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NORC
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The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

AMERICAN TEENS ARE POLITICALLY ENGAGED BUT PESSIMISTIC ABOUT COUNTRY'S DIRECTION

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

American teenagers, on the cusp of assuming their rights and responsibilities as voters and citizens, perceive a country divided and are pessimistic about America's current situation. However, they aren't entirely gloomy and do hold flashes of optimism for the future.



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Teens have long been excluded from most research about politics and civics because they cannot yet vote. But even before they can go to the polls, teens are developing their political and civic identities. As they peer forward into their future, they

evaluate the society and governance that adults have created, determining what aspects they will support and what they will resist and undo. Asking teenagers what they think about the country's future, its politics, and society, is a window into all of our futures.

Five Things You Should Know

About The AP-NORC Poll of American Teens on Politics and Civic Engagement

Among American teens age 13-17:

- 1) Most believe they are living in a divided America, with 4 in 5 saying that Americans are greatly divided on their most important values.
- 2) Six in 10 say the country is currently headed in the wrong direction, but a majority also hopes that America's best days are still ahead.
- 3) Civic engagement is high, with nearly 9 in 10 saying they have taken a civic action like volunteering for a cause they care about or raising money for such a cause.
- 4) Twenty-nine percent of teens say they would register as a Democrat, 23 percent as a Republican, and 24 percent as an independent or with another party, but 24 percent are not yet sure what party they would join if they could.
- 5) Less than a third say they have a favorable impression of Trump, and most were surprised by his election, though white teens view him and his election more positively than black or Hispanic teens.

A new study from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research surveyed 790 teenagers age 13 to 17 as a lens into the 2018 mid-term elections and the 2020 presidential contest, when many of today's teens will be making their first forays to the polls. The study examines teens' broad feelings about the direction of the country, gauges their optimism for the future, and reveals the next generation's ideas about governance and America's role on the world stage.

Teens are opposed to a border wall, a ban on foreign Muslims, and curtailing efforts to reverse climate change but are more favorable to ACA repeal and changing trade pacts.

Many teens have opinions about current political issues—expressing their opposition to building a border wall with Mexico, calls to ban Muslims from entering the United States, and curtailing efforts to stop or slow climate change. But more support than oppose overturning the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and changing the nature of our trade partnerships with other nations.

- 53 percent of teens oppose building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border vs. 25 percent who favor building it.
- 47 percent of teens oppose scaling back efforts to fight climate change; 19 percent favor scaling back.
- 46 percent oppose banning foreign Muslims from entering the United States while 29 percent support a ban.
- 40 percent of teens favor repealing the ACA vs. 33 percent who oppose it.
- 35 percent of teens are in favor of changing trade agreements with other countries while 25 percent oppose it.

Almost all teens were surprised by President Donald Trump's election.

America's youth expressed surprise at Trump's election. They feel positively towards former president Barack Obama but hold more negative opinions of both of the candidates, Trump and Hillary Clinton, in the most recent presidential contest.

- 68 percent of all American teens, regardless of their partisan leanings, were surprised by the election of Trump. Forty-eight percent say they feel frustrated by his election, 46 percent feel afraid, and 43 percent feel hopeful. Twenty-nine percent are excited by a Trump presidency.
- 62 percent of teens are favorable towards Obama, while 38 percent are favorable towards former presidential candidate Clinton and 30 percent are favorable towards Trump.
- Girls are more favorable towards Clinton (42 percent of girls vs. 33 of boys).
- Black teens are uniformly favorable to Obama, and 76 percent are favorable towards Clinton. Less than 10 percent are favorable towards Trump. White teens are much more positive about Trump than their black peers with 42 percent favorable towards him.

Teens see the country as deeply divided and feel distance from others based on party, race, and income.

Teens uniformly believe their country is divided over critical values, and they themselves face sharp divides by political outlook, race, and other factors. There are steep divisions around optimism and pessimism for the future and policy issues, but also by how much they believe they have in common with people different from themselves. Some do see this diversity as beneficial to the country, but teens of different races and political parties especially have very different takes on the current political situation, as well as on how much they believe they have in common with others.

- 81 percent of American teens (and 80 percent of American adults) say the country is greatly divided over important values.
- 62 percent of teens say that America is much or moderately stronger because of its diversity; 27 percent believe that diversity doesn't strengthen or weaken this country, and 10 percent say that America is made weaker by its diverse population.
- Teens are most likely to say they have little or nothing in common with people with more money (43 percent), people in different political parties (35 percent), and people who live in other parts of the country (33 percent).
- Teens are most likely to say they have a lot or quite a bit in common with people who live in their local community (52 percent), people of different races (48 percent), and people of different religions (38 percent).
- Black teens are more likely than white or Hispanic teens to say they have much in common with different races and different religions and to feel more affinity with people who have more money than Hispanic youth.

A majority of American teens give back to their communities and learn citizenship skills at school.

This study also steps back and looks at teens' broader civic engagement and finds that a majority of teens are involved in improving their communities through fundraising, volunteering, community problem-solving, or online political discourse. A similarly large percentage of teens spend time at school learning the building blocks for critical citizenship and media literacy, such as how to evaluate information online and about the importance of critically examining the evidence that backs up people's opinions, how to find different points of view about a political or social issue, and learning about people who are different from themselves.

- 71 percent of teens have volunteered and 61 percent have raised money for a cause they care about.
- 67 percent of teens have discussed at school how to tell if the information you find online is trustworthy.
- 61 percent have worked with others to solve a problem affecting their school, city, or neighborhood.
- 60 percent of teens have discussed the importance of evaluating the evidence that backs up people's opinions.

- 58 percent have talked about how to find different points of view on political and social issues on the internet.
- 12 percent have taken part in a peaceful protest, march, or demonstration.

These civically savvy teens are more likely to be politically engaged and more likely to report that they have much in common with people with less money, of different races or ethnic backgrounds, and with people who both live in their communities as well as in other parts of the country. Teens who are not civically engaged are more likely to report little or nothing in common with these groups.

Teens are most likely to identify as Democrats, though one-quarter of teens don't yet know which party they would choose were they to register to vote.

Teens are more likely to say they would register as a Democrat than as a Republican, independent, or with another party if they could register to vote today.¹ But nearly a quarter of teens say they don't yet know where their affiliations lie.

- 29 percent of teens identify as Democrats.
- 23 percent of teens identify as Republicans.
- 19 percent of teens select independent as their affiliation.
- 24 percent do not yet know what party they would join were they to register to vote.

Teens who talk to parents about political issues are more engaged and feel they have more in common with those who are different from them.

Parent involvement through talking with teenagers about political issues—regardless of whether parent and child agree with each other or not—percolates into greater political awareness among teens, a greater sense of commonalities with people different from them, and more civic and community engagement.

- Among the teens who talk politics with parents, a majority of them say they agree with their parents and another sizeable percentage say they hold a mix of the same and opposing views from their family. Only a few teens say they are in complete disagreement with their parents over political beliefs.
- 41 percent of teens who participate in civic activities like volunteering, fundraising, or signing a petition talk with their parents daily or weekly about political topics, while just 22 percent of teens who aren't civically active talk politics with their parents as frequently.
- 51 percent of teens who identify as Republicans, 41 percent of Democrats, and 41 percent of independent teens talk with their parents daily or weekly about political issues. Only 23 percent of teens who don't yet know what party they'd pick say they talk with their parents as frequently about political topics.

¹ Except where explicitly noted, all analysis of political party identification in this report combines all teens who say that they are unaffiliated, independent, another party (eg., Green, Libertarian) or that they do not know which party they would choose into the independent category.

Teens who use Twitter, Instagram, or a large number of social media platforms are more likely to be civically engaged.

- Teens who use Twitter are more likely to take part in a protest (16 percent vs. 8 percent of teens who don't use Twitter) and express political beliefs online (44 percent vs. 25 percent).
- Instagram users are more likely to protest (14 percent vs. 6 percent of non-Instagrammers), post online about politics (38 percent vs. 22 percent), raise money for a cause (65 percent vs. 50 percent), and volunteer (74 percent vs. 63 percent).
- Teens who use six or more social media platforms are more likely than those who use fewer to protest, sign a petition, and talk about political beliefs online.

The data for this report were collected in a nationally representative survey fielded between December 7-31, 2016, using the AmeriSpeak® Panel, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 790 teens 13 to 17 years old after consent was granted by a parent or guardian.

INTRODUCTION

Though they cannot yet vote, American teenagers share many of adults' hopes and concerns about the direction of the country, the new administration, and what seems to them to be gaping divides in the country by wealth, political orientation, and our most important values. Understanding teens' political views regarding current events and policies as well as broader questions of governance gives us a window into what the future holds. Some of today's teens will be eligible to vote in 2018, and even more in the next presidential election in 2020. By looking at them now, we get a glimpse of possible political shifts in our next cohort of young adults and young voters, as well as a sense of the forces at home, at school, and in the community that shape children into citizens and political beings. Previous research² suggests that, as adolescents develop cognitively and accumulate a larger body of life experiences with individuals, groups, and institutions, they form their ideas of what a society, a government, and a citizen should be. This report examines teens' civic engagement, both personally and at school, and in conversations at home with parents. It connects these experiences with an exploration of teens' political orientation and beliefs about current policies and the broader functioning of government. And because teens, especially older ones, are uniquely focused on the possibilities for their own futures—and thus what our current political and social situation seems to be offering them as economic, social, and political prospects—we've asked youth to weigh in on how they see the future of our country unfolding.

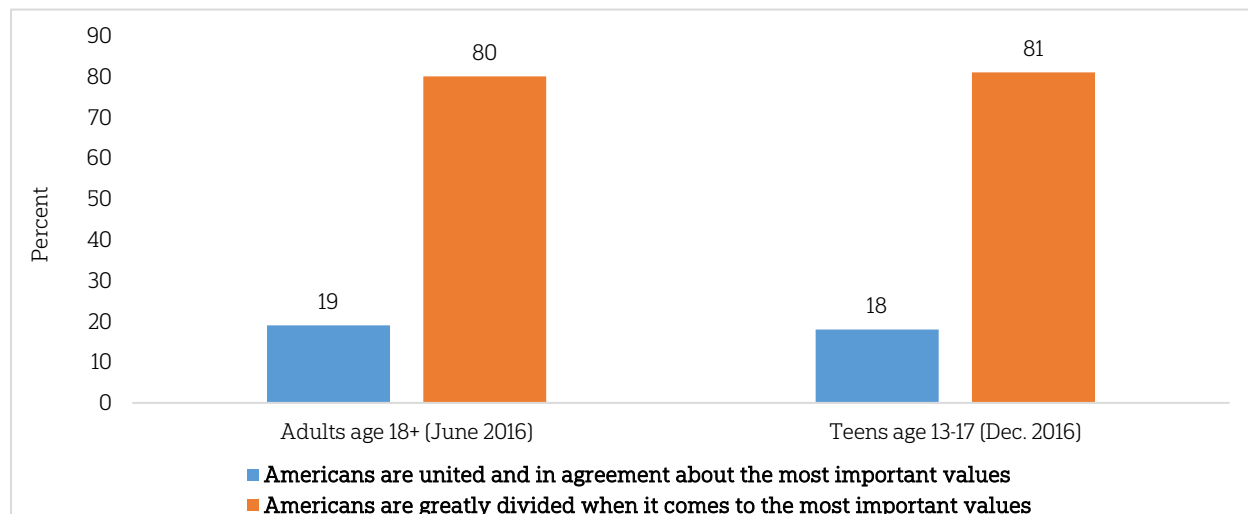
This study uses data from the December 2016, AP-NORC Center survey of 790 teens age 13-17. The survey was fielded on NORC at the University of Chicago's nationally representative, probability-based AmeriSpeak® panel. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with teens after consent was granted by a parent or guardian.

AMERICAN TEENS FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THEY LIVE IN A DIVIDED AMERICA.

Most teens, like most American adults, believe that Americans are greatly divided around questions of values. Four in 5 teens (81 percent) believe that Americans are deeply divided, while 18 percent say that values still unite most Americans.

² Flanagan, C. 2013. *Teenage Citizens: The Political Theories of the Young*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

American adults and teens believe the country is divided over important values.

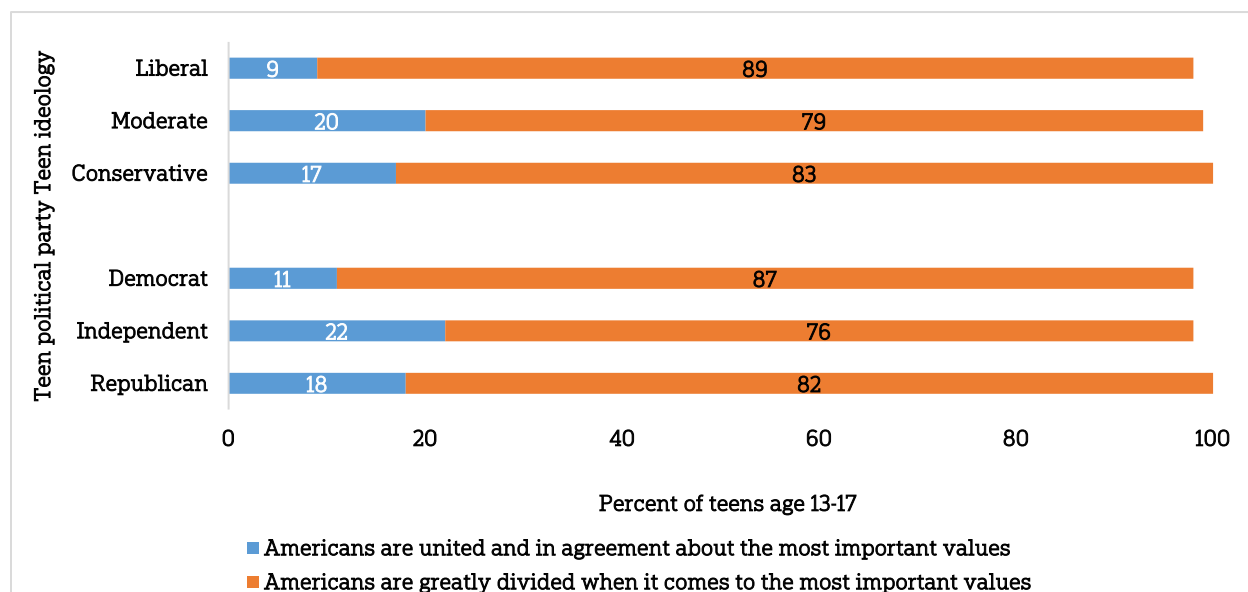


Question: What statement comes closer to your own view?

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

These findings mirror [June 2016, AP-NORC data](#)³ from American adults, which found that 80 percent of adults believe Americans are divided over the most important values and 19 percent feel that the nation is in agreement about what values it holds as most critical. Different subgroups of teens show similar patterns of beliefs around America’s divisions.

Moderate and independent teens are the most likely to see America as united around important values.



Question: What statement comes closer to your own view?

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

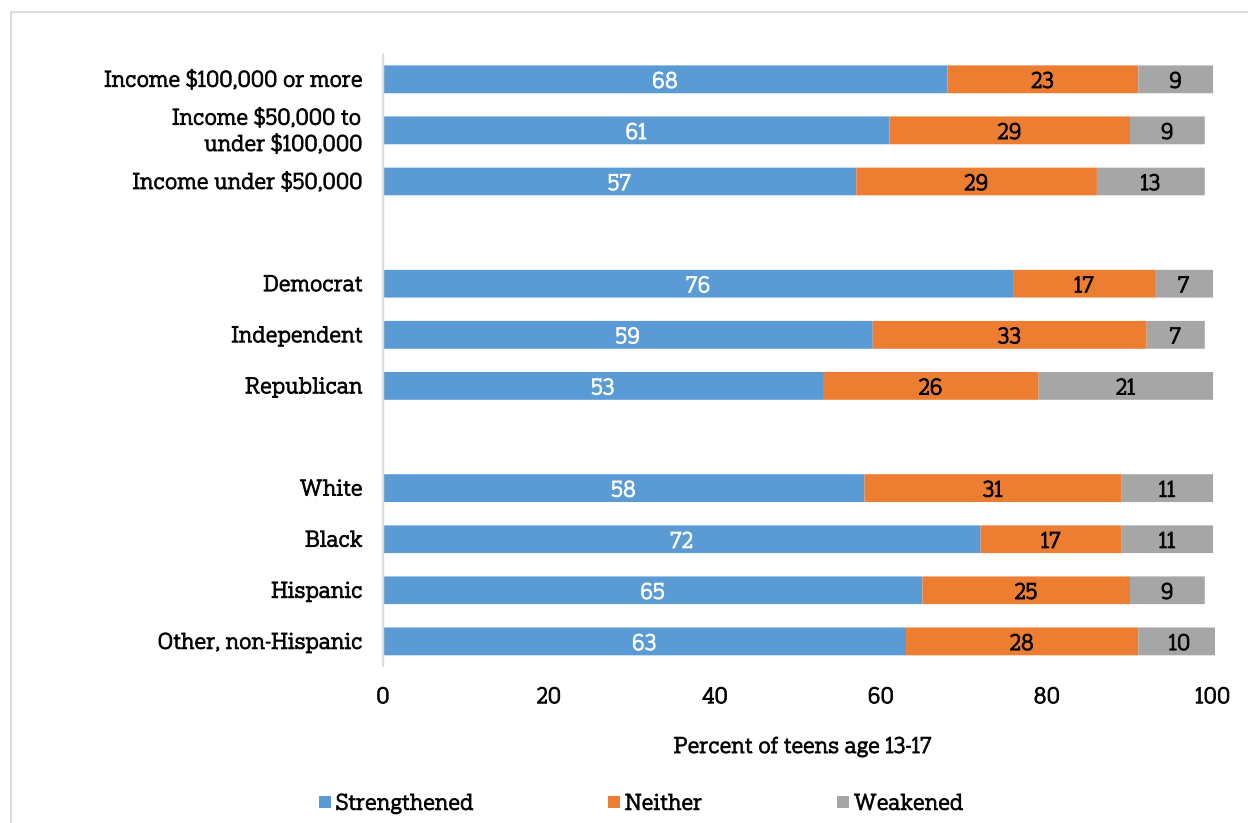
³ AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2016. “Divided America: Perceptions of What Unites and Divides the Country.” <http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/divided-america-perceptions-of-what-unites-and-divides-the-country.aspx>

SIX IN TEN TEENS BELIEVE AMERICA IS STRENGTHENED BY ITS DIVERSITY.

American teenagers make up one of the most racially and ethnically diverse groups of people in the country—their diversity only exceeded by that of their younger siblings and neighbors. Perhaps unsurprisingly, teenagers routinely believe that America is made stronger by its diverse population composed of people from different races, ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds—with 62 percent saying that America is much or moderately stronger because of its diversity. However, there is a subset of teens (27 percent) who believe that diversity doesn’t strengthen or weaken this country, and a small portion of teens (12 percent) say that America is actively weakened by its diverse population.

Data from June indicate that young adults age 18-29 have beliefs similar to teens, with 64 percent saying diversity makes the country stronger, just 8 percent saying it makes the country weaker, and 28 percent in the middle. Overall, adults are less likely than teens to believe diversity strengthens the country, with 56 percent of adults age 18 and older saying it makes the country stronger and 16 percent saying diversity makes the country weaker.⁴

A majority of American teens believe the country is strengthened by its diversity.



Question: The United States has a diverse population, with many people of different races, ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds. On balance, do you think this diversity makes the country much stronger, moderately stronger, neither stronger nor weaker, moderately weaker, much weaker?

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

⁴ AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2016. "Divided America: Perceptions of What Unites and Divides the Country." <http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/divided-america-perceptions-of-what-unites-and-divides-the-country.aspx>

Black and white teens differ in their beliefs in strength through diversity. Seventy-two percent of black teens believe that diversity strengthens America compared to 58 percent of white teens. White teens are more likely to feel that diversity neither strengthens nor weakens the country (31 percent vs. 17 percent of black adolescents.)

Differences of opinion about diversity also break along party lines and political engagement at home. Teens who would join the Democratic Party are much more likely to say diversity strengthens America. Conversely, Republican teens are much more likely to feel diversity makes America weaker, and independent teens are much more likely to hew to the middle, believing diversity makes America neither stronger nor weaker than either their Democratic or Republican counterparts.⁵

Teens with parents who talk with them more often about politics are also more likely to believe that America is improved by its diversity, while teens from households where politics is rarely, if ever, discussed are more likely to take a more neutral view of the impact of diversity on the country.

WEALTH, POLITICAL BELIEFS, AND PHYSICAL DISTANCE DIVIDE, SAY TEENS.

Beyond the broad question of whether America is divided or not, we asked teens about how much they felt they had in common with others who were different from them along a variety of demographic categories. When questioned about who they have much or little in common with, teens again voiced sentiments similar to American adults. Divisions around household wealth and political beliefs are the most pronounced among both teens and adults, though teens are less likely to say they have only a little or nothing in common with people of different political parties than their elders, with 35 percent of teens reporting little or nothing in common compared with 41 percent of adults.⁶ Teens and adults share a sense that they have little in common with those who have a lot more money than they or their families do, with more than 4 in 10 of both teens and adults saying so.

Teens are also more likely to feel divided from those who live in other parts of the country than American adults, with 33 percent of teens saying they feel they have little or nothing in common with people outside their community while 26 percent of adults say the same.

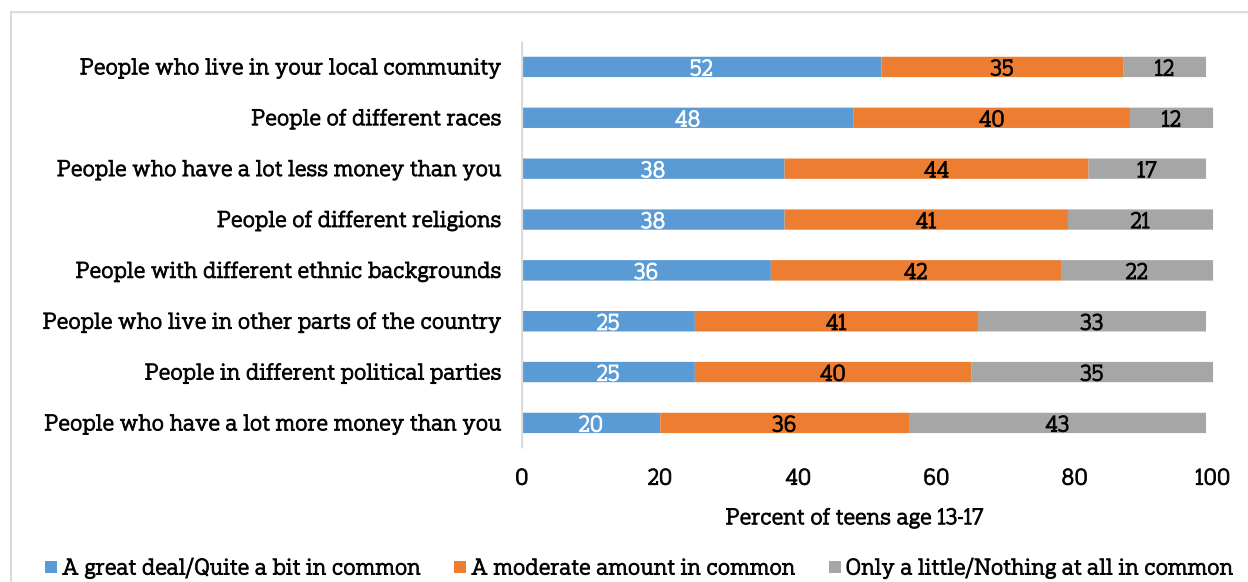
Teens feel that they have the most in common with people who are living in their community, people of different races, and people who have a lot less money than they do.

⁵ Except where explicitly noted, all analysis of political party identification in this report combines all teens who say that they are unaffiliated, independent, another party (eg., Green, Libertarian) or that they do not know which party they would choose into the independent category.

⁶ AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2016. "Divided America: Perceptions of What Unites and Divides the Country."

<http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/divided-america-perceptions-of-what-unites-and-divides-the-country.aspx>

Teens are most connected to neighbors and people of different races, and least connected to people with different politics or more wealth.



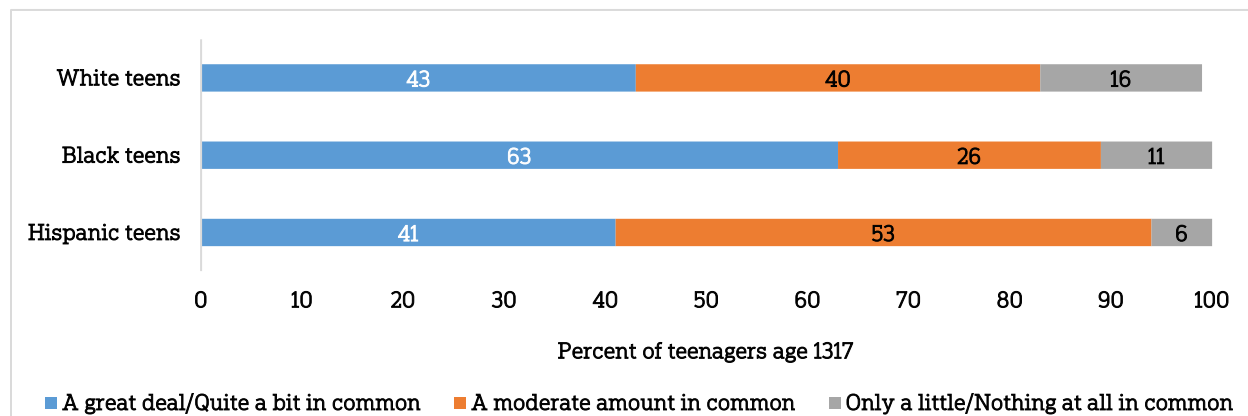
Question: How much do you feel you have in common with the following types of people?
 Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

However, these feelings of connection or disconnection are not the same across different racial, political, or socioeconomic groups.

BLACK TEENS ARE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THEY HAVE MUCH IN COMMON WITH PEOPLE OF OTHER RACES AND RELIGIONS.

Black teens are more likely than either white or Hispanic teens to say they have a great deal or quite a bit in common with people of other races. While 63 percent of black teens believe they have much in common with people of different races, just 43 percent of white teens and 41 percent of Hispanic teens say the same.

Black teens are most likely to say they have a great deal or quite a bit in common with those of different races.



Question: How much do you feel you have in common with the following types of people? [People of different races]
 Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Feelings about common experiences across religion show similar patterns to race—with black teens more likely to say they have a great deal or quite a bit in common with others of different religions, while the largest portions of white and Hispanic teens say they have only a moderate amount in common with people of other faiths. Half of black teens report having much in common with people of other faiths, while 45 percent of whites and 42 percent of Hispanic teens take a more moderate view of common experiences across religious groups.

Black teens are also more likely to feel that they have a lot in common with people who have more money than they do than are Hispanic teens (26 percent vs. 17 percent).

BLACK AND WHITE TEENS FEEL THEY HAVE MORE IN COMMON WITH NEIGHBORS THAN DO HISPANIC YOUTH.

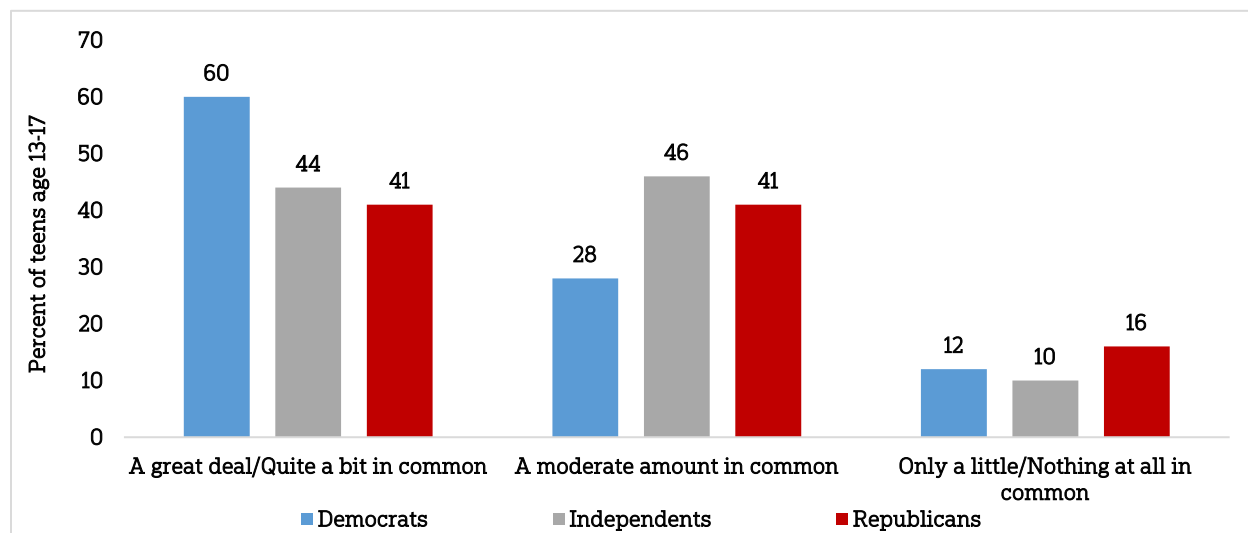
More than half of both black and white teens say they have a large amount in common with their neighbors, with 59 percent of blacks and 55 percent of whites reflecting a sense of common experience with their neighbors, compared with just over a third of Hispanic teens. In contrast, Hispanic teens are more likely than either white or black teens to say they have a moderate amount in common with people who live in their local community. The largest group of Hispanic teens (46 percent) say they have a moderate amount in common with their neighbors, compared with 27 percent of black teens and 34 percent of whites.

TEEN DEMOCRATS HAVE MORE AFFINITY FOR DIFFERENT RACES.

Teens who identify with different political groups have differing perspectives about their commonalities with other groups.

Political beliefs also relate to beliefs about how much you have in common with people of other races. Six in 10 teens who identify as Democrats say they have a great deal or quite a bit in common with people of other races, while 44 percent of independents and 41 percent of Republican teens say the same.

Democrats are more likely than independents or Republicans to say they have a great deal or quite a bit in common with people of different races.

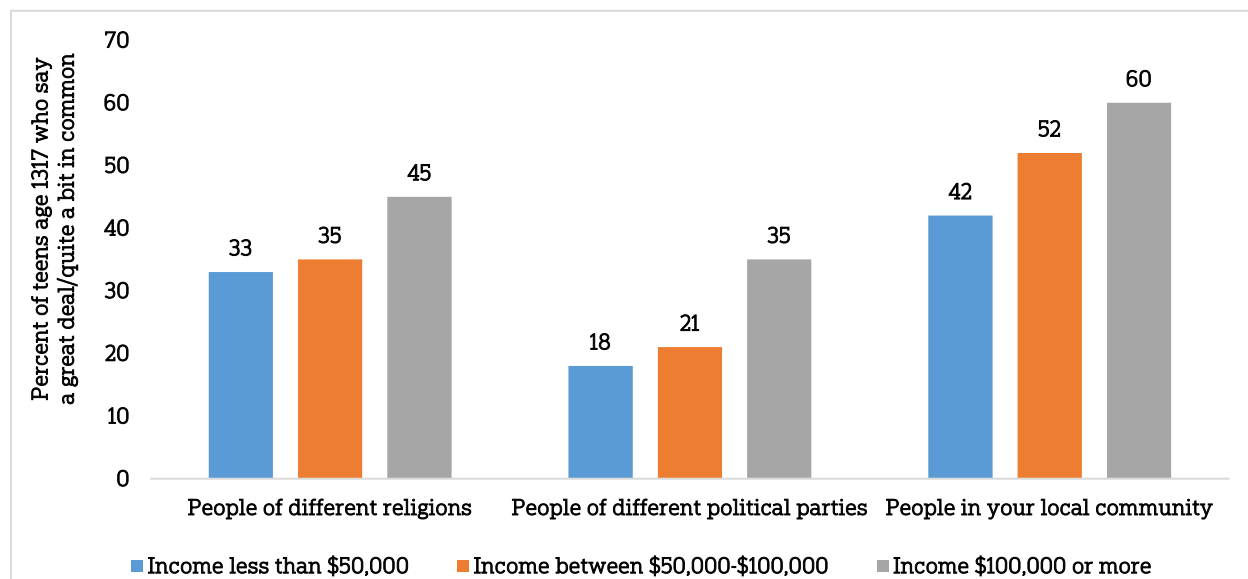


Question: How much do you feel you have in common with the following types of people? [People of different races]
 Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

AS HOUSEHOLD INCOME RISES SO DOES A TEEN’S SENSE OF COMMON EXPERIENCE WITH PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT RELIGIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND NEIGHBORS.

Teens from households earning more than \$100,000 per year are more likely than those earning less to say they have at least quite a bit in common with people of different religions, those from different political parties, and people in their local communities. They are also more likely to say they have at least a moderate amount in common with people who have more money than they do (69 percent), compared to half of those in families earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and half of those in families earning less than \$50,000.

Teens from higher-income households are more likely to say they have quite a bit or a great deal in common with people from other religions, different political parties, and people in their local communities.



Question: How much do you feel you have in common with the following types of people?

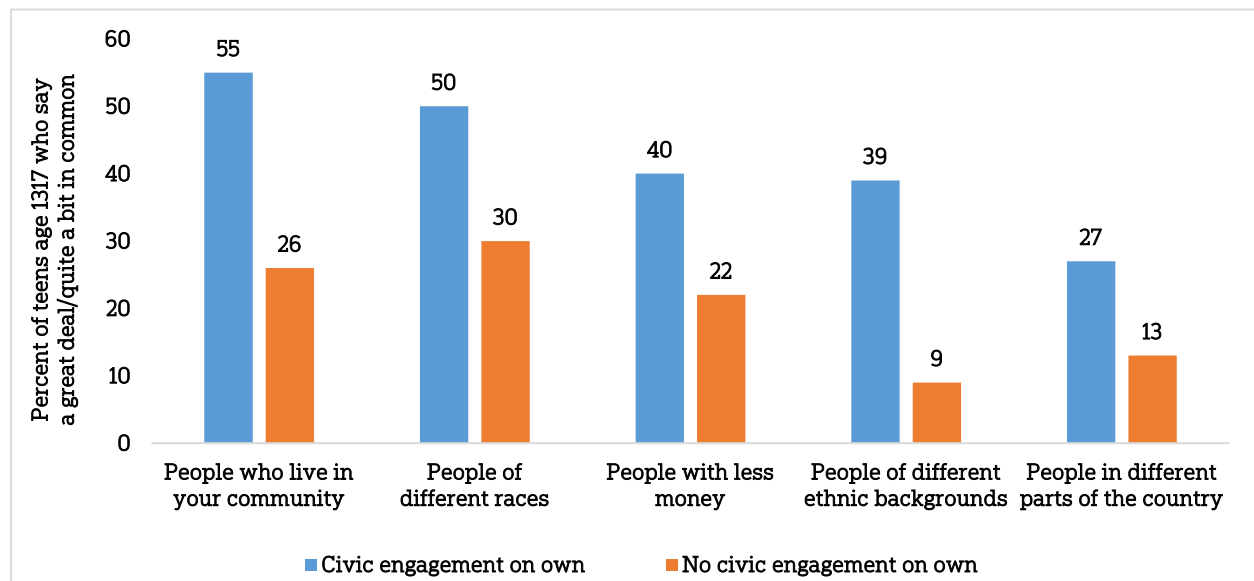
Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Higher income teens are least likely to say they have little or nothing in common with people from other religions and those from other parts of the country. Just 13 percent of those in families earning \$100,000 say they have little or nothing in common with people from other religions, compared to 22 percent of those in families earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 a year and 28 percent of those in families earning less than \$50,000. Similarly, just 27 percent say they have little or nothing in common with those in other parts of the country, compared to 34 percent of those in households earning \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year and 40 percent of those in households earning less than \$50,000.

CIVICALLY ENGAGED TEENS REPORT MORE IN COMMON WITH DIFFERENT RACES, ETHNICITIES, POORER PEOPLE, AND NEIGHBORS.

Civic engagement, especially volunteering and helping to solve a problem in their community, raises teens' awareness of and empathy for those who are different from themselves.⁷ Beyond engaging in work to help improve their communities, youth involved in civic activities have different attitudes towards others than less engaged teens. Teens who have personally engaged in at least one civically oriented activity⁸ have a more positive perspective on people different from themselves than teens who have not engaged civically with their community or others. Civically engaged teens are much more likely to say they have much in common with people with less money than them, with people of different races, of different ethnic backgrounds, with people who live in their community, and to a lesser extent with people in different parts of the country. Civically unengaged teens are more likely to report a moderate amount or little or nothing in common with these groups.

Civically engaged teens are more likely than those with no civic engagement to say they have a lot in common with people who differ from them by race, ethnicity, income, or geography.



Question: How much do you feel you have in common with the following types of people?

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

⁷ Flanagan, C. 2013. *Teenage Citizens: The Political Theories of the Young*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

⁸ In this study, civic activities were defined as: raising money for a cause you care about, volunteering, working with others to solve a local problem, peaceful protesting, signing a petition, or expressing political beliefs online.

Schools also can expose teens to ideas, information, and concepts around shared political and social concerns. Teens who have done at least one in-school civic learning activity⁹ are more likely to report that they have much in common with people different from themselves. These teens say they have a great deal or quite a bit in common with people of different races (49 percent vs. 36 percent of teens without any in-school civic learning) or ethnic backgrounds (37 percent vs. 21 percent), people who live in their local community (54 percent vs. 29 percent), and people from different political parties (26 percent vs. 13 percent). Teens without opportunities for civic engagement and learning at school are more likely to take a more moderate view of how much they have in common with people of other races and ethnicities, and their neighbors, and to believe they have little or nothing in common with people of different political parties.

Talking with a parent about political issues relates to a teen's sense of commonality with others. In these data, teens who rarely or never talk with their parents about politics are more likely to say they have little in common with people who live in other parts of the country (35 percent), when compared with teens who talk with their parents daily about political topics (25 percent). More than half of teens who talk politics daily with parents say they have a great deal or quite a bit in common with people of different ethnicities, while nearly 3 in 10 teens who rarely or never discuss politics with a parent say the same.

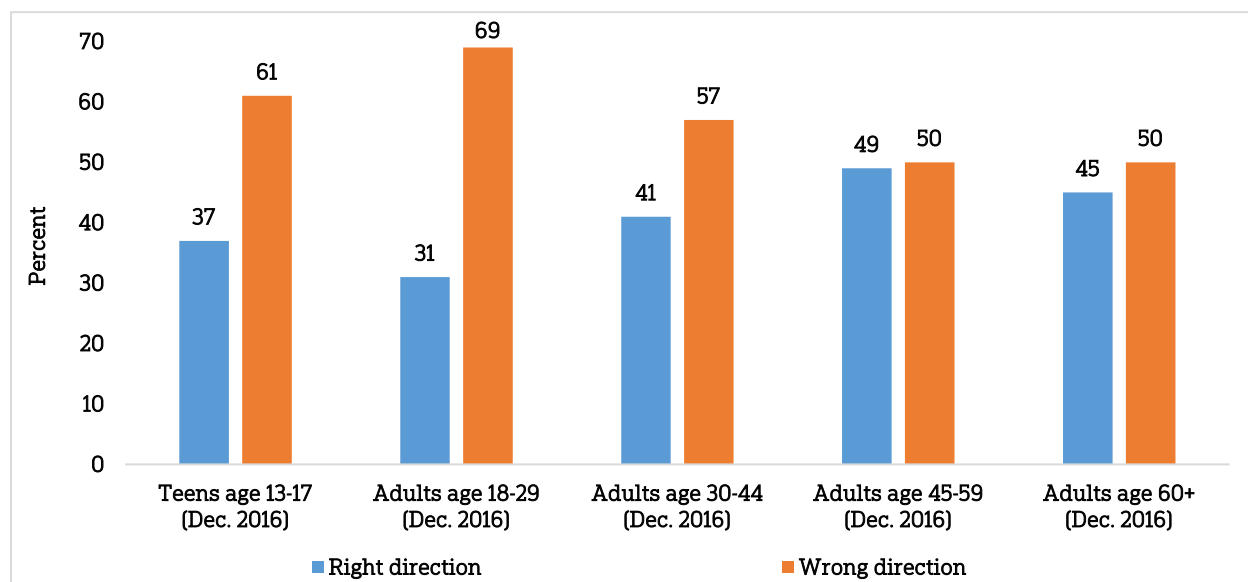
MANY TEENS SAY AMERICA IS HEADED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION BUT ARE STILL SEEING BETTER DAYS AHEAD, WITH DIFFERENCES ALONG PARTISAN, RACIAL, AND ETHNIC LINES.

As teens mature towards adulthood, they assess and evaluate the country's future as they seek to paint a picture of their own. A majority of teens age 13 to 17 do not feel like things in America are headed in the right direction. Sixty-one percent say the country is headed in the wrong direction, compared to 37 percent who say it is headed in the right direction. In data collected in December 2016, rates were similar among adults age 18 and older, with 56 percent saying the country is headed in the wrong direction and 42 percent saying it is headed in the right direction. But younger adults age 18-29 are even more likely than teens to say the country is headed in the wrong direction. Sixty-nine percent of those age 18-29 said it is headed in the wrong direction, compared to just 31 percent who said it is headed in the right direction. Older adults were less pessimistic.¹⁰

⁹ School-based civic engagement in this study includes: talking about how to find different points of view on political and social issues online, discussing how to tell if the information you find online is trustworthy, creating and sharing something on the internet related to a societal issue, discussing the importance of evaluating evidence that backs up people's opinions, or learning about people with backgrounds and experiences that are different from yours.

¹⁰ AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2017. "Americans' Priorities for 2017."
<http://apnorc.org/projects/Pages/americans-priorities-for-2017.aspx>

Teens and younger adults are particularly pessimistic about the direction of the country, with older adults less so.



Question: Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?

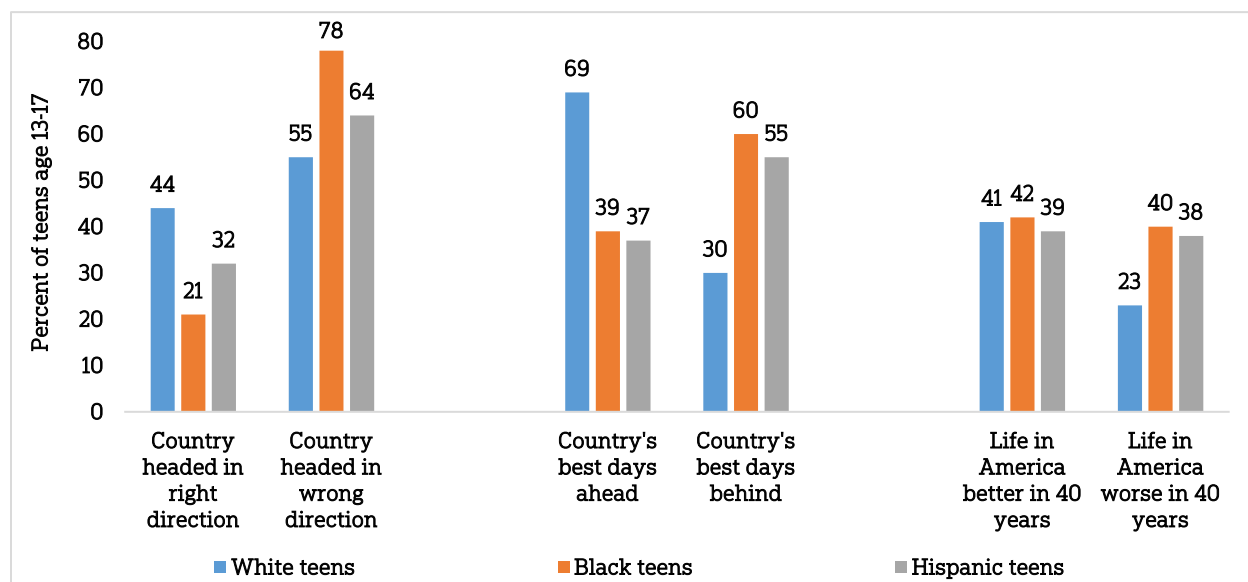
Sources: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide; AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 14-19 with 1,017 adults age 18 and older nationwide. All differences between teens and adults are statistically significant except between teens and adults age 30-44.

Still, teens remain generally optimistic about the future, with a majority of teens saying America's best days are still ahead of it. Fifty-six percent say so, compared to just 41 percent who say those days are in the past. As of June 2016, adults had a similar outlook, with a slim majority (52 percent) saying America's best days are in the past.¹¹ When asked about how things might change over the next 40 years, the picture is neutral to negative among teens. For a country that is generally optimistic, teens paint a downbeat picture, with just 41 percent of teens saying life in America will get better, 29 percent saying it will get worse, and 30 percent saying it will stay about the same.

Different racial and ethnic groups register differences in optimism. While white, black, and Hispanic teens are all more likely to say the country is headed in the wrong direction than the right direction, white teens are more likely to say it is on the right track than are black teens (44 percent vs. 21 percent). And, while 7 in 10 white teens say the country's best days are ahead of it, just 4 in 10 black and Hispanic teens agree. And while similar numbers of white and black teens (about 4 in 10) say life in America will be better in 40 years, black teens are more likely to say life will be worse (40 percent vs. 23 percent).

¹¹ AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2016. "Divided America: Perceptions of What Unites and Divides the Country." <http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/divided-america-perceptions-of-what-unites-and-divides-the-country.aspx>

White teens are more optimistic about the direction of the country than black or Hispanic teens across several measures.



Questions: Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?

In general, do you think America's best days are...[ahead of us/behind us]?

Looking ahead to the next 40 years—that is, from now until about 2055—do you think life in America over that time will [get better/get worse/stay about the same]?

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

December 2016 data from the GenForward panel shows similar differences by race in optimism between teens and adults age 18-30, with whites more optimistic than blacks or Hispanics about things like whether the country is headed in the right direction and whether they will personally be better off in four years. Whites were also more optimistic about the chances for the lives of people of color, women, the middle class, the working class, and the poor to improve with the election of Trump. On the other hand, blacks and Hispanics were more likely than whites to say the lives of white people would improve.¹²

This represents a shift in recent trends seen among American adults. In a study conducted in 2013 with data from the General Social Survey and The Associated Press, AP-NORC found that whites were less optimistic than Hispanics or blacks about things like whether the country is headed in the right direction and their family's chances for improving their standard of living. These trends began to emerge after the economic recession and the election of Obama in 2008. The trends after 2008 themselves represented a reversal of trends prior, where economic optimism differed little between races and ethnicities about chances to improve one's standard of living, and optimism about the direction of the country was higher among whites than Hispanics or blacks.¹³

¹² GenForward, December 2016. "Obama vs. Trump in the Minds of Millennials."

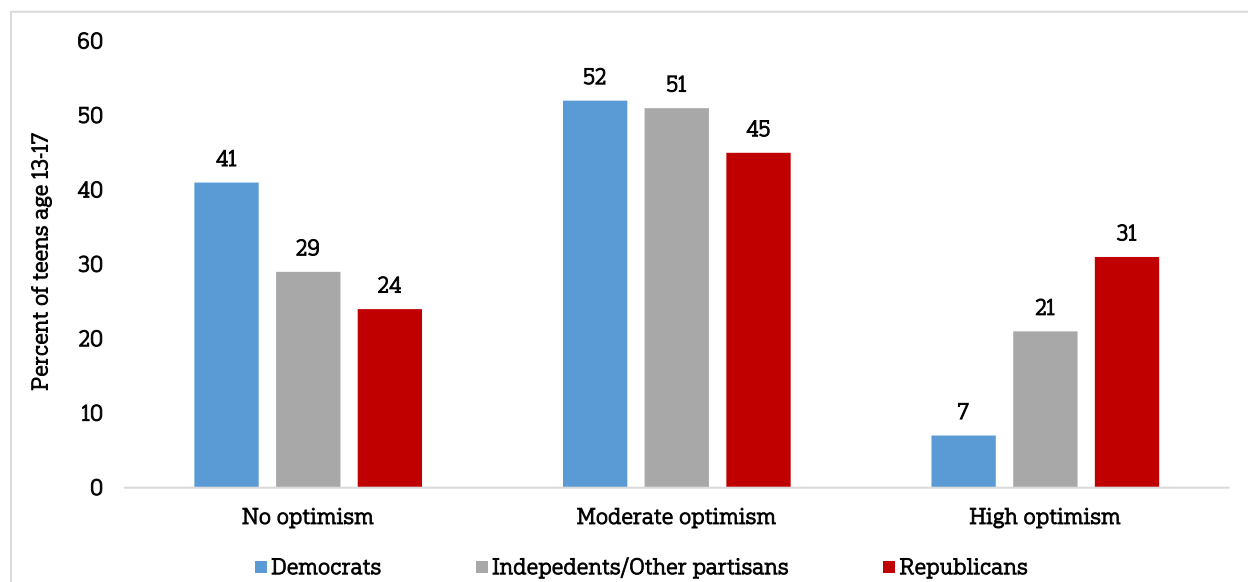
<http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/genforward-december-2016.aspx>

¹³ AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2013. "The Public Mood: White Malaise but Optimism among Blacks, Hispanics."

<http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/the-public-mood-white-malaise-but-optimism-among-blacks-hispanics.aspx>

Deep partisan differences emerge on whether the country is headed down the right path and whether its best days are ahead or behind it. Just 16 percent of teens who say they are Democrats say the country is going in the right direction. Independents express more positivity, with 40 percent saying it is on the right track. Republicans are the most enthusiastic about the country’s direction, with 56 percent saying things are going in the right direction. Majorities of Republicans (71 percent) and independents (60 percent) say the country’s best days are ahead of it, compared to just 37 percent of Democrats. Little difference between partisans emerge, however, in whether the country will be better or worse off 40 years from now.

Overall optimism levels are low for teenage Democrats, moderate for independents and other partisans, but higher for Republican teens.



Questions: Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?

In general, do you think America’s best days are...[ahead of us/behind us]?

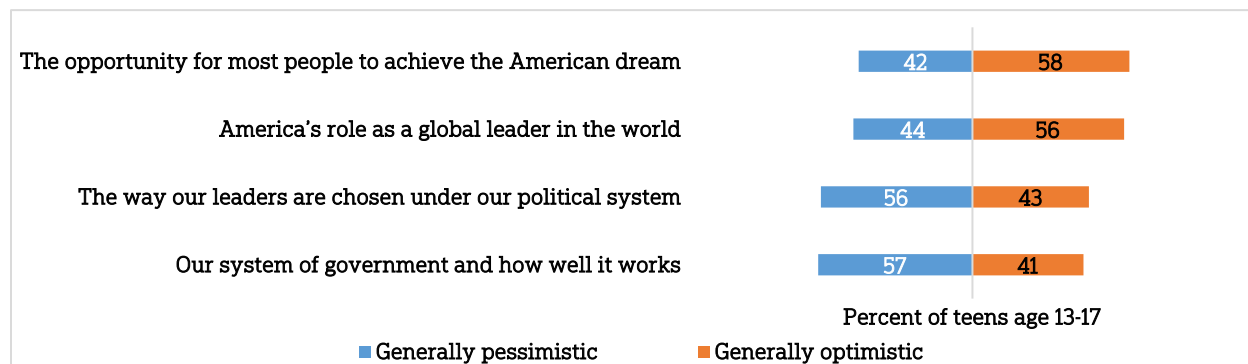
Looking ahead to the next 40 years—that is, from now until about 2055—do you think life in America over that time will [get better/get worse/stay about the same]?

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

A MAJORITY OF TEENS SAY THEY ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT AMERICA’S ROLE AS A GLOBAL LEADER AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM, BUT ARE MORE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE POLITICAL SYSTEM.

Looking at more specific aspects of American life, teens lean toward optimism about the opportunity for most people to achieve the American dream and America’s role as a global leader, but they lean pessimistic about how our leaders are chosen in the political system and how well our system of government works.

Teens are optimistic about American leadership and the opportunities available to Americans, but pessimistic about how the government works and the system of choosing its leaders.

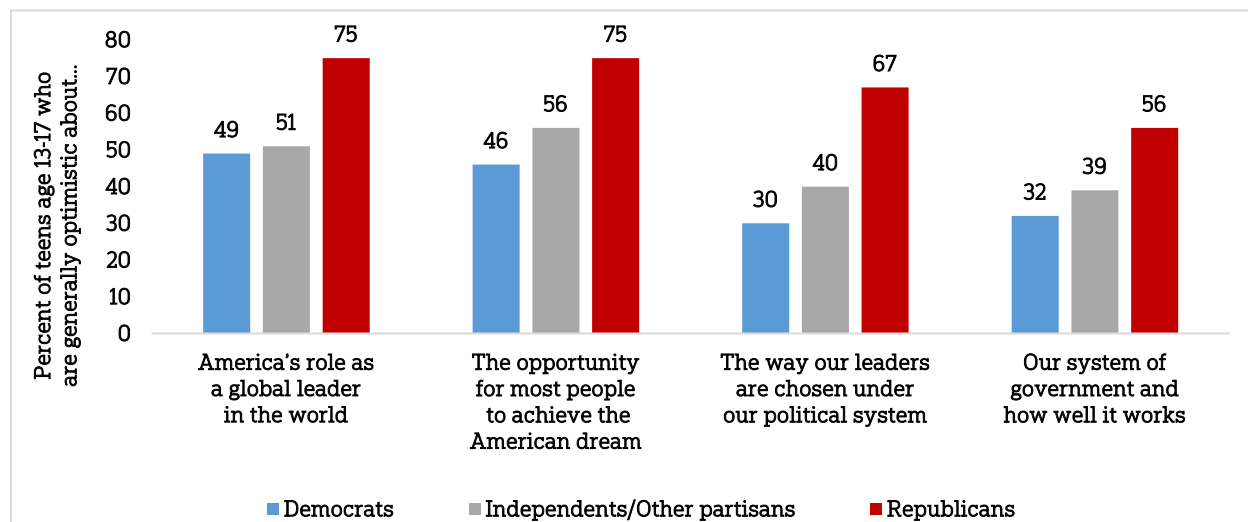


Question: Thinking about the future of our country, please tell me whether you feel generally optimistic or generally pessimistic about each of the following.

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Partisan differences emerge on these issues even when controlling for overall optimism (as measured by whether the country is on the right track, whether America's best days are ahead, and prospects for the country 40 years from now). Republicans are most optimistic about American leadership, opportunities, and the system of government.

Republicans are more optimistic than Democrats or independents/other partisans about American leadership, the opportunities available to Americans, and how the political system will function.



Question: Thinking about the future of our country, please tell me whether you feel generally optimistic or generally pessimistic about each of the following.

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Some differences also emerge along racial and ethnic lines on these issues. Most of these differences can be attributed to the teen's political party, but regardless of political party, white teens are still more likely to say they are optimistic about America's role as a global leader in the world than are black or Hispanic teens (67 percent vs. 48 percent and 35 percent, respectively). Male teens are also more likely than female teens to say they are optimistic about this (63 percent vs. 50 percent).

OBAMA REMAINS POPULAR AMONG TEENS WHILE TRUMP AND CLINTON ARE MOSTLY UNPOPULAR, WITH DIFFERENCES AMONG TEENS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY.

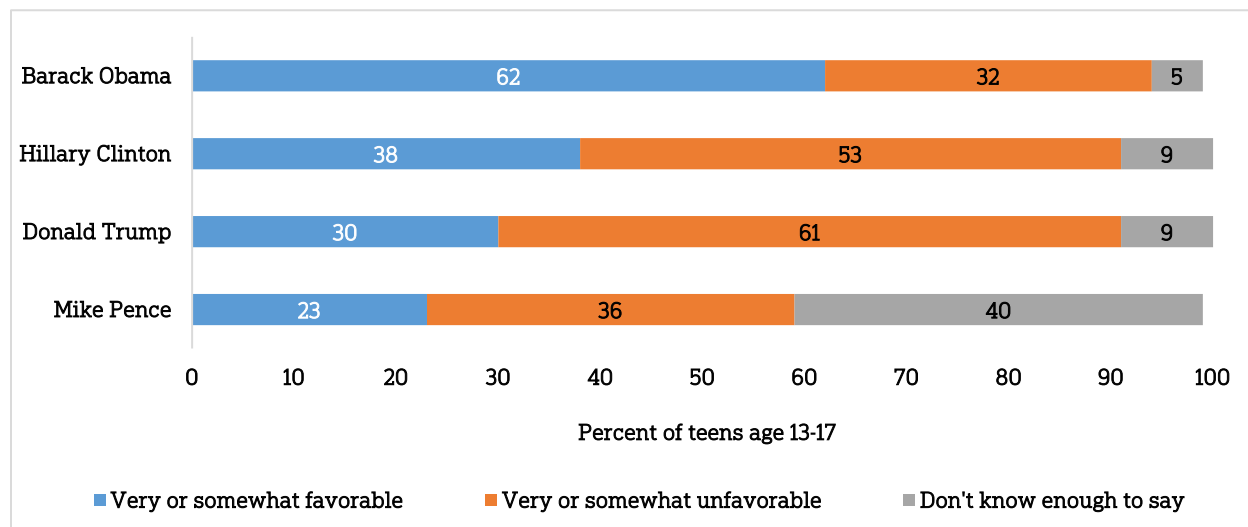
In addition to asking teens about their own and the country’s future, as well their thoughts on government’s functions and role in the world, this study also asked young people about their thoughts on the November 2016 election, its candidates, and pressing national issues.

Overall, teens remain enamored of Obama, with less favorable assessments of the two 2016 presidential candidates. The former president is popular among teenagers, with nearly 2 in 3 who are favorable towards him and just 1 in 3 who feel unfavorable. Teens’ views of Obama are more positive than those of American adults age 18 and older, with 57 percent of adults favorable compared with 62 percent of teens.¹⁴

However, majorities of teens remain unfavorable towards both former Democratic presidential nominee Clinton and Trump, though they prefer Clinton—with 38 percent favorable towards her vs. 30 percent favorably inclined towards Trump. In AP-NORC data from September, a similar percentage of adults age 18+ held favorable opinions of Clinton (37 percent) and Trump (30 percent). Among younger adults age 18-29, those favorable rates were similar to teens for Clinton at 35 percent, but lower than teens at 23 percent favorable for Trump.¹⁵

Vice President Mike Pence is largely unknown to teenagers, with 4 in 10 who say they don’t know enough about him to have an opinion.

Teenagers approve of former Obama and feel negatively towards Clinton and Trump, while Pence remains largely unknown to teens.



Question: For each of the following individuals, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of that person. If you don't know enough about the person to have an opinion, you can say that too.
 Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

¹⁴AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2017. "Obama's Legacy as President: Depends on Who You Ask." <http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/obama's-legacy-as-president-depends-on-who-you-ask.aspx>

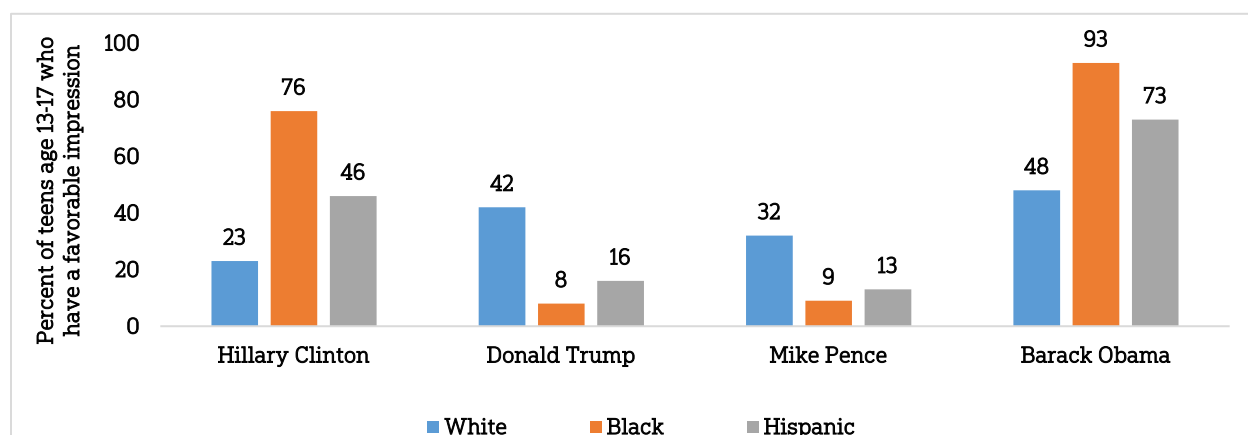
¹⁵ AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2016. "Americans Want an Issues-Based Campaign, but Don't Always Agree on which Issues Matter Most." <http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/americans-want-an-issues-based-campaign-but-dont-always-agree-on-which-issues-matter-most.aspx>

As with adults, teens' impressions of key political figures fall sharply along partisan lines. Virtually all Democratic teens (97 percent) have a positive opinion of Obama and most are favorable towards Clinton (76 percent), while less than 1 in 10 have a favorable impression of either Trump or Pence. On the other side of the aisle, few Republican teens are favorable towards Obama (24 percent) or Clinton (5 percent), and majorities support both Trump (68 percent) and Pence (53 percent).

When it comes to teens' evaluations of Clinton, gender also plays a role. Nearly 6 in 10 teen boys have an unfavorable impression of Clinton, while 33 percent are favorable towards her. Teen girls are more likely than boys to have a favorable impression of Clinton (42 percent), but just under half of girls disapprove.

Opinions about key political figures are also divided along racial lines. Nearly all black teens have a favorable impression of Obama, and 76 percent say the same about Clinton. However, less than 1 in 10 have a positive opinion of Trump or Pence. Only minorities of whites are favorable towards any of the four, but compared to black and Hispanic teens, they are much more likely to have a favorable view of Trump and Pence and less likely to have a positive impression of Clinton or Obama.

White teens have more favorable impressions of Trump and Pence than do teens of color. Black teens overwhelmingly support Clinton and former president Obama.



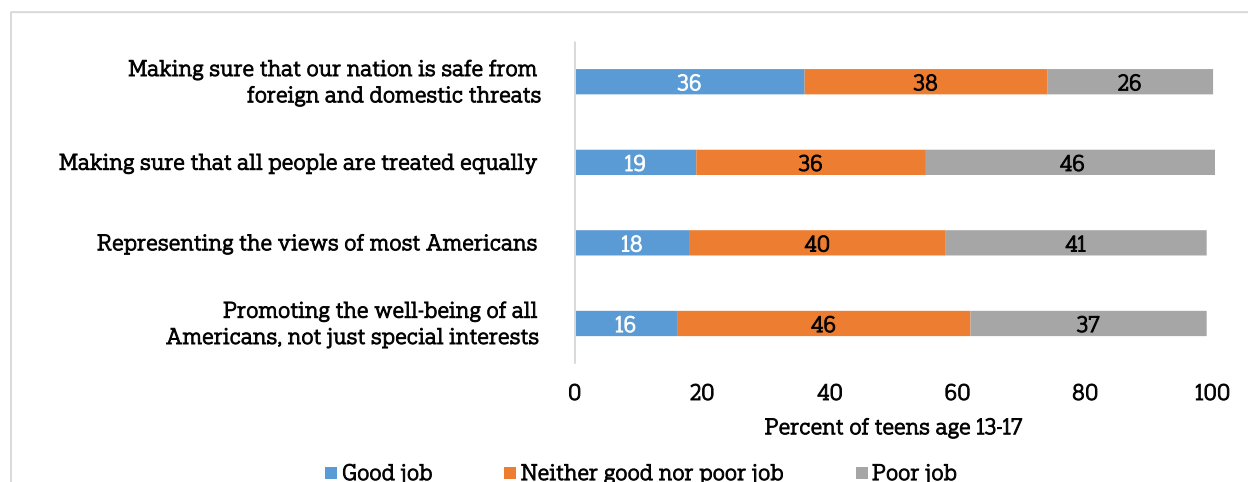
Question: For each of the following individuals, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of that person. If you don't know enough about the person to have an opinion, you can say that too.

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

FEW TEENS THINK THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS DOING A GOOD JOB ENSURING THE RIGHTS, SAFETY, AND EQUALITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, AND MANY ARE SKEPTICAL OF POLICIES POTENTIALLY ON THE HORIZON IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

Teens were asked how they felt the government was doing with some of its responsibilities, like keeping people safe, ensuring equality, and representing the public. A sizable share of teens say the government is doing neither a good nor poor job at all of these responsibilities, and few say they are doing a good job at things like making sure all people are treated equally (19 percent), representing the views of most Americans (18 percent), and promoting the well-being of all Americans, not just special interests (16 percent). More (36 percent) say the government is doing a good job making sure the country is safe from foreign and domestic threats, but a majority still say it is doing neither a good nor poor job or worse.

Few teens think the federal government is doing a good job at representing, ensuring equality for, and promoting the well-being of most Americans.



Question: For each of the following tasks, do you think the federal government is doing a good job, a poor job, or neither a good nor poor job at that particular task?

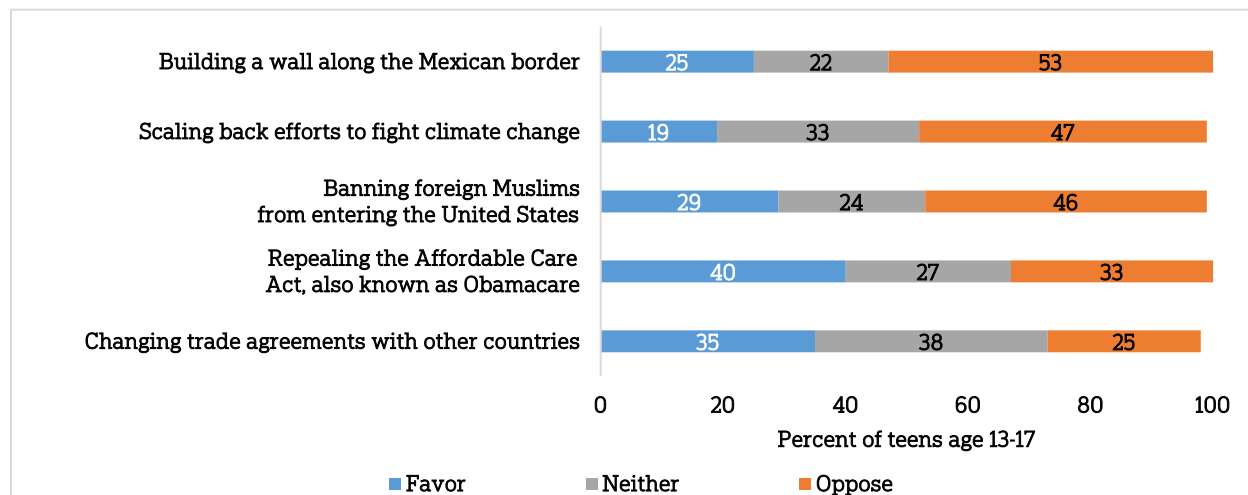
Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Partisans evaluate the job the government is doing on some of these responsibilities differently. Republicans (37 percent) are more likely than Democrats (19 percent) or independents/other partisans (24 percent) to say the government is doing a poor job of making sure the country is safe from foreign and domestic threats. On the other hand, a majority of Democrats (61 percent) but fewer Republicans (33 percent) and independents/other partisans (43 percent) say the government is doing a poor job at making sure all people are treated equally. No partisan differences emerge when asking about the other responsibilities.

LARGEST GROUPS OF TEENS OPPOSE A BORDER WALL, BANNING MUSLIMS, AND ROLLING BACK EFFORTS TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE, BUT SUPPORT REPEALING THE ACA AND CHANGING TRADE AGREEMENTS.

Teens were also asked how they felt about potential policies that the federal government could pursue over the next four years. Like the more general government responsibilities, many do not have an opinion on each of the policies. Still, more favor than oppose repealing the Affordable Care Act (40 percent vs. 33 percent) and changing trade agreements with other countries (35 percent vs. 25 percent), and more oppose than favor building the wall along the border (53 percent vs. 25 percent), scaling back efforts to fight climate change (47 percent vs. 19 percent), and banning foreign Muslims from entering the United States (46 percent vs. 29 percent).

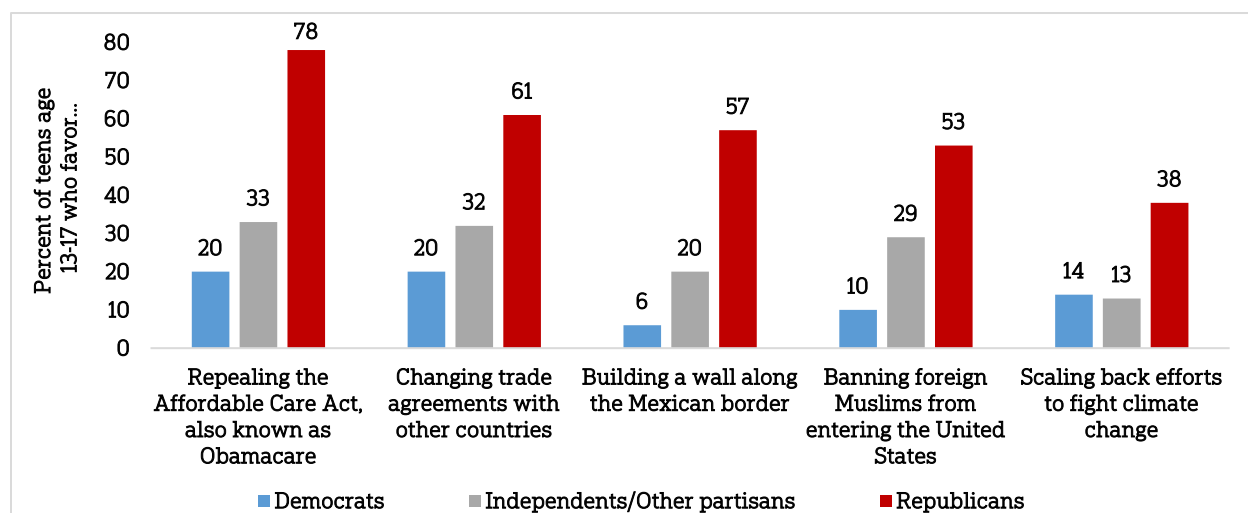
While many teens do not express an opinion on some of the possible federal actions during the next four years, almost half or more oppose ideas like banning foreign Muslims from entering the country, building a wall along the border with Mexico, and scaling back efforts to fight climate change.



Question: Now we have a list of things the federal government might do over the next four years. Would you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose the federal government doing these things?
 Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Partisan differences emerge on all of these issues. Few Democrats favor any of these policies. A majority of Republicans favor each of them, with the only exception being scaling back efforts on climate change, consistent with recent findings with American adults.¹⁶ Still, more Republicans than Democrats or independents support scaling back these efforts.

A majority of Republican teens support each of these potential policies, except scaling back the fight against climate change; few Democrats or independents support any of them.



Question: Now we have a list of things the federal government might do over the next four years. Would you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose the federal government doing these things?

¹⁶ Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E., Roser-Renouf, C., Cutler, M., & Rosenthal, S. 2017. *Trump Voters & Global Warming* New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. <http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/trump-voters-global-warming/>

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

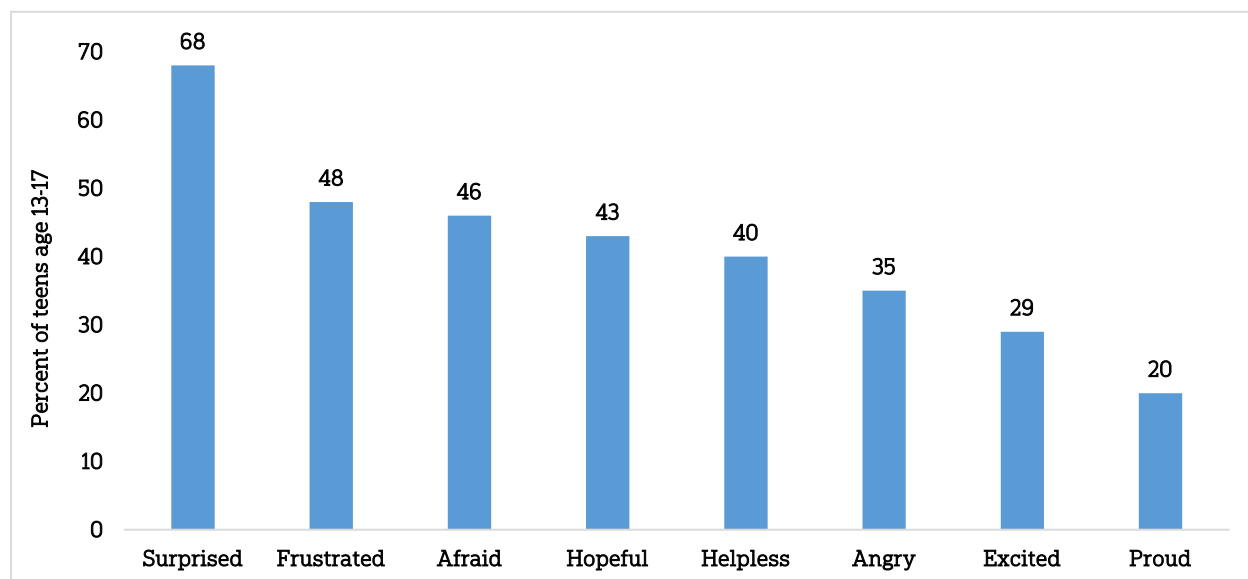
As for differences by race and ethnicity, white teens are more supportive of building a wall along the Mexican border than Hispanic teens (36 percent vs. 11 percent), and they are more likely to want to repeal the ACA than either black or Hispanic teens (50 percent vs. 20 percent and 32 percent, respectively).

TEENS REACTED WITH SURPRISE TO THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION.

More than any other emotion, teenagers felt surprised by the outcome of the election. Nearly 7 in 10 teens report being surprised about Trump being elected as president.

In addition to surprise, many have negative emotions about Trump's election, and few are excited or proud. Nearly half say they feel frustrated or afraid, 4 in 10 feel helpless, and 35 percent are angry. However, some teens remain optimistic, with 43 percent saying they feel hopeful about the outcome.

Many teens are surprised about Trump being elected president, while few feel excited or proud about the outcome.



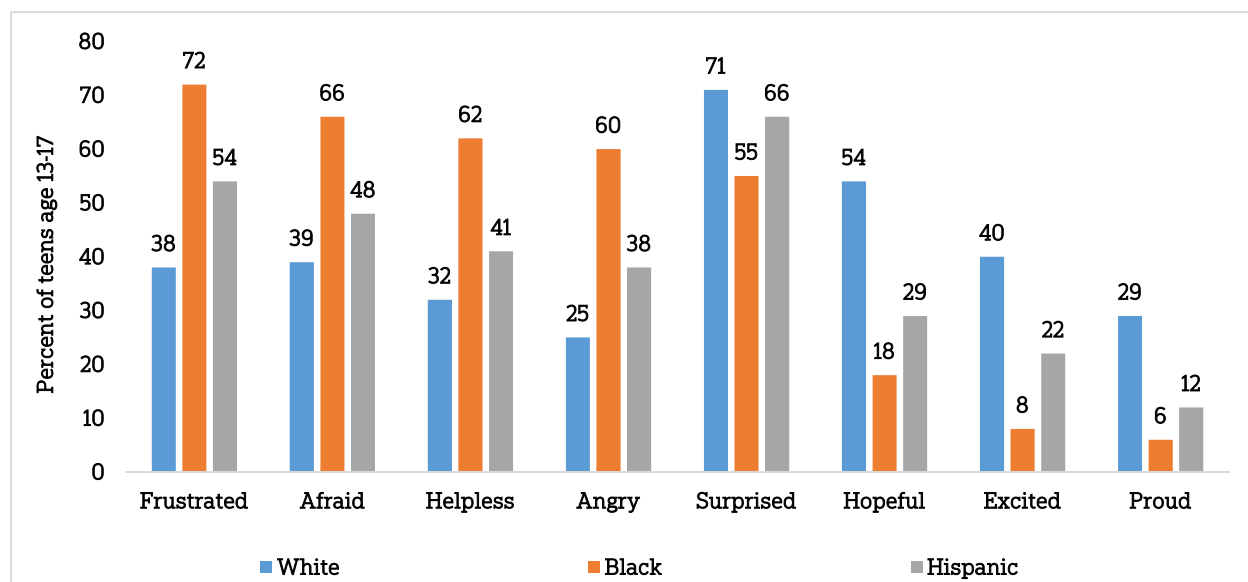
Question: For each of the following, please say whether each word does describe or does not describe how you feel about Donald Trump being elected president?

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

While teens of all stripes feel equally surprised about Trump's election, strong divisions by political party emerge in teens' reactions to the election outcome. Democratic teens are overwhelmingly negative about the election outcome and are most likely to feel frustrated, afraid, helpless, or angry, while Republican teens are predictably hopeful, excited, and proud. Those who would register as an independent or remain unaffiliated are more ambivalent, with just under half in each group who feel frustrated, hopeful, and afraid.

Race and ethnicity play a key role in shaping how teens feel about the election outcome. White teens are much more likely than black and Hispanic teens to say they feel hopeful, excited, or proud, and less likely to feel afraid, frustrated, helpless, or angry.

Teens of color, especially black teens, are more likely to feel negative emotions about Trump's election, such as being afraid, frustrated, hopeless, or angry.



Question: For each of the following, please say whether each word does describe or does not describe how you feel about Donald Trump being elected president?

Source: AP NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Girls and boys have differing reactions to Trump's election, with teen girls feeling negative about the outcome. Compared to teen boys, teen girls are more likely to feel afraid (56 percent vs. 36 percent), frustrated (55 percent vs. 40 percent), and angry (40 percent vs. 29 percent). In contrast, teen boys are more likely to feel excited (35 percent vs. 24 percent), proud (26 percent vs. 15 percent), and hopeful (49 percent vs. 37 percent).

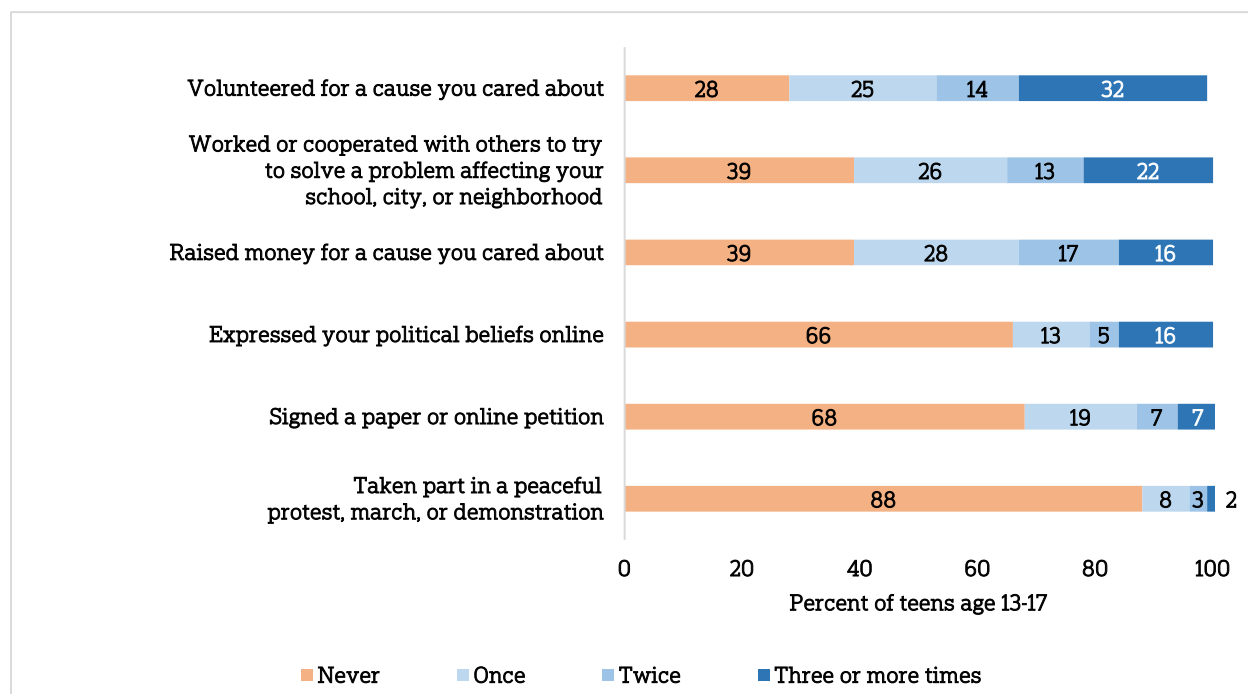
TEENS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: VOLUNTEERING, FUNDRAISING, AND COMMUNITY PROBLEM-SOLVING MOST COMMON FORMS OF TEEN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THIS STUDY.

How do teens learn to become citizens? Personal, familial, or school-based civic engagement in volunteering, fundraising, solving a problem in their community, learning to assess the source and veracity of information and how to seek all sides of a debate all lay the groundwork for scaffolding adolescents into adult citizens and voters. When it comes to civic engagement, teenagers aren't the disconnected and disengaged youth lamented by pundits or portrayed in the media. Majorities of teens have raised money for a cause they care about (61 percent), worked or cooperated with others to solve a problem affecting school/city/neighborhood (61 percent), or volunteered for a cause they care about (71 percent) at least once.

However, only a minority have participated in more political or activist activities such as expressing political opinions online (34 percent), signing a petition (32 percent), or taking part in a peaceful protest, march, or demonstration (12 percent).

Overall, 88 percent of teens have done any of these activities at least once, and on average, teens have done about 3 of these 6 things.

Majorities of teens have engaged through volunteer or community work, but fewer have expressed political beliefs online, signed a petition, or taken part in a protest.



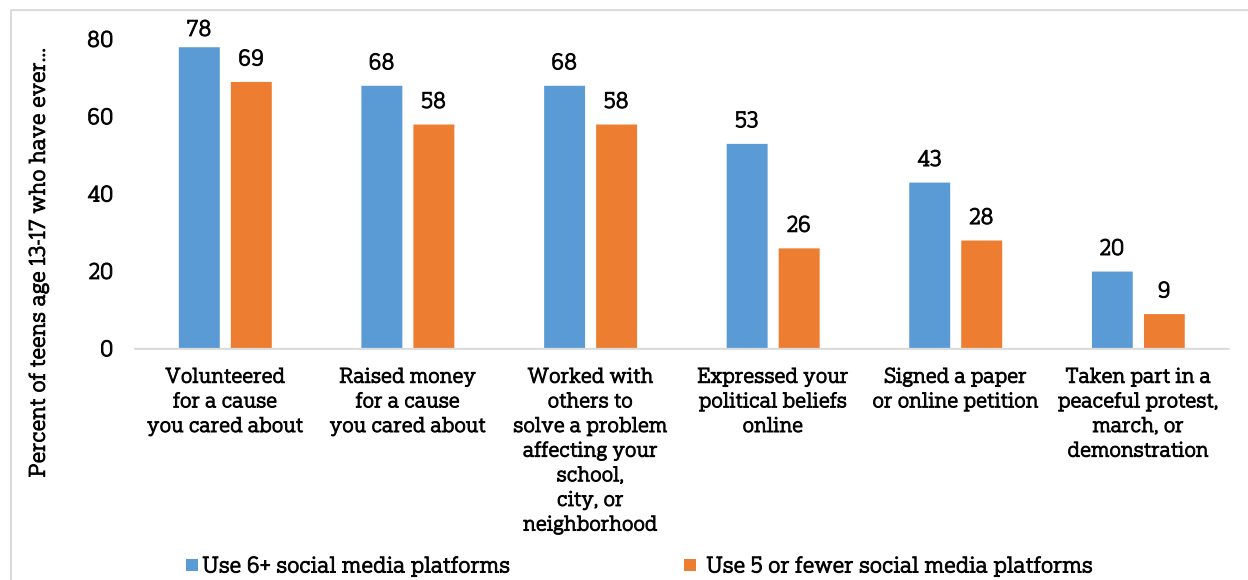
Question: Over the past year, how many times have you... [Never] [Once] [Twice] [Three or more times]?
 Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Some teens are more likely to have participated in some of these civic activities than others. While 26 percent of black teens have taken part in a protest or march, 7 percent of white teens have done the same. Older teens are more likely to have expressed their beliefs online than younger teens. Nearly half (45 percent) of 17-year-olds have posted online about their political beliefs compared with 27 percent of 13-year-olds.

Additionally, teens with high social media use, meaning they use six or more social media sites,¹⁷ are more likely to be civically engaged than teens with lower levels of social media use. The biggest differences between teens with high and low social media use are seen in expressing political beliefs online, signing a paper or online petition, or taking part in a protest.

¹⁷ Social media sites asked about on the survey include: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Steam, Twitch, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Teens who use six or more social media platforms are more likely to be civically engaged than those who use less social media.



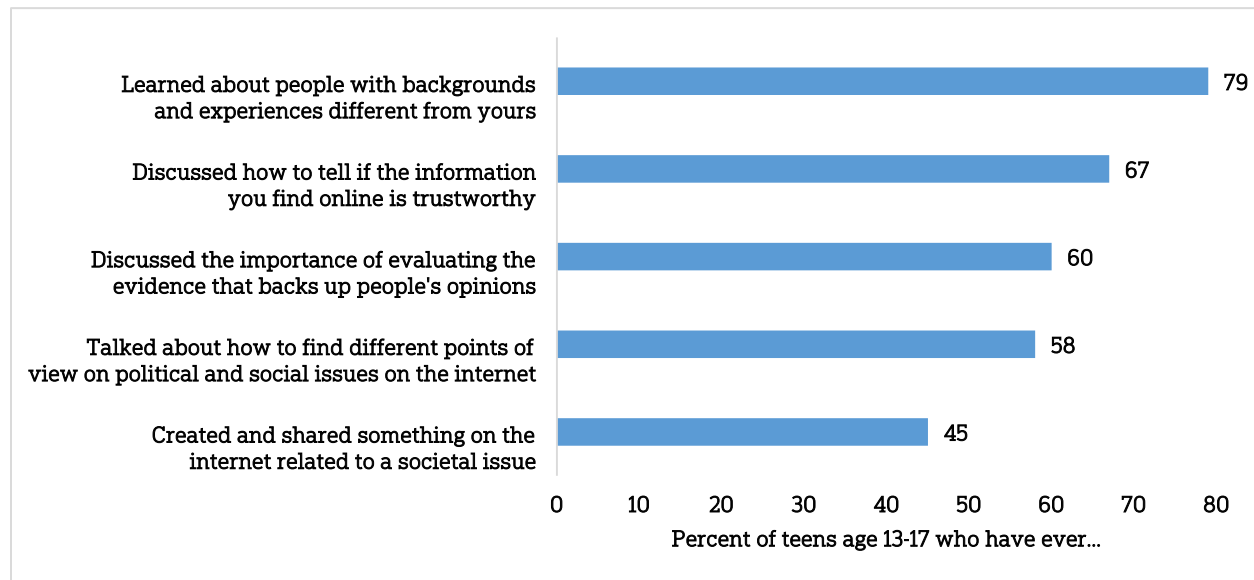
Question: Over the past year, how many times have you... [Never] [Once] [Twice] [Three or more times]?
 Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Participation in certain activities varies by which social media platforms teens use. Teens who use Twitter are more likely than teens without Twitter accounts to take part in a protest (16 percent vs. 8 percent) and expressing political beliefs online (44 percent vs. 25 percent). Instagram use is also associated with protesting (14 percent vs. 6 percent) and posting online about politics (38 percent vs. 22 percent), as well as raising money for a cause (65 percent vs. 50 percent) and volunteering (74 percent vs. 63 percent). Using Facebook or Snapchat, the other two most popular social media sites among teens, had no effect on civic engagement.

SCHOOL-BASED CIVIC EDUCATION IS WIDESPREAD, BUT MORE LIKELY AMONG TEENS WITH A COLLEGE-EDUCATED PARENT.

Schools are also fulfilling an important function by preparing students for their responsibilities as citizens. By teaching teens tools for evaluating evidence and the trustworthiness of content, as well as how to find different perspectives and exposing youth to people with different backgrounds, schools lay the groundwork for our next generation of civic and political life.

Many teens have learned about people with varying backgrounds, how to evaluate sources, and how to find different points of view at least once in their classes.



Question: How many times, if at all, have you done the following in your classes this year [Never] [Once] [Twice] [Three or more times]?

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Many civic skills have a larger purpose of teaching young people to be critical consumers of media and ideas—vital in an age of reduced trust in media institutions and lower barriers to entry for the production of digital content. Majorities of teens report discussing how to determine the trustworthiness of information they find online, the importance of evaluating evidence that backs up people's opinions, and how to find different points of view online. A smaller number of teens have become creators of civic content themselves by creating and sharing something about a social issue online as a part of their classwork.

Overall, 89 percent of teens have been exposed to any of these in-school activities. On average, teens have done about three of these five things in class, slightly higher than levels of participation in civically oriented activities outside the classroom.

However, access to opportunities for civic engagement and learning at school is not equal for all teens. Those teens who have a parent with a bachelor's degree or higher are more likely to have talked about how to find different points of view on political and social issues on the internet (66 percent vs. 53 percent), discussed how to tell if the information they find online is trustworthy (76 percent vs. 62 percent), discussed the importance of evaluating the evidence that backs up people's opinions (70 percent vs. 54 percent), or learned about people with backgrounds and experiences different from theirs (89 percent vs. 73 percent).

ABOUT HALF OF TEENAGERS TALK TO THEIR PARENTS ABOUT POLITICS AT LEAST OCCASIONALLY, AND VERY FEW SAY THEY MOSTLY DISAGREE WITH THE PARENT THEY TALK TO MOST OFTEN.

Parents play a key role in teenagers’ political socialization. However, nearly half of teenagers have only infrequent or no conversations about politics with their parent(s). Eleven percent of teens never talk to their parent(s) about politics at all, and 1 in 3 have political conversations with parents less than monthly.

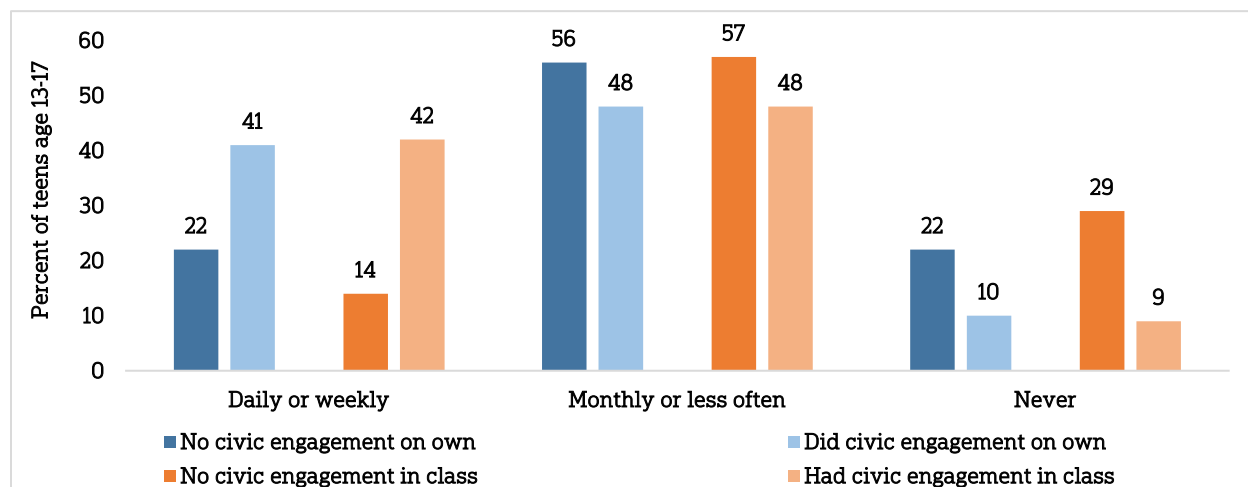
Still, almost as many teens (39 percent) have conversations about politics with their parents at least once a week, with 28 percent who talk about politics weekly and 11 percent who have conversations every day. Another 16 percent say they have conversations about once a month.

Teens in families with higher socioeconomic status talk politics with their parent(s) more frequently than teens whose parents have lower incomes and less education. Half of teens who have a parent with a bachelor’s degree or higher discuss politics daily or weekly, compared to just 32 percent of those who have a parent without a college degree. Similarly, 42 percent of teens with a household income above \$50,000 talk to a parent about politics daily or weekly, while the same is true for only 32 percent of lower-income households.

Civic engagement is also related to having frequent conversations about politics with at least one parent. Forty-one percent of teens who have participated in an activity like volunteering, raising money for a cause, or signing a petition at least once talk to parents daily or weekly, compared with 22 percent of teens who have not.

While likelihood of talking to parents about politics is related to personal civic engagement, it is also associated with civic learning in school. Teens who have had any civic education in class, like discussing how to evaluate evidence or learning about people with different backgrounds and experiences, are three times more likely to have conversations with parents daily or weekly than those who have never done these things in school (42 percent vs. 14 percent).

Teens who have been civically engaged in school or on their own are two to three times more likely to discuss politics with their parent(s) daily or weekly.



Question: How often do you talk with your parent(s) about politics, if at all?

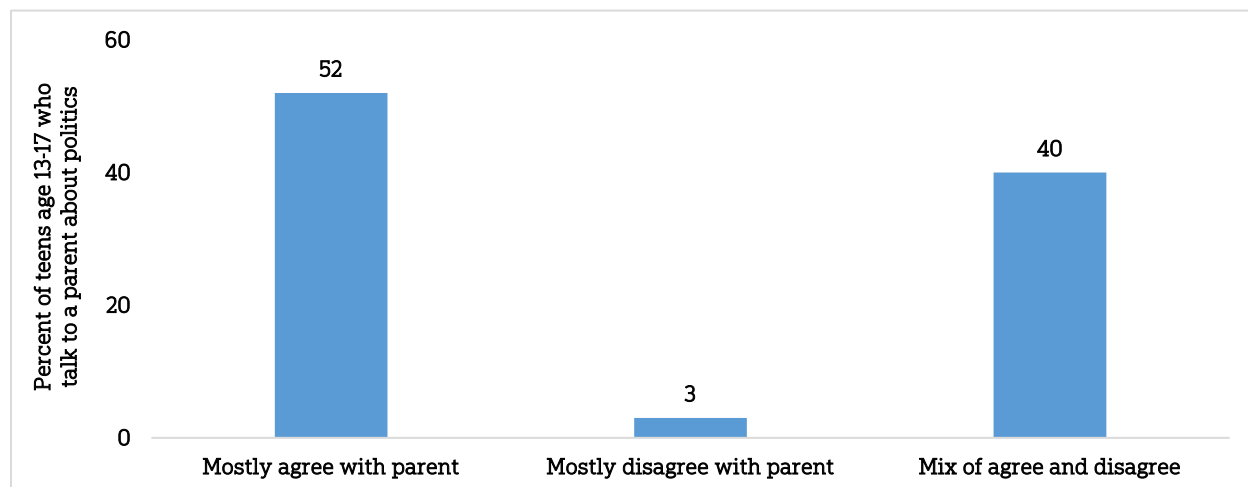
Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

Those who choose a political party or to be independent are more likely to talk politics with parents than those who aren't sure what party they would register with. A majority (51 percent) of Republican teens talk to their parent(s) about politics daily or weekly, compared to 41 percent of Democrats and 41 percent of independents/another party. However, just 23 percent of teens who are not sure about their party identification have daily or weekly conversations, and 1 in 5 never have political discussions at all.

TALKING WITH TEENS ABOUT POLITICS HAS AN IMPACT—IT DOESN'T MATTER IF PARENT AND CHILD AGREE.

Few teens who discuss politics with parents have regular disagreements. Of teens who ever have political conversations with family, a majority (52 percent) mostly agree with the parent or guardian with whom they discuss politics most often. Another 4 in 10 say it's a mix of agree and disagree, and just 3 percent mostly disagree with their parent.

A majority of teens who talk to a parent about politics generally agree with them, and very few mostly disagree with their parent's views.



Question: Thinking about the parent or guardian you discuss politics with most often, do you mostly agree with your parent's views, disagree with your parent's views, or is it a mix?

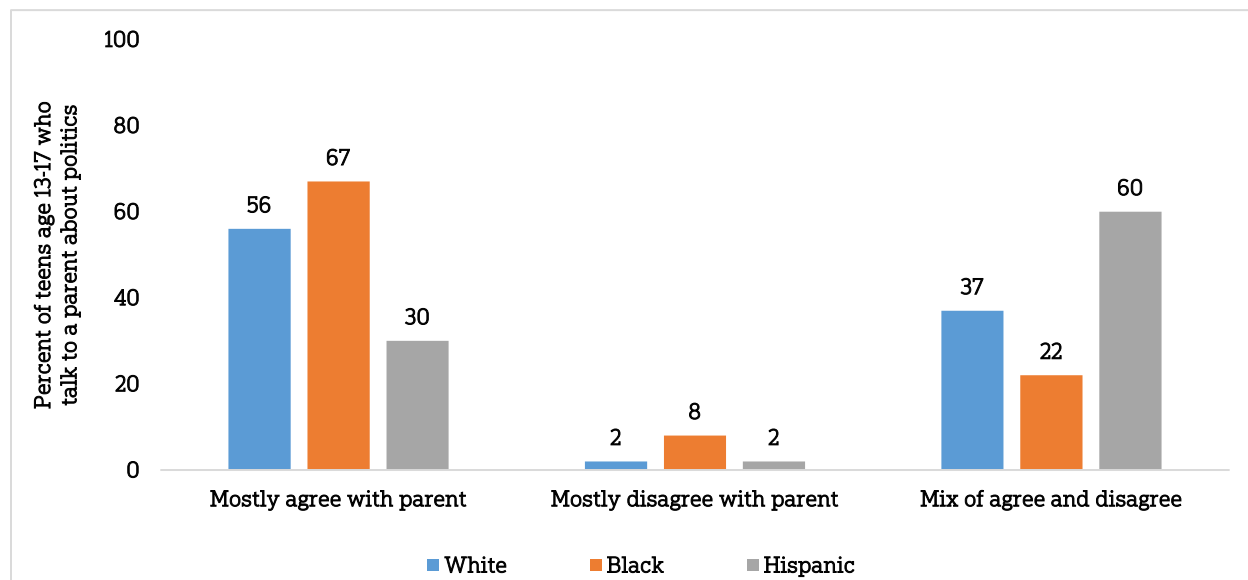
Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

However, teens who affiliate with the Democratic or Republican Party are more likely to mostly agree with their parents than teens who are independents or part of another party. Sixty-five percent of both Democratic and Republican teens mostly agree with their parents, compared to just 35 percent of independent teens. Half of independents say it's a mix of agree and disagree with their parents, compared to just 3 in 10 Republican or Democratic teens.

Parents with more education are more likely to agree with their kids, especially if they have a college degree. Nearly 2 in 3 (62 percent) of teens whose parent has a bachelor's degree or above mostly agree with them, compared to just 45 percent of those whose parent has some college or less.

Race and ethnicity also play a role in ideological agreement between parents and teens. While few teens mostly disagree, Hispanic teens are much less likely to mostly agree with their parents compared to white and black teens, and more likely to have a mix of agreements and disagreements.

Hispanic teens are less likely to agree with their parents on political issues than white or black teens, and more likely to have a mix of agreements and disagreements.



Question: Thinking about the parent or guardian you discuss politics with most often, do you mostly agree with your parent's views, disagree with your parent's views, or is it a mix?

Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

WHILE LARGEST GROUP OF TEENS WOULD REGISTER AS DEMOCRATS, MANY REMAIN UNSURE OF WHAT PARTY THEY WOULD JOIN IF THEY COULD.

Teens are at an important juncture in their lives—gradually developing over their adolescence a broader understanding of other people and more nuanced thinking about challenging topics. A part of this development is figuring out where they stand politically. Although too young to vote, as a part of this study teens age 13 to 17 were asked which political party they would affiliate with if they were to register today. While a substantial number—1 in 4—are not sure what party they would register with, another 3 in 4 would choose to register as a Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, Green, another party, or know that they would choose to remain unaffiliated/independent.¹⁸

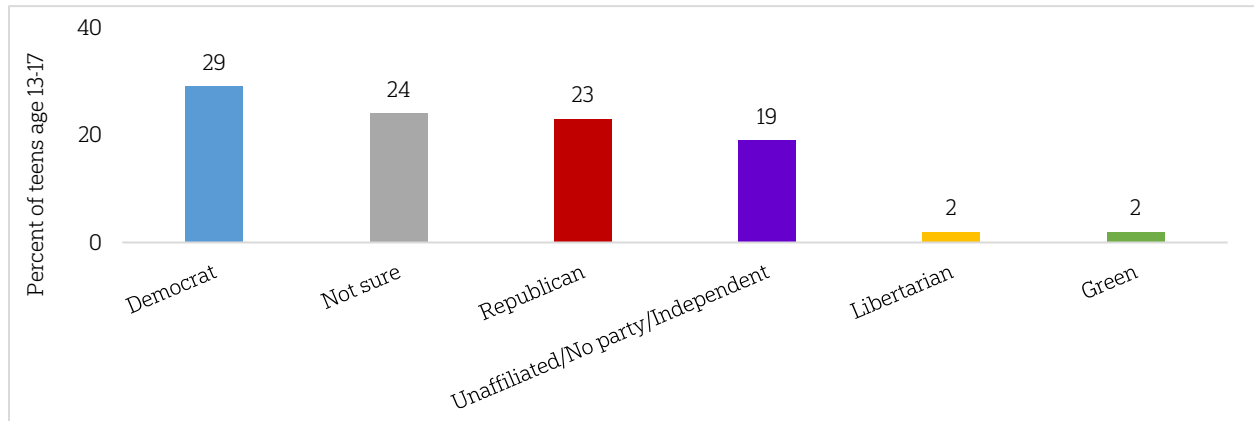
Setting aside the one-quarter of teens who don't yet know which party they would choose, the remaining teens are more evenly split among the main parties than adults. While 34 percent of all adults are Democrats (excluding leaners),¹⁹ 29 percent of teens would affiliate with the Democratic Party. Another 23 percent of teens would register as Republicans, compared with 23 percent of adults. Fully 19 percent of teens are unaffiliated or independents, as are 27 percent of adults, while another 15 percent of adults say they are “none of the above.” Few teens would register as Libertarian, Green Party, or other, unspecified parties.

¹⁸ Except where explicitly noted, all analysis of political party identification in this report combines all teens who say that they are unaffiliated, independent, another party (eg., Green, Libertarian) or that they do not know which party they would choose into the independent category.

¹⁹ AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. 2017. “Obama’s Legacy as President: Depends on Who You Ask.”

<http://www.apnorc.org/projects/Pages/obama's-legacy-as-president-depends-on-who-you-ask.aspx>

Teens do not overwhelmingly identify with any one political party, but they are most likely to say they would register as Democrats.



Question: If you were going to register to vote today, which party would you register with?
Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

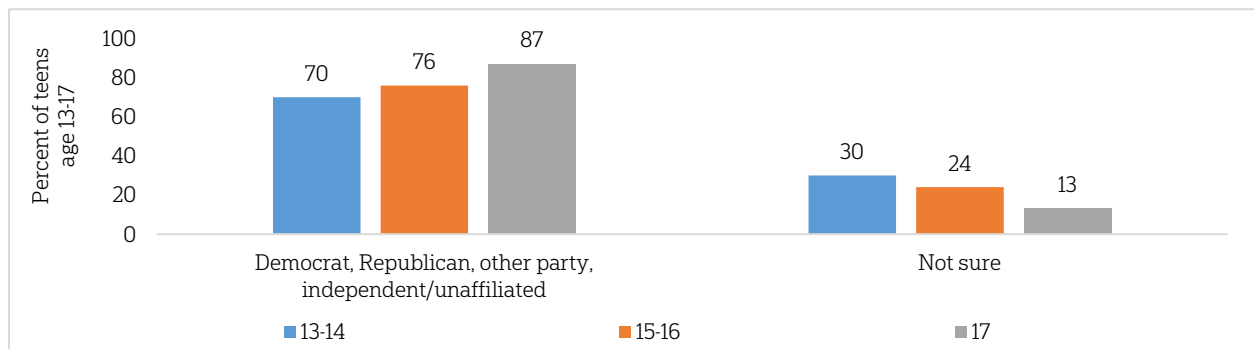
Similar to adults, teen party identification is related to race, ethnicity, and gender. Black (65 percent) and Hispanic teens (32 percent) are more likely than white teens (16 percent) to be Democrats. By the same token, black (4 percent) and Hispanic teens (10 percent) are much less likely to be Republicans than are white teens (34 percent). In terms of gender, teen boys are more likely to be Republican than are teen girls (28 percent vs. 18 percent).

FOR MANY TEENAGERS, POLITICAL BELIEFS ARE STILL DEVELOPING.

Many teens are still in the process of forming their political identities. Age, discussions about politics with a parent, civic education, and civic engagement all play a role in whether a teen identifies with a party or remains unsure.

Younger teens age 13-14 are more than twice as likely to be unsure what party they would affiliate with than are 17-year-olds. With just a year or less until they reach the voting age and a little more life experience under their belts, the oldest teens are more willing to identify a political party that they would register with than are younger teens still years away from being able to vote.

Younger teens are unsure about their party identification, while 17-year-olds closer to the voting age are more certain about wanting to register as a Democrat, Republican, or with another party.



Question: If you were going to register to vote today, which party would you register with?
Source: AP-NORC Center poll conducted December 7-31 with 790 teenagers age 13-17 nationwide

The more often teens discuss politics with their parent(s), the more likely they are to choose an affiliation, such as the Democratic Party, Republican Party, unaffiliated, or independent. While 86 percent of those who have political conversations with a parent daily or weekly say they would register with a party or choose to be independent, just 41 percent of those who never discuss politics with a parent identify with a political party or choose to be independent.

Similarly, teens who have ever had any type of civic education or activities in their classes also choose a political party (78 percent) more often than those who haven't experienced this in school (63 percent). Teens who are civically engaged on their own are also more likely to identify with a party (78 percent) than those who have not engaged in any of the civic activities included on the survey (59 percent).

ABOUT THE STUDY

Survey 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 AmeriSpeak, NORC's 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 December 7 and 31, 2016, with teenagers age 13 to 17 representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Adult panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and after confirming that there were children of the appropriate age in the household, permission was sought from a parent or guardian to survey their teenager. If a given panelist had multiple teens at home, one teen was randomly selected to participate. Completed interviews were conducted with 790 teenagers, 739 via the web and 51 via telephone. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference.

The final stage completion rate is 31.5 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 34.3 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 95 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 10.3 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.6 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 have 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 at the adult level included age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, and Census division. This produced a weight for each teen that was then adjusted so as to be calibrated to the external controls totals for age, sex, race/ethnicity, Census division, and household income for the U.S. population of teenagers age 13 to 17. The weighted data 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.

A comprehensive listing of the questions, complete with tabulations of top-level results for each question, is available on The AP-NORC Center website: www.apnorc.org.

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ABOUT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS–NORC CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

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