

Trust, Facts, Democracy

How Libraries Fit Into the Biggest Issues of These Times

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Study: 90% Of Americans Strongly Opposed To Each Other

“The vast majority of respondents signaled they were dead set against the U.S. populace, condemning in forceful terms the way others have handled things over the past year...,” said Pew Research Center polling analyst Babette Randolph, noting that the rate of opposition remained consistent across all 50 states and virtually every demographic regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or political identification.



“Wow, I can’t believe I’m included in Pew findings!”

RORY TAGGART • CRADLE SANDER



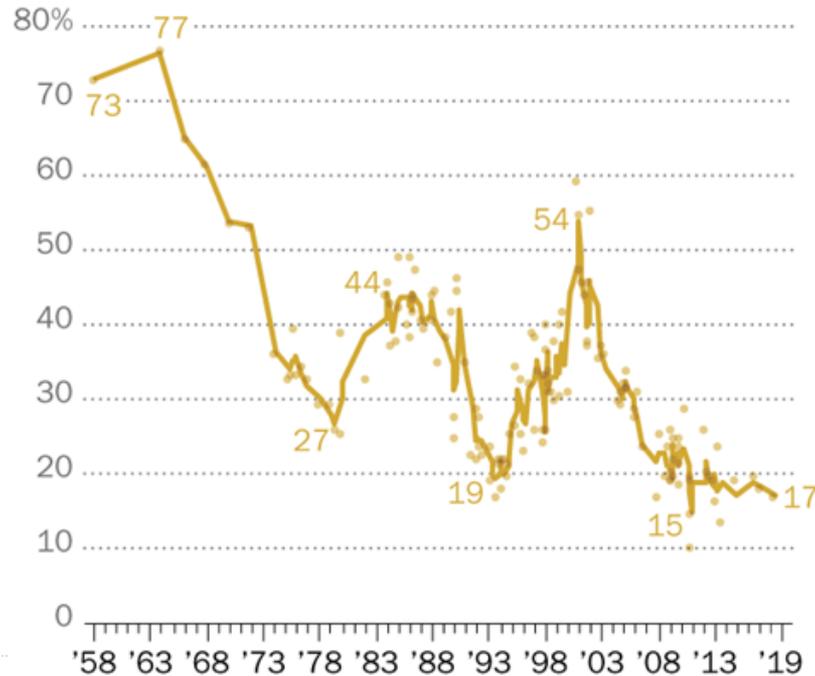
“Yeah, but Pew’s a bunch of stoners.”

PEGGY GONNEAU • FOOD TRUCK OPERATOR

Trust

Public trust in the federal government remains at historic low

% who say they trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time



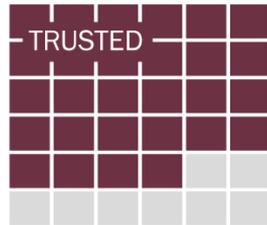
Consistent Liberals & Conservatives Often Live in Different Media Worlds

Consistent liberals...

...name an array of main news sources

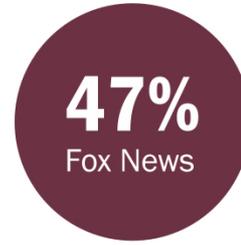


...trust more than distrust 28 of the 36 news sources surveyed

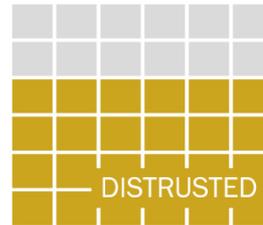


Consistent conservatives...

...are tightly clustered around one main news source

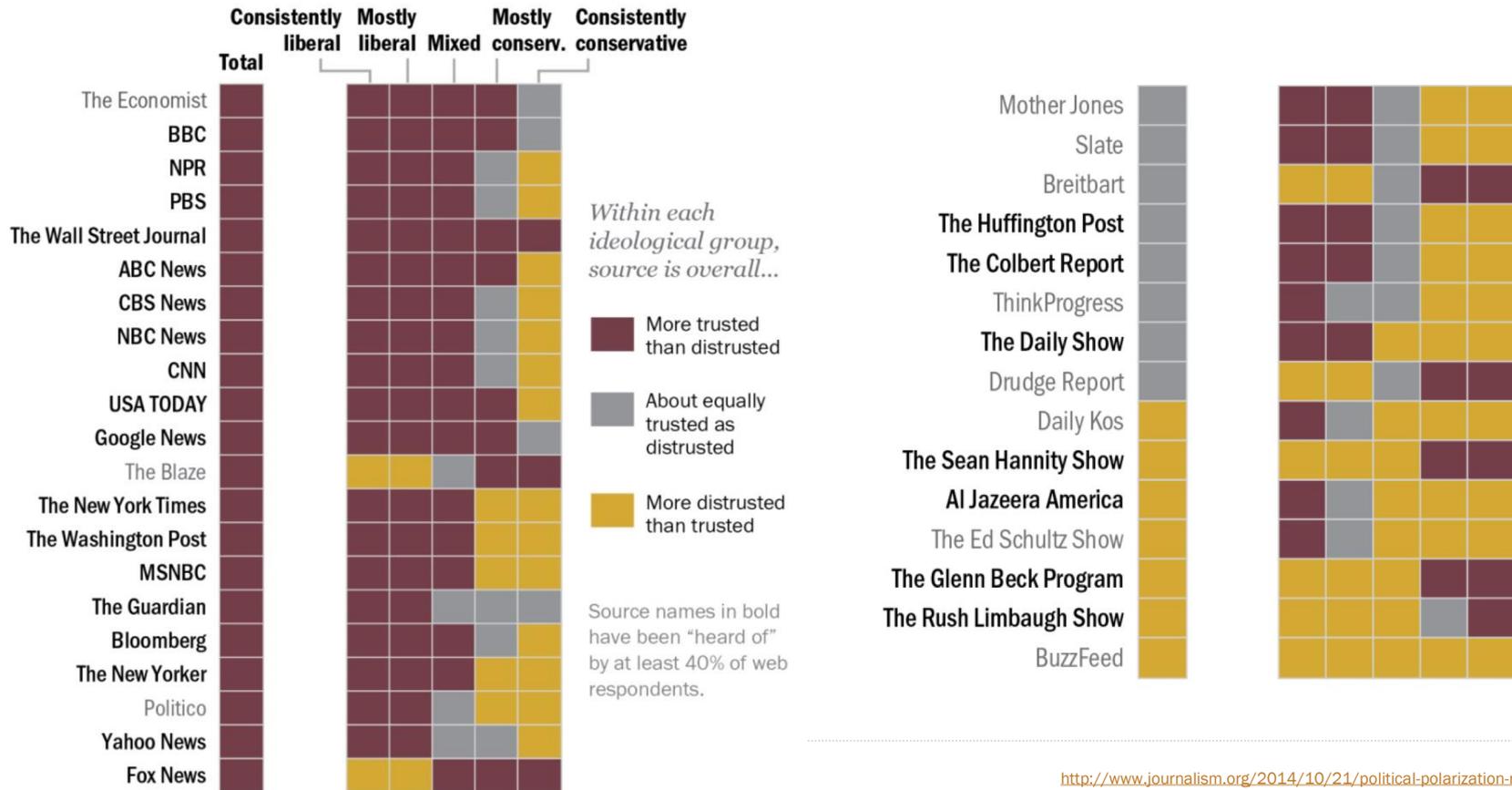


...distrust more than trust 24 of the 36 news sources



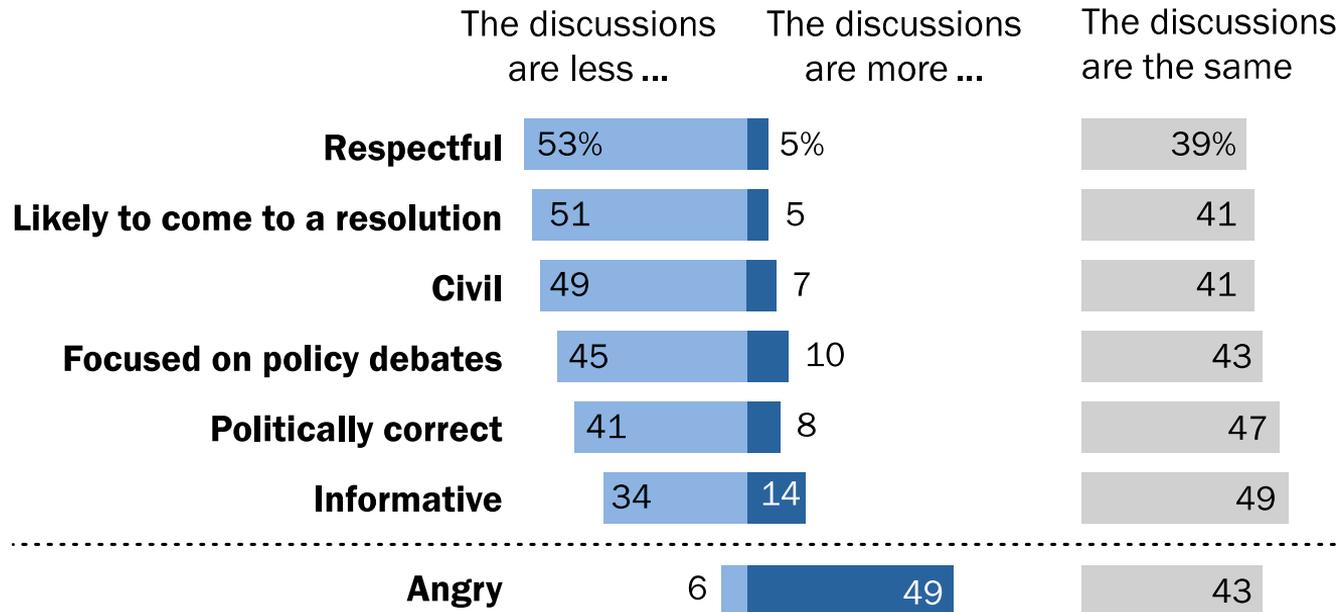
Little Overlap in the Sources Trusted for Political News

Trust Levels of News Sources by Ideological Group

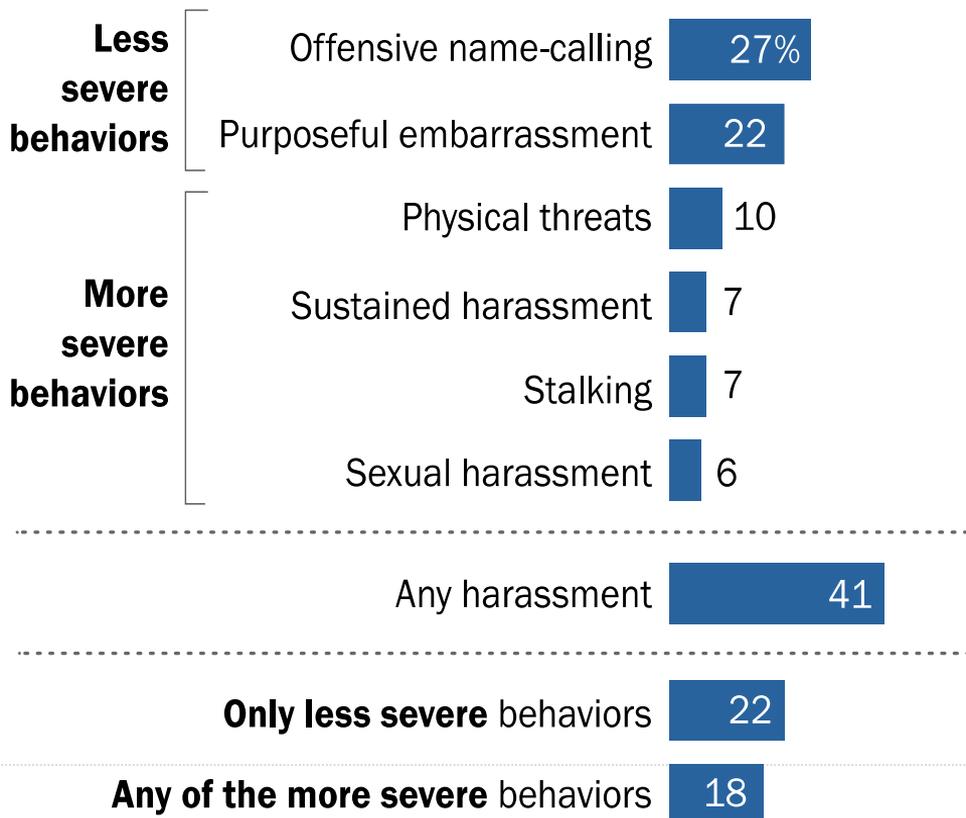


Many users see social media as an especially negative venue for political discussions compared with face-to-face

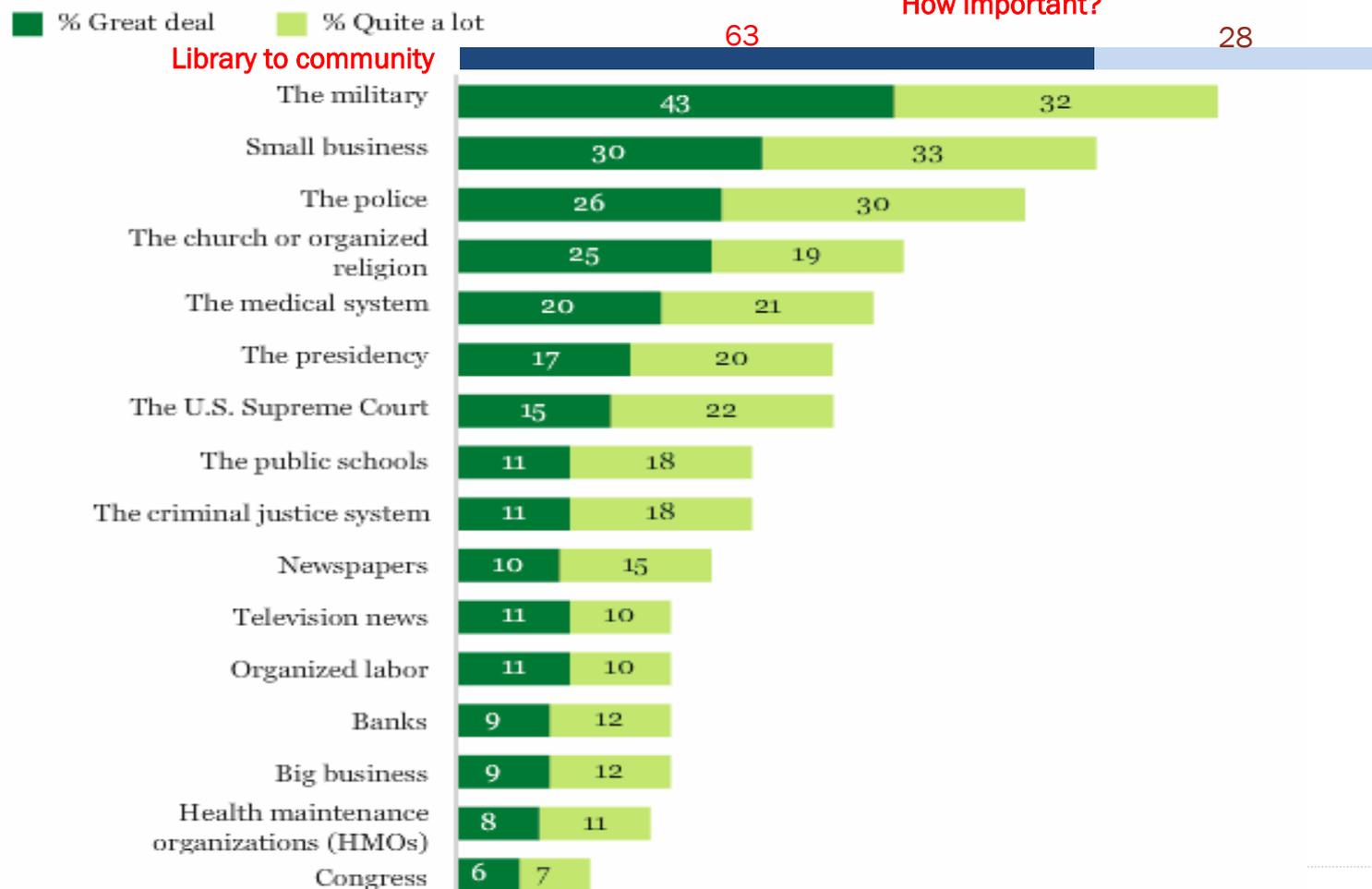
% of social media users who say their political discussions are more or less ___ compared with other places people might discuss politics



41% have personally experience online harassment (66% have witnessed it)

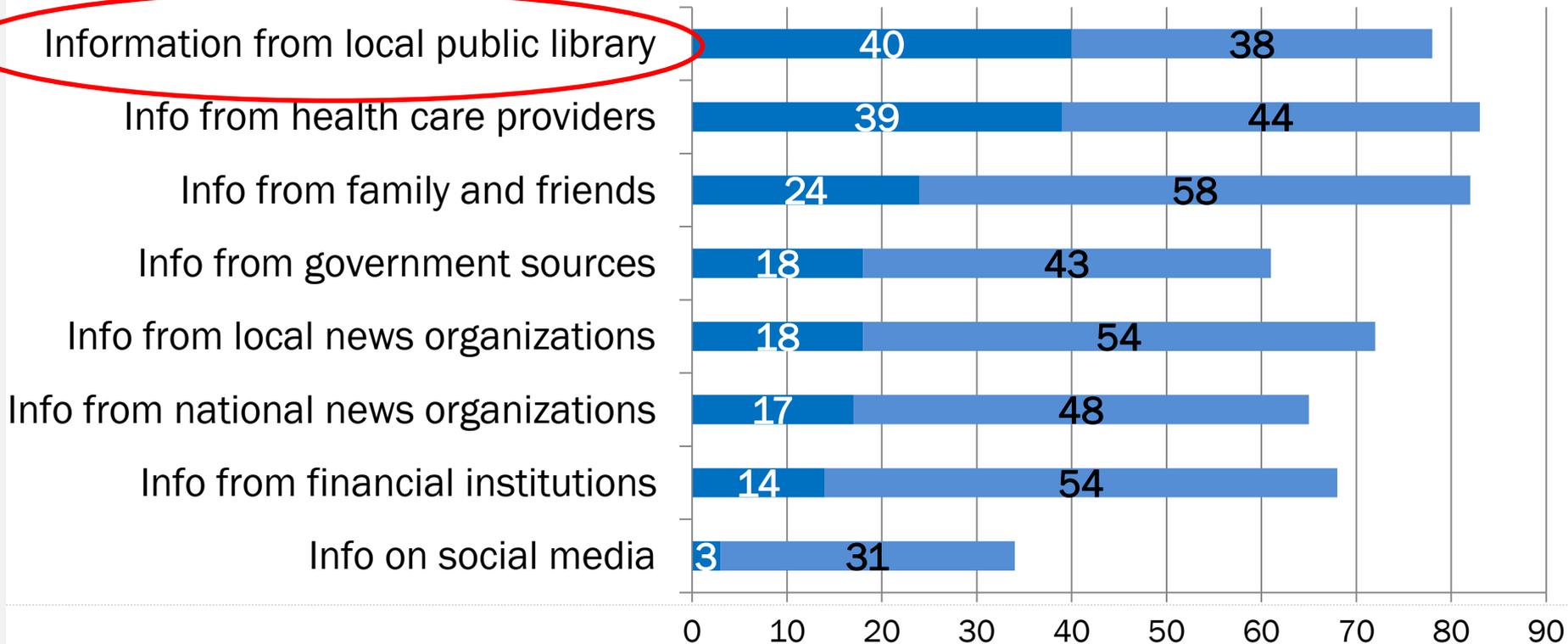


How important?



People's trust in various sources of information

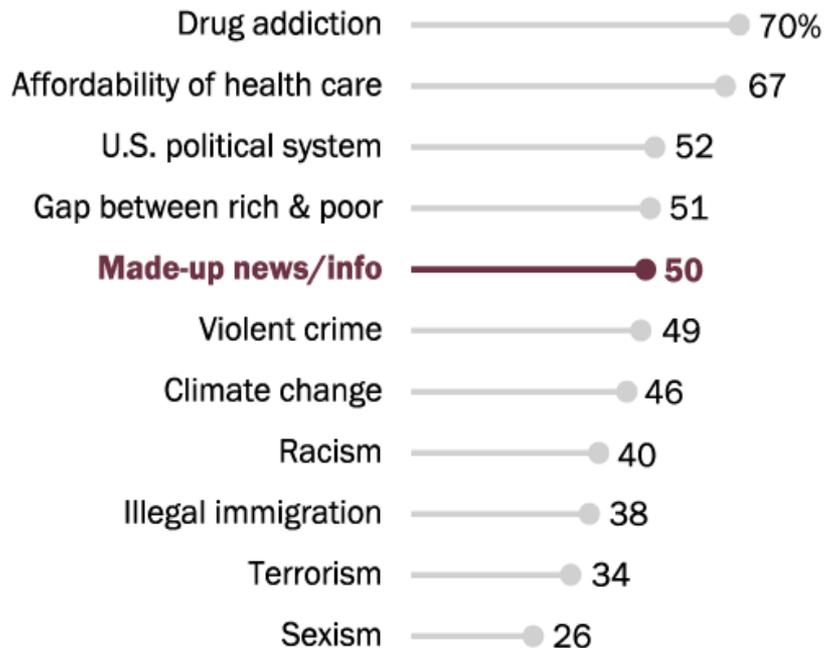
■ a lot ■ some



Facts

Americans see made-up news as a bigger problem than other key issues

*% of U.S. adults who say ___ is a **very big problem** in the country today*



Americans see made up news as detrimental to the country's democratic system

*% of U.S. adults who say made-up news and information has a **big impact** on ...*

68% Americans' confidence in government

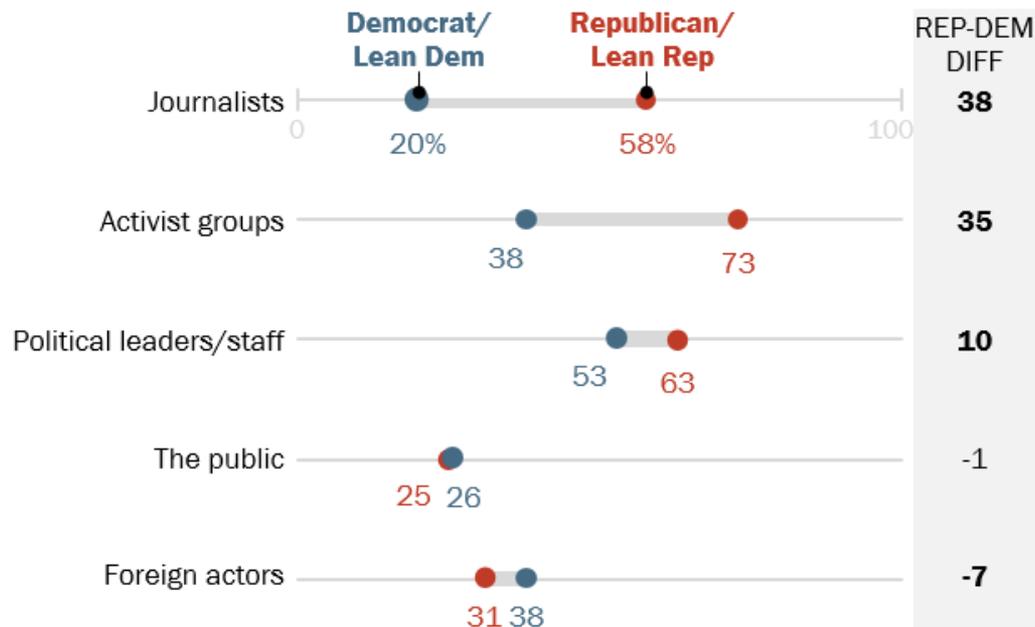
54% Americans' confidence in each other

51% Political leaders' ability to get work done

Source: Survey conducted Feb. 19-March 4, 2019.
"Many Americans Say Made-Up News is a Critical Problem That Needs to be Fixed"

Republicans about three times as likely as Democrats to blame journalists for creating made-up news and information

% of U.S. adults who say ___ create a lot of made-up news and information



Note: Statistically significant differences are in **bold**.

Source: Survey conducted Feb. 19-March 4, 2019.

"Many Americans Say Made-Up News is a Critical Problem That Needs to be Fixed"

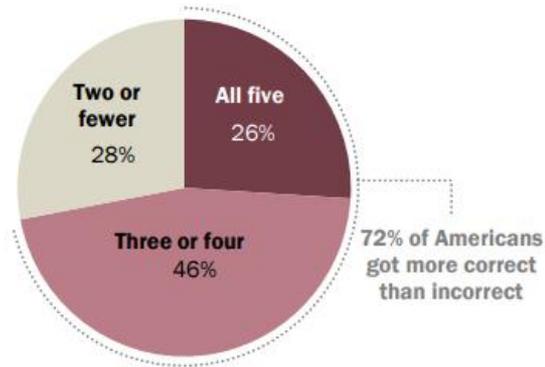
Some news statements are more likely than others to be correctly identified as factual or opinion

% U.S. adults who classified each statement as factual or opinion

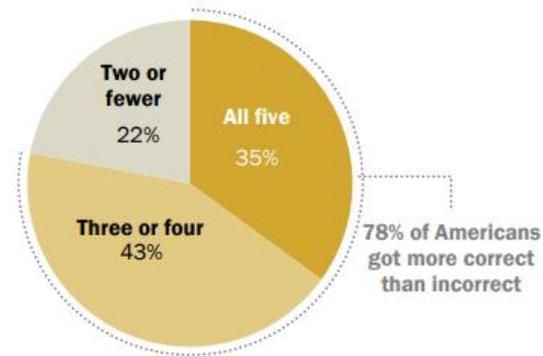
	Factual	Opinion
	%	%
Factual statements		
President Barack Obama was born in the United States	77	22
Health care costs per person in the U.S. are the highest in the developed world	76	23
ISIS lost a significant portion of its territory in Iraq and Syria in 2017	68	30
Spending on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid make up the largest portion of the U.S. federal budget	57	41
Immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally have some rights under the Constitution	54	44
Opinion statements		
Abortion should be legal in most cases	18	80
Increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour is essential for the health of the U.S. economy	26	73
Government is almost always wasteful and inefficient	28	71
Democracy is the greatest form of government	29	69
Immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally are a very big problem for the country today	31	68

Few classified all factual and opinion statements correctly, though a majority got more correct than incorrect

% of U.S. adults who correctly classified ___ factual statements as factual



% of U.S. adults who correctly classified ___ opinion statements as opinions



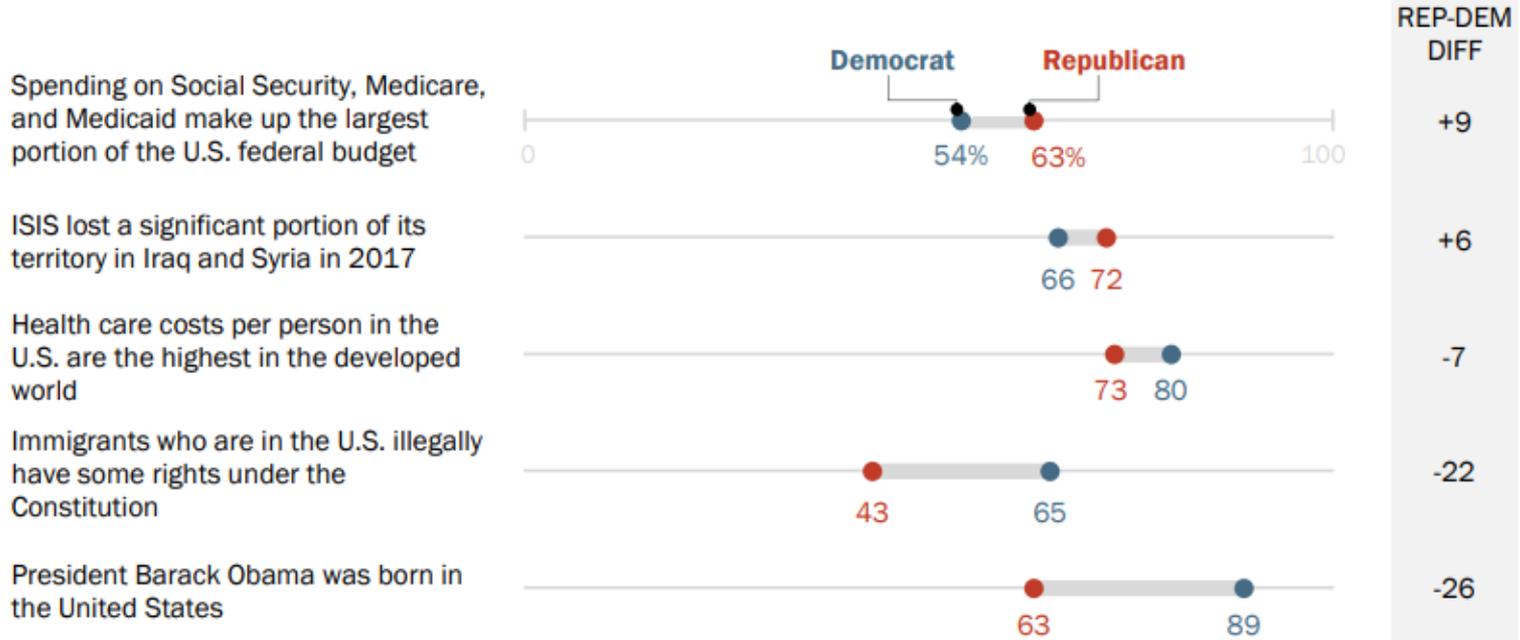
Note: Skipping a statement was counted as not correctly identifying it as factual or as opinion.

Source: Survey conducted Feb. 22-March 4, 2018.

"Distinguishing Between Factual and Opinion Statements in the News"

Republicans and Democrats more likely to see opinion statements as factual when they favor their side

% who classified each factual statement as factual



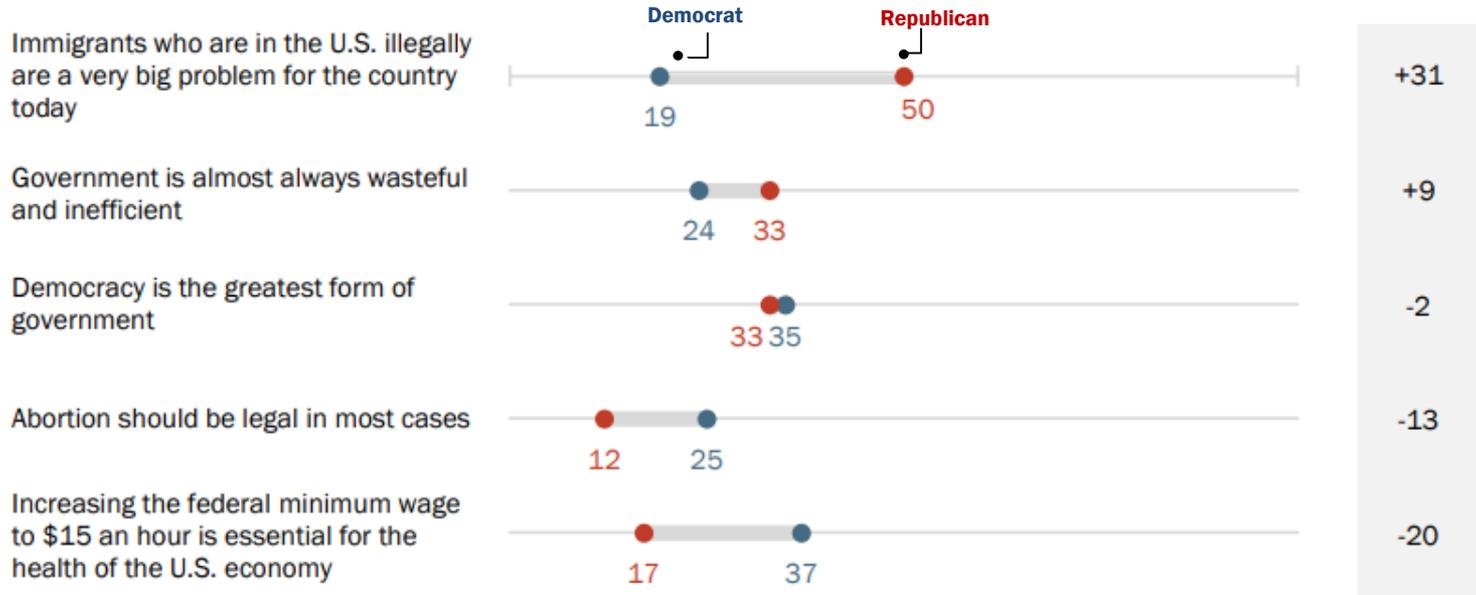
Note: Independents not shown. Republicans and Democrats significantly differ on all statements.

Source: Survey conducted Feb. 22-March 4, 2018.

"Distinguishing Between Factual and Opinion Statements in the News"

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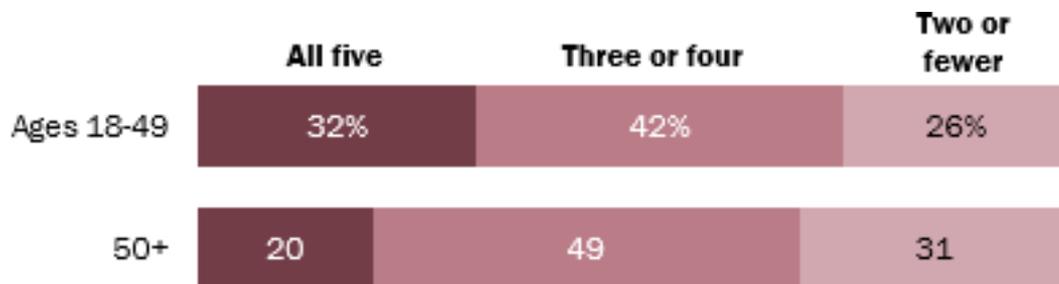
% who classified each opinion statement as factual



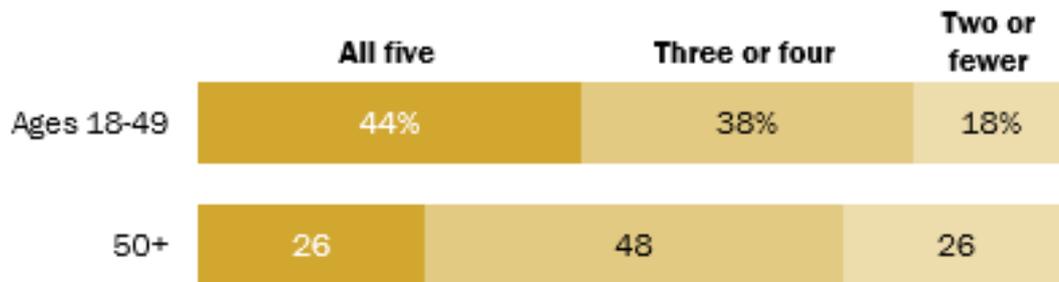
Note: Independents not shown. Republicans and Democrats significantly differ on all statements except for "Democracy is the greatest form of government."
Source: Survey conducted Feb. 22-March 4, 2018.
"Distinguishing Between Factual and Opinion Statements in the News"

Younger Americans are better able to distinguish between facts and opinions

% of U.S. adults in each age group who correctly classified _____ factual statements as factual

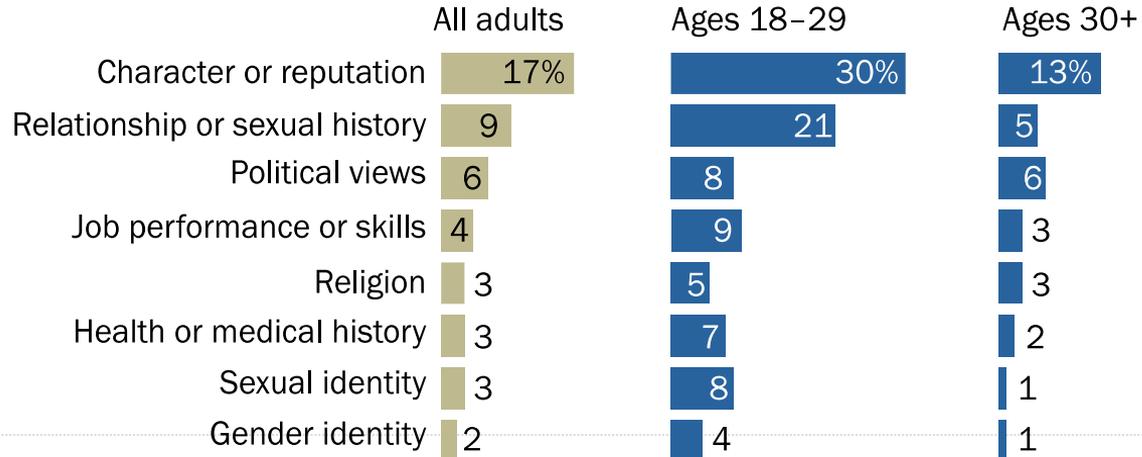
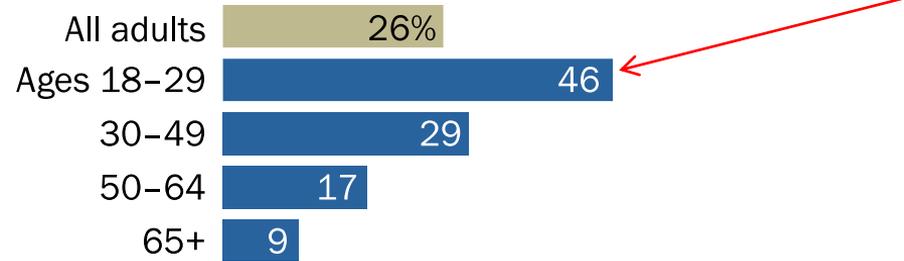


% of U.S. adults in each age group who correctly classified _____ opinion statements as opinion



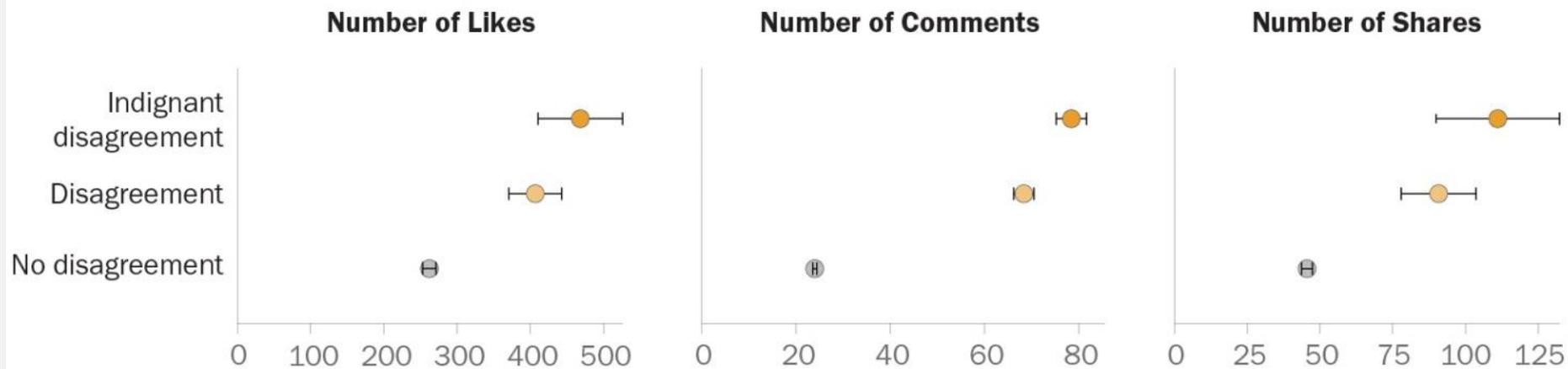
26% of Americans have had false information posted about them

% of U.S. adults who have had untrue information about them posted online



Critical posts get more likes, comments, and shares than other posts

Average number of likes, comments, and shares per Facebook post containing ...



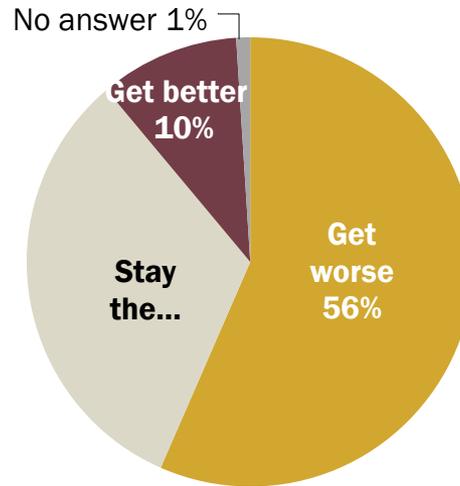
Note: Lines indicate the standard error, an attempt to quantify the uncertainty surrounding each estimate. The “disagreement” and “indignant disagreement” categories are not mutually exclusive: statements that contain indignant disagreement are a subset of those that contain disagreement more broadly.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of data from Facebook OpenGraph API. See Methodology section for details.

“Partisan Conflict and Congressional Outreach”

Most say the issue of made-up news will get worse

% of U.S. adults who say the issue of made-up news and information will _____ in the next five years

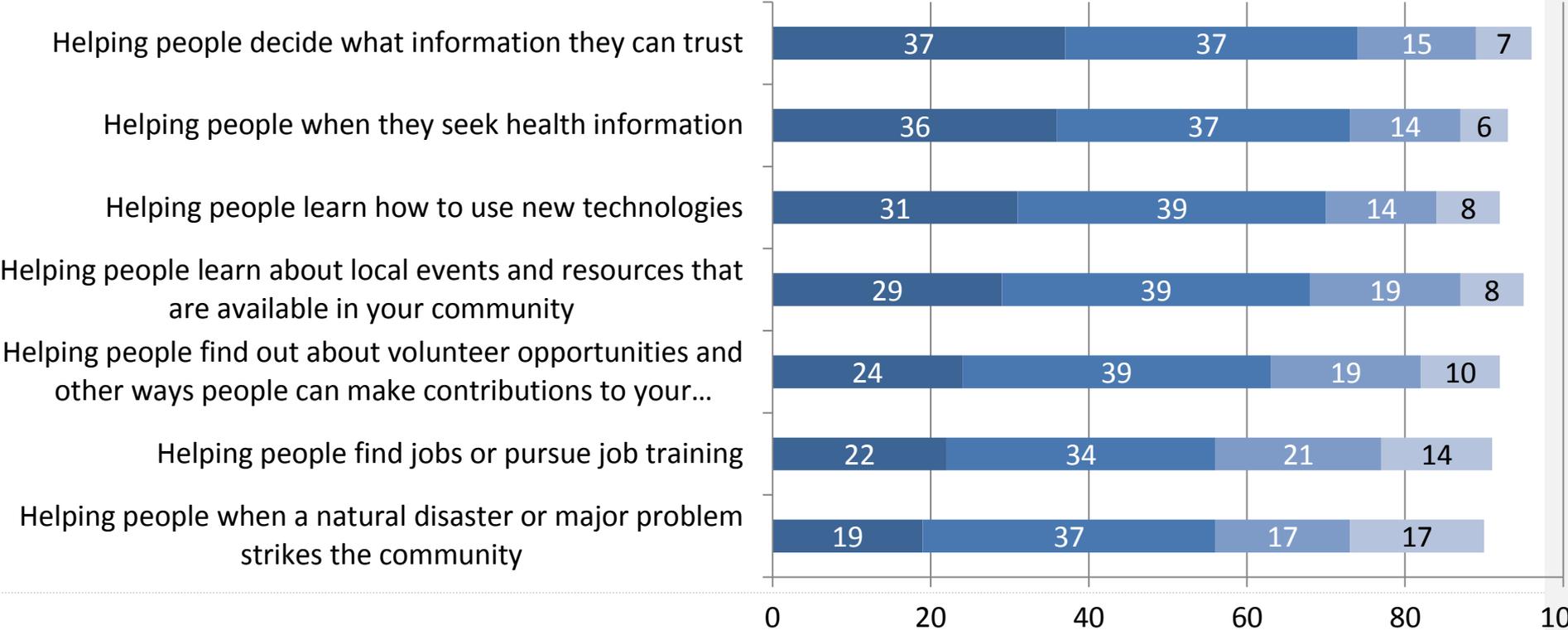


Source: Survey conducted Feb. 19-March 4, 2019.
"Many Americans Say Made-Up News is a Critical Problem That Needs to be Fixed"

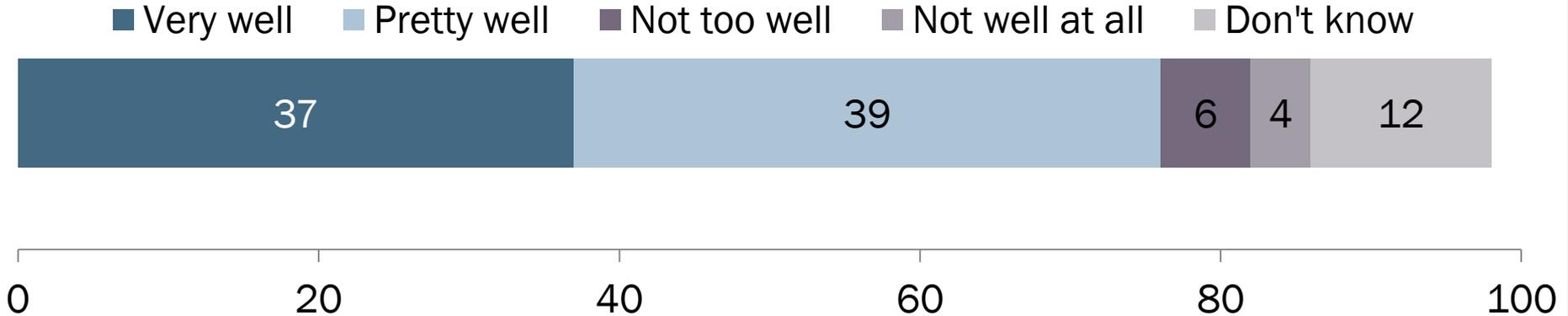
How much have libraries contributed to their communities?

% of those ages 16+

■ A lot ■ Somewhat ■ A little ■ Not at all



How well, if at all, do your local public libraries **serve the learning and educational needs of your local community – not just children at schools, but all those of any age who want to learn?**
% of those ages 18+



How well, if at all, do your local public libraries **serve the learning and educational needs of you and your family? (% of those ages 18+)**

■ Very well ■ Pretty well ■ Not too well ■ Not well at all ■ Don't know



0

20

40

60

80

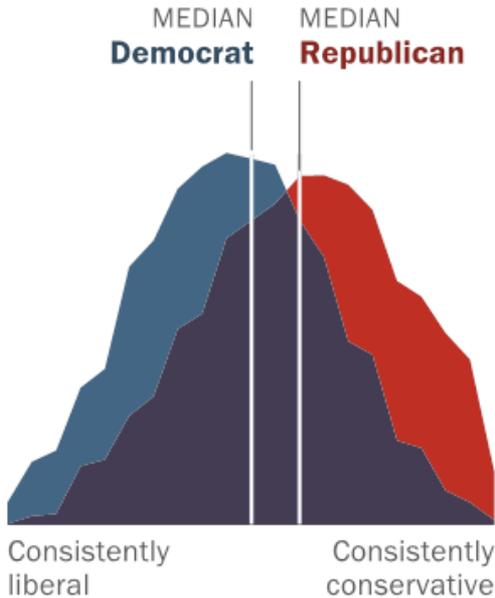
100

Democracy

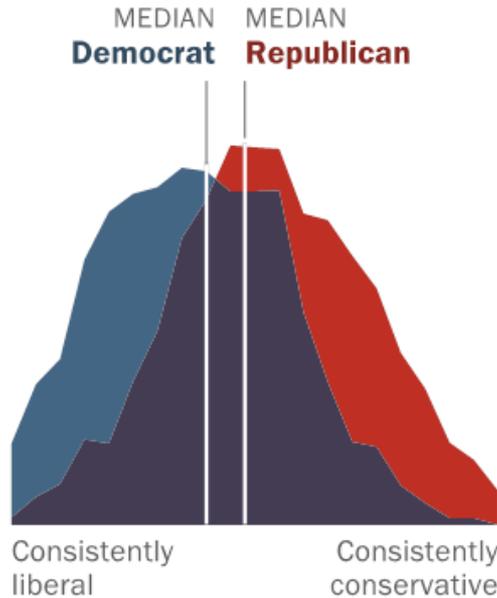
Democrats and Republicans more ideologically divided than in the past

Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values

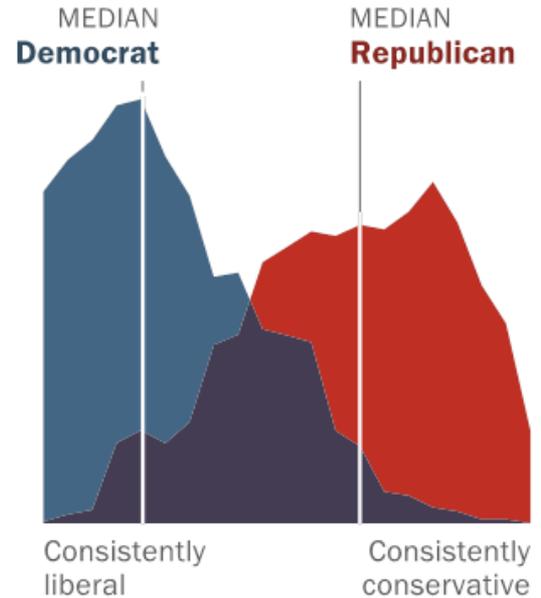
1994



2004

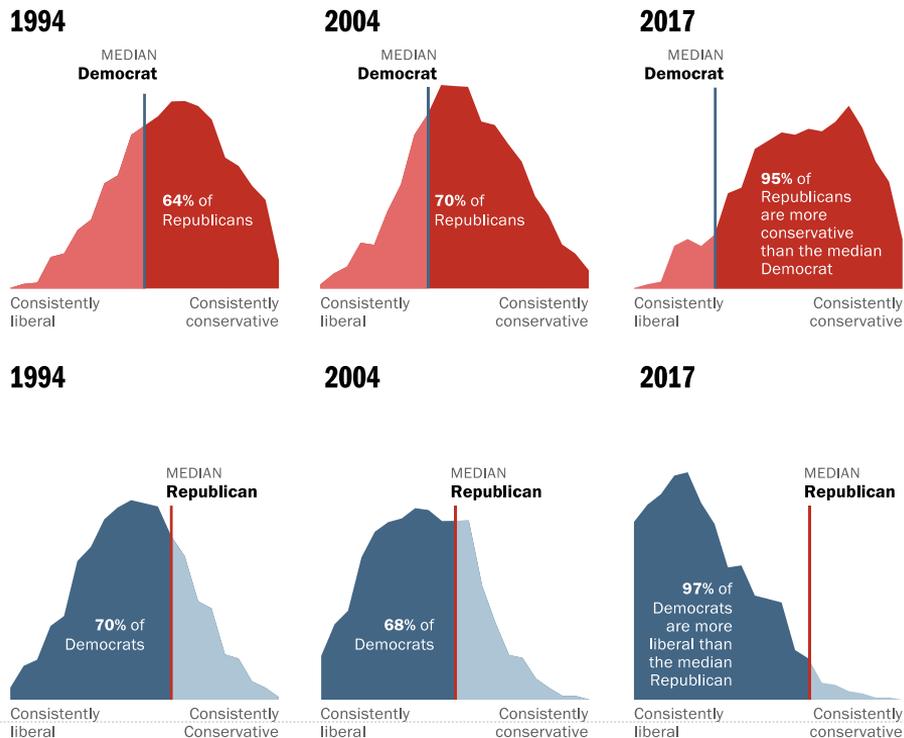


2017



Less overlap in the political values of Republicans and Democrats than in the past

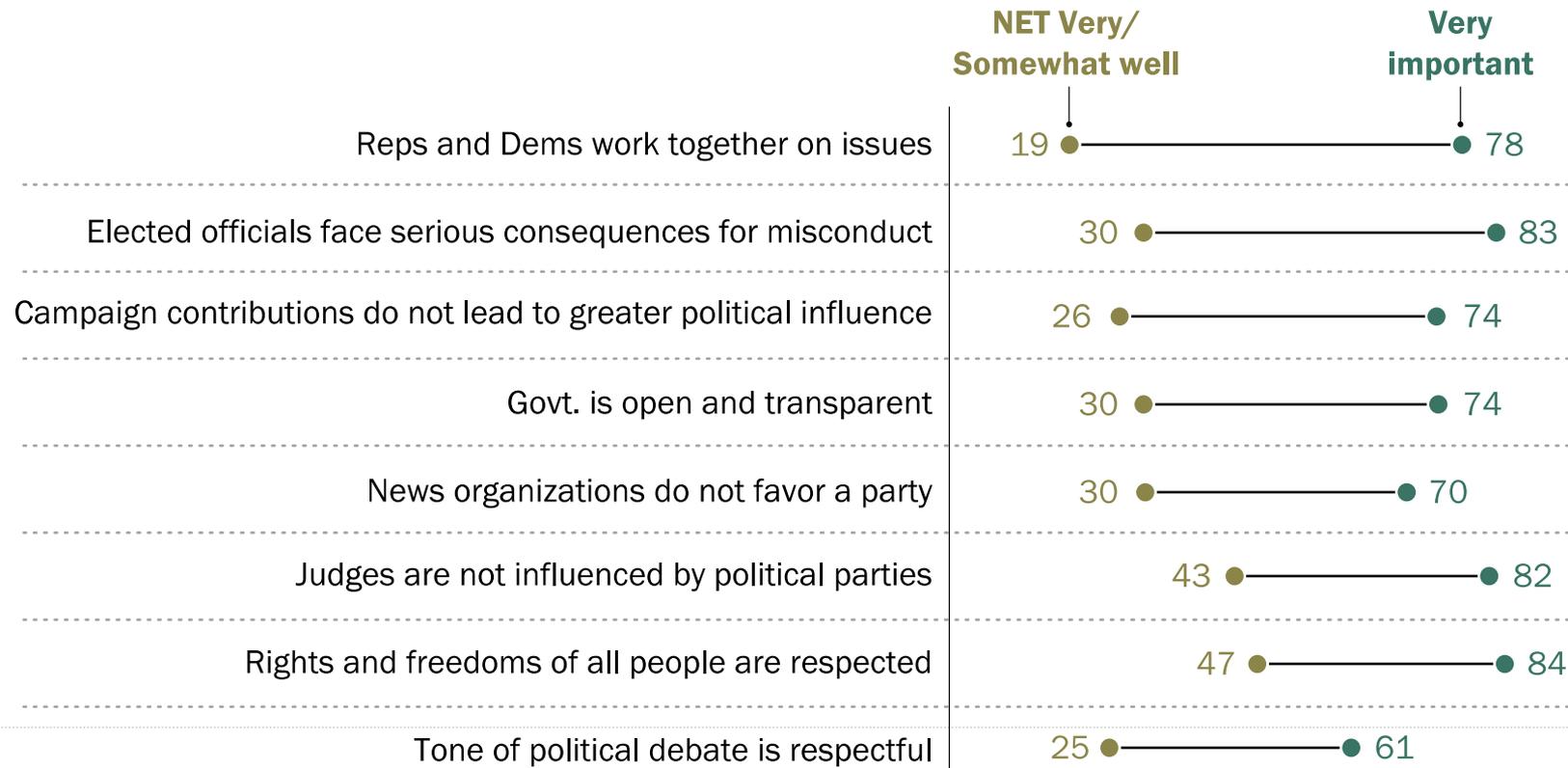
Distribution of Republicans and Democrats on a 10-item scale of political values



Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.

Country viewed as falling short on a range of widely supported democratic values

% who say each is very important for the U.S. and describes the country very/somewhat well ...



NET Very/
Somewhat well Very
important

News organizations are independent of government

43 ● ————— ● 76

Everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed

52 ● ————— ● 82

People agree on basic facts even if disagree on politics

34 ● ————— ● 60

Govt. policies reflect views of most Americans

36 ● ————— ● 59

Views of those not in the majority on issues are respected

40 ● ————— ● 62

Balance of power between govt. branches

55 ● ————— ● 76

People are free to peacefully protest

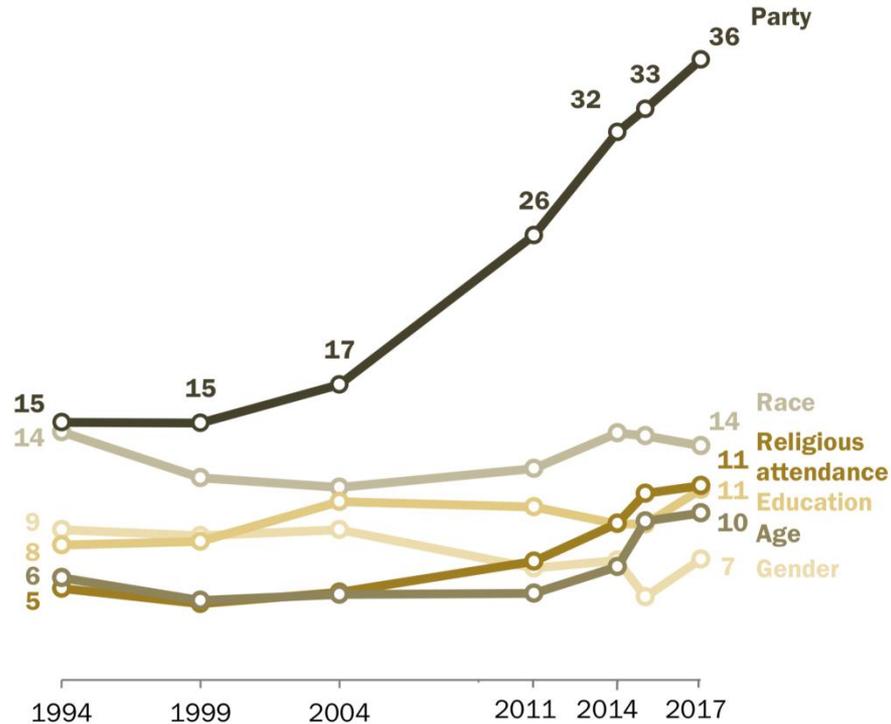
73 ● ● 74

Military leadership does not publicly support a party

66 ● — ● 74

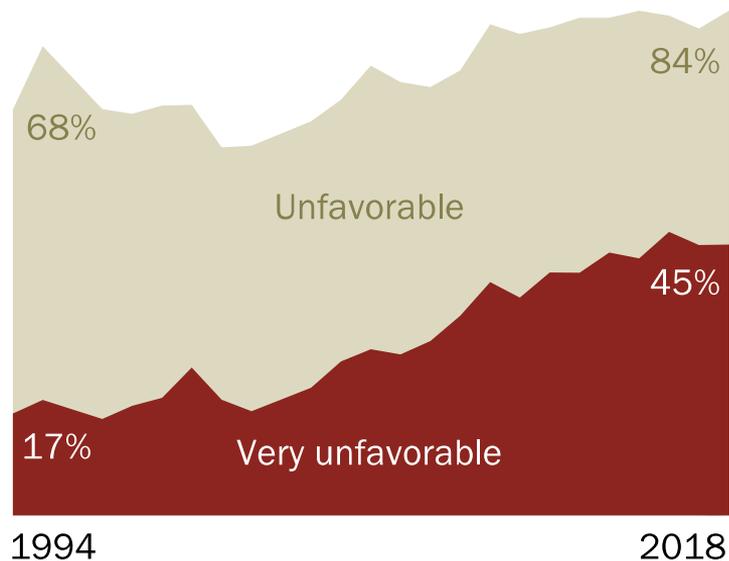
Party now far exceeds other social divisions

Average divide across 10 political values, by key demographics

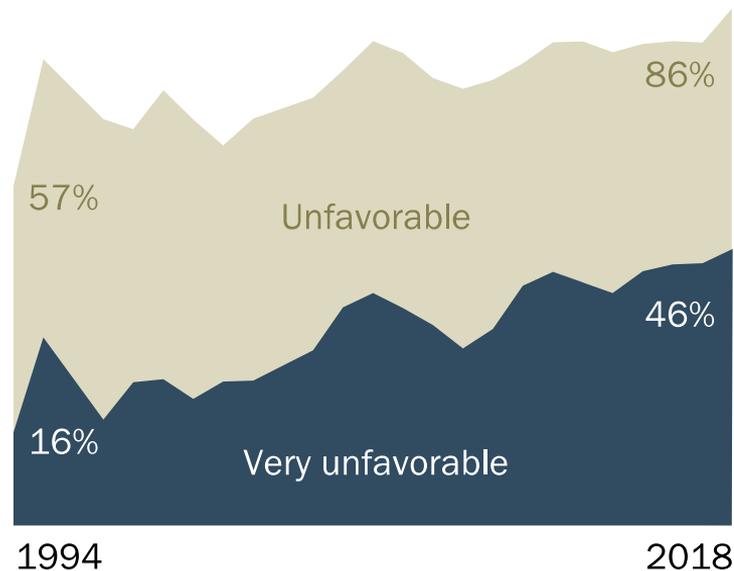


Rising 'antipathy' toward other political side

Republican attitudes
about the **Democratic** party



Democratic attitudes
about the **Republican** party



Source: Yearly averages

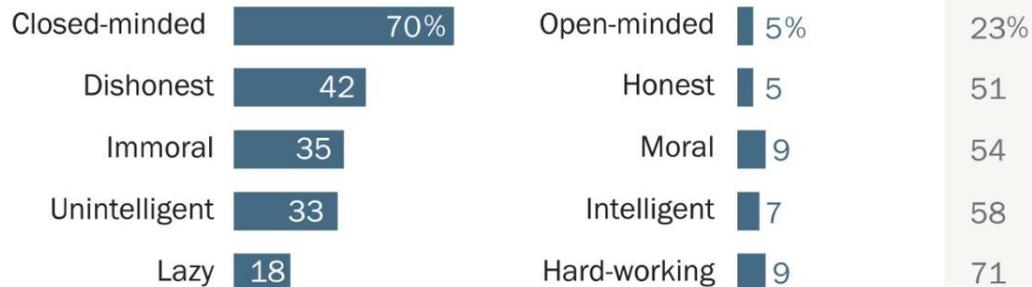
February 2017

Negative stereotypes about the 'other side'

% of Republicans who say Democrats are more ___ than other Americans

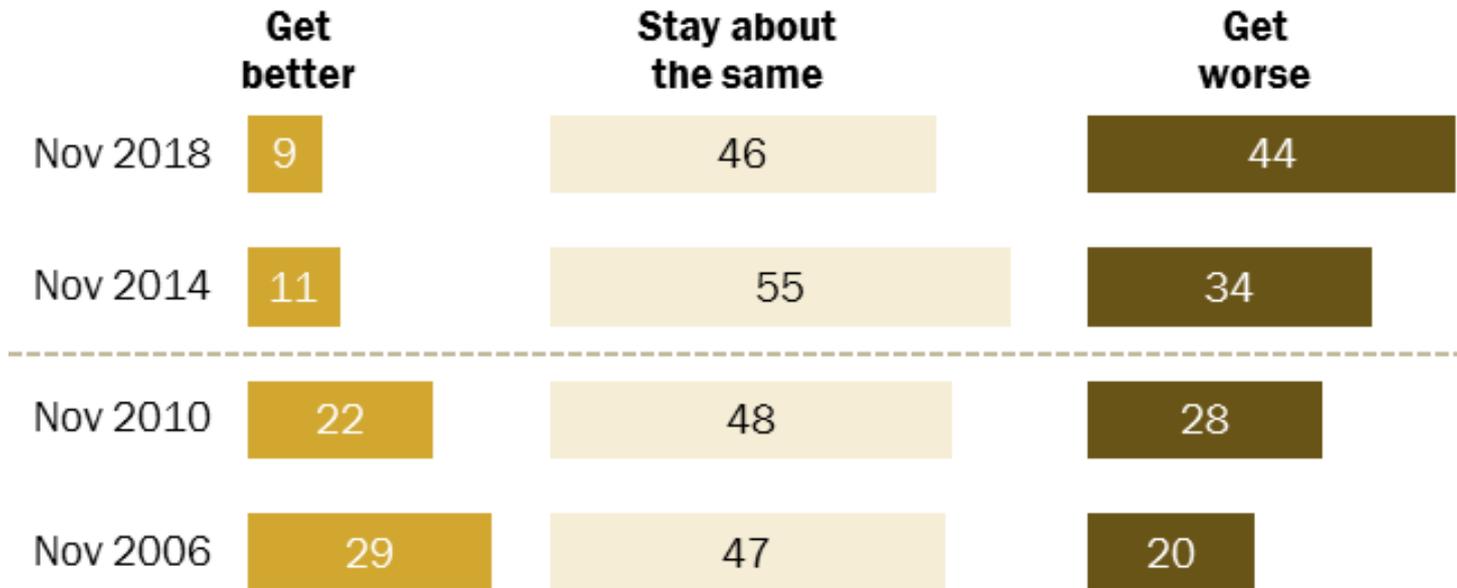


% of Democrats who say Republicans are more ___ than other Americans



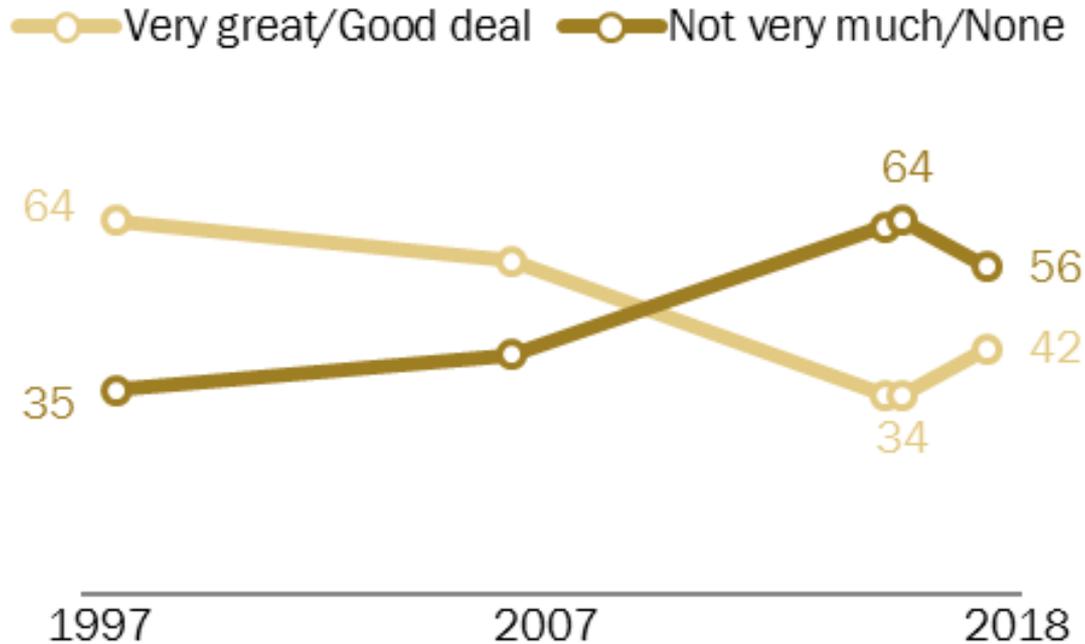
More Americans expect partisan relations to get worse than did so after three prior midterms

% who say relations between Republicans and Democrats in Washington will ___ in the coming year



Most have little or no confidence in political wisdom of the American people

% saying they have ___ of trust and confidence in the wisdom of American people in making political decisions



Public is broadly pessimistic about the future of America



When the public looks to the future of the U.S. over the next 30 years, they see ...

A country declining in stature on the world stage

The U.S. will be **LESS** important in the world

60%

The U.S. will be **MORE** important in the world

31%

A widening gap between the haves and the have-nots

Gap between rich and poor will **GROW**

73

Gap between rich and poor will **GET SMALLER**

19

Growing political polarization

Country will be **MORE** politically divided

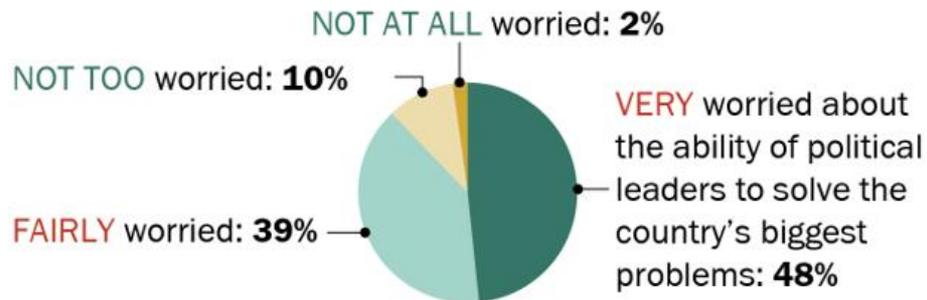
65

Country will be **LESS** politically divided

26



And they are worried that the country's political leaders are not up to the challenge



What people say they want/need

Smart allies (diversity really helps)

Improved curators

Proof of authenticity

Transparency

**More confidence they can
learn and grow**

**Just-in-time help in
decision making**

**More training on tech use and
information literacy**

**Organizations that will help
and protect them**



Be not
afraid



Thank you!

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