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June 2025 Survey Report







































































COMPILED BY

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SPECIAL THANKS TO

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ABOUT THE PELL CENTER

The Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy at Salve Regina is a multidisciplinary research center focused at the intersection of politics, policies and ideas. Dedicated to honoring Sen. Claiborne Pell's legacy, the Pell Center promotes American engagement in the world, effective government at home and civic participation by all Americans.

Our programs are designed to generate new ideas, to expand public understanding of important issues and, ultimately, to help the public and its leaders make better decisions. Working with students and faculty, we don't just study the world, we try to change it.

The Pell Center is animated by Sen. Claiborne Pell's belief that politics is about translating ideas into action to help people. We work to supplement the education available to Salve Regina students by fostering civic participation to make the world a better place.

ABOUT SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY

Salve Regina University is a Catholic, coeducational institution of higher education, founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1947. For more than 75 years, Salve has offered rigorous, innovative academic programming in the liberal arts tradition that prepares students to be global citizens and lifelong learners. More than 2,700 undergraduate and graduate students from around the world are enrolled at Salve in 48 undergraduate majors, 13 master's degree programs, combined bachelor's/master's programs, and doctoral programs. Every undergraduate student engages in Salve Compass, a four-year transformational framework through which they develop the experience, skills, and wisdom required for a fulfilling career and to make a positive difference in the world. For more information visit salve.edu.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The following is an analysis of a Rhode Island state survey conducted by the Pell Center at Salve Regina University. The survey, fielded by Embold Research between June 16-22, 2024 via the web and SMS messaging, gathered responses from 804 likely voters in Rhode Island, with a modeled margin of error of 3.6%. Demographics of survey participants can be found at the end of the report.

Weighting parameters are based on the demographic composition of registered voters in Rhode Island, based on voter file data.

'2024 voters' are defined as individuals registered to vote in Rhode Island who voted in the 2024 presidential election. This is a strong indicator of likelihood to vote in future elections and allows for comparisons with likely voters in previous surveys.



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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

VIEWPOINTS ON THE HEALTH OF DEMOCRAY

Well over half of Rhode Islanders (63%) believe the United States democracy is not healthy. Democrats are the most likely to believe this; 80% say our democracy is not healthy, more than twice as many as the percent of Republicans who agree (34%). Republicans are seven times more likely to agree that our democracy is healthy than they were one year ago. This is likely due in large part to the change of power in the executive branch. As is common throughout the report, Independents—or those not registered with the Democratic or Republican party—split the difference between their party counterparts: 59% say democracy is not healthy.

Despite concerns over democratic health, Rhode Islanders are nearly evenly split on whether they agree that the United States is operating as a democracy. Democrats (51%) and Republicans (53%) are more likely than not to agree that our government is defined as one, but Independents are divided equally: 47% agree and 46% disagree.

It follows then that well over half of survey participants agree that the United States is facing a constitutional crisis (64%). Democrats overwhelmingly believe this (94%), compared to only 27% of Republicans and 55% of Independents. Democrats perceive a decline in the strength of the checks and balance system, which likely bolsters their sense of democratic backsliding. Only one-third (32%) agree the system is strong while 64% agree that country has fallen into dictatorship.

Relatedly, 83% of Democrats believe the policies of the current Trump administration have hurt them personally, compared to only 6% of Republicans. Independents are nearly evenly split; 35% say the policies have neither helped nor hurt them.

TOP ISSUES AND CONCERNS

On the economy – a hot button election issue – three-quarters of Republicans (76%) believe it is thriving, while 73% of Democrats believe we are in a recession. Only 17% of respondents chose the economy as one of the top three most important issues facing the country, however. Over half of Republicans tapped immigration (58%) as a top issue while Democrats chose Trump and the Republicans (66%) and the state of Democracy (36%) as main concerns. Independents were split on a wider number of issues; about one-third chose Trump and the Republicans (28%), inflation and the cost of living (34%), immigration (34%), and polarization and division (28%).

Given their concern on the issue of immigration and their party support for Trump, 91% of Republicans support the administration's decision to deploy U.S. military troops in response to protests over the federal government's approach to immigration enforcement. Almost all of Republicans (93%) want the federal government to increase spending on the boarder and immigration enforcement.

Despite major disagreements on issues like immigration and the economy, members of all parties largely want the federal government to increase spending on Medicare and Social Security. Enhanced funding for Social Security is overwhelmingly popular: 82% of Democrats, 75% of Republicans, and 70% of Independents agree. Democrats would also like increased funding for Medicaid (78%) and education (89%), while Republicans support more funds for defense (68%). Independents are again spread on a wider range of issues: half or more also want funding increased to Medicaid, education, and immigration.















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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY

Despite – or perhaps because of – high levels of concern for the health of U.S. Democracy, being an American is an important identity for most Rhode Islanders. Nearly all of Republicans (96%) say it is extremely or very important, compared to 77% of Independents and 60% of Democrats.

Rhode Islanders are less connected to their political party identity. Just as with their American identity, Democrats are the least likely to say it is extremely or very important (53%) while Independents, interestingly, are the most likely to say it is important (67%).

PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL POLARIZATION

Rhode Islanders overwhelmingly agree that political polarization has increased in the last year (83%). Democrats drove the overall percent increase, however: over 90% say polarization has increased, compared to 73% in June 2024. On the other hand, the percent of Republicans who agree that polarization has increased dropped by 15 percentage points between June 2024 (86%) and June 2025 (71%).

Disinformation and fake news are tapped as one of the biggest contributors to political polarization by all three parties, just as they were in June 2024. But in June 2025, Republicans are more likely to believe Democratic officials are a main cause of polarization over any other factor (58% compared to 41% in 2024).

Democrats and Republicans hold deeply negative views of their political counterparts. Over half of Democrats believe Republicans are very closeminded, dishonest, and immoral. Three-quarters of Republicans view Democrats as close-minded and dishonest; about two-thirds view them as immoral and lazy. Independents, comprised of a mix of left and right leaning people, are less likely to judge their counterparts as harshly. They are about two times less likely to say Republicans or Democrats are close-minded.

NEWS CONSUMPTION HABITS

Independents and Democrats get their news from a variety of sources. Over a third tune into local TV news and network channels like CBS and ABC. Democrats also turn to sources like national and local newspapers, local radio, CNN, and MSNBC. Republicans turn to FOX News nearly twice as much as any other news sources apart from local TV news.

Three-quarters of Rhode Islanders avoid the news (32%), but they are slightly less likely to do so than they were a year ago. Republicans drove the overall shift; they are about 40 percent less likely to avoid the news in June 2025 than they were in June 2024.

Nearly half of respondents avoid news on national politics (48%). Republicans are the least likely to avoid news on this topic (31%), but they are the most likely to avoid news related to social justice and climate change, and they avoid these topics at higher rates than they did a year ago. Over one-third Democrats (36%) avoid news about the Israel-Hamas war while the same percent of Republicans avoid news about the war in Ukraine.





SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

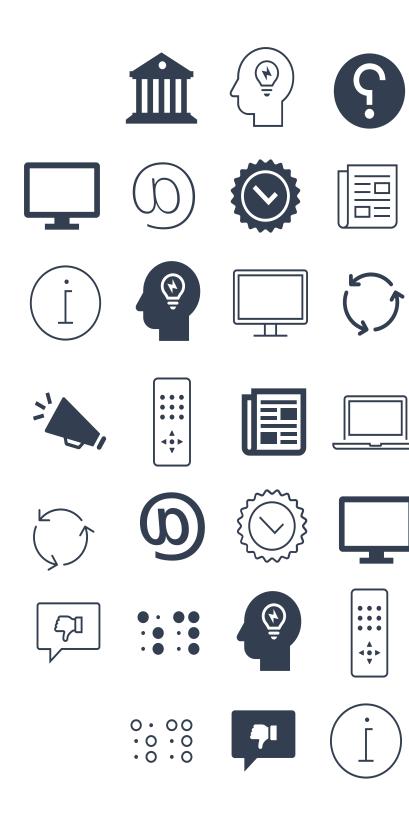
RHODE ISLAND STATE MATTERS

Job performance approval ratings for three of Rhode Island's four Congressional representatives dipped between June 2024 and June 2025. Representative Gabe Amo saw a 2 percentage point increase in net approval (+11), though Senator Reed holds the highest net approval rating (+12). Governor Dan McKee's approval rating dropped from 36% in June 2024 to 25% in June 2025.

In June 2025, Rhode Island officials estimated the Washington Bridge will be rebuilt by November 2028 and cost \$427 million. Survey respondents, no matter their political party, are broadly skeptical the project will end on time and on budget: nearly 60% say it's not likely at all and Republicans are the most skeptical at 80%.

Before the Rhode Island state congressional session ended in June 2025, the legislative body considered or proposed a wide variety of legislation, from an assault rifles ban to a state bottle refund program, among others. About three-quarters of respondents support the proposed Millionaire's tax (71%), which included a 3% income tax surcharge on highest earners; increased Medicaid reimbursements to primary care doctors (77%); and an increase to minimum wage, either one-time (72%) or gradual (75%). A modified minimum wage increase bill passed while the other two pieces of legislation stalled in committee.

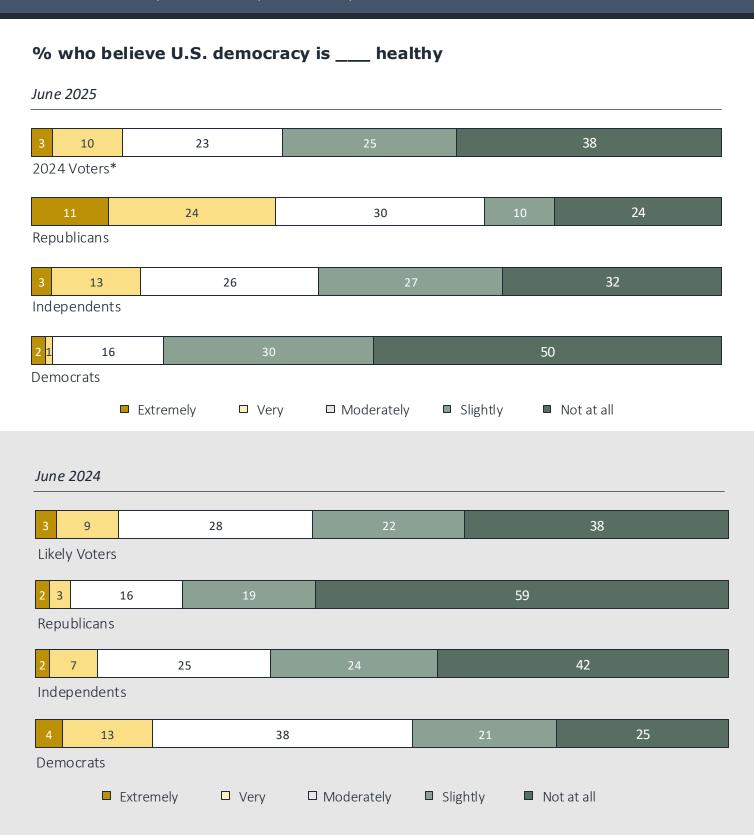
Over half of respondents support a state-wide assault rifles ban (54%), which also passed in modified form, and a state-wide bottle refund program (59%), which was delayed to the next session due to proposed amendments.





PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. DEMOCRACY

Though only a little over a third of Republicans in June 2025 believe the U.S. democracy is healthy, the group is seven times more likely to agree that it is than they were one year ago. Inversely, twice as many 2025 Democrats say our democracy is not healthy at all.



^{* 2024} voters represent all June 2025 survey participants and are defined as individuals registered to vote in Rhode Island who voted in the 2024 presidential election.

Note: totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.



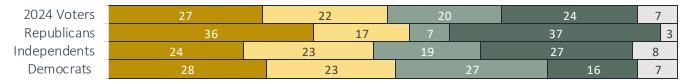
PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. DEMOCRACY

Democrats are overwhelmingly concerned the country is facing a constitutional crisis, while Republicans disagree and Independents are divided. As for the economy—a hot button election issue—three quarters of Republicans believe it is thriving, while 85% of Democrats disagree.

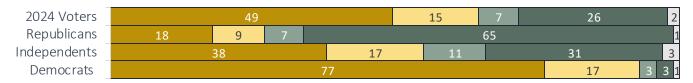
% who agree or disagree with the following statements



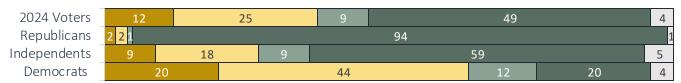
The U.S. is a democracy



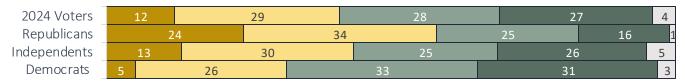
The U.S. is in a constitutional crisis



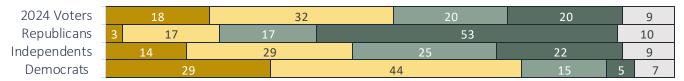
The U.S. is a dictatorship



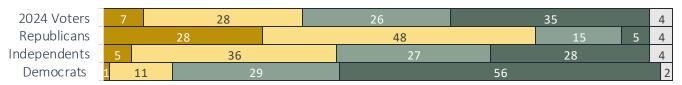
The U.S. government has a strong system of checks and balances



The U.S. economy is in a recession



The U.S. economy is thriving



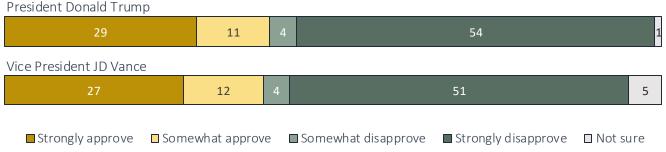


NATIONAL POLITICS

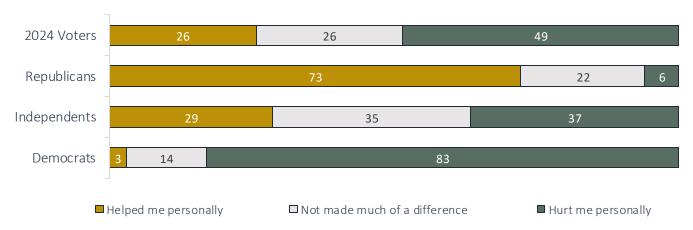
Republicans are staunchly behind Trump's decision to use U.S. military forces to aid in immigration enforcement and nearly three-quarters believe his administration's policies have helped them personally.

% approval ratings of job performance, Trump administration 2024 Voters

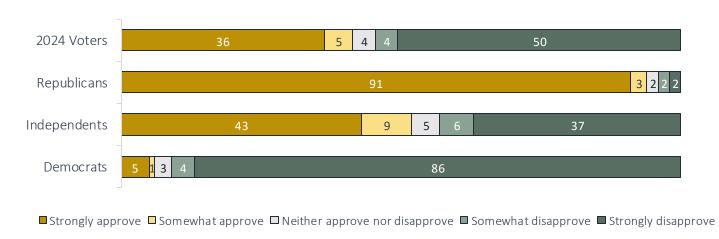




% who believe Donald Trump's policies have helped them personally or hurt them personally



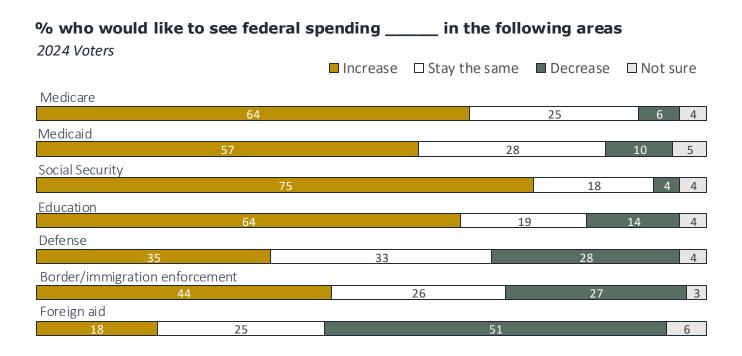
% approval of the Trump administration's decision to nationally deploy U.S. military troops in response to protests over the federal government's immigration enforcement



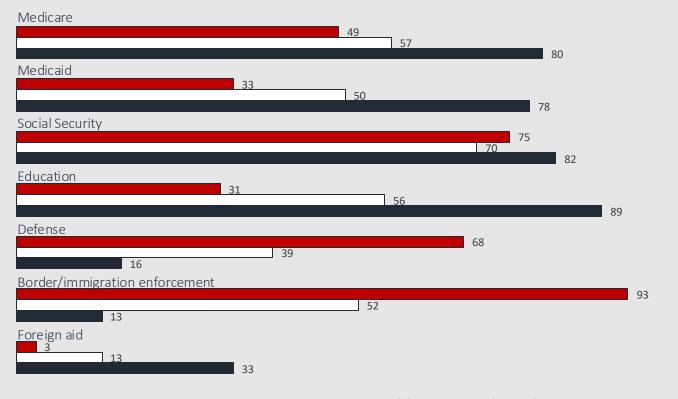


NATIONAL POLITICS

Rhode Islanders generally agree they would like to see increased funding for Medicare and Social Security, though the parties disagree on funding to immigration enforcement and education. Half or more of Independents would like to see increased in all the following areas, except defense and foreign aid.



% who would like to see federal spending increase in the following areas

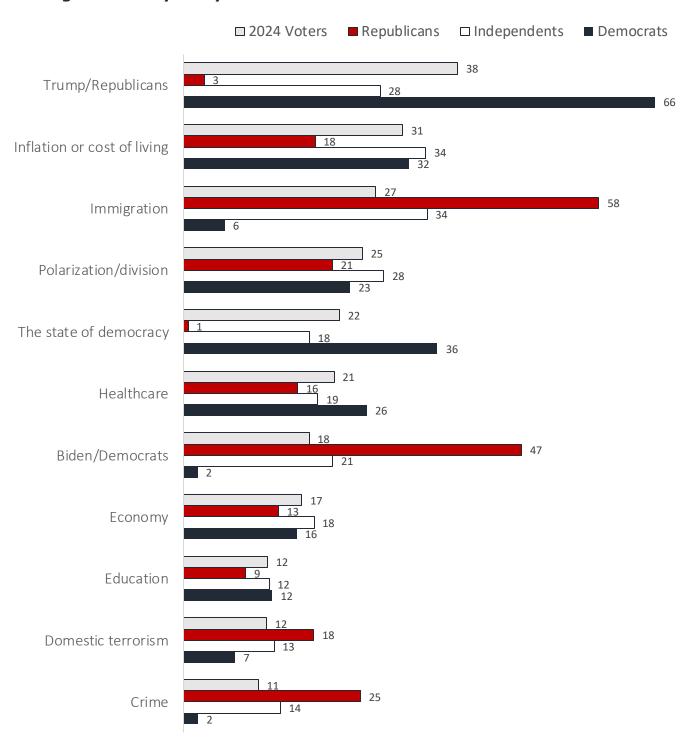




IMPORTANT ISSUES

Party divisions are stark as it relates to the most important issues facing the country today. Democrat leaders and immigration are top issues for Republicans, while registered Democrats are concerned with Republican officials and the state of democracy.

% who choose the following as one of the top three most important problems facing the country today

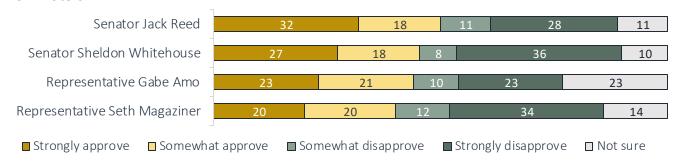




STATE POLITICS

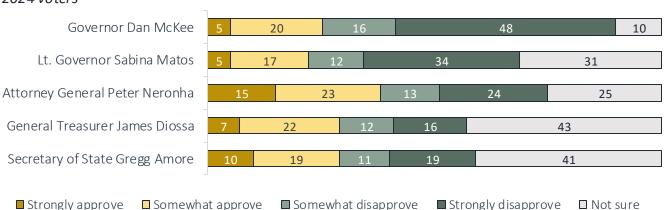
Senator Jack Reed and Representative Gabe Amo have the highest net approval ratings, at +12 and +11 respectively. Governor Dan McKee's net approval rating has dropped from -18 to -39 since June 2024.

% approval ratings of job performance, Congressional representatives 2024 voters*



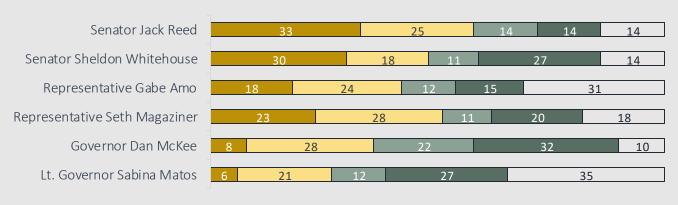
% approval ratings of job performance, state representatives

2024 voters



% approval ratings of job performance

June 2024, Likely voters



[■] Strongly approve □ Somewhat approve □ Somewhat disapprove □ Strongly disapprove □ Not sur



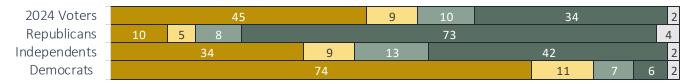
STATE POLITICS

Democrats were the most likely to support all the following pieces of legislation. The assault rifles ban, which passed in a modified form in June 2025, was supported by nearly three-quarters of Democrats and a third of Independents.

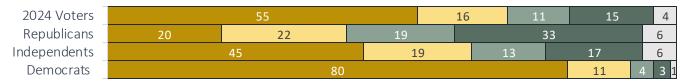




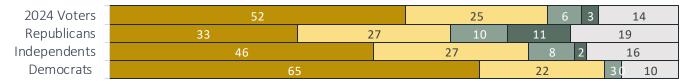
Statewide assault weapons ban



Millionaire's tax, including a 3% income tax surcharge on highest earners



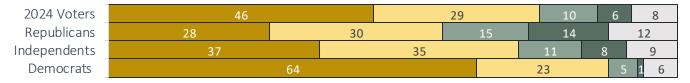
Increased Medicaid reimbursements to primary care doctors



A one-time minimum wage increase for tipped workers to \$6.75



A gradual minimum wage increase for tipped workers through 2031



State bottle refund program, including a 10-cent deposit on recyclable beverage containers



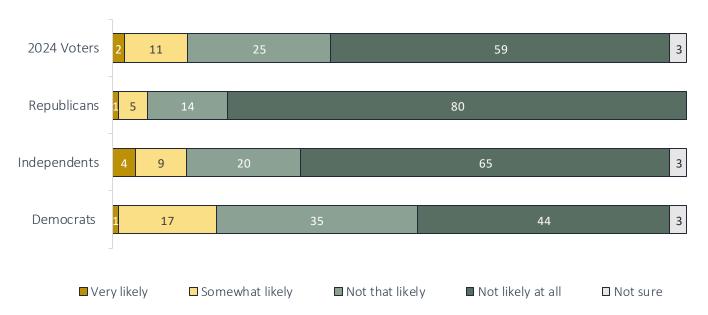


STATE POLITICS

Rhode Islanders, no matter their political party, are broadly skeptical the Washington Bridge rebuild will end on time and on budget.

Rhode Island state officials estimate that the Washington Bridge will be rebuilt by November 2028 and cost \$427 million.1

% who believe it is ____ likely the project will be completed within this timeframe and budget.

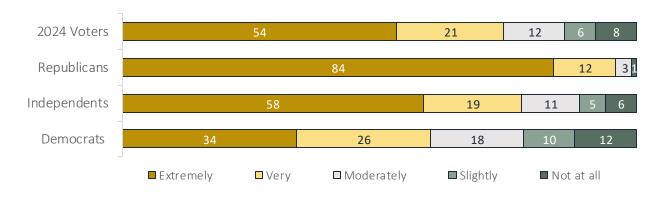




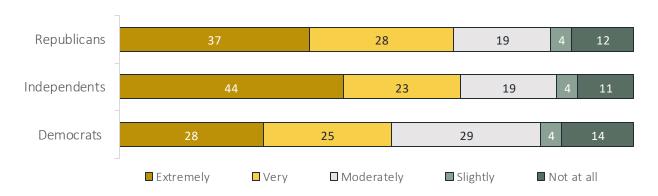
IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY

Despite—or perhaps because of—high levels of concern for the health of U.S. Democracy, being an American is an important identity for most Rhode Islanders. Rhode Islanders are less connected to their party identity, but Independents are the most likely to say it's extremely important.

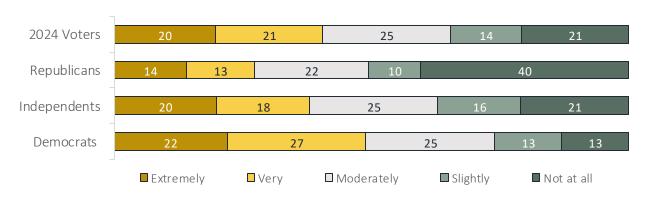
% importance of American identity



% importance of party affiliation identity



% importance of Rhode Island identity



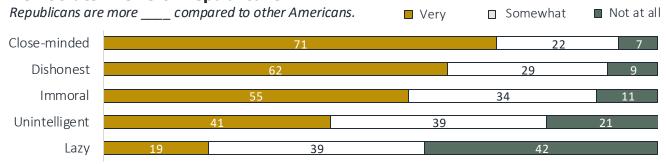
Note: totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.



VIEWS OF THE 'OTHER'

Republicans and Democrats in the state hold deeply negative views of their political counterparts, while Independents judge less harshly.

Democrats' views of Republicans

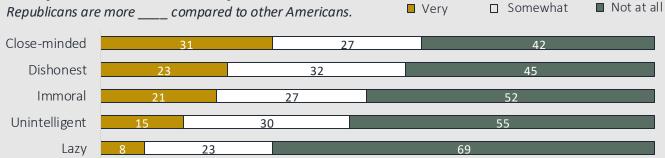


Republicans' views of Democrats

Democrats are more ____ compared to other Americans.

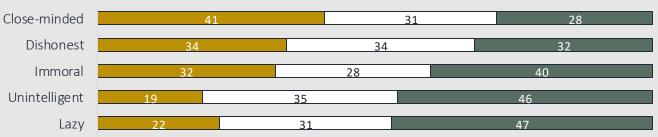


Independents' views of Republicans



Independents' views of Democrats

Democrats are more ____ compared to other Americans.

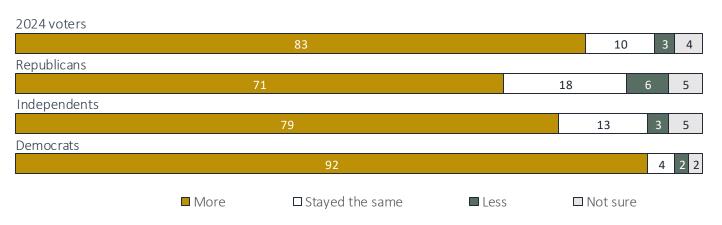




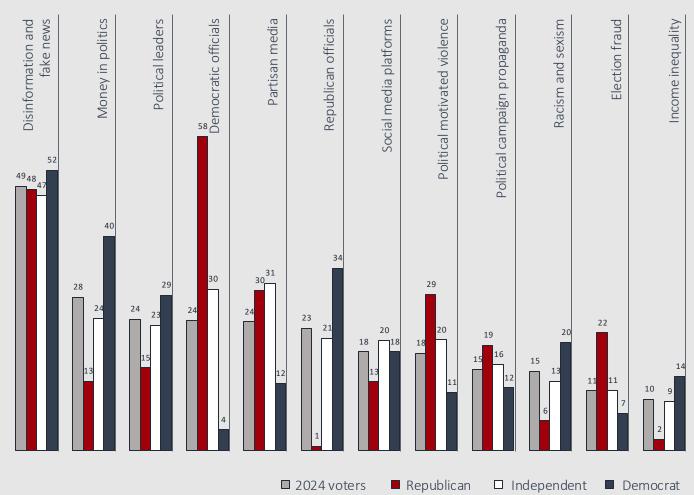
ROOT CAUSES OF DIVISION

Rhode Islanders overwhelmingly agree that political polarization has increased in the last year. Over 90% of Democrats say it has increased, compared to 73% in June 2024. Disinformation and fake news are tapped as one of the biggest contributors to political strife by all three parties, though Republicans are more likely to believe Democratic officials are a main cause of polarization over any other factor.

% who think the country has become _____ politically polarized in <u>past year</u>



% who choose the following as a top three contributor to political polarization



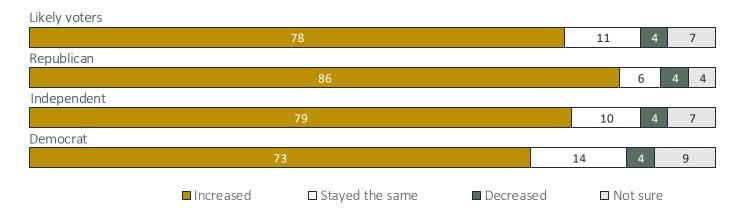
SO SALVE THE PALL CENTER

June 2024

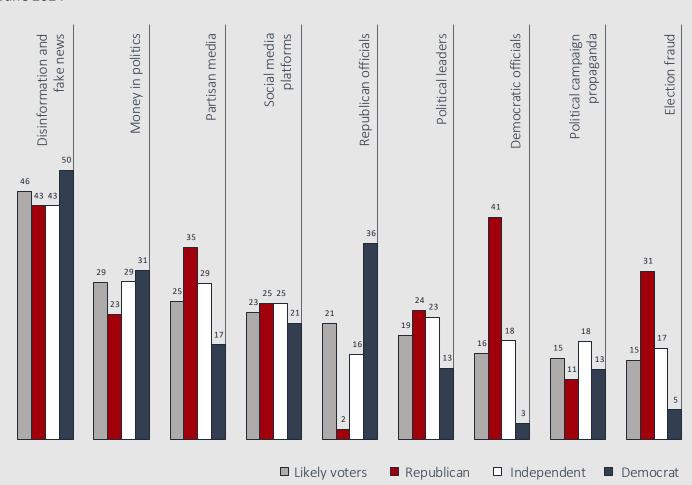
ROOT CAUSES OF DIVISION

Between 2024 and 2025, the parties did not change their mind much on the main contributors to polarization, though the percent who believe political leaders add to the schism has increased.

% who believe the level of political polarization has ____ in the <u>past year</u> June 2024



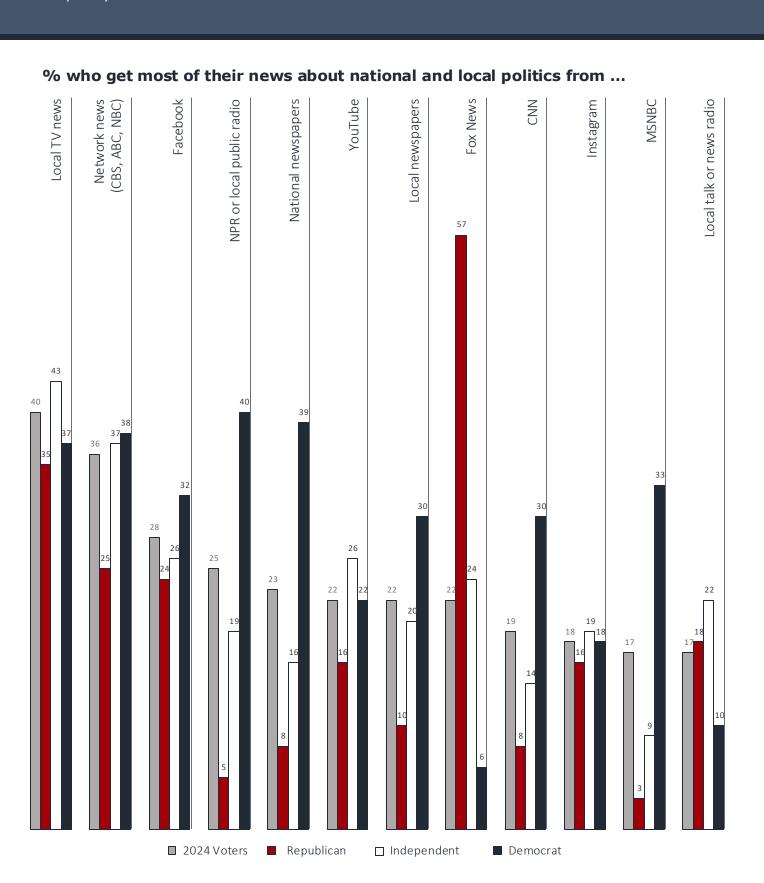
% who chose the following as a top three contributor to political polarization June 2024





NATIONAL AND LOCAL NEWS SOURCES

Rhode Islanders get most of their news from local TV and network news channels, but Republicans frequently turn to Fox News.

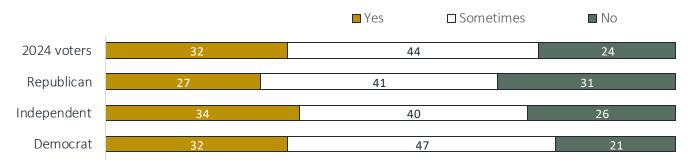




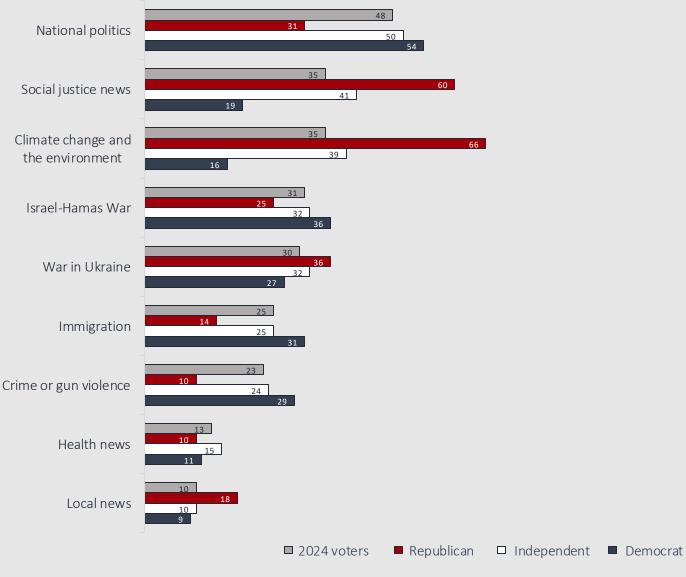
NEWS AVOIDERS*

Three-quarters of Rhode Islanders avoid the news, but they are slightly less likely to do so than they were a year ago, just months before the 2024 presidential election. Republicans likely drove the overall shift as they are about 50 percent less likely to avoid the news than they were in June 2024.

% who find themselves actively trying to avoid news these days



Among news avoiders, % total who say they avoid news about the following topics



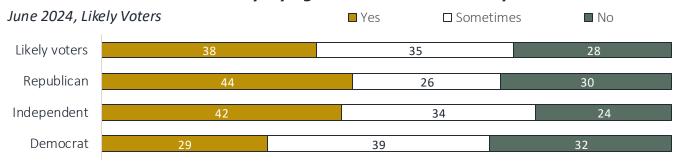
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June 2024

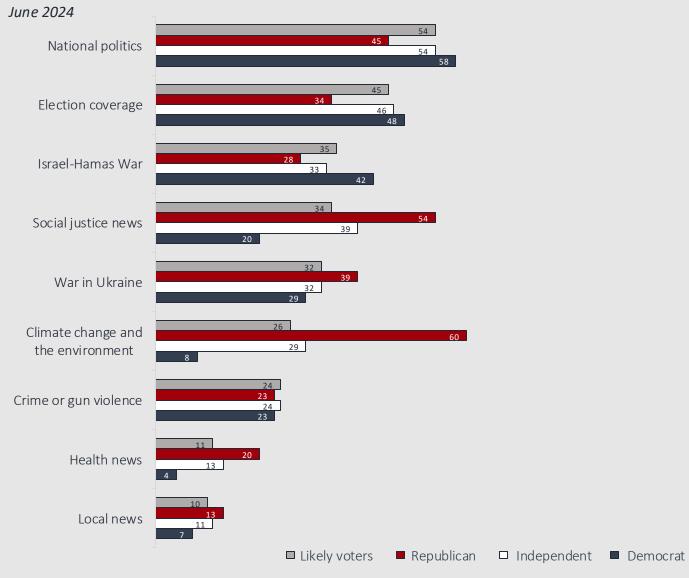
NEWS AVOIDERS*

In June 2024, over one-third of Rhode Islanders avoided the news, most commonly on topics of national politics and the election.

% who find themselves actively trying to avoid news these days



Among news avoiders, % total who said they avoid news about the following topics



SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

SORVET DEMOGRAPHICS	2024 Voters
n = 804; modeled margin of error 3.6%	
Registered Party	
Republican	15%
Unaffiliated	48%
Democrat	36%
Vote in 2024 elections	
Kamala Harris, the Democrat	55%
Donald Trump, the Republican	42%
A minor third-party candidate	3%
Age	
18-34	22%
35-49	22%
50-64	27%
65+	29%
Race	2370
White	81%
Hispanic	7%
Black	4%
AAPI	3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Other	3%
Identity	
Man	46%
Woman	53%
Other	1%
Highest level of education completed	
High school diploma or less	18%
Some college, no degree	27%
Associate's degree	16%
Bachelor's degree	21%
Graduate degree	19%
Congressional district	
1	46%
2	52%
	<u> </u>

Note: 'not sure' responses not shown

SURVEY QUESTIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

- 1. Are you
 - A man
 - A woman
 - Neither of these
- 2. In what year were you born?
- 3. In what ZIP code do you currently live?
- 4. Here is a map of Rhode Island's two congressional districts. In which district do you live?
 - 1
 - 2
 - Not sure
- 5. What is your race?
 - White/Caucasian
 - Hispanic or Latino/a
 - Black or African American
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Other (please specify)
- 6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - High school diploma or less
 - Some college, but no degree
 - Associate's degree, or two-year college degree
 - Bachelor's degree, or four-year college degree
 - Graduate degree
- 7. Are you registered to vote in Rhode Island?
 - Yes
 - No [terminate]
 - Not sure [terminate]
- 8. How did you vote in the 2024 election for President, or for some reason were you unable to vote?
 - Kamala Harris, the Democrat
 - Donald Trump, the Republican
 - A minor third-party candidate
 - Not registered/Too young/Ineligible [Terminate]
 - Did not vote [Terminate]

- 9. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a:
 - Democrat
 - Republican
 - Independent/Other

[IF DEMOCRAT/REPUBLICAN] Do you consider yourself a:

- Strong Democrat/Republican
- Not so strong Democrat/Republican

[IF INDEPENDENT/OTHER] Do you consider yourself closer to: [RANDOMIZE DEM/REP]

- The Democrats
- The Republicans
- Neither

VOICES OF VALUE SURVEY QUESTIONS

- 10. Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the following individuals? [RANDOMIZE][Strongly approve | Somewhat approve | Somewhat disapprove | Strongly disapprove | Not sure]
 - · Senator Jack Reed
 - · Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
 - [IF RI-01] Representative Gabe Amo
 - [IF RI-02] Representative Seth Magaziner
 - · Governor Dan McKee
 - Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos
 - Attorney General Peter Neronha
 - General Treasurer James Diossa
 - Secretary of State Gregg Amore
 - President Donald Trump
 - Vice President JD Vance

- 11. For each of the following, indicate whether you support or oppose the proposed Rhode Island state policy. [RANDOMIZE] [Strongly support | Somewhat support | Somewhat oppose | Strongly suppose | Not sure]
- A statewide assault weapons ban that blocks the purchase, sale, and possession of certain weapons, like semi-automatic shotguns
- A millionaire's tax which includes a 3% income tax surcharge on highest earners
- Increased Medicaid reimbursements to primary care doctors, at the same level as Medicare reimbursements
- A one-time minimum wage increase for tipped workers to \$6.75
- A gradual minimum wage increase for tipped workers through 2031
- A state bottle refund program which includes a 10-cent deposit on recyclable beverage containers
- 12. Rhode Island state officials estimate that the Washington Bridge will be rebuilt by November 2028 and cost \$427 million to rebuild. In your opinion, how likely do you think the project will be completed within this timeframe and budget?
 - Very likely
 - Somewhat likely
 - Not that likely
 - · Not likely at all
 - Not sure
- 13. Do you think Donald Trump's policies have helped you personally, hurt you personally, or have not made much of a difference either way?
 - They have helped me personally
 - They have hurt me personally
 - They have not made much of a difference in my life
- 14. Do you approve or disapprove of the Trump administration's decision to nationally deploy U.S. military troops in response to protests over the federal government's immigration enforcement?
 - Strongly approve
 - Somewhat approve
 - Neither approve nor disapprove
 - Somewhat disapprove
 - Strongly disapprove

- 15. For each of the following, would you like to see federal spending increase, decrease, or stay about the same? [RANDOMIZE] [Increase | Decrease | Stay the same | Not sure]
 - Medicare
 - Medicaid
 - Social security
 - Education
 - Defense
 - Border/immigration enforcement
 - Foreign aid
- 16. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [RANDOMIZE] [Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Strongly disagree | Not sure]
 - The US is in a constitutional crisis
 - The US is a democracy
 - The US economy is in a recession
 - The US government has a strong system of checks and balances
 - The US is a dictatorship
 - The US economy is thriving
- 17. How important are the following aspects to your identity? [Extremely important | Very important | Moderately important | Slightly important | Not important at all] [RANDOMIZE]
 - Being a Rhode Islander
 - Being an American
- 18. And how important is being a [Republican / Democrat / independent based on answer to Q8] to your identity?
 - Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - · Slightly important
 - Not important at all
- 19. In your opinion, how healthy is the U.S. system of democracy? [RANDOMLY FLIP]
 - Not at all healthy
 - Slightly healthy
 - Moderately healthy
 - Very healthy
 - Extremely healthy

20. In the past year, do you think the country has...[ROTATE]

- · Become more politically polarized
- Staved the same
- · Become less politically polarized
- Not sure
- 21. What are the strongest contributors to polarization? Please select your top three. [RANDOMIZE]
 - Disinformation and fake news
 - Partisan media
 - Social media platforms
 - · Lack of civic engagement
 - Lack of exposure to diverse perspectives
 - Income inequality
 - · Neighborhood segregation
 - · Racism and sexism
 - Politically motivated violence
 - Political leaders
 - Money in politics
 - Political campaign propaganda
 - Voter suppression
 - · Redistricting or gerrymandering
 - Election fraud
 - Foreign interference in elections
 - The filibuster
 - The electoral college
 - · Democratic officials
 - Republican officials
 - Other (please specify)[textbox]

- 22. What do you think are the most important problems facing the country today? Please select your top three. [RANDOMIZE]
 - Economy
 - · Inflation or cost of living
 - Reproductive rights (abortion)
 - Immigration
 - Crime
 - Gun policies
 - Healthcare
 - Education
 - · Climate change
 - The state of democracy
 - Election integrity
 - Polarization/division
 - Racism/racial issues
 - Trump/Republicans
 - Biden/Democrats
 - · War in Ukraine
 - Israel-Hamas War
 - Relations with China
 - · International terrorism
 - Domestic terrorism
 - Other (please specify)

23. Would you say: [Very	Somewhat	Not at	all]
[RANDOMIZE]			

- Republicans are ____ close-minded compared to other Americans.
 Democrats are ____ close-minded compared to other Americans.
 Republicans are ___ immoral compared to other Americans.
 Democrats are ___ immoral compared to other Americans.
 Republicans are ___ dishonest compared to other Americans.
- Democrats are _____ dishonest compared to other Americans.
- Republicans are ____ unintelligent compared to other Americans.
- Democrats are ____ unintelligent compared to other Americans.
- Republicans are _____ lazy compared to other Americans.
- Democrats are _____ lazy compared to other Americans.

- 24. How do you get most of your news about national and local politics and issues? Please select all that you watch, read or listen to for at least an hour per week.
 - CNN
 - MSNBC
 - FOX News
 - Network news (CBS, ABC, NBC, PBS)
 - Local TV news
 - Newsmax
 - Local newspapers (like The Providence Journal or The Newport Daily News)
 - National newspapers (like The Washington Post or New York Times)
 - NPR or local public radio
 - Local talk or news radio
 - Local Spanish-language radio, newspapers, or television
 - National Spanish-language radio, newspapers or television
 - Facebook
 - Twitter/X
 - Threads
 - Instagram
 - TikTok
 - YouTube
 - Somewhere else (please specify)
- 25. Do you find yourself actively trying to avoid news these days?
 - Yes
 - Sometimes
 - No
- 26. [IF YES OR SOMETIMES] You said that you actively try to avoid news these days. Which of the following news topics do you try to avoid? Please select all topics that you try to avoid.
 - National politics
 - · Social justice news
 - War in Ukraine
 - Israel-Hamas War
 - · Climate change and the environment
 - Entertainment/celebrity
 - Health news
 - Local news
 - Crime or gun violence
 - Immigration
 - Other (please specify)[textbox]