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**Politics, Morality, Entitlements Sap Confidence**  
**THE OPTIMISM GAP GROWS**

*These are the findings of a special Pew Research Center survey conducted in conjunction with "State of the Union," a PBS series.*

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As 1996 drew to a close Americans were evaluating their lives much the way they have over the past four decades during good economic times. Most feel they have made personal progress over the past five years, and most are optimistic about the future. Financial stability, good health and a strong family life are the things that people hope for and worry about as they have in the past. While the public's self evaluation is very familiar, its appraisal of the *nation* is strikingly different. Americans are much less positive about the state of the country than they have been in 15 years, and they are even more pessimistic about the prospects for "national progress."

The factors that shape the public's sense of the state of their nation are also quite different than they once were. Worries about the Cold War and international competition with the Soviet Union have given way to concern about seemingly intractable moral and social problems. Further, partisanship and political views now animate views about the country's future much more than they once did.

These are the findings of a special Pew Research Center nationwide survey of 1,204 adult Americans conducted in mid-November in conjunction with the *PBS State of the Union* series. Respondents were asked to rate their personal lives and the state of the nation using a series of questions employed by survey researchers since 1959.<sup>1</sup> In previous surveys Americans usually rated their own lives higher than that of the country as a whole.<sup>2</sup> In 1996, however, the gap between optimism about personal future and about the country's future is unprecedented.

	Five Years <u>Ago</u>	<u>Today</u>	Five Years <u>from Now</u>
Current	5.8	6.7	7.7
Jan/Feb 1989	6.0	6.4	7.4
Apr/May 1987	5.8	6.5	7.7
March 1985	5.8	6.4	7.6
1982	5.9	6.3	6.5
1981	6.0	6.4	7.3
Jan 1976	5.7	6.7	7.7
1975	5.5	6.1	6.7
Apr 1974	5.5	6.6	7.4
June 1972	5.5	6.4	7.6
Jan 1971	5.8	6.6	7.5
Sept 1964	6.0	6.9	7.9
1959	5.9	6.6	7.8

\* 1959-89 results are from Gallup surveys

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents are asked to rate the country's -- as well as their own -- past, present and future state on a rating scale of 0 to 10, where the top rung represents the best possible situation and the bottom rung the worst possible situation.

<sup>2</sup> Only in the 1950's and early 1960's did Americans feel as positively about the country as they did about themselves.

Americans' optimism about their own present and future is at near record levels. They score their personal circumstances today and five years ahead, as positively as they did in the mid-1980s, during the Reagan economic boom years.

In contrast, they rate the state of the nation today nearly as low as in bad economic times or when political scandal soured the public mood. Just once in four decades of polling has the public rated the current state of the union substantially lower than today -- in 1974, when the Watergate scandal demoralized the country.

One of the longest periods of economic expansion and a record-breaking bull market has not translated into elation about national progress. In fact, on average Americans think the country is in worse shape today (5.4 rating)<sup>3</sup> than it was five years ago (5.6). In percentage terms, 39% rate the country's status lower today than they believe it was five years ago, 32% rate it higher now than then, and 25% rate past and present the same.

	Five Years <u>Ago</u>	<u>Today</u>	Five Years <u>from Now</u>
Current	5.6	5.4	5.7
May 1991	5.8	5.9	6.0
Jan/Feb 1989	5.6	5.7	6.3
Apr/May 1987	5.7	5.5	6.1
March 1985	5.3	5.9	6.6
1982	6.5	5.3	6.0
1981	6.0	5.1	6.3
Jan 1976	6.0	5.5	6.1
Apr 1974	6.3	4.8	5.8
June 1972	5.6	5.5	6.2
Jan 1971	6.2	5.4	6.2
Sept 1964	6.1	6.5	7.7
1959	6.5	6.7	7.4

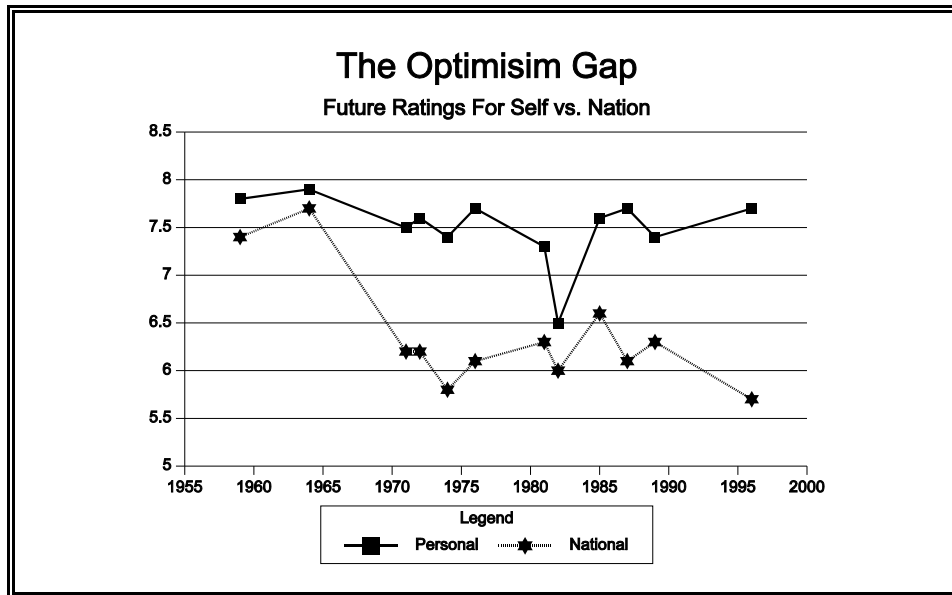
\* 1959-89, 1991 results are from Gallup surveys

The public's lack of a sense of national progress is more than matched by its lack of optimism about the country's future course. When asked to look forward five years and estimate where the country will be at that time, respondents gave a lower average rating (5.7) than did participants in all 12 previous surveys conducted over the last 36 years. In fact, the only survey yielding a comparable level of national pessimism, again, was conducted during the Watergate era (April 1974).

In percentage terms, 41% are optimists about the *nation's* future, while 33% are pessimists. This compares starkly to 55% who are optimists about their *personal* lives, while only 13% are pessimists. Historically, the gap between these two measures is at an all time high.

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<sup>3</sup> On an 11 point scale.



### *Partisanship Colors Outlook*

The greater politicalization of the country today is playing a significant part in the extent of pessimism observed in the survey. Only Clinton voters and Democrats tend to be optimistic about where the country is headed. Dole voters, Perot voters, and Republicans tend to be pessimistic, while non-voters and Independents divide about evenly between optimists and pessimists. For example, Democrats rate the country's future substantially higher than Republicans do (6.4 vs. 5.0). While the ratings of Independents fall between those of members of the two parties (5.5).

In contrast, in a comparable Gallup survey in 1972, those who identified with the Republican Party of incumbent Richard Nixon rated the country's future only slightly higher than those aligned with his Democratic opposition (a mean rating of 6.6 vs. 6.3). More recently, in 1989 the partisan gap in the ratings for the country's future was smaller than it is today, but greater than it had been in 1972 (6.8 for Republicans vs. 6.0 for Democrats).

### Views of the Nations Future: By Party ID and 1996 Vote

	<u>Optimists</u> %	<u>Pessimists</u> %	No Change/ <u>DK</u> %
<i>Total</i>	41	33	26
<i>Party ID</i>			
Republican	30	40	30
Democrat	53	24	23
Independent	37	37	36
<i>Presidential Vote</i>			
Clinton	52	21	27
Dole	30	41	29
Perot	33	46	21
Non-Voters	38	36	26

The impact of partisanship on the outlook of Americans for their country seems to fly in the face of post-election polls that show a solid second honeymoon for Bill Clinton. But, the historical reality is that Clinton is getting less of a public opinion lift than other presidents who have been returned to office in recent years. With depressed voter turnout and a third party presidential candidate drawing votes away from both major party nominees, only about one in four adult Americans personally voted to return Clinton to the White House. The President's current approval rating of 57% may be among his highest to date, but it is the *lowest* rating for any president since World War II recorded immediately after re-election to a second term.

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %
Clinton (Nov. 1996)	57	34
Reagan (Nov. 1984)	62	30
Nixon (Nov. 1972)	62	28
Johnson (Nov. 1964)	70	19
Eisenhower (Nov. 1956)	75	15

\* 1956-84 results from Gallup Poll

***And Different Problems . . .***

The end of the Cold War and the absence of an external enemy may also be a significant factor in the increasingly pessimistic and partisan view of the country. In previous surveys when respondents were asked to express in their own words their hopes and fears for the nation, worries about war and peace dominated the answers. Today Americans put more relative emphasis on hopes for economic progress, reductions in crime, and improved public morality. While hopes and worries about peace and national security are much less prevalent than in the 1960s and 70s<sup>4</sup>, there are also significantly fewer mentions of social progress and improvements to the environment. (See table in appendix).

With a greater focus on domestic issues, national progress is less apparent to Americans. For example, pluralities or majorities think the country is losing ground on 15 of 17 problem areas tested in this survey. Even in areas where objective indicators show gains (deficit reduction and lower crime rates) most respondents in the survey said these problems are worsening.

***The Morality Crisis Fuels Pessimism***

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%). Half (52%) also believe the quality of the public schools is deteriorating.

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<sup>4</sup>William Watts and Lloyd Free. *State of the Nation* (Potomac Associates). New York: Universe Books, 1973

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. Crime is the one concern found to be driving pessimism among all major political subgroups, including those who voted for Clinton, those who voted for other presidential candidates, and those who decided not to vote at all. Eight in ten (79%) pessimists predict that the crime rate will be higher in the year 2000.

When asked to describe their wishes or hopes for the country's future in their own words, pessimists are more likely than optimists to call for more morality in society or greater influence of religion (15% vs. 7%). Pessimists more often say that low moral and ethical standards are a growing national problem (71% vs. 60%). Concern about falling morals and ethics ranks second only to increasing crime in explaining pessimism among Dole/Perot voters.

Pessimists are also significantly more likely than optimists to believe the country is losing ground on the drug problem (73% vs. 60%) and the quality of public education (61% vs. 49%). By a wide margin, pessimists more often predict that the public education system will get worse by the year 2000 (51% vs. 29%). Among Clinton voters and non-voters, concern about falling behind on education is one of the major factors characterizing pessimists. Perception of a worsening drug problem is another contributor to pessimism among Clinton voters.

<b>Pessimists and Optimists Judge Problems</b>			
	<u>Pessimists</u>	<u>Optimists</u>	<u>Diff.</u>
% "Losing Ground":			
Soundness of Social Security and Medicare	75	61	+14
Crime	74	54	+20
Drugs	73	60	+13
Low moral and ethical standards	71	60	+11
The deficit	63	41	+22
High taxes	63	51	+12
Quality of public education	61	49	+12
Job security	60	59	+1
Poverty, hunger, homelessness	58	54	+4
Availability of good-paying jobs	58	50	+8
Political corruption	58	46	+12
Health care system's working	56	49	+7
Illegal immigration	52	46	+6
Welfare system's working	49	44	+5
Racial conflict	43	39	+4
Environment	36	28	+8
Discrimination	30	29	+1

### ***Entitlement Worries***

Americans seem unaware of -- or take little comfort from -- reports of recent progress in deficit reduction. Although down from 60% in 1995, about half (48%) the public still believes the country is losing ground in dealing with the deficit; only about a quarter (23%) see progress on this front. There is widespread concern about the potential for a future fiscal crisis in Social Security and Medicare: about two-thirds (65%) believe the country is losing ground in its efforts to keep these entitlement programs financially sound. Over two-thirds (70%) predict this problem will get worse by the year 2000.

One of the biggest differences between pessimists and optimists is in perceptions of the federal budget deficit. Pessimists are more likely than optimists to believe the country is losing ground in dealing with the deficit (63% vs. 41%), and to feel the deficit is having a major impact on their own lives (34% vs. 23%). Pessimists are also more likely to think the country is losing ground in keeping Social Security and Medicare financially sound (75% vs. 61%) and to believe these entitlement programs will be in worse financial shape by the year 2000 (81% vs. 66%).

While pessimistic Dole/Perot voters are more worried about moral and social decline, pessimistic Clinton voters are concerned about the deficit and threats to entitlement programs. Among Clinton voters, pessimists are more likely to think the country is losing ground on the deficit (55% vs. 28%) and the financial soundness of Social Security/Medicare (77% vs. 53%) and to predict that old-age entitlement programs will be in worse shape by the year 2000 (77% vs. 57%).

### ***Will the Economic Recovery Last?***

Only in the last year have Americans begun to acknowledge improvement in the national economy, and there is fear that improved economic conditions will not last. Although people feel personally more financially secure these days, majorities see job security (58%), high taxes (55%), and poverty/homelessness (54%) as growing problems at the national level, and half (51%) see the country falling behind in the availability of good paying jobs.

The public is divided over whether the economy will be stronger (53%) or weaker (42%) by the year 2000. One of the biggest differences between those with pessimistic and optimistic views of the nation's future is in expectations for the national economy. Six in ten (59%), compared with only a third (33%) of optimists, predict a weaker economy.

Pessimists of all political persuasions more often than optimists foresee a worse economy ahead. Among non-voters, pessimism is also associated with the belief that high taxes and lack of good paying jobs are growing problems. Poverty and homelessness are national problems linked to pessimism among Clinton voters.

***Continued Concern about Health Care***

Although the public ultimately rejected Bill Clinton's ambitious health care reform proposals, health care persists as a public concern -- especially for those with bad feelings about the country's future. Roughly half of American adults (52%) now think the country is losing ground in the way the health care system is working, while less than a quarter (20%) see progress being made. The managed care revolution has not done much to make people confident that health care costs will be brought under control. Looking ahead to the year 2000, six in ten (61%) think health care will be less affordable than it is now.

Pessimists about the nation's future are more likely than optimists to believe that health care will be less affordable by the year 2000 (71% to 54%). Concern about health care costs ranks as one of the major factors distinguishing pessimists from optimists among non-voters, who may see gridlock between Republicans and Democrats as the legacy of the 1994 health care debate.

***Political Reform***

Americans rate the power of special interest groups in politics as about as great a threat to the future of country as international terrorism and illegal aliens. Half (49%) feel the country is losing ground in its efforts to fight political corruption. The most positive indication in the survey was that respondents were at worst divided over whether the campaign finance system will be reformed by the year 2000 -- 47% thought it would be achieved, 46% thought not. Only a majority of Democrats (55%) and Clinton voters (54%) expect reform to happen in the next four years. Non-voters with a pessimistic view of the country's future were especially bearish on the prospects for reform (37%).

***Ambivalence about Government and the News Media***

The public is unsure about what national problem deserves the top priority for government action. Moreover, many perceive government as part of the problem as well as the solution. Seven in ten (70%) Americans think a major role for government is critical to a better future for the country -- more than see a similar role for big corporations (59%), small businesses (51%) and religion (52%). However, at a time when confidence in political leaders is very low, people's reservations about government are also apparent. More than four in ten (43%) say government is a major threat to the country's future. Evaluations of the news media were similarly double barreled. Half (50%) of the Pew sampling felt news organizations

<b>Threats to the Nation's Future</b>	
	<u>% Consider Each a Threat</u>
International terrorists	54
The power of special interest groups in politics	53
The number of immigrants who come to this country illegally	51
Racial conflict	49
Economic competition from other nations	47
The government in Washington/Government	43
The news media	39
Anti-government groups	38
The number of immigrants who come to this country legally	26

would play a big role in the country's improvement, while almost as many (39%) thought the media represented a major threat to the country's future.

Post-industrial Americans put the most faith in science and technology and academia to bring about positive change. Three-quarters of adults interviewed think science and technology (77%) and schools and universities (77%) must play a major role if this country is to have a better future. One of the few signs of optimism about the country's future is the majority opinion (59%) that public education will improve by the year 2000. And there is less concern about technology having adverse effects on society than there is about the role of government. Only three in ten Americans (29%) regard "the pace of technological change" as a major threat to the country's future.

## **FINDINGS IN DETAIL**

## ***SECTION 1 - PERSONAL OPTIMISM AND THE EXPECTATIONS GAP***

Americans' ratings of their personal circumstances contrast sharply with their views of the national situation. In evaluating their own lives, Americans tell a familiar story: they are doing quite well today, have seen improvement in the recent past, and are optimistic about their future prospects. Average personal ladder scale ratings for 1996 convey steady progress on the ladder of life: 5.8 for five years ago; 6.7 for today; and 7.7 for five years from now. People are as happy with their personal circumstances today as they were in the mid-1980s, when economic confidence was especially high. In 1985, during the Reagan boom, personal ladder scale ratings were 5.8 (past), 6.4 (present), and 7.6 (future). In fact, personal satisfaction does not get much higher than the current ratings: the highest average ratings on record (1964) are only 0.2 points higher, across-the-board, than those recorded for 1996.

Consistent with past surveys, optimism about one's personal future runs highest among the young, who have the most potential for growth in careers and income levels. Well over three-quarters (85%) of adults aged 18 to 29 are optimists, compared with two-thirds (64%) of those 30 to 49 and a quarter (23%) of those aged 50 and older. Racial minorities (67%), and Hispanics (80%), are more likely to be optimists than whites (53%). Working women are more optimistic than women who are not now in the work force (67% vs. 50%).

Overall, only 13% of those surveyed are classified as pessimists about their personal future. Those most likely to be pessimists are retirees (29%) and those over 65 (28%), whose age makes them more subject to health problems. There is also a political component to personal pessimism: Dole voters (20%) and Perot voters (25%) are more likely to be pessimistic about their personal future than Clinton voters (11%) and non-voters (7%).

The remaining one-quarter (27%) of American adults -- who expect no change in their personal status over the next five years -- are an older, somewhat wealthier, perhaps more settled group who have already "made it" or are at the very least satisfied with their lot in life. Their average rating of the present is higher than those of optimists and pessimists.

### ***Youth Less Hopeful***

With regard to the country, the new survey finds a "generation gap" in public confidence, as younger Americans are less positive than their elders about what lies ahead. Those between the ages of 18 to 29 are as likely to be pessimistic (40%) as optimistic (40%) about the country's future, based on their ladder of life ratings. In contrast, optimists significantly outnumber pessimists (41% to 31%) among those aged 30 and older.

Data from a 1972 survey offers a historical perspective on the current findings. As seen in this year's results, ratings of both the current and future state of the nation increase gradually with age. Young adults' average ratings of the current state of the nation -- 5.2 -- are identical to those for that same age group recorded in 1972, at a time of anti-Vietnam War protests, the Nixon presidency, and a highly publicized generation gap.

This finding cast doubt on the notion that the low turnout in this year's elections among young people reflected satisfaction with the status quo. Non-voters in 1996 have mixed views about the nation's future (38% optimistic vs. 36% pessimistic). And under 30 non-voters are even more pessimistic (36% optimistic vs. 48% pessimistic).

## SECTION 2 -THE HOPES AND FEARS OF AMERICANS

When expressing their wishes and hopes for their own personal future, twice as many Americans cite financial or economic aspirations as any other type of concern. Overall, four in ten (42%) mention something in the category of finance/economics such as improved job opportunities, a higher income, a sound economy, or a being able to count on Social Security. Next on Americans' list of hopes for their personal future are health-related concerns (21%) and family-oriented aspirations (18%), such as happiness for family and children or a desire to start a family. Hopes for world peace rank next at 10%, followed by wishes for a better quality of life (6%) and less crime (6%).

Young people - under 30 - are most likely to express their major hopes in financial terms (53% vs. 44% of those 30-49 and 32%, of those 50 plus). Older people more often name good health as the main wish. Only about one in ten (9%) people aged 18-29 do so, compared with four in ten (38%) people aged 65 and older. On the other hand, aspirations related to family and children are more common among middle aged and younger adults.

Americans top personal worries are also predominately financial or economic. Four in ten (38%) mention job security, inadequate finances, retirement income, or a related concern. Concerns about ill health or inadequate health care (14%) and the threat of crime (10%) come next, followed by worries about children's future (6%). Unlike earlier decades, today fear of war ranks quite low as a personal concern (4%).

Americans who are optimistic about their personal future -- a younger group looking to move up -- are most likely to express their wishes and hopes for their futures in financial or economic terms. Half (51%) of optimists mention a financial goal like getting a better job or achieving financial security. Both pessimists and those who expect no change in the status quo are less likely to wish for financial progress and more likely to hope for good health than optimists.

These same patterns are observed for fears and worries about the future. Optimists' fears, like their wishes, are financial in nature -- i.e., they worry about not having enough money or moving ahead in their career. While pessimists are about as likely as optimists to cite worries related to finances (44% vs. 42%), they are significantly more likely to mention worries about health or health care (22% vs. 12%).

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS ... HOPES ABOUT ONE'S FUTURE

*What are your main wishes and hopes for your future? What do you most hope for to be happy in your life?...*

### **Financial**

- \* Better living conditions better wages.
- \* Be able to live a long life and have financial security and participate in the Social Security programs in the future.
- \* I hope that we can take home more of our money and lower the national deficit.
- \* Having a secure job with benefits for my family.
- \* Being able to afford all the things my parents could afford.
- \* I hope for low inflation rates.
- \* When I become old enough to retire to have a sufficient income to be happy with my family.
- \* Policies to help the middle class and the poor and benefits for the elderly. Stop cutting Social Security.

### **Health**

- \* In my case, just to live a little while longer. I have some health problems, and I would like to know that there would be health care for me if something happened to my present insurance.
- \* To be in good health and keep working.
- \* Continued health care and a good environment to live in, free of environmental pollution, toxic food and unhealthy water.
- \* I would like to die without a lot of pain.

### **Family/Children**

- \* I hope that the society and the world will be a nice place for my children, and when they grow up I hope there will be less strife for them. And hopefully the job outlook will be better for them.
- \* I hope to spend more time with my family.
- \* I would like to have better communication with friends and family, deeper relationships.
- \* To raise a successful family.
- \* To raise children in a decent environment so they can finish school and get jobs.
- \* I want my kid to have a good education and not be involved in gangs. It would be nice if my husband didn't have to work two jobs.
- \* That my kids don't take drugs.

### **Peace/Stability**

- \* My dearest hope would be for world peace.
- \* That world conflicts would end and I wouldn't fear the future for my children.
- \* A peaceful and drug free America. No more wars where America is unnecessarily involved.
- \* A government with a strong national defense/security for our nation.
- \* Peace in Bosnia.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS ... WORRIES ABOUT ONE'S FUTURE

*What are your main fears and worries about your future?...*

### **Financial**

- \* When I am elderly I won't have Social Security or a retirement plan.
- \* Job security and providing for my family.
- \* That I won't succeed, that I will be working a minimum wage job at a Burger King or something.
- \* Over taxation and poor health care.
- \* Employment, the pay scale, the minimum wage.
- \* That I will lose my job and won't have the resources to educate my children or pay my bills.
- \* I worry that my salary will not increase. Even though some businesses are doing well, that's not translating into higher salaries for people working in the trenches.
- \* Government is going to get too large and the average citizen won't be able to afford it.
- \* Being homeless.

### **Health**

- \* Getting sick and not having insurance for medical costs.
- \* Going into an HMO program is one of my biggest fears.
- \* Health care and pollution.
- \* Being broke and being sick.
- \* That we're going to destroy ourselves with the dope and the diseases we're creating.
- \* That I will get sick and be a burden to my family.

### **Crime**

- \* The violence will get worse.
- \* That they don't do anything about the drug dealers. I want them to find a way to stop the drug dealers.
- \* Rising crime, civil unrest, racial tension.
- \* You can't even go to the store without fear of someone attacking you.
- \* I have fear of a family or friend being brutally attacked.
- \* All the crime that's going on; I'm tired of getting home before dark and locking myself in.
- \* Violence; getting shot while getting home.

### **Worries About Children's Future**

- \* My children -- are they going to be able to go to school, will I have the money to send them?
- \* My children and grandchildren will be in debt due to the government over-spending.
- \* That my kids will have to go to war.
- \* My child's education.
- \* My main fears are the concerns of my children and what will happen with their future because they have immigrant parents.
- \* I worry about my daughter when she starts school; I worry about her safety.
- \* That I won't be able to provide for my family the way my parents were able to provide for me.

### *Hopes and Fears About the Nation's Future*

When asked to describe their hopes or wishes for the country's future in their own words, people most often respond in economic terms (26%), hoping for such things as more jobs, a better economy, or a balanced federal budget. Second most often, Americans wish for world peace or a more secure nation (19%). Twenty or thirty years ago, far more people expressed hopes for peace than economic improvement. In a 1972 Gallup survey, for example, 56% cited peace as one of the major hopes for the country's future, substantially more than mentioned economic issues.

The public's other major aspirations for the country's future now include less crime (12%), a more moral or religious society (10%), better government or political leadership (9%), and more cooperation and unity (8%). Republicans are much more likely than Democrats and Independents to express hopes for a more moral and religious nation (19% vs. 5% and 8%, respectively). White Evangelical Protestants are much more likely to hold such views than other white Protestants and white Catholics (21% vs. 5% and 6%, respectively).

People's fears and worries about the country's future reflect the same five themes as their wishes and hopes: economic worries come first (18%), followed by fear of war (12%), crime (10%), inadequate government or political leadership (8%) and lack of morality or religion (6%). As with respect to hopes, Republicans and white Evangelical Protestants are most likely to cite lack of morality or waning religious influence in society.

Those optimists about the country tend to wish for different things than pessimists. Optimists put more emphasis on peace and prosperity, more often specifying economic improvement (31% vs. 22% of pessimists) and peace or military security (24% vs. 15%). Pessimists, on the other hand, are more likely to hope for better political leadership (13% vs. 6% of optimists), and a more moral or religious society (15% vs. 7%).

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS ... HOPES ABOUT THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE

*What are your main wishes and hopes for the country's future? What do you most hope for to make the country better?...*

### **Economic**

- \* That the poverty rate goes down and there is less homelessness.
- \* Continued economic growth.
- \* Eliminate the deficit and do something to correct the extreme differences between the very rich and very poor.
- \* Create more opportunities for jobs and education.
- \* Government will take a stand and reduce the deficit.
- \* More employment for the country.
- \* Stronger protections for workers.
- \* An end to the entitlement system, changes in the welfare system.

### **World Peace/National Security**

- \* That we all get along, no more war only peace.
- \* Stronger military.
- \* To avoid nuclear war.
- \* Peace and understanding, cooperation.
- \* Just what the President is trying to do: bring peace to the world and stop the fighting among nations.
- \* For the US to remain the major power in the world.

### **Crime**

- \* Need to get crime under control There's no control over kids any more.
- \* Less violence and more guidance for the children.
- \* Better control over drugs.
- \* Reduce the crime rate, get rid of guns in the schools. There is much less respect for life nowadays.
- \* Getting rid of guns would save a lot of lives.
- \* Less discrimination and police brutality.

### **Religion and Morality**

- \* That people will turn toward God for their answers.
- \* I wish that people would think about God a lot more which would bring a lot of compassion and concern.
- \* I'd like to see religion play a more prevalent role in America as it once did in the past.
- \* That the leaders go back to moral standards that are preached in the Bible.
- \* Just that we have a moral awakening, get back on track with morals.

### **Government/Political Leadership**

- \* Humanitarian leadership, a leader that is aware of the value of human life and liberty.
- \* Less lies about how we are doing, more truth about the government today.
- \* That the people will take back the government.
- \* Reduce the growth of government at all levels.
- \* Stronger moral leadership in the Congress and at all levels of government.
- \* For power to shift away from Washington and come back to the states and the people.
- \* Revamp the government, cut out loopholes that protect politicians and the rich.
- \* That we get politics out of running the government, that we address more issues that the majority of Americans face.

### **Cooperation/Unity**

- \* For everyone to get along/Unity among the people.
- \* To get along, work with each other, stop fighting.
- \* That Democrats and Republicans work together.
- \* My hope would be a coming together of the races; I'm tired of the turmoil.
- \* I'd like for the country to pull together, for people to start taking responsibility for themselves.
- \* To accept diversity.
- \* Put away our fears and come together as one nation.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS ... WORRIES ABOUT THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE

*What are your main fears and worries about the country's future?...*

### **Economic**

- \* The rich man is going to get richer, and the poor man is going to get poorer.
- \* Deficit, jobs going to other countries.
- \* Another recession.
- \* The national debt.
- \* Unemployment.
- \* Losing the farms.
- \* We are not going to make it economically and we will no longer be a superpower.
- \* Big business taking over.
- \* Hunger and homelessness.
- \* I would like to see more opportunity for younger people, the system is failing to provide career opportunities.

### **War/National Security**

- \* Sending our boys to war.
- \* World War III and chemical warfare.
- \* That we are giving too much to the other countries; we are becoming world police and are over-extended.
- \* Renegade nuclear bomb from Iran or someone else who doesn't like us.
- \* Nuclear war.
- \* Getting involved in another Vietnam.
- \* That we will get too involved in the politics of the Middle East.

### **Crime/Violence**

- \* Domestic violence.
- \* The country is falling apart because of crime.
- \* The criminal justice system is at an all-time low; the police force is inefficient.
- \* Not enough gun control.
- \* Violence seems to be increasing for the younger people.
- \* Gangs and crime.
- \* Too many drugs and firearms.

### **Government/Political leadership**

- \* That we will lose control of our politicians.
- \* I really question the values of congressmen and people in power; the whole political structure is corrupt, lobbyists have too much power. I'm not sure that laws are made for the common person.
- \* The growth of the federal government.
- \* The fact that the President and the Congress can't agree on anything, they're very petty.
- \* Polarization of the parties in government. Officials displaying lack of ability, civility, manners.
- \* Extremist groups will gain more power.

### ***SECTION 3 - RATING THE NATION'S PROBLEMS***

Americans are not as pessimistic about a few problems as they were a year ago. The biggest change in public opinion reflects the impact of the welfare reform legislation passed by the last Congress. Less than half (45%) of the public now feel the country is losing ground in the way the welfare system works. This is substantially below the two-thirds (67%) recorded in a 1995 survey. In addition, significantly fewer Americans now think the country losing ground in the five other problem areas: crime (61% now vs. 77% in 1995), low moral and ethical standards (62% vs. 70%), the quality of public education (52% vs. 60%), the federal budget deficit (48% vs. 60%), and illegal immigration (47% vs. 62%).

These small positive shifts in public opinion, however, have not much altered the big picture -- most people continue to see the United States as a nation in decline, overwhelmed by a wide array of moral, social and economic problems:

- \* Solid majorities of Americans continue to say that crime (61%), drugs (64%), and low moral and ethical standards (62%) are becoming worse problems for the country. Crime rose to the top of the public's list of national problems for the first time in the 1990s. Concern about declining morality, typically cited as the nation's top problem by only one or two percent in previous decades, has increased to the double-digit level in recent years.
- \* Two-thirds (65%) think the country is losing ground in its efforts to keep Social Security and Medicare financially sound. Further reflecting concern about the federal government's financial shape, close to half (48%) continue to say the deficit is getting worse. Other polling has shown the public resistant to higher taxes as a means to balance the budget. The new survey shows a 55% majority saying high taxes are becoming a greater national problem.
- \* Despite better economic conditions -- acknowledged by the public in other recent surveys -- there is still a high level of concern about the jobs situation, most likely reflecting continuing uncertainty during a time of economic restructuring. Six in ten adults (58%) see job security becoming a worse problem and about half (51%) feel the same way about the availability of good-paying jobs. A stronger economy also hasn't done much to reduce concern about poverty and homelessness. Over half (54%) say this problem getting worse at the national level; almost identical to the 53% who responded this way in a 1989 survey.
- \* In the midst of a managed care revolution, roughly half (52%) of Americans continue to believe the nation is losing ground in the way the health care system works.

- \* Education ranked first as an issue of concern to voters in the past presidential campaign, but roughly half (52%) of adults continue to see a decline in the quality of public education.
- \* While perceptions have become somewhat less negative, close to half of adults still feel the country is losing ground in dealing with illegal immigration (47%) and the welfare system (45%). Close to half (49%) also believe political corruption is a growing problem in this country.

The public has a long list of national problem areas that seem to be getting worse, but a very short list of areas where there has been noticeable progress. Protecting the environment is the only area in the survey on which there is some degree of consensus that the country is gaining (42% making progress vs. 30% losing ground).

After the recent publicity about alleged racial discrimination by Texaco executives, the percentage who see the country making progress in the area of racial discrimination has fallen from 40% in 1995 to 33% today; more than a quarter (28%) think the country is losing ground in this area. The races remain sharply divided in their perceptions: 44% of African-Americans, compared with 26% of whites see discrimination as a growing problem at the national level. Nearly half (46%) of African-Americans and over a third (38%) of whites see increasing conflict between racial groups in this country.

Differences in perceptions between backers of the three President candidates, as well as non-voters are apparent. By margins of five points or more, Dole voters are more likely than Clinton voters to seeing growing problems in ten specific areas. Dole voters differ most in their tendency to see the country losing ground on the following: low moral and ethical standards (80% vs. 51%), the deficit (60% vs. 34%), high taxes (66% vs. 46%), drugs (75% vs. 57%), political corruption (58% vs. 40%), and illegal immigration (59% vs. 41%).

Perot voters show themselves to be at least as critical of the state of the union as Dole voters. Two-thirds or more of those who cast a ballot for Perot see the nation losing ground on the following problems: low morals (76%), the financial soundness of Social Security and Medicare (73%), drugs (70%), political corruption (68%), crime (66%) and the deficit (65%). Majorities of Perot voters also see decline in some areas of less concern to Republicans, including health care (60%), poverty and homelessness (63%) and the availability of good paying jobs (62%).

Non-voters are more discontented than apathetic about the state of the union. Compared with those who voted for four more years of Bill Clinton, those who did not vote in the presidential election are more likely to see worsening conditions with respect to the deficit (52% vs. 34%), crime (64% vs. 53%), high taxes (56% vs. 46%), and drugs (63% vs. 57%).

Non-voters under 30, who are much more pessimistic about the country's future than older non-voters, are especially critical of the state of public education. Fully half (51%) of non-voters aged 18 to 29 see the country losing ground in the quality of public education, compared with only about four in ten (37%) non-voters aged 30 and older.

**SECTION 4 - ELEMENTS OF PERSONAL SATISFACTION**

A stronger national economy seems to have improved Americans' feelings about some aspects of their personal lives. Five years ago, when the effects of a recession were still being felt, only a slim majority (54%) of adults surveyed claimed to be satisfied with their household income. Today, nearly two-thirds (65%) say they are satisfied. Over the same period, there has also been an increase in people's satisfaction with their standard of living (75% now vs. 62% in 1991) and housing situation (87% vs. 80%).

Although people now feel better about their personal economic situation, attitudes have not completely rebounded to 1980's levels. The percent satisfied with standard of living was significantly higher in 1988 than it is today (85% vs. 75%) and satisfaction with household income was marginally higher (69% vs. 65%). Moreover, in 1988, before downsizing and corporate restructuring took hold, people were also more likely to report satisfaction with their job (76% vs. 69%) and free time (87% vs. 77%).

Family life continues to be the aspect of personal life scoring the highest levels of satisfaction (90% at least somewhat satisfied, 69% very satisfied). Dissatisfaction with family life is more often reported by blacks (18%) and Hispanics (16%) than whites (8%).

Most parents of children under 18 are reasonably satisfied with the education their sons and daughters are receiving: three-quarters (74%) are at least somewhat satisfied; nearly half (44%) are very satisfied. The level of dissatisfaction (19% of total) is higher among white Evangelicals (23%) and parents with incomes below \$30,000 (22%).

	<u>Sept/Oct 1973</u>	<u>Sept 1988</u>	<u>Oct 1991</u>	<u>Current</u>
<i>% Satisfied:</i>				
Family life	-	94	-	90
Housing	74	87	80	87
Free time	-	87	-	77
Standard of living	71	85	62	75
Your job -- the kind of work you do	79	76	-	69
Household income	61	69	54	65
Education children are getting today/Your children's education	61	-	-	54

**SECTION 5 - NO CONSENSUS ABOUT GOVERNMENT ACTION**

As was apparent in presidential campaign polling, there is no consensus on what specific problem is most important for this country to address. When respondents were asked which one of seventeen problem areas they would most like to see the government do something about, no more than 12% selected any single problem (crime and the quality of public education each scored at this level). Seven additional problems statistically tied for third, scoring between 6%-8%.

By political and demographic subgroups, crime is named most often by Republicans (17%) and those who sat out the 1996 presidential election (16%). Education is most often given the top priority by those with incomes of \$75,000 or more (18%) and Clinton voters (16%).

Both optimists and pessimists about the country's future include crime and public education on their "top five" list of national problems the government should do more to address. However, demonstrating their competing agendas for the nation, the two groups differ in filling out their lists. Optimists would like to see more done to improve the health care and welfare systems, and reduce poverty and homelessness. Pessimists, on the other hand, give a higher priority to cutting taxes, reducing the deficit, and combating drugs.

<b>Priorities for Government Action</b>	
	<u>Top Choices</u>
	%
Crime	12
Quality of public education	12
Way the health care system is working	8
The deficit	7
Soundness of Social Security and Medicare	7
Drugs	7
Poverty, hunger, homelessness	7
High taxes	7
The way the welfare system is working	6

**SECTION 6 - CONTRIBUTORS AND THREATS TO A BETTER FUTURE**

Three-quarters (77%) of Americans say schools and universities will play a major role in a successful national future, and the same proportion (77%) think science and technology will play a major role. Confidence in academic institutions is fairly constant across all demographic groups, but the American public is somewhat more divided about technology’s promise. Eight in ten (81%) of those with at least some college experience say science and technology will pave the way for future national success, compared with only about three-quarters (77%) of high school graduates and six in ten (63%) of those with less than a high school education. White Evangelical Protestants place less faith in science (68%) than do those of other religions. Not all Americans embrace technology's promises completely; three in ten (29%) consider the pace of technological change to be a major threat to the country's future well-being.

**Government: A Mixed Blessing**

Almost as many Americans place their faith in government as in science and education, but their feelings about government’s impact on the nation's future century are mixed. Seven in ten (70%) believe the government will play a major role if life is going to be better in this country in the future. But more than four in ten (43%) believe the government is a major threat to the country's future well-being. A plurality (39%) view the government as a major positive force and *not* a major threat, but almost as many (31%) hold the ambivalent view that the government is *both* a major threat and needs to play a major role in the country's future success. One in five (18%) views the government as neither a major player for good nor a significant threat. Only one in ten (12%) views the government as only a threat.

Americans' political leanings are clearly echoed in their feelings about government's role in the coming millennium. The plurality of Republicans (34%) hold the ambivalent view that government is both a major threat and a major potential force for good. The largest share of Democrats, half in fact (49%), see the government as only a major beneficial force and not a major threat. Furthermore, Independents (12%), and Republicans in particular (16%), are much more likely than Democrats (7%) to see the government as only a threat and not a force for good. A similar pattern is seen by the 1996 presidential vote. Half (50%) of Clinton voters see government as a major positive force and not a major threat. The plurality of Dole voters

	----- Party ID -----			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep.</u>	<u>Dem.</u>	<u>Ind.</u>
	%	%	%	%
Major Role				
Not Major Threat	39	26	49	40
Major Role				
Major Threat	31	34	30	32
Not Major Role				
Major Threat	12	16	7	12
Not Major Role				
Not Major Threat	<u>18</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>
	100	100	100	100

(32%), however, see the government as both a positive force and a threat. Furthermore, almost one in five Dole (17%) and Perot (18%) voters see government as only a threat, compared with 6% of Clinton voters.

Those who are optimistic about the nation's future are more likely to hold the view that government will play a major positive role, and not a significant negative role, in the nation's future (46%) than are those who are pessimistic (30%).

### ***Other Positive Elements***

Six in ten (59%) Americans see a major role in the future for large corporations and half (51%) see such a role for small business. Religion is seen as a major force by half (52%) of Americans. Not surprisingly, three-quarters (73%) of White Evangelical Protestants see a major role for religious faith. This tendency is also more pronounced among African-Americans (72%), Republicans (58%) and women (57%). Only four in ten (43%) of those under 30 see a major role for religion, compared with half (52%) of those 30 to 49, and six in ten (59%) of those 50 and over.

### ***Threats***

Three external forces, and two internal ones, top the list of what Americans judge to be the greatest threats to our nation's future. More than half (54%) of Americans consider international terrorism to be a major threat. Hispanics (64%) and women (61%) are more likely to consider this a major threat. Older Americans are more concerned than younger Americans: 61% of those 50 and older name terrorism as a major threat compared with 53% of those 30 to 49, and 46% of those 18 to 29.

The number of immigrants who enter this country illegally is a major threat to our collective future in the eyes of half (51%) of Americans. Less affluent and less well-educated Americans, perhaps because they feel their own jobs are more likely to be threatened by illegal immigrants, more often hold such views. Surprisingly, Dole supporters are no more likely than Clinton supporters to view illegal immigration as a major threat (50% vs. 51%). Similarly, Republicans, and Independents are only slightly more likely than Democrats to regard illegal immigrants as a major threat (52%, 54%, and 45% respectively). The number of immigrants entering the country legally is of great concern to far fewer Americans. Still, one in four (26%) considers legal immigration to be a major threat to the country's future.

Ranking third as a major external threat is economic competition from other nations (47%). Like illegal immigration, this is a somewhat greater concern among less affluent, less educated Americans who presumably feel their economic well-being may be threatened by overseas competition.

The power of special interest groups in politics ranks as the most dangerous domestic threat. Over half (53%) of the public hold such views. Those who are more affluent and well-educated are more likely to see special interests as a major threat. Those in the West (59%) are more concerned than those in other regions (51%). Republican, Democrats, and political Independents alike are equally concerned about this issue. Those who voted in the 1996 presidential election are more concerned (58%) than those who did not cast a ballot (36%), suggesting disenchantment with the influence of special interests was not a major factor in keeping people from the polls.

The final domestic threat that registers highly with the public is racial conflict. Half (49%) see this as a major threat. Blacks (63%) are more likely than whites (47%) to hold this view.

## ***SECTION 7-PREDICTIONS FOR THE YEAR 2000***

Americans are generally pessimistic about progress on major problems by the year 2000.

Taxes have been, and will continue to be, a major concern for Americans. Eight in ten (82%) believe in the year 2000 the average American will pay more in taxes. This belief is held across all demographic and political groups.

The public is quite pessimistic about the future financial status of the Social Security and Medicare systems. Seven in ten (70%) maintain that by the year 2000 Social Security and Medicare will be in worse financial shape. Middle age people are the most pessimistic about fixing the system (80%). More affluent and educated Americans also tend to be slightly more bearish about entitlements.

Despite recent decreases in crime rates around the country, six in ten (61%) Americans still maintain that we are losing ground in this area. And they expect this trend will continue; seven in ten (68%) believe the crime rate in the United States will be higher in the year 2000. Perhaps owing to the different law-enforcement philosophies supported by those on the right and the left, Republicans (77%) and Dole voters (76%) are more likely than Democrats (60%) and those who voted for Clinton (59%) to hold this view.

Six in ten (61%) Americans believe health care will be less affordable by the year 2000. Parents of children under 18 (67%) are especially likely to hold this view. Two-thirds (66%) of those who voted for Dole predict rising health care costs. Clinton supporters, on the other hand, are less likely to hold such beliefs, yet still over half (54%) do.

Americans have no clear view about the shape of the economy at the turn of the century -- 53% believe the economy will be stronger and 42% believe it will be weaker. Democrats (64%) and Clinton voters (67%) are more likely to predict an improved economy than Republicans (45%) or Dole voters (38%). Echoing their relative confidence in the nation's future, blacks (64%) are more likely than whites (51%) to foresee a stronger economy by the turn of the century.

Americans are also divided as to whether race relations will improve (54%) or worsen (40%) over the next few years. Blacks and whites have similar views. There is also no clear public expectation about whether campaign finance reform will be enacted (47%) or not (46%).

Perhaps owing to Clinton's concentration on education during the campaign, 59 percent of Americans believe that by the year 2000 the public education system will improve. However, Americans age 18-29, who have had more recent exposure to the public education system, are less likely to hold this view (53%) than older Americans. There are also political differences on this issue. Democrats (67%) and Clinton (66%) supporters have more confidence that education will improve in a second Clinton term than Republicans (52%), Independents (59%) and those who voted for Dole (50%).

Pessimists tend to make more dire predictions on all the issues and problems facing the nation, but they are especially negative about Clinton's chances for a successful second term and the economic outlook. As seen in the adjacent table, there is a difference of more than 25 points in the percentages of pessimists and optimists who predict that Clinton will not be successful (54% vs. 25%) and that the economy will be weaker (59% vs. 33%). More than 20 percentage point differences are also evident about worsening race relations and public education.

<b>Pessimists and Optimists: Negative Prediction for the Year 2000</b>			
	<u>Pessimists</u>	<u>Optimists</u>	<u>Diff.</u>
	%	%	%
<i>% Say Likely:</i>			
Clinton will have an unsuccessful second term	54	25	+29
U.S. economy will be weaker	59	33	+26
Race relations will get worse	54	32	+22
Public education system will get worse	51	29	+22
Health care will be less affordable	71	54	+17
Crime rate will be higher	71	55	+16
Social Security and Medicare systems will be in worse financial shape	81	66	+15
Campaign finance reform will not be enacted	55	40	+15
Average American will pay more in taxes	88	80	+8

***America's Children***

Over half of those surveyed (55%) believe the nation's children, on average, will grow up to be worse off than their parents. Parents are more sanguine about their own children's futures than the prospects for the nation's children generally. Half (51%) believe their own children will grow up to be better off than their parents, but as many as 41% think their own children will not fare as well as they did.

# **TABLES**

## PERSONAL AND NATIONAL FUTURE STATE

	Personal Future State				Future State of the U.S.				<u>N</u>
	-----No Change-----				-----No Change-----				
	<u>Optimist</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Pessimist</u>	<u>Optimist</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Pessimist</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
<b>Total</b>	55	23	5	13	41	12	10	33	1204
<b>Sex</b>									
Male	57	24	4	12	37	15	11	33	600
Female	54	21	6	14	44	9	9	33	604
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>									
White	53	24	5	14	39	11	11	34	954
Non-white	67	19	4	7	49	13	6	28	231
Black	66	22	4	5	48	13	5	32	119
Hispanic	80	10	3	6	43	4	14	32	88
<b>Age</b>									
Under 30	85	8	1	4	40	10	10	40	295
30-49	64	22	4	8	40	12	10	34	532
50 -64	29	34	6	22	40	11	10	32	204
65+	16	33	8	28	44	14	9	23	154
<b>Education</b>									
College Grad	53	32	1	12	34	16	11	36	349
Some College	69	16	2	10	44	9	10	34	354
H.S. Grad	53	22	6	14	45	13	9	29	389
Less than H.S.	42	22	10	17	35	8	9	39	101
<b>Family Income</b>									
\$75,000 plus	50	36	1	12	28	20	8	42	139
\$50,000 to \$74,999	61	26	3	9	45	13	10	30	163
\$30,000 to \$49,999	58	22	4	12	44	11	11	32	310
\$20,000 to \$29,999	60	17	4	17	41	9	9	36	211
Less than \$20,000	53	16	8	13	42	10	8	35	238

*Continued . . .*

Continued . . .

	<u>Personal Future State</u>				<u>Future State of the U.S.</u>				<u>N</u>
	-----No Change-----				-----No Change-----				
	<u>Optimist</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Pessimist</u>	<u>Optimist</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Pessimist</u>	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
<b>Total</b>	55	23	5	13	41	12	10	33	1204
<i>Region</i>									
Northeast	57	20	6	14	49	12	8	27	219
Midwest	53	20	6	16	41	14	9	33	289
South	52	25	5	13	36	13	10	37	406
West	61	25	2	9	40	9	12	33	290
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>									
Total White Protestant	49	23	5	16	37	11	8	38	529
Evangelical	47	24	5	16	32	8	8	44	291
Non-Evang.	52	22	4	16	44	14	8	29	212
White Catholic	50	28	7	14	46	14	11	28	214
<i>Party ID</i>									
Republican	46	27	4	18	30	10	14	40	338
Democrat	56	25	4	11	53	13	7	24	407
Independent	62	18	4	12	37	12	10	37	389
<i>1996 Presidential Vote</i>									
Clinton	58	26	3	11	52	16	8	21	417
Dole	45	25	5	20	30	11	14	41	296
Perot	44	22	6	25	33	8	10	46	63
Didn't Vote	65	15	7	7	38	10	10	36	304

## AVERAGE NATIONAL LADDER RATINGS: 1972 AND 1996

	<i>-- Past --</i>		<i>-- Present --</i>		<i>-- Future --</i>		<i>Shift: Past to Present</i>		<i>Shift: Present to Future</i>		<u>1996N</u>
	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	
<b>Total</b>	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.4	6.2	5.7	-0.1	-0.2	+0.7	+0.3	1204
<b>Sex</b>											
Male	5.7	5.6	5.7	5.6	6.3	5.7	-	-	+0.6	+0.1	600
Female	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.3	6.1	5.6	-0.3	-0.3	+0.8	+0.3	604
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>											
White	5.7	5.6	5.4	5.4	6.2	5.5	-0.3	-0.2	+0.8	+0.1	954
Non-white	NA <sup>5</sup>	5.4	NA	5.9	NA	6.4	NA	+0.5	NA	+0.5	231
Black	5.4	5.3	5.6	6.0	6.3	6.4	-0.2	+0.7	+0.7	+0.4	119
Hispanic	NA	5.6	NA	5.4	NA	5.7	NA	-0.2	NA	+0.3	88
<b>Age</b>											
Under 30	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.2	6.0	5.3	-0.1	-0.2	+0.8	+0.1	295
30-49	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.2	5.6	-0.2	-	+0.7	+0.1	532
50 plus	5.8	5.9	5.6	5.6	6.4	6.0	-0.2	-0.3	+0.8	+0.4	358
<b>Education<sup>6</sup></b>											
Top quarter	5.6	5.7	5.4	5.5	6.0	5.6	-0.2	-0.2	+0.6	+0.1	349
Bottom three-quarters	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.4	6.3	5.7	-0.2	-0.2	+0.8	+0.3	844

*Continued . . .*

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<sup>5</sup> NA= not available or not applicable

<sup>6</sup> For 1972 data top most-educated quarter (24%) are those with at least some college or more. For 1996 data top most-educated quarter (22%) are those with at least a four year degree.

Continued . . .

	<i>-- Past --</i>		<i>-- Present --</i>		<i>-- Future --</i>		<i>Shift: Past to Present</i>		<i>Shift: Present to Future</i>		<u>1996N</u>
	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	
<b>Total</b>	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.4	6.2	5.7	-0.1	-0.2	+0.7	+0.3	1204
<b>Family Income<sup>7</sup></b>											
Top quarter	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.6	6.1	5.6	-0.2	-0.2	+0.6	-	302
Second quarter	5.6	5.4	5.3	5.3	6.1	5.6	-0.3	-0.1	+0.8	+0.3	310
Third quarter	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.2	5.6	-0.1	-	+0.7	+0.1	211
Bottom quarter	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.6	6.3	5.9	-0.2	-0.2	+0.8	+0.3	238
<b>Region<sup>8</sup></b>											
Northeast	5.6	5.7	5.3	5.4	6.0	5.9	-0.3	-0.3	+0.7	+0.5	219
Midwest	5.7	5.5	5.4	5.4	6.3	5.7	-0.3	-0.1	+0.9	+0.3	289
South	5.6	5.8	5.7	5.6	6.4	5.6	+0.1	-0.2	+0.7	-	406
West	5.7	5.5	5.4	5.3	6.1	5.6	-0.3	-0.2	+0.7	+0.3	290
<b>Party ID</b>											
Republican	5.7	6.1	5.8	5.0	6.6	5.0	+0.1	-1.1	+0.8	-	338
Democrat	5.8	5.1	5.4	5.8	6.3	6.4	-0.4	+0.7	+0.9	+0.6	407
Independent	5.6	5.8	5.3	5.5	6.0	5.5	-0.3	-0.3	+0.7	-	389
<b>1996 Presidential Vote</b>											
Clinton	NA	5.2	NA	5.9	NA	6.5	NA	+0.7	NA	+0.6	417
Dole	NA	6.6	NA	5.0	NA	5.1	NA	-1.6	NA	+0.1	296
Perot	NA	5.6	NA	5.1	NA	5.0	NA	-0.4	NA	-0.1	63
Didn't vote	NA	5.5	NA	5.3	NA	5.4	NA	-0.2	NA	+0.1	304

<sup>7</sup> For 1972 data income breakdowns are as follows:

Top quarter	\$15,000 and more	23%
2nd quarter	\$10,000 to \$14,999	19%
3rd quarter	\$5,000 to \$9,999	31%
Bottom quarter	Under \$5,000	24%

For 1996 data income breakdowns are as follows:

Top quarter	\$50,000 and more	22%
2nd quarter	\$30,000 to \$49,999	24%
3rd quarter	\$20,000 to \$29,999	18%
Bottom quarter	Under \$20,000	23%

<sup>8</sup> There is some discrepancy between the regional definition used in 1972 and those used in the current survey. Specifically, Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC and West Virginia are categorized as "South" currently, but in the 1972 survey were categorized in the "East," which we currently label "Northeast."

## AVERAGE PERSONAL LADDER RATINGS: 1972 AND 1996

	<i>-- Past --</i>		<i>-- Present --</i>		<i>-- Future --</i>		<i>Shift: Past to Present</i>		<i>Shift: Present to Future</i>		<u>1996N</u>
	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	
<b>Total</b>	5.5	5.8	6.4	6.7	7.6	7.7	+0.9	+0.9	+1.2	+1.0	1204
<b>Sex</b>											
Male	5.4	5.8	6.2	6.7	7.4	7.7	+0.8	+0.8	+1.2	+1.1	600
Female	5.6	5.9	6.6	6.8	7.7	7.7	+1.0	+0.9	+1.1	+0.9	604
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>											
White	5.6	5.9	6.5	6.7	7.6	7.6	+0.9	+0.8	+1.1	+0.9	954
Non-white	NA	5.5	NA	6.5	NA	8.2	NA	+1.0	NA	+1.7	231
Black	4.8	5.6	5.5	6.5	7.3	8.4	+0.7	+0.9	+1.8	+1.9	119
Hispanic	NA	5.3	NA	6.6	NA	8.2	NA	+1.3	NA	+1.6	88
<b>Age</b>											
Under 30	4.7	4.8	6.1	6.3	8.1	8.4	+1.4	+1.5	+2.0	+2.1	295
30-49	5.3	5.7	6.4	6.7	7.8	8.0	+1.1	+1.0	+1.4	+1.3	532
50 plus	6.3	6.7	6.6	6.9	6.9	6.8	+0.3	+0.2	+0.3	-0.1	358
<b>Education<sup>9</sup></b>											
Top quarter	5.6	6.4	6.8	7.3	8.0	8.0	+1.2	+0.9	+1.2	+0.7	349
Bottom three-quarters	5.5	5.7	6.3	6.5	7.4	7.6	+0.8	+0.8	+1.1	+1.2	844

*Continued . . .*

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<sup>9</sup> For 1972 data top most-educated quarter (24%) are those with at least some college or more. For 1996 data top most-educated quarter (22%) are those with at least a four year degree.

Continued . . .

	<i>-- Past --</i>		<i>-- Present --</i>		<i>-- Future --</i>		<i>Shift: Past to Present</i>		<i>Shift: Present to Future</i>		<u>1996N</u>
	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	<u>'72</u>	<u>'96</u>	
<b>Total</b>	5.5	5.8	6.4	6.7	7.6	7.7	+0.9	+0.9	+1.2	+1.0	1204
<b>Family Income<sup>10</sup></b>											
Top quarter	5.4	6.3	7.0	7.2	8.2	8.1	+1.6	+0.9	+1.2	+0.9	302
Second quarter	5.7	5.7	6.9	6.9	7.9	7.8	+1.2	+1.2	+1.0	+0.9	310
Third quarter	5.3	5.4	6.1	6.1	7.5	7.4	+0.8	+0.7	+1.4	+1.3	211
Bottom quarter	5.6	5.5	5.8	6.2	6.8	7.5	+0.2	+0.7	+1.0	+1.3	238
<b>Region<sup>11</sup></b>											
Northeast	5.5	6.1	6.3	6.6	7.4	7.7	+0.8	+0.5	+1.1	+1.1	219
Midwest	5.4	5.8	6.3	6.7	7.5	7.5	+0.8	+0.9	+1.2	+0.8	289
South	5.5	5.7	6.5	6.6	7.7	7.7	+1.0	+0.9	+1.2	+1.1	406
West	5.6	5.7	6.7	6.8	7.6	8.1	+1.0	+1.1	+0.9	+1.3	29
<b>Party ID</b>											
Republican	6.0	6.2	6.8	6.9	7.6	7.5	+0.8	+0.7	+0.8	+0.6	338
Democrat	5.3	5.8	6.3	6.8	7.7	7.9	+1.0	+1.0	+1.2	+1.1	407
Independent	5.5	5.7	6.4	6.4	7.7	7.8	+0.9	+0.7	+1.3	+1.4	389
<b>1996 Presidential Vote</b>											
Clinton	NA	5.7	NA	6.9	NA	8.0	NA	+1.2	NA	+1.1	417
Dole	NA	6.4	NA	6.9	NA	7.4	NA	+0.5	NA	+0.5	296
Perot	NA	5.8	NA	6.9	NA	7.0	NA	+1.1	NA	+0.1	63
Didn't Vote	NA	5.4	NA	6.0	NA	7.8	NA	+0.6	NA	+1.8	304

<sup>10</sup> For 1972 data income breakdowns are as follows:

Top quarter	\$15,000 and more	23%
2nd quarter	\$10,000 to \$14,999	19%
3rd quarter	\$5,000 to \$9,999	31%
Bottom quarter	Under \$5,000	24%

For 1996 data income breakdowns are as follows:

Top quarter	\$50,000 and more	22%
2nd quarter	\$30,000 to \$49,999	24%
3rd quarter	\$20,000 to \$29,999	18%
Bottom quarter	Under \$20,000	23%

<sup>11</sup> There is some discrepancy between the regional definition used in 1972 and those used in the current survey. Specifically, Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC and West Virginia are categorized as "South" currently, but in the 1972 survey were categorized in the "East," which we currently label "Northeast."

**PERCENT WHO FEEL COUNTRY LOSING GROUND ON EACH PROBLEM**

	<u>Social Security/Medicare</u>	<u>Drugs</u>	<u>Moral &amp; Ethical Standards</u>	<u>Crime</u>	<u>Job Security</u>	<u>High Taxes</u>	<u>Poverty/Hunger &amp; Homelessness</u>	<u>Public Education</u>	<u>Health Care System</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Total</b>	65	64	62	61	58	55	54	52	52
<b>Sex</b>									
Male	67	61	61	55	59	57	49	51	52
Female	64	67	64	67	58	53	60	52	51
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>									
White	<b>69</b>	65	64	62	60	56	53	53	<b>54</b>
Non-white	<b>48</b>	63	53	59	52	49	62	44	<b>40</b>
Black	<b>44</b>	63	52	58	53	51	69	44	<b>35</b>
Hispanic	<b>59</b>	63	61	72	42	43	63	40	<b>55</b>
<b>Age</b>									
Under 30	<b>63</b>	63	50	60	<b>46</b>	54	50	51	<b>39</b>
30-49	<b>77</b>	64	67	61	<b>62</b>	55	58	52	<b>58</b>
50 -64	<b>65</b>	68	67	66	<b>69</b>	57	53	56	<b>61</b>
65+	<b>41</b>	65	65	61	<b>55</b>	55	54	47	<b>43</b>
<b>Education</b>									
College Grad	72	64	71	54	63	52	51	60	60
Some College	73	66	65	60	59	52	55	53	53
H.S. Grad	62	62	61	65	57	53	53	50	48
Less than H.S.	54	67	52	64	53	69	62	45	48
<b>Family Income</b>									
\$75,000 plus	<b>73</b>	62	<b>73</b>	56	58	55	53	<b>66</b>	63
\$50,000 to \$74,999	<b>72</b>	66	<b>70</b>	63	63	53	48	<b>52</b>	53
\$30,000 to \$49,999	<b>71</b>	67	<b>68</b>	57	59	57	54	<b>57</b>	51
\$20,000 to \$29,999	<b>68</b>	64	<b>56</b>	64	65	57	58	<b>53</b>	55
Less than \$20,000	<b>54</b>	64	<b>55</b>	61	52	54	56	<b>41</b>	44
<b>Region</b>									
Northeast	66	58	62	55	65	59	55	50	54
Midwest	72	65	61	58	59	57	54	51	51
South	58	69	61	68	54	58	52	47	51
West	69	62	67	60	58	46	58	62	52
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>									
Total White Protestant	66	68	70	65	56	58	51	52	52
Wh. Prot. Evangelical	65	73	74	72	55	63	51	55	53
Wh. Prot. Non-Evang.	70	63	65	56	60	54	54	51	54
White Catholic	74	66	59	58	68	62	56	54	57
<b>Party ID</b>									
Republican	65	70	73	64	56	64	44	55	50
Democrat	64	62	57	55	57	46	57	48	53
Independent	68	62	60	64	63	58	57	53	51
<b>1996 President Vote</b>									
Clinton	60	<b>57</b>	<b>51</b>	53	60	<b>46</b>	57	52	53
Dole	74	<b>75</b>	<b>80</b>	66	58	<b>66</b>	48	58	50
Perot	73	<b>70</b>	<b>76</b>	66	62	<b>57</b>	63	58	60
Didn't Vote	63	<b>63</b>	<b>56</b>	64	55	<b>56</b>	53	42	49

*Continued . . .*

Continued . . .

	Good Paying Jobs	Political Corruption	Deficit	Illegal Immigration	Welfare System	Racial Conflict	Envi- ronment	Discrimination Against Minorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Total</b>	51	49	48	47	45	39	30	28
<b>Sex</b>								
Male	51	48	50	47	44	37	26	28
Female	51	50	48	47	46	41	34	28
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>								
White	51	50	50	48	45	38	<b>39</b>	26
Non-white	52	44	41	40	43	44	36	40
Black	53	42	40	37	48	46	<b>36</b>	44
Hispanic	43	46	49	45	53	35	<b>41</b>	33
<b>Age</b>								
Under 30	<b>49</b>	45	51	<b>38</b>	50	40	39	27
30-49	<b>55</b>	47	50	<b>47</b>	44	40	28	29
50 -64	<b>60</b>	54	46	<b>49</b>	45	36	29	27
65+	<b>34</b>	55	43	<b>58</b>	40	38	26	29
<b>Education</b>								
College Grad	46	44	43	48	46	38	28	28
Some College	51	48	51	46	42	38	30	28
H.S. Grad	55	50	48	47	45	40	28	27
Less than H.S.	48	54	55	46	49	39	39	30
<b>Family Income</b>								
\$75,000 plus	50	46	45	51	45	43	34	27
\$50,000 to \$74,999	52	44	47	49	42	45	22	30
\$30,000 to \$49,999	49	50	52	45	46	40	25	27
\$20,000 to \$29,999	59	48	49	55	47	42	29	28
Less than \$20,000	48	48	48	40	42	35	33	27
<b>Region</b>								
Northeast	<b>64</b>	43	43	42	51	33	27	27
Midwest	<b>53</b>	51	54	41	40	39	24	27
South	<b>41</b>	49	47	51	41	40	33	29
West	<b>52</b>	52	50	51	52	44	35	30
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>								
Total White Protestant	47	53	52	49	44	38	31	26
Wh. Prot. Evangelical	47	60	56	54	44	37	30	25
Wh. Prot. Non-Evang.	48	43	46	45	44	40	32	29
White Catholic	58	47	49	55	47	42	22	25
<b>Party ID</b>								
Republican	45	54	57	52	42	40	22	25
Democrat	51	42	40	44	43	37	34	31
Independent	53	51	49	46	48	41	32	28
<b>1996 President Vote</b>								
Clinton	51	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	41	42	39	31	32
Dole	44	<b>58</b>	<b>60</b>	59	43	44	23	23
Perot	62	<b>68</b>	<b>65</b>	59	54	39	26	37
Didn't Vote	54	<b>45</b>	<b>52</b>	39	48	35	36	25

# **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

## **ABOUT THIS SURVEY**

The survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,204 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period November 22 - December 1, 1996. 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=600) or Form 2 (N=604), the sampling error is plus or minus 5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY IN DETAIL

The sample for this survey is a random digit sample of telephone numbers selected from telephone exchanges in the continental United States. The random digit aspect of the sample is used to avoid "listing" bias and provides representation of both listed and unlisted numbers (including not-yet-listed). The design of the sample 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 households in the U.S. Estimates of the number of telephone households within each county are derived from 1990 Census data on residential telephone incidence that have been updated with state-level information on new telephone installations and county-level projections of the number of households. 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 sample was 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.

At least four 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 1994). 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.

# **THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PRINCETON SURVEY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS  
STATE OF THE UNION POLL**

-- FINAL TOPLINE --

November 22, - December 1, 1996

N= 1,204 adults 18+ -- 600 for Form 1 and 604 for Form 2<sup>12</sup>

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling for Princeton Survey Research. We're taking an important national opinion survey for public television. The results will appear on a nationally televised program in January. I'd like to ask a few questions of the YOUNGEST MALE age 18 or older, who is now at home. **(IF NO MALE AT HOME NOW:** Then, may I speak with the OLDEST FEMALE age 18 or older who is now at home)

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as president? **(IF DON'T KNOW ENTER AS CODE 9. IF "DEPENDS" PROBE ONCE WITH:** Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as president?)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
Current	57	34	9	=100
June, 1996	54	38	8	=100
April, 1996	53	39	8	=100
March, 1996	55	38	7	=100
February, 1996	51	39	10	=100
January, 1996	50	43	7	=100
October, 1995	48	42	10	=100
September, 1995	45	42	13	=100
August, 1995	44	44	12	=100
June, 1995	50	40	10	=100
April, 1995	47	43	10	=100
March, 1995	44	44	12	=100
February, 1995	44	44	12	=100
December, 1994	41	47	12	=100
November, 1994	48	40	12	=100
October, 1994	41	47	12	=100
Early October, 1994	38	47	15	=100
September, 1994	41	52	7	=100
July, 1994	45	46	9	=100
June, 1994	42	44	14	=100
May, 1994	46	42	12	=100
March, 1994	45	42	13	=100
January, 1994	51	35	14	=100
Early January, 1994	48	35	17	=100
December, 1993	48	36	16	=100
October, 1993	44	42	14	=100
September, 1993	49	35	16	=100
Early September, 1993	43	43	14	=100
August, 1993	39	46	15	=100
May, 1993	39	43	18	=100
Early May, 1993	45	37	18	=100
April, 1993	49	29	22	=100
February, 1993	56	25	19	=100

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<sup>12</sup> Margin of error: Plus or minus 3 percentage points for total sample; Plus or minus 5 percentage points for Form 1; Plus or minus 5 percentage points for Form 2

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the policies and proposals of the Republican leaders in Congress? (**IF DON'T KNOW ENTER AS CODE 9. IF "DEPENDS" PROBE ONCE WITH:** Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the policies and proposals of the Republican leaders in Congress?)

		<u>June</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>April</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>Feb</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>Jan</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>Oct</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>Sept</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>Aug</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>June</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>April</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>Dec</u> <u>1994</u> <sup>13</sup>
40	Approve	36	39	35	33	36	36	36	38	41	44	43	52
43	Disapprove	50	46	51	53	54	51	50	45	45	43	39	28
<u>17</u> 100	Don't know	<u>14</u> 100	<u>15</u> 100	<u>14</u> 100	<u>14</u> 100	<u>10</u> 100	<u>13</u> 100	<u>14</u> 100	<u>17</u> 100	<u>14</u> 100	<u>13</u> 100	<u>18</u> 100	<u>20</u> 100

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<sup>13</sup> In December 1994 the question asked "As best you can tell, do you approve or disapprove of Republican congressional leaders' policies and plans for the future?"

On a different subject, I'd like to ask you about your hopes and fears for your future.

3. First, 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?

- 42 Financial (NET)
  - 11 More opportunities/Better job
  - 10 Financial Security (Unspecified)
  - 7 Security/Stability of Social Security
  - 6 Make more money/Better wages
  - 5 Be more successful professionally
  - 4 A sound economy
  - 3 Other financial
  
- 21 Health (NET)
  - 18 Good health/A long life
  - 4 Other health
  
- 18 Family/Children (NET)
  - 7 Happiness for family/children
  - 6 Education/Job opportunities for children
  - 4 Starting a family/ Having children
  - 2 Other family/children
  
- 10 Peace/Stability (NET)
  - 7 No wars/People not killing each other
  - 3 Other peace/stability
  
- 6 Quality of life (NET)
  
- 6 Less crime
  
- 4 Less government
  
- 4 Return to morality
  
- 4 Education (NET)
  - 3 Get an education/Finish school
  - 1 Other education
  
- 3 Material possessions (NET)
  - 2 Buy a house
  - 1 Buy something else
  
- 10 Other
  
- 12 Don't know

*Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses*

4. And what are your main fears and worries about your future? (**OPEN-END, RECORD VERBATIMS. PROBE FOR CLARITY ONLY. ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR THEM. ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES.**)

38	Financial (NET)
10	Job security/Find a job
10	Personal finances/Not enough money
6	Stability of Social Security System
6	The economy
4	Retirement plans/Money for retirement
4	Financial security unspecified
1	Other financial
14	Health (NET)
8	Being sick/Poor health
5	Inadequate health care or health insurance
2	Other health
10	Crime (NET)
6	Worries about children's future
5	The political system
4	War/International instability
3	Things getting worse/going downhill (unspecified)
3	Moral decline
7	Other
24	None/No worries
2	Don't know

*Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses*

5. Let's talk about the quality of your life . . . Imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to ten 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 ten.<sup>14</sup>

	<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>
37 High (8-10)	31	33
33 Medium (6-7)	35	36
29 Low (0-5)	34	30
$\frac{1}{100}$ Don't know	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$
6.7 <i>Mean Rating</i>	6.4	6.5

6. On what number step would you say you stood five years ago?

	<u>1989</u>
26 High (8-10)	28
27 Medium (6-7)	27
46 Low (0-5)	44
$\frac{1}{100}$ Don't know	$\frac{1}{100}$
5.8 <i>Mean Rating</i>	6.0

7. Just your best guess, on what number step do you think you will stand in the future, say about five years from now?

	<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>
64 High (8-10)	56	61
16 Medium (6-7)	21	19
16 Low (0-5)	18	14
$\frac{4}{100}$ Don't know	$\frac{5}{100}$	$\frac{6}{100}$
7.7 <i>Mean Rating</i>	7.4	7.7

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<sup>14</sup> Trends for questions 5, 6, and 7: Gallup

Now I'd like to ask you about your hopes and fears for the future of the United States.

8. First, what are your main wishes and hopes for the country's future? What do you most hope for to make the country better?

- 26 Economic (NET)
  - 9 More jobs
  - 7 A good/better economy
  - 6 A balanced budget/Less government debt
  - 7 Other economic
  
- 19 World Peace/National Security (NET)
  - 16 World peace/No more war
  - 2 Stronger military/Security
  - 2 Other peace/security
  
- 12 Crime (NET)
  - 11 Less crime/violence
  - 1 Eliminate drug problem
  - 1 Other Crime
  
- 10 Religion and Morality (NET)
  - 5 A more moral society
  - 3 More emphasis on religion
  - 2 Other religion/morality
  
- 9 Government/Political leadership (NET)
  - 3 Better leadership
  - 6 Other government/political leadership
  
- 8 Cooperation/Unity (NET)
  - 4 More unity
  - 4 Other cooperation/Unity
  
- 6 More money for education
  
- 4 Race relations (NET)
  - 2 Racial equality
  - 1 Other race relations
  
- 4 Improved health care
  
- 3 Taking care of our own citizens
  
- 3 Help to homeless
  
- 2 Change welfare
  
- 9 Other
  
- 8 Don't know

*Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses*

9. And what are your main fears and worries about the country's future?

- 18 Economic (NET)
  - 4 The economy
  - 4 Unemployment/Job loss
  - 3 Budget imbalance/Debt
  - 8 Other economic
  
- 12 War/National Security (NET)
  - 10 War/Fighting between nations
  - 2 Other war/national security
  
- 10 Crime/Violence
  
- 8 Government/Political leadership (NET)
  - 4 Effectiveness of Government/Political leadership
  - 5 Other government/Political leadership
  
- 6 Religion and Morality (NET)
  - 4 Low morals
  - 3 Other religion/Morality
  
- 6 Things are getting worse/going downhill (unspecified)
  
- 3 Racial tension
  
- 15 Other
  
- 28 None/No worries
  
- 1 Don't know

*Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses*

10. Thinking about the ladder again, suppose the top represents the best possible situation for our country; 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 ten.<sup>15</sup>

		<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>
10	High (8-10)	13	14
36	Medium (6-7)	42	34
52	Low (0-5)	43	51
$\frac{2}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{2}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$
5.4	<i>Mean Rating</i>	5.7	5.5

11. On what number step would you say the U.S. was about five years ago?

		<u>1989</u>
14	High (8-10)	13
35	Medium (6-7)	33
48	Low (0-5)	51
$\frac{3}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{3}{100}$
5.6	<i>Mean Rating</i>	5.6

12. Just your best guess, if things go pretty much as you now expect, what number step do you think the U.S. will be on the ladder, let us say, about five years from now?

		<u>1989</u>	<u>1987</u>
26	High (8-10)	31	28
27	Medium (6-7)	33	29
44	Low (0-5)	31	34
$\frac{3}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{5}{100}$	$\frac{9}{100}$
5.7	<i>Mean Rating</i>	6.3	6.1

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<sup>15</sup> Trends for questions 10, 11, and 12: Gallup

“LADDER OF LIFE” SUMMARIES AND TRENDS:<sup>16</sup>  
 (Questions 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 12)

PERSONAL LADDER RATINGS<sup>17</sup>

	<u>Five Years Ago</u>	<u>Today</u>	<u>Five Years from Now</u>
Current	5.8	6.7	7.7
January/February 1989	6.0	6.4	7.4
April/May 1987	5.8	6.5	7.7
March 1985	5.8	6.4	7.6
1982	5.9	6.3	6.5
1981	6.0	6.4	7.3
January 1976	5.7	6.7	7.7
1975	5.5	6.1	6.7
April 1974	5.5	6.6	7.4
June 1972	5.5	6.4	7.6
January 1971	5.8	6.6	7.5
September 1964	6.0	6.9	7.9
1959	5.9	6.6	7.8

LADDER RATINGS FOR U.S.<sup>18</sup>

	<u>Five Years Ago</u>	<u>Today</u>	<u>Five Years from Now</u>
Current	5.6	5.4	5.7
May 1991	5.8	5.9	6.0
January/February 1989	5.6	5.7	6.3
April/May 1987	5.7	5.5	6.1
March 1985	5.3	5.9	6.6
1982	6.5	5.3	6.0
1981	6.0	5.1	6.3
January 1976	6.0	5.5	6.1
April 1974	6.3	4.8	5.8
June 1972	5.6	5.5	6.2
January 1971	6.2	5.4	6.2
September 1964	6.1	6.5	7.7
1959	6.5	6.7	7.4

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<sup>16</sup> Gallup

<sup>17</sup> Weighted averages on an 0-10 point scale

<sup>18</sup> Weighted averages on an 0-10 point scale

		<u>January 1989</u>	<u>April/May 1987</u>
<u>Personal Future State</u>			
55	Optimists	55	59
27	No change	25	24
	22 Positive	20	20
	5 Negative	5	4
13	Pessimists	15	11
<u>Personal State In Retrospect</u>			
51	Made progress	47	53
26	No change	26	23
	20 Positive	18	17
	6 Negative	8	6
21	Slipped	26	24
<u>Future State of the U.S.</u>			
41	Optimists	50	46
22	No change	25	21
	12 Positive	16	12
	10 Negative	9	9
33	Pessimists	20	23
<u>U.S. In Retrospect</u>			
32	Made progress	39	34
25	No change	31	22
	12 Positive	17	11
	13 Negative	14	11
39	Slipped	26	41

Now here are some different questions about the future.

13. Thinking ahead to the year 2000, that is about 3 years from now, are you very optimistic, somewhat optimistic, somewhat pessimistic, or very pessimistic about YOUR future by the year 2000?

32 Very optimistic  
47 Somewhat optimistic  
11 Somewhat pessimistic  
6 Very pessimistic  
 $\frac{4}{100}$  Don't know

14. Are you very optimistic, somewhat optimistic, somewhat pessimistic, or very pessimistic about the future of the United States by the year 2000?

20 Very optimistic  
47 Somewhat optimistic  
22 Somewhat pessimistic  
8 Very pessimistic  
 $\frac{3}{100}$  Don't know

15. Are you the parent or guardian of any children under 18 years of age?

41 Yes

$\frac{59}{100}$  No

16. Looking to the future, when your children grow up do you think they will be better off or worse off than you are now?

*Based on parents of children under 18; n=502*

August 1994<sup>19</sup>

51 Better off 47

41 Worse off 39

4 Same (VOL) 5

$\frac{4}{100}$  Don't know  $\frac{9}{100}$

17. Looking to the future, do you think MOST children in this country will grow up to be better off or worse off than their parents?

August 1994<sup>20</sup>

38 Better off 33

55 Worse off 50

3 Same (VOL) 6

$\frac{4}{100}$  Don't know  $\frac{11}{100}$

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<sup>19</sup> PSR for Newsweek

<sup>20</sup> PSR for Newsweek. Trend based on non-parents only.

18. Please tell me whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied, on the whole, with the following aspects of your life: (First/Next) (**INSERT-- READ AND ROTATE**) (are you satisfied or dissatisfied?)

Would you say you are VERY (dis)satisfied or SOMEWHAT (dis)satisfied.

	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Doesn't Apply (VOL)</u>	<u>DK</u>	
a. Your standard of living -- what you can buy or do	35	40	14	10	NA <sup>21</sup>	1	=100
b. Your household income	27	38	18	15	NA	2	=100
c. Your family life	69	21	6	3	NA	1	=100
d. Your job -- the kind of work you do	41	28	8	6	17	*	=100
e. <b>(NON-PARENTS)</b> The education children are getting today/ <b>(PARENTS)</b> Your children's education							
Total	26	28	20	20	NA	6	=100
Non-Parents (n=702)	14	26	28	28	NA	4	=100
Parents (n=502)	44	30	9	10	NA	7	=100
f. Your housing situation	56	31	7	5	NA	1	=100
g. Your free time -- the time when you are not working	47	30	12	7	3	1	=100

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<sup>21</sup> NA = Not applicable for this question

QUESTION 18 TREND<sup>22</sup>

	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied/ Doesn't apply/DK</u>	
a. Your standard of living -- what you can buy or do			
Current	75	25	=100
October 1991	62	38	=100
September 1988	85	15	=100
Sept/Oct 1973	71	27	=100
b. Your household income			
Current	65	35	=100
October 1991	54	46	=100
September 1988	69	31	=100
Sept/Oct 1973	61	39	=100
c. Your family life			
Current	90	10	=100
September 1988	94	6	=100
d. Your job -- the kind of work you do			
Current	69	31	=100
September 1988	76	24	=100
Sept/Oct 1973	79	21	=100
e. The education children are getting today/ Your children's education			
Current	54	46	=100
Sept/Oct 1973	61	39	=100
f. Your housing situation			
Current	87	13	=100
October 1991	80	20	=100
September 1988	87	13	=100
Sept/Oct 1973	74	23	=100
g. Your free time -- the time when you are not working			
Current	77	23	=100
September 1988	87	13	=100

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<sup>22</sup> Trends: 1991 Gallup for Newsweek; 1988 and 1973 Gallup. Wording of some questions differ slightly

On the subject of crime . . .

19. Is there any area within a mile of your home where you would be afraid to walk alone at night?<sup>23</sup>

		<u>1992</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1965</u>
39	Yes	44	40	43	45	45	45	45	42	31	34
60	No	56	59	57	55	55	55	55	58	69	66
$\frac{1}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$

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<sup>23</sup> Gallup. Trend question wording differs slightly.

**QUESTIONS 20 &-21:**

Now I'd like to ask some question about some of the problems we face in this country today. For each problem I mention, please tell me how you think each is affecting this country today, and how much this problem affects you personally. (First/next) **(INSERT -- READ AND ROTATE)** . . .

20. Do you think the problem of (INSERT) is ABOUT THE SAME as it has been, that the country is MAKING PROGRESS in this area, or that the country is LOSING GROUND?

21. And, how much do problems in this area affect you personally? A lot, somewhat, only a little, OR not at all?

		QUESTION 20				QUESTION 21						
		<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>About the Same</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>DK</u>		
a.	Crime											
	Current	15	23	61	1 =100	27	30	21	22	*	=100	
	April 1995	9	13	77	1 =100							
	March 1994	7	15	77	1 =100							
	March 1989	15	19	64	2 =100							
b.	Drugs											
	Current	13	21	64	2 =100	23	22	18	36	1	=100	
	April 1995	10	22	66	2 =100							
	March 1994	13	22	62	3 =100							
	March 1989	17	12	69	2 =100							
c.	The way the health care system is working											
	Current	20	25	52	3 =100	34	33	16	16	1	=100	
	April 1995	14	30	53	3 =100							
	March 1994	16	31	49	4 =100							

*Continued. . . .*

*Questions 20 & 21 continued . . .*

		QUESTION 20				QUESTION 21				
		<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>About the Same</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>DK</u>
d.	Conflict between racial groups <sup>24</sup>									
	Current	27	31	39	3 =100	15	25	23	36	1 =100
	April 1995	27	36	35	2 =100					
	March 1994	21	32	41	3 =100					
e.	Political corruption									
	Current	12	36	49	3 =100	22	32	21	23	2 =100
	April 1995	12	41	44	3 =100					
	March 1994	12	39	46	3 =100					
f.	Low moral and ethical standards									
	Current	12	24	62	2 =100	24	33	21	20	2 =100
	April 1995	7	20	70	3 =100					
	March 1994	6	29	63	2 =100					
g.	Poverty, hunger and homelessness									
	Current	14	30	54	2 =100	17	22	25	35	1 =100
	April 1995	11	30	57	2 =100					
	March 1994	9	32	56	3 =100					
	March 1989	22	23	53	2 =100					

*Continued. . .*

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<sup>24</sup> Trend question asked about “conflict among racial, religious or ethnic groups”

*Questions 20 & 21 continued . . .*

		QUESTION 20				QUESTION 21				
		<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>About the Same</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>DK</u>
h.	The availability of good-paying jobs									
	Current	19	26	51	4 =100	27	28	18	25	2 =100
	April 1995	17	24	55	4 =100					
	March 1994	10	23	63	4 =100					
i.	Discrimination against minorities									
	Current	33	36	28	3 =100	16	25	24	34	1 =100
	April 1995	40	32	26	2 =100					
	March 1994	38	32	25	5 =100					
j.	The quality of public education									
	Current	24	22	52	2 =100	30	29	16	24	1 =100
	April 1995	18	20	60	2 =100					
	March 1994	17	19	61	3 =100					
k.	The federal budget deficit									
	Current	23	24	48	5 =100	27	32	20	19	2 =100
	April 1995	15	21	60	4 =100					
	March 1994	11	21	60	8 =100					
	March 1989	16	27	56	7 =100					
l.	Illegal immigration									
	Current	15	32	47	6 =100	14	18	24	42	2 =100
	April 1995	9	23	62	6 =100					
	March 1994	9	22	58	11 =100					

*Continued . . .*

*Questions 20 & 21 continued . . .*

		QUESTION 20				QUESTION 21				
		<u>Making Progress</u>	<u>About the Same</u>	<u>Losing Ground</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>DK</u>
m.	Job security Current	14	25	58	3 =100	28	26	17	28	1 =100
n.	The financial soundness of Social Security and Medicare Current	10	21	65	4 =100	35	25	16	22	2 =100
o.	High taxes Current	11	31	55	3 =100	45	32	12	10	1 =100
p.	The way the welfare system is working Current	31	21	45	3 =100	19	23	21	36	1 =100
	April 1995	13	17	67	2 =100					
	March 1994	11	23	60	3 =100					
q.	Environmental pollution Current	42	26	30	2 =100	29	31	21	18	1 =100
	April 1995	43	26	30	1 =100					
	March 1994	37	26	34	3 =100					
	March 1989	32	20	42	6 =100					

22. Of all the problems we've just talked about, which ONE would you most like to see the government do more about?

- 12 Crime
- 12 The quality of public education
- 8 The way the health care system is working
- 7 The federal budget deficit
- 7 The financial soundness of Social Security and Medicare
- 7 Drugs
- 7 Poverty, hunger and homelessness
- 7 High taxes
- 6 The way the welfare system is working
- 4 Low moral and ethical standards
- 4 Job security
- 4 Political corruption
- 3 The availability of good-paying jobs
- 3 Environmental pollution
- 2 Conflict between racial groups
- 1 Discrimination against minorities
- 1 Illegal immigration
- 1 None (VOL)
- 4 Don't know

100

23. If life is going to be better in this country in the future, how big a role do you think each of the following will play: (First/Next) will **(INSERT -- READ AND ROTATE)** will play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all (in making things better)?

	<u>Major Role</u>	<u>Minor Role</u>	<u>No Role At All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
a. Science and technology	77	17	4	2	=100
<i><b>Based on form 1; n=600</b></i>					
b. Large corporations	59	32	7	2	=100
<i><b>Based on form 2; n=604</b></i>					
c. Small businesses	51	41	6	2	=100
d. Religion	52	38	8	2	=100
e. Schools and universities	77	18	4	1	=100
<i><b>Based on form 1; n=600</b></i>					
f. The government in Washington	71	23	5	1	=100
<i><b>Based on form 2; n=604</b></i>					
g. Government	70	24	4	2	=100
h. The news media	50	38	10	2	=100

24. In your opinion, how much of a threat to our country's future well-being are each the following:  
 (First/Next) is (INSERT --READ AND ROTATE) a major threat, a minor threat, or not a threat at all?

	<u>Major Threat</u>	<u>Minor Threat</u>	<u>No Threat At All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
a. The news media	39	39	19	3	=100
<i>Based on form 1; n=600</i>					
b. The number of immigrants who come to this country LEGALLY	26	45	27	2	=100
<i>Based on form 2; n=604</i>					
c. The number of immigrants who come to this country ILLEGALLY	51	37	10	2	=100
<i>Based on form 1; n=600</i>					
d. The government in Washington	43	37	18	2	=100
<i>Based on form 2; n=604</i>					
e. Government	43	39	14	4	=100
f. The pace of technological change	29	37	29	5	=100
g. International terrorists	54	38	6	2	=100
h. Economic competition from other nations	47	39	12	2	=100
i. Anti-government groups	38	47	12	3	=100
j. Racial conflict	49	40	9	2	=100
k. The power of special interest groups in politics	53	37	7	3	=100

25. Thinking ahead to the year 2000, as I read the following pairs, please tell me which is more likely to happen. (First/Next), do you think . . . **(INSERT ITEM PAIRS -- READ AND ROTATE)**

- a.        68        The crime rate will be higher  
             OR  
             28        The crime rate will be lower  
             2         Neither/No change **(VOL)**  
             2        Don't know  
             100
- b.        36        Health care will be **MORE** affordable  
             OR  
             61        Health care will be **LESS** affordable  
             1         Neither/No change **(VOL)**  
             2        Don't know  
             100
- c.        53        The U.S. economy will be stronger  
             OR  
             42        The U.S. economy will be weaker  
             2         Neither/No change **(VOL)**  
             3        Don't know  
             100
- d.        54        Race relations will improve  
             OR  
             40        Race relations will get worse  
             3         Neither/No change **(VOL)**  
             3        Don't know  
             100
- e.        59        The public education system will improve  
             OR  
             37        The public education system will get worse  
             2         Neither/No change **(VOL)**  
             2        Don't know  
             100

*Continued . . .*

*Question 25 continued . . .*

- f.        26        The Social Security and Medicare systems will be in BETTER financial shape  
                 OR  
                 70        The Social Security and Medicare systems will be in WORSE financial shape  
                 1        Neither/No change (VOL)  
                   3          Don't know  
                 100
- g.        82        The average American will pay MORE in taxes  
                 OR  
                 14        The average American will pay LESS in taxes  
                 2        Neither/No change (VOL)  
                   2          Don't know  
                 100
- h.        58        Bill Clinton will have a SUCCESSFUL second term  
                 OR  
                 36        Bill Clinton will have an UNSUCCESSFUL second term  
                 1        Neither/No change (VOL)  
                   5          Don't know  
                 100
- i.        47        The campaign finance system will be reformed  
                 OR  
                 46        The campaign finance system will NOT be reformed  
                 1        Neither/No change (VOL)  
                   6          Don't know  
                 100