2026 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 190: Press Freedom Knowledge
March 23-29, 2026

TOPLINE
N=3,507

Note: All numbers are percentages unless otherwise noted. Percentages less than 0.5% are replaced by an asterisk (*). Rows/columns may not total 100% due to rounding. The questions presented below are part of a larger survey conducted on the American Trends Panel.

"No answer" includes web respondents who do not answer the question as well as telephone respondents who refuse to answer or who say they don't know how to answer. In cases where "not sure" was offered as an explicit option to web and telephone respondents, the "no answer" category includes only web skips and telephone refusals.

This survey was conducted primarily online, with some interviews conducted by live telephone. This topline shows the programming language for online administration. For details on how questions were slightly modified for phone administration, visit the questionnaire.

PN = Programming note

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. adults	3,507	+/- 1.9 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	1,504	+/- 2.8 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	1,858	+/- 2.7 percentage points

CORRECTION (Sept. 28, 2026): A previous version of this topline showed incorrect sample size figures for Rep/Lean Rep and Dem/Lean Dem respondents. The margins of error shown by party and the actual sample sizes used in our analysis were correct.

TXT:
DISPLAY TO ALL:
The next few questions are a little different. For each, please answer them as best as you can. We want to measure what you already know. Please do not look up or ask someone for the answers. If you don't know the answer, you can select "Not sure."

KNOW_FA1
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4, HOLDING 5 LAST]

Which of the following is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution?

Mar 23-29, 2026	
9	The right to bear arms
1	Freedom to own property
26	The right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
51	Freedom of the press {correct}
12	Not sure
*	No answer

KNOW_FA2
ASK ALL:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 3 LAST]

Which of the following is true in the U.S.?

Mar 23-29, 2026	
60	It is legal for social media companies to restrict content posted on their sites or apps {correct}
13	It is not legal for social media companies to restrict content posted on their sites or apps
27	Not sure
*	No answer

KNOW_FA3
ASK ALL:

Can the U.S. government legally force social media companies to remove false information posted on their sites?

Mar 23-29, 2026	
25	Yes
37	No {correct}
37	Not sure
1	No answer

KNOW_FA4
ASK ALL:
[PN: DISABLE THE "BACK" BUTTON ON THIS SCREEN. RESPONDENTS SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BACK UP TO THE PREVIOUS SCREEN.]

As you may know, the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of the press.

As far as you know, does the U.S. Constitution …

		Yes {correct for GOV}	No {correct for PRIV}	Not sure	No answer
GOV	Protect the press from interference by the U.S. government				
	Mar 23-29, 2026	58	14	27	1
PRIV	Protect the press from interference by private companies				
	Mar 23-29, 2026	29	33	37	1

KNOW_FA5
ASK ALL:
[PN: DISABLE THE "BACK" BUTTON ON THIS SCREEN. RESPONDENTS SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BACK UP TO THE PREVIOUS SCREEN.]

Is each of the following protected by the First Amendment?

		Yes {correct}	No	Not sure	No answer
NEWS	Information or opinions published by a news organization				
	Mar 23-29, 2026	70	7	22	1
INFL	Information or opinions expressed by influencers or creators				
	Mar 23-29, 2026	64	10	25	1
ORD	Information or opinions expressed by ordinary people				
	Mar 23-29, 2026	71	8	19	1

ASK ALL:
PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a:
ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY_FINAL=3 or 4 OR REFUSED):
PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to…[1]

Republican	Democrat	Independent	Something Else	No answer	*Lean Rep*	*Lean Dem*
28	27	30	14	2	*18*	*21*

[1] PARTY and PARTYLN asked in a prior survey.

2026 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 195: Press Freedom
June 22-28, 2026

TOPLINE
N=3,488

Note: All numbers are percentages unless otherwise noted. Percentages less than 0.5% are replaced by an asterisk (*). Rows/columns may not total 100% due to rounding. The questions presented below are part of a larger survey conducted on the American Trends Panel.

"No answer" includes web respondents who do not answer the question as well as telephone respondents who refuse to answer or who say they don't know how to answer. In cases where "not sure" was offered as an explicit option to web and telephone respondents, the "no answer" category includes only web skips and telephone refusals.

This survey was conducted primarily online, with some interviews conducted by live telephone. This topline shows the programming language for online administration. For details on how questions were slightly modified for phone administration, visit the questionnaire.

American Trends Panel surveys conducted between October 2016 and June 2024 were conducted fully online (with tablets and data plans provided to adults without home internet). American Trends Panel surveys conducted prior to October 2016 were conducted primarily online, with some respondents completing by mail. For additional details, visit the methodology.

PN = Programming note

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. adults	3,488	+/- 1.8 percentage points
Form 1	1,751	+/- 2.6 percentage points
Form 2	1,737	+/- 2.6 percentage points

[ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR RELEASE]

POLFREE
ASK ALL:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1, HOLDING 6 LAST]

In the U.S., how free do you think people who share your political views are to openly express those views?

Jun 22-28, 2026	
11	Extremely free
25	Very free
34	Somewhat free
13	A little free
8	Not at all free
9	Not sure
*	No answer

NEWSSOCIETY
ASK ALL:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1]

Overall, how important do you think the freedom of the press is to the well-being of society?

	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	A little important	Not at all important	No answer
Jun 22-28, 2026	43	30	18	6	2	1
Feb 24-Mar 2, 2025	47	31	17	4	2	1
Apr 1-7, 2024	44	29	18	6	2	1

FREEDOM
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

In the U.S....

		Completely free	Somewhat free	Not very free	Not at all free	No answer
PRESS	How free is the media to report the news?					
	Jun 22-28, 2026	28	48	17	5	1
	Feb 24-Mar 2, 2025	33	46	16	4	1
	Apr 1-7, 2024	33	46	16	5	*
SAY	How free are people to say what they want?					
	Jun 22-28, 2026	28	53	15	3	*
	Feb 24-Mar 2, 2025	32	54	12	2	*
	Apr 1-7, 2024	28	53	15	4	*
INTERNET	How free are people to use the internet					
	Jun 22-28, 2026	54	37	6	2	*
	Feb 24-Mar 2, 2025	54	38	5	2	1
	Apr 1-7, 2024	40	48	9	3	*

NEWSRESTRICTBAT
ASK IF FORM 2 (X_FORM=2) [N=1,737] :
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1]

How concerned are you, if at all, about potential restrictions on each of the following in the United States?

		Extremely concerned	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	A little concerned	Not at all concerned	No answer
REL	Freedom of religion						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	23	15	22	15	24	1
PRESS	Freedom of the press						
	Jun 22-28, 2026						
	ASK ALL	27	20	24	14	15	1
	[N=3,488][1]						
	Feb 24-Mar 2, 2025	22	21	26	15	14	1
	Apr 1-7, 2024	19	22	29	17	11	1
ARMS	The right to bear arms						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	22	15	21	14	27	1
VOTE	The right to vote						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	30	16	18	11	24	1
ASSEM	Freedom for people to assemble peacefully						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	28	19	23	12	17	1
SPEECH	Freedom of speech						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	30	19	23	14	13	1

PRESSFREE
ASK ALL:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1]

Which of these statements comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?

Jun 22-28, 2026	
45	It is more important for the press to be free to report the news, even if some reporting is inaccurate
53	It is more important to prevent inaccurate reporting, even if it limits freedom of the press
2	No answer

[1] In surveys conducted in 2025 and earlier, NEWSRESTRICT was asked as a standalone question. In this survey, respondents on Form 1 received the standalone version (NEWSRESTRICT), while respondents on Form 2 received the item as part of a battery (NEWSRESTRICTBAT_PRESS). As there were no substantive differences between the two versions, the responses were combined.

PFNEWS
ASK IF FORM 1 (X_FORM=1) [N=1,751] :
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

Do you think the U.S. government should be able to require a news organization to take down a news story if it...

		Yes, the U.S. government should be able to do this	No, the U.S. government should not be able to do this	Not sure	No answer
FALSE	Contains false information Jun 22-28, 2026	51	33	16	*
POL	Clearly favors one political side Jun 22-28, 2026	14	72	14	*
CRITIC	Is critical of the government Jun 22-28, 2026	10	77	13	*
NATSEC	Poses a risk to national security Jun 22-28, 2026	60	23	18	*

PFPOST
ASK IF FORM 2 (X_FORM=2) [N=1,737] :
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

Do you think a U.S. social media company should be able to take down someone's post if it…

		Yes, a U.S. social media company should be able to do this	No, a U.S. social media company should not be able to do this	Not sure	No answer
FALSE	Contains false information Jun 22-28, 2026	53	29	17	1
POL	Clearly favors one political side Jun 22-28, 2026	11	75	14	*
CRITIC	Is critical of the government Jun 22-28, 2026	15	71	14	1
NATSEC	Poses a risk to national security Jun 22-28, 2026	67	18	15	1

PFFALSE
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1, HOLDING 6 LAST]

If a U.S. news organization publishes false information, when, if ever, do you think…

		In all or almost all cases	In most cases	In some cases	In few cases	In no or almost no cases	Not sure	No answer
CORRECT	The news organization should issue a public correction							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	68	13	7	3	2	6	*
FIRE	The news organization should fire the journalist who reported the story							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	16	14	33	15	8	13	*
FINE	The U.S. government should fine the news organization							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	19	13	23	12	20	13	*
REMOVE	The U.S. government should require the news organization to take down the story							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	29	15	17	10	18	11	*

PFGOVT
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1, HOLDING 6 LAST]

How often, if ever, is it acceptable for the U.S. government to...

		Always acceptable	Usually acceptable	Sometimes acceptable	Rarely acceptable	Never acceptable	Not sure	No answer
SOURCE	Force journalists to reveal the identity of unnamed government sources							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	5	6	18	21	35	15	*
LICENSE	Take away a news organization's license to broadcast							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	4	4	22	28	27	15	*
ACCESS	Give journalists access to public officials in exchange for positive coverage							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	4	7	13	12	49	15	*

PFNEWSORG
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1 IN SAME ORDER AS PFGOVT, HOLDING 6 LAST]

How often, if ever, is it acceptable for U.S. news organizations to…

		Always acceptable	Usually acceptable	Sometimes acceptable	Rarely acceptable	Never acceptable	Not sure	No answer
ANON	Keep a source's identity secret							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	27	29	23	6	4	10	1
LEAK	Publish confidential information from government sources							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	9	12	26	19	23	11	1
ARR	Record police or other law enforcement officers making an arrest in public							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	42	22	18	5	4	8	1
MED	Publish information about a politician's personal life							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	12	18	33	15	12	9	1
MIL	Publish classified details about military operations during an active conflict							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	5	4	15	19	47	10	1

[PN: RANDOMIZE ORDER OF NEWSCORP/NEWSCORPINFL AND NEWSGOVT/ NEWSGOVTINFL]

NEWSCORP
ASK ALL:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4/4-1, HOLDING 5 LAST]

How much, if at all, do you think that U.S. news organizations are influenced by corporations and financial interests?

	A great deal	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure	No answer
Jun 22-28, 2026	54	29	5	1	10	*
Feb 24-Mar 2, 2025	55	30	6	1	8	1
Apr 1-7, 2024	51	33	6	1	9	1

NEWSCORPINFL
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4/4-1 IN SAME ORDER AS NEWSCORP, HOLDING 5 LAST]

How much do you think corporate and financial interests influence...

		A great deal	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure	No answer
ACC	The accuracy of the news						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	39	37	10	3	11	1
STORY	Which news stories get covered						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	49	32	6	2	10	*
BAL	The balance of political perspectives in the news						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	47	33	8	2	10	1

NEWSGOVT
ASK ALL:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4/4-1 IN SAME ORDER AS NEWSCORP, HOLDING 5 LAST]

How much, if at all, do you think that U.S. news organizations are influenced by government and political interests?

	A great deal	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure	No answer
Jun 22-28, 2026	49	34	6	2	9	*
Feb 24-Mar 2, 2025	57	29	5	1	7	1
Apr 1-7, 2024	49	34	7	1	9	1

NEWSGOVTINFL
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS IN SAME ORDER AS NEWSCORPINFL; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4/4-1 IN SAME ORDER AS NEWSCORP, HOLDING 5 LAST]

How much do you think government and political interests influence...

		A great deal	Somewhat	Not very much	Not at all	Not sure	No answer
ACC	The accuracy of the news						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	38	38	10	4	9	*
STORY	Which news stories get covered						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	47	34	7	2	9	1
BAL	The balance of political perspectives in the news						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	44	34	8	3	10	*

PFOWNERCORP
ASK IF FORM 1 (X_FORM=1) [N=1,751] :
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4/4-1, HOLDING 5 LAST]

How acceptable or unacceptable do you think it is for the owner of a U.S. news organization to stop it from publishing a story because it goes against the owner's business interests?

Jun 22-28, 2026	
6	Completely acceptable
11	Somewhat acceptable
20	Somewhat unacceptable
49	Completely unacceptable
14	Not sure
*	No answer

PFOWNERPOL
ASK IF FORM 2 (X_FORM=2) [N=1,737] :
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4/4-1 HOLDING 5 LAST]

How acceptable or unacceptable do you think it is for the owner of a U.S. news organization to stop it from publishing a story because it goes against the owner's political interests?

Jun 22-28, 2026	
4	Completely acceptable
9	Somewhat acceptable
17	Somewhat unacceptable
58	Completely unacceptable
11	Not sure
*	No answer

[ADDITIONAL QUESTION HELD FOR RELEASE]

NEWSPOW
ASK ALL:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 3 LAST]

How much power and influence in politics today do U.S. news organizations have?

Jun 22-28, 2026	
55	Too much power and influence
14	Not enough power and influence
29	About the right amount
3	No answer

NEWSCENSOR
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1 HOLDING 6 LAST]

How often, if ever, do you think each of the following intentionally keeps important news from reaching the American public?

		Extremely often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not sure	No answer
SM	Social media companies							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	20	26	31	10	3	11	1
NEWS	News organizations							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	21	25	33	9	2	10	1
JOUR	Individual journalists							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	11	17	37	20	3	11	1
GOVT	The U.S. government							
	Jun 22-28, 2026	30	29	25	5	2	9	1

PFCRITIC
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE ITEMS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-4/4-1 HOLDING 5 LAST]

How acceptable or unacceptable do you think it is for...

		Completely acceptable	Somewhat acceptable	Somewhat unacceptable	Completely unacceptable	Not sure	No answer
POL	Politicians to publicly criticize news organizations and journalists						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	25	31	20	14	10	1
JOUR	News organizations and journalists to publicly criticize politicians						
	Jun 22-28, 2026	39	29	14	9	9	1

MEDIA_ADMIN25
ASK ALL:
[PN: RANDOMIZE INSERT SHOWN IN PARENS; ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-5/5-1]

Do you think that **[PN: RANDOMIZE INSERT** "the Trump administration and the U.S. news media"; "the U.S. news media and the Trump administration" **]** currently have a...

	Very good relationship	Somewhat good relationship	Neutral relationship	Somewhat bad relationship	Very bad relationship	No answer
Jun 22-28, 2026	3	8	17	36	34	1
Feb 24-Mar 2, 2025	2	9	22	42	22	3

PFADMIN1
ASK ALL:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 3, 4 LAST]

During this Trump administration, would you say...

Jun 22-28, 2026	
12	The press has become more free
44	The press has become less free
26	There has been no change
17	Not sure
*	No answer

PFADMIN2
ASK IF THINKS PRESS IS MORE FREE (PFADMIN1=1) [N=389]:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 3, 4 LAST]

And, do you think the press becoming more free is…

Jun 22-28, 2026	
49	A good thing for the country
23	A bad thing for the country
19	Neither a good nor bad thing for the country
9	Not sure
*	No answer

ASK IF THINKS PRESS IS LESS FREE (PFADMIN1=2) [N=1,674]:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1, HOLDING 3, 4 LAST]

And, do you think the press becoming less free is...

Jun 22-28, 2026	
2	A good thing for the country
92	A bad thing for the country
4	Neither a good nor bad thing for the country
2	Not sure
1	No answer

ASK ALL:
PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a:
ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY_FINAL=3 or 4 OR REFUSED):
PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to…[2]

Republican	Democrat	Independent	Something Else	No answer	*Lean Rep*	*Lean Dem*
28	28	29	13	2	*17*	*21*

[2] PARTY and PARTYLN asked in a prior survey.