

State of the Union: Majorities on both sides of the border believe American Age is in its final chapter

Three-in-five Americans, Canadians believe U.S. electoral system is weakening

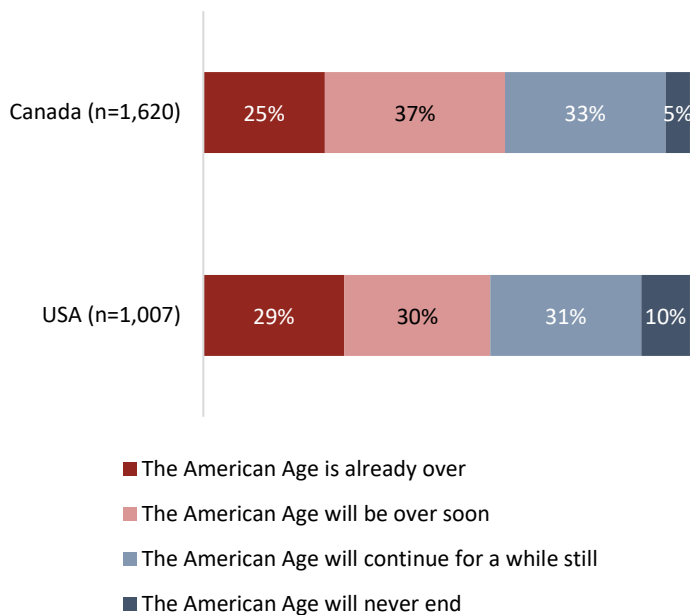
March 1, 2022 – As U.S. President Joe Biden readies his first State of the Union address, a new cross-border study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds many in the union, and their northern neighbours, dismayed with the state of democracy in the United States.

Majorities of Americans believe elections are becoming less free and fair in their country (58%), power is increasingly out of the hands of the average American (66%) and the rule of law is not being applied equally (67%). Half in the U.S. (50%) believe human rights are becoming less protected. On all those measures, at least three-in-five Canadians agree that those pillars of democracy are crumbling in their southern neighbour.

While Canadians believe some of those democratic aspects are deteriorating in their own country, it pales in comparison in how negative Americans assess their home country's situation. Americans, too, are more disillusioned with their federal government than Canadians. Seven-in-ten (70%) of Americans believe their federal government does not care about the issues that are important to them, a larger proportion than the Canadians (59%) who say the same.

Meanwhile, Americans are also much more critical than Canadians when it comes to evaluating other aspects of their society. One-third (32%) of Americans believe American society is caring, one-third (33%) believe the U.S. is a positive player in world affairs and two-in-five (43%) say it is a safe country overall. On all three measures, more Americans are likely to say the opposite is true.

In your belief, is the American Age over, or will it continue for the foreseeable future?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Jan. 27-31, 2022 among a representative randomized sample of 1,620 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

ARI conducted a second online survey from Jan. 27-31, 2022 among a representative randomized sample of 1,007 American adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum USA](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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All this comes as majorities on both sides of the border believe America's time as the dominant world power is already over or ending soon. Three-in-five Canadians and Americans believe the American Age is coming to a close if not already past.

More Key Findings:

- Three-in-five Canadians (63%) and Americans (58%) believe U.S. elections are becoming less free and fair. Few Americans (20%) and Canadians (13%) believe the opposite.
- Four-in-five (82%) of those who voted for former President Donald Trump in the 2020 election believe the federal government ignores issues that are important to them. They are joined by three-in-five (60%) of those who voted for President Joe Biden.

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

INDEX

Part One: Direction of U.S. a concern for both countries

- **Is the American Age over?**

Part Two: National self assessments

- **Americans on America: They don't much like what they see**
- **Canadians more divided about their own prospects**

Part One: Direction of U.S. a concern for both countries

In the first part of this two-study series, Canadians said they were worried that political turmoil in the United States would affect their own country's economy and security. Given the two countries share the world's largest undefended border, and the U.S. is Canada's largest trading partner, this is a natural concern. The two countries are joined at the hip in many ways.

Related: [Angst of the Americas: Four-in-five Canadians worry about the domestic impacts of continued U.S. political turmoil](#)

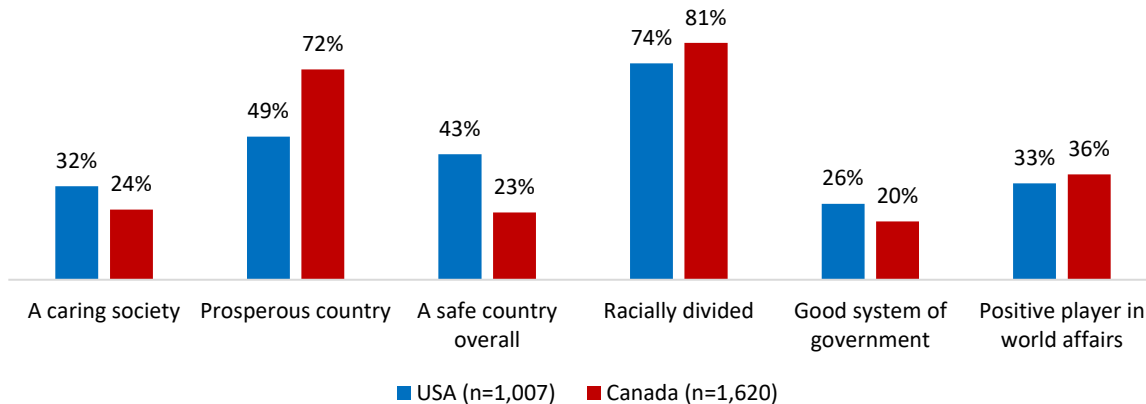
As many Canadians worry about the bleed-over effects of continuing American political discord, residents of both countries offer a dismal assessment of the United States. Few Americans or Canadians describe American society as caring. Less than that say the U.S. has a good system of government. And those who would say the United States has a beneficial influence on the world (33% in the U.S., 36% in Canada) are outnumbered by those who say the opposite (45% in both countries).

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Instead, many Canadians and Americans see a country in the United States that is racially divided. A plurality in the U.S. (47%) and a majority in Canada (68%) also say the country is unsafe.

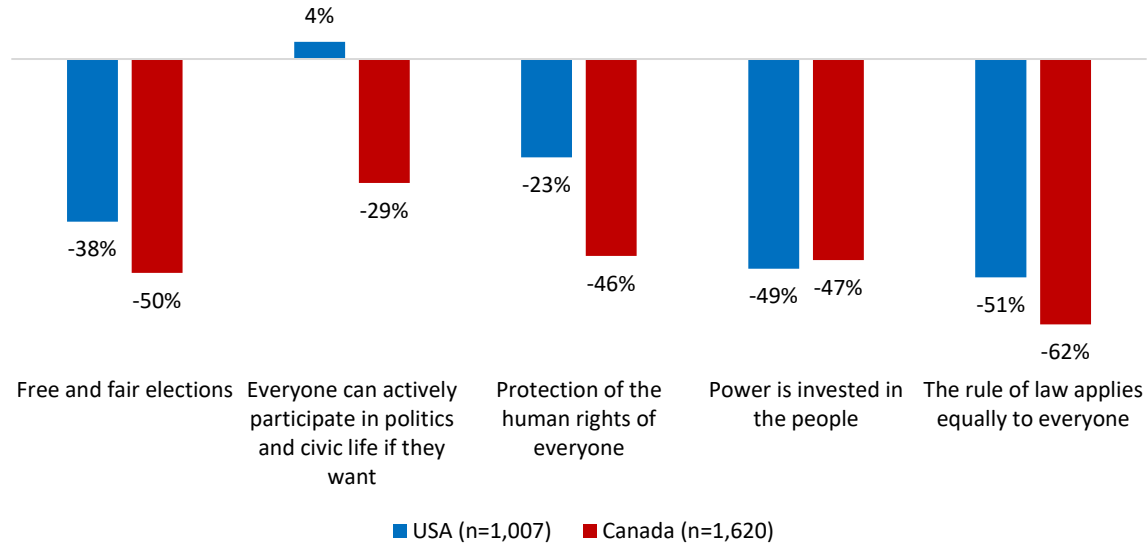
**Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the United States:
(Percent selecting 'accurate' shown)**



When asked specifically to focus on the standing of key pillars of democracy in the United States, residents on both sides of the 49th parallel – especially Canadians – are negative.

On all five measures – free and fair elections, ease of participation in civic life, protection of human rights, the power of the average American, equal application of the rule of law – Canadians are more likely to believe they are weakening than becoming stronger. When it comes to ease of participation, Americans who believe that aspect of democracy has been bolstered slightly outnumber those who believe the opposite. For the rest of the pillars, Americans are more likely to believe they are crumbling:

Percentage of each country who say each is improving minus those who say each is worsening in the United States:

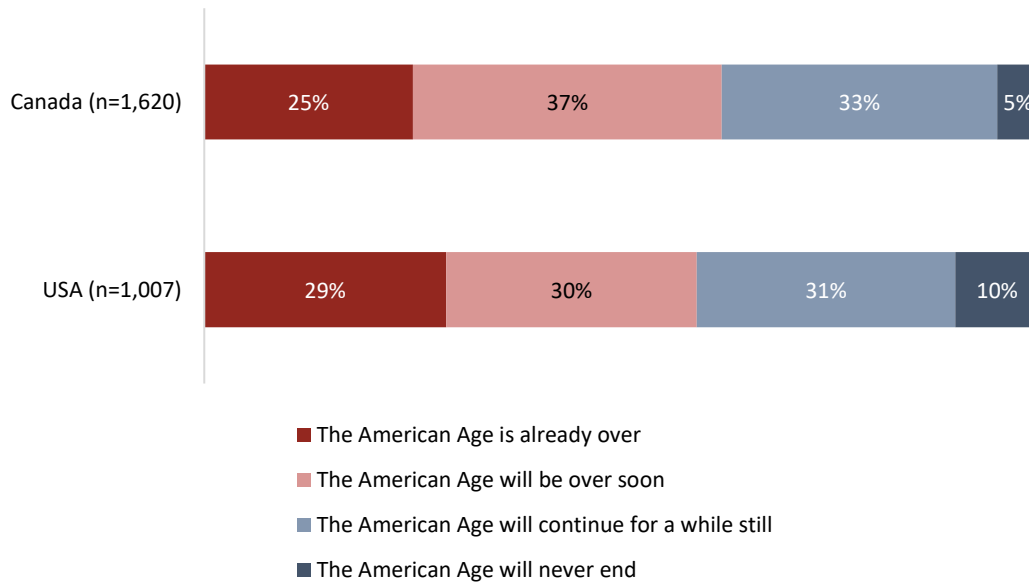


Is the American Age over?

Some historians have classified the era since the middle of the 20th century as the American Century or American Age. The U.S. rose to dominance after the First World War, standing with the U.S.S.R. as a global superpower after the Second World War, and then alone after the Soviet Union fell in 1989. Some wonder if the time of American global dominance in political, economic and cultural terms is coming to an end as China increasingly asserts itself on an international stage and an aggressive Russia seeks to return to past glory.

Three-in-five on both sides of the border believe the American Age is over or will be shortly:

In your belief, is the American Age over, or will it continue for the foreseeable future?



Part Two: National self assessments

Americans on America: They don't much like what they see

A study released by ARI at the beginning of February showed that most Canadians view their society positively but are much more split on how they view their government. Equal numbers believe Canada has a good system of government (42%) as the opposite (45%). Meanwhile, seven-in-ten (71%) say they are proud to live in Canada, and three-in-five call Canadian society caring (63%) and prosperous (62%).

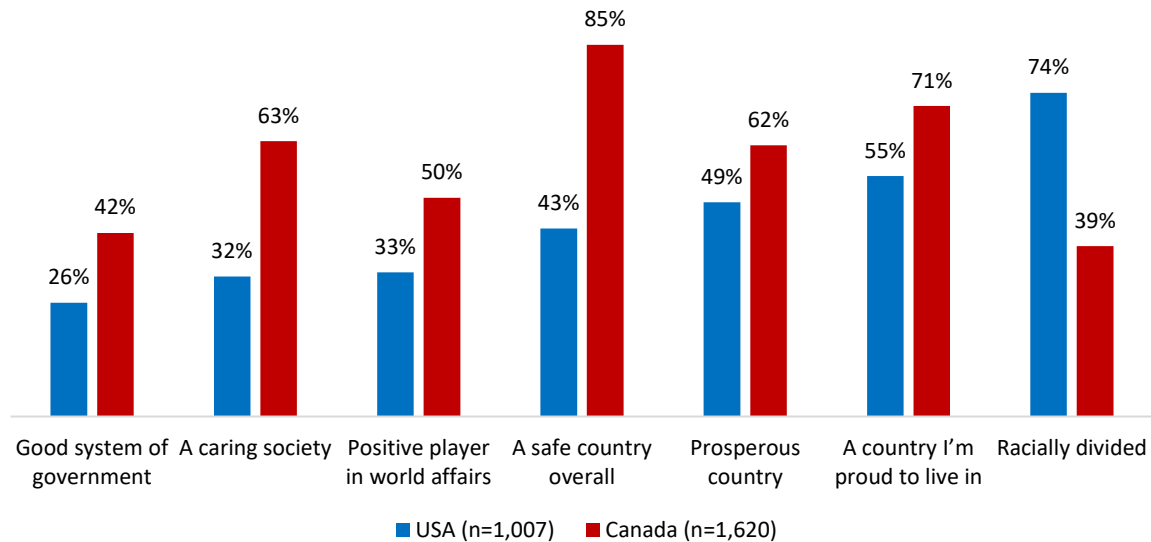
Related: [Two-in-five say there's "no room" for compromise in Canada](#)

Americans, on the other hand, are much more negative about their country and its society. One-quarter of Americans believe they have a good system of government, one-third believe they live in a caring society, one-third say the U.S. has a positive international effect, two-in-five say the U.S. is safe overall and three-quarters believe America is racially divided – all are much more negative appraisals than Canadians have for their own country.

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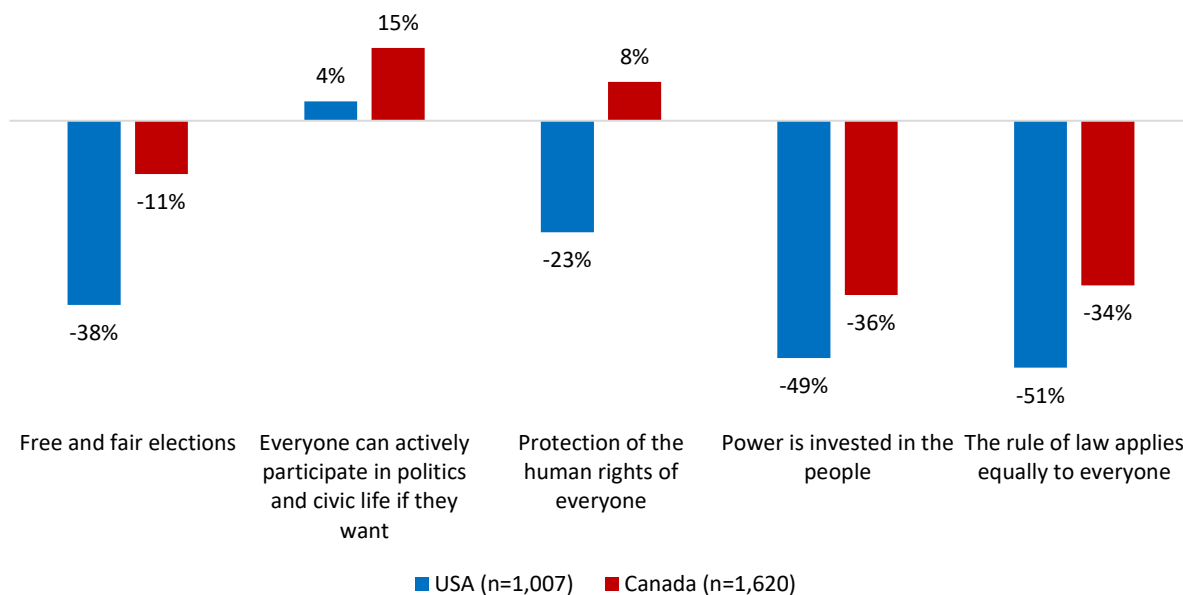
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Based on your own experiences and perceptions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the country you live in: (Percent selecting 'accurate' shown)



Americans, too, are more likely than Canadians to see cracks in their respective country's democratic foundation. Though, on both sides of the border, those who believe the application of the rule of law is becoming less equal, elections are becoming less free and fair, and the average citizen is losing their power outnumber those who believe the opposite:

Percentage of each country who say each is improving minus those who say each is worsening in the country they live in:

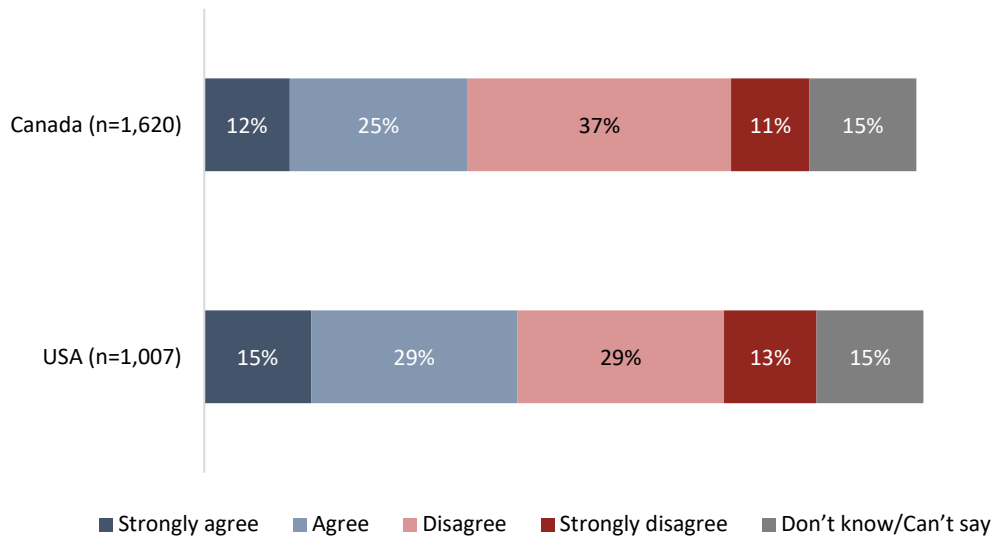


Political division is a concern on both sides of the border, but Americans are more likely to believe there is an unbridgeable political divide than Canadians and less likely to believe there is room for compromise:

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Agree vs. disagree -
"There is no room for political compromise in my country today"



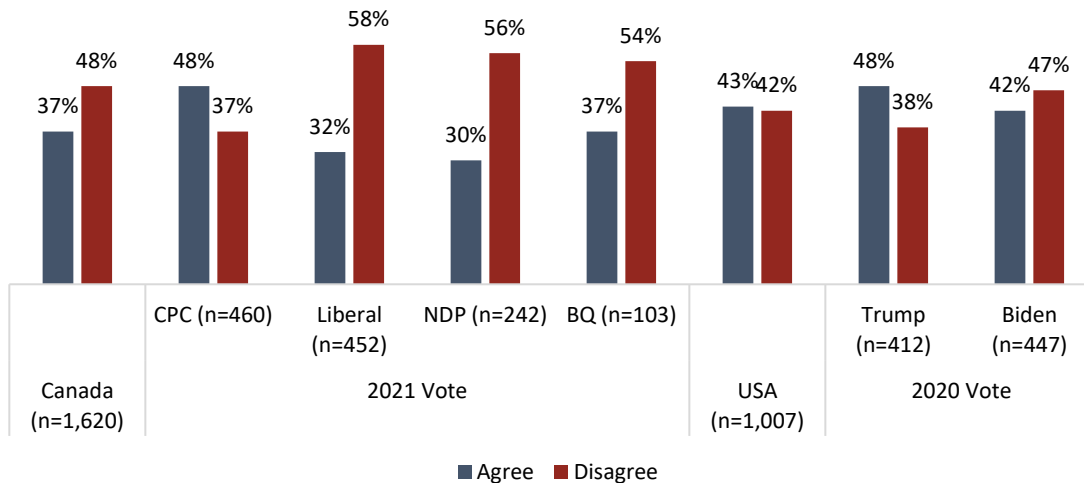
Past Conservatives and Trump voters share nearly identical views on this question. In each case half (48%) agree that compromise is lacking, while two-in-five disagree. President Joe Biden [appealed for unity](#) after he was elected, though he's struggled to find bipartisan agreement to get his [Build Back Better infrastructure bill passed](#). Still, there are more Biden voters who believe there is room for compromise than those who don't.

A slight majority of non-CPC voters in Canada disagree and feel that compromise is still possible in Canadian politics. This comes as the Liberals seek to craft a budget that will likely [need NDP support](#) to pass this spring.

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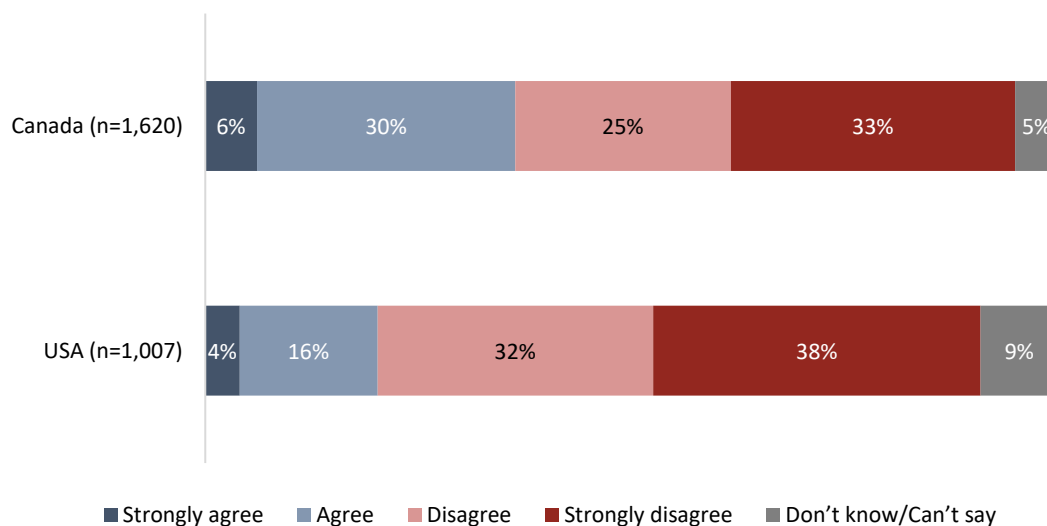
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**Agree vs. disagree -
"There is no room for political compromise in my country today"**



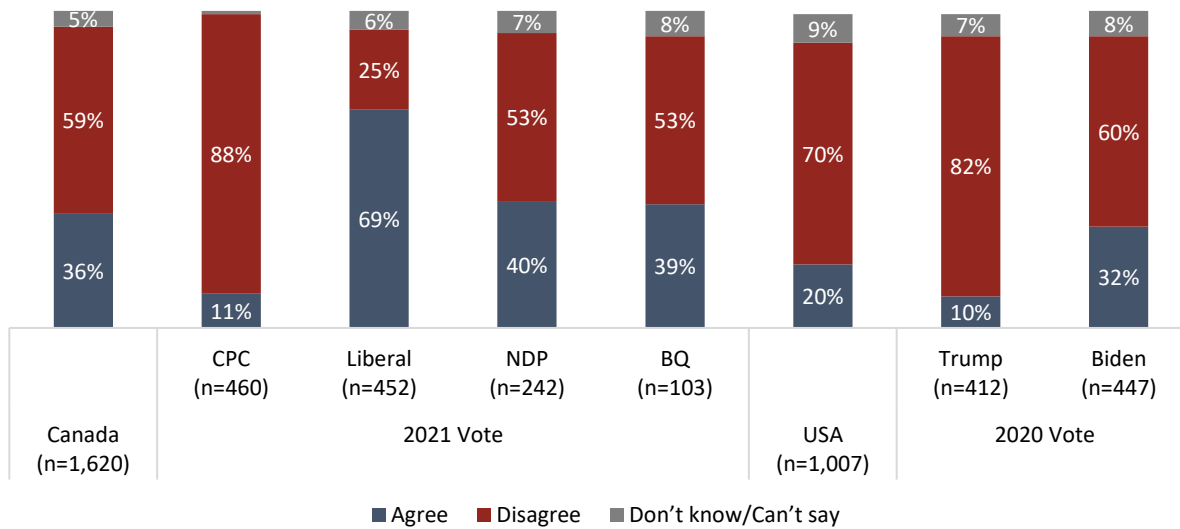
There is a larger gap between the two countries on how they feel about their respective federal governments. Three-in-five (59%) Canadians believe their federal government ignores them, a significant number, but a slightly lower proportion than the seven-in-ten Americans (70%) who say the same.

**Agree vs. disagree -
"My federal government cares about issues that are important to me"**



In Canada, while a majority feel disenchanted with their federal government, nearly twice as many Canadians as Americans feel that their federal government is dialed into the issues they care most about. Past Liberals are by far most likely to say this about the government they supported. However, in the U.S., a majority of those who cast votes for Biden feel the president is not aligned with their priorities:

**Agree vs. disagree -
"My federal government cares about issues that are important to me"**



For detailed results for Canadian respondents by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

For detailed results for American respondents by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).