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Why Americans Don't Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility

Members of Congress and technology leaders are rated lower in empathy, transparency and ethics; public gives higher scores to military leaders, public school principals and police officers

BY *Claire Gecewicz and Lee Rainie*

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

Claire Gecewicz, Research Associate

Lee Rainie, Director, Internet and Technology Research

Dana Page, Associate Director, Communications

202.419.3665

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Why Americans Don't Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility

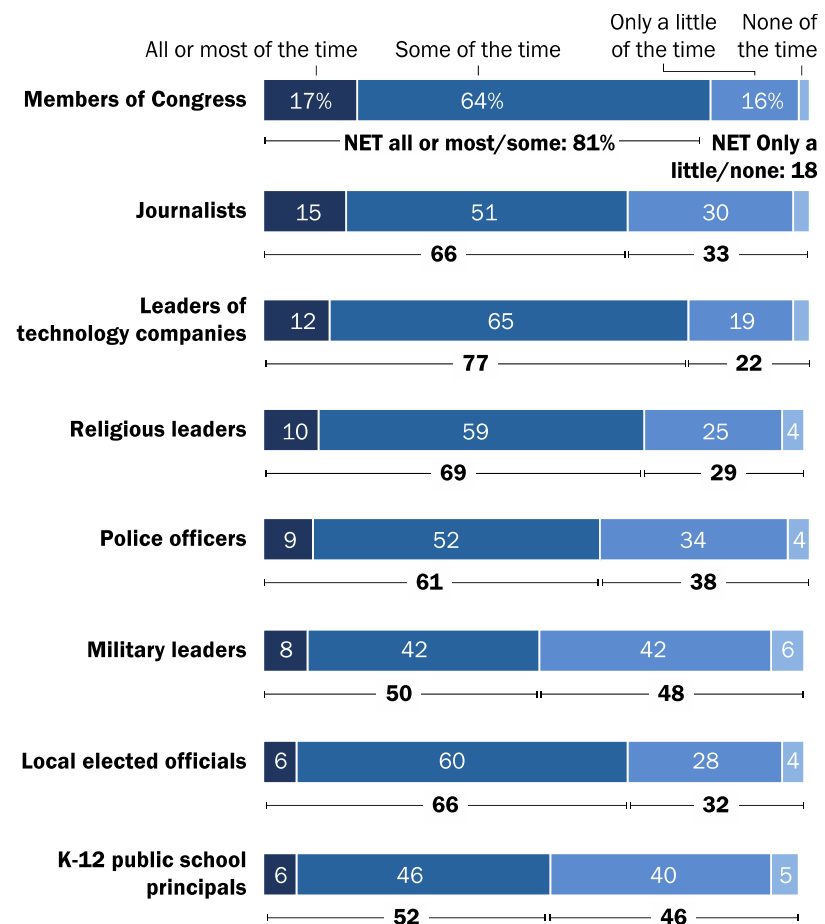
Members of Congress and technology leaders are rated lower in empathy, transparency and ethics; public gives higher scores to military leaders, public school principals and police officers

People invest their trust in institutions and those who have power for a variety of reasons. Researchers have found that people's confidence in others and organizations can include their judgments about the [competence, honesty and benevolence](#) of the organizations or individuals they are assessing, as well as factors such as [empathy, openness, integrity](#) and [accountability](#). These perceptions can be seen as building blocks of trust.

Taking account of those insights, a new Pew Research Center survey finds that people offer different judgments about these building blocks of trust when it comes to eight groups of people who hold positions of power and responsibility in America: members of Congress, local elected officials, K-12 public school principals, journalists, military leaders, police officers, leaders of

Most think key institutional actors behave unethically at least a little of the time

% of U.S. adults who think _____ act unethically



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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technology companies and religious leaders.

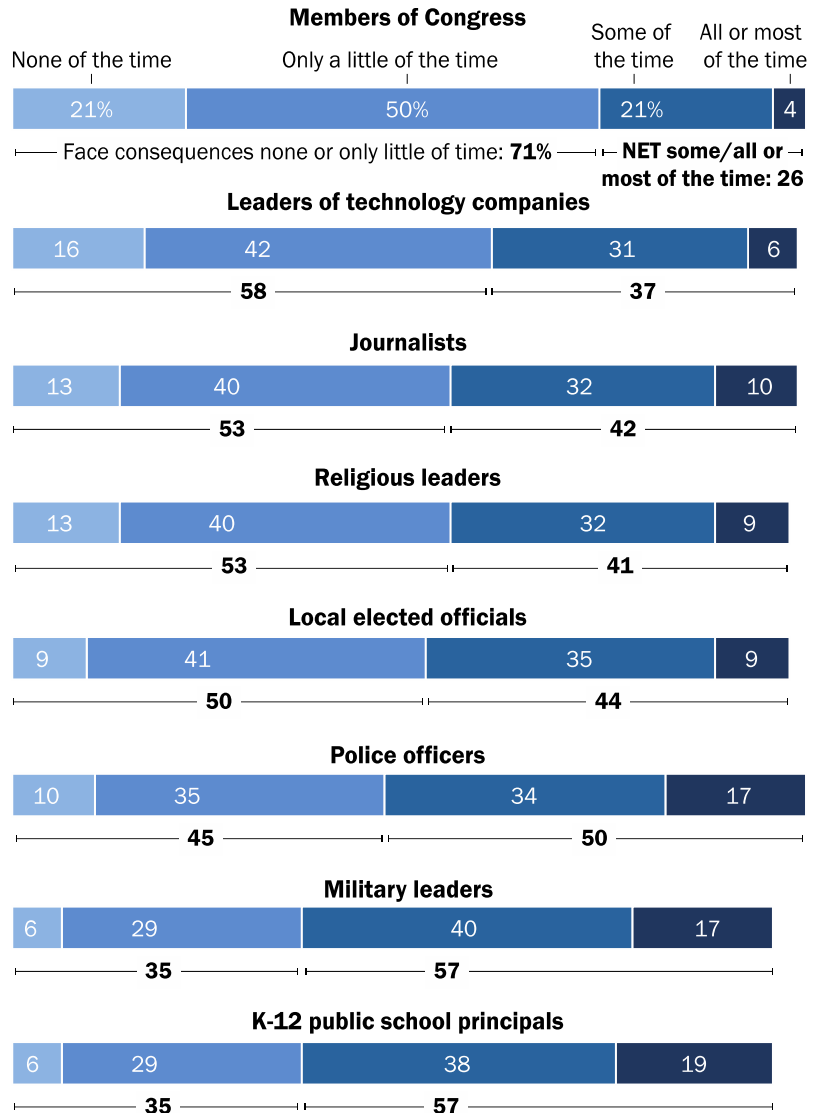
Notable shares of the public give people in these powerful jobs low ratings when it comes to behaving ethically, dealing with ethical problems in their ranks and admitting mistakes. Half or more of Americans think these influential people act *unethically* at least some of the time, ranging from 50% who believe this about military leaders to 81% who feel members of Congress act unethically “some,” or “all or most of the time.” Additionally, 77% believe this about the leaders of technology companies and 69% think this about religious leaders.

At the same time, a third or more of Americans think that unethical behavior is treated relatively lightly – that is to say, wrongdoers face serious consequences only a little of the time or less often. Indeed, majorities believe that members of Congress (79%), local elected officials (57%), leaders of technology companies (55%) and journalists (54%) admit mistakes and take responsibility

for them only a little of the time or none of the time. Some 49% say the same of religious leaders.

Americans generally don't think unethical behavior by those in positions of power and responsibility results in serious consequences

How often, if at all, do you think _____ face serious consequences when they act unethically?



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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These views emerge in a survey that covered several dimensions of public confidence in those who hold these positions of power and responsibility. The questions probed public views about several essential aspects of public confidence – such as whether these groups care about people, handle resources responsibly or provide accurate information to the public. Survey respondents were asked to choose whether the group members act in these ways “all or most of the time,” “some of the time,” “only a little of the time” or “none of the time.”

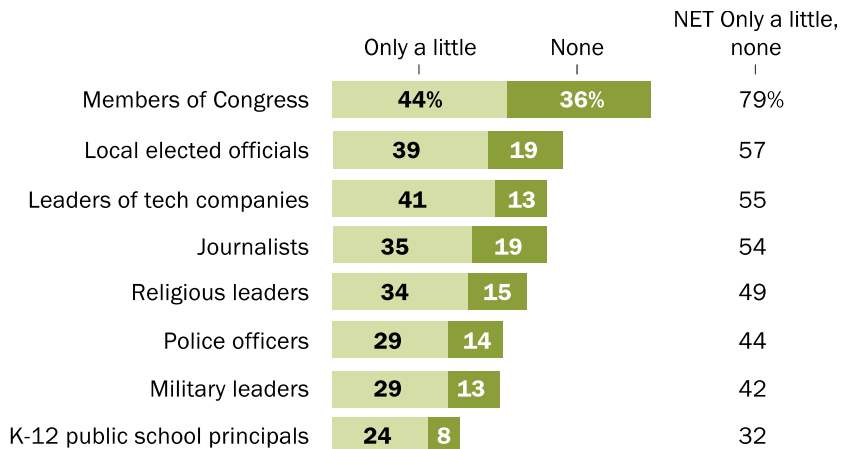
The survey shows that beyond the realms of ethics and transparency, Americans have varying levels of confidence in key aspects of job performance by those who hold important positions of power and responsibility. For instance, U.S. adults have relatively high levels

of confidence that these people will perform key aspects of their duties (for example, that leaders of technology companies build products and services that enhance people’s lives) “some of the time” or more often, and that they will handle resources responsibly.

Generally, the public has the most confidence in the way K-12 public school principals, military leaders and police officers operate when it comes to caring about people, providing fair and accurate information to the public and handling resources responsibly. Some 84% think principals care about the students they serve “some of the time” or “all or most of the time,” 79% think police officers care about them at that level of frequency, and 73% have the same level of confidence in military leaders. The public places somewhat lower – but still relatively high – levels of confidence in religious leaders, journalists and local elected officials.

Many believe members of Congress do not often admit mistakes or take responsibility for them

% of U.S. adults who say ____ admit mistakes, take responsibility only a little or none of the time



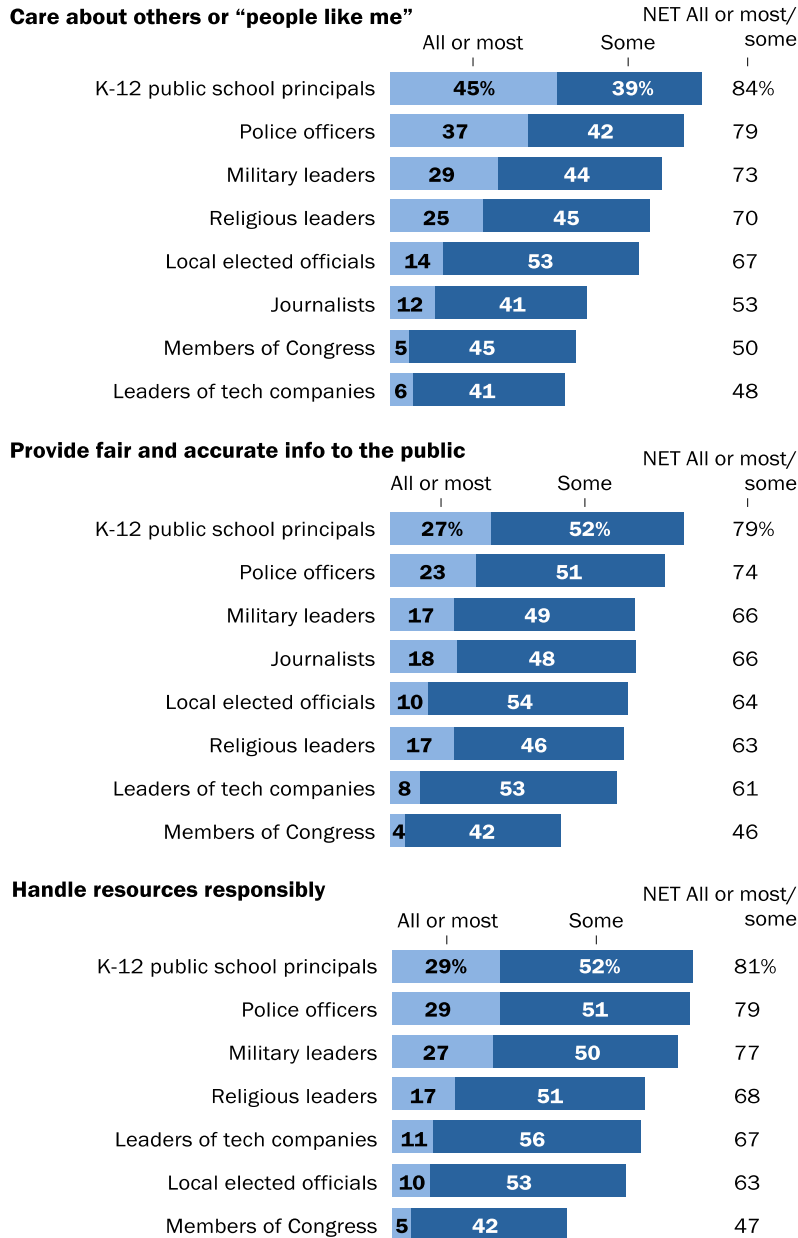
Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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Americans have the most confidence in K-12 principals, police and military leaders, and least confidence in members of Congress and tech leaders

% of U.S. adults who say these people ___ all or most, or some of the time



Note: The survey did not ask about the frequency with which journalists handle resources responsibly.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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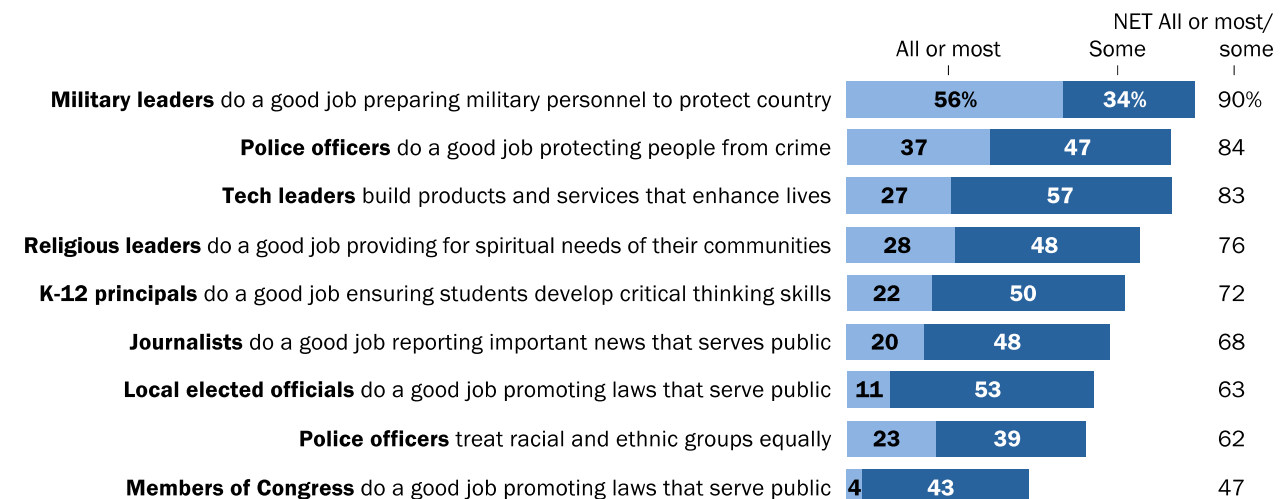
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Members of Congress and leaders of technology companies do not have the same level of public confidence when it comes to several performance attributes. For instance, 48% of adults think tech firm bosses care about people “all or most of the time” or “some of the time,” and 50% feel that way about members of Congress. Similarly, 46% think members of Congress provide fair and accurate information that often, and 61% think this about leaders of tech firms. Some 47% think members of Congress handle resources responsibly at least some of the time.

When queried about their views related to specific aspects of each group’s mission, the public gives relatively good marks to all of these actors, with military leaders ranking the highest and members of Congress the lowest. For instance, 90% of adults believe military leaders do a good job preparing military personnel to protect the country “all or most of the time” or “some of the time,” 83% think technology company leaders build products and services that enhance lives, and 63% think local elected officials do a good job promoting laws that serve the public.

Public sees military and tech leaders doing key parts of their jobs well and gives a mixed verdict on police officers

% of U.S. adults who say these people fulfill key aspects of their missions all or most, or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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The survey posed two questions about the performance of police officers and people had somewhat varying views: 84% say police do a good job protecting people from crime “all or most of the time” or “some of the time.” A smaller share (62%) say police officers do a good job treating racial and ethnic groups equally at least some of the time.

These readings about those who have power and responsibility were gathered in four different segments of a survey of 10,618 U.S. adults conducted Nov. 27 to Dec. 10, 2018, using the Center’s nationally representative [American Trends Panel](#). Panelists were randomly assigned to one of the four segments, and each segment focused on questions about two of the eight categories of people in positions of power and responsibility covered in this report. The margin of sampling error for the smallest of the four samples is plus or minus 3.0 percentage points.

The groups of those who have power and responsibility were chosen because they play key roles in American society and have important effects on the day-to-day lives of Americans. This research is part of the Center’s extensive and ongoing focus on issues tied to [trust, facts and democracy](#), and the interplay among them. It is closely aligned with the Center’s recent exploration of the public’s nuanced views about trust in [scientific experts](#).

Views of those who hold positions of power and responsibility are linked to political party, race and gender

Here are some other key findings related to partisanship and demographic differences about the performance of these eight major groups of those who have power and responsibility in various institutions:

Partisan differences: Republicans and independents who lean toward the Republican Party are less likely than Democrats and Democratic leaners to believe journalists perform key parts of their jobs “all or most of the time” or “some of the time.” For instance, three-in-ten Republicans and Republican leaners (31%) believe journalists fairly cover all sides of an issue at least some of the time, while about three-quarters of Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic party (74%) say the same – a 43-percentage-point difference in opinion between the two groups.

Democrats and those who lean Democratic are more likely than their Republican counterparts to think K-12 public school principals consistently perform key aspects of their jobs. For instance, Democrats and leaners are more likely than Republicans and their leaners to believe that principals handle resources in a responsible way (87% vs. 76%) and to think that principals do a good job ensuring that students are developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills (76% vs. 68%).

The partisan gaps apply to people's judgments about military leaders, with Republicans being more positive than Democrats. For example, Republicans are 20 points more likely than Democrats to say military leaders handle the resources available in a responsible way some of the time or more often (89% vs. 69%).

In addition, Republicans and those who lean toward the Republican Party are more likely than Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic Party to express positive opinions about religious leaders. For instance, fully three-quarters of Republicans say religious leaders provide fair and accurate information to the public at least some of the time, compared with just 54% of Democrats who say the same.

Racial and ethnic differences: Black Americans and Hispanics are more skeptical than white people about the performance of police officers. Roughly seven-in-ten white Americans (72%) say police officers treat racial and ethnic groups equally at least some of the time. In comparison, half of Hispanics and just 33% of black adults say the same.

Black people are also less likely than white Americans to believe that local officials do their jobs well at least some of the time.

Gender differences: Women are more likely than men to have confidence in members of Congress and journalists doing their jobs much of the time.

1. Where public confidence stands about eight groups that have positions of power and responsibility

Public trust in leaders and those who have jobs that give them power and responsibility can apply to various aspects of their role in national and community life. Not only can people express broad views about their overall trust in leaders, they also can ponder questions about the distinct attributes that underlie elements of trust. In this survey, the Center sought answers about the performance of eight major groups of leaders and people in positions of responsibility: members of Congress, local elected officials, K-12 public school principals, journalists, military leaders, police officers, leaders of technology companies and religious leaders. This effort expands on the overall readings the Center got on [public confidence in these groups](#).¹

The questions focused on public judgments about members of each cohort:

- Level of empathy
- Adequacy in performing a specific part of their job
- Stewardship of resources
- Ability to provide fair and accurate information to their constituents
- Willingness to admit mistakes and take responsibility for them
- Frequency with which they behave unethically
- Frequency with which they face serious consequences when they act unethically

Four nearly identical questions were asked about the potentially positive aspects of the performance of all eight groups.² The questions focus on how often those who have positions of power and responsibility in these groups care about the people “like you” or those they serve, whether they handle the resources available to them in a responsible way, the degree to which they provide fair and accurate information to the public, and whether they admit their mistakes and take responsibility for them. The response options were “all or most of the time,” “some of the time,” “only a little of the time” and “none of the time.” In most of the analysis in this report, those who answered either “all or most of the time” or “some of the time” are combined, as are those who answered “only a little of the time” or “none of the time.”

Across these four measures, the survey finds that public school principals, police officers and military leaders receive high marks from the public for empathy, managing resources,

¹ The broad findings on confidence in groups and institutions included public views about “elected officials” and “business leaders” overall. The findings reported here focus on members of Congress and, separately, on local elected officials. Additionally, the material covered here includes people’s attitudes about leaders of technology companies.

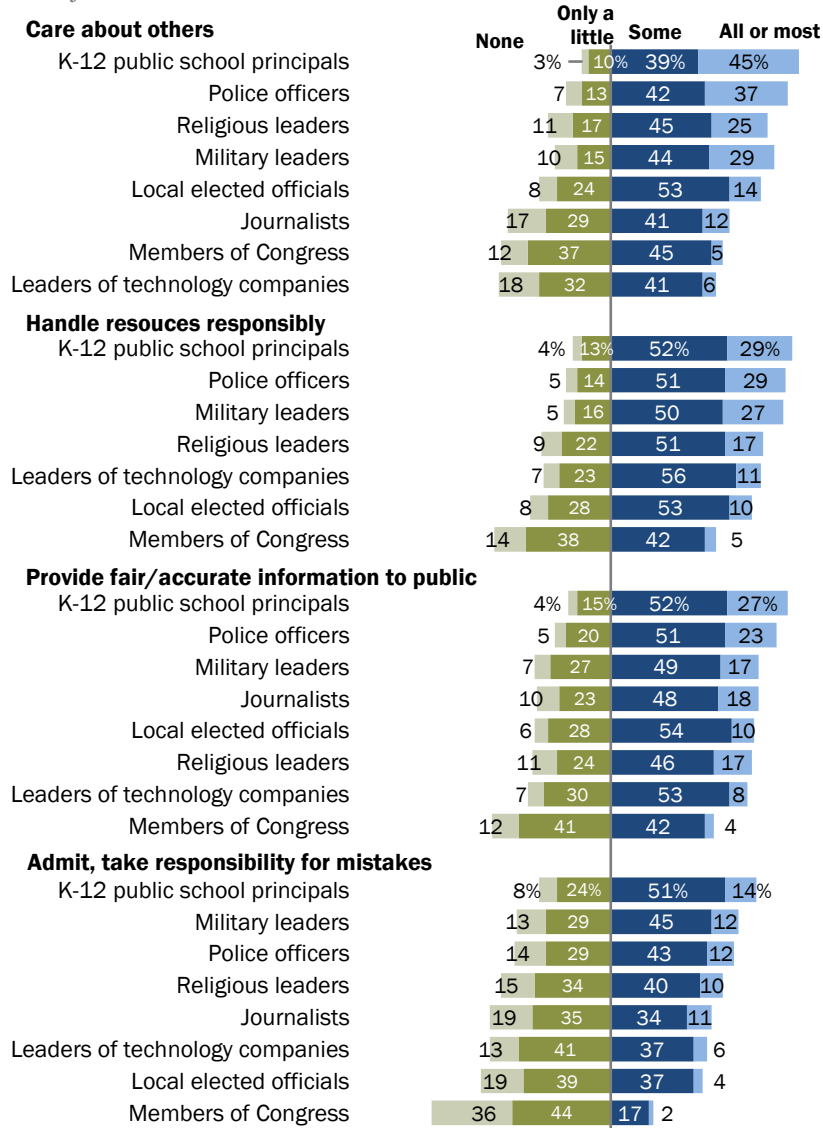
² Respondents were not asked about how often journalists handle the resources available to them in a responsible way.

transparency and accountability in their work. For instance, about eight-in-ten U.S. adults say K-12 public school principals care about the students in their schools “all or most of the time” or “some of the time” (84%). Large majorities also say police officers and military leaders “care about people like you” at least some of the time (79% and 73%, respectively). Similarly, roughly three-quarters or more believe principals, police officers and military leaders “handle the resources available to them in a responsible way.” Moreover, majorities of U.S. adults also say these three groups regularly provide fair and accurate information to the public.

Meanwhile, members of Congress and leaders of technology companies tend to receive lower ratings for empathy, transparency and accountability. Roughly half of U.S. adults (49%) say members of Congress care about the people they represent “none of the time” or “only a little of the time.” Similar shares of adults say the same about tech leaders. Additionally, 55% believe tech leaders admit mistakes and take responsibility for them none or a little of the time.

Compared with others, public school principals viewed most positively by public for key performance attributes

% of U.S. adults who say these people _____ none, only a little, some, or all or most of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown. The survey did not ask about the frequency with which journalists handle resources responsibly.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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While local elected officials do not garner overwhelmingly high levels of confidence from the U.S. public along these confidence measures, they tend to be viewed in a more positive light than members of Congress. For instance, two-thirds of U.S. adults say local elected officials care about their constituents at least some of the time, compared with just half who say the same about members of Congress. About six-in-ten say local elected officials provide fair and accurate information to the public “all or most” or “some of the time” (64%) while fewer than half say members of Congress do this on a regular basis (46%).

Across these four questions, Americans express somewhat mixed views of religious leaders and journalists. Seven-in-ten U.S. adults say that religious leaders care about people like them “all or most” or “some of the time.” A similar share (68%) say religious leaders regularly handle the resources available to them responsibly. At the same time, the public is divided over how often religious leaders admit their mistakes and take responsibility for them: Half say they do this at least some of the time, while a nearly identical share say religious leaders take responsibility for their mistakes only a little (34%) or none of the time (15%). Americans also are divided about the role journalists play in society. Roughly half (53%) say journalists care about people like them at least some of the time, and 46% think journalists rarely care about people like them.

At a time when partisan divisions are [deeper than ever](#), Republicans and Democrats are united in their negative views of members of Congress and their more positive opinions of local elected officials. But Americans’ opinions of police officers, military leaders and religious leaders are splintered along partisan lines. Furthermore, some of the deepest divides between partisans are over their opinions of journalists. Republicans are consistently more distrustful of journalists than Democrats are, which is [in line with past research](#) on Americans’ views of the news media.

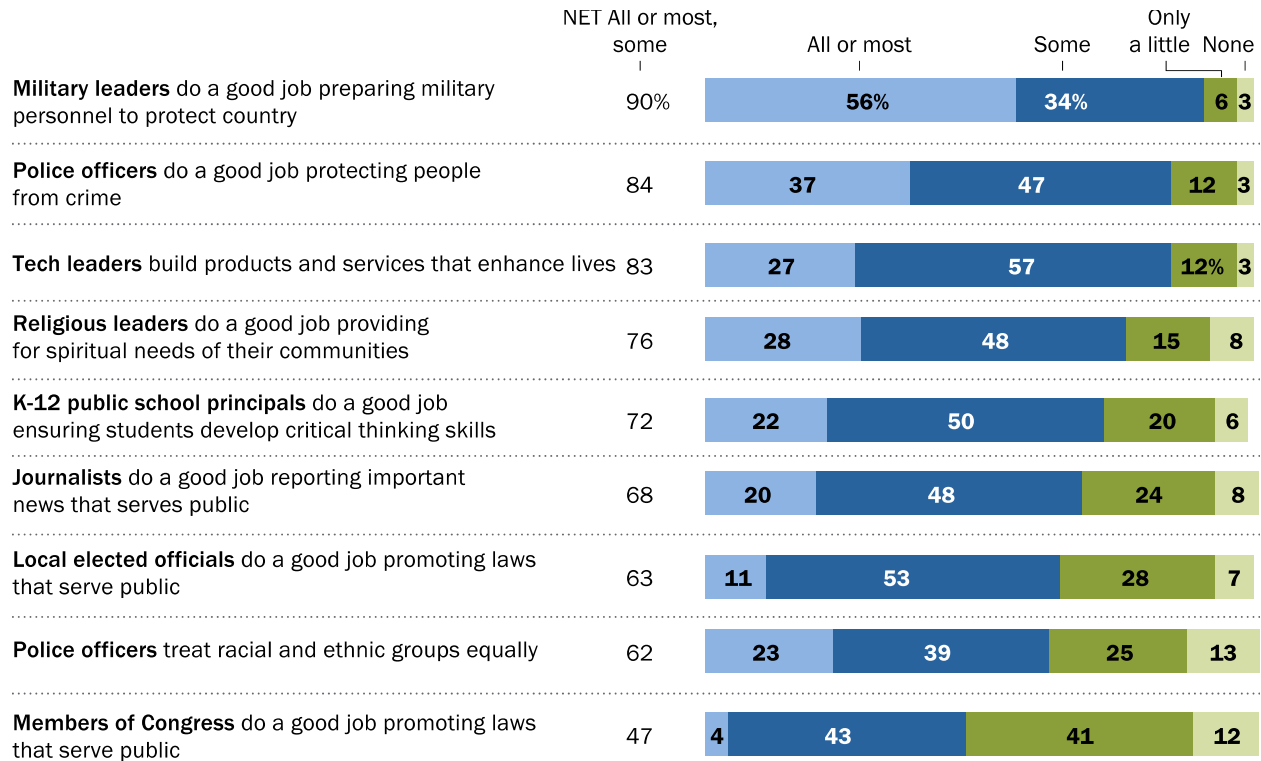
The survey also finds that levels of confidence these groups varies along demographic lines, with many large differences among racial and ethnic groups. White Americans tend to express more confidence in major groups – especially police officers – while black and Hispanic Americans tend to hold somewhat more negative opinions about the performance of individuals in these groups. The findings about different demographic groups’ trust in people in these positions of responsibility will be covered in more detail in individual sections about each of the eight cohorts.

Military leaders rank at the top for performing job-specific duties, while members of Congress rank at the bottom

When asked to rate how frequently each of the eight groups perform duties specific to their jobs, the U.S. public ranks military leaders at the top. Fully nine-in-ten say military leaders do a good job preparing military personnel to protect the country “all or most” (56%) or “some of the time” (34%).

U.S. public thinks most of those in roles of power and responsibility carry out job-specific duties effectively

% of U.S. adults who say various groups perform core functions like ___ all or most, some, only a little, or none of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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Police officers also rank near the top for their efforts to protect people from crime, with more than eight-in-ten U.S. adults saying police officers do this “all or most” (37%) or “some of the time” (47%). But police officers do not receive such overwhelmingly positive reviews for some other aspects of their jobs asked about in the survey. U.S. adults also were asked to assess how often police officers treat racial and ethnic groups equally, and a smaller majority say police officers treat racial and ethnic groups equally at least some of the time (62%). At the same time, nearly four-in-ten say police officers treat racial minorities fairly only a little or none of the time (37%).

Leaders of technology companies receive relatively high praise for building products and services that enhance people’s lives, with more than eight-in-ten U.S. adults saying tech leaders do this at least some of the time (83%). Religious leaders also are viewed as doing a good job providing for the spiritual needs of their communities.

On the other end of the spectrum are government officials. About half of U.S. adults say members of Congress do a good job promoting laws and policies that serve the public “all or most” (4%) or “some of the time” (43%), and a somewhat larger share say they do this “only a little” or “none of the time” (53%).

At the same time, local elected officials also rank toward the bottom for promoting laws and policies that serve the public, though Americans think local officials perform this key aspect of their job more often than members of Congress do. Roughly six-in-ten (63%) say local elected officials do a good job promoting laws and policies that serve the public at least some of the time, compared with a smaller share (47%) who say members of Congress do this.

Public school principals and journalists also receive mostly positive ratings for performing critical parts of their jobs. A majority of U.S. adults say that K-12 public school principals do a good job ensuring that students are developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills (72%). And a similar share (68%) says that journalists do a good job reporting important news that serves the public interest at least some of the time.

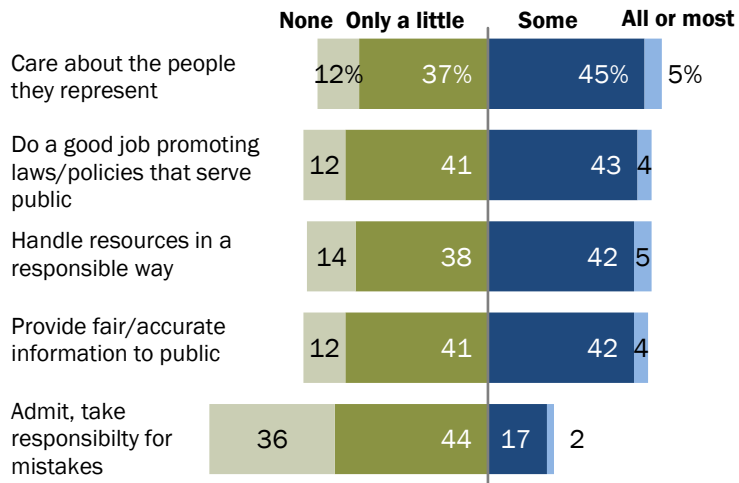
The next sections of this report cover insights specific to these eight major clusters of people in organizations that have power and responsibility.

Members of Congress: Eight-in-ten U.S. adults believe they take responsibility for their mistakes a little or none of the time

Overall, U.S. adults have relatively negative views about whether members of Congress are consistently performing key elements of their jobs, at least in comparison with their assessments of other groups. About half of adults say that “some of the time” or “all or most of the time” members of Congress care about the people they represent (50%), do a good job promoting laws and policies that serve the public (47%), and handle the resources available to them in a responsible way (47%). And 46% of adults say members of Congress provide fair and accurate information to the public at least some of the time.

The public thinks members of Congress do not often admit and take responsibility for their mistakes

% of U.S. adults who say members of Congress _____ none, only a little, some, or all or most of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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And 46% of adults say members of Congress provide fair and accurate information to the public at least some of the time.

Very few U.S. adults think members of Congress are performing their duties “all or most of the time.” For instance, 5% of U.S. adults say members of Congress care about the people they represent or handle their resources responsibly all or most of the time. Similarly, just 4% of U.S. adults say members of Congress do a good job promoting laws and policies that serve the public or provide fair and accurate information to the public all or most of the time.

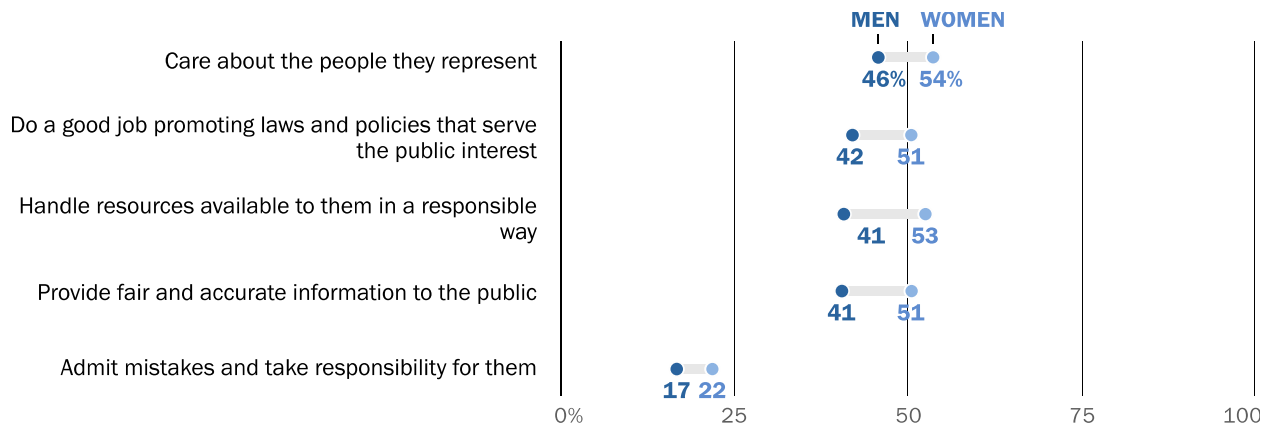
Members of Congress receive overwhelmingly negative marks from the public for their willingness to admit mistakes and take responsibility for them. Just one-in-five U.S. adults say members of Congress do this at least some of the time, including just 2% who think members of Congress are held accountable for their mistakes “all or most of the time.” By contrast, about eight-in-ten U.S.

adults say members of Congress admit mistakes and are held accountable for them only a little (44%) or none of the time (36%).

Dissatisfaction with members of Congress crosses party lines, with Republicans and Democrats rating members of Congress similarly across most questions asked in the survey. For instance, roughly half of Republicans and Democrats (and those who lean toward each party) say members of Congress care about their constituents at least some of the time. And just one-in-five in each partisan camp say members of Congress admit their mistakes and take responsibility for them “all or most” or “some of the time.” But there is a small partisan difference in opinion about use of resources by members of Congress. Half of Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic Party say members of Congress use the resources available to them in a responsible way at least some of the time, compared with a slightly smaller share of Republicans and Republican leaners who say this (43%).

Women are more likely to have confidence in members of Congress

% of U.S. adults who say members of Congress _____ all or most, or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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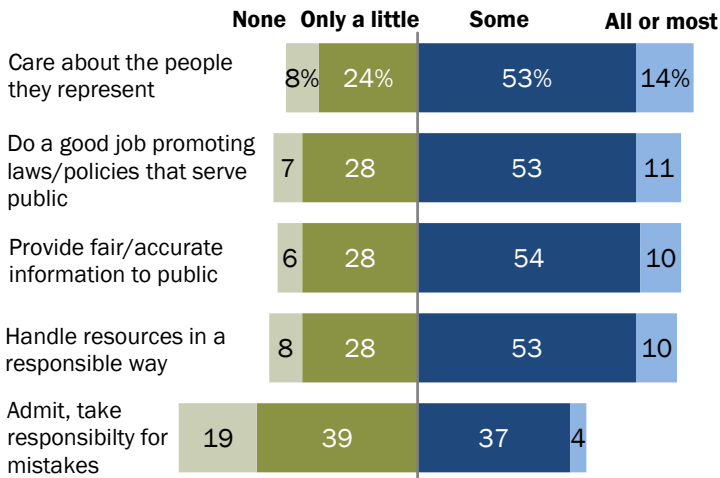
Views of Congress diverge along gender lines. Across all five questions asked in the survey, women are more likely than men to say that members of Congress consistently perform key aspects of their jobs, though both women and men are not confident that members of Congress admit mistakes and take responsibility for them. (A full table of the demographic and partisan answers on these issues can be found in Appendix A.)

Local elected officials: People view them more positively than members of Congress

Compared with members of Congress, Americans view the actions of local elected officials much more favorably. Two-thirds of U.S. adults think local elected officials care about the people they represent “all or most” (14%) or “some of the time” (53%). Similar shares say local elected officials do a good job promoting policies that serve the public and that they handle the resources available to them in a responsible way at least some of the time (63% each). And 64% say that local officials provide fair and accurate information to the public with that regularity.

Public views local elected officials fairly positively, except when it comes to admitting mistakes

% of U.S. adults who say local elected officials _____ none, only a little, some, or all or most of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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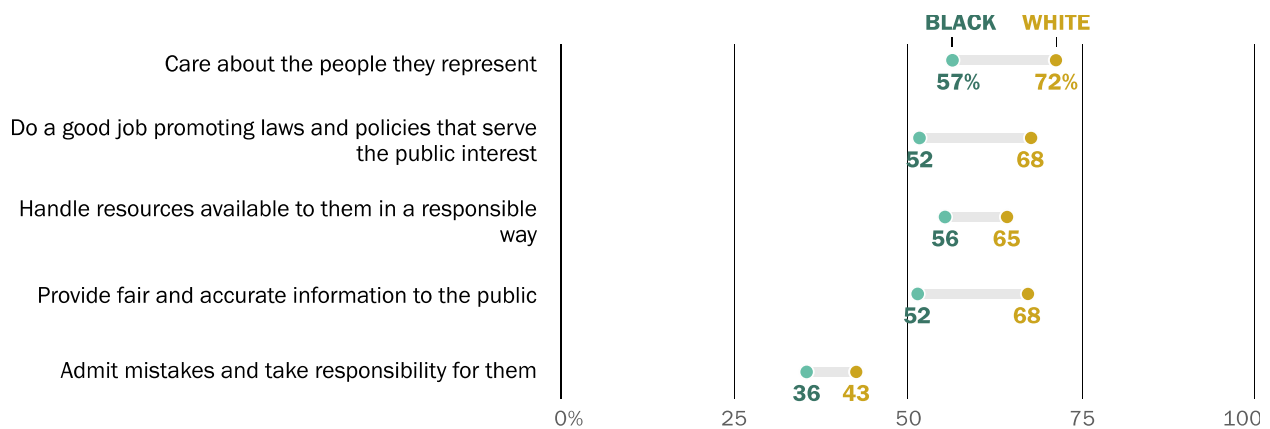
Much like their opinions about members of Congress, U.S. adults tend to hold a negative opinion of local officials’ ability to admit mistakes and take responsibility for them. A majority say local elected officials take responsibility for their mistakes only a little or none of the time (57%), while fewer (41%) think they take responsibility at least some of the time.

White respondents are more likely than black respondents to say that “all or most of the time” or “some of the time” local elected officials care about the people they represent (72% vs. 57%), do a good job promoting laws that serve the public interest (68% vs. 52%) and provide fair and accurate information to the public (68% vs. 52%).

U.S. adults who have graduated from college are more likely than those with less education to say

Black people are less confident in local officials doing their jobs well than white people

% of U.S. adults who say local elected officials _____ all or most, or some of the time



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local elected officials care about the people they represent “some” or “most or all of the time” (77% vs. 62%), do a good job promoting laws and policies that serve the public (73% vs. 59%), handle resources responsibly (70% vs. 60%) and provide fair and accurate information to the public at least some of the time (71% vs. 61%).

Partisans are generally united in their negative opinions of members of Congress, and that tends to be the case in their views of local elected officials, but opinions about local officials tend to be more positive overall. There is little difference in opinion between Republicans and Democrats (and their respective leaners) when the question focuses on whether local officials do a good job promoting policies that serve the public, handle their resources responsibly and provide fair and accurate information to the public. Republicans and Democrats also share similar – and fairly negative – views about local elected officials taking responsibility for their mistakes. Roughly four-in-ten in each group say local elected officials admit and take responsibility for their mistakes at

least some of the time. (A full table of the demographic and partisan answers on these issues can be found in Appendix A.)

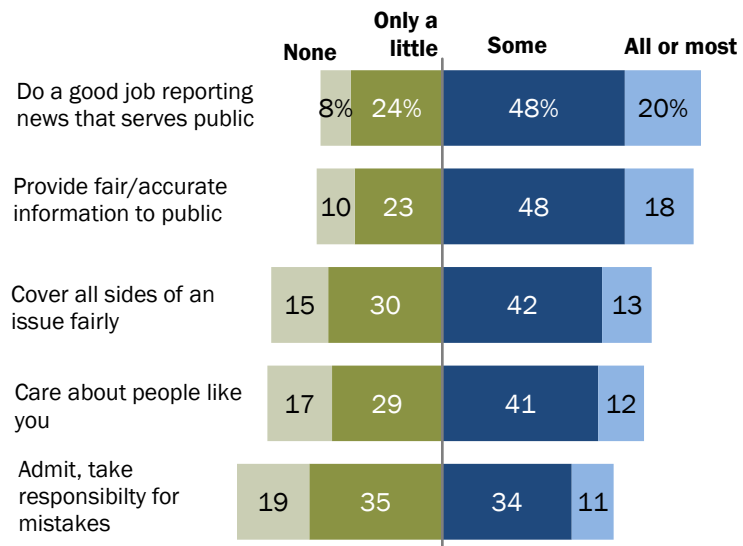
Journalists: U.S. adults have mixed opinions of journalists, with large differences in opinion among partisans

Overall, Americans have varied opinions about the role that journalists play in society. For example, two-thirds say that “all or most” or “some of the time” journalists do a good job reporting important news that serves the public (68%) and that journalists regularly provide fair and accurate information to the public (66%). But journalists receive lower ratings for being unbiased in their coverage of issues: 55% of U.S. adults say journalists cover all sides of an issue fairly at least some of the time. And a similar share of U.S. adults say journalists care about people like them some of the time or more often (53%).³

Fewer than half of U.S. adults say journalists admit and take responsibility for their mistakes at least some of the time (45%), while a somewhat larger share of the public thinks journalists take responsibility for errors only a little or none of the time (54%).

More than half think journalists rarely take responsibility for their mistakes

% of U.S. adults who say journalists _____ none, only a little, some, or all or most of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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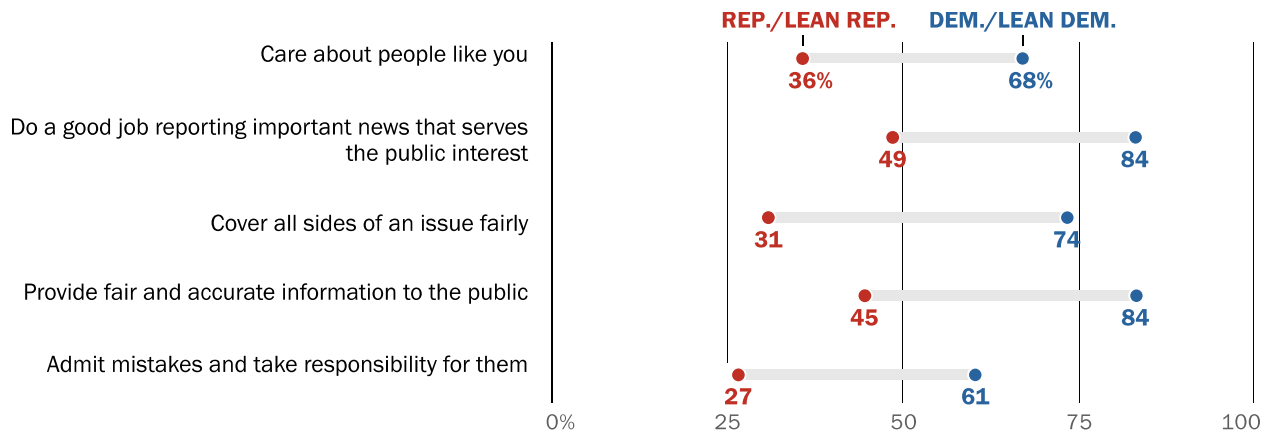
³ This survey did not ask a question about how journalists handle the resources available to them, as it did in the case of other groups. It focused instead on two aspects of journalists’ jobs: reporting news that serves the public and covering all sides of an issue fairly.

Opinions about journalists differ along political and demographic lines. Republicans and Democrats report widely different opinions about journalists, with Republicans viewing journalists in a more negative light than Democrats do. These partisan differences are especially apparent when it comes to whether journalists provide fair and accurate reporting. For instance, about three-quarters of Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic party (74%) say journalists cover all sides of an issue fairly at least some of the time, but just three-in-ten (31%) Republicans and Republican leaners say the same – a 43-percentage-point difference in opinion between the two groups. Furthermore, more than eight-in-ten Democrats (84%) think that journalists regularly provide fair and accurate information to the public, compared with fewer than half of Republicans who say this (45%).

Women, black Americans and college graduates are more likely than others to report positive opinions about journalists performing key aspects of their jobs. (A full table of the demographic

Republicans are much less likely to think journalists perform key parts of their jobs often

% of U.S. adults who say journalists _____ all or most, or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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and partisan answers on these issues can be found in Appendix A.)

K-12 public school principals: Public views about them are overwhelmingly positive

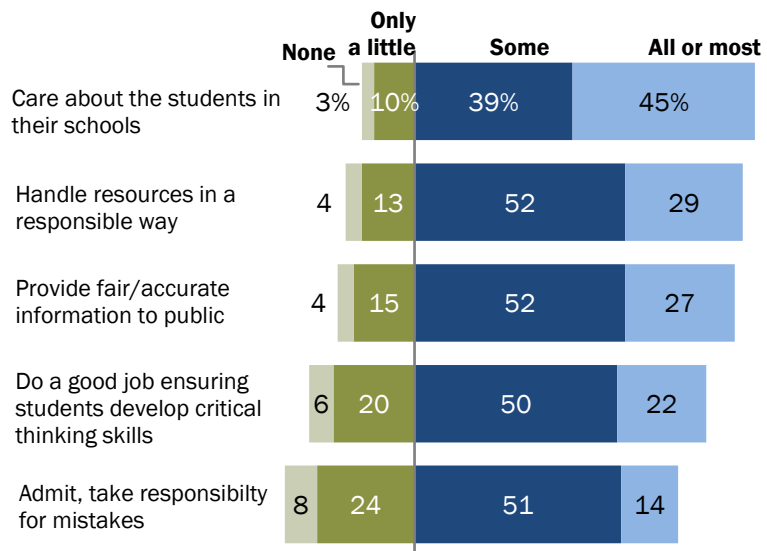
In general, Americans have high opinions of K-12 public school principals. More than eight-in-ten (84%) say public school principals care about the students in their schools at least some of the time, and 81% believe school principals mostly handle their resources responsibly.

In addition, large majorities believe that at least some of the time principals provide fair and accurate information to the public (79%) and do a good job ensuring that students are developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills (72%).

K-12 public school principals do stand apart from some other powerful cohorts in the eyes of the public when it comes to admitting and taking responsibility for mistakes. By a two-to-one margin, more U.S. adults say school principals take responsibility for their mistakes “all or most of the time” (65%) than say that principals take responsibility for mistakes “only a little” or “none of the time” (32%).

More than eight-in-ten say principals care about the students in their schools

% of U.S. adults who say K-12 public school principals _____ none, only a little, some, or all or most of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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While opinions of public school principals are high across all demographic groups, there are some modest differences in opinion among different segments of the population. Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic Party are more likely than Republicans to think public school principals consistently perform key aspects of their jobs. For instance, Democrats and leaners are more likely than Republicans and their leaners to believe that at least some of the time principals handle resources in a responsible way (87% vs. 76%) and do a good job ensuring that students are developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills (76% vs. 68%).

A similar pattern is seen along gender and education lines. Women and those with college degrees give higher ratings to principals than do men and those with less education across all five questions asked about in the survey. Additionally, black people are more likely than white people to have confidence in high school principals, notably on the issue of at least some of the time doing a good job ensuring that students are developing critical thinking skills (84% of blacks say this vs. 71% of whites) and admitting mistakes and taking responsibility for them (76% vs. 66%). (A full table of the demographic and partisan answers on these issues can be found in Appendix A.)

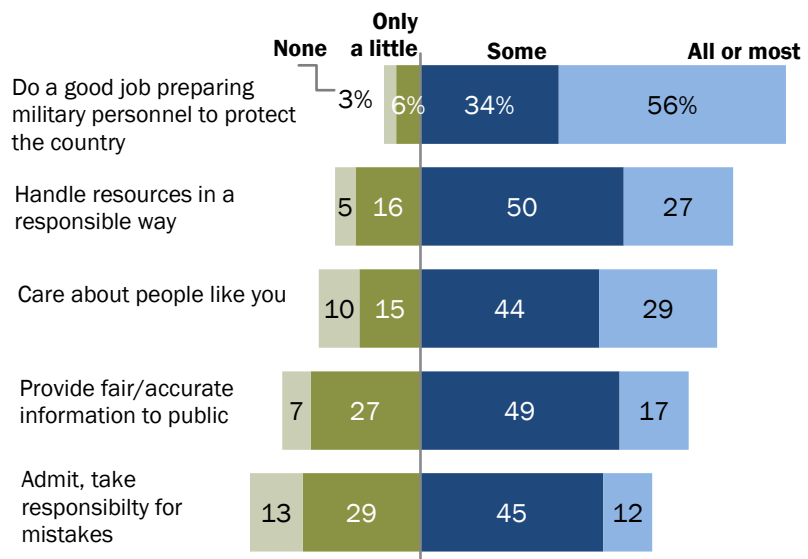
Military leaders: Americans give high ratings to military leaders

The U.S. public ranks military leaders highly on these various dimensions of trust. For instance, military leaders are viewed as performing well at key aspects of their jobs. This includes nine-in-ten U.S. adults who say that at least some of the time military leaders do a good job preparing military personnel to protect the country and 77% who say they handle the resources available to them in a responsible way.

Most also endorse the way military leaders interact with the public. Roughly three-quarters (73%) say that military leaders care about people at least some of the time, and two-thirds say they provide fair and accurate information to the public “some of the time” or “all or most of the time” (66%).

U.S. adults express confidence that military leaders do a good job preparing military personnel to protect country

% of U.S. adults who say military leaders _____ none, only a little, some, or all or most of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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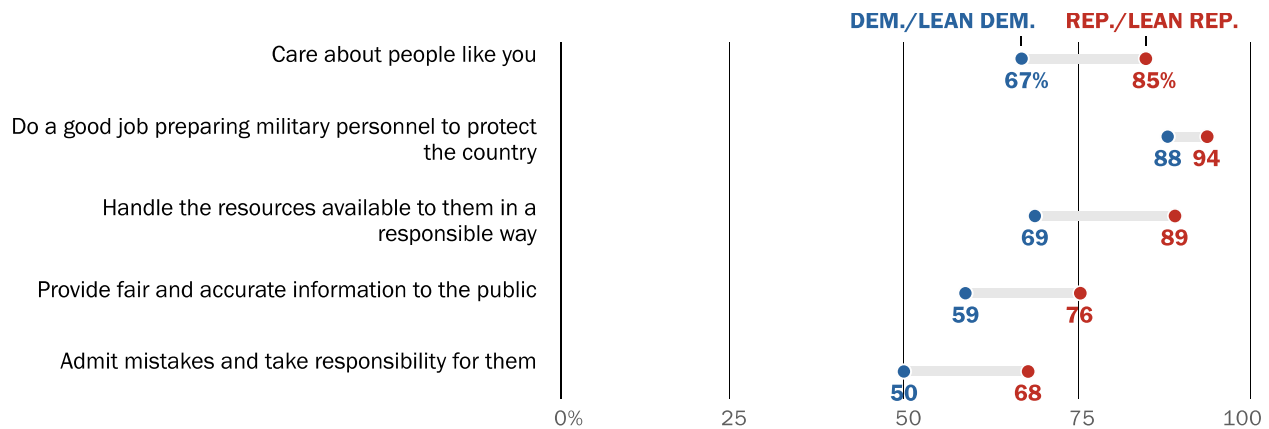
A majority of U.S. adults express that military leaders admit their mistakes and take responsibility for them “all or most” (12%) or “some of the time” (45%). Still, a sizable minority (42%) thinks military leaders admit and take responsibility for their mistakes only a little or none of the time.

However, while high praise for military leaders is fairly consistent across subgroups, some groups of Americans are even more likely than others to express that military leaders perform their jobs well with at least some frequency. For example, across most questions asked in the survey, women and adults ages 50 and older are more likely than men and younger adults (under the age of 50) to approve of the job military leaders are doing. (A full table of the demographic and partisan answers on these issues can be found in Appendix A.)

While members of both political parties tend to endorse the job that military leaders are doing, there are some large gaps along partisan lines in opinions about military leaders. Republicans and those who lean toward the Republican Party are more likely than Democrats and Democratic leaners to say military leaders perform key aspects of their job on regular basis. Republicans are 20 points more likely than Democrats to say military leaders handle the resources available in a responsible way some of the time or more often (89% vs. 69%).

Democrats have less confidence in military leaders doing their jobs

% of U.S. adults who say military leaders _____ all or most or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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A similar divide exists over how often military leaders care about others and the frequency with which they take responsibility for their mistakes. More than eight-in-ten Republicans (85%) say military leaders care about Americans at least some of the time, compared with fewer Democrats (67%). And two-thirds of Republicans think military leaders regularly admit their mistakes and take responsibility for them, while just half of Democrats say the same.

Police officers: They are seen positively, but several groups express less confidence in them

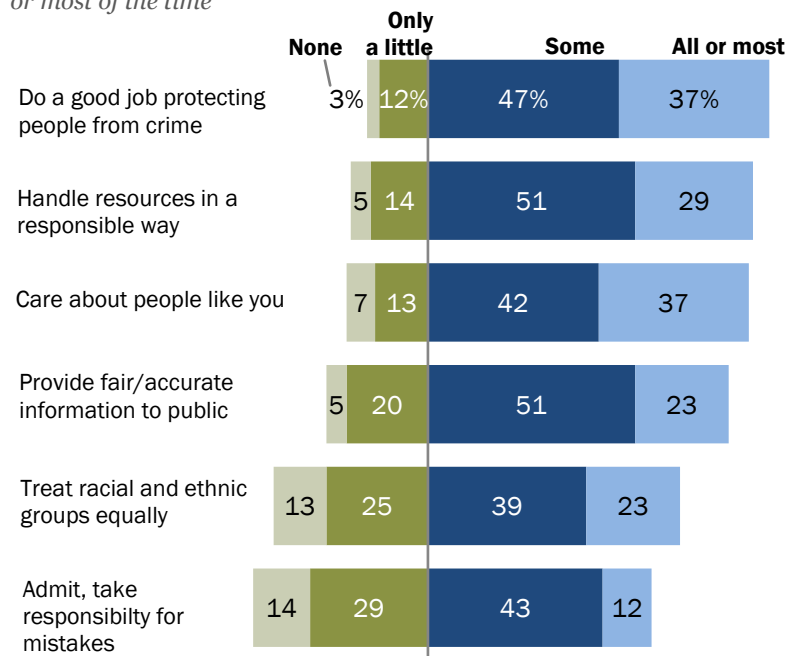
Police officers also are viewed in a positive light by the U.S. public. More than eight-in-ten (84%) U.S. adults say police officers protect people from crime “all or most” or “some of the time.” Three-quarters or more also say that police officers care about people (79%), responsibly handle the resources available to them (79%) and provide fair and accurate information to the public (74%) at least some of the time.⁴

A smaller majority says that police officers treat racial and ethnic groups equally at least some of the time (62%). And just slightly more than half think police officers admit their mistakes and take responsibility for them at least some of the time (55%).

But opinions about police officers differ widely by racial and ethnic group, with white people holding more positive opinions about police officers than black people and Hispanics do. This racial and ethnic divide is most apparent when it comes to police officers

Police officers viewed positively by most U.S. adults

% of U.S. adults who say police officers _____ none, only a little, some, or all or most of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
 “Why Americans Don’t Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility”

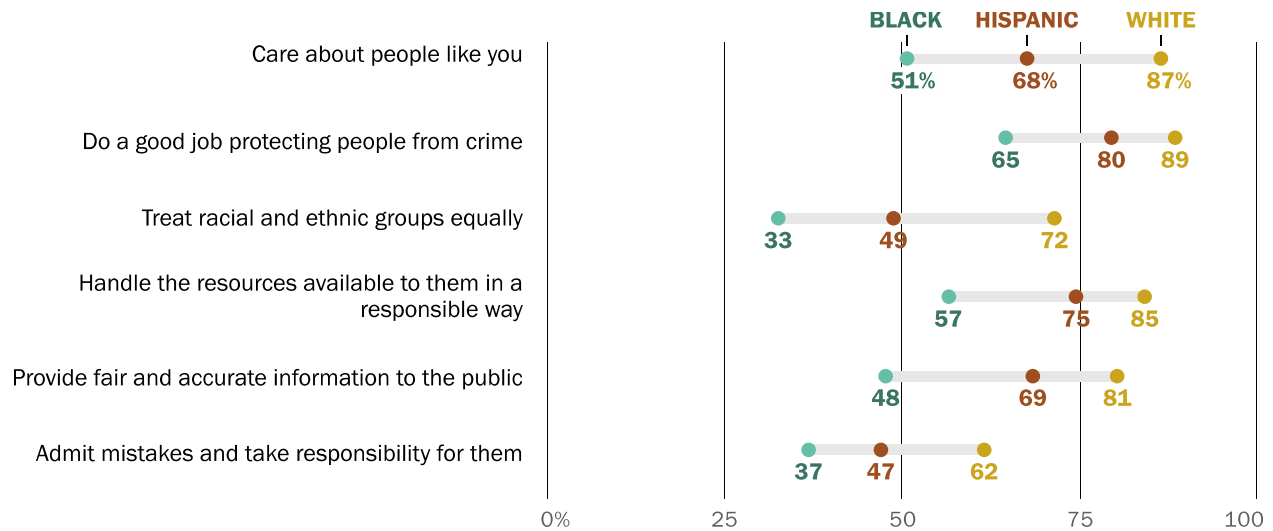
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⁴ Respondents were asked six questions about police officers, while most other groups were covered with five questions.

treating all racial and ethnic groups equally. Roughly seven-in-ten white Americans (72%) say police officers treat racial and ethnic groups equally at least some of the time. By way of comparison, half of Hispanics and just 33% of black adults say the same. The racial divide extends beyond opinions about police officers treating racial and ethnic groups equally. Across all six questions asked about police officers, whites are more likely than both Hispanic and black Americans to express positive views of police officers.

Black Americans and Hispanics are more concerned about police officers' efforts

% of U.S. adults who say police officers _____ all or most, or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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Both Republicans and Democrats share positive opinions about the frequency with which police officers care about people, do a good job protecting people from crime and handle resources responsibly. But Republicans and the independents who lean toward the Republican Party are much more likely than Democrats to express confidence in police officers' tendency to admit mistakes and take responsibility for them, and to treat racial and ethnic groups equally. About three-quarters of Republicans and those who lean toward the Republican party say that police officers admit their mistakes and take responsibility for them some of the time or more often. Among Democrats and Democratic leaners, just four-in-ten express a similar opinion (42%). And Republicans are about twice as likely as Democrats to think police officers regularly treat racial and ethnic groups equally (87% vs. 43%).

There also are consistent differences in opinion about police officers by age. U.S. adults under the age of 30 generally hold positive opinions about police officers' job performance, but compared with older adults, the positive opinions of younger Americans lag behind. For example, those under the age of 30 are less likely than their older counterparts to say that "all or most" or "some of the time," police officers care about people like them, do a good job protecting people from crime, handle their resources responsibly and treat racial and ethnic groups equally. (A full table of the demographic and partisan answers on these issues can be found in Appendix A.)

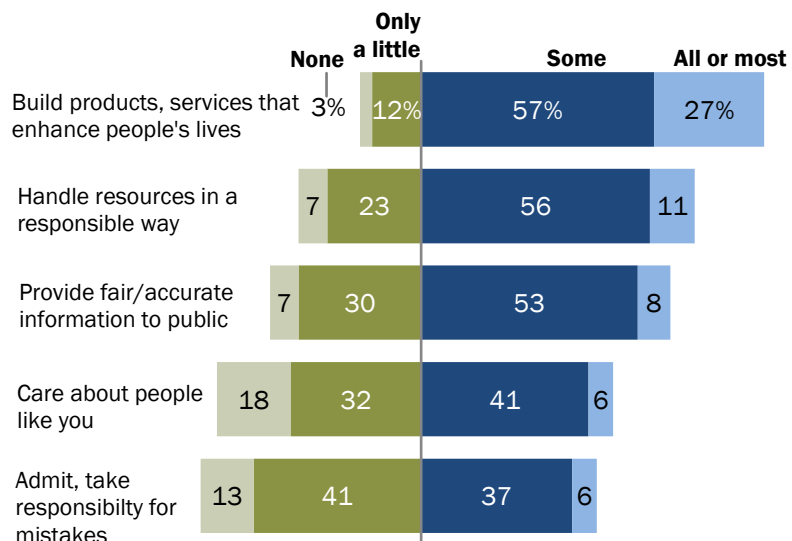
Leaders of technology companies: U.S. adults confident tech leaders create good products, but doubtful that they care for others

Leaders of technology companies receive somewhat mixed reviews from the public. An overwhelming majority commend tech leaders for creating quality products: eight-in-ten say leaders of technology companies build products and services that enhance people’s lives “all or most” (27%) or some of the time (57%). And smaller majorities say tech leaders handle their resources responsibly and provide accurate information to the public at least some of the time (67% and 61% respectively).

But leaders of technology companies do not earn such high marks when it comes to caring about Americans. Roughly half of U.S. adults say tech leaders care about Americans at least some of the time (48%), while a similar share says tech leaders care about people only a little or none of the time (50%). Furthermore, when it comes to admitting mistakes and taking responsibility for them, the balance of opinion is even more negative. Just over half of Americans (55%) say tech leaders take responsibility for their mistakes only or little or none of the time, while a smaller share (43%) think they regularly take responsibility for their mistakes.

U.S. public has mixed opinions about leaders of technology companies

% of U.S. adults who say leaders of technology companies _____ none, only a little, some, or all or most of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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Opinions of tech leaders do not differ much by demographic subgroup, with the opinions of men and women, older and younger adults, college-educated adults and those with less education, and Republicans and Democrats generally mirroring the views of the public as a whole. (A full table of the demographic and partisan answers on these issues can be found in Appendix A.)

Religious leaders: Adults hold generally positive opinions of them, but big differences emerge along religious lines

In general, U.S. adults express positive opinions about the role religious leaders play in their communities. U.S. adults express the most confidence in religious leaders' ability to fulfill the spiritual needs of their communities on a consistent basis. Three-quarters say religious leaders do a good job providing for the spiritual needs of their communities "all or most" or "some of the time," while just 23% say religious leaders do this only a little or none of the time. Another seven-in-ten U.S. adults say religious leaders care about people like them at least some of the time.

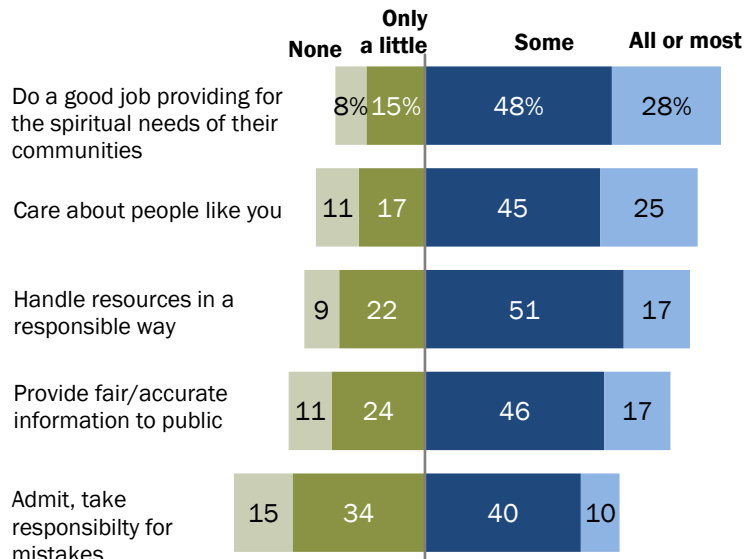
Nearly seven-in-ten U.S. adults say religious leaders handle the resources available to them in a responsible way at least some of the time. Six-in-ten also say religious leaders provide fair and accurate information to the public "all or most" or "some of the time."

U.S. adults are divided over how frequently religious leaders admit their mistakes and take responsibility for them. Half say religious leaders do this at least some of the time, while half also say religious leaders do this "only a little" or "none of the time."

Opinions of religious leaders are influenced by religious affiliation and commitment. Not surprisingly, U.S. adults who identify with a religion and those who do not have a religion hold diverging opinions of religious leaders. Across all five measures queried in the survey, religiously affiliated adults are more likely than religiously unaffiliated adults (those who say their religion is atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular") to say religious leaders perform key parts of their jobs at least some of the time.

Three-quarters say religious leaders regularly provide for the spiritual needs of their communities

% of U.S. adults who say religious leaders _____ none, only a little, some, or all or most of the time



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

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But among U.S. adults who identify with a religious faith, evangelical Protestants are among the groups who hold the most positive opinions about religious leaders. For example, evangelical Protestants are most likely to say religious leaders provide fair and accurate information to the public some of the time or more often.

There also are large differences in opinion about religious leaders based on how often Americans attend religious services. Those who say they attend religious services at least once a week are more likely than those who say they attend services less often to think religious leaders regularly care about people, do a good job providing for the spiritual needs of their communities, handle their resources responsibly, and admit and take responsibility for their mistakes.

Older and younger Americans also hold different views of religious leaders. Those ages 50 and older are consistently more likely than their younger counterparts to give religious leaders higher praise for at least some of the time performing the five job duties asked about in the survey.

Frequent church attenders, older Americans and Republicans tend to hold more positive opinions of religious leaders

% of U.S. adults who say religious leaders ...

	NET only a little/none		NET all or most/some		
	Care about people like you	Do good job providing for the spiritual needs of their communities	Handle resources responsibly	Provide fair/accurate information to public	Admit, take responsibility for mistakes
Ages 18-29	34% 66%	30% 69%	36% 64%	43% 57%	52% 48%
30-49	29 69	24 75	35 62	38 60	52 46
50-64	24 75	18 81	25 73	29 70	44 54
65+	27 72	20 78	24 74	29 69	44 54
High school or less	30 68	25 74	33 64	34 63	47 51
Some college	28 71	26 73	32 66	35 64	50 49
College graduate+	27 72	18 81	26 73	37 62	49 50
Republican/lean Rep.	22 77	18 81	23 76	24 75	39 59
Democrat/lean Dem.	34 65	27 72	37 62	45 54	56 42
Christian	19 80	15 84	21 78	23 75	36 63
Protestant	17 82	14 85	19 80	20 79	34 65
<i>Evangelical</i>	13 86	8 90	17 82	15 83	31 68
<i>Mainline</i>	19 79	13 86	20 79	22 77	39 60
Catholic	25 74	15 84	25 74	29 70	41 58
Unaffiliated	43 56	34 65	46 53	53 46	68 30
Attend religious services weekly	12 87	13 87	15 83	17 81	26 72
Attend services less often	34 65	26 72	36 63	41 58	56 43

Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

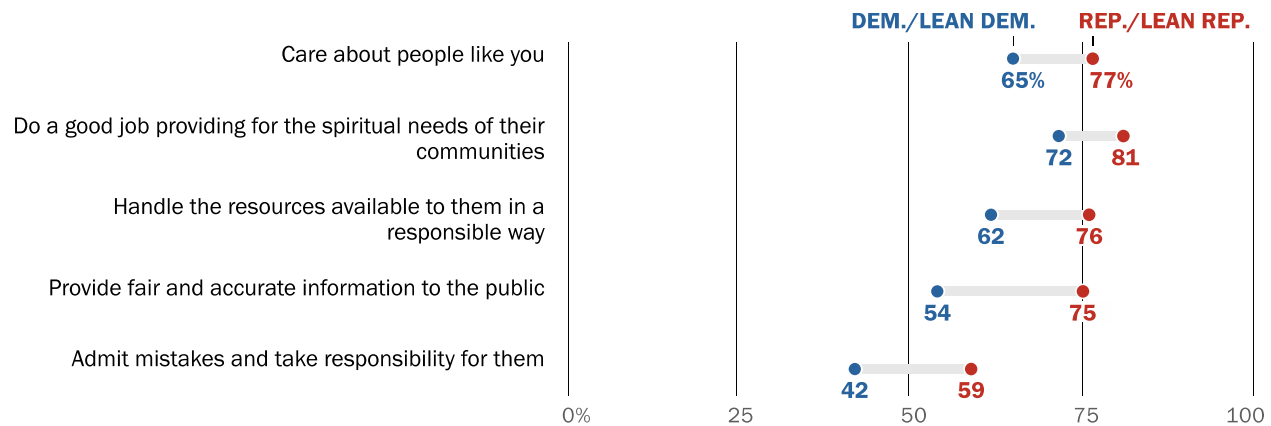
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Opinions about the roles of religious leaders also are divided along political lines. Republicans and those who lean toward the Republican Party are more likely than Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic Party to express positive opinions about religious leaders. For instance, three-quarters of Republicans say religious leaders provide fair and accurate information to the public at least some of the time, compared with 54% of Democrats who say the same. And six-in-ten Republicans say religious leaders admit their misstates and take responsibility for them at least some of the time (59%) compared with 42% of Democrats who say this.

Republicans are more affirming of the roles religious leaders play

% of U.S. adults who say religious leaders _____ all or most, or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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2. Ethical behavior among those who hold these positions of power and responsibility

Many Americans are not convinced that members of important groups behave ethically, and they are not very confident that those who hold jobs of power and responsibility face serious consequences when caught.

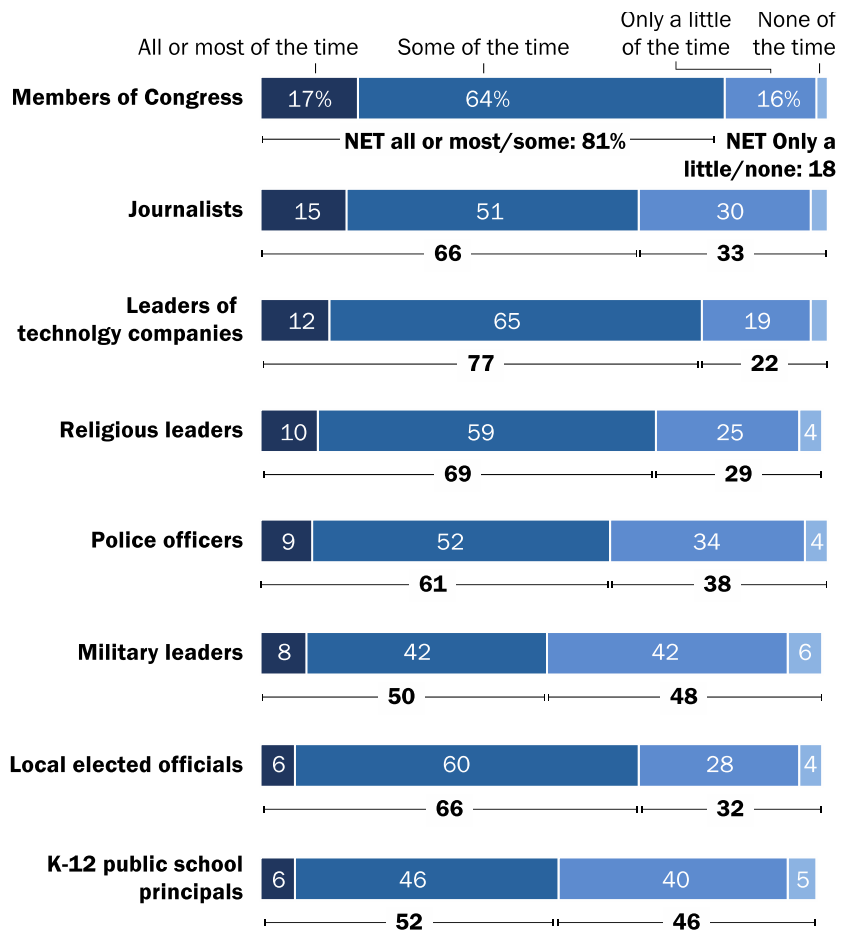
This survey tackled the issue of ethics with two questions and offered the same frequency options as other questions in the survey:

“all or most of the time,” “some of the time,” “only a little of the time” or “none of the time.” The first question asked about how often members of different cohorts behave unethically. Roughly nine-in-ten adults or more say members of Congress, journalists, police officers, leaders of technology companies, local elected officials, religious leaders, public school principals and military leaders act unethically at least a little of the time.

At least half of Americans believe members of these eight key groups behave unethically at least some of the time – and that includes those who are relatively trusted, such as military leaders and K-12 public school principals. Eight-in-ten adults (81%) think members of Congress behave unethically at least some of the time, and 77% believe this about leaders of technology companies.

Most think members of key institutional actors behave unethically at least a little of the time

% of U.S. adults who think _____ act unethically



Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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Mirroring many of the other findings in the survey, opinions about the ethical behavior of the eight groups differ by race and ethnicity and political party. Black Americans are more likely than white adults to say local elected officials, leaders of public schools, military leaders and police officers act unethically at least some of the time.

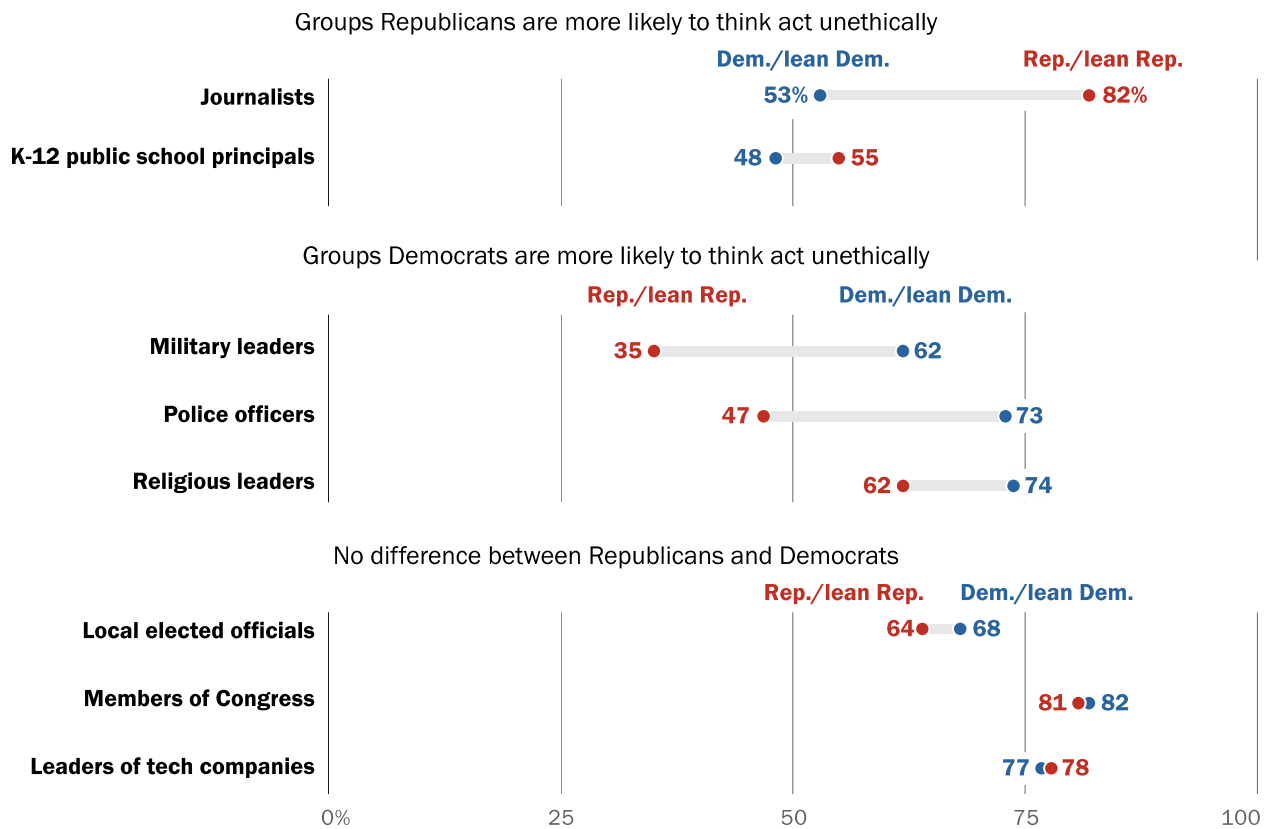
Furthermore, some of the widest gaps in views of these groups are between Republicans and Democrats (including those who lean toward each party). Partisan opinions differ for five of the eight groups asked about in the survey. Compared with Democrats, Republicans are more likely to think journalists and leaders of public schools act unethically at least some of the time. But Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say military leaders, police officers and religious leaders behave unethically.

Assessments of the frequency of unethical behavior among journalists, military leaders and police officers produce the largest gaps. Eight-in-ten Republicans and Republican leaners say journalists behave unethically at least some of the time, compared with 53% of Democrats and Democratic leaners who say this, a 29-point gap. There is a similarly large gap in opinions of military leaders (27-point gap, with Democrats more likely to say military leaders act unethically). In terms of ethical behavior among police officers, a larger share of Democrats than Republicans think police officers regularly act unethically, with a 26-point gap in opinion between the two groups.

There are no partisan differences in opinion about the ethical behavior of members of Congress, local elected officials or leaders of technology companies.

Partisans have different views about the prevalence of unethical behavior in key groups

% in each party who say ____ act unethically all or most, or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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The second question dealing with this issue asked how often those who behave unethically in these major institutional groups face serious consequences for their actions. Notably, majorities of U.S. adults say members of Congress (71%) and leaders of technology companies (58%) face consequences for wrong behavior only a little or none of the time. About half believe journalists (53%), religious leaders (53%) and local elected officials (50%) face serious consequences when they act unethically only a little or none of the time.

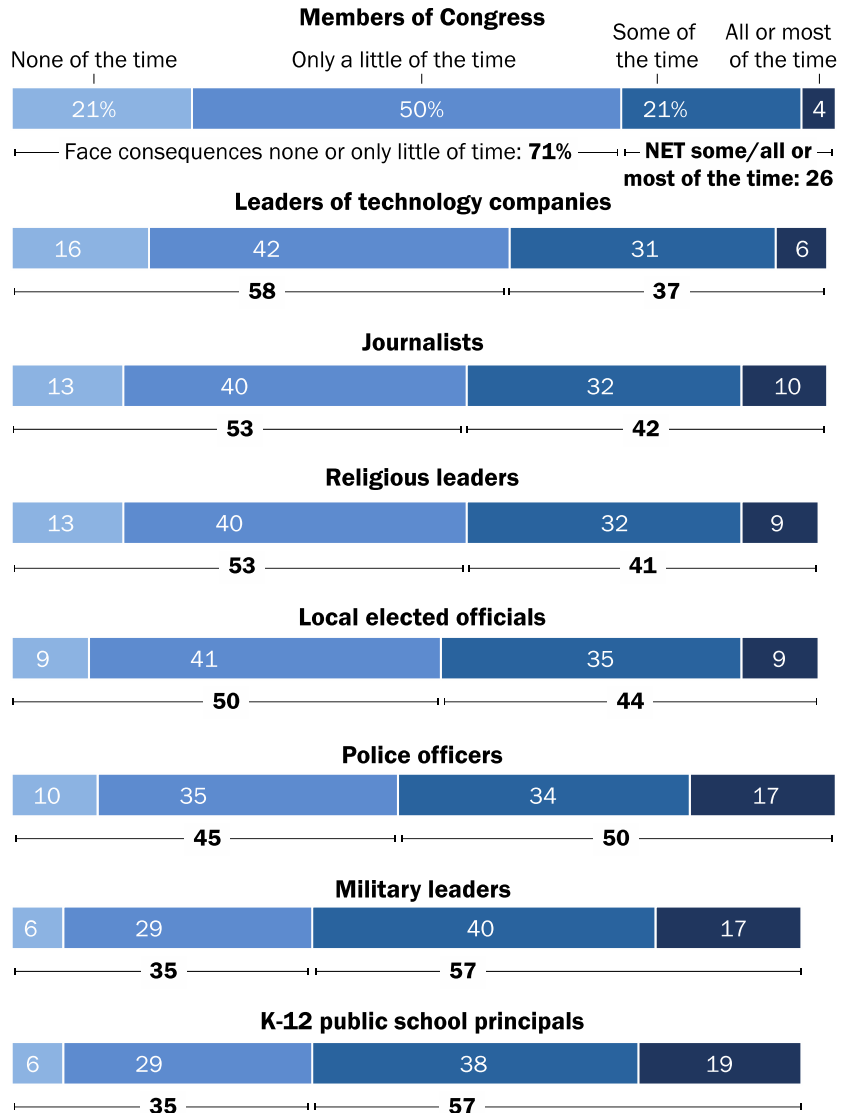
Put another way, roughly one-in-five or fewer say people in these groups face serious consequences for their actions “all or most” of the time.

Republicans and Democrats disagree about how often many in the eight major groups act unethically, and these divides extend to their opinions about these groups facing consequences for their actions. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say military leaders, police officers and religious leaders face

consequences for their unethical behavior. Democrats, on the other hand, are more likely to believe that journalists and leaders of public schools face consequences for their actions at least

Americans don't think unethical behavior by groups with power and responsibility results in serious consequences all or most of the time

How often, if at all, do you think _____ face serious consequences when they act unethically?



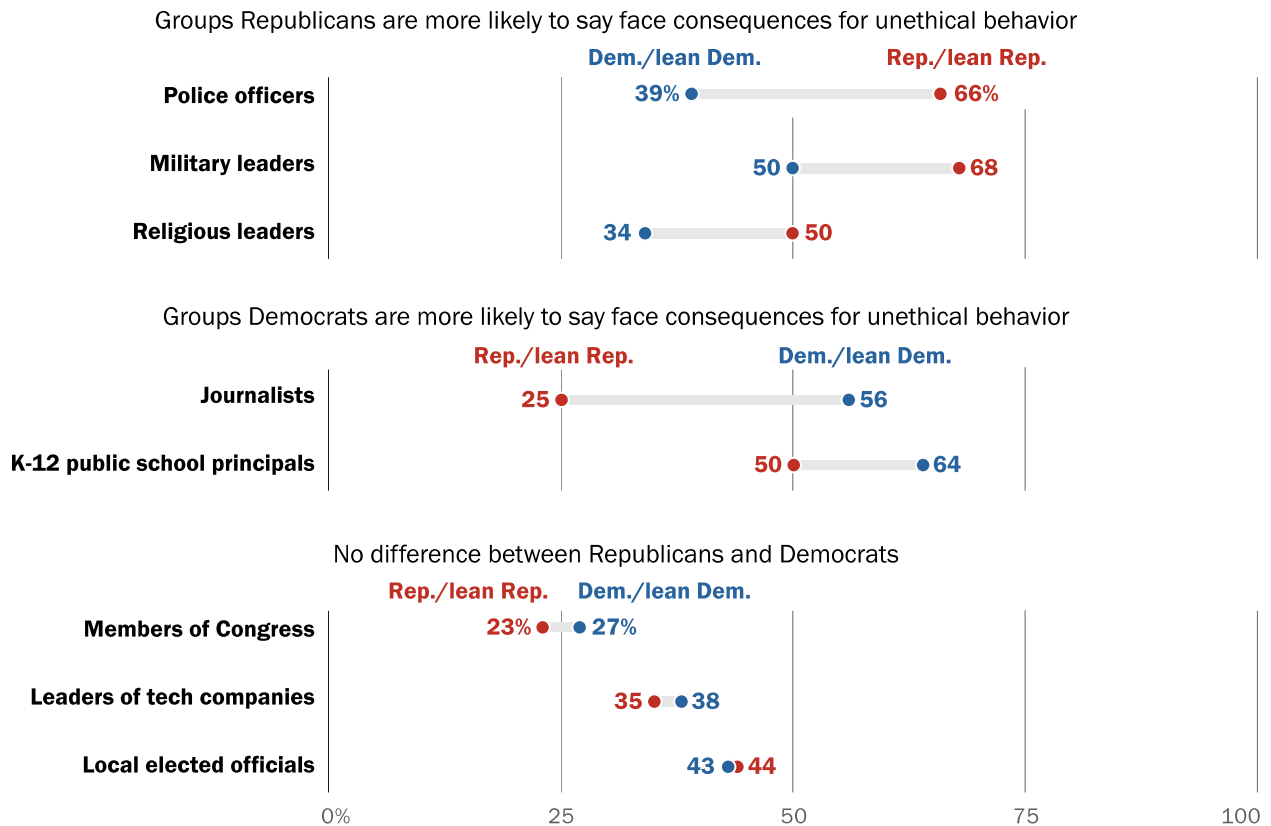
Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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some of the time.

Other demographic differences are less clear. Although consistent with other survey findings, black people are much less likely than whites and Hispanics to say police officers face consequences for their actions “all or most” or “some of the time” (31% of black people say this vs. 56% among whites and 49% among Hispanics).

Partisans often have different views about whether those who act unethically face consequences for their actions

% in each party who say _____ face consequences when they act unethically all or most, or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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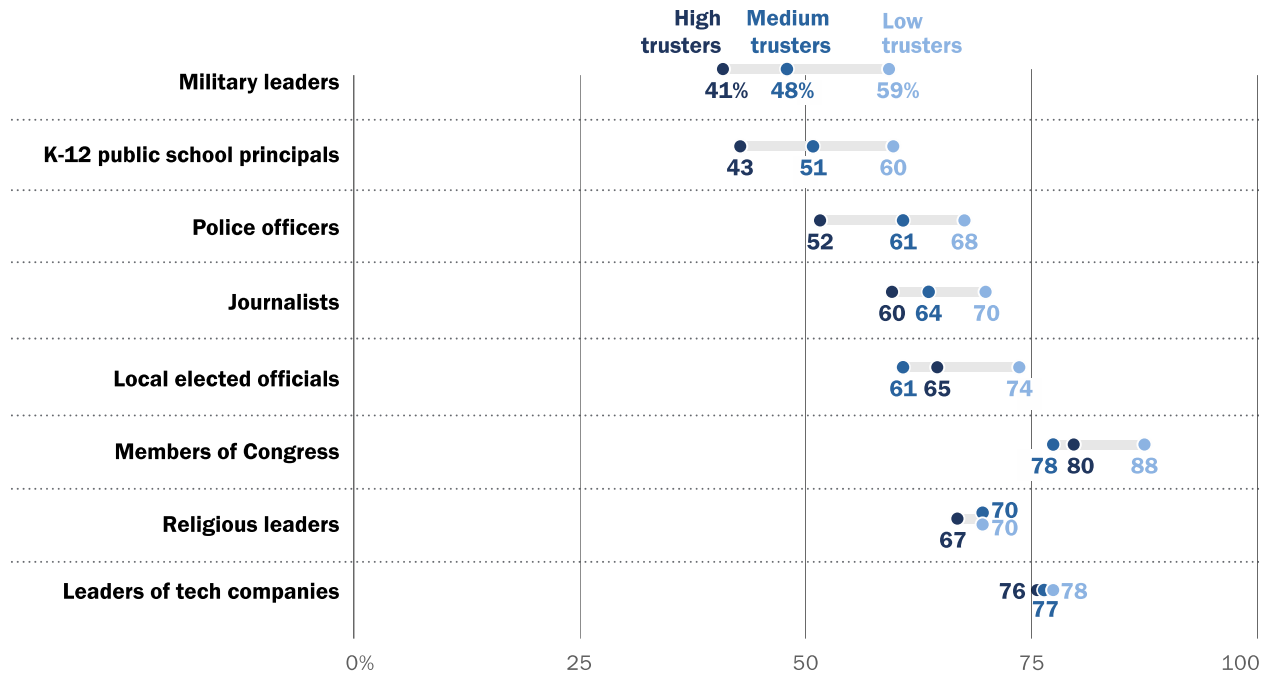
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Personal trust is connected to people’s assessments of unethical behavior

A [previous report on the state of personal trust in the U.S.](#) divided American adults into three categories – high trusters, medium trusters and low trusters – based on their responses to questions about people’s general trust or distrust in others, their sense of the exploitative tendencies or fairness of others, and their assessment of the overall helpfulness or selfishness of others.⁵ In general, the opinions of those in the three trust categories about the frequency of ethical behavior among those in positions of power and responsibility mirror the opinions of the public as a whole. But those with the lowest level of trust are more likely than those with high levels of trust to say each of the groups asked about in the survey acts unethically at least some of the time. Two exceptions are religious leaders and leaders of tech companies – there are no differences in opinion among high, medium and low trusters for these groups.

Those with low interpersonal trust worry more about unethical behavior in major groups

% in each trust group who say _____ act unethically all or most, or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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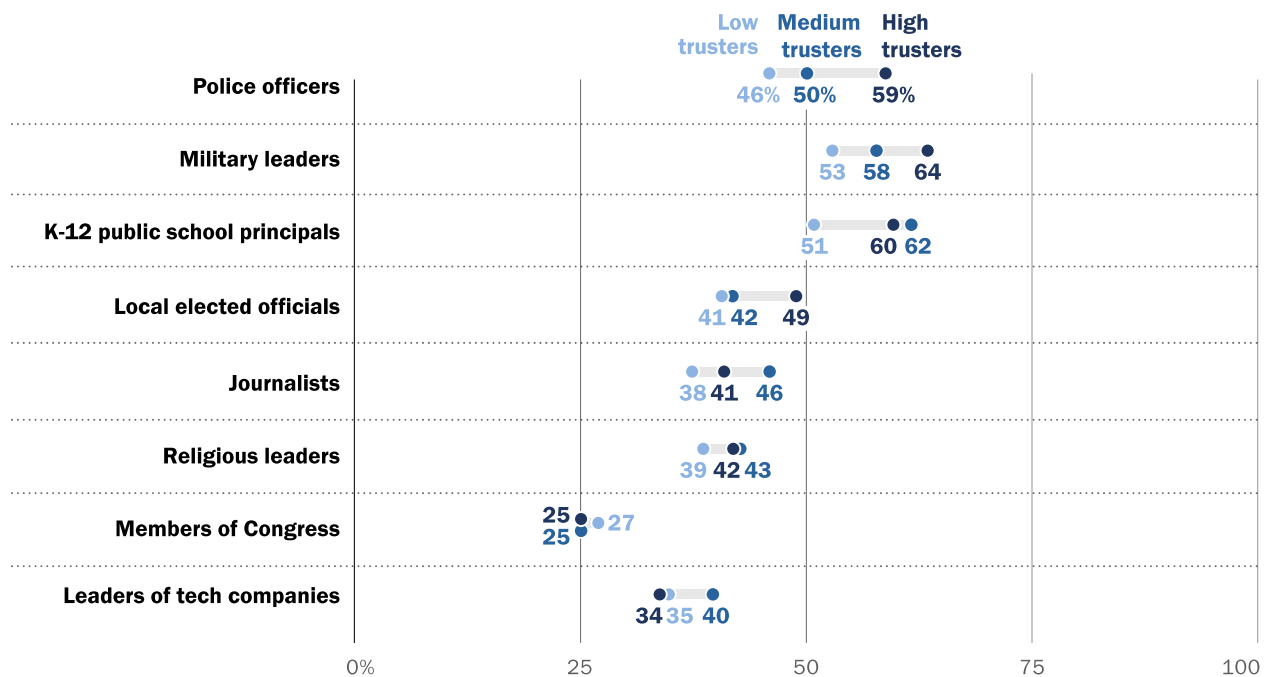
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⁵ A full explanation of how the groups were created can be found [here](#).

But when it comes to perceptions of whether unethical actors in these groups face consequences for their actions, opinions are more mixed. For instance, high trusters tend to be more likely than low trusters to think police officers, military leaders, K-12 principals and local elected officials face consequences for their actions “all or most” or “some of the time.” But there are no differences in opinion about how often members of Congress, journalists, leaders of technology companies and religious leaders face consequences for their unethical behavior.

Low trusters are sometimes less likely to think unethical behavior is punished

% in each trust group who say ____ face consequences for unethical behavior all or most, or some of the time



Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.
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Research team

Claire Gecewicz, *Research Associate*
Lee Rainie, *Director, Internet and Technology Research*
Scott Keeter, *Senior Survey Advisor*
Andrew Perrin, *Research Analyst*
Cary Funk, *Director, Science and Society Research*
Aaron Smith, *Director, Data Labs*
Courtney Kennedy, *Director, Survey Research*
Greg Smith, *Associate Director, Research*
Juliana Horowitz, *Associate Director, Research*
Baxter Oliphant, *Senior Researcher*
Jeffrey Gottfried, *Senior Researcher*
Alec Tyson, *Senior Researcher*
Claudia Deane, *Vice President, Research*
Meg Hefferon, *Research Analyst*
Nick Bertoni, *Panel Manager*
Madhu Kumar, *Research Assistant*
Meera Ramshankar, *Senior Administrative Coordinator*

Editorial and graphic design

Bill Webster, *Information Graphics Designer*
Aleksandra Sandstrom, *Copy Editor*

Communications and web publishing

Dana Page, *Associate Director, Communications*
Shawnee Cohn, *Communications Manager*
Sara Atske, *Associate Digital Producer*

Appendix A: Demographic tables

Modest differences in opinion about members of Congress among demographic groups

% of U.S. adults who say members of Congress ...

	Care about the people they represent		Do good job promoting policies that serve public		Handle resources responsibly		Provide fair and accurate information to public		Admit, take responsibility for mistakes	
	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Men	46	53	42	57	41	58	41	58	17	82
Women	54	45	51	48	53	47	51	49	22	77
White	51	48	46	53	46	54	46	54	17	82
Black	46	54	52	47	52	47	43	57	25	74
Ages 18-29	50	48	47	52	49	48	46	52	26	73
30-49	51	48	47	53	48	51	47	53	19	80
50-64	47	53	43	56	42	58	45	54	17	83
65+	54	46	52	48	48	51	46	53	19	81
High school or less	48	51	51	48	48	50	46	53	24	75
Some college	47	53	41	58	44	56	43	57	18	82
College graduate+	57	42	48	52	49	50	49	50	17	83
Republican/lean Republican	51	49	45	54	43	56	44	56	20	79
Democrat/lean Democratic	51	49	48	51	50	48	47	52	19	80

Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown. White and blacks are not Hispanic.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

"Why Americans Don't Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Republicans and Democrats both hold relatively positive opinions of local elected officials

% of U.S. adults who say local elected officials ...

	Care about the people they represent		Do good job promoting laws and policies that serve public		Handle resources responsibly		Provide fair and accurate information to public		Admit, take responsibility for mistakes	
	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Men	67	32	62	36	62	36	63	36	37	61
Women	67	31	65	34	64	35	66	33	45	54
White	72	27	68	31	65	33	68	31	43	55
Black	57	43	52	47	56	44	52	47	36	63
Ages 18-29	63	34	64	33	61	37	63	34	45	51
30-49	68	31	60	39	62	37	63	35	41	58
50-64	63	37	64	35	62	37	62	37	35	64
65+	75	23	66	33	68	31	69	30	44	54
High school or less	59	40	55	43	57	41	58	41	39	59
Some college	67	31	63	35	63	36	65	34	42	57
College graduate+	77	21	73	26	70	28	71	27	43	56
Republican/lean Republican	67	33	61	38	64	35	63	36	42	57
Democrat/lean Democratic	67	31	66	32	62	36	66	32	40	58

Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown. White and blacks are not Hispanic.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

"Why Americans Don't Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Opinions of journalists diverge along partisan lines

% of U.S. adults who say journalists ...

	Care about people like you		Do good job reporting important news that serves public		Cover all sides of an issue fairly		Provide fair and accurate information to public		Admit, take responsibility for mistakes	
	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Men	48	51	63	36	49	51	62	38	41	58
Women	57	41	72	27	59	40	70	29	48	51
White	52	48	66	33	51	49	63	36	44	56
Black	68	29	79	21	79	20	82	18	65	34
Hispanic	45	54	66	33	55	44	65	34	34	64
Ages 18-29	55	44	72	27	52	46	72	27	45	53
30-49	50	49	65	34	53	46	64	35	42	57
50-64	54	44	69	31	59	41	67	32	46	53
65+	54	46	68	32	54	46	63	37	47	52
High school or less	47	52	65	34	53	46	62	37	37	62
Some college	49	50	65	34	49	50	64	35	42	57
College graduate+	66	33	74	25	63	37	73	27	58	41
Republican/lean Republican	36	63	49	50	31	68	45	54	27	72
Democrat/lean Democratic	68	31	84	15	74	25	84	16	61	38

Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown. White and blacks are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

"Why Americans Don't Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Across demographic subgroups, opinions of public school principals are positive

% of U.S. adults who say K-12 public school principals ...

	Care about students in their schools		Do good job ensuring students develop problem solving and critical thinking skills		Handle resources responsibly		Provide fair and accurate information to public		Admit, take responsibility for mistakes	
	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Men	82	16	68	30	78	19	76	22	60	38
Women	86	12	76	22	84	14	81	18	70	28
White	87	11	71	27	82	15	80	18	66	31
Black	85	15	84	15	87	12	86	14	76	24
Hispanic	75	24	68	32	76	24	69	30	56	44
Ages 18-29	82	18	69	30	78	22	81	19	62	38
30-49	86	13	75	24	85	14	79	20	66	33
50-64	82	16	71	27	79	19	76	22	64	33
65+	86	9	72	24	82	14	79	16	70	25
High school or less	79	19	70	29	79	20	73	26	60	38
Some college	83	14	71	27	79	18	81	16	66	31
College graduate+	92	6	77	21	87	11	84	14	71	27
Republican/lean Republican	83	15	68	29	76	20	76	22	62	34
Democrat/lean Democratic	87	12	76	23	87	12	82	17	69	30

Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown. White and blacks include are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

"Why Americans Don't Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Most demographic groups have positive opinions of military leaders, but partisan differences emerge

% of U.S. adults who say military leaders ...

	Care about people like you		Do good job preparing military personnel to protect country		Handle resources responsibly		Provide fair and accurate information to public		Admit, take responsibility for mistakes	
	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Men	71	29	90	10	74	25	61	38	55	45
Women	76	22	90	8	80	17	69	29	59	39
White	77	22	92	7	81	17	69	30	58	41
Black	75	25	85	14	72	27	65	34	52	48
Hispanic	59	40	89	10	69	28	51	47	57	41
Ages 18-29	66	33	84	15	70	28	51	47	48	52
30-49	71	28	88	11	74	24	61	37	54	45
50-64	78	21	93	5	80	17	73	25	61	37
65+	80	18	94	4	86	12	77	22	66	33
High school or less	73	25	90	9	78	19	65	33	58	40
Some college	72	26	87	11	75	23	64	34	55	44
College graduate+	75	24	93	6	78	20	68	31	58	41
Republican/lean Republican	85	14	94	5	89	10	76	24	68	31
Democrat/lean Democratic	67	32	88	11	69	29	59	40	50	49

Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown. White and blacks include are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

"Why Americans Don't Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Large racial divides in opinions about police officers

% of U.S. adults who say police officers ...

	Care about people like you		Do good job protecting people from crime		Handle resources responsibly		Provide fair and accurate information to public		Admit, take responsibility for mistakes		Treat racial and ethnic groups equally	
	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Men	78	21	84	16	79	20	73	27	53	46	62	37
Women	80	19	84	15	80	19	76	24	57	42	62	37
White	87	13	89	11	85	14	81	18	62	38	72	28
Black	51	48	65	35	57	41	48	52	37	63	33	67
Hispanic	68	29	80	18	75	24	69	30	47	51	49	49
Ages 18-29	67	33	73	27	65	33	64	36	42	57	49	50
30-49	76	23	81	17	77	22	69	31	50	49	57	43
50-64	82	17	88	11	84	15	79	20	61	37	66	32
65+	91	8	92	7	92	7	89	11	71	29	77	23
High school or less	77	22	83	15	82	16	77	23	59	39	66	32
Some college	75	25	79	20	74	26	69	30	53	47	59	41
College graduate+	86	14	89	11	83	16	77	23	54	45	60	39
Republican/lean Republican	88	12	89	10	88	11	86	14	73	27	87	13
Democrat/lean Democratic	73	26	79	20	73	26	66	34	42	58	43	57

Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown. White and blacks are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

"Why Americans Don't Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

People think tech leaders build useful products, aren't as likely to admit mistakes

% of U.S. adults who say leaders of technology companies ...

	Care about people like you		Build products and services that enhance people's lives		Handle resources responsibly		Provide fair and accurate information to public		Admit, take responsibility for mistakes	
	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none	NET All or most/some	NET Only a little/none
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Men	46	52	84	15	67	31	60	39	42	56
Women	49	48	82	15	68	29	63	35	44	53
White	44	53	86	13	66	32	60	38	39	59
Black	64	35	78	21	70	29	65	33	49	50
Hispanic	45	50	73	23	70	26	61	37	51	46
Ages 18-29	45	52	82	17	61	36	59	38	43	55
30-49	49	47	84	14	73	24	63	35	46	51
50-64	51	47	81	16	66	32	60	38	44	53
65+	44	55	86	14	67	31	62	37	36	63
High school or less	50	45	79	18	67	28	62	34	45	51
Some college	44	55	82	17	65	33	61	37	41	57
College graduate+	48	51	90	9	70	29	61	39	43	56
Republican/lean Republican	48	50	82	17	66	32	58	40	39	59
Democrat/lean Democratic	47	51	85	13	69	29	64	35	46	52

Note: Those who declined to answer are not shown. White and blacks are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 27-Dec. 10, 2018, among U.S. adults.

"Why Americans Don't Fully Trust Many Who Hold Positions of Power and Responsibility"

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted Nov. 27 to Dec. 10, 2018. A total of 10,618 panelists responded out of 13,570 who were sampled, for a response rate of 78%. The cumulative response rate

accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3.7%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 10,618 respondents is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points.

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial

survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of which 9,942 agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample (ABS) of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. For a random half-sample of invitations, households without internet access were instructed to return a postcard. These households were contacted by telephone and sent a tablet if they agreed to participate. A total of 9,396 were invited to join the panel, and 8,778 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey.

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,515
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,471
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	806
Aug. 8, 2018–Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	8,778
	Total	29,114	18,720	13,570

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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Of the 18,720 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 13,570 remain active panelists and continue to receive survey invitations.

Weighting

The ATP data was weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 and 2017 some respondents were subsampled for invitation to the panel. The next step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on the dimensions listed in the accompanying table.

Sampling errors and statistical-significance tests take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the American Trends Panel's Hispanic sample is predominantly U.S. born and English speaking.

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 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:

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2017 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Race/Hispanic origin	
Hispanic nativity	
Region x Metropolitan status	2018 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2015 CPS Volunteer Supplement
Voter registration	2016 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.
Internet access	2018 Pew Research Center internet core trends telephone survey

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total US adult population.

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Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	10,618	1.5 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 2,622	3.0 percentage points
Republican/lean Rep	4,306	2.4 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 1,070	4.8 percentage points
Democrat/lean Dem	5,923	2.0 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 1,475	4.1 percentage points
Ages 18-29	1,398	4.2 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 335	8.3 percentage points
30-49	3,515	2.6 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 862	5.3 percentage points
50-64	3,190	2.8 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 791	5.5 percentage points
65+	2,510	3.1 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 611	6.3 percentage points
Low Trusters	2,816	2.9 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 677	6.0 percentage points
Medium Trusters	4,377	2.4 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 1,074	4.8 percentage points
High Trusters	3,186	2.8 percentage points
Quarter sample	At least 775	5.6 percentage points

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

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Topline questionnaire

**2018 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 40 NOVEMBER
FINAL TOPLINE
NOV. 27 – DEC. 10, 2018
TOTAL N=10,618**

OTHER QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED OR HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK IF FORM=1 [N=2,622]:

TRUSTCONG In your view, how much of the time do MEMBERS OF CONGRESS...
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-e]

	All or most of the <u>time</u>	Some of the <u>time</u>	Only a little of the <u>time</u>	None of the <u>time</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. Care about the people they represent Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	5	45	37	12	1
b. Do a good job promoting laws and policies that serve the public interest Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	4	43	41	12	1
c. Handle the resources available to them in a responsible way Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	5	42	38	14	1
d. Provide fair and accurate information to the public Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	4	42	41	12	1
e. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	2	17	44	36	1

ASK IF FORM=1 [N=2,622]:

TRUSTLOCAL In your view, how much of the time do LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-e IN SAME ORDER OF TRUSTCONG]**

	All or most of the <u>time</u>	Some of the <u>time</u>	Only a little of the <u>time</u>	None of the <u>time</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. Care about the people they represent Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	14	53	24	8	1
b. Do a good job promoting laws and policies that serve the public interest Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	11	53	28	7	1
c. Handle the resources available to them in a responsible way Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	10	53	28	8	2
d. Provide fair and accurate information to the public Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	10	54	28	6	1
e. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	4	37	39	19	2

ASK IF FORM=2 [N=2,668]:

TRUSTMEDIA In your view, how much of the time do JOURNALISTS... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-e]**

	All or most of the <u>time</u>	Some of the <u>time</u>	Only a little of the <u>time</u>	None of the <u>time</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. Care about people like you Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	12	41	29	17	1
b. Do a good job reporting important news that serves the public interest Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	20	48	24	8	1
c. Cover all sides of an issue fairly Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	13	42	30	15	1
d. Provide fair and accurate information to the public Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	18	48	23	10	1
e. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	11	34	35	19	1

ASK IF FORM=2 [N=2,668]:

TRUSTEDU In your view, how much of the time do K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS...
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-e IN SAME ORDER AS TRUSTMEDIA]

	All or most of the <u>time</u>	Some of the <u>time</u>	Only a little of the <u>time</u>	None of the <u>time</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. Care about the students in their schools Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	45	39	10	3	2
b. Do a good job ensuring that students are developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	22	50	20	6	2
c. Handle the resources available to them in a responsible way Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	29	52	13	4	2
d. Provide fair and accurate information to the public Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	27	52	15	4	2
e. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	14	51	24	8	2

ASK IF FORM=3 [N=2,683]

TRUSTMIL In your view, how much of the time do MILITARY LEADERS... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-e]**

	All or most of the <u>time</u>	Some of the <u>time</u>	Only a little of the <u>time</u>	None of the <u>time</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. Care about people like you Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	29	44	15	10	1
b. Do a good job preparing military personnel to protect the country Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	56	34	6	3	1
c. Handle the resources available to them in a responsible way Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	27	50	16	5	2
d. Provide fair and accurate information to the public Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	17	49	27	7	1
e. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	12	45	29	13	1

ASK IF FORM=3 [N=2,683]:

TRUSTPOLICE In your view, how much of the time do POLICE OFFICERS...

[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-e IN SAME ORDER AS TRUSTMIL; ALWAYS SHOW ITEM f LAST]

	All or most of the <u>time</u>	Some of the <u>time</u>	Only a little of the <u>time</u>	None of the <u>time</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. Care about people like you Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	37	42	13	7	1
b. Do a good job protecting people from crime Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	37	47	12	3	1
c. Handle the resources available to them in a responsible way Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	29	51	14	5	1
d. Provide fair and accurate information to the public Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	23	51	20	5	<1
e. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	12	43	29	14	1
f. Treat racial and ethnic groups equally Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	23	39	25	13	1

ASK IF FORM=4 [N=2,645]:

TRUSTTECH In your view, how much of the time do LEADERS OF TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES...
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-e]

	All or most of the <u>time</u>	Some of the <u>time</u>	Only a little of the <u>time</u>	None of the <u>time</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. Care about people like you Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	6	41	32	18	2
b. Build products and services that enhance people's lives Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	27	57	12	3	2
c. Handle the resources available to them in a responsible way Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	11	56	23	7	3
d. Provide fair and accurate information to the public Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	8	53	30	7	2
e. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	6	37	41	13	2

ASK IF FORM=4 [N=2,645]:

TRUSTRELIG In your view, how much of the time do RELIGIOUS LEADERS...
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS a-e IN SAME ORDER AS TRUSTTECH]

	All or most of the <u>time</u>	Some of the <u>time</u>	Only a little of the <u>time</u>	None of the <u>time</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. Care about people like you Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	25	45	17	11	1
b. Do a good job providing for the spiritual needs of their communities Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	28	48	15	8	1
c. Handle the resources available to them in a responsible way Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	17	51	22	9	2
d. Provide fair and accurate information to the public Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	17	46	24	11	2
e. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them Nov 27-Dec 10, 2018	10	40	34	15	2

ASK IF FORM=1 [N=2,622]:

CONGPREF How often do you think MEMBERS OF CONGRESS act unethically?

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018

17	All or most of the time
64	Some of the time
16	Only a little of the time
2	None of the time
1	No answer

ASK IF CONGPREF=1-3:

CONGCONS How often, if at all, do you think MEMBERS OF CONGRESS face serious consequences when they act unethically?

BASED ON FORM 1 [N=2,622]

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018

97	NET Members of Congress act unethically all or most of the time/some of the time/only a little of the time
4	Members of Congress face serious consequences all or most of the time
21	Some of the time
50	Only a little of the time
21	None of the time
<1	No answer
3	NET Members of congress act unethically none of the time/no answer

ASK IF FORM=1 [N=2,622]:

LOCALPERF How often do you think LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS act unethically?

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018

6	All or most of the time
60	Some of the time
28	Only a little of the time
4	None of the time
1	No answer

ASK IF LOCALPERF=1-3:

LOCALCONS How often, if at all, do you think LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS face serious consequences when they act unethically?

BASED ON FORM 1 [N=2,622]

Nov 27-
Dec 10
2018

94 NET Local elected officials act unethically all or most of the time/some of the time/only a little of the time

9 Local elected officials face serious consequences all or most of the time
35 Some of the time
41 Only a little of the time
9 None of the time
<1 No answer

6 NET Local elected officials act unethically none of the time/no answer

ASK IF FORM=2 [N=2,668]:

MEDIAPERF How often do you think JOURNALISTS act unethically?

Nov 27-
Dec 10
2018

15 All or most of the time
51 Some of the time
30 Only a little of the time
3 None of the time
1 No answer

ASK IF MEDIAPERF=1-3:

MEDIACONS How often, if at all, do you think JOURNALISTS face serious consequences when they act unethically?

BASED ON FORM 2 [N=2,668]

Nov 27-
Dec 10
2018

96 NET Journalists act unethically all or most of the time/some of the time/only a little of the time

10 Journalists face serious consequences all or most of the time
32 Some of the time
40 Only a little of the time
13 None of the time
1 No answer

4 NET Journalists act unethically none of the time/no answer

ASK IF FORM=2 [N=2,668]:

EDUPERF How often do you think LEADERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS act unethically?

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018

6	All or most of the time
46	Some of the time
40	Only a little of the time
5	None of the time
2	No answer

ASK IF EDUPERF=1-3:

EDUCONS How often, if at all, do you think LEADERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS face serious consequences when they act unethically?

BASED ON FORM 2 [N=2,668]

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018

93	NET Leaders of public schools act unethically all or most of the time/some of the time/only a little of the time
19	Leaders of public schools face serious consequences all or most of the time
38	Some of the time
29	Only a little of the time
6	None of the time
1	No answer
7	NET Leaders of public schools act unethically none of the time/no answer

ASK IF FORM=3 [N=2,683]:

MILPERF How often do you think MILITARY LEADERS act unethically?

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018

8	All or most of the time
42	Some of the time
42	Only a little of the time
6	None of the time
1	No answer

ASK IF MILPERF=1-3:

MILCONS How often, if at all, do you think MILITARY LEADERS face serious consequences when they act unethically?

BASED ON FORM 3 [N=2,683]

Nov 27-
Dec 10
2018

92 NET Military leaders act unethically all or most of the time/some of the time/only a little of the time

17 Military leaders face serious consequences all or most of the time
40 Some of the time
29 Only a little of the time
6 None of the time
<1 No answer

8 NET Military leaders act unethically none of the time/no answer

ASK IF FORM=3 [N=2,683]:

POLICEPERF How often do you think POLICE OFFICERS act unethically?

Nov 27-
Dec 10
2018

9 All or most of the time
52 Some of the time
34 Only a little of the time
4 None of the time
1 No answer

ASK IF POLICEPERF=1-3:

POLICECONS How often, if at all, do you think POLICE OFFICERS face serious consequences when they act unethically?

BASED ON FORM 3 [N=2,683]

Nov 27-
Dec 10
2018

96 NET Police officers act unethically all or most of the time/some of the time/only a little of the time

17 Police officers face serious consequences all or most of the time
34 Some of the time
35 Only a little of the time
10 None of the time
<1 No answer

4 NET Police officers act unethically none of the time/no answer

ASK IF FORM=4 [N=2,645]:

TECHPERF How often do you think LEADERS OF TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES act unethically?

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018

12	All or most of the time
65	Some of the time
19	Only a little of the time
3	None of the time
1	No answer

ASK IF TECHPERF=1-3:

TECHCONS How often, if at all, do you think LEADERS OF TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES face serious consequences when they act unethically?

BASED ON FORM 4 [N=2,645]

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018

96	NET Leaders of technology companies act unethically all or most of the time/some of the time/only a little of the time
6	Leaders of technology companies face serious consequences all or most of the time
31	Some of the time
42	Only a little of the time
16	None of the time
1	No answer
4	NET Leaders of technology companies act unethically none of the time/no answer

ASK IF FORM=4 [N=2,645]:

RELIGPERF How often do you think RELIGIOUS LEADERS act unethically?

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018

10	All or most of the time
59	Some of the time
25	Only a little of the time
4	None of the time
1	No answer

ASK IF RELIGPERF=1-3:

RELIGCONS How often, if at all, do you think RELIGIOUS LEADERS face serious consequences when they act unethically?

BASED ON FORM 4 [N=2,645]

Nov 27-

Dec 10

2018**94****NET Religious leaders act unethically all or most of the time/some of the time/only a little of the time**

9

Religious leaders face serious consequences all or most of the time

32

Some of the time

40

Only a little of the time

13

None of the time

<1

No answer

6**NET Religious leaders act unethically none of the time/no answer**