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*****EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024, AT 5:00 AM ET*****

**47th BIENNIAL HARVARD YOUTH POLL: AS ELECTION IS TAKING SHAPE,
BIDEN LEADING TRUMP AMONG REGISTERED AND LIKELY VOTERS**
**Poll also finds an emerging gender gap, strong support for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza,
concerns about inflation, and nuanced views on immigration**

[Topline Results](#)

Thursday, April 18, 2024

(Cambridge, MA) - A national poll released today by the Institute of Politics (IOP) at the Harvard Kennedy School indicates that among 18-to-29-year-olds nationwide, more than half of young Americans say they will definitely be voting in the Presidential election this Fall. But findings show that among those likely voters, levels of support varied significantly among different subgroups.

The poll also finds:

- Broad support for a permanent ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war;
- Economic concerns continue to be top of mind for young voters;
- Confidence in public institutions continues to decline.

Since 2000, the Harvard Public Opinion Project (HPOP) has provided the most comprehensive look at young Americans' political opinions and voting trends. It provides essential insight into the concerns of young Americans at a time when the nation is confronting numerous challenges both at home and abroad. President Kennedy once said, *"It is a time for a new generation of leadership, to cope with new problems and new opportunities."* The IOP is preparing a new generation of political leaders to confront these very challenges and gain the ability to successfully lead in today's complicated political landscape. Identifying areas of concern through the Harvard Youth Poll lets tomorrow's political leaders get started on ideas, strategies, and solutions, and allows them to decide today what the next generation of political leadership needs to look like.

The Spring 2024 Harvard Youth Poll surveyed 2,010 young Americans between 18- and 29 years old nationwide, and was conducted between March 14-21, 2024.

"Young people today have clear concerns about where our country is headed," **said IOP Director Setti Warren.** "From worries about the economy, foreign policy, immigration, and climate, young people across the country are paying attention and are increasingly prepared to make their voices heard at the ballot box this November."

"As the Biden/Trump rematch takes shape, we see strong levels of engagement and interest in voting among young Americans," **said John Della Volpe, IOP polling director.** "Make no mistake, this is a different youth electorate than we saw in 2020 and 2022, and young voters are motivated by different things. Economic issues are top of mind, housing is a major concern -- and the gap between young men's and young women's political preferences is pronounced."

"Young Americans are emerging from a pandemic that has tested our trust in democratic institutions and the bonds that unite us," **said Anil Cacodcar, Student Chair of the Harvard Public Opinion Project.** "Despite this, young Americans are more ready than ever to engage with these institutions to push for the change we want to see in the world."

Ten key findings from the 47th in the biannual series are below.

1. Among young Americans under 30, President Biden leads former President Trump by eight percentage points; among likely voters, Biden's lead expands to 19 points.

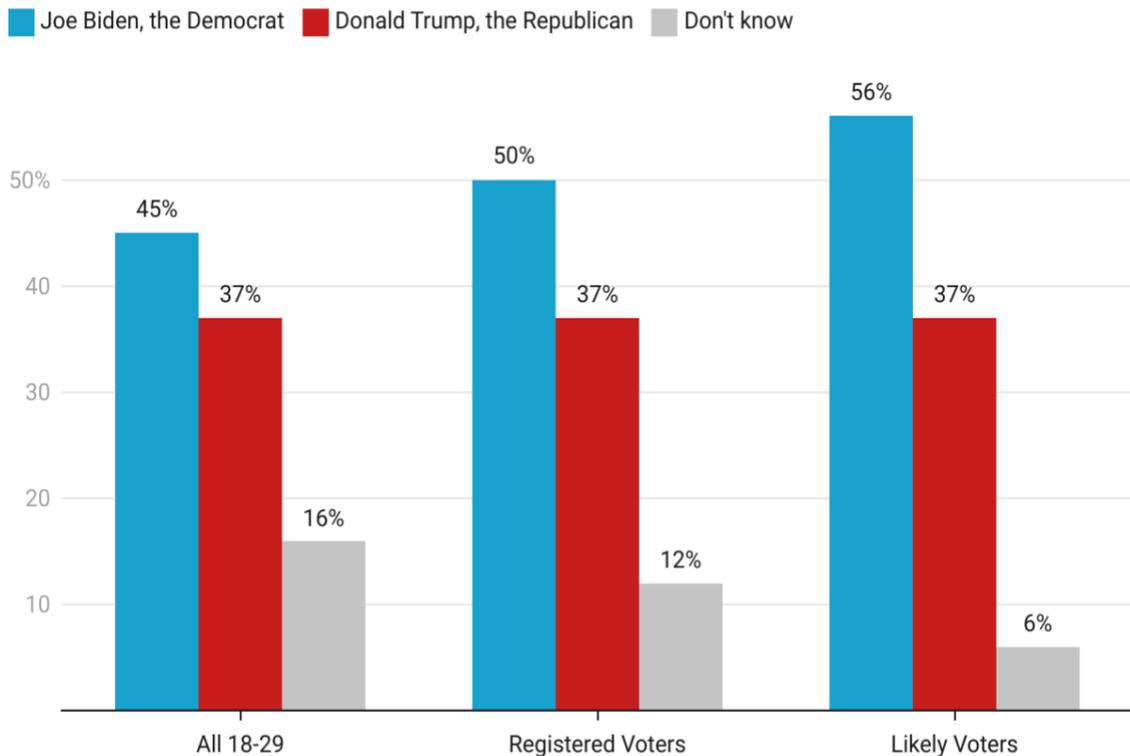
Approximately half (53%) of young Americans indicate they will "definitely be voting" in the 2024 general election for president. Young Americans' interest in voting in 2024 is now on par with Harvard Youth Poll data from 2020, which indicated that 54% would likely vote.

If the presidential election were held today, President Biden would outperform former President Trump among both registered (50% Biden, 37% Trump) and likely young voters under 30 (56% Biden, 37% Trump). When there is no voter screen (i.e., all young adults 18-29), the race narrows to single digits, 45% for President Biden, 37% for former President Trump, with 16 percent undecided.

Among the 1,051 “likely voters” in our sample, we found significant differences in support levels based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education levels, among other subgroups. For example, among likely young voters:

- President Biden’s lead among young men is six points; among young women his lead is 33 points;
- President Biden’s lead among 18-24 year-olds is 14 points, and among 25-29 year-olds it is 26 points;
- President Biden’s lead among white voters is 3 points; among non-white voters his lead is 43 points;
- President Biden’s lead among college students is 23 points; he leads by 47 points among college graduates. The race is even among those not in college and without a four-year degree.

If the election for President were held today and the candidates were [Joe Biden, the Democrat and Donald Trump, the Republican], for whom would you vote?



Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

For context, at this stage in the 2020 election, the Harvard Youth Poll showed Biden leading Trump by 23 points among all young adults (51%-28%) and by 30 points (60%-30%) among likely voters under 30.

One area where former President Trump has an advantage over Biden is enthusiasm. Three-quarters (76%) of Trump voters say they enthusiastically support their candidate, while 44% of Biden voters say the same.

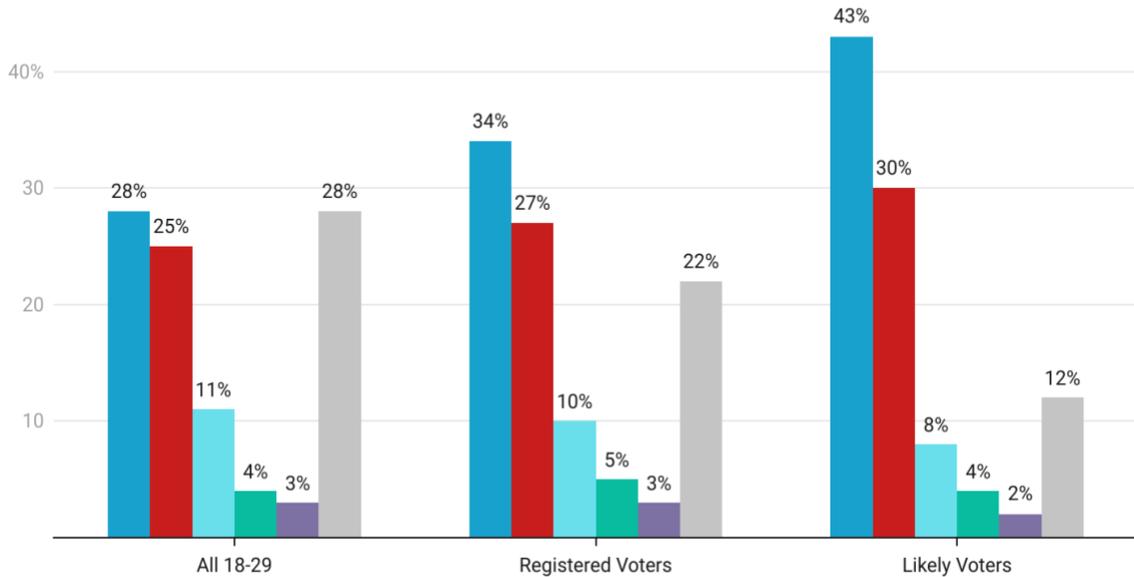
A guilty verdict in any of former President Trump's trials could significantly impact the youth vote. If Trump is found guilty, we find that:

- Biden's lead among all young Americans increases from 8 to 18 points;
- Biden's lead among young registered voters increases from 13 to 21 points;
- Biden's lead among young likely voters increases from 19 to 28 points.

In a hypothetical scenario, when Biden and Trump were joined on the ballot by independent and third party candidates Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Cornel West, and Jill Stein, Biden would still win the youth vote but with smaller margins.

If the election for President were held today and the candidates were: [Rotate candidates], for whom would you vote?

■ Joe Biden, the Democrat
 ■ Donald Trump, the Republican
 ■ Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., an independent candidate
 ■ Jill Stein, the Green party candidate
 ■ Cornel West, an independent candidate
 ■ Don't know



Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

2. Support for a permanent ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war is 5-to-1 in favor; majorities of young Americans sympathize with the Israeli and the Palestinian people.

While only 38% of young Americans tell us that they are following the news about the war between Israel and Hamas very or somewhat closely, the proportion rises among registered voters (45%) and those most likely to vote in November (52%). Overall, we find that Democrats (49%) are more likely to follow this news closely compared to Republicans (32%), and those with a college degree (50%) are more likely to be following these events compared to current college students (39%) and those that never attended (32%).

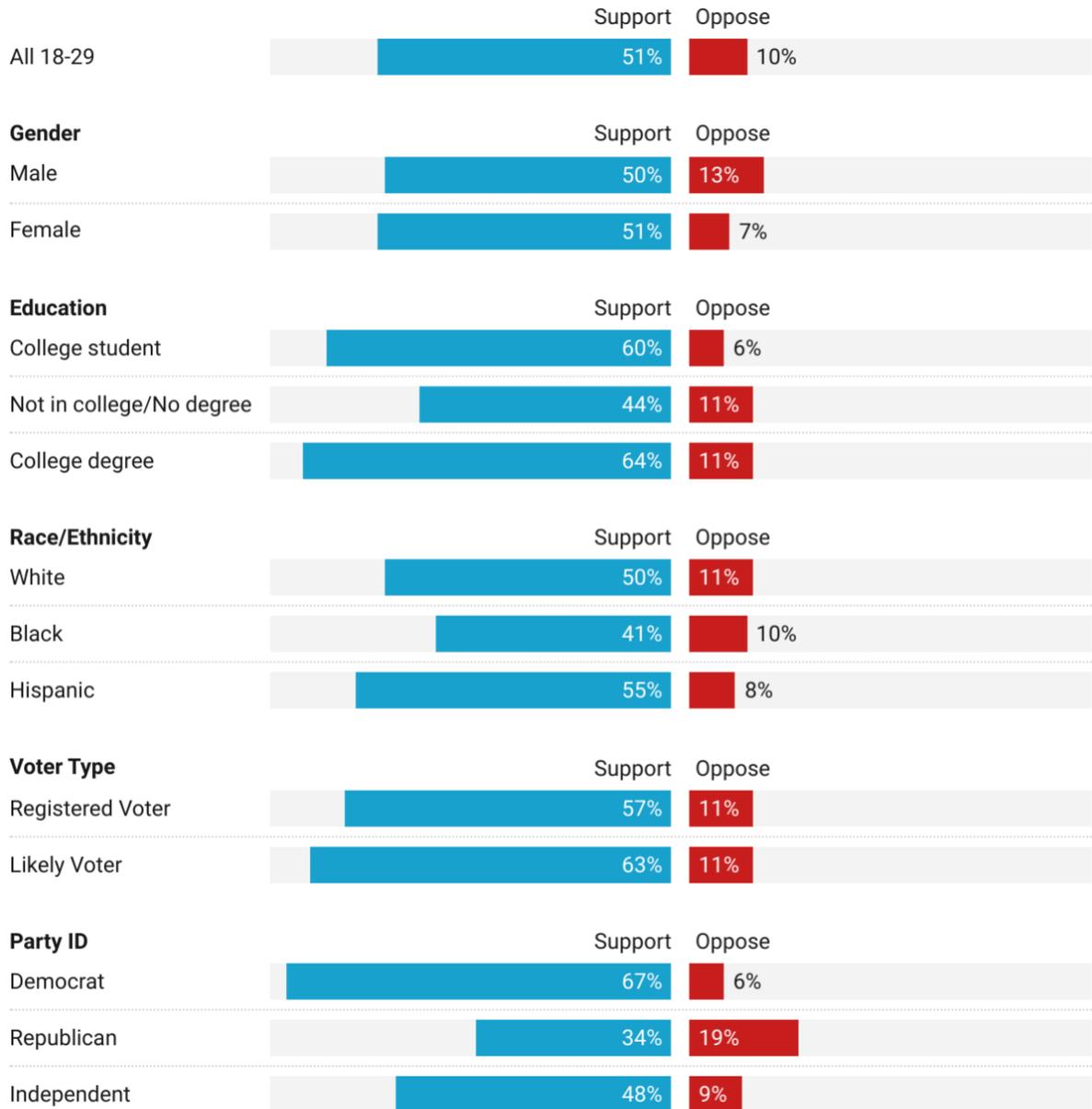
When young Americans are asked whether or not they believe Israel’s response so far to the October 7 attack by Hamas has been justified, -- a plurality indicates that they don’t know (45%). About a fifth (21%) report that Israel’s response was justified with 32% believing it was not justified. Across most subgroups, more young Americans say the

actions of the Israeli government were unjustified than justified. Republicans see Israel's actions as justified (36% justified, 16% not justified), while Democrats (14% justified, 44% not justified) and independents (19% justified, 30% not justified) feel the opposite is true.

Young Americans support a permanent ceasefire in Gaza by a five-to-one margin (51% support, 10% oppose). No major subgroup of young voters opposes such action.

Do you support or oppose a permanent ceasefire in Gaza?

Support Oppose



Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

Asked whether or not they sympathize with various groups involved in the war, we found that majorities of young Americans hold sympathy for the Israeli (52% sympathize) and the Palestinian people (56% sympathize), while they have far less sympathy for their governments (29% sympathize with the Israeli government; 32% with the Palestinian government). Seventeen percent (17%) expressed sympathy toward Hamas; for those

who were presented with the information in a split sample that Hamas was an Islamist militant group, sympathy dipped to 13%.

3. Most young Americans believe there's a crisis at the Southern border; at the same time, youth believe immigrants improve America's culture.

A majority (53%) of young Americans—including at least a plurality of every significant subgroup—believe that the United States is experiencing an immigration crisis at the Southern border; only 16% disagree with this notion, while 29% neither agree nor disagree. Despite this, young Americans oppose construction of a border wall (36% support, 45% oppose) and believe by wide margins that:

- Immigrants improve the culture of the United States (50% agree, 17% disagree);

And they disagree by similarly strong margins that:

- Immigrants increase crime in my community. (21% agree, 45% disagree); and
- Immigrants are taking jobs that should go to Americans instead. (24% agree, 48% disagree).

Only 12% of young Americans say they would be uncomfortable if an immigrant moved next door to them. A solid majority (60%) of young Americans have had classmates who have been immigrants, 46% have friends who are immigrants, 41% have had immigrant coworkers, and 40% have had immigrant neighbors. Young Americans who have firsthand experience with immigrants have more favorable views about their impact on society.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Immigrants improve the culture of the United States.	Agree	Disagree
All 18-29	50%	17%
Know an immigrant	62%	14%
Do not know an immigrant	22%	24%
<hr/>		
Immigrants are taking jobs that should go to Americans instead.	Agree	Disagree
All 18-29	24%	48%
Know an immigrant	21%	58%
Do not know an immigrant	31%	25%
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Immigrants increase crime in my community.	Agree	Disagree
All 18-29	21%	45%
Know an immigrant	21%	54%
Do not know an immigrant	23%	23%

% Strongly + somewhat agree displayed; "Know an immigrant" = personal friend, neighbor, classmate, co-worker
Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

After being informed by the U.S. Census Bureau’s projection that white Americans will comprise less than half of the U.S. population by approximately 2045, respondents were asked to share their perspectives. A significant majority (60%) expressed a neutral stance, considering the news neither inherently positive nor negative for the country. Among the remaining young Americans, opinions were evenly divided, with 19% viewing it favorably and 18% perceiving it unfavorably.

4. Only 9% of young Americans say the country is headed in the right direction; economic concerns, along with reproductive freedom, continue to be top of mind for young voters.

Nearly three in five (58%) young Americans believe that the country is “off on the wrong track,” and only 9% say that things in the nation are “generally headed in the right direction.” An additional 32% say they are unsure. In the Spring 2020 wave, 21% responded that the nation was headed in the right direction; in the Spring 2016 wave, 15% said the same.

In an open-ended question about which national issue concerned them most, we found that about a quarter (27%) of young Americans volunteered something related to the

economy. Immigration (9%), foreign policy (8%), and environmental issues followed behind.

President Biden's job approval among all young Americans is 31% (-4 since Fall 2023, +3 since Spring 2023). Vice President Kamala Harris (32% approval) and Democrats in Congress (34% approval) are in a similar position, while Republicans in Congress (24% approval) trail their Democratic colleagues by 10 percentage points.

President Biden's approval on economic issues, except student loan debt, is lower than his approval rating overall:

- 39% Student debt relief
- 33% Ukraine (-4 since Spring 2023)
- 30% Economy (+2 since Spring 2023)
- 25% Gun violence (-2 since Spring 2023)
- 23% Inflation (-1 since Spring 2023)
- 18% Israel-Hamas war

Additionally, we identified 16 prominent areas of concern and asked survey respondents in a series of randomized match-ups which one of two paired issues was more important to them. Again, we found that economic concerns were viewed as more prominent. Inflation, healthcare, housing, and jobs won most match-ups regardless of what they were paired against.

The table below shows the percentage of the time an issue was rated as more important than the issue it was matched against.

Thinking about the major issues facing the United States today, please tell me which of the following two is more important to you:



	All 18-29 ▼	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Dem	Rep	Ind
Inflation	64%	66%	61%	66%	66%	58%	58%	76%	63%
Healthcare	59%	57%	60%	59%	58%	60%	63%	51%	60%
Housing	56%	55%	57%	49%	68%	60%	62%	49%	56%
Gun violence	54%	50%	60%	51%	53%	62%	67%	41%	51%
Jobs	53%	55%	51%	53%	52%	54%	49%	60%	53%
Corruption	52%	56%	49%	54%	49%	51%	48%	57%	54%
Protecting democracy	52%	56%	48%	55%	46%	49%	57%	53%	48%
Women's reproductive rights	50%	42%	58%	47%	54%	52%	68%	24%	49%
Education	50%	52%	47%	54%	46%	45%	45%	54%	54%
Immigration	47%	51%	43%	50%	31%	48%	37%	71%	44%
Crime	47%	47%	47%	44%	48%	49%	42%	60%	45%
Climate change	43%	37%	47%	41%	43%	45%	55%	22%	44%
Taxes	43%	48%	40%	45%	41%	42%	39%	56%	41%
Free speech	40%	44%	37%	44%	34%	36%	30%	54%	42%
Israel/Palestine	34%	31%	36%	35%	32%	35%	37%	32%	32%
Student debt	26%	24%	27%	24%	31%	25%	29%	22%	26%

% that each issue wins against the field

Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

The only issue time that inflation did not win its individual match-up was when it was paired with women’s reproductive rights. Women’s reproductive rights was considered the more important issue, 57% to 43%. A link to the chart of individual match-ups is [here](#).

5. Young Americans do not support gender-based stereotypes; political ideology more than gender, race, or education – is most predictive of attitudes on this subject.

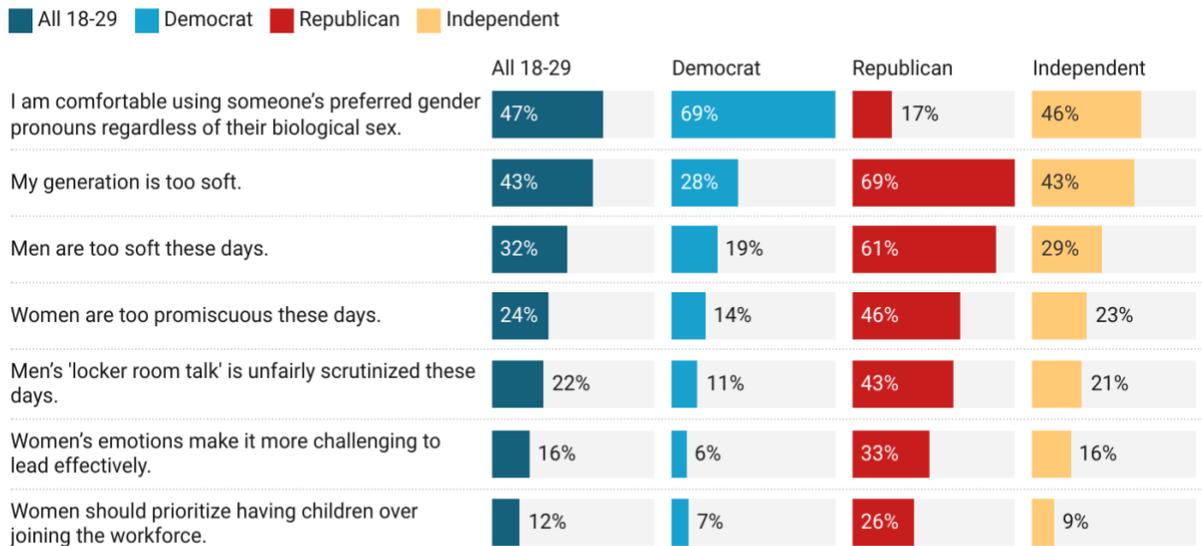
With increasing attention on culture war issues in media and politics, our students designed a new series of questions to benchmark youth opinions on gender norms, stereotypes, and prejudices.

Overall, we found that the overwhelming majority of youth do not subscribe to these gender-based stereotypes. Still, nevertheless, there are striking differences between how

young Democrats, Republicans, and independents view the role of men and women in society.

- Large numbers of Republicans distance themselves from their peers, believing that their generation (69%), and men in particular (61%), are too soft these days.
- Between a quarter and roughly half of young Republicans also subscribe to beliefs such as women should prioritize children over joining the workforce (26% Republicans, 7% Democrats agree), women’s emotions make it more challenging to lead (33% Republicans, 6% Democrats agree), and women are too promiscuous these days (46% Republicans, 14% Democrats agree).

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

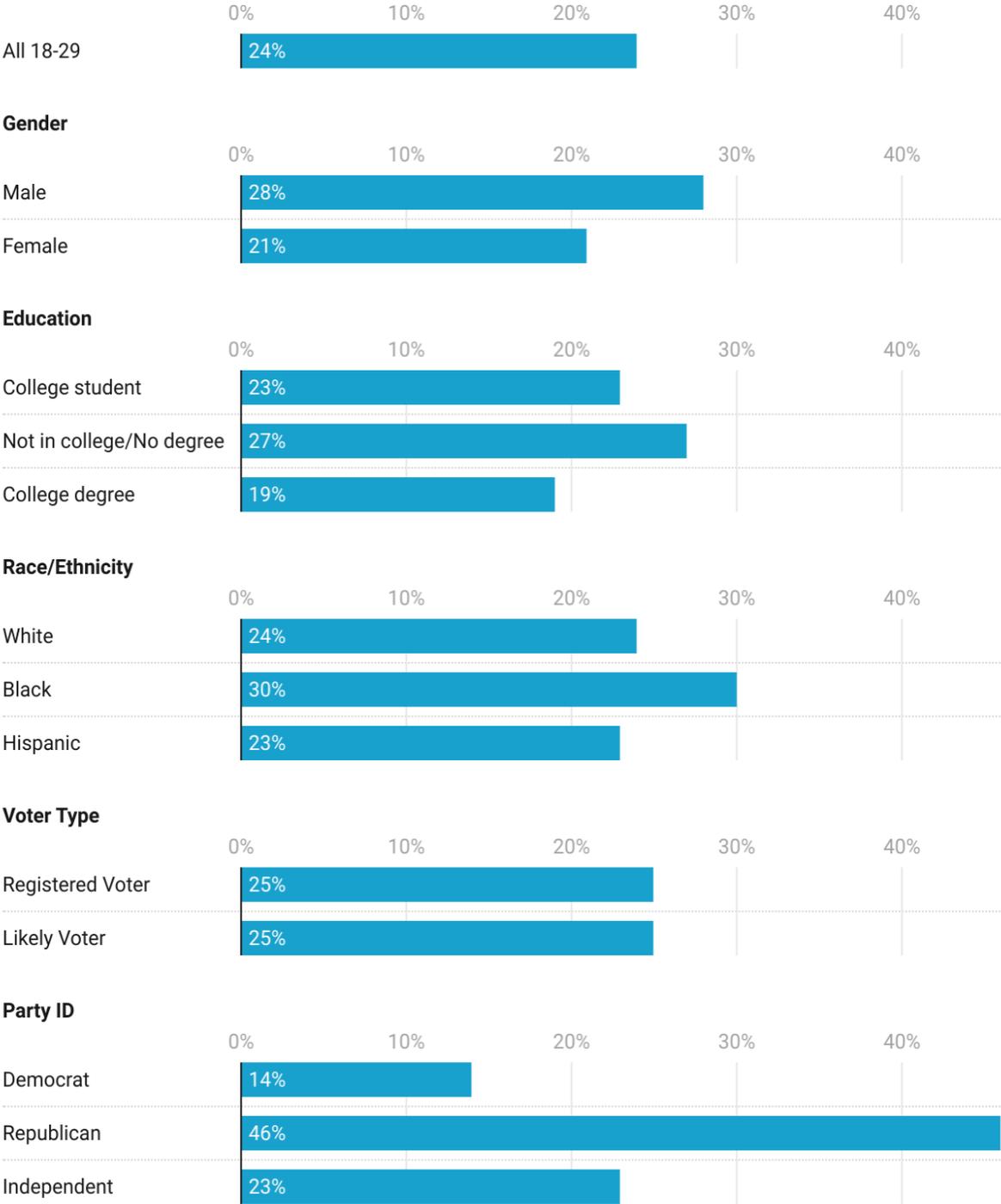


% Strongly + somewhat agree displayed

Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

We find that political ideology, more than gender, education, race and ethnicity is more predictive of views related to gender norms in society today.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - Women are too promiscuous these days.



% Strongly + somewhat agree displayed

Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

When we isolate political party and gender, we find:

- Nearly identical numbers of young Republican men (46% agree, 21% disagree) and young Republican women (47% agree, 18% disagree) agree that “women are too promiscuous these days;” and
- Most Democratic young men (18% agree, 57% disagree) and women (11% agree, 70% disagree) reject the stereotype.

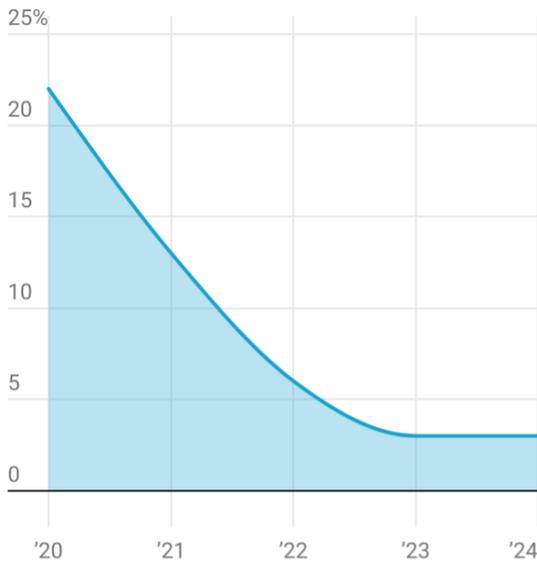
6. **While young men are turning away from the Democratic party, they remain supportive of basic party tenets such as health insurance being a right and the role the government should play in safeguarding the vulnerable.**

For 2024 likely voters, Joe Biden leads among both men (+6) and women (+33). Compared with this stage in the 2020 campaign, Biden’s lead among women is nearly identical (was +35 in 2020), but his lead among likely male voters has been dramatically reduced from +26 in 2020 to +6 today. While Democrats still hold a party ID advantage with younger males and females, as the chart below illustrates, Democrats have lost significant ground with young men in the last five years.

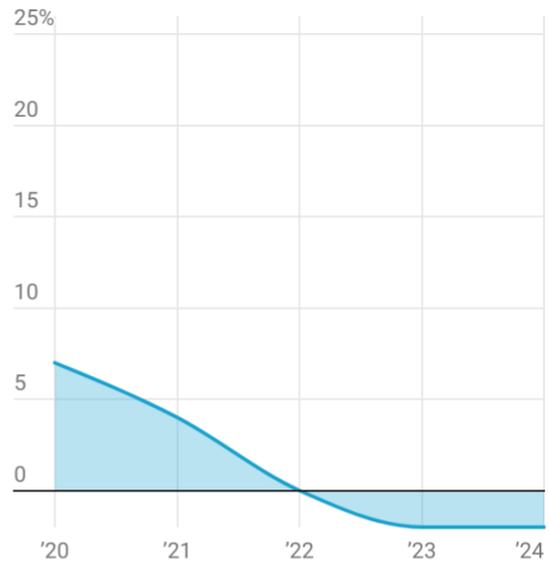
- Only five years ago, in 2020, 42% of young men in our poll identified as Democrats and 20% were Republicans (+22 Democratic advantage); in this wave, 32% are Democrats and 29% are Republicans (+3 Democratic advantage). The percentage of independents has remained unchanged at 37% during this period.
- Over the same period, the Democratic advantage among women expanded by six points. In 2020, 43% of young women in our poll identified as Democrats, and 23% were Republicans (+20 Democratic advantage); in this wave, 44% are Democrats, and 18% are Republicans (+26 Democratic advantage).

Party ID and Ideology by Gender

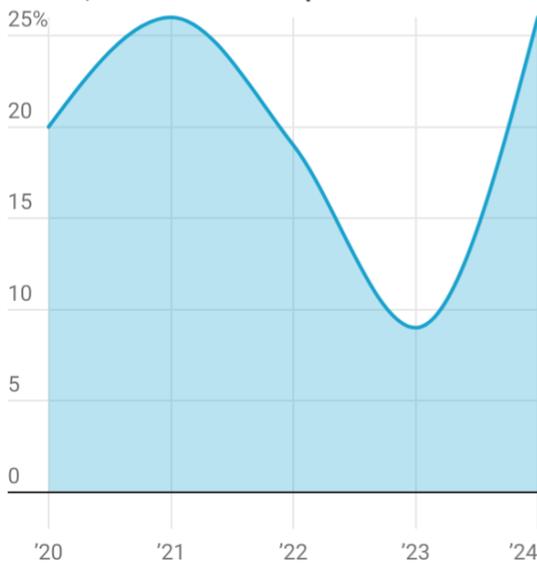
Male, Democrat minus Republican



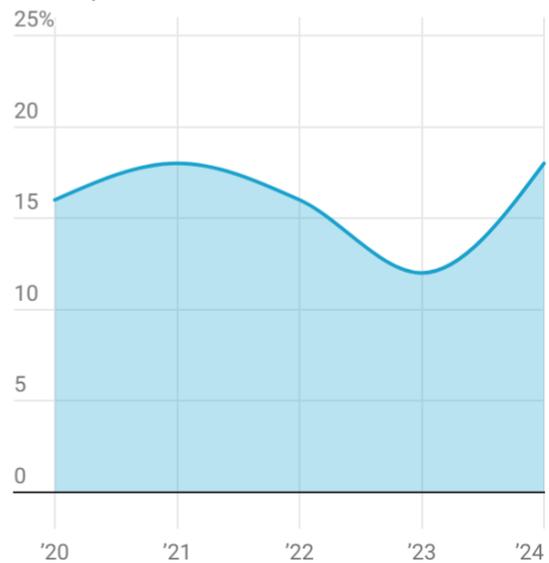
Male, Liberal minus Conservative



Female, Democrat minus Republican



Female, Liberal minus Conservative



Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2020-2024 • Created with Datawrapper

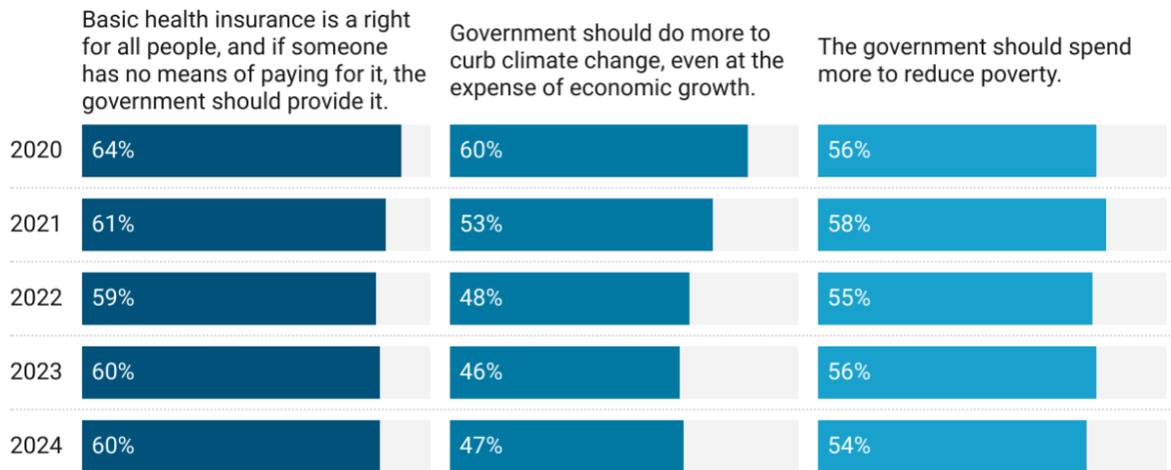
While party ID and self-identified ideology show younger men shifting from Democrat to Republican and from liberal to conservative -- their views on the role of government have not changed as dramatically.

- Today, 60% of young men agree that “basic health insurance is a right for all people, and if someone has no means of paying for it, the government should provide it;” and 64% agreed in 2020.

- Fifty-four percent (54%) agree that “the government should spend more to reduce poverty;” and 56% agreed in 2020.

Over the last five years, we have noted however an attitudinal shift on climate policy. In 2020, 60% of young men agreed that “government should do more to curb climate change, even at the expense of economic growth,” while today, agreement is down to 47%.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

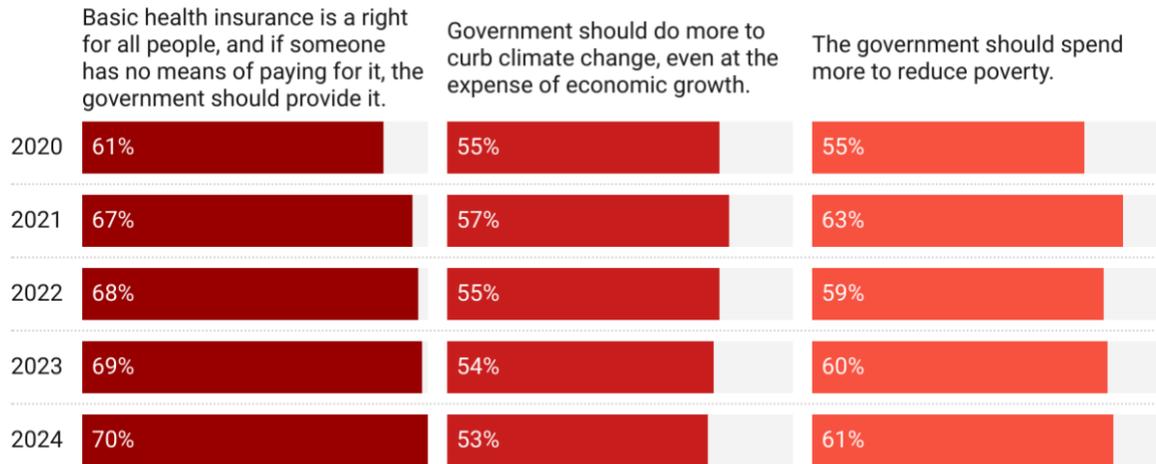


Men only; % Strongly + somewhat agree displayed

Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2020-2024 • Created with Datawrapper

At the same time, young female opinion grew in favor of more government intervention in two of the three policy areas.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Women only; % Strongly + somewhat agree displayed

Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2020-2024 • Created with Datawrapper

7. Confidence in public institutions continues to decline. While still the most trusted institution in the survey, faith in the military dropped 10 points last year.

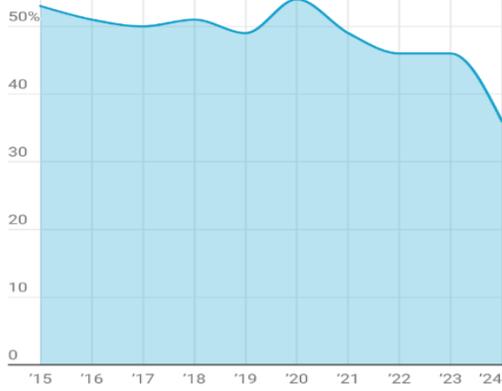
This wave of the youth poll shows the lowest levels of confidence in most public institutions since the survey began. In the last twelve months alone, trust in the U.S. military and the Supreme Court to do the right thing “all” or “most of the time” has fallen by 10 and nine percentage points, respectively.

Only one (the United Nations) of the eight institutions in our survey is more trusted today than in 2015. The level of trust for the UN has increased by 17% over the decade. The remaining institutions saw steep declines:

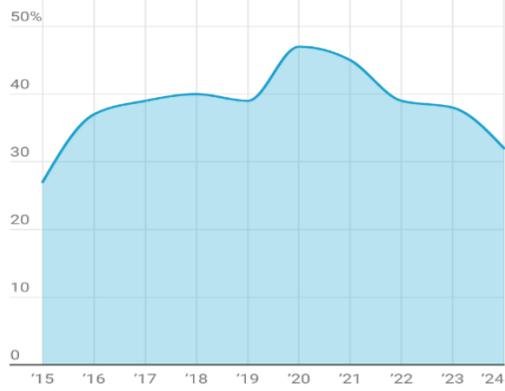
- Trust in the President has declined by 60% since 2015 (it now stands at 20%);
- Trust in the Supreme Court declined 55% (now at 24%);
- Trust among Wall Street is down 43% (now at 9%);
- Trust in the U.S. military (now at 36%) and the federal government (now at 17%) both declined 38%;
- Trust in Congress is down 34% (now at 12%);
- Trust in the media is down 18% (now at 10%).

How often do you trust each of them to do the right thing?

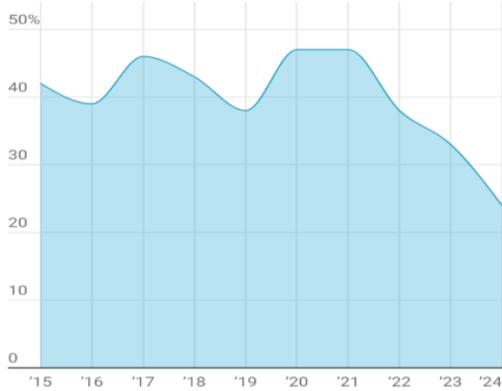
U.S. Military



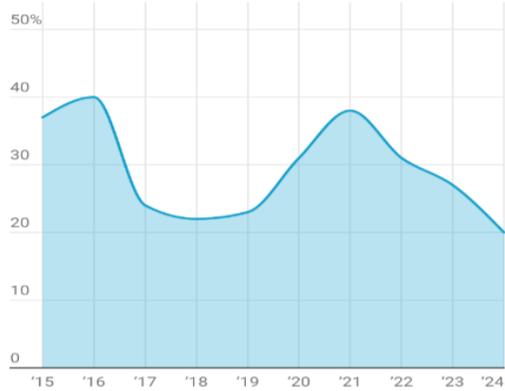
United Nations



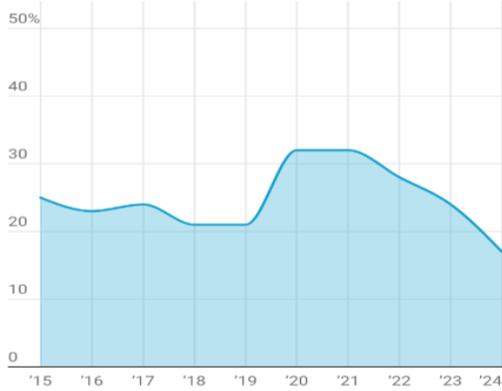
Supreme Court



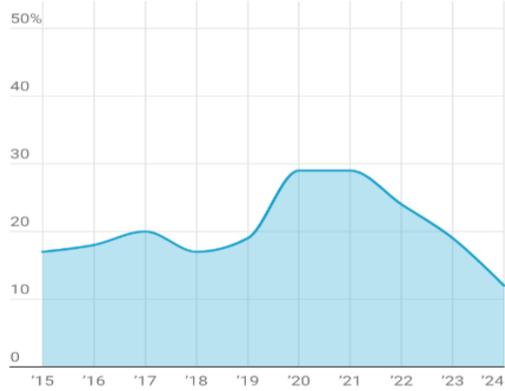
President



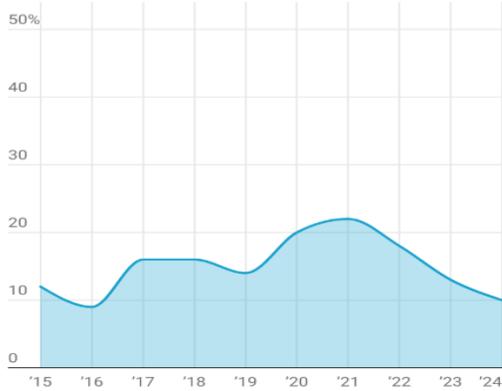
Federal government



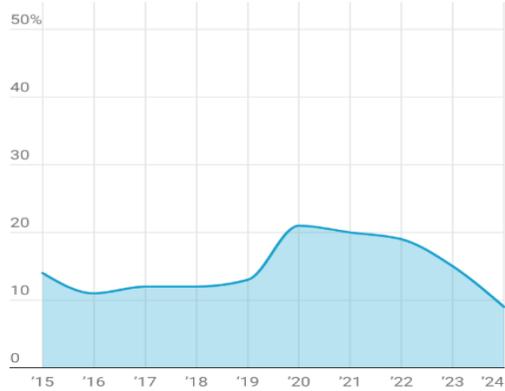
Congress



Media



Wall Street



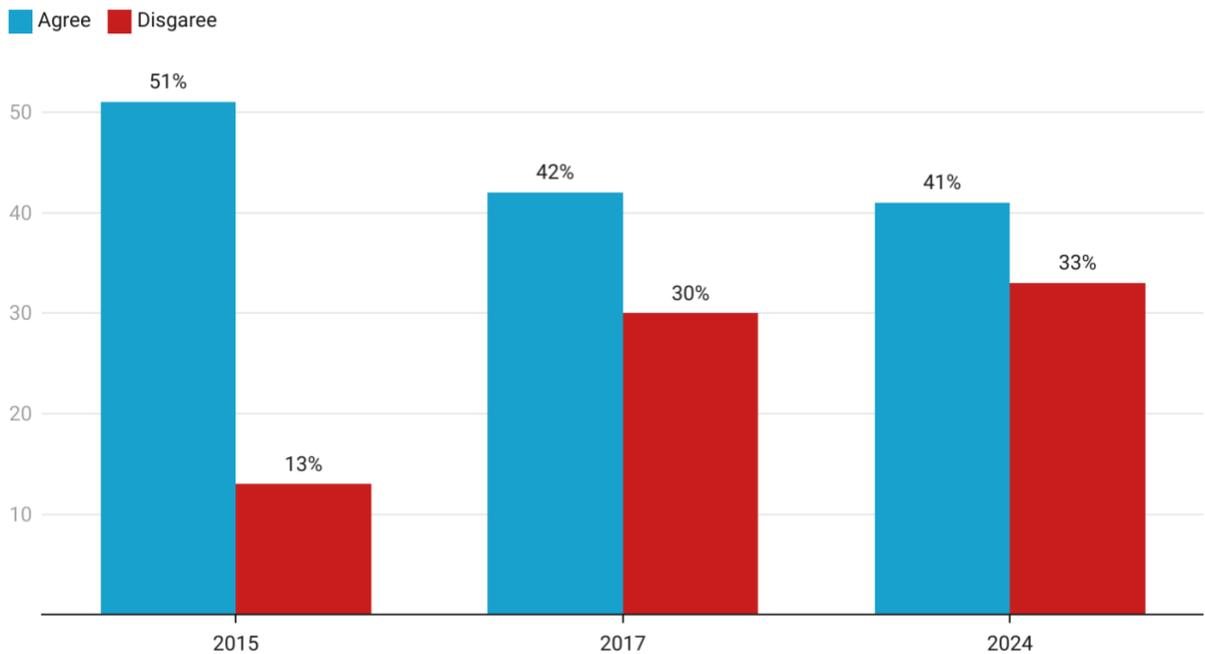
% All + most of the time displayed

Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2015-2024 • Created with Datawrapper

8. One-third of college students are uncomfortable sharing their political views on campus; young Democrats are more comfortable and more likely to be politically engaged.

While students are more comfortable than uncomfortable sharing their political opinions at their college, we still find that one-third (33%) of students are concerned about censorship or negative repercussions if they do. During the transition between the Obama and Trump presidencies, we charted a significant increase in students feeling uncomfortable sharing their political views. In the last seven years, however, this trend has stabilized.

I feel comfortable sharing my political opinions at my college without fear of censorship or negative repercussions.



Among college students

Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2024 • Created with Datawrapper

While college students who are Democrats say they are more comfortable than Republicans and independents sharing their views on campus, young Democrats also appear more politically engaged than Republicans. Among young Americans under 30, Democrats are more likely than Republicans in the last year to say they are politically engaged (34% Democrat, 25% Republican). Additionally, they are more likely to have:

- Shared or posted online advocating for a political position or opinion (32% Democrat, 14% Republican)
- Attend a political rally or demonstration (22% Democrat, 10% Republican)
- Donated money to a political campaign or cause (21% Democrat, 10% Republican)
- Participated in a government, political, or issue-related organization (10% Democrat, 6% Republican)
- Volunteered on a political campaign for a candidate or an issue (10% Democrat, 5% Republican).

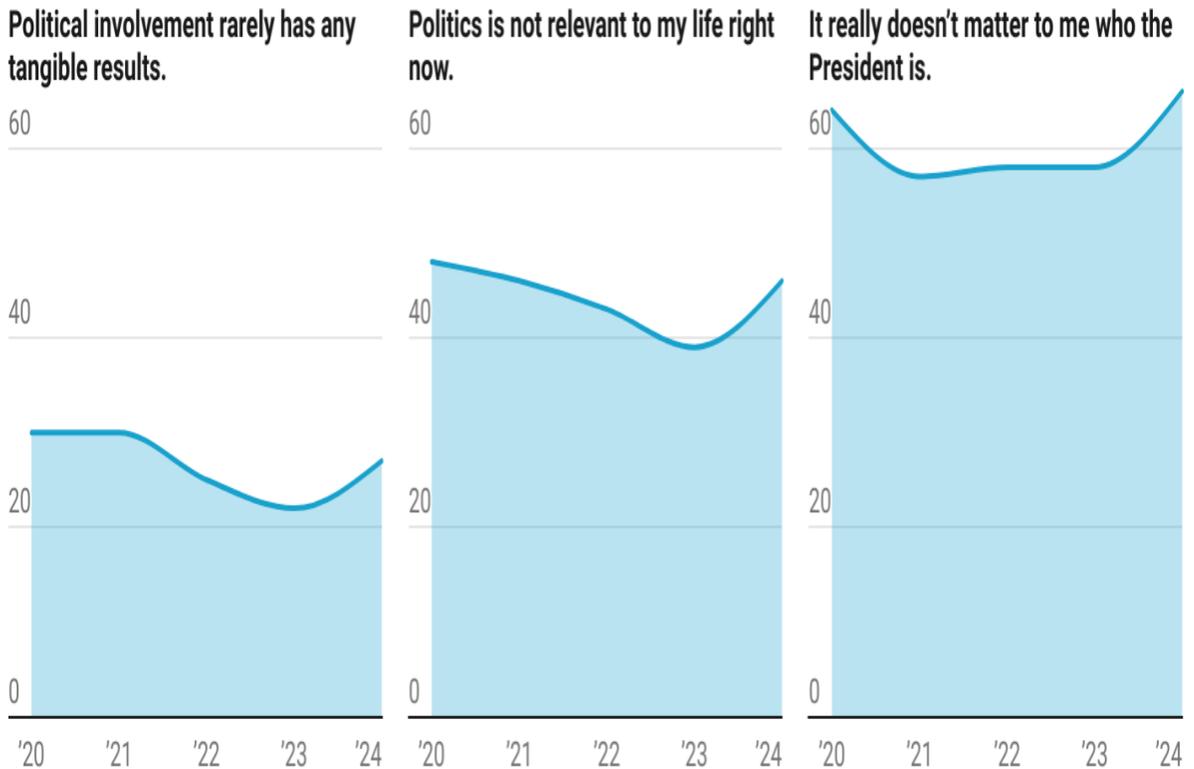
9. As the election draws closer, young Americans can more clearly see the difference political engagement can make.

Among the strongest predictors of whether or not a young American is likely to vote in 2024 are attitudes related to the efficacy of the process, the system, and perceived differences between the parties. For example:

- 57% of likely voters strongly disagree with the statement that “it really doesn't matter to me who the President is.” In comparison, only 25% of less likely voters strongly disagree with the statement.
- 45% of likely voters strongly disagree that they “don't see a difference between the Democratic and Republican parties” compared to 21% of less likely voters.
- 32% of likely voters strongly disagree that “politics is not relevant to my life right now,” while 9% of those less likely to vote strongly disagree.

As the number of young people likely to vote has increased in the last two waves of this poll, so too have positive attitudes about the efficacy of engagement.

Below is a list of statements about politics and public service. Do you agree or disagree with these statements?



% Strongly + somewhat disagree displayed

Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2020-2024 • Created with Datawrapper

10. Nearly half of young Americans are regularly bothered by feelings of depression or hopelessness. Mental health remains challenging for millions of young Americans, but there are early signs that things could be improving.

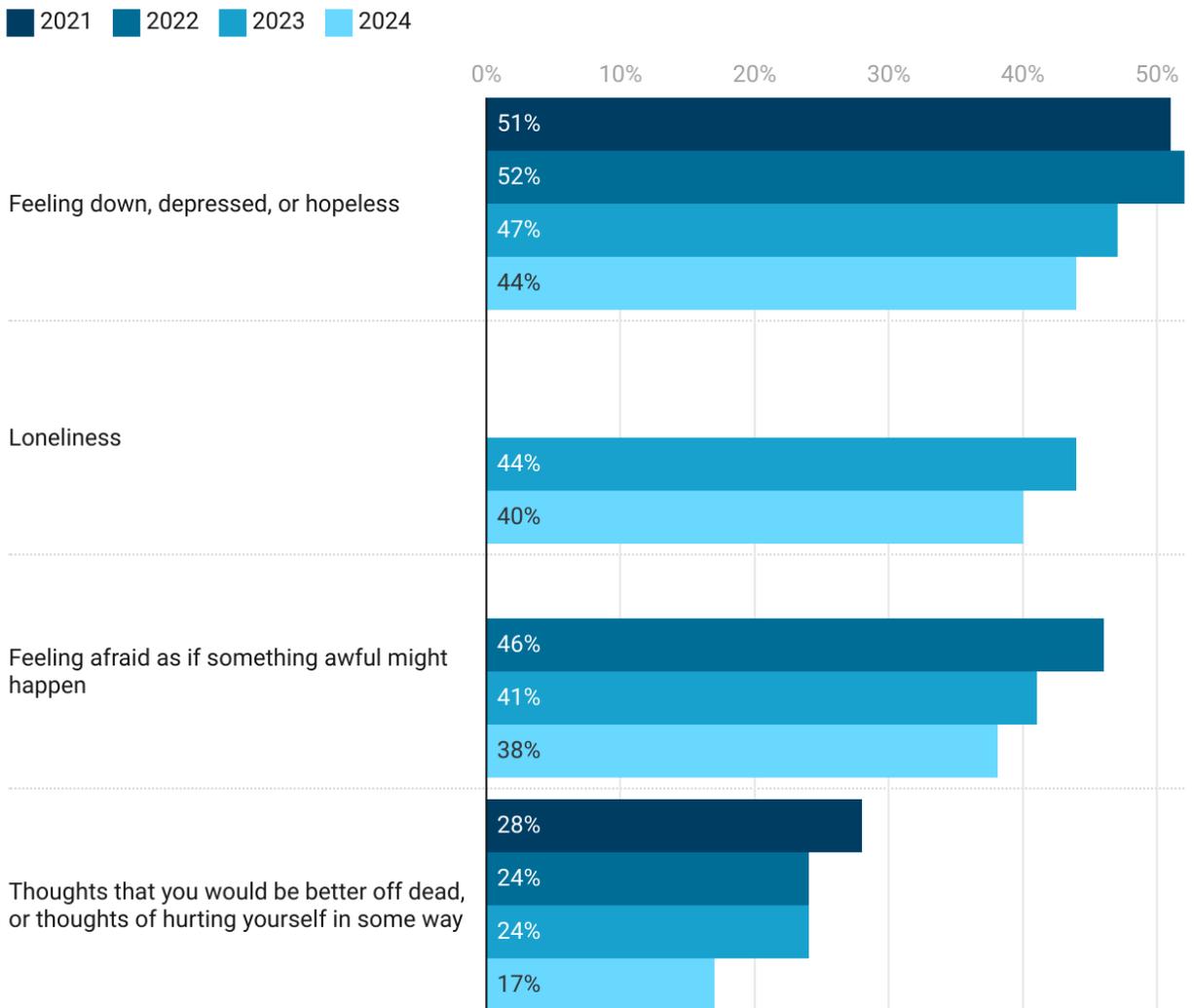
Forty-four (44%) of young Americans report feelings of depression or hopelessness at least several days in the last two weeks. Nearly as many say they had feelings of loneliness (40%), and feeling afraid as if something awful might happen (38%). Importantly, 17% tell us that they have had thoughts of self harm at least several days in the last two weeks -- three percent of youth between 18 and 29 have these thoughts nearly every day.

Thoughts of self harm at least several days in the last two weeks are more prevalent among:

- Young women (19%);
- Hispanic-Americans (24%);
- Those not in college and without a degree (19%); and
- Young people living in small towns (27%).

Despite this, we see some evidence that the mental health of young Americans may be improving relative to 2021. While the number of young people suffering from depression, anxiety, loneliness, and thoughts of self-harm remains alarmingly high -- across the board, the trend since 2021 appears to be heading in the right direction.

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?



% Nearly every day + More than half the days + Several days displayed

Source: Harvard IOP Youth Poll; Spring 2021-2024 • Created with Datawrapper

Methodology

This poll of 2,010 18-to-29-year-olds was organized with undergraduate students from the Harvard Public Opinion Project (HPOP) and supervised by John Della Volpe, Director of Polling. Data were collected by Ipsos Public Affairs using the KnowledgePanel. KnowledgePanel provides probability-based samples with an “organic” representation of the study population for measurement of public opinions, attitudes, and behaviors. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish between March 14 and 21, 2024. The target population for this survey is US residents between the ages of 18 and 29. Data are weighted to reflect population estimates based on age, race/Hispanic ethnicity, education, household income, census region by metropolitan area, and primary language within Hispanics. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.02%.

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