

- 01 Trust in traditional and social media are at an all-time low.** The U.S. is operating in an information vacuum, with historic lows in social media (down 5 points to 27%); owned media (down 2 points to 33%); traditional media (down 10 points to 46%); and search engines (down 7 points to 48%). 59% suspect journalists of spreading misinformation purposely to mislead people.
- 02 Hyperpartisanship drives a trust chasm.** Biden voters (who carry a 56% trust index across institutions) and Trump voters (for whom this number has declined 13% since November, to 34%). differences are starkest in trust levels for the media (57% of Biden voters trust the media; only 18% of Trump voters do).
- 03 The American public feels extreme urgency on partisan divides.** 58% of Biden voters and 64% of Trump voters share the belief that “the U.S. is in the midst of a cold Civil War”.
- 04 The pandemic has accelerated social and economic issues.** Americans cite improving our healthcare (+51%) and education systems (+43%), addressing poverty (+41%), and closing the economic and social divide (+38%) as some of their most urgent and pressing needs relative to last year.
- 05 For the first time ever, U.S.-based businesses are distrusted globally.** In the eyes of the global public, American business stand at 48% trust, a decline from 62% in 2014 and a stark contrast from global peers like Germany and the UK, which remain trusted in global markets. The inference is clear: A weak global view of American government impacts the view of American business.
- 06 But in the U.S., business is now the most trusted institution, and the only institution viewed as competent.** Since 2020, it's also risen to be viewed as ethical. Employers in particular are deeply trusted (73% trust), and more than 60% expect CEOs to get ahead of government where needed, holding themselves accountable to the public.
- 07 CEOs are trusted by their employees across party lines.** The majority of both Trump (61%) and Biden (68%) voters agree that their the CEO of their employer has their trust.
- 08 In their role as employers, American CEOs have become our most trusted information source.** Employers are now expected to guard information quality; be a moderating force on content given the widespread belief that media is purposely misleading; and help drive increases in information literacy – particularly relevant as we look to distribute a vaccine in the coming year.