

What unites Americans? Service and values

By Rye Barcott and Clifford Young

It is not news to anyone that America is a nation divided. There are roughly six months until the 2024 presidential election, and tensions are soaring. Regardless of party, most Americans feel as if the 2024 presidential election will mark a pivotal turning point in American history. The stakes feel high.

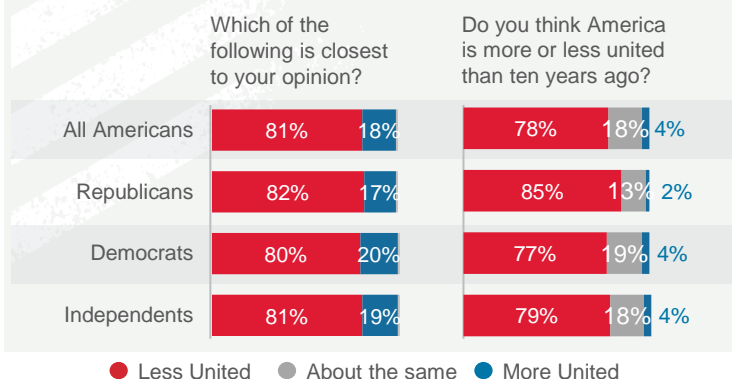
Division seems like the norm for most. As the campaigns and partisan infighting kick up, it is worth examining a guiding question in the year ahead: what unites the country?

New research With Honor conducted with Ipsos finds that there are foundational principles that bridge the deep fault lines between people, parties, and politics. Despite much ink being spilled that Americans are irrevocably divided, most Americans believe in the same values and want the same things out of life. In the five charts below, With Honor and Ipsos found that service, American values, and Veterans unite the country around a shared sense of purpose and direction.

Less united, more divided

What unites Americans? A sense of division unites Americans; that's true regardless of whether someone is a Democrat, Republican, or independent. Look at the data. Most also agree that America is more divided than it was a decade ago. Two Americas, one red, the other blue, all divided.

Americans See a Divided Country

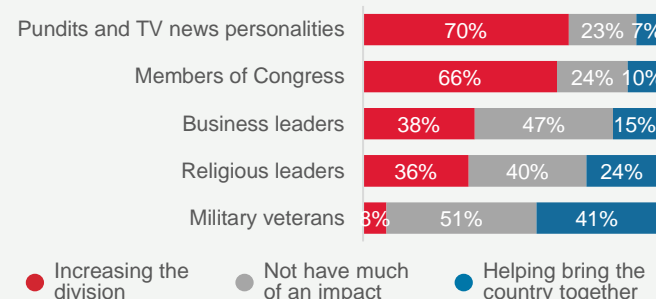


Who unites?

However, there are institutions and key groups that unite Americans. Most Americans feel that Congress and TV pundits increase the division in the country day-to-day. On the other hand, far more Americans feel people like military Veterans help bring the country together.

Veterans Unite, Media and Congress Divides

Do you think the day-to-day words and actions of the following help bring the country together or increase division...



Rally around service and values

American values and serving others are popular concepts that unite Americans. Other things, like polarization and greed, unite Americans in their unpopularity. There is much that unites as much as divides.

Core American Values and Belief in Service Unites

With Honor Unity Index – February 2024 (Wave 1 and Wave 2)



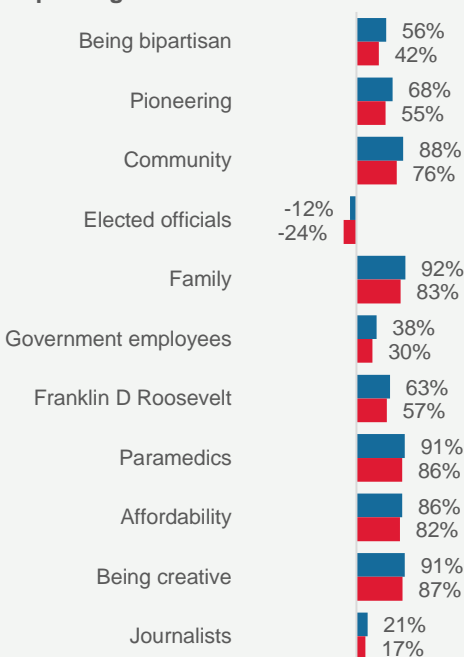
Bipartisan popularity

Over the past four years, Americans have had a more favorable opinion of bipartisanship, pioneering, and community. These ideas are now more popular with the public even as public figures, news media and entertainment, and some political issues have grown less popular.

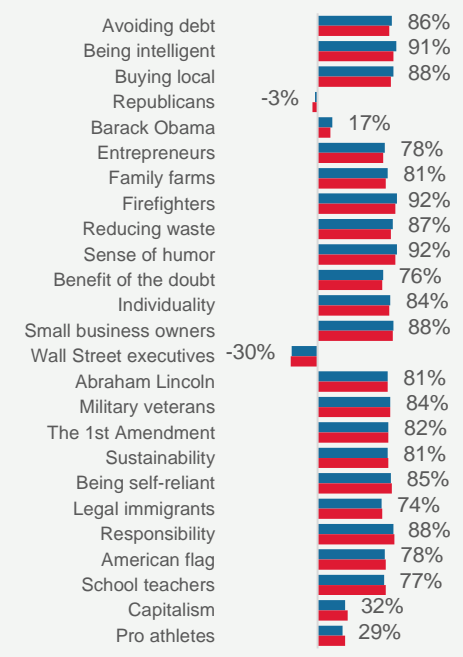
Americans Grow More Favorable to Bipartisanship

Ordered by size of change in favorability between 2018-2024

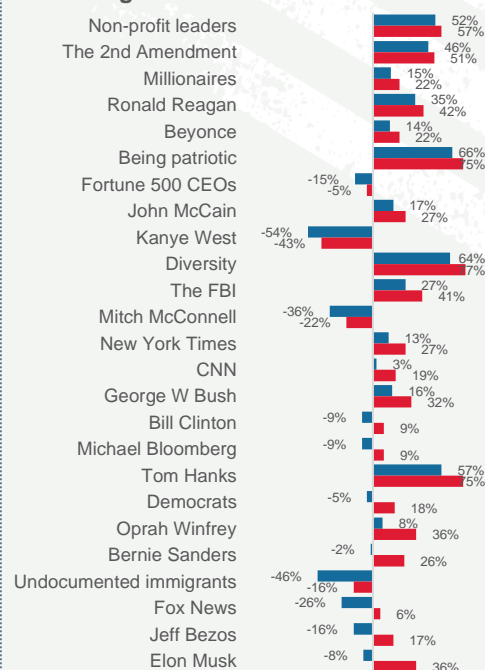
Improving



Stable



Declining



● 2018 ● 2024

Common goals

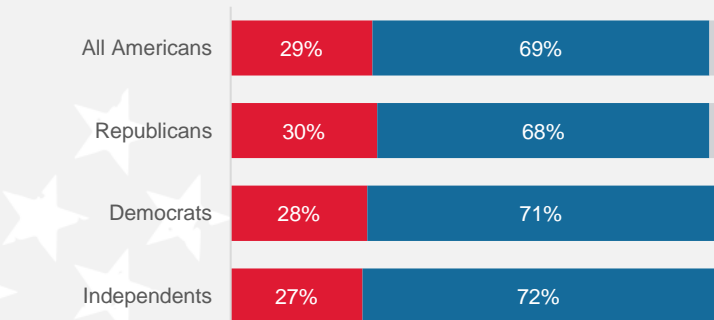
Yet, despite this enduring sense that America is divided interpersonally, most Americans feel that other Americans want the same things out of life as they do. The goal is not red or blue; it is one that most Americans agree on.

As the 2024 election cycle continues, it is essential to focus on what unites the country as much as what divides it. Most Americans feel that Veterans, service, and foundational principles bring the country together, even as the wide partisan divide continues to separate people.

Americans can appreciate that most people want the same things, and nearly all can agree that the division in the country has gotten worse in the past decade. Despite this, centering shared American experiences and values may create the stepping stones for bridging that seemingly vast divide.

Americans Have Much in Common

Which of the following is closest to your opinion?



Most Americans...

● Want radically different things out of life ● Want the same things out of life