

Ideology: Nine Signs of Common Ground

Americans diametrically opposed in 2008 are showing signs of shifting – generally toward moderate views – around nine key issues: environment, regulation of business, privacy around new technologies, public education, guns, marriage, abortion, helping the poor and tax reductions.

Some 72% of these shifts are in the **Blue** direction. This finding comes as a surprising reality-check that defies the simplistic media narrative about an increasingly divided nation, as many of the shifts are away from entrenched positions towards the center.

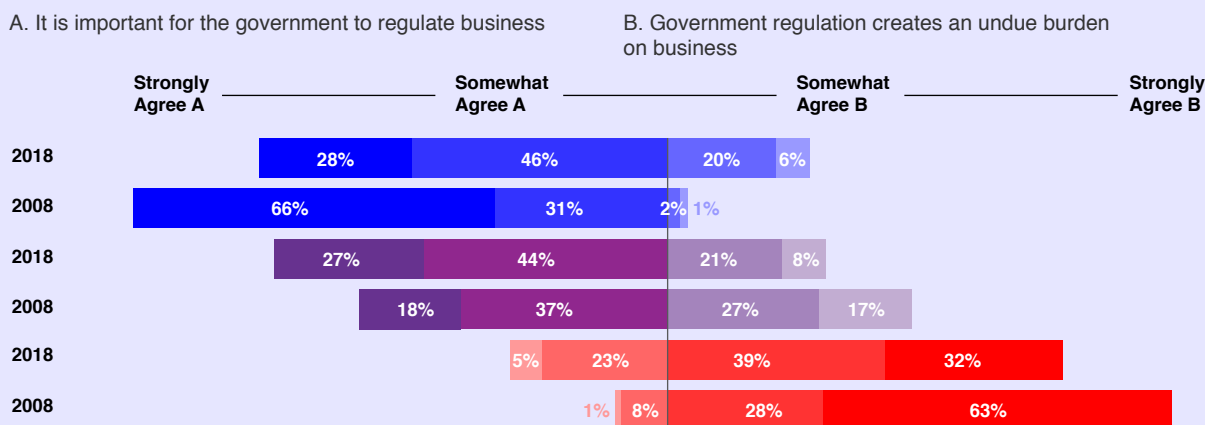
1. More Resources for Environmental Protection

Since 2008, agreement that *government needs to devote more resources to protecting the environment* increased from about one-half to three-quarters overall. Much of this shift can be attributed to **Reds** moving away from their previously near-unanimous belief that *the government has taken protecting the environment too far and is hurting business*. In fact, 45% of **Reds** now agree with almost all **Blues** and most **Purples** that more government support of environmental protection is required.

2. Regulation of Business

Ten years ago, a slight majority agreed that *government regulation creates an undue burden on business*. In 2018, we see a shift away from that sentiment, with a majority belief that *it is important for the government to regulate business*. Both **Blues** and **Reds** appear to have softened their positions, while the **Purple** majority favoring government regulations has increased in both size and strength.

IS GOVERNMENT REGULATION A BURDEN?



While the Purples create a strong force in favor of government regulation of business, the extreme Blues and Reds have softened their positions.

3. Cautious of New Technology

The general public appears to have become more risk-averse regarding new technology, perhaps due to abuses by tech companies and online privacy violations that have dominated the news. Support has substantially decreased for the view that *we should embrace new technology and all the social and economic changes it brings*. Fewer **Blues** and **Purples** now hold that view, while the **Red** majority has reversed its previous view, with a majority now saying *we should be wary of new technology and slow down its implementation when necessary*.

4. Need for Gun Legislation

Public opinion has shifted away from the belief that the *Constitution gives us the absolute right to bear arms, to greater agreement that times have changed and it's necessary to regulate gun ownership.* Although often presented in news media as an insuperable partisan divide, our data shows that the entrenched majorities on both sides of this issue have actually weakened slightly, in that fewer attest to strong agreement with their chosen side.

5. Support for Public Education

Overall support for investing in public education increased sharply compared to ten years ago when half of Americans agreed that *the only way to get a better education in America is to invest in public education.* In 2018, 80% of respondents agreed with this statement. Most of the general shift is attributable to a **Red** drift in position away from the belief that *the only way to get better education in America is to invest in private education* to a majority agreement (63%) that it's better to invest in public education.

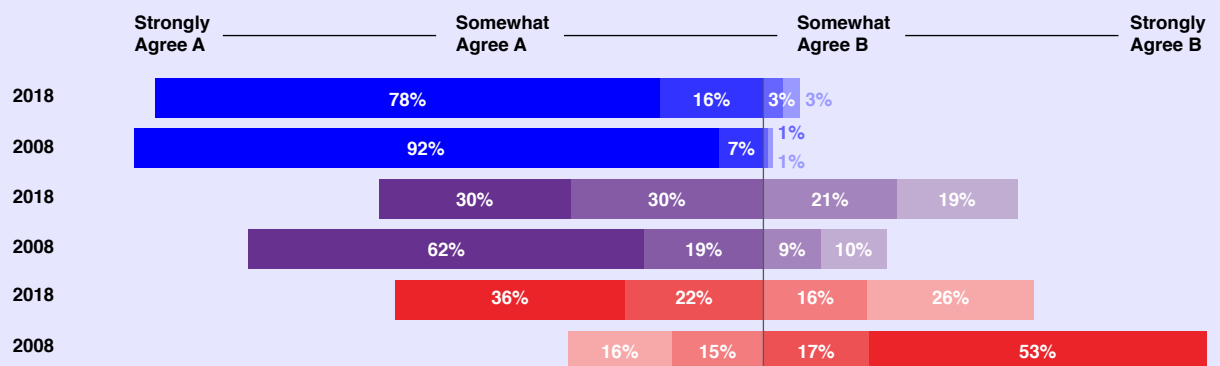
6. Abortion Rights

Overall, more people support the belief that *abortion is a private decision between a woman and her doctor* now than ten years ago. The **Red** majority has shifted to this point of view, and their strong agreement to the contrary has also declined. Notably, strong agreement has decreased somewhat for **Blues** and **Purples**.

IS ABORTION A PRIVATE DECISION?

A. Abortion is a private decision between a woman and her doctor

B. Abortion is NOT a private decision between a woman and her doctor



A remarkable shift towards agreement that abortion is a private decision was traced across all groups, led by a softening of position by Purples and shifting sides by Reds.

7. Help for the Less Fortunate

The vast majority of all Americans agree that they have a responsibility to help those less fortunate. In 2008, 75% agreed that *it is our duty to help the less fortunate*, and now 80% have adopted that view. The shift is led by **Purples** (from 77% to 83%), while agreement from **Reds** has increased more modestly (from 58% to 61%). **Blues** kept their super-majority of ten years ago when they were almost unanimous on this issue, but now they less forcefully agree (down from 99% to 91%).

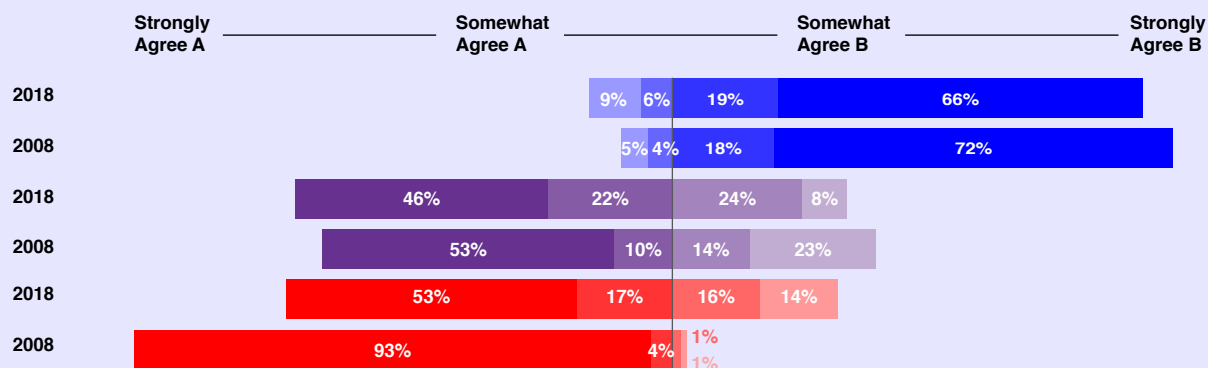
8. Marriage

Overall public opinion has shifted on the issue of marriage equality. Whereas ten years ago the majority of Americans agreed that *marriage should only be between one man and one woman*, the majority now believes that *the institution of marriage should adapt to a changing society*. Drilling down, we see the Red majority of ten years ago, when 97% held a strong belief in traditional marriage, has shrunk to 70%. Close to one-third of Reds now agree that *marriage should adapt to a changing society*. Conversely, a slightly greater majority of Purples have shifted toward the more traditional viewpoint.

WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

A. Marriage should only be between one man and one woman

B. The institution of marriage should adapt to a changing society



Overall, public opinion has shifted toward agreement that marriage should adapt to a changing society, as opposed to marriage being only between one man and one woman.

9. Reduced Taxes

The majority opinion that *all Americans would benefit from drastically reduced taxes* has increased from 59% to 63% - a rare example of a shift toward the more traditionally conservative end of the spectrum. This is largely due to a shift by the Blues, whose majority went from almost 90% agreement that *not all Americans would benefit from drastically reduced taxes* to over-half now agreeing *all Americans would benefit from drastically reduced taxes*. Majority agreement from Purples has increased from over half to almost 70% as well. Surprisingly, the Red majority has decreased on this issue (from 92% to 74%), with strong agreement declining from 78% to 39%.