

Pessimism Growing: Just One Third Say America's Best Days Lie Ahead

Confirming a growing trend of pessimism, only 33% of likely voters across the United States believe the country's best days are ahead of us. That figure is down from 41% last [November](#) and 48% in [January 2004](#).

Forty-three percent (43%) now believe that the country's best days have come and gone (see [history](#)).

Women are far more pessimistic than men. Just 25% of women believe the nation's best days are ahead of us. Forty-four percent (44%) of men share that assessment.

Younger Americans are less optimistic than their elders. Just 22% of those under 30 believe the USA has better days ahead.

Republicans are evenly divided on the question?40% say the best days are in the future while 42% believe they were in the past. Among Democrats, just 30% hold the optimistic view while 48% are pessimistic on this question.

As for those not affiliated with either major political party, 29% say the nation's best days are ahead us and 40% say they are in the rear view mirror.

Despite the darkening outlook, 54% say that ours is by and large a Fair and Decent society. That's down just a couple points from December (see [history](#)). Thirty percent (30%) believe a characterization of American society as Unfair and Discriminatory is more apt.

Men, whites, and Republicans tend to be more positive than women, blacks, and Democrats. More than twice as many whites (62%) as blacks (26%) say American society is generally fair and decent.

About three quarters (74%) of respondents believe that immigrants to the U.S. should adopt American language and culture, a decline of four points since the December 2006 poll but an increase since 2004. Eleven percent (11%) say immigrants should maintain the culture of their home country and 15% aren't sure.

Almost three fifths (58%) would prefer fewer government services and lower taxes. Twenty-four percent (24%) would rather have more government and more taxes. Just a plurality of Democrats (43%) side with the tradeoff of lower taxes but fewer services, as opposed to 76% of GOP voters willing to take that deal.

When it comes to foreign affairs, a plurality of 40% believe that allies of the United States should do what the U.S. wants more often, a slight drop since last year's survey; 27% believe the U.S. should be more accommodating toward our allies. Twenty-one percent (21%) decline both propositions.

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