

W30 | consent

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. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to skip any questions or withdraw from the study 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 Brendan Nyhan by email at nyhan@dartmouth.edu with any questions or concerns. 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.

Do you consent to participate in the survey?

Yes

No

W30 | current

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?

Least democratic										Most democratic				
0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100				

United States today

W30 | current_why

In the previous question about the political system of the United States today, using a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 is least democratic and 100 is most democratic, you rated the United States today as \${q://QID1448/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}. Please explain why you chose this rating.

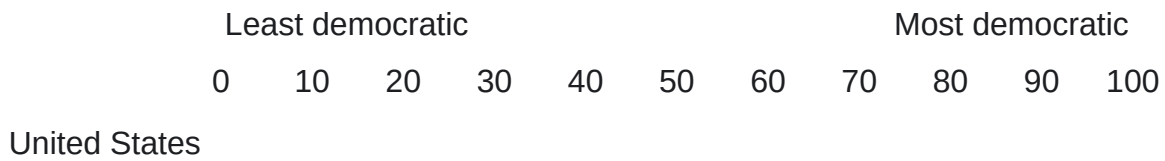
W30 | retrospective

Using the same 0 to 100 scale used previously, where 0 is least democratic and 100 is most democratic, how would you rate the political system of the United States over time? You rated the political system of the United States today as \${q://QID1448/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}.

	Least democratic						Most democratic				
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
United States in 2017											
United States in 2019											
United States in 2020											
United States in 2021											
United States in 2024											

W30 | future

What rating would you expect to give the political system of the United States in {e://Field/forecast_year}? You rated the US now as {q://QID1448/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}.



W30 | perf

How well do the following statements describe the United States as of today?

	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
The legislature is able to effectively limit executive power	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lower courts are able to effectively limit executive power	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Supreme Court is able to effectively limit executive power	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
All adult citizens have equal opportunity to vote	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Officeholders do not use the military to advance political agendas or intimidate political opponents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

W30 | confidence_a

How confident are you that votes **nationwide** will be counted as voters intend in the November 2026 election for the U.S. Congress?

Very confident

Somewhat confident

Not very confident

Not at all confident

In your own words, why are you **\${q://QID1453/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}** that votes nationwide will be counted as voters intend in the November 2026 election for the U.S. Congress?

How confident are you that everyone who is legally entitled to vote and seeks to do so will be able to successfully cast a ballot in the November 2026 election for the U.S. Congress?

Very confident

Somewhat confident

Not too confident

Not at all confident

How confident are you that election administrators nationwide will count votes fairly and accurately in the November 2026 election for the U.S. Congress?

Very confident

Somewhat confident

Not very confident

Not at all confident

W30 | majority_house

Which party do you think will have a majority of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives after the elections in November?

Democratic Party

Republican Party

Not sure

W30 | majority_senate

Which party do you think will have a majority of seats in the U.S. Senate after the elections in November?

Democratic Party

Republican Party

Not sure

W30 | irregularities

`{e://Field/irregularities_stem}`

	A million or more	A few thousand	A few hundred	A few dozen	Fewer than a dozen	Never
Stealing or tampering with ballots	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Voting with an absentee ballot intended for another person	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Voting more than once in an election	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pretending to be someone else when voting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People voting who are not U.S. citizens	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vote changed by manipulation of voter machine software	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

`{e://Field/irregularities_stem}`

	A million or more	A few thousand	A few hundred	A few dozen	Fewer than a dozen	Never
Ineligible voters being deterred from voting by law enforcement, immigration officials, or military personnel in or around polling places	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eligible voters being prevented from voting by election officials	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eligible voters being deterred from voting by law enforcement, immigration officials, or military personnel in or around polling places	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eligible voters being deterred from voting by poll watchers or other people in or around polling places	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ineligible voters being prevented from voting by election officials	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ineligible voters being deterred from voting by poll watchers or other people in or around polling places	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

W30 | forecast_intro

The goal of this portion of the survey is to understand how respondents assess the likelihood of some political events that could occur in the future. We will ask you to assess the chances that each one will occur. For example, we might ask you to rate the chances that Congress passes legislation to limit the terms of future Supreme Court justices to 18 years by the end of 2026.

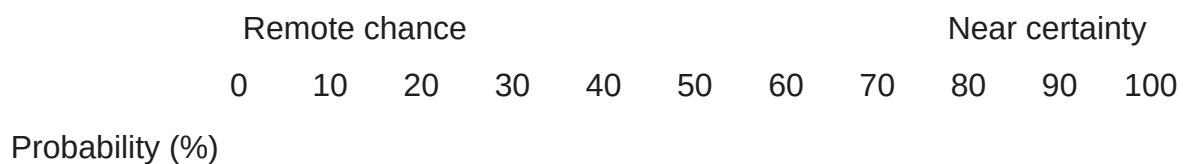
W30 | forecast_01

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will the 2026 U.S. midterm elections be free and fair? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



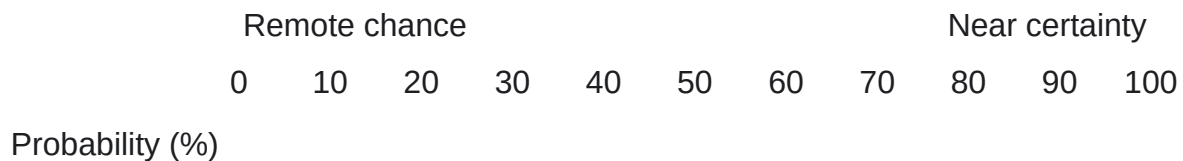
W30 | forecast_02

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For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will the federal government successfully require all in-person voters to show an ID in order to vote in the 2026 midterm elections? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

[► Show details](#)



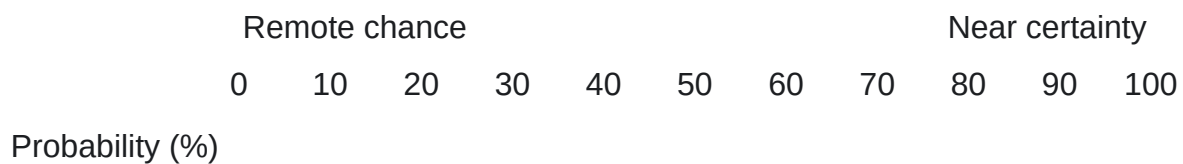
W30 | forecast_03

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will the federal government restrict the hours or locations of in-person voting in the 2026 midterm elections? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

[► Show details](#)



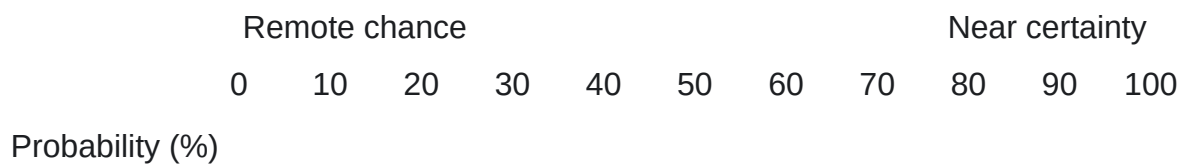
W30 | forecast_04

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will the federal government limit or eliminate the use of voting machines to tally ballots in the 2026 midterm elections? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

[► Show details](#)



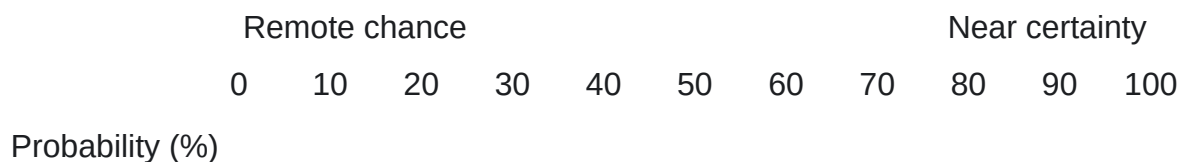
W30 | forecast_05

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will President Trump or one of his appointees ask the National Guard, military personnel, or federal agents (such as the FBI, U.S. Marshals, ICE, or CBP) to seize voting equipment or ballots in any state during or after the 2026 midterm elections? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



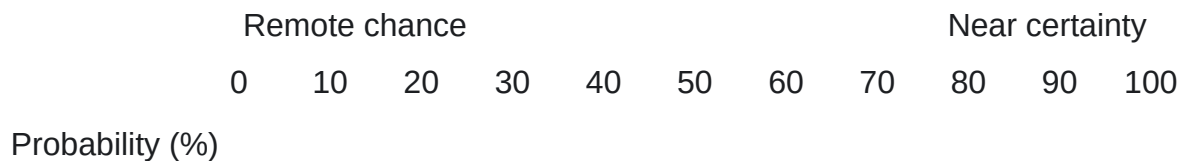
W30 | forecast_06

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will at least one candidate for congressional or statewide office in 2026 win only because of voter fraud? (In other words, they would have lost if there had been no voter fraud.) (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



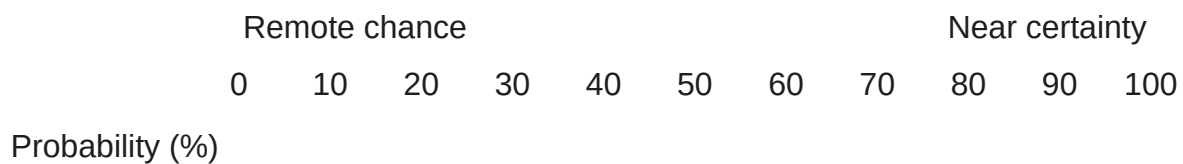
W30 | forecast_07

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will at least one candidate for congressional or statewide office in 2026 who is declared the winner by the Associated Press based on the vote count have the result overturned? (In other words, no candidate is certified as the winner or another candidate is certified instead.) (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



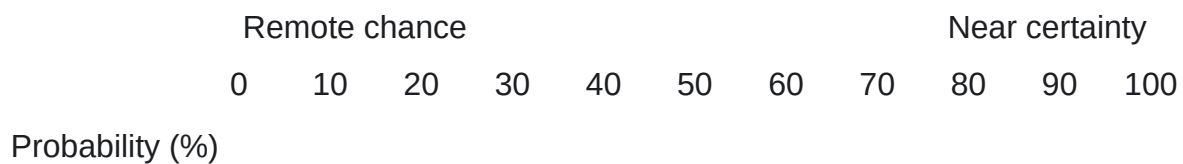
W30 | forecast_08

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will Trump ban U.S. states from using mail-in ballots for the 2026 midterm elections?
(Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

[► Show details](#)



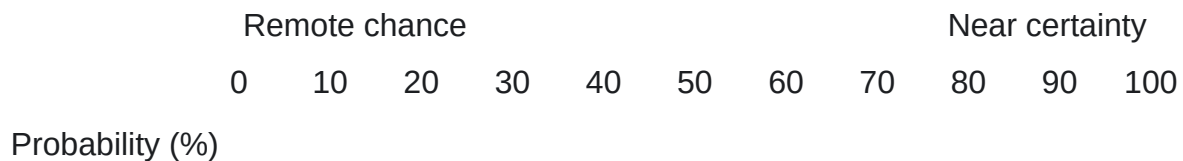
W30 | forecast_09

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will legislation that requires proof of U.S. citizenship as a condition of registering to vote in federal elections become law before Nov 1, 2026? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



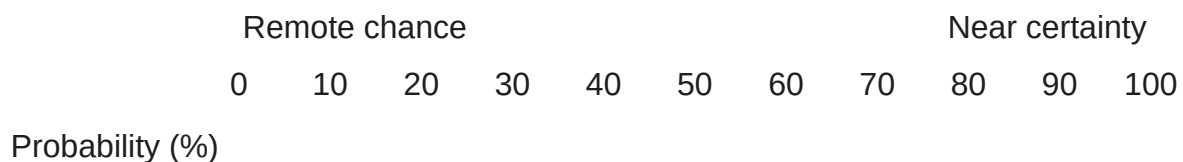
W30 | forecast_10

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will the midterms happen on time? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

[► Show details](#)



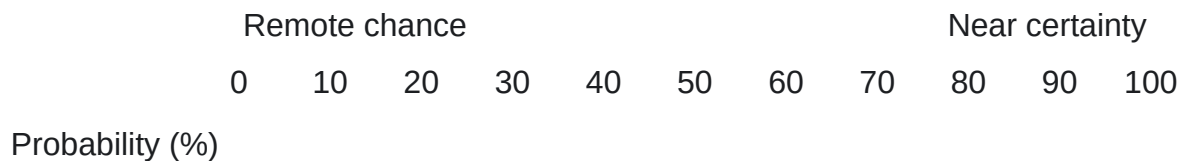
W30 | forecast_11

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will a U.S. federal or state court prevent certification of any statewide election results because of fraud before April 1, 2027? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

[► Show details](#)



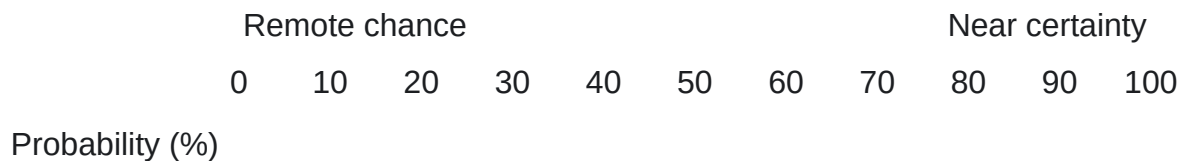
W30 | forecast_12

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will a U.S. federal or state court prevent certification of any congressional or statewide election results because of fraud before April 1, 2027? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



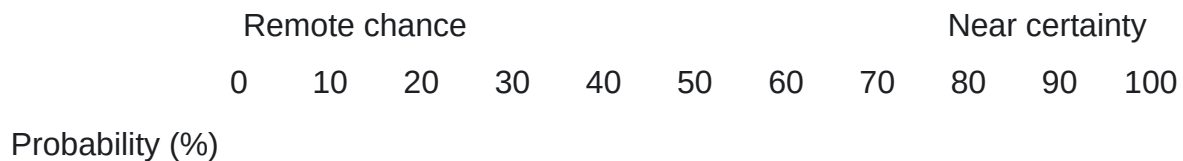
W30 | forecast_13

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will at least one candidate be seated in Congress or assume a statewide office before July 1, 2027, without having been certified as the winner of their election? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



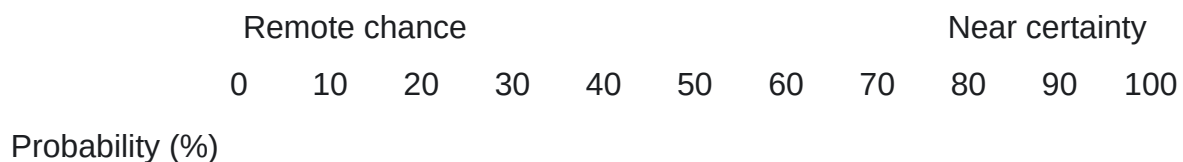
W30 | forecast_14

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will the Trump administration or a Republican governor deploy National Guard members, military personnel, or federal or state law enforcement officers (such as the FBI, U.S. Marshals, ICE, or CBP) at or near polling places in the 2026 midterm elections? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



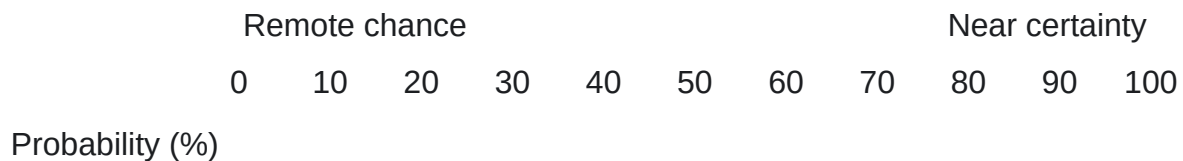
W30 | forecast_15

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will five or more of the 25 best-known living Democratic political figures publicly claim that fraud or other illegal conduct affected the results of the 2026 midterm elections? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



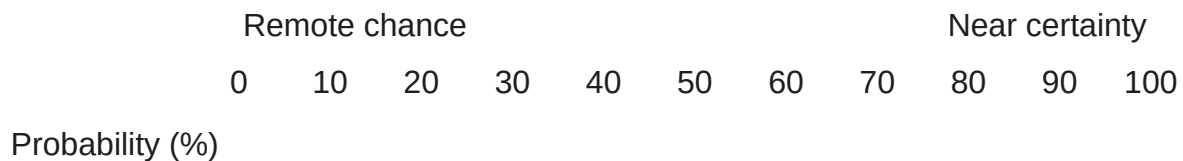
W30 | forecast_16

We ask you to provide your answers using numeric percentages. If you think the scenario will occur with near certainty, then you would give an answer close to 100%. If you think there is only a remote chance that the scenario will occur, then you would give an answer close to 0%, and if you think the scenario is as likely to occur as not to occur, then you would give an answer close to 50%.

For a description of what events would qualify, click the Show details button under the event wording.

Will five or more of the 25 best-known living Republican political figures publicly claim that fraud or other illegal conduct affected the results of the 2026 midterm elections? (Please answer below in percentages from 0-100%.)

► [Show details](#)



W30 | conditional_intro

Next, we will ask you to consider several possible events involving the 2026 midterm elections.

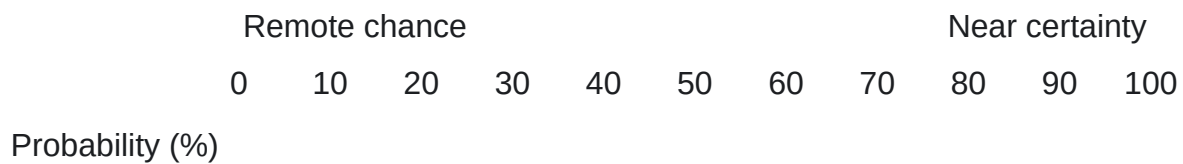
For each question, assume the event described happens, even if you think it is unlikely. We would like to know what you think the chance is that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair under that assumption.

W30 | conditional_02

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that the federal government successfully requires all in-person voters to show an ID in order to vote in the 2026 midterm elections.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

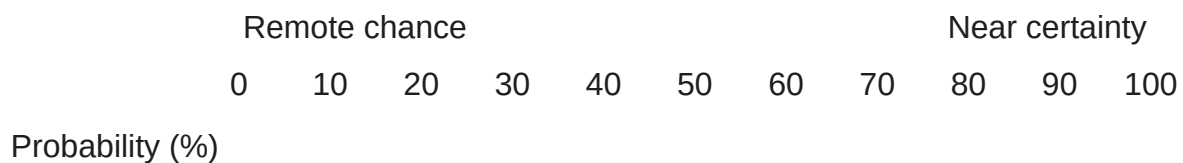


W30 | conditional_03

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that the federal government restricts the hours or locations of in-person voting in the 2026 midterm elections.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

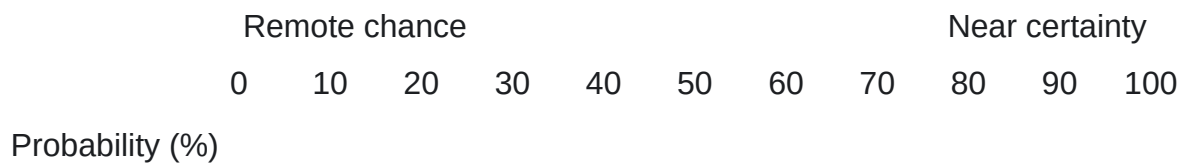


W30 | conditional_04

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that the federal government limits or eliminates the use of voting machines to tally ballots in the 2026 midterm elections.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

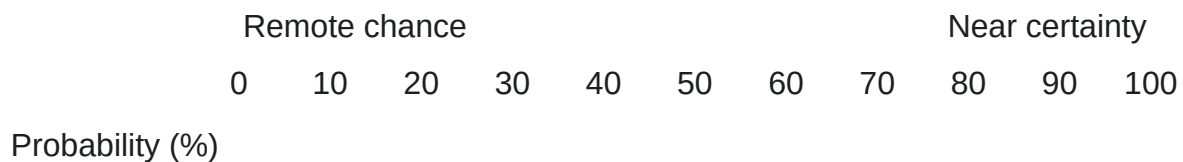


W30 | conditional_05

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that President Trump or one of his appointees asks the National Guard, military personnel, or federal agents (such as the FBI, U.S. Marshals, ICE, or CBP) to seize voting equipment or ballots in any state during or after the 2026 midterm elections.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

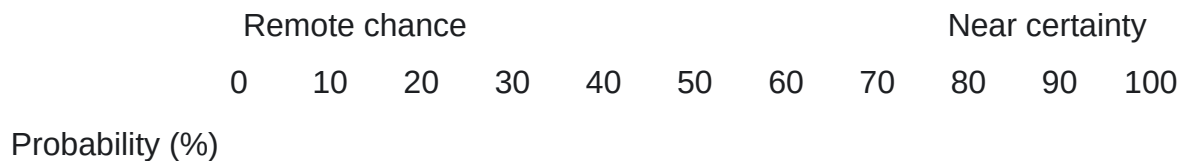


W30 | conditional_06

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that at least one candidate for congressional or statewide office in 2026 wins only because of voter fraud. (In other words, they would have lost if there had been no voter fraud.)

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

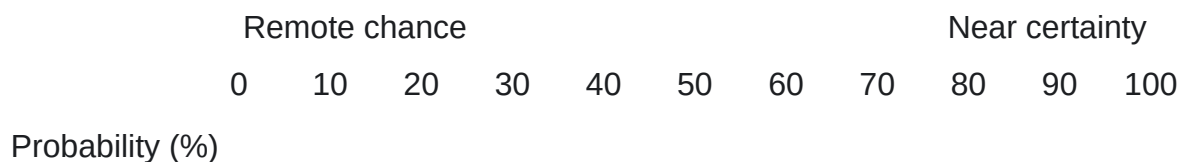


W30 | conditional_07

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that at least one candidate for congressional or statewide office in 2026 who is declared the winner by the Associated Press based on the vote count has the result overturned. (In other words, no candidate is certified as the winner or another candidate is certified instead.)

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

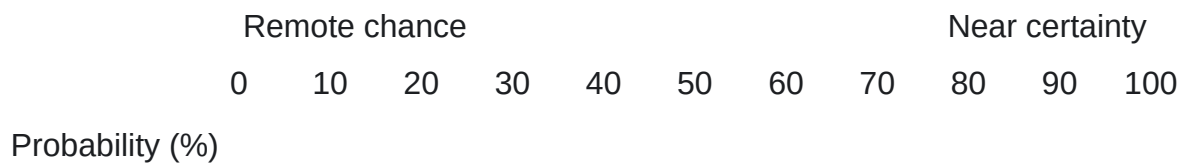


W30 | conditional_08

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that Trump bans U.S. states from using mail-in ballots for the 2026 midterm elections.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

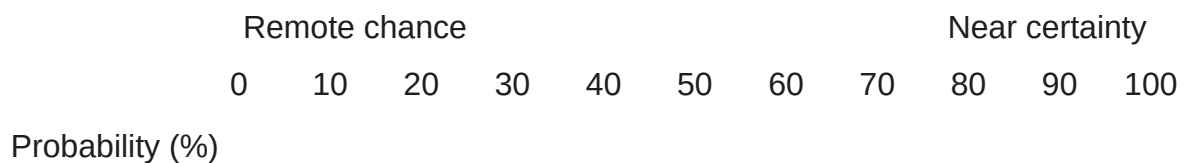


W30 | conditional_09

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that legislation that requires proof of U.S. citizenship as a condition of registering to vote in federal elections becomes law before November 1, 2026.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

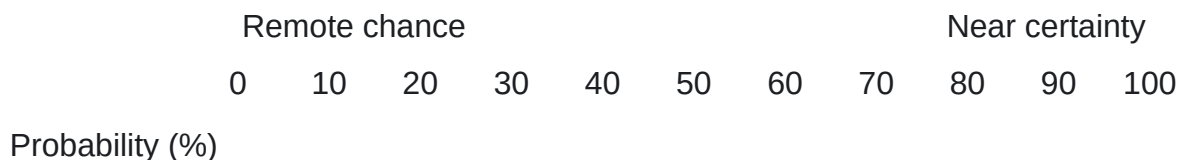


W30 | conditional_10

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that the midterms happen on time.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

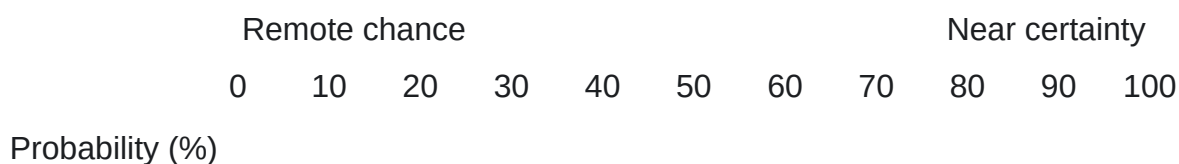


W30 | conditional_11

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that a U.S. federal or state court prevents certification of any statewide election results because of fraud before April 1, 2027.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

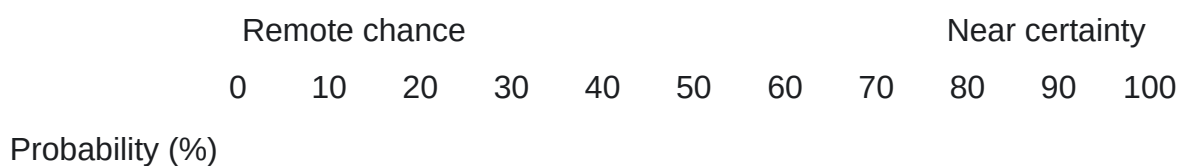


W30 | conditional_12

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that a U.S. federal or state court prevents certification of any congressional or statewide election results because of fraud before April 1, 2027.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

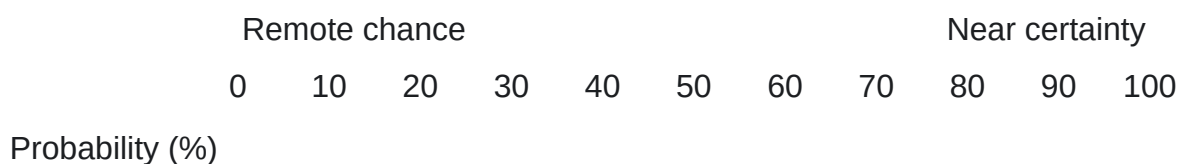


W30 | conditional_13

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that at least one candidate is seated in Congress or assumes a statewide office before July 1, 2027, without having been certified as the winner of their election.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

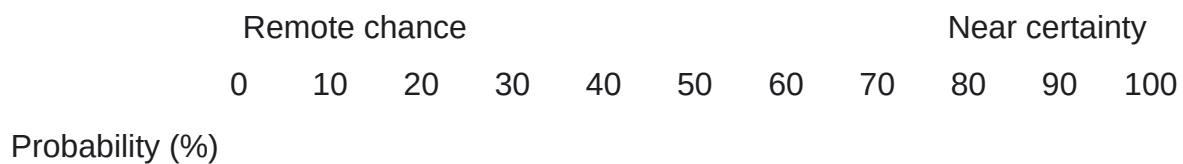


W30 | conditional_14

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that the Trump administration or a Republican governor deploys National Guard members, military personnel, or federal or state law enforcement officers (such as the FBI, U.S. Marshals, ICE, or CBP) at or near polling places in the 2026 midterm elections.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair?

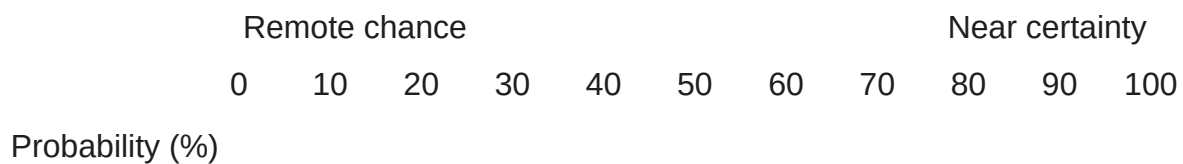


W30 | conditional_15

You previously gave a \${q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1}% probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that five or more of the 25 best-known living Democratic political figures publicly claim that fraud or other illegal conduct affected the results of the 2026 midterm elections.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections were free and fair?

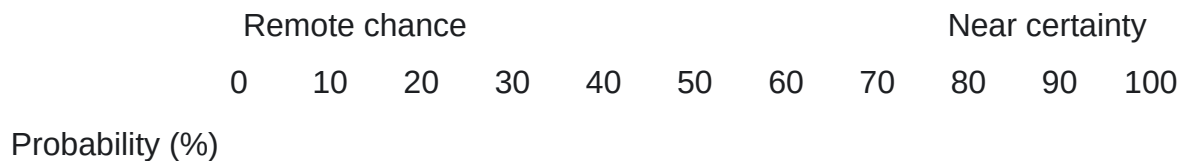


W30 | conditional_16

You previously gave a $\{q://QID1464/ChoiceNumericEntryValue/1\}$ % probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections will be free and fair.

Now suppose that five or more of the 25 best-known living Republican political figures publicly claim that fraud or other illegal conduct affected the results of the 2026 midterm elections.

Under that assumption, what is the probability that the 2026 U.S. midterm elections were free and fair?



W30 | role

Which of these statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?

Political scientists should take an active role in public debates about issues related to democracy.

Political scientists should focus on establishing sound scientific facts and stay out of public debates.

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Political scientists should communicate about threats to democracy with the general public.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Political scientists should communicate their findings to politicians.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

W30 | demographics

Which of the following best describes your occupation?

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

What is your primary field of study?

- American politics
- Comparative politics
- International relations
- Political theory
- Another field of political science
- Something other than political science

What is your specific area of study?

What type of academic institution do you work at?

- Public
- Private nonprofit
- Private for-profit
- None of the above

In which state is the academic institution where you work located? This information will not be used to identify you.

How old are you?

W30 | thanks

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.

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.

Please click the next button to complete the survey.

