Poll: Nearly Seven in 10 Active Service Members Have Witnessed Politicization in U.S. Military

SUMMARY
A new survey of active U.S. military members reveals that 68 percent have witnessed some or a significant level of politicization in the military, and 65 percent of those polled say that it is a concern. Of all the issues polled, policies that allow unrestricted military service by transgender individuals were of greatest concern for active military members, with eight in 10 (80 percent) saying that it decreased their trust in the military somewhat or a great deal. The results could have implications for the future of the military. Seven in 10 active military members (68 percent) said that politicization would somewhat or significantly affect their decision to encourage their children to join the military.

Q: To what degree do you trust the U.S. military?

Great deal/Good deal: 93%
Great deal: 65%
Good deal: 28%
A little: 4%
Not at all: 4%

Q: To what degree have you witnessed a growing politicization (defined as becoming political in character as opposed to neutral) of the military?

Significantly/Somewhat: 68%
Significantly: 38%
Somewhat: 30%
A little: 25%
Not at all: 7%

Q: To what degree are you concerned about growing politicization of the military?

Somewhat/Very concerned: 65%
Very concerned: 38%
Somewhat: 27%
A little: 26%
Not at all: 8%

Q: To what extent would politicization of the military impact your decision to encourage your children to join the military?

Somewhat/Significantly: 68%
Significantly: 41%
Somewhat: 27%
A little: 20%
Not at all: 7%
I don't have children: 5%
Q: To what degree have the following events or reports decreased your trust in the military?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Not aware of this</th>
<th>Net: A great deal/some</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changing of policy to allow unrestricted service by transgender individuals in the military</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The withdrawal from Afghanistan</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of physical fitness standards to “even the playing field”</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement for the military to pay for travel for abortions</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports of sexual assault in the military</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A worry that the military is dominated by males</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical race theory books appearing on Chief of Naval Operations’ reading list</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embracement of a goal to pursue all electric military vehicles</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on climate change as a top national security threat</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**METHODOLOGY**

Data collection was undertaken by the sample and data experts at Maru/Blue between December 12 and 19, 2022, among a random selection of 1,000 American adults aged 18+ and an additional sample of 299 young Americans aged 18 to 24, who are Maru Springboard America online panelists. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of each size has an estimated margin of error (which measures sampling variability) of +/- 3.1 percent (n=1000) and +/- 5.7 percent (n=299), 19 times out of 20. The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region to match the population according to U.S. Census data, which ensures that the sample is representative of the entire adult population of the United States. An additional sample of active military personnel (n=301 +/- 5.7 percent) was included to complete the study sample frame.