

Americans more likely to trust Fauci than RFK Jr. for health guidance, but two-in-five don't back either of them

Divide over whether Dr. Fauci has been treated fairly (43%) or unfairly (36%)

August 12, 2026 – As Dr. Anthony Fauci's actions during the COVID-19 pandemic come under increasing scrutiny from a Republican-led campaign, the former director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and chief medical advisor to the president garners more trust than the current administration's top health official.

New data from Angus Reid USA finds one-third (35%) of Americans trust Fauci more for public health guidance in a head-to-head with Health and Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr., who is chosen by one-quarter (23%). A larger group of two-in-five (42%) select neither (27%) or are uncertain (15%).

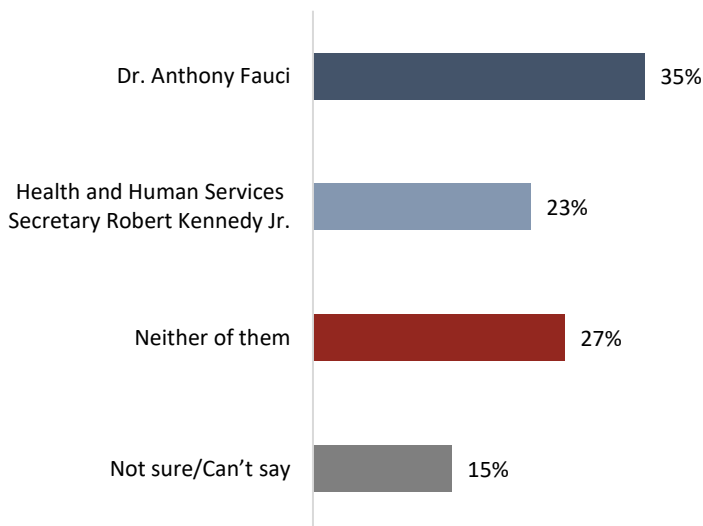
This comes as Republican Senator Rand Paul has asked the Justice Department to prosecute Fauci following the latter's refusal to answer questions during a senate committee hearing. Americans are divided as to whether the criticism of Fauci has been fair (43%) or unfair (36%), with the division largely occurring along political lines. Still, half (49%) say they believe Fauci's advice during the pandemic was well-intentioned.

Political views are a strong determining factor on the issue of Fauci. Those who identify as MAGA Republicans are most likely to believe the criticism of Fauci has been fair (89%) and most likely to believe Fauci was not acting in good faith during the pandemic (64%).

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**In general, which of these public figures would you trust more for advice and guidance on public health in America?
(All respondents, n=1,525)**



METHODOLOGY:

Angus Reid USA conducted an online survey from Aug. 7-11, 2026 among a representative randomized sample of 1,525 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. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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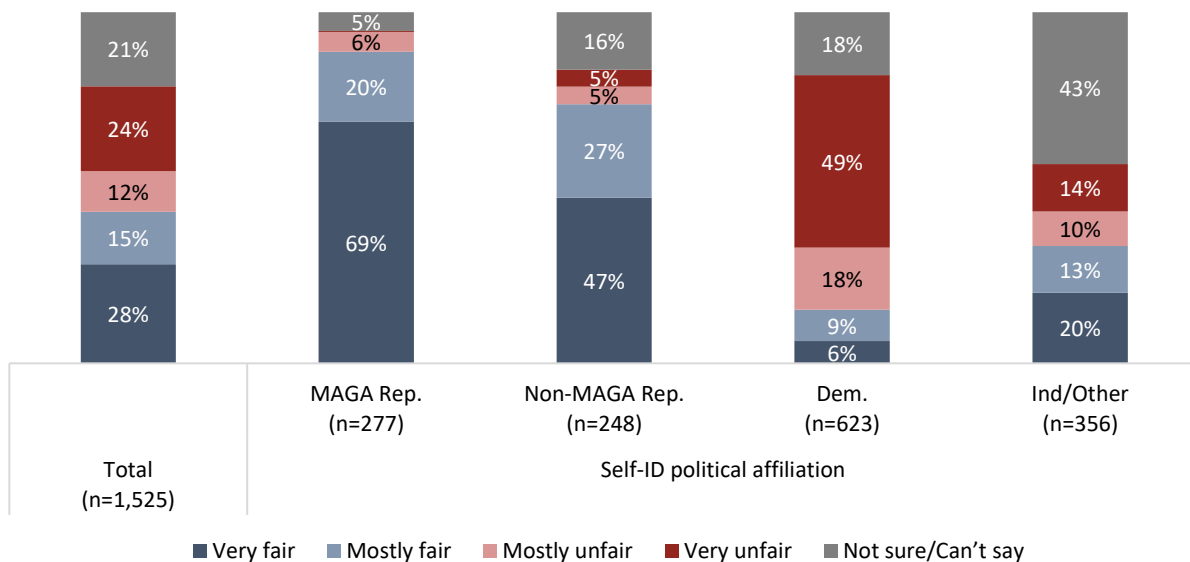
Criticism of Fauci – fair or unfair?

On July 29, Dr. Anthony Fauci testified before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee chaired by Sen. Rand Paul, invoking his Fifth Amendment right more than 100 times and declining to answer even routine questions. A Senate committee subsequently voted along party lines to [hold him in contempt of Congress](#), with Paul indicating he would refer the matter to the Justice Department.

Paul has accused Fauci of misleading Congress and has questioned whether US-funded research in China contributed to the pandemic. These are allegations Fauci denies and he countered in the preamble to his testimony that Paul's [own public comments](#) about wanting him "behind bars" left him with no choice but to decline to testify with anything of substance.

Fauci's positioning as a lightning rod for criticism from the right has Americans divided. Two-in-five (43%) say that criticism of him has been fair, while 36 per cent disagree.

Thinking about criticism directed at Dr. Anthony Fauci over his role in the United States' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, do you believe that criticism has generally been fair or unfair?



Half say he was well-intentioned in handling COVID-19

The political spectacle surrounding Fauci is not new, as criticisms of him started early in the pandemic. That controversy escalated further just days before his July 29 hearing, when Sen. Paul released more than 1,100 pages of Fauci's personal diary entries spanning December 2019 to December 2022. The diary revealed comments made by Fauci that some have insinuated support the ["lab leak"](#) theory of COVID-19's origin. Fauci's team has pushed back, with fact-checkers noting the entries are consistent with how his views evolved as scientific understanding of COVID-19 developed, rather than evidence of deliberate deception, and suggesting that [quotes have been misconstrued](#).

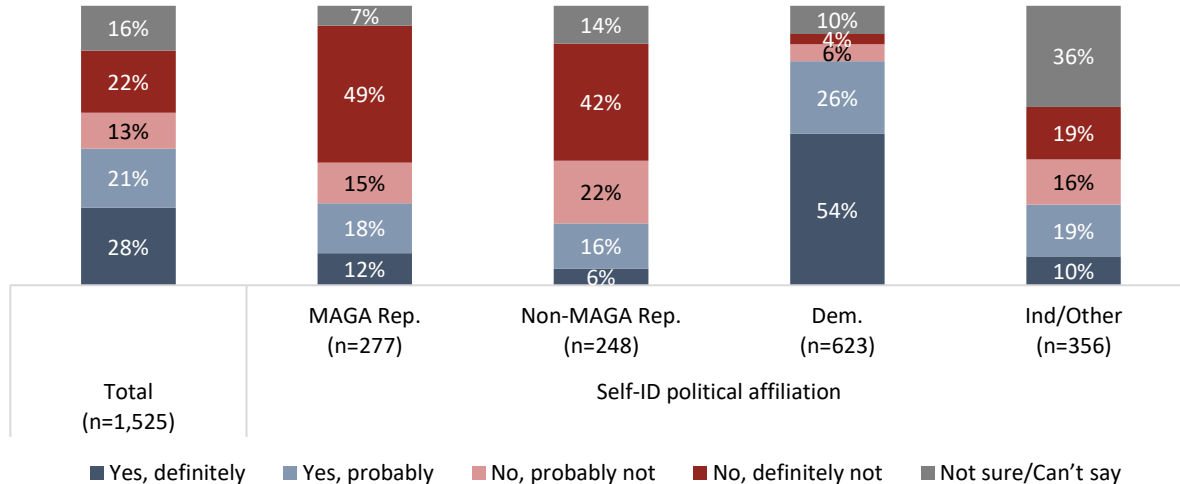
Americans tend to give Fauci more credit than criticism over his intentions. Half say he was well-intentioned in how he handled COVID, while more than one-in-three disagree and many are unsure.

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Regardless of whether you agreed with his decisions, do you believe Dr. Fauci was generally well-intentioned in the advice he gave during the COVID-19 pandemic?



Fauci generates more trust than RFK Jr. on health issues

An active, long-running feud continues between Dr. Fauci and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Kennedy has recently renewed his attacks on Fauci over pandemic lockdowns and vaccine policy, clashing publicly with [CNN's Dana Bash on August 2](#) over disputed Covid death-rate claims. The animosity predates Kennedy's cabinet appointment. He has previously called Fauci "[a genuinely bad human being](#)" and said he would prosecute him if elected president, while Fauci has warned that Kennedy's political rise could put lives at risk if his vaccine skepticism gains further influence.

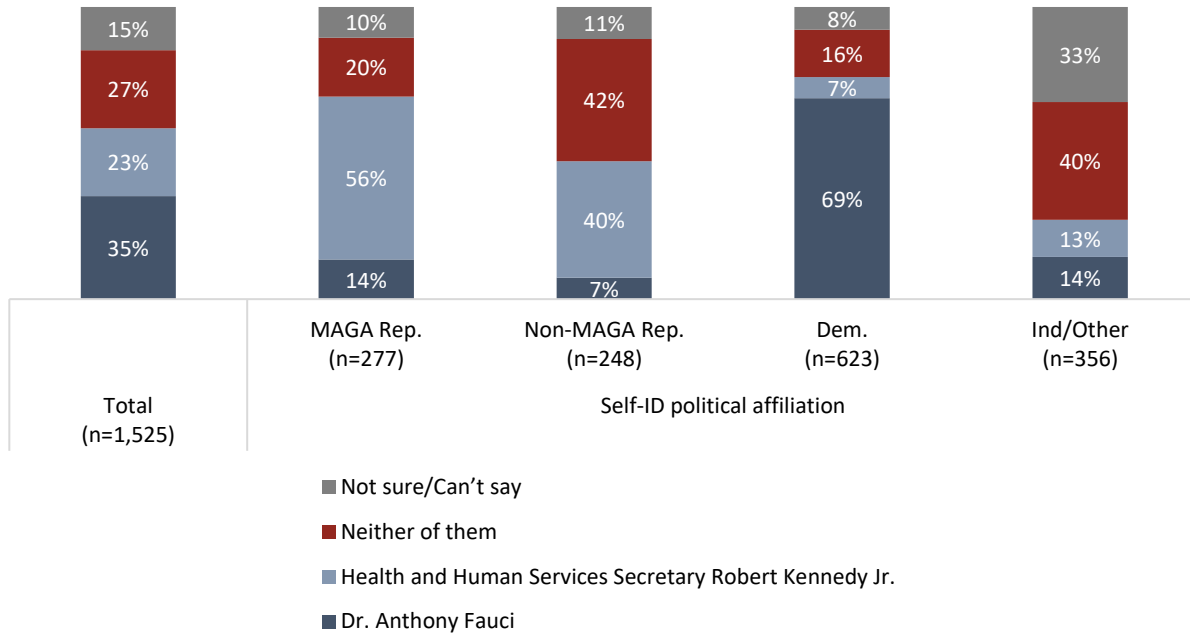
Their mutual hostility has likely not done any favors to medical confidence in the country. Asked who they trust more for medical guidance, 35 per cent choose Fauci and 23 per cent choose RFK Jr. While Fauci holds an advantage, largely due to high levels of trust among Democrats, RFK also trails "neither of them" at 27 per cent. One-in-six (15%) say they aren't sure:

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In general, which of these public figures would you trust more for advice and guidance on public health in America?



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

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