



The Associated Press-NORC  
Center for Public Affairs Research

# **AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS**

Conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research

*Interviews: 11/12-17/2015*

*1,011 adults*

*Margin of error: +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level among all adults*

*NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled.*

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**Q21. The financing of election campaigns is a complex issue. As you may know, rules governing the financing of campaigns can vary based on the type of election, by state, and the position the candidates are running for.**

**Overall, how much would you say you know about the issue of how candidates get money for their campaigns? Would you say a great deal, quite a bit, a moderate amount, only a little, or nothing at all?**

**[HALF SAMPLE ASKED OPTIONS IN REVERSE ORDER]**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>A great deal/Quite a bit</b>	<b>13</b>
A great deal	4
Quite a bit	10
<b>A moderate amount</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Only a little/Nothing at all</b>	<b>53</b>
Only a little	39
Nothing at all	15
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

1,011

**Q22. How important to you is the issue of how candidates get money for their campaigns?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Not important at all/Not very important</b>	<b>19</b>
Not important at all	6
Not very important	13
<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Very/Extremely important</b>	<b>39</b>
Very important	28
Extremely important	11
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

1,011

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**Q23. There are many different ways in which presidential candidates can finance their campaigns. Do you think each of the following is an acceptable or unacceptable way for a *presidential* candidate to raise money for a campaign?**

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]

**A. Money from individual contributions made by citizens.**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Acceptable (NET)</b>	<b>82</b>
Completely acceptable	54
Somewhat acceptable	28
<b>Neither acceptable nor unacceptable</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Unacceptable (NET)</b>	<b>9</b>
Somewhat unacceptable	5
Completely unacceptable	4
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N= 1,011

**B. Public financing from the federal government.**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Acceptable (NET)</b>	<b>27</b>
Completely acceptable	12
Somewhat acceptable	15
<b>Neither acceptable nor unacceptable</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Unacceptable (NET)</b>	<b>58</b>
Somewhat unacceptable	17
Completely unacceptable	41
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1

N= 1,011

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

C. The candidate's own money.

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Acceptable (NET)</b>	<b>87</b>
Completely acceptable	72
Somewhat acceptable	15
<b>Neither acceptable nor unacceptable</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Unacceptable (NET)</b>	<b>6</b>
Somewhat unacceptable	3
Completely unacceptable	4
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

D. Money from individuals who collect large numbers of contributions on the candidate's behalf

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Acceptable (NET)</b>	<b>63</b>
Completely acceptable	27
Somewhat acceptable	36
<b>Neither acceptable nor unacceptable</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Unacceptable (NET)</b>	<b>24</b>
Somewhat unacceptable	15
Completely unacceptable	9
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

E. Money from 'PACs', or political action committees, organizations that pool campaign contributions and use those funds to campaign for or against candidates.

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Acceptable (NET)</b>	<b>44</b>
Completely acceptable	17
Somewhat acceptable	27
<b>Neither acceptable nor unacceptable</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Unacceptable (NET)</b>	<b>39</b>
Somewhat unacceptable	19
Completely unacceptable	20
DON'T KNOW	1
SKIP/REFUSED	1
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**Q24. When it comes to individual citizens contributing money to a political campaign, do you think they should be limited in the amount of money they can contribute, or should they be allowed to contribute as much money as they want, or should they not be allowed to contribute money to political campaigns at all?**

**[HALF SAMPLE ASKED OPTIONS 1-2 IN REVERSE ORDER]**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Individual citizens should be limited in the amount of money they can contribute	24
Individual citizens should be allowed to contribute as much money as they want	47
Individual citizens should not be allowed to contribute money to political campaigns at all	30
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

1,011

**[ORDER OF Q25/Q26 ROTATED]**

**Q25. When it comes to corporations spending money on a political campaign, do you think they should be limited in the amount of money they can spend, or should they be allowed to spend as much money as they want, or should they not be allowed to spend money on political campaigns at all?**

**[HALF SAMPLE ASKED OPTIONS 1-2 IN REVERSE ORDER]**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Corporations should be limited in the amount of money they can spend	38
Corporations should be allowed to spend as much money as they want	37
Corporations should not be allowed to spend money on political campaigns at all	24
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1

N=

1,011

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**Q26. When it comes to labor unions spending money on a political campaign, do you think they should be limited in the amount of money they can spend, or should they be allowed to spend as much money as they want, or should they not be allowed to spend money on political campaigns at all?**

[HALF SAMPLE ASKED OPTIONS 1-2 IN REVERSE ORDER]

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Unions should be limited in the amount of money they can spend	42
Unions should be allowed to spend as much money as they want	37
Unions should not be allowed to spend money on political campaigns at all	19
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1

N=

1,011

**Q27. Which of the following comes closest to your opinion about how campaigns for president in the United States should be financed?**

[HALF SAMPLE ASKED OPTIONS 1-2 IN REVERSE ORDER]

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
The federal government should provide a set amount of money that each campaign can spend	26
Campaigns should raise and spend money using donations	56
Campaigns should be funded primarily using donations, but the federal government should match small donations to increase impact	17
DON'T KNOW	1
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

1,011

**Q28. Do you consider money given to political candidates to be a form of free speech protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution, or not?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Yes, this is a form of free speech	50
No, this is not a form of free speech	48
DON'T KNOW	1
SKIP/REFUSED	1

N=

1,011

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**Q29. In the United States' current system of financing political campaigns, some groups are allowed to raise and spend unlimited amounts of money to support a candidate as long as they do not coordinate with the candidate's campaign. Do you think this is acceptable or unacceptable?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Acceptable (NET)</b>	<b>33</b>
Completely acceptable	12
Somewhat acceptable	21
<b>Neither acceptable nor unacceptable</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Unacceptable (NET)</b>	<b>51</b>
Somewhat unacceptable	25
Completely unacceptable	26
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N= 1,011

**Q30. Do you think all groups that raise and spend unlimited money to support candidates should be required to publicly disclose their contributors, or do you think it is okay for that information to remain private?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Should publicly disclose	76
Okay to remain private	23
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N= 1,011

**Q31. Do you think campaign contributions from corporations, special interest groups, and individuals directly influence the decisions most elected officials make, or not?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Yes, they influence decisions	82
No, they do not influence decisions	17
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1

N= 1,011

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

*If yes, they influence decisions in Q31*

**Q31A. Do you think campaign contributions directly influence the decisions most elected officials make a little, some, or a lot?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
A little	7
Some	32
A lot	59
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIP/REFUSED	2

N=

828

**Q32. Here are some possible ways to change the current system of financing political campaigns in the United States. How effective do you think each of the following would be in reducing the influence of money in politics?**

[ITEMS RANDOMIZED, HALF SAMPLE ASKED OPTIONS IN REVERSE ORDER]

- A. Limits on how much a candidate can spend on his or her campaign, regardless of the source of the money

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very effective</b>	<b>51</b>
Extremely effective	25
Very effective	26
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Not very/Not effective at all</b>	<b>15</b>
Not very effective	9
Not effective at all	6
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

1,011



AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**B. Limits on how much a political party can spend on a candidate's campaign**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very effective</b>	<b>52</b>
Extremely effective	23
Very effective	29
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Not very/Not effective at all</b>	<b>13</b>
Not very effective	8
Not effective at all	5
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

**C. Limits on how much an outside group can spend on a candidate's campaign**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very effective</b>	<b>54</b>
Extremely effective	25
Very effective	29
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Not very/Not effective at all</b>	<b>12</b>
Not very effective	8
Not effective at all	5
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

**D. Government financing of political campaigns**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very effective</b>	<b>25</b>
Extremely effective	13
Very effective	12
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Not very/Not effective at all</b>	<b>39</b>
Not very effective	16
Not effective at all	23
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

**E. Government matching funds for small donations**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very effective</b>	<b>19</b>
Extremely effective	8
Very effective	11
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Not very/Not effective at all</b>	<b>45</b>
Not very effective	18
Not effective at all	26
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

**F. A shorter campaign period**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very effective</b>	<b>42</b>
Extremely effective	20
Very effective	22
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Not very/Not effective at all</b>	<b>21</b>
Not very effective	13
Not effective at all	9
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

**G. No limits on contributions from individuals to candidates**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very effective</b>	<b>23</b>
Extremely effective	10
Very effective	12
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Not very/Not effective at all</b>	<b>47</b>
Not very effective	20
Not effective at all	27
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**H. Requirements that all groups spending money supporting candidates have to disclose all their contributors and how much money they gave**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very effective</b>	<b>60</b>
Extremely effective	33
Very effective	27
<b>Somewhat effective</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Not very/Not effective at all</b>	<b>13</b>
Not very effective	7
Not effective at all	5
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

1,011

**Q33. There are many different ways to contribute to and participate in political campaigns. Have you ever done any of the following? Please select all that apply.**

**[ITEMS RANDOMIZED]**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Displayed a bumper sticker, wore a button, or placed a sign in your yard or home	36
Signed a petition for a political candidate	35
Donated money to a political candidate	23
Attended a campaign rally or event	25
Volunteered for the political campaign of a candidate	15
Donated money to a political party	15
Donated money to a PAC, or political action committee	5
None of the above	29
DON'T KNOW/SKIP/REFUSED	11

N=

1,011

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**Q34. How much attention have you paid to the 2016 presidential campaign so far?**

**[HALF SAMPLE ASKED OPTIONS IN REVERSE ORDER]**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>No attention/Not much</b>	<b>39</b>
No attention	14
Not much	25
<b>Some</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>A good deal/A lot</b>	<b>24</b>
A good deal	18
A lot	6
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

1,011

**Q35. How likely are you to contribute money to a...?**

**[ITEMS RANDOMIZED, HALF SAMPLE ASKED OPTIONS IN REVERSE ORDER]**

**A. Political candidate for the 2016 presidential election**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very likely</b>	<b>9</b>
Extremely likely	4
Very likely	5
<b>Somewhat likely</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Not too/Not at all likely</b>	<b>79</b>
Not too likely	16
Not at all likely	63
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIP/REFUSED	*

N=

1,011

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**B. Political party during the 2016 campaign for president**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very likely</b>	<b>4</b>
Extremely likely	2
Very likely	2
<b>Somewhat likely</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Not too/Not at all likely</b>	<b>85</b>
Not too likely	16
Not at all likely	69
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIP/REFUSED	*
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

**C. Political action committee or PAC during the 2016 campaign for president**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Extremely/Very likely</b>	<b>2</b>
Extremely likely	1
Very likely	1
<b>Somewhat likely</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Not too/Not at all likely</b>	<b>91</b>
Not too likely	14
Not at all likely	76
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	1
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

The following questions are for classification purposes only. Be assured that your responses will be combined with those of other participants to this survey.

**Q36. Are you currently registered to vote at your address, or not?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Yes	80
No	20
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**Q37. Do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent or none of these?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Democrat	34
Republican	25
Independent	25
None of these	16
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	*
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

*If Democrat in Q37*

**Q37A. Do you consider yourself a strong Democrat or a moderate Democrat?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Strong Democrat	35
Moderate Democrat	65
DON'T KNOW	*
SKIP/REFUSED	-
<i>N=</i>	<i>342</i>

*If Republican in Q37*

**Q37B. Do you consider yourself a strong Republican or a moderate Republican?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Strong Republican	37
Moderate Republican	63
DON'T KNOW	-
SKIP/REFUSED	*
<i>N=</i>	<i>250</i>

*If Independent, None of these, or Don't Know/Skip/Refused in Q37*

**Q37C. Do you lean more toward the Democrats or the Republicans?**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Lean Democrat	29
Lean Republican	28
Don't lean	41
DON'T KNOW	1
SKIP/REFUSED	1
<i>N=</i>	<i>400</i>

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**Q37/Q37A/Q37B/Q37C. Party Identification**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
<b>Democrat (NET)</b>	<b>46</b>
Strong Democrat	12
Moderate Democrat	22
Lean Democrat	12
<b>Don't lean/Independent/None</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Republican (NET)</b>	<b>37</b>
Lean Republican	12
Moderate Republican	16
Strong Republican	9
DON'T KNOW/SKIP/REFUSED	1

N= 1,011

**AGE**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
18-24	12
25-34	17
35-44	17
45-54	19
55-64	16
65-74	11
75+	8

N= 1,011

**GENDER**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Male	48
Female	52

N= 1,011

AMERICANS' VIEWS ON MONEY IN POLITICS

**RACE/ETHNICITY**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
White	65
Black or African American	12
Hispanic	16
Other	6
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

**MARITAL STATUS**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Married	51
Widowed	6
Divorced	13
Separated	2
Never married	22
Living with partner	6
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>

**INCOME**

	AP-NORC 11/12-17/2015
Under \$10,000	6
\$10,000 to under \$20,000	10
\$20,000 to under \$30,000	13
\$30,000 to under \$40,000	9
\$40,000 to under \$50,000	11
\$50,000 to under \$75,000	19
\$75,000 to under \$100,000	14
\$100,000 to under \$150,000	11
\$150,000 or more	8
<i>N=</i>	<i>1,011</i>



### **AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research Poll**

#### **Study Methodology**

This survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and with funding from NORC at the University of Chicago. Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Panel, which is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face).

Interviews for this survey were conducted between November 12-17, 2015, with adults age 18 and over from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from the AmeriSpeak Panel, and 1,011 completed the survey—769 via the web and 242 via telephone. The final stage completion rate is 29.5 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 36.8 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 99 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 10.7 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data has been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any non-coverage or under- and oversampling resulting from the study-specific sample design. Poststratification variables included age, gender, Census division, race/ethnicity, and household phone status. The weighted data, which reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over, were used for all analyses.

All differences reported between subgroups of the U.S. population are at the 95 percent level of statistical significance, meaning that there is only a 5 percent (or lower) probability that the observed differences could be attributed to chance variation in sampling.

#### **About the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research**

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

- The Associated Press (AP) is the world's essential news organization, bringing fast, unbiased news to all media platforms and formats.
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest and most respected, independent research institutions in the world.

The two organizations have established the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals.

The founding principles of the AP-NORC Center include a mandate to carefully preserve and protect the scientific integrity and objectivity of NORC and the journalistic independence of AP. All work conducted by the Center conforms to the highest levels of scientific integrity to prevent any real or perceived bias in the research. All of the work of the Center is subject to review by its advisory committee to help ensure it meets these standards. The Center will publicize the results of all studies and make all datasets and study documentation available to scholars and the public.