

A Changing World

Within the last three years, the American people, alongside the rest of the world, have struggled not only to face the trials of pandemic living and expectations, but have also struggled through what some may argue to be a turning point in American history, politics, society, culture, and nationwide values.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade*—precipitating the loss of accessible reproductive care in many Southern and Midwestern states—is a ruling 61% of Americans disagree with. This mismatch between the desires of general voters and the policies enacted by the federal government emphasizes the chasm growing between people and their leaders. This is coupled with a distrust of law enforcement agencies, which has been substantially exacerbated among the general population following the high-profile police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020. The recent failings of police communication and action at the Robb Elementary School massacre in Uvalde, Texas only further strengthens this sentiment. The pandemic's influence on the mass resignation of hundreds of providers in the American healthcare system, as well as the decrease in imports on common consumer goods has created an infrastructural instability that threatens the common American's perception of the strength of the economy. Alongside the current climate crisis, many young Americans feel disconnected with common social norms like homeownership and raising children—contributing to a nationwide feeling of hopelessness for the future.

In a cellular age, the publication of these events in an easily accessible format for consumption means a constant stream of devastating news and information for most American people. With many communities feeling disconnected and distrusting in the government's ability to protect the American people and maintain functional infrastructure, many responsibilities of politics and lifestyle have fallen into the hands of the average citizen. The instability of the American lifestyle today—as well as the changes in expectations of community commitment from the American people—have rearranged social ideals of what should be a priority in American life. For many, values of family, self-care, friends, and leisure remain a lifelong goal, shadowed by the search for balance between one's responsibility to community and one's time for personal needs. Navigating this evolving society, many Americans struggle with their perception of what a “life well lived” truly means, as well as how to find beauty, family, and happiness in a world undeniably plagued by pain and hardship.

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Information gathered from: “‘Systemic Failures’ in Uvalde Shooting Went Far beyond Local Police, Texas House Report Details,” [Texastribune.org](https://www.texastribune.org/2022/07/17/uvalde-shooting-report/), July 17, 2022; “U.S. Senators Reach Deal on Gun Legislation in Aftermath of Uvalde Shooting,” [Texastribune.org](https://www.texastribune.org/2022/06/17/uvalde-shooting-senate-deal/), June 17, 2022; Richard Young et al., “Civil Society and the Global Pandemic: Building Back Different?” [Carnegieendowment.org](https://www.carnegieendowment.org/2021/09/30/civil-society-and-the-global-pandemic-building-back-different/), September 31, 2021; “After a Year of Pandemic and Crisis, How Have American Values Changed?” [Commonwealthfund.org](https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2021/03/31/after-a-year-of-pandemic-and-crisis-how-have-american-values-changed/), March 31, 2021; Aarts Wilthagen et al., “The New Common: How the Covid-19 Pandemic is Transforming Society” (Springer International Publishing AG, 2021); Audie Cornish's “George Floyd's Impact On The Fight For Racial Justice” in *All Things Considered* (NPR), 2021; “Covid-19” in [Britannica.org](https://www.britannica.com/topic/covid-19) (n.d.); “About Six-in-Ten Americans Say Abortion Should Be Legal in All or More Cases” [Pewresearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org/2022/06/13/abortion-legal-in-all-or-more-cases/), June 13, 2022.