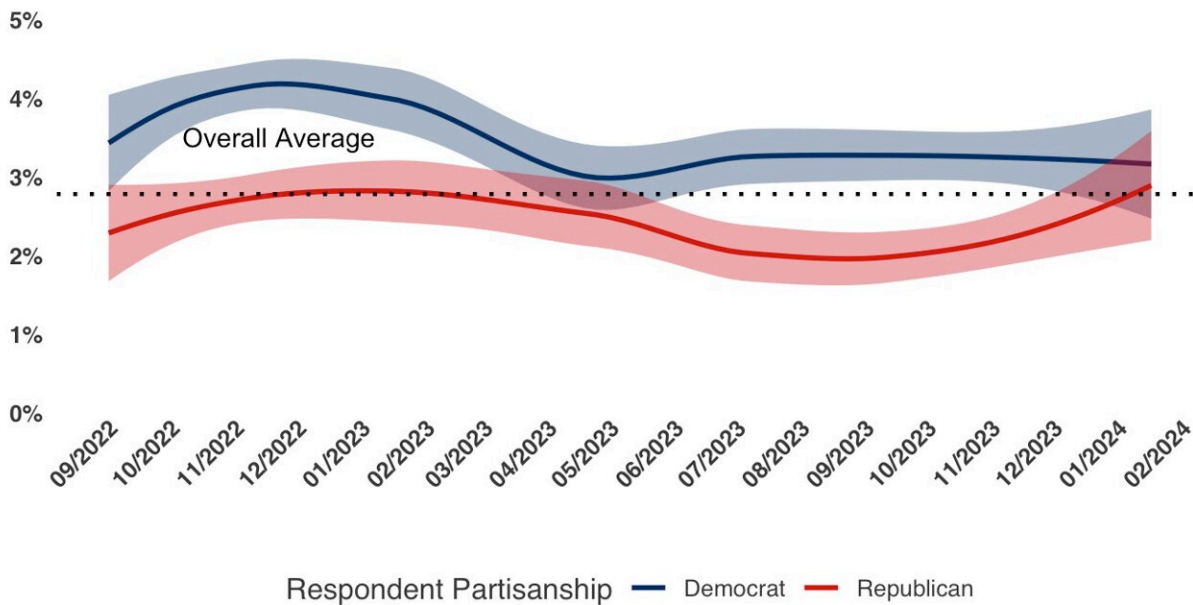


# Report finds most Americans do not support partisan violence

February 20 2024

## Public Support for Partisan Violence

(Assault or More Severe)



Weighted Trends  
September 2022 to January 2024  
PolarizationResearchLab.org

Credit: *Partisan Animosity and America—The Path to the 2024 Presidential Election: Partisan Violence*, (2024)

Despite political chatter about a new civil war, Americans' support for

partisan violence remains very low, according to a [new report](#) issued by the Polarization Research Lab.

Led by Sean Westwood, an associate professor at Dartmouth, and co-directed by Yphtach Lelkes at the Annenberg School for Communication at University of Pennsylvania, and Shanto Iyengar at Stanford University, the research group applies "science to the study of polarization and democracy."

The report, "Partisan Animosity and America," marks the launch of a monthly report series—The Path to the 2024 Presidential Election—which provides an in-depth look at Americans' attitudes on key issues leading up to and following the election in November.

"While there is a common perception that partisan [violence](#) is something that is going to destroy the bedrock of U.S. democracy, our data show that this is, in fact, far from the truth. Americans have a fundamentally incorrect understanding of support for partisan violence," says Westwood, the report author.

"Democrats think 45.5% of Republicans support partisan murder is 20.7 times larger than what our data show. Similarly, Republicans think 42% of Democrats support partisan murder, which is 25 times larger than reality."

"There is a large mismatch between the perceptions that Americans have of the other side and the reality of the state of American politics," says Westwood.

Based on 73,300 survey interviews on the YouGov platform over the last 15 months, including 3,500 in January, the lab tracked American support for partisan violence. The study finds that both Democrats and Republicans reject partisan violence.

Some of the other key findings include:

- Support for any type of partisan violence is low "as fewer than 4% of Americans support violent crimes like assault or arson against [political opponents](#)."
- In like manner, most Americans (about 2%), do not support politically-motivated murder. At 2.1%, Democrats show slightly higher levels of support for this type of partisan violence as compared to Republicans at 1.8%.
- "Support for partisan violence concentrates among young, male, wealthy, non-white, and more educated Americans," according to the [report](#). Support for partisan violence for those under 30 is 5.8% as compared to 1.7% for those above 30, illustrating that young people support this type of violence at nearly three times the rate of the older age group. And among Republicans, MAGA Republicans support partisan violence 1.2 times more than other members of their party.

"Just because you say that you support partisan violence doesn't mean that you, yourself, are going to commit an act of violence," says Westwood.

"Any support for partisan violence in the public is troublesome and we should take note, but small levels of support doesn't mean that we are headed towards a civil war. We must remain attentive to the problem," says Westwood. "As partisan animosity continues to create divisions in our society things could very well get worse."

Public attitudes on issues often move in response to political events, so the lab will administer future surveys to track changes in Americans'

attitudes leading up to November.

**More information:** Report: [prlpublic.s3.amazonaws.com/reports/January2024.html](https://prlpublic.s3.amazonaws.com/reports/January2024.html)

Provided by Dartmouth College

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