INSTITUTE *for* FAITH & CULTURE

NATIONAL SOCIALISM SURVEY

OCTOBER 2026

SOCIALISM AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POOR

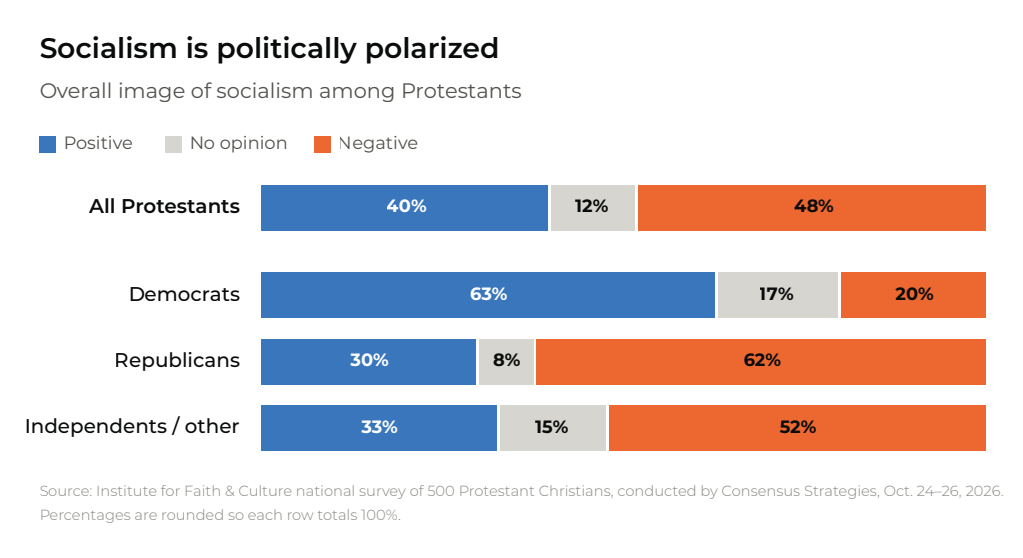
National Protestant Survey | October 26, 2026

The toplines point in different directions. Socialism draws a slightly more negative than positive overall reaction, with a pronounced party divide. Government is the most frequently named institution responsible for caring for the poor, though fewer than half choose it and majorities of Republicans and independents split among government, churches and charities, and families.

Socialism is politically polarized. On the weighted topline, 40% report a positive image of socialism (20% very positive, 20% somewhat positive), 48% a negative image (15% somewhat negative, 33% very negative), and 12% no opinion. The partisan gap is large: 63% of Democrats view socialism positively, compared with 30% of Republicans; 62% of Republicans view it negatively, compared with 20% of Democrats. Independents lean negative (52% negative, 33% positive). The 2024 vote crosstab shows the same divide: 67% of Harris voters are positive, while 67% of Trump voters are negative. Strongly negative views are concentrated among Republicans and Trump voters.

63% *of Democrats view Socialism positively*

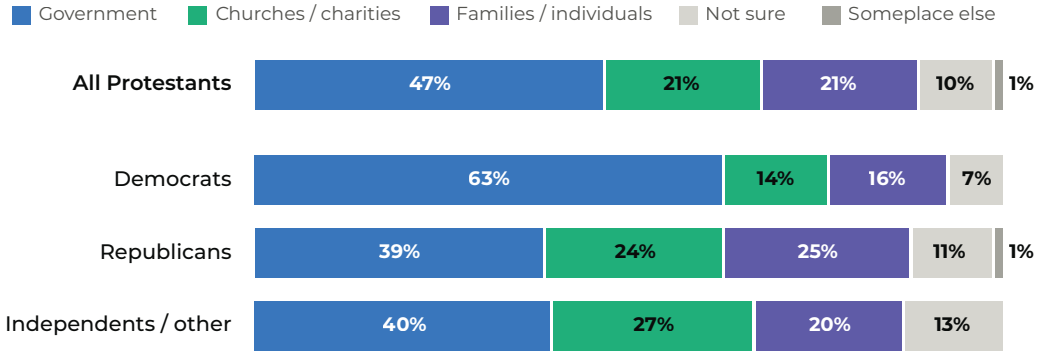
62% *of Republicans view it negatively*



Government leads on poverty responsibility, without a majority. Overall, 47% say government should have primary responsibility for caring for the poor. Churches and charities and families and individuals each receive about 21%; 10% are unsure. Democrats are more likely to choose government (63%) than Republicans (39%) or independents (40%). Republicans are more likely than Democrats to name churches and charities (24% vs. 14%) or families and individuals (25% vs. 16%), but neither alternative is the dominant Republican answer. Evangelicals and non-evangelical Protestants are similar on government responsibility (48% and 46%, respectively); non-evangelicals are somewhat more likely to choose families and individuals (24% vs. 19%).

Government leads on caring for the poor, without a majority

Who should have primary responsibility for caring for the poor?



Source: Institute for Faith & Culture national survey of 500 Protestant Christians, conducted by Consensus Strategies, Oct. 24–26, 2026. Percentages are rounded so each row totals 100%.

47%

say government should have primary responsibility for the poor (no majority)

The DSA fares worse than socialism itself. On a 0-to-10 rating scale, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) receive a mean rating of 3.6, below the midpoint of 5. About 58% score it from 0-4, 11% choose 5, and 31% score it from 6-10. The divide is sharp by party: mean ratings are 6.6 among Democrats, 2.3 among Republicans, and 2.8 among independents. The DSA draws a more negative assessment than socialism in general.

DSA averages

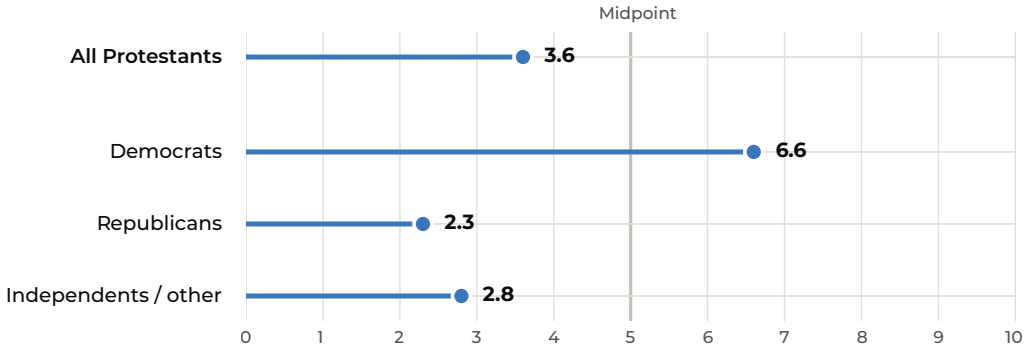
3.6

out of

10

Only Democrats rate the DSA above the midpoint

Mean rating of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) on a 0–10 scale



Source: Institute for Faith & Culture national survey of 500 Protestant Christians, conducted by Consensus Strategies, Oct. 24–26, 2026. Means are among respondents who gave a rating.

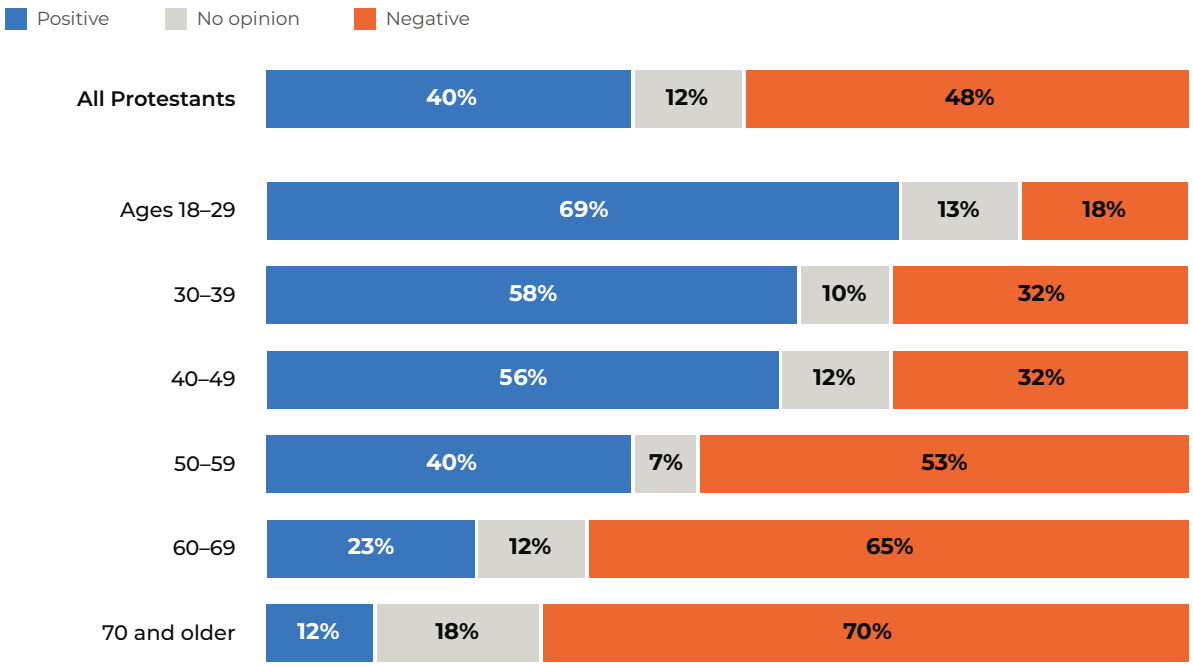
What this suggests. The word “socialism” is a stronger partisan marker than the question of who should care for the poor: Republicans are much more negative about socialism, yet government remains their single most common answer on poverty responsibility. These items measure general attitudes and views of primary responsibility; they do not establish support for any specific program or level of government spending.

The Generation Gap on Socialism. Protestant views of socialism split at age 50. A majority of every age group under 50 sees socialism positively, and a majority of every group 50 and older sees it negatively. The gap is widest at the ends: 69% of Protestants under 30 view socialism positively, while 70% of those 70 and older view it negatively. Young Protestants aren't just leaning favorable, either: 38% call their view "very positive," four times the share who say "very negative" (9%).

69%
of Protestants under 30 view socialism positively

Nearly 7 in 10 young Protestants view socialism positively

Overall image of socialism among Protestants, by age



Source: Institute for Faith & Culture national survey of 500 Protestant Christians, conducted by Consensus Strategies, Oct. 24–26, 2026.

Percentages are rounded so each row totals 100%. Margin of error is higher for age groups than for the full sample.

METHOD NOTE
Survey of 500 Protestant Christians nationwide, conducted by Consensus Strategies for the Institute for Faith & Culture, October 24–26, 2026, via text-to-web and an online panel. Results are weighted by age, education, gender, race, and 2024 vote recall. Margin of sampling error is ±4.4 percentage points; higher for subgroups. Percentages are rounded so each question totals 100%.