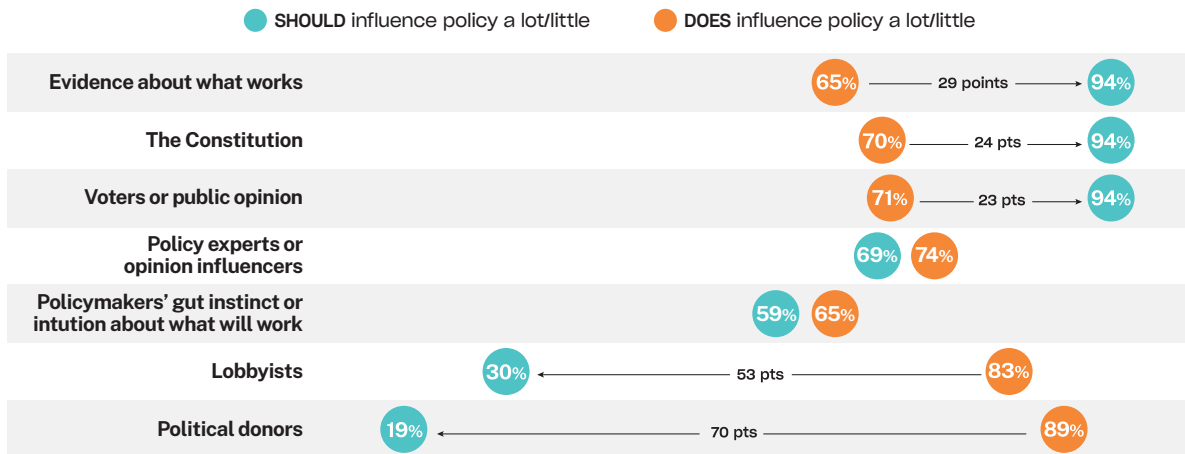


Surveying American Attitudes Toward Evidence-Based Policymaking

Executive Summary

Echelon Insights, on behalf of Results for America, conducted a survey of 1,038 likely voters nationwide to study voters' views on evidence-based policymaking. **The findings were unambiguous: over nine in ten voters (94%) think evidence about what works should influence policymaking in the U.S.**

- **Strong majorities (89%) support evidence-based policymaking.**
 - This view is broadly bipartisan: **91% of Republicans, 86% of independents and 90% of Democrats** support evidence-based policymaking.
- **Voters say evidence should be a top influence in policymaking.**
 - 94% say evidence of what works should influence policymaking, on par with voter or public opinion (94%) and the Constitution (94%), and far above lobbyists (30%) or political donors (19%).



- **Voters believe that special interests currently shape policy more than evidence.**
 - A majority of respondents believe that political donors (67%) and lobbyists (55%) wield a lot of influence over policy, compared to the Constitution (28%), public opinion (22%) or evidence of what works (18%).
 - That differs sharply from how Americans think policy decisions should be made. Regardless of political affiliation, voters believe evidence of what works (75%), public opinion (77%) and the Constitution (82%) should all influence policy a lot – not lobbyists (6%) or political donors (5%).

Surveying American Attitudes Toward Evidence-Based Policymaking

Executive Summary, continued

Respondents also **strongly favored a thoughtful, data-driven approach to investing taxpayer dollars** over broad, indiscriminate cuts to programs and agencies.

- **Americans want the government to spend smarter.**
 - By a 21-point margin (58% to 37%), voters say the primary goal of evidence-based policy should be **identifying the best programs to expand**, rather than identifying wasteful programs to cut.
 - 72% of voters are more favorable toward evidence-based policymaking if it means the government spends the same amount but **focuses on programs proven to work**.
- **Voters believe evidence can help leaders solve problems and rebuild trust.**
 - 92% of respondents believe that looking at evidence of what works will make sure the government is actually making progress solving problems instead of doing the same things year after year.
 - 89% of respondents believe that trust in government can be rebuilt by ensuring programs are doing their job.
 - 91% want a smarter government focused on performance instead of ideology.

While evidence-based policymaking enjoys broad support, **Americans are divided on what constitutes reliable, impartial data.**

- **Voters are split on whether evidence is credible or manipulated by politicians.**
 - While evidence-based policymaking enjoys broad support, there is a near even split (47% vs. 46%) between those who believe that statistics and data from well-designed research are credible and those who believe data are manipulated or "cherry-picked" by politicians.
- **Voters are more likely to support leaders who use evidence to guide policy.**
 - 85% of respondents say they are more likely to vote for officials who support policies and programs that have been shown to work through evidence.
 - 76% say they are less likely to vote for officials who continue making policy decisions without consulting research.

These findings and more can be found in the full topline [from our survey here](#). You can also access the [publicly available crosstabs here](#).