

CENTER FOR DIGNITY IN POLITICS

Dignity in American Political Life: What Registered Voters See — and What They Say They Want From Leaders

Findings from a national survey by NGA, Matter Neuroscience and Napolitan
Institute

n = 5,001 registered voters · July 30–August 5, 2026 · Weighted results

NGA · Matter Neuroscience · Dr. Brandon Tatum, lead researcher
Survey fielded by RMG Research

Descriptive findings only — no significance tests; no causal claims.

Overview

The NGA Center for Dignity in Politics and Matter Neuroscience partnered on a national survey of **5,001 registered voters**, fielded **July 30 through August 5, 2026**. The survey explores the tone of American political life, what voters want from leaders, and how politics connects to their relationships and life satisfaction.

Most registered voters say American political life today looks less like healthy disagreement and more like disrespect or dehumanization. **Only 10%** say they most often see healthy disagreement in political life. **Nearly half (49%)** say they most often see disrespect, and **about one-third (34%)** say they most often see dehumanization. Combined, **83%** name disrespect or dehumanization as what they see more often.

That harsh read of the climate coexists with a broad appetite for a different kind of leadership. **Three-quarters (75%)** say they would be more likely to trust a political leader who publicly treated opponents with dignity. That view is shared by large majorities of Democrats (**80%**) and Republicans (**75%**). Independents are the notable middle case — considerably more skeptical (**56%** yes), yet **more uncertain than opposed (25% not sure; 19% no)**. Independents look **skeptical but still pushing for dignity**.¹

About **one in five (21%)** feel politically outnumbered where they live. Among those who do, politics and personal relationships collide more often. **36%** of the outnumbered say political disagreement has harmed family relationships, compared with **14%** among those who do not feel outnumbered. For friends, the figures are **38%** and **19%**. Only **39%** of the outnumbered report no relationship harm from political disagreement, versus **67%** among those not outnumbered.

Overall, politics has strained personal ties for a sizable minority. Asked which relationships political disagreement has harmed — and allowed to select all that apply — **22%** name friends, **19%** family, **13%** colleagues, and **9%** neighbors. **61%** say none. That “none” share implies that roughly **four in ten (about 39%)** report harm in at least one category (select-all; categories can overlap).

The survey also asked about life satisfaction on a 0–10 scale and about everyday markers of work, place, and relationships. About **63%** of registered voters place themselves at 7–10; the approximate mean is **6.7**. Descriptively, the largest gaps between people at the low and high ends of that scale are not the political items. They are **work energy and employment happiness, attachment to place, everyday gratitude**, and the frequency of **close personal connection** — hugs, meals with someone loved, family time, and having someone to call at 2 a.m. People with lower life satisfaction are more likely to see dehumanization in political life. Reports of harm to their own relationships from politics differ much less across the satisfaction scale.

In short: Registered voters describe a political climate thick with disrespect and dehumanization, say they would trust leaders who treat opponents with dignity, and — when they feel outnumbered — more often report politics spilling into family and friend relationships. The same survey’s life-satisfaction patterns point to work, place, and ordinary human connection as the backdrop against which that political story sits.

1 Soft note: The dignity item asks about **likelihood of trust**, not about activism, vote intention, or willingness to organize.

Key findings

1. **Disrespect and dehumanization dominate the perceived political climate.** Only **10%** of registered voters say they most often see healthy disagreement; **49%** say disrespect and **34%** dehumanization (**83%** combined). Republicans more often name disrespect (**59%**); Democrats more often name dehumanization (**45%**).
2. **Dignity in leadership has broad appeal.** **75%** say they would be more likely to trust a leader who publicly treated opponents with dignity (Democrats **80%**, Republicans **75%**, Independents **56%** yes / **25%** not sure / **19%** no). Independents are a skeptical middle — **more uncertain than opposed** — but still push for dignity as a majority yes among those who take a side.
3. **Feeling politically outnumbered co-occurs with higher relationship strain.** **21%** feel outnumbered where they live. Among them, family harm is **36%** (vs **14%** not outnumbered) and friends harm **38%** (vs **19%**); only **39%** report no harm vs **67%** among those not outnumbered.
4. **Politics has damaged relationships for a sizable minority.** Select-all mentions: friends **22%**, family **19%**, colleagues **13%**, neighbors **9%**; **61%** none — implying roughly **39%** report harm in at least one category (select-all; not a mutually exclusive partition).
5. **Work, place, and close relationships dominate life-satisfaction associations.** Comparing low vs high satisfaction bands (LS 0–3 vs. LS 9–10), the widest descriptive gaps are work motivation/drain, employment happiness, excitement to show a visitor where you live, everyday gratitude, and frequency of hugs, meals, family time, and 2 a.m. support — larger than gaps on political items.
6. **People who are unhappy with their lives are much more likely to see politics as dehumanizing. But they are not more likely to say politics has hurt their own friendships or family ties.** Among people least happy with their lives (0–3 on a 0–10 scale), **46%** say they most often see dehumanization in politics. Among the happiest (9–10), **24%** do. Family harm is **19%** vs. **18%**. Friends harm is **23%** vs. **21%**.

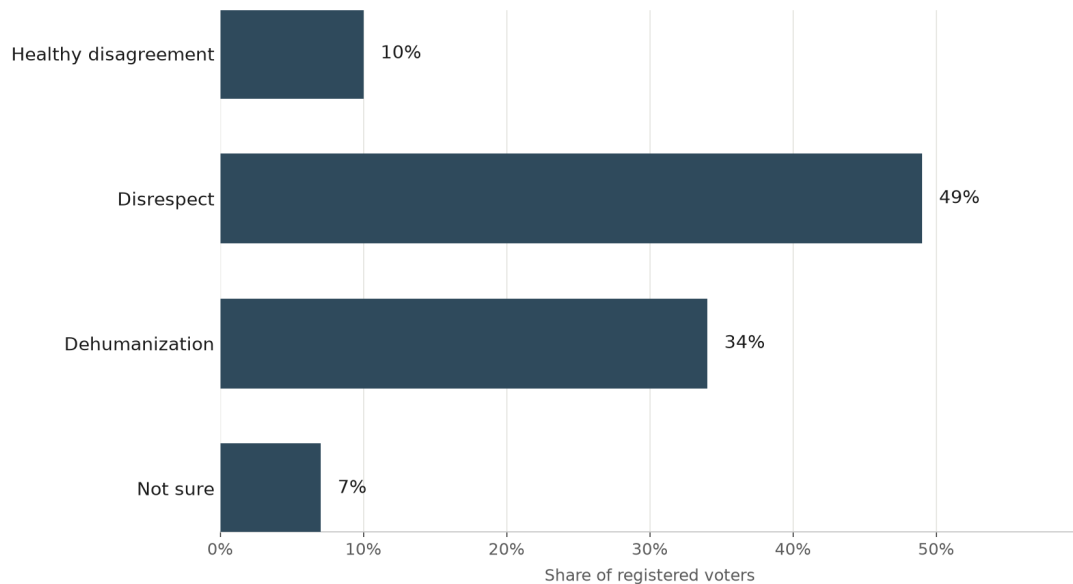
1. Disrespect and dehumanization dominate the perceived political climate

When registered voters are asked what they see more often in political life today — healthy disagreement, disrespect, or dehumanization — the answer is rarely healthy disagreement.

Only 10% say they most often see healthy disagreement. **Nearly half (49%)** say disrespect. **About one-third (34%)** say dehumanization. Another **7%** are not sure. Taken together, **83%** name either disrespect or dehumanization as what they see more often — more than eight in ten registered voters describing a political climate that, in their telling, has moved past ordinary conflict into something harsher.

Figure 1

What registered voters say they see more often in political life



Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026, N=5,001. Weighted results. Center for Dignity in Politics

Figure 1. What registered voters say they see more often in political life

Healthy disagreement 10%; Disrespect 49%; Dehumanization 34%; Not sure 7%.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.

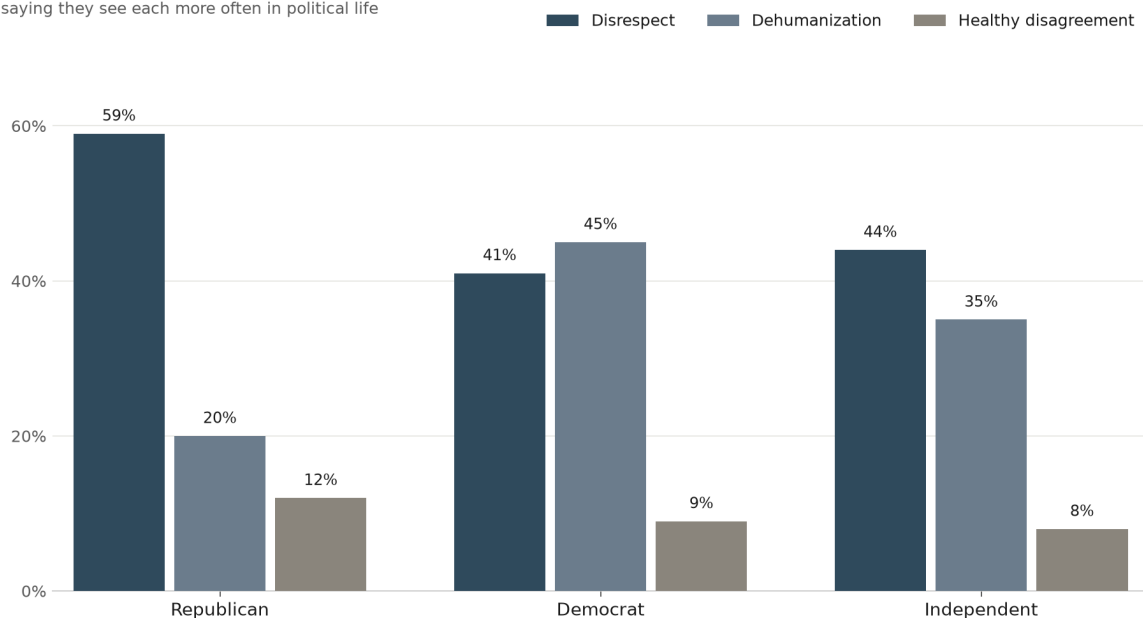
Men and women describe the climate in nearly identical terms. Disrespect is **49%** among both men and women; dehumanization is **33%** among men and **34%** among women; healthy disagreement is **11%** and **9%**, respectively. Gender is not where the vocabulary splits.

Party identification is. Republicans more often reach for **disrespect**: **59%** of Republicans say that is what they see more often, compared with **41%** of Democrats and **44%** of Independents. Democrats more often reach for **dehumanization**: **45%**, compared with **20%** of Republicans and **35%** of Independents. Healthy disagreement remains a small minority response in every party group — **12%** of Republicans, **9%** of Democrats, and **8%** of Independents.

Figure 2

Political climate vocabulary by party

Share saying they see each more often in political life



Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results. Center for Dignity in Politics

Figure 2. Political climate vocabulary by party

Republicans disproportionately name Disrespect (59%); Democrats disproportionately name Dehumanization (45%). Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.

The pattern is a descriptive difference in labels, not a ranking of which party “has it worse.” Both major parties, and Independents as well, overwhelmingly reject “healthy disagreement” as the modal description of political life. What differs is which harder word they prefer. Republicans, in this survey, more often call the climate disrespectful; Democrats more often call it dehumanizing. Independents fall between the two parties on dehumanization and closer to Democrats on disrespect.

Age also tracks vocabulary. Older registered voters more often name disrespect (56% of those 55–64 and 58% of those 65+, versus 32% of those 18–24). Younger adults more often name dehumanization (45% among 18–24, versus 27% among 65+). Healthy disagreement is somewhat more common among the youngest adults (19% of 18–24) than among those 45 and older (about 6–7%), but even among 18- to 24-year-olds it remains a minority answer.

In short, registered voters broadly agree that political life today is not characterized by healthy disagreement. They disagree — descriptively — about whether the better word for what they see is disrespect or dehumanization, and that disagreement tracks party and, to a lesser extent, age.

2. Dignity in leadership has broad appeal

Against that backdrop, a clear majority say they would respond favorably to a different public posture from leaders.

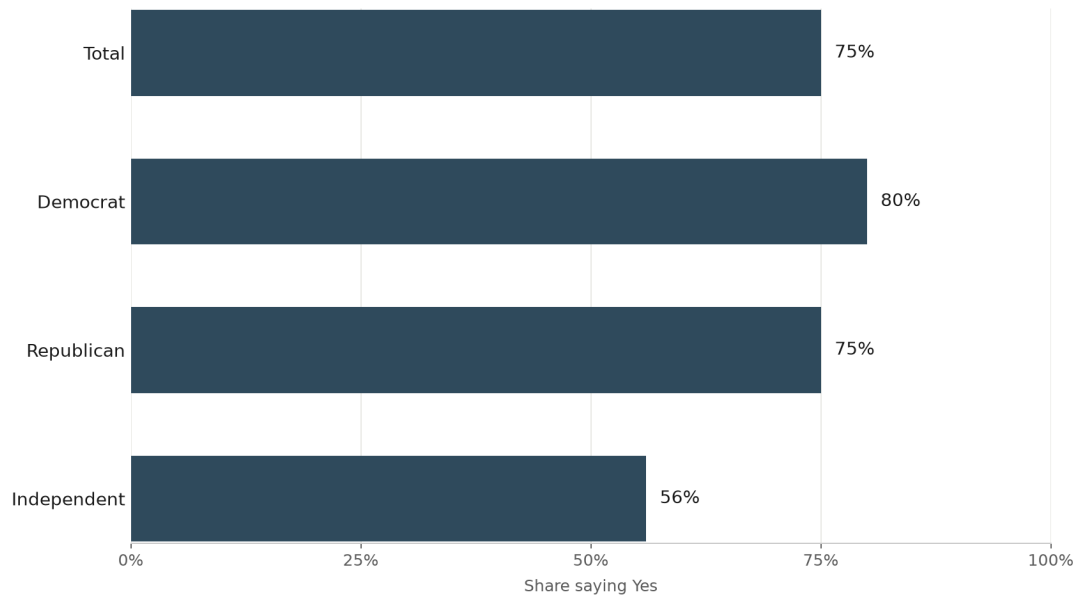
Three-quarters (75%) of registered voters say they would be more likely to trust a political leader who publicly treated opponents with dignity. **12%** say no; **13%** are not sure.

That appetite is shared across party lines among those who identify with a major party. **80%** of Democrats and **75%** of Republicans say yes. Independents are the notable middle case — considerably more skeptical: **56%** say yes, **19%** say no, and **25%** are not sure. They are **more uncertain than opposed**. Independents, in this survey, look **skeptical but still pushing for dignity** — a majority yes overall, with a larger “not sure” share than among partisans, not a majority rejection of the idea.²



Figure 3

Would trust a leader who treats opponents with dignity



Note: Among Independents, Not sure = 25%.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.
Center for Dignity in Politics

Figure 3. Would trust a leader who treats opponents with dignity

Yes — Total 75%; Democrats 80%; Republicans 75%; Independents 56% (Independents Not sure 25%, No 19%). Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.

Men and women answer identically on the yes share: **75%** each. The “no” share is slightly higher among men (**14%**) than women (**10%**); “not sure” is slightly higher among women (**15%**) than men (**11%**).

The dignity-trust appetite is also not limited to people who feel politically embattled. Among those who feel politically outnumbered where they live and among those who do not, the yes share is similarly high— about **77%** in both groups. Feeling outnumbered co-occurs with much higher reports of relationship harm (see Chapter 3), but it does not appear, descriptively, to be a precondition for saying one would trust a leader who treats opponents with dignity. The offer registers with the outnumbered and the not-outnumbered alike.

Life satisfaction softens the yes share at the low end of the scale without erasing it. In the broader low-satisfaction pool (LS 0–3), about **67%** say yes, compared with about **77%** in the high-satisfaction pool (LS 9–10) and **75%** overall. Even among those least satisfied with life, a clear majority still say they would be more likely to trust a dignified leader. The dignity cue does not collapse among the least satisfied; it is somewhat softer.

What the item does **not** measure is also worth stating plainly. The question asks about **likelihood of trust** if a leader publicly treated opponents with dignity. It does not ask about activism, organizing, vote intention, or willingness to reward such a leader at the ballot box. The finding is an expressed trust inclination, widely shared — not evidence of a mobilized constituency.

2 Soft note: Trust-likelihood item, not activism, vote intention, or willingness to organize.

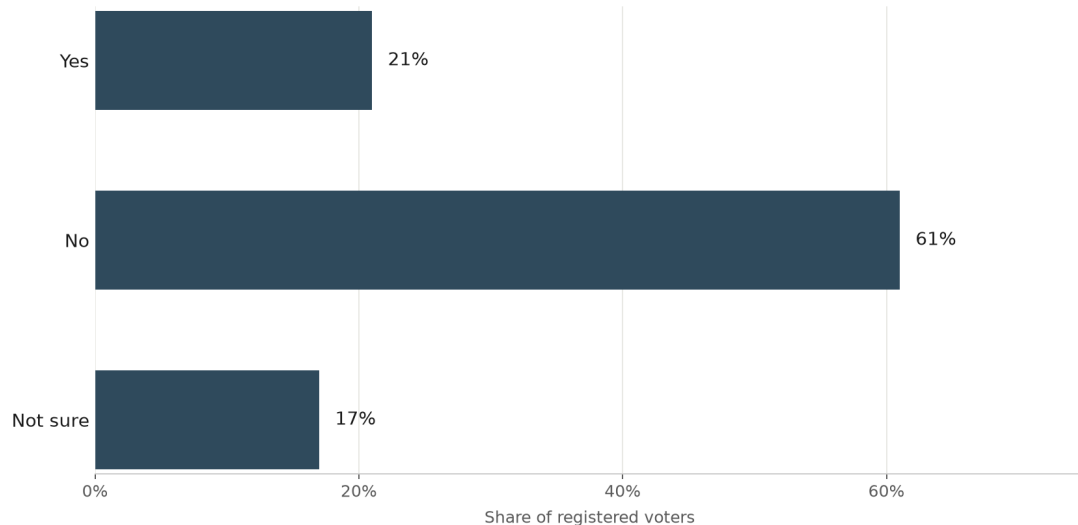
3. Feeling politically outnumbered co-occurs with higher relationship strain

About **one in five (21%)** registered voters say they feel politically outnumbered where they live. **61%** say they do not; **17%** are not sure.

Figure 4

Feeling politically outnumbered

Do you feel politically outnumbered where you live?



Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026, N=5,001. Weighted results. Center for Dignity in Politics

Figure 4. Feeling politically outnumbered where you live: Yes 21%; No 61%; Not sure 17%.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026, N=5,001. Weighted results.

Party gaps on this item are modest. **25%** of Democrats, **20%** of Independents, and **18%** of Republicans say yes. Independents again show a large “not sure” share (**28%**), compared with **15%** of Republicans and **16%** of Democrats. Men and women are nearly identical on “yes” (**21%** and **22%**); women are more often unsure (**20%** vs. **14%** of men).

Where feeling outnumbered stands out is in its co-occurrence with self-reported relationship harm from political disagreement.

The survey asked which relationships, if any, political disagreement had harmed, and allowed respondents to select all that apply: family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, or none. (National results for this question appear in Chapter 4.)

Among those who feel politically outnumbered, harm mentions are much higher than among those who do not — and the “none” share is much lower.

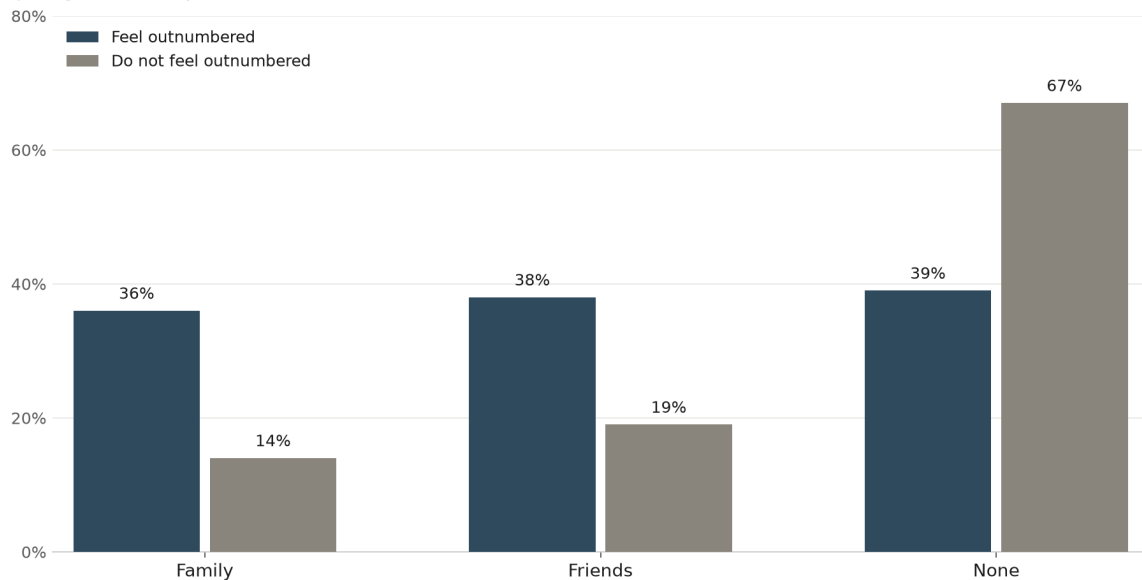
- **Family: 36%** among the outnumbered vs. **14%** among those not outnumbered
- **Friends: 38%** vs. **19%**

• **None (no relationship harm): 39% vs. 67%**

Figure 5

Relationship harm by outnumbered status

Share reporting harm to family / friends, or none



Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results. Center for Dignity in Politics

Figure 5. Relationship harm from political disagreement, by outnumbered status

Family 36% vs. 14%; Friends 38% vs. 19%; None 39% vs. 67%.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.

Note: Select-all item; categories can overlap.

In other words, people who feel politically outnumbered where they live are far more likely to say politics has damaged family and friend relationships, and far less likely to say it has damaged none. That is a descriptive co-occurrence pattern in weighted crosstabs — not a claim that feeling outnumbered causes relationship harm, or that relationship harm causes people to feel outnumbered.

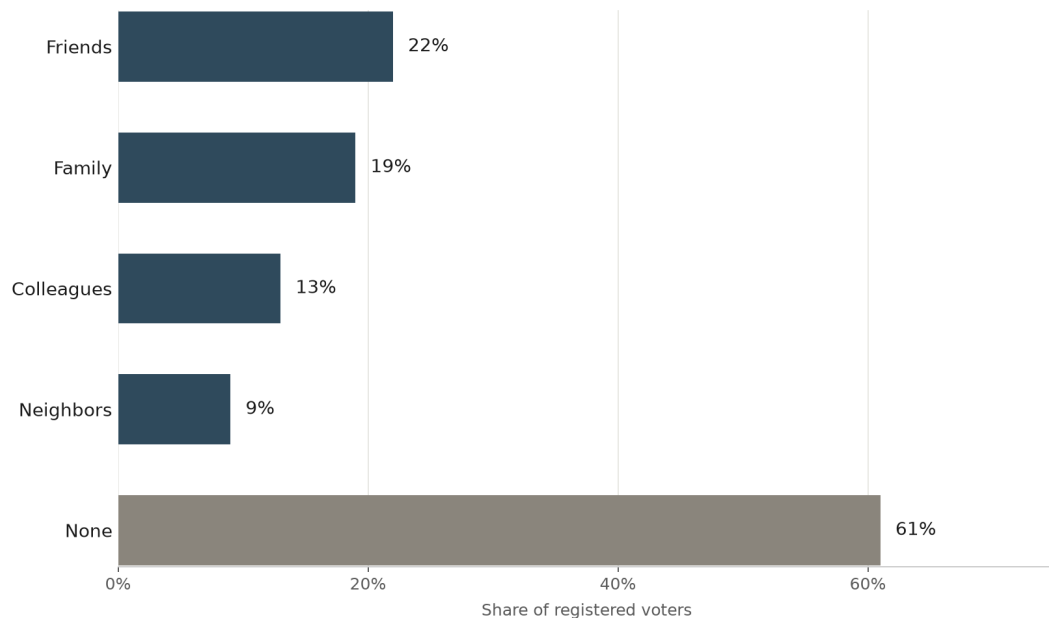
Taken together: most registered voters do **not** feel outnumbered, and a majority say political disagreement has not harmed the listed relationships. But for the substantial minority who do feel outnumbered — about one in five — politics and close relationships collide more often in their own accounts.

4. Politics has damaged relationships for a sizable minority

Feeling outnumbered is one part of the picture. Across all registered voters, a sizable minority say political disagreement has damaged at least one of their personal relationships. Roughly **four in ten (about 39%)** name at least one relationship category, while **61%** say none of the listed relationships has been harmed. Because the question allowed respondents to select all that apply, these categories can overlap.

Asked which relationships, if any, political disagreement had harmed — family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, or none — **22%** of registered voters name friends, **19%** family, **13%** colleagues, and **9%** neighbors; **61%** say none. Because “None” is **61%**, roughly **39%** report harm in at least one category — an approximate complement, not a separately modeled exclusive share. Select-all categories can overlap; shares need not sum to 100.

Figure 6
Relationships harmed by political disagreement



Select-all; ~39% named at least one relationship type.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results. Center for Dignity in Politics

Figure 6. Relationships harmed by political disagreement (select-all)

Friends 22%; Family 19%; Colleagues 13%; Neighbors 9%; None 61%.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.

Note: Select-all item; categories can overlap. “Any harm ≈ 39%” is the approximate complement of None (61%), not a separately modeled exclusive share.

Party cuts on the select-all harm items show smaller differences than the outnumbered break. Democrats are somewhat less likely than Republicans to say “none” (**56%** vs. **67%**), and somewhat more likely to name family (**22%** vs. **15%**) and colleagues (**16%** vs. **11%**). Friends harm is similar across parties (**24%** Democrats, **22%** Independents, **20%** Republicans). The outnumbered contrast described in Chapter 3 remains the sharper descriptive signal on harm to people’s own relationships from politics.

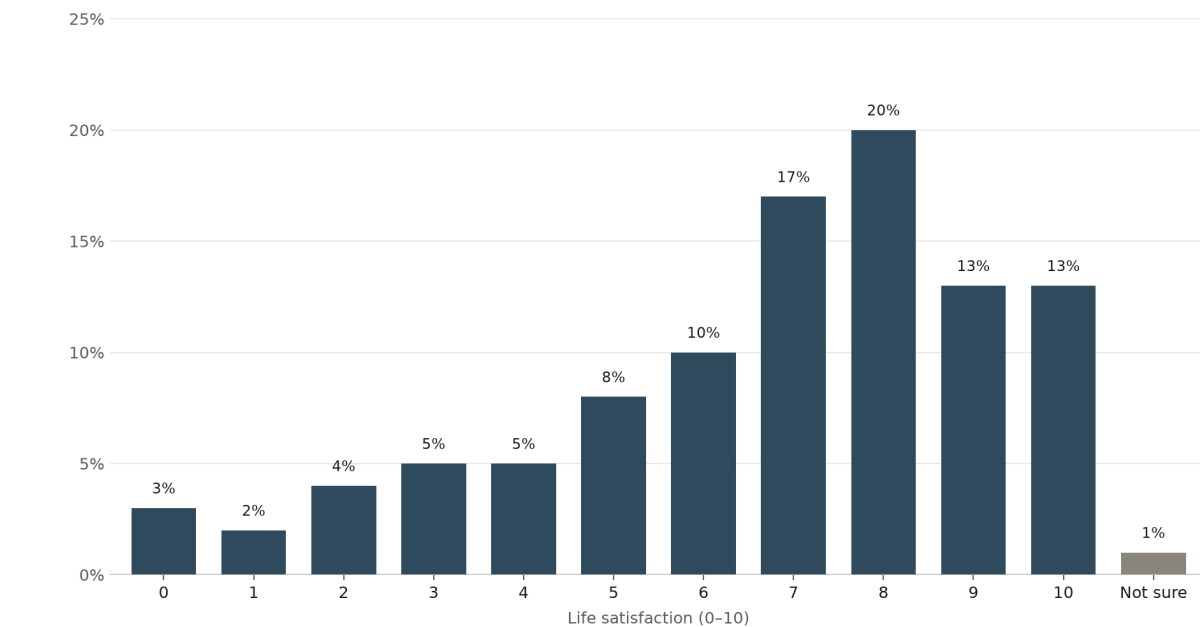
5. Work, place, and close relationships dominate life-satisfaction associations

The same survey asked registered voters to rate their life satisfaction on a 0–10 scale and posed a battery of questions about work, place, relationships, health habits, gratitude, and crisis support. Those items supply a backdrop for the political findings — not as causes of political attitudes, and not as effects of them, but as descriptive co-occurrence patterns.

The national picture

Life satisfaction among registered voters skews moderately positive. About **63%** place themselves at 7–10; about **19%** at 0–4. The approximate mean (excluding “Not sure”) is **6.7**. The single lowest score, 0, is about **3%** of the weighted sample — too small for reliable headline contrasts on its own. This chapter therefore compares **LS 0–3** (about **14%** of the sample) with **LS 9–10** (about **26%**), using share-weighted averages of the life-satisfaction column percentages. All figures below are descriptive; none are causal.

Figure 7
Life satisfaction among registered voters (0–10)



Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.
Center for Dignity in Politics

Figure 7. Life satisfaction among registered voters (0–10): mean ≈ 6.7; 7–10 ≈ 63%; 0–4 ≈ 19%.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.

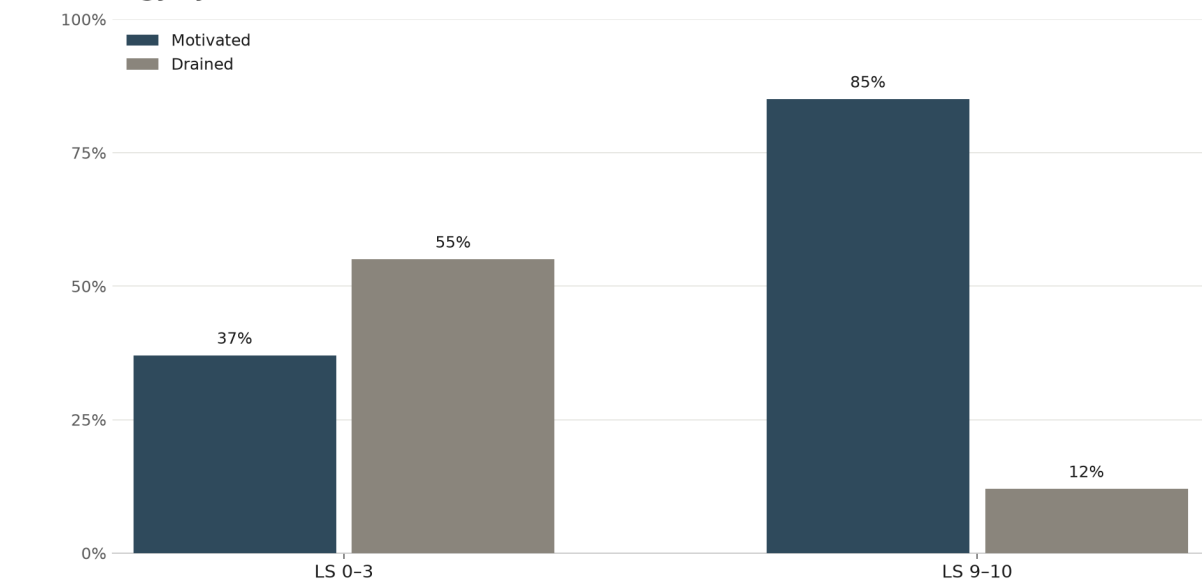
Across these measures, a consistent descriptive pattern appears: registered voters reporting greater life satisfaction more often describe lives connected to other people and to place — someone to call in a crisis, shared meals and family time, attachment to where they live, everyday gratitude, and work that feels energizing rather than draining. The survey cannot say which way those relationships run; the consistency of the co-occurrence is still notable.

Work energy and employment happiness dominate the association map

The widest gaps between low- and high-satisfaction pools are about work.

Among those in the LS 0–3 pool, **37%** say work leaves them motivated and energized, compared with **85%** in the LS 9–10 pool (national total: **60%**). The reverse item — drained and discouraged — is **55%** in the low pool vs. **12%** in the high pool (total: **31%**). Employment happiness tracks the same pattern: **19%** in LS 0–3 say they are very happy with their employment, vs. **64%** in LS 9–10 (total: **37%**); very unhappy is **21%** vs. **2%** (total: **5%**).

Figure 8
Work energy by life-satisfaction band



LS 0–3 and LS 9–10 are share-weighted pools (descriptive).

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.
Center for Dignity in Politics

Figure 8. Work energy by life-satisfaction band: Motivated 37% (LS 0–3) vs. 85% (LS 9–10); Drained 55% vs. 12%.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.

These work gaps outrank every political item in the battery on absolute percentage-point difference. Whatever else life satisfaction co-occurs with in this survey, work affect is the largest descriptive signal.

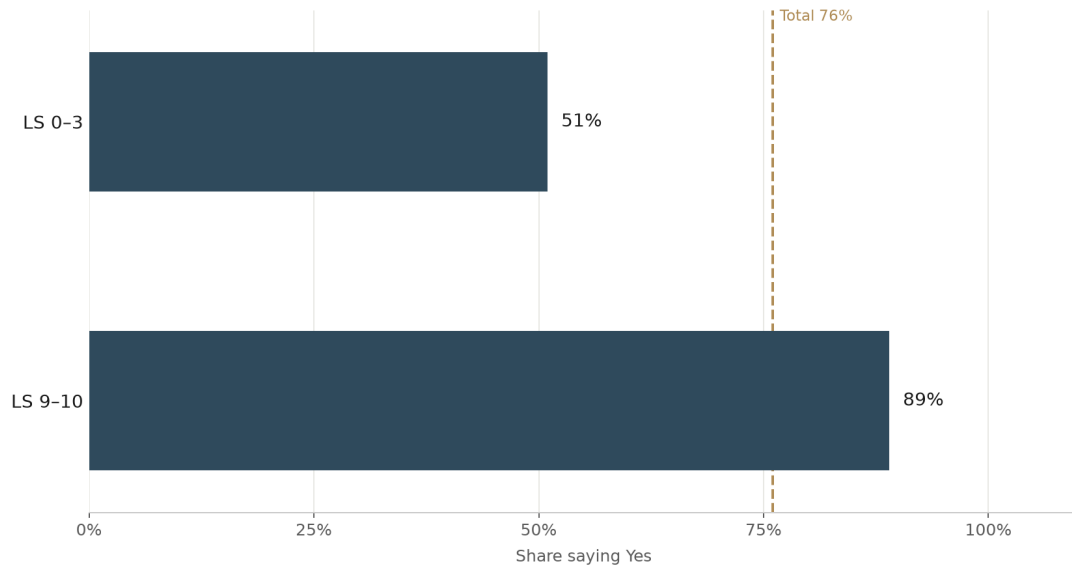
Place belonging

Attachment to place is the next-tier pattern. Asked whether they would be excited to show a friend where they live, **51%** in the LS 0–3 pool say yes, compared with **89%** in the LS 9–10 pool (national total: **76%**). Saying no is **37%** in the low pool vs. **7%** in the high pool (total: **15%**).

Figure 9

Place belonging by life-satisfaction band

Excited to show a visitor where you live (Yes)



Share-weighted LS pools; dashed line = total registered voters (76%).

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results. Center for Dignity in Politics

Figure 9. Place belonging by life-satisfaction band

Excited to show a visitor where you live — Yes 51% (LS 0–3) vs. 89% (LS 9–10); Total 76%.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.

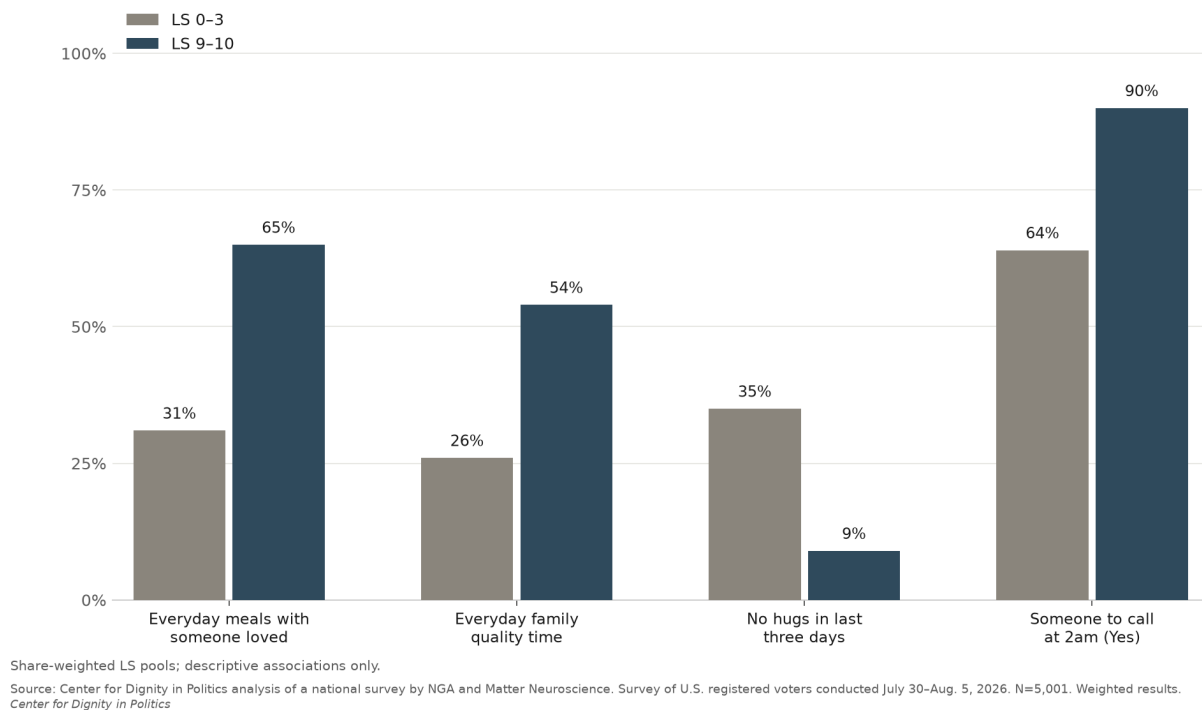
Homeownership also co-occurs with place pride nationally (**80%** yes among homeowners vs. **65%** among non-owners), but the life-satisfaction contrast is larger still. Low satisfaction and thinner place belonging travel together in these crosstabs.

Close relationships, gratitude, and crisis support

A cluster of everyday connection items moves together with life satisfaction.

Marker	Total	LS 0–3	LS 9–10
Hugs in last three days: None	18%	35%	9%
Meals with someone loved: Everyday	48%	31%	65%
Meals: Rarely or never	9%	23%	4%
Family quality time: Everyday	41%	26%	54%
Family time: Rarely or never	9%	23%	4%
Someone to call at 2 a.m.: Yes	83%	64%	90%
Gratitude (past week): Everyday	30%	15%	49%
Gratitude: Rarely or never	9%	24%	3%

Figure 10

Close connection markers by life-satisfaction band**Figure 10. Close connection markers by LS band**

everyday meals / family time / hugs none / 2 a.m. yes — LS 0–3 vs. LS 9–10.

Source: Center for Dignity in Politics analysis of a national survey by NGA and Matter Neuroscience. Survey of U.S. registered voters conducted July 30–Aug. 5, 2026. N=5,001. Weighted results.

People at the low end of the satisfaction scale are more likely to report no recent hugs, rare meals with someone they love, rare family quality time, and no one to call in a crisis. Everyday gratitude is thin in the low pool (**15%**) and common in the high pool (**49%**); rarely-or-never gratitude is **24%** vs. **3%**.

Neighborhood fabric and perceived safety show a similar tilt. Knowing no neighbors by name is **19%** in LS 0–3 vs. **5%** in LS 9–10 (total: **10%**). Feeling very safe walking at night is **36%** vs. **61%** (total: **48%**).

Marriage, nationally, co-occurs with denser day-to-day connection — everyday meals with someone loved are **65%** among married respondents vs. **28%** among those not married; everyday family quality time **54%** vs. **27%**; no hugs in three days **11%** vs. **27%** — but the life-satisfaction pools remain the primary comparison frame for this chapter.

6. People who are unhappy with their lives see politics as more dehumanizing. But they do not report more harm to their own relationships

The survey asked people to rate how satisfied they are with their lives on a scale from 0 to 10. This chapter compares people who are least happy with their lives (0–3) with people who are most happy (9–10). It looks at the political questions.

People who are least happy with their lives are much more likely to see politics as dehumanizing. **46%** of them say that is what they see most often. Among the happiest people, **24%** say so.

But the least happy are not more likely to say politics has hurt their own relationships. **19%** of the least happy say political disagreement has hurt family ties. So do **18%** of the happiest. For friends, it is **23%** vs. **21%**.

Being unhappy with life goes with a darker view of politics as a whole. It does not go with more personal damage from politics. This shows that the two things go together. It does not show that one causes the other.

Other political questions show a smaller gap. Across all registered voters, **34%** say they most often see dehumanization. Feeling **politically outnumbered** is **30%** among the least happy and **17%** among the happiest (total: **21%**). Most people in both groups would still be more likely to trust a leader who treats opponents with dignity (**67%** vs. **77%**; total: **75%**).

Reports of damaged relationships differ much less across the scale. On the select-all relationship question, **61%** of the least happy and **67%** of the happiest say political disagreement has harmed none of the listed relationships (total: **61%**). The gap in how people see politics as a whole is much larger than the gap in harm to their own relationships.

That difference matters for interpretation. Lower life satisfaction goes with a harsher view of political life— more dehumanization, and somewhat more feeling outnumbered. It goes much less with reported damage to family or friend relationships from political disagreement.

What the life-satisfaction patterns do — and do not — say

The life-satisfaction findings in this chapter and Chapter 5 are **descriptive associations** only. They do not establish that low satisfaction causes people to see dehumanization, or that work drain causes low satisfaction, or that any of these items causes political attitudes. They show which everyday conditions are more common at the low and high ends of a self-rated satisfaction scale in a large national sample of

registered voters. In that descriptive map, **work, place, gratitude, and close personal connection** show the largest gaps; how people see the political climate shows a smaller gap; and reports of harm to people's own relationships from politics differ much less across the scale.

Conclusion

Registered voters in this survey describe a political climate that is more often harsh than healthy. Only **10%** say they most often see healthy disagreement; **49%** say disrespect and **34%** say dehumanization — **83%** combined. That read sits alongside a broad appetite for a different kind of leadership. **Three-quarters (75%)** say they would be more likely to trust a political leader who publicly treated opponents with dignity, including large majorities of Democrats (**80%**) and Republicans (**75%**). Independents are more cautious — **56%** yes, **19%** no, and **25%** not sure — **more uncertain than opposed**, and still **skeptical but still pushing for dignity** as a majority preference among those who take a side.³

Feeling politically outnumbered is less common nationally (**21%**), but where it appears it co-occurs with higher reported strain in close relationships. Among the outnumbered, **36%** say political disagreement has harmed family relationships and **38%** say friends, compared with **14%** and **19%** among those who do not feel outnumbered. Only **39%** of the outnumbered report no relationship harm, versus **67%** among those not outnumbered. Overall, select-all mentions — friends **22%**, family **19%**, colleagues **13%**, neighbors **9%**, with **61%** none — imply that roughly **four in ten** name at least one damaged relationship category (select-all; categories can overlap).

Life-satisfaction patterns supply a backdrop, not a verdict. Comparing the LS 0–3 and LS 9–10 pools, the largest descriptive gaps are in **work energy and employment happiness, attachment to place, everyday gratitude**, and the frequency of **close personal connection**. Seeing politics as harsh — especially seeing dehumanization — is more common at lower life satisfaction. Reports of harm to people's own relationships from politics differ much less across the same scale.

None of these patterns establish causation, and this report does not offer a policy prescription. The findings are **descriptive**: what registered voters say they see, whom they say they would be more likely to trust, where politics and relationships collide in their accounts, and which everyday conditions co-occur with higher and lower self-rated life satisfaction. The Center for Dignity in Politics presents them as a national baseline for that conversation — not as proof of what works, what fails, or what leaders must do next.

³ Soft note: The dignity item asks about **likelihood of trust**, not about activism, vote intention, or willingness to organize.

How we did this

The Center for Dignity in Politics partnership with Matter Neuroscience fielded a national survey among **5,001 registered voters** from **July 30 to August 5, 2026**. Results are **weighted**. The survey was conducted by **RMG Research** using the sensemaking survey tool. **Dr. Brandon Tatum** served as lead researcher and principal report developer.

This report presents **descriptive** findings from national crosstabs: topline shares and selected subgroup patterns. It does **not** report statistical significance tests or make causal claims.

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not sum to 100. One question on relationship harm allowed respondents to select all that apply; those categories can overlap, and category shares can exceed 100% in the aggregate. Where this report refers to “any relationship harm,” that figure is the approximate complement of those who selected “None” (61% None → roughly 39% naming at least one category) — not a separately modeled exclusive share.

Life-satisfaction comparisons in the body prefer **pooled bands** (LS 0–3 vs. LS 9–10), which are share-weighted averages of the life-satisfaction column percentages using the survey’s overall life-satisfaction distribution as weights. The single “0” cell is small (about 3% of the weighted sample) and is not used as a headline contrast when a pool is available.

Methods and disclosures

Survey. NGA–Matter Neuroscience national survey.

Population. U.S. registered voters.

Sample size. $n = 5,001$.

Field dates. July 30–August 5, 2026.

Weighting. Results are weighted.

Field vendor. RMG Research (Scott Rasmussen involved).

Lead researcher / principal report developer. Dr. Brandon Tatum.

Sponsoring brand. Center for Dignity in Politics (NGA; partnership with Matter Neuroscience).

Analysis type. This report presents **weighted descriptive percentages** from national crosstabs — topline and selected subgroup co-occurrence patterns. It does **not** report formal statistical significance tests, confidence intervals, correlations, regressions, or multivariate controls. It makes **no causal claims**. Gaps between groups are co-occurrence patterns, not effects.

Rounding. Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer (conventional half-up) and may not sum to 100.

Select-all (relationship harm). Respondents could name more than one relationship type harmed by political disagreement. Category shares can overlap and need not sum to 100. “Any relationship harm $\approx 39\%$ ” is the approximate complement of “None” (61%), not a separately modeled exclusive share.

Life-satisfaction pools. LS 0 alone is about 3% of the weighted sample (~150 of 5,001). External narrative comparisons prefer **LS 0–3** (~14%) vs. **LS 9–10** (~26%). Pool percentages are share-weighted averages of the LS-column percentages using the survey’s overall LS distribution as weights; they are descriptive approximations, not reweighted microdata estimates.

Label restores. Some numeric response bands in the source workbook (hugs; screen hours) were auto-converted by spreadsheet software into date strings; those labels were restored to their intended ranges (e.g., hugs 1–3 / 4–6 / 7–10; screens 2–5 / 6–10 / 11–15) before interpretation.

Margins of error. Design effects, clustering, and stratification details are not documented in the crosstab workbook used for this report. An approximate simple-random-sample margin of error at 50/50 and 95% confidence for $n = 5,001$ is about ± 1.4 percentage points; that figure is **not** a design-consistent MOE and should not be applied to subgroups or to geographic estimates. This report does not attach MOE bands to individual percentages.

Geography. The national crosstab file used for the main report does not contain state or congressional-district columns. Any district- or state-level life-satisfaction figures appearing in Appendix B are **modeled / smoothed estimates** from a companion Precision Politics application, not raw survey crosstabs, and must be read with the methods box in that appendix.

What this file cannot support. Significance stars; causal language; income stratification; open-end themes; respondent-level correlations or controls without microdata; treating congressional-district means as raw cells.

Appendix A: Selected topline

All figures are weighted percentages of registered voters, NGA–Matter Neuroscience national survey ($n = 5,001$), July 30–August 5, 2026. Rounded; may not sum to 100.

Political dignity block

In political life today, what do you see more often?

Healthy disagreement 10% · Disrespect 49% · Dehumanization 34% · Not sure 7%

Do you feel politically outnumbered where you live?

Yes 21% · No 61% · Not sure 17%

Would you be more likely to trust a political leader who publicly treated opponents with dignity?

Yes 75% · No 12% · Not sure 13%

Has political disagreement harmed any of these relationships? (select all that apply)

Family 19% · Friends 22% · Colleagues 13% · Neighbors 9% · None 61%

Select-all; categories can overlap. Complement of None $\approx 39\%$ report harm in at least one category.

Life satisfaction (0–10)

0: 3% · 1: 2% · 2: 4% · 3: 5% · 4: 5% · 5: 8% · 6: 10% · 7: 17% · 8: 20% · 9: 13% · 10: 13% · Not sure: 1%

Approximate mean (excl. Not sure) $\approx$ 6.7 · Share 7–10 $\approx$ 63% · Share 0–4 $\approx$ 19%

Selected connection, place, and work markers

Item	Selected shares
Hugs (last three days)	None 18%; 1–3 58%; 4–6 16%; 7–10 4%; More than 10 2%; Not sure 1%
Meals with someone you love	Everyday 48%; Almost everyday 23%; A few times a week 13%; A few times a month 8%; Rarely or never 9%
Quality time with family	Everyday 41%; Almost everyday 24%; A few times a week 15%; A few times a month 11%; Rarely or never 9%
Excited to show a friend where you live	Yes 76%; No 15%; Not sure 10%
Neighbors known by name	All 10%; Most 32%; A few 48%; None 10%
Safety walking at night	Very safe 48%; Somewhat safe 40%; Not very safe 7%; Not at all safe 3%; Not sure 1%
Work energy	Motivated and energized 60%; Drained and discouraged 31%; Not sure 9%
Employment happiness	Very happy 37%; Somewhat happy 45%; Somewhat unhappy 11%; Very unhappy 5%; Not sure 1%
Someone to call at 2 a.m.	Yes 83%; No 11%; Not sure 6%
Gratitude (past week)	Everyday 30%; Almost everyday 32%; A few times 29%; Rarely or never 9%

Party cuts — political climate and dignity trust (selected)

Response	Total	Rep	Ind	Dem
Climate: Healthy disagreement	10	12	8	9
Climate: Disrespect	49	59	44	41
Climate: Dehumanization	34	20	35	45
Climate: Not sure	7	8	12	5
Trust dignity leader: Yes	75	75	56	80
Trust dignity leader: No	12	12	19	10
Trust dignity leader: Not sure	13	13	25	9
Outnumbered: Yes	21	18	20	25

Outnumbered × relationship harm (selected)

Harm mention (select-all)	Outnumbered Yes	Outnumbered No
Family	36%	14%
Friends	38%	19%
None	39%	67%

Life-satisfaction pools — selected markers (LS 0–3 vs. LS 9–10)

Share-weighted averages of LS-column percentages; descriptive approximations.

Marker	Total	LS 0–3	LS 9–10
Work: Motivated & energized	60%	37%	85%
Work: Drained & discouraged	31%	55%	12%
Employment: Very happy	37%	19%	64%
Place belonging: Yes	76%	51%	89%
Place belonging: No	15%	37%	7%
Gratitude: Everyday	30%	15%	49%
Gratitude: Rarely/never	9%	24%	3%
Hugs: None	18%	35%	9%
Meals loved: Everyday	48%	31%	65%
Family time: Everyday	41%	26%	54%
2 a.m. support: Yes	83%	64%	90%
Climate: Dehumanization	34%	46%	24%
Outnumbered: Yes	21%	30%	17%
Trust dignity leader: Yes	75%	67%	77%
Harm: None (select-all)	61%	61%	67%

Appendix B: Geographic life-satisfaction notes (optional)

Methods box — read before any figure or table in this appendix

Congressional-district and state life-satisfaction figures in this appendix come from a companion **Precision Politics** application (U.S. states and congressional districts, 2026), not from geography columns in the national crosstab workbook used for the main report. Exports provide full 0–10 distributions by geography; means are **derived** from those shares. With roughly 5,000 respondents spread across hundreds of districts, **district figures cannot be treated as raw survey cells**. They should be read as **modeled / smoothed estimates**. Do **not** apply the national margin of error to districts or states. Do **not** publish these means as if they were direct crosstabs. The compressed range of estimates (state means roughly 6.42–6.81;

CD means roughly 6.07–6.98) is consistent with heavy smoothing. Field-date labeling in the app (July 30–August 4) differs slightly from the Excel national file (July 30–August 5, 2026; $n = 5,001$); treat as the same study with minor metadata mismatch.

National benchmark (Excel crosstabs): mean life satisfaction ≈ 6.7 ; share at 7–10 $\approx 63\%$; share at 0–4 $\approx 19\%$.

Highest and lowest derived CD mean life satisfaction (modeled/smoothed):

Rank	CD	Derived mean	Share at 7+ LS
Top 1	FL-19	6.98	67.4%
Top 2	FL-22	6.93	66.2%
Top 3	FL-28	6.92	65.6%
Bottom 1	NY-13	6.07	52.2%
Bottom 2	NY-15	6.17	53.4%
Bottom 3	CA-34	6.25	55.0%

These rankings illustrate the smoothed geographic surface only. They are **not** evidence that any named district's registered voters answered the survey at the rates shown above as raw cells. Deeper demographic matching, significance tests, and respondent-level geographic analysis remain blocked without microdata.

Center for Dignity in Politics · NGA–Matter Neuroscience national survey · July 30–August 5, 2026 · $n = 5,001$ registered voters · Weighted · Descriptive only

Lead researcher: Dr. Brandon Tatum · Fielded by RMG Research

