

FOR RELEASE: TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 1998, A.M.

DECONSTRUCTING DISTRUST
How Americans View Government

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Kimberly Parker, Research Director
Gregory Flemming, Survey Analyst
Molly Sonner, Survey Analyst
Beth Donovan, Editor
Pew Research Center for The People & The Press
202/293-3126
<http://www.people-press.org>

FOREWORD

Distrust of government is hardly new. In fact, at its most benign, a certain skepticism about government seems almost central to our national character, an admirable quality Americans employ to keep Washington in check. But during the 1960s and early 1970s, this healthy skepticism deteriorated into an outright distrust that in the 1990s has appeared a rigid cynicism.

At what point does such profound distrust of government become dangerous, threatening our ability as a society to address the pressing issues of the day? What underpins trust in government? And what do the American people need to see before a measure of trust might be restored?

As we approach the end of the 20th Century — the American Century — these questions beg answers. To begin the search, we undertook an extensive study of public attitudes toward the federal government and trust in it. Through this work on behalf of The Pew Charitable Trusts, we found clear indications of changing views of government and have come to a better understanding of the causes and implications of public distrust of the federal government.

Andrew Kohut
Director
Pew Research Center for The People & The Press

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Overview	3
Section I: General and Specific Measures of Trust	14
Section II: Mood of the Country & Trust in Government	23
Section III: Evaluations of Government Leadership	27
Section IV: Government Performance	32
Section V: The Role of Government	37
Section VI: Government's Priorities	45
Section VII: Consequences	49
Section VIII: European Attitudes Toward Government	53
Tables	58
Survey Methodology	67
Questionnaires	73
Appendix	135

DECONSTRUCTING DISTRUST

Overview

Americans continue to distrust the government, although there are signs that hostility toward government has begun to diminish. There is also considerable evidence that distrust of government is strongly connected to how people feel about the overall state of the nation.

Today, personal satisfaction is soaring, the economy is thriving and confidence in state and local governments is growing, but neither satisfaction with the condition of the country nor confidence in the federal government has been transformed. The national mood and trust are both up from the mid-1990s, but still just 20% of Americans are highly satisfied with the state of the nation and only 34% basically trust the government.

Worry about the moral health of American society is suppressing satisfaction with the state of the nation, just as discontent with the honesty of elected officials is a leading cause of distrust of government. In the broadest sense, these ethical concerns are now weighing down American attitudes as Vietnam, Watergate, double digit inflation and unemployment once did.

Disillusionment with political leaders is essentially as important a factor in distrust of government as is criticism of the way government performs its duties. Cynicism about leaders is especially critical to distrust among the generations of Americans who came of age during and after the Vietnam and Watergate eras, while performance failures are more important to older Americans.

Distrust of government and discontent with the country notwithstanding, there is no indication that these attitudes are near a crisis stage. Public desire for government services and activism has remained nearly steady over the past 30 years. And distrust of government is not fostering a disregard for the nation's laws, eroding patriotism or discouraging government service. About as many people would recommend a government job to a child today as would have in the early 1960s, when there was much less distrust of government.

Refining these views, most Americans describe themselves as frustrated with government, not angry at it. And that frustration is taking a toll on the quality and nature of the dialogue between the American public and its leaders in Washington.

With the failings of political leaders bearing so large a burden in Americans' distrust of government, the recent allegations against President Clinton — of adultery, perjury and suborning perjury — appear to strike at the heart of trust in government. But trust declined only modestly in a follow-up survey conducted in the midst of the scandal. The basic views of Americans accustomed to scandal in Washington generally, and to allegations about Clinton specifically, are not easily moved. Further, poll after poll show that Americans are much more concerned with elected officials' public conduct than with their private lives.

Principal Findings

These are the results of a series of surveys and focus groups conducted by the Pew Research Center for The People & The Press that were designed to examine the underlying causes of distrust of government. The study also sought to determine whether distrust has reached a dangerous level and to learn what steps could be taken to improve the public’s understanding of government.

Conducted over the last six months, these surveys show Americans to be less critical of government in a variety of ways than they were just a few years ago. Despite broad-based distrust of government, the polling finds improved public evaluations of federal workers and specific departments and agencies of government. Just one of the 19 federal agencies and departments tested was not rated favorably by a majority of respondents. Seven received significantly better ratings than they did in the mid-1980s.

A softening of general attitudes toward the federal government is also apparent today. Fewer people than in 1994 criticize Washington for being inefficient and wasteful, too controlling and unresponsive. Further, the percentage thinking that government regulation of business does more harm than good fell over this same period, as did the percentage who think that elected officials lose touch with people.

A Less Critical View of Government				
	<u>'90</u>	<u>'92</u>	<u>'94</u>	<u>'97</u>
<i>% Agree . . .</i>				
Govt is inefficient & wasteful	67	70	69	64
Pol. lose touch pretty quickly	78	84	83	76
Govt controls too much of daily life	62	64	69	64
Regulation of business does more harm than good	58	61	63	57
Govt run for the benefit of all people	52	44	42	48

The direction of the trend notwithstanding, distrust of government remains substantial. No matter how the question is posed, it is a decided minority that has a positive opinion of government. Fewer than 40% trust the government in Washington always or most of the time; approximately the same percentage has a favorable opinion of the federal government.

However, 56% of Americans temper their distrust of government by saying they are frustrated with it. Just 12% say they are angry with government. In fact, more than twice as many people — 29% — say they are basically content as say they are angry.

The Center surveys suggest that the public’s frustration is directed more at politicians who lead government than at civil servants who administer it. By a margin of 67%-to-16%, the public has more trust in federal workers than in their elected officials to do the right thing. In that vein, 69% now say that they have a favorable opinion of government workers — an improvement from the 55% that held that view in a 1981 *Los Angeles Times* national opinion survey.

Americans are also drawing sharper distinctions between federal, state and local governments than they once did. Today, more people trust their state and local governments than trust the government in Washington. But, it was not always that way. Twenty-five years ago people were more confident in the federal government than in those closer to home. Since then confidence in Washington has eroded, while faith in state and local government has actually grown.¹

But even at that, the Pew Research Center surveys find little indication that distrust of government is having dangerous consequences for the country. The exception is among the small segment of the public that describes itself as angry at the government, where as many as 38% could see justifications for violent acts against the federal government.

The broader problem is the American public's connection to its political leadership. While trust in government does not directly correlate with that bond, feelings about political leaders — the bosses of government — clearly do. Boredom with Washington, not voting and seeing Washington issues as irrelevant are much more common attitudes and behaviors among Americans who are highly critical of political leaders than among those with more positive views of politicians.

The study is summarized in the next eight pages and discussed in detail in subsequent sections. Nearly 4,000 adults were contacted, including 1,007 adults called February 19-22 for a follow-up survey; 1,165 for a values update survey, November 13-17, 1997; and 1,762 in the initial trust in government survey, September 25-October 31, 1997. This overview features an examination of broad factors underpinning trust, highlights specific views of government and finally presents our conclusions. A complete description of the methodology can be found on page 67. The questionnaires and results can be found on page 73.

Conducted in the fall of 1997, the initial trust in government survey included nearly 50 questions designed to illuminate the sources of trust and distrust. It found 39% of the public basically trusted the federal government. The late February follow-up survey sought a snap shot of trust in the wake of allegations of a sex scandal and cover-up in the White House. Trust in government declined modestly to 34%. Throughout this report, the analyses of factors influencing trust in government reflect findings in the earlier survey.

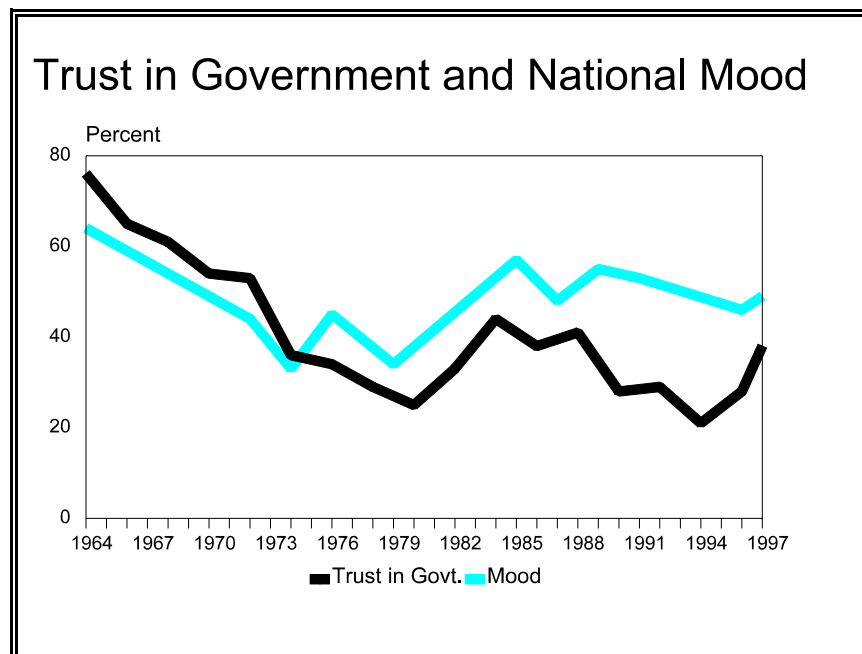
Limited Scandal Damage			
	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Late Feb</u>	
	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>Change</u>
<i>Trust the Govt in Washington</i>			
Always	3	5	+2
Most of the time	36	29	-7
Only sometimes	59	61	+2
Never	2	4	+2
Don't know	*	<u>1</u>	
	100	100	
<i>Rating the Nation</i>			
High	15	20	+5
Medium	34	36	+2
Low	50	43	-7
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	
	100	100	

¹ Similarly, *all* branches of the federal government have not suffered a long term loss of confidence. A Spring 1997 Gallup poll found more Americans trusting the Supreme Court than in 1972, even though public confidence in both the presidency and the Congress has fallen substantially during that interval.

The National Mood and Trust in Government

Pew's new polling sheds light on the paradox of public distrust of government on the one hand and liking and wanting specific forms of government activity on the other. A close correspondence is seen between how Americans view the state of the nation and how much trust they have in government. People who generally distrust government also have a poor opinion of the condition of the country. Conversely, people who trust the government tend to feel good about the country in general.

Over the past 30 years, these two attitudes have tracked very closely, even though the findings come from different surveys administered by varied polling and opinion research organizations. The state of the nation rating was developed by the noted Princeton social psychologist Hadley Cantril in 1959 to measure public contentment with the course of the nation.² Since then this measure has been employed by a variety of survey organizations, notably The Gallup Organization and the Center for The People & The Press more recently. Since the mid-1960s, there has been a striking correspondence between answers to this question and responses to the famous American National Election Studies (NES) question which asks respondents how much they trust the government in Washington to do what is right.



²

Respondents are asked to consider their hopes and fears for the nation and then rate the state of the nation on a 0-10 scale to represent where the country stands today, where it stood five years ago, and where it is expected to be five years hence.

Confidence in government and ratings of the nation both plummeted in the 1960s during the Vietnam years and fell even further in the 1970s in response to Watergate. Both measures remained low throughout the 1970s, presumably in response to the high inflation and unemployment of that era. There was somewhat of a rebound in trust and rating of the nation during Reagan’s “Morning in America” years, though it ended abruptly with public disillusionment over the Iran-Contra scandal. Trust and satisfaction with the state of the nation have fluctuated somewhat since then, but have never fully recovered.

Pew’s research provides insight into why trust in government and views of the nation have paralleled each other, both failing to recover with the successful end of the Cold War and the vigor of the American economy. Two inter-related factors emerge: First, long-standing public discontent with morality and politics generally and morality *in* politics specifically; second, generational differences in views of both government and the state of the nation.

Morals, Ethics and Honesty

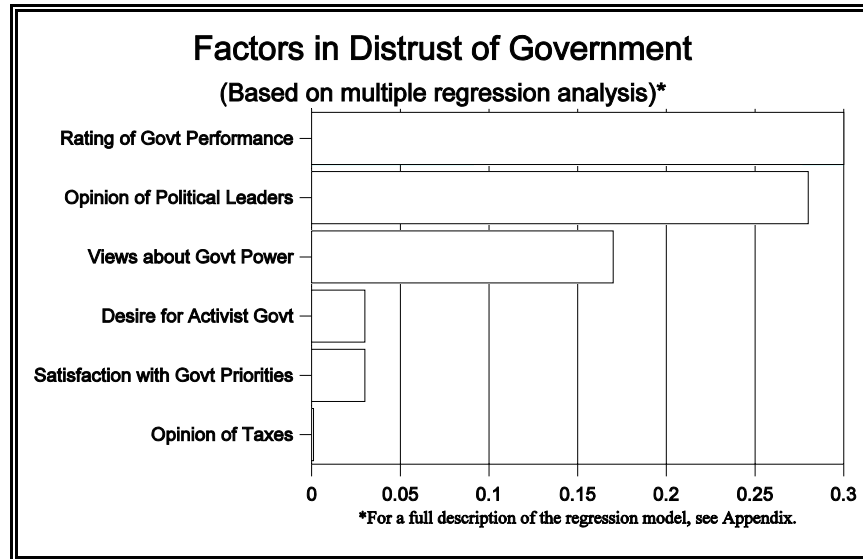
Discontent with political leaders and lack of faith in the political system are principal factors that stand behind public distrust of government. Much of that criticism involves the honesty and ethics of government leaders. Concern about moral decline is also a major component of discontent with the nation at a time when its economic and international standing is ascendant.

The importance of political disillusionment to distrust of government is reflected in a number of ways. When asked to say in their own words why they do not like government, 40% of those with an unfavorable opinion of the government offer complaints about political leaders or the political system as the reason for their negative view.

This is considerably more than the 24% who offer critiques of the way government *does its job*; the 14% who cite complaints about government *policies*; or the 13% who say that government is *uncaring*. Much of the criticism of leaders and the political system involves personal and professional ethics — mentions of dishonesty, self-aggrandizement, scandal and special interests are prevalent.

Reasons People Give For Disliking Government
<i>Political Leadership/Political System (40%)</i> Politicians are dishonest/crooks Only out for themselves/For own personal gain Representatives say one thing and do another Too partisan Scandals
<i>Critiques of Government (24%)</i> Too much govt spending/Spend money frivolously Federal govt can’t get anything done Government is too big/Too much government Government interferes too much/Too intrusive
<i>Policy (15%)</i> Taxes are too high Dislike govt policies in general/Dislike specific policy Spend too much on foreign countries Government has the wrong priorities
<i>Government Doesn’t Care/Unresponsive (13%)</i> Govt doesn’t pay attention to/care about people Needs/opinions of people not represented in govt

Looking at a comprehensive analysis based on the results of many questions, we also find that criticism of political leaders is a principal driver of distrust in government. The Pew surveys found that criticism of political leaders is as important an element in the distrust equation as the view that government does a poor job in running its programs. Cynicism about political leaders and the political system is more crucial to distrust than concerns about the proper role of government, worries about its power and intrusiveness, misgivings about its priorities or resentment about taxes.

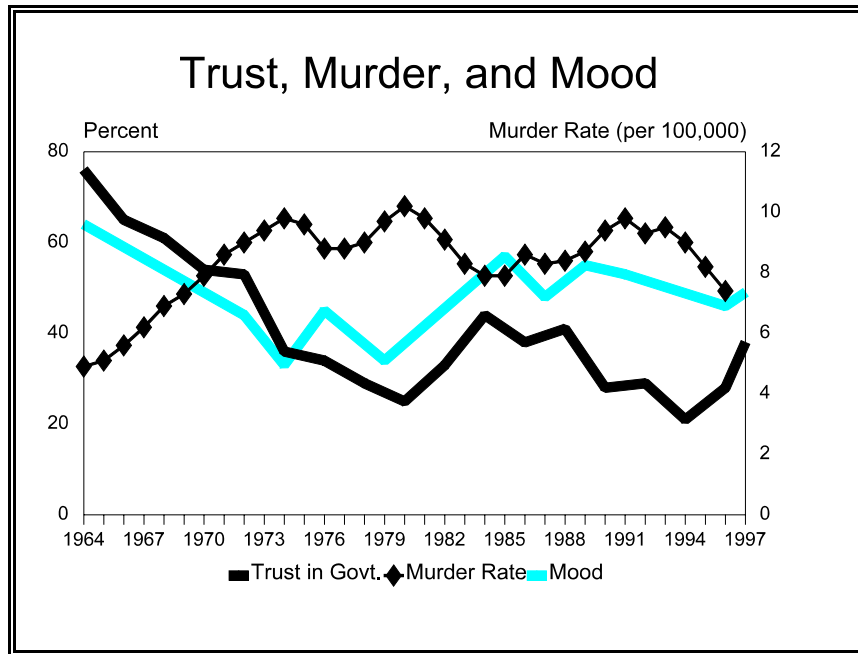


Concern about honesty and ethics in politics is an important link between distrust in government and pessimism about the state of the nation. In exploring the discontinuity between the optimism Americans feel about their own lives and the pessimism they feel about the nation, Pew’s research found in November 1996 that the morality crisis was fueling pessimism about the country:

Three of the four national problems that over 60% of survey respondents say are increasing in severity relate to moral and social decline: crime (61%), drugs (64%) and low moral and ethical standards (62%)... Perceptions of a nation overwhelmed by moral and social problems are strongly linked to pessimism about the country’s future. By a margin of 74% to 54%, pessimists are more likely than optimists to believe that crime is becoming a worse problem nationally.³

³ Pew Research Center for The People & The Press, “The Optimism Gap Grows,” January 17, 1997.

The link between America's moral discontent and its dissatisfaction with the state of the country and distrust in government is shown in the graph below, which charts the two survey measures over the past three decades side-by-side with the murder rate.



Cynicism or Performance: Generational Differences

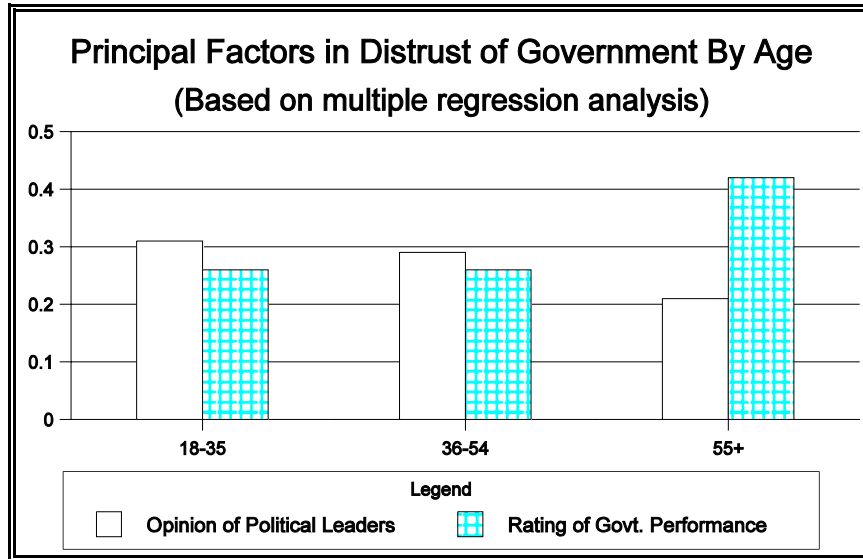
If the changed moral climate has taken a toll on how Americans view their country and government, its impact has been greatest on Americans who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s when criticism of government leaders and policies crescendoed. The long-term impact of this period in American history upon the young people of that time is clearly evident today. The nearly 40-year history of public opinion about the state of the nation and trust in government makes it possible to observe how particular generations have changed or maintained their views over this time period.

In 1964, there was no generation gap in Americans' views of the state of the nation. This is not true today. While the turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s dimmed perceptions of the state of the nation for people of all ages, Americans who had reached middle age by then have regained some of their positive feelings. Today, they feel more upbeat about the state of the nation than do younger Americans and their distrust of government is not as great as that of Baby Boomers.

These generational patterns continue to influence

Year Born	Age In	U.S. Ladder Rating (% rating "High" [8-10])			
		1964	1972	1987	1997
<i>Total</i>		30	17	14	15
1970-79	not born	—	—	—	10
1955-69	< 10	—	—	12	11
1945-54	10-19	—	9	11	16
1935-44	20-29	28	16	15	17
1925-34	30-39	27	13	15	26
1915-24	40-49	31	17	16	—
1905-14	50-59	29	24	17	—
Pre-1905	60 +	32	19	—	—

views of government. Today, younger generations are much more distrustful of politicians than older people. Pew’s analysis suggests that the underlying causes of distrust differ by generation. Older people judge government more on the basis of its performance, while younger people measure government by the quality of its leadership.



Specific Views of Government

Americans give the government dismal performance ratings. An overwhelming majority of the public says that the government does a fair or poor job managing its programs and providing services (74%). Almost as many agree that when a program is run by government it is usually inefficient and wasteful (64%). These low marks do not come up significantly when people are asked about federal handling of specific tasks. For instance, 52% of Americans say the government is doing only a fair job providing for the elderly; 20% describe the effort as poor.

Americans express mixed views on why the federal government’s performance is so lackluster. When asked what the government’s biggest problem is — its priorities or inefficiency — 61% choose inefficiency. But when people look more closely at specific issues government takes on, many acknowledge the complexity of the issues. Among those who give the government low marks on health care, for example, 48% blame the complexity of the issue, compared to 45% who blame the government.

Whatever the reason, the government’s perceived performance failures significantly undermine trust. Fully 70% of those who give the government a fair or poor rating say they basically distrust government. The inverse is also true: 76% of those who are satisfied with government performance basically trust the government.

One reason performance factors so prominently in trust is that Americans have high expectations for the role government should play in public life. Fully 72% of Americans believe the government should see to it that no one is without food, clothing or shelter in this country — as many as felt that way in the 1960s. Many Americans also say it is the federal government’s responsibility to manage the economy (68%), conserve natural resources (52%) and provide for the elderly (46%).

At the same time, Americans do not believe the federal government gives these domestic issues the attention they deserve. On eight different issues — which range from ensuring safe food and medicine to setting academic standards for students and providing for the elderly — the public believes the federal government should give the issues higher priority than they think it now does. The priority gap is highest on ensuring access to affordable health care: 75% of the public say it *should* be a high priority; just 15% say it is. The gap is lowest on ensuring everyone can afford college: 50% want it to be a high priority; 11% say it is.

Despite this enthusiasm for an activist government, Americans are uneasy with federal power and control. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the public believes the government controls too much of our daily lives and more than half say Washington interferes too much in state and local matters. While these numbers are substantial, the intensity has lessened since 1994. Today, 29% completely agree with the statement government controls too much of our daily lives, down from 37%.

The public divides into three equal sized groups when asked if the government has too much power (33%), too little (33%) or about the right amount (32%). Remarkably, this division has not changed markedly in 30 years.

Conclusions

A principal finding of this research is that distrust of the federal government is not only about the workings of government per se. A significant part of this distrust reflects how people feel about the nation more generally.

Discontent with the state of the nation is both a cause and an effect of distrust of government. Both sentiments are expressions of a broader disillusionment with the country as a whole, which is not apparent in people's lives, nor is it as evident at the state and local levels of government.

The consequences of distrust of the federal government are equally complex. The growth of this opinion since the 1960s has not been accompanied by a commensurate loss of appetite for government programs or solutions. Opinions about using the government to solve important problems have changed remarkably little over the past 30 years.

It is difficult to pinpoint the specific negative behavioral or attitudinal consequences of distrust. It has not diminished Americans' sense of patriotism, nor has it created a climate of opinion that is conducive to acceptance of illegal anti-government activities. Even public interest in government employment has varied little since the early 1960s, despite the decline in trust.

Instead, distrust of the national government and low opinions of the state of the nation seem to weaken people's connections to civic life. Interest in public affairs, news from Washington and voting are victims of low public esteem for politicians, which is an integral component of distrust.

The data collected in these surveys suggest that views about government performance, power and priorities are more important than "trust," in judging public opinion of the federal government. These opinions, at the very least, bear directly on government and are not part of a larger set of attitudes about the nation.

There are signs, however, that public criticism of government in almost all ways has diminished somewhat in recent years. Fewer Americans than in the mid-1990s fault government performance, worry about abuse of government power and feel government is unresponsive. However, on balance the vast majority of the public continues to be troubled by these things.

Over the past decade, the public's bottom line on the government has fluctuated. In 1987, a 57%-to-39% majority of Americans agreed that the government is really run for the benefit of all the people. By 1994, the balance of opinion had completely reversed to 42%-to-57%. It has since rebounded, but only part of the way and now stands at 48%-to-50%.

Americans are now as distrustful of their national government as are the European publics, but remarkably remain less distrustful than Europeans of their political leaders. Over the past decade Europeans have caught up with American concerns about the power of government, but are somewhat less critical of government performance than those on this side of the Atlantic.

In many ways, the Pew surveys underscore the importance of government performance to improved public attitudes about government. While acknowledging the difficulty of many of the problems with which government deals, perceptions about poor performance are still seen as a primary reason for government failures. Despite some concern about misguided government objectives, most people say it is performance that determines their opinions.

For the most part, Americans remain open-minded about government. Most think it can do better. Increased positive public evaluations of the Post Office and the military during a period in which trust in government is at a very low ebb give testimony to the public's "show me" willingness to change its mind. Indeed, most Americans agree that the federal government is basically sound and needs only some reform. What's more, nearly all Americans express confidence that the government can work better.

Many people contributed to this work, most of all, Paul Light of The Pew Charitable Trusts, who not only shared his expertise on government and trust but also enthusiastically urged us forward in taking the broadest possible look at the underpinnings of trust. Michael Robinson read drafts of surveys and findings, always challenging our assumptions and providing context for our conclusions. Francis Fukuyama and Seymour Martin Lipset helped focus our thinking as we approached the project as did Sam Popkin, Cal Mckenzie, Marjorie Connelly, Lee Sigleman, Larry Hugick, Cliff Zukin, Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Patricia McGinnis.

The research team was lead by Mary McIntosh, of Princeton Survey Research Associates, and Kimberly Parker, our Research Director. They played important roles in every stage of the project — conceptualizing the surveys, analyzing the data and crafting the report. Greg Flemming and Molly Sonner, both Pew Research Center analysts, along with Claudia Deane, now with *The Washington Post*, and Christopher Adasiewicz of PSRA, all contributed significantly with thoughtful analyses and provocative questions. Charmaine Thompson created all of the charts and graphs that enrich this report, and Jocelyn Causey prepared the tables. Beth Donovan edited the report.

SECTION I: GENERAL AND SPECIFIC MEASURES OF TRUST

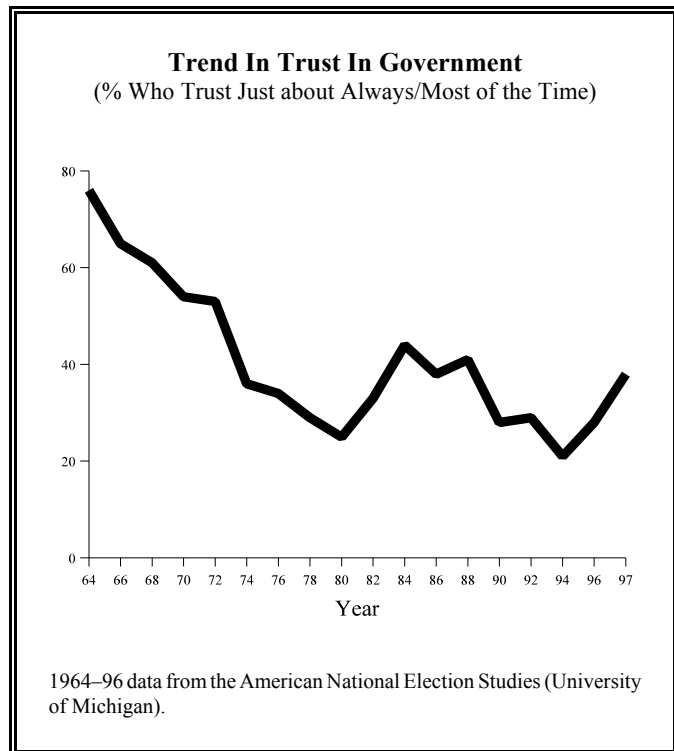
A majority of Americans still distrust the federal government, but for the first time in a decade there are signs of improved attitudes. Nearly 40% of Americans say they trust the federal government to do the right thing at least most of the time. This is an 18 percentage point increase over the low of 1994 and reflects improvement in all demographic groups.

Asked to describe their feelings toward the federal government today, a solid majority say they are frustrated. Nearly one-third of Americans say they are content with Washington, well more than say they are angry. Moreover, Americans hold positive views of a wide range of specific federal agencies and departments. Attitudes toward state and local governments are even more favorable.

Rebound in Trust

Compared to the early 1960s, public trust in government can only be described as low. In 1964, a decided majority of Americans basically trusted the federal government: 76% said they trusted the government to do what is right just about always or most of the time. Less than a quarter of the public dissented (22%), saying they trusted the federal government only some of the time or never. Today, nearly the opposite is true: 39% say they trust the government just about always or most of the time; 62% say they trust the federal government some of the time or never.⁴

Trust is decidedly up, however, compared to 1994, the year the Republican Party succeeded in ending four decades of Democratic hegemony in Congress. Trust in government hit an all-time low that year, when a mere 21% of Americans trusted the federal government to do the right thing just about always or most of the time. This level of trust rivals



⁴

Throughout this report, analysis of trust in government is based on combined responses to two slightly different questions. One asks, "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right? Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time? (Q.19 Form 1) The other asks, "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do a good job...?" (Q.19 Form 2) For a further explanation, see the Appendix.

the 44% who trusted the federal government in 1984, when President Reagan’s popularity was high and economic times were good.

The public’s skeptical stance is consistent regardless of how the question is phrased. Asked for a simple up-or-down assessment — “Would you say you basically trust the federal government in Washington, or not?” — 57% say they do not trust the federal government; 39% say they do. Favorability ratings elicit almost identical responses— 59% say they have a very or mostly unfavorable opinion of the federal government; 38% say the opposite.

Americans Frustrated, Not Angry

Distrust does not, however, translate into hostility toward the federal government. Although a clear majority have an unfavorable opinion of the federal government, only 18% say their opinion is very unfavorable. Just 12% say they are angry with Washington. Instead, a majority describe themselves as frustrated (56%). A sizable minority say they are basically content with the federal government (29%). And just 2% say they never trust the federal government to do the right thing.

But if the negative attitudes toward Washington are more moderate than extreme, they are nonetheless held with conviction. Few Americans either apologize for their distrust or absolve the government of responsibility for it. By a wide margin, Americans believe that criticism of the way the federal government does its job is justified rather than believe that Washington often does a better job than it is given credit for (60% vs. 33%). Similarly, 75% do not think distrust of government is inevitable.

Trust in State and Local Government

Americans hold much more favorable opinions of their state and local governments’ ability to handle problems than they do of the federal government. This is reflected in the high approval ratings many governors and big city mayors now enjoy for their efforts in crime fighting and reducing welfare rolls.

Local governments were not always favored over the federal government. In 1972, a solid majority (70%) had a great deal or fair amount of confidence in the federal government when it came to handling domestic problems. Somewhat fewer had a great deal or fair amount of confidence in their state governments to handle state problems (63%) and their local governments to handle local problems (63%). Today, the opposite is true. More than three-fourths now say they have confidence in state (81%) and

Confidence and Trust in Government to Handle Problems				
		Great Deal/ <u>Fair Amount</u> %	Not Very Much/None <u>At All</u> %	DK/ <u>Ref.</u> %
<i>Federal</i>	1997	60	40	*=100
	1976	49	49	2=100
	1974	51	44	5=100
	1972	70	29	1=100
<i>State</i>	1997	81	18	1=100
	1976	72	26	2=100
	1974	75	20	5=100
	1972	63	33	4=100
<i>Local</i>	1997	78	21	1=100
	1976	65	32	3=100
	1974	71	24	5=100
	1972	63	33	4=100

1972-76 data from Gallup.

local (78%) governments to handle problems; a smaller majority (60%) has confidence in the federal government.

Favorability ratings confirm that Americans think more highly of state and local governments than they do of Washington. Two-thirds have a very or mostly favorable overall opinion of their state (66%) and local (68%) governments. This is far higher than the 38% who have a very or mostly favorable overall opinion of the federal government.

The public's dislike of the federal government appears grounded in its handling of domestic rather than foreign affairs. Despite drops in the public's overall trust in government and confidence in its ability to handle domestic problems over the past three decades, confidence in Washington's ability to handle international problems has not wavered. In 1972, 75% had a great deal or fair amount of confidence in the federal government's ability to handle international problems; today 76% feel that way.

These findings do not mean that Americans want to turn over most federal responsibilities to states and municipalities, nor does the public think Washington is irrelevant to them. As highlighted in Section V of this report, Americans have a long list of major responsibilities they say belong to the federal government, not state and local governments.

Federal Government Still Relevant

Today 90% of Americans think the federal government has an effect on their day-to-day lives; 36% think it has a great effect. That is virtually unchanged from 1960, when 84% thought the federal government had an effect and 41% thought the effect was great. Equally high percentages think their state and local governments affect their day-to-day lives (90% and 88%, respectively).

The federal government as an abstraction elicits a much more negative reaction than particular federal agencies, departments or even branches of government. In general, most Americans have a very or mostly favorable opinion of the individual departments and agencies of the federal government, with the Postal Service, the National Park Service, the Centers for Disease Control, the Defense Department, the Food and Drug Administration, NASA and the Federal Aviation Administration all reaching 70% or more. Opinion is divided on three agencies: the Department of Housing and Urban Development (51% favorable), the CIA (51%) and the Federal Trade Commission (53%). Only the IRS drew a more negative than positive rating (60% unfavorable, 38% favorable).

Since the mid-1980s, opinion has improved or held steady for 14 of 17 agencies tested. Public esteem declined significantly only

	--- Favorable ---	
	1987	1997/98
	%	%
Postal Service	76	89
Park Service	80	85
CDC	—	79
Defense	57	76
FDA	74	75
NASA	66	73
FAA	53	70
EPA	62	69
Agriculture	60	68
FBI	78	67
SSA	—	62
Education	60	61
Veterans Admin	68*	59
Commerce	57	58
Justice	53	56
FTC	56	53
HUD	49	51
CIA	52	51
IRS	49	38

1987 data from Roper.
* Trend is from 1986.

for the IRS, the FBI and the Veterans Administration. A few agencies saw dramatic increases in their favorability ratings, including Defense, the FAA and the Postal Service.

The discrepancy between Americans' macro and micro views of government is also evident in attitudes toward the branches of government. Americans rate Congress slightly more favorably than unfavorably (53% vs. 44%). President Clinton's ratings remain high, and strong majorities rate the Supreme Court favorably (77%).

As questions become more specific, evaluations of government improve. Asked whether they basically trust the federal government, only 39% say yes. The number ticks up when people are asked whether they think the federal government has a positive or negative effect on their lives — 50% say positive. Asked how much confidence they have in the federal government when it comes to handling domestic problems, fully 60% say a great deal or fair amount.

Leadership Shapes Opinion of Departments

A comprehensive analysis of the factors that shape attitudes toward these specific departments reveals interesting differences.⁵ As with trust in government generally, attitudes toward political leaders color public assessments of these federal departments. Americans who hold positive attitudes toward political leaders tend, on average, to express a favorable opinion of these specific departments, while those who hold a negative opinion of political leaders tend to express an unfavorable opinion.

All other things being equal, opinion of political leaders is the most consistent predictor of public attitudes toward this wide range of federal departments. Government performance, though a strong predictor of trust, plays an inconsistent role in shaping opinion toward specific departments.

Public evaluations of government performance play an influential role in shaping views of the IRS, the Social Security Administration, the EPA and the Department of Education. Performance is not a driving factor in evaluations of the FDA and the Department of Defense.

Similarly, Americans who favor an activist government hold more favorable opinions toward the EPA and Department of Education than Americans who think federal government programs should be greatly cut back. These particular departments represent touchstone issues — environmental protection and education — that elicit the strongest feelings about the proper role of government.

Predictably, opinion about taxes plays a large role in shaping opinion toward the IRS, even when other attitudes are taken into consideration. Americans who think they are paying too much in taxes are more likely than others to harbor an unfavorable opinion of the IRS. Attitudes toward the Social Security Administration are also influenced by opinion about taxes. Americans who think they pay too much in taxes hold a more unfavorable opinion of the Social Security Administration than those who think they

⁵ Based on a series of multiple regression analyses. See Appendix for a full description of the models.

pay about the right amount of taxes.

The Postal Service stands out from other departments. None of the factors that shape attitudes toward other departments shape attitudes toward the Postal Service, suggesting that Americans think of the Postal Service in a very different manner than they think about these other departments.

Who Trusts the Government?

Americans who trust the government can be found in all segments of the public, and so can those who distrust it. Neither age nor gender, race, education or income provide significant clues to trust. Today, roughly 60% of people ages 18 to 29, just like those ages 50 and older, only trust Washington some of the time. The same is true of men and women.

Again mirroring the general public, 41% of those with college educations and 38% of those lacking high school diplomas trust the federal government; 39% of those with high incomes and 40% of those with low incomes say they have trust in Washington.

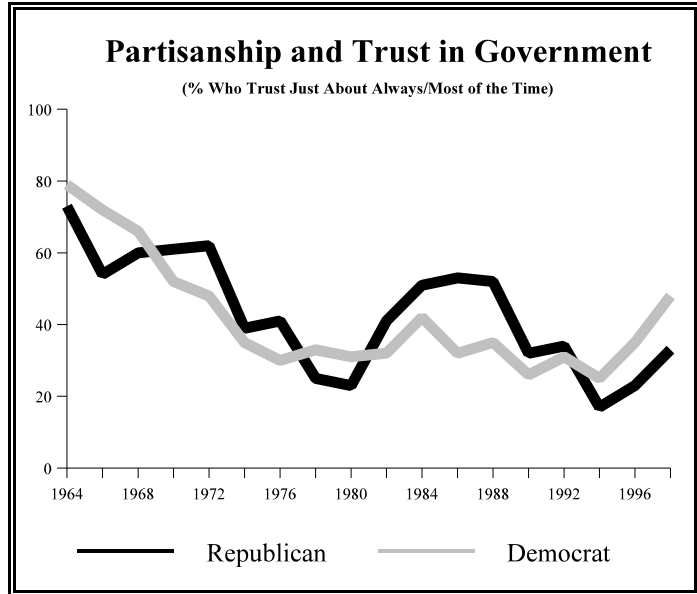
Trust in government has increased among all demographic groups since 1994, when trust was at an all time low. This increase is particularly striking for better educated Americans, who were among the most distrustful of government in 1994.

Trust in Washington					
	--- 1994 ---		--- 1997 ---		Change in Trust
	<u>Trust</u>	<u>Distrust</u>	<u>Trust</u>	<u>Distrust</u>	
	%	%	%	%	
Total	21	78	38	61	+ 17
Sex					
Male	21	78	37	63	+ 16
Female	22	77	40	60	+ 18
Race					
White	21	78	39	61	+ 17
Black	20	78	39	61	+ 19
Age					
18-29	23	76	38	61	+ 15
30-49	19	81	38	62	+ 19
50+	24	75	40	60	+ 16
Education					
College Grad.	17	83	41	59	+ 24
Some college	21	79	39	60	+ 18
High School	20	79	37	63	+ 17
< High School	31	67	38	62	+ 7
Party ID					
Republican	17	83	33	67	+ 16
Democrat	27	72	48	52	+ 21
Independent	20	79	35	65	+ 15

1994 data from the American National Election Studies.

One factor that clearly does influence trust is partisanship. Since the 1960s, Americans who identify with the party in the White House have had more trust in the federal government than those in the out-of-power party. Reflecting the current administration, Democrats today are more trusting than Republicans and Independents — 48% of Democrats but just 33% of Republicans and 35% of Independents trust the federal government just about always or most of the time. During Reagan’s presidency the opposite was true. Over half of the self-described Republicans but less than a third of the Democrats expressed trust in Washington (53% vs. 31%).

While overall trust in government is not sensitive to demographic differences, the ratings of the various federal departments and agencies are. Women rate federal departments more favorably than men (62% vs. 55%) as do those less well educated compared to those better educated (62% vs. 53%). Hispanics rate the departments higher than either whites or blacks (69% vs. 58% and 63% respectively). And Democrats rate agencies in general more favorably than Republicans and Independents (67% vs. 55% and 55%).



Confidence in Government to Handle Domestic Problems

The public’s confidence in the federal government’s ability to handle domestic problems varies little by social demographic group, a change from 1972 when whites, women and older people expressed more confidence in Washington than blacks, men and younger people. Since 1972, confidence in the federal government has declined across almost all demographic groups, with whites, women, older Americans and the less well educated losing confidence at a faster pace than their counterparts.

Demographic factors play a larger role in predicting the public’s confidence in state and local government. Race, in particular, influences confidence levels in state and local governments’ ability to handle problems. In 1972, blacks and whites were equally confident in state government’s problem solving abilities. Since then, both racial groups have grown more confident in state and local government, but whites have done so at a faster pace than blacks.

Trust and Confidence in the Federal Government to Handle Domestic Problems					
	--- 1972 ---		--- 1997 ---		Change in Some Confidence
	Great Deal/ Fair Amount	Not Much/ None	Great Deal/ Fair Amount	Not Much/ None	
	%	%	%	%	
Total	69	29	60	40	-9
Sex					
Male	65	34	58	42	-7
Female	74	23	62	37	-12
Race					
White	73	26	60	40	-13
Black	60	39	63	36	+3
Age					
18-29	65	33	60	40	-5
30-49	69	30	59	40	-10
50+	74	24	61	38	-13
Education					
College Grad.	70	30	64	36	-6
Some College	67	32	58	41	-9
High School	69	30	60	40	-9
< High School	72	26	58	41	-14
Party ID					
Republican	80	18	56	44	-24
Democrat	66	33	70	30	+4
Independent	71	29	56	44	-15

1972 data from Gallup.

The result is a racial confidence gap — 83% of whites and 72% of African-Americans express confidence in state government’s ability to handle problems. At the local level, this racial gap was evident in 1972 (66% of whites expressed confidence, compared to 55% of blacks). Even though confidence in local government has increased among both blacks and whites over the last two decades, the racial gap has not narrowed; today 80% of whites have confidence in local government, compared to 68% of blacks.

There is little difference among the generations in their confidence in state and local government, a change since 1972. At that time, older Americans voiced more confidence than younger ones in state and local governments’ problem solving abilities. Since then, the confidence younger Americans have in the ability of state government to handle problems has grown significantly and now mirrors the confidence of older Americans.

Trust and Confidence in State Government to Handle Problems					
	--- 1972 ---		--- 1997 ---		Change in Some Confidence
	Great Deal/ Fair Amount	Not Much/ None	Great Deal/ Fair Amount	Not Much/ None	
	%	%	%	%	
Total	64	33	81	18	+17
Sex					
Male	63	35	81	18	+18
Female	65	30	81	18	+16
Race					
White	65	32	83	16	+18
Black	60	35	72	27	+12
Age					
18-29	60	37	80	19	+20
30-49	63	34	82	18	+19
50+	68	28	82	17	+14
Education					
College Grad.	72	24	78	21	+6
Some College	59	39	82	17	+23
High school	62	35	82	18	+20
< High School	65	32	85	14	+20
Party ID					
Republican	76	21	85	15	+9
Democrat	64	34	79	21	+15
Independent	57	39	81	18	+24

1972 data from Gallup.

Partisan differences do emerge in evaluations of state and local government. In 1972, self-described Republicans expressed much more confidence than Democrats or Independents in both state and local governments' problem solving abilities. Over the years, the confidence of Democrats and Independents increased faster than that of Republicans, but not enough to close the gap. Today, while all three groups express considerable confidence in the problem solving capability of state and local government, Republicans remain somewhat more confident.

Who's Angry, Who's Not

Age and race differentiate frustrated Americans from contented ones. Older people are more likely than younger people to describe themselves as frustrated with the government; white Americans are more likely than blacks to say so. These differences prevail even after statistically controlling for the effects of education and gender.

Not surprisingly, angry Americans are more extreme in their views of government. Virtually all of those who say they are angry with the government distrust it (93%) and a large majority think the federal government needs very major reform (77%). A substantial minority think it may be justified, under some situations, to take violent action against the government (38%) — double that of content Americans (19%) and notably more than frustrated Americans (27%).

The state of the nation also worries angry Americans. Angry Americans are much more likely than frustrated or content Americans to rate the country's situation as poor (76% vs. 55% and 28%, respectively). And they are far more pessimistic about the country's future: 58% see the future situation as poor compared to 45% of those who say they are frustrated and 21% of those who are content. Interestingly, a majority of angry Americans (58%) listen to talk radio regularly or sometimes, while fewer content or frustrated people are regular or occasional listeners (44% and 45%).

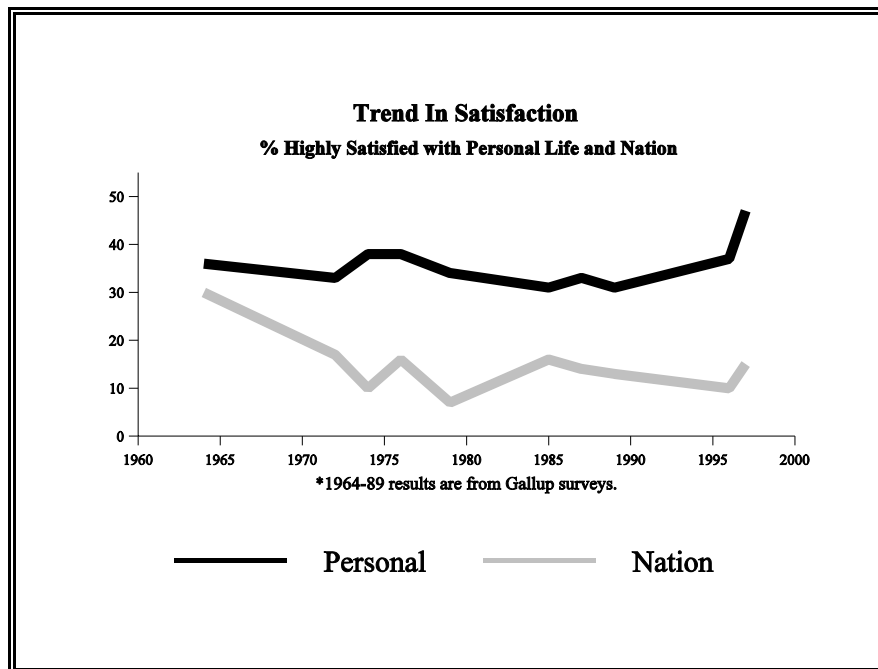
SECTION II: MOOD OF THE COUNTRY & TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

Over the past 30 years, the trend in the mood of the country has run on a parallel track with trust in government. While both measures have inched upward in recent years, the two measures remain essentially low despite economic prosperity and record high levels of personal satisfaction among Americans.

Both trust in government and satisfaction with the state of the nation reflect broader feelings about the country. In recent years, those sentiments have been depressed by disillusionment with ethics and morality — those of political and governmental figures and those of the nation as a whole.

Good Times Acknowledged

Americans are feeling very good about their own lives these days — better than they have at any time during the last 30 years. Fully 48% of Americans are highly contented with their lives today, a jump of 11 percentage points in just the last year.



Evaluations of one's personal life are strongly linked to socio-economic factors.⁶ Among the groups that rate their personal situation highest are those making over \$50,000 a year, college graduates, married people, home owners and senior citizens. Among those rating their lives lower than average are low income Americans, people who rent rather than own their homes, single people and younger people — especially young women.

While Americans are feeling good about their own lives, they do not feel that way about the country. In November 1997, just 15% described themselves as highly contented with the state of the nation. That number increased to 20% in February. In both surveys, Democrats were more likely than Republicans to express a high level of satisfaction, though the gap widened recently — suggesting the measure has become further politicized in this environment. The number of Republicans who are highly satisfied moved to 14% from 11%, while the percentage of Democrats who feel that way climbed to 30% from 22%.

Even at 20%, satisfaction with the state of the nation falls far short of the 30% who felt that way in 1964. Furthermore, the public is not optimistic about the country's future. Among those who rate conditions in the country today average or low, only 34% believe things will be any better five years from now.

Unlike evaluations of one's personal life, ratings for the country are linked more to feelings about *government* than to socio-economic factors. Those who give the nation higher than average ratings also tend to trust the government to do the right thing, think government does an excellent or good job running its programs, have a favorable opinion of government and believe the government is now using about the right amount of power. Those who rate the nation lower than average are distrustful of the government, give the government poor performance ratings and have an unfavorable opinion of the federal government.

But, The Country's Not

A significant proportion of Americans — 21% — place themselves and the country on opposite ends of the spectrum. They say they are highly contented with their own lives but they give low ratings to the nation.

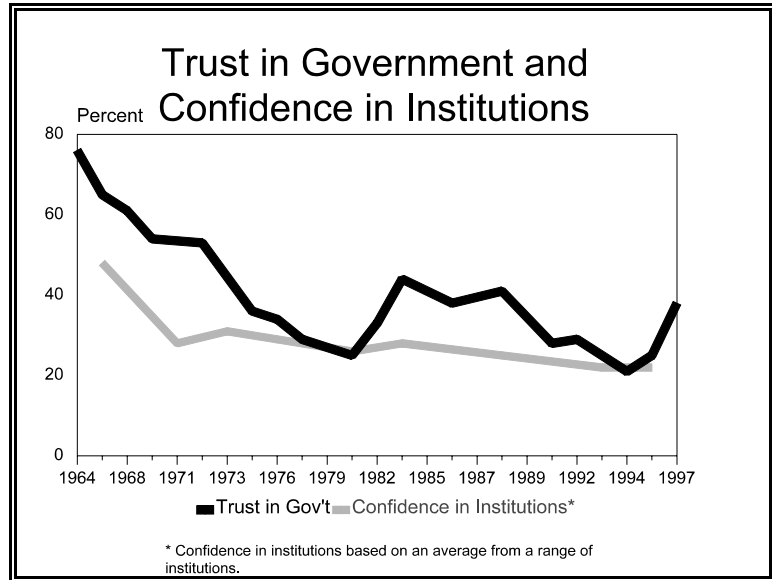
⁶ Unless otherwise noted, analyses of personal and national mood are based on the main Trust in Government survey (Sept 25 - Oct 31, 1997).

This group includes disproportionately more women, Republicans and Evangelical Christians, and it is characterized by extreme anti-government sentiment. Fully 74% of those who rate their own lives high and rate the country low have an unfavorable opinion of the federal government. This compares with 59% of the general public. An equal percentage (74%) say they trust the government only some of the time or never (compared to 61% of the public). This group is highly frustrated with the federal government (65% are frustrated compared to 56% of the country). More than half believe the federal government needs very major reform (53%).

Trust and Mood Run on Parallel Tracks

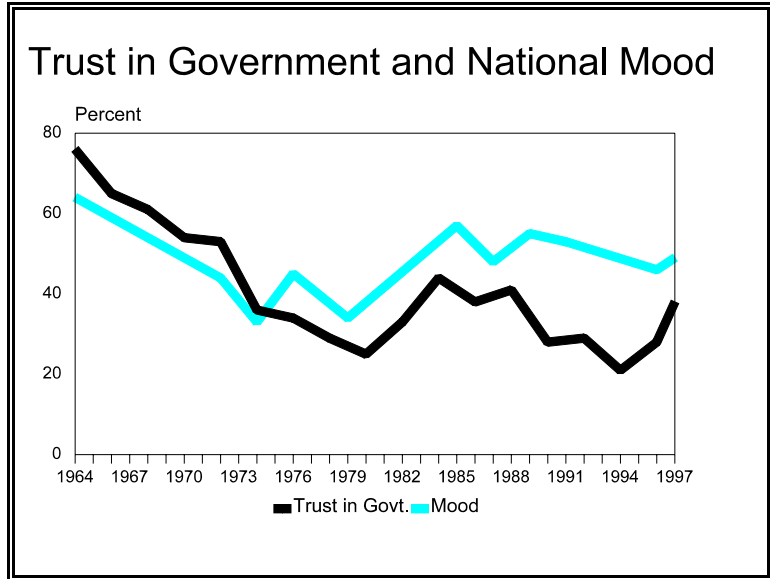
The public’s mood about the state of the nation is strongly related to trust in the federal government. Trust and mood track more closely even than trust in government and confidence in American institutions more generally.

Long-term historical trends show that, just as trust in government has eroded, confidence in a range of institutions — from medicine to organized religion to the media — has fallen over the last 30 years.⁷ However, the trend in institutional confidence has not mirrored trust in government nearly as closely as the mood of the nation has.



⁷ Trend analysis based on figures from the Harris Poll (1966 and 1971) and NORC, General Social Surveys (all other years).

The trend lines on trust in government and ratings for the nation have followed a strikingly similar path over the last 30 years. Ratings for the nation fell sharply during the turbulent years between 1964 and 1972, at the same time that trust in government started its steep descent. By 1997 trust in government had moved slightly upward, as had ratings for the nation.



The February 1998 survey showed the trend lines on national mood and trust in government diverging somewhat from this historical pattern.

In the immediate aftermath of the disclosure of allegations against President Clinton, mood continued its rise (to 20% highly contented, from 15% in November), while trust declined modestly (34% trusting always or most of the time, vs. 39% in November).

The relationship between trust and national mood can be seen at the individual level as well. Those who feel good about conditions in the country also tend to be more trusting of government. Similarly, those who are negative about the country's course are extremely distrustful of government.

	Rating for Nation		
	High	Average	Low
<i>% Who Trust the Govt ...</i>			
Just about always/ Most of the time	61	51	23
Only some of the time/Never	38	49	77
DK/Ref.	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{0}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$

This relationship extends beyond trust in government to attitudes toward political leaders and the political system. Americans who give the country low ratings are highly critical of government performance, the political leadership and the size and scope of government. In addition, they are more alienated from the government than the public at large.

Fully 85% of those who rate the state of the nation low, also believe the federal government does only a fair or poor job running its programs. This compares with 68% of those who give the country a medium rating and 50% of those who give it a high rating. Only 46% of those who rate the nation low have a favorable opinion of elected federal officials. Two-thirds of those who give the nation a medium rating and 71% of those who give it a high rating view elected officials in a favorable light. This group of national naysayers believes overwhelmingly that the federal government is too powerful (72%) and only 37% say the government is really run for the benefit of all the people.

SECTION III: EVALUATIONS OF GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

Distrust of political leaders pervades American society today. Americans from all walks of life give poor ratings to the ethical standards of government officials, declaring them untrustworthy and out-of-touch. The cynicism these attitudes engender is at the heart of distrust of government more broadly: 80% of those who distrust politicians also distrust government.

Public evaluations of government leaders tumbled immediately after Watergate and have never recovered. Today, more than two-thirds of Americans give a fair or poor rating to the ethical and moral practices of federal officials, and when Americans who say they do not like the government are asked why, the No. 1 answer is *politicians are dishonest*.

Though this broad cynicism has prevailed for over two decades, it is not a static sentiment. For now, 1994 stands as the high water mark for public disdain of political leadership. While Americans remain profoundly skeptical, the feelings have diminished. Today, more Americans think politicians care about people like them compared to three years ago. Moreover, Americans now find favor not only in many individual politicians, but also in political leaders' willingness to compromise to get the job done, state and local government officials and even in civil servants.

Distrust Politicians, Distrust Government

Cynicism about the political system and particularly political *leaders* underlies negative feelings toward the government. When those who have an unfavorable opinion of the federal government — a large majority of all Americans — were asked in an open-ended format why they felt that way, complaints about political leaders topped the list.

Fully one-third of this group volunteered a response that made reference to the dishonesty, insincerity, selfishness or ineptitude of politicians. Complaints about leaders and the political system out-ranked critiques of government and quarrels with specific government policies.

The findings were similarly striking in the follow-up survey on trust, in which people were asked to explain in their own words why politicians are untrustworthy. A 36% plurality gave answers involving elected officials' failure to follow-through on political promises. Another 18% simply complained of lying.

In addition, when then asked what bothers them about elected officials — their honesty and personal ethics, the way they campaign for office or the way they govern once elected — public conduct dominated. Concerns about governance topped the list with 44%, followed by campaigning with 31%. Just 22% are most bothered by politicians' personal ethics.

Fewer than half of all Americans believe that most elected officials are trustworthy (44%). This distrust of political leaders is highly correlated with distrust of the government more generally. Among those who trust the government in Washington to do the right thing only some of the time or never, only a quarter agree that most elected officials are trustworthy (27%); nearly three quarters disagree (72%). Among those who trust the government always or most of the time, the numbers are reversed: 70% believe officials can be trusted; 28% disagree.

Trust in Government And Trust in Political Leaders		
	<i>Trust the government...</i>	
	<u>Always/Most of the time</u>	<u>Only some-times/Never</u>
<i>"Elected officials are trustworthy"</i>	%	%
Agree	70	27
Disagree	29	72
DK/Ref.	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100

The public has not always felt so negatively toward its elected leaders. In 1964, federal government officials received relatively high marks from the public for their ethical and moral practices: 47% characterized them as either excellent or good. Today only 31% give federal officials such a high rating, and more than twice as many say their ethical and moral practices are only fair or poor (68%).

Ethical & Moral Practices Of Federal Government Officials			
	<u>Excellent/Good</u>	<u>Only fair/Poor</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
	%	%	%
1997	31	68	1=100
1986	27	67	6=100
1983	25	65	10=100
1981	23	72	5=100
1979	22	70	8=100
1977	22	71	7=100
1975	28	63	9=100
1973	26	67	7=100
1964	47	34	19=100

1964-86 data from ORC.

The most dramatic change in opinion on this measure occurred between 1964 and the summer of 1973 — when the public’s faith in government was seriously shaken by the still unfolding Watergate scandal. Ratings for federal government officials have actually rebounded somewhat since the 1970s. After reaching a low point in 1979, they have risen gradually since then — though they remain well below the levels reached in the 1960s.

Similarly, the number of Americans who complain that “public officials don’t care about people like me” has more than doubled since 1956 — 61% feel that way today up from 26%. Again, the most dramatic change in opinion occurred in the post-Watergate era.

To put the government numbers in perspective, leaders of business corporations and journalists do not fare much better than federal officials: only one-third of the public gives each group excellent or good ratings; about two-thirds say their ethical and moral practices are only fair or poor. The public gives itself high marks for ethics: 69% rate the ethical standards of people like themselves either excellent or good.

State and local government officials receive better ratings than federal officials for their ethical and moral practices: 43% rate them excellent or good, compared to only 31% for federal government officials. State and local leaders also saw their ratings fall between 1964 and 1973. However, unlike federal officials, their ratings have rebounded fully, making up most of the lost ground between 1983 and 1997.

Up from the 1994 Nadir

While politicians are held in low regard now, things were even worse in 1994. As has been noted throughout this report, 1994 represented in many ways the height of anti-government sentiment in this country, and political leaders were the object of much public wrath at that time.

Today, 76% of the public agree that elected officials in Washington lose touch with the people pretty quickly; in 1994 even more — 83% — agreed. Only 41% believe most elected officials care what people like them think; in 1994 even fewer — 33% — believed this. Fully 68% of Americans agree that it is time for Washington politicians to step aside and make room for new leaders. This sentiment was even stronger in the summer of 1994, when 79% expressed this opinion. Similarly, in 1994, a clear majority of Americans (60%) thought Washington needed new leaders even if they were not as effective as experienced politicians. Today, 50% share that view.

Negative feelings toward political leaders have softened most among self-identified Republicans. This is not surprising, given that the GOP was a minority in Congress in 1994 and now enjoys a majority in both the House and the Senate.

These shifts in opinion should not overshadow the fact that Americans remain extremely distrustful of the political leadership, and these anti-leadership feelings have several dimensions: distrust, dislike, alienation and a penchant for outsiderism. On each of these scores the current political leadership fares rather poorly. Majorities of the public believe most elected officials are untrustworthy, out of touch and uncaring and that they should step aside and make room for new leaders.

Few Demographic Fault Lines

Distrust of the political leadership cuts across nearly all demographic groups. The only group that believes politicians are trustworthy is senior citizens — and even in that case the majority is slim (56%). Whites are more trusting of political leaders than are blacks (46% vs. 34%, respectively say most politicians are trustworthy). Democrats and Republicans express similar opinions on the trustworthiness of political leaders. Political Independents stand out on this issue. Only 39% say politicians are trustworthy, compared to 47% of both Democrats and Republicans. Fully 61% of Independents say they cannot be trusted.

Independents are also more alienated from the political leadership than are those who identify with either party. Thirty-seven percent of Independents *completely* agree that elected officials in Washington lose touch with the people pretty quickly. This compares with 29% of Democrats and 28% of Republicans. Similarly, 61% disagree with the statement, “most elected officials care what people like me think,” compared to 56% of Democrats and 53% of Republicans.

Elected Officials Are Trustworthy			
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
	%	%	%
Total	44	55	1=100
Sex			
Male	43	55	2=100
Female	45	54	1=100
Race			
White	46	53	1=100
Black	34	65	1=100
Age			
18-29	39	60	1=100
30-49	40	59	1=100
50-64	47	52	1=100
65+	56	40	4=100
Education			
College Grad.	48	51	1=100
Some College	42	56	2=100
High School	44	55	1=100
<High School	41	57	2=100
Party ID			
Repub	47	51	2=100
Democ	47	52	1=100
Indep	39	61	*=100

Those who never attended college and those making less than \$30,000 a year are more likely than others to believe that elected officials lose touch with the people pretty quickly. Blacks and middle income Americans are among the least likely to believe elected officials care what people like them think.

Credit Where Credit is Due

This year Americans showed that, while they do not entirely trust their leaders in Washington, they are willing to give them credit when they perceive progress has been made. Bipartisan efforts to reach a balanced budget and tax cut agreement in the summer of 1997 were well received by the public. In the aftermath of the budget deal, Clinton’s approval ratings approached the 60% mark, approval of the GOP leaders in Congress rebounded and support for congressional incumbents reached a decade high.⁸

⁸ Pew Research Center for The People & The Press, “When Washington Works, Incumbents Prosper,” August 15, 1997. Support for congressional incumbents refers to the percent who would like to see their own Representative re-elected.

The public wants its political leaders to compromise. Fully 78% say they like political leaders who are willing to compromise in order to get the job done. This appetite for a political middle ground has increased significantly in recent years. In 1987, 16% completely agreed that they liked leaders who are willing to compromise, that number rose to 23% in 1990, and now stands at 32%.

There is a significant generation gap on the issue of bipartisan compromise: young people are much more in favor of political leaders compromising to get things done than are their older counterparts. Fully 46% of those under age 30 completely agree that they like politicians who compromise. This compares with 31% of those ages 30 to 49 and only 26% of those 50 and older. This may be due in part to the fact that older Americans came of age politically in an era when a stronger two party system dominated the political landscape.

Democrats are more in favor of political compromise than are Independents or Republicans: 37%, 31% and 28%, respectively, feel strongly that compromising in order to get the job done is a good thing.

Civil Servants — A-Okay

Americans are more favorably disposed toward non-elected government officials — civil servants — than they are toward the leaders they elect. They trust civil service employees over politicians by an overwhelming margin of 67% to 16%. Fully 71% think government is a good place to work, primarily because of the benefits, pay and job security. Nonetheless, they would overwhelmingly prefer private business over government as an employer (70% vs. 23%).

Eighteen percent of Americans report that they personally work in government — either federal, state or local. Another 10% say that some member of their household is a government employee. Government workers come from all walks of life. They are somewhat more educated than the public at large (20% have post-graduate training vs. 9% of the public). There are more blacks among the ranks of government workers than among the general public (18% vs. 11%). Politically, they are more heavily Democratic than the general public — 43% self-identify as Democrats compared to 33% of all Americans.

Government workers are slightly more trusting of government though not markedly so. Forty-six percent say they basically trust the federal government in Washington, compared to 39% of the general public; 44% trust the government always or most of the time vs. 39% of the public. Still, on balance, even a majority of government workers distrust the federal government. Furthermore, they are as distrustful of elected officials as are most Americans — 55% say most elected officials are *not* trustworthy.

SECTION IV: GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Overall Americans give the government poor marks on its job performance, with just a quarter of the public saying the government does an excellent or good job running its programs. These low marks prevail even with regard to specific tasks, such as providing for the elderly or ensuring that health care is affordable.

Americans, however, are divided over whether this lackluster performance reflects an inefficient government or the complexity of the issues today. Americans who are very critical of government performance tend to hold the government responsible. In contrast, Americans who are mildly critical of the federal government's performance tend to think it is due — at least in part — to the intractable nature of many of the problems the government faces.

Inefficiency and Performance

Many Americans think the federal government has the wrong priorities. But what really annoys them is inefficiently run government programs. When asked, “What do you personally feel is the bigger problem with government — government has the wrong priorities, or government has the right priorities but runs programs inefficiently?” 61% say inefficient programs; 29% say having the wrong priorities.

On balance, Americans are as discontent with government inefficiency today as they were a decade ago. In 1987, 63% agreed with the statement, “When something is run by the government, it is usually inefficient and wasteful.” This sentiment peaked in 1992, when 69% said the government was inefficient. It is now back down to the 1987 level. Today, 64% agree that inefficiency plagues Washington.

Consistent with this, Americans give the federal government low marks for its overall performance — the job it does running its programs and providing services. Three-quarters say Washington does an only fair (53%) or poor (21%) job running its programs, and just a quarter say the federal government does an excellent or good job (25%).

Opinion of the federal government's performance in specific areas is equally cool. Relatively few Americans say the federal government has done an excellent or good job handling seven current issues, including conserving the country's natural resources (34%), providing a decent standard of living for the elderly (26%) and setting academic standards for public schools (23%). The one exception is ensuring food and medicines are safe, which 58% of Americans say the federal government has done an excellent or good job handling. Food and drug safety notwithstanding, Americans are much more inclined to say the federal government does a lackluster job handling specific issues, with the prevailing sentiment being mildly rather than extremely negative.

	Excellent/ Good %	Only Fair %	Poor %	DK/ Ref %
<i>Job govt does running its programs ...</i>	25	53	21	1=100
<i>Job govt has done ...</i>				
Ensuring safe food and drugs	58	33	8	1=100
Conserving natural resources	34	52	12	2=100
Providing for the elderly	26	52	20	2=100
Setting academic standards	23	52	22	3=100
Ensuring health care is affordable	18	45	35	2=100
Ensuring everyone can afford college	18	51	28	3=100
Reducing poverty	14	53	31	2=100
Reducing juvenile delinquency	11	49	36	4=100

Who's To Blame?

Americans are troubled by government inefficiency, but the public does not think Washington is so inefficient that it cannot improve. Just 7% think the federal government is bound to be inefficient; 92% believe Washington can become more efficient.

Despite their criticisms and expectations for improvement, Americans acknowledge the complexity and difficulty of the issues Washington must manage. Overall, of those who are dissatisfied with the federal government's performance, 53% blame the complexity of policy issues and 41% fault Washington. Juvenile delinquency and poverty are perceived as exceptionally difficult issues.

	Govt's Fault %	Issue Difficult %	DK/ Ref. %
Reducing juvenile delinquency	25	69	6=100
Reducing poverty	33	61	6=100
Ensuring everyone can afford college	37	56	7=100
Ensuring health care is affordable	45	49	6=100
Ensuring safe food and drugs	46	49	5=100
Setting academic standards	49	44	7=100
Conserving natural resources	51	44	5=100
Providing for the elderly	49	44	7=100

In general, where Americans lay blame for the government's poor performance depends on how negatively they assess that performance. Americans who are mildly critical of government performance are more likely than others to fault the difficulty of the issues the government faces. Americans who are very critical of government performance are more likely to fault government itself.

Familiar Demographic Patterns

A generally negative evaluation of the federal government's performance pervades all social groups, although the intensity of this sentiment varies by gender and race. Women are somewhat more positive than men about the job the federal government does running its programs: 29% vs. 22% rate the government's performance excellent or good. More blacks than whites say Washington does an excellent or good job running its programs: 33% vs. 24%.

Democrats rate the federal government's program performance more positively than Republicans. Today, the difference is substantial — 37% of Democrats rate the government's performance excellent or good compared to 20% of Republicans. Similarly, fewer Democrats believe that federal programs are typically inefficient and wasteful (58% vs. 70%).

Does Experience Matter?

For the most part, direct experience with federal government programs does not sway Americans' views of Washington's performance. How one rates performance is unrelated to having received federal financial aid for college, Social Security benefits, Medicare or Veterans benefits. For example, those who have received federal financial aid for college are as likely as those who have not to give federal performance an excellent or good rating (27% to 24%).

However, direct experience with federal poverty programs does bolster assessment of the federal government's performance. Those who have received food stamps or welfare are more likely to say Washington does an excellent or good job running programs than those who have not received these benefits (36% and 34% vs. 22% and 25%, respectively).

Surprisingly, federal government workers rate Washington's performance no differently than the rest of Americans do. However, government workers as whole — those who work for federal, state or local government — are slightly more likely than those who do not work in the public sector to give Washington high marks for performance (30% vs. 24%).

Performance and Trust

How Americans assess Washington’s job performance plays a major role in explaining how much they trust the federal government. Specifically, 73% of those who say the federal government does an excellent or good job running its programs say they trust the government just about always or most of the time. By contrast, only 34% of those who say the federal government does an only fair job running programs trust the government always or most of the time. And just 8% of those who give federal performance a poor rating trust always or most of the time — 91% trust only some of the time or never.

Assessments of the federal government’s performance also play a major role in explaining frustration and anger with Washington. Nearly two-thirds of those who say the federal government does an excellent or good job running its programs are basically content with the federal government (64%). By contrast, 65% of those who give federal performance an only fair or poor rating are frustrated.

Those who say the federal government does a poor job running its programs are disproportionately angry — 31% are angry, compared with 10% of those who give federal performance an only fair rating and 2% of those who give it an excellent or good rating.

Americans Divided Over Taxes

The American public is divided on the issue of taxes. Asked, “Considering what you get from the federal government, do you think you pay more than your fair share of taxes, less than your fair share, or about the right amount?” roughly half say they pay about the right amount or less than their fair share (45% and 2%, respectively); the other half say they pay more than their fair share of taxes (52%).

A relationship exists between how Americans size up their tax bills and how they rate federal government performance. Americans who say they pay more than their fair share are more likely than those who feel they pay the right amount to rate performance only fair or poor (80% vs. 67%). Conversely, Americans who feel they pay the right amount in taxes are much more positive about Washington’s performance than those who say they pay more than their fair share — 32% vs. 19% rate

Performance and Distrust			
<i>Job Washington Does</i>			
<i>--- Running Programs ---</i>			
	Excellent/ <u>Good</u> %	Only <u>Fair</u> %	<u>Poor</u> %
Trust Washington just about always or most of the time	73	34	8
Trust only some of the time or never	26	66	91
Don’t know/Refused	<u>1</u> 100	<u>0</u> 100	<u>1</u> 100
Basically content with the federal government	64	22	5
Frustrated	31	66	62
Angry	2	10	30
Don’t know/Refused	<u>3</u> 100	<u>2</u> 100	<u>3</u> 100

Taxes and Performance		
<i>--- Tax burden ---</i>		
	More Than <u>Fair Share</u> %	About <u>Right</u> %
<i>Job Washington does running its programs:</i>		
Excellent/Good	19	32
Only fair/Poor	80	67
Don’t know/Refused	<u>1</u> 100	<u>1</u> 100

performance excellent or good.

Although there are other factors at work, these data suggest a link between satisfaction with one's tax burden and satisfaction with government performance. A dampened willingness to contribute goes hand-in-hand with the perception that government performance is poor.

A similar pattern exists between the public's perception of taxes and government inefficiency. Americans who think the government is generally inefficient and wasteful are somewhat more likely than Americans who disagree with this assessment to feel they contribute more than their fair share of taxes (56% vs. 46%).

At first glance, there appears to be a strong relationship between feeling taxes are too high and distrusting Washington. Of those who think they pay more than their fair share of taxes, 69% trust the federal government only some of the time or never, compared to 53% of those who think they pay the right amount in taxes. However, the influence of taxes on trust is very slight when evaluations of government performance are also taken into account.

Taxes and Trust		
	<i>--- Tax burden ---</i>	
	<u>More Than</u>	<u>About</u>
	<u>Fair Share</u>	<u>Right</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Trust Washington just about always or most of the time	31	47
Trust only some of the time or never	69	53
Don't know/Refused	*	0
	100	100

SECTION V: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Support for an activist federal government is not only evident but robust as we approach the millennium. Despite the dramatic decline in trust over the past 30 years, the American public today sees a very clear role for the federal government when it comes to a wide variety of specific functions and even for providing a safety net for the poor and the needy. This vision for the government is not substantially different than it was in the early 1960s, at the dawn of the Johnson administration's Great Society initiatives.

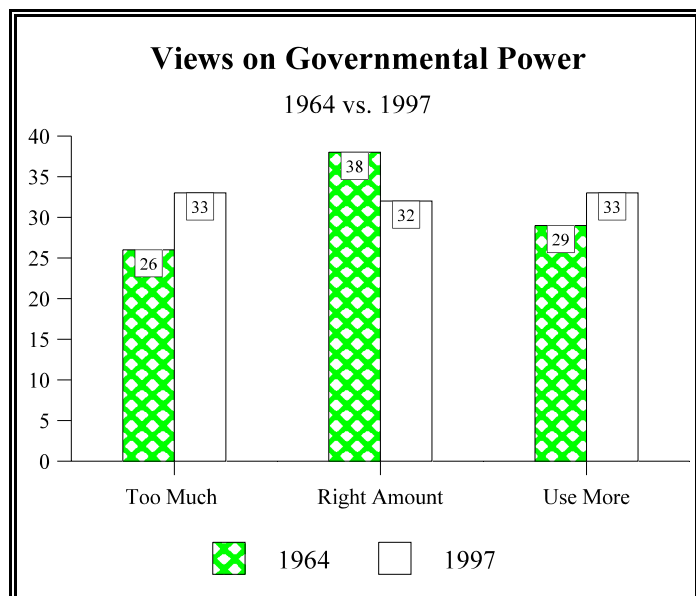
Despite this broad desire for an activist government, the public is very uneasy with the power of government and divided about federal control and regulation. These attitudes bear directly on how much trust people have in government: Those who believe the government has too much power are less trusting of the government.

Though gender, race and partisanship tell us little about who trusts government, they are all strongly related to views on government activism and power. Women, racial minorities and Democrats are all more supportive of an active federal government, and they are more comfortable with the idea of a powerful government.

The Role of Government

In 1964 Gallup asked the following question: "Which of the following statements comes closest to your views about government power today? The federal government today has too much power; the federal government is now using about the right amount of power for meeting today's needs; or the federal government should use its powers even more vigorously to promote the well-being of all segments of the people." At that time, the public divided fairly evenly among the three responses, though a plurality (38%) held the moderate point of view — believing the government was using the right amount of power.

Today, in an era characterized by low trust in government, the public still divides evenly among these three perspectives. One-third says the federal government has "too much power" (33%), another third says the government is using "the right amount of power" (32%), and the remaining third says the government should "use its powers even more vigorously" (33%). Very few are undecided about the role of government (2%). While the proportion saying the government has too much power has increased somewhat (from 26% in 1964 to 33% today), the balance of



opinion has not shifted markedly — in spite of the beating government has taken over the last three decades.

The gender gap, which has become central to understanding public attitudes toward politics and government in the 1990s, is readily apparent on the question of the proper role of government. A plurality of American men (40%) believe the federal government has too much power, only 27% advocate a more activist government. Those numbers are reversed for women: 40% say the government should use its powers more vigorously, while 27% believe the government is too powerful. Women and men are equally likely to say the government is exercising about the right amount of power today (32% and 31%, respectively).

Race is also a strong predictor of attitudes toward the role of government. While whites are fairly evenly divided over the role of government, both blacks and Hispanics endorse a more vigorous use of governmental powers.

Age is strongly linked to beliefs about the proper role of government. Here younger Americans (those under age 30) are most in favor of a more activist government. Late-middle aged Americans (those aged 50-64) are most critical of governmental power today. In this regard, they differ significantly from their older counterparts. Fully 39% of those ages 50-64 say the federal government has too much power, compared to only 28% of those 65 and older, suggesting that Americans' perspectives on the role of government may change once they reach 65 and become beneficiaries of entitlement programs such as Medicare and Social Security.

	<u>Men</u> %	<u>Women</u> %
<i>Role of govt</i>		
Too powerful	40	27
Right amount of power	32	31
Should use more power	27	40
DK/Ref.	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100

The link between party identification and attitudes toward government power is predictably strong: Democrats favor a more activist government (42% say the government should exercise its powers even more vigorously), while a plurality of Republicans say today's federal government is too powerful (45%). Independents come closer to Republicans in this regard, 38% say the government is too powerful.

The public's desire for *moderation* in the use of governmental power is apparent even within the traditional party groupings. Fully 18% of Democrats say the government is too powerful and 25% of Republicans say the government should do more to promote the well-being of all segments of the population. Significant numbers of Democrats and Republicans say the government is currently using the right amount of power (39% and 29%, respectively).

While Republicans' trust and confidence in the federal government has plummeted over the last thirty years, their views on the role of government have not changed substantially over that same time period. As was the case in 1964, Republicans are divided over the proper role of government. Approximately half believe the federal government is too powerful. The other half say that either the government is using enough power to meet today's need or that the government should use its powers even more aggressively.

	<i>--Repub--</i>		<i>--Democ--</i>		<i>--Indep--</i>	
	'64 %	'97 %	'64 %	'97 %	'64 %	'97 %
<i>Federal govt power</i>						
Too much	48	45	13	18	30	38
Right amount	31	29	41	39	40	28
Should use more	17	25	37	42	26	32
DK/Refused	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Democrats and Independents are slightly more inclined today to say the government is too powerful than was the case in 1964, but the stability of opinion is more striking than these slight variations.

Attitudes about the proper role of the federal government are also related to levels of trust in government and evaluations of government performance. Those who trust the government only sometimes or never are far more likely to believe that the federal government has too much power than those who trust the government most of the time or always (44% vs. 16%, respectively).

	<i>---Trust Govt---</i>		<i>---Govt Job Eval'n---</i>		
	Always/ <u>Most of time</u> %	Only some- times/ <u>Never</u> %	Excellent/ <u>Good</u> %	Only <u>Fair</u> %	<u>Poor</u> %
<i>Federal govt power</i>					
Too much	16	44	15	31	62
Right amount	47	22	43	33	13
Should use more	35	33	41	34	24
DK/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100	100	100

In addition, those who say the federal government does a poor job of running its programs are more critical of government power. Fully 62% of those who give government a poor rating on performance also say the government is too powerful. This compares with 31% of those who give government a fair rating and only 15% who give it an excellent or good rating.⁹

⁹ Multivariate analysis suggests that these performance evaluations are more powerful predictors of support for government activity than any of the demographic variables detailed above, although gender, Democratic party identification and trust in government are also strong predictors of feelings about the proper role of government.

A Centrist View

When asked about the proper role of government, Americans place themselves slightly to the left of center. Given a scale where six represents someone who feels that government programs should be maintained to deal with important problems and one represents someone who generally believes that federal government programs should be cut back greatly to reduce the power of government, the average rating is four.

Very few Americans place themselves at the low end of the scale (9% say they are a one), while a fair number place themselves at the top of the scale (17% consider themselves a six). This may help explain why Republican congressional leaders were rebuked by the public for their efforts to downsize the government. While Americans share Republican criticism of government performance, they part company on how much government they want.

Today the public sees a more prominent role for Washington in many aspects of American life, just as it did in the 1960s. In 1962, the Opinion Research Corporation asked Americans *who* should have the primary responsibility for a series of general social and policy issues — the federal government, state and local government, private industry or individuals and community groups. At that time, there was strong support for federal government involvement in economic regulation, conservation efforts and income support for the elderly. Today, support for federal involvement in these areas remains high.

As was the case in 1962, there are certain problem areas where the public sees no primary role for the federal government, for instance, setting academic standards for schools, promoting greater honesty and stronger morals and reducing juvenile delinquency.

Who Should Be Responsible? 1962 vs. 1997					
	Federal <u>Govt</u> %	State/ Local <u>Govt</u> %	Priv. <u>Industry</u> %	Indivs./ Commun. <u>Grps.</u> %	DK/ <u>Ref.</u> %
Managing economy					
'62	81	8	6	4	1=100
'97	68	13	7	7	5=100
Conserving natural resources					
'62	65	27	4	4	0=100
'97	52	21	5	18	4=100
Providing for elderly					
'62	55	31	7	7	0=100
'97	46	30	2	19	3=100
Ensuring all can afford college					
'62	28	39	2	30	1=100
'97	35	19	4	38	4=100
Promoting honesty and morals					
'62	13	10	1	76	0=100
'97	16	9	1	71	3=100
Reducing juvenile delinquency					
'62	15	44	2	39	0=100
'97	7	31	1	58	3=100
1962 data from ORC.					

While the balance of opinion has remained remarkably stable since 1962, there have been some marginal changes. The greatest falloff in support for a strong federal role can be seen on conserving natural resources and managing the nation’s economy. In 1962, 65% of the public said the federal government should be primarily responsible for conserving natural resources, 52% say the same today. There is much greater support for individual and community responsibility on this issue today than was the case in the 1960s (18% vs. 4%).

There is also less clear support for a federal role in providing a decent standard of living for the elderly (46% today vs. 55% in 1962) and reducing juvenile delinquency (7% now vs. 15% then). There is somewhat *more* support today for federal aid for higher education — 35% say the federal government should be primarily responsible for this, compared to 28% in 1962.

The current survey, which includes some additions to the 1962 list of issues, indicates that the public draws clear distinctions between what should and what should not fall under the federal purview. In some cases, such as ensuring that food and medicines are safe, support for a federal government role is nearly unanimous. In other cases, such as ensuring that every American can afford to send their children to college, the public is ambivalent. And on some issues, such as reducing juvenile delinquency, the public clearly sees no role for the federal government.

In addition to food and drug safety, there is majority support for federal involvement in managing the economy, ensuring access to health care and conserving natural resources. There are moderately strong levels of support for federal involvement in aid to the elderly, assistance with higher education and the more general goal of reducing poverty.

Support for Federal Government Involvement	
<i>Function:</i>	Fed. Govt Should be <u>Primarily Responsible</u> %
Ensuring that food and medicines are safe	73
Managing the economy to prevent another recession or depression	68
Ensuring every American has access to affordable health care	58
Conserving the country’s natural resources	52
Providing a decent standard of living for the elderly	46
Ensuring that every American can afford to send their children to college	35
Reducing poverty	34
Setting academic standards for public schools	22
Promoting greatest honesty and stronger morals among people	16
Reducing juvenile delinquency	7

Despite the public's greater trust in state and local governments, the public favors state and local government involvement over federal in only two of these 10 issue areas. Fully half of the public say that state and local government should be primarily responsible for setting academic standards for public schools. The public also chooses state and local government more often than federal when it comes to dealing with juvenile delinquency (31% vs. 7%), though Americans choose individuals and community groups most often here.

These non-governmental entities are also seen as playing an important role in promoting greater honesty and stronger morals among people (71%), ensuring Americans can afford college for their kids (38%) and, to a lesser extent, reducing poverty (26%) and setting academic standards (25%).

The public sees a very limited role for private industry in this context. Eight percent say industry should be primarily responsible for ensuring access to affordable health care. Even smaller proportions see a prominent role for industry in each of the other problem areas.

The Social Safety Net

As was the case in the 1960s, the American public sees a very clear role for the federal government when it comes to caring for the needy. In this regard, public sentiment has changed very little over the last thirty years or so. Roughly three-quarters of the public agree that the government must see that no one is without food, clothing or shelter (72%) and that the government has a responsibility to try to do away with poverty (74%). In 1964, these same opinions were held by 68% and 73%, respectively.

Although a clear majority of Americans believe it is the government's responsibility to take care of people who cannot take care of themselves, support for the social safety net is weaker when it is presented as a trade-off with government debt. Only 44% say the government should help more needy people even if it means going deeper in debt.

Public Views About The Role of Government			
	<u>Agree</u> %	<u>Disagree</u> %	<u>DK/Ref.</u> %
<i>Government...</i>			
Must see that no one is without food, clothing or shelter	72	27	1=100
Has a responsibility to try to do away with poverty in this country	74	25	1=100
Controls too much of our daily lives [^]	64	35	1=100
Regulation does more harm than good [^]	57	37	6=100
Should run only those things that can't be run at the local level [^]	74	24	2=100
[^] Pew Research Center Nov. 5-9 & Nov. 13-17, 1997.			

Support for a federal role in helping the disadvantaged is stronger among women, blacks and Democrats. Nonetheless, even among those who believe the federal government has too much power, a strong majority (greater than 60%) say the government should provide food, shelter and clothing and work to do away with poverty — suggesting that these are bedrock values which may supersede other attitudes toward government.

Americans' appetite for government action does not extend to foreign involvement. More than half of Americans agree that, "The U.S. should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along as best they can on their own." Support for U.S. involvement abroad has eroded steadily over time. In 1964, a mere 20% agreed with this statement; 70% disagreed. Opinion appears to have shifted in the post-Vietnam era. By 1976, 43% said the U.S. should mind its own business; in 1994, 49% agreed.

A similar though less dramatic pattern can be seen in support for economic aid to foreign countries. In 1964, 32% of the public said spending on foreign aid should be kept at least at the present level, 61% said it should be reduced or ended. Today, just 24% say spending levels should be maintained: 74% say spending should be reduced on ended.

Still Skeptical About Government Regulation

In spite of widespread public support for many specific, domestic governmental activities, the public remains skeptical about government *control* and *regulation*. Nearly two-thirds of Americans agree that the federal government controls too much of our daily lives. Even more agree that the federal government should run only those things that cannot be run at the local level (74%). And more than half say the federal government is interfering too much in state and local affairs (53%).

While these opinions are strong, they have softened somewhat since July 1994 — when anti-government feelings peaked in the months leading up to the "Republican Revolution." That summer some 37% of the public *completely* agreed that the government controls too much of our lives; today 29% feel that strongly. There has also been a significant fall-off in the number of people *completely* agreeing that the federal government should do only what cannot be done at the local level (33% vs. 38% in 1994) and those saying government regulation of business does more harm than good (20% vs. 27%).

On the issue of government *control*, the biggest gaps in opinion fall along generational, educational and political lines. Young Americans (those under age 30) are much less likely to say the federal government controls too much of their daily lives than are older Americans (those over 50) — 54% vs. 71%. College graduates are less critical of government control than those who never attended college — 52% say the government controls too much of their lives vs. 70% of less the educated group. Interestingly, there is no gender gap on the issue of government control, generally.

	-- <i>Completely Agree</i> --		
	1994	1997	Change
	%	%	
<i>Government...</i>			
Controls too much of our daily lives	37	29	-8
Regulation of business usually does more harm than good	27	20	-7
Should only run those things that can't be run at the local level	38	33	-5

Data from Pew Research Center Nov. 5-9 & Nov. 13-17, 1997.

The party differences are significant though not as large as those seen on generation and education. As would be expected, Republicans are most critical of federal government control, Independents express nearly identical views; 69% and 67%, respectively say government controls too much of their daily lives. This compares with 56% of Democrats.

Blacks and whites agree that the federal government should step in only where the states and localities cannot act, but they part company over the issue of whether the federal government is interfering too much in state and local matters. Most whites agree with this suggestion (54%), while a majority of blacks disagree (52%).

The partisan gap on this issue is substantial: only 40% of Democrats say the federal government interferes too much in state and local matters, compared to two-thirds of Republicans. Independents fall squarely in the middle — 54% agree. Generational differences are a factor here as well: only 46% of those under age 30 think the federal government interferes too much, compared to fully 60% of those over age 50.

Government regulation is frowned upon by a majority of Americans. Fifty-seven percent believe regulation of business usually does more harm than good, and a similar majority (56%) say the government has gone too far in regulating business and interfering with the free enterprise system. Republicans are consistently more critical of government regulation.

SECTION VI: GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITIES

Americans say Washington is out-of-step with public priorities for the federal government. Decided majorities think the federal government should give much higher priority than it does to a host of domestic issues including food and drug safety, the environment and education standards. This priority gap is most evident among women, blacks and those without college degrees.

Top Priorities

Even when reminded that there are many important issues facing our country, but limited resources to address these issues, substantial majorities say the federal government should give a very high or high priority to seven of eight issues tested. Ensuring the safety of food and medicine tops the list. Fully 90% say this should be at least a high priority, including 51% who say it should be a very high priority. Given media coverage of contaminated beef and recalled diet pills in recent years, the public's insistence on close government attention to food and drug safety is not surprising. Yet other issues command high priority as well.

	Very		Medium/		DK/ Ref.
	<u>High</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Ref.</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%
Ensuring safe food and medicine	51	39	10		*=100
Ensuring access to affordable health care	39	36	25		*=100
Conserving natural resources	34	42	23		1=100
Setting academic standards for schools	32	36	31		1=100
Providing the elderly a decent standard of living	28	44	27		1=100
Reducing juvenile delinquency	28	32	39		1=100
Reducing poverty	24	41	34		1=100
Ensuring everyone can afford college	22	28	49		1=100

Three-quarters of the public thinks the federal government should give very high or high priority to conserving natural resources (76%) and to ensuring everyone has access to affordable health care (75%). Of the issues included in the survey, ensuring college is affordable ranks lowest, but still not low. Half of the public thinks affordable college should be a high or very high priority for Washington (50%).

The Priority Gap

Americans want the federal government to give high priority to these issues, but few believe Washington does so. When asked how high a priority Washington actually places on these issues, most Americans say the government rates them only a medium or low priority.

This priority gap is evident on each of the eight issues. For example, while 90% say food and drug safety should be a top priority, only 50% say it actually is a high priority for the government. And while three-fourths say natural resources and affordable health care should be high priorities for Washington, only 24% and 15%, respectively, say they in fact are. Considering the eight issues together, 87% feel the federal government gives less priority than it should to these issues.

Less Attention than Wanted			
	<i>% Who Believe Government...</i>		Priority Gap
	<u>Actually Gives High Priority</u>	<u>Should Give High Priority</u>	
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Ensuring access to affordable health care	15	75	-60
Providing the elderly a decent standard of living	17	72	-55
Conserving natural resources	24	76	-52
Reducing poverty	16	65	-49
Setting academic standards for schools	20	68	-48
Reducing juvenile delinquency	13	60	-47
Ensuring safe food and medicine	50	90	-40
Ensuring everyone can afford college	11	50	-39

Men and women differ over both what the federal government should do and what they think Washington actually does. Overall, women are more likely than men to think the federal government should place a high priority on most of the issues named. For example, more women than men think the federal government should give a high priority to setting academic standards (75% vs. 62%) and providing a decent standard of living for the elderly (78% vs. 65%). At the same time, women are less likely than men to think the federal government actually does give high priority to several of these issues. Fewer women than men think the federal government actually gives high priority to conserving natural resources (20% vs. 28%) and ensuring safe food and medicine (48% vs. 54%).

In contrast, a racial divide results from differences over what the federal government should do. Blacks and whites do not differ dramatically in their assessments of what the federal government's priorities actually are, but blacks are more likely than whites to think the federal government should give high priority to setting academic standards (86% vs. 66%), ensuring affordable health care (83% vs. 73%), providing a decent standard of living for the elderly (86% vs. 69%) and reducing poverty (81% vs. 63%).

Similarly, there are differences between Americans who are better informed about government and those who are less well informed. These two groups are more likely to differ in their opinions about what government should be doing rather than what government actually is doing.

In general, Americans under age 65 are more likely to think the federal government's priorities are misplaced than those who are older. This reflects the higher priority younger Americans place on five of the eight issues tested. Americans under age 65 are more likely than those 65 and older to think the federal government should place high priority on setting academic standards (70% vs. 59%), conserving natural resources (78% vs. 67%), ensuring college is affordable (52% vs. 43%) and reducing poverty (67% vs. 56%). Americans of all ages think ensuring access to affordable health care should be

a top priority, but Americans age 65 and older are more likely to think the federal government in fact gives health care a top priority (20% vs. 13%).

Democrats and Republicans assess the federal government’s actual priorities in most areas roughly equally, but Democrats are much more likely to perceive a gap between their own and the federal government’s priorities. Partisan differences run particularly deep on health care and the elderly. Fully 87% of Democrats think the federal government should give a high priority to ensuring affordable health care, but only 13% think the federal government does so. By contrast, 60% of Republicans think health care should be a top priority; 16% think it in fact is. Nearly all Democrats think the federal government should give a high priority to providing a decent standard of living for the elderly (84%), but only 18% think this actually is a priority. Among Republicans, 62% think a decent standard of living for the elderly should be a top priority; 19% think it is.

The Priority Gap and Trust

The larger the priority gap Americans perceive, the more they distrust the federal government. Fully 80% of those who perceive a large priority gap trust the federal government only some of the time or never. Of those who perceive a moderate gap, 63% trust government only some of the time or never; 54% of those who perceive a small gap feel that way. This relationship weakens substantially, however, when evaluations of Washington’s performance are also considered. After accounting for one’s evaluation of performance, the relationship between the size of the priority gap and trust declines substantially, as illustrated in the chart below.

<i>Priority Gap</i>				<i>Performance Low</i>		<i>Performance High</i>	
	<u>Small</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Large</u>	<u>Small</u>	<u>Large/Med*</u>	<u>Small</u>	<u>Large/Med</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Trust	46	37	20	28	18	68	61
Distrust	54	63	80	72	82	32	39
DK/Ref.	0	*	0	0	*	0	*
N=	100 (621)	100 (673)	100 (110)	100 (337)	100 (462)	100 (284)	100 (321)

* There are too few cases to analyze those who perceive a large gap separately.

Attention Paid to Social Groups: Another Set of Misplaced Efforts

Americans believe that certain social groups receive disproportionate attention from Washington. In the aggregate, majorities think Washington slights poor people (65%), the elderly (60%) and the middle class (54%); a plurality of Americans say that whites, blacks, women and religious people command the right amount of government attention; and half of the public believes that Washington pays too much attention to business leaders (50%).

But this overall assessment misses striking differences among racial, gender and income groups over the level of government attention afforded their own social group. In particular, 61% of African-Americans think they get less attention than they deserve but just 21% of whites agree. Most whites think blacks get the right amount (49%) or too much attention (26%). In contrast, 64% of whites think they get the right amount of attention from Washington, but nearly as many African-Americans say whites get more than they deserve (56%).

How Much Attention Does Government Pay To ...?

	<u>Less than</u> <u>Deserved</u> %	<u>Right</u> <u>Amount</u> %	<u>More than</u> <u>Deserved</u> %	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u> %
Poor people	65	23	10	2=100
Elderly people	60	31	8	1=100
Middle class people	54	36	9	1=100
Women	39	46	13	2=100
Religious people	27	46	22	5=100
Black people	26	46	24	4=100
White people	17	59	19	5=100
Business leaders	9	37	50	4=100

Gender differences also emerge. Twenty percent of men believe women command too much attention from the federal government, a view shared by very few women (6%). Fully 48% of women say they get too little attention; just 29% of men agree. Nearly half of all women and men believe women get the right amount of attention from the federal government (45% and 48%, respectively).

A majority (65%) of Americans agree that poor people receive less attention than they should from Washington, but this sentiment differs notably by income level. A large majority of Americans making less than \$30,000 a year think poor people are being slighted by Washington (75%). Substantially fewer Americans making \$50,000 or more concur (53%).

The elderly stand as an exception to this pattern of in-group rivalry for their share of government attention. Only 42% of senior citizens think they are being shortchanged by the government. This compares with more than 60% of young and middle-aged Americans who think the elderly receive less government attention than they should.

Gaps in Perception

	<u>White</u> %	<u>Black</u> %	
<i>Black people</i>			
Less attention	21	61	
Right amount	49	28	
More	26	7	
<i>White people</i>			
Less attention	19	7	
Right amount	64	31	
More	12	56	
Don't know	<u>5</u> 100	<u>6</u> 100	
	<u>Men</u> %	<u>Women</u> %	
<i>Women</i>			
Less attention	29	48	
Right amount	48	45	
More	20	6	
Don't know	<u>3</u> 100	<u>1</u> 100	
	<u>< \$30K</u> %	<u>\$30,000- \$49,999</u> %	<u>\$50K +</u> %
<i>Poor people</i>			
Less attention	75	63	53
Right amount	16	24	32
More	7	12	14
Don't know	<u>2</u> 100	<u>1</u> 100	<u>1</u> 100

SECTION VII: CONSEQUENCES

Underlying all of this research are questions of whether distrust of government has any serious consequences for the health of our democracy, the government or the vitality of citizenship. At its current level, the answer appears to be no. Distrust has little direct impact on voter turnout, patriotism or respect for the law.

If there is a by-product of distrust, it is in the dialogue between citizens and government leaders. Overwhelmingly, people who distrust government say that public officials don't care about ordinary people. And people who feel political leaders do not care respond in kind: They are less attentive to national affairs and less likely to vote.

Distrust and Voting

By all accounts, Americans put in a poor showing at the polls. In 1996, only 49% turned out for the presidential election, down from the 55% who voted in 1992 and about the same as the 50% who voted in 1988. And Americans admit to the low turnout. Only half say they always vote (51%), and almost a quarter say they vote just part of the time, seldom or never (26%).

Surprisingly, distrust of government does not depress voting. Americans who distrust the federal government are just as likely to always vote as those with faith in Washington (52% vs. 49%). Similarly, those who trust are as likely to vote just part of the time or less often as those who distrust (25% for both). Americans of all social groups fall short in exercising their right to vote, but distrust of the federal government is not to blame.

Distrust and Voting			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Trust</u>	<u>Distrust</u>
	%	%	%
<i>How often do you vote?</i>			
Always	51	49	52
Nearly always	23	25	22
Less frequently	25	25	25
Other/Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100
<i>When you vote do you usually ...</i>			
Feel satisfied	63	68	59
Do it out of duty	29	23	33
Other/Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100

Although distrust does not inhibit turnout, it does sour satisfaction with voting. Americans who trust the federal government are more likely than distrusters to say they get a sense of satisfaction when they vote (68% vs. 59%). By contrast, distrusters are more likely than trusters to say they vote only out of a sense of duty (33% vs. 23%).

The satisfaction one feels is also in part a function of demographics: Older, more affluent, more politically knowledgeable and white Americans derive more satisfaction from voting than younger, less well-off, less politically knowledgeable and non-white Americans.

Distrust and Patriotism

Americans’ voting record might be lackluster, but their love for their country is practically universal. Ninety percent of Americans say they completely or mostly agree with the statement, “I am very patriotic,” a sentiment that has not wavered over the last decade. Moreover, distrusters are as patriotic as trusters.

In other words, regardless of whether or not Americans trust their government, they love their country. Patriotism does vary substantially, however, by age and race. Young Americans and blacks are notably less likely to completely agree with statement, “I am very patriotic,” than are those 65 and older and whites — 33% and 32% vs. 58% and 50%, respectively. Patriotism is not blind to partisanship, as Republicans are more likely to describe themselves as patriotic than are Democrats or Independents.

Trend in Patriotism								
	87	88	89	90	91	92	94	97
<i>I am very patriotic</i>								
Completely agree	43	51	51	48	58	52	51	48
Mostly agree	46	38	40	40	33	39	40	42
Mostly disagree	7	6	6	8	5	5	6	6
Completely disagree	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
DK/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Trust and Patriotism</i>								
	<u>Trust</u>		<u>Distrust</u>					
Very patriotic	91		86					
Not very patriotic	8		12					
DK/Refused	<u>1</u>		<u>2</u>					
	100		100					

Distrust Mutes Dialogue

But distrust appears to sour Americans’ dialogue with Washington, as reflected in skepticism about whether public officials properly represent their constituencies. Fully 71% of Americans who distrust Washington contend that public officials don’t care what people like them think. Trusters are split on the issue, with 55% thinking public officials do care what people like them think and 44% questioning the concern of their leaders.

Moreover, Americans who think public officials don’t care are somewhat less likely than others to feel it is their duty to vote. These same Americans tend to be less likely than others to vote and to keep up with national affairs. They are more likely to be bored by Washington and to feel that what happens there does not affect them.

Distrusters also question the fairness of government leaders and their actions. Two-thirds of those who distrust government disagree with the statement, “The government is really run for the benefit of all the people” (65%; 34% agree). On the other hand, 75% of those who basically trust government agree that it is really run for the benefit of all; only 24% disagree.

Distrust and Respect for the Law

Distrust of government would be especially worrisome if distrusters were less inclined than trusters to obey the law, but the two groups do not differ on this score. Distrusters were as likely as trusters to say they would be upset if they heard someone had: claimed government benefits they were not entitled to; gotten out of jury duty; not paid all the income taxes they owed; or avoided the military draft.

That is not to say that Americans overall are terribly troubled by these things. Just 31% say they would be very upset if they heard that someone failed to pay all of the income tax they owed; 20% wouldn't care. Only 24% would be very upset if someone avoided the military draft; 29% wouldn't care. Getting out of jury duty is offensive to just 9% of the public, who say they would be very upset. Instead, a slim majority say they either would not care (40%) or would approve (12%) if they heard someone got out of jury duty.

Only claiming government benefits unlawfully raises the ire of more than half of the American public. Fully 64% would be very upset if someone claimed benefits they were not entitled to.

Non-whites and younger Americans are among the least concerned about their fellow citizens unlawfully claiming government benefits, failing to pay all of the income taxes they owe and getting out of jury duty. Draft avoidance is the only item that draws a partisan response. Democrats, as well as non-whites and young Americans, are less concerned about people avoiding the draft than Republicans, older Americans and whites.

Distrust and Anti-Government Violence

A slight relationship can be found between distrusting the federal government and thinking that under some circumstances it may be justified to take violent action against the government. Of Americans who trust the government, 21% believe it is justified in some situations to take violent action against the government; 30% of distrusting Americans concur.

Trust in Government and Respect for the Law			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Trust</u>	<u>Distrust</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
<i>How would you feel if someone ...</i>			
<i>Claimed benefits they weren't entitled to</i>			
Very upset	64	64	65
Just annoyed	29	29	29
Would approve	1	*	1
Wouldn't care	5	5	5
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>*</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Got out of jury duty</i>			
Very upset	9	8	10
Just annoyed	31	31	30
Would approve	12	14	11
Wouldn't care	40	39	41
Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Didn't pay all the taxes they owed</i>			
Very upset	31	33	29
Just annoyed	45	48	44
Would approve	2	1	2
Wouldn't care	20	16	23
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100
<i>Avoided the military draft</i>			
Very upset	24	22	25
Just annoyed	35	36	34
Would approve	7	7	7
Wouldn't care	29	28	29
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100

Overall, sympathy for anti-government violence is most pronounced among non-whites and young Americans ages 18 to 29, particularly young men, 41% of whom say under some situations it may be justified to take violent action against the government.

The belief that anti-government violence is sometimes justified appears to stem in part from a sense that Washington is too powerful. Of those who completely agree that “the federal government controls too much of our daily lives,” 38% think violence against the government is justified in some situations, compared to just 15% of those who completely disagree that the federal government’s grip is too tight.

	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Trust</u> %	<u>Distrust</u> %
Violence against the government may be justified in some cases	27	21	30
Violence against the government is never justified	71	77	67
Other/Don't know	<u>2</u> 100	<u>2</u> 100	<u>3</u> 100

Distrust and Public Service

Despite the fact that the American public’s trust in government has plummeted since the 1960s, as many Americans today as in 1962 would recommend that a son or daughter go into politics as their life’s work (27% vs. 23%).

On four measures, those who distrust the federal government are notably less positive than trusters about the professional rewards of working in politics or government. Although a large majority of Americans think the government is a good place to work, distrusters are less likely than trusters to concur (65% vs. 80%). Distrusters are also more likely than trusters to say they would *not* recommend politics as a profession for their children (71% vs. 60%).

Similarly, distrusters are more likely than trusters to recommend against young people starting their careers in politics or government (59% vs. 46%). More generally, fewer distrusters than trusters would prefer the government over private business as an employer (20% vs. 29%).

	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Trust</u> %	<u>Distrust</u> %
<i>Is government a good place to work?</i>			
Yes	71	80	65
No	23	15	29
Don't know	<u>6</u> 100	<u>5</u> 100	<u>6</u> 100
<i>If you had a son/daughter, would you like to see him/her go into politics?</i>			
Yes	27	30	25
No	67	60	71
Don't know	<u>6</u> 100	<u>10</u> 100	<u>4</u> 100
<i>Would you recommend that young people start their careers in politics/government?</i>			
Yes	40	46	36
No	54	46	59
Don't know	<u>6</u> 100	<u>8</u> 100	<u>5</u> 100
<i>Would you prefer government or private business as an employer?</i>			
Government	23	29	20
Private business	70	61	76
Don't know	<u>7</u> 100	<u>10</u> 100	<u>4</u> 100

SECTION VIII: EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TOWARD GOVERNMENT

Americans may not exactly trust their political leaders, but they are far more trusting than their Europeans counterparts — 44% of the U.S. public basically trusts most elected officials compared to just 30% of Europeans. Even in Great Britain, where Prime Minister Tony Blair still enjoys something of a honeymoon period, the public is less trusting of its political leadership than is the American public.

When it comes to trust in government, however, the differences disappear. Mirroring the 40% of Americans who trust the government, just 41% of Western Europeans — the British, French, Germans, Italians, and Spanish — trust their governments.

During the 1990s, Europeans have come to share American concerns about government power and intrusiveness. At the start of the decade, Europeans on average were less concerned about government control of their daily lives than Americans. Today there is little difference between the two, with more than 60% on both continents agreeing that the state has too much control.

There is, however, a trans-Atlantic divide on the appropriate role of government. Europeans and Americans both believe government should help level the playing field to ensure equal opportunity for all individuals. But if that fails, Europeans are considerably more supportive of a strong social safety net than Americans. Fully 80% of Europeans agree with the statement that the government should guarantee every citizen food and basic shelter, compared with 61% of Americans.

Trust

Europe's long-standing political tradition of social democracy and a generous social welfare system does not garner any more public trust than the American tradition of liberal democracy and its creed of rugged individualism. Minorities of both Europeans and Americans say they basically trust the government (41% and 40%, respectively).¹⁰ Still, Americans are somewhat more *distrusting* (56%) than Europeans (45%), who are much more likely to say they “don't know” whether they basically trust or distrust government (14% vs. 4%).

	<u>Trust</u> %	<u>Distrust</u> %	<u>DK</u> %
<i>U.S.</i>	40	56	4=100
<i>European average</i>	41	45	14=100
UK	57	32	11=100
France	33	59	8=100
Germany	41	41	18=100
Italy	35	51	14=100
Spain	38	42	20=100

British Prime Minister Tony Blair's May 1997 election victory, grounded in a promise to reform the government, likely helps explain why Britain does not fit this pattern — a slight majority (57%) of Britons basically trust the government. On the continent, trust varies somewhat by country. Much like Americans, the French and Italians are decidedly more distrusting (59% France, 51% Italy) than trusting

¹⁰ In Europe, “state” is substituted for “government.” In the U.S., “government” refers to the federal government.

(33% France, 35% Italy). On the other hand, the Germans and Spanish are notably more ambivalent, with a substantial minority — almost 20% — saying they don't know whether they trust the government. Undecideds notwithstanding, the Spanish are slightly more distrusting than trusting (42% vs. 38%), and German opinion divides evenly (41% distrust vs. 41% trust).

Government Performance

Europeans and Americans also share similar assessments of their governments' performance, as measured by their views about government inefficiency and waste. A slim majority of Europeans as a whole and a slightly larger percentage of Americans agree with the statement, "When something is run by the government, it is usually inefficient and wasteful" (56% and 64%, respectively). Only in Spain do as many agree as disagree (40% vs. 44%). In both the U.S. and Europe overall, the sense that government is inefficient is much the same today as in the early 1990s. France and Germany are exceptions; there discontent with government inefficiency and waste has grown since 1991 (65% today vs. 58% in 1991 in France, 51% vs. 41% in Germany).

	--- 1991 ---		--- 1997 ---	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
	%	%	%	%
U.S.	68	30	64	34
European average	55	37	56	35
UK	57	38	53	41
France	58	35	65	29
Germany	41	47	51	37
Italy	74	23	71	25
Spain	44	42	40	44

On both sides of the Atlantic, men and the less well educated are somewhat more likely than women and the college educated to think the government is usually inefficient and wasteful.

Government Power

Clear majorities of both Europeans and Americans believe their governments control too much of their daily lives (61% and 64%). The French are the most likely to agree with the statement, "The government controls too much of our daily lives" (75%), while the Germans are the least likely to agree (46%). In the U.S., the balance of opinion on this issue has remained steady since 1990, but Europeans as a whole have grown more wary of government control during the last six years. In 1991, just half of Europeans believed the government controlled too much of their daily lives (53%). Attitudes have shifted the most in the UK, where in 1991 only 44% were concerned about government control and today 57% are.

	--- 1991 ---		--- 1997 ---	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
	%	%	%	%
U.S.	62	34	64	35
European average	53	41	61	33
UK	44	52	57	39
France	69	28	75	22
Germany	38	54	46	45
Italy	54	41	64	31
Spain	62	28	64	25

In both Europe and the U.S., the less well educated are more likely than the better educated to express concern about government control. In the U.S., this concern is also more prevalent among older Americans.

Government Assistance to the Needy

Although solid majorities on both sides of the Atlantic see a clear role for government when it comes to providing assistance to those in need, the support is much stronger in Europe than in the U.S. Fully 80% of Europeans think the government should guarantee every citizen food and basic shelter; 61% of Americans agree.

American sentiment on this issue remains much as it was in 1990, but European support for government assistance to the needy has waned somewhat. In 1991, 87% of Europeans believed the government should guarantee every citizen food and basic shelter. Growing concerns about the solvency of the social welfare systems and anxieties about competing in global markets likely explain why somewhat fewer Europeans today than in the early 1990s think the government should make these guarantees.

Europeans and Americans universally agree that their societies should do what is necessary to make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed (91% for both). With the exception of Spain, where support for this sentiment has declined (from 93% in 1991 to 84% in 1997), opinion on this issue is largely unchanged from the early 1990s.

The Government Should Guarantee Every Citizen Food and Basic Shelter				
	--- 1991 ---		--- 1997 ---	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
	%	%	%	%
<i>U.S.</i>	62	34	61	37
<i>European average</i>	87	10	80	16
UK	88	9	82	16
France	89	10	90	8
Germany	82	14	77	18
Italy	86	14	66	30
Spain	92	4	86	9

Society Should Do What Is Needed to Make Sure Everyone Has an Equal Opportunity to Succeed				
	--- 1991 ---		--- 1997 ---	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
	%	%	%	%
<i>U.S.</i>	91	7	91	8
<i>European average</i>	94	5	91	6
UK	96	3	96	4
France	93	6	94	5
Germany	92	6	90	6
Italy	96	3	93	5
Spain	93	5	84	10

Trust in Elected Leaders

Americans and Europeans alike question the trustworthiness of their elected officials. Fully 55% of Americans and 62% of Europeans disagree with the statement, “Most elected officials are trustworthy.” Concern about the trustworthiness of leaders is particularly high in Spain (68%), Italy (67%) and France (67%). Americans under age 30 are more likely than those over 50 to distrust elected officials (60% vs. 47%). This is not as true of Europeans: 64% of those under 30 distrust elected officials compared to 60% of those over 50.

Both Europeans and Americans also question whether elected officials care about what the public thinks. Just 41% of Americans and 25% of Europeans agree with the statement, “Most elected officials care what people like me think.” Italians are particularly likely to doubt whether elected officials care what they think — just 15% think officials care. At the other end of the European spectrum, the British are as likely as Americans to think public officials care what people like them think (43%). A post-election Blair bliss likely has boosted Britons’ confidence in their leaders, yet the UK topped Europe on this issue in 1991 as well, when 35% believed officials cared what the public thought. The UK notwithstanding, both European and American opinion on this issue is relatively unchanged since the early 1990s.

More broadly, Europeans and, to a lesser extent, Americans doubt whether the government is really run for the benefit of all the people. On average, 38% of Europeans agree with the statement, “The government is really run for the benefit of all the people,” while 55% disagree. In contrast, 48% of Americans surveyed think the government is really run for the benefit of all, while 50% disagree. The balance of opinion on this issue has shifted among Americans. In 1991, a slim majority of Americans thought the government was run for the benefit of all the people. Among the European countries, Italy stands out, with a 77% majority claiming the Italian government is *not* run for the benefit of the people, although this is down from 86% in 1991. On the whole, as many Europeans and Americans today as in the early 1990s think the government is run for the benefit of all, with the exception of the Germans and Spanish,

Most Elected Officials Are Trustworthy			
--- 1997 ---			
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	
	%	%	
U.S.	44	55	
European average	30	62	
UK	39	53	
France	30	67	
Germany	32	58	
Italy	26	67	
Spain	20	68	
Elected Officials Care What People like Me Think			
--- 1991 ---		--- 1997 ---	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>
	%	%	%
U.S.	44	53	41
European average	26	69	25
UK	35	61	43
France	27	70	26
Germany	30	63	20
Italy	14	83	15
Spain	26	67	21

Government Is Really Run for the Benefit of All			
--- 1991 ---		--- 1997 ---	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>
	%	%	%
U.S.	52	45	48
European average	41	55	38
UK	52	47	57
France	48	50	52
Germany	41	49	30
Italy	12	86	16
Spain	51	41	38

who today are somewhat less likely than in 1991 to voice this sentiment.

Control, Inefficiency, Leaders and Trust

European and American attitudes toward trust in government are shaped by trust in elected officials, as well as perceptions of government control and government inefficiency. Europeans and Americans who doubt officials' trustworthiness, think the government controls too much of our daily lives, or who think the government is usually inefficient and wasteful are more likely than others to distrust the government. These strong relationships prevail even after controlling for such demographics as gender, age and education.

Control, Inefficiency, Leaders and Trust				
	<i>--- U.S. ---</i>		<i>--- Europe ---</i>	
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
	%	%	%	%
<i>Elected officials are trustworthy:</i>				
Trust	60	22	69	28
Distrust	35	75	21	59
DK	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Govt controls too much of our daily lives:</i>				
Trust	27	54	34	55
Distrust	68	43	53	33
DK	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>12</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Govt is inefficient and wasteful:</i>				
Trust	28	58	32	56
Distrust	68	38	55	32
DK	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>12</u>
	100	100	100	100

TABLES

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

Trust the Government in Washington...

	Just about Always/ <u>Most of the time</u> %	Only Sometimes/ <u>Never</u> %	Don't Know/ <u>Refused</u> %	<u>(N)</u>
Total	39	61	*=100	(1762)
Sex				
Male	37	63	*	(857)
Female	40	60	*	(905)
Race				
White	39	61	*	(1250)
Non-white	40	60	0	(495)
*Hispanic	44	56	0	(103)
Black	39	61	0	(367)
Age				
Under 30	38	61	1	(433)
30-49	38	62	0	(772)
50-64	36	64	*	(328)
65+	43	56	1	(205)
Education				
College Grad.	41	59	*	(543)
Some College	39	60	1	(474)
High School Grad.	37	63	*	(569)
<H. S. Grad.	38	62	0	(166)
Family Income				
\$75,000+	36	64	0	(245)
\$50,000-\$74,999	42	58	0	(279)
\$30,000-\$49,999	36	64	0	(467)
\$20,000-\$29,999	41	59	0	(264)
<\$20,000	40	59	1	(371)
Region				
East	42	58	*	(329)
Midwest	40	60	0	(445)
South	37	63	*	(649)
West	37	62	1	(339)
Community Size				
Urban	38	62	1	(559)
Suburban	38	62	*	(803)
Rural Area	41	59	0	(400)
Race/Religion/Ethnicity				
Total White Protestant	38	62	*	(708)
White Prot. Evangelical	34	66	*	(344)
White Prot. Non-Evangelical	42	58	*	(345)
White Catholic	41	59	*	(307)
Party ID				
Republican	33	67	*	(485)
Democrat	48	52	*	(630)
Independent	35	65	*	(541)
Rep./Lean Rep.	32	68	*	(699)
Dem./Lean Dem.	47	53	*	(856)

Question: How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?
 Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?
 How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do a good
 job? Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

* For this and all subsequent tables, the designation, Hispanic, is unrelated to the white/black categorization.

FEELINGS ABOUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

	Basically <u>Content</u> %	<u>Frustrated</u> %	<u>Angry</u> %	Don't Know/ <u>Refused</u> %
Total	29	56	12	3=100
Sex				
Male	29	55	14	2
Female	30	58	10	2
Race				
White	28	58	12	2
Non-white	39	47	11	3
Hispanic	34	53	10	3
Black	40	44	12	4
Age				
Under 30	36	51	10	3
30-49	30	57	11	2
50-64	25	56	17	2
65+	24	59	13	4
Education				
College Grad.	29	59	9	3
Some College	28	59	11	2
High School Grad.	29	55	15	1
<H. S. Grad.	34	49	11	6
Family Income				
\$75,000+	29	60	10	1
\$50,000-\$74,999	30	57	11	2
\$30,000-\$49,999	26	60	12	2
\$20,000-\$29,999	30	54	14	2
<\$20,000	32	52	13	3
Region				
East	35	50	11	4
Midwest	29	58	11	2
South	29	56	13	2
West	27	61	11	1
Community Size				
Urban	30	56	12	2
Suburban	31	54	13	2
Rural Area	26	61	10	3
Race/Religion/Ethnicity				
Total White Protestant	27	59	12	2
White Prot. Evangelical	24	62	12	2
White Prot. Non-Evangel	29	59	11	1
White Catholic	30	60	9	1
Party ID				
Republican	24	58	16	2
Democrat	42	49	7	2
Independent	22	62	13	3
Rep./Lean Rep.	22	60	17	1
Dem./Lean Dem.	38	51	8	3

Question: Some people say they are basically content with the federal government, others say they are frustrated, and others say they are angry. Which of these best describes how you feel?

RATINGS FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Can't Rate</u>
	%	%	%
Total	38	59	3=100
Sex			
Male	36	62	2
Female	40	57	3
Race			
White	36	62	2
Non-white	49	48	3
Hispanic	43	56	1
Black	50	47	3
Age			
Under 30	40	58	2
30-49	36	62	2
50-64	39	59	2
65+	38	56	6
Education			
College Grad.	39	59	2
Some College	35	63	2
High School Grad.	37	61	2
<H. S. Grad.	46	47	7
Family Income			
\$75,000+	33	65	2
\$50,000-\$74,999	39	61	*
\$30,000-\$49,999	37	62	1
\$20,000-\$29,999	40	59	1
<\$20,000	39	55	6
Region			
East	43	54	3
Midwest	35	64	1
South	38	59	3
West	37	60	3
Community Size			
Urban	39	58	3
Suburban	39	59	2
Rural Area	36	61	3
Race/Religion/Ethnicity			
Total White Protestant	34	64	2
White Prot. Evangelical	30	67	3
White Prot. Non-Evangel	38	60	2
White Catholic	37	62	1
Party ID			
Republican	32	66	2
Democrat	50	47	3
Independent	32	66	2
Rep./Lean Rep.	31	68	1
Dem./Lean Dem.	48	49	3

Question: Do you have a very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the federal government in Washington?

RATINGS FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

	-----State-----			-----Local-----		
	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Can't Rate</u>	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Can't Rate</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	66	29	5=100	68	25	7=100
Sex						
Male	66	31	3	64	29	7
Female	65	28	7	71	21	8
Race						
White	69	27	4	70	23	7
Non-white	52	38	10	57	34	9
Hispanic	65	30	5	65	26	9
Black	51	38	11	56	36	8
Age						
Under 30	67	25	8	66	24	10
30-49	63	32	5	65	28	7
50-64	64	31	5	71	24	5
65+	76	21	3	76	19	5
Education						
College Grad.	64	31	5	69	26	5
Some College	66	28	6	66	25	9
High School Grad	67	29	4	70	24	6
<H. S. Grad.	67	25	8	66	25	9
Family Income						
\$75,000+	65	31	4	66	28	6
\$50,000-\$74,999	64	33	3	68	27	5
\$30,000-\$49,999	70	26	4	68	25	7
\$20,000-\$29,999	61	34	5	69	23	8
<\$20,000	64	28	8	67	25	8
Region						
East	59	35	6	69	25	6
Midwest	71	25	4	71	23	6
South	66	28	6	65	27	8
West	64	30	6	67	26	7
Community Size						
Urban	62	30	8	59	33	8
Suburban	65	31	4	71	22	7
Rural Area	72	24	4	71	22	7
Party ID						
Republican	72	24	4	74	20	6
Democrat	63	32	5	67	26	7
Independent	66	29	5	64	28	8
Rep./Lean Rep.	71	25	4	70	24	6
Dem./Lean Dem.	64	31	5	68	26	6

Question: Do you have a very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of your state government?
Do you have a very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of your local government?

TRUST IN ELECTED OFFICIALS

Most Elected Officials are Trustworthy

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%
Total	44	55	1=100
Sex			
Male	43	55	2
Female	45	54	1
Race			
White	46	53	1
Non-white	35	64	1
Hispanic	46	52	2
Black	34	65	1
Age			
Under 30	39	60	1
30-49	40	59	1
50-64	47	52	1
65+	56	40	4
Education			
College Grad.	48	51	1
Some College	42	56	2
High School Grad.	44	55	1
<H. S. Grad.	41	57	2
Family Income			
\$75,000+	44	56	*
\$50,000-\$74,999	50	50	0
\$30,000-\$49,999	43	56	1
\$20,000-\$29,999	42	57	1
<\$20,000	39	59	2
Region			
East	46	53	1
Midwest	46	53	1
South	42	57	1
West	43	56	1
Community Size			
Urban	39	59	2
Suburban	44	55	1
Rural Area	48	51	1
Race/Religion/Ethnicity			
Total White Protestant	47	51	2
White Prot. Evangelical	47	52	1
White Prot. Non-Evangel	49	49	2
White Catholic	47	52	1
Party ID			
Republican	47	51	2
Democrat	47	52	1
Independent	39	61	*
Rep./Lean Rep.	44	55	1
Dem./Lean Dem.	46	53	1

Question: Please tell me if you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree that most elected officials are trustworthy.

EVALUATING GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

	Excellent/ <u>Good</u> %	Only <u>Fair</u> %	<u>Poor</u> %	Don't Know/ <u>Refused</u> %
Total	25	53	21	1=100
Sex				
Male	22	52	25	1
Female	29	54	16	1
Race				
White	24	54	21	1
Non-white	32	48	18	2
Hispanic	40	41	16	3
Black	33	47	18	2
Age				
Under 30	30	57	12	1
30-49	25	50	24	1
50-64	19	53	27	1
65+	27	58	14	1
Education				
College Grad.	26	51	23	*
Some College	24	55	20	1
High School Grad.	24	54	21	1
<H. S. Grad.	31	52	16	1
Family Income				
\$75,000+	23	50	26	1
\$50,000-\$74,999	26	49	23	2
\$30,000-\$49,999	22	54	23	1
\$20,000-\$29,999	27	58	15	*
<\$20,000	28	54	17	1
Region				
East	27	54	18	1
Midwest	27	50	22	1
South	25	55	19	1
West	23	54	21	2
Community Size				
Urban	27	54	17	2
Suburban	23	53	22	1
Rural Area	26	52	21	1
Race/Religion/Ethnicity				
Total White Protestant	23	54	21	2
White Prot. Evangelical	20	55	24	1
White Prot. Non-Evangel	27	53	19	1
White Catholic	28	51	21	*
Party ID				
Republican	20	50	28	2
Democrat	37	52	10	1
Independent	19	56	24	1
Rep./Lean Rep.	19	51	29	1
Dem./Lean Dem.	34	54	11	1

Question: All in all, how good a job does the federal government do running its programs? An excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job?

VIEWS ON GOVERNMENTAL POWER

	<u>Gov't Has too Much Power</u>	<u>Gov't Uses Right Amount of Power</u>	<u>Gov't Should Use More Power</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
	%	%	%	%
Total	33	32	33	2=100
Sex				
Male	40	32	27	1
Female	27	31	40	2
Race				
White	35	33	31	1
Non-white	24	27	45	4
Hispanic	22	30	46	2
Black	25	25	47	3
Age				
Under 30	31	30	38	1
30-49	33	31	35	1
50-64	39	32	27	2
65+	28	38	29	5
Education				
College Grad.	34	38	27	1
Some College	33	31	34	2
High School Grad.	35	30	34	1
<H. S. Grad.	27	27	42	4
Family Income				
\$75,000+	39	36	25	*
\$50,000-\$74,999	34	37	28	1
\$30,000-\$49,999	38	30	31	1
\$20,000-\$29,999	28	30	40	2
<\$20,000	29	25	41	5
Region				
East	26	33	39	2
Midwest	33	32	34	1
South	36	30	32	2
West	35	32	31	2
Community Size				
Urban	30	27	40	3
Suburban	33	33	33	1
Rural Area	35	34	29	2
Race/Religion/Ethnicity				
Total White Protestant	38	32	28	2
White Prot. Evangelical	41	30	28	1
White Prot. Non-Evangel	36	34	28	2
White Catholic	24	32	43	1
Party ID				
Republican	45	29	25	1
Democrat	18	39	42	1
Independent	38	28	32	2
Rep./Lean Rep.	46	28	25	1
Dem./Lean Dem.	21	37	40	2

Question: Which one of the following statements comes closest to your views about governmental power today?
The federal government today has too much power; The federal government is now using about the right amount of power for meeting today's needs; The federal government should use it's powers even more vigorously to promote the well-being of all segments of the people.

WHO WORKS FOR THE GOVERNMENT?

	Self/Family Member <u>Works for Gov't</u> %	Non-Gov't <u>Household</u> %	Don't Know/ <u>Refused</u> %
Total	28	72	*=100
Sex			
Male	28	72	*
Female	28	72	*
Race			
White	26	74	*
Non-white	38	62	*
Hispanic	43	57	0
Black	35	65	*
Age			
Under 30	28	71	1
30-49	30	70	*
50-64	30	70	0
65+	15	85	0
Education			
College Grad.	35	65	*
Some College	29	71	*
High School Grad.	25	75	*
<H. S. Grad.	21	79	0
Family Income			
\$75,000+	30	69	1
\$50,000-\$74,999	33	67	0
\$30,000-\$49,999	29	71	0
\$20,000-\$29,999	27	72	1
<\$20,000	20	80	0
Region			
East	23	77	*
Midwest	29	71	*
South	28	72	*
West	29	71	0
Community Size			
Urban	28	72	*
Suburban	26	74	*
Rural Area	30	69	1
Race/Religion/Ethnicity			
Total White Protestant	25	74	1
White Prot. Evangelical	23	76	1
White Prot. Non-Evangel	27	73	*
White Catholic	28	72	0
Party ID			
Republican	28	72	*
Democrat	31	69	0
Independent	25	75	*
Rep./Lean Rep.	28	71	1
Dem./Lean Dem.	28	72	*

Question: Do you work for federal, state or local government — for example, as a public school teacher, police officer, firefighter, or other government job? [IF NO:] Does anyone in your household work for federal, state, or local government? [IF YES TO EITHER:] Is that a federal, state, or local government job?

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Project Design

The findings of this study are based on the results of several telephone surveys conducted during 1997 and 1998: 1) a broad-based national survey on Trust in Government; 2) surveys conducted in five European countries; 3) a national survey on political values, updating long-term Pew Research Center trends; 4) and a final national survey conducted two weeks before the release of this report to update the findings.

Prior to the survey work, Princeton Survey Research Associates conducted six focus groups around the country to lay the groundwork for the questionnaire development. Two groups were conducted in suburban Detroit. Each consisted of self-described middle-class and working class suburbanites who trust the government to do the right thing “some of the time” or “rarely or none of the time.” The first group included men and women aged 22 to 34, the second group included women aged 35 to 65.

Two groups were conducted in Columbus, Georgia. These groups consisted of self-described middle-class, conservative, religious Southerners from small town or rural areas who were married and had children. These participants said they trust the government to do the right thing “some of the time” or “rarely or none of the time.” The first group was white, the second group was African-American.

Finally, two groups were conducted in Phoenix, Arizona. All the participants were second generation Americans. The first group consisted of people who trust the government to do the right thing “most of the time” or “just about always.” The second group consisted of extreme distrusters, those who said they trust the government to do the right thing “rarely or none of the time.”

The National Trust Survey

Results from the *main* survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,762 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period September 25 - October 31, 1997. The survey includes an oversample of 200 black adults. However, the results are weighted to produce a final sample that is representative of the general population of adults in the continental United States. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on either Form 1 (n=879) or Form 2 (n=883), the sampling error is plus or minus 4 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting telephone surveys can introduce error or bias into the finding of opinion polls.

Sample Design

The sample for the survey consisted of a random digit dial telephone sample designed to be representative of all telephone households in the continental United States and a separate random digit dial race-targeted sample which was used for the black oversample.

The black oversample was designed to be representative of all telephone households, yet efficient in locating households containing a black person. These competing goals are met by selecting random telephone numbers from exchanges such that a disproportionately large sample of telephone numbers is selected from telephone exchanges serving areas with a high density of blacks and a disproportionately small sample is selected from other (lower black density) telephone exchanges. Thus, the incidence of black households is increased over their incidence in a sample design where the selection probabilities are proportionate.

The resulting sample is unbiased because all telephone households have an opportunity of being included in the sample, regardless of the racial makeup of their exchanges and regardless of whether their telephone numbers are listed or unlisted (the actual telephone numbers are randomly generated). The sample becomes representative after weights are applied to eliminate the disproportionality in selection probabilities related to the black density of the area served by the telephone exchange.

The race-targeted sample was drawn by first ranking all telephone exchanges according to the percentage of blacks in the area served by the exchange. The information on the racial makeup of the area is taken from Census information at the Census tract level. The tract information is linked to telephone exchange on the basis of the rough geographic boundaries of the exchange.

With black density estimated for each telephone exchange, sample can be drawn with selection probabilities related to the density of blacks in the exchange, i.e., the higher the density of blacks in the exchange, the greater the probability of selecting a number from that exchange.

Weighting to eliminate the selection disproportionalities is based on information collected in the course of screening respondents for qualification. An estimate of the qualification incidence of telephone households is computed separately for each of the sampling strata and is used, together with information about the number of telephone households in each stratum, to re-proportionalize the sample of completed interviews. This weighting was supplemented by demographic weighting which is discussed below.

The sample was released for interviewing in replicates for each of the four black density strata and for the general population sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample to the field ensures that the complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample and ensures an appropriate number of completed interviews from each strata. Again, this works to increase the representativeness of the final sample.

At least ten attempts were made to complete an interview at every sampled telephone number. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making a contact with a respondent. In each contacted household, interviewers asked to speak with the "youngest male 18 or older who is at home". If there is no eligible man at home, interviewers asked to speak with "the oldest woman 18 or older who lives in the household". This systematic respondent selection technique has been shown empirically to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and gender.

In addition to the black density stratum weighting necessary to compensate for the disproportionate sample selection, demographic weighting was used to bring the characteristics of the total sample (the general population sample and the black oversample combined) into alignment with the demographic characteristics of the population of all adults 18 and older.

The demographic weighting parameters are derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Census Bureau Annual Demographic File (from the March 1996 Current Population Survey). This analysis produced population parameters for the demographic characteristics of households with adults 18 or older, which are then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights. The analysis only included households in the continental U. S. where there is a telephone in the household.

The total sample was weighted to the CPS distributions of sex, age, education, race, and region. Additionally, the sample of blacks (combining the blacks from the general population sample and from the oversample) was weighted to the CPS distributions of sex, age, education and region for black adults living in telephone households in the continental United States.

The weights were derived using an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distributions of all weighting parameters.

The European Component

Surveys were conducted in five European countries under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates. PSRA subcontracted the fieldwork for each survey. The subcontractors for each study are listed below.

United Kingdom	MORI UK	
France		IFOP
Germany	EMNID	
Italy		Pragma
Spain		Demoscopia

All European questions were fielded on omnibus surveys; interviews were conducted face-to-face.

Pew Values Update

Results for the November 1997 Values Update Survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,165 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period November 5-9, 1997 and November 13-17, 1997. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

Final National Survey

Results for the Final National Survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,007 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period February 19-22, 1997. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

The samples for the Values Update Survey and the Final National Survey are random digit samples of telephone numbers selected from telephone exchanges in the continental United States. The random digit aspect of the samples is used to avoid "listing" bias and provides representation of both listed and unlisted numbers (including not-yet-listed). The design of the samples ensures this representation by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange, and bank number.

The telephone exchanges were selected with probabilities proportional to their size. The first eight digits of the sampled telephone numbers (area code, telephone exchange, bank number) were selected to be proportionally stratified by county and by telephone exchange within county. That is, the number of telephone numbers randomly sampled from within a given county is proportional to that county's share of telephone numbers in the U.S. Only working banks of telephone numbers are selected. A working bank is defined as 100 contiguous telephone numbers containing three or more residential listings.

The samples were released for interviewing in replicates. Using replicates to control the release of sample to the field ensures that the complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. The use of replicates also insures that the regional distribution of numbers called is appropriate. Again, this works to increase the representativeness of the sample.

At least five attempts were made to complete an interview at every sampled telephone number. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making a contact with a potential respondent. All interview breakoffs and refusals were re-contacted at least once in order to attempt to convert them to completed interviews. In each contacted household, interviewers asked to speak with the "youngest male 18 or older who is at home". If there is no eligible man at home, interviewers asked to speak with "the oldest woman 18 or older who lives in the household". This systematic respondent selection technique has been shown empirically to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and gender.

Non-response in telephone interview surveys produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population, and these subgroups are likely to vary also on questions of substantive interest. In order to compensate for these known biases, the sample data are weighted in analysis.

The demographic weighting parameters are derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (March 1996). This analysis produced population parameters for the demographic characteristics of households with adults 18 or older, which are then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights. The analysis only included households in the continental United States that contain a telephone.

The weights are derived using an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distributions of all weighting parameters.

QUESTIONNAIRES

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS
TRUST IN GOVERNMENT SURVEY
-- FINAL TOPLINE --

September 25 - October 31, 1997

Total N = 1,762 (200 oversample of African Americans)

(Form 1 n=879; Form 2 n=883)

INTRODUCTION: Hello, I am _____, calling for Princeton Survey Research Associates in Princeton, New Jersey. We are conducting a telephone opinion survey for leading newspapers and TV stations around the country. I'd like to ask a few questions of the youngest male, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home. [IF NO MALE:] May I please speak with the oldest female, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home?

Q1. a. First, let's talk about the quality of your life. Imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to 10 at the top. Suppose the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you; and the bottom, the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time? You can name any number between zero and 10.

		<u>1996</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1985¹¹</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1964</u>
47	High (8-10)	37	31	33	31	34	38	38	33	34	36
31	Medium (6-7)	33	35	36	36	31	30	26	29	30	33
22	Low (0-5)	29	34	30	33	33	32	33	38	34	30
<u>1</u>	Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
7.0	<i>Mean Rating</i>	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.7	6.6	6.4	6.6	6.9

b. And on what number step would you say you stood five years ago?

		<u>1996</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1964</u>
28	High (8-10)	26	28	25	28	29	24	25	27	28
25	Medium (6-7)	27	27	27	24	22	22	23	25	24
46	Low (0-5)	46	44	48	48	49	53	50	47	47
<u>1</u>	Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
5.9	<i>Mean Rating</i>	5.8	6.0	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.8	6.0

c. And on what number step do you think you will be five years from now—just your best guess?

		<u>1996</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1964</u>
73	High (8-10)	64	56	61	59	57	60	58	58	57
13	Medium (6-7)	16	21	19	19	18	18	17	17	22
10	Low (0-5)	16	18	14	16	19	14	17	15	11
<u>4</u>	Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
8.2	<i>Mean Rating</i>	7.7	7.4	7.7	7.6	7.0	7.7	7.4	7.6	7.9

¹¹

For questions 1 and 2, trends for 1964 through 1985 and 1991 are from Gallup.

Q2. a. Still thinking about the ladder, suppose the top represents the best possible situation for our country; and the bottom, the worst possible situation. Please tell me on which step of the ladder you think the United States is at the present time? You can name any number between zero and 10.

		<u>1996</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1964</u>
15	High (8-10)	10	20	13	14	16	7	16	10	17	30
34	Medium (6-7)	36	33	42	34	41	27	29	23	27	34
50	Low (0-5)	52	44	43	51	42	63	53	65	53	32
<u>1</u>	Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
5.6	<i>Mean Rating</i>	5.4	5.9	5.7	5.5	5.9	4.8	5.5	4.8	5.5	6.5

b. And on what number step would you say the U.S. was five years ago?

		<u>1996</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1964</u>
14	High (8-10)	14	20	13	12	28	27	19	24
36	Medium (6-7)	35	32	33	30	29	32	30	34
48	Low (0-5)	48	43	51	56	40	36	47	37
<u>2</u>	Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
5.7	<i>Mean Rating</i>	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.3	6.0	6.3	5.6	6.1

c. And on what number step do you think the U.S. will be five years from now—just your best guess

		<u>1996</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1964</u> ¹²
29	High (8-10)	26	32	31	28	37	32	29	35	57
28	Medium (6-7)	27	24	33	29	28	24	21	22	17
39	Low (0-5)	44	36	31	34	27	34	37	33	15
<u>4</u>	Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
5.9	<i>Mean Rating</i>	5.7	6.0	6.3	6.1	6.6	6.1	5.8	6.2	7.7

¹²

In 1964 the question referred to "ten years from now."

Q3. Now, I'd like your opinion of some organizations and institutions. The first one is [INSERT ITEM]. Do you have a very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of [INSERT ITEM]? ... How about [INSERT ITEM]? ... [INTERVIEWER: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE"]

		Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Never Heard of	Can't Rate
a.	Business corporations	11	55	23	5	*	6=100
	May, 1997	9	50	21	7	1	12=100
	June, 1996	10	52	25	6	*	7=100
	February, 1996	9	50	24	10	1	6=100
	October, 1995	6	54	29	7	0	4=100
	July, 1994	8	62	19	5	*	6=100
	November, 1991	8	57	22	6	0	7=100
	January, 1988	6	53	27	5	*	9=100
	June, 1985	8	50	24	7	1	10=100
	<i>Roper</i> ¹³ , October 1984	19	52	19	6	4=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , October 1983	18	50	21	8	3=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , October 1982	12	51	24	9	4=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , October 1981	14	46	24	12	4=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , November 1980	10	51	26	8	5=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , January 1978	14	48	22	10	6=100	
b.	The news media	7	43	34	14	*	2=100
c.	The Military	22	56	13	5	0	4=100
	May, 1997	23	57	11	5	0	4=100
	February, 1996	33	49	12	4	*	2=100
	July, 1994	30	57	8	3	*	2=100
	May, 1993	32	53	8	2	0	5=100
	March, 1991	60	34	2	2	0	2=100
	May, 1990	18	55	15	6	*	6=100
	January, 1988	20	57	14	3	*	6=100
	April, 1987	17	63	12	4	0	4=100
	January, 1987	19	54	11	5	*	11=100
	July, 1986	32	53	7	3	0	5=100
	June, 1985	24	53	13	5	*	5=100
d.	The federal government in Washington	4	34	41	18	0	3=100
e.	Your state government	10	56	22	7	*	5=100
f.	Your local government	12	56	18	7	*	7=100

13

Response categories for this and subsequent Roper favorability trends are slightly different: "highly favorable, moderately favorable, not too favorable, or rather unfavorable."

[FOR ITEMS D,E,F, IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS 1-4, FOLLOW-UP WITH Q4, OBSERVING FORM DIFFERENCES AS NOTED.]

Q4. Why do you feel that way?

[OPEN-ENDED. ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE.]

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON

Favorable Responses (N=691)

22	Positive performance evaluation
19	General satisfaction/No complaints
13	Good intentions/Trying/Doing best they can
6	Like Clinton (NET)
4	Clinton doing a good job
2	Like Clinton's policies/Like specific policy
5	Strong economy
4	Better than other countries
3	Reinventing initiatives/New approaches to governing are working
2	Enjoy freedom/democracy
1	Positive personal experience
1	Security/Strong defense
1	Peace
1	Balance of power is good
1	Bipartisanship/Parties working together
1	Education policies

(Negative Comments)

3	Things aren't going well in country (generally)
3	Politicians dishonest/Crooks
3	Government doesn't pay attention to/care about people
2	Dislike government policies in general/Dislike specific policy
2	Federal government can't get anything done
1	Government interferes too much/Too intrusive
1	General negative (I'm not satisfied)
1	Too partisan
1	Spend too much of foreign countries
1	Too much government spending/Spend money frivolously
1	Campaign finance system
1	Government has the wrong priorities
1	Welfare system — negative
1	Only out for themselves/For own personal gain
1	Not much progress solving national problems
1	Don't like Bill Clinton
1	Specific mention of IRS — negative
15	Other
8	Don't know/Refused

Q4. Why do you feel that way?

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON

Unfavorable Responses (N=1028)

- 40 Political leadership/Political system (NET)
 - 34 Leadership (NET)
 - 16 Politicians are dishonest/crooks
 - 11 Only out for themselves/For own personal gain
 - 3 Representatives say one thing and do another
 - 3 Representatives don't represent the people
 - 2 Lack of leadership/Bad leadership/No leadership
 - 2 Government officials/politicians are inept
 - 8 Political system (NET)
 - 3 Too partisan
 - 2 Scandals
 - 1 Too much politics
 - 1 Special interest influence
 - 1 Campaign finance system
- 24 Critiques of Government (NET)
 - 8 Too much government spending/Spend money frivolously
 - 6 Federal government can't get anything done
 - 4 Government no morals
 - 3 Government is too big/Too much government
 - 3 Government interferes too much/Too intrusive
 - 2 Government is mismanaged
 - 1 Government is inefficient
 - 1 Government downsized too much
- 15 Policy (NET)
 - 4 Taxes are too high
 - 4 Dislike government policies in general/Dislike specific policy
 - 2 Spend too much on foreign countries
 - 2 Government has the wrong priorities
 - 2 Specific mention of IRS
 - 1 Too liberal
 - 1 Court system/Judicial system
 - 1 Welfare system
 - 1 Problems with education
- 13 Government Doesn't Care/Unresponsive (NET)
 - 11 Government doesn't pay attention to/care about people
 - 2 Needs/opinions of people not represented in government
- 13 General negative (I'm not satisfied)
 - 9 Things aren't going well in the country (generally)
 - 6 Don't like Bill Clinton
 - 3 Not much progress solving national problems
 - 1 Negative personal experience

(Positive Comments)

- 1 General satisfaction/No complaints
- 4 Other
- 4 Don't know/Refused

Q4. Why do you feel that way?

YOUR STATE GOVERNMENT (FORM 1 ONLY)

Favorable Responses (N=559)

- 26 General satisfaction/No complaints
- 24 Positive performance evaluation
- 11 Governor doing good job/Like Governor
- 7 Doing the best they can
- 6 Represents interests of people/More in touch
- 5 More approachable on state level/Not as large/More responsive than federal government
- 5 On road to recovery/Has improved
- 4 Pay for schools/Education
- 3 Pay for roads/Highways
- 3 Strong economy
- 3 Helping with employment situation
- 2 Taxes are lower/reasonable
- 2 Like specific policy/policies
- 2 Welfare reform
- 2 Personal experience/contact
- 1 Don't interfere in my life

(Negative Comments)

- 2 Could do a better job
- 1 Don't agree with way they handle issues
- 1 Taxes too high
- 1 General negative (I'm not satisfied)
- 1 Not helping people as much as they could
- 1 Don't like specific policy/policies
- 1 Welfare system — negative

- 6 Other
- 7 Don't know/Refused

Q4. Why do you feel that way?

YOUR STATE GOVERNMENT (FORM 1 ONLY)

Unfavorable Responses (N=278)

- 31 General negative
- 17 Taxes too high
- 11 Don't like Governor
- 10 Not helping people as much as they could
- 8 People only there for personal gain
- 7 Politicians are corrupt
- 7 Don't like specific policy/policies
- 5 Need better education
- 4 Don't agree with the way they handle issues
- 4 Could do a better job
- 3 Lack of leadership/Bad leadership/No leadership
- 3 Spends too much
- 2 Unresponsive/Slow to respond to needs/concerns
- 2 Too much crime
- 2 Wrong priorities
- 2 Don't teach spiritual/moral/family values
- 2 Court system/Judicial system
- 1 Negative personal experience
- 1 Welfare system
- 1 State has cut back on too many services

(Positive Comments)

- 1 Positive performance evaluation
- 1 Governor doing good job/Like Governor

- 5 Other
- 4 Don't know/Refused

Q4. Why do you feel that way?

YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (FORM 2 ONLY)

Favorable Responses (N=599)

- 22 Positive performance evaluation
- 18 General satisfaction/No complaints
- 8 Trying/Doing best they can
- 8 Responsive to our needs/concerns
- 5 Smaller/More accessible
- 4 Good police/Crime rate looks good/Feel safe
- 4 It's alright/Doing what it's supposed to do
- 3 Like the Mayor/Good Mayor
- 3 Know local leaders personally
- 3 Economy better
- 3 Pro-growth/Trying to build and expand
- 3 Take care of/stick up for people
- 2 Like what they are doing with education
- 2 People have more control
- 2 Good leaders
- 2 Taxes are low/No taxes
- 1 Local government more honest/up front
- 1 Roads/Highways
- 1 Positive personal experience/contact
- 1 Like specific policy/policies

(Negative Comments)

- 3 Could be better/Make a lot of mistakes
- 1 Politicians are corrupt
- 1 Government based on money/All trying to make money
- 1 Don't do anything for the people/Not listening
- 1 Needs new people/Run by same people for too long
- 1 Too much crime
- 1 Always arguing/Can't come to decision on anything

- 10 Other
- 7 Don't know/Refused

Q4. Why do you feel that way?

YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (FORM 2 ONLY)

Unfavorable Responses (N=236)

- 22 Don't do anything for the people/Not listening
- 19 General negative (I'm not satisfied)
- 12 Politicians are corrupt
- 10 Could be better/Make a lot of mistakes
- 8 Taxes are too high
- 8 Always arguing/Can't come to decision on anything
- 7 Government based on money/All trying to make money
- 4 Don't like specific policy/policies
- 4 Wrong priorities
- 3 Too much crime
- 3 Need better education
- 3 Don't do what they say/Say one thing and do another
- 2 Needs new people/Run by same people for too long
- 2 Lack of leadership/Bad leadership/No leadership
- 2 Negative personal experience
- 1 Court system/Judicial system
- 1 Welfare system
- 1 Special interest influence
- 1 Problems with roads and highways
- 1 Too liberal
- 1 Are against families/Breaking up families

(Positive Comments)

- 1 Pro-growth/Trying to build and expand
- 1 Positive performance evaluation
- 1 General satisfaction/No complaints
- 1 Positive personal experience

- 6 Other
- 5 Don't know/Refused

Q5. What has most influenced your impression of the federal government... what you've heard or read OR things you've personally experienced?
 [INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS "BOTH" PROBE ONCE WITH: Well, what has MOST influenced your impression...]

62 Heard/read
 20 Personal experiences
 14 Both [VOL.]
 * Something else [SPECIFY]
 4 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q6. Would you say you basically trust the federal government in Washington or not?

39 Yes
 57 No
 4 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q7. Some people say they are basically content with the federal government, others say they are frustrated, and others say they are angry. Which of these best describes how you feel?

29 Basically content
 56 Frustrated
 12 Angry
 3 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q8. If 1 represents someone who generally believes that, on the whole, federal government programs should be cut back greatly to reduce the power of government, and 6 represents someone who feels that federal government programs should be maintained to deal with important problems, where on the scale of 1 to 6 would you place yourself?

	(1-3) <u>Anti-Government</u>	(4-6) <u>Government Activist</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>Average Rating</u> ¹⁴
October, 1997	41	57	2=100	4
October, 1995 ¹⁵	45	53	2=100	4
August, 1995	45	53	2=100	4

14 Based on those who could rate themselves.

15 Previously the question was worded, "If 1 represents someone who believes that government programs should be cut back very much in order to lower taxes and reduce the power of government, and 6 represents someone who feels that government programs that help needy people and deal with important national problems should be maintained, where on the scale of 1 to 6 would you place yourself?"

Q9. All in all, how good a job does the federal government do running its programs? An excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job?

2 Excellent
 23 Good
 53 Only fair
 21 Poor
1 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q10. Some people think criticism of the way the federal government does its job is justified; others think the government often does a better job than it is given credit for. Which comes closer to your views?

60 Criticism is justified
 33 Government often does better job than given credit for
7 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q11. And which of these statements comes closest to your views? [READ]

37 The federal government needs very major reform.
 58 The federal government is basically sound and needs only some reform.
 4 The federal government doesn't need much change at all.
1 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q12. ASK A-B TOGETHER FOR EACH ITEM:]

- A. How much effect do you think the [INSERT ITEM]'s activities—the laws passed and so on—have on your day-to-day life? Do they have a great effect, some effect, or no effect?
- B. [IF GREAT OR SOME EFFECT:] In general, is the [INSERT ITEM]'s effect on your life positive or negative?

		Great Effect	Some Effect	None	DK/ Ref.	Posi- tive	Nega- tive	Neither	DK/ Ref.
	[ASK ALL:]								
a.	The federal government	36	54	9	1=100	50	31	5	4=90%
	<i>ORC</i> , March 1960	41	43	11	5=100				
bF2.	Your state government	31	59	9	1=100	62	21	5	2=90%
cF2.	Your local government	31	57	11	1=100	64	18	4	2=88%
	<i>ORC</i> , March 1960	35	53	10	2=100				

Q13. What do you personally feel is the bigger problem with government? Government has the wrong priorities, OR government has the right priorities but runs programs inefficiently?

29 Wrong priorities
 61 Runs programs inefficiently
 5 Both (VOL.)
 2 Neither (VOL.)
3 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q14. I'm going to read you a few pairs of statements some people have made. For each pair, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right. The first pair is [INSERT ITEM]... The next pair is [INSERT ITEM] ...

a. Human nature is basically bad, and you can't be too careful in your dealings with people; OR Human nature is basically good, and people can be trusted.
 29
 68
3 Neither/Don't know
 100

		<u>June</u> <u>1997</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>April</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>July</u> <u>1994</u>
b.	Racial discrimination is the main reason why many black people can't get ahead these days; OR Blacks who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition	33	28	37	34	34	32
	Neither/Don't know	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>
		100	100	100	100	100	100

		<u>June</u> <u>1997</u>	<u>June</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>July</u> <u>1994</u>
c.	Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents; OR Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing, and health care.	41	37	31
	Neither/Don't know	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>
		100	100	100

		<u>June</u> <u>1997</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>April</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>April</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>July</u> <u>1994</u>
d.	Homosexuality is a way of life that should be accepted by society; OR Homosexuality is a way of life that should be discouraged by society.	45	44	44	45	47	46	46
	Neither/Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Q15. In your opinion, which is generally more often to blame if a person is poor? Lack of effort on his or her own part, or circumstances beyond his or her control?

		<i>LAT</i>		----- <i>Gallup</i> -----			
		<u>1992</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1964</u>
39	Lack of effort	27	35	38	40	33	34
44	Circumstances beyond control	52	45	42	37	34	25
14	Both (VOL.)	18	17	17	17	31	38
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100

Q16. Now I would like to ask you a few questions about some things that have been in the news. Not everyone will have heard about them. Who is the Speaker of the House of Representatives?

55	Newt Gingrich
4	Incorrect answer
<u>41</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q17. As far as you know, is more of the federal budget now spent on Medicare, or is more spent on foreign aid?

		<i>PSRA</i>
		<u>1995</u>
27	Medicare	27
63	Foreign aid	58
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>15</u>
100		100

Q18. Over the last three years, do you think the number of people employed by the federal government has increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

		<i>PSRA</i>
		<u>1995</u>
35	Increased	34
34	Decreased	28
27	Stayed the same	35
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>
100		100

Q19. On a different subject...

[SPLIT FORM:]

[FORM 1:] How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right? Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

[FORM 2:] How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do a good job? Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

	Just About <u>Always</u>	Most Of the <u>Time</u>	Only Some- <u>times</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK</u>
Total Combined Forms	3	36	59	2	*=100
Form 1 Only:	2	36	60	2	*=100
NES ¹⁶ , 1996	2	25	70	2	1=100
1994	2	19	74	3	2=100
1992	3	26	68	2	1=100
1990	3	25	69	2	1=100
1988	4	37	56	2	1=100
1986	3	35	58	2	2=100
1984	4	40	53	1	2=100
1982	2	31	62	2	3=100
1980	2	23	69	4	2=100
1978	2	27	64	4	3=100
1976	4	30	62	1	3=100
1974	2	34	61	1	2=100
1972	5	48	44	1	2=100
1970	7	47	44	*	2=100
1968	7	54	37	*	2=100
1966	17	48	28	3	4=100
1964	14	62	22	*	2=100
1958	16	57	23	0	4=100
Form 2 Only:	4	35	59	2	*=100

16

Trend numbers for 1958 through 1996 are from the American National Election Studies.

Q20. How much trust and confidence do you have in [INSERT ITEM]? A great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all? ... And how about in [INSERT ITEM]? ...

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Fair amount</u>	<u>Not very much</u>	<u>None at all</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. Our federal government when it comes to handling domestic problems	7	53	31	9	*=100
<i>Gallup, June 1976</i>	5	44	42	7	2=100
<i>Gallup, April 1974</i>	9	42	36	8	5=100
<i>Gallup, May 1972</i>	11	59	26	3	1=100
b. Our federal government when it comes to handling international problems	22	54	19	4	1=100
<i>Gallup, June 1976</i>	8	48	33	7	4=100
<i>Gallup, April 1974</i>	24	49	18	4	5=100
<i>Gallup, May 1972</i>	20	55	20	2	3=100

[SPLIT FORM TWO WAYS:]

c. Your state government when it comes to handling state problems [FORM 1]	15	66	15	3	1=100
<i>Gallup, May 1997</i>	18	50	25	6	1=100
<i>Gallup, June 1976</i>	13	59	19	7	2=100
<i>Gallup, April 1974</i>	16	59	17	3	5=100
<i>Gallup, May 1972</i>	15	48	27	6	4=100
d. Your local government when it comes to handling local problems [FORM 2]	22	56	16	5	1=100
<i>Gallup, May 1997</i>	21	48	21	8	2=100
<i>Gallup, June 1976</i>	13	52	23	9	3=100
<i>Gallup, April 1974</i>	16	55	16	8	5=100
<i>Gallup, May 1972</i>	12	51	26	7	4=100

Q21. How would you feel if you heard that someone had [INSERT ITEM]? Would you be very upset, just annoyed, would you approve, or wouldn't you care? ... And how would you feel if you heard that someone had [INSERT ITEM]? ...

	<u>Very Upset</u>	<u>Just Annoyed</u>	<u>Would Approve</u>	<u>Wouldn't Care</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
[FORM 1:]					
a. Claimed government benefits they were not entitled to	64	29	1	5	1=100
b. Gotten out of jury duty	9	31	12	40	8=100
[FORM 2:]					
c. Not paid all the income taxes they owed	31	45	2	20	2=100
d. Avoided the military draft	24	35	7	29	5=100

Q22. In your opinion, who should be PRIMARILY responsible for [INSERT ITEM]? The federal government, state and local government, private industry, or individuals and community groups? ... How about [INSERT ITEM]? ...

[RANDOMIZE A-J:]		Federal <u>Gov't</u>	State/ Local <u>Gov't</u>	Private <u>Industry</u>	Indivs./ Community <u>Groups</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
[FORM 1:]						
a.	Setting academic standards for public schools	22	50	2	25	1=100
b.	Conserving the country's natural resources	52	21	5	18	4=100
	<i>ORC, Jan 1962</i> ⁷	65	27	4	4	0=100
c.	Ensuring every American has access to affordable health care	58	22	8	10	2=100
d.	Providing a decent standard of living for the elderly	46	30	2	19	3=100
	<i>ORC, Jan 1962</i> ⁸	55	31	7	7	0=100
e.	Promoting greater honesty and stronger morals among people	16	9	1	71	3=100
	<i>ORC, Jan 1962</i>	13	10	1	76	0=100
[FORM 2:]						
f.	Ensuring that every American can afford to send their children to college	35	19	4	38	4=100
	<i>ORC, Jan 1962</i> ⁹	28	39	2	30	1=100
g.	Ensuring that food and medicines are safe	73	14	6	5	2=100
h.	Reducing juvenile delinquency	7	31	1	58	3=100
	<i>ORC, Jan 1962</i>	15	44	2	39	0=100
i.	Reducing poverty	34	27	6	26	7=100
j.	Managing the economy to prevent another recession or depression	68	13	7	7	5=100
	<i>ORC, Jan 1962</i> ¹⁰	81	8	6	4	1=100

⁷ In 1962, the question was worded, "In your personal opinion, is this a matter each individual person should handle for himself primarily? Or is it a matter voluntary agencies or community groups should handle primarily? Or private industry or companies? Or state and local governments? Or is this a matter the federal government should handle primarily?... conserving the country's natural resources."

⁸ In 1962, the question was worded, "adequate incomes for retired people."

⁹ In 1962, the question was worded, "a college education for every able willing student."

¹⁰ In 1962, the question was worded, "avoiding another recession or depression."

Q23. I'd like your opinion of some other organizations and institutions. Let's start with [INSERT ITEM]. Do you have a very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of [INSERT ITEM]? ... How about [INSERT ITEM]? ... [INTERVIEWER: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND CAN'T RATE"]

[RANDOMIZE A-J:]

	Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Never Heard of	Can't Rate
[FORM 1:]						
a.	The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the FBI					
	13	54	17	8	*	8=100
	12	48	21	7	0	12=100
	16	48	19	9	*	8=100
	34	48	3	6	*	9=100
	28	50	14	3		5=100
	25	50	13	4		8=100
	24	48	15	5		8=100
	30	47	14	5		4=100
	29	46	14	5		6=100
b.	The Environmental Protection Agency, the EPA					
	14	55	20	7	1	3=100
	19	43	23	7		8=100
	18	41	24	7		10=100
	19	39	20	11		11=100
	27	41	17	9		6=100
	21	35	22	12		10=100
c.	The Postal Service					
	28	61	8	3	0	*=100
	33	43	14	8		2=100
	27	47	16	8		2=100
	23	47	16	11		3=100
	24	45	18	10		3=100
	25	45	17	10		3=100
d.	The Social Security Administration					
	11	51	24	10	0	4=100

Q23. CONTINUED...

		Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Never Heard of	Can't Rate
e.	Congress	5	48	33	11	0	3=100
	August 1997	6	44	33	11	0	6=100
	June, 1997	4	48	34	8	0	6=100
	May, 1997	5	44	32	10	*	9=100
	February, 1997	6	46	31	9	*	8=100
	January, 1997	6	50	32	8	*	4=100
	June, 1996	6	39	38	12	*	5=100
	April, 1996	6	39	37	13	0	5=100
	January, 1996	4	38	38	16	*	4=100
	October, 1995	4	38	42	13	0	3=100
	August, 1995	5	40	34	13	*	7=100
	June, 1995	8	45	31	11	*	5=100
	February, 1995	10	44	27	10	0	9=100
	July, 1994	7	46	34	9	*	4=100
	May, 1993	8	35	35	13	0	9=100
	November, 1991	7	44	34	9	0	6=100
	May, 1990	6	53	25	9	1	6=100
	May, 1988	8	56	23	5	0	8=100
	January, 1988	6	58	25	4	0	7=100
	May, 1987	10	64	16	4	*	6=100
	January, 1987	7	52	23	8	0	10=100
	June, 1985	9	58	21	5	*	7=100
	[FORM 2:]						
f.	The Internal Revenue Service, the IRS	5	33	35	25	*	2=100
	<i>Time/CNN</i> , March 1997		37		43	12	8=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1987	10	39	27	19		5=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1986	10	41	26	19		4=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1985	8	40	28	19		5=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1984	13	47	23	11		6=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1983	12	38	28	16		6=100
g.	The Department of Education	12	49	26	11	0	2=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1987	14	46	24	11		5=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1986	16	47	22	10		5=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1985	14	47	23	11		5=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1984	14	42	25	13		6=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1983	10	39	27	18		6=100

Q23. CONTINUED...

		Very Favor- <u>able</u>	Mostly Favor- <u>able</u>	Mostly Unfavor- <u>able</u>	Very Unfavor- <u>able</u>	Never <u>Heard of</u>	Can't <u>Rate</u>
h.	The Food and Drug Administration, the FDA	12	63	18	4	*	3=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1987	23	51	16	4		6=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1986	25	50	15	3		7=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1985	27	47	14	5		7=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1984	32	46	13	4		5=100
	<i>Roper</i> , August 1983	31	42	15	5		7=100
i.	The Defense Department	18	58	15	4	*	5=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1987	16	41	22	14		7=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1986	22	44	19	10		5=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1985	15	39	22	15		9=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1984	15	39	24	15		7=100
	<i>Roper</i> , April 1983	14	40	23	15		8=100
j.	The Supreme Court	13	64	12	6	*	5=100
	May , 1997	16	56	17	5	0	6=100
	July, 1994	18	62	13	3	*	4=100
	May, 1993	17	56	14	4	0	9=100
	November, 1991	18	54	16	5	0	7=100
	May, 1990	10	55	18	7	1	9=100
	January, 1988	14	65	11	2	*	8=100
	May, 1987	13	63	15	2	*	7=100
	<i>Roper</i> , March 1985	17	47	21	7		8=100

Q24. Now, I'm going to read you a few statements some people have made about government. The first one is [INSERT ITEM]. Do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree? ... How about [INSERT ITEM]? ...

[RANDOMIZE A-F; ALWAYS ASK G LAST:]

		Comp- letely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Comp- letely <u>Disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
a.	The government has gone too far in regulating business and interfering with the free enterprise system.	14	42	36	5	3=100
	<i>Hart Teeter</i> , March 1995 ²¹	36	37	17	7	3=100
	<i>CBS/NYT</i> , April 1981	65			26	9=100
	<i>CBS/NYT</i> , Nov. 1980	65			27	8=100
	<i>CBS/NYT</i> , Jan. 1978	58			31	11=100
	<i>Gallup</i> , Sept. 1964	43			40	17=100
b.	The federal government is interfering too much in state and local matters.	12	41	39	5	3=100
	<i>Gallup</i> , Sept. 1964	40			48	12=100
c.	The U.S. should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along as best they can on their own.	15	37	34	12	2=100
	<i>Univ. Of MD</i> , June 1996 ²²	21	22	28	26	3=100
	June 1995	41			51	8=100
	<i>Gallup</i> , March 1994	49			49	2=100
	<i>Gallup</i> , March 1993	42			55	3=100
	<i>Gallup</i> , March 1992	44			53	3=100
	<i>CBS/NYT</i> , June 1978	47			45	8=100
	<i>Gallup</i> , June 1976	43			47	10=100
	<i>Gallup</i> , May 1972	39			54	7=100
	<i>Gallup</i> , Sept. 1964	20			70	10=100

21 Hart Teeter response categories were slightly different: "strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree."

22 Univ. Of Maryland response categories were slightly different: "agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, disagree strongly."

Q24. CONTINUED...

	<u>Com- pletely Agree</u>	<u>Mostly Agree</u>	<u>Mostly Disagree</u>	<u>Comp- letely Disagree</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
d. When something is run by the government, it is usually inefficient and wasteful. ²³	27	37	27	7	2=100
July, 1994	33	36	25	5	1=100
May, 1993	24	45	24	5	2=100
June, 1992	29	41	24	4	2=100
November, 1991	32	36	23	7	2=100
May, 1990	22	45	25	4	4=100
February, 1989	26	39	26	5	4=100
May, 1988	24	42	26	3	5=100
May, 1987	19	44	27	4	6=100
e. The government is really run for the benefit of all the people. ²⁴	9	39	35	15	2=100
July, 1994	10	32	38	19	1=100
October, 1992	9	30	38	21	2=100
September, 1992	9	31	37	21	2=100
June, 1992	8	36	37	17	2=100
May, 1992	7	34	40	18	1=100
March, 1992	8	31	41	18	2=100
February, 1992	7	35	40	17	1=100
January, 1992	8	35	40	15	2=100
November, 1991	11	37	34	16	2=100
May, 1990	10	42	35	10	3=100
February, 1989	12	45	31	10	2=100
May, 1988	11	42	34	10	3=100
May, 1987	9	48	31	8	4=100
f. The federal government is too powerful.	18	44	32	5	1=100
g. What happens in Washington is of little concern to most people.	8	38	38	15	1=100

²³ This item and several others were included on a separate Pew survey to preserve the context of the trend. The survey was conducted Nov. 5-9 and Nov. 13-17, 1997 (N=1,165).

²⁴ Pew Research Center, Nov. 5-9 and Nov. 13-17, 1997.

Q25. Do you think federal government spending on economic aid to foreign countries should be kept at least at the present level, or reduced, or ended altogether?

		<i>Gallup</i> <u>Sept. 1964</u>
24	Present level (or increased—VOL.)	32
65	Reduced	47
9	Ended	14
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>7</u>
100		100

Q26. On another subject, as you know, there are many important issues facing our country, but we have only limited resources for addressing these issues. Keeping this in mind,
[INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT SAYS FED. GOV'T SHOULDN'T BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ISSUE CODE AS 4, "LOW/NO PRIORITY"]

[ASK A-B TOGETHER FOR EACH ITEM:]

A. How much of a priority SHOULD the federal government give to [INSERT ITEM]? A very high priority, a high priority but not the highest, a medium priority, or a low priority? [AFTER SECOND ITERATION, SHORTEN TO: A Very high, high, medium, or a low priority?]

B. And how much of a priority do you think the federal government ACTUALLY GIVES to [INSERT ITEM]? A very high priority, a high priority but not the highest, a medium priority, or a low priority? [AFTER SECOND ITERATION, SHORTEN TO: A very high, high, medium, or a low priority?]

[RANDOMIZE A-H:]

		<i>How much priority</i> ---SHOULD gov't give---					<i>How much priority</i> ---DOES gov't give---				
		Very <u>High</u>	High	Med- <u>ium</u>	Low	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>	Very <u>High</u>	High	Med- <u>ium</u>	Low	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
[FORM 1:]											
a.	Setting academic standards for public schools	32	36	17	14	1=100	3	17	51	25	4=100
b.	Conserving the country's natural resources	34	42	20	3	1=100	4	20	53	20	3=100
c.	Ensuring every American has access to affordable health care	39	36	18	7	*=100	4	11	44	39	2=100
d.	Providing a decent standard of living for the elderly	28	44	23	4	1=100	3	14	50	31	2=100

Q26. CONTINUED...

	<i>How much priority</i>					<i>How much priority</i>				
	<i>---SHOULD gov't give---</i>					<i>---DOES gov't give---</i>				
	<u>Very High</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Med-ium</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>	<u>Very High</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Med-ium</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
e. [FORM 2:] Ensuring that every American can afford to send their children to college	22	28	33	16	1=100	3	8	40	44	5=100
f. Ensuring that food and medicines are safe	51	39	8	2	*=100	12	38	37	11	2=100
g. Reducing juvenile delinquency	28	32	27	12	1=100	2	11	40	43	4=100
h. Reducing poverty	24	41	27	7	1=100	4	12	45	36	3=100

Q27. Generally speaking, what is your opinion of [INSERT ITEM]? Is it very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? ... How about [INSERT ITEM]? ... [INTERVIEWER: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE"]

[RANDOMIZE A-F; ALWAYS ASK C LAST:]

	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Mostly Favorable</u>	<u>Mostly Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>Never Heard of</u>	<u>Can't Rate</u>
a. Elected federal officials	4	53	33	7	*	3=100
b. Departments and agencies of the federal government	4	55	32	5	*	4=100
<i>Roper, August 1987</i>	6	56	26	8		4=100
<i>Roper, April 1987</i>	4	51	30	9		6=100
<i>Roper, August 1986</i>	6	55	26	8		5=100
<i>Roper, April 1986</i>	5	57	25	8		5=100
<i>Roper, August 1985</i>	7	52	24	9		8=100
<i>Roper, April 1985</i>	4	53	27	9		7=100
<i>Roper, August 1984</i>	6	54	26	9		5=100
<i>Roper, April 1984</i>	5	46	31	11		7=100
<i>Roper, August 1983</i>	6	50	28	10		6=100
<i>Roper, April 1983</i>	2	48	29	14		7=100

Q27. CONTINUED...

		Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Never Heard of	Can't Rate
c.	President Bill Clinton	15	47	20	16	*	2=100
	August 1997	16	45	21	17	0	1=100
	April, 1997	17	44	21	16	*	2=100
	January, 1997	17	49	18	14	*	2=100
	October, 1996 ²⁵	12	45	22	19	0	2=100
	June, 1996	16	45	23	14	*	2=100
	April, 1996	16	41	24	16	0	3=100
	February, 1996	20	35	22	21	0	2=100
	January, 1996	13	43	27	15	0	2=100
	August, 1995	13	36	29	20	0	2=100
	February, 1995	14	41	25	17	0	3=100
	December, 1994	17	34	24	22	0	3=100
	July, 1994	15	43	25	16	*	1=100
	May, 1993	18	42	23	12	0	5=100
	July, 1992	17	42	25	9	0	7=100
	June, 1992	10	36	33	14	1	6=100
	May, 1992	11	42	32	10	*	5=100
	March, 1992	10	43	29	11	1	6=100
	February, 1992	15	44	24	7	2	8=100
	January, 1992	9	28	11	4	27	21=100
	November, 1991	5	25	8	2	39	21=100
[FORM 1:]							
d.	Government workers	7	62	23	5	*	3=100
	<i>LA Times</i> , April 1981	6	49	28	10	5	2=100
e.	State and local government officials	6	64	23	5	*	2=100
[FORM 2:]							
f.	Public employees	8	64	22	3	0	3=100

Q28. On a different subject... Do you think that [INSERT ITEM] in this country get more attention from the federal government than they should, about the right amount of attention, or less attention than they should? ... How about [INSERT ITEM]? ...

[RANDOMIZE A-H:]

		<u>More</u>	<u>About Right</u>	<u>Less</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
[FORM 1:]					
a.	White people	19	59	17	5=100
b.	Women	13	46	39	2=100
c.	Poor people	10	23	65	2=100
d.	Business leaders	50	37	9	4=100
[FORM 2:]					
e.	Black people	24	46	26	4=100
f.	Elderly people	8	31	60	1=100
g.	Middle class people	9	36	54	1=100
h.	Religious people	22	46	27	5=100

Q29. Who do you trust more to do the right thing? The politicians who lead the federal government or the civil service employees who run federal government departments and agencies?

16 Politicians
 67 Civil service employees
 9 Both the same/Trust neither (VOL.)
8 Don't know/Refused
 100

Q30. [ASK A-B TOGETHER FOR EACH ITEM:]

A. What kind of job has the federal government done of [INSERT ITEM]? An excellent job, a good job, only a fair job or a poor job?

B. [IF ONLY FAIR OR POOR:] Is this the government's fault or is it because the issue is too difficult or too complex?

[RANDOMIZE A-H:]

		<i>---What kind of job has gov't done?---</i>					<i>---Why only fair or poor?---</i>			
		Excel- <u>lent</u>	<u>Good</u>	Only <u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>	Gov'ts <u>Fault</u>	Too <u>Complex</u>	Both <u>(Vol)</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
[FORM 1:]										
a.	Setting academic standards for public schools	2	21	52	22	3=100	36	33	2	3=74%
b.	Conserving the country's natural resources	3	31	52	12	2=100	33	28	2	1=64%
c.	Ensuring every American has access to affordable health care	2	16	45	35	2=100	36	39	3	2=80%
d.	Providing a decent standard of living for the elderly	2	24	52	20	2=100	35	32	2	3=72%
[FORM 2:]										
e.	Ensuring that every American can afford to send their children to college	2	16	51	28	3=100	29	44	2	4=79%
f.	Ensuring that food and medicines are safe	11	47	33	8	1=100	19	20	*	2=41%
g.	Reducing juvenile delinquency	1	10	49	36	4=100	21	59	2	3=85%
h.	Reducing poverty	1	13	53	31	2=100	28	51	2	3=84%

Q31. Now I'm going to read you a few more statements. For each one, please tell me if you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree or completely disagree. The first one is... [INSERT ITEM]

[RANDOMIZE A-F:]

	<u>Com- pletely Agree</u>	<u>Mostly Agree</u>	<u>Mostly Disagree</u>	<u>Comp- pletely Disagree</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
a. The federal government controls too much of our daily lives. ²⁶	29	35	29	6	1=100
<i>UVA</i> , January 1996	23	40	31	7	0=100
July, 1994	37	32	25	5	1=100
May, 1993	26	39	30	4	1=100
October, 1992	39	34	21	5	1=100
September, 1992	33	36	21	7	3=100
June, 1992	28	36	29	5	2=100
May, 1992	28	36	29	6	1=100
March, 1992	33	39	23	4	1=100
February, 1992	30	35	27	6	2=100
January, 1992	27	36	28	7	2=100
November, 1991	32	31	28	7	2=100
May, 1990	22	40	29	5	4=100
February, 1989	22	35	34	6	3=100
May, 1988	25	36	31	5	3=100
May, 1987	18	40	32	5	5=100
b. Public officials don't care what people like me think.	17	44	33	5	1=100
<i>PSRA</i> , November 1995 ²⁷	40	28	23	8	1=100
<i>ABC/W.Post</i> , March 1994	67			32	1=100
<i>Gallup</i> , September 1992	59			38	3=100
<i>ABC</i> , April 1992	65			34	1=100
<i>ABC/W.Post</i> , October 1991	58			40	2=100
<i>ABC/W.Post</i> , September 1990	65			34	1=100
<i>CBS/NYT</i> , February 1985	58			37	5=100
<i>CPS</i> , September 1984	42			57	1=100
<i>Gallup</i> , July 1984	53			41	6=100
<i>ABC</i> , June 1983	48			49	3=100
<i>CBS/NYT</i> , October 1980	51			45	4=100
<i>CBS</i> , September 1978	52			42	6=100
<i>CBS/NYT</i> , April 1977	64			29	7=100
<i>CBS/NYT</i> , August 1976	53			37	10=100
<i>ANES</i> , September 1956	26			71	3=100
c. Most elected officials are trustworthy.	3	41	40	15	1=100

²⁶ Pew Research Center, Nov. 5-9 and Nov. 13-17, 1997.

²⁷ PSRA response categories were slightly different: "strongly agree, just agree, disagree or strongly disagree."

Q31. CONTINUED...

		Com- pletely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Comp- pletely <u>Disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
d.	I am very patriotic. ²⁸	48	42	6	2	2=100
	July, 1994	51	40	6	2	1=100
	June, 1992	52	39	5	2	2=100
	November, 1991	58	33	5	2	2=100
	May, 1990	48	40	8	2	2=100
	February, 1989	51	40	6	1	2=100
	May, 1988	51	38	6	2	3=100
	May, 1987	43	46	7	1	3=100

[FORM 1:]

e.	The government must see that no one is without food, clothing, or shelter.	29	43	19	8	1=100
	<i>Harris</i> , September 1964		68		32	0=100

[FORM 2:]

f.	The federal government has a responsibility to try to do away with poverty in this country.	22	52	20	5	1=100
	<i>Gallup</i> , September 1964		73		20	7=100

Q32. Generally, how would you rate the ethical and moral practices of [INSERT ITEM]? Would you give them an excellent, good, only fair or poor rating?

[RANDOMIZE A-D; ASK E LAST:]

		<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	Only <u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
a.	Federal government officials	2	29	47	21	1=100
	<i>ORC</i> , August 1986	4	23	41	26	6=100
	<i>ORC</i> , June 1983	3	22	44	21	10=100
	<i>ORC</i> , September 1981	2	21	45	27	5=100
	<i>ORC</i> , July 1979	2	20	38	32	8=100
	<i>ORC</i> , May 1977	2	20	45	26	7=100
	<i>ORC</i> , September 1975	3	25	39	24	9=100
	<i>ORC</i> , July 1973	3	23	40	27	7=100
	<i>ORC</i> , May 1964	10	37	26	8	19=100

²⁸

Pew Research Center, Nov. 5-9 and Nov. 13-17, 1997.

Q32. CONTINUED...

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
b. State and local government officials	3	40	44	11	2=100
<i>ORC</i> , June 1983	3	28	45	14	10=100
<i>ORC</i> , September 1981	2	29	47	19	3=100
<i>ORC</i> , July 1979	2	25	40	24	9=100
<i>ORC</i> , May 1977	2	29	40	20	9=100
<i>ORC</i> , September 1975	2	28	40	25	5=100
<i>ORC</i> , July 1973	3	29	43	18	7=100
<i>ORC</i> , May 1964	5	35	34	8	18=100

[FORM 1:]

c. Leaders of business corporations	2	31	47	16	4=100
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[FORM 2:]

d. Journalists	4	29	41	25	1=100
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[ASK ALL:]

e. People like you	16	53	27	3	1=100
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Q33. Considering what you get from the federal government, do you think you pay more than your fair share of taxes, less than your fair share, or about the right amount?

52	More than fair share
2	Less than fair share
45	About the right amount
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q34. On a different subject... How often do you [INSERT ITEM]? Regularly, sometimes, hardly ever, or never? ... How often do you [INSERT ITEM]? ...

[RANDOMIZE A-E:]

	<u>Regu- larly</u>	<u>Some- times</u>	<u>Hardly Ever</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. Watch news on television	72	20	6	2	*=100
b. Read newspapers	62	24	10	4	*=100
c. Listen to news on the radio	50	26	15	9	*=100

Q34. CONTINUED...

	<u>Regu- larly</u>	<u>Some- times</u>	<u>Hardly Ever</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>
d. Listen to talk radio shows that invite listeners to call in to discuss current events, public issues, and politics	18	28	25	29	*=100
August, 1997	17	24	28	31	*=100
September, 1996	15	25	22	37	1=100
July, 1996	16	24	27	33	*=100
June, 1996	17	25	26	31	1=100
April, 1996	13	23	25	39	*=100
March, 1996	18	28	24	30	*=100
October, 1995	18	33	25	24	*=100
April, 1995	19	30	24	27	*=100
November, 1994	16	31	26	26	1=100
July, 1994	17	29	24	30	*=100
December, 1993	23	22	25	30	0=100
April, 1993	23	32	23	22	*=100
e. Use a computer to go online to get information about current events, public issues, or politics	11	13	14	62	*=100

Q35. Which one of the following statements comes closest to your views about governmental power today? [READ]

	<i>Gallup</i> <u>1964</u>
33 The federal government today has too much power.	26
32 The federal government is now using about the right amount of power for meeting today's needs.	38
33 The federal government should use its powers even more vigorously to promote the well-being of all segments of the people.	29
<u>2</u> Don't know/Refused	<u>7</u>
100	100

Q36. In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions? A very great deal, a good deal, not very much, or none at all?

	<i>Gallup</i> <u>1964</u>
11 Very great deal	14
53 Good deal	63
32 Not very much	19
3 None at all	1
<u>1</u> Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>
100	100

Q37. How often would you say you vote? Always, nearly always, part of the time, or seldom?

51	Always
23	Nearly always
11	Part of the time
10	Seldom
*	Other (VOL.)
5	Never (VOL.)
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q38. [IF NOT NEVER:] When you vote do you usually get a feeling of satisfaction from it, or do you only do it because it's your duty?

63	Usually get a feeling of satisfaction from it
29	Do it only out of duty
7	Both/Neither (VOL.)
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q39. Would you prefer government or private business as an employer?

	<i>Gallup</i>	<i>Roper</i>	<i>Roper</i>
	<u>1962²⁹</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1939</u>
23	Government	27	40
70	Private business	66	50
4	No opinion (VOL.)	--	--
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>
100		100	100

Q40. [FORM 1:]

If you had a son or daughter, would you like to see him or her go into politics as a life's work when he or she gets out of school?

	----- <i>Gallup</i> -----				<i>NORC</i>	
	<u>1965</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1943</u>	
27	Yes	36	23	26	21	17
67	No	54	69	60	68	69
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>14</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

[FORM 2:]

Would you recommend that young people start their careers in politics or government?

40	Yes
54	No
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

²⁹

Gallup and Roper trends asked married women about their *husbands'* preference.

Q41. Generally speaking, do you think government is a good place to work? [IF YES:] What's the main reason you think government is a good place to work? The pay, the benefits, the job security, because the work is challenging, or because the hours are good? [ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES BUT DO NOT PROBE]

71	Yes (NET)
22	Pay
34	Benefits
22	Job security
16	Challenging work
9	Good hours
6	Other (SPECIFY)
2	Don't know why
23	No
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q42. Would you favor or oppose allowing an American state to become independent from the country if a majority of the people from that state wanted to do this?

23	Favor
73	Oppose
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q43. Which of these statements comes closer to your views? [READ]

71	It is never justified, under any circumstance, to take violent action against the United States government.
27	Under some situations, it may be justified to take violent action against the government.
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q44. Please tell me whether you or anyone in your household has ever received any of the following services and benefits. Have you or anyone in your family ever received [INSERT ITEM]? ... What about [INSERT ITEM]? ...

[RANDOMIZE A-F:]

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
[FORM 1:]			
a. Federal financial aid for college	27	73	*=100
b. Food stamps	20	80	*=100
c. Social Security benefits	34	66	*=100
[FORM 2:]			
d. AFDC or welfare	17	82	1=100
e. Medicare	29	70	1=100
f. Veterans benefits	18	82	*=100

Q45. Do you work for federal, state, or local government—for example, as a public school teacher, police officer, firefighter, or other government job? [IF NO:] Does anyone in your household work for federal, state, or local government? [IF YES TO EITHER:] Is that a federal, state, or local government job?

28	Yes (NET)
4	Respondent—federal
6	Respondent—state
7	Respondent—local
1	Respondent—Don't know level
3	Not respondent but family member—federal
3	Not respondent but family member—state
2	Not respondent but family member—local
2	Not respondent but family member—Don't know level
72	No
*	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q46. [IF WORK FOR STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT:] How much time do you spend in your work doing things that are required by the federal government in Washington—for example, following certain rules that the federal government, not the state or local government, asks you to follow? Roughly speaking, would you say you spend... [READ]?

20	No time
36	Less than 25 percent of your time
19	Between 25 percent and half
10	Between half and 75 percent
12	More than 75 percent of your time
3	Don't know/Refused
100	
(N=268)	

Q47. Please tell me whether you or anyone in your household works for a non-government employer that receives government funds for the work it does—for example, through a government contract or grant.
[IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED 1-4 IN Q45, OMIT “YOU”: “Please tell me whether anyone in your household works for...”]

14	Yes
82	No
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q48. Do you think the federal government is bound to be inefficient no matter what, or can it become more efficient?

7	Bound to be inefficient
92	Can become more efficient
*	Depends (VOL.)
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q49. Do you think people will mistrust the government no matter what, or do you think there are things the government could do to increase the public's trust?

23	Mistrust no matter what
75	Could be trusted more
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
 FEBRUARY 1998 TRUST IN GOVERNMENT UPDATE
 — FINAL TOPLINE —
 February 19-22, 1998
 N=1,007

Hello, I am _____ calling for Princeton Survey Research Associates in Princeton, New Jersey. We are conducting a telephone opinion survey for leading newspapers and TV stations around the country. I'd like to ask a few questions of the youngest male, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home. **[IF NO MALE, ASK: May I please speak with the oldest female, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home?]**

Q.1 First, let's talk about the quality of your life. Imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to 10 at the top. Suppose the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you; and the bottom, the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder [INSERT ITEM]? You can name any number between zero and 10. ... And on what number step [INSERT ITEM]? ...

[READ A-C IN ORDER:]

a. do you feel you personally stand at the present time?												
		<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1985³⁰</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1964</u>
48	High (8-10)	47	37	31	33	31	34	38	38	33	34	36
31	Medium (6-7)	31	33	35	36	36	31	30	26	29	30	33
21	Low (0-5)	22	29	34	30	33	33	32	33	38	34	30
*	Don't know	*	<u>1</u>	*	<u>1</u>	*	<u>2</u>	*	<u>3</u>	*	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
7.1	<i>Mean Rating</i>	7.0	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.7	6.6	6.4	6.6	6.9
b. would you say you stood five years ago?												
		<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1964</u>	
29	High (8-10)	28	26	28	25	28	29	24	25	27	28	
23	Medium (6-7)	25	27	27	27	24	22	22	23	25	24	
48	Low (0-5)	46	46	44	48	48	49	53	50	47	47	
*	Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	*	*	*	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
5.9	<i>Mean Rating</i>	5.9	5.8	6.0	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.8	6.0	
c. do you think you will be five years from now—just your best guess?												
		<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1964</u>	
72	High (8-10)	73	64	56	61	59	57	60	58	58	57	
14	Medium (6-7)	13	16	21	19	19	18	18	17	17	22	
11	Low (0-5)	10	16	18	14	16	19	14	17	15	11	
<u>3</u>	Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
8.2	<i>Mean Rating</i>	8.2	7.7	7.4	7.7	7.6	7.0	7.7	7.4	7.6	7.9	

30

Trends for 1964 through 1985 and 1991 are from Gallup.

Q.2 Please tell me in your own words, what are your main wishes and hopes for your future? What do you most hope for to be happy in your life? (**OPEN-END, RECORD VERBATIM. PROBE FOR CLARITY ONLY. ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR THEM. ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES.**)

- 37 HEALTH (NET)**
 26 Good health (unspecified)
 9 Healthy family/kids/grandchildren
 3 Not to die/Live a long time/Live another ten years
 * All other health mentions
- 28 FAMILY/CHILDREN (NET)**
 9 Close relationship with loved ones/family
 8 Children have the best life possible/Be happy
 6 For my family to succeed
 3 Getting married/Being married
 2 Good marriage
 1 Seeing grandchildren grow-up
 1 All other family/children mentions
- 25 FINANCIAL SECURITY (NET)**
 18 Financial security/Good financial position
 4 Put children through college/Afford college for children
 3 More money/Be a millionaire/Win the lottery
 2 Out of debt/Able to pay bills
 * All other financial security mentions
- 15 QUALITY OF LIFE (NET)**
 5 Be the best Christian I can/Live a Christian life
 5 Be happy (unspecified)
 2 Be fulfilled/Do something good
 2 Inner peace/Contentment
 1 Accomplish everything/Reach everything in my life
 1 Better balance in life
 1 All other quality of life mentions
- 12 CAREER/JOB SATISFACTION (NET)**
 4 Successful career/Be successful/More successful
 3 Better job
 2 Job satisfaction/Work in a job that I love
 2 Job security
 1 Have my own business
 * Professional job
 * All other career/job satisfaction mentions
- 6 PEACE/STABILITY (NET)**
 4 World peace/A peaceful world
 1 Peace and quiet
 1 World free of violence
 * No racism/Better race relations
 * All other peace/stability mentions
- 5 MISCELLANEOUS (NET)**
 2 Everything stay the way it is/For things to stay the way they are
 1 Travel
 1 Better morals (unspecified)
 2 All other miscellaneous mentions

Q.2 con't ...

- 5 MATERIAL POSSESSIONS (NET)**
 - 5 Own a home/Have a nice home/Buy a home
 - * Own a car
 - * All other material possessions mentions
- 4 RETIREMENT (NET)**
 - 4 Retirement/Be retired
 - 1 Early retirement
- 3 EDUCATION (NET)**
 - 3 Finish school/College/Graduate college
- 4 Don't know/Refused/No answer

Q.2a And what are your main fears and worries about your future? (SEE INSTRUCTION FOR Q.2.)

- 26 HEALTH (NET)**
 - 18 Poor health/Health/Illness
 - 3 Death/Painless death
 - 3 Being a burden to my family/Not being able to care for yourself
 - 1 Getting old/Growing old
 - 1 Cancer/Have cancer now
 - 1 All other health mentions
- 15 FINANCIAL SECURITY (NET)**
 - 9 Not having enough money/My money will run out (unspecified)
 - 3 Not being able to pay bills (unspecified)
 - 2 Provide for my children/Financial help for my kids (unspecified)
 - 1 Not being able to pay medical bills
 - 1 Provide an education for my children
- 11 CAREER/JOB SATISFACTION (NET)**
 - 6 Job security/Losing job/Jobs going overseas
 - 3 Failure at career/Unsuccessful career
 - 1 Working/Going from job to job
 - 1 Stuck in a job you don't like
- 10 FAMILY/CHILDREN (NET)**
 - 4 Quality of life for children
 - 3 Safety of my kids/Something will happen to my kids/Losing a child
 - 3 Children are guided in right directions/Able to raise a family/kids
 - * All other family/children mentions
- 7 PEACE/STABILITY (NET)**
 - 4 War (unspecified)
 - 1 War with Iraq
 - 1 Germ warfare/Anthrax
 - * Terrorist attack
 - 1 All other peace/stability mentions
- 6 MISCELLANEOUS (NET)**
 - 3 Economic concerns/The economy
 - 1 Decline in morals
 - 1 Social problems (unspecified)
 - 1 Environment
 - * Drugs/Current drug situation
 - 1 All other miscellaneous mentions

Q.2a con't ...

- 4 RETIREMENT (NET)**
 - 2 Not able to live on retirement
 - 1 Not enough money to retire
 - * No pension
 - 1 All other retirement mentions
- 3 WASHINGTON/CONGRESS (NET)**
 - 1 Our country's situation (unspecified)
 - 1 Government is getting too large
 - * Bill Clinton
 - * Politicians don't represent the people
 - 1 All other Washington/Congress mentions
- 3 CRIME (NET)**
 - 3 Crime/Violence/Gang violence/Killing
- 2 EDUCATION (NET)**
 - 1 Education for children/No good education for children
 - 1 No degree/Won't graduate
- 1 QUALITY OF LIFE (NET)**
 - 1 Be a good Christian/Trust in God/Whatever the Lord has planned
 - * All other quality of life mentions
- 10 None/None at this age/Don't have any
- 16 Don't know/Refused/No answer

Q.3 Now thinking about the ladder again, suppose the top represents the best possible situation for OUR COUNTRY; and the bottom, the worst possible situation. Please tell me on which step of the ladder [INSERT ITEM]. You can name any number between zero and 10. ... And on what number step [INSERT ITEM]? ... **[READ A-C IN ORDER:]**

a. you think the United States is at the present time?		<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1985</u> ³¹	<u>1979</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1964</u>
20	High (8-10)	15	10	20	13	14	16	7	16	10	17	30
36	Medium (6-7)	34	36	33	42	34	41	27	29	23	27	34
43	Low (0-5)	50	52	44	43	51	42	63	53	65	53	32
<u>1</u>	Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
5.8	Mean Rating	5.6	5.4	5.9	5.7	5.5	5.9	4.8	5.5	4.8	5.5	6.5
b. would you say the U.S. was five years ago?		<u>1997</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1964</u>		
17	High (8-10)	14	14	20	13	12	28	27	19	24		
36	Medium (6-7)	36	35	32	33	30	29	32	30	34		
45	Low (0-5)	48	48	43	51	56	40	36	47	37		
<u>2</u>	Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>		
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		
5.7	Mean Rating	5.7	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.3	6.0	6.3	5.6	6.1		

³¹ Trends for 1964 through 1985 and 1991 are from Gallup.

Q.3 con't ...

c. do you think the U.S. will be five years from now—just your best guess		1997	1996	1991	1989	1987	1985	1976	1974	1972	1964 ³²
33	High (8-10)	29	26	32	31	28	37	32	29	35	57
27	Medium (6-7)	28	27	24	33	29	28	24	21	22	17
36	Low (0-5)	39	44	36	31	34	27	34	37	33	15
<u>4</u>	Don't know	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
6.1	Mean Rating	5.9	5.7	6.0	6.3	6.1	6.6	6.1	5.8	6.2	7.7

Q.4 In your own words, what are your main wishes and hopes for the country's future? What do you most hope for to make the country better? (SEE INSTRUCTION FOR Q.2.)

30 ECONOMIC (NET)

- 11 Economy/Economic growth/Stability (unspecified)
- 8 Create jobs/More jobs/Lower employment
- 5 Poverty/Take on hunger/Needy/Homeless
- 4 Taxes/Lower taxes/Easier tax laws
- 3 National debt/Attention to national debt/Get budget figured out
- 2 Distribution of wealth/Rid of greed
- 1 Social Security/Assured Social Security
- 1 Inflation/Control inflation

29 WOLD PEACE/NATIONAL SECURITY (NET)

- 16 No war/World peace/Peace with all nations
- 10 Peace (unspecified)
- 2 Stay out of conflict with Iraq
- 1 All other world peace/national security mentions

18 GOVERNMENT/POLITICAL LEADERSHIP (NET)

- 4 Congress does what's best for the country should work for the people/Should look out for country not own interest
- 3 Distance from other countries problems/Take care of our own/Leave other countries alone
- 3 Good President/Leader
- 3 More moral President/Leader with good morals
- 2 New President/Get Bill Clinton out of office
- 2 Qualified people in Congress/Public office
- 1 Governor should have more morals/Good common sense
- 1 All other government/political leadership mentions

14 MISCELLANEOUS (NET)

- 5 Education/Well educated group of people
- 4 Drugs/Eliminate drugs/No drugs
- 4 Health care for all/Medical care system to take care of all people
- * Environment/Paying attention to the environment
- 2 All other miscellaneous mentions

³²

In 1964 the question referred to "ten years from now."

Q.4 con't ...

13	RELIGION/MORALITY (NET)
4	Better morals (unspecified)
4	Back to Christianity/Country will return to Christian heritage
2	Improve quality of family
*	Bring back prayer to public schools
*	All other religion/morality mentions
10	COOPERATION/UNITY (NET)
8	People come together/More love between citizens
2	More equality
*	All other cooperation/unity mentions
8	CRIME (NET)
8	Crime/Violence/Eliminate crime/Violence
*	All other crime mentions
5	RACE RELATIONS (NET)
4	More tolerance of other races/Racial problems have to go/People will learn to understand country is multi-ethnic
*	All other race relations mentions
6	Don't know/Refused/No answer

Q.4a And what are your main fears and worries about the country's future? (SEE INSTRUCTION FOR Q.2.)

40	WAR/NATIONAL SECURITY (NET)
25	War/World War III
4	War with Iraq
3	Nuclear war
3	A high profile as a world power/Not being a predominant nation
2	Biological germ warfare
2	Terrorism/Terrorist attack
1	World's coming to an end
*	War with China
1	All other War/National security mentions
18	GOVERNMENT/POLITICAL LEADERSHIP (NET)
4	Country's leadership/Leaders/Lack of leadership
3	Not working for the good of the people/Lack of focus on needs of people/Loss of confidence in the government
3	Getting involved in other people's business/Worry about own future not other countries
3	Big government/Too much government encroachment on individual rights
2	Political uprising/Rebellion against authority/Anarchy
2	Not using common sense/Not enough strength and wisdom/Responding the wrong way
2	Corruption in government/Dishonest/Illegal things in government
1	Gridlock in government/Internal fighting/Acting politically
1	Immoral President
*	President's impeachment

Q.4a con't ...

18	ECONOMIC (NET)
6	Economic downturn/Collapse/Recession/Depression
3	Unemployment/Jobs leaving the U.S./Going to other countries
2	Poverty/Homelessness/Taking care of the poor
2	National debt
2	Economy (unspecified)
1	Illegal immigration/Letting in too many aliens/Not curbing immigration
1	Government spending/Cost of big government
1	Inflation
1	All other economic mentions
18	MISCELLANEOUS (NET)
7	Crime/Violence
4	Drugs/Drug use/Legalization of drugs
3	Quality of education
2	Financial burden on the elderly/Eliminate benefits for the elderly/Lack of Social Security
2	Lack of medical/health care
1	Pollution
2	All other miscellaneous mentions
11	RELIGION/MORALITY (NET)
4	Decline/Lack of morals
3	Lack of parental guidance/Breakdown of the family
3	People's selfish interests/Self gratification
1	Immoral faults will be accepted so they don't seem wrong
*	All other religion/morality mentions
2	None
9	Don't know/Refused/No answer

ON ANOTHER SUBJECT...

Q.5 How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right? Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

		Just About Always	Most Of the Time	Only Some	Never	DK
1998		5	29	61	4	1=100
1997		2	36	60	2	*=100
NES ³³ , 1996		2	25	70	2	1=100
1994		2	19	74	3	2=100
1992		3	26	68	2	1=100
1990		3	25	69	2	1=100
1988		4	37	56	2	1=100
1986		3	35	58	2	2=100
1984		4	40	53	1	2=100
1982		2	31	62	2	3=100
1980		2	23	69	4	2=100
1978		2	27	64	4	3=100
1976		4	30	62	1	3=100
1974		2	34	61	1	2=100
1972		5	48	44	1	2=100
1970		7	47	44	*	2=100
1968		7	54	37	*	2=100
1966		17	48	28	3	4=100
1964		14	62	22	*	2=100
1958		16	57	23	0	4=100

Q.6 If the elections for U.S. Congress were being held TODAY, would you vote for the Republican Party's candidate or the Democratic Party's candidate for Congress in your district?

IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED '3' OR '9' IN Q.6 , ASK:

Q.7 As of TODAY, do you LEAN more to the Republican or the Democrat?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS: [N=567]

		Jan 1998	Aug 1997	Early Nov 1996 ³⁴	Late Oct 1996	Early Sept 1996	Early July 1996	June 1996	March 1996	Jan 1996	Oct 1995	Aug 1995	Nov 1994	Oct 1994	Early Oct 1994	Sept 1994	July 1994	
41	Rep/Lean Rep	41	45	44	42	43	43	46	44	44	46	48	50	45	47	52	48	45
50	Dem/Lean Dem	51	48	48	49	49	51	47	50	49	47	48	43	43	44	40	46	47
<u>9</u> 100	Other/Undecided	<u>8</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100	<u>8</u> 100	<u>9</u> 100	<u>8</u> 100	<u>6</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100	<u>6</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100	<u>4</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100	<u>12</u> 100	<u>9</u> 100	<u>8</u> 100	<u>6</u> 100	<u>8</u> 100

³³ Trend numbers for 1958 through 1996 are from the American National Election Studies.

³⁴ Based on Likely Voters.

ASK ALL:

Q.8 All in all, how good a job does the federal government do running its programs? An excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job?

		Oct <u>1997</u>
2	Excellent	2
30	Good	23
51	Only fair	53
16	Poor	21
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>
100		100

Q.10 Now, I'd like your opinion of some federal government departments and agencies. Let's start with [INSERT ITEM]. Do you have a very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of [INSERT ITEM]? ... How about [INSERT ITEM]? ... [INTERVIEWER: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND CAN'T RATE"]

[RANDOMIZE A-K; OBSERVE FORM DIFFERENCES:]
[FORM 1 N=500; FORM 2 N=507]

		Very Favor- able	Mostly Favor- able	Mostly Unfavor- able	Very Unfavor- able	Never Heard of	Can't Rate
a.F1	The Veterans' Administration	15	44	19	7	1	14=100
	<i>Roper</i> ³⁵ , 1986	26	42	16	6	10=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , 1985	30	45	11	4	9=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , 1984	37	40	11	4	9=100	
b.F2	The Centers for Disease Control, CDC	20	59	9	2	1	9=100
c.F1	The Commerce Department	7	51	18	4	2	18=100
	<i>Roper</i> , 1987	6	51	17	5	21=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , 1986	6	51	15	4	24=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , 1985	6	49	15	5	25=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , 1984	5	49	17	5	24=100	
d.F2	The Justice Department	7	49	27	12	0	5=100
	<i>Roper</i> , 1987	10	43	24	15	8=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , 1986	10	42	24	15	8=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , 1985	10	43	22	17	9=100	
e.F1	The Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD	10	41	28	12	1	8=100
	<i>Roper</i> , 1987	10	39	27	15	9=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , 1986	9	39	27	14	11=100	
	<i>Roper</i> , 1985	9	41	24	14	12=100	

35

Response categories for this and subsequence Roper favorability trends are slightly different: "highly favorable, moderately favorable, not too favorable, or rather unfavorable."

Q.10 con't ...

		Very Favor- <u>able</u>	Mostly Favor- <u>able</u>	Mostly Unfavor- <u>able</u>	Very Unfavor- <u>able</u>	Never <u>Heard of</u>	Can't <u>Rate</u>
f.F2	The Agriculture Department	11	57	14	4	1	13=100
	<i>Roper, 1987</i>	12	48	20	7	13=100	
	<i>Roper, 1986</i>	9	45	24	8	14=100	
	<i>Roper, 1985</i>	10	45	21	7	17=100	
	<i>Roper, 1984</i>	10	51	18	5	17=100	
g.F1	The National Park Service	26	59	7	2	2	4=100
	<i>Roper, 1987</i>	37	43	8	3	9=100	
	<i>Roper, 1986</i>	32	42	7	2	17=100	
	<i>Roper, 1985</i>	39	40	5	2	15=100	
	<i>Roper, 1984</i>	44	40	5	1	9=100	
h.F2	The Central Intelligence Agency	7	44	25	7	1	16=100
	<i>Roper, 1987</i>	12	40	29	9	10=100	
	<i>Roper, 1986</i>	14	47	20	6	13=100	
	<i>Roper, 1985</i>	15	38	22	11	15=100	
	<i>Roper, 1984</i>	17	41	22	8	11=100	
i.F1	The National Aeronautic and Space Administration, NASA	23	50	15	5	1	6=100
	<i>Roper, 1987</i>	23	43	19	5	10=100	
	<i>Roper, 1986</i>	23	38	19	11	9=100	
j.F2	The Federal Aviation Agency, FAA	12	58	12	3	3	12=100
	<i>Roper, 1987</i>	11	42	23	10	14=100	
	<i>Roper, 1986</i>	12	44	17	5	20=100	
	<i>Roper, 1985</i>	18	48	14	5	16=100	
	<i>Roper, 1984</i>	23	46	9	4	18=100	
k.F1	The Federal Trade Commission, FTC	5	48	24	4	3	16=100
	<i>Roper, 1987</i>	7	49	17	5	22=100	
	<i>Roper, 1986</i>	7	44	18	5	27=100	
	<i>Roper, 1985</i>	8	46	14	4	28=100	
	<i>Roper, 1984</i>	12	51	11	4	22=100	

ON ANOTHER SUBJECT...

Q.11 Please tell me how much you agree with the following statement: most elected officials are trustworthy. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree or completely disagree.

- 2 Completely agree — **GO TO Q.13**
 - 49 Mostly agree — **GO TO Q.13**
 - 38 Mostly disagree
 - 10 Completely disagree
 - 1 Don't know/Refused — **GO TO Q.13**
- 100

IF “DISAGREE” IN Q.11, ASK: [N=491]

Q.12 In what ways are elected officials UNtrustworthy? (**OPEN-END, ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES.**)

- 36 SAY ONE THING/DO ANOTHER/DON'T KEEP PROMISES (NET)**
- 18 Don't follow through on campaign promises
 - 12 Say what needs to be said to get elected/Say what people want to hear
 - 10 Say one thing, do another
 - 18 Lie/Not truthful
 - 9 Dishonest/Crooked
 - 9 Out for themselves
 - 7 Corruption/Bought off by corporations/Getting paid off/Kick-backs
 - 5 Don't represent constituents/Forget about people who elected them
 - 5 Influenced by special interest groups/Pandering to special interests
 - 4 Not trustworthy/Don't trust them
 - 4 Letting personal views affect their decisions
 - 4 Don't act in public interest/Overlook people's needs
 - 3 Not grounded in moral values/Lack of integrity
 - 3 Hidden agenda/Keep secrets
 - 3 Power crazed/Feel they are above the law
 - 3 Two-faced/Talk out of both sides of their mouth
 - 3 Miscellaneous
 - 2 Not believable/Can't believe them
 - 5 Don't know/Refused/No answer

ASK ALL:

Q.13 Generally, what one thing bothers you most about elected officials... (READ)? (**IF RESPONDENT SAYS “ALL OF THE ABOVE,” PROBE FOR ONE ANSWER.**)

- 22 Their honesty and personal ethics
- 31 The way they campaign for office, or
- 44 The way they govern once elected
- 2 Other (**VOL**) (**SPECIFY**)
- 1 DK/Refused
- 100

Q.14 Now I am going to read you a list of some programs and proposals that are being discussed in this country today. For each one, please tell me whether you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose it. The first one is... **(READ AND ROTATE)**

		<u>Strongly Favor</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a.	An increase in the minimum wage, from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.15 an hour	48	32	14	5	1=100
b.	Using the federal budget surplus to help make the Social Security program financially sound	47	35	10	5	3=100
c.	Enacting a patients' bill of rights for people in managed health care systems	35	43	10	3	9=100
d.	Expanding the Medicare program to also include younger retirees and uninsured Americans between the ages of 55 and 64 who are willing to pay higher premiums	29	46	16	7	2=100
e.	Hiring 100,000 new teachers to help reduce class sizes in public schools	51	31	11	5	2=100
f.	Increasing federal spending on child care for low-income families	31	43	18	7	1=100
g.	Restoring food stamp benefits to some legal immigrants	11	33	31	22	3=100

ON A DIFFERENT SUBJECT...

Q.15 How closely have you been following allegations that President Clinton had an affair with former White House intern, Monica Lewinsky? Have you followed this story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

		<u>Feb 1998</u>
21	Very closely	34
44	Fairly closely	42
25	Not too closely	17
10	Not at all closely	7
*	DK/Refused	<u>0</u>
100		100

Q.16 Thinking about these allegations against President Clinton, how important an issue do you think this whole situation is to the nation... of great importance, of some importance, or of very little importance?

--- CBS News ---

		<u>Feb</u> <u>1998</u>	<u>Jan 26th</u> <u>1998</u>	<u>Jan 24-25</u> <u>1998</u>
22	Great importance	25	39	40
25	Some importance	27	28	21
50	Very little importance	45	28	35
3	None (VOL)	1	2	3
*	DK/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100
			(N=609)	(N=943)

Q.17 How good a job are news organizations doing at reporting about the allegations against President Clinton... an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job or a poor job?

		<u>Feb 1998</u>
12	Excellent	10
27	Good	36
31	Only fair	32
26	Poor	19
<u>4</u>	DK/Refused — GO TO Q.15	<u>3</u>
100		100

Q.18 Now I'm going to describe some of the allegations being made in this matter. As I read each one, please say whether you think it is definitely true, probably true, probably not true, or definitely not true. (First,...) (Next,...)

		<u>Definitely</u> <u>True</u>	<u>Probably</u> <u>True</u>	<u>Probably</u> <u>Not True</u>	<u>Definitely</u> <u>Not True</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref</u>
a.	The allegation that Bill Clinton had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky February, 1998	13	48	23	7	9=100
		9	43	29	10	9=100
b.	The allegation that Bill Clinton lied under oath about having an affair with Monica Lewinsky February, 1998	14	42	25	10	9=100
	<i>Gallup</i> : Jan 28, 1998	9	40	31	11	9=100
	<i>Gallup</i> : Jan 25-26, 1998	9	37	31	13	10=100
	<i>Gallup</i> : Jan 23-24, 1998	18	38	23	13	8=100
	<i>Gallup</i> : Jan 21, 1998	15	40	26	10	9=100
		8	41	28	15	8=100

Q.19 Now, a few questions about the situation in Iraq. First, how important an issue do you think this whole situation is to the nation... of great importance, of some importance, or of very little importance?

70 Great importance
 21 Some importance
 8 Very little importance
 * None (VOL)
1 DK/Refused
 100

Q.20 United Nations weapons inspectors are in Iraq to ensure that Iraq is not developing weapons of mass destruction. If the government of Iraq continues to restrict United Nations weapons inspections, would you favor or oppose the United States using its Air Force to bomb targets there?

----- CBS News -----

		Feb 9th	Feb 1st	Jan 28th
		<u>1998</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1998</u>
67	Favor	69	74	75
28	Oppose	21	17	18
<u>5</u>	DK/Refused	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>
100		100	100	100

Q.21 If the U.S. does launch air strikes against Iraq, how long do you think these attacks should go on...(READ)?

32 Until Saddam Hussein allows U.N. weapons inspectors unlimited access to all buildings and locations in Iraq, OR

61 Until Saddam Hussein is removed from power

7 DK/Refused
 100

Q.22 If the U.S. launches air strikes against Iraq, do you think there would be mainly just Iraqi MILITARY casualties or would there also be many Iraqi CIVILIAN casualties?

--- Gulf War ---

		<u>Jan 1991</u> ³⁶
10	Mainly military	9
87	Also many civilian	86
<u>3</u>	DK/Refused	<u>5</u>
100		100

³⁶ In January 1991 the question was asked "Do you think there would be mainly just military casualties or would there also be many civilian casualties in the Persian Gulf?"

Q.23 If the U.S. launches air strikes against Iraq, about how many AMERICAN casualties, if any, do you expect there will be among U.S. forces... (READ)?

3	None
14	Only a handful
13	Between 10 and 20
15	Between 20 and 50
50	More than 50
<u>5</u>	(DO NOT READ) DK/Refused
100	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS
NOVEMBER 1997 VALUES UPDATE SURVEY
-- FINAL TOPLINE --
Nov 5 - 9, 1997
Nov 13 - 17, 1997
N = 1,165

Hello, I am _____ calling for Princeton Survey Research Associates in Princeton, New Jersey. We are conducting a telephone opinion survey for leading newspapers and TV stations around the country. I'd like to ask a few questions of the youngest male, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home. [IF NO MALE, ASK: May I please speak with the oldest female, 18 years of age or older, who is now at home?]

Q.9 Now I am going to read you a series of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it or completely disagree with it. The first one is... **(READ ITEMS, IN ORDER. DO NOT ROTATE)**

	<u>Completely Agree</u>	<u>Mostly Agree</u>	<u>Mostly Disagree</u>	<u>Completely Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. People like me don't have any say about what the government does					
July, 1994	15	31	35	18	1=100
May, 1993	22	32	31	15	*=100
June, 1992	15	37	31	16	1=100
Nov, 1991	14	36	32	17	1=100
May, 1990	22	28	28	21	1=100
Feb, 1989	19	38	31	11	1=100
May, 1988	22	40	29	8	1=100
May, 1987	16	39	33	11	1=100
May, 1987	14	38	34	12	2=100
b. Generally speaking, elected officials in Washington lose touch with the people pretty quickly					
July, 1994	32	44	18	5	1=100
May, 1993	39	44	13	3	1=100
June, 1992	29	53	13	3	2=100
Nov, 1991	35	49	12	3	1=100
May, 1990	41	43	11	4	1=100
Feb, 1989	30	48	17	2	3=100
May, 1988	30	50	16	2	2=100
May, 1987	26	50	19	3	2=100
May, 1987	22	51	21	3	3=100
c. Most elected officials care what people like me think					
July, 1994	6	35	38	19	2=100
May, 1993	4	29	41	25	1=100
June, 1992	5	35	42	16	2=100
Nov, 1991	5	31	46	16	2=100
May, 1990	7	29	39	23	2=100
Feb, 1989	7	37	39	14	3=100
May, 1988	5	39	42	12	2=100
May, 1987	5	42	40	11	2=100
May, 1987	5	42	40	9	4=100

Q.9 CONTINUED....

	<u>Completely Agree</u>	<u>Mostly Agree</u>	<u>Mostly Disagree</u>	<u>Completely Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
d. Voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things	27	40	23	9	1=100
July, 1994	24	42	21	11	2=100
Nov, 1991	32	42	15	9	2=100
May, 1990	23	50	18	7	2=100
Feb, 1989	25	48	20	5	2=100
May, 1988	26	49	18	5	2=100
May, 1987	23	55	15	4	3=100
i. Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good	20	37	32	5	6=100
July, 1994	27	36	28	5	4=100
June, 1992	19	42	28	5	6=100
May, 1990	16	42	29	4	9=100
May, 1988	17	40	31	4	8=100
May, 1987	12	43	30	4	11=100
j. The federal government should run ONLY those things that cannot be run at the local level	33	41	17	7	2=100
July, 1994	38	40	14	5	3=100
May, 1990	26	51	16	2	5=100
May, 1987	22	53	16	3	6=100
k. When something is run by the government, it is usually inefficient and wasteful	27	37	27	7	2=100
July, 1994	33	36	25	5	1=100
May, 1993	24	45	24	5	2=100
June, 1992	29	41	24	4	2=100
Nov, 1991	32	36	23	7	2=100
May, 1990	22	45	25	4	4=100
Feb, 1989	26	39	26	5	4=100
May, 1988	24	42	26	3	5=100
May, 1987	19	44	27	4	6=100
l. The Federal Government controls too much of our daily lives	29	35	29	6	1=100
July, 1994	37	32	25	5	1=100
May, 1993	26	39	30	4	1=100
June, 1992	28	36	29	5	2=100
Nov, 1991	32	31	28	7	2=100
May, 1990	22	40	29	5	4=100
Feb, 1989	22	35	34	9	3=100
May, 1988	25	36	31	5	3=100
May, 1987	18	40	32	5	5=100

Q.9 CONTINUED....

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>
m.	The government is really run for the benefit of all the people	9	39	35	15	2=100
	July, 1994	10	32	38	19	1=100
	June, 1992	8	36	37	17	2=100
	Nov, 1991	11	37	34	16	2=100
	May, 1990	10	42	35	10	3=100
	Feb, 1989	12	45	31	10	2=100
	May, 1988	11	42	34	10	3=100
	May, 1987	9	48	31	8	4=100
q.	It is time for Washington politicians to step aside and make room for new leaders	27	41	23	4	5=100
	July, 1994	34	45	14	4	3=100
	June, 1992	38	46	12	2	2=100
	Nov, 1991	32	45	16	4	3=100
	May, 1990	21	40	26	4	9=100
	Feb, 1989	20	38	30	4	8=100
	May, 1988	26	42	22	3	7=100
	May, 1987	16	46	26	3	9=100
r.	Dealing with a federal government agency is often not worth the trouble	21	44	27	4	4=100
	July, 1994	26	43	22	6	3=100
	June, 1992	21	43	27	4	5=100
	May, 1990	21	44	24	4	7=100
	May, 1988	20	43	27	4	6=100
	May, 1987	14	44	29	3	10=100
v.	We need new people in Washington even if they are not as effective as experienced politicians	16	34	33	14	3=100
	July, 1994	20	40	28	10	2=100
	June, 1992	20	36	30	11	3=100
	May, 1990	13	34	37	10	6=100
	May, 1988	16	35	33	10	6=100
	May, 1987	9	35	38	10	8=100

Q.15 Now I am going to read you another series of statements on some different topics. For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it or completely disagree with it. The first one is... **(READ ITEMS, IN ORDER. DO NOT ROTATE)**

	Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>
e. It is the responsibility of the government to take care of people who can't take care of themselves	23	38	26	11	2=100
July, 1994	20	37	26	15	2=100
May, 1993	19	43	26	9	3=100
June, 1992	28	41	20	8	3=100
May, 1990	23	44	23	6	4=100
May, 1988	26	48	17	6	3=100
May, 1987	21	50	20	4	5=100
f. The government should help more needy people even if it means going deeper in debt	14	30	37	16	3=100
July, 1994	13	28	37	19	3=100
May, 1993	9	34	40	12	5=100
June, 1992	18	35	31	12	4=100
Nov, 1991	20	31	31	15	3=100
May, 1990	15	36	34	10	5=100
May, 1988	17	35	30	12	6=100
May, 1987	13	40	33	7	7=100
g. The government should guarantee every citizen enough to eat and a place to sleep	29	33	25	11	2=100
July, 1994	27	32	25	14	2=100
June, 1992	32	33	22	10	3=100
Nov, 1991	41	32	16	9	2=100
May, 1990	27	35	25	9	4=100
Feb, 1989	35	30	22	10	3=100
May, 1988	28	38	22	9	3=100
May, 1987	22	40	26	7	5=100
h. I like political leaders who are willing to make compromises in order to get the job done	32	46	14	5	3=100
May, 1990	23	48	17	6	6=100
May, 1988	23	49	17	5	6=100
May, 1987	16	56	16	4	8=100
i. I am very patriotic	48	42	6	2	2=100
July, 1994	51	40	6	2	1=100
June, 1992	52	39	5	2	2=100
Nov, 1991	58	33	5	2	2=100
May, 1990	48	40	8	2	2=100
Feb, 1989	51	40	6	1	2=100
May, 1988	51	38	6	2	3=100
May, 1987	43	46	7	1	3=100

Q.15 CONTINUED....

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>
v.	Poor people have become too dependent on government assistance programs	35	44	14	4	3=100
	July, 1994	46	39	10	3	2=100
	May, 1993	31	49	15	3	2=100
	June, 1992	35	44	14	4	3=100

Q.21 I'm going to read you some more statements on a different topic. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements. The first one is... **(READ ITEMS, IN ORDER. DO NOT ROTATE)**
Do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree?

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>
w.	I feel it's my duty as a citizen to always vote	63	26	7	4	*=100
	July, 1994	66	27	4	3	*=100
	May, 1993	66	28	4	1	1=100
	June, 1992	69	22	6	2	1=100
	Nov, 1991	72	21	4	2	1=100
	May, 1990	50	35	9	4	2=100
	Feb, 1989	64	26	6	2	2=100
	May, 1988	56	32	7	2	3=100
	May, 1987	46	39	9	3	3=100
x.	I'm interested in keeping up with national affairs	40	46	10	3	1=100
	July, 1994	46	43	9	2	*=100
	June, 1992	51	40	6	2	1=100
	Nov, 1991	46	44	7	2	1=100
	May, 1990	33	49	12	4	2=100
	Feb, 1989	34	50	12	2	2=100
	May, 1988	39	47	10	2	2=100
	May, 1987	28	53	12	3	4=100
y.	I'm generally bored by what goes on in Washington	14	37	34	14	1=100
	July, 1994	17	34	33	15	1=100
	June, 1992	20	35	31	13	1=100
	Nov, 1991	16	36	30	16	2=100
	May, 1990	12	36	38	12	2=100
	Feb, 1989	10	37	37	13	3=100
	May, 1988	11	37	38	12	2=100
	May, 1987	8	34	41	13	4=100
z.	I'm pretty interested in following local politics	20	48	25	6	1=100
	July, 1994	24	52	18	5	1=100
	June, 1992	26	47	21	5	1=100
	Nov, 1991	29	48	16	5	2=100
	May, 1990	17	53	23	6	1=100
	Feb, 1989	24	49	21	5	1=100
	May, 1988	21	51	22	5	1=100
	May, 1987	16	54	22	4	4=100

Q.21 CONTINUED....

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	Don't <u>Know</u>
aa.	Most issues discussed in Washington don't affect me personally	8	27	45	19	1=100
	July, 1994	5	25	42	27	1=100
	June, 1992	7	26	43	22	2=100
	Nov, 1991	8	25	41	23	3=100
	May, 1990	7	28	46	16	3=100
	Feb, 1989	7	26	44	20	3=100
	May, 1988	7	29	45	17	2=100
	May, 1987	5	26	50	15	4=100
bb.	I feel guilty when I don't get a chance to vote	36	32	17	12	3=100
	July, 1994	38	32	18	9	3=100
	June, 1992	39	30	16	9	6=100
	Nov, 1991	46	28	14	8	4=100
	May, 1990	30	37	22	8	3=100
	Feb, 1989	38	34	17	7	4=100
	May, 1988	32	37	18	8	5=100
	May, 1987	25	41	22	6	6=100
cc.	Sometimes I vote for a candidate without really knowing enough about him or her	14	38	26	20	2=100
	July, 1994	14	38	27	20	1=100
	June, 1992	14	38	25	20	3=100
	Nov, 1991	18	36	22	22	2=100
	May, 1990	12	41	27	15	5=100
	Feb, 1989	15	41	24	17	3=100
	May, 1988	12	44	24	15	15=100
	May, 1987	9	44	28	13	6=100

Q.22 Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs...**(READ)**

		Nov* <u>1996</u>	Oct* <u>1996</u>	Oct <u>1995</u>	April <u>1995</u>	Nov <u>1994</u>	Oct <u>1994</u>	July <u>1994</u>	May <u>1990</u>	May <u>1988</u>	Jan <u>1988</u>	May <u>1987</u>
41	Most of the time	52	43	46	43	49	45	46	39	37	37	41
36	Some of the time	32	37	35	35	30	35	33	34	37	35	35
16	Only now and then	12	13	14	16	13	14	15	18	17	18	15
7	Hardly at all	4	6	5	6	7	6	6	9	6	8	7
<u>* 100</u>	Don't know	<u>* 100</u>	<u>1 100</u>	<u>* 100</u>	<u>* 100</u>	<u>1 100</u>	<u>* 100</u>	<u>* 100</u>	<u>* 100</u>	<u>3 100</u>	<u>2 100</u>	<u>2 100</u>

*Based on Registered Voters

Q.27 How often would you say you vote...(READ)

		<u>June</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>Feb</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>April</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>Nov</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>July</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>June</u> <u>1992</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1992</u>	<u>Nov</u> <u>1991</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1990</u>	<u>Feb</u> <u>1989</u>	<u>Jan</u> <u>1988</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1987</u>
33	Always	41	32	41	42	43	43	40	47	41	38	33	45	39	34
38	Nearly always	30	34	32	29	24	28	30	26	32	37	35	30	33	37
15	Part of the time	12	15	12	12	11	13	14	10	13	13	12	10	12	11
9	Seldom	12	11	11	11	13	10	11	11	11	9	10	8	8	6
*	(VOL) Other	1	1	*	*	1	5	*	1	*	0	1	1	1	2
5	(VOL) Never vote	4	6	3	6	8	1	5	5	3	3	8	6	6	9
$\frac{*}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS
TRUST IN GOVERNMENT SURVEY
— FINAL TOPLINE —

	<u>Field period</u>	<u>Sample size</u>	<u>Margin of error</u>
U.S.	Sept. 25–Oct. 31, 1997	1,762 adults 18+	± 2.5 % points
UK	Oct. 10–13	906	± 4%
France	Oct. 2–7	835	± 4%
Germany	Oct. 2–14	982	± 3.5%
Italy	Oct. 10–19	941	± 3.5%
Spain	Oct. 16–26	974	± 3.5%

1. Now I am going to read you a series of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. For each statement, please tell me whether you completely agree with it, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with it. The first one is (INSERT ITEM). ... How about (INSERT ITEM)?
 ...

a. The federal government³⁷ controls too much of our daily lives.

		Completely <u>agree</u>	Mostly <u>agree</u>	Mostly <u>disagree</u>	Completely <u>disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
U.S. ³⁸	1997	29	35	29	6	1=100
	1990	22	40	29	5	4=100
<i>European average</i>	1997	24	37	25	8	6=100
	1991	23	30	30	11	6=100
UK	1997	14	43	34	5	4=100
	1991	18	26	41	11	4=100
France	1997	39	36	17	5	3=100
	1991	35	34	22	6	3=100
Germany	1997	10	36	36	9	9=100
	1991	8	30	43	11	8=100
Italy	1997	26	38	22	9	5=100
	1991	19	35	26	15	5=100
Spain	1997	32	32	17	8	11=100
	1991	36	26	18	10	10=100

³⁷In Europe, “state” substituted for “federal government” and “government.”

³⁸Fielded separately Nov. 5–9 and 13–17, 1997 (n = 1,165; margin of error ± 3%).

b. The government should guarantee every citizen food and basic shelter.

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
U.S. ³⁹	1997	25	36	22	15	2=100
	1990	27	35	25	9	4=100
<i>European average</i>	1997	44	36	12	4	4=100
	1991	60	27	7	3	3=100
UK	1997	42	40	12	4	2=100
	1991	60	28	6	3	3=100
France	1997	64	26	5	3	2=100
	1991	65	24	6	4	1=100
Germany	1997	28	49	14	4	5=100
	1991	45	37	12	2	4=100
Italy	1997	32	34	21	9	4=100
	1991	59	27	9	5	*=100
Spain	1997	53	33	7	2	5=100
	1991	72	20	2	2	4=100

c. Our society should do what is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
U.S. ⁴⁰	1997	56	35	5	3	1=100
	1990	45	46	6	1	2=100
<i>European Average</i>	1997	55	36	5	1	3=100
	1991	62	32	3	2	1=100
UK	1997	56	40	3	1	*=100
	1991	62	34	2	1	1=100
France	1997	68	26	3	2	1=100
	1991	68	25	4	2	1=100
Germany	1997	44	46	5	1	4=100
	1991	46	46	4	2	2=100
Italy	1997	59	34	4	1	2=100
	1991	65	31	2	1	1=100
Spain	1997	53	31	8	2	6=100
	1991	69	24	3	2	2=100

³⁹Fielded separately Nov. 14–18, 1997 (n = 1,010; margin of error ± 3.5%).

⁴⁰Fielded Nov. 14–18.

d. Most elected officials are trustworthy.

	Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
U.S.	3	41	40	15	1=100
<i>European average</i>	5	25	36	26	8=100
UK	3	36	36	17	8=100
France	5	25	35	32	3=100
Germany	4	28	43	15	10=100
Italy	3	23	36	31	7=100
Spain	7	13	33	35	12=100

e. When something is run by the government, it is usually inefficient and wasteful.

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
U.S. ⁴¹	1997	27	37	27	7	2=100
	1990	22	45	25	4	4=100
<i>European Average</i>	1997	18	38	29	6	9=100
	1991	23	32	28	9	8=100
UK	1997	12	41	34	7	6=100
	1991	23	34	31	7	5=100
France	1997	24	41	23	6	6=100
	1991	25	33	28	7	7=100
Germany	1997	12	39	33	4	12=100
	1991	10	31	40	7	12=100
Italy	1997	28	43	21	4	4=100
	1991	40	34	17	6	3=100
Spain	1997	13	27	34	10	16=100
	1991	18	26	25	17	14=100

⁴¹Fielded Nov. 5–9 and 13–17, 1997.

f. The government is really run for the benefit of all the people.

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
U.S. ⁴²	1997	9	39	35	15	2=100
	1990	10	42	35	10	3=100
<i>European Average</i>	1997	7	31	36	19	7=100
	1991	10	31	32	23	4=100
UK	1997	6	51	29	10	4=100
	1991	9	43	30	17	1=100
France	1997	16	36	29	16	3=100
	1991	13	35	33	17	2=100
Germany	1997	3	27	45	15	10=100
	1991	6	35	39	10	10=100
Italy	1997	2	14	47	30	7=100
	1991	2	10	34	52	2=100
Spain	1997	9	29	30	21	11=100
	1991	19	32	23	18	8=100

g. Most elected officials care what people like me think.

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
U.S. ⁴³	1997	6	35	38	19	2=100
	1990	7	37	39	14	3=100
<i>European Average</i>	1997	4	21	39	29	7=100
	1991	5	21	38	31	5=100
UK	1997	3	40	35	18	4=100
	1991	3	32	38	23	4=100
France	1997	5	21	39	31	4=100
	1991	6	21	37	33	3=100
Germany	1997	3	17	43	26	11=100
	1991	6	24	47	16	7=100
Italy	1997	2	13	45	35	5=100
	1991	3	11	34	49	3=100
Spain	1997	6	15	33	34	12=100
	1991	7	19	33	34	7=100

⁴²Fielded Nov. 5–9 and 13–17, 1997.

⁴³Fielded Nov. 5–9 and 13–17, 1997.

h. Most people in this society are trustworthy.

		Completely <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Agree</u>	Mostly <u>Disagree</u>	Completely <u>Disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Refused</u>
U.S. ⁴⁴	1997	6	49	31	13	1=100
<i>European Average</i>	1997	7	40	33	14	6=100
	1991	8	36	34	17	5=100
UK	1997	5	49	29	14	3=100
	1991	8	47	28	14	3=100
France	1997	6	33	38	20	3=100
	1991	7	27	43	21	2=100
Germany	1997	4	40	39	7	10=100
	1991	8	47	33	4	8=100
Italy	1997	8	43	31	14	4=100
	1991	6	27	37	26	4=100
Spain	1997	12	31	29	18	10=100
	1991	13	32	29	21	5=100

2. Would you say you basically trust the state or not?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
U.S.	40	56	4=100
<i>European Average</i>	41	45	14=100
UK	57	32	11=100
France	33	59	8=100
Germany	41	41	18=100
Italy	35	51	14=100
Spain	38	42	20=100

⁴⁴Fielded Nov. 14–18.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

The opinions that underlie Americans' trust in government were explored more extensively through multivariate regression analyses. The scaling of the variables used in these analyses and the results of several regression equations are presented below. All results presented here are from ordinary least squares (OLS) regression.

Dependent Variables

The principal dependent variable in these analyses was based on the question asking, "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington...?" (Q.19). The scale ranges from 1 ("Never") to 4 ("Just about always"). Respondents who answered "Don't know" or did not answer the question were excluded from the analysis.

The standard trust in government question was asked in two ways, with the wording of the question differing slightly between two random halves of the sample (see topline). Half of the respondents were asked a question (Q.19a) that read, "How much of the time to you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?" This is a long-standing question that has been asked repeatedly by the American National Elections Studies and other survey organizations since 1958. The other half of the respondents were asked a slightly different question (Q.19b): "How much of the time to you think you can trust the government in Washington to do a good job?" As shown in the topline, responses to these two questions were not substantively or significantly different. This result was consistent with an earlier survey experiment conducted by the Pew Research Center in September, which found that responses to these two versions of the question did not differ. Therefore, most analyses in this report that use the trust in government question (Q.19) — including the regressions presented below — are based on *all* respondents, with responses from the two versions of the trust question combined.

In some analyses, the 11-point ladder rating for the nation (Q.2a) was used as the dependent variable. Finally, several 4-point favorability ratings for specific government departments (Q.23) were used as the dependent variable in another set of regressions. The scale for these ratings ranges from 1 ("Very unfavorable") to 4 ("Very favorable").

Independent Variables

Measures based on one question

- What you get from taxes you pay (Q.33)
- Support for activist government (Q.8)
- Ladder rating for the nation (Q.2a)

Measures based on combined scales from multiple questions

• View of politicians

Opinion of elected federal officials (Q.27a)

Are most elected officials trustworthy? (Q.31c)

Reliability coefficient (alpha) for scale = .62 (N=1762)

• Attitudes about government power

Federal government is too powerful (Q.24f)

Government controls too much of our lives (Q.31a)

Reliability coefficient (alpha) for scale = .62 (N=1762)

• Opinion of government's performance

How good a job does government do? (Q.9)

Does government do a better job than given credit for? (Q.10)

Reliability coefficient (alpha) for scale = .60 (N=1762)

• Government priorities gap

A scale was created based on the difference between how much priority the federal government "*should*" give to four policy areas and how much priority the federal government "*actually gives*" to these same four policy areas (Q.26). The four policy areas differed between one random half of the sample (Form 1) and the other half (Form 2). Form 1 respondents were asked about setting academic standards for public schools; conserving the country's natural resources; ensuring every American has access to affordable health care; and providing a decent standard of living for the elderly. Form 2 respondents were asked about ensuring that every American can afford to send their children to college; ensuring that food and medicines are safe; reducing juvenile delinquency; and reducing poverty. The mean score on this scale for Form 1 respondents was 4.4; the mean score for Form 2 respondents was 3.9.

Reliability coefficients (alpha) for scales: Form 1 = .63 (N=815); Form 2 = .63 (N=803).

Basic regression model. Predicting trust in government.

--- Dependent Variable ---

Trust in Government

<i>Independent Variables</i>	Unstandardized		Standardized
	<u>Coefficient</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>
View of politicians	.08	.01	.28
Government performance	.10	.01	.30
Activist government	.01	.01	.03
Government power	-.05	.01	-.17
Priorities gap	-.01	.003	-.03
Taxes	.001	.02	.001
(Constant)	1.78	.10	

Adjusted R² = .36 (N = 1616)

Path analysis. Predicting ladder ratings for the nation using trust in government, opinion about government performance, and views of politicians.

--- Dependent Variables ---

<i>Independent Variables</i>	Trust in Government			U.S. Ladder Ratings		
	Unstd.		Std.	Unstd.	Std.	
	<u>Coeff.</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>Coeff.</u>	<u>Coeff.</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>Coeff.</u>
View of politicians	.08	.01	.26	.15	.03	.16
Government performance	.10	.01	.28	.18	.03	.17
Trust in government	–	–	–	.56	.09	.18
U.S. Ladder rating	.04	.01	.12			
Activist government	.003	.01	.01			
Government power	-.04	.01	-.16			
Priorities gap	-.004	.003	-.02			
Taxes	.01	.02	.01			
(Constant)	1.61	.10		2.62	.19	

Adjusted R² = .37 (N = 1605)

Adjusted R² = .17 (N = 1605)

Basic regression model applied to specific departments. Predicting favorability ratings for various government departments.

--- Dependent Variables ---

<i>Independent Variables</i>	FBI			EPA		
	Unstd. Coeff.	S.E.	Std. Coeff.	Unstd. Coeff.	S.E.	Std. Coeff.
View of politicians	.11	.02	.18	.08	.02	.14
Government performance	.06	.03	.10	.09	.03	.13
Activist government	-.003	.02	-.01	.13	.02	.21
Government power	-.06	.02	-.11	-.02	.02	-.04
Taxes	.03	.08	.01	.06	.07	.03
(Constant)	2.95	.33		2.08	.31	

Adjusted R² = .08 (N = 812)

Adjusted R² = .15 (N = 839)

--- Dependent Variables ---

<i>Independent Variables</i>	Postal Service			Social Security Admn		
	Unstd. Coeff.	S.E.	Std. Coeff.	Unstd. Coeff.	S.E.	Std. Coeff.
View of politicians	.03	.02	.07	.11	.02	.18
Government performance	.002	.02	.004	.11	.03	.16
Activist government	.02	.02	.04	.06	.02	.09
Government power	-.01	.02	-.02	.003	.02	.005
Taxes	.002	.06	.001	-.23	.08	-.10
(Constant)	3.78	.26		2.49	.33	

Adjusted R² = .01 (N = 875)

Adjusted R² = .13 (N = 843)

--- Dependent Variables ---

<i>Independent Variables</i>	IRS			Dept of Education		
	Unstd. Coeff.	S.E.	Std. Coeff.	Unstd. Coeff.	S.E.	Std. Coeff.
View of politicians	.11	.02	.17	.11	.02	.17
Government performance	.19	.03	.24	.10	.03	.13
Activist government	.02	.02	.03	.09	.02	.13
Government power	-.04	.02	-.07	-.04	.02	-.07
Taxes	-.35	.08	-.15	-.08	.08	-.03
(Constant)	2.18	.33		2.30	.34	

Adjusted R² = .21 (N = 865)

Adjusted R² = .13 (N = 862)

--- Dependent Variables ---

<i>Independent Variables</i>	FDA			Defense Dept		
	Unstd. Coeff.	S.E.	Std. Coeff.	Unstd. Coeff.	S.E.	Std. Coeff.
View of politicians	.09	.02	.17	.09	.02	.17
Government performance	.06	.02	.09	.04	.03	.07
Activist government	.03	.02	.05	-.001	.02	-.002
Government power	-.04	.02	-.09	-.003	.02	-.01
Taxes	-.02	.07	-.01	.02	.07	.01
(Constant)	3.09	.29		3.03	.30	

Adjusted R² = .08 (N = 861)

Adjusted R² = .04 (N = 840)

Note on Duplicate Values Items

In some instances, the analyses presented in this report draw on several questions that were included in *both* the main Trust in Government survey (September 25 - October 31, 1997) and the November Values Update survey (November 5-9 and 13-17, 1997). The items that were included in the main Trust in Government survey and duplicated in the November survey (Q.24d, Q.24e, Q.31a and Q.31d) are taken from a long-standing series of questions designed to measure political, social and cultural values. In order to preserve the integrity of the long-term Pew Research Center trend (dating back to 1987) the entire Values series was included in the November survey (topline results are included in the back of this report). In addition, the topline results for Q.24d, Q.24e, Q.31a and Q.31d in the main Trust survey are taken from this November survey. Throughout the report, bivariate analyses using these questions are based on the November survey wherever possible. However, in certain cases where the bivariate or multivariate analysis involves a values item *and* a variable that was not included in the November survey (such as Q.19 — trust in government) analyses are based on the main Trust survey.