



The Political Ideology of the Millennial Generation

A National Study of Political Values and Beliefs Among 18- to 29-Year-Old Adults

John Halpin Center for American Progress

Karl Agne Gerstein/Agne Strategic Communications

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Introduction

Of all the storylines emerging from the historic 2008 elections perhaps none has more impact on the future of our country than the rise of the Millennial Generation. These young 18- to 29-year-old Americans born between 1978 and 2000 represent the largest and most diverse generation in American history. Last year, their record turnout and overwhelming support for Barack Obama—as well as Democrats up and down the ballot—delivered a decisive victory and signaled a turning point in our country’s political history.

What is most important about these voters is not their current predilection for Democratic candidates, however, but rather the deeply held progressive beliefs underlying their voting preferences. The progressive beliefs of these young adult voters could recast the core ideological battles that have defined our country’s post-Vietnam political discourse.

The presidency of George W. Bush marked the formative political experience for many of these younger Americans, and the results are not good for conservatives looking to gain support among this critical segment of the electorate. The combined effect of Bush’s social policies, the war in Iraq, his tax cuts, and the collapse of the economy clearly had a strongly negative impact on the ideological views of Millennial voters. Younger Americans today express broad and deep support for a progressive worldview on government, society, and world affairs and are ambivalent to outright hostile to many core elements of the conservative worldview.

Case in point: Of the 21 values and beliefs garnering majority support in our recently completed national study of political values and beliefs among young adults, only four can be classified as conservative.

This study and our companion national survey—both conducted by Gerstein/Agne Strategic Communications in conjunction with the launch of the Progressive Studies Program at the Center for American Progress—explore the essential ideological views of Americans on a sweeping range of critical issues. The complex attitudes revealed in the national survey and the country’s growing progressive tilt were explored in our inaugural report, “The State of American Political Ideology, 2009.” The accompanying youth survey reinforces the finding in that report that the youngest Americans are also the country’s most progressive generation, but there are deeper trends that reveal a more complicated dynamic.

Examining the core attitudes, self-identification patterns and ideological ratings measured throughout the study, it is clear that the conservative brand faces serious skepticism among Millennials. In contrast to findings among older Americans, this survey reveals that there is little, if any, residual strength for the conservative worldview among younger Americans—less than half of all young people rate a “conservative” approach to politics favorably while a “progressive” approach is the most highly rated. Similarly, a strong plurality of younger Americans, 44 percent, self-identify as either progressive or liberal compared to just 28 percent who call themselves conservative or libertarian.

Younger voters also view President Obama quite well and offer strong support for the broad ideological framework and many specific items in his ideological agenda. In general, it is fair to say that a new progressive generation is on the rise, and given electoral and attitudinal trends, this rise could have profound impacts on the future of American politics.

Whereas the country as a whole scored most progressive on attitudes toward the role of government and least progressive on cultural issues, voters under 30 are most progressive on cultural issues, exposing a massive generational rift on these issues that will surely move the country in an increasingly progressive direction as more Millennials reach adulthood. Americans under 30 are much more progressive than older Americans on issues surrounding international affairs and national security. While they are more likely to embrace progressive positions in this area—particularly on Iraq and the need for the United States to provide global leadership on climate change—the real generational divide on these issues comes in younger Americans’ complete rejection of conservative positions, particularly the primacy of military force in fighting terrorism, the need to compromise civil liberties to protect the United States from terrorism, and the need to refrain from criticism of government and military leaders in times of war.

Younger Americans largely mirror the progressive inclinations of their older compatriots on the role of government. The one area where they are far more likely to embrace a progressive position is the need for government to step in to protect the national economy when markets fail, reflecting their support for the policies of the Obama administration as it wrestles with the record deficits and far-reaching economic crises bequeathed by the Bush administration.

Similarly, Americans under 30 are less likely to agree with any of the conservative positions on the role of government tested in this survey, but the greatest drop-offs are on free-market solutions trumping government as a means of creating economic growth and limited government always being preferable to big government. Because of the market failures that created the current economic climate, it seems the Bush administration’s policies that enabled these failures have now created a greater openness to government among these Americans.

The area where younger Americans differ least from older Americans, and on which they score lowest on our progressive index by a significant margin, is on economic and

domestic policy. They are actually more likely to agree with a range of progressive positions, particularly the need for the federal government to guarantee affordable health coverage for all Americans. At the same time, their agreement with conservative positions holds steady, with one critical exception where they are more conservative than older Americans—those under 30 are much more likely to agree that we should reform Social Security to allow workers to invest some of their contributions in individual accounts.

Millennials are also more likely to embrace free trade, reflecting the more global perspective of a generation raised with the Internet, but much less likely to see tax cuts as the key to economic growth, which is another key finding in the context of the current economic debate. Some additional findings from the study include:

Overall ideological trends

- Based on responses to 40 ideological statements grouped in four areas (role of government, cultural/social values, economic and domestic policy, and international affairs/national security), we calculated an aggregate measure of ideological positioning based on a scale of “0” to “400,” with “0” being the most conservative position on the continuum and “400” being the most progressive. Younger Americans as a whole record a mean ideological score of 221.6, with the youngest group, ages 18 to 24, coming in more progressive in aggregate (224.6) than those in their mid- to late twenties (217.6).
- Younger Americans overall are noticeably more progressive than older Americans. Notably, the youngest voters in the electorate, those ages 18 to 24, are the most progressive of any age grouping in all four ideological areas.
- Younger Americans are most progressive (56.6) on cultural and social values and the least progressive on economic and domestic policy (53.1). In contrast, older voters are most progressive on the role of government (53.6) and the least progressive on cultural beliefs (50.1). Young people not only embrace progressive ideas about culture and society, but they also firmly reject most conservative ideas in this area.
- As with the population at large, there are no ideological outliers among key groups of younger Americans—the range of composite ideological scores in the youth survey runs from 179.1 for conservative Republicans to 245.9 for liberal Democrats. The ideological distribution among young people is both more progressive overall and more compressed than the ideological range among the total population. This suggests greater accord among young people about many of the progressive values and beliefs that shape politics than exists in the population at large.
- More than two in three younger Americans agree with progressive perspectives on energy, sustainable living, and climate change, government efforts to protect people

and the economy, and new steps to fight inequality. Strong agreement tops 40 percent on many of these progressive beliefs. Many of these areas of agreement align with the findings from the national survey, suggesting that there is genuine cross-generational consensus on the fundamental values that should guide our country.

- Of the 21 statements with majority support among young people, only four are classified as conservative ideological viewpoints.
- We find weak support, ambivalence, and outright skepticism about many conservative teachings—agreement ranges from only 44 to 50 percent on key conservative ideas about deficits, limited government, and tax cuts. In contrast, majorities of Americans in the national survey expressed agreement with many of these same elements of the conservative framework.
- Majorities of self-identified young conservatives and Republicans agree with all five progressive arguments on the role of government, four out of five progressive positions on economic and domestic policy, and three out of five progressive beliefs about international affairs and national security.
- The views of younger people are fairly well aligned across educational classes, further reinforcing the generational harmony among younger Americans around many progressive ideas.
- There are major divergences in opinions between younger and older Americans, however. On the cultural front, for example, far fewer younger Americans than older Americans agree that changes in the traditional family have harmed society (-16 points) while many more believe that the country has gone too far in mixing politics and religion (+15 points).
- Similarly, far fewer younger Americans than older ones agree that military force is the most effective way to keep America safe (-16 points); that restrictions on civil liberties and torture are okay in order to protect us from terrorism (-16 points); and that it is unpatriotic to criticize leaders during war (-16 points).
- Younger Americans are much more likely than those who are 30 years or older to believe that government must step in to protect the national economy when the market fails (+12 points) and that society has contributed greatly to the wealth of rich people (+11 points).
- Conversely, young Americans are far less likely than older Americans to agree with conservative notions that stronger regulation of business does more harm than good (-7 points); that free-market solutions are better than government at creating jobs and economic growth (-18 points); and that limited government is always better than big government (-12 points).

Core American values

- Expressing a profound optimism about their own futures, 77 percent of younger Americans believe that they have either already achieved the American Dream (10 percent) or will achieve it in their lifetime (67 percent), while only 12 percent feel that they will not achieve it over the course of their lives.
- White youth are more skeptical of their chances of achieving the American Dream (13 percent will not achieve) than nonwhite youth (9 percent will not achieve). Twenty percent of those young people earning \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year are skeptical of their life chances compared to only 8 percent of those earning \$75,000 per year or more.
- Asked to choose two American political values that are most important to them, 48 percent of young people say “opportunity” and 41 percent select “equality.” In comparison, their older counterparts favor “liberty” (41 percent) and “justice” (36 percent) as their top values.
- Young people are in basic alignment (although at lower levels of support) with older voters in the belief that “government should do more to promote the common good” (50 percent) rather than doing more “to promote individual liberty” (29 percent).
- Both younger and older Americans also agree with a notion of freedom grounded more in progressive arguments reminiscent of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Forty-eight percent of younger Americans believe that “freedom requires economic opportunity and minimum measures of security, such as food, housing, medical care, and old age protection,” compared to 37 percent of young people who believe the libertarian notion that “freedom requires that individuals be left alone to pursue their lives as they please and to deal with the consequences of their actions on their own.”
- A plurality of youth (42 percent) believes that “our current economic problems show what happens when you rely too much on the market and reduce regulations on corporations,” while 39 percent favor the argument that “corporations deserve a lot of the blame for our current economic problems, but the free market is still the best way to organize our economy.”
- Young and old are in agreement that government needs to play a larger role in the economy—60 percent of younger Americans and 61 percent of older ones say that “it’s time for government to take a larger and stronger role in making the economy work for the average American,” compared to 27 percent and 36 percent, respectively, who follow the conservative line that “turning to big government to solve our economic problems will do more harm than good.”

Ideological perceptions of President Obama

- Overall, two-thirds of young people approve of President Obama’s job performance while only 16 percent disapprove. Younger Americans support the new president at higher rates than their 30-plus cohorts (56 percent approve).
- Approval of Obama’s presidency crosses partisan and ideological lines among young people, with a plurality of self-identified conservatives and Republicans rating Obama’s job performance favorably. This finding stands in contrast to the trends in our national survey, which showed hardening opposition to the president among conservatives and Republicans at large.
- In general, young people respect Obama’s personal characteristics and a large percentage view him as a significant agent of change. Thirty-four percent of youth offer a positive personal assessment while another 32 percent say that Obama represents a new direction.
- Older voters are more likely than younger ones to say something negative about Obama, with nearly one-fifth of those 30 or older saying he can’t be trusted or isn’t up to the job compared to less than 10 percent of those ages 18 to 29 who believe similarly.

Ideological ratings

- In our national survey, more than two-thirds of Americans rated a “conservative” approach to politics favorably with an equal percentage rating a “progressive” approach favorably. In contrast, less than half of young people (45 percent) in this study rate “conservative” favorably while both “progressive” and “liberal” score quite well.
- Noncollege young people (43 percent favorable) are even less positive about conservatism than are college-educated ones (48 percent). Traditional audiences such as Republicans (80 percent) and born-again Christians (67 percent) do retain strong sentiments for conservatism.
- The “progressive” label enjoys the highest favorable rating (54 percent) of the four approaches tested with one-half of younger Americans also rating “liberal” favorably. As in our national survey, the “libertarian” brand receives fairly low marks, with only 35 percent of young people rating favorably compared to 39 percent of those ages 30 or older.
- The libertarian label is largely unknown to younger Americans—a full 36 percent of those 18- to 29-years-old are unable or unwilling to offer an opinion of the approach.

Self-identification

- Younger Americans report high levels of self-identification as ideological progressives and liberals.
- Thirty-seven percent of younger Americans identify as either “liberal” (21 percent) or “progressive” (16 percent); 25 percent as either “conservative” (21 percent) or “libertarian” (4 percent); and another 38 percent as “moderate” (24 percent) or “other” (14 percent). After asking the moderate respondents to select between the remaining ideological approaches, we find a 16-point margin for progressive/liberal over conservative/libertarian with roughly an additional one-third remaining neutral as moderate/other.

The story throughout this survey is one of conservative decline and progressive ascendancy among young people. Just as the post baby boom Generation X broke heavily for Ronald Reagan and his brand of optimistic conservatism, the current Millennial Generation has found its ideological center in the policies and leadership of President Obama. As this Generation Progressive grows in electoral importance, the potential for significant realignment of political attitudes toward progressive views of government and society is strong.

The first half of this report will examine the overall ideological composition of the Millennial Generation and explore their beliefs about government, culture and society, economic and domestic policy and international affairs and national security. The second half of the report will focus on the core political values of younger Americans, their opinions about the president, and their own ideological ratings and identification patterns.

Methodological note

“The Political Ideology of the Millennial Generation” report documents the findings of the first study by the Progressive Studies Program at CAP about the nature and contours of political values and beliefs in America among young people.

The composite measures of political ideology are based on responses to 40 questions that are evenly split between different strands of progressive and conservative thought in four areas: the role of government; cultural/social values; economics and domestic policy; and international affairs and national security. The unique measurement system provides detailed information on overall agreement on key ideas, the intensity of agreement or disagreement, and the overlap and cleavages among and across groups on key ideas and concepts based on their responses. The goal is to track these measures over time to explore the shifts and continuity of political ideology throughout the course of the Obama presidency and beyond.

Results for young people as a whole (ages 18 to 29) are based on 915 interviews drawn from both the national sample—which included a hybrid methodology of land, cell-phone, and web panel interviews—and an oversample conducted online using the exact same survey instrument. The margin of error for the youth survey is +/- 3.2 percent. Subsamples are subject to a larger margin of error.

Part One

Composite ideology and core political beliefs among Millennials

TABLE 1
The political worldview of the Millennial Generation

Ranked by % total agree (dark blue = progressive; light blue = conservative)

	Strongly agree (9-10)	Total agree (6-10)	Neutral (5)	Total disagree (0-4)	Strongly disagree (0-1)	Total agree 30+	Mean
1. Government investments in education, infrastructure, and science are necessary to ensure America's long-term economic growth.	43	80	13	6	2	(77)	7.7
2. America has taken too large a role in solving the world's problems and should focus more at home.	41	80	12	9	2	(73)	7.6
3. Americans should adopt a more sustainable lifestyle by conserving energy and consuming fewer goods.	40	79	13	8	2	(80)	7.5
4. America's economic future requires a transformation away from oil, gas, and coal to renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.	42	78	13	9	2	(75)	7.6
5. America must play a leading role in addressing climate change by reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions and complying with international agreements on global warming.	38	73	13	13	7	(68)	7.1
6. A positive image of America around the world is necessary to achieve our national security goals.	31	73	15	13	4	(72)	7.0
7. The federal government should guarantee affordable health coverage for every American.	43	71	13	16	6	(63)	7.2
8. Government policies too often serve the interests of corporations and the wealthy.	32	71	16	13	4	(65)	7.0
9. Government regulations are necessary to keep businesses in check and protect workers and consumers.	24	70	19	11	3	(73)	6.8
10. Government must step in to protect the national economy when the market fails.	28	69	15	16	5	(57)	6.7
11. Free trade is good for America because it creates new markets for our goods and services and lowers costs for consumers.	24	68	22	10	4	(64)	6.8
12. Rich people like to believe they have made it on their own, but in reality, society has contributed greatly to their wealth.	31	67	17	16	5	(58)	6.8
13. Government has a responsibility to provide financial support for the poor, the sick, and the elderly.	27	66	13	21	5	(69)	6.5
14. The gap between rich and poor should be reduced, even if it means higher taxes for the wealthy.	34	66	15	19	9	(61)	6.7
15. Social Security should be reformed to allow workers to invest some of their contributions in individual accounts.	24	64	27	9	3	(54)	6.7
16. Religious faith should focus more on promoting tolerance, social justice, and peace in society, and less on opposing abortion or gay rights.	42	64	17	19	12	(58)	6.8
17. America's security is best promoted by working through diplomacy, alliances, and international institutions.	22	63	26	11	3	(68)	6.7
18. The war in Iraq has proven that the U.S. can not impose democracy on other nations.	25	59	18	23	7	(52)	6.3
19. Cultural institutions, the arts, and public broadcasting play an important role in our society and should receive government support.	23	59	23	18	6	(50)	6.3
20. Government spending is almost always wasteful and inefficient.	20	57	21	23	6	(61)	6.1
21. Our country has gone too far in mixing politics and religion and forcing religious values on people.	27	54	18	29	13	(39)	5.9

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

	Strongly agree (9-10)	Total agree (6-10)	Neutral (5)	Total disagree (0-4)	Strongly disagree (0-1)	Total agree 30+	Mean
22. Cutting taxes for individuals and businesses is the key to economic growth.	15	50	29	20	5	(57)	5.9
23. There should be stronger regulation of sex and violence in popular culture and on the Internet.	23	49	16	35	18	(69)	5.4
24. Government programs for the poor undermine individual initiative and responsibility.	15	48	23	29	10	(49)	5.5
25. Human life begins at conception and must be protected from that point forward.	31	47	22	30	20	(58)	5.7
26. Limited government is always better than big government.	18	44	38	18	5	(56)	5.9
27. Healthy economic growth requires eliminating budget deficits, which discourage private investment and raise interest rates.	13	44	38	17	5	(45)	5.8
28. Labor unions play a positive role in our economy.	12	44	33	23	9	(46)	5.5
29. Changes in the traditional American family have harmed our society.	18	43	19	38	19	(59)	5.1
30. The primary responsibility of corporations is to produce profits and returns for their shareholders, not to improve society.	12	43	27	30	9	(44)	5.4
31. African Americans and other minority groups still lack the same opportunities as whites in our country.	15	43	14	43	22	(50)	4.8
32. Free-market solutions are better than government at creating jobs and economic growth.	12	42	40	18	5	(60)	5.7
33. Military force is the most effective way to combat terrorism and make America safer.	13	42	19	39	15	(58)	5.0
34. Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs and abuse government benefits.	17	42	16	42	21	(43)	4.9
35. America should spend more to help meet the basic economic, health, and education needs of people around the world.	14	38	20	43	16	(36)	4.9
36. We must do whatever is necessary to protect America from terrorism, even if it means restricting civil liberties or engaging in methods some might consider torture.	15	37	16	47	22	(53)	4.6
37. Government regulation of business does more harm than good.	11	36	34	29	8	(43)	5.3
38. Talking with rogue nations such as Iran or with state-sponsored terrorist groups is naive and only gives them legitimacy.	10	35	30	35	12	(41)	5.0
39. It is unpatriotic to criticize our government leaders or our military during a time of war.	10	30	19	51	28	(45)	4.1
40. Homosexuality is unnatural and should not be accepted by society.	18	29	13	58	43	(35)	3.7

Progressive Studies Program Composite Ideology Measure (Millennials)

Our youth study employed the same methodology for categorizing ideology that we developed in the companion national survey. The bulk of the questions asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with 40 ideological statements grouped in four areas: the role of government; cultural and social beliefs; economic and domestic policy; and international affairs and national security. Each battery of questions was evenly divided between progressive and conservative statements, and scores for each area are calculated on a “0” to “100” scale, with “0” representing maximum agreement with all conservative statements and maximum disagreement with all progressive ones, and “100” representing maximum agreement with all progressive statements and maximum disagreement with all conservative ones.

The responses in these four years were then aggregated on a scale of “0” to “400” to achieve a composite measure of ideological positioning, with “0” being the most conservative position on the continuum and “400” being the most progressive. As Figure 1 displays, younger Americans as a whole record a mean ideological score of 221.6, with the youngest group, ages 18 to 24, coming in more progressive in aggregate (224.6) than those in their mid- to late twenties (217.6).

Looking at these scores in more depth, important trends emerge on the composite scores. To start, younger Americans overall are noticeably more progressive than older Americans. Younger Americans in both age categories scored well above their older counterparts—those 30 years of age

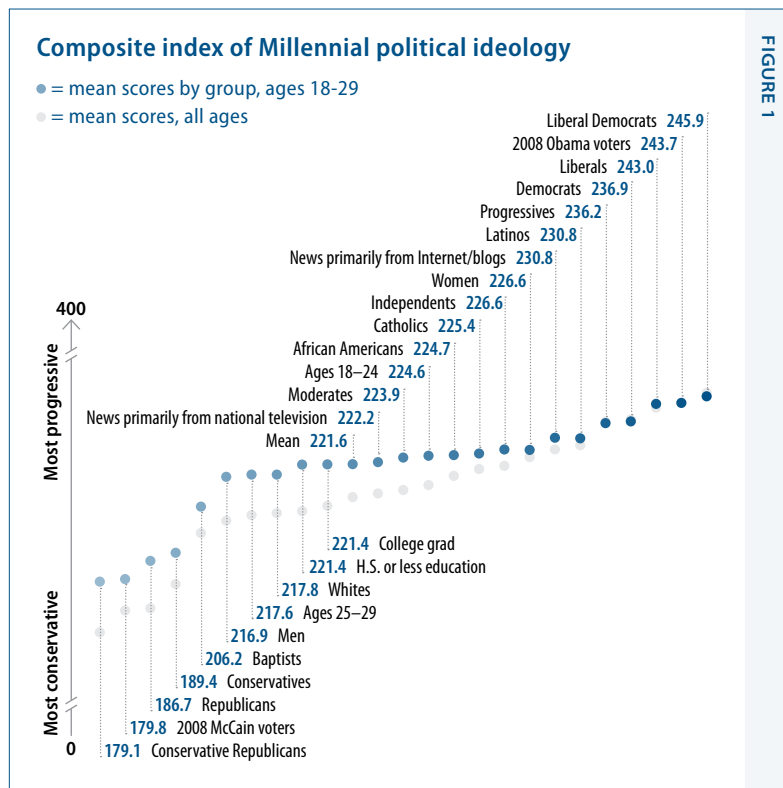


TABLE 2
Total mean score per issue area

	18-24	25-29	Total under 30	Total 30+
Cultural values and beliefs	58.1	54.5	56.6	50.1
Role of government	56.4	56.1	56.3	53.6
International affairs and national security	56.7	54.2	55.6	52.0
Economic and domestic policy	53.4	52.8	53.1	52.0
Composite score	224.6	217.6	221.6	207.7

or older—in each of the four subject categories and in aggregate (207.7). Notably, the youngest voters in the electorate, those ages 18 to 24, are the most progressive of any age grouping in all four ideological areas.

Younger Americans are most progressive (56.6) on cultural and social values and the least progressive on economic and domestic policy (53.1). In contrast, older voters are most progressive on the role of government (53.6) and the least progressive on cultural beliefs (50.1). This finding suggests that the culture wars that helped to carve conservative victories over the years will most likely die out in importance as generational change takes hold. Young people not only embrace progressive ideas about culture and society but also firmly reject most conservative ideas in this area.

As with the population at large, there are no ideological outliers among key groups of younger Americans. As Figure 1 shows, the range of composite ideological scores in the youth survey runs from 179.1 for conservative Republicans to 245.9 for liberal Democrats. The ideological distribution among young people is both more progressive overall and more compressed than the ideological range among the total population. This suggests greater accord among young people about many of the progressive values and beliefs that shape politics than exists in the population at large. Two interesting things to note in this graph: Young conservative Republicans (the farthest right group) score 19 points more progressive in aggregate than conservative Republicans in the total population (160.6) while young liberal Democrats (the farthest left group) scored two points less progressive than liberal Democrats in the population at large (247.1).

Going beneath the aggregate measures, we find significant consensus on progressive principles. As Table 1 highlights, more than two out of three younger Americans agree with progressive perspectives on energy, sustainable living, and climate change, government efforts to protect people and the economy, and new steps to fight inequality. Strong agreement tops 40 percent on many of these progressive beliefs. Many of these areas of agreement align with the findings from the national survey suggesting that there is genuine cross-generational consensus on the fundamental values that should guide our country.

Of the 21 statements with majority support among young people, only four are classified as conservative ideological viewpoints. The highest ranking of these beliefs reflects nearly unanimous agreement across all age groups that America has taken too large a role abroad and needs to do more at home (80 percent agree). The remaining three conservative ideas with majority agreement among young people involve the importance of free trade (68 percent agree), reforming Social Security to allow some individual investments (64 percent agree), and the notion that government spending is almost always wasteful and inefficient (57 percent agree).

Unlike the results from the national survey, however, there is little evidence in this study of latent support among younger Americans for much of the conservative worldview. Instead,

we find weak support, ambivalence, and outright skepticism about many conservative teachings—agreement ranges from only 44 percent to 50 percent on key conservative ideas about deficits, limited government, and tax cuts. In contrast, majorities of Americans in the national survey expressed agreement with many of these same elements of the conservative framework. We also find that majorities of young people flat out disagree with the conservative position that it is unpatriotic to criticize leaders during a time of war (51 percent disagree) and the belief that homosexuality is unnatural and should not be accepted by society (58 percent disagree). None of the 40 statements garnered majority disagreement in the national survey.

Further reinforcing the emerging progressive consensus among many younger Americans, we find that majorities of self-identified young conservatives and Republicans agree with all five progressive arguments on the role of government, four out of five progressive positions on economic and domestic policy, and three out of five progressive beliefs about international affairs and national security. Again, unlike the trends in the national survey, we do not find these attitudes reciprocated among younger liberals and progressives. Slight majorities of younger progressives (but not liberals) do agree with conservative positions on trade, Social Security, deficits, and government spending.

Our youth study also did not reveal any significant divergences in attitudes and beliefs between non-college-educated younger Americans and college-educated ones. Our national survey found important differences in opinion between these two groups, with noncollege-educated Americans holding much more populist and progressive attitudes than elites about the role of government and fighting inequality and much more conservative views on cultural and national security areas. The views of younger people are fairly well aligned across educational classes, further reinforcing the generational harmony among younger Americans around many progressive ideas.

What younger Americans believe

Issues of greatest consensus

- Government investment
- Sustainability
- Alternative energy
- Universal health care
- Climate change
- Focus more at home

(Approximately two out of three agree, less than out of five disagree, 40 percent-plus strongly agree)

Issues of ambivalence

- Limited government
- Deficits
- Role of labor unions
- Market solutions

(Approximately one out of four or more neutral, less than one out of three strongly agree/disagree)

Issues of polarization

- Changes in families
- Status of minorities
- Military force
- Immigrants
- Talking with rogue nations
- International spending

(Fairly even divide, 40 percent-plus strongly agree/disagree)

Reject outright

- Unpatriotic to criticize leaders during time of war
- Homosexuality unnatural

(Majority disagreement)

But, as Table 1 also highlights, there are major divergences in opinions between younger and older Americans. Notably, many of the most pronounced differences emerge on issues that were prominent during the Bush years, including culture war battles, America's national security posture, and issues surrounding the collapse of the economy. On the cultural front, for example, far fewer younger Americans than older Americans agree that changes in the traditional family have harmed society (-16 points) while many more believe that the country has gone too far in mixing politics and religion (+15 points).

Similarly, the legacy of the Bush administration on national security has left far fewer younger Americans than older ones in agreement that military force is the most effective way to keep America safe (-16 points); that restrictions on civil liberties and torture are okay in order to protect us from terrorism (-16 points); and that it is unpatriotic to criticize leaders during war (-16 points). And on the economic front, younger Americans are much more likely than those who are 30 years or older to believe that government must step in to protect the national economy when the market fails (+12 points) and that society has contributed greatly to the wealth of rich people (+11 points).

Conversely, they are far less likely than older Americans to agree with conservative notions that stronger regulation of business does more harm than good (-7 points); that free-market solutions are better than government at creating jobs and economic growth (-18 points); and that limited government is always better than big government (-12 points).

The role of government

Americans under 30 years of age express broad agreement with a variety of progressive positions on the role of government, demonstrating a clear belief in government as a necessary and constructive player in creating economic growth and checking the potential excesses of a market economy. At the same time, they express concern that current government policies too often serve the interests of corporations and the wealthy, leaving a need for more direct support of the most vulnerable in our society. They share conservative concerns over the wastefulness and inefficiency of government spending, but they are far less sympathetic than older Americans to conservative lionization of limited government and unregulated markets. Overall, their sentiments are unmistakable, with every progressive position scoring higher than any conservative position by a significant margin.

At least two out of three young Americans express agreement with each of the progressive positions tested in this section, including majorities of every major subgroup, even self-identified conservatives. The greatest point of consensus in the entire survey comes on the first progressive position, with an incredible 80 percent agreeing (and 43 percent strongly agreeing) that “government investments in education, infrastructure, and science are necessary to ensure America’s long-term economic growth,” with just 6 percent disagreeing and 13 percent neutral. What is most remarkable about the high level of agreement on this measure is the consistency across the spectrum, with only one group—noncollege conservatives (69 percent)—dropping below 70 percent.

TABLE 3
Millennial survey—role of government

Progressive statements—% agree

	Total	White	Black	Hisp	Reg. Vote	Not Reg.	18-24	25-29	30+
Government investments in education, infrastructure, and science are necessary to ensure America’s long-term economic growth	80	81	80	78	82	76	81	79	77
Government policies too often serve the interests of corporations and the wealthy	71	73	67	68	72	70	70	74	65
Government regulations are necessary to keep businesses in check and protect workers and consumers	70	71	63	69	70	71	69	71	73
Government must step in to protect the national economy when the market fails	69	68	74	65	71	66	71	67	57
Government has a responsibility to provide financial support for the poor, the sick, and the elderly	66	65	71	63	66	66	67	64	69

Another progressive statement that garners broad support presents a strong populist take on current government policy. Over 70 percent agree that “government policies too often serve the interests of corporations and the wealthy,” with just 13 percent disagreeing and 16 percent neutral. Democrats and Independents are in lockstep on this measure (74 percent agree), while Republicans lag behind but are still overwhelmingly in agreement (63 percent). And despite the strong populist sentiments here, agreement is actually slightly higher among college-educated young Americans than those without a college degree.

One of the most important and timely findings in the full national survey was the broad agreement on the necessity of government regulations, which reached 73 percent in that survey. Among younger Americans, 70 percent agree that “government regulations are necessary to keep businesses in check and protect workers and consumers,” while 19 percent are neutral and just 11 percent disagree. Again, the results on this measure are surprisingly consistent, with support dropping to just 60 percent among conservatives and 64 percent among those who voted for Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) in the 2008 presidential contest.

The greatest difference in this set of progressive positions between young Americans and those 30 or older comes on government intervention in a failing economy. Clearly influenced by recent events, a majority of older Americans (59 percent) agrees that “government must step in to protect the national economy when the market fails.” However, among younger Americans, this number jumps to 69 percent, with 15 percent neutral and just 16 percent in disagreement with this unambiguous statement. Majorities of all groups among younger Americans support this position, with agreement particularly high among Obama voters (80 percent), union households (79 percent), and African Americans (74 percent).

A second position where agreement dropped off among younger Americans is actually the lowest scoring progressive statement on the role of government. Overall agreement is still quite high, however, as 66 percent agree that “government has a responsibility to provide financial support for the poor, the sick, and the elderly,” while 21 percent disagree and the remaining 13 percent are neutral. Overall support of more than three to one for this measure is noteworthy because we made this measure particularly tough by including

TABLE 4
Millennial survey—role of government

Conservative statements—% agree

	Total	White	Black	Hisp	Reg. Vote	Not Reg.	18-24	25-29	30+
Government spending is almost always wasteful and inefficient	57	60	52	52	56	59	52	64	61
Government programs for the poor undermine individual initiative and responsibility	48	48	47	48	46	53	49	47	49
Limited government is always better than big government	44	46	41	44	46	40	44	44	56
Free-market solutions are better than government at creating jobs and economic growth	42	44	36	37	44	37	42	43	60
Government regulation of business does more harm than good	36	35	39	44	35	41	38	35	43

the notion of direct financial support in the wording. As a result, it is the only progressive position in this section where support is higher among noncollege young Americans than those with a college degree.

Only one conservative position on the role of government finds agreement among a majority of young Americans, while all of the statements are met with more ambivalence than any of the progressive positions; neutral ratings range from 13 to 19 percent on the progressive positions but 21 to 40 percent on the conservative positions. What is most striking across all but the most popular statement is the huge drop-off from Americans over 30 to these younger Americans. This is a theme that we see across this survey—these young Americans are more likely to embrace progressive values and beliefs but even more likely to reject conservative viewpoints.

The one conservative position that garners broad support and does not suffer a dramatic drop-off from older Americans focuses on frustrations with government spending, another topic that has been a constant theme in recent headlines. A clear majority (57 percent) agrees that “government spending is almost always wasteful and inefficient,” while 23 percent disagree and 21 percent agree. There is a significant drop-off on this measure along lines of race (60 percent agree among whites, 52 percent among African Americans and Hispanics) and partisan identification (67 percent Republicans, 60 percent Independents, 48 percent Democrats). But the most striking number for us is the fact that strong agreement on this core conservative critique and rallying cry is just 20 percent—lower than for any progressive position on the role of government and less than half the intense agreement with the progressive statement on the necessity of government investment in education, infrastructure, and science to ensuring our country’s long-term economic growth.

Another attack on government spending—this time targeted at support for the poor—fails to attract majority agreement from young Americans. Just less than half (48 percent) do agree that “government programs for the poor undermine individual initiative and responsibility” while 29 percent disagree and another 23 percent are neutral. This statement exposes a significant divide between Republicans on one side (65 percent agree) and Independents (48 percent) and Democrats (39 percent) on the other. There is surprisingly little intensity on either side of this measure, with strong agreement at 15 percent and strong disagreement at 10 percent.

The conservative positions where we see a massive drop-off from older Americans to these Millennials involve the superiority of limited government and the role of markets. Only 44 percent agree that “limited government is always better than big government” (compared to 56 percent among those 30 or older); only 18 percent disagree, with 38 percent ambivalent. A majority of conservatives agree with this position while support is near or below 40 percent among all others. On a similar note, 42 percent agree that “free market solutions are better than government at creating jobs and economic growth” while 18 percent disagree and 40 percent are ambivalent. A full 60 percent of older Americans express agreement with this conservative position on markets.

Overall, younger Americans are not championing “big government.” They are simply unimpressed by simplistic conservative attacks on it and the subsequent lionization of “limited government.” This is hardly surprising given the broad support for all of the progressive positions defining worthy roles government can play in advancing the nation’s interests and ensuring economic growth. Americans under 30 see a clear role for government and they are more interested in increasing the effectiveness of government action than abandoning it altogether.

The least popular and most divisive position tested on the role of government is the conservative counterpoint on government regulation of businesses. Whereas large majorities of every subgroup agreed with the progressive assertion that government regulation is necessary, barely half as many (36 percent) agree with the conservative argument that “government regulation of business does more harm than good” while 29 percent disagree and 34 percent are neutral. In the current political environment, not even a majority of Republicans or conservatives (46 percent agree each) can support this statement.

Cultural and social values

Nowhere is the gap between Americans under 30 and their older counterparts in this country greater than on cultural and social issues. This battery was by far the most polarizing section of the survey among all Americans, but there is relative consensus among younger Americans. Majorities agree with every progressive position but one, whereas no conservative position garners majority support. Support for the progressive positions is equal or increased relative to older Americans, while support for the conservative positions is down as much as 20 points.

These cultural and social values issues still cause greater polarization along lines of partisan identification and religion than other issues, but the gaps are much smaller than we saw in the country as a whole. More importantly, the polarization that does exist here says more about the dwindling number of young Americans who identify themselves as Republicans. With Democrats outnumbering Republicans almost 2 to 1 among this age group (42 percent to 23 percent), the only hope for Republicans is to attract large numbers of Independents to their values and beliefs.

But on every single cultural and social values issue tested in this survey, Independents align closer to the Democrats than the Republicans. On the conservative positions, Independents differ from Democrats by at most 5 points and from Republicans by at least 16 points. The

TABLE 5
Millennial survey—cultural and social values

Progressive statements—% agree

	Total	White	Black	Hisp	Reg. Vote	Not Reg.	18-24	25-29	30+
Americans should adopt a more sustainable lifestyle by conserving energy and consuming fewer goods	79	79	80	82	82	73	79	79	80
Religious faith should focus more on promoting tolerance, social justice, and peace in society, and less on opposing abortion or gay rights	64	65	54	64	65	60	67	59	58
Cultural institutions, the arts, and public broadcasting play an important role in our society and should receive government support	59	56	62	64	59	58	61	56	50
Our country has gone too far in mixing politics and religion and forcing religious values on people	54	53	52	56	54	52	57	49	39
African Americans and other minority groups still lack the same opportunities as whites in our country	43	32	79	52	42	44	45	40	50

lesson here is clear—the more Republicans continue to define themselves and their party through social issues and to demand unwavering orthodoxy from their party leaders on abortion, gay marriage, stem cell research, and similar subjects, the further they move toward irrelevance among the most important generation in modern American politics.

One trend that is important to explore on both the progressive and conservative batteries is the age divide within this generation. Just as Americans under 30 are more progressive than those over 30, 18- to 24-year-olds score higher on almost every progressive measure and lower on every conservative measure than 25- to 29-year-olds. It is impossible to determine at this stage whether this is a function of the increasing progressivism of the youngest Americans or whether Americans of this generation will tend to grow slightly more conservative as they age and increasingly take on the responsibilities of adulthood such as home ownership and parenthood.

In sharp contrast to the other issues sections, only one cultural position garners majority support across the board among Americans under 30 years old. At least two-thirds of every major subgroup and 79 percent overall agree that “Americans should adopt a more sustainable lifestyle by conserving energy and consuming fewer goods,” with just 8 percent disagreeing and 13 percent neutral; 40 percent strongly agree with this position compared to 2 percent who strongly disagree. While many older conservatives and Republicans continue to mock and attack this fundamental conservationist stance, it is a given among younger Americans, with little difference between conservative Republicans (75 percent agree) and progressive Democrats (81 percent).

Research on the Millennial Generation shows that, like previous generations, they value spirituality and faith but are far less likely to embrace organized religion. This is reflected in the 64 percent who agree that “religious faith should focus more on promoting tolerance, social justice, and peace in society, and less on opposing abortion or gay rights,” compared to 19 percent who disagree and 17 percent who are neutral. Intensity is extremely high on this measure, with 42 percent strongly agreeing.

This rejection of traditional litmus test social issues in favor of broad progressive values that span the teachings of all major religions is particularly high among Obama voters (77 percent), Catholics (67 percent), and Democrats (72 percent) and Independents (66 percent) alike. Support for this position is lower—but still outstrips opposition—among Republicans (46 percent agree, 37 percent disagree) and born-again Christians (45 percent agree, 41 percent disagree) of course, but also African Americans (54 percent agree, 27 percent disagree) and parents (55 percent agree, 27 percent disagree).

The largest increase from older Americans to those under 30 on any progressive social measure is found on public support for critical cultural institutions and outlets. Among these young Americans, 59 percent agree that “cultural institutions, the arts, and public broadcasting play an important role in our society and should receive government support,”

while 23 percent are neutral and just 18 percent disagree. We see consistent divisions on this question along lines of gender (62 percent agree among women, 56 percent among men), race (64 percent among Hispanics, 62 percent among African Americans, 56 percent among whites), and education (64 percent among college grads, 56 percent among non-college).

A second progressive statement on religious faith and its role in our society and our politics also garners majority support among young Americans, with 54 percent agreeing that “our country has gone too far in mixing politics and religion and forcing religious values on people,” while 18 percent are neutral and 29 percent disagree. Younger Americans are much more in agreement with this sentiment than are older Americans: only 39 percent of those 30 or older agree that our country has gone too far in mixing politics and religion. Among those with the most intense feelings on either side, 27 percent strongly agree while only 13 percent strongly disagree. This question produces significant gaps between Democrats and Independents (59 percent agree each) on the one hand and Republicans (35 percent agree, 48 percent disagree) on the other. Even among conservatives, non-college conservatives are divided on this measure (41 percent agree, 42 percent disagree) while college-educated conservatives fiercely disagree (26 percent agree, 60 percent disagree).

The only progressive position that does not garner majority agreement focuses on the continuing specter of racial inequality in our society. Young Americans are evenly divided (43 percent agree, 14 percent neutral, 43 percent disagree) on the question of whether “African Americans and other minority groups still lack the same opportunities as whites in our country.” Strong agreement stands at just 15 percent, while 22 percent strongly disagree. Not surprisingly, race is the driving factor on this measure, with African Americans overwhelmingly in agreement (79 percent agree, 15 percent disagree), Hispanics less adamant but still supportive of the position (52 percent agree, 32 percent disagree), and a majority of whites disagreeing (32 percent agree, 54 percent disagree). There are no significant gaps based on gender, education, or other traditional demographic divisions beyond race.

TABLE 6
Millennial survey—cultural and social values

Conservative statements—% agree

	Total	White	Black	Hisp	Reg. Vote	Not Reg.	18-24	25-29	30+
There should be stronger regulation of sex and violence in popular culture and on the Internet	49	47	58	50	50	47	44	55	69
Human life begins at conception and must be protected from that point forward	47	48	47	50	48	46	47	48	58
Changes in the traditional American family have harmed our society	43	42	54	39	42	45	40	46	59
Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs and abuse government benefits	42	50	36	21	44	37	40	45	43
Homosexuality is unnatural and should not be accepted by society	29	28	44	23	29	30	27	33	35

One of the Millennial Generation's hallmarks is the degree to which advanced technology and the Internet have defined their lives and their worldview. So much of the information they depend upon, whether relating to the world at large or their closest friends and family, and the entertainment they consume on a daily basis comes via the Internet. Therefore, it is not surprising that they are 20 points less likely than Americans over 30 to say that "there should be stronger regulation of sex and violence in popular culture and on the Internet" (49 percent agree, 16 percent neutral, 35 percent disagree). There are tremendous gaps on this measure along lines of gender (57 percent agree among women, 41 percent among men), race (58 percent among African Americans, 47 percent among whites), age (55 percent among 25-to-29 year olds, 44 percent among those 18 to 24), marital status (60 percent among married, 44 percent among single), and of course religion (66 percent among born-again, 52 percent among mainline Protestants, 48 percent among Catholics, 36 percent among those with no religious affiliation).

Another conservative position that drops from strong majority support among older Americans to a much smaller plurality among young Americans is the contention that "human life begins at conception and must be protected from that point forward" (47 percent agree, 22 percent neutral, 30 percent disagree). Not surprisingly, more than half of those on either side of this question express strong agreement (31 percent) or disagreement (20 percent). The overall support for this position is bolstered by intense support among conservatives (70 percent agree) and Republicans (69 percent). No other statement in this battery exposes a larger divide between Republicans and Independents (40 percent), who are actually even less likely than Democrats (42 percent) to side with conservatives on this issue.

The final conservative position to fall from majority support is their defense of the traditional American family. Among young Americans, 43 percent agree that "changes in the traditional American family have harmed our society," while 38 percent disagree and 18 percent remain neutral; intensity on this question actually slightly favors opposition (18 percent strongly agree, 19 percent strongly disagree). Once again, the huge partisan divide defines this issue. Democrats (36 percent agree, 46 percent disagree) and Independents (40 percent agree, 41 percent disagree) both express net disagreement with the position, but 3-to-1 support among Republicans (60 percent agree, 21 percent disagree) overcomes their opposition. Similar to the first measure on regulation of sex and violence, we see unusually strong support for this conservative position among African Americans; these two are the only conservative positions in the survey where this is the case.

For several years now, immigration has been heralded as an issue that could help Republicans consolidate their base of support and attract conservative-leaning Independents alienated by years of scandal and fiscal profligacy by Republicans. Yet our national survey showed this issue does not have strong appeal outside of the conservative Republican base, and the same holds true among younger Americans. Overall, they are evenly split on the conservative position that "immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs and abuse government benefits," (42 percent agree, 16 percent neutral, 42 percent

disagree), with intensity (17 percent strongly agree, 21 percent strongly disagree) once again favoring the opposition. As expected, this position is anathema to Hispanics (67 percent disagree) and is opposed by African Americans (36 percent agree, 44 percent disagree) as well. But the real story is in the partisan breakdown: Democrats (35 percent agree, 49 percent disagree) and Independents (40 percent agree, 45 percent disagree) alike reject the conservative critique while Republicans largely embrace it (56 percent agree, 26 percent disagree).

In our national survey of all ages, no position garnered majority disagreement, and only two statements had net disagreement. Among Americans under 30, majorities disagreed with two statements, and the least popular position in both surveys was the conservative position on homosexuality. By a 2-to-1 margin, young Americans disagree with the conservative belief that “homosexuality is unnatural and should not be accepted by society” (29 percent agree, 13 percent neutral, 58 percent disagree), with 18 percent who strongly agree far outnumbered by the incredible 43 percent who strongly disagree. Among voters over 30, only majorities of conservative Republicans and born-again Christians over 30 still express support for this broadly unpopular position. Among those under 30, this trend is even more pronounced—74 percent agree, 12 percent disagree among devout born-again Christians while 57 percent agree, and 31 percent disagree among conservative Republicans. As the number of young Americans identifying with either of these groups dwindles, the gulf between them and the rest of their generation only grows larger on key cultural issues such as this.

Economic and domestic policy

The issue area where young Americans differ least from their older counterparts is on economic and domestic policy. This is because—unlike every other issue area—they do not differ markedly from older Americans on the conservative principles articulated here. In fact, they are more likely than older Americans to agree with the top two conservative positions—support of free trade and Social Security reform. These positions still do not match most progressive positions on economic and domestic policy—particularly in terms of strong support—but given how far conservatives have to go in other areas this has to qualify as their first foothold in trying to make up some ground among these young Americans.

Despite this relative good news for conservatives, progressive positions receive broad support. Combined with the results from the section on the role of government, it is clear that these voters support the principles underlying President Obama’s economic reform efforts and will not respond to conservative attacks on the key pillars of his plan—affordable health care for all Americans, a transformation to renewable energy, tax reform that ensures the wealthy pay their fair share, and corporate accountability.

Just as the earlier progressive “green” position on sustainable living and conservation won broad support across the spectrum of Americans under 30, so does the most popular statement from either ideology on economic and domestic policy—the progressive call for a fundamental shift away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy. Again, support is even higher among young Americans than the strong agreement found among their older

TABLE 7
Millennial survey—economic and domestic policy

Progressive statements—% agree

	Total	White	Black	Hisp	Reg. Vote	Not Reg.	18-24	25-29	30+
America’s economic future requires a transformation away from oil, gas, and coal to renewable energy sources such as wind and solar	78	80	74	77	79	77	80	76	75
The federal government should guarantee affordable health coverage for every American	71	71	71	72	72	70	73	69	63
Rich people like to believe they have made it on their own, but in reality, society has contributed greatly to their wealth	67	67	63	68	65	72	70	63	58
The gap between rich and poor should be reduced, even if it means higher taxes for the wealthy	66	66	68	65	65	67	68	63	61
Labor unions play a positive role in our economy	44	40	59	53	44	45	50	37	46

counterparts, with 78 percent of those under 30 agreeing that “America’s economic future requires a transformation away from oil, gas, and coal to renewable energy sources such as wind and solar,” compared to just 9 percent who disagree and 13 percent who remain neutral. Intensity of feelings on both sides underscores the degree of support—48 percent strongly agree and 2 percent strongly disagree.

It is almost impossible to overstate how powerful this issue is for progressives and the degree to which its broad appeal can help define the progressive movement in the years to come as President Obama’s efforts in this area advance and are magnified by investment from the public and private sectors.

Our full national survey showed broad support for an aggressive statement on health care, and this survey shows that support even stronger among Americans under 30. Almost three out of four (71 percent, 8 points higher than among those over 30) agree that “the federal government should guarantee affordable health coverage for every American,” with just 16 disagreeing and 13 percent neutral. Again, intensity of support tells the story—43 percent strongly agree and 6 percent strongly disagree. Support for this statement is strikingly consistent across the spectrum, but the real measure of how deeply this principle of universal health coverage is among Americans under 30 is the fact that solid majorities of conservatives (58 percent) and Republicans (55 percent) agree.

President Obama’s tax reform plan—which would provide tax cuts to 95 percent of Americans while raising taxes on the wealthiest 5 percent—has caused consternation for Republicans who cling to a now discredited theory of trickle-down economics. Even many Democrats seem so cowed by age-old Republican tax-and-spend attacks that they can’t recognize the ways that eight years of Bush economic policies and our current economic crisis have changed public attitudes on economic policy. Nearly two out of three young Americans agree with the fundamental premise of progressive taxation tested in this survey: “The gap between rich and poor should be reduced, even if it means higher taxes for the wealthy” (66 percent agree, 15 percent neutral, 19 percent disagree). For them, this is not a question of higher taxes but of fairness and social responsibility, because by nearly identical margins, they feel “rich people like to believe they have made it on their own, but in reality, society has contributed greatly to their wealth” (67 percent agree, 17 percent neutral, 16 percent disagree).

Both of these populist progressive positions attract broad support, but agreement with the position that the wealthy have derived significant personal benefit from society as a whole is far more consistent, with even 58 percent of conservative Republicans in agreement. The tax position is much more polarizing, with support peaking among Democrats (75 percent agree), Obama voters (77 percent), non-college women (70 percent), and those earning \$50,000 per year or less (70 percent). But even among most those groups that are least supportive—conservative Republicans (45 percent agree, 40 percent disagree), McCain voters (45 percent agree, 38 percent disagree), and those with an annual house-

hold income of \$100,000 or more (57 percent agree, 24 percent disagree)—we find net support for the position. Only among college-educated conservatives—a dwindling but increasingly ideologically extreme segment of the population—do we see net disagreement with this position (39 percent agree, 46 percent disagree).

The only progressive position that fails to attract significant support focuses on labor unions and their role in the modern economy. Overall, there is largely ambivalence over whether “labor unions play a positive role in our economy,” with 44 percent agreeing, 23 percent disagreeing and 33 percent neutral. Barely one-in-five feel strongly either way (12 percent strongly agree, 9 percent strongly disagree). Among those who do express a clear opinion, this is a rare issue where Democrats (56 percent agree) are out on a limb, with Independents (38 percent) much closer to Republicans (32 percent). College-educated voters, particularly college-educated men (37 percent agree, 37 percent disagree), are the least supportive of this position.

Only three conservative positions in this survey garnered agreement from at least 60 percent of Americans under 30 (compared to 14 progressive positions), and two of them were on economic and domestic policy. The most popular conservative position in this battery states that “free trade is good for America because it creates new markets for our goods and services and lowers costs for consumers,” (68 percent agree, 22 percent neutral, 10 percent disagree). Support for this position is very consistent across partisan and ideological lines; with the biggest gap—albeit still a very small one—emerging between college educated (74 percent agree) and non-college educated (66 percent).

The other conservative position that garners broad support focuses on Social Security reform and actually scores significantly higher among these young Americans than those 30 or older. They say that “Social Security should be reformed to allow workers to invest some of their contributions in individual accounts,” (64 percent agree, 27 percent neutral, just 9 percent disagree). Although the required decrease in guaranteed benefits that

TABLE 8
Millennial survey—economic and domestic policy

Conservative statements—% agree

	Total	White	Black	Hisp	Reg. Vote	Not Reg.	18-24	25-29	30+
Free trade is good for America because it creates new markets for our goods and services and lowers costs for consumers	68	69	62	69	72	59	71	65	64
Social Security should be reformed to allow workers to invest some of their contributions in individual accounts	64	64	57	72	64	65	66	62	54
Cutting taxes for individuals and businesses is the key to economic growth	50	53	47	42	52	46	49	52	57
Healthy economic growth requires eliminating budget deficits, which discourage private investment and raise interest rates	44	45	43	41	46	40	45	43	45
The primary responsibility of corporations is to produce profits and returns for their shareholders, not to improve society	43	43	37	45	43	42	46	39	44

would accompany this reform is not addressed in the conservative rhetoric, the fact that just 9 percent disagree reinforces research that has consistently shown that the youngest Americans do not believe Social Security will even exist when they reach retirement, giving them little incentive not to take a gamble. Again, there is virtually no difference here between Democrats and Republicans or even between progressives and conservatives, with high support and strikingly low disagreement consistent across the spectrum.

No concept is more central to conservative economic principles than the link between tax cuts and economic growth. Yet recent economic policies and outcomes appear to have shaken faith in this link among many Americans. Half of Americans under 30 still agree that “cutting taxes for individuals and businesses is the key to economic growth,” while 20 percent disagree and 29 percent are neutral. With agreement dipping to just 44 percent among Independents and 42 percent among Hispanics, however, the ability of this issue to produce meaningful electoral gains for Republicans after the deep-seated doubts created by the economic policies of the Bush administration and a compliant Republican Congress has to be brought into question.

The lack of enthusiasm for tax cuts may be tied directly to concerns about increasing budget deficits. These young Americans express some concern about these issues, with 44 percent agreeing that “healthy economic growth requires eliminating budget deficits, which discourage private investment and raise interest rates,” and just 17 percent disagreeing. But with 38 percent neutral and less than 1-in-5 expressing strong opinions either way, it’s clear that there remains a great deal of uncertainty around the issue of deficits and their impact on economic growth. Support for this statement is actually higher among self-identified progressives (51 percent agree) and liberals (45 percent) than conservatives (41 percent), who also expressed higher disagreement (22 percent) than almost any other subgroup.

The most divisive and least popular conservative economic position tested focuses on the role of corporations and their relationship to the broader society. Among young Americans raised in an environment that has included everything from disgraced companies Enron Corp. and Tyco International Ltd. to admitted Wall Street Ponzi scheme maven Bernie Madoff and the subprime mortgage mess, 43 percent agree that “the primary responsibility of corporations is to produce profits and returns for their shareholders, not to improve society,” while 30 percent disagree and 27 percent are neutral. There is surprisingly little variation in levels of support along lines of partisan identification—although Democrats and Independents express much higher levels of disagreement—or education, but there is a significant gender gap (49 percent agree among men, 37 percent among women).

International relations and national security

There is no issue area where the Bush legacy hurts Republicans and conservatives alike among Americans under 30 years of age more than international relations and national security. These young Americans express broad support for most progressive positions but draw the line on the one that actually calls for direct support of those most in need around the world. It is a very different tale on the conservative side of the equation, where they rate all conservative positions but one dramatically lower than Americans 30 or older.

Strongly influenced by the global reach of the Internet, Millennials have a unique appreciation for our country’s role and image in the world and wish to see our country leading by example and actively using diplomacy rather than military might to advance out strategic interests. But they also have an isolationist streak when it comes to direct financial support or open-ended efforts to solve the world’s problems, and they are unwilling to compromise constitutional liberties to accomplish our security goals.

Once again, the strongest progressive position tested in this issue area addresses energy and the environment and the country’s willingness to take dramatic steps to reverse course and establish true energy independence. There is broad agreement that “America must play a leading role in addressing climate change by reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions and complying with international agreements on global warming,” (73 percent agree, 13 percent neutral, 13 percent disagree), with 38 percent strongly agreeing. While

TABLE 9
Millennial survey—int’l relations and national security

Progressive statements—% agree

	Total	White	Black	Hisp	Reg. Vote	Not Reg.	18-24	25-29	30+
America must play a leading role in addressing climate change by reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions and complying with international agreements on global warming	73	70	78	76	72	75	74	71	68
A positive image of America around the world is necessary to achieve our national security goals	73	72	69	76	74	69	76	68	72
America’s security is best promoted by working through diplomacy, alliances, and international institutions	63	61	59	72	65	57	67	58	68
The war in Iraq has proven that the U.S. can not impose democracy on other nations	59	56	64	56	59	57	59	58	52
America should spend more to help meet the basic economic, health, and education needs of people around the world	38	33	51	43	38	38	43	31	36

there were no real divisions along traditional lines such as partisanship, ideology, or any significant demographics on the other statements addressing issues of sustainability and renewable energy, Republicans and conservatives (58 percent agree each) are far less likely to support this position. Despite agreeing that we must commit to dramatic change in our own country, they still fear the next step—a commitment to serve as a model to the rest of the world and to bring other countries in line.

There is nonetheless partisan unity on the importance of restoring America's image in the world. By an almost identical margin (73 percent agree, 15 percent neutral, 13 percent disagree), young Americans say that “a positive image of America around the world is necessary to achieve our national security goals.” Progressives (83 percent agree) are particularly committed to this goal, as are Catholics (81 percent) and those who get their news primarily online from blogs and the Internet (81 percent).

Given that progressives and conservatives alike wish to protect America, the question facing both sides is how to accomplish this essential goal. In a direct rebuke of Bush policy, 63 percent of young Americans believe that “America's security is best promoted by working through diplomacy, alliances, and international institutions,” while 26 percent are neutral and just 11 percent disagree. Even majorities of conservative Republicans (53 percent) and McCain voters (51 percent) agree with this position, which attracts particularly strong agreement among those with a college degree.

Taking the progressive critique of the Bush years one step further, 59 percent agree that “the war in Iraq has proven that the United States can not impose democracy on other nations,” while 18 percent are neutral and 23 percent disagree. This is a very strong critique that directly contradicts the neoconservative ideology that drove us to war in Iraq, and it produces a fascinating partisan dynamic among Americans under 30. Republicans (36 percent agree, 45 percent disagree) reject this position but Independents (64 percent agree) actually support it in even higher numbers than the preference for diplomacy above, putting them nearly equal with Democrats (67 percent agree) and once again leaving Republicans isolated on their own. It is clear that even if most American troops are withdrawn from Iraq by 2011 the political ramifications of the war and the way the Bush administration led the country to war will reverberate much longer.

The strong progressive consensus found to this point on international affairs breaks down when it comes to direct support to help the needy throughout the world. Only 38 percent agree that “America should spend more to help meet the basic economic, health, and education needs of people around the world,” with 20 percent neutral and 43 percent who disagree, making this the only progressive position in the survey with net disagreement. This is not a straightforward test of support for foreign aid because we employed the much tougher test of increasing spending at a time when so many Americans feel the basic needs of many in their own communities are not being met. Nonetheless, the lack

of enthusiasm for increased support at this time is unmistakable, with even progressives (51 percent agree, 31 percent disagree) offering only modest support and most subgroups expressing disagreement with the position.

Only one conservative position shows majority support and increased support among young Americans while the other four all fall well short of 50 percent and reveal double-digit drops relative to Americans 30 and older. The one successful conservative position is built on the same attitudes and concerns that held these young Americans back on the last progressive position. By a margin of almost 9-to-1 (80 percent agree, 9 percent disagree, 12 percent neutral), Americans under 30 agree that “America has taken too large a role in solving the world’s problems and should focus more at home.” This represents a 7-point increase over older Americans and a rare point of agreement on conservative beliefs. Traditional partisan and ideological trends are actually turned on their head on this measure, with Democrats and Independents both more supportive than Republicans and Obama voters more likely to agree than McCain voters.

Conservatives and progressives harbor fundamental disagreements about how best to provide for America’s security in the current global climate, and Americans under 30 clearly prefer the progressive vision for securing our future. Whereas 63 percent express support for the progressive assertion that diplomacy and alliances are the best means of achieving national security, only 42 percent agree with the competing conservative belief that “military force is the most effective way to combat terrorism and make America safer,” with 19 percent neutral and 39 percent disagreeing. Partisan and ideological divisions are most important here, with 63 percent of Republicans in agreement, whereas large numbers of Democrats (40 percent) and Independents (52 percent) alike express disagreement. Again, the isolation of Republicans is highlighted, as Independents (28 percent agree) are even less likely than liberal Democrats (31 percent) to endorse this position.

TABLE 10
Millennial survey—int’l relations and national security

Conservative statements—% agree

	Total	White	Black	Hisp	Reg. Vote	Not Reg.	18-24	25-29	30+
America has taken too large a role in solving the world’s problems and should focus more at home	80	80	78	80	78	83	78	82	73
Military force is the most effective way to combat terrorism and make America safer	42	41	45	47	44	36	40	44	58
We must do whatever is necessary to protect America from terrorism, even if it means restricting civil liberties or engaging in methods some might consider torture	37	37	43	29	39	32	35	39	53
Talking with rogue nations such as Iran or with state-sponsored terrorist groups is naive and only gives them legitimacy	35	35	28	37	35	34	34	36	41
It is unpatriotic to criticize our government leaders or our military during a time of war	30	31	32	26	30	31	31	30	45

Like the war in Iraq, the debate over interrogation methods and privacy concerns will far outlast the Bush administration policies that injected these issues into our daily political discourse. And young Americans hold strong opinions that are likely to remain with them for years to come, as only 37 percent agree that “we must do whatever is necessary to protect America from terrorism, even if it means restricting civil liberties or engaging in methods some might consider torture,” while 47 percent disagree and another 16 percent are neutral. Majority support among Republicans (58 percent) is far outweighed by majority opposition from Democrats and Independents (54 percent disagree each). This issue also reveals major differences between men (42 percent agree) and women (31 percent) and those without a college degree (39 percent) versus college grads (32 percent). Overall, the 16-point slump from majority support among those 30 or older matches the largest drop-off in this section.

In another challenge to the progressive position on diplomacy, young Americans are split evenly on whether or not “talking with rogue nations such as Iran or with state-sponsored terrorist groups is naive and only gives them legitimacy,” (35 percent agree, 35 percent disagree) with ambivalence running particularly high (30 percent neutral). Given the efforts of the McCain campaign to make this a central issue in the 2008 election, it is telling that majorities of conservatives, Republicans, and McCain voters express support while almost no other group approaches even 40 percent agreement. And given the McCain campaign’s desperate need to attract swing voters, it is telling that Independents (29 percent) are once again even less likely than Democrats (32 percent) to side with this statement.

The final conservative position is only the second in the survey to attract a majority in disagreement, and it represents an extension of the willingness to restrict civil liberties laid out in the earlier measure including torture. While 30 percent of young Americans agree that “it is unpatriotic to criticize our government leaders or our military during a time of war,” 51 percent disagree while the remaining 19 percent are neutral. Almost every subgroup disagrees with this statement except Republicans (51 percent agree, 30 percent disagree), whose support stands in marked contrast to Democrats (26 percent agree, 54 percent disagree) and Independents (21 percent agree, 60 percent disagree). On no other set of issues do Republicans under the age of 30 isolate themselves so consistently and so far from the Independents they must attract to regain relevance among America’s largest generation of voters.

Part Two

Political values, ideological perceptions and ratings among Millennials

Core American political values

As in our national survey, the youth study explored young people’s views on a series of more macro ideological values that help shape political discourse. One of the more important, if somewhat abstract, measures of these core values involves public understanding of the American Dream. Expressing a profound optimism about their own futures, 77 percent of younger Americans believe that they have either already achieved the American Dream (10 percent) or will achieve it in their lifetime (67 percent), while only 12 percent feel that they will not achieve it over the course of their lives.

These sentiments track fairly well with older Americans as 74 percent of those 30 or older say they have or will achieve the American Dream. The distribution is different among older Americans, reflecting life cycle changes with many more Americans 30 years of age and older reporting that they have already achieved the American Dream (38 percent). At the same time, more Americans ages 30 or older are skeptical of their life chances than are younger Americans with 19 percent reporting that they will not achieve the American Dream in their lifetime. As Table 11 shows, the percentage of the public believing they will not achieve the American Dream rises with age—from 10 percent among those ages 18 to 24, to 14 percent among those ages 25 to 29, to 19 percent among those 30 or older. As younger people face the realities of life, the American Dream becomes more elusive for many of their fellow citizens with a full 21 percent of those 50 or older saying they won’t achieve it in their lifetime.

Examining patterns among sub-groups we find some interesting trends among younger Americans. White youth are more skeptical of their chances of achieving the American

TABLE 11
Achieving the American dream

% agreeing by age

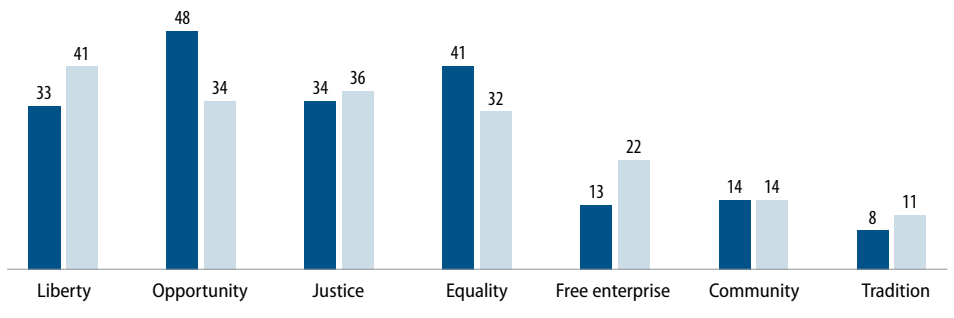
Thinking about the American Dream and what that means for you and your family, do you feel you have already achieved the American Dream, that you have not achieved it yet but will in your lifetime, or that you won’t achieve it in your lifetime?

	Total youth	18-24	25-29	30+
Achieved	10	12	8	38
Not yet but will	67	66	68	36
Will not achieve	12	10	14	19

FIGURE 2

Top American values

■ Total youth % ■ 30+ %



Dream (13 percent will not achieve) than non-white youth (9 percent will not achieve). Twenty percent of those young people earning \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year are skeptical of their life chances compared to only 8 percent of those earning \$75,000 per year or more. Fifteen percent of Independents believe they won't achieve the dream—almost double the number of Republicans (8 percent).

Further highlighting the optimism of youth, we find that younger Americans overwhelmingly choose “opportunity” and “equality” as their primary political values. In comparison, their older counterparts favor “liberty” (41 percent) and “justice” (36 percent) as their top values. Asked to choose two American political values that are most important to them, 48 percent of young people say “opportunity” and 41 percent select “equality.” A second tier of values emerges with “liberty” (33 percent) and “justice” (34 percent) while “free enterprise” (13 percent), “community” (14 percent), and “tradition” (8 percent) rank much lower.

Fleshing out these abstract values in more detail, we asked young people to choose between a series of forced choice comparisons. These larger comparisons help to explain the framework for the consensus we find around more specific progressive values. Young people are in basic alignment (although at lower levels of support) with older voters in the belief that “government should do more to promote the common good,” (50 percent) rather than doing more “to promote individual liberty,” (29 percent). The notion of taking care of common needs and the public good is shared across ideological groups with 53 percent of Democrats, 55 percent of liberals, and 50 percent of conservatives agreeing with this focus.

Both younger and older Americans also agree with a notion of freedom grounded more in progressives arguments reminiscent of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Forty-eight percent of younger Americans believe that “freedom requires economic opportunity and minimum measures of security, such as food, housing, medical care and old age protection,” compared to 37 percent of young people who believe the libertarian notion that “freedom requires that individuals be left alone to pursue their lives as they please and to deal with the consequences of their actions on their own.” The percentage of young and

old favoring the libertarian view of freedom is identical, but a larger percentage of older people (58 percent) support the progressive notion of freedom than do younger ones.

Perhaps signaling younger American’s more negative reaction to the financial collapse, we find that a plurality of youth (42 percent) believes that “our current economic problems show what happens when you rely too much on the market and reduce regulations on corporations,” while 39 percent favor the argument that “corporations deserve a lot of the blame for our current economic problems, but the free market is still the best way to organize our economy.” Younger conservatives disagree with this premise while younger Republicans are fairly split in their opinions. In contrast, a majority of Americans ages 30 or older (54 percent) still believes in the free market approach to organizing the economy.

Despite these age differences about the role of markets, young and old are in agreement that government needs to play a larger role in the economy—60 percent of younger Americans and 61 percent of older ones say that “it’s time for government to take a larger and stronger role in making the economy work for the average American” compared to 27 percent and 36 percent, respectively, who follow the conservative line that “turning to big government to solve our economic problems will do more harm than good.”

TABLE 12
Millennial attitudes about freedom, markets and government

	1 st much more	1 st somewhat more	Both	2 nd somewhat more	2 nd much more	Neither	Don't know/refused	Total 1 st more 18–29/30+	Total 2 nd more 18–29/30+
STATEMENT #1 Government should do more to promote the common good.	21	28	21	18	11	0	0	50/62	29/35
STATEMENT #2 Government should do more to promote individual liberty.									
STATEMENT #1 Freedom requires economic opportunity and minimum measures of security, such as food, housing, medical care, and old age protection.	20	28	14	24	13	-	0	48/58	37/37
STATEMENT #2 Freedom requires that individuals be left alone to pursue their lives as they please and to deal with the consequences of their actions on their own.									
STATEMENT #1 Our current economic problems show what happens when you rely too much on the market and reduce regulations on corporations.	14	28	19	25	14	0	-	42/40	39/54
STATEMENT #2 Corporations deserve a lot of the blame for our current economic problems, but the free market is still the best way to organize our economy.									
STATEMENT #1 It’s time for government to take a larger and stronger role in making the economy work for the average American.	30	29	13	16	11	-	1	60/61	27/36
STATEMENT #2 Turning to big government to solve our economic problems will do more harm than good.									

Ideological perceptions of President Obama

Various commentaries on the rise of Millennials in American politics often refer to these youngest voters as “Generation Obama.” Based on the responses to a number of questions about the new president, this study backs up that claim. A broad and deep cross-section of American youth support the president’s tenure in office and see in Obama a range of positive personal and job related characteristics.

Overall, two-thirds of young people approve of President’s job performance while only 16 percent disapprove. Younger Americans support the new president at higher rates than their 30+ cohorts (56 percent approve). As Table 13 highlights, approval of Obama’s presidency crosses partisan and ideological lines among young people with a plurality of self-identified conservatives and Republicans rating Obama’s job performance favorably. This finding stands in contrast to the trends in our national survey which showed hardening opposition to the president among conservatives and Republicans at large.

In terms of how young people perceive President Obama’s own ideological perspective, the patterns are quite similar to those among older voters—people of particular ideological persuasions tend to see their own ideology reflected in Obama. A plurality of progressives, for example, views President Obama’s political perspective as progressive; liberals see him as liberal; and moderates as moderate. Like the national survey, the lone exception to this trend is among self-identified conservatives who overwhelmingly (52 percent) view Obama as liberal. Younger conservatives (58 percent) are also more likely than their ideological counterparts to believe that the country is more divided than in the past rather than less. Progressives, liberals and moderates believe that the country is more unified than in the past. Again, although ideological resistance to Obama exists among younger conservatives, it is not as pronounced as it is among older voters.

TABLE 13
Job performance ratings of Obama

	18-29	30+	Prog.	Lib	Mod	Con	Dem	Ind.	Rep
Approve	66	56	86	86	69	41	86	61	43
Disapprove	16	25	6	4	18	36	5	15	39

TABLE 14

Ideological perceptions of President Obama

% of self-identified group saying that Obama's political perspective is...

Which of the following do you feel best describes Barack Obama's political perspective?				
	Progressives	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives
Progressive	60	26	27	14
Liberal	10	45	22	52
Moderate	18	16	38	12
Conservative	6	3	2	14

Our study also asked younger Americans to describe President Obama in one word or phrase. In general, young people respect Obama's personal characteristics and a large percentage view him as significant agent of change. Thirty-four percent of youth offer a positive personal assessment while another 32 percent say that Obama represents a new direction. Older voters are more likely than younger ones to say something negative about Obama, with nearly one fifth of those 30 years of age and older saying he can't be trusted or isn't up to the job compared to less than 10 percent of those ages 18 to 29 who believe similarly.

Ideological ratings

One of the bigger stories emerging from this study is the near collapse of the conservative brand among young people. In our national survey, more than two-thirds of Americans rated a “conservative” approach to politics favorably with an equal percentage rating a “progressive” approach favorably. In contrast, less than half of young people (45 percent) in this study rate “conservative” favorably while both “progressive” and “liberal” score quite well.

To be sure, some of this is driven by the larger percentage of young people identifying as progressive or liberal and the roughly one-fifth of young people who cannot or will not offer an opinion on the label. But the low marks also reflect the poor state of the conservative brand among Independents (39 percent favorable) and middling ratings among moderates (51 percent favorable) and married younger Americans (51 percent). Non-college educated young people (43 percent favorable) are even less positive about conservatism than are college-educated ones (48 percent). Traditional audiences such as Republicans (80 percent) and born-again Christians (67 percent) do retain strong sentiments for conservatism.

As Table 15 highlights, the “progressive” label enjoys the highest favorable rating (54 percent) of the four approaches tested with one-half of younger Americans also rating “liberal” favorably. As in our national survey, the “libertarian” brand receives fairly low marks with only 35 percent of young people rating favorably compared to 39 percent of those ages 30 or older. The libertarian label is largely unknown to younger Americans, however—a full 36 percent of those 18- to 29-year-olds are unable or unwilling to offer an opinion of the approach. Interestingly, self-identified young conservatives look much less favorably upon the libertarian brand (21 percent) than do young progressives (45 percent) and liberals (45 percent).

TABLE 15
Public favorability of major ideologies

% total favorable towards ideological label

	Total youth	30+	Prog	Lib	Mod	Con
Progressive	54	66	85	62	60	35
Liberal	50	47	62	85	55	19
Conservative	45	68	35	83	51	83
Libertarian	35	39	45	45	31	21

Self-identification

Perhaps not surprisingly given the other findings explored throughout this report, younger Americans report high levels of self-identification as ideological progressives and liberals. As in our national survey, this study employs a unique measurement of Americans’ ideological self-identification, expanding the traditional liberal-moderate-conservative test with a 5-point measure that we believe more accurately reflects the dominant ideologies in politics today. In the national study, we found that roughly 3 out of 10 Americans on the whole classify themselves as “progressive” or “liberal” (31 percent) and “moderate or other” (31 percent), and just over one-third of Americans label themselves “conservative” or “libertarian” (36 percent).

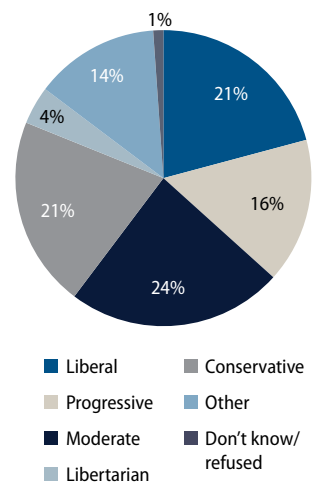
In the youth study, the trends toward progressivism-liberalism are more pronounced as are trends toward moderate and non-affiliated leanings. Thirty-seven percent of younger Americans identify as either “liberal” (21 percent) or “progressive” (16 percent); 25 percent as either “conservative” (21 percent) or “libertarian” (4 percent); and another 38 percent as “moderate” (24 percent) or “other” (14 percent). After asking the moderate respondents to select between the remaining ideological approaches, we find a 16-point margin for progressive-liberal over conservative-libertarian with roughly additional one-third remaining neutral as moderate-other.

Although these ideological labels fall along our composite index spectrum fairly well (See Figure 1 earlier in report)—conservatives below the mean at 189.4, moderates close to the mean at 223.9, and progressives and liberals well above the mean at 236 and 243.0, respectively—ideological groupings among younger people are noticeably more progressive than the scores among the population at large.

Furthermore, these ideological labels do not correspond to hard or fixed views about politics, particularly among those who identify as conservative. As stated earlier, majorities of self-identified young conservatives and Republicans agree with every progressive position on the role of government and four out of five progressive positions on economics. The demise of the conservative brand among young people overall is compounded by the broad acceptance of progressive values and beliefs across the ideological and partisan spectrum.

Ideological self-identification

What is your ideology?



Combined breakdown after moderates choose from other ideologies

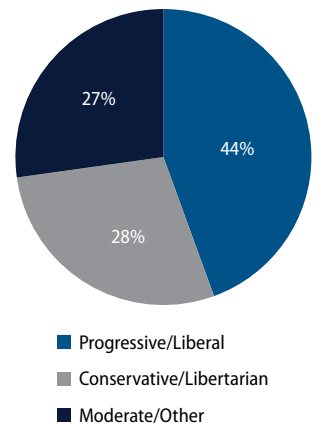


FIGURE 3

Appendix

Complete results from Millennial questionnaire

Q.4 (Landline only) First of all, are you registered to vote at this address?

[74 Respondents]

	Total
Yes	64
No	36
(Refused)	-

(ref:SCREEN1)

Q.5 (Cell and online only) First of all, are you registered to vote?

[841 Respondents]

	Total
Yes	72
No	28
(Refused)	-

(ref:SCREEN2)

Q.6 Generally speaking, do you think that things in this country are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

	Total
Right direction	35
Wrong track	64
(Don't know/refused)	1
Right - Wrong	-29

(ref:DIRECT)

Q.7 Do you think your family's income is going up faster than the cost of living, staying about even with the cost of living, or falling behind the cost of living?

	Total
Income going up faster	5
Income staying even	31
Income falling behind	63
(Don't know/Refused)	1

(ref:ECON2)

Q.8 Thinking about the American Dream and what that means for you and your family, do you feel you have already achieved the American Dream, that you have not achieved it yet but will in your lifetime, or that you won't achieve it in your lifetime?

	Total
Have achieved the American Dream	10
Have not achieved it yet but will	67
Will not achieve the American Dream	12
(Don't know/Refused)	11

(ref:ECON3)

Q.9 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

	Total
Strongly approve	28
Somewhat approve	38
Somewhat disapprove	9
Strongly disapprove	7
(Don't know/Refused)	17
Total approve	66
Total disapprove	16
Approve - disapprove	50

(ref.PRESAPPR)

Q.10 Please tell me what ONE word or phrase best describes Barack Obama in your opinion? [OPEN-ENDED]

	Total
NEW DIRECTION	32
Change / New / Different from Bush	20
Inspirational / Optimistic / Promising	6
Hope / Potential	5
Progressive	1
Will work with both sides	0
POSITIVE PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	22
Determined / Persistent / Hard working	6
Smart / Intelligent / Capable	5
Brave / Bold / Courageous	4
Trustworthy / Honest / Integrity	2
Eloquent / Good speaker	2
Flexible / Adaptable	1
Thoughtful / Calm	1
Energetic	1
Down to Earth / Humble	0
Decent / Moral	0
Real / Genuine	0
POSITIVE—GENERAL	7
Great / Excellent / Awesome	6
Cares about America	1
NOT UP TO THE JOB	5
Inexperienced / Unqualified	3
In over his head / Overrated	1
Arrogant	1
Can't change things / Misguided	0
POSITIVE JOB PERFORMANCE	5
Leader	2
Doing his best / Trying to fix our country	2
Influential / Powerful	1
Doing a good job	1
TOO EARLY TO SAY	5
Unknown / Waiting to see	3
He is president now	1
Young	0
Faced with hard decisions / Big challenges ahead	0
CAN'T BE TRUSTED	4
Smooth talker / Deceptive / Fake	2
Communist / Socialist	2
Typical politician / Promises a lot	0
Other	16
Refused/None/Nothing	2
Don't know	2

(ref.DESCRIBE)

Q.11 Which of the following do you feel best describes Barack Obama's political perspective?

	Total
Liberal	34
Progressive	26
Moderate	19
Conservative	7
Libertarian	2
(Other)	10
(Don't know/Refused)	1

(ref:OBAMAIDEO)

Q.12 (IF MODERATE) If you had to pick one of the following, which do you feel best describes Obama's political perspective?

[171 Respondents]

	Total
Progressive	45
Liberal	34
Conservative	8
Libertarian	2
(Moderate)	-
(Other)	10
(Don't know/Refused)	0

(ref:OBAMAIDEO2)

Q.11/12 Combined Obama ideology

	Total
Liberal	40
Progressive	35
Conservative	8
Libertarian	3
Moderate	2
(Other)	10
(Don't know/Refused)	1

(ref:OBAMAIDEO/OBAMAIDEO2)

Q.13 Do you think the country is more politically divided these days than in the past or not?

	Total
Yes, more divided	44
No, not more divided than in the past	43
(Don't know/Refused)	13
Yes - No	0

(ref:DIVIDE)

Q.14 Which two of the following American political values are most important to you?

	Total
Opportunity	48
Equality	41
Justice	34
Liberty	33
Community	14
Free enterprise	13
Tradition	8
(Other)	3
(Don't know/Refused)	0

(ref:VALUES)

Q.15 Now I'm going to read you a number of statements about the role of government in our society. For each, please indicate how much you agree on a scale of 0-10, with 10 meaning you completely agree with the statement, zero meaning you completely disagree with the statement, and 5 meaning you aren't sure whether you agree or disagree. You can use any number from 0 to 10, the higher the number the more you agree with the statement.

	Strng Agree (9-10)	Total Agree (6-10)	Neutral (5)	Total Disagree (0-4)	Strng Disagree (0-1)	DK/Ref	Mean
15 Government policies too often serve the interests of corporations and the wealthy.	32	71	16	13	4	-	7.0
16 Government has a responsibility to provide financial support for the poor, the sick, and the elderly.	27	66	13	21	5	-	6.5
17 Government regulations are necessary to keep businesses in check and protect workers and consumers.	24	70	19	11	3	-	6.8
18 Government investments in education, infrastructure, and science are necessary to ensure America's long-term economic growth.	43	80	13	6	2	-	7.7
19 Government must step in to protect the national economy when the market fails.	28	69	15	16	5	-	6.7
20 Limited government is always better than big government.	18	44	38	18	5	0	5.9
21 Free market solutions are better than government at creating jobs and economic growth.	12	42	40	18	5	0	5.7
22 Government spending is almost always wasteful and inefficient.	20	57	21	23	6	-	6.1
23 Government regulation of business does more harm than good.	11	36	34	29	8	-	5.3
24 Government programs for the poor undermine individual initiative and responsibility.	15	48	23	29	10	0	5.5
Progressive Government Index Mean	56.3						

(ref:GOVTINDEX)

Q.25 Now I'm going to read you a number of statements about our society today. For each, please indicate how much you agree on a scale of 0-10, with 10 meaning you completely agree with the statement, zero meaning you completely disagree with the statement, and 5 meaning you aren't sure whether you agree or disagree. You can use any number from 0 to 10, the higher the number the more you agree with the statement.

	Strng Agree (9-10)	Total Agree (6-10)	Neutral (5)	Total Disagree (0-4)	Strng Disagree (0-1)	DK/Ref	Mean
25 Our country has gone too far in mixing politics and religion and forcing religious values on people.	27	54	18	29	13	-	5.9
26 Americans should adopt a more sustainable lifestyle by conserving energy and consuming fewer goods.	40	79	13	8	2	-	7.5
27 Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs and abuse government benefits.	17	42	16	42	21	0	4.9
28 African-Americans and other minority groups still lack the same opportunities as whites in our country.	15	43	14	43	22	0	4.8
29 Homosexuality is unnatural and should not be accepted by society.	18	29	13	58	43	-	3.7
30 Human life begins at conception and must be protected from that point forward.	31	47	22	30	20	0	5.7
31 Religious faith should focus more on promoting tolerance, social justice, and peace in society, and less on opposing abortion or gay rights.	42	64	17	19	12	0	6.8
32 There should be stronger regulation of sex and violence in popular culture and on the Internet.	23	49	16	35	18	-	5.4
33 Changes in the traditional American family have harmed our society.	18	43	19	38	19	0	5.1
34 Cultural institutions, the arts, and public broadcasting play an important role in our society and should receive government support.	23	59	23	18	6	-	6.3
Progressive Cultural Index Mean	56.6						

(ref:CULTINDEX)

Q.35 Now I'm going to read you a number of statements about the economy and other issues facing our country. For each, please indicate how much you agree on a scale of 0-10, with 10 meaning you completely agree with the statement, zero meaning you completely disagree with the statement, and 5 meaning you aren't sure whether you agree or disagree. You can use any number from 0 to 10—the higher the number the more you agree with the statement.

	Strng Agree (9-10)	Total Agree (6-10)	Neutral (5)	Total Disagree (0-4)	Strng Disagree (0-1)	DK/Ref	Mean
35 Labor unions play a positive role in our economy.	12	44	33	23	9	0	5.5
36 The gap between rich and poor should be reduced, even if it means higher taxes for the wealthy.	34	66	15	19	9	-	6.7
37 Rich people like to believe they have made it on their own, but in reality, society has contributed greatly to their wealth.	31	67	17	16	5	-	6.8
38 America's economic future requires a transformation away from oil, gas, and coal to renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.	42	78	13	9	2	-	7.6
39 The federal government should guarantee affordable health coverage for every American.	43	71	13	16	6	-	7.2
40 Free trade is good for America because it creates new markets for our goods and services and lowers costs for consumers.	24	68	22	10	4	0	6.8
41 The primary responsibility of corporations is to produce profits and returns for their shareholders, not to improve society.	12	43	27	30	9	-	5.4
42 Cutting taxes for individuals and businesses is the key to economic growth.	15	50	29	20	5	-	5.9
43 Social Security should be reformed to allow workers to invest some of their contributions in individual accounts.	24	64	27	9	3	-	6.7
44 Healthy economic growth requires eliminating budget deficits, which discourage private investment and raise interest rates.	13	44	38	17	5	0	5.8
Progressive Economic Index Mean	35.1						

(ref:ECONINDEX)

Q.45 Now I'm going to read you a number of statements about our country and its role in the world. For each, please indicate how much you agree on a scale of 0-10, with 10 meaning you completely agree with the statement, zero meaning you completely disagree with the statement, and 5 meaning you aren't sure whether you agree or disagree. You can use any number from 0 to 10—the higher the number the more you agree with the statement.

	Strng Agree (9-10)	Total Agree (6-10)	Neutral (5)	Total Disagree (0-4)	Strng Disagree (0-1)	DK/Ref	Mean
45 America should spend more to help meet the basic economic, health, and education needs of people around the world.	14	38	20	43	16	-	4.9
46 America has taken too large a role in solving the world's problems and should focus more at home.	41	80	12	9	2	-	7.6
47 America's security is best promoted by working through diplomacy, alliances, and international institutions.	22	63	26	11	3	0	6.7
48 America must play a leading role in addressing climate change by reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions and complying with international agreements on global warming.	38	73	13	13	7	-	7.1
49 Military force is the most effective way to combat terrorism and make America safer.	13	42	19	39	15	-	5.0
50 We must do whatever is necessary to protect America from terrorism, even if it means restricting civil liberties or engaging in methods some might consider torture.	15	37	16	47	22	-	4.6
51 It is unpatriotic to criticize our government leaders or our military during a time of war.	10	30	19	51	28	-	4.1
52 A positive image of America around the world is necessary to achieve our national security goals.	31	73	15	13	4	-	7.0
53 The war in Iraq has proven that the United States can not impose democracy on other nations.	25	59	18	23	7	-	6.3
54 Talking with rogue nations such as Iran or with state-sponsored terrorist groups is naive and only gives them legitimacy.	10	35	30	35	12	0	5.0
Progressive International Index Mean	55.6						

(ref:INTLINDEX)

Q.55 Now, I am going to read you a list of terms. Please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each.

	Strng Fav	Smwt Fav	Smwt Unfav	Strng Unfav	DK/Ref	Total Fav	Total Unfav	Fav-Unfav
55 Conservative	15	30	26	12	17	45	38	7
56 Liberal	15	35	17	13	20	50	31	19
57 Libertarian	8	28	21	7	36	35	29	7
58 Progressive	17	38	12	4	29	54	16	38

(ref:IDEOTS)

Q.59/60 Which of the following do you feel best describes your political perspective?

	Total
Very Conservative	6
Somewhat Conservative	15
Very Liberal	6
Somewhat Liberal	15
Very Progressive	5
Somewhat Progressive	11
Very Libertarian	2
Somewhat Libertarian	2
Moderate	24
(Other)	14
(Don't know/Refused)	1
Total Conservative	21
Total Liberal	21
Total Progressive	16
Total Libertarian	4

(ref:SELFIDEO/SELFIDEO2)

Q.61 (IF MODERATE, OTHER, OR DK/REF) If you had to pick one of the following, which do you feel best describes your political perspective?

[355 Respondents]

	Total
Liberal	10
Conservative	9
Progressive	9
Libertarian	1
(Moderate)	45
(Other)	25
(Don't know/Refused)	1

(ref:SELFIDEO3)

Q.59-61 Combined self ideology with Moderate push

	Total
Liberal	25
Conservative	24
Progressive	19
Moderate	17
Libertarian	4
(Other)	10
(Don't know/Refused)	0

(ref:SELFIDEO/SELFIDEO2/SELFIDEO3)

Q.62 Would you say that a progressive is more like a liberal, more like a conservative, or something entirely different?

	Total
More like a liberal	44
Something entirely different	46
More like a conservative	9
(Don't know/Refused)	1

(ref:DEOTS2)

Q.63 Now I'm going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read each pair, please tell me whether you agree more with the first statement or agree more with the second statement.

	1st Much More	1st Smwt More	Both	2nd Smwt More	2nd Much More	Neither	DK/Ref	Total 1st More	Total 2nd More	1st-2nd
63 Government should do more to promote the common good. Government should do more to promote individual liberty.	21	28	21	18	11	0	0	50	29	21
64 Freedom requires economic opportunity and minimum measures of security, such as food, housing, medical care, and old age protection. Freedom requires that individuals be left alone to pursue their lives as they please and to deal with the consequences of their actions on their own.	20	28	14	24	13	-	0	48	37	11
65 (SPLIT A) Our current economic problems show what happens when you rely too much on the market and reduce regulations on corporations. Corporations deserve a lot of the blame for our current economic problems, but the free market is still the best way to organize our economy. 457 Respondents	14	28	19	25	14	0	-	42	39	2
66 (SPLIT B) It's time for government to take a larger and stronger role in making the economy work for the average American. Turning to big government to solve our economic problems will do more harm than good. 458 Respondents	30	29	13	16	11	-	1	60	27	33

(ref:BIGTHEME)

Q.67 Now a couple questions about you and your own media habits. On average, how many hours per day do you spend online—that is, actively using the Internet?

	Total
Less than one hour per day	7
One to two hours per day	22
Two to three hours per day	25
Three to four hours per day	15
Four or more hours per day	31
(Don't know/Refused)	0

(ref:INTERUSE)

Q.68 (ONLINE ONLY) Do you have a cell phone for personal use?

790 Respondents

	Total
Yes	94
No	6

(ref:CELLONLY)

Q.69 (ONLINE ONLY) Do you have a regular telephone at home?

[790 Respondents]

	Total
Yes	55
No	45

(ref:OWNCELL)

Q.68 (CELL PHONE ONLY) Is your cell phone your only phone for personal use or do you also have a regular telephone at home?

[50 Respondents]

	Total
Cell phone only	74
Also have regular phone	26
(Don't know/Refused)	-

(ref:CELLONLY)

Q.69 (LANDLINE ONLY) We reached you on your telephone at home. Do you also have a cell phone that you use for personal use?

[74 Respondents]

	Total
Yes, have cell phone also	60
No cell phone	40
(Don't know/refused)	-

(ref:LANDONLY)

Q.68/69 Combined phone usage

	Total
Only landline	8
Only cell phone	42
Both	49
No phone	0
Total landline	57
Total cell phone	92

(ref:CELLONLY/LANDONLY)

Q.70 Where do you get most of your information about what's going on in politics and national affairs today?

	Total
Local television news	31
Internet or blogs	24
National television news	21
Talking to other people	7
Local newspapers or magazines	5
Local radio	3
National radio	3
Late night shows	2
National newspapers or magazines	2
(Other)	3
(Don't know/Refused)	-

(ref:SOURCES)

Q.71 Finally, I would like to ask you a few questions for statistical purposes. What is the last year of schooling that you have completed?

	Total
1 - 11th grade	5
High school graduate	19
Noncollege post-high school.	2
Some college	41
College graduate	25
Postgraduate school	7
(Don't know/Refused)	0

(ref:EDUC)

Q.72 In what year were you born?

	Total
18 - 24	57
25 - 29	43

(ref:AGE)

Q.73 Are you married, single, separated, divorced, or widowed?

	Total
Married	30
Single	68
Separated	1
Divorced	1
Widowed	-
(Don't know/Refused)	0

(ref:MARITAL)

Q.74 Do you have any children 18 years of age or younger living at home?

	Total
Yes	31
No	69

(ref:KIDS)

Q.75-77 Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, or what?

	Total
Strong Democrat	19
Weak Democrat	23
Independent-lean Democrat	11
Independent	17
Independent-lean Republican	6
Weak Republican	13
Strong Republican	10
(Don't know/Refused)	0

(ref:PTYID1/PTYID2/PTYID3)

Q.78 Are you a member of a labor union? (IF YES) Are you a current member or a retired member? (IF NOT CURRENT OR RETIRED UNION MEMBER) Is anyone in your household a current or retired member of a union?

	Total
Yes: Respondent belongs	4
Household member	8
No member belongs	86
Retired member	1
(Don't know/refused)	0

(ref:UNION)

Q.79 What is your religion?

	Total
Roman Catholic	16
Nondenominational Christian	13
Baptist	9
Lutheran	3
Presbyterian	3
Methodist	3
Mormon	3
Congregational/United Church of Christ	2
Evangelical	2
Eastern Orthodox	2
Jewish	2
Pentecostal	1
Anglican/Episcopal	1
Buddhist	1
Christian Scientist	1
Hindu	1
Islam	1
Charismatic	0
Seventh Day Adventist	0
Unitarian Universalist	0
(Other)	8
No religious affiliation	28
(Don't know/Refused)	1
Total Protestant	36

(ref:RELIG1)

Q.80 (IF LUTHERAN, PRESBYTERIAN, CONGREGATIONAL, EVANGELICAL, CHARISMATIC, BAPTIST, METHODIST, SEVENTH DAY, PENTECOSTAL, OR NONDENOMINATIONAL) Do you consider yourself to be a born-again Christian?

[332 Respondents]

	Total
Yes	56
No	44
(Don't know/Refused)	0

(ref:RELIG2)

Q.81 How often do you attend religious services—more than once a week, every week, once or twice a month, several times a year, or hardly ever?

	Total
More than once a week	8
Every week	17
Once or twice a month	11
Several times a year	16
Hardly ever	48
(Don't know/Refused)	1

(ref:RELIG3)

Q.82 (IF REGISTERED) In the 2008 election for president, did you vote for Democrat Barack Obama or Republican John McCain, or did you not vote in the 2008 presidential election?

[649 Respondents]

	Total
Democrat Barack Obama	47
Republican John McCain	23
(Other candidate)	1
Did not vote	22
(Don't know/Refused)	8

(ref:VOTE08)

Q.83 What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

	Total
White	64
African American or Black	13
Hispanic or Latino	15
Native American	0
Asian	5
(Other)	2
(Don't know/Refused)	0

(ref:RACE)

Q.85 Last year, that is in 2008, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

	Total
Less than \$10K	10
\$10K to under \$20K	12
\$20K to under \$30K	13
\$30K to under \$50K	21
\$50K to under \$75K	17
\$75K to under \$100K	10
\$100K or more	8
(Refused)	7
(Don't know)	1

(ref:INCOME)

Q.3 Respondent's gender

	Total
Male	51
Female	49

(ref:GENDER)

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The Center for American Progress is a nonpartisan research and educational institute dedicated to promoting a strong, just and free America that ensures opportunity for all. We believe that Americans are bound together by a common commitment to these values and we aspire to ensure that our national policies reflect these values.

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The Progressive Studies Program at CAP is made possible by the generous support and partnership of the Glaser Progress Foundation, created by Rob Glaser, CEO and Chairman of RealNetworks, Inc, and directed by Martin Collier. The foundation is focused on building a more just, sustainable and humane world through its work in four program areas: measuring progress, global HIV/AIDS, independent media and animal advocacy.

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