Survey Trend Analysis of Trust in US Institutions

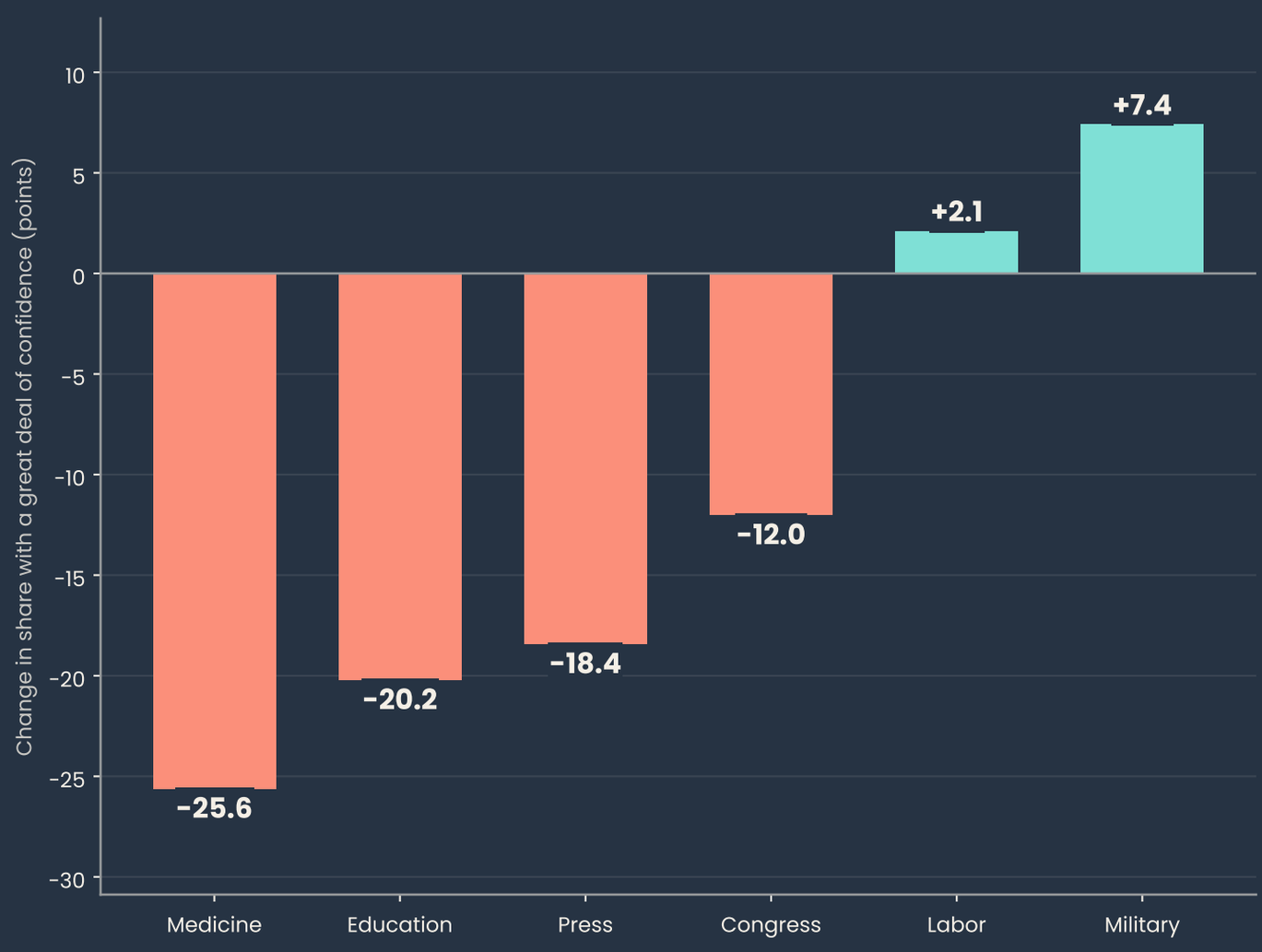
−25.6 pts

change in the share of US adults with a great deal of confidence in the people running medicine, 1973–77 to 2022–24.

4 of 6 displayed institutions lost confidence	**+7.4** points for the military, the largest gain	**33.05** point swing in military minus medicine	**-5.3** points per decade for medicine

EXHIBIT 1

Change in high confidence, 1973–77 to 2022–24



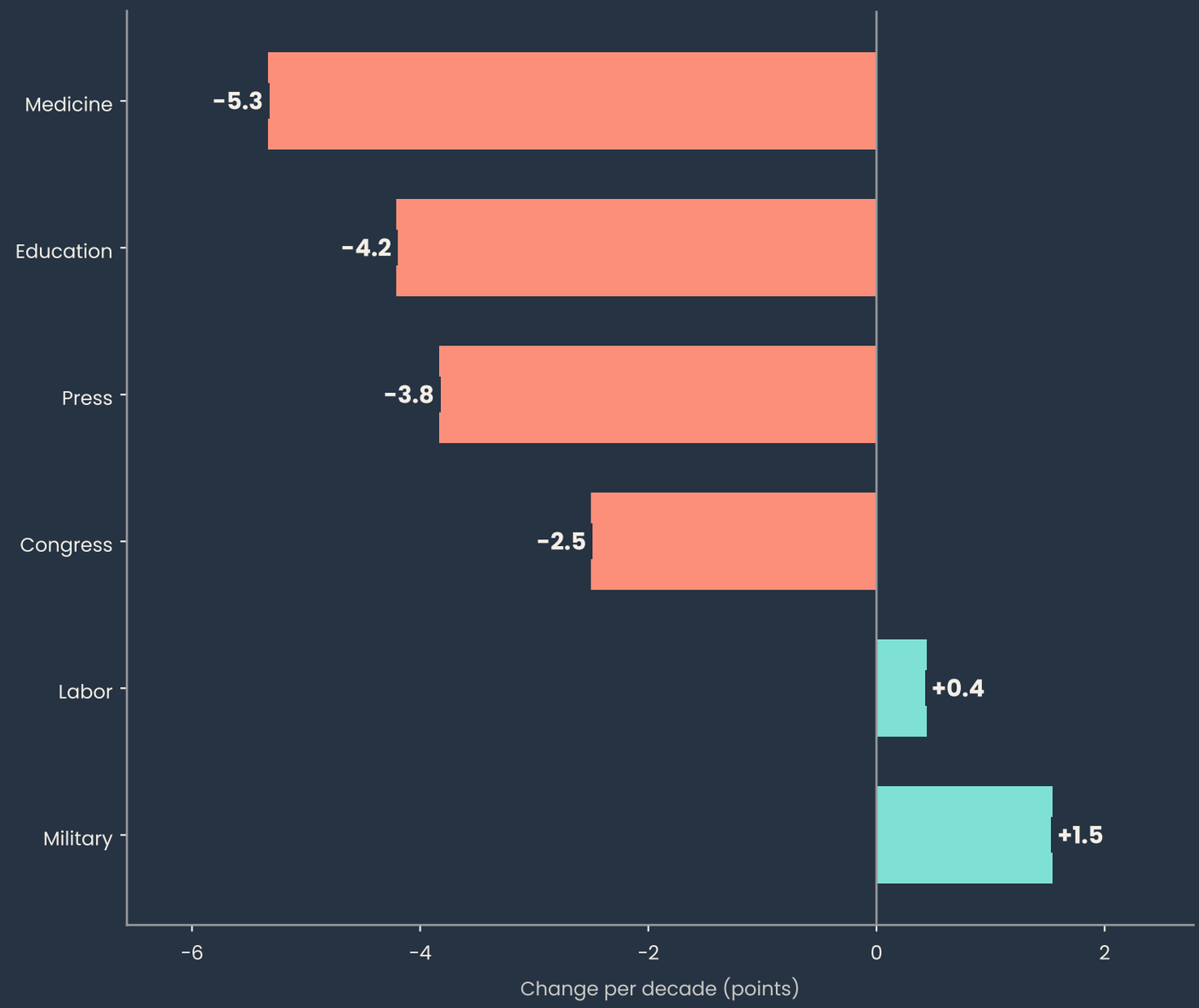
Four institutions fell by double digits. Labor and the military rose.

What the analysis shows

- Confidence did not fall across the board. Medicine, education, the press and Congress fell 12 to 26 points; organized labor and the military rose.
- Medicine fell furthest, 25.6 points, about 5.3 points per decade between the midpoints of the two survey windows.
- Medicine led military by 18.03 points early. Military led medicine by 15.02 points late: a +33.05-point swing, with a narrower absolute gap.
- Medicine alone accounts for 34% of the combined decline among the four falling institutions; education and the press add another 51%.
- A single "trust is falling" headline would misstate two of the six series, which is why each institution is reported with its own windows.

EXHIBIT 2

The same change as a pace

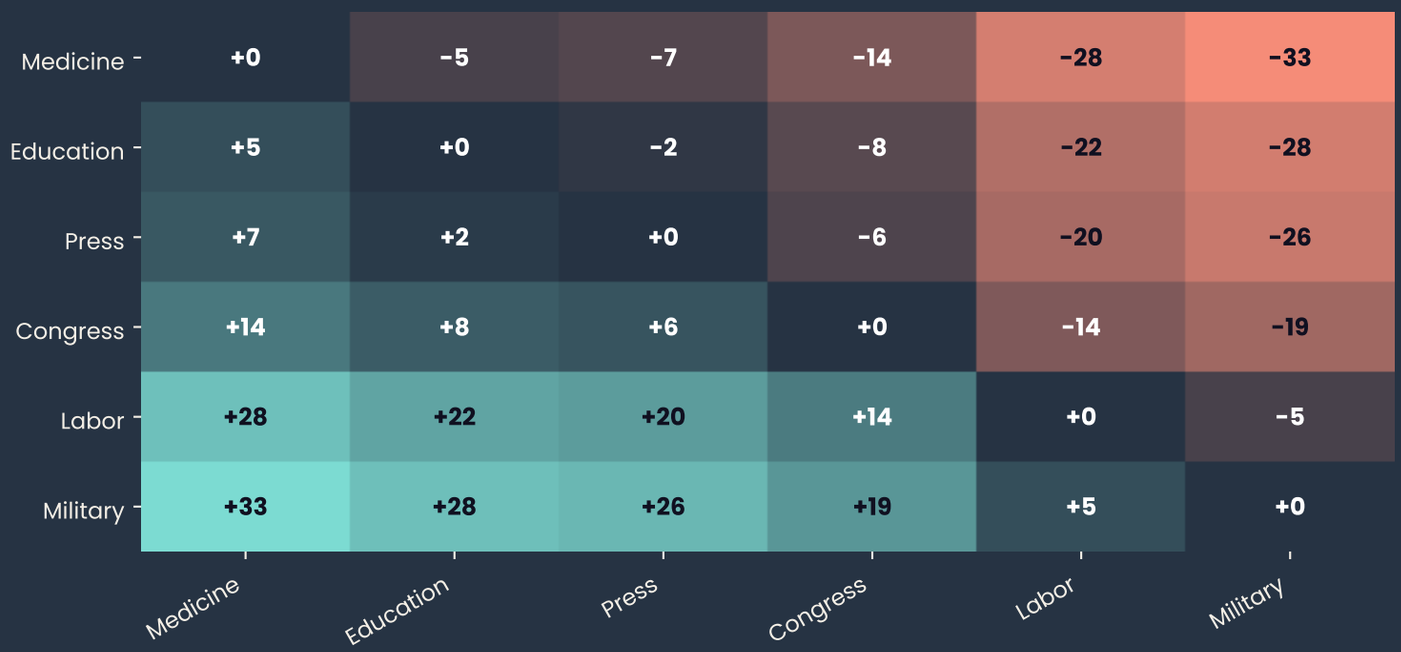


Dividing by the 4.8 decades between window midpoints turns each change into a rate a board can compare with other trackers.

Inside the numbers

EXHIBIT 3

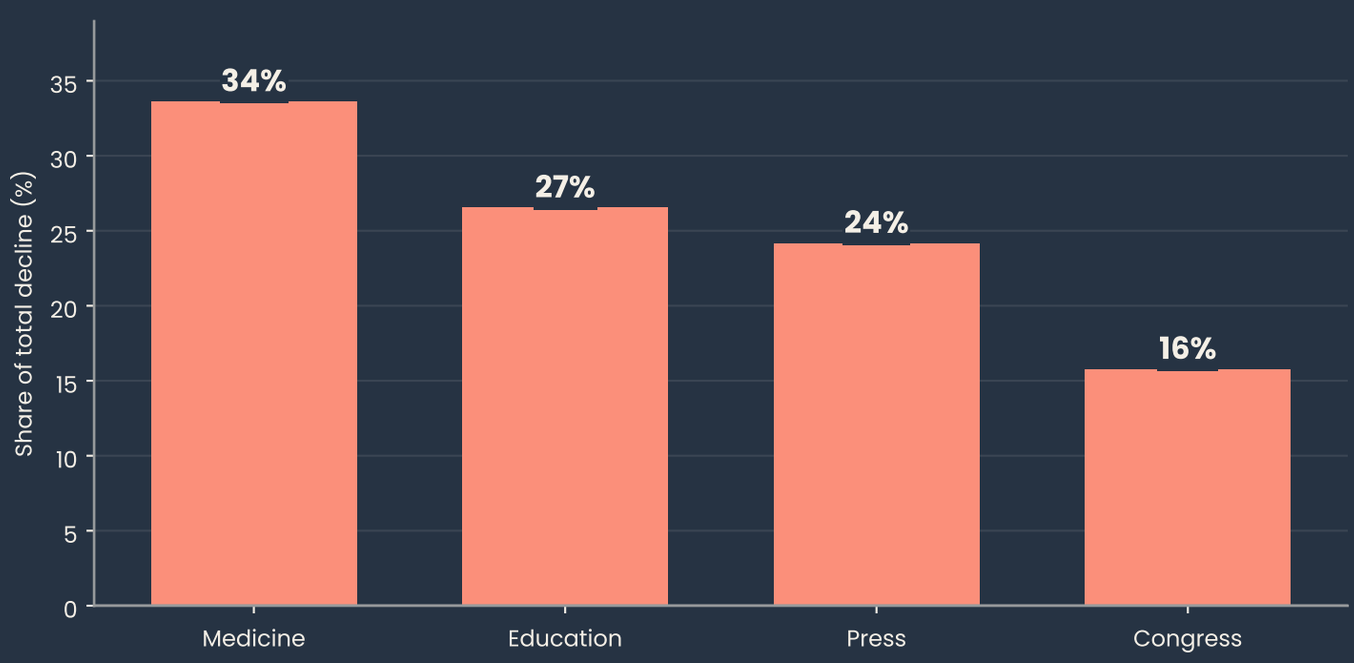
Pairwise differences between changes



Each cell is the row institution's change minus the column's. Military minus medicine is +33.05 points. The absolute gap narrowed.

EXHIBIT 4

Who accounts for the decline

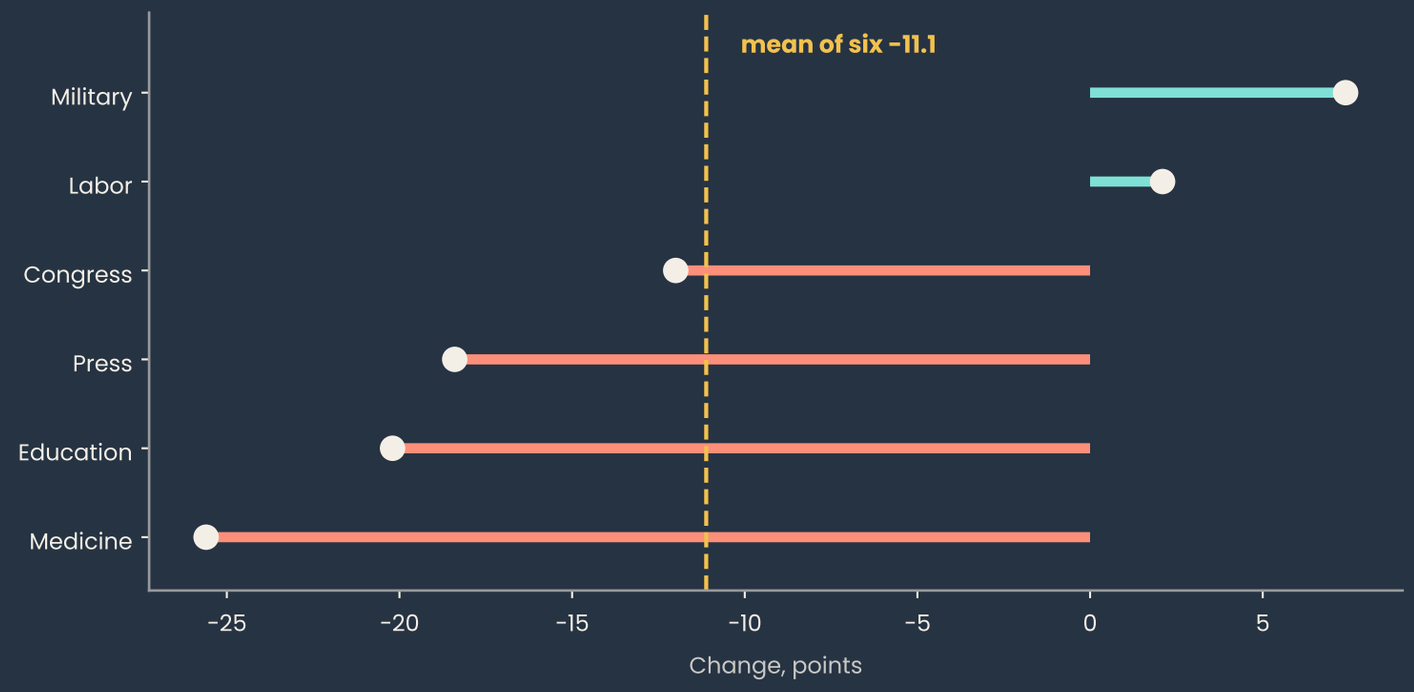


Of 76.2 points of combined decline, medicine supplies a third.

What changes the answer

EXHIBIT 5

Ranked changes against their mean



The six-institution mean is -11.1 points, but no institution sits near it; the series split into two groups.

EXHIBIT 6

Board table

Institution	Change (pts)	Per decade	Direction	Rank
Medicine	-25.6	-5.3	Fell	1
Education	-20.2	-4.2	Fell	2
Press	-18.4	-3.8	Fell	3
Congress	-12.0	-2.5	Fell	4
Labor	+2.1	+0.4	Rose	5
Military	+7.4	+1.5	Rose	6

One row per institution, with the change, the pace and the direction.

How it was built and how far it goes

RECOMMENDED USE

- Quote each institution separately and keep both survey windows in the sentence.
- Lead with the divergence between medicine and the military; it is the most defensible single comparison.
- Use the per-decade pace when comparing with trackers that cover a different span.

METHOD

- Weighted shares of General Social Survey respondents reporting a great deal of confidence in the people running each institution.
- Two pooled windows, 1973–77 and 2022–24; change is the later share minus the earlier share.
- Pace uses 4.8 decades between midpoints. Pairwise cells subtract signed changes using the original weighted estimates before rounding.

LIMITS

- Six of the 13 institutions in the underlying analysis are shown; the other seven are not in this report.
- Repeated cross-sections describe the population, not change within individuals.
- Endpoints and differences were rounded separately, and sampling intervals are not shown here.

NUMBERS RECONCILED

Quantity	Value	How it was checked
Medicine	-25.6 pts	project chart data
Education	-20.2 pts	project chart data
Press	-18.4 pts	project chart data
Congress	-12.0 pts	project chart data
Labor	+2.1 pts	project chart data
Military	+7.4 pts	project chart data