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More Now Say It's 'Stressful' to Discuss Politics With People They Disagree With

Liberal Democrats most likely to say it is stressful

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More Now Say It's 'Stressful' to Discuss Politics With People They Disagree With

Liberal Democrats most likely to say it is stressful

Over the past two years, Americans have become more likely to say it is “stressful and frustrating” to have political conversations with those they disagree with. The change in opinions has come largely among Democrats: 57% now say that talking about politics with people they disagree with is stressful and frustrating, up from 45% two years ago.

By contrast, Republicans’ feelings about political conversations with people they disagree have changed very little. About half (49%) continue to find such conversations stressful and frustrating.

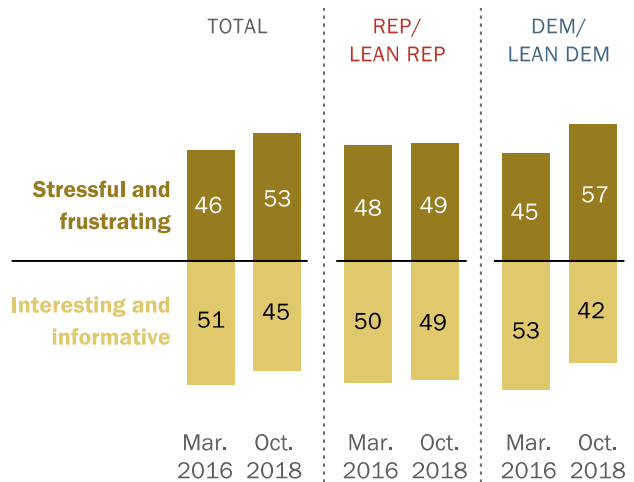
Overall, 53% of Americans say talking about politics with people they disagree with is generally stressful and frustrating; fewer (45%) say such conversations are usually “interesting and informative.” In March 2016, during the presidential primaries, slightly more found such conversations interesting and informative (51%) than stressful and frustrating (46%).

The national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted Sept. 24 to Oct. 7, also finds that a majority of Americans (63%) say that when discussing politics with people they disagree with they find they usually have *less* in common politically than they thought.

Views of whether such conversations lead to more common ground politically – unlike opinions about whether they are informative or stressful – do not differ by partisanship. Majorities in both parties say they find they usually have less in common politically when discussing politics with those who have differing views.

More Democrats say talking politics with those on other side is 'stressful'

% who say that talking about politics with people they disagree with is generally ...



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

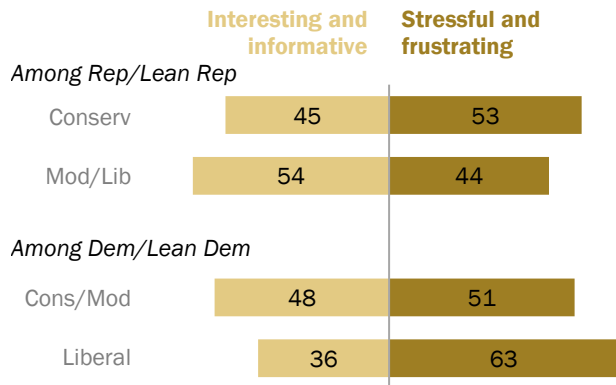
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In both parties, there are ideological differences in views of whether conversations with those they disagree with politically are stressful or not. Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, 63% of liberals say such conversations are stressful and frustrating, compared with 51% of conservatives and moderates.

Among Republicans and Republican leaners, somewhat more conservatives (53%) than moderates and liberals (44%) say it is stressful to discuss politics with those they disagree with.

Liberal Democrats most likely to find political conversations with people they disagree with to be ‘stressful’

% who say that talking about politics with people they disagree with is generally ...



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

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Majorities of Republicans and Democrats say talking politics with people whose views differ does not lead to more common ground

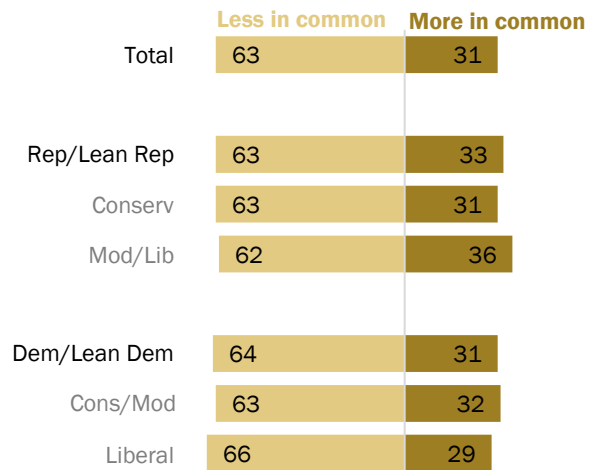
A majority of Americans (63%) say that when they talk about politics with people they disagree with, they usually find they have “less in common” politically than they thought previously. Fewer than a third of Americans (31%) say they find they have more in common with people they disagree with politically.

These opinions have changed only modestly since 2016, when 63% said that when discussing politics with people they disagreed with, they had less in common than they thought.

There is little division across the partisan and ideological spectrum: More than six-in-ten in each group say they find that when they discuss politics with people they disagree with, they usually find they have “less in common” politically than they thought.

Few find that when talking to those with differing views, they have more in common than they thought

% who say that when talking about politics with people they disagree with, they usually find they have ____ politically than they thought



Note: No answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

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Trump remains as big a topic of conversation today as he was shortly after the 2016 election

Currently, a majority (62%) of Americans say Donald Trump's presidency and policies come up very often (25%) or somewhat often (37%) in conversation. Far fewer (38%) say Trump comes up not too often or not at all often.

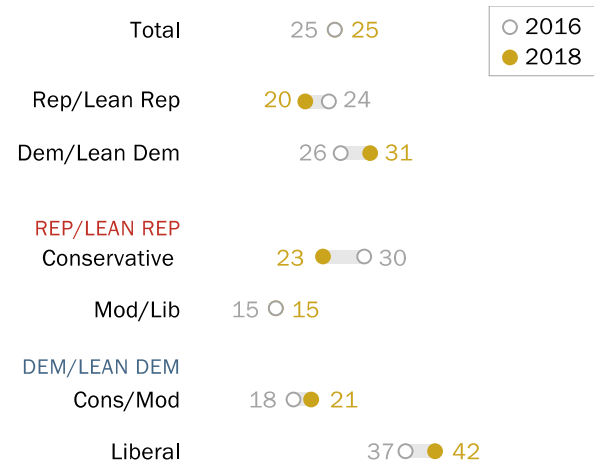
That is similar to people's views of how often Trump came up in conversation in December 2016, shortly after his presidential victory. At that time, 25% said Trump's election and plans for his presidency came up in conversations very often, while 40% said they were topics somewhat often.

As was the case in late 2016, Trump is a more frequent topic of conversation for liberal Democrats than for other Democrats or among Republicans. Currently, 42% of liberal Democrats say Trump's presidency comes up in conversations very often; that is double the share of conservatives and moderates who say this.

Among Republicans, Trump comes up more in conversation among conservatives (23% very often) than among GOP moderates and liberals (15%). The share of conservative Republicans who say Trump comes up very often in conversation has slipped since 2016, from 30% then to 23% now.

Trump a focal point of conversations more for liberal Dems than others

% who say Trump's presidency and policies have come up in conversations "very often"



Note: In 2016, question was worded: "How often has Donald Trump's election and plans for his presidency come up in the conversations you have, either in person, over the phone or online?"
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 24-Oct. 7, 2018.

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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 survey methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by GfK.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted September 24-October 7, 2018. A total of 10,683 panelists responded out of 13,493 who were sampled, for a response rate of 79%.

The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3.8%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 10,683 respondents is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points.

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial

survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of which 9,942 agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to mail recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample (ABS) of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. For a random half-sample of invitations, households without internet access were instructed to return a postcard. These households were contacted by telephone and sent a tablet if they agreed to participate. As of Sept. 17, 2018, a total of 8,611 had been invited to join the panel, and 8,023 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey.

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment Dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,756
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,639
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	1,075
Aug. 8, 2018-Ongoing	ABS/web	8,611	8,023	8,023
	Total	28,329	17,965	13,493

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel. The number of active panelists in this table reflects the state of the panel on Sept. 17, 2018.

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Of the 17,965 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 13,493 remain active panelists and continue to receive survey invitations.

Weighting

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 and 2017 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. For panelists recruited prior to 2018, 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. No adjustment was made for new panelists from the 2018 recruitment. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on the dimensions listed in the accompanying table.

Sampling errors and statistical-significance tests take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the American Trends Panel's Hispanic sample is predominantly native born and English speaking.

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.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2016 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Race/Hispanic origin	
Region x Metropolitan status	2017 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2015 CPS Volunteer Supplement
Voter registration	2016 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.
Internet access	2018 Pew Research Center internet core trends telephone survey

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total US adult population.

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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 survey¹:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	10,683	1.5 percentage points
Half sample	5,315	2.1 percentage points
Quarter sample	2,650	3.0 percentage points
Quarter sample Rep/Lean Rep	1,048	4.7 percentage points
Quarter sample Dem/Dem Lean	1,437	4.2 percentage points

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

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¹ All questions in this report are based on either a half or quarter sample.

**2018 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 38
September 24-October 7, 2018
FINAL TOPLINE
N=10,683**

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****ASK ALL:**

CONVOZ How often, if at all, **[INSERT ITEM; DO NOT CAPITALIZE FIRST WORD IN ITEM]** come up in the conversations you have, either in person, over the phone or online?

	<u>Very often</u>	<u>Somewhat often</u>	<u>Not too often</u>	<u>Not at all often</u>	<u>No answer</u>
ASK FORMS 1 AND 3 ONLY (N=5,315)					
a. Do Donald Trump's presidency and policies					
Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	25	37	28	10	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
Donald Trump's election and plans for his presidency					
Nov 29-Dec 12, 2016	25	40	25	10	1
ASK FORMS 2 AND 4 ONLY (N=5,368)					
b. Do the 2018 midterm elections and candidates running for office					
Sep 24-Oct 7, 2018	12	29	38	20	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
The 2016 presidential election					
Jun 7-Jul 5, 2016	21	40	29	9	1

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=2,665]:**

TALKDISA In your experience, when you talk about politics with people who you DISAGREE with, do you generally find it to be... **[RANDOMIZE]**

Sep 24- Oct 7 <u>2018</u>		Mar 2- Mar 28 <u>2016</u>
45	Interesting and informative	51
53	Stressful and frustrating	46
2	No answer	2

ASK FORM 3 ONLY [N=2,650]:

TALKCMN In your experience, when you talk about politics with people who you DISAGREE with, do you usually find that... **[RANDOMIZE]**

Sep 24- Oct 7 <u>2018</u>		Mar 2- Mar 28 <u>2016</u>
31	You have more in common politically than you thought	36
63	You have less in common politically than you thought	61
5	No answer	3

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**