



THE VETERANS AND CITIZENS INITIATIVE

We are a nonpartisan group of veterans, military families, and support organizations who are committed to working with our fellow Americans to bridge divides, strengthen our country, and promote the shared obligations of citizenship. Anchored in More in Common, a nonpartisan research and civic nonprofit, the Veterans and Citizens Initiative (VCI) leads national research that helps bridge the citizen-military divide and galvanize connections between veterans, military families, and civil society.

What Our Data Shows

Few Americans have direct connection with the military and veteran communities.

- Over half of Americans (54 percent) never or rarely talk with a veteran. More than 60 percent of Americans said they have never talked with an Iraq or Afghanistan War veteran about his or her experience.
- Yet, most Americans (81 percent) across the political spectrum believe that is important for nonveterans to engage with veterans in their local communities.
- As the veteran population continues to shrink and more time passes from our military engagements of the 20th and 21st century, Americans risk losing touch with the needs and contributions of our veteran population.

Yet, Americans across the political spectrum have high trust in veterans and see them as civic role models.

- More than 7 in 10 Americans believe that veterans are role models for good citizenship.
- Americans have significantly higher confidence in veterans and military to do what is right for our country than in Congress or the Supreme Court.
- This suggests that veterans and military families can play a unique role in bridging divides and reducing polarization in America.

Building strong ties between veterans, military families, and the broader society is even more crucial today amidst decreasing levels of trust and concerns about the politicization of the military.

- In 2022, 48 percent of Americans had a great deal of confidence in the military compared with 70 percent of Americans in 2018.*
- 7 in 10 Americans believe the military *should* be separate from politics, yet only 4 in 10 Americans actually believe the military *is* separate from politics.
- There is a risk of military and veterans becoming increasingly perceived through partisan filters. Absent efforts to chart a new course, these communities could fall into a vicious cycle of polarization.

* (Source: 2022 National Defense Survey, Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute)

The Challenges VCI Addresses

During a period of polarization, how do we catalyze efforts to better engage veterans, military families, and civil society?

What role can military and veteran families play in reducing polarization and uniting the country?



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Our Approach: Research and Partnership

As the anchor organization for the VCI, More in Common conducts unique public opinion research to explore Americans' attitudes towards veterans and the military community, and to elevate veterans' attitudes towards American society. We apply our insights into thought leadership that argues for an increased focus on bridging the military-citizen divide and share our work with veteran and military family organizations that work to close this gap. Our work has been featured in media outlets such as Stars and Stripes, The Boston Globe, Defense One, and The War Horse.

Key Reports

Americans' Attitudes Towards the Military

Feb. 2023

The data finds there is confidence in the military but also signs of ideological polarization in how Americans view elements of the military, such as the effort it places on diversity and inclusion.

2022 Veterans Day Report: A Survey of Americans' Attitudes towards Veterans

Nov. 2022

Americans have high trust in veterans and see them as civic role models, however many Americans rarely engage with veterans. The report also explores Americans' and veterans' views towards issues believed to be important to veterans.

Afghanistan War 3 Part-Series

Afghanistan War

Aug. 2022

Through exploring Americans' perceptions and memories of the war in Afghanistan, our data shows the public shares high levels of negativity towards the war, and that an alarming narrative of "another Vietnam" is taking hold with many Americans.

Narratives of the Afghanistan War

Jun. 2022

The report provides anecdotes, quotes, and stories from American veterans and nonveterans highlighting their views on the success of the war, level of gratitude for those that served, and attitudes around the US withdrawal.

After Kabul: Veterans, America, and the End of the War in Afghanistan

Nov. 2021

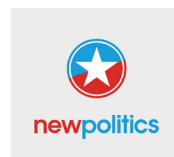
Conducted in the immediate aftermath of the evacuation from Afghanistan, the data finds veterans feeling disconnected from broader American society, but also identifies clear opportunities for veterans and non-veterans to come together.

Survey on Veterans, Military Families, and American Civic Culture

Mar. 2021

Americans feel it is possible to come together, and veterans and military families have the potential to serve as leaders for civic engagement and bridgebuilding.

Our partners



More information @ www.TheVCI.org

