



Is Sexual Harassment Inevitable in the Workplace?

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Concern about sexual harassment of women in the workplace has grown over the last three decades, but Americans do not think sexual harassment at work is inevitable, according to this [Exclusive Third Rail with OZY-Marist Poll](#), commissioned by WGBH Boston and OZY Media for the new PBS prime-time, cross-platform debate program *Third Rail with OZY*, hosted by Emmy Award®-winning journalist Carlos Watson.

The national survey was conducted by The Marist Poll in advance of this week's *Third Rail with OZY* debate, airing Friday, October 13, 2017 at 8:30pm ET (check local listings) and streaming on pbs.org/thirdrail, which asks: **Is sexual harassment inevitable in the workplace?**

Other finds of the exclusive Marist poll: most Americans (87%) consider sexual harassment to be a problem in the workplace. And while there is a divide about the severity of the issue, the proportion of residents who think sexual harassment is a big problem has more than doubled over the last thirty years. Forty two percent of U.S. residents, up from 17% in a 1986 Time/Yankelovich Clancy Shulman Poll, say sexual harassment is a big problem. Forty five percent report it is somewhat of a problem, and 11% believe it is not a problem at all.

There is a gender gap. Men (16%) are nearly three times as likely as women (6%) to say that there is no problem regarding workplace sexual harassment. Other differences fall along racial, age, and partisan lines. Non-white residents (52%), residents under 45 years of age (50%), and Democrats (53%) are *more likely* than white residents (36%), those age 45 or older (36%), and Republicans (31%) to perceive sexual harassment to be a big problem. By four to one, Republicans (24%) are more likely than Democrats (6%) to say sexual harassment is not an issue.

When it comes to defining the issue, 74% of Americans consider sexual harassment to be sexual abuse. Twenty four percent disagree with that characterization. Democrats (80%) are more likely than Republicans (66%) to describe sexual harassment as sexual abuse. One in three Republicans (33%), compared with 19% of Democrats, do not consider sexual harassment to be abuse.

Many Americans (60%) disagree that what some women perceive to be sexual harassment is actually just innocent flirting intended as flattery. More than three in ten (32%) agree with the statement. Regardless of most demographic groups, at least a majority of residents disagree with the statement that these actions are meant as flirtations.

**All references to the survey must be sourced as "Exclusive Third Rail with OZY-Marist Poll"*

Americans perceive workplace sexual harassment to be a problem which can be overcome and they place the responsibility for eliminating it on business. Nearly seven in ten residents nationally (69%) disagree with the idea that sexual harassment is inevitable. Twenty seven percent say it is a fact of life. Regardless of demographic group, more than six in ten residents nationally think sexual harassment is preventable. Though, white Americans (73%) are more likely than non-white residents (62%) to have this view.

“Recent headlines out of Hollywood, FOX, Silicon Valley and elsewhere suggest that sexual harassment in the workplace is a very real issue for many women. The Marist findings indicate that the vast majority of Americans acknowledge this problem, but many disagree about the solutions,” says Denise Dilanni, series creator and Executive-in-Charge of *Third Rail with OZY*.

Nearly two-thirds of U.S. residents (65%) believe it is the responsibility of companies to prevent or solve the problem of sexual harassment. However, 28% think it is the responsibility of the individuals involved to prevent or solve the issue. Men and women differ on this question. While 73% of women believe it is up to their company to guard against sexual harassment, fewer men (56%) share this opinion.

When it comes to perceptions of men and women in the workplace, a majority of Americans (57%) say men often resent women who have more power than they do while 39% believe men do not. A sharp gender gap exists. Seventy one percent of women say men resent women with more authority while 54% of men say they do not. Partisan differences are also present. Sixty six percent of Democrats and 53% of independents report men resent women with more power. Republicans divide, 47% to 46%.

For more on Third Rail with OZY:

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For more on The Marist Poll:

maristpoll.marist.edu

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About The Marist Poll

Founded in 1978, The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of social issues. Through the regular public release of surveys, MIPO has built a legacy of independence, reliability, and accuracy. Its results are featured in print and electronic media throughout the world.

About Third Rail with OZY

Third Rail with OZY is a co-production of WGBH Boston and OZY Media. Host: Carlos Watson. Executive in Charge: Denise Dilanni. Executive Producers: Eugenia Harvey and Cameo George. Funding is provided by Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS. Exclusive *Third*

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Rail with OZY poll conducted by The Marist Poll, Marist College. Special thanks to collaborator The Conversation. Social media integration by Telescope.

About WGBH Boston

WGBH Boston is one of America's preeminent public broadcasters and the largest producer of PBS broadcast and digital content, including *Frontline*, *NOVA*, *American Experience*, *Masterpiece*, *Antiques Roadshow*, *Arthur*, as well as other children's, primetime, and lifestyle series. WGBH also is a major supplier of programming for public radio, and a leader in educational multimedia for the classroom, supplying content to PBS LearningMedia, a free national broadband service for teachers and students. WGBH is a pioneer in technologies and services that make media accessible to those with hearing or visual impairments. WGBH has been recognized with hundreds of honors: Emmys, Peabodys, duPont-Columbia Awards and Oscars. More information at wgbh.org.

About OZY Media

With 25 million monthly unique users and 2 million subscribers, OZY brings readers "the new and the next," offering 100% original content, with a focus on the future, via unique OZY News, OZY Magazine, OZY TV and OZY Events products. Called "the new media magnet for the news hungry" by Fortune magazine, OZY's in-depth and high-quality journalism has attracted a number of high-profile media partners including The New York Times, NPR, PBS NewsHour, TED, The Financial Times, The Huffington Post and many more, as well as guest editors including Bill Gates, President Bill Clinton, and Prime Minister Tony Blair. Founded in 2013 by Emmy award winning journalist Carlos Watson and co-founder Samir Rao, the OZY team is based in Mountain View, CA and backed by leading Silicon Valley investors including Laurene Powell Jobs, Ron Conway, David Drummond, Larry Sonsini and Dan Rosensweig and a significant investment from publishing giant Axel Springer.

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