



WORLD HEADQUARTERS  
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## Most Americans are Satisfied with the U.S. Electoral System, but Divide on Democracy and Trusting Election Results

**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** GQR and Redbud Consulting

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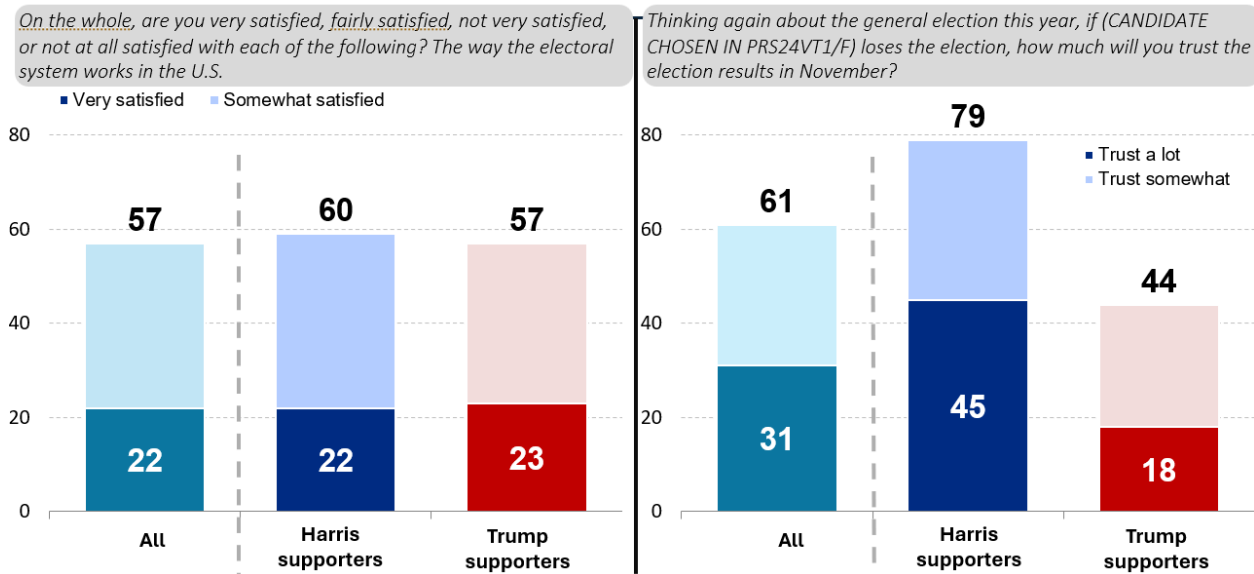
Heading into the 2024 elections, majorities of Americans across demographic and partisan groups are satisfied with the way the electoral system works generally, but large partisan and demographic differences emerge in satisfaction with democracy and trust in the results of the upcoming elections.<sup>1</sup> The results of a bipartisan survey conducted by GQR and Redbud Consulting for Issue One show that 57 percent of Americans are very or somewhat satisfied with the way the electoral system works in the U.S., including 60 percent of those who support Vice President Kamala Harris and 57 percent of those who support former President Donald Trump.

But rhetoric sowing distrust in election results, largely stemming from Trump's false insistence that he won the 2020 election, has created substantial divides in how elections results are viewed. When asked if they will trust the election results if their preferred candidate loses, 61 percent say they will trust the results a lot or somewhat. Nearly eight in ten Harris supporters (79 percent) say they will trust the results if she loses, but that drops to 44 percent among Trump supporters if he loses.

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<sup>1</sup>GQR and RedBud Consulting conducted a 20-minute online survey among 1500 adults nationally, including 1200 base and oversamples of an additional 100 Black, 100 Hispanic, and 100 Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) adults. The survey fielded September 3-9, 2024. Respondents were selected from Verasight's online panel community, which blends probability-based recruited panelists with opt-in panelists. Because the sample is based in part on those who initially self-selected for participation in the panel rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to multiple sources of error, including, but not limited to, sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error. If this poll were conducted among a probability sample, then the margin of error would be +/- 2.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval; the margin of error is higher among subgroups. The data are statistically weighted to Census parameters for region, age, education, and gender composition. Partisanship is weighted to an average of partisanship in recent high-quality surveys, including Pew Research and Gallup. In this report, results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Net results cited in the text may not exactly match individual results shown in the charts due to rounding.

**Figure 1: Satisfaction with Democracy vs. Trust in Election Results if Preferred Candidate Loses**



### Satisfaction with elections and democracy

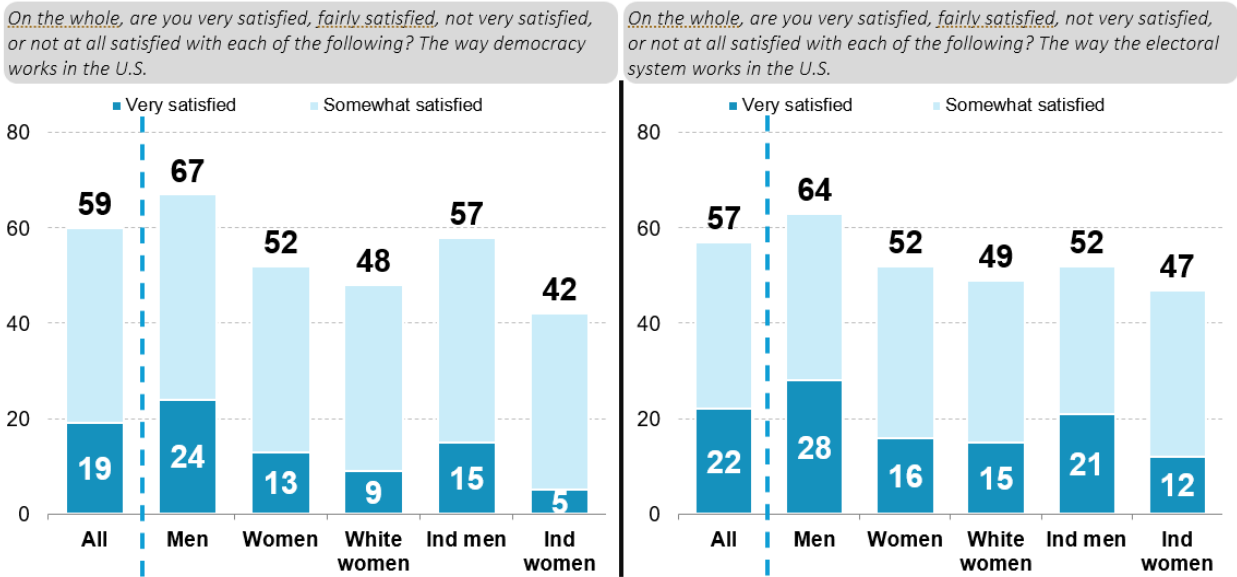
Most Americans (57 percent) are very or somewhat satisfied with the way the electoral system works in this country. Men (64 percent) are more likely than women (52 percent) to express satisfaction with the electoral system, and this pattern is largely driven by lower satisfaction among white women (49 percent).

Similarly to likelihood to vote, there is little difference between Republicans (62 percent) and Democrats (60 percent), but independents express less satisfaction (49 percent). Independent women (47 percent) are driving this trend downward; among independent men satisfaction is 52 percent. Trump supporters (57 percent) are only slightly less satisfied than Harris supporters (60 percent).

While most Americans are very or somewhat satisfied with the way democracy works in the U.S. (59 percent), a gender gap persists with 67 percent of men satisfied, compared to 52 percent of women. White women (48 percent) and independent women (42 percent) are among the lowest satisfaction groups. Black Americans (69 percent) are more likely than white (57 percent), Hispanic (63 percent), or AAPI (53 percent) adults to say they are satisfied with how democracy works in the U.S.

Large partisan divides emerge on this question. Republicans (52 percent) and independents (49 percent) are much less likely than Democrats (74 percent) to express satisfaction with the way democracy works, and Trump supporters (49 percent) are much less likely than Harris supporters (74 percent) to say they are satisfied.

Figure 2: Gender Gaps in Satisfaction with Democracy and the Electoral system

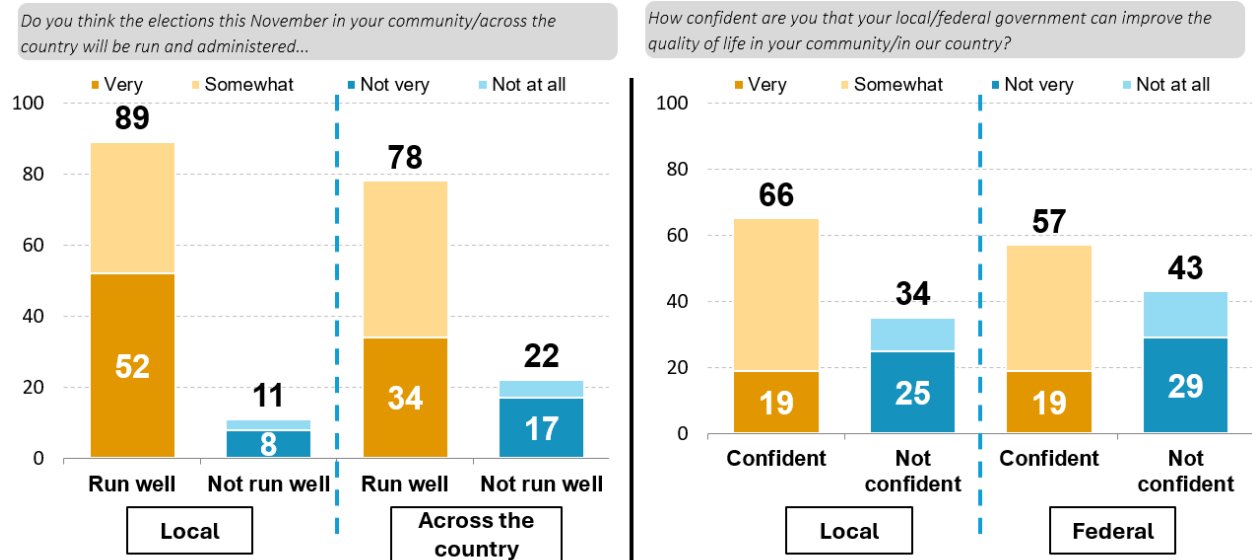


### Confidence in local elections vs. national elections

Local elections and local government earn more trust than their federal counterparts. Most Americans – 89 percent – say their local elections are run well, including 52 percent who say they are run very well. Gender differences persist: 57 percent of men say local elections are very well run, compared to 49 percent of women. Independent women (35 percent) and women under age 50 (37 percent) are particularly less likely to say local elections are very well run. About half of Republicans (49 percent) say local elections are very well run, compared to 65 percent of Democrats. Independents drop to 40 percent. Trump supporters (45 percent) are less likely than Harris supporters (66 percent) to say local elections are very well run.

Americans express tepid confidence in their local governments’ ability to improve the quality of life in their communities – 19 percent are very confident, while the plurality (46 percent) are somewhat confident. There are not a lot of demographic differences on confidence in local government, but there are partisan differences: Republicans (19 percent) and independents (11 percent) are less likely than Democrats (26 percent) to say they are very confident in their local government. Trump supporters (17 percent) are a little less likely than Harris supporters (24 percent) to say they are very confident.

Figure 3: Local vs. National Government



Americans are less likely to say elections across the country are run very or somewhat well (78 percent), with 34 percent saying they are run very well. There are not large gender differences on this assessment, one of the few items that men and women rate similarly. Partisanship shows larger gaps than on local elections: Republicans (25 percent) and independents (25 percent) are half as likely as Democrats (49 percent), and Trump supporters (23 percent) are less than half as likely as Harris supporters (50 percent) to say national elections are run very well.

Confidence in the federal government to improve the quality of life is similar to confidence in local government, with 19 percent very confident and 38 percent somewhat confident in the federal government. Again, there is not a large gender gap, but there is a sizeable difference in assessments by race: white Americans (16 percent) and AAPI (18 percent) are less likely than Black (28 percent) and Hispanic (25 percent) Americans to say they are very confident in the federal government’s ability to solve problems.

Republicans (19 percent) are less likely than Democrats (27 percent) to be very confident in the federal government, and independents (10 percent) are less likely than either. Trump supporters (17 percent) are less likely than Harris supporters (25 percent) to say they are very confident that the federal government can solve the country’s problems.

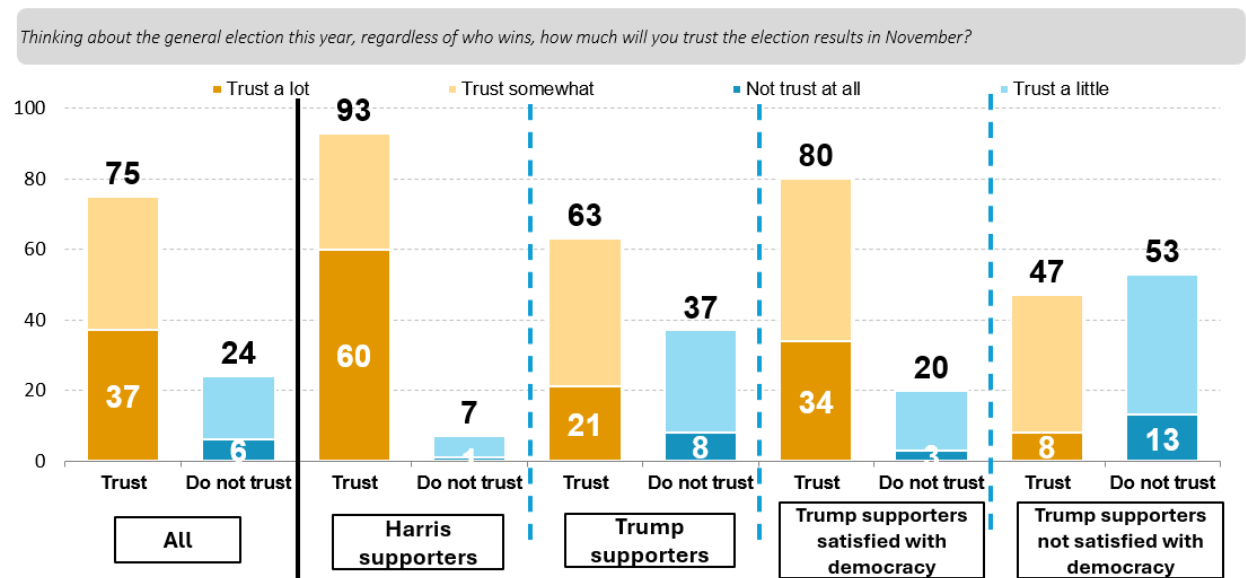
### Trust in election results

Regardless of who wins, 37 percent of Americans say they will have a lot of trust in the results, with an additional 38 percent saying they will somewhat trust the results. Another 18 percent say they will trust the results a little, and 6 percent say not at all. Republicans (23 percent) and independents (30 percent) are less likely than Democrats (56 percent) to say they have a lot of trust in the election results. Those who are satisfied with democracy in the U.S. (51 percent) are much more likely than those who are not

(18 percent) to trust the results, and those who are satisfied with how the electoral system works (47 percent) are more likely than those who are not (25 percent) to say they will trust the election outcome a lot regardless of who wins.

Trump supporters (21 percent) are substantially less likely than Harris supporters (60 percent) to say they will trust the election result a lot regardless of who wins. Trump supporters satisfied with how democracy works (34 percent) are four times more likely than those who are not (8 percent) to say this, and Trump supporters who are satisfied with how the electoral system works (33 percent) are eight times more likely than those who are not (4 percent) to say they will trust the results a lot.

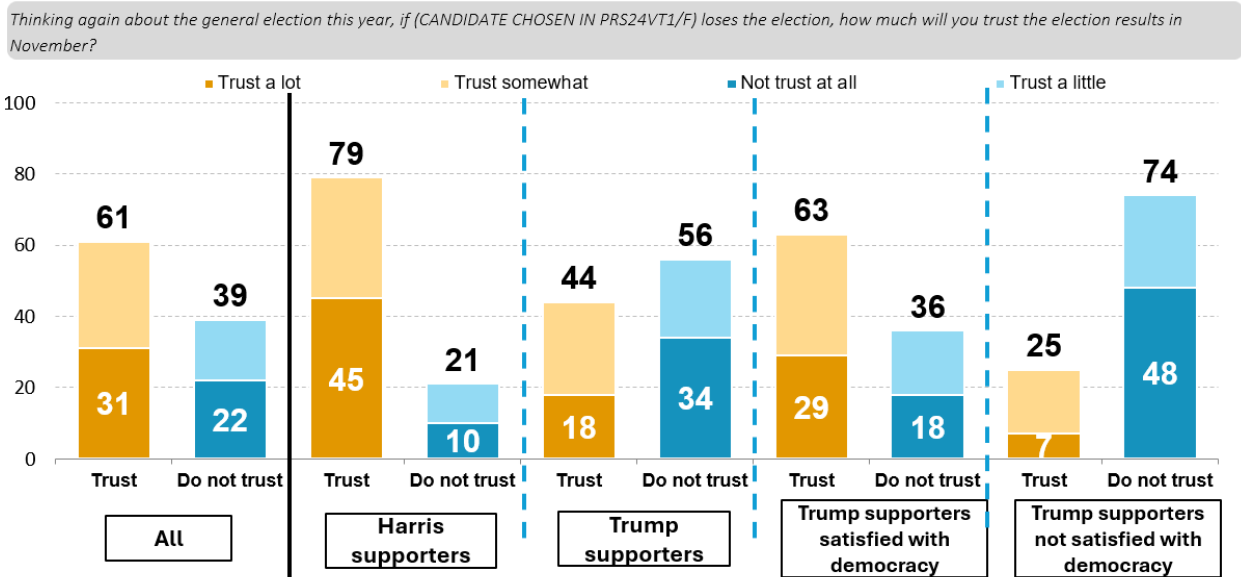
Figure 4: Trust in Results, Regardless of Who Wins



Trust in the election results if the respondent’s chosen candidate loses drops, with 31 percent saying they will trust the results a lot, 30 percent somewhat, 17 percent a little, and 22 percent not at all. Republicans (19 percent) are much less likely than independents (31 percent) and Democrats (42 percent) to trust the results a lot if the candidate they oppose wins. Similarly, those satisfied with democracy (42 percent) are more likely than those who are not (14 percent), and those who are satisfied with the electoral system (39 percent) are more likely than those who are not (20 percent) to say they will trust the results a lot if their preferred candidate loses.

Only 18 percent of Trump supporters say they will trust the results a lot if he loses. That improves to 29 percent among Trump supporters who are satisfied with the way democracy works but shrinks to 7 percent among those who are not satisfied. Similarly, 28 percent of Trump supporters who are satisfied with the electoral system and 5 percent of those who do not say they will trust the results a lot if he loses. Less than half of Harris supporters (45 percent) will trust the results a lot if she loses.

Figure 5: Trust in Results if Preferred Candidate Loses



### Social media and the election

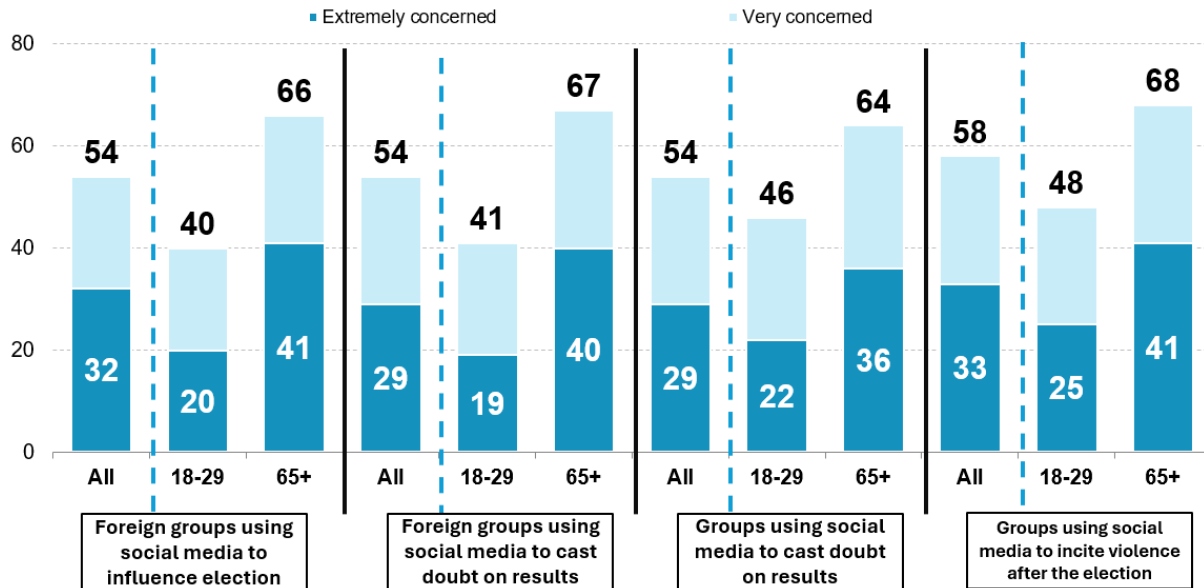
More than half of Americans (54 percent) are extremely or very concerned about foreign groups from places like Iran, China, and Russia using social media to influence the election. There are no substantial demographic or partisan differences besides older Americans (66 percent among ages 65 and over) expressing higher levels of concern than digital native younger Americans (40 percent among ages 18-29). There is a slight difference between 58 percent of Harris supporters and 52 percent of Trump supporters who are extremely or very concerned about foreign agents trying to use social media to influence the election. Concerns about foreign groups using social media to try to cast doubts on the election results are virtually identical.

The same proportion of Americans (54 percent) are extremely or very concerned about groups using social media to try to cast doubts on the results of the election. Older Americans (64 percent) are again more likely to have this concern than younger Americans (46 percent). Harris supporters (64 percent) are more worried about this than Trump supporters (50 percent) – a larger difference than on foreign interference.

A slightly larger majority of Americans (58 percent) are extremely or very concerned that groups will use social media to incite violence after the election, with older Americans’ concern spiking to 68 percent. Still, less than half of younger Americans (48 percent) are extremely or very worried about this. Nearly two-thirds of Harris supporters (65 percent) and a majority of Trump supporters (55 percent) are very or extremely worried about groups using social media to incite post-election violence.

**Figure 6: Concerns About Social Media as a Medium for Bad Actors**

Please indicate how concerned you are about each scenario below regarding social media and the election in November.



**In Sum**

The results of the survey provide encouraging data points – not every measure of satisfaction and confidence in democracy, government, and elections is hugely divided by partisanship or which presidential candidate voters prefer. However, the survey also clearly shows that trust in election results has been eroded among some Republicans and Trump supporters as a result of the stolen election claims and Trump’s refusal to ever concede the 2020 election.

Independent and less engaged voters have less confidence and trust in democracy and elections across the board. It is also notable that women, and particularly white women, have lower trust and confidence in democracy, government, and elections across several measures. Black Americans often have higher trust and confidence than other race and ethnic groups on these metrics.

Efforts to bolster confidence and trust go hand-in-hand with increasing engagement in politics and elections. Those who were not satisfied with the systems were also the groups with the least confidence in governments and trust in elections. Understanding these Americans’ views, and why they are disaffected, is key to building confidence and trust in the system.