



The Associated Press-NORC  
Center for Public Affairs Research

# 2025: THE PUBLIC'S PRIORITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

More Republicans and Democrats cite immigration as a top issue for the government to work on in 2025 compared to last year. The economy and inflation also remain high on the public's agenda, as well as foreign policy issues, the environment, health care reform, education, and abortion. Most Americans are not confident in the ability of the federal government to make progress on the important issues facing the country in the coming year.

To explore the public's agenda for 2025, The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research conducted a poll in December 2024, in which respondents provided up to five volunteered issues that they believe should be priorities for the federal government in 2025.

Following a presidential election cycle with heavy emphasis on immigration, the economy, and reproductive rights, these issues are among the top concerns of the public. More adults name immigration as a top issue compared with last year.

After a year of war between Israel and Hamas and entering the third year of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, foreign policy issues also remain a top concern amongst the public.

Top issues are similar across political parties. Both Democrats and Republicans cite immigration, the economy, inflation, and foreign policy as top issues. Democrats cite the environment and climate as their top concern, while Republicans put government spending and debt into their top five.



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## Three Things You Should Know

About The AP-NORC Poll on the Public's Priorities and Expectations Among Americans Age 18 and Older:

- 1) Immigration is a top issue for 47%, including 69% of Republicans and 32% of Democrats.
- 2) Other foreign policy issues are a top concern for 35%, including 40% of Republicans and 30% of Democrats.
- 3) The economy is a top issue for 30%, including 35% of Republicans and 25% of Democrats. Twenty-nine percent cite inflation as a main concern for the government to address.

With Donald Trump taking office in January, Republicans are showing more optimism in the direction of the country and ability of the federal government to address the top concerns facing the country. However, overall confidence in the ability of the federal government to make progress on the important problems and issues facing the country is low, with just 15% of adults being extremely or very confident.

The nationwide poll was conducted December 5-9, 2024 using the AmeriSpeak® Panel, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 1,251 adults. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.7 percentage points.

Findings from the poll include:

- Forty-seven percent of adults cite immigration as a top issue for the government to work on in 2025, up from 35% who named immigration as a priority last year. More Democrats, independents, and Republicans name immigration as a top issue compared to last year.
- Almost half of Republicans believe the country is moving in the right direction, compared to 11% who said the same in October 2024. By contrast, just 12% of Democrats believe the country is headed in the right direction, compared to 52% who said the same in October.
- Republicans are more likely to be extremely or very confident in the federal government's abilities to address the important issues facing the country compared with independents and Democrats (35% vs. 8% and 2%, respectively).
- A vast majority of the public, regardless of party, disapprove of Congress with only 17% of adults approving. Approval of specific Congressional leaders is slightly higher, though many don't know enough about them to say.

## **IMMIGRATION IS THE TOP PRIORITY FOR 2025.**

Members of the public were asked which problems facing the United States and the world today they would like the government to work on in 2025. Following Trump's presidential victory in November in which his supporters were largely motivated by the [situation at the U.S.-Mexico border and the economy](#), immigration, foreign policy, and economic issues top the list of the public's priorities for 2025.

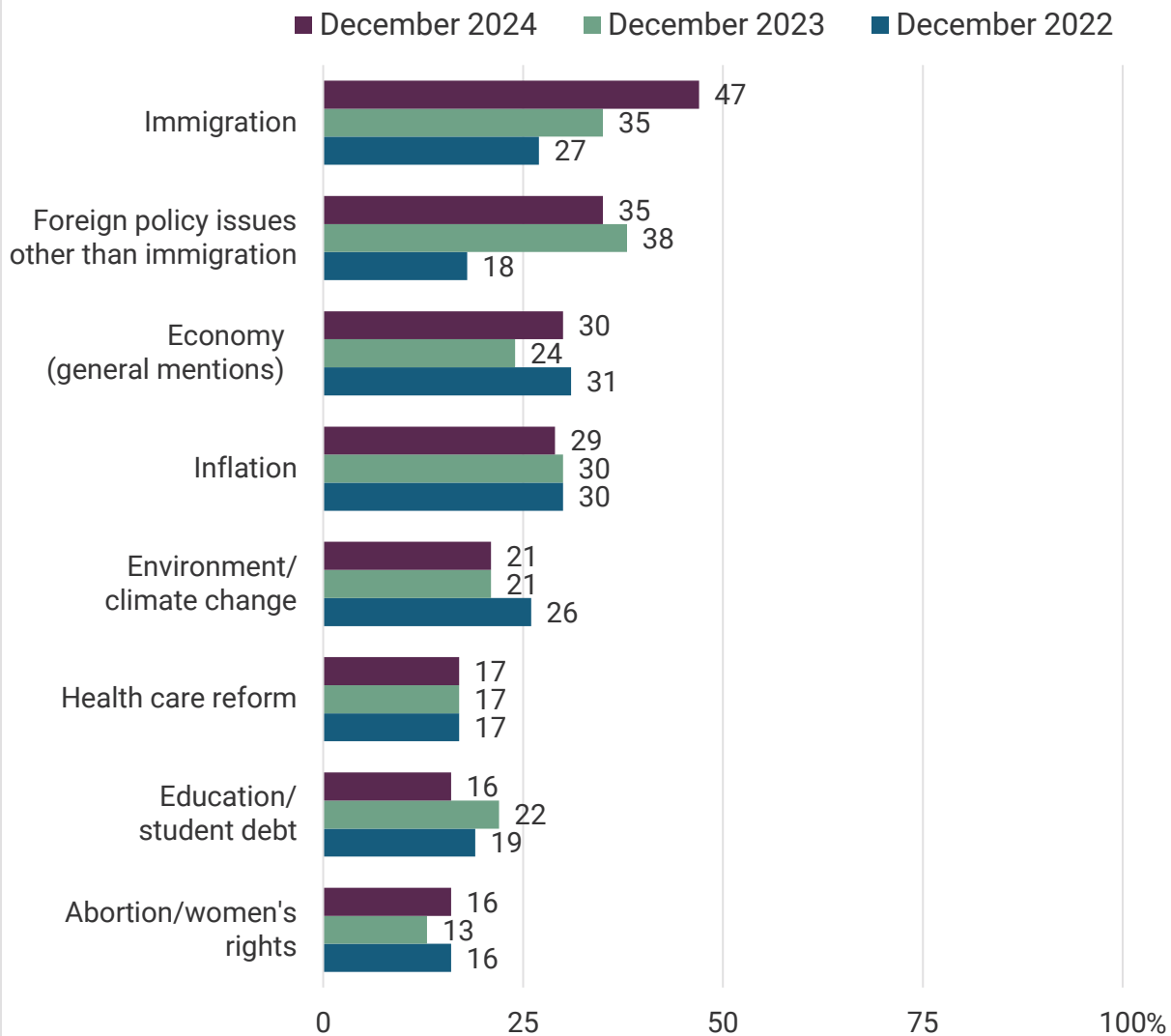
Forty-seven percent of the public name immigration as a priority for the government to work on, up from 35% who said the same in December 2023. Two years ago, just 27% named immigration as a top issue.

After another year of wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, 35% name foreign policy issues as a top concern, similar to December 2023. Last year, following the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas and the subsequent invasion of Gaza, 38% named foreign policy issues, up from 18% in 2022.

Among domestic policies, economic issues are the public's top priority, with 75% naming concerns related to the economy. Specifically, about 1 in 3 adults name the economy or inflation as one of their main concerns. Behind the economy, the environment and climate change (21%), health care reform (17%), education or student debt (16%), and abortion or women's rights (16%) round out the public's top issues.

## Immigration, foreign policy, and economic issues top the public's agenda for 2025.

Percent of adults



**Question:** Thinking about the problems facing the United States and the world today, which problems would you like the government to be working on in the year 2025? Please list up to five problems. (Percentages above among those who provided at least one problem. Problems named by at least 15% in December 2024 are shown above).

**Source:** AP-NORC polls, the latest conducted December 5-9, 2024, with 1,251 adults nationwide.



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Immigration is a top issue for Democrats, independents, and Republicans, showing up as the most important issue for both independents and Republicans. Among Democrats, immigration is second only to the environment or climate change. Across parties, more cite immigration as a top issue for the government to work on in the coming year compared to last year.

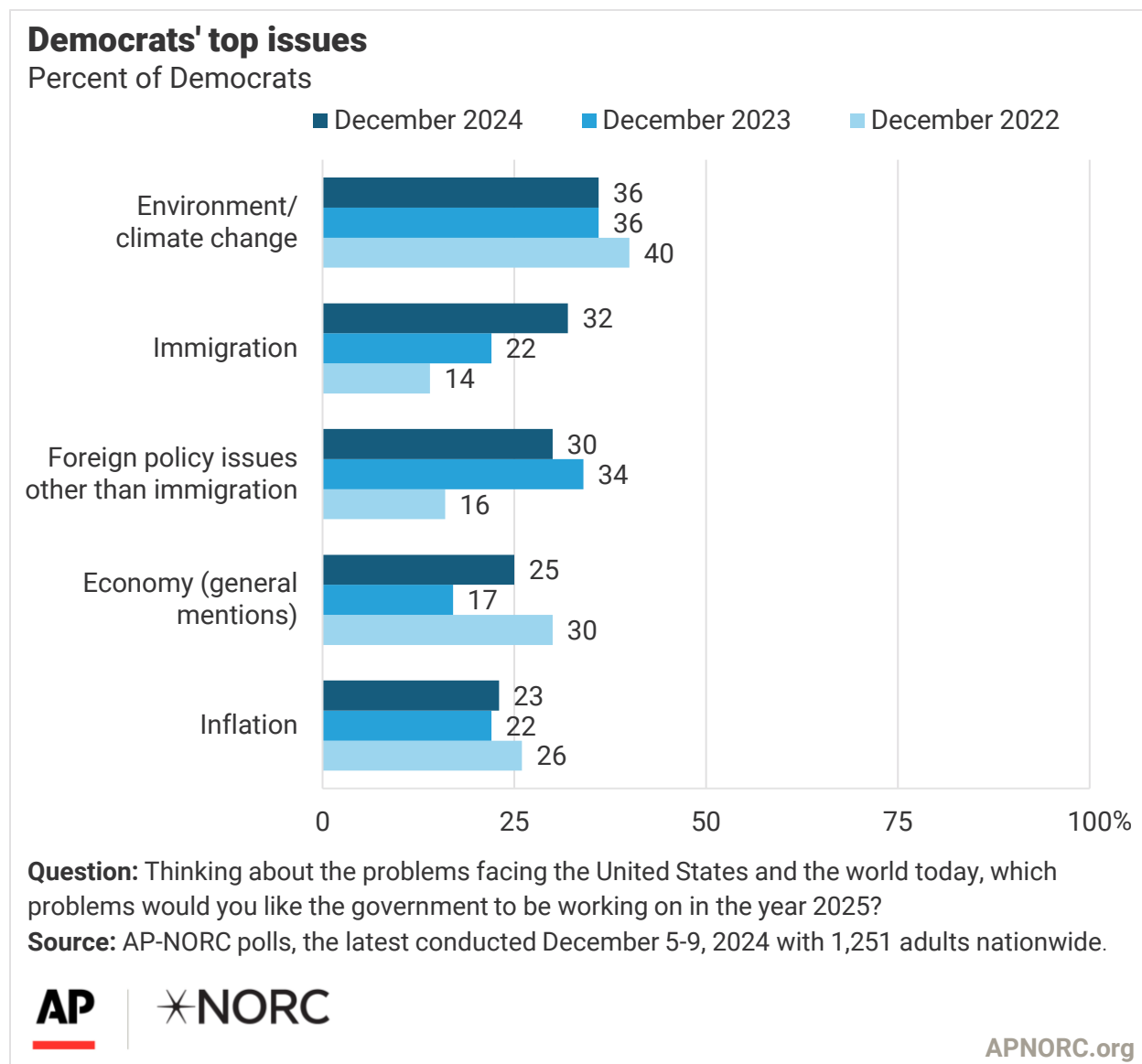
Though immigration is a top issue across all parties, Republicans are much more likely to cite immigration as a top concern compared with independents or Democrats (69% vs. 41% and 32%, respectively).

The economy and inflation are also in the top five issues across all parties. Just [32% feel the nation's economy is in good shape](#), with 67% saying it is poor. While Democrats are more likely than Republicans to describe the economy as good, more Democrats cite the economy as a top issue this year compared with last year.

Once again, though economic concerns persist across all parties, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to cite inflation and economy as a top issue.

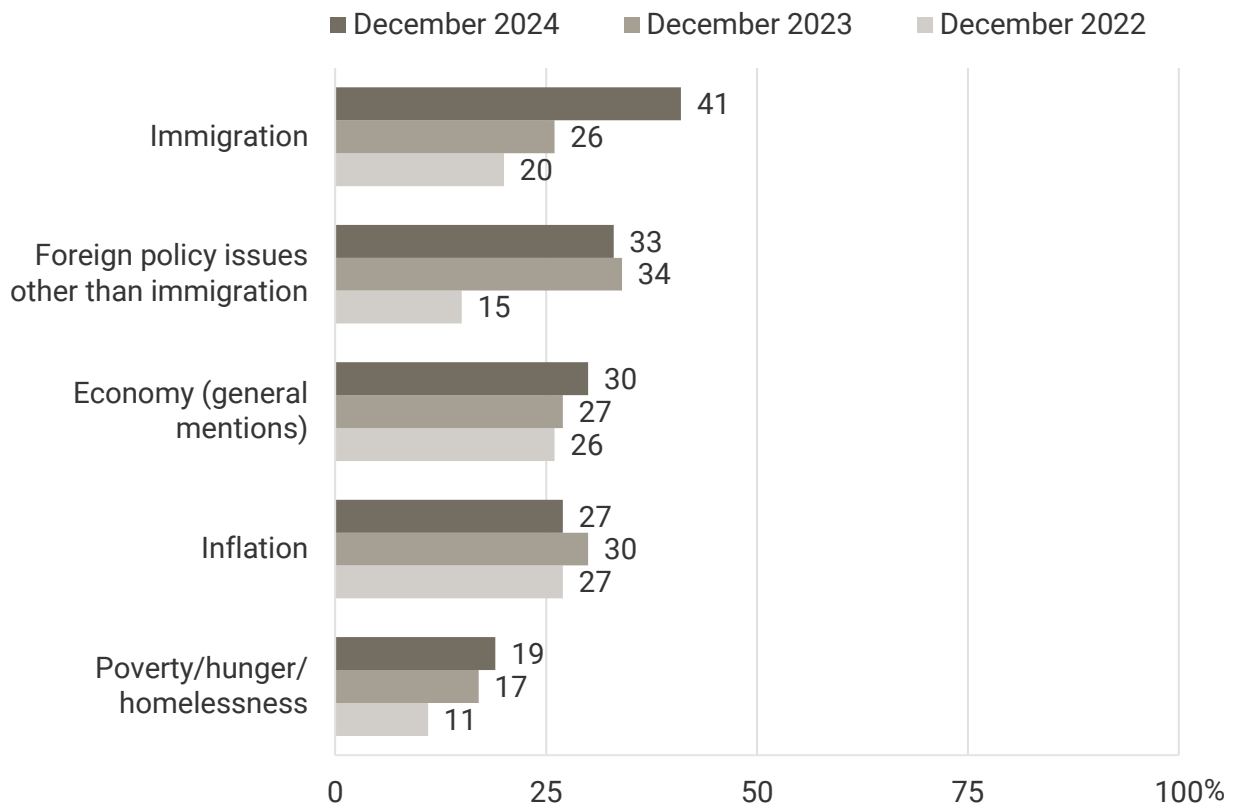
Among Democrats, the environment and climate change remain their top concern, similar to 2023 and 2022.

Amidst the emphasis from the incoming Trump administration on [reducing government waste](#), government spending, debt, and the deficit is a top issue for Republicans.



### Independents' top issues

Percent of independents

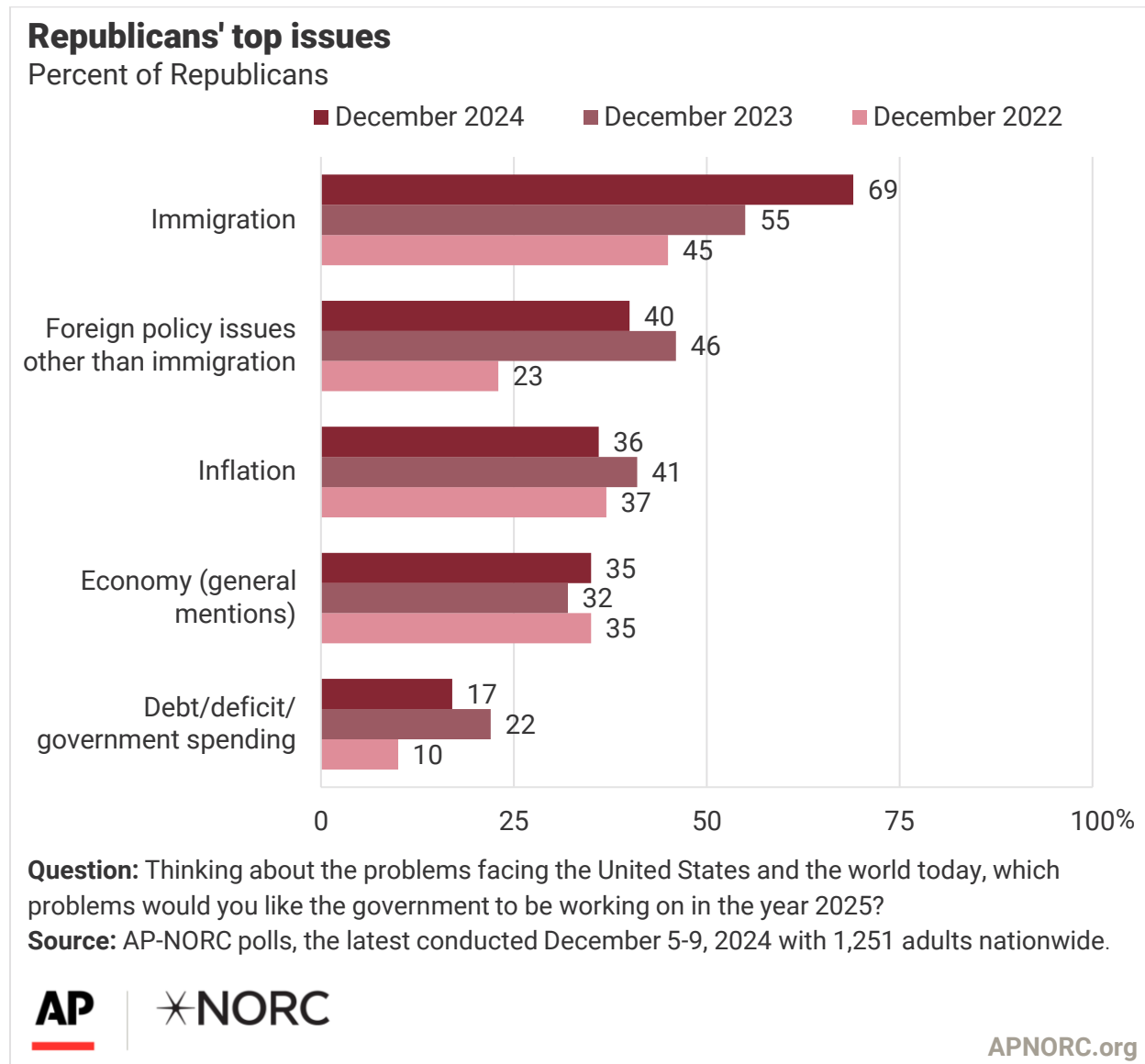


**Question:** Thinking about the problems facing the United States and the world today, which problems would you like the government to be working on in the year 2025?

**Source:** AP-NORC polls, the latest conducted December 5-9, 2024 with 1,251 adults nationwide.



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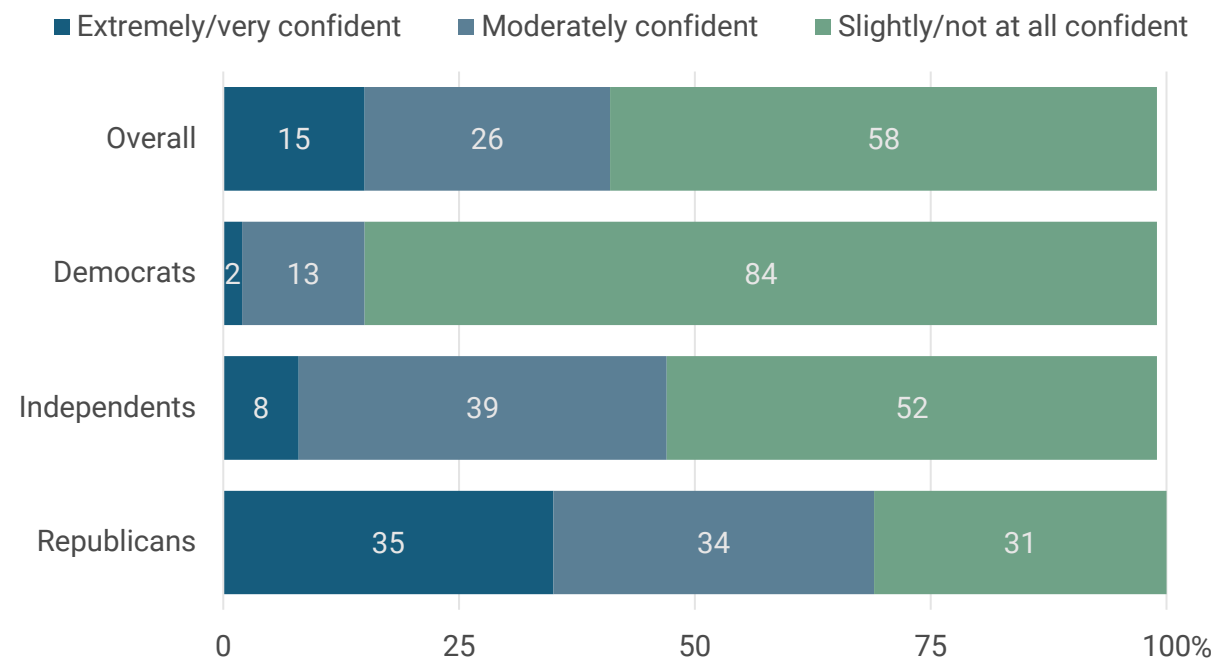
## OPTIMISM ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY AND CONFIDENCE IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS UP AMONG REPUBLICANS.

Just 15% of the public is extremely or very confident in the ability of the federal government to make progress on the top issues facing the country. Twenty-six percent are moderately confident and 58% are slightly or not at all confident.

Republicans are now more likely to be extremely or very confident that the government will make progress on their top issues in 2025. Last year, just 1% of Republicans were confident in the federal government’s abilities and 83% were slightly or not at all confident. With the second Trump administration set to begin in January, Republicans are more optimistic about progress in the year to come.

## Republicans are more confident than Democrats in the federal government's ability to make progress on the issues facing the country in 2025.

Percent of adults



**Question:** How confident are you in the ability of the federal government to make progress on the important problems and issues facing the country in 2025?

**Source:** AP-NORC poll conducted December 5-9, 2024, with 1,251 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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Partisan views about the direction of the country tend to correspond with the party in power. Throughout the first Trump administration, Democrats were less likely than Republicans to say the country was moving in the right direction. When Joe Biden took office in January 2021, the reverse became true—Republicans were less optimistic about the direction of the country compared with Democrats.

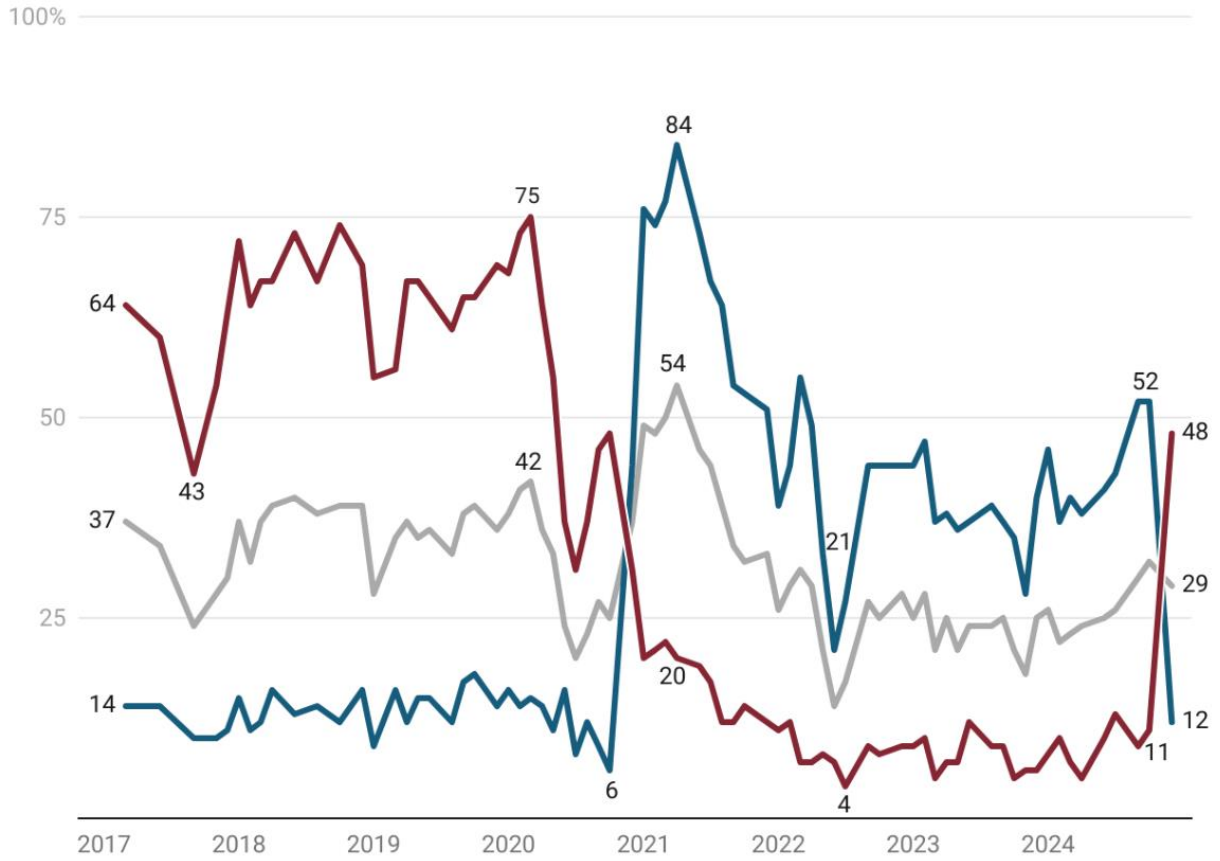
Since Trump won November's presidential election, partisan shifts are occurring once again. Almost half of Republicans believe the country is moving in the right direction, compared with 11% who said the same in October 2024. By contrast, just 12% of Democrats believe the country is headed in the right direction, compared with 52% who said the same in October.



## Satisfaction with the direction of the country changes based on the party in power.

Percent who say the country is moving in the right direction

— Overall — Democrats — Republicans



**Question:** Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the...

**Source:** AP-NORC polls, the latest conducted December 5-9, 2024 with 1,251 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



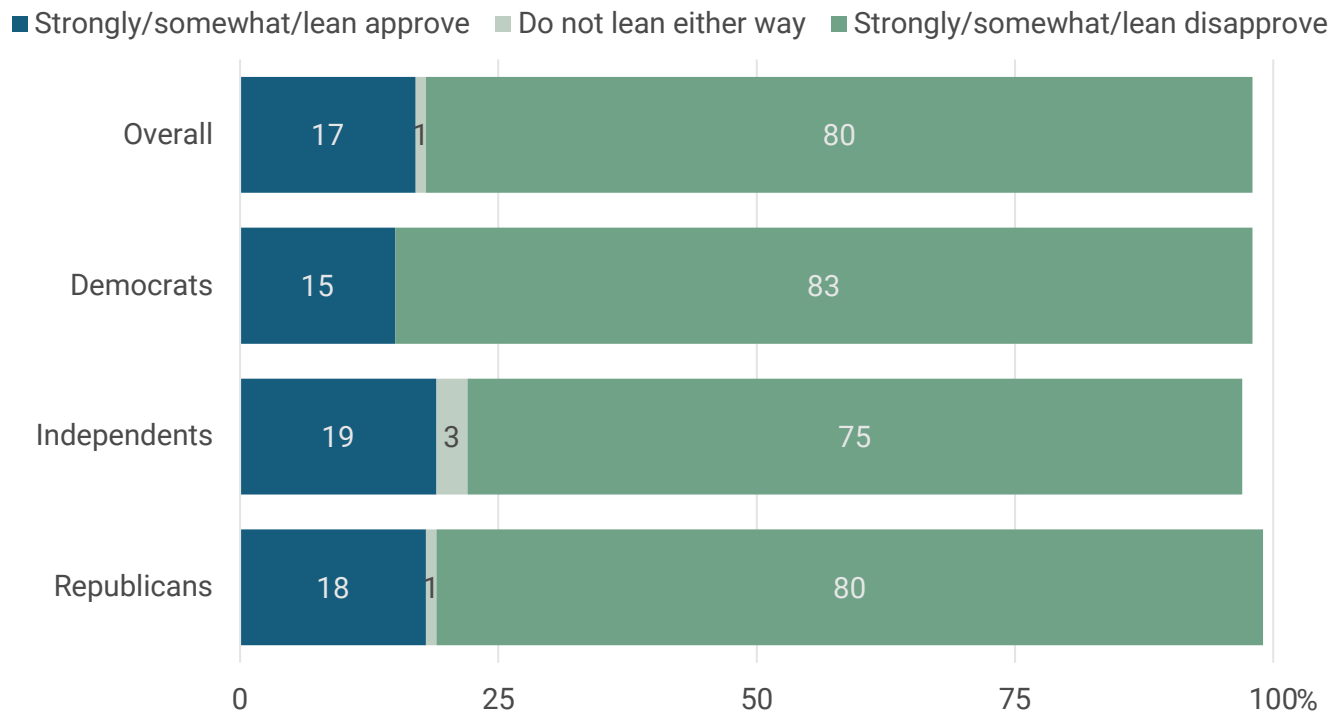
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While confidence in the federal government is higher among Republicans, overall approval of Congress is low across all parties. Just 17% approve of the way Congress is handling its job and 80% disapprove.



## A majority of Democrats, independents, and Republicans disapprove of Congress' job performance.

Percent of adults



**Questions:** Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job? If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approving or disapproving of the way Congress is handling its job? Would you say you approve/disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job strongly or do you approve/disapprove just somewhat?

**Source:** AP-NORC poll conducted December 5-9, 2024, with 1,251 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



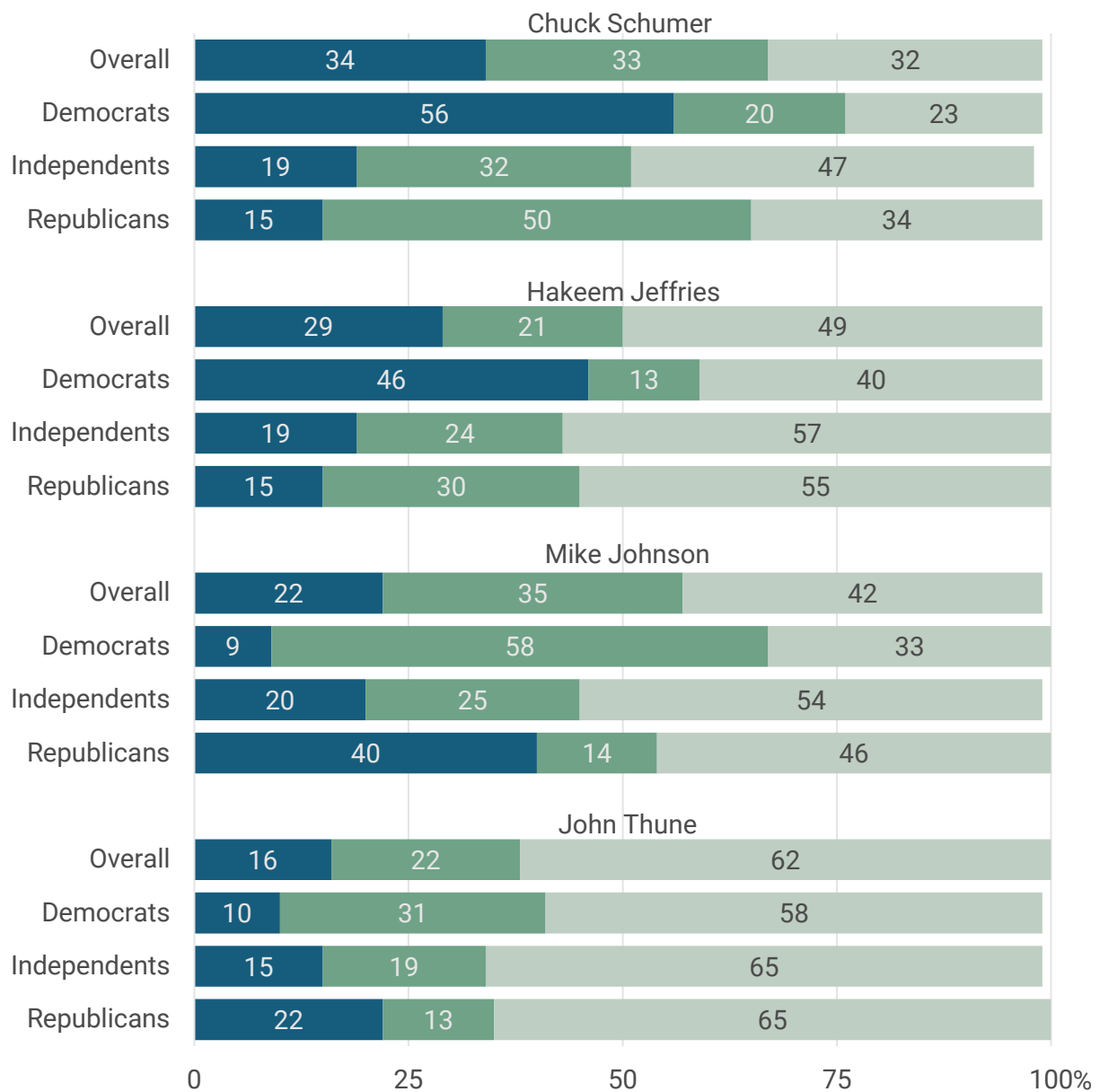
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Regarding Congressional leadership, views of current Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, and incoming Senate Majority Leader John Thune fall along partisan lines. Democrats are more likely to approve of Schumer and Jeffries, whereas Republicans are more likely to approve of Johnson and Thune. Many do not know enough to have an opinion, particularly about Thune.

## Few have positive views of Congressional leadership.

Percent of adults

■ Very/somewhat favorable ■ Very/somewhat unfavorable ■ Don't know enough to say



**Question:** For each of the following individuals, please indicate if you have an unfavorable or favorable impression of that person. If you don't know enough about the person to have an opinion, you can say that too.

**Source:** AP-NORC poll conducted December 5-9, 2024 with 1,251 adults age 18 and older nationwide.



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## STUDY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and with funding from The Associated Press and NORC at the University of Chicago.

Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Omnibus®, a bi-monthly multi-client survey using NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. 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 December 5 through December 9, 2024, with adults aged 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,251 completed the survey—1,208 via the web and 43 by telephone. Panel members were invited by email or by phone from an NORC telephone interviewer. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive for completing the survey. The final stage completion rate is 14.6 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 27.4 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 77.2 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 3.1 percent.

The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups. For example, the margin of sampling error is +/- 5.7 percentage points for Democrats and +/- 5.9 percentage points for Republicans.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 76 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them. These interviews were excluded from the data file prior to weighting.

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 2023 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over.

The sample is also weighted to match the average of self-identified party identification in the previous two waves of the AmeriSpeak Omnibus survey and this current survey.

For the open-ended question PROB1, responses were classified using Canvs AI, an online platform that codes open-ended data. These codes were validated by a human coder and were then collapsed into more general categories based on topic for reporting.

Complete questions and results are available at: [apnorc.org](https://apnorc.org)

Additional information on the AmeriSpeak Panel® methodology is available at:  
<https://amerispeak.norc.org/about-amerispeak/Pages/Panel-Design.aspx>.

For more information, email [info@apnorc.org](mailto:info@apnorc.org).

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

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- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest objective and nonpartisan research institutions in the world. [www.norc.org](https://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](https://www.apnorc.org).