Wave 6 Bright Line Watch Political Science Survey

July 2018

Start of Block: Block 1

Q1
Thank you for participating in the Bright Line Watch survey of political scientists. The purpose of this survey is to measure expert opinions about the state of American democracy.

Your responses will be anonymous. No identifying information will be collected with your survey responses. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to skip any questions or withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions or comments about this survey, or if you would like to be removed from the mailing list for future surveys, please email survey@brightlinewatch.org.

☐ I agree to continue (1)

☐ I do not agree to continue (2)
Q21
On the next screen you will see a series of statements related to democratic government. For each, you will be asked to indicate how well the statement describes the United States today.

Fourteen statements have been randomly selected from a set of twenty-seven statements (the full list will be available at the end of the survey).

Please click "Next >>" to continue to the next screen.
Q2 How well do the following statements describe the United States as of today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>The U.S. does not meet this standard (1)</th>
<th>The U.S. partly meets this standard (2)</th>
<th>The U.S. mostly meets this standard (3)</th>
<th>The U.S. fully meets this standard (4)</th>
<th>Not sure (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government officials are legally sanctioned for misconduct (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government officials do not use public office for private gain (2)</td>
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<td>Government agencies are not used to monitor, attack, or punish political opponents (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>All adult citizens enjoy the same legal and political rights (5)</td>
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<td>Government does not interfere with journalists or news organizations (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government effectively prevents private actors from engaging in politically-motivated violence or intimidation (7)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Government protects individuals’ right to engage in unpopular speech or expression (8)

Political competition occurs without criticism of opponents’ loyalty or patriotism (9)

Elections are free from foreign influence (11)

Parties and candidates are not barred due to their political beliefs and ideologies (12)

All adult citizens have equal opportunity to vote (13)

All votes have equal impact on election outcomes (14)

Elections are conducted, ballots counted, and winners determined without pervasive fraud or manipulation (15)
Executive authority cannot be expanded beyond constitutional limits (16)

The legislature is able to effectively limit executive power (17)

The judiciary is able to effectively limit executive power (18)

The elected branches respect judicial independence (19)

Voter participation in elections is generally high (20)

Information about the sources of campaign funding is available to the public (21)

Public policy is not determined by large campaign contributions (22)

Citizens can make their opinions heard in open
debate about policies that are under consideration (23)

The geographic boundaries of electoral districts do not systematically advantage any particular political party (24)

Even when there are disagreements about ideology or policy, political leaders generally share a common understanding of relevant facts (25)

Elected officials seek compromise with political opponents (26)

Citizens have access to information about candidates that is relevant to how they would govern (27)

Government protects individuals’ right to
engage in peaceful protest (28)

Law enforcement investigations of public officials or their associates are free from political influence or interference (29)
Q3
On a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 is least democratic and 100 is most democratic, how would you rate the political system of the United States as of today? 

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

United States today ()
Q15
On the following screens you will see a list of 9 recent events (randomly selected from a list of 22 events - the full list will be available at the end of the survey). We ask that you please rate these events using the following two scales.

*Normal or Abnormal*, where 1 is business as usual for a presidential administration, like vetoing a bill or appointing a cabinet, and 5 is highly unusual for American democracy, like Iran-Contra or ordering newspapers to halt the publication of the Pentagon Papers.

*Unimportant or Important*, where 1 has limited or no consequences for the federal government, like the first family’s pets or the menu for a state dinner, and 5 creates a significant or lasting change, like the establishment of Social Security or the Voting Rights Act.

We also welcome any comments you may have that explain your evaluation.

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G1a
*President Trump holding a face-to-face summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un*

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G1b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)
G1c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G1d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid1

Start of Block: Grid2

G2a

*President Trump describing members of the MS-13 gang as “animals”*
G2b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G2c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G2d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid2
Start of Block: Grid3
G3a
The Department of Homeland Security separating children from parents who enter the United States illegally

G3b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G3c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G3d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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________________________________________________________________
President Trump criticizing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as “dishonest and weak”

G4b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G4c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G4d Please comment on your responses above (optional).
G5a
*Congress passing tax legislation*

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G5b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

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G5c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)
G5d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid5

Start of Block: Grid6

G6a
President Trump pardoning Dinesh D’Souza for making illegal campaign contributions

G6b Is this normal or abnormal?

○ Normal (1)

○ Mostly normal (2)

○ Borderline normal (3)

○ Mostly abnormal (4)

○ Abnormal (5)
G6c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G6d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid6

Start of Block: Grid7

G7a
President Trump repeatedly calling the press an “enemy of the people”
G7b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G7c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G7d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid7
Start of Block: Grid8
G8a
The Trump administration reversing Obama-era environmental and financial regulations

G8b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G8c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G8d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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G9a
President Trump calling for suspending due process rights for suspected illegal immigrants

G9b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G9c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G9d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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President Trump profiting from political fundraisers and events held by foreign dignitaries at hotels and resorts owned by his family business

G10b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G10c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)
G10d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid10

Start of Block: Grid11

G11a
President Trump calling for the Department of Justice to investigate Hillary Clinton

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G11b Is this normal or abnormal?

○ Normal (1)

○ Mostly normal (2)

○ Borderline normal (3)

○ Mostly abnormal (4)

○ Abnormal (5)
G11c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

End of Block: Grid11

G12a

President Trump publicly criticizing the investigation led by special counsel Robert Mueller
G12b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G12c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G12d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid12

Start of Block: Grid14
G14a
*President Trump nominating Brett Kavanaugh to replace Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy*

G14b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G14c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G14d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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The United States withdrawing from the United Nations Human Rights Council

G15b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G15c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G15d Please comment on your responses above (optional).
President Trump congratulating Vladimir Putin on his election victory

G16b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G16c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)
G16d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid16

Start of Block: Grid17

G17a
President Trump demanding greater defense spending from NATO allies

G17b Is this normal or abnormal?

○ Normal (1)
○ Mostly normal (2)
○ Borderline normal (3)
○ Mostly abnormal (4)
○ Abnormal (5)
G17c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G17d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid17

Start of Block: Grid18

G18a
President Trump threatening American businesses such as Amazon and Harley-Davidson
G18b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G18c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G18d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid18

Start of Block: Grid19
G19a
*The Trump Administration imposing tariffs on $34 billion in Chinese imports*

G19b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G19c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G19d Please comment on your responses above (optional).
The Trump administration imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum from Canada, Mexico, and the E.U.

G20b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G20c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G20d Please comment on your responses above (optional).
G21a
*President Trump publicly criticizing the F.B.I.*

G21b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G21c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)
G21d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid21

Start of Block: Grid22

G22a
President Trump questioning the conclusions of U.S. intelligence about allegations of Russian election meddling during a press conference alongside Russian President Vladimir Putin.

G22b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal  (1)
- Mostly normal  (2)
- Borderline normal  (3)
- Mostly abnormal  (4)
- Abnormal  (5)
G22c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G22d Please comment on your responses above (optional).

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End of Block: Grid22

Start of Block: Grid23

G23a
President Trump publicly criticizing the leaders of the United Kingdom and Germany at a time when both are politically vulnerable at home.
G23b Is this normal or abnormal?

- Normal (1)
- Mostly normal (2)
- Borderline normal (3)
- Mostly abnormal (4)
- Abnormal (5)

G23c Is this unimportant or important?

- Unimportant (1)
- Mostly unimportant (2)
- Semi-important (3)
- Mostly important (4)
- Important (5)

G23d Please comment on your responses above (optional).  

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End of Block: Grid23

Start of Block: Block 3
Q4 Finally, we have just a few questions about you.

Which of the following best describes your occupation?

- Graduate student (1)
- Post-doctoral fellow (2)
- Adjunct faculty (3)
- Full-time faculty (4)
- Emeritus faculty (5)
- Other (6)
Finally, we have just a few questions about you. Which of the following best describes your occupation?

- Graduate student
- Post-doctoral fellow
- Adjunct faculty
- Full-time faculty
- Emeritus faculty

Q5 What is your primary field of study?

- American politics (1)
- Comparative politics (2)
- International relations (3)
- Political theory (4)
- Another field of political science (5)
- Something other than political science (6)
Q6 What is your specific area of study?
Q7 Do you have any comments about this survey?

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End of Block: Block 3