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For The People & The Press

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Changing Views of Federal Spending

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# Fewer Want Spending to Grow, But Most Cuts Remain Unpopular

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## Changing Views of Federal Spending Fewer Want Spending to Grow, But Most Cuts Remain Unpopular

The public's views about federal spending are beginning to change. Across a range of federal programs, Americans are no longer calling for increased spending, as they have for many years. For the most part, however, there is not a great deal of support for *cutting* spending, though in a few cases support for reductions has grown noticeably. The survey also shows that the public is reluctant to cut spending – or raise taxes – to balance state budgets.

Since June 2009, there have been double-digit declines in the proportions favoring increased federal spending for health care (by 20 percentage points), government assistance for the unemployed (17 points), Medicare (13 points) and veterans' benefits and services (12 points). Fewer Americans also favor increased spending on military defense (down nine points) and environmental protection (seven points).

In two areas in particular – aid for the unemployed and national defense – the public's attitudes toward federal spending have changed dramatically. Currently, as many favor decreasing spending as increasing spending for assistance to the unemployed and national defense. In 2009, far more supported funding increases than decreases for these programs.

Despite these changing views, however, majorities or pluralities favor increased

### Fewer Say Spend More, But Most Cuts Find Little Favor

	<i>Would you increase, decrease or keep spending the same for...</i>	2009		2011	Change
		%	%		
Education	Increase	67	62	-5	
	Decrease	6	11	+5	
Veterans' benefits and services	Increase	63	51	-12	
	Decrease	2	6	+4	
Health care	Increase	61	41	-20	
	Decrease	10	24	+14	
Medicare	Increase	53	40	-13	
	Decrease	6	12	+6	
Combating crime	Increase	45	39	-6	
	Decrease	10	18	+8	
Energy	Increase	41	36	-5	
	Decrease	15	23	+8	
Scientific research	Increase	39	36	-3	
	Decrease	14	23	+9	
Environmental protection	Increase	43	36	-7	
	Decrease	16	26	+10	
U.S. anti-terrorism defenses	Increase	35	33	-2	
	Decrease	17	21	+4	
Agriculture	Increase	35	32	-3	
	Decrease	12	23	+11	
Military defense	Increase	40	31	-9	
	Decrease	18	30	+12	
Unemployment assistance	Increase	44	27	-17	
	Decrease	15	28	+13	
Global poverty assistance	Increase	26	21	-5	
	Decrease	34	45	+11	

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spending in five of 18 areas. Fully 62% favor increased funding for education – the highest percentage for any program tested and little changed from 2009 (67%). In all, there is only one area – economic assistance to needy people around the world – for which a plurality favors cutting federal spending.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Feb. 2-7 among 1,385 adults, finds that President Obama’s overall job rating has ticked up: 49% approve of Obama’s job performance while 42% disapprove. From September through January, roughly as many approved as disapproved of Obama’s job performance.

Most Americans (56%) say President Obama could be doing more to improve economic conditions while 39% say he is doing as much as he can. A year ago, somewhat fewer (50%) said Obama could be doing more on the economy and in March 2009, just 30% expressed this view.

Still, views of former President Bush’s efforts to improve the economy at a comparable stage in his presidency were slightly more negative than they are for Obama today, though the economy was in much better shape. In January 2003, 61% said Bush could be doing more to improve economic conditions while 33% said he was doing all he could.

The survey finds somewhat more positive – or at least, less negative – views of the nation’s economy. Only about one-in-ten (12%) says economic conditions are excellent or good, a figure that has changed little over the past three years, but the proportion saying the economy is “poor” has edged lower. Currently 42% rate economic conditions as poor, which is virtually unchanged from December (45%), but down nine points from October (54%).

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### Most Say Obama Could be Doing More on the Economy

<i>President's efforts on the economy...</i>	<b>Could be doing more</b>	<b>Is doing as much as he can</b>	<b>DK</b>
<b>Obama</b>	%	%	%
Feb 2011	56	39	5=100
Feb 2010	50	43	7=100
March 2009	30	60	10=100
<b>Bush</b>			
Feb 2004	65	30	5=100
Jan 2003	61	33	6=100
Jan 2002	46	48	6=100

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 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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A plurality (42%) continues to say it will be a long time before the economy recovers, but that is 10 points lower than in September. The percentage saying the economy is recovering has more than doubled – from 10% to 24% – over this period.

Yet there has been no improvement in people's assessments of their own finances. And while economists say that the recession has ended, more than a third (36%) say that the recession had a major effect on their finances and they have yet to recover.

Jobs remain the public's dominant economic concern, but a new threat has emerged. The proportion citing rising prices as the national economic issue that most worries them has risen from 15% in December to 23% currently. Over the same period, the proportion citing the deficit as the most worrisome economic problem is flat (19% in December, 19% today).

As state budget problems worsen, most say that the states themselves should be responsible for addressing these problems, without the help of the federal government. Six-in-ten (60%) say the states should deal with budget shortfalls by raising taxes or cutting services, while just 27% favor the federal government giving more money to the states. These opinions are virtually unchanged from last June.

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### More Say Economy is Recovering, But Inflation Casts a Shadow

	Sept 2010	Dec 2010	Feb 2011
<i>National economic outlook</i>	%	%	%
The economy is recovering	10	17	24
Not yet recovering, but will soon	37	33	33
Will be a long time before it recovers	52	48	42
Don't know	2	2	2
	100	100	100
<i>Economic issue that worries you most</i>			
Job situation	49	47	44
Rising prices	15	15	23
Budget deficit	19	19	19
Financial/housing markets	12	14	10
Other/Don't know	5	5	5
	100	100	100

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 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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But there continues to be far more opposition than support for nearly all specific proposals to balance state budgets. Large majorities say their state should not decrease funding for primary and secondary education, health services, higher education, and road maintenance and public transportation. Most also oppose raising personal income and sales taxes, as well as taxes on business as ways to balance their state's budget.

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### Public Rejects State Budget Cuts, Tax Increases

<i>If state needs to balance its budget...</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>DK</b>
<i>State should decrease...</i>	%	%	%
Pensions plans of government employees	47	47	6=100
Funding for roads and public transportation	31	67	2=100
Funding for public colleges and universities	31	66	3=100
Health care services	21	76	4=100
Funding for K through 12 public schools	18	79	3=100
<i>State should increase...</i>			
Taxes on businesses	41	55	4=100
Sales taxes	30	67	2=100
Personal income taxes	28	68	4=100

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 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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There is greater willingness to decrease funding for the pension plans of government employees. Even so, as many oppose this option as support it as a way to balance their state's budget (47% each).

The survey finds little change in opinions about both political parties over the past few months. Currently, 47% have a favorable impression of the Democratic Party while 46% express an unfavorable view. For the GOP, 43% have a favorable opinion and slightly more (48%) have an unfavorable view.

The shift in the balance of power on Capitol Hill has not changed the public's view about the level of discord between the president and Congress. Fully 65% say Obama and GOP leaders are not working together on the important issues facing the country; an almost identical percentage (67%) expressed this view at the beginning of last year. As was the case a year ago, far more of those who say the two sides are not working together blame Republican leaders (31%) than the president (19%).

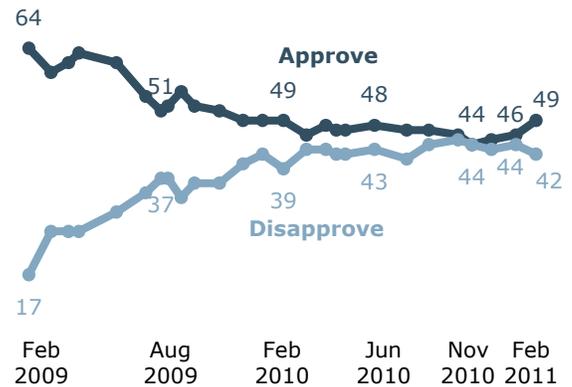
## SECTION 1: THE PARTIES AND THE PRESIDENT

Barack Obama's approval ratings have improved somewhat in the last few months. Currently, more Americans say they approve of the way he is handling his job as president than say they disapprove (49% vs. 42%). Opinion was more closely divided throughout the fall and earlier this winter (in November 44% approved while an identical percentage disapproved). Obama's approval ratings are now on par with his ratings in the winter and spring of last year.

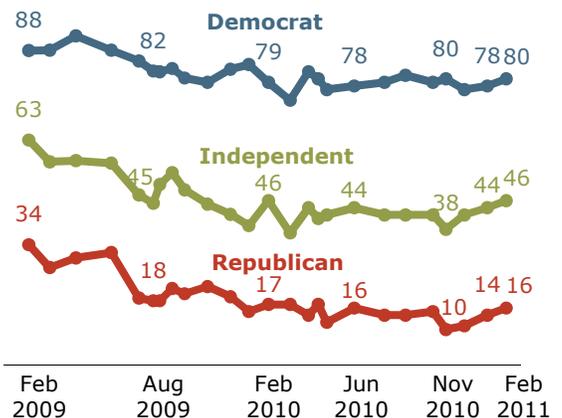
While Democratic opinion of the president's job performance has remained relatively steady since the fall (currently 80% approve), his ratings among independents and Republicans have improved over that period. Today, 46% of independents approve of Obama's performance, up from a recent low of 38% after the midterm election.

While just 16% of Republicans approve of Obama's job performance, that represents a return to the levels seen earlier in his term and an improvement from an all-time low of 10% following the GOP's midterm victories.

### Obama's Job Approval



### Job Approval by Party



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## Party Favorability

A few weeks into the new congressional session, views of both the Democratic and Republican parties are little changed since September. Today, opinions of the Democratic Party are about evenly split: 47% have a favorable opinion, 46% have an unfavorable opinion. At best, this is slightly better than the overall rating given to the Republican Party (43% favorable, 48% unfavorable).

But opinions of both parties have improved substantially from a low point following the heated debate over health care reform last spring, when favorability ratings for both parties fell into negative territory. This recovery is most noticeable among political independents. Today, 40% of independents offer a favorable assessment of the Democratic Party, up from 27% last spring. And 41% feel favorably toward the GOP, up from 33%.

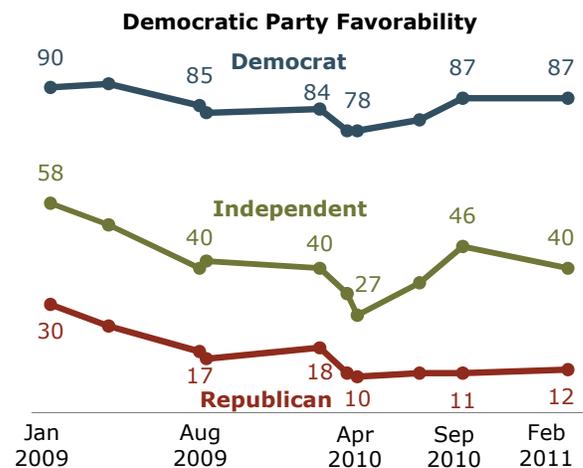
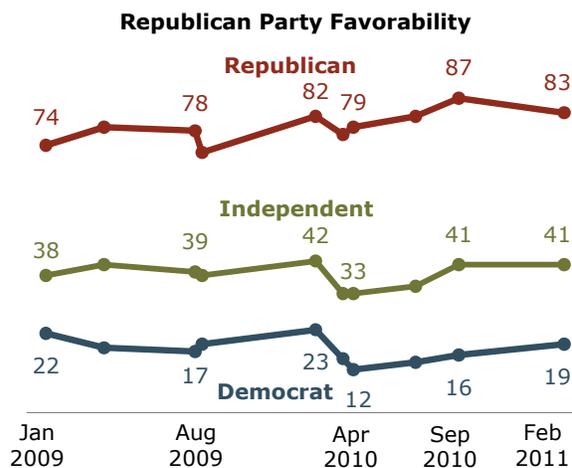
Overall, partisans on both sides express broad satisfaction with their political parties: 83% of Republicans and 87% of Democrats offer a favorable assessment of their parties.

### Stable Views of the Parties

	Aug 2009	Apr 2010	Sept 2010	Feb 2011
<i>Democratic Party</i>				
Favorable	49	38	50	47
Unfavorable	40	52	44	46
Don't know	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Republican Party</i>				
Favorable	40	37	43	43
Unfavorable	50	53	49	48
Don't know	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100	100

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### Both Parties Win Broad Support From Their Bases



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## Few Say Obama and GOP Are Cooperating

Just 27% of Americans say Barack Obama and Republican congressional leaders are working together to deal with the important issues facing the country, while 65% say they are not working together. Public perceptions have changed little since last January, and Republicans (76%) continue to be somewhat more likely than Democrats (61%) and independents (63%) to say the two sides are not working together.

When asked who is to blame for the lack of bipartisan cooperation in Washington, far more people blame the Republican leaders in Congress (31%) than Barack Obama (19%), though another 11% volunteer that both are equally to blame. By about four-to-one, Republicans place blame with Obama (46%) rather than their party's leadership (11%). In contrast, 52% of Democrats lay the blame at the feet of Republican leaders and just 3% attribute it to Obama. Independents are about twice as likely to say GOP leaders are to blame than say Obama is to blame (27% vs. 14%). These partisan dynamics are nearly identical to opinion in January 2010.

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### Public Sees Little Bipartisanship

	Feb 2009*	Jun 2009	Aug 2009	Jan 2010	Feb 2011
<i>Obama and GOP leaders are...</i>	%	%	%	%	%
Working together	43	39	24	25	27
Not working together	45	50	63	67	65
<i>Who is to blame?</i>					
GOP leaders	27	26	29	32	31
Barack Obama	7	12	17	19	19
Both (vol.)	5	9	9	9	11
Neither/Other/DK (vol.)	6	4	7	7	4
Don't know	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER. Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q13-14. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. \*Feb 2009 asked specifically about the economic stimulus.

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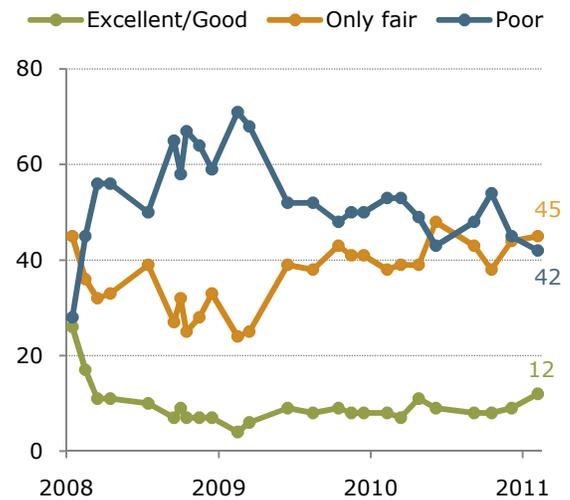
## SECTION 2: NATIONAL ECONOMY, PERSONAL FINANCES

The public's views of national economic conditions are broadly negative. Nearly nine-in-ten call conditions either only fair (45%) or poor (42%), and just 12% describe them as excellent or good. While negative on balance, national economic ratings have shown modest signs of improvement.

A year ago, 53% rated economic conditions as poor. The percentage saying the economy was in poor shape declined in the summer (43% in June). But in October, 54% rated economic conditions as poor. That percentage fell to 45% in December and 42% currently. The percentage calling conditions poor is now at its lowest point since January 2008.

The number rating the economy as poor has declined across most demographic and political groups since October. There continues to be a wide partisan gap in views of the economy: 51% of Republicans currently say national economic conditions are poor, compared with 43% of independents and 36% of Democrats.

### Views of National Economic Conditions



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## More Say Recovery is Underway

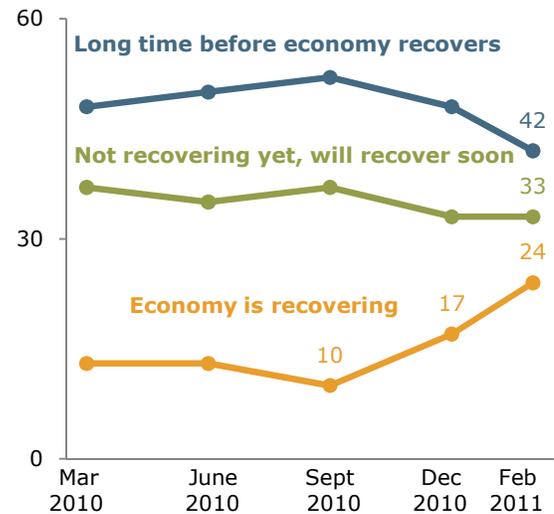
While economic ratings remain mostly negative, the public's outlook continues to improve. In the current survey, more than half (57%) say the economy is now recovering (24%) or that it is not yet recovering but will soon (33%). About four-in-ten (42%) say it will be a long time before the economy recovers.

The percentage saying the economy is recovering has climbed seven points since December and is up 14 points since September. Over the same time period, the percentage saying it will be a long time before the economy recovers has declined from 52% in September to 42% in the current survey.

Since September, there have been sharp increases in the percentages of people with higher incomes and college graduates who say the economy is recovering. Nearly a third in each group now say the economy is recovering (31% of those with family incomes of \$75,000 or more, 30% of college graduates). In September, just 12% of higher income people and 10% of college graduates said the economy was recovering. Among people with lower incomes and less education, increases have been somewhat smaller.

All political groups have become more optimistic about an economic recovery since September. However, more Democrats (30%) than Republicans (18%) and independents (23%) say the economy is in recovery.

## More Say Economy is Recovering



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## Affluent, Better Educated More Likely to See Recovery

Percent saying economy is recovering...	Sept 2010	Dec 2010	Feb 2011	Sept-Feb change
	%	%	%	
Total	10	17	24	+14
<i>Family income</i>				
\$75,000 or more	12	22	31	+19
\$30k-\$74,999	9	18	23	+14
Less than \$30,000	9	13	21	+12
<i>College grad+</i>				
Some college	9	16	18	+9
HS or less	10	16	22	+12
<i>Political affiliation</i>				
Republican	6	11	18	+12
Democrat	13	23	30	+17
Independent	9	16	23	+14
<i>Age group</i>				
18-29	13	21	25	+12
30-49	10	17	22	+12
50-64	8	16	26	+18
65+	8	15	21	+13

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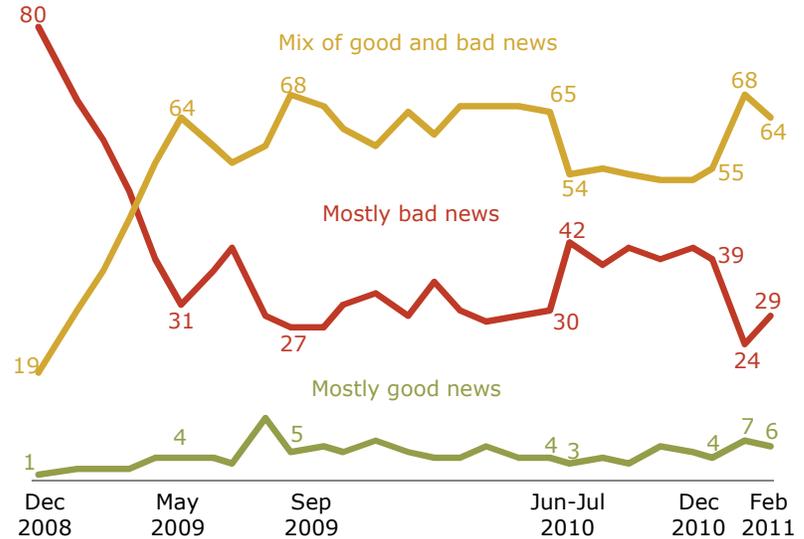
## Public Hearing Mixed Economic News

The improved outlook on economic recovery mirrors what Americans say they are seeing and hearing in the news these days. Since December, there has been an increase in the number hearing a mix of good and bad news about the economy, according to the Pew Research Center's News Interest Index survey.

The survey found the number of those hearing a mix of economic news increased from 55% in December to 64% in

February. There was also a 10-point drop in those hearing mostly bad news (39% in December, 29% in February). However, only a small minority (6%) say they are hearing mostly good news about the economy. (For more on this poll, including what people are hearing about specific segments of the economy, [click here](#).)

### Economic News Mostly Good, Mostly Bad or Mixed?



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## Recession Hurt Most, But One-In-Four Feeling Better

In evaluating the effect of the recession on their own personal financial situation, only a minority (37%) say it did not have a major effect on them, while 61% say it did. Most who were affected – 36% of Americans overall – say their financial situation has yet to recover. But a significant minority – 25% of the public – say that while the economy had a major effect on their finances, they have mostly recovered.

The continuing toll of the recession on personal finances is most notable among the less affluent and educated. Roughly half (49%) of people with family incomes of \$30,000 or less say they have not yet

recovered from the effect of the recession, 18% have recovered from the impact, and 31% say they were not affected in a major way.

These contrast with the views among those with incomes of \$75,000 or more; about half of this group (48%) say the recession did not have a major effect on their finances and only 19% say they have not yet recovered.

Both younger and older Americans are more likely to say they escaped the effects of the recession – 44% of

those under 30 and those 65 and older say it did not have a major effect on them, compared with 33% of those ages 30 to 64. Instead, people in their prime working years are the most likely to say their finances have not yet recovered from the recession's impact.

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### Middle Aged, Less Educated, and Poor Are Still Hurting

	<i>Impact of recession on own financial situation...</i>		
	<b>Major impact, have not recovered</b>	<b>Major impact, mostly recovered</b>	<b>Did not have major impact</b>
	%	%	%
Total	36	25	37
<i>Family income</i>			
\$75,000+	19	31	48
\$30,000-74,999	33	30	36
Less than \$30K	49	18	31
<i>College grad+</i>			
College grad+	25	31	43
Some college	37	23	39
HS or less	43	23	32
<i>Age</i>			
18-29	31	23	44
30-49	38	26	36
50-64	39	29	30
65+	33	22	44

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## SECTION 3: THE DEFICIT AND GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Overall, the public is divided over whether it is more important for the federal government to reduce the budget deficit or spend to help the economy recover. About half (49%) say that reducing the budget deficit should be the federal government's higher priority, while nearly as many (46%) say the priority should be spending to help the economy recover. This is comparable to the balance of opinion nearly two years ago, when the public was asked to choose between reducing the budget deficit (46%) and spending *more* to help the economy recover (48%).

Over the past year, there has been no increase in the number of Americans who cite the budget deficit as the economic issue that worries them most. The job situation (44%) remains the top economic concern, followed by rising prices (23%) which is up from 15% just two months ago. About one-in-five (19%) cite the deficit, which is largely unchanged since last March.

While a large majority of Republicans (70%) prioritize deficit reduction over spending on economic recovery, they are divided over which economic issue worries them most. About as many Republicans cite the job situation (39%) as the budget deficit (36%).

By a slight margin (51% to 44%), independents place a higher priority on reducing the deficit over spending to help economic recovery. More than twice as many independents say the job situation (44%), rather than the budget deficit (19%), is their top economic concern.

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### No Consensus that Deficit Reduction is the Priority

<i>Federal government's priority these days should be...</i>	<b>June 2009</b>	<b>Feb 2010</b>	<b>Feb 2011</b>
	%	%	%
Reducing the budget deficit	46	47	49
Spending (more) to help the economy recover*	48	47	46
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100

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\* In 2009 and 2010 option was "Spending more to help the economy recover."

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### Jobs Continue to Surpass Deficit among Public's Economic Concerns

<i>What economic issue worries you most?</i>	<b>Mar 2010</b>	<b>Jun 2010</b>	<b>Sep 2010</b>	<b>Dec 2010</b>	<b>Feb 2011</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
Job situation	45	41	49	47	44
Rising prices	17	16	15	15	23
<b>Budget deficit</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>
Financial/housing markets	11	13	12	14	10
Other/DK	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100	100	100

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Democrats, by contrast, place a higher priority on spending to boost the recovery (by 64% to 32%). Half of Democrats (50%) say the job situation is the economic issue that worries them most while just 8% cite the budget deficit.

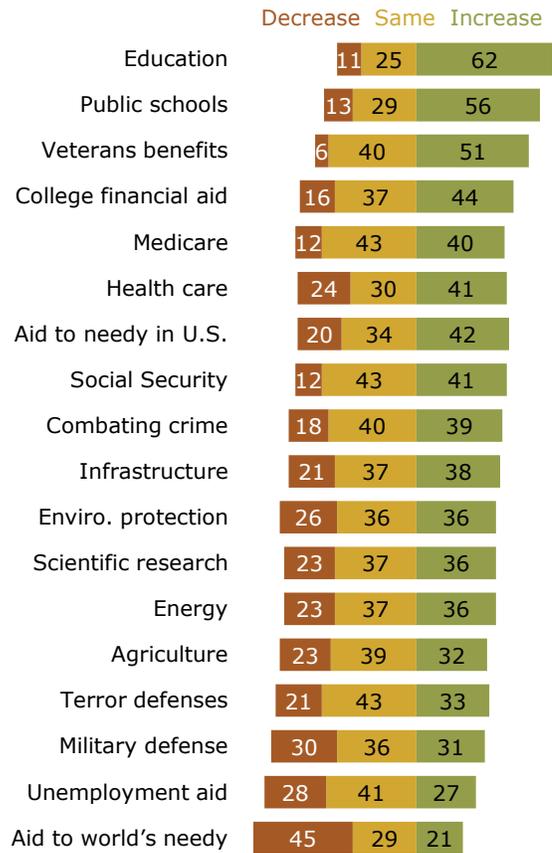
### More Still Favor Spending Increases than Spending Cuts

The public’s taste for cuts in federal government spending on specific programs remains limited. More want to see spending increased than decreased on 15 of 18 issues tested. The only area where a plurality favors decreased spending is on economic assistance to needy people around the world; even here, just under half (45%) support spending cuts, while 21% say spending should be increased and 29% want to keep spending the same. In two other areas – military defense and assistance for the unemployed – the numbers favoring cutbacks are roughly equal to the numbers favoring increases.

While there is modest support for spending cuts, substantial numbers are willing to see spending held steady. Pluralities say government spending on anti-terrorism defenses and unemployment assistance should be kept the same.

In this regard, majorities favor *either* cuts or spending freezes on 15 of the 18 issues tested. Education, public schools and veterans’ benefits are the only areas where half or more favor increased spending.

### Few Support Decreases in Federal Government Spending



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## Growing Support for Less Spending

Public attitudes about government spending have changed substantially over the past two years. For 12 of the 13 issues where 2009 trends are available, either support for increased spending has fallen or support for spending cuts has grown (or both).

Terrorism defenses is the only area where there has not been a statistically significant shift in a more austere direction over the past two years.

The largest shift in public spending preferences since 2009 is in the area of health care. The share of Americans who want the government to spend more on health care has fallen from 61% in 2009 – during the early stage of the debate over health care legislation – to 41% today. The proportion favoring decreased spending for health care has more than doubled since then, from 10% to 24%. Nearly half of Republicans (47%) want cuts in funding for health care, up from just 15% two years ago.

There also is growing support for less spending on aid to the unemployed and national defense. In both cases, as many now favor cutting spending as increasing spending. Two years ago, more supported increasing spending by wide margins.

Even on some popular budget items, such as Medicare and veterans' benefits, there have been sharp declines in the percentages favoring more spending – 13 points for Medicare and 12 points for veterans' benefits

## Support for Decreased Spending - Education a Notable Exception

<i>Would you increase, decrease or keep spending the same for...</i>		2009		2011	Change
		%	%		
Education	Increase	67	62	-5	
	Decrease	6	11	+5	
	Keep same	23	25	+2	
Veterans' benefits and services	Increase	63	51	-12	
	Decrease	2	6	+4	
	Keep same	29	40	+11	
Health care	Increase	61	41	-20	
	Decrease	10	24	+14	
	Keep same	24	30	+6	
Medicare	Increase	53	40	-13	
	Decrease	6	12	+6	
	Keep same	37	43	+6	
Combating crime	Increase	45	39	-6	
	Decrease	10	18	+8	
	Keep same	39	40	+1	
Energy	Increase	41	36	-5	
	Decrease	15	23	+8	
	Keep same	35	37	+2	
Scientific research	Increase	39	36	-3	
	Decrease	14	23	+9	
	Keep same	40	37	-3	
Environmental protection	Increase	43	36	-7	
	Decrease	16	26	+10	
	Keep same	34	36	+2	
U.S. anti-terrorism defenses	Increase	35	33	-2	
	Decrease	17	21	+4	
	Keep same	41	43	+2	
Agriculture	Increase	35	32	-3	
	Decrease	12	23	+11	
	Keep same	41	39	-2	
Military defense	Increase	40	31	-9	
	Decrease	18	30	+12	
	Keep same	37	36	-1	
Unemployment assistance	Increase	44	27	-17	
	Decrease	15	28	+13	
	Keep same	36	41	+5	
Aid to the world's needy	Increase	26	21	-5	
	Decrease	34	45	+11	
	Keep same	33	29	-4	

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and services. On both issues, the balance of opinion is still toward expanded rather than decreased spending, but by a significantly narrower margin than in 2009.

At the other end of the spectrum, the public has in the past been less enthusiastic about spending on economic assistance to needy people around the world than on other priorities. Two years ago 34% said this should be cut back, and this has risen to 45% today.

Republicans tend to be more supportive of reducing spending across most issues, and their views have often shifted further in the past two years, leading to even larger partisan differences in spending preferences. The share of Republicans who want to reduce spending on foreign aid spiked from an already high 40% in 2009 to 70% today, while Democratic and independent attitudes remained relatively steady.

Fully half (50%) of Republicans today say spending on unemployment assistance should be decreased, roughly double the share who said this two years ago (26%). And Republican support for reductions in spending on health care and environmental protection has also risen substantially.

By contrast, Democrats and independents increasingly favor cutting the defense budget. Currently, 36% of Democrats and 33% of independents would like to see defense spending reduced, up from 23% and 17%, respectively, in 2009. Just 18% of Republicans want to see defense spending reduced, up from 10% two years ago.

### More Republicans Back Cuts in Foreign Aid, Health Care, Assistance for Unemployed

<i>Percent saying decrease spending for...</i>		2009 2011 Change		
		%	%	
Economic assistance to needy people around the world	<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>+11</b>
	Republican	40	70	+30
	Democrat	24	28	+4
	Independent	44	45	+1
Military defense	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>+12</b>
	Republican	10	18	+8
	Democrat	23	36	+13
	Independent	17	33	+16
Government assistance for the unemployed	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>+13</b>
	Republican	26	50	+24
	Democrat	6	11	+5
	Independent	16	29	+13
Environmental protection	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>+10</b>
	Republican	29	43	+14
	Democrat	8	12	+4
	Independent	16	26	+10
Health care	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>+14</b>
	Republican	15	47	+32
	Democrat	2	8	+6
	Independent	14	25	+11
Agriculture	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>+11</b>
	Republican	14	26	+12
	Democrat	10	15	+5
	Independent	12	28	+16

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q17a,k,l,m,p,q.

## Wide Partisan Differences

Overall, Republicans are far more supportive of spending cuts across a wide range of issues, while Democrats tend to favor spending increases. On 16 of the 18 issues tested, more Democrats favor increasing spending than decreasing spending. By comparison, the Republican balance of opinion favors spending increases on six issues: education, public schools, veterans' benefits, crime, terrorism and defense.

Meanwhile, more Republicans favor cuts than increases on four of the 18 items. There is no program for which significantly more Democrats support cuts rather than increases.

Overall, Democrats' and Republicans' spending preferences differ the most on aid to the unemployed and health care. In both areas, roughly half of Democrats want to see spending increased and roughly half of Republicans want to see it reduced.

There also are wide gaps over funding for foreign aid and environmental protection. By 70% to 7%, Republicans favor cutting, rather than increasing, aid for needy people around the world. Democrats are more evenly divided (32% increase, 28% decrease). Nearly half of Democrats (47%) support increasing spending for environmental protection while nearly as many Republicans (43%) want to decrease spending in this area.

## Partisan Gaps Over Government Spending

<i>Would you increase, decrease or keep spending the same for...</i>		Rep	Dem	Ind	D-R gap
		%	%	%	
Unemployment aid	Increase	11	47	23	+36
	Decrease	50	11	29	-39
Health care	Increase	22	56	39	+34
	Decrease	47	8	25	-39
Aid to needy in the U.S.	Increase	24	57	37	+33
	Decrease	35	12	20	-23
Education	Increase	45	77	62	+32
	Decrease	15	4	13	-11
Environmental protection	Increase	16	47	41	+31
	Decrease	43	12	26	-31
Aid to world's needy	Increase	7	32	22	+25
	Decrease	70	28	45	-42
Public school systems	Increase	42	65	58	+23
	Decrease	25	4	13	-21
Roads and transportation	Increase	22	44	43	+22
	Decrease	32	18	18	-14
College financial aid	Increase	30	51	47	+21
	Decrease	30	9	15	-21
Scientific research	Increase	28	46	35	+18
	Decrease	30	13	26	-17
Medicare	Increase	27	55	38	+18
	Decrease	20	5	14	-15
Energy	Increase	26	41	37	+15
	Decrease	28	18	22	-10
Social Security	Increase	33	45	40	+12
	Decrease	21	4	15	-17
Agriculture	Increase	29	37	31	+8
	Decrease	26	15	28	-11
Veterans' benefits	Increase	46	52	53	+6
	Decrease	8	6	5	-2
Combating crime	Increase	41	45	33	+4
	Decrease	19	13	20	-6
Terrorism defenses	Increase	38	32	30	-6
	Decrease	16	20	23	+4
Military defense	Increase	41	28	27	-13
	Decrease	18	36	33	+18

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q17a-s. Percent saying "keep spending the same" not shown.

Fully 77% of Democrats support increased spending on education, compared with 45% of Republicans. On the specific issue of financial aid for college students, 51% of Democrats favor providing more funding while just 9% would cut funding; as many Republicans would cut as increase spending on financial aid for college students (30% each).

On many of these issues, independent views fall roughly in between the Republican and Democratic positions. But on a few key items, independents' spending preferences are far closer to those of Democrats than Republicans. Notably, independents support increased spending on college financial aid and on rebuilding highways, bridges and roads at nearly the same rate as Democrats. Conversely, 36% of Democrats and 33% of independents favor cuts in defense spending, compared with only 18% of Republicans.

Independents' spending preferences are significantly closer to Republicans on only one issue: agriculture. While Democrats favor more rather than less agriculture spending by a 37% to 15% margin, both Republicans and independents are about as likely to favor cuts as increases (Republicans: 29% increase, 26% decrease, independents: 31% increase, 28% decrease).

## Younger People Favor More Increases

Young people are more supportive than are older people of increased government spending on a number of programs – particularly education. By 72% to 8%, more people younger than 40 want to see federal spending on education increased rather than decreased. Support for increased education spending falls to 60% among those ages 40 to 64 and 49% among those 65 and older. Seniors are twice as likely as those under 40 to say education spending should be cut.

Similar age differences are evident on specific education programs – funding for public school systems and financial aid to college students.

There also is a wide age gap on spending for environmental protection. By 47% to 20%, people under age 40 want to see environmental spending grow rather than shrink. But just 27% of those 65 and older favor more spending on environmental protection while 33% support less spending.

The one issue younger people are more willing to cut is Social Security. Nearly one-in-five of those younger than 40 (18%) say Social Security spending should be cut, compared with 11% of those ages 40-64 and just 4% of those 65 and older. Even so, far more in every age group would rather see Social Security spending increased than decreased.

### Younger People Favor Education Increases

<i>Would you increase, decrease or keep spending the same for...</i>		<b>18-39</b>	<b>40-64</b>	<b>65+</b>	<b>Gap</b>
		%	%	%	
College financial aid	Increase	57	39	32	+25
	Decrease	13	18	19	-6
Education	Increase	72	60	49	+23
	Decrease	8	10	17	-9
Public school systems	Increase	67	53	45	+22
	Decrease	8	16	15	-7
Environmental protection	Increase	47	31	27	+20
	Decrease	20	28	33	-13
Medicare	Increase	45	41	29	+16
	Decrease	14	10	12	+2
Aid to world's needy	Increase	27	20	13	+14
	Decrease	37	50	49	-12
Agriculture	Increase	36	34	23	+13
	Decrease	21	22	28	-7
Scientific research	Increase	42	35	30	+12
	Decrease	19	25	25	-6
Social Security	Increase	39	44	41	-2
	Decrease	18	11	4	+14

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q17a-s. Percent saying "keep spending the same" not shown. Gap shows difference between youngest and oldest age groups.

## SECTION 4: DEALING WITH STATE BUDGET PROBLEMS

Eight-in-ten Americans (81%) say their state is currently facing budget problems, and 36% say the problems in their state are very serious. At the other end of the spectrum, 20% say their state either has no budget problems (12%) or that the problems are not too serious (8%).

There has been virtually no change in opinion about the seriousness of the state budget problems compared with public perceptions eight years ago. A January 2003 Washington Post/ABC News survey found 82% saying their state faced budget problems, and 34% describing those problems as very serious.

Views about the severity of the budget situation vary across the country. People in the Pacific region are the most likely to say their state is facing serious budget problems – 62% say their budget problems are very serious. In the Middle Atlantic, East North Central and Mountain West, about four-in-ten say the budget problems are very serious. Far fewer people in other regions say their state’s budget problems are very serious.

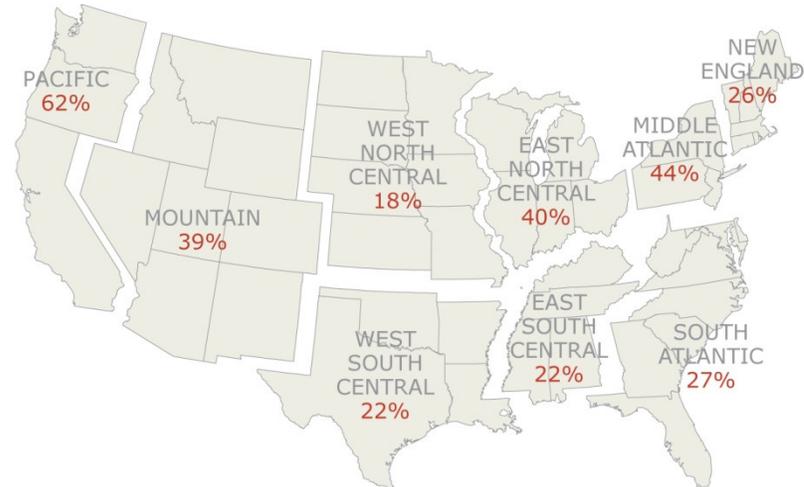
### Rating State Economic and Budget Conditions

	Jan 2003	Feb 2011
<i>State economy is in...</i>	%	%
Excellent/Good shape	33	23
Only fair/Poor shape	66	77
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>
	100	100
<i>Is your state is facing budget problems?</i>		
Yes	82	81
Very serious	34	36
Fairly serious	37	36
Not too serious	10	8
Don't know	1	1
No	12	12
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q37-39. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. 2003 figures from Washington Post/ABC News.

### Severity of Budget Problems Varies by Region

Percent who say state budget problems are very serious



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q38 & Q39. States grouped into regions as defined by the Census department. See [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us\\_regdiv.pdf](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/us_regdiv.pdf) for more information.

## States Responsible for Their Own Problems

If states are facing default over the course of the coming year, there is little public support for a federal government bailout. Six-in-ten (60%) say that if states can't balance their budgets, they should deal with it themselves by raising taxes or cutting services. Only 27% say that the federal government should give more money to the states to help them meet their budgets, even if it means higher federal deficits. These views are little changed from a Pew Research/National Journal survey conducted last June and a CBS News poll conducted in April 2003.

As was the case last summer, more Republicans than Democrats think the states should handle their own budget problems. About three-fourths (78%) of Republicans and 57% of independents say the states should take care of their own budget problems, by raising taxes or cutting services. Democrats are more divided in their view – 51% say states should handle their own budget problems while 40% think the federal government should give more money to the states, even if it increases the deficit.

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### Public to Struggling States: 'You're on Your Own'

<i>Better way to address state budget problems...</i>	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
Federal gov't should give more money to states, even if it increases deficit	27	12	40	29
States should take care of this by raising taxes or cutting services	60	78	51	57
Other/Don't know	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>15</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 3-6, 2011 Omnibus. PEW7.  
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## How Should States Handle Budget Problems?

The public thinks the best way for states to deal with their budget problems is through a combination of spending cutbacks and increased state taxes. About two-thirds (68%) say their state lawmakers should do a combination of cutting major programs and increasing taxes. Far fewer (19%) think that focusing mostly on cutting major programs is the best way to deal with the budget in their state. Only 4% say focusing mostly on increasing taxes is the best approach.

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### Most Favor Cuts and Tax Hikes to Deal with State Budgets

<i>To deal with budget, should state focus on...</i>	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
Cutting major programs	19	31	10	19
Increasing taxes	4	2	5	6
A combination of both	68	60	80	65
Other/Don't know	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q40.  
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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The public recently expressed similar views when asked about the federal budget deficit. In December, 65% said the best way to reduce the federal budget deficit is through a combination of cutting major government programs and increasing taxes (See [“Deficit Solutions Meet With Public Skepticism”](#).)

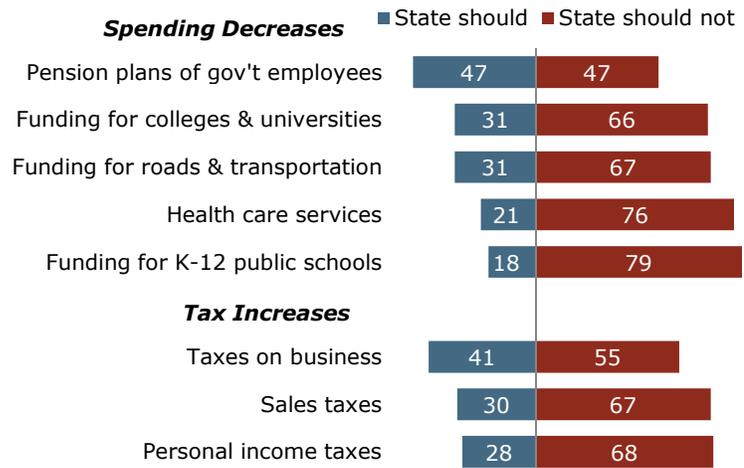
There is broad bipartisan agreement that to tackle the budget problems many states are facing, lawmakers should cut major programs and increase taxes. Majorities of Democrats (80%), independents (65%) and Republicans (60%) favor a combination of cutting spending and increasing taxes. Even among Republicans, only 31% say the best way to address state budget problems is to focus mostly on cutting major programs.

### Most State Budget Solutions Unpalatable

While the public supports a combination of major cuts and tax increases in the abstract, there is far less support for some of the specific proposals many states are considering. Of eight possible proposals for dealing with state budgets, none receives majority support.

Decreasing the pension plans of government employees receives the most support from the public, though as many oppose the idea as support it (47% each). Only about three-in-ten support their state cutting funding for public colleges and universities (31%) or decreasing funding for maintaining roads and public transportation (31%). Even fewer favor decreases in health care services (21%) or in funding for K through 12 public schools (18%).

### Little Support for Spending Cuts and Tax Increases to Deal With State Budgets



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q41.

When it comes to raising taxes, 41% think their state should increase taxes on businesses while 55% are opposed to this. The public is less supportive of increasing or establishing state sales taxes (30%) or personal income taxes (28%).

Partisans differ on the various ways states can reduce their budgets, but opposition to most proposals crosses party lines. In general, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to support spending cuts in their state, with the exception of reducing funding for roads and public transportation. But even among Republicans, the only spending decrease that receives majority support is reducing the pension plans of government employees.

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### Those Seeing Very Serious Budget Problems Still Oppose Most Solutions

<i>If state needs to balance budget...</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>R-D diff</b>	<i>State budget problems are...</i>		<b>Diff</b>
						<b>Very serious</b>	<b>Not very serious</b>	
<b>State should decrease...</b>	%	%	%	%		%	%	%
The pensions plans of gov't employees	47	58	40	48	+18	51	45	+6
Funding for roads and public transportation	31	34	32	29	+2	36	28	+8
Funding for public colleges and universities	31	40	25	32	+15	32	31	+1
Health care services	21	31	14	21	+17	25	19	+6
Funding for K through 12 public schools	18	25	12	19	+13	15	19	-4
<b>State should increase...</b>								
Taxes on businesses	41	31	49	42	-18	39	42	-3
Sales taxes	30	28	35	30	-7	29	31	-2
Personal income taxes	28	19	35	29	-16	27	29	-2

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q41.

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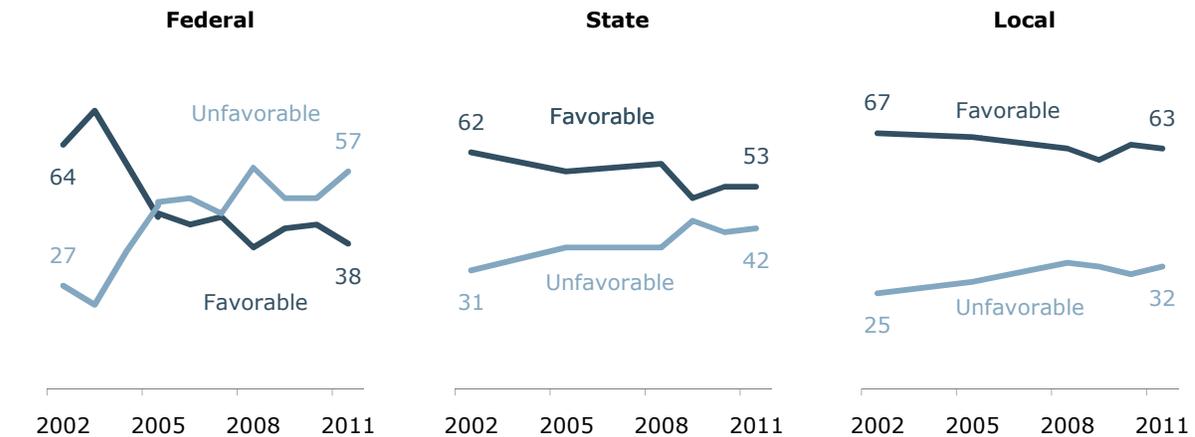
Democrats are more likely than Republicans to support increasing taxes on businesses and raising personal income taxes, though neither idea garners majority support from either party, or from independents. And there is substantial opposition to sales tax increases across party lines.

Even among those who say their state is facing a crisis there is broad opposition to most of the spending cuts or tax increases under discussion. On six of eight items tested, there are no significant differences in the opinions of those who say their state has very serious budget problems and those who do not.

## State and Local Governments Viewed Favorably

Even as debates about state budget problems have intensified, views of state governments have changed little over the past year. A majority (53%) continues to express a favorable opinion of their state government, while 42% have an unfavorable view. Views of local governments are even more positive – nearly twice as many have a favorable opinion of their local government as have an unfavorable one (63% vs. 32%). By contrast, public views of the federal government continue to be more negative than positive. Only 38% have a favorable view of the federal government, while 57% express an unfavorable opinion.

### Government Favorability Ratings



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Q6e-g.

There continue to be strong partisan differences in views of the federal government. More than twice as many Democrats (58%) as Republicans (25%) express a favorable opinion of the federal government, as has been the case since Barack Obama took office. The pattern was reversed during George W. Bush's administration, with Republicans expressing more favorable views than Democrats.

By contrast, views of state and local governments do not differ substantially across party lines. A majority of Democrats (57%), Republicans (53%) and independents (51%) have a favorable view of their state government. Similarly, 69% of Democrats, 65% of Republicans and 58% of independents view their local government favorably.

## About the Surveys

Most of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted February 2-7, 2011 among a national sample of 1,385 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (952 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 433 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 197 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2010 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,385	3.5 percentage points
Form 1	688	4.5 percentage points
Form 2	697	4.5 percentage points
Republicans	339	6.5 percentage points
Democrats	455	6.0 percentage points
Independents	511	5.5 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

Some of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted February 3-6, 2011 among a national sample of 1,001 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (670 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 331 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 131 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or

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<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1001	4.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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.

## About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director  
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research  
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors  
Michael Remez, Senior Writer  
Leah Christian and Jocelyn Kiley, Senior Researchers  
Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, and Alec Tyson, Research Associates  
Jacob Poushter, Research Analyst  
Danielle Gewurz, Research Assistant

## PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL TABLE

Q1: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handing his job as president?

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>(VOL.)</u> <u>DK/Ref</u> %	<u>N</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	49	42	9	1385
<b>SEX</b>				
Men	46	45	9	635
Women	51	40	9	750
<b>AGE</b>				
18-49	50	41	9	554
50+	47	44	8	808
<b>DETAILED AGE</b>				
18-29	54	37	8	197
30-49	47	43	10	357
50-64	48	44	8	465
65+	46	44	9	343
<b>SEX BY AGE</b>				
Men 18-49	51	42	7	278
Men 50+	41	49	10	350
Women 18-49	49	39	11	276
Women 50+	53	40	7	458
<b>RACE</b>				
White, non-Hispanic	40	51	9	1009
Black, non-Hispanic	89	6	5	147
Hispanic	56	32	13	129
<b>EDUCATION</b>				
College grad+	48	45	7	535
Some college	47	43	10	350
HS or less	50	41	9	493
<b>INCOME</b>				
\$75,000+	45	49	6	360
\$30,000-\$74,999	47	46	7	464
<\$30,000	54	35	11	418
<b>RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE</b>				
Total White NH Prot.	32	60	9	523
White NH evang. Prot.	27	65	8	277
White NH mainline Prot.	37	53	10	246
Total Catholic	52	41	7	318
White NH Cath.	46	46	8	220
Unaffiliated	58	34	8	233
<b>REGION</b>				
Northeast	54	37	10	223
Midwest	49	41	9	353
South	46	46	8	518
West	48	43	9	291

**PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL TABLE (CONT.)**

Q1: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>(VOL.)</u> <u>DK/Ref</u> %	<u>N</u>
<b>REGISTERED VOTER</b>				
Yes, certain	47	46	8	1117
Not registered	54	34	12	268
<b>PARTY ID</b>				
Republican	16	77	6	339
Democrat	80	15	5	455
Independent	46	45	9	511
<b>PARTY WITH LEANERS</b>				
Rep/Lean Rep	18	75	7	552
Dem/Lean Dem	78	16	6	659
<b>IDEOLOGY</b>				
Conservative	33	58	8	533
Moderate	56	36	8	518
Liberal	68	27	5	266
<b>PARTY AND IDEOLOGY</b>				
Conservative Republican	13	80	7	241
Mod/Lib Republican	25	71	5	92
Mod/Cons Democrat	81	14	5	293
Liberal Democrat	78	18	4	150
<b>TEA PARTY MOVEMENT</b>				
Agree	18	78	4	333
Disagree	80	13	7	355
No opinion/Don't know	48	41	12	697
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>				
Employed	47	45	8	754
Not employed	51	39	10	627
<b>LABOR UNION</b>				
Member in HH	57	37	6	182
No member in HH	47	43	9	1197
<b>AMONG WHITES</b>				
Men	36	55	8	455
Women	44	47	9	554
18-49	38	51	11	348
50+	42	51	7	645
College grad+	46	48	6	421
Some college or less	38	53	9	585
\$75,000+	40	55	5	287
\$30,000-\$74,999	39	54	7	355
<\$30,000	44	45	11	255
Republican	13	82	6	307
Democrat	80	16	4	279
Independent	40	52	8	371
Northeast	51	40	9	174
Midwest	41	49	10	293
South	33	59	8	341
West	42	52	7	201

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**FEBRUARY 2011 POLITICAL SURVEY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**February 2-7, 2011**  
**N=1,385**

**RANDOMIZE Q.1 AND Q.2****ASK ALL:**

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Dis- approve</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>		<u>Approve</u>	<u>Dis- approve</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
Feb 2-7, 2011	49	42	9	Jan 6-10, 2010	49	42	10
Jan 5-9, 2011	46	44	10	Dec 9-13, 2009	49	40	11
Dec 1-5, 2010	45	43	13	Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	51	36	13
Nov 4-7, 2010	44	44	12	Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	52	36	12
Oct 13-18, 2010	46	45	9	Sep 10-15, 2009	55	33	13
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	47	44	9	Aug 20-27, 2009	52	37	12
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	47	41	12	Aug 11-17, 2009	51	37	11
Jun 8-28, 2010	48	41	11	Jul 22-26, 2009	54	34	12
Jun 16-20, 2010	48	43	9	Jun 10-14, 2009	61	30	9
May 6-9, 2010	47	42	11	Apr 14-21, 2009	63	26	11
Apr 21-26, 2010	47	42	11	Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	61	26	13
Apr 8-11, 2010	48	43	9	Mar 9-12, 2009	59	26	15
Mar 10-14, 2010	46	43	12	Feb 4-8, 2009	64	17	19
Feb 3-9, 2010	49	39	12				

**RANDOMIZE Q.1 AND Q.2****ASK ALL:**

Q.2 All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?

	<u>Satis- fied</u>	<u>Dis- satisfied</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>		<u>Satis- fied</u>	<u>Dis- satisfied</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
Feb 2-7, 2011	26	68	5	Jan 7-11, 2009	20	73	7
Jan 5-9, 2011	23	71	6	December, 2008	13	83	4
Dec 1-5, 2010	21	72	7	Early October, 2008	11	86	3
Nov 4-7, 2010	23	69	8	Mid-September, 2008	25	69	6
Sep 23-26, 2010	30	63	7	August, 2008	21	74	5
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	25	71	5	July, 2008	19	74	7
Jun 24-27, 2010	27	64	9	June, 2008	19	76	5
May 13-16, 2010	28	64	7	Late May, 2008	18	76	6
Apr 21-26, 2010	29	66	5	March, 2008	22	72	6
Apr 1-5, 2010	31	63	6	Early February, 2008	24	70	6
Mar 11-21, 2010	25	69	5	Late December, 2007	27	66	7
Mar 10-14, 2010	23	71	7	October, 2007	28	66	6
Feb 3-9, 2010	23	71	6	February, 2007	30	61	9
Jan 6-10, 2010	27	69	4	Mid-January, 2007	32	61	7
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	25	67	7	Early January, 2007	30	63	7
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	25	67	7	December, 2006	28	65	7
Sep 10-15, 2009 <sup>1</sup>	30	64	7	Mid-November, 2006	28	64	8
Aug 20-27, 2009	28	65	7	Early October, 2006	30	63	7
Aug 11-17, 2009	28	65	7	July, 2006	30	65	5
Jul 22-26, 2009	28	66	6	May, 2006*	29	65	6
Jun 10-14, 2009	30	64	5	March, 2006	32	63	5
Apr 28-May 12, 2009	34	58	8	January, 2006	34	61	5
Apr 14-21, 2009	23	70	7	Late November, 2005	34	59	7
				Early October, 2005	29	65	6
				July, 2005	35	58	7
				Late May, 2005*	39	57	4
				February, 2005	38	56	6

<sup>1</sup> In September 10-15, 2009 and other surveys noted with an asterisk, the question was worded "Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?"

## Q.2 CONTINUED...

	Satis- fied	Dis- satisfied	(VOL.) DK/Ref		Satis- fied	Dis- satisfied	(VOL.) DK/Ref
January, 2005	40	54	6	January, 1999	53	41	6
December, 2004	39	54	7	November, 1998	46	44	10
Mid-October, 2004	36	58	6	Early September, 1998	54	42	4
July, 2004	38	55	7	Late August, 1998	55	41	4
May, 2004	33	61	6	Early August, 1998	50	44	6
Late February, 2004*	39	55	6	February, 1998	59	37	4
Early January, 2004	45	48	7	January, 1998	46	50	4
December, 2003	44	47	9	September, 1997	45	49	6
October, 2003	38	56	6	August, 1997	49	46	5
August, 2003	40	53	7	January, 1997	38	58	4
April 8, 2003	50	41	9	July, 1996	29	67	4
January, 2003	44	50	6	March, 1996	28	70	2
November, 2002	41	48	11	October, 1995	23	73	4
September, 2002	41	55	4	June, 1995	25	73	2
Late August, 2002	47	44	9	April, 1995	23	74	3
May, 2002	44	44	12	July, 1994	24	73	3
March, 2002	50	40	10	March, 1994	24	71	5
Late September, 2001	57	34	9	October, 1993	22	73	5
Early September, 2001	41	53	6	September, 1993	20	75	5
June, 2001	43	52	5	May, 1993	22	71	7
March, 2001	47	45	8	January, 1993	39	50	11
February, 2001	46	43	11	January, 1992	28	68	4
January, 2001	55	41	4	November, 1991	34	61	5
October, 2000 (RVs)	54	39	7	Gallup: Late Feb, 1991	66	31	3
September, 2000	51	41	8	August, 1990	47	48	5
June, 2000	47	45	8	May, 1990	41	54	5
April, 2000	48	43	9	January, 1989	45	50	5
August, 1999	56	39	5	September, 1988 (RVs)	50	45	5

## NO QUESTIONS 3-5

## ASK ALL:

Q.6 Just in general... Is your overall opinion of **[INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE ITEMS a THROUGH d AS A BLOCK FIRST, ITEMS e-g SECOND AS A BLOCK]** very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? **[INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]** How about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[IF NECESSARY: would you say your overall opinion of [ITEM] is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?] [INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]**

						(VOL.)	(VOL.)
----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			Never	Can't rate/
Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	heard of	Ref

## ITEMS a AND b HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

c. The Republican Party								
Feb 2-7, 2011	43	8	35	48	19	29	*	9
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	43	8	35	49	21	28	*	8
July 1-5, 2010	39	10	29	49	24	25	*	12
April 1-5, 2010	37	8	29	53	26	27	*	9
Mar 18-21, 2010	37	5	32	51	20	31	*	12
Feb 3-9, 2010	46	5	41	46	14	32	0	8
Aug 20-27, 2009	40	6	34	50	19	31	*	10
Aug 11-17, 2009	40	7	33	50	18	32	*	10
Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	40	7	33	51	17	34	0	9
Jan 7-11, 2009	40	5	35	55	21	34	*	5
Late October, 2008	40	10	30	50	23	27	*	10
Mid-September, 2008	47	11	36	46	22	24	*	7

## Q.6 CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
August, 2008	43	9	34	49	18	31	1	7
Late May, 2008	39	7	32	53	20	33	*	8
July, 2007	39	7	32	53	22	31	0	8
Early January, 2007	41	9	32	48	21	27	1	10
Late October, 2006	41	9	32	50	20	30	*	9
July, 2006	40	10	30	52	23	29	1	7
April, 2006	40	10	30	50	21	29	*	10
February, 2006	44	11	33	50	24	26	*	6
Late October, 2005	42	12	30	49	24	25	*	9
July, 2005	48	13	35	43	18	25	*	9
June, 2005	48	11	37	44	20	24	0	8
December, 2004	52	15	37	42	17	25	0	6
June, 2004	51	12	39	40	14	26	0	9
Early February, 2004	52	14	38	42	16	26	*	6
June, 2003	58	14	44	33	10	23	0	9
April, 2003	63	14	49	31	10	21	*	6
December, 2002	59	18	41	33	11	22	*	8
July, 2001	48	11	37	42	15	27	*	10
January, 2001	56	13	43	35	13	22	*	9
September, 2000 (RVs)	53	11	42	40	12	28	0	7
August, 1999	53	8	45	43	12	31	*	4
February, 1999	44	7	37	51	15	36	0	5
January, 1999	44	10	34	50	23	27	0	6
Early December, 1998	46	11	35	47	20	27	*	7
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	52	9	43	42	14	28	0	6
Early September, 1998	56	9	47	37	11	26	*	7
March, 1998	50	10	40	43	12	31	*	7
August, 1997	47	9	38	47	11	36	*	6
June, 1997	51	8	43	42	11	31	1	6
January, 1997	52	8	44	43	10	33	*	5
October, 1995	52	10	42	44	16	28	*	4
December, 1994	67	21	46	27	8	19	*	6
July, 1994	63	12	51	33	8	25	*	4
May, 1993	54	12	42	35	10	25	0	11
July, 1992	46	9	37	48	17	31	*	6
d. The Democratic Party								
Feb 2-7, 2011	47	13	35	46	17	29	*	6
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	50	13	36	44	20	24	*	7
July 1-5, 2010	44	12	31	45	22	23	*	11
April 1-5, 2010	38	9	29	52	27	25	*	9
Mar 18-21, 2010	40	8	32	49	25	24	*	11
Feb 3-9, 2010	48	9	39	44	17	27	*	8
Aug 20-27, 2009	48	11	37	43	19	24	*	10
Aug 11-17, 2009	49	12	37	40	16	25	*	10
Mar 31-Apr 6, 2009	59	15	44	34	13	21	*	7
Jan 7-11, 2009	62	19	43	32	12	20	*	6
Late October, 2008	57	19	38	33	15	18	*	10
Mid-September, 2008	55	18	37	39	14	25	*	6
August, 2008	57	16	41	37	13	24	*	6
Late May, 2008	57	14	43	37	14	23	*	6
July, 2007	51	13	38	41	14	27	0	8
Early January, 2007	54	15	39	35	12	23	*	11
Late October, 2006	53	13	40	36	11	25	*	11
July, 2006	47	13	34	44	13	31	2	7
April, 2006	47	12	35	42	14	28	*	11
February, 2006	48	14	34	44	17	27	0	8
Late October, 2005	49	14	35	41	15	26	*	10
July, 2005	50	15	35	41	14	27	*	9

## Q.6 CONTINUED...

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	Total	Very	Mostly	Total	Very	Mostly	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
June, 2005	52	12	40	39	13	26	*	9
December, 2004	53	13	40	41	14	27	*	6
June, 2004	54	12	42	36	11	25	0	10
Early February, 2004	58	14	44	37	9	28	*	5
June, 2003	54	11	43	38	10	28	0	8
April, 2003	57	13	44	36	11	25	*	7
December, 2002	54	15	39	37	10	27	*	9
July, 2001	58	18	40	34	10	24	*	8
January, 2001	60	18	42	30	9	21	1	9
September, 2000 (RVs)	60	16	44	35	12	23	*	5
August, 1999	59	14	45	37	9	28	*	4
February, 1999	58	11	47	37	11	26	0	5
January, 1999	55	14	41	38	12	26	0	7
Early December, 1998	59	18	41	34	10	24	0	7
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	56	11	45	38	9	29	*	6
Early September, 1998	60	13	47	33	8	25	*	7
March, 1998	58	15	43	36	10	26	*	6
August, 1997	52	11	41	42	10	32	0	6
June, 1997	61	10	51	33	8	25	*	6
January, 1997	60	13	47	35	7	28	*	5
October, 1995	49	9	40	48	11	37	0	3
December, 1994	50	13	37	44	13	31	*	6
July, 1994	62	13	49	34	7	27	*	4
May, 1993	57	14	43	34	9	25	0	9
July, 1992	61	17	44	33	9	24	*	6
e. The federal government								
in Washington								
Feb 2-7, 2011	38	6	32	57	19	37	*	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	43	6	38	50	16	34	*	7
Jul 22-26, 2009	42	4	38	50	18	31	*	8
April, 2008	37	6	31	58	21	37	1	4
January, 2007	45	7	38	46	15	31	1	8
February, 2006	43	6	37	50	16	34	*	7
December, 2005	46	7	39	49	18	31	*	5
Late October, 2005	45	6	39	48	16	32	*	7
February, 2004	59	10	49	36	11	25	*	5
April, 2003	73	14	59	22	5	17	0	5
December, 2002	64	11	53	27	7	20	*	9
Mid-November, 2001	82	17	65	15	3	12	0	3
Late October, 2000 (RVs)	54	7	47	40	10	30	*	6
October, 1997	38	4	34	59	18	41	0	3
f. Your STATE government								
Feb 2-7, 2011	53	10	42	42	14	28	*	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	53	9	44	41	14	27	0	6
Jul 22-26, 2009	50	6	44	44	16	28	*	6
April, 2008	59	9	50	37	16	21	0	4
December, 2005	57	8	49	37	11	26	*	6
December, 2002	62	15	47	31	10	21	1	7
Mid-November, 2001	77	15	62	18	4	14	*	5
October, 1997	66	10	56	29	7	22	*	5
g. Your LOCAL government								
Feb 2-7, 2011	63	15	48	32	10	22	1	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	64	11	53	30	10	20	*	6
Jul 22-26, 2009	60	8	52	32	9	23	0	8
April, 2008	63	11	52	33	12	21	1	3
December, 2005	66	12	54	28	10	18	*	6

**Q.6 CONTINUED...**

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	Never heard of	Can't rate/Ref
December, 2002	67	16	51	25	9	16	*	7
Mid-November, 2001	78	15	63	17	4	13	*	5
October, 1997	68	12	56	25	7	18	*	7

**NO QUESTIONS 7-9****QUESTION 10 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****NO QUESTIONS 11-12****ASK ALL:**

Thinking more generally ...

Q.13 In dealing with important issues facing the country, are **[RANDOMIZE]**; Barack Obama and Republican leaders in Congress, Republican leaders in Congress and Barack Obama] working together or not working together?

**ASK IF 'NOT WORKING TOGETHER':**

Q.14 Who do you think is most to blame for them not working together? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

Feb 2-7 <u>2011</u>		Jan 6-10 <u>2010</u>	Aug 11-17 <u>2009</u>	Jun 10-14 <u>2009</u>	Feb 4-8 <u>2009</u> <sup>2</sup>
27	Working together	25	24	39	43
65	Not working together	67	63	50	45
19	Barack Obama to blame	19	17	12	7
31	Republican leaders in Congress to blame	32	29	26	27
11	Both to blame <b>(VOL.)</b>	9	9	9	5
1	Neither to blame <b>(VOL.)</b>	2	1	1	1
1	Other to blame <b>(VOL.)</b>	2	2	1	3
2	Don't know who is to blame <b>(VOL.)</b>	3	4	2	2
9	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	8	13	11	12

**NO QUESTIONS 15-16****ASK ALL:**

Thinking about the federal budget...

Q.17 If you were making up the budget for the federal government this year, would you increase spending, decrease spending or keep spending the same for **[INSERT FIRST ITEM, RANDOMIZE, OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]**? What about for **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[REPEAT AS NECESSARY, AT LEAST EVERY THIRD ITEM]**: Would you increase spending, decrease spending or keep spending the same for **[ITEM]**?

	Increase <u>spending</u>	Decrease <u>spending</u>	Keep spending <u>the same</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
<b>ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=688]:</b>				
a.F1 Health care				
Feb 2-7, 2011	41	24	30	5
Jun 18-21, 2009	61	10	24	6
February, 2002	69	4	24	3
April, 2001	71	4	23	2
May, 1997	57	7	34	2
December, 1994	52	11	33	4
August, 1990	74	6	18	2
May, 1990	80	3	16	1
May, 1987	72	3	23	2
b.F1 Energy				
Feb 2-7, 2011	36	23	37	4
Jun 18-21, 2009	41	15	35	9

<sup>2</sup> In February 2009, question was worded: "In developing a plan to stimulate the economy and create jobs. ..."

February, 2002		34	9	49	8
<b>Q.17 CONTINUED...</b>		Increase	Decrease	Keep spending	<b>(VOL.)</b>
		<u>spending</u>	<u>spending</u>	<u>the same</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
April, 2001		52	9	35	4
c.F1	Anti-terrorism defenses in the U.S.				
	Feb 2-7, 2011	33	21	43	4
	Jun 18-21, 2009	35	17	41	7
	February, 2002	63	4	29	4
d.F1	Veterans benefits and services				
	Feb 2-7, 2011	51	6	40	3
	Jun 18-21, 2009	63	2	29	6
	April, 2001	58	3	34	5
e.F1	Financial aid for college students				
	Feb 2-7, 2011	44	16	37	3
	May, 1997	53	10	35	2
	December, 1994	41	13	43	3
	May, 1990	51	10	37	2
	May, 1987	43	13	41	3
f.F1	The public school systems				
	Feb 2-7, 2011	56	13	29	2
	May, 1997	67	7	23	3
	December, 1994	64	6	28	2
	May, 1990	76	3	20	1
	May, 1987	69	4	25	2
g.F1	Social Security				
	Feb 2-7, 2011	41	12	43	3
	May, 1997	44	7	46	3
	December, 1994	46	7	45	2
	May, 1990	63	3	32	2
	May, 1987	64	3	31	2
h.F1	Rebuilding highways, bridges and roads				
	Feb 2-7, 2011	38	21	37	3
	May, 1990	54	5	40	1
i.F1	Economic assistance to needy people in the U.S.				
	Feb 2-7, 2011	42	20	34	3
<b>ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=697]:</b>					
j.F2	Scientific research				
	Feb 2-7, 2011	36	23	37	4
	Jun 18-21, 2009	39	14	40	7
	April, 2001	41	10	46	3
	May, 1997	45	14	38	3
	December, 1994	37	15	44	4
	May, 1990	51	9	37	3
	May, 1987	45	9	42	4
k.F2	Military defense				
	Feb 2-7, 2011	31	30	36	3
	Jun 18-21, 2009	40	18	37	5
	February, 2002	60	5	31	4
	April, 2001	47	11	40	2
	May, 1997	21	30	46	3
	December, 1994	31	23	44	2
	August, 1990	23	43	31	3

	18	40	39	3
<b>Q.17 CONTINUED...</b>	Increase	Decrease	Keep spending	<b>(VOL.)</b>
	<u>spending</u>	<u>spending</u>	<u>the same</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
May, 1990	18	40	39	3
May, 1987	24	29	44	3
<b>I.F2 Government assistance for the unemployed</b>				
Feb 2-7, 2011	27	28	41	4
Jun 18-21, 2009	44	15	36	6
February, 2002	40	14	41	5
May, 1997	20	33	44	3
December, 1994	25	23	49	3
February, 1989	26	14	57	3
May, 1987	41	15	41	3
<b>m.F2 Agriculture</b>				
Feb 2-7, 2011	32	23	39	5
Jun 18-21, 2009	35	12	41	13
April, 2001	46	8	42	4
<b>n.F2 Medicare</b>				
Feb 2-7, 2011	40	12	43	5
Jun 18-21, 2009	53	6	37	4
February, 2002	63	3	31	3
April, 2001	70	2	26	2
May, 1997	44	8	44	4
<b>o.F2 Combating crime</b>				
Feb 2-7, 2011	39	18	40	3
Jun 18-21, 2009	45	10	39	6
April, 2001	55	5	37	3
May, 1997	62	7	29	2
December, 1994	71	4	23	2
<b>p.F2 Environmental protection</b>				
Feb 2-7, 2011	36	26	36	3
Jun 18-21, 2009	43	16	34	6
February, 2002	43	9	45	3
April, 2001	48	9	40	3
May, 1997	46	14	38	2
December, 1994	40	17	40	3
May, 1990	71	3	24	2
May, 1987	59	4	34	3
<b>q.F2 Economic assistance to needy people around the world</b>				
Feb 2-7, 2011	21	45	29	4
Jun 18-21, 2009	26	34	33	7
<b>No item r.F2</b>				
<b>s.F2 Education</b>				
Feb 2-7, 2011	62	11	25	2
Jun 18-21, 2009	67	6	23	4
February, 2002	73	3	22	2
April, 2001	76	5	18	1

**ASK ALL:**

Q.18 If you were setting priorities for the federal government these days, would you place a higher priority on **[OPTION]** or a higher priority on **[OPTION]**?

Feb 2-7

2011

46 Spending to help the economy recover  
49 Reducing the budget deficit  
5 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

**TREND FOR COMPARISON**

*If you were setting priorities for the government these days, would you place a higher priority on **[OPTION]** or a higher priority on **[OPTION]**?*

	Nov 4-7	Jul 15-18	Feb 3-9	Jul 22-26	Jun 18-21
	<u>2010</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009<sup>3</sup></u>	<u>2009</u>
Spending more to help the economy recover	43	51	47	53	48
Reducing the budget deficit	50	40	47	38	46
Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	7	9	6	9	6

**NO QUESTIONS 19-24****ASK ALL:**

Now thinking about the nation's economy...

Q.25 How would you rate economic conditions in this country today... as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	Only <u>fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Feb 2-7, 2011	1	11	45	42	1
Dec 1-5, 2010	1	8	44	45	1
Oct 13-18, 2010	1	7	38	54	1
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	1	7	43	48	1
Jun 3-6, 2010	1	8	48	43	1
Apr 21-26, 2010	*	11	39	49	1
Mar 10-14, 2010	1	6	39	53	1
Feb 3-9, 2010	1	7	38	53	1
Dec 9-13, 2009	1	7	41	50	1
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	*	8	41	50	1
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	1	8	43	48	1
Aug 11-17, 2009	*	8	38	52	2
Jun 10-14, 2009	1	8	39	52	1
Mar 9-12, 2009	*	6	25	68	1
Feb 4-8, 2009	*	4	24	71	1
December, 2008	*	7	33	59	1
November, 2008	1	6	28	64	1
Late October, 2008	*	7	25	67	1
Early October, 2008	1	8	32	58	1
Late September, 2008	*	7	27	65	1
July, 2008	1	9	39	50	1
April, 2008	1	10	33	56	*
March, 2008	1	10	32	56	1
Early February, 2008	1	16	36	45	2
January, 2008	3	23	45	28	1
November, 2007	3	20	44	32	1
September, 2007	3	23	43	29	2
June, 2007	6	27	40	25	2
February, 2007	5	26	45	23	1
December, 2006	6	32	41	19	2

<sup>3</sup> In July, 2009, question was asked as part of a list that included items on: spending on education, spending on health care and spending to develop energy technology.

**Q.25 CONTINUED ...**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	Only <u>fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Early November, 2006 (RVs)	9	35	37	17	2
Late October, 2006	6	27	40	25	2
September, 2006	5	32	41	20	2
March, 2006	4	29	44	22	1
January, 2006	4	30	45	19	2
Early October, 2005	2	23	45	29	1
Mid-September, 2005	3	28	44	24	1
Mid-May, 2005	3	29	47	20	1
January, 2005	3	36	45	15	1
December, 2004	3	33	43	20	1
Early November, 2004 (RVs)	5	31	37	26	1
Mid-September, 2004	4	34	40	20	2
August, 2004	3	30	45	21	1
Late April, 2004	4	34	38	22	2
Late February, 2004 <sup>4</sup>	2	29	42	26	1

**ASK ALL:**

Q.26 Which of these best describes your opinion: **[READ; READ CATEGORIES IN REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF THE SAMPLE]**?

Feb 2-7 <u>2011</u>		Dec 1-5 <u>2010</u>	Aug 25-Sep 6 <u>2010</u> <sup>5</sup>	Jun 3-6 <u>2010</u>	Mar 10-14 <u>2010</u>
24	The economy is recovering	17	10	13	13
33	The economy is not yet recovering but will recover soon	33	37	35	37
42	It will be a long time before the economy recovers	48	52	50	48
2	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	2	2	2	2

**TREND FOR COMPARISON**

*How would you describe economic conditions in this country? Would you say the economy is now recovering OR that we are in a recession that will pass fairly soon OR that we are in an economic depression that will last a long time?*

	Jan <u>2004</u>	March <u>1994</u>	Dec <u>1993</u>	Jan <u>1993</u>	March <u>1992</u>	Jan <u>1992</u>
The economy is now recovering	45	40	37	34	16	7
We are in a recession that will pass fairly soon	33	33	27	35	41	51
We are in a depression that will last a long time	18	21	29	27	40	38
Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	4	6	7	4	3	4

**ASK ALL:**

Now thinking about your own personal finances...

Q.27 How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape or poor shape financially?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	Only <u>fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Feb 2-7, 2011	7	29	41	22	1
Dec 1-5, 2010	5	30	40	23	2
Oct 13-18, 2010	6	33	36	23	1
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	6	30	40	23	1
Jun 3-6, 2010	6	32	38	20	4
Mar 10-14, 2010	6	31	39	22	2
Dec 9-13, 2009	7	28	39	24	2
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	5	30	40	25	1
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	6	32	38	22	1
Aug 11-17, 2009	6	31	36	26	2

<sup>4</sup> Earlier trends available from Gallup.

<sup>5</sup> In September 2010 and earlier, the first answer choice read "The economy is now recovering."

**Q.27 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Jun 10-14, 2009	6	32	39	22	1
Feb 4-8, 2009	5	33	41	20	1
December, 2008	6	32	40	21	1
Early October, 2008	6	35	40	18	1
July, 2008	9	33	37	19	2
April, 2008	8	35	39	16	2
March, 2008	8	39	34	17	2
Early February, 2008	9	36	37	16	2
January, 2008	10	39	34	15	2
November, 2007	9	41	34	15	1
September, 2007	10	38	34	16	2
February, 2007	8	41	36	14	1
December, 2006	8	40	35	16	1
Late October, 2006	9	40	33	16	2
March, 2006	9	39	36	15	1
January, 2006	7	39	37	15	2
Mid-May, 2005	7	37	39	16	1
January, 2005	10	41	34	14	1
August, 2004	9	42	34	14	1
September, 2003	10	38	36	15	1
Late March, 2003	10	43	31	12	4
January, 2003	7	38	39	15	1
Early October, 2002	7	39	37	16	1
June, 2002	5	40	37	16	2
Late September, 2001	7	40	37	14	2
June, 2001	6	38	39	16	1
June, 2000	9	43	35	11	2
August, 1999	6	43	41	9	1
May, 1997	7	43	38	11	1
September, 1996 (RVs)	8	47	34	10	1
February, 1995	8	39	38	14	1
March, 1994	5	41	40	13	1
December, 1993	5	34	45	15	1
U.S. News:January, 1993	4	33	46	16	1
U.S. News:October, 1992	6	34	40	19	1
U.S. News:August, 1992	5	30	47	17	1
U.S. News:May, 1992	4	35	45	15	1
U.S. News:January, 1992	4	32	45	18	1

**ASK ALL:**

Q.28 Overall, which of the following best describes how the recession affected your own personal financial situation? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 3; KEEP OPTION 2 SECOND]**

Feb 2-7

2011

- 36 It had a major effect, and your finances have not recovered  
 25 It had a major effect, but your finances have mostly recovered  
 37 It didn't have a major effect on your finances  
 1 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=688]:**Q.29F1 Which of the following national economic issues worries you most? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

Feb 2-7 <u>2011</u>		Dec 1-5 <u>2010</u>	Aug 25-Sep 6 <u>2010</u>	Jun 3-6 <u>2010</u>	Mar 10-14 <u>2010</u>
44	The job situation	47	49	41	45
23	Rising prices	15	15	16	17
19	The federal budget deficit	19	19	23	22
10	Problems in the financial and housing markets	14	12	13	11
1	Other <b>(VOL.)</b>	1	2	3	2
1	None/Not worried about any <b>(VOL.)</b>	1	1	1	*
3	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	3	2	2	2

**NO QUESTIONS 30-35****ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=697]:**

Q.36F2 In your opinion, is President Obama doing as much as he can to improve economic conditions or do you think he could be doing more?

	Doing as much <u>as he can</u>	Could be <u>doing more</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Feb 2-7, 2011	39	56	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	43	50	7
Mar 9-12, 2009	60	30	10
<b>G. W. Bush</b>			
February, 2004	30	65	5
September, 2003	26	70	4
Early July, 2003	33	62	5
May, 2003	42	53	5
Late March, 2003	41	52	7
January, 2003	33	61	6
Early October, 2002	31	63	6
June, 2002	33	62	5
January, 2002	48	46	6
<b>G. H. W. Bush</b>			
March, 1992	21	76	3
January, 1992	21	76	3

**ASK ALL:**

Thinking now about the state you live in...

Q.37 Would you describe the economy in your state as excellent, good, only fair or poor?

Feb 2-7 <u>2011</u>		ABC/Wash. Post <u>Jan 2003<sup>6</sup></u>
2	Excellent	1
21	Good	32
47	Only fair	45
30	Poor	21
*	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	1

<sup>6</sup> In 2003 instead of "only fair," the answer category was "not so good."

**ASK ALL:**

Q.38 As you may know, some state governments are facing budget problems that have forced them to raise taxes or reduce spending. What about in your state: Is your state government currently facing budget problems, or not? **[IF "DEPENDS," PROBE ONCE WITH: "Just your impression... Is your state government currently facing budget problems, or not?]**

**ASK IF STATE FACING BUDGET PROBLEMS (Q.38=1):**

Q.39 Are these budget problems very serious, fairly serious, or not too serious?

Feb 2-7 <u>2011</u>		ABC/Wash. Post <u>Jan 2003</u> <sup>7</sup>
81	Yes, state facing budget problems	82
36	Very serious	34
36	Fairly serious	37
8	Not too serious	10
0	Not a problem <b>(VOL.)</b>	*
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	1
12	No	12
6	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	5

**ASK ALL:**

Q.40 What is the best way to deal with the budget in your state? Should state lawmakers mostly focus on **[RANDOMIZE: Cutting major programs / Increasing taxes]** mostly focus on **[increasing taxes / cutting major programs]** or should your state do a combination of both?

Feb 2-7 <u>2011</u>	
19	Cutting major programs
4	Increasing taxes
68	Combination of both
5	Neither <b>(VOL.)</b>
*	No budget problem in my state <b>(VOL.)</b>
4	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

Q.41 If your state government needs to find ways to balance its budget this year, do you think your state should **[INSERT FIRST ITEM, RANDOMIZE]**, or not? Should your state **[NEXT ITEM]**, or not? **[AFTER EVERY THREE ITEMS READ: If your state government needs to find ways to balance its budget this year, do you think your state should [ITEM], or not?]**

		Yes, state should	No, state should not	<b>(VOL.)</b> DK/Ref
a.	Decrease funding for K through 12 public schools Feb 2-7, 2011	18	79	3
b.	Decrease health care services Feb 2-7, 2011	21	76	4
c.	Decrease funding for maintaining roads and public transportation systems Feb 2-7, 2011	31	67	2
d.	Decrease the pension plans of government employees Feb 2-7, 2011	47	47	6
e.	Increase personal income taxes <sup>8</sup> Feb 2-7, 2011	28	68	4

<sup>7</sup> In 2003 the question read, "As you may know, some state governments are facing budget problems that have forced them to raise taxes and reduce state spending on state programs and services. What about in your state? Is your state government currently facing budget problems, or not?"

<sup>8</sup> **[IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS THAT STATE DOES NOT HAVE INCOME TAXES ASK:** Should your state establish a personal income tax, or not?]

<b>Q.41 CONTINUED...</b>		Yes, state should	No, state should not	(VOL.) DK/Ref
f.	Increase sales taxes <sup>9</sup> Feb 2-7, 2011	30	67	2
g.	Decrease funding for public colleges and universities Feb 2-7, 2011	31	66	3
h.	Increase taxes on businesses Feb 2-7, 2011	41	55	4

**TREND FOR COMPARISON**

*If your state government needs to take steps to balance its budget this year, would you favor or oppose [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? What about [NEXT ITEM]? [IF NECESSARY: would you favor or oppose [ITEM] as a way to balance you state budget]?*

	Favor	Oppose	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Cuts in funding for K through 12 public schools Jun 24-27, 2010	22	73	4
Cuts in health care services provided by the state or local government Jun 24-27, 2010	27	65	8
Cuts in funding for maintaining roads and public transportation systems Jun 24-27, 2010	43	50	7

**QUESTION 42, 44-45 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****NO QUESTIONS 43, 46-54, 58-63, 65-66, 68, 70-71, 75****QUESTIONS 55-57, 64, 67, 69, 72-74 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

**ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
Feb 2-7, 2011	24	31	39	3	*	2	16	16
Jan 5-9, 2011	27	32	35	4	*	2	15	14
Dec 1-5, 2010	25	33	34	5	1	2	13	14
Nov 4-7, 2010	26	30	37	4	*	2	17	13
Oct 27-30, 2010	25	34	31	6	1	4	13	11
Oct 13-18, 2010	25	31	36	4	*	3	16	13
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	24	32	39	2	*	2	15	17
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	26	33	34	4	*	3	14	14
Jun 16-20, 2010	27	34	34	3	1	2	15	15
Apr 21-26, 2010	26	33	36	3	1	3	16	13
Mar 11-21, 2010	28	34	32	3	*	3	13	12
Mar 10-14, 2010	22	33	37	6	*	3	14	13
Feb 3-9, 2010	26	31	37	3	*	3	14	17
<b>Yearly Totals</b>								
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0

9

**[IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERS THAT STATE DOES NOT HAVE SALES TAXES ASK:** Should your state establish a sales tax, or not?]

## PARTY/PARTYLN CONT...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

## ASK ALL:

TEAPARTY

From what you know, do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/ DK
Feb 2-7, 2011	5	17	12	10	53	2	2	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	6	18	12	10	50	2	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	5	17	14	12	49	2	2	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	8	19	11	11	49	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 <sup>10</sup> (RVs)	12	17	11	14	32	--	1	13
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	9	19	11	13	30	--	1	16
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	11	18	12	14	32	--	1	13
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	8	14	9	9	37	--	1	21
Jun 16-20, 2010	9	15	10	8	30	--	*	27
May 20-23, 2010	10	15	8	10	31	--	1	25
Mar 11-21, 2010	9	15	7	7	29	--	1	31

## ASK ALL:

EMPLOY Are you now employed full-time, part-time or not employed?

Feb 2-7

2011

56	Employed
42	Full-time
15	Part-time
43	Not employed
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

<sup>10</sup>

In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May through October, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March it was described as "the Tea Party Protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX  
FEBRUARY 3-6, 2011 OMNIBUS  
FINAL TOPLINE  
N=1,001**

**PEW.1-PEW.3 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**NO PEW.4**

**PEW.5-PEW.6 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.7 As you may know, by law most states must balance their budgets, but many states are now unable to do so. In your opinion, which is the better way to address this problem **[READ IN ORDER]**?

Feb 3-6 <u>2011</u>		Jun 24-27 <u>2010</u>	<i>CBS</i> <u>Apr 2003</u>
27	Should the federal government give more money to the states to help them meet their budgets, even if it means higher federal deficits [OR]	26	35
60	Should the states take care of this themselves, either by raising state taxes or cutting state services	58	57
13	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	16	8