



## New AP-NORC/USAFacts study shows high levels of skepticism in election information heading into November 2024

*Roughly a quarter of adults find it difficult to get factual information about the candidates and 34% struggle to know if election information is true or not.*

**Chicago, IL, September 10, 2024** – A new study from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and USAFacts shows that few adults in the United States think facts are the primary driver of information these days. Just 10% of adults think decisions by policymakers are always or often grounded in factual information. Seventy-eight percent think misinformation is a major problem when it comes to getting information about the U.S. government.

Skepticism about information is especially acute in politics. Forty-five percent of adults think Kamala Harris’s campaign messages are rarely or never based on factual information, and 57% express the same doubts about Donald Trump’s campaign. Forty percent think debates between political candidates are rarely or never based on facts.

Many in the public see a connection between political divisions and the information environment. Forty-five percent of adults think political divisions in the country are mostly due to people relying on different facts about major issues. That’s up from 37% who felt that way in 2019.

Republicans trust Trump as a source. Looking ahead to the 2024 election, more Republicans trust him and his campaign (67%) than government certifications of election results (51%) to provide accurate information on the outcome of November’s election. In comparison, Democrats are most trusting of government certifications of election results (87%), while nearly as many also trust Harris and her campaign (82%).

To better understand how attitudes about news sources have changed over time, this study replicated several questions from surveys conducted in 2019 and 2020 by The AP-NORC Center and USAFacts. The share of adults who think decisions made by policymakers are rarely or never based on factual information is trending up from 30% in 2019 to 37% in 2024. It also found that while social media ranks among the most common sources of information about the government, it continues to be one of the least trusted and fewer people are using it for news.

“The survey results highlight the distrust Americans hold toward election information across a range of sources,” said Poppy MacDonald, President of USAFacts. “And while few have trouble finding information, many struggle to know if the information is true or not.”

New questions about artificial intelligence show the public’s skepticism across a range of measures. Half of adults (52%) are concerned about the future impact of AI tools on how they get information, while only 9% are excited. Nearly two-thirds (64%) are not confident that the information from AI chatbots or search results is reliable and factual. Looking ahead to this fall, only 27% trust AI even a moderate

amount to provide accurate information about the outcome of the election in November, and 43% think AI will make it more difficult to find factual information about the election compared with just 16% who think it will make it easier.

“Tracking the public’s trust in information from artificial intelligence tools is critical as the public starts to encounter AI more often in today’s information environment,” said Dan Malato, Senior Research Director at The AP-NORC Center. “The public’s concerns about not only its accuracy in the present but its impact in the future make this year’s survey an important data point in the ongoing discussion about AI.”

### **About the Study**

This survey, funded by USAFacts, was conducted by The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Staff from The AP-NORC Center and USAFacts collaborated on all aspects of the study.

The nationwide poll was conducted by The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research from July 29 to August 8, 2024 using AmeriSpeak®, NORC’s probability-based panel. Online and telephone interviews were conducted with adults age 18 and older representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. 1,019 completed the survey—990 via the web and 29 by telephone.

The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points.

A full description of the study methodology, as well as detailed survey findings, can be found at [www.apnorc.org](http://www.apnorc.org).

### **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 an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. Founded in 1846, AP today remains the most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of the technology and services vital to the news business. More than half the world’s population sees AP journalism every day. [www.ap.org](http://www.ap.org).
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest and most respected, independent research institutions in the world. [www.norc.org](http://www.norc.org)

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.

Learn more at [www.apnorc.org](http://www.apnorc.org).

### **About USAFacts**

USAFACTS is a not-for-profit, nonpartisan civic organization making source data easy for all Americans to access and understand. USAFACTS provides an online resource of well-visualized data and trends on the most pressing issues to help ground public debate in facts. Learn more at [usafacts.org](https://usafacts.org).

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