

Annenberg Institutions of Democracy Panel

March 2025 Judicial Study

Topline Report

Overview

The Annenberg Public Policy Center engaged SSRS to conduct the Democracy Study National Panel Wave 34 via a custom-recruited panel of non-institutionalized U.S. citizens aged 18 or older. Data collection was conducted in three replicates from March 6 – 16, 2025 among a sample of 1,363 respondents.

The survey was conducted via web (N=1,305) and telephone (N=58) in English (N=1,349) and Spanish (N=14). Data were weighted to represent the target national population of U.S. adults ages 18 or older. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 3.53 percentage points.

This provides the topline numbers for the items included in the release “Most Americans support checks on presidential power.” All values are rounded to the nearest percent and may not sum to 100%. Values marked with an asterisk (*) are greater than zero but less than 0.5%.

DIRECTION. Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction, or do you think things are seriously off on the wrong track?

Date	Right direction	Wrong track	Refused
March 2025	40	60	*

NECONFUTURE. Looking ahead, do you think that a year from now the nation's economy as a whole will be (worse, about the same, or better / better, about the same, or worse) than it is today?

Date	Much worse	A little worse	About the same	A little better	Much better
March 2025	39	15	10	20	16

TERROR1. Suppose that the Supreme Court issues a ruling the president disagrees with because he believes that the ruling would prevent him from protecting the country against terrorist attacks. Should the president...?

Date	Do what he thinks is in the best interest of the country	Follow the Supreme Court's ruling	Don't know	Refused
March 2025	31	69	*	*

TERROR2. Some people think (our system of govt permits the president to ignore a SC ruling if the president believes it will prevent him from protecting against attacks). Others think (the president must follow SC rulings). Which is supposed to happen?

Date	President ignores Supreme Court ruling	Must follow Supreme Court ruling	Don't know	Refused
March 2025	23	76	*	*

CHECK_1. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: - Courts prevent elected officials from abusing their power

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
March 2025	10	13	19	33	24
Democrat	12	12	12	31	33
Independent	10	8	27	31	24
Republican	9	15	24	37	14

Note: March 2025 line corresponds to the overall result for the total sample.

CHECK_2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: - Courts play a vital role in our system of government

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Refused
March 2025	1	4	11	29	55	*
Democrat	1	2	11	22	64	0
Independent	0	5	13	36	45	0
Republican	0	6	11	36	47	0

CHECK_3. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: - A president should be able to ignore court decisions he believes intrude on his constitutional authority

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Refused
March 2025	51	16	18	11	5	*	*
Democrat	75	12	8	4	2	*	*
Independent	40	13	27	13	7	*	*
Republican	25	21	26	19	8	1	*

CHECK_4. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: - A president should have the right to enact policies without having those policies voted on by Congress.

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Refused
March 2025	41	19	20	15	5	*	*
Democrat	64	15	12	7	3	*	*
Independent	30	21	28	15	5	*	1
Republican	16	23	26	25	9	*	1

CHECK_5. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: - The president should be able to appoint judges of his choosing regardless of whether the U.S. Senate agrees with his selections.

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
March 2025	45	21	16	11	7
Democrat	70	15	8	3	4
Independent	39	24	24	9	4
Republican	18	29	23	20	11

CHECK_6. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement: - A president should have the authority to decide how executive agencies will implement bills passed by Congress.

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
March 2025	27	15	24	24	10	*
Democrat	45	19	19	14	2	*
Independent	25	17	26	24	9	*
Republican	6	9	28	37	20	*

JURY1. Have you been called for jury duty in the past five years

Date	Yes	No	Refused
March 2025	35	65	*

JURY1A. Have you served on a jury in the past five years?

Date	Yes	No	(Missing)
March 2025	4	31	65

Note: 65% said no to JURY1 and thus were not asked this item.

The following nine items comprise the legitimacy scale referenced in the news release under "The positive effects of jury service."

CTLEGIT_1. Thinking about the courts in [PMSTATE], please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements - Courts tend to favor wealthy people over poor people

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Refused
March 2025	5	8	21	32	34	*

For comparable items about the U.S. Supreme Court, see "Trust in U.S. Supreme Court Continues to Sink." *The Annenberg Public Policy Center*, Oct. 2, 2024.
<https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/trust-in-us-supreme-court-continues-to-sink/>

CTLEGIT_2. Thinking about the courts in [PMSTATE], please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements - Courts get too mixed up in politics

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Refused
March 2025	4	9	23	37	27	*

CTLEGIT_3. Thinking about the courts in [PMSTATE], please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements - If the courts started making a lot of rulings that most people in [PMSTATE] disagreed with, it might be better to do away with

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
March 2025	41	21	22	12	5

CTLEGIT_4. Thinking about the courts in [PMSTATE], please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements - The right of courts to decide certain types of controversial issues should be reduced

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Refused
March 2025	12	17	33	27	11	*	*

CTLEGIT_5. Thinking about the courts in [PMSTATE], please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements - The courts ought to be made less independent so that they listen more to what the people want.

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Refused
March 2025	19	16	27	24	13	*

CTLEGIT_6. Thinking about the courts in [PMSTATE], please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements - Judges who consistently make unpopular decisions should be removed from their position as judges.

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
March 2025	13	19	29	26	13

CTLEGIT_7. Thinking about the courts in [PMSTATE], please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements - The courts are legislating from the bench rather than interpreting the law.

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Refused
March 2025	6	13	34	32	14	*	*

CTLEGIT_8. Thinking about the courts in [PMSTATE], please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements - The courts can usually be trusted to make rulings that are right for the people in the state as a whole.

Date	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
March 2025	7	16	28	40	8

CTLEGIT9. Which of the following statements come closer to your belief about the courts in [PMSTATE]?

Date	The courts are fair and objective in their rulings	The courts are sometimes politically motivated in their rulings	Refused
March 2025	27	73	*

The following five items comprise the trait scale referenced in the news release under "The positive effects of jury service."

JTRAIT_1. In general, how corrupt, if at all, do you think judges are? Are they...

Date	Very corrupt	Somewhat corrupt	Not too corrupt	Not at all corrupt	Don't know	Refused
March 2025	8	42	42	8	*	*

JTRAIT_2. In general, how trustworthy, if at all, do you think judges are? Are they...

Date	Very trustworthy	Somewhat trustworthy	Not too trustworthy	Not at all trustworthy	Refused
March 2025	12	66	18	4	*

JTRAIT_3. In general, how biased, if at all, do you think judges are? Are they...

Date	Very biased	Somewhat biased	Not too biased	Not at all biased	Don't know
March 2025	17	57	22	4	*

JTRAIT_4. In general, how fair, if at all, do you think judges are? Are they...

Date	Very fair	Somewhat fair	Not too fair	Not at all fair
March 2025	10	70	16	4

JTRAIT_5. In general, how competent, if at all, do you think judges are? Are they...

Date	Very competent	Somewhat competent	Not too competent	Not at all competent
March 2025	21	64	11	3

TNOM3. Regardless of how a new Supreme Court Justice appointed by President Trump [Bush] might feel personally about controversial issues, how confident are you that the new Justice will make decisions without considering his or her personal views?

Date	Not at all confident	Not too confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident	Don't know	Refused
March 2025	29	34	27	10	*	*
May 2005	14	23	48	11	2	*

SCETHICS3. Now thinking about the ethical practices of Supreme Court justices, in your opinion are the ethical practices of Supreme Court justices (very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad)/ (very bad, somewhat bad, somewhat good, or very good)?

Date	Very good	Somewhat good	Somewhat bad	Very bad	Or are you not sure?	Refused
March 2025	9	29	24	16	21	*
Aug. 2006	18	53	14	5	9	1

SCTIME. In general, has your opinion of the Supreme Court improved, declined, or remained the same in the past 10 years?

Date	Improved	Remained the same	Declined	Refused	Don't know
March 2025	10	39	51	*	0
May 2005	12	56	27	*	4

The following three items comprise the trust scale referenced in the news release under "The positive effects of jury service."

SCTRUST. How much, if at all, do you trust the U.S. Supreme Court to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust	Don't know
March 2025	32	27	27	11	3	41	*

For trend, see "Trust in U.S. Supreme Court Continues to Sink." *The Annenberg Public Policy Center*, Oct. 2, 2024. <https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/trust-in-us-supreme-court-continues-to-sink/>

CTTRUST. How much, if at all, do you trust the courts in [PMSTATE] to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust	Refused
March 2025	21	27	35	14	4	52	*

FCTRUST. How much, if at all, do you trust the other federal courts to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust	Don't know
March 2025	21	36	34	7	1	56	*

EXTRUST. How much, if at all, do you trust the President to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust
March 2025	50	11	12	10	17	40

LGTRUST. How much, if at all, do you trust the U.S. Congress to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust	Refused
March 2025	40	28	24	6	2	32	*

PEWTRUST2. How much, if at all, do you trust the military to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust	Don't know
March 2025	12	16	30	24	18	72	*

PEWTRUST6. How much, if at all, do you trust police officers to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust
March 2025	17	18	29	25	12	66

FBITRUST. How much, if at all, do you trust the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust
March 2025	26	28	29	12	5	46

DOJTRUST. How much, if at all, do you trust the Department of Justice (DOJ) to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust	Don't know
March 2025	31	26	28	10	4	43	*

ICETRUST. How much, if at all, do you trust Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to act in the best interest of people like you?

Date	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal	NET Trust	Don't know	Refused
March 2025	32	19	21	15	13	49	*	*