



# Beyond MAGA

A Profile of the Trump Coalition





ABOUT MORE IN COMMON

This report was conducted by More in Common US, part of a nonpartisan, international initiative aimed at building societies and communities that are stronger, more united, and more resilient to the increasing threats of polarization and social division. We work in partnership with a wide range of civil society groups, as well as philanthropy, business, faith, education, media, and government to connect people across lines of division.

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## FOREWORD

This report is about the people in President Trump’s coalition: their motivations for voting for the president, their perspectives on the many issues facing the country, and their understanding of what is happening in America today and of what ought to happen in the future.

More in Common made its debut with the release of *Hidden Tribes* in 2018, when we described an “Exhausted Majority”—two-thirds of Americans who “share a sense of fatigue with our country’s polarized political conversation, a willingness to be flexible in their political viewpoints, and a lack of voice in the national conversation.”










This report, *Beyond MAGA*, is the first of at least three studies in More in Common’s renewed *Hidden Tribes* Project. In addition to mapping the values of today’s Exhausted Majority with an update to the original *Hidden Tribes*, we are separately studying the voter coalitions on either side of US politics—starting with this study of the Trump voter coalition and following up later in the year with a study about the Left’s coalition.

Most of the analysis in our national discourse reduces Americans to simple demographic units or into red or blue teams. This is a far cry from how people understand themselves. More in Common’s goal is to describe Americans on their own terms. This usually—though not always—means emphasizing political identity less and American identity more.

The renewed *Hidden Tribes* Project starts by studying a sample of Americans defined by their vote in a presidential election. This is because, at its best, More in Common’s research adds richness and depth to groups of people whose images have been flattened in our national consciousness. Today, there is perhaps no label as misunderstood as “Trump voter,” no tagline quite so distorted as “MAGA.”

By 2024, President Trump amassed the largest coalition in American politics. And yet, only 38 percent of the president’s 2024 voters say that “being MAGA” is an important part of their identity, with the distribution varying widely across the four types of Trump voters that we define. The goal of this study is to try to understand what his voters do find important by offering an understanding of how the president’s voters view themselves.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# A Coalition, Not a Cult

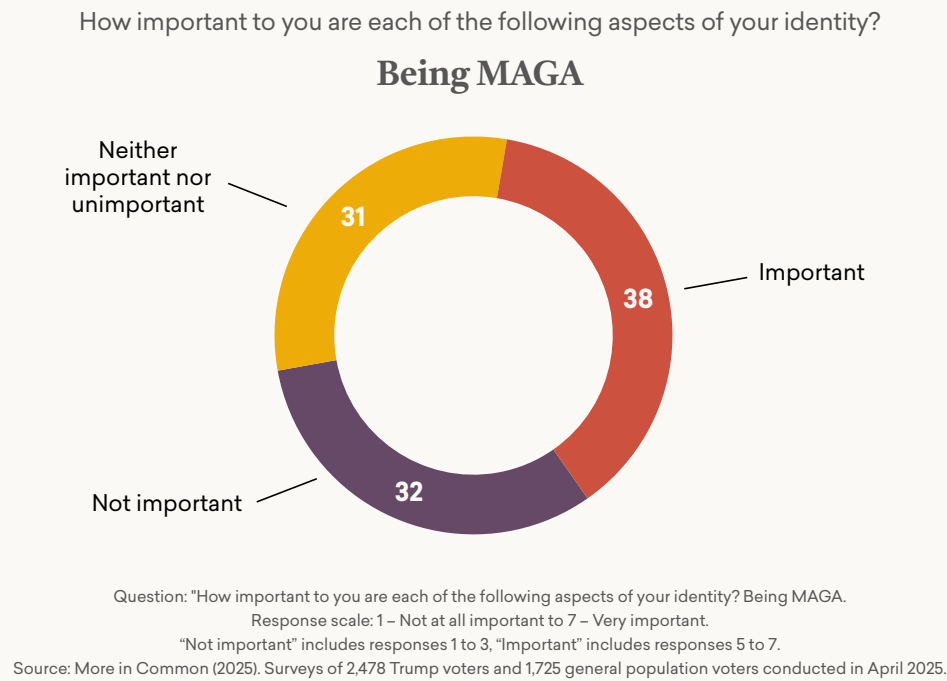
There is an image at the heart of American politics: a sea of red-hat-wearing MAGA supporters at a Trump campaign rally, representing the millions of Americans who voted for him over the past three elections—63 million in 2016, 74 million in 2020, and 77 million in 2024.<sup>0.1</sup>

Yet this image is misleading. President Trump has built a coalition, not a cult. This coalition shares many common concerns, from immigration to progressive overreach to American decline. But it also contains groups with distinct identities, competing priorities, and clashing worldviews. And while there is a strong core of ardent Trump supporters whose identity is wrapped up in the MAGA movement, they represent a minority: only 38 percent of Trump voters say that being MAGA is important to them.

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<sup>0.1</sup> The American Presidency Project, “Election Listing,” Statistics, Data and Mapping, University of California, Santa Barbara, accessed January 04, 2026, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/statistics/elections>

FIGURE 0.1  
THE TRUE IMPORTANCE OF MAGA



Drawing on surveys, interviews and group conversations conducted with over 10,000 Trump voters over 10 months concluding in early 2026, this study finds four distinct types of Trump voters: MAGA Hardliners, Anti-Woke Conservatives, Mainline Republicans, and the Reluctant Right.

- **MAGA Hardliners** represent the fiery core of Trump’s base. They are fiercely loyal, deeply religious, and animated by a sense that America is in an existential struggle between good and evil, with God firmly on their side.
- **Anti-Woke Conservatives** are relatively well-off, politically engaged, and deeply frustrated by the perceived takeover of schools, culture, and institutions by the progressive left.
- **Mainline Republicans** are middle-of-the-road conservatives who play by the rules and expect others to do the same. Most do not follow politics closely. For them, Trump’s strength is that he advances familiar conservative priorities: securing the border, keeping the economy strong, and preserving a sense of cultural stability.
- The **Reluctant Right** is the most ambivalent cohort of Trump’s coalition, and the group most likely to have voted for Trump transactionally: the businessman who was “less bad” than the alternative. Many feel disconnected from national politics and believe politicians do not share their priorities.

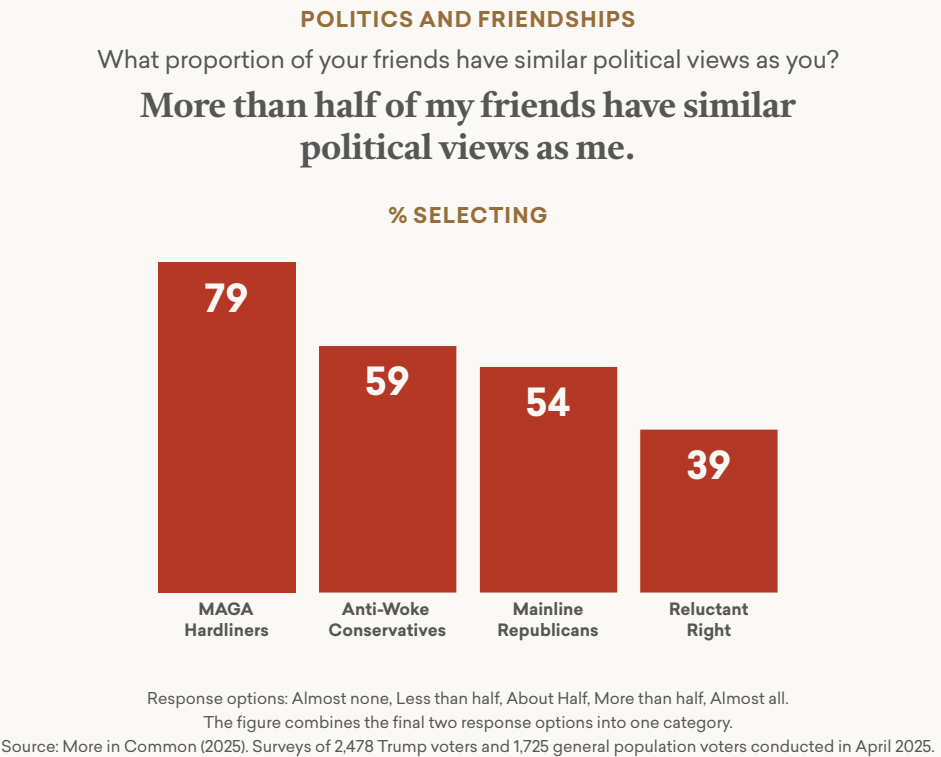
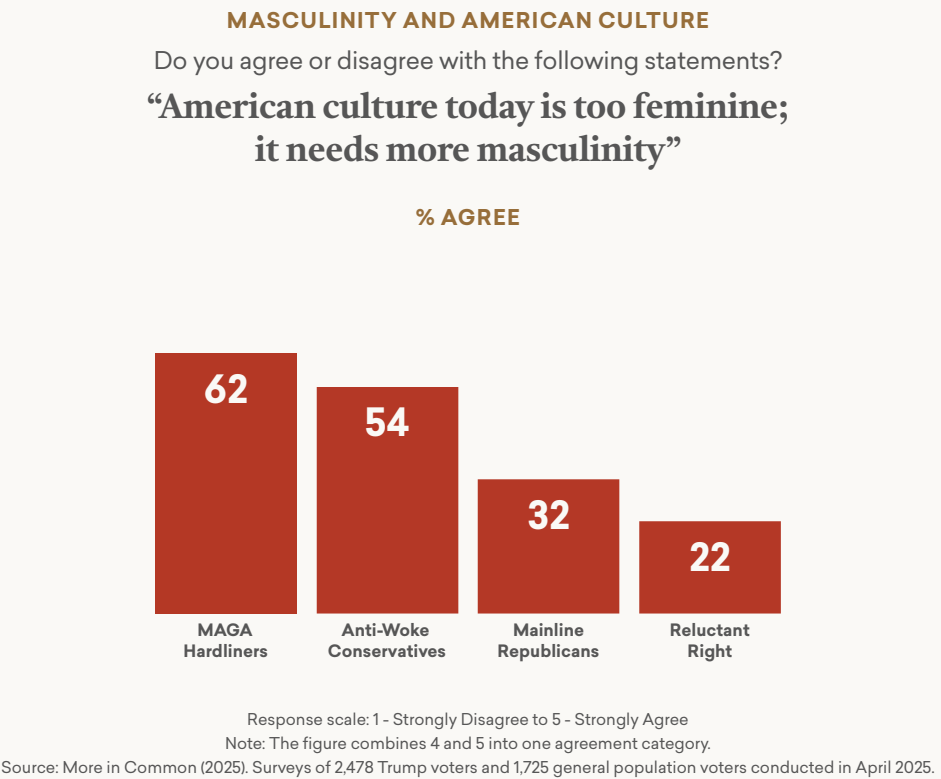
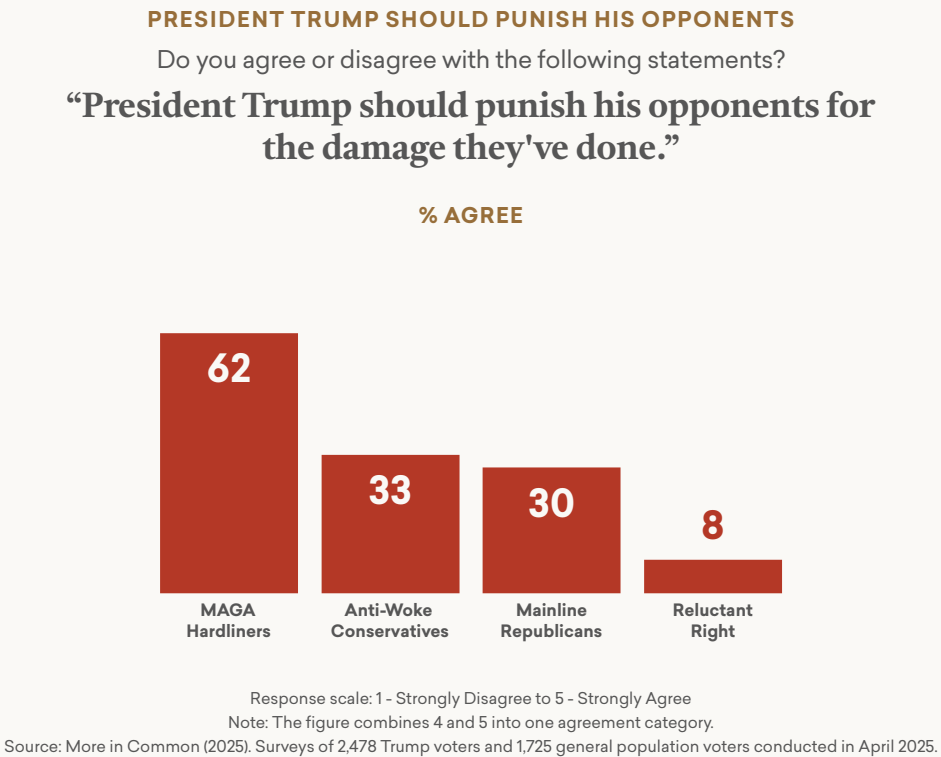
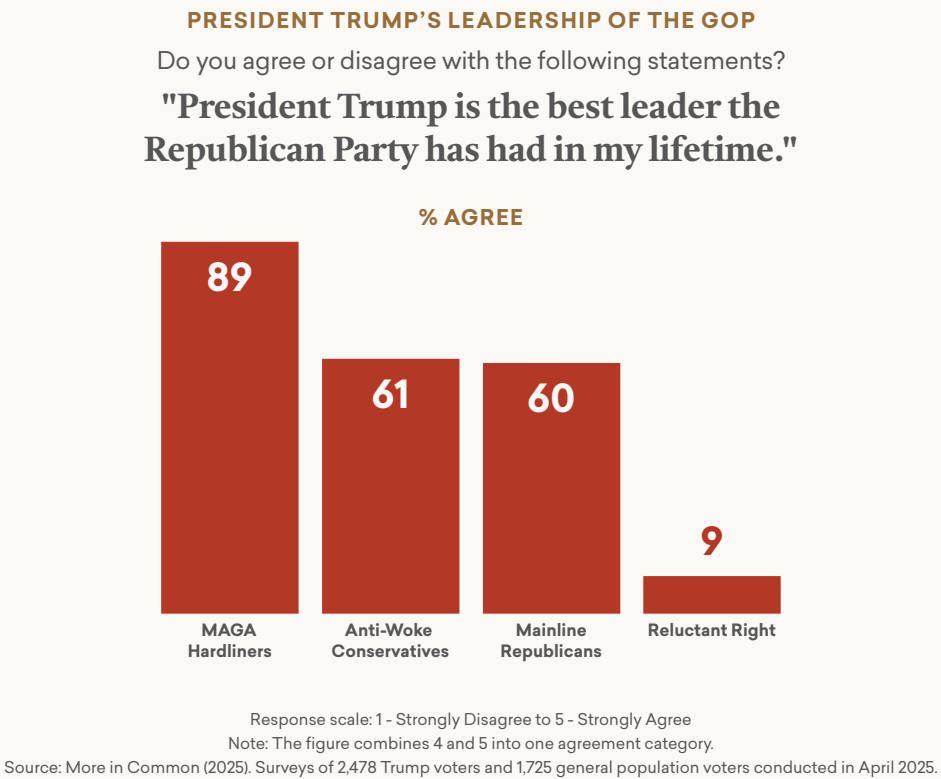
FIGURE 0.2  
THE FOUR VOTER TYPES IN THE TRUMP COALITION



Trump voters hold different opinions on many issues. MAGA Hardliners often hold the most extreme stances, followed by Anti-Woke Conservatives and Mainline Republicans, while the Reluctant Right typically holds the least partisan viewpoints.



FIGURE 0.3  
TRUMP VOTERS DIVERGE ACROSS KEY ISSUES





WASHINGTON DC - Saturday, 14 November 2020: En route to Saturday, 14 November 2020 Million MAGA March Gathering Rally from 13th & G to 12 & E Street, Photo: Elvert Barnes - IMG\_4020, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

This report offers a lens on Trump voters beyond conventional categories such as age, religious affiliation, income, race, and gender. The four voter types often hold stronger views on specific issues than the demographic categories most associated with those issues.

For instance, compared to Evangelicals and “very conservative” Americans, MAGA Hardliners are more likely to feel that the Left profoundly threatens America. Conversely, the Reluctant Right is less likely than Trump-voting college-educated women and Gen Z to feel the same way.

Similarly, MAGA Hardliners are more likely than “strong Republicans” and Gen Z Trump voters, including Gen Z men, to support President Trump pursuing a third term. The Reluctant Right are less than half as likely to support such a measure than even “not so strong Republicans” who voted for Trump.

So too, MAGA Hardliners are more convinced of the merits of using the military for mass deportation than are self-described “very conservative” Trump voters. By contrast, the Reluctant Right are more opposed to this policy than Hispanic Trump voters, despite the impacts of these policies on Hispanic communities.

Finally, MAGA Hardliners believe that President Trump is less corrupt than do “strong Republicans,” and moderate and Gen Z Trump voters perceive less corruption in the president than do the Reluctant Right.

“**My decision was purely from the economic standpoint.** I was hoping that he would get interest rates down and inflation down... So I basically see him as like a businessman, so I had faith that he would help the economy.”

**Jeff, Reluctant Right**

Age 34 • White man • Olathe, Kansas

“When it really comes down to it, both **the left and right care about America but they see what is right in a different way.** No one is anti-American.”

**Chloe, Reluctant Right**

Age 67 • Asian American woman • Watsonville, California

“I like the way [Trump] talks back to the media. He doesn’t lay down for these guys. He fights back and they don’t like it. He is a disruptor. **He sees the corruption and all the bad things that are going on in this country and he’s the one person who’s going to try to fix it and they hate that.** They detest him and that makes me like him that much more.”

**Gary, MAGA Hardliner**

Age 60 • White man • Mounds, Oklahoma

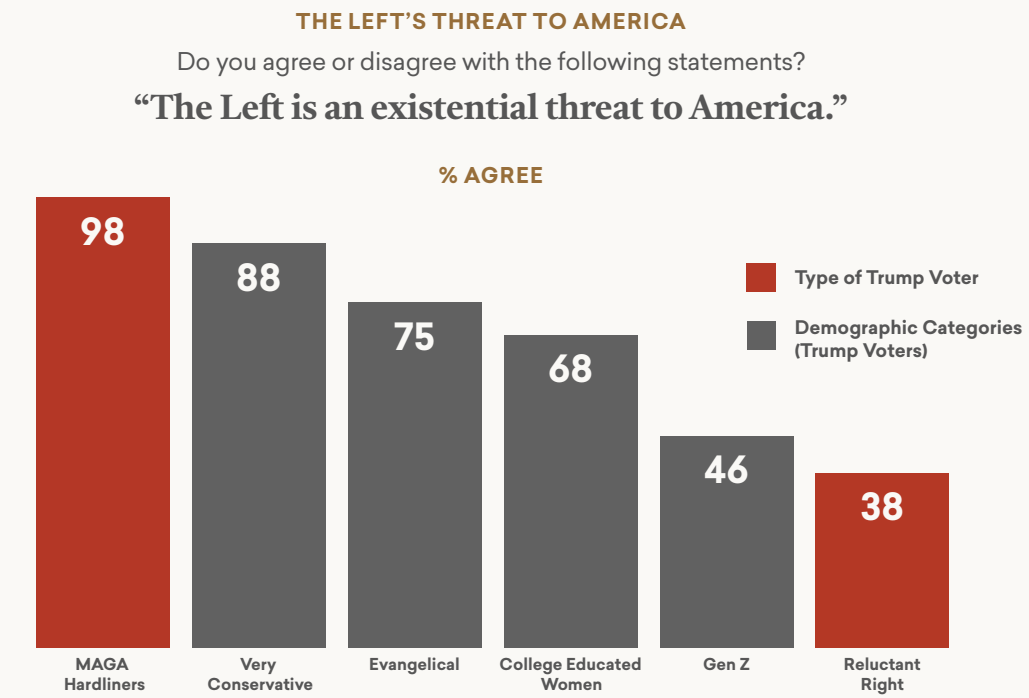
“There’s so much more to clean up after what the Democrats have left in the office for Trump and J.D. At this point in time, **I do not see anything that would hinder Trump being voted for again, if he was enabled to have a third term...** I’d just say let us sit back and watch him work because he’s doing a great job.”

**Annie, MAGA Hardliner**

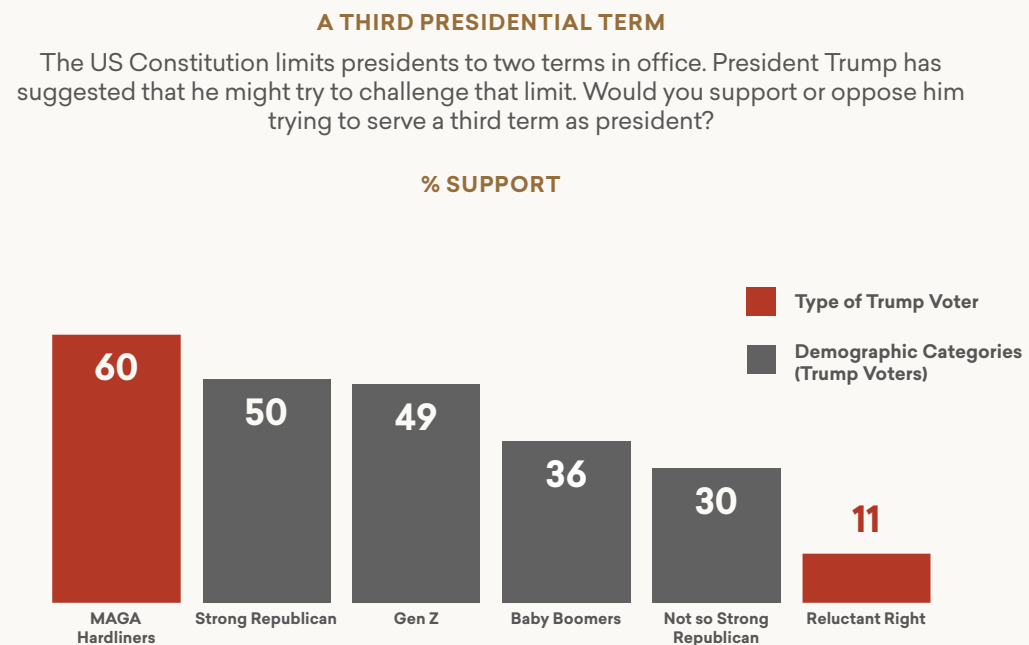
Age 40 • Mixed race woman • Corinth, Mississippi



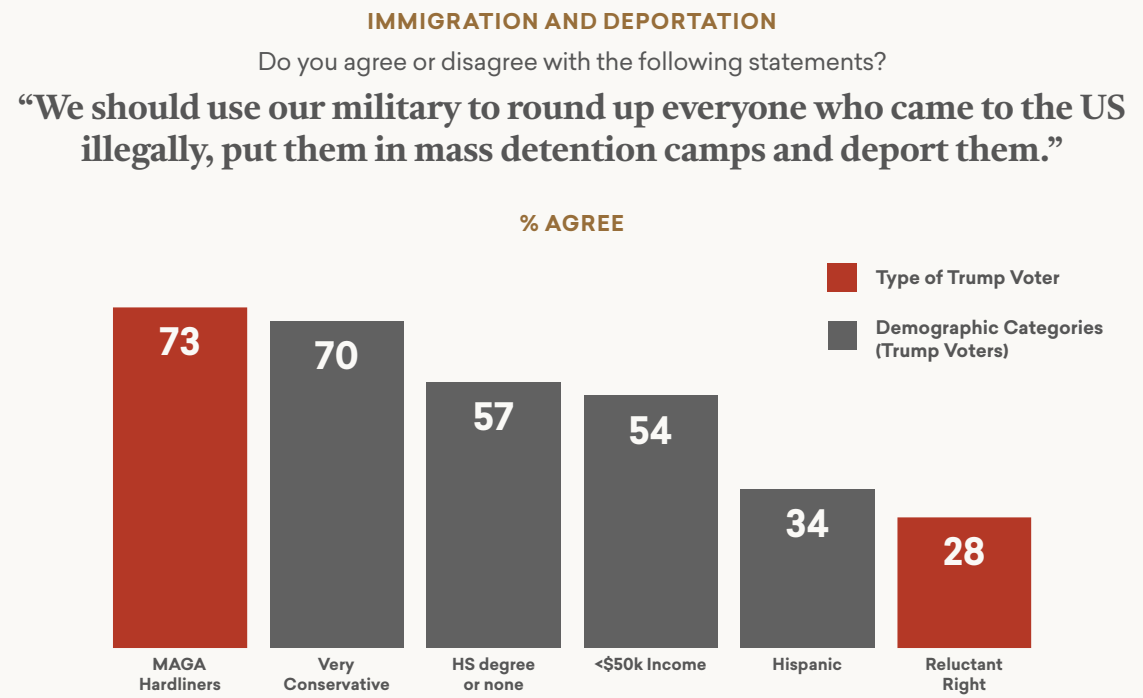
FIGURE 0.4  
BEYOND THE CONVENTIONAL CATEGORIES



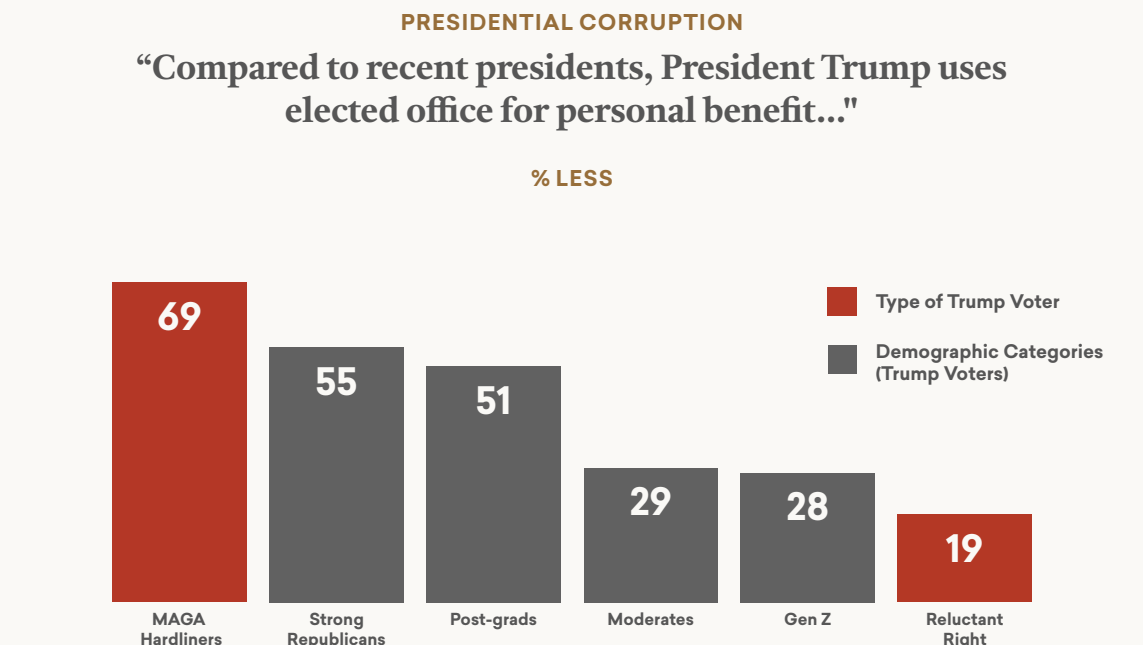
Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.



Response scale: 1 - Strongly support to 5 - Strongly oppose; Don't know.  
Note: The figure combines 1 and 2 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.



Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,671 Trump voters and 1,512 general population voters conducted in September 2025.



How do you think President Trump compares to recent presidents when it comes to using elected office for personal benefits, such as helping himself, his family, or friends to profit from government decisions? Much more than recent presidents, more than recent presidents, about the same as recent presidents, less than recent presidents, much less than recent presidents? Combining “less” and “much less.”  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,676 Trump voters and 1,516 general population voters conducted in August 2025.





Washington County, Maryland, USA - September 9, 2023: A sign on the fence of a home warns "America! Save Your Children From Evil" with American flags on either side of it. iStock

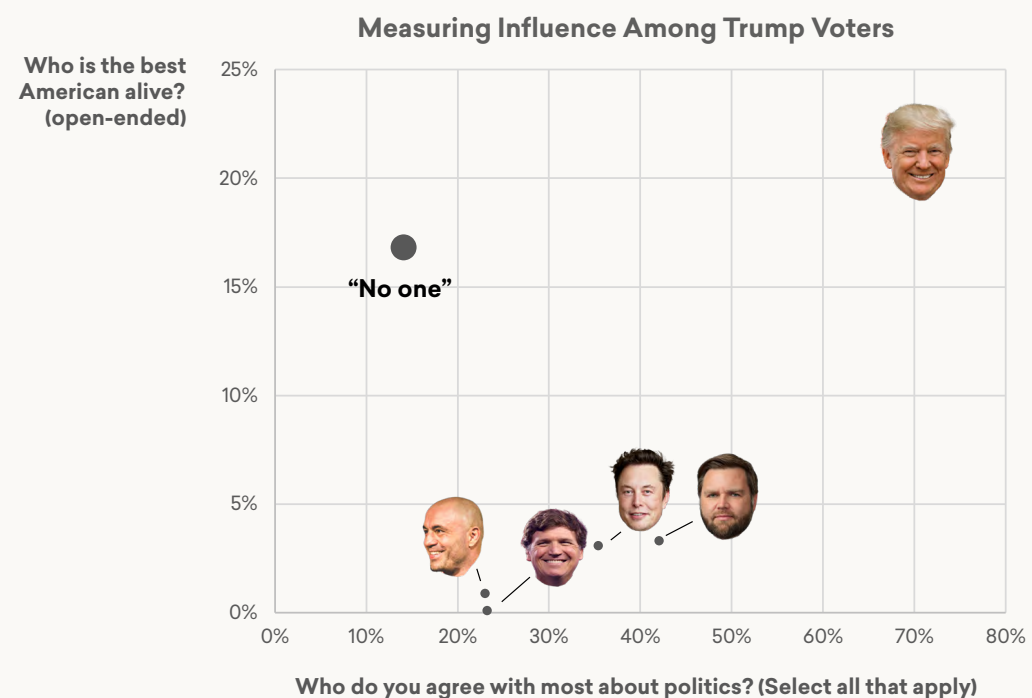
# Trump voters on key issues

This report reveals the diversity within the Trump coalition on key questions such as leadership, faith, immigration, and “wokeness.” It also examines trends among younger Trump voters, and their competing impulses toward national unity and political dominance.

## Leadership

President Trump occupies a singular place in the conservative political landscape. When asked whom they most agree with about politics among public figures, 73 percent of Trump voters choose the president, nearly twice as many as anyone else. President Trump is also considered “the best American alive today” by nearly a quarter of his voters—far more than any other individual.

**FIGURE 0.5**  
**PRESIDENT TRUMP’S TOWERING INFLUENCE**



Question: “In your opinion, who is the best American role model alive today? Please just choose one person” [open-ended]  
Source: Surveys of 2,671 Trump voters and 1,512 general population voters conducted in September 2025.  
Question: “Among public figures, who do you tend to agree with the most about politics? You could refer to a politician, a commentator or journalist, a podcaster or someone else who is well known.” Note: Plotted figures include (from left to right) Joe Rogan, Tucker Carlson, Elon Musk, J.D. Vance, Donald Trump.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

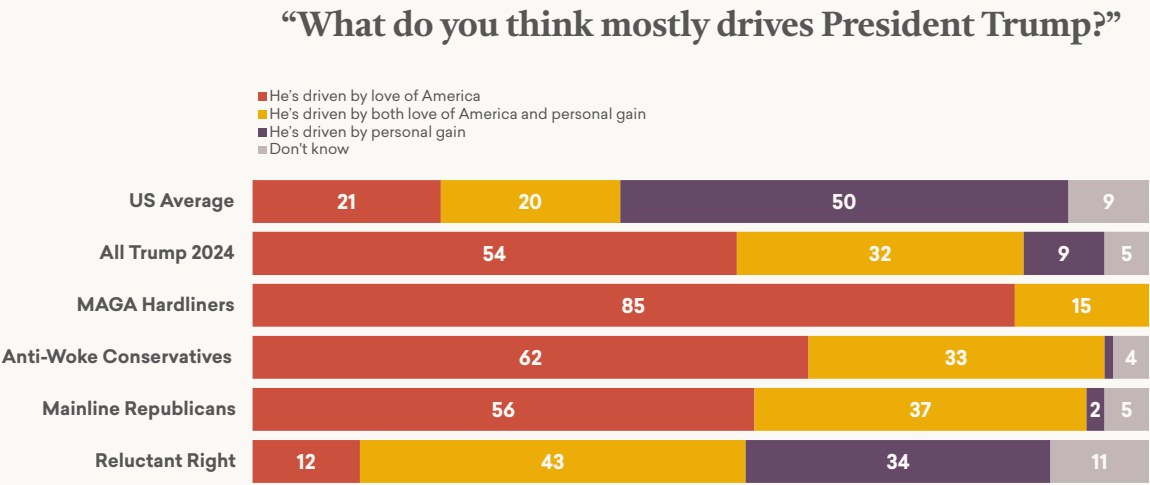


Voter types differ in their perceptions of Trump’s motivations for seeking the presidency. While 85 percent of MAGA Hardliners see him as exclusively driven by “love of America,” other Trump voters hold more mixed views. On average, one-third of Trump’s voters see him as motivated by “both love of America and personal gain.” In interviews, while many Trump voters acknowledge that he is not entirely selfless, many feel that his personal ambition is not at odds with championing American interests.

“I do think that Trump has taken a couple of wrong steps. He is financially motivated, but for the most part, **he represents the way that I think we should be headed.**”

**Hannah, Reluctant Right**  
Age 28 • White woman • Mount Hope, West Virginia

FIGURE 0.6  
PERCEPTIONS OF PRESIDENT TRUMP’S MOTIVATIONS



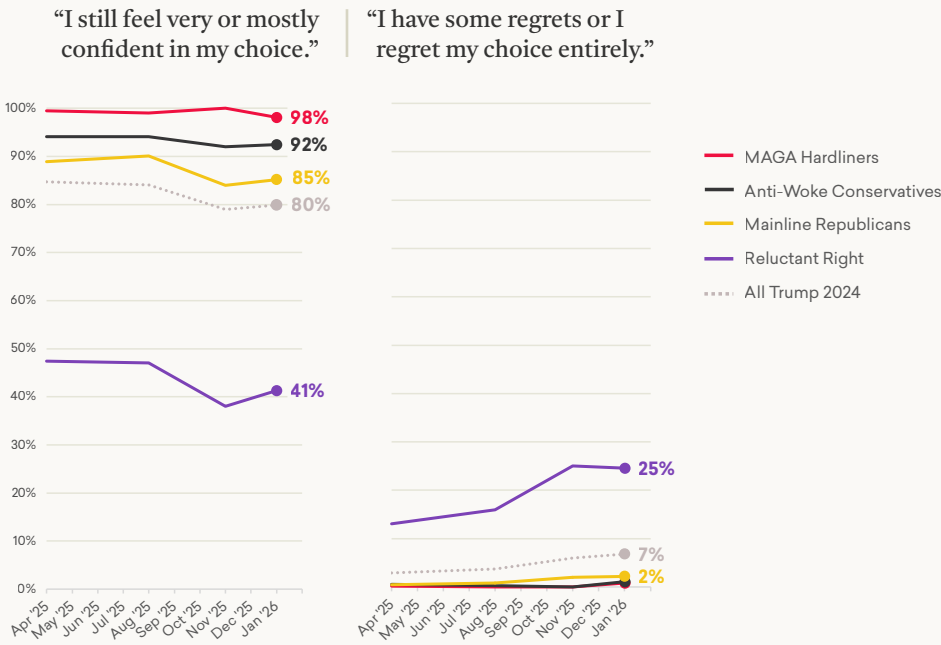
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

While there has been much discussion about the fracturing of President Trump’s coalition, his voters mostly stand behind their choice. One year into his presidency, more than four in five MAGA Hardliners, Anti-Woke Conservatives, and Mainline Republicans said they still felt “very” or “mostly confident” in their choice, a conviction that remained stable across the first year of Trump’s presidency. By contrast, only 41 percent of the Reluctant Right remained confident in their choice, a figure that has declined from 47 percent since April 2025.



MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA - SEPTEMBER 22: A man wears a "Trump 2028" cap while waiting in line outside the "American Comeback Tour" event at Northrop Auditorium on the University of Minnesota campus on September 22, 2025 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The event was hosted by political commentator Michael Knowles after the assassination of Charlie Kirk earlier this month. Photo by Stephen Maturen/Getty Images.

FIGURE 0.7  
CONFIDENCE IN 2024 VOTING CHOICE

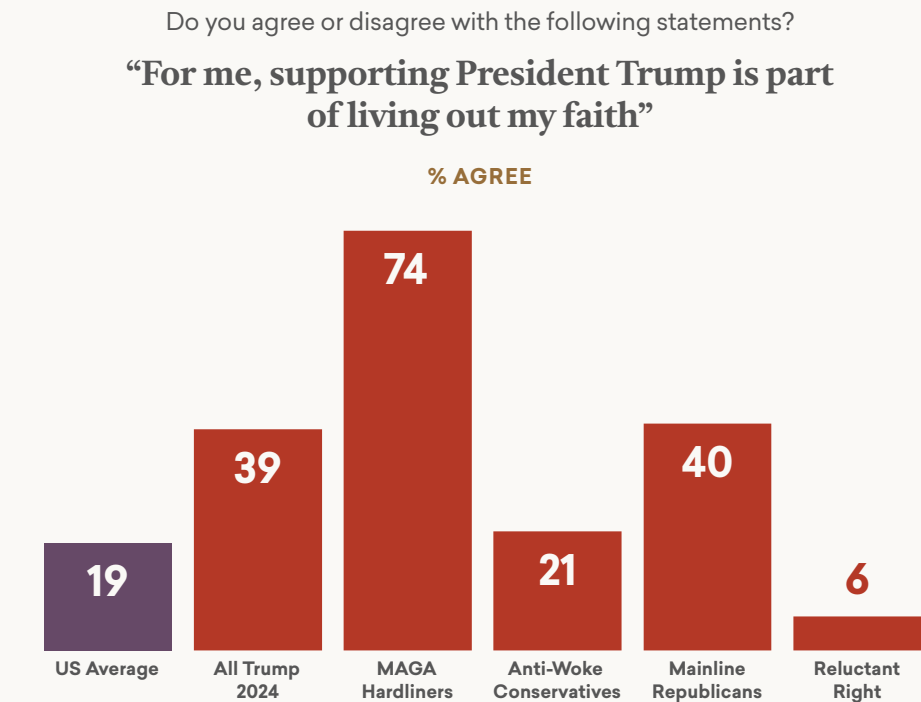


Question: “Which of the following best describes how you feel today about your choice for president in 2024?” I still feel very confident in my choice, I feel mostly confident in my choice, I have mixed or uncertain feelings, I have some regrets about my choice, I regret my choice entirely.  
Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 7,761 total Trump voters conducted in April, August, and November 2025, and January 2026.

Faith and politics

Faith plays a far greater role in the lives of some Trump voters than others. While less than half (39 percent) of Trump’s voters link their support for the president to their faith, the MAGA Hardliners are the strong exception. Fully 74 percent of MAGA Hardliners say that “supporting President Trump is part of living out my faith” — around twice the rate of Mainline Republicans and vastly more than both Anti-Woke Conservatives and the Reluctant Right.

FIGURE 0.8  
TRUMP SUPPORT AND LIVING OUT FAITH



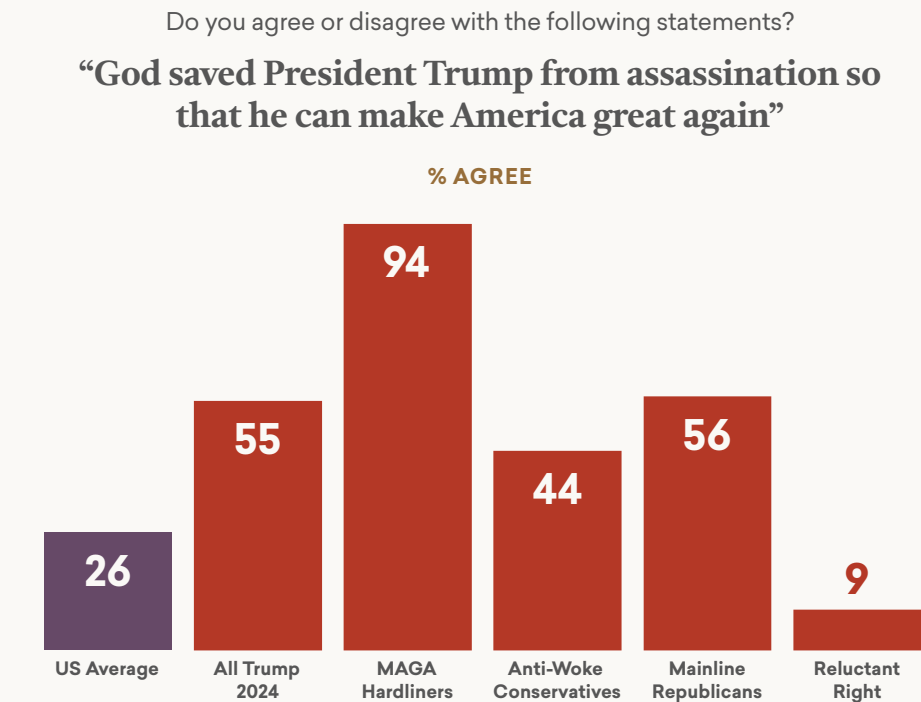
Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

These differences in orientation toward faith and politics shape how they interpret key events. For instance, in recalling the historic 2024 assassination attempt on President Trump’s life in Butler, Pennsylvania, nearly all MAGA Hardliners feel that “God saved President Trump from assassination so that he can make America great again.” This view is far more pervasive among MAGA Hardliners than any of the other Trump voter types, including the highly loyal Anti-Woke Conservatives and comparably religious Mainline Republicans.

"I truly believe that in my heart that God saved him. It was just something so divine. Especially when all the Secret Service were wrapping themselves around him and Trump raised his arm. I almost cried for real. Because the way this country was headed, **I think God really intervened and saved his life.**"

**Fernando, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 38 • Black man • Houston, Texas

FIGURE 0.9  
FAITH AND SUPPORT FOR TRUMP



Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

### Immigration

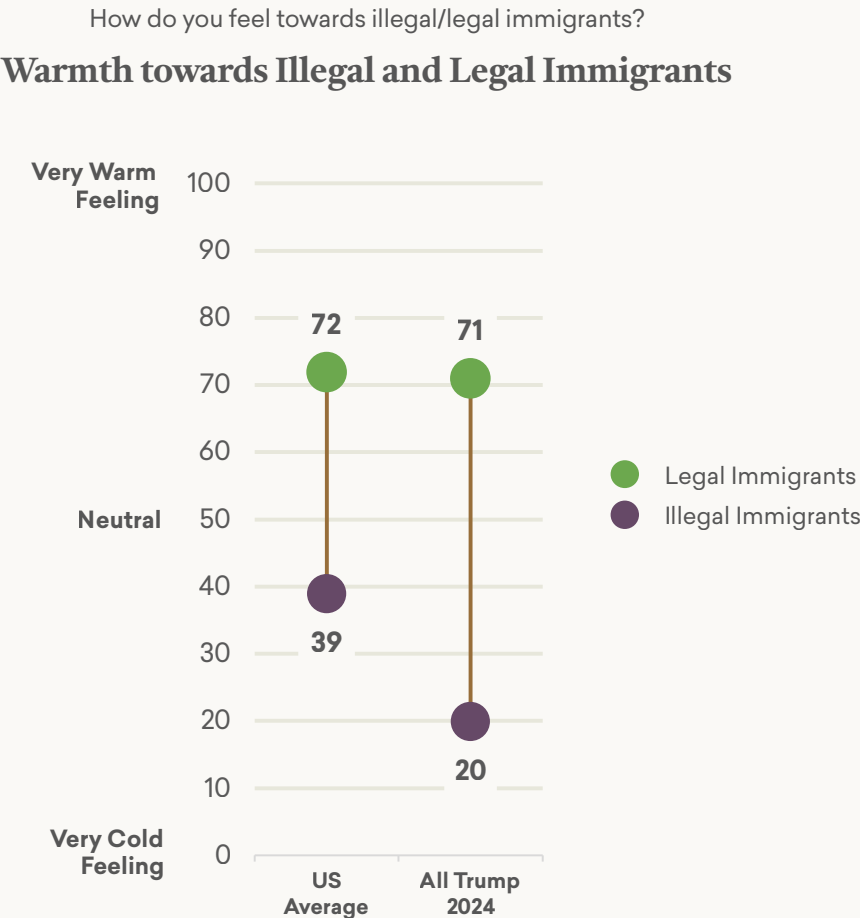
Concerns about immigration played an important role in forging the Trump coalition. A common perception is that Trump voters are largely motivated by a dislike of newcomers and immigrants in general. There is evidence to suggest otherwise. On thermometer score questions, Trump voters express the same level of warmth toward legal immigrants (71) as Americans do on average (72). In fact, on average, they feel greater warmth toward legal immigrants than they do toward members of MAGA (67). Yet their feelings toward illegal or undocumented immigrants are colder than the average Americans’ by 10 points or more. MAGA Hardliners (10) and Anti-Woke Conservatives (13) are particularly hostile toward these groups.



“I am not against immigration, but it has to be legal. You have to respect and wait for your turn. This is not a place that you can come in when you want and do whatever you want. And on top of that, you know, get all the benefits. That is illegal. **If you want to come, do it legally, and respect the rules.** That is the way, I think. And come to work”

**Gloria, Mainline Republican**  
Age 70 • Hispanic woman • Miami, Florida

FIGURE 0.10  
THERMOMETER SCORES FOR LEGAL AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS



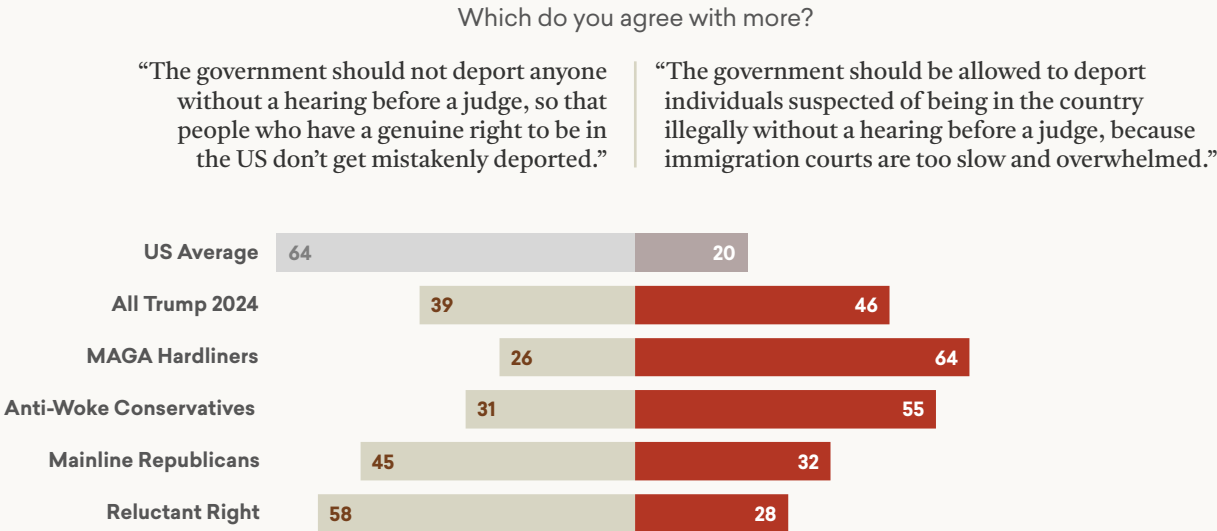
Question: “On a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means very cold and 100 means very warm, how cold or warm do you feel towards the following groups? Legal immigrants, Illegal/undocumented immigrants  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.



Chicago, IL - October 18, 2015: An ERO officer escorts aliens headed to an ICE detention facility. usicegov, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

On issues relating to immigration enforcement and deportations, differences between the Trump voters are also large. MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives tend to support aggressive measures, such as deporting individuals without a hearing before a judge, while most Mainline Republicans and Reluctant Right do not. While undocumented immigration is a top priority for most Trump voters, they differ substantially on how far the administration should go in tackling it.

FIGURE 0.11  
DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPECTED ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

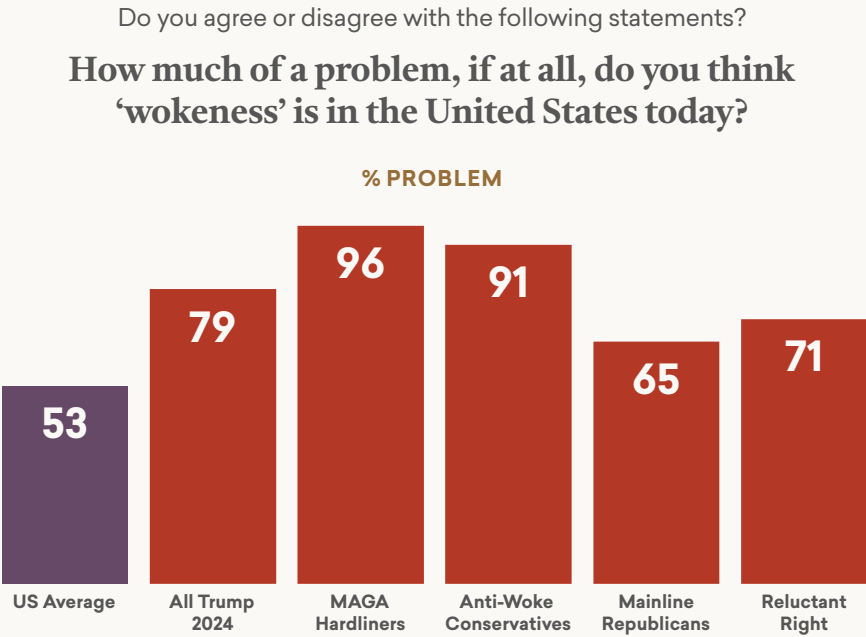


Question: “Which of the following statements comes closest to your view, even if neither is exactly right?”  
Strongly agree with A/B, Somewhat agree with A/B, Unsure/no opinion. Note: Unsure/no opinion not shown.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,671 Trump voters and 1,512 general population voters conducted in September 2025.

# American institutions and "wokeness"

Opposition to the progressive left has been a driving force of Trump’s presidency. Today, nearly eight in ten (79 percent) Trump voters see “wokeness” as a problem, with almost universal concern among MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives. While lower in intensity, frustration with perceived progressive excess is held by clear majorities, even of the less politically engaged voter types, suggesting it is a widely held concern across the coalition.

FIGURE 0.12  
THE PROBLEM OF “WOKENESS”



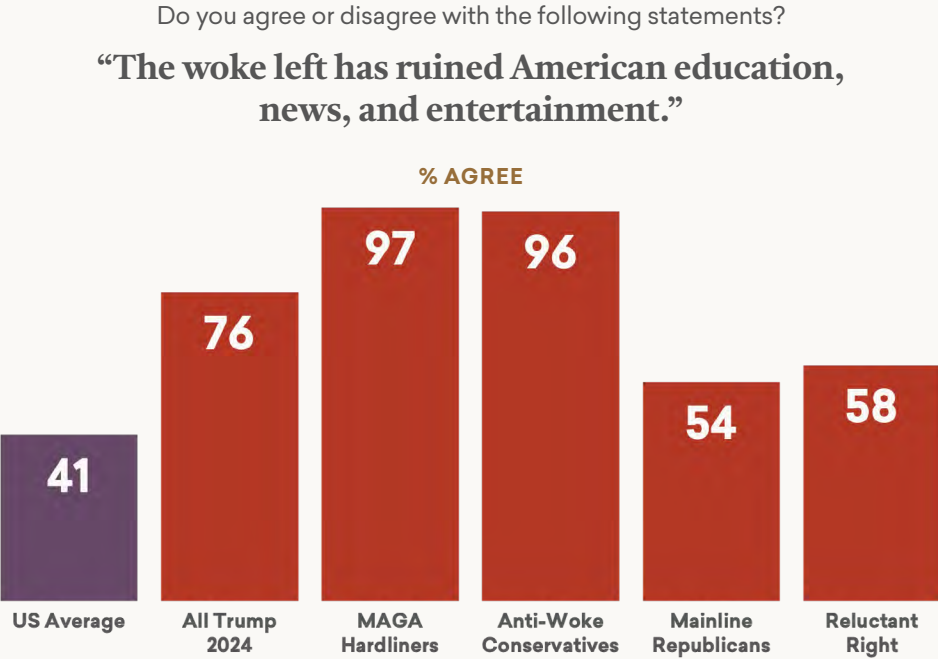
Response scale: 1 – A very serious problem to 5 – Not at all a problem; and “I don’t know the term ‘wokeness’”  
Note: The figure combines 1 and 2 into one category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

Americans’ trust in institutions has been in decline for decades. But many Trump voters overwhelmingly agree on why our political and cultural institutions are no longer worthy of trust and who should be held to blame. At least in recent years, they perceive that elites with progressive agendas have power over these institutions. Three in four (76 percent) agree that “the woke left has ruined American education, news, and entertainment” compared to just 42 percent of all Americans, with majorities of every Trump voter type in agreement—though there is a significant spread between the most and least concerned groups.

“To me, ‘woke’ has become a negative term. It seems less about real fairness and more about **forcing extreme ideas, silencing opposing opinions, and dividing people**. It feels like it’s gone from awareness to intolerance.”

**Susan, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 41 • White woman • Talladega, Alabama

FIGURE 0.13  
THE DAMAGE OF THE WOKE LEFT



Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

# Emergent new traditionalism

A deeper analysis of Gen Z and Millennial Trump voters points to an emergent “new traditionalism.” This is less of a settled or coherent ideology and more the developing threads of a countercultural conservative movement that departs from both its own generation and from older conservatives in several ways.

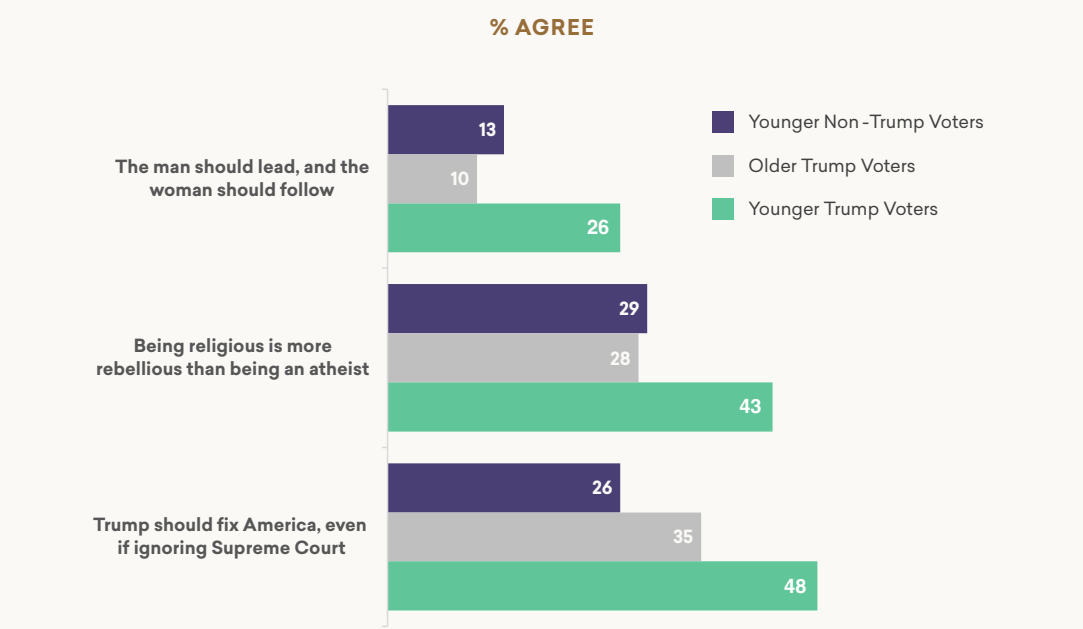
For example, younger Trump voters differ markedly in their views on gender roles. A quarter of this group (26 percent) believe “the man should lead, and the woman should follow”—more than twice the rate of older Trump voters (10 percent) and twice that of non-Trump voters their age (13 percent). Similarly, half (49 percent) believe that “American culture needs more masculinity,” as compared to 39 percent of older Trump voters and 25 percent of younger non-Trump voters.

On faith, many younger Trump voters do not view religiosity as conformity: instead, they are significantly more likely (43 percent) than both older Trump voters (28 percent) and other younger non-Trump voters (29 percent) to believe that “to be religious” is more rebellious than “to be an atheist.”

“Gender roles and abilities are biologically based ...**Society is better off when each gender understands their best qualities** and does their best to amplify them.”

**Jaria, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 35 • Black man • Sneads Ferry, North Carolina

FIGURE 0.14  
EMERGENT TRENDS AMONG YOUNGER TRUMP VOTERS



**Category definitions:** **Younger Non-Trump Voters** are Millennial and Gen Z adults who did not vote for Donald Trump in 2024 or did not vote at all; **Younger Trump Voters** are Millennial and Gen Z adults who voted for Donald Trump in 2024; **Older Trump Voters** are Gen X, Baby Boomer, and Silent Generation Americans who voted for Donald Trump in 2024. Generational definitions can be found here: <https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/data-visualizations/2019/defining-our-six-generations>

**Question texts:** **Man leads, woman follows:** “In general, which of the following best describes your view of relationships between a man and a woman?” The man should lead, and the woman should follow. / The man and woman should act as equal partners. / The woman should lead, and the man should follow. / It depends on the couple. **Being religious is rebellious today:** “Which do you think is more rebellious for younger generations today?” To be religious / To be an atheist / Don’t know. **Fix America, ignore SCOTUS:** “Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between?” A) President Trump needs to act urgently to fix America, even if it means ignoring decisions by the Supreme Court / B) Presidents must honor the Supreme Court’s decisions out of respect for our Constitution.

Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025, and survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

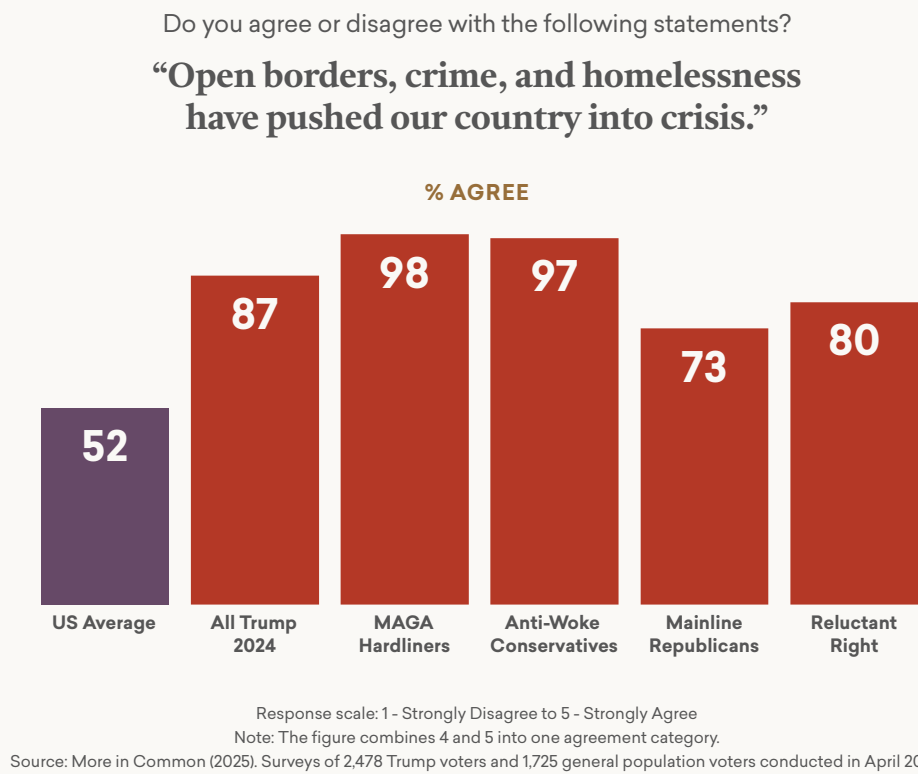
Younger Trump voters are also less committed to democratic norms, with almost half (48 percent) willing to support President Trump ignoring the Supreme Court if doing so would advance his goals, compared to 35 percent of older Trump voters and one in four (26 percent) of younger non-Trump voters. Whether this willingness to bypass democratic guardrails solidifies or recedes will depend on how political leaders and institutions respond—and whether they offer young voters compelling reasons to invest in democratic processes.



# Crises and choices

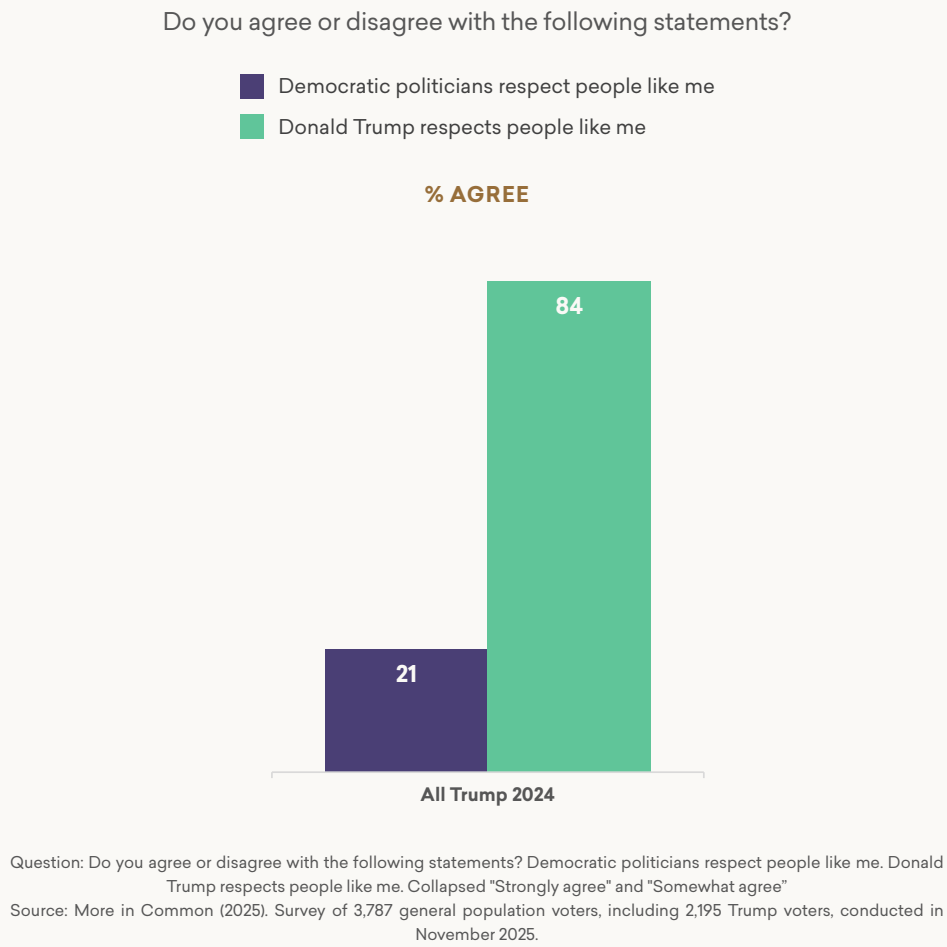
The Trump coalition differs on many issues but overwhelmingly shares the view that America faces an acute national crisis—with 87 percent seeing open borders, crime, and homelessness as evidence the country has reached a breaking point. By comparison, just 29 percent of 2024 Harris voters agree. Nearly two-thirds of Trump voters (64 percent) believe the American dream is moving out of reach for younger generations. In addition to these material challenges, most also see moral and spiritual dimensions to the crisis: three-quarters (75 percent) say America’s “morals and values” are in decline.

FIGURE 0.15  
A COUNTRY IN CRISIS



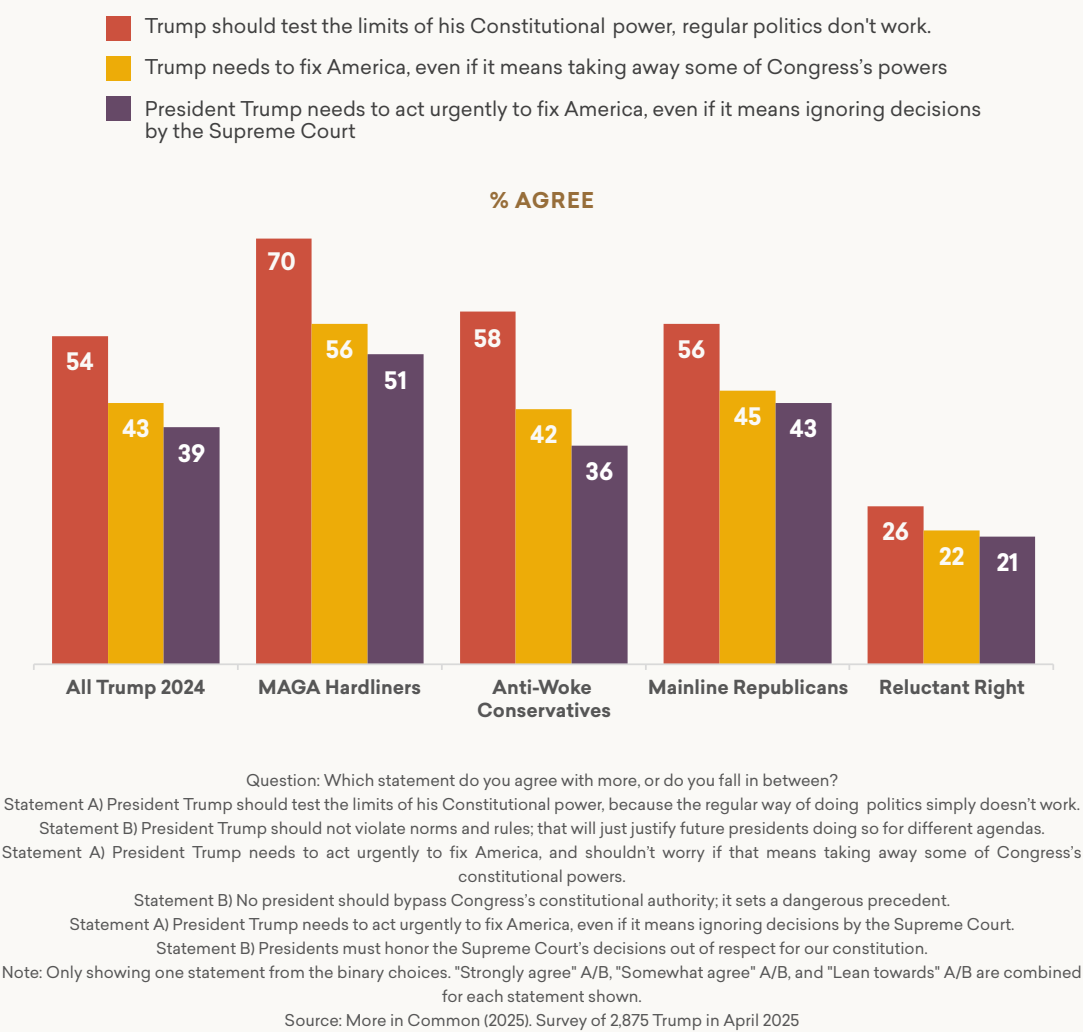
To address these challenges, many feel they have limited options: just 21 percent of Trump voters believe that “Democratic politicians respect people like me.” By contrast, 84 percent of Trump voters feel respected by the president. This gulf in perceived respect reinforces their attachment to President Trump.

FIGURE 0.16  
PERCEPTIONS OF RESPECT FROM POLITICIANS



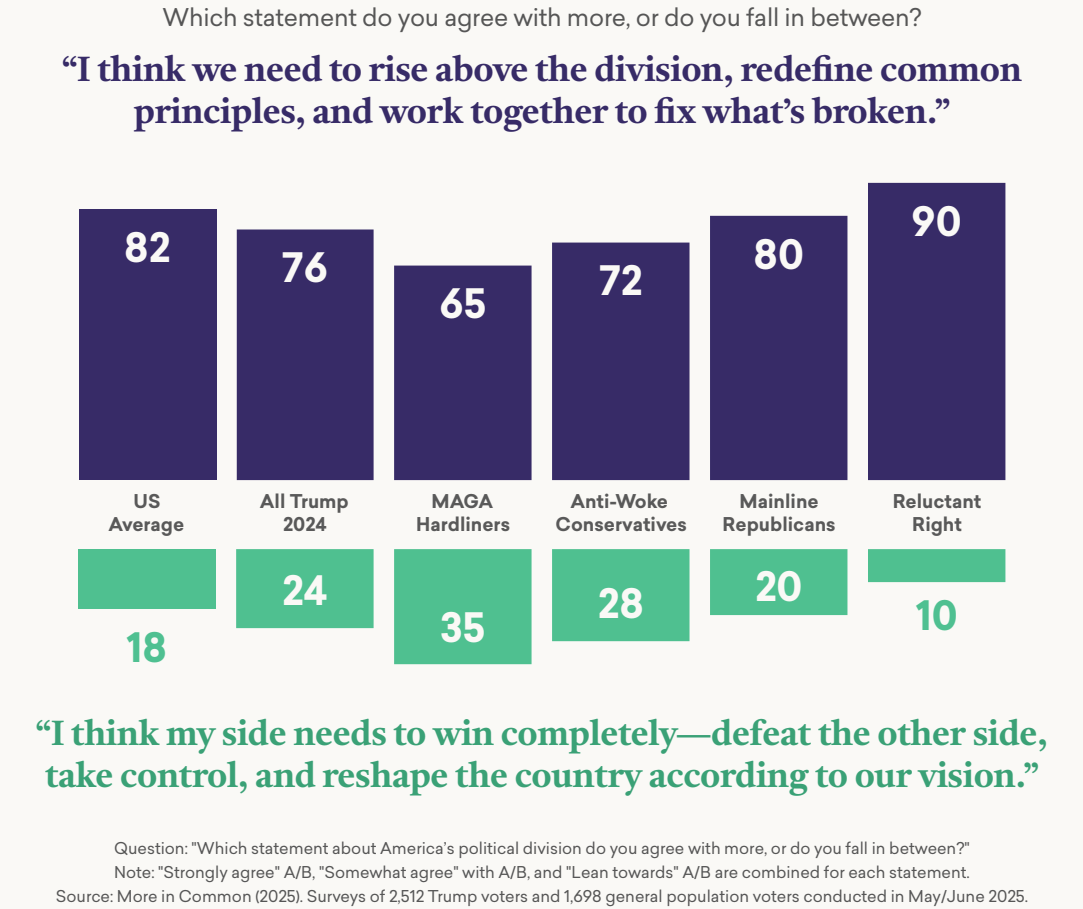
In this context of perceived crisis, and with few appealing options, extraordinary measures can begin to feel justifiable. While the Reluctant Right remains committed to constitutional boundaries, a majority of all other Trump voter types are sympathetic to the president "testing the limits of constitutional power because the regular way of doing politics doesn't work" (with 55 percent overall in agreement). Around two in five would further support Trump encroaching on the powers of the other branches of government—a level that could presumably rise in the context of a real or perceived national emergency.

FIGURE 0.17  
TESTING THE LIMITS



But breaking norms is not Trump voters' first preference. Given the choice between working together to fix what is broken or defeating the other side completely, 76 percent of Trump voters choose cooperation—similar to the 82 percent of Americans overall who say the same.

FIGURE 0.18  
A SHARED PREFERENCE FOR COOPERATION





WASHINGTON DC, SEPT 16 2017 – The ‘Mother of All Rallies’ event in support of Donald Trump draws a small group to the National Mall by kellybdc, licensed under CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

## Conclusion

Much is at stake in better understanding the 77 million Americans who make up the Trump voter coalition. The coalition's internal differences run through nearly every major issue facing the country. On immigration, some want mass deportations while others prioritize border security with paths to legal status. On democratic norms, the Reluctant Right insists on constitutional limits while majorities of other segments are ready to test those boundaries. On faith, some see America as fundamentally a Christian nation requiring government protection while others prioritize religious freedom and pluralism.

Yet these divisions within the Trump voter coalition exist alongside striking agreement: America is in crisis, the political establishment has failed, and the other side holds them in contempt. Whether the coalition endures may depend on whether these shared frustrations remain strong enough to override differences about deeply-held identities and about what lines should not be crossed.

But understanding the breadth of views within the Trump voter coalition also suggests that America's path need not be one of deepening division. Americans' differences and disagreements should not be minimized, but the battle lines of recent years rarely capture the complexity within coalitions—nor the commonalities across them.



# Methodology

From April 2025 to January 2026, we conducted six online surveys of US adult citizens designed to be representative of the American adult population. In parallel, we oversampled US adults who voted for Donald Trump in 2024 with demographic targets to ensure they were representative of the 2024 Trump electorate.

To better understand the diversity within the 2024 Trump voter coalition, we identified four distinct types of Trump supporters through a cluster analysis of attitudinal and behavioral variables. This approach goes beyond demographics to capture the core attitudes, behaviors and identities that differentiate Trump voters, and it is described in greater detail in the segmentation section below.

In addition to survey research and segmentation, we drew on qualitative insights from our Americans in Conversation (AIC) panel, an ongoing online community of approximately 200 Americans from diverse political and demographic backgrounds. We also conducted 26 in-depth interviews and 13 focus groups with 2024 Trump voters. These provided richer context to our four Trump voter types and personal narratives that complemented the survey findings.

Together, this mixed-methods approach allowed us to capture not only the broad patterns in public opinion of Trump voters but also the underlying differences in values, experiences, and perspectives within the 2024 Trump voter coalition.

# Survey content

The six surveys explored a wide range of political, cultural, and social attitudes, with a particular emphasis on views of Donald Trump, constitutional norms, and broader values shaping American politics. Respondents first answered core demographic and identity questions, followed by items on partisanship, ideology, and the current political environment. Voting decisions were measured, including motivations for supporting Trump, reflections on vote choice, and orientations towards the Republican Party. Beyond this subject matter, surveys explored a wide array of contemporary issues, ranging from climate change and cancel culture to views on Elon Musk and Vladimir Putin.

Some survey questions employ less formal language than is typical in academic research. We pre-tested some survey language—and conducted exploratory research—using our Americans in Conversation (AIC) platform to ground our questions in how Trump voters and other Americans refer to concepts and events. This is also an intentional stylistic choice designed to mirror the tone and vocabulary of contemporary political discourse, particularly as reflected by President Trump and social media conversations more broadly. For example, respondents were asked about “wokeness” and whether President Trump should “punish” his opponents. This wording captures the language and sentiment of real-world debates more faithfully than more formal alternatives.

## Large-scale polling

Across six survey waves, we conducted a total of 18,371 interviews, including 10,971 Trump 2024 voters and 7,400 non-Trump voters.

For all nationally representative samples across each of the six survey waves, the data were weighted to be representative according to gender and age interlocked, race, education level, region, and 2024 presidential vote and turnout. The weighting targets are based on the 2020 US Census and the 2023 American Community Survey.

For all surveys of 2024 Trump voters, the data were weighted to be representative according to gender and age interlocked, race, education level, and region. The weighting targets are based on the 2024 Edison Research Exit Poll.

We applied several quality controls to ensure data integrity. Respondents who failed one or both attention checks were excluded from analysis, as were survey respondents who gave overtly contradictory responses across items designed to capture inattentive respondents. Additional screening removed participants with short completion times, through both manual and automatic speed checks. We applied further checks to identify and remove responses that showed markers of AI generation (e.g., mentioning specific terms in an open-ended question that were hidden but visible to an AI operator).

Below is detailed information about each of the six surveys conducted for this project.

SAMPLE SIZE		
10,971	7,400	18,371
2024 Trump Voters	Non-Trump Voters	Total Interviews
FIELDWORK DATES		
WAVE 1		WAVE 4
APRIL 16 – 22, 2025		SEPTEMBER 20 – 24, 2025
Nationally Representative		Nationally Representative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 1,725</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 2.36</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 2,671</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 1.90</li></ul>
Survey of 2024 Trump Voters		Survey of 2024 Trump Voters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 2,478</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 1.97</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 1,512</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 2.52</li></ul>
WAVE 2		WAVE 5
MAY 28 – JUNE 1, 2025		NOVEMBER 6 – 17, 2025
Nationally Representative		Nationally Representative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 2,512</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 1.96</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 3,787</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 1.59</li></ul>
Survey of 2024 Trump Voters		Survey of 2024 Trump Voters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 1,698</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 2.38</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 2,195</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 2.09</li></ul>
WAVE 3		WAVE 6
AUGUST 8 – 19, 2025		JANUARY 2 – 9, 2026
Nationally Representative		Nationally Representative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 2,767</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 1.86</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 3,038</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 1.78</li></ul>
Survey of 2024 Trump Voters		Survey of 2024 Trump Voters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 1,516</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 2.52</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sample Size: 1,572</li><li>Margin of Error: ± 2.47</li></ul>

## Trump voter segmentation

Our Trump voter segmentation draws on data from More in Common’s nationally representative Wave 1 survey of 2,478 self-identified 2024 Trump voters, conducted in April 2025. Our Trump voter segmentation was developed in two stages: clustering and classification.

In the first stage, we used unsupervised clustering techniques to group respondents into distinct types based on patterns in their attitudes, values, and identities. We tested several approaches before settling on a k-means solution with Gower’s distance, balancing internal cohesion with interpretability. We iteratively refined the set of input variables to avoid redundancy and ensure that the final clusters meaningfully captured the diversity within the 2024 Trump voter coalition. To evaluate alternative specifications, we relied on diagnostic tools such as silhouette scores, classification error rates, and conceptual review of the explanatory value each segmentation produced.

In the second stage, we developed a supervised classification model to assign new respondents to these clusters in a reliable and replicable way. Using a gradient boosting algorithm (XGBoost), we identified a smaller set of 23 items that best predicted cluster membership. This model allows us to allocate new cases to segments with strong accuracy while reducing respondent burden and improving scalability. Below is a list of key segmentation input variables.

**Trump behaviors:** The extent to which respondents engaged in pro-Trump activities—such as attending rallies, donating, displaying signage, or using Truth Social—versus having no such involvement.

**Trump versus GOP identity:** Whether individuals primarily identify as Trump supporters, Republicans, equally both, or neither.

**Descriptors of Trump:** The qualities people most strongly associate with Trump (e.g., bold, leader, patriot, liar, dictator), capturing both positive and negative characterizations.

**Trump and Personal Faith:** Agreement with statements linking Trump to divine purpose or faith commitments.

**Partisan Animosity:** Agreement with framing the left as an existential threat, including whether Trump should punish political opponents.

**Constitutional power and cultural authority:** Preferences for Trump’s role in shaping values in schools and higher education, including support for using government power to enforce traditional values or punish universities.

**Institutional trust:** Perceptions of the honesty of national media as a key measure of broader trust in institutions.

**Care about America:** Views on whether those who truly care about the country are mostly on the left, mostly on the right, or present on both sides.

**Religious and worldview beliefs:** Endorsement of end times theology, creationism versus evolution, and the role of MAGA as a core personal identity.

Cluster analysis has several key advantages. By avoiding the use of demographic inputs, we were able to go beyond conventional categories and organize people according to their most basic attitudinal differences. This approach also reveals the diversity of beliefs within the Trump voter base and highlights the distinct ways those beliefs shape political identity and behavior. Cluster analysis also uncovers patterns that are not visible through standard demographic or partisan breakdowns, providing a deeper explanatory framework for understanding the electorate.

## Qualitative Research

### Americans in conversation

In addition to polling, this report draws on qualitative findings from Americans in Conversation (AIC), an online panel formed by More in Common to deepen understanding of Americans’ attitudes, values, and beliefs. This panel is broadly representative of the American general population and comprises a politically and demographically diverse online community of approximately 200 Americans with whom we engage regularly from 2023–2026. Through open-ended surveys and discussion forums, we test content and explore emerging trends. Quotations from those conversations with respondents are included in this report. Where provided, names have been changed to protect their privacy. At times, grammar and punctuation have been lightly edited for clarity.

The following survey activities from AIC were fielded and analyzed as part of this project.

**Thoughts on America and the presidency (March 18 – 21, 2025; N = 212):** This survey examines how Trump voters prioritize competing cultural, moral, political, and economic concerns; the influence of religion on their political views; their perceptions of Trump’s leadership style and the role of the Constitution; and their openness to reevaluating their support for him in light of broader ideological, institutional, and partisan dynamics.

**Thinking about politics (April 2 – 7, 2025; N = 190):** This survey explores participants’ immediate associations with President Trump, the political figures they most align with, and how they self-identify within the broader spectrum of 2024 Trump voters, uncovering ideological affinities and distinctions from other types of supporters.

**Reflecting on American presidency (April 12 – 14, 2025; N = 184):** This survey explores how 2024 Trump voters perceive their relationship to Donald Trump and the Republican Party, their motivations and feelings about their vote, views on major policies and cultural issues, and how they see themselves within the broader conservative and MAGA movements.



**American politics and values (April 12 – 14, 2025; N = 179):** This survey examines the extent to which Trump-aligned voters endorse confrontational views toward the political left, support the use of presidential power to reshape institutions and challenge constitutional limits, and express openness to authoritarian or antidemocratic sentiments in response to perceived institutional failure.

**Trump voter segmentation (June 17 – 30, 2025; N = 196):** This survey is designed to classify participants into distinct Trump voter types by capturing behavioral signals, political identity, emotional and religious reasoning, media trust, and core cultural beliefs.

**Progressive culture and “wokeness” (October 14 – 18, 2025; N = 149):** This survey explores subjects of the cultural and political reach of progressivism and “wokeness”; perceptions, experiences and opinions of the “woke Left”; questions related to faith and religiosity, and other topics.

**Emerging trends in conservatism (November 26 – December 2, 2025; N = 121):** This survey measures the extent to which Trump voters have encountered or personally hold viewpoints increasingly associated with young Americans and young conservatives, including perceptions of national and moral decline, traditional views on gender, religious conversion, negative views towards minority groups, views on democracy, US relationship to Israel, and other topics.

## Focus groups

In the qualitative phase of the research, we conducted 13 separate focus groups, each lasting approximately 75 minutes and including approximately four to eight participants. These groups featured a broadly representative distribution of respondents from each of the four key Trump voter types. We also conducted additional focus groups with specific demographic groups of interest, including Hispanic/Latino and Black 2024 Trump voters under the age of 30.

Participants were recruited through ROI Rocket, which maintains a diverse and demographically balanced panel. The company ensures high-quality participation through a double opt in process and third-party verification of participant identity and background. All interviews and focus groups were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to capture participants’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in their own words and to identify emerging trends and patterns. Where respondent quotes are provided, names have been changed to protect individual privacy.

## In-depth interviews

Finally, we conducted 26 in-depth interviews with Americans within the four key Trump voter types. These respondents were recruited as recontacts from focus groups or through a snowball sampling method. Quotes from the respondents are included in this report. Where provided, names have been changed to protect the privacy of participants. Grammar and punctuation have been lightly edited for clarity.

# Profiles of the Trump Voter Types





# MAGA Hardliners

29%  
of TRUMP VOTERS

MAGA Hardliners are the fiery core of Trump’s base—fiercely loyal, deeply religious, and animated by a sense that America is in an existential struggle between good and evil, with God firmly on their side. They tend to be older, less affluent, and less formally educated than other conservatives, but they see themselves as the guardians of a way of life they believe is rapidly disappearing. For them, Trump is not simply a politician but the champion of their cause, someone willing to break with convention to restore what they see as America’s rightful greatness.

Among Trump voters, MAGA Hardliners are the most willing to violate democratic norms to achieve political ends. They are skeptical of mainstream institutions,

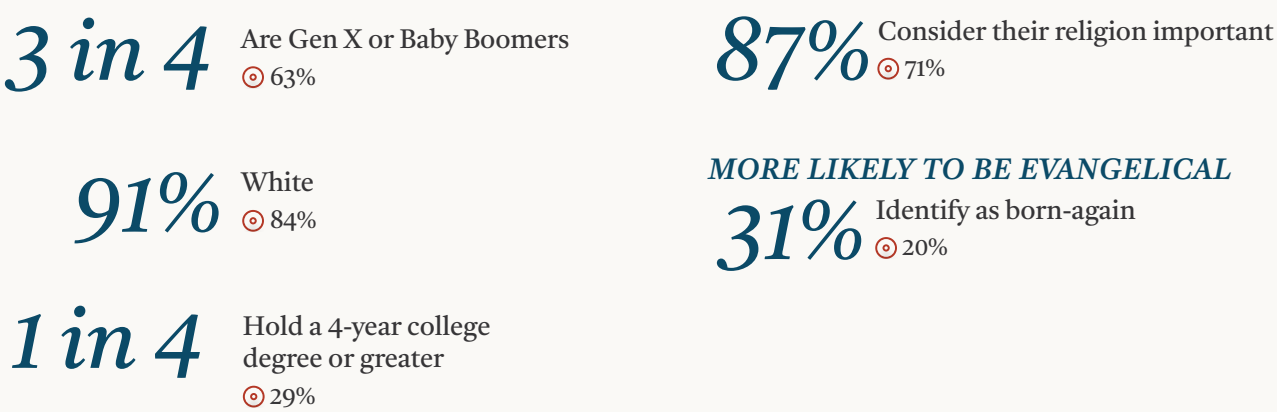
“I just personally like him. I like the way he talks back to the media. He doesn’t lay down for these guys. He fights back and they don’t like it. He’s a disruptor. He sees the corruption and all the bad things that are going on in this country, and **he’s the one person who’s going to try to fix it and they hate that.** They detest him and that makes me like him that much more.”

**Gary, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 60 • White man • Mounds, Oklahoma

## PORTRAIT OF THE MAGA Hardliners



WHITE • OLDER • CHRISTIAN  
⦿ = AVERAGE OF ALL FOUR COHORTS



convinced that traditional sources of information have been compromised, and many believe that a small group of people secretly controls politics, media, and business. This leads them to be generally tolerant of Trump ignoring Supreme Court rulings or amending the Constitution to seek a third term, although a majority still believe Trump should follow the Constitution, even if it means he sometimes can’t get things done. They have a strong sense of community and are among the cohorts most likely to say that most of their friends share their political views. Overall, MAGA Hardliners can be counted on to take Trump’s side in almost every situation.

“I truly believe that in my heart that **God saved him. It was just something so divine.** Especially when all the Secret Service were wrapping themselves around him and Trump raised his arm. I almost cried for real. Because the way this country was headed, I think God really intervened and saved his life.”

**Fernando, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 38 • Black man • Houston, Texas



**Charles** is a 55-year-old handyman from southwestern Louisiana. He never married and has no kids, but he is not alone—he lives in a trailer on family property, next door to his mother and brother, and just down a golfcart trail from his younger sister, along with several nieces and nephews. He has spent most of his life working in construction and the trades, and for the last several years has found fulfilling work as a handyman: “If I see something broke, I feel good after I fix it, if that makes sense. I get gratitude every time I do something like that. I guess it just gives me a purpose.”

On a recent morning, he accidentally snapped the handle off the door to his truck. By early that same afternoon, he had been able to order a part, go to work, pick up the part, and fix the handle. He was able to do this because he gets up long before sunrise. “I get up no later than four o’clock,” Charles says, “and it gives me time to do a little reading, watch some news, drink my coffee. The morning is the best part of the day. It’s quiet.” The news is either Fox or NBC: “Everything I see on the news I take with a grain of salt. I believe Fox is the most accurate, but it’s almost like you got to watch both of them to know what’s going on.” His reading is a few Bible verses or a book with short stories about how to live a Christian life.

Even though he does not go to church anymore, Charles was raised and still considers himself Catholic. His faith shapes his values and adds urgency to his political views. Charles has conviction when he says that “people’s moral beliefs have gotten real bad.” He says that “your beliefs are up to you. But why is it so important that I believe the same thing?” He says, “The big one is these people that are trying to change their sex. They’re born a man, and now they’re trying to be a woman. They’re making so much noise because they want everybody else to accept that, which is a flat out lie. It can’t be done.” He supports President Trump, in part, because “to me, he was the best choice for someone that has the same values that I have. I think we needed someone not to go in there and tiptoe, but to go in there and just go to town.”

Yet Charles concedes that President Trump is not a personal model of Christian values. Before the president entered politics, Charles knew who he was “because anytime somebody talked about the rich, everybody always said ‘Donald Trump.’ I mean, he had a big, big name for being rich.” “Yeah,” Charles says, “he’s not perfect, but what he’s doing is what I want our president to do. I don’t care what he did in the past. What is he doing today?”

Charles grew up as a Democrat, though almost everyone in his family is a Republican now. The one exception is his little brother: “He’s a big-time Democrat because his whole life he’s been a union electrician. We’re always talking about it and getting frustrated, but it doesn’t affect our relationship or anything.” More generally, Charles says, “I cannot wrap my head around what the Democrats are doing or what they want. They’re not for the American worker anymore.”

That is why Charles considers himself to be a part of the MAGA movement. “We need it,” he says, “because we need to take care of the people here first, then help others. Everything the president is doing, in my opinion, is making America better.” On immigration, for instance, he says that “I don’t blame some of them families wanting to come here to get away from whatever problems they have, but when you make it easy for people to come across, then everybody’s going to come. If they’re vetted and do it the right way, I’m all open for it. I consider myself a Christian, so yeah, I want to help these people, but they got to do it the right way. You got to go by the law, if not, if you just open the gates, you’re going to have every bad person in the world coming over here. I mean, why wouldn’t they? Crooks and murderers and drugs and all that just fly across the border. It’s that simple.”

Charles briefly summarizes his endorsement of the president’s approach to policy leadership: “If you want to get things done, you just got to go full-blown. So, I like all the stuff that he’s done.” In addition to being a leader who fights for Charles’ values, that “stuff” includes not only how the president has taken on immigration, but also government spending and tariffs. When Charles discusses the tariffs, his face lights up: “You cannot go buy something that’s not made in China. And that just blows my mind.” When asked why that is so frustrating for him, he says, “Number one, it’s a cheaper product. It’s not as good as something built in America.”

He believes President Trump is rebuilding a country where his family can thrive. He says he gets the most joy in life “spending time with my nephews and nieces. Some of them have gotten older, and they have kids now. When I see them, or I’m doing something with them, I got a smile on my face the whole time. They’re the closest thing I have to kids, and they make me laugh, and I like doing things for them. And sometimes I wonder when they get much older, what’s it going to be like around here? And I truly believe we’re going to have a Republican president for a long while, and I think that is a good thing.”

# MAGA Hardliners

VERSUS THE AVERAGE TRUMP 2024 VOTER

● MAGA HARDLINERS %    ⦿ AVERAGE TRUMP 2024 VOTER %

## STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY

### MORE LIKELY TO SAY

“Almost all” or “more than half” of their friends have similar political views as them  
● 78% v. ⦿ 59%

### MOST LIKELY

Among Trump voters to “strongly disagree” that they have “no community where [I] feel a strong sense of belonging”  
● 27% v. ⦿ 20%

## DEEPLY RELIGIOUS

### MORE LIKELY TO BELIEVE

God created humans, not evolution  
● 80% v. ⦿ 59%

### MOST LIKELY TO SAY

Supporting Trump is “part of living out my faith”  
● 74% v. ⦿ 39%

## SKEPTICAL OF ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS

### VERY LIKELY TO BELIEVE

Bureaucrats and their deep state allies control politics  
● 78% v. ⦿ 65%

### LEAST LIKELY TO OPPOSE

Trump serving a third term in office as president  
● 23% v. ⦿ 40%

## ZEALOUS POLITICAL BELIEFS

### MOST LIKELY TO SAY

They still feel “very confident in my choice” to vote for Trump  
● 94% v. ⦿ 63%

### MOST LIKELY TO SAY

The Left hates America  
● 93% v. ⦿ 58%

### MOST LIKELY TO STRONGLY AGREE

That open borders, crime, and homelessness amount to a crisis  
● 88% v. ⦿ 59%





# Anti-Woke Conservatives

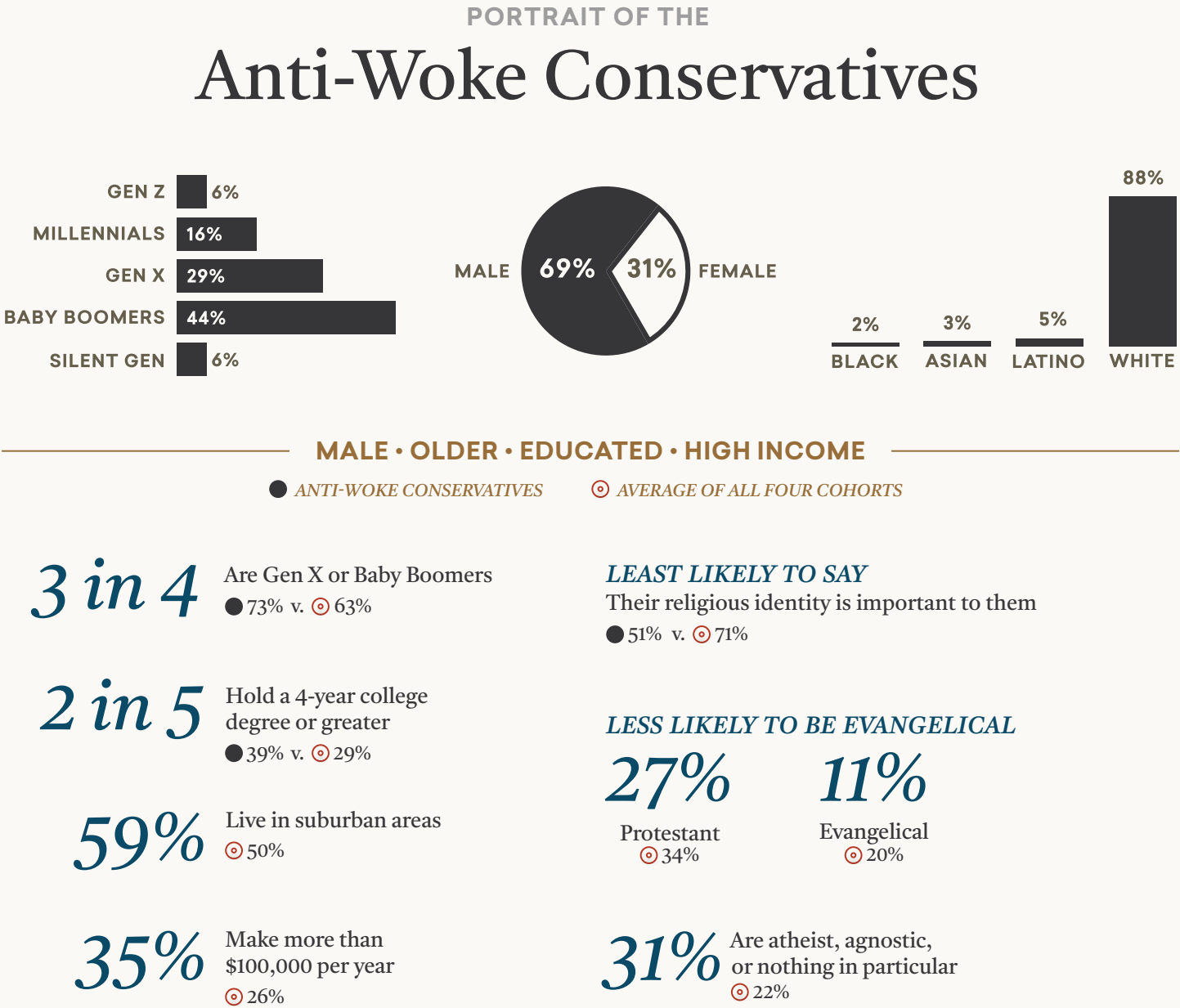
21%  
of TRUMP VOTERS

Well-off and politically engaged, Anti-Woke Conservatives are deeply frustrated by the perceived takeover of our schools, culture, and institutions by the progressive left. They believe American identity is being eroded by lax immigration laws and by DEI programs, and are typically the most likely among Trump voters to express disagreement or opposition to “wokeness.”

Unlike the rest of Trump’s base, Anti-Woke Conservatives’ connection to Trump is practical rather than spiritual: they see him as a builder, someone capable of fixing a broken system, and are the least likely among his base to see his presidency as divinely ordained. They generally frown on

“It seems like [the media] has an agenda. It’s like they don’t investigate anything anymore. **They just put whatever’s out there, and people buy it, hook, line, and sinker.**”

**Buck, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 59 • White man • Staten Island, New York



the idea of Trump violating the Constitution or Supreme Court rulings, though most also believe Trump should do everything in his power within these limits to strike back against the Left. Anti-Woke Conservatives vote regularly, take civic life seriously, and carry a strong sense of duty to the nation. For them, Trump represents a means to restore America to a state they believe was stronger, more secure, and more rooted in common sense.

“I’m noticing that a lot of the conservatives are not afraid to speak up anymore. **During the last four years with Biden, we all kind of took a back seat,** and we weren’t allowed to express ourselves for fear of being canceled or being outed or whatever.”

**Raquel, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 48 • White woman • Colorado Springs, Colorado



**Dave** is a 42-year-old from Maryland who lives with his girlfriend and her two teenage daughters. He is a life-long public servant from a family of public servants and has been a registered Republican for most of his life, but he says that “back when things were going off the rails for both parties in early 2020, I switched party affiliation to Independent because I just got sick of the party system.” Dave “wouldn’t say Trump attracted me into his coalition. It was more a case of I didn’t like the ridiculousness of the opposition to Trump.” For Dave, voting for President Trump is all about “stopping the stupidity, first and foremost.”

Dave uses the terms “stupidity” and “ridiculousness” almost interchangeably with the idea of “wokeness”—which he defines as “not really challenging the norm but adhering to the latest conformity that they’re pushing.”

Dave takes his responsibility as a public servant seriously—he “thinks less of” his colleagues in the federal government when they discuss politics at the office. One of the “tipping points” that drove him to become a Trump voter was “in the government workplace being encouraged to put my pronouns in my signature block.” Dave never actually added “he/his” to his emails, but, as he tells the story, his supervisor had gone to a two-day DEI training and, when she got back, had a meeting with her team where she said that “she learned that this is a way that we can allow people to see themselves in the office and will make us closer as a family.” Dave felt that his boss was doing this “for purely corporate reasons, not necessarily because it’s what she felt deep down.” It fits into his characterization of “ridiculousness”: “Can you imagine the amount of investment for updating government databases for 59 different genders? You’re just trying to push the lines to see how far we can take these arguments and I’m just sick of it at this point. It seems like by putting my pronouns in my signature block I’m signing up for an ideology and I’m not sure what else comes with that.”

As Dave says, he was not “attracted” by Trump. He considers himself to be more of a conservative than a Republican and “more of a libertarian than a conservative, even though I think they’re orthogonal.”

His daily commute is about two hours each way, and he spends most of that time listening to books. He is reflective: he can describe his beliefs in geometric detail. He has applied the same level of thought to how he thinks about what it means to be an American, which for him, in addition to a commitment to ideals like liberty, also involves “some sort of connection with your fellow citizens, a shared sense

of purpose.” He also lives out this definition of citizenship: he is part of a daily running club, plays trivia with a group of friends at a local pub twice a week, and, for the last seven years, has been a high school football referee in part because “it’s a mentoring opportunity. Being on the sidelines with the high schoolers, you get to chitchat and spend a little time influencing young people.”

While he thinks national Democratic leadership has gotten a bit “ridiculous,” he remains close friends with plenty of Democrats. He recounted a friend in his running club, a social worker who helps with housing placements for low-income families, who apparently runs at Dave’s pace. As he recalls, “When Trump came out with an executive order a couple of weeks ago where he is trying to encourage people to move off the street and into community-supported shelters, we debated that on a run for a good 15-20 minutes. We don’t blatantly try and force our politics on one another. We just try and find common ground through those conversations.”

Dave thinks President Trump is funny and an excellent communicator who knows how to get his opposition fired up: “I mean, calling Sydney Sweeney hot this morning, is there anything more authentic than that?” he jokes. But that is not what drew him to the president: “I don’t necessarily like him intentionally getting under other people’s skin and being antagonistic.” Dave views his support for President Trump as an alignment with common sense: “I’ve heard this described as 80/20 issues where 80 percent of Americans agree with something, for example, gender divisions in youth sports. Why do we support the 20 percent in that scenario? I know it’s important to support those individuals... but at the same time, it’s hurting the other participants in youth sports that want to compete against athletes who are of a similar physical makeup.”

For him, President Trump represents that 80 percent. While he is open to compromise in his personal life, he is skeptical of it in his political life: “The goalposts just keep on moving... so why should we try and bend the knee at this point when you know that once you accept a position, that position will evolve and move further towards more ridiculousness.”

COMPARISON

# Anti-Woke Conservatives

VERSUS THE AVERAGE TRUMP 2024 VOTER

● ANTI-WOKE CONSERVATIVES %    ◎ AVERAGE TRUMP 2024 VOTER %

STRONG SUSPICION OF THE LEFT

**MOST LIKELY TO BELIEVE**

“American identity is disappearing nowadays”

● 89% v. ◎ 76%

**MUCH MORE LIKELY TO BELIEVE**

The “woke left has ruined American education, news, and entertainment”

● 96% v. ◎ 76%

**THE LEAST WARM IN FEELING TOWARDS:**

(100 point thermometer scale)

22 Democrats  
◎ 29

13 Undocumented immigrants  
◎ 20

16 Pro-Gaza demonstrators  
◎ 25

SUPPORTIVE OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**SECOND MOST LIKELY (AFTER RELUCTANT RIGHT)**

To say Trump should **always follow the Constitution, even if it means he sometimes can’t get things done**

● 82% v. ◎ 77%

**MOST LIKELY TO SAY**

“Democracy is definitely the best form of government”

● 76% v. ◎ 64%

**MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN MAGA HARDLINERS TO SAY**

Trump should “honor the Supreme Court’s decisions out of respect for our Constitution”

● 64% v. ● 49%

“Every American’s voice matters equally so long as they are committed to our founding ideals”

● 80% v. ● 74%

PRACTICAL RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL SUPPORT FOR TRUMP

**LEAST LIKELY TO SAY**

Their faith shapes their politics

● 14% v. ◎ 27%

**MUCH LESS LIKELY THAN MAGA HARDLINERS TO BELIEVE**

We are living in religious “end times”

● 26% v. ● 72%

**MOST LIKELY TO**

Not practice a faith

● 37% v. ◎ 19%

**LESS LIKELY TO BELIEVE**

God saved Trump from assassination so he could make America great again

● 43% v. ◎ 55%

**MUCH LESS LIKELY TO SAY**

The U.S. should bring religion into government and public life

● 25% v. ◎ 36%





# Mainline Republicans

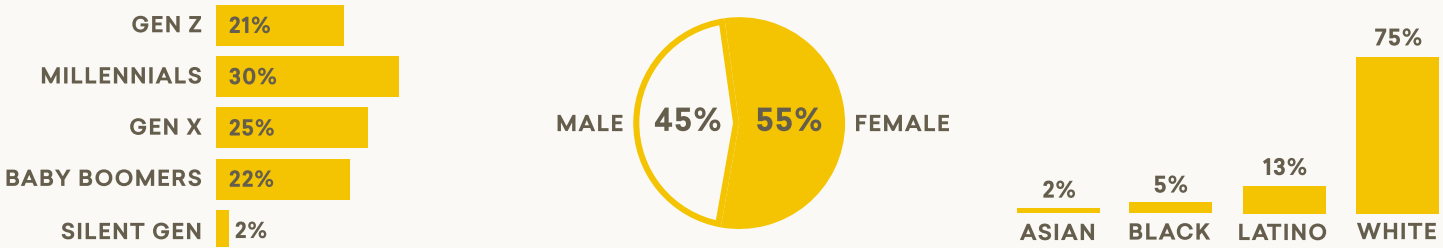
30%  
of TRUMP VOTERS

Mainline Republicans are middle-of-the-road conservatives who play by the rules and expect others to do the same. They tend to be more focused on their families and daily lives than on national politics and are less likely than many other Trump voters to have voted in a local election or follow what is going on in public affairs. They are drawn to Trump less for his flair or showmanship than for the way he advances familiar conservative priorities: securing the border, keeping the economy strong, and preserving a sense of cultural stability.

"I'm not necessarily 100% pro-Trump all the way, **but I am a Republican**, and that's just the way that I needed to vote."

**Jason, Mainline Republican**  
Age 48 • White man • Salisbury, New Hampshire

## PORTRAIT OF THE Mainline Republicans



YOUNGER • FEMALE • DIVERSE • LOW INCOME  
⦿ AVERAGE OF ALL FOUR COHORTS

### MOST FEMALE-HEAVY GROUP

55% Female  
⦿ 48%

### NOTABLE HISPANIC REPRESENTATION

13% Hispanic  
⦿ 8%      75% White  
⦿ 84%

### GENERATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

30% Millennials ⦿ 23%	25% Gen X ⦿ 28%	22% Baby Boomers ⦿ 35%
26% Roman Catholic ⦿ 25%	2% Muslim ⦿ 1%	30% Protestant ⦿ 34%

43% Have an income of under \$50k/yr  
⦿ 36%

38% Hold only a high school diploma  
⦿ 34%

25% Have some college, but no degree  
⦿ 28%

Mainline Republicans' preference for order makes them uneasy with violations of political norms, which may help explain why they take a negative view toward such events as the storming of the Capitol on January 6th or Trump's talk of pushing constitutional limits. Yet overall, they see Trump's leadership as a force for good and believe he is getting it right on issues like immigration. To them, Trump embodies the determination and boldness they believe are necessary for promoting conservative values and addressing the nation's challenges.

"I think the good thing about growing up here and seeing my parents, uncles, and aunts from different countries is that **you really do get an equal chance. You really do.** If you focus and do what you learn, you go to school, you do have a good shot at what you want to do."

**Jay, Mainline Republican**  
Age 64 • Hispanic man • Smithtown, New York



MEET A MAINLINE REPUBLICAN

Veronica

is a 70-year-old Cuban American who lives in South Florida and loves listening to Latin music. Asked if there is anything in particular that she likes best, she starts her answer with what she absolutely does not like: “What I don’t like is the one they play now, the reggaeton with the bad words. No, no, no, no, no. I like romantic. I’m from the old school.” She listens to music much more often than she watches the news, which she only catches while she is preparing dinner, and only then because she has no choice: her husband, who is 17 years older, has to “put the TV on so loud” in the living room so he can hear the nightly local news in Spanish.

Veronica and her family arrived in the United States, as she makes sure to emphasize, “the right way” 60 years ago “legally with the freedom flights.” She has been a US citizen for most of her adult life, but she only started voting when she married her second husband 20 years ago. Veronica’s husband, whom she met by chance when they ended up on the same tour of Machu Picchu, told her she had to register to vote “because that’s your right and you’re going to do it.”

Since then, she has only ever voted for Republicans. That was, in part, informed by her husband’s politics (he was a small business owner before retiring and is a longtime Republican). When asked why she has never considered voting for any other party, Veronica replies that “Republicans, they work for the people. With them, the economy always goes up.”

In addition to being a committed Republican, she supported President Trump as far back as 2015 when he was an upstart in a big primary field because “there’s a lot of things that need to be done, and he’s a businessman, and he can do it.” She also appreciates his style because she “likes people who tell you what they think up-front and to your face, looking you right in the eyes.”

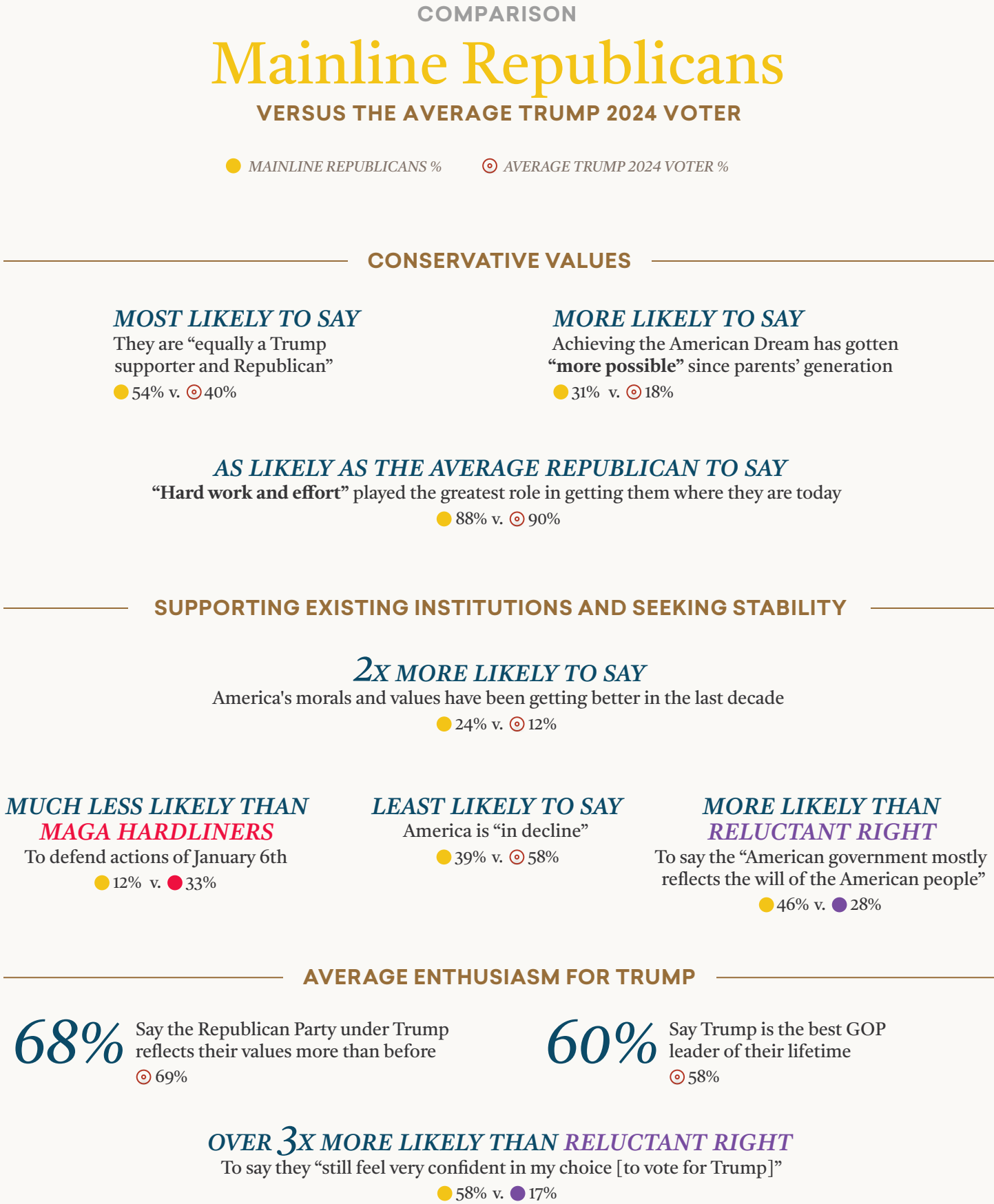
While she is happy with her vote, she is worried about some aspects of the Trump Administration’s immigration policy. She recalls a story she overheard on the news of a longtime resident from Guatemala who was recently deported, even though he was a small business owner whose concrete company in Orlando “employed 10 families.” As Veronica puts it, “There’s a lot of immigrants here who are really bad and need to go home.” But the man in Orlando was “not taking welfare, not asking for help, not a public burden. Why did they treat him like that? That’s not fair.”

Veronica has a tremendous amount of pride about being an American, the sort of pride one has from something earned as opposed to bestowed. She remembers her father, who worked three jobs, telling her that she and her siblings would be going “to the Promised Land to be men and women.” She started working as a cashier right out of high school and did not stop until her retirement five years ago: “no welfare, nothing, nothing, nothing” from the government.

Because of her husband’s age, she cannot travel as much as she would otherwise in her retirement, and she is okay with that: “We spend the day at home, and it’s very peaceful. We have a nice house, and it’s all paid. We are very hardworking people, immigrants that started from the bottom and now we have a very happy and peaceful life.”

Outside of spending time with her husband and family, she does not like to do much because “there’s a lot of robbery and shooting and all that. Every time you turn on the news, that’s all you hear.” She also worries about the cost of living and “ridiculous” insurance prices in particular. Like most Americans, Veronica does not discuss politics much in her personal life, and she is friends with lots of people who did not vote the same way she did last November. But she would never vote for a Democrat because she thinks most Democratic politicians “are kind of communists.”

As she puts it, “I think Trump is the only one who can fix a lot of the problems that we are encountering in the country, and four years is not going to be enough to fix everything we have to fix, but at least he’s going to try to make America great again.”







# Reluctant Right

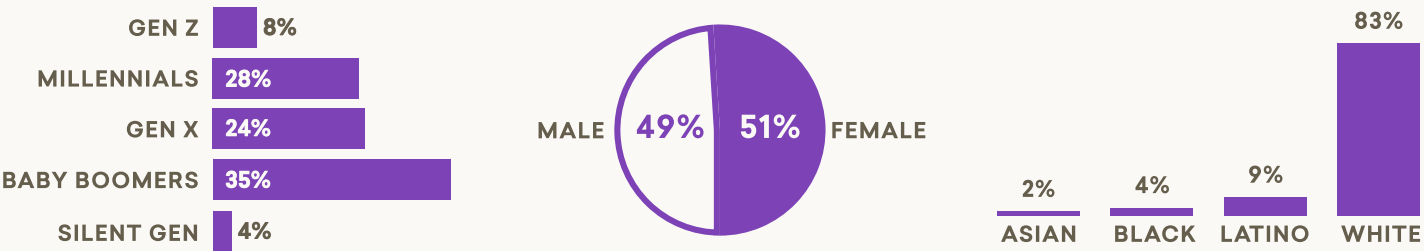
20%  
of TRUMP VOTERS

The Reluctant Right is the most ambivalent cohort of Trump’s coalition. Many feel disconnected from national politics and believe politicians don’t reflect their concerns. They also value compromise and believe both sides care equally about America. When they do engage with political issues, they often find themselves torn between competing values—for example, balancing compassion with a desire for order on immigration. They also tend to avoid political conversations with friends and family, both because they dislike confrontation and because they often find themselves holding the minority position.

“I kind of feel out of place at the moment. When I think of MAGA, I just, I think **‘too extreme for me.’**”

**Cesar, Reluctant Right**  
Age 39 • Hispanic man • Campbell, California

## PORTRAIT OF THE Reluctant Right



### OLDER • CONFLICTED

⦿ AVERAGE OF ALL FOUR COHORTS

6 in 10 Are Gen X or Baby Boomers  
● 59% v. ⦿ 63%

**MOST LIKELY TO**  
Identify as Independent  
● 35% v. ⦿ 24%

32% Protestant  
⦿ 34%

**LEAST LIKELY TO**  
Identify as Republican  
● 51% v. ⦿ 70%

29% Are atheist, agnostic,  
or nothing in particular  
⦿ 22%

**LOWER IMPORTANCE ON**  
Being American  
● 86% v. ⦿ 91%

**MOST LIKELY TO SAY THEY ARE "NOT HOPEFUL"**  
About the next four years in the United States  
● 37% v. ⦿ 13%

Asked to explain their vote for Trump, members of the Reluctant Right are the most likely among the cohorts to say they simply found him “less bad” than the alternative or were encouraged by a close friend or family member to do so. They are wary of Trump’s divisive rhetoric, say his immigration policies go “too far,” and are strongly opposed to a third Trump term. At the same time, they are concerned about the direction of the country and believe that open borders, crime, and homelessness have pushed the country into crisis. What they want is strong, competent leadership to steer the nation out of its troubles—which is why, more than any other group, they describe Trump not as a traditional politician but as a “CEO running a company.”

“[L]esser of two evils, I guess, is the best way we can put it. **It wasn’t necessarily the perfect choice,** but it was our choice.”

**Francis, Reluctant Right**  
Age 57 • White man • Sumter, South Carolina



**Amanda** is a 35-year-old stay-at-home mother of one boy and one girl from South Bend, Indiana who does her best to catch her favorite show, Wheel of Fortune, every night. About eight million Americans watch Wheel every night. And when asked why she voted for President Trump in the 2024 election, Amanda replied with a straightforward answer that echoes a sentiment shared by millions of Americans as well: “It feels like the Democratic side was kind of forced, so it wasn’t really a fair choice for us. We didn’t really get an opinion there. And Harris was already really close to the Biden Administration, and the Biden Administration just wasn’t working in my eyes. And if you vote another way, your vote pretty much ends up not counting for anything. So, Trump was the only option I could really put on the paper.”

Amanda was born in South Bend to a mother who grew up on public assistance and a father who made a living working a union job. Politics didn’t come up too much in her home, but she is pretty sure her parents tended to vote for Democrats and knows that “when Obama was the president, they were both like...I love this president.”

Amanda’s parents tend a bit more to the political right now than they used to. When asked why, Amanda says, “Republicans have always come in and helped with money... especially the middle class. Whereas Democrats, they’re helping the lower class and that’s great, they need it. But I think right now the middle class is in limbo.”

After graduating from high school, Amanda immediately entered the workforce, working a union job for a global telecommunications company, a job she held for 13 years before deciding to stay at home with her kids. During President Trump’s first term, she remembers that her company was in a contract negotiation with her union and “we actually got a better pay raise because of a deal that Trump made with the company.” As she remembers it, the president personally intervened in a negotiation that saw her get paid more. Amanda tells this story as a reflection of the president’s priorities—a “focus on the financial side,” as she puts it, rather than what she calls “rage bait” cultural issues.

Amanda thinks that most news is “rage bait” nowadays. She says that the media “do what they can to get the most views. And that’s essentially how I see news these days: they just want the most views on their channel, so they’re going to be as outrageous as possible.” Even on the local news that runs before Wheel of Fortune, she says she senses bias from each station in how they frame policies like tariffs.

On the rare occasions they do discuss politics in her house, it often leads to an argument between Amanda and her husband—a progressive who did not vote in the 2024 election, but who thinks the president’s tariff policies will ruin the economy. They spend most of their time thinking about their kids’ wellbeing. This year, they made a choice to move their kids to a school district 20 minutes away because “in South Bend, there’s a ton of cussing, a ton of gang fights...and you go 20 minutes down the road and it’s farmers, it’s people who are a tight-knit community...I know it’s horrible to say, but I would much rather that environment than what’s going on at South Bend School Corporation.”

Amanda was raised Christian, and she and her family still go to church every week. She thinks that President Trump cares more about issues that affect her family than Democrats do. As she puts it, “Trump steers us away from things like LGBQ, the things that can matter to you, that’s fine, but it doesn’t need to be talked about over and over again.” But she does not think that her faith and her politics are the same thing, and she certainly does not think that voting for President Trump is a sign of her faith, nor that he is a good Christian. She says, “Trump has, I don’t know if I’d call it a vanity, but he thinks he’s maybe a little bit better than others and that he’s definitely God’s gift to man. Everybody’s human, everybody’s going to make their mistakes. But I do think he has this ego that is really way up there that should probably come down a bit.”

When asked about the future of the country, Amanda highlights two things. First, she wishes healthcare was more widely accessible. Amanda’s brother-in-law is an adult with mental health issues, and she worries what will happen when her in-laws can no longer care for him. She says that she “wishes healthcare was more available to those that need it.” Second, as Amanda says, “It all comes down to money... are our kids going to be able to have generational wealth, which is what we’re shooting for? There’s no guarantee in that, especially where we’re at now. So, are we even going to have enough money to put them through college?”

For now, she thinks President Trump is more likely to allay these concerns about her children’s future. But, she says, she would have voted for her former Mayor (Democrat Pete Buttigieg) if he was on the ballot.

MEET A RELUCTANT RIGHT

COMPARISON

# Reluctant Right

VERSUS THE AVERAGE TRUMP 2024 VOTER

● RELUCTANT RIGHT %    ⊕ AVERAGE TRUMP 2024 VOTER %

MODERATE POLITICS

MORE THAN 2X LIKELY TO SAY

They voted for candidates from more than one party

● 50% v. ⊕ 24%

MOST LIKELY TO SAY

They voted for Trump because he seemed “less bad” than Harris

● 39% v. ⊕ 13%

4X MORE LIKELY TO SAY

They are **neither** Trump supporters nor Republicans

● 30% v. ⊕ 7%

MOST LIKELY TO SAY

“Politicians don’t care about people like me”

● 76% v. ⊕ 64%

MOST LIKELY TO HAVE VOTED FOR JOE BIDEN

In the 2020 election before switching to Trump in 2024

● 14% v. ⊕ 5%

SUPPORTING POLITICAL COMPROMISE

MOST LIKELY TO SAY

The Left and the Right care equally about America

● 77% v. ⊕ 40%

MOST LIKELY TO "FULLY AGREE"

That “we need to rise above the division, redefine common principles, and **work together to fix what's broken.**”

● 43% v. ⊕ 33%

MOST LIKELY TO VALUE

A leader who “compromises with opponents”

● 91% v. ⊕ 76%

TEPID ON TRUMP

LEAST LIKELY TO SUPPORT

Amending the Constitution to allow Trump to serve a third term

● 2% v. ⊕ 24%

3X MORE LIKELY TO SAY

Trump’s immigration policies are “going too far”

● 38% v. ⊕ 13%

MOST LIKELY TO SAY

They are “ashamed of what happened on January 6th and do not support it at all”

● 46% v. ⊕ 21%

3X MORE LIKELY TO

Describe Trump as “arrogant”

● 46% v. ⊕ 14%





## Faith and the Trump Coalition: A Brief Overview

*Faith is central to understanding the Trump coalition in ways that examining the four voter types individually misses. This analysis fills part of that gap, though these dynamics deserve deeper exploration beyond the scope of this report. More in Common hopes to revisit these issues in the future.*

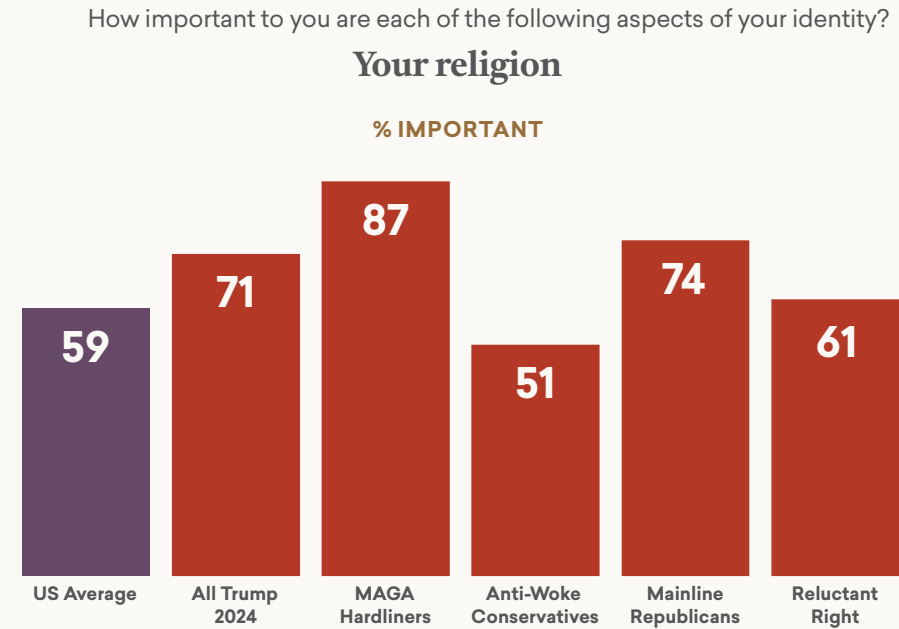


By any measure, religious identity plays a **greater role in the lives of Trump voters than for most other Americans:**

- Some 71 percent of Trump voters rank religion as an important source of identity in their lives, compared to an average of 59 percent for all Americans.
- Only 22 percent of Trump voters identify as atheist, agnostic, or “nothing in particular,” compared to an average of 35 percent for all Americans.

But some key insights emerge from examining differences among the Trump voter types. Faith is more central to the identity of MAGA Hardliners and Mainline Republicans, while Anti-Woke Conservatives are less religiously inclined than the average American.

FIGURE F.1  
IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY



Response scale: 1 – Not at all to 4 – Neither important nor unimportant to 7 – Very important.  
Note: The figure combines 5 to 7 into one importance category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

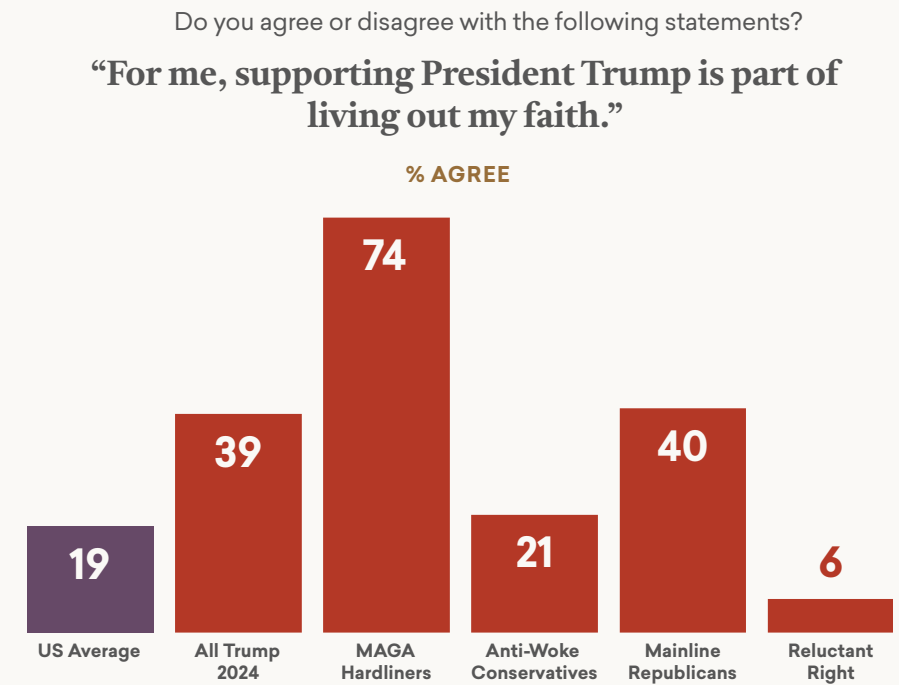
Faith is an important part of what binds the **Trump coalition, but Trump voters differ starkly in the extent to which they connect their faith to their politics.** Three in four MAGA Hardliners (74 percent) agree with the statement “For me, supporting President Trump is part of living out my faith.” This compares to just 40 percent of Mainline Republicans, 21 percent of Anti-Woke Conservatives or 6 percent of Reluctant Right. Although there are more Evangelicals among MAGA Hardliners than other groups, this does not account for this difference (as Figure F.5 shows, slightly more than one-third

of MAGA Hardliners" to "about one-third of MAGA Hardliners" are Evangelicals). In fact, only 49 percent of Evangelicals who voted for President Trump say that supporting him is part of living out their faith. This reveals how images of Evangelicals at MAGA rallies can be misleading: they represent a passionate minority, not the typical Evangelical Trump voter.

“I felt like he was **chosen by God to lead this country**, and I truly believe that.”

**Fernando, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 38 • Black man • Houston, Texas

FIGURE F.2  
FAITH AND SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT TRUMP



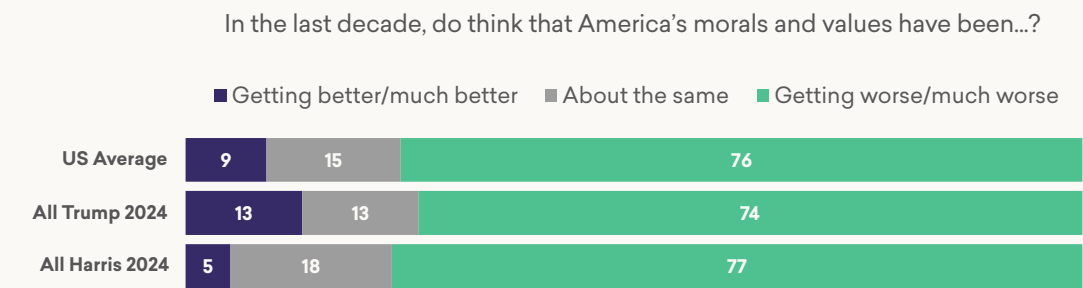
Response scale: 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

Trump voters with a strong religious identity consistently point to **moral decline as one of their main concerns with America today**—a perception they share with other Trump voters and even many Harris voters. Three in four (75 percent) Trump voters believe that America’s morals and values have been getting worse over the last decade, a view shared by Harris voters (77 percent).<sup>F.1</sup>

<sup>F.1</sup> Politics has at least a small effect on perceptions of moral decline, with some Trump voters perceiving a reversal of moral decline since Trump came to office, and some Harris voters perceiving an acceleration of decline for the same reason. But qualitative research suggests that most voters’ perceptions of moral decline are not shaped primarily by politics.

This sentiment was reflected in the remarks of Charlie Kirk’s widow, Erika, at his memorial service in September 2025, an event watched by more than 20 million Americans. Referring to Turning Point USA, the youth organization that her husband built, she remarked, “The world needs TPUSA. It needs something that will lead people away from Hell in this world and in the next: young people pointed in the direction of truth and beauty.”<sup>F.2</sup>

FIGURE F.3  
MORAL DECLINE



Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

While Americans agree on the diagnosis of moral decline, they differ sharply on the cure. A strong majority (63 percent) of Trump voters believe the country needs more religion and faith, while only a small minority (21 percent) of Harris voters think the same. Even the more secular Trump voter segments—Anti-Woke Conservatives and the Reluctant Right—see restoring faith as essential to America's future.

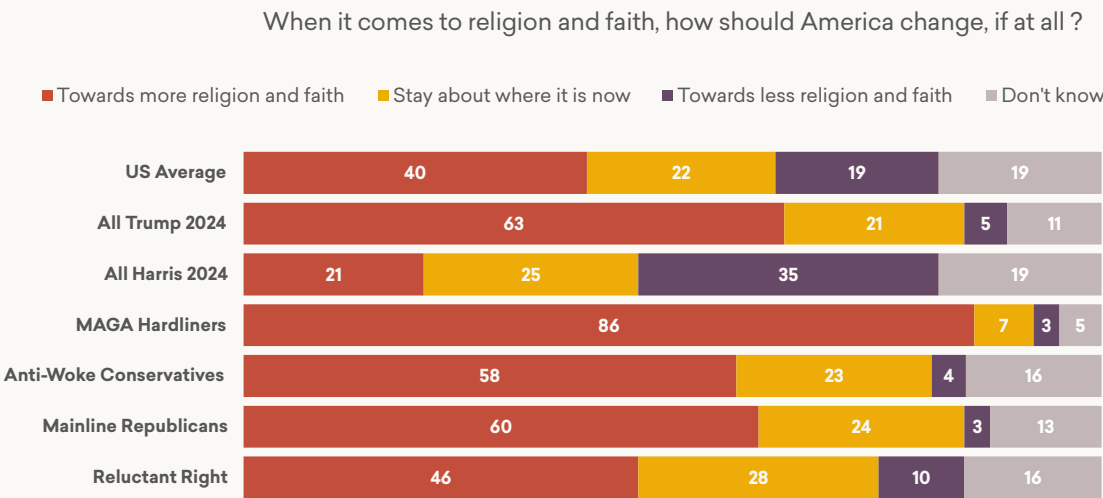
“Actually, I'm an atheist, but I think we should have a religious backdrop in our country because it keeps people in line. If my neighbor's religious, they're less likely to break into my house and steal my TV. So even as an atheist, I don't have a problem with the Ten Commandments. I don't have a problem with religious freedom.”

Daniel, Anti-Woke Conservative  
Age 44 • White man • Lubbock, Texas



Erika Kirk delivers remarks during the Memorial Service for Charlie Kirk at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, Sunday, September 21, 2025. Photo by The White House, United States Government Work

FIGURE F.4  
RELIGIOUS DIRECTION



Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

<sup>F.2</sup> Turning Point USA, “Charlie Kirk Memorial Service Honors the Monumental Legacy of TPUSA Founder,” TPUSA Live, accessed January 8, 2026, <https://tpusa.com/live/charlie-kirk-memorial-service-honors-the-monumental-legacy-of-tpusa-founder/>





“One Nation Under God Indivisible” poster from Stop the Steal rally in Raleigh, NC on January 6, 2021. Photo Credit: Flickr user Anthony Crider. CC BY 2.0 / Filtered effect from original.

Faith creates common ground across all four voter types—not because they are equally religious, but because they share concerns about moral decline and threats to traditional values. Even secular Trump voters, such as Anti-Woke Conservatives, prioritize policies defending family and traditional norms. This shared moral framework, rooted in religious conviction for some and cultural conservatism for others, is part of what holds the Trump coalition together.

FIGURE F.5  
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF TRUMP VOTERS

	What is your present religion, if any? Would you describe yourself as a "born-again" or evangelical Christian, or not?				
	All Trump 2024	MAGA Hardliners	Anti-Woke Conservatives	Mainline Republicans	Reluctant Right
Roman Catholics	25	23	27	26	22
Evangelicals	20	31	11	20	14
Atheists, Agnostics, Nothing in Particular	22	13	31	19	29
All Other Religions / Something Else	16	17	9	22	12
Protestant non-Evangelical	14	13	16	11	18
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon)	1	2	1	1	1
Jewish	3	1	5	3	3

Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.



## CHAPTER ONE

# Immigration Policy: Americans First

Debates about immigration have been at the center of campaigning and policy during the Trump era in American politics, from the 2016 rally calls to “build the wall” to the frequent images of masked Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents during his second term in office. Immigration played an especially important role in the 2024 general election. More in Common’s post-election poll of 5,005 voters found that more than four in five late-deciding voters who decided for Trump said that immigration was personally important to them.<sup>1.1</sup> Immigration was very or extremely important to almost three times as many Trump voters as Harris voters in 2024.<sup>1.2</sup>

The centrality of immigration to the 2024 election and the Trump administration’s agenda has led to assumptions that Trump voters hold uniform views about immigration. It is often asserted, for example, that they share the motivation of preserving a White, Christian America in the face of demographic changes, and embrace once-fringe ideas such as the Great Replacement Theory.<sup>1.3</sup> Likewise, it is often assumed that Trump voters will support any and all of the administration’s plans for enforcement, detention, and deportations.

In fact, the concerns of Trump voters about the loss of control at the border were widely shared by Americans of all races, and immigration was cited as a factor by nine out of ten voters from non-White backgrounds who voted for Trump in 2024—suggesting that racial differences cannot explain away Trump voters’ views on immigration.<sup>1.4</sup>

<sup>1.1</sup> 84 percent among late-deciding Trump voters, defined as Trump voters who decided their vote either days before the election or on election day itself.

<sup>1.2</sup> 62 percent of Trump voters regarded it as extremely or very important, compared to 20 percent of Harris voters.

<sup>1.3</sup> The Great Replacement Theory references the claim that there is a deliberate plan to replace White Americans with non-White immigrants for political reasons.

<sup>1.4</sup> In More in Common’s November 2024 post-election poll of voters analyzed by racial identity, the only group of Trump voters for whom less than nine in ten voters said immigration was important or very important in their vote for president was Black voters, for whom the number was eight in ten.



Several Hispanic men walk along the Mexican side of the US/Mexican steel-slat border wall as the camera films on the US side on a sunny day. iStock

Moreover, despite assumptions that the Trump campaign’s anti-immigration rhetoric would alienate non-White voters, the 2024 election results suggested otherwise. In fact, the election saw the most racially diverse coalition of Republican voters in modern political history.<sup>1.5</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to better understand Trump voters’ views on immigration through the lens of the four types. This analysis offers valuable insights into the views of Trump voters that can go beyond demographic categories such as race, age, and income. With the border secured, Trump voters also felt more satisfied with immigration policy under the second Trump administration than any other policy in 2025. However, this chapter also finds that the views of Trump voters diverge on many immigration issues within the border. This is significant given the centrality of domestic immigration enforcement to the second Trump administration’s agenda. Issues where the Trump coalition is divided include ICE enforcement tactics, people being deported to countries that they did not come from, and the administration revoking the status of people who came legally to the US for protection—all of which are examples where the majority of Trump voters do not agree with administration policies.

<sup>1.5</sup> Polling analysis by Democratic firm Catalist at <https://catalist.us/whathappened2024/#ib-toc-anchor-6> concluded that “in 2012, when former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney was the GOP nominee, roughly one in ten Republican presidential voters was a person of color; by 2024, that figure rose to one in five Republican voters.”

## The importance of immigration

One of the most stark differences between Republican and Democratic voters in 2024 was their views on the importance of immigration. Among Republicans and Independents, it ranked as the top non-economic issue. In contrast, among Democrats, it did not even register among the top ten. Concerns about immigration were overwhelmingly focused on the southern border. Trump voters felt that immigration was out of control, with nine in ten likely Trump voters in October 2024 feeling that the situation at the US border with Mexico was an emergency or major problem, a view shared by almost half of Harris voters.<sup>1.6</sup> A majority of intending Trump voters said that they worried “a great deal” about illegal immigration at the US border, compared to just 9% of Harris voters. Trump’s promise to restore order to America’s borders and its immigration system was an especially important motivator for Trump voters in 2024, including many who had not voted for him in 2020.

“The immigration system was **out of control** for the past four years. Major actions needed to be taken. There are bound to be some mistakes, but if they are corrected, then it is worth it.”

**Jaria, MAGA Hardliner**

Age 35 • Black man • Sneads Ferry, North Carolina

“I am going to say the last four years, **immigration has been insane**. Like criminals that have passed the borders, rapists, sex traffickers, all those people who were in gangs in their own country, and they all decided to come freely to the border. I think it was like, honestly ridiculous. And **I come from an immigrant family. My parents came here the legal way.**”

**Polly, MAGA Hardliner**

Age 26 • White woman • Fort Lauderdale, Florida

“**We have three years to enforce policies that haven't been enforced in generations**. This has gotten us criminals and repeat offenders coming into America and causing dangerous conditions for those of us who are here legally. If we don't address it now, under a President who it willing to take action, **we'll be missing out on the opportunity of a lifetime** to get this country headed in the right direction.”

**Katherine, MAGA Hardliner**

Age 53 • Hispanic Woman • Cape Coral, Florida

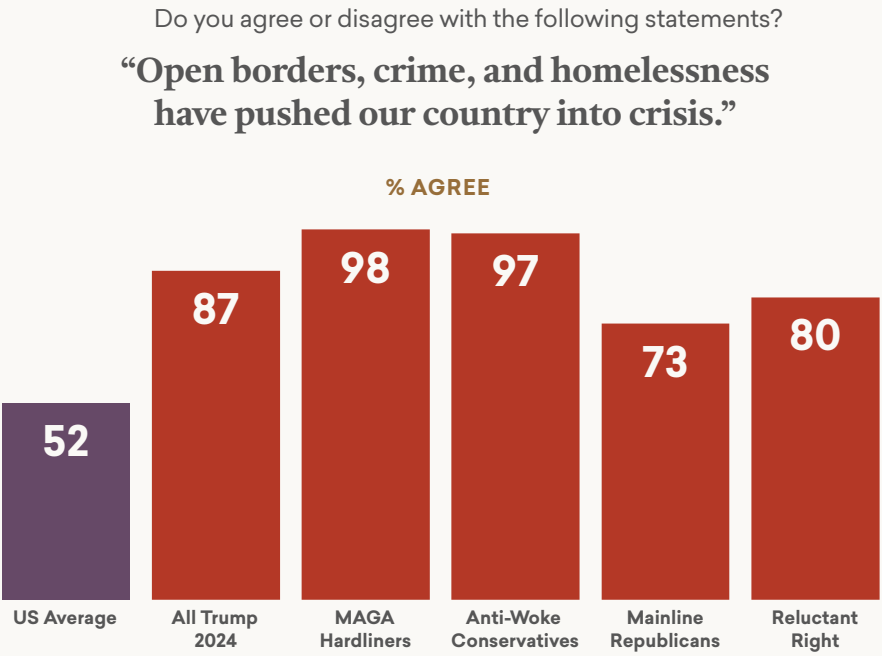
<sup>1.6</sup> 89% of Trump voters and 54% of Harris voters. More in Common, October 2024.



This perceived loss of control of the southern border was a strong motivation for many voters to support Trump. It came up repeatedly in focus groups that More in Common conducted in battleground states during the fall of 2024. In different ways, many expressed frustration and incomprehension that the Biden administration seemed unable to control its own borders. Typical of this sentiment was the Hispanic woman in Georgia who spoke of how “it really kind of aggravates me the way the new immigrants are actually crossing the border... and all these benefits they’re getting when I had to work and pay for everything that I have to become legal in this country”. Voters worried that the arrival of large numbers of undocumented immigrants put excessive demands on public services and threatened local communities through increased homelessness, lawlessness, and gang crime. Some cited how even Democratic mayors in cities such as New York, Chicago, and Denver had spoken about these impacts. Fully 87 percent of Trump voters agree that “open borders, crime, and homelessness have pushed our country into crisis.”

The feeling that the US was facing a national emergency on immigration is a point of broad consensus across the four Trump voter types. But the feeling is significantly more pronounced among MAGA Hardliners (98 percent agree, including 88 percent who agree strongly) and Anti-Woke Conservatives (97 percent agree), the two segments who consistently show the highest levels of concern about immigration.

FIGURE 2.1  
OPEN BORDERS AND CRISIS



Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.



Princeton, NC - June 21, 2024: A crew of Mexican H-2A seasonal farm workers start a day of sweet potato planting in late June in Eastern North Carolina. iStock

“I mean, **I am sure there are really good people that just want a better life for themselves.** I think that is kind of where the soft part of my heart comes in. I fully realize we have to keep the emotions separate. And I think it just has to be a hard line.

I think it got so out of control; we did not have a strong enough leader that now, **Trump is just having to clean it all up and try to fix it.** If we had had security in place, and rules in place, and even a wall up 10, 15 years ago, we would not be dealing with such mass amounts of people and red tape and all the stuff that goes along with that. **I have compassion as a human, but I also understand we have to put ourselves first and our country first.”**

**Tara, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 53 • Native American woman • Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

# Prioritizing border enforcement, not opposing immigration

The strong emotions about the border often expressed by many Trump voters can lead to misperceptions that they are against immigration altogether. In fact, while the Trump voters who oppose immigration are very concerned about the issue, the reverse does not hold: many of those who are concerned about immigration actually support immigration in principle, so long as it is legal and well-managed.

FIGURE 2.2  
STATEMENTS ON IMMIGRATION <sup>1.7</sup>

Key propositions on immigration	% AGREE	
	US Adults	All Trump 2024
America is a nation of immigrants	73	68
The United States should be a place where individuals of all religious beliefs and no religious beliefs feel that they belong	79	81
Every American voice matters equally, so long as they are committed to our founding ideals	71	74
We need to make it easier for immigrants to come to the US legally and harder to come illegally	68	71
Properly controlled immigration can be good for America	88	90

In fact, Trump voters demonstrate broad support for immigration (Figure 2.2):

- Trump voters are close to national averages in affirming the long-standing characterization of America as a nation of immigrants, with 68 percent in agreement.
- Trump voters overwhelmingly endorse the view that properly controlled immigration can be good for America, at the same levels as the wider American population.
- Trump voters share most other Americans’ views on how newcomers should be treated once they arrive. For example, 81 percent agree the US should be a place where people “of all religious beliefs and no religious beliefs feel that they belong.” In a time when some have questioned whether all citizens’ voices should carry the same weight, Trump voters exceed the national average in affirming egalitarian principles: close to three-quarters say every voice in America “should count equally, so long as they are committed to our founding ideals.”

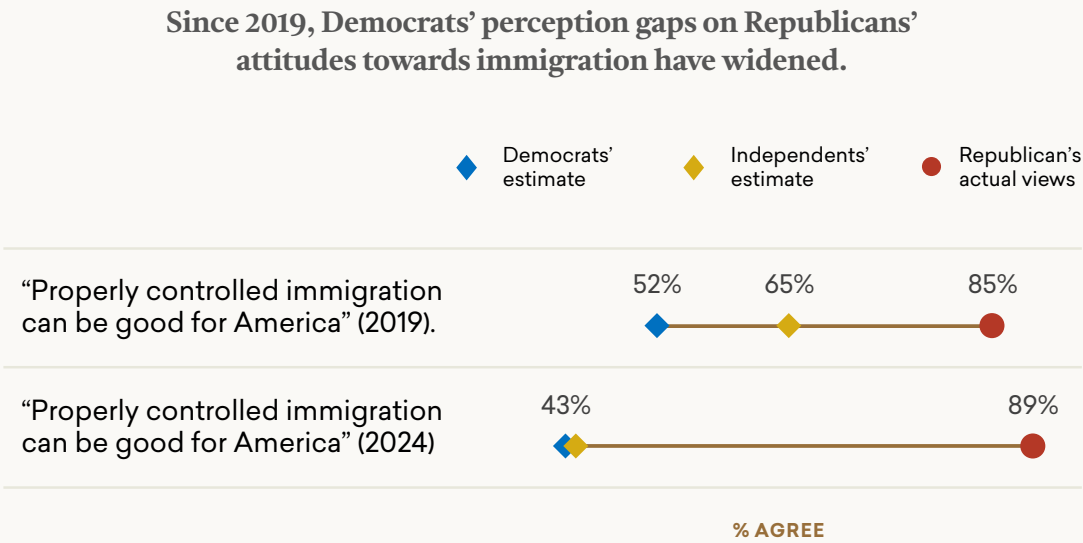
<sup>1.7</sup> More in Common (2024, 2025). Statements 1–4 drawn from a survey of 2,767 general population voters, including 1,516 Trump voters, conducted in August 2025. Statement 5 drawn from a November 2024 post-election survey of 2,178 general population voters, including 1,570 Trump voters.

“There is just so much that happens if we are not controlling our borders. And I do think immigration should never be stopped because that is how America was created, by being a melting pot of people from the best of other countries coming together and working to contribute to the economy. But I just think it is so important that we are careful of how we go about that.”

Sarah, Anti-Woke Conservative  
Age 23 • White woman • Palatine, Illinois

The concept of **perception gaps** helps explain why these findings can be surprising to non-Trump voters. More in Common’s research has shown that polarized societies often experience large perception gaps between opposing groups.<sup>1.8</sup> On immigration issues, Americans’ perception gaps are especially large and have grown in the past five years. Democrats and Independents estimate that almost five times as many Trump voters hold strongly anti-immigration views than actually do.<sup>1.9</sup> Trump voters are more than twice as likely to hold a positive view of immigration than Democrats and Independents estimate.

FIGURE 2.3  
PERCEPTION GAPS AROUND IMMIGRATION



Question: “Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” and “Next, we want to ask you about what you think Republican voters believe about certain issues. What percentage of Republican voters do you think agree with this statement?”  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys 2,100 Americans conducted in November 2018 and 5,005 Americans conducted in November 2024.

<sup>1.8</sup> See for example [perceptiongap.us](https://www.moreincommon.org/perceptiongap.us) and [historyperceptiongap.us](https://www.moreincommon.org/historyperceptiongap.us)

<sup>1.9</sup> Democrats estimate that the percentage of Republicans who reject the notion that properly controlled immigration can be good for America is 57 percent (Independents estimate it is 56 percent). In fact, only 12 percent of Republicans disagree with this statement, while 88 percent agree (More in Common, November 2024).





Chicago, IL - October 18, 2015: An ERO officer escorts aliens headed to an ICE detention facility. usicegov, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

## Legal versus illegal immigration: A clear distinction

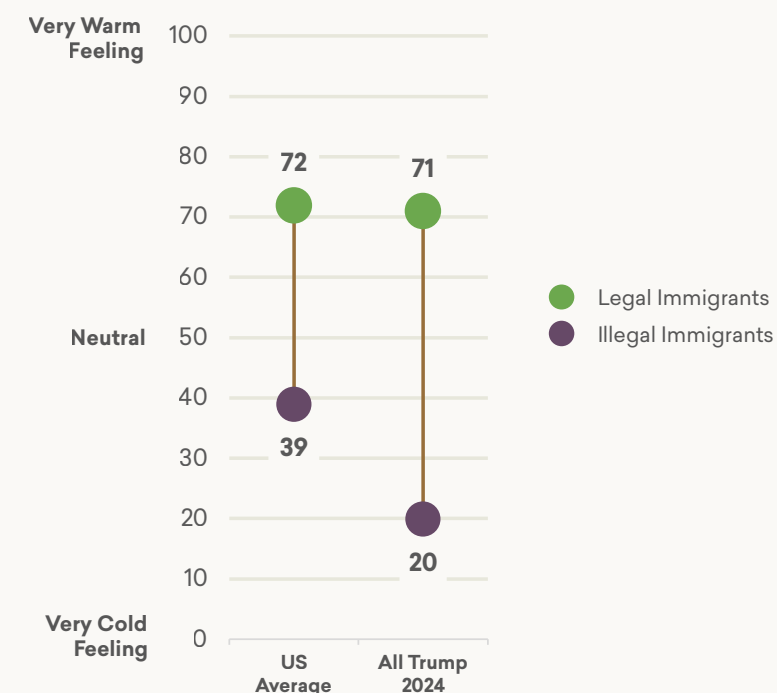
Key to understanding Trump voters' views on immigration is the distinction between legal and illegal immigration. This distinction explains many attitudinal differences, both among the different Trump voter types, and between Trump voters and other Americans. The difference in sentiment towards legal versus illegal immigrants is much greater among Trump voters than most Americans, as Figure 2.4 shows. To many Trump voters, entering the United States illegally shows disregard for orderly processes and is unfair to millions of people around the globe who are waiting for their turn to apply to enter, equivalent to cutting in line while others wait patiently.

While a minority of Trump voters is altogether opposed to immigration and consistently supportive of the strictest policies of enforcement and detention, most express concern with the lack of control of immigration policy in recent years but support legal immigration in principle. When asked about their warmth or coldness towards immigrants, Trump voters give nearly the same scores as the national average for legal

immigrants (71 percent versus 72 percent), showing relatively warm sentiments.<sup>1,10</sup> This is reflected in conversations with Trump voters, who often remark on how immigrants share their pride in American identity and contribute to the economy. This warmth is also consistent across all four Trump types, some of which are above the national average in their warmth towards legal immigrants.

**FIGURE 2.4**  
**WARMTH TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS**

How warm/cold do you feel about legal vs. illegal immigrants



Question: "On a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means very cold and 100 means very warm, how cold or warm do you feel towards the following groups? Legal immigrants, Illegal/undocumented immigrants  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

However, there are significant differences in perceptions of illegal immigrants between the Trump voter types, as Figure 2.4 shows. Significantly colder sentiments are held by the MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives, with average scores that are less than half those of Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right. These feelings are reflected in the groups' differing perspectives on detention and enforcement, with the latter two groups more likely to support the strongest control measures.

<sup>1,10</sup> A "feeling thermometer" is a simple way to measure how people feel about someone or something. It allows respondents to express their feelings without overthinking their answer. Survey respondents are asked to rate their feelings on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 degrees = very cold/negative feelings; 50 degrees = neutral (neither warm nor cold); and 100 degrees = very warm/positive feelings.

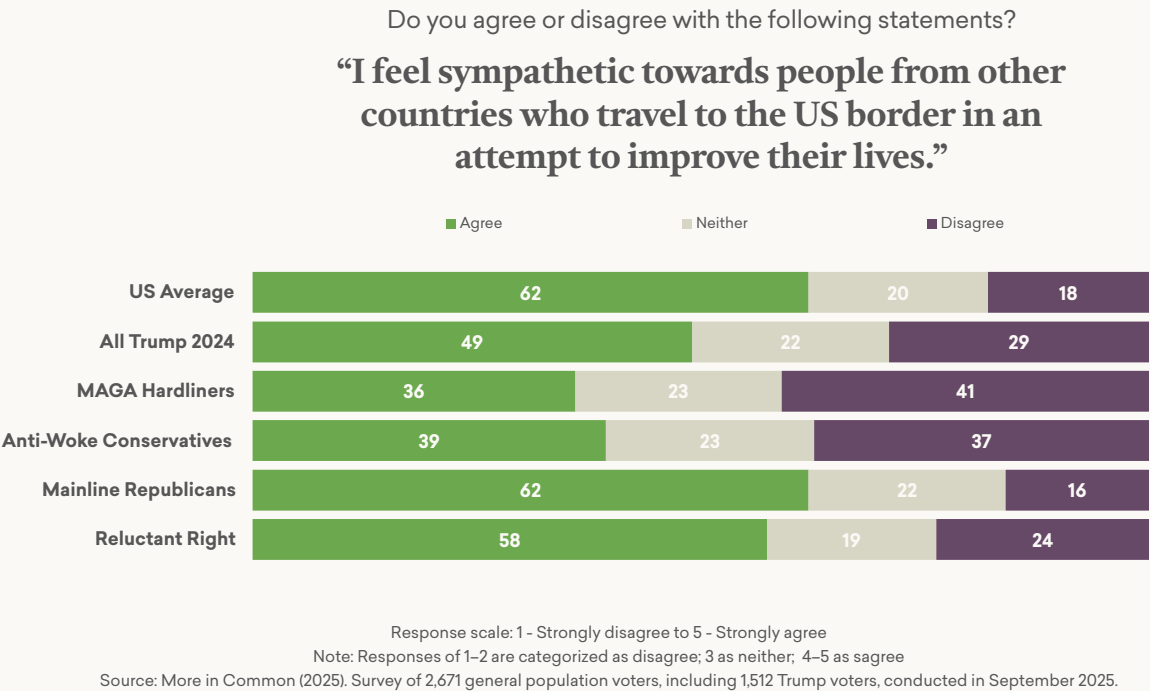
“I feel like new arrivals who do not qualify for safety should be removed, but long-term immigrants should have a way to earn legal status, as **deporting them only harms our economy and situations and families.**”

**Zed, Reluctant Right**  
Age 22 • Asian American man • Chicago, Illinois

“I am not against immigration, **but it has to be legal.** You have to respect and wait for your turn. This is not a place that you can come in when you want and do whatever you want. And on top of that, you know, get all the benefits. That is illegal. **If you want to come, do it legally, and respect the rules.** That is the way, I think. And come to work.”

**Gloria, Mainline Republican**  
Age 70 • Hispanic woman • Miami, Florida

**FIGURE 2.5**  
**SYMPATHY TOWARDS PEOPLE TRAVELING TO THE US BORDER**



One in two Trump voters (49 percent) express sympathy towards those who travel to the US border in an attempt to improve their lives—a point at which they have not broken any laws, though their reason for coming to the US might be its economic opportunities. Compassion is frequently expressed by Trump voters with strong religious convictions, and many have links to churches and traditions that help to resettle refugees and assist victims of persecution. Among Mainline Republicans and Reluctant Right, large majorities of these Trump voters express sympathy for those at the border, alongside a concern for maintaining an orderly immigration system.

These findings highlight how centrally **perceptions of illegal immigration shape differences in views on immigration**, rather than starkly polarized views about the wider benefits of immigration. Trump voters across the four types consistently make the distinction between legally admitted immigrants and those who have knowingly entered the country without permission or otherwise overstayed a visa. This distinction shapes their perceptions of what is fair or unfair in how immigrants are treated.

These findings also highlight the value of understanding people’s political views in the larger context of their values. Past research by More in Common has found that the higher levels of concern about immigration are highly correlated to people’s core beliefs. Holding to a strong moral foundation of authority—reflected in respect for ‘ordered society’ values such as rules, order, and control<sup>1.11</sup>—especially correlates with people’s views on immigration and helps explain why the distinction of legal and illegal immigration is so important to many Trump voters.

The relevance of the distinction between legal and illegal immigration is further enhanced **by Americans’ perceptions of the scale of illegal immigration.** While expert estimates suggest that the proportion of illegal or undocumented immigration<sup>1.12</sup> is around 30%, Trump voters on average estimate 68 percent of immigrants entered the US illegally, compared to an average estimate among Americans of 54 percent.<sup>1.13</sup> It is unsurprising that Trump voters support very strong measures on illegal immigration when they believe that more than two-thirds of immigrants are in this category.

<sup>1.11</sup> The moral foundation of authority is discussed in Jonathan Haidt (2012), *The Righteous Mind*. More in Common examined this in a 2019 study on attitudes on immigration: <https://www.moreincommon.com/media/qdwpkoux/pdf.pdf>

<sup>1.12</sup> Estimates in 2025 varied from Pew’s 14 million or 26 percent to FAIR’s 18.6 million or 35 percent: <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2025/08/21/u-s-unauthorized-immigrant-population-reached-a-record-14-million-in-2023/> and <https://www.fairus.org/issue/how-many-illegal-aliens-are-united-states-2025-update>

<sup>1.13</sup> More in Common (2025). Survey of 2,671 general population voters, including 1,512 Trump voters, conducted in September 2025.



Trump voters' concerns about immigration stem from believing both that most recent immigrants have arrived illegally and that illegal immigration causes severe harm. In addition to their concerns about crime and a loss of American identity, they also perceive illegal immigration as an injustice to those waiting to enter lawfully. Many express anger at how crossing the border without a legal right to enter the US is a violation of laws and shows disrespect to America. Those with their own backgrounds of immigration often reference their own experience, or that of relatives and friends, of waiting years to enter the US through official channels, only to see others cross the border with nobody stopping them.

“I live in a state where you get a lot of illegal immigration and also have family who has both, who has both legal and illegal immigrants. Most of my relatives who have come here have spent a few years going through the process and coming here legally.

**So, when people just come in here unchecked, and, especially if I recall with under Biden, it was really, really crazy, the levels of illegal crossings through the border.** It is just when you put numbers to how much in terms of cost, it is just not feasible.”

**Cesar, Reluctant Right**  
Age 39 • Hispanic man • Campbell, California

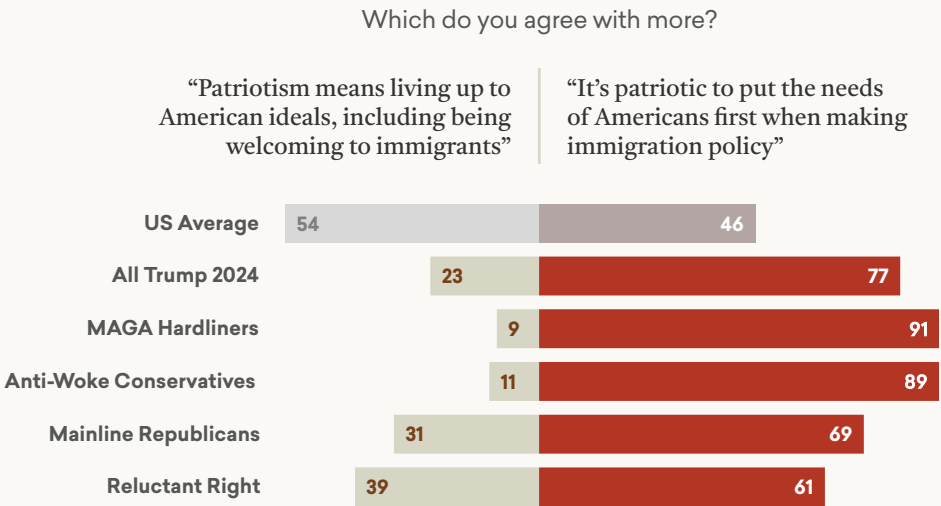
“I have this personal experience being a legal immigrant and becoming a citizen, that I feel like **it is a slap in the face to anyone who has had to deal with the extensive process of applying for visas, getting green cards, and then the citizenship process to just see how people are coming illegally and that there are no consequences.**”

**Maria, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 20 • Hispanic woman • Gainesville, Florida

# Putting Americans first in immigration policy

The view that immigration policy should prioritize the needs of American citizens is a clear point of consensus among Trump voters. More than three In four Trump voters prefer the statement, “It’s patriotic to put the needs of Americans first when making immigration policy” over the alternative that “patriotism means living up to American ideals, including being welcoming to immigrants.” In contrast, Americans as a whole are split nearly 50-50 on this question. Among the four Trump voter types, there is nevertheless a difference in intensity, with almost all MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives preferring the ‘Americans first’ approach, while among the other types around one in four choose the alternative focus on welcoming immigrants.

FIGURE 2.6  
AMERICANS FIRST IMMIGRATION POLICY



Question: “Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between?”  
Note: “Don’t know” responses not shown.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

In conversations about immigration, most Trump voters do not see a conflict between putting Americans first and ongoing immigration—but they do believe that American interests should play a greater role in who comes to the US.

“Americans should **help their fellow Americans first and foremost**. But, sometimes reaching outside can bring great benefits if the right people are chosen.”

**Muller, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 45 • White man • Springfield, Oregon

“**Once we take care of the people here in the US**, then top talent can be recruited from other countries, provided they are vetted.”

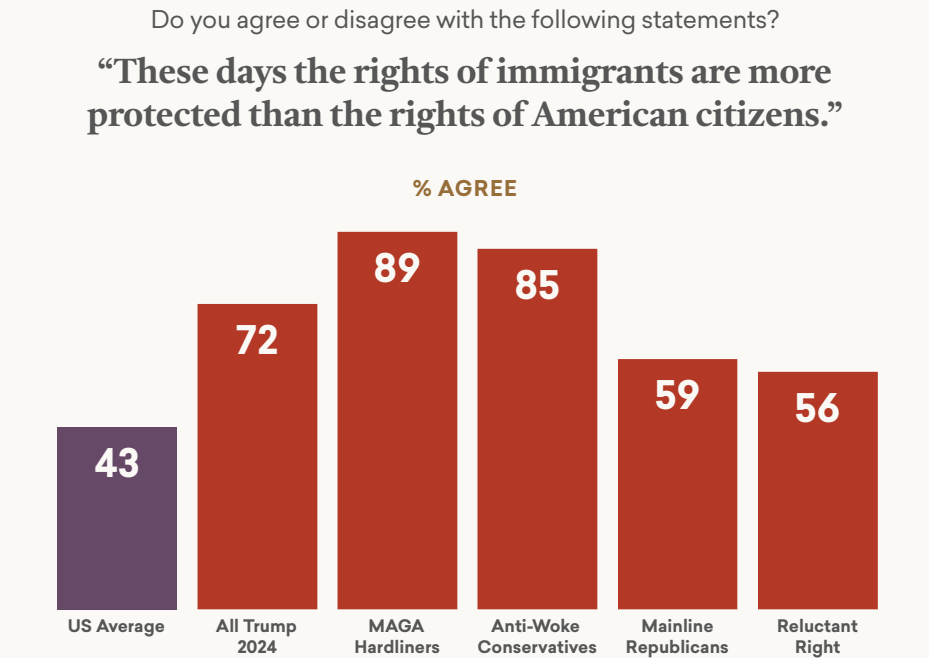
**Luca, Mainline Republican**  
Age 48 • Hispanic man • El Paso, Texas

“We totally need to hire the best—people want to come to America, and that works to our benefit. It is good for them and good for our country. **We need to maintain our position strongly to delay the China influence as much as we can.**”

**Daniel, Reluctant Right**  
Age 63 • White man • Saint Louis, Missouri

Trump voters often speak in practical terms of how immigration policy should contribute to the well-being of the people already living and working in the country. However they feel that in recent years, ordinary Americans have been overlooked at the expense of prioritizing immigrants, often to the detriment of America’s national interest and the lives of people already here. This is reflected in Figure 2.7, showing that nearly three in four Trump voters affirm that “these days the rights of immigrants are more protected than the rights of American citizens,” with majorities in every cohort in agreement. In conversations, Trump voters often cite examples of public services being provided to undocumented people while Americans are left unsupported. With public services often overstretched, these stories have strong emotional resonance, reinforcing feelings of injustice and neglect.

FIGURE 2.7  
IMMIGRANTS VERSUS AMERICAN CITIZENS



Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 7 - Strongly Agree. Note: The figure combines 5-7 into one agreement category. Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

“They come here, and you must support them and pay for where they live and give them money to buy all their food, **while you do not take care of your own citizens.**”

**Buck, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 59 • White man • Staten Island, New York

“I think that most of them are looking for a better life. I really believe that most of them are, but **you have a lot of them who are just menaces to society and are just coming over to cause havoc**. I do not know if I should bring this up, but I am going to bring up the riots in LA right now. And they are flying their flag for their home country and they are looting and they are starting cars on fire. And it is like **if you really loved your country that much, then go back!** You are sitting here flying your Puerto Rican flag or whatever flag that you are flying and you are saying how much you love your country, but you are burning the American flag and you are throwing rocks at police and all this other stuff. If you love your country that much, then go back.”

**Raquel, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 48 • White woman • Colorado Springs, Colorado





A United States national flag viewed from the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington DC, USA. iStock

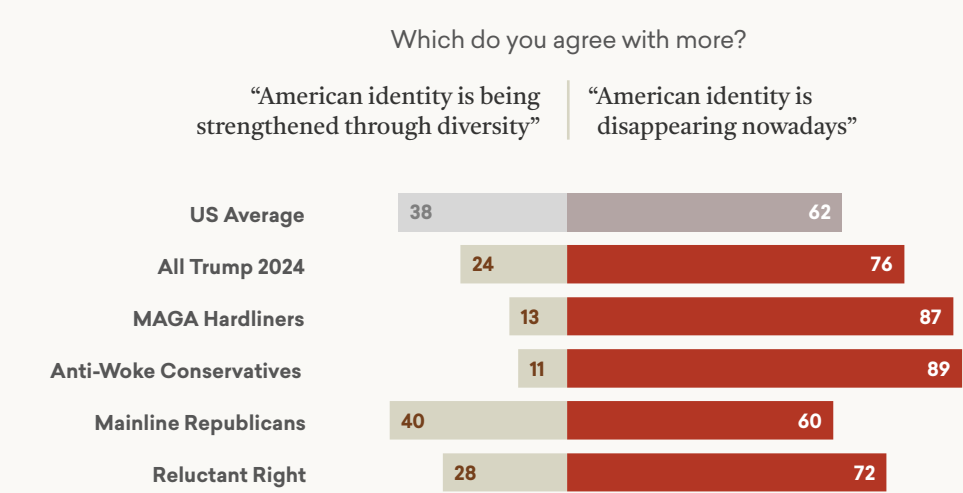
Concerns that cultural changes have devalued shared traditions and national pride are widely shared among Trump voters. Three in four (74 percent) feel that in the past decade, America’s morals and values have gotten “worse” or “much worse.” One in three MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives also believe that “strengthening our culture and moral values” should be the most important priority for America.

However, Trump voters do not altogether blame immigration for cultural and moral decline. They also cite factors such as social media and smartphones, changes in schools, declining church attendance, the loss of neighborhood life, and the influence of mainstream media and entertainment. But immigration plays a role in this story, and the perception is often reinforced by diversity programs that appear to celebrate immigrant cultures while downplaying a broader, shared American identity.

“I do not think it was like that 10 years ago, for sure not 25 years ago. For whatever reason, **saying you are a Christian and saying you are proud to be an American, that is associated with a negative connotation, which sickens me.** It used to be you would say those things loud and proud, and you are a good person. And now you say those things and you are like, everyone is like, ‘Oh my gosh, she must have voted for Trump.’”

**Macy, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 31 • White woman • Grand Forks, North Dakota

**FIGURE 2.8**  
**THE LOSS OF AMERICAN IDENTITY**



Question: “Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between?”  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

Across society, there is a widely-held feeling that American identity is disappearing, rather than being strengthened through diversity. This view is held by 76 percent of Trump voters but also by 62 percent of all Americans, as Figure 2.8 shows, including a majority of Latino and Asian Americans (while Black American Trump voters are evenly split). The intensity of concern about the loss of American identity is greatest among older Trump voters. Almost all Baby Boomer Trump voters say that American identity is important to them, Gen Z Trump voters agree at lower numbers (77 percent) and with less intensity (with 41 percent saying it is very important, compared to 73 percent of Baby Boomers).

# Differences within the Trump voter coalition: Enforcement, detention, and deportation

Among the four types of Trump voter, two groups consistently adopt the hardest line on immigration issues: MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives. The Reluctant Right consistently hold the most moderate views and are skeptical of extremes. Mainline Republicans are usually between those two poles.

“We need to secure the borders and stop the flow of illegal aliens and drugs from entering our country. Also, **we need to deport all the criminals** that have crossed over illegally.”

**Mason, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 51 • White man • Ridgewood, New York

“Because recent arrivals have been returned to their home countries, immigration has seen a lower rate. **Long term immigrants are what has helped build this country**, and sending them back to a home they no longer know, without a job or a means of making a living, leaving their families, is to me, unfair and unjust.”

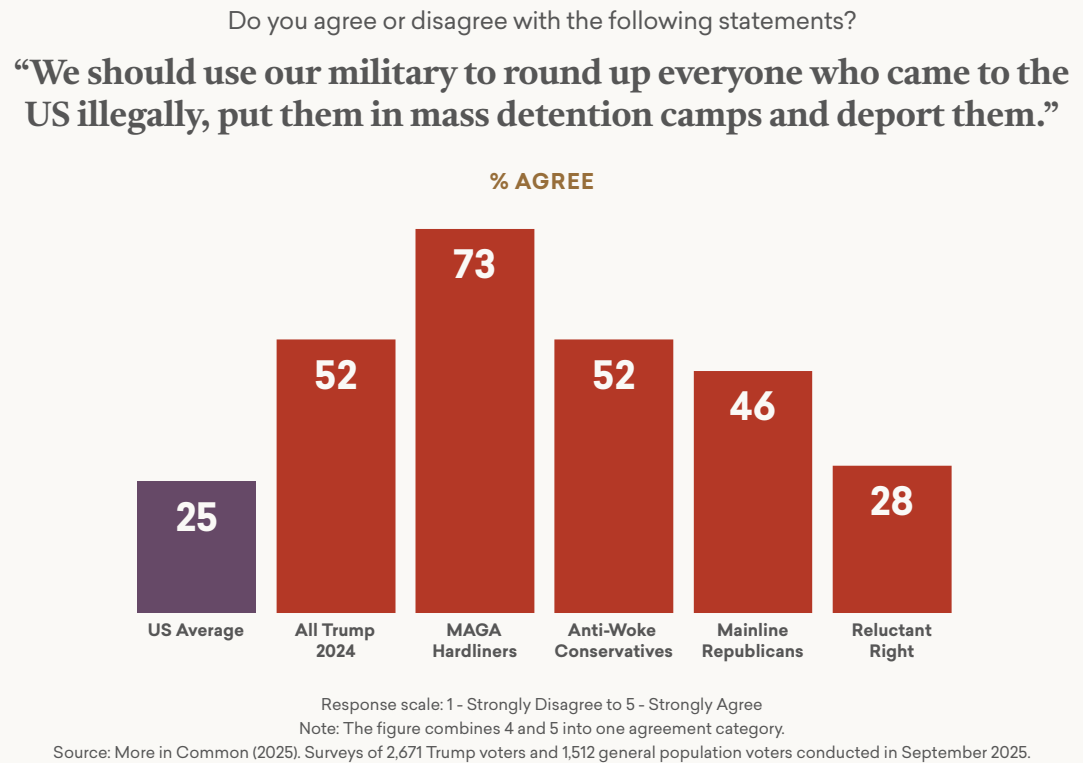
**Lauren, Reluctant Right**  
Age 67 • White woman • Bearsville, New York

“I think the border should be safe but fair. **People who want a better life should have a legal and easy way to come**. We should protect the country but also give others a chance to start new.”

**Dean, Mainline Republican**  
Age 19 • Asian American man • Carmichael, California

One illustration of these differences is the Trump administration’s policy of mass deportations. While a majority of Trump voters (52 percent) support using the military to round up those who came to the US illegally, putting them in mass detention camps, and then deporting them, there is strong support among MAGA Hardliners (73 percent), but much lower among Reluctant Right (28 percent support) and Mainline Republicans (46 percent support).

FIGURE 2.9  
SUPPORT FOR MASS DEPORTATION



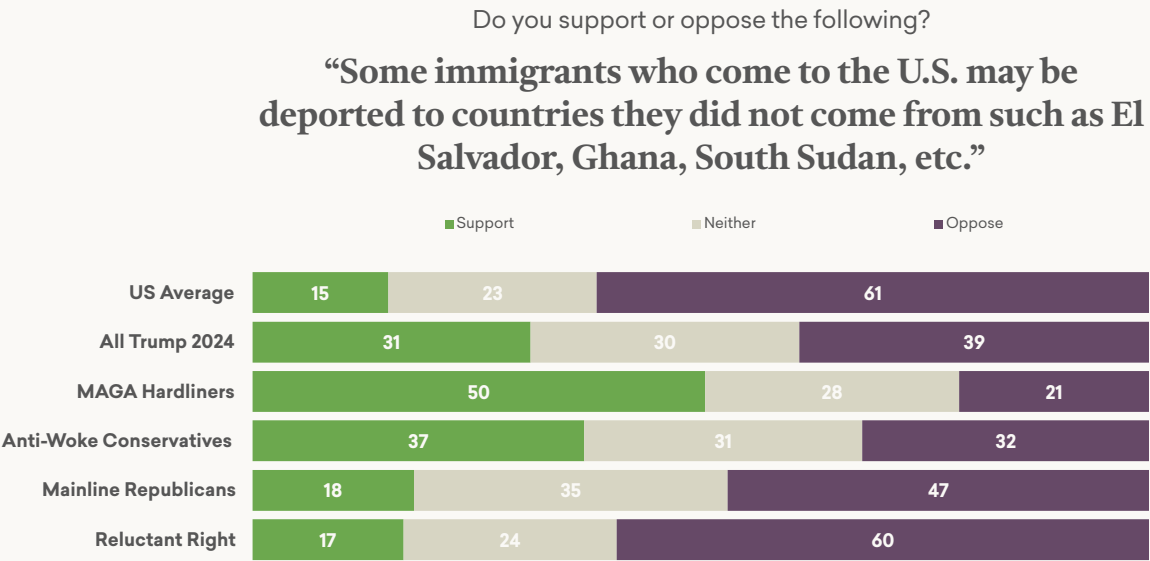
Even on immigration issues that may have greater impacts on specific communities such as Latinos, the differences between the Trump voter types are larger than the differences between different demographic groups of Trump voters, such as from White and Latino backgrounds. Consider the issue of mass deportations: Although Latinos are far more likely to experience the effects of these policies on the lives of people close to them<sup>1,14</sup>, the differences between them and other Trump voters are smaller than the differences among the Trump voter types. For example, for the question in Figure 2.9:

- **Voter types:** There is a 45 percentage point gap between the MAGA Hardliners at one end of the spectrum and Reluctant Right at the other, shown in Figure 2.9 (73 percent and 28 percent respectively).
- **Race:** There is only a 20 percentage point gap between racial categories (54 percent agreement among White Trump voters, 48 percent among Asian Americans, 45 percent among Black Trump voters, and 34 percent among Latinos).
- **Age:** The largest age gap is 16 percentage points between Trump-voting Gen Xers (56 percent agreement) and Trump-voting Gen Zers (40 percent).

<sup>1,14</sup> Gabriel R. Sanchez and Edward D. Vargas, “Racial profiling by ICE will have a marked impact on Latino communities.” *Brookings*, October 16, 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/racial-profiling-by-ice-will-have-a-marked-impact-on-latino-communities/>



FIGURE 2.10  
DEPORTING IMMIGRANTS TO COUNTRIES  
THEY DID NOT COME FROM

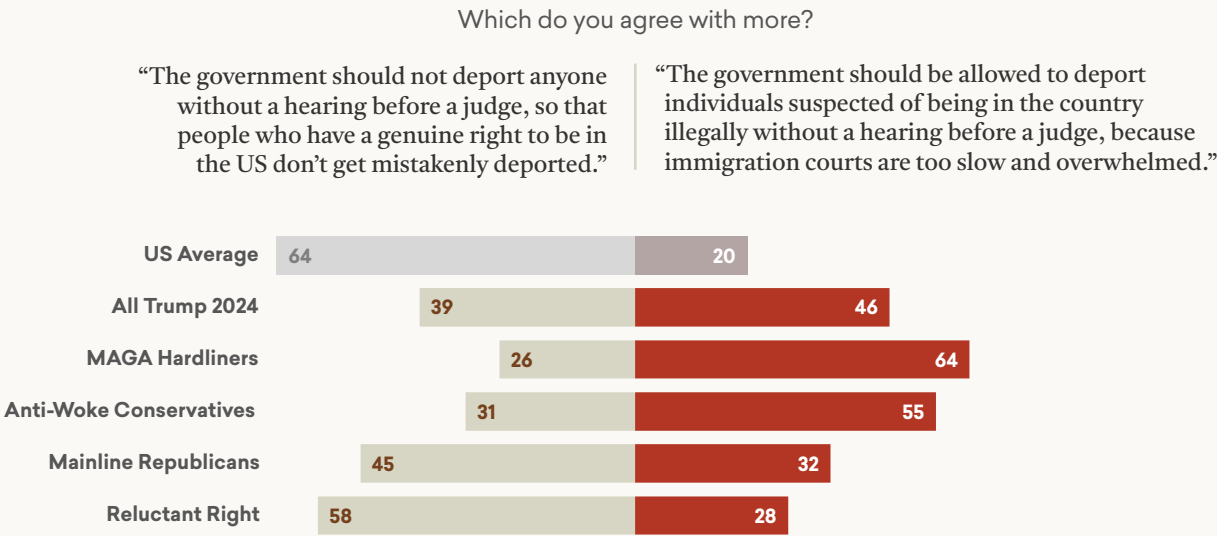


Response scale: 1 - Strongly oppose to 5 - Strongly support  
Note: Responses of 1–2 are categorized as oppose; 3 as neither; 4–5 as support  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 2,671 general population voters, including 1,512 Trump voters, conducted in September 2025.

Two examples highlight how the differences between the Trump types on immigration widen around immigration enforcement policies.

Trump voters are split in their views of a policy of deporting immigrants to a third country to which they have no connection, with Figure 2.10 showing only 31 percent in support. Only the MAGA Hardliners (50 percent) give this majority support, and there is support from less than one in five of the Reluctant Right (17 percent) and Mainline Republicans (18 percent). The 33 percentage point difference between the most and least supportive Trump voter types on deportations is significantly larger than differences between racial groups or between generations. Latino and White Trump voters differed by nine percentage points, for instance, while between different generations of Baby Boomers and Gen Z Trump voters differed by 21 percentage points.

FIGURE 2.11  
DEPORTING IMMIGRANTS WITHOUT  
DUE PROCESS



Question: “Which of the following statements comes closest to your view, even if neither is exactly right?” Statement A: “The government should not deport anyone without a hearing before a judge, so that people who have a genuine right to be in the US don’t get mistakenly deported.” Statement B: “The government should be allowed to deport individuals suspected of being in the country illegally without a hearing before a judge, because immigration courts are too slow and overwhelmed.” Strongly agree with A/B, Somewhat agree with A/B, Unsure/no opinion.  
Note: Unsure/no opinion not shown.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,004 general population voters, including 1,747 Trump voters, conducted in September 2025.

Views differ among Trump voters about how the US should handle illegal immigrants. On the whole, swift deportations are more important to Trump voters than protecting due process. Given the choice between expedited deportations without court proceedings or maintaining judicial hearings to prevent wrongful deportations, Trump voters slightly prefer the faster approach (by a margin of 46 to 39 percent). There are pronounced differences among Trump voters in support for expedited deportations. MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives are at one end of the spectrum with around three in five supporting such a policy. At the other end are Reluctant Right and Mainline Republicans, with about one in three supporting.

**“ALL illegal immigrants should be deported, without a trial! Therefore, of course ALL gang members MUST be deported without a trial! If I break into a private club of which I am not a member and therefore not allowed and they try to throw me out, do I have the right to say, ‘Wait, I have the right to a trial.’ NO! They throw me out. That is the LAW!”**

**Gio, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 63 • Hispanic man • Las Vegas, Nevada



Los Angeles, CA - June 12, 2025: Officer from the “Los Angeles Field Office Special Response Team” (SRT) of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) during Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO). DHSgov, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

As the Trump administration scales up immigration enforcement—leveraging the record \$168 billion additional allocation for border security in the 2025 congressional budget<sup>1.15</sup>—these internal coalition tensions may become more significant. Many Trump voters who praise the administration for securing the southern border are unsure that it now needs to be such a high priority, and express reservations about the risk of overreach on domestic enforcement.

“I think since Donald Trump took office the problem has completely turned around. We’re enforcing laws and the **unauthorized entries into the country are down to a miraculously low level**, so the issue is much more in hand than it was under Biden.”

**Jaria, MAGA Hardliner**

Age 35 • Black man • Sneads Ferry, North Carolina

“I do feel this is an important issue and agree immigration problems have been overlooked in the past and need to be dealt with better. **I do think the economy is a more pressing issue**, however.”

**Mikayla, Mainline Republican**

Age 49 • Asian American woman • Easton, Pennsylvania

<sup>1.15</sup> Bier, David J. 2025. “Deportations to Add Almost \$1 Trillion in Costs to the ‘Big Beautiful Bill.’” *Cato Institute Blog*, June 6, 2025. <https://www.cato.org/blog/deportations-add-almost-1-trillion-costs-gops-big-beautiful-bill>

Over two-thirds (68 percent) of Trump voters felt that even if it takes a few years for enforcement officers to be recruited and fully trained, it is better to wait than to hire private contractors who do not have the necessary training (with only 19 percent agreeing that private contractors should be used in the meantime). Amidst media reports of resources being diverted from other agencies into immigration enforcement,<sup>1.16</sup> only one in three Trump voters (34 percent) said that resources should be diverted away from other divisions of law enforcement and security—such as the FBI, local police, prisons, and the military—to immigration enforcement. One in five Trump voters (21 percent) already felt the growth of the immigration enforcement budget was too much or far too much.

“I feel like it is something that does need to be addressed, but **I do not think it is very urgent. I feel like inflation is a bigger issue**. If anything, I feel like the illegals who are criminals and doing bad things should be dealt with first and not necessarily all illegals right away. If they are going to do it, it should be done the right way, and the officers should be fully trained. If they are not trained properly, officers and others can get hurt or killed.”

**Sheila, Mainline Republican**

Age 24 • White woman • Ocala, Florida

“We need some more enforcement, **but not an extreme amount**. No need to rob Peter to pay Paul.”

**Ryanne, Mainline Republican**

Age 38 • White woman • Chester, Vermont

<sup>1.16</sup> See for example: Nicholas Nehamas, Michael H. Keller, Alexandra Berzon, Hamed Aleaziz and Zolan Kanno-Youngs, “Homeland Security Missions Falter Amid Focus on Deportations.” *The New York Times*, November 16, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/16/us/politics/dhs-agents-reassigned.html>. and Perry Stein, “A quarter of FBI agents are assigned to immigration enforcement, per FBI data.” *Washington Post*, October 8, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/10/08/fbi-agents-reassigned-immigration/>



# Conclusion

The future of America’s immigration policy will play out not just between Republicans and Democrats, but also within the Republican and Democratic voter coalitions. There are clear differences between those Trump voters highly motivated by immigration issues and supportive of any and all restrictions, versus the majority of Trump voters who favor controlled immigration but think more in terms of getting the balance right. While the MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives strongly support a tougher approach to immigration, even among their ranks, sizeable minorities hold different views. Trump voters clearly distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants, and their priority is a well-controlled immigration policy rather than reduced numbers and mass deportations. Many express empathy with legal immigrants and still resonate strongly with the idea of the United States as a nation of immigrants.

On occasion, we observe a clear divergence between the Trump administration’s policies and the views of the Trump coalition. This includes the deportation of undocumented immigrants who have worked in the US for more than ten years, revoking the status of people who have come to the US legally and separating families because of their immigration status—all of which are examples where the majority of Trump voters do not agree with policies that the administration has pursued.

The Trump coalition’s consensus on immigration was forged by a sense of urgency about the border. It is united in crediting the administration for restoring control at the border. But agreement within the coalition breaks down around deporting long-term illegal immigrants who are well-integrated into local communities – with a majority of Trump voters (54 percent) against doing so. A majority of Trump voters also disagree with canceling the status of legal immigrants such as Afghan refugees (70 percent) and those who came through a vetted program, such as Ukrainians or Venezuelans (67 percent). Faith is also an important motivation for the majority of Trump voters, and when it comes to individuals, many feel compassion and a neighborly sense of responsibility—indeed, in a September 2025 poll, one in four Trump voters said that if invited to help sponsor a refugee family, they would be likely to agree.<sup>1,17</sup>

Trump voters give the administration high grades for the restoration of control at the border and its commitment to taking action on immigration. They support immigration being well-controlled, with clear distinctions between legal and illegal immigration, and for immigration policy to serve the interests of the American people. But on issues of enforcement and deportations, they do not speak with one voice. A substantial minority are consistent in their disagreement with the administration’s approach, and on its most extreme measures, a majority disagree. How these views evolve will have a significant bearing not only on immigration policy but on whether the coalition holds together into the future.

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<sup>1,17</sup> In a nationally representative study, 25 percent of 2024 Trump voters responded “likely” or “very likely” to the question “If you were invited to join a group to help sponsor a refugee or refugee family, how likely is it that in the next couple of years you would be interested in doing that?” More in Common, September 2025, 2,671 general population voters, including 1,512 Trump voters.

## CHAPTER TWO

# The End of “Wokeness”?

Addressing a Joint Session of Congress in 2025 shortly after his second inauguration, President Trump declared the culture wars over: “Because we’re getting ‘wokeness’ out of our schools and out of our military...‘Wokeness’ is trouble. ‘Wokeness’ is bad. It’s gone. It’s gone.”<sup>21</sup>

Whether or not this declaration proves accurate, debates about “woke” culture and values have been a defining feature of the 2020s in America, playing a central role in the nation’s most polarized conflicts. The term originated in Black intellectual and creative circles as a call to remain alert to racial injustices embedded in American economic and social life. From this vantage point, many institutions and norms are understood to have been shaped to benefit those with power, especially White men.<sup>22</sup> Advocates argue that these imbalances in power must be recognized and corrected for America to become a just society. In practice, this has often meant cultural and policy initiatives aimed at overcoming the marginalization of racial minorities, the LGBTQ+ community, and women.

For its critics, “wokeness” has become an umbrella term for what they see as progressive cultural overreach—an attempt by a vocal minority to impose its values on the broader population. Frustration with initiatives ranging from Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs to transgender athletes in women’s sports has helped forge the Trump coalition. The need to push back has energized many Trump supporters, who see the president’s combative approach as meeting the moment. Yet not all Trump voters are energized by the culture wars and debates over race, gender, and identity. While some see these issues as fundamental threats to American values, for others, they are little more than background noise.

<sup>21</sup> Associated Press. 2025. “Transcript of President Donald Trump’s Speech to a Joint Session of Congress.” *apnews.com*, March 5, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/751b5891a3265ff1e5c1409c391fef7c>

<sup>22</sup> VanDreew, B. M., Phillips, J. B., Munis, B. K., & Goidel, S. (2025). *What’s woke? Ordinary Americans’ understandings of wokeness*. *Research & Politics*, 12, Article 20531680251335650. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20531680251335650>





Washington County, Maryland, USA - September 9, 2023: A sign on the fence of a home warns "America! Save Your Children From Evil" with American flags on either side of it. iStock

This chapter examines how Trump voters understand “wokeness”: what it means to them, what threats they believe it poses, and the potential future of America’s culture wars. It focuses on three cultural battlegrounds: freedom of speech, freedom of belief, and fair competition. It concludes by considering whether these cultural conflicts have reached a turning point or will continue to escalate.

## The extent of concern about “wokeness”

Trump voters vary in how deeply they are concerned about progressive cultural change, but opposition to “wokeness” is a powerful unifying force across the coalition. A large majority believe progressive cultural politics have gone too far and require correction—a perspective shared by a sizeable minority of Democratic voters, as noted below. Within the Trump coalition, these concerns range in intensity. Some believe America’s way of life faces an existential threat from a “woke agenda” that has captured major institutions and misled younger generations. Others who may not follow these issues closely report negative personal experience of excesses, connecting to issues such as gender education in schools, diversity mandates in the workplace, and ideological uniformity in universities.

Three findings illustrate the breadth of anti-woke sentiment in the Trump coalition:

- **79 percent** of Trump voters believe “wokeness” is a problem in the United States today.
- **76 percent** agree that “the woke left has ruined American education, news, and entertainment.”
- **69 percent** believe that “President Trump should punish public universities if they promote ideas like DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) or CRT (Critical Race Theory) by withholding federal funding.”

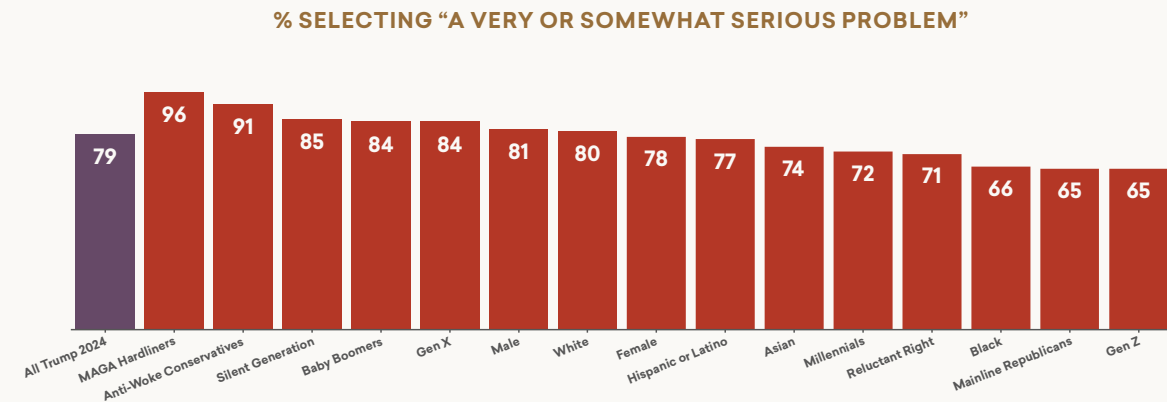
Some observers attribute this backlash to racial resentment, fear of demographic change, or prejudice against LGBTQ+ people. There is partial evidence for this interpretation. Older Trump voters express greater concern about “wokeness” than younger Trump voters, and Black Trump supporters are less concerned than their White counterparts. Still, demographic patterns alone cannot fully explain the breadth of anti-woke sentiment. Concern about “wokeness” extends across demographic boundaries, including groups often assumed to benefit from progressive cultural initiatives. As Figure 4.1 shows, when asked whether “wokeness” is a problem in the US today, majorities of Trump voters in every demographic category say yes.

Beyond the Trump coalition, half of Independents (50 percent) and a majority of Americans overall (53 percent) share this concern. Substantial minorities of Democrats (36 percent), Latinos (46 percent), Asian Americans (43 percent), and Black Americans (48 percent) also express worry about progressive cultural overreach. Understanding how Americans—and Trump voters in particular—define and interpret “wokeness” helps clarify what they believe is at stake.



FIGURE 3.1  
THE EXTENT TO WHICH “WOKENESS” IS SEEN AS A PROBLEM

“How much of a problem, if at all, do you think ‘wokeness’ is in the United States today?”



Question: “How much of a problem, if at all, do you think ‘wokeness’ is in the United States today?” Response scale: A very serious problem, somewhat of a problem, not much of a problem, not a problem at all, I don’t know the term ‘wokeness.’ The first two responses values were collapsed as “a problem.”  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

Among Trump voter types, MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives are nearly unanimous in viewing “wokeness” as a problem, with large majorities in both groups describing it as “very serious.” At these levels, opposition to “wokeness” is a defining feature of each group’s political identity.

Yet while the two groups share deep frustration with progressive cultural politics, religious orientation plays a stronger role for MAGA Hardliners. They are more likely than Anti-Woke Conservatives to identify with a religion (87 percent versus 70 percent) and nearly three times as likely to say religion is “very important” to their identity (65 percent versus 23 percent). This pattern reveals that the strongest opposition to “wokeness” unites both highly religious and more secular Trump voters. Religious conviction amplifies concern but does not solely drive it, even if religious beliefs influence attitudes towards many contested issues, such as LGBTQ+ rights and gender identity.

Among Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right, concern about “wokeness” is widespread but less intense. About one in three in each group (30 percent and 31 percent, respectively) consider it “a very serious problem,” while one in six (16 percent in each) are unfamiliar with the term. Notably, despite being less conservative and less partisan than Mainline Republicans, the Reluctant Right express equivalent or slightly higher levels of concern about progressive cultural overreach. This suggests that worry about cultural excesses transcends traditional ideological and partisan boundaries.

# How Trump voters define “wokeness”

The harshest critics of “wokeness” describe it as an ideology whose proponents are both dogmatic and arrogant. MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives use strong language to criticize what they perceive as an unreflective tendency to adopt the latest political or cultural trends. They sometimes label this behavior “virtue signaling,” viewing it as a performative display of moral standing rather than true conviction. In their view, those who decline to conform risk being shamed, shunned, or silenced.

“To me, [‘woke’] means the opposite. **People who are not awake to reality and common sense.** People who do not see the world as it is and believe in any agenda their political party tells them to.”

**Claire, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 33 • Mixed race woman • Mansfield, Massachusetts

“To me, ‘woke’ has become a negative term. It seems less about real fairness and more about forcing **extreme ideas, silencing opposing opinions, and dividing people.** It feels like it’s gone from awareness to intolerance.”

**Susan, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 41 • White woman • Talladega, Alabama

“‘Woke’ is just the adherence to what the prevailing cause of the day is...It used to be that you were aware of the real things that are going on, but now it’s more of a pejorative that we use to refer to **people who are virtue signaling to everybody else, and it’s to the point of absurdity** where they embarrass themselves with the positions they take just because they’re trying to fit in with what they think everybody else believes.”

**David, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 44 • White man • Lubbock, Texas



By contrast, Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right offer more varied critiques of progressive cultural politics. Rather than thinking of “wokeness” as an overarching ideology, these voters are often more familiar with specific issues labeled as “woke,” such as pronoun requirements, diversity training, or debates over school curricula. Some focus less on the goals themselves than on the methods: they may support greater inclusivity in principle but object to what they see as heavy-handed enforcement, public shaming of dissenters, or a lack of tolerance for different viewpoints.

“For me, it's become a little bit of an issue because it's like every single time you turn on the TV, every single show that you watch, **it's almost like the ‘wokeness’ for a long time was more of the focus** than what the show was supposed to be about.”

**Hannah, Reluctant Right**  
Age 28 • White woman • Mount Hope, West Virginia

“**I don't really understand** what [‘wokeness’] is, I guess.”

**Marli, Reluctant Right**  
Age 28 • White woman • Easthampton, Massachusetts

“While some people take things too far, **most efforts to be ‘woke’ just try to make schools and media more inclusive and respectful.** The problem isn’t ‘wokeness’ itself; it’s when people stop having open discussions and just label each other.”

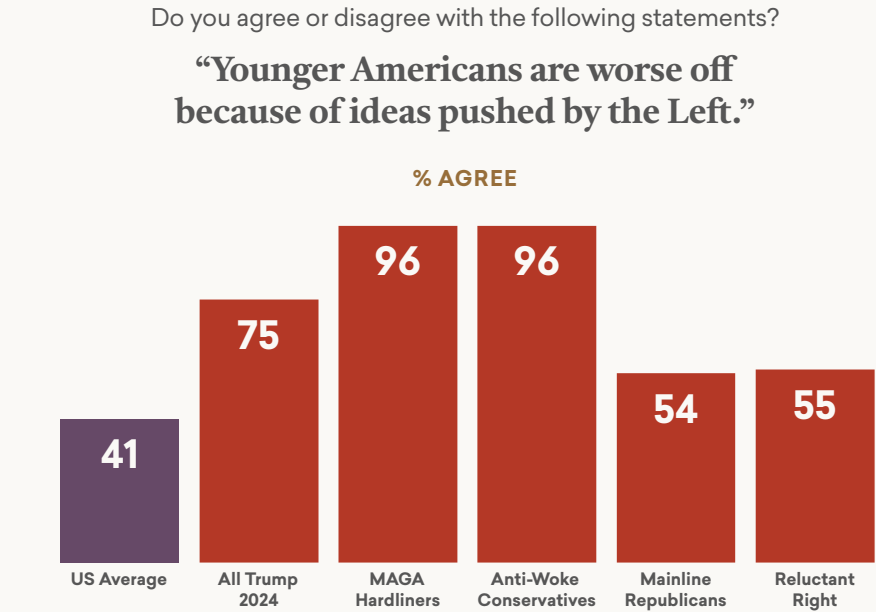
**Mark, Mainline Republican**  
Age 19 • Asian American man • Carmichael, California

The more measured opposition to progressive cultural politics among Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right reflects several factors. Both groups skew younger than MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives, and younger Americans have generally come of age in an era where diversity and inclusion are more normalized. These voters also hold warmer views toward progressives as people, even when disagreeing on policy—suggesting that their opposition is pragmatic rather than tribal. Finally, their lower levels of political engagement mean that they are less exposed to the constant stream of news and commentary about identity politics that fuels outrage among more politically active Trump supporters. For these voters, cultural debates are real but not all-consuming.

# Why the “woke” agenda matters to Trump voters

For many Trump voters, opposition to progressive cultural politics stems from a deeper fear: that it is damaging the minds, morals, and well-being of the next generation. Three in four Trump voters (75 percent) agree that “younger Americans are worse off because of ideas pushed by the Left”—a belief that encompasses concerns about everything from gender ideology in schools to the erosion of meritocracy to what they see as a culture of victimhood. This conviction is nearly unanimous among MAGA Hardliners (96 percent) and Anti-Woke Conservatives (96 percent). Even among the more moderate Mainline Republicans and Reluctant Right, majorities (54 percent and 55 percent, respectively) share this concern, suggesting that worry about cultural progressivism's impact on youth transcends the most ideological segments of the Trump coalition.

FIGURE 3.2  
YOUNGER AMERICANS WORSE OFF BECAUSE OF THE LEFT

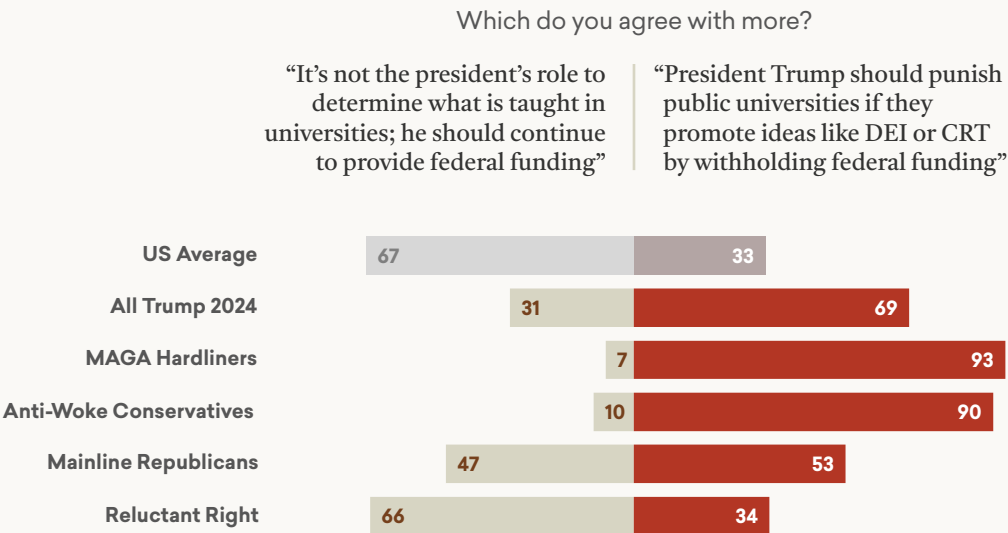


Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

This concern about cultural damage often translates into support for punitive action. Seven in ten Trump voters (69 percent) believe President Trump should withhold federal funding from public universities that promote CRT (Critical Race Theory) or DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) programs—explicitly rejecting the principle that "it's not the president's role to determine what is taught in universities." For these voters, the threat posed by progressive ideology justifies executive intervention, even at the expense of academic freedom.

Figure 4.3 shows that support for this hardline approach is heavily concentrated among MAGA Hardliners (93 percent) and Anti-Woke Conservatives (90 percent). By contrast, large shares of both Mainline Republicans (47 percent) and the Reluctant Right (66 percent) oppose using federal funding as a weapon against universities—a significant break from the Trump coalition's dominant position. This split reveals a fault line within the coalition: while most share concerns about progressive overreach, they diverge sharply on the extent to which governmental authority should be deployed to combat it.

FIGURE 3.3  
PROVIDING FEDERAL FUNDING FOR  
UNIVERSITIES THAT TEACH DEI OR CRT



Question: "Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between?"  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.



2025-03-10 Black Lives Matter Plaza removal, Washington, DC. Photo by Geoff Livingston, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Central to the concerns among the Trump voters is the belief that progressive cultural politics threaten core American freedoms and values. Across focus groups, surveys, and interviews, Trump voters identify three principal threats:

- **Freedom of speech:** Progressive activists have restricted what can be said without fear of social or professional retribution, creating a climate of self-censorship.
- **Freedom of belief:** Schools, universities, and corporations have imposed a progressive ideology through institutional authority, often amplified by sympathetic media coverage that marginalizes dissenting views.
- **Merit and fairness:** Group identity has been elevated over individual achievement, undermining the principle that hard work and talent should determine success.

Together, these perceived threats drive a powerful impulse to confront and dismantle what many in the coalition see as a coordinated assault on fundamental American principles.



# Freedom of speech

A central complaint about progressive cultural politics is that Americans are being told not just what to think but also what words they may use to express those thoughts. Many Trump voters describe pressure to adopt new terminology and frameworks, with dissent met not through persuasion but through public shaming or professional consequences. What was once called "political correctness" is now more commonly described as "cancel culture"—a shift in language that reflects a perceived escalation from social expectation to punitive enforcement.

“I definitely noticed there's a culture of if you say **the wrong thing and the people sort of will want to lash out at you sort of say your opinion is wrong and stuff. So, I never really brought up my opinion...** [w]hen other people did, and especially when they had more sort of, not an extreme viewpoint, but just not necessarily anything relating to the Left.”

**Cesar, Reluctant Right**  
Age 39 • Hispanic man • Campbell, California

“There's been a concerted effort to infringe upon our freedoms, especially freedom of speech. A lot of people tend to self-censor themselves because they're afraid of saying the 'wrong thing.' And it shouldn't be like that in America. You should be able to say whatever you want, whenever, and how you want. **Respect people, of course... but it seems like especially on the Left, they're trying to police our speech. You say the wrong thing, and you get canceled.**”

**Don, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 50 • Hispanic man • Haledon, New Jersey

Yet the spectre of cancel culture may loom larger in perception than reality. As the Trump administration has moved to reshape cultural institutions such as universities, media organizations, and corporations, Trump voters have sensed a turning tide. Further, concerns about being silenced have created a political identity built on resistance to cultural policing, reflected most distinctively among the Anti-Woke Conservatives. This means that the mobilizing power of resistance to “wokeness” is likely to endure into the future for many Trump voters, even if they discern a shift in the cultural environment since his return to office.



At the Intrepid Museum 2023. Photograph by Mike Peel ([www.mikepeel.net](http://www.mikepeel.net)). - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

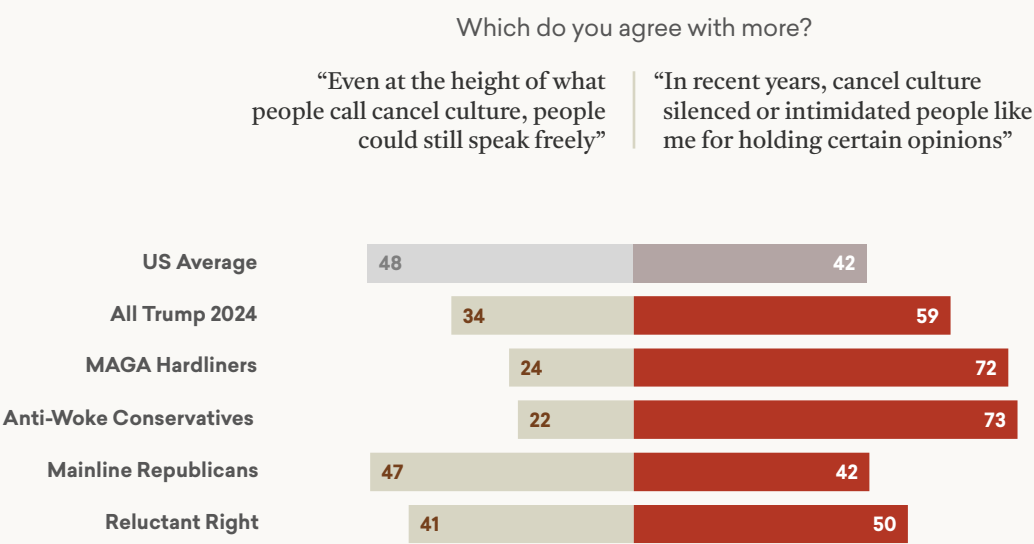
“A big thing that I've noticed, especially with my friend group in the past few years, the whole ‘woke’ trend, I remember just being in college and I would be scared to say what I actually felt. I feel like it was [as] if everyone was so quick to cancel you or to make quick judgements, and **I don't know, this year especially, I just feel like everyone, I feel like there's no fear of that anymore.** You don't have to be careful what you say or post. The whole—I think drastic—canceling movement is slowly dying down, which makes me feel more comfortable I think.”

**Sarah, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 23 • White woman • Palatine, Illinois

“I haven't **heard the term** ‘woke’ anymore.”

**Amara, Reluctant Right**  
Age 40 • Black woman • Pensacola, Florida

FIGURE 3.4  
CANCEL CULTURE



Question: "Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between?"  
Note: "Don't know" responses not shown.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

Three in five Trump voters (59 percent) report that "in recent years, cancel culture has silenced or intimidated people like me for holding certain opinions." This sense of being personally targeted is most acute among Anti-Woke Conservatives (73 percent) and MAGA Hardliners (72 percent). By contrast, Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right are more evenly divided, with roughly half rejecting the claim that they've been silenced and instead asserting that "even at the height of what people call cancel culture, people could still speak freely."

This divergence may reflect both temperament and exposure. MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives are more likely to engage in political discussions where their views might provoke backlash, while less politically active voters may have avoided such confrontations altogether. The difference may also reflect generational and cultural shifts, with less concern among younger and more moderate Trump voters, who are more concentrated among Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right.

# Freedom of belief

Many Trump voters perceive progressive cultural politics as a top-down imposition of ideas from powerful cultural institutions. The consistency of progressive messaging across media, education, and corporate sectors strikes them as evidence of orchestration between those powerful actors. This perception fuels suspicion that Americans are being told what to think rather than persuaded through open debate.

“It seems like **it's an agenda forcing a belief**. And everybody has the same story, the same go-to words, and they use the same phrases on every channel, every story. It's like they don't investigate anything anymore. They just put whatever's out there and people buy it hook, line, and sinker.”

**Buck, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 59 • White man • Staten Island, New York

“A lot of people are very gullible, and we're at a point now where people don't necessarily understand the fundamentals of politics, and they need to be told what to think. And **that's how they form opinions: they repeat headlines, and they regurgitate stuff that the media forces down their throats**. And that's where we are now.”

**Maxwell, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 45 • White man • Pompano Beach, Florida





Columbia University, New York City - April 22, 2024: A sign displayed at the reinstated Gaza Solidarity Encampment stating: "Welcome to the People's University for Palestine". Photo: دانيال دابح, Public domain.

Beyond concerns about institutional alignment, many Trump voters believe progressive activists deliberately exaggerate social problems, particularly racism, to advance their agenda. They feel that claims of racism are deployed strategically to silence opposition, generate fear, and maintain political power. Notably, this critique comes not only from White conservatives but also among Trump voters from minority backgrounds who reject the narrative that racism remains widespread in America today.

"I think the country's headed in a way—there's more racial division, but I don't think **it's like real racism. I just think it's manipulated by the media to make us believe that Black and White people can't get along**; they exaggerate everything...I'm starting to see that a lot more now—how they manipulate our minds to think that something is there that's really not there."

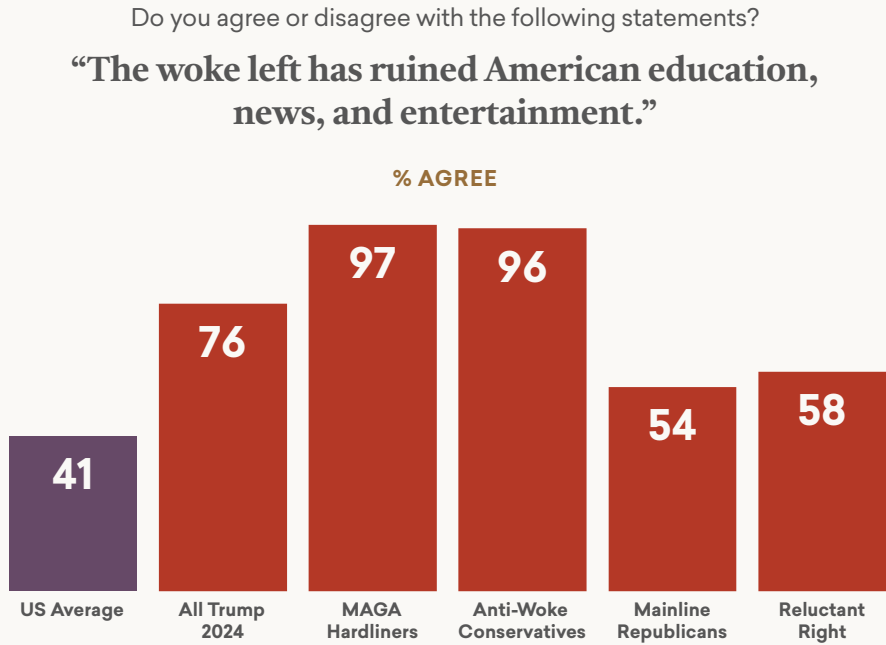
**Fernando, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 38 • Black man • Houston, Texas

**"People do a lot of race baiting. It's like racism is used as like a weapon**, like calling something racist or calling someone racist. That's used more in my mind. From what I've seen, that gets used a lot more than anything racial actually happening."

**Griselda, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 28 • Hispanic woman • Las Vegas, Nevada

These concerns translate into sweeping condemnation of America's cultural institutions. Three in four Trump voters (76 percent) agree that "the woke left has ruined American education, news, and entertainment"—a view held nearly unanimously by MAGA Hardliners (97 percent) and Anti-Woke Conservatives (96 percent) and shared by majorities of Mainline Republicans (54 percent) and the Reluctant Right (58 percent).

**FIGURE 3.5**  
**THE WOKE LEFT'S DAMAGE TO CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS**



Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

Of all institutional arenas, schools appear to generate the most intense anxiety within the Trump coalition. The concern centers particularly on gender identity and sexual orientation. Many parents fear that schools are actively encouraging children to question their gender or explore different sexual identities, often without parental knowledge or consent. In focus group conversations, many Trump voters told stories of this kind of overreach from their own lives. Their concerns often highlight the pace and manner of cultural change in recent years, with any dissent from these policies treated as bigotry rather than legitimate parental concern.





Austin, Texas – August 26, 2023: Drag Story-Time Event Held In Austin, Texas, Week Ahead Of Restrictive Bill Going Into Effect. Photo by Brandon Bell/Getty Images.

“My kids start school soon and we we’re just, you know, worried about indoctrination. We’ve seen a lot of, you know, what they consider ‘woke’ or whatever and ‘woke’ behaviors in school. There’s them trying to teach kids certain things. I just didn’t want my kids to be near that. **I want to keep my kids’ innocence safe.**”

**Jada , Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 28 • Black woman • Lexington, South Carolina

“**Everybody has the freedom to be represented.** You know, the people that want to have a sex change can have a sex change. The people that don’t want to have [a] sex change and want to be involved in their children’s lives should have that freedom. And it’s really scary to me that people say, ‘Oh, you can’t.’ Don’t tell me I can’t. I’m the parent.”

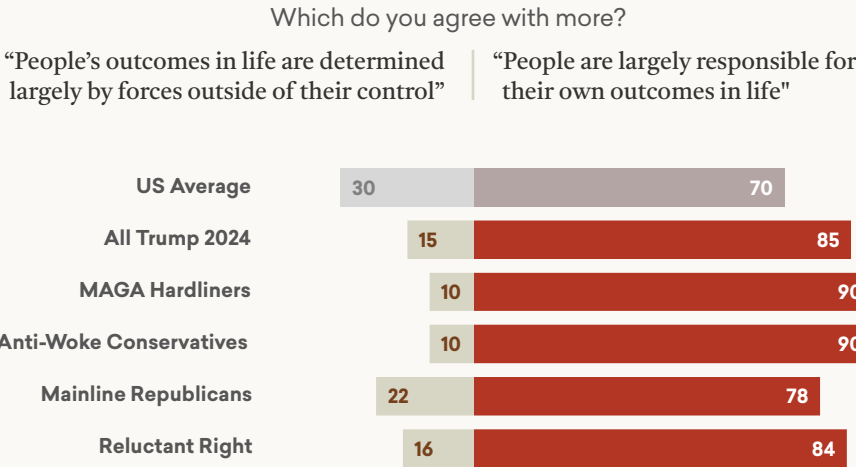
**Josephine, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 41 • White woman • Lynch Station, Virginia

# Merit and fairness

At the heart of Trump voter opposition to progressive cultural politics lies a clash of worldviews over human agency and achievement. Trump voters overwhelmingly embrace the belief that individuals shape their own destinies through hard work and determination. Nine in ten (90 percent) say that "hard work and effort" rather than "luck and circumstance" explains where they are in life—a view that is also shared by 79 percent of Americans overall, but where progressive activists are outliers.<sup>2,3</sup> This conviction extends beyond personal experience: 85 percent of Trump voters believe that "people are largely responsible for their own outcomes in life" rather than being "determined largely by forces outside of their control." This worldview commands majority support across every demographic group and Trump voter type, though it is especially pronounced among MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives (both 90 percent).

This emphasis on individual agency helps explain why Trump voters often chafe at affirmative action and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs. From their perspective, these policies replace merit-based competition with group-based

**FIGURE 3.6**  
**BELIEF IN INDIVIDUAL AGENCY**



Question: “Which statement do you agree with more?”  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

<sup>2,3</sup> More in Common (2018). *Hidden Tribes: A Study of America’s Polarized Landscape* [www.hiddentribes.us](http://www.hiddentribes.us)



preferences, undermining both fairness and trust. If success can be attributed to demographic characteristics rather than talent and effort, the entire meritocratic system becomes suspect, leaving both beneficiaries and competitors uncertain whether achievement reflects genuine ability.

“The first time I went to college and got a degree was 1992 to 1996. At that point, they were starting to get into identity politics...starting to divide students based on ethnicity and so forth as being grievance groups. When I got to law school in 1996, it was obvious that there were quotas of women versus men, different races, and **it made me uncomfortable because as a woman, I don't know if other people are thinking I'm only there because I fill a role. And so that really hurt my confidence.** Do I actually belong at this law school or was I just brought in to be helping the bean counters?”

**Gina, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 50 • White woman • Springfield, Oregon

“[Diversity] has been hijacked as a buzz word now. It's no longer an idea that represents diversity. **It is equality of outcome now versus equal opportunity. And equal opportunity has to be destroyed to get that equality of outcome.** And that's what diversity has become in the United States today.”

**Fred, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 62 • Mixed race man • Alma, Arkansas

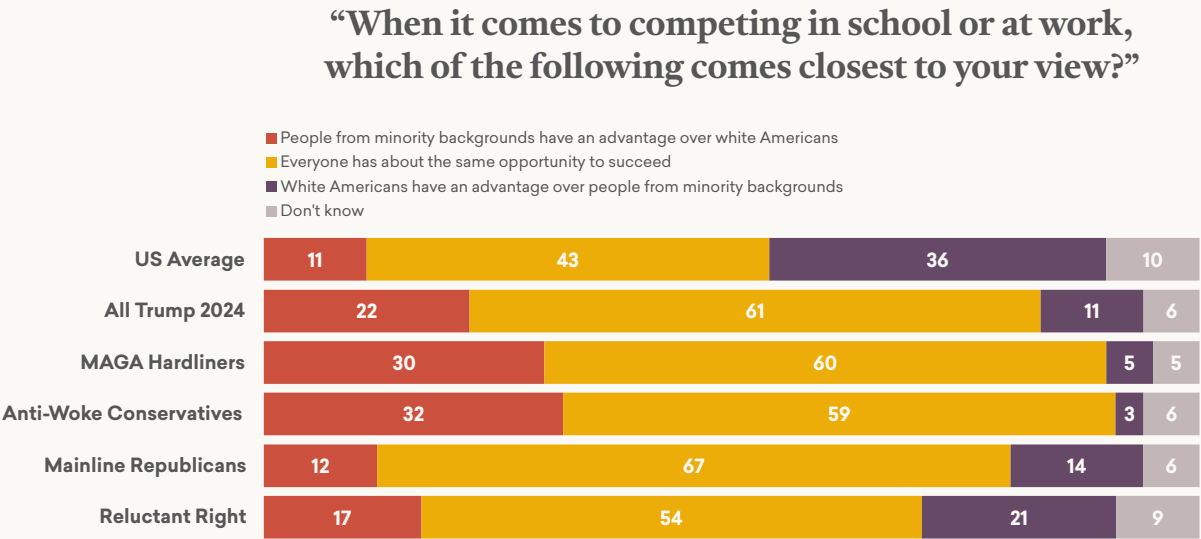
“And it's kind of a double-edged sword because **if you force the diversity and you have quotas and that kind of thing, then everybody questions who is in that position that they get chosen for.** It's like, well, you were only picked because you checked this box. So, then you don't even know who the best people are anymore.”

**Juan, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 54 • Hispanic man • Bakersfield, California

For a minority of Trump voters, concern about diversity policies extends to a belief that the balance of advantage has shifted entirely so that White Americans now face a systemic disadvantage. Trump voters are twice as likely to believe that "people from minority backgrounds have an advantage over White Americans" (22 percent) as they are to think White Americans have the advantage (11 percent). This perception is strongest among MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives, while Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right are more divided, with significant numbers believing that White Americans continue to benefit from structural advantages.

Yet despite these concerns, most Trump voters believe America's meritocracy remains fundamentally intact. Six in ten (60 percent) agree that "when it comes to competing in school or at work, everyone has about the same opportunity to succeed"—a view that holds across all Trump voter types at similar levels. This finding reveals an important nuance: while Trump voters sharply criticize specific diversity policies, most do not believe these initiatives have fundamentally corrupted American society. The threat, from their perspective, is potential rather than fully realized.

FIGURE 3.7  
WHO HAS THE ADVANTAGE IN AMERICA TODAY?



Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

# The end of “wokeness”?

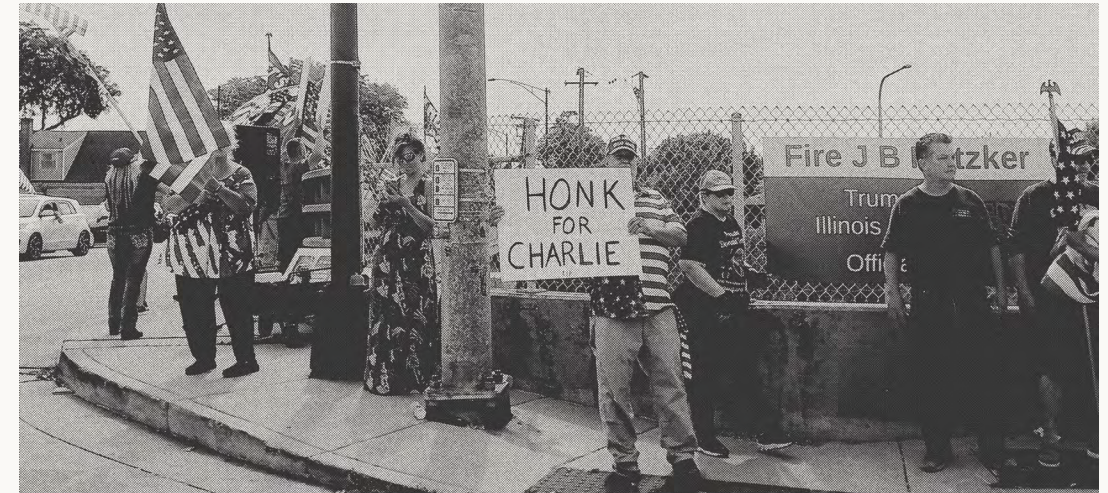
The consistent pattern shown in this chapter is that while MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives view progressive cultural politics as an urgent existential threat, Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right see it as concerning but not transformative. This divergence reveals a fundamental challenge: sustaining political mobilization around diffuse cultural anxieties may be harder than rallying opposition to concrete policy failures, such as surging prices or a porous southern border. It also raises a pivotal question for the Trump coalition: will anti-woke sentiment retain its galvanizing power in the years ahead, or will it fade as other priorities demand attention?

Several indicators suggest that the peak of progressive cultural dominance may have passed, even if “wokeness” itself has not disappeared entirely. Despite fierce criticism of specific diversity initiatives, most Trump voters still believe merit-based competition remains fundamentally intact in American society. Many also perceive that cancel culture has receded from its height. Institutional shifts reinforce this trajectory.

The Supreme Court has struck down race-based affirmative action.<sup>24</sup> Corporations are retreating from DEI commitments.<sup>25</sup> Democrats have distanced themselves from progressive cultural positions<sup>26</sup>—such as California Governor Gavin Newsom’s public opposition to transgender athletes competing in girls’ sports.<sup>27</sup> To all of this, the public backlash appears minimal but may be swinging back.

What happens next depends on how the Trump coalition and its leaders use their newfound cultural authority. One possibility is constructive: with the most unpopular excesses curbed, America could build consensus around principles that protect everyone regardless of who holds power—free expression, respectful disagreement, and fair competition based on merit rather than identity. These are ideals that can command broad support across partisan lines.

On the other hand, opposition to progressive overreach could be used as a license for conservative retribution—punishing dissent, pressuring institutions, and silencing liberal voices. Episodes of right-leaning efforts to punish or silence liberal voices (as seen after the killing of Charlie Kirk) hint at that risk, with conservative activists targeting



Trump rally in honor of Charlie Kirk at Canfield Road overpass above I-90, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

professors, boycotts of “woke” corporations morphing into broader cultural policing, and calls to defund universities that do not conform to the anti-woke priorities.<sup>28</sup> America could merely exchange one orthodoxy for another, with no cessation of conflict. Highly engaged online communities on both sides remain motivated to sustain conflict rather than seek resolution. The danger is a perpetual cycle in which each side claims to defend freedom while using cultural and political power to silence dissent and enforce conformity.

Americans face a stark choice between two futures. One path leads to a cycle of cultural combat where victory means silencing opponents rather than persuading them—an expectation that whoever holds power determines acceptable speech, belief, and expression. The alternative requires genuine commitment to principles that constrain everyone: defending free expression even when offensive, tolerating disagreement even when frustrating, and maintaining fair competition even when outcomes disappoint. The question is not whether “wokeness” has peaked, but whether Americans can build a culture that resists any ideology’s claim to absolute authority—progressive or conservative, Left or Right.

The internal dynamics of the Trump coalition will play a decisive role in which path America takes. How MAGA Hardliners, Anti-Woke Conservatives, Mainline Republicans, and the Reluctant Right negotiate their differences—and how leaders respond to their competing priorities—will determine whether institutions and policies evolve toward genuine pluralism or perpetuate the polarized cultural conflict that has defined recent years. The Trump coalition’s victory in 2024 gives conservatives scope to set the tone for American culture for years to come. Whether they use that power to impose a new orthodoxy or to restore genuine openness will shape not just this political moment, but the trajectory of American public life for years to come.

<sup>24</sup> Nadworny, Elissa. “Why the Supreme Court Decision on Affirmative Action Matters.” *NPR*, June 29, 2023. <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/29/1181138066/affirmative-action-supreme-court-decision>

<sup>25</sup> Forbes. “IBM reportedly walks back diversity policies, citing ‘inherent tensions’—here are all the companies rolling back DEI programs.” *Forbes*, April 11, 2025. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/conormurray/2025/04/11/ibm-reportedly-walks-back-diversity-policies-citing-inherent-tensions-here-are-all-the-companies-rolling-back-dei-programs/>

<sup>26</sup> Politico. “Working-class voters think Democrats are ‘woke and weak,’ new research finds.” *Politico*, Nov. 2, 2025. <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/11/02/working-class-voters-think-dems-are-woke-and-weak-new-research-finds-00632618>

<sup>27</sup> CalMatters. “Gavin Newsom shocks LGBTQ allies with criticism of transgender athletes.” *CalMatters*, March 6, 2025. <https://calmatters.org/politics/2025/03/newsom-transgender-athletes/>

<sup>28</sup> Reuters. “The Charlie Kirk purge: How 600 Americans were punished in a pro-Trump crackdown.” *Reuters*, Nov. 19, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/investigations/charlie-kirk-purge-how-600-americans-were-punished-pro-trump-crackdown-2025-11-19/>



CHAPTER THREE

# Perceptions of Trump's Leadership

In July 2024, the *New York Times* published an editorial headlined “Donald Trump Is Unfit to Lead.” The article declared that Trump was “dangerous,” “puts self over country,” and “loathes the laws we live by.” These sentiments were widely shared among the Americans who did not vote for him: in the year leading up to the election, Trump was variously described as a “fascist,”<sup>3.1</sup> a “monster,”<sup>3.2</sup> a “narcissist,”<sup>3.3</sup> a “tyrant,”<sup>3.4</sup> “corrupt,”<sup>3.5</sup> a “liar,”<sup>3.6</sup> “racist,”<sup>3.7</sup> and a “demagogue.”<sup>3.8</sup>

<sup>3.1</sup> Adrienne Mahsa Varkiani, “Karoline Leavitt Is Fascism’s Lead Mouthpiece,” *The New Republic*, December 26, 2025, <https://newrepublic.com/article/204550/karoline-leavitt-maga-monster-fascism-lead-mouthpiece>

<sup>3.2</sup> Peter Isackson, “Halloween Special: Is Trump a Devil Masquerading as a Monster?” *Fair Observer*, October 31, 2025. <https://www.fairobserver.com/devils-advocate/halloween-special-is-trump-a-devil-masquerading-as-a-monster/>

<sup>3.3</sup> Maureen Dowd and Patrick Healy, “Maureen Dowd on Trump the Narcissist, Act II.” *The New York Times*, January 30, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/30/opinion/trump-power-narcissism.html>

<sup>3.4</sup> Jamelle Bouie, “America, This Is an Old and Brutal Tyranny.” *The New York Times*, April 16, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/16/opinion/trump-court-order-constitution.html>

<sup>3.5</sup> Abdallah Fayyad, “Why Voters Keep Shrugging Off Trump’s Corruption.” *Vox*, September 25, 2025. <https://www.vox.com/politics/462706/trump-corruption-tom-homan-bribery>

<sup>3.6</sup> Vickie Shufton. “I WITNESS: We Hold These Lies to Be Self-Evident.” *The Berkshire Edge*, October 25, 2025. <https://theberkshireedge.com/i-witness-we-hold-these-lies-to-be-self-evident/>

<sup>3.7</sup> Sam Levin, “Fact-check: Trump’s racist and false claims on immigration and cost of living.” *The Guardian*, December 9, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/dec/09/fact-check-trump-speech-pennsylvania>. *The Guardian*

<sup>3.8</sup> Adam Rubenstein, “Yes, Trump Is a Demagogue. But So Were Many of His Forebears,” *The Free Press*, January 19, 2025, <https://www.thefp.com/p/trump-is-a-demagogue-so-were-his-forebears-adam-rubenstein-philip-terzian>. *The Free Press*



President Donald J. Trump addresses his remarks Thursday, Feb. 6, 2020 in the East Room of the White House, in response to being acquitted of two Impeachment charges. Official White House photo by Shealah Craighead (public domain, U.S. federal government work) via Wikimedia Commons.

Four months later, more than 77 million Americans handed Trump the Presidency.

Efforts to understand President Trump's electoral success have filled countless think pieces, podcasts, and online debates. Across the dug-in trenches of America's polarized politics, a set of well-rehearsed arguments about Trump are heard. Some commentators emphasize racial resentment and White backlash against perceived encroachments by immigrants and racial minorities. Others argue that Trump successfully convinced millions of working-class Americans that he could run the country like a successful business. Still others point to his unmatched ability to dominate the attention economy.

This chapter offers a different perspective. The novelist Anaïs Nin once observed that "we don't see things as they are; we see them as we are." To understand the coalition Donald Trump assembled, we must see him through the eyes of his supporters: what he represents to them, the role he plays in their lives, and why so many view him as the answer to this period of perceived American decline.

What emerges is not a single, consistent picture but rather a set of overlapping images: Trump as a leader who can bend reality to his will, who can shatter progressive pieties, who can restore pride, and who can rebuild lost greatness. It is precisely this ability to play different roles—this capacity to, as the poet Walt Whitman put it, "contain multitudes"—that is the source of Trump's power. Understanding these different roles helps shed light not only on the nature of his coalition, but also on the conditions of American society itself.

## Perceptions of Leadership

When describing Trump in their own words, "leader" is the most common word his supporters use. Indeed, nearly three quarters of Trump voters (73 percent) believe he is "the best leader the Republican Party has had in my lifetime." Many even view Trump more positively than the Republican Party itself: a third of his voters (29 percent) say they are more of a "Trump supporter than a Republican."

Perceptions of Trump as a leader are reinforced by his combative style and a sense that he has the strength not to back down in the face of opposition. For many in his coalition, this willingness to fight signals the kind of toughness they believe is necessary to challenge entrenched interests and solve America's problems.

"I voted for Trump because he is a natural, he is a leader. **All the stuff that they threw at him, he just shook it off...that's a lot of pressure, and he hung in there.**"

**Sam, MAGA Hardliner**

Age 76 • Black man • Lancaster, South Carolina

"I like the fact that even if people don't like him, **he still stands by what he believes** and he's not somebody that goes along to get along. That's why I like him as a leader. **He doesn't go with the popular opinion.** He's going to do what he wants"

**Danielle, Mainline Republican**

Age 28 • Black woman • Seagoville, Texas

"Trump is a strong leader. **He stands up to all the nonsense.**"

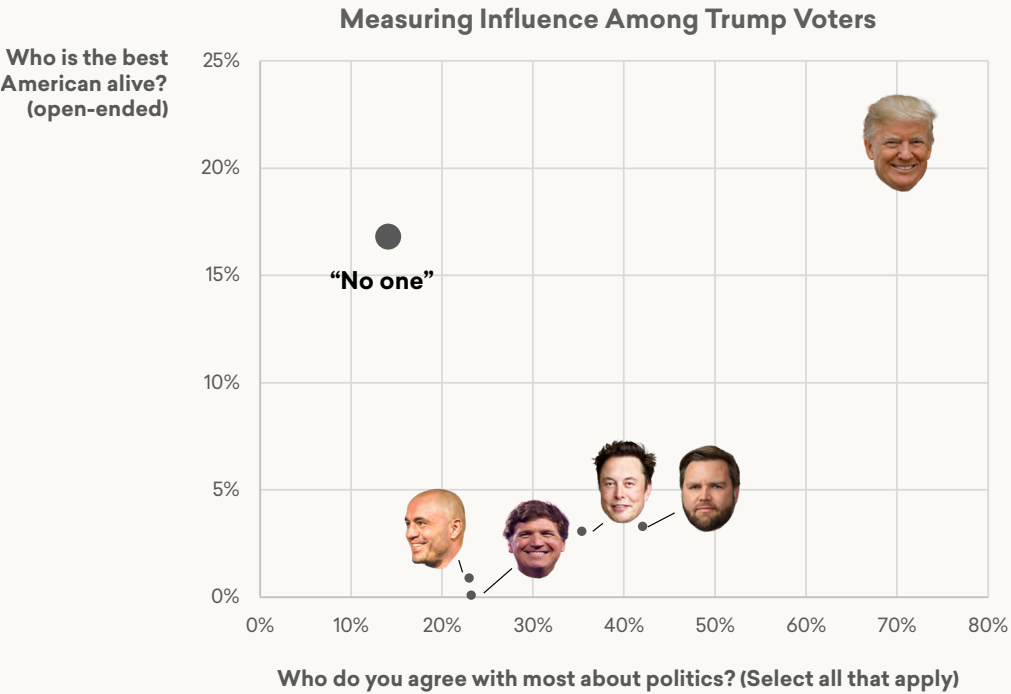
**Javier, MAGA Hardliner**

Age 33 • Hispanic man • Whitehouse Station, New Jersey



Many of Trump’s supporters express an affinity for the president unmatched by any other public figure. When asked, for example, “Who is the best American alive?” almost a quarter (23 percent) of his supporters say Trump—more than quadruple the rate of any of the next-most popular individuals (e.g., Joe Rogan, JD Vance, Elon Musk). Additionally, three quarters (73 percent) say that Trump is the person they “agree with most about politics.” These figures suggest Trump plays a unique role in American politics today.

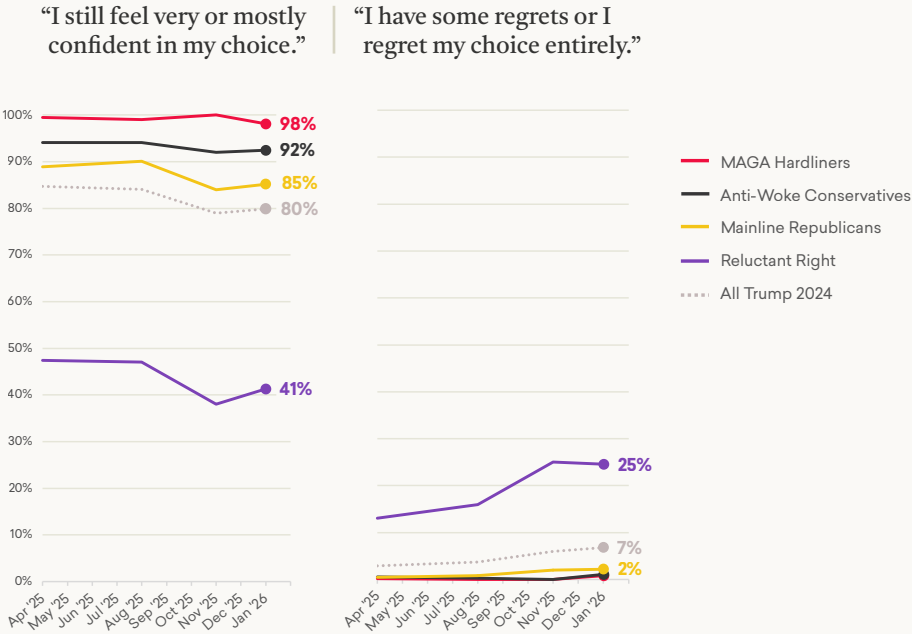
FIGURE 4.1  
TRUMP’S SINGULAR INFLUENCE



Question: “In your opinion, who is the best American role model alive today? Please just choose one person” [open-ended]  
Source: Surveys of 2,671 Trump voters and 1,512 general population voters conducted in September 2025.  
Question: “Among public figures, who do you tend to agree with the most about politics? You could refer to a politician, a commentator or journalist, a podcaster or someone else who is well known.” Note: Plotted figures include (from left to right) Joe Rogan, Tucker Carlson, Elon Musk, J.D. Vance, Donald Trump.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

A year into Trump's presidency, despite sliding approval ratings, criticism from past supporters like Marjorie Taylor Greene, and continued furor around the Epstein files, most of his coalition remains confident or “very confident” in their choice. The one exception to this was the Reluctant Right, a quarter (25 percent) of whom have begun to say they “regret” their vote choice.

FIGURE 4.2  
CONTINUED CONFIDENCE IN TRUMP’S LEADERSHIP



Question: “Which of the following best describes how you feel today about your choice for president in 2024?” I still feel very confident in my choice, I feel mostly confident in my choice, I have mixed or uncertain feelings, I have some regrets about my choice, I regret my choice entirely.  
Source: More in Common (2026). Surveys of 7,761 total Trump voters conducted in April, August, and November 2025, and January 2026.

“I feel my decision to vote for Trump was a good decision. Trump is doing what he campaigned about doing. **Results are happening. I feel confident that my children and grandchildren now can have a future.**”

**Sophia, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 59 • White woman • South Bend, Washington

“President Trump had done even better than I thought he would do. **No one that I know who voted for Trump regrets it.** They ALL say he is doing great!”

**Gio, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 63 • Hispanic man • Las Vegas, Nevada

“I still support my decision to vote for Trump. **He has come through on many promises he made** and I know for long term change to happen there will be short-term growing pains.”

**Jill, Mainline Republican**  
Age 47 • White woman • Oregon, Wisconsin



Sarasota, FL, USA - November 28, 2015: White seniors holding a placard supporting Donald Trump showing their support at his Presidential candidacy visit to Sarasota FL. iStock

# Motivations for Choosing Trump

But while perceptions of Trump as a leader are shared across his coalition, the reasons supporters give for voting for him vary across groups. MAGA Hardliners are motivated by a strong personal loyalty, with seven in ten (63 percent) saying they are simply “strong supporters of Donald Trump.” Anti-Woke Conservatives, by contrast, are more policy-driven: a plurality (41 percent) say they had reservations about Trump but agreed with his policies. Mainline Republicans are more divided, with a third (33 percent) citing policy agreement despite misgivings, and nearly as many (32 percent) expressing strong personal support. Finally, the Reluctant Right is more likely than any other cohort to say they voted for Trump because he was “less bad” than the alternative (39 percent). Taken together, these patterns suggest that Trump’s coalition is held together less by a single shared rationale than by a patchwork of distinct motivations.

“I just like his policies. I like a lot of his ideas, and **people say things and never follow up. He tries to get things done.** They stop him at every turn, but he tries to get things done.”

**Fernando, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 38 • Black man • Houston, Texas

FIGURE 4.3  
REASONS FOR VOTING FOR TRUMP

	All Trump 2024	MAGA Hardliners	Anti-Woke Conservatives	Mainline Republicans	Reluctant Right
I had some issues with Donald Trump, but I agreed with his policies	32	20	41	33	36
I am a strong supporter of Donald Trump	34	63	26	32	2
I wanted to vote against Kamala Harris, Joe Biden, and Democrats	11	7	15	9	14
I usually support the Republican presidential candidate	11	8	10	15	9
I didn't like Kamala Harris or Donald Trump, but Trump seemed less bad	13	1	9	11	39

More in Common (2025). Survey of 2,478 Trump voters conducted in April 2025.

Further evidence of the distinct ways Trump’s supporters see him comes from their evaluations of his policies. Overall, there is far more variation between cohorts than between issue areas: for example, MAGA Hardliners give Trump “As” virtually across the board; Mainline Republicans give a mix of “Bs” and “Cs”; and the Reluctant Right give exclusively “Ds” and “Fs.” This lack of differentiation across issues suggests voters are not making fine-grained distinctions about particular policies, but rather applying a general assessment uniformly. The one exception is the Anti-Woke Conservatives, who show more nuance, giving Trump an “A” on immigration but “Cs” on trade and healthcare, with “Bs” on most other issues.



FIGURE 4.4  
GRADING TRUMP’S PERFORMANCE

How would you rate Trump’s performance? (January 2026)

	US Average	All Trump 2024	MAGA Hardliners	Anti-Woke Conservatives	Mainline Republicans	Reluctant Right
Overall	F	B	A	B	B	D
Immigration	F	B	A	A	B	D
Foreign Policy	F	B	A	B	B	F
Government Efficiency	F	C	A	B	C	F
Trade	F	C	A	B	C	F
Economy	F	C	B	C	C	F
Healthcare	F	D	B	C	C	F

Question: On a scale from 0 - 100, how would you rate Trump’s performance on the following issues?  
Grading Scale: 90–100: A; 80–89: B; 70–79: C; 60–69: D; 0–59: F.  
Source: More in Common (2026). Survey of 3,038 general population voters, including 1,572 Trump voters, conducted in January 2026.

The cohorts also differ in their perceptions of what motivates President Trump. On average, about half in the Trump coalition (54 percent) see him as “driven by love of country” while one in three (32 percent) interpret President Trump to have a mix of motivations, being driven “by both love of country and personal gain.” More than four in five (85 percent) of MAGA Hardliners reject the idea that Trump’s quest for power is driven at all by desire for personal gain. Anti-Woke Conservatives and Mainline Republicans have more mixed views, though a majority of both groups (62 percent and 56 percent, respectively) trust that he is motivated by love of country. The Reluctant Right are the most skeptical toward President Trump: a plurality (43 percent) believe he is driven by a mix of desire for personal gain and a love of America, while a significant share (34 percent) believe he is primarily motivated by personal gain.

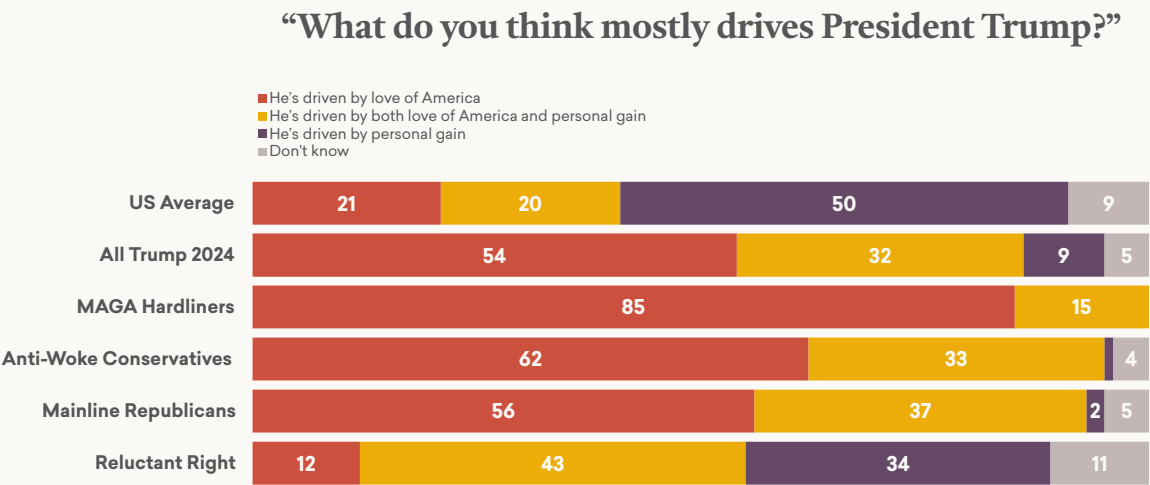
“I do think that Trump has taken, you know, a couple of wrong steps. He is financially motivated, but for the most part, he represents the way that I think we should be headed.”

Hannah, Reluctant Right  
Age 28 • White woman • Mount Hope, West Virginia



Merchandise bus at Donald Trump rally, Grappone Conference Center in Concord, New Hampshire - 19 January 2024. Photo by Artaxerxes, licensed under CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

FIGURE 4.5  
PERCEPTIONS OF TRUMP’S MOTIVATIONS



Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.



# Trump’s Four Leadership Roles

Four key symbolic “roles” help explain what Trump’s leadership means for his voter coalition, based on a synthesis of interviews, focus groups, surveys and other research with Trump voters:

- **Grand Narrator**—the most trusted interpreter of reality for his supporters, offering a sweeping story about what's wrong with America and what must be done, in contrast to a discredited establishment
- **Blasphemer**—a leader who defies convention and says what others are afraid to say, grabbing attention by speaking uncomfortable truths
- **Redeemer**—a leader who restores dignity and status to Americans who have felt disrespected, ignored, or left behind
- **Builder**—a businessman who can fix what's broken and get things done rather than just talk about them

For each of the Trump voter types, these leadership roles are of differing but overlapping relevance and importance, as Figure 4.6 shows, based on quantitative and qualitative data. The more symbolic roles—Grand Narrator, Blasphemer, and Redeemer—resonate most strongly with MAGA Hardliners, while Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right place greater emphasis on Trump as Builder who can fix America's problems.

FIGURE 4.6  
HOW MUCH EACH OF TRUMP’S SYMBOLIC ROLES RESONATES WITH EACH COHORT

	MAGA Hardliners	Anti-Woke Conservatives	Mainline Republicans	Reluctant Right
Grand Narrator	High	High	Medium	Low
Blasphemer	High	High	Low	Low
Redeemer	High	Medium	Medium	Low
Builder	Medium	High	High	High



WASHINGTON DC, SEPT 16 2017 – The ‘Mother of All Rallies’ event in support of Donald Trump draws a small group to the National Mall by kellybdc, licensed under CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

## Grand Narrator

President Trump’s appeal to Americans can only be understood in the context of a profound collapse in trust in American institutions such as Congress, journalism, academia and the scientific establishment. Over the last 40 years, the percentage of Americans with “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of trust in major institutions has been cut in half.<sup>3.9</sup> This distrust is particularly acute among Trump supporters. Nine in 10 (90 percent) of MAGA Hardliners, for instance, consider the media to be “dishonest”; a similar proportion (87 percent) believes there is a “deep state in Washington DC that follows its own agenda.” Anti-Woke Conservatives hold nearly identical views (86 percent for both). Even with Republicans controlling all three branches of government, three in five from both groups distrust the federal government itself (61 percent and 58 percent, respectively).

Trump filled this void by becoming not just a political leader his supporters agree with, but their primary source of political truth. Seven in 10 Trump supporters (70 percent) consider him the public figure they agree with most about politics; among MAGA Hardliners, this figure goes up to nine in ten (94 percent; see Figure 4.7). But more

<sup>3.9</sup> Jacob Wolf, “On Our Present Anti-Institutional Age,” *Philanthropy Daily*, December 29, 2025, <https://philanthropydaily.com/on-our-present-anti-institutional-age/>

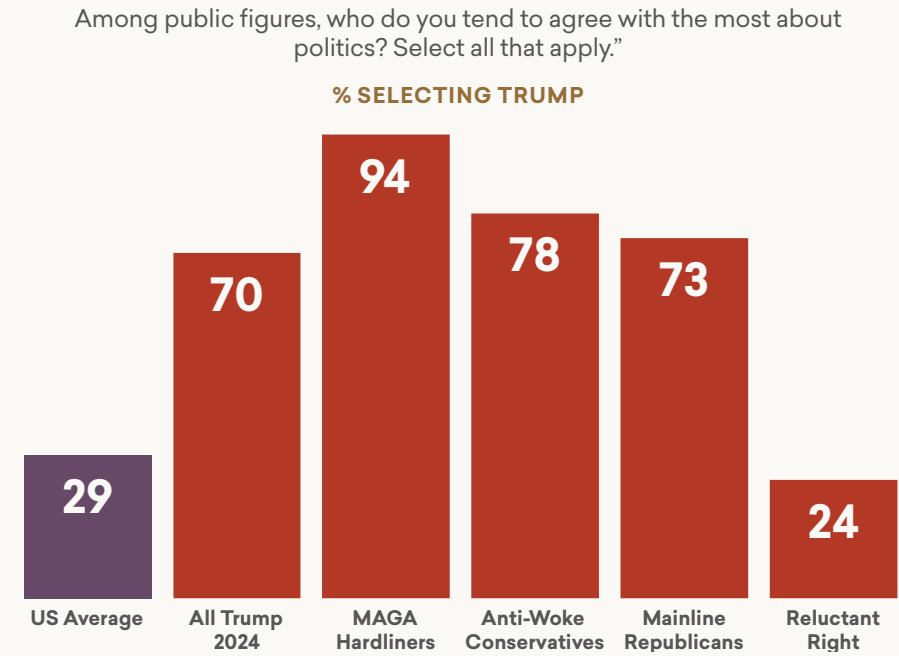




WASHINGTON DC - Saturday, 14 November 2020: En route to Million MAGA March Rally along E between 12th and 13th Street, NW. Photo: Elvert Barnes - IMG\_4319, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

remarkably, a similar proportion (93 percent) trust him more than other sources, with two in five (43 percent) naming him their single most trusted source of information (Figure 4.8). The pattern extends across segments: about three quarters (78 percent) of Anti-Woke Conservatives and Mainline Republicans (73 percent) agree with him politically, while nearly as many (72 percent and 62 percent respectively) rank him among their most trusted sources. The Reluctant Right is the exception: only a quarter (24 percent) say they agree with him about politics.

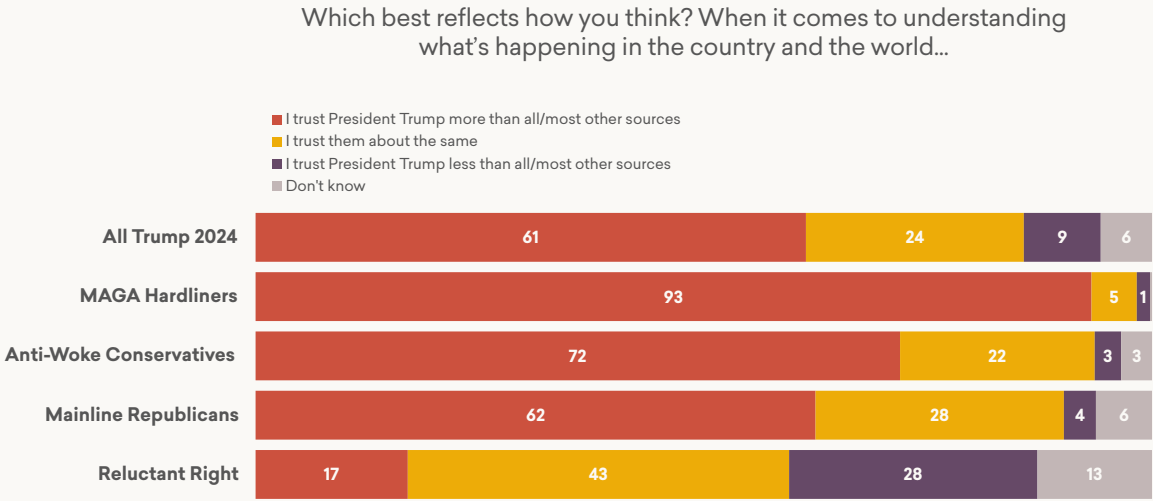
FIGURE 4.7  
PUBLIC FIGURES AGREED WITH MOST



Question: "Among public figures, who do you tend to agree with the most about politics? You could refer to a politician, a commentator or journalist, a podcaster or someone else who is well known. Select all that apply/"

Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

FIGURE 4.8  
TRUST IN TRUMP VERSUS IN OTHER SOURCES



Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

Trump's rhetorical style—shaped by decades in the public eye and over a decade hosting the reality television show *The Apprentice*—commands constant attention. His supporters read as authenticity what critics dismiss as bombast: a refusal to speak in establishment code and a willingness to “tell it like it is”. He tells a story of what is wrong with the country and what needs to be done about it, and his supporters respond with profound loyalty: 93 percent of MAGA Hardliners believe “the Republican Party better reflects what I care about under President Trump than before”, along with 77 percent of Anti-Woke Conservatives and 68 percent of Mainline Republicans.

This has given Trump a singular position in American life: in a landscape where traditional sources of truth have lost credibility, he has fashioned himself as both the narrator and the hero of his own story.

“Trump is... **He's also, honestly, respected as a cultural figure...** People speak like Trump now.”

**Neel, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 23 • Asian man • San Francisco, California

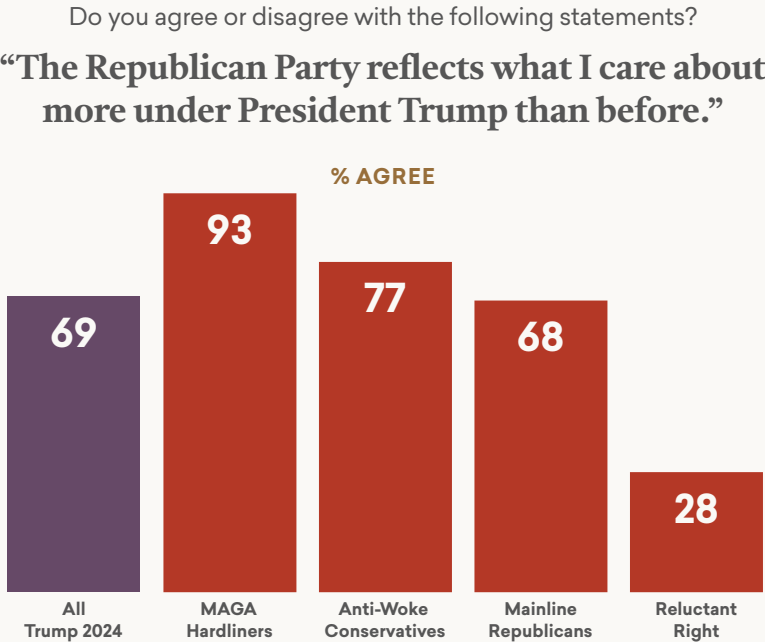
“I’m not worried about much... **I trust Trump to get us on the right course.**”

**Sophia, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 59 • White woman • South Bend, Washington

“**Most agree with the leadership of President Trump and trust him.** A small percentage have other ideas or a personal story to keep them from being one-hundred percent all in.”

**Kris, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 55 • White man • Bellevue, Washington

**FIGURE 4.9**  
**EVOLUTION OF REPUBLICAN PARTY UNDER TRUMP**



Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: Responses of 1–2 are categorized as disagreement; 3 as neither; 4–5 as agreement.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 2,478 Trump voters conducted in April 2025.

# Blasphemer

Many in the Trump voter coalition chafe at what they perceive as progressive Puritanism that has taken hold in American society. Right-wing blogger Curtis Yarvin coined the term “Cathedral” to describe the informal network of elite institutions, such as universities, legacy media organizations and entertainment, that shape public opinion and enforce progressive norms<sup>3.10</sup>. For Trump’s supporters, this term captures the perception that the political Left has become a sanctimonious elite imposing its worldview on everyone else: virtually all MAGA Hardliners (97 percent) and Anti-Woke Conservatives (95 percent) believe the “woke left has ruined American education, news, and entertainment”—along with majorities of Mainline Republicans (54 percent) and the Reluctant Right (58 percent). More than nine in ten MAGA Hardliners (93 percent) and Anti-Woke Conservatives (89 percent) go further: they believe the “left actually hates America.”

Compounding this resentment is “cancel culture”—the use of social censure to enforce speech norms. Concern or resentment of these practices is held by a majority of almost every Trump cohort: 73 percent of Anti-Woke Conservatives, 72 percent of MAGA Hardliners and 50 percent of the Reluctant Right. (Mainline Republicans, at 42 percent, are somewhat less concerned.) The perceived imposition of speech norms has deepened feelings of condescension and disrespect, fueling demand for someone willing to stand up to cultural elites. This sense of disrespect pervades the Trump coalition: a majority of every voter type, including 96 percent of MAGA Hardliners, 92 percent of Anti-Woke Conservatives, and 61 percent of both Mainline Republicans and the Reluctant Right, believe Democrats do not “respect people like me.”

Trump has positioned himself as the answer: a norm-breaker who delights in poking his finger in the eye of his critics. The belief that Trump should “make the left pay for its mistakes and lies” is widespread—held by 77 percent of MAGA Hardliners and 55 percent of Anti-Woke Conservatives, though less common among Mainline Republicans (37 percent) and the Reluctant Right (16 percent). One in four MAGA Hardliners (25 percent) and nearly as many Anti-Woke Conservatives (23 percent) describe Trump simply as a “fighter.”

For many supporters, this generates what has been called a “thrill of transgression”<sup>3.11</sup>—the satisfaction of violating accepted pieties enforced by elites. It explains Trump’s declaration at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in March 2023: “I am your retribution.” Trump offers catharsis: an opportunity to strike back against years of accumulated resentment.

<sup>3.10</sup> Curtis Yarvin, “A Brief Explanation of the Cathedral: An Oligarchy Inherently Converges on Ideas That Justify the Use of Power,” *Gray Mirror* (Substack), January 21, 2021, <https://graymirror.substack.com/p/a-brief-explanation-of-the-cathedral>

<sup>3.11</sup> Giuliano da Empoli, *The Endless Sea: Imagining a Story of Tomorrow* (More in Common, 2021), <https://www.moreincommon.com/media/btttdgl1b/the-endless-sea-imagining-a-story-of-tomorrow.pdf>



“[Trump is like] a **gigantic orange flashing middle finger**, and I love it.”

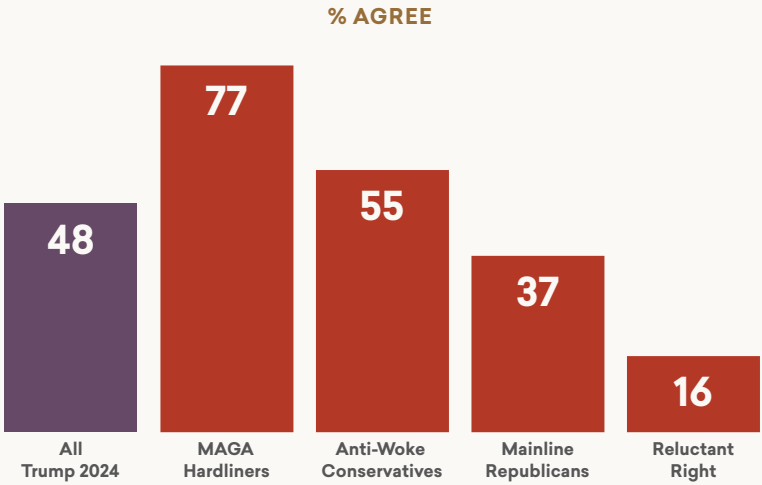
**Gina, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 50 • White woman • Navarre, Florida

“I love him because of his **abrasive nature**.”

**Nikhil, Trump Voter**  
Age 30 • Asian American man • Manassas, Virginia

FIGURE 4.10  
RETRIBUTION TOWARD THE LEFT

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
“President Trump should make the left pay for its mistakes and lies.”



Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 2,478 Trump voters conducted in April 2025.



Manhattan - October 27, 2024: Trump supporters on 32nd Street near Donald Trump rally at Madison Square Garden. Photo: Deans Charbal - CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

# Redeemer

The perceived sanctimony of elites has fueled not only a desire for retribution among Trump supporters, but another, related impulse: a desire for redemption. This refers not to religious salvation but to the recovery of something lost—the restoration of moral and social status.

Among Trump voters, there is a widely-held view that American cultural life has been dominated by elites who disdain those who do not share their values—a sentiment crystallized in Hillary Clinton’s infamous “basket of deplorables” remark in 2016.<sup>3.12</sup> What these voters seek is not merely a figure who will defy elite pieties, but someone who will affirm and respect their values.

This is another dimension of Trump’s role as leader in the eyes of his voter coalition. More than four in five of his supporters believe that “President Trump respects people like me,” including 98 percent of MAGA Hardliners, 92 percent of Anti-Woke Conservatives, and 94 percent of Mainline Republicans. The notable exception is the Reluctant Right, among whom fewer than half (48 percent) share this view. This stands in sharp contrast to Trump voters' view of Democratic politicians overall: only 21 percent feel respected by them. Trump is not simply a fighter but someone who makes them feel respected and gives them a sense of belonging.

<sup>3.12</sup> Amy Chozick, “Hillary Clinton Calls Many Trump Backers ‘Deplorables,’ and G.O.P. Pounces,” *The New York Times*, September 10, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/11/us/politics/hillary-clinton-basket-of-deplorables.html>



Members of the audience pray during the 60th Presidential Inauguration at Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 2025. (Public domain, U.S. federal government work) via Wikimedia Commons.

For some, this redemption takes on religious overtones. Three-fourths of MAGA Hardliners (74 percent), two-fifths of Mainline Republicans (40 percent), and two in ten Anti-Woke Conservatives (21 percent) believe that “supporting President Trump is part of living out my faith.” By contrast, fewer than one in ten members of the Reluctant Right (6 percent) agree. Among those who do hold this belief, support intensifies dramatically, with large majorities calling him the “best leader the Republican Party has had in my lifetime.” For these voters, Trump functions as a defender of their faith, values and way of life.

Trump's redemptive role is also reflected in his supporters' emotions. Asked how they feel about “the fact that Donald Trump is President,” the most common response is hope (69 percent), suggesting that their attachment is oriented toward what he might yet accomplish. Hope is the strongest response among MAGA Hardliners (78 percent), Anti-Woke Conservatives (79 percent), and Mainline Republicans (75 percent).

The second most common emotion is a sense of relief (46 percent). Majorities of MAGA Hardliners (59 percent) and Anti-Woke Conservatives (58 percent), along with nearly half of Mainline Republicans (47 percent), feel relieved. For these groups, the fact that Trump is in the White House makes them feel as though a weight has been lifted.

Taken together, these responses reveal that Trump offers his supporters more than policy wins or cultural combat. He offers redemption: the promise of restored recognition and moral standing in a culture they feel has long derided them.

“He is **fighting for us.**”

**Macy, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 31 • White woman • Grand Forks, North Dakota

FIGURE 4.11  
FEELINGS ABOUT TRUMP’S PRESIDENCY

Which of the following best reflects how you feel when you think about the fact that Donald Trump is President? Select up to 3.

	All Trump 2024	MAGA Hardliners	Anti-Woke Conservatives	Mainline Republicans	Reluctant Right
Hope	69	78	79	75	41
Relief	46	59	58	47	18
Pride	39	61	41	44	9
Excitement	30	40	30	38	10
Joy	22	36	18	26	5
Frustration	12	1	5	4	40
Disbelief	7	0	1	2	27
Hopelessness	6	1	2	3	18
Sadness	4	0	0	2	15
Anger	4	1	1	1	12
None of the above	6	0	5	5	16

Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.



# Builder

A common perception is that Trump's appeal centers on destruction—tearing down broken systems. There is some truth in this: a third (36 percent) of Trump voters believe “we cannot fix the problems in our social institutions; we need to tear them down and start over.” But far more see him constructively. When asked which role best describes Trump, more than half (58 percent) choose “a builder trying to fix a broken system,” including 68 percent of both MAGA Hardliners and Anti-Woke Conservatives. The most politically moderate segment, the Reluctant Right, most often sees him as a “CEO running a company” (51 percent), suggesting their support stems partly from believing his corporate experience helps him “get stuff done.”

This builder image aligns with what many Trump voters want prioritized. Across all cohorts, “strengthening the economy” ranks as the most important priority for America's future (50 percent), followed by “strengthening our culture and moral values” (27 percent). Notably, the Reluctant Right is more likely than MAGA Hardliners to see Trump as a “businessman” (38 percent versus 35 percent)—underscoring that for this more skeptical segment of the Trump coalition, his business credentials matter more than his other qualities. The builder role is a practical reason for supporting Trump that appeals to those less animated by his other symbolic roles.

“**He’s a businessman.** Maybe that's the perspective that we need to bring up America's economy.”

**Sierra, Reluctant Right**  
Age 24 • Mixed race woman • Suwanee, Georgia

“I just kind of **see him as the CEO of the United States in a way,** and just the way he runs things.”

**Briana, Mainline Republican**  
Age 23 • Black woman • Houston, Texas

This reveals something often missed: many Trump supporters are more disposed to seeing Trump as a builder who can also help to transcend the country's political divisions. More than nine in ten Reluctant Right (91 percent) prioritize “compromising with opponents” over “winning at all costs,” as do three in four Mainline Republicans (76 percent) and Anti-Woke Conservatives (75 percent), and even 62 percent of MAGA Hardliners. Similarly, majorities across all segments—including 90 percent of the Reluctant Right, 80 percent of Mainline Republicans, 72 percent of Anti-Woke



Crosby, MN – October 18, 2025: A protester at a 'No Kings' rally with people holding Trump Vance signs. Photo: Lorie Shaull - CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Conservatives, and 64 percent of MAGA Hardliners—want their side to “rise above the division, redefine common principles, and work together to fix what's broken” rather than “win completely, defeat the other side, and reshape the country.”

These bridge-building sentiments are at odds with Trump's combative approach, reflected, for instance, in his remarks at Charlie Kirk's funeral in October 2025: “I hate my opponent.”<sup>3.13</sup> This suggests a distance between this combative rhetoric and the views of many in his coalition. While they want him to defend their values against progressive overreach, many also want the country to come together and find solutions to its problems. In conversations and interviews, even the most loyal of Trump's coalition come across as more concerned about overcoming divisions, and more open to compromise, than might be assumed from his combative approach.

“**The divisiveness in our country right now is so insane to me.** It's black and white, it's polar opposites when it comes to politics. One of my best friends is a stout Democrat and I consider myself a stout Republican and she's my best friend. But I mean it's like we're arguing about the color of the sky and I think it's purple and she thinks it's black. It's so divided, which is really sad to me.”

**Sierra, Reluctant Right**  
Age 24 • Mixed race woman • Suwanee, Georgia

<sup>3.13</sup> C-SPAN. “I Hate My Opponent and I Don't Want the Best for Them.” September 21, 2025. Video clip, C-SPAN. <https://www.c-span.org/clip/white-house-event/i-hate-my-opponent-and-i-dont-want-the-best-for-them/5172742>





WASHINGTON DC - Saturday, 14 November 2020: En route to Saturday, 14 November 2020 Million MAGA March Gathering Rally from 13th & G to 12 & E Street, Photo: Elvert Barnes - IMG\_4020, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

FIGURE 4.12  
TRUMP’S ROLE IN AMERICA

When you think about President Trump's role in America, which of the following best describes how you see him, even if none of them fit perfectly?

	All Trump 2024	MAGA Hardliners	Anti-Woke Conservatives	Mainline Republicans	Reluctant Right
A builder trying to fix a broken system	58	68	68	55	39
A CEO running a company	23	10	19	19	51
An avenger standing up for those who've been wronged	9	13	6	10	4
A regular citizen speaking his mind	5	2	4	10	4
A father protecting his family	5	7	3	6	2

Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 2,478 Trump voters conducted in April 2025.

# Following the rules, or breaking them

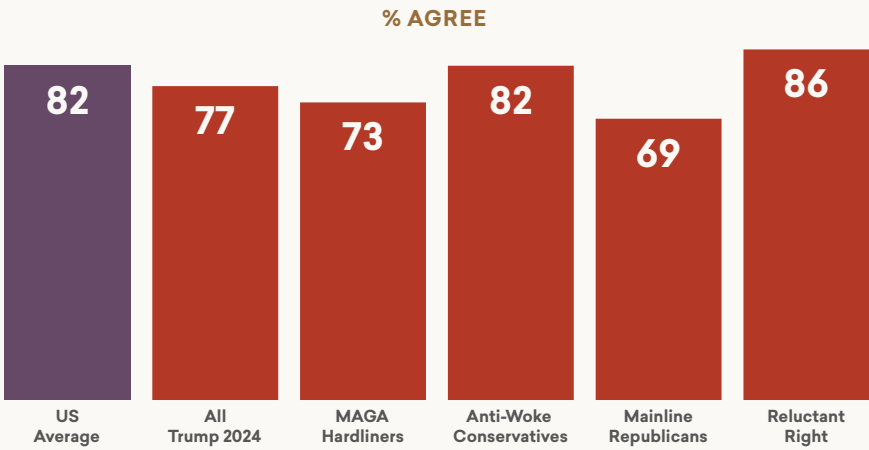
The four symbolic roles that President Trump plays for his supporters—Grand Narrator, Blasphemer, Redeemer, and Builder—have practical implications for potential future flashpoints. A major concern among political observers is whether Trump might steer the country toward authoritarian rule<sup>3,14</sup>, undermining America’s constitution. This makes his Blasphemer role particularly consequential: if Trump perceives respect for Supreme Court rulings or other constitutional constraints as pieties ripe for breaking, the result could be constitutional crisis. How willing are his supporters to tolerate such violations?

When it comes to respecting the Constitution, a majority of his supporters draw a clear line. Three quarters (77 percent) say that it is more important for Trump to “always follow the Constitution” than “do what he thinks is best for America, even if it means ignoring the Constitution.” Following the Constitution is the priority for between seven and nine out of ten of each voter type. In other words, Constitutional adherence is where most Trump supporters refuse to follow him into transgression.

FIGURE 4.13  
FOLLOWING THE CONSTITUTION

With regards to the Constitution, how do you think President Trump should govern?

**“He should always follow the Constitution, even if it keeps him from getting things done.”**



Question: "With regards to the Constitution, how do you think President Trump should govern? A: He should always follow the Constitution, even if it keeps him from getting things done B: He should do what he thinks is best for America, even if it means ignoring the Constitution."

Showing combined "Fully agree with A", "Mostly agree with A", and "Lean towards A".

Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

<sup>3,14</sup>Steven Levitsky, Lucan Way, and Daniel Ziblatt. "How Will We Know When We Have Lost Our Democracy?," The New York Times, May 8, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/08/opinion/trump-authoritarianism-democracy.html>



On other issues, however, the picture is more mixed. For example, 38 percent of Trump voters would support him trying to serve a third term (though only among MAGA Hardliners is there a clear majority in support, at 60 percent). And nearly half (46 percent) of his supporters, including 70 percent of MAGA Hardliners, say he would “probably” have their support if he ignored a decision made by the Supreme Court (though only 12 percent of Reluctant Right agree). Of course, these attitudes could change according to the specific context of any constitutional crisis. But as of today, the Trump voter coalition is divided on the question of defying Constitutional limits.

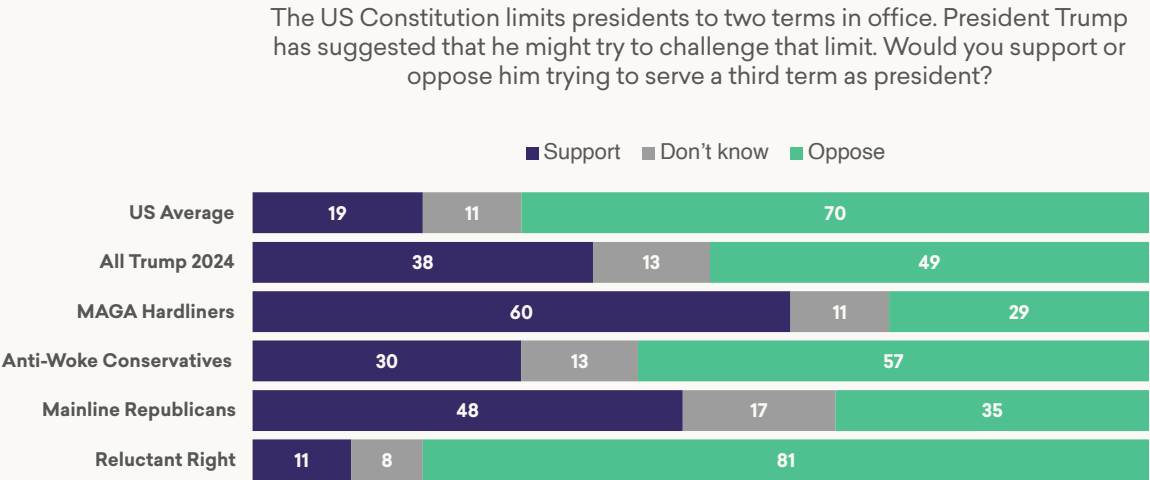
“On a third term: All of us in here, we know how Trump is. We know him. I know what he means. **He'll probably live vicariously through J.D. Vance.**”

**Fernando, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 38 • Black man • Houston, Texas

“It [running for a third term] is precluded by the Constitution. And any ‘thinking’ person knows that **when he says stuff like that, he's half in jest.** Like when he said, I want to be a dictator from day one. Do you really think he wanted to be a dictator? Or that they would let him become a dictator? These morons believe everything the TV tells them...**It's not going to happen.**”

**Don, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 50 • Hispanic man • Haledon, New Jersey

FIGURE 4.14  
SUPPORT FOR THIRD TERM



Response scale: 1 - Strongly oppose to 5 - Strongly support  
Note: Responses of 1–2 are categorized as oppose; 3 as neither; 4–5 as support  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 2,671 general population voters, including 1,512 Trump voters, conducted in September 2025.



MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA - SEPTEMBER 22: A man wears a "Trump 2028" cap while waiting in line outside the "American Comeback Tour" event at Northrop Auditorium on the University of Minnesota campus on September 22, 2025 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The event was hosted by political commentator Michael Knowles after the assassination of Charlie Kirk earlier this month. Photo by Stephen Maturen/Getty Images.

# Conclusion

Trump's appeal rests not in any single identity but in his ability to play different roles for different people. Some see the Blasphemer who can smash progressive pieties. Others see the Redeemer protecting them from liberal contempt. Still others see the Builder who can restore economic prosperity, or a Grand Narrator who can restore trust and truth.

Successful political leadership involves assembling and holding together broad coalitions. This has also been Trump's political strength. But it is also his coalition's vulnerability. The roles he inhabits can pull in different directions. The Blasphemer breaks norms, while the Builder requires them. The Redeemer offers dignity, while the Blasphemer courts transgression.

Trump possesses an uncanny ability to “read the crowd”—a skill that has been honed in WWE arenas, reality TV sets, and campaign podiums. He can be what they want him to be: a projection of their fears and aspirations; an avatar of their worldview. With Republicans controlling all three branches of government, his supporters face a defining choice: to rebuild the country around shared principles, or to seize power and crush the opposition. Our data suggest that a majority favor the former, even as the later attracts a louder minority. If Trump mirrors the impulses of his supporters, then the direction of the country in the coming years rests not in his hands, but in theirs.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Emergent New Traditionalism

The role that younger Americans played in Trump’s 2024 electoral victory upended some longstanding assumptions about the demographic profile of Republican voters. Support for Trump’s candidacy was especially high among young men.<sup>4.1</sup> This outcome coincided with discussions of growing cultural conservatism among segments of younger Americans, even as their peers have moved in more progressive directions.<sup>4.2</sup>

A key question is whether these shifts reflect a passing moment or are early signs of a more durable realignment. If it is the latter, then understanding the values, identities, and forms of political engagement among highly engaged younger Trump voters is essential to understanding the future of the Trump coalition.

Much discussion has focused on the online environments in which male-oriented conservative political hosts blend irony and taboo-violating humor. Particular attention has been paid to the exclusionary conservatism of "groyppers" and Nick Fuentes—who has openly expressed admiration for both Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin.<sup>4.3</sup> Evidently, these dynamics extend beyond anonymous online spaces and are entering into institutional settings. For example, the leaking of private messages among New York State Young Republicans in late 2025 revealed extreme rhetoric that referred to “watermelon people” and sending people to “the gas chamber.”<sup>4.4</sup>

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<sup>4.1</sup> Daniel A. Cox, “2024 Election Edition: Young Men Swing Toward Trump,” *The Survey Center on American Life Newsletter*, November 7, 2024, <https://www.americansurveycenter.org/newsletter/2024-election-edition-young-men-swing-toward-trump/>

<sup>4.2</sup> Pew Research Center, “Cultural Issues and the 2024 Election,” June 6, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/06/06/cultural-issues-and-the-2024-election/>

<sup>4.3</sup> Rachel Leingang, “Tucker Carlson’s Interview With Far-Right Antisemite Nick Fuentes Divides Conservatives,” *The Guardian*, Oct. 31, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/oct/31/conservative-reaction-tucker-carlson-nick-fuentes-interview>

<sup>4.4</sup> Luke Simon, “The Gen Z Worship War,” *Christianity Today*, May 29, 2025, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2025/05/gen-z-worship-war-men-women-ccm-liturgy-tradition/>





Phoenix, AZ – June 23, 2020: A Students for Trump supporter at an "An Address to Young Americans" event, featuring President Donald Trump, hosted by Students for Trump and Turning Point Action at Dream City Church. Photo: Gage Skidmore - CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Alongside these political signals, commentators have also noted developments in religion and culture, including reports of increased conversion to Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism among some younger men. This has been attributed in part to a wider search for structure, authority and belonging.<sup>4,5</sup> Increased religiosity has coincided with a revival of traditional views on gender roles and masculinity. In turn, this has raised the question of whether young conservatives' evolving views about gender reflect a genuine search for order and meaning amid cultural flux, or a reaction against changing gender norms and women's growing economic independence and social equality.

Understanding young Trump voters matters for charting pathways beyond America's polarization. The key question is not only whether social conservatism, distrust of institutions, and anti-elite sentiment exist among younger Trump voters, but whether these attitudes may shape the future of the Republican coalition beyond the Trump presidency.

This chapter examines whether the evidence points to an **"emergent new traditionalism"** among younger Americans, most evident among younger Trump voters. It examines these threads by contrasting a younger cohort of Gen Z and Millennials with an older cohort comprising Gen X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation (i.e., contrasting Americans of voting age born after versus before 1981). This analysis does not find a settled ideology, but rather a loose collection of views spanning gender norms and masculinity, moral and religious authority, openness to norm-breaking leadership, and a more adversarial approach to politics. In many instances, the views of this new traditionalism represent only a minority of younger Trump voters but are noteworthy because they are more prevalent among younger rather than older cohorts. They suggest a countercultural social conservatism that is taking shape amid dissatisfaction with the economic and cultural status quo.

## Commonalities among younger generations

The values and priorities of Gen Z and Millennial Trump voters have been shaped by a distinct set of social, economic, and media conditions that set them apart from older generations. As a result, younger Trump voters often have more in common with others their age, including those across party lines, than they do with older Trump voters.

A number of social trends are converging among young Americans: rising loneliness and anxiety, worsening economic prospects, declining in-person socialization, diminishing trust in institutions, and a cultural environment shaped by technology and social media, from video games and remote work to online dating and the widespread availability of pornography. In addition, most have experienced political engagement chiefly in an online environment.

Pessimism about economic mobility is widespread, cutting across politics and age. Large majorities of both Trump voters (64 percent) and non-Trump voters (70 percent), across generations, agree that "achieving the American dream has gotten less possible."

**"Everything has gone downhill, literally everything.** We are more divided than ever. We can't afford basic items such as groceries and household items. **The American dream is dead,** no young person unless coming from money to start with can realistically even think about buying a home meanwhile states are giving substantial money/housing/clothing/food—everything away to people who are not here legally. Nothing runs efficient anymore; no one seems to care anymore at their jobs. Schools are a mess..."

**Claire, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 33 • Mixed race woman • Mansfield, Massachusetts

<sup>45</sup> Luke Simon, "The Gen Z Worship War," *Christianity Today*, May 29, 2025, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2025/05/gen-z-worship-war-men-women-ccm-liturgy-tradition/>

Within this broader malaise, many younger Americans lack a sense of belonging. Nearly three in ten (28 percent) younger Trump voters say there is “no community where [they] feel a strong sense of belonging,” matching the share among younger non-Trump voters (27 percent) and modestly higher than among older Trump voters (22 percent). Feelings of isolation are slightly more pronounced among younger Trump-voting men, where the figure rises to 30 percent.

“A lot of people are using people, **a lot of people are screwing people over**. I got a few people that I know personally that are just very fake and they’re just trying to be nice. And once you have kids involved, a lot of people are just all about themselves and just trying to get what they can get. **Everybody’s in survival mode.**”

**Jessica, Trump Voter**  
Age 31 • White woman • Matawan, New Jersey

“I do believe **that the fundamental morality of being American has decayed. I used to have such simpler times when I was younger**. Just like, being nice to people, and just not thinking about robbing them, and whatnot. But I’ve definitely noticed a lot of crazy stuff now, and people think they can get away with it and keep, keep running with it.”

**Sajan, Trump Voter**  
Age 30 • Asian American man • Manassas, Virginia

Higher rates of anxiety and depression are likewise common across younger generations. Younger Trump voters experience anxiety at roughly twice the rate of older Trump voters: nearly three in ten (29 percent) say they feel anxious at least “more than half the days,” compared to just 14 percent of older Trump voters. Younger non-Trump voters report even higher levels of anxiety (43 percent). More than one in four younger Trump voters (28 percent) also report that they had “little interest or pleasure in doing things” on at least half the days over the past two weeks—a much higher incidence than among their older counterparts (11 percent).

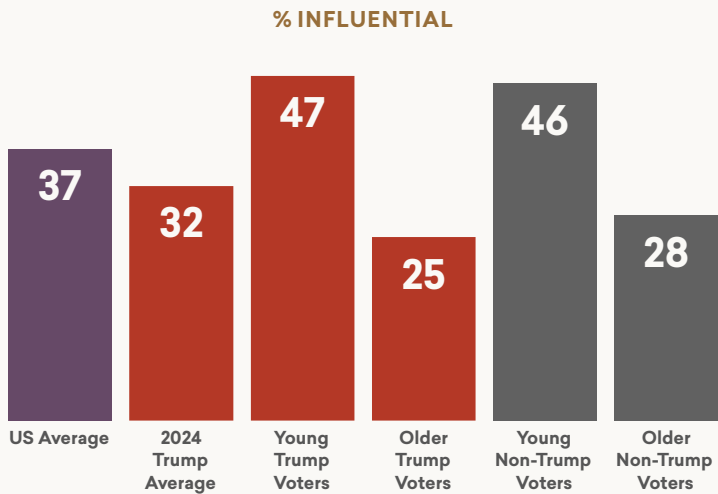
These generational experiences of isolation and distress help shape the distinctive political responses explored in this chapter. This shared adversity does not orient younger Americans in a single direction, but it helps to explain an apparent curiosity toward unconventional and transgressive alternatives to the status quo, whether in culture or politics. For some younger Trump voters, new traditionalism and norm-breaking discourse might offer a sense of connection, belonging, and direction in response to instability and disconnection.

Younger Americans have also **come of age politically in an environment dominated by social media**, spending far more time online than older adults. The formative influence

of social media is twice as prevalent for younger Trump voters as older ones: 47 percent of younger Trump voters name social media as a major or dominant influence on their political beliefs, compared to just 25 percent of older Trump voters. With nearly one-half of younger non-Trump voters (46 percent) also citing social media as at least a major influence, this is another area of common ground among younger generations.

FIGURE 5.1  
SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL BELIEFS

“How influential would you say that social media content has been in shaping the political beliefs that you hold today?”



Note: “The most influential” and “A major influence” were combined as “Influential.” Responses of “minor influence,” “not at all influential,” and “don’t use social media” not shown. Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older. Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

**Progressive movements and norms around race, identity, and global justice have dominated the cultural and political landscape** during younger Americans’ formative years. Movements such as Black Lives Matter heightened attention to racial inequality, while increasingly critical views of Israel have become prominent reference points across universities, media, workplaces, and cultural institutions—perspectives held more widely among younger generations than their elders.<sup>4,6</sup>

<sup>4,6</sup> Only 16% of adults under 30 support providing military aid to Israel in its war against Hamas, compared to 56% of those aged over 65: Ted Van Green and Kelsey Jo Starr, “In Views of the Israel-Hamas War, Younger Americans Stand Out,” Pew Research Center (blog), April 2, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/02/younger-americans-stand-out-in-their-views-of-the-israel-hamas-war/>. Proportion of 12th grade young people holding negative opinions about the police increased from 24% to 50% between 2020 and 2021: Lloyd D. Johnston et al., *Monitoring the Future: National Results on Adolescent Drug Use: Overview of Key Findings*, 2021 (Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 2022), <https://monitoringthefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/mtf-overview2021.pdf>



Against this backdrop, younger Trump voters often define themselves in opposition to what they experience as a dominant progressive culture. Their politics often reflects a countercultural stance that is less about policy detail than about resisting prevailing moral and social norms. This helps explain the combination of social conservatism and cultural transgression explored in the sections that follow.

Younger Americans on the left and right are more inclined than older generations to adopt a zero-sum outlook on politics and society, though in both instances a minority holds this perspective. One in three younger Trump voters (32 percent) and younger non-Trump voters (33 percent) agree that "when one group gains in America, another group usually loses." By contrast, older Trump and non-Trump voters alike are more likely to endorse a positive-sum view: that it is "possible for the whole country to grow and prosper together."

FIGURE 5.2  
CONFLICT-ORIENTED VIEW OF POLITICS<sup>4.7</sup>

Conflict-oriented views, by voter group (% agreeing / leaning toward statement)

View/Measure	Younger Trump voters	Older Trump voters	Younger non-Trump voters	Older non-Trump voters
Zero-sum worldview ("When one group gains, another usually loses")	32%	17%	33%	23%
Winning over compromise ("Winning at all costs" over compromising with opponents)	31%	21%	30%	7%

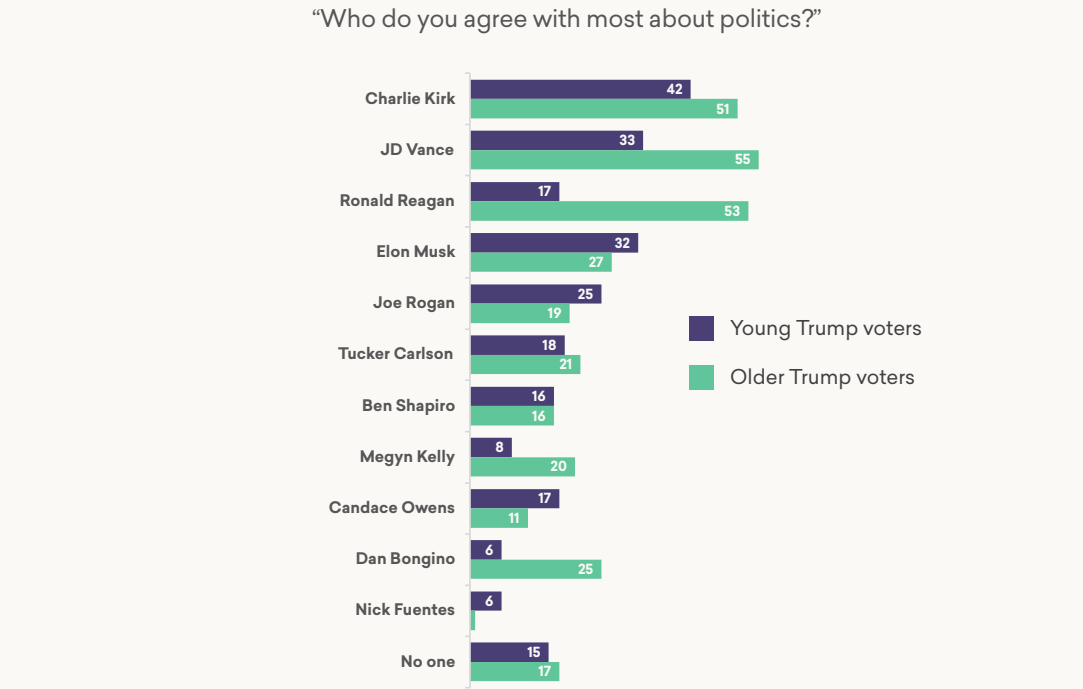
This outlook is reinforced by attitudes toward politics that suggest the formative influence of social media. Younger generations are more likely than older cohorts to prioritize **"winning at all costs"** over compromising with opponents—a pattern visible among both Trump and non-Trump voters. Among Trump voters, nearly one-third of younger respondents (31 percent) favor winning at all costs, compared with 21 percent of older Trump voters. Among non-Trump voters, the same generational gap appears (30 percent versus seven percent). This tendency is especially pronounced among young men: 38 percent of younger Trump-voting men prioritize winning at all costs, compared with 26 percent of older Trump-voting men and just seven percent of older men who did not vote for Trump. While winning at all costs remains a minority viewpoint, its prevalence points to a weaker commitment to compromise as a civic norm among younger Americans.

<sup>4.7</sup> **Zero-sum worldview question:** "Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between? A) When one group gains in America, another group usually loses B) It's possible for the whole country to grow and prosper together." **Winning over compromise question:** "Which value do you want our political leaders to give greater priority to today? Winning at all costs / Compromising with opponents." Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older. Source: More in Common (2025).

This **conflict orientation** is somewhat reflected in the figures that are most influential among younger Trump voters. Figures most likely to be mentioned as influences include more combative public personas such as Elon Musk (32 percent) and Candace Owens (17 percent), while a small minority of younger Trump voters mention the far-right white nationalist Nick Fuentes (six percent of younger Trump voters, rising to 10 percent of those in Gen Z). A recent study of Gen Z Republicans by the Manhattan Institute provided a useful caution against overinterpreting these dynamics:

*"Psychologically, this group was marked by desensitization, shaped less by fear than by boredom... Politics is entertainment: a stage for mockery, transgression and performance, not moral seriousness or policy discipline. This sensibility explains their media diets... Extreme rhetoric often landed like another genre of Internet content—something to be halfheartedly consumed, laughed at, scrolled past, and then forgotten."*<sup>4.8</sup>

FIGURE 5.3  
INFLUENCES ON YOUNGER TRUMP VOTERS



Question: "Among public figures, who do you tend to agree with the most about politics? You could refer to a politician, a commentator or journalist, a podcaster or someone else who is well known." Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older. Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

<sup>4.8</sup> Jesse Arm, "Everyone Wants to Know What Gen Z Republicans Think. We Asked Them.," *City Journal*, December 19, 2025, <https://www.city-journal.org/article/manhattan-institute-focus-group-gen-z-republicans>



Phoenix, AZ - October 28, 2024: Charlie Kirk speaking with attendees at the Grand Canyon University "You're Being Brainwashed" tour stop. Photo: Gage Skidmore - CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Despite recent discussions about the uptake of extreme ideas, younger Trump voters **remain overwhelmingly opposed to explicitly racist claims**. About one in seven (15 percent) agree that "some races are naturally inferior," slightly higher than among older Trump voters but similar to levels among younger non-Trump voters. Although still relatively fringe, this elevation underscores how for a subset of young Trump voters, the rejection of progressive social norms and a sense of righteous grievance can translate into support for extreme viewpoints.

"Online... people say words that are so **blunt and extreme and controversial...** mostly on TikTok and Twitter."

**Zed, Reluctant Right**  
Age 22 • Asian American man • Chicago, Illinois

**Attitudes toward Jewish Americans** are slightly cooler among younger Trump voters, although views remain broadly positive. Among Trump voters, younger generations' warmth toward Jewish Americans averages 64 on a 0-100 scale in which 50 is neutral. This compares with a warmth score of 76 among older Trump voters and 63 among younger non-Trump voters. This "cooler" sentiment is mainly explained by the fact that far fewer younger Trump voters hold very warm feelings towards Jewish Americans: 28 percent express a warmth in the 80-100 range, compared to 52 percent of older Trump voters—perhaps reflecting their generations' involvement in public criticism of Israel, and America's support of Israel, in recent years.

There is notably less concern about antisemitism among younger Trump voters. While 80 percent of older Trump voters think antisemitism is a "very serious" or "somewhat serious problem in the United States today," that number drops to just 56 percent among younger Trump voters.

But even if it is not a top concern for younger Trump voters, few young Trump voters explicitly indicate cold feelings towards Jewish Americans: five percent of younger Trump voters rate their feelings towards Jewish Americans in the 0-20 range.

**Support for political violence** remains limited across all groups, although younger voters are less likely to reject it outright. While large majorities agree that political violence is "never justified," younger Trump voters are nearly three times as likely as older Trump voters to feel that violence may sometimes be necessary (20 percent versus seven percent). This is a generational pattern among both young men and women that is not distinct to Trump voters. For example, 22 percent of younger women who did not vote for Trump say political violence is justified in some circumstances.

**FIGURE 5.4**  
**GROUP SUPERIORITY AND SUPPORT FOR VIOLENCE** <sup>4.9</sup>

View/Measure	Younger Trump voters	Older Trump voters	Younger non-Trump voters	Older non-Trump voters
Some races are naturally inferior to others (at least some agreement)	15%	10%	12%	9%
Warmth towards Jewish Americans (0 to 100 thermometer scale)	64	76	69	63
Openness to political violence (at least some agreement that violence may sometimes be necessary)	20%	7%	20%	6%

<sup>4.9</sup> **Racial inferiority question:** Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between? A: No race is inherently better or worse than others; B) Some races are naturally inferior to others. **Warmth question:** On a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means very cold and 100 means very warm, how cold or warm do you feel towards Jewish Americans? **Political violence question:** Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between? A. I feel that violence is sometimes needed to advance political causes in the US today. B. Political violence is never justified." Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older. Source: More in Common (2025)



# The countercultural response of new traditionalism

Young Americans across the political spectrum have grown up in a culture rapidly shifting toward progressive social norms, with an information landscape defined by a fragmented media environment and algorithmic social media. Yet younger Trump voters share important instincts with older Trump voters: concern about moral decline, the erosion of traditional social roles, and the weakening of institutions that once provided order and cohesion. These inclinations place them firmly within the conservative tradition. But they differ from older conservatives in the intensity and form of their response. Five threads of a countercultural stance emerge from conversations with and surveys of younger Trump voters:

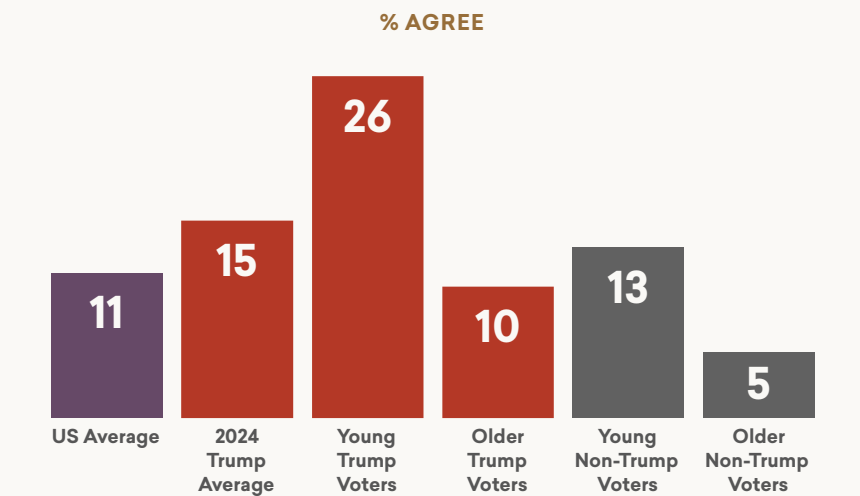
- A conflict orientation to politics
- Some attraction to exclusionary and fringe views
- A return to traditional gender roles
- A desire for moral and religious structure
- Skepticism about democracy and support for constitutional violations

Having already noted the first two features above, the remaining three are examined below. The new traditionalism that emerges is not so much a coherent ideology as a collection of beliefs involving both restoration and transgression.

**Gender roles** are a key area that defines this new traditionalism. This is where some younger Trump voters diverge most clearly from their peers and fellow Trump voters: younger Trump voters hold more traditional attitudes towards gender roles than older conservatives. As Figure 5.5 shows, younger Trump voters are the only group in which there is significant support for male-led relationships (26 percent). While this is far from a majority viewpoint, reflecting just one in four younger Trump voters, it is substantially more than older Trump voters (10 percent). It is also much greater than among non-Trump voters, although younger non-Trump voters are also more likely to hold traditional attitudes than older ones (13 percent compared to 5 percent). Support for traditional gender roles is also consistent between younger male and female Trump voters (27 percent and 25 percent, respectively).

FIGURE 5.5  
SUPPORT FOR TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES

In general, which of the following best describes your view of relationships between a man and a woman?  
“The man should lead, and the woman should follow.”



Responses not shown: “The man and woman should act as equal partners.” “The woman should lead, and the man should follow,” and “It depends on the couple.” Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

Comments from younger Trump supporters show a clear and confidently articulated belief in male leadership within relationships, rooted in ideas about biological difference, traditional morality, and social stability. These threads of new traditionalism are often voiced not as restrictive but as natural, desirable, and protective — a model in which men lead and provide, and women nurture and support.

“It seems like the men are kind of the head of family... **when a man is in the family, the woman feels like she has someone to support her...** he’s kind of like this superman of the family. He tends to take care of the bills.”

**Darius, Trump voter**  
Age 32 • Black man • New York, New York



Supporters of President Donald Trump take a selfie during a rally for evangelical supporters at the King Jesus International Ministry church, Friday, Jan. 3, 2020, in Miami. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

“We can all do other things also, of course... however, **those are the roles God planned out in the Bible. They also best suit the physiology and psychology of the two genders and reduce friction in society.** We feel most fulfilled in these roles and don’t have to argue as much over who will handle what, whose career the family moves for etc.”

**Amanda, Reluctant Right**  
Age 40 • White woman • Felton, Pennsylvania

“I believe **a man should do what he can to protect his family and a woman should be caring and nourishing.** They can both have differences but should have values and try to be the best they can.”

**Diego, Mainline Republican**  
Age 37 • Hispanic man • Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

“Gender roles and abilities are biologically based and are things that should be promoted. The **overarching society is better off when each gender understands their best qualities and does their best to amplify them.** Pretending gender does not exist or pretending you are not the biological gender you actually are is nothing more than mental illness.”

**Jaria, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 35 • Black man • Sneads Ferry, North Carolina

For some younger conservatives, restoring traditional gender roles is a necessary corrective to what they perceive as cultural decline and confusion around masculinity—a perspective voiced by both young men and women.

“If you’re going to go to school, you go to school and do your work and then graduate. And then you **keep the man of the house as the man of the house.** And then the woman is the woman and does all the cleaning and cooking. So I am very conservative.”

**Ally, Trump voter**  
Age 29 • White woman • Van Buren, Arkansas

“The decline in the trades field is largely in part to losing masculinity, shaming masculinity. Whether anyone likes it, they are male dominated fields (which is more than okay) and we need that to keep this country running in so many industries. **Raising soft generations of men does not bode well for society.** Being a protector, provider and supporter of the family is not something to shame.”

**Claire, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 33 • Mixed race woman • Mansfield, Massachusetts

This countercultural pattern extends to **views on masculinity.** Half of younger Trump voters (49 percent) believe that American culture needs “more masculinity,” significantly more than both older Trump voters (39 percent) and older non-Trump voters (13 percent). While only one in four younger non-Trump voters (25 percent) agrees that more masculinity is needed in America, this is still twice as many as older non-Trump voters, suggesting that, as with views on traditional gender roles, the trend toward valuing masculinity among young people is not limited to political conservatives, even if it is much more common among them.

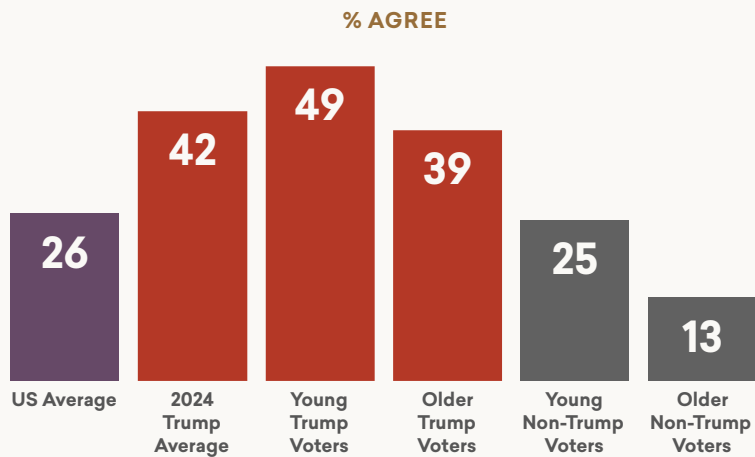


While support for traditional gender hierarchy is broadly shared among younger men and women who voted for Trump, the desire for "more masculinity" is far more common among men. Younger Trump-voting men (59 percent) are notably more likely than younger Trump-voting women (35 percent) to feel that American culture needs "more masculinity"—a pattern that persists, though in weaker form, among older generations as well.

Gender emerges as a key area in which some younger Trump voters are pushing back against progressive norms, with traditional ideas about gender and masculinity forming an important part of how they are responding to wider generational pressures. But younger generations are not so polarized that this is unique to those who voted for Donald Trump—similar trends are seen at weaker levels among non-Trump voters.

FIGURE 5.6  
MASCULINITY AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
“American culture needs more masculinity.”



Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree

Note: The figure combines 4 and 5 into one agreement category. Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older.

Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

Another dimension that emerges from conversations with younger Trump voters is a **desire for greater moral and religious authority or structure**. Younger Americans have grown up in a more secular society with less trust in institutional authority than

previous generations. As a result, sources of moral authority are less defined.<sup>4.10</sup> For many, this comes with a diminished role for religion in their own lives: nearly two in five (39 percent) of non-Trump voting younger people say that they do not practice any religion.

New traditionalism can be understood partly as a response to these increasingly secular, progressive norms. A substantial minority of younger Trump voters **favor an expanded role for religion**: two in five (40 percent) agree that "the United States should bring more religion into government and public life," rather than maintaining a separation between church and state. They are slightly more likely than older Trump voters (35 percent) to hold this view. Perhaps most interesting is that support for an expanded role for religion also exists among younger non-Trump voters, with 30 percent holding this view, compared to only 19 percent of older non-Trump voters.

“[Politics and faith should not be separate because] unless someone is lying, their faith should make them who they are, what they believe and be their moral compass. **Politics is downstream from culture, which is downstream from faith.**”

**James, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 45 • White man • Frederic, Michigan

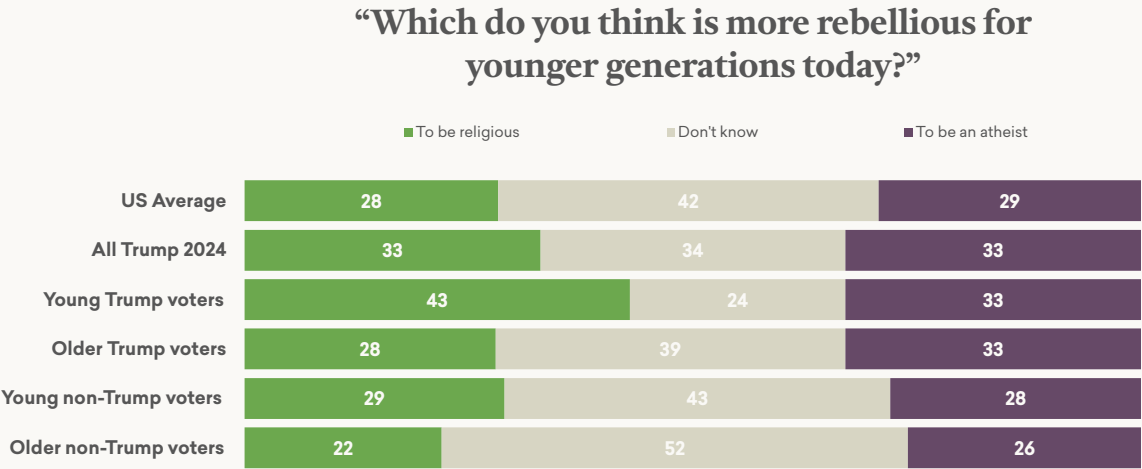
This suggests a growing sense among younger generations that religion can be a source of societal good rather than merely a private belief. When younger Trump voters are asked whether "it would be best if everyone shared my religious beliefs," nearly one-third (32 percent) agree—again, a higher proportion than among older Trump voters (22 percent), with younger Trump-voting men most supportive (40 percent). This remains a minority view, but one held more strongly by younger than older Trump voters.

Those who hold this view may sense they are out of step with the majority: for a significant number of younger Trump voters, religious identification is less a marker of conformity and more one of challenge to a dominant secular culture. Younger Trump voters are almost twice as likely to regard being religious as more “rebellious” than being an atheist (43 percent). This distinguishes them from older Trump voters, who still see atheism as more rebellious, while younger non-Trump voters are evenly split.

<sup>4.10</sup>Pew Research Center, “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace,” October 17, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>. See also Janell Fetterolf and Sarah Austin, “Many People in U.S., Other Advanced Economies Say It’s Not Necessary to Believe in God to Be Moral,” *Pew Research Center* (Short Reads), April 20, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/04/20/many-people-in-u-s-other-advanced-economies-say-its-not-necessary-to-believe-in-god-to-be-moral/>



FIGURE 5.7  
RELIGION AS REBELLION



Note: Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.

“There is more controversy when a person holds a religion than if a person holds no religion. People are starting to ditch religion with little to no controversy in society, making being religious the rebellious one out of the options.”

**Patrick, Reluctant Right**  
Age 20 • White man • Peshtigo, Wisconsin

“For years people have been trying to remove God from all aspects of society, and **Christianity has been held up to mockery and ridicule.** For this reason, I think that the younger generation has mostly grown up without God in their lives, so to live for Him is a rebellious concept to the majority.”

**Cathy, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 63 • White woman • Sandusky, Ohio



Charlotte, NC - 2 March 2020: President Trump supporters wearing faith in God and Trump shirts at the rally in the Bojangle's Coliseum. Shutterstock

A final thread evident among younger Trump voters is a **weaker confidence in democracy.** President Trump’s willingness to challenge constitutional and democratic norms has been a key feature of his presidency, particularly in his second term.<sup>4.11</sup> It is often argued that the sustained support from much of his voter coalition indicates that Trump voters approve of this norm-breaking and have themselves drifted away from traditional democratic and constitutional values.

<sup>4.11</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2024: The Mounting Damage of Flawed Elections and Armed Conflict* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2024), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2024/mounting-damage-flawed-elections-and-armed-conflict>. Freedom House



Caution should be exercised in making these assumptions. While many younger Trump voters show some level of skepticism toward democratic principles, this appears less a rejection of democracy than a **distrust of American institutions that they feel have failed them**. Their frustration is directed less at democracy as an ideal and more at the way American institutions operate in practice, and as Figure 5.8 shows, it is a frustration shared with younger non-Trump voters.

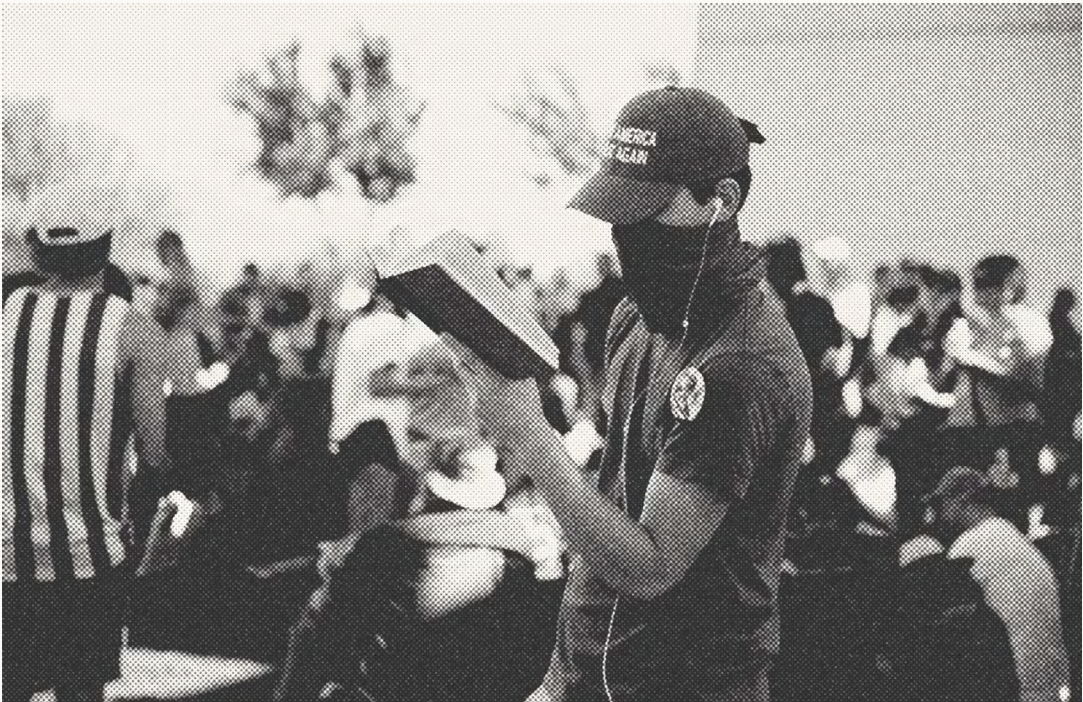
**“Democracy hasn’t failed us, but the institutions that should be vetting our candidates and monitoring our politicians have.** So-called leaders who in previous times would have been tossed aside are allowed to burrow in like ticks sucking on the lifeblood of taxpayers.”

**Paulie, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 32 • Asian American woman • Overland Park, Kansas

“I just feel like with the Constitution and everything a lot of the kind of old age [features] I would say is outdated with how society is changing right now. We have more social media impact and also other stuff that kind of impact how politics are. I feel like **maybe there should be some changes to the Constitution itself.**”

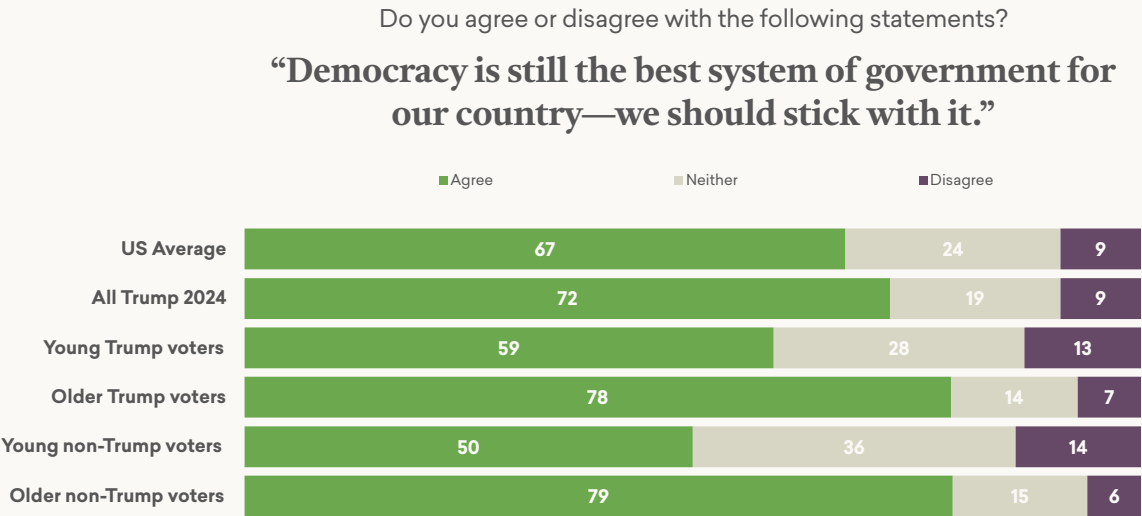
**Rob, Trump Voter**  
Age 28 • Asian American man • Richmond, California

Certainly, younger Trump voters show weaker confidence in democracy than older conservatives. Only 28 percent "strongly agree" that democracy is the best system of government (59 percent total agree), compared with 53 percent of older Trump voters (78 percent total agree). But a very similar generational pattern appears among non-Trump voters (30 percent versus 60 percent). What is distinctive among **younger Trump voters is that their weaker confidence in democracy is combined with greater openness to leaders pushing against constitutional limits**. Taken together, these patterns point to a greater willingness to support a political leader who breaks norms.



Phoenix, AZ - June 23, 2020: A Students for Trump supporter at an "An Address to Young Americans" event, featuring President Donald Trump, hosted by Students for Trump and Turning Point Action at Dream City Church. Photo: Gage Skidmore - CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

**FIGURE 5.8**  
**VIEWS OF DEMOCRACY**

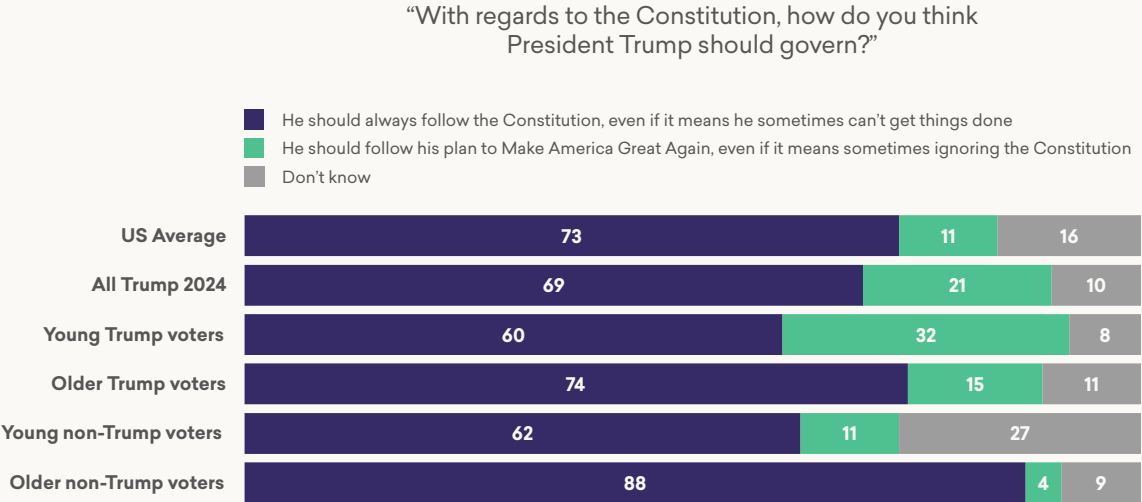


Response scale: 1 - Strongly Disagree to 5 - Strongly Agree  
Note: Responses of 1–2 are categorized as disagreement; 3 as neither; 4–5 as agreement. Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.



Majorities of younger and older Trump voters believe that the President should "follow his plan to Make America Great Again, even if it means sometimes ignoring the Constitution." Figure 5.9 shows that only one in five (21 percent) believe he should "do what he thinks is best for America, even if it means ignoring the Constitution," although support for ignoring the Constitution is twice as great among younger Trump voters (32 percent) than among their older counterparts (15 percent).

FIGURE 5.9  
TRUMP AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



Note: Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

Trump voters who believe that the Constitution should sometimes be ignored typically explain this perspective in practical terms, not through a hostility to constitutional restraints but by questioning whether the Constitution is adequate to address today's problems. All the same, this reasoning reveals some level of tolerance for Constitutional violations.

"The **most important thing is doing what is best for the country** and the Constitution was written so long ago."

**Natalie, Reluctant Right**  
Age 22 • White woman • Pequannock, New Jersey



Phoenix, AZ - June 23, 2020: A Students for Trump supporter at an "An Address to Young Americans" event, featuring President Donald Trump, hosted by Students for Trump and Turning Point Action at Dream City Church. Photo: Gage Skidmore - CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

"It makes sense to live and breathe like **we can do what's best for society. Rather we aren't necessarily bound to what the Constitution says but we should follow it the best we can.** The Constitution isn't the Bible by any means."

**Amelia, MAGA Hardliner**  
Age 27 • White woman • Athens, Georgia

Similar dynamics are at play in Trump voters' views on how President Trump should respond to decisions by the Supreme Court. Again, a clear majority of Trump voters (61 percent) believe that he needs to honor Supreme Court decisions out of respect for the Constitution. However, the opposing view—that Trump "needs to act urgently to fix America, even if it means ignoring decisions by the Supreme Court"—is held by nearly one-half of younger Trump voters (48 percent), compared to 35 percent of their older counterparts. This impatience with procedural limits comes through in some of the comments from Trump voters:

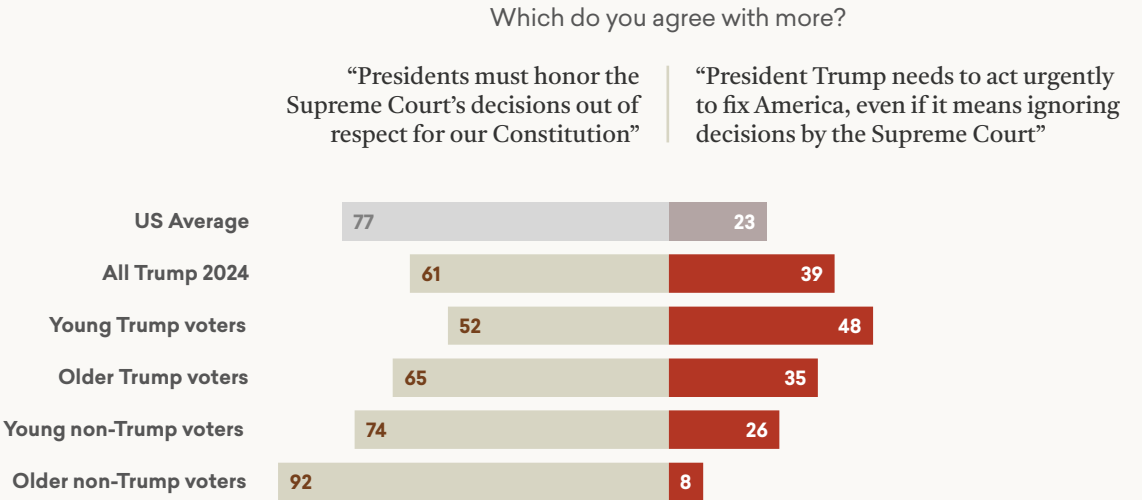
"**Why bother with the Constitution?** What is the reason for having it if it is just a political prop?"

**Elliot, Anti-Woke Conservative**  
Age 39 • White man • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



As Figure 5.10 shows, support for respecting Supreme Court decisions is much stronger among non-Trump voters despite the Court’s current conservative majority. A large majority of Americans (77 percent) take this view—though again, younger non-Trump voters (74 percent agree) are notably less convinced than older ones (92 percent). This highlights that skepticism toward democratic institutions is not confined to the political right, but involves both generational and partisan factors.

FIGURE 5.10  
TRUMP AND THE SUPREME COURT



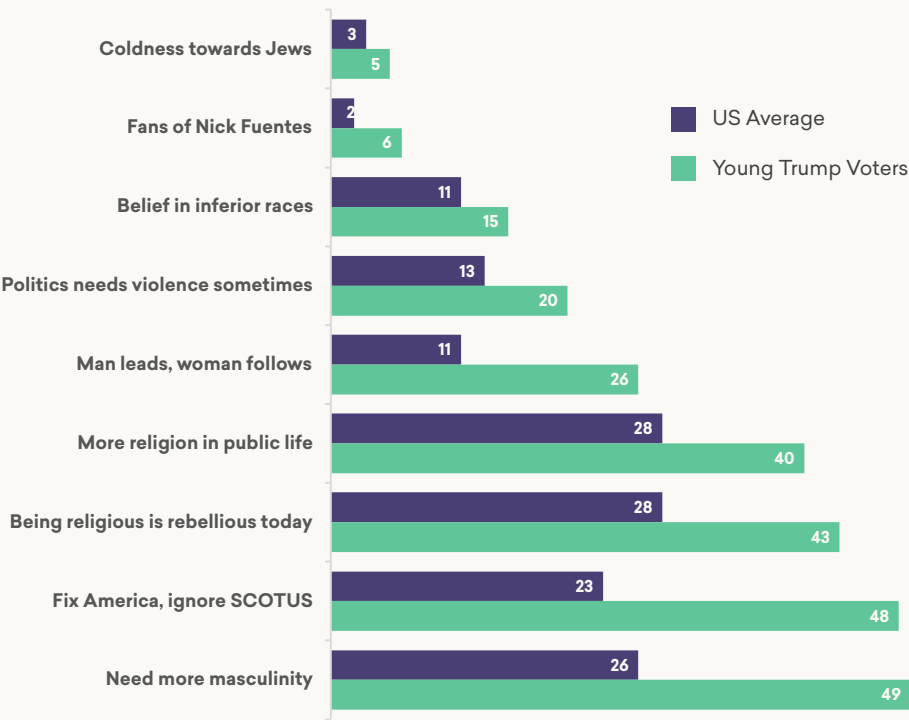
Question: "Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between?" Fully agree with A/B, Mostly agree with A/B, Lean towards A/B  
Note: Gen Z and Millennials considered younger. Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation considered older.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,875 Trump voters and 1,848 general population voters conducted in April 2025.

Overall, these findings do not reveal that younger Trump voters are abandoning democratic principles. Instead, like others in their generation, they appear to be losing faith in the institutions meant to uphold democracy. Younger Trump voters have grown up in a highly partisan and polarized era and often see Congress as a place for obstruction and political conflict rather than the resolution of the nation’s problems. Even if the impulse is anti-democratic, they see appeal in a leader who can deliver change. Compared with older conservatives, they are clearly more willing to prioritize Trump's agenda over constitutional limits and more open to the idea that he might ignore Supreme Court decisions. But these positions appear rooted less in an embrace of authoritarianism than in frustration with what they see as a system that no longer works. The same flexibility towards the Constitution appears among younger non-Trump voters too. Across the electorate, then, younger Americans show a thinner, more

conditional attachment to democratic institutions—but among younger Trump voters, this institutional skepticism aligns with a readiness to endorse a more disruptive, transgressive style of leadership.

FIGURE 5.11  
FEATURES OF AN EMERGENT NEW TRADITIONALISM

Features of an Emergent New Traditionalism



**Coldness toward Jews:** "On a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means very cold and 100 mean very warm, how cold or warm do you feel towards the following groups? Jewish Americans" Scores under 20 were calculated as cold. **Fans of Nick Fuentes:** "Among the public figures you selected, who do you tend to agree with the most about politics?" % selecting Nick Fuentes. **Belief in inferior races:** "Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between? A: No race is inherently better or worse than others. B: Some races are naturally inferior to others." % selecting B. **Politics needs violence sometimes:** "Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between? A: I feel that violence is sometimes needed to advance political causes in the US today. B. Political violence is never justified." % selecting B. **Man leads, woman follows:** "In general, which of the following best describes your view of relationships between a man and a woman? The man should lead, and the woman should follow. The man and woman should act as equal partners. The woman should lead, and the man should follow." % selecting B. **More religion in public life:** "Which statement do you agree with more, or do you fall in between? A: The United States should maintain a separation between church and state. B: The United States should bring more religion into government and public life." % selecting B. **Being religious is rebellious today:** "Which do you think is more rebellious for younger generations today? To be religious / To be an atheist / Don't know / It depends on the couple." % selecting A. **Fix America, ignore SCOTUS:** "Which statement do you agree with more , or do you fall in between? A) President Trump needs to act urgently to fix America, even if it means ignoring decisions by the Supreme Court B) Presidents must honor the Supreme Court’s decisions out of respect for our Constitution." % selecting A. **Need more masculinity:** "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: American culture needs more masculinity" % selecting agree. Gen Z and Millennials considered younger Trump voters.  
Source: More in Common (2025). Surveys of 2,478 Trump voters and 1,725 general population voters conducted in April 2025, and survey of 3,787 general population voters, including 2,195 Trump voters, conducted in November 2025.



# Conclusion

The picture that emerges from this chapter reveals several surprising patterns.

First, younger Trump voters are **in many respects similar to other Gen Z and Millennial Americans in their outlook**. They have been shaped by social media, share similar economic pessimism, are more likely to feel let down by democratic institutions, want to challenge the status quo, and are more oriented to conflict and zero-sum thinking. Perhaps surprisingly, both Trump and non-Trump voters in younger generations are more likely than other generations to believe in bringing more religion into government and public life. Overall, there is evidence to suggest that far from being more polarized on many issues, Gen Z and Millennial Americans are more aligned than older generations.

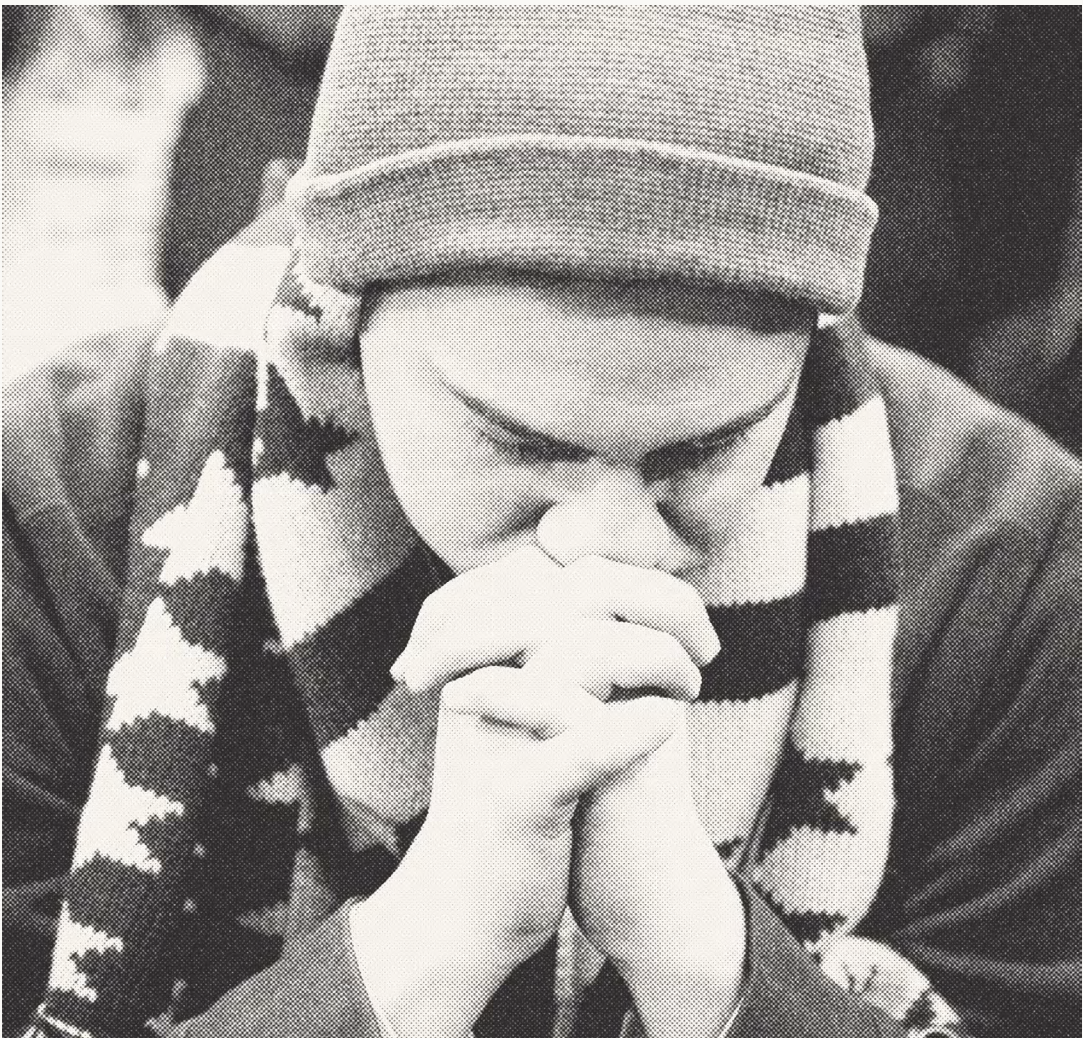
Second, **younger Trump voters frequently embrace more traditional values, especially around gender roles, than do older Trump voters**. This includes higher levels of support for hierarchical gender roles, traditional masculinity, the public role of religion and others. Similar trends appear among non-Trump voters, though at much weaker levels. Among these, the shift towards more traditional views on masculinity and gender roles than older generations is especially striking. Skepticism toward democratic constraints is also higher. This seems to reflect a desire for decisive leadership rather than wholesale rejection of democratic principles, but is still significant. More extreme attitudes remain on the fringe, confined to a small subset of Trump supporters rather than defining the whole group.

Third, these findings lead to an important question about **whether highly politically engaged Trump voters hold distinctive attitudes**. Understanding voters through the lens of the strength of their engagement in politics often provides valuable insights. Indeed, More in Common has often found that some of the largest differences between Americans are more behavioral than ideological, reflecting differences in levels of engagement.<sup>4.12</sup>

Analysis of the responses discussed in this chapter suggests that being more highly-engaged<sup>4.13</sup> is often associated with particular views, but not in ways that fit a simple ideological pattern. Unsurprisingly, highly-engaged younger Trump voters often hold stronger views, such as stronger support for President Trump, stronger belief in the value of religion in American public life, stronger conviction that American culture needs more masculinity, and stronger agreement that it is patriotic to put American needs first in immigration policy. But their higher political engagement also translates into significantly stronger confidence in democracy, higher rejection of racial superiority and anti-Semitism, and warmer feelings toward pro-choice, lesbian, gay,

<sup>4.12</sup>This was first discussed in the distinction between the “Wing” groups and the “Exhausted Majority” in the *Hidden Tribes* study: More in Common, “Hidden Tribes: A Study of America’s Polarized Landscape,” accessed December 28, 2025, <https://hiddentribes.us/>

<sup>4.13</sup>Trump voters were grouped into three levels of engagement based on whether they said that they follow government and public affairs most of the time (“engaged”), some of the time (“slightly engaged”) or only now and then, or hardly at all (“disengaged”).



A man prays during the 60th Presidential Inauguration at Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 2025. Donald Trump was sworn in as the 47th president of the United States at the Capitol and the inaugural parade was moved to the Capital One Arena. (Public domain, Department of Defense photo by Staff Sgt. Danny Gonzalez) via Wikimedia Commons.

and transgender Americans. As a group, highly-engaged younger Trump voters clearly do not fit the attitudinal profile of “groyper” or other far-right extremists.

Taken together, this analysis suggests a collection of attitudes among younger Trump voters that does not yet constitute a distinctive segment of new traditionalists, but highlights emerging trends that could significantly shape the future of the conservative coalition. From generations such as the Baby Boomers, we know that the political orientations formed in peoples’ early adulthood both endure and also evolve as generations enter different life stages. The values of Baby Boomers today are not the same as in the 1970s, when most of them reached voting age. Similarly, the values of today’s younger conservatives will continue evolving. What is emerging now is far from a settled ideology.



**Three key influences** relevant to the future of younger generations in the conservative coalition are worth noting:

- **Economic conditions:** Many of the anxieties identified in this chapter are shaped by insecurity around work, housing, and the affordability of essentials. If technological change, including the expansion of AI, delivers broad-based growth and improved living standards, this may constrain the appeal of grievance and zero-sum thinking. If, however, its effects are destabilizing and perceived as unfair, economic grievances might shape America's political future, potentially combining with cultural pessimism and a longing for a more ordered past.
- Changes in the **information and media ecosystem:** Younger voters have come of age in a rapidly changing media environment, with algorithmically-driven content feeds that result in very different perceptions of the world they live in. Platforms and content will continue to evolve, with AI bringing further waves of changes in coming years. But the way in which younger Americans choose to engage with content and media platforms will also be important. The high levels of support among younger Americans for limits on smartphone use in schools and age restrictions on social media reflect a broader desire to exercise more control over how they interact with media and technology. What younger Americans are hearing and reading, and how they are engaging with it and with each other, will significantly shape the future.
- **Political leadership:** Despite widespread distrust of politicians and institutions, individual leaders still have a powerful effect on the coalitions that they forge. Prior to Donald Trump's rise, it was widely assumed that demographic change would give Democratic candidates a growing political advantage. But as this report's chapter on leadership discussed, Trump demonstrated instead that a charismatic leader could shake up established patterns and create a more diverse voter coalition. New leaders will emerge in coming years, and the way they define America's opportunities and challenges, and how they relate to American institutions and democracy, will also shape the future of that coalition.

The threads of new traditionalism discussed in this chapter reflect an emerging pattern rather than a settled realignment. While these findings point to potential areas of cultural conflict, they also highlight surprising common ground among younger generations that is too often overlooked. The evidence shows that younger Americans are less polarized than social media's toxic environment might suggest. How these generational forces play out—within the conservative coalition and in American society more broadly—is not predetermined. It will be shaped by the choices of Millennial and Gen Z Americans, who will constitute the majority of the American electorate beginning in 2028.<sup>4.14</sup>

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<sup>4.14</sup> Morley Winograd, Michael Hais, and Doug Ross. "How younger voters will impact elections: Younger voters are poised to upend American politics." *Brookings*, February 27, 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/younger-voters-are-poised-to-upend-american-politics/>

## CONCLUSION

# Final Word

America is deeply divided politically, with widespread social conflict and distrust in our institutions. In confronting these challenges, people on each side often see things as a zero-sum contest, in which any attempt to recognize the humanity of their opponents is a concession. But this approach only perpetuates the cycle of division. If we are to overcome these challenges, we must understand the experiences that shape how other Americans see the country—and from there, build toward a better future.

This is the animating spirit behind this report: an effort to see the world through the eyes of the millions of Americans who elected Donald Trump president. Other explanations of the Trump coalition have often relied on a single story: that his support reflects his one of a kind strengths of leadership; that his voters are animated by racism, grievance, or resentment; that they are economically disenfranchised and “left behind”; or that they have been brainwashed by social media.

There is evidence for many of these explanations, but this report finds a more complex reality: one of diverse motivations, cherished values, and sincerely held beliefs. Trump has woven these disparate strands into a coalition that is united less by a single vision or ideology than a shared set of frustrations and concerns.

While no coalition is permanent, many evolve and endure for decades. The durability of the Trump coalition has profound implications for America's future: for what policies get enacted and sustained, for how our democratic institutions function, for how Americans understand their national identity, and for whether the concerns that brought millions to Trump are addressed or are allowed to continue.

The findings in this report suggest what might determine the coalition's future. If Trump's supporters see him as an effective steward of the economy, enforcer of borders, and bulwark against the threats of liberal excess, the coalition may endure. But



if his administration fails to deliver on key promises, if major policy initiatives backfire, or if Trump's symbolic appeal wanes with key constituencies, the coalition could fracture.

Beyond these immediate political calculations, larger questions loom about the stability of America's democracy. Most Trump supporters say they respect the Constitution and separation of powers, yet many also favor expanding executive authority in ways that would test or override congressional and judicial limits. The risks here are significant. A substantial portion of Trump's coalition is open to aggressive uses of executive power, particularly when they believe it serves important ends. This means that overt breaches of established democratic norms may find support among a meaningful share of the American people—a dynamic that could threaten our constitutional order.

Adding fuel to the fire are the “perception gaps” that reflect and exacerbate America's divisions. Americans routinely misunderstand not only those on the other side but also their fellow partisans—what they believe, what they value, and what they want. When people believe distorted versions of what others think and when opponents are viewed not just as political counterparts but existential threats, extreme measures become easier to justify. Critical to defusing the explosive tensions characterizing our democracy, therefore, is finding our way back to a clearer view of reality.

Donald Trump will not be president forever, but the Americans who comprise his coalition will remain central to our politics for years to come. Understanding them—their concerns, their values, their vision for the country—is not simply an electoral calculus but a prerequisite for addressing the deeper challenges America faces. The ultimate question is not what Trump will do, but what kind of country his supporters, and all Americans, want to build together.



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