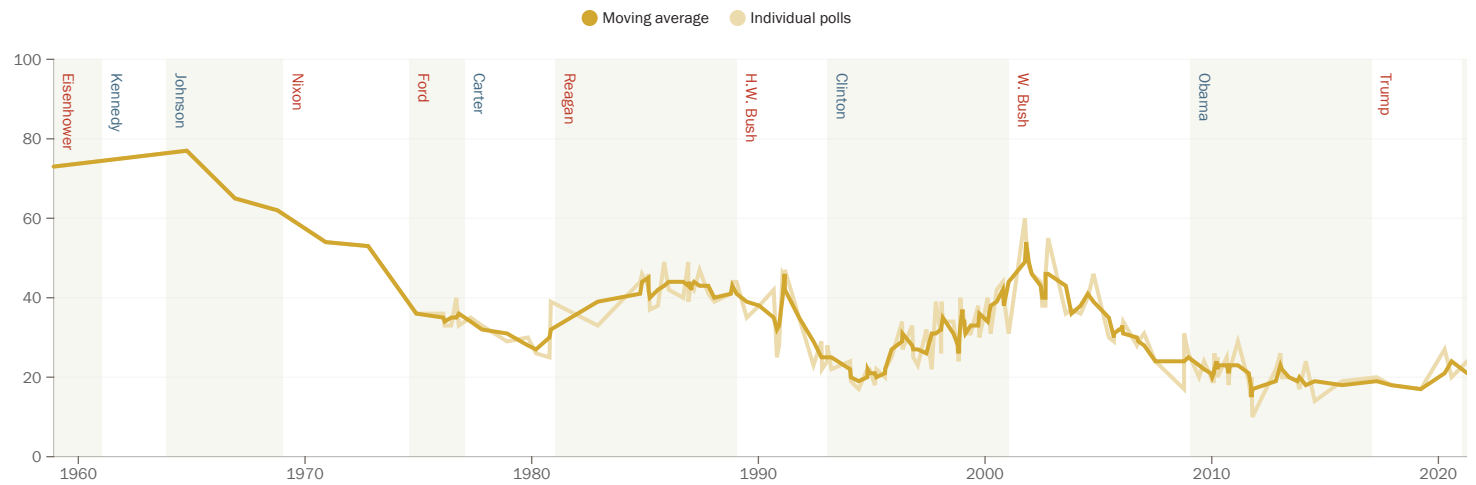


# Public Trust in Government

Public trust in the federal government, which has been low for decades, has returned to near record lows following a modest uptick in 2020 and 2021. Currently, fewer than two-in-ten Americans say they trust the government in Washington to do what is right “just about always” (1%) or “most of the time” (15%). This is among the lowest trust measures in nearly seven decades of polling. Last year, 20% said they trusted the government just about always or most of the time.

## Public trust in government near historic lows

% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time



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## Public trust in government near historic lows

% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time

Date		Individual polls	Moving average
6/11/2023	PEW	16	16
5/01/2022	PEW	20	20
4/11/2021	PEW	24	21
8/2/2020	PEW	20	24
4/12/2020	PEW	27	21
3/25/2019	PEW	17	17
12/04/2017	PEW	18	18
4/11/2017	PEW	20	19
10/04/2015	PEW	19	18
7/20/2014	CNN	14	19
2/26/2014	PEW	24	18
11/15/2013	CBS/NYT	17	20
10/13/2013	PEW	19	19

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When the National Election Study began asking about trust in government in 1958, about three-quarters of Americans trusted the federal government to do the right thing almost always or most of the time. Trust in government began eroding during the 1960s, amid the escalation of the Vietnam War, and

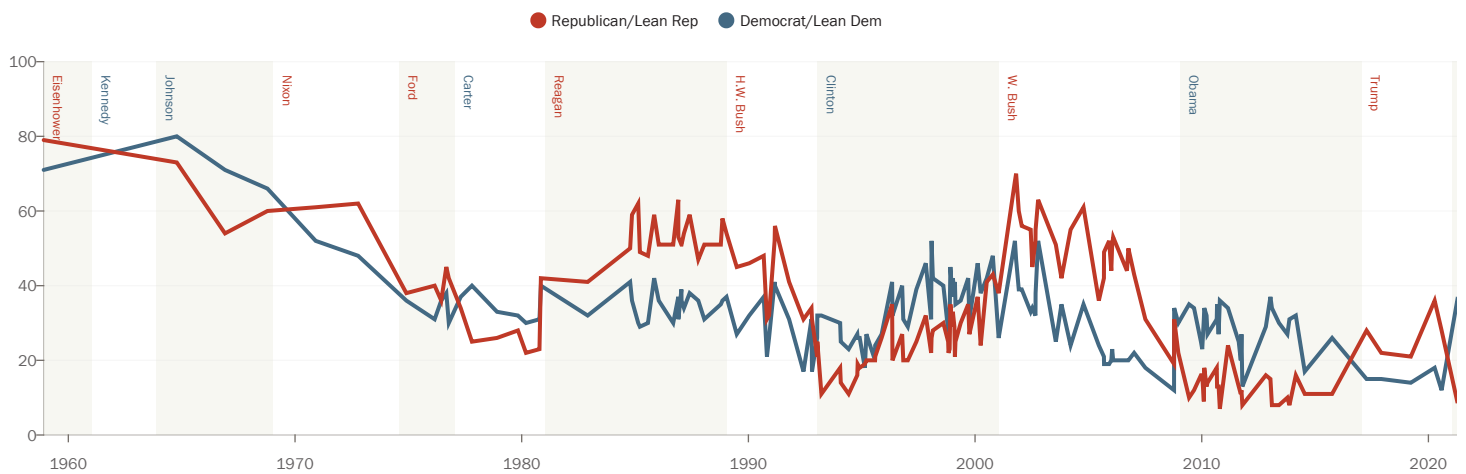
the decline continued in the 1970s with the Watergate scandal and worsening economic struggles. Confidence in government recovered in the mid-1980s before falling again in the mid-1990s. But as the economy grew in the late 1990s, so too did confidence in government. Public trust reached a three-decade high shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks but declined quickly thereafter. Since 2007, the shares saying they can trust the government always or most of the time has not surpassed 30%.

Today, 25% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say they trust the federal government just about always or most of the time, compared with 8% of Republicans and Republican leaners. Democrats report slightly less trust in the federal government today than a year ago; Republicans' views have been relatively unchanged over this period.

Since the 1970s, trust in government has been consistently higher among members of the party that controls the White House than among the opposition party. Republicans have often been more reactive than Democrats to changes in political leadership, with Republicans expressing much lower levels of trust during Democratic presidencies; Democrats' attitudes have tended to be somewhat more consistent, regardless of which party controls the White House. However, the GOP and Democratic shifts in attitudes from the end of Donald Trump's presidency to the start of Joe Biden's were roughly the same magnitude.

### Trust in government higher among members of party that controls presidency

% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time



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### Trust in government higher among members of party that controls presidency

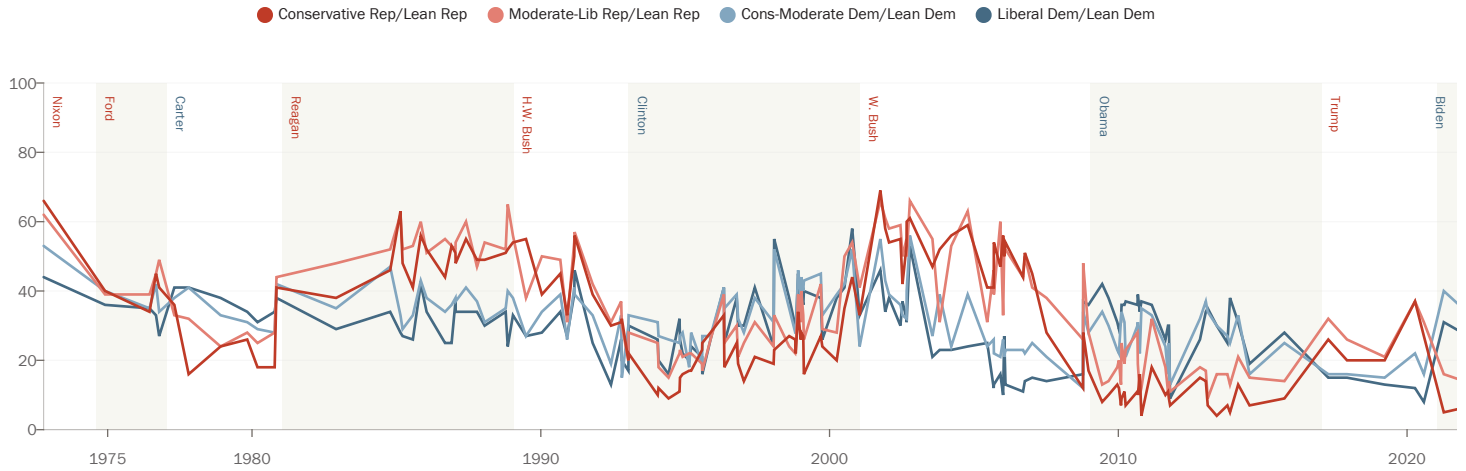
% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time

Date		Democrat/Lean Dem	Republican/Lean Rep
6/11/2023	PEW	25	8
5/1/2022	PEW	29	9
4/11/2021	PEW	36	9
8/2/2020	PEW	12	28
4/12/2020	PEW	18	36
3/25/2019	PEW	14	21
12/04/2017	PEW	15	22
4/11/2017	PEW	15	28
10/04/2015	PEW	26	11
7/20/2014	CNN	17	11
2/26/2014	PEW	32	16
11/15/2013	CBS/NYT	31	8
10/13/2013	PEW	27	10

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## Trust in government by party and ideology

% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time



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## Trust in government by party and ideology

% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time

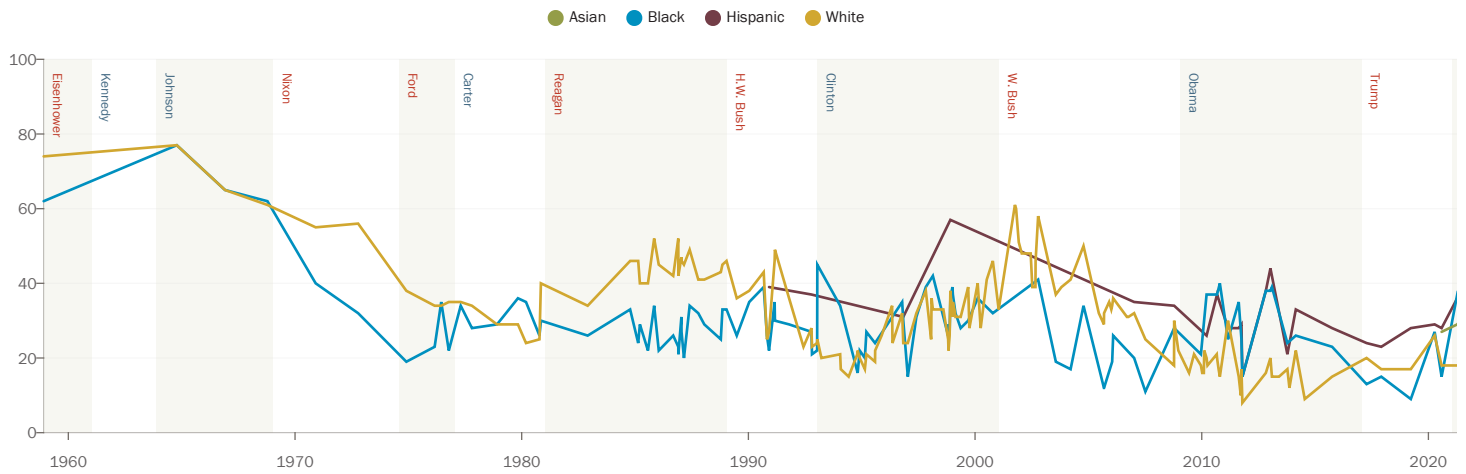
Date		Liberal Dem/Lean Dem	Cons-Moderate Dem/Lean Dem	Moderate-Lib Rep/Lean Rep	Conservative Rep/Lean Rep
6/11/2023	PEW	23	27	14	4
5/1/2022	PEW	26	32	13	7
4/11/2021	PEW	31	40	16	5
8/2/2020	PEW	8	16	31	27
4/12/2020	PEW	12	22	37	37
3/25/2019	PEW	13	15	21	20
12/04/2017	PEW	15	16	26	20
4/11/2017	PEW	15	16	32	26
10/04/2015	PEW	28	25	14	9
7/20/2014	CNN	19	16	15	7
2/26/2014	PEW	31	33	21	13
11/15/2013	CBS/NYT	38	25	13	5
10/13/2013	PEW	25	27	16	7
5/31/2013	CBS/NYT	30	30	16	4
2/06/2013	CBS/NYT	35	34	9	7
1/10/2012	PEW	21	27	17	11

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Among Asian, Hispanic and Black adults, 23%, 23% and 21% respectively say they trust the federal government “most of the time” or “just about always” – higher levels of trust than among White adults (13%). During the last Democratic administration, Black and Hispanic adults similarly expressed more trust in government than White adults. Throughout most recent Republican administrations, White Americans were substantially more likely than Black Americans to express trust in the federal government to do the right thing.

## Trust in government by race and ethnicity

% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time



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## Trust in government by race and ethnicity

% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time

Date		Hispanic	Black	White	Asian
6/11/2023	PEW	23	21	13	23
5/1/2022	PEW	29	24	16	37
4/11/2021	PEW	36	37	18	29
8/2/2020	PEW	28	15	18	27
4/12/2020	PEW	29	27	26	
3/25/2019	PEW	28	9	17	
12/04/2017	PEW	23	15	17	
4/11/2017	PEW	24	13	20	
10/04/2015	PEW	28	23	15	
7/20/2014	CNN			9	
2/26/2014	PEW	33	26	22	
11/15/2013	CBS/NYT			12	
10/13/2013	PEW	21	24	17	
5/31/2013	CBS/NYT			15	
2/06/2013	CBS/NYT		39	15	
1/10/2010	PEW	44	30	30	

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Sources: Pew Research Center, National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN Polls. Data from 2020 and later come from Pew Research Center's online American Trends Panel; prior data from telephone surveys. Question wording can be found [here](#). See [2020 report](#) for more details on [changes in survey mode](#). More information on the Center's polling methodology can be found [here](#). For party and race/ethnicity analysis, selected datasets obtained from searches of the iPOLL Databank provided by the [Roper Center for Public Opinion Research](#). White, Black and Asian American adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.