



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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Contact: Rich Robinson, communications director, Voice Of the People  
[rrobinson@vop.org](mailto:rrobinson@vop.org) or 202-232-5075

## **New Study Finds People in Red and Blue Districts Largely Agree on What Government Should Do**

WASHINGTON – A new study released today finds remarkably little difference between the views of people who live in red (Republican) districts or states, and those who live in blue (Democratic) districts or states on questions about what policies the government should pursue. The study analyzed 388 questions asking what the government should do in regard to a wide range of policy issues and found that that most people living in red districts/states disagreed with most people in blue districts/states on only four percent of the questions.

“A Not So Divided America,” contradicts the conventional wisdom that the political gridlock between Democrats and Republicans in Congress arises from deep disagreements over policy among the general public. The study was a joint project of Voice Of the People and the Program for Public Consultation (PPC), affiliated with the University of Maryland.

“Clearly, the gridlock in Congress is not driven by the people,” said PPC Director Steven Kull, who led the study. “Although some research has shown partisan polarization in response to broad ideological slogans, on specific questions about what government should do, the study found hardly any difference between red and blue districts.”

The study analyzed questions from dozens of surveys from numerous sources including the National Election Studies, Pew, major media outlets, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs as well as the Program for Public Consultation. Responses were analyzed based on whether the respondents lived in red or blue districts or states.

- On only four percent of the questions (14 out of 388) did a majority or plurality of those living in red congressional districts/states disagree with the majority or plurality in the blue districts/states.
- For a large majority of questions – 69 percent – (266 of 388), there were no statistically significant differences between the views in the red districts/states and the blue districts/states.

- For 23 percent (90 of 388), there were statistically significant differences in the size of the majority or plurality, but the dominant position in the red and blue districts/states was the same.

“The fact is, Americans are more united than divided,” said Richard Parsons, executive director, Voice Of the People. “Giving the people a greater voice would help break the gridlock in Washington.”

The study was conducted by the Program for Public Consultation, a joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the School of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland.

The full study can be found at:

<http://vop.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Red-Blue-Report.pdf>

The report’s appendix can be found at:

<http://vop.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Red-Blue-Appendix.pdf>

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*Voice Of the People is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that uses innovative methods and technology to give the American people a more effective voice in government.*