

Bright Line Watch Public Survey - Standard Performance Battery
September 2019

This study is being conducted by John Carey, Gretchen Helmke, Brendan Nyhan, and Susan Stokes, who are professors at Dartmouth College (Carey and Nyhan), the University of Rochester (Helmke), 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 screen 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 how well certain principles or values to democracy are being upheld in practice in the United States.

Page Break

How well do the following statements describe the United States as of today?
[Randomly display 10]

	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"/>
Government agencies are not used to monitor, attack, or punish political opponents	<input type="radio"/>	<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"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government does not interfere with journalists or news organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<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"/>	<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

Government statistics and data are produced by experts who are not influenced by political considerations

[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

Start of Block: Dem/Anti-Dem

Timing

First Click (1)

Last Click (2)

Page Submit (3)

Click Count (4)

Below we are going to describe a number of political scenarios. Please indicate how democratic or undemocratic you consider each scenario to be.

Please click the arrow to continue to the next screen.

Page Break

t [There are 8 blocks here, intended to be 4 sets of pairs

Norms & Behavior

Reverse Norms & Behavior

Institutions, Accountability, Rule of law

Reverse Institutions, Accountability, Rule of law

Rights, Protections & Freedom

Reverse Institutions, Accountability, Rule of law

Elections & Voting

Reverse Elections & Voting

Please randomly show 1 of each pair from every set. In other words, each respondent will see 4 blocks, one from each category.

]

End of Block: Dem/Anti-Dem

Start of Block: DAD Reverse Norms & Behavior



How democratic or undemocratic are these scenarios?

	Very undemocratic (1)	Moderately undemocratic (2)	Moderately democratic (4)	Very democratic (5)	Not sure (7)
A prime minister/president acknowledges the right of political opponents to criticize his or her leadership (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A prime minister/president endorses the legitimacy of an election in which they have been defeated (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A prime minister/president respects established boundaries between civilian and military authority (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DAD Reverse Norms & Behavior

Start of Block: DAD Norms & Behavior



Q181 How democratic or undemocratic are these scenarios?

	Very undemocratic (1)	Moderately undemocratic (2)	Moderately democratic (4)	Very democratic (5)	Not sure (7)
A prime minister/president says political opponents who criticize his or her leadership should be investigated and imprisoned (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A prime minister/president attacks the legitimacy of an election in which they have been defeated (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A prime minister/president compels active-duty military officers to promote his or her political agenda (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DAD Norms & Behavior

Start of Block: DAD Reverse Institutions, Accountability, Rule of law



Q186 How democratic or undemocratic are these scenarios?

	Very undemocratic (1)	Moderately undemocratic (2)	Moderately democratic (4)	Very democratic (5)	Not sure (7)
Prosecutors decide whether to charge companies or individuals without interference from the president/prime minister (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A government cooperates with independent investigation into its own staff or ministers/Cabinet members (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The chief executive respects institutional restrictions on his or her power (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DAD Reverse Institutions, Accountability, Rule of law

Start of Block: DAD Institutions, Accountability, Rule of law



Q180 How democratic or undemocratic are these scenarios?

	Very undemocratic (1)	Moderately undemocratic (2)	Moderately democratic (4)	Very democratic (5)	Not sure (7)
The president/prime minister intervenes in prosecutors' decisions about whether to charge companies or individuals (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A government blocks an independent investigation into its own staff or ministers/Cabinet members (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The chief executive uses emergency powers to circumvent institutional restrictions on his or her power (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DAD Institutions, Accountability, Rule of law

Start of Block: DAD Reverse Rights, Protections & Freedom



Q185 How democratic or undemocratic are these scenarios?

	Very undemocratic (1)	Moderately undemocratic (2)	Moderately democratic (4)	Very democratic (5)	Not sure (7)
A government agency renews the broadcast licenses of media outlets even though they are critical of the president's/prime minister's performance (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A prime minister/president engages respectfully with journalists who are critical of his or her performance (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A government allows peaceful protests by its political opponents (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DAD Reverse Rights, Protections & Freedom

Start of Block: DAD Rights, Protections & Freedom



Q179 How democratic or undemocratic are these scenarios?

	Very undemocratic (1)	Moderately undemocratic (2)	Moderately democratic (4)	Very democratic (5)	Not sure (7)
A government agency refuses to renew the broadcast licenses of media outlets that criticize the president's/prime minister's performance (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A prime minister/president threatens to imprison journalists who are critical of his or her performance (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A government blocks peaceful protests by its political opponents (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DAD Rights, Protections & Freedom

Start of Block: DAD Reverse Elections & Voting



Q184 How democratic or undemocratic are these scenarios?

	Very undemocratic (1)	Moderately undemocratic (2)	Moderately democratic (4)	Very democratic (5)	Not sure (7)
Voter registration and ballot access rules allow all groups equal access regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The votes of every citizen carry equal weight in elections for Congress/Parliament regardless of the total population of their state/province (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Every citizen is allowed to vote regardless of where they were born (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DAD Reverse Elections & Voting

Start of Block: DAD Elections & Voting



Q178 How democratic or undemocratic are these scenarios?

	Very undemocratic (1)	Moderately undemocratic (2)	Moderately democratic (4)	Very democratic (5)	Not sure (7)
Voter registration and ballot access rules place a greater burden on some racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The votes of citizens in states/provinces with small populations carry greater weight in elections for Congress/Parliament than the votes of citizens in states/provinces with large populations (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Only native-born citizens are allowed to vote (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DAD Elections & Voting

Start of Block: Constitutional Hardball Introduction

Q193 Below we are going to describe a number of political scenarios. Please indicate how appropriate or inappropriate you consider each scenario to be. Please click the arrow to continue to the next screen.

[Randomly show 4 out of 5 blocks]

End of Block: Constitutional Hardball Introduction

Start of Block: CHB Congress & Divided Government



Q173 Are the following actions appropriate or inappropriate?

	Entirely inappropriate (1)	Mostly inappropriate (2)	Mostly appropriate (3)	Entirely appropriate (8)	Not sure (9)
A majority party in either chamber of Congress refusing to raise the limit on the amount of money the U.S. government can legally borrow (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The majority party in the Senate abolishing the filibuster rule so it can pass legislation without minority party support (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The minority party in the Senate routinely using the filibuster rule to block legislation supported only by the majority party (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: CHB Congress & Divided Government

Start of Block: CHB Executive powers



Q161 Are the following actions appropriate or inappropriate?

	Entirely inappropriate (1)	Mostly inappropriate (2)	Mostly appropriate (3)	Entirely appropriate (4)	Not sure (5)
The President pardoning himself or herself (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The President establishing important new government policy by executive order without passage of a law in Congress (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The President directing the Department of Justice to open investigations into political opponents (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: CHB Executive powers

Start of Block: CHB Courts



Q175 Are the following actions appropriate or inappropriate?

	Entirely inappropriate (1)	Mostly inappropriate (2)	Mostly appropriate (3)	Entirely appropriate (4)	Not sure (5)
The majority party in the Senate refusing to consider any nomination by a President to fill an open seat on the Supreme Court (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The majority party in the Senate abolishing the filibuster rule so they can confirm judges without minority party support (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A party that controls Congress and the presidency creating and filling new seats on the Supreme Court to change the partisan balance of power (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: CHB Courts

Start of Block: CHB Impeachment



Q174 Please carefully read the information below, then indicate whether the actions that follow are appropriate or inappropriate:

Under the Constitution, a majority of the House of Representatives may impeach the President. If the President is impeached, a two-thirds vote in the Senate is required to remove him or her from office.

	Entirely inappropriate (1)	Mostly inappropriate (2)	Mostly appropriate (3)	Entirely appropriate (4)	Not sure (5)
A majority of the House of Representatives seeking to impeach a president because they believe he or she is unfit for office rather than specific evidence of high crimes and misdemeanors (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A majority of the House of Representatives impeaching a president they believe has committed a high crime or misdemeanor even if the Senate does NOT support removal (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A majority of the House of Representatives impeaching a president they believe has committed a high crime or misdemeanor when the Senate supports removal (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: CHB Impeachment

Start of Block: CHB Elections, Voting Rights & Representation



Q176 Are the following actions appropriate or inappropriate?

	Entirely inappropriate (1)	Mostly inappropriate (2)	Mostly appropriate (3)	Entirely appropriate (4)	Not sure (5)
A party that controls both chambers of Congress granting statehood to Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State governments signing a pact to guarantee that the popular vote winner is elected president (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A state political party drawing Congressional districts that ensure it will receive a share of seats much larger than its share of votes (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A state political party proposing measures that make it more difficult to vote, especially for members of the other party (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: CHB Elections, Voting Rights & Representation

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
 - Theresa May
 - Boris Johnson
 - 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 contact Brendan Nyhan at nyhan@dartmouth.edu

[timing]

End of Block
