



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

# STRESS IN AMERICA™ 2024

A Nation in Political Turmoil



OCTOBER 2024



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A Nation in Political Turmoil

## The future of our nation, the economy and the presidential election are among the top stressors

The American Psychological Association's (APA) latest Stress in America™ poll revealed a populace dealing with multiple stressors as the country braces for the 2024 U.S. presidential election. In the new survey, conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of APA, the most commonly reported sources of stress centered on the election or were political in nature.

More than 7 in 10 adults reported the future of our nation (77%) as a significant source of stress in their lives, making it the most common source of significant stress in this year's survey. The economy was the second most common, with 73% of adults having reported it as a significant source of stress. The 2024 U.S. presidential election followed closely at 69%.

Compared with the previous two presidential elections, stress related to the 2024 election was slightly higher than in 2020 (69% vs. 68%) but significantly higher than in 2016 (52%). Stress related to the current election appeared to be driven, in part, by the potential consequences from the election results.

The concern about dire consequences was evidenced by two data points from this year's survey:



**More than 7 in 10 adults (72%)** were worried the election results could lead to violence.



**More than half of adults (56%)** said they believe the 2024 presidential election could be the end of democracy in the U.S.

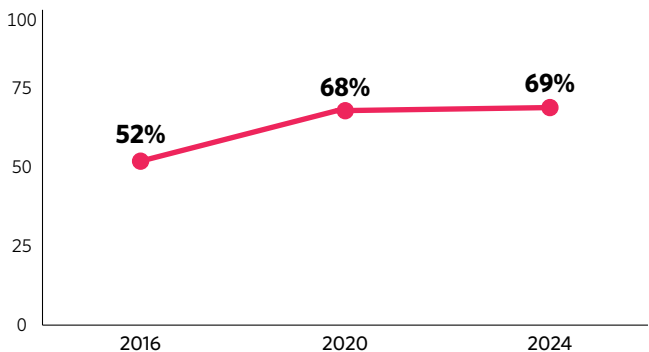
Stress in America™ 2024: A Nation in Political Turmoil revealed a country in the grip of existential stress in the run-up to Election Day. Around 2 in 5 adults reported the state of the nation has made them consider moving to a different country (41%) and the political environment in their state has made them consider moving to a different state (39%). In addition, nearly two-thirds of adults (64%) felt as though their rights are under attack.

A strong majority (82%) were worried that people may be basing their values and opinions on false or inaccurate information. Furthermore, around a third of adults (32%)

reported the political climate has caused strain between them and their family members, and 3 in 10 (30%) said they limit their time with family because they don't share the same values.

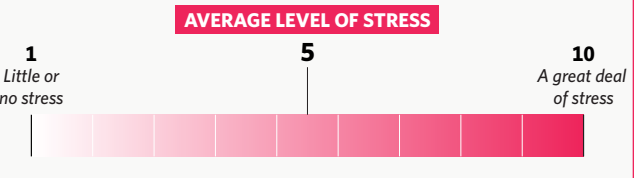
### U.S. presidential election stress

% who rate as a significant stressor



### Overall average stress level

on a scale of 1-10 where 1 is "little to no stress" and 10 is a "great deal of stress"



Despite the pervasive stress about our nation's future, this year's survey revealed determination and resilience among adults. Findings suggested that the current political climate has motivated positive change through individual actions. More than three-quarters of adults (77%) said they intend to vote in the presidential election, and half of adults (51%) said they feel more compelled to volunteer or support causes they value as a result of the state of our nation — significantly higher than the 45% who said so in 2019 prior to the 2020 presidential election.

What's more, 3 in 5 adults reported feeling hopeful about the change this election is going to bring (61%) and that this election will lead to a more inclusive society (59%). More than 2 in 5 adults (42%) said they haven't felt this excited about an election in years.



## AMERICA BRACES FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULT FALLOUT

The survey revealed that fears about the consequences of the 2024 U.S. presidential election results weigh heavily on the minds of most people in the U.S.

Democrats and Republicans were equally likely to report stress related to the future of the nation (80% of Republicans and 79% of Democrats), and independents slightly less likely (73%).

A large majority of adults (72%) reported being worried the election results could lead to violence. Adults ages 65+ were more likely to be worried about this than their younger counterparts (80% vs. 69% of adults ages 18-34, 66% of adults ages 35-44 and 72% of adults ages 45-64).

“

**I think that after the upcoming election the country will experience a period of unrest. People are not going to easily accept the results. We may have to live with the military enforcing law and order for a while.”**

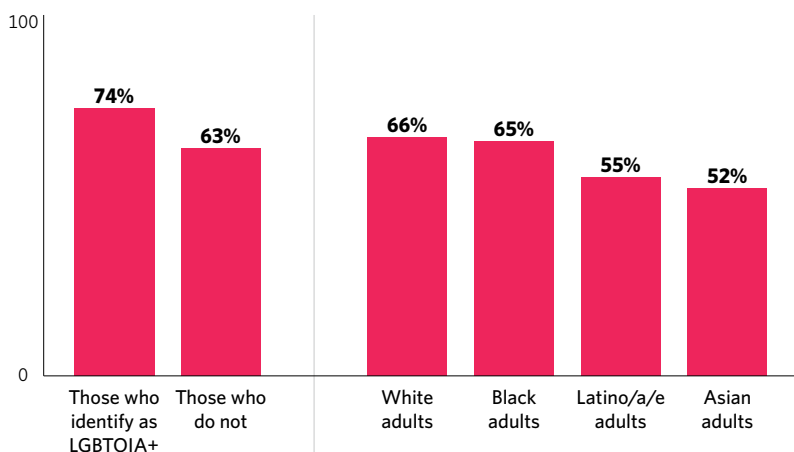
**45-year-old Black female**

Of the 56% of adults who said the 2024 presidential election could be the end of democracy in the U.S., Democrats and independents were the most likely to report this. Irrespective of political party, nearly half or more reported feeling this way (62% of Democrats, 58% of independents and 51% of Republicans).



### Rights under attack

% who feel as though their rights are under attack



Women were more likely than men (49% vs. 38%) to be stressed about how their lives and our democracy (47% vs. 38%) will be impacted based on the results of the 2024 presidential election. White adults were more likely than Black, Latino/a/e and Asian adults to report the same about their lives (48% vs. 38%, 37% and 37%, respectively) and our democracy (47% vs. 35%, 33% and 36%, respectively).

Though a majority of adults (64%) said they feel as if their rights are under attack, this was reported more among those who identify as LGBTQIA+ than those who identify as heterosexual and cisgender (74% vs. 63%). Additionally, White adults and Black adults were more likely than Latino/a/e and Asian adults to report feeling as though their rights are under attack (66% and 65% vs. 55% and 52%, respectively).

Around two-thirds of adults (67%) reported that this is the lowest point in our nation's history that they can remember.

However, this is lower than in 2020, when 71% of adults reported the same. Republicans were more likely than independents and Democrats to report that this is the lowest point in our nation's history that they can remember (75% vs. 69% and 63%, respectively). Further, adults ages 35+ were more likely than those ages 18-34 to report the same (71% of those ages 65+, 68% of those ages 45-64 and 68% of those ages 35-44 vs. 61% of those ages 18-34). White adults were more likely than Black, Latino/a/e or Asian adults to share this sentiment (71% vs. 60%, 61% and 63%, respectively).

Among the 2 in 5 who reported the state of the nation has made them consider moving to a different country (41%) and the political environment in their state has made them

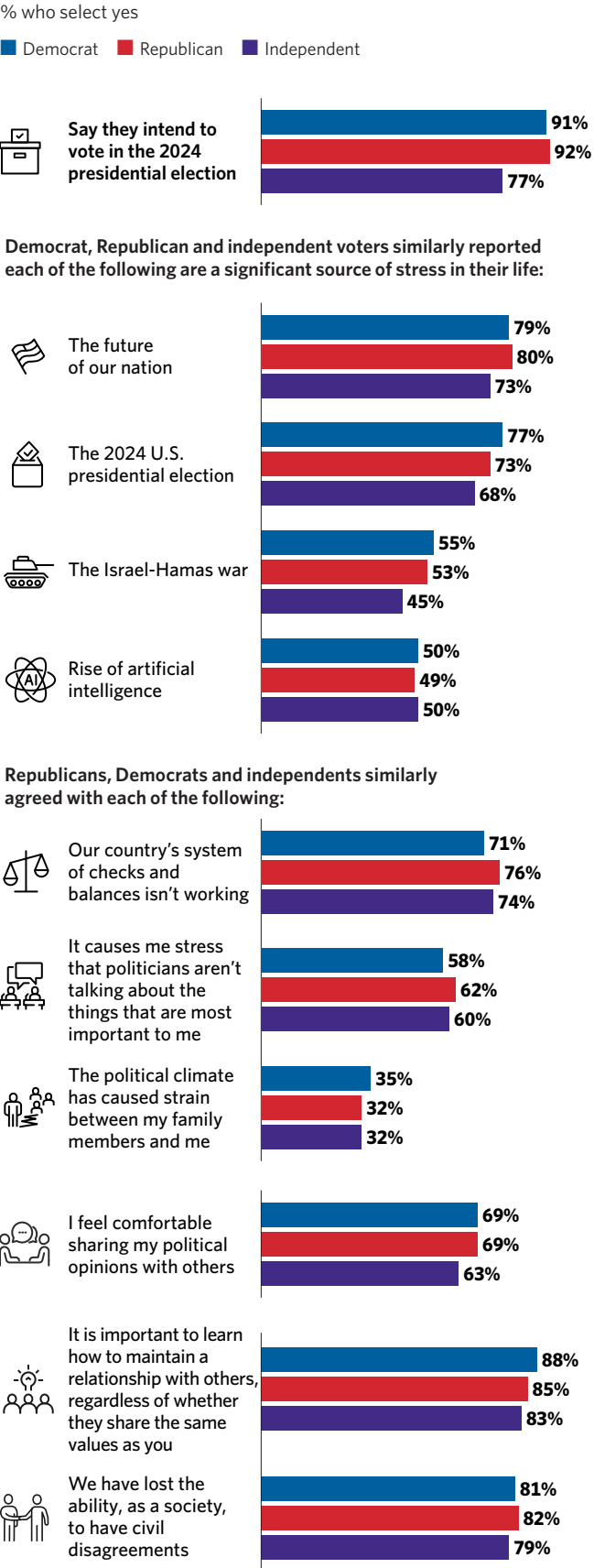
consider moving to a different state (39%), adults ages 18–34 were more likely than those ages 35+ to say the state of the nation has made them consider moving to a different country (57% vs. 45% of those ages 35–44, 37% of those ages 45–64 and 22% of those ages 65+) or the political environment in their state has made them consider moving to a different one (54% vs. 45%, 35% and 23%, respectively).

Latino/a/e adults were more likely than Asian and White adults to say they have considered moving to a different country (48% vs. 39% and 37%, respectively), and Black adults were more likely than White adults to say the same (44% vs. 37%). Black and Latino/a/e adults were more likely than Asian and White adults to say they have considered moving to a different state (44% and 48% vs. 34% and 35%, respectively).

Those who identify as LGBTQIA+ were significantly more likely than those who do not to say they have considered moving to a different country (59% vs. 38%) or moving to a different state (50% vs. 38%).



### Commonalities Across Political Affiliations

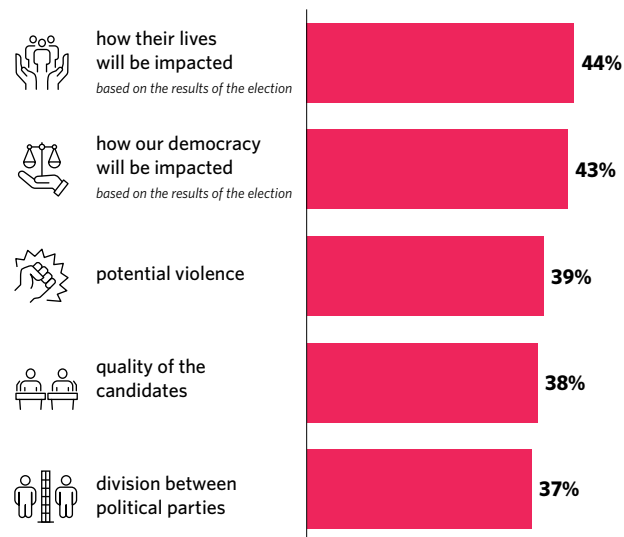


## EMOTIONS RUN HIGH AMID TUMULTUOUS PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

More than 4 in 5 adults (82%) reported feeling this election season has been an emotional rollercoaster. Specifically related to election stressors, top issues cited by survey respondents included how their lives (44%) and our democracy (43%) will be impacted based on the results of the election. These were followed closely by potential violence (39%), quality of the candidates (38%) and division between political parties (37%).

### Election stressors

% who cite significant source of stress



More than 2 in 5 (43%) said they feel they have to vote for a candidate they do not fully support. Younger adults (ages 18–34) were more likely than their older counterparts to agree with this statement (53% vs. 43% of adults ages 35–44, 42% of adults ages 45–64 and 32% of adults ages 65+).

When asked to describe their feelings about the 2024 presidential election, contrasting feelings of worry (43%) and hope (39%) were the top cited. However, more negative sentiments topped the list than positive, including frustration (29%), fear (27%), skepticism (26%) and dread (23%).

Survey results suggested that the election is affecting our sleep. Around half of adults (51%) said the uncertainty about the election was causing them stress, and one-quarter of adults (25%) reported that stress about the election kept them awake at night. Those who identify as LGBTQIA+ were more likely than those who do not to report being kept awake at night due to election stress (36% vs. 24%). Democrats, Republicans and independents were equally likely to agree with this statement (26%, 26% and 25%, respectively). Adults ages 18–34 were more likely than their older counterparts to agree with this sentiment (39% vs. 29% of adults ages 35–44, 19% of adults ages 45–64 and 12% of adults ages 65+).

Interestingly, around 2 in 5 adults (42%) said they haven't felt this excited about an election in years. Democrats were more likely than Republicans and independent voters to agree with this statement (49% vs. 43% and 37%, respectively). Black, Latino/a/e and Asian adults were more likely than their White counterparts to feel this way (50%, 50% and 45% vs. 37%, respectively). Younger adults (ages 18–34) were more likely than their older counterparts (ages 45+) to report the same (47% vs. 39% of adults ages 45–64 and 38% of adults ages 65+).



“

**I have a negative view of the future on the best days, and this election season has given me more reasons to feel despondent.”**

**29-year-old White nonbinary adult**

## ABORTION LAWS, THE ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBAL TENSION AMONG NON-ELECTION SOURCES OF STRESS

Despite the majority having cited stress related to political issues, the overall average reported level of stress was 5.0 out of 10, which is similar to previous years. In addition to the future of the nation, the economy and the U.S. presidential election, the other societal stressors commonly cited as significant among adults included U.S. politics (62%), health care (55%), violence and crime (54%), the environment (51%), global tension/conflict (51%) and gun laws and regulations (49%).

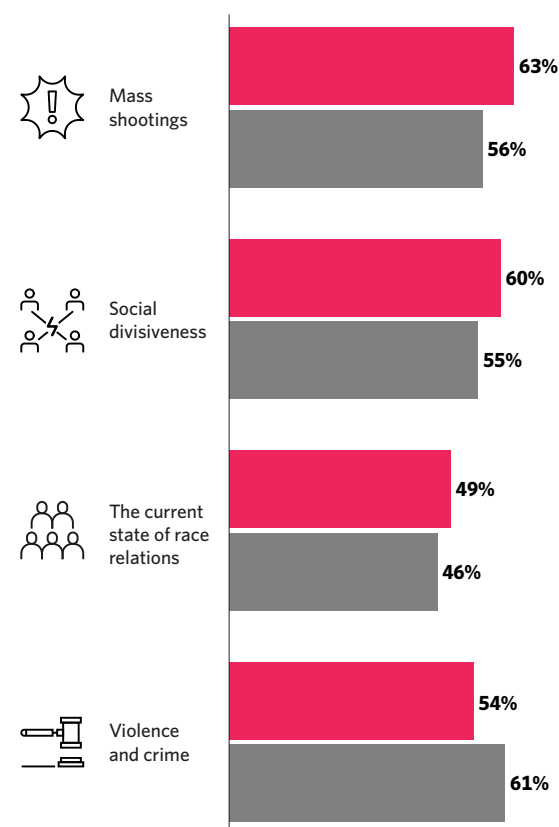
While stressors can differ by political party, the survey findings revealed many commonalities, including the economy (79% of Republicans, 71% of independents, 69% of Democrats), U.S. politics (70% of Democrats, 64% of Republicans, 62% of independents), violence and crime (54% of Democrats, 53% of Republicans, 53% of independents) and health care (57% of Democrats, 52% of Republicans, 53% of independents).

Younger adults (ages 18–34) were more likely than their older counterparts to report a variety of societal issues as significant

### Changes in stress from 2023

% who cite significant source of stress

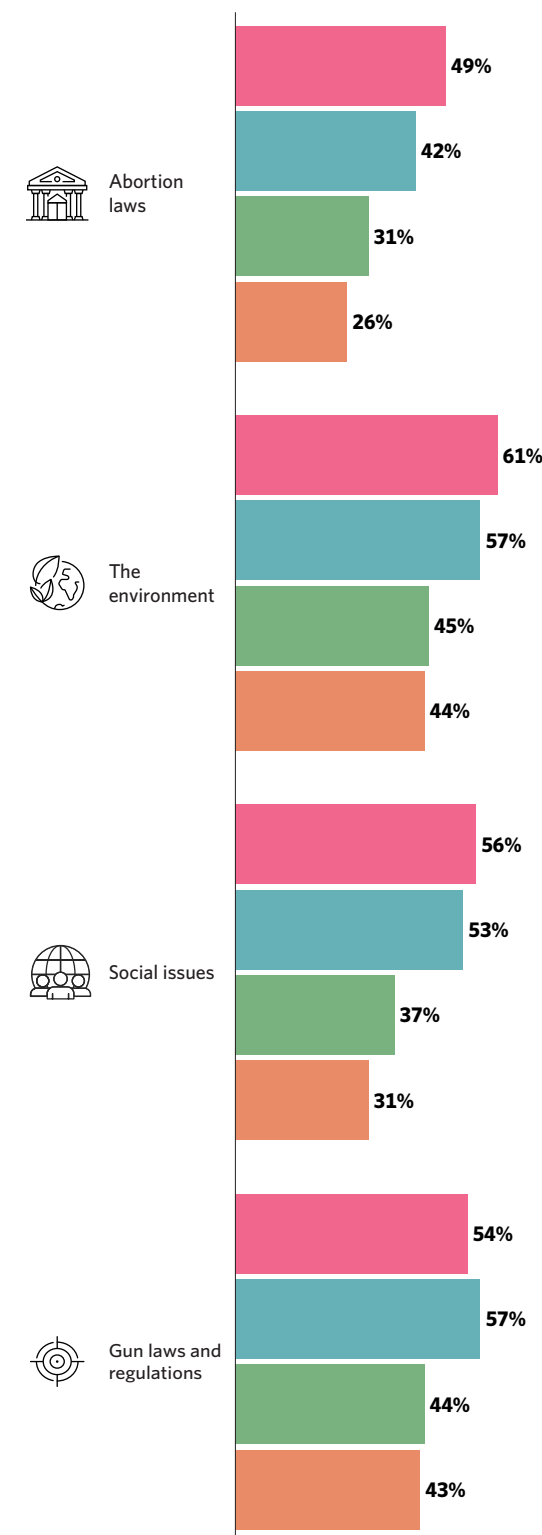
■ 2024 ■ 2023



### Societal issues as significant sources of stress for younger adults

% who cite significant source of stress

■ Ages 18-34 ■ Ages 35-44 ■ Ages 45-64 ■ Ages 65+



sources of stress. Specifically, those ages 18–34 were more likely to report abortion laws as a source of significant stress (49% vs. 42% of those ages 35–44, 31% of those ages 45–64 and 26% of those ages 65+). Adults ages 18–34 and 35–44 were more likely than those ages 45–64 and 65+ to indicate the environment (61% and 57% vs. 45% and 44%, respectively), social issues (56% and 53% vs. 37% and 31%, respectively) and gun laws and regulations (54% and 57% vs. 44% and 43%, respectively) were significant sources of stress.

When asked to rate their stress about specific news, topics and events, many adults said housing costs (65%), mass shootings (63%), the spread of false news (62%) and social divisiveness in our nation (60%) were significant sources of stress in their lives. Further, around half cited stress related to police violence toward minorities (52%), the Israel-Hamas

war (50%), the current state of race relations (49%) and the rise of artificial intelligence (49%).

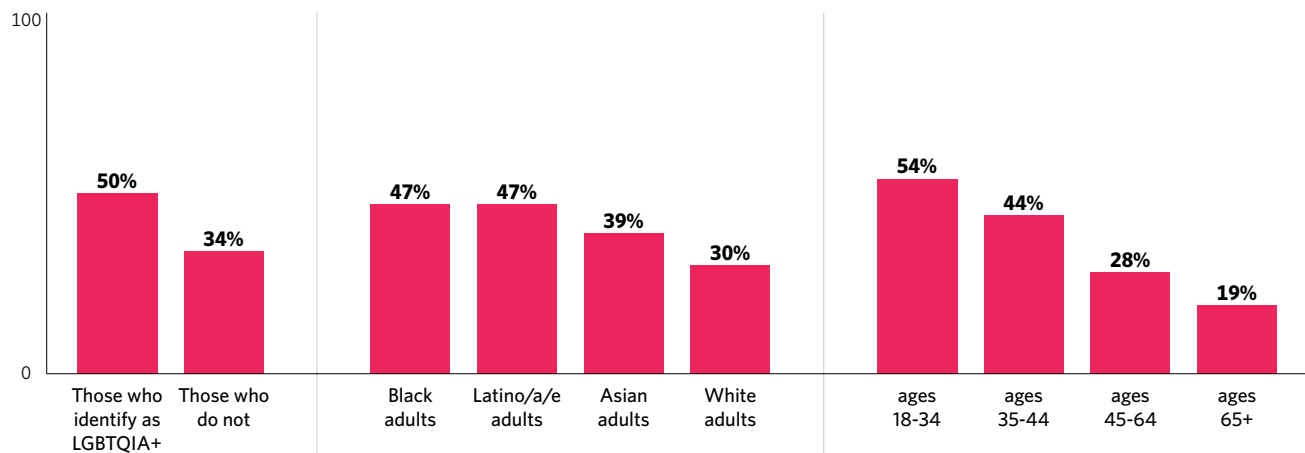
Adults ages 18–34 and 35–44 were more likely than those 45–64 and 65+ to report mass shootings as a significant source of stress (68% and 67% vs. 59% and 60%, respectively).

Overall, health-related issues (66%), work (65%) and money (64%) were the most commonly reported personal significant sources of stress in adults' lives. Women were more likely than men to rate money as a significant source of stress (66% vs. 61%). Other day-to-day stressors included family responsibilities (56%), relationships (49%), job stability (41%), personal safety (36%) and discrimination (24%).



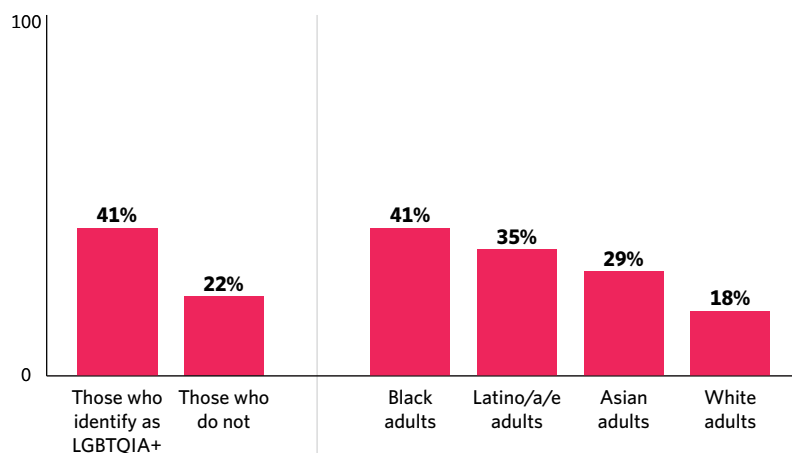
### Personal safety as a source of stress

% who cite significant source of stress



### Discrimination as a source of stress

% who cite significant source of stress

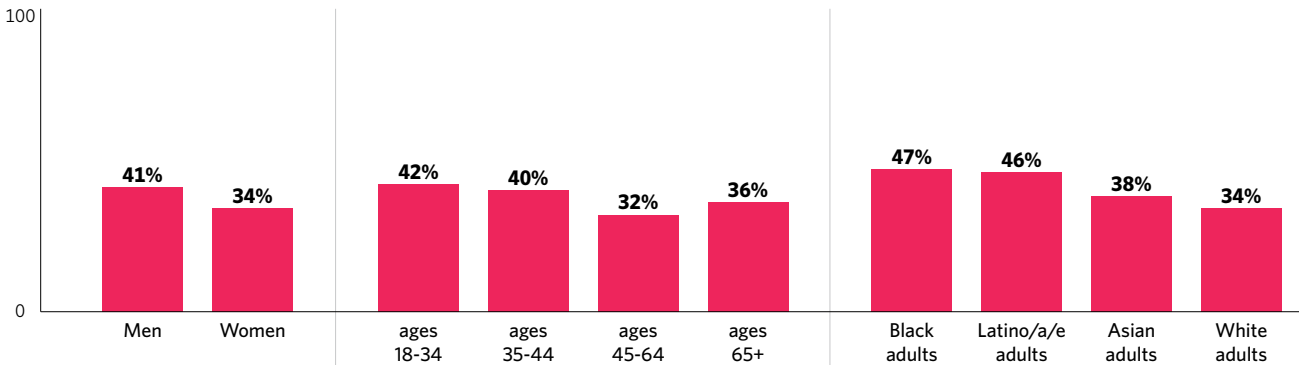




# EROSION OF TRUST IN THE U.S. POLITICAL SYSTEM SHAKES CONFIDENCE



**Fewer than 2 in 5 (37%) feel their government representatives have their best interests in mind**  
% agree with this sentiment



Apprehension stemming from politics went beyond the election and more broadly to the government as a whole. Most adults (54%) reported they have very little to no trust in the U.S. government, while 46% said they have a great deal/some trust in the government.

More than 7 in 10 adults (72%) said our country's system of checks and balances isn't working. This rating was consistent across political party affiliations (76% of Republicans, 74% of independents and 71% of Democrats).

Similarly, 7 in 10 adults (70%) said they don't think people in government care about them. Around 7 in 10 White and Latino/a/e adults felt this way (72% and 69%) and a little more than 3 in 5 Black and Asian adults agreed (62% and 63%). Nearly 3 in 5 adults (58%) also said it causes them stress that politicians aren't talking about the things that are most important to them.

Only a third of adults (33%) said they believe our children are going to inherit a better world than they did — a significant decrease since 2022 (38%). Parents appeared hopeful for their child(ren)'s future; they were more likely than those who are not parents to agree that our children are going to inherit a better world than they did (47% vs. 28%). Additionally, adults ages 18-34 and 35-44 were more likely than those ages 45-64 and 65+ to agree with this statement (41% and 42% vs. 28% and 24%, respectively).

Many reported feeling they have more opportunities than people like them had in older generations (68%) and around half of adults said their community, as a whole, is improving (49%). However, less than a quarter of adults felt that each of the following are getting better in the U.S.: LGBTQIA+ rights, women's rights, disability rights, race relations, religious freedom and digital rights such as data privacy and data ownership.

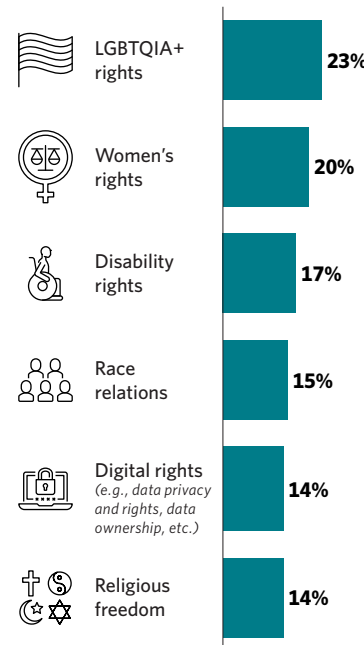
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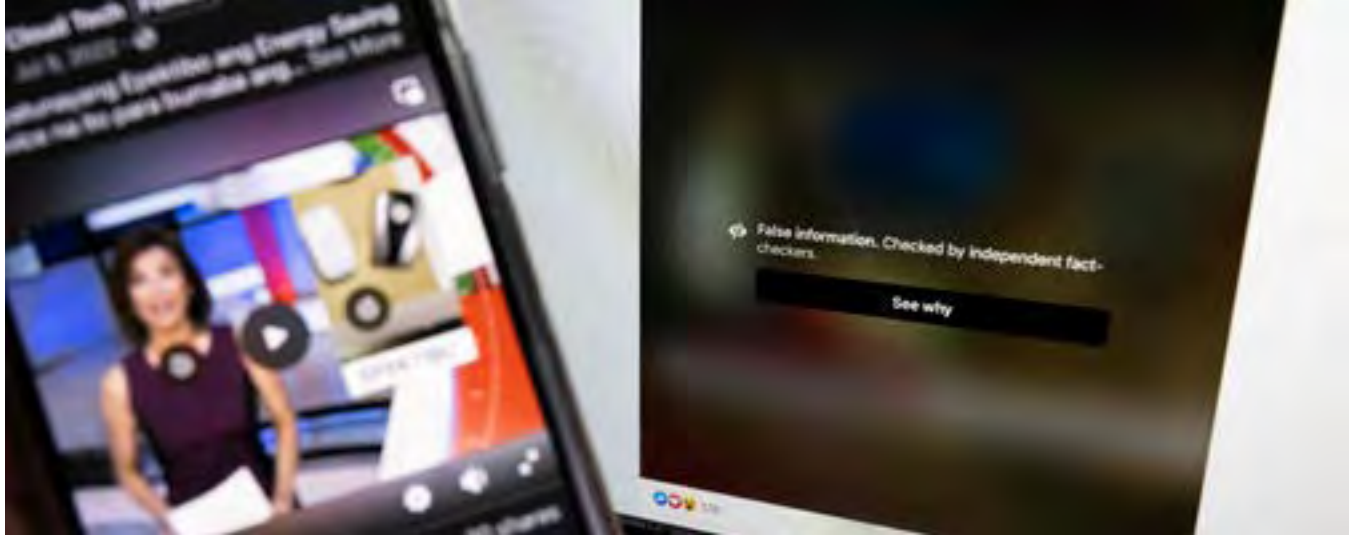
**We are going backwards and all the advances our country made in the last 30 years are halted. People are very angry and too much division is taking place.”**

55-year-old Latina

## Perceptions of progress

% of adults who said the following are getting better





## MISINFORMATION CONCERNS ABOUT THIS ELECTION SEASON

Stress related to misinformation was cited as a growing concern of survey respondents. A strong majority of adults (82%) said it worried them that people may be basing their values and opinions on false or inaccurate information. More than 1 in 5 adults (21%) reported believing something they read online or on social media when it wasn't real or accurate information.

Conversely, nearly three-quarters (73%) of adults appeared confident in their ability to spot misinformation. In fact, around three-quarters (76%) reported they always verify information/sources they read/watch/listen to.

More than half of adults (56%) reported being concerned about unknowingly spreading misinformation (e.g., unknowingly sharing a post with misinformation, citing misinformation in a conversation or work, etc.). Younger adults (ages 18–44) were more likely than their older counterparts to be concerned about unknowingly spreading misinformation (61% of adults ages 18–34 and 61% of adults ages 35–44 vs. 53% of adults ages 45–64 and 49% of adults ages 65+).

This is perhaps due in part to the fact that 3 in 10 adults (30%) reported having never learned how to identify misinformation; almost a quarter (24%) said they were not sure. More than 7 in 10 (73%) agreed it is stressful to know how believable fake information can look or seem. Specifically, around one-third who use social media (34%) reported they don't know what to believe on it.

### Concerns about misinformation



**82%** worry people may be basing their values and opinions on false or inaccurate information



**78%** don't feel they can trust someone who shares misinformation in a conversation, online, etc.



**73%** are confident in their ability to spot misinformation



**56%** are concerned about unknowingly spreading misinformation



**35%** say their personal relationships have been impacted negatively because of it

“

**I feel that there will be division in this nation. Unless there is a stop to misinformation, then the outlook for the world and nation will be bleak.”**

45-year-old Asian male

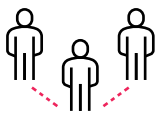
## POLITICAL DIVISIONS LIMIT ABILITY TO CONNECT, DAMAGE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Politics appeared integral to people in the U.S., as more than half of adults (54%) reported their political views are an important part of their identity. Such strong personal feelings toward political views may explain the impact political divisions appeared to have had on personal connection.

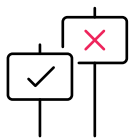
While around two-thirds (65%) felt comfortable sharing their political opinions with others, 2 in 5 (41%) said they have a hard time having a civil conversation about politics with people who have different values. In addition, differing political viewpoints/opinions have impacted adult connections and relationships. Half of adults (50%) said tension around social and political topics makes them less likely to want to connect with people in general. Around 3 in 10 (28%) said they have nothing in common with people who have different political opinions than they do. More than 2 in 5 adults (46%) wouldn't date someone who didn't share the same political opinions (47% of women said this, as did 45% of men).

### Political viewpoints and connections

% agree



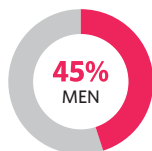
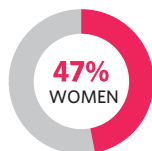
**Half of adults (50%)** said tension around social and political topics makes them less likely to want to connect with people in general.



**Around 3 in 10 (28%)** said they have nothing in common with people who have different political opinions than they do.



**More than 2 in 5 adults (46%)** wouldn't date someone who didn't share the same political opinions.



In fact, around a third of adults (32%) reported the political climate has caused strain between their family members and them. Men were more likely than women to report that the political climate has caused strain between their family members and them (36% vs. 28%). Those who identify as



LGBTQIA+ were more likely than those who do not identify as LGBTQIA+ to report this (41% vs. 30%). Latino/a/e adults were more likely than White, Black and Asian adults to agree with this sentiment (39% vs. 30%, 30% and 27%, respectively). However, Democrats, Republicans and independents were equally likely to report experiencing this strain (35%, 32% and 32%, respectively).

Further, 3 in 10 adults (30%) said they limit their time with family because they don't share the same values. Men were more likely than women to agree with this sentiment (32% vs. 28%). Those who identify as LGBTQIA+ were more likely than those who do not to report the same (44% vs. 28%).

**This isn't the first presidential election that seems to have posed a hurdle in relationships. More than a third of adults (34%) said either the 2016 or 2020 presidential election negatively impacted their relationships.**

For those whose relationship(s) were negatively impacted by either of the past two elections, most avoided discussing the election (39%). A quarter or more also asked people to stop talking about certain topics with/around them (27%), unfriended/unfollowed such people on social media (26%) and/or avoided getting together with them in person (25%). Around a fifth went as far as avoiding talking to them via calls/texts (21%) and cutting off all ties/communication with them (20%).

## A DESIRE TO RETURN TO CIVIL DISCOURSE

A large majority of adults (80%) reported feeling that we have lost the ability as a society to have civil disagreements. Adults ages 65+ were more likely than their younger counterparts to agree with this sentiment (89% vs. 72% of adults ages 18-34, 75% of adults ages 35-44 and 84% of adults ages 45-64).

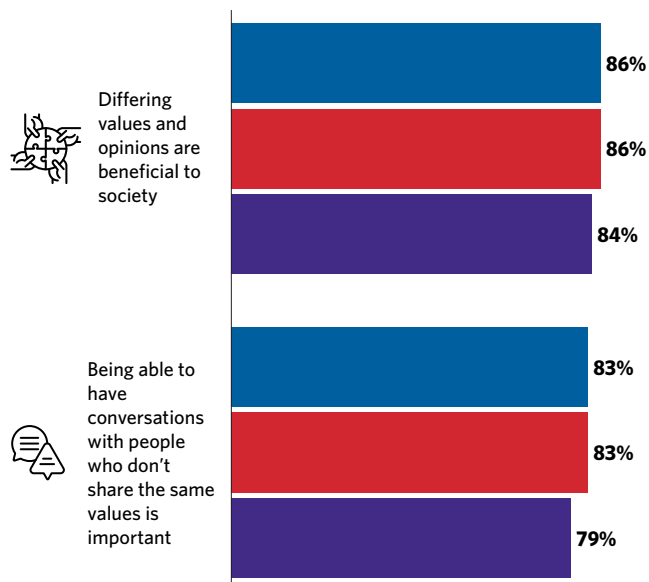
The lack of availability of accurate information and allowance of differing views/opinions have posed obstacles to civil discourse, in the opinion of many adults in the U.S. Around two-thirds (65%) reported being concerned that people with opinions that aren't mainstream or popular are being silenced in society. Yet a majority were aware of the impact that connecting with others — regardless of values or opinions — can have on society. In fact, more than 4 in 5 adults said differing values and opinions are beneficial to society (84%) and being able to have conversations with people who don't share the same values is important (82%).

Regardless of political party, people in the U.S. agreed differing values and opinions are beneficial to society (86% of Democrats, 86% of Republicans and 84% of independents) and being able to have conversations with people who don't share the same values is important (83%, 83% and 79%, respectively).

### Differing values and opinions are beneficial to society

% of adults who agree

■ Democrat ■ Republican ■ Independent



“

**[I'm] hopeful for improvement where we as society can overlook our differences and move to a common greater goal."**

53-year-old White male







## HOPE FOR A BETTER, MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY EMERGES

People in the U.S. have leaned into their election-related fears and concerns as a way of identifying actions to pave a path to a more positive and more connected society — including voting in the upcoming election and volunteering and supporting causes that are important to them.

Around 3 in 5 felt hopeful about the change this election is going to bring (61%) and that this election will lead to a more inclusive society (59%). Men were more likely than women to feel hopeful that this election will lead to a more inclusive society (64% vs. 56%). Black and Latino/a/e adults were more likely than White adults to agree with this sentiment (64% each vs. 57%).

“

**I see with my own eyes people healing, learning, growing, being patient with one another, plus showing love, and that equals change. To actually witness it is amazing.”**

**53-year-old Latina**

This year’s survey also showed that despite — or perhaps due to — the stress surrounding this election season, many people are choosing to act. A majority of adults (77%) said they intended to vote in the 2024 U.S. presidential election — with just 1 in 10 who did not plan to vote (13%) or were not sure (10%).

More than 3 in 5 adults (62%) reported feeling like their vote matters. Democrats were more likely than Republicans and independents to report this (74% vs. 61% and 58%, respectively). Black and Latino/a/e adults were more likely than White and Asian adults to agree with this statement (73% and 67% vs. 61% and 63%, respectively). Adults ages 65+ were more likely than their younger counterparts to agree (75% vs. 56% of adults ages 18–34, 60% of adults ages 35–44 and 60% of adults ages 45–64).

Around half (51%) felt more compelled to volunteer or support causes that they value — which is significantly higher than in 2019, prior to the 2020 election (45%). Adults ages 18–34 and 35–44 were more likely than those ages 45–64 and 65+ to feel compelled to volunteer or support a cause (58% and 54% vs. 47% and 46%, respectively). Black and Latino/a/e adults were more likely than White adults to agree with this statement (63% and 57% vs. 46%, respectively). Those who identify as LGBTQIA+ were more likely than those who do not to agree (59% vs. 50%).

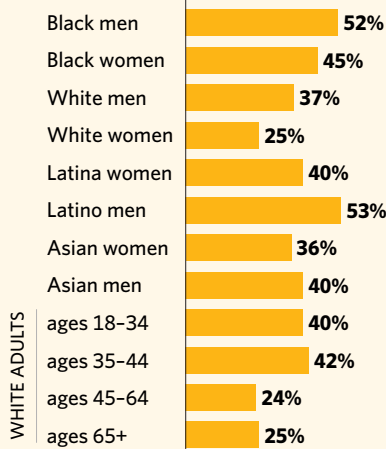
Around a quarter or more adults had spoken with family or friends to convince them of a political or social view (32%) — a significant increase from 29% in 2020 — signed a petition (25%) and shared or expressed their political or social views on social media (24%) in the past year. Adults ages 18–34 were more likely than those ages 35–44, 45–64 and 65+ to have taken action such as signing a petition or volunteering in the past year (69% vs. 62%, 54% and 53%, respectively).

## A Closer Look at Hope by Gender and Race

% of adults who agree



**Black men and women were more likely than White men and women to feel confident about the direction our country is going in**



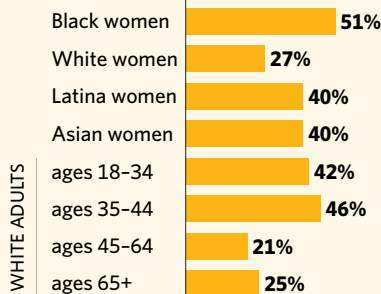
**Black, Latina and Asian women were more likely than White women to feel hopeful about the change this election is going to bring**



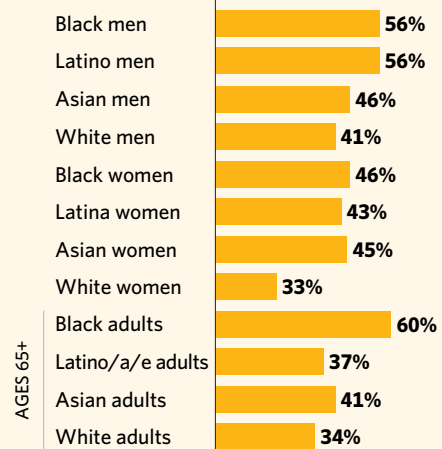
**Black and Latina women were more likely than White women to feel hopeful that this election will lead to a more inclusive society**



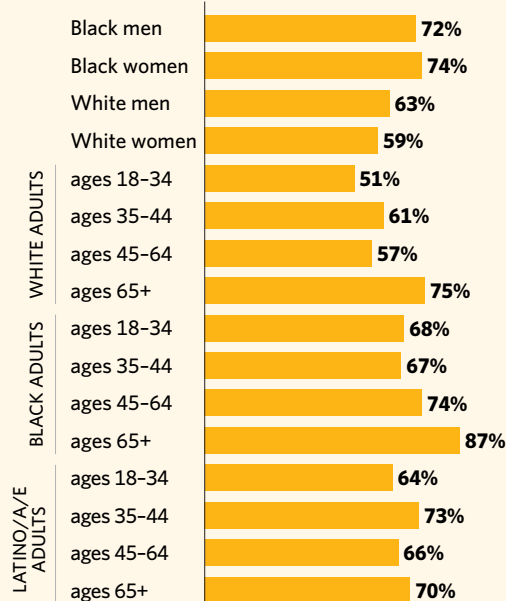
**Black women were more likely than White, Latina and Asian women to feel our country is on the path to being stronger than ever**



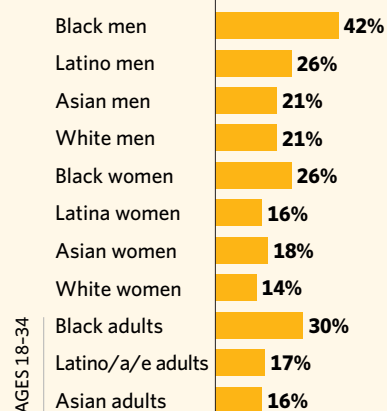
**Black and Latino men were more likely than White and Asian men to report they haven't felt this excited about an election in years**



**Black men and women were more likely than White men and women to feel like their vote matters**



**Black men were more likely than White, Latino and Asian men to use excitement to describe their feelings regarding the 2024 presidential election**



## METHODOLOGY

The 2024 Stress in America™ survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of the American Psychological Association between Aug. 1-23, 2024, among 3,305 adults ages 18+ who reside in the U.S. that serves as a nationally representative sample. In addition, oversamples were collected to allow for subgroup analysis by racial/ethnic groups. Sample sizes across the national and oversamples are as follows: 801 Black, 855 Hispanic and 804 Asian. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

Data was weighted where necessary to reflect its proportions in the population based on the 2023 Current Population Survey (CPS) by the U.S. Census Bureau, PEW NPORS 2023 (for frequency of internet use and political party affiliation) and PEW 2021 (for language use). Weighting variables included age by gender, race/ethnicity, education, region, household income, frequency of internet use and political party affiliation to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population. Hispanic adults were also weighted for acculturation, taking into account respondents' household language as well as their ability to read and speak in English and Spanish. Country of origin (U.S./non-U.S.) was also included for Hispanic and Asian subgroups.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within  $\pm 2.2$  percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

- The sample data for the Black sample is accurate to within  $\pm 4.6$  percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The sample data for the Hispanic sample is accurate to within  $\pm 5.2$  percentage points using a 95% confidence level.
- The sample data for the Asian sample is accurate to within  $\pm 4.6$  percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

All sample surveys and polls, whether they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error that are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Throughout the report, mentions of political parties are defined by those who self-identify as registered voters of the Democratic, Republican or independent party.

## STRESS IN AMERICA

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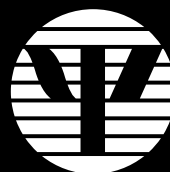
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