

FOR RELEASE MARCH 15, 2018

Public Confidence in Mueller's Investigation Remains Steady

Most are skeptical Trump will act to block future Russian meddling

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, March, 2018, "Public Confidence in Mueller's Investigation Remains Steady"

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Public Confidence in Mueller's Investigation Remains Steady

Most are skeptical Trump will act to block future Russian meddling

The public continues to express at least some confidence that Robert Mueller will conduct a fair investigation into Russia's involvement in the 2016 election.

A majority of Americans (61%) say they are very or somewhat confident Mueller will conduct a fair investigation; these views have changed only modestly since December.

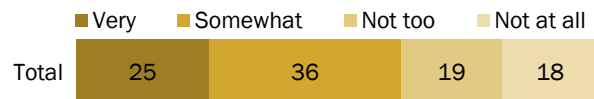
While opinions about Mueller's probe – and other issues related to Russia's alleged election meddling – are divided along partisan lines, nearly half of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (46%) are very or somewhat confident Mueller will conduct a fair investigation. Democrats and Democratic leaners are overwhelmingly confident Mueller's investigation will be fair (75% very or somewhat confident).

The latest national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted March 7-14 among 1,466 adults, finds the public is skeptical that the Trump administration will make a "serious effort" to prevent Russia from influencing future U.S. elections. (The survey was conducted before the administration's March 15 announcement it was imposing sanctions on Russia in response to its interference in the 2016 campaign.)

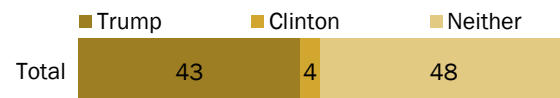
About four-in-ten Americans (42%) are very or somewhat confident that the administration will make a serious effort to thwart Russian efforts to influence future elections. Most are not too confident (19%) or not at all confident (36%) the Trump administration will take serious action to prevent Russia from influencing future elections in this country.

Most Americans are very or somewhat confident Mueller's probe will be fair

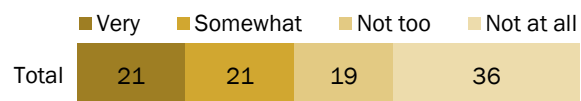
% who are ___ confident that special counsel Robert Mueller will conduct a fair investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 election



% who say Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election benefited ___ campaign



% who are ___ confident that the Trump administration will make a serious effort to prevent Russia from influencing future U.S. elections



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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The survey finds that the public is divided in opinions about the ultimate impact of Russian efforts to influence the 2016 presidential election: 48% say these efforts did not benefit either Trump or Hillary Clinton, while 43% say they benefited Trump. Very few Americans (4%) think Russian actions benefited Clinton.

Trump's job approval has changed little in recent months. Currently, 39% approve of the way Trump is handling his job as president, while 54% disapprove. (Also new today: *Disagreements about Trump widely seen as reflecting divides over 'other values and goals'.*)

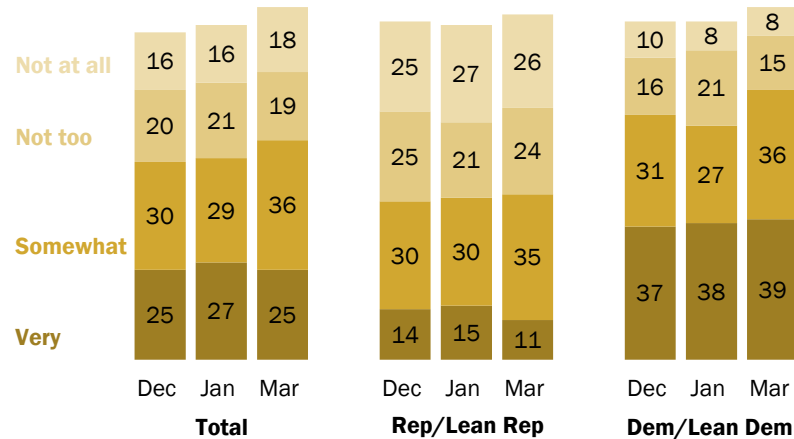
Most are at least somewhat confident in fairness of Mueller's investigation

Overall, more Americans (61%) say they are very or somewhat confident that Justice Department special counsel Robert Mueller will conduct a fair investigation into Russia's involvement in the 2016 election; 37% are not too confident or not at all confident that he will do this.

Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, 39% are *very* confident Mueller will pursue a fair investigation, while another 36% are *somewhat* confident. Just 23% of Democrats are not too confident or not at all confident.

Democrats' confidence in Mueller's investigation has increased; Republicans' views are little changed

% who are ___ confident that special counsel Robert Mueller will conduct a fair investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 election



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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The share of Democrats who are at least somewhat confident Mueller will conduct a fair investigation into Russia's election involvement has risen modestly since December, from 68% then to 75% today.

By contrast, opinions among Republicans and Republican leaners are virtually unchanged from three months ago. About a quarter of Republicans say they are not at all confident (26%) that Mueller will conduct a fair investigation; 24% are not too confident, while 46% say they are at least somewhat confident Mueller will conduct a fair investigation into Russian election involvement.

Republicans say Russian efforts in 2016 didn't benefit either candidate

The public is split on whether Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election benefited Donald Trump's campaign or neither campaign very much. Roughly equal shares say that Russian efforts likely benefited Trump's campaign (43%) or neither of the campaigns (48%)—with sharp divisions by party. Just 4% say Russian efforts benefited Hillary Clinton's campaign.

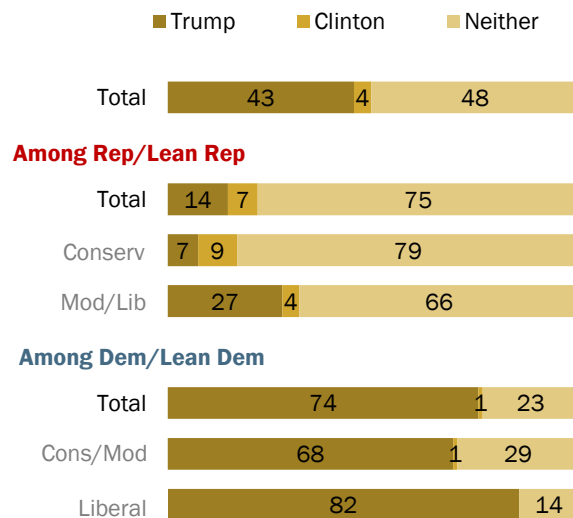
Three-quarters of Republicans and Republican leaners say that Russia's meddling didn't benefit either campaign very much. A nearly identical share of Democrats and Democratic leaners (74%) say it benefited Trump's campaign.

There are ideological differences in both parties in these views. Over a quarter (27%) of moderate and liberal Republicans say the Trump campaign benefited from Russian influence in the campaign, compared with just 7% of conservative Republicans.

Among Democrats, majorities of liberals (82%) and conservatives and moderates (68%) say the Trump campaign benefited from Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election.

Wide partisan gap in views of impact of Russian efforts to influence election

% who say Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election benefited ___ campaign



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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There also are sizable differences between parties – and wide ideological differences within each – on whether the Trump administration had improper contact with Russia during the 2016 campaign.

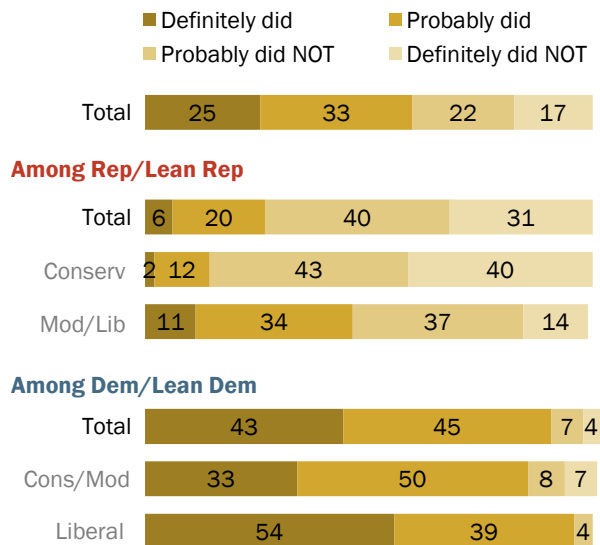
Overall, 58% of the public say senior members of the Trump administration likely had improper contact with Russia during the 2016 campaign, including 25% who say they “definitely” did and 33% who say they “probably” did. As with views of Mueller’s investigation, these opinions are relatively unchanged since December.

An overwhelming share of Democrats (88%) says that improper contact probably (45%) or definitely (43%) occurred. Liberal Democrats (54%) are far more likely than conservative and moderate Democrats (33%) to say such contacts definitely took place.

By contrast, seven-in-ten Republicans (71%) say that senior members of the Trump administration probably or definitely did not have improper contact with Russia. While 40% of conservative Republicans say improper campaign contacts between senior Trump officials and Russia definitely did not occur, just 14% of moderate and liberal Republicans say the same.

Parties divided ideologically in views of Trump campaign contacts with Russia

% who say senior members of Trump administration ___ have improper contact with Russia during 2016 campaign



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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Most are not confident administration will make serious effort to prevent future Russian interference

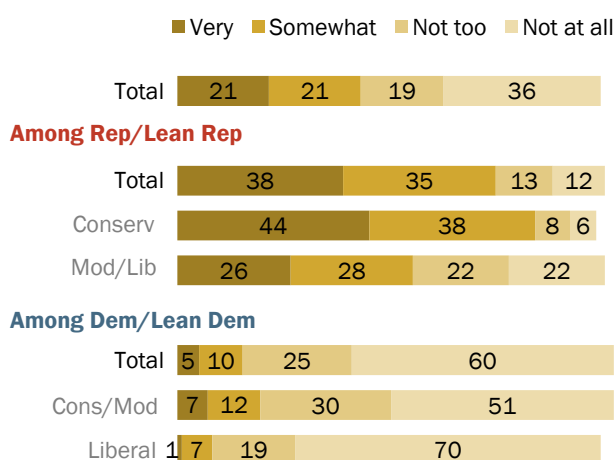
A majority of Americans (56%) say they are not confident that the Trump administration will make a serious effort to prevent Russia from influencing future U.S. elections. Roughly four-in-ten (42%) say they are very or somewhat confident that the administration will take serious action in this regard.

Democrats – especially liberals – are deeply skeptical that the White House will make serious efforts to block Russia from intervening in future elections. A large majority of liberal Democrats (70%), along with about half (51%) of the party’s conservatives and moderates, say they are “not at all confident” the administration will make serious efforts.

Most Republicans (73%) are very or somewhat confident that the administration will make a serious effort to block future election involvement by Russia. However, just 38% are very confident the White House will take serious action, including 44% of conservatives and 26% of moderates and liberals.

Democrats skeptical White House will prevent future Russian meddling

% who are ___ confident the Trump administration will make a serious effort to prevent Russia from influencing future U.S. elections



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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Acknowledgements

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted March 7-14, 2018 among a national sample of 1,466 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (384 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,082 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 653 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted under the direction of ICF Incorporated. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Marketing Systems Group. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2016 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2016 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Survey conducted March 7-14, 2018

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,466	3.0 percentage points
Republican/Lean Rep	655	4.5 percentage points
Democrat/Lean Dem	682	4.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Pew Research Center undertakes all polling activity, including calls to mobile telephone numbers, in compliance with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act and other applicable laws.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
MARCH 2018 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
MARCH 7-14, 2018
N=1,466**

QUESTIONS 1, 7, 12, 14-15, 24-27, 40, 46-47 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

QUESTIONS 2, 41-42 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

NO QUESTIONS 3-6, 8-11, 13, 16-23, 28-39, 43-45

ASK ALL:

Q.48 How much, if anything, have you read or heard about Russian efforts to influence the 2016 presidential election? **[READ]**

TREND FOR COMPARISON

Mar 7-14 <u>2018</u>		Jan 10-15 <u>2018¹</u>
61	A lot	55
26	A little	33
12	Nothing at all	11
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1

ASK ALL:

Q.49 Do you think Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election **[READ AND RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 WITH OPTION 3 ALWAYS LAST]**?

Mar 7-14 <u>2018</u>	
43	Benefited Donald Trump's campaign
4	Benefited Hillary Clinton's campaign
48	Didn't benefit either one very much
*	Russia did not try to influence election (VOL.)
4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

Q.50 How confident are you that the Trump administration will make a serious effort to prevent Russia from influencing future U.S. elections? Are you **[READ IN ORDER]**?

Mar 7-14 <u>2018</u>	
21	Very confident
21	Somewhat confident
19	Not too confident
36	Not at all confident
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

QUESTIONS 51-53, 55, 59, 61, 63, 90 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 54, 56-58, 60, 62, 64-89, 91-93

¹ In the January 10-15, 2018 survey, question was worded: "How much, if anything, have you read or heard about the investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 election?"

ASK ALL:

Q.94 Thinking about the investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 election... just your impression, do you think senior members of the Trump administration definitely did, probably did, probably did NOT or definitely did NOT have improper contact with Russia during the 2016 presidential campaign?

Mar 7-14 2018		Nov 29-Dec 4 2017
25	Definitely did	30
33	Probably did	29
22	Probably did not	18
17	Definitely did not	12
4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	10

ASK ALL:

Q.95 How confident, if at all, are you that the Justice Department special counsel Robert Mueller [PRONOUNCED: "MULL-er"] will conduct a fair investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 election [READ]?

Mar 7-14 2018		Jan 10-15 2018	Nov 29-Dec 4 2017
25	Very confident	27	25
36	Somewhat confident	29	30
19	Not too confident	21	20
18	Not at all confident	16	16
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	8	8

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

				(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
	Republican	Democrat	Independent					
Mar 7-14, 2018	26	28	41	3	*	1	17	18
Jan 10-15, 2018	26	33	34	3	1	3	12	18
Nov 29-Dec 4, 2017	20	32	40	4	1	3	13	19
Oct 25-30, 2017	22	32	41	3	1	2	17	19
Jun 8-Jul 9, 2017	25	31	39	3	1	2	16	18
Apr 5-11, 2017	24	31	42	2	1	*	17	20
Feb 7-12, 2017	23	34	37	3	1	2	15	18
Yearly Totals								
2017	23.6	31.4	39.4	3.3	.6	1.7	15.8	18.7
2016	25.4	32.0	36.5	3.4	.5	2.2	14.6	17.0
2015	23.7	30.4	40.1	3.6	.4	1.8	16.4	17.3
2014	23.2	31.5	39.5	3.1	.7	2.0	16.2	16.5
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>
				<u>preference</u>	<u>party</u>			
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--