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Tone in Washington Worse Since Trump... Heightened Political Rancor Anticipated with New Congress... Majority Against Increased Political Correctness For Immediate Release

Contact: Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Griffith
Marist College
845.575.5050

This NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Reports:

Seven in ten (70%) Americans think the tone of the discourse between Republicans and Democrats has gotten worse since President Donald Trump was elected. 21% say it has stayed the same, and 5% believe it has improved. Rare bipartisan agreement exists. 81% of Democrats, 65% of Republicans, and 73% of independents think the tone in Washington has gotten worse since Trump took office.

“Americans don’t agree about much when it comes to national politics,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “But, regardless of one’s party preference, people think political discourse is deteriorating.”

More than three in four Americans do not expect that a new Congress will improve the tone and level of civility between Republicans and Democrats in Washington, D.C. In fact, the plurality (41%) think the level of civility will get worse. An additional 35% believe the level of animosity will stay the same. 20% think the tone in Washington will improve. Democrats (30%) are more than twice as likely as Republicans (13%) and independents (14%) to think the hostility between the parties will ease.

Who’s to blame for the increased negativity in the nation’s capital? The media (37%) and President Trump (35%) top the list. 13% consider the Democrats in Congress to be responsible while 8% say the Republicans in Congress are at fault. Seven percent are unsure.

While the proportion of Americans who consider Trump to be fueling the rancorous fires has declined from 40% last month, the proportion of those who blame the media has increased from 29%.

The lack of civility in Washington, D.C. reflects the tenor on Main Street U.S.A. 68% of residents consider Americans overall to be less respectful of each other than a few years ago. Democrats (72%), Republicans (64%), and independents (70%) share this view. Only 5% perceive people to be more respectful, and 26% say Americans are about as respectful as they have been in the past few years.

Americans divide about whether or not they feel they can more freely speak their mind now compared with a few years ago. 47% say they do not feel they can be candid while 47% report they can. Six percent are unsure.

A majority of Americans (52%), including 76% of Republicans and 53% of independents, are against the country becoming more politically correct. 36%, including a majority (55%) of Democrats, favor a more politically correct nation. Five percent are unsure.

“Young people are more likely to want Americans to be sensitive in their language when it comes to the feelings of others,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “Older Americans are more likely to believe they should be able to say what they think.”