Released:
Tuesday, April 18, 2023

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NATIONAL: WHAT MAKES A GOOD DEMOCRAT?

Climate change, abortion, Black Lives Matter are key markers

West Long Branch, NJ – Looking out for others, providing a safety net for the vulnerable, and focusing on working-class issues are some of the ways Democratic voters describe what it means to be a good member of the party. The ***Monmouth ("Mon-muth") University Poll*** of self-identified Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters also asked about specific issues that could define party loyalty. A majority of these voters point to climate change, abortion, and Black Lives Matter as issues with clear positions that a good Democrat should hold.

When asked to describe in their own words what it means to be a good Democrat, one-quarter of the party's voters focus on social support. This includes a general sense that good Democrats "take care of others" (17%) and maintain a safety net for the disadvantaged (9%). Another 7% say being a good Democrat means focusing on working-class and middle-class issues. Specific policy areas mentioned include health care access (3%), abortion access (3%), environment and climate change (2%), while 3% say that good Democrats should generally have a liberal, progressive or socialist viewpoint. About 1 in 10 Democratic voters focus on "rights" as defining features of their partisan identity, including equal rights and human rights in general (6%), freedom and liberty (2%), anti-racism (2%) and LGBTQ+ rights (1%). Civic duty is also a common theme, including protecting democracy and the rule of law (6%), making sure to vote and participate in the process (6%), making informed choices (6%), and being willing to work across the aisle (5%). Another 7% say being a good Democrat simply means supporting their party over the Republicans. The current poll complements a [survey of Republicans](#) taken by Monmouth last year. In that poll, GOP voters focused on fiscal management, self-reliance, and patriotism and liberty as key hallmarks of what it means to be a good Republican.

"There isn't a single prevailing view of what it means to be good Democrat, but some themes emerge that bring to mind the proverbial big tent. Specifically, these voters say the party needs to look out for segments of society that may not get a fair break," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent

Monmouth University Polling Institute. He added, "Even when Democrats use the same terms as Republicans, such as liberty and freedom, their meaning is quite different."

THE GOOD DEMOCRAT		
Can you be a good Democrat and …	**Yes**	**No**
Oppose allowing some illegal immigrants to stay	51%	40%
Support some corporate tax breaks	49%	43%
Oppose universal health care	41%	54%
Oppose Black Lives Matter	35%	58%
Oppose legalized abortion	34%	58%
Do not believe climate change is major problem	29%	65%
MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY	*National poll of Democratic voters Mar. 16-20, 2023*	

The poll also presented party voters with six policy areas and asked whether one needs to hold a specific position on each in order to be considered a good Democrat. The issue that shows the clearest delineation on defining party orthodoxy is climate change. Nearly 2 in 3 (65%) say someone who disagrees with climate change being a major problem cannot be considered a good Democrat. Just 29% say such a person can still be a good Democrat. Only 1 in 3 party voters feel someone who opposes legalized abortion (34%) or Black Lives Matter (35%) can be considered a good Democrat. Opposition to universal health care is also seen as an unacceptable position to most Democrats – just 41% say you can hold this view and still be considered a good party member.

Voters are divided over business taxes as a defining position. Specifically, 49% say voters who support some tax breaks for corporations can be a good Democrat while 43% say they cannot. Similarly, just over half (51%) of Democratic voters say opposition to allowing some illegal immigrants to stay in the country is an acceptable position for a good Democrat to have, while 40% say it is not.

In general, voters who describe their political views as very liberal – representing just over a quarter of the Democratic electorate – are more likely to see each of these issues as having a clear Democratic position. For example, just 30% of very liberal Democrats say you can oppose immigration reform and still be considered a good party member. By comparison, 50% of somewhat liberal Democrats and 62% of moderate to conservative Democrats say a good party member can hold such a position on immigration. Moderate and conservative Democrats – who comprise about half of party-affiliated voters – are more likely to feel that a good Democrat can be opposed to universal health care (48%), Black Lives Matter (45%) and legalized abortion (43%) than liberals as a whole. Climate change is the one area covered in the poll where clear majorities of very liberal (84%), somewhat liberal (61%), and moderate to conservative (57%) Democrats say that people who deny this is a major problem cannot be in good standing within the party.

There are few demographic differences on these policy-related descriptors of Democratic orthodoxy. Men (40%) are somewhat more likely than women (31%) to accept that someone who opposes

abortion access can be considered a good Democrat, although that view is in the minority among both sexes. Democrats who are Black, Hispanic or Asian (61%) are much more likely than non-Hispanic white Democrats (42%) to say that opposition to amnesty for some illegal immigrants is acceptable within the party. Democrats without a college degree are somewhat more likely than college graduates to acknowledge fellow Democrats as good party members if they oppose immigration reform (55% non-college to 45% college) or Black Lives Matter (40% to 28%)

Compared to Monmouth's survey of Republican voters conducted last year, Democrats are more likely to point to a number of issues as litmus tests on party identity. While the actual issues tested in the two party polls were worded differently, abortion was the only policy in the Republican poll where Republicans were more likely than not to have a definitive party position.

"Democrats seem to be more likely than Republicans to hold a common set of issue positions that defines, for them, what it means to be a member of the party in good standing," said Murray.

The *Monmouth University Poll* was conducted by telephone and online from March 16 to 20, 2023 with 542 Democrat and Democrat leaning voters in the United States. The question results in this release have a margin of error of +/- 6.3 percentage points for the full sample. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute in West Long Branch, NJ.

QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. What does being a good Democrat mean to you? [*LIST WAS NOT READ*] [*Note: Results add to more than 100% because multiple responses were accepted.*]

	March 2023
Always vote Dem, against GOP	7%
Liberal, progressive, socialism	3%
Vote, participate in process	6%
Make informed choices, vote conscience	6%
Honest, truthful	3%
Fairness	2%
Willing to compromise, work across aisle	5%
Take care of others, look out for everyone	17%
Working, middle class issues	7%
Safety net for poor, disadvantaged	9%
Healthcare access	3%
Abortion access	3%
Environment, climate change	2%
Anti-racism, discrimination	2%
LGBTQ+	1%
Equal rights, human rights	6%
Freedom, liberty	2%
Protect democracy, rule of law	6%
Other	18%
(VOL) Don't know	17%
(n)	*(542)*

[*QUESTIONS 2–7 WERE ROTATED*]

2.   Can someone who opposes legalized abortion be considered a good Democrat, or not?

	March 2023
Can	34%
Cannot	58%
(VOL) Don't know	8%
(n)	*(542)*

3.   Can someone who opposes immigration reform that allows some illegal immigrants already here to stay in the country be considered a good Democrat, or not?

	March 2023
Can	51%
Cannot	40%
(VOL) Don't know	9%
(n)	*(542)*

4.   Can someone who does not believe that climate change is a major problem be considered a good Democrat, or not?

	March 2023
Can	29%
Cannot	65%
(VOL) Don't know	7%
(n)	*(542)*

5.   Can someone who supports some tax breaks for corporations be considered a good Democrat, or not?

	March 2023
Can	49%
Cannot	43%
(VOL) Don't know	9%
(n)	*(542)*

6.   Can someone who opposes Black Lives Matters be considered a good Democrat, or not?

	March 2023
Can	35%
Cannot	58%
(VOL) Don't know	7%
(n)	*(542)*

7.   Can someone who opposes universal health care be considered a good Democrat, or not?

	March 2023
Can	41%
Cannot	54%
(VOL) Don't know	5%
(n)	*(542)*

[*Q8-11 previously released.*]

METHODOLOGY

The *Monmouth University Poll* was sponsored and conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from March 16 to 20, 2023 with a probability-based national random sample of 542 registered voters who identify with or lean toward the Democrat Party. Interviews were conducted in English, and included 151 live landline telephone interviews, 229 live cell phone interviews, and 162 online surveys via a cell phone text invitation. Telephone numbers were selected through a mix of random digit dialing and list-based sampling. Landline respondents were selected with a modified Troldahl-Carter youngest adult household screen. Interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, with sample obtained from Dynata (RDD, n= 189), Aristotle (list, n= 260) and a panel of prior Monmouth poll participants (n= 93). Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey design, data weighting and analysis. The full sample is weighted for region, age, education, gender and race based on voter list and US Census information (ACS 2021 one-year survey). For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 6.3 percentage points, adjusted for sample design effects (1.50). Sampling error can be larger for sub-groups (see table below). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)
Self-Reported
52% Strong Democrat
21% Democrat, not strong
27% Independent, lean Dem.

42% Male
58% Female

23% 18-34
23% 35-49
26% 50-64
28% 65+

55% White
22% Black
16% Hispanic
7% Asian/Other

30% High school or less
31% Some college
39% 4 year degree

MARGIN OF ERROR		unweighted sample	moe (+/-)
TOTAL		542	6.3%
SELF-REPORTED PARTY ID	Strong Dem.	300	8.5%
	Dem., not strong	104	14.4%
	Indep., lean Dem.	138	12.5%
IDEOLOGY	Very liberal	155	11.8%
	Somewhat liberal	123	13.3%
	Moderate-conservative	253	9.3%
GENDER	Male	239	9.5%
	Female	303	8.5%
RACE	White, non-Hispanic	350	7.9%
	Other	184	10.9%
AGE	18-49	198	10.5%
	50-64	161	11.6%
	65+	175	11.1%
REGION	Northeast	126	13.1%
	Midwest	122	13.3%
	South-Gulf	173	11.2%
	Southwest, West	121	13.4%
COLLEGE GRADUATE	No degree	210	10.2%
	4 year degree	331	8.1%
INCOME	<$50K	149	12.1%
	$50 to <$100K	159	11.7%
	$100K+	214	10.1%

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		TOTAL	PARTY STRENGTH			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY			GENDER	
			Strong Dem	Dem, not strong	Indep, lean D	Very Liberal	Somewht Liberal	Moderate -Cons	Male	Female
M1. What does being a good Democrat mean to you? [OPEN END. MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED.]	Always vote Dem, against GOP	7%	8%	9%	4%	8%	5%	7%	5%	9%
	Liberal, progressive, socialism	3%	5%	4%	1%	12%	0%	1%	6%	2%
	Vote, participate in process	6%	7%	7%	2%	5%	3%	6%	2%	9%
	Make informed choices, vote conscience	6%	4%	6%	9%	6%	3%	7%	6%	6%
	Honest, truthful	3%	5%	1%	1%	2%	4%	3%	4%	2%
	Fairness	2%	3%	0%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%
	Willing to compromise, work across aisle	5%	3%	4%	9%	7%	1%	6%	7%	3%
	Take care of others, look out for everyone	17%	20%	13%	14%	17%	13%	19%	12%	20%
	Working, middle class issues	7%	7%	5%	7%	3%	9%	8%	10%	4%
	Safety net for poor, disadvantaged	9%	10%	8%	8%	10%	10%	8%	10%	8%
	Healthcare access	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%
	Abortion access	3%	4%	1%	2%	3%	5%	2%	2%	4%
	Environment, climate change	2%	3%	2%	1%	4%	3%	1%	2%	2%
	Anti-racism, discrimination	2%	4%	0%	0%	4%	2%	1%	2%	2%
	LGBTQ+	1%	2%	0%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%	2%
	Equal rights, human rights	6%	9%	3%	4%	7%	11%	4%	6%	7%
	Freedom, liberty	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	Protect democracy, rule of law	6%	10%	3%	1%	4%	4%	7%	5%	7%
	Other	18%	17%	16%	22%	20%	23%	15%	21%	16%
	Dont know	17%	9%	28%	23%	13%	20%	17%	17%	17%

Monmouth University Poll -- NATIONAL Democratic Voters -- 4/18/23

		RACE		AGE			REGION			
		White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	18-49	50-64	65+	Nor-east	Midwest	South-Gulf	SW-West
M1. What does being a good Democrat mean to you? [OPEN END. MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED.]	Always vote Dem, against GOP	6%	8%	6%	4%	13%	7%	3%	7%	11%
	Liberal, progressive, socialism	4%	3%	5%	2%	2%	6%	2%	2%	4%
	Vote, participate in process	5%	7%	5%	6%	6%	2%	3%	9%	6%
	Make informed choices, vote conscience	5%	6%	6%	3%	7%	1%	4%	8%	8%
	Honest, truthful	3%	4%	2%	5%	3%	2%	3%	5%	2%
	Fairness	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%
	Willing to compromise, work across aisle	5%	5%	6%	4%	3%	6%	4%	4%	6%
	Take care of others, look out for everyone	17%	16%	15%	20%	15%	17%	16%	23%	8%
	Working, middle class issues	10%	3%	5%	6%	9%	5%	12%	7%	3%
	Safety net for poor, disadvantaged	11%	6%	9%	13%	4%	11%	7%	9%	7%
	Healthcare access	3%	3%	4%	2%	2%	5%	0%	4%	3%
	Abortion access	4%	2%	2%	3%	4%	5%	3%	2%	1%
	Environment, climate change	4%	0%	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%	1%	4%
	Anti-racism, discrimination	2%	3%	3%	3%	0%	2%	6%	1%	0%
	LGBTQ+	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	0%	0%
	Equal rights, human rights	7%	6%	6%	6%	8%	6%	5%	6%	9%
	Freedom, liberty	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	0%	3%
	Protect democracy, rule of law	6%	7%	5%	8%	6%	6%	5%	7%	6%
	Other	18%	18%	16%	19%	22%	21%	23%	15%	15%
	Dont know	14%	20%	22%	19%	6%	13%	21%	12%	23%

		COLLEGE GRAD		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	<$50K	$50-100K	$100K+
M1. What does being a good Democrat mean to you? [OPEN END. MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED.]	Always vote Dem, against GOP	7%	7%	8%	4%	8%
	Liberal, progressive, socialism	3%	4%	2%	5%	3%
	Vote, participate in process	5%	6%	9%	2%	6%
	Make informed choices, vote conscience	6%	6%	9%	5%	4%
	Honest, truthful	3%	2%	3%	5%	1%
	Fairness	2%	2%	1%	1%	4%
	Willing to compromise, work across aisle	6%	4%	5%	4%	5%
	Take care of others, look out for everyone	16%	18%	13%	19%	18%
	Working, middle class issues	7%	6%	6%	7%	8%
	Safety net for poor, disadvantaged	7%	11%	5%	10%	12%
	Healthcare access	4%	1%	2%	4%	4%
	Abortion access	2%	4%	2%	1%	5%
	Environment, climate change	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%
	Anti-racism, discrimination	1%	4%	2%	3%	2%
	LGBTQ+	0%	2%	0%	2%	1%
	Equal rights, human rights	4%	10%	4%	9%	7%
	Freedom, liberty	1%	4%	1%	2%	3%
	Protect democracy, rule of law	6%	7%	9%	5%	4%
	Other	21%	13%	25%	16%	14%
	Dont know	19%	14%	13%	17%	18%

		TOTAL	PARTY STRENGTH			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY			GENDER	
			Strong Dem	Dem, not strong	Indep, lean D	Very Liberal	Somewht Liberal	Moderate -Cons	Male	Female
M2. Can someone who opposes legalized abortion be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	34%	29%	43%	37%	22%	29%	43%	40%	31%
	Cannot	58%	63%	49%	55%	74%	65%	47%	51%	63%
	[VOL] Dont know	8%	8%	8%	8%	4%	6%	9%	9%	7%

		RACE		AGE			REGION			
		White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	18-49	50-64	65+	Nor-east	Midwest	South-Gulf	SW-West
M2. Can someone who opposes legalized abortion be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	35%	34%	34%	39%	31%	40%	31%	39%	25%
	Cannot	60%	55%	62%	54%	56%	54%	60%	54%	66%
	[VOL] Dont know	6%	10%	5%	7%	13%	7%	9%	6%	10%

		COLLEGE GRAD		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	<$50K	$50-100K	$100K+
M2. Can someone who opposes legalized abortion be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	36%	32%	29%	33%	42%
	Cannot	55%	63%	62%	59%	53%
	[VOL] Dont know	9%	5%	9%	7%	5%

		TOTAL	PARTY STRENGTH			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY			GENDER	
			Strong Dem	Dem, not strong	Indep, lean D	Very Liberal	Somewht Liberal	Moderate -Cons	Male	Female
M3. Can someone who opposes immigration reform that allows some illegal immigrants already here to stay in the country be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	51%	49%	56%	51%	30%	50%	62%	53%	49%
	Cannot	40%	41%	36%	42%	63%	42%	29%	39%	41%
	[VOL] Dont know	9%	11%	8%	7%	6%	8%	9%	8%	10%

		RACE		AGE			REGION			
		White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	18-49	50-64	65+	Nor-east	Midwest	South-Gulf	SW-West
M3. Can someone who opposes immigration reform that allows some illegal immigrants already here to stay in the country be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	42%	61%	48%	52%	55%	54%	41%	58%	48%
	Cannot	48%	30%	44%	40%	34%	40%	49%	31%	44%
	[VOL] Dont know	9%	9%	9%	8%	11%	6%	10%	11%	9%

		COLLEGE GRAD		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	<$50K	$50-100K	$100K+
M3. Can someone who opposes immigration reform that allows some illegal immigrants already here to stay in the country be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	55%	45%	56%	43%	54%
	Cannot	34%	49%	36%	47%	40%
	[VOL] Dont know	11%	6%	9%	10%	7%

		TOTAL	PARTY STRENGTH			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY			GENDER	
			Strong Dem	Dem, not strong	Indep, lean D	Very Liberal	Somewht Liberal	Moderate -Cons	Male	Female
M4. Can someone who does not believe that climate change is a major problem be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	29%	26%	27%	36%	11%	31%	37%	30%	28%
	Cannot	65%	68%	68%	54%	84%	61%	57%	64%	65%
	[VOL] Dont know	7%	6%	5%	9%	4%	8%	6%	6%	7%

		RACE		AGE			REGION			
		White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	18-49	50-64	65+	Nor-east	Midwest	South-Gulf	SW-West
M4. Can someone who does not believe that climate change is a major problem be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	25%	34%	29%	31%	28%	31%	30%	28%	27%
	Cannot	70%	57%	65%	63%	64%	63%	62%	65%	68%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	9%	6%	6%	8%	6%	8%	8%	5%

		COLLEGE GRAD		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	<$50K	$50-100K	$100K+
M4. Can someone who does not believe that climate change is a major problem be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	31%	25%	30%	28%	29%
	Cannot	61%	70%	62%	66%	67%
	[VOL] Dont know	8%	5%	8%	6%	4%

		TOTAL	PARTY STRENGTH			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY			GENDER	
			Strong Dem	Dem, not strong	Indep, lean D	Very Liberal	Somewht Liberal	Moderate-Cons	Male	Female
M5. Can someone who supports some tax breaks for corporations be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	49%	45%	54%	52%	39%	51%	53%	49%	49%
	Cannot	43%	46%	38%	40%	54%	45%	37%	44%	42%
	[VOL] Dont know	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	4%	10%	7%	10%

		RACE		AGE			REGION			
		White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	18-49	50-64	65+	Nor-east	Midwest	South-Gulf	SW-West
M5. Can someone who supports some tax breaks for corporations be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	47%	51%	51%	48%	43%	55%	48%	46%	46%
	Cannot	47%	38%	43%	43%	44%	35%	45%	48%	43%
	[VOL] Dont know	7%	11%	6%	9%	13%	10%	7%	7%	11%

		COLLEGE GRAD		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	<$50K	$50-100K	$100K+
M5. Can someone who supports some tax breaks for corporations be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	47%	51%	47%	44%	57%
	Cannot	43%	43%	44%	51%	38%
	[VOL] Dont know	10%	6%	9%	5%	5%

		TOTAL	PARTY STRENGTH			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY			GENDER	
			Strong Dem	Dem, not strong	Indep, lean D	Very Liberal	Somewht Liberal	Moderate-Cons	Male	Female
M6. Can someone who opposes Black Lives Matters be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	35%	33%	45%	32%	17%	34%	45%	39%	32%
	Cannot	58%	61%	48%	62%	78%	61%	48%	53%	62%
	[VOL] Dont know	7%	7%	8%	6%	6%	5%	7%	7%	6%

		RACE		AGE			REGION			
		White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	18-49	50-64	65+	Nor-east	Midwest	South-Gulf	SW-West
M6. Can someone who opposes Black Lives Matters be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	31%	39%	35%	35%	34%	37%	28%	39%	34%
	Cannot	63%	53%	58%	56%	62%	55%	65%	55%	60%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	8%	7%	9%	4%	8%	7%	6%	6%

		COLLEGE GRAD		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	<$50K	$50-100K	$100K+
M6. Can someone who opposes Black Lives Matters be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	40%	28%	36%	34%	36%
	Cannot	54%	65%	59%	60%	57%
	[VOL] Dont know	6%	7%	5%	6%	7%

		TOTAL	PARTY STRENGTH			POLITICAL IDEOLOGY			GENDER	
			Strong Dem	Dem, not strong	Indep, lean D	Very Liberal	Somewht Liberal	Moderate -Cons	Male	Female
M7. Can someone who opposes universal health care be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	41%	41%	44%	38%	29%	38%	48%	42%	40%
	Cannot	54%	54%	52%	57%	67%	59%	48%	53%	56%
	[VOL] Dont know	5%	5%	3%	5%	4%	3%	4%	5%	4%

		RACE		AGE			REGION			
		White non-Hisp	Hsp-Blk-Asn-Oth	18-49	50-64	65+	Nor-east	Midwest	South-Gulf	SW-West
M7. Can someone who opposes universal health care be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	39%	42%	42%	45%	35%	41%	42%	40%	39%
	Cannot	56%	53%	56%	49%	58%	54%	53%	56%	54%
	[VOL] Dont know	4%	5%	2%	6%	8%	5%	5%	4%	6%

		COLLEGE GRAD		INCOME		
		No degree	4 yr degree	<$50K	$50-100K	$100K+
M7. Can someone who opposes universal health care be considered a good Democrat, or not?	Can	42%	39%	40%	35%	48%
	Cannot	54%	55%	55%	60%	50%
	[VOL] Dont know	4%	5%	5%	5%	3%