

Center for American Progress Action Fund



PROTECT
OUR CARE

Holding Trump Accountable on the Coronavirus Crisis

Key findings from a national survey among 1,003 registered voters

Conducted April 3 to 5, 2020

For CAP Action and Protect Our Care

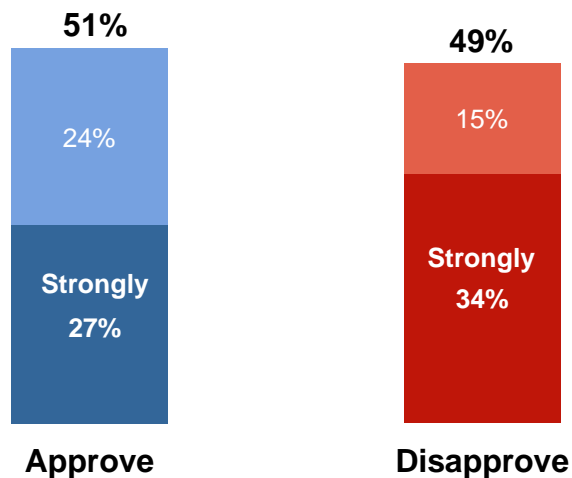
HART
RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES

Key Finding 1

Trump's approval rating for his handling of the coronavirus crisis continues to be mixed, but large majorities are critical of his failure to prepare and failure to test.

Trump's ratings for handling the coronavirus correspond to political party and preferred cable network.

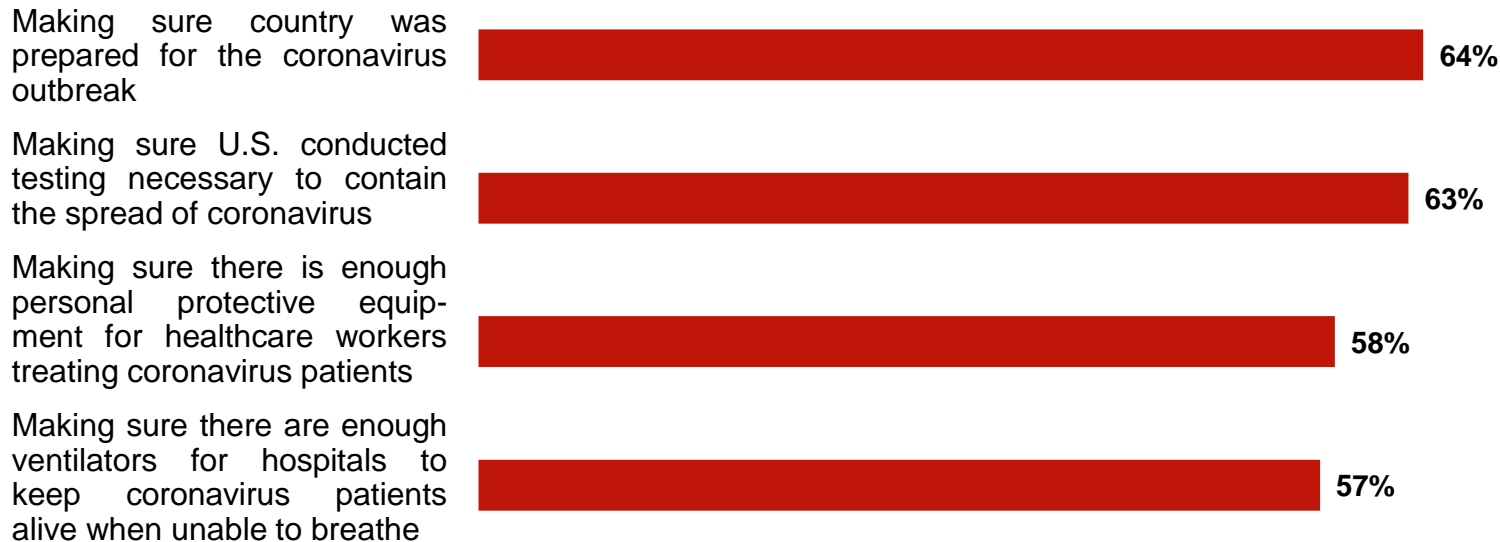
Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Trump has handled the coronavirus outbreak?



	Approve	Disapprove
Democrats	21%	79%
Independents	46%	54%
Republicans	89%	11%
Watch FOX news	84%	16%
Watch CNN	31%	69%
Watch MSNBC	27%	73%
Don't watch cable news	47%	53%
Watch Trump briefings	59%	41%

Large majorities say Trump has done too little on several fronts in the war against coronavirus.

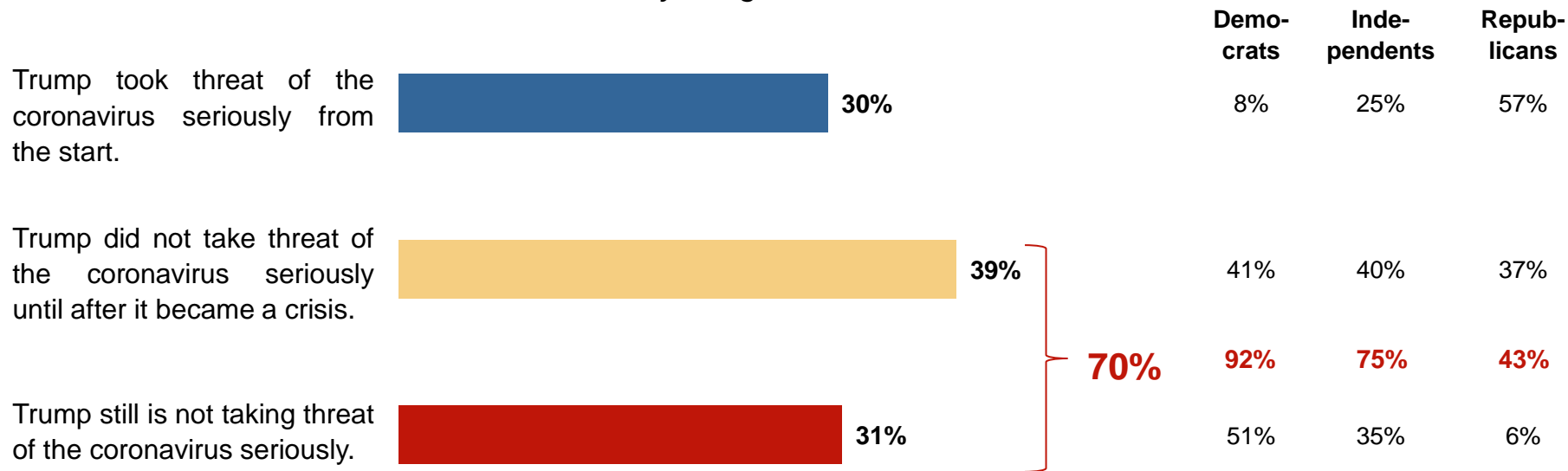
Proportions saying President Trump is doing/has done too little on this



Thirty-eight percent (38%) of those who approve of Trump's performance overall say he did too little on preparation and/or testing - a key target group

Seventy percent (70%) say Trump did not take the threat seriously until after the coronavirus became a crisis, if then.

Which statement do you agree with the most?

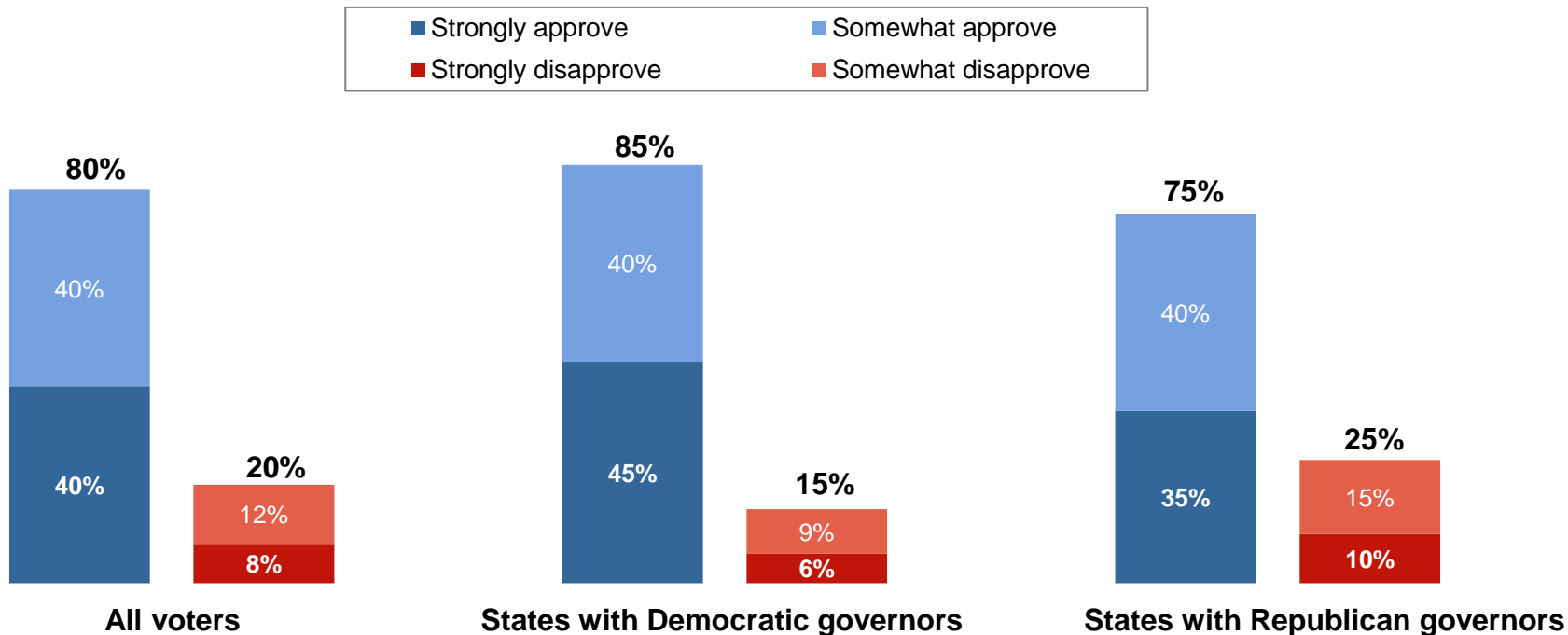


Key Finding 2

Governors are providing the real leadership for their states, far more than Trump. Trump's treatment of governors is a vulnerability for him.

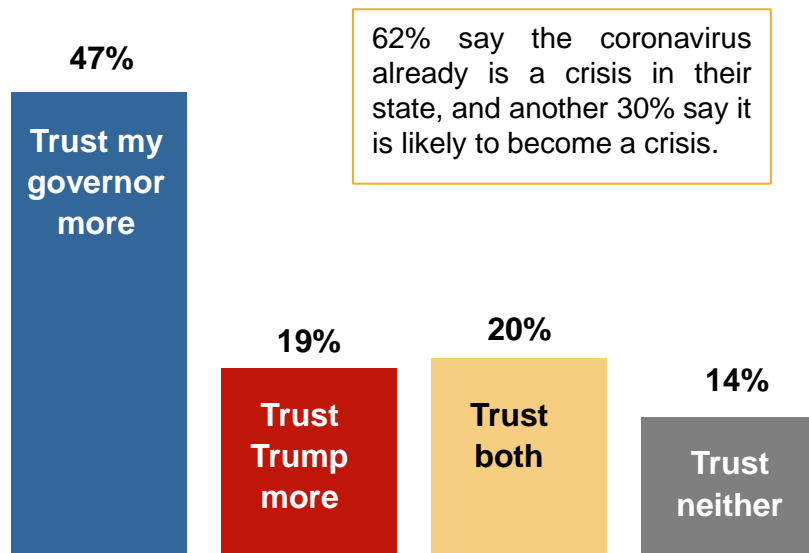
There is overwhelming approval for governors. When needs are being met, they should get the credit.

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the governor of your state has handled the coronavirus outbreak?



Voters trust their governor more than Trump to provide accurate info on the coronavirus crisis in their states.

Who do you trust more to provide accurate information about the coronavirus outbreak and how well needs are being met in your state?



62% say the coronavirus already is a crisis in their state, and another 30% say it is likely to become a crisis.

	Trust my governor	Trust Trump
Democratic governor	55%	20%
Republican governor	37%	17%
<hr/>		
Democrats	69%	2%
Independents	47%	15%
Republicans	21%	40%

Highlighting Trump's mistreatment of governors and states raises doubts and concerns for voters.

This statement gives me doubts and concerns about the way President Trump has handled the coronavirus outbreak:

■ Gives me MAJOR doubts/concerns ■ Gives me SOME doubts/concerns

He **demanded that governors be “nice” to him in order to get federal help**, and did not provide the amount of requested equipment to states whose governors are not his allies.



He **refused requests from governors to have a national effort to obtain enough ventilators** and other supplies and told governors to do it on their own—forcing states to compete against each other to find life-saving equipment.

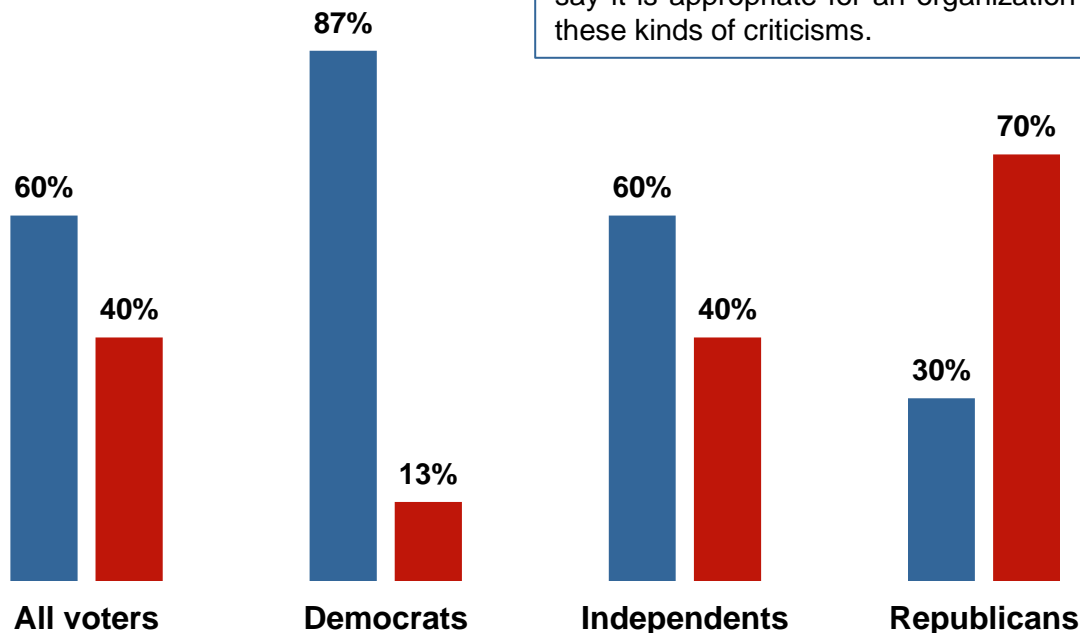


Key Finding 3

Voters say it is appropriate for opponents to criticize Trump and hold him accountable.

Voters don't buy the argument that we need to unite around Trump and shouldn't criticize him.

- **It is appropriate for President Trump's opponents to criticize him** at this time, because if we don't hold our leaders accountable for their failures they will continue making the same mistakes.
- **It is unacceptable for President Trump's opponents to criticize him** at this time, because we need to unite around his leadership now and criticizing him accomplishes nothing.



When we show voters a video criticizing Trump's failure to control the spread of coronavirus relative to other countries, by 63% to 37% they say it is appropriate for an organization to make these kinds of criticisms.

Key Finding 4

Messages that remind and educate voters about Trump's failures drive down his approval rating and increase the proportion who are less likely to reelect him.

These messages are the most effective in moving swing voters.

This statement gives me doubts and concerns about the way President Trump has handled the coronavirus outbreak:

■ Gives me MAJOR doubts/concerns ■ Gives me SOME doubts/concerns

In February, Trump made a **75% cut in the budget request to buy respirator masks/supplies** for national stockpile. Now healthcare workers are using bandanas because there aren't enough masks, ventilator shortage is forcing doctors to make horrible choices about who gets life-saving equipment.



He **failed to pay attention to numerous warnings from experts** inside and outside the government about the potential coronavirus pandemic before it came to the United States.



He **failed to make sure the U.S. could conduct the mass testing** experts said would be essential for containing spread of the virus. Countries like South Korea tested 10 times as many people as the U.S. in the first two months, and as a result have only a few hundred deaths.



He repeatedly **misled the public about the severity** of the coronavirus and said many things that simply were not true, like it would disappear—**causing the virus to spread unchecked.**



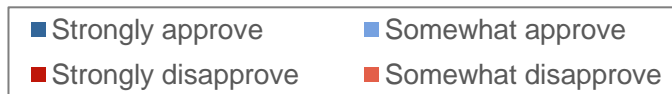
These messages reinforce key attributes that trouble voters most about Trump.

- ➔ He refuses to listen to experts and science.
- ➔ He does not tell the truth and misleads people.
- ➔ He is impulsive, erratic, and chaotic in his decision-making when we need steady and stable leadership.

Reminder: 47% now say they are very worried they or someone in their household will become infected, and another 36% say they are somewhat worried. **Trump's failure to protect the country is personal, not abstract.**

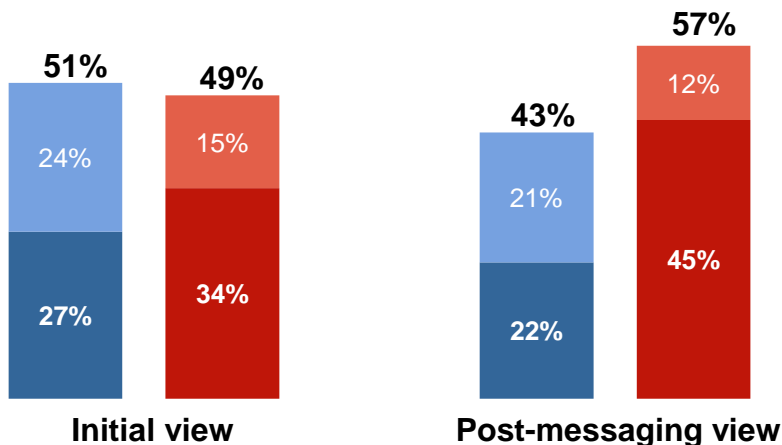
Many voters move to a more negative view of Trump's performance based on these messages.

Approval of Trump's handling of the coronavirus outbreak

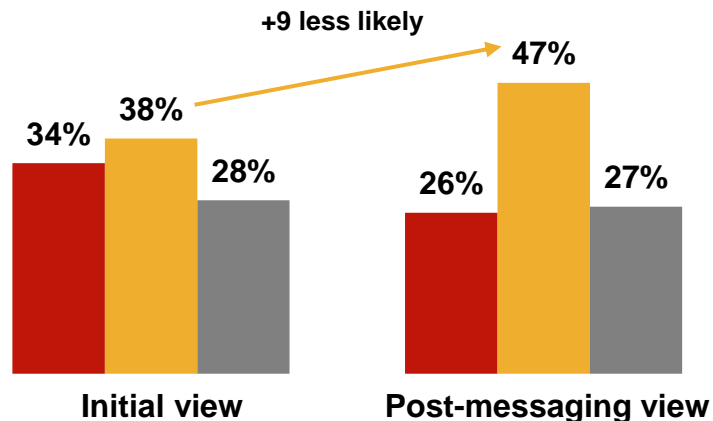


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Impact of Trump's handling of coronavirus on support for his reelection



While there is movement across the electorate, it is greatest among persuadable and low-information voters.

	DISAPPROVE OF DJT HANDLING OF CORONAVIRUS		CORONAVIRUS IMPACT: LESS LIKELY TO REELECT DJT	
	Initial	Final	Initial	Final
All voters	49%	57%	38%	47%
Democrats	79%	87%	63%	73%
Independents	54%	63%	41%	48%
Republicans	11%	20%	9%	17%
2020 Persuadables	38%	64%	35%	51%
White men/non-college grads	39%	47%	31%	37%
White men/college grads	46%	49%	41%	47%
White women/non-college grads	41%	53%	30%	39%
White women/college grads	54%	62%	41%	49%
Watch FOX news	16%	24%	15%	22%
Watch CNN	69%	77%	61%	68%
Watch MSNBC	73%	80%	56%	70%
Don't watch cable news	53%	63%	37%	45%

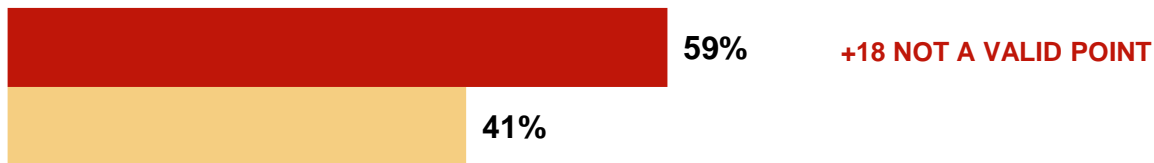
Key Finding 5

Some of Trump's defenses (broken system, governors' responsibility) fall flat with voters, but others need to be countered.

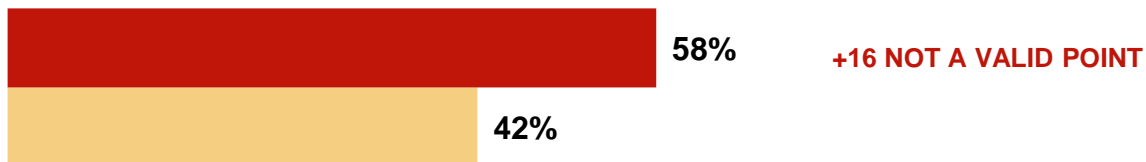
Most voters know that “broken system” and “not the federal government’s responsibility” are hollow excuses.

■ Does not make a valid point for DJT ■ Makes a valid point for DJT

Governors who are blaming the Trump administration for a lack of testing and medical equipment are wrong to do so, because it is their responsibility and **not the responsibility of the federal government** to deal with the problems in their states.



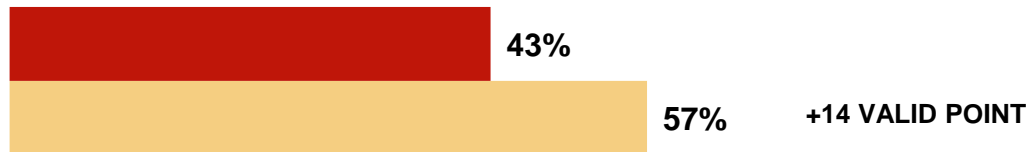
The reason that the United States was not prepared to deal with the coronavirus crisis is that **President Trump inherited a broken system**, and President Trump has taken steps to fix that.



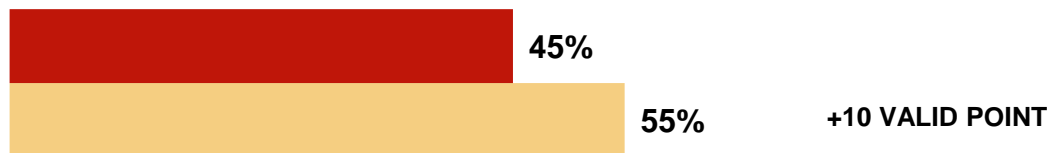
But voters are sympathetic to two of Trump's arguments.

■ Does not make a valid point for DJT ■ Makes a valid point for DJT

President Trump was ahead of the curve in protecting Americans from the coronavirus by instituting a **ban on travel to the United States from China**.



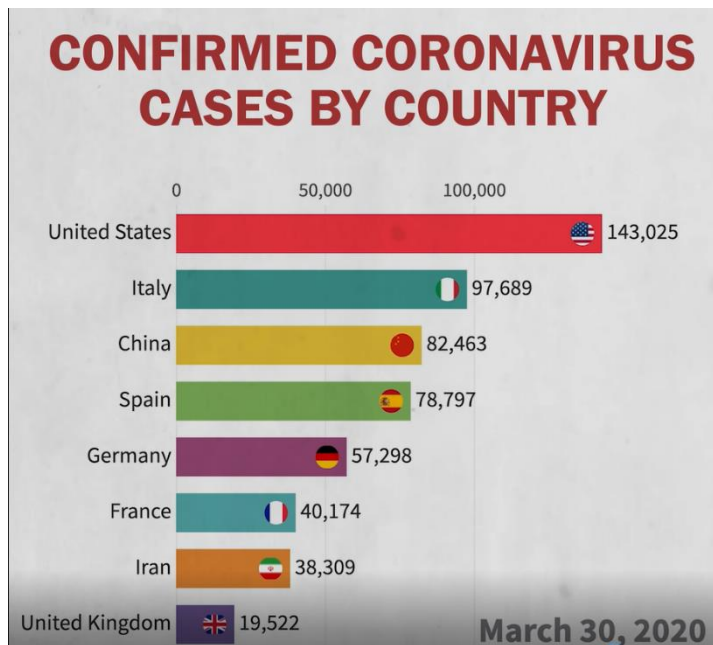
Experts say that the death toll in the United States could have reached more than two million people, but **because of the actions taken by President Trump, it will be 90% lower** than that.



Guidance on Countering Trump's Arguments

- 1. Don't concede a thing on Trump's travel ban.** The reality is, Trump was slow in instituting the ban—381,000 people entered the U.S. from China after the outbreak in Wuhan, but before the ban went into place. And the ban was so leaky that 40,000 more people entered from China after the ban was in place.
- 2. Don't engage in a numbers game with Trump on how many fatalities are expected.** The numbers we want to focus on are the growth in cases here compared with other countries that responded aggressively, and the paltry number of tests delivered compared with what Trump promised and experts say we needed.

This video from CAP Action is effective in showing voters that the U.S. did a worse job than other countries in controlling the spread of the virus.



- ➔ After this video, 70% say the U.S. is doing a worse job than other countries, up from 37% at start.
- ➔ Linking the data to testing makes these claims credible: “Countries like South Korea tested 10 times as many people as the U.S. in the first two months and as a result have only a few hundred deaths.”

Video address: <https://twitter.com/i/status/1244754120621404167>