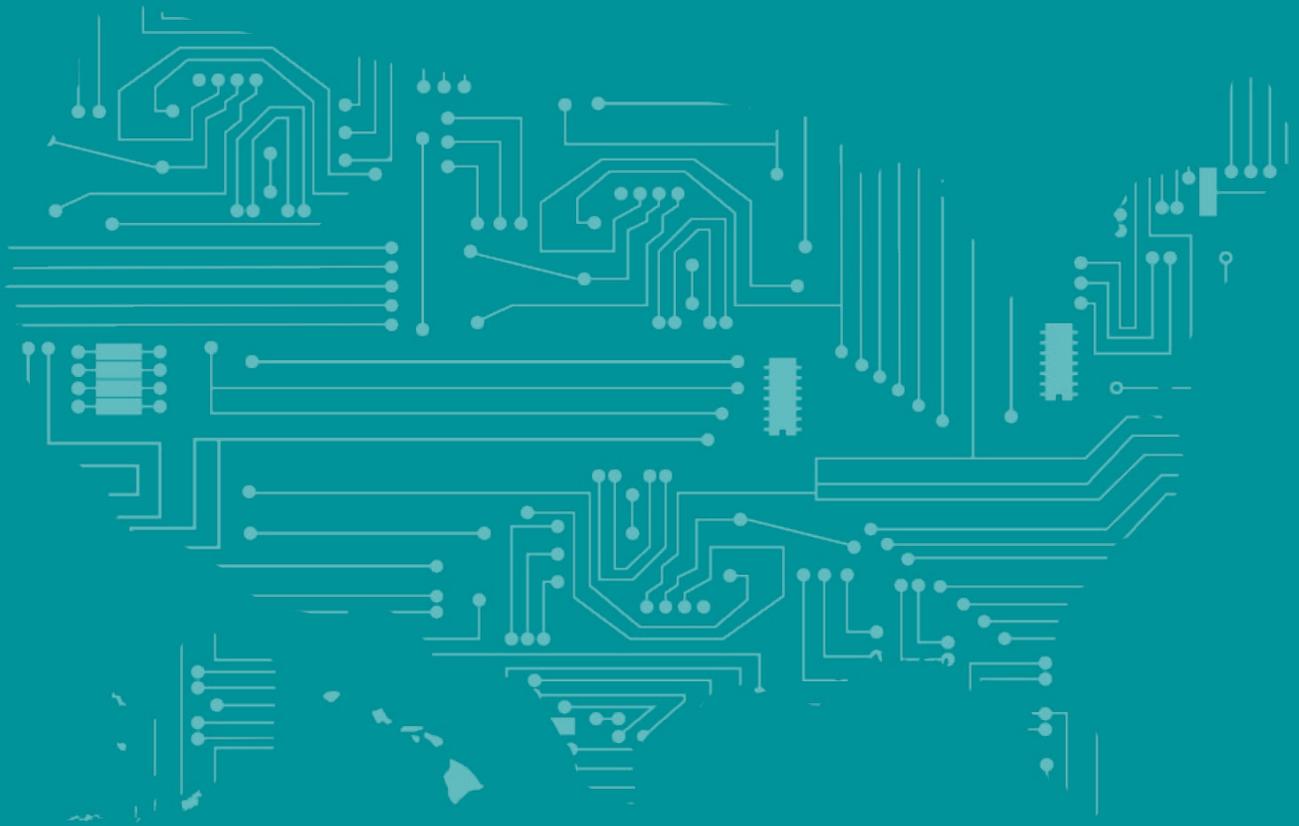




# 2019 Viewpoint Inclusion Survey Report



# About This Study

Lincoln Network partnered with the research technology company Morning Consult to design and implement a national survey of technology professionals in the United States. Data collection began in October 2018 and ended in November 2018.

## **THIS IS THE BIGGEST VIEWPOINT INCLUSION STUDY OF ITS KIND.**

The survey was designed to capture a broad sample of technical and non-technical technology employees in the United States. Most respondents (66%) worked for privately held tech companies, but many were from publicly traded companies (34%). About 56% of respondents worked at a company that employed more than 500 employees. 18% worked for publicly traded companies with a market cap over \$50 billion. Respondents were mostly male (75%), and about half of the sample (49%) was between the ages of 30 and 44. In general, the demographic composition reflects the same patterns found in other surveys of technology workers in the US.

Lincoln Network also reached out to its own network of technology professionals and asked people to tell us about their experiences in the tech industry in an open, online survey. Quotes from this are used to supplement the Morning Consult survey data.

## **WHY SHOULD WE TRUST THESE FINDINGS?**

Lincoln Network has endeavored to conduct this survey in an open and scientifically rigorous manner from the beginning of the project. As part of our research process, we contracted with Morning Consult as an independent party to collect all of the quantitative data. In addition, all of the data has been made publicly available under a Creative Commons license (CC BY 4.0) so that everyone is free to explore and analyze the dataset themselves.

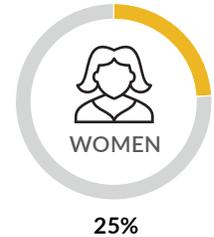
## **DOES PROMOTING VIEWPOINT INCLUSION UNDERMINE OR DISTRACT FROM EFFORTS FOCUSED ON GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, RACE, OR OTHER DIVERSITY INITIATIVES?**

Viewpoint inclusion is complementary, rather than contradictory, to other diversity and inclusion initiatives. We strongly believe diversity in the workplace – including race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, ability, and other traits – better serves both employees and companies. A workplace culture that encourages differing viewpoints should be an essential component of this mix.

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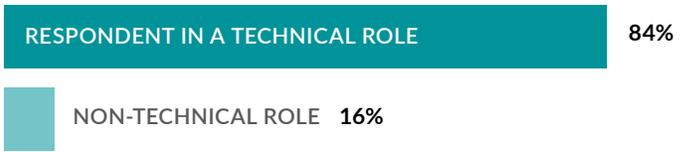
# Survey Demographics

## Total Number of Responses

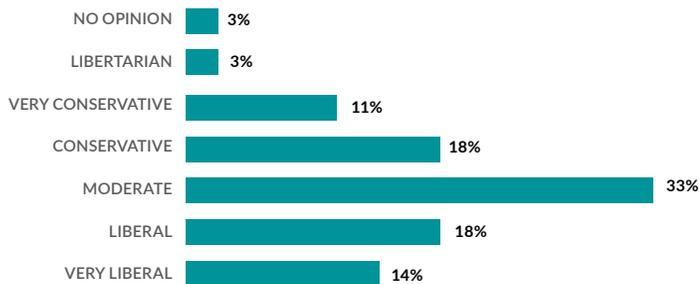


## Sample of Self-Identified Employers

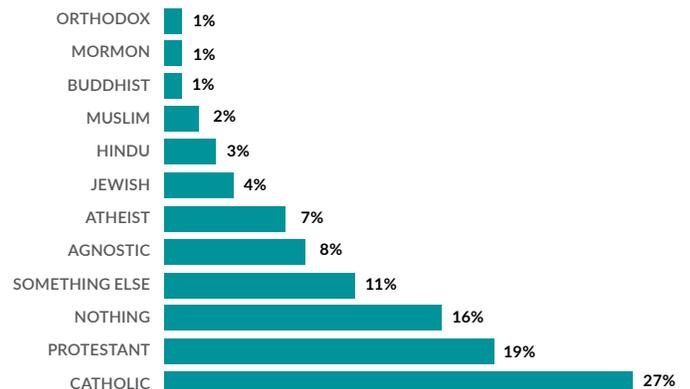
- |          |            |          |
|----------|------------|----------|
| ALPHABET | MICROSOFT  | HP       |
| AMAZON   | SALESFORCE | IBM      |
| APPLE    | ACCENTURE  | ORACLE   |
| FACEBOOK | AT&T       | QUALCOMM |
| GOOGLE   | CISCO      | SAMSUNG  |
| INTEL    | DELL       | TWITTER  |



## Ideological Identification



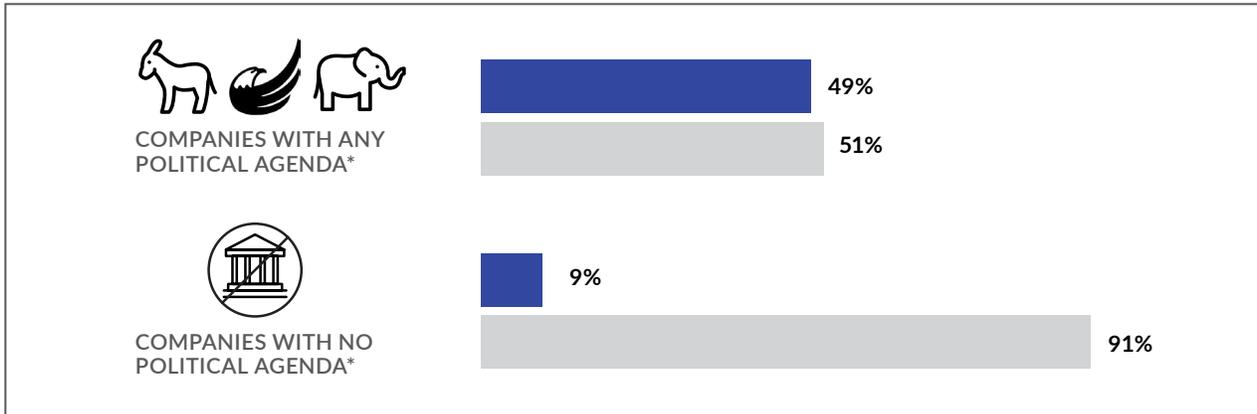
## Religious Affiliation



# Employee Perception of an Ideological Work Environment **Impacts** Their Performance

Do your ideological views in the context of your workplace affect your ability to do your work?

■ Yes, somewhat or significantly
 ■ No, not at all



\*45% of respondents claimed to work at a company promoting a political agenda

## Respondent Quotes

**VERY LIBERAL** – Not current employer, but previous employer allowed and encouraged political / social issue speech and it became disruptive to work. There was a lot of disharmony among employees. Current employer, we never talk about it and nobody cares. The focus remains on work and everyone is happy about it.

**LIBERAL** – There are no clear boundaries set by the organization overall to prevent ideological bias. Third parties that used to be respected for setting such boundaries, like the EFF, are no longer respected, while partisan organizations like ADL and SPLC (who I believe push a political agenda) are considered by most employees to be objective.

**CONSERVATIVE** – Employees will interpret your words in the most offensive way possible, then report you to HR based on that interpretation. It's one big offendedness

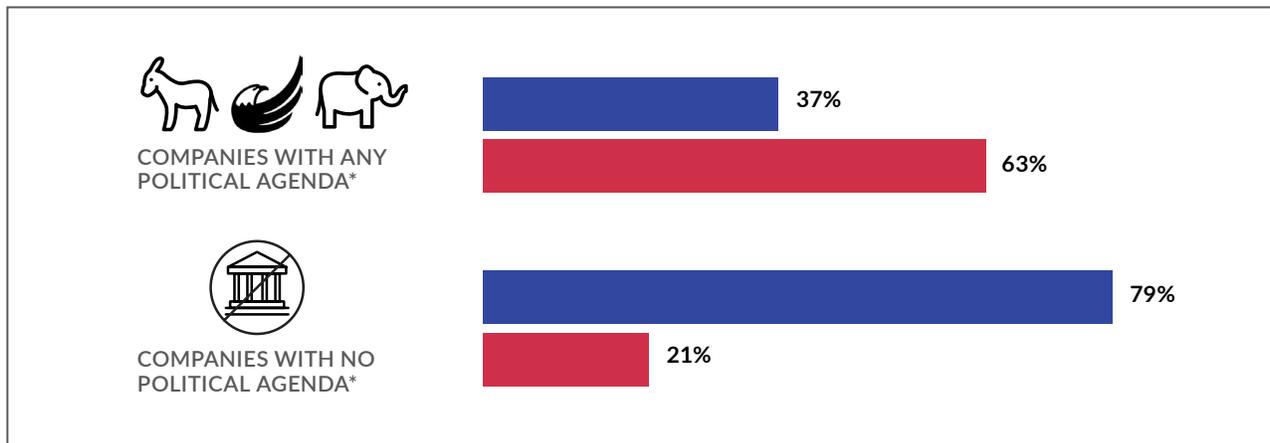
sweepstakes. When people get in trouble, it's often based not on what they said, but on how others interpreted their words, regardless of how unreasonable that interpretation is. And there is some evidence HR does have a political agenda. I've even seen someone get reported to HR for sharing a National Review article.

**LIBERTARIAN** – I have had both extremely conservative and extremely progressive friends worry that exposing their views will result in problems with, or termination by, their employer. A sense of professionalism is badly needed, wherein we agree on the bounds of discussion and conduct, both within the workplace and to a lesser degree outside it.

# Viewpoint Hostility Increases at Companies Promoting a Political Agenda

Do half or more of your colleagues ridicule/ostracize other colleagues with whom they disagree?

■ No, less than half
 ■ Yes, half or more



\*45% of respondents claimed to work at a company promoting a political agenda

## Respondent Quotes

**LIBERAL** – *The standard with which we are expected to treat each other is overtly and unapologetically progressive and liberal ... I don't consider it necessarily incompatible with externally facing political neutrality, either, but there is no charge from management to distinguish what's enforced on users from what's enforced on coworkers, at least not one I consider clear enough to address what I see as a moral hazard.*

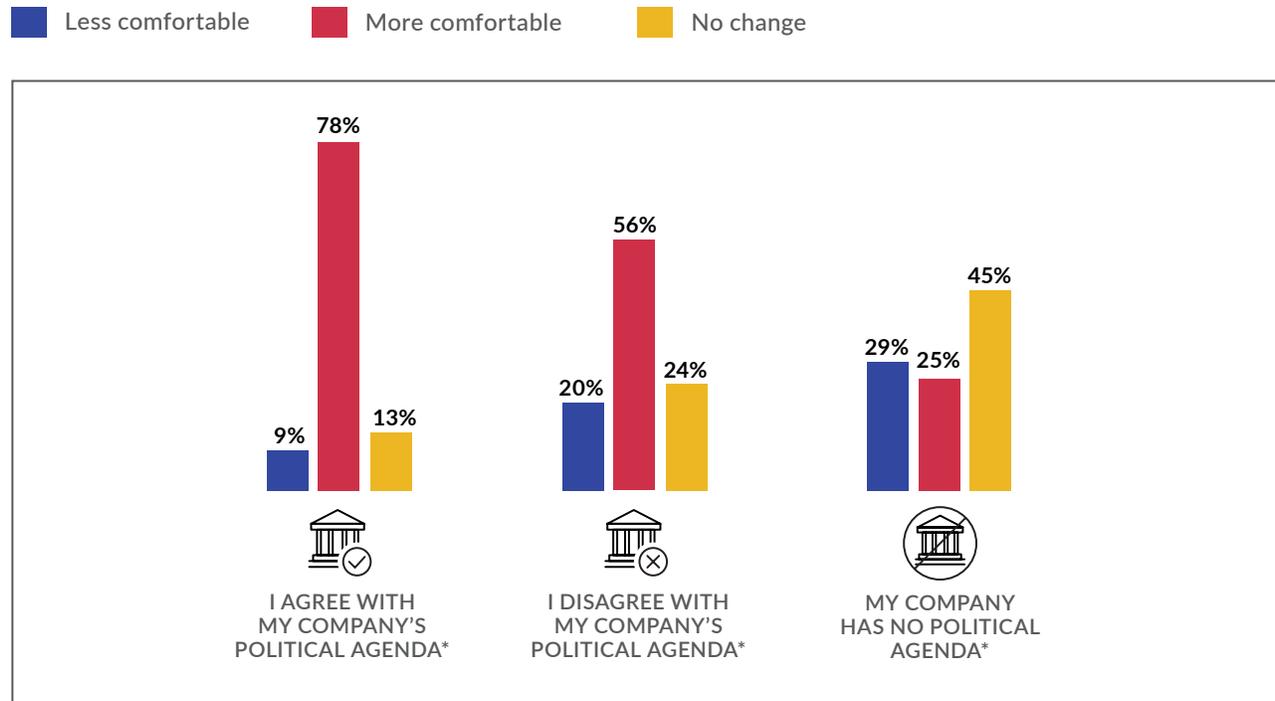
*Colleagues apparently feel perfectly happy to dox socially liberal co-workers to potentially violent far-right harassers. This has made me much less likely to talk politics with people at work. I'm not afraid I'll be fired, I'm afraid a conspiracy theorist will find my address online and come to my home.*

**MODERATE** – *Affirmation, pleasure, delight, and approval are consistently and publicly given to progressive views, while sneering, sarcasm, and a feeling of a finger being tapped on one's chest occurs when different views are expressed.*

**LIBERTARIAN** – *My libertarian viewpoint (fact-based with limited intervention in my personal life) is disregarded if not outright disrespected by the progressives and Democrats with political power in Silicon Valley.*

# Promoting a Political Agenda **Emboldens** Employees to Share Views

Do you feel more or less comfortable sharing views after 2016 election?



\*45% of respondents claimed to work at a company promoting a political agenda

## Respondent Quotes

**MODERATE** – The company runs various events, programs and talks, and it's always about progressive viewpoints and ideas. On the other hand, conservative events and speakers are getting blocked.

**VERY CONSERVATIVE** – My observation is that those with left-of-center viewpoints ... tend to see themselves as normal and good and even righteous, and thus experience no reluctance in expressing their opinions nor in condemning those who express right-of-center opinions, whom they tend to view as abnormal and bad and deserving of being silenced and even punished.

I live in the Midwest, in a small city with a conservative majority. Even though at least half the company would likely identify as conservative or libertarian, many of

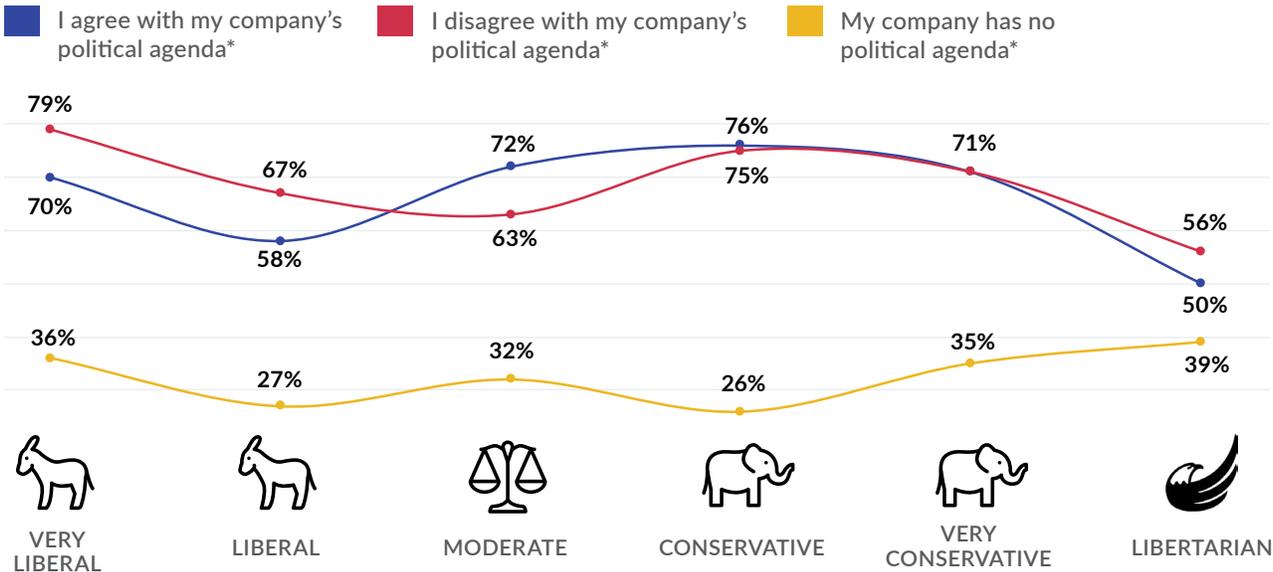
those who identify as liberal feel comfortable sharing their ideology. Everyone else stays mostly silent.

**LIBERTARIAN** – Discussing stuff in an informal setting with colleagues is mostly fine. It just becomes problematic and dangerous when it gets to some formal or public setting. And it is hard to object to questionable company policies without feeling pressure due to differences in views.

I don't care to talk about my political views at work freely. But some progressive co-workers constantly do, and they are implicitly sanctioned as having the "correct" opinion. Everyone else is uncomfortable talking about these things, so only the most progressive voices are heard.

# Employees **More Likely** to Fear Disagreeing with Colleagues at Companies Promoting a Political Agenda

Yes, I worry about the consequences of disagreeing with my colleagues in a casual work setting.



\*45% of respondents claimed to work at a company promoting a political agenda

## Respondent Quotes

**MODERATE** – I am happy, with the exception of my time at work where I feel like the choices I have made in my beliefs label me as stupid, a bigot, deplored, and more. This has been going on for far longer than Trump's time in office. I am coming to the conclusion that we cannot live or work together any longer. It is too painful.

**CONSERVATIVE** – I don't think that the majority of SF Bay Area tech employees actively support the left/progressive/liberal/Democrat agenda. Employees are either silenced by intimidation or are just indifferent, wishing only to make a good living in their chosen profession without jumping into politics or creating drama in their work life.

The problem is you simply don't know what is going to cause the next outrage mob; once it starts, you're in big trouble.

Basically, you have to keep a facade and just smile, nod when comments you deeply disagree with are made because of the monoculture. It's a very isolating and ostracizing environment. There's no break from it sometimes ... Just walking to lunch, even the surrounding strangers give no rest with their constant negative talking against my views. It can be very disheartening.

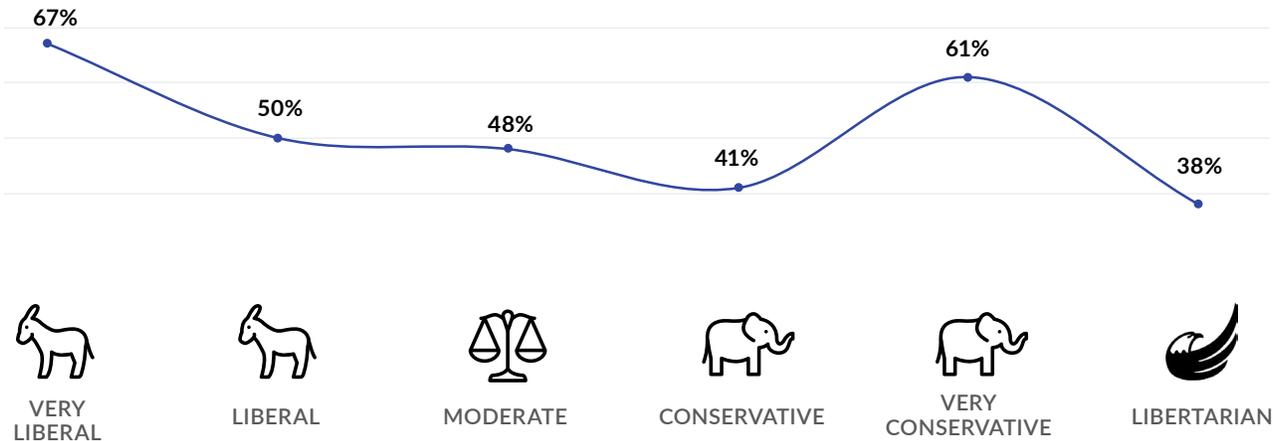
**LIBERTARIAN** – At [my Fortune 500 tech company based in the Bay Area], I've overheard managers cautioning against making anti-Trump statements to people in the Indiana office because they think most of the people there are conservative.

There are conservatives and libertarians hiding in tech, and they talk amongst themselves about their frustrations. But it has to be like a secret society, or there might be repercussions.

# Collectivism **on the Rise** Amongst Far-Left and Far-Right

Yes, I agree that group rights are more important than individual rights.

■ Respondents answering “Yes”



## Respondent Quotes

**LIBERAL** – There are two strands of liberalism in the people I interact with. One believes in science, evidence, and reason. They are willing to hear ideas they do not already believe, and humble enough to consider the possibility that they might be wrong. The other is a cult that pretends to care about such things.

**MODERATE** – [At my Fortune 500 company based in the Bay Area], employees frequently believe that [our company] has a moral obligation to interfere in the marketplace of ideas that it manages to censor and eliminate offensive ideas.

**CONSERVATIVE** – [My Fortune 500 company based in the Bay Area] has probably always been a liberal company in terms of its employees, but its commitment to free speech has served as a counter-majoritarian guardrail that prevented its internal biases from impacting

our users. As its commitment to free speech has weakened, this guardrail has weakened as well, and the consequences have been quite obvious.

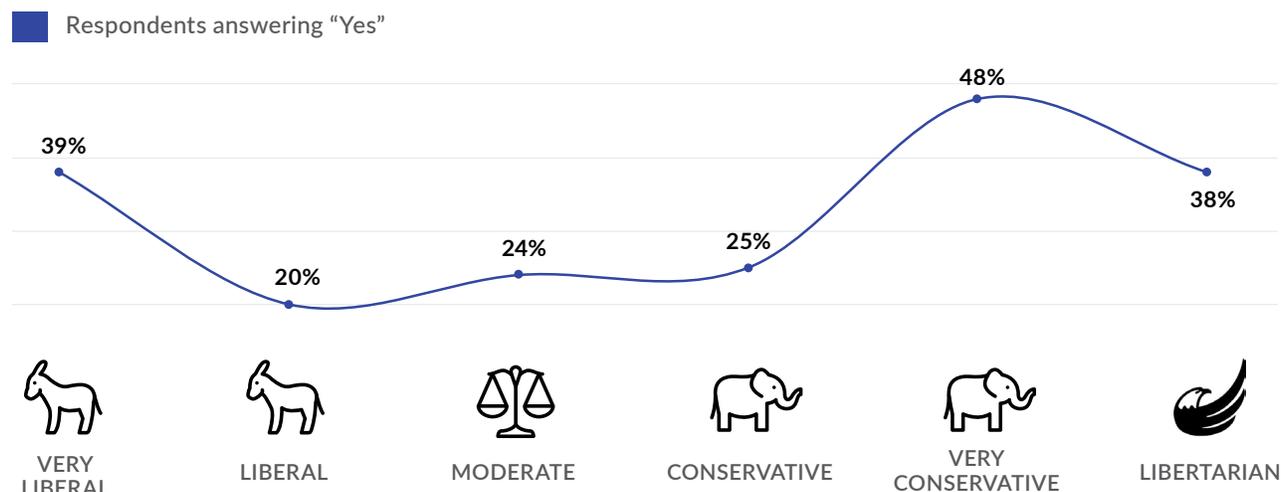
**VERY CONSERVATIVE** – No one can think outside of their perceived identity group, so it’s just assumed people think a certain way.

**LIBERTARIAN** – [At a Fortune 500 company based in the Bay Area] I’ve been told by a manager, “That’s why we work here, so we don’t have to work with people who don’t share our values.” We have a culture where we don’t bring politics or religion to work in Europe, so this focus on identity politics is a bit weird to us.

All employees freely admit to the fact that we are a liberal company, and that’s a major selling point for most employees.

# Exiting Tech Due to Ideological Conflicts

Yes, I know someone who did not pursue or left a career in tech because of perceived ideological conflicts with their company.



## Respondent Quotes

**MODERATE** – I think [my CEO of Fortune 500 company based in the Bay Area]’s involvement in Trump’s presidential advisory committee (as he transitioned to POTUS) was a real slap in the face to employees who were against him taking office. As a leader of my company, [the CEO] misrepresented the diverse views of the employees, and many exited the company.

**CONSERVATIVE** – A co-worker (who was a manager) had an employee who reported to them for 10 years. The employee’s cousin ran for a high political position as a conservative, and the employee was excited and talked about it. The leadership and other employees targeted the manager who the employee reported to, and made it a living hell for the manager. They wanted the manager to fire the employee; the manager said they wouldn’t because the employee didn’t do anything wrong. So the C-suite, the manager’s colleagues, and employees in that department created a hostile environment so intense and difficult for the manager at work that they forced them to resign after 21 years at the company.

Several people have told me that they would never pursue a position at my present employer due to its well-documented environment of ideological hostility.

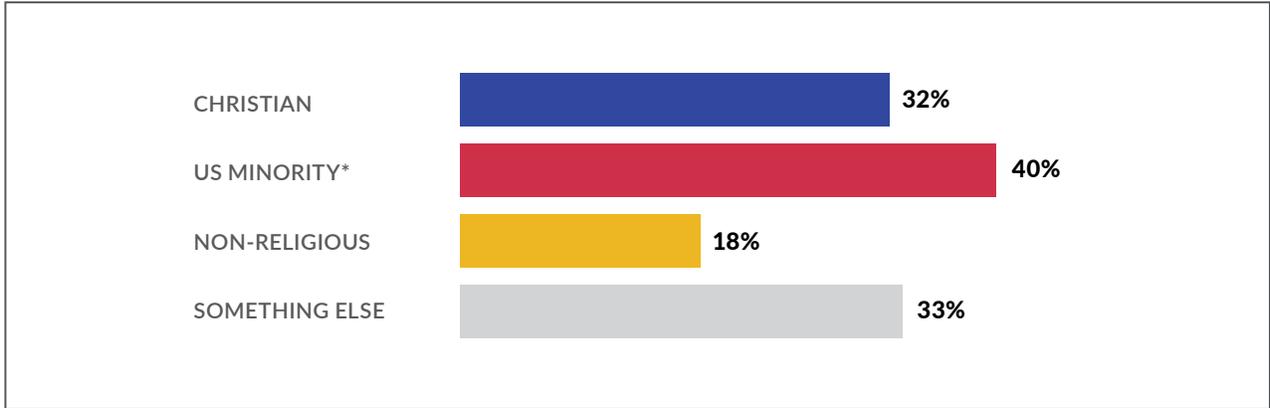
**LIBERTARIAN** – I have several personal friends that have expressed relief they hadn’t yet applied to [my Fortune 500 tech company based in the Bay Area] given the political situation. I regularly tolerate various “microaggressions,” of the form “all Trump voters are Nazis, you should punch them,” discussions of how pro-life positions are misogyny, and similar things. I don’t bring up my objections because I like my job on the whole and desire to keep it.

At [my Fortune 500 tech company based in the Bay Area], you can’t talk about anything right of center or anything right of Hillary Clinton without jeopardizing your career. I am planning to leave the Bay Area in the next six months because my ideas have impacted my career.

If my family were not here [in Silicon Valley], I would be looking to move away immediately due to culture, cost of living, high taxes, and general intrusion into my life by the government (at all levels).

# Minority Religious Groups Are **Most Affected** by Perceived Ideological Conflicts

Yes, I know someone who did not pursue or left a career in tech because of perceived ideological conflicts with their company.



\*US Minority = Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Mormon and Orthodox

## Respondent Quotes

**LIBERAL** – Conservatives are very internally vocal at my company. I feel the culture is just as welcoming to them unless they say things that are openly discriminatory against women, gays, or ethnic or religious minorities. And many, many of my colleagues are Christian. This is at a big tech company with its headquarters in Silicon Valley. Reports of rabid liberalism are hilariously exaggerated.

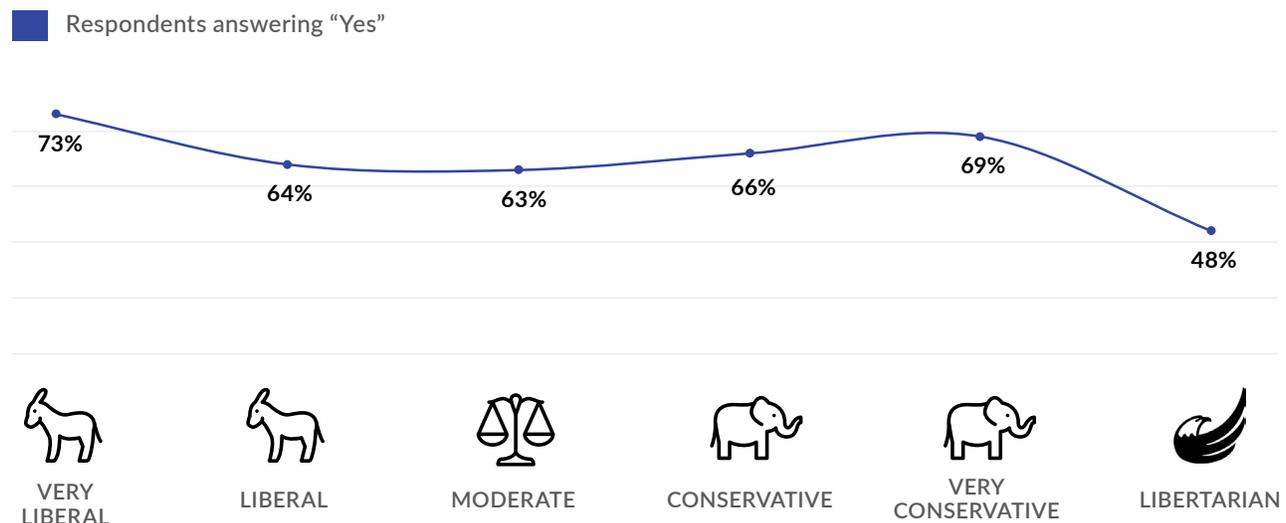
**MODERATE** – Without thinking when I first started, at a group meet, I said the term “human assets” and the reaction was awful. Somebody gasped and said, “You’re kidding. You’re a Republican?” I did a poker face,

fast. I attend Mass. I hide my cross. I hide my church participation. I live in fear someone will find out, so I drive to a distant parish to assure I do not cross paths with colleagues. To be part of the group, I pretend to be whom I am not.

**LIBERTARIAN** – I became very concerned ... about sharing my views on political, religious, diversity-related, or otherwise potentially controversial things ... I was especially saddened to see how many co-workers started treating each other dismissively, disrespectful, or aggressively if they disagreed with their viewpoints.

# Pronounced Support for Silencing ‘Dangerous’ Opinions

Yes, I agree some opinions and ideas are too dangerous to be discussed openly.



## Respondent Quotes

**MODERATE** – *It seems like the organization is configured to honor the “aggrieved veto” – if someone indicates that a particular viewpoint is hostile or offensive, it can be dangerous to voice that viewpoint or even say that people who have that viewpoint should be permitted to speak.*

**CONSERVATIVE** – *One woman at work was strongly conservative and criticized Barack Obama’s policies at lunch. She also stated reasons (when asked) why she wouldn’t vote for Hillary Clinton. She told us that she was later reprimanded after someone “tattled” on her. She began seeking another job and left within a month.*

**VERY CONSERVATIVE** – *In February 2017, I was fired from [a Fortune 500 company] for expressing support of Trump’s travel ban.*

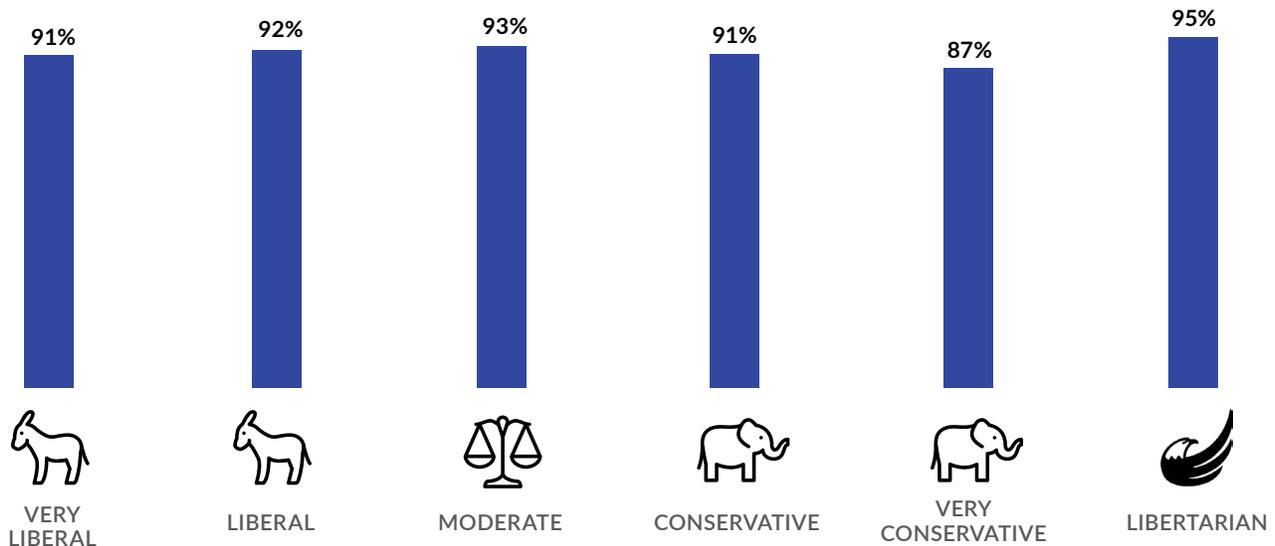
**LIBERTARIAN** – *The CEO personally fired a conservative employee who wrote a document about how there is an ideological echo chamber within the company and lack of free discourse on political/diversity issues.*

*Living in the Bay Area is pretty challenging, as our views are certainly not shared by the majority. Takes me back to the bad old communist days in Hungary, where we had to constantly self-censor ourselves to avoid being sent to the Hungarian version of Siberia.*

# Overwhelming Agreement

## That Tech Companies Should Encourage Viewpoint Diversity

Yes, I agree that companies in general should foster a diversity of viewpoints.



### Respondent Quotes

**LIBERAL** – Our company encourages dialogue, and there are frequent in-person or online discussions with differing viewpoints.

**MODERATE** – I feel that there is a balance of taking a stand as an individual and as a company, and that looks different from one company to another. There should be an independent outside HR organization that should be able to have an unbiased opinion on how leaders and employees are handling inclusivity of all views.

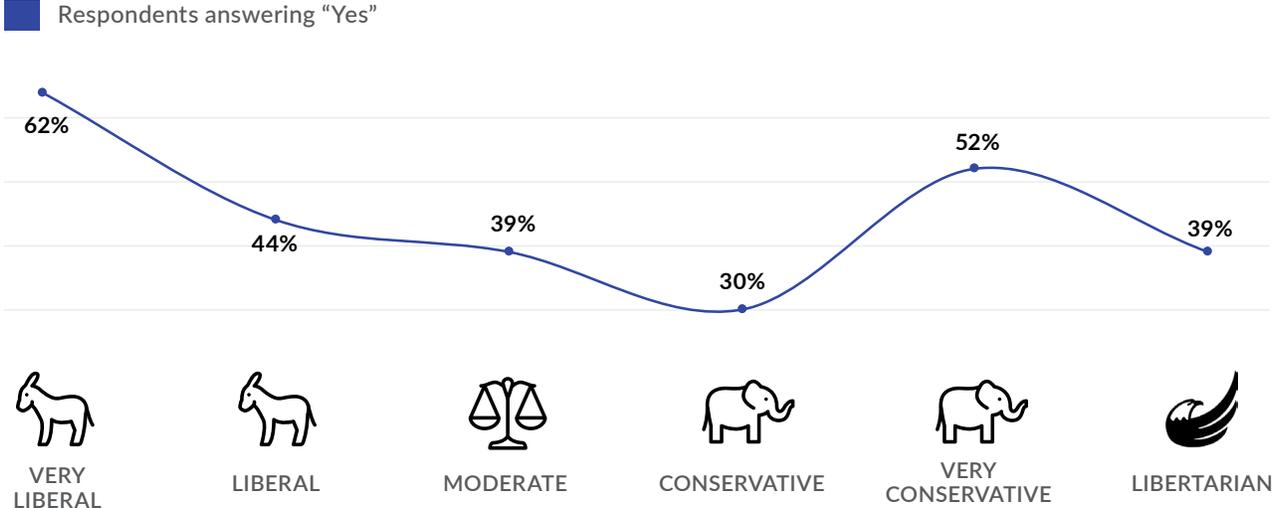
**CONSERVATIVE** – It’s difficult to see how employers “taking a public stand” on issues they deem important in any way encourages the free exchange of ideas or is helpful for employees “bringing their whole selves to work.” In fact, the opposite occurs, as those who may not agree with the employer’s political “stand” will begin to feel alienated.

My employer’s [Fortune 500 company based in the Bay Area] diversity and inclusion efforts used to be much more non-partisan, and they embraced science-based thinking. More recently, it’s become much more partisan, and it frequently embraces “research” from the activist disciplines of academia as opposed to actual science.

**VERY CONSERVATIVE** – In a communication channel about diversity and inclusion, I asked if viewpoints other than leftist ones were allowed to be shared. So far, the only answer received has been, “I’ll have to think about it.”

# Far-Right and Far-Left Employees **Most Likely** to Support Termination for Offensive Views

Yes, I agree companies should terminate employees when they express offensive views outside the workplace.



## Respondent Quotes

**VERY CONSERVATIVE** – I was very discouraged to find out that my company fired their top trainer, who was the absolute best at his job, because he was a conservative family man ... Someone at my company found out that he had different viewpoints than the executives, and since he is visible with training customers and employees, he shouldn't have that right. If any of us make our viewpoints public to an executive, we will probably be fired.

A guy who mentioned he was a gun owner, in a non-threatening way, was removed from [our company's internal messaging service] immediately and fired within the week. Most of the HR team is based in L.A., which creates a blind spot for culture. People from other parts of the country would not have cracked down on a gun comment.

Many people in HR at my company see their role as political activists. Anyone who does not agree with their take is a problem.

**LIBERTARIAN** – Being perceived as politically inoffensive is critical for my career. After the 2016 presidential election, with casual workplace conversation so frequently falling to politics, I am often better off not speaking to certain coworkers. The idea of "bringing your whole self to work" is undermined if the workplace culture allows for wishing harm and torture on Trump voters.

The CEO explicitly asked anyone who voted for Trump in 2016 to resign. I find that unprofessional, uncalled for, and it pretty much guarantees that the dozen conservatives working at the company are afraid of being outed.

When discussing at dinner that everyone talks only about liberal politics in the company, a director noted that "it's fine, we shouldn't tolerate intolerant people such as conservatives here."