

# Public Demand for Regulating Big Tech

*Findings from recent polling*

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## Executive Summary

- Americans have increasingly negative attitudes towards technology companies and these negative views are shared by Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike.
- Two-thirds of Americans say that they trust big technology just a little or not at all to do what is best for their users. Distrust has increased significantly even just over the past few years.
- Across many polls, a broad majority of Americans say that Big Tech has too much power and influence over society. Americans also say that Big Tech has too much influence over government and policy making.
- High quality nonpartisan polling organizations Gallup and the Pew Research Center both find that a majority of Americans think that technology companies should be regulated more than they are now. This sentiment is shared by Democrats, Republicans and Independents.
- A majority of Americans support holding big tech accountable for stifling competition.
- There is broad bipartisan support for the American Innovation and Choice Online Act (AICO). Even after hearing arguments for and against the legislation, 58% of national likely voters support the bill while just 26% are opposed. Support outpaces opposition for each partisan grouping. Significant majorities also support the legislation in a variety of statewide polls.
- The Open App Markets Act is also broadly popular, with supporters outnumbering opponents by about four-to-one in various state polls.
- Across a variety of different state polls, a large bipartisan majority of likely voters indicate that they want their senators and representatives to vote for AICO and the Open App Markets Act and say that they will be more likely to support legislators who vote for those bills.

## Methodology

Two approaches were taken to identify polling on this topic. First, a comprehensive search of news sources looking for polling on technology and social media companies was conducted from March 2020 through May 2022. Second, a search of key terms in the Roper iPoll Public Opinion Poll database was also conducted. The Roper iPoll database provides the ability to search question text for key terms for all surveys archived by the center.

Polls were only included in this report if they met the following criteria:

1. Sufficient methodological detail was provided.
2. A document with toplines and/or crosstabs was available.
3. The polling organization's methodology was scientifically valid and the pollster received at least a B- rating for their accuracy from Fivethirtyeight.com.  
(see <https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/pollster-ratings/>)

Overall, the report includes findings from 26 surveys, most of which have been conducted in the past three years. Most surveys are national in scope, though in some cases the polls were conducted at the state or congressional district level. A full list of the polls cited in this report is included in the table on the following page. The table includes the polling firm, the month and year the poll was fielded, the population surveyed, the survey mode used, and the pollster's rating.

**Table 1: Polls cited in this report**

<b>Pollster</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>538 rating</b>
Change Research	7/21	National RVs	Web	B-
CNN/SSRS	11/21	National adults	Phone/Web	B
	3/19	National adults	Phone	
Data for Progress	1/21	National LVs	Web	B
	1/21	Iowa LVs	SMS/Web	
	5/21	National LVs	Web	
	1/22	CA-19 LVs	SMS/Web	
	1/22	OH-4 LVs	SMS/Web	
	2/22	CA LVs	Web	
	5/22	WA LVs	Web	
	5/22	National 18-25 LVs	Web	
Gallup	8/19	National adults	Phone	B+
	1/21	National adults	Phone	
Greenberg Quinlan Rosner	7/20	National RVs	Web	A/B
Harris Poll	10/20	National adults	Web	B+
Hart Associates	5/22	RVs in AZ, GA, NH, NV	Phone	B-
IBD/TIPP	5/21	National adults	Web	A+
Ipsos	9/21	National adults	Web	B-
	2/22	National adults	Web	
Morning Consult	2/22	National adults	Web	B
Pew Research Center	2/10	National adults	Phone	B/C
	6/18	National adults	Web	
	6/20	National adults	Web	
	4/21	National adults	Web	
Public Policy Polling	2/22	NY RVs	Phone(IVR)/SMS	A-
	2/22	VA RVs	Phone(IVR)/SMS	
Quinnipiac	10/21	National adults	Phone	A-

# 1 How the public views Big Tech

Recent polling provides a clear consensus that the American public increasingly views Big Tech as untrustworthy and too powerful. This evaluation is shared by a wide range of Americans from different political perspectives, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and is especially strongly held by older Americans.

Surveys collecting attitudes on Big Tech have used a wide range of questions to capture how Americans feel about the industry. For example, a November 2021 CNN poll found that only one-third of Americans had somewhat or a great deal of trust in Big Tech to do what is best for their users. In a 2018 Pew Research Center poll, just 28% of adults said that major technology companies could be trusted to do what is right most of the time or just about always. And when given the two options to choose from, a 2021 Quinnipiac poll found that 70% of adults say that social media companies do more harm than good while just 20% say they do more good than harm. This view crossed party lines, with 85% of Republicans and 62% of Democrats saying these companies do more harm than good. This view was particularly held among older Americans – well over 70% of those 35 and older thought social media companies did more harm than good, compared to 62% among 18-34 year olds.

*“70% of adults say that social media companies do more harm than good while just 20% say they do more good than harm.”*

## 1.1 The public’s view of Big Tech is becoming increasingly negative

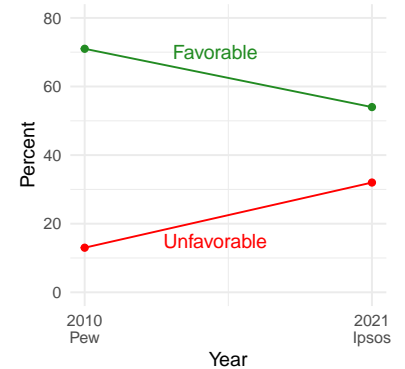
While much of the polling on Big Tech is fairly recent, reflecting the fact that the landscape in this sector has changed dramatically in recent decades, it is still clear that American adults have a more negative view of Big Tech now than they even have in recent years. For example, CNN asked Americans in both 2019 and 2021 how much they trusted big technology companies to do what is best for their users. In 2019, 58% said that they trusted Big Tech companies a little or not at all; by 2021, that figure had increased to 66%. Gallup also found a significant increase in negative attitudes during this same period, with the percent of Americans saying that they had a negative view of technology companies increasing from 33% in 2019 to 45% in 2021.

*“In 2019, 58% said that they trusted Big Tech companies a little or not at all; by 2021, that figure had increased to 66%.”*

In terms of favorability ratings, a Pew Research Center survey

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fielded in 2010 asked Americans whether their overall opinion of technology companies was favorable or unfavorable. In that survey, 71% said that they had a favorable view of technology companies while just 13% were unfavorable. Ipsos asked a very similar question in 2021 and found that 54% had said they had a favorable view of technology companies while the percent with unfavorable views had more than doubled to 32%. While a majority of Americans still have an overall favorable view towards technology companies, opinion is much more divided than it was in 2010.



**Figure 1: Ratings of Tech Companies, 2010-2021**

### 1.2 Big Tech companies widely seen as having too much power

A common thread across many recent surveys is the widely held belief that Big Tech has too much power, both on society as a whole but also over government and elected officials. When it comes to capturing beliefs about the power that Big Tech has in society, pollsters have used a variety of different questions. A sample of these are included in the table that follows. Of particular note are the more specific items asked by the Pew Research Center and Data for Progress, which reveal that about two-thirds of Americans think that big tech companies have too much power and influence in the economy and that this is a problem for the U.S. economy.

**Table 2: Recent polls showing American perceptions of Big Tech’s power.**

Poll	Item Description	Agree
Greenberg Quinlan Rosner (7/2020)	A handful of large tech companies have too much power	85%
Data for Progress (1/2021)	The economic power of big tech companies is a problem facing the U.S. economy	65%
Pew Research Center (4/2021)	Major technology companies have too much power and influence in today’s economy	68%
Morning Consult (2/2022)	The tech sector has a lot of power in America	60%
Hart Associates AZ, GA, NH, NV (5/2022)	Big technology companies have too much power and influence	79%

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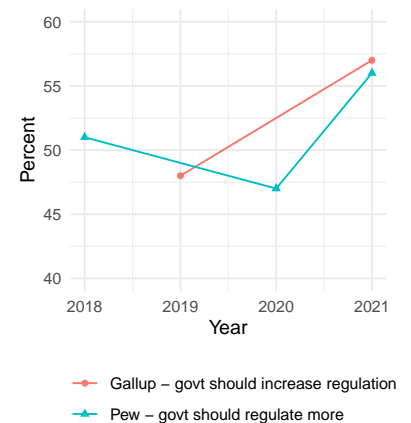
This concern about Big Tech’s influence over the economy is broadly bipartisan, with 74% of Republicans and 64% of Democrats in the Pew survey agreeing that these companies had too much power and influence over the economy.

Notably, Americans also report that they see Big Tech as having too much influence over politics, government, and policy making. A June 2020 survey from the Pew Research Center reported that 72% of American adults, including 82% of Republicans and 63% of Democrats said that social media companies have too much power and influence on politics. Similarly, a July 2021 poll conducted by Change Research for the Center for American Progress found that 81% of Americans think that big technology and social media companies have too much power and influence over politics and government.

*“72% of American adults, including 82% of Republicans and 63% of Democrats said that social media companies have too much power and influence on politics.”*

## 2 General attitudes towards regulating Big Tech

Given the public’s concerns about Big Tech, it is unsurprising that there is also widespread support for increasing the degree to which the government regulates the industry. In 2021, a Pew Research Center poll showed that 56% of American adults said that major technology companies should be regulated by the government more than they are now. This was consistent with a Gallup Poll survey conducted that same year which showed that 57% of adults thought that the government should increase its regulation of technology companies.



**Figure 2: Support for increasing government regulation of Big Tech, 2018-2021**

These questions have been asked by Pew and Gallup over the past several years and as the accompanying figure illustrates, support for regulation hit its highest levels in 2021. It is also worth noting that support for the increased regulation of Big Tech attracts bipartisan support. A majority of both Democrats and Republicans said that technology companies should be regulated more than they are now in the 2021 Pew survey and in the 2021 Gallup survey increased regulation of Big Tech companies was supported by 60% of Democrats, 53% of Republicans, and 58% of Independents.

Strong support for regulating Big Tech is not particularly sensi-



tive to partisan cues. Ipsos conducted an experiment in their September 2021 survey in which they randomly assigned respondents to see one of three versions of the same question. In one version, they were told that some people say new rules and laws should be put in place to limit technology companies; 68% supported such regulations when shown this version. In a second version, they were told that Donald Trump supports new rules and laws and in the third version the same was said of President Biden. Support for new regulations was 63% in the Trump version and 58% in the Biden version. Thus, even when partisan cues are injected into the question, majority support for regulating Big Tech persists.

*“Even when partisan cues are injected into the question, majority support for regulating Big Tech persists.”*

## 2.1 Public support for reining in Tech firms

In terms of the types of regulations Americans support, there is consistent majority support for taking action to limit the power of large technology firms. The polls highlighted in the table below show that even with a variety of different approaches to asking about this question, between 55% and 64% of Americans express support for the government intervening by limiting growth or even breaking up Big Tech companies.

**Table 3: Recent polls showing American perceptions of Big Tech’s power.**

Poll	Item Description	Agree
Ipsos (2/2022)	Do you support breaking up large, monopolistic, technology companies	64%
Data for Progress (5/2021)	Would you support or oppose the breaking up of major tech firms into smaller entities	58%
Pew Research Center (4/2021)	Government should not allow these companies to grow beyond a certain size	55%
Data for Progress (1/2021)	Have federal government to do more to try to break up Big Tech monopolies and promote market competition	59%
Harris (10/2020)	Breaking up big technology companies into smaller companies is justified.	58%

Notably, Americans do not simply support breaking up Big Tech firms in the abstract. The IBD/TIPP poll asks Americans whether

they support breaking up specific firms, including Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google. The poll, which has been repeatedly asking this question over the past few years, consistently finds a majority in support of breaking up each of those four firms. For example, 57% supported breaking up Facebook in May 2021, compared to just 25% opposed. A majority also supported breaking up Google, Amazon, and Apple, with only about 30% opposed for each of those companies.

**Table 4: Support for breaking up specific Big Tech firms (IBD/TIPP Poll, May 2021)**

Tech Firm	Support break-up
Google	54%
Facebook	57%
Amazon	53%
Apple	50%

### 3 Support for specific legislative proposals

This final section explores support for particular legislative proposals being discussed in Congress. Polling on particular legislative proposals has not been as widespread, but recent polls have asked about two prominent bills.

#### 3.1 Support for the American Innovation and Choice Online Act

The American Innovation and Choice Online Act (AICO) is sponsored by a bipartisan group of legislators and would keep Big Tech companies from privileging their own products on their platforms. Since most Americans have not heard of this specific legislation, Data for Progress fields a question that provides arguments for and against the bill:

*“A bipartisan group of legislators have recently proposed the American Innovation and Choice Online (AICO) Act. The AICO Act puts in place new rules and standards for large technology companies. Supporters of the bill say these rules are necessary to limit major technology corporations abusing their power by squeezing out small businesses’ products on their platforms and limiting consumers’ choices. Opponents of the bill say this comes out of political motivations to burden these companies and would fundamentally alter the internet, decreasing consumers’ convenience on major technology platforms. Knowing what you know now, do you support or oppose*

*the AICO Act?”*

This is a common approach to asking about proposals that have not yet received substantial attention from voters. However, it is important to note that responses to items like this may be sensitive to the arguments presented for either side.

The table below shows results for this question from surveys of likely voters fielded nationally, in California, Iowa, Washington, and in two congressional districts (CA-19 and OH-4). Overall, a clear majority of likely voters support AICO and this support is typically bipartisan in nature. Nationally, for example, 58% of likely voters support the bill and just 26% are opposed with 15% saying they don’t know how they feel about the legislation. There is significantly more support than opposition among each partisan grouping, including among Republicans where 46% are supportive and 38% are opposed.

*“Overall, across these two polling organizations and various jurisdictions, it appears there is strong support for (and very little opposition to) AICO from American voters.”*

**Table 5: Support for AICO in Data for Progress polls**

Sample	All	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
National likely voters	58%	69%	46%	60%
California likely voters	74%	78%	68%	73%
Iowa likely voters	74%	65%	87%	67%
Washington likely voters	65%	72%	58%	62%
OH-4 likely voters	58%	65%	56%	56%
CA-19 likely voters	58%	63%	59%	52%

Also worth noting is that in a May 2022 Data for Progress poll of likely voters between the ages of 18 and 25, support for AICO was 61% while only 18% were opposed.

A slightly different wording has been used by Public Policy Polling in polling conducted on behalf of the Tech Oversight Project in New York and Virginia. In Virginia, the poll found 48% in favor of AICO and just 11% opposed while in New York 49% supported the legislation and 11% were opposed. Note that both of these polls showed more than 40% of voters did not express support or opposition for the legislation. Overall, across these two polling organizations and various jurisdictions, it appears there is strong

support for (and very little opposition to) AICO from American voters.

### 3.2 Support for the Open App Markets Act

There is less polling on the Open App Markets legislation currently being considered by Congress. In fact, only 5 state polls were identified for this legislation and no national polling appeared to be available. Public Policy Polling asked about this legislation in New York and Virginia while Data for Progress asked about the bill polls conducted in California and Washington. Hart Research Associates asked about the legislation in a survey of four swing states – Arizona, Georgia, New Hampshire, and Nevada.

There is similar broad-based support for the Open App Markets Act as there is for AICO. Supporters outnumber opponents by about 4-to-1 in each of the five polls. Additionally, the California poll breaks out results by party which shows that this legislation also has broad bipartisan support with backing from 73% of Democrats and 62% of Republicans. Finally, Data for Progress finds that among young (18-25 year old) likely voters nationally, 58% support the Open App Markets Act while just 24% are opposed. This support among young voters is also bipartisan, with 60% of Democrats and 55% of Republicans supportive of the legislation.

**Table 6: State polling on the Open App Markets Act**

State	Support	Oppose
California	69%	17%
New York	47%	9%
Virginia	44%	13%
Washington	62%	22%
AZ/GA/ NH/NV	80%	16%

### 3.3 Support for legislators who back these bills

Several subnational Data for Progress surveys found that likely voters were more likely to support their member of Congress for re-election in 2022 if that incumbent supported efforts to hold large technology companies accountable. In a survey of voters in California, 72% said they would be more likely to support a member of Congress who backed such efforts. When the same question was asked of voters in Washington state, 71% said they would be more likely to support such a legislator. And in a poll of voters in Ohio’s 4th congressional district 79% said they would be more likely to vote for a member of Congress who supported holding Big Tech accountable.

The Hart Research Associates swing state poll asked respondents specifically about how it would make them feel if their sen-

*“49% of voters in Arizona, Georgia, New Hampshire and Nevada say they would react favorably to their senator supporting AICO and the Open App Markets Act while just 19% said that they would have an unfavorable reaction.”*

ator supported AICO and the Open App Markets Act. Despite this poll being conducted in four closely divided states, the reaction was overwhelmingly favorable. Overall, 49% of voters in Arizona, Georgia, New Hampshire and Nevada say they would react favorably to their senator supporting AICO and the Open App Markets Act while just 19% said that they would have an unfavorable reaction.

The Hart poll also asked respondents directly whether they would want their senator to vote for or against these bills. In each of the four states at least 70% of voters said that they wanted their senator to vote in favor of the legislation. Even a large majority of Trump voters (61%) supported their senator backing these bills. In fact, the broad bipartisan support for this legislation can be seen in the table below which breaks out results from this question by party across the four swing states. While 84% of Democrats said they wanted their senator to vote for these bills, even Republicans preferred that their senator vote for rather than against the bills by about a two-to-one margin.

**Table 7: Support senator voting for AICO and Open App Markets Act (Hart Poll, May 2022)**

State	Support
NH	70%
NV	72%
GA	72%
AZ	72%

**Table 8: How partisans in four swing states want their senators to vote on AICO and the Open App Markets Act (Hart Associates Poll, May 2022)**

Party	Want senator to vote for bills	Want senator to vote against bills
Democrats	84%	13%
Republicans	62%	32%
Independents	65%	25%

## 4 Conclusion

The polls analyzed for this report consistently show that Americans are concerned about the power and influence that Big Tech has on society and government. These concerns are fueling support for government taking more action to regulate the industry and reining in large technology firms. When it comes to legislation presently before Congress, voters voice overwhelming support for both AICO and the Open App Markets App with very few opposed to these bills. Overall, the polling is clear that Americans demand more government action to regulate Big Tech and that AICO and the Open App Markets Act are broadly popular bills for achieving such increased regulation.