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In Wake Of Tragedies In Texas And Ohio, Americans Are Divided On Who Is Responsible For Mass Shootings In The U.S.

Democrats More Likely Than Republicans To Blame Racism And Gun Laws

Washington, DC, August 6, 2019 — A new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of USA Today finds that Americans ascribe responsibility for mass shootings, including the recent tragedies in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio, to a range of culprits. More Americans place blame on the mental health system (73% say responsible), racism and white nationalism (69%) and loose gun laws (67%) than they do to gun manufacturers and the NRA (55%), violent video games (51%) or President Donald Trump (50%). Partisanship is rife, with Republicans inclined to blame the mental health system (77%) and violent video games (60%) while Democrats blame racism and white nationalism (84%), loose gun laws (83%), and President Donald Trump (74%).

In the aftermath of the mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton, 15% of Americans report feeling unsafe in public spaces. One quarter of Americans have made plans with their family about what to do in the event of a mass shooting, and 21% skipped public events where there would be a lot of people because of mass shooting in the United States over the last few years.

When it comes to increased gun purchase background check bills, most Americans are in favor of moving forward with these bills. The majority of Americans (52%) believe that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell should cancel the current August recess to hold hearings and votes on the bills previously passed in the US House of Representatives to tighten background checks for gun purchases but not yet considered in the Senate. Moreover, 67% of Americans want the US Senate to pass the increased background check bills.

For full results, please refer to the following questionnaire.



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Full Annotated Questionnaire:

1. When in public spaces over the last few weeks, how safe or unsafe have you felt?

	Total (N=1004)	Democrat (N=446)	Republican (N=392)	Independent (N=100)
Very safe	28%	26%	33%	29%
Mostly safe	52%	52%	50%	53%
Mostly unsafe	11%	9%	10%	15%
Very unsafe	4%	5%	4%	-
Don't know	5%	7%	4%	3%
<i>Safe (Net)</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>82%</i>	<i>82%</i>
<i>Unsafe (Net)</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>15%</i>

2. Have you done any of the following as a result of the mass shootings that have taken place in the United States over the last several years?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Talked with your family about what to do if a shooting happened in your area	25%	30%	21%	18%
Skipped public events where there would be a lot of people	21%	22%	20%	17%
Avoided shopping in crowded places	18%	21%	18%	8%
Contacted public officials asking for new laws to prevent mass shootings	7%	11%	6%	*
None of these	52%	47%	55%	64%

3. How familiar are you, if at all, with the recent mass shootings in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very familiar	38%	44%	35%	31%
Somewhat familiar	31%	29%	33%	30%
Heard about it, don't know much	24%	20%	26%	27%
Have not heard about it	4%	3%	4%	6%
Don't know	4%	4%	2%	5%
<i>Familiar/have heard (Net)</i>	<i>93%</i>	<i>93%</i>	<i>94%</i>	<i>88%</i>



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4. How much responsibility do you believe the following hold for mass shootings in the United States?

Total Responsible Summary

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
The mental health system	73%	74%	77%	59%
Racism and white nationalism	69%	84%	57%	54%
Loose gun laws	67%	83%	51%	59%
Gun manufacturers and the NRA	55%	72%	37%	54%
Violent video games	51%	47%	60%	41%
President Donald Trump	50%	74%	23%	41%
Republicans in Congress	47%	66%	29%	36%
Democrats in Congress	40%	34%	51%	37%

a. President Donald Trump

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very responsible	34%	52%	12%	27%
Somewhat responsible	17%	22%	12%	14%
Not very responsible	12%	8%	19%	12%
Not at all responsible	28%	9%	53%	34%
Don't know	10%	9%	6%	13%
<i>Responsible (Net)</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>41%</i>
<i>Not responsible (Net)</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>46%</i>

b. The mental health system

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very responsible	36%	35%	42%	32%
Somewhat responsible	37%	39%	35%	27%
Not very responsible	11%	12%	9%	17%
Not at all responsible	8%	8%	6%	13%
Don't know	8%	7%	8%	11%
<i>Responsible (Net)</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>59%</i>
<i>Not responsible (Net)</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>30%</i>





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c. Violent video games

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very responsible	22%	19%	27%	14%
Somewhat responsible	29%	28%	33%	27%
Not very responsible	21%	23%	16%	26%
Not at all responsible	20%	24%	15%	21%
Don't know	9%	6%	9%	11%
<i>Responsible (Net)</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>41%</i>
<i>Not responsible (Net)</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>48%</i>

d. Gun manufacturers and the NRA

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very responsible	35%	49%	17%	35%
Somewhat responsible	20%	22%	19%	19%
Not very responsible	14%	11%	18%	9%
Not at all responsible	22%	11%	38%	28%
Don't know	9%	7%	7%	9%
<i>Responsible (Net)</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>54%</i>
<i>Not responsible (Net)</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>37%</i>

e. Democrats in Congress

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very responsible	17%	11%	26%	17%
Somewhat responsible	23%	22%	25%	20%
Not very responsible	21%	26%	19%	18%
Not at all responsible	23%	26%	20%	25%
Don't know	17%	14%	11%	20%
<i>Responsible (Net)</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>37%</i>
<i>Not responsible (Net)</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>43%</i>

f. Republicans in Congress

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very responsible	29%	44%	13%	24%
Somewhat responsible	19%	22%	16%	12%
Not very responsible	16%	12%	22%	18%
Not at all responsible	21%	9%	38%	23%
Don't know	16%	13%	12%	23%
<i>Responsible (Net)</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>66%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>36%</i>
<i>Not responsible (Net)</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>41%</i>



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g. Racism and white nationalism

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very responsible	44%	61%	27%	33%
Somewhat responsible	25%	23%	29%	21%
Not very responsible	9%	6%	14%	10%
Not at all responsible	12%	5%	20%	19%
Don't know	10%	6%	10%	18%
<i>Responsible (Net)</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>84%</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>54%</i>
<i>Not responsible (Net)</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>29%</i>

h. Loose gun laws

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Very responsible	43%	59%	28%	31%
Somewhat responsible	24%	25%	23%	28%
Not very responsible	10%	6%	15%	8%
Not at all responsible	15%	5%	27%	20%
Don't know	8%	6%	7%	14%
<i>Responsible (Net)</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>59%</i>
<i>Not responsible (Net)</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>28%</i>

As you may know, the US House of Representatives passed several bills earlier this year tightening background checks for gun purchases. However, to date the US Senate has not considered or voted on these bills. The US Senate is currently not meeting while on their August recess.

5. Do you believe Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell should cancel the Senate recess to hold hearings and votes on these gun purchase background check bills?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	52%	62%	43%	47%
No	26%	19%	37%	25%
Don't know	22%	18%	20%	28%

6. Should the US Senate pass these increased background check bills already passed by the US House?

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	67%	79%	59%	53%
No	14%	7%	24%	16%
Don't know	19%	14%	17%	31%



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7. Which of the following statements comes closest to your overall view of guns laws in this country? Do you think gun laws should be...

	Total	2/28/18 Total (N=1005)	10/17/17 Total (N=1006)
Gun laws should be a lot more strict than they are today	50%	44%	45%
Gun laws should be somewhat more strict than they are today	22%	31%	23%
Gun laws are about right	17%	17%	20%
Gun laws should be somewhat less strict than they are today	4%	4%	7%
Gun laws should be a lot less strict than they are today	7%	4%	4%
<i>More strict (Net)</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>68%</i>
<i>Less strict (Net)</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>11%</i>

	Democrat			Republican			Independent		
	2019	2/28/18 (N=351)	10/17/17 (N=340)	2019	2/28/18 (N=341)	10/17/17 (N=370)	2019	2/28/18 (N=203)	10/17/17 (N=186)
Gun laws should be a lot more strict than they are today	65%	68%	65%	32%	22%	29%	44%	37%	32%
Gun laws should be somewhat more strict than they are today	22%	24%	19%	22%	38%	26%	20%	31%	29%
Gun laws are about right	6%	5%	9%	28%	27%	33%	27%	23%	23%
Gun laws should be somewhat less strict than they are today	2%	1%	6%	6%	8%	6%	7%	5%	10%
Gun laws should be a lot less strict than they are today	5%	1%	1%	12%	6%	6%	2%	4%	6%
<i>More strict (Net)</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>84%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>55%</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>61%</i>
<i>Less strict (Net)</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>18%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>12%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>16%</i>



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between August 5-6, 2019 on behalf of USA Today. For this survey, a sample of roughly 1,004 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The sample includes 446 Democrats, 392 Republicans, and 100 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 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Posthoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability 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=1,004, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-5.0 percentage points).

The poll also has a credibility interval of plus or minus 5.3 percentage points for Democrats, plus or minus 5.6 percentage points for Republicans, and plus or minus 11.2 percentage points for Independents.

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