



National Survey Examines Marriage, Family, Immigration, Health care and Technology in the Age of Trump

Most Americans say biggest problems facing families are economic, but Trump voters are more likely to name cultural problems

Results also show link between high levels of phone use and reports of relationship troubles

Salt Lake City, Utah – Nov. 16, 2017 – The results of a comprehensive annual national poll released today provide new insights into the lives of American families, revealing how Trump voters, Clinton voters and non-voters view marriage, relationships and family, and a wide variety of political and social issues. The survey includes respondents’ views on smartphones and social media usage, immigration, healthcare, addiction and government programs.

The third annual American Family Survey, a nationwide Deseret News/Brigham Young University study conducted by YouGov, is the first fielded in the age of Trump, and it examines Americans’ concerns about culture and family life. While all respondents tend to approve of and support marriage and families, regardless of their voting behavior, the poll found striking differences between the three voting groups with respect to health care preferences, immigration attitudes and social connectedness.

“Every year since we began conducting the American Family Survey, we have been surprised by its findings, and this year they were even more fascinating as we were able to look particularly at Trump voters, Clinton voters and non-voters,” said Allison Pond, editor of the Deseret News In-depth team and a former Pew Research Center staffer. “As our cultural and political divide seems to grow wider by the day, it is important to note that most people align in terms of how they live their family lives — but there are some glaring differences in their views on public policy.”

The annual American Family Survey examines the views and experiences of modern-day families and tracks changes over the years. This year’s poll looked at the challenges facing families and found that concerns about economic pressures on family are growing.

“This comprehensive look at American families provides helpful insights that will inform political and academic debates about the struggles and values of our nation’s diverse families,” said Chris Karpowitz of Brigham Young University’s Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy. “As the family unit changes with the times, it is remarkable to see which values and attitudes remain constant and which are being redefined.”

Some of the findings of the poll — which drew more than 3,000 responses from Americans across racial, religious, gender and age groups — include:

Family/Relationships:

- An increasing number of people believe that the most serious problems facing families are economic, while fewer identify primarily cultural challenges. Since 2015, there has been an 11-percentage point increase in the people who say the top problems facing families are economic (from 51% to 62%) and a 17-point decrease in those who say they are cultural (from 68% to 51%). Trump voters, however, are much more likely to point to cultural issues than economic issues.
- Parents of all political stripes believe that being a parent is central to their personal identities – 92 percent say it is “very” or “somewhat” important – and many Trump and Clinton voters believe that a key part of parenting is taking a stand on political issues (48% vs. 50% respectively). Those who did not vote in 2016 are less likely (31%) to see political socialization as part of their parenting duties.
- Like last year, survey respondents have positive views of their own relationships and families but are much more pessimistic about the state of marriages and families in the country in general. For example, 49% of respondents who are married or in a relationship say that relationship is stronger than it was a year ago, but only eight% believe that marriages in general are stronger.
- Solid majorities believe that marriages make families and kids better off financially (66%), that marriage is needed to make strong families (63%), and that when more people are married, society is better off (56%).

Technology Usage:

- Social media and smartphone usage are clearly connected to relationship health. Though the direction of causality is difficult to assess, over four in 10 people who use their phone multiple times a day to check social media believe their relationship is in trouble. Among those who never use social media, fewer than two in 10 believe that their relationship is in trouble.
- There is a clear dividing line among children of different ages in smartphone usage. Before age twelve only a few (one in four) children have a phone. After age twelve, four out of five children have a phone.

Addiction and health:

- Americans report heroin or opioid addiction, both personally and among family members, at rates similar to those of alcohol addiction (though reported levels of marijuana addiction trail both categories). More than one in ten Americans (12%) say someone in their family is addicted to heroin or opioids.
- Most respondents place the largest share of the blame for addiction on addicts and dealers, with no more than a quarter of the population placing “a lot” of blame on any other institution or group, such as drug companies, physicians or hospitals. However, that blame differs substantially by vote choice. Trump voters place the most blame on dealers and addicts, whereas Clinton voters place less and nonvoters place the least amount of blame on those groups.
- About six in 10 respondents say that either themselves, their spouse or their child has a serious health condition “that requires frequent medical care—for

example, regular doctor visits, or daily medications,” and this varies little by insurance status.

- Nearly 40 percent of respondents say they receive health insurance through an employer or union; 12 percent have purchased their own, and 43 percent have Medicaid or Medicare. Eight percent say they have no health insurance.

Public Policy:

- Trump voters and Clinton voters differ dramatically in how they confront difficult health care policy tradeoffs. By large margins, Clinton voters care more about making health insurance accessible to all (90%) over giving people more flexibility to opt out of insurance; guaranteeing coverage of pre-existing conditions (75%) over lowering monthly costs; and helping the poor to secure insurance (80%) over lowering taxes for most Americans. Trump voters, by contrast, make different tradeoffs: they want more flexibility to opt out of insurance (57%), favor keeping monthly insurance costs low (73%), and emphasize tax cuts (76%).
 - The gap in health care policy preferences between Trump and Clinton voters persists even among families that are confronting serious medical challenges, though Trump voters with such challenges are substantially more likely to choose guarantees for coverage of pre-existing conditions over lower monthly costs.
- The public favors a higher minimum wage across the board, generally favoring an average of just over \$10.50 an hour,. Urban-dwellers and Clinton voters are the most supportive of increases, favoring averages of over \$11 and \$12, respectively. Trump voters still favor an increase, but only to \$8.50.
- The public generally does not oppose birthright citizenship for children of immigrants, though certain demographics (such as high income, white, married citizens with children) are more likely to oppose it. The group most strongly opposed are Trump voters, of whom fully 73 percent oppose it. Despite this opposition, the survey found in all cases that reminding people that deportation could separate families lowered support for deportation. For instance, about six in 10 respondents with children favored deportation when not reminded that it would break up families, the number dropped to about four in 10 when people were reminded of those consequences.

For the first time, the survey paired results with additional information about the zip codes where respondents live, and found that people who live in neighborhoods where more people are married also have a stronger sense of connection to their neighborhoods and say that the neighborhood shares a common set of values. When it comes to addiction, about one in 10 people who are not addicted see their neighborhood as not getting along well. Four in ten of the addicted see their neighborhoods this way.

More results from the poll are at deseretnews.com/American-family-survey, along with a copy of the full report for download.

The implications of the survey's findings will also be presented and discussed during a [moderated panel event](#) this morning at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C. Panelists include Richard V. Reeves, Brookings Senior Fellow in Economic Studies and Co-Director of the Center on Children and Families; W. Bradford Wilcox, Director of the National Marriage Project and Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia; and Jeremy C. Pope and Chris Karpowitz of Brigham Young University's Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy. Karlyn Bowman, Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, will moderate the panel.

The Deseret News is also releasing a content series exploring the study's implications in depth. The articles include:

- An overview of what the survey findings reveal about the state of marriage and family in America today and Americans' views on social issues;
- An examination of the impact of phones and social media on family relationships and what people can do to foster awareness;
- A close analysis of whether recent health care proposals reflect what American families say is important to them;
- A compassionate look at how addiction plays out in families; and
- Three shorter pieces on bipartisan marriages, self-identified homemakers, and families' Thanksgiving plans

The poll was designed by Christopher Karpowitz and Jeremy C. Pope of the Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy at Brigham Young University; Doug Wilks, Editor of the Deseret News; Allison Pond, Editor of the Deseret News In-depth team; and Sam Sturgeon, President of Demographic Intelligence. They consulted an advisory board which included Karlyn Bowman, Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute; Sara McLanahan, Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs at Princeton; Richard Reeves, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and former strategy advisor to the deputy prime minister of the United Kingdom; and W. Brad Wilcox, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia and Director of the National Marriage Project.

METHODOLOGY

Between August 1 and August 7, 2017, YouGov interviewed 3264 respondents who were then matched down to a sample of 3,000 to produce the final dataset. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political interest. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). Data on voter registration status and turnout were matched to this frame using the November 2010 Current Population Survey. Data on interest in politics

and party identification were then matched to this frame from the 2007 Pew Religious Life Survey. The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and ideology. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles.

ABOUT THE DESERET NEWS

Founded in 1850, the Deseret News (www.deseretnews.com and national.deseretnews.com) offers news, analysis and commentary for family-oriented audiences across the country. The award-winning writers at the Deseret News keep their growing readership informed with real-world solutions that can make a positive difference in families and communities. The Deseret News, the first news organization and longest continuously-operating business in the state of Utah, is a top-25 online national newspaper.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY (CSED) AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY (BYU)

The Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy (CSED) at Brigham Young University is a nonpartisan academic research center seeking to increase knowledge about the practice of American democracy. CSED is committed to the production and dissemination of research that meets high academic standards, is useful to policy makers, and informs citizens. CSED-sponsored research has been published by leading academic journals and presses in the areas of campaign finance, voting technology and election reform, presidential and congressional elections, religion and politics and democratic deliberation.

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