



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

MTV/AP-NORC: COMPARING THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS' GENERATION

Young people and their parents share a negative outlook on the current political landscape in America and are largely dissatisfied with the government's handling of a wide variety of key issues, according to a new poll of Americans age 15-34, and parents of children age 15-26 by MTV and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Young people's opinions about their generation's ability to impact the government have shifted in recent months, following student-driven activism. Between the first poll fielded between late February and early March 2018, shortly after the shooting in Parkland, Florida, and this second poll conducted roughly two months later, young people age 15-34, and particularly those age 15-22, feel more politically empowered. The proportion overall who believe that elected officials care what they think rose from a quarter to a third, and there was a similar rise in the numbers who think people like them can impact the government.

The generation of parents of children age 15-26 is less racially and ethnically diverse and includes a greater proportion of Republicans than young people age 15-26, and the survey demographics reflect this. Parents are more likely to approve of President Donald Trump (42 percent vs. 26 percent) and are somewhat more optimistic (59 percent vs. 45 percent) than the younger generation. Still, the findings show that young people and parents are on the same page about politics in general. Majorities say they tend to agree with one another on many key issues and that their political discussions are generally amicable.



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Three Things You Should Know

About the MTV/AP-NORC Poll of Americans Age 15-34 and Parents of 15-26 Year Olds:

- 1) In the wake of recent protests and demonstrations, 46 percent of young people age 15-34 believe that people like them can affect the government at least a moderate amount, an increase from 37 percent in the March 2018 poll. For 15-22 year olds, this rose 15 points, to 48 percent.
- 2) Nearly two-thirds of young people age 15-26 and parents of this age group discuss politics at least once a month. Majorities say these conversations are civil and that they are at least sometimes able to change others' political views when disagreements do occur.
- 3) More than two-thirds across both generations are disillusioned with the two major political parties and feel a third is needed.

Both young people age 15-26 and parents of this age group give the federal government a grade of F more often than any other letter grade when assessing its performance on a wide variety of issues, including gun control, the cost of higher education, foreign relations, immigration, environment and climate change, health care, income inequality, taxes, sexual harassment and assault, abortion, racism, and the treatment of citizens by police and the justice system. The economy and job creation fare better, most commonly receiving grades of C from both groups.

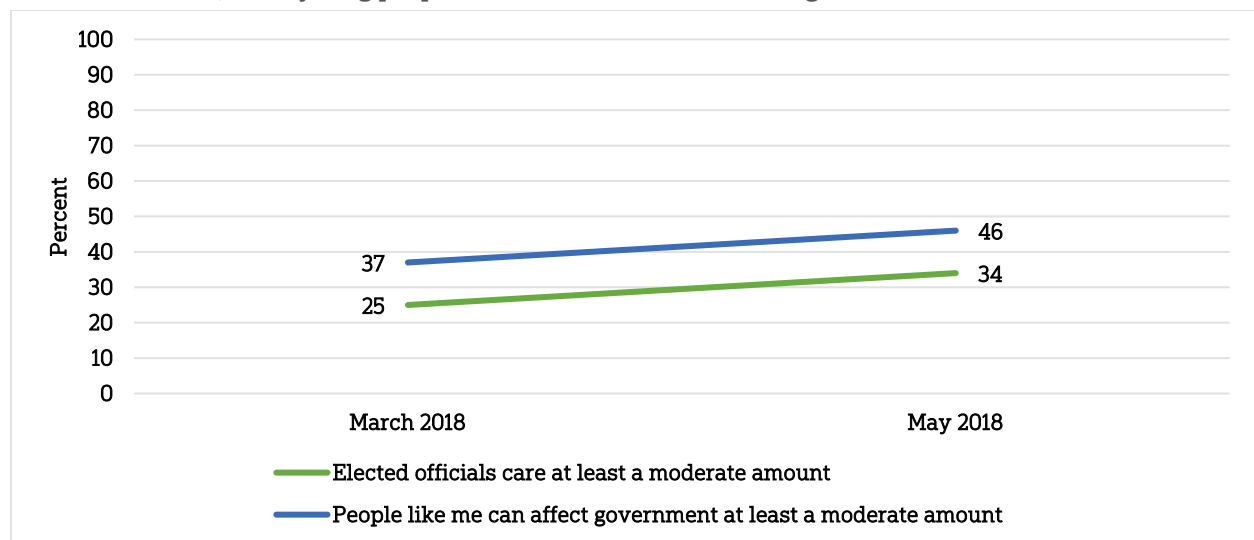
This survey is the second in a multiwave series of polls highlighting the voices of the youngest generation of voters age 15-34, with this installment including a sample of parents of 15-26 year olds to allow for comparisons between generations. This nationwide poll by MTV and The AP-NORC Center surveyed a total of 939 young people, including 148 teens age 15-17, 410 adults age 18-26, and 381 adults age 27-34, as well as 607 parents of young people age 15-26.

AFTER RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS, YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL MORE EMPOWERED IN POLITICS.

Since the first MTV/AP-NORC Youth Political Pulse survey in March 2018, overall outlook among the larger group of young people including those age 15-34 remains stable. Similar to the previous survey, just under half are optimistic and a slight majority are pessimistic about the future of the United States. Four in 10 have felt angry or anxious about the state of the country in the past month, while 1 in 10 have felt excited or positive.

Young peoples' overall standpoint is fairly negative, but there is one area where young people have grown somewhat more optimistic. After many recent protests and demonstrations, more now than in March say elected officials care at least a moderate amount what people like them think (34 percent vs. 25 percent) and that people like them can affect the government at least a moderate amount (46 percent vs. 37 percent).

Since March 2018, more young people feel efficacious in American government.



Questions: 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 April 23-May 9, 2018, with 607 parents and 558 children age 15-26 nationwide

Young people age 15-22 in particular are increasingly optimistic when it comes to political efficacy. In March, just a third said that people like them can affect what the government does at least a moderate amount. Now, 48 percent of those age 15-22 say the same.

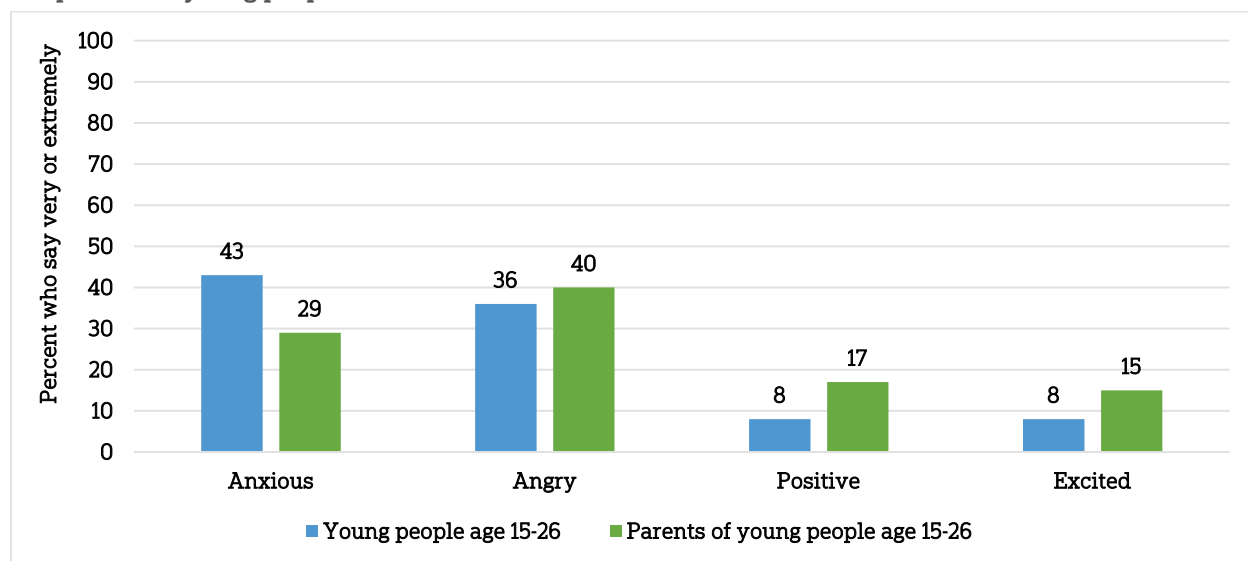
Young peoples' priorities have also shifted. When asked to describe in their own words what issue facing the country concerns them the most, 21 percent cited gun laws in March. Just 6 percent mention gun issues now.¹ The most common worries are now the economy (16 percent) and social inequality (14 percent).

BOTH YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS SAY POLITICS HAVE BECOME DYSFUNCTIONAL, AND BOTH ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM.

Young people age 15-26 and parents of young people age 15-26 alike have mixed outlooks on the future of the United States. Young people are more pessimistic than parents (55 percent vs. 40 percent), although these differences are mainly attributable to the parents being more Republican and less racially and ethnically diverse than young people.

Both generations report relatively negative feelings about the state of the country over the past month. Substantial minorities of both groups have felt anxious or angry in the past month, while few have felt positive or excited. Young people are more likely than parents to say they feel anxious (43 percent vs. 29 percent) and less likely to feel positive (8 percent vs. 17 percent) or excited (8 percent vs. 15 percent).

Young people age 15-26 are more anxious and less positive or excited about the state of America than are parents of young people.



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

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted April 23-May 9, 2018, with 607 parents and 558 children age 15-26 nationwide

Young people and parents have similar assessments of the political system and their own efficacy within it. Majorities of both groups say American politics have been dysfunctional over the past month. Sixty-four percent of young people and 67 percent of parents feel that politics have not been functioning very well or at all.

Young people see the current two-party system as inadequate, and parents agree. Less than a third think the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job of representing the American people, while more than two-thirds say a third party is needed.

¹ Interviews for this survey were conducted April 23-May 9, 2018, prior to the May 18 shooting in Santa Fe, Texas.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS ARE SIMILARLY ENGAGED WITH THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS.

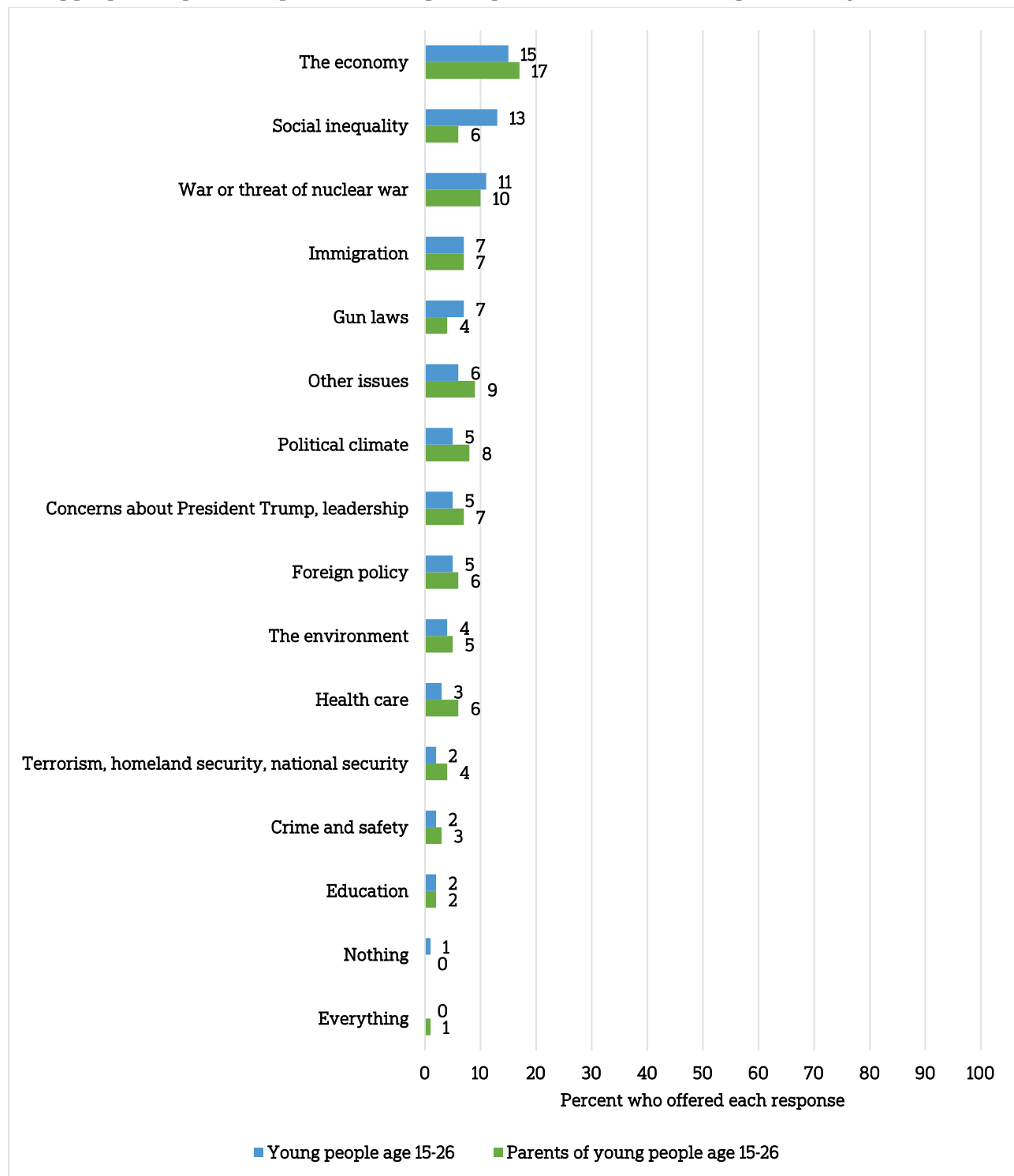
When it comes to the upcoming midterm elections in November, parents of young people age 15-26 are more likely than young people age 15-26 to be regularly reading or watching news about the elections (66 percent vs. 45 percent). However, older adults tend to consume news more often than young people in general² and may be hearing more about the midterms as a result.

The two generations are equally likely to engage with the November elections in other ways, such as posting or commenting about them on social media (25 percent of parents vs. 25 percent of young people age 15-26), sharing political memes (18 percent of parents vs. 24 percent of young people age 15-26), participating in events (14 percent of parents vs. 16 percent of young people age 15-26), or volunteering with a candidate or issue campaign (11 percent of parents vs. 9 percent of young people age 15-26).

BOTH GENERATIONS HAVE VARIED POLITICAL CONCERNS AND ARE STRONGLY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE ON KEY ISSUES.

Economic issues top long lists of current concerns for both young people and parents. When asked to say in their own words what concerns them most about the issues currently facing the country, 15 percent of young people age 15-26 and 17 percent of parents of young people age 15-26 say they are most concerned about the economy. The two groups place similar priorities on a range of other issues, although social inequality ranks second highest for young people (13 percent) and fails to make the top five most worrisome issues for parents (6 percent).

² The Media Insight Project. 2014. *The Personal News Cycle*.
http://www.apnorc.org/PDFs/Media%20Insight/News%20Cycle/The_Personal_News_Cycle_Final.pdf

Young people and parents report a wide range of top concerns of issues facing the country.

Question: Of all of the issues facing the country right now, what concerns you the most?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted April 23-May 9, 2018, with 607 parents and 558 children age 15-26 nationwide

Young people age 15-26 believe the federal government is doing a poor job addressing a majority of key issues. They most commonly give the government a failing grade for 15 of 17 key issues. However, young people rate performance on the economy and job creation as average, most commonly giving a grade of C.

Parents most commonly give the same grades as young people age 15-26 on most issues, with a few exceptions. They give Cs rather than Fs for LGBT rights, the quality of education, terrorism and homeland security, and taxes.

Young people age 15-26 and parents give low marks to the federal government on its handling of many issues.

	Young People Age 15-26					Parents of Young People Age 15-26				
	A	B	C	D	F	A	B	C	D	F
The environment and climate change					✓					✓
Gun control					✓					✓
Racism					✓					✓
Immigration					✓					✓
Cost of higher education					✓					✓
Treatment of citizens by police and justice system					✓					✓
Abortion					✓					✓
Income inequality					✓					✓
Sexual harassment and assault					✓					✓
The quality of education					✓			✓		
Taxes					✓			✓		
Foreign relations					✓					✓
Health care policy					✓					✓
The rights of LGBT Americans					✓			✓		
Terrorism and homeland security					✓			✓		
The economy			✓					✓		
Job creation			✓					✓		

✓ Indicates the most commonly given grade, or mode. The frequency of each grade is indicated with darker shading for more common responses, according to the key below.



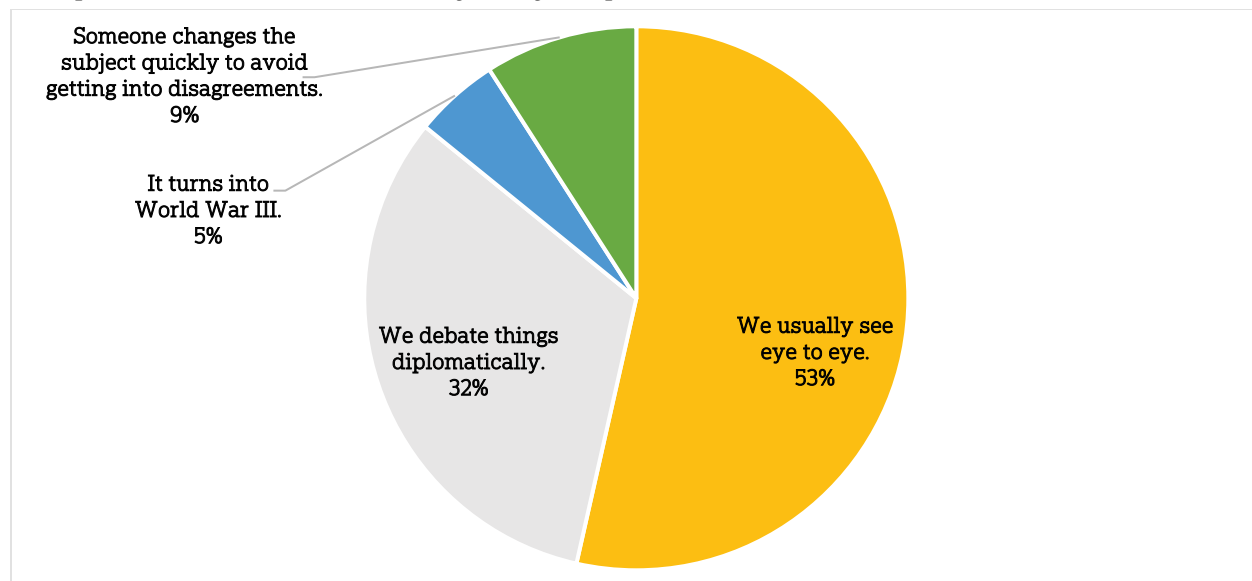
Question: What letter grade, A through F, would you give the federal government for how well they are addressing each of the following issues?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted April 23-May 9, 2018, with 607 parents and 558 children age 15-26 nationwide

PARENT/CHILD DISCUSSIONS ABOUT POLITICS ARE USUALLY CORDIAL, BUT IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO SWAY THE OTHER GENERATION WHEN VIEWS DIFFER.

Young people age 15-26 and their parents have fairly regular discussions with one another about politics and social issues, and few see these discussions as a source of conflict. Across the two groups, 64 percent of young people and parents say they discuss politics with each other at least once a month, 20 percent say they have these discussions less often, and 16 percent say they never talk about politics or social issues together.

Among those who discuss political and social issues with their parents or children, a majority say they usually see eye to eye in these conversations, and about a third say they debate diplomatically. Fewer say the discussion turns into a major conflict or requires changing the subject to avoid arguments.

Most parents and their children see eye to eye on politics and social issues.

Question: When you talk with [him/her/them] about political and social issues, how would you describe how the discussion goes?

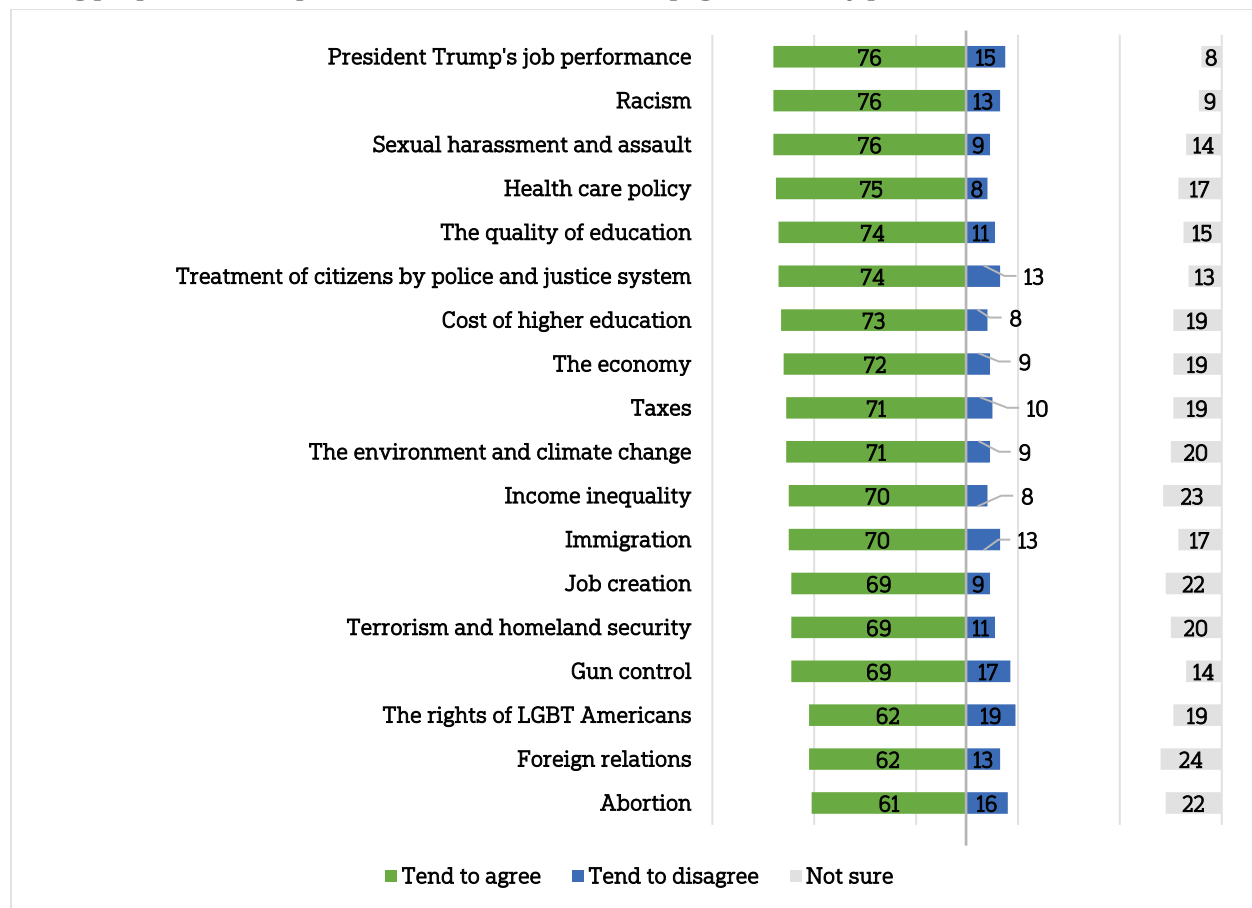
Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted April 23-May 9, 2018, with 607 parents and 558 children age 15-26 nationwide

When the two generations were asked about political discussions with a particular family member, parents' accounts are similar regardless of the specific relationship, such as mother-daughter or father-son. Sons reporting on discussions with fathers are more likely than other pairings to say they talk about politics at least once a week, but least likely to say these discussions tend to go smoothly. Only 42 percent of sons say they usually see eye to eye with their fathers, while 49 percent of sons say the same about their mothers, 54 percent of daughters say so about their fathers, and 62 percent say so about their mothers.

Those who identify as political independents (36 percent) are less likely than Democrats (60 percent) or Republicans (53 percent) to say they usually see eye to eye in parent/child discussions about political and social issues.

When asked about potential differences in opinion on specific issues, both generations report high levels of agreement. In their discussions, at least 6 in 10 say there is agreement when discussing each of 18 topics. Agreement levels are highest on Trump's job performance and on the issues of racism, sexual harassment and assault, and health care policy, and lowest on LGBT rights, abortion, and foreign relations.

While agreement is high, there also seems to be a fair amount of ambiguity about family members' political positions. On 13 of the 18 issues asked about, at least 15 percent say they are unsure if they tend to agree or disagree.

Young people and their parents tend to be on the same page with many political and social issues.

Questions: When talking about the following issues, do you tend to agree or disagree with [him/her/them]?

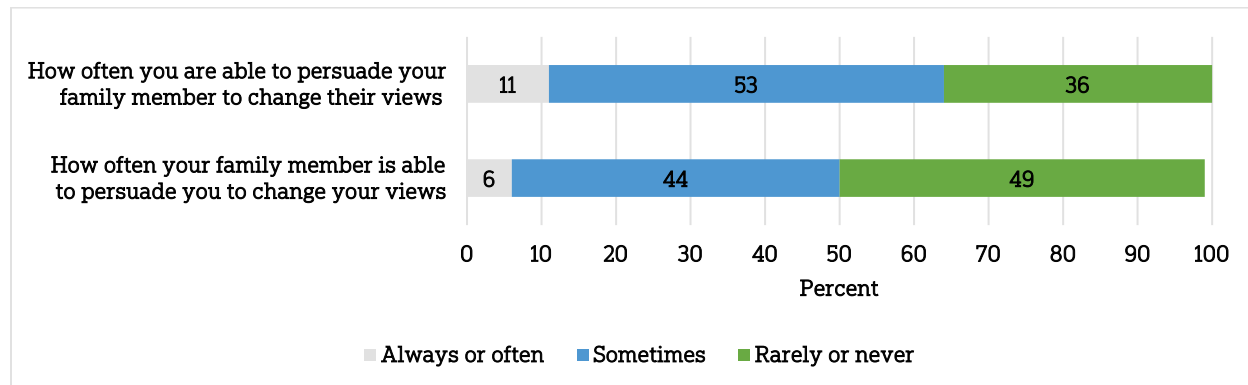
When talking with [your family member] about Donald Trump and how he's handling his job as president, do you tend to agree or disagree with [him/her/them]?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted April 23-May 9, 2018, with 607 parents and 558 children age 15-26 nationwide

The two generations report different issues as the biggest sources of disagreement. Among those who say they generally don't see eye to eye when talking about political and social issues, young people age 15-26 say they tend to disagree with their parents most about racism (37 percent), LGBT rights (36 percent), and how Trump is handling his presidency (33 percent). Parents of young people age 15-26 report that the largest sources of disagreement are gun control (27 percent), LGBT rights (25 percent), and how Trump is handling his presidency (21 percent).

When there are disagreements, few young people and parents are able to persuade one another to change their views, and the findings are consistent between the generations. Eleven percent overall say they are always or often able to persuade their family member to change their views. Fifty-three percent acknowledge that they are sometimes able to persuade their family member. Just 6 percent say the reverse is true, that they are often or always convinced to change their views by their family member. Another 44 percent say their family member is sometimes able to persuade them to change their own views.

Few young people or parents find it easy to persuade one another to change their political and social views.



Questions: In general, when you disagree with [him/her/that person] about political or social issues, how often would you say that you're able to persuade [him/her/them] to change [his/her/their views]?

In general, when you disagree with [him/her/that person] about political or social issues, how often would you say that [he is/she is/they are] able to change your views?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted April 23-May 9, 2018, with 607 parents and 558 children age 15-26 nationwide

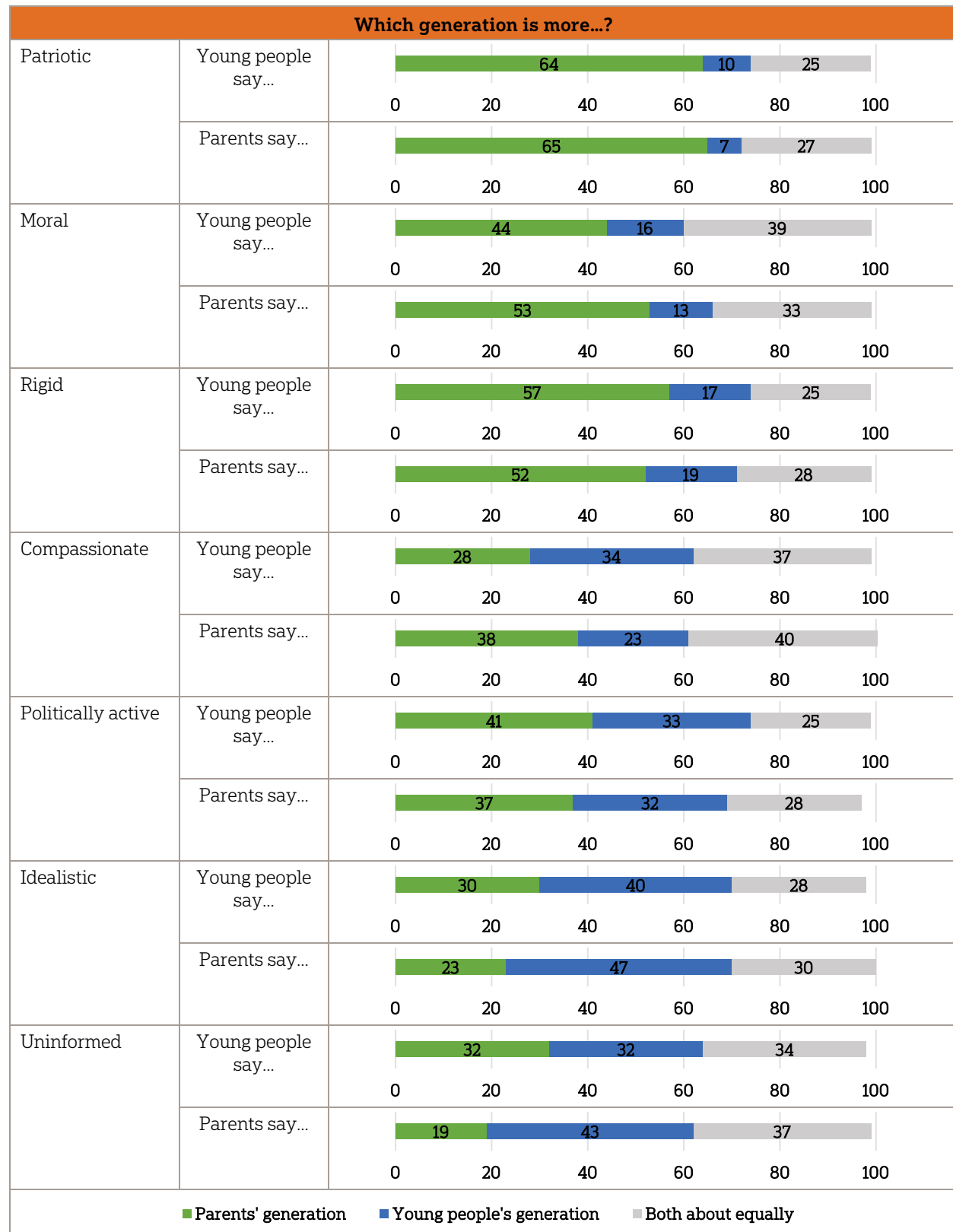
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PERCEIVED AS MORE IDEALISTIC THAN THE OLDER GENERATION, AND PARENTS FEEL THEIR CHILDREN'S GENERATION IS LESS INFORMED THAN THEIR OWN.

When asked to compare the generations, young people age 15-26 and parents of this age group tend to agree on who is the more patriotic and rigid generation, but there is some disagreement about who is more informed.

About two-thirds of both young people and parents say the older generation is more patriotic. More than half of each group feel the older generation is more rigid.

Among both groups, the largest proportion view the parents' generation as more politically active and moral than the younger generation, and the younger generation as more idealistic.

Young people are divided on whether their generation is more uninformed, their parents' generation is more uninformed, or whether the two are about equal. Parents believe the younger generation is more uninformed than their own.

Young people and parents agree that the older generation is more patriotic and more rigid.

Question: Thinking about people in your generation, compared to people in [his/her/their] generation, do you think the following words describe your generation better, describe [his/her/their] generation better, or describe both generations about equally well?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted April 23-May 9, 2018, with 607 parents and 558 children age 15-26 nationwide

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to describe their own generation as patriotic (51 percent vs. 32 percent) and are less likely to describe their own generation as idealistic (27 percent vs. 39 percent).

FOR SOME, POLITICS SEEPS INTO INTERACTIONS WITH EXTENDED FAMILY.

A significant minority of both generations have had political disagreements with relatives that have led to conflict. Twenty percent have unfriended or blocked a family member on social media due to a disagreement over politics, and 21 percent have themselves been unfriended or blocked by a family member. Fewer than 1 in 5 have had a holiday gathering ruined (11 percent), have decided not to attend a family event (12 percent), or have had a family member decide to not attend a family event (17 percent) due to political disagreements.

While there are no differences by generation, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to have had political disagreements with relatives affect their social media behavior. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say they've unfriended or blocked a family member on social media (26 percent vs. 12 percent) and to have had a family member unfriend or block them on social media (27 percent vs. 15 percent).

EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO APPROVE OF TRUMP, THE REPORT CARD IS MEDIOCRE.

Young people age 15-34 give poor marks to the federal government on its handling of many public policy issues. Even among Trump's supporters, the report card is still only average. Young people who approve of Trump's job performance most commonly give the federal government a C for all issues except terrorism and homeland security and treatment of citizens by the police and justice system, which earn a B, and abortion, which earns an F. For those who disapprove of Trump, F is the most common grade for all issues except job creation, which most commonly gets graded a C.

Most common grades for the federal government's handling of issues.

	Approve of Trump	Disapprove of Trump
Gun control	C	F
Cost of higher education	C	F
Foreign relations	C	F
Immigration	C	F
The environment and climate change	C	F
Health care policy	C	F
Income inequality	C	F
The economy	C	F
Taxes	C	F
Sexual harassment and assault	C	F
Abortion	F	F
Racism	C	F
The rights of LGBT Americans	C	F
Terrorism and homeland security	B	F
Treatment of citizens by police and justice system	B	F
The quality of education	C	F
Job creation	C	C

Question: What letter grade, A through F, would you give the federal government for how well they are addressing each of the following issues?

Source: MTV/AP-NORC poll conducted April 23-May 9, 2018, with 607 parents and 558 children age 15-26 nationwide

Looking at grades by political party, the results are similar. Democrats' most common grade across most issues is an F. However, Democrats give better marks to the federal government's efforts on job creation, most commonly grading it a C.

Republicans are slightly more mixed, but most commonly give issues a C. For abortion, they most commonly give a grade of F.

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 April 23 and May 9, 2018, with young people age 15-34 and parents of young people age 15-26 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 18-34 were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 791 completed the survey—780 via the web and 11 via telephone. Teen panel members age 15-17 were drawn from AmeriSpeak Teen, and 148 completed the survey—145 via the web and 3 via telephone. Adult panel members who are known parents of 15-17 year olds were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 104 completed the survey—101 via the web and 3 via telephone. In addition, panel members age 30-76 were randomly drawn to screen for parents of young adults age 18-26, and 503 completed the survey—469 via the web and 34 via telephone.

Among young people age 15-34, the final stage completion rate is 25.9 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 33.7 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 87.2 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 7.6 percent. The overall margin of sampling error among young people age 15-34 is +/- 4.3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The overall margin of sampling error among young people age 15-26 is +/- 5.6 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Among parents of young people age 15-26, the screener completion rate is 27.9 percent, with an incidence rate of 25.2. The interview completion rate is 95.6 percent, and the final stage completion rate is 26.7 percent. The weighted household panel response rate is 33.7 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 87.2 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 7.8 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 6.7 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 15-34 and parents of young people age 15-26.

All analyses were conducted using STATA (version 14), which allows for adjustment of standard errors for complex sample designs. All differences reported between subgroups of the U.S. population are at the 95 percent level of statistical significance, meaning that there is only a 5 percent (or less) probability that the observed differences could be attributed to chance variation in sampling.

A comprehensive listing of all study questions, complete with tabulations of top-level results for each question, is available on The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research 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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