

AMERICA 250

Enduring Values, Evolving Identity



APRIL 2026



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Ipsos U.S. Public Affairs Commemorates America 250

To mark the nation's 250th anniversary, we are proud to share a new report exploring how Americans reflect on the state of the country.

Two hundred fifty years into the American experiment, democracy remains a messy, sometimes fractious enterprise. Yet beneath the debates that shape our politics lies something enduring: a foundational belief in the values and ideals that define a nation.

The country's divisions are real and often intense, but they are seen as problems to solve, not permanent barriers. Our new survey shows that the American idea remains resilient and, for many, the country still carries the potential to be that shining city on the hill.

Throughout this report, we feature Americans in their own words, sharing their one wish for the nation's 250th birthday. Many of these voices appeal for greater unity and recommitting to founding principles – a powerful call to action for leaders and citizens alike.

At Ipsos, we are proud to bring the public's voice to the conversations that matter most. We hope this report provides insight and inspiration as the nation looks ahead to its next 250 years and the ongoing pursuit of a more perfect union.

Alec Tyson, Lead Pollster

Chris Moessner, Executive Sponsor



WISHES FOR AMERICA'S
250TH BIRTHDAY:

Throughout this report we present direct quotations from everyday Americans answering the question: *“What one wish do you have for America's 250th birthday?”*

1 Being American



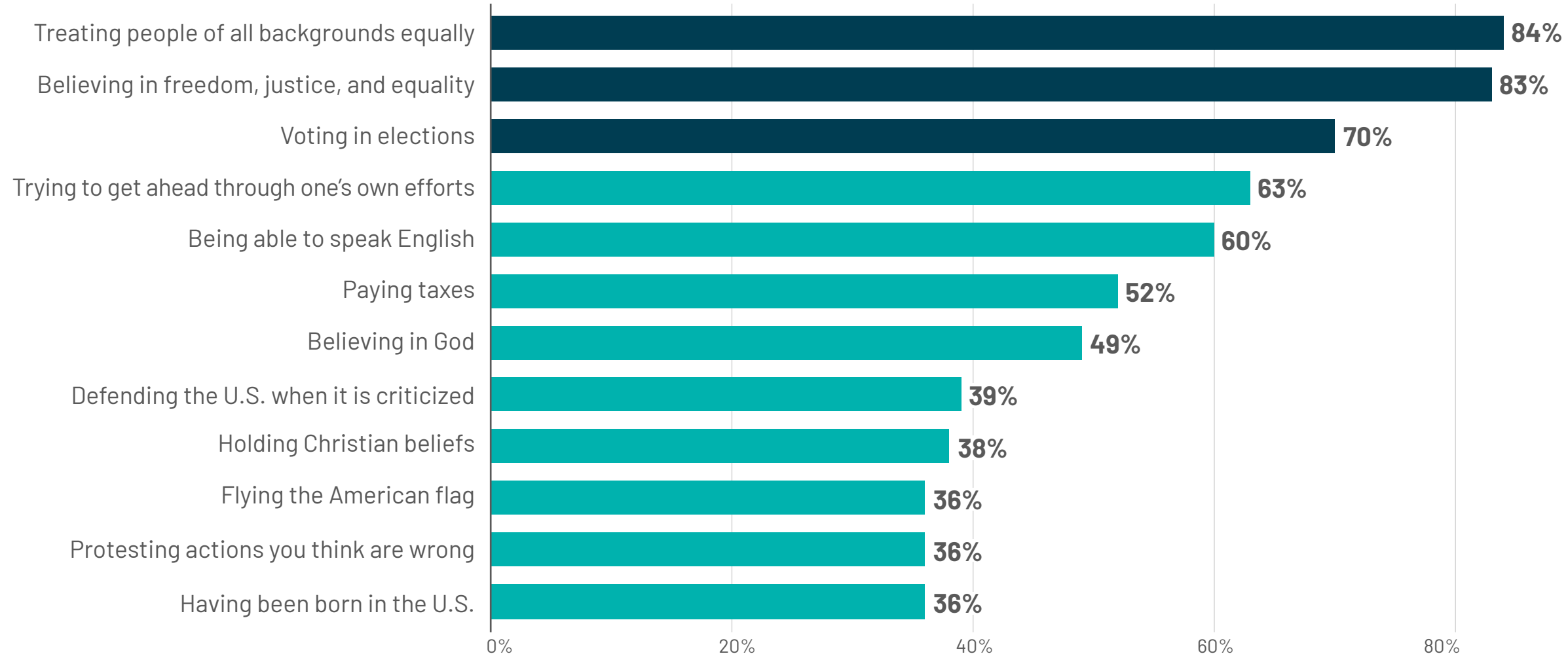
WISH FOR AMERICA'S
250TH BIRTHDAY:

"That Americans would deeply and honestly reflect on what our founding fathers wanted to achieve with establishing this country and recommit to that goal."

What does it mean to be American?

Equality, believing in freedom and justice, and taking part in elections seen as central to American identity

Percent who say each is important to being an American:



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.



“Being American” plays differing roles in Americans’ lives

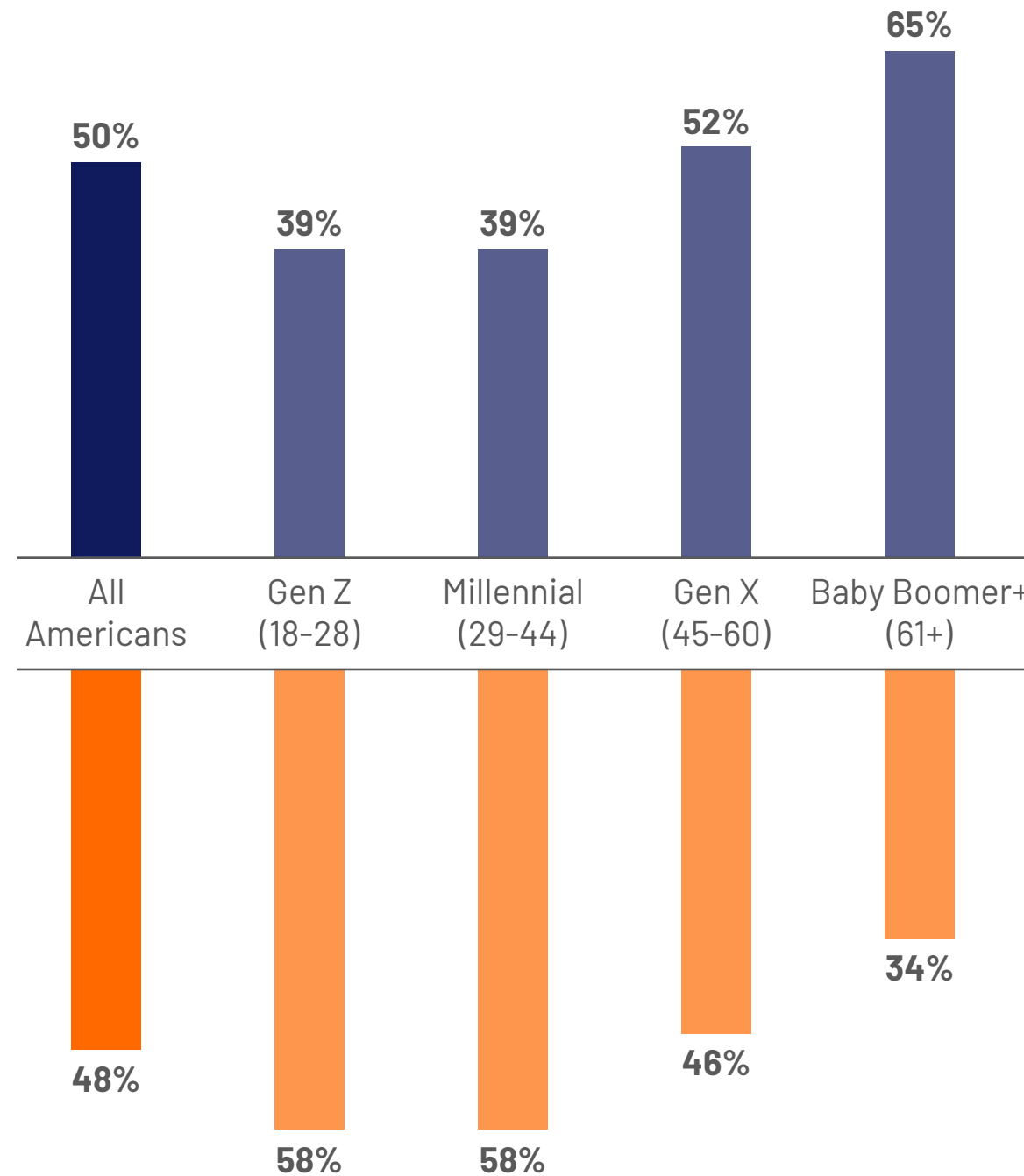
Older generations are much more likely to say being American is an important part of their identity than Gen Z and Millennials

50%

say being an American is an important part of how they think about themselves

48%

say being an American is not something they think much about



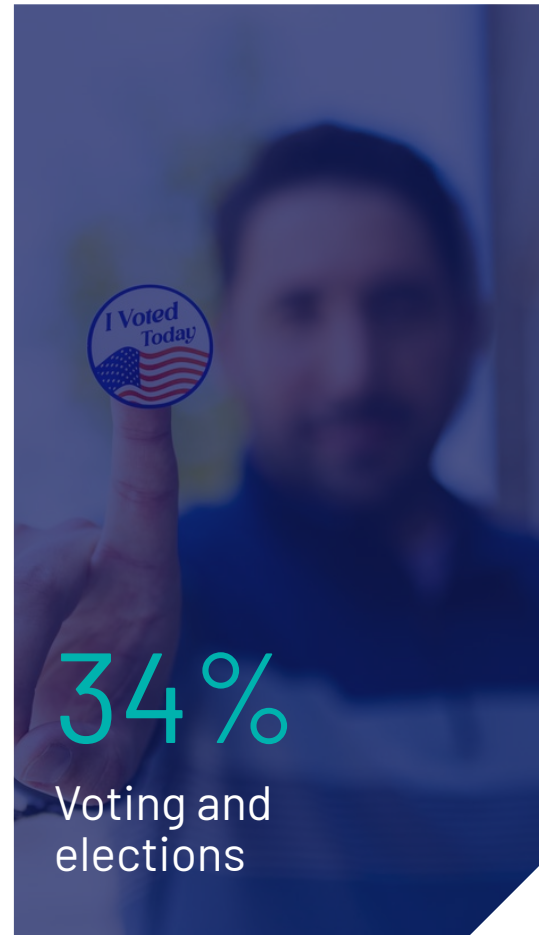
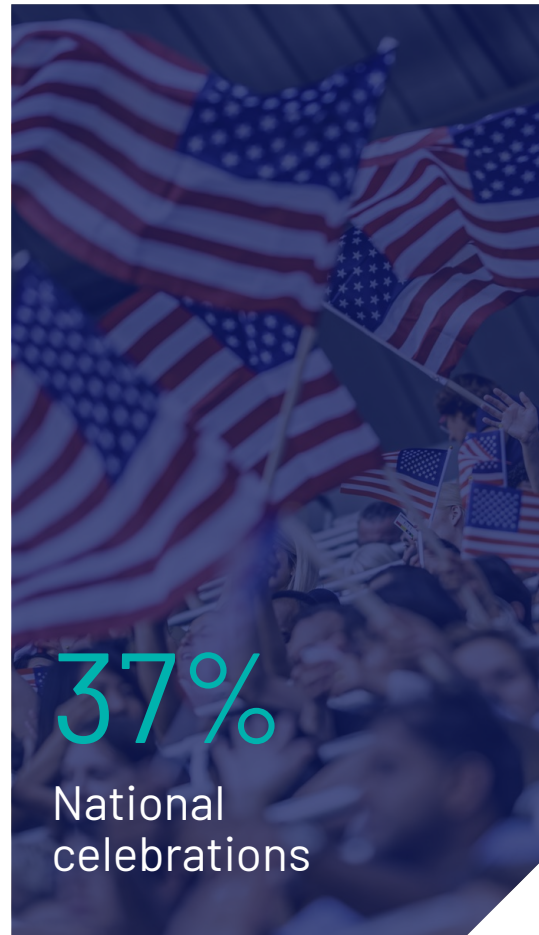
■ Being an American is an important part of how I think about myself

■ Being American is not something I think about that much

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

When do you feel most connected with other Americans?

National celebrations and tragedies are moments of connection, along with voting and elections



Other moments Americans feel most connected:

21% Religious services

20% Local community events

19% Sporting events

18% Volunteering

17% Military memorials

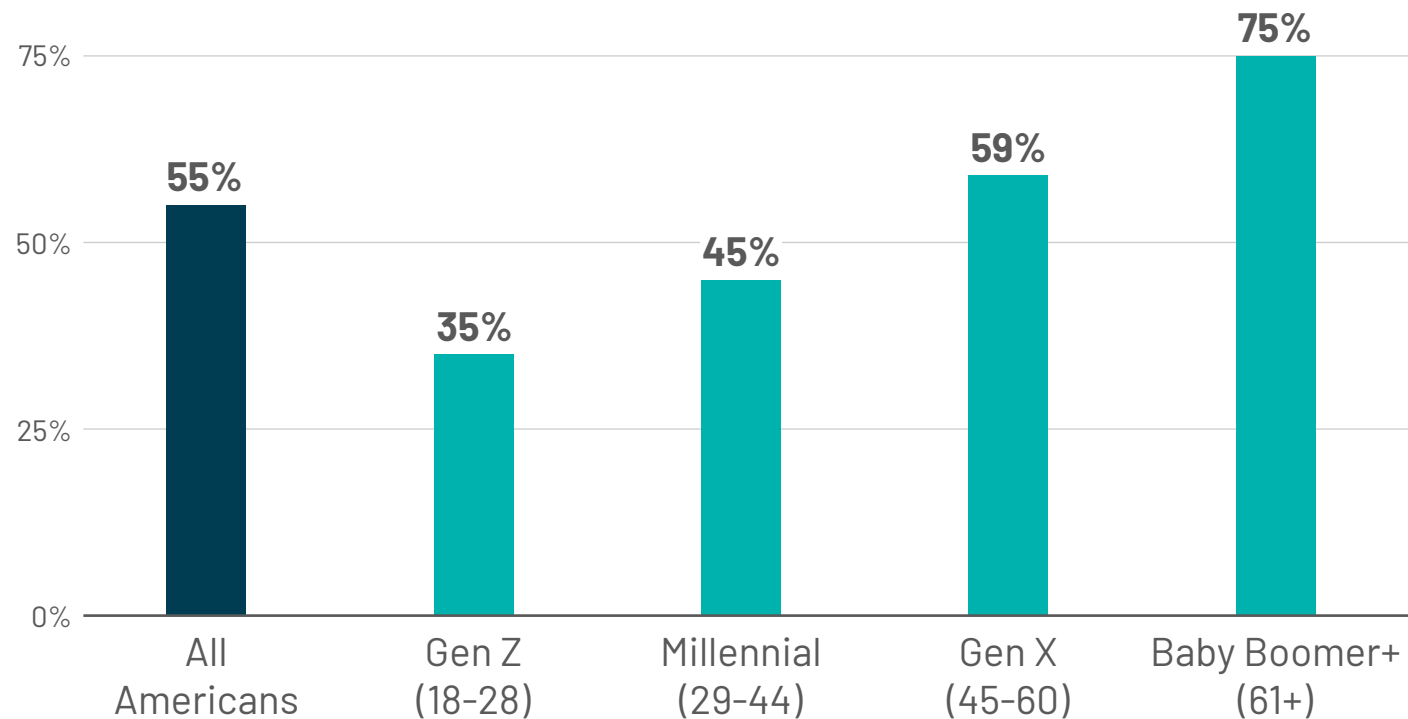
15% Protests

13% Cultural events

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

Most think about their Constitutional rights, but there are generational differences over relevance of Founding Documents

Percent who say the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Bill of Rights feel relevant and important in their own lives



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.



71%

say they **think about their Constitutional rights** often or sometimes

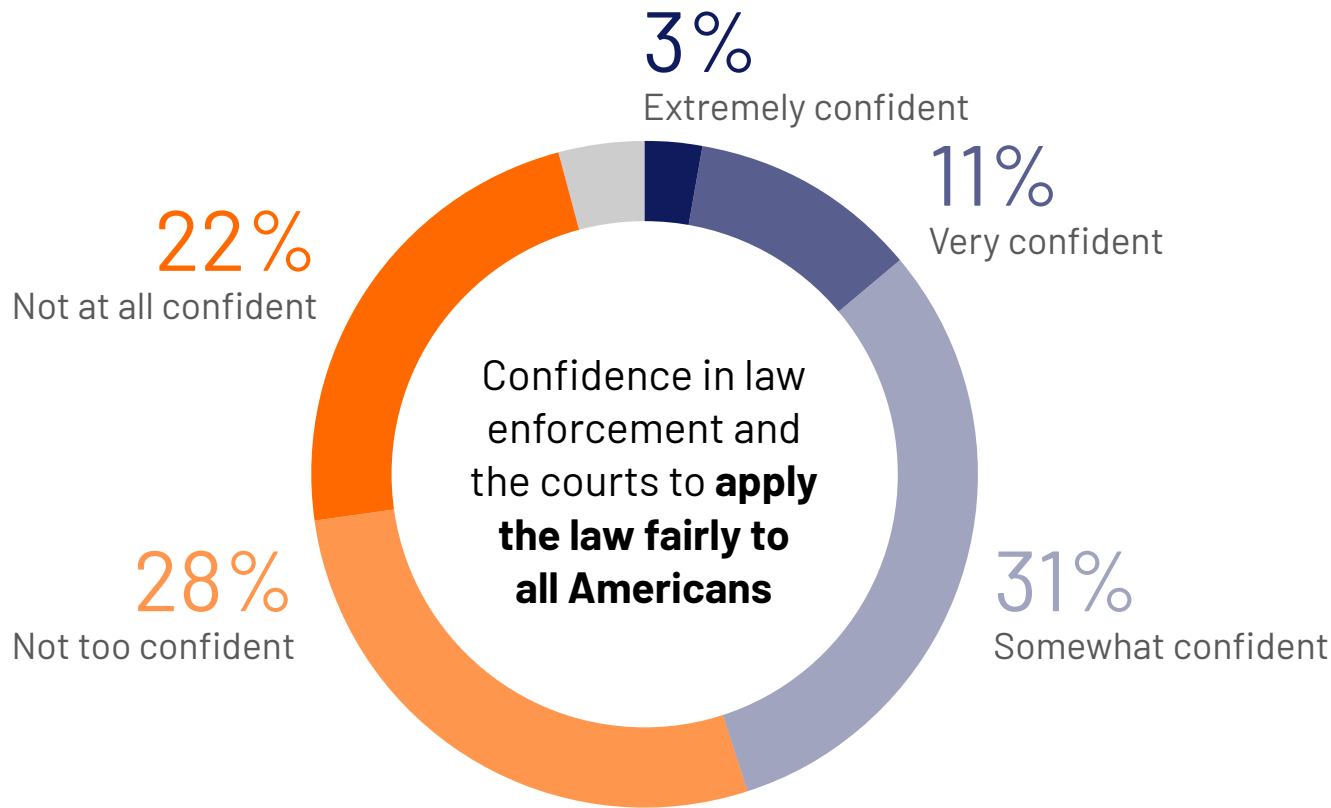


WISH FOR AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY:
"Celebration of American identity and our unique, singular achievement as a nation to enshrine free speech and individual liberty to our citizens."



Americans celebrate constitutional rights, but some have doubts that justice is blind

Half lack confidence that the law is applied equally to all without consideration of wealth and influence



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

American fabric: Freedom of religion, respect for military service, business and prosperity

Americans are united in many of their fundamental attitudes and beliefs



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.



Legacy and Ideals



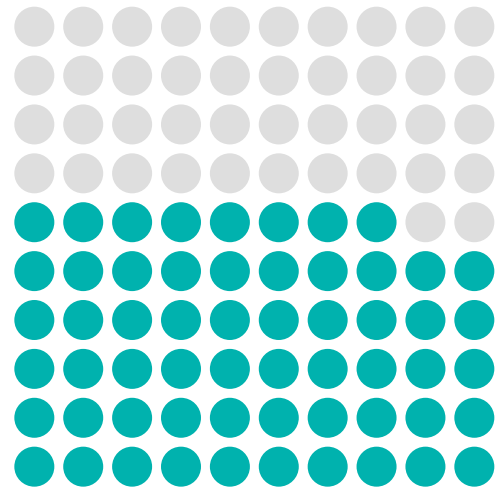
WISH FOR AMERICA'S
250TH BIRTHDAY:

“We need to celebrate our past—both the good and the bad—so we can learn from our mistakes and [so] everyone can see that we can move forward past our history and make it a better place for everyone! Not just a few.”

Historical successes and failures are both important parts of the national conversation about America

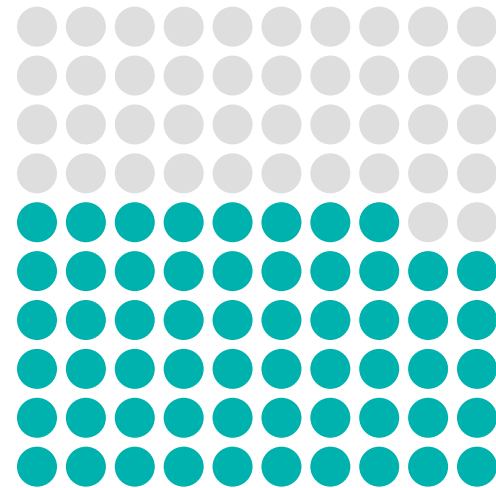
58%

of Americans believe discussions about historical **failures and flaws** are important

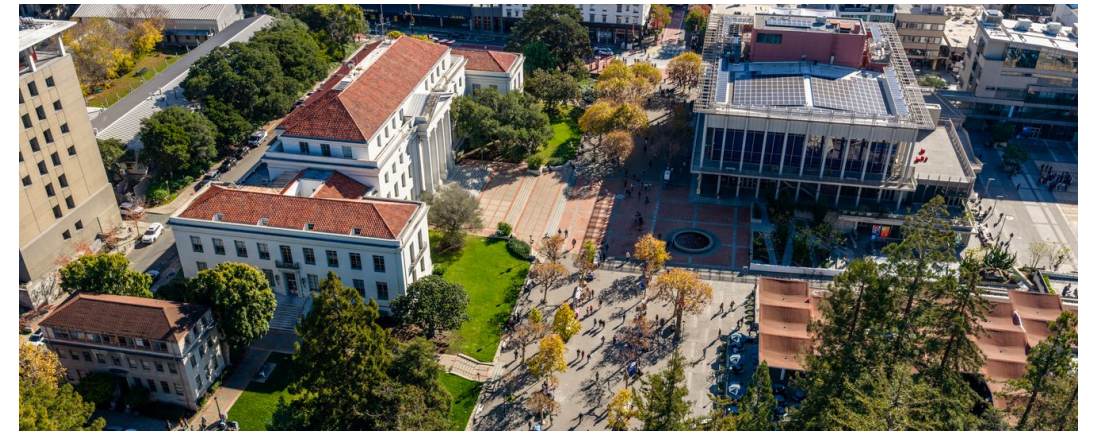


58%

of Americans believe discussions about historical **successes and strengths** are important

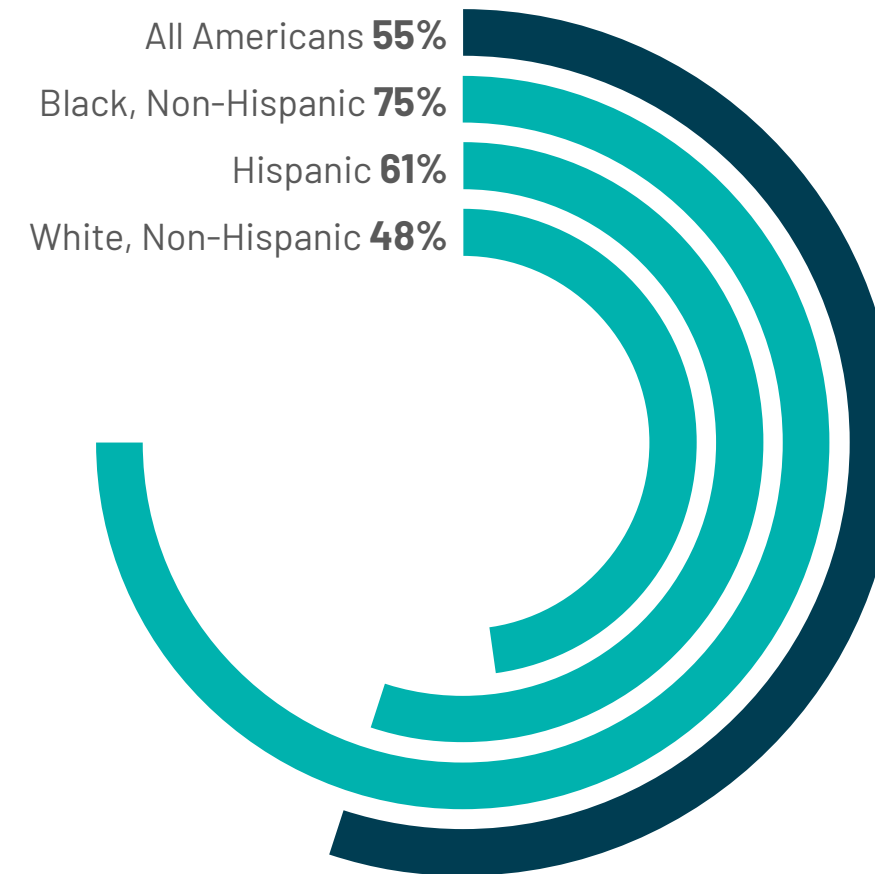


Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.





The legacy of slavery is present today, especially in the outlook of Black Americans



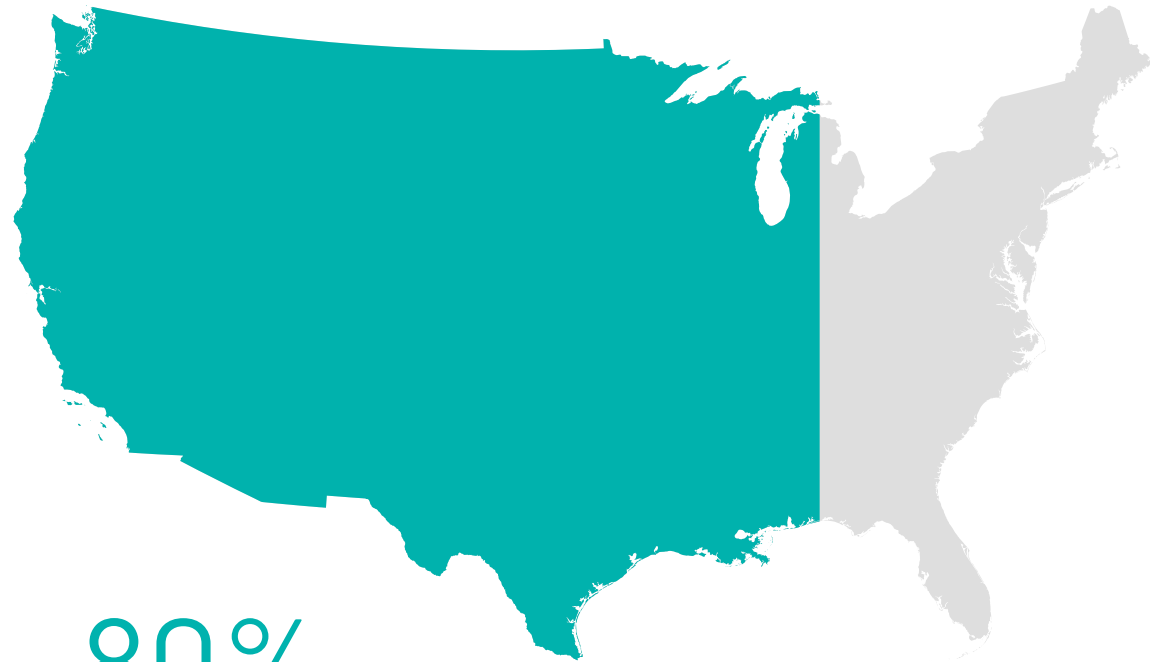
55%

of Americans agree the **legacy of slavery** affects the position of **Black people** in **American society** today quite a bit

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

Immigrants and diversity are integral to the American story

Majorities describe the country as a “nation of immigrants” and say diversity strengthens American society



80%

of Americans agree **the U.S. is a nation of immigrants**

63%

say the diverse population of the country **strengthens American society**



9%

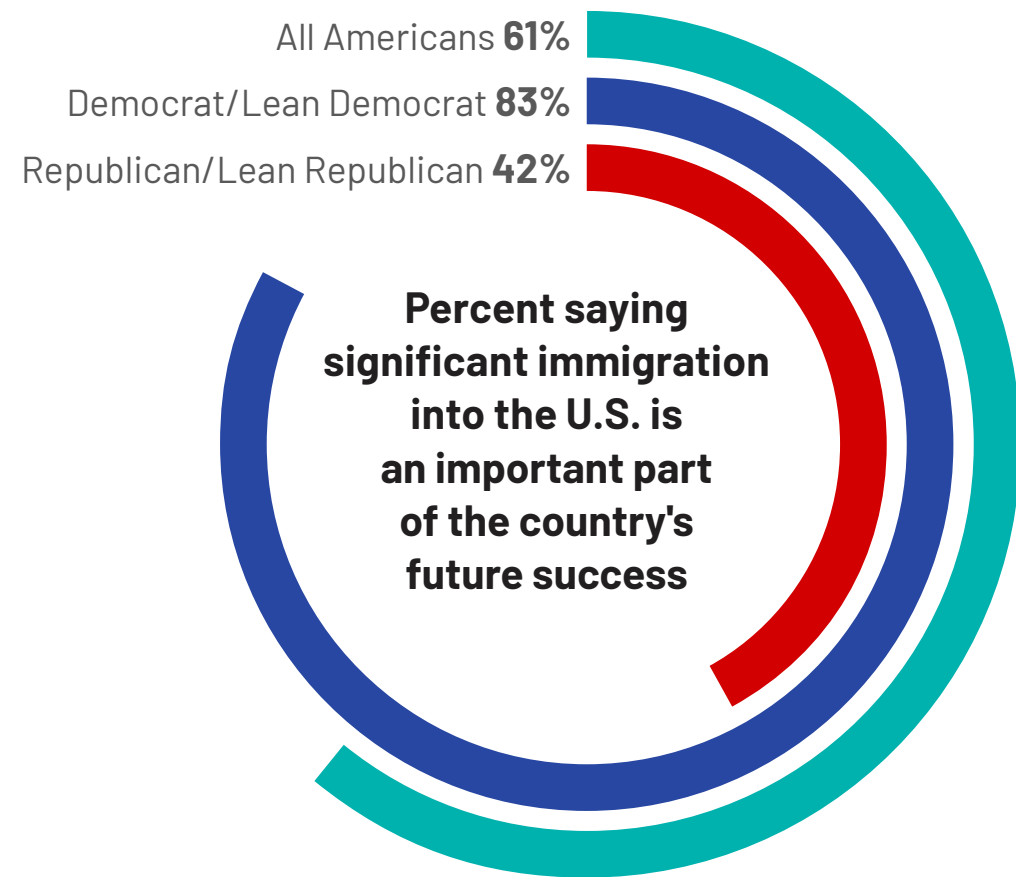
say the diverse population of the country **weakens American society**

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

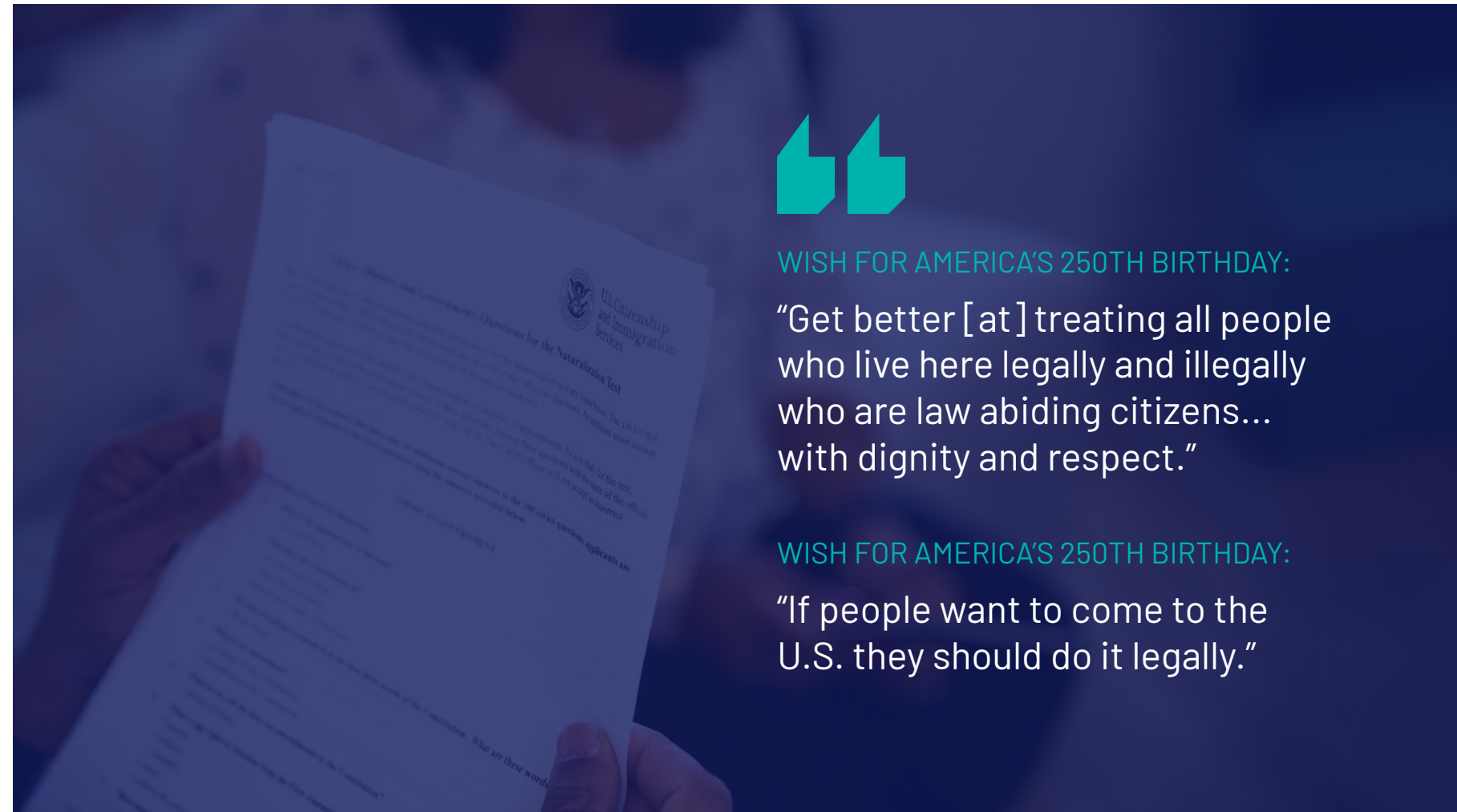


Six in 10 see immigration as an important part of the country's future success

However, views divide along partisan lines, with a range of viewpoints on the issue



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.



WISH FOR AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY:

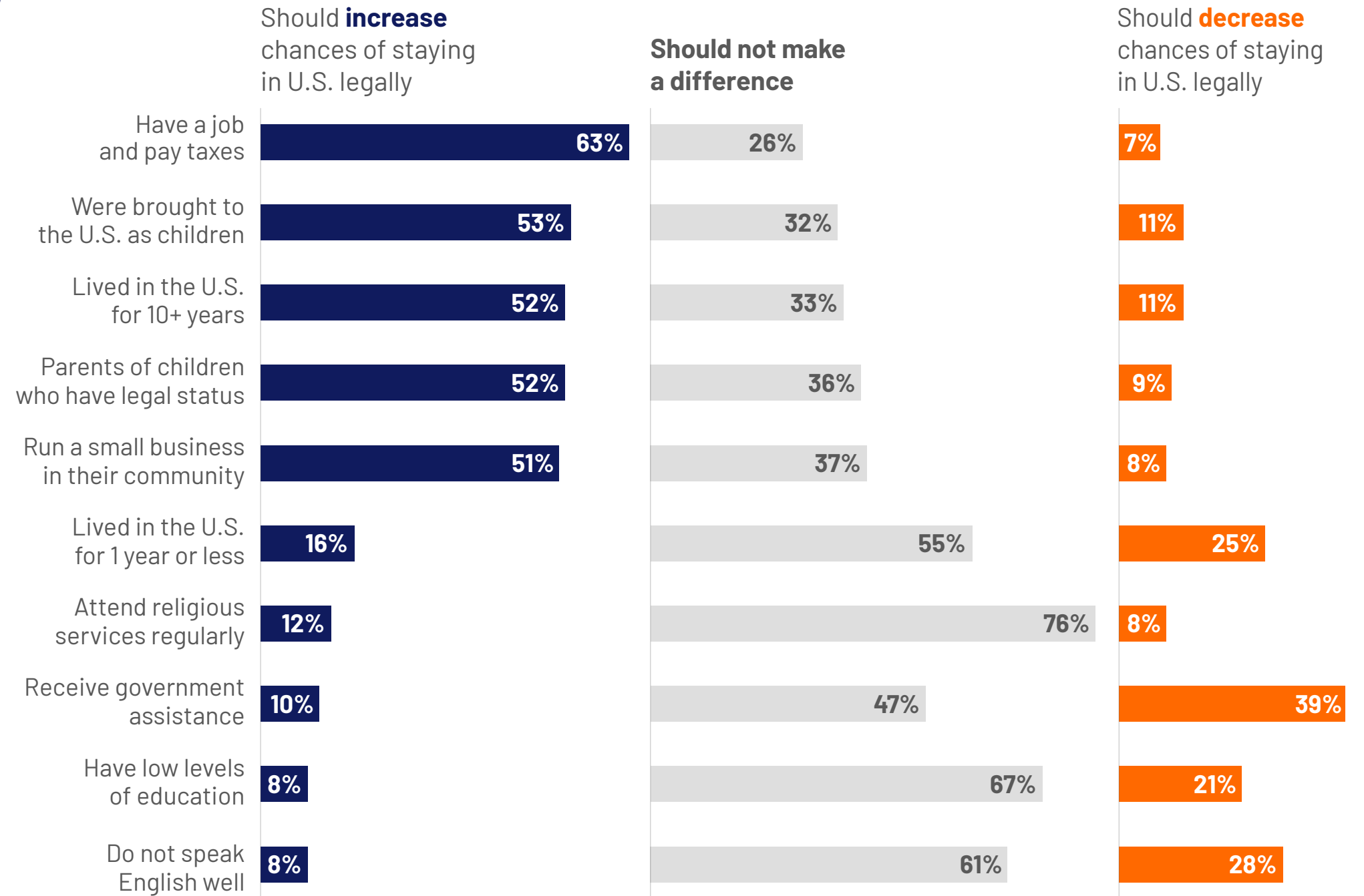
"Get better [at] treating all people who live here legally and illegally who are law abiding citizens... with dignity and respect."

WISH FOR AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY:

"If people want to come to the U.S. they should do it legally."

Debate over how to address undocumented immigrants in U.S.

Some people believe certain characteristics should be considered when deciding whether undocumented immigrants are allowed to stay in the U.S. legally. For each of the following characteristics, do you think each should increase or decrease the chances of undocumented immigrants being allowed to stay in the country legally, or not make a difference either way?



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

The ability to change is seen as vital for U.S. future

Majorities say both reliance on long-standing principles and the ability to change are important to the country's future success—but the ability to change is seen as the more important attribute

How important is each to the future success of the U.S.?

58%

of Americans believe **reliance on long-standing principles** is important



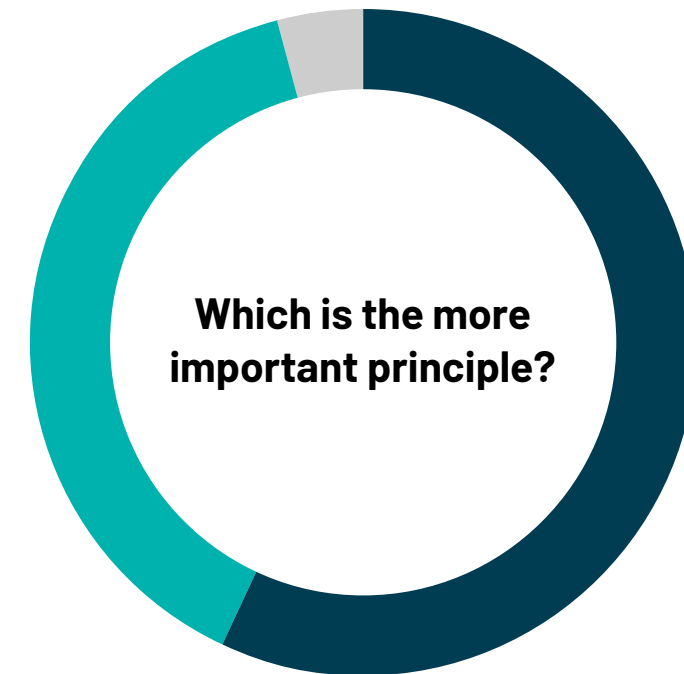
66%

of Americans believe **the ability to change** is important



39%

Reliance on
long-standing
principles



57%

The ability
to change

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

Americans believe there is still more to do to live up to ideals



2 in 3

Americans believe there is still **much more to do for the U.S. to live up to its founding ideals**

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.





The Pursuit of Happiness



WISH FOR AMERICA'S
250TH BIRTHDAY:

"My wish is for the next
generation to inherit
more opportunity."



The American Dream, though elusive, still feels within reach for most

34%
say they have **achieved** the American Dream



39%
say they are **on their way to achieving** the American Dream

23%
say the American Dream is **out of reach** for them

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

Life, liberty, and the *pursuit of happiness*

Most say it is important for the U.S. to provide opportunity for Americans to be prosperous and happy; fewer say it's doing this well

71% say **it is important for the U.S. to provide opportunity** for Americans to live prosperous and happy lives

← 52-point gap →

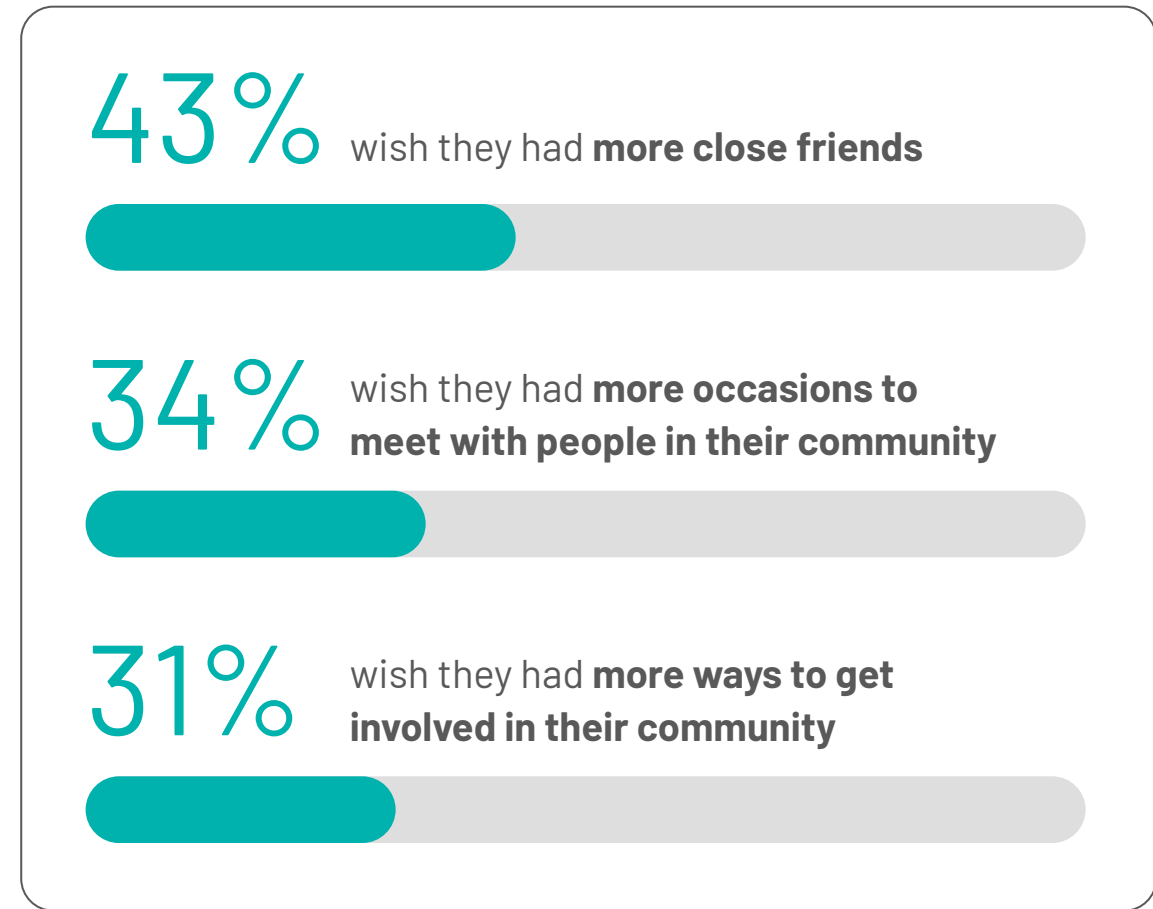
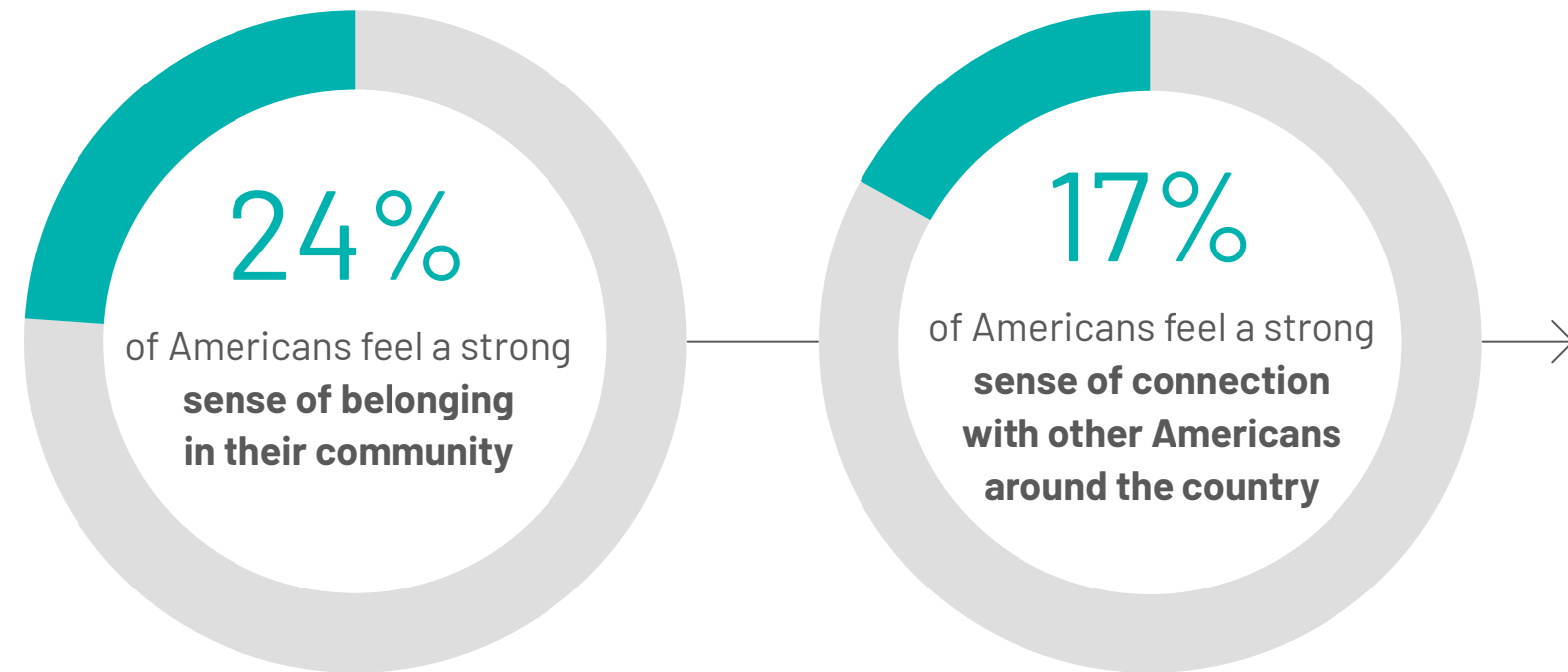
19% say **the U.S. is doing well at providing opportunity** for Americans to live prosperous and happy lives

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.



For Americans, a strong sense of community belonging and national connection can be hard to find

Many wish they had more opportunities to connect and contribute to their communities

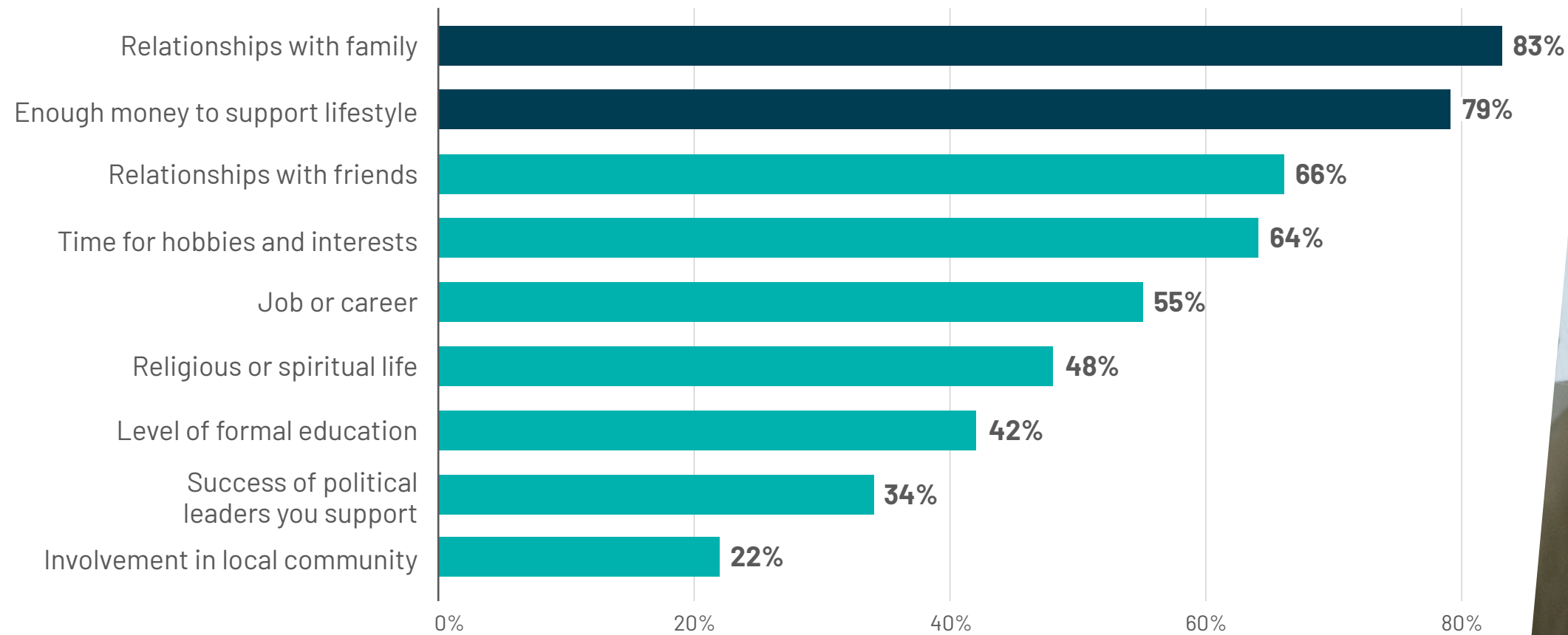


Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

Family ranks first when it comes to American happiness and success

Relationships with family and having enough money to live are what matter most to Americans in defining happiness and success

Percent who say each is important to how they define happiness and success



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.



American Promise

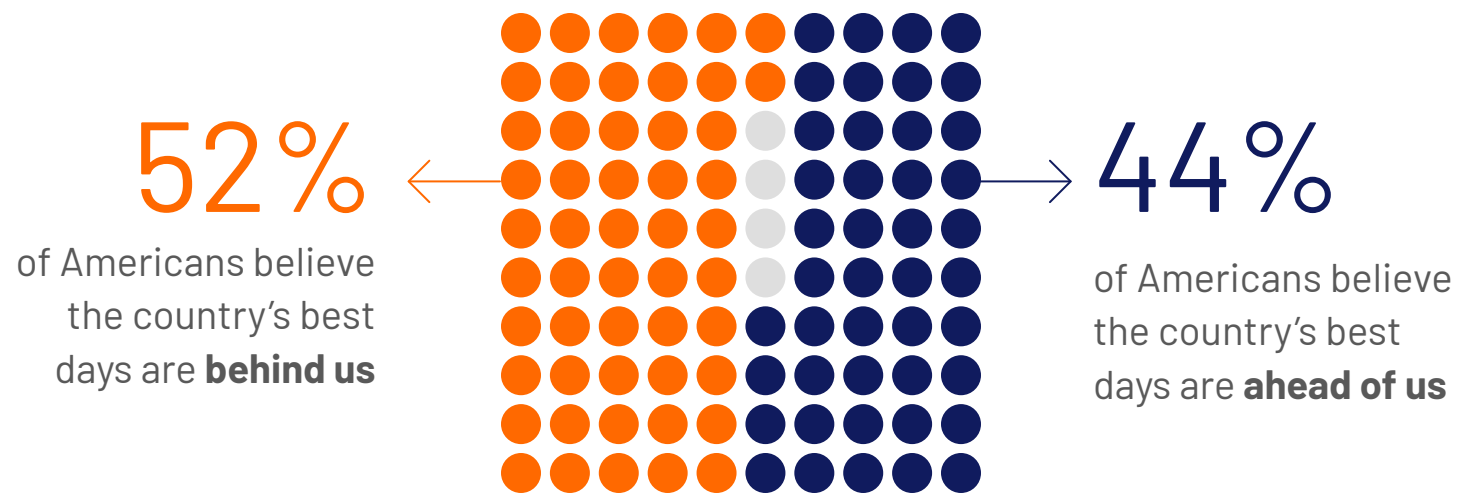


WISH FOR AMERICA'S
250TH BIRTHDAY:

"That the current
population will do
things that provide for
future generations."

Americans express both hope and doubts for the future

Questions about whether the country's best days are ahead of us or behind us



62% of Americans **feel hopeful** about the country's future



77% of Americans **have serious doubts** about the country's future



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

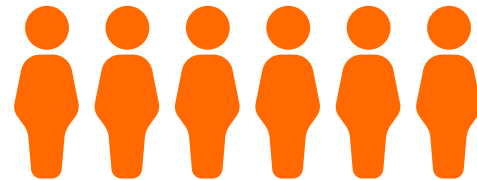
Signs of rifts within the country

Many question whether other people would put the country ahead of their own interests



40%

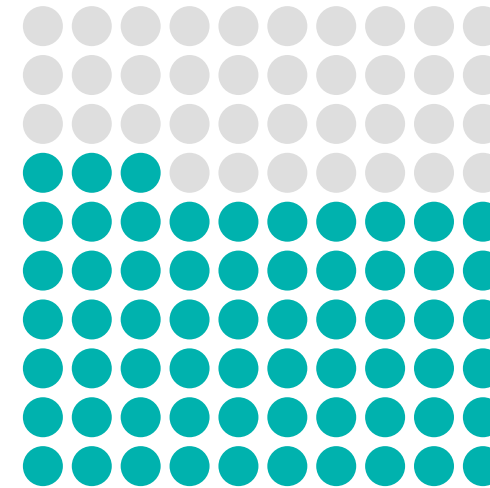
of Americans feel we're divided over a lot of issues, **but there's still more that unites us**



57%

of Americans feel we're divided over a lot of issues, **and we are splitting apart as a country**

and



63%

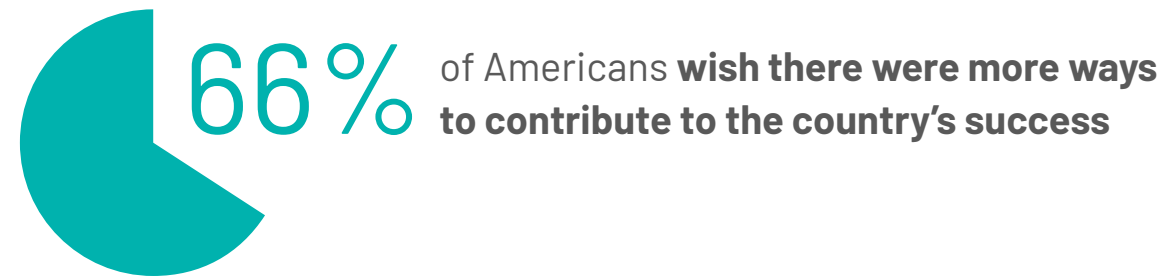
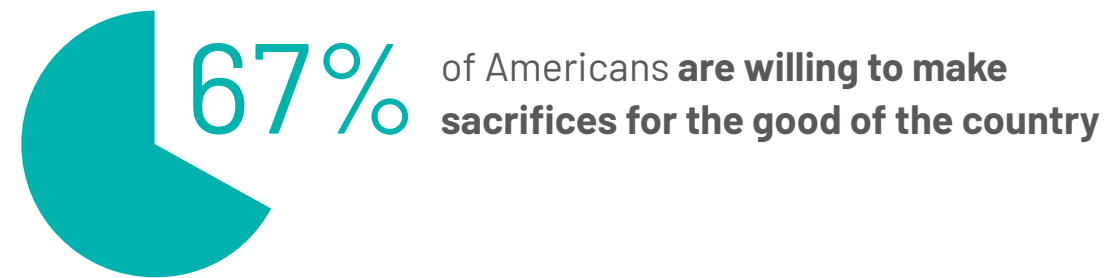
of Americans say **most would put their own interest ahead of doing more to help the country**

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.



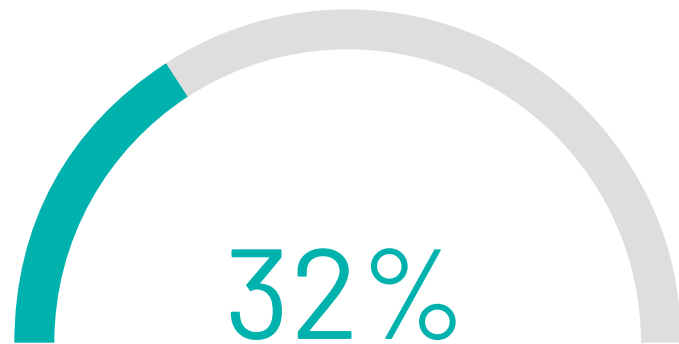
Americans eager to support their country's future

Majorities of Americans say they are willing to make sacrifices for the good of the country and wish there were more ways for them to contribute to national success

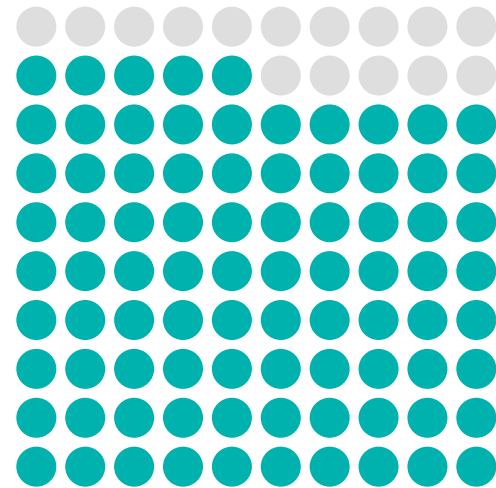


Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

Americans want more from their elected representatives; bedrock belief in respecting election results



of Americans agree that **elected officials care what people like me think**



85%

of Americans believe we should **respect the results of elections, even when their preferred candidate loses**

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.



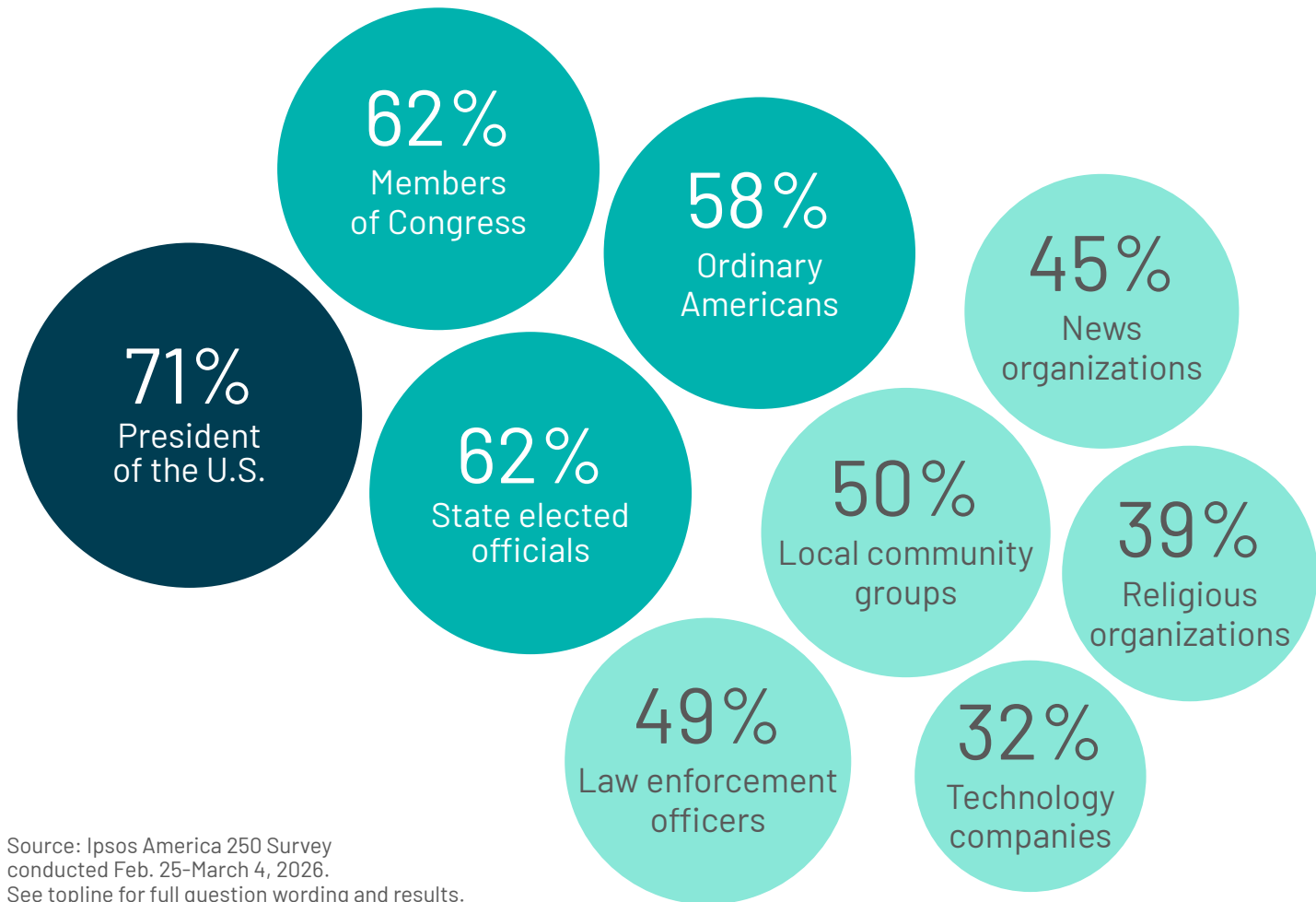
WISH FOR AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY:

"Greater unity in government. No politics, no grandstanding, just doing the most for the people."



Bringing the country together is seen as a shared responsibility

Percent who say each has a great deal/quite a bit of responsibility for bringing the country together and fostering greater unity



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

A moment of national commemoration



WISH FOR AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY:

“Foster deep national unity, bridging divides to create a more inclusive, just society where Constitutional rights and equality are protected for all.”

What would make the nation's 250th birthday most meaningful to you?



52%

Elected leaders of both parties committing to greater cooperation and unity



46%

Honest reflection on our history, both good and bad

Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.

Steadfast belief in the potential of America

When united, majorities see no limit to what we can achieve



88% of Americans agree that **there's an urgent need for greater unity among Americans**



84% of Americans agree that **as Americans, there's no limit to what we can achieve when we are united in a common cause**



Source: Ipsos America 250 Survey conducted Feb. 25-March 4, 2026. See topline for full question wording and results.





Methodology

This Ipsos poll was conducted February 25-March 4, 2026, by Ipsos using the probability-based KnowledgePanel®. This poll is based on a nationally representative probability sample of 4,692 general population adults aged 18 or older.

The study was conducted in English and Spanish. The data were weighted to adjust for gender by age, race and ethnicity, census region, metropolitan status, education, household income, 2024 vote choice and political party identification.

The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 1.48 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, for results based on the entire sample of adults. The margin of sampling error takes into account the design effect, which was 1.07. The margin of sampling error is higher and varies for results based on sub-samples. To view the survey topline, [click here](#).

For more information about this study, please contact Alec Tyson at alec.tyson@ipsos.com.

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