Executive Summary

Survey of Young Americans’ Attitudes Toward Politics and Public Service
31st Edition

Harvard Public Opinion Project

Presented by:
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Director of Polling
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26 October 2016
Conceived by two Harvard undergraduate students during the winter of 1999, Harvard University’s Institute of Politics Survey of Young Americans’ Attitudes toward Politics and Public Service began in 2000 as a national survey of 18-to 24-year old college undergraduates. Over the last 16 years, this research project has grown in scope and mission, as this report now includes an analysis of 18- to 29-year olds on a broad set of longitudinal and current events issues.

The first survey of N=800 college undergraduates was completed in the Spring of 2000 and all interviews were conducted over the telephone; since that time, 30 subsequent surveys have been released. Over this period, a number of modifications have been made to the scope and methodology in order to ensure that sampling methods most accurately capture the view of the population of young adults in a manner that will be useful to both the Institute of Politics and the broader research and political communities.

- In 2001, the survey was expanded from N=800 to N=1,200 college students in order to capture a more robust sample of the undergraduate population.

- In 2006, the survey expanded to N=2,400 interviews, as we began interviewing members of the 18- to 24-year-old cohort who were not currently attending a four-year college or university. In addition, because of changing uses of technology among younger Americans, in 2006 the survey moved from a telephone poll to a survey that was administered online.

- In 2009, we expanded our scope a third time to include the population of young adults aged 18 to 29. While we will continue to report on the attitudes and opinions of U.S. college students, this change in our research subject was made to allow for better and more direct comparisons to the broader set of election and general public opinion research tracking data, which tends to track the 18- to 29-year-old demographic group. Our fall political tracking surveys will include samples of N=2,000, while the spring semester's research will be more in-depth and include N=3,000 interviews. All of our interviews are conducted in English and Spanish. Using GfK (formerly Knowledge Networks) as our research partner, IOP surveys use RDD and Address-Based Sampling (ABS) frames and are administered online (see Appendix).

The interviewing period for this survey of N=2,150 18- to 29-year olds was October 7 to October 17, 2016. The margin of error for the poll is +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. During the interviewing period, major media stories included coverage of the Donald Trump-Billy Bush Access Hollywood tape, the second Presidential debate, Speaker Paul Ryan abandoning Donald Trump, allegations about sexual misconduct by Donald Trump, a Catholic group demanded that a top Clinton aide resign over leaked emails and Trump began talk that the election is “rigged.”

Harvard IOP Polling Director John Della Volpe supervised the survey group of undergraduates. As always, the Harvard Public Opinion Project would like to thank IOP Director Maggie Williams and Interim Director Bill Delahunt, Interim Executive Director Amy Howell and Mary Cappabianca, Digital Communications Specialist for their insight and support over the course of this and all IOP projects.
10 KEY FINDINGS
01: MAJORITY OF YOUNG AMERICANS FEARFUL ABOUT FUTURE OF AMERICA, DEEP CONCERN ABOUT ATTAINING THE “AMERICAN DREAM”

Overall, would you say you are more hopeful or more fearful about the future of America?

- 51% more fearful, 20% hopeful (all 18-29s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Gender</th>
<th>Fear</th>
<th>Hope</th>
<th>Ratio of Fear to Hope</th>
<th>% Believe Will Be Better Off Financially Than Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Male</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Male</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic Male</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>1.2:1</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5:1</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Female</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>1.8:1</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Female</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>2.8:1</td>
<td>52%</td>
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</table>
“People are not kind anymore and would rather hurt than help. People are selfish and are only looking out for themselves. The leaders running for election are showing the rest of us what the future will look like. I do not want them as role models for the future of America.”

“Because it seems like everything is going to crap for my generation. Crappy jobs, huge debts, inability to start families or have homes.”

“The divide between our two major parties is widening, and there is too much selfishness in politics. Instead of determining what is best for America, the government only cares about what is best for themselves.”

“With the increasing violence seen in terrorism and racial disputes I am concerned with the increase in violence as a result of these issues.”

“Everything seems out of control, and our politicians care more about themselves than doing the right thing for all Americans. We're extremely divided, and very few seem to have any interest in trying to unite us.”

“There is no more voice in Washington for the American people. It is all about money and who can milk the government for more. Our government has lost touch with the American People. Electing a president is not going to fix anything when you have the Senate and the House more crooked then either candidate for the presidency.”

“There is a decent chance the US will break apart within 50 years.”

“This country is “F____(ed)”!"
03: YOUTH TURNOUT TRACKING 2012; FEAR OF AMERICA’S FUTURE HAS POTENTIAL TO BE CATALYST FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

How likely is it that you will vote in the general election for President in November? (% who say “Definitely”)

- All 18-29: 48% to 49%
- 18-24: 47% to 47%
- 25-29: 50% to 52%
- Male: 47% to 51%
- Female: 44% to 45%
- College: 51% to 60%
- Non-College: 38% to 40%
- White: 54% to 53%
- Black: 59%
- Hispanic: 31% to 39%
- Democrats: 39% to 39%
- Republicans: 29% to 36%
- Independents: 31% to 36%

Do you consider yourself to be politically engaged or politically active?

- Fall 2016: No 70%, Yes 28%
- Fall 2012: No 73%, Yes 27%

Has this campaign made you more likely or less likely to engage in the following kinds of political activities? (Among Those Who Say They Are Fearful About Future of America, n=1,087)

- Vote in a general election: More Likely 33%, Less Likely 17%
- Vote in a presidential primary: More Likely 32%, Less Likely 17%
- Follow political news in the media: More Likely 31%, Less Likely 21%
- Have a political discussion or debate with friends: More Likely 30%, Less Likely 25%
- Volunteer for a cause: More Likely 16%, Less Likely 18%
- Post about politics on social media: More Likely 27%
If the election for President were held today and the candidates were: Hillary Clinton, the Democrat, Donald Trump, the Republican, Gary Johnson, the Libertarian, Jill Stein, the Green Party, for whom would you vote? (Among “Likely Voters Only”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>49%</th>
<th>21%</th>
<th>14%</th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>11%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trump</td>
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<td>Johnson</td>
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<td>Stein</td>
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<td>Undecided</td>
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If the election for President were held today and the candidates were: Hillary Clinton, the Democrat and Donald Trump, the Republican, for whom would you vote? (Among “Likely Voters Only”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>61%</th>
<th>54%</th>
<th>59%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trump</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>25%</th>
<th>28%</th>
<th>25%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trump</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>14%</th>
<th>18%</th>
<th>15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trump</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2016 Leader</th>
<th>2012 Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>Clinton +24</td>
<td>Obama +15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>Clinton +32</td>
<td>Obama +26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Clinton +27</td>
<td>Obama +21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-College</td>
<td>Clinton +28</td>
<td>Obama +18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Clinton +82</td>
<td>Obama +90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>Trump +64</td>
<td>Romney +81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Clinton +15</td>
<td>Obama +23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Clinton +19</td>
<td>Obama +16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Clinton +37</td>
<td>Obama +23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Clinton +85</td>
<td>Obama +85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Clinton +85</td>
<td>Obama +85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Clinton +45</td>
<td>Obama +60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>538 “States to Watch”*</td>
<td>Clinton +22</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other States**</td>
<td>Clinton +33</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Harvard IOP Polling Fall 2012, Fall 2016
** October 22, 2016 “States to Watch” http://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2016-election-forecast/?es_cid=mapromo
05: VIEW OF CLINTON IMPROVED SINCE SUMMER, TRUMP UNCHANGED; LIKELY VOTERS TRUST CLINTON MORE ON “MILLENNIAL AGENDA”

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable view of the following individuals? (All 18-29s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>Unfavorable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October LV</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate which candidate you trust more to handle each of the following issues. (Likely Voters)

- **Address inequality**
  - Clinton: 64%
  - Trump: 17%
  - Both the same: 18%

- **Unite the country**
  - Clinton: 60%
  - Trump: 20%
  - Both the same: 19%

- **Deal with immigration**
  - Clinton: 58%
  - Trump: 13%
  - Both the same: 29%

- **Improve the economy**
  - Clinton: 56%
  - Trump: 16%
  - Both the same: 28%

- **Combat spread of terrorism**
  - Clinton: 55%
  - Trump: 18%
  - Both the same: 27%

- **Reduce impact of money in politics**
  - Clinton: 49%
  - Trump: 24%
  - Both the same: 27%
06: NEARLY 40% OF JOHNSON VOTERS LIKELY TO VOTE FOR ANOTHER CANDIDATE; CLINTON VOTERS MOST ENTHUSIASTIC

How likely is it that you might change your mind and vote for another candidate in November? (Likely Voters)

- Likely: 6%
- Not Likely: 94%

How enthusiastic are you about your support of this candidate? (Likely Voters)

- Not Enthusiastic: 28%
- Enthusiastic: 72%

- Not Enthusiastic: 35%
- Enthusiastic: 65%

- Not Enthusiastic: 42%
- Enthusiastic: 58%

- Likely: 5%
- Not Likely: 95%

- Likely: 37%
- Not Likely: 63%

- Likely: 37%
- Not Likely: 63%

- Likely: 65%
- Not Likely: 35%

- Likely: 58%
- Not Likely: 42%
07: 85% OF YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICANS, 72% OF HISPANICS BELIEVE PEOPLE OF THEIR OWN RACIAL BACKGROUND “UNDER ATTACK” IN USA

How much, if at all, do you believe that people of your own racial background are under attack in America? (All 18-29s)

- Black: 62% A lot, 30% A little, 15% Not much, 23% Not at all, 2% Refused
- Hispanic: 45% A lot, 42% A little, 30% Not much, 22% Not at all, 2% Refused
- White: 34% A lot, 30% A little, 30% Not much, 15% Not at all, 2% Refused

How concerned are you about the state of race relations in America today? (All 18-29s)

- Concerned: 34%
- Not very concerned: 44%
- Not at all concerned: 12%
- Very concerned: 7%
- Refused: 7%

If Hillary Clinton were to be elected president, do you expect race relations to improve, worsen, or stay about the same? (All 18-29s)

- Improve: 23%
- Worsen: 22%
- Stay the same: 36%
- Refused: 12%

If Donald Trump were to be elected president, do you expect race relations to improve, worsen, or stay about the same? (All 18-29s)

- Improve: 8%
- Worsen: 62%
- Stay the same: 12%
- Refused: 7%
08: ALTHOUGH MAJORITY DISAGREE, YOUNG AMERICANS WARMING TO IDEA OF GOVERNMENT COLLECTING ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TO AID NATIONAL SECURITY

In the ongoing debate about privacy, what personal information, if any, do you approve of the U.S. government collecting from you to aid national security efforts? (All 18-29s, % who Approve)

- Social network activity
  - Fall 2013: 19%
  - Fall 2016: 30%
- Web browsing history
  - Fall 2013: 15%
  - Fall 2016: 23%
- Email
  - Fall 2013: 14%
  - Fall 2016: 16%
- GPS location
  - Fall 2013: 14%
  - Fall 2016: 13%
- Telephone calls
  - Fall 2013: 13%
  - Fall 2016: 14%
- Text messages
  - Fall 2013: 11%
  - Fall 2016: 14%
- None
  - Fall 2013: 61%
  - Fall 2016: 57%

In the ongoing debate about privacy, what personal information, if any, do you approve of the U.S. government collecting to aid national security efforts? (All 18-29s, % who Approve)

- Social network activity
  - Fall 2013: 19%
  - Fall 2016: 30%
- Web browsing history
  - Fall 2013: 15%
  - Fall 2016: 25%
- Email
  - Fall 2013: 14%
  - Fall 2016: 21%
- GPS location
  - Fall 2013: 14%
  - Fall 2016: 16%
- Telephone calls
  - Fall 2013: 13%
  - Fall 2016: 18%
- Text messages
  - Fall 2013: 15%
  - Fall 2016: 17%
- None
  - Fall 2013: 55%
  - Fall 2016: 51%
09: FACEBOOK THE HOME FOR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT BY YOUNG AMERICANS DURING THE CAMPAIGN

A. On which of the following platforms do you have an account?
B. On which of the following platforms have you engaged on the presidential campaign?

- Facebook: 26% with account, 80% engaged on the campaign
- Instagram: 5% with account, 49% engaged on the campaign
- Snapchat: 5% with account, 46% engaged on the campaign
- Twitter: 10% with account, 38% engaged on the campaign
- Pinterest: 3% with account, 37% engaged on the campaign
- LinkedIn: 3% with account, 28% engaged on the campaign
- Tumblr: 3% with account, 15% engaged on the campaign
10: OBAMA APPROVAL RATING HIGHEST IN 7 YEARS DESPITE ONLY 14% BELIEVING COUNTRY IS HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

In general, do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Obama</th>
<th>Democrats in Congress</th>
<th>Republicans in Congress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 10</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 10</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 11</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<td>Fall 11</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<td>Spring 12</td>
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<td>Fall 12</td>
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<td>Fall 13</td>
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<td>Spring 14</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<td>Fall 14</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 15</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<td>Fall 15</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Spring 16</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 16</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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All in all, do you think things in the nation are...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wrong track</th>
<th>Right direction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Spring 10</td>
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<td>Fall 16</td>
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Harvard’s Institute of Politics (IOP) was established in 1966 as a memorial to President Kennedy and aims to inspire undergraduates to consider careers in politics and public service. The Institute oversees the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum, one of the world’s premier arenas for political speech, discussion, and debate, and runs a fellowship program offering a unique opportunity for political practitioners to spend semesters at Harvard and interact with students. The IOP also offers dozens of paid internships for eight to ten weeks during the summer; a nonpartisan, quarterly journal written and run entirely by undergraduates; and a unique, nationwide survey project of young adults’ political views.

Students are offered wide-ranging opportunities, including internships and conferences intended to provide opportunities for interaction with the people who shape politics and public policy. The IOP does not offer formal courses or degree-granting programs; instead, it provides avenues for practical experience and encourages students to examine critically and think creatively about politics and public issues. For more information, including past results of these polls, please visit us online at www.iop.harvard.edu.

Harvard Institute of Politics team members who worked on this project include:

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