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Democrats More Disappointed than Angry

Mixed Reactions to Senate Gun Vote

A Pew Research Center/Washington Post Survey

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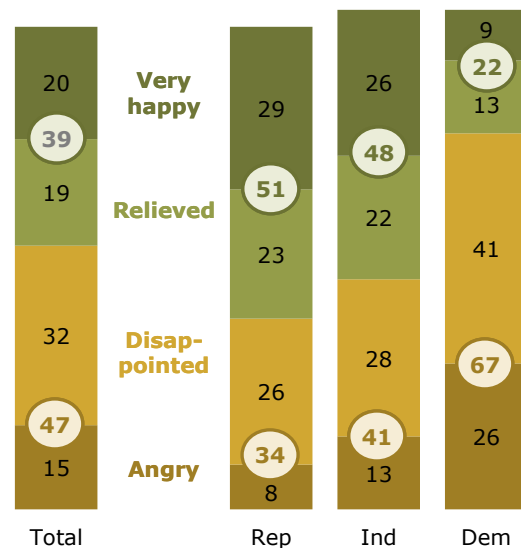
The key Senate vote that halted gun control legislation last week is drawing a mixed reaction from the American public: 47% express negative feelings about the vote while 39% have a positive reaction to the Senate’s rejection of gun control legislation that included background checks on gun purchases. Overall, 15% say they are *angry* this legislation was voted down and 32% say they are *disappointed*. On the other side, 20% say are *very happy* the legislation was blocked, while 19% say they are *relieved*.

The new national survey by the Pew Research Center and the Washington Post, conducted April 18-21 among 1,002 adults, finds a wide partisan gap in reactions. Just over half of Republicans are either very happy (29%) or relieved (23%) that the legislation was voted down, though roughly a third of Republicans say they are either disappointed (26%) or angry (8%). Among Democrats, fully two-thirds (67%) express negative sentiments about the legislation’s failure, with more saying they are disappointed (41%) than angry (26%).

Republicans and Democrats paid equally close attention to the gun debate last week: 40% across party lines say they tracked the events very closely, making it the second most closely followed story last week, after [the terrorist bombings at the Boston Marathon](#). About half of those who followed news about the gun control debate very closely last week had particularly strong reactions to the Senate vote – 31% say they are very happy about the outcome while 22% are angry. Among those who followed news about the debate less closely, only about a quarter offered such strong reactions.

Divided Reactions to Last Week’s Senate Gun Vote

What word best describes how you feel about the Senate voting down new gun control legislation that included background checks on gun purchases?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER/WASHINGTON POST April 18-21, 2013.

The overall balance of positive and negative reactions to the Senate vote tracks more closely to earlier measures of the public's broad views on gun control than to attitudes toward background checks specifically. [A Pew Research Center/USA TODAY survey in February](#) found the public divided over whether gun control (50%) or gun rights (46%) should be the higher priority. By contrast, making private gun sales and sales at gun shows subject to background checks was supported by an 83% to 15% margin in the February survey.

Despite stark political divisions in the Senate over the Toomey-Manchin legislation, there are relatively modest differences in public reactions in states represented by senators on both sides of the vote. Even in states where both senators voted in favor of the legislation, only about half of the constituents are angry or disappointed that the proposal failed. Similarly, in states where both members voted no only about half are very happy or relieved the bill was blocked.

Modest Differences in Public Reactions in States with Senators For, Against and Split on Bill

Reaction to Senate voting down gun legislation with background checks

	Very happy/ Relieved	Angry/ Disappointed	Other/ DK
	%	%	%
Nationwide total	39	47	14=100
<i>How senators from respondent's state voted on Toomey-Manchin bill</i>			
Both senators voted no (16 states)	46	37	17=100
One yes, one no (13 states)	36	49	15=100
Both senators voted yes (21 states)	38	51	11=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/WASHINGTON POST April 18-21, 2013.
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.
 See Appendix for how states are classified.

In the 21 states where both senators supported the legislation, including California, New York and Illinois, 51% say they are either angry or disappointed that the legislation failed, while 38% are very happy or relieved about the outcome. Just 16% of people in these states say they are angry the legislation was voted down, while 35% are simply disappointed.

In the 13 states where one senator voted in favor and one voted against the bill, such as Florida, Ohio and Arizona, the overall balance of opinion is similar: 49% say they are angry or disappointed, 36% very happy or relieved.

Reactions to the Senate vote are more positive in states represented by two senators who both voted against the legislation. In the 16 states where both senators voted against the

legislation, such as Texas, Georgia and Tennessee, 46% say they are very happy or relieved that the bill did not pass; 37% say they are angry or disappointed.

Appendix: Senate Vote on Toomey-Manchin Proposal by State

States with two senators voting yes:

CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, IL, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, NJ, NM, NY, OR, PA, RI, VT, VA, WA, WV

States with one senator voting yes and one senator voting no:

AZ, FL, IN, IA, LA, MO, MT, NV*, NH, NC, OH, SD, WI

* Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) originally voted yes, but then changed his vote to no so that he could reintroduce the proposal at a later time. For this analysis, Sen. Reid is considered a yes vote.

States with two senators voting no:

AL, AK, AR, GA, ID, KS, KY, MS, NE, ND, OK, SC, TN, TX, UT, WY

Source: [U.S. Senate](#)

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted April 18-21, 2013 among a national sample of 1,002 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (501 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 501 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 237 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Universal Survey 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. 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://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2011 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, based on extrapolations from the 2012 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. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. 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	1,002	3.7 percentage points
Republicans	239	7.6 percentage points
Democrats	316	6.6 percentage points
Independents	362	6.2 percentage points
<i>On gun legislation ...</i>		
Both senators voted no	219	7.9 percentage points
One yes, one no	261	7.3 percentage points
Both senators voted yes	520	5.2 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
April 18-21, 2013, OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,002

PEW.1a, c-e PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
b. Debate over gun control in the U.S.					
April 18-21, 2013	39	27	16	18	*
April 4-7, 2013	37	28	17	18	*
February 14-17, 2013	37	29	15	19	*
January 31-February 3, 2013	42	32	13	12	1
January 3-6, 2013	34	30	18	16	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
January 17-20, 2013: <i>President Obama announcing proposals for strengthening gun laws</i>	43	29	15	13	1
June, 1999: <i>Debates about gun control legislation in Congress and state legislatures</i>	28	37	22	12	1

ASK ALL:

PEW.2¹ As you may know, the U.S. Senate voted DOWN new gun control legislation, including background checks on gun purchases. Which word best describes how you feel about the fact that this gun legislation did not pass? **[READ; READ IN REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF SAMPLE]?**
[INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS THAT THEY ARE INDIFFERENT OR WOULDN'T CARE, CODE IN PUNCH 8]

Apr 18-21	
<u>2013</u>	
20	Very happy
19	Relieved
32	Disappointed
15	Angry
10	None/Other/Indifferent (VOL.)
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTIONS PEW.3-PEW.6

PEW.7-PEW.16 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

¹ PEW.2 asked in conjunction with *The Washington Post*.