

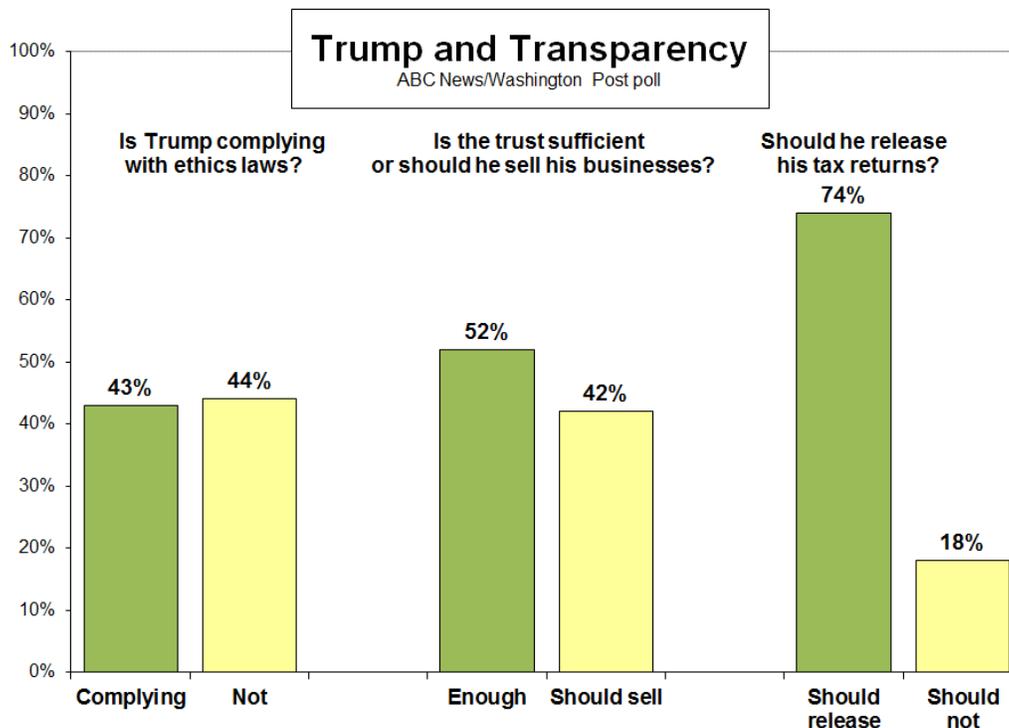
Public Splits on Trump’s Ethics Compliance; Three-Quarters Want Tax Returns Released

Americans divide evenly on whether the incoming Trump administration is complying with ethics laws. And while a bare majority in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll accepts Donald Trump’s business ownership plan, three-quarters say he should release his tax returns.

Contrary to his comment that the American public doesn’t care about the issue, four in 10 say they care “a lot” about Trump releasing his tax records.

This report is a first look at results of an extensive ABC/Post pre-inaugural poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#). Results on Trump’s handling of the transition, views on his policy proposals and expectations for his presidency will be released Tuesday morning, with results Wednesday morning on Barack Obama’s final ratings as president.

In terms of ethics, the poll finds Americans are split on whether or not Trump, his family and his advisers are complying with federal ethics laws: Forty-three percent think so, while 44 percent think not.



Partisan and ideological gaps are wide: Seventy-nine percent of Republicans say Trump is complying with ethics laws, dropping to 44 percent among independents and just 16 percent of Democrats. Similarly, it's 72 percent among strong conservatives, slipping to 56 percent among "somewhat" conservative Americans, then plummeting to 37 percent of moderates and 25 percent of liberals.

These divisions also are evident in another measure: Among Americans who say they wanted Trump to win the presidency – 36 percent of the public – a broad 85 percent think he's in compliance ethically. That drops to just 11 percent of those who wanted Hillary Clinton to win (39 percent of all adults) and a third of those who preferred other candidates, or none of them.

Despite criticism by some ethics officials, 52 percent overall say Trump's plan to continue owning his businesses while placing them in a trust managed by his sons is sufficient. Forty-two percent instead say he should sell his businesses, peaking at 71 percent of Clinton supporters, vs. just 10 percent of those who favored Trump for the office.

Views on tax returns shift decidedly away from Trump's position. Seventy-four percent overall say he should release his tax returns; that includes 49 percent of his own supporters, as well as nearly all of Clinton's (94 percent) and 83 percent of those who had another preference, or none.

The number who favor release of the documents is higher than it was in two related questions in ABC/Post polls during the election campaign. In May, 64 percent said he should release the returns, and in September, 63 percent said he was not justified in withholding them.

In one key support group for Trump, non-college-educated white men, 58 percent say he should release the tax returns; that rises to 81 percent of college-educated white women and 88 percent of nonwhites. By another measure, 69 percent in the red states – those Trump won – say he should release these records, as do 81 percent in Clinton's blue states.

Forty-one percent, overall, say they "care a lot" about Trump releasing the records – 47 percent in the blue states, 36 percent in the states Trump won. At a news conference last week, Trump said: "The only one that cares about my tax returns are the reporters." As far as other Americans, he said: "I don't think they care at all."

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Jan. 12-15, 2017, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,005 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 31-23-37 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

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 Gary Langer.

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

Media contacts: [Heather Riley](#) or [Julie Townsend](#).

Full results follow.

1-13, 17-25 held for release.

*= less than 0.5 percent

14. Trump has announced that he will continue owning his businesses while putting them in a trust run by two of his children and another executive. Do you think this is enough to separate Trump's business interests from his obligations as president, or do you think he should sell his businesses?

	Is enough	Should sell his businesses	No opinion
1/15/17	52	42	6

15. Given what you've heard or read, do you think Trump, his family and his advisers are or are not complying with federal ethics laws? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Are complying -----			----- Not complying -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
1/15/17	43	22	21	44	12	32	13

16. Do you think Trump should or should not release his tax returns? (IF SHOULD RELEASE) How much do you care about that - a lot, or not so much?

	----- Should release -----			Should not release	No opinion
	NET	Care, a lot	Care, not so much		
1/15/17	74	41	33	18	8

Compare to:

Trump has not released his tax returns, while Clinton has released hers. Do you think Trump is justified in not releasing his tax returns, or not?

	Justified	Not justified	No opinion
9/22/16	31	63	6

All major presidential candidates in the last 40 years have publicly released their tax returns before the election. Trump has said he may not do this. Do you think Trump should release his tax returns before the November election, or is it OK if he does not release his tax returns? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Should release -----			--- OK if he does not ---			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
5/19/16	64	54	9	31	11	20	5

*** END ***