

FOR RELEASE SEPTEMBER 13, 2017

Partisans Differ Widely in Views of Police Officers, College Professors

Republicans, Democrats view each other more negatively

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, September, 2017,
"Partisans Differ Widely in Views of Police Officers,
College Professors"

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Partisans Differ Widely in Views of Police Officers, College Professors

Republicans, Democrats view each other more negatively

Americans give strongly positive ratings to teachers and members of the military, while ratings of political and ideological groups – Democrats, Republicans, liberals and conservatives – are much less positive, and more starkly divided along partisan lines.

Yet wide partisan and ideological divides are also seen in views of some professions. Educators – particularly college professors – tend to receive warmer ratings from Democrats than Republicans, while Republicans generally have warmer views of people in the military and law enforcement than do Democrats.

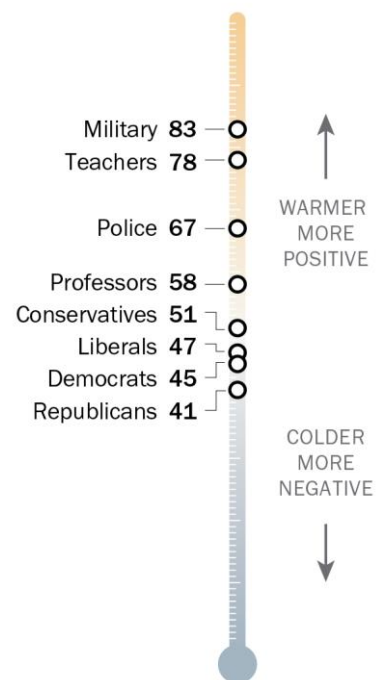
A new survey of 4,904 adults conducted online Aug. 8-21 on Pew Research Center's nationally representative American Trends Panel finds that among the public overall, people in the military receive the warmest ratings from the public – a mean, or average, rating of 83 degrees on a “feeling thermometer” between 0 and 100 – where 0 is the coldest, most negative rating and 100 represents the warmest, most positive. Teachers also are highly regarded, garnering an average rating of 78.

Among the public, the mean rating for police officers is 67, but Republicans give police officers a much higher average rating than do Democrats (84 vs. 62). College professors get an overall rating of 58, but the average rating is considerably higher among Democrats (71) than among Republicans (46).

Partisans sit at the lower end of the thermometer. Democrats receive an average rating of just 45 degrees among the public, while Republicans are the only group in the survey to receive a chillier rating – 41 degrees on average.

Members of the military, teachers highly rated

Mean thermometer ratings



Note: Ratings of the parties are based on a “feeling thermometer” from 0 (coldest) to 100 (warmest).

Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017.

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Conservatives (51) receive a higher average rating than do liberals (47). While liberals and Democrats receive similar ratings (47 and 45, respectively), the overall public views conservatives (51) more positively than Republicans (41).

Though Republicans and Democrats alike view people in the military warmly, the average is higher among Republicans (92) than Democrats (82). Conversely, while teachers are highly regarded across the political spectrum, on average Democrats feel more warmly toward them than do Republicans (86 vs. 72).

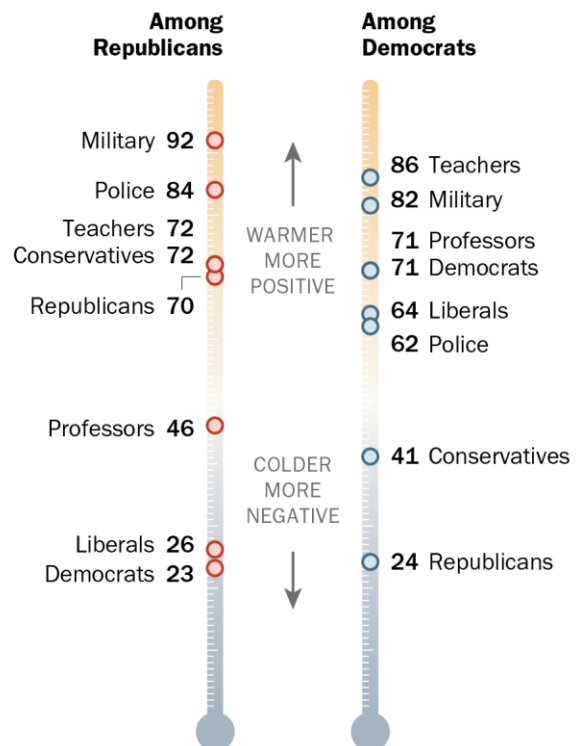
The wide partisan gaps in views of police officers and college professors are reflected in the differences in the relative rankings (among eight groups tested) among Republicans and Democrats.

Among Republicans, only military members receive a higher average rating than do police officers. In fact, Republicans rate police officers (84) higher than they do Republicans (70). Among Democrats, four groups are rated significantly higher than police officers (62), including Democrats (71).

Democrats rate only teachers (86 average rating) and members of the military (82) more highly than college professors; their average rating of 71 is identical to Democrats' ratings of Democrats. Republicans rate college professors far below the military, police, teachers, conservatives and Republicans. (*For more on growing partisan divisions regarding the impact of colleges and universities, see [“Sharp Partisan Divisions in Views of National Institutions.”](#)*)

Wide partisan gaps in thermometer ratings for police officers, professors

Mean thermometer ratings



Notes: Ratings of the parties are based on a “feeling thermometer” from 0 (coldest) to 100 (warmest). Based on partisans, does not include independents. Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017.

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Among Republicans, ratings of members of the parties and ideological groups (liberals, conservatives) are fairly similar: Conservatives (72 on average) and Republicans (70) garner positive ratings, while the average ratings for liberals (26) and Democrats (23) are almost equally low.

This stands in contrast to views among Democrats. While Democrats give both their fellow partisans and liberals positive ratings, their views of Democrats are significantly more positive than their views of liberals (an average of 71 vs. 64). Similarly, while Democrats have cold views of both conservatives and Republicans, their views of Republicans are chillier than of conservatives (an average of 24 vs. 41, respectively).

Partisans have more negative views of members of the opposing party

While Republicans and Democrats continue to express warm feelings toward the members of their own parties, ratings of the opposing party's members have grown more negative over the last year.

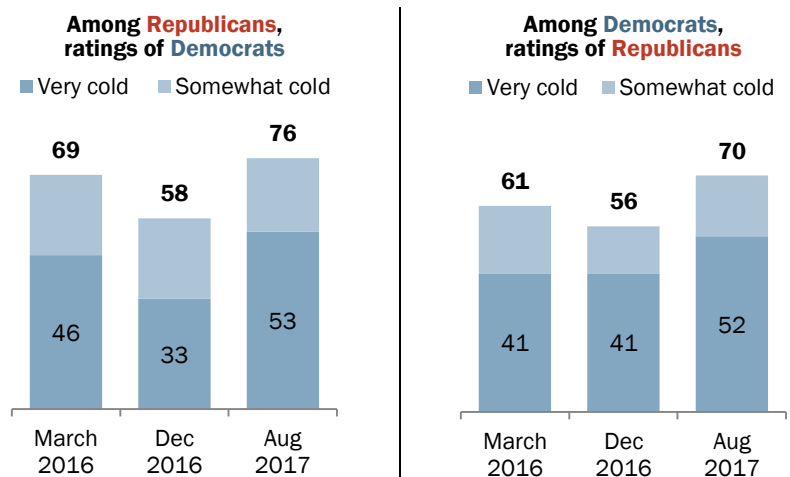
Both Republicans and Democrats feel more “coldly” toward each other than in 2016.

Today, 76% of Republicans have a cold view of Democrats (rating them 0-49 on the 0-100 scale), with about half (53%) rating Democrats very coldly (0-24). Very cold ratings for Democrats among Republicans are higher today than in December 2016 (33%), after the election, or in March of last year (46%) during the primary campaign.

Democratic views of Republicans show a similar pattern. Today 70% of Democrats have a cold view of Republicans, up from 56%

'Cold' ratings for members of the opposing party rise, following a post-election downturn

% who rate ___ on a 'feeling thermometer' from 0 (coldest rating) to 100 (warmest rating) ...



Note: Feeling thermometer ratings: very cold (0 to 24), somewhat cold (25-49). Based on partisans, does not include independents. Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017.

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in December and 61% in March; very cold ratings (currently 52%) are higher than at earlier points (41% in both December and March).

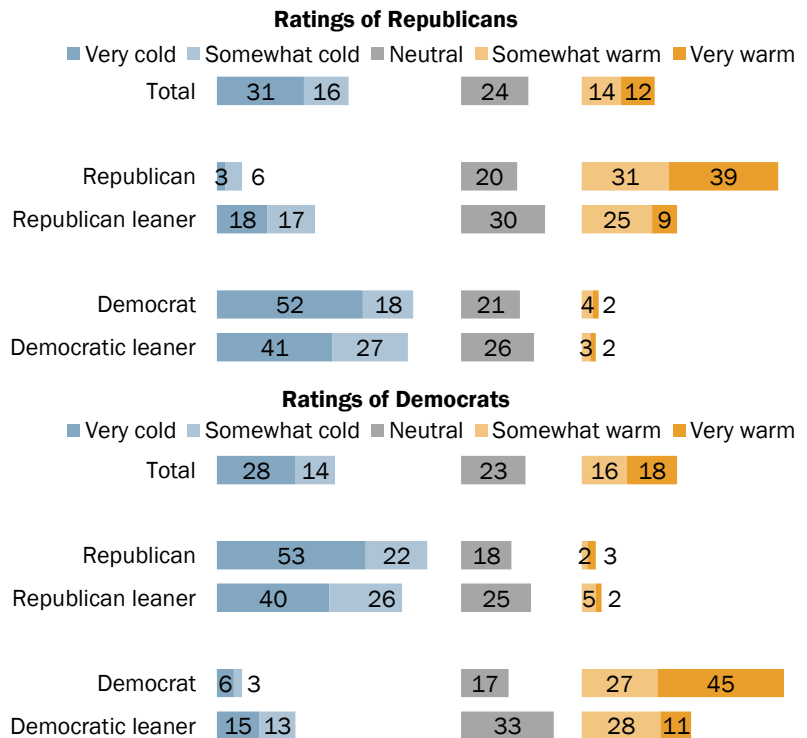
When it comes to ratings of the party they identify with, roughly seven-in-ten of both Democrats (72%) and Republicans (70%) give their party a warm rating on the scale (51 to 100). But Democrats are more likely than Republicans to view their own party *very* warmly (45% vs. 39%).

Among independents, both Republican and Democratic leaners feel negatively about the opposing party, but not very warmly toward the party they lean toward.

Just 34% of Republican leaners give Republicans a warm rating (compared with 70% of Republicans). Similarly, 38% of Democratic leaners (vs. 72% of Democrats) rate Democrats warmly.

‘Leaners’ have cold views of opposing party, but don’t feel particularly warmly to the party they lean toward

% who rate ___ on a ‘feeling thermometer’ from 0 (coldest rating) to 100 (warmest rating) ...



Note: Feeling thermometer ratings: very cold (0 to 24), somewhat cold (25-49), neutral (50), somewhat warm (51-75), very warm (76-100).

Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017.

Republican leaners less accepting of ‘Republican’ label

Most Republicans and Democrats view fellow members of their party warmly. But when asked how well the partisan label fits them personally, more continue to say it applies *fairly* well than *very* well.

Still, Democrats in particular are somewhat more likely today than they were last year to say the term “Democrat” describes them very well: 39% say this today, compared with 33% in March 2016. Another 51% of Democrats say the term describes them fairly well.

Even fewer Republicans (31%) say the term “Republican” applies very well to them; most Republicans (58%) say it describes them fairly well. The share of Republicans who say they are described well by the term is largely unchanged from last year.

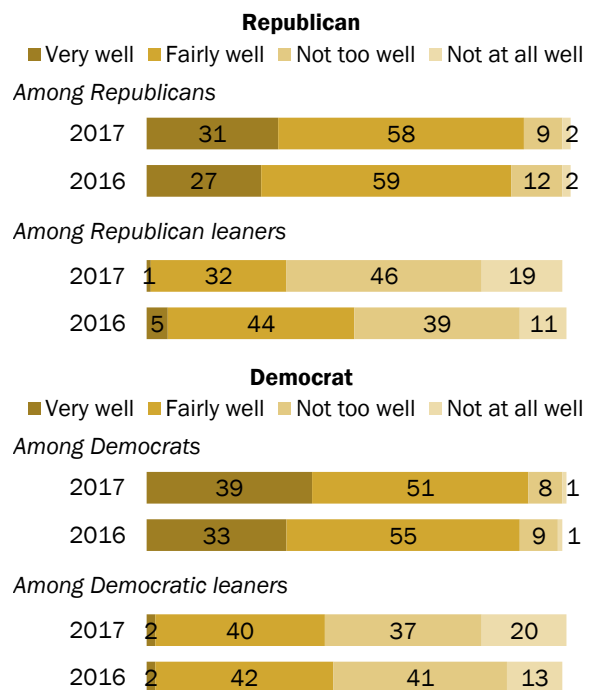
However, there has been a sizable decline in the share of Republican-leaning independents who say the label “Republican” describes them well.

In general, those who lean to a party, rather than affiliate with it, are less likely to embrace a partisan label. But among Republican leaners, just a third say the term Republican describes them very or fairly well; most (65%) say it describes them not to well or not at all well.

This is a major shift from last year, when nearly half of Republican leaners (48%) said the descriptor Republican fit them well. Among Democratic leaners, there has been very little change in these views since 2016 (45% then, 42% today).

Fewer Republican-leaning independents say ‘Republican’ describes them well

% who say each term describes them ...



Note: Don't know/No response not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017.

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Partisans generally agree with their party on issues

In thinking about the issue positions of the two parties, majorities of Republicans and Democrats say they agree with their own party “almost always” or “more than half the time” – and very few agree with the opposing party’s positions. These views are little changed [since last year](#).

About seven-in-ten

Republicans (72%) say they agree with the Republican Party almost always (22%) or more than half of the time (51%) on issues; another 21% agree with the party “about half of the time,” while just 7% agree “less than half of the time” or “almost never.”

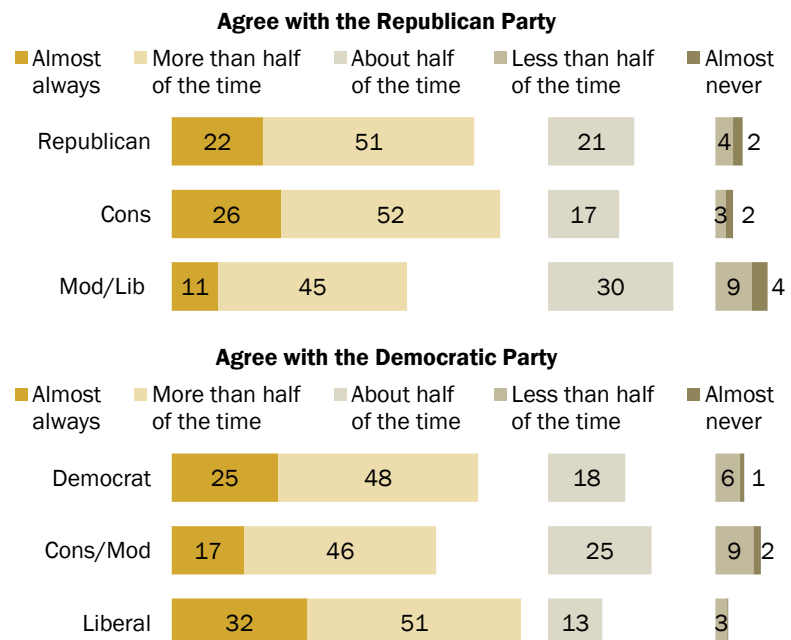
Among Democrats, there is a similar level of agreement with the party’s positions: 73% say they agree with the party almost always or more than half the time.

In both parties, there are ideological divisions in agreement with the party’s positions. Conservative Republicans are far more likely than moderate and liberal Republicans to say they frequently agree with

GOP positions. Among Democrats, more liberals than moderates and conservatives say the same.

Republicans and Democrats mostly – but not always – agree with their party’s issues positions

% who say they tend to agree with the positions of their party on political issues ...



Note: Don't know/No response not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017.

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Republicans feel more ‘warmly’ than Democrats toward military and police officers

Both Republicans and Democrats have largely positive views of members of the military and police officers, though in both cases Republicans’ ratings of the groups are warmer than Democratic ratings.

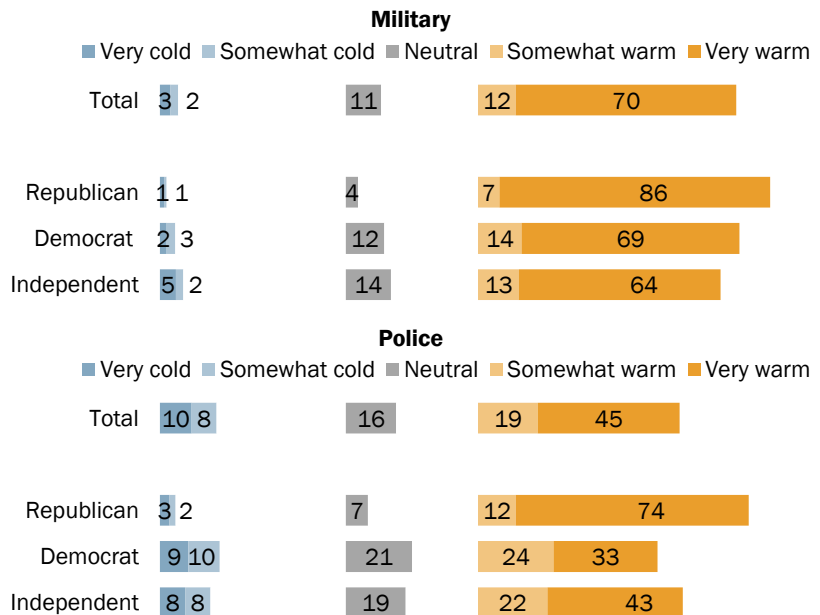
Fully 93% of Republicans have a warm rating of people in the military, including 86% who give a very warm rating (76 or higher on the 0-100 scale). Though Democrats are less intensely positive than Republicans about members of the military, 82% give a warm rating – including 69% who view service members very warmly.

Among Democrats, there is a notable ideological difference in these views. About nine-in-ten (91%) conservative and moderate Democrats rate military members warmly, including 81% who give very warm ratings. By comparison, 73% of liberal Democrats view people in the military warmly (including 56% who view them very warmly).

The partisan divide is more pronounced in views of police officers. Overall, 64% of the public views police officers warmly, 16% give them a neutral rating, while 18% view them coldly. While 86% of Republicans give officers warm ratings – and about three-quarters (74%) view them very warmly – a smaller majority of Democrats (57%) view officers warmly, and just 33% give them very warm ratings. Independents’ ratings are similar to Democrats (65% warm, 43% very warm). Still, only about two-in-ten Democrats (19%) or independents (16%) view officers coldly.

Most Democrats, Republicans rate police officers ‘warmly,’ but sharp differences in ‘very warm’ ratings

% who rate ___ on a ‘feeling thermometer’ from 0 (coldest rating) to 100 (warmest rating) ...



Note: Feeling thermometer ratings: very cold (0 to 24), somewhat cold (25-49), neutral (50), somewhat warm (51-75), very warm (76-100).

Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017.

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Teachers, professors viewed more positively by Democrats than Republicans

Teachers are viewed warmly across the political spectrum. Overall, 77% give teachers warm ratings, including 69% of Republicans, 73% of independents and 90% of Democrats.

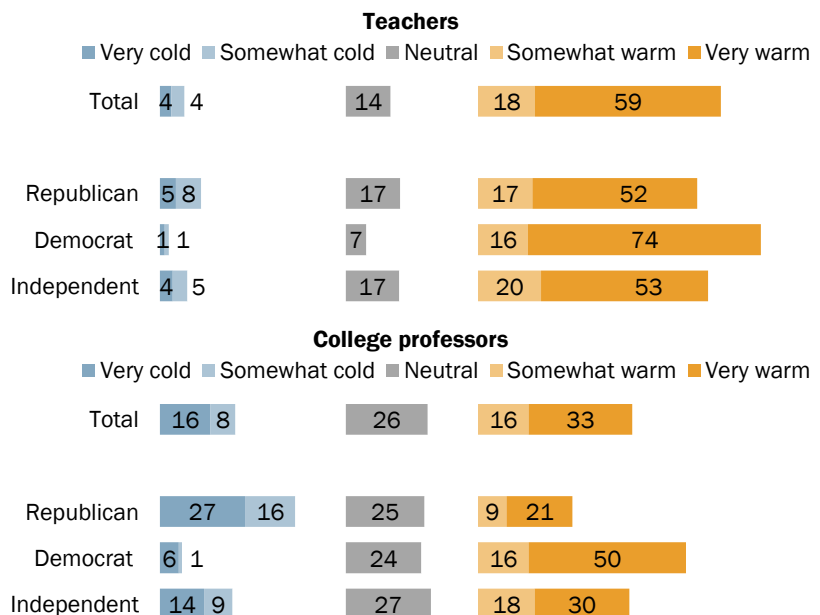
Although there is a partisan divide in views of teachers, there is a considerably wider one in views of college professors.

Overall, college professors are viewed warmly: 49% give professors either a very warm (33%) or somewhat warm (16%) rating, 26% give professors a neutral rating, while 24% give them either a very cold (16%) or somewhat cold (8%) rating).

But while Democratic ratings of professors are largely positive (66% warm, including 50% very warm), Republican views are more negative than positive. Just 30% of Republicans give college professors a warm rating, while 43% give them a cold rating. (*For more on views of college professors, see [“Republicans much ‘colder’ than Democrats in views of professors.”](#)*)

More Republicans rate college professors ‘coldly’ than ‘warmly’

% who rate ___ on a ‘feeling thermometer’ from 0 (coldest rating) to 100 (warmest rating) ...



Note: Feeling thermometer ratings: very cold (0 to 24), somewhat cold (25-49), neutral (50), somewhat warm (51-75), very warm (76-100).

Source: Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017.

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Acknowledgements

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by the Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults recruited from landline and cell phone random digit dial surveys. Panelists participate via monthly self-administered Web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Abt Associates.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017 among 4,971 respondents. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 4,971 respondents is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points.

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from several large, national landline and cellphone random digit dial (RDD) surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate.¹ The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Pew Research Center Survey on Government, conducted Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015. Of the 6,004 adults interviewed, all were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate.² The third group of panelists was recruited from a survey conducted April 25 to June 4, 2017. Of the 5,012 adults interviewed in the survey or pretest, 3,905 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 1,628 agreed to participate.³

The ATP data were weighted in a multi-step process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on a number of dimensions. Gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region parameters come from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey. The county-level population density parameter (deciles) comes from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census. The telephone service benchmark comes from the January-June 2016 National Health

¹ When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of 25%, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, 83% of non-internet users were invited to join the panel.

² Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after February 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

³ White, non-Hispanic college graduates were subsampled at a rate of 50%.

Interview Survey and is projected to 2017. The volunteerism benchmark comes from the 2015 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement. The party affiliation benchmark is the average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys. The Internet access benchmark comes from the 2017 ATP Panel Refresh Survey. Respondents who did not previously have internet access are treated as not having internet access for weighting purposes. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the American Trends Panel is predominantly native born and English speaking.

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:

Survey conducted Aug. 8-21, 2017

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	4,971	2.3 percentage points
Half form	2,406 (min)	3.2 percentage points
Republican	1,315	4.4 percentage points
Republican half form	622 (min)	6.4 percentage points
Democrat	1,814	3.7 percentage points
Democrat half form	883 (min)	5.3 percentage points
Independent	1,348	4.3 percentage points
Independent half form	666 (min)	6.1 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.

The August 2017 wave had a response rate of 74% (4,971 responses among 6,722 individuals in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10.0%) and attrition from panel members who were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the wave is 2.6%.⁴

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⁴ Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.

Appendix: Topline questionnaire

2017 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL

WAVE 28 August

FINAL TOPLINE

August 7 – August 21, 2017

TOTAL N=4,971

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

Now on a different topic...

ASK ALL:

THERMO

We'd like to get your feelings toward a number of groups on a "feeling thermometer." A rating of zero degrees means you feel as cold and negative as possible. A rating of 100 degrees means you feel as warm and positive as possible. You would rate the group at 50 degrees if you don't feel particularly positive or negative toward the group.

How do you feel toward **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**? *[Enter the number in the box between 0 and 100 that reflects your feelings]*

	Rating of <u>0 to 24</u>	Rating of <u>25 to 49</u>	Rating of <u>50</u>	Rating of <u>51 to 75</u>	Rating of <u>76 to 100</u>	No Answer	Mean rating
ASK FORM 1 [N=2,565]:							
a. Republicans							
Aug 8-21, 2017	31	16	24	14	12	2	41
Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	23	10	28	15	21	3	50
Mar 2-28, 2016	25	15	29	13	16	2	46
b. Democrats							
Aug 8-21, 2017	28	14	23	16	18	1	45
Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	19	13	26	14	24	3	52
Mar 2-28, 2016	22	12	26	15	23	2	51
c. College professors							
Aug 8-21, 2017	16	8	26	16	33	2	58
d. Police officers							
Aug 8-21, 2017	10	8	16	19	45	2	67
ASK FORM 2 [N=2,406]:							
e. Liberals							
Aug 8-21, 2017	24	10	33	13	18	2	47
f. Conservatives							
Aug 8-21, 2017	16	15	33	14	20	2	51
g. Teachers							
Aug 8-21, 2017	4	4	14	18	59	1	78
Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	4	4	15	17	57	3	78
h. People in the military							
Aug 8-21, 2017	3	2	11	12	70	1	83
Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	3	3	14	11	67	2	82
Mar 2-28, 2016	5	1	12	10	70	1	82

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

Now on a different topic...

[PROGRAMMING NOTE: RANDOMIZE ORDER OF DESCREP/DESCDEM AND AGREEREP/AGREEDEM AS BLOCKS. RANDOMIZE ORDER OF QUESTIONS WITHIN EACH BLOCK.]

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF DESCREP AND DESCDEM]**ASK ALL:**

DESCREP Would you say the term "Republican" describes you...

Aug 8- Aug 21 <u>2017</u>		Mar 2- Mar 28 <u>2016</u>
31	NET Well	35
9	Very well	8
23	Fairly well	27
67	NET NOT well	63
25	Not too well	29
42	Not at all well	33
1	No answer	2

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF DESCREP AND DESCDEM]**ASK ALL:**

DESCDEM Would you say the term "Democrat" describes you...

Aug 8- Aug 21 <u>2017</u>		Mar 2- Mar 28 <u>2016</u>
42	NET Well	41
13	Very well	11
28	Fairly well	30
57	NET NOT well	57
23	Not too well	27
34	Not at all well	30
1	No answer	2

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF AGREEREP AND AGREEDEM]**ASK ALL:**

AGREEREP Thinking about political issues, how often do you tend to agree with the positions of the Republican Party?

Aug 8- Aug 21 <u>2017</u>		Mar 2- Mar 28 <u>2016</u>
6	Almost always	5
19	More than half of the time	21
20	About half of the time	24
25	Less than half of the time	26
28	Almost never	22
2	No answer	2

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF AGREEREP AND AGREEDEM]**ASK ALL:**

AGREEDEM Thinking about political issues, how often do you tend to agree with the positions of the Democratic Party?

Aug 8- Aug 21 <u>2017</u>		Mar 2- Mar 28 <u>2016</u>
9	Almost always	8
24	More than half of the time	25
22	About half of the time	24
21	Less than half of the time	22
23	Almost never	20
2	No answer	2

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE