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# Supreme Court Favorability Rebounds

## *Continuing Partisan Divide in Views of Court's Ideology*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
ON THIS REPORT:**

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# Supreme Court Favorability Rebounds

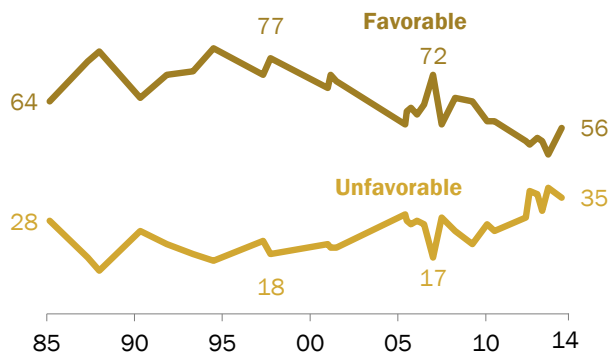
## *Continuing Partisan Divide in Views of Court's Ideology*

Favorable views of the Supreme Court are back above 50%, having rebounded from historic lows reached in the summer of 2013. However, the court still has several major decisions pending that could impact the public's views, including [rulings on challenges to the Affordable Care Act's requirement](#) that employers include contraceptive coverage in their employees' health plans.

The latest survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted April 23-27 among 1,501 adults, finds that 56% have a favorable view of the court, while 35% have an unfavorable view. (The survey was conducted before [the court's ruling that a town council in New York and, by extension, other legislatures, can begin meetings with a Christian prayer.](#)) Last July, following high-profile rulings on the Voting Rights Act and same-sex marriage, about half held a favorable view of the court (48%), among the [lowest measures recorded in Pew Research surveys.](#)

Currently, more Democrats (63%) than Republicans (54%) have a favorable impression of the Roberts court, though the gap has narrowed considerably since July 2012. [At that time, shortly after the court upheld most of the provisions of the Affordable Care Act,](#) 64% of Democrats viewed the court favorably compared with just 38% of Republicans.

### Favorable Views of the Supreme Court Move Back Above 50%

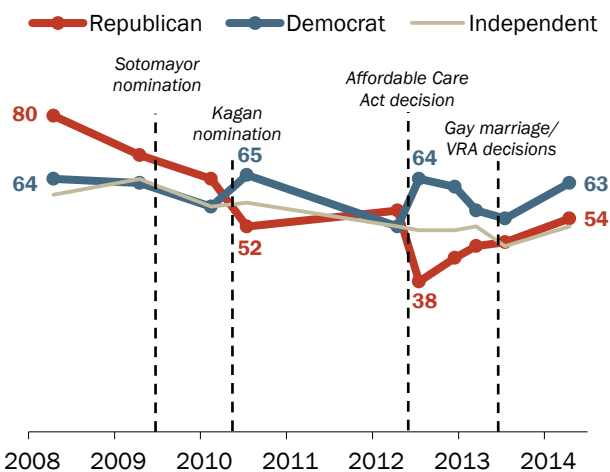


Survey conducted April 23-27, 2014.

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### Partisan Views of the Court: 2008-2014

% expressing favorable view of Supreme Court ...



Survey conducted April 23-27, 2014.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Blacks hold a favorable view of the Supreme Court by about a two-to-one margin (63%-30%). In July 2013, blacks were divided in their views of the court (44% favorable, 41% unfavorable).

That survey was fielded shortly after the Supreme Court struck down the core elements of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, widely seen as a landmark piece of legislation enacted to prohibit

discrimination in voting. Current views of the court among blacks are similar to those expressed in March 2013, before the Voting Rights Act ruling.

## Views of the Court's Ideology

The public is divided when it comes to views of the Supreme Court's ideology. About a third (35%) say that the court is middle of the road, while 31% call it liberal and 25% call it conservative. The percentage calling the court liberal has edged up five points since the summer of last year. In July 2013, about as many described the court as liberal (26%) as conservative (23%), while 42% called it middle of the road.

### Blacks' Views of Court More Positive than After Voting Rights Decision

*View of Supreme Court ...*

	March 2013		July 2013		April 2014	
	Fav %	Unfav %	Fav %	Unfav %	Fav %	Unfav %
Total	52	31	48	38	56	35
White	49	35	49	37	53	38
Black	61	24	44	41	63	30
Hispanic	58	25	51	37	62	27

Survey conducted April 23-27, 2014. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

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### Conservative Republicans See Court as Liberal; Liberal Dems More Likely to View it as Conservative

	Conser- vative %	Middle of the road %	Liberal %	DK %	N
Total	25	35	31	8=100	1501
Republican	10	38	45	7=100	389
Conservative	9	33	53	5=100	266
Moderate/Liberal	11	49	31	8=100	116
Independent	25	35	32	8=100	593
Democrat	40	36	18	6=100	452
Conservative/Moderate	36	39	18	8=100	243
Liberal	47	33	19	1=100	199
<i>Among Rep/ Rep leaners</i>					
Tea Party	3	37	56	3=100	244
Non-Tea Party	13	37	40	10=100	398

Survey conducted April 23-27, 2014. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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Conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats continue to have very different opinions about the court's ideology. About half of conservative Republicans (53%) say the Roberts court is liberal, while 33% say it is middle of the road and just 9% view it as conservative. By contrast, more liberal Democrats (47%) say the court is conservative than say it is middle of the road (33%) or liberal (19%).

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted April 23-27, 2014 among a national sample of 1,501 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (600 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 901 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 449 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. 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://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2012 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 2013 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. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.

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:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,501	2.9 percentage points
Republican	389	5.7 percentage points
Democrat	452	5.3 percentage points
Independent	593	4.6 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.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**APRIL 2014 POLITICAL SURVEY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**April 23-27, 2014**  
**N=1,501**

**QUESTIONS 1-2, 4, 8, INT1-INT3M, 12, 18-19, 21-24, 26 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**  
**NO QUESTIONS 3, 5-7, 9-11, 13-17, 20, 25, 27**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.28 Next, would you say your overall opinion of [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE; RANDOMIZE ITEMS a THROUGH c IN BLOCK; RANDOMIZE ITEMS d THROUGH g IN BLOCK; RANDOMIZE BLOCKS] is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? [INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."] How about [NEXT ITEM]? [IF NECESSARY: Just in general, is your overall opinion of [ITEM] very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?] [INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]

**ITEMS a-d, f-g HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
e. The Supreme Court								
Apr 23-27, 2014	56	11	44	35	12	23	*	9
Jul 17-21, 2013	48	7	41	38	14	24	1	13
Mar 13-17, 2013	52	7	45	31	10	21	2	15
Dec 5-9, 2012	53	8	45	36	12	24	1	10
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	51	10	41	37	14	23	1	11
Apr 4-15, 2012	52	11	41	29	10	20	*	18
July 1-5, 2010	58	9	49	25	8	17	1	16
Feb 3-9, 2010	58	8	50	27	8	19	*	15
Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	64	8	56	21	6	15	0	15
April, 2008	65	15	50	25	7	18	*	10
July, 2007	57	12	45	29	9	20	0	14
January, 2007	72	18	54	17	3	14	2	9
July, 2006	63	7	56	27	8	19	1	9
February, 2006	60	16	44	28	10	18	*	12
Late October, 2005	62	12	50	27	10	17	*	11
July, 2005	61	12	49	28	10	18	*	11
June, 2005	57	8	49	30	8	22	*	13
July, 2001	70	15	55	20	6	14	*	10
March, 2001	72	15	57	20	5	15	*	8
January, 2001	68	18	50	21	8	13	1	10
October, 1997	77	13	64	18	6	12	*	5
May, 1997	72	16	56	22	5	17	0	6
July, 1994	80	18	62	16	3	13	*	4
May, 1993	73	17	56	18	4	14	0	9
November, 1991	72	18	54	21	5	16	0	7
May, 1990	65	10	55	25	7	18	1	9
January, 1988	79	14	65	13	2	11	*	8
May, 1987	76	13	63	17	2	15	*	7
Roper: March 1985	64	17	47	28	7	21	--	8

**ASK ALL:**

Q.29 Thinking about the Supreme Court...In your view, do you think the current Supreme Court is conservative, middle of the road, or liberal?

Apr 23-27 2014		Jul 17-21 2013	Mar 13-17 2013	Jun 28-Jul 9 2012	Jul 1-5 2010	Apr 21-26 2010	July 2007
25	Conservative	23	22	24	23	24	36
35	Middle of the road	42	40	41	39	36	35
31	Liberal	26	24	23	23	24	14
8	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	9	14	12	14	16	15

**NO QUESTIONS 30-39, 42, 53-59, 63, 69-74****QUESTIONS 40-41, 43-47, 50-52, 60-62, 64-68, 75-78 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTION 48-49 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or 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?

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
Apr 23-27, 2014	24	30	41	2	1	2	18	17
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	22	31	41	3	1	2	17	17
Feb 14-23, 2014	22	32	39	4	1	2	14	17
Jan 15-19, 2014	21	31	41	3	1	2	18	16
Dec 3-8, 2013	24	34	37	3	*	2	17	15
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	24	32	38	4	*	2	16	14
Oct 9-13, 2013	25	32	37	3	1	3	16	18
Sep 4-8, 2013	26	32	38	3	1	1	17	15
Jul 17-21, 2013	19	29	46	3	*	2	19	18
Jun 12-16, 2013	23	33	39	3	*	2	17	15
May 1-5, 2013	25	32	37	2	1	3	14	16
<b>Yearly Totals</b>								
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3



## PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.) No	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	preference	party			
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

## ASK REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):

TEAPARTY3 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

## BASED ON REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS [N=658]:

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/ DK
Apr 23-27, 2014	33	11	54	1	1	--
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	37	11	50	1	1	--
Feb 14-23, 2014	36	9	54	1	1	--
Jan 15-19, 2014	35	12	52	1	*	--
Dec 3-8, 2013	32	9	57	1	1	--
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	40	9	48	2	1	--
Oct 9-13, 2013	41	11	45	2	1	--
Sep 4-8, 2013	35	9	54	1	1	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	37	10	50	2	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	9	46	1	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	41	7	48	1	3	--
May 1-5, 2013	28	8	61	2	1	--
Mar 13-17, 2013	43	7	47	1	1	--
Feb 13-18, 2013	36	9	52	1	3	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	43	9	45	1	2	--
Jan 9-13, 2013	35	10	51	2	2	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	11	51	1	*	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	40	8	49	1	2	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	9	50	1	3	--
Sep 12-16, 2013	39	7	52	1	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	40	9	47	2	1	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	36	9	53	1	2	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	38	10	49	2	1	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	40	7	51	1	1	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	42	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	37	8	52	1	1	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	40	9	48	2	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	37	11	51	1	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	7	49	*	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	40	7	51	*	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	42	9	47	1	1	--
May 25-30, 2011	37	7	52	1	3	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	45	9	46	*	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	37	7	54	1	*	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	41	9	48	1	1	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 <sup>1</sup>	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--

<sup>1</sup> In the February 2-7, 2011, survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."

## TEAPARTY3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Haven't heard of</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Refused</u>	Not heard of/ <u>DK</u>
Nov 4-7, 2010	51	5	42	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	58	5	27	--	1	9
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	54	5	30	--	1	10
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	56	6	29	--	*	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	46	5	36	--	1	13
Jun 16-20, 2010	46	5	30	--	*	19
May 20-23, 2010	53	4	25	--	1	16
Mar 11-21, 2010	48	4	26	--	1	21