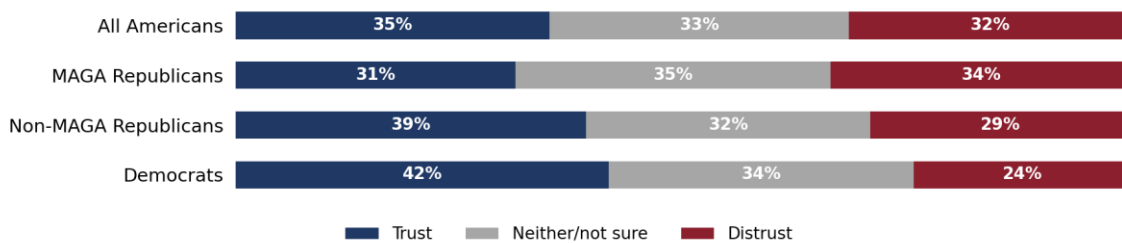


Democrats trust election authorities most, MAGA Republicans least — but most Americans distrust them or aren't sure

Data comes amid fight over state and local election officials' compliance with federal voter-roll demands

July 24, 2026 – As the Trump administration presses state and local election officials nationwide over voter-roll compliance, new data from Angus Reid USA finds considerable distrust (32%) or uncertainty (33%) from Americans toward their state and local election authorities. Overall, the one-third (35%) say they trust these institutions, rising to 39 per cent among non-MAGA Republicans and 42 per cent among Democrats.

Trust in state and local election authorities to do what is right for the American people, by political identity



On most institutions tested in this comprehensive survey, the pattern runs the other way, with Republicans offering more trust and disillusioned Democrats less. Trust in the presidency shows the widest partisan gap of any institution tested, with 72 per cent of MAGA Republicans saying they trust the presidency to do what is right, compared with just 11 per cent of Democrats. The U.S. military and the Supreme Court show similarly wide gaps in the same direction.

Beyond government, other institutions in public life draw more trust. Doctors and scientists are trusted by a majority, as is the military.

KEY FINDINGS

- Trust in the U.S. military divides by age more than any other institution tested: 66 per cent among adults 55 and older, compared with 39 per cent among those 18 to 34.
- Scientists and scientific institutions show the widest partisan gap running in Democrats' favor: 72 per cent of Democrats say they trust scientists, compared with 29 per cent of MAGA Republicans.
- Men report higher trust than women on nearly every institution tested, a gap that is widest on the federal courts, local government, the presidency, and doctors.

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Part One: Trust in Government Institutions

Federal, state and local government institutions show the widest partisan divide in the survey. Trust in the presidency and the Supreme Court depends heavily on political identity, while state and local government, along with election authorities, draw more evenly balanced views across party lines. Public trust in the federal government nationally is near a historic low: just 17 per cent of Americans told the [Pew Research Center](#) in late 2025 that they trust Washington to do what is right most of the time, one of the lowest readings in the nearly seven decades that survey has run.

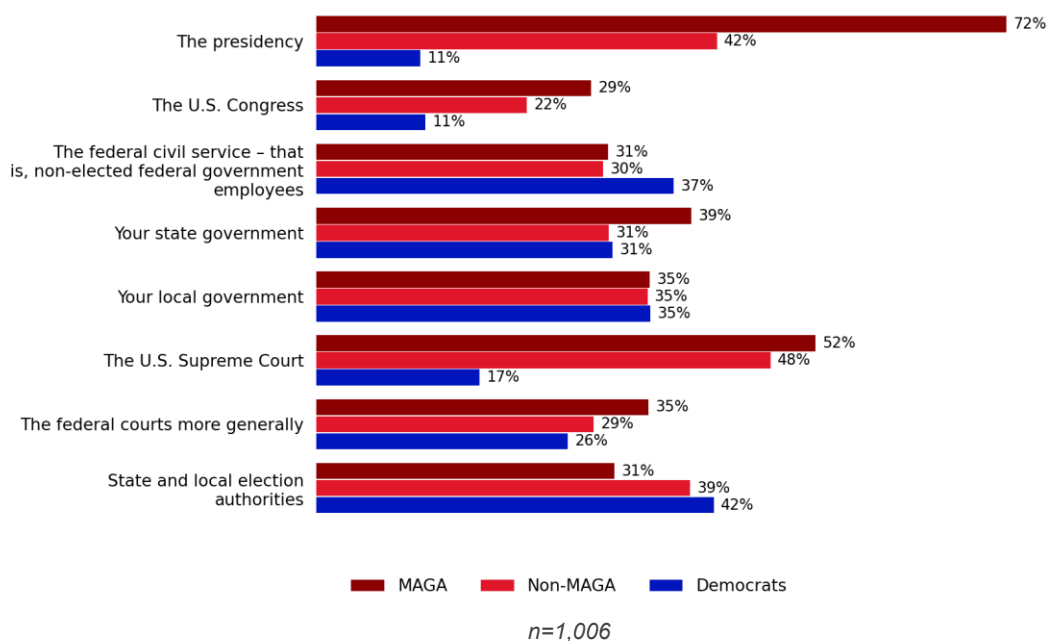
Institution	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	MAGA	Non-MAGA	Dem.
State and local election authorities	35%	40%	31%	37%	31%	36%	31%	39%	42%
Your local government	32%	38%	26%	37%	26%	33%	35%	35%	35%
The federal civil service	31%	34%	28%	33%	30%	30%	31%	30%	37%
Your state government	29%	33%	26%	36%	24%	28%	39%	31%	31%
The U.S. Supreme Court	29%	34%	24%	34%	22%	29%	52%	48%	17%
The presidency	27%	32%	22%	27%	19%	33%	72%	42%	11%
The federal courts more generally	26%	32%	20%	29%	21%	28%	35%	29%	26%
The U.S. Congress	16%	16%	16%	24%	16%	10%	29%	22%	11%

Source: Angus Reid USA, Institutional Trust survey, n=1,006 American adults, fielded July 15-18, 2026. Figures combine “trust completely” and “trust most of the time.” “MAGA” and “Non-MAGA” are self-identified sub-groups among Republican-aligned respondents.

A polarized presidency, a more evenly trusted city hall

Trust in the presidency splits 72 per cent among MAGA Republicans against 11 per cent among Democrats, the widest partisan gap of any government institution tested. The Supreme Court follows a similar pattern, trusted by 52 per cent of MAGA Republicans compared with 17 per cent of Democrats.

How much do Americans trust government institutions to do what is right for the American people? — by political identity

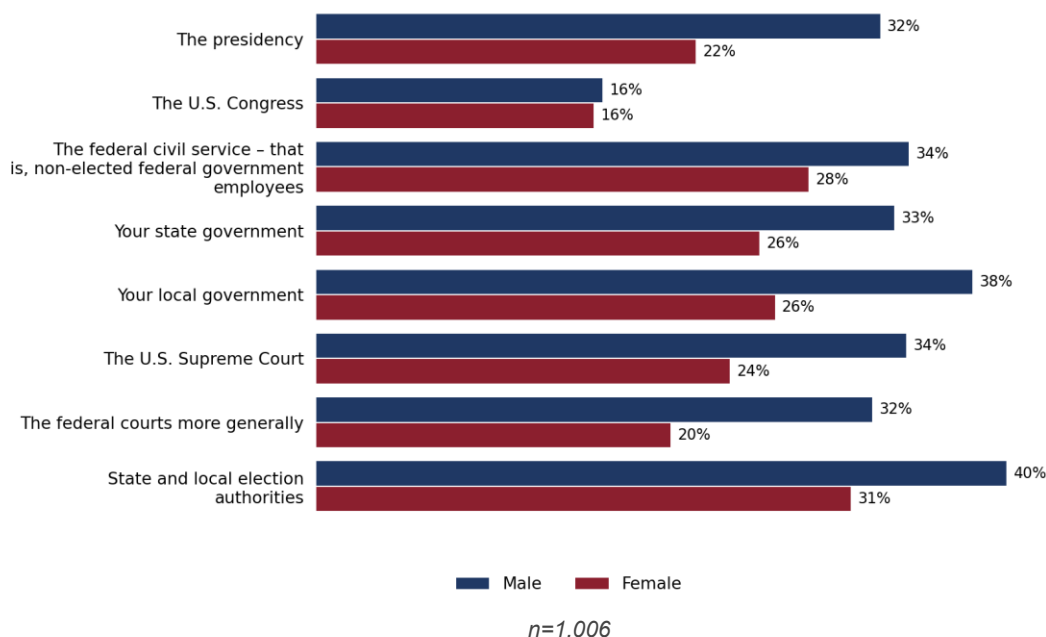


Trust in local government and in state and local election authorities is spread far more evenly across MAGA Republicans, Non-MAGA Republicans and Democrats than trust in the presidency or the Supreme Court. Americans appear to separate their view of national political institutions from the governments closest to home.

Older Americans trust their governments more; younger adults favor Congress

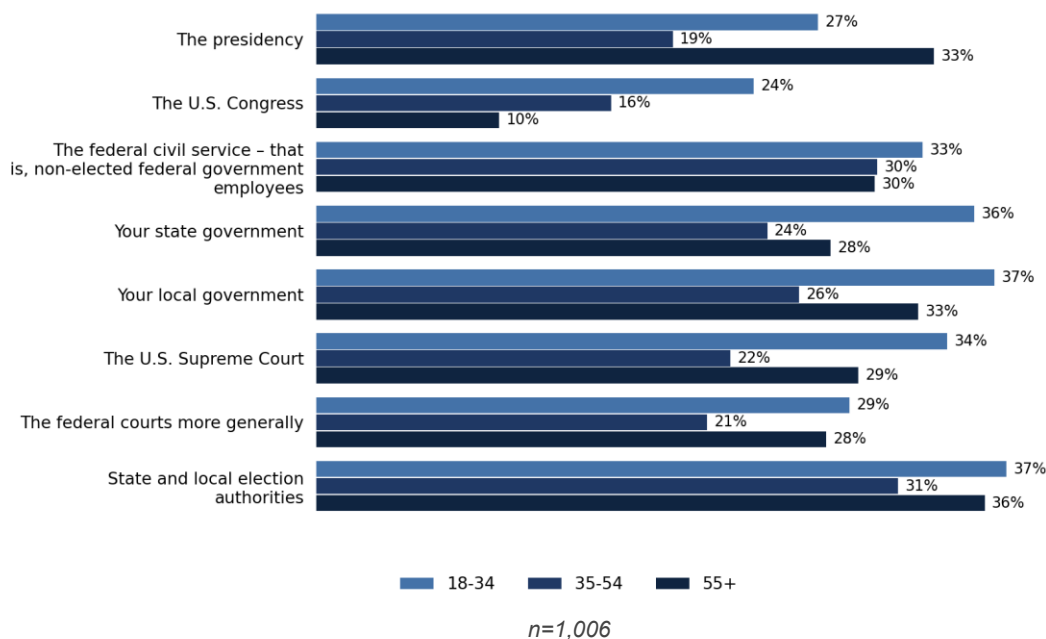
Adults 55 and older report higher trust than those 18 to 34 in the federal civil service, state government and local government.

How much do Americans trust government institutions to do what is right for the American people? — by gender



Trust in Congress runs the other way, skewing slightly younger, while men report higher trust than women across every government institution tested.

How much do Americans trust government institutions to do what is right for the American people? — by age



The gap between men and women is widest on the federal courts and local government, both of which men trust at meaningfully higher rates than women do.

Part Two: Trust in Justice & Security Institutions

Police, courts and national security institutions divide Americans by party and by generation alike. The U.S. military draws the highest overall trust of any institution tested, but that trust is concentrated among MAGA Republicans and older adults. National confidence in the military has been on a longer decline as well: [Gallup](#) has tracked confidence in the armed forces falling to its lowest level in over two decades, a slide that has coincided with a well-documented recruitment shortfall across the services.

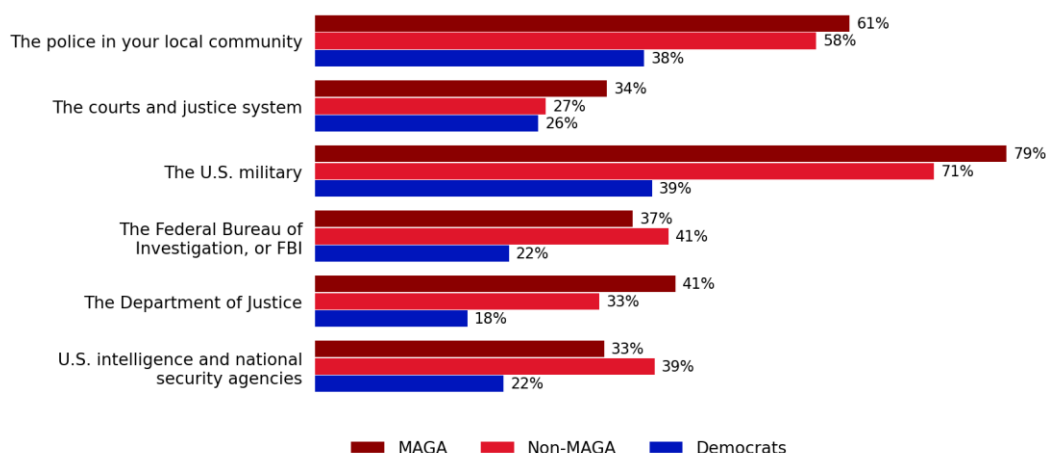
Institution	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	MAGA	Non-MAGA	Dem.
The U.S. military	51%	55%	48%	39%	47%	66%	79%	71%	39%
The police in your local community	45%	47%	42%	40%	36%	57%	61%	58%	38%
The Federal Bureau of Investigation, or FBI	28%	28%	27%	25%	28%	29%	37%	41%	22%
The courts and justice system	26%	28%	25%	30%	23%	26%	34%	27%	26%
U.S. intelligence and national security agencies	26%	27%	24%	25%	24%	28%	33%	39%	22%
The Department of Justice	24%	26%	22%	27%	22%	23%	41%	33%	18%

Source: Angus Reid USA, Institutional Trust survey, n=1,006 American adults, fielded July 15-18, 2026. Figures combine “trust completely” and “trust most of the time.” “MAGA” and “Non-MAGA” are self-identified sub-groups among Republican-aligned respondents.

MAGA Republicans and Democrats are furthest apart on the military

Trust in the military splits 79 per cent among MAGA Republicans against 39 per cent among Democrats, one of the widest partisan gaps in the survey.

How much do Americans trust justice and security institutions to do what is right for the American people? — by political identity

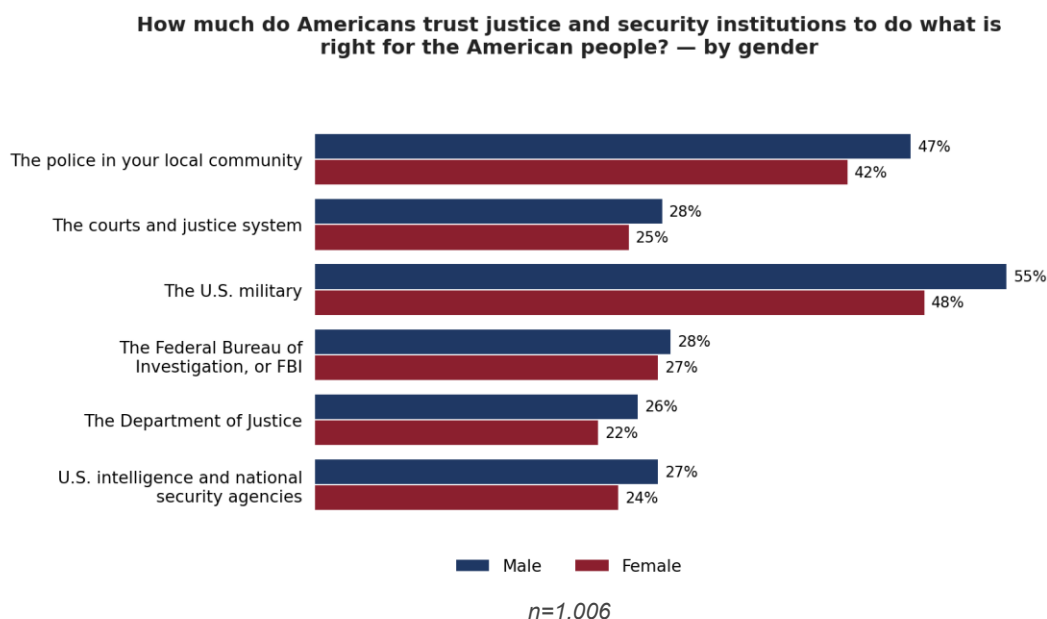


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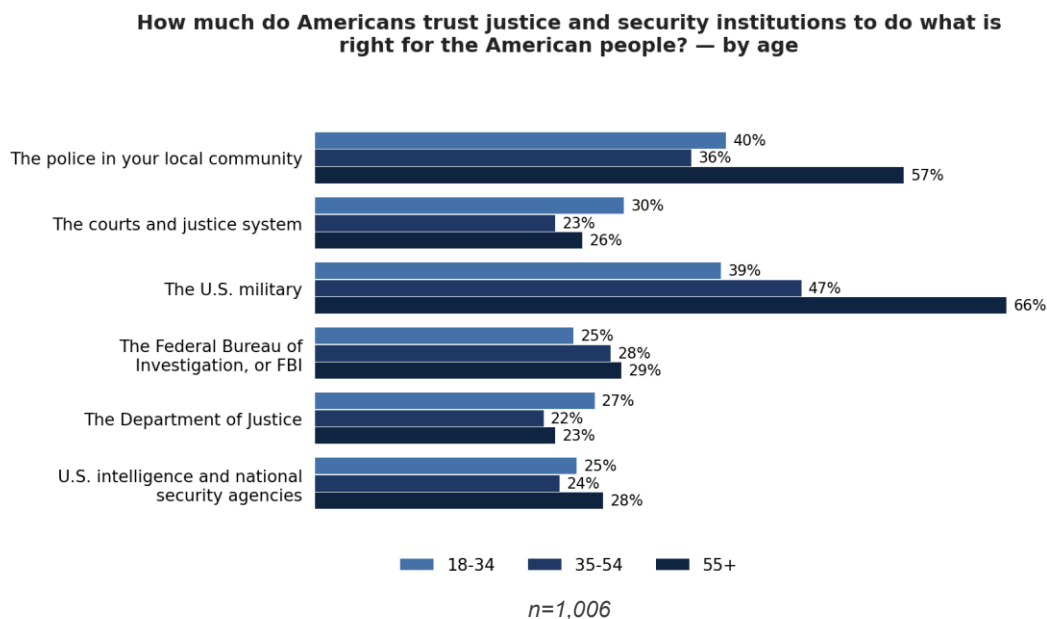
The Department of Justice and intelligence agencies draw lower overall trust but show the same pattern, with MAGA Republicans roughly twice as likely as Democrats to say they trust each.

The military also shows the largest age gap of any institution tested

Trust in the military rises from 39 per cent among adults 18 to 34 to 66 per cent among those 55 and older, a 27-point gap that is the widest recorded anywhere in the survey.



Local policing follows a similar but smaller pattern by age.



Men report modestly higher trust than women across every justice and security institution tested, though the gap is narrower than the one seen by party or by age.

Part Three: Trust in Social & Civic Institutions

Trust in schools, universities, science and the media runs in the opposite direction from government and security institutions: Democrats are consistently more trusting than MAGA Republicans, often by wide margins. Doctors and other medical professionals are the most broadly trusted institution tested across every group measured. That partisan pattern echoes national trends: a [Pew Research Center survey published in January 2026](#) found 90 per cent of Democrats and 65 per cent of Republicans nationally have at least a fair amount of confidence in scientists, a gap that has persisted for years.

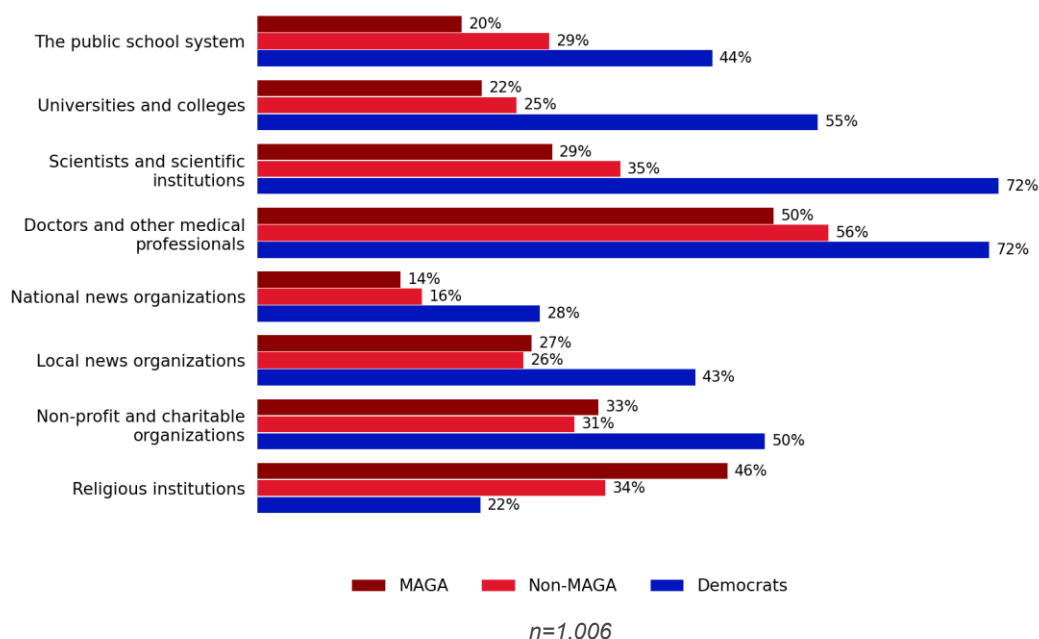
Institution	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	MAGA	Non-MAGA	Dem.
Doctors and other medical professionals	59%	64%	54%	62%	50%	64%	50%	56%	72%
Scientists and scientific institutions	51%	51%	51%	58%	51%	45%	29%	35%	72%
Non-profit and charitable organizations	40%	40%	40%	48%	35%	37%	33%	31%	50%
Universities and colleges	38%	42%	35%	41%	37%	36%	22%	25%	55%
Local news organizations	33%	37%	29%	38%	29%	32%	27%	26%	43%
The public school system	33%	34%	31%	34%	33%	31%	20%	29%	44%
Religious institutions	27%	30%	25%	31%	20%	31%	46%	34%	22%
National news organizations	21%	22%	19%	29%	18%	16%	14%	16%	28%

Source: Angus Reid USA, Institutional Trust survey, n=1,006 American adults, fielded July 15-18, 2026. Figures combine "trust completely" and "trust most of the time." "MAGA" and "Non-MAGA" are self-identified sub-groups among Republican-aligned respondents.

Scientists and universities draw the widest gap in Democrats' favor

Trust in scientists and scientific institutions splits 72 per cent among Democrats against 29 per cent among MAGA Republicans, the widest gap recorded anywhere in the survey.

How much do Americans trust social and civic institutions to do what is right for the American people? — by political identity

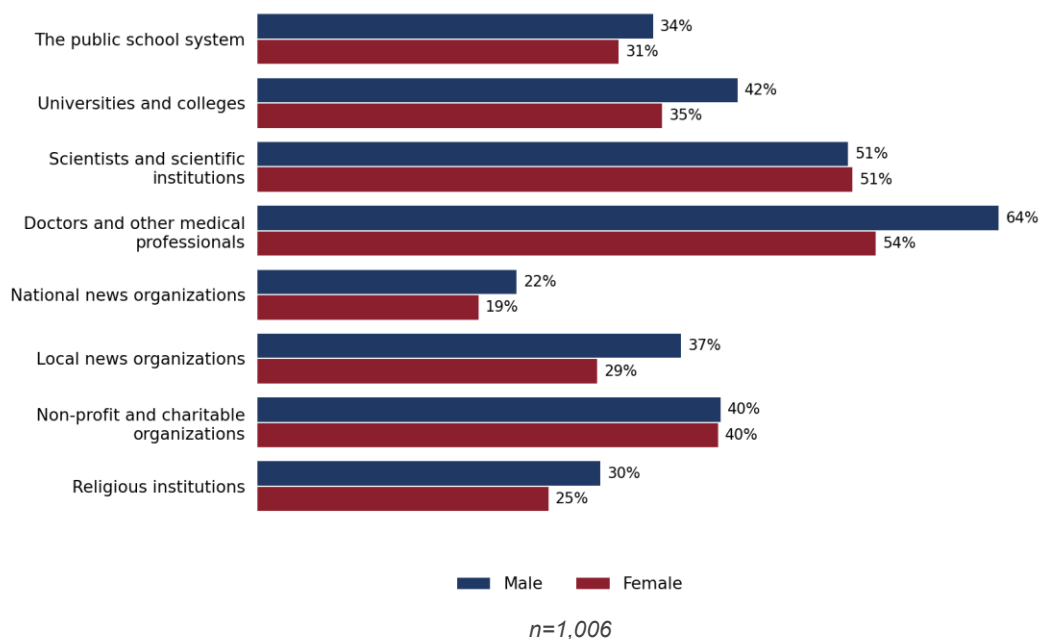


Universities and colleges (55 per cent versus 22 per cent) and the public school system (44 per cent versus 20 per cent) follow a similar pattern. Religious institutions are the one social or civic institution where the pattern reverses, trusted more by MAGA Republicans than by Democrats.

National news draws the least trust overall, and the only reversal by age

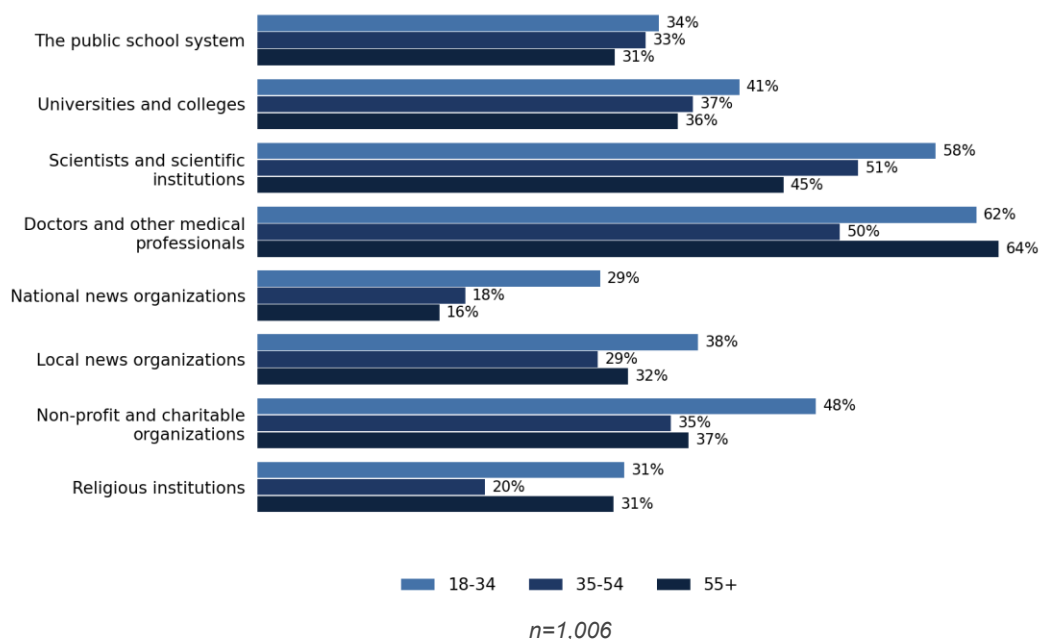
National news organizations draw the lowest overall trust of any institution tested, and are the one case where adults 18 to 34 report meaningfully higher trust than those 55 and older.

How much do Americans trust social and civic institutions to do what is right for the American people? — by gender



Gender gaps are narrower across social institutions than elsewhere in the survey.

How much do Americans trust social and civic institutions to do what is right for the American people? — by age

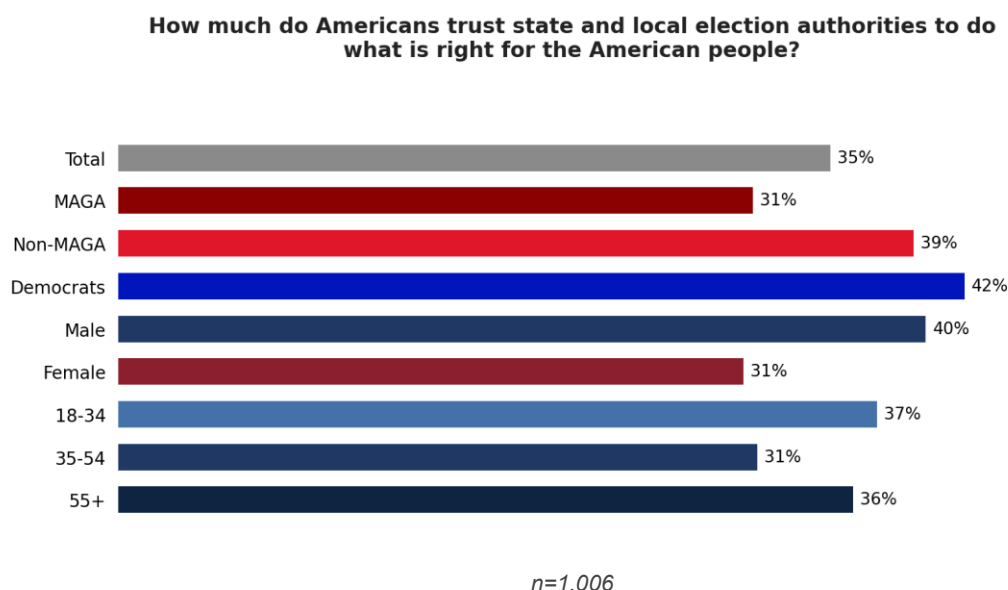


Men report notably higher trust than women in doctors and other medical professionals, the one clear gender gap among social and civic institutions.

Part Four: A Closer Look at Election Authorities

State and local election authorities are drawing national attention heading into the 2026 midterms. Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin [threatened top election officials in all 50 states](#) with possible prison time on July 17 if they do not comply with the administration's voter-roll review, days after the Department of Justice [sent letters to state and local election officials nationwide](#) warning of criminal liability. State officials have separately told reporters that [federal cybersecurity support for election offices has been scaled back](#) ahead of the midterms.

Trust in state and local election authorities sits in the middle of the pack among government institutions tested, at 35 per cent overall. The partisan pattern is the opposite of what the current standoff might suggest: Democrats report the highest trust (42 per cent) and MAGA Republicans the lowest (31 per cent), with Non-MAGA Republicans in between (39 per cent). Distrust follows the same direction: 32 per cent of Americans overall say they do not trust election authorities, including 34 per cent of MAGA Republicans and 24 per cent of Democrats.



Men report higher trust than women in election authorities, 40 per cent versus 31 per cent, one of the wider gender gaps recorded in the survey. Trust is fairly even across age groups, ranging from 31 per cent among adults 35 to 54 to 37 per cent among those 18 to 34.

Source: Angus Reid USA, Institutional Trust survey, n=1,006 American adults, fielded July 15-18, 2026. Figures combine "trust completely" and "trust most of the time."

Methodology

Angus Reid USA conducted an online survey from July 15-18, 2026, among a representative randomized sample of 1,006 American adults who are members of Angus Reid Forum USA. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by Angus Reid USA. "Top2box" figures combine "trust completely" and "trust most of the time" responses. MAGA and Non-MAGA are self-identified sub-groups among Trump-aligned Republican respondents. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).