



New Partnership for Public Service polling shows majority of the American public concerned about cuts to the federal workforce and government services

Most Americans oppose the Trump administration's firing of career federal employees while 64% say they are worried about the loss of experience.

MAY 1, 2025

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The majority oppose DOGE and the Trump administration's workforce and spending cuts	4
People fear more negative effects	6
Many supporters of workforce reductions have concerns about the impact	8
The public is already noticing a negative impact from cuts	10
The public is paying close attention	11
Despite continued criticism, most people support public servants	12
Conclusion	13

The severe cuts to federal personnel and programs by the Donald Trump administration and the Department of Government Efficiency are an unprecedented threat to the ability of our government to effectively serve the public. The haphazard nature of these changes has led to confusion and disruption of key government functions, including [Social Security payments](#), [medical research](#) and the [protection of nuclear weapons](#). While the long-term impact remains unclear, future reductions in the federal workforce and cuts to programs and services may be determined by public opinion and how these actions are impacting people’s lives and communities.

Americans are concerned about lost experience

“If a lot of federal workers leave their jobs, how concerned are you about the loss of experience and knowledge that could occur in the federal workforce?”

	A lot/somewhat	Not too much/not at all	Don’t know
Overall	64%	32%	5%
Democrats	85%	10%	5%
Republicans	44%	54%	2%
Independents	63%	30%	7%

Source: Online survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025

To understand how the public is perceiving the Trump administration’s reshaping of the federal government, the Partnership for Public Service completed an online survey of 1,000 Americans from March 13-16, 2025, from a panel maintained by [Prodege](#). While it is not a random, nationally representative sample, the Partnership used quota sampling techniques to resemble the demographic makeup of the U.S. Some findings were supplemented by focus groups run by the Partnership in Feb. 2025.

The survey indicates the public is paying close attention to the administration’s changes and that the majority of people oppose the Department of Government Efficiency or DOGE and cuts to the workforce and programs. As some experienced and specialized federal workers are being laid off, almost two-thirds of the respondents (64%) said they are concerned about the loss of “experience and knowledge” from the workforce. That includes 85% of Democrats, 63% of independents and 44% of Republicans.

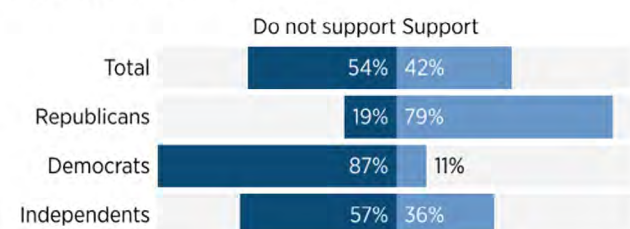
Only 37% said the changes will have a positive impact on their community while 48% believe they will make things worse and another 15% are unsure. Almost one-third say they have already seen consequences of these cuts (29%), and majorities of respondents shared they are concerned about the impact on important issues like the economy and health care.



The majority oppose doge and the Trump administration's workforce and spending cuts

More than half of respondents to the online survey (54%) oppose the “changes made to the federal government by the Trump administration,” while only 42% expressed support. While Republicans were mostly supportive (79% favor), opposition was strongest among Democrats where 87% were opposed. Among independents, the opposition was much larger (57%) than support (36%).

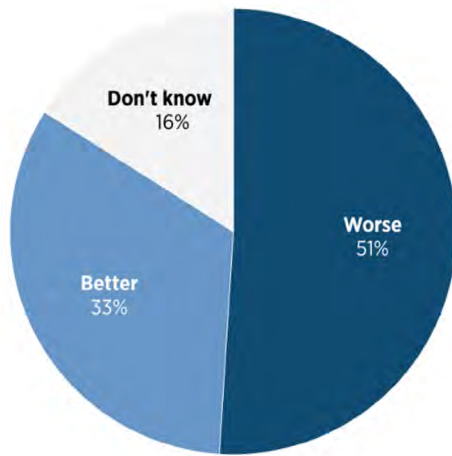
Majority oppose changes to the federal government by the Trump administration



The levels of support for DOGE were similar—as was the partisan divide. While the vast majority of Republicans supported the changes, far more Democrats and independents were in opposition.

Source: Online survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025

"The federal government is operating (better/worse) today than it was a year ago"



Source: Online survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025

When asked about the functioning of the federal government overall, 51% of respondents said the government is operating “worse” now than it was a year ago, while only 33% said it is operating “better” and 16% said they were unsure.



People fear more negative effects

Many people are opposed to the cuts to the federal government because they anticipate negative consequences in the future.

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) said they were concerned about the loss of “experience and knowledge” that could occur due to the reductions in the federal workforce—including 85% of Democrats, 63% of independents and 44% of Republicans.

Pluralities of respondents were pessimistic about the loss of federal employees on their own lives and communities. Nearly half of respondents (48%) said the changes to the federal workforce would make their community worse and 46% said the changes would make their own lives worse.

About half of respondents believe cuts to the federal workforce will make their community and lives worse

“The changes to the federal workforce will make... ”

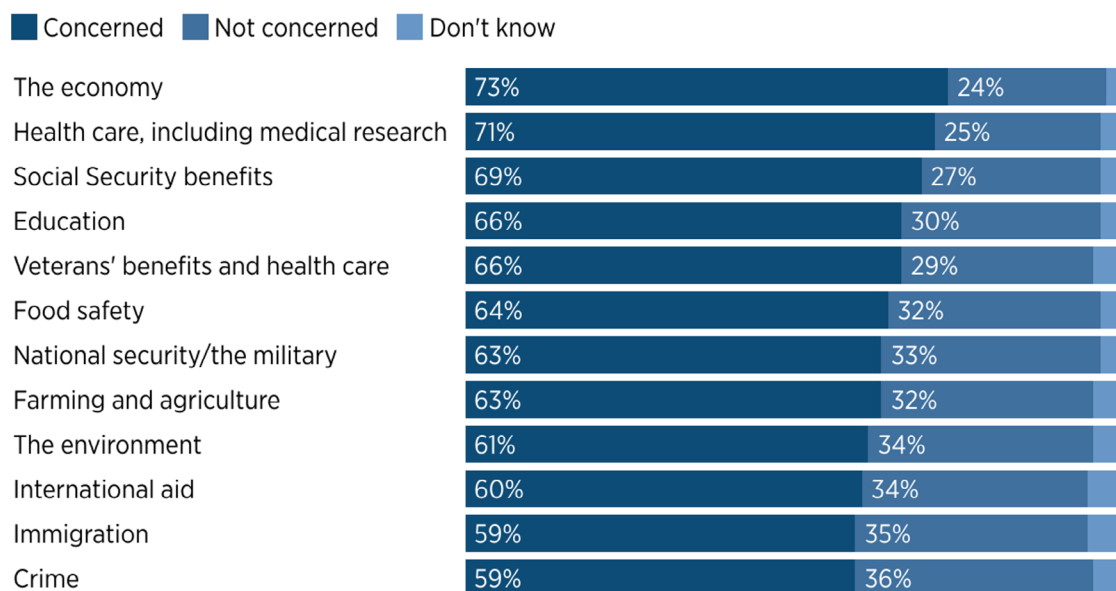
	Better	Worse	Don't know
My community...	37%	48%	15%
My life...	38%	46%	16%

Source: Online survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025

By contrast, fewer people thought the changes would result in improvements in their lives (38%) or communities (37%).

Concern about the negative impact is even higher when the focus is on specific issues. Almost three-quarters of the respondents said they were concerned the economy would be negatively impacted by job cuts (73%). Almost as many people said they were worried about the impact on health care and medical research (71%) and Social Security benefits (69%). In fact, at least 59% of respondents expressed concern about the impact for all 12 issues included in the survey.

"For each of the following subjects, how concerned are you that changes to the federal workforce could have a negative impact?"



Source: Online survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025



Many supporters of workforce reductions have concerns about the impact

Those who support downsizing the federal workforce are not without concerns. While most supporters believe the overall impact will be positive, significant portions agreed there will be some negative consequences for key public services.

Supporters of the Trump administration’s cuts are more positive about the outcomes

	Among those who support the Trump administration’s changes	Among those who oppose the Trump administration’s changes
Anticipates the cuts will “make my community better”	79%	7%
Anticipates the cuts will “make my life better”	80%	6%
Concerned about “the loss of experience and knowledge”	41%	85%
Knows someone who has been impacted by recent cuts	24%	36%
Said the federal government is operating better today than it was a year ago	69%	7%
Said the federal government is operating worse today than it was a year ago	19%	80%

Source: Online survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025

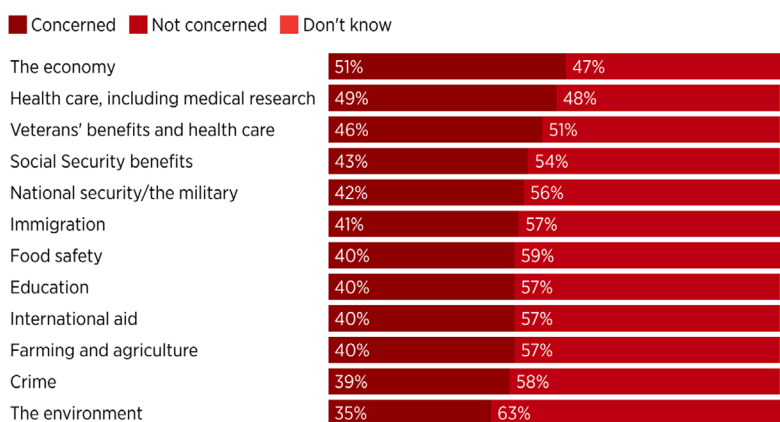
In fact, 41% of those who said they support cuts to federal jobs also said they are concerned about the loss of “experience and knowledge” in the federal workforce. And when asked about the 12 specific policy areas mentioned earlier, at least 35% of supporters were concerned about how the Trump administration’s cuts would impact each. About half of supporters (51%) were worried about how the changes would affect the economy while 49% shared concerns about the impact on the country’s health care and medical research.

The supporters of the administration’s actions are not expecting the process to be perfect. In our focus groups, supporters anticipated some negative consequences along the way. But such possibilities were not enough to change their support for the larger endeavor.

As one focus group participant said, “Trust the [DOGE] process and allow it to run its course. There might be some ups and downs, and it might be a bumpy road. But if [DOGE] is doing what it’s supposed to do, it’s going to work out over time.”

Some supporters of the Trump administration’s cuts are concerned about potential negative impacts

Among supporters of the Trump administration’s cuts



Source: Online survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025



The public is already noticing a negative impact from cuts

Just a few months into the Trump administration, almost one-third of the public is already noticing the impact of the cutting of some federal programs and the firing of federal employees.

When asked specifically if people know anyone impacted by the changes, 9% of respondents said they have been personally affected. Another 20% said they knew someone else who had been impacted. Combined, 29% of respondents said they know someone who has been personally affected by the cuts and layoffs.

Examples of the negative impact mentioned by survey participants

“My local schools are cutting programs because of budget cuts. They can’t count on federal funding which impacts my kids.”

“It’s harder to get through to a person at the IRS.”

“The [negative] impact it is having on the teachers and staff in schools.”

“Funding cut from the research lab I volunteer in.”

“Many of the historical sites [in Philadelphia] are open less because of lack of national park rangers.”

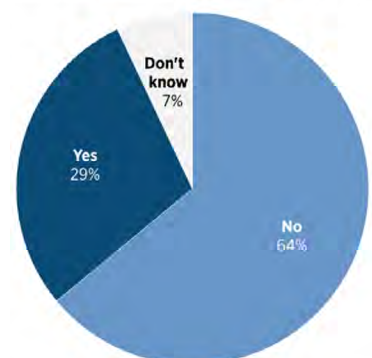
“My sister-in-law works for a nonprofit which receives some of their funding from the federal government. This funding has been cut off so she may lose her job and there will be less services to the community.”

“Cuts to cancer research.”

“I have friends who have Pell Grants in jeopardy.”

About one-third have seen direct impact of layoffs and cuts to programs

“The Trump administration’s activities have included cutting or slowing down funding for some programs. They have also laid off some federal employees. Do you know anyone personally who has been impacted by these changes?”



Source: Online survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025.



The public is paying close attention

Most Americans are following the changes to the federal government closely.

In this survey, 78% said they are closely following the changes made to the federal government while 73% said they were specifically following DOGE closely.

For perspective, only 52% of respondents in the same survey said they closely follow general “national political or U.S. government news.” Polls by [other organizations](#) suggest that public attention to news is even lower. This means the firing of federal government employees and the cutoff of programs and services is drawing significant attention and the public is focused on how these efforts will play out.

Such attention suggests there is an opportunity for media outlets to find an engaged audience for stories explaining the impact of cuts to the American people.

The public is paying more attention to the current changes in the federal government than to most national news

“How closely have you been following...”

	Closely	Not closely/not at all
Trump administration's changes to the federal government	78%	22%
DOGE	73%	27%
National politics and U.S. government news	52%	48%

Note: The scales given to respondents for these questions were slightly different, but have been aligned to the above categories.
Source: Online survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025



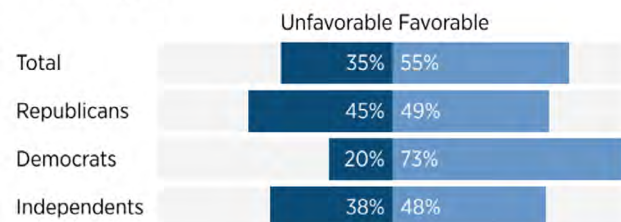
Despite continued criticism, most people support civil servants

Since the Partnership began surveying [public opinion in 2021](#), we found support for civil servants is much greater than for the federal government as a whole. This continues to be the case—despite criticism and disparagement from many politicians and public officials.

A majority of respondents (55%) said they have a favorable opinion of federal government employees, compared with only 35% with an unfavorable opinion. This approval is just slightly higher than the [last time](#) we asked a similar question in our nationally representative survey.

In this recent survey, Democrats were more than three times as likely to say they have a favorable opinion than an unfavorable opinion of federal employees. Republicans were nearly split with 49% having a favorable opinion and 45% having an unfavorable one. Almost half (48%) of independents had a favorable opinion while only 38% said they have an unfavorable one.

Majority have positive views of federal employees



Source: Online survey from 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by the Partnership for Public Service from March 13-16, 2025

Conclusion

The changes made by the president and DOGE to the workings of the federal government have garnered the public's attention during the first few months of the second Trump administration. About three-quarters of the public is paying close attention and almost one-third said they have already noticed an impact on their communities. Overall, most of the public has favorable opinions of civil servants and opposes dramatic workforce reductions and cuts to programs. While there are supporters of the administration's efforts, many of them expressed concerns about the impacts on issues such as health care and the economy as well as the loss of knowledge in the federal workforce.

During the past two decades, the Partnership has [shone a light](#) on the often-unseen parts of our federal government. Many important functions are receiving new attention in recent weeks—unfortunately only because they are being cut or ended. The current situation, however, provides a unique opportunity to see how the public understands the role of government in our society and what a future of good governance could look like.

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