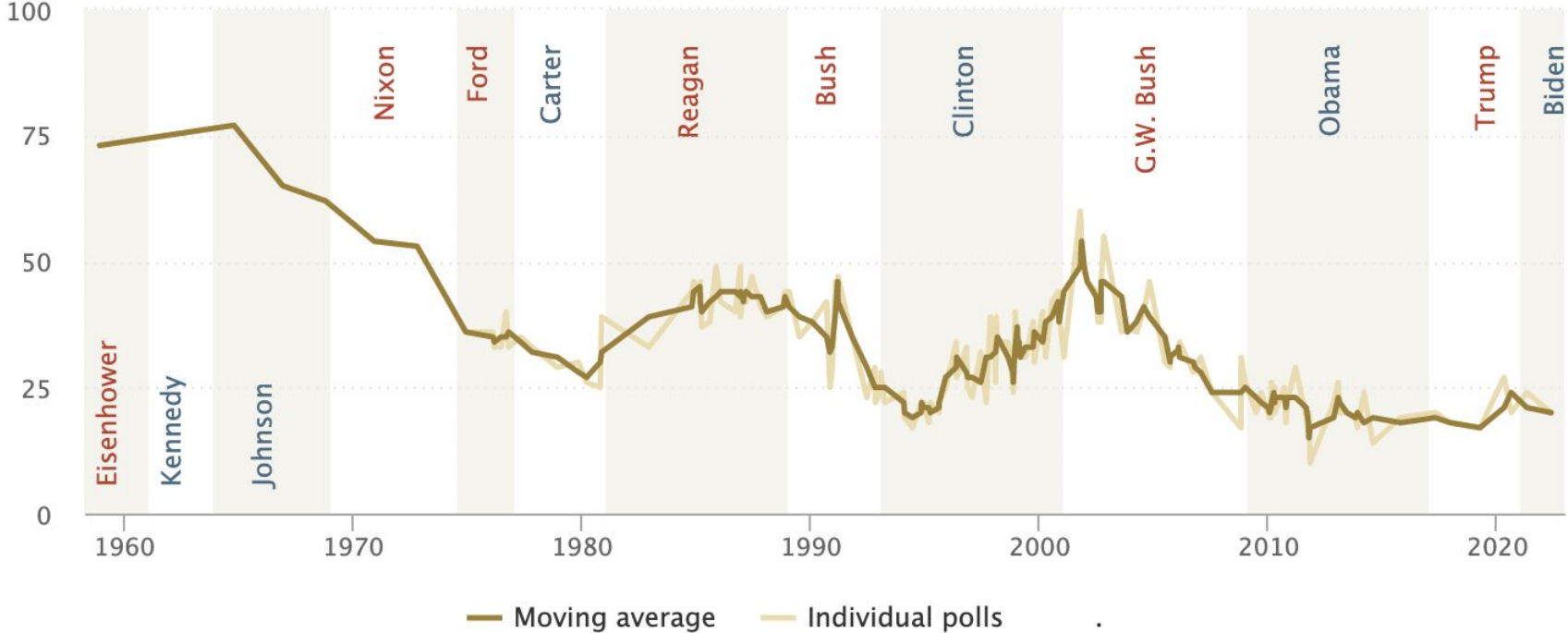


# Courthouse Civility



# Trust in Government

*% who say they trust the government to do what is right just about always/most of the time*



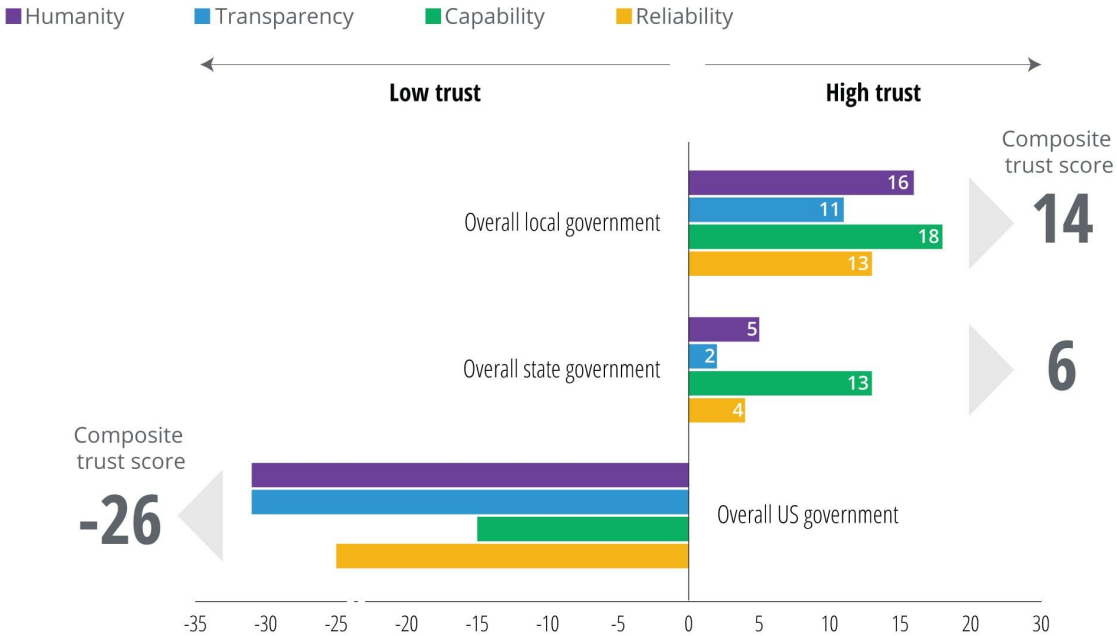
CLICK LEGEND ITEMS TO REMOVE THEM FROM CHART

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



# Trust in Levels of Government

FIGURE 2  
**Local governments are the most trusted among the surveyed respondents**



Note: The score for overall US government is based on the Deloitte federal trust survey conducted in November 2020 and taken from William D. Eggers et al., *Rebuilding trust in government: Four signals that can help improve citizen trust and engagement*, Deloitte Insights, March 9, 2021.  
 Source: Deloitte analysis.

Deloitte Insights | [deloitte.com/insights](https://deloitte.com/insights)



# National League of Cities: On the Frontlines of Today's Cities: Trauma, Challenges and Solutions



# Harassment and Local Government

**FIGURE 2.** More than 8 in 10 surveyed local officials reported experiencing harassment, threats and violence

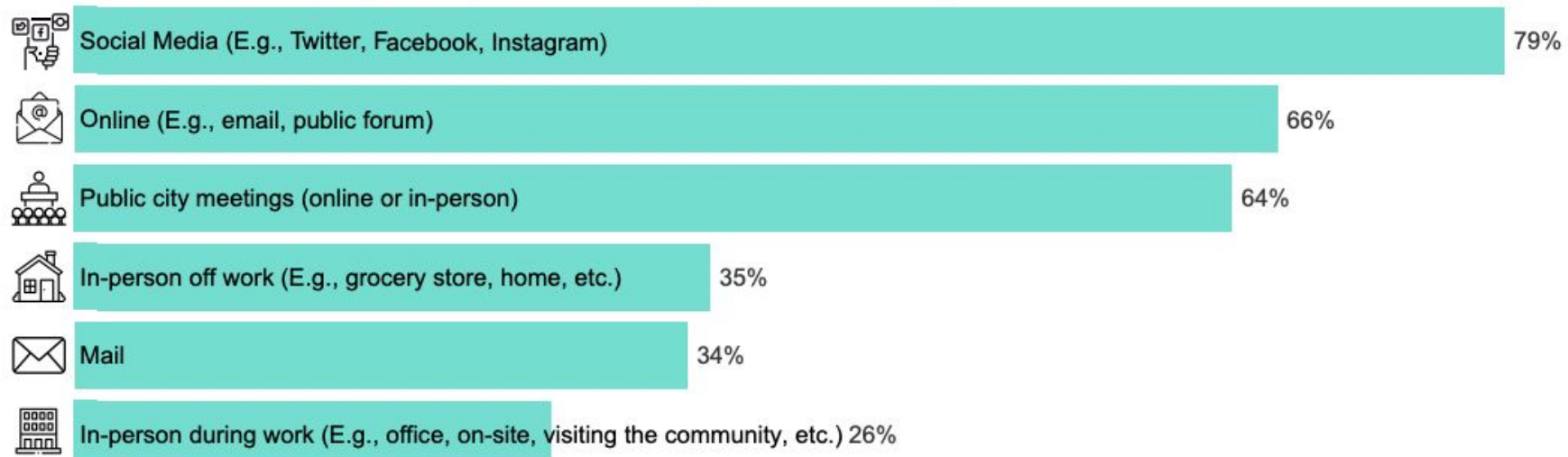


**FIGURE 3.** A vast majority of surveyed local officials have noticed changes in the levels of harassment, threats and violence during their time in office



# Where Harassment Occurs

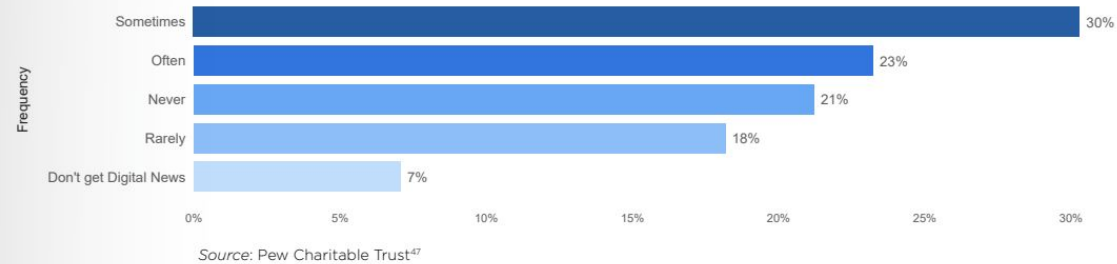
**FIGURE 4.** Local officials cited social media most commonly regarding where they experience incidences of harassment, threats and violence



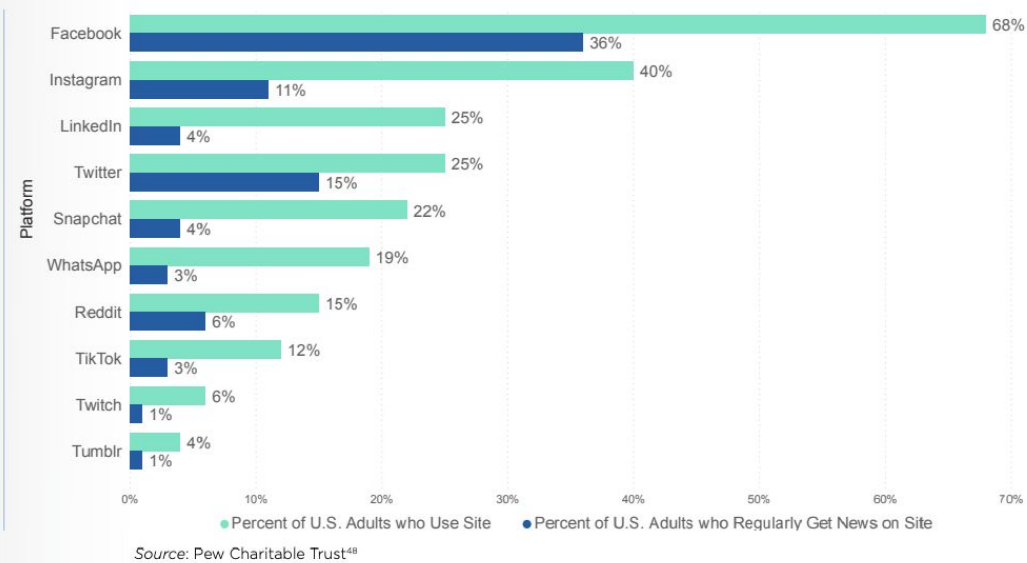
Surveyed local officials' response to where they have experienced harassment, threats and violence.

# Social Media as News Source

**FIGURE 6.** About half of Americans get news on social media at least sometimes



**FIGURE 7.** Facebook stands out as a regular source of news for Americans



# County Responsibility vs Authority

- Three county commissioners
- Six independently elected “row” officers
- Responsibility vs. Authority
- “Intra” county relationships
- “Inter” county relationships
  - There are only 132 people in Idaho who know what it’s like to be a county commissioner
  - There are only 44 people in Idaho who know what it’s like to be a county row officer for each county office





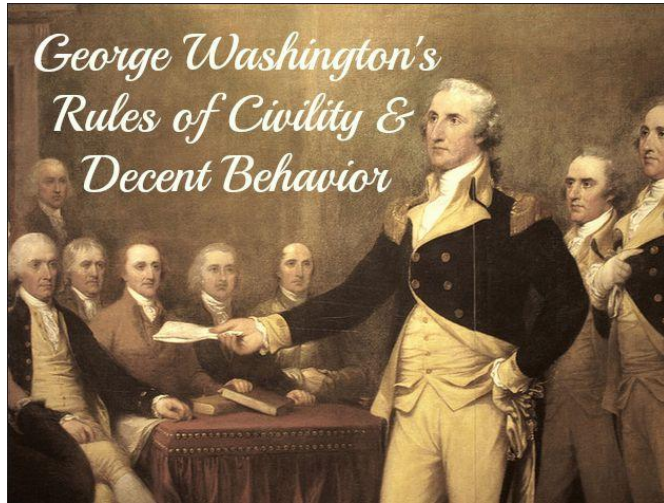
# A Very Bad Example: *Crooks v Maynard*

- The players
  - John H. Maynard, Second District Judge
  - Donna Crooks, Nez Perce County Clerk
- The issue:
  - Disagreement over who appoints court clerks
  - Maynard did not like who Crooks appointed as court clerk
  - Maynard issues administrative order precluding Crooks from entering court chambers
  - Crooks defies order and is arrested
  - Case goes all the way to Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
- The outcome:
  - “The court notes that since this suit was filed, both Judge Maynard and Clerk Crooks have been voted out of office. **Ultimately the ballot box is the preferred place to resolve disputes such as that which gave rise to this suit.”**

# What Works

- Openness/transparency
- Regular communication
- Its ok to disagree, its not ok to be disagreeable
- Positive public engagement

# George Washington's Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior



1. Every action done in company ought to be done with some sign of respect.
9. Being to advise or reprehend any one, consider whether it ought to be in public or in private, and presently or at some other time; in what terms to do it; and in reproving show no signs of color but do it with all sweetness and mildness.
12. Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any.
20. Be friendly and courteous.
24. Think before you speak, pronounce not imperfectly, nor bring out your words too hastily, but orderly and distinctly
25. When another speaks, be attentive yourself and disturb not the audience. If any hesitate in his words, help him not nor prompt him without desired. Interrupt him not, nor answer him till his speech be ended.
32. Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.

# Board Relationships



# Strong Boards

- Connect with each other before offering perspectives
- Acknowledge the position of fellow board members
- Use “I” statements to build understanding/offer perspective
  - This is where I stand (include your reasons and cite your data/sources)
- Avoid “truth” statements
  - “This is just how it is going to be”
  - “You are wrong”
- Focus on what the board can do, not on what individual board members won’t do or can’t do

# Listen

- Separate people from problems
- Obtain facts
- Understand opposing viewpoints
- Use a fair process to make decisions
- Be willing to both persuade and be persuaded (consider your arguments and the arguments made by others, explain your position and be open to the positions of others)

# Overcoming Disagreements

- Differ respectfully, compromise, and focus on what is best for the county
  - If you do, both county employees and community member will be more likely to follow your lead
  - If you choose to get mired in blame and division, county employees will follow your example (as will the community)
  - This can grind county operations to a stand still causing the county to fracture

# Leading

- Lead in the way your employees and constituents expect you to lead
- Help each other focus on the future and the common interests that bind you
- Recognize that elected officials have different opinions and that's ok
- The sign of true leaders is the ability to work through differences in ways that advance the needs of the county, build trust, and create a culture of respect



# A Couple of Tips

- Check your ego at the door
  - Focus on what is best for the county, not you
- Keep calm under pressure
  - Take a deep breath and think about your response



# Remember One Things

- No matter what you do, no matter how good you think you are, no matter what you say, public perception will become your legacy