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PUBLIC OPINION

UMass Lowell/ American Academy of Arts and Sciences National Survey on Voting Reform Sept. 25-Oct. 1, 2024

N = 3,200 Likely 2024 General Election Voters

The sample has an adjusted margin of error of +/-1.8 percentage points

See <http://uml.edu/polls> for full questionnaire/topline results and detailed methodology disclosure.

Survey design and analysis by John Cluverius, director of survey research, University of Massachusetts Lowell Center for Public Opinion.

Do you have a question about this poll? If so, tweet @UML_CPO and we'll get back to you.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Americans hungry for change in how we elect Congress

Just a month before the 2024 presidential election, respondents to a poll conducted by the UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences shows deep dissatisfaction from voters across the political spectrum and an openness to voting reform. 78% of Americans, including 66% of Democrats, 87% of Republicans and 90% of independents, said that they could only trust the federal government in Washington to do what is right some or none of the time. Only 23% of all respondents said that they could trust the government almost always or most of the time.

Respondents to the survey seem very displeased with the state of American politics. Seventy percent said that about half or more of government officials are corrupt; 80% of respondents agreed strongly or somewhat with the statement "government officials don't care what people like them think." Sixty-nine percent agreed strongly or somewhat that they did not have a say in what the government does.

Nonetheless, Americans support changes in the system: 53% of respondents say that the way we elect members of congress should change, larger than the 47% of respondents who say we should keep things the same. Signaling support for a broader multiparty democracy, 63% of overall respondents said that the United States would be better off with more than two major political parties, well above the 37% who said that a two-party system is preferable.

2. Americans support increasing the size of the House with positive framing

“Most survey experiments result in very modest changes between question wording. By merely suggesting that increasing the size of the House will make the body smaller and make members of Congress closer to their constituents, support for increasing the size of the House skyrockets to a supermajority position. The American people are sick and tired of a system they see as corrupt, unresponsive, and frustrating. Despite the fact that historically, Americans have not have positive views of Congress, they’re willing to make the body larger to improve it,” said UMass Lowell’s John Cluverius, director of survey research for the Center for Public Opinion and an associate professor of political science.

A survey experiment conducted in the poll also shows that when Americans are told that adding members of Congress will make districts smaller and improve representation, they overwhelming support adding 150 members to the House of Representatives. When presented with a control question asking whether the body should be increased by 150 members, Americans oppose the measure 56% to 44%, but when language saying the measure will make congressional districts smaller and members could get to know their constituents’ needs better, respondents support the change overwhelmingly, 60% to 40%.