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Public Holds Broadly Favorable Views of Many Federal Agencies, Including CDC and HHS

Republicans' ratings of several agencies rise

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How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to understand how Americans view federal government agencies. For this analysis, we surveyed 1,013 U.S. adults in March 2020. The surveys were conducted in both English and Spanish over the phone under the direction of SSRS. Respondents to this survey were randomly selected via a combination of landline and cellphone random-digit-dial samples. To ensure that the results of this survey reflects a balanced cross section of the nation, the data are weighted to match the U.S. adult population by gender, age, education, race and ethnicity and other categories.

See here to read more about the [questions used for this report](#) and the [report's methodology](#).

Public Holds Broadly Favorable Views of Many Federal Agencies, Including CDC and HHS

Republicans' ratings of several agencies rise

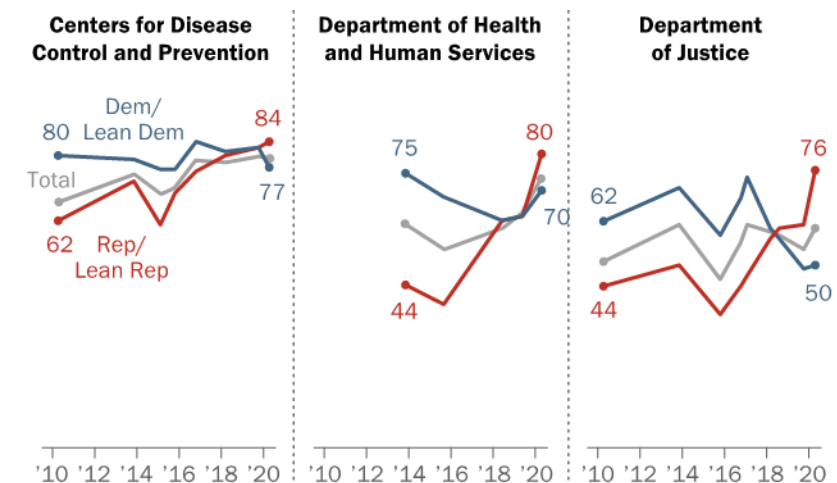
As the United States confronts the coronavirus outbreak, Americans continue to rate a wide range of federal agencies favorably, including two at the forefront of dealing with COVID-19: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services. Other federal agencies, including the Postal Service, the Census Bureau and the Department of Homeland Security, also receive broadly favorable ratings from the public.

The public has long viewed the CDC positively. Currently, 79% of U.S. adults express a favorable opinion of the CDC, including large majorities of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (84%) and Democrats and Democratic leaners (77%).

Views of the CDC among Republicans have grown more positive in recent years. Democrats' views have shown less change; the share of Democrats with a positive view of the agency has ticked down slightly since last September, from 82%.

Growing shares of Republicans express favorable views of CDC, HHS and Justice Department

% who have a favorable opinion of each



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 24-29, 2020.

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Republicans feel far more favorably toward the Department of Health and Human Services than they did during Barack Obama's presidency – and substantially more positively than they did seven months ago. Currently, 80% view HHS favorably, up 17 percentage points since last fall. In 2013 and 2015, fewer than half of Republicans viewed this agency favorably. Majorities of Democrats have consistently expressed positive views of HHS (70% currently).

The national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted March 24-29 among 1,013 U.S. adults, finds that more than three years into the Trump administration, larger shares of Republicans than Democrats express favorable opinions of eight of 10 government agencies included in the survey. And for the other two agencies, the Postal Service and the IRS, nearly identical majorities in both parties have favorable opinions.

Republicans' views of the Justice Department improved after Donald Trump's election, while Democrats turned more negative. Even so, favorable views of the DOJ have increased sharply since September; currently, 76% of Republicans view the DOJ favorably, up from 61% last fall and the highest positive rating for the department in polling going back a decade. By comparison, 50% of Democrats feel favorably toward the Justice Department, little changed from the fall and among the lowest ratings in a decade.

Views of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) remain even more polarized: 77% of Republicans and Republican leaners view the agency favorably, compared with only 28% of Democrats and Democratic leaners.

With the decennial census underway – [and most Americans saying they plan to participate](#) – 77% of Americans overall view the Census Bureau favorably, compared with just 12% who hold an unfavorable view. And while the public holds positive views of several federal agencies, ratings of the Postal Service continue to stand out: An overwhelming 91% say they have a favorable view of the mail delivery service.

Many agencies, including the IRS, are viewed favorably by majorities in both parties

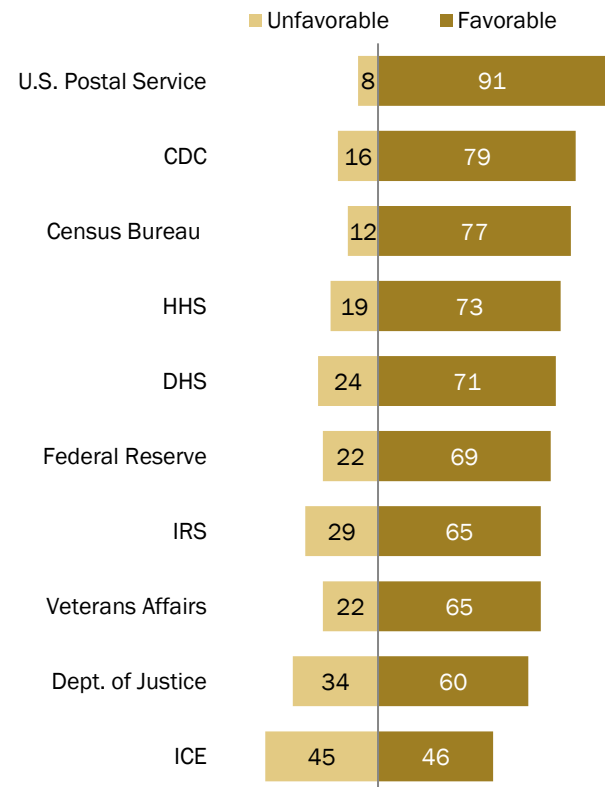
Of the 10 agencies included in the survey, nine are viewed more favorably than unfavorably by the public. ICE is the only agency for which about equal shares express an unfavorable (45%) as favorable (46%) view.

Among the agencies viewed in positive light, the majorities viewing each favorably range from 91% for the Postal Service to 60% for the Justice Department.

About two-thirds view Veterans Affairs and the IRS favorably (both 65%). Slightly more hold favorable views of the Federal Reserve (69%) and the Department of Homeland Security (71%).

A number of federal agencies viewed favorably by majorities of the public

% who have a ___ opinion of each



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 24-29, 2020.

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For many federal agencies, there are only modest differences in ratings between Republicans and Democrats.

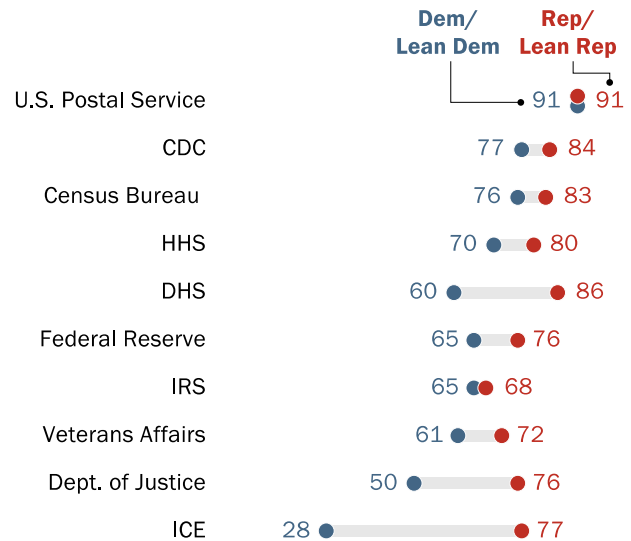
For instance, large majorities of Republicans and Democrats have favorable views of the Postal Service, Census Bureau, CDC and HHS.

A broader majority of Republicans (86%) than of Democrats (60%) view the Department of Homeland Security favorably. The partisan gap is similar in views of the DOJ.

The widest partisan divide in the survey by far is in assessments of ICE: Republicans and Republican leaners are 49 points more likely than Democrats and Democratic leaners to hold a favorable view of the agency (77% vs. 28%).

Positive views of many agencies cross party lines, but not ICE or DOJ

% who have a favorable opinion of each



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 24-29, 2020.

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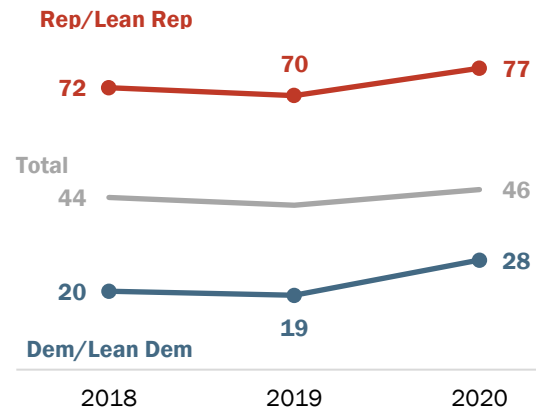
The share of Republicans with a favorable view of ICE has increased 7 points since September 2019.

Among Democrats, ratings of ICE remain overwhelmingly negative (64% view the agency unfavorably), though the share with a favorable view has increased since last fall (up 9 points).

The overall gap in ratings of ICE between Republicans and Democrats remains about the same as it has been over the last few years.

Views of ICE continue to be deeply divided along partisan lines

% who say they have a favorable view of ICE



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 24-29, 2020.

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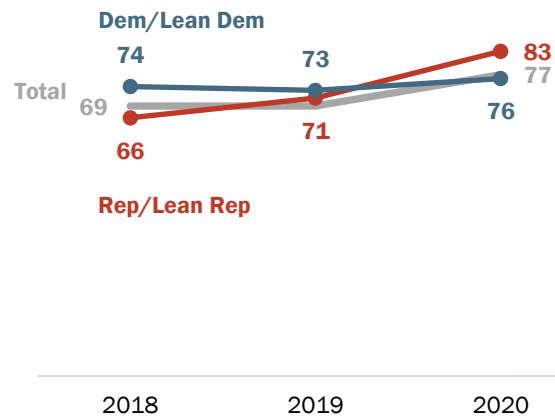
As the Census Bureau launches its decennial census, majorities of both Republicans and Democrats hold positive views of the agency.

Republicans' views of the Census Bureau have grown considerably more positive over the last two years. Today, 83% of Republicans view the Census Bureau favorably, compared with 66% who held a favorable view of the agency in 2018.

Among Democrats, views of the Census Bureau have remained relatively stable. About three-quarters of Democrats (76%) say they hold favorable views of the agency today; views were similar in 2019 and 2018.

Republicans' views of the Census Bureau turn much more positive

% who say they have a favorable view of the Census Bureau



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 24-29, 2020.

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Acknowledgments

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

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Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted March 24-29, 2020, among a national sample of 1,013 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in the United States (305 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 708 were interviewed on a cellphone, including 461 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted under the direction of SSRS. A combination of landline and cellphone random-digit-dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Marketing Systems Group. 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://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The combined landline and cellphone sample is weighted to provide nationally representative estimates of the adult population 18 years of age and older. The weighting process takes into account the disproportionate probabilities of household and respondent selection due to the number of separate telephone landlines and cellphones answered by respondents and their households, as well as the probability associated with the random selection of an individual household member. Following application of the above weights, the sample is post-stratified and balanced by key demographics such as age, race and ethnicity, sex, region, and education. The sample is also weighted to reflect the distribution of phone usage in the general population, meaning the proportion of those who are cellphone only, landline only, and mixed users.

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 March 24-29, 2020

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,013		3.5 percentage points
Republican/Lean Republican	380	37	5.7 percentage points
Democrat/Lean Democrat	498	48	4.9 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.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
MARCH 24-29, 2020 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,013**

ASK ALL:

Q.1 Is your overall opinion of **[INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE ITEMS]** very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? How about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[IF NECESSARY: would you say your overall opinion of [ITEM] is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?]** **[INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]**

ASK ALL:	----- 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 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CDC								
Mar 24-29, 2020	79	33	46	16	7	9	1	4
Sep 5-16, 2019	80	30	50	12	5	7	2	6
Feb 7-11, 2018	78	30	48	11	3	8	2	9
Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	79	25	53	14	4	10	2	6
Sep 22-27, 2015	71	23	48	19	6	13	2	9
Jan 7-11, 2015	70	25	44	23	10	13	2	5
Oct 9-13, 2013	75	27	47	14	5	8	2	9
Mar 18-21, 2010	67	15	52	16	5	10	2	15
February, 1998	79	20	59	11	2	9	1	9
b. The Department of Homeland Security								
Mar 24-29, 2020	71	26	45	24	7	17	1	5
Sep 22-27, 2015	64	16	48	30	12	18	*	6
Oct 9-13, 2013	66	12	54	30	12	18	1	3
c. The Internal Revenue Service, the IRS								
Mar 24-29, 2020	65	16	49	29	11	18	1	5
Sep 5-16, 2019	55	9	46	40	16	24	1	4
July 11-15, 2018	57	13	44	36	15	21	1	6
Feb 7-11, 2018	58	14	44	33	13	20	*	8
Jan 5-8, 2017	58	13	45	33	16	17	*	8
Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	50	11	39	45	21	24	*	5
Sep 22-27, 2015	42	9	32	52	24	28	*	6
Jan 7-11, 2015	45	10	35	48	24	25	*	6
Oct 9-13, 2013	44	9	35	51	23	28	*	5
Mar 18-21, 2010	47	6	41	40	17	23	*	13
October, 1997	38	5	33	60	25	35	*	2
Roper, August 1987	49	10	39	46	19	27	--	5
Roper, August 1986	51	10	41	45	19	26	--	4
Roper, August 1985	48	8	40	47	19	28	--	5
Roper, August 1984	60	13	47	34	11	23	--	6
Roper, August 1983	50	12	38	44	16	28	--	6
d. The Justice Department								
Mar 24-29, 2020	60	18	42	34	14	20	1	5
Sep 5-16, 2019	54	11	43	41	14	27	1	4
July 11-15, 2018	58	20	38	35	13	22	1	6
Feb 7-11, 2018	59	16	43	32	13	19	1	9
Jan 5-8, 2017	61	17	44	30	11	19	*	9

Q.1d CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.) Never	(VOL.) Can't rate/
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	heard of	Ref
Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	56	14	42	37	16	20	*	7
Sep 22-27, 2015	46	10	37	47	18	29	*	6
Oct 9-13, 2013	61	9	52	33	14	19	1	5
Mar 18-21, 2010	51	6	44	33	11	23	1	15
February, 1998	56	7	49	39	12	27	0	5
Roper, April 1987	53	10	43	39	15	24	--	8
Roper, April 1986	52	10	42	39	15	24	--	8
Roper, April 1985	53	10	43	39	17	22	--	9
e. The Department of Health and Human Services, the HHS								
Mar 24-29, 2020	73	24	49	19	6	13	2	6
Sep 5-16, 2019	64	15	49	27	8	19	2	7
July 11-15, 2018	60	19	42	28	10	18	3	9
Jan 5-8, 2017	64	21	44	24	8	15	1	11
Sep 22-27, 2015	54	13	41	31	14	17	3	12
Oct 9-13, 2013	61	14	47	30	12	19	2	7
f. The Census Bureau								
Mar 24-29, 2020	77	25	51	12	2	9	3	9
Sep 5-16, 2019	69	16	53	16	5	11	4	10
July 11-15, 2018	69	19	50	16	7	9	4	11
g. The Postal Service								
Mar 24-29, 2020	91	47	43	8	3	5	*	1
Sep 5-16, 2019	90	37	52	8	3	6	*	2
Feb 7-11, 2018	88	37	51	10	3	7	1	2
Jan 5-8, 2017	86	39	47	11	4	7	*	3
Sep 22-27, 2015	84	33	51	14	6	8	*	2
Mar 18-21, 2010	83	30	53	14	6	8	1	3
October, 1997	89	28	61	11	3	8	0	*
Roper, April 1987	76	33	43	22	8	14	--	2
Roper, April 1986	74	27	47	24	8	16	--	2
Roper, April 1985	70	23	47	27	11	16	--	3
Roper, April 1984	69	24	45	28	10	18	--	3
Roper, April 1983	70	25	45	27	10	17	--	3
h. The Federal Reserve								
Mar 24-29, 2020	69	20	49	22	7	15	2	7
Sep 5-16, 2019	65	14	51	23	9	15	3	9
Feb 7-11, 2018	63	15	48	19	6	13	3	15
Jan 5-8, 2017	58	15	43	21	9	13	2	18
Feb 12-26, 2014	47	10	37	37	14	23	2	14
Oct 9-13, 2013	57	12	45	32	12	20	1	10
i. The Department of Veterans Affairs, the VA								
Mar 24-29, 2020	65	22	42	22	7	16	2	10
Sep 5-16, 2019	52	14	38	38	12	27	3	7
Feb 7-11, 2018	57	20	37	30	10	20	2	11
Jan 5-8, 2017	49	14	36	34	13	21	2	15
Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	48	14	34	43	18	25	1	8
Sep 22-27, 2015	39	14	25	52	24	28	1	8

Q.1i CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.) Never	(VOL.) Can't rate/
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>heard of</u>	<u>Ref</u>
Jan 7-11, 2015 ¹	52	21	31	38	15	24	1	9
Oct 9-13, 2013	68	24	44	25	7	18	*	7
Mar 18-21, 2010	57	19	38	22	5	17	2	20
February, 1998	59	15	44	26	7	19	1	14
<i>Roper</i> , August 1986	75	30	45	15	4	11	--	9
<i>Roper</i> , August 1985	68	26	42	22	6	16	--	10
<i>Roper</i> , August 1984	77	37	40	15	4	11	--	9
j. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement, known as ICE								
Mar 24-29, 2020	46	19	28	45	24	21	2	7
Sep 5-16, 2019	42	17	25	54	28	25	*	4
July 11-15, 2018	44	19	25	47	28	19	2	7

ASK ALL:

PARTY Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, or an 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.) Other	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean	Lean
				<u>party</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>
Mar 24-29, 2020	27	33	35	0	4	9	15

¹ In January 2015 and previous surveys, item was worded "The Veterans Administration, the VA."