



TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Groundwork Collaborative
RE: Public opinion on governmental reform
DATE: October 27, 2025

New polling conducted by Groundwork Collaborative and Data for Progress finds that voters don't trust the government, but believe the influence of wealthy elites and corporations bears more blame than bureaucracy or red tape.

Since returning to office, President Trump has put federal government operations at the heart of his agenda, with his appointment of Elon Musk to create and lead the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), large-scale firings of federal workers, and broad cuts to funding for programs like Medicaid. There is strong consensus from voters that the government can be improved, however only a small minority believe these slash and burn tactics will succeed.

Voters blame corruption more than red tape for government's failures

Of the 64% of voters who say the government does not work effectively or efficiently for them, only a quarter (26%) say it's because of "bureaucracy and red tape." Instead, nearly two-thirds of respondents lay blame on government's prioritization of wealthy special interests and President Trump's funding cuts and mass layoffs:

- A plurality (35%) say the main reason the federal government struggles to deliver for them and their family is because "it serves wealthy special interests over the American people."
 - Agreement is higher with Independents (43%) and voters under 45 (47%).
- A combined 32% of respondents say the responsibility lies with President Trump and DOGE for:
 - "...cut[ing] too much funding" (19%) or,
 - "...fir[ing] too many workers" (13%)

Improving government should start with checking corporate power and modernizing services

When asked what would be the best way to improve government, voters overwhelmingly say it must change its relationship with corporate power:

- "Limiting the influence of lobbyists and insiders" and "cracking down on companies that break the law" received the highest support from voters, with both topping 70%.
 - Both receive at least 60% support across party lines.

Similarly, there is clear agreement on how to deliver better government services as there is on whose influence needs to be curbed. Most voters (68%) say they rarely interact with the government.

- 67% support “creating more checks and rules to keep the government from overreaching.”
- 65% say the government should have better internal information sharing in order to abolish “needless paperwork” and deliver services and benefits automatically.
- When Americans do interact with the government, 64% say accessing services should be as “simple and modern as ordering something online.”

Notably, a majority of voters believe these public services should be delivered by skilled government employees (61%), not outsourced to contractors in the private sector (29%).

- Additionally, 66% say government worker pay should be based on performance, not seniority.
- 51% say they should be offered private sector-level-pay in order to “draw and keep skilled workers,” including 55% of Republicans.
- Even as respondents want to pay federal workers more and outsource less, 63% also believe it should be easier to address ineffective government workers.

A positive vision of government is one that fights corruption, guarantees security, and protects rights

Similar to [polling conducted](#) shortly after DOGE was formally established, “cutting wasteful spending” is a top priority for voters: 34% name it as one of their top 2 priorities for improving how the government works, including 40% of Independents and 50% of Republicans.

However, there is even larger demand for a suite of anti-corruption actions, in particular targeting government officials and those who try to influence them:

- 33% say “Preventing corruption by government officials” is a top 2 priority.
- 21% say “Increasing transparency and accountability.”
- 20% say “Stopping lobbyists and insiders from influencing policy decisions”

In addition to holding bad actors accountable, voters also believe it’s important for the government to prioritize individuals’ safety, basic needs, and rights:

Q: Below is a list of government functions. Please select up to three you believe are most important. (Showing top 3)	
Ensuring our country is safe and secure	52%
Ensuring Americans can meet their basic health care needs	45%
Safeguarding individual rights and freedoms	44%

Q: To what extent would each of the following make the government function better or worse, or make no difference at all?	Would make it much better	Would make it much + a little better
Actively seeking input from everyday Americans, not just lobbyists and insiders	45%	74%
Doing more to crack down on companies that break the law	43%	71%
Creating more checks and rules to keep the government from overreaching	37%	67%
Abolishing needless paperwork by using information it already has to deliver services and benefits automatically	37%	64%
Paying government workers based on their performance, not just their seniority	33%	66%
Making accessing government services as simple and modern as ordering something online	33%	65%
Making it easier to fire ineffective government workers	33%	63%
Offering government workers private-sector-level pay to draw and keep skilled workers	29%	51%
Ensuring unelected judges cannot block elected leaders' economic policies	27%	52%