

The Second Yankelovich Democracy Monitor Finds an America Ready for Change

Contacts:

Nick Obourn, nobourn@publicagenda.org, Communications Director

David Schleifer, dschleifer@publicagenda.org, Vice President, Director of Research

Social media handles:

FB@publicagenda/Twitter@publicagenda/Instagram@publicagenda_

Hashtags: #YDM2 #YDM #Democracyreform

New York, NY (July 28, 2020) – [Public Agenda](#), a non-partisan research and public engagement organization, announces the release of the second annual Yankelovich Democracy Monitor, a public opinion research report that tracks Americans' feelings about their democracy with a solutions-focused approach. In the report, "[Greater Voice, Greater Impact: Americans' Views on Making Democracy Work for Everyone](#)," we found that despite deep challenges to their democracy and the ideals of democracy, Americans feel there are solutions that point in the right direction. Our research in this second report also brought focus to some of the perceived challenges of our democracy. For example, eighty percent of Americans say that our democracy is either "in crisis" or "facing serious challenges." Half of Americans feel that racism makes it difficult for some people to participate in civic and political life, including two-thirds of Black Americans and about half of white and Latino Americans.

"We fielded the Democracy Monitor survey before nationwide protests over the death of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minnesota and before COVID-19," said David Schleifer, Vice President and Director of Research at Public Agenda. "The impacts of these events, and whether awareness of the impacts of racism grows as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement is an area we plan to track in future research. It is clear, however, that in the short term they have accelerated and intensified the desire for new ways of thinking about public participation and the role of government."



“Greater Voice, Greater Impact: Americans’ Views on Making Democracy Work for Everyone” found that a sense of responsibility to uphold democracy remains in the majority. The 2019 report found that sixty four percent of Americans feel that It’s mostly our responsibility as Americans to help find solutions--it’s not enough to just vote and pay taxes. The research report makes clear that people want to have a greater voice in the decisions that affect their lives and are enthusiastic about democratic innovations such as participatory budgeting, ballot initiatives and citizen juries. Public Agenda recently released a report that examined [participatory budgeting in New York City](#), where the practice has been adopted by dozens of city council members and through which notable shifts in funding priorities have emerged.

The second Yankelovich Democracy Monitor report found about half of Americans want their local governments to implement the above mentioned reforms, the most common reason being to put more control in the hands of the people. Four in ten Americans say the design and structure of our nation’s government need significant change no matter whom we elect to represent us, indicating a strong desire among Americans to rethink who democracy serves.

“One of the report’s most significant findings is that people want more equitable, deliberative and collaborative relationships with their governments,” said Matt Leighninger, Vice President for Public Engagement & Director of the Yankelovich Center at Public Agenda. “They want a greater voice in decision making and problem solving, and they are open to a wide range of new democratic reforms and practices.”

The [Yankelovich Democracy Monitor](#) is a multi-year, solutions-focused survey of Americans conducted by Public Agenda in partnership with the Kettering Foundation. To complete the survey, Public Agenda contacted a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Americans in the fall of 2018 and the fall of 2019.

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About Public Agenda

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