



Do Americans support **political violence?**

UPDATES FROM THE 2026 LIFE IN AMERICA SURVEY

Since 2022, researchers at the Centers for Violence Prevention at UC Davis have surveyed Americans on how they feel about political violence, including whether it is ever justified and, if so, whether they would personally get involved in it. This fact sheet provides updated key findings of the research and citations to new publications.



**These findings are clear.
Entrapment in a spiral of escalating
political violence is not inevitable in
the United States.**

**Those who promote political
violence should recognize that they
do not have the public's support
and that promoting violence may
exact a political cost."**

Garen Wintemute

Professor of Emergency Medicine Director,
UC Davis Centers for Violence Prevention

General support for political violence decreased.

There was a broad **decrease in support for political violence in the United States from mid-2025 to mid-2026**, contrary to expectation and popular perception.

Three-fourths (77%) of participants believed that violence "in general...to advance a political objective that you support" was never justified.

Support for political violence decreased across nearly all specific scenarios in 2026.

There were significant decreases in respondents' anticipation of, justification for, and willingness to commit political violence across almost two-thirds of survey statements detailing specific scenarios (35/53 items).

The only significant increase was in respondents' expectation of civil war.

Support remained stronger on the political right than on the political left.

Decreases occurred across the political spectrum. Justification for political violence—but not personal willingness to engage in violence—was more common among MAGA Republicans than most others.

A small but concerning group of non-Republican MAGA supporters had higher levels of support for and willingness to engage in violence than most other groups.



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Support for democracy remains very strong in the US.

Nearly 90% of respondents continued to consider it very or extremely important that the US remain a democracy.

Respondents increasingly saw American democracy as facing a serious threat.

Across the political spectrum, support for subverting outcomes and willingness to engage in political violence are both low.

Across 12 items, only 2% to 4% of respondents agreed strongly or very strongly with actions the federal government might take to subvert elections or control their outcomes.

Nearly half of respondents agreed strongly or very strongly that “President Trump should be impeached and removed from office.”

Across 12 items, fewer than 3% of respondents were very or completely willing to commit pro- or anti-government violence or violence to control the outcomes of elections.

Messengers and messages for change can be effective in dissuading political violence.

Of the 12.5% who were very/completely willing to use violence in more than one situation, **57% could be persuaded otherwise.**

Prominent Messengers

- Family members (35%)
- Friends (29%)
- Respected leaders (18%)
- News media (15%)
- Social Media (12%)

Prominent Messages

- Violence is not who you are
- Violence could bring harm to your family
- Violence never really solves problems
- Violence could end up with you seriously injured or dead
- Violence could end up with you in prison or jail



Connect with Us

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Explore our resource library

for more CVP publications on political violence, fact sheets, and other violence prevention topics.

ABOUT THE CENTERS FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The Centers for Violence Prevention at UC Davis provide a scientific approach to understanding and preventing violence. The research centers were founded more than 30 years ago and have helped shape the way violence is studied and prevented. They continue to build the evidence base that community members and policymakers can rely on for effective violence prevention strategies.

The Centers for Violence Prevention share the work of the Violence Prevention Research Program and the California Firearm Violence Research Center to empower key stakeholders and translate findings into impactful policies and initiatives, creating safer, more equitable communities where all can flourish.

RELATED STUDIES FROM UC DAVIS CVP

This is the latest in a series of studies on political violence from the Centers for Violence Prevention at UC Davis.

Its findings confirm and expand upon those of whole-population studies in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025. Other publications have explored variation with MAGA movement and political party affiliation; focused on those who endorse intergroup fear and loathing (racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, hostile sexism, homonegativity, and transphobia), firearm owners, social media users, and those who approve of the National Rifle Association; assessed views on civil war in 2023 and 2024; and measured support for authoritarianism and use of force by the federal government in 2025.

CITE THE PAPERS

Wintemute GJ, Robinson S, Neumann K, Tancredi DJ, Cruz SS, Shev A, Tomsich E, Velasquez B, Wright M, Pear V. Decreased Support for Political Violence in the United States in Mid-2026: Findings from a Nationally Representative Survey [Preprint]. SocArXiv; 2026. https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/5pcg6_v1

Wintemute GJ, Velasquez B, Robinson S, Neumann K, Cruz SS, Shev A, Tancredi DJ, Tomsich E, Wright M, Pear V. No King, and Other Matters—America's Perspectives in Mid-2026 on Democracy, Authoritarianism, and Election-Related Violence: Findings from a Nationally Representative Survey [Internet]. SocArXiv; 2026. https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/xv3yk_v1

Wintemute GJ, Neumann K. Talking America Back from the Cliff—Messengers and Messages to Prevent Political Violence: Findings from a Nationally Representative Survey. Forthcoming.