

Trends in Prejudice Toward Jews and Muslims

Comparison to Other Ethnic, Racial, and Religious Groups

Shibley Telhami, Principal Investigator

Over the last ten years, the University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll has tracked U.S. public attitudes on various domestic and foreign policy issues, fielding regular national polls and issuing several reports on the findings. In polls we fielded in [2023](#), [2024](#), and 2025, we repeated some older questions and added others about American attitudes toward antisemitism, Islamophobia, and racial and religious prejudice toward Muslim and Jewish Americans, comparing these to attitudes toward Black, White, Asian, and Hispanic Americans. We also probed attitudes about the state of democracy in the United States. Our latest [report](#) tracks findings on these issues and adds in-depth analysis based on data from a poll fielded with SSRS from July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents with a margin of error ± 2.9 percentage points, including an oversample of young adults, ages 18-34.

Views on What Constitutes Antisemitism

Our poll has been tracking American attitudes toward antisemitism and the term's use in American political discourse since before October 2023 and continued after Hamas's attack on Israel and Israel's war in Gaza, providing a window into how these events, and the American discourse about them, may have impacted the American public's views.

Our findings show that American respondents have become more opinionated about which attitudes constituted antisemitism, with a substantial increase from 2023 to 2025 in the proportion of respondents who saw attitudes against Jews and against Judaism as antisemitic. At the same time, there was an increase in the minority who said that attitudes against Zionism and against Israeli policies constituted antisemitism. The partisan divides have also widened over whether attitudes against Zionism and against Israeli policies were antisemitic, with Democrats being significantly more likely than Republicans to say these attitudes do not constitute antisemitism. Public perceptions of how the label "antisemitic" was used in political discourse have also shifted. While slightly more Americans believed the label describes "people who are genuinely antisemitic," a majority of respondents — especially Democrats — believed the label was

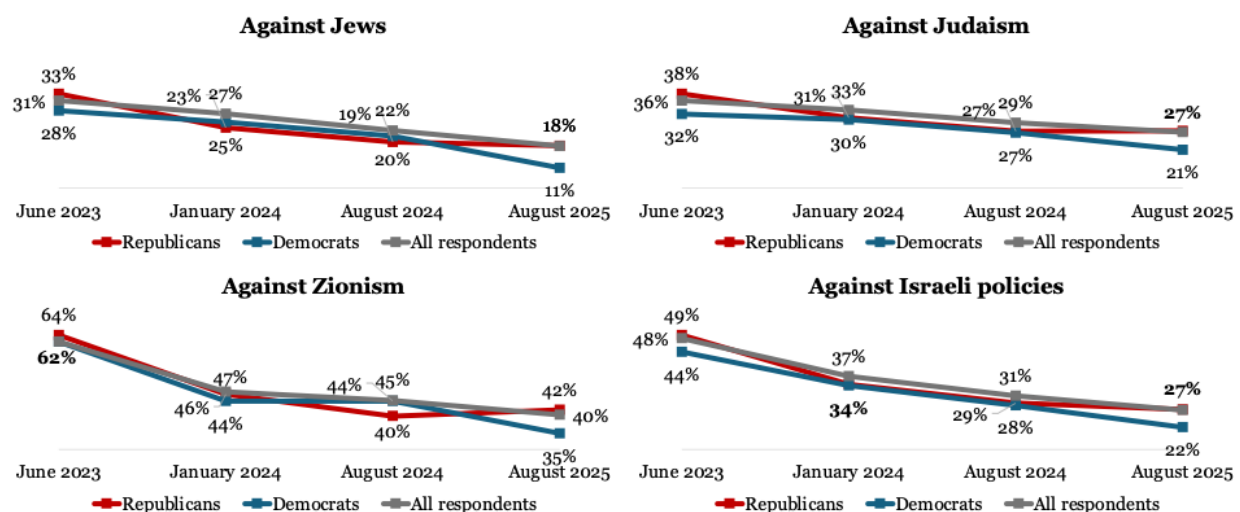
at least sometimes “used to delegitimize political opponents” and “used to delegitimize critics of Israel.” These trends showed an increase in party polarization on the issue of antisemitism and indicated that respondents have become more opinionated on these issues compared to previous years.

A base question tracked attitudes about what constitutes antisemitism: “Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism: against Jews, against Judaism, against Zionism, and against Israeli policies?” Notably, the share of respondents who responded with “I don’t know” had shrunk significantly since our June 2023 poll, which we documented in a *Brookings* [article](#) and in our 2024 Critical Issues Poll [report](#).

Among total respondents, those who said “I don’t know” to the question of whether attitudes against Zionism constituted antisemitism dropped from 62% in 2023 to 40% in 2025, marking a 22-percentage-point decrease. Similarly, those who said they did not know whether attitudes against Israeli policies constituted antisemitism declined by 21 percentage points (from 48% in 2023 to 27% in 2025). Among total respondents, those who said they were unsure whether attitudes against Jews constituted antisemitism decreased by 18 percentage points (from 31% in 2023 to 18% in 2025). Finally, those who said “I don’t know” whether attitudes against Judaism were antisemitic declined from 36% in 2023 to 27% in 2025, marking a 9-percentage-point decrease. We also saw similar temporal patterns when we disaggregated results by party identification, suggesting that as respondents were being exposed to news about the war in Gaza, they began taking more defined positions on these questions.

From 2023 to 2025, Respondents Who Said They Did Not Know Which Attitudes Constituted Antisemitism Decreased Sharply

Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism? (Those that said “I don’t know”)

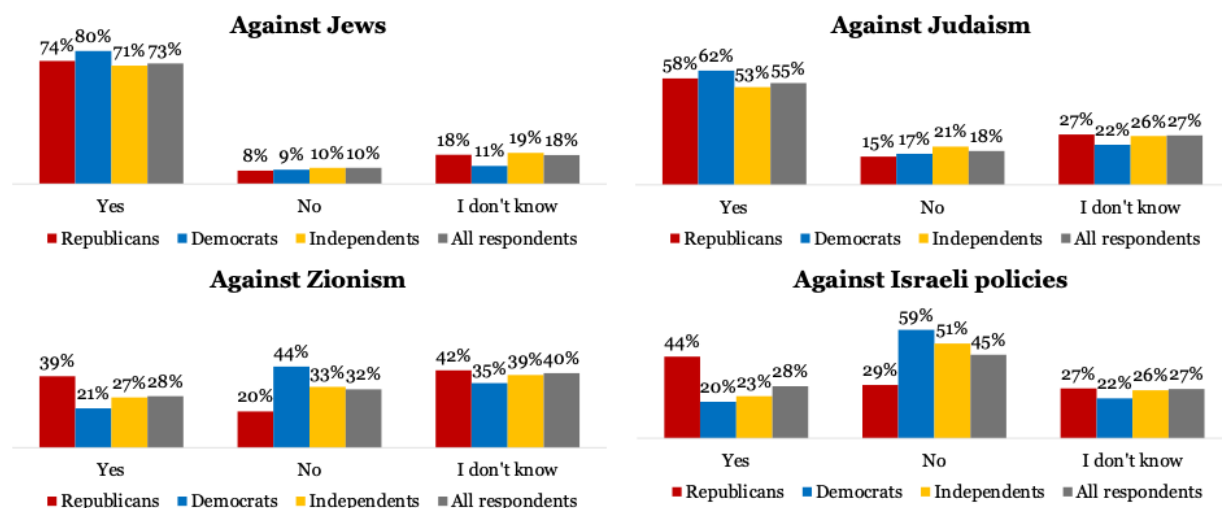


Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

In our 2025 poll, we found that a majority of respondents said that attitudes against Jews (73%) and attitudes against Judaism (55%) were antisemitic. A partisan divide, however, is notable in the degree to which respondents viewed attitudes against Zionism and against Israeli policies as antisemitic. While 39% of Republicans said that attitudes against Zionism were antisemitic, only 21% of Democrats said the same, a difference of 18 percentage points. Likewise, 44% of Republicans said attitudes against Israeli policies were antisemitic and only 20% of Democrats said the same, a difference of 24 percentage points. A plurality of Democrats (44%) said attitudes against Zionism were not antisemitic, and a majority (59%) said that attitudes against Israeli policies were not antisemitic, suggesting that Democrats were much more comfortable criticizing Israeli policies.

In 2025, Respondents Agreed That Attitudes against Jews and against Judaism Were Antisemitic, But Only a Minority Viewed Attitudes against Zionism and against Israeli Policies as Being Antisemitic

Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism?



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

To probe the effect of the media environment on respondents' attitudes, we asked “What is your primary source for political information?” with 14 options including newspapers, public broadcasting, CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, radio, internet/social media, religious groups, personal networks and more. Of the top responses, 33% of respondents said the internet/social media, 14% said network TV news like ABC, NBC, or CBS, and 12% said Fox News. We analyzed the interaction between respondents' primary source of political information (looking at “Fox News”, “Internet/Social Media”, and “Other”) and opinions on which attitudes respondents considered antisemitic.

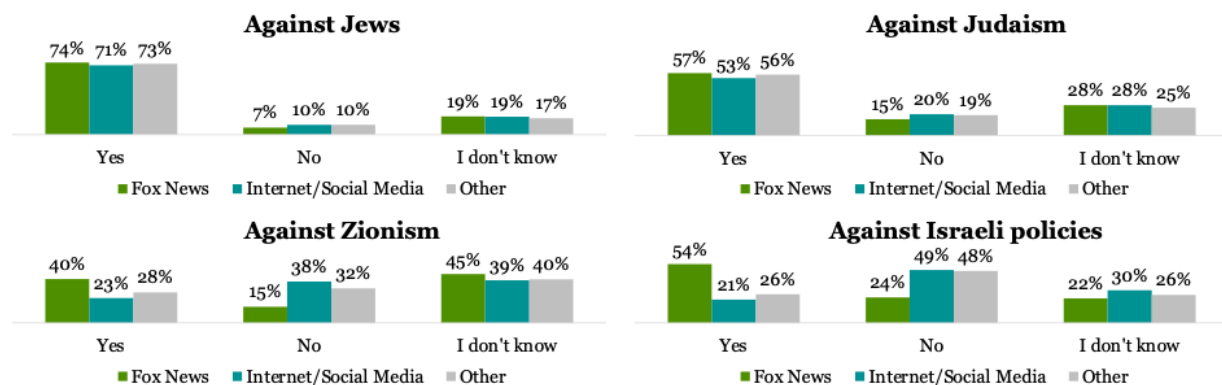
Regardless of respondents' primary source of political information, we found that majorities of respondents said attitudes against Jews or against Judaism were

antisemitic. Interestingly, however, 40% of respondents whose primary source of political information was Fox News said attitudes against Zionism were antisemitic, compared to only 23% of respondents whose primary information source was the internet/social media who said the same, a 17-percentage-point difference. Conversely, only 15% of respondents who primarily relied on Fox News said attitudes against Zionism were not antisemitic, compared to 38% of those who primarily relied on the internet and social media and 32% of those who primarily relied on other sources. Slightly more respondents whose primary source of information was Fox News (45%) said they did not know whether attitudes against Zionism constituted antisemitism, while 39%–40% of those who got their news from the internet/social media or other sources said they did not know.

A 33-percentage-point gap separates those who were primarily Fox News viewers and those who primarily got political information from the internet or social media on whether attitudes against Israeli policies constituted antisemitism (54% vs. 21%). Twenty-six percent of those who primarily relied on other sources said the same. Nearly half of respondents who primarily got their news from the internet/social media or other sources (49%-48%) and only a quarter of those who primarily relied on Fox News said those attitudes were not antisemitic.

In 2025, while a Majority of Respondents Agreed That Attitudes against Jews and Judaism Were Antisemitic, Those Who Got Their Political Information from Fox News Were Significantly More Likely to Also Say That Attitudes against Zionism and Israeli Policies Were Antisemitic

Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism?



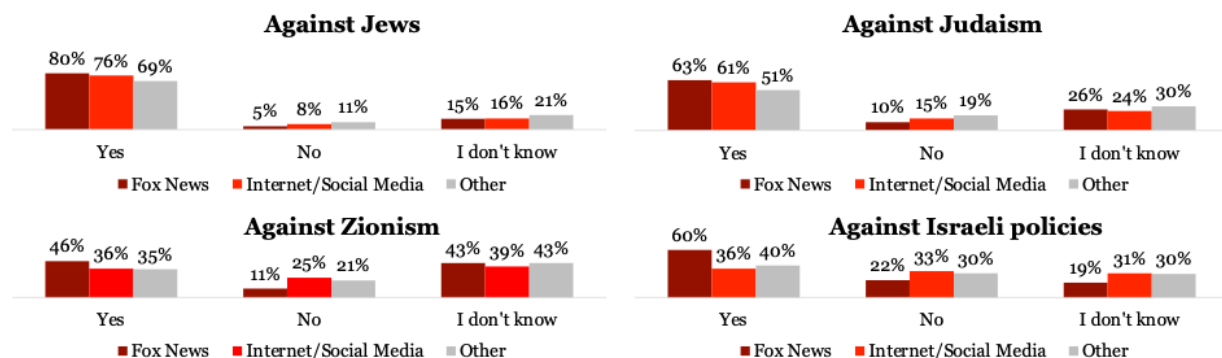
Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

We further analyzed our 2025 survey results by specifically probing how Republicans' views varied by their sources of political information. We found that, overall and irrespective of their political information sources, Republicans were more likely to label attitudes against Jews and Judaism as antisemitic than attitudes directed at Zionism or Israel. Eighty percent of Republicans who relied on Fox News for political information said attitudes against Jews were antisemitic and a similarly high proportion (76%) of

those who relied on the internet/social media said the same. Similarly, 63% of Republicans who primarily relied on Fox News said attitudes against Judaism were antisemitic and 61% of those who primarily relied on the internet/social media shared the same view. However, we saw notable differences in these respondents' views on Zionism and Israeli policies. While 46% of Republicans who primarily relied on Fox News for political information said attitudes against Zionism constituted antisemitism, only 36% of those who relied primarily on the internet/social media said the same, marking a 10-percentage-point difference. Similarly, whereas 60% of Republicans who primarily relied on Fox News said attitudes against Israeli policies were antisemitic, only 36% of those who primarily used the internet/social media said the same, marking a 24-percentage-point difference.

In 2025, Republicans Who Primarily Relied on Fox News for Political Information Were Significantly More Likely Than Those Who Relied on the Internet/Social Media to View Attitudes Against Zionism and Israeli Policies As Antisemitic

Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism? (Among Republicans)



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

We saw important patterns when we tracked opinions on what constituted antisemitism over time. Between June 2023 and August 2025, we saw that the share of respondents who said attitudes against Jews were antisemitic increased by 15 percentage points (from 58% in 2023 to 73% in 2025), and those who said attitudes against Judaism were antisemitic increased by 8 percentage points (from 47% in 2023 to 55% in 2025).

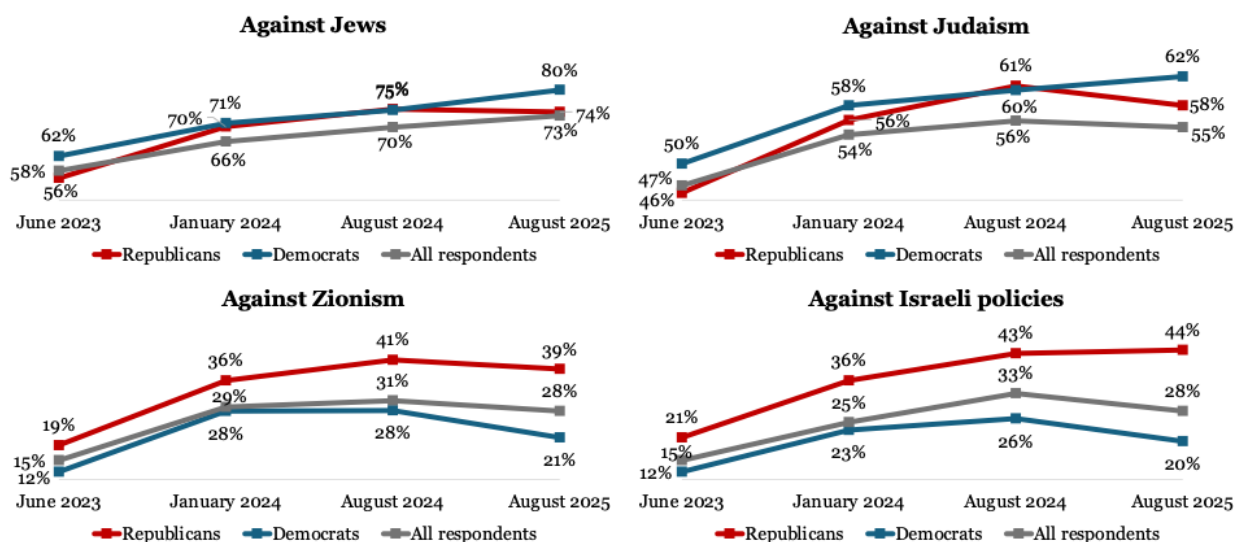
The partisan divide between Democrats and Republicans grew over whether attitudes against Zionism and attitudes against Israeli policies constituted antisemitism. In June 2023, before the war in Gaza, 25% of Democrats said attitudes against Zionism were *not* antisemitic, increasing by 19 percentage points to 44% in August 2025. In the same period, 42% of Democrats said attitudes against Israeli policies were *not* antisemitic, increasing by 17 percentage points to 59% in August 2025.

Conversely, the share of Republicans who said these attitudes did not constitute antisemitism remained significantly low during those two years. Instead, we found that

Republicans were more likely than Democrats to view both attitudes against Zionism and attitudes against Israeli policies as antisemitic. The share of Republicans who thought that attitudes against Zionism and against Israeli policies were antisemitic rose by 20 and 23 percentage points, respectively: in 2023, 19% of Republicans said attitudes against Zionism were antisemitic, increasing to 39% in 2025, while 21% of Republicans said attitudes against Israeli policies were antisemitic in 2023, increasing to 44% in 2025. The proportion of Democrats who said these attitudes constituted antisemitism in 2025 remained notably low (21%-20%), albeit increasing nearly 10 percentage points since 2023.

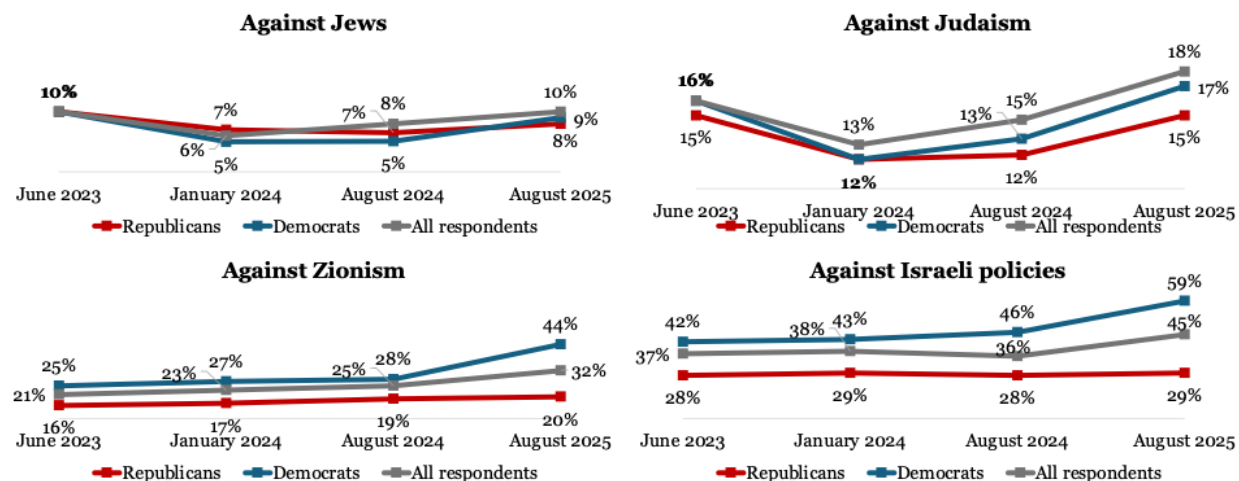
From 2023 to 2025, More Respondents Agreed That Attitudes against Jews and Judaism Were Antisemitic While the Partisan Divide Widened Over Zionism and Israeli Policies

Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism? (Those that said “Yes”)



Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism? (Those who said “No”)



Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

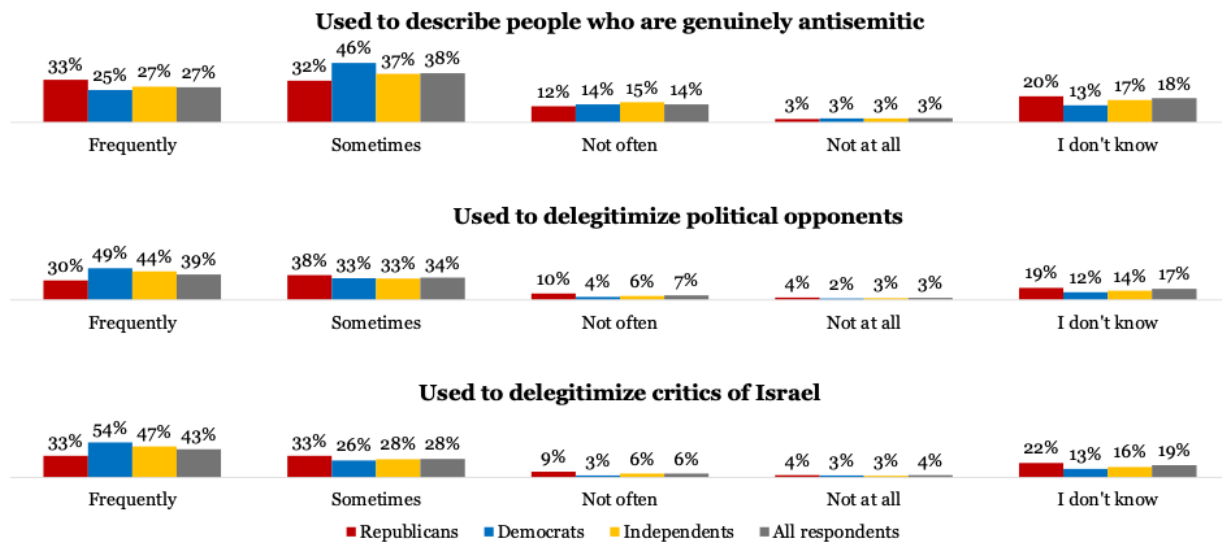
Attitudes on “Antisemitic” Label in Political Discourse

At the same time that we began probing attitudes on what constitutes antisemitism, we also began tracking the question “What is your impression of how labeling people antisemitic is used in American political discourse?” Notably, in our 2025 poll results, majorities of all respondents, including both Republicans and Democrats, said that the label antisemitic was used at least “sometimes” to describe people who were genuinely antisemitic (65%), to delegitimize political opponents (73%), and to delegitimize critics of Israel (71%).

We found that among all respondents, 27% said the label antisemitic was “frequently” used to describe people who were genuinely antisemitic, including 33% of Republicans and 25% of Democrats, marking an 8-percentage-point difference between the two parties. By contrast, Democrats were more likely than Republicans to say the label was frequently used to delegitimize political opponents (49% and 30%, respectively) and frequently used to delegitimize critics of Israel (54% and 33%, respectively). Among all respondents, 39% said the label was frequently used to delegitimize political opponents and 43% said it was frequently used to delegitimize critics of Israel.

More Democrats Said the Label “Antisemitic” Was Frequently Used to Delegitimize Political Opponents and Critics of Israel

Q. What is your impression of how labeling people antisemitic is used in the American political discourse?



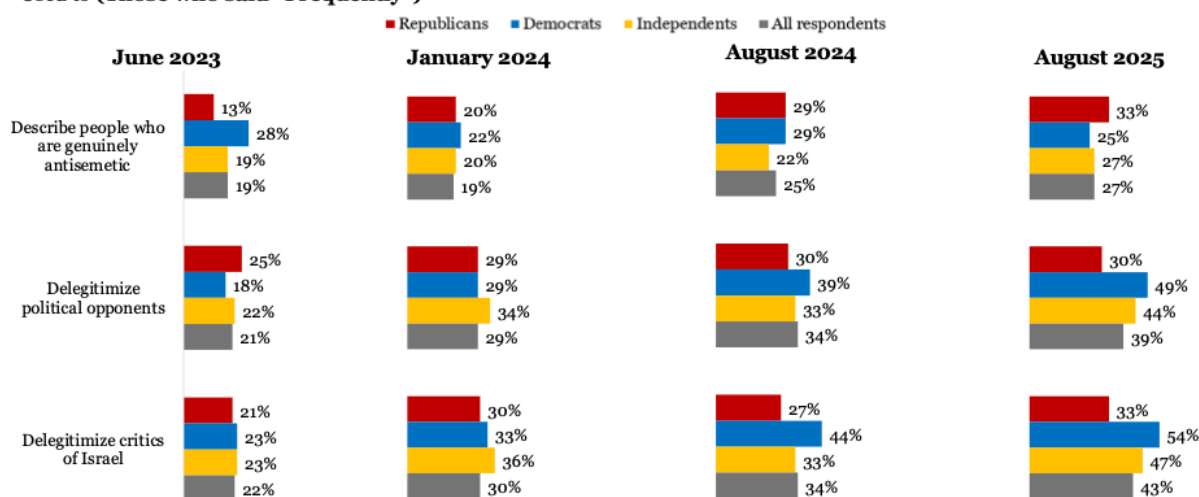
Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Between June 2023 and August 2025, the share of all respondents who said the label antisemitic was used frequently to describe people who were genuinely antisemitic increased by 8 percentage points (from 19% to 27%). Notably, among Republicans it rose by 20 percentage points (from 13% to 33%) while among Democrats it decreased by 3 percentage points (from 28% to 25%). The share of respondents who thought the label

antisemitic was used frequently to delegitimize political opponents climbed by 18 percentage points (from 21% to 39%). Among Democrats it surged by 31 percentage points (from 18% to 49%), whereas among Republicans it only increased by 5 percentage points (from 25% to 30%). Those who said the label was used frequently to delegitimize critics of Israel also skyrocketed by 21 percentage points (from 22% to 43%), including for Democrats by 31 percentage points (from 23% to 54%) and for Republicans by 12 percentage points (from 21% to 33%).

Between 2023 and 2025, There Was a Notable Increase in Both Democrats and Republicans Who Said the Label “Antisemitic” Was Used to Delegitimize Political Opponents and Critics of Israel

Q. What is your impression of how labeling people antisemitic is used in the American political discourse:
Used to (Those who said “Frequently”)



Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Trends in U.S. Public Attitudes Toward Muslims and Jews, 2022-2025

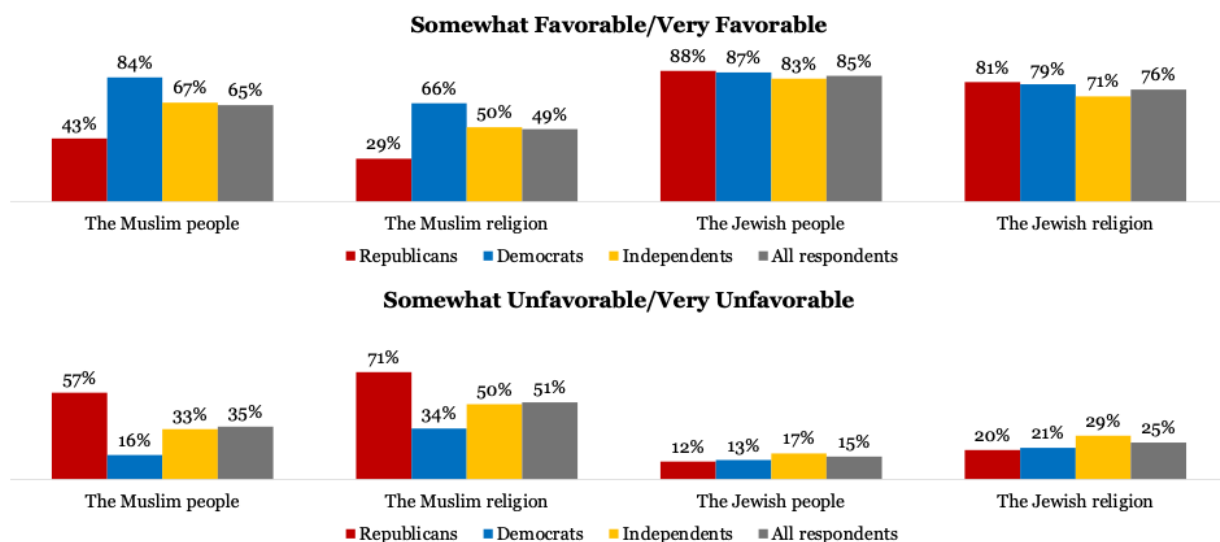
In our 2025 poll, we repeated the question “What is your attitude about each of the following: the Muslim people, the Muslim religion, the Jewish people, and the Jewish religion?” A majority of respondents, including both Republicans and Democrats, viewed the Jewish people and Jewish religion “somewhat” or “very” favorably. Among all respondents, 85% had favorable attitudes toward Jewish people, including 88% of Republicans and 87% of Democrats. Similarly, the Jewish religion received 76% of favorable attitudes from all respondents, including 81% of Republicans and 79% of Democrats.

By contrast, Muslim people and Islam received much lower favorable attitudes from all respondents, including Democrats and Republicans. 65% of respondents viewed the

Muslim people favorably, a 20-percentage-point difference from those who found the Jewish people favorably. Additionally, 49% viewed the Muslim religion favorably, a 27-percentage-point difference from those who said the same of the Jewish religion. There were also large partisan differences in favorable attitudes towards Muslims and Islam. While Democrats were more favorable toward Jewish people and Judaism than Muslim people and Islam, they were more likely, in comparison to Republicans, to have favorable attitudes towards both the Muslim people (84%) and the Muslim religion (66%), albeit with a difference of 18 percentage points between the two. Republicans were the least likely to have favorable attitudes toward both Muslims and Islam (43% and 29%, respectively).

Respondents Across Party Lines Viewed Jews and Judaism More Favorably Than Muslims and Islam

Q. What is your attitude about each of the following?



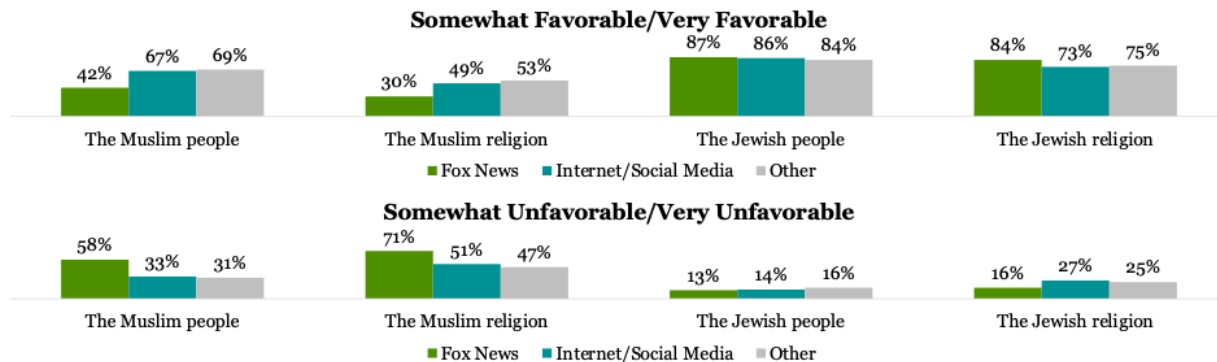
Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

We found that respondents who received their political information primarily from Fox News were more favorable toward the Jewish people and the Jewish religion and significantly less favorable toward the Muslim people and the Muslim religion than those who received their political information elsewhere. While respondents were overwhelmingly favorable toward the Jewish people regardless of their source of political information, we observed an 11-percentage-point difference in favorability toward Judaism between those who relied on Fox News (84%) and those who relied on social media (73%). Favorable views toward Muslims and Islam were more intensely shaped by the source of political information. Roughly two-thirds of respondents who received their information from the internet/social media (67%) or other sources (69%) said they had favorable views of the Muslim people, whereas only 42% of those who relied on Fox News said the same, a difference of about 27 percentage points. Favorable

views of the Muslim religion were the lowest among all attitudes. While nearly half of respondents who received their political information from the internet/social media, and 53% who received their news from other sources, said they have favorable views of Islam, only 30% of those who relied on Fox News said the same.

Fox News Viewers Had Significantly Less Favorable Attitudes Toward Muslim People and Islam Than Respondents Who Primarily Relied on Other Sources of Political Information

Q. What is your attitude about each of the following?



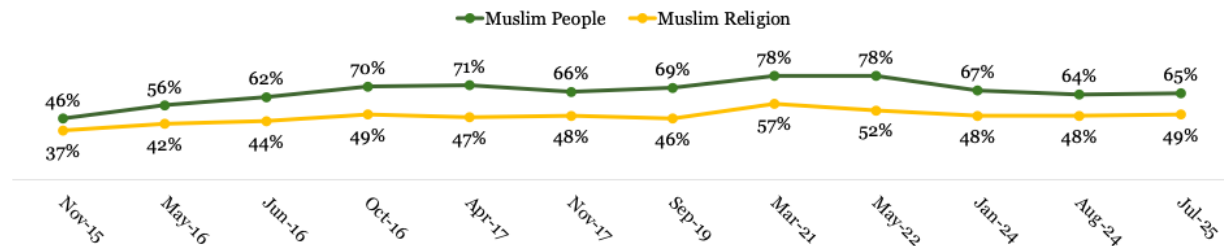
Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Among Republicans who primarily got their political information from Fox News, only 34% had a favorable attitude toward the Muslim people, while 46% of those whose source is the internet/social media or other had favorable views, a 12-percentage-point difference. Only a quarter of Republicans whose primary source was Fox News had favorable views of the Muslim religion, while just 28% of Republicans whose primary source was the internet/social media said the same. 32% of Republicans whose source was other outlets had a favorable view of the Muslim religion. As with all respondents, the source of political information had relatively little impact on attitudes toward the Jewish people, although 86% of Republicans whose primary source was Fox News had a favorable view of the Jewish religion, while 77% of Republicans whose primary source was the internet/social media and 80% of those whose source was “other” said the same.

We have tracked attitudes toward the Muslim people and Islam since 2016 in a separate polling project, and when these temporal patterns were combined with findings from our recent Critical Issues Polls, we saw a notable peak in favorability toward both Muslims and Islam in 2021 at 78% and 57%, respectively. After 2021, favorable attitudes towards Muslim people and the Muslim religion began to experience a steady decline to 67% and 48%, respectively, in January 2024 before plateauing at 65% and 49% in August 2025. We previously documented in a Brookings [report](#) in 2022, the reversal of the upward trend in positive attitudes toward Muslims and Islam that holds across partisan lines, race, and age and correlates with the war in Israel and Gaza since October 2023.

Favorable Attitudes Toward Muslims and Islam Declined Steadily After Peaking in 2021–2022

Q. What is your attitude about each of the following? (Those that said “Somewhat Favorable/Very Favorable”)

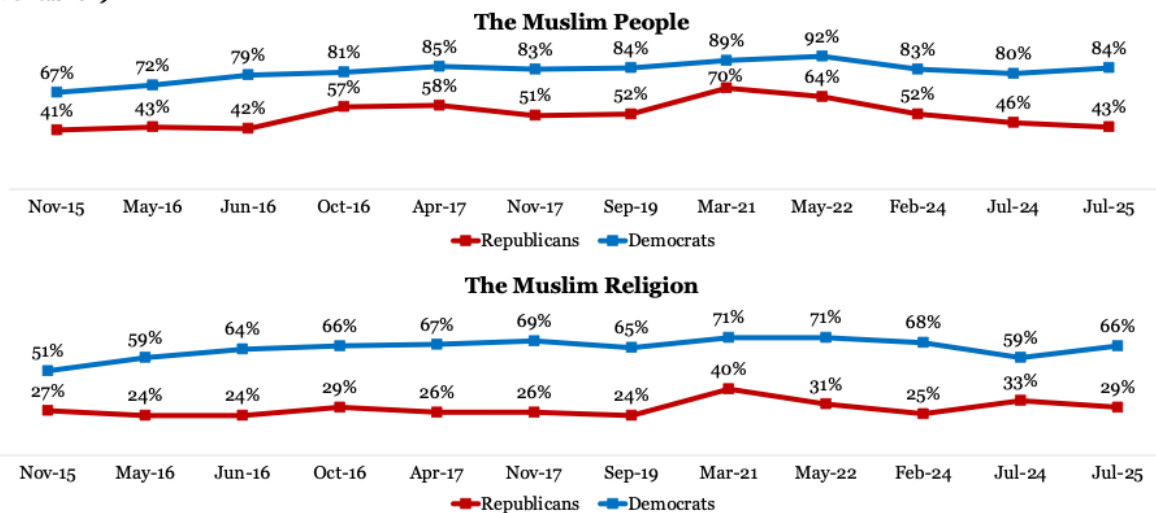


Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Our findings also showed a relatively similar pattern when we looked at this trend along partisan lines. Favorable attitudes toward the Muslim people among Democrats dropped from a peak of 92% in 2022 to 84% in 2025, marking an 8-percentage-point reversal in favorability. Among Republicans, favorable attitudes toward the Muslim people peaked in 2021 at 70% before experiencing a dramatic decline to 43% in 2025, representing a 27-percentage-point decrease. Similarly, among Democrats, favorable attitudes toward the Muslim religion dropped from a peak of 71% in 2021 to 66% in 2025. Among Republicans, it dropped from 40% in 2021 to 29% in 2025.

Favorable Attitudes Toward Muslims and Islam Among Both Democrats and Republicans Declined Steadily After Peaking in 2021–2022

Q. What is your attitude about each of the following? (Those that said “Somewhat Favorable/Very Favorable”)



Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

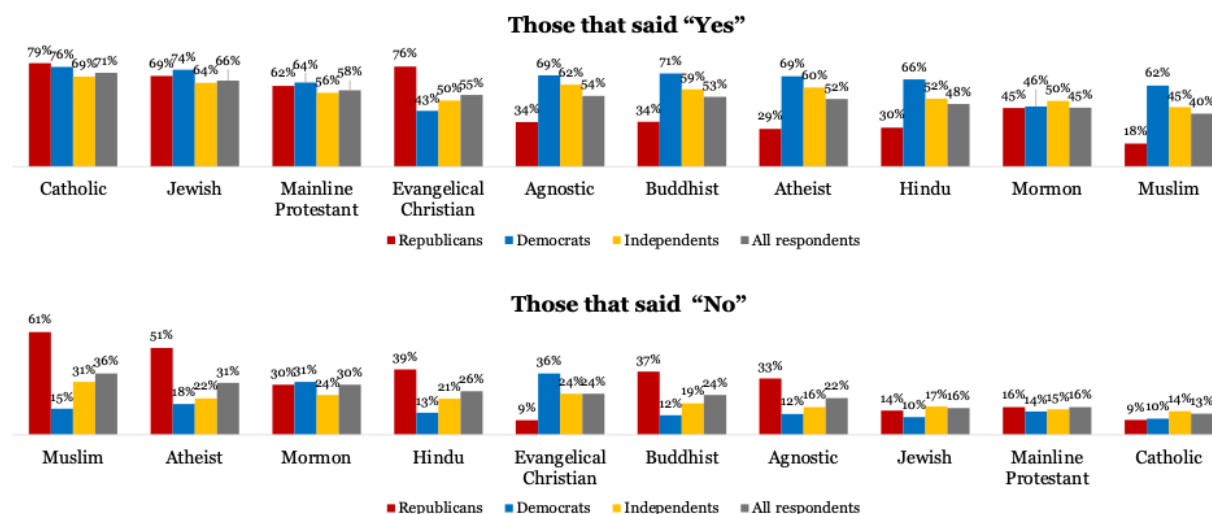
Preferences for Presidential Candidates Based on Religious Backgrounds

We asked respondents the following question: “Assuming that you agree with the general positions of the presidential candidates on issues that were important to you, would you vote for that candidate if he/she were...” We found that respondents were significantly more likely to say that they would *not* vote for a Muslim presidential candidate than to say they would *not* vote for a Jewish candidate. Among all respondents, 36% reported that they would not vote for a Muslim presidential candidate, making Muslims the least favored candidate identities—exceeding the share unwilling to support an atheist (31%) or a Mormon (30%) candidate. By contrast, 16% of total respondents said they would not vote for a Jewish candidate.

Partisanship is an important driver of respondents' preferences for Muslim and Jewish presidential candidates. Republicans were the least likely to prefer voting for a Muslim presidential candidate. Almost two-thirds of Republicans (61%) said they would not vote for a Muslim candidate, compared to just 14% who said the same about a Jewish candidate. Conversely, only 15% of Democrats said they would not vote for a Muslim candidate and 10% said the same for a Jewish candidate, showing broader acceptance of both Jewish and Muslim candidates among Democrats.

Muslim Presidential Candidates Were the Least Likely of All Groups to Be Supported, While Jewish Candidates Were Among the Most Likely

Q. Assuming that you agree with the general positions of the presidential candidates on issues that are important to you, would you vote for that candidate if he/she were...



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

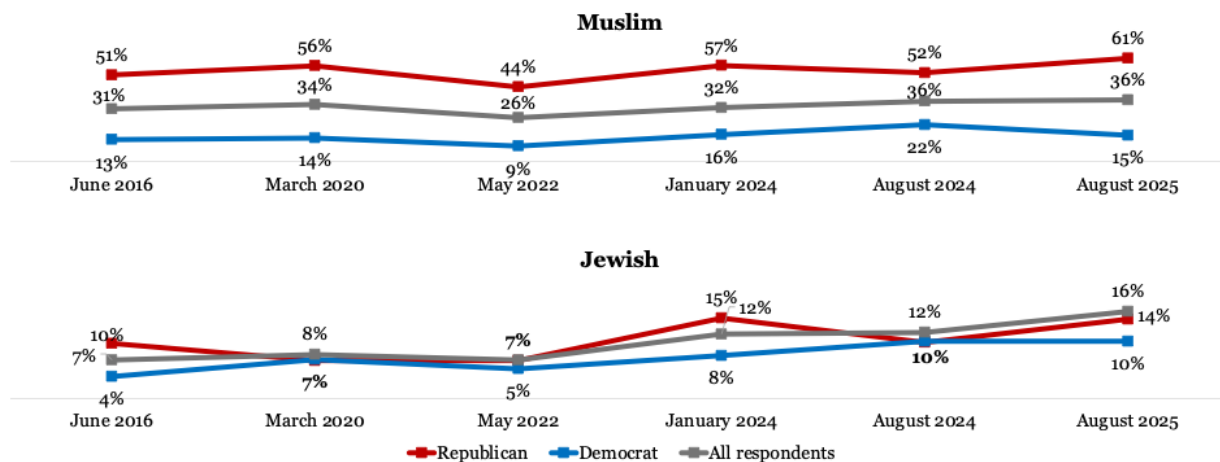
Comparing our August 2025 poll results with those from August 2024, we found that overall respondent preferences for Muslim and Jewish presidential candidates showed little change. However, the share of Republicans who said they would not vote for a

Muslim candidate rose by 9 percentage points, from 52% in 2024 to 61% in 2025. Among Democrats, by contrast, it fell by 7 percentage points, from 22% to 15%. Respondents who said they would not vote for a Jewish candidate rose by 3 percentage points, from 13% to 16%. Among Republicans it rose by 4 percentage points, from 10% to 14%, while among Democrats it remained the same (10%).

Tracking responses to this question from 2016 to today revealed interesting patterns. The share of total respondents who said they would not vote for a Muslim candidate increased by 5 percentage points overall, from 31% in 2016 to 36% in 2025. Among Republicans, this share rose by 10 percentage points, from 51% to 61%, and among Democrats it climbed from 13% in 2016 to a peak of 22% in 2024 before declining to 15% in 2025. At the same time, the proportion of total respondents who said they would not vote for a Jewish candidate increased by 9 percentage points, from 7% in 2016 to 16% in 2025. It rose by 4 percentage points among Republicans (10% to 14%) and by 6 percentage points among Democrats (4% to 10%).

Over the Past Decade, Opposition to Muslim Candidates Was Significantly Higher Than Opposition to Jewish Candidates, Although Opposition Among Democrats Fell After Peaking in August 2024

Q. Assuming that you agree with the general positions of the presidential candidates on issues that are important to you, would you vote for that candidate if he/she were: **(Those that said ‘No’)**

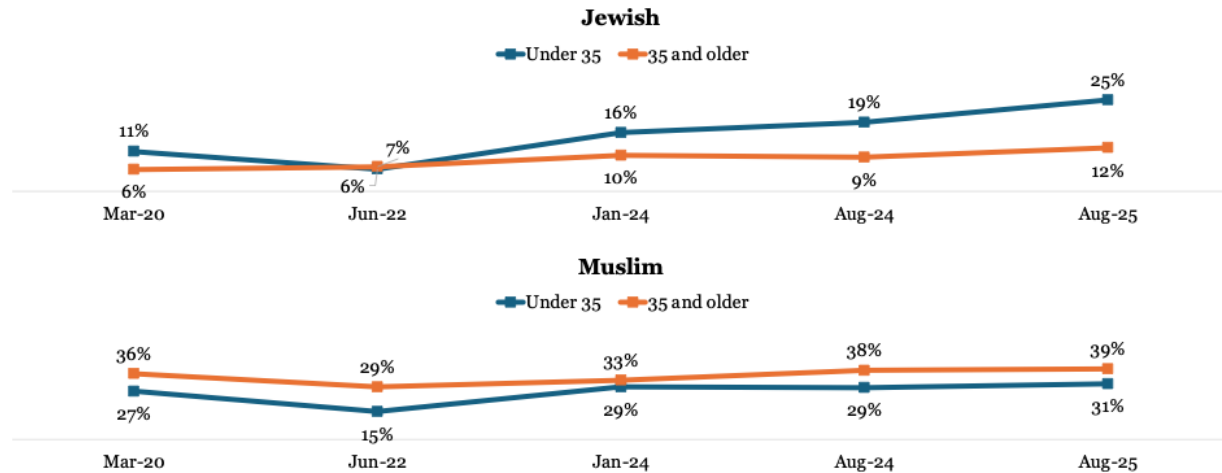


Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Younger respondents under 35 were more likely than older respondents 35 years and older to say they would not vote for a Jewish candidate. The age gap began to grow after 2022, when the difference between those under and over 35 was just 1 percentage point. By 2025, the gap had grown to 13 percentage points. 12% of those 35 and older said they would not vote for a Jewish candidate and 25% of those under 35 said the same. By contrast, younger respondents were less likely than older ones to say they would not vote for a Muslim candidate, with an 8-point difference between the two age groups as of 2025 (39% among those 35 and older and 31% among those under 35).

Both Younger and Older Respondents Were More Likely to Oppose Muslim Presidential Candidates Than Jewish Ones; However, Younger Respondents Increasingly Said They Would Not Vote for a Jewish Presidential Candidate

Q. Assuming that you agree with the general positions of the presidential candidates on issues that are important to you, would you vote for that candidate if he/she were: **(Those that said “No”)**



Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Perceptions of Prejudice Against Jews and Muslims

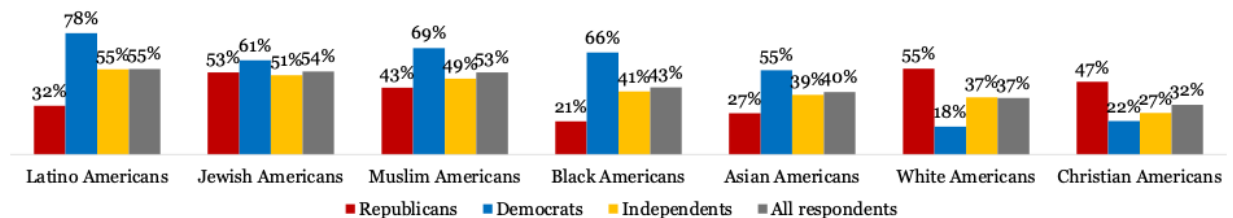
We have continued to track perceptions of prejudice with the following question: “Compared to 5 years ago and based on your own experience, including interactions with others, how much racial/ethnic/religious prejudice (such as statements that reveal prejudice against a person because of their race, ethnicity, or religion), if any, would you say exists against each of the following groups in the U.S. today?” In 2025, more than half of respondents said that there is more prejudice today compared to 5 years ago against both Muslim and Jewish Americans (53% and 54%, respectively). Democrats were significantly more likely than Republicans to say that both Muslim Americans and Jewish Americans faced incidents of prejudice. Among Democrats, 69% said that Muslim Americans faced more incidents of prejudice and 61% said the same about Jewish Americans. By contrast, only 43% of Republicans said Muslim Americans faced more incidents of prejudice and 53% said the same about Jewish Americans.

Among all respondents, White Americans and Christian Americans were the least likely to be viewed as facing more incidents of prejudice (37% and 32%, respectively). However, there was a significant partisan difference with Republicans being significantly more likely than Democrats to think that White Americans and Christian Americans faced more incidents of prejudice, with a 37 and 25-percentage-point difference, respectively. Democrats were more likely than Republicans to say that Latino, Asian, and Black Americans faced more incidents of prejudice. More than three-

quarters of Democrats (78%) said Latino Americans faced more incidents of prejudice while only 32% of Republicans said the same, a 46-percentage-point difference. Similarly, while 66% of Democrats said Black Americans faced more incidents of prejudice, only 21% of Republicans said the same, a 45-percentage-point difference.

Most Democrats Reported Increasing Prejudice against Latino, Jewish, Muslim, Black, and Asian Americans, While Most Republicans Said the Same for White, Christian, and Jewish Americans

Q. Compared to 5 years ago and based on your own experience, including interactions with others, how much racial/ethnic/religious prejudice (such as statements that reveal prejudice against a person because of their race, ethnicity, or religion), if any, would you say exists against each of the following groups in the U.S. today? **(Those that said, “A lot more” or “A little more”)**



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

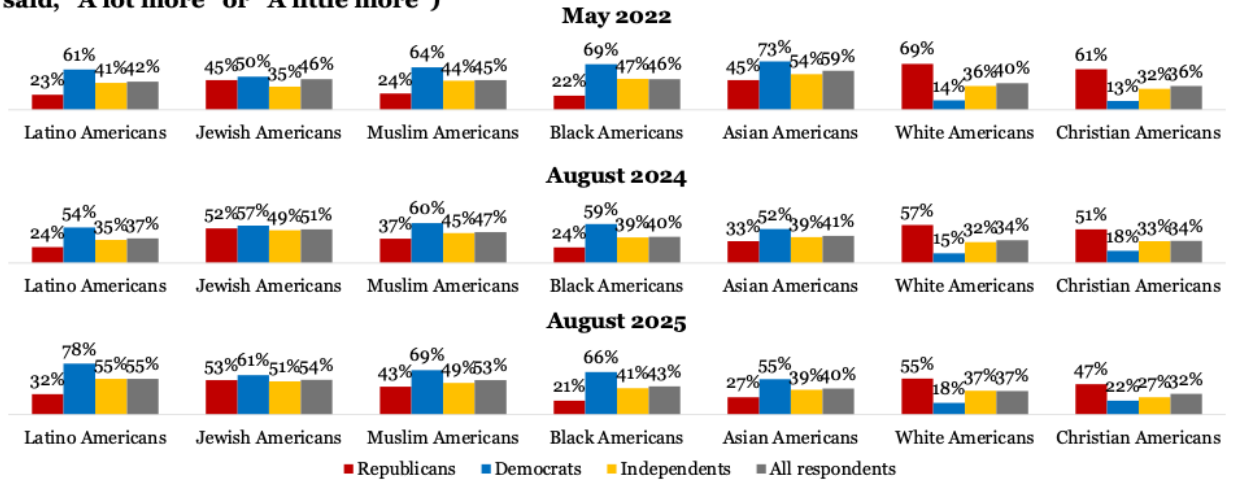
Among total respondents, perceived prejudice against Muslim Americans rose from 45% in 2022 to 53% in 2025. Similarly, perceived prejudice against Jewish Americans increased from 46% in 2022 to 54% in 2025.

The increase in perceptions of prejudice against Muslim Americans and Jewish Americans held across partisan lines. Among Democrats, perceived prejudice against Muslim Americans rose from 64% in 2022 to 69% in 2025, marking a 5-percentage-point increase. Among Republicans, it rose dramatically from 24% to 43% during the same period, a 19-percentage-point increase. There was a larger increase in the share of Democrats (11 percentage points) who perceived more incidents of prejudice against Jewish Americans between 2022 and 2025, increasing from 50% to 61%. Among Republicans, perceived incidents of prejudice against Jewish Americans rose 8 percentage points from 45% to a majority of 53% during the same period.

Another notable pattern that emerged when comparing 2022 and 2025 is the change in the partisan divide on perceived incidents of prejudice against White and Christian Americans. Among Republicans, perceived prejudice against White Americans had steadily decreased from 69% in 2022 to 55% in 2025. Among Democrats, by contrast, it slightly increased from 14% in 2022 to 18% in 2025. We saw a similar trend in the answers to perceived incidents of prejudice against Christian Americans.

Since 2022, There Has Been an Increase in the Share of Democrats and Republicans Who Said There Was More Prejudice against Muslim and Jewish Americans

Q. Compared to 5 years ago and based on your own experience, including interactions with others, how much racial/ethnic/religious prejudice (such as statements that reveal prejudice against a person because of their race, ethnicity, or religion), if any, would you say exists against each of the following groups in the U.S. today? **(Those that said, “A lot more” or “A little more”)**

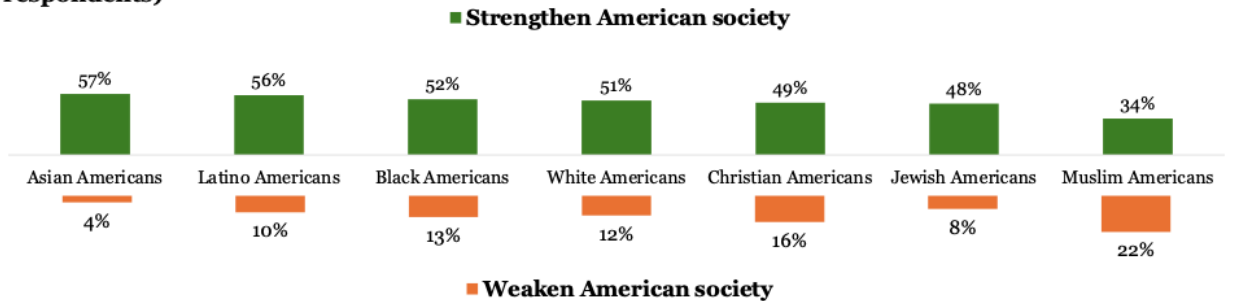


Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

To probe whether respondents perceived different racial and religious groups of Americans as strengthening or weakening American society, we asked the respondents the following question: “Would you say that, in general, the number of [...] weaken American society?” Muslim Americans were the least likely to be viewed as strengthening American society and the most likely to be viewed as weakening it relative to all the other racial and religious groups in the poll. Among all respondents, Muslim Americans were less likely (34%) than Jewish Americans (48%) to be perceived as strengthening American society. Muslim Americans were also substantially more likely (22%) than Jewish Americans (8%) to be viewed as weakening American society.

Muslim Americans Were the Least Likely and Asian Americans Were the Most Likely to Be Seen as Strengthening American Society

Q. Would you say that, in general, the number of [...] strengthen or weaken American society? **(Among all respondents)**

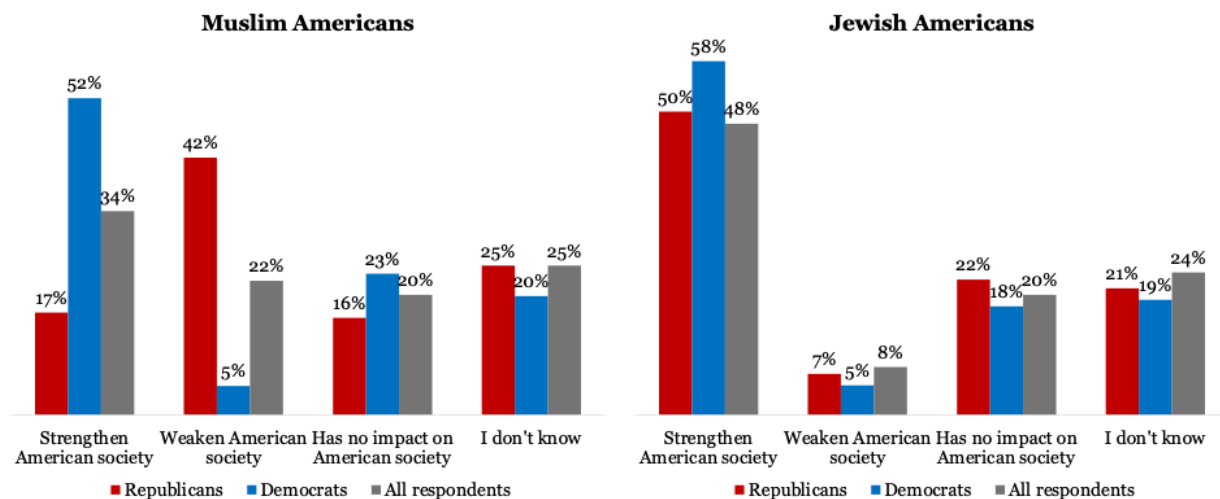


Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Democrats were more likely than Republicans to view Muslim Americans as strengthening American society with a difference of 35 percentage points: 52% of Democrats said Muslim Americans strengthened American society while 17% of Republicans said the same. Only 5% of Democrats said Muslim Americans weakened American society while 42% of Republicans said Muslim Americans weakened American society, a 37-percentage-point difference. 20% of respondents said that Muslim Americans and 20% of respondents said that Jewish Americans had no impact on American society, and 25%-24% said they did not know.

Democrats Were More Likely Than Republicans to View Muslim Americans as Strengthening American Society, While Most Republicans and Democrats Viewed Jewish Americans as Strengthening American Society

Q. Would you say that, in general, the number of [...] strengthen or weaken American society?

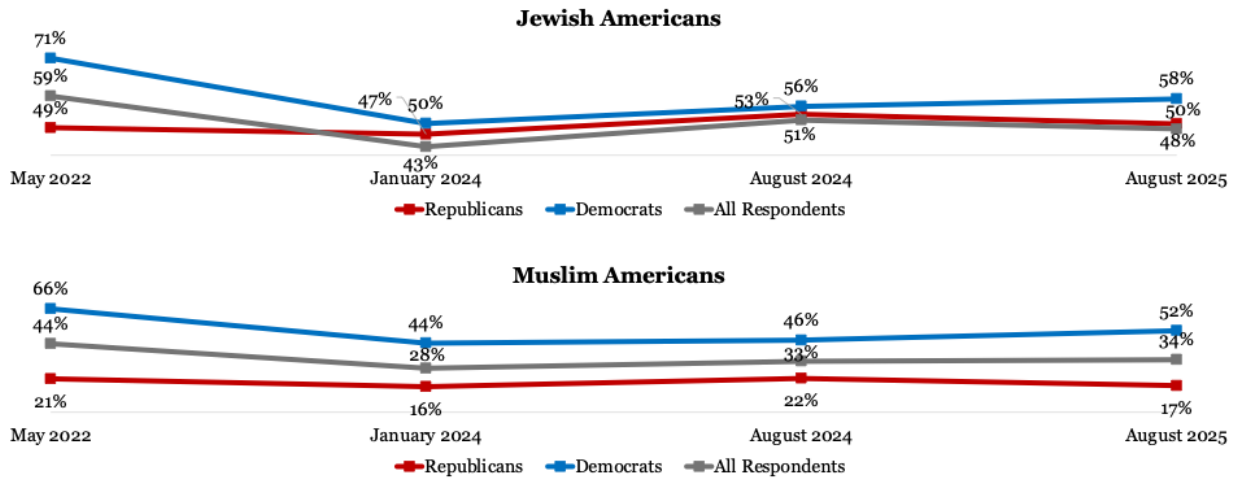


Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Between 2022 and August 2025, the share of respondents who said Jewish and Muslim Americans strengthened American society declined notably. The percentage of total respondents that said Jewish Americans strengthened American society decreased from 59% in 2022 to 48% in 2025, while for Muslim Americans it decreased from 44% to 34%. The percentage of Democrats who said Jewish Americans strengthened American society dropped by 13 percentage points (from 71% to 58%) while the percentage of Democrats who said the same about Muslim Americans decreased by 14 percentage points (from 66% to 52%). Among Republicans, the share of those who think Jewish Americans strengthened American society increased by 1 percentage point during the same period (from 49% to 50%), while the share of those who said the same about Muslim Americans declined by 4 percentage points (from 21% to 17%).

Since 2022, There Has Been a Notable Decline in the Share of Respondents Who Thought Muslim and Jewish Americans Strengthened American Society

Q. Would you say that, in general, the number of [...] strengthen or weaken American society? (Those that said “strengthen American society”)

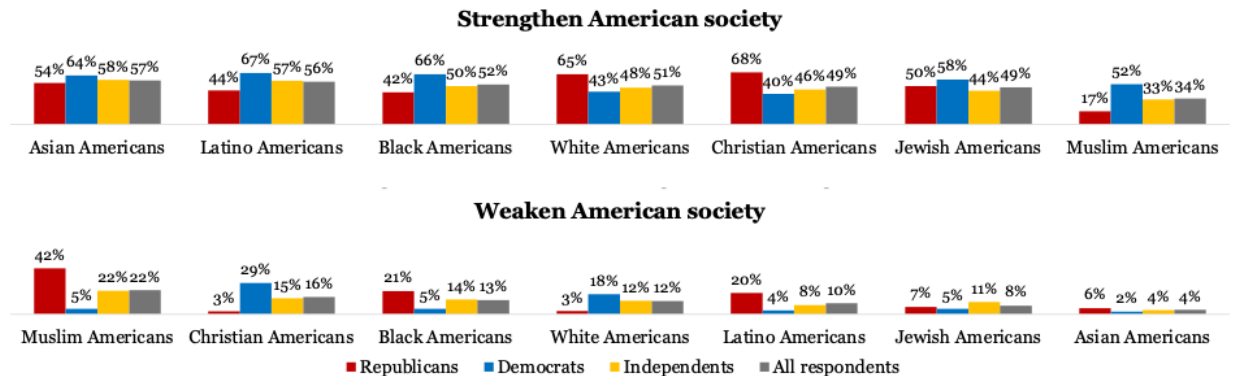


Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

As with questions probing prejudice, we also saw a sharp partisan split on attitudes toward White Americans and Christian Americans, with Republicans being more likely than Democrats to view both groups as strengthening American society. Most Republicans said that White Americans and Christian Americans strengthened American society (65% and 68%, respectively), while only 43% of Democrats said the same of White Americans and 40% said the same of Christian Americans. Asian Americans were the only group that most Democrats, Republicans, and independents said strengthened American society.

Republicans Were Significantly More Likely Than Democrats to View White Americans and Christian Americans as Strengthening American Society

Q. Would you say that, in general, the number of [...] strengthen or weaken American society?

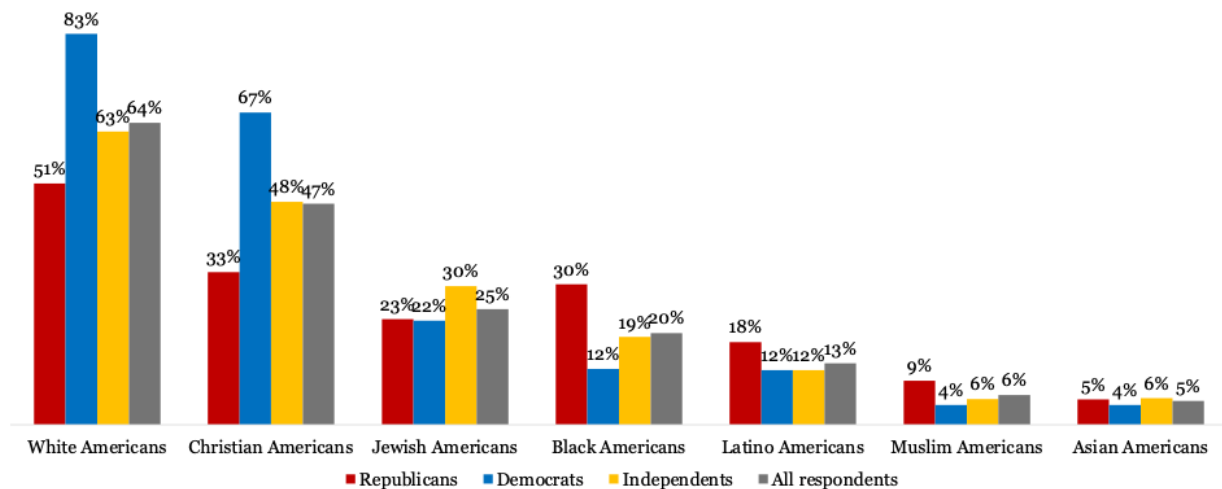


Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

To examine the degree of influence that respondents said different racial and religious groups had on American politics, we included the following question: “How much power do you believe each of the following groups has when it comes to influencing U.S. politics?” Overall, Muslim Americans were among the least likely (6%) to be perceived as having “a great deal” of influence in American politics, second only to Asian Americans (5%). By contrast, a quarter of respondents perceived Jewish Americans as having “a great deal” of influence, while White Americans (64%) and Christian Americans (47%) were the most likely to be viewed as having a “great deal” of influence in American politics. Partisan divides were more significant in shaping perceptions of the influence of White Americans, Christian Americans, and Black Americans. 83% of Democrats said that White Americans had a “great deal” of influence and 67% of Democrats said the same of Christian Americans, while 51% and 33% of Republicans said the same, respectively. Republicans (30%) were more likely than Democrats (12%) to say Black Americans had “a great deal” of power to influence American politics.

Muslim Americans Were Among the Least Likely to Be Perceived as Having Influence in U.S. Politics

Q. How much power do you believe each of the following groups has when it comes to influencing U.S. politics?
(Those that said “A great deal”)



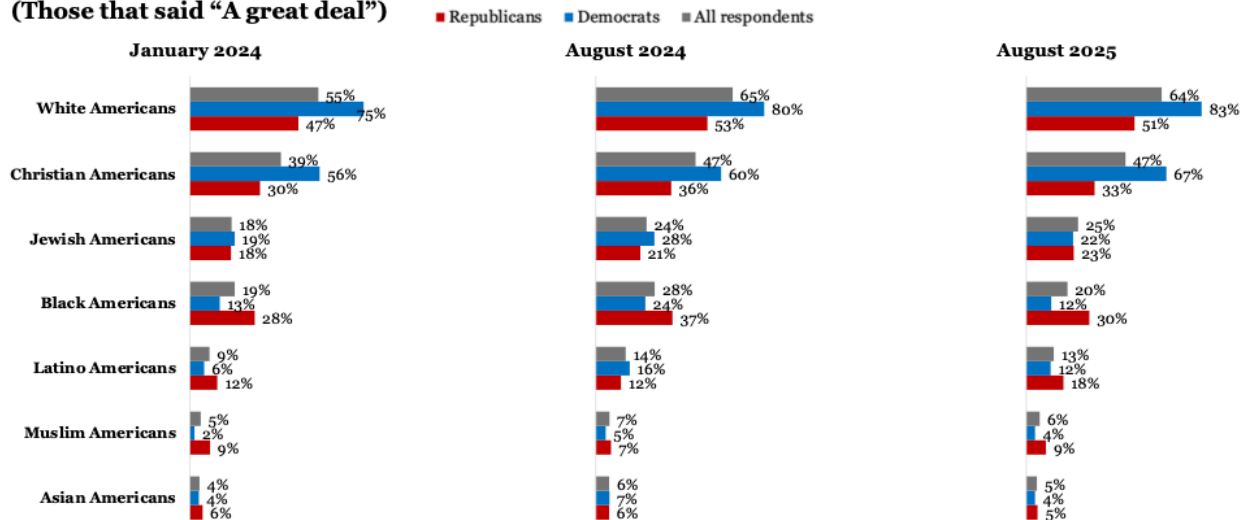
Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Between January 2024 and August 2025, there was an increase in the proportion of total respondents who viewed Jewish Americans as having a “great deal” of influence in American politics, marking a 7-percentage-point increase (from 18% to 24%). We also found a similar pattern along party lines. By contrast, perceptions of Muslim Americans as having a “great deal” of influence in U.S. politics among total respondents and across partisan lines remained low and unchanged between 2024 and 2025. There was also a notable increase in the share of respondents who viewed Christian Americans and White

Americans as having “a great deal” of influence in U.S. politics. Among total respondents, those who said that Christian Americans had “a great deal” of influence increased by 8 percentage points (from 39% to 47%), and those who said White Americans had “a great deal” of influence increased by 9 percentage points (from 55% to 64%).

Between 2024 and 2025, There Was a Notable Increase in Respondents Who Said Christian Americans and White Americans Had “A great deal” of Influence in U.S. Politics

Q. How much power do you believe each of the following groups has when it comes to influencing U.S. politics? (Those that said “A great deal”)



Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

College Education and Attitudes Toward Jews and Muslims

In recent months, the Trump administration has intensified its accusations that U.S. universities are responsible for a surge in antisemitism on U.S. campuses, following the Gaza war and the wave of pro-Palestinian college protests calling for a ceasefire. In [Brookings](#) and [Lawfare](#) pieces published in May and June, we reported and analyzed findings from a survey we fielded in May 2025 examining U.S. public opinion on campus protests. We found that Americans were more likely to think that campus protests were shaped by concerns about Israeli policies in Gaza rather than by antisemitism. We also noted that although Republicans were more likely than Democrats to view campus protests as driven by antisemitism, younger Republicans were significantly less likely than older ones to share these views.

In this report, drawing on our latest survey, we further examined the relationship between college education and attitudes toward Jews and antisemitism, as well as attitudes toward Muslims and Islamophobia. Overall, college-educated Americans were

more favorable toward both Jewish people and Muslim people, more likely to see these groups as strengthening U.S. society, and more likely to perceive rising prejudice against them. College-educated respondents also expressed different views about what constituted antisemitism, agreeing strongly that attitudes against Jews or against Judaism were antisemitic, while being more likely to disagree that attitudes against Zionism and against Israeli policies were antisemitic. By contrast, non-college-educated respondents showed relatively lower favorability, greater uncertainty, and less differentiation across these categories. Notably, both groups saw Jewish people more positively than Muslim people and were more likely to think Jewish Americans strengthened society relative to Muslim Americans. Finally, compared to when these questions were probed in 2023, respondents in 2025 - especially non-college-educated ones - were significantly less uncertain and more likely to take clearer positions on how the label “antisemitic” was used in American political discourse.

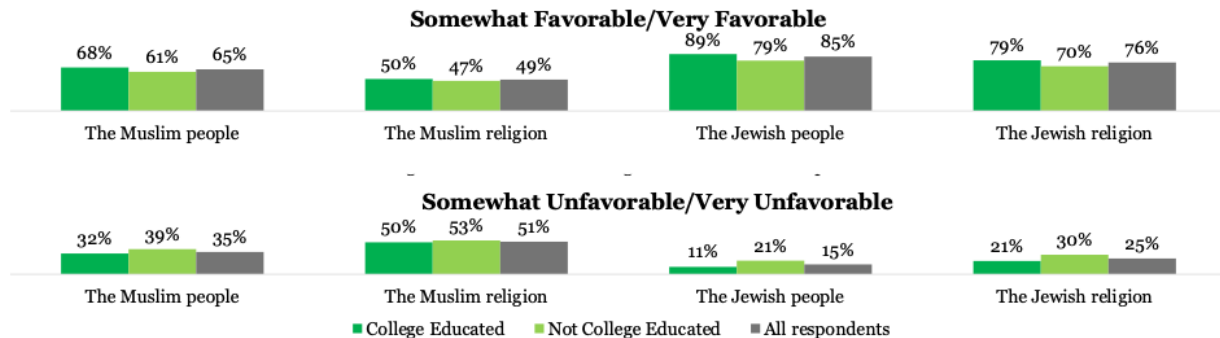
These findings reinforce and echo findings we documented in previous pieces, including the ones published at [Brookings](#) and [Lawfare](#). A recent [survey](#) conducted by the University of Michigan’s Center for Political Studies on American stereotypes, including those concerning Jewish and Muslim Americans, also found results largely similar to ours.

On the questions that probe respondents' attitudes towards Muslim people and Islam and towards Jewish people and Judaism, we found that college-educated respondents were significantly more likely than non-college-educated respondents to have favorable attitudes toward the Jewish people and religion. Eighty-nine percent of those with a college education saw the Jewish people favorably, a 10-percentage-point difference from the 79% of those without a college education that said the same. Similarly, 79% of those with a college education saw the Jewish religion favorably, while 70% of those without a college education said the same.

Both college-educated and non-college-educated respondents were overwhelmingly more likely to have favorable attitudes toward the Jewish people and religion compared to the Muslim people and religion. Half of college-educated respondents had favorable attitudes toward the Muslim religion, slightly more than the 47% of those without a college education who said the same. 68% of those with college education had favorable attitudes toward the Muslim people, while 61% of those without college education said the same.

College-Educated Respondents Were More Likely to Favor Both Jewish and Muslim People and Judaism and Islam; However, They Remained Overall More Favorable of Jewish People and Judaism Than Muslim People and Islam

Q. What is your attitude about each of the following?

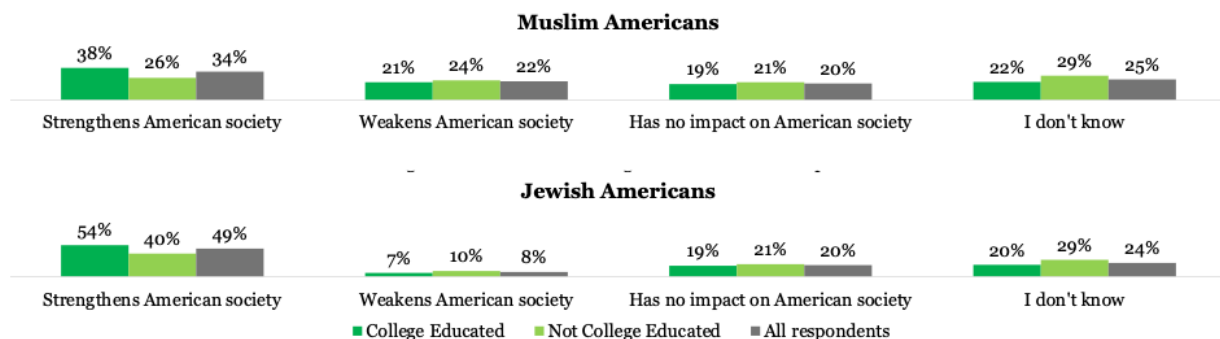


Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

On perceptions of the extent to which Jewish and Muslim Americans strengthened American society, while both college-educated and non-college-educated respondents were substantially more likely to think that Jewish Americans strengthened American society compared to Muslim Americans, we found that college-educated respondents were significantly more likely than non-college-educated ones to say that Jewish Americans strengthened American society, marking a 14-percentage-point difference between the two groups (54% vs. 40%, respectively). College-educated respondents were also more likely than non-college-educated ones to say that Muslim Americans strengthened American society, marking a 12-percentage-point difference between the two groups (38% vs. 26%, respectively).

Both College and Non-College-Educated Respondents Were More Likely to Think Jewish Americans Strengthened American Society Compared to Muslim Americans

Q. Would you say that, in general, the number of [...]?

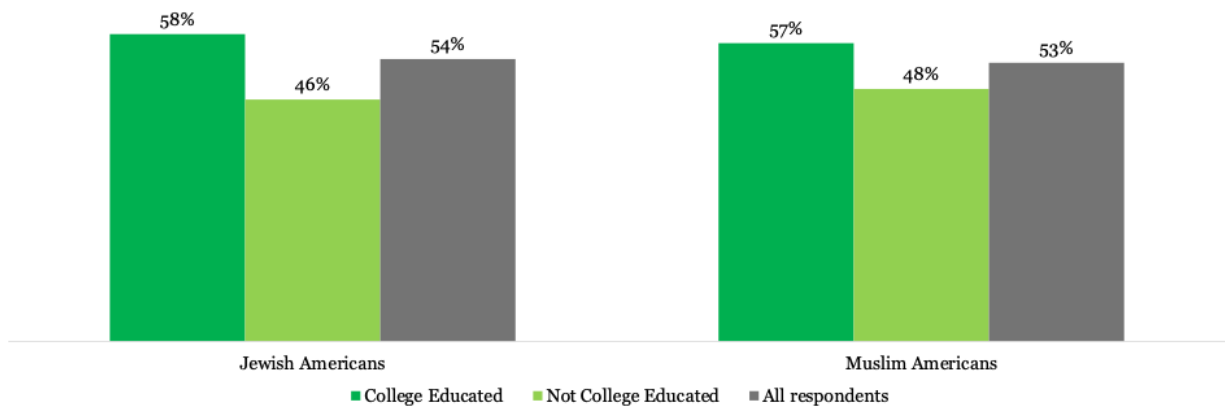


Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

When asked about perceived prejudice against different racial and religious groups, college-educated respondents were notably more likely than non-college-educated respondents to say that Jewish Americans faced more prejudice today compared to 5 years ago, marking a 12-percentage-point difference (58% vs. 46%, respectively). We saw a similar pattern when we asked college and non-college-educated respondents about perceived prejudice against Muslim Americans (57% vs. 48%, respectively)

Most College-Educated Respondents Said That Jewish and Muslim Americans Experienced More Prejudice

Q. Compared to 5 years ago and based on your own experience, including interactions with others, how much racial/ethnic/religious prejudice (such as statements that reveal prejudice against a person because of their race, ethnicity, or religion), if any, would you say exists against each of the following groups in the U.S. today? **(Those that said, “A lot more” or “A little more”)**

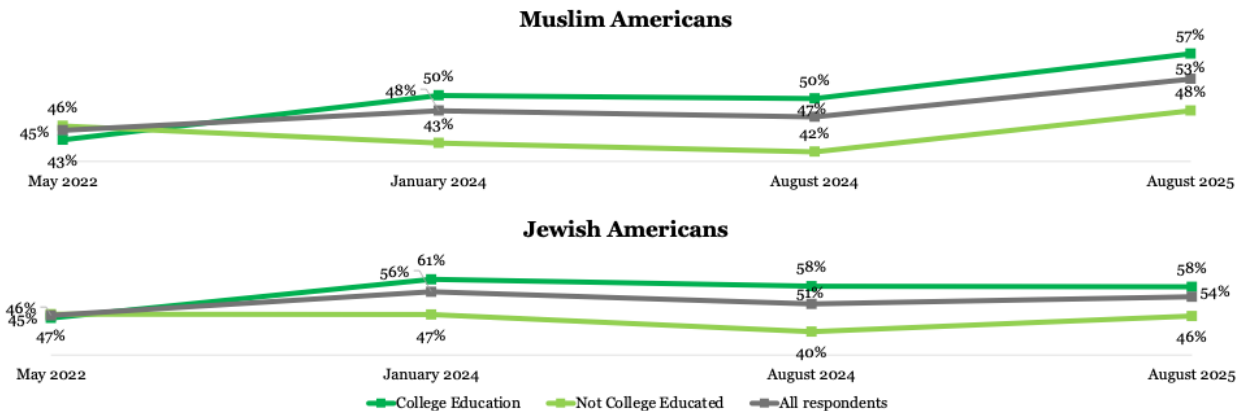


Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Compared to May 2022, there was a 14-percentage-point increase, from 43% to 57%, of college-educated respondents who said there was more prejudice against Muslim Americans and a 13-percentage-point increase, from 45% to 58% who said there was more prejudice against Jewish Americans. Among non-college-educated respondents who said there was more prejudice of Muslim Americans, we observed a 4-percentage-point decrease, from 46% in 2022 to 42% in 2024, before a 6-percentage-point increase to 48% in 2025. Meanwhile, 47% of non-college-educated respondents in 2022 said there was more prejudice against Jewish Americans, decreasing to 40% in 2024, before rising to 46% in 2025.

Since 2024, Both Respondents With and Without College Education Increasingly Said Muslim Americans Faced More Prejudice, While Only Those Without College Education Said Jewish Americans Faced More Prejudice

Q. Compared to 5 years ago and based on your own experience, including interactions with others, how much racial/ethnic/religious prejudice (such as statements that reveal prejudice against a person because of their race, ethnicity, or religion), if any, would you say exists against each of the following groups in the U.S. today? **(Those that said, “A lot more” or “A little more”)**



Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

There were notable differences between college-educated and non-college-educated respondents on whether attitudes against Jews, Judaism, Zionism, and Israeli policies constituted antisemitism. Those without college education were significantly more likely than their college-educated counterparts to opt for “I don’t know” in their answers. 50% of non-college-educated respondents said “I don’t know” whether attitudes against Zionism were antisemitic compared to 35% of their college-educated counterparts. Regarding attitudes against Israeli policies, 35% of non-college-educated respondents said “I don’t know” while 21% of college-educated ones said the same. On attitudes against Judaism, 40% of non-college-educated respondents said “I don’t know” compared to 18% of college-educated ones who said the same.

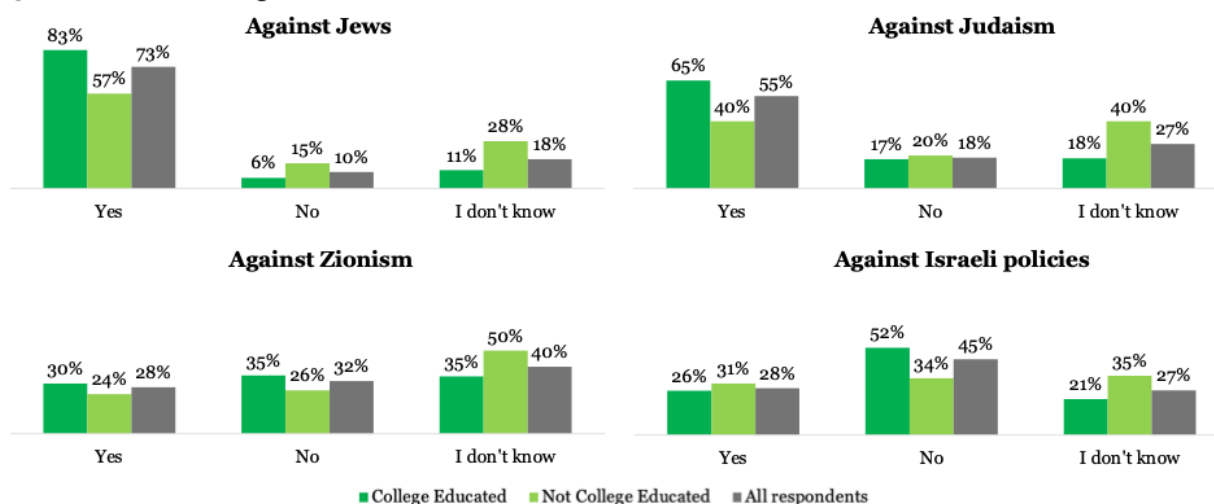
Most college-educated and non-college-educated respondents agreed that attitudes against Jews constituted antisemitism, albeit with a 26-percentage-point difference (83% vs. 57%, respectively). College-educated respondents were also significantly more likely than non-college-educated respondents to agree that attitudes against Judaism were antisemitic (65% vs. 40%, respectively). On whether attitudes against Zionism and against Israeli policies were antisemitic, answers of both college and non-college-educated respondents were opposing. College-educated respondents (30%) were slightly more likely than non-college-educated respondents (24%) to agree that attitudes against Zionism were antisemitic with a 6-percentage-point difference between the two. Conversely, non-college-educated respondents (31%) were slightly more likely than

college-educated respondents (26%) to agree that attitudes against Israeli policies were antisemitic with a 5-percentage-point difference.

Notably, over half of college-educated respondents said that attitudes against Israeli policies did not constitute antisemitism and 35% said the same about attitudes against Zionism. These findings strongly support and reinforce our previous finding that Americans were more likely to view college campus protests as driven by critical attitudes against Israel rather than antisemitism.

Respondents Without a College Education Were Significantly More Likely to Express Uncertainty About What Attitudes Constituted Antisemitism

Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism?



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Between June 2023 and August 2025, we saw significant decreases in the share of college-educated and non-college-educated respondents who said “I don’t know” when asked which attitudes constitute antisemitism.

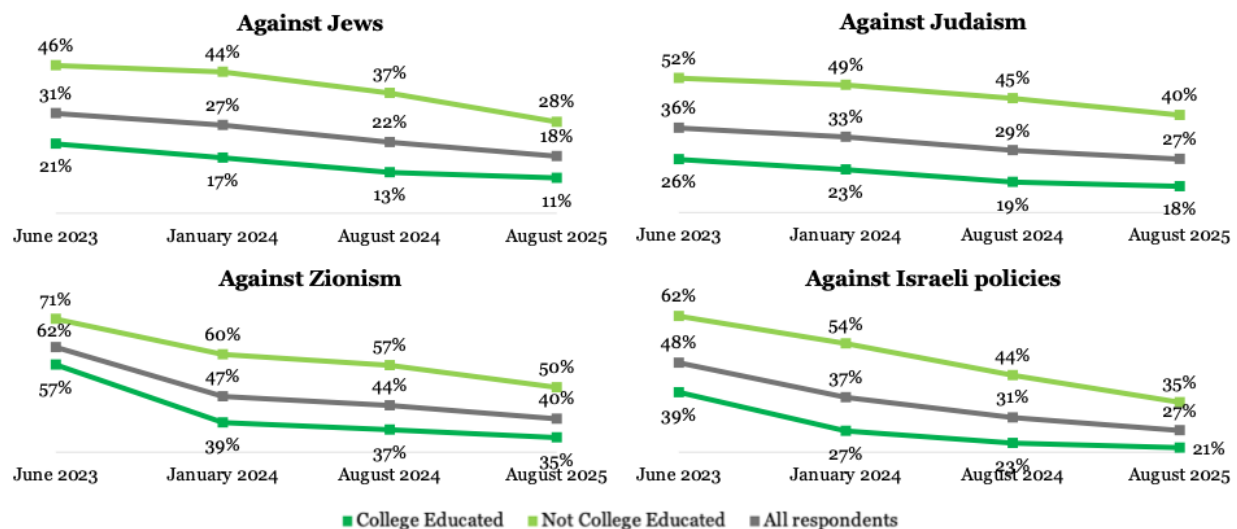
A majority of non-college-educated respondents in 2023 said “I don’t know” if attitudes against Judaism (52%), against Zionism (71%), and against Israeli policies (62%) were antisemitic. Between 2023 and 2025, there was a 12-percentage-point decrease of non-college-educated respondents who said “I don’t know” if attitudes against Judaism were antisemitic, a 21-percentage-point decrease of those who were unsure if attitudes against Zionism were antisemitic, and a 27-percentage-point decrease of those who were unsure if attitudes against Israeli policies were antisemitic.

College-educated respondents showed a similar decrease in choosing “I don’t know” responses across all attitudes, but to a lesser degree for attitudes against Jews (from 21%

to 11%) and attitudes against Judaism (from 26% to 18%). However, there was a pronounced decrease of 22 percentage points in the share of college-educated respondents who said they did not know if attitudes against Zionism were antisemitic and an 18-percentage-point decrease of those who said the same about attitudes against Israeli policies.

Between 2023 and 2025, Uncertainty Over What Attitudes Constituted Antisemitism Has Declined Significantly for College and Non-College-Educated Respondents

Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism? (Those that said “I don’t know”)



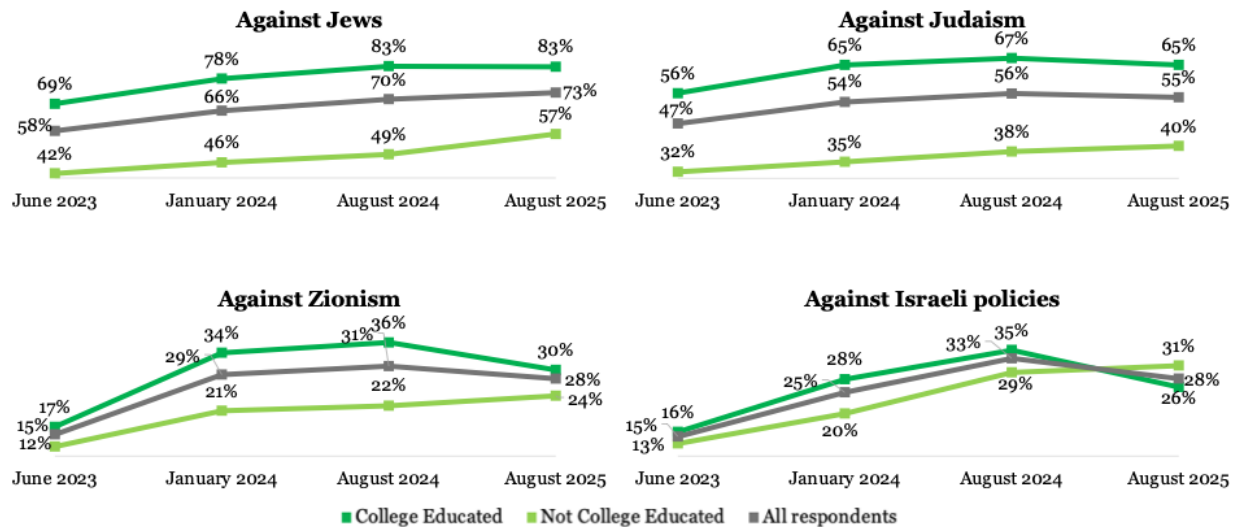
Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

In June 2023, 17% of those with a college education said attitudes against Zionism constituted antisemitism, increasing 19 percentage points to 36% in August 2024, then dropping to 30% in August 2025. At the same time, 16% of those with a college education said attitudes against Israeli policies constituted antisemitism, increasing 19 percentage points to 35% in August 2024, then dropping 9 percentage points to 26% in August 2025.

Meanwhile, those without a college education increasingly said all attitudes constituted antisemitism. Between June 2023 and August 2025, among non-college-educated respondents, there was a 15-percentage-point increase (from 42% to 57%) in those who said attitudes against Jews constituted antisemitism, an 8-percentage-point increase (from 32% to 40%) in those who said attitudes against Judaism constituted antisemitism, a 12-percentage-point increase (from 12% to 24%,) in those who said attitudes against Zionism constituted antisemitism, and most notably, an 18-percentage-point increase (from 13% to 31%) in those who said attitudes against Israeli policies constituted antisemitism.

Between 2023–2025, College-Educated Respondents Showed a Shift in Whether They Viewed Attitudes against Zionism and against Israeli Policies as Antisemitic

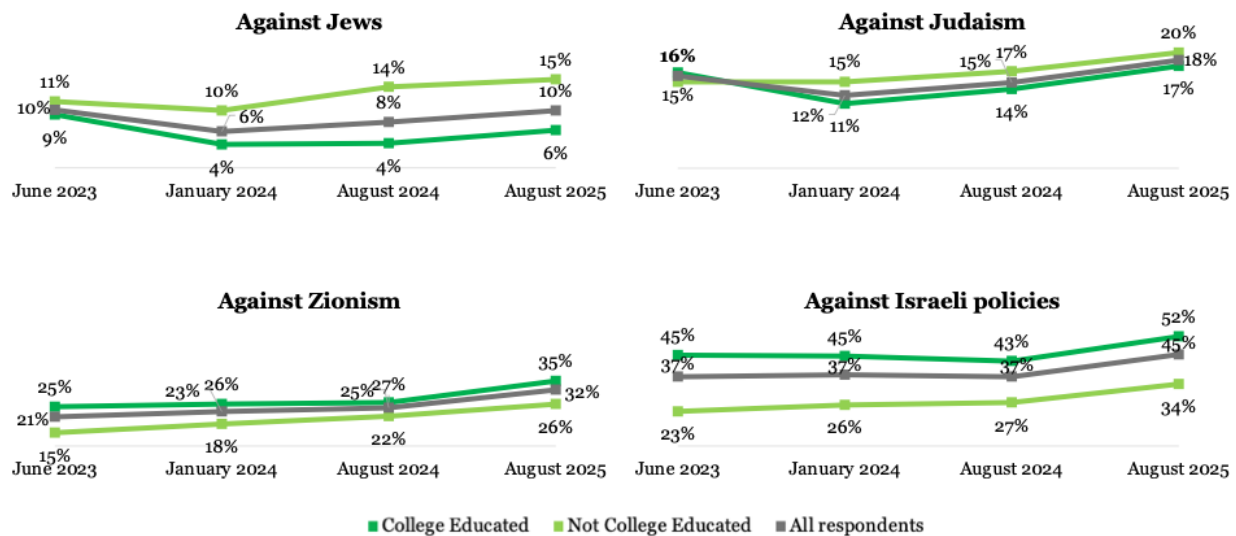
Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism? (Those that said “Yes”)



Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Between 2023–2025, Both College and Non-College-Educated Respondents Increasingly Said Attitudes against Zionism and against Israeli Policies Did Not Constitute Antisemitism

Q. Which of the following attitudes constitute antisemitism? (Those that said “No”)



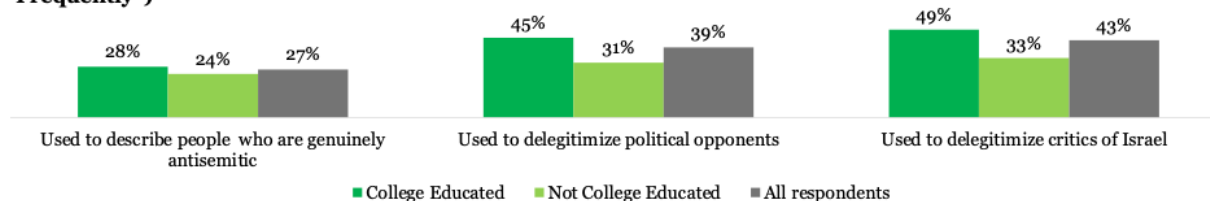
Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

On the question of respondents’ impression of how the label “antisemitic” was used in American political discourse, we found that college-educated respondents were significantly more likely than non-college-educated respondents to think the label was used frequently to delegitimize political opponents and delegitimize critics of Israel.

Forty-five percent of college-educated respondents said the label “antisemitic” was used frequently to delegitimize political opponents, while only 31% of non-college-educated respondents said the same thing, marking a 14-percentage-point difference. Nearly half of college-educated respondents also said that the label was used frequently to delegitimize critics of Israel, whereas only a third of non-college-educated respondents felt similarly, marking a 16-percentage-point difference. On whether the label “antisemitic” was used frequently to describe people who were genuinely antisemitic, 28% of college-educated respondents and 24% of non-college-educated respondents agreed.

Significantly More College-Educated Respondents Than Non-College-Educated Respondents Said the Label “Antisemitic” Was Used Frequently to Delegitimize Political Opponents and Critics of Israel

Q. What is your impression of how labeling people antisemitic is used in the American political discourse? **(Those who said “Frequently”)**



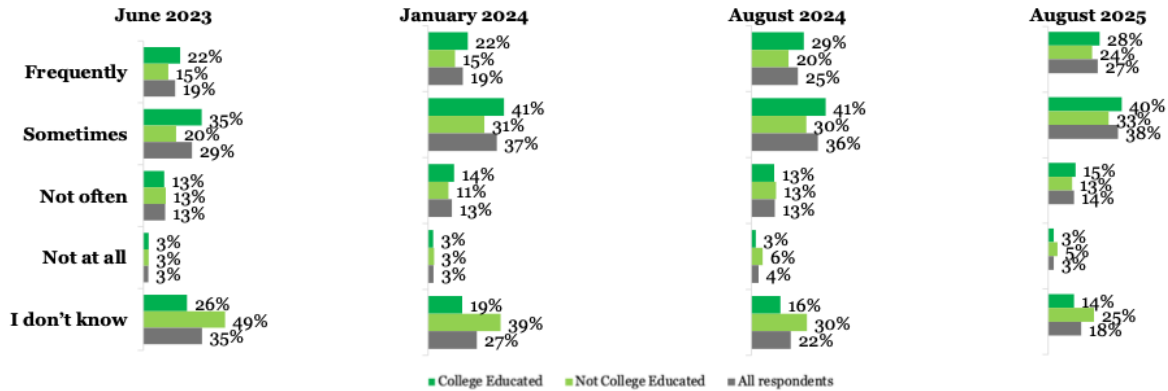
Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Compared to previous polling in 2023, we saw that in 2025 the percentage of respondents who opted for “I don’t know” had shrunk substantially. Significantly fewer college and particularly non-college-educated respondents said “I don’t know” when asked about how the label “antisemitic” was used in American political discourse. As we noted earlier in this report, this reoccurring pattern in our recent findings strongly suggests that American respondents in recent years have become more opinionated on these issues as their exposure to news has increased.

We also found that, between 2023 and 2025, more college-educated respondents (by 6 percentage points) and more non-college-educated respondents (by 9 percentage points) said the label “antisemitic” was frequently used in American political discourse to describe people who were genuinely antisemitic. There was a 21-percentage-point increase from 2023 to 2025 for college-educated respondents, and a 16-percentage-point increase for non-college-educated respondents who said the label was used frequently to delegitimize political opponents. Meanwhile, in regard to the term’s use to frequently delegitimize critics of Israel, there was a 22-percentage-point increase from 2023 to 2025 for college-educated respondents, and a 19-percentage-point increase for non-college-educated respondents.

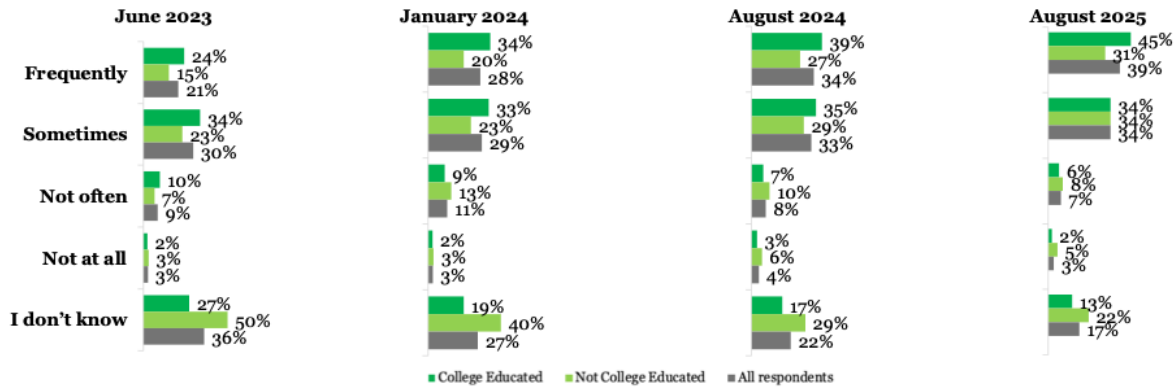
Between 2023 and 2025, Uncertainty About How the Label “Antisemitic” Was Used in American Political Discourse Decreased Significantly Among College-Educated and Non-College-Educated Respondents

Q. What is your impression of how labeling people antisemitic is used in the American political discourse: Used to describe people who are genuinely antisemitic?



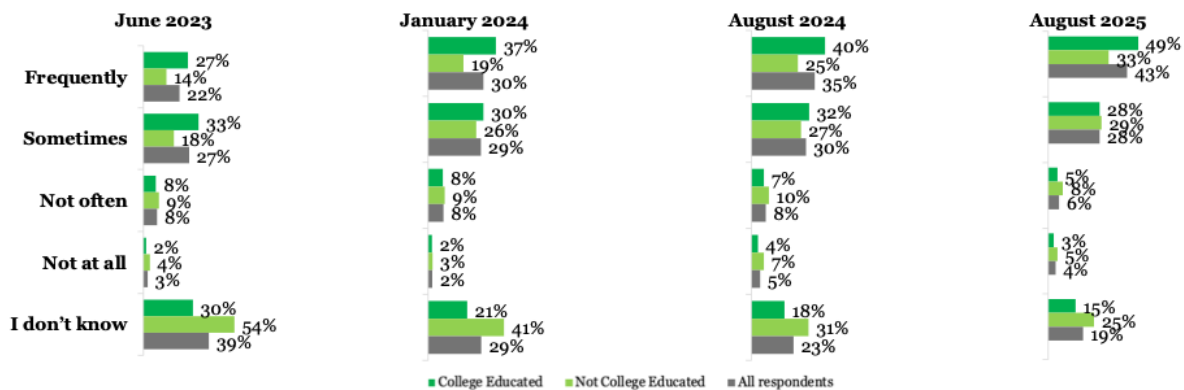
Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Q. What is your impression of how labeling people antisemitic is used in the American political discourse: Used to delegitimize political opponents?



Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Q. What is your impression of how labeling people antisemitic is used in the American political discourse: Used to delegitimize critics of Israel?



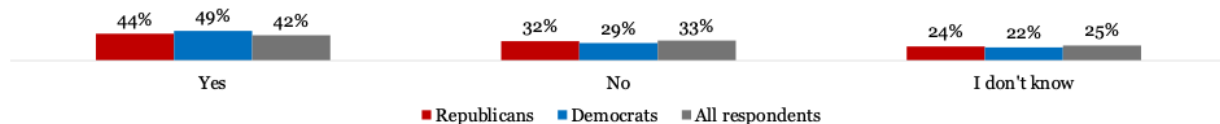
Source for latest poll: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Democracy and Human Rights as U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives

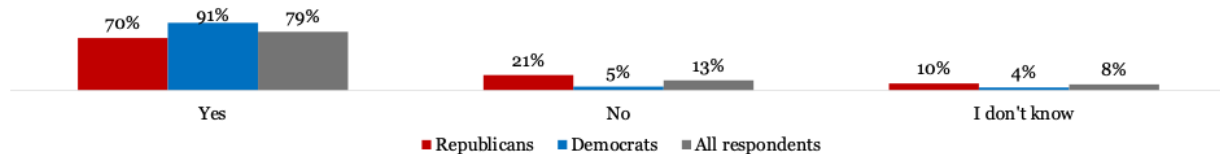
We asked respondents if “spreading democracy globally” and “defending human rights globally” should be goals of American foreign policy. While democracy and human rights are two topics often aligned in political discourse, Americans had very different perspectives of which should be a goal of U.S. foreign policy. We observed a 37-percentage-point difference between those who said defending human rights should be a goal of U.S. foreign policy and those who said the same for spreading democracy. 42% of respondents said “yes” when asked whether they supported spreading democracy globally, 33% said no, and 25% said they did not know. On the other hand, 79% of respondents said that defending human rights globally should be a goal of U.S. foreign policy, with only 13% who said no and 8% did not know.

Significantly More Respondents Wanted Defending Human Rights to Be a Goal of American Foreign Policy Than Wanted the Same of Spreading Democracy

Q. Do you believe that spreading democracy globally should be a goal of American foreign policy?



Q. Do you believe that defending human rights globally should be a goal of American foreign policy?



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Among those who answered “yes” to whether spreading democracy and/or defending human rights should be a goal of American foreign policy, we asked a follow-up question probing their opinion on the best way to achieve this goal. A plurality of respondents (46%) said the best way for the U.S. to help spread democracy globally is “by setting a good example,” followed second with “by working through international organizations such as the United Nations” (31% of all respondents). All other methods received support from 11% of respondents or less, including the use of foreign aid as an incentive, economic boycotts, military force, “other,” and “I don’t know.”

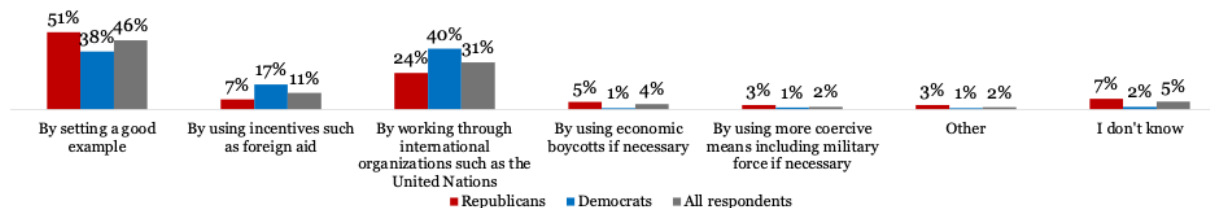
When we asked respondents, “In your opinion, what is the best way for the U.S. to defend human rights globally?” only 25% of respondents said “by setting a good example.” Instead, a plurality said “by working through international organizations such as the United Nations.” We previously published an extended [commentary](#) based on an

analysis in [Brookings](#) analyzing American support for international organizations in the current political environment. With defending human rights, as with spreading democracy, 11% of respondents said, “by using incentives such as foreign aid.”

Returning to the question of the best way for the U.S. to spread democracy globally, a majority of Republicans, 51%, said “by setting a good example,” while 38% of Democrats said the same, a 13-percentage-point difference, suggesting that Democrats may not support the idea that currently the U.S. is capable of setting a good example of a democracy, a proposition that we probe later in the report. It is worth noting that when we asked this question in January 2024, we saw a majority of respondents and plurality of Democrats who said “setting a good example” was the best way to spread democracy. Overall, 52% of respondents, including 54% of Republicans and 49% of Democrats, said the same in January 2024. There was a 6-percentage-point drop in overall respondents and 9-percentage-point drop in Democrats who said by “setting a good example” between January 2024 and August 2025. Instead, in August 2025, a plurality of Democrats (40%) now said “working through international organizations” was the best way to help spread democracy. As for the question of “defending human rights globally” in 2025, a majority of Democrats, 52%, and a plurality of Republicans, 32%, said by “working through international organizations,” changing minimally by roughly 3 percentage points each from responses in January 2024.

A Majority of Republicans Said Setting a Good Example Was the Best Way for the U.S. to Spread Democracy Globally, While a Plurality of Democrats Said Working Through International Organizations Was the Best Way

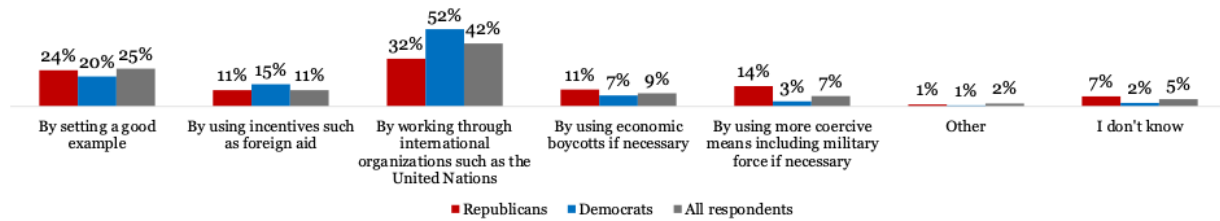
Q. In your opinion what is the best way for the U.S. to help spread democracy globally? (Among those who said that spreading democracy globally should be a goal of American foreign policy)



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

A Majority of Democrats and a Plurality of Republicans Said Working with International Organizations Is the Best Way for the U.S. to Defend Human Rights Globally

Q. In your opinion what is the best way for the U.S. to defend human rights globally? (Among those who said that defending human rights globally should be a goal of American foreign policy)



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

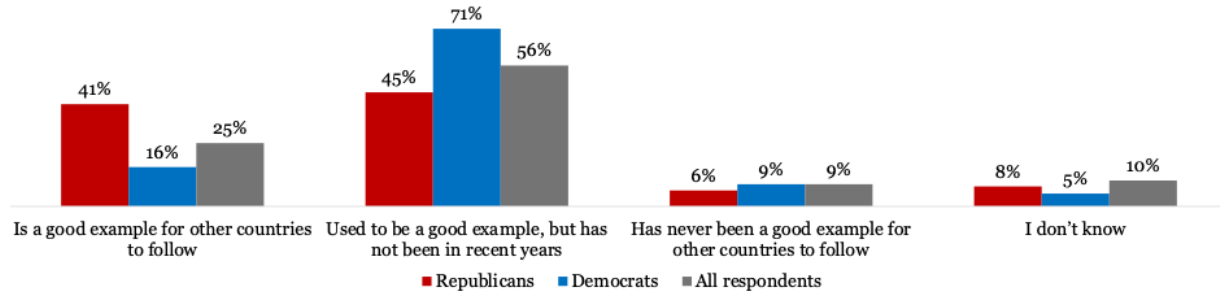
Partisan Perceptions of Democracy

Probing perceptions of democracy and human rights in the United States, we asked respondents which of the following statements came closest to their view: Democracy in the United States “is a good example for other countries to follow,” “used to be a good example, but has not been in recent years,” “has never been a good example for other countries to follow,” and “I don’t know.” The majority of respondents (56%) said that the United States used to be a good example, a quarter said the United States was a good example, and 9% said the United States has never been a good example. Ten percent said they did not know. We also found large partisan differences in these responses, with an overwhelming majority (71%) of Democrats saying the U.S. used to be a good example and 16% saying the U.S. was a good example. While a plurality of Republicans (45%) said the United States used to be a good example, 41% said the United States was a good example, a 25-percentage-point difference from Democrats who said the same.

It is notable that a larger percentage of Black Americans (17%) said the United States has never been a good example for other countries to follow, compared to 5% of White Americans and 13% of Hispanic Americans. In addition, only 13% of Black Americans said the United States was a good example for other countries to follow, compared to 28% for White Americans and 25% for Hispanic Americans, while 51% of Black Americans said it used to be a good example, compared to 58% for White Americans and 54% for Hispanic Americans. Black Americans were also more likely to say that they did not know (19%) compared to 9% of White Americans and 8% of Hispanic Americans.

In 2025, a Majority of Democrats and a Plurality of Republicans Said the United States Used to Be a Good Example of Democracy, But Has Not Been in Recent Years

Q. Which statement comes closest to your view, even if none are exactly right? Democracy in the United States is...



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Compared to our January 2024 poll, when this question was last probed, we observed significant partisan shifts but little change among overall respondents. In January 2024, 25% of total respondents said the U.S. was a good example and 54% said it used to be, nearly identical to the results from August 2025. However, in January 2024 when President Biden was in office, only 30% of Republicans said that the U.S. was a good example to follow, an 11-percentage-point difference from the 41% who said the same in 2025. Meanwhile, 28% of Democrats said the U.S. was a good example in January 2024, decreasing by 12 percentage points to 16% in August 2025. Among those who said the U.S. “used to be a good example, but has not been in recent years” in 2024, 59% were Republicans, a difference of 14 percentage points from our 2025 poll, and 55% were Democrats, a difference of 16 percentage points from the 2025 poll. These partisan shifts coincided with the change in party identification of the president in power. Republicans showed more favorable views of the status of democracy in the U.S. during Trump’s presidency than before.

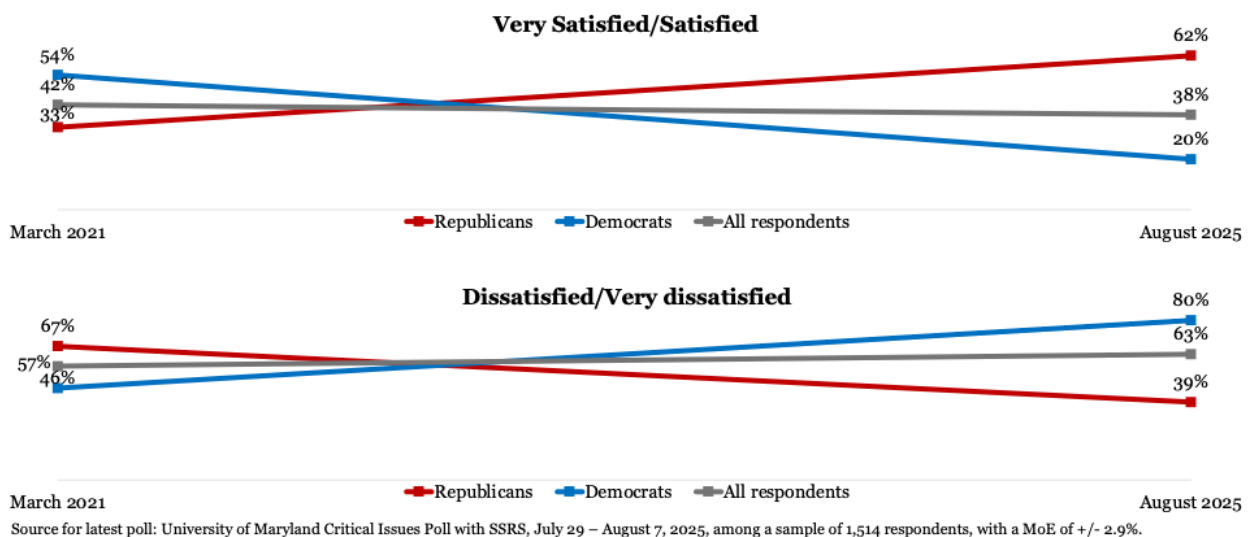
We specifically asked respondents about their level of satisfaction “with the way democracy works in the United States” and found similar partisan trends. A plurality of respondents (42%) said dissatisfied, 21% said very dissatisfied, 33% said satisfied, and 5% said very satisfied. Where 52% of Republicans said “satisfied,” only 17% of Democrats said the same, a difference of 35 percentage points. Meanwhile, 52% of Democrats said “dissatisfied” and 32% of Republicans said the same, a smaller but still significant difference of 20 percentage points. Ten percent of Republicans said they were “very satisfied” and 3% of Democrats said the same, while 28% of Democrats said “very dissatisfied” and 7% of Republicans said the same.

We previously probed this question in March 2021, shortly after the beginning of President Biden’s first term. Once again, we observed dramatic partisan shifts in

perceptions of the status of democracy between March 2021 and August 2025, as the party in control of the White House changed from Democrat to Republican. In March 2021, only 29% of Republicans said they were “satisfied” with the way democracy works in the U.S., a 23-percentage-point difference from 2025, and 47% of Democrats said the same, a 30-percentage-point difference from 2025. On the other hand, in 2021, 41% of Republicans were dissatisfied, a 10-percentage-point difference from in 2025, and 36% of Democrats were dissatisfied, a 16-percentage-point difference.

Satisfaction with the State of Democracy in the United States Was Highly Partisan, Depending on the Party in Power

Q. In general, would you say that you are [very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied] with the way democracy works in the United States?



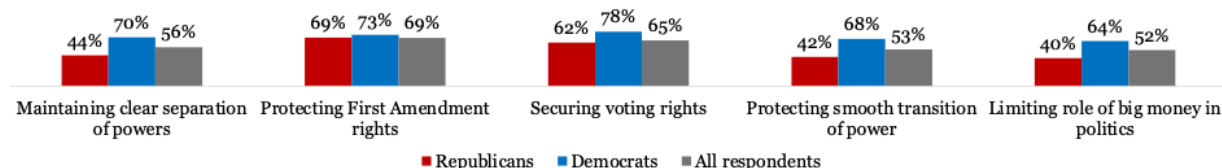
We asked respondents to rate their feeling of the importance of five issues (maintaining clear separation of powers, protecting First Amendment rights, securing voting rights, protecting smooth transition of power, and limiting role of big money in politics) for “guarding democracy in the United States” on a scale of 1 (“not at all important”) to 10 (“indispensable”).

For each issue, a majority of respondents rated the importance as “indispensable.” The issue marked “indispensable” by most respondents was “Protecting First Amendment rights,” with 69% of respondents, including 69% of Republicans and 73% of Democrats, saying “indispensable.” “Limiting the role of big money in politics” was the issue least likely to receive a score of 10: 52% of respondents said the issue was indispensable for guarding democracy in the U.S., with 40% of Republicans and 64% of Democrats who said the same, a partisan difference of 24 percentage points. Similarly, when asked about “protecting smooth transition of power” and “maintaining clear separation of powers,” 53% and 56% of total respondents said the importance for protecting

democracy was indispensable, respectively. Notably, there is a 26-percentage-point difference between Republicans and Democrats who said indispensable when asked about “protecting smooth transition of power,” and a 33-percentage-point difference between the parties when asked about “maintaining clear separation of powers.”

Among All Respondents and Republicans, Protecting First Amendment Rights Was Considered the Most Indispensable Issue for Guarding U.S. Democracy; Democrats Said Securing Voting Rights Was the Most Indispensable

Q. On a scale of 1-10, where 1 is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT and 10 is INDISPENSABLE, please tell me how you feel about the importance of the following for guarding democracy in the United States. **(Those that said ‘10,’ indispensable).**



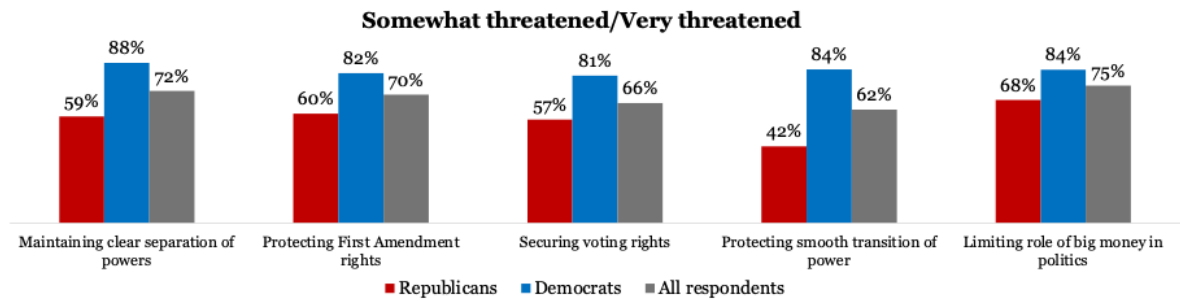
Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

To further explore public opinion on each of the issues mentioned above, we also asked respondents: “Looking at the current state of American democracy, how do you assess the condition of each of the following?” A majority of respondents and Democrats said each issue was threatened (“somewhat threatened”/ “very threatened”). Likewise, a majority of Republicans said each issue was threatened, with the notable exception of the 42% who said “protecting smooth transition of power” was threatened.

Similar to the previously observed large partisan gaps on the importance of these issues for guarding democracy in the U.S., we also observed partisan differences on whether these issues were threatened in our current state of democracy. As mentioned, while only 42% of Republicans said “protecting smooth transition of power” was threatened, 84% of Democrats said the same, making the largest partisan difference among all five issues of 42 percentage points. Similarly, we saw a 29-percentage-point difference between Republicans (59%) who said “maintaining clear separation of powers” was threatened and Democrats (88%) who said the same. Where more Democrats said separation of powers was threatened than all other issues, more Republicans said “limiting role of big money in politics” was threatened compared to other issues. This is interesting given that only 40% of Republicans, the lowest number of all issues probed, gave the issue a “10,” or indispensable rating, on the scale of importance in guarding American democracy. This suggests that for some Republicans, while they perceive limiting the role of big money in politics as being under threat, it is not necessarily of great importance for guarding democracy.

Most Respondents and Republicans Said Limiting the Role of Big Money in Politics Was the Most Threatened Issue; Most Democrats Said Maintaining Clear Separation of Powers Was the Most Threatened Issue

Q. Looking at the current state of American democracy, how do you assess the condition of each of the following?



Source: University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll with SSRS, July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, with a MoE of +/- 2.9%.

Methodology

June 2023

The survey was carried out June 21–27, 2023 among 1,439 respondents, with a margin of error of +/- 2.9%. The survey was conducted using Ipsos' KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based online panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, Ipsos provides at no cost a laptop/netbook and ISP connection. People who already have computers and Internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.

July–August 2024

The survey was conducted by SSRS via their probability-based opinion panel among U.S. adults aged 18 and older. Data collection was conducted from July 26 to August 1, 2024, among a sample of 1,912 respondents, with a margin of error of +/- 3.0%. Among these, n=1,510 were from the General Population, n=202 were from an oversample of Black adults, and n=200 were from an oversample of Hispanic adults. The survey was conducted via web in English and data were weighted to represent the target population of U.S. adults ages 18 or older. For this study, there were four weights provided: three weights were computed by race (Black, Hispanic, and White/Other) and there was one overall, final weight computed.

July–August 2025

The survey was carried out July 29 – August 7, 2025, among a sample of 1,514 respondents, including an oversample of young adults, ages 18-34. Overall, the sample included n=605 ages 18-34 and n=909 ages 35 and older. The survey was conducted from the SSRS Opinion Panel among U.S. adults age 18 and older. Data collection was conducted via the web in English and data were weighted to represent the residential adult population of the United States as well as the residential adult population of the United States under the age of 35. Therefore, two weights were provided: the general population age 18+ weight (which includes the 18-34-year-old oversample weighted back into proportion) and the 18–34-year-old weight. The margin of sampling error for the entire sample is ± 2.9 and the margin of sampling error for those ages 18-34 is ± 4.9 percentage points.

Leadership for the Critical Issues Poll



Shibley Telhami is the Director of the University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll. He is also the Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland, College Park, and a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. Before coming to the University of Maryland, he taught at several universities, including the University of California at Berkeley, where he received his doctorate in political science. He has authored and edited numerous books, including one forthcoming book: *Peace Derailed: Obama, Trump, Biden, and the Decline of Diplomacy on Israel/Palestine*, 2011-2022 (co-authored). His most recent book is a co-edited with contributions volume, *The One State Reality: What is Israel/Palestine?* which was published in March 2023 with Cornell University Press. He has advised every U.S. administration from George H.W. Bush to Barack Obama. Telhami was selected by the Carnegie Corporation of New York along with the New York Times as one of the "Great Immigrants" for 2013 and the Washingtonian Magazine listed him as one of the "Most Influential People on Foreign Affairs" in both 2022 and 2023. He is also the recipient of many awards including the University of Maryland's Distinguished Service Award and the University of Maryland's Honors College Outstanding Faculty Award.



Michael Hanmer is the Associate Director of the Critical Issues Poll. He is also the Director of the Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement and a professor in the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland. He earned his PhD in Political Science at the University of Michigan in 2004. He specializes in American politics with an emphasis on voting rights, civic engagement, public opinion, and political methodology. He is the author of *Discount Voting: Voter Registration Reforms and Their Effects* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) and the co-author of *Citizens of the World: Political Engagement and Policy Attitudes of Millennials across the Globe* (Oxford University Press, 2023) and *Voting Technology: The Not-So-Simple Act of Casting a Ballot* (Brookings Institution Press, 2008). His current research investigates the expansion of voting rights, the intersection of sports and politics, how mobilization influences the use of new voting methods, vote over-reporting, how individuals evaluate the responsiveness of political leaders, and question-wording effects in surveys.



Analyst: Taib Biygautane
Doctoral Student in the
Government and Politics
Department



**Coordinator & Analyst:
Karenni Sarney**
Program Coordinator &
Executive Assistant for the
Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace
and Development

Autumn Dawn Perkey assisted in the project.

Advisory Committee for the Critical Issues Poll



Antoine Banks is Professor and the Chair of the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland. His research interests include racial and ethnic politics, emotions, political psychology, and public opinion. His book, *Anger and Racial Politics: The Emotional Foundation of Racial Attitudes in America*, published by Cambridge University Press, explores the link between emotions and racial attitudes and the consequences it has for political

preferences. His articles have appeared in journals such as *American Journal of Political Science*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Political Behavior*, *Political Analysis*, and *Political Psychology*.



Ernesto Calvo is the Director of the Interdisciplinary Lab for Computational Social Science (iLCSS) and Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland. His research centers on the study of comparative political institutions, social media, political representation, and social networks. His work lies at the intersection of big data, survey experiments, and institutions. He is the author of a

number of books on comparative institutions and social media, including *Non-Policy Politics: Rich Voters, Poor Voters, and the Diversification of Electoral Strategies* (Cambridge University Press 2019) with María Victoria Murillo. Calvo has authored over 70 publications in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe. His research has been recognized by the American Political Science Association with the Lawrence Longley Award, the Luebbert Best Article Award, and the Michael Wallerstein Award.



Janelle Wong is Professor in the Departments of Government and Politics and American Studies and a core faculty member in the Asian American Studies Program. Wong authored two books, *Immigrants, Evangelicals and Politics in an Era of Demographic Change* (2018, Russell Sage Foundation), *Democracy's Promise: Immigrants and American Civic Institutions* (2006, University of Michigan Press) and co-author of two books on Asian American politics, including *Asian American Political Participation: Emerging Constituents and their*

Political Identities (2011, Russell Sage Foundation), based on the first national, multilingual, multiethnic survey of Asian Americans. She was a co-principal investigator on the 2016 National Asian American Survey and on the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation). Wong is a Senior Researcher with AAPI Data.