

FOR RELEASE OCTOBER 5, 2017

The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider

Sharp shifts among Democrats on aid to needy, race, immigration

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, October, 2017, "The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider"

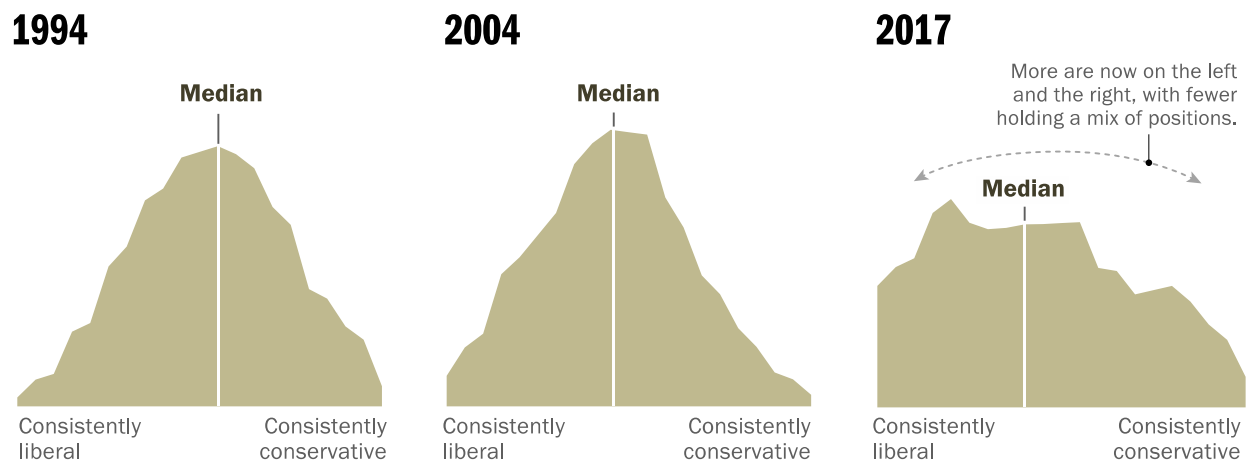
Ideological distance and partisanship

Using these 10 questions to create an ideological scale provides another way of illustrating changes in the public's political values, and a growing divide along partisan lines.

Overall, although many Americans continue to hold a mix of liberal and conservative views across

A declining share of Americans holds a mix of liberal and conservative views

Distribution of the public on a 10-item scale of political values



Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see methodology).

Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.

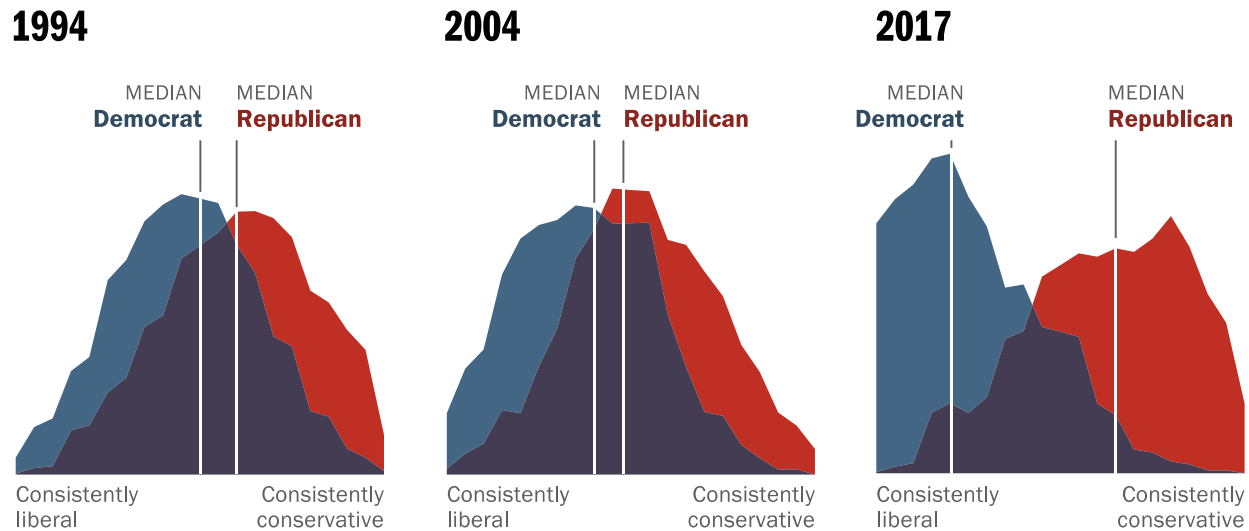
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different issue areas, that share has declined over time.

At the same time, the center of the scale has shifted in a somewhat liberal direction over time. To a large extent, this is the result of the public's growing acceptance of homosexuality and more positive views of immigrants, shifts that are seen among both Democrats and Republicans (GOP attitudes about immigrants are little changed over the last decade, but Republicans are substantially less likely to view immigrants as a burden on the country than they were in the 1990s).

Democrats and Republicans more ideologically divided than in the past

Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values



Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see methodology). The blue area in this chart represents the ideological distribution of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents; the red area of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. The overlap of these two distributions is shaded purple.

Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.

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Reflecting the growing partisan gaps across the 10 questions (even those where both parties have shifted in the same direction), Republicans and Democrats are now further apart ideologically than at any point in more than two decades, a continuation of the trend Pew Research Center first [documented with these measures in 2014](#). For instance, overall, on this scale of 10 political values, the median (middle) Republican is now more conservative than 97% of Democrats, and the median Democrat is more liberal than 95% of Republicans.

By comparison, in 1994 there was substantially more overlap between the two partisan groups than there is today: Just 64% of Republicans were to the right of the median Democrat, while 70% of Democrats were to the left of the median Republican. Put differently, in 1994

What is the ideological consistency scale?

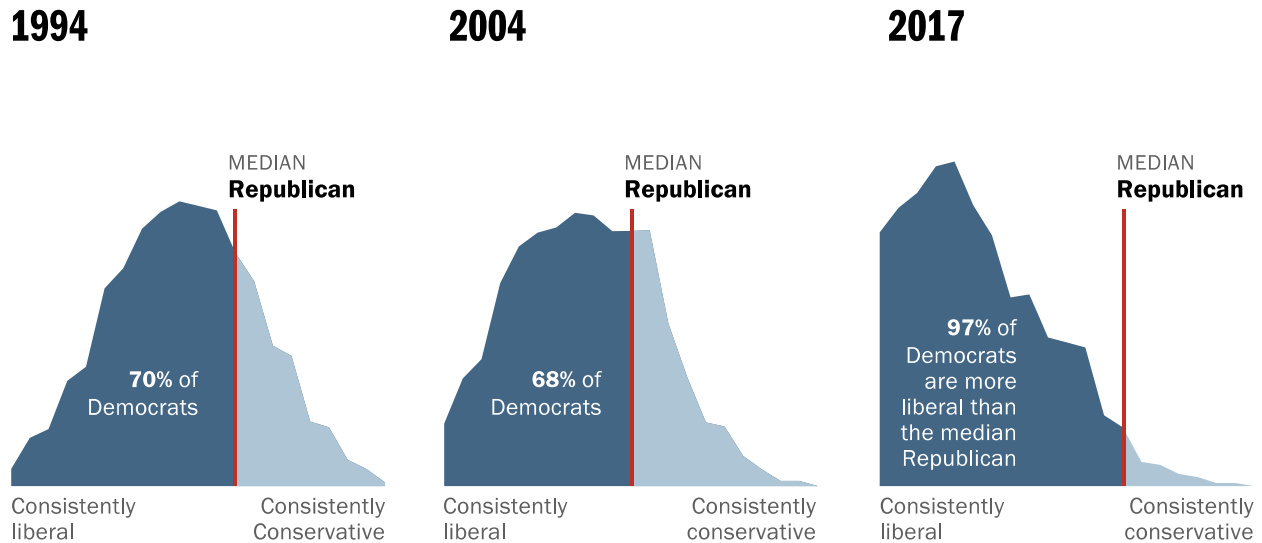
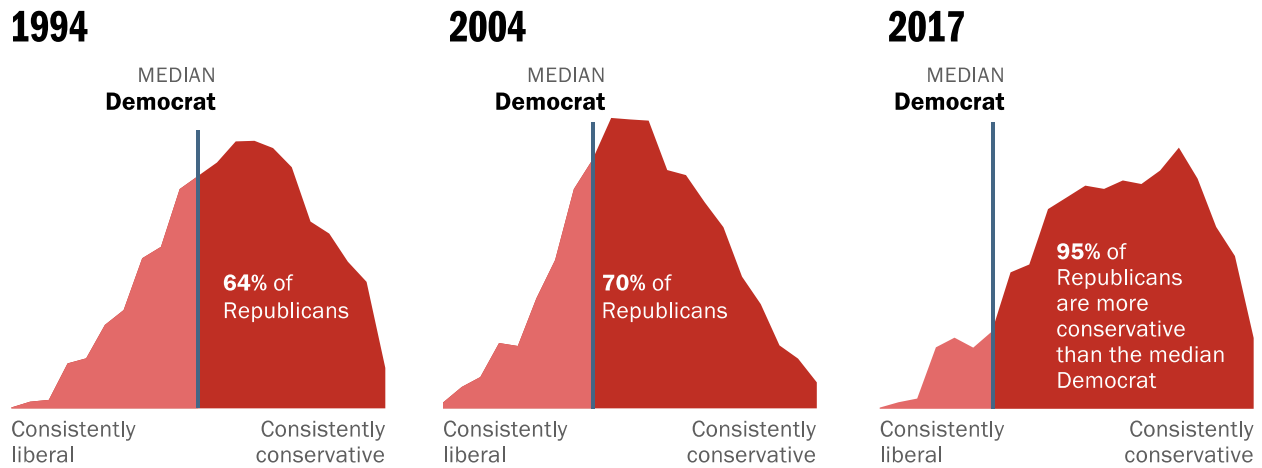
This scale is composed of 10 questions asked on Pew Research Center surveys going back to 1994 to gauge the degree to which people hold liberal or conservative attitudes across many political values (including attitudes about size and scope of government, the social safety net, immigration, homosexuality, business, the environment, foreign policy and racial discrimination). The individual items are discussed at the beginning of this section, and additional details about the scale can be found in the methodology.

Where people fall on this scale does not always align with whether they think of themselves as liberal, moderate or conservative. The scale is not a measure of extremity, but of consistency.

23% of Republicans were *more liberal* than the median Democrat; while 17% of Democrats were *more conservative* than the median Republican. Today, those numbers are just 1% and 3%, respectively.

Less overlap in the political values of Republicans and Democrats than in the past

Distribution of Republicans and Democrats on a 10-item scale of political values



Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see methodology). Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents.

Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.

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