



## **July 2021 Blind Bias Survey**

John Gable | CEO and Co-Founder

Julie Mastrine | Director of Marketing

Rick Wytmar | Content and Research Assistant

Andrew Weinzierl | Research Assistant and Data Journalist

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## Survey Overview

In May 2021, AllSides conducted a multi-partisan blind bias survey to assess the political bias of five popular U.S. media outlets: **The Guardian, Yahoo News, Breitbart, The Daily Caller, and The Wall Street Journal.**

A total of 1,720 people across the political spectrum took the survey, including 186 participants with a self-reported Left bias; 378 with a Lean Left bias; 520 with a Center bias; 508 with a Lean Right bias, and 128 with a Right bias.

**Participants assessed written, online news content *only* — not radio, TV, or broadcast content.** The purpose of the survey was to gather more data on news source bias and ensure that the AllSides Media Bias Ratings™ for the five news outlets reflect the average judgement of Americans. The data collected in blind bias surveys is just one of multiple methods AllSides uses to rate media bias.

## About AllSides Media Bias Ratings™

AllSides provides over [800 media bias ratings](#) of online media outlets, writers, think tanks, and other sources. We assign each source a bias rating on a 5-point scale: [Left](#), [Lean Left](#), [Center](#), [Lean Right](#), and [Right](#).



The AllSides **patented bias detection and display technology** drives what is arguably the world's most effective and up-to-date bias detection engine. It's powered by a combination of wisdom-of-the-crowd technology and statistical research and methodologies.

Our bias rating system utilizes multiple methodologies for assessing media bias, and combines them for the best possible results. On AllSides.com, we list which methods we used to arrive at the bias rating for any given source. Blind bias surveys are our most robust methodology; we also employ editorial reviews, independent reviews, and third party data. [Learn about these other methods for rating bias at AllSides.com.](#)

Our bias ratings are fluid and are subject to change over time as the bias of a source changes or as we acquire new information.

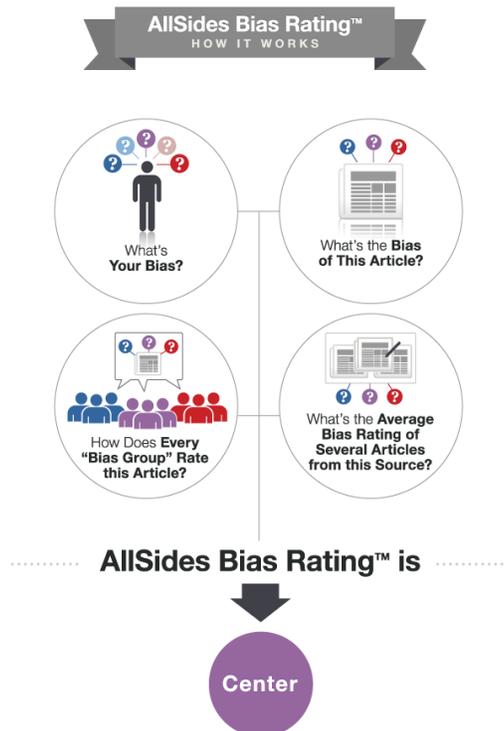
## Subjectivity of Bias Ratings

The AllSides patented media bias rating system reflects the average judgment of the American people. It is not “accurate” – bias is subjective and “in the eye of the beholder,” so there is no strictly accurate measurement of political bias. What is considered a left-wing view to a right-winger may seem like a centrist view to a left-winger.

AllSides recognizes that a five-point bias rating scale (Left, Lean Left, Center, Lean Right, Right) cannot capture the multitude of nuance that makes up the landscape of political thought. Far from seeking perfection, our ratings simply serve as a “map” of bias that helps readers to get a general idea of where a media outlet may fall in the modern political landscape, thus helping them to understand which perspectives may be represented or omitted in reading that particular news outlet. Our bias ratings reflect the average judgement of the American people, who have various views and hail from all points on the political bias spectrum.

## About AllSides Blind Bias Surveys

During an AllSides Blind Bias Survey, participants are asked to rate the bias of online news content “blindly” — with all branding and identifying information removed. This provides a robust bias evaluation because it eliminates respondents’ preconceived notions of that brand’s bias — they assess content *only*. This method is at the core of the patented AllSides Bias Rating™ methodology.



## How AllSides Chose Which Sources to Evaluate

The July 2021 Blind Bias Survey collected responses on online news content from the following media outlets:

- Breitbart — Rated by AllSides as **Right** as of July 2021
- The Daily Caller — Rated as **Right** as of July 2021
- The Guardian — Rated as **Lean Left** as of July 2021
- The Wall Street Journal — Rated as **Center** as of July 2021
- Yahoo News — Rated as **Lean Left** as of July 2021

AllSides chose these outlets to assess based on multiple factors, including one or a combination of the following:

**Community feedback from readers.** Visitors to the AllSides website are invited to indicate whether they agree or disagree with our media bias ratings. Community feedback does not determine AllSides Media Bias Ratings™, but can trigger a deeper review. Some outlets may be chosen because a significant portion of readers indicated they disagreed with our bias rating for that outlet.

**Traffic to the source page from search engines.** AllSides uses Google Analytics to determine which source pages receive the most traffic from search engines.

**Existing data.** AllSides took into consideration whether or not the outlet had been subject to other AllSides media bias rating methodologies, such as past Blind Bias Surveys, Editorial Reviews, independent reviews, or third party data.

AllSides chose **The Guardian**, **Yahoo News** because neither of them had undergone a Blind Bias Survey. The Guardian, a *Lean Left* outlet, receives a lot of traffic on our website.

AllSides assessed **The Daily Caller** via [Editorial Review](#) in [February 2021](#), and determined it retained its rating of *Right*. A Daily Caller editor then reached out to us, making the case that the outlet should instead be rated *Lean Right*. Media outlets can't lobby or pay AllSides for different ratings, but we took the feedback into consideration and added it to our source page. We included the Daily Caller in our July 2021 Blind Bias survey because no survey has been conducted on The Daily Caller in the past.

AllSides chose **Breitbart** and **The Wall Street Journal** because Blind Bias Surveys had not been conducted since 2017 and 2013, respectively.

## Methodology

Content added to the survey was stripped of any clear indications of brand, source, author, etc. No logos, reporter names, or other signals of where the content originated from were included. This ensured that the reader was “blind” to the content’s origins.

### Anchor Outlets

AllSides chose three articles covering the same topic from three “anchor” outlets — Axios (Center bias), CNN (Left bias), and RedState (Right bias) to present at the very beginning of the survey. AllSides chose content from these outlets because we are very confident in their bias ratings.

Because bias is subjective, the inclusion of content from “anchor outlets” was meant to “anchor” participants to a general idea about the range of bias that appears in media from left to right, and to provide them with a baseline of a Left, Center, and Right bias rating in American media. Because bias is subjective and contextual, providing anchor outlets helps readers to get a sense of the extremes of bias before rating content.

AllSides acknowledges that this system is not bulletproof, as bias is still ultimately subjective and there may be people who disagree that Axios, CNN, and RedState are Center, Left, and Right, respectively. However, we are confident that these three outlets are good representations of Center, Left, and Right political bias in the U.S.

### Selecting Content to Measure Bias

AllSides selected content in two ways: 1.) collecting *the top 5 headlines most prominently displayed on the website on two different days at the same time of day*, and 2.) collecting *one article each of the top stories the outlet most prominently displayed around two major national news stories, on two different days at the same time of day*.

#### Selecting Top Headlines

AllSides collected the top five headlines on each outlet’s homepage on two different days, at the same time of day.

AllSides pulled headlines from each outlet on two separate occasions. The first pull was done at 2:45pm ET on June 28, 2021; the second was done at 1:36pm ET ET on June 29, 2021.

For **The Guardian**, we pulled headlines from their U.S. section (<http://theguardian.com/us>). Headlines were pulled from **Yahoo News**’ originals section (<http://news.yahoo.com/originals>) to

only focus on content unique to Yahoo News. A few stories featured on **The Daily Caller** were not included, as they were opinion pieces not focused on politics whatsoever.

## Selecting Coverage of Major Ongoing Stories

AllSides also took into account how each outlet displayed bias in its coverage of two major, ongoing news stories: **NYC Board of Elections Mishandles Primary Vote Count** and **Trump Sues Facebook, Twitter, & Google**.

Top headlines on the NYC Board of Elections story were pulled from each outlet between 5:05pm ET on June 30, 2021; top headlines on Trump's lawsuit of tech platforms were pulled at 1:50pm ET on July 7, 2021.

In addition to the headline, AllSides included the first 75 to 125 words of each article in the survey for respondents to evaluate for bias.

## Minimizing Subjectivity

Each media outlet formats its homepage differently, and determining which stories are “most prominently” displayed is somewhat subjective. In order to determine “prominence” of a story on a homepage, AllSides took into consideration **photo size, headline font size, and whether or not the story was in the center of the display screen**. Stories that had very large headline fonts and photos and were displayed in the middle or at the top of the page were considered to be “most prominent.”

Top headlines were selected either because they were ***the five most prominent stories on the outlet's homepage at the selected time***, or ***the five top stories specifically labeled in an outlet's “Top Stories” section at the selected time***.

The content pulled to reflect coverage of major ongoing stories was ***the most prominent story an outlet displayed on the chosen topic at the selected time***.

AllSides retained screenshots of each site's homepage on the days and times the content was pulled; anyone interested in obtaining them can [contact us](#).

When pulling **Breitbart's** headlines from its homepage, the AllSides team translated the text from all caps to title case in order to reflect other outlets and in an effort to not reveal the outlet.

## Understanding the Personal Political Bias of Those Who Formatted and Participated in the Survey

Content was gathered by three AllSides team members, two of whom have Lean Left biases, and one who has a Lean Right bias. Having people with different political biases pull the content provided a check and ensured it was done objectively.

Each survey participant was asked to self-determine their bias using the [AllSides Rate Your Bias tool](#) and report their results in the survey. Exactly 186 participants reported a self-reported Left bias; 378 reported a Lean Left bias; 520 reported a Center bias; 508 reported a Lean Right bias, and 128 reported a Right bias.

Note that when examining the results, each group was viewed independently and then the data was normalized. In other words, in normalization, the overall results of all participants with a Left bias were given the same weight as the results from those with a Right bias (which had fewer participants overall) and from those with a Center bias (which had more participants overall). Each group had an equal impact on the survey results.

Using the tool, participants self-rate their bias on social issues, economic issues, foreign policy, the environment, healthcare, education, social security, and welfare. Users are asked to say whether they believe their views are left, lean left, center, lean right, or right on these issues. They are also asked to rate the importance of these issues to them personally, in order for AllSides to generate an overall bias rating for the individual.

The Rate Your Bias tool does not purport to be definitive, and AllSides acknowledges that political thought is complex and does not fit neatly into boxes of left, center, and right. It is also important to remember that ideas often “change sides” in the political landscape. For example, in the past, those on the left openly supported stricter immigration control to curb job competition for native blue-collar workers; now, those on the left are more likely to support open borders or more liberal immigration policies, while conservatives are more likely to support stricter immigration control (however, this is not monolithic: some conservatives do support liberal immigration policies and vice versa).

When people use this tool, they are able to provide an indication of *where they perceive their own views to fall on the political spectrum*. Because bias is “in the eye of the beholder,” many people approach news articles with their own bias in mind. For example, someone who believes themselves to be Lean Left on many issues likely filters news articles through the lens of that bias. For this reason, while not perfect nor “accurate,” the self-rated bias of AllSides team members and survey participants is a key aspect of our blind bias survey and overall rating system, because it helps us to identify media bias as Americans perceive it.

## Distribution

AllSides distributed the survey sign-up link on our website, to our newsletter subscribers, and on our social media platforms — Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram — between July 26, 2021 and August 2, 2021.

## How the Survey Was Formatted

Participants were asked to disclose their age, gender, [Rate Your Bias](#) result, state or country of residence, and whether or not they live in a rural, urban or suburban area.

Participants were then provided a headline and the first 75-125 words of the three articles taken from the “anchor outlets” — Axios (Center bias), CNN (Left bias), and RedState (Right bias). They were told the following:

*“Below are headlines from 5 major online media outlets in the U.S.*

*Please indicate whether you think the bias of the headline and content are from a media outlet with a left, lean left, center, lean right, or right political bias. There are no “correct” answers — AllSides is interested in what you perceive the bias of the media outlet to be.”*

Participants were then presented with eight pages of survey content (a given media outlet’s content would be displayed on a single page) and were asked to give an overall bias rating for the content. For example, the survey question with The Guardian content looked like this:

Please indicate what you believe ***the overall bias of the media outlet to be*** based on the headlines and content.

### **Headlines Day 1:**

*Live: Biden calls for federal investigation into Miami condo collapse*

*Revealed / neo-Confederate group includes military officers and politicians*

*LGBTQ+ Rights / US supreme court declines to take up bathroom case in win for trans rights*

*Portland / ‘Heat dome’ in Pacific north-west breaks records as Portland braces for 115F*

*Colorado / Bystander who shot gunman dead but was then killed by police hailed as hero*

## **Headlines Day 2:**

*Biden to visit Miami on Thursday as 150 still missing after condo collapse – live*

*Donald Trump / Ex-president in financial and political danger as firm faces possible criminal charges*

*'Heat Dome' / Why the Pacific north-west is facing record temperatures*

*Donald Trump / Trump contempt for White House covid taskforce revealed in new book*

*Live / Ireland to restrict indoor dining to fully vaccinated people; Malta to ban unvaccinated British visitors*

## **Story 1**

### **New York mayor's race in chaos after elections board publishes incorrect tally**

New York City's mayoral election has been thrown into chaos after the board of elections mistakenly included 135,000 "test ballots" in its vote tally.

The board of elections had published updated vote totals for the Democratic primary earlier on Tuesday, which showed Kathryn Garcia, New York's former sanitation commissioner, narrowing the gap on Eric Adams, the Brooklyn borough president, to less than two points.

Hours later, however, the board of elections said it had become aware of a "discrepancy" in its report. The elections board said its calculations had included "both test and election night results, producing approximately 135,000 additional records".

## **Story 2**

### **Trump says he will sue social media giants as he pines for lost platform**

Donald Trump, the former US president, held a rambling press conference on Wednesday to announce legal action against Facebook, Twitter and Google, accusing the tech giants of censoring conservative voices.

Trump was once an irrepresible, agenda-setting force on social media but, in the wake of the 6 January insurrection, was banned from Twitter and suspended from Facebook until at least 2023 because of the risk of inciting further violence.

“We’re asking the US district court for the southern district of Florida to order an immediate halt to social media companies’ illegal, shameful censorship of the American people,” Trump said in the faux-presidential setting of blue lectern, white columns and a dozen US flags at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey.

Participants were then presented with a multiple choice answer and the five options of Left, Lean Left, Center, Lean Right, and Right.

## Data Analysis

AllSides counted how many people with each self-proclaimed personal bias rating rated the content from each outlet as Left, Lean Left, Center, Lean Right or Right. For example, we found that of the 144 people who describe themselves as on the Left and provided a rating for The Guardian, 20 rated content from The Guardian as Left, 76 rated the content as Lean Left, 45 as Center, and so on.

AllSides then assigned a numeric scale to represent each Left-to-Right bias rating, both as part of a bell curve and as a flat curve, and assigned each of those numeric scales a number. The ranges were:

**Bell Curve Range:** 0 - 1.5 Left, 1.5 - 2.75 Lean Left, 2.75 - 3.25 Center, 3.25 - 4.5 Lean Right, 4.5 - 6 Right

**Flat Range:** 0 - 1.2 Left, 1.2 - 2.4 Lean Left, 2.4 - 3.6 Center, 3.6 - 4.8 Lean Right, 4.8 - 6 Right

**Standard Values:** 0 Left, 1.5 Lean Left, 3 Center, 4 Lean Right, 6 Right

Bias	Left	Lean Left	Center	Lean Right	Right
Range : Bell Curve	0-1.5	1.5 - 2.75	2.75 - 3.25	3.25 - 4.5	4.5-6
Range: Flat	0-1.2	1.2-2.4	2.4-3.6	3.6-4.8	4.8-6
#	0	1.5	3	4.5	6

Using these numbers, AllSides then calculated an average for each group of results from users across the spectrum.

In the example below, people’s self-proclaimed biases are on the X-axis (columns B - F) and their responses — what they believed the bias of the media outlet to be — are on the Y-axis (rows 49 - 54). So, cell B51 indicates 45 people who self-reported a personal political bias of

Left said they believe The Guardian's bias is Center; C51 indicates 76 people who Lean Left believe The Guardian's bias is Center; D51 indicates 99 people in the Center said they believe The Guardian's media bias is Center; and so on.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
1		People's Bias								Normalized f
2	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Left</b>	<b>Lean Left</b>	<b>Center</b>	<b>Lean Right</b>	<b>Right</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Average</b>	
3	<i>Range : Bell Curve</i>	0-1.5	1.5 - 2.75	2.75 - 3.25	3.25 - 4.5	4.5-6				
4	<i>Range: Flat</i>	0-1.2	1.2-2.4	2.4-3.6	3.6-4.8	4.8-6				
48	<b>The Guardian</b>	<b>Left</b>	<b>Lean Left</b>	<b>Center</b>	<b>Lean Right</b>	<b>Right</b>				
49	Left	20	39	93	122	43	317			
50	Lean Left	76	171	184	193	39	663			
51	Center	45	76	99	65	8	293			
52	Lean Right	3	10	14	10	3	40			
53	Right	0	1	7	5	5	18			
54	<i>Total Responses</i>	144	297	397	395	98	1331			
55	<i>Average</i>	1.822916667	1.803030303	1.707808564	1.416455696	1.285714286			1.607185103	

AllSides then took the average of these responses, using 0, 1.5, 3, 4.5 and 6 as a proxy to represent each bias rating from Left to Right, to calculate the numbers in row 55. For example, the following equation computed the result in cell B55:

$$= ( (B49 * \$B\$5) + (B50 * \$C\$5) + (B51 * \$D\$5) + (B52 * \$E\$5) + (B53 * \$F\$5) ) / (sum (B49 : B53) )$$

These averages were then compared against the bell curve and flat range numbers in rows 3 and 4 to determine what bias, on average, people on the Left believed The Guardian to have (cell B55 = 1.82, which amounts to a Lean Left bias), or people who Lean Left (cell C55 = 1.80, which amounts to a Lean Left bias), or people who are in the Center (cell D55 = 1.71, which amounts to a Lean Left bias), and so on.

We then took an average of these individual averages to arrive at a final number in cell I55. This final average was compared against the bell curve and flat curve ranges to arrive at a final bias rating for the media outlet. In this case, 1.61 places The Guardian as Lean Left on the flat curve ranges and Lean Left on the bell curve.

## Conclusions

Upon calculating a flat average for all media outlets, AllSides determined the following:

Outlet	Average Rating	Bell Curve/Flat Curve Analysis	Notes
The Guardian	1.61	Lean Left	<b>Current Rating:</b> Lean Left <b>Survey:</b> Lean Left <b>Final Analysis:</b> Keep Lean Left
Breitbart	5.15	Right	<b>Current Rating:</b> Right <b>Survey:</b> Right <b>Final Analysis:</b> Keep Right
Yahoo News	1.68	Lean Left	<b>Current Rating:</b> Lean Left <b>Survey:</b> Lean Left <b>Final Analysis:</b> Keep Lean Left
The Daily Caller	3.59	Lean Right/Center	<b>Current Rating:</b> Right <b>Survey:</b> Lean Right <b>Editorial Review:</b> <a href="#">Keep Right</a> <b>Final Analysis:</b> Keep Right
The Wall Street Journal	3.08	Center	<b>Current Rating:</b> Center <b>Survey:</b> Center <b>Final Analysis:</b> Keep Center

## Changes to Bias Ratings Due to Survey Data and Subsequent Analysis

The results confirmed our ratings for **The Guardian**, **Breitbart**, **Yahoo News**, and **The Wall Street Journal**. On average, respondents rated **The Daily Caller** as Lean Right, which differed from our rating of Right.

The results for **The Daily Caller** triggered an [Editorial Review](#). Editorial Reviews allow the AllSides team to review more content from outlets than a Blind Survey does. The [result](#) of the Editorial Review was to keep the Bias Rating of The Daily Caller as Right.

## Survey Results

### Breitbart

On average, respondents rated Breitbart as Right, confirming AllSides' existing rating.

A total of 1,279 people from across the political spectrum — people who identified as Left, Lean Left, Center, Lean Right, or Right — rated the bias of Breitbart. A majority of respondents rated it as Right, including a plurality of people in all bias categories. The second most common response from all bias categories was Lean Right.

### The Daily Caller

On average, people across the political spectrum rated content from The Daily Caller as Lean Right in our July 2021 Blind Bias Survey. This differed from AllSides' rating of DC as Right. We conducted a Small Group Editorial Review, in which a team of people from the left, center and right review the works of the outlet. We **opted to keep The Daily Caller's rating as Right**, mostly due to [sensationalism](#) and right-wing story choice.

A total of 1,217 people rated the bias of The Daily Caller.

A plurality of people who have a Left, Lean Left, Center or Lean Right bias rated The Daily Caller as Lean Right; a plurality of people on the Right actually rated DC as Lean Left.

On average, people with a Left or Lean Left bias rated DC as Lean Right; people with a Center or Lean Right bias rated it Center on average; people who are on the Right rated it as between Center and Lean Right on average.

### The Guardian

On average, The Guardian was rated Lean Left by people across the political spectrum.

A total of 1,331 people rated The Guardian. A plurality of people who have a Left, Lean Left, Center, and Lean Right bias rated The Guardian as Lean Left. A very slight plurality of people who have a Right bias rated The Guardian as Left, with the second most common response from the Right being Lean Left.

The second most common response for people on the Left, Lean Left, and Center was a rating of Center. For people who Lean Right, the second most common response was Left..

## The Wall Street Journal

The average rating for The Wall Street Journal from people across the political spectrum was Center.

1,195 people rated the bias of The Wall Street Journal. The vast majority of people rated it as Center. A majority of people who self-identified as having a Left, Lean Left, Center, or Lean Right bias rated WSJ as Center; a plurality of people with a Right biased rated it Center, with the second most common response being Lean Right.

## Yahoo News

The average rating for Yahoo News from people across the political spectrum was Lean Left, aligning with AllSides' current rating.

A total of 1,239 people rated the outlet's bias. People in all bias categories were more likely to rate it as Lean Left than anything else. The second most common response among people who have a Right and Lean Right bias was Left. Among people who are Left, Lean Left, and Center, the second most common response was Center.

## Notes and Limitations

AllSides has conducted blind bias surveys differently in the past; for example, asking participants to rate only headlines for bias. Our process is evolving and is subject to change again as we determine the best ways to evaluate media outlets for bias.

Because the blind bias survey was distributed online, we had to be mindful of participants' time and ensure the survey was not too long. This means respondents only saw a few pieces of content from each outlet over a few days. Bias may be better determined by looking at more articles and headlines from an outlet over a longer period of time; however, making the survey longer would have meant a drop-off in completion rates.

We acknowledge that users could have possibly found ways to "cheat" while taking the survey. Although we trust that the vast majority of respondents completed the survey in good faith and with the intention of contributing to meaningful research, we take many precautions against cheating or gaming the system. These protective measures include but are not limited to recruiting participants from many different places and using other methods in addition to this one to determine a bias rating.