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Shifting Views of Supreme Court's Ideology among Liberals, Conservatives

*Most Liberal Democrats Now View
Court as Conservative*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THIS REPORT:**

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Most Liberal Democrats Now View Court as Conservative

Overall views of the U.S. Supreme Court – and its ideology – have changed only modestly since last measured in April before the court's end-of-term decisions, including the Hobby Lobby ruling that limits the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive requirement.

But among liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans there have been sizable changes in opinions of the court; more liberals now view the Supreme Court as conservative – and fewer conservatives view it as liberal – than did so just a few months ago.

The national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted July 8-14 among 1,805 adults, finds that as many Americans call the court liberal (26%) as say it is conservative (27%). More (38%) say the current Supreme Court is “middle of the road.”

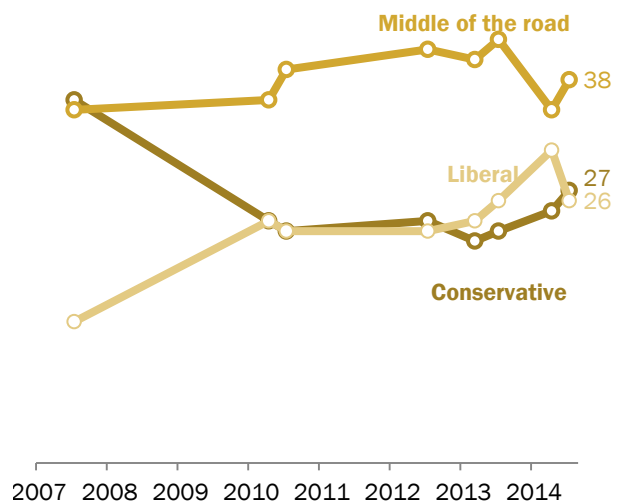
Before the recent rulings, somewhat more viewed the court as liberal (31%) than conservative (25%), with 35% viewing it as middle of the road.

Liberal Democrats are much more likely to see the court as conservative after this term's rulings; fully 60% now say this, compared to less than half in April (47%). Today, liberal Democrats are nearly twice as likely as the public overall to say the court is conservative.

By contrast, there has been an 11 percentage point decline in the share of conservative Republicans who view the Supreme Court as liberal (from 53% in April to 42% currently). Today, conservative Republicans are as likely to say the court is middle of the road (44%) as to say it is liberal (42%). In April, more conservative Republicans saw it as liberal (53% vs. 33% middle of the road).

As Many Now Call the Supreme Court 'Conservative' as 'Liberal'

% saying the current Supreme Court is ...



Survey conducted July 8-14, 2014.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The balance of opinion about the court's ideology also has shifted among Republicans and Republican leaners who agree with the Tea Party. Today, about half (51%) view the court as middle of the road; in April, most Tea Party Republicans described the court's ideology as liberal (56%).

College graduates remain more likely than those with less education to view the Supreme Court as conservative; 36% of those with college degrees say this, compared with about a quarter of those with some college or less.

Fewer Conservative Republicans See Court as Liberal; More Liberal Democrats View Court as Conservative

% saying current Supreme Court is ...

	----- April 2014 -----			----- July 2014 -----		
	Conserv	Middle of the road	Liberal	Conserv	Middle of the road	Liberal
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	25	35	31	27	38	26
College grad+	33	40	22	36	41	19
Some college	22	37	35	24	40	28
HS or less	23	32	34	25	36	29
Republican	10	38	45	11	45	38
Conservative	9	33	53	8	44	42
Moderate/Liberal	11	49	31	16	46	31
Independent	25	35	32	28	38	25
Democrat	40	36	18	40	34	18
Conserv/Moderate	36	39	18	30	40	23
Liberal	47	33	19	60	26	11
<i>Among Rep/Rep leaners</i>						
Tea Party	3	37	56	7	51	39
Non-Tea Party	13	37	40	15	43	34

Survey conducted July 8-14, 2014. Don't know responses not shown.

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Supreme Court Favorability

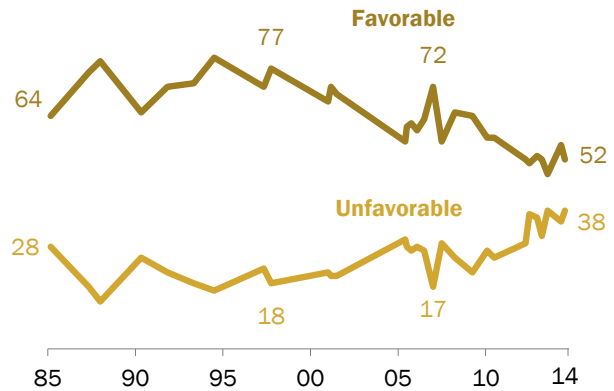
The survey finds that 52% of Americans now view the nation's highest court favorably, while 38% have an unfavorable opinion. Ratings of the court have edged lower since April (from 56% favorable).

Current ratings are mired near all-time lows (reached [a year ago](#)) as the court's image has declined significantly over the past several years. In January 2007, 72% held a positive view of the court.

The court's favorability decline since April has been driven by a shift in views among

Democrats. Roughly half of Democrats (52%) view the Supreme Court favorably, down from 63% in April. There has been little movement in favorability ratings among Republicans or independents.

Court Favorability Ticks Back Down



Survey conducted July 8-14, 2014.

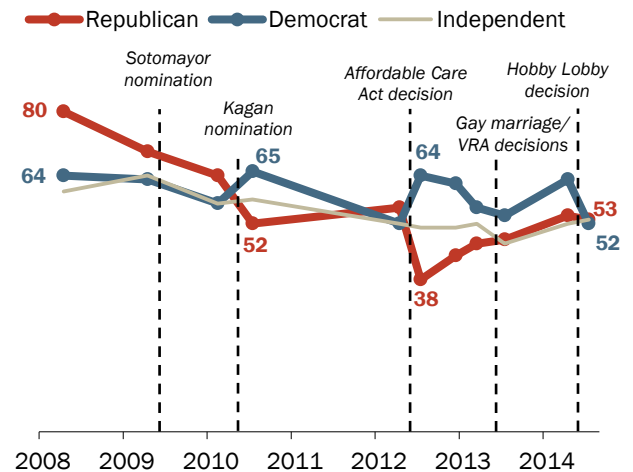
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Positive views of the court among liberal Democrats have dropped 13 points since April; fewer than half (44%) now hold a favorable view of the court. Conservative and moderate Democrats are more likely than liberal Democrats to view the court favorably, but their favorable rating also has dropped – down 10 points since April.

While little changed over the past three months, Republicans' views of the court are much more positive today than at this point two years ago, following the 5-4 decision that upheld core components of the Affordable Care Act.

Supreme Court Favorability Ticks Downward Among Democrats

% expressing favorable view of Supreme Court ...



Survey conducted July 8-14, 2014.

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Fewer than Half of Liberal Democrats View Supreme Court Favorably

% expressing favorable view of Supreme Court ...

	April 2014	July 2014	Change
	%	%	%
Total	56	52	-4
Republican	54	53	-1
Conservative	50	54	+4
Moderate/Liberal	62	50	-12
Independent	52	53	+1
Democrat	63	52	-11
Conserv/Moderate	68	58	-10
Liberal	57	44	-13
<i>Among Rep/ Rep leaners</i>			
Tea Party	46	52	+6
Non-Tea Party	56	54	-2

Survey conducted July 8-14, 2014.

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About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted July 8-14, 2014 among a national sample of 1,805 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (723 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,082 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 597 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2012 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2013 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,805	2.7 percentage points
Republican	480	5.2 percentage points
Conservative	317	6.3 percentage points
Democrat	608	4.6 percentage points
Liberal	243	7.3 percentage points
Independent	639	4.5 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
JULY 2014 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
July 8-14, 2014
N=1,805**

QUESTIONS 1-24, 28 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**NO QUESTIONS 5-9, 18-22, 25-27****ASK ALL:**

Q.29 Is your overall opinion of **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE ITEMS A-B FOLLOWED BY C LAST]** very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? **[INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]** How about **[NEXT ITEM]? [IF NECESSARY: Just in general, is your overall opinion of [ITEM] very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?]** **[INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]**

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
a. The Supreme Court								
Jul 8-14, 2014	52	8	44	38	14	24	1	9
Apr 23-27, 2014	56	11	44	35	12	23	*	9
Jul 17-21, 2013	48	7	41	38	14	24	1	13
Mar 13-17, 2013	52	7	45	31	10	21	2	15
Dec 5-9, 2012	53	8	45	36	12	24	1	10
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	51	10	41	37	14	23	1	11
Apr 4-15, 2012	52	11	41	29	10	20	*	18
July 1-5, 2010	58	9	49	25	8	17	1	16
Feb 3-9, 2010	58	8	50	27	8	19	*	15
Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	64	8	56	21	6	15	0	15
April, 2008	65	15	50	25	7	18	*	10
July, 2007	57	12	45	29	9	20	0	14
January, 2007	72	18	54	17	3	14	2	9
July, 2006	63	7	56	27	8	19	1	9
February, 2006	60	16	44	28	10	18	*	12
Late October, 2005	62	12	50	27	10	17	*	11
July, 2005	61	12	49	28	10	18	*	11
June, 2005	57	8	49	30	8	22	*	13
July, 2001	70	15	55	20	6	14	*	10
March, 2001	72	15	57	20	5	15	*	8
January, 2001	68	18	50	21	8	13	1	10
October, 1997	77	13	64	18	6	12	*	5
May, 1997	72	16	56	22	5	17	0	6
July, 1994	80	18	62	16	3	13	*	4
May, 1993	73	17	56	18	4	14	0	9
November, 1991	72	18	54	21	5	16	0	7
May, 1990	65	10	55	25	7	18	1	9
January, 1988	79	14	65	13	2	11	*	8
May, 1987	76	13	63	17	2	15	*	7
Roper: March 1985	64	17	47	28	7	21	--	8

ITEMS b-c PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**ASK ALL:**

Q.30 In your view, do you think the current Supreme Court is conservative, middle of the road, or liberal?

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Middle of the Road</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Jul 8-14, 2014	27	38	26	8
Apr 23-27, 2014	25	35	31	8

Q.30 CONTINUED...

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Middle of the Road</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Jul 17-21, 2013	23	42	26	9
Mar 13-17, 2013	22	40	24	14
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	41	23	12
Jul 1-5, 2010	23	39	23	14
Apr 21-26, 2010	24	36	24	16
July 2007	36	35	14	15

NO QUESTIONS 31-36, 39, 41-45, 48-49, 57-58, 62-65, 69-71, 73-82, 86**QUESTIONS 37-38, 40, 46-47, 50-56, 59-61, 66-68, 72, 83, 85 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTION 84 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	<u>Lean Rep</u>	<u>Lean Dem</u>
Jul 8-14, 2014	25	34	37	2	1	1	16	15
Apr 23-27, 2014	24	30	41	2	1	2	18	17
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	22	31	41	3	1	2	17	17
Feb 14-23, 2014	22	32	39	4	1	2	14	17
Jan 15-19, 2014	21	31	41	3	1	2	18	16
Dec 3-8, 2013	24	34	37	3	*	2	17	15
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	24	32	38	4	*	2	16	14
Oct 9-13, 2013	25	32	37	3	1	3	16	18
Sep 4-8, 2013	26	32	38	3	1	1	17	15
Jul 17-21, 2013	19	29	46	3	*	2	19	18
Jun 12-16, 2013	23	33	39	3	*	2	17	15
May 1-5, 2013	25	32	37	2	1	3	14	16
Yearly Totals								
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

QUESTIONS 87-88 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**ASK REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):**

TEAPARTY3 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

BASED ON REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS [N=778]

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/ DK
Jul 8-14, 2014	35	12	50	2	1	--
Apr 23-27, 2014	33	11	54	1	1	--
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	37	11	50	1	1	--
Feb 14-23, 2014	36	9	54	1	1	--
Jan 15-19, 2014	35	12	52	1	*	--
Dec 3-8, 2013	32	9	57	1	1	--
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	40	9	48	2	1	--
Oct 9-13, 2013	41	11	45	2	1	--
Sep 4-8, 2013	35	9	54	1	1	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	37	10	50	2	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	9	46	1	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	41	7	48	1	3	--
May 1-5, 2013	28	8	61	2	1	--
Mar 13-17, 2013	43	7	47	1	1	--
Feb 13-18, 2013	36	9	52	1	3	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	43	9	45	1	2	--
Jan 9-13, 2013	35	10	51	2	2	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	11	51	1	*	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	40	8	49	1	2	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	9	50	1	3	--
Sep 12-16, 2013	39	7	52	1	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	40	9	47	2	1	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	36	9	53	1	2	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	38	10	49	2	1	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	40	7	51	1	1	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	42	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	37	8	52	1	1	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	40	9	48	2	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	37	11	51	1	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	7	49	*	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	40	7	51	*	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	42	9	47	1	1	--
May 25-30, 2011	37	7	52	1	3	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	45	9	46	*	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	37	7	54	1	*	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	41	9	48	1	1	--

TEAPARTY3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	(VOL.) <u>Haven't heard of</u>	(VOL.) <u>Refused</u>	Not heard of/ <u>DK</u>
Feb 2-7, 2011 ¹	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	51	5	42	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	58	5	27	--	1	9
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	54	5	30	--	1	10
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	56	6	29	--	*	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	46	5	36	--	1	13
Jun 16-20, 2010	46	5	30	--	*	19
May 20-23, 2010	53	4	25	--	1	16
Mar 11-21, 2010	48	4	26	--	1	21

¹ In the February 2-7, 2011, survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."