



## COVID-19 Survey Summary: May 8, 2020

The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network (SEAN). Surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

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### Reopening America

Even with restrictions easing in many areas of the country, majorities of Americans remain opposed to reopening a range of businesses:

- About eight in 10 say movie theaters (82 percent) and gyms (78 percent) should not be allowed to open now. Three-quarters say the same about dine-in restaurants and nail salons (both 74 percent).
- Seven in 10 don't think gun stores (70 percent) or barber shops and hair salons (69 percent) should be allowed to open; 66 percent say the same about retail shops.
- Fifty-nine percent oppose opening golf courses.

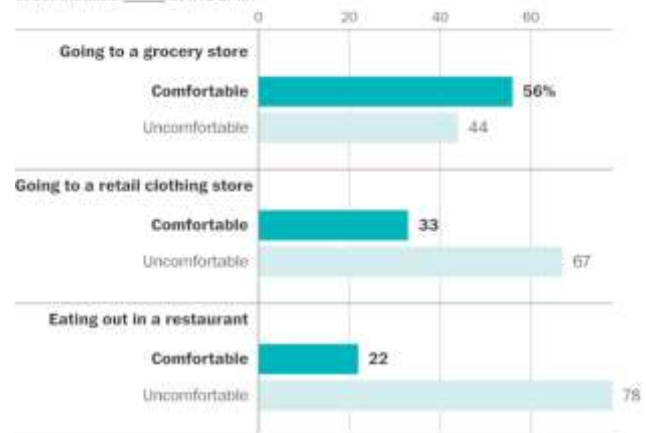
Even in states that have loosened restrictions, majorities overall oppose re-opening each of the eight business types tested ([Post/UMD 4/28-5/3](#)).

Indeed, while 56 percent would be comfortable going to a grocery store, just a third say they'd feel comfortable going to a retail clothing store and 22 percent would feel comfortable eating out in a restaurant – suggesting that allowing these stores to open may not be enough to get customers through the door ([Post/UMD 4/28-5/3](#)).

Fifty-six percent say “making sure as few people as possible get sick from the coronavirus” should be a more important factor in deciding whether to lift restrictions than “making sure the economy doesn't go into a deep and lengthy downturn,” 33 percent. More than twice as many are more concerned that states will lift restrictions too

#### A majority is comfortable going to a grocery store now; larger majorities are uncomfortable going to stores or eating out

Q: Regardless of current restrictions in your area, would you feel comfortable or uncomfortable \_\_\_\_\_ at this time?



Note: "No opinion" not shown.

Source: April 28-May 3, 2020, Washington Post-U. Md. poll of 1,005 U.S. adults with a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.5 percentage points.

quickly than that they will not lift them quickly enough, 63 vs. 29 percent ([Monmouth 4/30-5/4](#)). [Pew Research Center](#) and [ABC/Ipsos](#) surveys have similar results on lifting restrictions.

Partisanship divides in these views. In deciding when to lift restrictions, Democrats focus on avoiding increased infections over preventing an economic downturn by 80-12 percent. It's a much closer 49-36 percent among independents. And among Republicans, the result flips: Fifty-four percent think preventing an economic downturn should be a more important factor in these decisions, while 36 percent prioritize limiting the spread ([Monmouth 4/30-5/4](#)).

Republicans also are far more supportive of opening each of the eight business types tested. But even among Republicans and those who lean toward the GOP, majorities support reopening for just two – golf courses (61 percent) and retail shops (53 percent) ([Post/UMD 4/28-5/3](#)).

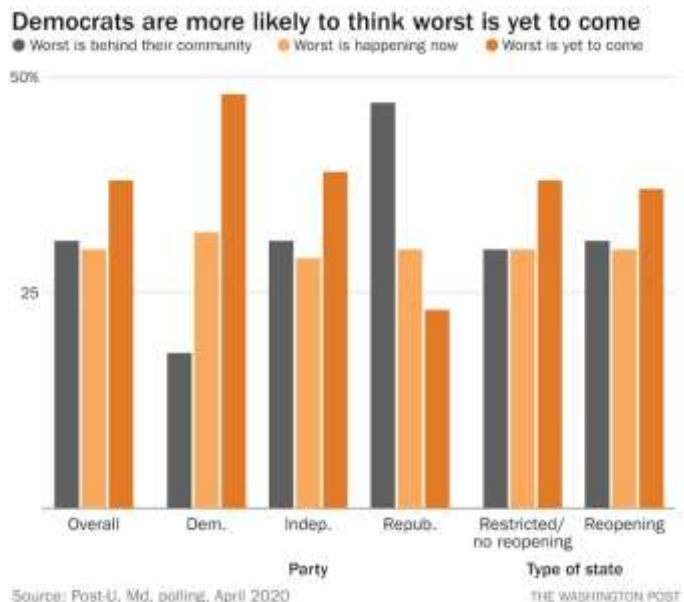
### Contact and Concern

The number of Americans who personally know someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus reached a new high, 29 percent. Seventeen percent know someone who tried to be tested but was turned away; 12 percent know someone who has died because of the virus ([Axios/Ipsos 5/1-5/4](#)).

If an effective vaccine becomes available, 74 percent of Americans say they are likely to get vaccinated – but 25 percent say they are not likely to do so ([ABC/Ipsos 5/8-9](#)).

Health concerns remain high, with 63 percent worried about becoming seriously ill from the coronavirus. And in terms of impacts overall, 38 percent think the worst is yet to come for their community, with an additional three in 10 say the worst is happening now, leaving just 31 percent who say the worst for their community is behind them ([Post/UMD 4/28-5/3](#)).

Democrats are likeliest to think the worst is yet to come (48 percent), while Republicans are most apt to say the worst is behind their community (47 percent). Independents divide more evenly among the three choices. Notably, residents of states that have eased restrictions are no more likely to think the worst is behind (or ahead) than those living in states that have maintained strict restrictions ([Post/UMD 4/28-5/3](#)).



### Daily Life

Seventy-two percent of Americans are spending 20 hours or more per day at home, down from a peak of 81 percent in early April. That includes 82 percent of those living in the hard-hit Northeast, compared with 67,

69 and 71 percent of Midwesterners, Westerners and Southerners, respectively ([SSRS/LoT Sports Poll 4/28-5/3](#)).

In tandem with the decline in average time spent at home, perceptions of the risk of several everyday activities has eased:

- For the second week, about a quarter of Americans say they've visited with friends or family in the past week, up from 19 percent a month ago. The number who view gathering with friends and family outside one's household as a large risk to their health or well-being has declined from 53 percent in mid-April to 36 percent now.
- In mid-April, seven in 10 said going to the grocery store was a large or moderate risk to their well-being; now about six in 10 say the same. Just a quarter think picking up take-out is at least a moderate risk, down from 33 percent; and 14 percent think having online purchases delivered is a risk, down from two in 10.
- The number who call it a large risk to travel on an airplane or mass transit has eased, from 73 to 67 percent, and the number saying the same about attending in-person events or conferences has gone from 68 to 60 percent ([Axios/Ipsos 5/1-5/4](#)).
- Fifty-six percent now report feeling safe getting together with one other person (4 or 5 on a 0-5 scale from "not at all safe" to "totally safe"), up from a low of 38 percent in early April. Thirty-five percent feel safe getting together with "a few people," up from 20 percent in the same period ([SSRS/LoT Sports Poll 4/28-5/3](#)).

Partisanship is a strong factor in perceptions of risk, as well. Republicans are nearly twice as likely as Democrats to feel safe getting together right now with a few people (46 vs. 24 percent), as well as more likely to feel safe gathering with "more than a few but no more than 100 people" (21 vs. 5 percent) or 100-1000 people (13 vs. 3 percent) ([SSRS/LoT Sports Poll 4/28-5/3](#)).

Although restricted access to household supplies and foods has waned in general ([Axios/Ipsos 5/1-5/4](#)), food insecurity is [reported](#) to have risen dramatically. Nearly three in 10 say it was at least sometimes true in the past 30 days that "we worried our food would run out before we got money to buy more" and two in 10 say it was at least sometimes true that "the food that we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have money to get more" ([COVID Impact 4/20-4/26](#)).

Looking to the future, nearly half, 47 percent, say they've canceled summer plans such as a trip or vacation rental, a camp, or kids' program; and 58 percent are at least somewhat concerned about the possibility of schools not re-opening in the fall ([Axios/Ipsos 5/1-5/4](#)).

### Economic Impact

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' latest [monthly jobs report](#), released today, shows an unemployment rate of 14.7 percent in April, up 10.3 points since March, the largest single-month increase in data back since 1948. U6 (underemployment) is 22.8 percent, up from 8.7 percent.

Illustrating disproportionate economic impact on minorities, 20 percent of Hispanics and 16 percent of blacks report being laid off or furloughed since the pandemic began, compared with 11 percent of whites. Young adults and those without a college degree also are more apt than others to have lost their jobs ([Post/Ipsos 4/27-5/4](#)).

Half of those who report being laid off since the outbreak began say they have applied for unemployment; an additional one in 10 tried to apply but was unsuccessful. Only 28 percent of these laid-off workers say they have received benefits. About a quarter of those laid off say they'll be in real financial trouble in less than a month if nothing changes ([Post/Ipsos 4/27-5/4](#)).

Still, laid-off workers are optimistic about their future job prospects. About three-quarters think it is very (58 percent) or somewhat (19 percent) likely that they will be rehired by their previous employer once stay-at-home orders are lifted ([Post/Ipsos 4/27-5/4](#)).

Echoing the sharp 7.5 percent decline in consumer spending in March [reported last week](#), half of adults say they've been spending less money in recent months, up nearly 20 points from a year ago. The last time so many reported spending less was 2010. Forty-seven percent expect this to be a temporary reduction in spending, compared with 33 percent who said so in the aftermath of the Great Recession ([Gallup 4/14-4/28](#)).

Americans' ratings of their personal finances sustained their largest one-week drop in seven years as consumer sentiment overall extended its steepest downturn in 34 years of weekly surveys. It's gone from a 19-year-high in January to its lowest since October 2014 ([Bloomberg CCI 4/7-5/3](#)).



Six in 10 Americans say they've received stimulus money from the government, up from 49 percent the past two weeks. Thirty-five percent of recipients say they've put at least some of their stimulus money into savings, a quarter have used some of the money for food and basic household needs, 23 percent to pay off debts and 14 percent to pay rent or mortgage. Two in 10 say they have not spent it yet, but plan to ([Axios/Ipsos 5/1-5/4](#)).

### Government Response

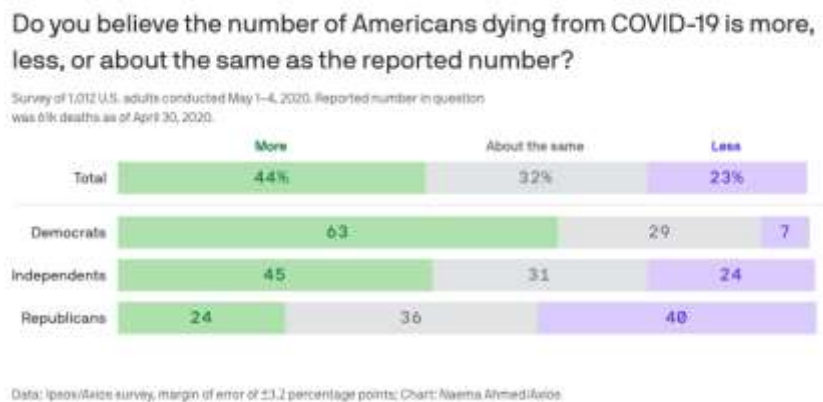
Americans divide, 42-45 percent, on whether the measures taken by the federal government to slow the spread of the coronavirus have been appropriate or haven't gone far enough (one in 10 says they've gone too far). This has improved from 35-54 percent last month. Still, 54 percent continue to say the federal government is not doing enough to help hard-hit states ([Monmouth 4/30-5/4](#)).

Just 38 percent trust the federal government to "look out for the best interests of you and your family," a number that's declined steadily from a high of 53 percent in mid-March. More trust their local (65 percent) and state government (62 percent) to look out for their interests, but those too are off their mid-March peaks ([Axios/Ipsos 5/1-5/4](#)). (See also state results, below.)

Overall, 42 percent of Americans think President Trump has done a good job handling the outbreak, while 51 percent say he’s done a bad job. More than half, 55 percent, think Trump has been largely inconsistent in his press briefings from day to day, while 36 percent say he’s been consistent. When specifically asked about the advice Trump has given about how to prevent and treat the virus, 42 percent say it’s been harmful, 33 percent helpful and 23 percent say it’s not been particularly harmful or helpful ([Monmouth 4/30-5/4](#)).

### Death Count and News Coverage

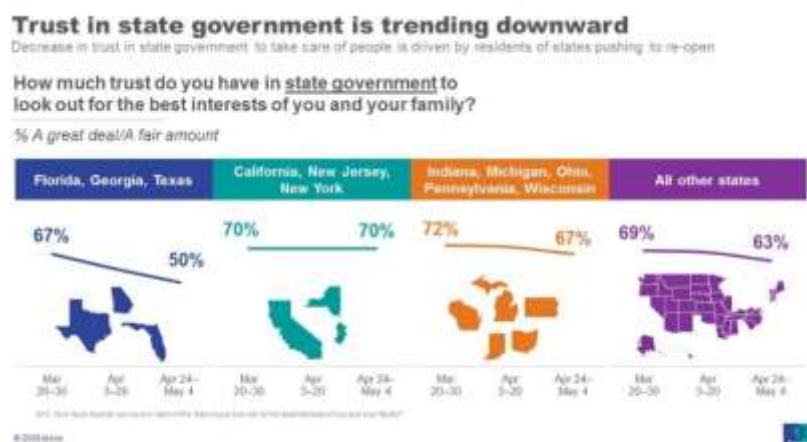
As noted, partisanship relates to many views of the pandemic, and that extends to trust in the official death count. Most Americans are skeptical of the official death toll; 44 percent think the actual number dying is more than indicated, while 23 percent think fewer are dying than reported. Sixty-three percent of Democrats think the official tally is an undercount, while 40 percent of Republicans think it’s an overcount ([Axios/Ipsos 5/1-5/4](#)).



Perceptions of media coverage of the coronavirus more generally are largely positive. Seven in 10 say the news media have covered the outbreak very or somewhat well, steady since March. Fewer, 48 percent, feel the news media have exaggerated the risks of the virus, down from 62 percent in March. Republicans are less apt to view the news media coverage favorably, and more apt to feel the media have exaggerated the risk ([Pew 4/20-4/26](#)).

### State Results

Trust in one’s state government to “look out for the best interests of you and your family” for has dropped in Florida, Georgia and Texas (combined) – three states that have pushed ahead with plans to re-open – from 67 percent in late March to 50 percent now. In the same period, trust has remained high in California, New York and New Jersey, which have plotted a slower path to re-opening; seven in 10 in these states continue to express trust





in their state government ([Axios/Ipsos 5/1-5/4](#)).

Majorities in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut report personally knowing someone who has been diagnosed with the virus – 71 percent in New Jersey, 63 percent in New York and 61 percent in Connecticut. About four in 10 in New Jersey know someone who has died from the virus, as do 35 percent of New Yorkers and 22 percent in Connecticut.

Roughly half of households in these states have faced financial hardship because of the pandemic. Still, about two-thirds say the restrictions in their state are “about right,” while two in 10 think they don’t go far enough and 13 to 16 percent think they go too far. About one in 10 thinks it’s safe to lift their state’s stay-at-home order immediately and about three in 10 think it’ll be safe in the next few weeks, leaving a majority in each state who feel it will take longer than that ([Quinnipiac 4/30-5/4](#)). (Results are among self-identified registered voters.)

### International Results

Four weeks after lockdown measures were introduced in Great Britain, about eight in 10 adults say they have not left the house at all or except for permitted reasons in the past seven days. A similar number, 81 percent, express strong support for the stay-at-home measures. About half say their well-being is being affected by the pandemic, about a quarter say it’s impacting their household finances and two in 10 say their relationships are being affected. Four in 10 now think it’ll be longer than six months until life returns to normal, up from 33 percent in the first week of lockdown ([Office for National Statistics 4/17-4/27](#)).

In Australia, two-thirds report feeling anxious or worried about their personal safety or the safety of their friends and family because of the coronavirus. Four in 10 think it is likely that they will be infected in the next six months. As elsewhere, employment has dropped, particularly among younger adults and senior citizens. More than a quarter overall think there’s more than a 50 percent chance they’ll lose their job in the next year. At the same time, 57 percent of Australians now express confidence in the federal government, up sharply from 27 percent in January ([Australian National University 4/14-4/27](#)).

In South Korea, six in 10 report being very or somewhat worried about the coronavirus, down from 77 percent in late February, when cases in the country peaked. Roughly half think they are at least somewhat likely to be infected. Six in 10 evaluate President Moon Jae-in’s overall job performance positively ([Korea Gallup 4/21-4/23](#)).

In Ukraine, 76 percent support continuing the country’s quarantine until at least May 12, and 52 percent say they’re ready for it to be extended further. More than half think the worst is yet to come. Three-quarters continue to fear that they or a loved one will get coronavirus, but the number who are very afraid of this has declined from 40 to 29 percent. This ease in strong fears accompanies a decline in the number who report taking several precautionary measures, such as reducing trips to the grocery store (from 64 to 56 percent) not using public transportation (56 to 49 percent), avoiding unnecessary trips out of the house (from 76 to 71 percent) and disinfecting surfaces (from 66 to 59 percent) ([R&B Group 4/18-4/24](#)).

In Mexico, two-thirds support measures that prohibit meeting with other people and 63 percent support strong restrictions on people leaving their houses, but a majority expresses opposition to measures that would restrict their freedom of expression (e.g., by forbidding criticism of the government or spreading fake news or misinformation about the virus). The population divides 47-52 percent on whether the people should rally around the president and his government during the health crisis or if people should demand results from them ([El Financiero 4/17-4/18](#)).

In Bulgaria, 55 percent feel the measures taken by authorities in response to the epidemic are sufficient, 32 percent feel they're excessive and 12 percent find them insufficient. Views that the measures are excessive have nearly doubled since mid-March. During that period, the number who report thinking coronavirus is not a serious danger increased from 12 to 23 percent, and the number who say their income has decreased because of the virus has grown from 36 to 46 percent ([Gallup International Bulgaria 5/1-5/3](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

*Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).*