

Brennan Center for Justice Corruption Survey

April 28–May 6, 2026

2,000 U.S. registered voters

Verasight web panel matched to voter file

Margin of error: +/- 2.2 percentage points

Q.1 Would you say things in this country are generally headed in the right direction or off on the wrong track?

| Response | n | Percent |
|-----------------|-------|---------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Right direction | 572 | 29% |
| Wrong track | 1,296 | 65% |
| Don't know | 132 | 7% |

Q.2 How interested would you say you are in politics?

| Response | n | Percent |
|---|--------------|------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Very interested | 851 | 43% |
| Somewhat interested | 808 | 40% |
| Not very interested | 216 | 11% |
| Not at all interested | 124 | 6% |
| Refused | 1 | 0% |
| Total Very/Somewhat interested | 1,659 | 83% |
| Total Not at all/Not very interested | 340 | 17% |

Q.3 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following people and groups?

| Item | Very favorable | Somewhat favorable | Some what unfavorable | Very unfavorable | Unsure | Ref-used | Total Favorable | Total Unfavorable |
|--|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------|----------|-----------------|-------------------|
| President Donald Trump | 22% | 16% | 9% | 51% | 2% | — | 38% | 59% |
| Former President Joe Biden | 13% | 24% | 18% | 42% | 3% | 1% | 37% | 59% |
| Congress | 3% | 17% | 37% | 35% | 7% | 1% | 20% | 72% |
| Your member of the U.S. House of Representatives | 10% | 31% | 22% | 22% | 14% | 1% | 41% | 44% |
| The U.S. Supreme Court | 7% | 31% | 26% | 26% | 9% | 1% | 38% | 52% |

Q.4 How much of a problem would you say corruption is in U.S. politics and government?

| Response | n | Percent |
|--------------------------|-------|---------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| A very big problem | 1,249 | 62% |
| A moderately big problem | 590 | 30% |
| A small problem | 144 | 7% |
| Not a problem at all | 17 | 1% |

Q.5 (Only if Small/Not a problem in Q.4) You indicated that corruption is not a big problem in U.S. politics and government. Which of the following explanations comes closest to your own?

| Response | n | Percent |
|---|-----|---------|
| TOTAL | 162 | 100% |
| Corruption in government is rare and limited to criminal behaviors such as taking bribes and stealing public funds. | 73 | 45% |
| The influence of corporations and wealthy individuals is a normal, acceptable part of the political process. | 38 | 23% |
| Even if government officials engage in questionable behavior, it does not affect how well government serves the public. | 38 | 24% |
| Other | 13 | 8% |

Q.6 How concerned are you about corruption influencing U.S. elected officials?

| Response | n | Percent |
|---|--------------|------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Very concerned | 1,269 | 63% |
| Somewhat concerned | 588 | 29% |
| Not too concerned | 115 | 6% |
| Not at all concerned | 28 | 1% |
| Total Very/Somewhat concerned | 1,857 | 93% |
| Total Not at all/Not too concerned | 143 | 7% |

Q.7 When it comes to corruption in the U.S. government, which of the following views comes closest to your own?

| Response | n | Percent |
|---|-------|---------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Corruption exists, but it is driven by individuals making unethical choices — it is not a structural problem. | 694 | 35% |
| Corruption is deeply embedded in the institutions of the U.S. government — incentives and structures enable corruption broadly. | 1,306 | 65% |

Q.8 Please indicate if the following people and organizations are corrupt.

| Item | Yes, very corrupt | Yes, somewhat corrupt | No, not at all corrupt | Unsure | Refused | Total Yes, corrupt |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------|---------|--------------------|
| President Donald Trump | 50% | 18% | 26% | 6% | — | 68% |
| Former President Joe Biden | 34% | 28% | 29% | 8% | 0% | 63% |
| Congress | 28% | 57% | 6% | 9% | 1% | 85% |
| Your member of the U.S. House of Representatives | 18% | 34% | 24% | 23% | 1% | 52% |
| High-ranking government officials such as cabinet members and agency leaders | 38% | 42% | 8% | 10% | 1% | 81% |
| The U.S. Supreme Court | 22% | 40% | 23% | 15% | 1% | 62% |

Q.9 Please fill in the blank in the following statements.

| Item | All | Most | Some | A few | No | Refused |
|---|-----|------|------|-------|----|---------|
| In the U.S., _____ government officials are unresponsive to their constituents. | 9% | 40% | 43% | 8% | 1% | 0% |
| In the U.S., _____ government officials are focused on personal gain. | 15% | 46% | 32% | 6% | 1% | 0% |
| In the U.S., _____ government officials prioritize the interests of billionaires and big corporations over the interests of the general public. | 14% | 42% | 34% | 8% | 2% | 0% |

Q.10 Which of the following statements comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?

| Response | n | Percent |
|--|-------|---------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| People who run for office or serve in office tend to be corrupt. | 899 | 45% |
| Running for office and serving in government makes people corrupt. | 1,097 | 55% |
| Refused | 3 | 0% |

Q.11 Please indicate if the following are examples of corruption.

| Item | Yes, very corrupt | Yes, somewhat corrupt | No, not an example of corruption | Refused | Total Yes, corrupt |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| Taxpayer dollars spent on programs that do not seem to benefit the public | 60% | 31% | 9% | 1% | 90% |
| Billionaires and big corporations having an easier time having their voices heard by the government than the general public | 59% | 30% | 11% | 1% | 89% |
| Congress not focusing on solving the problems faced by the public | 44% | 35% | 20% | 1% | 79% |
| A government official who is unresponsive to their constituents | 43% | 33% | 23% | 1% | 76% |
| A government official who lies to the public | 68% | 26% | 5% | 1% | 94% |
| A government official who uses their position for personal gain | 82% | 15% | 3% | 1% | 97% |
| A government official who prioritizes the interests of billionaires and big corporations over those of the public | 68% | 26% | 6% | 1% | 94% |
| A government official who bends the rule of law | 60% | 34% | 5% | 1% | 94% |

**Q.12 What would you say are the main causes of corruption in elected officials?
Please select as many as apply.**

| Response | n | Percent |
|---|-------|---------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Campaign contributions from billionaires | 1,280 | 64% |
| Campaign contributions from big corporations | 1,248 | 62% |
| Elected officials prioritizing using their office for personal financial gain | 1,581 | 79% |
| Elected officials wanting more power | 1,303 | 65% |
| Elected officials who stay in office too long | 1,136 | 57% |
| Elected officials being too beholden to special interests | 1,290 | 65% |
| A lack of consequences for officials accused of corruption | 1,572 | 79% |
| Other | 71 | 4% |

Q.13 Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about corruption?

| Item | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | Refused | Total Agree | Total Disagree |
|--|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| Corruption is responsible for big problems that our government has failed to solve in the United States, which could include cost of living, crime, or climate change. | 51% | 37% | 10% | 2% | 0% | 88% | 12% |
| Corruption is responsible for public services not working properly. | 39% | 44% | 14% | 3% | 0% | 83% | 17% |
| Corruption is responsible for policies that benefit billionaires and big corporations at the expense of the American people. | 58% | 31% | 9% | 2% | 0% | 89% | 11% |
| Corruption makes government officials prioritize staying in power over the needs of the public. | 65% | 29% | 4% | 1% | 0% | 95% | 5% |

Q.14 The following are descriptions of elected government officials. For each, please indicate how likely it is that the official described is corrupt.

| Item | Very likely | Somewhat likely | Not too likely | Not at all likely | Refused | Total Very/Somewhat likely | Total Not at all/Not too likely |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| An elected official who accepts campaign money from a local group and works to reduce regulations affecting that group | 47% | 38% | 12% | 2% | 0% | 85% | 14% |
| An elected official who grants a government contract to a company owned by a campaign donor | 58% | 34% | 7% | 1% | 0% | 92% | 8% |
| An elected official who grants a government contract to a company owned by a family member | 68% | 25% | 5% | 2% | 0% | 93% | 7% |
| An elected official who trades stocks of companies affected by their policymaking | 69% | 23% | 6% | 1% | 0% | 92% | 7% |

Q.15 Please indicate if you would support or oppose each of the following proposals.

| Item | Strongly support | Some-what support | Some-what oppose | Strongly oppose | Neither support nor oppose | Ref-used | Total Support | Total Oppose |
|---|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|----------|---------------|--------------|
| A constitutional amendment establishing that the federal and state governments may regulate and limit contributions to campaigns and campaign spending, including by placing greater limits on corporations than on individuals | 52% | 26% | 8% | 4% | 9% | 0% | 79% | 11% |
| A law limiting campaign contributions from government contractors who hold government contracts valued at more than \$1 million | 60% | 22% | 7% | 3% | 8% | 1% | 82% | 10% |
| A law that requires all organizations that spend money on federal campaigns to disclose their major donors and requires online political ads to say who paid for them | 67% | 18% | 6% | 2% | 6% | 1% | 85% | 8% |
| A law that bars presidents from having conflicts of interest and holds them to broadly the same ethics standards as other federal employees | 62% | 21% | 6% | 4% | 7% | 1% | 83% | 10% |
| A law that holds U.S. Supreme Court justices to ethics standards, requires them to disclose their finances, and provides a transparent process for addressing ethics violations | 63% | 22% | 6% | 3% | 6% | 1% | 84% | 9% |
| A new government ethics agency that enforces key federal anticorruption standards. It would be empowered to issue binding rules and sue violators in court | 52% | 28% | 7% | 5% | 8% | 1% | 81% | 11% |
| A law that empowers Congress and the states to sue the president and federal officials for violating constitutional provisions that bar them from accepting gifts from foreign countries and U.S. states | 49% | 22% | 10% | 8% | 11% | 1% | 71% | 18% |
| A constitutional amendment limiting the president's pardon power, including giving Congress the power to reverse certain pardons | 45% | 24% | 12% | 9% | 9% | 0% | 69% | 21% |
| A law prohibiting members of Congress and their senior staff from trading stocks and similar assets, including cryptocurrencies | 65% | 17% | 7% | 3% | 8% | 1% | 81% | 10% |

Q.16 Thinking back to the 2024 general election for president, who did you vote for?

| Response | n | Percent |
|---|----------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Democrat Kamala Harris | 858 | 43% |
| Republican Donald Trump | 821 | 41% |
| Someone else | 86 | 4% |
| Prefer not to say | 43 | 2% |
| I did not vote in the 2024 general election for president | 192 | 10% |

Q.17 Are you:

| Response | n | Percent |
|---|----------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| A man | 912 | 46% |
| A woman | 1,071 | 54% |
| Neither/nonbinary/prefer to self-describe | 18 | 1% |

Q.18 Age ranges of participants.

| Response | n | Percent |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| 18 to 34 | 365 | 18% |
| 35 to 49 | 518 | 26% |
| 50 to 64 | 543 | 27% |
| 65+ | 572 | 29% |
| Prefer not to say | 0 | 0% |
| Refused | 1 | 0% |
| Total 18 to 49 | 883 | 44% |
| Total 50+ | 1,116 | 56% |

| Response | n | Percent |
|-------------------|-------|---------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| 18 to 29 | 260 | 13% |
| 30 to 39 | 250 | 13% |
| 40 to 49 | 374 | 19% |
| 50 to 59 | 366 | 18% |
| 60 to 69 | 433 | 22% |
| 70 to 79 | 282 | 14% |
| 80 to 89 | 35 | 2% |
| 90+ | 0 | 0% |
| Prefer not to say | 0 | 0% |
| Refused | 1 | 0% |

Q.19 In order to make sure we get a representative sample of responses, please indicate your race or ethnicity. You may choose one or more races.

| Response | n | Percent |
|--|----------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| African American/Black | 266 | 13% |
| Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander | 110 | 6% |
| Latino/Hispanic | 224 | 11% |
| Native American/American Indian/Indigenous | 64 | 3% |
| Middle Eastern/North African | 15 | 1% |
| White | 1,463 | 73% |
| Other | 19 | 1% |
| Prefer not to say | 26 | 1% |

Q.20 What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

| Response | n | Percent |
|---|----------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Less than high school degree | 38 | 2% |
| High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent, including GED) | 513 | 26% |
| Some college but no degree | 399 | 20% |
| Associate degree in college (2-year) | 241 | 12% |
| Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) | 529 | 26% |
| Graduate degree | 280 | 14% |

Q.21 How would you describe the community where you currently live?

| Response | n | Percent |
|-----------------|----------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Urban | 496 | 25% |
| Suburban | 1,062 | 53% |
| Rural | 441 | 22% |
| Refused | 1 | 0% |

Q.22 Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or what?

| Response | n | Percent |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Strong Democrat | 466 | 23% |
| Weak Democrat | 206 | 10% |
| Independent, lean Democrat | 185 | 9% |
| Independent | 133 | 7% |
| Independent, lean Republican | 215 | 11% |
| Weak Republican | 252 | 13% |
| Strong Republican | 439 | 22% |
| Other party | 41 | 2% |
| Don't know/No preference | 64 | 3% |

| Response | n | Percent |
|--|------------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Total Strong/Weak Democrat | 671 | 34% |
| Total Independent/Independent Lean Democrat/Independent Lean Republican | 534 | 27% |
| Total Strong/Weak Republican | 690 | 35% |
| Other party/Don't know/No preference | 105 | 5% |

| Response | n | Percent |
|--|------------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Total Strong/Weak/Lean Democrat | 857 | 43% |
| Total Independent | 133 | 7% |
| Total Strong/Weak/Lean Republican | 905 | 45% |
| Other party/Don't know/No preference | 105 | 5% |

Q.25 When it comes to politics, do you generally think of yourself as:

| Response | n | Percent |
|---------------------------|------------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Very liberal | 269 | 13% |
| Somewhat liberal | 333 | 17% |
| Moderate | 699 | 35% |
| Somewhat conservative | 429 | 21% |
| Very conservative | 269 | 13% |
| Refused | 1 | 0% |
| Total Liberal | 602 | 30% |
| Total Conservative | 698 | 35% |

Q.26 Which of these categories best describes total pre-tax income for all members of your household combined last year (in 2025)?

| Response | n | Percent |
|-------------------|----------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| \$0–25,000 | 284 | 14% |
| \$25,001–50,000 | 334 | 17% |
| \$50,001–75,000 | 381 | 19% |
| \$75,001–100,000 | 319 | 16% |
| \$100,001–150,000 | 319 | 16% |
| \$150,001–250,000 | 199 | 10% |
| \$250,001 or more | 75 | 4% |
| Prefer not to say | 89 | 4% |

Census Region

| Response | n | Percent |
|------------------|----------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 2,000 | 100% |
| Midwest Region | 425 | 21% |
| Northeast Region | 361 | 18% |
| South Region | 761 | 38% |
| West Region | 453 | 23% |