2026 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 198: News Platforms
August 24-30, 2026

TOPLINE
N=5,166

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	5,166	+/- 1.6 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	2,319	+/- 2.4 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	2,640	+/- 2.2 percentage points

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

WATCHDOG_1
ASK ALL:
[PN: ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1-2/2-1]

Some people think that by criticizing leaders, news organizations keep political leaders from doing their job. Others think that such criticism is worth it because it keeps political leaders from doing things that should not be done.

Which position is closer to your opinion?

Aug 24-Aug 30, 2026		Sep 8-Sep 14, 2025	Sep 16-Sep 22, 2024	Feb 19-Mar 4, 2019	Feb 22-Mar 4, 2018	Mar 13-Mar 27, 2017	Jan 12-Feb 8, 2016
16	Criticism keeps political leaders from doing their job	22	24	29	31	28	21
80	Criticism keeps political leaders from doing things that shouldn't be done	75	74	68	65	70	75
3	No answer	4	2	3	4	2	4

PHONE TREND FOR COMPARISON:[1]

	Criticism keeps political leaders from doing their job	Criticism keeps political leaders from doing things that shouldn't be done	**(VOL.)** DK/Ref
Jul 17-21, 2013	21	68	10
Jul 20-24, 2011	25	58	17
July 2009	22	62	16
July 2007	26	58	15
November 2005	22	62	17
June 2005	28	60	12
Early July 2003	29	54	17
July 2002	26	59	15
Mid November 2001	32	55	14
Early September 2001	25	60	15
February 1999	31	58	11
Early February 1998	39	55	6
Late January 1994	23	66	10
August 1989	23	68	9
July 1985	17	67	16

[1] Some numbers before 2009 may vary slightly from previously published toplines due to rounding differences.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

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

Republican	Democrat	Independent	Something else	No answer	*Lean Rep*	*Lean Dem*
27	28	29	14	2	16	20

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