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Most Americans Say Trump Was Too Slow in Initial Response to Coronavirus Threat

Wide concern that states will lift COVID-19 restrictions too quickly

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How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to understand Americans' political attitudes and their views of the coronavirus outbreak. For this analysis, we surveyed 4,917 U.S. adults in April 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](#).

Most Americans Say Trump Was Too Slow in Initial Response to Coronavirus Threat

Wide concern that states will lift COVID-19 restrictions too quickly

As the death toll from [the novel coronavirus pandemic](#) continues to spiral, most Americans do not foresee a quick end to the crisis. In fact, 73% of U.S. adults say that in thinking about the problems the country is facing from the coronavirus outbreak, the worst is still to come.

With the Trump administration and many state governors actively considering ways to revive the stalled U.S. economy, the public strikes a decidedly cautious note on easing strict limits on public activity. About twice as many Americans say their greater concern is that state governments will lift restrictions on public activity too quickly (66%) as say it will not happen quickly enough (32%).

President Donald Trump's handling of the coronavirus outbreak – especially his response to initial reports of coronavirus cases overseas – is widely criticized. Nearly two-thirds of Americans (65%) say Trump was too slow to take major steps to address the threat to the United States when cases of the disease were first reported in other countries.

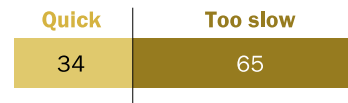
Opinions about Trump's initial response to the coronavirus – as well as concerns about whether state governments will act too quickly or slowly in easing restrictions – are deeply divided along partisan lines. These attitudes stand in stark contrast to the assessments of how officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and at the state and local level are addressing the outbreak, [which are largely positive among members of both parties](#).

Democrats are largely united in their concerns over state governments easing bans on public activity; 81% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say their greater concern is that

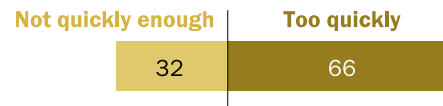
Trump's initial response to coronavirus faulted; most say 'worst is still to come'

% who say ...

Donald Trump was ___ to take major steps to address the threat of the coronavirus outbreak to the U.S.



Greater concern is that state governments will lift restrictions on public activity ...



When it comes to the problems the U.S. is facing from the outbreak the ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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governments will lift these restrictions too quickly. Yet Republicans and Republican leaners are evenly divided. About half (51%) say their bigger concern is that state governments will act too quickly, while slightly fewer (46%) worry more that restrictions on public movement will not be lifted quickly enough.

The new national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted April 7 to 12 among 4,917 U.S. adults on the American Trends Panel, finds that Republicans also are divided in opinions about whether it is acceptable for elected officials to criticize the Trump administration's response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Nearly half of Republicans (47%) say it is acceptable for officials to fault the administration's response, while slightly more (52%) find this unacceptable. Democrats overwhelmingly think it is acceptable for elected officials to criticize how the administration has addressed the outbreak (85% say this).

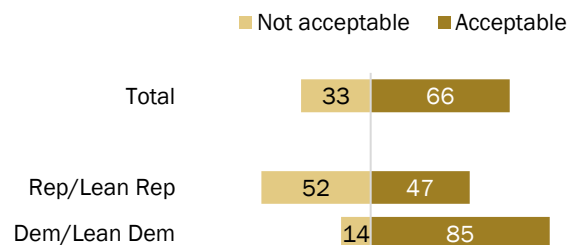
The survey finds that while Trump is widely viewed as having acted too slowly in the initial phase of the crisis, Americans have more positive views of how he is currently handling some aspects of the coronavirus outbreak. About half (51%) say he is doing an excellent or good job in addressing the economic needs of businesses facing financial difficulties.

However, fewer Americans say Trump has done well in addressing the financial needs of ordinary people who have lost jobs or income (46%), working with governors (45%), and meeting the needs of hospitals, doctors and nurses (45%). And 42% say Trump has done well providing the public with accurate information about the coronavirus. Public opinion about the coronavirus outbreak can be explored further by using the [Election News Pathways data tool](#).

Trump's overall job rating has changed little since late March (March 19-24); it remains among the highest ratings of his presidency. Currently, 44% approve of the way Trump is handling his job as president, while 53% disapprove.

Republicans divided on whether it is OK for elected officials to criticize Trump administration on coronavirus response

% who say it is ___ for elected officials to criticize the Trump administration's response to the coronavirus outbreak



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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The survey – most of which was completed after Bernie Sanders [announced April 8](#) that he was suspending his presidential campaign but before he endorsed Biden on April 13 – finds that early preferences for the general election are closely divided: 47% of registered voters say if the presidential election were held today, they would vote for Biden or lean toward supporting Biden, while 45% support or lean toward Trump; 8% favor neither Biden nor Trump or prefer another candidate.

With Biden now the party’s presumptive nominee, Democrats generally think that the party will unite around the

former vice president. About six-in-ten Democratic and Democratic-leaning registered voters (63%) say the party will unite around Biden as the nominee, while 36% say differences and disagreements will keep many Democrats from supporting Biden.

Notably, Democrats who supported Sanders for the party’s nomination in January are the most skeptical that the party will unite around Biden. Nearly half of Democratic voters who supported Sanders for the nomination (47%) say that differences will keep many in the party from backing Biden.

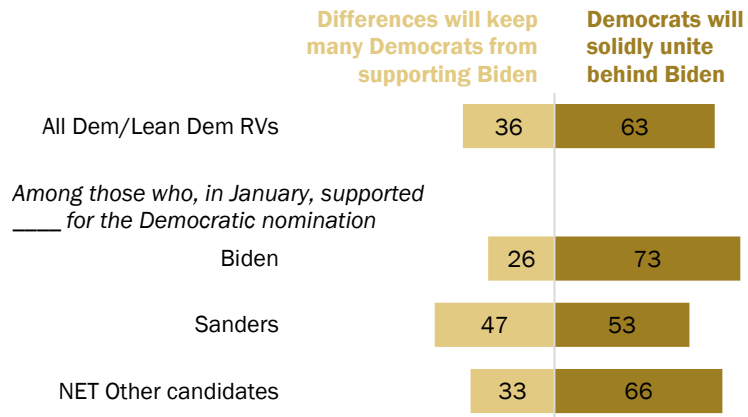
Here are the other major findings from the new survey:

Fewer than half of Americans say Trump portrays coronavirus situation “about as it really is.” Just 39% say in his public comments on the coronavirus outbreak, Trump is presenting the situation about as it really is. About half (52%) say he is making the situation seem better than it really is, while 8% say he is making things seem worse than they really are.

Negative job ratings for Pelosi and McConnell. Just 36% of Americans approve of the way Nancy Pelosi is handling her job as speaker of the House, while an identical percentage approves of Mitch

Democratic voters who backed Sanders in primaries less likely to say party will unite behind Biden

% of Dem/Lean Dem registered voters who say ...



Notes: Based on Dem/Lean Dem registered voters. No answer responses not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

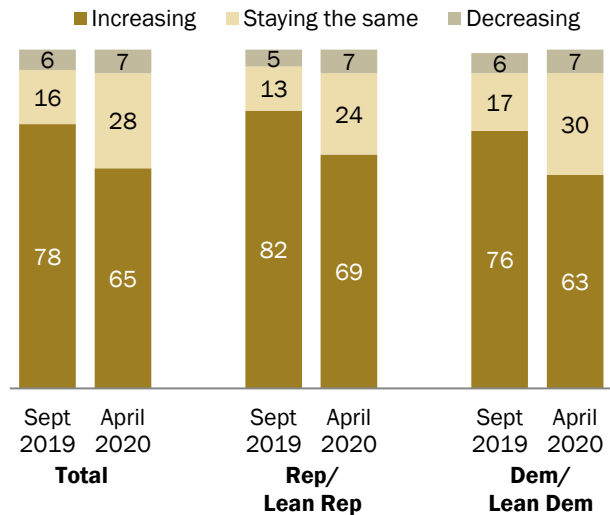
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McConnell's performance as Senate majority leader. Majorities disapprove of the job performance of Pelosi (61%) and McConnell (59%). Job ratings for both congressional leaders are deeply partisan.

Majority sees increased partisan divisions, but fewer do so than last fall. The public has long believed that the nation's partisan divisions have widened. But the share saying divisions between Republicans and Democrats, while large, has declined since last September. Currently, 65% say divisions between Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. are growing, compared with 78% who said this last fall.

A smaller but still sizable majority says nation's partisan divide is increasing

% who say they think divisions between Republicans and Democrats in this country today are ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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1. Trump's handling of coronavirus outbreak

While evaluations of Donald Trump's handling of specific issues related to the coronavirus outbreak are fairly similar to his overall job rating (44% approve), Americans view Trump's performance on some dimensions better than on others.

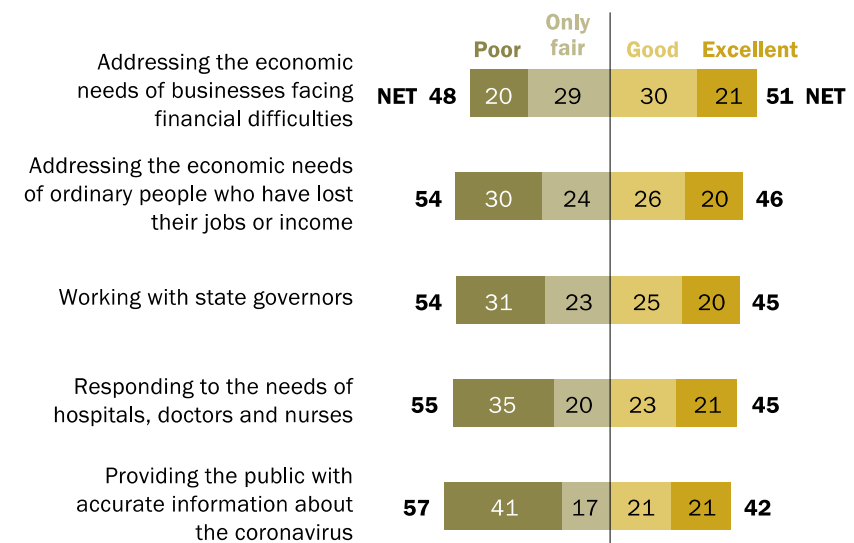
Trump receives his most positive ratings for how he is addressing the economic needs of businesses facing financial difficulties. About half of Americans (51%) say the president is doing an excellent or good job addressing the needs of businesses, while 48% say Trump is doing an only fair or poor job.

Slim majorities say that Trump is doing an only fair or poor job of addressing the economic needs of ordinary people affected by the outbreak (54%), working with state governors (54%) and responding to the needs of hospitals, doctors and nurses (55%).

Trump gets lower ratings for providing accurate information about the coronavirus to the public. A majority (57%) says Trump is doing an only fair or poor job of providing accurate information, including about four-in-ten (41%) who say he is doing a poor job of this. About four-in-ten say Trump is doing an excellent (21%) or good (21%) job of providing accurate information.

Majority says Trump is doing only a fair or poor job of giving accurate information about the coronavirus

% who rate the job Donald Trump is doing ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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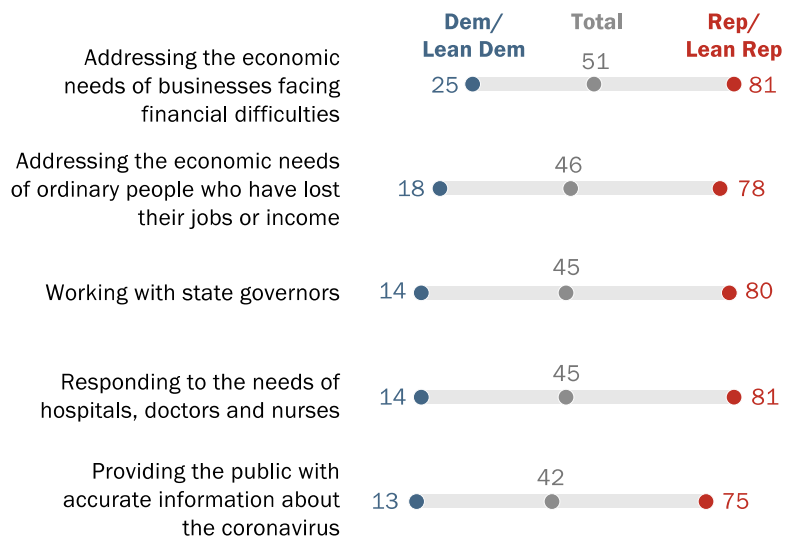
Republicans and Republican leaners are much more likely than Democrats and Democratic leaners to say that Trump is doing an excellent or good job dealing with key aspects of the outbreak. Three-quarters of Republicans say Trump is doing an excellent or good job of providing accurate information about the coronavirus to the public, including 40% who say he is doing an excellent job of this. Among Democrats, just 13% say Trump is doing an excellent or good job providing accurate information, while seven-in-ten say he is doing a poor job.

Partisans are similarly divided over Trump's performance in responding to the needs of hospitals, doctors and nurses and working with state governors. In each case, about eight-in-ten Republicans say Trump is doing an excellent or good job, compared with just 14% of Democrats. About two-in-ten Democrats (18%) and about eight-in-ten Republicans (78%) say Trump is doing an excellent or good job addressing the economic needs of ordinary people who have lost their jobs or income.

Democrats rate Trump most positively when it comes to addressing the economic needs of businesses, with one-quarter of Democrats saying he is doing an excellent or good job of this. Republicans are much more positive. About eight-in-ten Republicans and GOP leaners say Trump is doing an excellent or good job of addressing the needs of businesses impacted by the outbreak.

Wide partisan differences in views of Trump's handling of several issues arising from coronavirus outbreak

% who rate Donald Trump as doing as excellent/good job of ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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Nearly two-thirds of Americans say Trump administration's response to coronavirus was 'too slow'

By a nearly two-to-one margin, more Americans say that, as coronavirus cases were first reported around the world, Trump was too slow to take major steps to address the threat of the outbreak to the United States: 65% hold this view, while 34% say he was quick to take major steps.

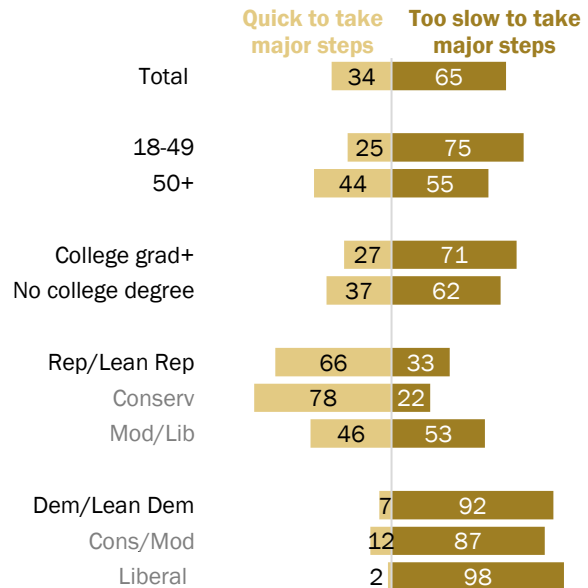
Adults under age 50 are considerably more likely to say Trump was too slow to act than those 50 and older (75% vs. 55%, respectively). And while majorities of those in all educational groups hold this view, those with a college degree are more likely to say this than those without: 71% of those with a bachelor's degree or more education say Trump was too slow to take action, while 62% of those without a college degree say the same.

Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents overwhelmingly say Trump was too slow in his response: 92% say this, including 98% of liberal Democrats and 87% of conservative and moderate Democrats.

There is a wider ideological divide in these views within the GOP. Overall, roughly two-thirds of Republicans (66%) say Trump was quick to take major steps to address the COVID-19 threat to the U.S. But roughly half of moderate and liberal Republicans say he was too slow to address the outbreak: 53% say this, while 46% say he was quick to respond. By comparison, conservative Republicans are decidedly of the view that Trump was quick to respond: 78% say this, while just 22% say he was too slow.

Most Americans say Trump's early response to coronavirus was too slow

% who say, thinking about when large numbers of coronavirus cases were first reported around the world, Donald Trump was ___ to address the threat to the U.S.



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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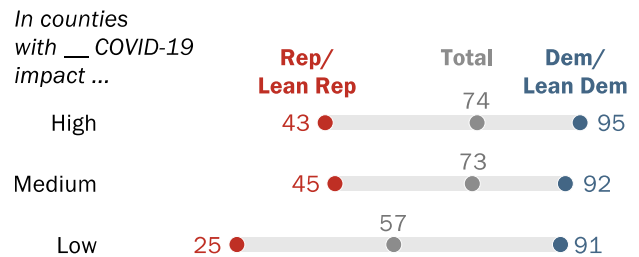
Republicans who live in counties that have seen the fewest coronavirus deaths are far less likely than others to say Trump’s response was “too slow”: 25% say this compared with at least four-in-ten Republicans who live in counties that have seen a moderate (45%) or high (43%) number of deaths.

There is considerably less geographic variation among Democrats. At least nine-in-ten Democrats and Democratic leaners say Trump’s response to the coronavirus threat was not quick enough – regardless of the severity of the outbreak in their own county.

Overall, sizable majorities of adults who live in counties that have experienced comparatively large numbers of coronavirus deaths say Trump was too slow to take major steps. Nearly three-quarters of Americans in counties with the highest number of deaths say the response wasn’t quick enough. A nearly identical share of adults in areas that have been hit moderately hard by coronavirus deaths also say this (73%).

Adults in harder-hit virus areas more likely to say response was ‘too slow’

% who say Trump *was too slow* to take major steps to address the coronavirus threat to the U.S.



Note: See Appendix for details on the COVID impact measure.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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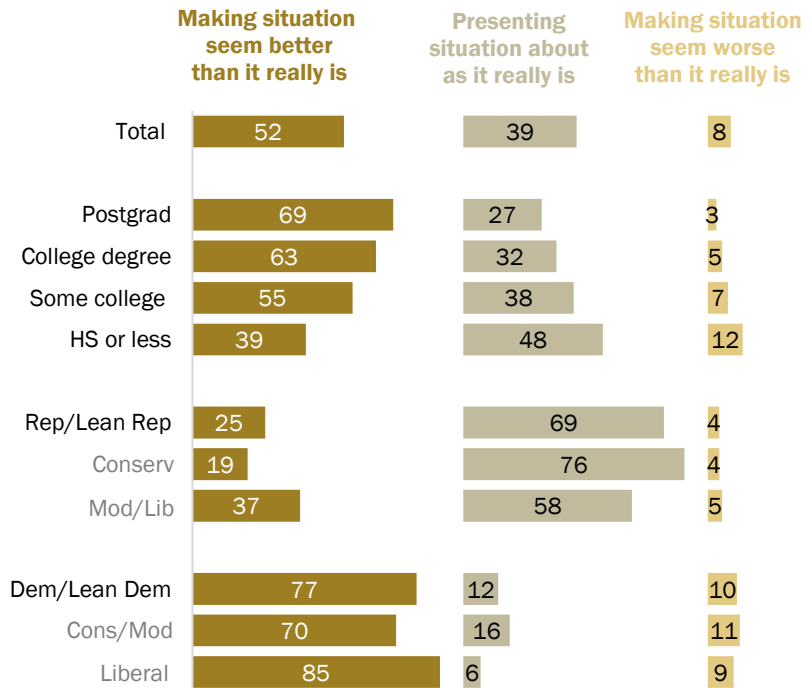
How is Trump characterizing the outbreak?

About half of Americans (52%) say that Trump's public comments on the coronavirus outbreak are making the situation seem better than it really is. Fewer (39%) say he is presenting the situation about as it really is, while just 8% say he is making the situation seem worse than it really is.

Adults with higher levels of educational attainment are particularly likely to say Trump is presenting the situation too positively: 69% of those with a postgraduate degree say this, as do 63% of those with a four-year college degree. Those with less education – especially those with a high school diploma or less – are more likely to take the view that Trump is presenting the situation about as it really is.

About half of adults say Trump is making the coronavirus situation seem 'better' than it really is

In his public comments on the coronavirus outbreak, do you think Donald Trump is ... (%)



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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Nearly seven-in-ten Republicans (69%) say Trump is characterizing the outbreak accurately, including 76% of conservative Republicans. A narrower majority of moderate and liberal Republicans (58%) say the same, while 37% of this group say Trump is making the situation seem better than it really is.

About three-quarters of Democrats (77%) say Trump is making the situation seem better than it really is, with liberals more likely than conservatives and moderates to say this (85% vs. 70%, respectively).

GOP split over acceptability of elected officials criticizing Trump administration's coronavirus response

Roughly two-thirds of adults (66%) say it is acceptable for elected officials to criticize the Trump administration's response to the coronavirus outbreak if they think it is not being handled well, while a third (33%) say this is *not* acceptable.

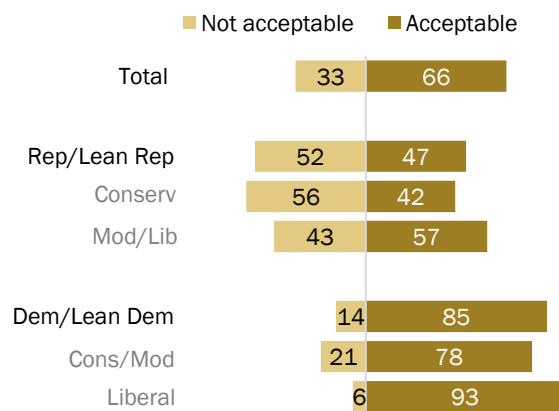
Republicans and Republican leaners are divided on this question: About half (47%) say it is acceptable to criticize the Trump administration's handling of the outbreak if they think the administration hasn't handled the situation well, while a similar share (52%) says such criticism is *not* acceptable.

Among conservative Republicans, a 56% majority says criticism of the administration's response is *not* acceptable, and 42% say it is acceptable. The balance of opinion is nearly the reverse among moderate and liberal Republicans: 57% say such criticism is acceptable while 43% say it is not.

While there is a similar-sized ideological gap in these views among Democrats, overwhelming majorities of both conservative and moderate Democrats (78%) and liberal Democrats (93%) view criticism of the Trump administration's response to COVID-19 as acceptable.

Majority of conservative Republicans say criticism of Trump administration's COVID-19 response is not acceptable

% who say it is ___ for elected officials to criticize the Trump admin's response to the coronavirus outbreak



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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Among Republicans, there are considerable demographic differences in views of critiquing the Trump administration’s response to the outbreak.

Republican men are significantly more likely to say it’s acceptable for elected officials to criticize the administration’s handling of the virus than GOP women (55% vs. 38%). And by a similar margin, Republicans under 50 are more likely than their older counterparts to see these critiques as fair game (55% vs. 41%).

There is less variation in views by gender and age among Democrats. At least eight-in-ten Democrats in each group say criticism is acceptable.

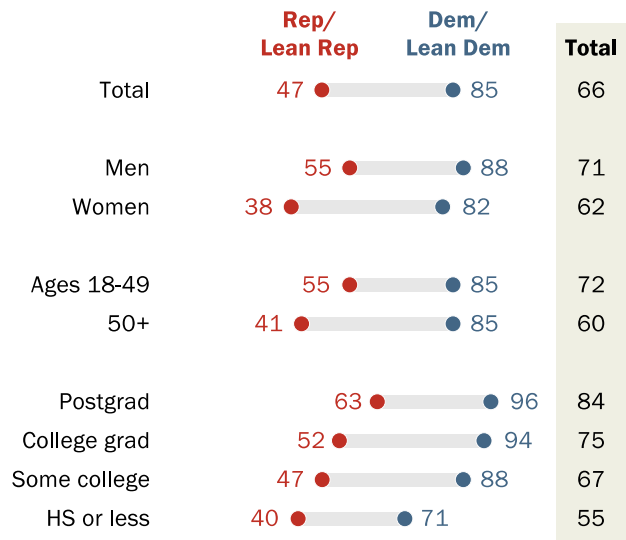
Adults with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely than those with lower levels of education to see criticism of the administration by elected officials as OK – a pattern seen in both parties.

For example, a clear majority of Republicans with a postgraduate degree say it’s acceptable for elected officials to criticize the administration’s response to the outbreak (63%), but a much smaller share of Republicans with a high school diploma or less say critiques are OK (40%).

Among Democrats, there is a similar-sized gap between postgraduates and those with high school diploma or less (96% vs. 71%).

Within GOP, sizable divides in views of critiquing Trump’s COVID-19 actions

*% who say it is **acceptable** for elected officials to criticize the Trump administration’s response to the coronavirus outbreak*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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2. Covid-19 and the country's trajectory

With substantial limits in place on public activity [in most states](#) to combat the coronavirus outbreak, 66% of Americans say they are more concerned that these restrictions will be lifted too quickly, while 32% say they are more concerned they won't be lifted quickly enough.

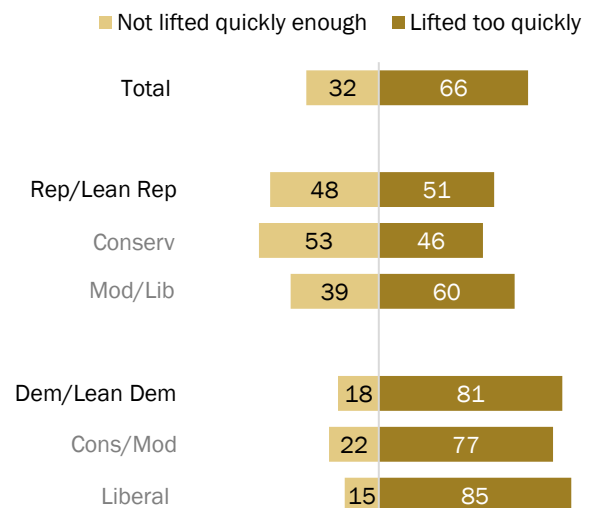
But Republicans and Republican leaners are split over which is the greater concern: About half (51%) say they're more concerned the restrictions will be lifted too quickly, while roughly the same share (48%) say they are more concerned they won't be lifted quickly enough.

Mirroring ideological divides on other coronavirus issues, conservative Republicans and moderate and liberal Republicans express slightly different concerns. A narrow majority of conservatives say they're mostly concerned the restrictions won't be lifted quickly enough (53%). But six-in-ten moderate and liberal Republicans say they're more concerned they'll be lifted too quickly.

About eight-in-ten Democrats and Democratic leaners (81%) say they're more concerned restrictions will be lifted too quickly. This includes 85% of liberals and a slightly smaller share of conservatives and moderates (77%).

Americans are more concerned restrictions on public activity will be lifted 'too quickly'

% who say their greater concern is that restrictions on public activity imposed by state governments in response to the coronavirus will be ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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There is a gender gap among Republicans in concerns about the speed of lifting restrictions, with GOP women considerably more likely than Republican men (58% vs. 45%) to say they're concerned COVID-19 restrictions imposed by state and local governments will be lifted too early.

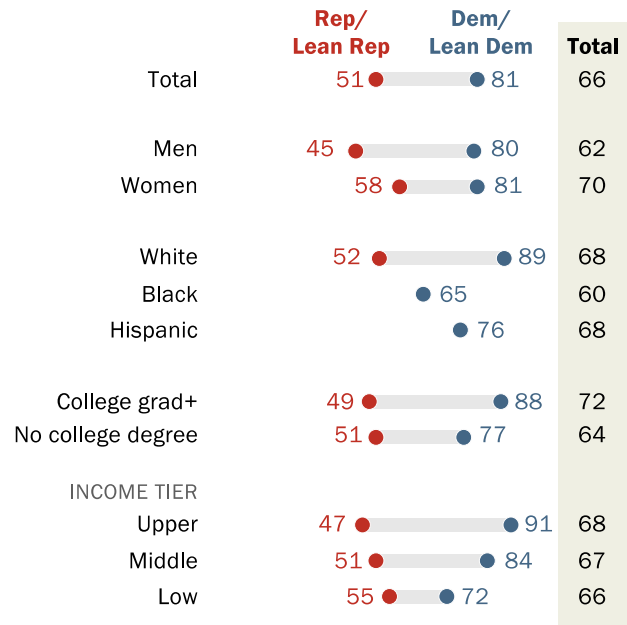
While majorities of Democrats across demographic groups express more concern that public activity will resume too quickly, this view is more prevalent among white Democrats (89%) than among black (65%) or Hispanic (76%) Democrats.

College-educated Democrats are more likely to say they're concerned restrictions will be lifted too early than those without a college degree (88% vs. 77%, respectively). In contrast, there is no such education gap among Republicans.

Similarly, higher-income Democrats are far more concerned than those with lower incomes about lifting restrictions too early. But among Republicans, there are more modest differences in views by income.

Demographic divides in both parties on views of lifting COVID-19 restrictions

% who say their greater concern is that restrictions will be lifted too quickly



Notes: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. Insufficient sample size to show views of blacks and Hispanics among Republicans.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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Nearly three-quarters say the worst is still to come in the outbreak

When it comes to the problems the country is facing from the coronavirus outbreak, 73% of U.S. adults say the worst is still to come, compared with 26% who say the worst is behind us. Majorities of both Republicans and Democrats say the worst is still to come. However, Democrats are much more likely to say this than Republicans.

Nearly nine-in-ten Democrats and Democratic leaners (87%) say the worst is still to come in the outbreak. This includes 84% of conservative and moderate Democrats and 90% of liberal Democrats. Each group represents [about half of Democratic voters](#).

A smaller majority of Republicans (56%) say the worst is still to come, while 42% of Republicans say the worst is already behind us. There are also sharper divisions among Republicans than among Democrats based on ideology.

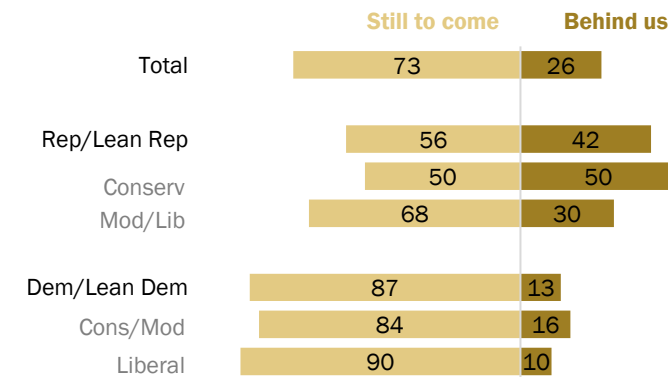
Among moderate and liberal Republicans, 68% say the worst is still to come while three-in-ten say the worst is behind us.

Conservative Republicans, who make up [about two-thirds of Republicans](#), are evenly divided: Half of conservative Republicans say the worst is behind us and half say the worst is still to come. By this

measure, conservative Republicans are far more optimistic about the problems the country faces due to the outbreak than any other major demographic or political group.

Most adults say ‘worst is still to come’ in coronavirus outbreak, but conservative Republicans are divided

% who say, in thinking about the problems the country is facing from the coronavirus outbreak, the worst is ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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Republicans – but not Democrats – also differ in their views based on age. Among Democrats, nearly identical percentages of those ages 18 to 49 (87%) and those ages 50 and older (86%) say the worst is still to come in the outbreak.

Among Republicans, there are sharp differences between adults 50 and older and those younger than 50. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of 18- to 49-year-old Republicans and Republican leaners say the worst is still to come, compared with 35% who say the worst is behind us. Among Republicans ages 50 and older, about half (51%) say the worst is still to come and about half (48%) say the worst is behind us.

Republicans ages 65 and older are also more optimistic than those 50 to 64. Among Republicans, a majority of those ages 50 to 64 (56%) say the worst is still to come, compared with 44% of those 65 and older.

Younger Republicans are more likely than older Republicans to say the worst is still to come in coronavirus outbreak

% who say, in thinking about the problems the country is facing from the coronavirus outbreak, the worst is still to come



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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3. The 2020 election and Congress

With about seven months until the general election, similar shares of registered voters say they would vote for Joe Biden (47%) or Donald Trump (45%) if the election were held today; 8% of voters say they wouldn't vote for either or would vote for someone else.

At this very early stage of the general election campaign, the demographic patterns in preferences in recent elections are evident in the Trump-Biden contest.

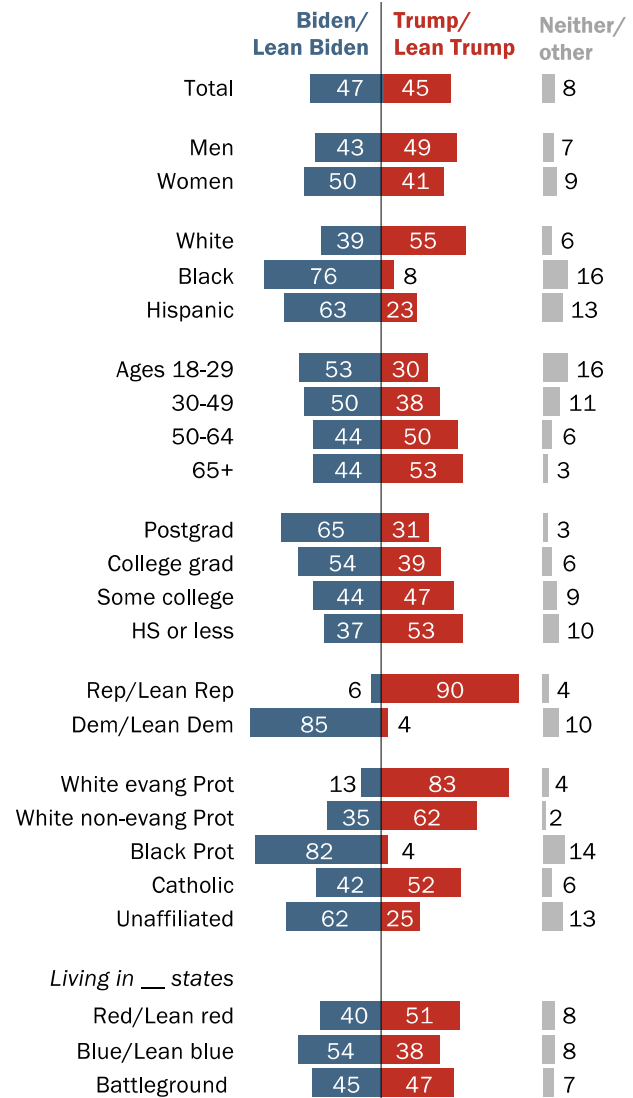
Trump has a slight advantage among men (49% to 43%), while Biden leads among women (50% to 41%).

Slightly more than half of white voters say they would vote for Trump (55%), while black and Hispanic voters are overwhelmingly likely to say they would vote for Biden if the election were held today (76% and 63%, respectively).

Younger voters are more likely to support Joe Biden: 53% of those ages 18 to 29 favor Biden, compared with 30% who support Trump; a relatively large share of young voters (16%) support neither candidate or another candidate. Biden also leads among voters ages 30 to 49, while Trump has an advantage among voters 50 and older.

Gender, race, and age differences in early general election preferences

% of registered voters who would vote for ___ if the 2020 presidential election were held today



Notes: Based on registered voters. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 8-12, 2020.

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Nearly two-thirds of voters with a postgraduate degree (65%) say they would vote for Biden, and 54% of those with a four-year degree say the same. Among those with some college experience, roughly similar shares say they would vote for Trump or Biden (47% vs. 44%). Those with no college experience are much more likely to say that they would support Trump (53%) than Biden (37%) in November.

Republican and Democratic voters overwhelmingly favor their party's candidate. Trump holds an early advantage in Republican-leaning states, while Biden has an even wider lead in Democratic-leaning states. [In battleground states](#), neither candidate has an advantage (47% prefer Trump, while 45% favor Biden).

Biden draws somewhat less support among Democratic voters who, in a January survey, named Bernie Sanders as their first choice for the nomination (83%) than among those who originally preferred Biden (94%) or other Democratic candidates (92%). Nearly all of those who supported Sanders in the earlier survey and don't currently back Biden in the general election currently say they don't support either of the two major party candidates (just 1% of Sanders' January supporters say they'll vote for Trump).

Biden gets broad Democratic backing, though a smaller share of Sanders supporters favor Biden in the general

Among those who supported each Democratic candidate in January, % of registered voters who would vote for ___ if the 2020 presidential election were held today...

	Biden/ Lean Biden	Trump/ Lean Trump	Neither/ other
Biden	94	2	5
Sanders	83	1	16
NET Other candidates	92	3	5

Note: Based on registered voters. Support for Democratic candidate previously asked in Jan. 2020.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Apr. 8-12, 2020.

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With Joe Biden as the presumptive Democratic nominee for the 2020 presidential election, a majority of Democrats expect the party to rally behind him ahead of the general election in November.

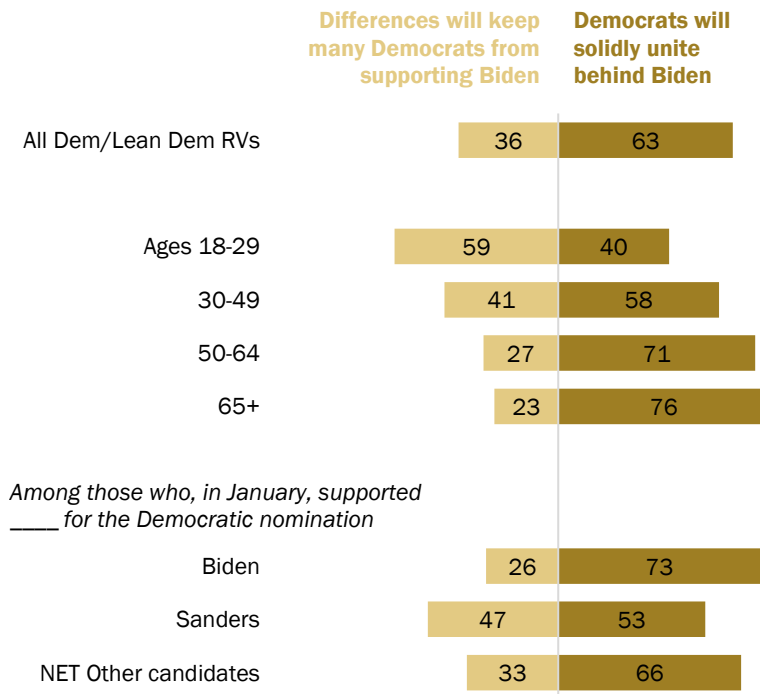
About six-in-ten Democratic and Democratic-leaning registered voters (63%) say they expect the Democratic Party will solidly unite behind Biden in the presidential election. Still, 36% of registered Democratic voters say that differences and disagreements within the party will keep many Democrats from supporting him. In a similar question in March 2016, 64% of Democratic registered voters said they expected that the Democratic Party would [unite behind Hillary Clinton](#) if she became the nominee, and roughly the same share said this of Barack Obama in 2008.

Although there are no significant racial, educational or ideological differences in the shares of Democrats who say their party will unite behind Biden, younger Democratic voters are far more likely than older voters to say disagreements will keep many Democrats from supporting Biden.

Democratic registered voters younger than 30 are the only group in which a majority does not expect their party to unite behind the presidential candidate: 59% say differences between members of their party will keep many Democrats from supporting Biden, while 40% say Democrats will solidly unite and back Biden.

Younger Democratic voters less likely to think their party will unite behind Biden in the fall

% of Dem/Lean Dem registered voters who say ...



Notes: Based on Dem/Lean Dem registered voters. No answer responses not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020.

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By contrast, clear majorities of older Democratic voters believe Democrats will unite behind Biden in the fall. About seven-in-ten or more Democratic voters 50 and older say they expect Democrats to solidly unite behind Biden.

Democratic voters who named Biden as their first choice for the Democratic presidential nomination in a January survey, prior to the first caucuses and primaries, are especially likely to say that the party will unite behind the former vice president: 73% say they expect Democrats will coalesce behind Biden. By comparison, those who supported Sanders in the January survey are less certain the party will unite: 53% say Democrats will unite behind Biden, while 47% say differences within the party will keep this from happening. Among Democrats who backed other candidates (such as Elizabeth Warren, Pete Buttigieg, Amy Klobuchar and Andrew Yang) in January, 66% say Democrats will solidly unite behind Biden in the fall.

Views of congressional leadership

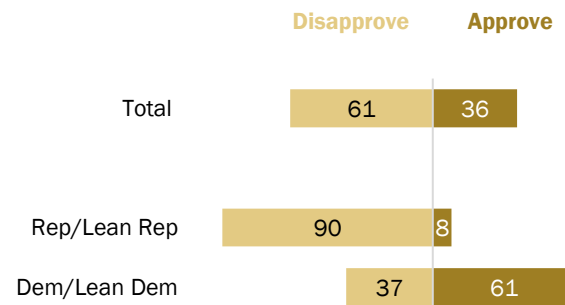
Most Americans disapprove of the way the House speaker and Senate majority leader are handling their jobs. About six-in-ten (61%) say they disapprove of Nancy Pelosi's job performance as speaker of the House, while roughly the same share disapproves (59%) of the way Mitch McConnell is handling his position as Senate majority leader. Just over a third (36%) say they approve of each of the leaders' job performance.

About six-in-ten Democrats and Democratic leaners (61%) approve of the speaker's performance, while 37% disapprove. By comparison, Republicans and Republican-leaning independents overwhelmingly give Pelosi negative ratings, with 90% saying they disapprove (just 8% say they approve).

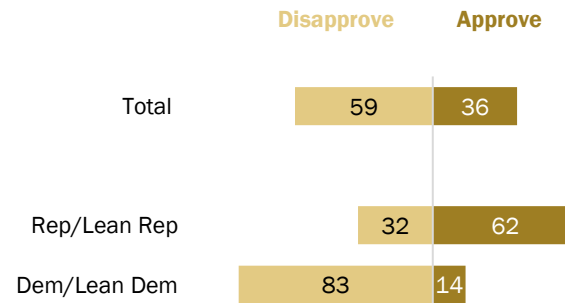
Views of McConnell's performance among Republicans are similar to Pelosi's ratings among Democrats: 62% of Republicans and Republican leaners approve of the majority leader, while 32% disapprove. About eight-in-ten Democrats (83%) say they disapprove of the Senate majority leader's performance.

Majorities disapprove of how Pelosi, McConnell are handling their jobs

% who ___ of the way Nancy Pelosi is handling her job as speaker of the House



% who ___ of the way Mitch McConnell is handling his job as Senate majority leader



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 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 is drawn from the panel wave conducted April 7 to April 12, 2020. A total of 4,917 panelists responded out of 6,092 who were sampled, for a response rate of 81%. This does not include one panelist who

was 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 4.4%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1.7%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 4,917 respondents is plus or minus 2.1 percentage points.

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	2,310
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,335
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	6,411
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS/web	5,900	4,720	4,686
	Total	35,014	23,440	15,427

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: 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, 15,427 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.¹ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

¹ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#)."

Weighting

The ATP data was 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 test 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.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2018 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Race/Hispanic origin	
Country of birth among Hispanics	
Years lived in the United States among Hispanics	
Home internet access	
Region x Metropolitan status	2019 CPS March Supplement
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:

Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 7-12, 2020

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	4,917		2.1 percentage points
<i>COVID-19 county health impact to date:</i>			
High	1,107	23	4.6 percentage points
Medium	1,374	26	4.1 percentage points
Low	2,436	51	3.0 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	2,034	45	3.2 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	2,764	51	3.0 percentage points
Registered voters	4,208		2.2 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep RV	1,740	47	3.3 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem RV	2,397	51	3.0 percentage points

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

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Appendix

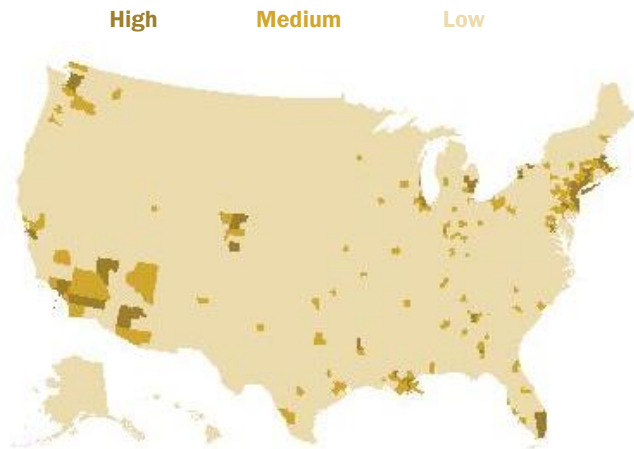
Categorization of COVID-19 county health impact in this report

This report uses the number of deaths attributed to COVID-19 in each respondent's county as a measure of the scale of the health impact of the outbreak for each individual in the survey. Counties are categorized as having a high, medium or low number of COVID-19 deaths.

Counties were classified as "high" if they had more than 25 deaths as of April 7. "Low" counties had five or fewer deaths. The remaining counties were classified as "medium" impact.

Categorization of COVID-19 cases by county

Counties where COVID-19 has had a ____ impact on county health (as of survey interview)



Note: COVID-19 county health impact based on number of deaths reported in each county as of April 7, 2020.

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Data for deaths attributed to COVID-19 by county were taken from the [2019 Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 \(2019-nCoV\) Data Repository](#) maintained at John Hopkins University (downloaded on April 9th).

Defining income tiers

To create upper-, middle- and lower-income tiers, respondents' 2018 family incomes were adjusted for differences in purchasing power by geographic region and for household size. "Middle-income" adults live in families with annual incomes that are two-thirds to double the median family income in our sample (after incomes have been adjusted for the local cost of living and for household size). The middle-income range for this analysis is about \$40,100 to \$120,400 annually for a three-person household. Lower-income families have incomes less than roughly \$40,100, and upper-income families have incomes greater than roughly \$120,400.

Based on these adjustments, among respondents who provided their income, 33% are lower income, 45% are middle income and 22% fall into the upper-income tier.

For more information about how the income tiers were determined, please see [here](#).

Categorization of battleground states in this report

To identify battleground states for the November presidential election, researchers consulted several experts' forecasts

(including [Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball](#), the [Cook Political Report](#), [Inside Elections](#) and Nate Cohn's New York Times ratings) to come up with a categorization of each state as either likely to back the Democrat (Blue/Lean blue), likely to back the Republican (Red/lean Red), or a "battleground state." The specific states in each category can be found in the accompanying table.

Categorization of battleground states

Blue/Lean blue	Battleground	Red/Lean red
California	Arizona	Alabama
Colorado	Florida	Alaska
Connecticut	Michigan	Arkansas
Delaware	North Carolina	Georgia
District of Columbia	Pennsylvania	Idaho
Hawaii	Wisconsin	Indiana
Illinois		Iowa
Maine		Kansas
Maryland		Kentucky
Massachusetts		Louisiana
Minnesota		Mississippi
Nevada		Missouri
New Hampshire		Montana
New Jersey		Nebraska
New Mexico		North Dakota
New York		Ohio
Oregon		Oklahoma
Rhode Island		South Carolina
Vermont		South Dakota
Virginia		Tennessee
Washington		Texas
		Utah
		West Virginia
		Wyoming

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2020 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 65 April 2020
APRIL 7-12, 2020
N=4,917

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

POL1DT Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president?

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Apr 7-12, 2020	44	53	3
Mar 19-24, 2020	45	52	2
Jan 6-19, 2020	40	58	1
Sep 3-15, 2019	40	59	1
July 22-Aug 4, 2019	40	59	1
Apr 29-May 13, 2019	40	59	1
Feb 4-17, 2019	38	61	1
Nov 7-13, 2018	41	58	1
Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	38	61	2
Jul 30-Aug 12, 2018	40	59	2
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	38	60	2
Aug 8-21, 2017	36	63	1
Apr 4-18, 2017	39	61	1
Feb 28-Mar 12, 2017 ¹	44	56	1

ASK ALL:

POL1DT Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president?

ASK IF ANSWERED POL1DT (POL1DT=1,2) [N=4,804]:

POL1DTSTR Do you [**IF POL1DT=1: approve; IF POL1DT=2: disapprove**] of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as president...

BASED ON TOTAL:

	NET <u>Approve</u>	<i>Very</i> <i>strongly</i>	<i>Not so</i> <i>strongly</i>	<i>No</i> <i>answer</i>	NET <u>Disapprove</u>	<i>Very</i> <i>strongly</i>	<i>Not so</i> <i>strongly</i>	<i>No</i> <i>answer</i>	<i>No</i> <i>answer</i>
Apr 7-12, 2020	44	33	10	1	53	42	11	*	3
Mar 19-24, 2020	45	34	10	1	52	40	11	*	2
Jan 6-19, 2020	40	31	9	*	58	46	11	1	1
Sep 3-15, 2019	40	31	9	*	58	46	11	1	1
Apr 29-May 13, 2019	40	29	10	*	59	48	10	*	1
Jul 30-Aug 12, 2018	40	31	9	*	59	48	10	*	2
Jan 29-Feb 13, 2018	38	29	9	*	60	48	12	*	2
Aug 8-21, 2017	36	26	10	*	63	49	13	*	1
Apr 4-18, 2017	39	27	12	*	61	45	15	*	1
Feb 28-Mar 12, 2017 ²	44	30	13	*	56	43	12	*	1

¹ The W24.5 Mode Study survey was administered by web and phone. Results reported here are from web mode only.

² The W24.5 Mode Study survey was administered by web and phone. Results reported here are from web mode only.

RANDOMIZE ORDER OF PELOSIAPP AND MCCONNELLAPP; SHOW ON SAME SCREEN**ASK ALL:**

PELOSIAPP Do you approve or disapprove of the way Nancy Pelosi is handling her job as Speaker of the House?

Apr 7-12

2020

36	Approve
61	Disapprove
3	No answer

ASK ALL:

MCCONNELLAPP Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mitch McConnell is handling his job as Senate Majority leader?

Apr 7-12

2020

36	Approve
59	Disapprove
5	No answer

ASK ALL:

DIVISIONSRD Do you think divisions between Republicans and Democrats in this country today are...

Apr 7-12

2020

65	Increasing
7	Decreasing
28	Staying about the same
*	No answer

Sep 3-15

2019

78
6
16
*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**ASK ALL:**

PRZCMPGN How much thought, if any, have you given to candidates who are running for president in 2020?

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>None at all</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Apr 7-12, 2020	42	33	18	7	*
Jan 6-19, 2020	30	37	21	11	*
Sept 3-15, 2019	30	37	22	11	*
July 22-Aug 4, 2019	26	37	23	14	*
2016 election					
May 10-June 6, 2016	55	27	9	8	1
Apr 5-May 2, 2016	52	31	11	5	1
Mar 2-28, 2016	56	28	9	6	1
Mar 10-Apr 6, 2015 ³	26	40	23	11	*

³ W10 (March 10-April 6, 2014) had a minor difference in question wording: "How much thought, if any, have you given to candidates who may be running for president in 2016?"

**ASK ALL:
MATTERS**

Thinking about how you feel about the 2020 presidential election, where would you place yourself on the following scale?

[PROGRAMMING NOTE: PLEASE FLIP THE LABELS FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS LEAVING THE SCALE ALWAYS 1→4]

	1 Really matters <u>who wins</u>	2	3	4 Doesn't really <u>matter who wins</u>	No <u>answer</u>
Apr 7-12, 2020	64	17	9	8	1
Sep 3-15, 2019	62	19	10	9	*
2016 election					
Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 ⁴	62	19	8	10	*
Sep 27-Oct 10, 2016	64	18	8	10	1
Aug 16-Sept 12, 2016	61	19	9	10	1
June 7-July 5, 2016	62	20	9	9	0
Apr 5-May, 2016	57	22	10	9	1
Mar 2-Mar 28, 2016	65	18	8	9	1
Nov 24-Dec 21, 2015	58	22	10	8	1

ASK IF U.S. CITIZEN (F_CITIZEN=1) [N=4,662]

VOTEGENA If the 2020 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for... **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 WITH OPTION 3 ALWAYS LAST]**

ASK IF NONE/OTHER CANDIDATE OR SKIPPED VOTEGENA (VOTEGENA=3, 99) [N=576]:

VOTEGENB As of TODAY, do you... **[SHOW OPTIONS IN SAME ORDER AS VOTEGENA]**

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=4,125]:

Apr 8-12
2020⁵

45	Donald Trump, the Republican/Lean more toward Trump
47	Joe Biden, the Democrat/Lean more toward Biden
8	Vote for neither/Other
*	No Answer

⁴ In 2015 and 2016, question read: "Thinking about how you feel about the 2016 presidential election and the next president, where would you place yourself on the following scale?"

⁵ Only W65 respondents who completed the survey on or after April 8, the day Bernie Sanders suspended his campaign for the Democratic nomination, were asked VOTEGENA or VOTEGENB.

VOTEGENA/VOTEGENB TREND FOR COMPARISON:**TREND FOR COMPARISON:**

Oct 25- Nov 8 <u>2016</u>		Sept 27- Oct 10 <u>2016</u>	Aug 16- Sept 12 <u>2016</u>	July 12- Aug 8 <u>2016</u> ⁶	June 7- July 5 <u>2016</u>
42	Donald Trump/Lean Trump	39	38	46	45
46	Hillary Clinton/Lean Clinton	46	45	50	51
6	Gary Johnson/Lean Johnson	10	10	n/a	n/a
4	Jill Stein/Lean Stein	4	4	n/a	n/a
1	None/Other	1	2	3	3
*	No Answer	0	1	1	1

ASK IF DEMOCRAT/LEAN DEMOCRAT OR NO LEAN (F_PARTYSUM_FINAL=2,9) [N=2,883]:

BIDEUNITE Do you think...

BASED ON DEMOCRATS AND DEMOCRATIC-LEANING REGISTERED VOTERS [N=2,397]:Apr 7-12
2020⁷

63	Democrats will solidly unite behind Joe Biden
36	Differences and disagreements will keep many Democrats from supporting Joe Biden
1	No answer

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

⁶ Survey conducted July 12-August 8 and June 7-July 5 asked only about Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. Later waves included Gary Johnson and Jill Stein.

⁷ For W65 respondents who completed the survey on April 7, before Bernie Sanders suspended his campaign, the question was worded, "If Joe Biden wins the Democratic nomination, do you think..."

ASK ALL:

DTCOV_EGFP When it comes to dealing with the coronavirus outbreak, how would you rate the job Donald Trump is doing ... **[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF ITEMS]**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Working with state governors Apr 7-12, 2020	20	25	23	31	1
b. Addressing the economic needs of businesses facing financial difficulties Apr 7-12, 2020	21	30	29	20	1
c. Addressing the economic needs of ordinary people who have lost their jobs or income Apr 7-12, 2020	20	26	24	30	*
d. Responding to the needs of hospitals, doctors, and nurses Apr 7-12, 2020	21	23	20	35	*
e. Providing the public with accurate information about the coronavirus Apr 7-12, 2020	21	21	17	41	1

ASK ALL:

COVID_TRUMPCRIT Do you think it is acceptable or not acceptable for elected officials to criticize the Trump administration's response to the coronavirus outbreak if they think his administration is not handling it well?

Apr 7-12
2020

66	Acceptable
33	Not acceptable
1	No answer

ASK FORM 1 [N=2,449]:

DTCOV_TONE In his public comments on the coronavirus outbreak, do you think Donald Trump is... **[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF OPTIONS 1 AND 2]**

Apr 7-12
2020

52	Making the situation seem better than it really is
8	Making the situation seem worse than it really is
39	Presenting the situation about as it really is
1	No answer

ASK FORM 2 [N=2,468]:

COVID_DTSPEED Thinking about when large numbers of coronavirus cases were first reported around the world, do you think Donald Trump... **[RANDOMIZE]**

Apr 7-12		
<u>2020</u>		
65	Was too slow to take major steps to address the threat to the U.S.	
34	Was quick to take major steps to address the threat to the U.S.	
1	No answer	

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**ASK FORM 2 [N=2,468]:**

COVID_FUT Thinking about the problems the country is facing from the coronavirus outbreak, do you think...? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Apr 7-12		
<u>2020</u>		
26	The worst is behind us	
73	The worst is still to come	
1	No answer	

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****ASK ALL:**

COVID_ECONOPEN Thinking about the decisions by a number of state governments to impose significant restrictions on public activity because of the coronavirus outbreak, is your greater concern that state governments will... **[RANDOMIZE]**

Apr 7-12		
<u>2020</u>		
66	Lift the restrictions too quickly	
32	Not lift the restrictions quickly enough	
1	No answer	

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a:

ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3 or 4) OR MISSING:

PARTYLN	As of today do you lean more to... ⁸						
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Something else	No answer	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
	28	29	29	13	1	17	22

⁸ Party and PartyIn asked in a prior survey.