

PewResearchCenter

# **The Mood of the American Electorate – and What it Means**

**Carroll Doherty**

*Director of Political Research*

*@CarrollDoherty*

---

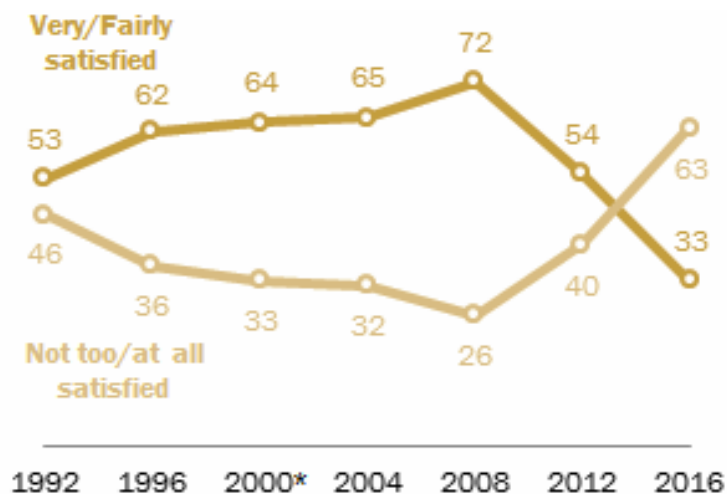
# **‘This is not a normal election ...’**

*Hillary Clinton, July 2016*

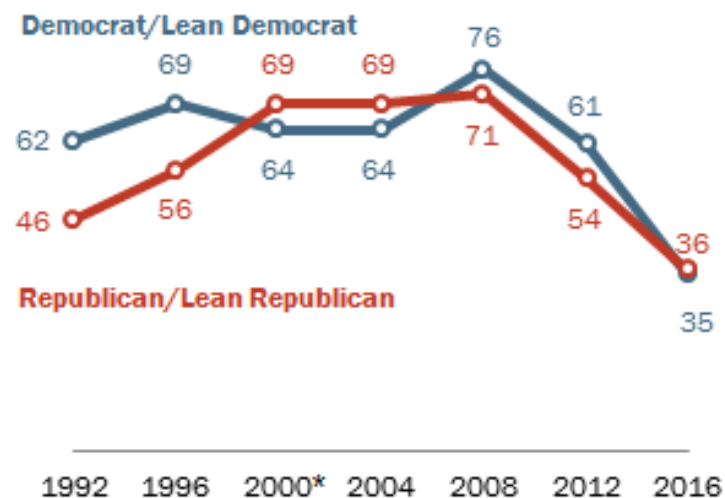
---

# Voter satisfaction with presidential choices at historic low

% of registered voters who are \_\_\_\_\_ with the choices of presidential candidates



% **very/fairly satisfied** with the choices of presidential candidates



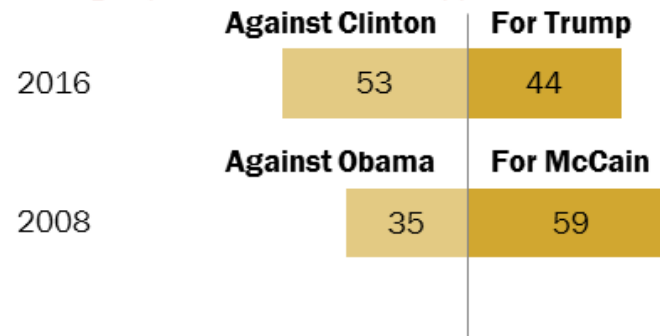
Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey conducted August 9-September 2, 2016.

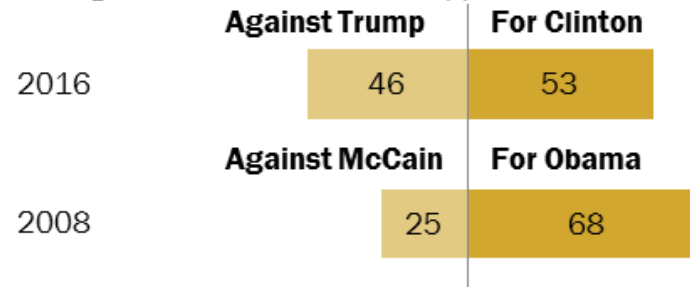
# 'Negative voting' has increased

Would you say your choice is more a vote **FOR** \_\_\_\_\_ or **AGAINST** \_\_\_\_\_ ?

## Among Republican candidate supporters



## Among Democratic candidate supporters

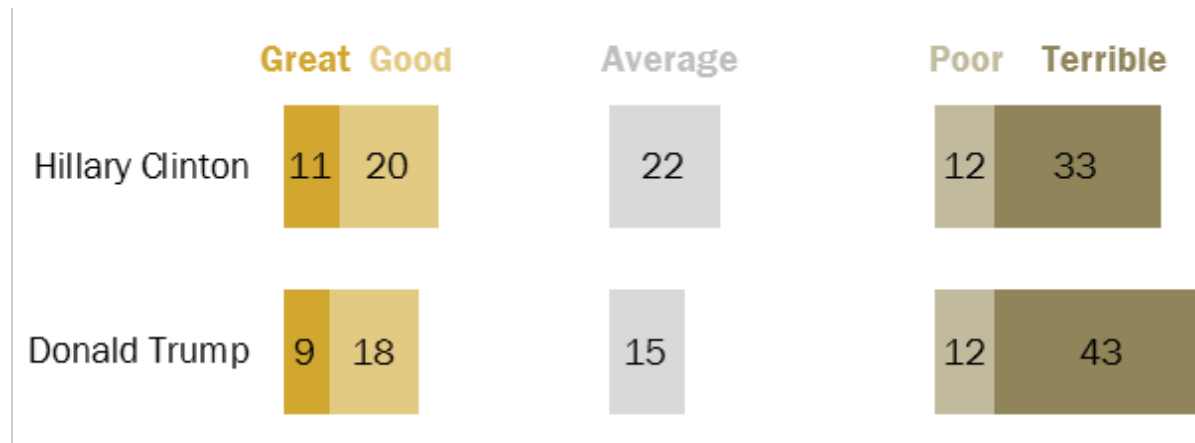


Source: Survey conducted August 9-16, 2016.

Note: Based on registered voters.

## A choice between 'lesser evils'

*% of registered voters saying each would be a \_\_\_\_ president if elected*



Note: Based on registered voters.

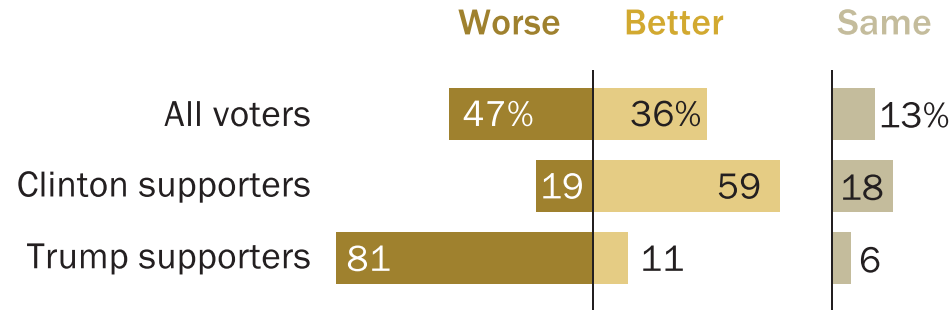
Source: Survey conducted August 9-16, 2016.

## **Why Trump? Why Now?**

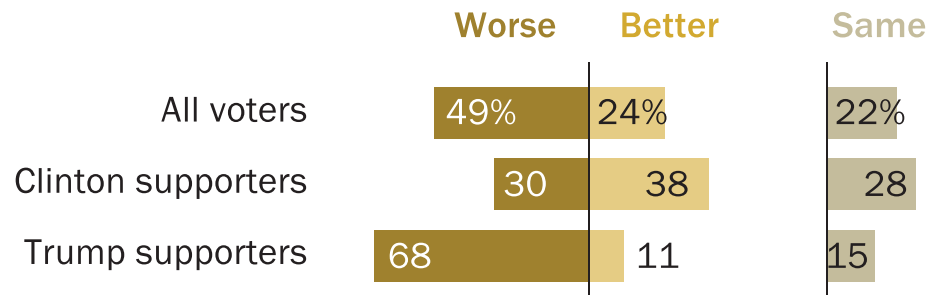
- A deeply unhappy GOP base, demanding change**
- A crowded primary field and a divided GOP electorate**
- A candidacy tailored for the changing media environment**

# Trump supporters deeply negative about nation's path – past and future

*Compared with 50 years ago, life for people like you in America today is...*



*The future of the next generation of Americans will be \_\_\_\_ compared with life today (%)*

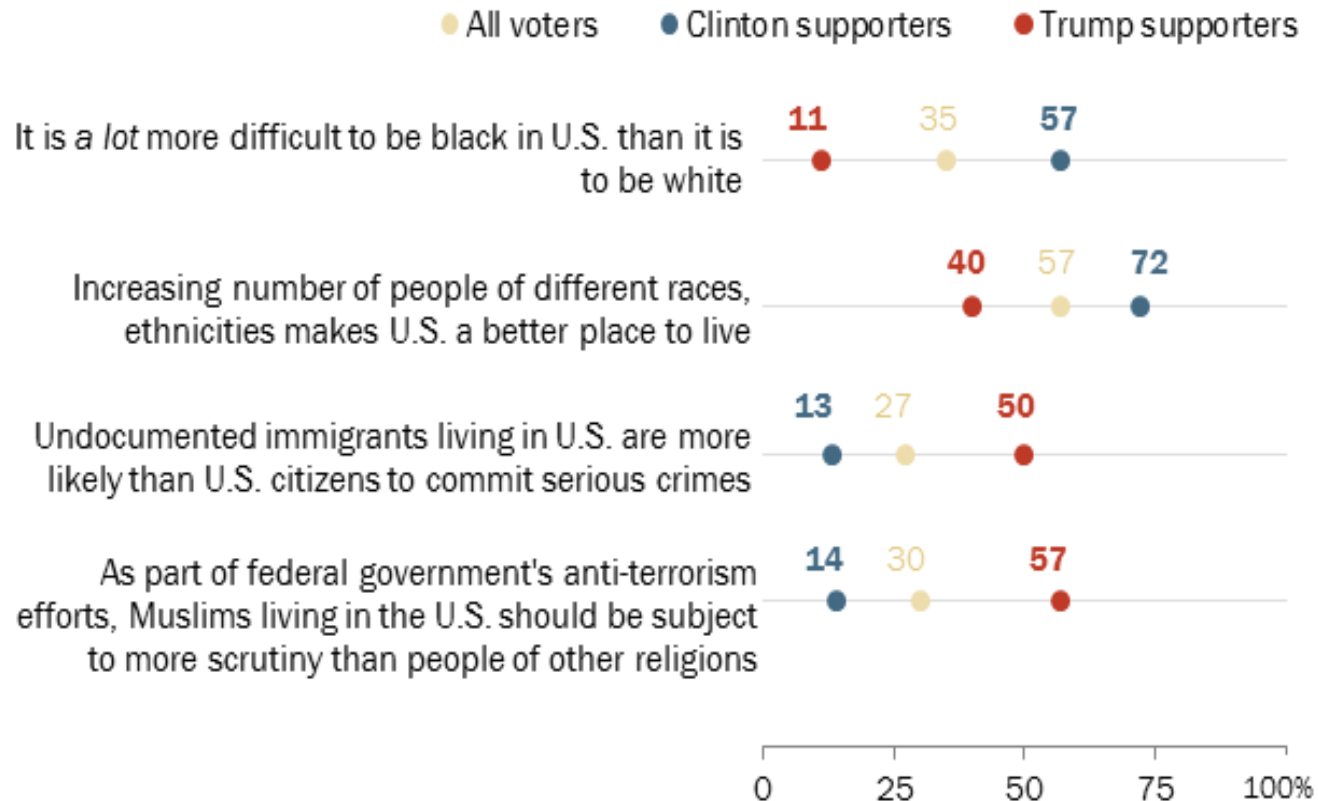


Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey conducted August 9-16, 2016.

# Sharp divides in voters' views of race, immigration, Muslims in the U.S.

*% of registered voters who say ...*



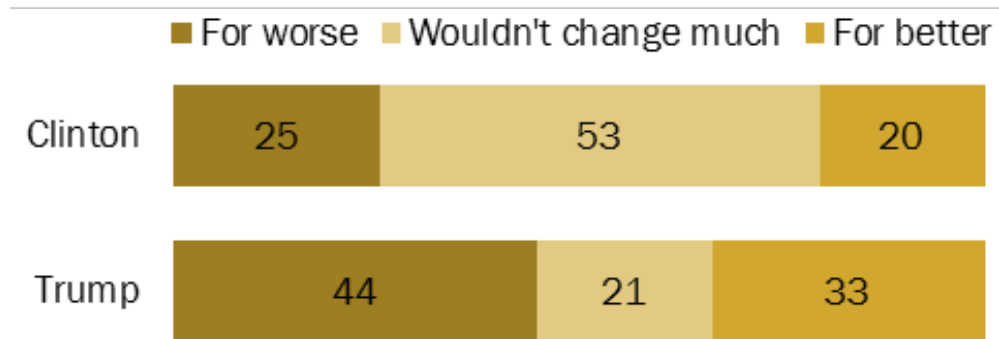
Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Surveys conducted June 7-July 15, 2016 and August 9-16, 2016.



# Trump would bring 'change' – but positive change?

*% who of voters who say \_\_\_\_ would change the way things work in Washington ...*



Notes: Based on registered voters. Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey conducted June 15-26, 2016.

# Were voters more 'angry?'

## No, but Trump tapped into latent GOP anger

	<i>Feeling toward federal government ...</i>			<i>Feeling about politics today ...</i>		
	<b>Basically content</b>	<b>Frustrated</b>	<b>Angry</b>	<b>Basically content</b>	<b>Frustrated</b>	<b>Angry</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
All voters	17	59	22	9	67	23
<i>Among Rep/Lean Rep, support ...</i>						
Trump	1	48	50	3	56	40
Cruz	8	62	30	7	69	24
Kasich	10	72	18	4	77	18
<i>Among Dem/Lean Dem, support ...</i>						
Clinton	34	57	6	18	63	18
Sanders	21	65	13	9	74	14

Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey conducted March 17-27, 2016.

---

## **As election approaches, a look at key voter groups**

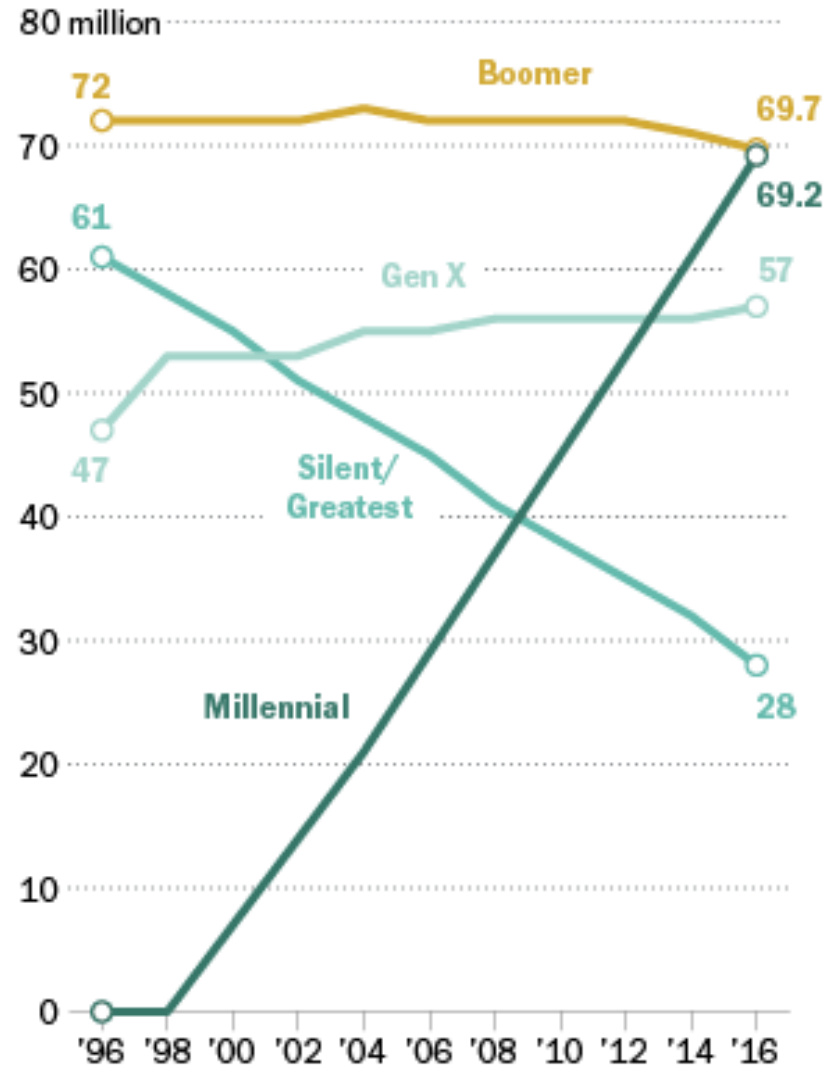
---

# Millennials will make up a larger share of the electorate

*Eligible voters by generation, 1996-2016*

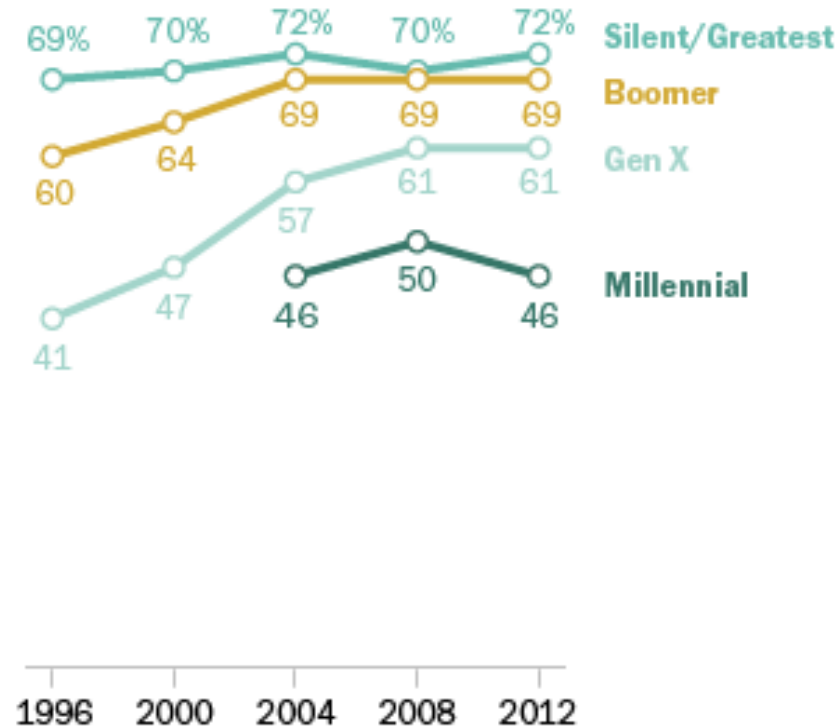
Note: Eligible voters are U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Millennials refers to population ages 18 to 35 as of 2016.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 1996-2014 Current Population Survey November Supplement and the April 2016 Current Population Survey



## But young people historically vote at lower rates

*% of eligible voters who say they voted*

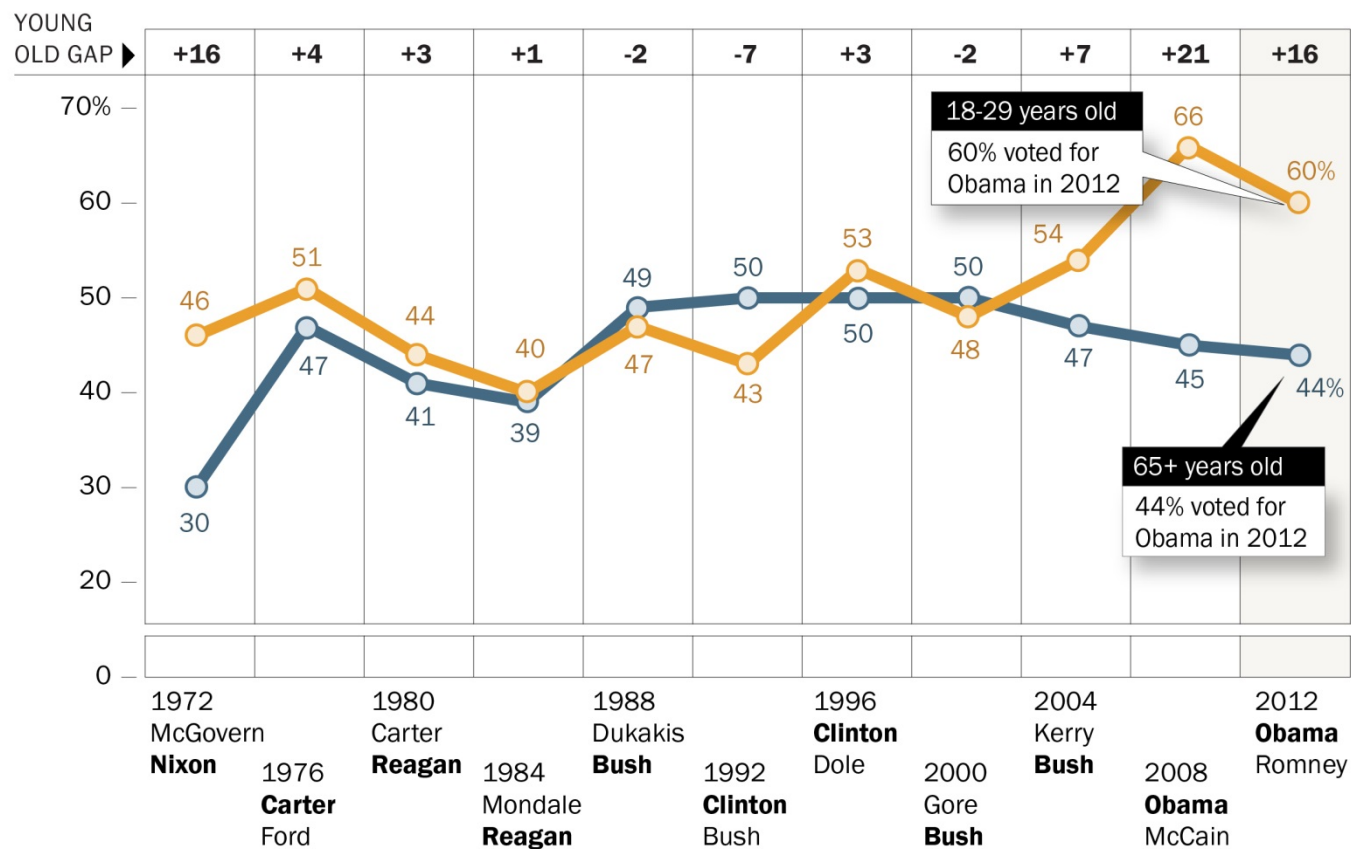


Note: Eligible voters are U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Millennials refers to population ages 18 to 35 as of 2016.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 1996-2014 Current Population Survey November Supplement and the April 2016 Current Population Survey

# The Young/Old Voting Gap, 1972-2012

*% voting for Democratic candidate*

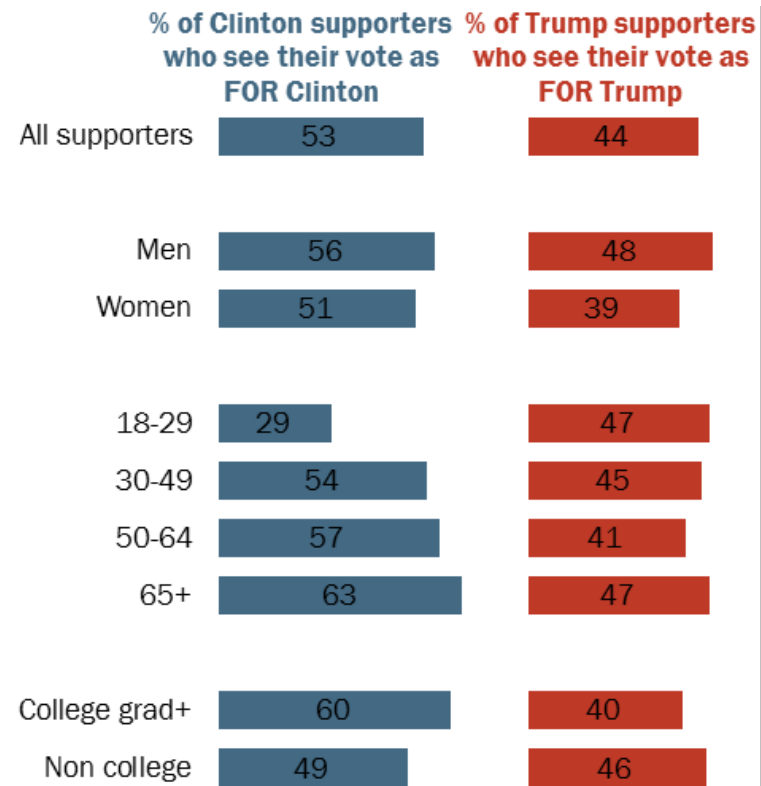


Note: From 1972 through 1988 oldest age category is 60 and older.

Source: Based on exit polls.

# Clinton's young supporters less likely to say they are voting 'for' her

*Among registered voters ...*



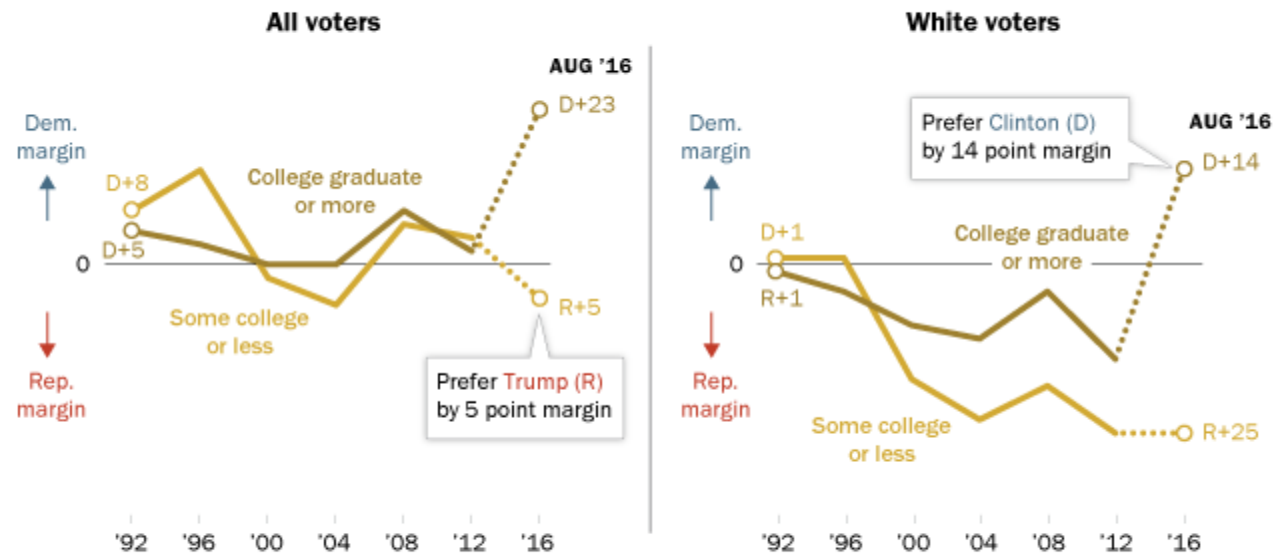
Notes: Based on registered voters. Insufficient sample sizes for Republicans who support/lean toward Clinton and for Democrats who support/lean toward Trump.

Source: Survey conducted August 9-16, 2016.

# Trump may face deficit among highly educated whites

## A widening educational divide in presidential preferences

*Presidential candidate preference, by educational attainment*



Note: Based on registered voters.

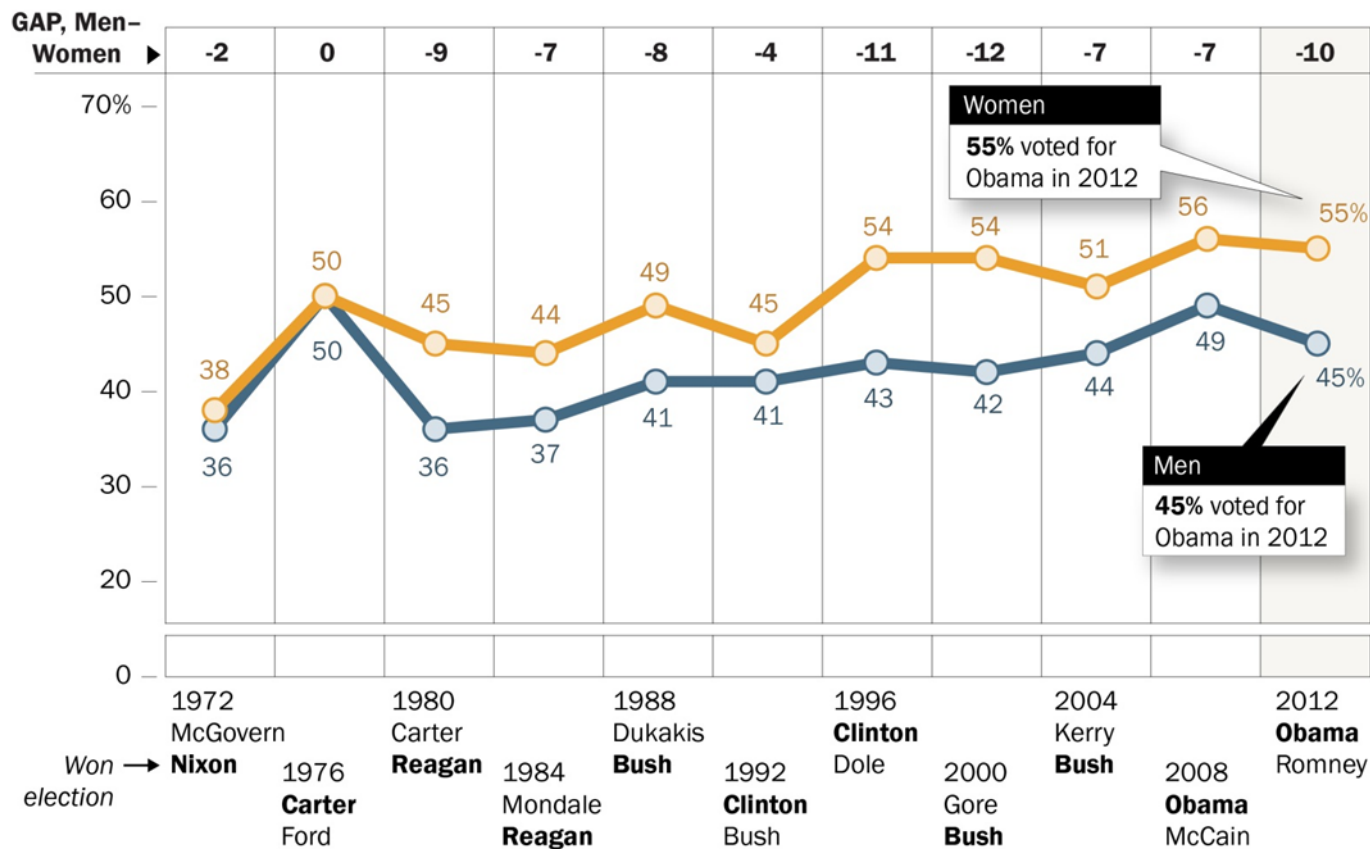
Source: Survey conducted Aug. 9-16, 2016. 1992-2012 data from national exit polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



# Gender gap is not new, but may grow in 2016

*% voting for Democratic candidate*



Source: Based on exit polls.

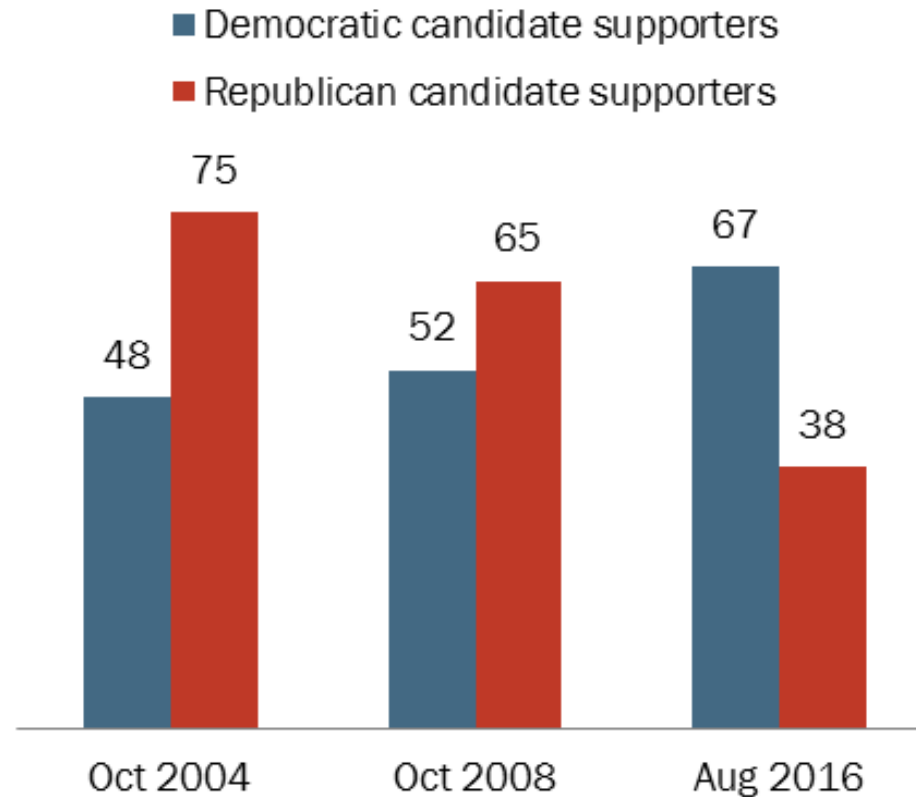
---

## **Looking ahead to November – and beyond**

---

# Most Republicans are dubious about an accurate vote count

*% of registered voters 'very confident' their vote will be accurately counted*



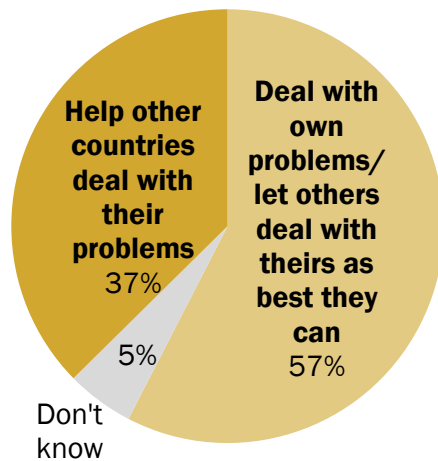
Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey conducted August 9-16, 2016.

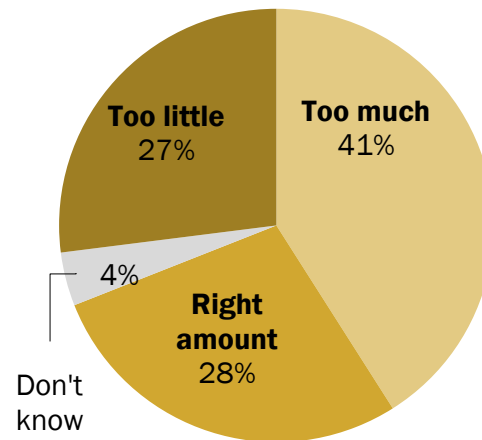
# U.S. global role: Public is wary of involvement

*% saying each ...*

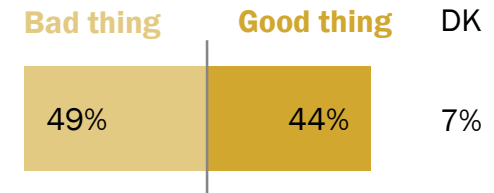
*U.S. should ...*



*In terms of solving world problems, the U.S. does ...*



*U.S. involvement in global economy is a ...*

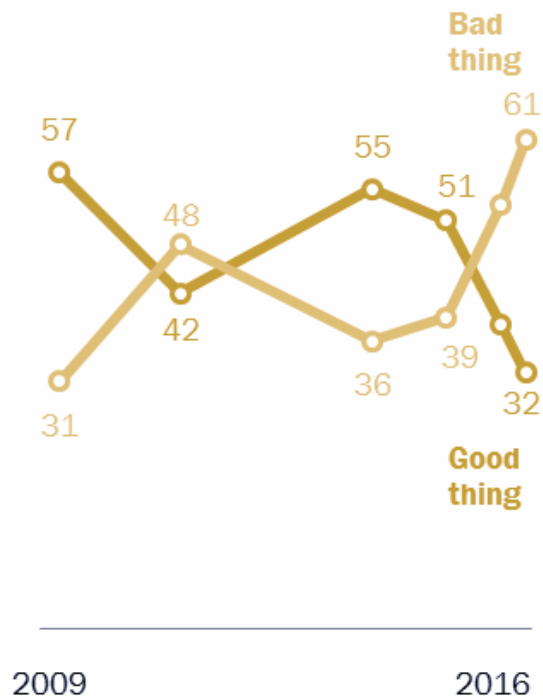


Source: Survey conducted April 12-19, 2016.

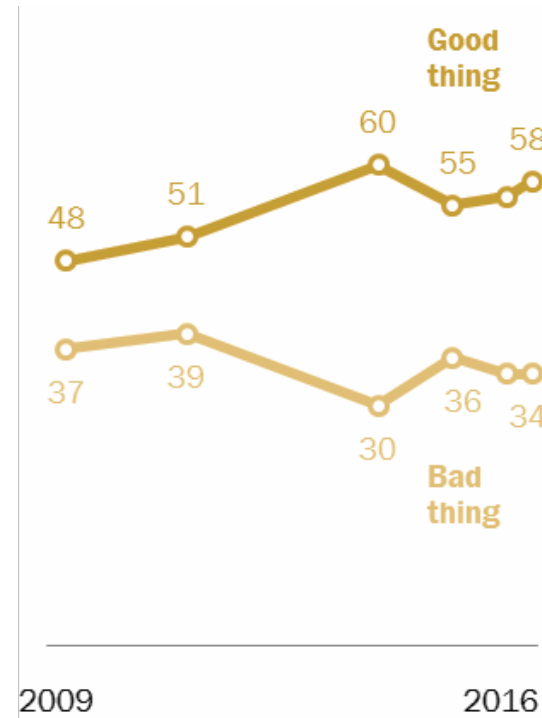
# Views on free trade – divided and polarized

% of registered voters who say *free trade agreements*  
have been a \_\_\_\_ for the U.S. ...

Among **Republican and Republican-leaning** registered voters



Among **Democratic and Democratic-leaning** registered voters

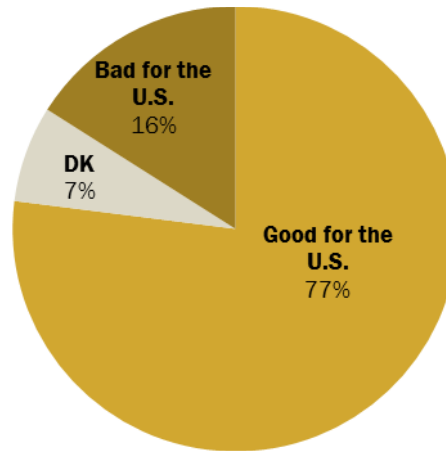


Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey conducted August 9-16, 2016.

## NATO widely seen as good for the U.S. ...

*% who say being a member of NATO is ...*



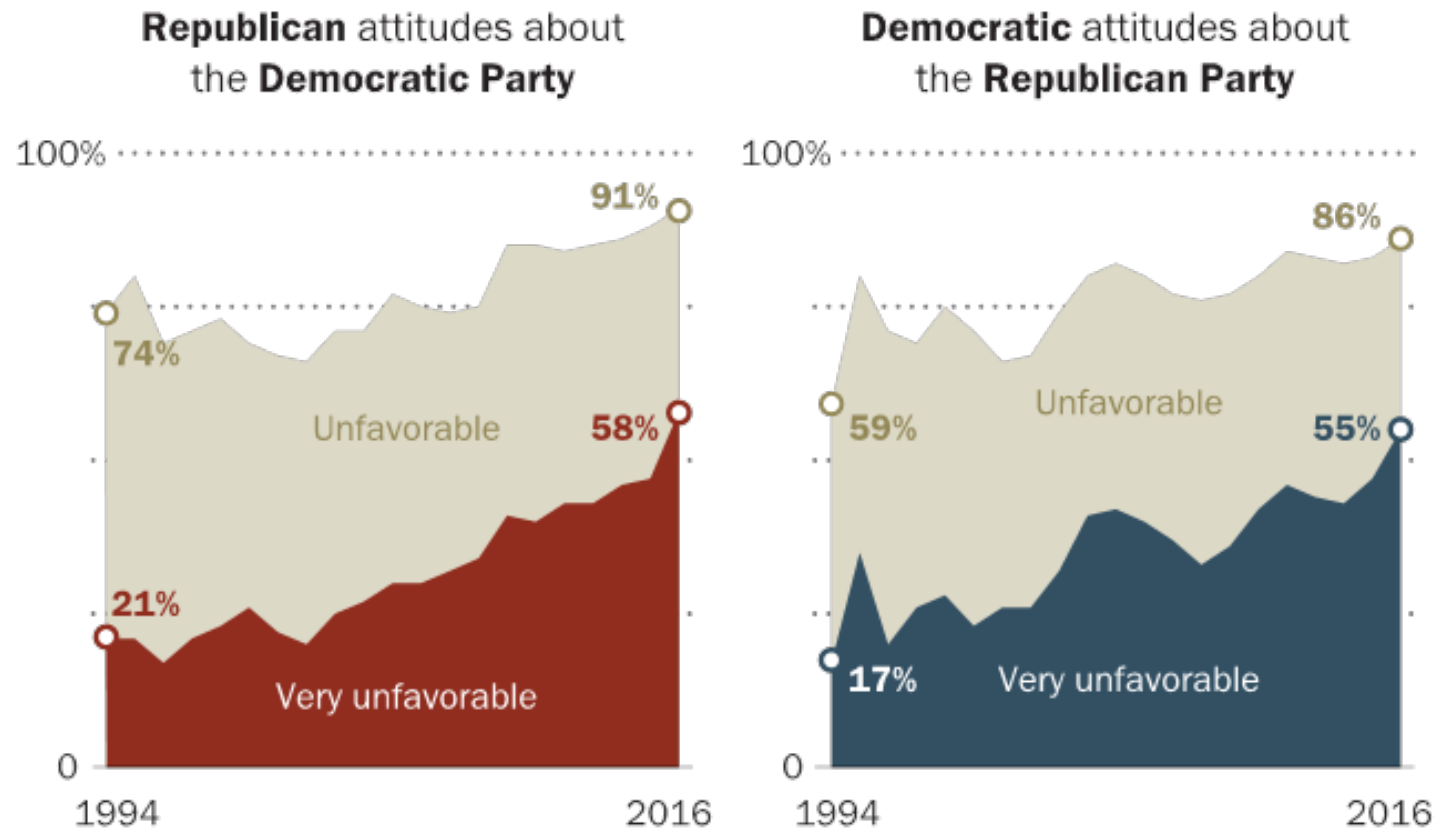
## But many see NATO as more important to other allies

*% who say NATO alliance is ...*



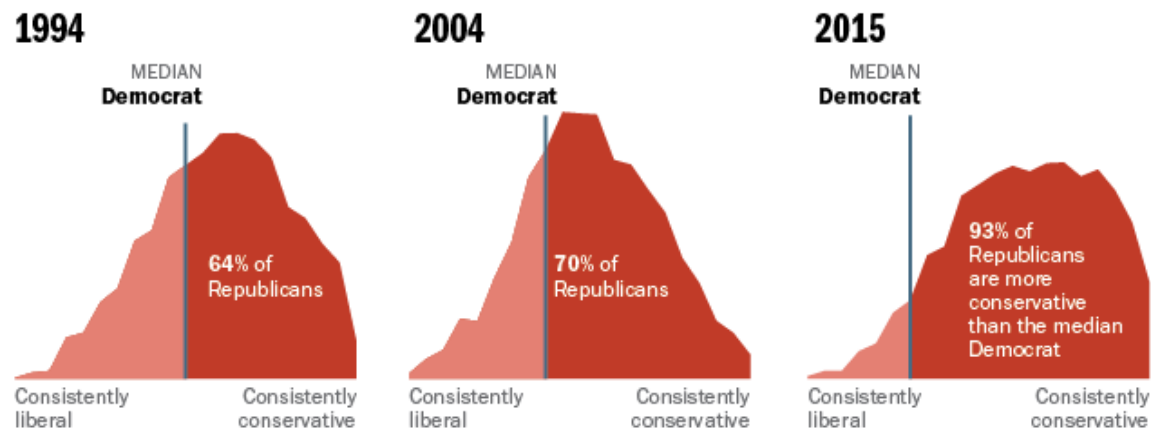
Source: Survey conducted April 12-19, 2016.

# At home, next president will face deep political polarization

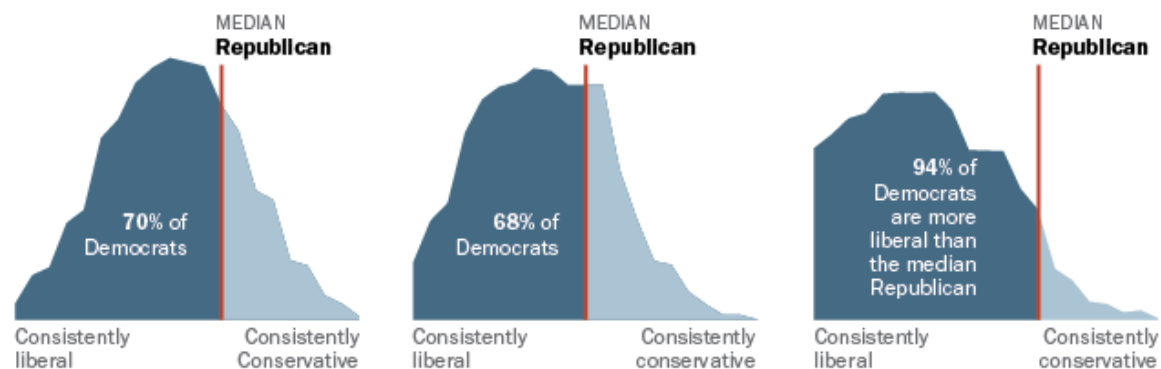


Source: Surveys conducted 1994, 1999, 2004, 2014 and 2015.

## Republicans shift to the right



## Democrats shift to the left

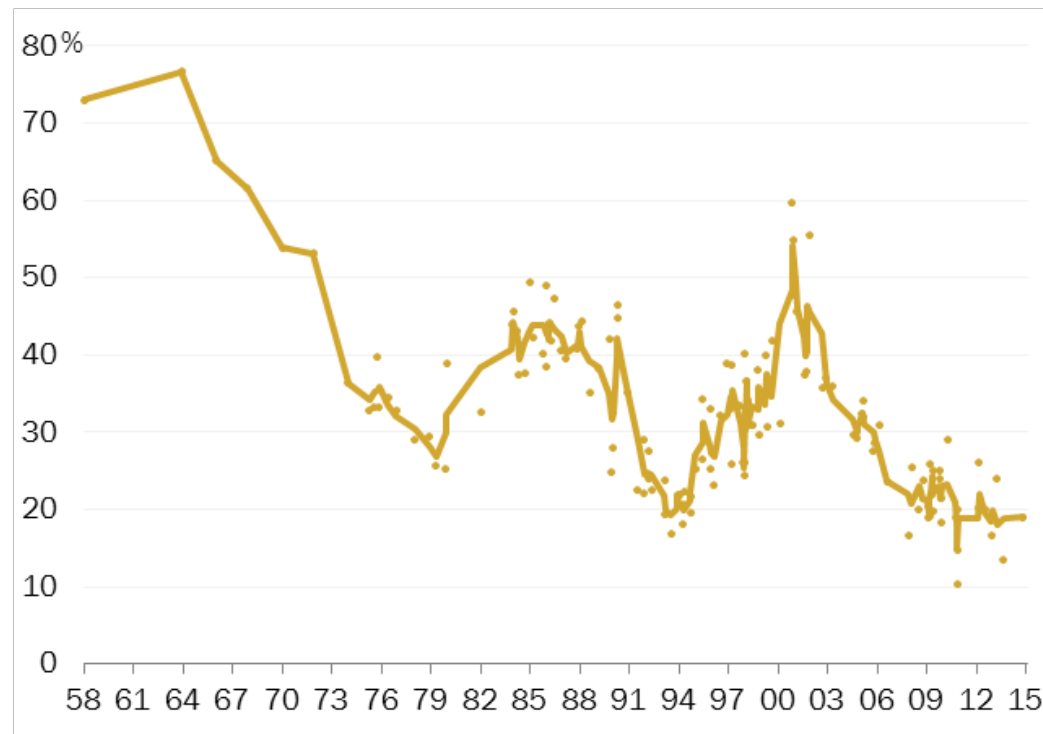


Source: Surveys conducted 1994, 2004 and 2015.  
Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions.



# Persistently low levels of trust in the federal government

*Trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time ...*



Source: Survey conducted August 27-October 4, 2015.

# What is Pew Research Center?

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It does not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. It studies U.S. politics and policy; journalism and media; internet, science and technology; religion and public life; Hispanic trends; global attitudes and trends; and U.S. social and demographic trends. All of the Center's reports are available at [www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org). Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

Follow us on Twitter at:



@pewresearch  
@facttank

