



# AMERICA AT 250

*How Well are We Fulfilling the  
Vision of the Founders?*

**A SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE**

**MAY 2026**



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND



SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC POLICY  
CIVIC INNOVATION CENTER

# INTRODUCTION

As America approaches the 250th anniversary of its establishment, this is a time for reflection on how well the U.S. government is doing relative to the Founders' vision for the republic.

The Founders were remarkably articulate and expansive on the principles that they saw as central. At the core of their thinking was the idea that government did not have an inherent right to govern, but that the legitimacy of government arose from a kind of social contract. In exchange for submitting to the power of the government, government was obliged 1) to serve the common good, not special interests, or factions as they called them, and 2) to seek to discern and be guided by the will of the people, not only through the process of elections, but on an ongoing basis.

So, do Americans think that the U.S. government is fulfilling this contract? And to the extent that they are dissatisfied, what methods can be pursued to better fulfill it?

To answer these questions, the Program for Public Consultation, together with the Center for Civic Innovation and Voice of the People, undertook a major national survey.

## METHODOLOGY

### Fielding and Sample Size

The survey was fielded online to 1,200 adults from March 11 through 19, 2026, by the University of Maryland's Program for Public Consultation (PPC), with representative non-probability samples obtained from multiple online panels, including Cint, Dynata and Prodege.

The sample has a confidence interval of +/- 2.9% and a response rate of 8.3%.

### Pre-Stratification and Weighting

The sample was pre-stratified and weighted by age, race, ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, household income, region, and home ownership. National benchmarks were obtained from the Census Bureau's 2024 and 2025 American Community Surveys, as well as the 2024 Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

The sample was also weighted by partisan affiliation to balance the sample and ensure a roughly representative distribution of Republicans and Democrats, as well as Independents, including those that register as unaffiliated, or chose another party affiliation. The maximum weight was 1.92.

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## Fulfilling the Founders' Vision?

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the American republic, a large majority of Americans say the US government is doing a poor job fulfilling the Founders' vision for the American republic.

## Government Seen as Failing to Serve Common Good Over Special Interests

Dissatisfaction with the government seems to arise from two key perceptions of how the government operates, both of which are violations of key principles established by the Founders. One is that Americans perceive that the US government is failing to serve the common good, as the Founders called for. Instead, large majorities perceive that special interests dominate, consistent with the Founder's warning about the potential power of factions.

## Government Seen as Failing to Be Guided by the People

The second key principle from the Founders that the public perceives the government as failing to fulfill is that government should be guided by the people. A large majority says that the American public has less influence than the Founders intended, and that the government should be guided by the views of the people more than it is. The government is seen as doing what the majority of the people would do less than half the time.

## Demand for Greater Efforts to Listen to the People

Large majorities believe that to understand the view of the people, elections are not enough, and that between elections the government should make an effort to find out the views of the people. They believe that there is not currently an adequate system in place for the voice of the American people to be heard in Congress. In regard to individual Members of Congress, majorities say Members do not make an adequate effort to seek out information about the views of their constituents, and thus Members of Congress have a poor understanding of the views of their constituents.

## Americans Believe There Is More Common Ground Among the People than Congress

Overwhelming majorities believe that consulting the people would lead Congress to find more common ground. Very large majorities reject the view that Congressional gridlock is just a mirror of polarization among the people and believe that the people have more common sense than Congress.

## Americans Support Innovative Efforts to Consult Representative Samples

Overwhelming majorities support using methods for consulting representative samples of the public on policy issues and believe that the Founders would approve of such efforts. Overwhelming bipartisan majorities say that Members of Congress should publicly respond to the findings of those public consultations and give them major consideration when deciding how to vote on legislation. Asked how much influence it should have when there is majority agreement on a policy position, only a small minority said that it should always determine the Members' vote. A clear majority said it should be given major consideration.

# FINDINGS

## Fulfilling the Founders' Vision?

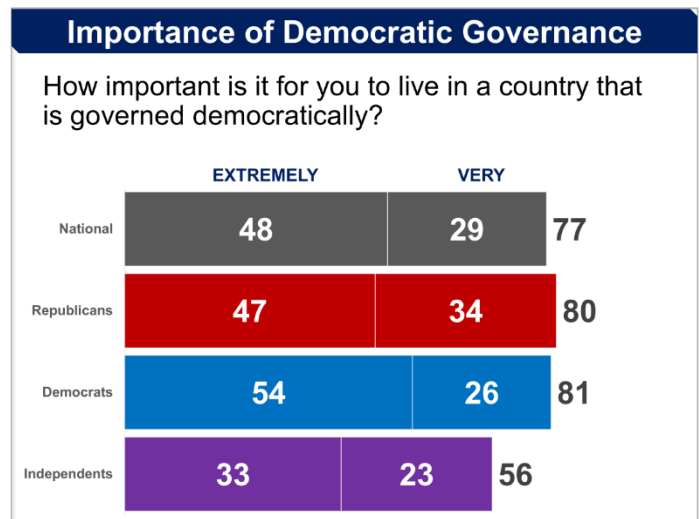
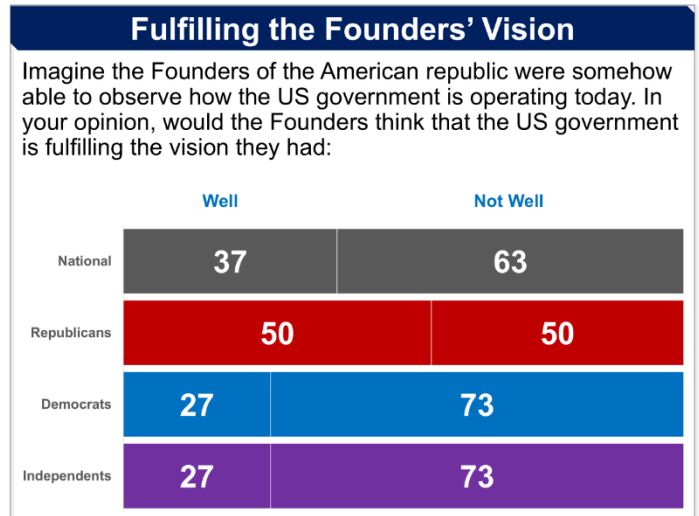
**As we approach the 250th anniversary of the American republic a large majority of Americans say the US government is doing a poor job fulfilling the Founders' vision for the American republic.**

When asked to think about the Founders observing today's government, 63% said the Founders would believe that the U.S. government is doing a poor job fulfilling the vision they had. This view was held by majorities of Democrats and independents (73% of each), and half of Republicans.

While large majorities consistently take this position, there is variation depending on which party is in the White House, especially for Republicans. In 2021, when Congress and the White House were controlled by Democrats, an overwhelming majority of Republicans (92%) took this position, while slightly fewer Democrats took this position (67%, or seven points less).

A recent survey by Ipsos asked "Thinking about America's founding ideals, which statement better describes how you feel," and 64% said "There's much more to do for America to live up to its founding ideals," while 33% said, "America has done a pretty good job living up to its founding ideals." (Ipsos, March 2026)

Despite this reservation when asked about the importance of living in a democracy, a substantially larger and bipartisan majority of 77% said it is extremely (48%) or very important (29%). This included an overwhelming eight-in-ten Republicans (80%) and Democrats (81%). Just 9% said it is only a little or not at all important (Republicans 9%, Democrats 5%).



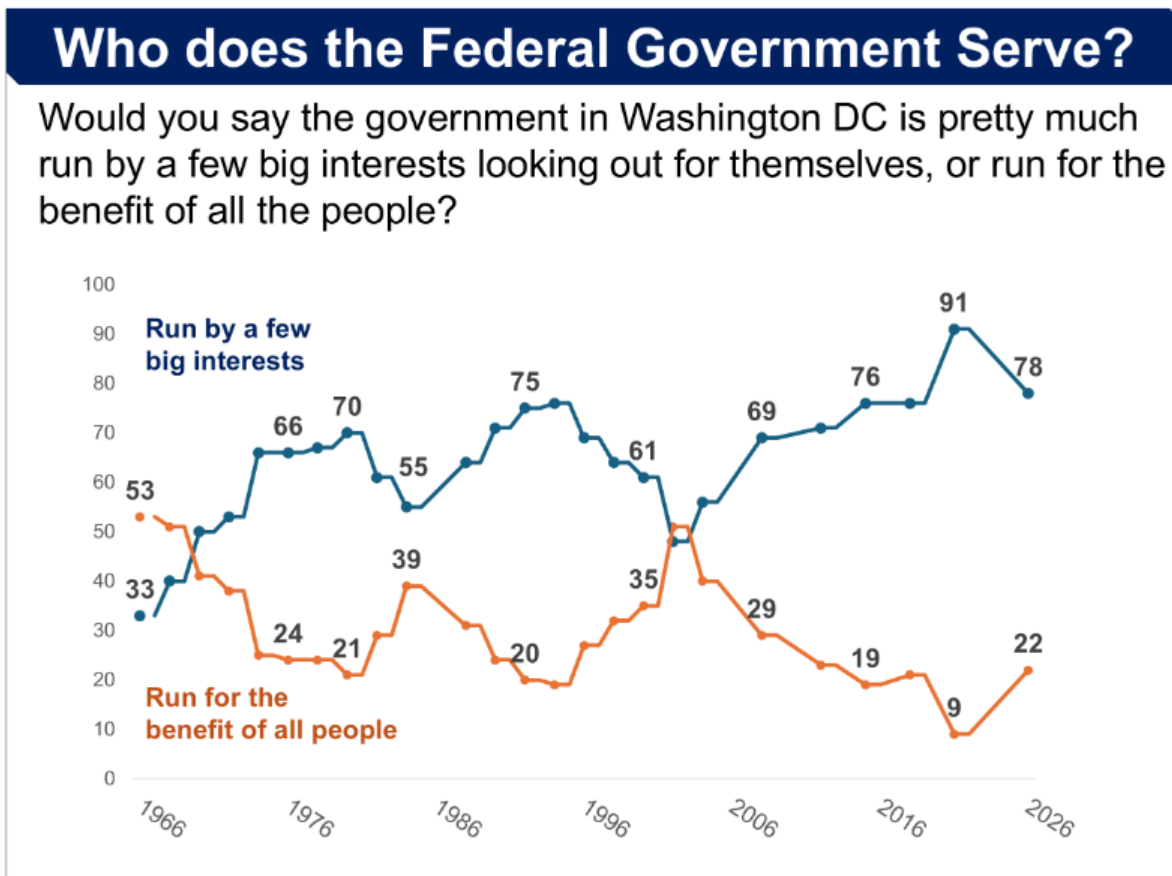
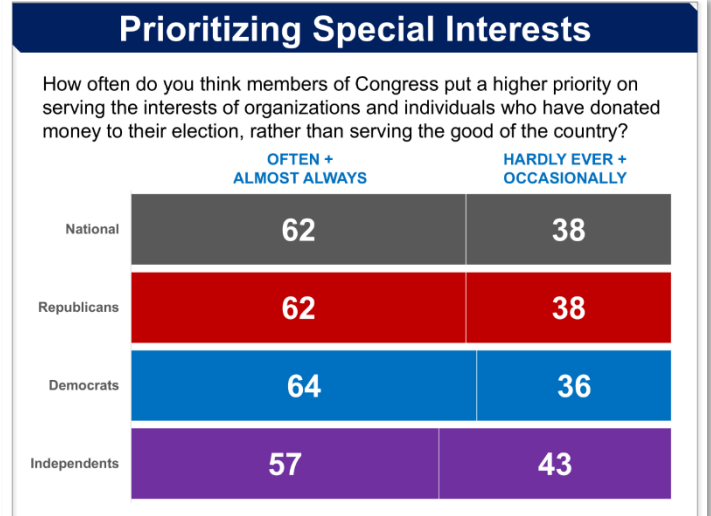
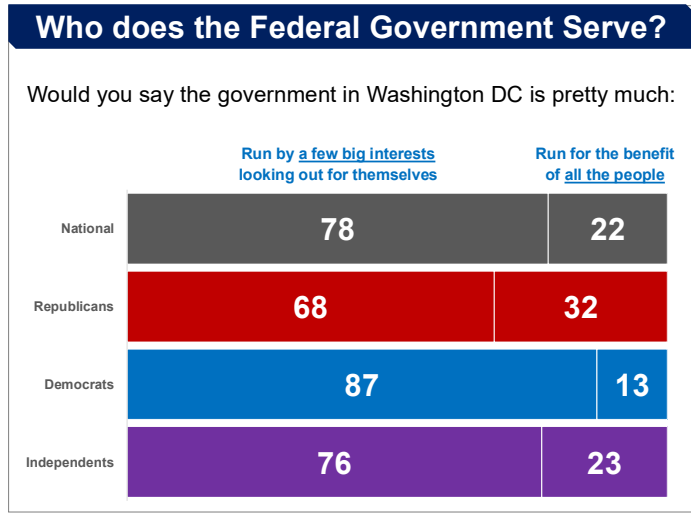
## Government Seen as Failing to Serve Common Good Over Special Interests

**Dissatisfaction with the government seems to arise from two key perceptions of how the government operates, both of which are violations of key principles established by the Founders. One is that Americans perceive that the US government is failing to serve the common good, as the Founders called for. Instead, large majorities perceive that special interests dominate, consistent with the Founders' warning about the potential power of factions.**

This dissatisfaction appears to have two be related to the public's perception that the government is not serving the common good, but rather special interests, consistent with the Founders' warning.

Over three-quarters (78%) say that the government is “run by a few big interests looking out for themselves,” rather than being “run for the benefit of all the people.” This view was taken by 68% of Republicans and 87% of Democrats. Here, again, the overall number is down a bit because the number of Republicans taking this position is down significantly.

The means by which interests assert themselves appear to be through campaign donations. Americans see Members of Congress as frequently prioritizing the interests of donors over the good of the country, with over six-in-ten saying they do so often (33%) or almost always (29%), including 62% of Republicans and 64% of Democrats.



## THE FOUNDERS ON SERVING THE COMMON GOOD

A central theme in the writings of the Founders was that government and its elected officials were obliged to serve the common good over any type of special interest. John Adams said, “Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity and happiness of the people; and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men.” James Madison said that for government, “the supreme object to be pursued” is “the public good, the real welfare of the great body of the people.” Thomas Paine wrote, “the word republic means the public good or the good of the whole.”

To the Founders, the greatest threat to the Republic was what they called “factions”—what in modern parlance is called ‘special interests’— which would compete with the common good. Madison defined a faction as “a number of citizens... actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.”

The Founders feared such factions would come to dominate political parties, leading to polarization and the loss of the ability to serve the collective. Alexander Hamilton wrote that leaders should “fear that the pestilential breath of faction may poison the fountains of justice. The habit of being continually marshaled on opposite sides will be too apt to stifle the voice both of law and of equity.”

Partisan polarization was seen as one of the key ways that leaders could lose track of the common good. Madison denounced those who “divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to cooperate for their common good” and mourned that “the public good is disregarded in the conflict of rival parties.”

### Low Confidence in Government

Not surprisingly, this perception that government is failing to serve the common good has undermined confidence in government. This survey found just four-in-ten saying they can trust the government to do what is right just about always (11%) or most of the time (28%).

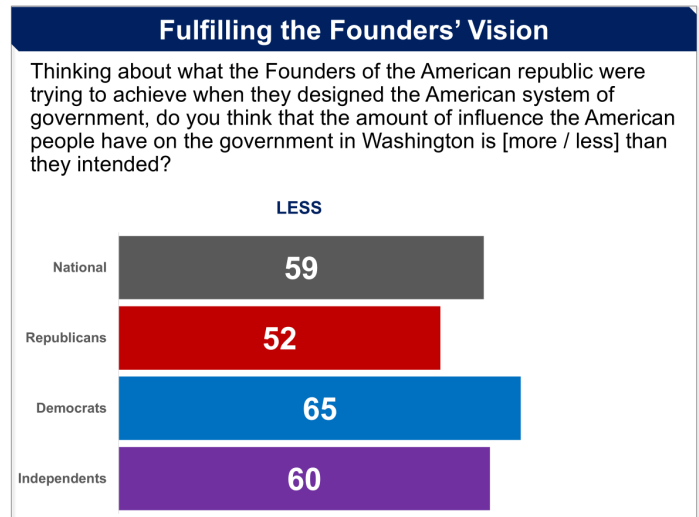
The decline in the American people’s confidence in their government is breathtaking. While a clear majority of Americans in the 1960s said they trusted the government to do the right thing at least most of the time, according to American National Election Studies polls, today only a small minority does.



## Government Seen as Failing to Fulfill Founders' Mandate to Be Guided by the People

The second key principle from the Founders that the public perceives the government as failing to fulfill is for government to be guided by the people. A large majority says that the American public has less influence than the Founders intended, and that the government should be guided by the views of the people more than it is. The government is seen as doing what the majority of the people would do less than half the time.

Asked whether the Founders would believe the amount of influence the public currently has on their government is more, less or the same as they intended, a bipartisan majority of 59% said less, including 65% of Democrats and 52% of Republicans.



## THE FOUNDERS ON CONSULTING THE PEOPLE

The Founders viewed the process of consulting the people on policy as central to the American form of government. At the constitutional convention, George Mason said, "the genius of the people must be consulted."

Alexander Hamilton wrote that government being subject to the influence of the people was as central as the principle of serving the common good, stating unequivocally "A government ought to [be] ... free from every other control but a regard to the public good and to *the sense of the people*."

Hamilton elaborated that representatives should create a "strong chord of sympathy between the representative and the constituent." and elaborated, "Is it not natural that a man who is a candidate for the favor of the people and who is dependent on the suffrages of his fellow citizens for the continuance of public honors, should take care to inform himself of their disposition and inclination and should be willing to allow them their proper degree of influence upon his conduct?"

James Madison also wrote that the public's reasoned views should have major influence saying, "it is the reason, alone, of the public, that ought to control and regulate government." He said that all governmental bodies were "agents" as well as "trustees" of "the people," and that government in its proper role could not take action "subversive of the authority of the people."

He too emphasized that Members of Congress should actively work to understand the people saying, "As it is essential to liberty that the government in general should have a common interest with the people, so it is particularly essential that [Congress] ... should have ... an intimate sympathy with the people."

Thomas Paine wrote that elected representatives "are supposed to have the same concerns as those who have appointed them and... act in the same manner as the whole body would act if they were present," and that they should show "fidelity to the public."

The Founders were very emphatic that giving the people an effective and influential voice was essential to countering the potential for corruption and self-interest among government leaders. Madison wrote that "sympathy with the great mass of the people" helps control the "caprice and wickedness" of leaders and that without "that communion of interests and sympathy of sentiments" with the people, government "degenerates into tyranny."

Similarly, Jefferson wrote, "Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositories," and that if the people "become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress...shall all become wolves."

## Government Seen as Unresponsive to the People

Respondents were asked a series of questions about how responsive they think the federal government and Members of Congress should be to the views of the people, and how responsive they actually are, both on a 0 to 10 scale from “not at all” to “completely”.

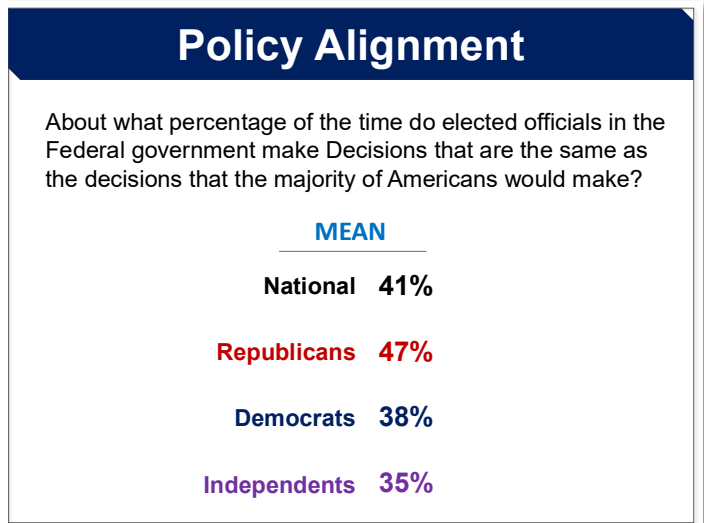
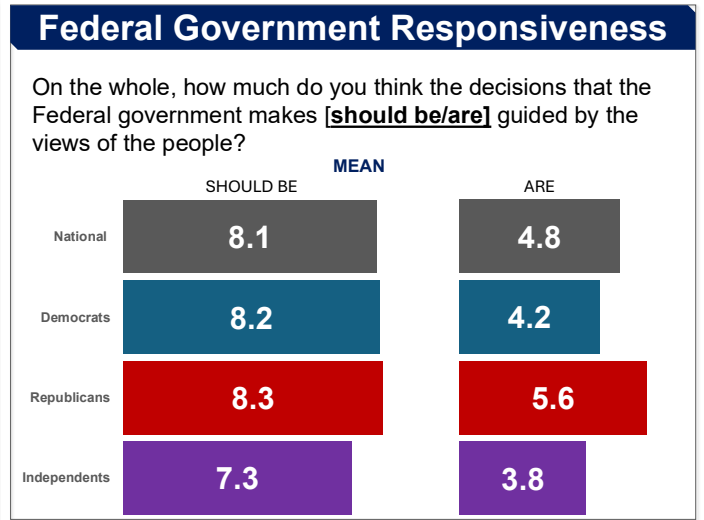
Asked how much they feel federal decisions should be “guided by the views of the people”, the mean response was 8.1 out of 10, with little difference by partisanship (Republicans 8.3, Democrats 8.2). Nearly nine-in-ten chose a number above five.

In contrast, when asked how much federal decisions are actually guided by the people, the mean response was just 4.8 (Republicans 5.6, Democrats 4.2). Just four-in-ten chose a number higher than five.

Comparing the two responses, a very large bipartisan majority of 70% said the federal government is less responsive to the views of the people than they should be (Republicans 67%, Democrats 75%).

## Not Doing What the Majority of People Would Do

When asked to estimate what percentage of time elected officials make decisions that are the same as what the majority of Americans would make, the mean response was just 41% of the time. Among Democrats, it was 38% and among independents just 35%. Among Republicans – whose party currently controls all three branches of government – the median answer was 47%. In 2021, when their party was not in control, Republicans estimated just 27% of the time.



## Members of Congress Seen as Unresponsive to Constituents

Asked how much Members of Congress, when deciding how to vote on major bills, should be guided by the views of their own constituents, the mean response was 8.2 out of 10 (Republicans 8.3, Democrats 8.3). Asked how much Members actually are guided by their constituents, the mean response was just 5.0, not much better than the views of the federal government's responsiveness as a whole (Republicans 5.7, Democrats 4.7).

A very large bipartisan majority of 68% said that Members of Congress are guided by their constituents' views less than they should be (Republicans 64%, Democrats 74%).

### Responsiveness of Federal Government

As a general rule, when Members of Congress are deciding how to vote on major bills, how much do you think they [should be/are] guided by the views of the people in their state or district?

	Mean Should	Do	% less than they should
Maryland	8.2	5.0	68%
Republicans	8.3	5.7	64%
Democrats	8.3	4.7	74%
Independents	7.3	4.1	61%

## IS IT TRUE GOVERNMENT IS NOT DOING WHAT THE PEOPLE WOULD DO?

Some may ask whether it is true that the public has so little influence over government. Since the electorate can vote the government out, can we not assume that ultimately what the government does is representative of the people? Isn't it true that elected officials are constantly adjusting their positions according to polls and focus groups?

An abundance of evidence says that in the United States, the process of democratic representation is working poorly. Studies suggest that after controlling for effects of the interest groups and affluent citizens, average citizens appear to have no influence; the correspondence between public opinion and government decisions has been declining and is now barely better than chance; public attitudes in specific districts have no correspondence to the way their Members vote; elected officials do not adjust their policies according to polls; and policymakers have a poor understanding of public opinion on many issues.

An extensive study by Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page examined 1,779 cases of proposed changes to federal policy on a wide range of issues. Using polling data, as well as an analysis of interest group positions, they determined that the views of interest groups and highly affluent citizens were highly correlated with government action. But while the views of average citizens corresponded to some of the government's actions, this was only the case when interest groups and/or highly affluent citizens favored them. The researchers' conclusion was that there was no evidence of any influence from the views of average citizens.

A series of studies by Alan Munroe examined the correspondence between public opinion and government decisions between 1960 and 1999—the same period during which there was a decline in confidence that the government is acting consistent with the public interest. He found that between 1960 and 1979 the correspondence between public opinion and government action was 63 percent. Between 1980 and 1993 this correspondence dropped to 55 percent and for the period between 1992 and 1999 it dropped further to 53 percent. Since the questions posed were largely binary, the government is likely to be consistent with the public's preferences by chance about half the time. Thus, these findings suggest that public preferences play a small role in shaping decisions.

Another set of studies by the Program for Public Consultation compared public attitudes in districts where the member had voted for legislation, to districts where their member had voted against it. If the process of representation were occurring effectively, we would expect there to be significant differences. However, on the many issues explored, in the vast majority of cases, not only did the majorities in the two sets of districts agree, there were not even any significant differences between them.

The question of whether candidates and elected officials adjust their positions to the findings of focus groups was addressed in an in-depth study by Lawrence Jacobs and Robert Shapiro that included extensive interviews. What they heard consistently—summarized in their book, titled "Politicians Don't Pander"—is that candidates use polls and focus groups not to adjust their positions, but to find more effective ways to present the positions that they have already decided to take.

## Demand for Greater Efforts to Listen to the People

Large majorities believe that to understand the view of the people, elections are not enough, and that between elections the government should make an effort to find out the views of the people. They believe that there is not currently an adequate system in place for the voice of the American people to be heard in Congress. In regard to individual Members of Congress, majorities say Members do not make an adequate effort to seek out information about the views of their constituents, and thus Members of Congress have a poor understanding of the views of their constituents.

In numerous questions respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with efforts by government in general or Members of Congress specifically understand the views of the people.

Asked specifically about the adequacy of elections as a means for representatives to understand their constituents' views and given two options, just 34% said that elections are fully adequate for people to express their views, whereas a very large bipartisan majority of 66% said that elections alone are not enough. Partisan responses were similar, with 58% of Republicans, 70% of Democrats and 76% of independents saying elections alone are not adequate.

More generally, six-in-ten said there is not currently “an adequate system in place for the voice of the American people to be heard in Congress,” including

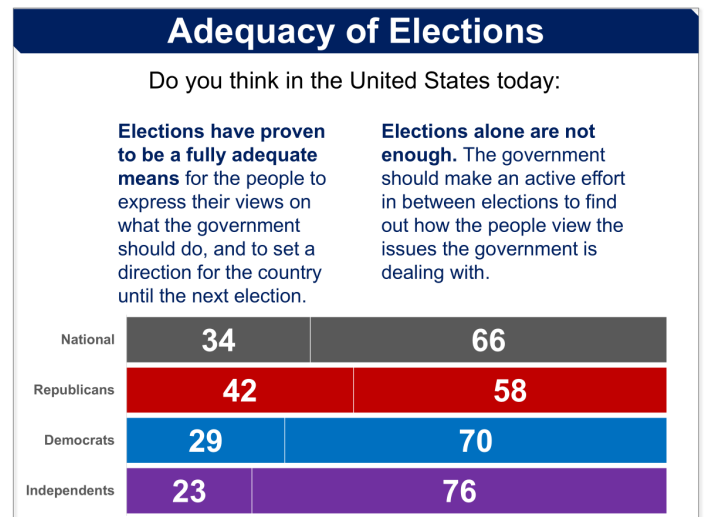
67% of Democrats and 76% of independents, as well as half of Republicans (49%). Here, again, this relatively low percentage for Republicans seems to be related to their party being in control. In 2021, 84% of Republicans said that there is not an adequate system in place.

Respondents were asked how much they think that Members of Congress should “seek to understand” the views of their constituents, on a 0 to 10 scale. The mean response was 8.4 out of 10 (Republicans 8.5, Democrats 8.5).

However, the reality is perceived to be much less. Asked how much Members actually do seek out that information, the mean response was just 5.0 (Republicans 5.6, Democrats 4.7).

Combining the two responses, a very large bipartisan majority of 68% said that Members seek to understand their constituents less than they should (Republicans 66%, Democrats 72%).

Other surveys have found majorities believing that elected officials do not care about the views of the people. Recently, Ipsos found 65% disagreeing with the statement that, “Elected officials care what people like me think.” (Ipsos, March 2026). In 2023, Vanderbilt University's Americas Barometer found 57% disagreeing with the statement that, “Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think.” (Americas Barometer, July 2023). Just 20% agreed and 20% were in the middle. In a 2021 PPC survey, a bipartisan majority of 64% said that their Congressional representatives have little interest in the views of their constituents (Republicans 69%, Democrats 55%).



## Americans Believe There Is More Common Ground Among the People than Congress

**Overwhelming majorities believe that consulting the people would lead Congress to find more common ground. Very large majorities reject the view that Congressional gridlock is just a mirror of polarization among the people and believe that the people have more common sense than Congress.**

Respondents were asked if Congress were to take into account the views of the people, whether they would be more or less likely to find common ground. An overwhelming bipartisan majority of 88% said they would be more likely, including 89% of Republicans and 88% of Democrats.

Respondents were asked to choose between two arguments about the effects of Congress listening more to the people. One said that, in regard to gridlock in Congress, “listening to the views of the people would not help, because the gridlock in Congress is just a reflection of the polarization among the people.” The other said, “if Congress would listen to the views of the people as a whole this would help break the logjam, because the people are less polarized than Congress.”

The view that being responsive to the people would break Congressional impasses was chosen by a very large bipartisan 72%, including 71% of Republicans and 75% of Democrats.

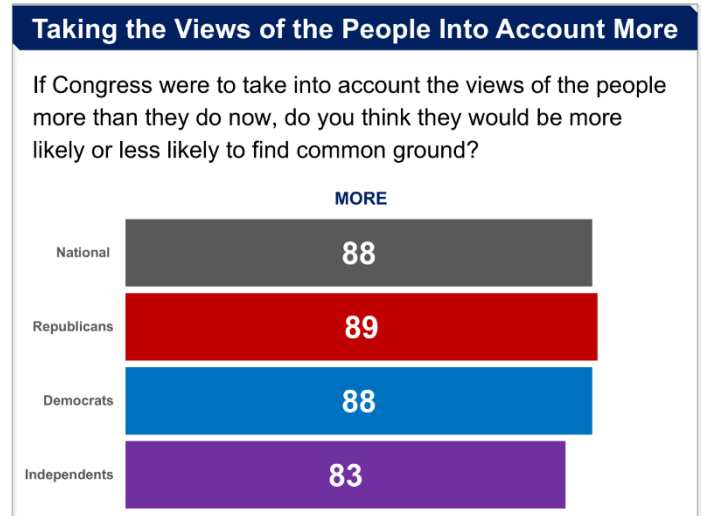
Asked whether they believe the American government or the American people has more common sense, an overwhelming 83% said the American people, including 77% of Republicans, 85% of Democrats and nearly all independents (95%).

## Americans Support Innovative Efforts to Consult Representative Samples

**Overwhelming majorities support using methods for consulting representative samples of the public on policy issues and believe that the Founders would approve of such efforts. Overwhelming bipartisan majorities say that Members of Congress should publicly respond to the findings of those public consultations and give them major consideration when deciding how to vote on legislation. Asked how much influence it should have when there is majority agreement on a policy position, only a small minority said that it should always determine the Member’s vote. A clear majority said it should be given major consideration.**

Public consultation surveys (done online) or in-person events (citizen assemblies) are methods of public consultation that involve representative-sample surveys, in which people are provided information necessary for them to weigh in on federal policy matters. Respondents were presented the following information about these methods of public consultation:

*A sample of citizens in a state or district is chosen that is a broad cross-section of the public. It is representative in that it mirrors the population in terms of gender, age, income, education, race and ethnicity, and partisan affiliation.*



Working online or in-person, the citizens are given a briefing on an issue that is being debated in Congress. They are presented policy options being considered. The citizens then evaluate strongly stated arguments for and against those policy options—the arguments that are being made in government. Finally, the citizens make their recommendations.

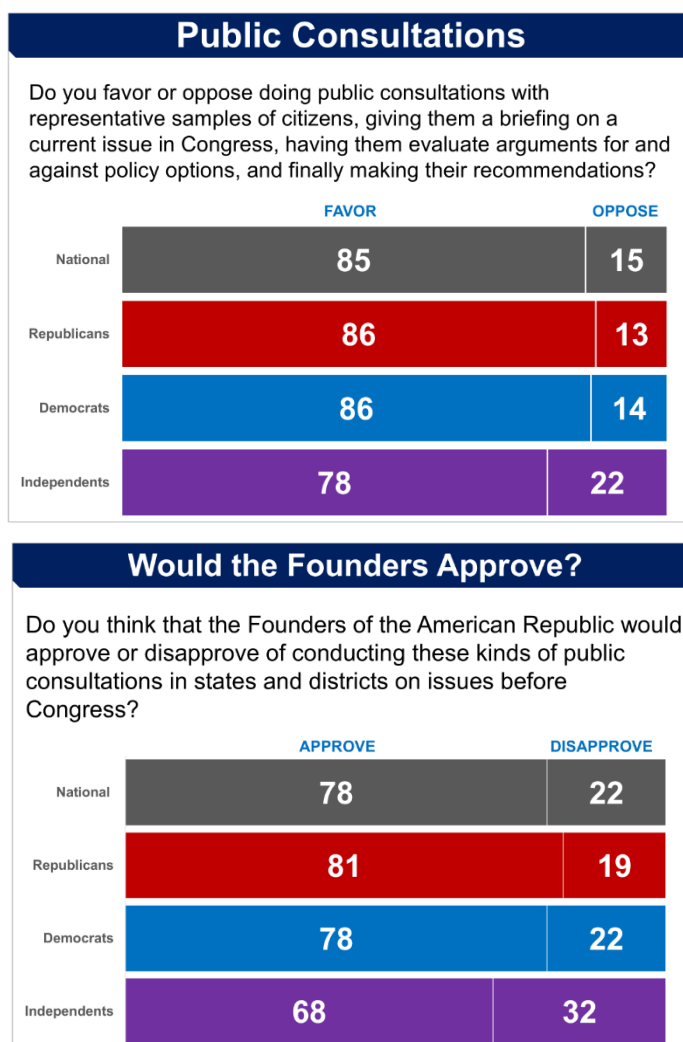
These recommendations are summarized in a report showing how many people favored each one, overall and among Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. The report is then publicly released and forwarded to the Members of Congress.”

Respondents evaluated arguments for and against doing these kinds of public consultations. The arguments in favor were found convincing by overwhelming bipartisan majorities of 77% to 85%, including 79% to 87% of both Republicans and Democrats. The argument that did best stated that, “*The Founders built this country on the principle that nobody knows what’s best for the people better than the people,*” and that when “*given correct information, the majority of citizens come to conclusions that are reasonable and even show wisdom – probably more than Congress.*”

The arguments against did substantially worse, with just 48% to 60% finding them convincing, including just 54% to 65% of Republicans and 42% to 56% of Democrats. The best-performing argument against, with 60% finding it convincing, stated that, “*Members of Congress shouldn’t govern by putting their finger to the wind, reacting to every shift in public opinion,*” and that public consultations would undermine Members’ ability to “*exercise their independent judgment, make hard decisions and do what is best for the country...*” However, the counter to this argument did much better, which stated that, “*The problem with Congress is not that they’re too reactive to public opinion – it’s that they’re too reactive to special interests,*” with 79% finding that convincing.

After evaluating the arguments, respondents were asked whether they favor or oppose such public consultations. An overwhelming bipartisan majority of 85% were in favor, including 86% of both Republicans and Democrats.

Eight-in-ten said the Founders would approve of this method of public consultation (78%), including 81% of Republicans and 78% of Democrats.



## How Members of Congress Should Respond to Policy Recommendations

Overwhelming majorities also said that Members of Congress should play an active role in listening to and responding to the policy recommendations that come from these public consultations. Nearly nine-in-ten said Members of Congress should be briefed on the recommendations (National 88%, Republicans 90%, Democrats 89%). Another overwhelming bipartisan majority said that Members of Congress should “publicly respond to the recommendations” that come from these consultations (National 86%, Republicans 87%, Democrats 88%, Democrats 88%).

### Amount of Consideration That Should be Given to Public Consultation Findings

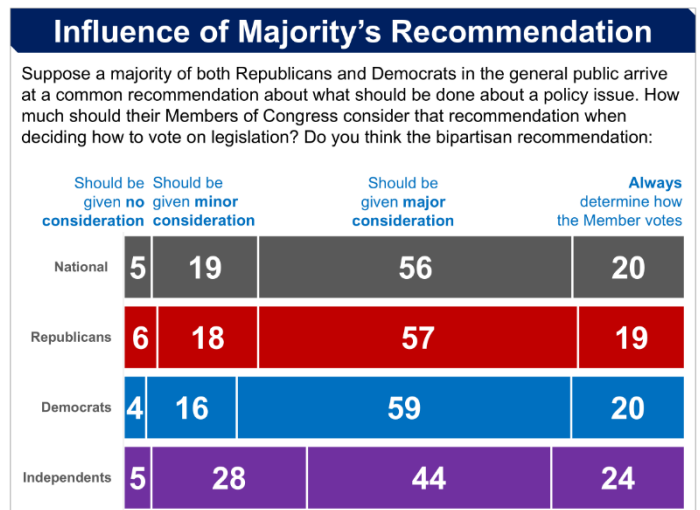
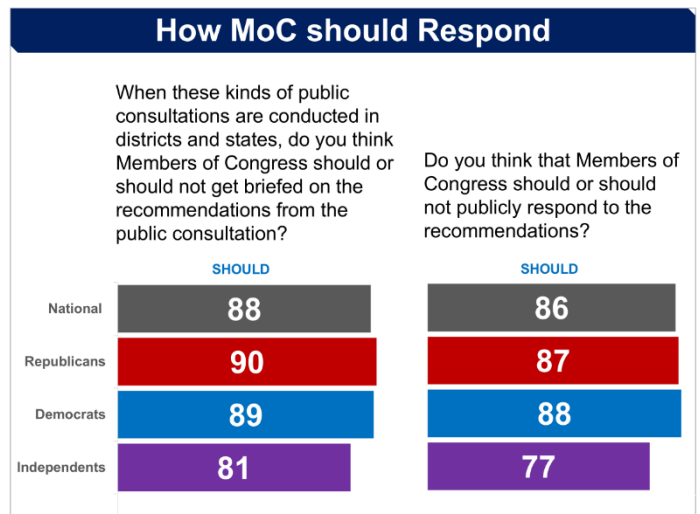
Respondents were presented with a scenario in which, after a public consultation has been conducted, a “clear majority” of the public agrees on a policy recommendation. Asked how much consideration should be given by Members of Congress when deciding how to vote on bills, nearly three-quarters (73%) said either “major consideration” (57%) or it “should always determine how the Member votes” (16%). This position was taken by large majorities of Republicans (70%) and Democrats (76%).

Asked to consider a similar scenario, but a policy recommendation is instead favored by a majority of both Republicans and Democrats, three-quarters said it should be given major consideration (56%) or always determine how the Member votes (20%). Results were similar for Republicans (76%) and Democrats (80%).

Notably, the most popular position was that majority recommendations should be given “major consideration” but not “always determine” how Members act. The sense that Members should be given some leeway in straying from public opinion is aligned with the public’s positive response to the argument that Members should be able to exercise their independent judgment. In the 2021 survey, very large majorities of Americans said they would be fine with Members acting contrary to majority public opinion if they publicly “explained why he or she voted differently,” and were basing their actions “on what he or she really thought was best for the country, rather than just doing what some big donor or special interest wants.”

### Comparing Different Forms for Consulting the Public

Respondents were presented with a list of different methods in which Members of Congress can learn information about the views of their constituents, and asked for each one, how much consideration should be given by the Member on a 0 to 10 scale.



Traditional methods got high ratings including conducting town halls (mean of 7.4, Republicans 7.5, Democrats 7.5) and paying attention to letters of calls from constituents (mean of 7.5, Republicans 7.7, Democrats 7.5).

Methods that use representative samples got essentially the same ratings including standard polls (mean of 7.3, Republicans 7.4, Democrats 7.4) and “public consultations in which a broad cross section of constituents are first given a briefing on a policy issue and evaluate pro and con arguments, and then recommend what should be done.” (mean of 7.4, Republicans 7.5, Democrats 7.6)

A lower score was given to considering “rallies or protests attended by their constituents” (mean of 6.8, Republicans 6.6, Democrats 7.2)

## Congressional Representatives Committing to Consult Constituents

**Overwhelming bipartisan majorities would have a positive view of Congressional representatives who express confidence in the American people and commit to pay attention and respond to the responses of representative samples to consultations on policy issues, and finally, when those processes reveal agreement between Republicans and Democrats to look for opportunities to develop and advance legislation that builds on that bipartisan common ground.**

Respondents were asked to imagine that one of their Congressional representatives would make a series of statements and then asked how positively or negatively they would perceive it on a nine-point scale, from extremely positive to extremely negative.

The first was a statement of confidence in the people: *“I have confidence in the American people. Evidence shows that when Americans have the opportunity to think through important policy issues, this often reveals that Republicans and Democrats agree on many issues, even ones that Congress is polarized on.”*

This statement was viewed positively by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of 91%, including 92% of both Republicans and Democrats. Approximately half (47%) said they would view it extremely or very positively, including similar percentages of Republicans (52%) and Democrats (47%)

The second was a commitment to be responsive to public opinion: *“As your representative, I will pay close attention when scientifically selected representative samples of the people I represent are consulted on issues before Congress—either through surveys or in-person meetings. I will respond thoughtfully to their conclusions and give them major consideration when I make decisions.”*

Nine-in-ten viewed this statement positively (91%), including 91% of Republicans and 93% of Democrats. A majority of 53% rated it extremely or very positively, including majorities of Republicans (58%), Democrats (53%).

The last was a commitment to develop legislation based on public opinion: *“When majorities of Republicans and Democrats who I represent, and nationwide, agree on how to address key issues, I will look for opportunities to develop and advance legislation that builds on that bipartisan common ground.”*

Nine-in-ten viewed this statement positively (90%), including 94% of Republicans and 90% of Democrats. A majority of 52% rated it extremely or very positively, including majorities of Republicans (58%), Democrats (51%).

# FULL METHODOLOGY

**Fielding and Sample Size:** The national survey was fielded to 1,200 adults online March 11 through 19, 2026, by the Program for Public Consultation (PPC) at the University of Maryland's Civic Innovation Center, with representative non-probability samples obtained from multiple online panels, including Cint, Dynata and Prodege.

The national sample has a confidence interval of +/- 2.9% and a response rate of 8.3%.

**Pre-Stratification and Weighting:** The sample was pre-stratified and weighted by age, race, ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, household income, region, and home ownership. National benchmarks were obtained from the Census Bureau's 2024 and 2025 American Community Surveys, as well as the 2024 Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

The sample was also weighted by partisan affiliation to balance the sample and ensure a roughly representative distribution of Republicans and Democrats, as well as Independents, including those that register as unaffiliated, or chose another party affiliation.

The maximum weight was 1.92 and the minimum weight was 0.48. The average weight was 1.0.

Confidence intervals were calculated using the sample variance of the weights using the following formula:

$$CI = \text{Square root } ((1+\text{variance})/\text{sample size})$$

**Sample Collection:** Sample collection was managed by Quant-E with oversight from PPC. Samples were drawn from multiple large online panels, including Cint, Prodege, and Dynata, whose members are recruited using non-probability sampling methods. The selected sample was invited to participate via email invitation, push notification, or SMS for cell phone users. Respondents were offered cash or cash-equivalent incentives to participate in the survey.

**Data Collection and Privacy:** Survey responses were collected directly on the Qualtrics platform. Only respondents with a provided link could take the survey, using their computer, laptop, tablet, or mobile phone.

Privacy and security measures were taken to ensure that data was collected in adherence to the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation policies for data privacy and security, as well as the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA).

**Quality Control:** Quality control measures in the sample collection process to disqualify duplicate respondents and survey bots included:

- checking respondents' IP addresses to determine if there are duplicate respondents
- employing an "operating system & Web browser check" to determine if there are any cross-panel duplicates
- using hCaptcha to detect and disqualify survey bots.

Quality control measures within the survey to disqualify dishonest or mischievous respondents, as well as survey bots, included:

- an attention-check question, e.g. Select the word that does not belong. [Tuesday]; [Friday]; [April]; [Wednesday]
- an honesty question, e.g. What have you done in the past week? Select all that apply. [Won a gold medal at the Olympics]; [Watched TV]; [Got a license to operate a Class SSGN submarine]; [Read a book]
- a speed limit, which disqualified respondents who moved through the first quarter of the survey at a pace roughly triple the average reading speed.

Lastly, respondents were removed from the sample who answered fewer than half the substantive questions or who engaged in straight-lining.