



Center for Communication and
Civic Renewal at the University of
Wisconsin-Madison

100 Days Under Trump

Public Reactions to Attacks on American Governance & Institutions

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON THIS REPORT:**

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Introduction

One hundred days after President Donald Trump's return to power – with his executive actions against marginalized groups, civic institutions, the rule of law, and fundamental principles of democracy – how have public perceptions and attitudes changed?

In this survey report, we investigate public awareness of and support for Trump's major actions in his first 100 days, changes in economic perceptions, changes in major policy attitudes, and changes in the public's institutional trust.

This report builds on our analysis of public attitudes just before the 2024 presidential election, reinterviewing the same respondents from seven months ago to track continuity and change.

Key Findings

Trump's First 100 Days

- **Awareness:** Most Americans, ranging from 62% to 85%, are at least “somewhat” familiar with ten of Trump's most significant actions. Americans are most familiar with Trump's efforts to deport immigrants and tariffs against China, and least familiar with Trump's illegal attempts to override federal budgets set by Congress. Democrats report slightly more familiarity than Republicans, with gaps from 2% to 10%.
- **Support:** None of the ten Trump actions we asked about win majority support. The closest are deportation at 49% and Ukraine aid cuts at 41%. Trump cuts to university grants are least popular at 32%, and the rest fall between 32% and 39% support (ending birthright citizenship, ignoring Congressional budgets, “DEI” cuts, DOGE data access, tariffs, federal employee firings). Republicans are roughly 60% more supportive than Democrats across all actions. 48% say Trump has overstepped his legal authority, and 33% say he has not.

Perceptions of Economic Conditions

- **National economy:** The public overwhelming believes the national economy is worse now than it was one year ago with 61% saying worse, and just 13% saying better. Comparing perceptions from the same respondents in October 2024, Democrats and Republicans largely swapped perceptions on economic health, while Independents barely moved.
- **Personal finances:** Evaluations of their own family's finances largely mirrored national economic perceptions, but the partisan differences were much more muted.

Changes in Public Policy Views

- **Continuity:** Public attitudes on policies largely remained static, defying common trends that move against the current administration. We find slight shifts of a few percentage points on a couple issues that balance out in liberal and conservative directions, perhaps leaning slightly conservative overall.

Changing Public Trust in Institutions & Groups

- **Stability:** Trust in governing institutions and controversial social groups remained largely stable between October 2024 and May 2025.
- **Levels:** Public trust was highest for the military, at 57% and lowest for big corporations at just 12%. Republicans trusted the Trump administration (72%), the military (76%), and police (70%) most. Democrats expressed most trust for colleges (61%), labor unions (52%), and college graduates (51%).

100 Days Among Media Audiences

- **Awareness:** Republicans who regularly consumed rightwing media were more aware of Trump actions than Republicans who regularly consumed mainstream news only.
- **Support:** Republicans in rightwing media echo chambers were most likely to support Trump's policy actions and to perceive the economy and their own personal finances as much better than a year before.
- **Mainstream media:** All respondents, but especially Republicans, who used mainstream media to keep up with current events were less supportive of DOGE activities and less supportive of the president's seismic policy changes. However, mainstream news consumers were less aware of many of the unprecedented actions the president has taken.

1. Major Trump Actions in the First 100 Days

We asked our survey respondents how much they had heard about ten major Trump administration actions, and whether they supported or opposed those actions.¹ Those actions were:

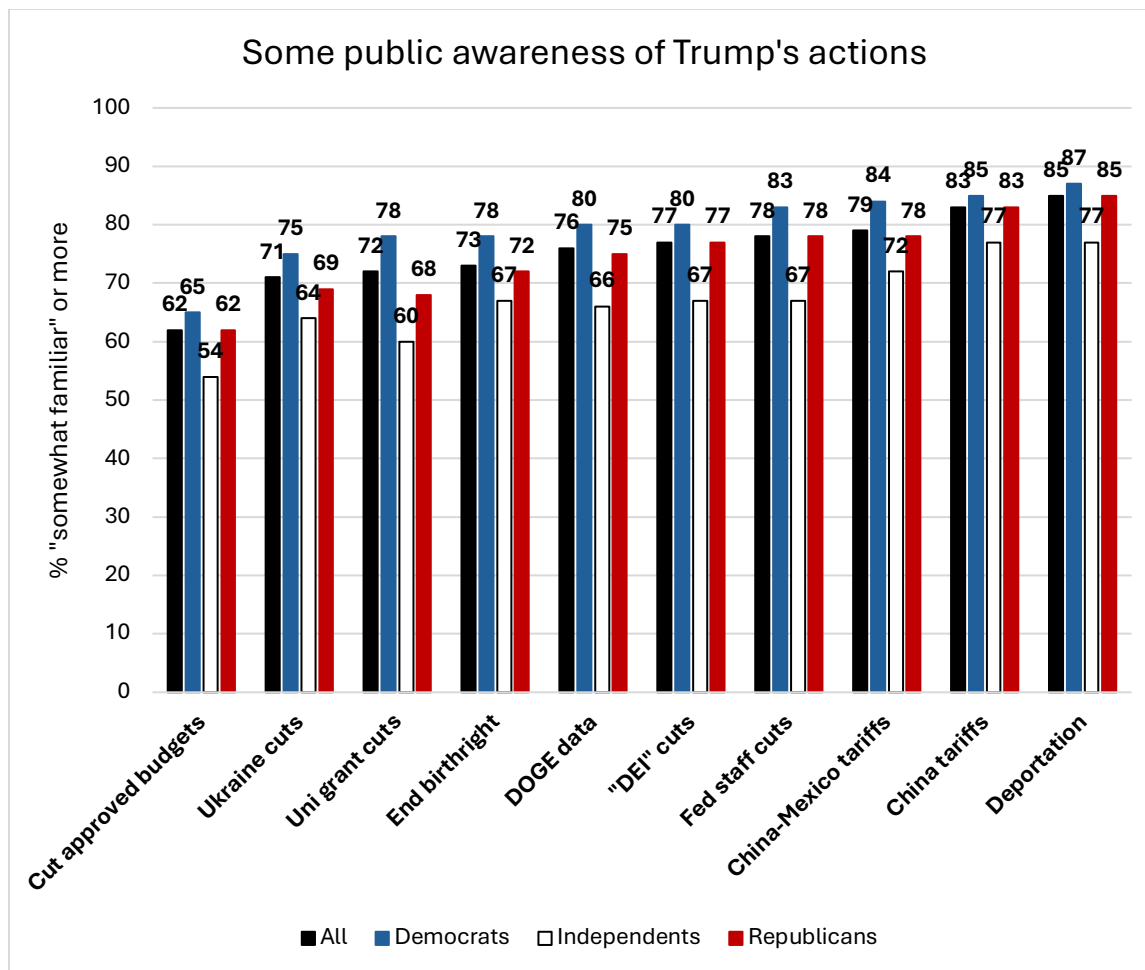
- 1) Trump refusing to spend money mandated to be spent by Congress under the law,
- 2) Trump's proposal to end birthright citizenship – something that has clearly and unequivocally provided automatic citizenship for everyone born in the U.S. under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution,
- 3) Trump's cuts in U.S. support for Ukraine's war to stop the Russian invasion,
- 4) Trump's efforts to end federal support for any institutions engaged in "DEI issues" – referencing diversity, equity, and inclusion, which, in practice seems to involve any mention of race, sex, religion, or other group categories,
- 5) Trump's deportation program, which has detained or removed people lawfully present in the U.S. without due process, even sending hundreds to a notorious slave labor prison in dictator-run El Salvador,
- 6) Trump giving data access to "DOGE" workers involving private tax, health, and other data on 350 million Americans despite the Privacy Act of 1974 forbidding this sort of access,
- 7) Trump canceling large university research grants and changing payment agreements in ways that are likely to cripple university budgets and substantially diminish U.S. global dominance in research and education,
- 8) Trump's enormous tariffs against China, our largest trading partner,
- 9) Trump's enormous cuts to federal workers who provide public services,
- 10) Trump's large tariffs against Mexico, our second largest trading partner. (We asked a combined China-Mexico question for comparison to the China-only question.)

Does the public know what Trump is doing?

Is the public aware of Trump's actions? We asked about each action on a 5-point response scale, ranging from "not at all" to "extremely familiar."

¹ Here is the wording for the ten policy questions:

- a. Reducing Congressionally-approved budgets
- b. Ending birthright citizenship for children of non-citizens
- c. Reducing U.S. aid to Ukraine
- d. Cutting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs
- e. Deporting undocumented immigrants
- f. Empowering Elon Musk and DOGE to access sensitive government data
- g. Cutting federal research grants awarded to Universities
- h. Imposing new tariffs to imported products
- i. Reducing the number of federal government employees

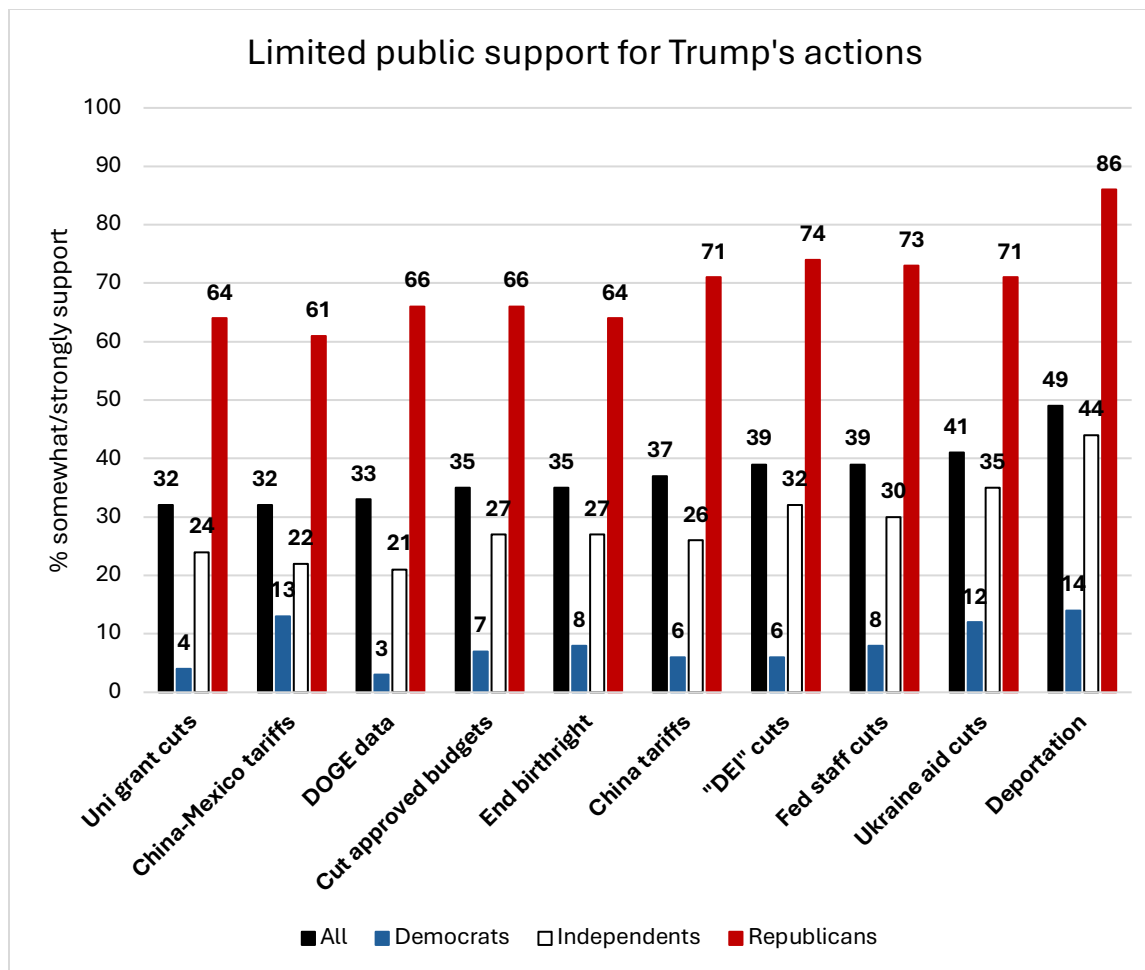


The public was most familiar with Trump's broad deportation efforts, tariff policies, and anti-"DEI" efforts, with familiarity around 80%. The public was least familiar (but still substantially aware of) Trump's cuts to congressionally approved federal agency budgets. The rest of the actions fell in between, in the 70% range.

Republicans claimed to know less about what was going on, but the difference compared to Democrats was small, at 10 points or less.

Does the public support what Trump is doing?

We also asked respondents about their level of support or opposition to each Trump action on 5-point support/oppose scales.



Overall, the public opposed each of Trump's initiatives. Public support ranged from a low of 32% for funding cuts to university research grants to a high of 49% for deportation actions. While he got majority support on each from Republicans, support among Independents rarely crested 30%, and Democrats provided less than 15% support on each one.

The Trump administration hasn't just been active in making seismic policy change but has done so in what appears to be plain violation of the law, in many unprecedented ways. We asked whether Trump had overstepped his legal authority in making cuts to spending authorized by Congress.

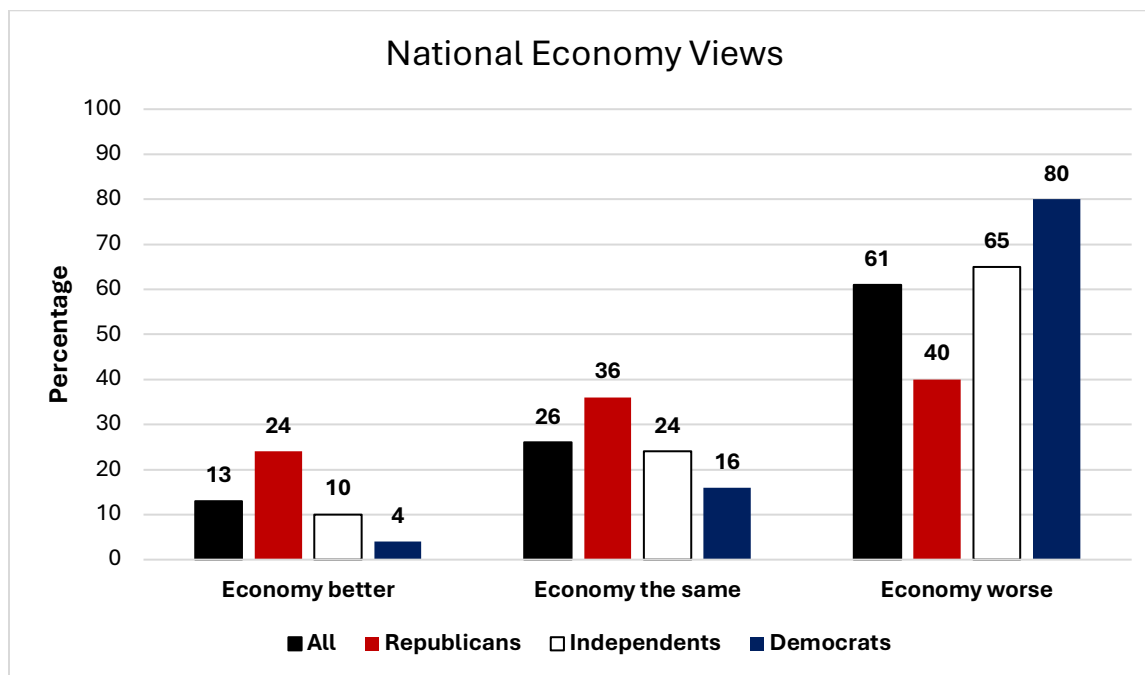
48% of respondents responded that Trump had overstepped his authority, including 83% of Democrats but just 13% of Republicans. 19% of the full sample were unsure, including 10% of Democrats and 23% of Republicans. And 33% of the sample claimed Trump has acted within his legal authority, including 7% of Democrats and 64% of Republicans.

2. Perceptions of National Economy & Personal Finances

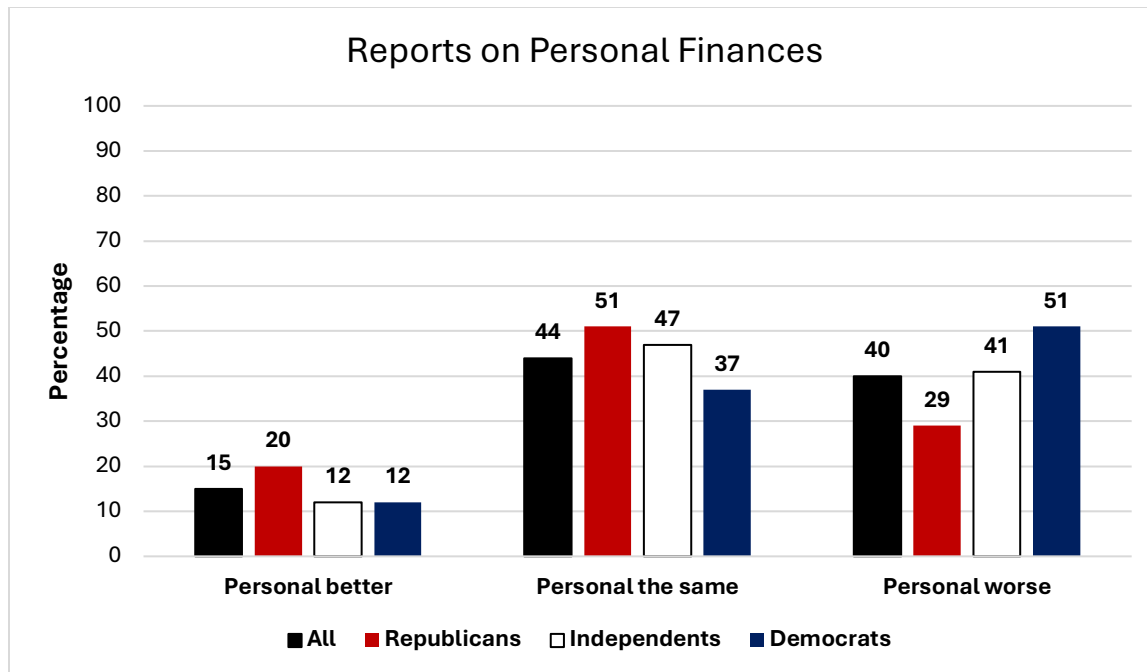
Public perceptions of the economy play an important role in how voters evaluate the current leaders in power, and economic performance often affects the amount of leverage that presidents have for enacting their broader agenda. So how does the public view the national economy 100 days into this Trump presidency?

The public varies a lot in knowledge of national conditions (usually just broad outlines at most – perhaps levels of unemployment or stock markets, for example), and partisans often evaluate their own party through rose colored glasses while attributing much worse conditions to their opponents. We asked our panel whether they think the national economy is doing better, worse, or about the same compared to one year ago, under Democratic President Joe Biden.

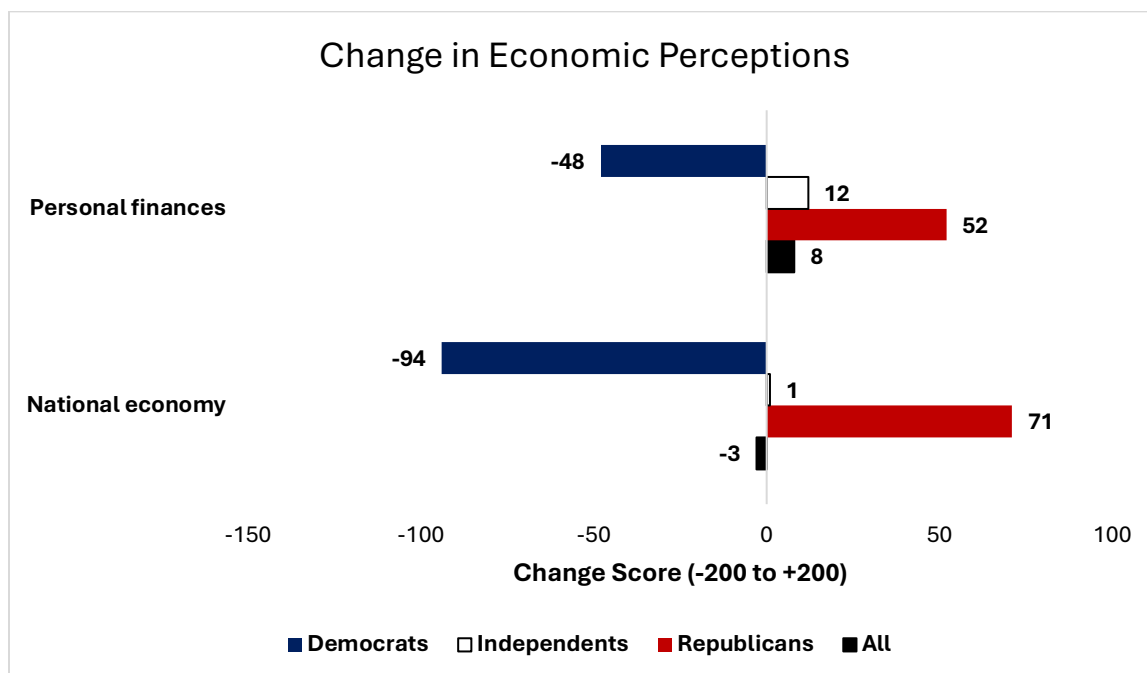
Only 13% said the economy is better than the year before, even with a 20-point gap in evaluations between Republicans and Democrats. Sixty one percent said the economy is worse than a year ago, including 80% of Democrats versus just 40% of Republicans.



The gap between partisans is much less dramatic for personal finances than for national economic conditions, though it remains substantial. Nearly three times as many people said their family finances were worse off compared to better off (40% vs. 15%), with no change the most common response (44%). Democrats were much more likely to say their personal finances had gotten worse in the past year than Republicans.



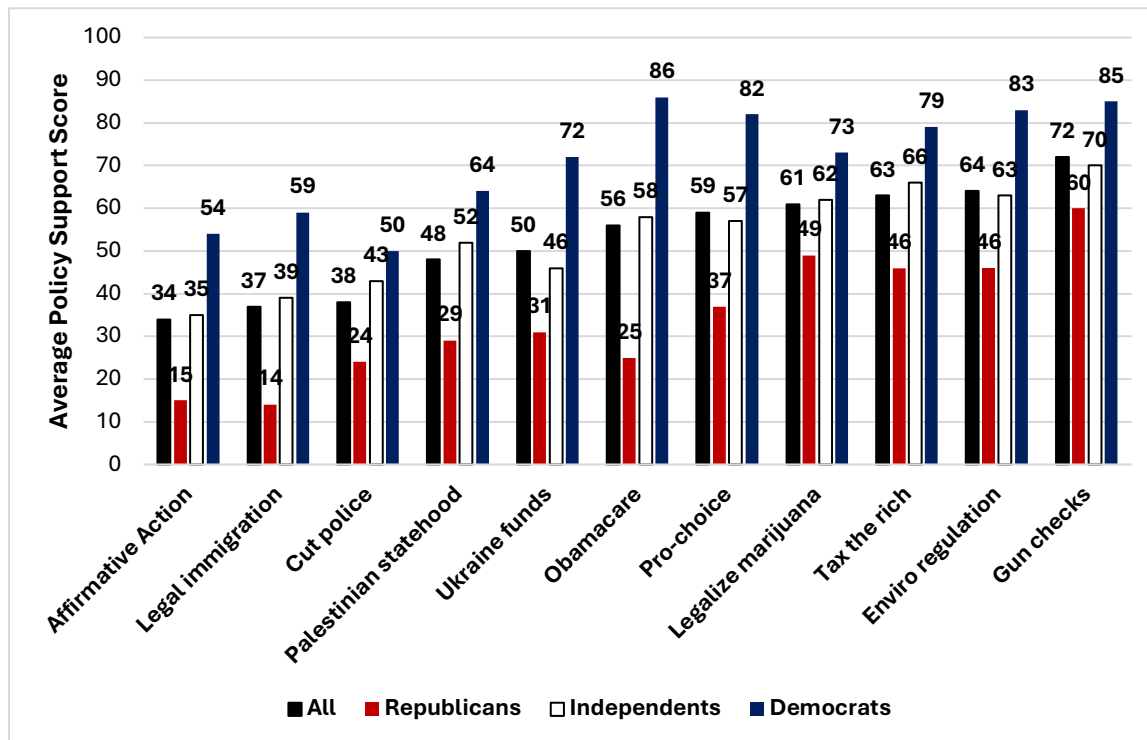
Since we asked both questions to the same people back in our October 2024 survey, we can see the economic shifts among the same respondents. Across the full sample. We see little net change – a 3-point decline in national economy perceptions and an 8-point rise in personal finances. However, that general stasis hides substantial individual level change as Democrats and Republicans dramatically reversed their perspectives on both kinds of economic evaluations coinciding with the partisan change in presidential administrations.



3. Continuity & Change in Policy Views

What does public support look like across many policy areas in Spring 2025? We asked questions 5-point support response scales, with opposing positions anchoring 1 and 5. We report average scores scaled from 0 (most conservative) to 100 (most liberal), rather than percentages, with 50 as the neutral or indifferent point between them.

We find a huge range in support across both liberal and conservative policies. The most definitive public position (closest to 0 or 100) supported gun background checks at 72 out of 100, which still means a lot of mixed and opposing views. Support for environmental regulation was the next most, with a score of 64. These are both liberal. The public's most conservative positions leaned against increasing legal immigration (37) and against affirmative action (34). Everything else was middling.



Party differences were biggest on Obamacare (61 points) and abortion and legal immigration (both 45 points). Party differences on these polarized issues were smallest for legalizing marijuana (24 points), gun background checks (25 points), cutting police budgets (26 points), and taxing the rich (33 points).

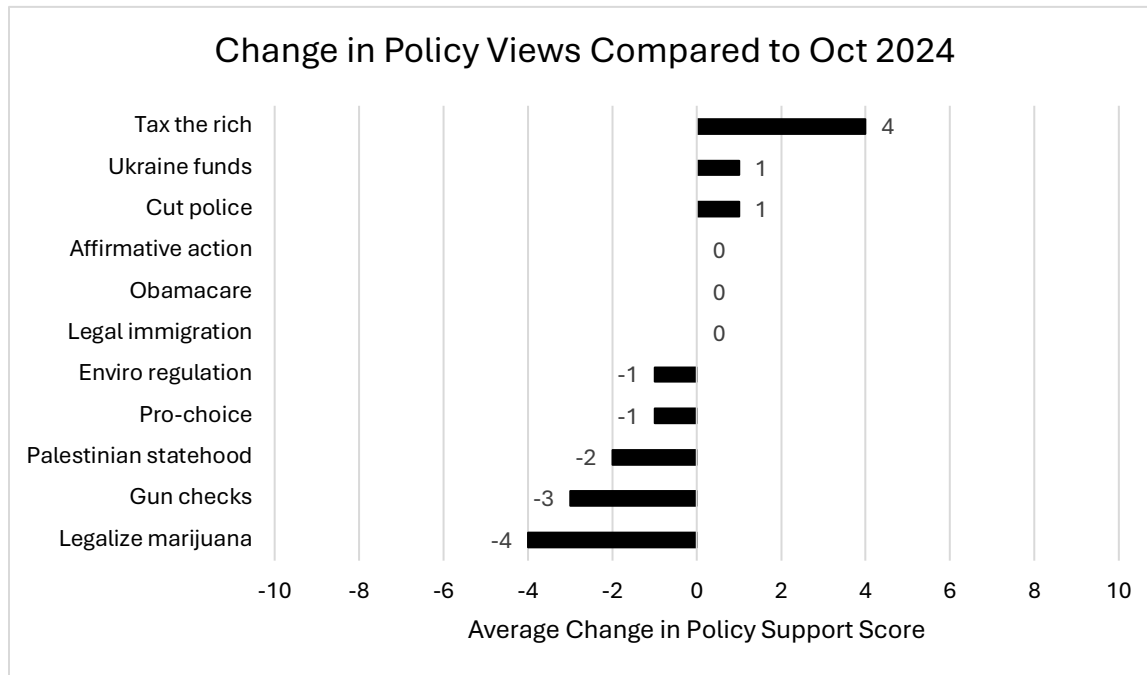
Stable Public Views Over Time

Public views on these broad policy divisions remained relatively stable, and the average across many small liberal and conservative shifts shows roughly no ideological change overall.

Let's consider two examples. We assess average shifts between October 2024 and spring 2025 for each of the 11 policy dimensions on 0-100 scales. Survey respondents were 4

points less likely to support legalizing marijuana and 4 points more likely to support taxing the rich. And those two were the largest shifts among the eleven policies.

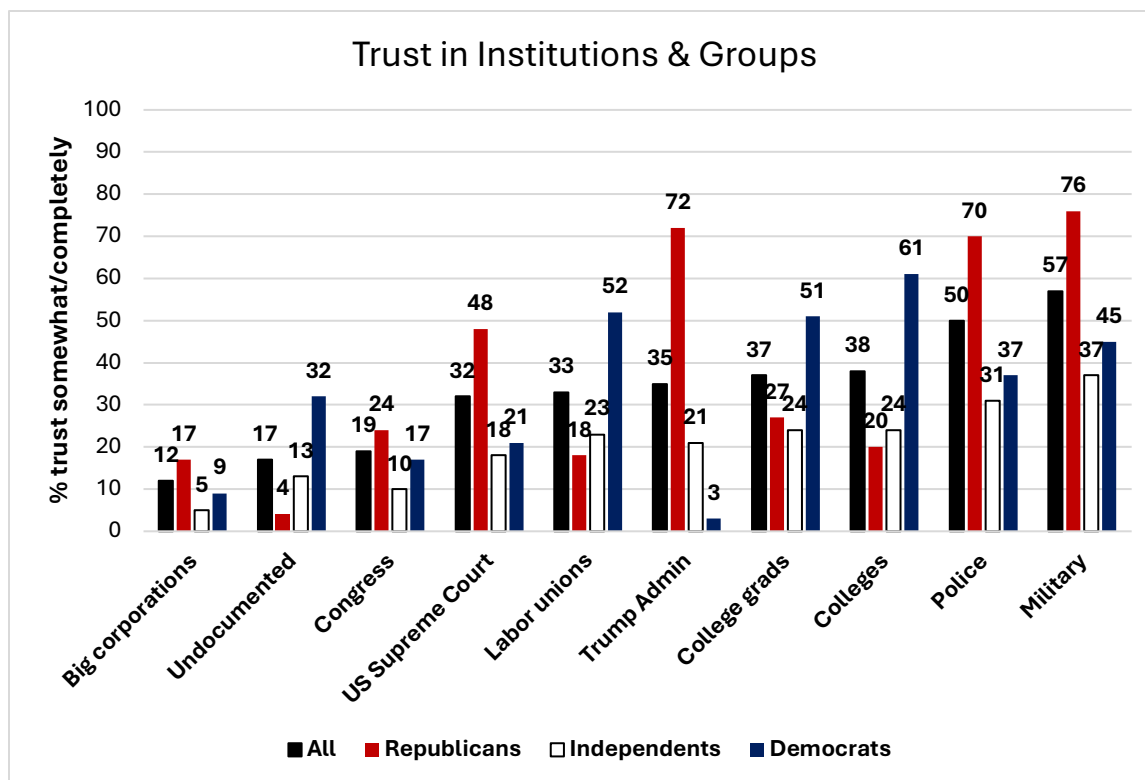
Stasis may seem unremarkable at first blush, but a commonly held theory among political scientists – called “thermostatic opinion” – holds that the public tends to move against the policy views of whichever presidential administration holds office. Thus, a neutral or even slightly conservative shift in public views runs against the theory. Perhaps it will simply take time for the shift to materialize, but we see no initial signs of it yet when looking across many views.



4. Continuity & Change in Institutional Trust

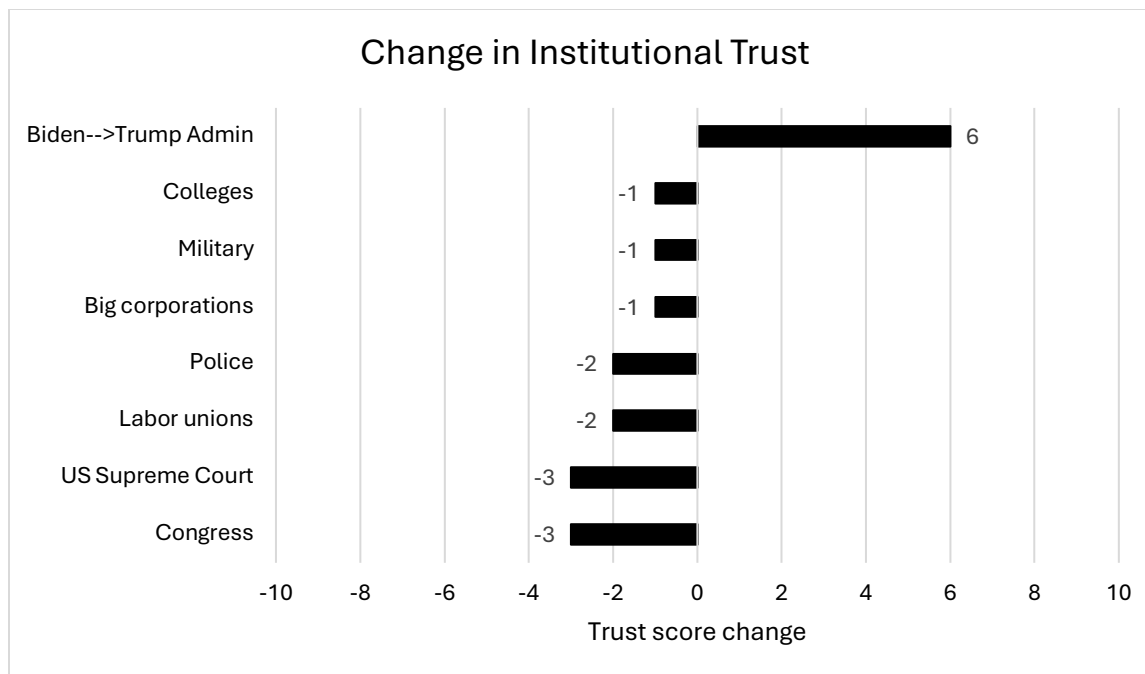
Trust in America’s governing institutions has been falling for decades. We also typically observe big partisan shifts based on who controls those institutions at a particular time, as with the transition from a Democratic president to a Republican one. Where does public trust in governing institutions lie 100 days into Trump’s presidency?

We asked respondents to share their level of trust or distrust in six institutions and four social groups or organizations.



Public trust was highest overall for the military, with 57% of respondents saying they somewhat or completely trusted the institution, followed by 50% for police and 38% for colleges and universities. Public trust was lowest for Congress at 19%, undocumented people at 17%, and big corporations at just 12%. The partisan gap in (dis)trust was smallest for big corporations, which people in both parties distrust, and unsurprisingly largest for trusting the Trump administration (72% vs. 3%). Beside Trump and company, Republicans were highly trusting of the military (76%) and police (70%). Democrats were generally less trusting across the board, but they expressed most trust for colleges (61%), labor unions (52%), and college graduates (51%).

We asked these same questions in our October 2024 survey with the same respondents. Among those who completed both surveys, trust was generally stable, with slight net decreases for the Supreme Court and Congress, and a 6-point increase in average trust from the Biden to Trump administrations. Partisan evaluations were also stable across trust evaluations, except, of course, for the changing partisan presidential administration, where Democrats and Republicans flipped in huge numbers.



Note: Change in institutional trust between October 2024 and April 2025.

5. 100 Days Among Rightwing Media Audiences

Our media diets shape the topics we think are important, and those news sources shape how we think about those topics based on the ways they frame stories. A minority of politically engaged Americans also seeks news media that align with their political perspectives, which can make it hard to disentangle cause and effect in

One remarkable aspect of American media politics is its asymmetry – the degree to which rightwing news sources have come to occupy a sizable fraction of Republican news consumption, especially among politically engaged partisans, while the same behavior is far less common among Democrats.

Here, we find that 18% of Republicans regularly consume right-wing media content exclusively, versus 1% of Democrats who regularly consume left-leaning media alone.²

Here, we analyze the impact of that asymmetry on the attitudes profiled above, comparing:

- 1) Republicans who exclusively consume rightwing media on a regular basis (18%)
- 2) Republicans who consume rightwing news with mainstream news (20%)

² We compiled media sources into three categories – mainstream news (including sources like national network television news, national newspapers, local newspapers, CNN, NPR),² rightwing and/or pro-Republican news (Fox News, Breitbart, Daily Caller, conservative talk radio), and progressive and/or pro-Democratic news (MSNBC, Huffington Post). Various combinations of mainstream news, Republican, and Democratic media types produce 8 news diet categories. We focus here on Republicans in 3 categories.

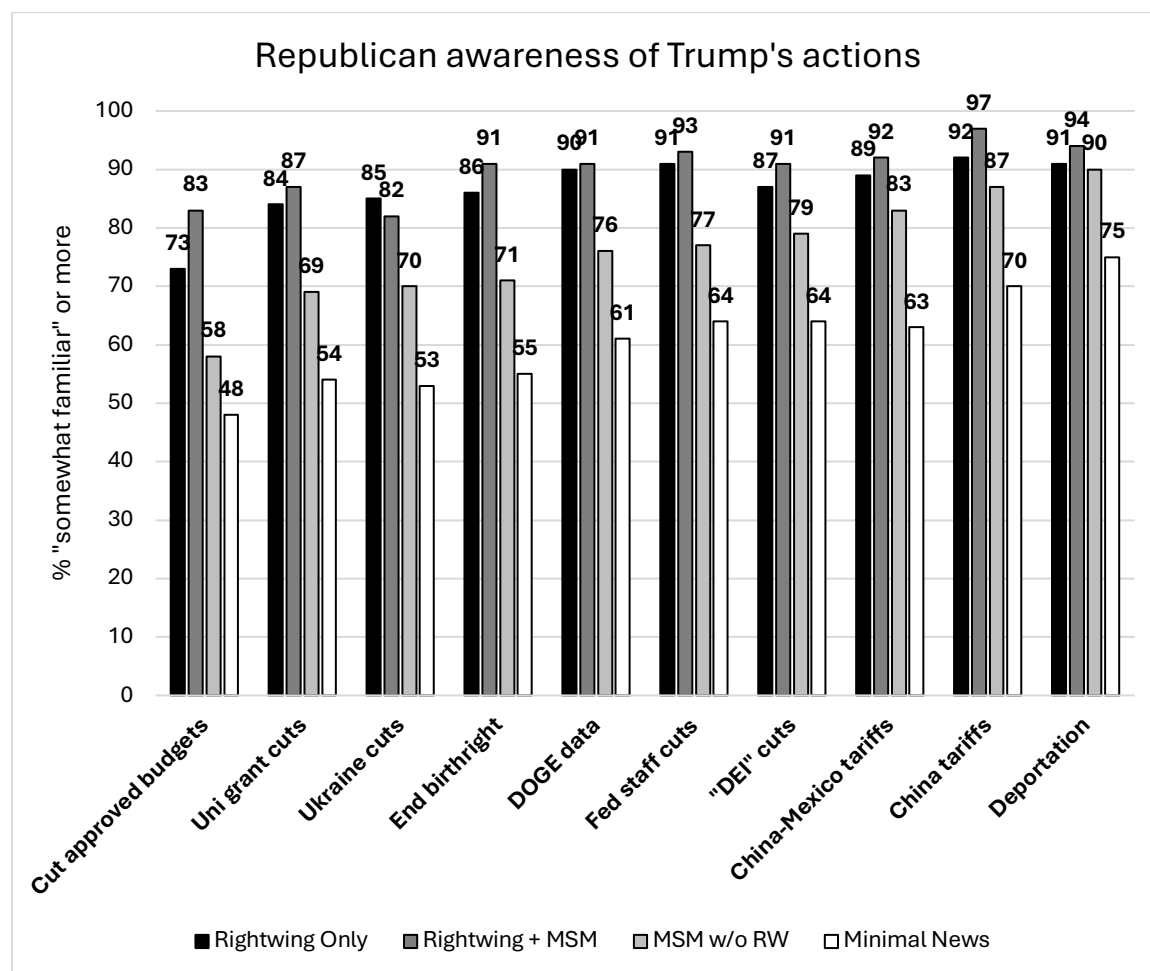
- 3) Republicans who regularly consume mainstream news without rightwing news (23%)
- 4) Republicans who do not regularly consume news (39%).

In total, these four categories include 751 Republican respondents.

Awareness of Trump Actions

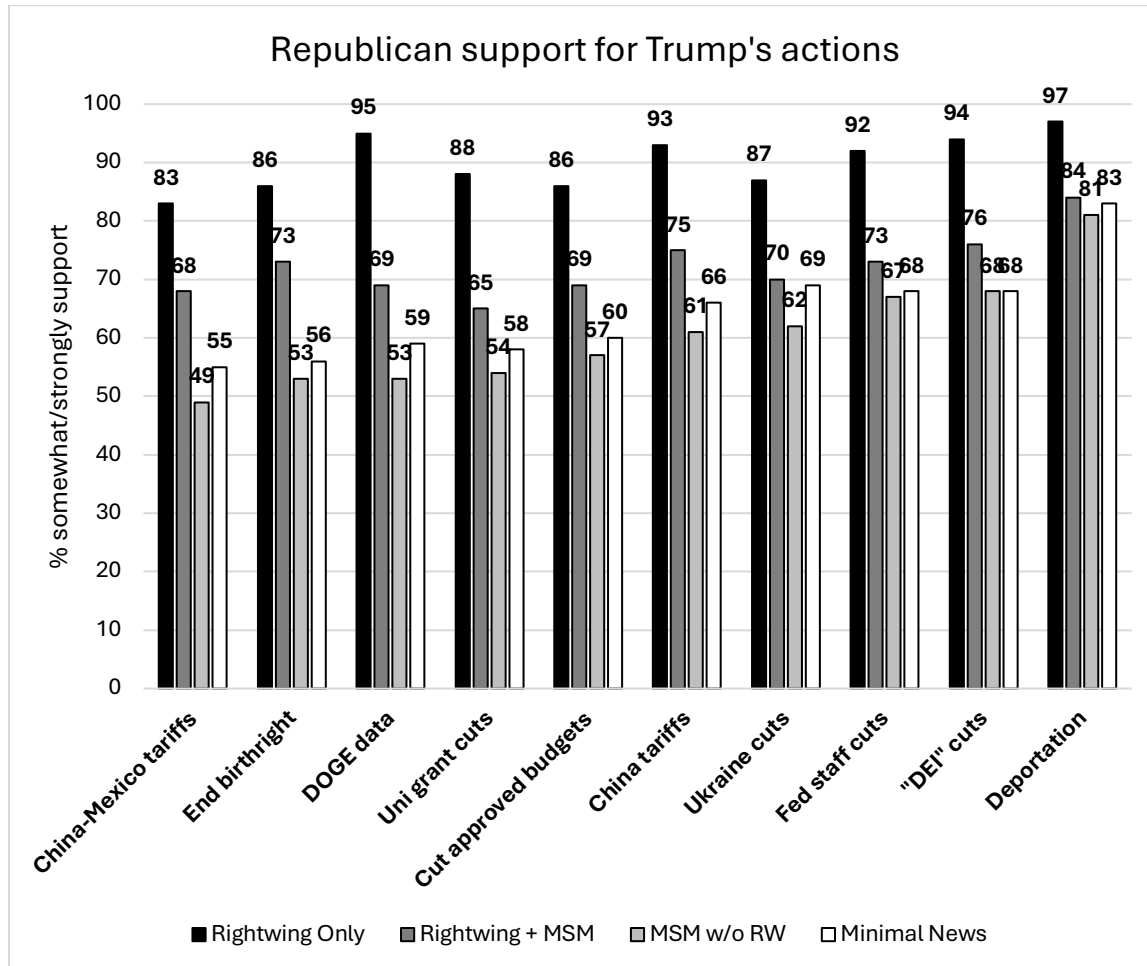
We find big differences in Republican awareness of Trump actions. Those who consume rightwing media seem to be more aware than those who consume only mainstream news. For example, 86% of Republicans who regularly consume only rightwing news know of Trump's efforts to end birthright citizenship, compared to 71% of Republicans who consume only mainstream news. That could be an indictment of mainstream news programming if it really is the cause for the gap.

Interestingly, over half of Republicans who don't regularly consume any news reported some familiarity with all ten of these actions. That is probably due to a combination of irregular news consumption and second-hand information they get from friends, family, and stray mentions on social media or entertainment programs.



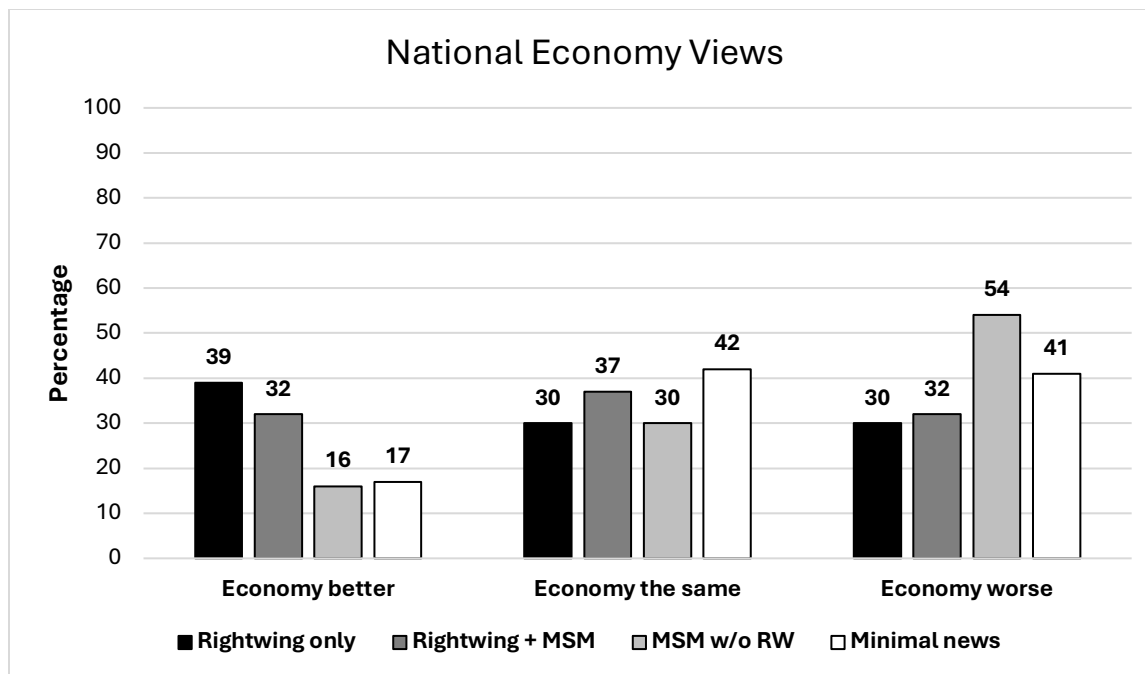
Support for Trump Actions

As we saw above, Republicans enthusiastically support Trump's actions overall. Here, we investigate how that support differs for Republicans across media consumption patterns. Far and away, Republicans who only consume rightwing media express more support than any other group by double digit margins, even over Republicans who consume rightwing media alongside mainstream media. Across most policies, support among MSM-consuming Republicans is roughly equal with those who don't regularly consume news. (Note: we have reordered the policies by support level here.)

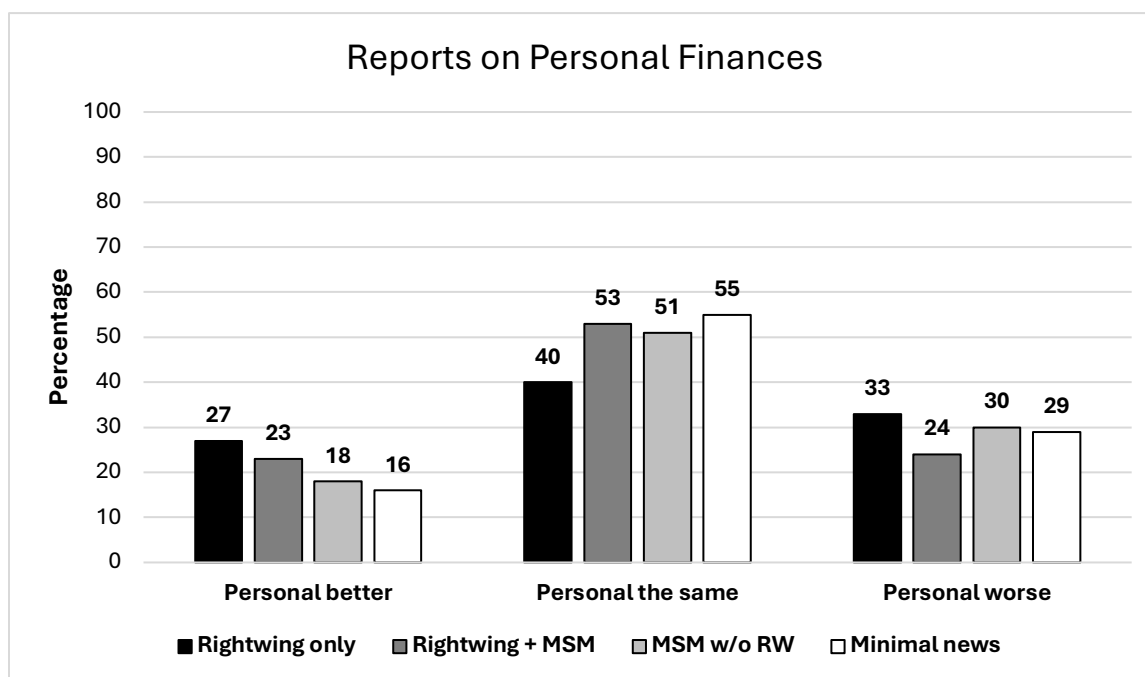


Economic Views

On economic views, we find much more positive national economic evaluations among people who consume rightwing media, especially those who don't temper it somewhat with mainstream news consumption. Republicans consuming mainstream news are more negative, and non-news Republicans fall in between.



The patterns look similar, though more muted, for positive evaluations of personal finances, but negative evaluations are flat across the media patterns.



Trust in Institutions & Groups

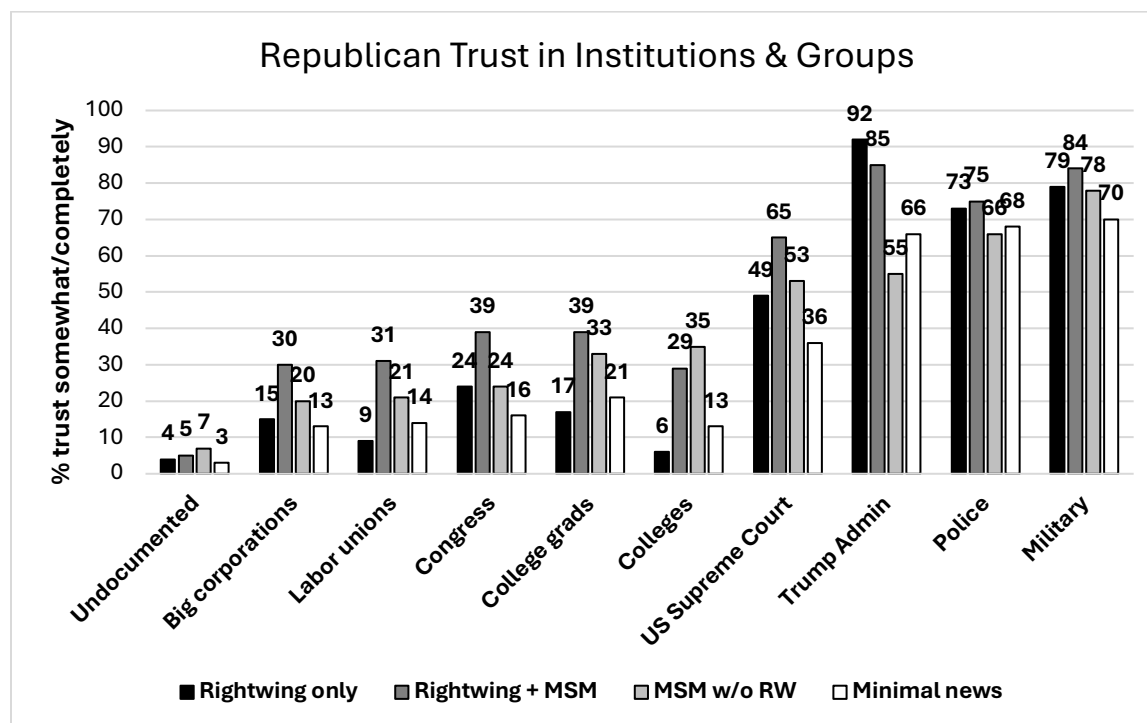
Finally, we find inconsistent patterns on trust in national institutions and groups among Republicans by media consumption patterns.

Consuming **rightwing news** gives a slight boost to trusting police compared to not consuming it, and a huge boost to trusting the Trump administration.

Trust in colleges, college graduates, labor unions, and big corporations tends to be higher among **mainstream news** consumers than Republicans who only consume rightwing media or no news.

Republican trust in the military, the Supreme Court, and Congress is highest among those who consume both rightwing news and mainstream news regularly.

And Republicans greatly distrust undocumented immigrants regardless of media use.



About the 2024-25 Wisconsin Communication & Election Study

The 2024-25 Wisconsin Communication & Election Study is a multi-wave survey panel administered online by [YouGov](#). Wave 1 was fielded before the presidential election from October 17 to November 4, 2024. Wave 2 – the focus in this report – was fielded in April and May of 2025 with reinterviews of Wave 1 participants plus a supplemental fresh cross-section. Wave 3 will be fielded in Fall 2025. We also fielded a Midwestern regional survey with many of the same questions.

In Wave 1, YouGov supplied a demographically weighted representative opt-in sample of 2,000 American residents. For Wave 2, we successfully reinterviewed 52% of Wave 1 national participants. We apply demography-based survey sample weights to better align estimates with state populations.

Although non-probability samples do not have traditional margins of error, percentages from the full sample have a virtual margin of error of ± 2 percentage points for estimates near 50%, with smaller margins for estimates as they move toward 0% or 100%. Estimates for Democrats in the two states have margins of error of ± 3 percentage points, and estimates for Republicans are ± 3 percentage points.

YouGov interviewed 3486 respondents, including a main sample of 2400 nationally representative respondents (1028 recontacted from Wave 1), and 4 oversamples composed of 253 in Iowa (167 recontacted), 270 in Michigan (178 recontacted), 269 in Minnesota (177 recontacted), and 294 in Wisconsin (225 recontacted). The main sample was then matched down to a sample of 2000, having included all 1028 recontacts. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, education, and party ID. The sampling frame is a politically representative "modeled frame" of US adults, based upon the American Community Survey (ACS) public use microdata file, public voter file records, the 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration supplements, the 2020 National Election Pool (NEP) exit poll, and the 2020 CES surveys, including demographics and 2020 presidential vote.

The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, region, and home ownership. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles. The main weights were then post-stratified on 2020 and 2024 presidential vote choice, as well as four-way stratification on gender, age (4-categories), race (4-categories), and education (4-categories), to produce the final main sample weight.

The 2024-25 Wisconsin Communication & Election Study was supported by the John S. and James L. [Knight Foundation](#), which advances research at the intersections of media and democracy.

About the Center for Communication & Civic Renewal

The Center for Communication & Civic Renewal (CCCR) is an interdisciplinary research team housed in the School of Journalism & Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. CCCR's research aims to understand Wisconsin public opinion and the state's broad political communication ecology, drawing upon frameworks and methods foundations in communication, political science, sociology, psychology, and computer science. Dr. Michael Wagner leads the Center as Faculty Director, Dr. Dhavan Shah is the Center's Research Director, and Dr. Nathan Kalmoe serves as Executive Administrative Director for the Center.

The Center's public opinion polling is one of three analytical components in its broader efforts studying political communication in Wisconsin, the Midwest, and beyond. Over the years, we have also conducted in-depth interviews with hundreds of citizens throughout the state to understand how they're talking and thinking about politics. And we have conducted large-scale computational analyses of social media and news media content throughout the Wisconsin, the United States, and the world.

CCCR's past research is synthesized in the book, [*Battleground: Asymmetric Communication Ecologies and the Erosion of Civil Society in Wisconsin*](#), published by Cambridge University Press in 2022, along with several peer-reviewed articles published in academic journals, and public-facing essays published in national news outlets including the *Washington Post*, *Vox*, and *TechStream* as well as local outlets like the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, the *Capital Times*, and the *Wisconsin State Journal*

Our March 2023 report, "[Civic Fracture & Renewal in Wisconsin](#)," assessed the public's civic attitudes and behaviors and found worrisome signs of social and political conflict in 2022 Wisconsin and U.S. midterm election survey comparisons. These included ending relationships over politics, safety fears in politics, and views supporting for political violence among a minority of citizens – but we also identified vital agreement across divides in ways that may help repair American democracy.

Our December 2024 report, "[Understanding 2024 Voters in Midwest Battleground States](#)," assessed Midwestern voting patterns, group and policy divides, and the nature of political conversations and news consumption. The study found lower anticipated voting levels among Democrats, low-income people, and people of color; large party divides in views of marginalized groups; some surprising levels of party agreement on many policy views, and substantial echo chambers for political talk and news.