
PUBLIC ATTITUDES ON US INTELLIGENCE

THE CHICAGO COUNCIL ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS

and

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, AUSTIN

TOPLINE REPORT

July 10, 2019

Detailed Findings

Note: Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.
For sample sizes, see page 13 of this document.

Q18. The United States government has a number of specialized agencies that gather and evaluate intelligence. Which of the following best describes your view of this “Intelligence Community”?

By partisanship, gender, age, knowledge

18/1. It plays a vital role in warning against foreign threats and contributes to national security.

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	56%	66%	58%	54%
2018	59%	68%	60%	57%

	Men	Women
2017	56%	55%
2018	62%	57%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	62%	64%	52%	48%	50%
2018	100%	78%	67%	58%	47%	47%

	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	40%	69%
2018	48%	70%

18/2. It is no longer necessary in an age when information on overseas events is widely available.

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	7%	7%	7%	5%
2018	12%	14%	10%	13%

	Men	Women
2017	7%	7%
2018	13%	11%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	2%	4%	8%	10%	14%
2018	N/A	4%	7%	12%	17%	26%

	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	11%	4%
2018	21%	5%

18/3. It represents a threat to Americans' civil liberties.

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	12%	7%	12%	18%
2018	9%	6%	7%	14%

	Men	Women
2017	16%	8%
2018	10%	9%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	6%	9%	14%	13%	21%
2018	N/A	3%	11%	12%	8%	5%

	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	10%	14%
2018	8%	10%

18/4. No opinion or lack the information needed to express a view.

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	25%	20%	24%	23%
2018	20%	12%	23%	15%

	Men	Women
2017	20%	30%
2018	16%	23%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	30%	22%	25%	29%	15%
2018	N/A	15%	15%	17%	28%	23%

	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	39%	13%
2018	23%	15%

Q18 Summary (overall data)

	2017	2018
It plays a vital role in warning against foreign threats and contributes to national security	56%	59%
It is no longer necessary in an age when information on events overseas is widely available	7%	12%
It represents a threat to Americans' civil liberties	12%	9%
No opinion or lack the information needed to express a view	25%	20%

Q19. How effective do you think the Intelligence Community is in meeting the following responsibilities? (by % very/somewhat effective)

By partisanship, gender, age, knowledge

19a. Preventing terrorist attacks against the United States

	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	80%	75%	79%
2018	87%	85%	80%

	Men	Women
2017	72%	77%
2018	85%	81%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	88%	85%	74%	64%	47%
2018	100%	94%	85%	81%	78%	84%

	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	60%	87%
2018	75%	88%

19b. Learning the plans of hostile governments

	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	77%	74%	76%
2018	80%	79%	75%

	Men	Women
2017	72%	74%
2018	81%	74%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	82%	78%	73%	68%	55%
2018	100%	88%	79%	80%	71%	63%

	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	62%	82%
2018	68%	85%

19c. Influencing events overseas in favor of the United States

	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	59%	52%	45%
2018	74%	64%	57%

	Men	Women
2017	57%	48%
2018	67%	62%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	49%	48%	54%	56%	54%

2018	100%	76%	64%	66%	59%	71%
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	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	53%	50%
2018	61%	68%

19d. Helping the President develop sound foreign policies

	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	58%	74%	55%
2018	54%	78%	58%

	Men	Women
2017	62%	58%
2018	68%	57%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	71%	62%	58%	56%	63%
2018	100%	71%	62%	65%	59%	43%

	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	60%	59%
2018	57%	65%

19e. Protecting sensitive defense information from foreign governments

	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	65%	56%	56%
2018	78%	72%	66%

	Men	Women
2017	61%	55%
2018	72%	69%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	64%	56%	58%	58%	68%

2018	100%	79%	67%	71%	68%	75%
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	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	58%	57%
2018	65%	75%

19f. Respecting the privacy and civil liberties of Americans

	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	51%	42%	38%
2018	56%	54%	44%

	Men	Women
2017	43%	42%
2018	49%	53%

	Greatest Generation	Silent (1928-1946)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	N/A	46%	43%	42%	45%	28%
2018	100%	61%	51%	52%	48%	44%

	Low Knowledge	High Knowledge
2017	46%	38%
2018	52%	50%

Q19 Summary (overall data)

(% very/somewhat effective)		
	2017	2018
Preventing terrorist attacks against the United States	75%	83%
Learning plans of hostile governments	73%	77%
Influencing events overseas in favor of the United States	52%	65%
Help the President develop sound foreign policies	60%	62%
Protecting sensitive defense information from foreign governments	58%	70%
Respecting the privacy and civil liberties of Americans	43%	51%

Q20. For each of the following statements below about United States Intelligence, please indicate whether you agree or disagree: (% agree/strongly agree)

By partisanship, gender, age

20a. The Intelligence Community should use all lawful means to ensure the United States will receive the best intelligence possible.

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	90%	93%	91%	89%
2018	89%	90%	89%	89%

	Male	Female
2017	91%	88%
2018	88%	89%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	100%	96%	82%	85%	91%
2018	100%	95%	90%	80%	75%

20b. In gathering information on possible threats, the Intelligence Community should respect the privacy rights of foreigners to the same degree as United States citizens.

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	38%	50%	26%	30%
2018	53%	62%	45%	47%

	Male	Female
2017	36%	40%
2018	52%	55%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	25%	26%	37%	52%	72%
2018	57%	38%	55%	61%	71%

20c. The Intelligence Community can share more information with the American people without compromising its effectiveness.

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	54%	63%	42%	53%
2018	65%	69%	63%	64%

	Male	Female
2017	56%	51%
2018	70%	61%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	41%	47%	60%	57%	69%
2018	59%	65%	61%	69%	77%

20d. Americans will need to surrender some of their privacy rights to enable the government to prevent future acts of terrorism within the United States.

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	45%	47%	48%	41%
2018	46%	49%	53%	39%

	Male	Female
2017	40%	49%
2018	40%	52%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	57%	43%	45%	45%	35%
2018	40%	48%	49%	43%	50%

Q20 Summary (overall data)

(% agree/strongly agree)		
	2017	2018
The Intelligence Community should use all lawful means to ensure the United States will receive the best intelligence possible	90%	89%

In gathering information on possible threats, the Intelligence Community should respect the privacy rights of foreigners to the same degree as United States citizens	38%	53%
The Intelligence Community can share more information with the American people without compromising its effectiveness	54%	65%
Americans will need to surrender some of their privacy rights to enable the government to prevent future acts of terrorism within the United States	45%	46%

Q21. Intelligence work is almost always conducted in secret. In the past, United States intelligence agencies have exceeded their authority and used secrecy to conceal inappropriate activities. If you had to say, who do you think should be principally responsible for monitoring these agencies to ensure they act within the law and in the country's best interest?

By partisanship, gender, age

21/1. President

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	11%	10%	11%	11%
2018	15%	7%	22%	16%

	Men	Women
2017	10%	11%
2018	19%	12%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	18%	9%	9%	13%	7%
2018	17%	15%	12%	16%	23%

21/2. The National Security Council

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	24%	25%	25%	23%
2018	22%	20%	25%	21%

	Men	Women

2017	20%	29%
2018	17%	26%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	28%	26%	27%	18%	28%
2018	25%	24%	21%	20%	15%

21/3. Director of each intelligence agency

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	19%	15%	25%	19%
2018	19%	21%	19%	17%

	Men	Women
2017	18%	21%
2018	14%	23%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	13%	19%	26%	16%	19%
2018	17%	22%	20%	17%	7%

21/4. Congress

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	20%	17%	22%	19%
2018	20%	23%	17%	23%

	Men	Women
2017	27%	13%
2018	27%	14%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	14%	24%	18%	17%	16%
2018	20%	23%	18%	18%	27%

21/5. Federal courts and judges

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	21%	27%	14%	19%
2018	18%	24%	13%	17%

	Men	Women
2017	20%	22%
2018	18%	19%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	21%	19%	14%	30%	18%
2018	16%	11%	24%	22%	14%

21/6. Media and investigative journalists

	Overall	Democrat	Republican	Independent
2017	5%	5%	3%	9%
2018	6%	5%	3%	7%

	Men	Women
2017	6%	5%
2018	6%	6%

	Silent (1928-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Millennials (1981-1996)	Gen Z (1997-)
2017	5%	3%	6%	6%	13%
2018	5%	5%	4%	7%	14%

Q21 Summary (overall data)

	2017	2018
President	11%	15%
The National Security Council	24%	22%
Director of each intelligence agency	19%	19%
Congress	20%	20%
Federal courts and judges	21%	18%
Media and investigative journalists	5%	6%

Sample Sizes:

By partisanship:	N =
Democrat	337
Republican	249
Independent	282
By gender:	
Male	476
Female	524
By age:	
Greatest	1
Silent	109
Boomer	279
Gen X	259
Millennial	299
Gen Z	53
By knowledge:	
High level	549
Low level	408