

OCTOBER 4, 2023

Fewer Americans Back Businesses Wading Into Current Events

BY [STEPHANIE MARKEN](#) AND TARA NICOLA

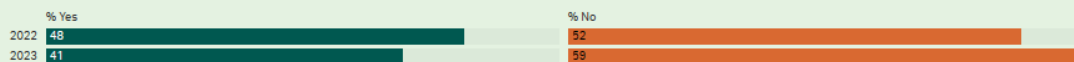


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Fewer Americans Think Businesses Should Take a Public Stance on Current Events

Do you think that businesses, in general, should take a public stance on current events?



May 8-15, 2023
Bentley-Gallup Business in Society Study

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The latest findings from the [Bentley-Gallup Business in Society Report](#) are based on a web survey with 5,458 U.S. adults conducted May 8-15, 2023, using the probability-based Gallup Panel.

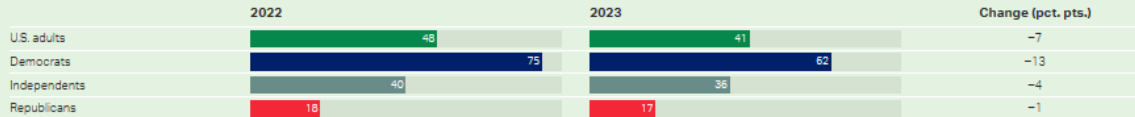
Democrats More Likely to Favor Companies Taking a Public Stance

Political party identification has the strongest influence on whether Americans believe corporations should take a public stance. Most Democrats (62%) believe businesses should take a public stance on current events, compared with just 17% of Republicans and 36% of independents. While still high, the percentage of Democrats who believe businesses should take a stance has declined from 75% in 2022. The percentage of independents reporting companies should take a stance has declined slightly, by four percentage points, while Republicans' views on this issue have remained essentially unchanged.

Democrats Most Likely to Say Businesses Should Take a Public Stance

Do you think that businesses, in general, should take a public stance on current events?

% Yes



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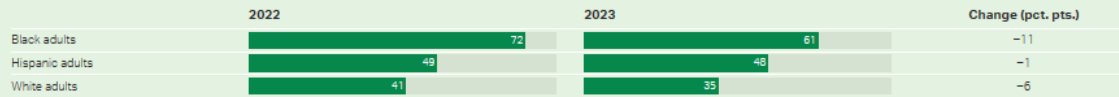
Respondents' race/ethnicity also has a significant, independent effect on their attitudes toward businesses weighing in on current events. Americans who identify as Black or Hispanic are far more likely than White Americans to believe businesses should take a public stance. Racial or ethnic identity is nearly as influential as party affiliation on this belief. Forty-eight percent of Hispanic and 61% of Black Americans think businesses should take a public stance, compared with 35% of White Americans.

Although Black Americans are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to favor businesses taking a public stance, the percentage saying so has declined, from 72% in 2022 to 61% in 2023. Rates have been more consistent among Hispanic and White Americans, whose support on this issue has declined by one and six percentage points, respectively, since 2022.

Black Americans Most Likely to Support Businesses Taking Public Stances

Do you think that businesses, in general, should take a public stance on current events?

% Yes



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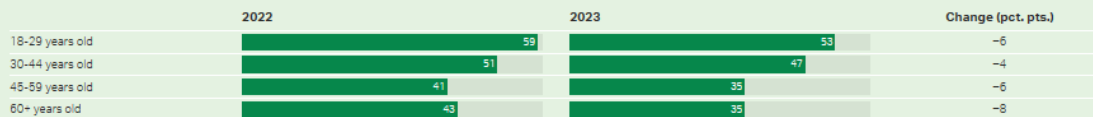
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Younger adults are more likely than older age groups to favor businesses taking a public stance on current events. About half of adults aged 18 to 29 (53%) believe businesses should take a public stance, compared with 47% of those aged 30 to 44 and 35% of those aged 45 and older. However, support for businesses to take a stance has waned across all age groups since 2022, especially among older Americans. The percentage among those aged 60 and older who believe businesses should take a public stance has declined by eight points since 2022.

Younger Americans Most in Favor of Businesses Speaking Out

Do you think that businesses, in general, should take a public stance on current events?

% Yes



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Americans Most Likely to Favor Businesses Taking a Stance on Climate Change

Though Americans generally oppose businesses weighing in on current events, there are some issues for which they support businesses taking a public position. When asked separately whether businesses should take a stance on each of 12 specific policy areas, majorities of Americans believe businesses should take a public stance on climate change (55%) and mental health (52%). Close to half also favor companies doing so for matters related to free speech (49%), healthcare (49%) and racial issues (45%).

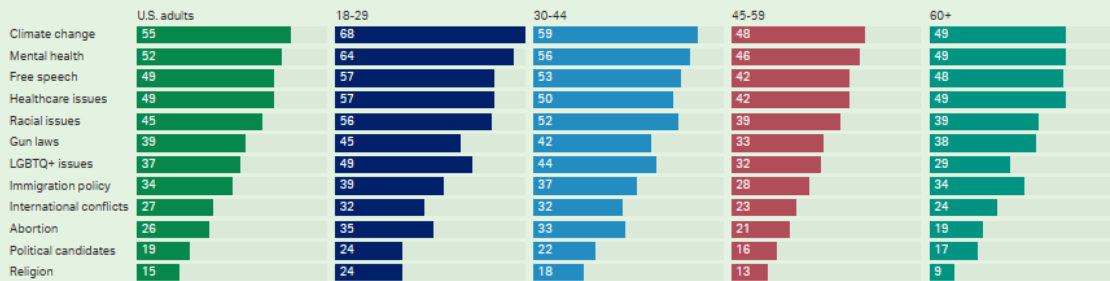
Americans are least likely to believe businesses should take a public stance on political candidates and religion (19% and 15%, respectively). More also disagree than agree that businesses should speak out on gun laws, LGBTQ+ issues, immigration policy, international conflicts and abortion.

Across nearly all topics asked about, younger people and Democrats are more likely than their counterparts to favor businesses taking a public stance.

Americans Across Age Groups Say Companies Should Speak Out on Climate Change and Mental Health

Do you think that business, in general, should take a public stance on subjects that have to do with the following?

% Yes



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Implications

Many businesses have struggled in recent years to decide if, when and how they should speak out about current events, including issues like systemic racism, recent Supreme Court decisions and other political events in the news. In some cases, addressing these topics can allow a business to highlight its values and commitment to employees and customers. In other cases, the topics can be polarizing and potentially alienate subgroups of their workforce or customer base.

The *Bentley-Gallup Business in Society Report* confirms that, like business leaders, the public has mixed views on whether businesses should weigh in on these often complex and nuanced issues. Americans are less likely now than they were in 2022 to say businesses should take a public stance on current events, but taking a stance on some topics -- climate change, in particular -- is still relatively palatable to most Americans.

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SURVEY METHODS



The Bentley-Gallup Business in Society study is based on a Gallup Panel web survey completed by 5,458 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted May 8-15, 2023. The Gallup Panel is a probability-based longitudinal panel of U.S. adults whom Gallup selects using random-digit-dial phone interviews that cover landlines and cellphones. Gallup also uses address-based sampling methods to recruit Panel members. The Gallup Panel is not an opt-in panel. The sample for this study was weighted to be demographically representative of the U.S. adult population, using the most recent Current Population Survey figures.

For results based on this sample, one can say that the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 1.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error are higher for subsamples.

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

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SOURCE: Gallup <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/511346/fewer-americans-back-businesses-wading-current-events.aspx>
