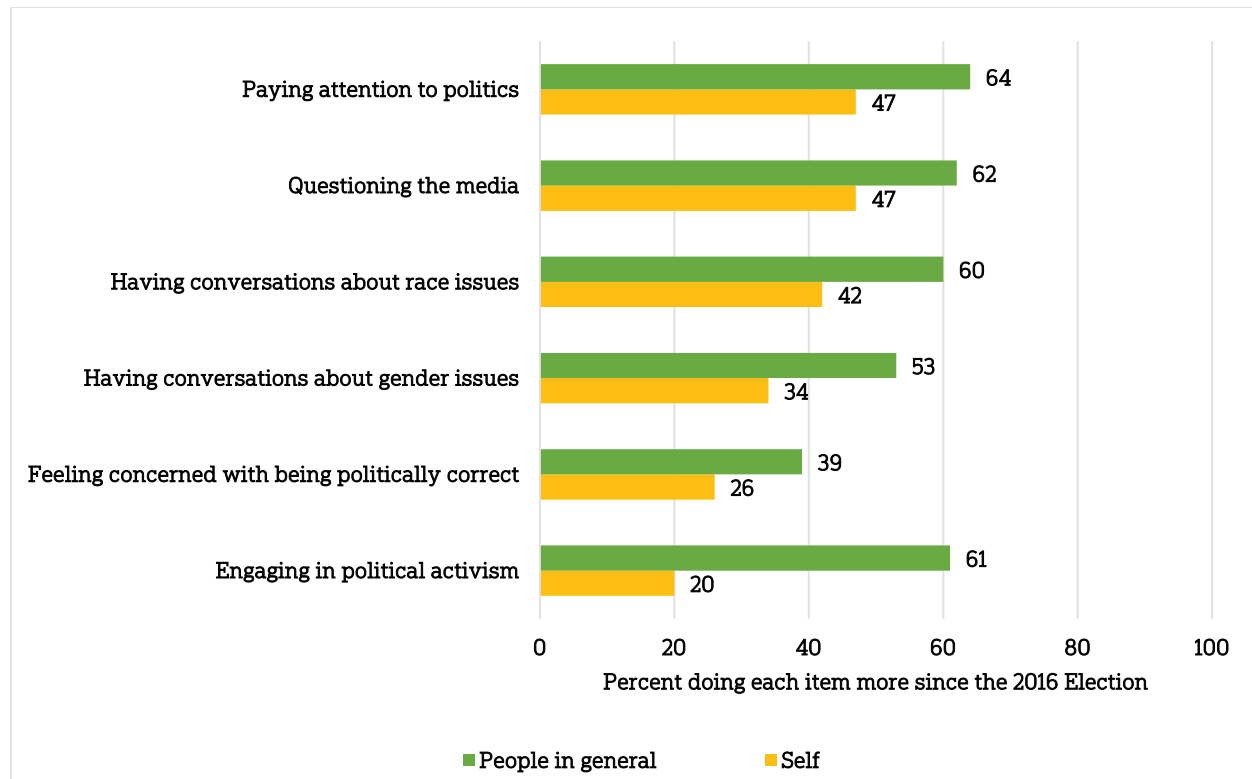
Despite the visibility of recent protests by high school students and other young people, many young Americans say they don't have much influence on the government. Sixty-two percent think people like themselves have little or no impact on what the government does, and an even larger group (75 percent) say public officials care only a little or not at all about what people like them think.

Teens and young adults who identify as Democrats are slightly more disaffected than their Republican counterparts. More Democrats than Republicans say that public officials don't care what people like them think (77 percent vs. 69 percent), or think that politics are functioning poorly (82 percent vs. 57 percent).

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL NEW ENERGY IN AMERICAN POLITICS.

Since Trump was elected in November 2016, many teens and young adults see the public as becoming more engaged. Majorities think people in general are paying attention to politics, questioning media, participating in activism, and talking about race and gender issues more than they were before Trump was elected.

As for their own behavior, nearly half of young Americans say they personally are paying more attention to politics and questioning the media more often than before Trump was elected. Smaller numbers are talking more about race and gender issues, though young women are more likely to say they're having more discussions about gender (41 percent vs. 28 percent of young men). And while 60 percent say people in general are engaging in more political activism, just 20 percent say the same about themselves.

Many young Americans think people have been more engaged since Trump's election.

Questions: Regardless of how you feel about President Trump, would you say that since he was elected, people in general are doing the following things more, less, or about the same as before?

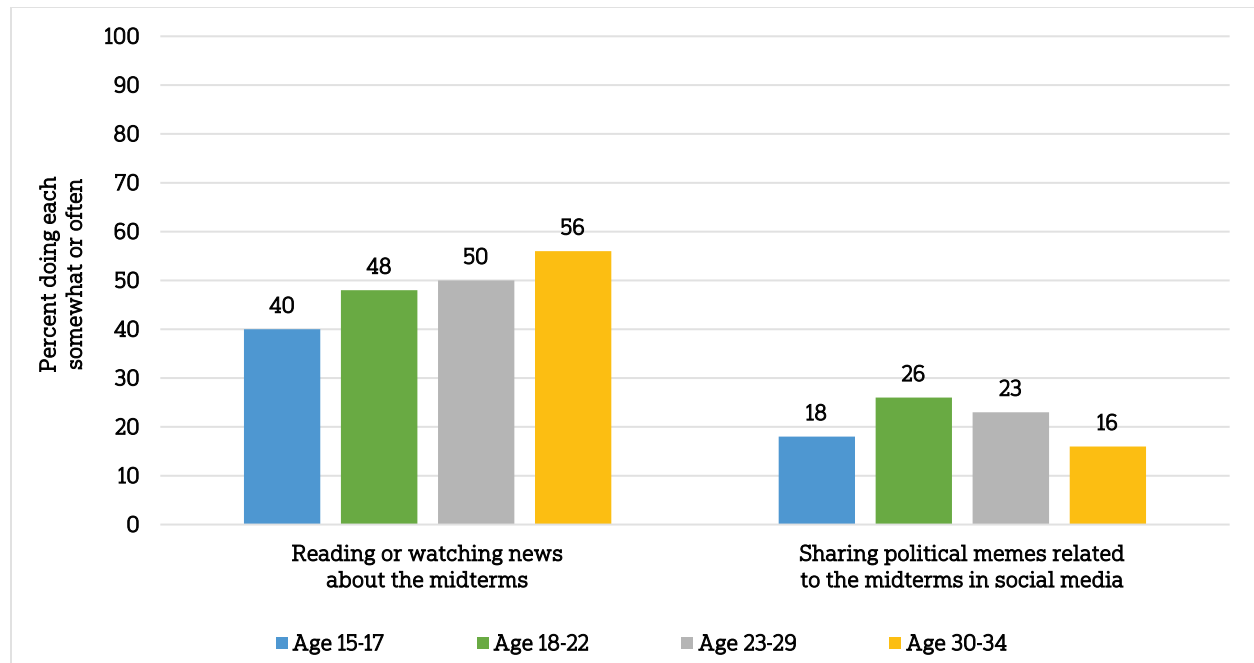
Please say if you're doing each of the following more, less, or about the same since President Trump was elected in November 2016.

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted February 22-March 9, 2018, with 1,027 young people age 15-34 nationwide

SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH A NEGATIVE OUTLOOK ON CURRENT EVENTS.

Overall, half of young people are reading or watching news about the 2018 midterm elections in November at least sometimes. About a quarter (23 percent) are engaging with the midterms on social media, while fewer are sharing memes about the elections (21 percent), participating in events (14 percent), or volunteering (10 percent).

Teens who won't be able to vote in the upcoming elections are less likely to follow news about them, and engagement increases with age. Young people age 18 to 22 are the most likely to be sharing political memes about the midterms, followed by 23 to 29-year-olds, 15 to 17-year-olds, and 30 to 34-year-olds.

Engagement with the 2018 midterm elections varies by age.

Question: Thinking about the 2018 midterm elections in November, how often are you engaged in the following activities?
 Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted February 22-March 9, 2018, with 1,027 young people age 15-34 nationwide

At this early date, less than half (44 percent) of young adults who will be eligible to vote in 2018 say they are highly likely to vote (rating themselves an 8, 9, or 10 on a scale of 1 to 10). Twenty-nine percent are moderately likely to vote, and 27 percent say they're unlikely to turn out. However, partisans are much more motivated to vote in the midterms than are independents. Fifty-two percent of Democrats, 45 percent of Republicans, and just 24 percent of independents say they are likely voters. Those who report negative feelings about the state of the country over the past month are more likely to report that they plan to turn out. Fifty-five percent of those who are anxious and 54 percent of those who are angry say they are likely voters, compared with 37 percent of those who are not anxious and 39 percent of those who are not angry.

THERE IS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR SOME PROGRESSIVE POLICIES AMONG YOUNG VOTERS, THOUGH STARK PARTISAN DIFFERENCES EMERGE FOR OTHERS.

Majorities of young people express support for policies that protect the rights of vulnerable populations or address climate change, though there are considerable differences in support between Democrats and Republicans.

Two-thirds of young people say they want a health care system in which the government provides health insurance to all Americans. Eighty-three percent of Democrats, 69 percent of independents, and 40 percent of Republicans say they would like this type of health care system.

Similar patterns in partisanship emerge in support for increasing the federal minimum wage, the government taking steps to address climate change, protecting the rights of Muslims and LGBT citizens, and legalizing the recreational use of marijuana nationally. More than half of all young people support each of these policies, including a large majority of Democrats, about half of independents, and fewer than half of Republicans.

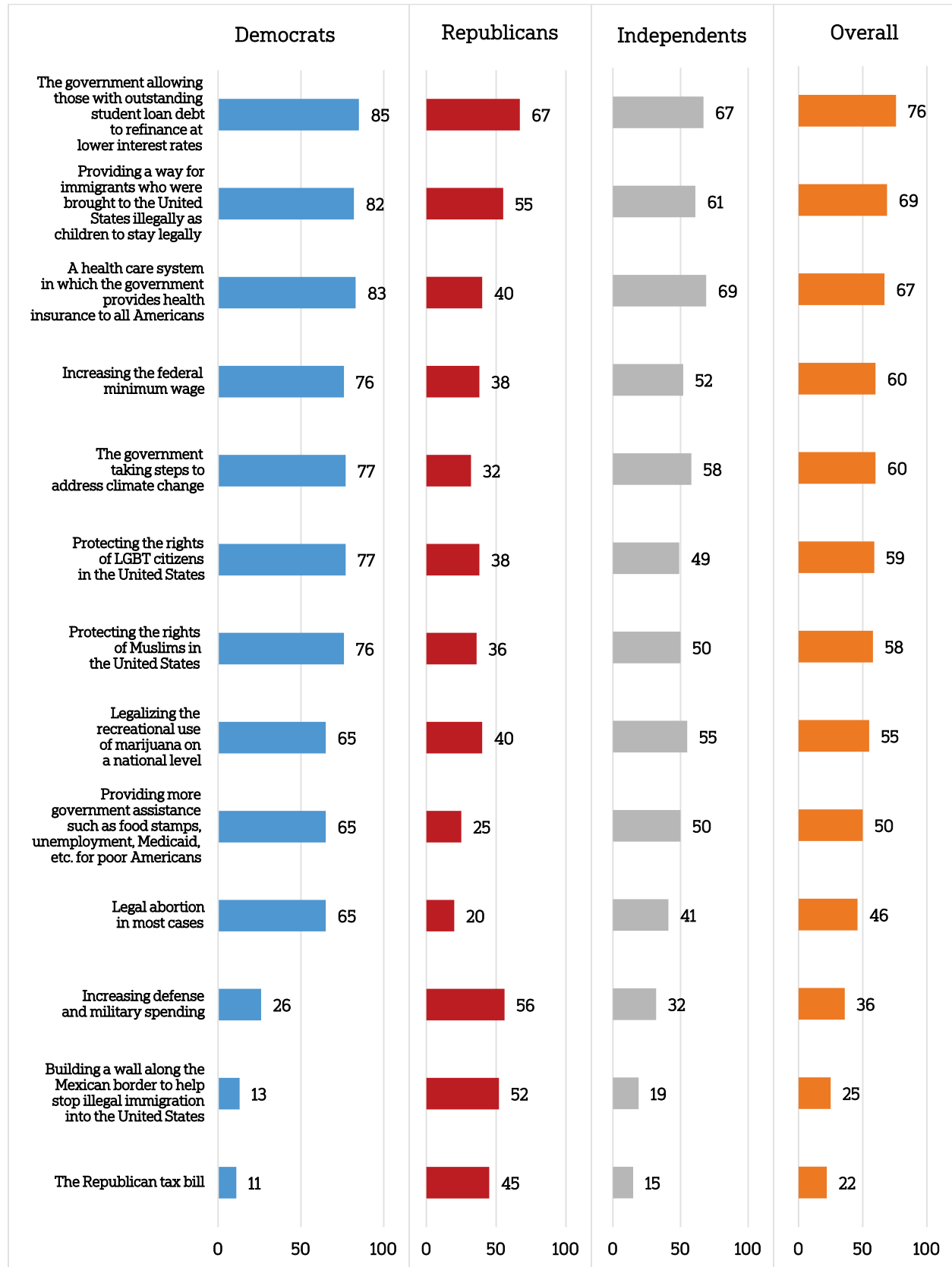
One policy proposal with majority support from young Democrats, Republicans, and independents relates to student loan debt. Three-quarters of young people, including two-thirds of Republicans and independents and 85 percent of Democrats, favor a policy that would allow those with outstanding student loan debt to refinance at lower interest rates.

A majority of Democrats, Republicans, and independents also favor a fix for DACA, though the policy is supported by considerably fewer Republicans (55 percent) and independents (61 percent) than Democrats (82 percent).

Half of young people favor providing more government assistance for the poor. Just under half support legal abortion in most cases. Two-thirds of Democrats express support for each of these policies while fewer independents and Republicans agree.

Less than half of teens and young adults express support for building a wall along the Mexican border to stop illegal immigration (25 percent), or an increase in defense and military spending (36 percent). Majorities of Republicans express support for each of these policies while few independents and Democrats agree. Twenty-two percent of young Americans support the Republican tax bill, including 45 percent of Republicans and far fewer Democrats (11 percent) and independents (15 percent).

Majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents support student loan debt relief and a fix for DACA.



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

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted February 22-March 9, 2018, with 1,027 young people age 15-34 nationwide

YOUNG PEOPLE'S TOP CONCERNS ABOUT CURRENT EVENTS RELATE TO GUNS, THE ECONOMY, AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY.

When asked what issue facing the country right now concerns them the most, gun-related issues topped the list. One in 5 young people said they're most concerned about school shootings, guns, gun control, Second Amendment rights, or gun laws. Fifteen percent are most concerned about the economy, including jobs, debt, poverty, and the cost of living. Eight percent say social inequality, and smaller numbers say immigration (5 percent), war or the threat of war (5 percent), or the state of the political climate (5 percent).

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 February 22 and March 9, 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 839 completed the survey—818 via the web and 21 via telephone. In addition, completed interviews were conducted with 188 teenagers age 15 to 17 who will be old enough to vote in the 2020 presidential election (with birth dates of October 2002 or earlier), 187 via the web and 1 via telephone. Adult panel members living in households with minors were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and after confirming that there were children of the appropriate age in the household, permission was sought from a parent or guardian to survey their teenager. If a given panelist had multiple teens at home, one teen was randomly selected to participate.

The final stage completion rate is 14.3 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 33.7 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 88.1 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 4.2 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.2 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

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.

All differences reported between subgroups of the U.S. population age 15 to 34 are at the 95 percent level of statistical significance, meaning that there is only a 5 percent (or lower) probability that the observed differences could be attributed to chance variation in sampling.

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. For more information, email info@apnorc.org.

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- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest and most respected, independent research institutions in the world.

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