



**Marist
Poll**



Campaign 2012: Civility Lost

July 2012

Attacks Over Issues

About two-thirds of Americans believe candidates on the campaign trail are spending more time criticizing their opponents than addressing the issues.

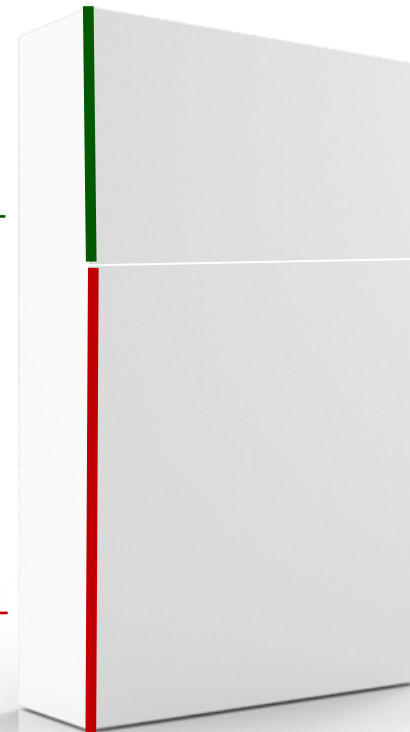
Overall, are the candidates running for office spending more time:

Talking about the issues

23%

Attacking their opponents

66%



Digging Deeper:

Registered voters, regardless of political party, believe the focus of political campaigns is *not* on the issues but on attacking political opponents.

The Tenor of Political Discourse

A majority of Americans, 56%, believe political campaigns in this country lack civility and respect.

Would you describe the tone of political campaigns in this country as:

37%

Mostly civil and respectful



56%

Mostly uncivil and disrespectful



Digging Deeper:

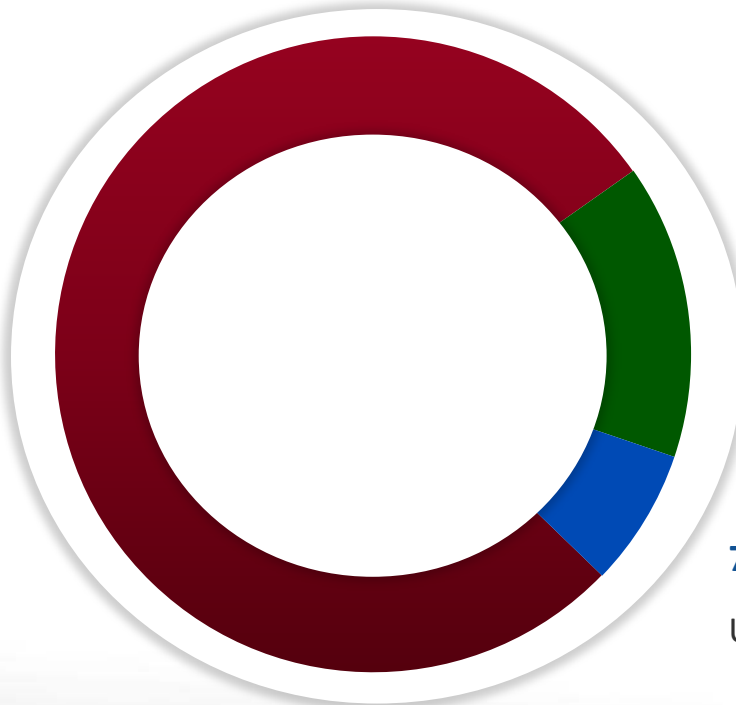
There is a strong consensus of opinion across party lines. 59% of registered voters are dismayed about the tone of political discourse including 60% of Republicans, and 58% of both Democrats and independents. 63% of Americans over 45 perceive the tone to be disrespectful compared with only 46% of younger generations.

Frustrating Tone

Most Americans, 78%, are frustrated by the tone of the political discourse. Few feel encouraged.

Are you mostly frustrated or mostly encouraged by the tone of political campaigns in this country today?

78%
Mostly
frustrated



15%
Mostly
encouraged

7%
Unsure

Digging Deeper:

Most Americans regardless of background or political persuasion are frustrated by the conduct of political campaigns in the country today .

Going Negative

Approximately three in four Americans, 74%, believe political campaigns in this country have become more negative over time.

Do you think the tone of political campaigns in this country has generally gotten more positive or more negative than it has been in past election years?



74%
More negative



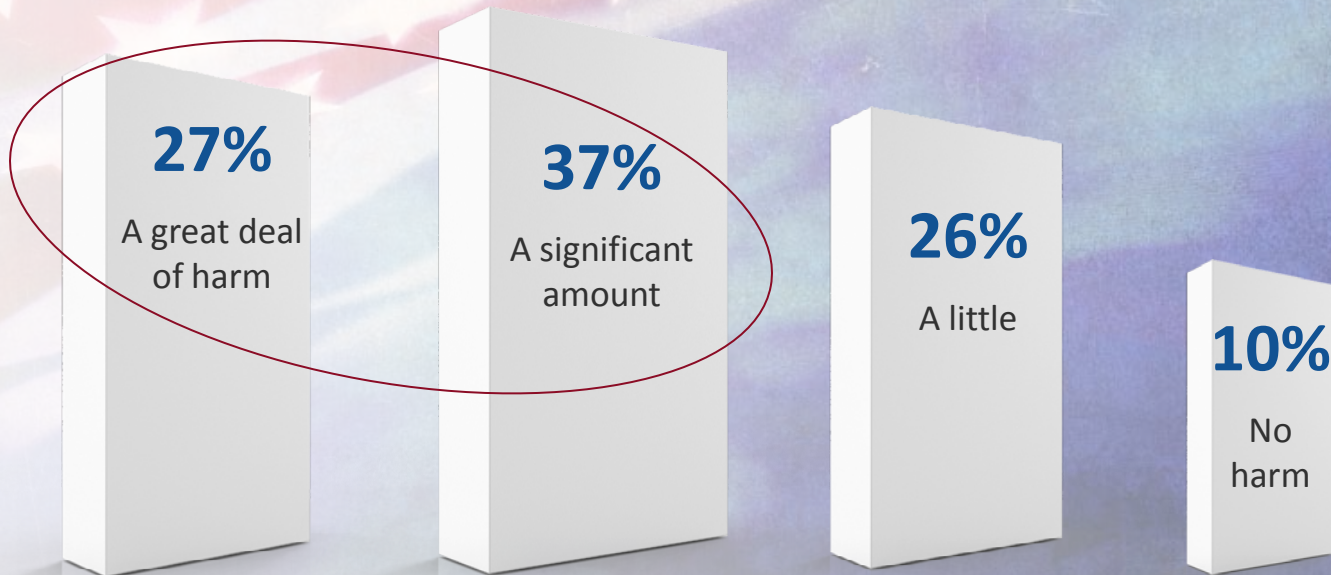
19%
More positive

Digging Deeper:
Americans over 45 years of age, 80%, are even more likely to perceive the tone of political campaigns to be increasingly harsh than their younger counterparts, 65%.

Cost to Democracy

64% of Americans believe the negativity in campaigns causes a great deal or significant amount of harm to the nation's political process.

Do personal attacks and negative ads in campaigns do a great deal of harm to our political process, a significant amount, a little, or no harm at all?



Digging Deeper:

67% of registered voters view the impact of this campaign strategy as detrimental to the nation's political process including 72% of independents, 71% of Republicans, and 59% of Democrats.

How the Survey was Conducted

- This study was done in partnership with The Knights of Columbus and conducted by The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion.
- This report details the findings from a telephone survey of 1,010 adults 18 years of age and older residing in the continental United States. Data were collected from July 9, 2012 through July 11, 2012.
- Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population.
- To increase coverage, this landline sample was supplemented by respondents reached through random dialing of cell phone numbers. The two samples were then combined.
- Reports for adults have a margin of error within +/- 3.0 percentage points. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

Please note that totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Contact Information



Knights of Columbus Headquarters

Mr. Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight

Mr. Andrew Walther, Vice President,
Media, Research and Development

1 Columbus Plaza
New Haven, CT 06510
(203) 752-4253

The Knights of Columbus is one of the nation's premiere volunteer and charitable organizations. Last year, Knights worldwide donated nearly 69 million hours, and more than \$150 million to charitable causes in communities throughout the Americas, as well in Europe and Asia. From helping children in need, to providing wheelchairs for the disabled, to helping stock food banks, to offering top-rated and affordable life insurance to its members, the Knights has been at the service of the community for more than 127 years, and is the world's largest Catholic service organization.



Marist College Institute for Public Opinion

Lee M. Miringoff, PhD

Barbara L. Carvalho, PhD

Susan K. McCulloch, PhDc

Marist College
3399 North Road
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
(845) 575-5050

Founded in 1978, The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of social issues. Through the regular public release of surveys, MIPO has built a legacy of independence, reliability, and accuracy. Its results are featured in print and electronic media throughout the world.