



Partisan Politics

September 19, 2024

Partisan politics ranked as an issue of high importance in the 2024 Utah Priorities Project. Utah voters generally agree that partisan politics is a big concern. This is perhaps in response to Utah voters of both political extremes tending to show strong feelings against the opposite group. **Half of the Project’s survey respondents think the policies of the Republican party threaten the nation’s well-being and half of voters believe the Democratic party threatens it.** One in six Utah voters think both parties do. Nonetheless, Utahns believe that there is a way forward. **Three-quarters of Utah voters agree that compromise is how things get done in politics, though conservatives are less likely to agree.**

General Survey Responses

Utahns’ concerns for the influence of partisan politics on their lives is generally more significant for the religiously active, for older voters, and for those of a more liberal persuasion. These groups have a higher likelihood of prioritizing partisan politics.

Survey Responses: Threats

Utah voters were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that “The policies of the Republican party are so misguided that they threaten the nation’s well-being.” Not surprisingly, the vast majority of conservative voters disagreed with the statement. Conversely, liberal voters were overwhelmingly likely to strongly agree with the statement. Finally, those agreeing with the statement were also found to be more likely to care about partisan politics as a top priority.

As one might expect, the above patterns are mirrored by the political parties, with Democrats strongly agreeing with the statement to an overwhelming degree and Republicans strongly and somewhat disagreeing to a relatively weaker degree.

Voters were also asked how much they agreed that “The policies of the Democratic party are so misguided that they threaten the nation’s well-being.” Again, political ideologies demonstrated a lot of difference with 64% of very conservative respondents strongly agreeing with the statement and 77% of the very liberal either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

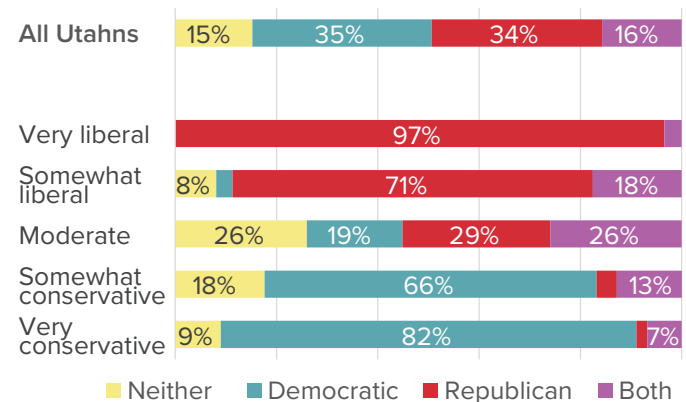
Again, Democrats were shown to be more likely to disagree than Republicans. Those who cared less about “partisan politics” as a priority were more likely to agree with this statement.

The lowest two income quintiles (households earning less than \$70,000 per year) are more likely than other quintiles to assert that neither party is a problem. Lower-income respondents were simultaneously the most likely to blame Democrats for threatening the national well-being.

Survey responses also reveal significant political stratification, as 82% of very conservative respondents believe Democrats are the biggest threat to national well-being. In comparison, 97% of Democrats feel that the Republicans are the threat. Predictably, moderate respondents exhibit the highest likelihood of believing that both – and neither – parties are threats. These tendencies are mirrored in political party affiliation. (See Figure 1.)

Politically moderate Utah voters are more likely to see both parties as threats.

Figure 1: Which Party’s Policies Threaten the Nation’s Well-Being



Source: Utah Foundation survey.

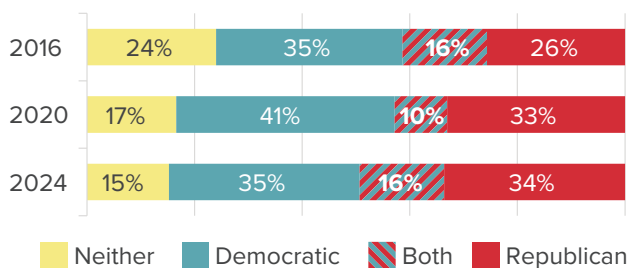
Over the past eight years, the share of voters considering Democrat policies a threat has remained consistently at close to 50%. However, the share of voters considering Republican policies a threat has grown from 42% to 50%. The share considering neither party a threat decreased to a similar degree. (See Figure 2.)

Survey Responses: Compromise

Voters were also asked about the nature of compromise. Respondents were asked to agree with one of two statements: “Compromise in politics is really just selling out on what you believe” or “Compromise is how things get done in politics.”

The perception of Republicans’ policies as threatening has increased over time.

Figure 2: Which Party’s Policies Threaten the Nation’s Well-Being, 2016-2024

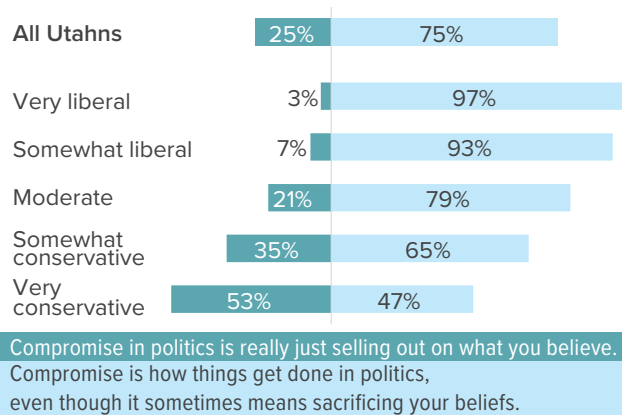


Source: Utah Foundation survey.

done in politics, even though it sometimes means sacrificing your beliefs.” An overwhelming majority (75%) of Utahns agreed that compromise is how things get done. Liberal voters and those who ranked partisan politics as a top priority were more likely to consider compromise as how things get done. The notion that compromise amounts to selling out is more common among conservative voters. (See Figure 3.) In addition, lower-income Utahns and non-white, non-Hispanic/Latino Utahns tend to be opposed to compromise.

Conservatives are less likely to support compromise.

Figure 3: Whether Voters View Compromise as “How Things Get Done” or “Selling Out”



Source: Utah Foundation survey.

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