# A Divided and <br> Pessimistic Electorate 

Voters skeptical of progress in many areas - even jobs - since 2008

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## A Divided and Pessimistic Electorate <br> Voters skeptical of progress in many areas - even jobs - since 2008

Beyond their disagreements over specific policy issues, voters who supported Presidentelect Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton also differed over the seriousness of a wide array of problems facing the nation, from immigration and crime to inequality and racism.

And while voters generally said little progress has been made over the last eight years across major areas, Trump backers said things had gotten worse across the board, while Clinton supporters saw more improvement, especially on the economy.

The national online survey was conducted in the two weeks leading up to the presidential election (from October 25 through the morning of November 8) among 3,788 registered voters who reported they had already voted or planned to vote. The survey was conducted on Pew Research Center's nationally representative American Trends Panel.

Fully 79\% of Trump voters said illegal immigration was a "very big" problem in the country today, while just two-in-ten Clinton voters (20\%) said the same. Nearly threequarters of Trump supporters (74\%) saw terrorism as a very big problem, compared with $42 \%$ of Clinton supporters.

Crime and job opportunities, including job opportunities for working-class Americans,


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also were rated as more serious problems by Trump than Clinton voters.

Conversely, climate change ranked as a leading problem among Clinton supporters ( $66 \%$ cited it as a very big problem), but near the bottom among Trump voters (14\%). Clinton backers also saw gun violence and the gap between rich and poor as much more serious problems than did Trump supporters.

Both racism and sexism were viewed as more serious problems among Clinton voters than Trump voters. About half of Clinton voters ( $53 \%$ ) said racism was a major problem, and $37 \%$ said that about sexism. That compared with $21 \%$ and $7 \%$, respectively, among Trump voters.

Among 13 issues, the gaps were fairly modest on only two - drug addiction and the condition of the nation's roads, bridges and other infrastructure. Majorities of Trump supporters (62\%) and Clinton backers (56\%) said drug addiction was a very big problem. Clinton backers (46\%) were somewhat more likely than Trump supporters (36\%) to cite infrastructure as a major problem.

The survey also found wide differences between Trump and Clinton voters over how best to address the nation's problems. Nearly two-thirds of voters overall (65\%) - including an overwhelming share of Clinton supporters (84\%) - said the more effective way to solve problems is with proven approaches that solve problems gradually, even if change may take a while.

But Trump voters were divided on the best approach to solving problems in this country. About half (53\%) favored "new approaches that may solve problems quickly, but also risk making things worse." Conversely, $46 \%$ of Trump backers preferred a proven, if slower, approach to problem-solving.

## More Trump voters than Clinton backers preferred quick solutions, even if risky

$\%$ of voters who said using ___ would be more effective in solving the major problems facing the country


Notes: Based on registered voters who voted before Election Day or planned to vote. Don't know/No answer not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Oct. 25-Nov. 8, 2016.
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## Voters said there has been scant progress across most areas

Overall, relatively few voters thought the country had made progress on most issues since 2008. The economy was the only one of seven about which roughly as many voters said things had gotten better (38\%) as worse (43\%) over this period. Roughly two-in-ten (18\%) thought it has stayed about the same.

But more voters said the job situation in the U.S. has gotten worse (44\%) than said it has gotten better (35\%), and by nearly two-to-one, voters were more likely to think the country's security from terrorism has gotten worse than to think it has gotten better ( $45 \%$ vs. $23 \%$ ).

Majorities of voters said race relations (67\%), the country's standing in the world (61\%), crime ( $57 \%$ ) and the immigration situation ( $55 \%$ ) in this country had each gotten worse since 2008.

Little progress seen in jobs, security, immigration, crime since 2008


Notes: Based on registered voters who voted before Election Day or planned to vote. Don't know/No answer not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Oct. 25-Nov. 8, 2016.
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Trump voters took a uniformly negative view of progress over the past eight years: Majorities of Trump supporters said things had declined in all seven areas from $87 \%$ who said the U.S. standing in the world had gotten worse to $69 \%$ who said the same about the job situation.

By contrast, Clinton supporters gave mixed views of the progress the country has made over the last eight years.

Majorities of Clinton voters said both the economy ( $67 \%$ ) and the job situation (60\%) have gotten better since

Trump voters saw across-the-board decline since '08; Clinton voters saw improvement on economy, jobs
\% of supporters who say each has $\qquad$ in this country since 2008


Among Clinton supporters



Notes: Based on registered voters who voted before Election Day or planned to vote. Don't know/No answer not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Oct. 25-Nov. 8, 2016.
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2008, while far fewer thought either has stayed the same or gotten worse.

Voters who back Clinton were divided on other aspects of the nation, however. While $37 \%$ thought security from terrorism in the U.S. has gotten better since 2008, about as many (41\%) said it has stayed about the same, and $22 \%$ thought it has gotten worse.

A $56 \%$ majority of Clinton supporters said the immigration situation in the U.S. has stayed about the same since 2008, while about a quarter thought it has gotten worse ( $26 \%$ ) and $18 \%$ said it has improved.

More Clinton supporters said race relations have gotten worse in this country than said this about any other issue: $55 \%$ thought this, compared with just a third ( $32 \%$ ) who thought race relations have stayed about the same since 2008 . Only about one-in-ten (12\%) said they have gotten better.

## Looking ahead to a Trump administration

As Election Day approached, voters looked ahead to the next administration with a substantial measure of pessimism. Voters had little confidence that the new Trump - or Clinton - administration would be open and transparent, improve the way government works or set a high moral standard for the presidency.

Across five specific areas, majorities of voters gave negative marks to a possible Trump presidency: $61 \%$ said that if Trump were elected, he would definitely or probably not set a high moral standard for the presidency; $57 \%$ said he would not improve U.S. global standing; $55 \%$ said he would not improve the way government works and the same percentage said he would not run and open and transparent administration. About half (52\%) said he would use his office to improperly enrich himself or friends and family.

Clinton also was viewed quite negatively; in fact, nearly two-thirds of voters ( $65 \%$ ) said she was unlikely to run and open and transparent administration ( $55 \%$ said this about Trump). Clinton also was viewed as less likely than Trump to improve the way government works. However, more voters thought Clinton (48\%) than Trump (42\%) would improve U.S. standing around the world.

## Before the election, voters had low expectations for a Trump presidency <br> If each candidate won the election, do you think each would happen or not? (\%) <br> $\square$ Definitely $\quad$ Probably $\llbracket$ Probably $\llbracket$ Definitely not happen not happen happen happen

Would run an open and transparent administration




Would set a high moral standard for the presidency

| Trump | $\mathbf{6 1}$ | 40 | 11 | $\mathbf{3 8}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Clinton | 56 | 35 | 13 | 42 |


|  | Would improperly use office to enrich <br> self or friends and family |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Trump | $\mathbf{4 6}$ | 18 | 28 | $\mathbf{5 2}$ |
| Clinton | 42 | 14 | 35 | 57 |

Notes: Based on registered voters who voted before Election Day or planned to vote. Don't know/No answer not shown. Source: Survey conducted Oct. 25-Nov. 8, 2016.
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## Fundamental differences in how candidates' supporters describe themselves

Even beyond the political and ideological divides between Trump and Clinton supporters, the two cohorts showed striking differences in how they describe themselves, both in terms of attributes, lifestyle and personal affiliations. The survey asked respondents to check each description that applied to them.

Notably, the widest gap in views between Trump and Clinton supporters was over whether the term "traditional" described them. About seven-in-ten Trump voters said it did (72\%), compared with just $31 \%$ of Clinton voters.

An overwhelming share of Clinton supporters ( $87 \%$ ) thought "open-minded" describes them well - the most across any of the eight attributes. A smaller majority of Trump supporters (64\%) thought the same of themselves.

There also was disagreement between supporters on what core values describe them


Notes: Based on registered voters who voted before Election Day or planned to vote. Voters were given a list of words and phrases and asked to check all that describes them well.
Source: Survey conducted Oct. 25-Nov. 8, 2016.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER well. Among Trump supporters, $59 \%$ said "honor and duty" described their core values, while about a third (35\%) of Clinton backers said this.

By contrast, three-quarters of Clinton supporters said "compassion and helping others are my core values" described them well, while a smaller majority of Trump backers said the same (58\%).

Similarly, a strong share of Trump backers (72\%) said "think of myself as a typical American" is an apt descriptor. Far fewer Clinton backers (49\%) said the same.

And while more Trump backers than Clinton supporters would think of themselves as "blue collar," relatively few across either of the cohorts described themselves in this way ( $33 \%$ of Trump supporters, $19 \%$ of Clinton supporters).

Supporters also were distinct in their associations. A wide majority of Trump supporters (69\%) said "supporter of the National Rifle Association" describes them well, more than eight times the share of Clinton supporters who said the same (8\%).

Conversely, Clinton supporters were more than twice as likely as Trump supporters to say "supporter of rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people" describes them well: A two-thirds majority of Clinton supporters said this, compared with just about a quarter (24\%) of Trump supporters.

Just about half (53\%) of Clinton supporters said in the weeks before the election that "supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement" describes them well, including roughly three-quarters of black voters who supported Clinton ( $73 \%$ ) and about half of white voters who supported her (51\%). By contrast, just $6 \%$ of Trump supporters described themselves as supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement.


Notes: Based on registered voters who voted before Election Day or planned to vote. Voters were given a list of words and phrases and asked to check all that describes them well.
Source: Survey conducted Oct. 25-Nov. 8, 2016.
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While only about four-in-ten Clinton supporters (38\%) said "consider myself a feminist" is an apt description, this is far greater than the share of Trump supporters who thought the same ( $5 \%$ ).

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## Methodology

## Survey conducted October 25-November 8, 2016

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by the Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults recruited from landline and cell phone random digit dial surveys. Panelists participate via monthly self-administered Web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Abt SRBI.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted October 25-November 8, 2016 among 4,265 respondents. In addition to the standard weighting procedure used in most waves of the ATP, this wave is weighted to match the results of the November 8 presidential election with respect to turnout and the candidates' vote share. This was done because the goal of the study was not to predict the results of the election, but rather to understand the attitudes and characteristics of those who voted in the election. Aligning the survey to match the election result helps to ensure that supporters of each candidate are represented proportional to their actual share of the vote. The margin of sampling error for the sample of 3,788 registered voters who had already voted or planned to vote is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points.

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from two large, national landline and cellphone random digit dial (RDD) surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted January 23 to March 16, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate. ${ }^{1}$ The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Survey on Government, conducted August 27 to October 4, 2015. Of the 6,004 adults interviewed, all were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate. ${ }^{2}$

The ATP data were weighted in a multi-step process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the

[^1]sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on a number of dimensions. Gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region parameters come from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey. The county-level population density parameter (deciles) comes from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census. The telephone service benchmark is comes from the July-December 2015 National Health Interview Survey and is projected to 2016. The volunteerism benchmark comes from the 2013 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement. The party affiliation benchmark is the average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys. The Internet access benchmark comes from the 2015 Pew Survey on Government. Respondents who did not previously have internet access are treated as not having internet access for weighting purposes. The frequency of internet use benchmark is an estimate of daily internet use projected to 2016 from the 2013 Current Population Survey Computer and Internet Use Supplement. Presidential election turnout is weighted to an estimate from the United States Elections Project. The parameter for each candidate's share of the national popular vote comes from the Associated Press' tally of election results. Election related parameters are current as of November 9. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the American Trends Panel is predominantly native born and English speaking.

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

| Survey conducted October 25-November 8, 2016 |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Unweighted |
| sample size |$\quad$ Plus or minus ...

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The October 2016 wave had a response rate of $81 \%$ (4,265 responses among 5,280 individuals in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10.0\%) and attrition from panel members who were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the wave is $2.7 \%$.
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3 Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.

## Appendix: Topline Questionnaire

2016 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL<br>WAVE 22 OCTOBER<br>FINAL TOPLINE<br>October 25 - November 8, 2016<br>TOTAL $\mathrm{N}=4,265^{1}$

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

## ASK ALL:

VOTEGENA If the 2016 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for... [RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 FIRST FOLLOWED BY RANDOMIZED OPTIONS 3 AND 4, WITH OPTION 5 ALWAYS LAST]
ASK IF NONE/OTHER CANDIDATE OR SKIPPED VOTEGEN (VOTEGENA=5 OR MISSING):
VOTEGENB As of TODAY, do you LEAN more to... [RANDOMIZE OPTIONS IN SAME ORDER AS VOTEGENA]

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS WHO ALREADY VOTED OR PLANNED TO VOTE [ $\mathrm{N}=3,788$ ]:

Note: The survey was weighted to approximately reflect the margin of the election results. See methodology for more details.

Oct 25-
Nov 8
$\underline{2016}$
46 Donald Trump and Mike Pence
46 Hillary Clinton and Tim Kaine
3 Gary Johnson
2 Jill Stein
2 None/other
1 No Answer

ASK ALL:
PLAN1 Do you plan to vote in the presidential election, have you already voted, or don't you plan to vote?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=3,872]:
Oct 25-
Nov 8
$\underline{2016}$

| 70 | Plan to vote |
| :---: | :--- |
| 20 | Already voted |
| 9 | Don't plan to vote |
| 1 | No Answer |

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

[^2]
## ASK ALL:

INCREMENTAL Thinking about major problems facing the country and how best to solve them. In general, which do you think would be more effective... [RANDOMIZE]
bASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS WHO ALREADY VOTED OR PLANNED TO VOTE [ $\mathrm{N}=3,788$ ]:

Oct 25-
Nov 8 2016

Using proven approaches that solve problems gradually, even if change may take a while Using new approaches that may be able to solve problems quickly, but 34 also may risk making things worse 1 No Answer

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

## ASK ALL:

NATPROBS How much of a problem do you think each of the following are in the country today?
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]
based on registered voters who already voted or planned to vote [ $\mathrm{N}=3,788$ ]:

## ASK ALL:

a. Illegal immigration

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
b. Terrorism

|  | A |
| :---: | :---: |
| A very big | moderately |
| problem | big problem |


| A small | problem |
| :---: | :---: |
| problem | at all | No answer

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
c. Crime
Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016

| 48 | 29 | 20 |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 56 | 30 | 12 |
| 45 | 41 | 12 |


| 20 | 3 |
| :--- | :--- |
| 12 | 1 |
| 12 | 1 |

* 
* 

1

ASK FORM 1 ONLY:

BASED ON FORM 1 REGISTERED VOTERS WHO ALREADY VOTED OR PLANNED TO VOTE [ $\mathrm{N}=1,912$ ]:
d.F1 Job opportunities for all Americans

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016

| 50 | 40 | 8 | 2 | $*$ |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 21 | 36 | 34 | 8 | 1 |
| 50 | 26 | 21 | 3 | $*$ |
| 40 | 25 | 21 | 14 | 1 |
| 39 | 45 | 15 | $*$ | 1 |

## NATPROBS CONTINUED...

## ASK FORM 2 ONLY:

BASED ON FORM 2 REGISTERED VOTERS WHO ALREADY VOTED OR PLANNED TO VOTE
[ $\mathrm{N}=1,876$ ]:

|  |  | A very big problem | A moderately big problem | A small problem | Not a problem at all | No answer |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| i.F2 | Job opportunities for working-class Americans Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 53 | 40 | 6 | 1 | * |
| j.F2 | Racism |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 36 | 41 | 20 | 3 | * |
| k.F2 | The affordability of a college education Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 52 | 34 | 12 | 2 | * |
| I.F2 | The gap between the rich and poor |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 54 | 31 | 11 | 4 | * |
| m.F2 | Drug addiction Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 58 | 33 | 9 | * | * |

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE
RANDOMIZE MESUM1 AND MESUM2
ASK ALL:
MESUM1 Which of these describes you well? [RANDOMIZE ITEMS] [Check all that apply]

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS WHO ALREADY VOTED OR PLANNED TO VOTE [ $\mathrm{N}=3,788$ ]:
a. Honor and duty are my core values

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
b. Compassion and helping others are my
b. compassion

Oct 25-Nov 8, 201666
Oct 25-Nov 8, 201660
26

Oct 25-Nov 8, 201633
46
2
47
c. Think of myself as a typical American

Blue collar
Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
e. Focused on my professional life and career
f. Interested in visiting other countries Oct $25-$ Nov 8,2016
Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016

Not selected/No answer
53

34

74

## RANDOMIZE MESUM1 AND MESUM2 <br> ASK ALL: <br> MESUM2 Which of these describes you well? [RANDOMIZE ITEMS] <br> [Check all that apply]

bASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS WHO ALREADY VOTED OR PLANNED TO VOTE [ $\mathrm{N}=3,788$ ]:

| a. |  | Selected | Not selected/No answer |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Open-minded |  |  |
|  | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 75 | 25 |
| b. | Traditional |  |  |
|  | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 50 | 50 |
| c. | Supporter of the National Rifle Association (NRA) |  |  |
|  | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 38 | 62 |
| d. | Supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement |  |  |
|  | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 29 | 71 |
| e. | Supporter of rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people |  |  |
| f. | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 45 | 55 |
|  | Consider myself a feminist |  |  |
|  | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 21 | 79 |
| g. | None of these [EXCLUSIVE PUNCH] |  |  |
|  | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 3 | 97 |

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

## ASK ALL:

EGHTYRS Thinking about some different areas in the country today...
Since 2008, do you think each has gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same... [RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS WHO ALREADY VOTED OR PLANNED TO VOTE [ $\mathrm{N}=3,788$ ]:
a. The country's economy

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
b. The job situation in the country

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
c. The country's security from terrorism

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
d. The country's standing around the world Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
e. The immigration situation in the country

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016

Stayed
Gotten Gotten

38
43 44 35

45

61
about the same

18

21

31

23

34

No answer

1

55

## EGHTYRS CONTINUED...

|  |  | Gotten better | Gotten worse | Stayed about the same | No answer |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| f. | Race relations in the country |  |  |  |  |
|  | Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 9 | 67 | 23 | 1 |
| g . | Crime in the country Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016 | 15 | 57 | 27 | 1 |

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

## RANDOMIZE HRCADMIN AND DTADMIN

## ASK ALL:

HRCADMIN If Hillary Clinton won the presidential election, do you think each would happen or not?
[RANDOMIZE, USE SAME ORDER FOR DTADMIN]
a. Hillary Clinton would improperly use the office to enrich herself or her friends and family Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
b. Hillary Clinton would run an open and transparent administration

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
c. Hillary Clinton would improve the way government works Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
d. Hillary Clinton would improve the country's standing around the world Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016
e. Hillary Clinton would set a high moral standard for the presidency

Oct 25-Nov 8, 2016

| Would | Would | Would <br> probably | Would <br> definitely |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| definitely |  |  |  |
| happen | probably <br> happen | NOT | NOT |
| happen | happen |  |  |

No answer

22

26

28

32
26
24
16

13
29
22
35
14
28
$27 \quad 38$

32
9


1

1

## RANDOMIZE HRCADMIN AND DTADMIN

## ASK ALL:

DTADMIN If Donald Trump won the presidential election, do you think each would happen or not?
[RANDOMIZE, USE SAME ORDER FOR HRCADMIN]



[^0]:    Note: Based on registered voters who voted before Election Day or planned to vote.
    Source: Survey conducted Oct. 25-Nov. 8, 2016.

[^1]:    1 When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of $25 \%$, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, $83 \%$ of noninternet users were invited to join the panel.
    Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after February 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

[^2]:    1 The Wave 22 survey was administered exclusively in web mode. The survey included $\mathrm{N}=181$ previous mail mode panelists that were converted to web and were provided an internet-enabled tablet if necessary.

