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# Most Say Government Policies Since Recession Have Done Little to Help Middle Class, Poor

*‘Partial’ Recovery Seen in Jobs, Household Incomes*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
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# Most Say Government Policies Since Recession Have Done Little to Help Middle Class, Poor

*‘Partial’ Recovery Seen in Jobs, Household Incomes*

The public makes sharp distinctions about which groups have benefited – and which have not – from the economic policies the government has put in place since the start of the recession. Majorities say that large banks, large corporations and the wealthy have been helped a great deal or a fair amount by government policies.

By contrast, 72% say that, in general, the government’s policies since the recession have done little or nothing to help middle class people, and nearly as many say they have provided little or no help for small businesses (68%) and the poor (65%).

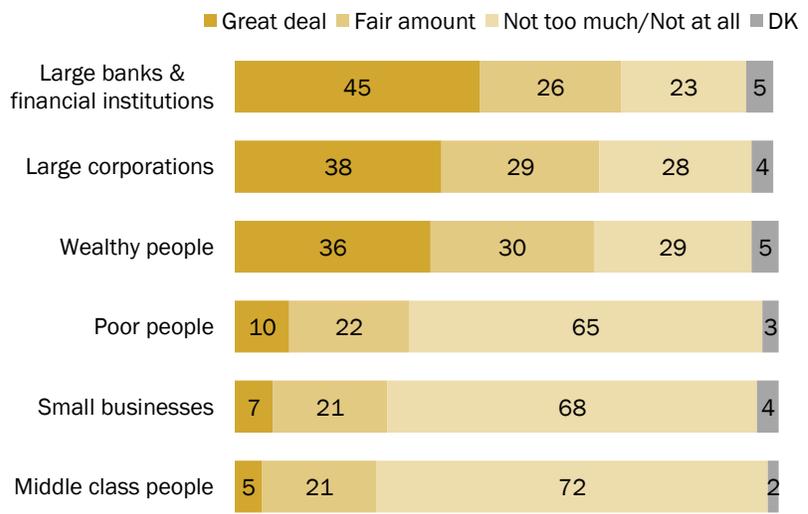
These opinions have changed little in recent years, and differ only modestly across demographic and income categories. There are significant partisan differences in these views, though majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents say that government policies following the start of the recession have done little or nothing for the poor and the middle class.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted Feb. 18-22 among 1,504 adults, finds that

opinions about whether various aspects of the economy – jobs, household incomes and the stock market – have recovered from the recession are much more positive than they were two years ago.

## Banks, Corporations, the Wealthy Widely Viewed as Benefiting from Gov’t Policies Since Recession

*% saying government economic policies since the recession have helped each...*



Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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Fully 67% say the job situation has recovered at least somewhat from the recession, which is up 20 points from September 2013. However, most (60%) see only a partial recovery in jobs: Just 7% think that the job situation has fully recovered from the recession. And nearly a third (32%) thinks the job situation “has hardly recovered at all.”

Similarly, more think household incomes have recovered than did so two years ago. But while 51% say there has been a partial recovery in incomes (up from 42% in September 2013), just 4% say they have fully recovered. About four-in-ten 42% think household incomes have hardly come back from the recession.

### More See ‘Partial’ Recovery in Job Situation, Household Incomes

	Job situation	Household incomes	Real estate	Stock market
<b>February 2015</b>	%	%	%	%
Fully recovered	7	4	8	31
Partially recovered	60	51	63	47
Hardly recovered at all	32	42	25	13
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100	100
<b>September 2013</b>				
Fully recovered	2	2	4	21
Partially recovered	45	42	59	53
Hardly recovered at all	52	54	33	18
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100	100
<b>Change in NET fully/partially recovered</b>	+20	+12	+8	+4

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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There has been less change since 2013 in views about recovery in the stock market and real estate. In 2013, majorities said both sectors had either fully or partially recovered, and that remains the case today. But there has been a 10-point increase since then in the share saying the stock market has “fully” recovered from the recession (31% now, 21% then).

When asked about the impact of the recession on their personal finances, 29% say the recession had a major impact on their finances and their finances have mostly recovered; about as many (30%) say it had a major impact and their finances have *not* recovered. Four-in-ten say the recession did not have a major effect on their finances.

The share saying their finances have not recovered from the recession has declined slightly, from 36% in 2011 and 33% in 2013 to 30% currently. Those with lower family incomes are especially likely to say they are still recovering from the recession, six years after it ended.

Among those with family incomes of less than \$30,000, 24% say the recession had a major impact and their finances have mostly recovered, while many more (38%) say it had a major impact but they have yet to recover. Just 36% say the recession did not have a major effect on them.

## Modest Change in Views of Recession's Personal Impact

*How did recession impact your personal finances?*

	Feb 2011 %	Sept 2013 %	Feb 2015 %	'11-'15 change
Had major effect, have not recovered	36	33	30	-6
Had major effect, have mostly recovered	25	28	29	+4
Did not have major effect	37	37	40	+3
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	
	100	100	100	

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## Many Lower-Income Americans Feel Enduring Impact of Recession

*How did recession impact your personal finances?*

	Major effect, have not recovered %	Major effect, mostly recovered %	Did not have major effect %	DK %
Total	30	29	40	1=100
<i>Family income</i>				
\$100,000 or more	14	36	50	*=100
\$75,000-\$99,999	27	33	40	0=100
\$30,000-\$74,999	29	31	39	*=100
Less than \$30,000	38	24	36	2=100

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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By contrast, people with family incomes of \$100,000 or more were less affected by the recession; half (50%) say the recession did not have a major impact on their finances, the highest percentage of any income category. And among those affected by the recession, far more say their finances have mostly recovered (36%) than say they have not yet recovered (14%).

## Other Important Findings

**Economic System Still Seen at Risk.** Most Americans continue to think the U.S. economic system is still vulnerable to the type of crisis that devastated the economy in the fall of 2008. Currently, 63% say the economic system is no more secure today than it was before the 2008 financial crisis, while only about a third of Americans (34%) say it is more secure. These attitudes are virtually unchanged from two years ago.

**Views of National Economy Weaken a Bit.** About a quarter (26%) view economic conditions as excellent or good, about the same as in January (27%). But “poor” ratings of the economy, which fell nine points from [October to January](#), have increased seven points since last month.

### **Most Say Economic System Favors Powerful Interests.**

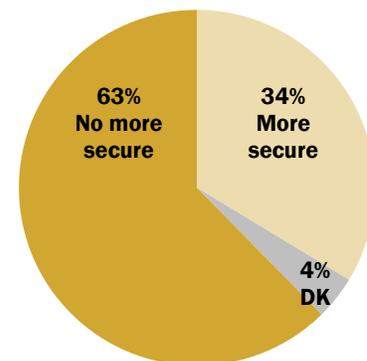
Currently, 62% say the economic system in this country unfairly favors powerful interests, while only about half as many (33%) think the system is fair to most Americans. This opinion is little changed since last year. The view that the economic system is tilted toward the powerful is shared by those in all income categories.

**Stark Partisan Divide over Government Aid to Poor.** About half of the public (49%) says government aid to the poor does more good than harm, because people are unable to escape poverty until basic needs are met. Nearly as many (44%) say government aid to the poor does more harm than good, by making people dependent on the government. There is a stark partisan divide in these attitudes: 74% of Democrats say government assistance to the poor, on balance, does more good than harm; 71% of Republicans say it does more harm than good.

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### **Doubts About Security of U.S. Economic System**

*Compared w/ before '08 financial crisis, U.S. economic system is ...*



Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.

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## Impact of Government Policies Since the Recession

Majorities across virtually all demographic and partisan groups say wealthy people have been helped a great deal or a fair amount by government policies since the recession began. Substantially smaller shares say middle class people and poor people have benefitted at least a fair amount.

Still, there are partisan differences in these opinions: Republicans (55%) are less likely than Democrats (73%) to say the wealthy have benefitted at least a fair amount from government policies since the start of the recession. Republicans also are less likely to say that the middle class has been helped: Just 16% say the middle class have been helped at least a fair amount, compared with 36% of Democrats. Comparable shares of Republicans (38%) and Democrats (34%) say poor people have been helped a great deal or fair amount by government policies.

Majorities of those in all income groups say that government policies implemented since the start of the recession have helped the wealthy. At the same time, relatively small percentages across income levels say government policies have done at least a fair amount for either the poor or middle class.

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### Gov't Policies Seen as Helping Wealthy More Than the Middle Class or Poor

*% saying gov't policies since recession have helped each a great deal/fair amount ...*

	Middle class people	Poor people	Wealthy people
	%	%	%
Total	26	32	66
<i>Family income</i>			
\$100,000 or more	23	32	61
\$75,000-\$99,999	20	28	56
\$30,000-\$74,999	22	36	70
Less than \$30,000	33	30	68
<i>Partisan</i>			
Republican	16	38	55
Democrat	36	34	73
Independent	24	29	69
<b>Rep-Dem diff</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>-18</b>

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.

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There is broad agreement among demographic and partisan groups that government policies since the start of the recession have helped large banks and financial institutions at least a fair amount. Fully 72% express this view, including 45% who say government policies have helped large banks and financial institutions a “great deal.”

Two-thirds (67%) say the government’s policies have benefitted large corporations. These views also vary only modestly across different income and partisan groups.

There are larger partisan differences in views of what government policies have done to help small businesses since the beginning of the recession. About three times as many Democrats (43%) as Republicans (14%) say these policies have helped small businesses at least a fair amount.

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## Few Republicans Say Gov’t Policies Have Helped Small Businesses

*% saying gov’t policies since recession have helped each a great deal/fair amount ...*

	<b>Small businesses</b>	<b>Large corporations</b>	<b>Large banks &amp; financial institutions</b>
	%	%	%
Total	29	67	72
<i>Family income</i>			
\$100,000 or more	21	63	74
\$75,000-\$99,999	21	64	74
\$30,000-\$74,999	28	69	74
Less than \$30,000	36	70	69
Republican	14	60	65
Democrat	43	70	70
Independent	24	72	78
<b>Rep-Dem diff</b>	<b>-29</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>-5</b>

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.

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## Changing Perceptions of Recovery in Jobs, Incomes

Since September 2013, there has been an across-the-board rise in the view that the job situation has at least partially recovered from the recession. However, most say that jobs have partially (60%), rather than fully (7%), recovered.

Republicans, Democrats and independents, and those across income levels, are all much more likely to see a stronger recovery in the job situation than in September 2013. Still, far more Democrats (80%) than Republicans (54%) see a recovery in jobs.

### Across the Board, More Say Job Situation Has at Least Partially Recovered

*% saying the job situation has recovered from the recession ...*

	September 2013		February 2015		'13-'15 change in Fully/ Partially
	NET Fully/ Partially %	Hardly at all %	NET Fully/ Partially %	Hardly at all %	
Total	47	52	67	32	+20
<i>Family income</i>					
\$100,000 or more	52	48	74	26	+22
\$75,000-\$99,999	50	50	78	22	+28
\$30,000-\$74,999	50	49	67	32	+17
Less than \$30,000	42	56	61	39	+19
Republican	36	63	54	46	+18
Democrat	56	44	80	18	+24
Independent	48	50	65	35	+17

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015. Don't know responses not shown.

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A similar pattern is evident in whether household incomes have recovered since the start of the recession. And there continues to be a sizable gap in these perceptions both by family income and partisanship.

Half (50%) of those with incomes of \$30,000 or less say that household incomes have recovered fully or partially, while nearly as many (48%) say they have recovered “hardly at all.” Majorities in higher income groups see at least a partial recovery in household incomes.

## Just Half of Lower-Income Adults Say Household Incomes Have Recovered from Recession

*% saying household incomes have recovered from the recession ...*

	September 2013		February 2015		'13-'15 change in Fully/ Partially
	NET Fully/ Partially %	Hardly at all %	NET Fully/ Partially %	Hardly at all %	
Total	44	54	56	42	+12
<i>Family income</i>					
\$100,000 or more	52	46	65	33	+13
\$75,000-\$99,999	36	62	64	35	+28
\$30,000-\$74,999	45	54	57	42	+12
Less than \$30,000	42	56	50	48	+8
<i>Partisanship</i>					
Republican	39	60	52	46	+13
Democrat	54	43	65	32	+11
Independent	41	57	50	48	+9

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015. Don't know responses not shown.

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Nearly two-thirds of Democrats (65%) say household incomes have seen some recovery from the recession, compared with only about half of Republicans (52%) and independents (50%).

## Current Views of the Nation's Economy

Overall, 26% describe economic conditions in the country as excellent or good, while slightly more (31%) say they are poor; a 43% plurality say conditions are only fair. Positive views of the economy are about the same as in January (27%). But somewhat more describe the economy as poor than did so last month (31% now, 24% then) while the share saying it is only fair has ticked down (from 48% to 43%).

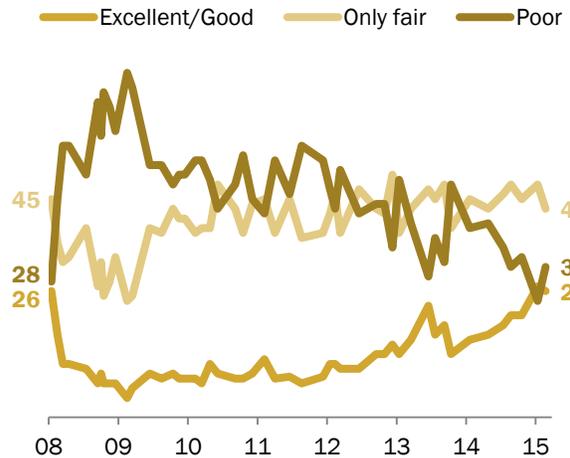
Nonetheless, views of the economy remain much more positive than they were in January 2014, when just 16% rated the economy as excellent or good.

Looking ahead, 27% say they expect economic conditions to be better in a year compared with 20% who think they will be worse; 52% say they will be about the same as they are now. The share saying they expect conditions to improve has declined slightly from January (from 31% to 27%).

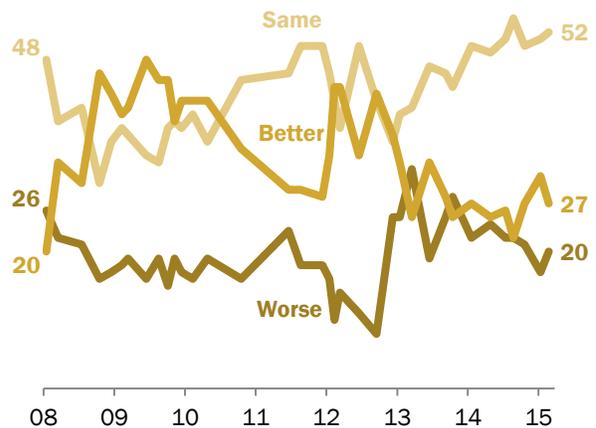
There continue to be partisan divides in views of economic conditions. Among Democrats, 36% rate conditions as excellent or good compared with just 14% of Republicans. Democrats also are more optimistic about the future: 37% say the economy will be better in a year, while just 9% think it will be worse. Among Republicans, more think economic conditions will be worse in a year (28%) than better (15%).

### More Rate Economic Conditions as 'Poor' Than in January

Current economic conditions in country are ... (%)



A year from now, economic conditions will be ... (%)



Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.

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## On Core Economic Beliefs, Differences Between - and Within - Parties

Most Americans (62%) think “the economic system in this country unfairly favors powerful interests.” Only about half as many (33%) say the system is “generally fair to most Americans.”

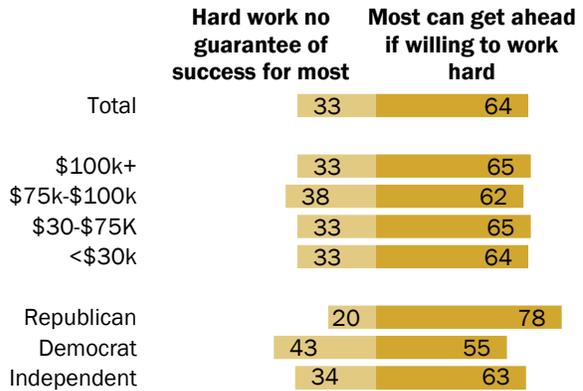
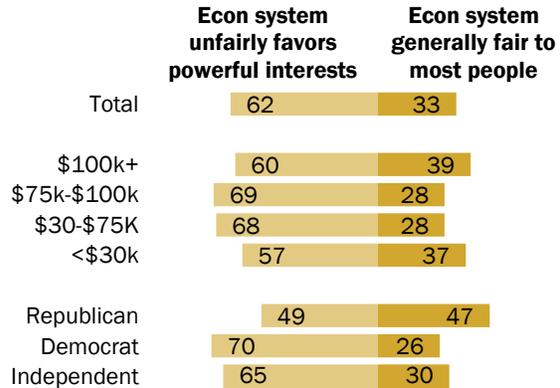
Seven-in-ten Democrats (70%) and 65% of independents regard the economic system as unfair. Republicans are divided: 49% say the system unfairly favors powerful interests, while 47% say it is fair to most Americans. Majorities across income categories view the system as unfair.

Most Americans say it is still possible to get ahead, despite the perceived unfairness of the economic system. Nearly two-thirds (64%) say “most people who want to get ahead can make it if they’re willing to work hard.” A third (33%) says that “hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people.”

As with opinions about the fairness of the economic system, views about whether hard work can lead to success differ more along partisan than income lines. Overall, 55% of Democrats say most people can get ahead through hard work compared with larger majorities of independents (63%) and Republicans (78%). Across income levels, similarly large majorities say most people who want to get ahead can make it if they’re willing to work hard.

### On Core Economic Values, Party Divides Larger Than Income Differences

*% saying ...*



Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.

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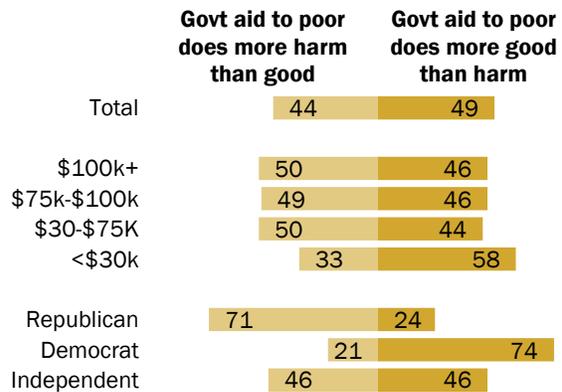
Opinions on the impact of government assistance to the poor are even more partisan than views on the fairness of the economic system and hard work and achievement. Overall, the public is split with 44% saying government aid to the poor “does more harm than good by making people too dependent on government assistance,” while about as many (49%) say it does “more good than harm because people can’t get out of poverty until their basic needs are met.” Republicans, by 71% to 24%, say government aid to the poor does more harm than good. Democrats take the opposite view and by a nearly identical margin (74% to 21%), say aid to the poor does more good than harm.

A majority of those with family incomes of less than \$30,000 a year (58%) say government aid to the poor does more good than harm. People in higher income groups are more divided.

Views on these three questions are largely unchanged from last June. As the Pew Research Center’s [Political Typology report](#) noted, there are deep divisions between, as well as within, the broader party coalitions on several of these measures.

### Divided Views of Gov’t Aid to Poor

*% saying ...*



Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.

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Within both parties, there are notable divisions by income level in core economic beliefs. Among Democrats, those with family incomes of \$75,000 or more are more likely than those with low incomes (less than \$30,000) to say the economic system is unfair, that hard work is no guarantee of success and that government aid to the poor does more good than harm.

On the value of hard work, for instance, 62% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning independents with incomes of less than \$30,000 say most people can get ahead if they work hard; 57% of those with incomes of \$30,000-\$74,999 agree. But those with incomes of \$75,000 or more are divided: 48% say hard work leads to success, while 51% say it is no guarantee of success for most people.

Ideology is a factor in these opinions. For example, 57% of liberal Democrats say hard work is no guarantee of success for most people. By contrast, among conservative and moderate Democrats, 64% say most people who work hard can get ahead. Democrats with higher incomes are more likely to describe their political views as liberal than are those with middle or lower incomes.

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## Lower-Income Democrats Say Hard Work Leads to Success for Most People

*Based on Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents*

	Family income			Hi-Low diff
	<\$30K	\$30K-\$75k	\$75K+	
	%	%	%	
Economic system unfairly favors powerful interests	64	73	77	+13
Economic system generally fair to most people	31	22	22	-9
Hard work no guarantee of success for most people	37	42	51	+14
Most can get ahead if they're willing to work hard	62	57	48	-14
Gov't aid to poor does more good than harm	66	64	86	+20
Gov't aid to poor does more harm than good	26	32	12	-14
N=	226	226	189	

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.

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Among Republicans, by far the biggest differences between income groups are over aid to the poor: 80% of Republicans and Republican leaners with incomes of \$75,000 or more say government aid to the poor does more harm than good, as do 71% of those with incomes of \$30,000-\$74,999. But among Republicans with incomes of less than \$30,000, 45% see government assistance to the poor in negative terms, while 48% say it does more good than harm.

Majorities of Republicans across income groups say most people can get ahead with hard work. Republicans with incomes of \$30,000-\$74,999 are somewhat more likely than those with higher or lower incomes to say that the economic system is unfair.

## Lower-Income Republicans More Likely to Have Positive View of Aid to Poor

*Based on Republicans and Republican-leaning independents*

	Family income			Hi-Low diff
	<\$30K	\$30K-\$75k	\$75K+	
	%	%	%	
Economic system unfairly favors powerful interests	46	62	53	+7
Economic system generally fair to most people	47	35	44	-3
Hard work no guarantee of success for most people	27	25	22	-5
Most can get ahead if they're willing to work hard	70	72	77	+7
Gov't aid to poor does more good than harm	48	24	15	-33
Gov't aid to poor does more harm than good	45	71	80	+35
N=	139	234	247	

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.

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## Views of Social Class

Amid debate over which policies would do the most to improve the lives of the middle class, large percentages of Americans identify with the term – either completely or with some qualification.

When asked to choose from five names for the social classes, 47% say they are middle class, 29% say they are lower-middle class, while 11% say they are upper-middle class.

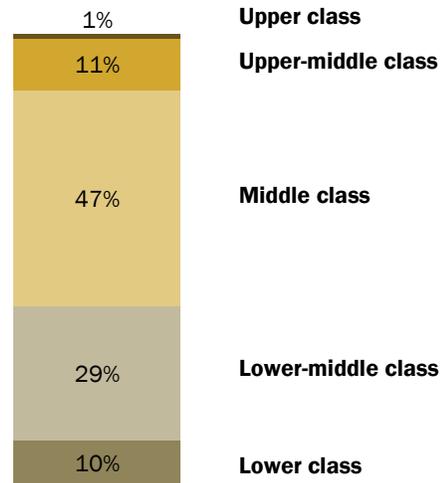
Just 1% say they belong in the upper class. Somewhat more (10%) place themselves at the bottom of the scale and say they are lower class.

Views on this question have changed little over the past year. In January 2014, 44% described themselves as middle class, 28% as lower-middle class and 13% as upper-middle class.

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### Nearly Half Describe Themselves as ‘Middle Class’

*Which of these social classes would you say you belong in?*



Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015.  
Don't know responses not shown.

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Those with family incomes of \$100,000 a year or more are among the most likely to place themselves at the top of the social class ladder: 40% say they are either upper-middle or upper class. However, 51% say they belong in the middle class and 8% say they are lower-middle class.

Among those with incomes of \$75,000-\$99,999 and \$50,000-\$74,999, majorities describe themselves as middle class. Those with smaller incomes are more likely to say they are lower-middle class or lower class.

Those with a post-graduate (28%) or college (22%) degree are more likely than those with some college experience (7%) or no college experience (8%) to say they are either upper-middle or upper class. Nonetheless, just 3% of post-graduates describe themselves as “upper class.”

There also are racial and ethnic differences in how people describe their social class; about half of blacks (51%) and Hispanics (48%) say they are either lower-middle class or lower class, compared with 35% of whites.

## Few with Family Incomes of \$100K+ Embrace the Label ‘Upper Class’

*Which of these social classes would you say you belong in?*

	Upper class	Upper-middle class	Middle class	Lower-middle class	Lower class	DK
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	1	11	47	29	10	1=100
White	2	14	49	28	7	1=100
Black	1	6	41	39	12	2=100
Hispanic	1	4	46	25	23	1=100
18-29	2	9	43	34	12	*=100
30-49	1	12	48	29	11	*=100
50-64	1	10	48	28	10	2=100
65+	2	15	47	26	9	1=100
Post-graduate	3	24	49	19	2	3=100
College graduate	2	19	54	21	2	1=100
Some college	*	7	51	33	9	*=100
HS or less	1	7	40	33	18	1=100
<i>Family income</i>						
\$100,000 or more	6	34	51	8	0	1=100
\$75,000-\$99,999	*	16	68	15	1	*=100
\$50,000-\$74,999	1	8	61	29	1	0=100
\$30,000-\$49,999	0	4	36	53	5	1=100
Less than \$30,000	1	3	34	34	27	1=100
Republican	2	14	53	27	5	1=100
Democrat	2	10	46	30	12	1=100
Independent	1	12	45	31	11	1=100

Survey conducted Feb. 18-22, 2015. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

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## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted February 18-22, 2015 among a national sample of 1,504 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (526 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 978 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 559 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://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2013 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2014 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 among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

The following table shows the unweighted 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>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,504	2.9 percentage points
Republican	399	5.6 percentage points
Democrat	440	5.4 percentage points
Independent	585	4.6 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.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
FEBRUARY 2015 POLITICAL SURVEY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
FEBRUARY 18-22, 2015  
N=1,504**

**QUESTIONS 1-2, 5, 8 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****NO QUESTIONS 3-4, 6-7, 9-10****ASK ALL:**

Q.11 As I read you some pairs of statements please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views — even if neither is exactly right. The first pair is **[READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS; RANDOMIZE PAIRS BUT NOT STATEMENTS WITHIN EACH PAIR]**. Next, **[NEXT PAIR] [IF NECESSARY: "Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?"]**

	Government aid to the poor does more harm than good, by making people too dependent on <u>government assistance</u>	Government aid to the poor does more good than harm, because people can't get out of poverty until their basic needs are <u>met</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> Both/Neither/ <u>DK/Ref</u>	
a.				
	Feb 18-22, 2015	44	49	7
	Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	48	47	6
	Jan 15-19, 2014 (U)	44	49	7
		The economic system in this country unfairly favors powerful interests	The economic system in this country is generally fair to most Americans	<b>(VOL.)</b> Both/Neither/ <u>DK/Ref</u>
b.				
	Feb 18-22, 2015	62	33	4
	Jan 29-Feb 9, 2014 <sup>1</sup>	62	34	4

**ITEM c PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

	Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they're willing to work <u>hard</u>	Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success <u>for most people</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> Both/Neither/ <u>DK/Ref</u>	
d.				
	Feb 18-22, 2015	64	33	2
	Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	65	32	3
	Jan 15-19, 2014 (U)	60	38	3
	Dec 7-11, 2011	58	40	3
	Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	64	33	3
	March, 2006	64	33	3
	December, 2005	64	33	3
	December, 2004	68	28	4
	September, 2000	73	24	3
	August, 1999	74	23	3
	July, 1994	68	30	2

**NO QUESTIONS 12, 14-15, 19-24, 30-50****QUESTIONS 13, 16-18, 51b-c PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTIONS 25-29, 51a HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

<sup>1</sup> Item was asked Jan. 29-Feb.9, 2014 (N=2,787).

**ASK ALL:**

Thinking about the nation's economy...

Q.52 How would you rate economic conditions in this country today... as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Feb 18-22, 2015	2	23	43	31	*
Jan 7-11, 2015	4	23	48	24	*
Oct 15-20, 2014	2	19	45	33	1
Aug 20-24, 2014	1	19	48	31	1
Jul 8-14, 2014	2	17	46	35	*
Apr 23-27, 2014 (U)	2	15	43	40	1
Jan 15-19, 2014 (U)	1	15	45	39	1
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	1	14	48	36	1
Oct 9-13, 2013	1	12	39	48	*
Sep 4-8, 2013	2	17	48	32	*
Jul 17-21, 2013	2	15	45	37	1
Jun 12-16, 2013	2	21	47	29	*
Mar 13-17, 2013	1	15	43	40	1
Jan 9-13, 2013	2	11	38	49	1
Dec 5-9, 2012	1	14	50	35	1
Oct 24-28, 2012	1	12	42	44	1
Sep 12-16, 2012	1	12	43	44	1
Jun 7-17, 2012	1	9	47	42	1
Mar 7-11, 2012	1	9	38	51	1
Feb 8-12, 2012	1	10	46	43	1
Jan 11-16, 2012	2	9	42	47	1
Dec 7-11, 2011	*	8	38	53	1
Aug 17-21, 2011	1	6	37	56	1
Jun 15-19, 2011	*	8	45	46	1
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	1	7	38	53	1
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

**Q.52 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
December, 2006	6	32	41	19	2
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>2</sup>	2	29	42	26	1

**ASK ALL:**

Q.53 A year from now, do you expect that economic conditions in the country as a whole will be better than they are at present, or worse, or just about the same as now?

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Feb 18-22, 2015	27	20	52	1
Jan 7-11, 2015	31	17	51	1
Oct 15-20, 2014	27	21	50	3
Aug 20-24, 2014	22	22	54	2
Jul 8-14, 2014	26	22	51	1
Apr 23-27, 2014 (U)	25	24	49	2
Jan 15-19, 2014 (U)	27	22	50	1
Oct 9-13, 2013	25	28	44	3
Sep 4-8, 2013	28	25	46	1
Jun 12-16, 2013	33	19	47	1
Mar 13-17, 2013	25	32	41	1
Jan 9-13, 2013	33	25	40	2
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	25	36	2
Sep 12-16, 2012	43	8	42	8
Jun 7-17, 2012	34	11	50	5
Mar 7-11, 2012	44	14	38	4
Feb 8-12, 2012	44	10	42	3
Jan 11-16, 2012	34	16	46	3
Dec 7-11, 2011	28	18	50	4
Aug 17-21, 2011	29	18	50	2
Jun 15-19, 2011	29	23	46	2
Oct 13-18, 2010	35	16	45	4
Apr 21-26, 2010	42	19	36	3
Feb 3-9, 2010	42	16	40	3
Dec 9-13, 2009	42	17	38	3
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	39	19	39	2
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	45	15	38	3
Aug 11-17, 2009	45	19	33	3
Jun 10-14, 2009	48	16	34	2
Mar 9-12, 2009	41	19	37	3
Feb 4-8, 2009	40	18	38	4
December, 2008	43	17	36	4
Early October, 2008	46	16	30	8
July, 2008	30	21	41	8

<sup>2</sup> Earlier trends available from Gallup.

**Q.53 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
March, 2008	33	22	39	6
January, 2008	20	26	48	6
September, 2007	19	23	53	5
June, 2007	16	24	55	5
February, 2007	17	20	58	5
December, 2006	22	18	56	4
September, 2006	16	25	55	4
January, 2006	20	22	55	3
Early October, 2005	20	32	45	3
Mid-September, 2005	18	37	43	2
Mid-May, 2005	18	24	55	3
January, 2005	27	18	52	3
August, 2004	36	9	47	8
Late February, 2004	39	12	41	8
September, 2003	37	17	43	3
May, 2003	43	19	35	3
Late March, 2003	33	23	37	7
January, 2003	30	20	44	6
January, 2002	44	17	36	3
<i>Newsweek</i> : January, 2001	18	33	44	5
June, 2000	15	24	55	6
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	16	22	57	5
Early September, 1998	18	17	61	4
May, 1990	18	31	45	6
February, 1989	25	22	49	4
September, 1988 (RVs)	24	16	51	9
May, 1988	24	20	46	10
January, 1988	22	26	45	7
<i>Newsweek</i> : January, 1984 (RVs)	35	13	49	3

**ASK ALL:**

Q.54 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]**

<u>Feb 18-22</u> <u>2015</u>		<u>Sep 4-8</u> <u>2013</u>	<u>Jan 11-16</u> <u>2012</u>	<u>Mar 8-14</u> <u>2011</u>	<u>Feb 2-7</u> <u>2011</u>
30	It had a major effect, and your finances have not recovered	33	36	40	36
29	It had a major effect, but your finances have mostly recovered	28	28	24	25
40	It did not have a major effect on your finances	37	33	34	37
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	2	4	2	1

**NO QUESTION 55****ASK ALL:**

Q.56 Thinking about the U.S. economic system in general, compared with before the 2008 financial crisis, do you think the U.S. economic system is **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

<u>Feb 18-22</u> <u>2015</u>		<u>Sep 4-8</u> <u>2013</u>
34	More secure today than it was before the 2008 economic crisis	33
63	No more secure today than it was before the 2008 economic crisis	63
4	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	4

**NO QUESTION 57**

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=755]:**

Q.58F1 Thinking about the recession that began in 2008 ... Please tell me whether you think each of the following has fully recovered from the recession, partially recovered, or hardly recovered at all. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**? Have/Has **[ITEM]** fully recovered from the recession, partially recovered, or hardly recovered at all? What about **[INSERT ITEM]**? **[IF NECESSARY: Have/has **[ITEM]** fully recovered from the recession, partially recovered, or hardly recovered at all?]**

		Fully <u>recovered</u>	Partially <u>recovered</u>	Hardly recovered <u>at all</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.F1	Real estate values				
	Feb 18-22, 2015	8	63	25	4
	Sep 4-8, 2013	4	59	33	4
b.F1	The stock market				
	Feb 18-22, 2015	31	47	13	9
	Sep 4-8, 2013	21	53	18	9
c.F1	The job situation				
	Feb 18-22, 2015	7	60	32	1
	Sep 4-8, 2013	2	45	52	1
d.F1	Household incomes				
	Feb 18-22, 2015	4	51	42	2
	Sep 4-8, 2013	2	42	54	2

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=749]:**

Q.59F2 Thinking about the federal government's economic policies following the recession that began in 2008 ... Do you think these policies have helped **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]** a great deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all? What about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[IF NECESSARY: Have the federal government's policies since the recession helped **[ITEM]** a great deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?]**

		A great <u>deal</u>	A fair <u>amount</u>	Not too <u>much</u>	Not at <u>all</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.F2	Middle-class people					
	Feb 18-22, 2015	5	21	41	31	2
	Sep 4-8, 2013	6	21	38	33	2
	Jul 15-18, 2010	2	25	43	25	4
b.F2	Poor people					
	Feb 18-22, 2015	10	22	34	32	3
	Sep 4-8, 2013	8	18	35	37	3
	Jul 15-18, 2010	7	24	37	27	5
c.F2	Wealthy people					
	Feb 18-22, 2015	36	30	20	9	5
	Sep 4-8, 2013	38	21	20	13	8
	Jul 15-18, 2010	31	26	18	12	12
d.F2	Large banks and financial institutions					
	Feb 18-22, 2015	45	26	16	8	5
	Sep 4-8, 2013	40	28	17	7	7
	Jul 15-18, 2010	53	21	12	6	8
e.F2	Small businesses					
	Feb 18-22, 2015	7	21	39	29	4
	Sep 4-8, 2013	6	23	35	32	4
	Jul 15-18, 2010	2	21	39	29	8

**Q.59F2 CONTINUED...**

		A great <u>deal</u>	A fair <u>amount</u>	Not too <u>much</u>	Not at <u>all</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
f.F2	Large corporations					
	Feb 18-22, 2015	38	29	18	10	4
	Sep 4-8, 2013	41	26	19	8	7
	Jul 15-18, 2010	44	26	12	8	10

**NO QUESTIONS 60-61, 64-65, 69, 72-73, 77****QUESTIONS 62-63, 66-68, 70-71, 74-76, 78 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****NO QUESTION 79****ASK ALL:**

Q.80 If you were asked to use one of these commonly used names for the social classes, which would you say you belong in? The upper class, upper-middle class, middle class, lower-middle class, or lower class?

	<u>Upper class</u>	<u>Upper- middle class</u>	<u>Middle class</u>	<u>Lower- middle class</u>	<u>Lower class</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Feb 18-22, 2015	1	11	47	29	10	1
Jan 15-19, 2014 (U)	1	13	44	28	12	1
Jul 16-26, 2012 (SDT)	2	15	49	25	7	2
Apr 4-15, 2012	1	11	47	27	11	2
Dec 7-11, 2011	1	15	46	25	11	2
Mar 15-29, 2011 (SDT)	2	17	52	20	7	2
May 11-31, 2010 (SDT)	2	18	50	21	8	1
February, 2008 (SDT)	2	19	53	19	6	1

**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?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) <u>No preference</u>	(VOL.) <u>Other party</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>	Lean <u>Rep</u>	Lean <u>Dem</u>
Feb 18-22, 2015	24	31	38	4	1	1	18	17
Jan 7-11, 2015	21	30	44	3	1	1	19	18
Dec 3-7, 2014	24	31	39	3	1	2	17	17
Nov 6-9, 2014	27	32	36	2	*	1	15	16
Oct 15-20, 2014	24	33	38	4	*	1	13	17
Sep 2-9, 2014	24	33	38	3	1	2	15	15
Aug 20-24, 2014	24	31	37	4	1	4	15	16
Jul 8-14, 2014	25	34	37	2	1	1	16	15
Apr 23-27, 2014	24	30	41	2	1	2	18	17
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	22	31	41	3	1	2	17	17
Feb 14-23, 2014	22	32	39	4	1	2	14	17
<b>Yearly Totals</b>								
2014	23.2	31.5	39.5	3.1	.7	2.0	16.2	16.5
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
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
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

**PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...**

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
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 REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):**

TEAPARTY3 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

**BASED ON REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS [N=679]:**

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/DK
Feb 18-22, 2015	36	9	54	*	*	--
Jan 7-11, 2015	34	9	54	1	2	--
Dec 3-7, 2014	34	9	55	2	1	--
Nov 6-9, 2014	31	10	57	1	1	--
Oct 15-20, 2014	32	8	56	2	2	--
Sep 2-9, 2014	38	10	50	1	1	--
Aug 20-24, 2014	34	10	53	*	2	--
Jul 8-14, 2014	35	12	50	2	1	--
Apr 23-27, 2014	33	11	54	1	1	--
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	37	11	50	1	1	--
Feb 14-23, 2014	36	9	54	1	1	--
Jan 15-19, 2014	35	12	52	1	*	--
Dec 3-8, 2013	32	9	57	1	1	--
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	40	9	48	2	1	--
Oct 9-13, 2013	41	11	45	2	1	--
Sep 4-8, 2013	35	9	54	1	1	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	37	10	50	2	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	9	46	1	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	41	7	48	1	3	--
May 1-5, 2013	28	8	61	2	1	--
Mar 13-17, 2013	43	7	47	1	1	--
Feb 13-18, 2013	36	9	52	1	3	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	43	9	45	1	2	--
Jan 9-13, 2013	35	10	51	2	2	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	11	51	1	*	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	40	8	49	1	2	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	9	50	1	3	--
Sep 12-16, 2013	39	7	52	1	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	40	9	47	2	1	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	36	9	53	1	2	--

## TEAPARTY3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Haven't heard of</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Refused</u>	Not heard of/ <u>DK</u>
Apr 4-15, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	38	10	49	2	1	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	40	7	51	1	1	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	42	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	37	8	52	1	1	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	40	9	48	2	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	37	11	51	1	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	7	49	*	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	40	7	51	*	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	42	9	47	1	1	--
May 25-30, 2011	37	7	52	1	3	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	45	9	46	*	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	37	7	54	1	*	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	41	9	48	1	1	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 <sup>3</sup>	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	51	5	42	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	58	5	27	--	1	9
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	54	5	30	--	1	10
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	56	6	29	--	*	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	46	5	36	--	1	13
Jun 16-20, 2010	46	5	30	--	*	19
May 20-23, 2010	53	4	25	--	1	16
Mar 11-21, 2010	48	4	26	--	1	21

**Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:**

(U)	Pew Research Center/USA Today polls
(SDT)	Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends

<sup>3</sup> In the February 2-7, 2011, survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." 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 2010 through October 2010, 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 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."