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# Nearly Half of Democrats Say the Best Age for a President Is ‘In Their 50s’

*Most Democrats say gender, race of 2020 nominee won't change their enthusiasm*

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# Nearly Half of Democrats Say the Best Age for a President Is ‘In Their 50s’

*Most Democrats say gender, race of 2020 nominee won't change their enthusiasm*

When asked about the ideal age for a president, most Democrats say they prefer someone in their 40s through their 60s, with nearly half (47%) saying the best age for a president is “in their 50s.”

Two of the Democratic Party’s best-known candidates, Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders, are in their 70s, yet only 3% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say this is the best age range for a president. And just 6% say it would be ideal for a president to be in their 30s.

The new survey by Pew Research Center, conducted April 29-May 13 among 10,170 adults – including 5,675 Democrats and Democratic leaners – finds that most who identify as or lean Democratic say it would not have much effect on their enthusiasm if the party’s presidential nominee were white, a person of color, or gay, lesbian or bisexual.

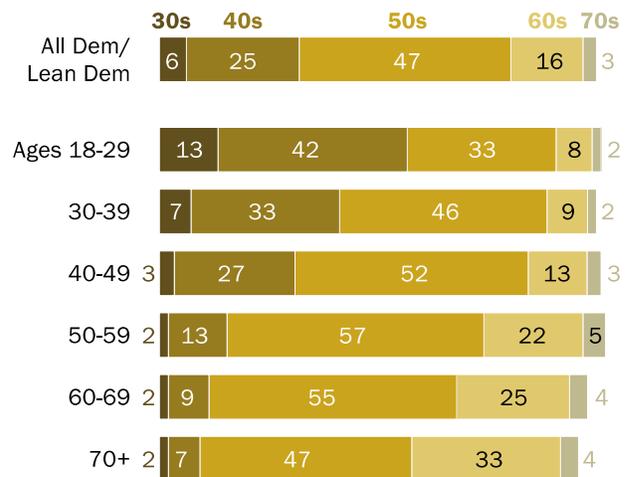
However, nearly a third of all Democrats (31%) – including 45% of Democratic women ages 18 to 49 – say they would be more enthusiastic if the party’s nominee were a woman.

And while relatively small shares of Democrats overall say they would be more enthusiastic if the nominee were black or Hispanic (21% each), more than a third of black Democrats (35%) say they would be more enthusiastic if the party’s nominee were black, while 44% of Latino Democrats say they would be more enthused by a Hispanic nominee.

The survey also finds that, in general, younger Democrats are more likely than older Democrats to prefer that a president be in their 30s or 40s. A majority of Democrats ages 18 to 29 (55%) say it is

## Democrats generally view ‘the 50s’ as the best age for a president

*% of Democrats and Democratic leaners who say it is best for a president to be in their ...*



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 29-May 13, 2019.

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best for a president to be in their 30s (13%) or 40s (42%). Among Democrats in their 30s, 40% say it is best for a president to be in their 30s or 40s, while 30% of those in their 40s say this. But among Democrats 50 and older, 12% view these as the ideal ages for a president.

For Democrats – apart from those 18 to 29 – the preferred age for a president is in the 50s. Although Democrats who are 70 and older are more likely than those in other age groups to say it is best for a president to be in their 60s (33% say this), nearly half (47%) say the 50s is the ideal age. Among Democrats 70 and older, just 4% say it is best that a president be in their 70s.

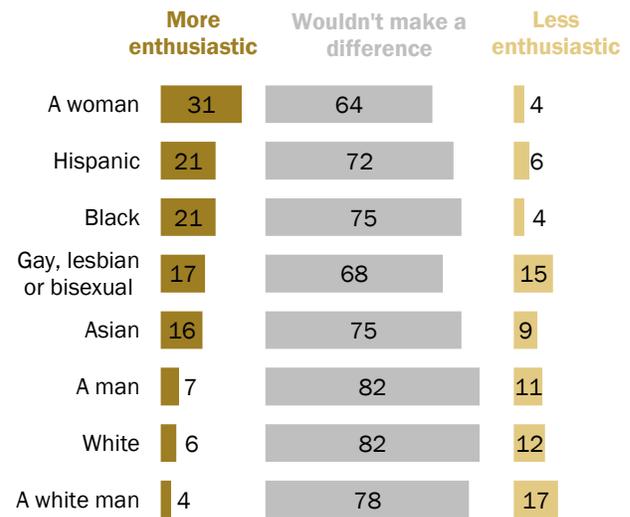
The survey finds that majorities of Democrats generally say the gender, race or sexuality of the Democratic nominee wouldn't make a difference in their enthusiasm for the candidate. About two-thirds or more say having a woman nominee (64%), a black nominee (75%) or a gay, lesbian or bisexual nominee (68%) wouldn't make a difference.

Still, far more Democrats say they would be more enthusiastic (31%) than less enthusiastic (4%) if the party's nominee were a woman. Larger shares also say they would be more enthusiastic than less enthusiastic if the nominee were black (21% vs. 4%), Hispanic (21% vs. 6%) or Asian (16% vs. 9%).

Roughly similar shares of Democrats say they would be more enthusiastic (17%) and less enthusiastic (15%) if the party's 2020 nominee were gay, lesbian or bisexual. By contrast, larger shares say they would be less enthused than more enthused if the nominee were a man, white or a white man. As with all characteristics asked about, a majority of Democrats (78%) say it would make no difference if the nominee were a white man. But more say they would be less enthusiastic (17%) than more enthusiastic (4%) if the Democratic nominee were a white man.

### Most Democrats say race, gender of nominee would not impact enthusiasm

*% of Democrats and Democratic leaners who say they would feel \_\_\_ if the Democratic nominee were ...*



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 29-May 13, 2019.

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## Younger Democratic women more likely than other Democrats to prefer a nominee who is female or a minority

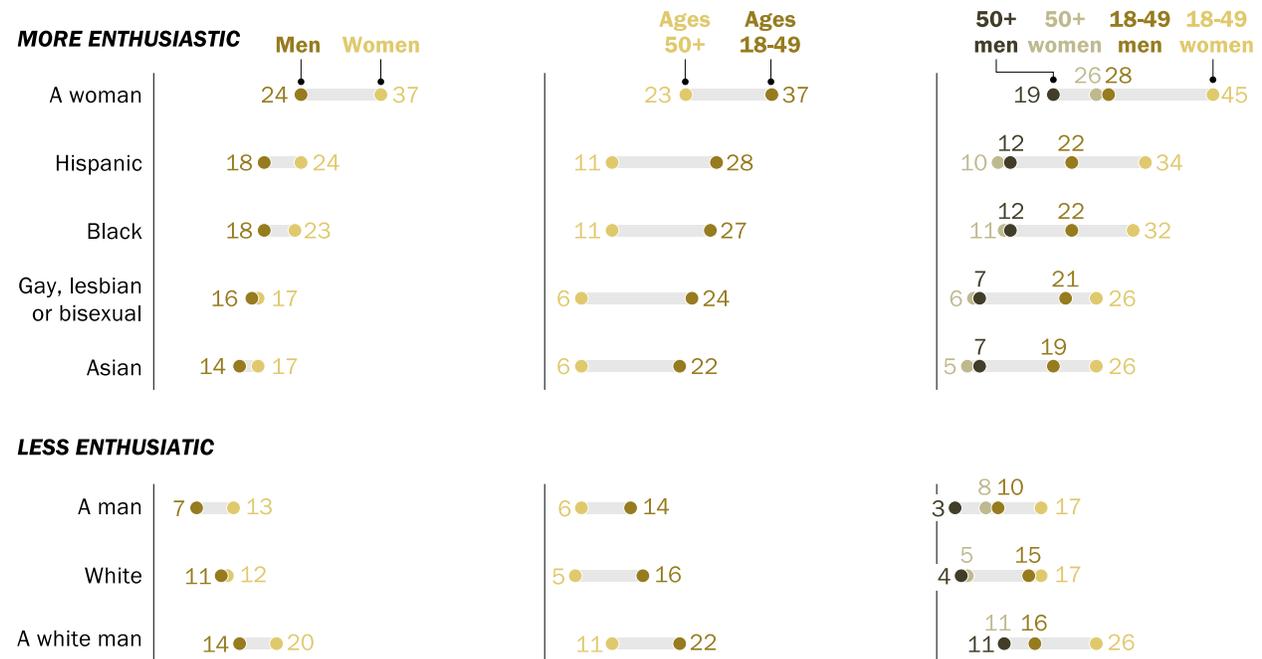
Enthusiasm for a 2020 nominee who is a woman or person of color is stronger among Democratic women and younger Democrats. And women younger than 50 are among the most likely to express enthusiasm about a nominee who is a woman, Hispanic or black.

Overall, more than a third of Democratic women (37%) say they would be more enthusiastic if the nominee were a woman, compared with 24% of Democratic men who say the same. Similarly, 37% of Democrats ages 18 to 49 say they would be more enthusiastic if the nominee were a woman; just 23% of Democrats 50 and older say that they would be more enthusiastic.

Women ages 18 to 49 are more enthusiastic than others about having a woman as the nominee. Nearly half of Democratic women ages 18 to 49 (45%) say they would be more enthusiastic if that

### Among Democrats, younger adults and women would be more enthusiastic about a woman or nonwhite nominee in 2020

% of Democrats and Democratic leaners who say they would feel \_\_\_ if the Democratic nominee were ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 29-May 13, 2019.

were the case. That compares with 26% of women 50 and older and 28% of men under 50. Among Democratic men who are 50 and older, just 19% say they would be more enthusiastic about a woman as the nominee.

Women and Democrats younger than 50 also are more likely to say they would be more enthusiastic were the nominee black or Hispanic. And while there are no gender differences in enthusiasm for a candidate who is gay, lesbian or bisexual, about a quarter of Democrats under 50 (24%) say this would make them more enthusiastic, while just 6% of older Democrats say the same.

Younger Democrats are more likely than older Democrats to say they would feel “less enthusiastic” if the Democratic nominee were white, a man or a white man, while women are more likely than men to say this about a candidate who is a man (or a white man).

About two-in-ten Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say they would be more enthusiastic if the party's nominee in 2020 were Hispanic (21%) or black (21%); only 6% say they would be more enthusiastic if the nominee were white. Just 4% say they would be more enthusiastic if it were a white man.

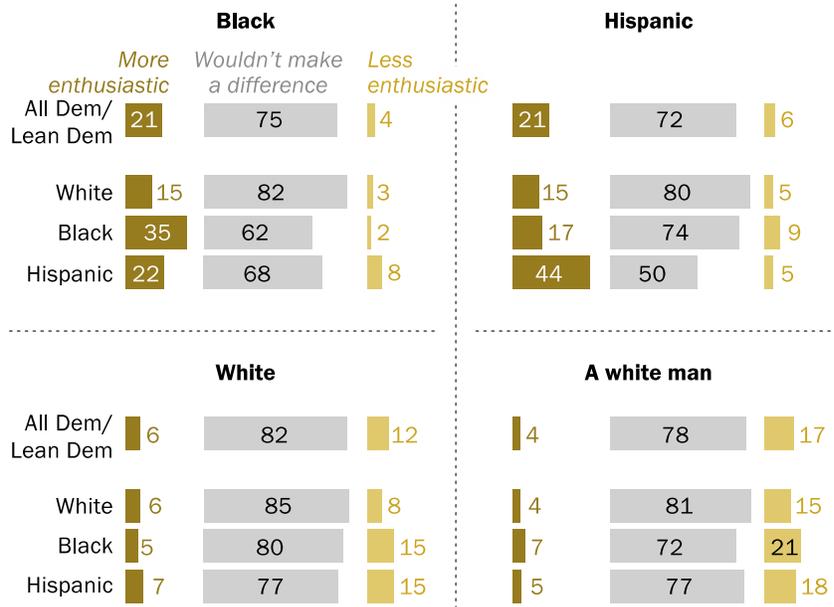
About a third of black Democrats (35%) say they would be more enthusiastic if the nominee were black, compared with 17% who would be more enthusiastic for a Hispanic nominee and 5% who say this about a white nominee.

Roughly four-in-ten Hispanic Democrats (44%) say they would be more enthusiastic with a Hispanic nominee, while about two-in-ten (22%) would be more enthusiastic with a black nominee and just 7% say they would be more enthused if the nominee were white.

Among white Democrats, 15% say they would be more enthusiastic if the nominee were black or Hispanic, while 6% say they would be more enthusiastic if the nominee were white.

### Nonwhite Democrats express more enthusiasm for nominee who shares their racial or ethnic background

% of Democrats and Democratic leaners who say they would feel \_\_\_ if the Democratic nominee were ...



Notes: No answer not shown. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 29-May 13, 2019.

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## Democrats divided in concerns about congressional Democrats' probes of Trump

Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are roughly divided over whether they are more concerned that congressional Democrats will focus *too much* (51%) or *not enough* (47%) on investigating the Trump administration.

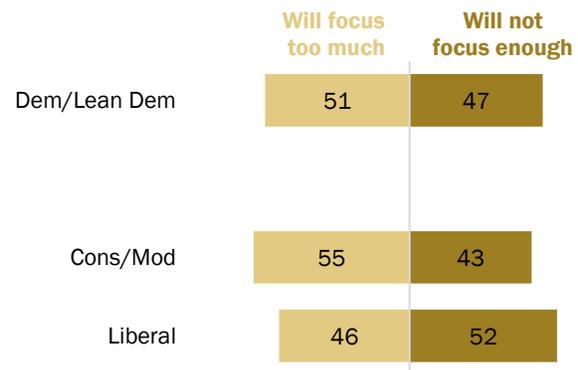
Opinions are changed only modestly since last November, after the midterm election, but the share saying their greater concern is that Democrats in Congress will focus too much on investigations has ticked up from 46% to 51%.

A slim majority of conservative and moderate Democrats say they are concerned more about too much focus on investigations (55%), while 43% say their greater concern is not enough focus. The balance of opinion is roughly the reverse among liberal Democrats: 52% say they are more concerned congressional Democrats will not focus enough on investigating the Trump administration, while 46% say they are more concerned they will focus too much on these investigations.

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### Democrats are split in concerns about investigations of Trump administration

*% of Democrats and Democratic leaners who are more concerned that congressional Democrats \_\_\_\_ on investigating the Trump administration*



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 29-May 13, 2019.

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## Little change in GOP support for a primary challenger to Trump

A majority of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (56%) continue to say that they would not like to see other Republicans challenge Donald Trump for the party's nomination in 2020; 43% say they would like to see a GOP challenge to Trump.

The share of Republicans and GOP leaners who would like to see Trump challenged for the nomination is slightly higher than it was in November (37%), shortly after the midterm election.

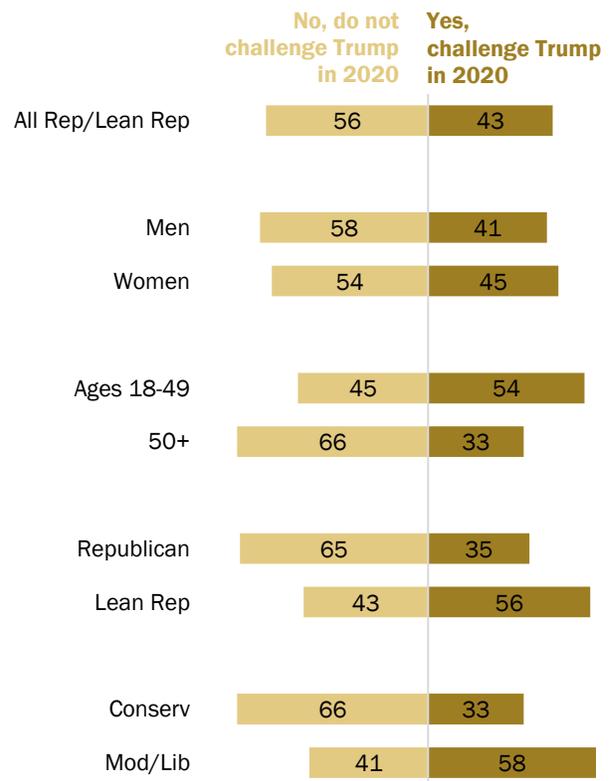
Just over half of Republicans younger than age 50 (54%) say other GOP candidates should challenge Trump for the nomination. By comparison, just 33% of older Republicans say this.

Republican-leaning independents are more supportive of a competitive GOP primary than Republicans: 56% of GOP leaners say Trump should be challenged, compared with 35% of Republicans.

About two-thirds of conservative Republicans (66%) do not want a primary challenge for Trump, while nearly six-in-ten moderate and liberal Republicans (58%) would like to see Trump challenged for the party's nomination.

### About four-in-ten Republicans and GOP leaners want a primary challenge to Trump

*% of Republicans and Republican leaners who say they would like to see other Republican candidates challenge Trump for the 2020 nomination*



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 29-May 13, 2019.

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## Acknowledgements

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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## Methodology

### The American Trends Panel survey methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted April 29-May 13, 2019. A total of 10,170 panelists responded out of 13,476 who were sampled, for a response rate of 75%. This does not include eight panelists

who were removed from the data due to extremely high rates of refusal or straightlining. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3.4%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged onto the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 10,170 respondents is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points.

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#### American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment Dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,507
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,465
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	802
Aug. 8, 2018–Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	8,702
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29,114</b>	<b>18,720</b>	<b>13,476</b>

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of which 9,942 agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample (ABS) of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. For a

random half-sample of invitations, households without internet access were instructed to return a postcard. These households were contacted by telephone and sent a tablet if they agreed to participate. A total of 9,396 were invited to join the panel, and 8,778 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. Of the 18,720 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 13,493 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover somewhere between the low 90% to 98% of the population.<sup>1</sup>

## Weighting

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents’ original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 and 2017 some respondents were subsampled for invitation to the panel. The next step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on the dimensions listed in the accompanying table.

Sampling errors and statistical-significance tests take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the American Trends Panel’s Hispanic sample is predominantly U.S. born and English speaking.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

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## Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2017 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Race/Hispanic origin	2018 CPS March Supplement
Hispanic nativity	
Home internet access	2017 CPS Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement
Region x Metropolitan status	
Volunteerism	2016 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Voter registration	
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total US adult population.

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<sup>1</sup> “AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling” (2016). AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	10,170	1.5 percentage points
Republican/Lean Republican	4,220	2.2 percentage points
Democrat/Lean Democrat	5,675	2.0 percentage points
<i>Among Dem/Lean Dem</i>		
Men	2,320	3.3 percentage points
Women	3,352	2.5 percentage points
White	3,708	2.4 percentage points
Black	801	5.1 percentage points
Hispanic	691	5.7 percentage points
Ages 18-49	2,820	2.7 percentage points
50+	2,853	2.9 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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**2019 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL  
WAVE 48 MAY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
APRIL 29-MAY 13, 2019  
N=10,170**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK DEMOCRAT/LEAN DEMOCRAT ONLY (PARTY=2 OR PARTYLN=2) [N=5,675]:**

DEMOVRSGHT Thinking about Democratic control of the House of Representatives, looking ahead which concerns you more... **[RANDOMIZE]**

Apr 29- May 13 2019		Nov 7-13 2018
51	That Democrats in Congress will FOCUS TOO MUCH on investigating the Trump administration	46
47	That Democrats in Congress will NOT FOCUS ENOUGH on investigating the Trump administration	51
2	No answer	3

**ASK DEMOCRAT/LEAN DEMOCRAT ONLY (PARTY=2 OR PARTYLN=2) [N=5,675]:**

PRMRTRT Looking ahead to the 2020 election, how would you feel if the Democratic nominee were... **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**

	More enthusiastic	Wouldn't make a difference	Less enthusiastic	No answer
<b>ASK ALL DEM/LEAN DEM:</b>				
a. A woman Apr 29-May 13, 2019	31	64	4	*
<b>ASK FORMS 1 AND 2 ONLY [N=2,862]:</b>				
b. White Apr 29-May 13, 2019	6	82	12	1
<b>ASK ALL DEM/LEAN DEM:</b>				
c. Black Apr 29-May 13, 2019	21	75	4	1
d. Hispanic Apr 29-May 13, 2019	21	72	6	1
e. Asian Apr 29-May 13, 2019	16	75	9	1
f. Gay, lesbian, bisexual Apr 29-May 13, 2019	17	68	15	1
<b>ASK FORMS 1 AND 2 ONLY [N=2,862]:</b>				
A man Apr 29-May 13, 2019	7	82	11	1
<b>ASK FORMS 3 AND 4 ONLY [N=2,813]:</b>				
A white man Apr 29-May 13, 2019	4	78	17	*

**ASK DEMOCRAT/LEAN DEMOCRAT ONLY (PARTY=2 OR PARTYLN=2) [N=5,675]:**

PREZAGE In your view, is it best for a president to be... [REVERSE ORDER OF RESPONSE OPTIONS  
FOR RANDOM 1/2 SAMPLE]

Apr 29- May 13 <u>2019</u>	
6	In their 30s
25	In their 40s
47	In their 50s
16	In their 60s
3	In their 70s
3	No answer

**ASK REPUBLICAN/LEAN REPUBLICAN ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1) [N=4,220]:**

PRMRCHLNG And thinking about the 2020 Republican nomination, would you like to see other Republican candidates challenge Donald Trump for the Party's nomination for president in 2020?

Apr 29- May 13 <u>2019</u>		Nov 7-13 <u>2018</u>
43	Yes	37
56	No	61
1	No answer	2

**PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON:**

*Based on Democrat/Lean Democrat only:*

	<i>Barack Obama 2012</i>	<i>Bill Clinton 1996</i>
	Aug 4-7, <u>2011</u>	Nov 4-7, <u>2010</u>
Yes	32	38
No	59	58
No answer	9	3
		Dec <u>1994</u>
		66
		29
		5