



Canadian  
Survey

AmericasBarometer

2025 SERIES

Brief

# Social trust in Canada and the USA

Do Canadians and Americans still trust  
others in this age in political polarization?

**EnviroNics  
Institute**  
For Survey Research



**LAPOP**

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# Environics Institute

For Survey Research

The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 with a mandate to conduct in-depth public opinion and social research on the issues shaping Canada's future. It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society.

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## Acknowledgements

The Environics Institute would like to thank the Max Bell Foundation for its financial support for this research. The Institute would also like to acknowledge the ongoing support and partnership of Toronto Foundation.

This brief was prepared with research assistance provided by Meryll Tiu and Daryl Lopez, graduates of the Marketing Research and Analysis Program at the School of Business at Algonquin College. Our thanks to Nathaniel Stone, the program's coordinator, for facilitating this arrangement.

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Date published: January 2026



## AmericasBarometer

These results are from the Canadian portion of the 2025–26 AmericasBarometer, a regular comparative survey of democratic values and behaviours that covers countries in North, Central and South America, as well as a significant number of countries in the Caribbean (the 2025–26 study will cover 20 countries).

The project is led by the LAPOP Lab at Vanderbilt University's Center for Global Democracy (CGD) and was conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with CGD's LAPOP Lab at Vanderbilt University and with the support of the Max Bell Foundation.

The survey was conducted online with a sample of 3,550 Canadians (aged 18 and over) between July 30 and August 7, 2025. The results are weighted by region, age, gender, education and language so as to be fully representative of the Canadian population.

This report also includes results from the companion survey conducted in the United States. This survey was conducted online with a 1,600 Americans, 18 years of age and older, between October 3 and 16, 2025. The results are weighted by region, age, gender, education and ethnicity so as to be fully representative of the American population.

[See our website for more reports from this survey.](#)

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# Introduction

Today we live in a time of social and political fracture. Much of what people know and how they communicate with others is happening on social media that channels content through narrow audiences, and feeds conflict and outrage. In the US, politics is now dividing Americans more than at any time since that country's Civil War more than 150 years ago. In Canada, such divisions are much less sharp yet the political rhetoric is heating up at the federal level and in some provinces like Alberta. Immigration – long an issue on which there was a normative consensus – is now becoming a wedge issue.

All this suggests we may be witnessing a fundamental breakdown in the social glue that holds our society together. Amidst the noise of heated political rhetoric and ranting Tik Tok videos, are we losing trust in each other?

One way to answer this question is through public opinion research that measures social trust in the population over time. The AmericasBarometer is such a project that encompasses population surveys on democracy, governance and civic engagement in 20 plus countries spanning the western hemisphere, conducted biennially since 2006. Our focus here is on results from the most recent survey in Canada and the USA (conducted in July – September 2025) and how opinions on social trust have changed or not over the past decade.



## Why social trust matters

On the one hand, people sometimes can be too trusting (e.g., falling prey to scams), and distrust can be a rational response to betrayal by others in social or business dealings, or misbehaviour by politicians and business leaders. On the other hand, trust is the essential oil that lubricates the frictions of daily life. Trust makes it possible for people to work together, and to get along in all kinds of circumstances. Our institutions and economy rely on confidence that other people will respect the law, honour contracts and behave honestly. And higher trust is associated with better-functioning democratic institutions.



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# General trust in others where you live

## Canada

Do Canadians trust others who live in their local community? For most, the answer is a qualified yes. In 2025 two-thirds (67%) consider people around where they live to be “somewhat trustworthy”, with the balance evenly split between those who say others in their community are very trustworthy (16%) and those who believe they are not very trustworthy (14%) or altogether untrustworthy (3%).

While these latest results indicate Canadians are less than fully trusting in their neighbours, they have not become less so over the past decade or so. Since 2010, the degree of trust placed in others has fluctuated over time but overall has remained largely the same, with a strong majority labelling others as somewhat, if not very, trustworthy. Lack of trust has inched upwards over time (averaging 14% in the period 2010 – 2019, increasing to 17% in the post-pandemic period 2021 – 2025), but this remains the view of no more than one in six Canadians. The stability in public trust over this time period is notable given the dramatic disruption in social connections resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic that could well have eroded Canadians trust in one another.

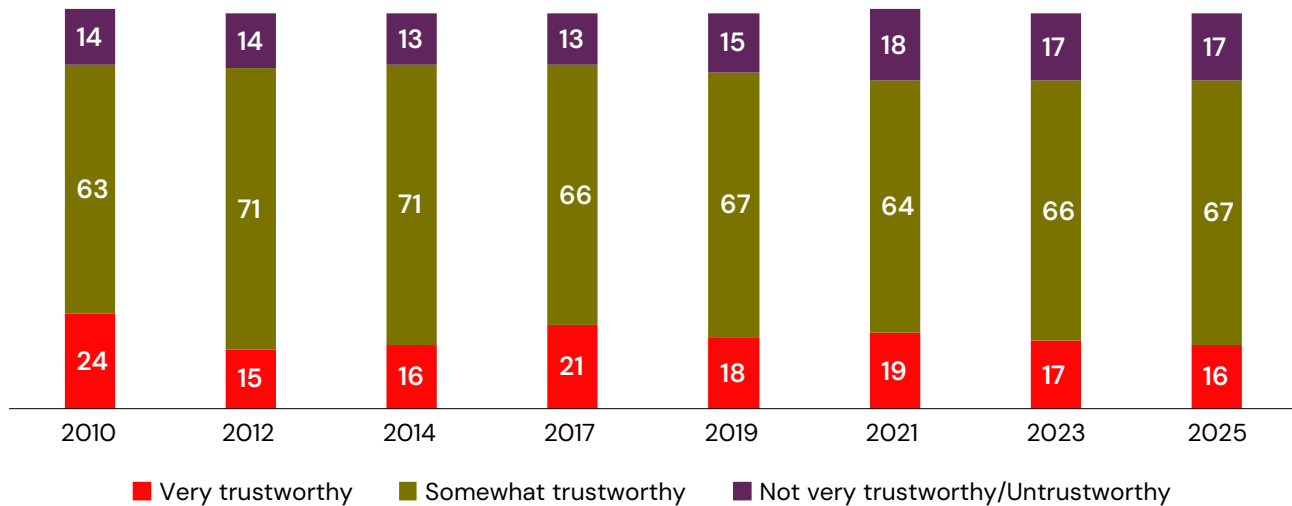


While these latest results indicate Canadians are less than fully trusting in their neighbours, they have not become less so over the past decade or so.

## Figure 1

### Social trust in Canada

2010 – 2025



*Speaking of the people from around where you live, would you say that people in your community are...*

As well, Canadians' degree of trust in others around them is more similar than different across the population. By region, Atlantic Canadians are the most likely to say others are very trustworthy (21%) and Quebecers are least apt to share this view (11%), but the latter are only marginally more likely to label others as not trustworthy. Social trust is somewhat stronger among Canadians ages 60 plus (21% very trustworthy), but opinions are essentially the same regardless of gender, education, income, generation living in Canada, or whether one is white or racialized.

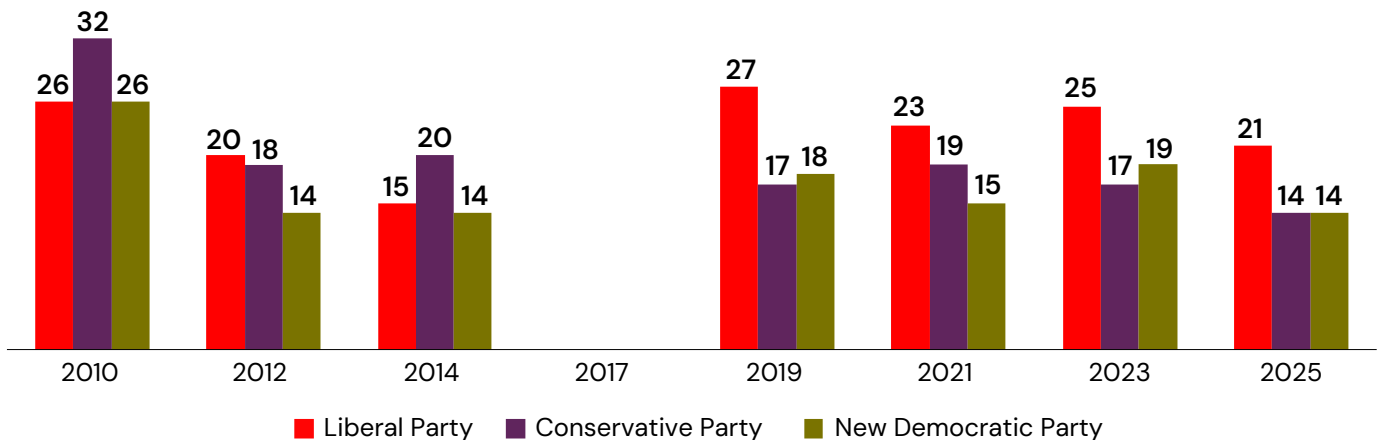
In this time of political polarization, does party affiliation matter for community trust? In 2025 Canadians who would vote for the federal Liberal Party are the most trusting of others where they live (21% say very trustworthy), compared with those who would vote for the federal Conservative Party (14%) or NDP (14%). But again this is a matter of degree rather than a different perspective: regardless of affiliation, two-thirds or more of Canadians describe others they know as somewhat trustworthy. This was also the case in 2010, when the difference between Liberals and Conservatives was reversed.



## Figure 2

### People in your community are very trustworthy – Canada

2025, by federal party support



## United States

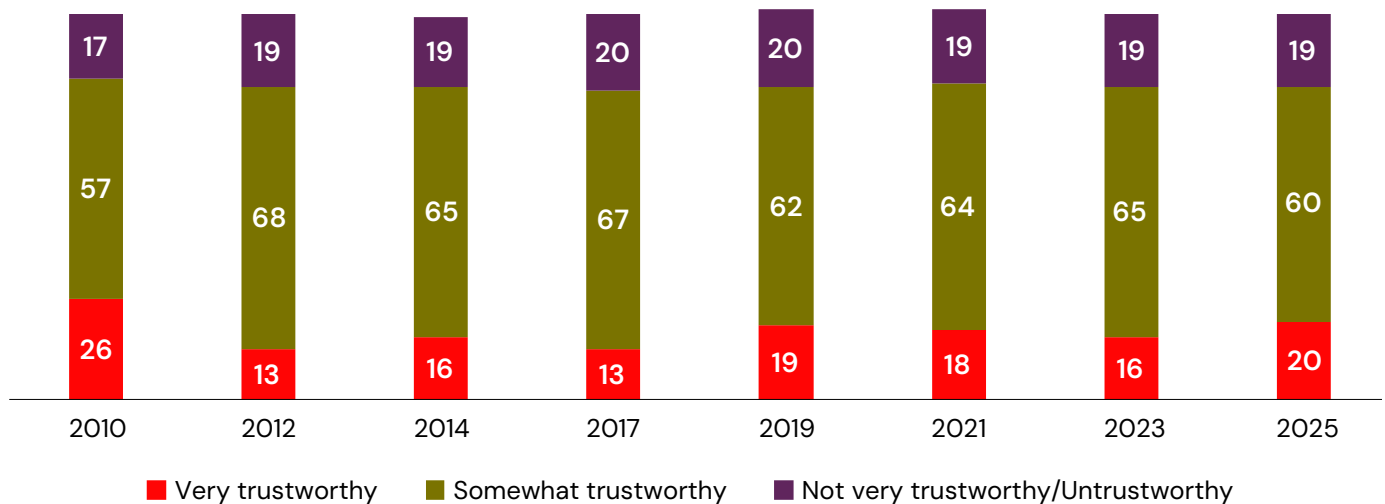
What about Americans' level of social trust in others where they live? The picture is surprisingly similar to what we see in Canada. In 2025, six in ten (60%) Americans say people in their community are somewhat trustworthy, with the balance equally divided between those who believe they are very trustworthy (20%) and those who label them as not very trustworthy (15%) or untrustworthy (4%).

Also mirroring the Canadian story, Americans' current perspective on this question has been notably consistent over the past 13 years. The proportion who see others as very trustworthy is actually a bit higher in more recent years (2019 – 2025) than the earlier period (2012 – 2017), with 2010 standing out (as in Canada) as a high water mark in public trust in one's neighbours.

### Figure 3

#### Social trust in the United States

2010 – 2025



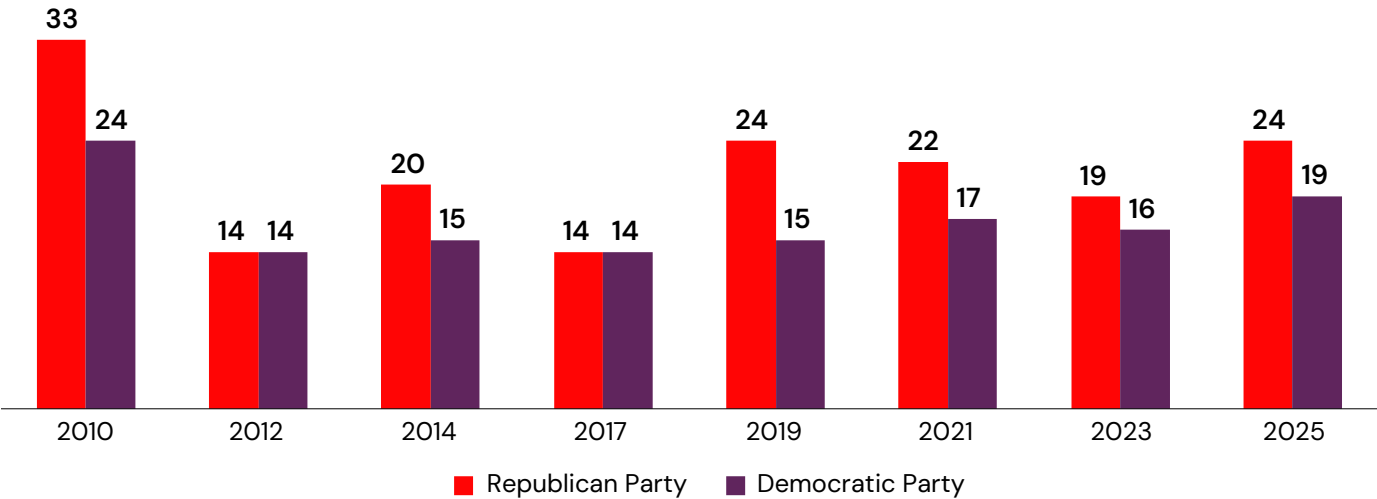
*Speaking of the people from around where you live, would you say that people in your community are...*

As in Canada, Americans ages 60 plus are among the more trusting of others in their neighbourhood, but this difference is less pronounced today than it was a decade ago. What differs from Canada is that American men are more likely than women to see others as very trustworthy versus not trustworthy, a small but enduring difference dating back to 2010.

Current US politics is dominated by a sharp partisan divide typified by Republicans versus Democrats, Red States versus Blue States, and progressive versus conservative values. Is such division reflected in how Americans look at others where they live? Despite the rhetoric from politicians and media, Democrat and Republican voters do not differ dramatically in the trust they express in others where they live – among both groups more than six in ten describe others as somewhat trustworthy.

At the same time, Americans who would vote Republicans are more likely than Democratic voters to say they believe others in their community are very trustworthy, and less apt to label them as not trustworthy. In 2025 the margin of difference is five percentage points, and this margin has fluctuated up and down dating back to 2010 (when the difference on “very trustworthy” was up to 9 points, but dropped to no difference by 2012).

**Figure 4**  
**People in your community are very trustworthy – United States**  
2010 – 2025



## Close up:

# Social trust in a global context

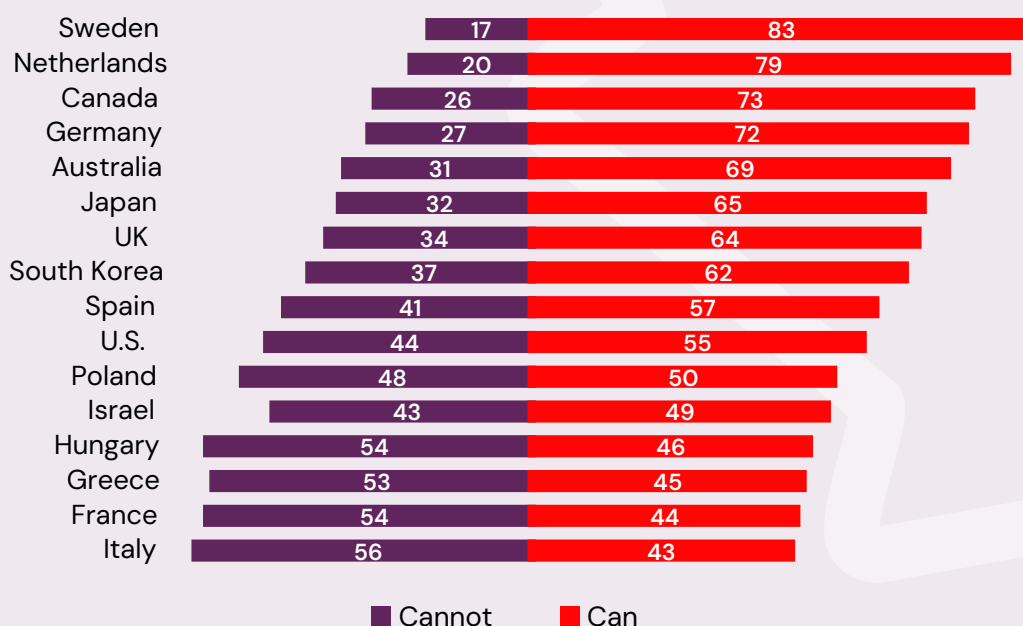
How does social trust expressed by Canadians and Americans compare with people in other countries? We can answer this question in part through an international survey conducted by the Pew Research Center earlier this year. This survey used a widely-used question measuring social trust: Which of the following comes closer to your view: a) Most people can be trusted; or b) Most people can't be trusted.

Among 16 high-income countries surveyed, Canada ranks third in the proportion of its population who say that most people can be trusted (73%). General trust is most widely expressed by people in Sweden (83%) and the Netherlands (79%), and trailing behind Canada are such countries as Australia (69%), Japan (65%) and the UK (64%). The USA is ranked 10th on this list, with 55 percent saying most people can be trusted, versus 44% who say they cannot.

## Figure 5

### Can most people be trusted or not?

2025, 16 high-income countries



Source: Pew Research Center. *Global Attitudes Survey 2025*

# Trust in people with different political views

## Canada

General trust in others is one thing, but can people trust others with whom they disagree about politics? This question was also addressed in the research, and the results are largely the same. As with general trust in others where they live, a clear majority of Canadians (61%) assign a medium level of trust to people whose political views are different from their own, with the balance giving either high trust (24%) or low trust (15%).<sup>1</sup>

As with general trust, it is Canadians who support the federal Liberal Party who are the most likely to say they would trust people with a different political viewpoint (30% high trust, versus 11% low trust). Opinions are more divided among those who would vote for the federal Conservative Party (20%, versus 19%) or NDP (22%, versus 17%).



A majority of Canadians assign a medium level of trust to people whose political views are different from their own, with the balance giving either high trust or low trust.

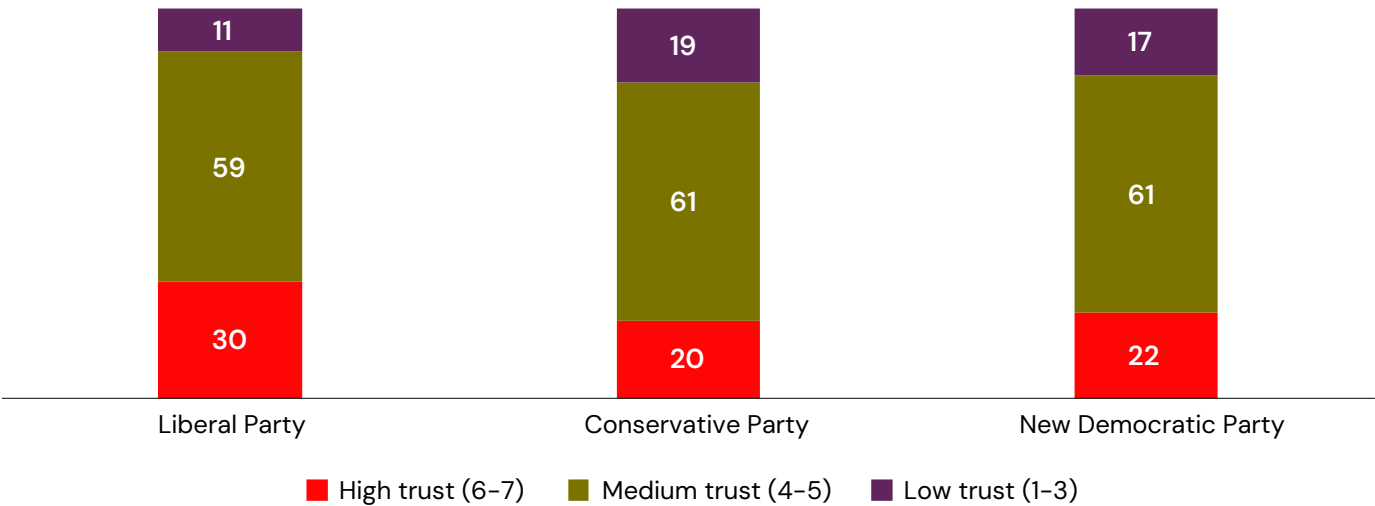
<sup>1</sup> This question used a 7-point response scale, with endpoints labelled as “not at all” (1) and “a lot.” (7). For reporting purposes these scale points were combined to reflect low trust (1 – 3), medium trust (4 – 5) and high trust (6 – 7). This question is new to the AmericasBarometer in 2025.



Figure 6

Trust in people with whose political views are different from your own – Canada

2025, by federal party support



Please answer the following questions using a number on a scale ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 means NOT AT ALL and 7 means A LOT. If your opinion is between not at all and a lot, you would choose an intermediate score. To what extent do you trust people whose political views are different from yours?

## United States

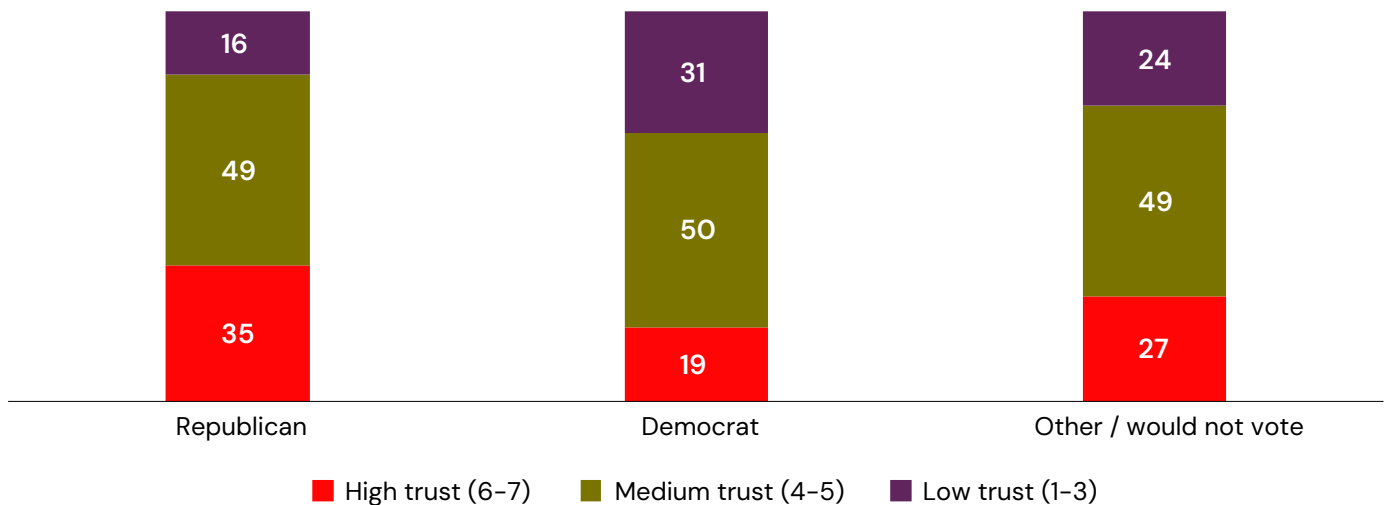
In comparison with Canadians, Americans are more likely to be definitive in whether they trust or distrust others with whom they disagree on politics. About half (49%) place a medium degree of trust in others with a different political outlook, with the rest divided between those expressing high trust (27%) and those indicating low trust (24%).

As with general social trust, Republican voters are the most open to others with whom they disagree, but the difference is more striking: they are more than twice as likely to place a high degree of trust (35%) than a low degree of trust (16%) in others whose political views they disagree with. Democratic voters, by comparison, are much less likely to trust those with whom they disagree (19% have high trust, versus 31% with low trust). In between these two extremes are Americans who would vote for another party or who say they would not vote (28%, versus 23%).

### Figure 7

#### Trust in people with whose political views are different from your own – United States

2025, by federal party support



*Please answer the following questions using a number on a scale ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 means NOT AT ALL and 7 means A LOT. If your opinion is between not at all and a lot, you would choose an intermediate score. To what extent do you trust people whose political views are different from yours?*

# Conclusion

What can we learn from this research? Both Canadians and Americans are qualified in the degree of trust they place in others who live in their local communities. Most consider the people around them to be “somewhat trustworthy,” with about one in five who express unequivocal confidence either side who are unequivocal in expressing either strong or weak trust in others. But this is essentially the same as it has been for more than a decade; the research shows that trust in others has remained largely stable since 2012, despite the growing political and cultural divisions we see happening in various forms as well as a global pandemic that isolated Canadians from one another for an extended period.

Moreover, the deepening partisan gulf now underway (especially in the US) is not reflected in a growing divide in how voters of different parties view the trustworthiness of their neighbours. Majorities consider others around them to be somewhat trustworthy, regardless of whether they would vote Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Republican or Democrat.

One distinction worth noting is that Canadians and Americans who support the political party currently in government are more trusting in others whose political views are different from their own. This mirrors partisan differences in how the public in both countries trust their political institutions (as measured elsewhere in this research), and suggests that the broader political context may exert some influence in how people relate to others at the local level.

Such differences aside, the main conclusion from this research is that the divisive political rhetoric, cultural skirmishes and social media chatter that have come to characterize our public square over the past decade has not eroded Canadians’ or Americans’ sense of trust in others around them. This offers a hopeful indicator of resilience in the underlying social glue that binds us together as functioning societies.



# Canadian Survey

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