

# Shifting U.S. Vaccine Policy: Explaining Federal Actions and Exploring Public Opinion

February 19, 2026

**KFF**

The independent source for health policy research, polling, and news.

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# Federal vs State Roles in Determining Vaccine Policy

## Federal Government

- Determine vaccine authorization/approvals/ licensure (safety & efficacy)
- Conduct post-market safety/monitoring
- Develop national guidelines/ recommendations/ immunization schedules
- Require insurance coverage of recommended vaccines (ACA, other laws and regs)
- Fund/administer Vaccines for Children program and immunization grants
- Oversee vaccine injury compensation programs
- Collect data from state and local governments
- Communicate and educate the public

## State Governments

- Set vaccine mandates/requirements (including exemptions) for daycare/school or employment (e.g., healthcare workers)
- Determine which guidelines/ recommendations to follow
- Regulate healthcare worker immunization scope of practice (pharmacists, doctors)
- Authority to require state-regulated insurers to cover vaccines
- Collect data and can choose to report to federal government
- Communicate and educate the public

# Major Areas of Change Made by the Trump Administration

## Category

- Vaccine authorization/approvals/licensure
- Conduct post-market safety/monitoring
- Develop national guidelines/ recommendations/ immunization schedules
- Require insurance coverage of recommended vaccines (ACA, other laws and regs)
- Fund/administer Vaccines for Children program state immunization grants, R&D
- Oversee vaccine injury compensation programs
- Collect data from state and local governments
- Communicate and educate the public

## Change

- ✓ New restrictions on future COVID/flu vaccine approvals
- ✓ Questioning post-market safety/monitoring
- ✓ Changing national guidelines/recommendations/ schedules & reconstituting advisory committees
- ✓ Some changes to insurance coverage requirements (e.g., break-up of MMRV)
- ✓ Discontinuing R&D programs (mRNA vaccines, pandemic preparedness)
- ✓ Revisiting vaccine injury compensation programs
- ✓ Discontinuing certain data collection efforts
- ✓ Changing communications/messaging to public

# Timeline of Select Changes to U.S. Federal Vaccine Policy

**FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. confirmed as HHS Secretary

**MAY 20, 2025**

FDA requires clinical trials for approval of new COVID vaccine formulations

**MAY 27, 2025**

Kennedy says COVID vaccines for healthy pregnant women and children no longer recommended

**JUNE 9, 2025**

Kennedy removes all sitting members of ACIP

**AUGUST 27, 2025**

Susan Monarez removed as CDC Director 28 days after being confirmed

FDA limits scope of approval for 2025–2026 COVID-19 vaccines

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2025**

ACIP no longer recommends combination MMRV vaccine and changes COVID-19 vaccine recommendations

**DECEMBER 5, 2025**

ACIP ends recommendation for all newborns to receive hepatitis B birth dose

**JANUARY 5, 2026**

Childhood vaccine schedule changed — six vaccines no longer recommended for routine use

# Trump Administration Changes to Pediatric Vaccine Recommendations

Disease(s)/Vaccine	Pre-2025	As of January 2026	Change (Y/N)
Varicella	Routine	Routine	N
Rotavirus	Routine	SCDM	Y
RSV	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations (But listed as Routine)	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations (Moved from Routine)	N*
Pneumococcal	Routine	Routine	N
Meningococcal B	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations & SCDM	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations & SCDM	N
Meningococcal ACWY	Routine & Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations & SCDM	Y
MMR	Routine	Routine	N
Influenza	Routine	SCDM	Y
Polio	Routine	Routine	N
HPV	Routine	Routine; Doses reduced from 2 or 3 to 1	Y
Hepatitis B	Routine	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations & SCDM	Y
Hepatitis A	Routine & Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations & SCDM	Y
Haemophilus influenzae type b	Routine	Routine	N
DTaP; Tdap	Routine	Routine	N
Dengue	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations	N
COVID-19	Routine	SCDM	Y

Source: KFF, *The New Federal Vaccine Schedule for Children: What Changed and What Are the Implications?*, January 9, 2026.

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Meningococcal B	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations & SCDM	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations & SCDM	N
Meningococcal ACWY	Routine & Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations & SCDM	Y
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DTaP; Tdap	Routine	Routine	N
Dengue	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations	Certain High-Risk Groups/Populations	N
COVID-19	Routine	SCDM	Y

Source: KFF, *The New Federal Vaccine Schedule for Children: What Changed and What Are the Implications?*, January 9, 2026.

# Responses to Federal Vaccine Policy Changes

- **Many states (mostly Democratic) de-linking policies from CDC/ACIP recommendations**
- **States forming new “health alliances”**
- **Some Republican-led states moving to reduce school mandates (Idaho, Florida)**
- **Outside expert groups providing separate recommendations**
- **Private insurers have pledged to continue to cover all vaccines at no cost through 2026, regardless of federal changes**
- **Manufacturers have begun to signal/announce changes (e.g., Moderna phase 3 trials)**
- **Legal challenges both ways**
  - **AAP vs. Kennedy**
  - **Children’s Health Defense vs. AAP, Thomas vs. Monarez**

# Increasing Number of States Departing from Federal Vaccine Recommendations for *All* Childhood Vaccines

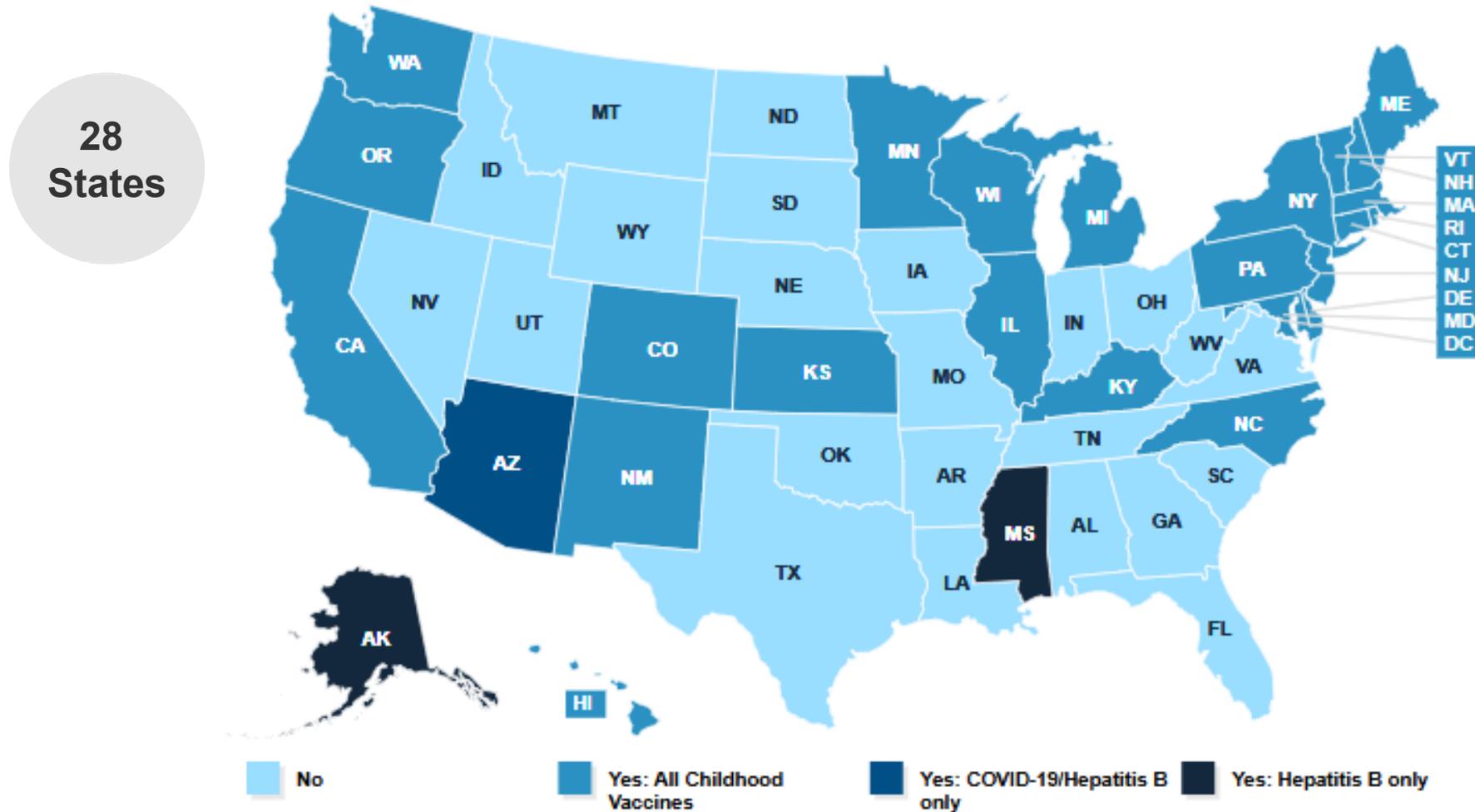
September 2025



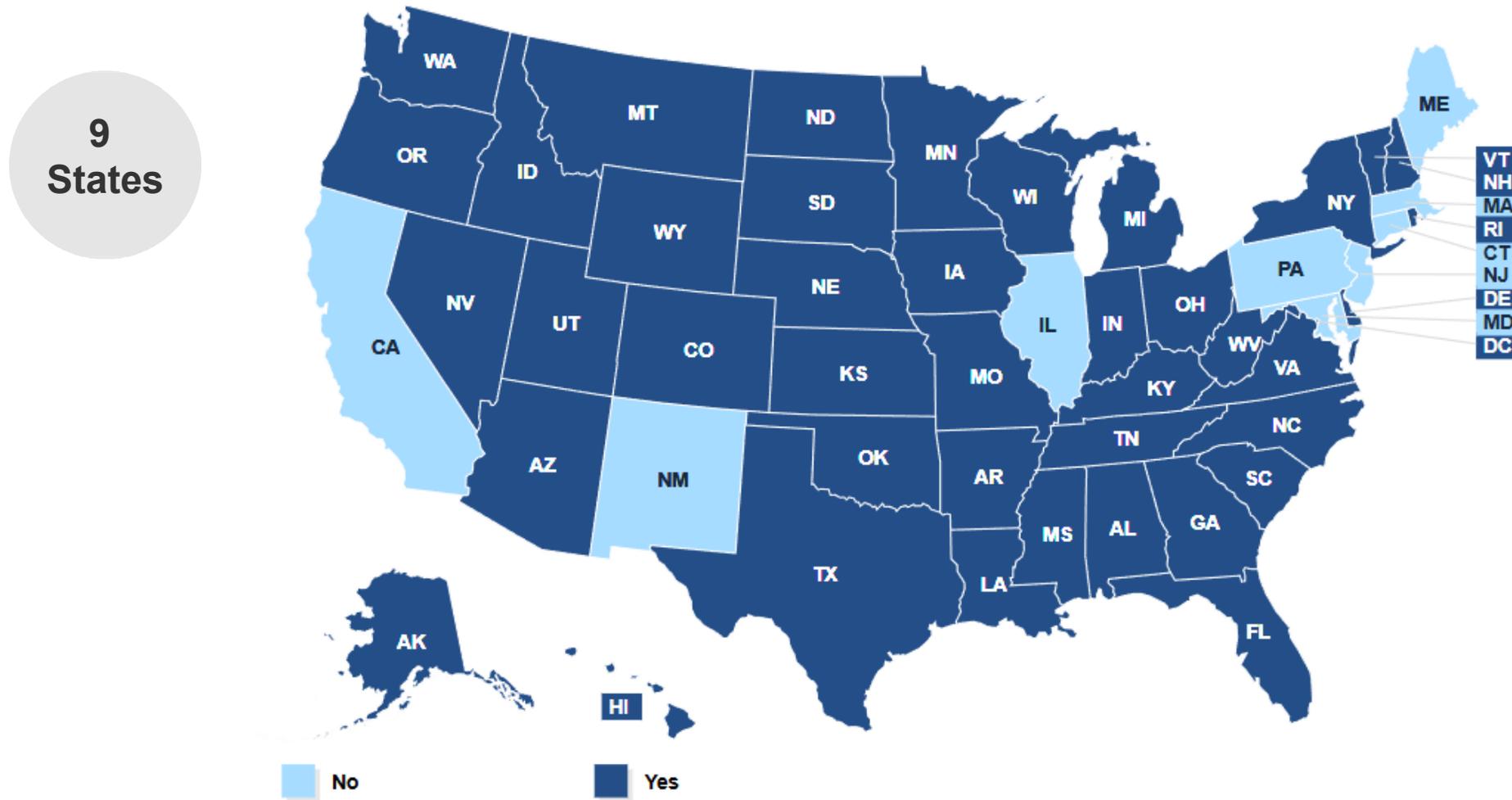
February 2026



# State Departs from CDC/ACIP for Childhood Vaccine Recommendations (February 10, 2026)



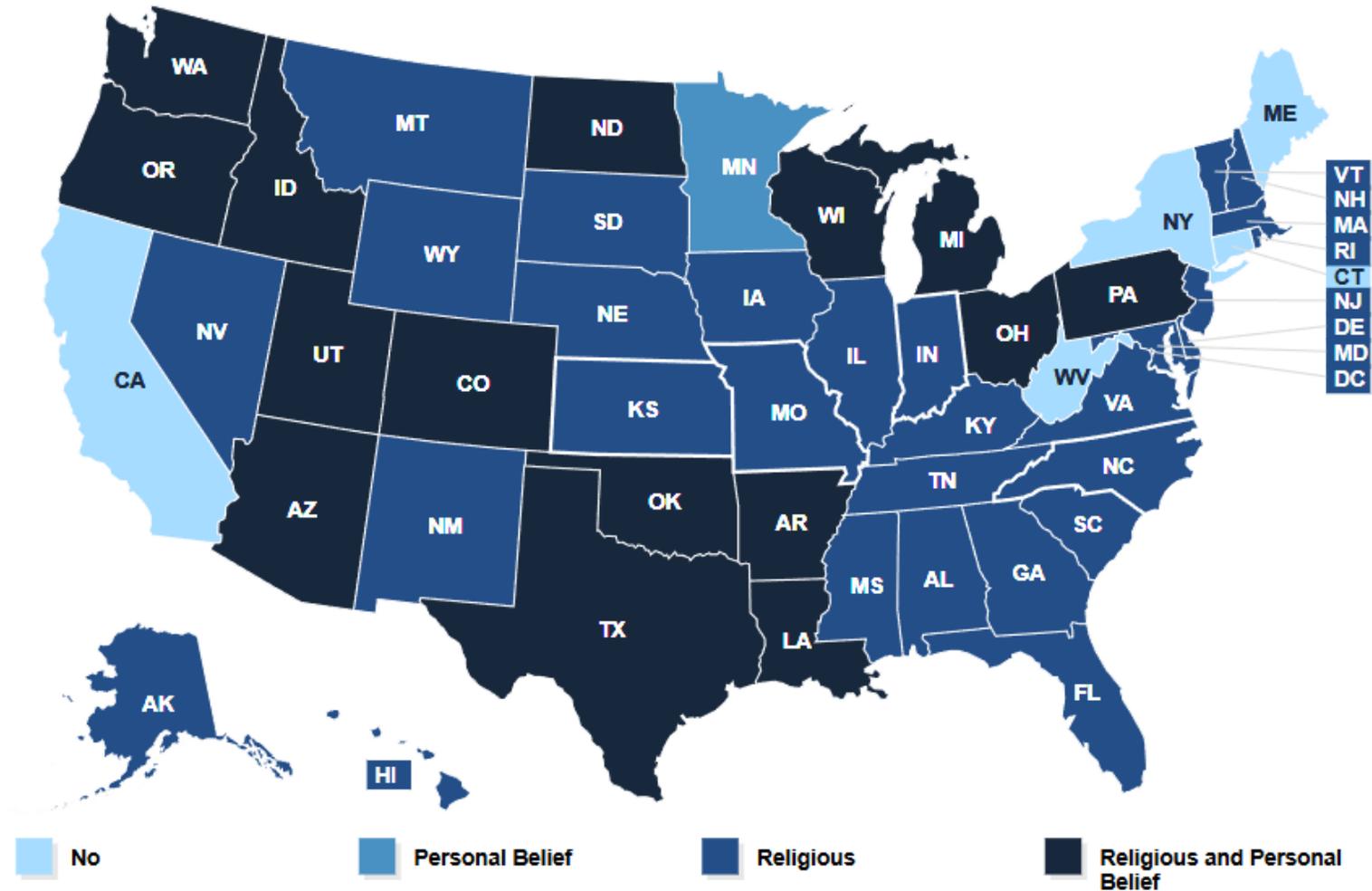
# State Requires Private Insurers to Cover Vaccines Based on Source Other Than CDC/ACIP (January 2026)



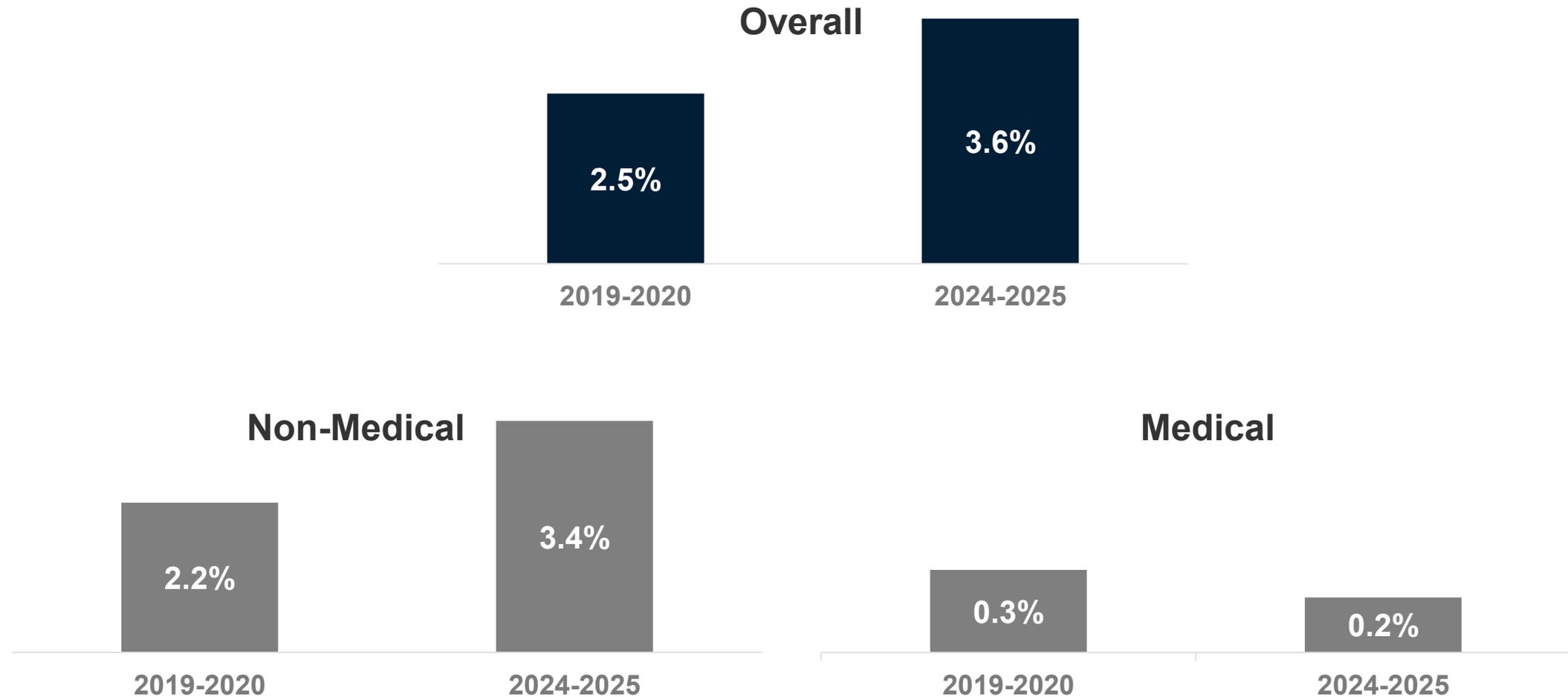
Note: Applies to state-regulated plans only (employer plans that are fully insured and individual and small-group marketplace plans).  
Source: KFF, State Health Facts, [State Requirements for Private Insurance Coverage of Vaccines](#), January 2026.

# State Allows Personal and Religious Exemptions from School Vaccine Requirements (2025)

46 States



# Non-Medical Exemptions Driving Rise In Exemptions Among Kindergarten Age Children, 2019-2020 & 2024-2025 School Years

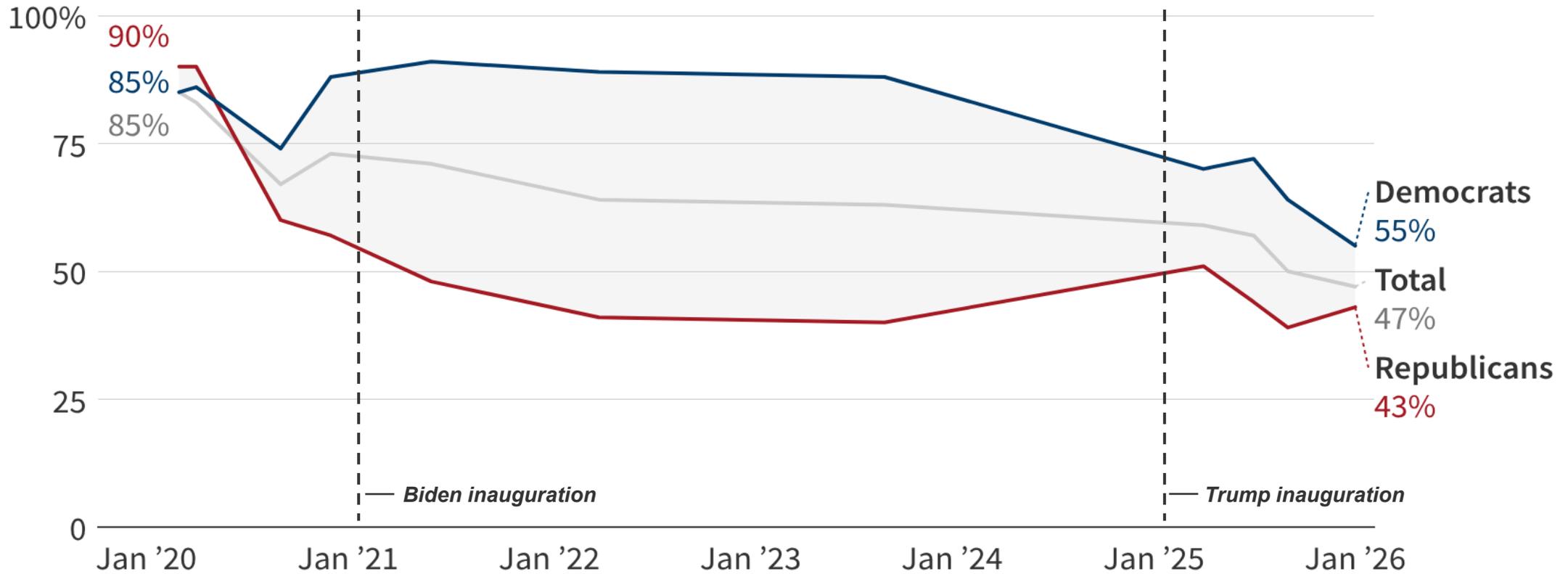


# What to Watch

- **Further changes to federal recommendations expected**
- **More divergence across the country (next school season is key marker)**
- **Trends in vaccine uptake overall and among school-age children**
- **Trends in disease incidence**
- **Trends in public trust**
- **Outcome of legal challenges**
- **Changes in investment and research decisions by vaccine manufacturers**

# Trust in CDC for Health Info Has Declined Amid Changing Partisan Views

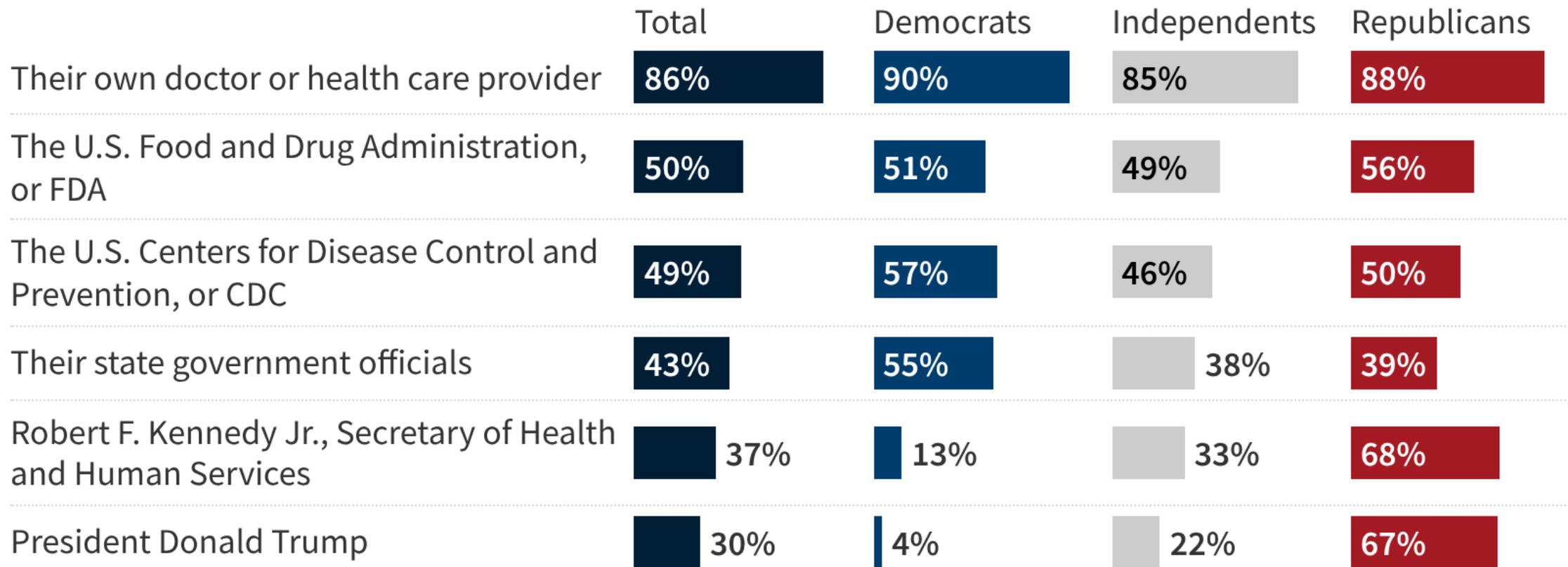
Percent who have a **great deal** or **fair amount** of trust in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide reliable information about vaccines, COVID-19 vaccines, and coronavirus



Note: Question wording changes over time. Source: KFF Health Tracking Polls/Tracking Polls on Health Information and Trust

# Current Picture: Individual Providers Most Trusted for Health Information; Others Are Divided

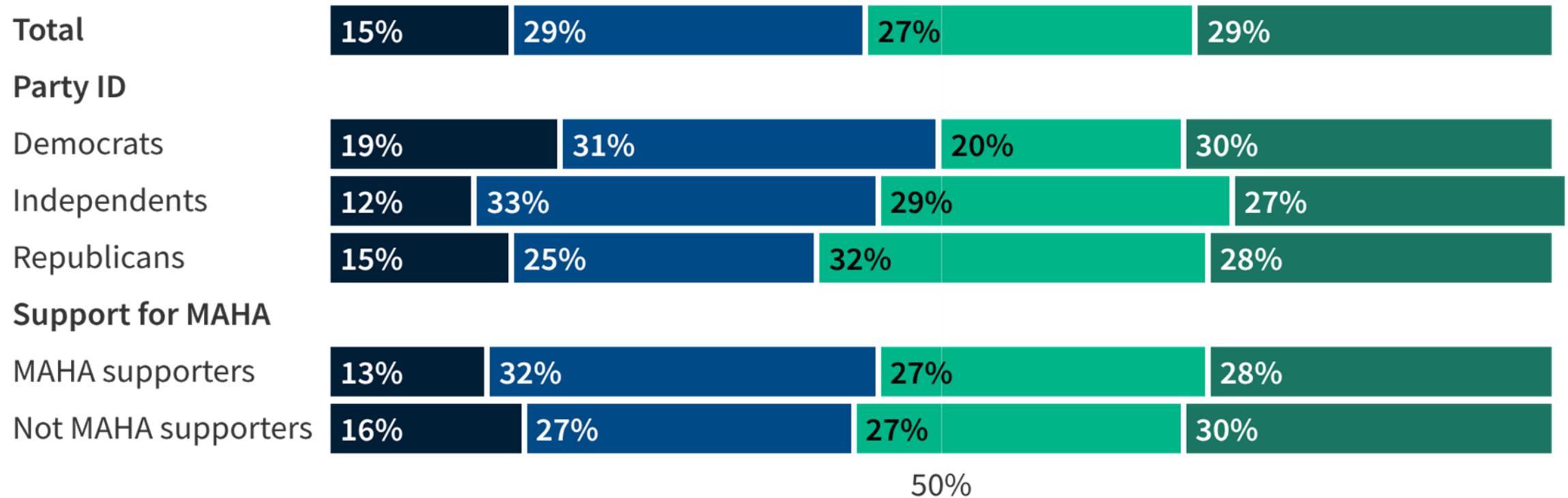
Percent who say they have a **great deal** or **fair amount** of trust in the following to provide reliable information about health issues



# Less Than Half of U.S. Adults Are Confident in Federal Health Agencies To Make Recommendations for Childhood Vaccines

How much confidence do you have in federal government health agencies like the CDC and FDA to make recommendations about childhood vaccine schedules?

■ A lot ■ Some ■ A little ■ None at all

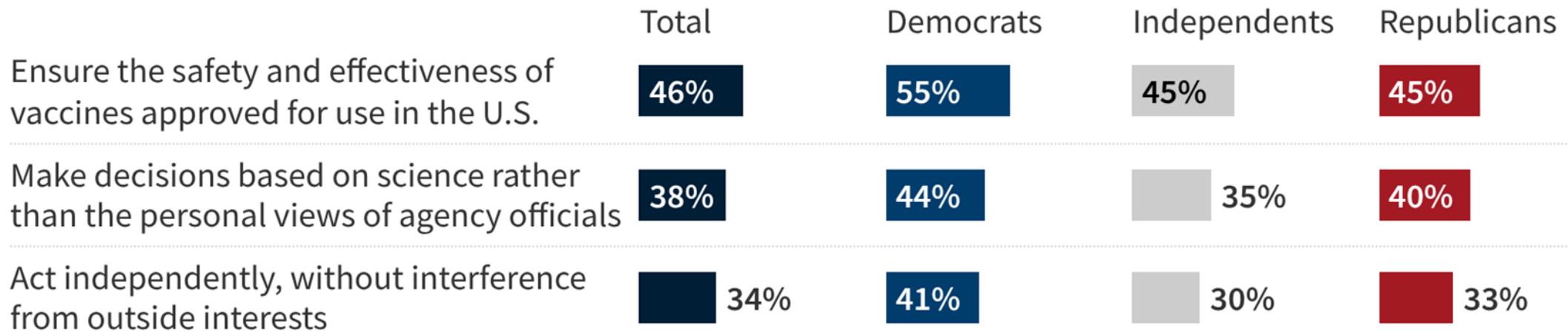


Note: See topline for full question wording.

Source: KFF Tracking Poll on Health Information and Trust (January 13-20, 2026)

# Across Partisanship, Fewer Than Half Are Confident in Government Health Agencies To Act Independently or To Make Decisions Based on Science

Percent who say they have a **lot** or **some** confidence in federal government health agencies like the FDA and FDA to do each of the following:



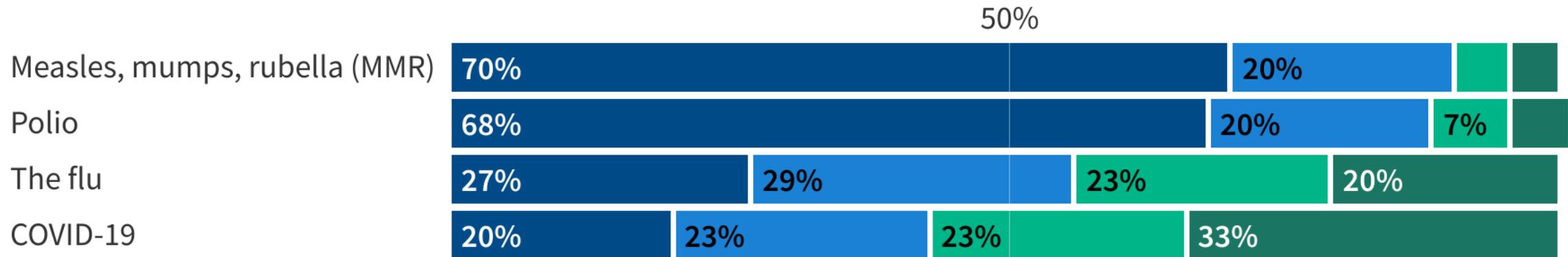
Note: See topline for full question wording.

Source: KFF Tracking Poll on Health Information and Trust (January 13-20, 2026)

# Nine in Ten Parents Say It Is Important for Children To Be Vaccinated Against MMR and Polio, Fewer Say the Same About Flu and COVID-19

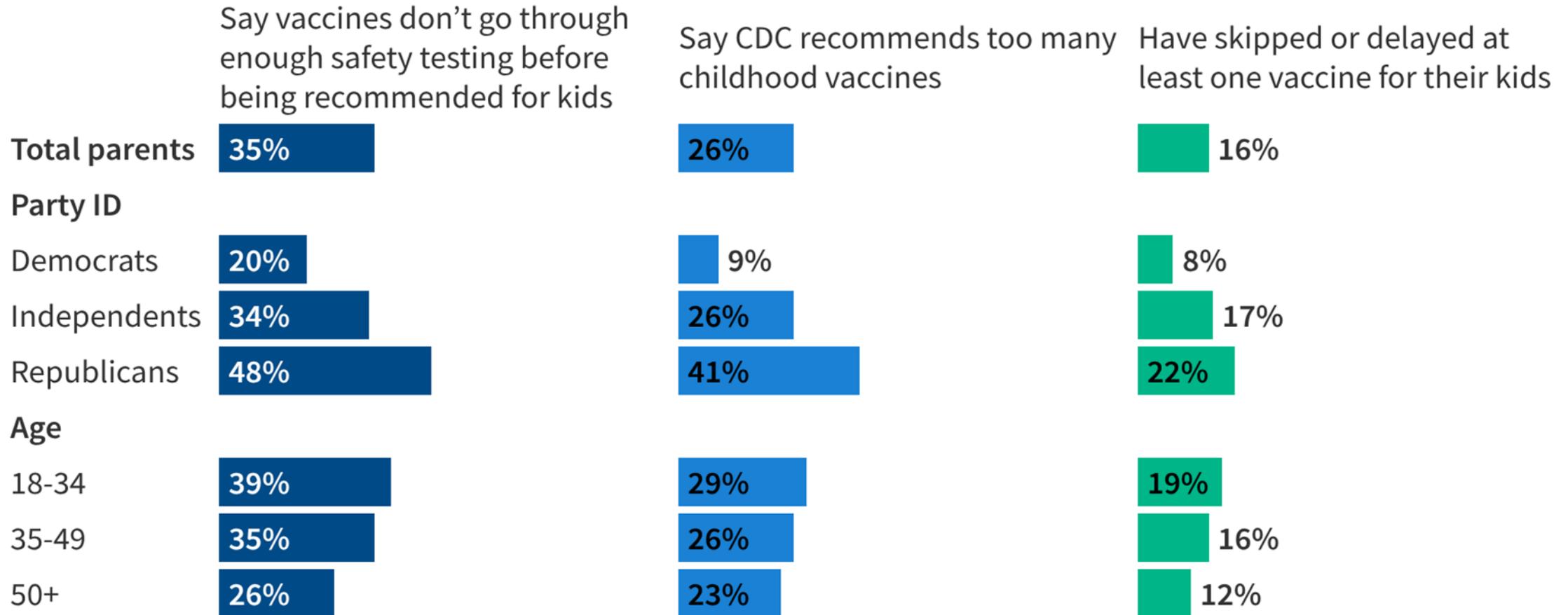
How important do you think it is for children in your community to be vaccinated for each of the following?

■ Very important 
 ■ Somewhat important 
 ■ Not too important 
 ■ Not at all important



Note: Among parents of children under age 18. See topline for full question wording.  
 Source: KFF/The Washington Post Survey of Parents (July 18-August 4, 2025)

# Parents' Vaccine Attitudes and Behaviors Diverge by Partisanship and Age



Note: Among parents of children under age 18. Independents include those who identify with 'Other' party. See topline for full question wording.

Source: KFF/The Washington Post Survey of Parents (July 18-August 4, 2025)

# Across An Array of False or Unproven Claims About Vaccines, Many Express Uncertainty And Fall In a “Malleable Middle”

Do you think the following statement is definitely true, probably true, probably false, or definitely false?

■ Definitely true ■ **Probably true** ■ **Probably false** ■ Definitely false

Getting the measles vaccine is more dangerous than becoming infected with measles [Apr '25]



More people have died from the COVID-19 vaccines than have died from the COVID-19 virus [Jan '25]



The measles, mumps, rubella vaccines, also known as the MMR vaccines, have been proven to cause autism in children [Apr '25]

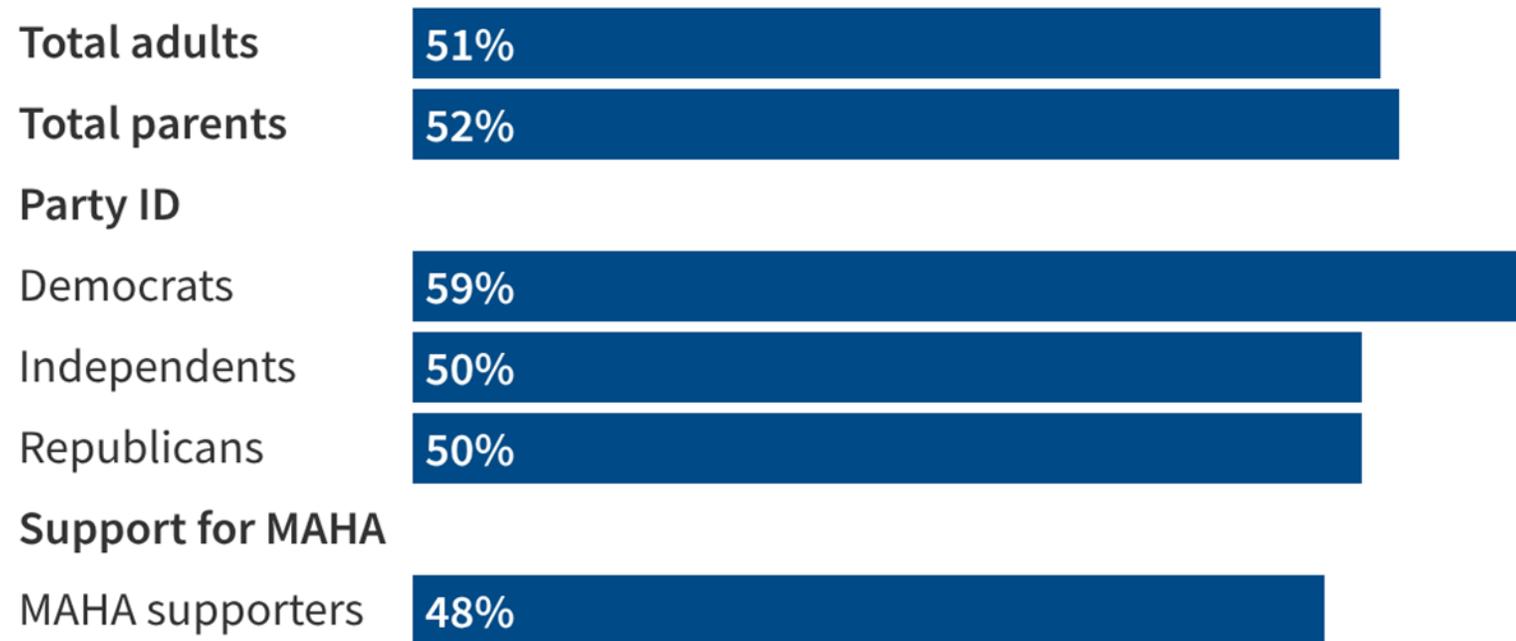


mRNA vaccines can change your DNA [Apr '25]



# About Half Have Heard About Recent Federal Changes to Recommended Vaccine Schedule, Including Across Partisanship and MAHA Identity

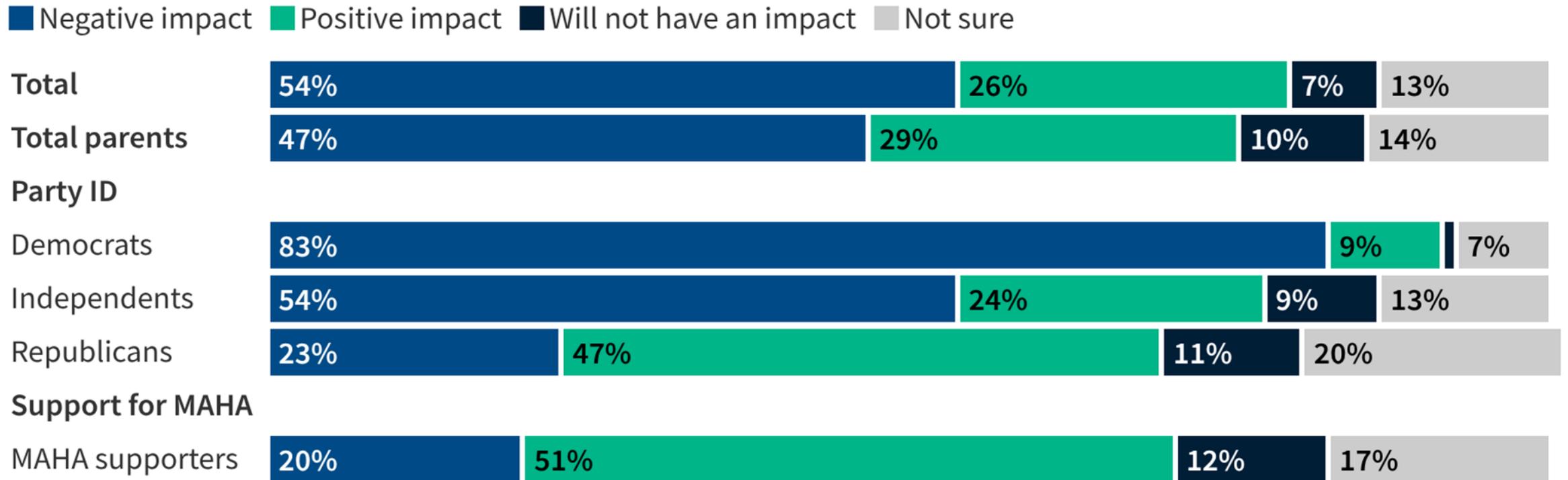
Percent who say they have read a **lot** or **some** about the recently announced changes to the recommended childhood vaccine schedule:



Note: Parents are parents or guardians of a child under the age of 18 living in their household. See topline for full question wording.  
Source: KFF Tracking Poll on Health Information and Trust (January 13-20, 2026)

# Among Those Who Have Heard of Recent Vaccine Schedule Changes, More Expect a Negative Rather Than a Positive Impact on Kids

Do you think the federal government's recent update to the childhood vaccine schedule will have a negative impact on children's health in the U.S. overall, a positive impact, or will it not impact children's health in the U.S.?

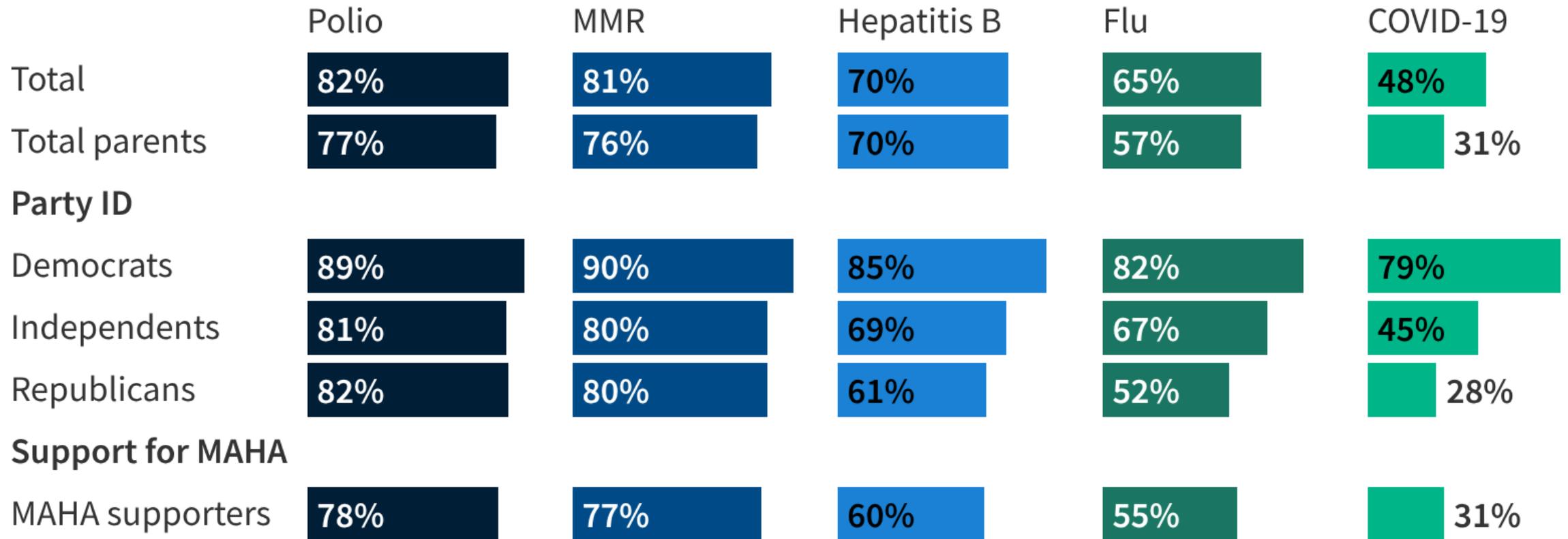


Note: Among those who said they have heard or read "a lot" or "some" about the federal government recently announcing changes to the recommended childhood vaccine schedule. See topline for full question wording.

Source: KFF Tracking Poll on Health Information and Trust (January 13-20, 2026)

# Large Majorities Confident in MMR and Polio Vaccine Safety, Partisans Divide on COVID-19, Flu, and Hep-B Vaccine Safety for Kids

Percent who say they are very or somewhat confident that the following vaccines are safe for children:



Note: See topline for full question wording.

Source: KFF Tracking Poll on Health Information and Trust (January 13-20, 2026)

# THANK YOU