

LOUISIANA
*Common
Ground*
SURVEY

August 2026



LSU

Reilly Center for
Media & Public Affairs
Manship School of Mass Communication

2026 Louisiana Common Ground Survey

LSU Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs

Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana

LSU Manship School of Mass Communication

LSU Public Policy Research Lab

Released August 2026

The 2026 *Louisiana Common Ground Survey* provides a statewide portrait of political attitudes, civic life, media use, institutional trust and cross-partisan relationships.

The poll is part of the Common Ground Project, a nonpartisan partnership between LSU's Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs and the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana (PAR) that seeks to understand and reduce polarization in Louisiana, while promoting dialogue and civic thought.

Academic research on polarization suggests that traditional measures partly capture people's opinions of something like caricatures, with news and social media amplifying the beliefs of the extreme ends of the political spectrum. Research also points to at least one way to counter the problem: by encouraging more face-to-face interpersonal experiences.

The Common Ground Project builds off that idea, not only studying what it means to communicate in a polarized world but also providing LSU students and Louisiana citizens with real-world opportunities for engaging constructively across ideological viewpoints.

The 2026 *Louisiana Common Ground Survey* is a key component, seeking to capitalize on the strengths of the Reilly Center's academic assets and survey center access and PAR's public policy research and issue area expertise to "take the temperature" of Louisiana's residents through a statewide poll, establishing a benchmark to potentially track changes over time.

The poll was conducted by LSU's Public Policy Research Lab and focused on gauging measures of polarization across the state, compared to national trends, as well as areas of shared values, trust in institutions, civic participation and media use. The survey combined live phone interviews and online responses from 1,046 Louisiana adults. It was conducted between November 29, 2025, and March 2, 2026, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.4%.

The results incorporate statistical weights in the analysis of responses to adjust for likelihood of participation and to ensure each sample represents the geographic and demographic distributions of the adult population of Louisiana.

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Key Findings

- Louisiana residents appear to be equally or slightly less polarized than the rest of the country, especially when it comes to their feelings about their own and the opposing political party. Importantly, Louisiana's polarization score dropped 10 points when people were asked to rate someone of those parties who they know personally.
- Louisiana residents are more interested in politics than Americans as a whole and talk about it more with others.
- In a potential sign of civic health, 70% of those surveyed reported having had a real-life conversation in the last month with someone who has very different political views from their own, while only 8% said they frequently post about politics on social media.
- On other issues suggesting unity across the state, 81% of Louisiana residents polled want to see elected officials working harder to find common ground across the aisle; 74% said they believe the values set forth in the U.S. Constitution are as relevant today as in the past; and 92% agreed that all Americans deserve an equal opportunity to succeed, no matter their race or ethnicity.
- Similar unity can be found on issues regarding political speech, with 91% of Louisiana poll respondents agreeing that free speech rights should apply equally to all groups, regardless of their political beliefs.
- Of those polled in Louisiana, 70% said violence is never justified to achieve political goals, though a concerning 14% said it can sometimes be justified.

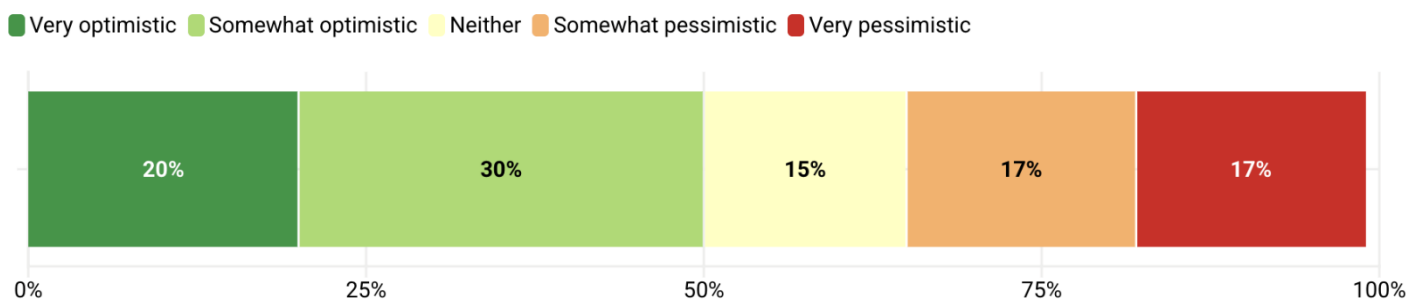
Where possible, the Louisiana survey responses are compared to responses from identical poll questions from national surveys.

Summary of Select Survey Results

Common Ground, Unity and Political Engagement

- Half of the Louisiana residents surveyed said they were at least somewhat optimistic about the country's ability to focus on what unites us, while 34% were either somewhat or very pessimistic. That compares to 47% optimism and 45% pessimism in a [national poll](#) conducted in 2025 for the Ronald Reagan Center on Civility and Democracy.

Optimism About National Unity

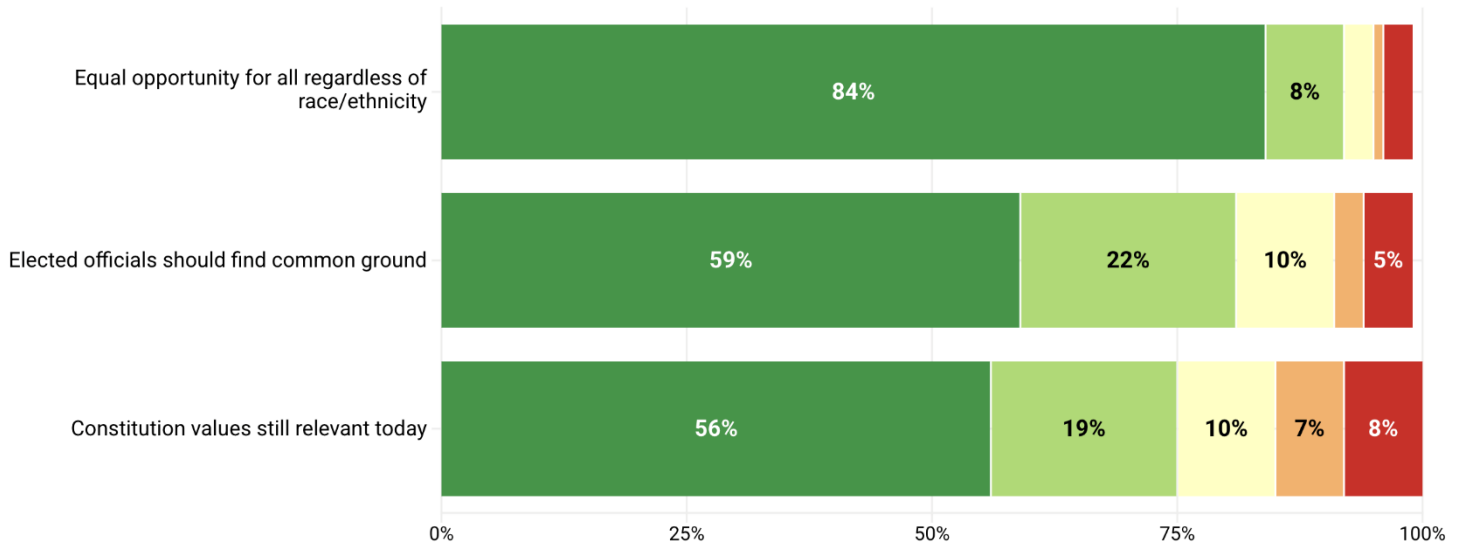


- Louisianans overwhelmingly agreed all Americans deserve an equal opportunity to succeed, no matter their race or ethnicity, with 92% of those surveyed saying they somewhat or strongly agree, almost identical to the 91% agreement in a national 2023 [Public Agenda survey](#).
- 81% of Louisiana residents said they want elected officials to work harder to find common ground with officials from different political parties, while 9% at least somewhat disagreed. That compares to 83% at least somewhat agreeing nationally, and only 4% disagreeing (Reagan Center).

Common Ground Attitude Items

Lower values (green) indicate stronger agreement

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree



- 74% of those surveyed said they somewhat or strongly agreed that they believe the values set forth in the U.S. Constitution are as relevant today as in the past, while 15% at least somewhat disagreed. That compares to 69% at least somewhat agreeing nationally, and 12% disagreeing (Reagan Center).
- In a contrast from national surveys, 48% of Louisianans reported being very or extremely interested in politics. That's compared to only 28% reporting likewise in a 2023 national survey by the [Pew Research Center](#).
- Similarly, 57% of Louisianans reported discussing government and politics with others either a few times a week or nearly every day, compared to 45% reporting likewise nationally (Pew Research).

Polarization

In this study, polarization refers to the gap between people feeling positively toward their own party and negatively toward the other. It captures partisan dislike and distrust rather than disagreement over specific policy issues.

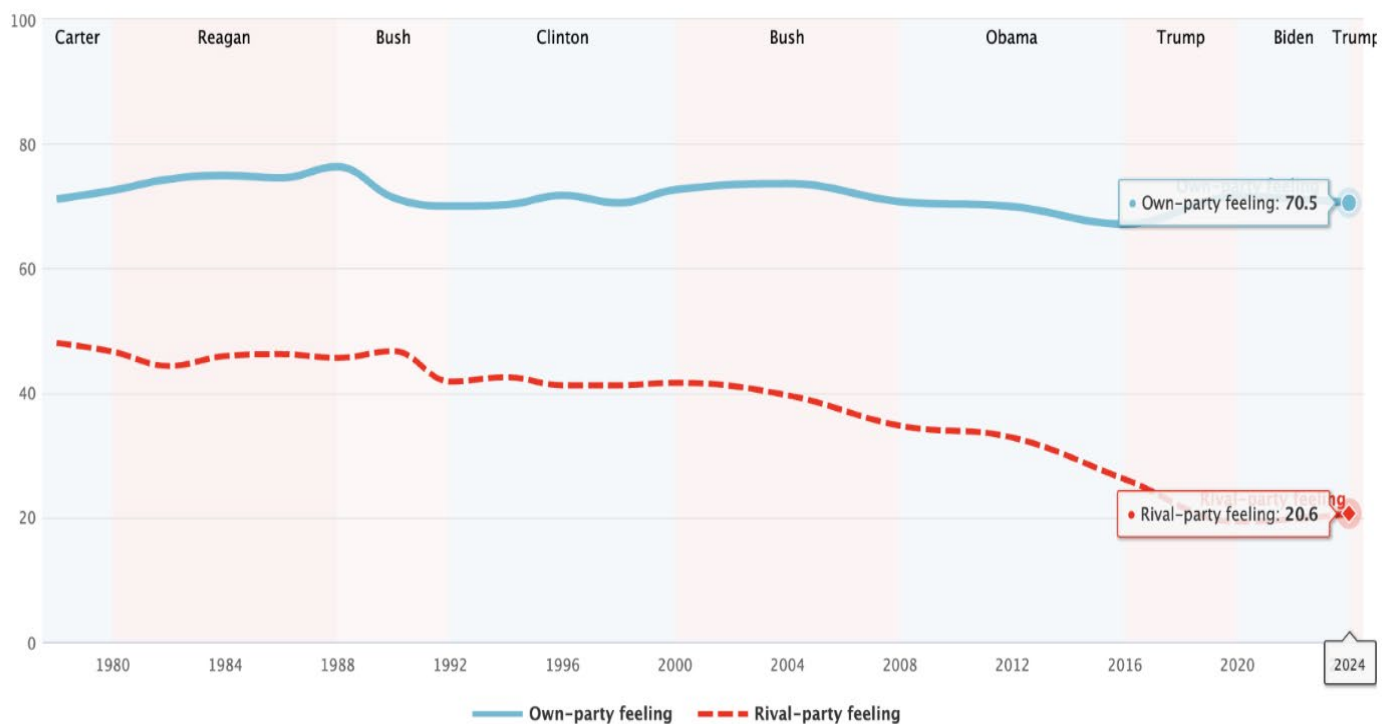
The measurement involves asking survey respondents on a scale of zero to 100 to rate their party (Republican or Democrat) versus the other party, called a feeling thermometer. The gap between feelings about one's own party and the rival party creates the measure of polarization.

A net score of 100 is as polarized as one can get on this measure, while a zero indicates the respondent feels the same about both parties. Pure independents were excluded from the calculation because they have no partisan in-group.

Higher values reflect greater favoritism toward one's own party relative to the other party.

The graph below shows the national polarization gap widening across decades in surveys conducted nationally by the American National Election Studies (ANES), with a 2024 score of 49.9 (calculated from subtracting a 20.6 rival party feeling from a 70.5 own-party feeling).

National Feeling Thermometers and Polarization



Source: ANES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior

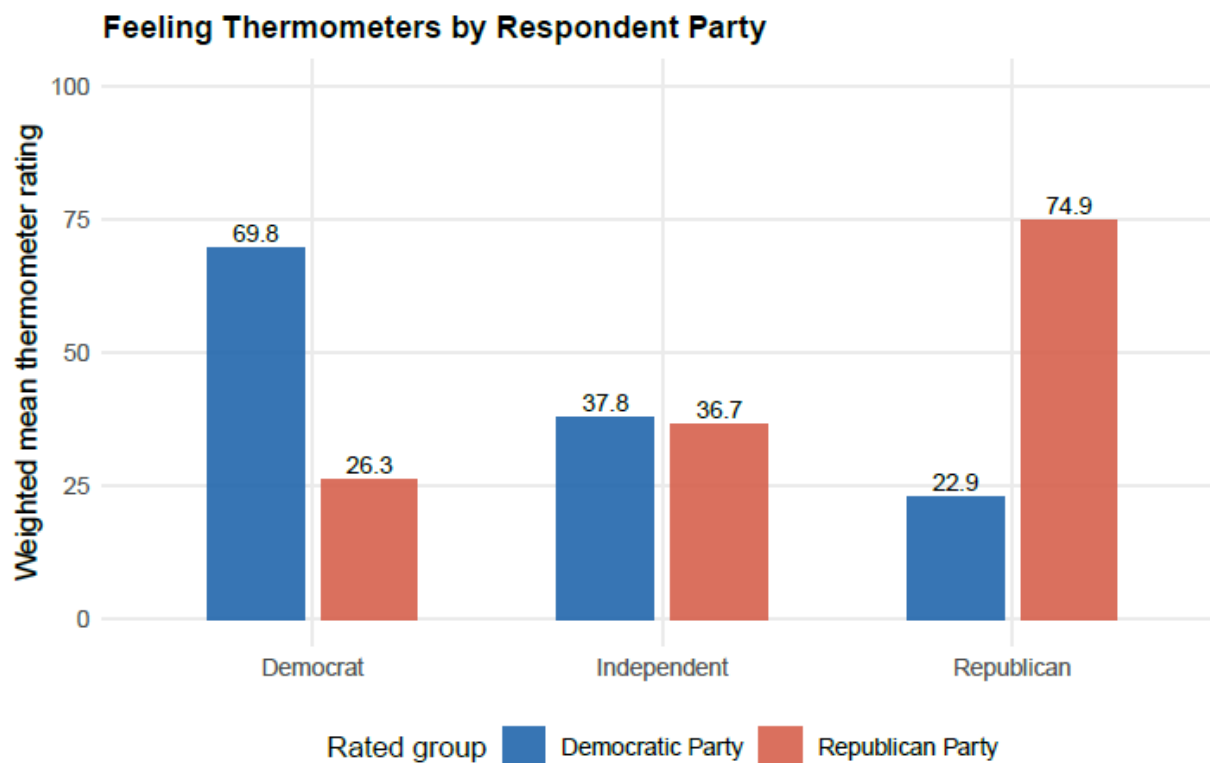
- Similarly, in the Louisiana Common Ground Survey, when self-identified Democrats and Republicans were asked to rate both their own and the rival party on a scale of 0-100, when those responses were combined together, Louisiana's polarization score, or gap, was 48.2, lower than the 49.9 national gap.

Louisiana Feeling Thermometers and Polarization

(partisan answers only)

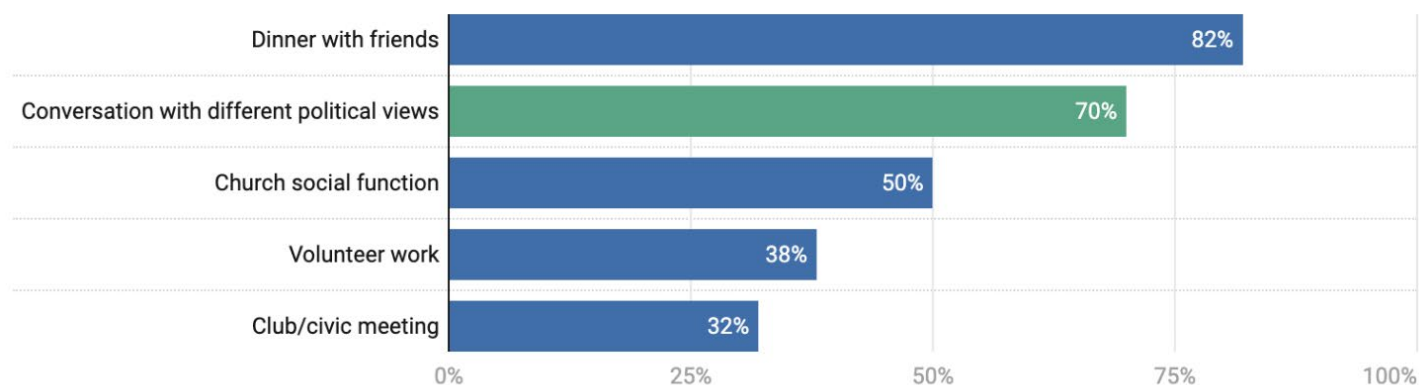
	Party Level	Known Person	Difference
Own Party Evaluation	72.6	78.4	5.8
Rival Party Evaluation	24.4	40.4	16.0
Polarization	48.2	38.0	-10.2

- However, when asked to picture a person from the opposite party that they personally know and rate them on a scale of zero to 100, Louisiana's polarization score fell by more than 10 points, from 48.2 to 38.0.



- Louisiana Republicans feel both more positive about their own party and more negative about the Democratic Party than Louisiana Democrats feel positively about their own party and negatively about Republicans, while independents have about an equally low rating of Democrats and Republicans (37.8 and 36.7 out of 100, respectively).
- Asked how they would feel if their child married someone from the opposite political party, 46% of Louisianans in the survey reported feeling somewhat or very comfortable, though importantly another 29% volunteered that it would not matter to them one way or the other. Only 25% reported feeling somewhat or very uncomfortable.
- 70% of Louisiana residents polled said they had a conversation in the past month with someone who has different political views from their own, compared with only 28% saying they had not.

Civic Participation Over Past Month



- Only 8% of Louisiana survey respondents said they post their political views and observations or share political news on social media daily or multiple times per day while 67% said they do that rarely or never. That matches closely with a 2021 [national survey](#) by the Pew Research Center that showed only 9% of Americans said they posted often about political issues on social media, with 70% saying rarely or never.

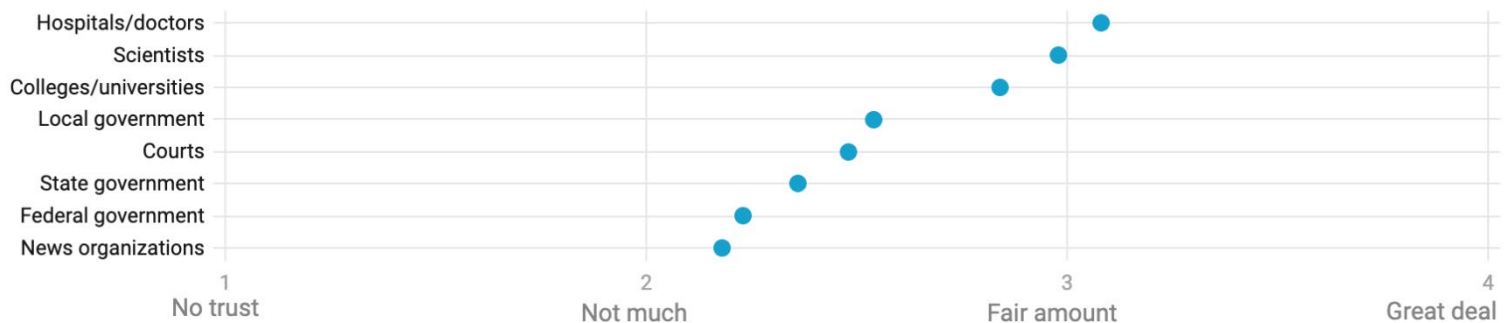
Democratic Norms

- 91% of Louisiana residents said they strongly or somewhat agreed that free speech rights should apply equally to all groups, regardless of their political beliefs, while only 4% disagreed.
- 70% of Louisianans said violence is never justified to achieve political goals, 14% said violence can sometimes be justified and 15% said they weren't sure or preferred not to say. That's compared to responses of 72%, 11% and 16%, respectively, in a 2025 [national survey](#) by YouGov.

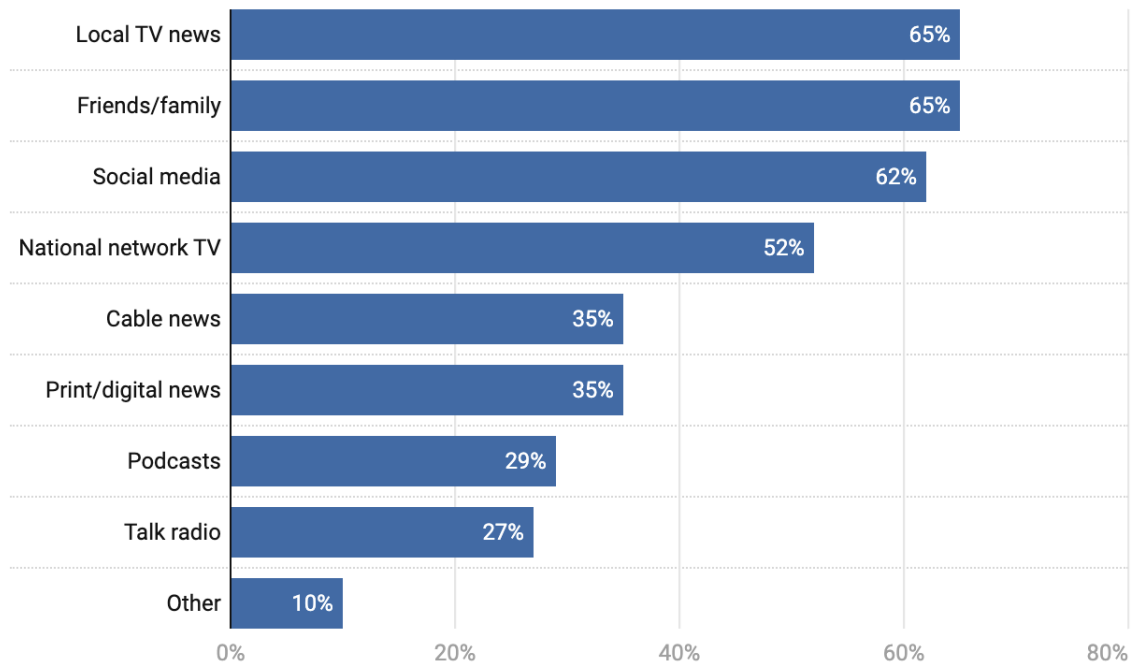
The Common Ground Survey also gauged Louisianans' trust in institutions and sources of news and information, their level of civic participation and their media use. Graphs outlining some of those responses are included below and on the next page.

Institutional Trust Rankings

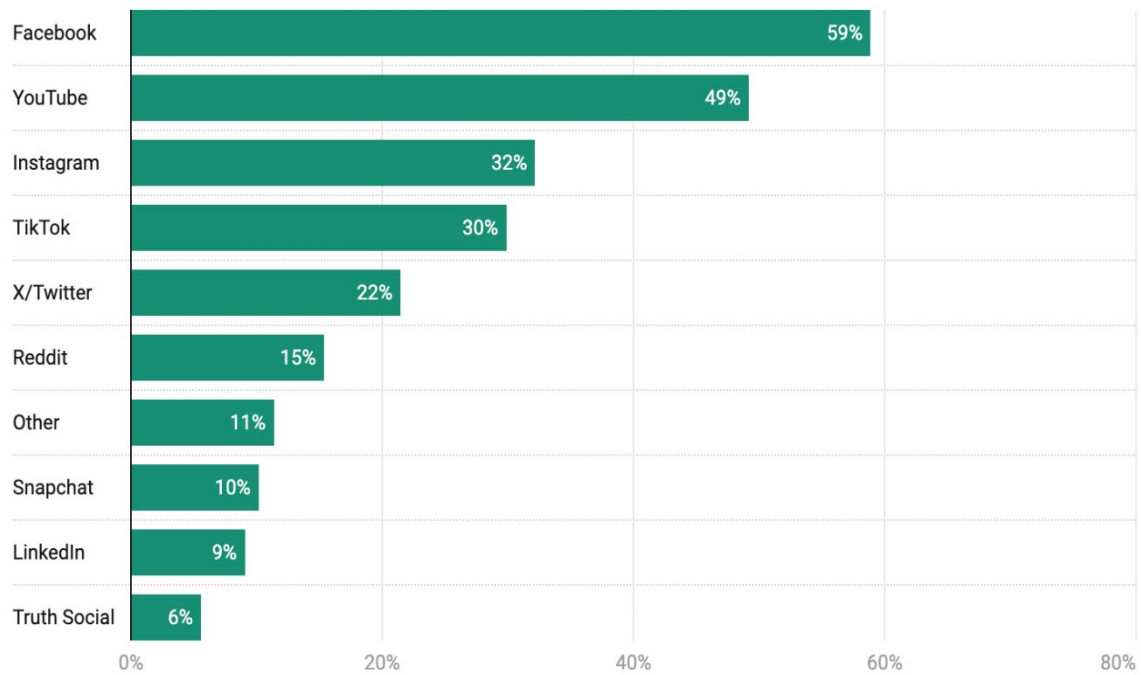
1= No trust at all, 4= A great deal



News Source Use Over Past Month



Social Media Platform Use for News Over Past Month



Polling Methodology

The 2026 Louisiana Common Ground Survey provides a statewide portrait of political attitudes, civic life, media use, institutional trust and cross-partisan relationships. The analysis combines live phone interviews and online conducted between November 29, 2025, and March 2, 2026.

The margin of error is +/- 3.4 %. The sample size included 1,046 people (543 by phone and 503 online).

The results were weighted so the combined sample reflects the adult population of Louisiana. In this survey, the unweighted sample over-represented White and college-educated residents and under-represented residents without a high school diploma. To correct for those imbalances, the sample was weighted to match U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2020–2024 five-year estimates for Louisiana adults 18 and older on four characteristics: sex by age; educational attainment; race and Hispanic origin; and region of the state.

The Common Ground Survey was developed, conducted, analyzed and released through contributions from Melinda Deslatte, Steven Procopio and Alex Tirado at PAR; Michael DiResto, Maria DeRoche Drummond and Lyla McGuire at LSU's Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs; Gail Hagan at LSU's Public Policy Research Lab; and Morgan Badurak, Michael Henderson and Ryan Wang at LSU's Manship School of Mass Communication.

More Information about the Common Ground Project

The Common Ground Project was created in August 2025 by LSU's Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs and the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana (PAR).

Beyond the survey, one Common Ground Project program is Civic Sips, a quarterly discussion series that invites Louisiana citizens to join in casual but serious conversations related to civic responsibility, media literacy, state policy issues and polarization sources and remedies.

A monthly on-campus discussion series, Pizza & Public Affairs, brings LSU students together with a public official, civic leader, public affairs practitioner, journalist or polarization expert, who, in a casual dialogue over lunch, shares with students a successful policy or program outcome achieved by building coalitions and communicating in a way that bridges division.

<https://www.lsu.edu/reillycenter/common-ground-project/index.php>

<https://parlouisiana.org/about-par/common-ground-project/>

Poll Results

Question 1: Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the country's ability to focus on what unites us (more than divides us)?

Very optimistic	19.64%
Somewhat optimistic	29.88%
Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	15.33%
Somewhat pessimistic	16.84%
Very pessimistic	17.34%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.97%

Question 2: Do you agree or disagree with this statement? I want elected officials to work harder to find common ground with officials from different political parties.

Strongly agree	59.19%
Somewhat agree	22.05%
Neither agree nor disagree	9.93%
Somewhat disagree	3.28%
Strongly disagree	5.44%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.11%

Question 3: Do you agree or disagree with this statement? I believe the values set forth in the U.S. Constitution are as relevant today as in the past.

Strongly agree	55.64%
Somewhat agree	18.82%
Neither agree nor disagree	10.17%
Somewhat disagree	6.91%
Strongly disagree	8.02%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.44%

Question 4: Do you agree or disagree with this statement? All Americans deserve an equal opportunity to succeed, no matter their race or ethnicity.

Strongly agree	83.61%
Somewhat agree	7.91%
Neither agree nor disagree	3.41%
Somewhat disagree	1.07%
Strongly disagree	3.38%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.61%

Question 5: How interested would you say you are in politics?

Extremely interested	18.51%
Very interested	29.83%
Somewhat interested	32.30%
Not too interested	11.77%
Not at all interested	7.36%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.24%

Question 6: How often do you discuss government and politics with others?

Nearly every day	26.49%
A few times a week	30.93%
A few times a month	20.08%
Less often	22.09%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.41%

Question 7: Using a scale of 0 to 100—with 0 meaning “very cold or unfavorable” and 100 meaning “very warm or favorable”: How would you rate the Republican Party?

Average of the answers from all respondents: 49.9

Question 8: Using a scale of 0 to 100—with 0 meaning “very cold or unfavorable” and 100 meaning “very warm or favorable”: How would you rate the Democratic Party?”

Average of the answers from all respondents: 43.0

Question 9: Now picture a Democrat/Republican that you personally know, and rate them on a scale of 0-100.

Average of the answers from all respondents about known Democrat: 55.2

Average of the answers from all respondents about known Republican: 58.9

Question 10: How would you feel if your child married someone from the opposite political party?

Very comfortable	22.79%
Somewhat comfortable	22.83%
It would not matter to me (volunteered)	29.36%
Somewhat uncomfortable	16.83%
Very uncomfortable	7.79%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.40%

Question 11: Compared to other Americans, would you say Republicans are...

A lot more open-minded	15.01%
Somewhat more open-minded	20.48%
About the same	22.33%
Somewhat less open-minded	15.30%
A lot less open-minded	24.08%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	2.79%

Question 12: Compared to other Americans, would you say Democrats are...

A lot more open-minded	16.40%
Somewhat more open-minded	22.82%
About the same	23.86%
Somewhat less open-minded	11.65%
A lot less open-minded	23.34%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.92%

Question 13: Compared to other Americans, would you say Democrats are...

A lot more moral	12.25%
Somewhat more moral	15.65%
About the same	34.95%
Somewhat less moral	16.09%
A lot less moral	19.02%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	2.04%

Question 14: Compared to other Americans, would you say Republicans are...

A lot more moral	16.90%
Somewhat more moral	21.85%
About the same	30.99%
Somewhat less moral	12.81%
A lot less moral	15.81%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.63%

Question 15: Free speech rights should apply equally to all groups, regardless of their political beliefs.

Strongly agree	76.78%
Somewhat agree	14.07%
Neither agree nor disagree	5.12%
Somewhat disagree	1.56%
Strongly disagree	2.22%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.26%

Question 16: Do you think it is ever justified for citizens to resort to violence in order to achieve political goals?

Yes, violence can sometimes be justified	14.05%
Not sure	10.04%
Prefer not to say	5.45%
No, violence is never justified	69.57%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.89%

Question 17: How much, if at all, do you trust the federal government in Washington?

A great deal of trust	9.21%
A fair amount of trust	29.28%
Not much trust	37.43%
No trust at all	23.40%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.68%

Question 18: How much, if at all, do you trust the state government?

A great deal of trust	8.22%
A fair amount of trust	36.62%
Not much trust	37.68%
No trust at all	17.09%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.39%

Question 19: How much, if at all, do you trust the local government?

A great deal of trust	11.33%
A fair amount of trust	44.58%
Not much trust	28.78%
No trust at all	13.69%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.63%

Question 20: How much, if at all, do you trust the courts?

A great deal of trust	11.37%
A fair amount of trust	40.18%
Not much trust	31.17%
No trust at all	16.20%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.08%

Question 21: How much, if at all, do you trust news organizations?

A great deal of trust	6.91%
A fair amount of trust	31.13%
Not much trust	33.52%
No trust at all	27.15%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.29%

Question 22: How much, if at all, do you trust hospitals, physicians and other medical providers?

A great deal of trust	29.99%
A fair amount of trust	50.70%
Not much trust	14.40%
No trust at all	4.33%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.59%

Question 23: How much, if at all, do you trust scientists and the scientific community?

A great deal of trust	28.72%
A fair amount of trust	46.34%
Not much trust	16.88%
No trust at all	7.22%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.84%

Question 24: How much, if at all, do you trust colleges and universities?

A great deal of trust	21.42%
A fair amount of trust	48.17%
Not much trust	21.57%
No trust at all	8.01%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.84%

Question 25: In the past month, did you do volunteer work?

Yes	38.36%
No	61.46%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.18%

Question 26: In the past month, did you have dinner with friends?

Yes	81.93%
No	17.98%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.09%

Question 27: In the past month, did you attend a church social function?

Yes	50.09%
No	49.35%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.56%

Question 28: In the past month, did you attend a meeting of a club or civic organization?

Yes	32.46%
No	66.80%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.75%

Question 29: In the past month, did you have a conversation with someone of different political views?

Yes	70.32%
No	27.99%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.69%

Question 30: In the last month, which of the following sources did you use to get news and information? (Select all that apply.)

Local TV news	65.25%
National network TV news	51.80%
Cable news	35.17%
Newspapers (print or digital)	34.62%
Social media	61.76%
Talk radio	27.36%
Friends/family conversations	65.24%
Podcasts	29.19%
Other	9.97%

Question 31: In the last month, did you get news or headlines from any of the following social media sites or apps? (Select all that apply.)

Facebook	58.93%
YouTube	49.15%
X (formerly Twitter)	21.52%
Instagram	32.24%
Snapchat	10.22%
LinkedIn	9.11%
TikTok	29.86%
Reddit	15.43%
Truth Social	5.63%
Other	11.40%

Question 32: How much do you trust the information you get from local news organizations?

A great deal of trust	16.29%
A fair amount of trust	56.91%
Not much trust	19.90%
No trust at all	6.62%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.28%

Question 33: How much trust, if at all, do you have in the information you get from national news organizations?

A great deal of trust	12.01%
A fair amount of trust	44.30%
Not much trust	29.59%
No trust at all	13.22%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.88%

Question 34: How much trust, if at all, do you have in the information you get from elected or public officials?

A great deal of trust	7.81%
A fair amount of trust	37.36%
Not much trust	41.04%
No trust at all	12.61%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.18%

Question 35: How much trust, if at all, do you have in the information you get from social media?

A great deal of trust	6.75%
A fair amount of trust	31.94%
Not much trust	39.51%
No trust at all	19.21%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	2.60%

Question 36: How much trust, if at all, do you have in the information you get from religious leaders?

A great deal of trust	15.01%
A fair amount of trust	42.43%
Not much trust	27.18%
No trust at all	13.15%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	2.23%

Question 37: How often do you post political views and observations or share political news on social media?

Frequently (daily or multiple times per day)	7.87%
Occasionally (a few times per week)	14.16%
Sometimes (about once per week or a few times per month)	10.93%
Rarely (about once per month or less)	21.53%
Never	45.37%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.15%

Party Identification and Ideology of Respondents

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, independent or something else?

Democrat	26.45%
Republican	32.53%
Independent	29.33%
Something else	10.56%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.13%

Would you consider yourself a strong or a not-so-strong [Democrat/Republican]? (Party strength among self-identified Democrats and Republicans)

Strong	70.54%
Not so strong	29.46%

Would you say you lean to the Democratic Party or Republican Party, or would you say you don't lean to either party? (Party leaning among independents and those self-identified as "something else")

Democratic Party	22.58%
Republican Party	25.67%
Independent (don't lean to either party)	51.75%

Seven-point party identification scale, derived from responses

Strong Democrat	17.65%
Not strong Democrat	8.80%
Lean Democrat	9.13%
Pure Independent	20.23%
Lean Republican	10.18%
Not strong Republican	8.51%
Strong Republican	23.80%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.70%

When it comes to politics, would you say you are very liberal, liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, conservative or very conservative?

Very liberal	7.95%
Liberal	10.51%
Somewhat liberal	9.82%
Moderate	27.84%
Somewhat conservative	13.71%
Conservative	14.57%
Very conservative	13.80%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	1.81%

Demographics of Respondents

Gender

Man	48.12%
Woman	51.31%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.57%

Age

18-29 years old	20.22%
30-44 years old	26.38%
45-59 years old	23.02%
60-74 years old	21.83%
75+ years old	8.54%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0%

Education: Which of the following categories best describes your level of education?

Less than 9 th grade	3.33%
9 th to 12 th grade, but no diploma	9.31%
High school graduate or equivalency	23.41%
Some college or vocational school, but no degree	26.10%
Two-year college degree	10.61%
Four-year college degree	15.49%
Graduate or professional degree	11.59%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.16%

Voter Registration: Are you registered to vote?

Yes, registered	83.91%
No, not registered	15.83%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.25%

Community Type: How do you describe the area where you live?

Big city	15.35%
Smaller city	20.39%
Suburban area	24.03%
Small town	21.21%
Rural area	18.84%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.17%

Hispanic/Latino Origin: Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?

Yes	8.72%
No	90.41%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	0.88%

Race: Which of the following best describes you? (Select all that apply.)

White	63.21%
Black or African American	31.88%
Asian	1.54%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.21%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.49%
Some other race	3.68%

Income: What was your total household income last year before taxes?

Under \$10,000	11.40%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.54%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.78%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	10.08%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	11.17%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.27%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7.77%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9.00%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	5.16%
\$200,000 or more	6.08%
Don't know/not sure/didn't answer	6.74%