

WHO DO AMERICANS LIKE LEAST? POLARIZATION, CONSENSUS, AND THE POLITICS OF DISLIKE

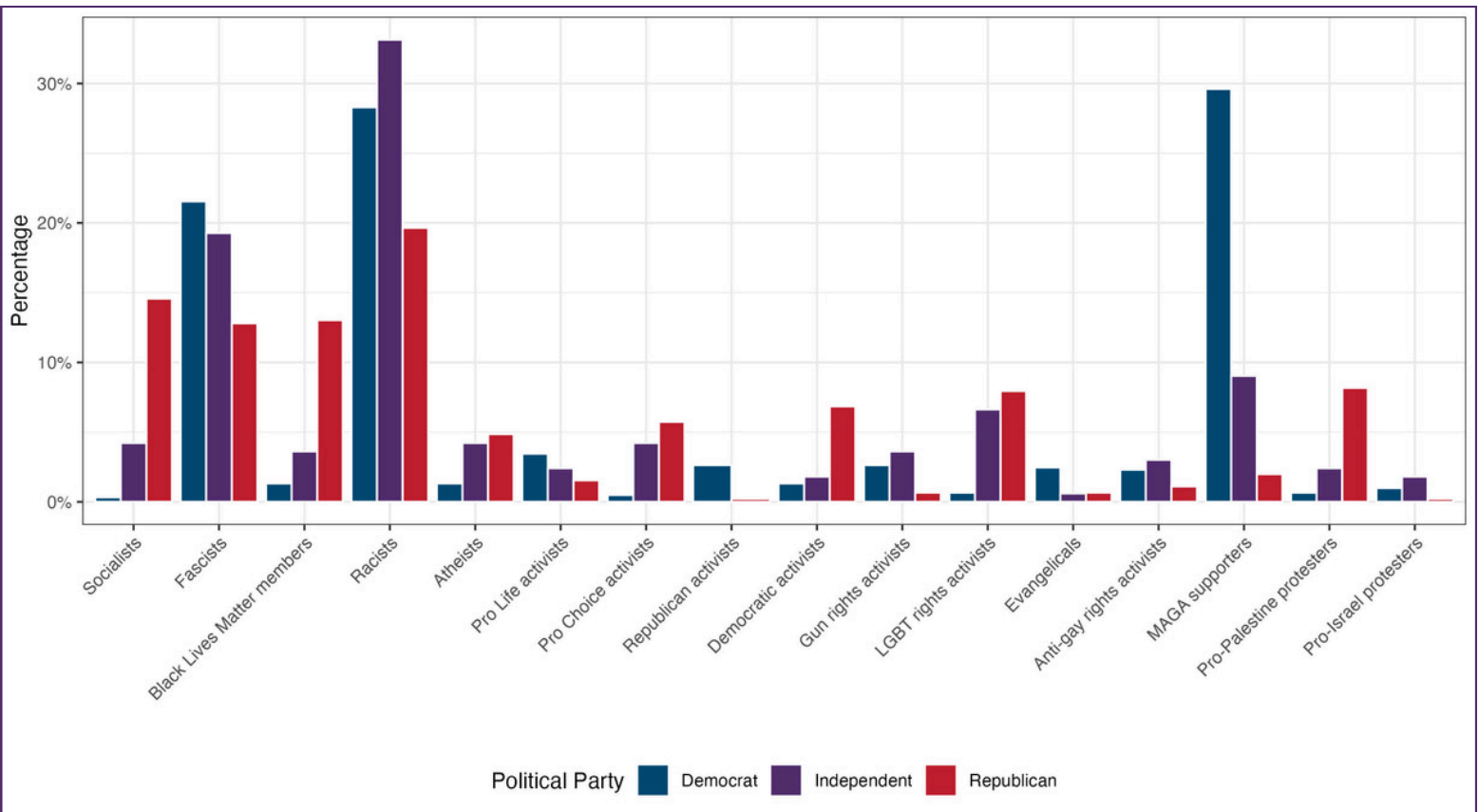
By: Mackenzie Dobson and Tyler Leigh

April 2025

When asked to identify their least liked group (LLG), Americans reveal a mix of partisan division and surprising common ground. New data from the Fall 2024 Health of Democracy Survey show that while partisans often express animosity toward ideological opponents, some social groups — especially racists and fascists — draw broad condemnation across party lines.

Broad Consensus: Racists Rank as the Most Disliked Group

Despite sharp political divides, Americans across the ideological spectrum agree on one thing: racists are widely disliked. In fact, **racists were the most frequently selected LLG among Independents and Republicans, and the second-most selected group among Democrats.** Overall, more than one in four Americans (**25.7%**) identified racists as the group they like least — notable agreement given the 16 response options. This consensus suggests that, despite polarization, rejection of overt racism remains a powerful shared norm in American society.



Out-Partisan Hostility Runs Deep

Despite some consensus between the parties, partisanship still plays a dominant role in shaping social animosity. **Among Democrats, the most commonly disliked group was MAGA supporters. Republicans, meanwhile, most frequently selected socialists and Black Lives Matter supporters.** This pattern reinforces the notion that out-party animus remains a central driver of political polarization.

Concern Over Anti-Democratic Movements Is Widespread

Many Americans — regardless of party — are also deeply uneasy about groups perceived to undermine democratic values. When combining selections for fascists, socialists, and MAGA supporters, **24.2% of Americans chose groups associated with opposition to democratic norms as their least liked.** This signals a shared concern about extremism on both ends of the political spectrum.

While Democrats and independents were most likely to select fascists and MAGA supporters, Republicans were especially likely to identify socialists as threatening. Still, all three groups appeared across party lines, indicating widespread discomfort with authoritarian-leaning ideologies.

Republicans' Distrust Is More Diffuse

Unlike Democrats and independents, whose LLG selections clustered around a few groups (e.g., racists, MAGA supporters), **Republican respondents showed a broader distribution of dislike.** In addition to socialists and BLM supporters, Republicans also identified atheists, media elites, and other groups as concerning. This pattern may reflect the broader conservative narrative of cultural siege — the sense that threats to American values come from multiple fronts.

The Notre Dame Health of Democracy Survey shows that Americans' views of the most socially dangerous groups are not purely partisan nor entirely ideological. While Democrats and Republicans exhibit clear divisions in the groups they most dislike, there is also notable agreement—particularly in widespread rejection of racism and concern over anti-democratic ideologies. These findings offer a snapshot of how Americans navigate social divisions—not only by opposing political adversaries, but also by coalescing around shared democratic norms.

Public disapproval is not directed solely at out-partisans, but also at those perceived to violate fundamental civic values. In this way, Americans' least-liked group preferences may reflect not just polarization, but competing conceptions of what sustains a just and democratic society. Future editions of the Rooney Report will continue to explore these dynamics and what they reveal about the health of American democracy.