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# Poll: Hope in American dream has dramatically declined

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A poll released Monday found that confidence in the American dream continues to slip, as the United States marks its semiquincentennial.



The AP-NORC America 250 survey indicated 34% believe in the American dream, reinforcing a Wall Street Journal-NORC poll released last fall that said just 31% of the public believed it held true.

“As America approaches this milestone, only a third of the public feel the American Dream, the belief that if you work hard, you’ll get ahead, still holds true today,” the pollsters reported.

“Not all adults are equally likely to believe that the American dream exists,” the poll continued. “Republicans are more than twice as likely than both independents and Democrats to believe that the American Dream still holds true (57% vs. 24% and 17%, respectively). Additionally, men are more likely than women (39% vs. 29%), and older adults are more likely than younger adults to believe in it.”

The polling marks a steady trend in the decline of hope in the American dream, after a majority, 53%, said it still held true in 2012. By 2014, that figure had fallen to 42%, according to polling from the Public Religion Research Institute.

By 2016, a Marist poll found 53% believed the middle class was dead. The same year, a Harvard poll of millennials found just 49% believed the American dream was alive. Nearly a decade later, in 2023, only 36% of the public believed in the American dream, according to a poll from the Wall Street Journal and the University of Chicago NORC.

The latest AP-NORC poll was conducted as the U. S. celebrates its 250th birthday. Amid semiquincentennial celebrations, President Donald Trump has sought to center messaging on restoring the American Dream, particularly through housing reform, touting the milestone as an opportunity to “inspire a renewed love for American history, encourage citizens to experience the beauty of our coun-

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try, ignite a spirit of adventure and innovation to help our nation succeed for the next 250 years, and...  
rededicate ourselves as One Nation Under God.”

“The Trump Administration remains fully committed to building a strong, accessible housing market that works for every American family — and is stopping at nothing to make sure all Americans can thrive and own their piece of the American Dream,” the White House said in February.

The poll was conducted between April 16 and 20 with 2,596 adults. The margin of error is +/- 2.6 percentage points.