

FOR RELEASE SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

# Most Americans Don't Believe God Played a Role in Recent Presidential Election Outcomes

*80% of U.S. Christians say 'good Christians' can disagree about Trump*

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## About this research

This Pew Research Center report examines the U.S. public's views on whether God influences presidential elections, whether Christians think it is essential to support or oppose President Donald Trump, and how much religion influences the way people vote.

### Why did we do this?

The Center conducts high-quality research to inform the public, journalists and leaders. Studying the public's views about religion's role in public life is a key part of the Center's long-standing research agenda.

[Learn more about Pew Research Center.](#)

### How did we do this?

This report includes findings from a survey of 8,937 U.S. adults who are part of the Center's [American Trends Panel \(ATP\)](#). The survey was conducted from May 5 to 11, 2025. The survey's overall margin of error is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points.

Here are the [questions used for this report](#), the [topline](#) and the survey [methodology](#).

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# Most Americans Don't Believe God Played a Role in Recent Presidential Election Outcomes

*80% of U.S. Christians say 'good Christians' can disagree about Trump*

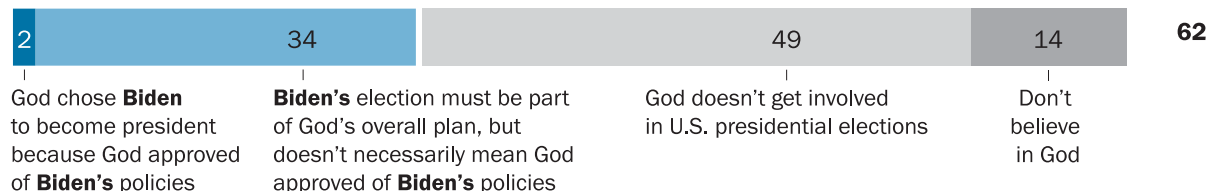
What role do Americans think God played in the last two presidential elections? In a May 2025 survey, most U.S. adults say God played no role at all, while about a third say recent election results are part of God's overall plan but don't necessarily mean God approved of the winner's policies. Very few say God chose the winners because of their policies.

## 4% say God chose Trump for president in 2024 because God approves of his policies; 2% say Biden won in 2020 because God approved of his policies

*Which comes closest to your views about God's role in the 2024 presidential election?*



*Which comes closest to your views about God's role in the 2020 presidential election?*



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Figures may not sum to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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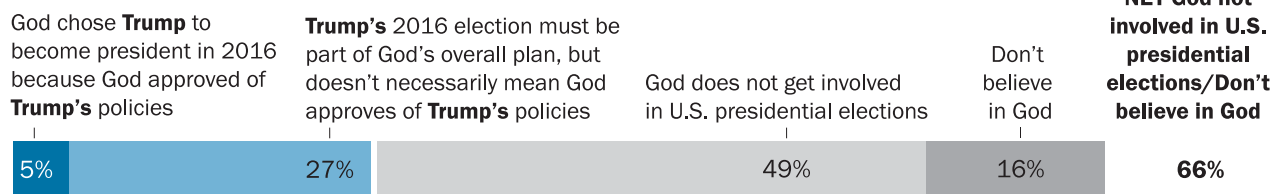
For example, when asked what role they think God played in **the 2024 presidential election**, more than six-in-ten U.S. adults surveyed say either that God doesn't get involved in presidential elections (49%) or that they don't believe in God (14%). Roughly one-third say President Donald Trump's victory must have been part of God's plan, but that this doesn't necessarily mean God approves of Trump's policies. Just 4% say God chose Trump to become president in 2024 because God approves of his policies.

The same survey asked Americans what role God played in **the 2020 election**, and the results are strikingly similar. Overall, 62% say either that God doesn't get involved in presidential elections or that they don't believe in God. Roughly one-third say Biden's 2020 victory must have been part of God's plan but didn't imply that God endorsed Biden's policies. And 2% say God chose Biden to become president because God approved of his policies.

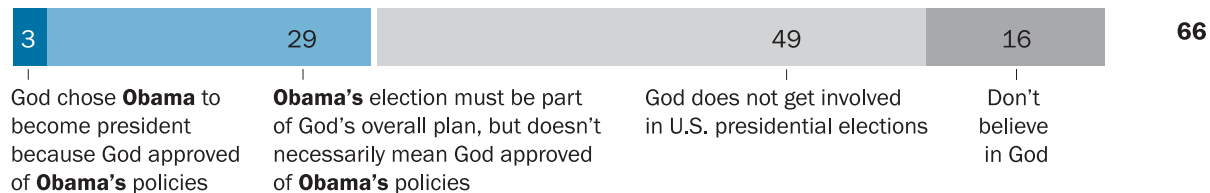
Americans' views about God's role in these recent elections are similar to what we found in a [February 2020 poll](#), when we asked Americans to look back on Trump's 2016 election and Obama's 2008 and 2012 victories.

### In a 2020 survey, 5% said God picked Trump for president in 2016 because of Trump's policies; 3% said the same about Obama's earlier elections

*Which comes closest to your views about God's role in the 2016 presidential election?*



*Which comes closest to your views about God's role in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections?*



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Figures may not sum to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 4-15, 2020.

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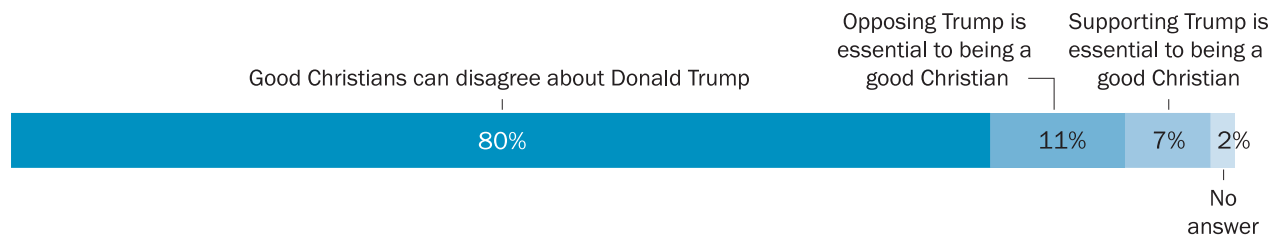
Another question in the survey, given only to Christian respondents, asked if it is essential for “a good Christian” to support Trump, essential for “a good Christian” to oppose Trump, or if “good Christians can disagree about Donald Trump.”

Overall, there’s consensus among most American Christians that “good Christians” do not need to take a particular view on Trump:

- 80% of U.S. Christians say good Christians can disagree about Donald Trump.
- 11% say opposing Trump is essential to being a good Christian.
- 7% say supporting Trump is essential to being a good Christian.

### 80% of U.S. Christians say ‘good Christians’ can disagree about Trump

% of Christians who say ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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The survey also explored the link between religion and politics in another way: It asked Americans how important religion is in shaping their votes. The findings show that a majority of Americans say religion plays a relatively small role or none at all in their vote:

- 56% say religion shapes how they vote *a little or not at all*.
- 18% say religion shapes how they vote *some*.
- 25% of U.S. adults say religion shapes how they vote *a great deal or quite a bit*.

Compared with how religion shapes their vote, Americans are more than twice as likely to say religion has a great deal or quite a bit of impact on the way they treat other people (59%) and how they think about morality (56%).

These are among the key findings about religion and politics from a Pew Research Center survey conducted May 5-11, 2025, among a nationally representative sample of 8,937 U.S. adults. They were asked these questions as part of the Center's long-running effort to gauge the public's views on how religion intersects with public life, including U.S. elections.

**Read on to learn more about:**

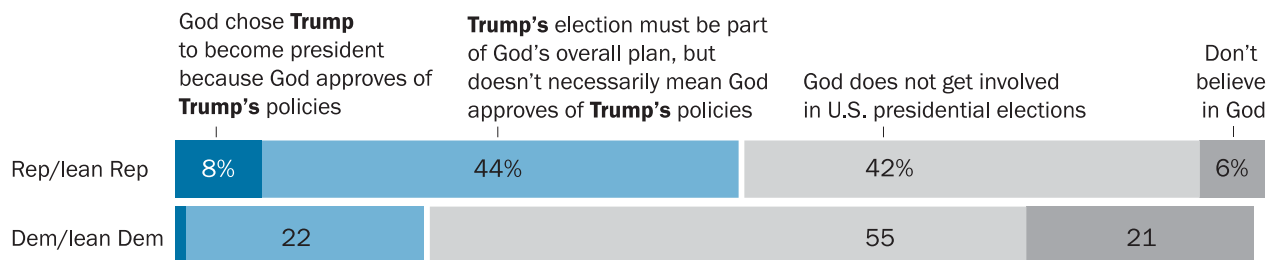
- [How Americans view God's role in recent presidential elections](#)
- [What Christians say about supporting or opposing Trump](#)
- [How Americans say religion affects their voting decisions](#)

## How Americans view God's role in recent presidential elections

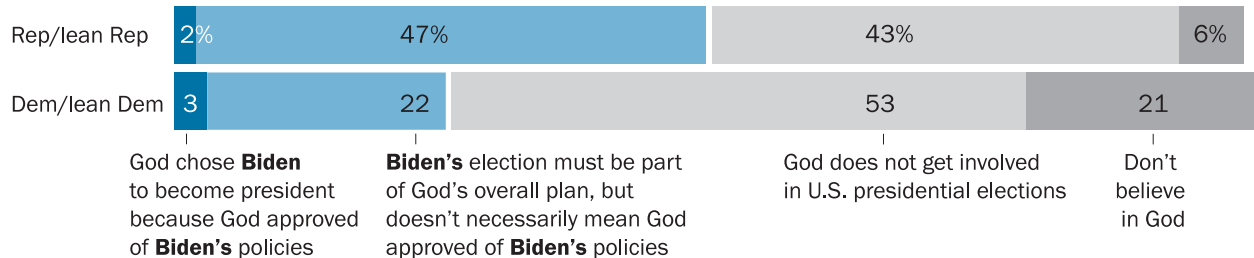
Relatively few Americans in either political party think God chose their party's candidate to become president in 2020 or 2024 specifically because God approved of the candidate's policies. Just 8% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say God chose Trump in 2024 because God approved of Trump's policies, and just 3% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say this of Biden's victory in 2020.

### Fewer than 1 in 10 in each party say God chose recent presidential winners because of their policies

*Which comes closest to your views about God's role in the 2024 presidential election?*



*Which comes closest to your views about God's role in the 2020 presidential election?*



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say that recent election results must be part of God's overall plan even if God didn't necessarily approve of the winner's policies. For instance, 44% of Republicans say Trump's election was part of God's overall plan even though the results don't necessarily mean God approved of Trump's policies. Just 22% of Democrats agree that Trump's election was part of God's plan.

By contrast, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say that God does *not* get involved in elections or to say they don't believe in God.

## Views among White evangelical Protestants

When it comes to religious groups, most White evangelical Protestants tie Trump's election to God in some way. But relatively few (8%) say that God chose Trump because God approves of his policies. Instead, most (63%) take the view that Trump's election must be part of God's overall plan, but that this doesn't necessarily mean God endorses his policies.

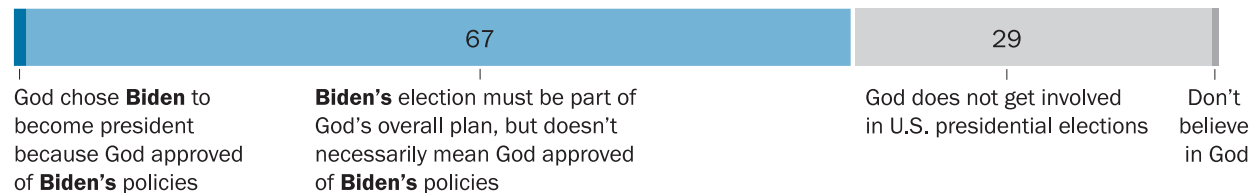
Most White evangelicals also tie Biden's 2020 victory to God in some way, though just 1% of them say God chose Biden to become president in 2020 because God approved of his policies. Instead, most White evangelicals (67%) say Biden's election must have been part of God's overall plan but that this didn't necessarily mean God approved of Biden's policies.

### 8% of White evangelicals say God chose Donald Trump because God approves of his policies

*% of White evangelical Protestants who say each of the following comes closest to their view about the 2024 election*



*% of White evangelical Protestants who say each of the following comes closest to their view about the 2020 election*



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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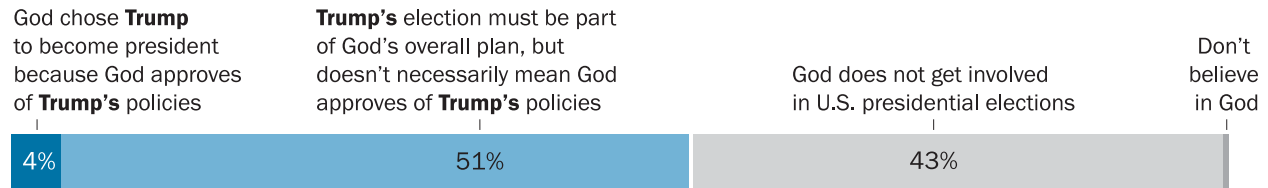
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## Views among Black Protestants

Around half of Black Protestants also tie Trump's election to God in some way, either by saying that God chose Trump because of his policies (4%) or that the election results must have otherwise been part of God's overall plan (51%). Roughly four-in-ten Black Protestants say God doesn't get involved in elections.

### 51% of Black Protestants say Trump's election was part of God's plan, but that this doesn't necessarily mean God approves of his policies

*% of **Black Protestants** who say each of the following comes closest to their view about the 2024 election*



*% of **Black Protestants** who say each of the following comes closest to their view about the 2020 election*



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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## Views among Catholics and White nonevangelical Protestants

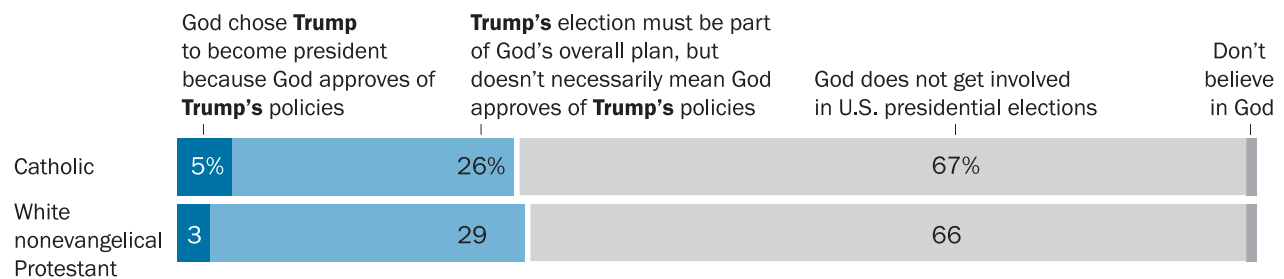
Most Catholics and White nonevangelical Protestants take the position that God played no role in Trump's or Biden's elections. For example, among Catholics:

- 67% say God does not get involved in presidential elections.
- 26% believe that Trump's election must be part of God's plan.
- 5% say God chose Trump because God approves of his policies.

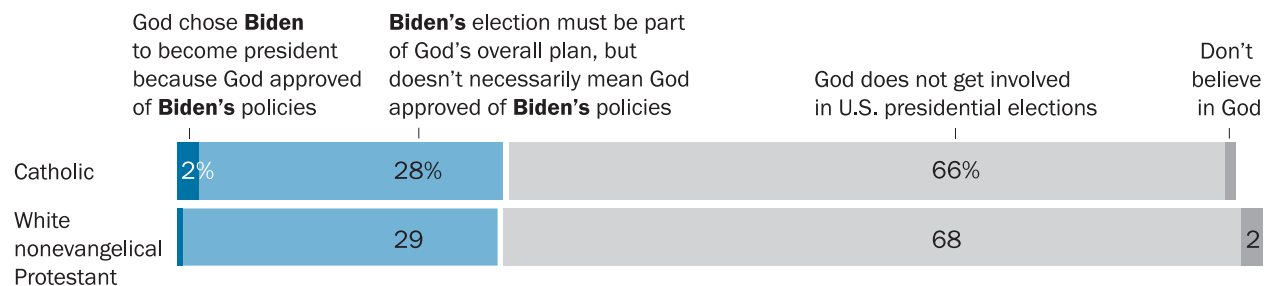
Majorities of both White and Hispanic Catholics say God does not get involved in U.S. presidential elections.

## Most Catholics and White nonevangelical Protestants think God played no role in the election of Trump or Biden

*% of Catholics and White nonevangelical Protestants who say each of the following comes closest to their view about the 2024 election*



*% of Catholics and White nonevangelical Protestants who say each of the following comes closest to their view about the 2020 election*



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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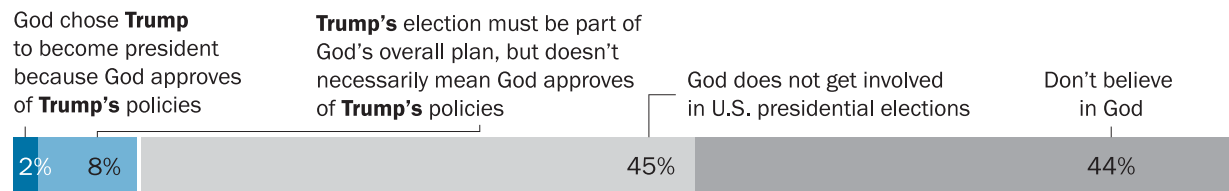
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## Views among religiously unaffiliated adults

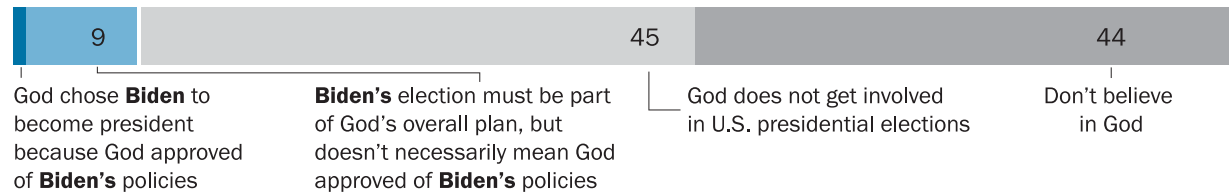
The vast majority of religiously unaffiliated Americans – a group made up of atheists, agnostics and people who say their religion is “nothing in particular” – say that God does not get involved in elections (45%) or that they don’t believe in God (44%).

### About 9 in 10 religiously unaffiliated Americans say God plays no role in presidential elections or that they don’t believe in God at all

*% of religiously unaffiliated adults who say each of the following comes closest to their view about the 2024 election*



*% of religiously unaffiliated adults who say each of the following comes closest to their view about the 2020 election*



Note: “Religiously unaffiliated adults” are respondents who describe themselves as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular” when asked about their religion. Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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## What Christians say about supporting or opposing Trump

The new survey posed a question specifically to Christians about how “good Christians” should think about Trump today. We found:

- 80% of U.S. Christians say good Christians can disagree about Donald Trump.
- 11% say opposing Trump is essential to being a good Christian.
- 7% say supporting Trump is essential to being a good Christian.

Large majorities of Christians across various religious traditions and political party lines say that good Christians can disagree about Donald Trump, ranging from 76% of Hispanic Catholics to 85% among White evangelicals.

Slightly more White evangelicals say *supporting* Trump is essential to being a good Christian than say *opposing* Trump is essential (10% vs. 5%). Within every other large Christian tradition, this balance of opinion is reversed.

Most Christians in both political parties feel that good Christians can disagree about Trump: 87% of Republican and Republican-leaning Christians say this, as do 71% of Christians who are Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party.

Democratic Christians are more likely to say *opposing* Trump is essential to being a good Christian than Republican Christians are to say *supporting* Trump is essential (24% vs. 10%).

### Majorities in all Christian subgroups say that ‘good Christians’ can disagree about Trump

% of Christians who say ...

	Good Christians can disagree about Donald Trump	Opposing Trump is essential to being a good Christian	Supporting Trump is essential to being a good Christian
All Christians	80%	11%	7%
Protestant	82	10	7
White evangelical	85	5	10
White, not evang.	78	16	4
Black Protestant	80	13	5
Catholic	79	13	6
White Catholic	82	11	5
Hispanic Catholic	76	13	7
Rep/lean Rep	87	1	10
Dem/lean Dem	71	24	3

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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## How Americans say religion affects their voting decisions

The survey also asked respondents how much religion shapes the way they vote, treat other people and think about morality. Americans are generally far less likely to say religion shapes their vote than to say it shapes their morality and treatment of others.

White evangelical Protestants and Republicans are especially likely to say religion shapes how they vote. For example, 51% of White evangelicals say religion shapes how they vote a

*great deal or quite a bit*, making them the only large religious group in which at least half say religion shapes their vote quite a bit or a great deal. Meanwhile, Republicans are roughly twice as likely as Democrats to say religion shapes how they vote (34% vs. 18%).

White evangelicals and Republicans also stand out for the large shares who say religion shapes how they treat other people and think about morality. For example, 88% of White evangelicals say religion shapes how they treat others a great deal or quite a bit, and 86% say the same about religion shaping their morality – among the highest percentages of any religious group analyzed.

### A quarter of U.S. adults say religion shapes how they vote a great deal or quite a bit

*% of U.S. adults who say religion shapes the way they do the following ...*

	A great deal/Quite a bit		Some	A little/ Not at all
Treat other people	59%		14%	26%
Think about morality	56		17	26
Vote	25	18	56	

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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## 56% of Americans say religion shapes how they vote only ‘a little’ or ‘not at all’

% who say religion shapes the way they do the following ...

	Treat other people			Think about morality			Vote		
	A great deal/ Quite a bit	Some	A little/ Not at all	A great deal/ Quite a bit	Some	A little/ Not at all	A great deal/ Quite a bit	Some	A little/ Not at all
U.S. adults	59%	14%	26%	56%	17%	26%	25%	18%	56%
<b>Religiously affiliated</b>	74	14	12	70	18	12	32	22	45
Christian	76	13	10	71	17	11	33	22	44
Protestant	79	12	8	75	15	10	37	23	40
White evangelical	88	8	3	86	10	3	51	22	26
White, not evangelical	66	18	16	57	25	18	20	20	60
Black Protestant	84	10	6	76	15	8	31	26	43
Catholic	69	16	14	64	22	13	24	22	54
White Catholic	69	18	12	67	20	13	23	21	56
Hispanic Catholic	69	14	17	59	24	16	21	25	53
Jewish	54	20	26	54	24	23	30	22	48
<b>Religiously unaffiliated</b>	17	16	66	17	17	65	6	8	84
Atheist	7	6	87	7	7	85	6	6	88
Agnostic	13	16	70	10	19	70	5	7	87
Nothing in particular	24	20	56	24	21	53	7	10	81
Rep/lean Rep	69	14	17	66	16	17	34	19	46
Dem/lean Dem	50	15	35	45	19	35	18	17	65

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 5-11, 2025.

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# Methodology

## The American Trends Panel survey methodology

### Overview

Data in this report comes from Wave 170 of the American Trends Panel (ATP), Pew Research Center’s nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. The survey was conducted from May 5 to 11, 2025. A total of 8,937 panelists responded out of 9,531 who were sampled, for a survey-level response rate of 94%.

The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is less than 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 8,937 respondents is plus or minus 1.4 percentage points.

SSRS conducted the survey for the Center via online (n=8,720) and live telephone (n=217) interviewing. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about the ATP, read “[About the American Trends Panel](#).”

### Panel recruitment

Since 2018, the ATP has used address-based sampling (ABS) for recruitment. A study cover letter and a pre-incentive are mailed to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service’s Computerized Delivery Sequence File. This Postal Service file has been estimated to cover 90% to 98% of the population.<sup>1</sup> Within each sampled household, the adult with the next birthday is selected to participate. Other details of the ABS recruitment protocol have changed over time but are available upon request.<sup>2</sup> Prior to 2018, the ATP was recruited using landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys administered in English and Spanish.

A national sample of U.S. adults has been recruited to the ATP approximately once per year since 2014. In some years, the recruitment has included additional efforts (known as an “oversample”) to improve the accuracy of data for underrepresented groups. For example, Hispanic, Black and Asian adults were oversampled in 2019, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. “[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#).”

<sup>2</sup> Email [pewsurveys@pewresearch.org](mailto:pewsurveys@pewresearch.org).

## Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was noninstitutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the United States. All active ATP members who previously completed ATP Wave 162 were invited to participate in this wave. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

## Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with SSRS. The web program used for online respondents was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the SSRS project team and Pew Research Center researchers. The SSRS project team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

## Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or gift code to Amazon.com, Target.com, or Walmart.com. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

## Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was May 5 to 11, 2025. Surveys were conducted via self-administered web survey or by live telephone interviewing.

**For panelists who take surveys online:** Postcard notifications were mailed to a subset on May 5.<sup>3</sup> Survey invitations were sent out in two separate launches: soft launch and full launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on May 5. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled online panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on May 6.

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<sup>3</sup> The ATP does not use routers or chains in any part of its online data collection protocol, nor are they used to direct respondents to additional surveys. Postcard notifications for web panelists are sent to 1) panelists who were recruited within the last two years and 2) panelists recruited prior to the last two years who opt to continue receiving postcard notifications.

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### Invitation and reminder dates for web respondents, ATP Wave 170

	Soft launch	Full launch
Initial invitation	May 5, 2025	May 6, 2025
First reminder	May 8, 2025	May 8, 2025
Final reminder	May 10, 2025	May 10, 2025

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Panelists participating online were sent an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages were sent an SMS invitation with a link to the survey and up to two SMS reminders.

**For panelists who take surveys over the phone with a live interviewer:** Prenotification postcards were mailed on May 2. Soft launch took place on May 5 and involved dialing until a total of five interviews had been completed. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled phone panelists' numbers were dialed throughout the remaining field period. Panelists who take surveys via phone can receive up to six calls from trained SSRS interviewers.

### Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, Center researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for whether respondents left questions blank at very high rates or always selected the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, two ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

### Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the panel survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of recruitment into the panel. These weights are then calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th

percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

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### American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2023 American Community Survey (ACS)
Age x Gender	
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Race/Ethnicity x Gender	
Race/Ethnicity x Age	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metropolitan status	
Volunteerism	2023 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2020 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Frequency of internet use	2024 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Religious affiliation	
Party affiliation x Race/Ethnicity	
Party affiliation x Age	
Party affiliation among registered voters	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on noninstitutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

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### Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 170

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	8,937	1.4 percentage points
<b>Religiously affiliated</b>	6,479	1.6 percentage points
Christian	5,600	1.7 percentage points
Protestant	3,771	2.1 percentage points
<i>White evangelical</i>	1,497	3.2 percentage points
<i>White, not evangelical</i>	1,130	3.7 percentage points
<i>Black Protestant</i>	617	5.3 percentage points
Catholic	1,666	3.2 percentage points
<i>White Catholic</i>	1,141	3.6 percentage points
<i>Hispanic Catholic</i>	373	6.6 percentage points
Jewish	374	8.3 percentage points
<b>Religiously unaffiliated</b>	2,432	2.7 percentage points
Atheist	584	5.4 percentage points
Agnostic	665	4.8 percentage points
Nothing in particular	1,183	3.9 percentage points
Rep/lean Rep	4,050	2.1 percentage points
Dem/lean Dem	4,644	1.9 percentage points
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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

## Dispositions and response rates

### Final dispositions, ATP Wave 170

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	8,937
Logged in (web)/Contacted (CATI), but did not complete any items	2.11	107
Started survey; broke off before completion	2.12	44
Never logged on (web)/Never reached on phone (CATI)	2.20	441
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	0
Other non-interview	2.30	0
Completed interview but was removed for data quality	2.90	2
<b>Total panelists sampled for the survey</b>		<b>9,531</b>
Completed interviews	I	8,937
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	151
Non-contact	NC	441
Other	O	2
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9,531</b>
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		94%

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### Cumulative response rate, ATP Wave 170

	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	11%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	73%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 170	35%
Response rate to Wave 170 survey	94%
<b>Cumulative response rate</b>	<b>3%</b>

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