



# 2017 Work and Well-Being Survey: Special Focus on Politics

American Psychological Association

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AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
CENTER *for* ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

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# Executive Summary



# Executive Summary

- American workers are more likely to say they are feeling stressed and cynical because of political discussions at work now than before the 2016 presidential election, according to survey results released by the American Psychological Association.
- The survey found that 26 percent of full-time and part-time employed adults said they felt tense or stressed out as a result of political discussions at work since the election, an increase from 17 percent in September 2016 when they were asked about political discussions at work during the election season.
- More than one in five (21 percent) said they have felt more cynical and negative during the workday because of political talk at work, compared with 15 percent before the election, according to the survey from APA's Center for Organizational Excellence.
- Half of the post-election survey respondents (54 percent) said they have discussed politics at work since the election, and for 40 percent of American workers, it has caused at least one negative outcome, such as reduced productivity, poorer work quality, difficulty getting work done, a more negative view of coworkers, feeling tense or stressed out, or increased workplace hostility. This is a significant increase from the pre-election survey data, when one in four (27 percent) reported at least one negative outcome.



# Executive Summary

- Nearly one-third (31 percent) said they had witnessed coworkers arguing about politics, and 15 percent said they have gotten into an argument themselves. More than one in five (24 percent) said they avoided some coworkers because of their political views.
- About one in six experienced strained relationships as a result of political discussions at work since the election: 16 percent said they have a more negative view of coworkers; 16 percent felt more isolated from coworkers; 17 percent said team cohesiveness suffered; and 18 percent reported an increase in workplace hostility.
- Some said that political talk in the workplace has hurt their job performance: 15 percent said they have had difficulty getting work done; 13 percent said their work quality has suffered; and 14 percent said they have been less productive.
- Since the election, significantly more female workers reported feeling more cynical and negative during the workday: 9 percent before the election, vs. 20 percent since. (For male workers, 20 percent reported feeling cynical and negative before the election, vs. 23 percent since).



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- Another notable finding from the survey is the difference in the way political discussions at work since the election are affecting employees based on their political views. In the survey before the election, there were few differences across political party or philosophy on how talk of politics was affecting workers.
- Since the election, self-described liberals are more likely than moderates or conservatives to report feeling tense or stressed as a result of political discussions at work since the presidential election (38 percent, vs. 22 percent for moderates and 21 percent for conservatives) and perceive an increase in workplace hostility (26 percent, vs. 16 percent for moderates and 13 percent for conservatives).
- People who identified as liberal were also more likely to report that political discussions have made them feel more connected to coworkers (39 percent, vs. 28 percent for moderates, 25 percent for conservatives).



# Detailed Findings

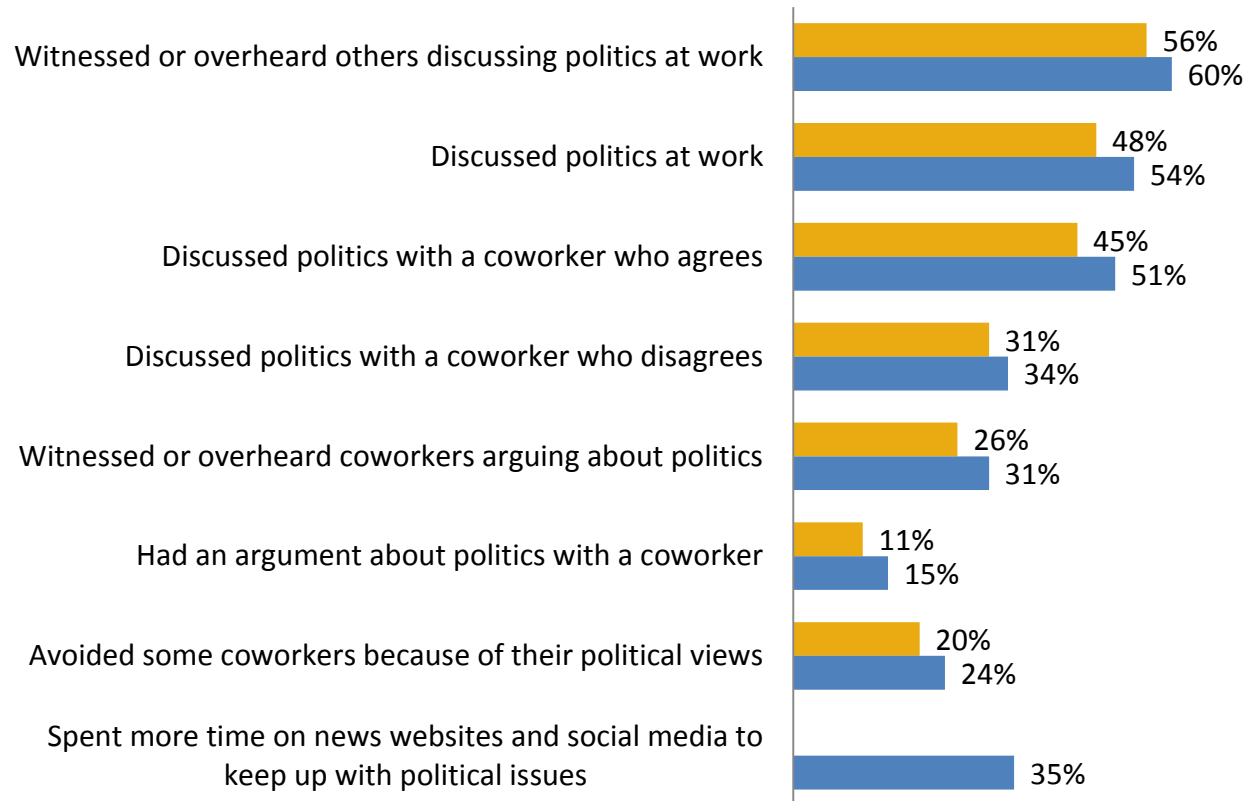


# Discussions and Arguments About Politics

## I have...

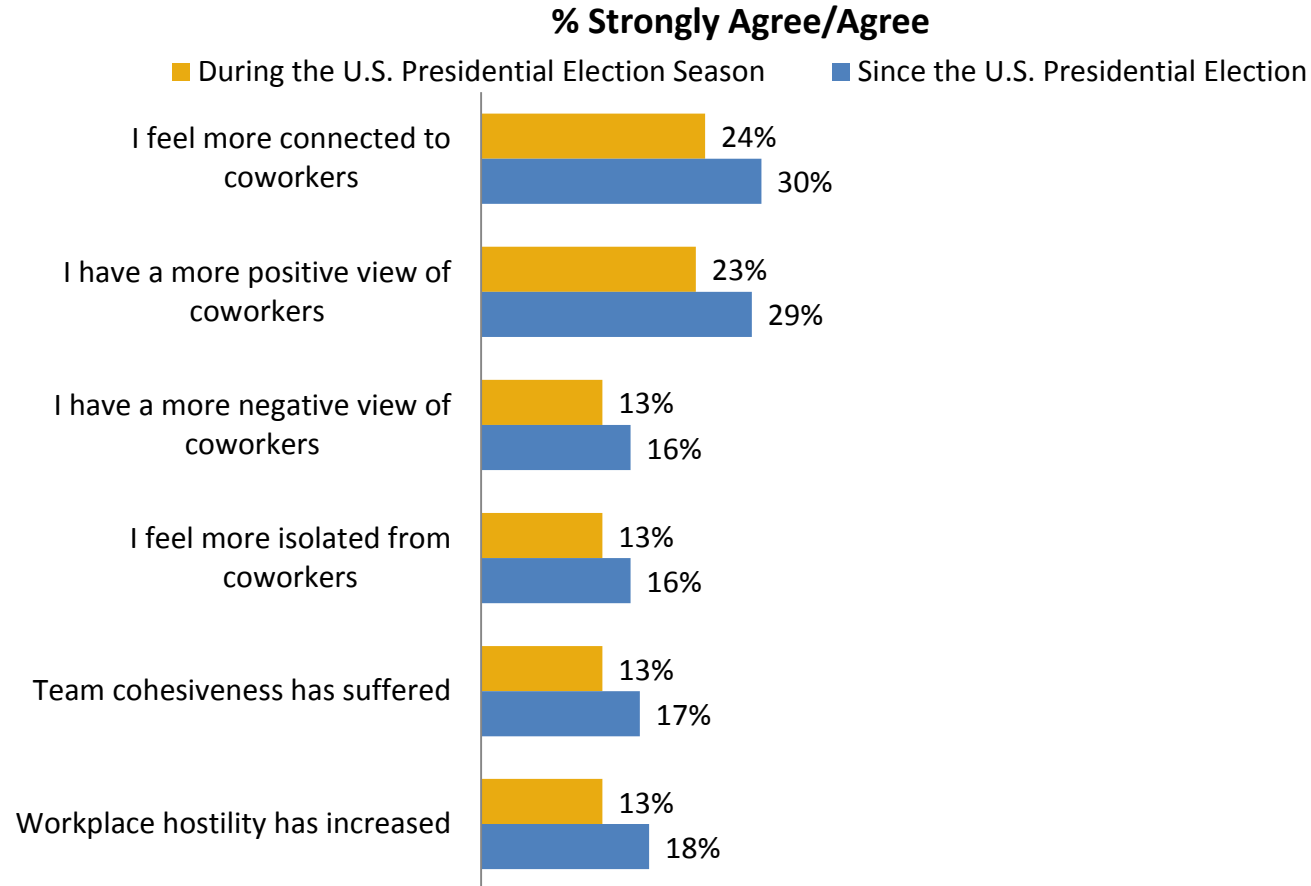
% Yes

■ During the U.S. Presidential Election Season ■ Since the U.S. Presidential Election



# Politics and Work Relationships

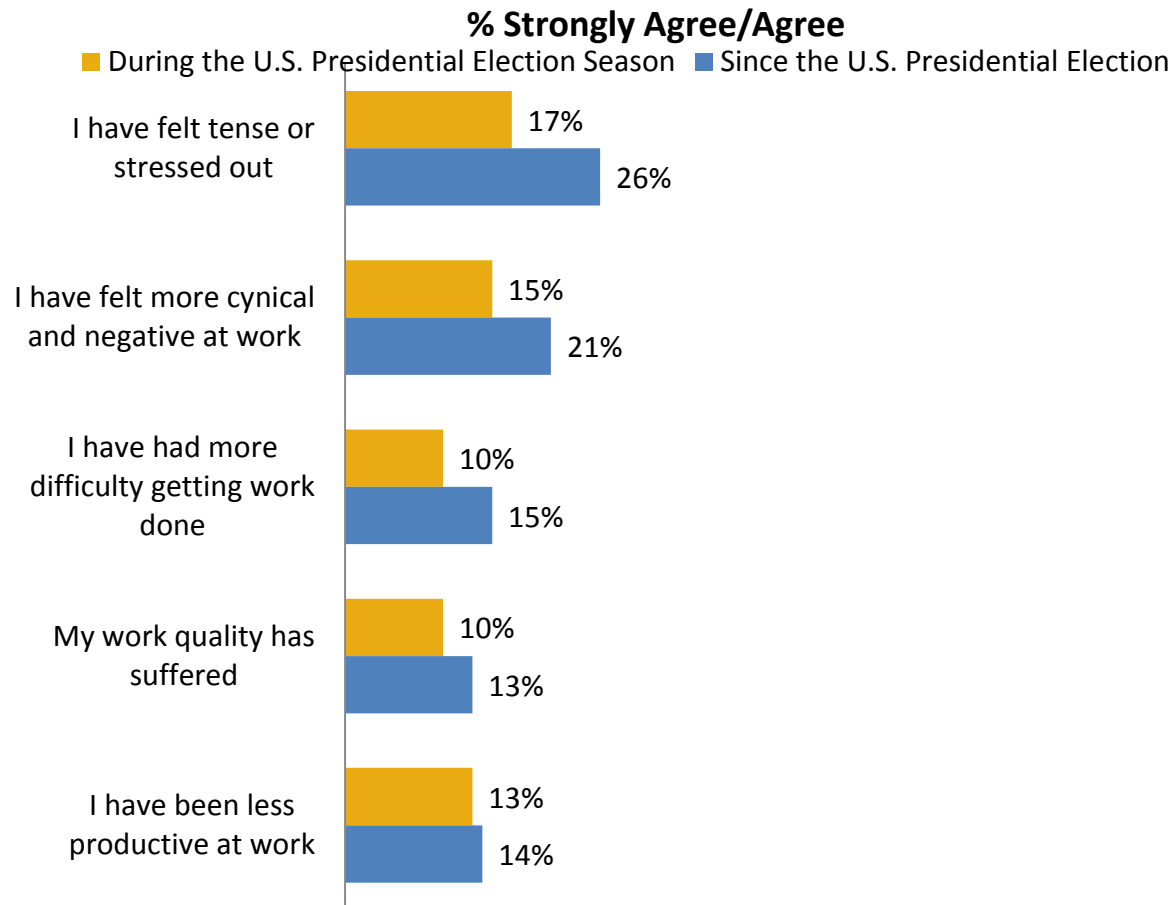
## As a result of political discussions at work...





# Politics, Well-Being and Work Performance

## As a result of political discussions at work...



# Gender Comparison

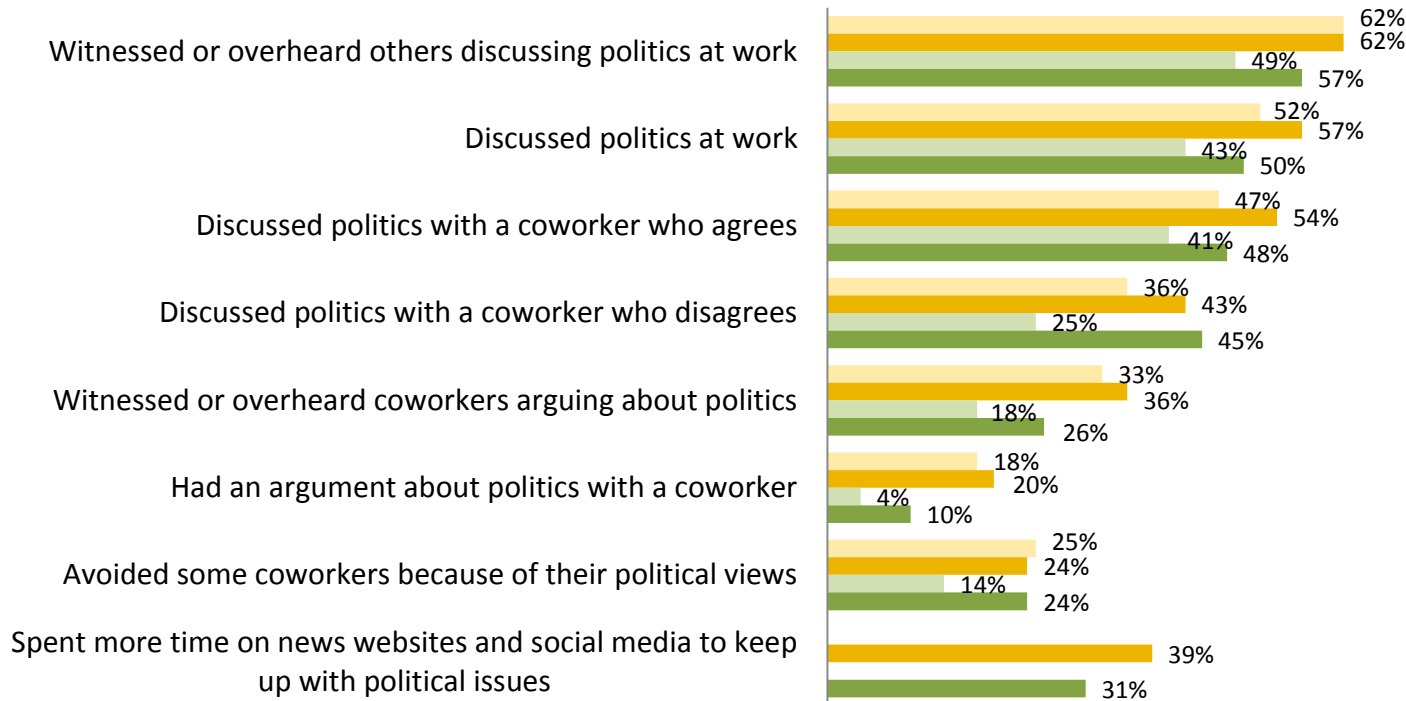


# Discussions and Arguments About Politics by Gender

I have...

% Yes

- Men During the U.S. Presidential Election Season
- Men Since the U.S. Presidential Election
- Women During the U.S. Presidential Election Season
- Women Since the U.S. Presidential Election

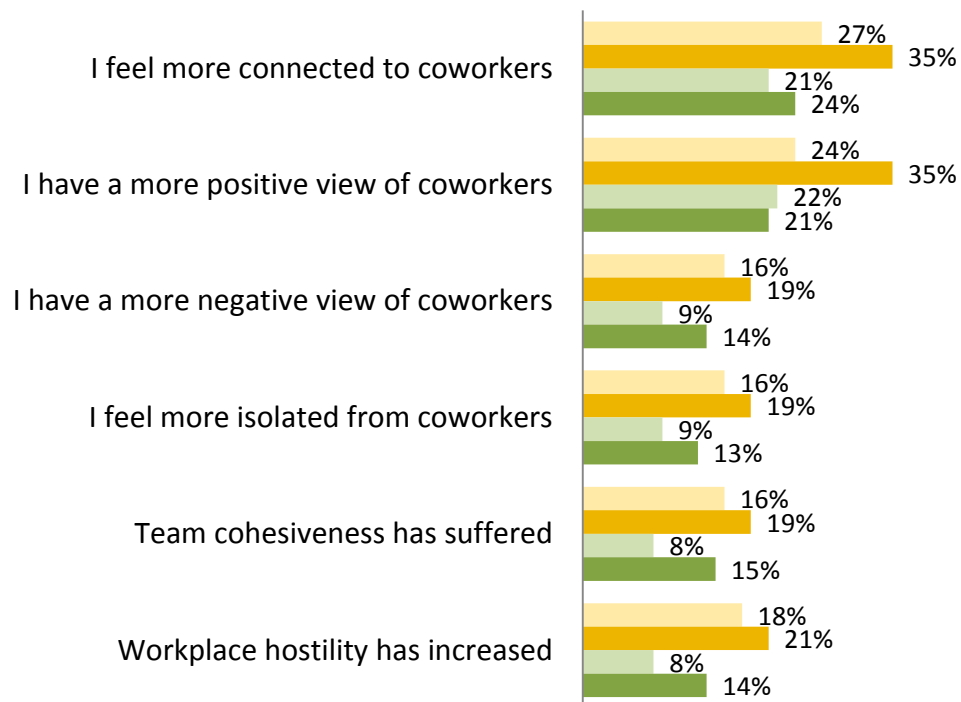


# Politics and Work Relationships by Gender

As a result of political discussions at work...

% Strongly Agree/Agree

■ Men During the U.S. Presidential Election Season     ■ Men Since the U.S. Presidential Election  
■ Women During the U.S. Presidential Election Season     ■ Women Since the U.S. Presidential Election

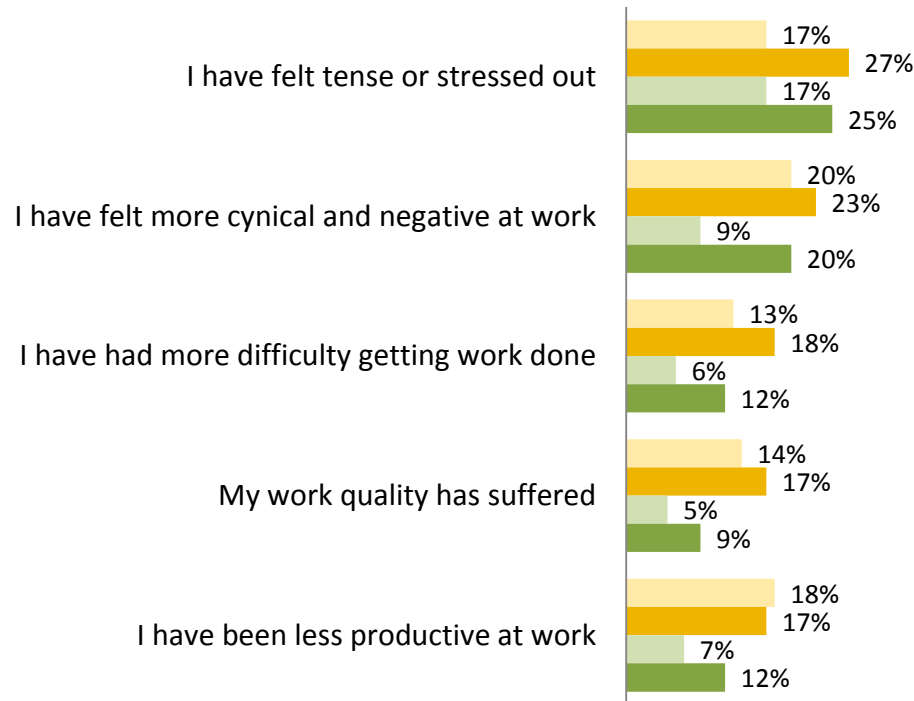


# Politics, Well-Being and Work Performance by Gender

As a result of political discussions at work...

% Strongly Agree/Agree

- Men During the U.S. Presidential Election Season
- Men Since the U.S. Presidential Election
- Women During the U.S. Presidential Election Season
- Women Since the U.S. Presidential Election



# Age Comparison

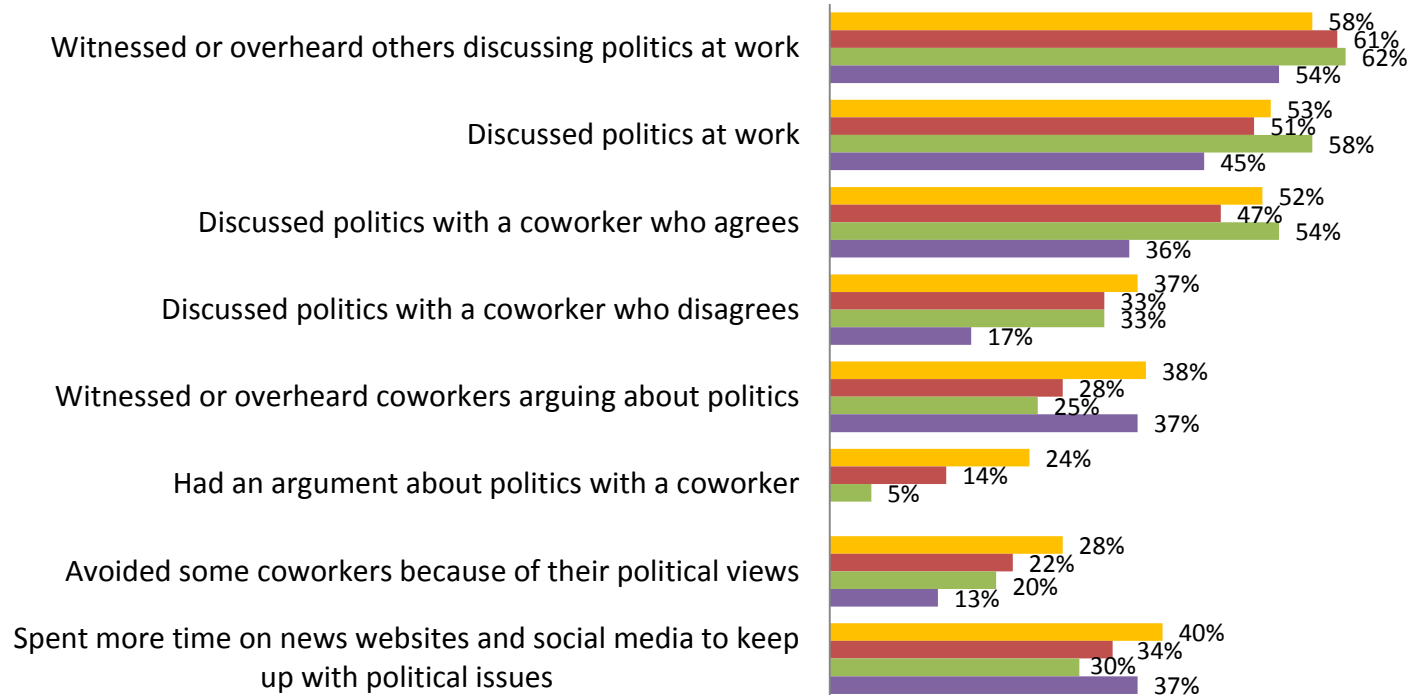


# Discussions and Arguments About Politics by Age

Since the U.S. presidential election, I have...

% Yes

■ Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer ■ Mature

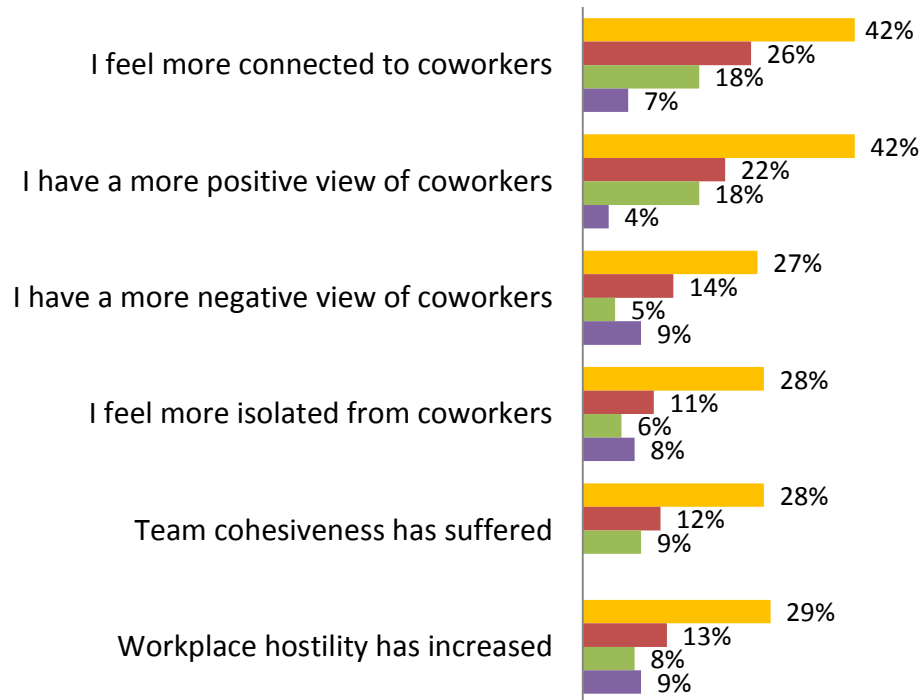


# Politics and Work Relationships by Age

As a result of political discussions at work since the presidential election...

% Strongly Agree/Agree

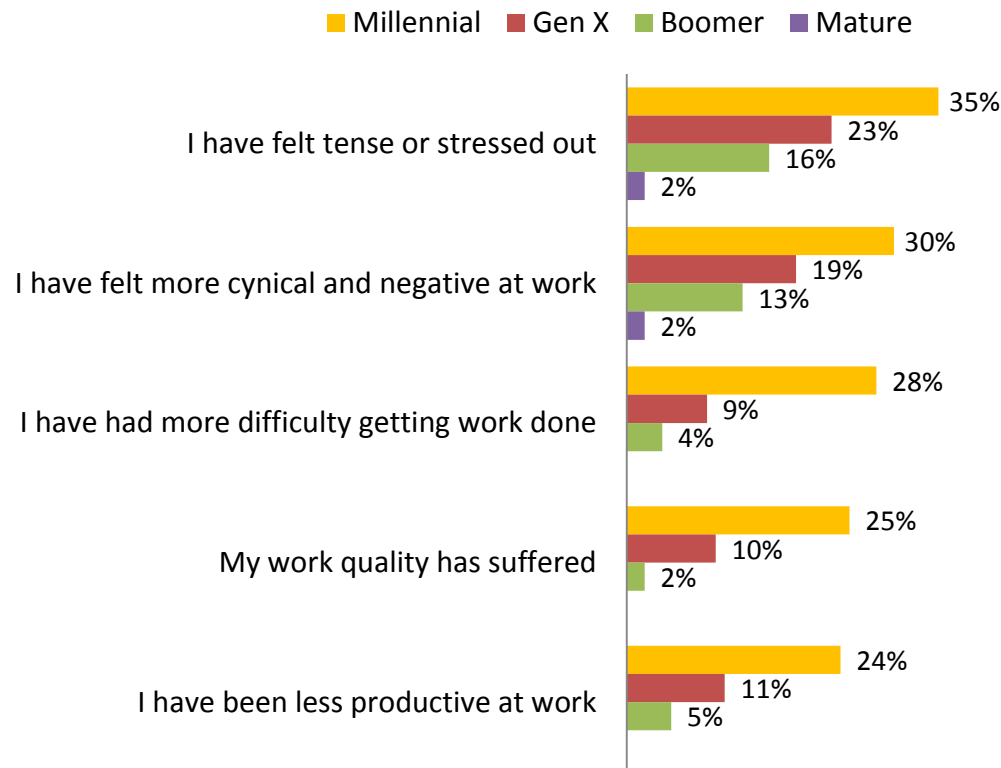
■ Millennial ■ Gen X ■ Boomer ■ Mature





# Politics, Well-Being and Work Performance by Age

As a result of political discussions at work since the presidential election...  
% Strongly Agree/Agree



# Political Party Comparison

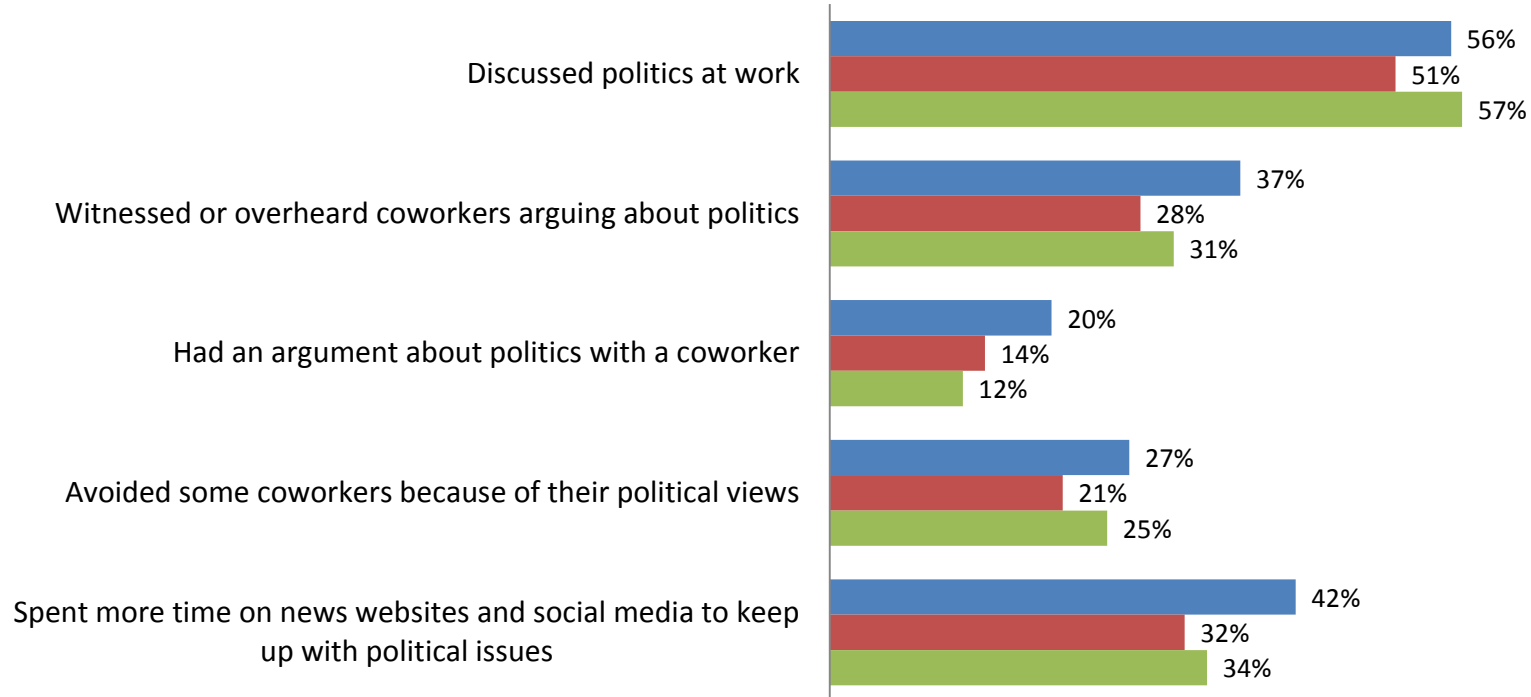


# Discussions and Arguments About Politics by Political Party

Since the U.S. presidential election, I have...

% Yes

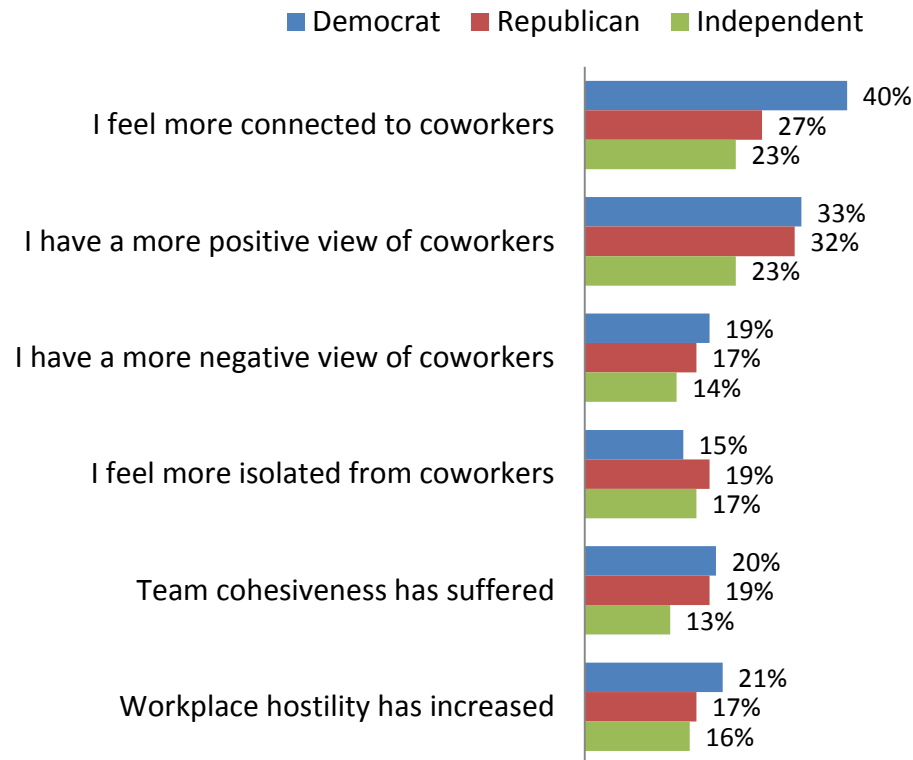
■ Democrat ■ Republican ■ Independent



# Politics and Work Relationships by Political Party

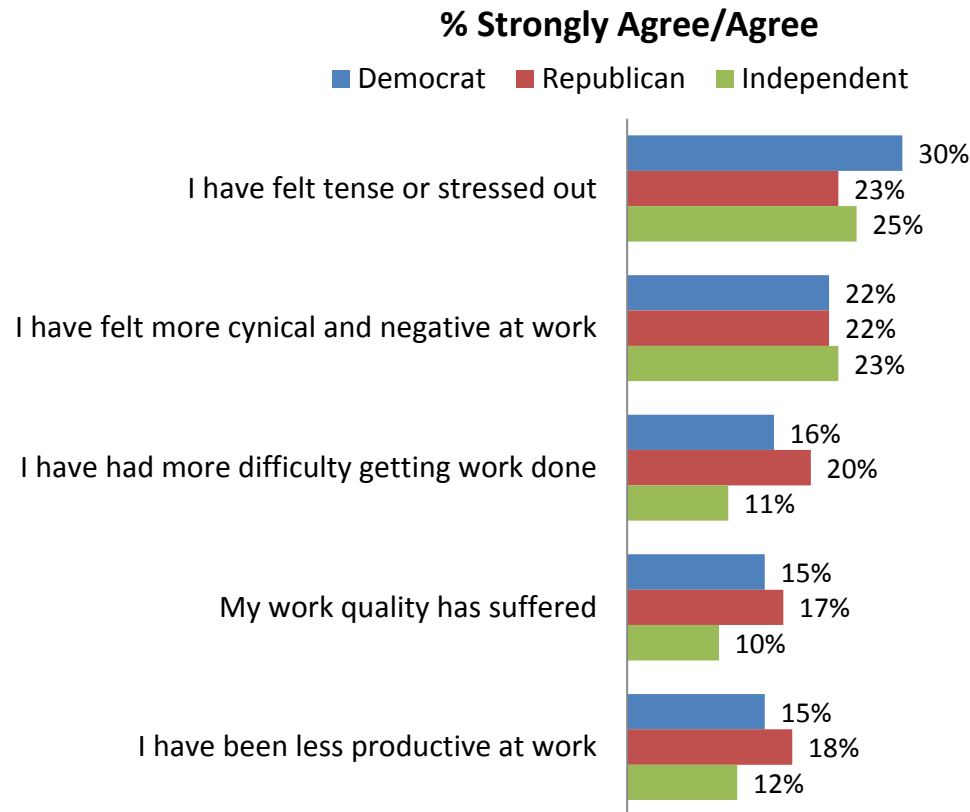
As a result of political discussions at work since the presidential election...

% Strongly Agree/Agree



# Politics, Well-Being and Work Performance by Political Party

As a result of political discussions at work since the presidential election...



# Political Philosophy Comparison

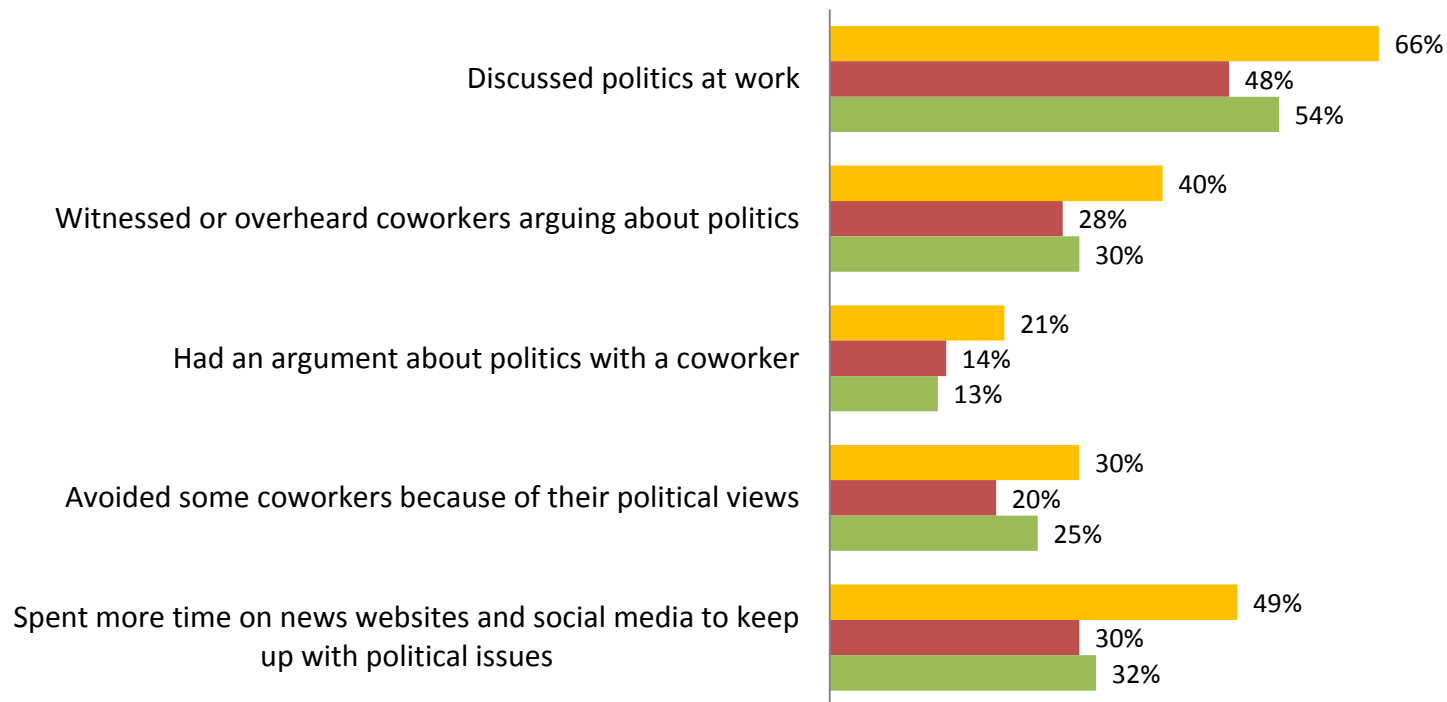


# Discussions and Arguments About Politics by Political Philosophy

Since the U.S. presidential election, I have...

% Yes

■ Liberal ■ Moderate ■ Conservative

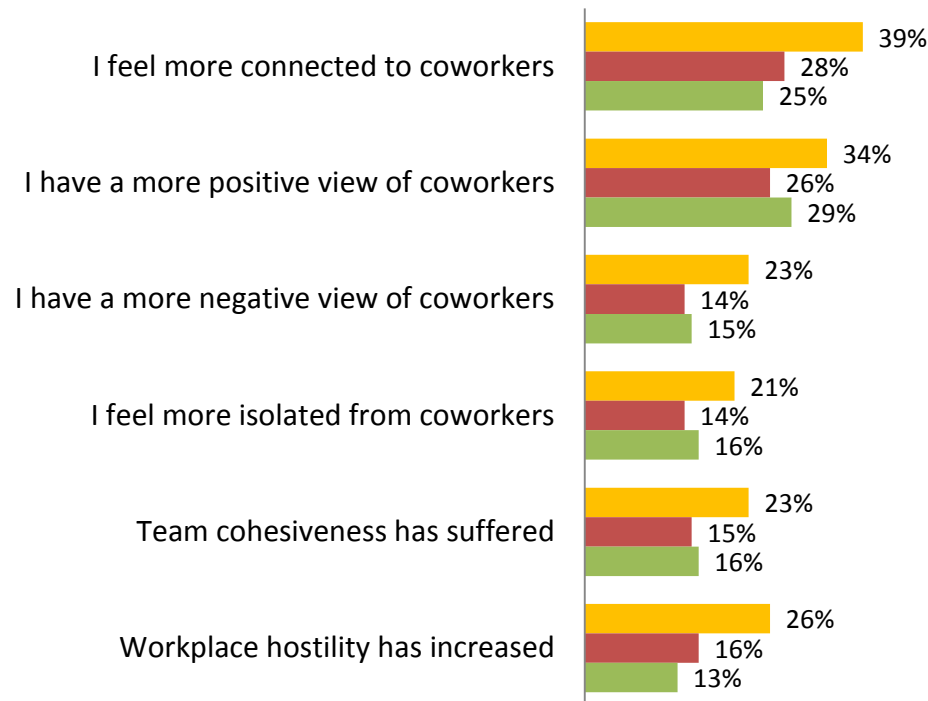


# Politics and Work Relationships by Political Philosophy

As a result of political discussions at work since the presidential election...

% Strongly Agree/Agree

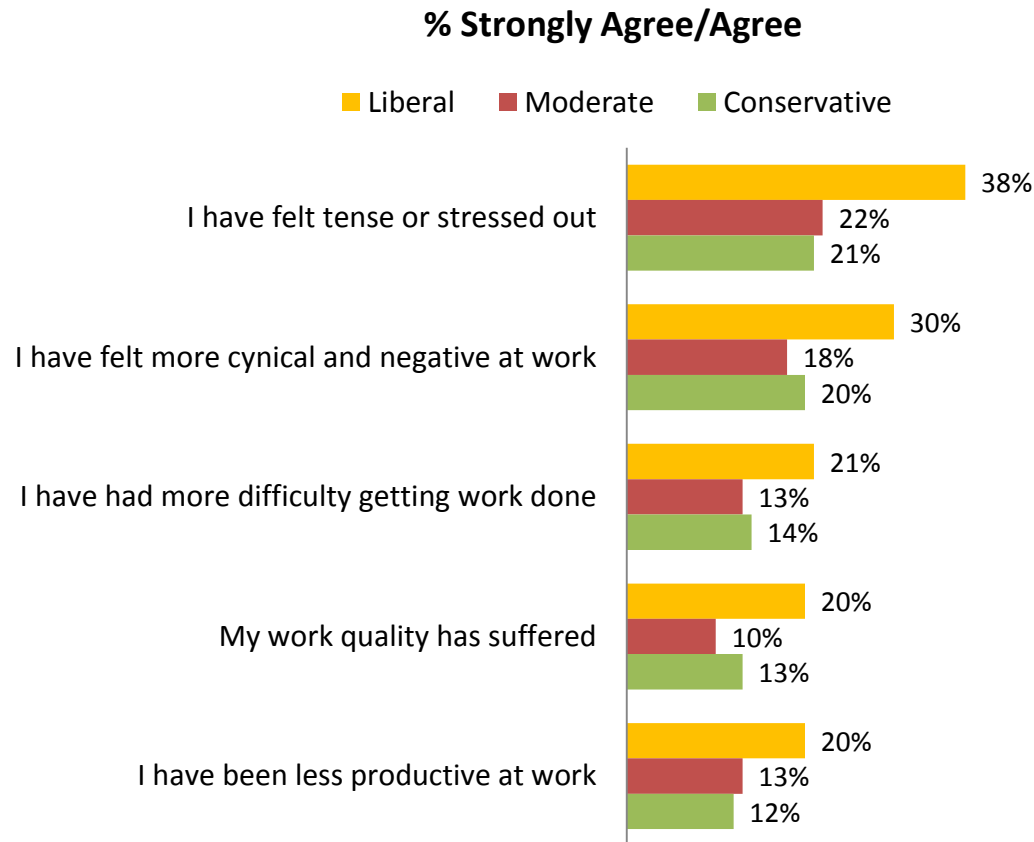
■ Liberal ■ Moderate ■ Conservative





# Politics, Well-Being and Work Performance by Political Philosophy

As a result of political discussions at work since the presidential election...



# Methodology

The post-election data were collected online within the U.S. on APA's behalf by Harris Poll from Feb. 16 - March 8, 2017, among 1,311 adults who are employed full time or part time. The data were collected as part of APA's 2017 Work and Well-Being Survey, which was conducted among 1,512 U.S. adults who are employed full time, part time, or self-employed, of whom 1,311 were employed full time or part time.

The pre-election survey was conducted online within the U.S. on APA's behalf by Harris Poll from Aug. 10-12, 2016, among a nationally representative sample of 927 adults who are employed full or part time. The pre-election data is from an online survey among 2,025 U.S. adults, of whom 927 were employed full time or part time.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Poll avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Poll surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Poll panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.



# About the American Psychological Association and APA's Center for Organizational Excellence

The [American Psychological Association](#), in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States. APA's membership includes nearly 115,700 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.

[APA's Center for Organizational Excellence](#) works to enhance the functioning of individuals, groups, organizations and communities through the application of psychology to a broad range of workplace issues. The center houses the Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program, a public education initiative designed to engage the employer community, raise public awareness about the value psychology brings to the workplace and promote programs and policies that enhance employee well-being and organizational performance. Connect with APA's Center for Organizational Excellence on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

