



The Alliance

FOR DIPLOMACY AND JUSTICE

As part of The Alliance's "Rebuilding Common Ground" project, an initiative that seeks to identify narratives about human rights and international engagement that resonate across political divides, The Alliance recently commissioned a research firm to conduct a nationally representative survey to generate actionable data on community concerns, values, democracy, foreign policy, and Americans' attitudes toward human rights. The survey (fielded June 28–July 2, 2026) included 2,106 registered voters—45% of whom voted for Trump in the 2024 election and 44% for Harris—and was weighted to reflect the U.S. registered voter population across gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education.

Here are five key takeaways on human rights, shared values, and the United States' role in the world.

1. Human rights values have overwhelming support among Americans.

Across the core values tested, at least 88% or more of Americans agree with principles centered on safety, freedom of expression, equal opportunity, fair treatment, and basic needs. Ninety-seven percent agree people should be safe from violence in their homes and communities, while 95% agree people should be able to express their opinions without fear of punishment. Americans also overwhelmingly agree that people should be free from violence and harassment, treated with basic dignity, and protected from losing their job or housing because of who they are.

The survey findings offer a clear starting point for human rights advocates and policymakers: Rather than assuming the public must first be convinced to value fundamental rights, the data reveal that core democratic principles already enjoy overwhelming, widespread support.

2. Americans want the United States to lead by example on human rights.

Ninety-two percent say leading by example on human rights is important to the United States' image in the world, including 75% who say it is very important. Seventy-nine percent agree that the U.S. government has a responsibility to set a good example for the rest of the world, and 82% believe America is strongest when it sets a values-based example that other countries want to follow.

The U.S. foreign policy establishment has often failed to meet these expectations, now more than ever. This presents an opportunity for human rights activists, lawmakers, and political candidates to center human rights as a foreign policy priority, reflecting Americans' beliefs and expectations.



3. Americans support working with other countries to address humanitarian and global challenges.

Eighty-eight percent say it is important for the United States to work with other countries to provide humanitarian assistance to people in crisis, and 76% agree that helping people abroad is consistent with American values. Eighty-eight percent also recognize that problems originating abroad can affect Americans at home, while 81% agree that the United States needs to work with other countries to address problems.

These findings question the popular framing of a country too divided to find common ground and increasingly uninterested in the world beyond its borders. Americans may sharply disagree about political parties, policies, priorities, and terminology, but beneath those divisions lies broad agreement on many values that should guide how the United States engages with the world.

4. Americans support international engagement when it gets specific.

While 35% say the United States should eliminate international engagement when asked about it in the abstract, support rises to 91% to 95% for specific forms of global cooperation, including combating terrorism and cybercrime, holding war criminals accountable, and addressing global health threats. The findings point to a significant gap between reactions to the term "international engagement" and support for many of the actions that engagement includes.

These findings challenge the idea that Americans simply want to retreat from the world.

5. Language, context, and framing matter.

Across the survey, the questions reflected that voters use varied language to describe similar values, attach different meanings to broad terms, and may shift their responses when abstract principles are applied to specific policies or actions and when provided concrete information.

In phase two of the "Rebuilding Common Ground" project, we will conduct a qualitative assessment of the data, allowing us to hear voters in their own words and clarify any ambiguous language.

Why do these findings matter? This data shows that protecting human rights is a shared value, and Americans care about global engagement. This *actionable, hopeful* data provides a roadmap for how the U.S. government and the American people can engage globally to rebuild and deliver justice at home and abroad.

This is an opportunity for all stakeholders who support human rights. Disseminating this information is a top priority. We need meaningful, sustained relationships with people and partners around the world, and we need meaningful engagement with Americans at home so they can see themselves, their values, and their interests reflected in that work. The Alliance believes this data can serve as a starting point to rebuild and strengthen those connections, bring more Americans into the conversation, and build the wider, more durable public constituency needed for a future U.S. foreign policy that values and centers human rights.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact connect@thealliancefordiplomacyandjustice.org.

