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Views of Supreme Court Little Changed as Major Rulings Loom

*Ideological Divide in Views of Court's
Ideology*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THIS REPORT:**

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Ideological Divide in Views of Court's Ideology

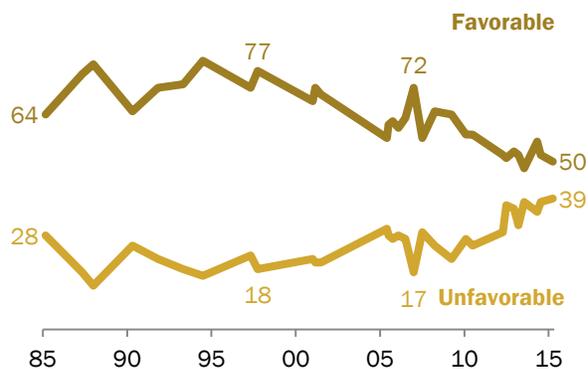
Public views of the Supreme Court are little changed since last summer, following the court's ruling in the [Hobby Lobby case](#) and other end-of-term decisions. Currently, half of Americans (50%) have a favorable opinion of the Supreme Court, while 39% say they have an unfavorable view.

The court's upcoming decisions, on such contentious subjects as same-sex marriage, the death penalty and the Affordable Care Act, have the potential to affect opinions of the court. The court will hear arguments April 28 in cases to overturn [state bans on same-sex marriage](#).

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted March 25-29, 2015 among 1,500 adults, finds no significant partisan differences in views of the court: 54% of Democrats and 50% of Republicans view the Supreme Court favorably.

Opinion of the Supreme Court

Overall opinion of the Supreme Court is ... (%)



Survey conducted March 25-29, 2015.

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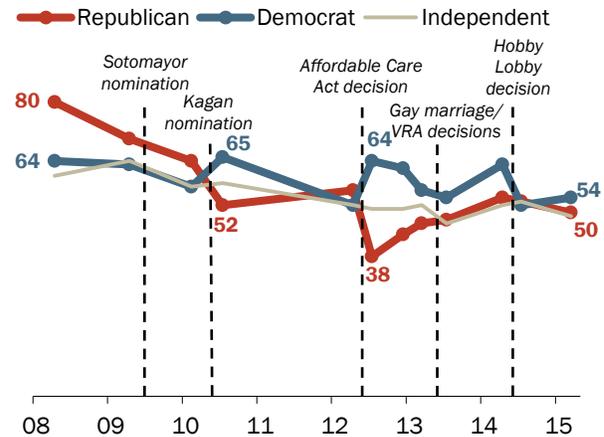
In recent years, partisan views of the court shifted following major, end-of-term decisions. [In 2012](#), the share of Republicans viewing the court favorably declined 18 points (from 56% to 38%), after the court's ruling upholding most parts of the Affordable Care Act; by contrast, favorable opinions among Democrats rose 12 points (from 52% to 64%).

[Last year](#), after the Hobby Lobby ruling limiting the Affordable Care Act's requirement to provide contraceptive coverage, there was an 11-point decline in the percentage of Democrats viewing the court favorably (63% to 52%). Republicans' views were largely unchanged (54% before, 53% after).

Over the long term, the public's views of the Supreme Court have become less positive. In seven of the last eight surveys since April 2012, favorable impressions of the court have been close to 50%, the lowest ratings in 30 years of polling.

Little Partisan Gap in Current Views of Supreme Court

% favorable view of the Supreme Court among ...



Survey conducted March 25-29, 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

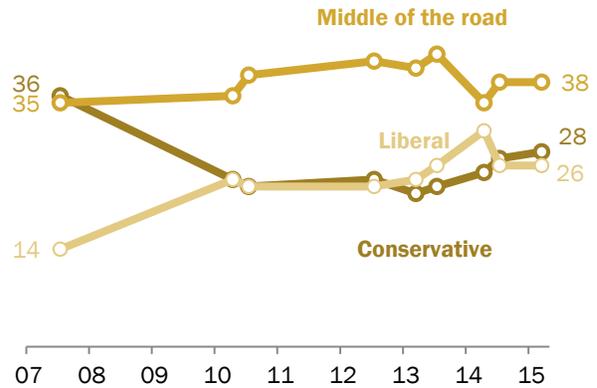
Views of Court's Ideology

The survey finds that the public continues to have a mixed view of the Supreme Court's ideology, with a plurality (38%) continuing to say they perceive the court to be "middle of the road." About as many call the Supreme Court liberal (26%) as say it is conservative (28%). This balance of opinion regarding the court's ideological leanings is virtually unchanged since last measured in July 2014.

There continue to be wide partisan and ideological differences in opinions about the Supreme Court's ideological leanings. A majority of liberal Democrats (56%) say the court is conservative; just 12% of conservative Republicans say the same. Nearly half of conservative Republicans (48%) see the court as liberal, compared with 8% of liberal Democrats. About four-in-ten conservative Republicans (38%) and 31% of liberal Democrats say the court is middle of the road.

Views of the Supreme Court's Ideology

% saying the Supreme Court is ...

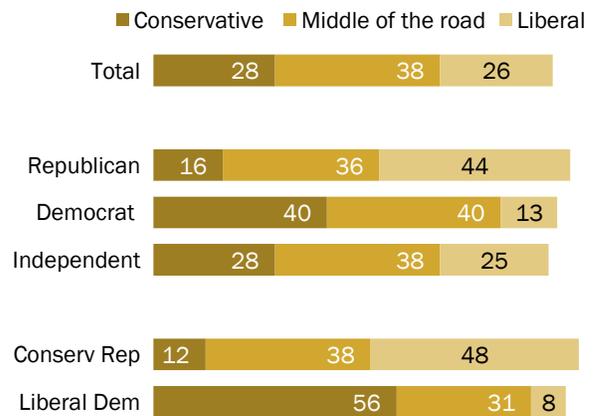


Survey conducted March 25-29, 2015.

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Liberals, Conservatives Have Very Different Views of Court's Ideology

% saying the Supreme Court is ...



Survey conducted March 25-29, 2015. Don't know responses not shown.

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About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted March 25-29 among a national sample of 1,500 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (525 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 975 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 567 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. 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 cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2013 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2014 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

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:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,500	2.9 percentage points
Republican	400	5.6 percentage points
Conservative	257	7.0 percentage points
Democrat	442	5.3 percentage points
Liberal	183	8.3 percentage points
Independent	574	4.7 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.

Pew Research Center is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization and a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
MARCH 2015 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
MARCH 25-29, 2015
N=1,500**

QUESTIONS 1-2, 14a PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**NO QUESTIONS 3-13****ASK ALL:**

Q.14 Would you say your overall opinion of **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]** is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? **[INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]** How about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[IF NECESSARY: Just in general, is your overall opinion of [ITEM] very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?] [INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]**

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
b. The Supreme Court								
Mar 25-29, 2015	50	8	42	39	12	26	1	11
Jul 8-14, 2014	52	8	44	38	14	24	1	9
Apr 23-27, 2014	56	11	44	35	12	23	*	9
Jul 17-21, 2013	48	7	41	38	14	24	1	13
Mar 13-17, 2013	52	7	45	31	10	21	2	15
Dec 5-9, 2012	53	8	45	36	12	24	1	10
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	51	10	41	37	14	23	1	11
Apr 4-15, 2012	52	11	41	29	10	20	*	18
July 1-5, 2010	58	9	49	25	8	17	1	16
Feb 3-9, 2010	58	8	50	27	8	19	*	15
Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	64	8	56	21	6	15	0	15
April, 2008	65	15	50	25	7	18	*	10
July, 2007	57	12	45	29	9	20	0	14
January, 2007	72	18	54	17	3	14	2	9
July, 2006	63	7	56	27	8	19	1	9
February, 2006	60	16	44	28	10	18	*	12
Late October, 2005	62	12	50	27	10	17	*	11
July, 2005	61	12	49	28	10	18	*	11
June, 2005	57	8	49	30	8	22	*	13
July, 2001	70	15	55	20	6	14	*	10
March, 2001	72	15	57	20	5	15	*	8
January, 2001	68	18	50	21	8	13	1	10
October, 1997	77	13	64	18	6	12	*	5
May, 1997	72	16	56	22	5	17	0	6
July, 1994	80	18	62	16	3	13	*	4
May, 1993	73	17	56	18	4	14	0	9
November, 1991	72	18	54	21	5	16	0	7
May, 1990	65	10	55	25	7	18	1	9
January, 1988	79	14	65	13	2	11	*	8
May, 1987	76	13	63	17	2	15	*	7
Roper: March 1985	64	17	47	28	7	21	--	8

QUESTIONS 14c-d HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Q.15 In your view, do you think the current Supreme Court is conservative, middle of the road, or liberal?

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Middle of the road</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Mar 25-29, 2015	28	38	26	8
Jul 8-14, 2014	27	38	26	8
Apr 23-27, 2014	25	35	31	8
Jul 17-21, 2013	23	42	26	9
Mar 13-17, 2013	22	40	24	14
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	41	23	12
Jul 1-5, 2010	23	39	23	14
Apr 21-26, 2010	24	36	24	16
July, 2007	36	35	14	15

**QUESTIONS 16, 25-27, 30, 32-33, 40-41, 43-45, 47-50, 57, 60-62, 70-71, 74-75, 80-81
PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

NO QUESTIONS 17-19, 23-24, 28-29, 31, 34-39, 42, 46, 51-56, 58-59, 63-69, 72-73, 76-79

QUESTIONS 20-22 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or 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.) <u>No preference</u>	(VOL.) <u>Other party</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Lean Rep</u>	<u>Lean Dem</u>
Mar 25-29, 2015	25	30	39	4	*	2	15	17
Feb 18-22, 2015	24	31	38	4	1	1	18	17
Jan 7-11, 2015	21	30	44	3	1	1	19	18
Dec 3-7, 2014	24	31	39	3	1	2	17	17
Nov 6-9, 2014	27	32	36	2	*	1	15	16
Oct 15-20, 2014	24	33	38	4	*	1	13	17
Sep 2-9, 2014	24	33	38	3	1	2	15	15
Aug 20-24, 2014	24	31	37	4	1	4	15	16
Jul 8-14, 2014	25	34	37	2	1	1	16	15
Apr 23-27, 2014	24	30	41	2	1	2	18	17
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	22	31	41	3	1	2	17	17
Yearly Totals								
2014	23.2	31.5	39.5	3.1	.7	2.0	16.2	16.5
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No <u>preference</u>	(VOL.) Other <u>party</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean <u>Rep</u>	Lean <u>Dem</u>
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

ASK REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):

TEAPARTY3 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

BASED ON REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS [N=627]:

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/ DK
Mar 25-29, 2015	35	11	52	1	1	--
Feb 18-22, 2015	36	9	54	*	*	--
Jan 7-11, 2015	34	9	54	1	2	--
Dec 3-7, 2014	34	9	55	2	1	--
Nov 6-9, 2014	31	10	57	1	1	--
Oct 15-20, 2014	32	8	56	2	2	--
Sep 2-9, 2014	38	10	50	1	1	--
Aug 20-24, 2014	34	10	53	*	2	--
Jul 8-14, 2014	35	12	50	2	1	--
Apr 23-27, 2014	33	11	54	1	1	--
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	37	11	50	1	1	--
Feb 14-23, 2014	36	9	54	1	1	--
Jan 15-19, 2014	35	12	52	1	*	--
Dec 3-8, 2013	32	9	57	1	1	--
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	40	9	48	2	1	--
Oct 9-13, 2013	41	11	45	2	1	--
Sep 4-8, 2013	35	9	54	1	1	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	37	10	50	2	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	9	46	1	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	41	7	48	1	3	--
May 1-5, 2013	28	8	61	2	1	--
Mar 13-17, 2013	43	7	47	1	1	--
Feb 13-18, 2013	36	9	52	1	3	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	43	9	45	1	2	--
Jan 9-13, 2013	35	10	51	2	2	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	11	51	1	*	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	40	8	49	1	2	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	9	50	1	3	--
Sep 12-16, 2012	39	7	52	1	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	40	9	47	2	1	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	36	9	53	1	2	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	38	10	49	2	1	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	40	7	51	1	1	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	42	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	37	8	52	1	1	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	40	9	48	2	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--

TEAPARTY3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	<u>(VOL.) Haven't heard of</u>	<u>(VOL.) Refused</u>	<u>Not heard of/ DK</u>
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	37	11	51	1	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	7	49	*	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	40	7	51	*	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	42	9	47	1	1	--
May 25-30, 2011	37	7	52	1	3	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	45	9	46	*	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	37	7	54	1	*	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	41	9	48	1	1	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 ¹	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	51	5	42	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	58	5	27	--	1	9
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	54	5	30	--	1	10
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	56	6	29	--	*	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	46	5	36	--	1	13
Jun 16-20, 2010	46	5	30	--	*	19
May 20-23, 2010	53	4	25	--	1	16
Mar 11-21, 2010	48	4	26	--	1	21

¹ In the February 2-7, 2011, survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."