



# May 15th Polling Roundup on the Coronavirus

The world has changed immensely in recent weeks and the public’s attitudes toward coronavirus have shifted in important ways as well. The following roundup of recent public polling on the topic, compiled by the Strategies 360 Research team, can help our staff and our clients understand trends in the data. The information below comes entirely from public sources and includes citations in the footnotes

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### Concern about coronavirus peaked in April and is now stabilizing, if not declining.

Four in ten Americans know someone who has contracted coronavirus (40%, up from 26% in late March) and a similar proportion are very concerned about someone in their family becoming seriously ill (42%), per a recent Monmouth survey<sup>1</sup>. Still, that level of concern represents an 8-point drop since April, when 50% were very concerned. Similarly, over half of Americans (56%) say the outbreak has had a major effect on their daily life, but that is also down six points from mid-April (62%) and comparable to the data from March.

How concerned are you about someone in your family becoming seriously ill from the coronavirus outbreak?	March	April	May
Very concerned	38	50	42
Somewhat concerned	32	33	28
Not too concerned	18	9	14
Not at all concerned	12	7	16

### Americans are divided on whether or not we’re past the worst of the outbreak.

A Washington Post / University of Maryland poll<sup>2</sup> finds that Americans are broadly split between believing the worst is behind us (31%), the worst is happening now (30%), or that the worst is yet to come (38%) in their community. There is a major partisan gap here, with Democrats and independents most likely to believe the worst is yet to come and Republicans most likely to believe that the worst of coronavirus is over.

- A Navigator poll<sup>3</sup> pushed respondents to pick between only two choices (the worst is yet to come, or the worst is over), and the results are more sobering: 53% say the worst is yet to come and just 26% say the worst of COVID is over, with little change in that measure since March.

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/reports/monmouthpoll\\_us\\_051120/](https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/reports/monmouthpoll_us_051120/)

<sup>2</sup><https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1u7j63YU7FSYsUXxvSMpH8QAENmteY9Sn4vEZIJURLSQ/edit?ts=5eb0a6ab#gid=0>

<sup>3</sup><https://navigatorresearch.org/navigating-coronavirus/>

**The financial impact of the outbreak remains dire, but Americans are optimistic about the long-term.**

Per the Monmouth poll, 40% of adults report losing income due to a decrease in work during the pandemic, similar to the 41% who said so in April and up from 35% in late March. About 1 in 3 report that someone in their household has been laid off, including nearly 40% of adults in low-income households. Just 18% of voters rate the national economy in positive terms<sup>4</sup>.

- Still, 63% describe their personal financial situation as stable, compared to 23% who say they are struggling – actually an improvement relative to April of last year (54% stable, 20% struggling).
- Thinking about their personal financial situation over the next few months, about half of voters feel confident (46%) and half uneasy (51%), with little change in the past six weeks.
- Nearly two thirds (63%) are very hopeful that they and their families will be able to get their lives back to normal after the pandemic. Another 28% are somewhat hopeful, while very few are not too (5%) or not at all (2%) hopeful.

**Racial minority groups continue to report higher levels of prevalence and concern about the coronavirus outbreak, and a more severe economic impact.**

In the Monmouth poll, 12% of white adults reported that they or a family member had gotten coronavirus – compared to 23% among non-white groups. Minority groups are also more than 20 points more likely than white adults to say they are very concerned about the virus.

**Voters' cautious behavior has largely persisted to this point, but a partisan gap is growing.**

Americans generally remain uncomfortable with various public activities like going to a retail clothing store (33% comfortable, 67% uncomfortable) or eating out at a restaurant (22% / 78%), per the Washington Post poll. Again, there are major partisan differences: Republicans are now 25-30 pts more likely than Democrats to say they are comfortable with a range of public activities.

**The huge partisan divides that we have seen on many coronavirus questions now extend to opinions toward reopening, where views are almost linear with partisanship. The public remains divided on reopening, but views are nuanced and the way you ask the question matters -- it's not necessarily a black and white choice.**

In most public polls, a majority of voters oppose efforts to re-open their state or the country, preferring a more cautious approach. Per an ABC News/Ipsos poll<sup>5</sup>, a 64% majority of Americans say that “opening the country now is not worth it because it will mean more lives being lost.” Similarly, a Pew poll<sup>6</sup> finds that 68% are more concerned that state governments will lift coronavirus-related restrictions on public activity too quickly compared to 31% who are more concerned that states will not lift restrictions quickly enough. Again, the partisan divide on this question is wide and increasing by the week.

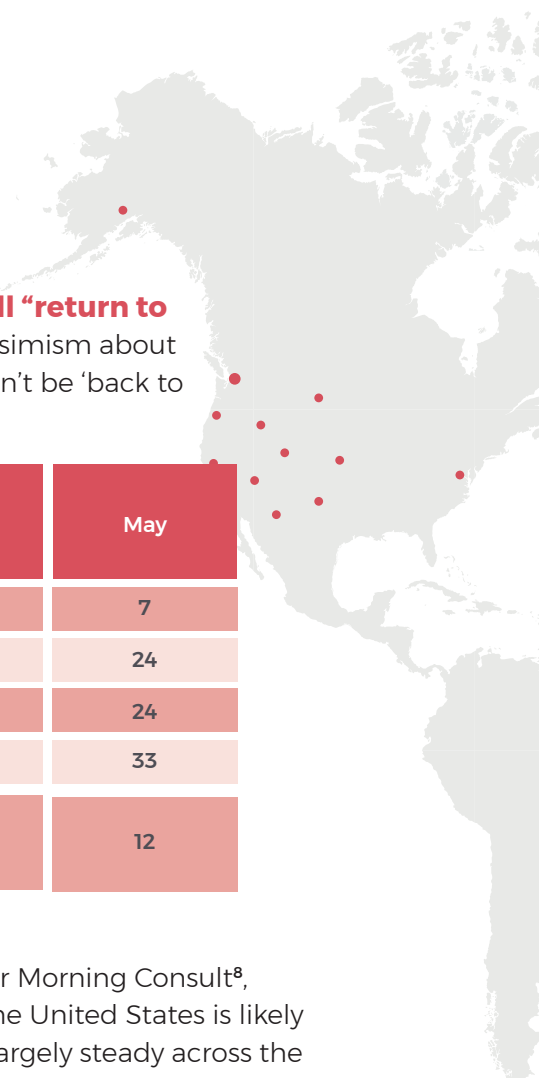
- A 55% majority of Americans disapprove of the recent protests that have urged states to re-open more quickly; 31% approve of the demonstrations<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>4</sup><https://navigatorresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Navigator-Daily-Tracker-Topline-F05.08.20.pdf>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/abc-news-coronavirus-poll>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/05/07/americans-remain-concerned-that-states-will-lift-restrictions-too-quickly-but-partisan-differences-widen/>

<sup>7</sup><https://news.yahoo.com/ap-norc-poll-majority-disapprove-120711649.html>



**Voters have become more pessimistic about when things will “return to normal.”** Navigator’s daily tracking shows a pattern of increasing pessimism about a return to normal, with a third of voters now believing that things won’t be ‘back to normal’ until 2021.

When do you expect life in the US to “return to normal,” with businesses able to open and people able to go about their lives and interact as they did before the coronavirus pandemic?	March	April	May
Within the next month	10	8	7
Within the next few months	42	36	24
By the end of the year	23	26	24
Not until 2021	17	21	33
Never - there will always be restrictions and guidelines in place due to the threat of coronavirus	8	9	12

**Over three-quarters anticipate a second wave of the virus.** Per Morning Consult<sup>8</sup>, “79% of voters said they think a second wave of coronavirus cases in the United States is likely in the next year, while 9 percent said it is unlikely. That number held largely steady across the political spectrum, with 80 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of independents and 78 percent of Republicans saying they anticipate another COVID-19 wave within the next year.” Navigator polling confirms this data and finds that 86% of voters say they are worried about a second wave of coronavirus once the country starts to re-open.

<sup>8</sup><https://morningconsult.com/2020/05/11/consumer-polling-comfort-eating-out/>