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Majorities Express Favorable Opinions of Several Federal Agencies, Including the FBI

Republicans' views of FBI have grown more negative in past year

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Majorities Express Favorable Opinions of Several Federal Agencies, Including the FBI

Republicans' views of FBI have grown more negative in past year

The public continues to express favorable opinions of a number of federal agencies and departments. And while positive opinions of the FBI among Republicans have slipped since early last year, two-thirds of Americans – including a majority of Republicans – view the bureau favorably.

The public rates the 10 agencies and departments included in the survey more positively than negatively, with the U.S. Postal Service continuing to rank highest. Today, fully 88% of Americans say they have a favorable opinion of the Postal Service, compared with just one-in-ten who view it unfavorably.

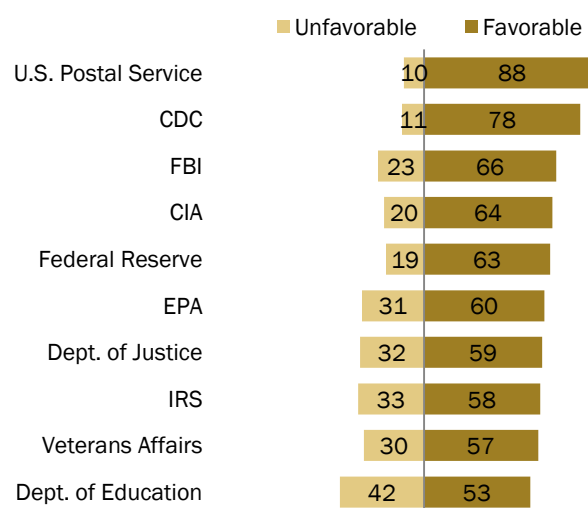
While more view the Department of Education favorably than unfavorably, just about half (53%) say they have a favorable opinion, while 42% have an unfavorable view – the highest share expressing a negative view of the 10 asked.

Overall, by roughly two-to-one, most Americans give positive ratings to the CIA (64%), the Federal Reserve (63%), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (60%) and the Department of Justice (59%).

The survey, conducted Feb. 7-11 among 1,009 adults, finds that 66% have a favorable opinion of the FBI, while 23% hold an unfavorable view. While overall ratings of the FBI have changed little in the past year, the partisan gap in views today in opinions of the FBI is wider than in the past seven years.

Public holds positive views across 10 federal agencies, departments

% who have a ____ opinion of each



Note: Other/Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 7-11, 2018.

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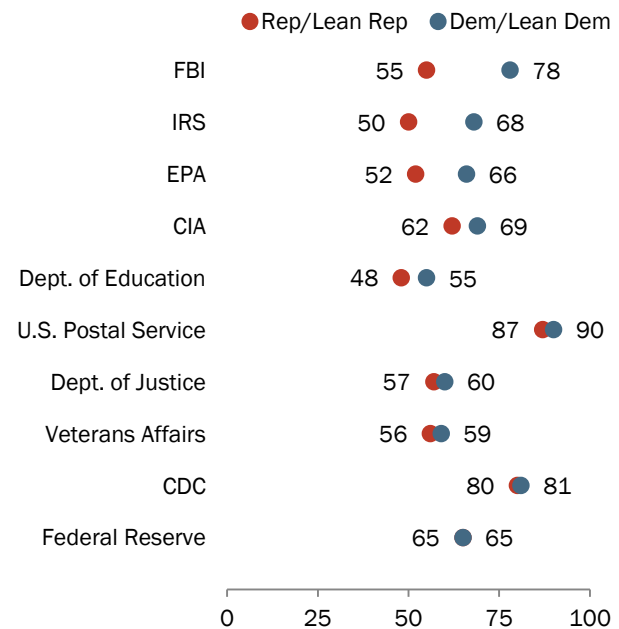
Today, the 23-percentage-point gap in views of the FBI among Republicans and Democrats is among the widest of the 10 agencies and departments asked in the survey: While 78% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents have a favorable opinion of the FBI, 55% of Republicans and Republican leaners say the same.

There are wide partisan differences in ratings of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as well. Half of Republicans (50%) are positive toward the IRS, compared with 68% of Democrats. On the EPA, 52% of Republicans say they hold a favorable view; 66% of Democrats say the same.

Republicans (87%) and Democrats (90%) alike give strongly favorable ratings of the Postal Service. Smaller majorities across both parties say they have a favorable opinion of the Department of Justice (57% of Republicans, 60% of Democrats), the VA (56% of Republicans, 59% of Democrats) and the Federal Reserve (65% of both).

Wide partisan gaps in positive ratings of FBI, IRS, EPA

% who have a favorable opinion of each



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 7-11, 2018.

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Across a number of agencies and departments, views have shifted over the last year – especially among Republicans and Republican leaners.

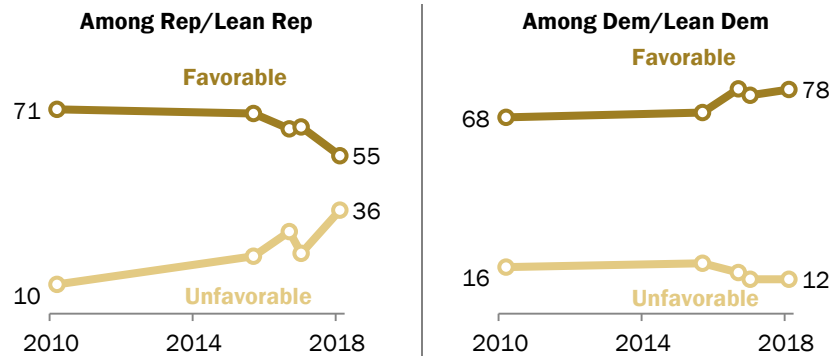
Most notably, while views of the FBI among Republicans are more positive than negative, the share saying they have an unfavorable opinion of the bureau has increased. Currently, 55% of Republicans and Republican leaners have a favorable opinion, compared with about a third (36%) who have an unfavorable view.

Just one year ago, 65% of Republicans gave the FBI positive ratings, and only about two-in-ten (21%) said they had unfavorable views.

Views among Democrats are little changed in recent years: A wide share (78%) is favorable toward the FBI, compared with just 12% who give unfavorable ratings. As a result, today, the 23-percentage-point gap in favorable ratings among Republicans and Democrats stands at its widest on record.

Partisan gap in favorable opinions of FBI widens, driven by decline in positive views among Republicans

% who have a ___ opinion of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)



Note: Other/Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 7-11, 2018.

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In attitudes toward other agencies and departments, the partisan gap has narrowed considerably, driven by more positive views among Republicans.

Attitudes toward the Department of Justice have shifted considerably among both Republicans and Democrats. Today, about six-in-ten in both parties say they have a favorable opinion of the DOJ. Among Republicans and Republican leaners, a 57% majority are favorable today, up 10 percentage points from last year (47%). By contrast, the share of Democrats who view the Department of Justice favorably has declined from 74% to 60% since then.

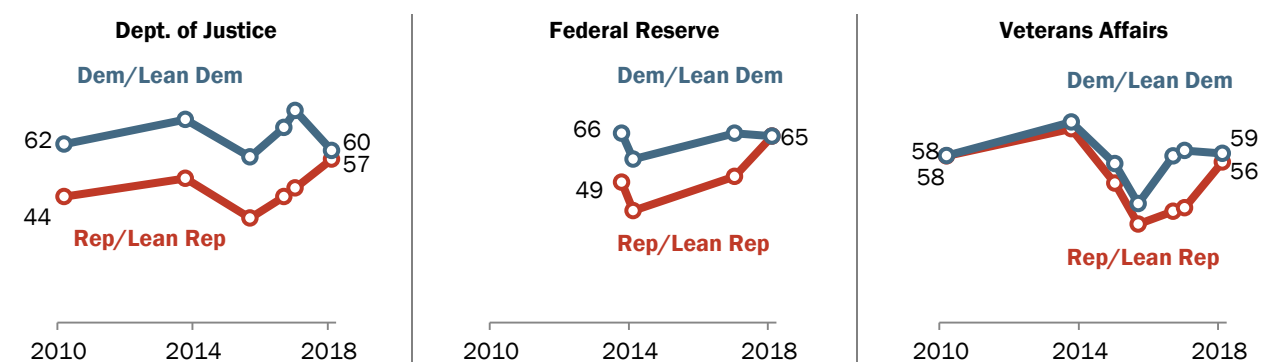
Republicans also are more favorable toward the Federal Reserve and the VA today compared with last year: Currently, about two-thirds of Republicans give a positive rating (65%) to the Fed, up from about half (51%) one year ago. And a 56% majority of Republicans view the VA favorably; last year, just 40% said the same.

Views of these agencies among Democrats are little changed in the last year: Majorities continue to give favorable ratings for both the Federal Reserve (65%) and the VA (59%).

Republicans also are more positive today than in the past toward the IRS (50% favorable, up from years past, when no more than about four-in-ten rated the agency favorably). By comparison, there has been little movement among Republicans – or Democrats – in views of the CIA.

In past year, Republicans have become more favorable toward the DOJ, Federal Reserve, VA

% who have a favorable opinion of each



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 7-11, 2018.

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Acknowledgements

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted February 7-11, 2018 among a national sample of 1,009 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in the United States (405 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 604 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 393 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted under the direction of SSRS. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Marketing Systems Group. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2017 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2017 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

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:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,009	3.7 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	420	5.7 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	447	5.6 percentage points

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.

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER
February 7-11, 2018 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,009

ASK ALL:

PEW.1 Is your overall opinion of [INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE ITEMS] very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? How about [NEXT ITEM]? [IF NECESSARY: would you say your overall opinion of [ITEM] is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?] [INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]

	----- Favorable -----			---- Unfavorable ----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
a. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the FBI								
Feb 7-11, 2018	66	25	41	23	9	13	2	9
Jan 5-8, 2017	69	22	47	16	6	10	*	15
Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	71	18	52	21	8	12	*	8
Sep 22-27, 2015	68	18	49	19	8	11	1	13
Mar 18-21, 2010	67	16	51	14	8	7	*	19
July, 2001	61	16	45	29	9	20	*	10
June, 1999	71	17	54	20	7	13	*	9
October, 1997	67	13	54	25	8	17	*	8
May, 1997	60	12	48	28	7	21	0	12
August, 1995	64	16	48	28	9	19	*	8
ABC/Wash. Post, May 1995 ¹	82	34	48	9	6	3	*	9
Roper, August 1987 ²	78	28	50	17	3	14	--	5
Roper, August 1986	75	25	50	17	4	13	--	8
Roper, August 1985	72	24	48	20	5	15	--	8
Roper, August 1984	77	30	47	19	5	14	--	4
Roper, August 1983	75	29	46	19	5	14	--	6
b. The Central Intelligence Agency, the CIA								
Feb 7-11, 2018	64	19	45	20	5	14	2	14
Jan 5-8, 2017	62	17	45	17	7	11	1	20
Sep 22-27, 2015	57	12	45	27	9	18	1	15
Jan 7-11, 2015	54	14	41	33	13	20	1	12
Mar 18-21, 2010	52	11	42	21	8	13	2	25
June, 1999	49	9	40	33	10	23	1	17
February, 1998	51	7	44	32	7	25	1	16
Roper, August 1987	52	12	40	38	9	29	--	10
Roper, August 1986	61	14	47	26	6	20	--	13
Roper, August 1985	53	15	38	33	11	22	--	15
Roper, August 1984	58	17	41	30	8	22	--	11
c. The Justice Department								
Feb 7-11, 2018	59	16	43	32	13	19	1	9
Jan 5-8, 2017	61	17	44	30	11	19	*	9
Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	56	14	42	37	16	20	*	7

¹ Question was worded: "Please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of...the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)...Is that a very favorable/unfavorable impression, or just somewhat favorable/unfavorable?"

² Question wording for all favorability trends from the Roper Organization was: "Let me ask you about a few specific federal agencies [ITEM]—Is your opinion of them highly favorable, or moderately favorable, or not too favorable, or rather unfavorable?" In these surveys, those who could not rate were not distinguished from those who had never heard of the agency; both were entered as "don't know" and are shown here as "can't rate".

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

		----- Favorable -----			---- Unfavorable ----			(VOL.) Never	(VOL.) Can't rate/
		<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	heard of	Ref
	Sep 22-27, 2015	46	10	37	47	18	29	*	6
	Oct 9-13, 2013	61	9	52	33	14	19	1	5
	Mar 18-21, 2010	51	6	44	33	11	23	1	15
	February, 1998	56	7	49	39	12	27	0	5
	Roper, April 1987	53	10	43	39	15	24	--	8
	Roper, April 1986	52	10	42	39	15	24	--	8
	Roper, April 1985	53	10	43	39	17	22	--	9
d.	The Federal Reserve								
	Feb 7-11, 2018	63	15	48	19	6	13	3	15
	Jan 5-8, 2017	58	15	43	21	9	13	2	18
	Feb 12-26, 2014	47	10	37	37	14	23	2	14
	Oct 9-13, 2013	57	12	45	32	12	20	1	10
e.	The Internal Revenue Service, the IRS								
	Feb 7-11, 2018	58	14	44	33	13	20	*	8
	Jan 5-8, 2017	58	13	45	33	16	17	*	8
	Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	50	11	39	45	21	24	*	5
	Sep 22-27, 2015	42	9	32	52	24	28	*	6
	Jan 7-11, 2015	45	10	35	48	24	25	*	6
	Oct 9-13, 2013	44	9	35	51	23	28	*	5
	Mar 18-21, 2010	47	6	41	40	17	23	*	13
	October, 1997	38	5	33	60	25	35	*	2
	Roper, August 1987	49	10	39	46	19	27	--	5
	Roper, August 1986	51	10	41	45	19	26	--	4
	Roper, August 1985	48	8	40	47	19	28	--	5
	Roper, August 1984	60	13	47	34	11	23	--	6
	Roper, August 1983	50	12	38	44	16	28	--	6
NO ITEM F									
g.	The Environmental Protection Agency, the EPA								
	Feb 7-11, 2018	60	20	40	31	14	17	2	8
	Jan 5-8, 2017	63	22	41	27	12	14	1	8
	Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	62	17	44	30	13	18	2	6
	Sep 22-27, 2015	52	13	39	38	18	20	2	8
	Jan 7-11, 2015	59	18	40	32	15	18	1	8
	Feb 12-Feb 26, 2014	57	14	43	33	14	19	2	8
	Oct 9-13, 2013	62	15	47	30	12	19	2	6
	Mar 18-21, 2010	57	11	46	32	12	20	1	10
	October, 1997	69	14	55	27	7	20	1	3
	Roper, August 1987	62	19	43	30	7	23	--	8
	Roper, August 1986	59	18	41	31	7	24	--	10
	Roper, August 1985	58	19	39	31	11	20	--	11
	Roper, August 1984	68	27	41	26	9	17	--	6
	Roper, August 1983	56	21	35	34	12	22	--	10
h.	The Department of Veterans Affairs, the VA								
	Feb 7-11, 2018	57	20	37	30	10	20	2	11
	Jan 5-8, 2017	49	14	36	34	13	21	2	15
	Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	48	14	34	43	18	25	1	8
	Sep 22-27, 2015	39	14	25	52	24	28	1	8

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			---- Unfavorable ----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	Never heard of	Can't rate/ Ref
Jan 7-11, 2015 ³	52	21	31	38	15	24	1	9
Oct 9-13, 2013	68	24	44	25	7	18	*	7
Mar 18-21, 2010	57	19	38	22	5	17	2	20
February, 1998	59	15	44	26	7	19	1	14
Roper, August 1986	75	30	45	15	4	11	--	9
Roper, August 1985	68	26	42	22	6	16	--	10
Roper, August 1984	77	37	40	15	4	11	--	9
i. The Postal Service								
Feb 7-11, 2018	88	37	51	10	3	7	1	2
Jan 5-8, 2017	86	39	47	11	4	7	*	3
Sep 22-27, 2015	84	33	51	14	6	8	*	2
Mar 18-21, 2010	83	30	53	14	6	8	1	3
October, 1997	89	28	61	11	3	8	0	*
Roper, April 1987	76	33	43	22	8	14	--	2
Roper, April 1986	74	27	47	24	8	16	--	2
Roper, April 1985	70	23	47	27	11	16	--	3
Roper, April 1984	69	24	45	28	10	18	--	3
Roper, April 1983	70	25	45	27	10	17	--	3
j. The Department of Education								
Feb 7-11, 2018	53	18	35	42	16	26	*	5
Jan 5-8, 2017	61	20	42	34	14	20	*	5
Sep 22-27, 2015	44	11	33	50	20	30	*	5
Oct 9-13, 2013	53	16	37	42	16	27	*	4
Mar 18-21, 2010	40	8	32	53	22	31	6	8
October, 1997	61	12	49	37	11	26	0	2
Roper, April 1987	60	14	46	35	11	24	--	5
Roper, April 1986	63	16	47	32	10	22	--	5
Roper, April 1985	61	14	47	34	11	23	--	5
Roper, April 1984	56	14	42	38	13	25	--	6
Roper, April 1983	49	10	39	45	18	27	--	6
k. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CDC								
Feb 7-11, 2018	78	30	48	11	3	8	2	9
Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	79	25	53	14	4	10	2	6
Sep 22-27, 2015	71	23	48	19	6	13	2	9
Jan 7-11, 2015	70	25	44	23	10	13	2	5
Oct 9-13, 2013	75	27	47	14	5	8	2	9
Mar 18-21, 2010	67	15	52	16	5	10	2	15
February, 1998	79	20	59	11	2	9	1	9

³ In January, 2015 and previous surveys, item was worded "The Veterans Administration, the VA."

ASK ALL:

PARTY Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, or an independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>(VOL.) Other party</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>	<u>Lean Rep</u>	<u>Lean Dem</u>
Feb 7-11, 2018	22	30	41	1	2	16	15