



What people think,  
feel and do

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Opinium US

# Reactions to government handling of Coronavirus



## Key findings

1 April 2020

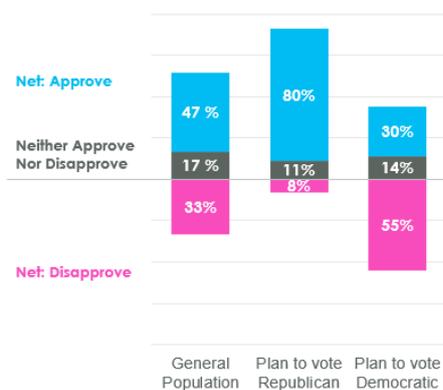
# Approval of government reaction

The Coronavirus crisis presents us with an entirely new reality from week to week. To keep a pulse on the public's perceptions of the government's handling of the situation, Opinium surveyed a nationally representative sample of 2,006 U.S. adults aged 18+ between March 20th and 25<sup>th</sup>. The survey was conducted online. Here's what we found—

## Public approval of the government's reaction to the crisis is split

The public is fairly split on the government's handling of the Coronavirus thus far, but a larger share approves than disapprove (47% vs. 33%). Interestingly, members of the C-Suite across industries are more likely than the general public to approve of the government's handling of the crisis thus far (60%). Approval bifurcates starkly by political affiliation—80% of people who plan to vote Republican approve of the government's handling and 78% are confident in the government's ability to handle the situation as it develops. The split is similar among those who originally put him in office, demonstrating loyalty across the president's base. Meanwhile, among those who plan to vote for the Democratic candidate, less than a third approve of the government's handling of the situation or are confident in its ability to handle it in future.

**APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT HANDLING OF CORONAVIRUS SITUATION THUS FAR**



\*To what extent do you approve, or disapprove, of the Government's handling of the Coronavirus situation so far? Base 2,006 US adults

**CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT'S FUTURE ABILITY TO HANDLE THE SITUATION AS IT DEVELOPS**



\*To what extent do you have confidence in the Government's ability to handle the Coronavirus situation as it continues to develop? Base 2,006 US adults

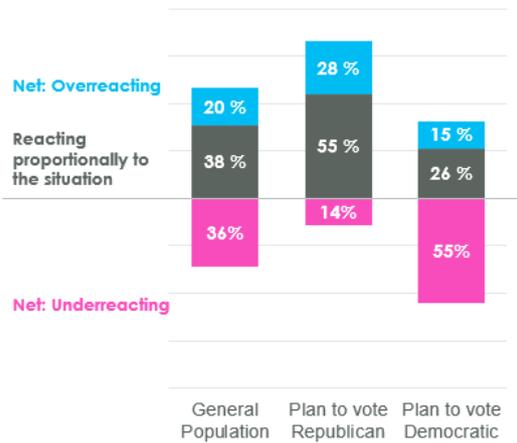


The largest chunk of the population (38%) now thinks the government is reacting proportionally to the crisis and only 20% of the public thinks the government is *overreacting*, indicating a growing acceptance of the seriousness of the situation as the outlook in major states like New York and California becomes increasingly bleak. Political affiliation influences this perception as well—those who plan to vote Republican in the general election are more likely to think the government is *overreacting* (28%), while those who plan to vote Democratic are more likely to think the government is *underreacting* (55%).

It remains to be seen how the \$2.2tn stimulus package, signed shortly after the close of our survey, will impact these ratings, but it is likely to increase approval for the government’s response considering the following:

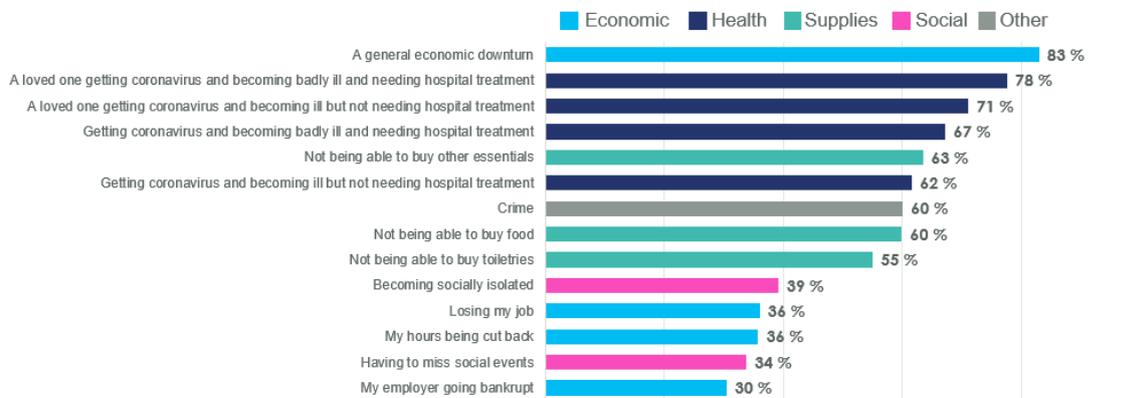
- 36% felt the government was underreacting at the time of our survey
- 83% of the population is worried (48% *extremely* so) about a general economic downturn as a result of the Coronavirus, making this the top concern in the US, above the fear of respondents themselves or loved ones becoming ill

**PERCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT REACTION TO THE CORONAVIRUS THUS FAR**



'Do you think that the Government is currently overreacting, or underreacting, to the Coronavirus?' Base 2,006 US adults

**SHARE OF U.S. RESPONDENTS WHO ARE SLIGHTLY OR EXTREMELY WORRIED ABOUT GIVEN SCENARIO OCCURRING AS A RESULT OF THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK**



'Are you at all worried about any of the following scenarios occurring as a result of the coronavirus outbreak?' Base: 2,006 US adults



**Trust in Coronavirus spokespeople**

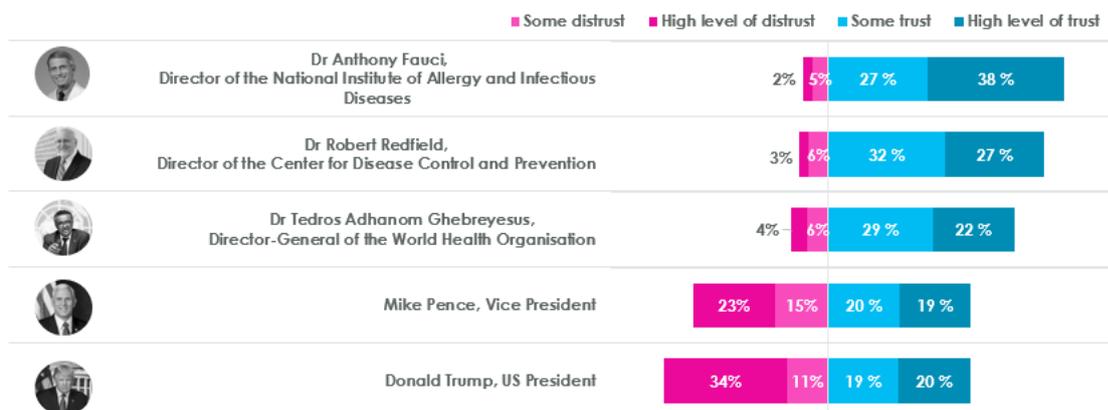
**Medical expertise counts in the eye of the public when it comes to the pandemic**

- **Rampant distrust of the President and Vice President:** More people in the US now actively *distrust* Trump’s information on Coronavirus (45% of respondents) than those who trust it (39%) though the split is driven by party lines. Over a third of respondents (34%) express a *high* level of distrust in the president’s information on Coronavirus. The public is

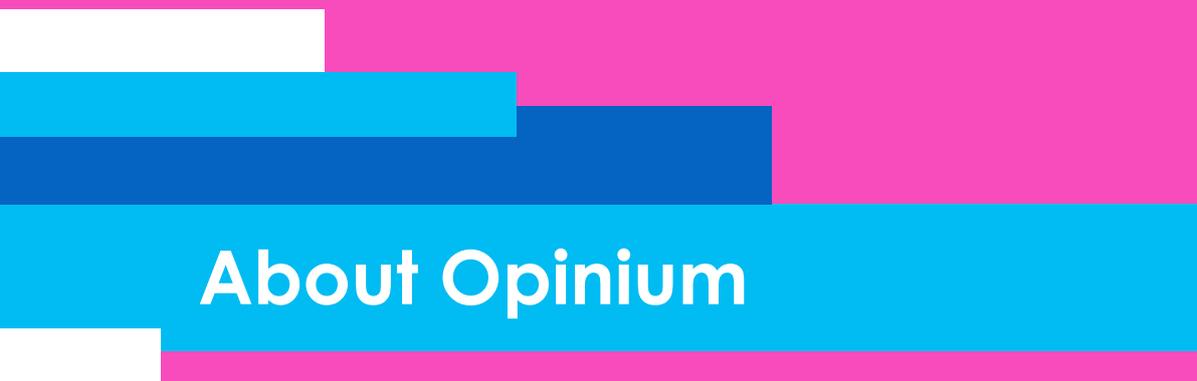
similarly split on Mike Pence, though a slightly smaller share of respondents actively distrusts his statements on the crisis (37%) compared to information provided by the president. This is the likely fallout of [contradictions between the president and experts](#), along with the [much critiqued oval office address on March 12<sup>th</sup>](#), requiring repeated White House clarification.

- Directors of National and International Health Organizations Widely Trusted:** Among those ranked, the most trusted figure on Coronavirus information remains Dr Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, with 65% of US respondents expressing trust in the information he provides on the issue and only 7% actively expressing distrust. Dr Robert Redfield, Director of the CDC, and Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the WHO, are also fairly trusted figures, with 60% and 51% of the population trusting their communications on Coronavirus, respectively. Expertise supersedes party affiliation.

**TRUST IN INFORMATION PROVIDED BY VARIOUS CORONAVIRUS SPOKESPEOPLE**



"What level of trust or distrust would you say you had in the information on coronavirus provided by the following individuals?" Base: 2,006 US adults



# About Opinium

**OPINIUM** is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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