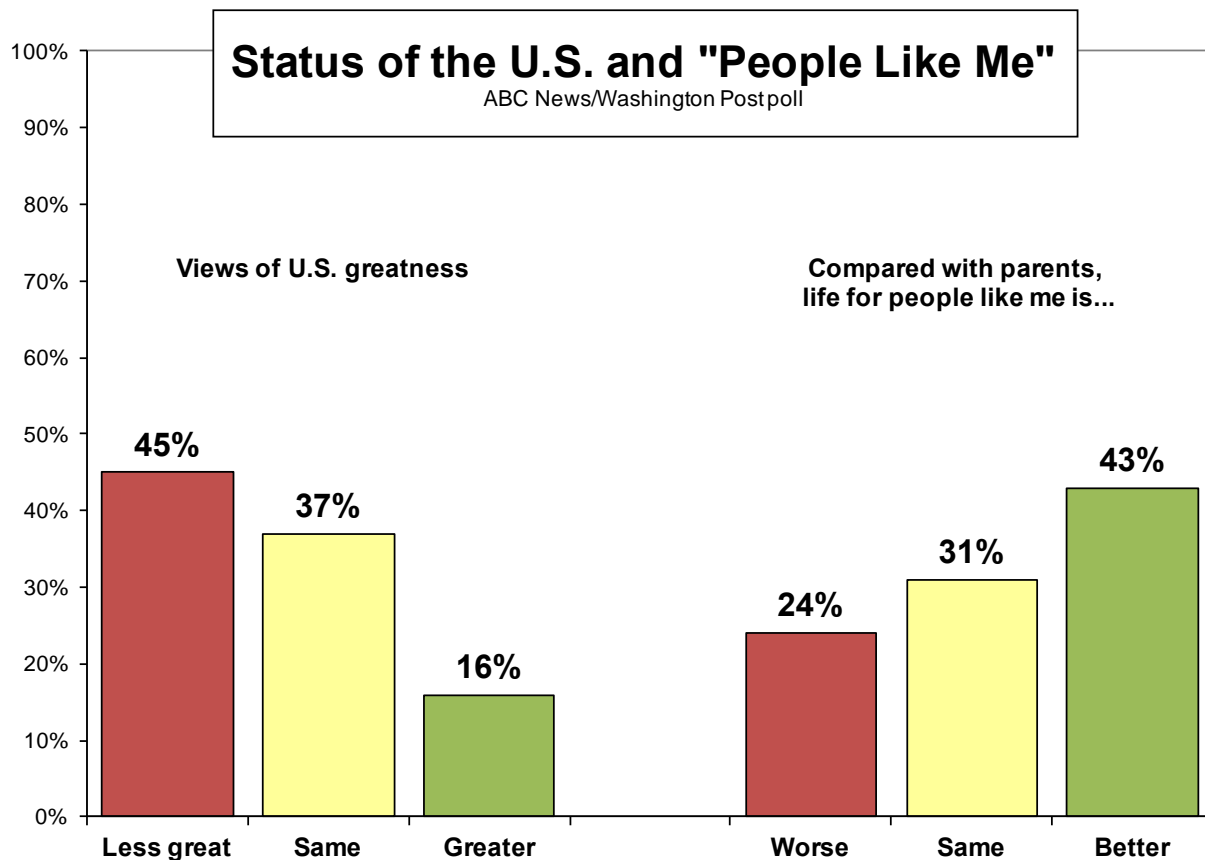


Pessimistic or Optimistic? Election-wise, it Matters

Two-thirds of Americans feel they have little or no influence over the actions of the federal government. Forty-five percent say the country's greatness is ebbing. As many see voter fraud as commonplace. A third aren't confident that votes in the presidential election will be counted fairly. And a third say people like them are treated unfairly in this country.

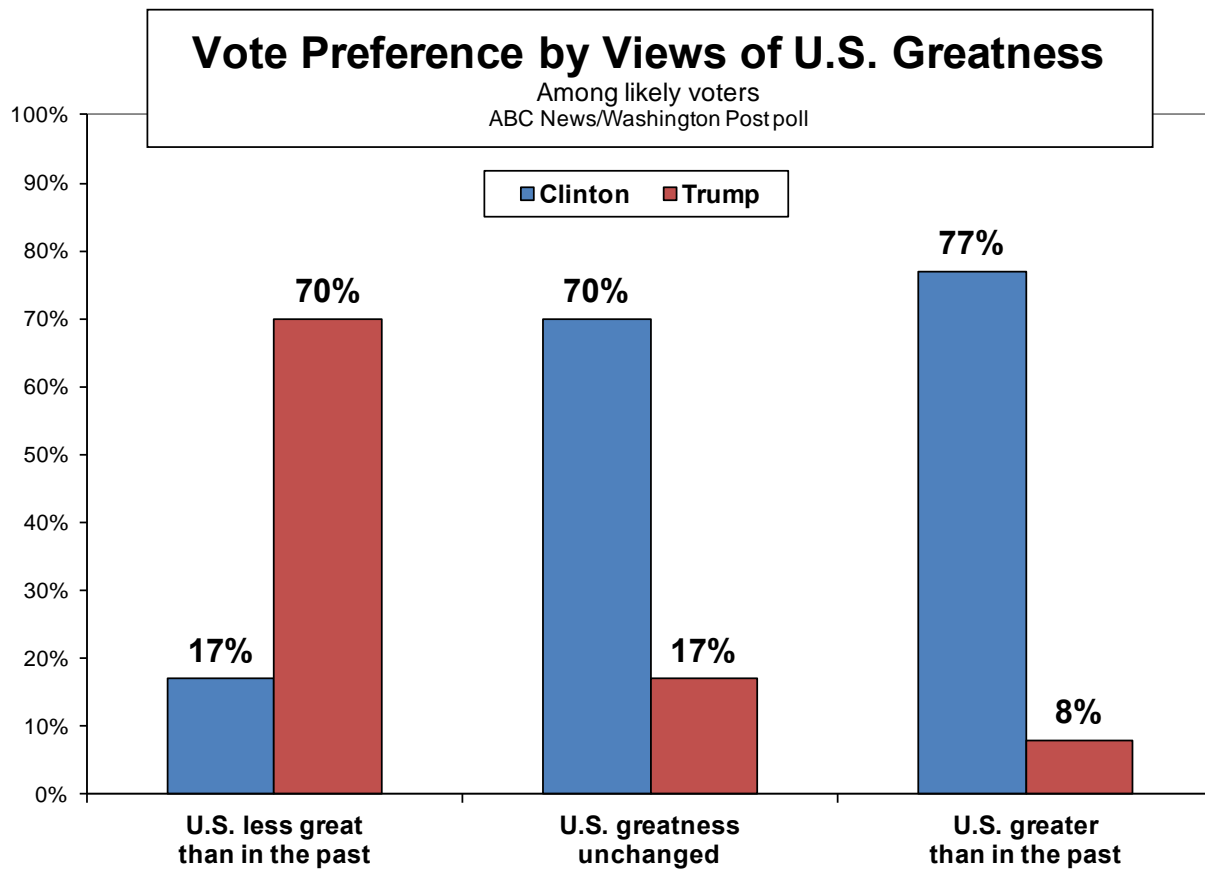
The latest ABC News/Washington Post poll finds that each of these viewpoints corresponds with support for Donald Trump. At the same time, many Americans have a rosier outlook – and they're a far better group for Hillary Clinton.



The results of this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), mark the extent to which underlying views of the state of the nation interact with political preferences: In some ways, a pessimists-vs.-optimists election.

In one example, among likely voters who feel that the United States is less great than it's been in the past, 70 percent support Trump. But among the majority that says the country is the same or better in terms of greatness, 72 percent back Clinton.

Additionally, while a plurality (45 percent, as noted) says the United States is less great, about as many (43 percent) also say that people like them are better off than their parents were. Trump easily wins those who feel worse off, 58-29 percent, but better-off likely voters prefer Clinton over Trump by a substantial 23-point margin, 56-33 percent.



In the most pervasive negative, 68 percent feel that people like them have little to no influence on what the federal government does. The sharp division comes in the 33 percent who feel most disenfranchised, saying they have no influence on the government at all. Trump leads Clinton among likely voters in this group by 55-24 percent (with 12 percent for Libertarian Gary Johnson and 5 percent for Green Party candidate Jill Stein). Voters who report little influence divide about evenly between Clinton and Trump; those who feel greater efficacy instead back Clinton by 70-20 percent.

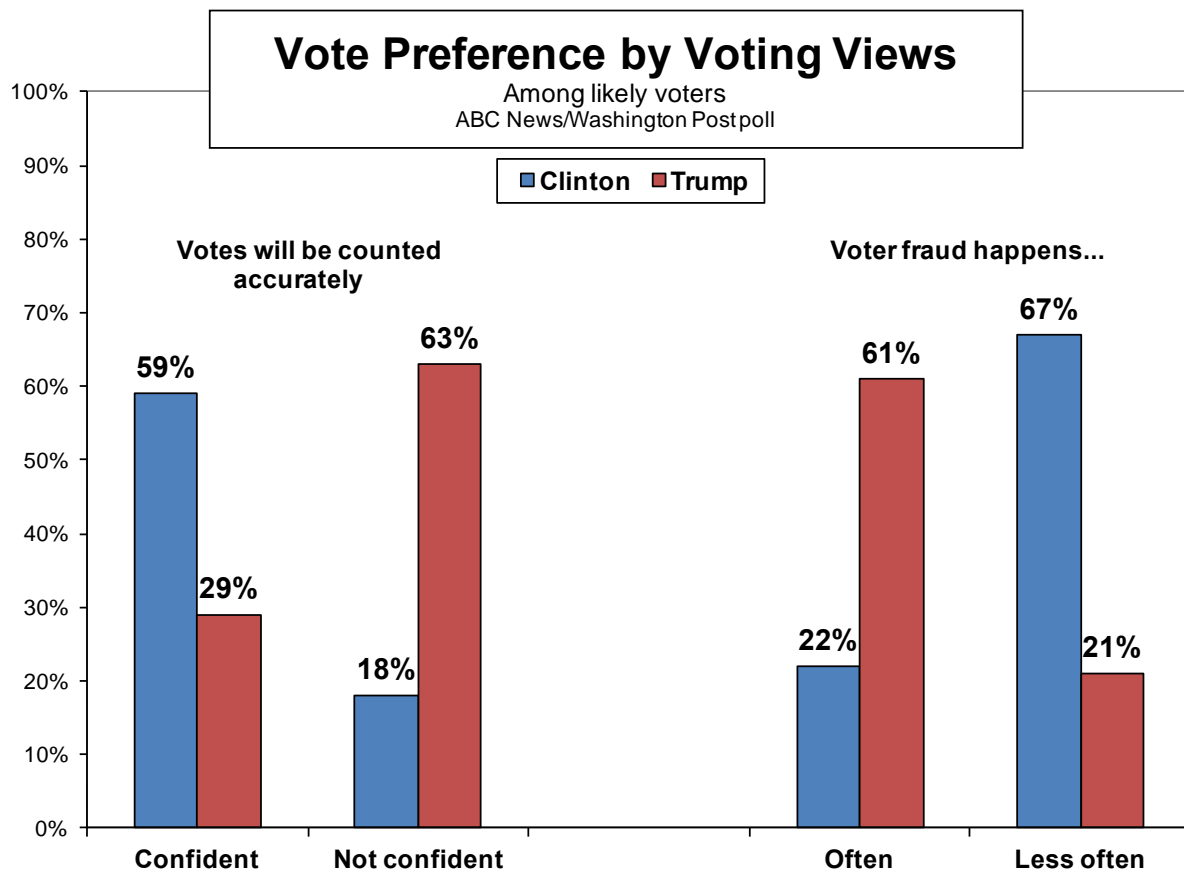
Among other groups, Trump leads by 22 points among likely voters who think people like them don't get a fair shake, 55-33 percent, and by 58-29 percent among those who think their quality of life has fallen behind their parents'.

Trump also capitalizes on the widespread distrust of the election process. Likely voters who lack confidence that votes will be counted accurately back him over Clinton by 63-18 percent. He has a similar 61-22 percent advantage among those who think voter fraud happens somewhat or very often.

BUT WAIT – That said, just more than half of the public feels the United States is as great (37 percent) or greater (16 percent) than it’s been in the past, 64 percent think people like them are treated fairly and 74 percent say that the quality of life for people like them has either held steady (31 percent) or improved (43 percent). Each of these groups broadly favors Clinton over Trump.

She leads by a vast 69-point margin among likely voters who feel the country is greater than it was in the past, but also by a whopping 53 points among those who feel the country’s greatness hasn’t changed. She’s +23 among those who feel that their quality of life is better than their parents’ generation and +19 among those who think people like them are treated fairly.

Clinton also captures the support of those with greater trust in the democratic system. More than six in 10 Americans are at least somewhat confident that votes will be counted accurately and half feel that voter fraud is an infrequent occurrence. Likely voters in these groups back Clinton by 30- and 46-point margins, respectively.



	Preference among likely voters		
	Clinton	Trump	Clinton-Trump diff.
All	46-41-	9- 2%	+5 pts.
People like me:			
Worse off	29-58-	9- 2	-29
Same	45-38-13-	2	+7
Better off	56-33-	7- 2	+23
Not treated fairly	33-55-	6- 2	-22
Treated fairly	52-33-10-	2	+19
No influence	24-55-12-	5	-31
Have little influence	43-46-	8- 1	-3
Have a lot/some influence	70-20-	6- 0	+50

Moreover, although just 32 percent of Americans feel they have at least some influence over the federal government, Clinton’s broad 50-point advantage among likely voters in this group counteracts Trump’s lead among the majority who feel they have little to no influence.

OPPOSING VIEWS – In profile, Trump and Clinton backers espouse vastly different worldviews. Eighty-five percent of Trump’s supporters feel they have little to no influence over the federal government and 82 percent feel the United States is less great than it once was. Seven in 10 think that voter fraud happens with at least some frequency and more than half are not confident that votes will be counted accurately.

In contrast, eight in 10 Clinton backers feel the United States is as great or greater than it’s been in the past and more than half feel that life is better for them now than it was for their parents’ generation. Less than a quarter think voter fraud happens with at least some frequency, just 16 percent feel they have no influence at all over the government and only 13 percent lack confidence that votes will be tallied correctly.

POLITICS – Not surprisingly, nearly all of these views are closely linked with political partisanship and ideology. For example, while seven in 10 Republicans feel America’s greatness has waned, just a quarter of Democrats say the same. There’s also a vast ideological divide – two-thirds of conservatives feel the United States has declined, compared with just 23 percent of liberals. Political independents and moderates fall in the middle – 43 and 41 percent, respectively, say the country is less great than it used to be.

Republicans are twice as likely as Democrats to think voter fraud happens frequently, 61 vs. 30 percent, and to lack confidence that the votes for president across the country will be counted accurately, 46 vs. 21 percent. Conservatives are more likely than liberals to hold these views by 36- and 19-point margins, respectively.

	----Party ID---			----Ideology----		
	Dem	Rep	Ind	Lib	Mod	Cons
America’s less great	25%	71%	43%	23%	41%	66%
Treated unfairly	30	37	35	31	30	41

Life worse	17	28	26	23	19	32
No influence	20	34	41	26	33	34
Not conf. in count	21	46	40	26	31	45
Freq. voter fraud	30	61	48	27	43	63

Republicans also are 14 points more likely than Democrats to feel people like them have no influence over what the federal government does, 34 vs. 20 percent (this peaks, though, among independents), and 11 points more likely to say life has gotten worse compared with their parents' generation, 28 vs. 17 percent. Reports of unfair treatment for "people like you," however, do not significantly differ by partisanship.

GROUPS – Views of the United States' greatness and perceptions of one's own group's status are intertwined. Americans who feel that the quality of life for people like them has declined also are far more apt to feel the country's greatness has faltered, compared with those who think things have improved, 75 vs. 31 percent. This gap remains even after controlling for partisanship, ideology and demographic differences.

Skepticism about the election and beliefs about the country's status also go hand in hand, independent of political predispositions. Six in 10 of those who think voter fraud happens frequently also feel that the country's greatness has declined, compared with just three in 10 of those who think voter fraud is less common. Americans who lack confidence that votes will be counted accurately similarly are far more likely to view the country's greatness as waning.

There also are demographic differences that remain even after controlling for partisanship and ideology. Among them:

- Nonwhites are less likely than whites to see declines in the United States' greatness or their quality of life – despite being more likely to report that people like them are treated unfairly and expressing greater concern that votes will not be counted accurately.
- Higher-income Americans are more likely than lower-income adults to feel the country's greatness is waning, but also 16 points less likely to feel people like them are treated unfairly, 38 vs. 22 percent.
- College-educated Americans are 16 points less likely to think voter fraud is a frequent occurrence and 12 points less apt to lack confidence that votes will be counted accurately, compared with those who lack a four-year degree.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Sept. 5-8, 2016, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,002 adults, including 642 likely voters. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including the design effect, for the full sample, and 4.5 points for likely voters. Partisan divisions are 34-24-33 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents, in the full sample, and 36-28-31 among likely voters.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y. See details on the survey's methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Julie Phelan.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contacts: [Heather Riley](#), (212) 456-4396, or [Julie Townsend](#), (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

1-32 previously released.

On another subject,

33. How confident are you that the votes for president across the country will be accurately counted this year: very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident or not confident at all?

	--- More confident ---			----- Less confident -----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	opinion
9/8/16	63	27	36	35	18	18	1
12/19/04*	71	43	28	29	16	13	0
10/27/04 LV	70	25	46	28	20	8	1

*"were accurately counted"

34. Thinking about voter fraud - like the same person voting multiple times or someone voting who is not eligible - do you think this happens very often, somewhat often, occasionally or rarely?

	----- Often -----			----- Not often -----			Never	No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Occasionally	Rarely	(vol.)	opinion
9/8/16	46	20	26	50	24	26	1	3

On another subject,

35. Do you think the United States is (less great) than it's been in the past, is (greater) than it's been in the past, or about the same?

	Less	Greater	About	No
	great		the same	opinion
9/8/16	45	16	37	2

36. Overall, do you think people like you get fair treatment in this country, or not?

	Get fair	Do not get	No
	treatment	fair treatment	opinion
9/8/16	64	34	2

37. Compared with your parents' generation, is life for people like you better, worse or about the same?

	Better	Worse	Same	No opinion
9/8/16	43	24	31	2

38. (IF WORSE) Do you think people in other groups than yours are getting ahead while people like you are falling behind, or are people in other groups falling behind too?

	Other groups getting ahead	Other groups falling behind	No opinion
9/8/16	18	78	4

37/38 NET:

	Better	NET	----- Other groups getting ahead	Worse ----- Other groups falling behind	No opinion	Same	No opinion
9/8/16	43	24	4	19	1	31	2

39. How much say do you feel people like you have in influencing what the federal government does - a lot, some, a little or none at all?

	- More influence -			--- Less influence ---			No opinion
	NET	A lot	Some	NET	A little	None	
9/8/16	32	8	24	68	35	33	1

*** END***