

THE STATE OF FREE SPEECH AND TOLERANCE IN AMERICA

Attitudes about Free Speech, Campus Speech,
Religious Liberty, and Tolerance of Political Expression

Findings from the Cato Institute 2017 Free Speech and Tolerance Survey



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Overview

Americans Say Political Correctness Has Silenced Discussions Society Needs to Have; Most Have Views They're Afraid to Share

Nearly three-fourths (71%) of Americans believe that political correctness has done more to silence important discussions our society needs to have. A little more than a quarter (28%) instead believe that political correctness has done more to help people avoid offending others.

The consequences are personal—58% of Americans believe the political climate today prevents them from saying things they believe. Democrats are unique, however, in that a slim majority (53%) do not feel the need to self-censor. Conversely, strong majorities of Republicans (73%) and independents (58%) say they keep some political beliefs to themselves.

Americans Oppose Hate Speech Bans but Say Hate Speech Is Morally Unacceptable

Most Americans (59%) think people should be allowed to express unpopular opinions in public, even those deeply offensive to other people. Forty percent (40%) think government should prevent hate speech in public. Nonetheless, an overwhelming majority (79%) agree that it is “morally unacceptable” to engage in hate speech against racial or religious groups. Thus, the public appears to distinguish between *allowing* offensive speech and *endorsing* it.

Despite this, the survey also found Americans willing to censor, regulate, or punish a wide variety of speech and expression they personally find offensive:

- 51% of strong liberals say it's “morally acceptable” to punch Nazis.
- 53% of Republicans favor stripping U.S. citizenship from people who burn the American flag.
- 51% of Democrats support a law that requires Americans use transgender people's preferred gender pronouns.
- 47% of Republicans favor bans on building new mosques.
- 58% of Democrats say employers should punish employees for offensive Facebook posts.
- 65% of Republicans say NFL players should be fired if they refuse to stand for the national anthem.

82% Say It's Hard to Ban Hate Speech Because People Can't Agree On What Speech Is Hateful or Offensive

An overwhelming majority (82%) of Americans agree that it would be difficult to ban hate speech because people can't agree what speech is hateful and offensive. Indeed, when presented with specific statements and ideas, Americans can't agree on what speech is hateful, offensive, or simply a political opinion:

- 59% of liberals say it's hate speech to say transgender people have a mental disorder, only 17% of conservatives agree.
- 39% of conservatives believe it's hate speech to say the police are racist, only 17% of liberals agree.
- 80% of liberals say it's hateful or offensive to say illegal immigrants should be deported, only 36% of conservatives agree.
- 87% of liberals say it's hateful or offensive to say women shouldn't fight in military combat roles; 47% of conservatives agree.
- 90% of liberals say it's hateful or offensive to say homosexuality is a sin; 47% of conservatives agree.

Black, Hispanic, and White Americans Disagree about How Free Speech Operates

African Americans and Hispanics are more likely than white Americans to believe:

- Free speech does more to protect majority opinions, not minority viewpoints (59%, 49%, 34%).
- Supporting someone's right to say racist things is as bad as holding racist views yourself (65%, 61%, 34%).
- People who don't respect others don't deserve the right of free speech (59%, 62%, 36%).
- Hate speech is an act of violence (75%, 72%, 46%).
- Our society can prohibit hate speech and still protect free speech (69%, 71%, 49%).
- People usually have bad intentions when they express offensive opinions (70%, 75%, 52%).

However, black, Hispanic, and white Americans agree that free speech ensures the truth will ultimately prevail (68%, 70%, 66%). Majorities also agree that it would be difficult to ban hate speech since people can't agree on what hate speech is (59%, 77%, 87%).

Two-Thirds Say Colleges Aren't Doing Enough to Teach the Value of Free Speech

Two-thirds (66%) of Americans say colleges and universities aren't doing enough to teach young Americans today about the value of free speech. When asked which is more important, 65% say colleges should "expose students to all types of viewpoints, even if they are offensive or biased against certain groups."

About a third (34%) say colleges should “prohibit offensive speech that is biased against certain groups.”

But Americans are conflicted. Despite their desire for viewpoint diversity, a slim majority (53%) also agree that “colleges have an obligation to protect students from offensive speech and ideas that could create a difficult learning environment.” This share rises to 66% among Democrats, but 57% of Republicans disagree.

76% Say Students Shutting Down Offensive Speakers Reveals “Broader Pattern” of How Students Cope

More than three-fourths (76%) of Americans say that recent campus protests and cancellations of controversial speakers are part of a “broader pattern” of how college students deal with offensive ideas. About a quarter (22%) think these protests and shutdowns are simply isolated incidents.

However, when asked about specific speakers, about half of Americans with college experience think a wide variety should not be allowed to speak at their college:

- A speaker who says that all white people are racist (51%)
- A speaker who says Muslims shouldn’t be allowed to come to the U.S. (50%)
- A speaker who says that transgender people have a mental disorder (50%)
- A speaker who publicly criticizes and disrespects the police (49%)
- A speaker who says all Christians are backward and brainwashed (49%)
- A speaker who says the average IQ of whites and Asians is higher than African Americans and Hispanics (48%)
- A speaker who says the police are justified in stopping African Americans at higher rates than other groups (48%)
- A speaker who says all illegal immigrants should be deported (41%)
- A speaker who says men on average are better at math than women (40%)

Excluding a speaker who would disrespect police, Democrats are about 15 to 30 points more likely than Republicans to say each of these speakers should not be allowed to speak.

65% Say Colleges Should Discipline Students Who Shut Down Invited Campus Speakers

Two-thirds (65%) say colleges need to discipline students who disrupt invited speakers and prevent them from speaking. However, the public is divided on how: 46% want to give students a warning, 31% want the incident noted on the student’s academic record, 22% want students to pay a fine, 20% want students suspended, 19% favor arresting students, and 13% want students fully expelled.

Democrats take a softer while Republicans take a harder approach to handling disruptive college protestors. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Democrats say colleges should listen to and address the students' concerns, compared to 36% of Republicans. Conversely, Republicans are two to six times as likely as Democrats to support some sort of punishment for the students, such as suspending or expelling them (47% vs. 15%), noting the incident on the students' records (41% vs. 22%), or having police arrest the students (32% vs. 7%).

Most people support the heckler's veto. A majority (58%) say colleges should cancel controversial speakers if administrators believe the students will stage a violent protest otherwise. Democrats and Republicans again disagree: Democrats say universities should cancel the speaker (74%) and Republicans say they should not cancel the speaker (54%) if the students threaten violence.

People of Color Don't Find Most Microaggressions Offensive

The survey finds that many microaggressions that colleges and universities advise faculty and students to avoid aren't considered offensive by most African Americans and Latinos. The percentage who say these microaggressions are not offensive are as follows:

- *Telling a recent immigrant: "You speak good English."* Black: 67%; Latino: 77%
- *Telling a racial minority: "You are so articulate."* Black: 56%; Latino: 63%
- *Saying "I don't notice people's race."* Black: 71%; Latino: 80%
- *Saying "America is a melting pot."* Black: 77%; Latino: 70%
- *Saying "Everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough."* Black: 77%; Latino: 89%
- *Saying "America is the land of opportunity."* Black: 93%; Latino: 89%

The one microaggression that African Americans (68%) agree is offensive is telling a racial minority, "you are a credit to your race." Latinos are evenly divided.

Americans Know Safe Spaces, Not Microaggressions

A majority (66%) of Americans have heard of safe spaces, but half or less are familiar with other social justice terms and phrases popular on college campuses today, including: cultural appropriation (50%), trigger warnings (49%), "check your privilege" (48%), microaggressions (43%), and "mansplaining" (41%).

In contrast, strong majorities of current college students and graduate students are familiar with all of these words and phrases: safe spaces (86%), cultural appropriation (76%), trigger warnings (75%), "check your privilege" (77%), microaggressions (66%), and "mansplaining" (69%).

Americans Don't Think Colleges Need to Advise Students on Halloween Costumes

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the public say colleges shouldn't advise students about offensive Halloween costumes and should instead let students work it out on their own. A third (33%) think it is the responsibility of the university to advise students not to wear costumes that stereotype racial or ethnic groups at off-campus parties.

A majority of African Americans (56%) believe universities should intervene and advise against offensive costumes. Conversely, a strong majority (71%) of white Americans and a majority of Latinos (56%) believe that college students should discuss offensive Halloween costumes among themselves without administrator involvement.

20% of Current Students Say College Faculty Has Balanced Mix of Political Views

Only 20% of current college and graduate students believe their college or university faculty has a balanced mix of political views. A plurality (39%) say most college and university professors are liberal, 27% believe most are politically moderate, and 12% believe most are conservative.

Democratic and Republican students see their college campuses differently. A majority (59%) of Republican college students believe that most faculty members are liberal. In contrast, only 35% of Democratic college students agree most professors are liberal.

51% Oppose Bias Reporting System, 68% of Current Students Support It

A slim majority (51%) of Americans oppose, while nearly as many (48%) support, the idea of a confidential reporting system at colleges and universities in which students could report people who make offensive comments about a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability status.

This "bias reporting system," as it's often referred to, is highly popular among current students. More than two-thirds (68%) of college students and graduate students support it, while less than a third oppose (30%).

What Beliefs and Expression Should Get People Fired?

Americans tend to oppose firing people for their beliefs or expression. However, Democrats and Republicans differ on what beliefs or expressive acts they believe are fireable offenses:

- Republicans (54%) are more likely than Democrats (38%) to say a business executive should be fired if she or he burned the American flag during a weekend political protest.
- Republicans (65%) are far more likely than Democrats (19%) to say NFL players should be fired for refusing to stand for the national anthem before games.
- Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say a business executive should be fired if he or she believes:
 - transgender people have a mental disorder (44% vs. 14%)
 - homosexuality is a sin (32% vs. 10%)
 - psychological differences help explain why there are more male than female engineers (34% vs. 14%)

63% of Republicans Say Journalists Are an “Enemy of the American People”

A majority of Republicans (63%) agree with President Trump that journalists today are an “enemy of the American people.” Conversely, most Americans (64%), as well as 89% of Democrats and 61% of independents, do not view journalists as the enemy.

Despite this, Republicans (63%) agree with most Americans (70%), including Democrats (76%) and independents (71%), that government should not have the power to stop news stories even if officials say they are biased or inaccurate.

Most Americans Perceive Media Bias, but Democrats Believe Media Is Balanced

Most Americans believe many major news outlets have a liberal bias, including the *New York Times* (52%), CNN (50%), and MSNBC (59%).¹ Fox News, on the other hand, is perceived to have a conservative bias (56%). Americans are divided about whether CBS is balanced (42%) or has a liberal bias (40%). Local news stations are a rare trusted source. A majority (54%) say their local TV station provides balanced news coverage without bias.

Majorities of Democrats believe most major news organizations are balanced in their reporting, including CBS (72%), CNN (55%), the *New York Times* (55%), as well as their local news station (67%). A plurality (44%) also believe the *Wall Street Journal* is balanced. The two exceptions are that a plurality (47%) believe

¹ Percentages have been calculated among Americans with an opinion of the news source. The following were not familiar with each of these news sources: CNN: 16%, Fox: 13%, MSNBC: 22%, CBS: 19%, Local TV News Station: 18%, *New York Times*: 24%, *Wall Street Journal*: 29%.

MSNBC has a liberal tilt and a strong majority (71%) say Fox has a conservative bias.

Republicans, on the other hand, see things differently. Overwhelming majorities believe liberal bias colors reporting at the *New York Times* (80%), CNN (81%), CBS (73%), and MSNBC (80%). A plurality also feel the *Wall Street Journal* (48%) has a liberal bias. One exception is that a plurality (44%) believe Fox News has a conservative bias, while 41% believe it provides unbiased reporting.

Americans Say Wedding Businesses Should Be Required to Serve LGBT People, Not Weddings

The public distinguishes between a business serving people versus weddings:

- A plurality (50%) of Americans say that businesses *should* be required to “provide services to gay and lesbian people,” even if doing so violates the business owner’s religious beliefs.
- But, 68% say a baker *should not* be required to provide a special-order wedding cake for a same-sex wedding if doing so violates their religious convictions.

Few support punishing businesses who refuse service to same-sex weddings. Two-thirds (66%) say nothing should happen to a bakery who refuses to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding. A fifth (20%) would boycott the bakery. Another 22% think government should sanction the bakery in some way, such as by fining the bakery (12%), requiring an apology (10%), issuing a warning (8%), taking away their business license (6%), or sending the baker to jail (1%).

Clinton Voters Can’t Be Friends with Trump Voters

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of Hillary Clinton’s voters agree that it’s “hard” to be friends with Donald Trump’s voters. However, only 34% of Trump’s voters feel the same way about Clinton’s. Instead, nearly two-thirds (64%) of Trump voters don’t think it’s difficult to be friends with Clinton voters.

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For questions please contact:
Emily Ekins
eekins@cato.org

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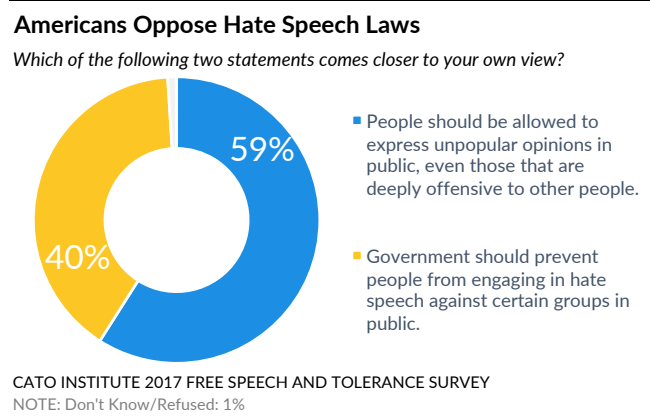
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Washington, D.C. 20001
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What Speech Should Be Legal?

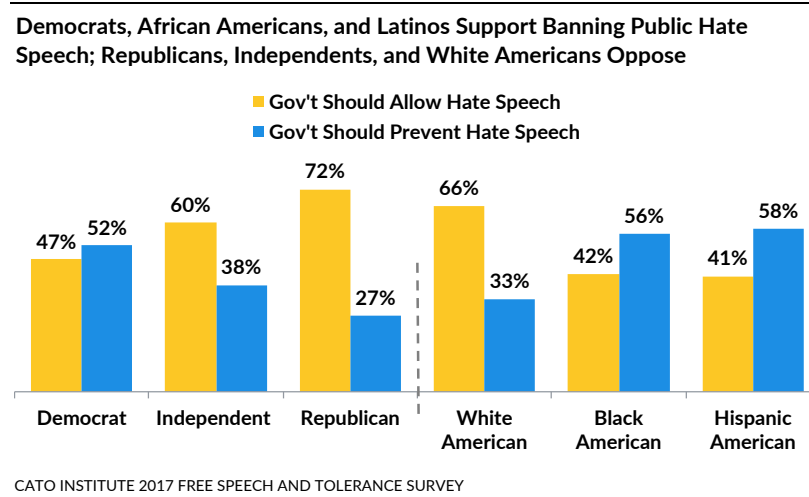
Hate Speech

59% of Americans Oppose Hate Speech Laws

Most Americans (59%) say people should be allowed to express unpopular opinions in public, even those that are deeply offensive to other people. A substantial minority (40%), however, say government should prevent people from engaging in hate speech against certain groups in public.



Racial minorities support government banning public hate speech, including 56% of African Americans and 58% of Latinos. Conversely, a majority of white Americans (66%) oppose banning hate speech.



While solid majorities of Republicans (72%) and independents (60%) oppose government banning hate speech, Democrats stand out with a slim majority in support (52%). However, African American and Latino Democrats largely drive these numbers. A majority (55%) of white Democrats say government should allow public hate speech, but majorities of black Democrats (59%) and Hispanic Democrats (65%) say it should prevent such speech in public.

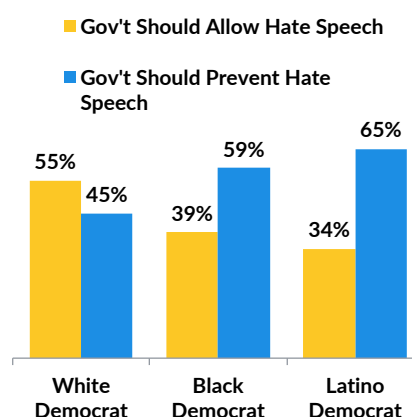
Thus, the Democratic Party is divided on matters of free speech. White Democrats are more likely to oppose government regulations on speech while black and Hispanic Democrats are more likely to support it.

Current college and graduate students diverge from Americans who have already graduated from college. About half (49%) of current students say government should ban hate speech while the same proportion (49%) say it should not. In contrast, among college *graduates*, 64% say hate speech should be legal and a third (36%) say it should not.

Using a political typology to identify ideological groups,² we find that Libertarians (82%) are the most opposed to hate speech laws, followed by Conservatives (75%) and a slim majority (53%) of Liberals. However, nearly two-thirds of Populists (64%) say government should prevent hate speech in public.

Altogether, Hispanic and black Americans, Democrats, women, Populists, and college students are most supportive of the government prohibiting public hate speech. Whites, Republicans, independents, men, and Libertarians are most opposed.

Democrats Are Divided over Banning Hate Speech



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Latinos, African Americans, Women, Democrats, College Students Most Supportive of Hate Speech Laws

Which comes closer to your own view? (1) People should be allowed to express unpopular opinions in public, even those that are deeply offensive to other people. (2) Government should prevent people from engaging in hate speech against certain groups in public.

	Gov't Allow Hate Speech	Gov't Prohibit Hate Speech	Diff
All	59%	40%	-19
White	66%	33%	-33
African American	42%	56%	+14
Hispanic	41%	58%	+17
Male	67%	32%	-35
Female	51%	48%	-3
Democrat	47%	52%	+5
Independent	60%	38%	-22
Republican	72%	27%	-45
Libertarian	82%	17%	-65
Conservative	75%	23%	-52
Liberal	53%	47%	-6
Populist	34%	64%	+30
Current Students	49%	49%	0
College Grads	64%	36%	-28

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² To improve upon ideological self-identification (i.e. liberal/conservative) this report uses answers to a three-question screen (found in Appendix A) about the role of government in economic and personal affairs to identify four primary groups of Americans: Libertarian (16%), Conservative (23%), Liberal (25%), Populist (16%). Populists are social conservatives who also support bigger government.

79% Say Hate Speech Is Morally Unacceptable

Although most Americans say government should not prevent people from engaging in public hate speech, most think hate speech is morally unacceptable. Nearly 8 in 10 (79%) say that it is “morally unacceptable” to “say things that might be offensive to racial or religious groups.”

This indicates that Americans make a distinction between allowing speech and endorsing that speech. Most think that speech that is offensive or insulting toward minority groups should be legally permitted, but that it is still wrong.



Say It's "**Morally Unacceptable**" to Say Offensive Things to Racial or Religious Groups

82% Say It's Hard to Ban Hate Speech Because People Can't Agree On What Speech Is Hateful

More than 8 in 10 Americans (82%) believe that it's hard to ban hate speech “because people can't agree what speech is hateful.” Seventeen percent (17%) disagree.

As a later section will show, Americans are sharply at odds over what speech they would personally define as hateful, offensive, or neither. For instance, a majority of Democrats (52%) believe saying that transgender people have a mental disorder is hate speech. Only 17% of Republicans agree. On the other hand, 42% of Republicans believe it's hateful to say that the police are racist, while only 19% of Democrats agree.



Say It's Hard to Ban Hate Speech Because People Can't Agree On What Speech is Hateful

Majorities across partisan groups, demographic groups, college students, and non-college students alike agree that hate speech is hard to define and thus may be hard to regulate.

24% Think It's Illegal to Make Racist Statements in Public

Most Americans (75%) are aware that making racist statements in public is legal under the First Amendment. However, a substantial minority—24%—think hate speech is currently prohibited by law.

Unsurprisingly, those with less education are more likely to think that hate speech is currently illegal. About a third (32%) of those with high school degrees or less think hate speech is illegal, compared to 19% of college graduates and 13% of those with post-graduate degrees.



Think Hate Speech Is Currently Illegal in the United States

Whom Should Hate Speech Laws Protect?

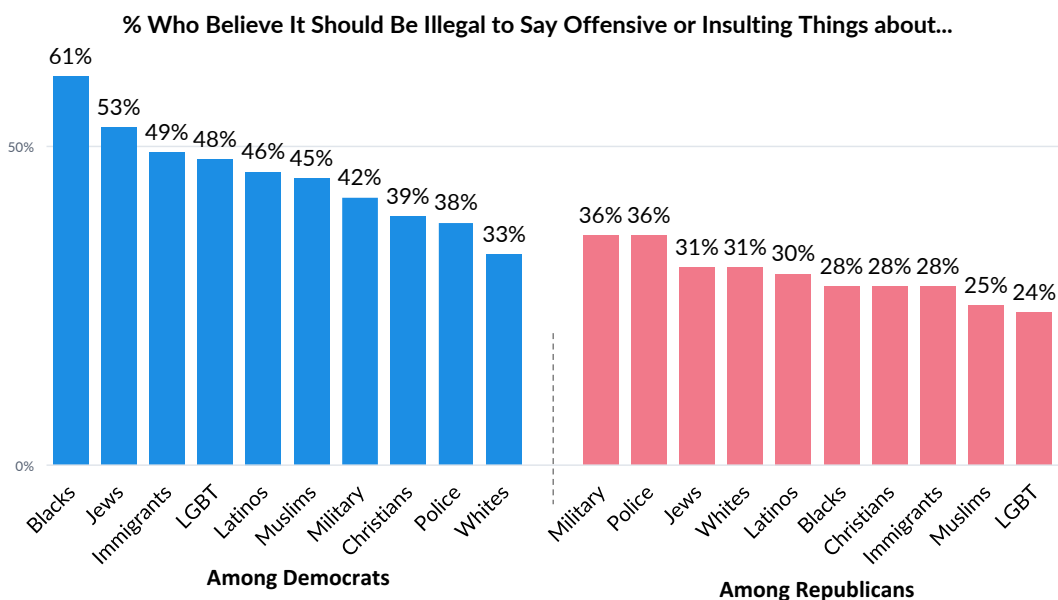
When asked if Americans might favor banning hate speech against particular groups of people, Americans still oppose such laws. There is, however, relatively more support for banning offensive and insulting speech against African Americans (46%). After that, about 4 in 10 would support banning offensive speech about Jewish Americans (41%), immigrants (40%), armed service members (40%), Hispanics (39%), Muslims (37%), the police (37%), gays, lesbians, and transgender people (36%), and Christians (35%). About a third (32%) would support banning insulting speech about white people.

Democrats Favor Banning Hate Speech Against African Americans, Jews

Interestingly, Democrats favor hate speech protections for some groups more than others. Majorities of Democrats support making it illegal to say offensive or insulting things in public about African Americans (61%) and Jewish Americans (53%). Compared to Republicans, Democrats tend to be more supportive of hate speech laws across the board. Nearly half support hate speech laws for immigrants (49%), gays, lesbians and transgender people (48%), Latinos (46%), and Muslims (45%). About 4 in 10 support such laws for military members (42%), Christians (39%), the police (38%), and a third (33%) support such laws for white Americans.

Democrats Favor Banning Hate Speech against African Americans and Jews

Would you favor or oppose a law that would make it illegal to say offensive or insulting things in public about...



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In contrast, majorities of Republicans tend to more consistently oppose hate speech laws for all the groups included on the survey, with about 3 in 10 in support. However, Republicans are relatively more likely to support banning hate speech against military service members (36%) and the police (36%) but less likely to support such laws for Muslims (25%) and LGBT people (24%).

African Americans and Hispanics Most Supportive of Hate Speech Laws

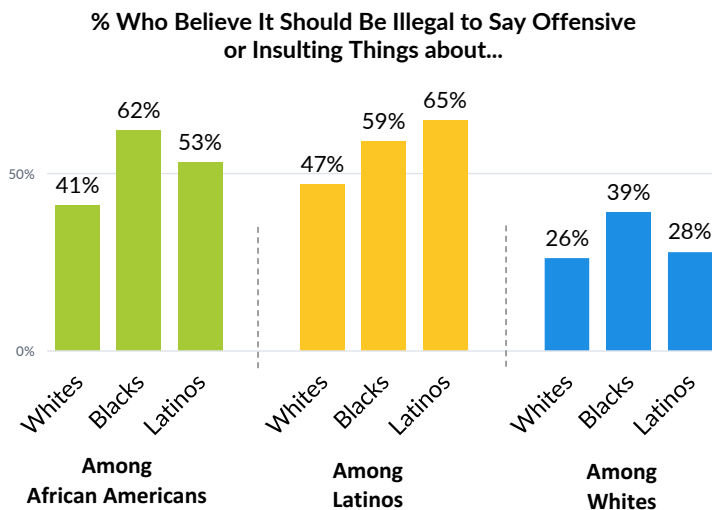
Racial minority groups are more likely than whites to support hate speech laws for groups across the board, but particularly members of their own racial/ethnic group. Nevertheless, blacks and Hispanics are more supportive than white Americans of laws banning offensive speech about white Americans as well.

African Americans are most likely to favor a law that bans hate speech against African Americans (62%). Fewer support banning hate speech against Hispanic (53%) and white (41%) Americans.

Latinos are most likely to favor a law that bans hate speech against Latinos (65%). A majority (59%) also favor making offensive speech against African Americans illegal and 47% favor banning hate speech against white Americans.

African Americans and Hispanics Most Supportive of Hate Speech Laws

Would you favor or oppose a law that would make it illegal to say offensive or insulting things in public about...



Whites are comparatively less likely to support banning hate speech against particular racial/ethnic groups. Nevertheless, whites are most likely to favor a law that bans hate speech against black Americans (39%). A little more than a quarter support banning offensive speech about Latino (28%) and white (26%) Americans.

Black and Hispanic Americans Most in Favor of Law Banning Offensive Speech against Police

Hispanic (51%) and black (40%) Americans are also more likely than white Americans (32%) to support making it illegal to say offensive or disrespectful things about the police. This is surprising given that surveys have long shown that

African Americans and Latinos view the police more negatively.³ The data reveal that both groups tend to more consistently support laws that restrict offensive public speech about any group, not just some groups.

As one 26-year-old Hispanic female further explained, “we are all human beings, we must all respect each other equally.” Similarly, a 31-year-old black male in the survey explained that he supported hate speech laws not only for African Americans “but it should be for everybody because it will stop the hate.”

Women Support Banning Hate Speech against African Americans

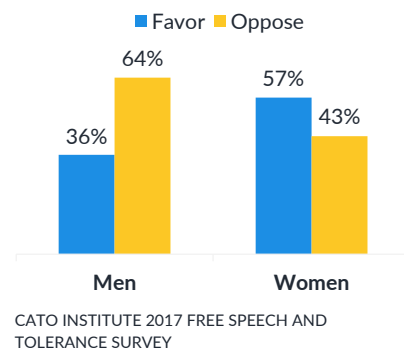
Women are more likely than men to support hate speech laws for different racial, religious, and other groups—particularly for African Americans.

A majority of women (57%) favor a law that would make it illegal to say offensive or insulting things about African Americans in public while 43% oppose. In contrast, only 36% of men would similarly favor this law while 64% would oppose it.

Majorities of women oppose similar laws for other groups. However, they are about 15 points more likely than men to favor banning hate speech against immigrants (46% vs. 33%), gays, lesbians, and transgender people (45% vs. 27%), the police (45% vs. 28%), Hispanics (45% vs. 30%), Muslims (44% vs. 30%), Jewish people (45% vs. 35%), and Christians (43% vs. 27%).

Women Support Banning Hate Speech against African Americans

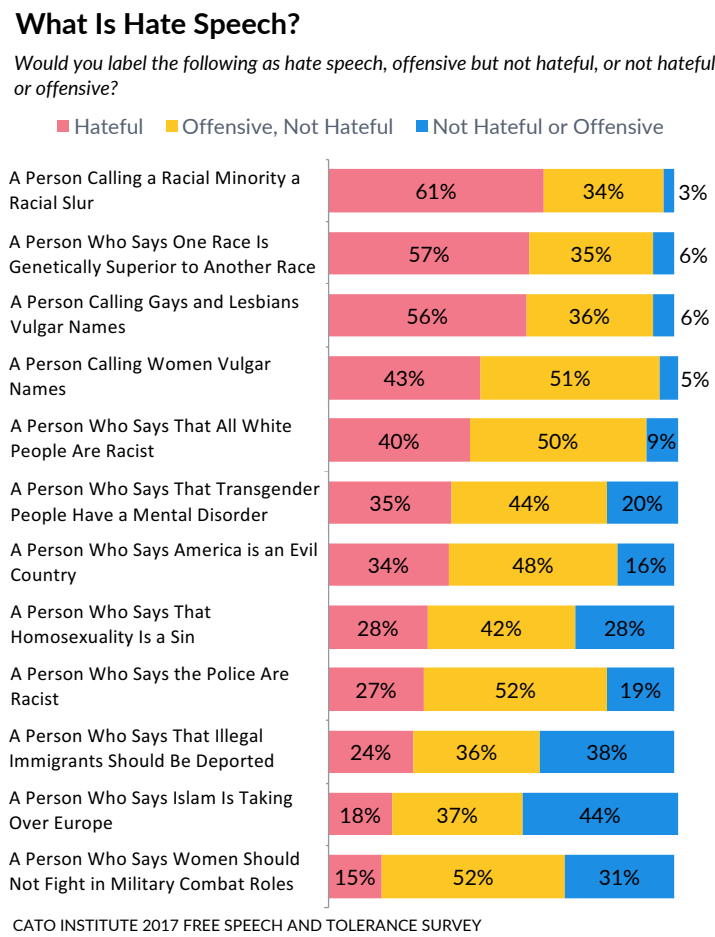
Would you favor or oppose a law that would make it illegal to say offensive or insulting things in public about African Americans?



³ Emily Ekins, “Policing in America: Understanding Public Attitudes Toward the Police,” Cato Institute, December 7, 2016, <https://www.cato.org/publications/working-paper/policing-america-understanding-public-attitudes-toward-police-results>.

How Do Americans Define Hate Speech?

Besides slurs and biological racism, Americans are strikingly at odds over what speech and ideas constitute hate.⁴



First, majorities agree that calling a racial minority a racial slur (61%), saying one race is genetically superior to another (57%), or calling gays and lesbians vulgar names (56%) is not just offensive—but is hate speech. Interestingly a majority do not think calling a woman a vulgar name is hateful (43%), but most would say it's offensive (51%). Less than half believe it's hateful to say that all white people are racist (40%), transgender people have a mental disorder (35%), America is an

⁴ In this report, biological racism refers to a belief that some races are genetically superior or inferior to one another.

evil country (34%), homosexuality is a sin (28%), the police are racist (27%), or illegal immigrants should be deported (24%). Less than a fifth believe it's hateful to say Islam is taking over Europe (18%) or that women should not fight in military combat roles (15%).

Liberals and conservatives significantly diverge over what speech they define as hateful, offensive, or simply an opinion. (See Appendix B).

Majorities of Americans agree with liberals that slurs and biological racism are hateful. However, majorities do not agree with liberals that it's hateful to say "transgender people have a mental disorder" (35% of all Americans vs. 59% of liberals) or to call women a vulgar name (43% vs. 54%).

Strikingly, majorities of conservatives don't think any of these ideas are "hateful" although most consider them "offensive" or hateful. In fact, conservatives are about 40 points less likely than liberals to think that saying transgender people have a mental disorder (17% vs. 59%) or saying racial slurs (43% vs. 81%) are hateful. While strong majorities of conservatives agree these are at least *offensive* or hateful, they are less likely to equate these phrases and ideas with hate specifically.

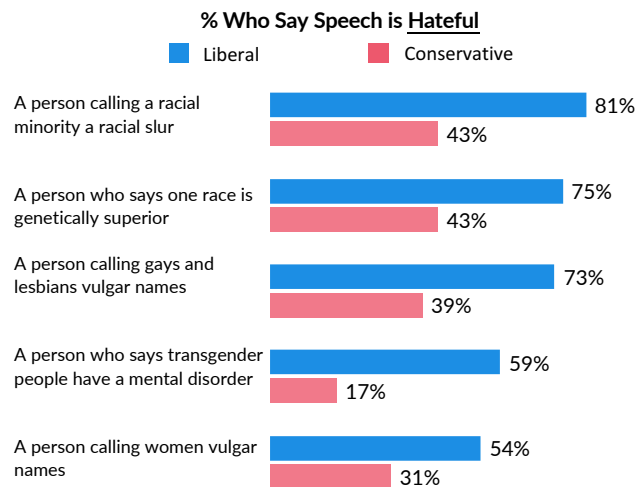
Liberals are also more likely than conservatives to view a variety of political opinions and speech as either *offensive* or hateful.

Liberals are more than 40 points more likely than conservatives to think it is offensive or hateful for a person to say that homosexuality is a sin (90% vs. 47%), women shouldn't fight in military combat roles (87% vs. 47%), illegal immigrants should be deported (80% vs. 36%), or Islam is taking over Europe (79% vs. 33%). Not even a majority of conservatives find these statements to be offensive or hateful.

Notice that two of these, women fighting in combat roles and deporting illegal immigrants, are *policy positions* that a substantial number of Americans hold.

Liberals More Likely Than Conservatives to Say Speech Is Hateful

Would you label the following as hate speech, offensive but not hateful, or not hateful or offensive?



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Key Insights: Liberals are more likely to find these views "**hateful**" while conservatives are more likely to think these views are "**offensive, but not hateful.**"

Yet, to merely express these as political positions would also be viewed as highly offensive to a large share of the population.

Furthermore, President Trump has explicitly advocated for deporting illegal immigrants during his 2016 presidential campaign.⁵ Thus, a large share of Americans not only disagree with his policy position but also find it highly offensive if not hateful.

What Most Offends Conservatives

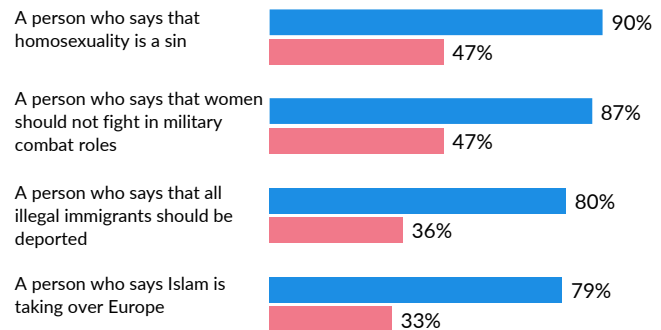
Majorities of conservatives did not find any of the statements included on the survey hateful. However, they were *more likely* than liberals to find several statements hateful. First, conservatives are about twice as likely as liberals to think it's hateful to say the police are racist (39% vs. 17%). Second, conservatives are somewhat more likely to believe it's hateful to say that America is an evil country (39% vs. 29%). Third, conservatives are somewhat more likely than liberals to think it's hateful to say that all white people are racist (44% vs. 35%).

Liberals More Likely Than Conservatives to Say Speech Is Offensive

Would you label the following as hate speech, offensive but not hateful, or not hateful or offensive?

% Who Say Speech is Offensive or Hateful

■ All ■ Liberal ■ Conservative



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⁵ Heather Haddon, "Donald Trump Says He Would Deport Illegal Immigrants," *Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-saying-illegal-immigrants-have-to-go-targets-obama-orders-1439738967>.

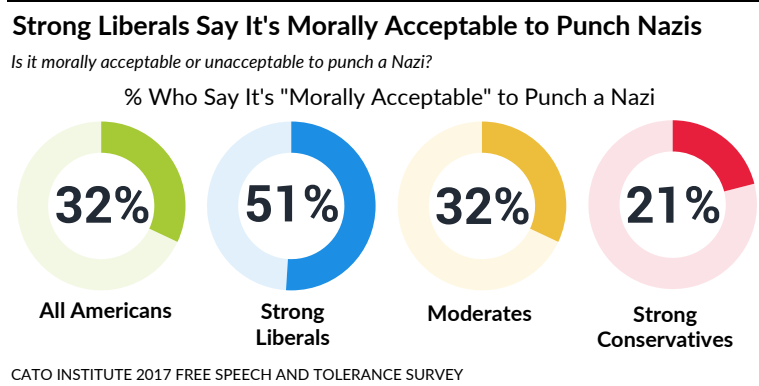
Is Violence an Appropriate Response to Hate Speech?

51% of Strong Liberals Say It's Morally Acceptable to Punch Nazis

Most Americans (68%) do not think it's morally acceptable to use physical violence against Nazis, while 32% say it is morally acceptable.⁶

However, strong liberals stand out with a slim majority (51%) who say it's moral to punch Nazis in the face. Only 21% of strong conservatives agree. The survey found liberals were more likely to consider upsetting and controversial ideas “hateful” rather than simply “offensive.” This may help partially explain why staunch liberals are more comfortable than the average American with using violence against Nazis.

Strong liberals' approval of Nazi-punching is not representative of Democrats as a whole. A majority (56%) of Democrats believe it is not morally acceptable to punch a Nazi. Thus, tolerance of violence as a response to offensive speech and ideas is found primarily on the far Left of the Democratic Party.



Approval for punching Nazis also varies with age and race. Millennials (42%) are nearly twice as likely as people over 55 (24%) to say violence is morally justified. African Americans (45%) are also 17 points more likely than whites (28%) and 10 points more likely than Latinos (35%) to say punching Nazis is morally acceptable. Nevertheless, majorities of each of these groups say physical force is not justified, even against a Nazi.

⁶ Data on punching Nazis in this section come from a Cato Institute/YouGov survey conducted August 21 to 22, 2017 (N=1,141). Question wording: "Is it morally acceptable or unacceptable to punch a Nazi?" See Survey Methodology for further details.

Other Speech Bans

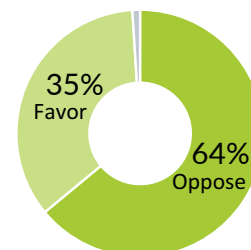
64% of Americans Oppose Banning Holocaust Denial

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Americans oppose a law that would make it illegal to deny that the Holocaust happened. About a third (35%) would support banning Holocaust denial. These results put Americans at odds with a number of European countries that have outlawed denying the historicity of the Holocaust.⁷

Support for banning Holocaust denial varies with ideology. A plurality (50%) of strong liberals support such a law, followed by 43% of liberals, 33% of moderates, 30% of conservatives, and 26% of strong conservatives.

Americans Oppose Banning Holocaust Denial

Would you favor or oppose a law that would make it illegal to make statements in public that deny that the Holocaust happened?



CATO INSTITUTE 2017 FREE SPEECH & TOLERANCE SURVEY Don't Know/Refused 1%

54% of Americans Oppose Banning Sexually Explicit Public Statements

A slim majority (54%) of Americans oppose a law that would ban making sexually explicit statements in public, while 45% would oppose.

Although majorities of Democrats (52%), Republicans (55%), and independents (57%) all oppose such a law, certain demographics would support it.

Women (54%) are more than 20 points more likely than men (36%) to support banning sexually explicit public statements. Hispanics (55%) and African Americans (50%) are also somewhat more likely than white Americans (41%) to support such a ban.

Church attendance also predicts support for banning sexually explicit public statements. A slim majority (52%) of regular churchgoers support such a law, but support declines as church attendance declines. A majority (55%) of those who seldom attend church and nearly two-thirds (63%) of those who never attend oppose a ban.

Women, Hispanics, Churchgoers, and Populists Support Banning Sexually Explicit Public Speech

Would you favor or oppose a law that would make it illegal to make statements in public that are sexually explicit?

	Favor	Oppose
All	45%	54%
White	41%	59%
African American	50%	47%
Hispanic	55%	45%
Male	36%	63%
Female	54%	46%
Libertarian	32%	67%
Conservative	45%	54%
Liberal	35%	64%
Populist	57%	41%
Church Attendance		
Once a Week+	52%	47%
Once or Twice a Year	49%	49%
Seldom	44%	55%
Never	37%	63%

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⁷ For instance, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Russia.

Libertarians (67%) and Liberals (64%) are most opposed to banning sexually explicit language in public.⁸ Conservatives also marginally oppose (54%). But Populists stand out, with a majority (57%) who say we should outlaw explicit statements. (See Appendix A).

62% Favor Law Banning Public Calls for Violent Protests

Americans oppose legal restrictions on hate speech, Holocaust denial, and sexually explicit public statements. However, nearly two-thirds (62%) would support a law making it illegal to call for violent protests. A little more than a third (37%) would oppose this law.

Outlawing public calls to violently protest is not controversial. Solid majorities of partisans and demographic groups support prohibiting this type of public speech.



Favor Ban on
Speakers Who
Advocate Violent
Protests

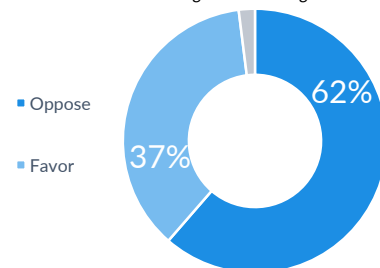
Transgender Pronoun Laws

59% of Liberals Support Transgender Pronoun Laws

Nearly 6 in 10 liberals (59%) favor a law that would require people to refer to transgender persons by their preferred gender pronouns, not their biological sex. This is in sharp contrast to what Americans overall support. Nearly two-thirds (62%) oppose a law requiring people use certain pronouns for transgender people while 37% would support it. Moderates (60%) and conservatives (82%) are highly opposed to such laws, including 59% of conservatives who *strongly* oppose.

Americans Oppose Transgender Pronoun Laws

Would you favor or oppose a law that requires people refer to a transgender person by their preferred gender pronouns and not according to their biological sex?

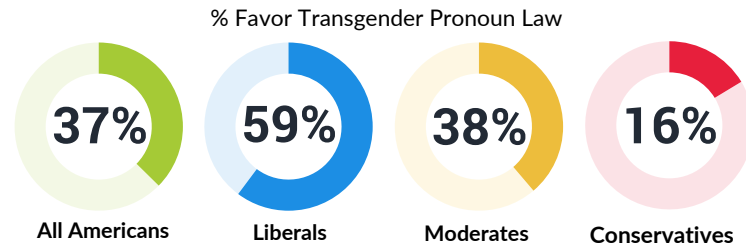


CATO INSTITUTE 2017 FREE SPEECH AND TOLERANCE SURVEY Note: Don't Know/Refused: 2%

⁸ To improve upon ideological self-identification (i.e. liberal/conservative) this report uses answers to a three-question screen (found in Appendix A) about the role of government in economic and personal affairs to identify four primary groups of Americans: Libertarian (16%), Conservative (23%), Liberal (25%), Populist (16%).

Liberals Support Transgender Pronoun Laws; Conservatives and Moderates Oppose

Would you favor or oppose a law that requires people refer to a transgender person by their preferred gender pronouns and not according to their biological sex?



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These results are relevant to the cities and states that are moving to fine or jail businesses and landlords who refuse to use transgender people's preferred pronouns. For instance, California enacted a new law that punishes long-term nursing home care staff who refuse to use a resident's preferred name or pronouns.⁹ Or in New York City, new regulatory guidance subjects landlords and businesses to fines for refusing to use transgender employees', customers', or tenants' preferred pronouns.¹⁰ Americans overall, however, do not support these laws.

“Patriotic Correctness” and Flag Burning

53% of Republicans Favor Stripping U.S. Citizenship from Flag Burners

While Democrats are more supportive of censorship when it comes to hate speech, Republicans disdain criticizing patriotic symbols like the American flag.

A majority (53%) of Republicans favor stripping a person of their U.S. citizenship if they burn the American flag, while 47% would oppose. These results fit with President Trump's tweets soon after his presidential election victory in which he called for a “loss of citizenship” to punish flag burning.¹¹

⁹ Eugene Volokh, “Jail for nursing home staff who ‘willfully and repeatedly fail to use a resident’s preferred name or pronouns?’” *Washington Post*, August 18, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2017/08/18/jail-for-nursing-home-staff-who-willfully-and-repeatedly-fail-to-use-a-residents-preferred-name-or-pronouns/?utm_term=.bfae5c923291; “Gov. Brown Signs ‘Bill of Rights’ for LGBTQ Seniors in Long-Term Care,” Equality California press release, October 4, 2017, <https://www.eqca.org/sb219signed/>.

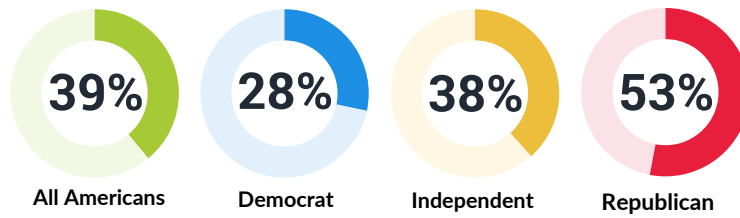
¹⁰ Eugene Volokh, “You can be fined for not calling people ‘ze’ or ‘hir,’ if that’s the pronoun they demand that you use,” *Washington Post*, May 17, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2016/05/17/you-can-be-fined-for-not-calling-people-ze-or-hir-if-thats-the-pronoun-they-demand-that-you-use/?utm_term=.5ff82da988f9.

¹¹ Charlie Savage, “Trump Calls for Revoking Flag Burners’ Citizenship. Court Rulings Forbid It,” *New York Times*, November 29, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/29/us/politics/trump-flag-burners-citizenship-first-amendment.html?_r=0.

Republicans Say Flag Burners Should Have Their U.S. Citizenship Revoked

Would you favor or oppose stripping a person of their U.S. citizenship if they burn the American flag?

% Favor Revoking Flag Burners' Citizenship



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While aligned with Trump, Republicans are out of step with the mainstream: 61% of Americans don't think we should strip people of their citizenship for flag burning. Thirty-nine percent (39%) think revoking a person's citizenship is a reasonable response to flag burning.

A strong majority of Democrats (71%) and independents (61%) oppose such a proposal. Nevertheless, a non-insignificant minority of Democrats (28%) and independents (38%) support stripping citizenship from a flag burner.

Latinos align most with Republicans on this issue: 49% agree flag burners should have their citizenship revoked. Latinos are 22 points more likely than African Americans (27%) and 10 points more likely than white Americans (39%) to support such a policy.

Support for revoking citizenship steadily declines with education. While nearly half (48%) of those with high school degrees or less agree with President Trump, only 29% of college graduates and 20% of post-grads agree.

58% of Americans Favor Law Banning Flag Burning

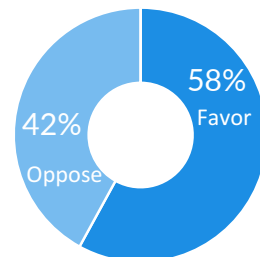
Although the Supreme Court has ruled that flag burning is protected speech under the First Amendment, a majority (58%) of Americans still favor a law banning it while 42% oppose.

Majorities of Republicans (72%) and independents (60%) also favor making it illegal to burn or desecrate the flag. Democrats stand out, with a slim majority (53%) who oppose a flag burning ban.

Hispanic Americans are most in favor (63%) of a ban on flag burning, followed by white Americans (58%). African Americans are divided, with 50% in favor and

Americans Favor Ban on Flag Burning

Would you favor or oppose a law that would make it illegal for a person to burn or desecrate the American flag?



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of Democrats
Oppose a Ban on
Flag Burning

49% opposed. Women are also more likely than men to support such a ban (65% vs. 50%).

Libertarians (56%) and Liberals (62%) stand out in opposition to a flag burning ban.¹² In contrast, nearly three-fourths of Conservatives (74%) and Populists (69%) support it. (See Appendix A).

¹² To improve upon ideological self-identification (i.e. liberal/conservative) this report uses answers to a three-question screen (found in Appendix A) about the role of government in economic and personal affairs to identify four primary groups of Americans: Libertarian (16%), Conservative (23%), Liberal (25%), Populist (16%).

Understanding Attitudes toward Free Speech

In this section, the survey report investigates the public's assumptions about how free speech operates. We find that Americans believe free speech has both benefits and costs. First, nearly two-thirds (67%) think that "freedom of speech ensures the truth will ultimately win out" and 58% say free speech does more to protect minority viewpoints. But also, most believe that speech can turn violent: 53% say hate speech is an act of violence and even more say that hate speech leads to violence against minority groups (70%). Ultimately, a majority (56%) think it's possible to both ban hate speech and still protect free speech.

There are wide racial and partisan divides over how people think free speech operates. Democrats, African Americans, and Latinos are more likely than Republicans and white Americans to believe that hate speech is violent and allows majority views to crowd out minority viewpoints, that supporting a racist's free speech right is as bad as being a racist, that people who offend others with their ideas have bad intentions, and that we can simultaneously ban hate speech and protect free speech.

% Who Agree with the Following Statements...

	All	Dem	Rep	White	Black	Hispanic
Hate speech leads to violence against minority groups	70%	89%	54%	66%	85%	79%
People usually have bad intentions when they express offensive opinions	58%	69%	47%	52%	70%	75%
Our society can prohibit hate speech and still protect free speech	56%	64%	46%	49%	69%	71%
Hate speech is an act of violence	53%	66%	41%	46%	75%	72%
People who don't respect others don't deserve the right of free speech	44%	47%	39%	36%	59%	62%
Supporting someone's right to say racist things is as bad as holding racist views yourself	43%	53%	31%	34%	65%	61%
It would be hard to ban hate speech because people can't agree what speech is hateful	82%	78%	90%	87%	59%	77%
Freedom of speech ensures the truth will ultimately win out	67%	63%	70%	66%	68%	70%
Free speech does more to protect minority viewpoints	58%	53%	66%	64%	39%	48%

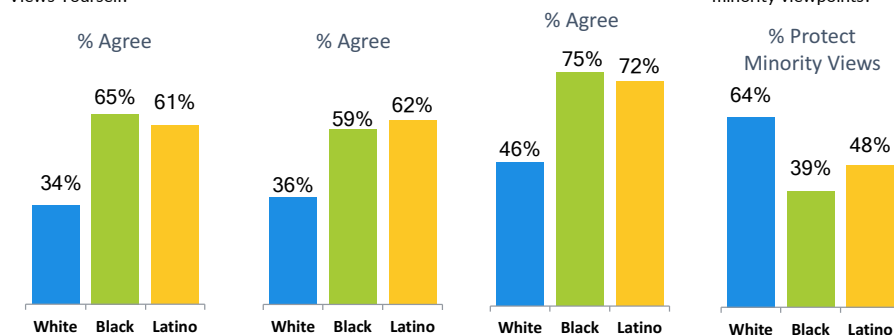
How Does Free Speech Operate?

"Supporting Someone's Right to Say Racist Things Is as Bad as Holding Racist Views Yourself."

"People Who Don't Respect Others Don't Deserve the Right of Free Speech."

"Hate Speech Is an Act of Violence."

Does free speech do more to protect opinions of the majority or more to protect minority viewpoints?



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67% Say Freedom of Speech Ensures the Truth Will Ultimately Win Out

Americans provide a strong endorsement of free speech with 67% who agree that "free speech ensures the truth will ultimately win out." About a third (32%) do not believe that truth can prevail with the free exchange of ideas.

This concept is non-controversial with strong majorities of political partisans and demographic groups who share this belief. However, strong liberals (42%) are more likely than moderates (31%) and strong conservatives (25%) to lack this confidence in free speech.



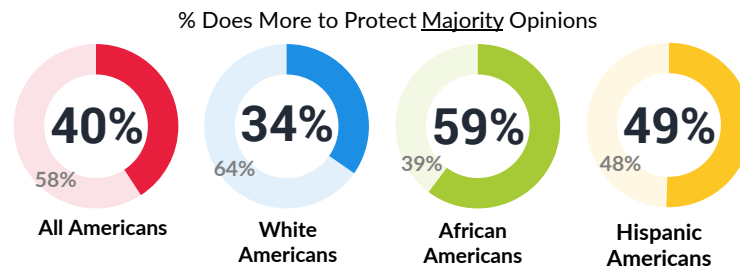
Say Free Speech Ensures Truth Will Ultimately Win Out

59% of African Americans Say Free Speech Does More to Protect Majority Opinions, Not Minority Viewpoints

Most Americans (58%) believe that free speech does more to protect minority viewpoints rather than those of the majority. However, African Americans stand out, with 59% who believe free speech does more to protect majority opinions, rather than views held by a minority of individuals. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of white Americans believe free speech primarily protects minority views. Latinos are evenly divided on this question.

Does Free Speech Do More to Protect Majority or Minority Opinions?

Do you think that free speech does more to protect opinions of the majority or more to protect minority viewpoints?



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Majorities of Democrats (53%), independents (57%), and Republicans (66%) agree that free speech does more to allow for and protect minority views.

However, the Democratic Party is divided. Six in 10 black Democrats believe free speech allows the majority to crowd out minority views, while 6 in 10 white Democrats believe it primarily protects minority views. Latino Democrats are divided with 51% who think free speech primarily protects majority opinions.

53% of Americans Say Hate Speech Is an Act of Violence

College protests of controversial speakers across the country have elevated an idea that deeply offensive speech is like an act of violence.¹³ A slim majority of Americans appear to endorse these sentiments: 53% say that “hate speech is an act of violence.” Another 46% do not believe that hate speech is violence.



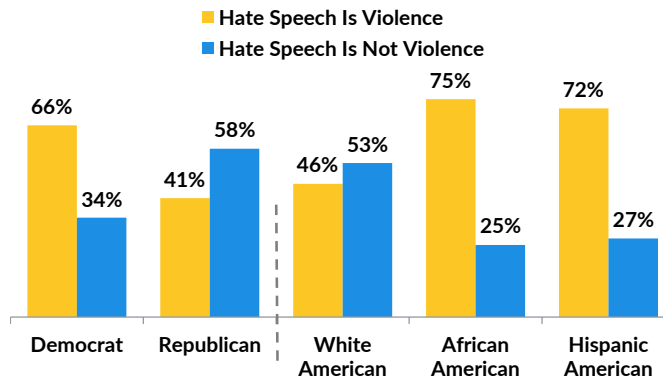
Say Hate Speech Is
an Act of Violence

Equating speech with violence is highly controversial and sharply divides Americans by political ideology, race, gender, and age.

While two-thirds (66%) of Democrats say hate speech is violence, 58% of Republicans say hate speech is *not* violence. Independents are split, with 51% who disagree hate speech is tantamount to violence.

¹³ See Lisa Feldman Barrett, “When is Speech Violence?” *New York Times*, July 14, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/14/opinion/sunday/when-is-speech-violence.html?_r=0.

Democrats, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans Say Hate Speech Is Violence



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African Americans (75%) and Latinos (72%) are nearly 30 points more likely than white Americans (46%) to believe hate speech is violence. Instead, a slim majority (53%) of white Americans believe it is not.

While nearly two-thirds (63%) of women believe hate speech is violence, a majority (56%) of men disagree.

Americans under 30 (60%) and seniors (57%) are also more likely than middle-aged Americans (35-64) to believe hate speech is violence (49%).

These differences may partially explain why Democrats, students, African Americans, Latinos, and women are more supportive of hate speech laws. Equating hate speech with violence provides a greater justification for restricting it.

One reason why Americans may believe hate speech is violence is that a majority (70%) believe that “hate speech leads to violence against minority groups.” This is a view shared by a majority of partisans and racial/ethnic groups. Nevertheless Democrats (89%), African Americans (85%), and Hispanic Americans (79%) are more likely to believe this than independents (60%), Republicans (54%), and white Americans (66%).

Is Hate Speech Violence? Democrats, African Americans, Latinos, Women, Millennials, and Seniors Say Yes

Is hate speech an act of violence?

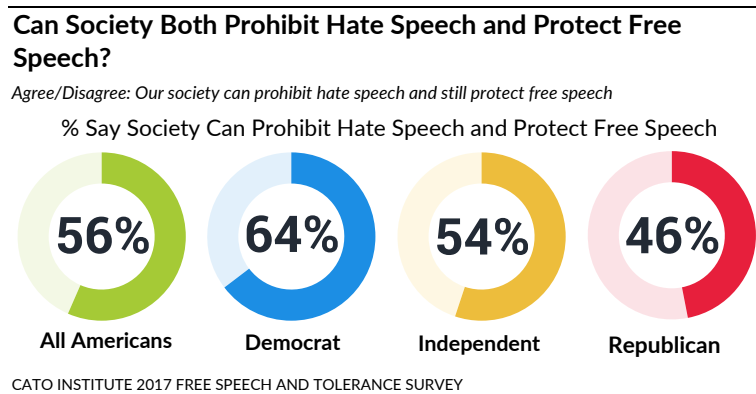
	Hate Speech Is Violence	Hate Speech Is Not Violence	Diff
All	53%	46%	+7
Democrat	66%	34%	+32
Independent	48%	51%	-3
Republican	41%	58%	-17
White American	46%	53%	-7
African American	75%	25%	+50
Hispanic American	72%	27%	+45
Male	43%	56%	-13
Female	63%	37%	+26
18-29	60%	40%	+20
30-44	51%	49%	+2
45-64	48%	51%	-3
65+	57%	41%	+16

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56% of Americans Say Society Can Prohibit Hate Speech and Protect Free Speech

A variety of campus protestors and social justice activists have argued that society can prohibit hate speech while still protecting Americans' First Amendment rights to free speech. As Scott Crow, a former Antifa organizer put it, "hate speech is not free speech."¹⁴ Similarly, a widely circulated Wellesley College newspaper staff editorial argued that "shutting down rhetoric that undermines the existence and rights of others" is "not a violation of free speech" because such rhetoric is "hate speech."¹⁵

The survey finds that a majority (56%) of Americans agree with the idea that "society can prohibit hate speech and still protect free speech." Forty-three percent (43%) disagree that society can simultaneously prohibit hate speech and protect free speech.



The idea that society can have both hate speech bans and uphold the First Amendment divides partisans and demographic groups. A majority of Democrats (64%) and independents (54%) think it's possible. A slim majority (52%) of Republicans think it's not.

Strong majorities of African Americans (69%), Latinos (71%), and women (64%) believe society can both protect free speech and ban hate speech, but white Americans and men are evenly divided. Current college students and graduate students (62%) are also more likely than college graduates (47%) to believe this can be done.

¹⁴ Jessica Suerth, "What is Antifa?" *CNN*, August 17, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/14/us/what-is-antifa-trnd/index.html>.

¹⁵ "Free Speech is Not Violated at Wellesley," *The Wellesley News*, staff editorial, April 12, 2017, <http://thewellesleynews.com/2017/04/12/free-speech-is-not-violated-at-wellesley/>.



Key Insights: The idea of upholding free speech protections but also banning hate speech may work better in theory than in practice. As an earlier section detailed, an overwhelming majority (82%) of Americans believe it would be “hard” to ban hate speech precisely because “people can’t agree on what speech is hateful.” Indeed, the survey finds Americans sharply disagree about what opinions are hateful, offensive but not hateful, or simply a political opinion. Thus, Americans think we could in theory restrict certain types of speech and still preserve the freedom to express most other opinions (56%). But most also recognize that it’s difficult to agree on a definition of hate speech, and consequently it may be hard to regulate.

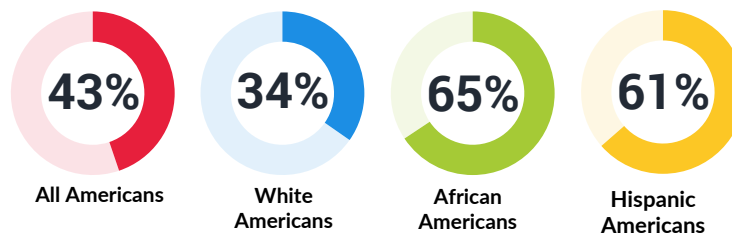
Nearly Two-Thirds of African Americans and Latinos Say Supporting Racists’ Free Speech Rights Is as Bad as Holding Racist Views Yourself

Nearly two-thirds of African Americans (65%) and Latinos (61%) agree that “supporting someone’s right to say racist things is as bad as holding racist views yourself.” About a third (34%) of white Americans agree. This suggests that Americans of color may not believe people are reasoning in good faith when they say we should *allow* speech even if we strongly *disagree* with it.

Is Supporting Racists’ Free Speech Rights the Same as Holding Racist Views Yourself?

Agree/Disagree: Supporting someone’s right to say racist things is as bad as holding racist views yourself.

% Agree



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This perspective was on full display at the College of William and Mary when student protestors recently prevented an invited ACLU affiliate from speaking at an event, “Students and the First Amendment.” Protestors explained this was in retaliation for the ACLU’s defense of white nationalists’ free speech rights.¹⁶ The Black Lives Matter of William and Mary student group wrote on their Facebook page, where they live streamed their shut down of the event: “We want to reaffirm our position of zero tolerance for white supremacy no matter what form

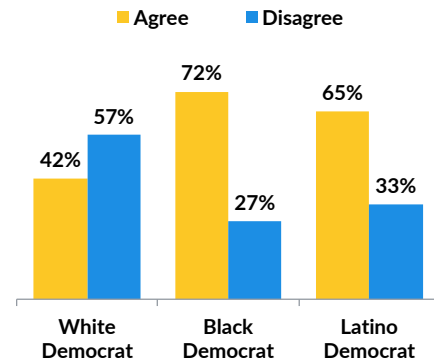
¹⁶ Francesca Truitt, “Black Lives Matter Protests American Civil Liberties Union,” *The Flat Hat* (College of William and Mary newspaper), October 2, 2017, <http://flathatnews.com/2017/10/02/black-lives-matter-protests-american-civil-liberties-union/?platform=hootsuite>.

it decides to masquerade in."¹⁷ From these students' perspective, the ACLU supporting someone's right to say racist things was as bad as being a racist organization.

Most Democrats (53%) also believe supporting a racist's free speech rights is as bad as holding racist views. However, the Democratic Party is divided by race. While 72% of black Democrats and 65% of Latino Democrats believe this, only 42% of white Democrats agree. Instead, a majority (57%) of white Democrats don't believe supporting a racist's right to free speech is the same as supporting racism. Majorities of independents (57%) and Republicans (66%) agree.

Democrats Disagree Whether Supporting a Racist's Speech Rights Is as Bad as Being Racist

Agree/Disagree: Supporting someone's right to say racist things is as bad as holding racist views yourself.



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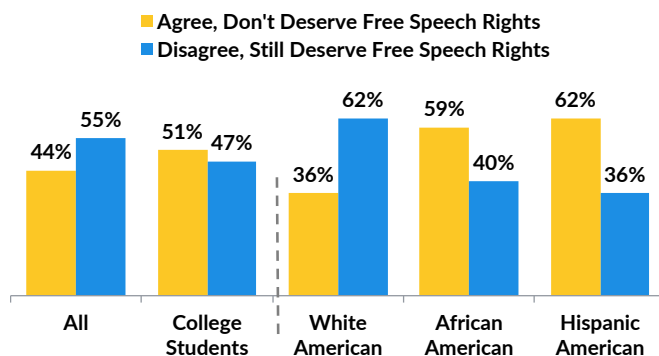
Men and women also disagree about whether supporting the right to speak is the same as endorsing its content. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of men don't believe supporting free speech rights is the same as supporting the speech's content. But a slim majority (51%) of women believe that it is.

51% of Current Students Say People Don't Deserve Free Speech Rights If They Don't Respect Others

A slim majority (51%) of current college students and graduate students believe a person doesn't deserve the right of free speech if they don't respect other people. In contrast, a majority (55%) of Americans overall don't think a person should lose their free speech rights even if they don't respect others.

College Students, African Americans, Latinos Say Disrespectful People Don't Deserve Free Speech Rights

Agree/Disagree: People who don't respect others don't deserve the right of free speech.



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There is also a wide race gap here. Six in 10 African Americans (59%) and Hispanics (62%) believe people don't deserve the right of free speech if they don't respect others, compared to 36% of white Americans. Instead a majority (62%) of white Americans think even disrespectful people should retain their free speech rights.

¹⁷ Black Lives Matter W&M Facebook Livestream Page, Last Modified September 27, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/builtonourbacks/videos/1734551936840965/>.

58% Say People Have Bad Intentions When They Express Offensive Opinions

A majority (58%) of Americans believe people “usually have bad intentions when they express offensive opinions.” Forty-one percent (41%) disagree that people who offend others with their ideas usually have nefarious motives.

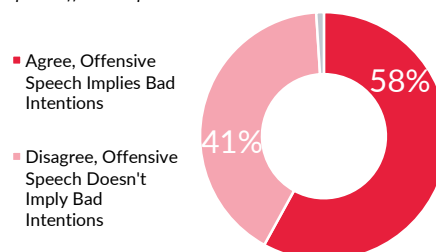
Democrats (69%) are 22 points more likely than Republicans (47%) to believe that people have bad intentions when they express offensive opinions. Instead, most Republicans (52%) think people may mean well even when they share an opinion others find offensive.

Latinos (75%) and African Americans (70%) are also about 20 points more likely than white Americans (52%) to think people usually have bad intentions when expressing offensive ideas.

Populists and Liberals are the most likely to believe (67%) that people who express offensive opinions have nefarious motives.¹⁸ Libertarians are the polar opposite, with 67% who do *not* think offensive ideas imply hurtful intentions. Conservatives are evenly divided.

Americans Think Offensive Opinions Imply a Speaker's Bad Intentions

Agree/Disagree: People usually have bad intentions when they express offensive opinions.



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Note: Don't Know/Refused: 1%



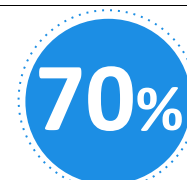
Key Insights: These results highlight why tolerance of diverse political expression is elusive. First, as an earlier section shows, large swaths of the population find a wide variety of political opinions as well as *policy positions* hateful or offensive. For instance, support for deporting illegal immigrants is viewed as hateful or offensive by 82% of Democrats. Second, these results show that most people believe maliciousness drives their opponents' offensive opinions. Taking these findings together helps explain why many assume malice, rather than genuine disagreement, drives their *political opponents*.

¹⁸ To improve upon ideological self-identification (i.e. liberal/conservative) this report uses answers to a three-question screen (found in Appendix A) about the role of government in economic and personal affairs to identify four primary groups of Americans: Libertarian (16%), Conservative (23%), Liberal (25%), Populist (16%).

Political Correctness, Self-Censorship, and Bubbles

70% Agree "A Big Problem This Country Has Is Being Politically Correct"

On the campaign trail, then-candidate Donald Trump contended: "I think the big problem this country has is being politically correct."¹⁹ A strong majority of Americans (70%) agree with this sentiment. Even though the survey did not attribute the quote to President Trump, fully 90% of Republicans and 78% of independents agree. Democrats are evenly divided.



Say Being Politically Correct is a "Big Problem This Country Has"

71% Say Political Correctness Has Silenced Important Discussions Society Needs to Have

Why do many people believe political correctness is a problem? Why do others believe it is necessary? Nearly three-fourths (71%) of Americans say that political correctness has done more to silence important discussions our society needs to have. Conversely, a little more than a quarter (28%) think that political correctness does more to help people avoid offending others.

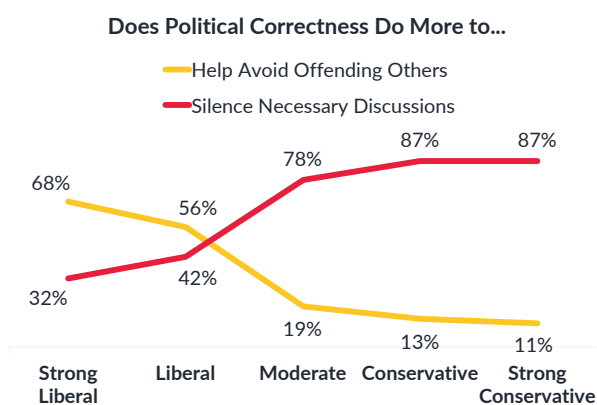


Say Political Correctness Silences Discussions Society Needs to Have

Strong majorities of white Americans (74%), African Americans (64%), and Latinos (58%) agree that political correctness has silenced necessary conversations. Overwhelming majorities of Republicans (89%) and independents (80%) also agree.

Far fewer Democrats believe political correctness has done more to silence necessary discussions (50%) than reduce offense. Liberal Democrats are driving these numbers. More than two-thirds (68%) of strong liberals believe political correctness primarily helps reduce

Liberals Say Political Correctness Helps Avoid Offense; Conservatives Say It Silences Necessary Discussions



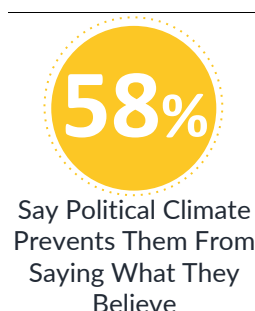
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¹⁹ Karen Tumulty and Jenna Johnson, "Why Trump May be Winning the War on 'Political Correctness,'" *Washington Post*, January 4, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/why-trump-may-be-winning-the-war-on-political-correctness/2016/01/04/098cf832-afda-11e5-b711-1998289ffcea_story.html?utm_term=.5fa178ea05e5.

offense. In stark contrast, nearly 9 in 10 strong conservatives (87%) say it primarily silences conversations society needs.

58% Say Political Climate Prevents Them from Saying What They Believe

Most Americans self-censor their political opinions because they're afraid they might offend someone. Nearly 6 in 10 (58%) report that the "political climate" these days prevents them from saying what they believe "because others might find them offensive." Four in 10 don't feel the need to censor their opinions.



The political climate appears to favor liberal Democrats, as they are among the few groups who feel they *do not* need to censor their opinions. However most other political and demographic groups do self-censor.

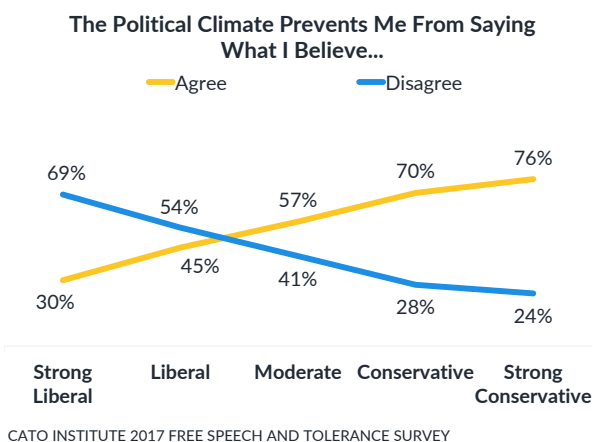
Strong liberals are the most comfortable sharing their true beliefs (69%). Far fewer strong conservatives (24%) and moderates (41%) agree. Similarly, Democrats (53%) are more likely than Republicans (26%) and independents (39%) to feel they can express their opinions. Instead, nearly three-fourths (73%) of Republicans and 58% of independents are afraid to share some of their true beliefs because of the political climate.

Why are Republicans more afraid than Democrats to share their views in this "political climate" given that Republicans currently control both Congress and the White House? Perhaps political power does not solely determine the political climate. Cultural sources of power, such as media, academia, and entertainment may matter more. The survey found that Americans believe most large media outlets, like the *New York Times* (52%) and CNN (50%), have a liberal bent. A plurality (45%) also believe college faculties are mostly liberal. These institutions may shape the political environment such that liberals feel more comfortable sharing their political views.

But perhaps, one might argue, liberals feel more comfortable sharing their political opinions because their views are less offensive. However, the survey found several instances where conservatives are more offended than

Liberals Most Likely To Feel Comfortable Sharing Political Beliefs; Conservatives Most Likely to Self-Censor

Agree/Disagree: The political climate these days prevents me from saying things I believe because others might find them offensive.



liberals by political views more commonly held among liberals. For instance, conservatives are about twice as likely as liberals to say calling the police racist is hate speech (39% vs. 17%). Conservatives are also somewhat more likely to believe it's hateful to say that America is an evil country (39% vs. 29%). Conservatives are also more offended than liberals by flag burning and NFL players refusing to stand for the national anthem.

What Political Topics Do Americans Avoid?

There are certain topics that Americans feel less inclined to discuss with others in their social surroundings, such as over dinner with co-workers or with classmates.

In such an environment, less than half of Americans would be "very willing" to discuss gay and lesbian issues (45%), race relations (45%), women's issues (48%), and foreign policy (48%).²⁰ Only about half would be similarly willing to discuss issues related to immigration (51%), the police (51%), abortion (52%), or poverty (53%). Americans are somewhat more willing to discuss the environment (64%), health care (61%), education (60%), crime (58%), and gun issues (56%).

There are some issues Democrats feel more comfortable discussing than Republicans and vice versa. Compared to Republicans, Democrats are more likely to say they'd be very willing to discuss women's issues (57% vs. 41%), gay and lesbian issues (52% vs. 37%), poverty (57% vs. 47%), race relations (50% vs. 40%), and the environment (69% vs. 62%). Conversely, Republicans feel relatively more comfortable than Democrats talking about crime (63% vs. 54%) and gun issues (60% vs. 52%). Across the board, however, Democrats are more willing than Republicans to discuss major policy issues.

The survey also asked respondents to use their own words to describe political beliefs they hold, but feel unable to share because of the political climate. Even though Democrats are more likely than Republicans to feel comfortable sharing their opinions, Americans of all political stripes have views they censor. A sampling of these opinions can be found in the box, "Dangerous Ideas vs. Approved Beliefs" on page 38.

Liberals, particularly those in conservative areas, feel they can't express secular beliefs, their dislike of Donald Trump, support for immigration, gun control, police reform, ending the Drug War, and LGBT rights, and a belief that racism continues in America today.

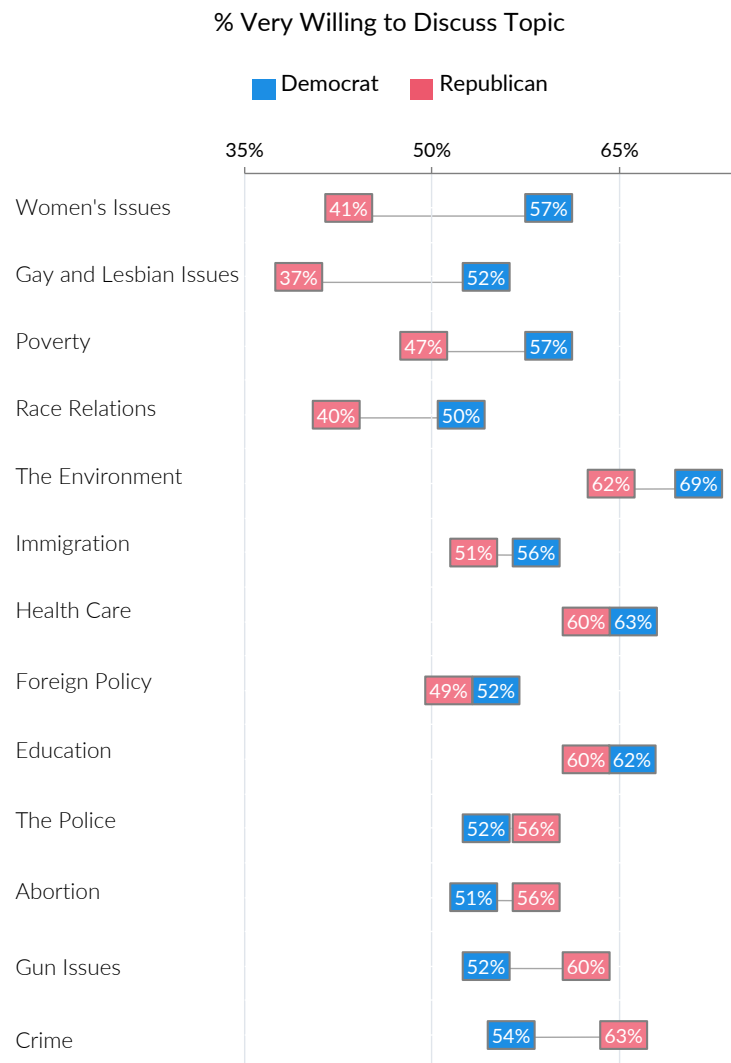
Conservatives, particularly those in liberal areas, feel they can't share their religious beliefs, support for Trump, patriotism, a belief that racial minorities receive special privileges in society, opposition to illegal immigration, affirmative

²⁰ These percentages are calculated among those who have an opinion on the topic.

action, same-sex marriage, and abortion, and support for the border wall, gun rights, free speech, deportation of unauthorized immigrants, and more rigorous security screening for Muslims entering the United States.

Notably, liberals also self-censored conventionally conservative sentiments. These included: indifference to identity politics, a belief that racial minorities receive favoritism, support for free speech, and opposition to “PC culture” and removing Confederate statues.

Democrats and Republicans Differ on What Political Topics They Are Most Willing to Discuss



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Note: Among those who have an opinion on specific topic

Dangerous Ideas vs. Approved Beliefs

Even though Democrats are more likely than Republicans to feel comfortable sharing their opinions, Americans of all political stripes have political views they feel can't be expressed. The survey asked people to use their own words to describe what views they feel can't be shared. Location matters a lot. Liberals in conservative areas and conservatives in liberal cities both self-censor.²¹

What They Can't Say	What They Can't Say
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I am atheist, and that's a no-no where I live." • "I'm from the Midwest and I can't say anything negative about the President or his policies." • "That racism is alive and well in America. White people refuse to believe it and take offense." • "You can't talk about the military and what they do outside the U.S." • "There is violence going on against black men." • "Sanctuary cities are necessary." • "I can't say I'm in favor of immigrants." • "I feel that I am unable to share my views on transgender individuals using the same public restrooms as women and children." • "I feel that I can't talk about immigration laws openly without offending someone, so I don't say anything." • "I feel that trans people deserve the same rights as all other American citizens." • "I'm strongly in favor of free speech, but in the eyes of some people, it makes me look like I'm just making excuses for bigots, although that is the opposite of my intentions." • "My longing to create an independent nation for minorities as a means to rise above the oppression faced globally by all peoples of color. Also, my strong disapproval of whiteness in general." • "The cheeto has to be crushed." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "As a Christian, I don't believe in gay marriage, but that's not to say I hate gay people at all. But I feel as if I'm going to have to walk on eggshells this day and age to explain and support my views because of the liberal nature of the world and media." • "Blacks can have things that are just for them, but no one else can." • "No one is going to drop dead because they are called a bad name." • "Saying 'Merry Christmas.'" • "I feel illegal immigration is a crime and I'm tired of supporting these people with my tax dollars." • "My belief in Christian principles." • "I believe there are only two genders." • "I work in a totally PC environment and if I dare state that I feel homosexuality or sexual promiscuity is not in line with what the Bible teaches, I feel attacked and accused of being insensitive." • "I don't believe climate change is happening because of humans." • "I believe that BLM and Antifa are terrorist groups and are as antithetical to the United States as any neo-Nazi group or white nationalist group." • "The political climate is focused on repressing Caucasians, especially white males."
Liberals	Conservatives

²¹ The idea to ask people what they believe but feel can't be publicly expressed comes from Ben Kohlmann, a former student at Stanford's Graduate School of Business who conducted a similar survey of his classmates. *Medium*, "Dangerous Ideas, Approved Beliefs," blog entry by Ben Kohlmann, June 8, 2017, <https://medium.com/non-disclosure/dangerous-ideas-acceptable-ideas-acd4fb67b699>.

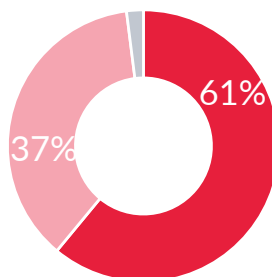
61% Say People Often Call Others Racist or Sexist to Avoid Debate

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of Americans believe that “people often call others racist or sexist to avoid having to debate with them.” More than a third (37%), however, say “people usually only call someone out for racism or sexism when they deserve it.”

Most Think Calling Someone Out for Racism or Sexism is about Avoiding Debate

Which of these two statements comes closer to your own opinion?

- People often call others racist or sexist to avoid having to debate with them
- People usually only call someone out for racism or sexism when they deserve it



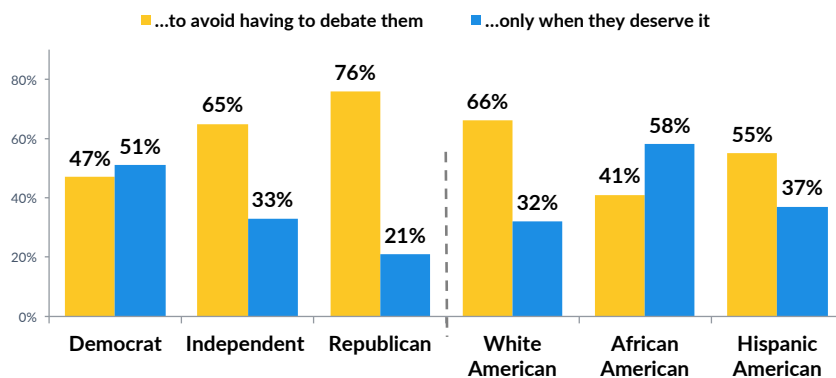
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Note: Don't Know/Refused: 2%

A slim majority (51%) of Democrats believe that calling out racism or sexism is typically justified and not an avoidance tactic. In sharp contrast, about three-fourths (76%) of Republicans and two-thirds (65%) of independents believe it's primarily used as a tool to stifle debate.

A majority (58%) of African Americans believe that a person called out for racism or sexism usually deserves it, while 41% think that such labels are often used to avoid discussion. Whites (66%) and Latinos (55%) are 14-25 points more likely to believe these labels are primarily used to suppress debate.

People Usually Call Others Out for Racism or Sexism...



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Clinton Voters Can't Be Friends with Trump Voters

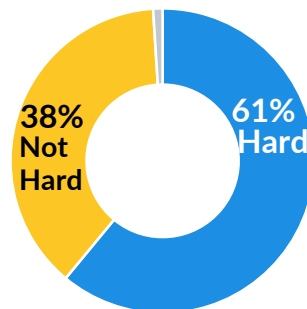
Nearly two-thirds (61%) of Clinton voters agree that "it's hard to be friends with people who voted for Donald Trump" while 38% disagree. Trump voters don't feel a similar animus toward Clinton voters. Instead, a majority (64%) of Trump voters do not think that it's hard to be friends with Clinton voters while 34% believe it is difficult.

Clinton Voters Can't Be Friends with Trump Voters

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It's hard to be friends with people who voted for ...

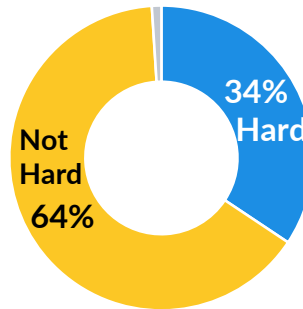
Among Clinton Voters

% Agree it's hard to be friends with people who voted for **Donald Trump**



Among Trump Voters

% Agree it's hard to be friends with people who voted for **Hillary Clinton**



CATO INSTITUTE 2017 FREE SPEECH AND TOLERANCE SURVEY
Note: Don't Know/Refused: 1%

Campus Speech

66% Say Colleges Aren't Doing Enough to Teach Value of Free Speech

Two-thirds of Americans (66%) say colleges and universities aren't doing enough today to teach young Americans about the value of free speech. This is a view shared by 51% of current college and graduate students, while 46% think colleges are doing enough.



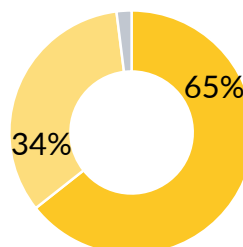
Say Colleges Aren't
Doing Enough to
Teach Value of
Free Speech

When asked which is more important, 65% say colleges should expose students to "all types of viewpoints even if they are offensive or biased against certain groups." About a third (34%) say colleges should "prohibit offensive speech that is biased against certain groups."

Most Say It's More Important for Colleges to Expose Students to Viewpoint Diversity, Even if Offensive

If you had to choose, is it more important for colleges...

- To expose students to all types of viewpoints, even if they are offensive or biased against certain groups
- To prohibit offensive speech on campus that is biased against certain groups



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Note: Don't Know/Refused: 1%

Strong liberals (52%), African Americans (54%), and Latinos (54%) stand out with slim majorities who believe it's more important for colleges to prohibit offensive and biased speech on campus. Conversely, majorities of regular liberals (66%), conservatives (73%), and white Americans (73%) think colleges need to expose students to a wide variety of perspectives even if they are offensive or prejudiced.

But Americans are conflicted. While most say colleges need to prioritize viewpoint diversity, a slim majority (53%) also agree colleges have "an obligation to protect students from offensive speech and ideas that could create a difficult learning environment." Problems arise, as evidenced earlier in the report, when students disagree about what speech is offensive and would create a difficult learning environment.

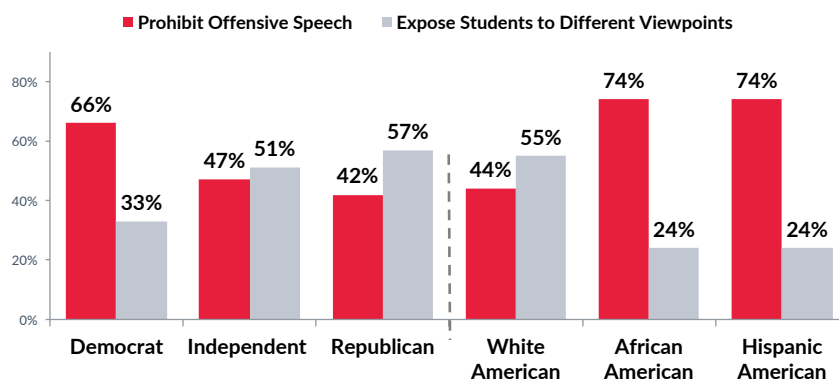


Say Colleges Have
Obligation to Protect
Students from
Offensive Ideas That
Could Disrupt
Learning Environment

Americans are divided by race, party, gender, and education. Nearly three-fourths of Latinos and African Americans (74%) agree colleges need to protect students from offensive ideas that could disrupt the learning environment. Less than half (44%) of white Americans agree. While a solid majority of Democrats (66%) believe colleges have this obligation, majorities of Republicans (57%) and independents (51%) do not believe colleges should do this.

Democrats, African Americans, and Hispanics Say Colleges Should Protect Students from Offensive Ideas That Could Disrupt Learning

Agree/Disagree: Colleges have an obligation to protect students from offensive speech and ideas that could create a difficult learning environment.



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Men and women are also divided. A majority of men (56%) don't think colleges should protect their students from offensive ideas while 64% of women think colleges should.

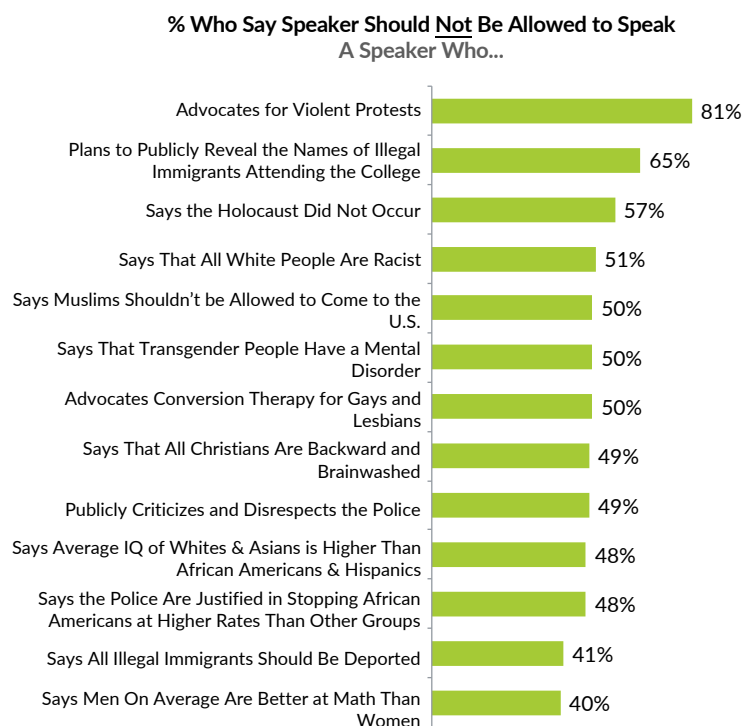
With more education, Americans become more averse to colleges shielding students from offensive speech even if it risks disrupting the learning environment. Six in 10 Americans (61%) with high school degrees or less think colleges should protect students from offensive ideas, compared to 44% of those with college degrees and 37% of post-graduates.

Campus Speakers: Who Should Be Allowed?

Although Americans say it's more important for colleges to expose students to a variety of diverse viewpoints, even offensive ones, many are willing to shut down speech they personally find offensive. About half of Americans who have college experience don't think a wide variety of speakers should be allowed to speak at their university.²²

Who Should Be Allowed to Speak at Your University?

[ASK OF COLLEGE STUDENTS/THOSE WITH COLLEGE EXPERIENCE] Suppose each of the following people were invited to give a speech at your college or university, should they be allowed to speak?



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An overwhelming share (81%) of respondents with college experience agree that campus speakers who advocate for violent protests shouldn't be allowed to speak at their university. Nearly two-thirds (65%) oppose a speaker who would reveal the names and identities of unauthorized immigrants attending the college. A solid majority (57%) would also oppose allowing any speaker who says the Holocaust did not occur. About half would oppose allowing a speaker who says all white people are racist (51%), that Muslims shouldn't be allowed to come to the U.S. (50%), that transgender people have a mental disorder (50%),

²² Similar questions were asked of those who do not have college experience: "Suppose each of the following people were invited to give a speech in your local community, should they be allowed to speak?" Responses were similar between both groups of respondents.

or that gays and lesbians should receive conversion therapy (50%). Nearly half would support cancelling a speaker who says all Christians are backward and brainwashed (49%), who publicly criticizes or disrespects the police (49%), who defends the police stopping African Americans at higher rates than other groups (48%), or says the average IQ of whites and Asians is higher than African Americans and Hispanics (48%), says all illegal immigrants should be deported (41%), or says men on average are better at math than women (40%). (Results are similar among Americans without college experience who were asked if the aforementioned speakers should be allowed to speak in their local community. (See Appendix C.))

The reader may notice that most of these hypothetical speakers are taken from real-world examples of controversial campus speakers or other public figures who could be invited to speak on a college campus. (Note that several of these campus speakers were not shut down because of controversial ideas they planned to include in their speech but for things they have said in the past.) If campus presidents agreed to cancel speakers that large numbers of their student body and faculty found offensive, these results imply they would have to prohibit a wide range of speakers including:

- Black Lives Matter activists, and other groups that criticize police practices.²³
- Police defenders, like Manhattan Institute scholar Heather MacDonald, who argue that police stopping practices are justified.²⁴
- AEI scholar Charles Murray who has written that the average IQ of whites and Asians is higher than that of African Americans.²⁵
- President Donald Trump, who has advocated deporting illegal immigrants and preventing Muslims from coming to the United States.²⁶
- Conservative commentator Ben Shapiro, who has said transgender people have a mental disorder.²⁷
- Former President of Iran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has questioned whether the Holocaust happened.²⁸
- Comedian Bill Maher and other religion critics.²⁹

²³ See Harold Pollack, "A Crime and Policing Expert Critiques Black Lives Matter's Police-Reform Plan," *New York Magazine*, August 24, 2015, <http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2015/08/expert-critiques-black-lives-matters-plan.html>.

²⁴ Heather MacDonald, "The Myth of Racial Profiling," *City Journal* 52 (spring 2001), <https://www.city-journal.org/html/myth-racial-profiling-12022.html>.

²⁵ See Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

²⁶ Jenna Johnsons, "Trump Calls For 'total And Complete Shutdown of Muslims Entering The United States,'" *Washington Post*, December 7, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/12/07/donald-trump-calls-for-total-and-complete-shutdown-of-muslims-entering-the-united-states/?utm_term=.2b9baf830183; Heather Haddon, "Donald Trump Says He Would Deport Illegal Immigrants," *Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-saying-illegal-immigrants-have-to-go-targets-obama-orders-1439738967>.

²⁷ "Ben Shapiro Tells Transgender He Has A Mental Illness, Gets Violent," YouTube video, 15:33, posted by "Daily Liberty," April 2, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r12ew31oXTg>.

²⁸ "Ahmadinejad Speaks; Outrage and Controversy Follow," CNN.com, September 24, 2007, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/09/24/us.iran/>.

²⁹ Elizabeth Gettelman, "The MoJo Interview: Bill Maher," *Mother Jones*, September/October 2008, <http://www.motherjones.com/media/2008/09/mojo-interview-bill-maher/>.

- A large number of college professors, and L'Oreal's first transgender model, who argue that racism is deeply imbued within societal institutions, and thus all white people necessarily are racist.³⁰
- Larry Summers, former U.S. Treasury Secretary and President of Harvard University, who said the gender gap in science could be related to gender differences in the variability of mathematical and scientific ability.³¹
- Milo Yiannopoulos, former Breitbart writer, who UC Berkeley college administrators believed would reveal the identities of unauthorized immigrants at the school.³²

Major differences emerge between Democrats and Republicans in their willingness to allow controversial and offensive speakers speak on campus. Even on issues in which one might expect Republicans to be more offended, they were less likely than Democrats to support cancelling the speaker. Majorities of Democrats would not allow, while Republicans would allow, a speaker who:

Percentage who say “not allowed” (Democrats; Republicans)

- Plans to reveal names of unauthorized immigrants on campus (83%; 46%)
- Says all illegal immigrants should be deported (54%; 24%)
- Says that transgender people have a mental disorder (64%; 31%)
- Says police are justified in their police stops (60%; 32%)
- Says all white people are racist (57%; 43%)
- Says the average IQ of whites and Asians is higher than blacks' and Latinos' (61%; 33%)
- Says men on average are better at math than women (51%; 25%)
- Says all Christians are backward and brainwashed (56%; 41%)
- Says Muslims shouldn't be allowed to come to the U.S. (63%; 32%)
- Advocates conversion therapy for gays and lesbians (65%; 34%)

There is also a wide racial gap between white Americans and black and Hispanic Americans in allowing these speakers to come to campus. Majorities of black and Hispanic Americans would not allow, while white Americans would allow, a speaker who:

Percentage who say “not allowed” (African Americans and Latinos; Whites)

- Says all illegal immigrants should be deported (60%; 34%)
- Says that transgender people have a mental disorder (67%; 44%)
- Says police are justified in their police stops (66%; 42%)
- Publicly criticizes and disrespects the police (61%; 44%)
- Says all white people are racist (68%; 44%)

³⁰ See Carlos Hoyt Jr., "The Pedagogy of the Meaning of Racism: Reconciling a Discordant Discourse," *Social Work* 57, no. 3 (2007): 225-234.

³¹ Scott Jaschik, "What Larry Summers Said," *Inside Higher ED*, February 18, 2005, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/02/18/summers2_18.

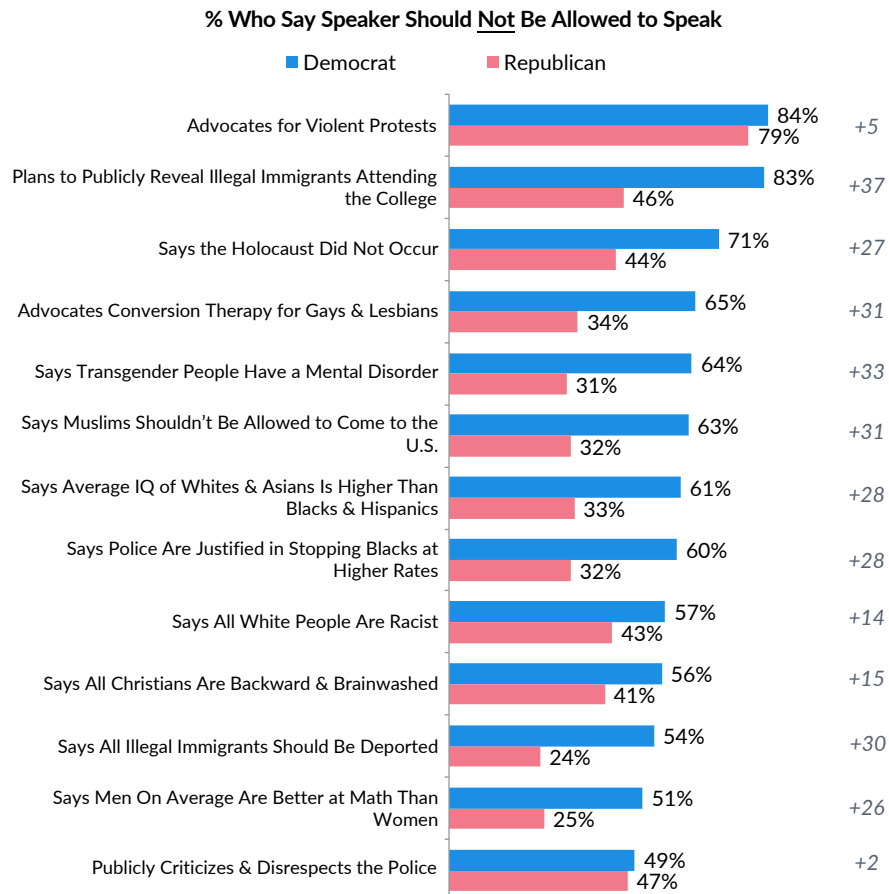
³² Maya Oppenheim, "UC Berkeley protests: Milo Yiannopoulos planned to 'publicly name undocumented students' in cancelled talk," *Independent*, February 3, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/uc-berkeley-protests-milo-yiannopoulos-publicly-name-undocumented-students-cancelled-talk-illegals-a7561321.html>.

- Says the average IQ of whites and Asians is higher than blacks' and Latinos' (64%; 43%)
- Says men on average are better at math than women (61%; 34%)
- Says all Christians are backward and brainwashed (65%; 43%)
- Says Muslims shouldn't be allowed to come to the U.S. (67%; 44%)
- Advocates conversion therapy for gays and lesbians (58%; 48%)

Majorities of black, white, and Hispanic Americans all oppose allowing a speaker who would reveal the names of unauthorized immigrants on campus, deny the Holocaust, or call for violent protests.

Democrats More Likely to Say These Speakers Shouldn't Be Allowed to Speak at Their College or University

Suppose each of the following people were invited to give a speech at your college or university, should they be allowed to speak?



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Men and women are similarly divided, with majorities of men supportive of nearly all these speakers being allowed to speak on campus and women opposed. Young Americans are also more averse to allowing these speakers to speak at their college or university, compared to older Americans.

Taken together, Republicans, white Americans, men, and older people are more supportive than Democrats, African Americans, Latinos, women, and younger people of allowing these campus speakers to speak at their college or university. Why are these latter groups more supportive of censoring speech? Perhaps because they are more likely to believe that colleges have an obligation to protect students from offensive ideas.

How College Students Would Handle a Racist Campus Speaker

About two-thirds (64%) of current college and graduate students say that if their college or university hosted a speaker who believes some races are superior to others, they would not attend the speech. Sixteen percent (16%) say they would attend the speech. Many would also take action: 43% would attend the speech and ask the speaker tough questions, 39% would hold a counter-event in a different location, 26% would hold a protest outside of the speech location, 36% would sign a petition to get the speech cancelled beforehand.

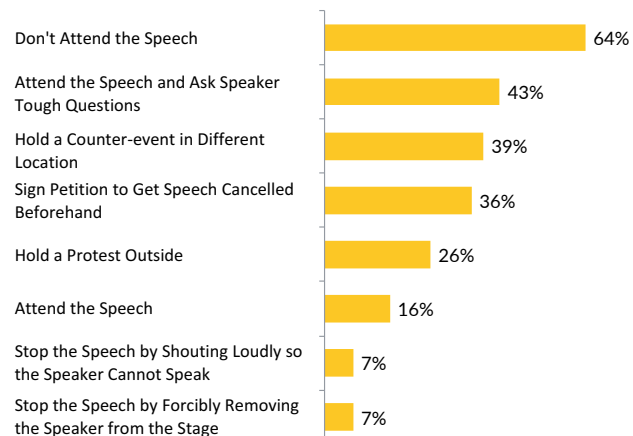
Notably, few students would try to forcibly shut down the speech by shouting loudly so the speaker cannot speak (7%) or by forcibly removing the speaker from the stage (7%).³³ Although most wouldn't use shouting or physical force to stop an offensive speech, more than a third (36%) would sign a petition to get the speech cancelled beforehand.

Democratic and Republican students say they'd handle the situation differently. Democratic students are more likely than Republicans to say they'd hold a counter-event in a different location (50% vs. 33%), protest outside (38% vs. 15%), or sign a petition beforehand to get the speech canceled (48% vs. 22%). On the other hand, Republican students are somewhat more likely to say they'd attend the speech and ask tough questions (53% vs. 44%) or simply attend the speech (25% vs. 15%).

How Should Colleges Handle Students Who Shut Down Campus Speakers?

[IF COLLEGE EXPERIENCE ASK] Suppose your college or university hosted a speaker who believes some races are superior to others, what do you think is the best approach? (Select all that apply)

Among Current College Students and Graduate Students



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³³ These results stand in contrast to an opt-in survey of college students conducted by Brookings senior fellow John Villasenor which found 19% of college students believe using violence against an offensive speaker is justified. John Villasenor, "Views Among College Students Regarding the First Amendment: Results from a New Survey," Brookings Institution, September 18, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2017/09/18/views-among-college-students-regarding-the-first-amendment-results-from-a-new-survey/>.

76% Say Student Cancellations of Offensive Campus Speakers Part of “Broader Pattern” of How Students Cope

More than three-fourths (76%) of Americans say that recent student protests and cancellations of controversial speakers on college campuses are part of a “broader pattern” of how college students respond to controversial ideas. About a quarter (22%) believe these protests and cancellations are isolated incidents, not indications of a broader pattern.

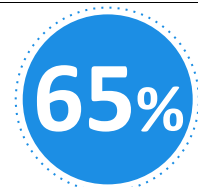
This perception is not controversial. Strong majorities of current students and non-students alike believe recent shut downs of campus speakers tell us something broader about how students deal with offensive ideas.

65% Say Universities Should Discipline Students Who Shut Down Invited Speakers

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Americans say that colleges and universities should discipline college students who disrupt invited campus speakers and prevent them from speaking.

Republicans are most likely to support disciplining students (83%); 67% of independents agree. Democrats on the other hand are evenly divided over whether colleges should punish students who shut down speakers (50%). White Americans (71%) are also more likely than Latinos (51%) and African Americans (49%) to support disciplining these students.

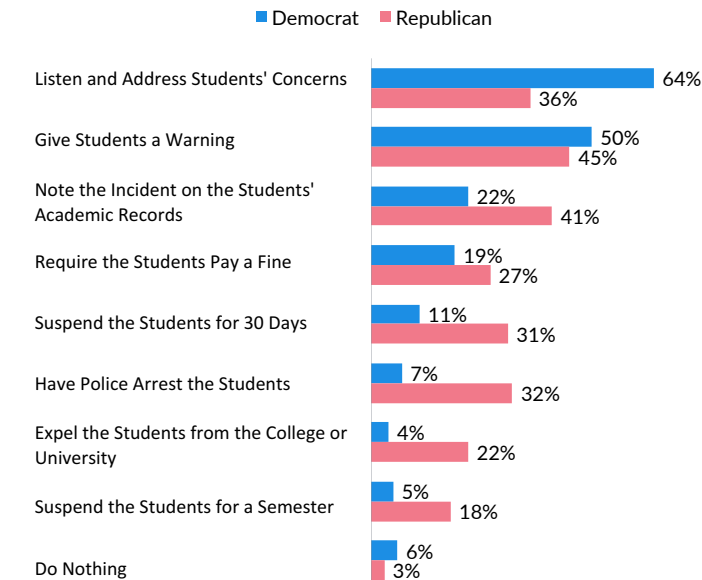
When asked how specifically colleges and universities should handle disruptive college protestors, Americans are less resolute. A plurality (50%) say that first, colleges and universities should listen and address the students' concerns. After that, 46% want colleges to give students a warning, 31% say colleges should note the incident on the students' records, 22% say students should pay a fine, 20% say colleges should suspend students for 30 days, 19% want the police to arrest the students, 13% want colleges to completely expel the students, 11% want to suspend students for a semester. Only 6% say colleges should do nothing.



Say Colleges Should
Discipline Students
Who Shut Down
Campus Speakers

How Should Colleges Handle Students Who Shut Down Campus Speakers?

How should colleges handle students who disrupt invited speakers and prevent them from speaking? (Select all that should apply)



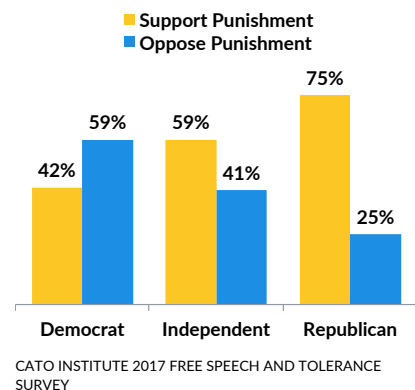
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Democrats take a softer while Republicans take a harder approach to handling disruptive college protestors. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Democrats say colleges should listen to and address the students' concerns, compared to 36% of Republicans who agree. Conversely, Republicans are two to six times as likely as Democrats to support some sort of punishment for the students, such as noting the incident on the students' records (41% vs. 22%); supporting suspending or expelling the students (47% vs. 15%); or having police arrest the students (32% vs. 7%).

Ultimately 75% of Republicans would impose at least one of the listed punishments, compared to less than half (42%) of Democrats. Most Democrats would rather listen and address the students' concerns or give them a warning. Given that research shows most of academia leans left of center, this might help explain why few universities have punished students who have shut down controversial campus speakers.³⁴

Republicans More Likely Than Democrats to Favor Punishment for Students Who Shut Down Campus Speakers

...If respondent supports colleges punishing students who shut down campus speakers by: noting the incident on the students' records, imposing fines, issuing suspensions, expulsions, or arrests



³⁴ Neil Gross, *Why Are Professors Liberal and Why Do Conservatives Care?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

58% Say Colleges Should Cancel Controversial Speakers If Students Threaten Violence

Most Americans would accede to the heckler's veto. A solid majority (58%) of Americans think college administrators should cancel controversial invited campus speakers if students threaten to stage a violent protest. Four in 10 think colleges should move forward with the invited speaker regardless.



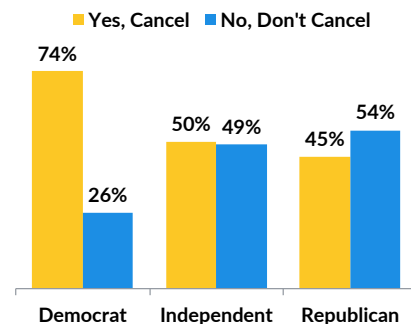
Say Colleges Should Cancel Invited Speakers If Students Threaten Violent Protest

Democrats and Republicans disagree about how to respond to threats of student violence: 74% of Democrats think colleges should cancel such controversial speakers while 54% of Republicans think colleges should not cancel the speech.

A slim majority of men (51%) believe colleges should resist student threats. Conversely, more than two-thirds (67%) of women think colleges should cancel speakers if students threaten violent protest.

Democrats Say Colleges Should Cancel Invited Speakers to Avoid Violent Student Protests; Republicans Disagree

Should college administrators cancel controversial speakers invited to speak on campus if they believe students will stage a violent protest unless the speech is cancelled?



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Bias Reporting System

51% Oppose Bias Reporting System; 68% of Current Students Support It



A slim majority (51%) of Americans oppose while nearly as many (48%) support the idea of a confidential reporting system at colleges through which students could report people who make offensive comments about a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability status.

This "bias reporting system," as it's often described, is highly popular among current students. More than two-thirds (68%) of current college students and graduate students support it while less than a third oppose (30%). However, 63% of those who have already graduated from college oppose a system to allow students to report bias on campus.

A bias reporting system is highly divisive along partisan and demographic lines. Solid majorities of Democrats (60%), African Americans (67%), Latinos (59%), and

Students, Democrats, Women, African Americans, Latinos Support Campus Bias Reporting System

Would you favor or oppose a confidential reporting system at colleges where students could report people who make offensive comments about a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability status to college administrators?

	Favor	Oppose
All	48%	51%
White	42%	57%
African American	67%	31%
Hispanic	59%	39%
Male	41%	58%
Female	54%	45%
Democrat	60%	38%
Independent	43%	56%
Republican	35%	64%
Libertarian	24%	75%
Conservative	30%	69%
Liberal	56%	43%
Populist	69%	30%
Current Students	68%	30%
College Grads	36%	63%

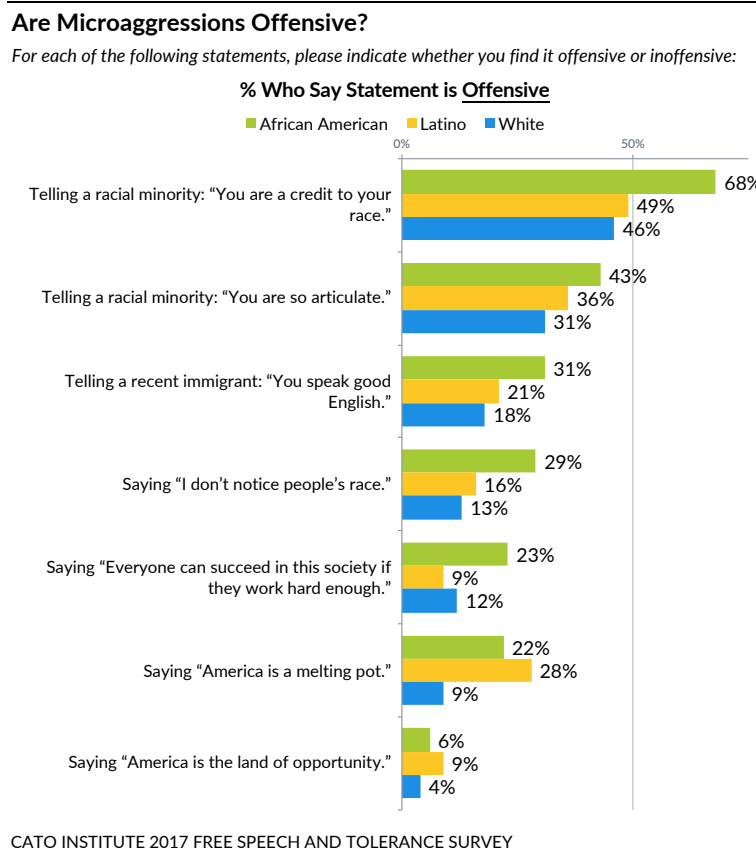
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women (54%) support it. Conversely, majorities of Republicans (64%), white Americans (57%), and men (58%) oppose it.

Microaggressions

People of Color Don't Find Many Microaggressions Offensive

The survey finds that many microaggressions that colleges and universities advise faculty and students to avoid aren't considered offensive by most people of color.³⁵ The survey included a variety of statements that major universities have identified should be avoided because the colleges contend they "communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership."³⁶ However, most African Americans and Latinos do not find most of these statements offensive.



³⁵ See Derald Wing Sue et al., "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life," *American Psychologist* 62, no. 4 (2007): 271-286.

³⁶ See *ibid*; University of California Santa Cruz, Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, "Tool: Recognizing Microaggressions and the Messages They Send," 2014, https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/events/documents/Microaggressions_Examples_Arial_2014_11_12.pdf; University of Minnesota, School of Public Health, "Examples of Microaggressions," <http://sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/microaggressions.pdf>; Also see University of California, Office of the President, Academic Personnel and Programs home page, <http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/programs-and-initiatives/faculty-diversity-initiatives/faculty-leadership-seminars.html>, for further information on microaggressions. The survey included microaggressions from the following themes: "Alien in One's Own Land," "Ascription of Intelligence," "Color Blindness," "Myth of Meritocracy."

Strong majorities of African Americans and Latinos say the following statements are not offensive:

Percentage who say “not offensive” (African Americans; Latinos)

- telling a recent immigrant “you speak good English” (67%; 77%)
- telling a racial minority “you are so articulate” (56%; 63%)
- saying “I don’t notice people’s race” (71%; 80%)
- saying “everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough” (77%; 89%)
- saying “America is a melting pot” (77%; 70%)
- saying “America is the land of opportunity” (93%; 89%)

Seventy percent (70%) of Asian Americans do not think it’s offensive to ask an Asian person, “where are you from?” (The sample size for Asian Americans is small and thus their responses are not shown separately for each of these microaggressions.)³⁷

The one microaggression that African Americans (68%) agree is offensive is telling a racial minority “you are a credit to your race.” Latinos are evenly divided on this question.

There may be other microaggressions not included on the survey that these groups find derogatory. However, African Americans and Latinos do not find most of the key microaggressions identified in academic training manuals insulting.



Key Insights: According to college training manuals, microaggressions categorized as “Ascription of Intelligence,” such as “you are a credit to your race,” imply an assumption of intelligence based on a person’s race or gender. “Color Blindness” microaggressions, such as “I don’t notice people’s race,” are said to imply that one must assimilate to the dominant culture. Training manuals also contend that “Myth of Meritocracy” microaggressions, such as “everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough,” wrongfully assume an even playing field in society and thus wrongfully imply that inequality is the fault of individuals. Survey results find that “Ascription of Intelligence” microaggressions are most likely to be viewed as offensive. On the other hand, “Color Blindness” and “Myth of Meritocracy” microaggressions are least likely to be viewed as offensive.

³⁷ Asian Americans N=57.

Halloween Costumes

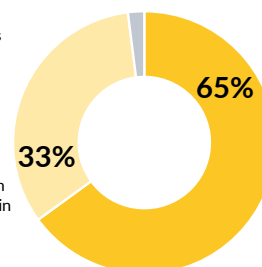
65% Say College Students Should Discuss Offensive Halloween Costumes without Administrator Involvement

Two years ago at Yale, a controversy erupted over a series of emails about offensive Halloween costumes. A resident advisor and Yale lecturer pushed back against an email from college administrators advising students not to wear offensive Halloween costumes. The advisor emailed her students and expressed confidence in students' capacity to discuss offensive Halloween costumes among themselves without administrators getting involved. Many students interpreted her email as an endorsement of offensive costumes, rather than of freedom of expression and the ability of people to discuss and resolve offense without oversight. What do Americans think?

Most Say College Students Should Discuss Offensive Halloween Costumes without College Administrator Involvement

Which of these two statements comes closer to your own opinion:

- College students should discuss offensive costumes among themselves without administrators getting involved
- College administrators have a responsibility to advise college students not to wear Halloween costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups at off-campus parties



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Note: Don't Know/Refused: 2%

The survey finds that nearly two-thirds (65%) of Americans agree that “college students should discuss offensive costumes among themselves without administrators getting involved.” A third (33%) say “college administrators have a responsibility to advise college students not to wear Halloween costumes that stereotype certain racial or ethnic groups at off-campus parties.”

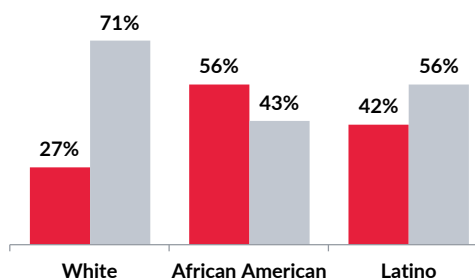
A significant racial divide emerges about how to handle offensive Halloween costumes. A majority (56%) of African Americans feel college administrators should intervene and advise students against offensive costumes. Conversely, a strong majority (71%) of white Americans and a majority of Latinos (56%) believe that college students should discuss offensive Halloween costumes among themselves without administrator intervention.

A majority (54%) of college and graduate students agree that students should discuss offensive costumes without intervention from school authorities. However, students (45%) are

African Americans Say College Administrators Should Advise Students Not to Wear Offensive Halloween Costumes

Do college administrators have a responsibility to advise students not to wear offensive Halloween costumes...

- Yes, Administrators Should Advise
- No, Let Students Discuss & Resolve



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12 points more supportive than Americans overall (33%) of administrators advising about offensive costumes.

Have You Heard of Safe Spaces?

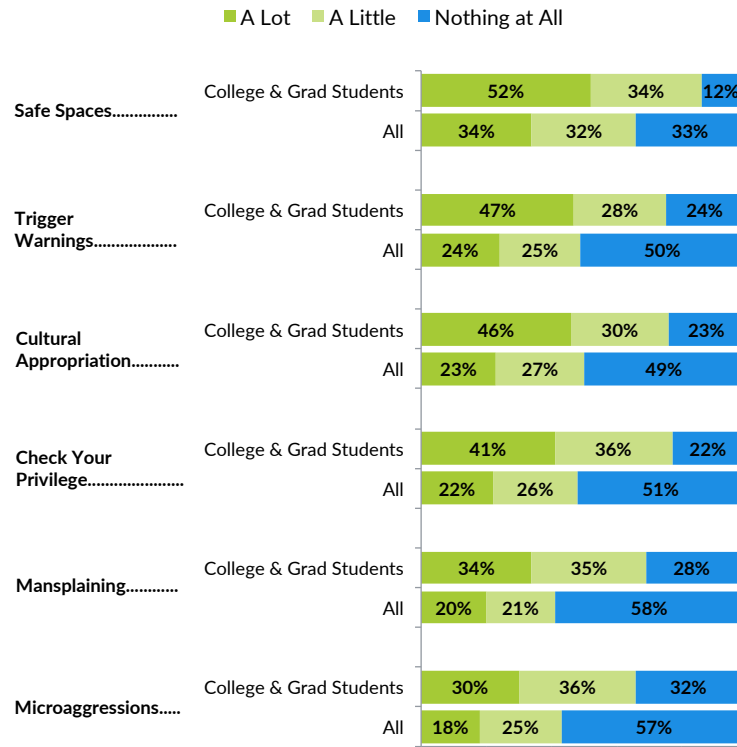
Most Americans Have Heard of Safe Spaces, but Not Microaggressions

About two-thirds to three-fourths of college students and graduate students are familiar with the new language of social justice terms and phrases that have emerged on college campuses. However, most Americans overall are unfamiliar with these words and phrases. The one exception is “safe spaces,” which two-thirds of the general public and 86% of current students have heard something about them.

- **Safe Spaces:** 66% of Americans have heard of safe spaces while 33% have not. 86% of current students have heard of them while only 12% have not.
- **Cultural Appropriation:** 50% of Americans have heard of this and 49% have not. 76% of current students have heard of it while 23% have not.
- **Trigger Warnings:** 49% of Americans have heard of trigger warnings while 50% have heard nothing at all. 75% of current students have heard of these while 24% have not.
- **“Check Your Privilege”:** 48% of Americans have heard about “checking your privilege” while a majority (51%) have heard nothing at all. 77% of current students have heard of this phrase while 22% have not.
- **Microaggressions:** 43% of Americans have heard about microaggressions while a majority (57%) have heard nothing at all. 66% of current students have heard about these while 32% have not.
- **Mansplaining:** 41% of Americans have heard about “mansplaining” while a majority (58%) have heard nothing at all. 69% of current students have heard something about it while 28% have not.

How Familiar Are Americans and College Students with Social Justice Terms and Phrases?

How much, if anything, have you heard or read about the following terms and phrases? Have you heard about...



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NOTE: COLLEGE STUDENTS AND GRAD STUDENTS N=769

Student Newspapers

African Americans and Latinos Say Student Newspapers Should Get Approval before Printing Controversial News Stories

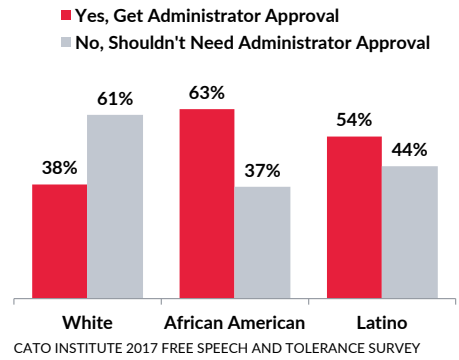
Most Americans (55%) and current college and graduate students (55%) say college newspapers should not need approval from college administrators before printing controversial news stories and editorials. However, nearly two-thirds of African Americans (63%) and a majority of Hispanic Americans (54%) think student papers should get approval before printing controversial stories. In contrast, 61% of white Americans don't think student papers should need approval.

Similar majorities of Democrats (56%), independents (55%), and Republicans (54%) oppose requiring that student papers get permission before printing controversial stories. However, Democrats are divided along racial lines. More than two-thirds (68%) of white Democrats do not believe such permission should be necessary while 65% of black Democrats and 57% of Hispanic Democrats believe it should be.

Men and women are also divided. Nearly two-thirds of men (63%) do not believe controversial news stories in student papers should need approval while 51% of women think they should.

African Americans and Hispanic Americans Say College Newspapers Should Get Administrators' Approval before Printing Controversial Stories

Do you think college and university student newspapers should get approval from college administrators before printing controversial news stories and editorials?



Campus Political Climate

College Democrats Less Likely Than Republicans to Think Faculty Is Liberal

The Faculty Only 20% of current college students and graduate students believe their college or university faculty has a balanced mix of political views. A plurality (39%) of current students agree that most college and university professors are liberal. Twenty-seven percent (27%) believe most are politically moderate, and 12% believe most are conservative.

Democratic and Republican college students see their campuses very differently. A majority (59%) of Republican college students believe that most faculty members are liberal. In contrast,

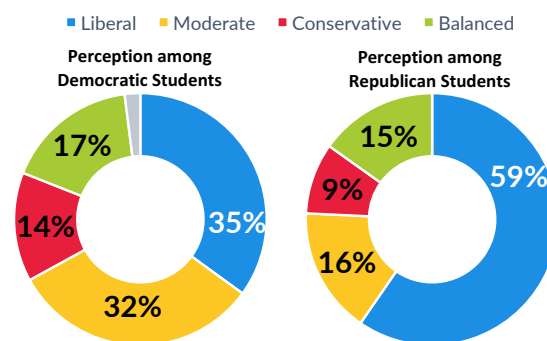
Democratic college students are 25 points less likely to believe that most of the faculty is liberal (35%). Democratic students are also about twice as likely as Republican students to think their professors are moderate (32% vs. 16%) or conservative (14% vs. 9%).

The Students Current students believe that most of their campus' student body is liberal. Fifty-percent (50%) believe that most students at their college or university are liberal, 21% believe most are moderate, 8% believe most are conservative, and 19% believe there is a balanced mix of political views. Democratic and Republican students largely agree on the ideological composition of their campus student body.

In sum, there is a widespread perception that most faculty and students in colleges are liberal. These results matter because if universities become political echo chambers, it could lead to the exclusion of non-conforming political views, self-censorship, and less rigorous academic inquiry. Without a free exchange of ideas, there may be less thorough checking of academic work and the quality of research may decline. By extension, the public may lose confidence in the process of academic inquiry and become skeptical of its results.

What Are the Most Common Political Views of Professors on Your College Campus?

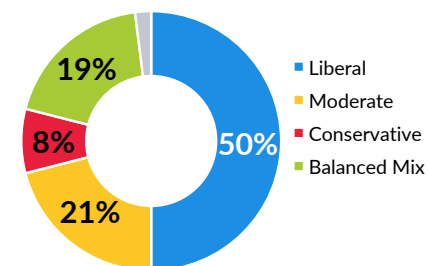
[AMONG CURRENT STUDENTS] Thinking about the professors at your college or university, what would you say are the most common political views?



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Note: Don't Know/Refused among Democrats: 2%

What Are the Most Common Political Views among Students on Campus?

[AMONG CURRENT STUDENTS] Thinking about the students at your college or university, what would you say are the most common political views?



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Note: Don't Know/Refused: 2%

Conflict in the Workplace

When Are Firings Justified?

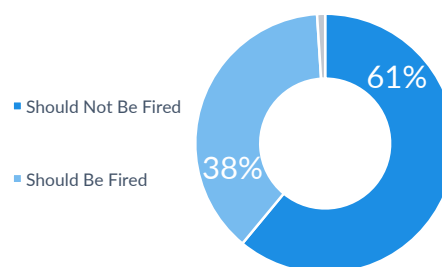
Although many Americans favor silencing offensive speakers on college campuses and in local communities, most oppose firing people for their political beliefs or expression.

61% of Americans Oppose Firing NFL Players Who Refuse to Stand for National Anthem, 65% of Republicans Favor

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of Americans oppose firing NFL (National Football League) players who refuse to stand for the national anthem before football games in order to make a political statement. These results stand in contrast to President Trump's urging NFL teams to fire players who refuse to stand for the anthem. A little over a third (38%) of Americans align with Trump and support firing these players.³⁸

Americans Oppose Firing NFL Players Who Refuse to Stand for National Anthem

Do you think an NFL (National Football League) player should or should not be fired from the team if they refuse to stand for the national anthem before football games to make a political statement?

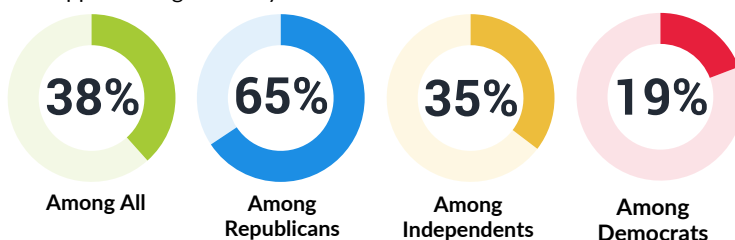


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Note: Don't Know/Refused: 1%

Republicans Support Firing NFL Players for Refusing to Stand for National Anthem; Democrats and Independents Oppose

Do you think an NFL player should or should not be fired from the team if they refuse to stand for the national anthem before football games to make a political statement?

% Support Firing NFL Players Who Refuse to Stand for National Anthem



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Conservative Republicans stand out with their support for firing NFL players who refuse to stand for the national anthem. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Republicans

³⁸ Ian Schwartz, "Trump: NFL Owners Should Fire The 'Son Of A Bitch Player' Who 'Disrespects Our Flag' By Kneeling," *Real Clear Politics*, September 23, 2017, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2017/09/23/trump_nfl_owners_should_fire_the_son_of_a_bitch_player_who_disrespects_our_flag_by_kneeling.html; Benjamin Hoffman et al., "After Trump Blasts N.F.L., Players Kneel and Lock Arms in Solidarity," *New York Times*, September 24, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/24/sports/nfl-trump-anthem-protests.html?mcubz=3&r=1>.

say NFL players should be fired for this reason. Only 19% of Democrats and 35% of independents agree. Punishing NFL players for their political speech distinguishes political Conservatives from Libertarians. Using a political typology to identify these ideological groups, the survey finds that Conservatives (62%) are the only political group to support firing NFL players. Conversely, 60% of Libertarians, 85% of Liberals, and 62% of Populists all oppose firing players.³⁹

People who are older, with less education, and living in smaller towns and rural communities are most likely to support punishing players who refuse to stand for the national anthem.

A majority (57%) of Americans over 65 think such players should be fired while 71% of Americans under 30 think they should not. Those without college degrees (44%) are more likely than college graduates (32%) and those with post-graduate degrees (26%) to support punishing NFL players who engage in this form of political protest. Americans living in rural communities are divided equally over whether teams should fire NFL players who refuse to stand for the national anthem. Conversely, those living in large urban centers solidly oppose (69%) such firings.

Majorities across racial groups oppose firing NFL players who kneel during the national anthem before football games. However African Americans (88%) are about 30 points more likely than Hispanic Americans (60%) and white Americans (55%) to oppose.

Not wanting to fire NFL players because of their political expression doesn't mean that most people necessarily agree with the content of that expression. As surveys have long found, including this one, the public opposes desecrating or disrespecting patriotic symbols, like the American flag. It's likely such views extend to the national anthem as well. Thus, many appear to make a distinction between allowing expression and endorsing its content. Americans can be tolerant of players' refusing to stand for the national anthem, even if they don't agree with what the players are doing.

Conservative GOP, Seniors, Non-College, and Rural Americans Most Likely to Support NFL Firing Players Who Refuse to Stand for Anthem

Do you think an NFL player should be fired from the team if they refuse to stand for the national anthem before football games to make a political statement?

	Should be Fired	Should Not Be Fired
All	38%	61%
Democrat	19%	80%
Independent	35%	64%
Republican	65%	34%
Ideological Typology		
Libertarian	38%	60%
Conservative	62%	37%
Liberal	15%	85%
Populist	36%	62%
High School or Less	44%	56%
Some College	36%	63%
College Grad	32%	64%
Post-Grad	26%	74%
18-29	28%	71%
30-44	29%	68%
45-54	39%	60%
54-64	43%	56%
65+	57%	43%
City	30%	69%
Suburb	37%	62%
Town	43%	55%
Rural	49%	49%
White	43%	55%
Black	12%	88%
Hispanic	38%	60%

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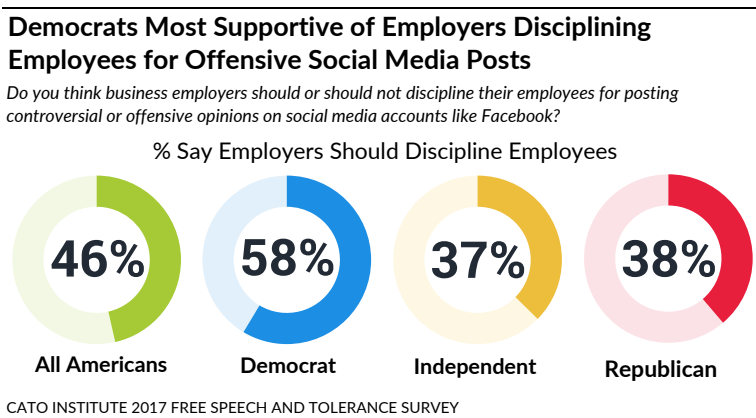
³⁹ To improve upon ideological self-identification (i.e. liberal/conservative) this report uses answers to a three-question screen (found in Appendix A) about the role of government in economic and personal affairs to identify four primary groups of Americans: Libertarian (16%), Conservative (23%), Liberal (25%), Populist (16%).

54% of Republicans Favor Firing a Business Executive for Flag Burning

Most Americans (55%) don't think a business executive should be fired from their job if they burn an American flag as part of a weekend political protest. However, a majority (54%) of Republicans think an executive should be fired for flag burning on the weekend. A plurality (50%) of Hispanics agree with Republicans that such an employee should be fired. In contrast, majorities of Democrats (61%), independents (57%), white Americans (56%), and African Americans (57%) don't believe this should be a fireable offense.

58% of Democrats Say Employers Should Discipline Employees for Offensive Facebook Posts

A slim majority (53%) of Americans say that business employers should not discipline their employees for posting controversial or offensive opinions on social media accounts like Facebook. Forty-six percent (46%) think businesses should.



Democrats stand out with 58% who say businesses *should* discipline their employees for offensive Facebook posts. In contrast, 60% of Republicans and 62% of independents think employees shouldn't be punished at work for what they write online.

There is also a racial divide. A majority (59%) of African Americans think employees should be subject to discipline at work for their social media posts, while 56% of whites think they should not. Latinos are evenly divided.

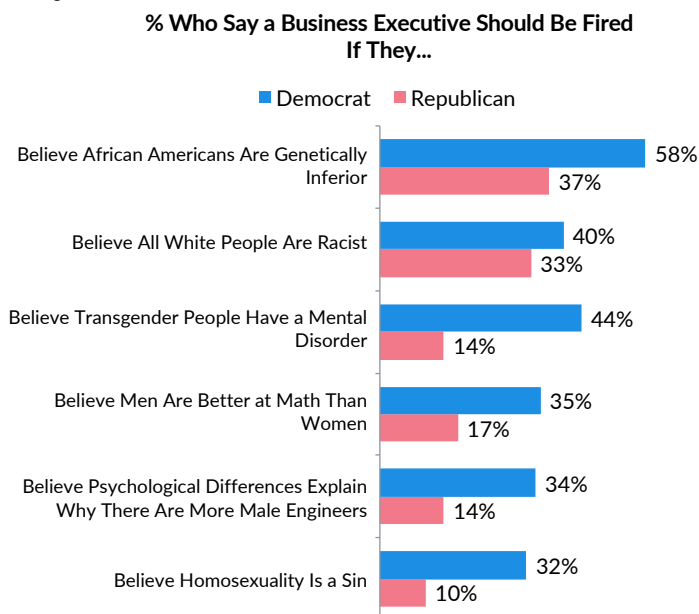
Americans Don't Want People Fired for Political Beliefs

Majorities of Americans don't want to fire people from their jobs because of their political beliefs. But, the public is most likely to support firing an executive who believes that African Americans are genetically inferior (46%). About a quarter to a third support firing business executives who believe that all white people are racist (35%), believe transgender people have a mental disorder (30%), believe men are better at math than women (26%), believe psychological differences help explain why there are more male than female engineers (25%), or believe homosexuality is a sin (22%).

Besides a belief in biological racism, majorities of Democrats and Republicans oppose firing business executives for these other beliefs. Nonetheless, Democrats are considerably more likely than Republicans to support doing so. Democrats are about three times more likely than Republicans to support firing an executive if they believe transgender people have a mental disorder (44% vs. 14%) or believe homosexuality is a sin (32% vs. 10%). Democrats are twice as likely as Republicans to support firing an employee if they believe psychological differences help explain why there are more male engineers (34% vs. 14%), or that men are better at math than women (35% vs. 17%). Democrats and Republicans are more similar in their support for firing executives who believe all white people are racist (40% vs. 33%).

Should a Business Executive Be Fired If They Believe...

Do you think a business executive should be fired from their job if they believe any of the following?

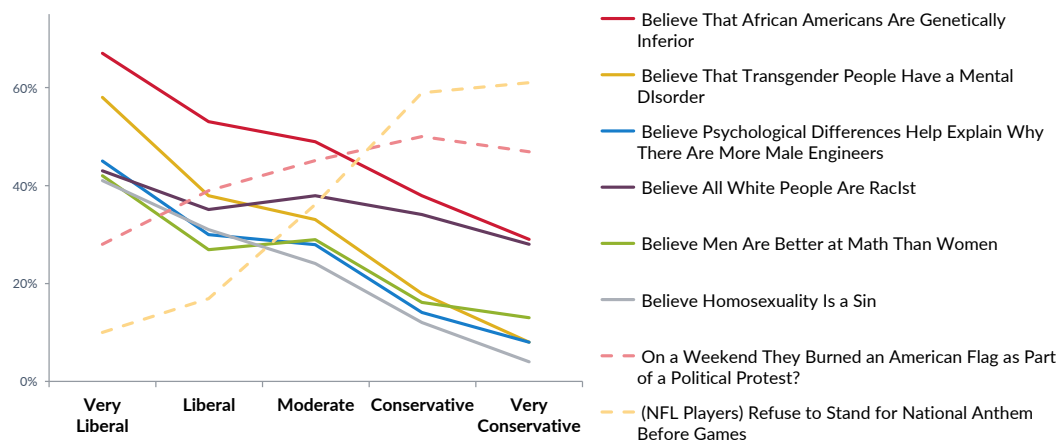


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We find that the more strongly a respondent identifies as liberal the more supportive they are of firing people for each of these beliefs. However, the more strongly a respondent identifies as conservative the more likely they are to support firing a person for burning an American flag or firing an NFL player for refusing to stand for the national anthem. Thus, Americans become more likely to support firing people for offensive beliefs and expressions the more ideological—either liberal or conservative—they become.

Support for Firing Employees across Ideological Groups

Do you think a business executive should be fired from their job if they believe any of the following? If they...



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Some of these results are surprising given that they test the boundaries of tolerable beliefs in the workplace. For instance, one might have expected that a belief in biological racism would be grounds for firing a business executive in charge of fostering merit and talent among all employees. Nevertheless, most Americans oppose firing someone for this belief.

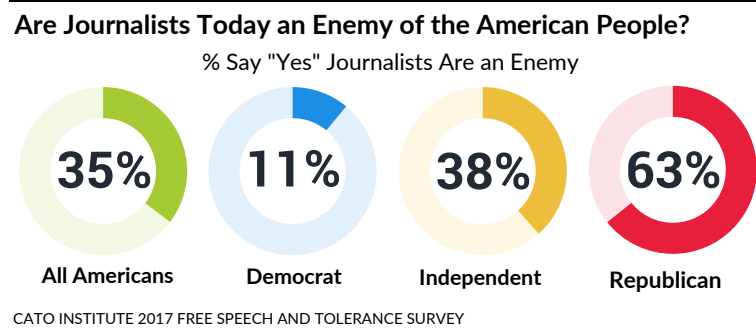
Furthermore, few Americans wish to fire executives for their beliefs about homosexuality or differences between men and women. These results imply that high-profile firings in recent years of Silicon Valley executives and employees for these reasons, such as Brendan Eich at Mozilla or James Damore at Google, do not reflect the demands of the public at large.

The Media and Freedom of the Press

63% of Republicans Say Journalists Are an “Enemy of the American People”

Early in his presidential tenure, Donald Trump tweeted that the national news media is “fake news” and that it is an enemy of the American people.⁴⁰ Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Americans do not agree with President Trump that journalists today are an “enemy of the American people.” Thirty-five percent (35%) side with the president.

However, nearly two-thirds (63%) of Republicans agree that journalists are an enemy of the American people. Such a charge is highly polarizing: 89% of Democrats and 61% of independents disagree.



70% Say Government Should Not Be Able to Shut Down News Stories

Although Republicans think that the national news media is a threat, they don’t believe government ought to regulate news stories, even if biased or inaccurate. Strong majorities of Republicans (63%), independents (71%), and Democrats (76%) agree that “government should not be able to stop a news media outlet from publishing a story that government officials say is biased or inaccurate.”

Among all Americans, 70% say government should not shut down news stories regardless of whether officials think the story is inaccurate. A little more than a quarter (29%) think government should have the authority to stifle stories authorities say are inaccurate or biased.



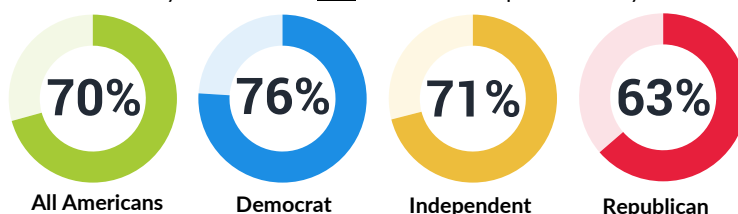
Say Gov’t Should Not Be Able to Stop News Stories It Says Are Biased or Inaccurate

⁴⁰ Michael M. Grynbaum, “Trump Calls the News Media the ‘Enemy of the American People,’” *New York Times*, February 17, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/17/business/trump-calls-the-news-media-the-enemy-of-the-people.html>.

Should Government Be Able to Stop Media Outlets from Publishing a News Story?

Do you think the government should or should not be able to stop a news media outlet from publishing a story that government officials say is biased or inaccurate?

% Say Gov't Should Not Be Able to Stop News Story



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52% of Democrats Say Media Is Doing a Good Job Holding Government Accountable

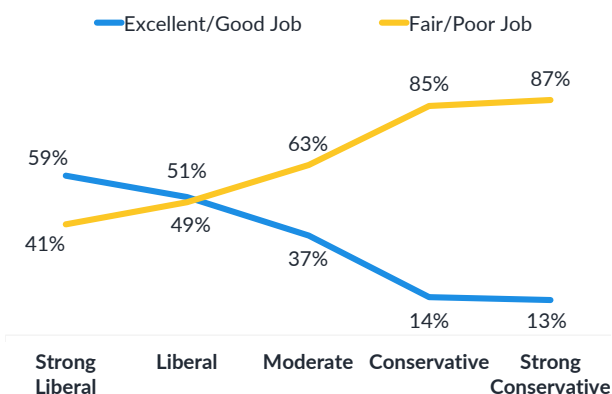
While Republicans stand out with their negative view of the media, Democrats have uniquely positive evaluations of it. A slim majority (52%) of Democrats say the national news media is doing a good or even excellent job “holding government accountable.” In contrast, only 24% of independents and 16% of Republicans agree.

Among all Americans, only a third (33%) agree the news media is doing its job holding government accountable. More than two-thirds (67%) say it is not. Even more Republicans (84%) and independents (75%) share such negative views of the media.

The more a person identifies as liberal the more likely they are to say the media is doing a good job. Among strong liberals, 59% say the national news media is doing a good or excellent job holding government accountable. In contrast, 87% of strong conservatives say it's doing a poor or fair job.

Liberals Have Most Positive Evaluations of News Media

How good a job do you think the national news media is doing in holding government accountable?



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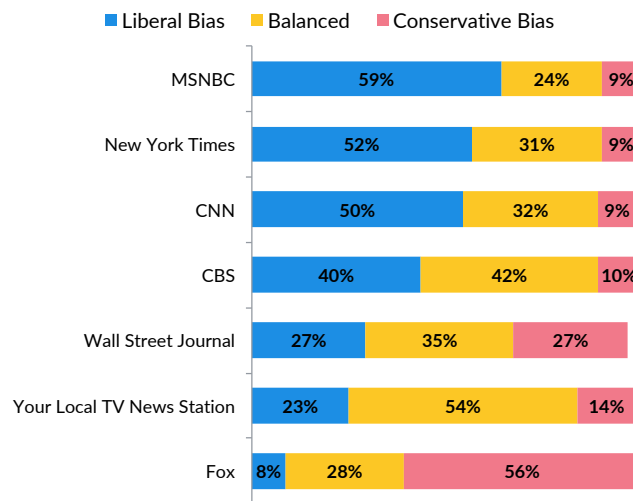
Media Bias

Most Americans Perceive Media Bias

Why do Republicans lack confidence in the national news media while Democrats view it positively? Perhaps because most Americans perceive a liberal bias among most major news organizations.⁴¹

Americans More Likely to Perceive Liberal Media Bias among Most Major News Organizations

For each of the following media outlets, would you say they are balanced in their reporting, show a liberal bias or a conservative bias?



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Note: Among those who have an opinion of the news source

Fifty-two percent (52%) of respondents say that the *New York Times* allows a liberal bias to color its reporting. Fifty percent (50%) feel CNN also succumbs to a liberal media bias. Fifty-nine percent (59%) say that MSNBC also has a liberal bias. Of all the top news organizations included on the survey, only Fox News was perceived to have a conservative bias (56%).

Americans feel their local news stations and broadcast news channels do a better job than cable news in providing balanced reporting. A majority (54%) say their local news station is balanced, without a liberal or a conservative bias. A plurality (42%) also believe that CBS is balanced. Nevertheless, respondents were four times as likely to say CBS has a liberal bias than a conservative bias (40% vs. 10%), and almost twice as likely to say their local station has a liberal bias (23% vs. 14%).

⁴¹ Percentages in this section have been calculated among Americans with an opinion of the news source. The following were not familiar with each of these news sources: CNN: 16%, Fox: 13%, MSNBC: 22%, CBS: 19%, Local TV News Station: 18%, *New York Times*: 24%, *Wall Street Journal*: 29%.

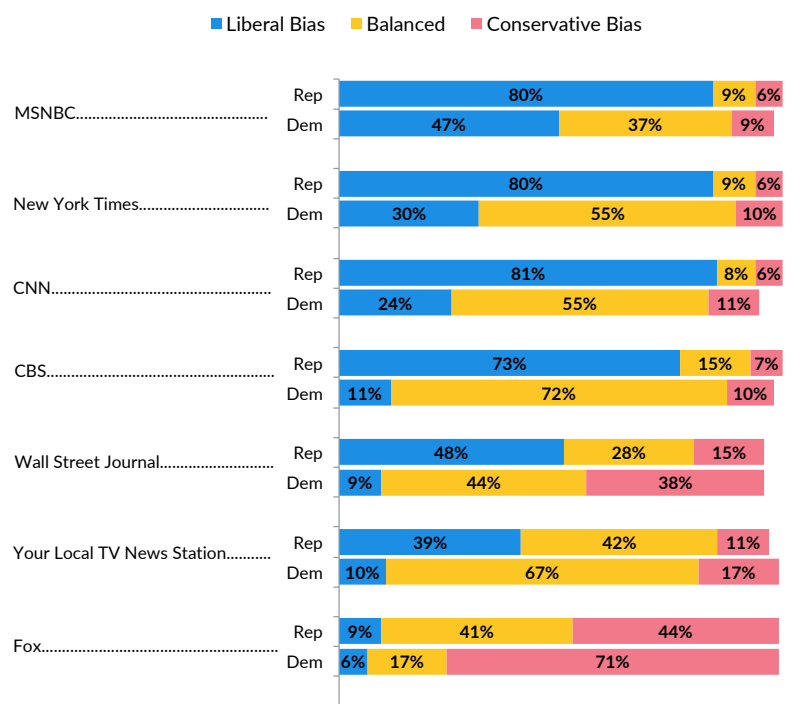
Democrats Believe Media Is Balanced; Republicans See Liberal Bias

Majorities of Democrats believe most major news organizations are balanced in their reporting, including CBS (72%), CNN (55%), the *New York Times* (55%), as well as their local news station (67%). A plurality (44%) also believe the *Wall Street Journal* is balanced. The two exceptions are that a plurality (47%) believe MSNBC has a liberal bias (37% believe it's unbiased) and a strong majority (71%) say Fox has a conservative bias.

Republicans, on the other hand, see things differently. Overwhelming majorities believe liberal bias colors reporting at the *New York Times* (80%), CNN (81%), CBS (73%), and MSNBC (80%). A plurality also feel the *Wall Street Journal* (48%) has a liberal tilt. Only when evaluating their local TV news station do most Republicans, but not a majority, perceive balanced reporting (42%). Similar to Democrats' perceptions of MSNBC, a plurality of Republicans (44%) believe Fox News has a conservative bias; 41% believe it provides unbiased reporting.

Republicans More Likely to Perceive Liberal Media Bias, Democrats More Likely to Believe Media Is Balanced

For each of the following media outlets, would you say they are balanced in their reporting, show a liberal bias or a conservative bias?



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Note: Among those who have an opinion of the news source

The news outlets that Republicans find most objective are their local news station (42%), Fox (41%), and the *Wall Street Journal* (28%). The media

organizations Democrats find most objective include CBS (72%), their local news station (67%), CNN (55%), and the *New York Times* (55%).



Key Insights: The implications of these results are troubling. In order for the media to perform the role of fact checker and to hold government accountable, it must be viewed as a credible source. However, Americans—of all different political persuasions—believe too many in the media offer biased reporting. Until the media regains a reputation for balanced and objective journalism, it will have trouble regaining the trust and confidence of Americans, particularly Republicans.

Religious Liberty

Who cares more about protecting religious liberty in the United States? It depends on whose liberty is at stake. Republicans tend to care more about protecting the conscience of religious bakers, florists, and other wedding-related businesses who refuse service to same-sex weddings. On the other hand, Democrats care more about ensuring Muslims have the right to build mosques in their communities.

Serving LGBT People vs. Servicing Weddings

Americans make a distinction between requiring businesses with religious objections to serve gay and lesbian people and providing custom services to same-sex weddings.

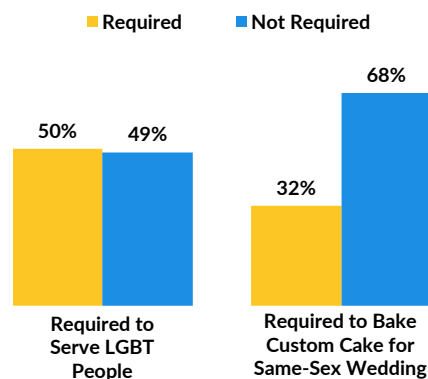
While 50% of Americans say businesses with religious objections should be required to provide services to gays and lesbians, only 32% think a baker should be required to bake a special-order cake for a same-sex wedding. Instead 68% say a baker should not be required to bake a custom wedding cake if doing so violates their religious convictions.

Majorities of Democrats say a business should be required to provide service to both LGBT people (73%) and bake a custom cake for same-sex weddings (52%), even if doing so

Americans Say Bakers Should Not Be Required to Bake a Custom Cake for a Same-Sex Wedding if It Violates Religious Convictions

[ASK FORM A] Should businesses be required to provide services to gay and lesbian people, even if doing so violates their religious convictions?

[ASK FORM B] Should a baker be required to bake a special-order wedding cake for a same-sex wedding, even if doing so violates their religious convictions?



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violates the business owner's religious beliefs. Conversely, majorities of Republicans say business owners should not be required to provide services in either situation, either to LGBT people (77%) or for same-sex weddings (87%).

41% of Republicans Say Baking Cake for Same-Sex Wedding Is an Endorsement

Most Americans (73%) do not view baking a special-order wedding cake for a same-sex wedding as an endorsement of same-sex marriage. About a quarter (26%) do view it as an endorsement. However, Republicans (41%) are 28 points more likely than Democrats (13%) to view baking the cake as an endorsement of the marriage.

Evangelical Protestants are also more likely to believe (42%) that baking a custom cake for a same-sex wedding would be an endorsement of that wedding. In contrast, about a quarter of Mainline Protestants (26%), Catholics (27%), or other religious groups (28%) view it as an endorsement. Only 14% of non-religious people agree.

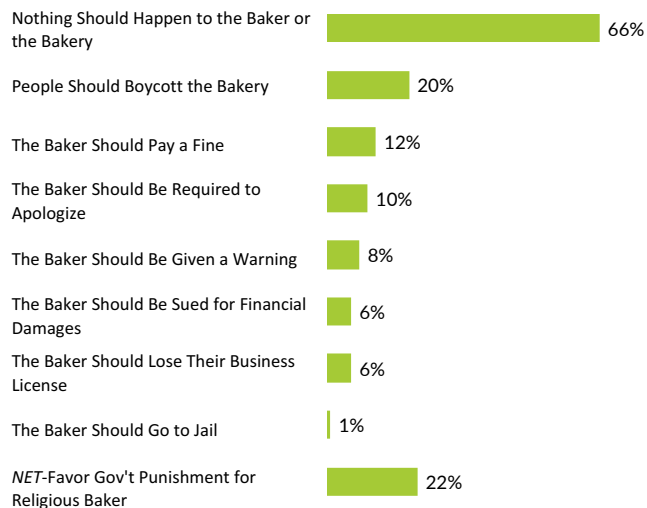
These data suggest that one reason Americans may disagree about requiring businesses service same-sex weddings is they don't agree on what providing those services means. For some Americans, it would require them violate their conscience, while it would not appear that way to others.

Few Favor Punishing Bakers Who Refuse to Bake Cakes for Same-Sex Weddings

What should happen to a religious baker who refuses to bake a special-order cake for a same-sex wedding? Most Americans (66%) say nothing should happen to the baker. Alternatively, a fifth (20%) would support a boycott of the bakery and 22% would support some kind of government punishment including: issuing a fine (12%), requiring an apology (10%), issuing a warning (8%), revoking their business license (6%), or sending the baker to jail (1%). Another 6% support suing the baker for damages.

Most Americans Say Nothing Should Happen to Bakers Who Refuse to Bake Cakes for Same-Sex Weddings

[ASK FORM B] If a baker refuses to bake a cake for the same-sex wedding for religious reasons, what do you think should happen? (Select all that apply)



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Strong liberals stand out with a majority (58%) who favor some form of government punishment for a baker who refuses to bake the cake. In contrast, 22% of moderates and only 4% of strong conservatives support some form of government sanction against the baker or bakery.

81% Oppose Requiring Churches to Facilitate Same-Sex Weddings

An overwhelming majority of Americans oppose requiring churches and religious organizations perform same-sex wedding ceremonies if doing so violates their religious beliefs. This is non-controversial, with strong majorities of Democrats (73%), independents (81%), Republicans (91%), evangelical Protestants (92%), and non-religious people (72%) in agreement.

52% Say Local Government Officials Should Be Required to Perform Same-Sex Weddings

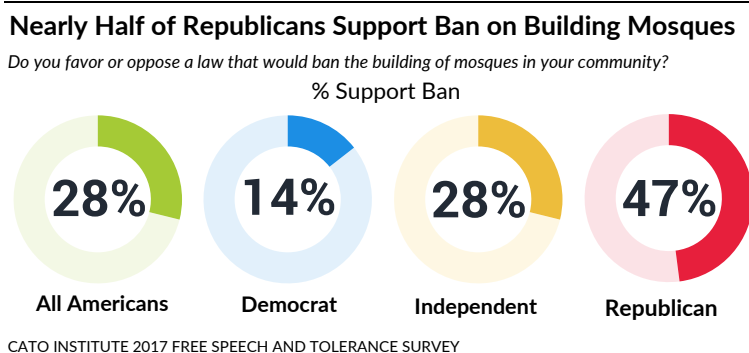
A slim majority (52%) of Americans say that local government officials should be required to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies, even if doing so violates that official's religious convictions. Nearly as many (47%) say these officials should not be required to perform these ceremonies.

Partisans are sharply divided. Nearly 7 in 10 (69%) Democrats say local officials should be required to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies. In contrast, 68% of Republicans say such officials should not be required to do this. Independents are divided, with a slim majority (51%) who say officials should perform the ceremonies.

Building Mosques

47% of Republicans Favor Ban on Building New Mosques

Most Americans (69%) would oppose a law that would ban the building of mosques in their community while 28% would favor. Although a slim majority (51%) of Republicans also oppose such a law, they are the most likely group to support it (47%). Far fewer Democrats (14%) and independents (28%) would also support a ban on building mosques in their communities.



The question distinguishes Libertarians from Conservatives. Using a political typology to identify ideological groups,⁴² we find that Libertarians (76%) are 25 points more likely than Conservatives (51%) to oppose a ban on building mosques. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of Liberals and 67% of Populists also oppose such a law.

⁴² To improve upon ideological self-identification (i.e. liberal/conservative) this report uses answers to a three-question screen (found in Appendix A) about the role of government in economic and personal affairs to identify four primary groups of Americans: Libertarian (16%), Conservative (23%), Liberal (25%), Populist (16%).

Appendix A: Ideological Typology

How Libertarian, Populist, Liberal, and Conservative Groups Are Identified

The Cato 2017 Free Speech and Tolerance survey asked the following three questions to identify clusters of like-minded respondents based on their answers to questions about the proper role of government involvement in economic affairs and in promoting traditional values.

1. If you had to choose, would you rather have a:
 - a. Smaller government providing fewer services **49%**
 - b. Bigger government providing more services **49%**
2. Which of these two statements comes closer to your own view?
 - a. There are more things that government should be doing **51%**
 - b. Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals **47%**
3. Which of these two statements comes closer to your own view?
 - a. The government should promote traditional values in our society **47%**
 - b. The government should not favor any particular set of values **52%**

Respondents were divided into five groups, based on whether they wanted more or less government involvement in economic affairs and promoting traditional values. Here are the five groups defined:

16%	(16%) Libertarian: These respondents say they prefer a smaller government providing fewer services, that government is doing too many things, and government should not favor any particular set of values.
23%	(23%) Conservative: These respondents say they prefer a smaller government providing fewer services, that government is doing too many things, and government should promote traditional values in society.
25%	(25%) Liberal: These respondents say they prefer a larger government providing more services, that government needs to do more, and that government should not favor any particular set of values.
16%	(16%) Populist: These respondents say they prefer a larger government providing more services, that government needs to do more, and that government should promote traditional values.
21%	(21%) Middle: These respondents did not conform to any of the other four groups.

Appendix B: What Speech Is Hateful, Offensive, or Neither?

		Hateful	Offensive, but not hateful	Not offensive or hateful
A person calling a racial minority a racial slur	Lib	81%	18%	1%
	Con	43%	51%	5%
A person calling a woman a vulgar name	Lib	54%	43%	2%
	Con	31%	61%	6%
A person calling gays and lesbians vulgar names	Lib	73%	23%	3%
	Con	39%	50%	8%
A person who says one race is genetically superior to another race	Lib	75%	23%	2%
	Con	43%	46%	9%
A person who says that transgender people have a mental disorder	Lib	59%	36%	4%
	Con	17%	44%	36%
A person who says that homosexuality is a sin	Lib	49%	41%	9%
	Con	8%	39%	51%
A person who says that illegal immigrants should be deported	Lib	37%	43%	19%
	Con	7%	29%	62%
A person who says America is an evil country	Lib	29%	51%	20%
	Con	39%	45%	13%
A person who says that all white people are racist	Lib	35%	55%	10%
	Con	44%	45%	8%
A person who says the police are racist	Lib	17%	52%	30%
	Con	39%	47%	12%
A person who says Islam is taking over Europe	Lib	31%	48%	21%
	Con	7%	26%	66%
A person who says that women should not fight in military combat roles	Lib	17%	70%	13%
	Con	7%	40%	51%

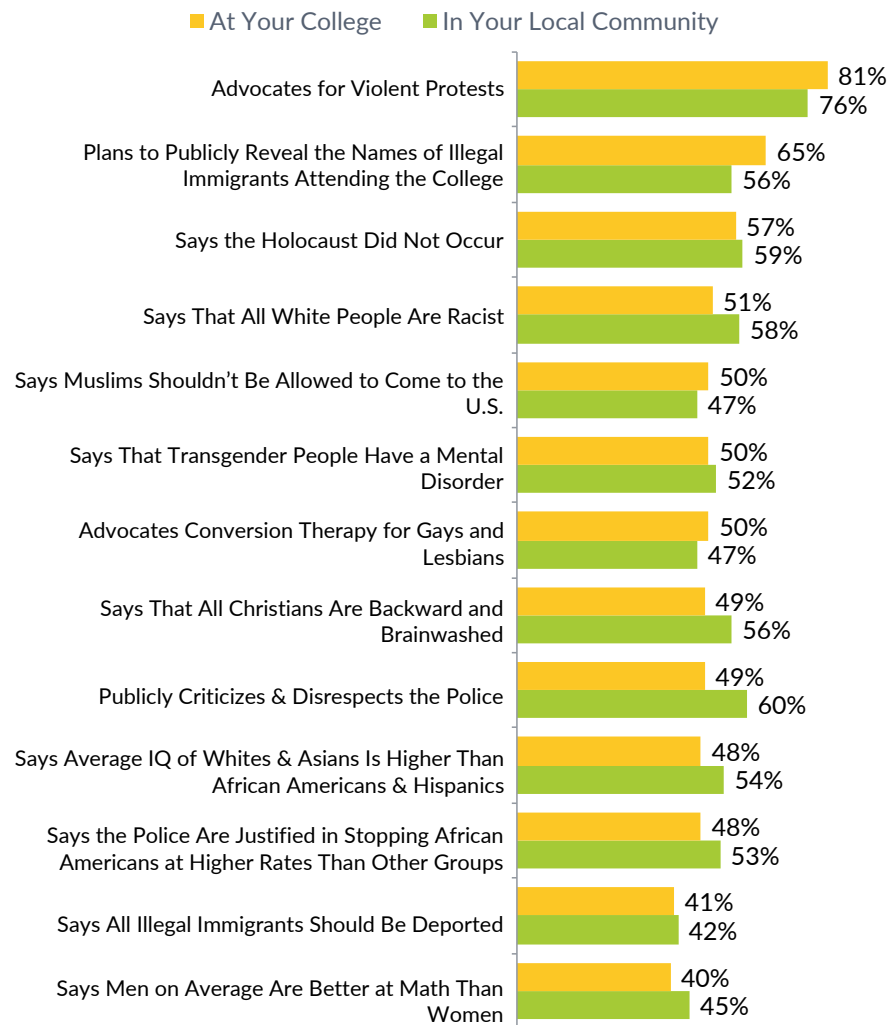
Appendix C: Who Should Be Allowed to Speak?

Who Should Be Allowed to Speak?

[ASKED OF THOSE WITHOUT COLLEGE EXPERIENCE] Suppose each of the following people were invited to give a speech in your local community, should they be allowed to speak?

[ASKED OF THOSE WITH COLLEGE EXPERIENCE] Suppose each of the following people were invited to give a speech at your college or university, should they be allowed to speak?

% Who Say Speaker Should Not Be Allowed to Speak A Speaker Who...



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Survey Methodology

The Cato Institute 2017 Free Speech and Tolerance Survey was conducted by the Cato Institute in collaboration with YouGov. YouGov collected responses August 15 to 23, 2017, from 2,547 Americans 18 years of age and older who were matched down to a sample of 2,300 to produce the final dataset. The survey included oversamples of 769 current college and graduate students, 459 African Americans, and 461 Latinos. Results have been weighted to be representative of the national adult sample. The margin of error for the survey, which adjusts for the impact of weighting is ± 3.00 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for current college and graduate students is ± 5.17 ; for African Americans it is ± 6.69 ; for Hispanics it is ± 6.68 ; for whites it is ± 4.13 . This does not include other sources of non-sampling error, such as selection bias in panel participation or response to a particular survey.

Data on the moral acceptability of punching a Nazi come from a Cato Institute/YouGov survey conducted August 21 to 22, 2017, of 1,141 respondents, with a margin of error of ± 4.5 percentage points, which adjusts for the impact of weighting.

YouGov conducted the surveys online with its proprietary Web-enabled survey software, using a method called Active Sampling. Restrictions are put in place to ensure that only the people selected and contacted by YouGov are allowed to participate.

The respondents in each survey were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political interest. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). Data on voter registration status and turnout were matched to this frame using the November supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS), as well as the National Exit Poll. Data on interest in politics and party identification were then matched to this frame from the 2007 Pew Religious Life Survey. The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, non-identification with a major political party, census region, and ideology. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles. The weights were then post-stratified to match the election outcome of the National Exit Poll, as well as the full stratification of four-category age, four-category race, gender, and four-category education.