

Bright Line Watch Public Survey - Standard Performance Battery
March 2019

This study is being conducted by John Carey, Gretchen Helmke, Brendan Nyhan, and Susan Stokes, who are professors at Dartmouth College (Carey), the University of Rochester (Helmke), the University of Michigan (Nyhan), and the University of Chicago (Stokes). We ask for your attention for a few minutes and we thank you for your attention and your responses. Your participation is voluntary and you may decline the survey or withdraw at any time. No information that identifies you will be collected or retained by the researchers, and all of the information we collect will be stored securely. However, any online interaction carries some risk of being accessed. Please contact the Social & Behavioral Sciences IRB at the University of Chicago with any questions or concerns (by phone at 773-834-7835 or by email at sbs-irb@uchicago.edu). Do you consent to participate in the survey?

Yes

No

[TERMINATE AND THANK ANYONE WHO DOES NOT CONSENT.]

[timing]

End of Block

How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 or older

[timing]

Page Break

Now we would like to ask you about your views on politics. On the next several screens you will see questions about the executive (president), legislature (Congress), and judiciary (courts), as well as about the news media and the political actions of individual citizens. The questions will ask you to evaluate the importance of certain principles or values to democracy in general, and how well those principles or values are being upheld in practice in the United States.

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How important are these characteristics for democratic government?
[Randomly display 14 of 27.]

| | Not relevant This has no impact on democracy | Beneficial This enhances democracy, but is not required for democracy | Important If this is absent, democracy is compromised | Essential A country cannot be considered democratic without this |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Government officials are legally sanctioned for misconduct | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Government officials do not use public office for private gain | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Government agencies are not used to monitor, attack, or punish political opponents | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| All adult citizens enjoy the same legal and political rights | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Government does not interfere with journalists or news organizations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Government effectively prevents private actors from engaging in politically-motivated violence or intimidation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Government protects individuals' right to engage in unpopular speech or expression

Political competition occurs without criticism of opponents' loyalty or patriotism

Elections are free from foreign influence

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

All adult citizens have equal opportunity to vote

All votes have equal impact on election outcomes

Elections are conducted, ballots counted, and winners determined without pervasive fraud or manipulation

Executive authority cannot be expanded beyond constitutional limits

The legislature is able to effectively limit executive power

The judiciary is able to effectively limit executive power

The elected branches respect judicial independence

Voter participation in elections is generally high

Information about the sources of campaign funding is available to the public

Public policy is not determined by large campaign contributions

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

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

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

Elected officials seek compromise with political opponents

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

Government protects individuals' right to engage in peaceful protest

Law enforcement investigations of public officials or their associates are free from political influence or interference

Page Break

How well do the following statements describe the United States as of today?
[Carry forward selected 14 statements from previous question.]

| | The U.S. does not meet this standard | The U.S. partly meets this standard | The U.S. mostly meets this standard | The U.S. fully meets this standard | Not sure |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Government officials are legally sanctioned for misconduct | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Government officials do not use public office for private gain | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
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[timing]

End of Block

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?

[slider bar as shown here]



Page Break

How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically? On this scale where 1 means it is “not at all important” and 10 means “absolutely important,” what position would you choose?

[multiple choice, horizontal, with “Not at all important” and “Absolutely important” placed on top of the 1 and 10, respectively]

- 1 Not at all important
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 Absolutely important

Page Break

In what state do you currently reside?

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana

- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania

- Rhode Island
 - South Carolina
 - South Dakota
 - Tennessee
 - Texas
 - Utah
 - Vermont
 - Virginia
 - Washington
 - West Virginia
 - Wisconsin
 - Wyoming
 - Puerto Rico
 - I do not reside in the United States
-

What is your gender?

- Male
 - Female
 - Other
-

When it comes to politics, would you describe yourself as liberal, conservative, or neither liberal nor conservative?

- Very conservative
 - Somewhat conservative
 - Slightly conservative
 - Moderate; middle of the road
 - Slightly liberal
 - Somewhat liberal
 - Very liberal
-

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

- Republican
 - Democrat
 - Independent
 - Something else
-

[timing]

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent,... Democrat Is Selected

Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- Strong Democrat
 - Not very strong Democrat
-

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent,... Republican Is Selected

Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- Strong Republican
 - Not very strong Republican
-

Display This Question:

If Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent,... Independent Is Selected

Or Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent,... Something else Is Selected

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

- Closer to the Republican Party
 - Closer to the Democratic Party
 - Neither
-

[timing]

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- Did not graduate from high school
 - High school diploma or the equivalent (GED)
 - Some college
 - Associate's degree
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - Professional or doctorate degree
-

Please check one or more categories below to indicate what race(s) you consider yourself to be.

- White
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - Multi-racial
 - Other
-

Are you of Spanish or Hispanic origin or descent?

- Yes
 - No
-

With which race or ethnicity do you most identify?

- White
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian/Pacific Islander
 - Multi-racial
 - Hispanic/Latino/Chicano/a
 - Other
-

Generally, how interested are you in politics?

- Extremely interested
 - Very interested
 - Somewhat interested
 - Not very interested
 - Not at all interested
-

[timing]

End of Block

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

- Strongly approve
 - Somewhat approve
 - Somewhat disapprove
 - Strongly disapprove
-

[timing]

End of Block

The next set of questions helps us learn what types of information are commonly known to the public. Please answer these questions on your own without asking anyone or looking up the answers. Many people don't know the answers to these questions, but we'd be grateful if you would please answer every question even if you're not sure what the right answer is.

It is important to us that you do NOT use outside sources like the Internet to search for the correct answer. Will you answer the following questions without help from outside sources?

- Yes
 - No
-

[timing]

End of Block

For how many years is a United States Senator elected - that is, how many years are there in one full term of office for a U.S. Senator?

- Two years
 - Four years
 - Six years
 - Eight years
 - None of these
 - Don't know
-

How many times can an individual be elected President of the United States under current laws?

- Once
 - Twice
 - Four times
 - Unlimited number of terms
 - Don't know
-

How many U.S. Senators are there from each state?

- One
 - Two
 - Four
 - Depends on which state
 - Don't know
-

Who is currently the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom? [randomize order of answer options except "don't know"]

- Richard Branson
 - Nick Clegg
 - David Cameron
 - Theresa May
 - Margaret Thatcher
 - Don't know
-

For how many years is a member of the United States House of Representatives elected - that is, how many years are there in one full term of office for a U.S. House member?

- Two years
 - Four years
 - Six years
 - Eight years
 - For life
 - Don't know
-

[timing]

End of Block

It is essential for the validity of this study that we know whether participants looked up any information online during the study. Did you make an effort to look up information during the study? Please be honest; you will still be paid and you will not be penalized in any way if you did.

- Yes, I looked up information
 - No, I did not look up information
-

We sometimes find people don't always take surveys seriously, instead providing humorous or insincere responses to questions. How often do you do this?

- Never
 - Rarely
 - Some of the time
 - Most of the time
 - Always
-

[timing]

Page Break

Do you have any comments on the survey? Please let us know about any problems you had or aspects of the survey that were confusing.

[textbox]

[timing]

Page Break

Thank you for answering these questions. This research is not intended to support or oppose any political candidate or office. The research has no affiliation with any political candidate or campaign and has received no financial support from any political candidate or campaign. Should you have any questions about this study, please opinion.study@dartmouth.edu.

[timing]

End of Block
