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**LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS?  
AMERICANS SAY THE U.S. IS FALLING SHORT,  
QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY NATIONAL POLL FINDS;  
NEARLY THREE-QUARTERS CONSIDER THEMSELVES PROUD AMERICANS,  
BUT LEVEL OF PRIDE VARIES BY AGE**

As the United States marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence this July, just over one-third of Americans think the United States is living up to the founding principles of equality and freedom as laid out in that document, there's a rise in the number of Americans who think democracy in the U.S. is not working, but Americans remain steadfast in their belief that democracy will not end in their lifetime. A vast majority of Americans consider themselves proud Americans and half think America's best days are ahead of us. These are just some of the findings in a Quinnipiac (KWIN-uh-pea-ack) University national poll of adults released today.

**LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS**

Sixty-one percent of Americans think the United States today is not living up to the ideal stated in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal and have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, while 35 percent think the United States today is living up to that ideal.

There are differences, some stark, along partisan lines, gender, and race.

Republicans (70 – 27 percent) think the United States today is living up to that ideal, while Democrats (87 – 11 percent) and independents (65 – 32 percent) think the United States today is not living up to that ideal.

Men (54 – 43 percent) and women (68 – 28 percent) think the United States today is not living up to that ideal.

Black Americans (79 – 18 percent), Hispanic Americans (61 – 32 percent), and white Americans (56 – 41 percent) think the United States today is not living up to that ideal.

“Are we who the Founding Fathers hoped we would be? Though there are clear differences among demographic groups, the U.S. is falling short of that hopeful ideal according to a majority of Americans,” said Quinnipiac University Polling Analyst Tim Malloy.

**DEMOCRACY**

Thirty-seven percent of Americans think the system of democracy in the United States is working, while 57 percent think it is not working.

This is a change from Quinnipiac University's March 27, 2024 poll when Americans were divided, as 45 percent thought the system of democracy in the United States was working and 49 percent thought it was not working.

In today's poll, Republicans (65 – 31 percent) think the system of democracy in the United States is working, while Democrats (74 – 23 percent) and independents (61 – 34 percent) think it is not working.

There are also big differences among age groups:

- 18 to 34 year olds: 32 percent say it is working, while 64 percent say it is not working;
- 35 to 49 year olds: 29 percent say it is working, while 61 percent say it is not working;
- 50 to 64 year olds: 45 percent say it is working, while 48 percent say it is not working;
- 65 years of age and over: 46 percent say it is working, while 49 percent say it is not working.

Americans 68 – 21 percent think democracy will not end in their lifetime, with 10 percent not offering an opinion.

This is nearly identical to Quinnipiac University's March 27, 2024 poll.

“It may be battered, but it is not beaten, say Americans about the state of the Democracy. And despite overall concerns, they are confident the bedrock of the country will endure,” added Malloy.

### **FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

Fifty-three percent of Americans say they are optimistic about freedom of speech being protected in the United States, while 41 percent say they are pessimistic about freedom of speech being protected in the United States.

Republicans (75 – 22 percent) and independents (54 – 41 percent) say they are optimistic about freedom of speech being protected in the United States, while Democrats (59 – 35 percent) say they are pessimistic about freedom of speech being protected in the United States.

### **TALKING POLITICS**

Americans are split about how they handle communicating with people they know who hold political views different than their own.

Forty-seven percent of Americans say, when thinking about people they know who hold political views different from their own, they are mostly able to talk with them about their differences; while 49 percent say, when thinking about people they know who hold political views different from their own, they mostly avoid talking with them about their differences.

There is a stark contrast across age groups:

- 18 to 34 year olds: 58 percent say mostly able to talk, while 40 percent say mostly avoid talking;
- 35 to 49 year olds: 51 percent say mostly able to talk, while 44 percent say mostly avoid talking;
- 50 to 64 year olds: 40 percent say mostly able to talk, while 55 percent say mostly avoid talking;
- 65 years of age and over: 38 percent say mostly able to talk, while 56 percent say mostly avoid talking.

## AMERICA'S FUTURE

Half of Americans (50 percent) think America's best days are ahead of us, while 41 percent think America's best days are behind us.

Along party lines, Republicans are most optimistic, with 62 percent thinking that America's best days are ahead of us and 29 percent thinking America's best days are behind us.

Among independents, 50 percent think America's best days are ahead of us, while 44 percent think America's best days are behind us.

Among Democrats, 43 percent think America's best days are ahead of us, while 49 percent think America's best days are behind us.

"Has American exceptionalism peaked, or is the road ahead filled with promise? While Republicans are far more optimistic than Democrats and independents, half of Americans aren't so sure," added Malloy.

## PROUD AMERICANS

Seventy-three percent of Americans consider themselves proud Americans, while 22 percent do not consider themselves proud Americans.

Republicans (97 – 2 percent), independents (71 – 22 percent), and Democrats (61 – 35 percent) consider themselves proud Americans.

There are wide differences among age groups:

- 18 to 34 year olds: 56 percent say yes, while 37 percent say no;
- 35 to 49 year olds: 71 percent say yes, while 23 percent say no;
- 50 to 64 year olds: 80 percent say yes, while 17 percent say no;
- 65 years of age and over: 91 percent say yes, while 7 percent say no.

1,316 adults nationwide were surveyed from May 14th – 18th with a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points, including the design effect.

The Quinnipiac University Poll, directed by Doug Schwartz, Ph.D. since 1994, conducts independent, non-partisan national and state polls on politics and issues. Surveys adhere to industry best practices and are based on probability-based samples using random digit dialing with live interviewers calling landlines and cell phones.

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Email [poll@qu.edu](mailto:poll@qu.edu) or follow us on X [@QuinnipiacPoll](https://twitter.com/QuinnipiacPoll).

34. Do you think the system of democracy in the United States is working, or not?

	ADULTS.....						WHITE.....			
	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	4 YR COLL DEG			
							Yes	No		
Yes/Working	37%	65%	23%	34%	42%	32%	45%	39%		
No	57	31	74	61	51	62	51	56		
DK/NA	7	4	3	5	7	6	4	5		
	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....					
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Blk	Hsp	
Yes/Working	32%	29%	45%	46%	49%	34%	41%	23%	33%	
No	64	61	48	49	45	62	54	66	56	
DK/NA	4	11	6	5	5	5	5	11	11	

35. Do you think democracy in the United States will end in your lifetime, or not?

	ADULTS.....						WHITE.....			
	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	4 YR COLL DEG			
							Yes	No		
Yes/Will end	21%	13%	25%	23%	18%	25%	20%	20%		
No	68	82	65	68	72	65	72	70		
DK/NA	10	5	11	9	10	10	7	10		
	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....					
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Blk	Hsp	
Yes/Will end	23%	24%	23%	15%	16%	23%	20%	26%	22%	
No	68	66	66	76	77	66	71	64	66	
DK/NA	9	10	11	10	7	11	9	10	12	

36. Would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about freedom of speech being protected in the United States?

	ADULTS.....						WHITE.....			
	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	4 YR COLL DEG			
							Yes	No		
Optimistic	53%	75%	35%	54%	56%	51%	49%	60%		
Pessimistic	41	22	59	41	38	43	48	36		
DK/NA	6	4	5	5	6	6	3	4		
	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....					
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Blk	Hsp	
Optimistic	54%	51%	48%	60%	61%	51%	56%	49%	57%	
Pessimistic	40	43	45	36	36	45	41	42	33	
DK/NA	6	6	6	4	3	4	3	9	10	

37. In thinking about people you know who hold political views different than your own, would you say you are mostly able to talk with them about your differences, or would you say you mostly avoid talking with them about your differences?

	ADULTS.....						WHITE.....	
	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	4 YR COLL DEG	
							Yes	No
Talk	47%	49%	40%	51%	52%	42%	41%	45%
Avoid	49	45	58	46	42	55	57	49
DK/NA	4	6	3	3	6	3	3	6

  

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....				
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Blk	Hsp
Talk	58%	51%	40%	38%	53%	35%	43%	46%	59%
Avoid	40	44	55	56	43	61	52	47	39
DK/NA	2	6	5	6	4	5	5	7	2

38. The Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal and have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Do you think the United States today is living up to that ideal, or not?

	ADULTS.....						WHITE.....	
	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	4 YR COLL DEG	
							Yes	No
Yes/Living up to	35%	70%	11%	32%	43%	28%	38%	43%
No	61	27	87	65	54	68	59	54
DK/NA	4	3	1	3	4	4	2	3

  

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....				
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Blk	Hsp
Yes/Living up to	28%	32%	42%	40%	52%	30%	41%	18%	32%
No	69	63	54	57	45	67	56	79	61
DK/NA	3	5	4	3	3	3	3	4	6

39. The United States and the United Kingdom have long had a special relationship as allies. How would you describe the relationship between the U.S. and U.K. today; very strong, somewhat strong, not so strong, or not strong at all?

	ADULTS.....						WHITE.....	
	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	4 YR COLL DEG	
							Yes	No
Very strong	7%	13%	3%	7%	8%	7%	6%	10%
Somewhat strong	41	47	40	43	41	40	48	39
Not so strong	31	26	37	32	29	33	34	31
Not strong at all	9	8	10	8	10	7	7	6
DK/NA	12	6	10	10	11	14	5	13

  

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....				
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom	Wht	Blk	Hsp
Very strong	6%	8%	7%	8%	9%	7%	8%	7%	7%
Somewhat strong	44	48	33	42	44	42	43	29	39
Not so strong	27	25	36	36	30	35	32	33	26
Not strong at all	8	6	12	9	7	6	6	15	9
DK/NA	16	13	12	4	10	10	10	15	19

40. Do you think America's best days are ahead of us or America's best days are behind us?

	ADULTS.....						WHITE.....	
	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	4 YR COLL DEG	
							Yes	No
Best ahead	50%	62%	43%	50%	54%	46%	59%	54%
Best behind	41	29	49	44	37	44	34	38
DK/NA	9	8	8	5	8	9	7	8

  

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Wht	Blk	Hsp
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom			
Best ahead	47%	47%	54%	54%	59%	52%	56%	43%	46%
Best behind	45	46	36	36	34	39	37	48	46
DK/NA	8	7	10	10	7	9	8	8	8

41. Do you consider yourself a proud American, or not?

	ADULTS.....						WHITE.....	
	Tot	Rep	Dem	Ind	Men	Wom	4 YR COLL DEG	
							Yes	No
Yes/Proud	73%	97%	61%	71%	76%	71%	81%	82%
No	22	2	35	22	20	23	17	17
DK/NA	5	1	4	7	4	6	2	1

  

	AGE IN YRS.....				WHITE.....		Wht	Blk	Hsp
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Men	Wom			
Yes/Proud	56%	71%	80%	91%	86%	77%	82%	60%	54%
No	37	23	17	7	13	21	17	32	31
DK/NA	7	6	3	2	1	2	1	7	15