



Americans Say Cutting Pensions Not Solution to Budget Shortfalls

Vast majority of Republicans and Democrats agree that law enforcement and first responders deserve to have a secure retirement

Washington, DC, October 3, 2018 – A new Ipsos poll shows that the vast majority of Americans have a favorable opinion of paramedics (94%), nurses (94%), firefighters (93%), teachers (91%), doctors (89%), and police officers (82%). On the other hand, government employees (53%), lawyers (50%), reporters (45%), and elected officials (27%) have lower favorability among Americans. The occupations with the widest favorability margins between Republicans and Democrats are reporters (67% vs. 26% of Republicans), police officers (78% vs. 94% of Republicans), and government employees (62% vs. 49% of Republicans).

A large majority of both Republicans (86%) and Democrats (86%) agree that police officers and firefighters deserve to have a secure retirement if they've served 20 or more years. However, there is a 9-point difference between Republicans and Democrats when it comes to whether or not they believe that public employee pensions are more generous than most people's retirements (58% vs. 67% of Republicans), and a 10-point difference on whether or not guaranteed pensions are a luxury American society cannot afford (30% vs. 40% of Republicans).

When asked what the local government should do to balance its budget if there were a budget shortfall, almost half say they would support raising taxes (46%) while only a third say they would support reducing spending on infrastructure like roads or sewers (33%). While Republicans are relatively split between the two options (36% for reducing infrastructural spending vs. 38% raising taxes), Democrats are much more inclined to choose the latter (29% vs. 52% raising taxes).

1. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following?

Favorable

	Total (N=1,005)	Democrat (N=320)	Republican (N=354)	Independent (N=208)
Paramedics	94%	94	96	94
Nurses	94%	95	97	89
Firefighters	93%	93	97	90
Teachers	91%	98	92	81
Doctors	89%	93	92	83
Police officers	82%	78	94	78
Government employees	53%	62	49	52
Lawyers	50%	58	48	45
Reporters	45%	67	26	45
Elected officials	27%	32	32	16

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Press Release – continued –

a) Police officers

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	43%	31%	58%	45%
Somewhat favorable	23	26	23	20
Lean towards favorable	16	21	13	13
Lean towards unfavorable	7	11	2	9
Somewhat unfavorable	4	5	*	5
Very unfavorable	4	5	2	4
Don't know	3	2	2	4
Favorable (net)	82%	78%	94%	78%
Unfavorable (net)	14	20	4	18

b) Firefighters

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	66%	67%	71%	64%
Somewhat favorable	19	17	19	19
Lean towards favorable	8	9	6	6
Lean towards unfavorable	2	2	1	4
Somewhat unfavorable	*	1	-	1
Very unfavorable	2	3	-	1
Don't know	3	1	2	4
Favorable (net)	93%	93%	97%	90%
Unfavorable (net)	4	5	1	6

c) Paramedics

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	61%	59%	67%	61%
Somewhat favorable	22	25	20	22
Lean towards favorable	10	10	9	10
Lean towards unfavorable	2	1	1	3
Somewhat unfavorable	1	1	*	*
Very unfavorable	1	1	*	-
Don't know	3	2	2	3
Favorable (net)	94%	94%	96%	94%
Unfavorable (net)	3	4	2	3

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Press Release – continued –

d) Teachers

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	54%	68%	47%	44%
Somewhat favorable	25	20	31	28
Lean towards favorable	11	9	14	9
Lean towards unfavorable	3	*	3	7
Somewhat unfavorable	1	*	2	2
Very unfavorable	2	1	1	3
Don't know	4	1	2	7
Favorable (net)	91%	98%	92%	81%
Unfavorable (net)	6	1	6	12

e) Nurses

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	60%	62%	61%	55%
Somewhat favorable	24	24	26	22
Lean towards favorable	10	9	9	11
Lean towards unfavorable	2	1	1	5
Somewhat unfavorable	1	2	-	1
Very unfavorable	*	*	*	*
Don't know	3	1	2	5
Favorable (net)	94%	95%	97%	89%
Unfavorable (net)	3	3	1	6

f) Doctors

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	39%	42%	38%	38%
Somewhat favorable	32	34	35	26
Lean towards favorable	18	17	19	19
Lean towards unfavorable	4	3	5	5
Somewhat unfavorable	2	1	*	6
Very unfavorable	1	1	*	1
Don't know	4	3	2	4
Favorable (net)	89%	93%	92%	83%
Unfavorable (net)	7	5	6	12

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Press Release – continued –

g) Lawyers

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	9%	15%	6%	7%
Somewhat favorable	17	15	20	17
Lean towards favorable	24	28	22	21
Lean towards unfavorable	22	24	21	21
Somewhat unfavorable	12	7	15	14
Very unfavorable	9	5	12	13
Don't know	6	5	4	7
Favorable (net)	50%	58%	48%	45%
Unfavorable (net)	43	36	48	48

h) Government employees

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	8%	11%	5%	9%
Somewhat favorable	18	22	18	12
Lean towards favorable	27	30	26	31
Lean towards unfavorable	21	22	21	21
Somewhat unfavorable	10	5	16	9
Very unfavorable	8	6	9	7
Don't know	8	6	5	11
Favorable (net)	53%	62%	49%	52%
Unfavorable (net)	38	33	46	38

i) Elected officials

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	3%	5%	2%	3%
Somewhat favorable	7	8	9	3
Lean towards favorable	16	19	20	10
Lean towards unfavorable	25	27	26	22
Somewhat unfavorable	18	20	16	21
Very unfavorable	23	15	23	35
Don't know	7	5	4	6
Favorable (net)	27%	32%	32%	16%
Unfavorable (net)	66	63	65	78

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j) Reporters

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very favorable	11%	20%	5%	9%
Somewhat favorable	16	25	9	14
Lean towards favorable	18	22	12	22
Lean towards unfavorable	20	18	20	19
Somewhat unfavorable	13	7	18	14
Very unfavorable	16	4	31	17
Don't know	6	5	5	6
Favorable (net)	45%	67%	26%	45%
Unfavorable (net)	49	28	69	49

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Agree

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Police and firefighters deserve to have a secure retirement if they've served 20 years or more.	83%	86	86	80
Public employee pensions are more generous than most people's retirements.	56%	58	67	46
Guaranteed pensions are a luxury American society cannot afford.	31%	30	40	28

a) Police and firefighters deserve to have a secure retirement if they've served 20 years or more.

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	56%	59%	61%	52%
Somewhat agree	26	27	25	28
Neither agree nor disagree	10	7	7	14
Somewhat disagree	3	4	4	2
Strongly disagree	1	1	1	1
Don't know	3	2	3	2
Agree (net)	83%	86%	86%	80%
Disagree (net)	4	5	4	3

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Press Release – continued –

b) Public employee pensions are more generous than most people’s retirements.

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	28%	24%	38%	24%
Somewhat agree	28	34	29	22
Neither agree nor disagree	23	19	18	28
Somewhat disagree	9	11	6	10
Strongly disagree	4	4	4	5
Don’t know	9	8	5	11
Agree (net)	56%	58%	67%	46%
Disagree (net)	12	15	10	14

c) Guaranteed pensions are a luxury American society cannot afford.

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	13%	12%	17%	11%
Somewhat agree	19	18	23	17
Neither agree nor disagree	23	16	20	28
Somewhat disagree	19	19	22	20
Strongly disagree	20	29	14	19
Don’t know	6	6	4	5
Agree (net)	31%	30%	40%	28%
Disagree (net)	40	48	36	39

3. If the government in your local area had a budget shortfall, how do you think they should balance their budget?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Raise taxes	46%	52	38	46
Reduce spending on infrastructure like roads or sewers	33%	29	36	29
Lower the amount of money going to teacher, firefighter, and police pensions	14%	11	19	15
Reduce spending on services like schools or police	8%	8	7	10

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Press Release – continued –

4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Total agree

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Traditional parties and politicians don't care about people like me	75%	77	68	84
America needs a strong leader to take the country back from the rich and powerful	67%	77	53	73
The American economy is rigged to advantage the rich and powerful	67%	88	40	75
The mainstream media is more interested in making money than telling the truth	63%	43	83	63
When jobs are scarce, employers should prioritize hiring people of this country over immigrants	58%	46	76	55
I am proud to be an American right now	56%	37	76	57

a. When jobs are scarce, employers should prioritize hiring people of this country over immigrants

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	35%	19%	55%	33%
Somewhat agree	23	27	21	22
Neither agree nor disagree	29	36	17	33
Somewhat disagree	5	6	4	4
Strongly disagree	5	9	1	5
Don't know	3	3	2	3
Agree (net)	58%	46%	76%	55%
Disagree (net)	10	15	5	9

b. America needs a strong leader to take the country back from the rich and powerful

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	42%	53%	32%	41%
Somewhat agree	25	25	21	32
Neither agree nor disagree	18	14	25	15
Somewhat disagree	7	4	12	6
Strongly disagree	4	2	9	2
Don't know	4	2	2	4
Agree (net)	67%	77%	53%	73%
Disagree (net)	11	6	21	8

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Press Release – continued –

c. The American economy is rigged to advantage the rich and powerful

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	37%	54%	17%	39%
Somewhat agree	30	34	23	36
Neither agree nor disagree	17	7	27	13
Somewhat disagree	8	2	19	6
Strongly disagree	5	1	12	2
Don't know	3	2	2	4
Agree (net)	67%	88%	40%	75%
Disagree (net)	13	3	31	8

d. Traditional parties and politicians don't care about people like me

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	37%	35%	30%	54%
Somewhat agree	38	42	39	30
Neither agree nor disagree	16	15	19	12
Somewhat disagree	5	5	8	2
Strongly disagree	2	2	3	1
Don't know	2	1	2	1
Agree (net)	75%	77%	68%	84%
Disagree (net)	7	6	11	2

e. The mainstream media is more interested in making money than telling the truth

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	39%	16%	61%	44%
Somewhat agree	24	27	22	20
Neither agree nor disagree	16	16	8	23
Somewhat disagree	10	18	5	7
Strongly disagree	9	19	2	6
Don't know	3	3	2	2
Agree (net)	63%	43%	83%	63%
Disagree (net)	19	38	7	12

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Press Release – continued –

f. I am proud to be an American right now

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Strongly agree	34%	21%	53%	30%
Somewhat agree	22	17	22	27
Neither agree nor disagree	19	18	14	26
Somewhat disagree	14	25	7	11
Strongly disagree	10	19	2	5
Don't know	2	1	2	1
Agree (net)	56%	37%	76%	57%
Disagree (net)	24	44	9	16

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About the Study

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted October 1-2, 2018. For the survey, a sample of 1,005 adults 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii were interviewed online in English. The sample includes 320 Democrats, 354 Republicans, and 208 Independents.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos' online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2013 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=1,005, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-5 percentage points).

The poll also has a credibility interval plus or minus 6.2 percentage points for Democrats, 5.9 percentage points Republicans and 7.7 for Independents.

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

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Press Release – continued –

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Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks fourth in the global research industry.

With offices in 88 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across five research specializations: brand, advertising and media; customer loyalty; marketing; public affairs research; and survey management.

Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,782.7 million in 2016.

GAME CHANGERS

« Game Changers » is the Ipsos signature.

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We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions.
We deliver with security, speed, simplicity and substance. We are Game Changers.

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