

FOR RELEASE JULY 22, 2015

# A Year Later, U.S. Campaign Against ISIS Garners Support, Raises Concerns

*Just 30% Say U.S. Military Effort Is  
Going Well*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
ON THIS REPORT:**

Carroll Doherty, Director of Political Research  
Rachel Weisel, Communications Associate

202.419.4372

[www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)

# A Year Later, U.S. Campaign Against ISIS Garners Support, Raises Concerns

*Just 30% Say U.S. Military Effort Is Going Well*

Nearly a year after the United States launched its first airstrikes against ISIS, the public remains broadly supportive of the military campaign. Yet Americans also have persistent doubts about how well the U.S. military effort is going, and there is no agreement about whether the U.S. should deploy ground troops as part of the military campaign in Iraq and Syria.

The latest national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted July 14-20 among 2,002 adults, finds:

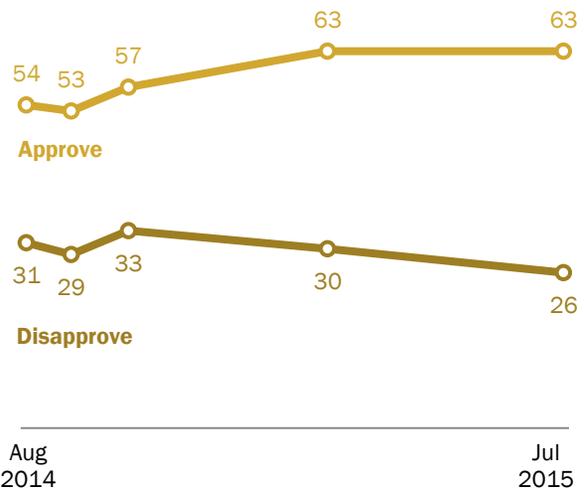
## Consistent Support for U.S. Military Action.

About six-in-ten Americans (63%) approve of the U.S. military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria; just 26% disapprove of the campaign. Support is somewhat higher today than for President Obama's first airstrikes against Islamic militants in Iraq in August 2014 (54% approved).

In that [poll](#), Republicans were 17 points more likely than Democrats to approve of U.S. military action (71% vs. 54%). Today, there are virtually no partisan differences in support for the U.S. military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria; 67% of Republicans approve of the campaign, as do 64% of Democrats.

## Continued Public Support for U.S. Military Action Against ISIS

% who \_\_\_\_\_ of the U.S. military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria



Survey conducted July 14-20, 2015.

\* September 2014 survey asked about Barack Obama's plan for a military campaign against militants in Iraq and Syria. August 2014 survey asked about U.S. airstrikes against militants in Iraq only.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Most Do Not Think Military Campaign Is Going Well.** In the new poll, just 30% say the U.S. military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria is going very well or fairly well. About twice as many (62%) say it is going not too well or not at all well. The share giving the military campaign a positive assessment has dipped six points (from 36%) since February.

Nonetheless, a majority (55%) thinks the U.S. and its allies definitely or probably *will* succeed in its campaign against the Islamic militants, while 36% say it will definitely or probably fail.

#### Will the U.S. Go Too Far – Or Not Far Enough?

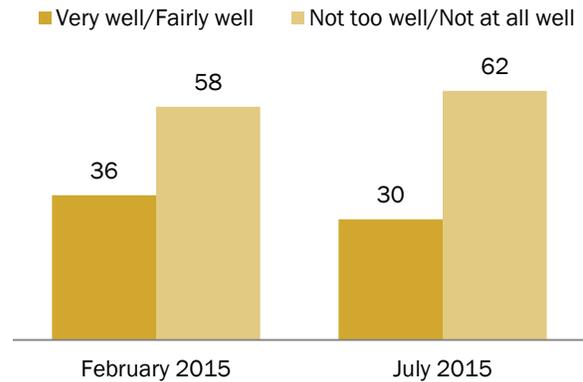
Nearly half of Americans (48%) say their bigger concern about U.S. military action in Iraq and Syria is that it will not go far enough in stopping Islamic militants; 43% express the opposite concern – that the U.S. will go too far in getting involved in the situation.

This marks a change from the [August 2014 poll](#). At that time, 51% were more concerned that the U.S. would become too deeply involved in Iraq and Syria, while just 32% were more concerned that the U.S. would not go far enough in stopping the militants.

The share of Republicans who worry that the U.S. will “not go far enough” has risen 12 percentage points, from 57% to 69%, over the past year. Independents’ views have moved in the same direction: 48% say their greater concern is that the U.S. will not go far enough in stopping the militants, up 20 percentage points. Meanwhile, most Democrats (57%) say

### Few See Progress in U.S. Military Campaign in Iraq and Syria

*% saying U.S. military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria is going...*

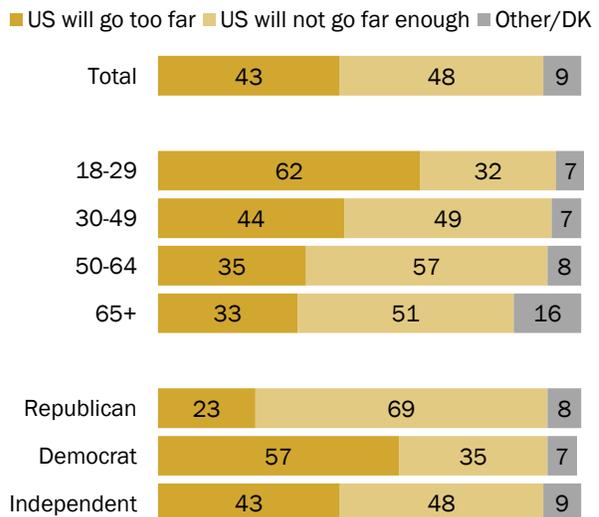


Survey conducted July 14-20, 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### Bigger Concern: Will U.S. Go Too Far, Or Not Far Enough, in Iraq and Syria?

*What concerns you more about the U.S. military action in Iraq and Syria ... (%)*



Survey conducted July 14-20, 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

the bigger worry is that the U.S. will go too far in getting involved in Iraq and Syria; 62% said this in August 2014.

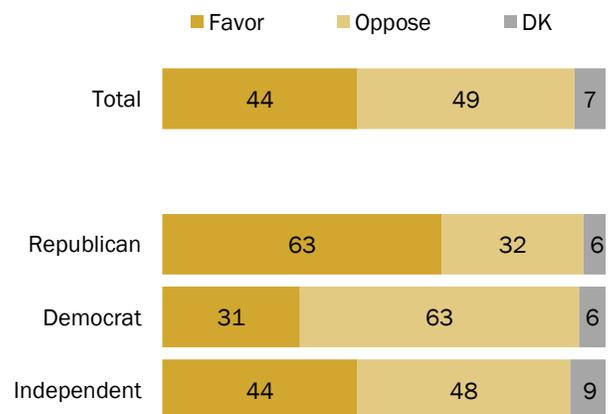
Young people continue to stand out for their concern over the United States becoming too deeply embroiled in Iraq and Syria. Fully 62% of those younger than 30 express this view, a much greater percentage than in older age groups.

**More Favor Use of U.S. Ground Forces.** [Last October](#), a majority of Americans (55%) opposed the use of U.S. ground forces to fight Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria; 39% favored the use of ground forces there. [But by February of this year](#), opinion had become more evenly divided (47% oppose, 49% favor). The current survey finds little change since February: 49% would oppose the deployment of ground forces against Islamic militants, while 44% would favor this.

The partisan divide over the use of U.S. ground forces is stark: 63% of Republicans favor the use of U.S. ground forces in Iraq and Syria; an identical percentage of Democrats are opposed. Independents are divided (48% oppose, 44% favor).

### Most Republicans Favor Use of Ground Troops; Most Democrats Are Opposed

*% saying they would \_\_\_\_\_ the U.S. sending ground troops to fight Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria*



Survey conducted July 14-20, 2015.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Demographic Differences in Views of U.S. Military Action

Majorities across nearly all demographic groups support the U.S. military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria. But there are notable differences in support.

About half of adults (52%) under 30 approve of U.S. military action against ISIS, compared with 60% or more across older age groups. Women are 12 points less likely than men to approve of the U.S. military campaign (57% vs. 69%). And while two-thirds of whites (66%) approve of U.S. military action in Iraq and Syria, smaller majorities of blacks (57%) and Hispanics (55%) agree.

Nearly three-quarters of adults with post-graduate degrees (74%) approve of the U.S. military campaign against ISIS, as do 69% of college graduates. Among those with less education, 60% support U.S. military action.

Among the public overall, more oppose (49%) than favor (44%) the use of U.S. ground forces in Iraq and Syria. Some demographic groups that are less supportive of U.S. military action generally, such as women and blacks, oppose sending U.S. ground troops to the region.

More than half (54%) of women say they would oppose sending U.S. ground forces to fight Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria, while just 37% would support this action. Men, on balance, favor the use of U.S. ground forces (51% favor, 44% oppose).

### Young People Less Supportive of U.S. Military Action Against ISIS

*% who \_\_\_\_\_ of the U.S. military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria*

	Approve %	Disapprove %	DK %
Total	63	26	11=100
Men	69	24	7=100
Women	57	28	15=100
White	66	22	11=100
Black	57	28	15=100
Hispanic	55	38	7=100
18-29	52	38	10=100
30-49	68	23	9=100
50-64	65	24	11=100
65+	63	21	16=100
Post-grad	74	17	9=100
College grad	69	22	9=100
Some college	62	27	10=100
HS or less	58	29	13=100
Republican	67	24	9=100
Conserv Rep	67	25	8=100
Mod/Lib Rep	69	22	9=100
Independent	62	28	10=100
Democrat	64	24	12=100
Cons/Mod Dem	66	23	11=100
Liberal Dem	62	27	11=100

Survey conducted July 14-20, 2015. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Whites are divided over deploying U.S. ground forces to Iraq and Syria (48% favor, 45% oppose), while most blacks (64%) would oppose the use of U.S. ground forces against Islamic militants there.

While better-educated adults overwhelmingly support U.S. action against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria, they oppose the use of U.S. ground forces in this conflict. Among those with post-graduate degrees, 55% oppose sending U.S. ground forces to fight ISIS, while just 39% favor this. College graduates also oppose the use of U.S. ground forces (52% to 41%). In contrast, those with less education are divided, with nearly as many supporting (45%) as opposing (47%) the deployment of U.S. ground forces.

## Women, College Grads Oppose Use of U.S. Ground Forces in Iraq and Syria

*% saying they would \_\_\_\_\_ the U.S. sending ground troops to fight Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria*

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>DK</b>
	%	%	%
Total	44	49	7=100
Men	51	44	5=100
Women	37	54	9=100
White	48	45	7=100
Black	28	64	8=100
Hispanic	42	53	5=100
18-29	40	53	6=100
30-49	48	45	6=100
50-64	43	51	6=100
65+	42	48	10=100
Post-grad	39	55	6=100
College grad	41	52	7=100
Some college	45	47	7=100
HS or less	45	47	7=100
Republican	63	32	6=100
Conserv Rep	68	28	5=100
Mod/Lib Rep	54	39	7=100
Independent	44	48	9=100
Democrat	31	63	6=100
Cons/Mod Dem	34	61	5=100
Liberal Dem	24	69	7=100

Survey conducted July 14-20, 2015. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted July 14-20, 2015 among a national sample of 2,002 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (700 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,302 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 758 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	2,002	2.5 percentage points
Republican	462	5.2 percentage points
Democrat	643	4.4 percentage points
Independent	796	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.

Pew Research Center is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization and a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
JULY 2015 POLITICAL SURVEY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
JULY 14-20, 2015  
N=2,002**

**QUESTIONS 1-2, 9-14, 21b, 25, 45-50, 54-56, 57b-e, 58-59 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**NO QUESTIONS 3-8, 15-20, 21a, 22-24, 26-33, 39-44, 51-53, 57a, 60**

**QUESTIONS 21c, 34-38 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

Next,

Q.61 Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria?

**TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:**

Jul 14-20 <u>2015</u>		Feb 18-22 <u>2015</u>	Oct 15-20 <u>2014</u>	Sep 11-14 <u>2014</u> <sup>1</sup>	Aug 14-17 (U) <u>2014</u> <sup>2</sup>
63	Approve	63	57	53	54
26	Disapprove	30	33	29	31
11	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	7	10	19	15

**ASK ALL:**

Q.62 How well is the U.S. military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria going? **[READ IN ORDER]**

Jul 14-20 <u>2015</u>		Feb 18-22 <u>2015</u>	Oct 15-20 <u>2014</u>
7	Very well	7	5
23	Fairly well	30	29
42	Not too well	38	38
20	Not at all well	20	21
8	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	5	8

**ASK ALL:**

Q.63 What concerns you more about the U.S. military action in Iraq and Syria? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE OPTIONS 1 AND 2]**

	That the US will go too far in getting involved in the situation	That the US will not go far enough in stopping the Islamic militants	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Both</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Neither</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Jul 14-20, 2015	43	48	1	2	6
Feb 18-22, 2015	46	49	1	1	4
Oct 15-20, 2014	47	43	1	2	7
Sep 11-14, 2014	41	41	3	6	9
<b>TREND FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
<i>What concerns you more about the U.S. military action in Iraq?</i>					
Aug 14-17, 2014	51	32	2	5	9

<sup>1</sup> In the September 11-14, 2014 survey, respondents were asked: "As you may know, Barack Obama has announced a plan for a military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria, involving U.S. airstrikes and U.S. military training for opposition groups. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of this plan?"

<sup>2</sup> In the August 14-17, 2014 survey, respondents were asked: "Do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. airstrikes against militants in Iraq in response to violence against civilians?"

**ASK ALL:**

Q.64 Would you favor or oppose the U.S. sending ground troops to fight Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria?

Jul 14-20 <u>2015</u>		Feb 18-22 <u>2015</u>	Oct 15-20 <u>2014</u>
44	Favor	47	39
49	Oppose	49	55
7	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	4	6

**ASK ALL:**

Q.65 Overall, do you think the United States and its allies will **[READ; READ CATEGORIES IN REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF THE SAMPLE]** in their military campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria?

Jul 14-20 <u>2015</u>		Feb 18-22 <u>2015</u>
13	Definitely succeed	15
42	Probably succeed	45
29	Probably fail	28
7	Definitely fail	5
9	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	6

**NO QUESTIONS 66-74, 78-80****QUESTIONS 75-77 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTIONS 81-84 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
Jul 14-20, 2015	22	32	41	4	*	1	15	19
May 12-18, 2015	24	32	38	3	1	2	15	18
Mar 25-29, 2015	25	30	39	4	*	2	15	17
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
<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 ALL:

TEAPARTY2 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/DK
Jul 14-20, 2015	15	27	55	2	1	--
Jan 7-11, 2015	17	27	52	2	1	--
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	18	28	51	1	2	--
Oct 9-13, 2013	19	32	46	2	2	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	18	25	52	4	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	22	29	46	2	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	17	20	56	3	4	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	19	26	52	2	1	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	18	29	50	2	1	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	19	29	47	1	3	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	19	25	52	2	2	--
Sep 12-16, 2012	18	26	53	2	2	--
Jul 16-26, 2012	16	27	54	2	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	19	27	49	3	2	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	21	25	52	2	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	16	25	54	2	3	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	20	26	50	3	2	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	19	29	48	2	2	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	18	25	53	2	2	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	20	24	52	2	2	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	18	25	52	2	3	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	19	27	50	2	2	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	20	27	51	1	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	19	27	51	2	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	20	27	50	1	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	20	24	53	1	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	20	26	50	3	2	--
May 25-30, 2011	18	23	54	2	2	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	22	29	47	1	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	19	25	54	1	1	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	20	25	52	2	2	--

## TEAPARTY2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> No opinion either way	Haven't heard of	<b>(VOL.)</b> Refused	<i>Not heard of/ DK</i>
Feb 2-7, 2011 <sup>3</sup>	22	22	53	2	2	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	24	22	50	2	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	22	26	49	2	2	--
Nov 4-7, 2010	27	22	49	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	29	25	32	--	1	13
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	28	24	30	--	1	16
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	29	26	32	--	1	13
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	22	18	37	--	1	21
Jun 16-20, 2010	24	18	30	--	*	27
May 20-23, 2010	25	18	31	--	1	25
Mar 11-21, 2010	24	14	29	--	1	31

---

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

(U) Pew Research Center/USA Today polls

---

<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."