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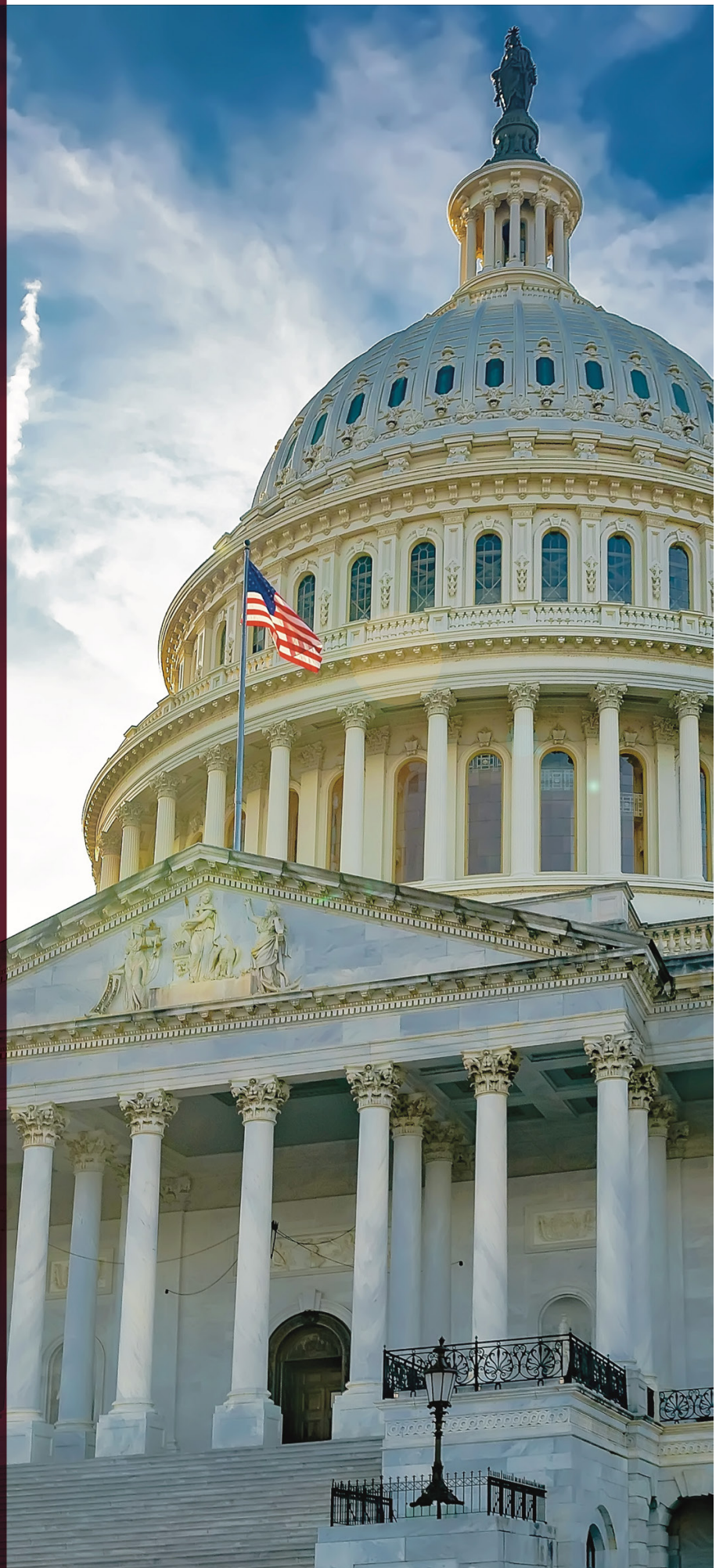


**INSTITUTE FOR
GOVERNANCE & CIVICS**
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

IGC POLL REPORT

Tracking Political Tolerance in Close Relationships: 2025–2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How willing are Americans to form close relationships with people who hold opposing political views? The Institute for Governance and Civics at Florida State University compared responses from a **May–June 2025** survey with a **July 2026** survey of 1,067 U.S. adults. Both surveys asked whether respondents would date someone with opposing political views and welcome this person into their family via marriage. The surveys used different panels, which limits conclusions about changes in attitude over time. Key findings include:

- **Intolerance remains generally highest at the ideological extremes.**

In the 2026 survey, 69% of extremely liberal respondents said they were unwilling to date someone with opposing political views, compared to 43% of extremely conservative respondents.

- **Fewer Americans are willing to welcome someone with opposing political views into their family.**

In 2026, 45% said they were willing to have such a person marry a family member, compared to 52% in 2025. The share unwilling was 19%, up from 14%.

- **The largest shift in tolerance occurred among young adults.**

In 2026, 26% of adults ages 18 to 29 said they were unwilling both to date someone with opposing views and to have such a person marry into the family, compared with 9% in 2025.

INTRODUCTION

Our August 2025 report, *More Than Politics: How Ideology Shapes Who Americans Trust, Date, and Avoid*, examined Americans' willingness to interact with people who hold opposing political views in various social and personal settings. Alongside questions about everyday interactions, such as whether they would be willing to buy from or sell to someone with opposing views, we asked whether respondents would be willing to date such a person or have them marry a family member. Dating someone or welcoming them into the family brings political differences into a closer personal relationship.

In our July 2026 nationally representative survey of 1,067 U.S. adults, we asked largely the same marriage and dating questions. This allows us to compare responses from this year's survey with those from our May–June 2025 survey.

Compared to 2025, fewer Americans said they were willing to have someone with opposing political views marry into their family, while more said they were unwilling. These shifts appear across political groups but are greatest among young adults. Because the two surveys were conducted using different survey panels, we cannot determine how much of the difference reflects a genuine change in attitudes rather than differences between the surveys.¹ Still, the shift on the marriage question remains after accounting for differences in the makeup of the two samples. In contrast, responses to the dating question show no comparable change. This makes it harder to attribute the marriage finding entirely to the differences between the surveys.

FEWER AMERICANS ARE WILLING TO HAVE SOMEONE WITH OPPOSING POLITICAL VIEWS MARRY INTO THEIR FAMILY

In the July 2026 survey, 45% said they were willing to have someone with opposing political views marry into their family. Another 36% said they were willing to allow the marriage but would prefer it not happen, while 19% said they were unwilling.

As shown in the left panel of Figure 1, the share fully willing to accept the marriage fell from 52% in 2025 to 45% in 2026—a statistically significant decline.² At the same time, the share of Americans who were outright unwilling to accept the marriage rose from 14% to 19%. Additionally, the share who were willing but would prefer not to have the marriage happen rose, from 33% to 36%.

1 The May–June 2025 survey used SSRS's Opinion Panel and the July 2026 survey used Ipsos's KnowledgePanel. Both are probability-based online panels, but they differ in how participants are recruited and in some survey procedures. SSRS recruits panelists through address-based sampling and random-digit dialing, while Ipsos recruits through address-based sampling. Because the surveys were conducted using different panels, some of the observed differences between 2025 and 2026 could reflect differences in panel composition or survey procedures rather than changes in public attitudes. For this reason, the results should not be interpreted as an exact measure of change over time.

2 In a weighted model adjusting for demographic, socioeconomic, and political characteristics, the predicted share willing to have a political opponent marry into their family was 54% in 2025 and 43% in 2026 (N = 1,891). The difference was not eliminated by these adjustments (Appendix Figure A1). The analysis cannot rule out unmeasured differences between the samples or effects of the change in survey provider.

When it comes to people who are of the opposite political party or political disposition from you, would you be willing to...

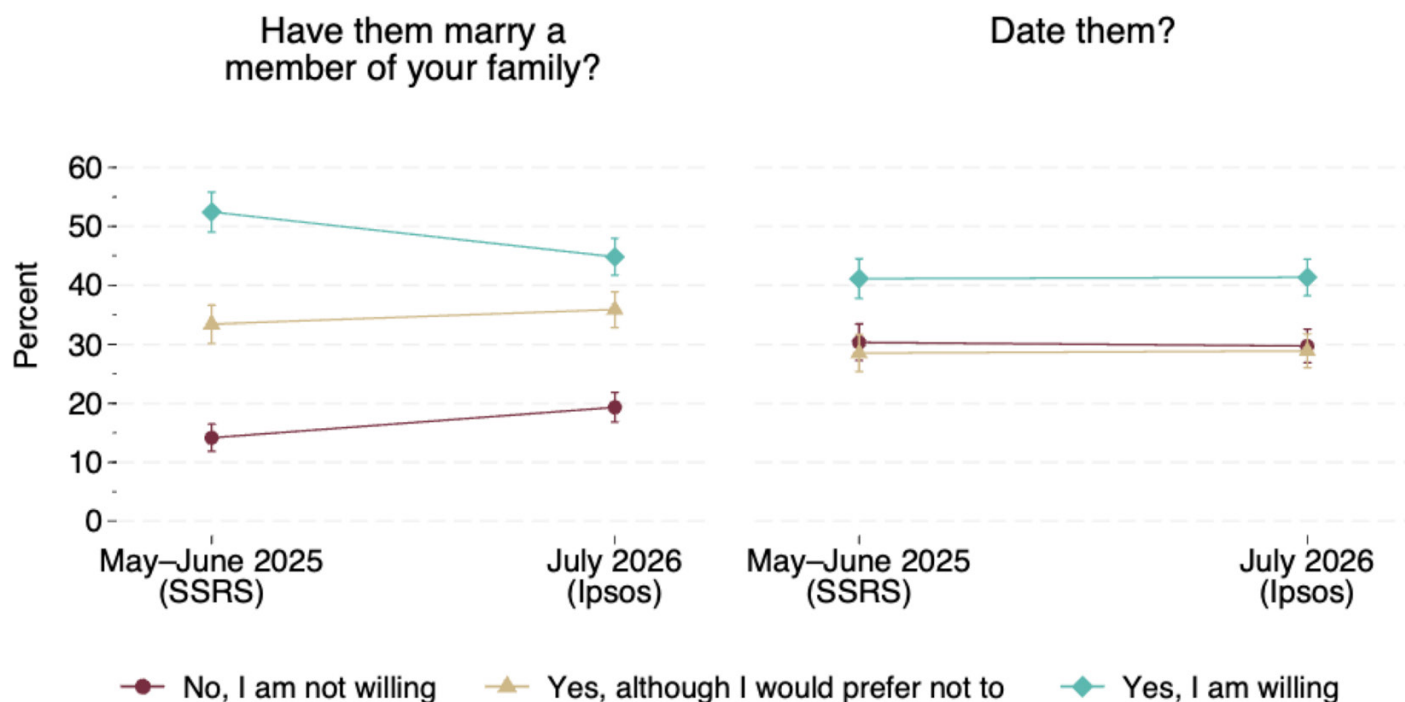


Figure 1. Willingness to Date Someone with Opposing Political Views or Have Them Marry into the Family, by Survey

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population. Markers represent the percent of respondents who gave each response shown in the legend by survey. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals. The May-June 2025 survey was conducted by SSRS and the July 2026 survey by Ipsos. Unweighted sample sizes for the marriage question were 1,004 in 2025 and 1,043 in 2026; for the dating question, they were 1,003 and 1,043. The 2026 dating question added "if you were romantically available," which did not appear in the 2025 version.

By contrast, the dating question showed virtually no change (Figure 1, right panel). In both surveys, 41% said they were willing to date someone with opposing political views, 29% were willing but would prefer not to, and 30% were unwilling. The overall response distributions were virtually identical.

Even so, 16% of Americans in 2026 said they were unwilling both to date someone with opposing views and to have such a person marry into their family, compared to 12% in 2025—a statistically significant increase.

DECLINES IN TOLERANCE ARE GREATEST AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

Figure 2 shows how adults ages 18 to 29 were nearly evenly divided on the marriage question in July 2026: 37% were fully willing to welcome someone with opposing political views into the family, 31% were willing but would prefer not to, and 31% were unwilling. Among older adults, full willingness ranged from 44% to 52%, and unwillingness from 12% to 18%.

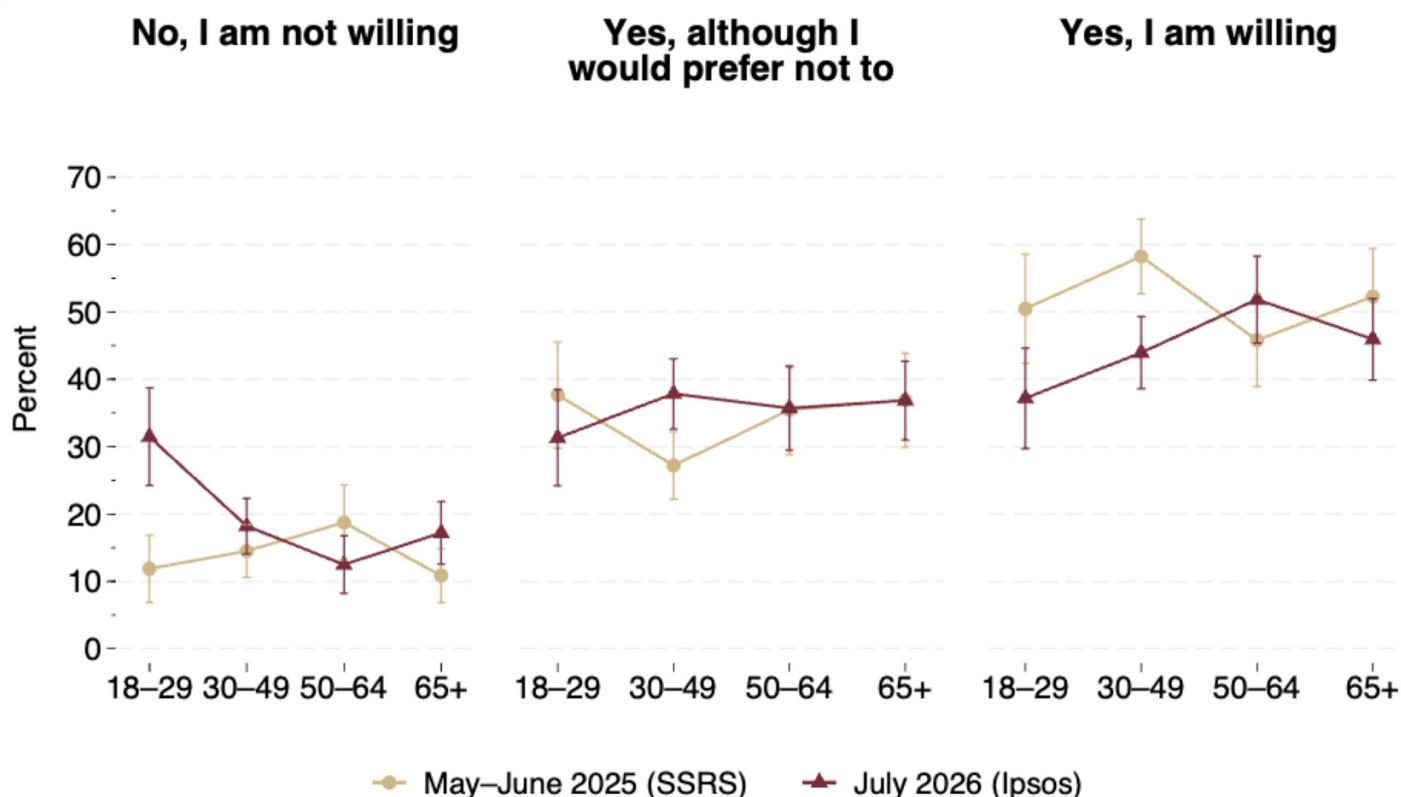


Figure 2. Willingness to Have Someone with Opposing Political Views Marry into the Family, by Age and Survey

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population. Markers show the percentage giving each response by age group and survey. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals. The May-June 2025 survey was conducted by SSRS and the July 2026 survey by Ipsos. Unweighted sample sizes were 1,004 in 2025 and 1,043 in 2026.

In May-June 2025, by contrast, young adults did not stand out from their older peers. In this survey, 50% were fully willing to have someone with opposing political views marry into their family, compared to 46%–58% of older adults; 12% were unwilling, compared to 11%–19% of older adults.

Figure 2 shows how the overall rise in outright unwillingness to have someone with opposing political views marry into one's family from 2025 to 2026 was largely driven by increased unwillingness among adults under 30.³

Willingness to have someone with opposing views marry into the family fell among adults ages 30–49, from 58% to 44%. Unlike adults under 30, however, the share unwilling changed little, from 15% to 18%. Instead, the share who were willing but would prefer not to rose from 27% to 38%. Among adults 65 and older, unwillingness rose more modestly, from 11% to 17%, while adults ages 50–64 showed no clear difference between surveys.

³ This pattern persists when we adjust for observed differences in the political and demographic composition of the two surveys (Appendix Figure A2).



No comparable decreases in full willingness to date across political lines were observed in any age group (Appendix Figure A3).⁴ When both questions are examined together, however, the difference among young adults becomes more pronounced. The share of adults under 30 in 2026 who said they were unwilling both to date a person with opposing political views and to welcome such a person into the family rose from 9% to 26%. For all other age groups, the shares in this “consistently unwilling” category differed little from 2025.

DECLINE IN WILLINGNESS TO HAVE IN-LAWS WITH OPPOSING VIEWS APPEARS ACROSS POLITICAL LINES

In 2026, 49% of Republicans and Republican leaners were willing to have someone with opposing political views marry into the family, compared to 40% of Democrats and Democratic leaners. The left panel of Figure 3 shows how willingness to have someone with opposing political views marry into the family declined across party lines from 2025 to 2026.

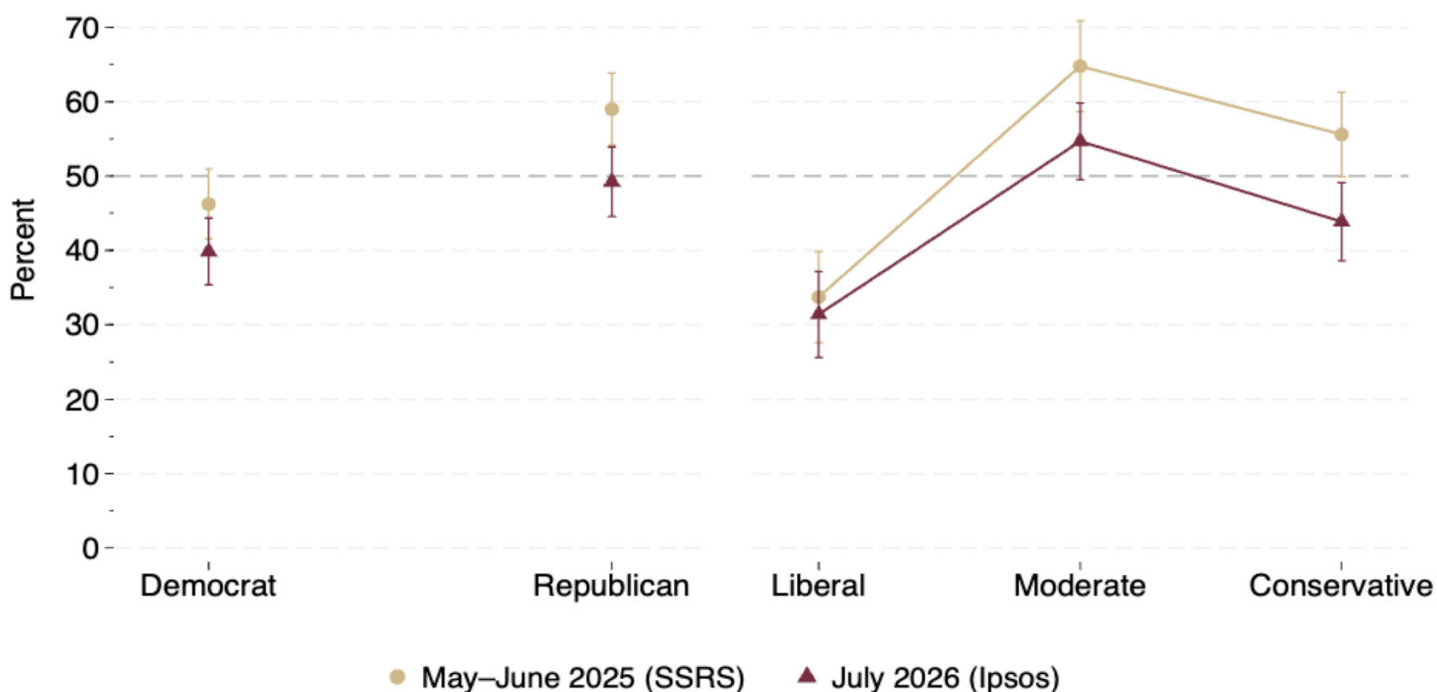


Figure 3. Willingness to Have Someone with Opposing Political Views Marry into the Family, by Party, Ideology, and Survey

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population. Markers show the percentage answering “Yes, I am willing”; error bars show 95% confidence intervals. The dashed line marks 50%. “Democrat” includes Democratic leaners, and “Republican” includes Republican leaners. Ideology is grouped into three broad categories for comparison across the surveys; the underlying question used five categories in 2025 (1=Very liberal, 5=Very conservative) and seven in 2026 (1=Extremely liberal, 7=Extremely conservative). Unweighted sample sizes were 1,000 in 2025 and 966 in 2026 for the party panel, and 915 and 1,032 for the ideology panel.

⁴ Among adults ages 50–64, full willingness to date across political lines was about 10 percentage points higher, and refusal about 10 points lower, in July 2026 than in May–June 2025. After adjusting for demographic and political characteristics, the corresponding differences were about 8 and 5 points and were no longer statistically significant (Appendix Figure A4).

Among Republicans and Republican leaners, the share saying “Yes, I am willing” fell from 59% in 2025 to 49% in 2026. Among Democrats and Democratic leaners, it fell from 46% to 40%.⁵

The right panel shows a similar pattern when respondents are grouped into broad ideological categories. Among conservatives, the share saying “Yes, I am willing” fell from 56% in 2025 to 44% in 2026; among moderates, it fell from 65% to 55%. Among liberals, the share changed little, from 34% to 31%, though this change was not significantly different from the declines among the other two groups.

The dating question, in contrast, showed no comparable declines (Appendix Figure A6). Within each party and broad ideological group, the share saying “Yes, I am willing” differed by about five percentage points or less between surveys; none of these differences were statistically significant.

TOLERANCE IS GENERALLY LOWEST AT THE IDEOLOGICAL EXTREMES, BUT THE PATTERN IS UNEVEN

The sharpest ideological difference appears in the willingness to date across political lines (Figure 4, right panel). In July 2026, 69% of extremely liberal respondents said they were unwilling to date someone with opposing political views, compared to 43% of extremely conservative respondents—a statistically significant difference. The gap was much smaller on the marriage question: 32% of extremely liberal respondents and 34% of extremely conservative respondents were unwilling to have someone with opposing political views marry into their family (Figure 4, left panel).

Tolerance was generally highest near the middle. Fifty-two percent of moderates said they were willing to date someone with opposing political views, compared to 45% of slightly conservative and 38% of slightly liberal respondents. Willingness fell to 15% among extremely liberal respondents and 26% among extremely conservative respondents.

On the marriage question, we find a similar pattern of willingness. About half of slightly liberal (50%), moderate (55%), and slightly conservative (51%) respondents said they were willing to have someone with opposing political views marry into their family. At the extremes, willingness was lower—18% among extremely liberal respondents and 28% among extremely conservative respondents.

In both surveys, conservatives were more likely than liberals to answer “Yes, I am willing” on the marriage and dating questions. The July 2026 survey, which measured ideology on a seven-point scale running from extremely liberal to extremely conservative, shows tolerance was generally highest near the ideological middle and lower at both ends. The 2025 survey, which used only five categories, shows a broadly similar pattern.⁶

⁵ The difference between these unadjusted declines was not statistically significant ($p = 0.478$). After adjusting for observed demographic and political characteristics, the estimated decline was approximately 10 percentage points in each partisan group (Appendix Figure A5).

⁶ See Figure 7 (right panel, p. 11) and Table 3 (left column, p. 12) in our August 2025 report, *More Than Politics: How Ideology Shapes Who Americans Trust, Date, and Avoid*.

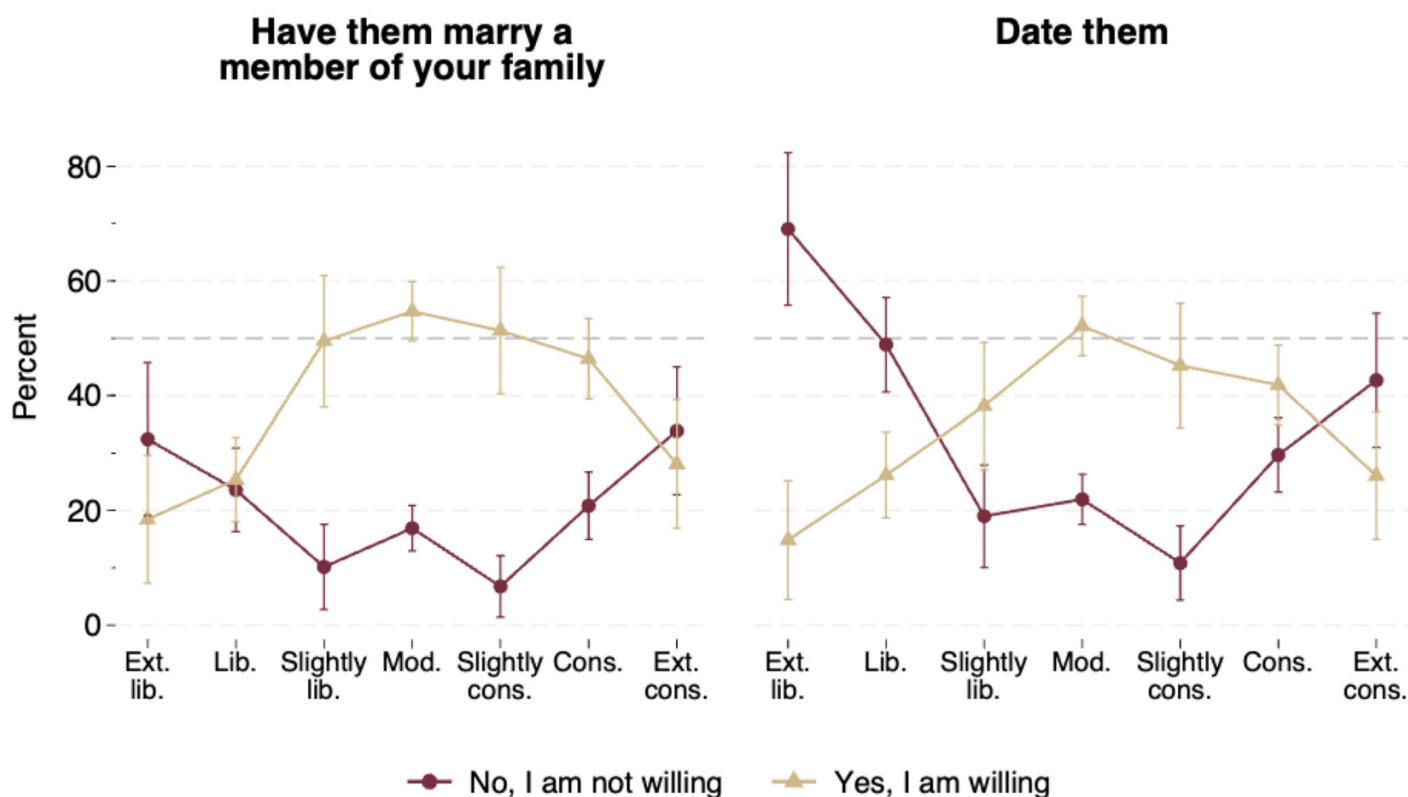


Figure 4. Willingness to Date Someone with Opposing Political Views or Have Them Marry into the Family, by Ideology

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population in July 2026. Markers show the percentage of respondents giving each response within each ideological group. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals. Respondents who answered “Yes, although I would prefer not to” are included in the analysis but are not shown. The dashed line marks 50%. The unweighted sample size is 1,032 for each question.

CONCLUSION

This report provided an updated assessment of interpersonal political tolerance among the American public, which we began tracking last summer. Our latest data show a significant decline in the share of Americans who say they are willing to have someone with opposing political views marry into their family, along with a significant rise in the share who say they are unwilling. These shifts appear across political groups and are greatest among young adults. Additionally, the share unwilling both to date someone with opposing political views and to have them as in-laws has grown, especially among young adults.

Because the two surveys used different panels, we cannot determine exactly how much of these differences reflect genuine changes in attitudes. But there are good reasons to believe at least some of these shifts are genuine. For one, the decline persists when we account for observed differences between the survey samples. We see no comparable shift in responses on the dating question, where results were virtually identical between surveys. Neither finding rules out a possible role for changes

in the survey panel, but together, they make it difficult to dismiss the marriage result as entirely due to differences in who answered the surveys.

Notably, willingness to welcome someone with opposing political views into the family was a majority position in the 2025 survey but a minority position in 2026. More than a quarter of young adults in 2026 said they were unwilling both to date someone with opposing views and to have such a person marry into their family, compared to fewer than one in ten the year before.

The concern goes beyond political separation in social or family life. When Americans increasingly avoid people who disagree with them, those people can become easier to caricature or dehumanize and, consequently, harder to work with toward common goals. At the extreme, this distance could make violence against political opponents easier to justify. Our survey does not establish whether these consequences are unfolding. But it raises the question: will a growing unwillingness to form close relationships across political lines lead to larger political consequences extend beyond those relationships to society at large?

POLL INFORMATION

The 2025 and 2026 surveys were conducted online using separate probability-based panels. SSRS surveyed 1,004 U.S. adults between May 21 and June 3, 2025; the margin of sampling error was ± 3.4 percentage points. Ipsos surveyed 1,067 U.S. adults through KnowledgePanel® between July 8 and 15, 2026; the margin of sampling error was ± 3.1 percentage points, including the design effect. The 2026 sample was weighted to represent the national adult population across demographic, geographic, political, and voting characteristics. Because the surveys used different providers and panels, differences between the results cannot necessarily be attributed entirely to changes in public attitudes. Weighted demographic characteristics of each survey sample are presented in Table 1 on the next page.



Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics by Survey Sample

Category	May—June 2025 Sample (SSRS)	July 2026 Sample (Ipsos)
Sex		
Female	51%	51%
Age		
18 to 29	20%	19%
30 to 49	34%	36%
50 to 64	23%	22%
65 or older	23%	23%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	61%	59%
Black	12%	11%
Hispanic	18%	18%
Other	9%	11%
Education		
Less than HS	9%	10%
HS Graduate	29%	27%
Some college	27%	28%
BA Degree	20%	21%
Postgrad/Prof. Degree	16%	15%
Income		
Less than \$50,000	44%	23%
\$50,000—\$74,999	15%	14%
\$75,000—\$149,999	29%	33%
\$150,000 and over	12%	29%
Partisanship		
Democrat	31%	28%
Lean Democrat	22%	18%
Independent/Other	1%	8%
Lean Republican	17%	15%
Republican	29%	31%
Ideology		
Liberal	31%	25%
Moderate	32%	38%
Conservative	37%	37%
N	1,004	1,067



APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURES

When it comes to people who are of the opposite political party or political disposition from you, would you be willing to...

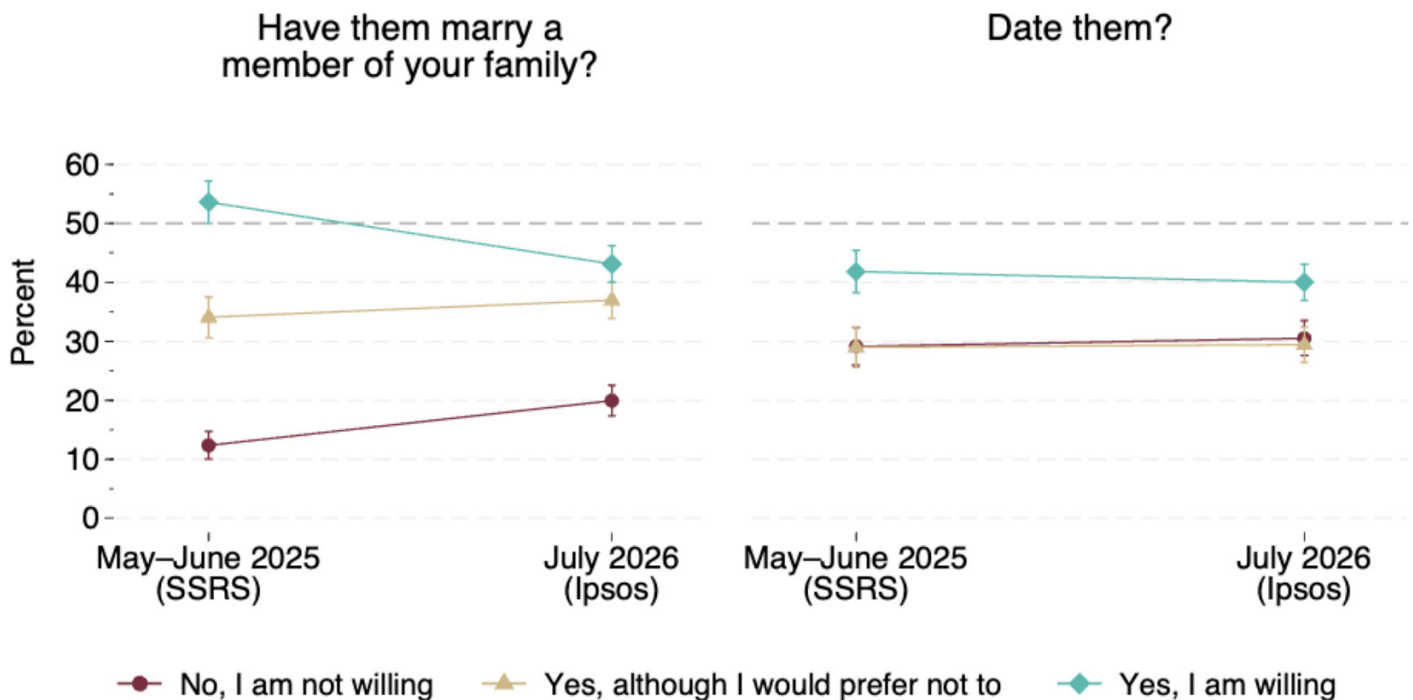


Figure A1. Adjusted Responses to Questions About Marriage and Dating Across Political Lines, by Survey

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population. Markers represent the percent of respondents who gave each response shown in the legend by survey. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals. Estimates adjust for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, household income, marital status, employment status, parent status, homeownership, metropolitan status, census region, party affiliation, and ideology. The May-June 2025 survey was conducted by SSRS and the July 2026 survey by Ipsos. Unweighted model sample sizes for the marriage question were 875 in 2025 and 1,016 in 2026; for the dating question, they were 874 and 1,016. Respondents with missing covariate data are excluded from the models. The 2026 dating question added "if you were romantically available," which did not appear in the 2025 version.

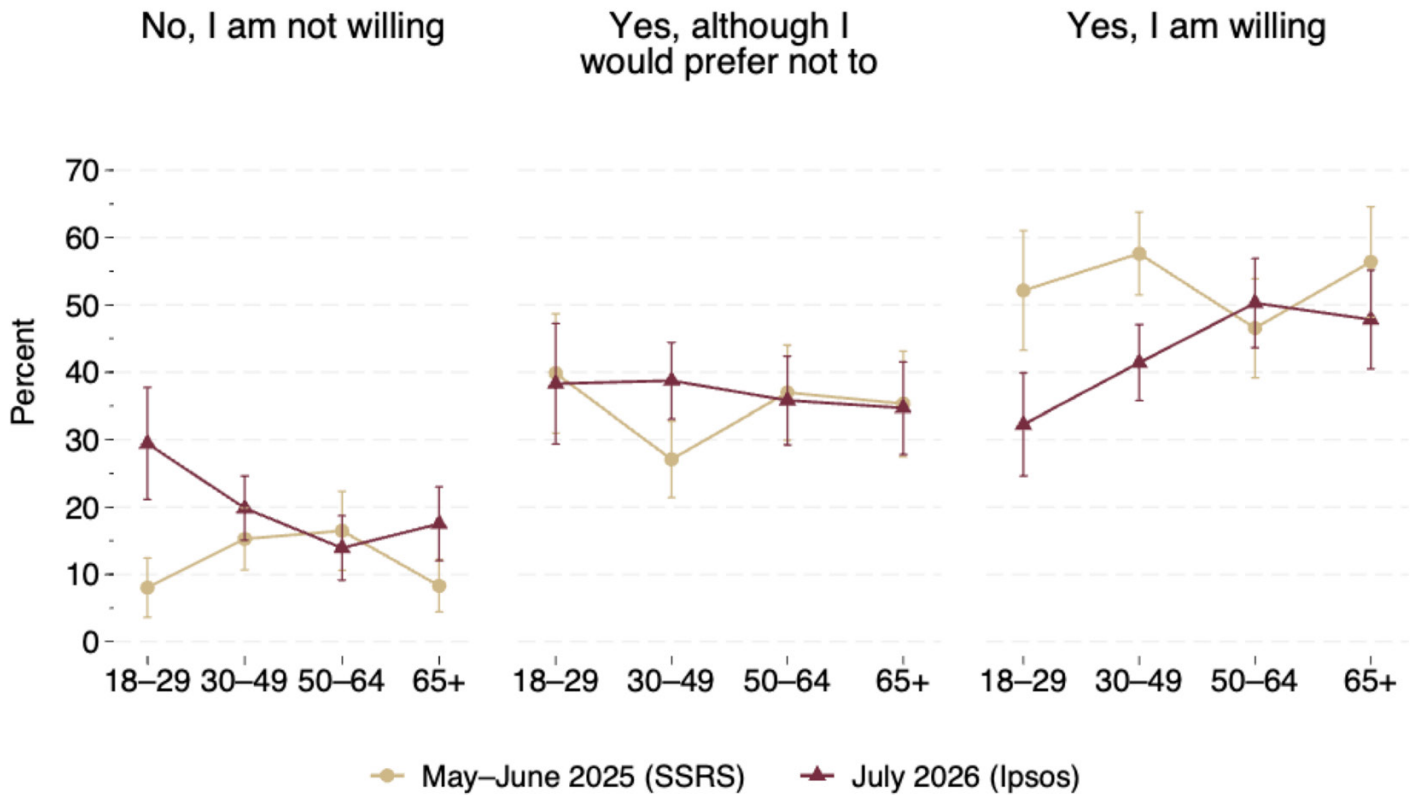


Figure A2. Adjusted Willingness to Have Someone with Opposing Political Views Marry into the Family, by Age and Survey

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population. Markers show the percentage giving each response by age group and survey. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals. Estimates adjust for sex, race/ethnicity, education, household income, marital status, employment status, parent status, homeownership, metropolitan status, census region, party affiliation, and ideology. The May-June 2025 survey was conducted by SSRS and the July 2026 survey by Ipsos. Unweighted model sample sizes were 875 in 2025 and 1,016 in 2026. Respondents with missing covariate data are excluded from the models.

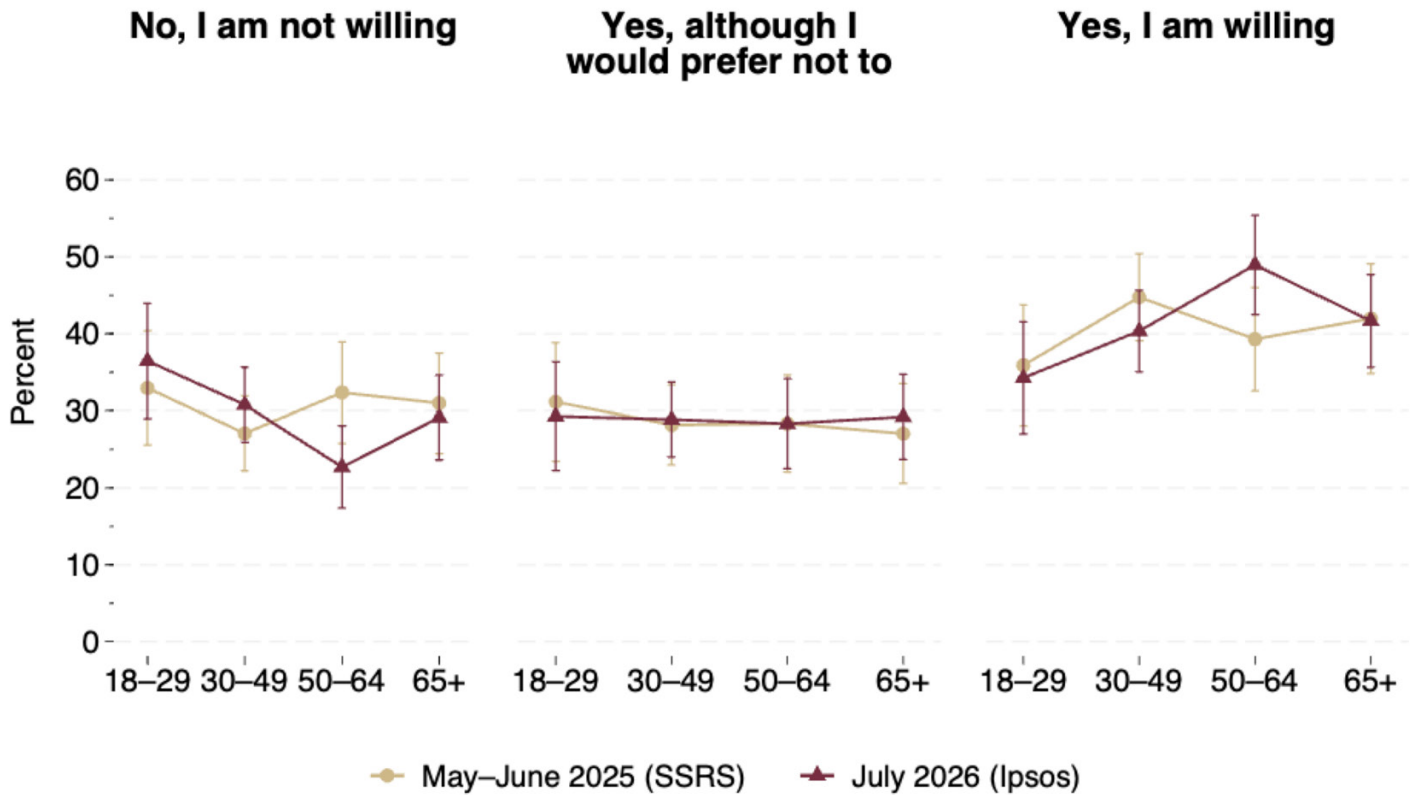


Figure A3. Willingness to Date Someone with Opposing Political Views, by Age and Survey

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population. Markers show the percentage giving each response by age group and survey. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals. The May-June 2025 survey was conducted by SSRS and the July 2026 survey by Ipsos. Unweighted sample sizes were 1,003 in 2025 and 1,043 in 2026. The 2026 dating question added “if you were romantically available,” which did not appear in the 2025 version.

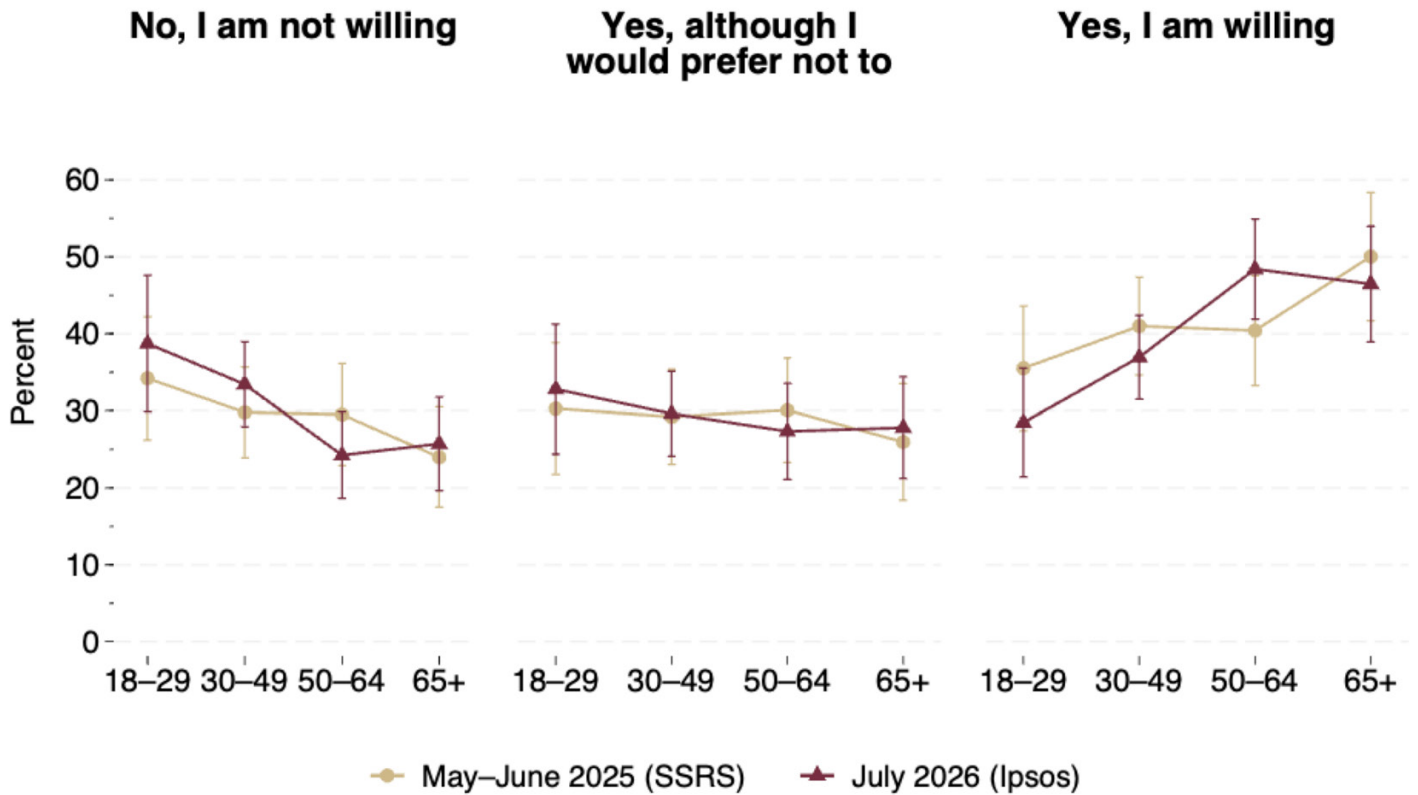


Figure A4. Adjusted Willingness to Date Someone with Opposing Political Views, by Age and Survey

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population. Markers show the percentage giving each response by age group and survey. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals. Estimates adjust for sex, race/ethnicity, education, household income, marital status, employment status, parent status, homeownership, metropolitan status, census region, party affiliation, and ideology. The May-June 2025 survey was conducted by SSRS and the July 2026 survey by Ipsos. Unweighted model sample sizes were 874 in 2025 and 1,016 in 2026. Respondents with missing covariate data are excluded from the models. The 2026 dating question added "if you were romantically available," which did not appear in the 2025 version.

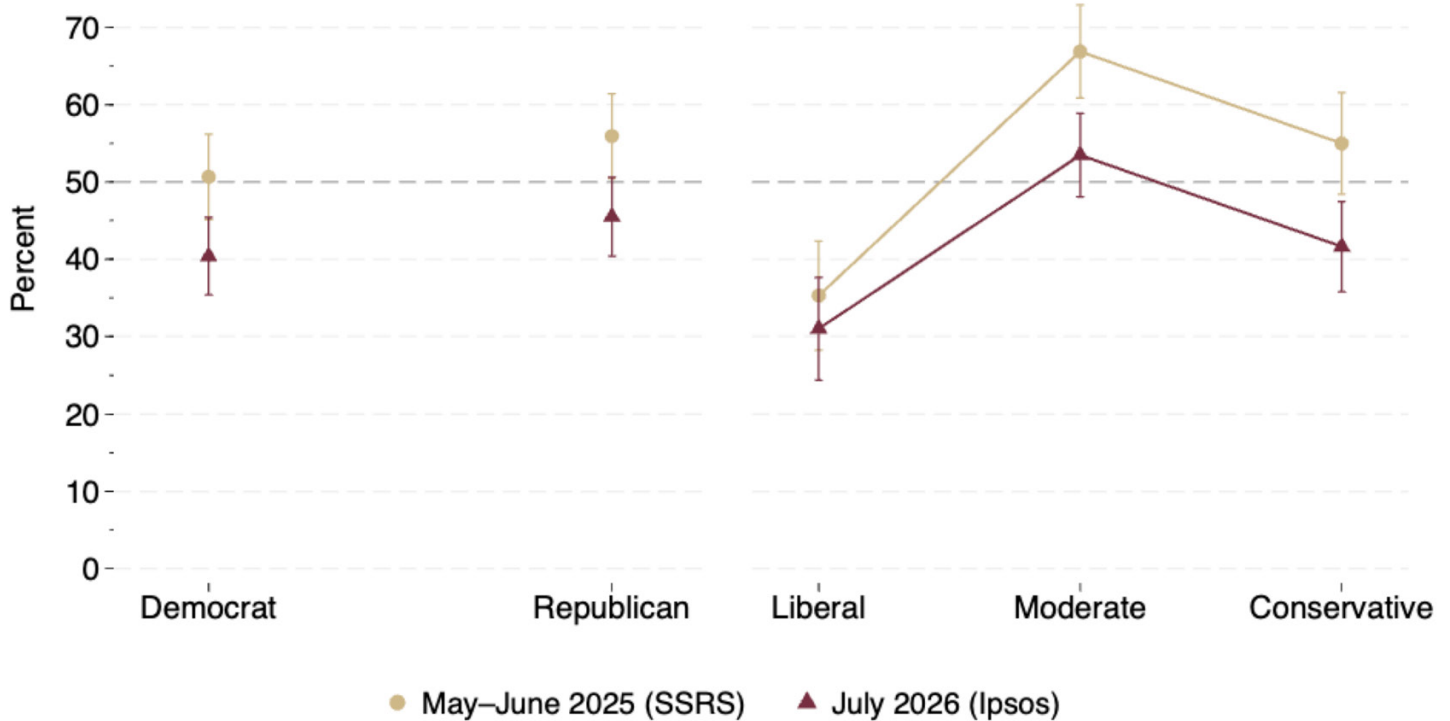


Figure A5. Adjusted Percentages of Respondents Willing to Have Someone with Opposing Political Views Marry into the Family, by Party, Ideology, and Survey

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population. Markers show the adjusted percentage of respondents answering “Yes, I am willing” to the marriage question. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals. Estimates adjust for sex, race/ethnicity, education, household income, marital status, employment status, parent status, homeownership, metropolitan status, census region, and party affiliation or ideology. The May–June 2025 survey was conducted by SSRS and the July 2026 survey by Ipsos. Unweighted model sample sizes were 874 in 2025 and 950 in 2026 for the party panel, and 875 and 1,016 for the ideology panel. Respondents with missing covariate data are excluded from the models.

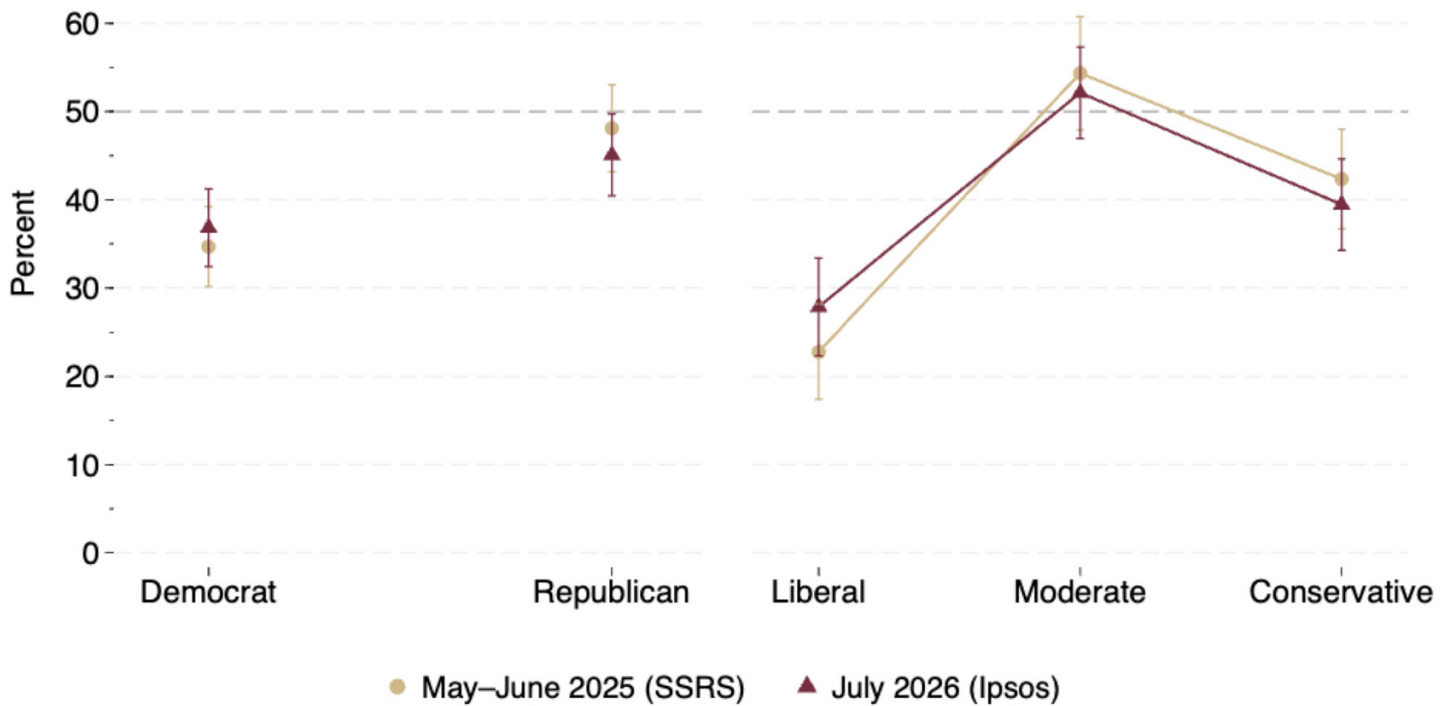


Figure A6. Willingness to Date Someone with Opposing Political Views, by Party, Ideology, and Survey

Note: Estimates are weighted to represent the U.S. adult population. Markers show the percentage answering “Yes, I am willing”; error bars show 95% confidence intervals. The dashed line marks 50%. “Democrat” includes Democratic leaners, and “Republican” includes Republican leaners. Ideology is grouped into three broad categories for comparison across the surveys; the underlying question used five categories in 2025 (1=Very liberal, 5=Very conservative) and seven in 2026 (1=Extremely liberal, 7=Extremely conservative). Unweighted sample sizes were 999 in 2025 and 966 in 2026 for the party panel, and 914 and 1,032 for the ideology panel.