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# Few Americans Express Positive Views of Trump's Conduct in Office

*80% of the public describes Trump as 'self-centered'*

**FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:**

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## How we did this

For more than three decades, Pew Research Center has been conducting surveys of the public's views of U.S. presidents. It is an essential aspect of our political research. For this report on views of Donald Trump, we surveyed 6,395 U.S. adults in February 2020. Everyone who took part is a member of Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the [ATP's methodology](#).

Here are the questions used for the report, along with responses, and its methodology.

# Few Americans Express Positive Views of Trump's Conduct in Office

*80% of the public describes Trump as 'self-centered'*

The American public has long expressed negative views of some of Donald Trump's personal traits and behaviors, including his

temperament and his tweeting. A new national survey finds that just 15% of U.S. adults say they like the way he conducts himself as president. A far larger share (53%) say they don't like how he conducts himself, while another 30% say they have mixed feelings.

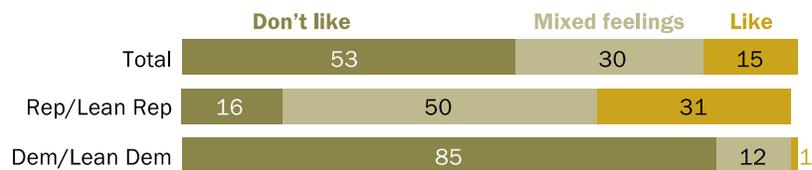
For the most part, Americans also do not agree with Trump on most of the important issues facing the country. Fewer than half (42%) say they agree with Donald Trump on many or nearly all of the top issues facing the country today; nearly six-in-ten (58%) say they agree with him on few or almost no issues.

The national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted Feb. 4-15 among 6,395 adults using the Center's American Trends Panel, finds deep partisan divisions in agreement with Trump on major issues and in views of his personal conduct.

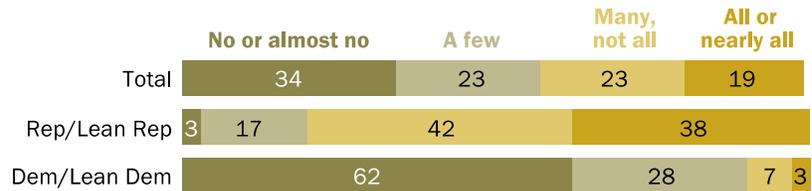
Republicans are largely in sync with the president on major issues: 80% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say they agree with Trump on many or nearly all important issues facing the country. Yet only 31% of Republican and Republican leaners say they like the way Trump conducts himself as president; 50% say they have mixed feelings and 16% say they don't like his conduct.

## Republicans largely agree with Trump on issues, but only about a third say they like his personal conduct

*% who say they \_\_\_ the way Donald Trump conducts himself as president*



*% who say they agree with Donald Trump on \_\_\_ important issues facing the country today*



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 4-15, 2020.

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It is important to note that, despite the reservations many Republicans have about Trump's personal conduct, they continue to overwhelmingly approve of his job performance. [In January](#), 80% of Republicans and Republican leaners approved of the way Trump was handling his job as president, including 64% who strongly approved.

Democrats are sharply critical of Trump's conduct. Fully 85% of Democrats and Democratic leaners say they don't like the way he conducts himself as president, while 12% have mixed feelings and just 1% like Trump's personal conduct. Only 10% of Democrats agree with Trump on many or nearly all issues.

Partisan differences in views of Trump's conduct and agreement with the president on important issues are similar to [those expressed in 2018 and 2017](#). The current survey is the first time these questions have been asked on Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel; previously, they were asked on telephone surveys.

## Majorities of Americans say Trump is self-centered, prejudiced

The public is broadly critical of Trump in assessing a number of his specific traits and characteristics. A sizable majority of Americans (80%) say the phrase “self-centered” describes him very or fairly well, while 59% view him as prejudiced.

Among positive traits, half say Trump is very or fairly well described as intelligent, while nearly as many (47%) say he “fights for what I believe in.” Only about a third each say Trump is honest (36%) and morally upstanding (32%).

Just 27% say the description “even-tempered” applies to Trump. Views of Trump’s temperament have been widely negative since he took office: [In a telephone survey last year](#), which asked about different personal traits, 28% said he was even-tempered.

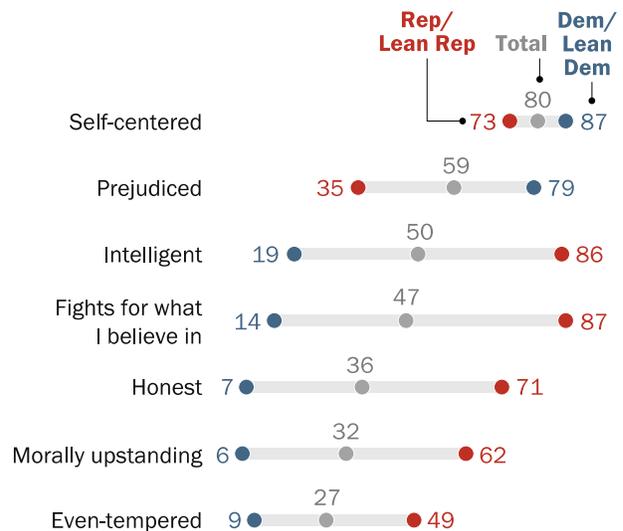
In evaluating Trump’s personal traits, Democrats are critical of the president across all dimensions, while Republicans make some distinctions, evaluating him very positively on some characteristics and offering more mixed evaluations on others.

Nearly nine-in-ten Republicans (87%) describe him as someone who “fights for what I believe in,” while about as many (86%) say Trump is intelligent. A smaller majority of Republicans (71%) say “honest” describes Trump very or fairly well, while 62% say morally upstanding describes him at least fairly well.

About a third of Republicans (35%) view Trump as prejudiced. Yet by far their most negative assessment is in perceptions of Trump as self-centered: 73% of Republicans say this describes Trump very or fairly well.

### Republicans widely view Trump as a fighter, but also self-centered

% who say each describes Trump very or fairly well



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 4-15, 2020.

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Democrats overwhelmingly view Trump as self-centered (87%) and prejudiced (79%). Only 19% say Trump is intelligent and 14% say he “fights for what I believe in.” Fewer than 10% of Democrats describe Trump as even-tempered, honest or morally upstanding.

## A detailed look at Republicans' views of Trump

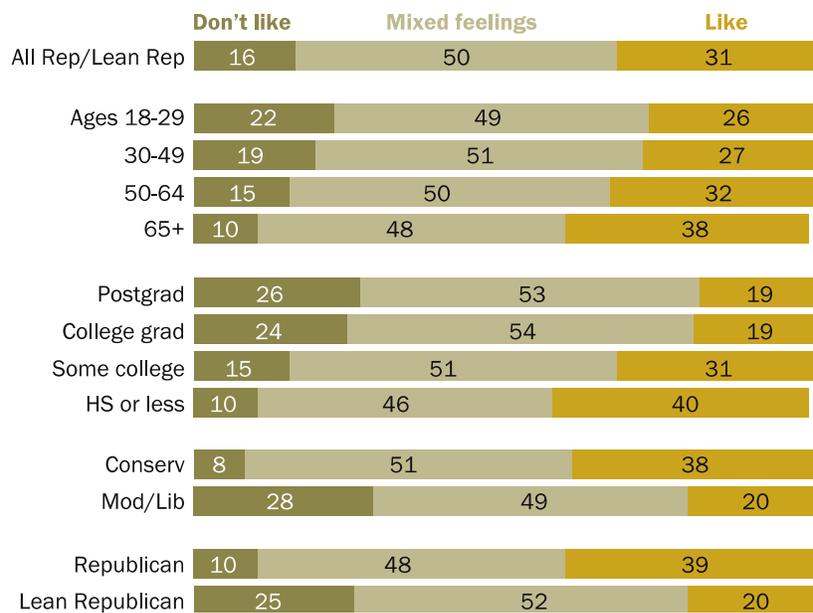
Among Republicans, Trump gets his highest ratings on personal conduct among those who are older, conservative and have not completed college. And these same groups of Republicans are among the most likely to say that Trump “fights for what I believe in.”

While there is no subgroup of Republicans in which a majority says they like Trump’s personal conduct, those who have not attended college are about twice as likely as those with four-year degrees to express positive views of his conduct (40% vs. 19%).

Similarly, while 38% of conservative Republicans, who make up about two-thirds of all Republicans and GOP leaners, express positive views of Trump’s conduct, only 20% of moderate and liberal Republicans do so. And older Republicans, especially those 65 and older, are more likely than younger Republicans to say they like Trump’s conduct as president.

### Republicans who have not completed college express more positive views of Trump’s conduct in office

Among *Republicans and Republican leaners*, % who say they \_\_\_ the way Donald Trump conducts himself as president



Notes: Based on Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 4-15, 2020.

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There also are sharp differences among Republicans in the shares saying Trump “fights for what I believe in.” Sizable majorities of Republicans ages 65 and older (94%) and 50 to 64 (92%) say this phrase describes Trump well – with majorities in both age groups saying it describes him *very* well.

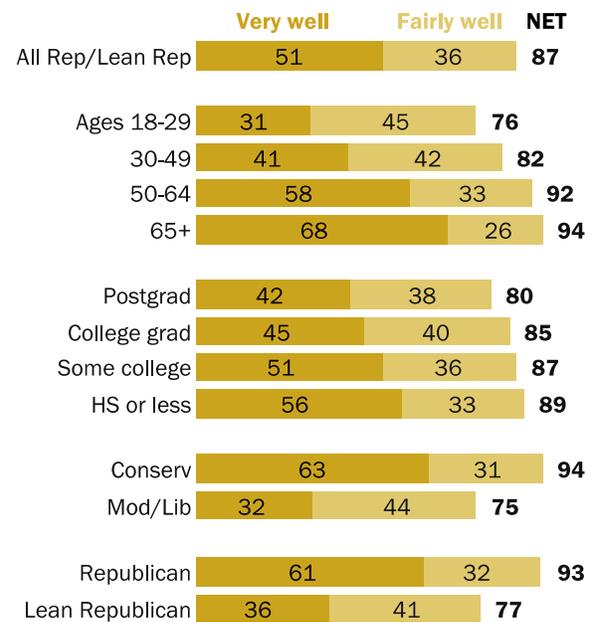
Most Republicans under age 50 view Trump as someone who fights for their beliefs, but fewer than half say it describes him very well.

While majorities of Republicans, regardless of their level of educational attainment, view Trump as a fighter for their beliefs, those who have not completed college are more likely than college graduates to say this describes him very well.

And while 94% of conservative Republicans say Trump fights for what they believe in – including 63% who say this describes him very well – fewer moderate and liberal Republicans say this (75% say it describes him well, 32% very well).

## Older Republicans especially likely to see Trump as fighting for their beliefs

Among *Republicans and Republican leaners*, % who say the phrase ‘fights for what I believe in’ describes Trump ...



Note: Based on Republicans and Republican-leaning independents.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 4-15, 2020.

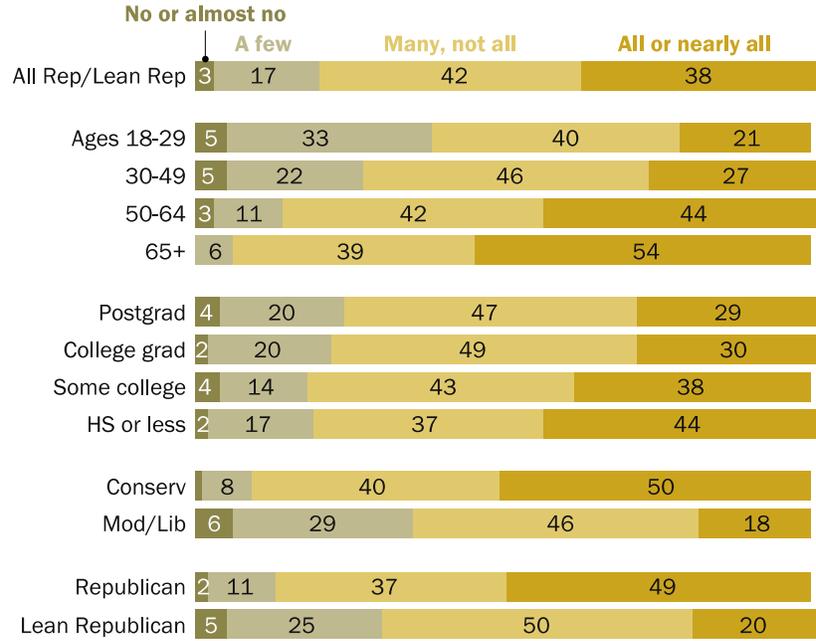
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There is a similar pattern in views of agreement with Trump on issues among Republican subgroups. While majorities of Republicans across demographic and educational categories agree with Trump on many or nearly all (or all) issues, half or more of self-described conservatives (50%) and those 65 and older (54%) say they agree with Trump on all or nearly all issues.

That is higher than the shares among other groups of Republicans. For example, among Republicans under age 30, just 21% say they agree with Trump on all or nearly all of the important issues facing the country.

### Among Republicans, conservatives express greater issue agreement with Trump than moderates

Among **Republicans/Republican leaners**, % who say they agree with Donald Trump on \_\_\_ important issues facing the country today



Notes: Based on Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 4-15, 2020.

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## Acknowledgments

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 February 4 to February 15, 2020. A total of 6,395 panelists responded out of 7,855 who were sampled, for a response rate of 81%. This does not include three

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 4.5%. 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 6,395 respondents is plus or minus 1.59 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	2,315
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,337
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	685
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	6,417
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS/web	5,900	4,720	4,700
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35,014</b>	<b>23,440</b>	<b>15,454</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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This study featured a stratified random sample from the ATP. The sampling strata were defined by the following variables: religious affiliation, age, ethnicity, education, country of birth (among Hispanics), internet status, party affiliation, voter registration and volunteerism.

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. The same recruitment procedure was carried out on August 19, 2019, from which a total of 5,900 were invited to join the panel and 4,720 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. Of the 23,440 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 15,454 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 as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.<sup>1</sup>

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

## Weighting

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original selection probability. 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 tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish.

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	2018 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Race/Hispanic origin	
Country of birth among Hispanics	
Home internet access	
Region x Metropolitan status	2019 CPS March Supplement
Religion	2019 Pew Research Center American Trends Panel Profile Survey
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
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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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:

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*Survey conducted Feb. 4- 15, 2020*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Weighted %</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	6,395		1.6 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	2,599	45	2.3 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	3,588	51	2.2 percentage points

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

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**2020 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL  
WAVE 61 FEBRUARY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
FEB 4-15, 2020  
TOTAL N=6,395**

*Note on trends:* Several questions have been asked both on the phone and online. These are labeled throughout the topline: "**phone trend for comparison.**" The extent of the mode differences varies across questions; while there are negligible differences on some questions, others have more pronounced differences. Caution should be taken when evaluating online and phone estimates. See report for more details.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

TRUMPISSUE1 Thinking about important issues facing the country today, overall, would you say you tend to agree with Donald Trump on... **[RANDOMIZE DISPLAY OF OPTIONS 1-4 AND 4-1]**

Feb 4-15	
<u>2020</u>	
19	All or nearly all issues
23	Many, but not all issues
23	A few issues
34	No or almost no issues
1	No answer

**PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON:**

*Thinking about important issues facing the country today, overall, would you say you tend to agree with Donald Trump on ...?*

Apr 25-May 1		Aug 15-21
<u>2018</u>		<u>2017</u>
19	All or nearly all issues	15
22	Many, but not all issues	18
24	A few issues	21
33	No or almost no issues	45
2	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	1

**ASK ALL:**

TRUMPISSUE2 Now thinking NOT about issues, but just about the way Donald Trump conducts himself as president, would you say you... **[RANDOMIZE DISPLAY OF OPTIONS 1-3 AND 3-1]**

Feb 4-15	
<u>2020</u>	
15	Like the way he conducts himself
30	Have mixed feelings about the way he conducts himself
53	Don't like the way he conducts himself
3	No answer

**TRUMPISSUE2 CONTINUED ...****PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON:**

Now thinking *NOT* about issues, but just about the way Donald Trump conducts himself as president, would you say you ...

Apr 25-May 1 <u>2018</u>		Aug 15-21 <u>2017</u>
19	Like the way he conducts himself	16
26	Have mixed feelings about the way he conducts himself	25
54	Don't like the way he conducts himself	58
2	<b>[VOL. DO NOT READ]</b> Don't know/Refused	1

**ASK ALL:**

TRUMPDESC How well does each of the following describe Donald Trump? **[RANDOMIZE]**

	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Fairly well</u>	<u>Not too well</u>	<u>Not at all well</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Fights for what I believe in Feb 4-15, 2020	26	22	15	37	1
b. Morally upstanding Feb 4-15, 2020	8	24	23	44	1
c. Even-tempered Feb 4-15, 2020	6	21	28	44	1
d. Honest Feb 4-15, 2020	12	24	19	44	1
e. Self-centered Feb 4-15, 2020	55	25	11	8	1
f. Prejudiced Feb 4-15, 2020	36	23	20	19	2
g. Intelligent Feb 4-15, 2020	26	24	21	27	1

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a...

**ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3 OR 4) OR REFUSED:**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to...<sup>2</sup>

<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Something else</u>	<u>No answer</u>	<u>Lean Rep</u>	<u>Lean Dem</u>
27	29	29	13	1	17	22

<sup>2</sup> Party and Partyln asked in a prior survey.