


RONALD REAGAN
CENTER ON CIVILITY AND DEMOCRACY

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More than seven in 10 Americans want to play a part in restoring civility in America, new data from Reagan Foundation Center on Civility & Democracy finds

Survey reveals the majority of Americans believe civility is struggling, but are interested in finding common ground.

SIMI VALLEY, CA – The vast majority of Americans (72%) desire to be a part of the solution in restoring civility to our country, according to a new study released today by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute’s (RRPFI) Center on Civility and Democracy. The findings from this survey on the state of democracy and civility acknowledge the divide in the United States, but reveal ways for Americans to find a way forward and foster civility.

“Our goal at the Center on Civility and Democracy is to reinstill the norms of respect and good citizenship in American public life, drawing from the example President Reagan set forth during his presidency,” said Fred Ryan, Director of the Center on Civility and Democracy. “This survey helps us to better understand the current state of the country and to identify ways to foster civility going forward – knowing that it does not mean agreement or compromise, but rather finding areas of common ground and allowing space for disagreements.”

Major survey findings include::

- Three-quarters (73%) of Americans believe that we "tolerate outrageous and uncivilized behavior by elected officials" more today than in the past.
- Yet more than eight out of 10 Americans (83%) expect government leaders to find common ground across political lines. These expectations are not just generalized but extend to their *own* elected officials.
- Americans are divided in their expectations and outlook for the country.
 - When asked about the country's ability to focus on what unites us, about half of respondents (47%) said they were optimistic and a similar amount (45%) expressed pessimism.
 - Republicans (72%) are most likely to be optimistic about the country’s ability to focus on what unites us. Only 30% of Democrats and 36% of Independents are optimistic.

- Older Americans express less optimism: those ages 65 and over (32%) are significantly more likely to be very pessimistic about our country's ability to focus on what unites compared with those who are ages 18-29 (24%) or 30-41 (20%).
- Most Americans (52%) believe our democracy is weaker today than in the past.
 - By contrast, only a quarter (25%) of Americans say our democracy is stronger. Independents (59%) and Democrats (61%) are more likely than Republicans (40%) to consider U.S. democracy weaker today. Additionally, half of Americans (51%) cite a decline in elected officials' character and values.
- 72% of Americans are interested in being a part of the solution to restore civility and find common ground, and wish their elected officials will be too.
 - Despite today's divide, 71% of respondents believe it's possible to find common ground on most issues. The survey revealed that most people (69%) affirm the values set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
 - Additionally, most people agree that we can settle differences without personal attack and 80% of respondents want and expect government leaders to find common ground.
- Furthermore, a significant number of respondents believe that our democracy will be stronger in the next ten years. While not a majority, and split by party lines, 44% of Americans believe our democracy will be stronger in the next 10 years compared to 29% who think it will be weaker.

Methodology

An online survey of a nationally representative sample of 1,555 U.S. adults on issues related to civility and democracy was conducted January 21-27, 2025 by Pinkston. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 2.3%.

About the Center on Civility and Democracy

The Center on Civility and Democracy, an initiative of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to addressing the deep divisions and discord that threaten the foundations of American democracy. The Center fosters constructive solutions by promoting collaboration, respectful dialogue, and principled leadership. Learn more at www.reaganfoundation.org/center-on-civility-and-democracy.

About the Reagan Foundation and Institute

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute (RRPFI) is the sole nonprofit organization created by President Reagan charged with advancing his legacy and principles – limited government, individual liberty, economic opportunity, freedom and democracy, peace through strength, and national pride.

A globally recognized nonpartisan organization based in Simi Valley, CA, with a leading policy institute in Washington, DC, RRPFI delivers impactful public affairs programming, policy convenings and projects of national and international significance, and distinctive educational

initiatives. In addition, RRPFI sustains the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, the largest and most visited presidential library, which routinely hosts major special exhibitions.

An hour from Los Angeles International Airport, RRPFI's Simi Valley campus sits on 400 acres, serves as the final resting place of America's 40th President and former First Lady Nancy Reagan, displays a chunk of the Berlin Wall, and houses the plane President Reagan flew as Air Force One to 26 countries. Onsite are the Reagan Center for Public Affairs, Presidential Learning Center, Air Force One Pavilion, and the Reagan Leadership Academy. More information is available at www.reaganfoundation.org.

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