

FOR RELEASE April 11, 2019

# Little Public Support for Reductions in Federal Spending

*Low trust in government; little confidence in the public's political wisdom*

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**RECOMMENDED CITATION**

Pew Research Center, April, 2019, "Little Public Support for Reductions in Federal Spending"

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# Little Public Support for Reductions in Federal Spending

*Low trust in government; little confidence in the public's political wisdom*

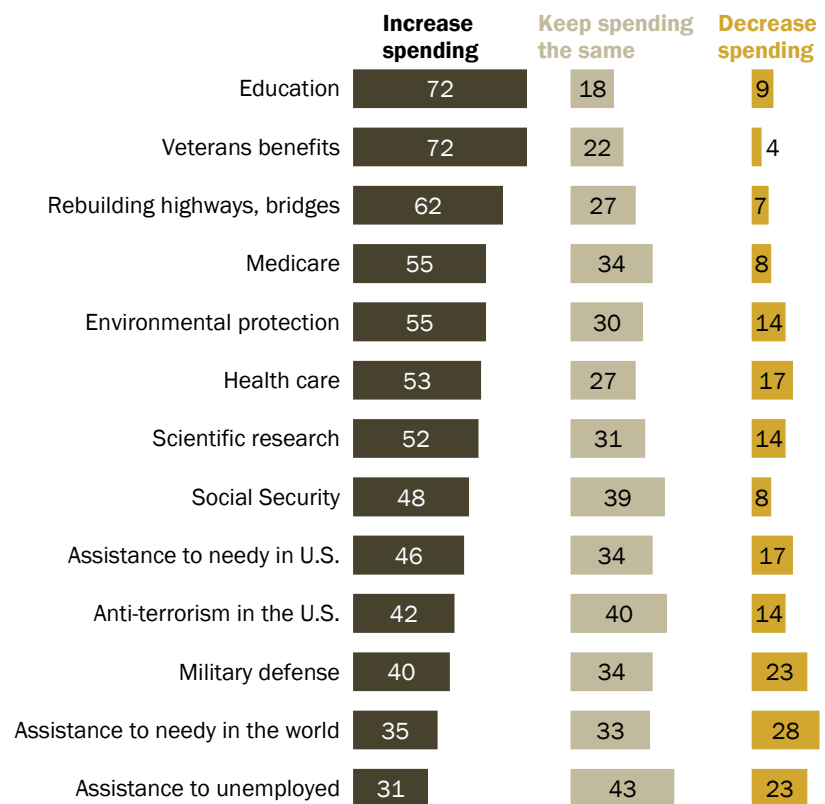
When Americans are asked to make up the budget for the federal government, they have little appetite for austerity measures. Asked about 13 different government program areas, from veterans benefits to foreign aid, no more than about a quarter favor reducing spending in any specific area.

The survey by Pew Research Center, conducted March 20-25 among 1,503 adults, finds that across all 13 programs, most either want to increase spending or maintain it at current levels.

As in the past, there is extensive public support for increasing federal funding for veterans benefits and education (72% each). About six-in-ten (62%) support more government spending for rebuilding the nation's highways, bridges and roads, while 55% each favor more funding for Medicare and environmental protection.

## Majorities favor increased spending for education, veterans, infrastructure, other govt programs

*If you were making up the budget for the federal government this year, would you increase, decrease or keep spending the same for ... (%)*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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By comparison, only about a third favor increased funding for aid to needy people around the world (35%) and assistance to the unemployed in the U.S. (31%). But for both programs, somewhat fewer want to cut spending than increase it (28% favor decreased spending on foreign aid, 23% on aid to the unemployed).

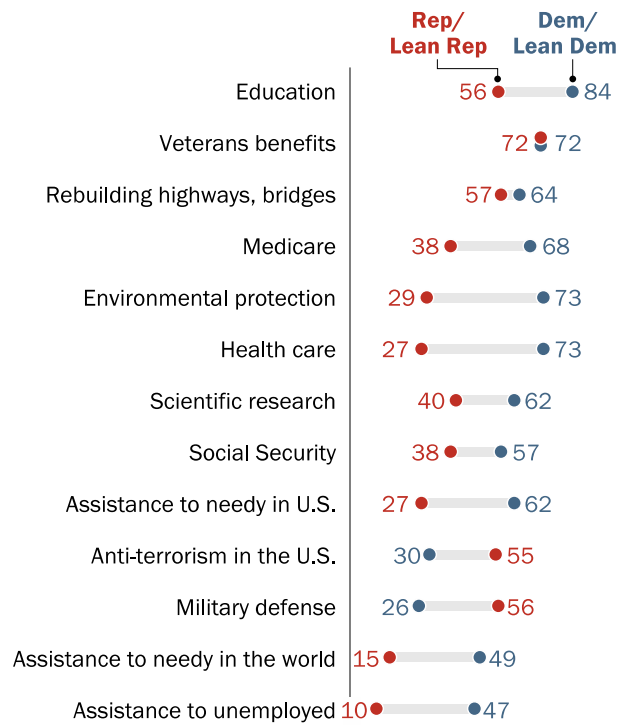
In most cases, the public's views on government spending have [changed little since 2017](#), but there is considerably more support for increased spending in several areas now than in 2013. Over the past six years, [public concern about the budget deficit](#) also has declined substantially.

Republicans and Democrats continue to have deep differences over increased government spending in most areas, including health care, environmental protection, aid to the unemployed and military defense.

Yet veterans benefits and infrastructure continue to stand out as areas in which partisans generally agree. Identical shares in both parties (72% of Republicans and Democrats) say spending on veterans benefits should be increased. And while 64% of Democrats favor more government spending on rebuilding highways, bridges and roads, a majority of Republicans (57%) also support this.

### Partisans differ on spending for most programs, but agree on veteran benefits

% saying they would increase spending for ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

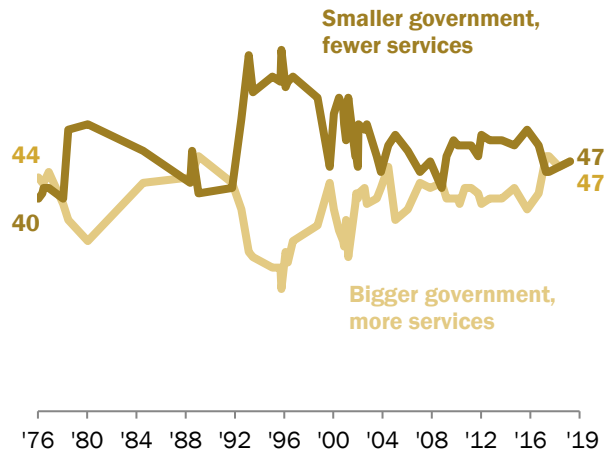
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While Americans support increased government spending in a number of areas, they continue to be divided in preferences regarding the overall size of government: 47% say they would rather have a smaller government with fewer services, while an identical share prefers a bigger government with more services. These views have changed little since 2017, but for several years prior to that, more Americans preferred smaller government to bigger government.

Opinions about the optimal size of government continue to be deeply divided along partisan lines: 74% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents prefer a smaller government with fewer services, while 67% of Democrats and Democratic leaners say they would rather have a bigger government with more services.

## Public remains divided in preferences for the overall size of government

*% who say they would rather have ...*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019. Data prior to 1997 from LA Times, ABC/Washington Post and CBS/New York Times surveys.

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The survey finds that Americans' trust in the federal government remains at a historic low: Just 17% say they trust the government in Washington to do the right thing always or most of the time; 71% say they trust the government only some of the time and 10% volunteer that they "never" trust the government.

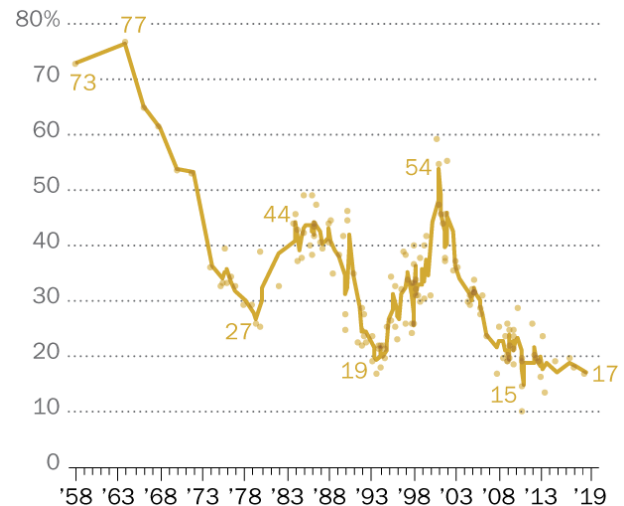
These attitudes have changed little over the course of the last two administrations. In fact, it has been more than a decade, during George W. Bush's second term, when as many as a third of Americans said they trusted the federal government at least most of the time. And with the exception of a brief period following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, it has been more than 40 years since public trust in government surpassed 50%.

As in the past, trust in government is higher among the party that controls the White House than among members of the opposition party.

However, only 21% of Republicans say they trust the federal government, which is about as low as at any point during Bush's presidency (the previous GOP administration). Just 14% of Democrats say the same, among the lowest levels dating back more than 60 years.

## Public trust in the federal government remains at historic low

*% who say they trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time ...*



Note: From 1976-2019 the trend line represents a three-survey moving average.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

Trend sources: Pew Research Center, National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN polls.

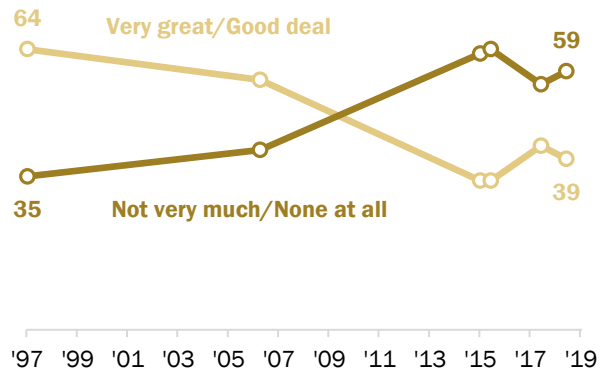
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While Americans have minimal trust in the federal government, they also are skeptical of their own collective political wisdom. About four-in-ten (39%) say they have a very great deal (7%) or good deal (31%) of trust and confidence in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions. A 59% majority says they have not very much confidence (47%) or no confidence at all (12%) in the public's political wisdom.

Republicans are somewhat more likely than Democrats to have at least some confidence in the wisdom of the American people. But the share of Republicans expressing at least a good deal of confidence in the public's wisdom has declined 11 percentage points from a year ago, before the GOP's losses in the midterm election.

## Fewer than half of Americans express confidence in public's political wisdom

*% saying they have \_\_\_\_ of trust and confidence in the wisdom of American people in making political decisions*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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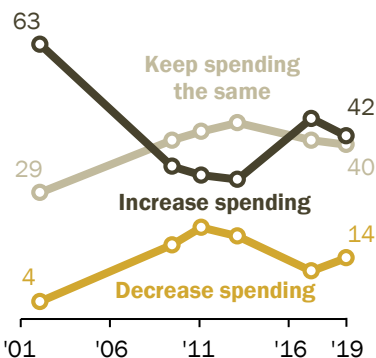
## Little change in views of government spending since 2017, but major shifts since 2013

Public attitudes about whether government spending should be increased, decreased or maintained are little changed since 2017 for most of the 13 program areas asked about in the survey. However, there is significantly more support for increased spending in all 13 areas today than there was in 2013.

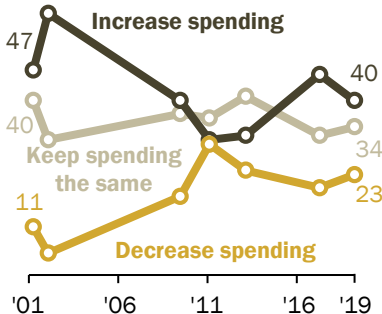
### Little change in opinions about defense, veterans' spending since 2017, but more favor increased spending today than during the Obama administration

*If you were making up the budget for the federal government this year, would you increase, decrease or keep spending the same for ... (%)*

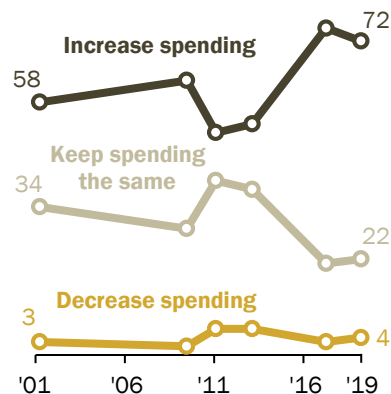
**Anti-terrorism defenses in the U.S.**



**Military defense**



**Veterans benefits and services**



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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Roughly four-in-ten Americans (42%) say they would increase federal spending for anti-terrorism defenses in the U.S., about the same as in 2017. But in 2013, only about a third (32%) favored increased spending for anti-terrorism defense. In early 2002, a few months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a majority (63%) supported increased spending for terrorism defenses.

The share of Americans who favor increased spending on military defense, which rose in 2017, has slipped six-percentage-points since then (from 46% to 40%). Most of the decline has come among Republicans; 56% favor higher defense spending today, compared with 71% who did so two years ago. However, the share of Republicans who support *cutting* defense spending remains low (10%).



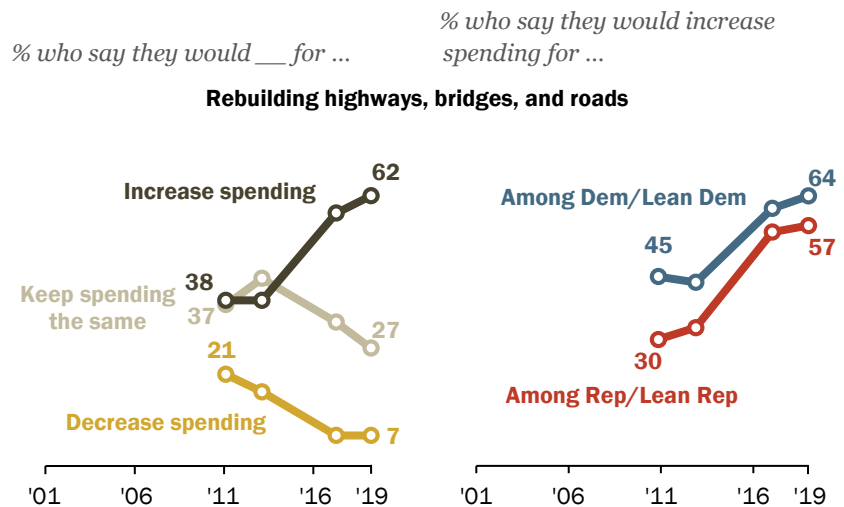
More Republicans support maintaining the status quo in defense spending today than in 2017 (34% now, 20% then).

Just 26% of Democrats favor increased spending for military defense, little changed since 2017. About three-in-ten Democrats (31%) support decreased defense spending, nearly three times the share of Republicans who say this.

Increased government spending for veterans' benefits continues to draw broad bipartisan public support. About seven-in-ten (72%) Americans – and identical shares in both parties (72% each) – say spending should be increased. Two years ago, a similar share (75%) said this, though significantly fewer Americans (53%) supported increased spending for veterans' benefits in 2013.

As is the case with veterans' benefits, increased spending for infrastructure is supported by majorities in both parties. Since 2013, the share of Republicans who favor higher spending for rebuilding roads, bridges and highways has increased 24-percentage-points (from 33% to 57%) and there has been a comparable increase among Democrats (from 44% to 64%).

### Growing support in both parties for more spending on rebuilding roads, bridges, and highways



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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## Widening partisan gap in views of spending on foreign aid

As was the case in 2017, the public is divided in opinions about whether economic assistance for needy people around the world should be increased (35%), maintained at its current level (33%) or decreased (28%).

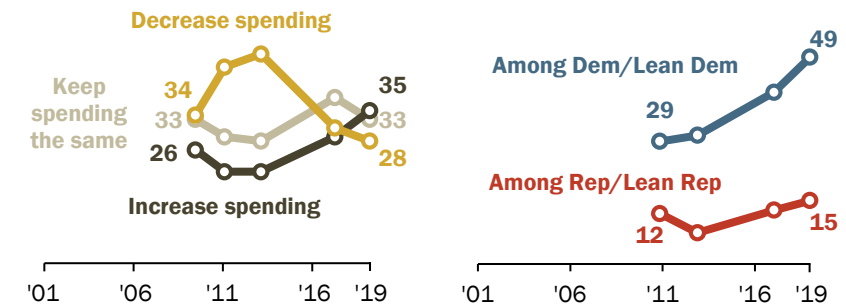
Since 2013, however, the share of Americans who favor increased spending for needy people overseas has risen 14 percentage-points (from 21% to 35%), while the share who support decreased spending has declined 20 points (from 48% to 28%).

### Democratic support for increasing economic aid for needy people around the world continues to rise

% who say they would \_\_\_ for ...

% who say they would increase spending for ...

#### Economic assistance to needy people around the world



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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About half of Democrats (49%) currently say economic aid to needy people around the world should be increased, up modestly from 41% in 2017. Six years ago, just 30% said spending should be increased.

Republicans are much less supportive of increased economic assistance to the needy around the world – just 15% say spending should be increased, and this number has not changed much since 2009.

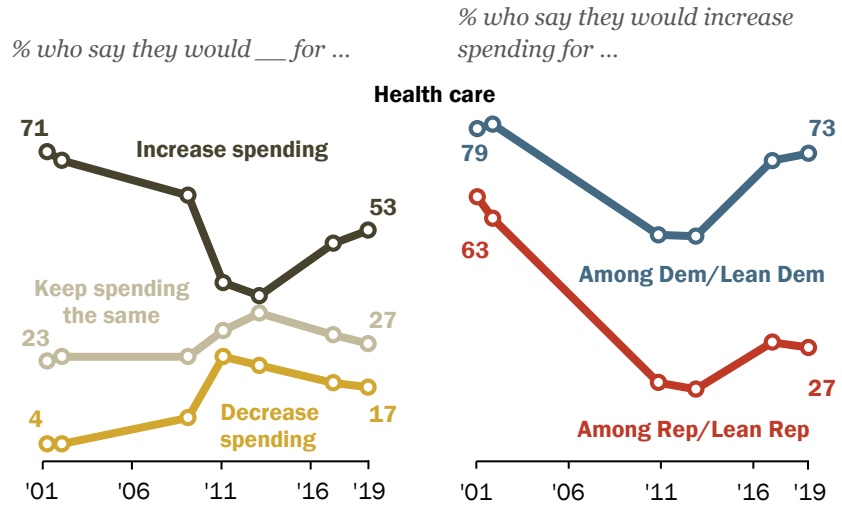
Support for increased spending on health care is much higher than it was in 2013, but not as high as it was in the early 2000s.

Today, about half (53%) say they would increase spending on healthcare. In 2013, just about four-in-ten (38%) said this. But in 2001, fully seven-in-ten Americans (71%) said spending for health care should be increased.

Democrats continue to be much more likely to say spending should be increased than Republicans – about seven-in-ten Democrats (73%) say this, compared with just 27% of Republicans.

The numbers saying this in both parties are largely unchanged since 2017, though both parties are more likely to say this than they were six years ago.

**Democrats remain far more likely than Republicans to favor increased spending on health care**



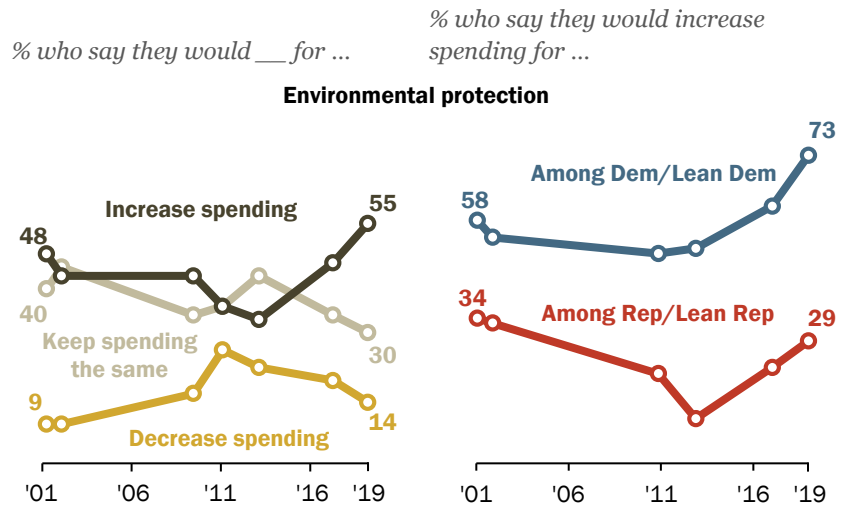
Note: Don't know responses not shown.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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More than half of the public (55%) says they would increase spending on environmental protection if they were making up the budget for the federal government this year. This is larger than the 46% who said this in 2017 and much larger than the one-third of Americans who said they would increase spending in 2013.

The share of Democrats saying they would increase spending on environmental protection has risen steadily since 2011. And the nearly three-quarters (73%) who say they would increase spending today is 12-percentage-points higher than it was two years ago.

### More Democrats say they would increase spending for environmental protection



Note: Don't know responses not shown.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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Republican views are little different than they were in 2017. However, GOP support for increasing spending for environmental protection is significantly higher than it was in 2013 (29% say this now, compared with 11% then).

## Views of size and scope of government

The public is split in their general preferences on the size and scope of government: 47% say they would rather have a smaller government providing fewer services while an identical share say they would prefer a bigger government providing more services.

There are sizable differences in these attitudes by gender, income and partisanship.

While more men prefer a smaller government to a bigger government (59% to 37%), the balance of opinion is reverse among women; 58% prefer a larger government, while 36% say they would rather have a smaller government.

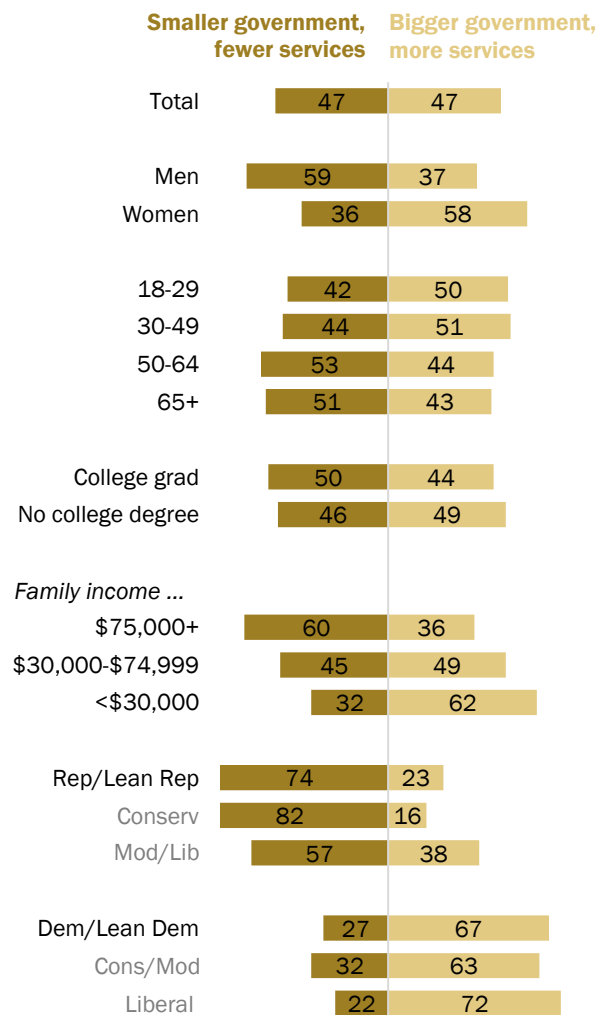
A majority of those with family incomes of \$75,000 or more (60%) say they would rather have smaller government with fewer services. In contrast, most of those with incomes of less than \$30,000 (62%) prefer a bigger government providing more services. Views are about evenly divided among those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$75,000.

Adults 50 years of age and older are slightly more likely than those younger than 50 to prefer smaller government – though views are relatively divided among adults across age groups.

There continue to be large partisan differences in views of the size of government. Nearly three-quarters of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (74%) say they prefer a smaller government with fewer services. Conservative Republicans are more likely than

### Differing views on size of government by gender, income and partisanship

% who say they would rather have ...



Note: Don't know responses not shown. N=93 for moderate and liberal Republicans.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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moderate or liberal Republicans to express this preference (82% to 57%).

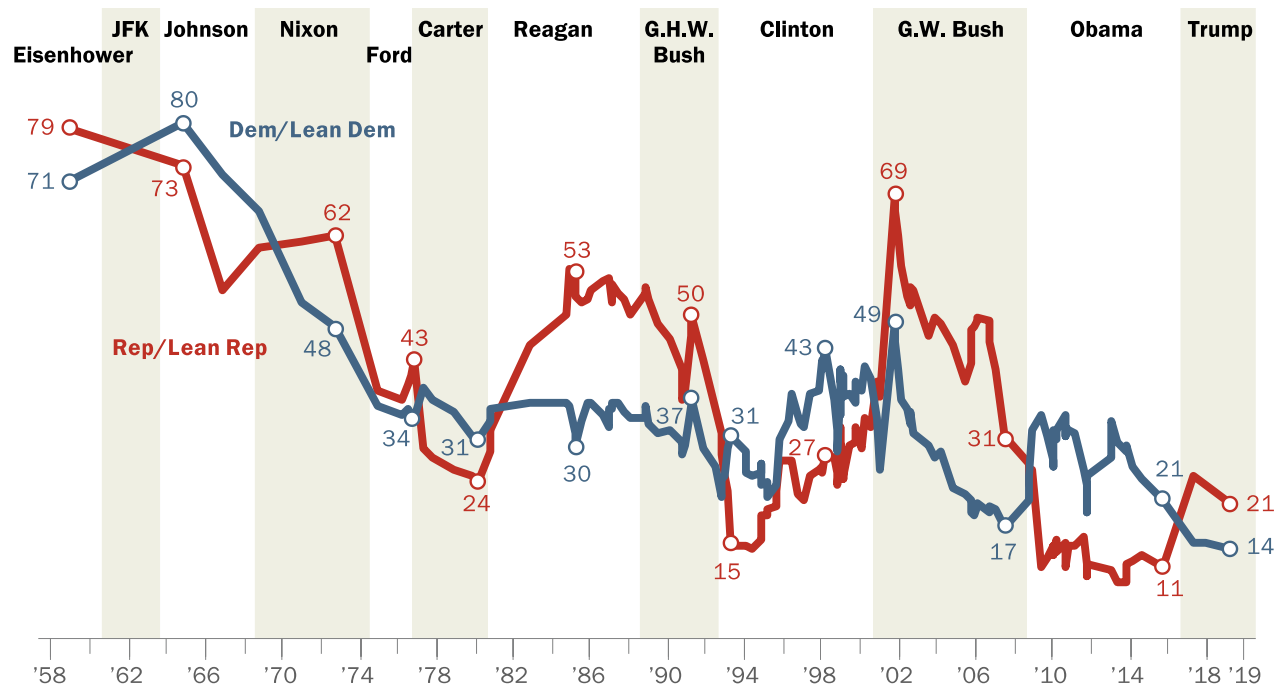
In contrast, Democrats are more likely to say they prefer a bigger government with more services (67%) to a smaller government providing fewer services (27%). There are no significant ideological differences among Democrats.

## Public trust in the federal government remains low

As has been the case for more than a decade, the public's trust in the federal government to do what is right remains historically low. Today, just 17% of adults say they trust the federal government to do what is right "just about always" (3%) or "most of the time" (14%). A large majority (71%) says they trust the government "only some of the time"; 10% volunteer that they never trust the federal government.

### Republicans now more likely than Democrats to trust the federal government, but trust is relatively low among members of both parties

% who say they trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time ...



Note: From 1976-2017 the trend line represents a three-survey moving average within each administration.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

Trend sources: Pew Research Center, National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN polls.

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Just 21% of Republicans say they trust the federal government at least most of the time. Trust in government among Republicans is significantly higher than it was during Barack Obama's tenure as president, having risen after the 2016 election of Donald Trump. Still, the share of Republicans expressing trust in government remains lower than it was during most of George W. Bush's years as president.

Democrats are even less likely than Republicans to say they trust the federal government: Only 14% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say they trust government most of the time or just about always. This is much lower than the share who said this during Obama's presidency, and among the lowest levels recorded among Democrats since the question was first asked 60 years ago.

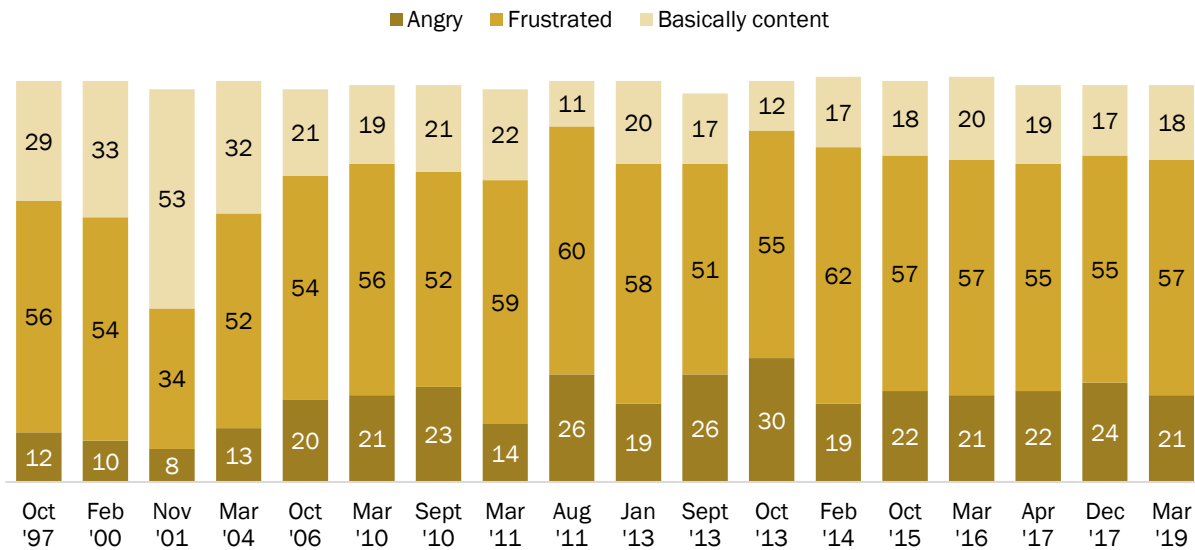


When asked about their feelings toward the federal government, a majority (57%) say they are frustrated, while 21% say they are angry and 18% say they are basically content.

Overall, the public’s feelings toward the federal government are roughly the same as those expressed throughout much of Obama’s presidency. The current level of anger toward the federal government is similar to levels seen over the last few years, though lower than it was in October 2013, during a two-week government shutdown.

### Majority of adults say they’re frustrated with the federal government

*Feeling toward the federal government (%)*



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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Since Trump has taken office, Democrats have been more likely than Republicans to say they feel angry toward the federal government. Today, a quarter of Democrats (25%) say this compared with 18% of Republicans.

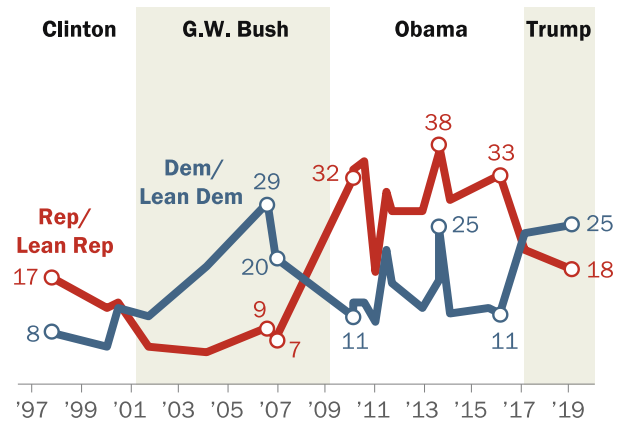
Levels of anger toward the federal government have fallen significantly among Republicans since the end of Obama’s administration. In early 2016, a third of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (33%) said they felt angry toward the federal government. Today, fewer Republicans express anger at the federal government (18%).

Most say they feel frustrated (55%), while 24% say they are content.

Over the same period, Democrats have grown more likely to say they are angry. In 2016, 11% of Democrats and Democratic leaners said they felt this way toward the federal government. Today, more than twice as many Democrats say they feel angry (25%). Still, frustration remains the predominant feeling toward government among Democrats: 59% say they feel this way; just 14% say they are basically content.

**More Democrats than Republicans now say they are ‘angry’ with government**

*% saying they feel ‘angry’ toward federal government*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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## Most lack confidence in public’s political wisdom

A majority of adults say they have little or no confidence in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions (59%). Fewer say they have a very great deal or good deal of confidence (39%).

Among the general public, views regarding the political wisdom of the American people are largely unchanged over the past year.

Republicans, however, have become less likely to express trust and confidence in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to political decisions. In March 2018, prior to the Democratic Party winning control of the House of Representatives, a narrow majority of Republicans said they have a very great or good deal of confidence (54%). Today, fewer than half (43%) of Republicans express confidence.

During that same period, Democrats’ views have remained mostly unchanged. A year ago, 32% of Democrats expressed confidence in the political wisdom of the American people. Today, 36% say this. Most Democrats continue to say they have not very much (50%) or no confidence at all (11%) in the political wisdom of the American people.

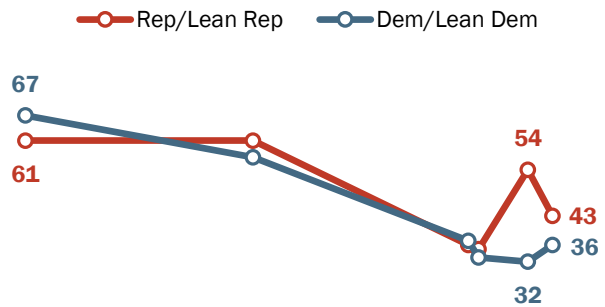
### After 2018 midterm, Republicans less confident in public’s political wisdom

*% who say they have \_\_\_ of trust and confidence in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions*



'97 '99 '01 '03 '05 '07 '09 '11 '13 '15 '17 '19

*% who say they have a very great/good deal of trust and confidence in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions*



'97 '99 '01 '03 '05 '07 '09 '11 '13 '15 '17 '19

Note: Don't know responses not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-25, 2019.

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## Acknowledgements

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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## Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted March 20-25, 2019 among a national sample of 1,503 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (300 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,203 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 792 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers under the direction of Abt Associates. A combination of landline and cell phone random-digit-dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC. 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. The weighting procedure corrected for the different sampling rates. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample is weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity, and region to parameters from the 2017 Census Bureau's American Community Survey one-year estimates 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 2018 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:

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*Survey conducted March 20-25, 2019*

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,503	3.0 percentage points
Half form	751 (min)	4.2 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	657	4.5 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep half form	326 (min)	6.4 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	708	4.4 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem half form	350 (min)	6.2 percentage points

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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 undertakes all polling activity, including calls to mobile telephone numbers, in compliance with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act and other applicable laws.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
MARCH 2019 POLITICAL SURVEY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
MARCH 20-25, 2019  
N=1,503**

**QUESTIONS 1-2, 10, 14 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****NO QUESTIONS 3-9, 11-13, 15-18****QUESTION 19 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

Q.20 Some people say they are basically content with the federal government, others say they are frustrated, and others say they are angry. Which of these best describes how you feel?

	<u>Basically content</u>	<u>Frustrated</u>	<u>Angry</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
Mar 20-25, 2019	18	57	21	4
Nov 29-Dec 4, 2017	17	55	24	5
Apr 5-11, 2017	19	55	22	3
Mar 17-26, 2016	20	57	21	2
Aug 27-Oct 4, 2015	18	57	22	3
Feb 12-26, 2014	17	62	19	2
Oct 9-13, 2013	12	55	30	3
Sep 25-29, 2013	17	51	26	5
Jan 9-13, 2013	20	58	19	3
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	17	58	21	3
Aug 17-21, 2011	11	60	26	3
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	22	59	14	5
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	21	52	23	4
Apr 1-5, 2010	23	52	21	4
Mar 11-21, 2010	19	56	21	5
Early January, 2007	21	58	16	5
Early October, 2006	21	54	20	5
March, 2004	32	52	13	3
Mid November, 2001	53	34	8	5
June, 2000	28	53	13	6
February, 2000	33	54	10	3
October, 1997	29	56	12	3

**NO QUESTIONS 21-24****ASK ALL:**

Q.25 How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right? Just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

	<u>Just about always</u>	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>Only some of the time</u>	<b>(VOL.) Never</b>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
Mar 20-25, 2019	3	14	71	10	2
Nov 29-Dec 4, 2017	3	15	67	14	2
Apr 5-11, 2017	4	16	68	11	2
Aug 27- Oct 4, 2015	3	16	67	13	1
Feb 12-26, 2014	3	21	68	7	1
Oct 9-13, 2013	3	16	68	12	1
Jan 9-13, 2013	3	23	67	6	2
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	3	17	72	7	2
Aug 17-21, 2011	3	16	72	8	1
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	4	25	65	4	2

**Q.25 CONTINUED...**

	Just about <u>always</u>	Most of <u>the time</u>	Only some <u>of the time</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Never</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	3	21	65	10	1
Apr 1-5, 2010	5	20	61	13	1
Mar 11-21, 2010	3	19	65	11	2
January, 2007	3	28	63	5	1
February, 2006	4	30	59	6	1
Mid-September, 2005	3	28	63	4	2
Mid-March, 2004	4	32	59	4	1
February, 2000	5	35	56	3	1
May, 1999	3	28	62	5	2
February, 1999	4	27	64	4	1
November, 1998 <sup>1</sup>	4	22	61	11	2
February, 1998	5	29	61	4	1
October, 1997	3	36	59	2	*

**NO QUESTIONS 26-32, 35-43****QUESTIONS 33-34 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****ASK ALL:**

Next,

Q.44 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]?**]

		<u>Increase spending</u>	<u>Decrease spending</u>	<u>Keep spending the same</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
<b>ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=751]:</b>					
a.F1	Health care				
	Mar 20-25, 2019	53	17	27	4
	Apr 5-11, 2017	50	18	29	3
	Feb 13-18, 2013	38	22	34	6
	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	Anti-terrorism defenses in the U.S.				
	Mar 20-25, 2019	42	14	40	4
	Apr 5-11, 2017	46	11	41	2
	Feb 13-18, 2013	32	19	45	3
	Feb 2-7, 2011	33	21	43	4
	Jun 18-21, 2009	35	17	41	7
	February, 2002	63	4	29	4

<sup>1</sup> The November, 1998 survey was conducted Oct. 26-Dec. 1, 1998. The question asked, "How much of the time do you trust the government in Washington to do the right thing? Just about always, most the time, or only some of the time?"



**Q. 44 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Increase spending</u>	<u>Decrease spending</u>	<u>Keep spending the same</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
c.F1 Veterans benefits and services				
Mar 20-25, 2019	72	4	22	3
Apr 5-11, 2017	75	3	21	2
Feb 13-18, 2013	53	6	38	3
Feb 2-7, 2011	51	6	40	3
Jun 18-21, 2009	63	2	29	6
April, 2001	58	3	34	5

**NO ITEM d.**

e.F1 Social Security				
Mar 20-25, 2019	48	8	39	4
Apr 5-11, 2017	46	6	45	3
Feb 13-18, 2013	41	10	46	3
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
f.F1 Rebuilding highways, bridges and roads				
Mar 20-25, 2019	62	7	27	3
Apr 5-11, 2017	58	7	33	1
Feb 13-18, 2013	38	17	43	2
Feb 2-7, 2011	38	21	37	3
May, 1990	54	5	40	1
g.F1 Economic assistance to needy people in the U.S.				
Mar 20-25, 2019	46	17	34	3
Apr 5-11, 2017	45	21	33	1
Feb 13-18, 2013	27	24	44	4
Feb 2-7, 2011	42	20	34	3

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=752]:**

h.F2 Scientific research				
Mar 20-25, 2019	52	14	31	3
Apr 5-11, 2017	48	12	38	2
Feb 13-18, 2013	37	20	40	3
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

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY (MARCH 21-25) [N=703]:<sup>2</sup>**

i.F2 Military defense				
Mar 21-25, 2019	40	23	34	3
Apr 5-11, 2017	46	20	32	1
Feb 13-18, 2013	32	24	41	3
Feb 2-7, 2011	31	30	36	3
Jun 18-21, 2009	40	18	37	5

<sup>2</sup> Due to a programming error, respondents were not asked questions Q44iF2-Q44nF2 on the first night of the survey. There are 49 missing cases for those questions due to this error.

**Q. 44 CONTINUED...**

		Increase <u>spending</u>	Decrease <u>spending</u>	Keep spending <u>the same</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
	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
	May, 1990	18	40	39	3
	May, 1987	24	29	44	3
j.F2	Government assistance for the unemployed				
	Mar 21-25, 2019	31	23	43	4
	Apr 5-11, 2017	29	24	44	2
	Feb 13-18, 2013	24	32	41	3
	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
k.F2	Medicare				
	Mar 21-25, 2019	55	8	34	3
	Apr 5-11, 2017	51	9	39	2
	Feb 13-18, 2013	36	15	46	3
	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
l.F2	Environmental protection				
	Mar 21-25, 2019	55	14	30	2
	Apr 5-11, 2017	46	19	34	1
	Feb 13-18, 2013	33	22	43	3
	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
m.F2	Economic assistance to needy people around the world				
	Mar 21-25, 2019	35	28	33	3
	Apr 5-11, 2017	29	31	38	2
	Feb 13-18, 2013	21	48	28	3
	Feb 2-7, 2011	21	45	29	4
	Jun 18-21, 2009	26	34	33	7
n.F2	Education				
	Mar 21-25, 2019	72	9	18	1
	Apr 5-11, 2017	67	9	22	1
	Feb 13-18, 2013	60	10	29	2
	Feb 2-7, 2011	62	11	25	2

**Q. 44 CONTINUED...**

	Increase <u>spending</u>	Decrease <u>spending</u>	Keep spending <u>the same</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Jun 18-21, 2009	67	6	23	4
February, 2002	73	3	22	2
April, 2001	76	5	18	1

**NO QUESTIONS 45-46, 51-53****QUESTIONS 47-50a-d PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTION 50e-f HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=752]:**

Q.54F2 In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions? A very great deal, a good deal, not very much, or none at all?

	Very great <u>deal</u>	Good <u>deal</u>	Not very <u>much</u>	None <u>at all</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Mar 20-25, 2019	7	31	47	12	2
Mar 7-14, 2018	10	32	44	12	2
Mar 17-26, 2016	9	25	51	14	2
Aug 27-Sep 13, 2015	9	26	49	14	2
January 2007	13	44	34	8	1
October 1997	11	53	32	3	1
<i>Gallup</i> : September 1964	14	63	19	1	3

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=751]:**

Q.55F1 If you had to choose, would you rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, or a bigger government providing more services?

	Smaller government, <u>fewer services</u>	Bigger government, <u>more services</u>	(VOL.) <u>Depends</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Mar 20-25, 2019	47	47	4	2
Apr 25-May 1, 2018	46	46	5	4
Jun 27-Jul 9, 2017	45	48	2	4
Apr 5-11, 2017	45	48	2	4
Aug 23-Sep 2, 2016	50	41	4	5
Sep 22-27, 2015	53	38	3	6
Sep 2-9, 2014	50	42	3	5
Sep 4-8, 2013	51	40	2	7
Sep 12-16, 2012	51	40	4	6
Jan 4-8, 2012	52	39	2	7
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	48	41	2	8
Mar 8-14, 2011	50	42	3	5
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	50	42	3	5
Apr 1-5, 2010	50	39	4	8
Feb 3-9, 2010	50	40	3	7
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	51	40	4	6
Mar 9-12, 2009	48	40	3	9
Late October 2008	42	43	4	11
November 2007	47	42	4	7
January 2007	45	43	4	8
<i>LA Times/Bloomberg</i> : January 2006	49	38	--	13
<i>LA Times</i> : January 2005	52	36	--	12
<i>ABC/Wash Post</i> : June 2004	50	46	--	4
<i>CBS/NYT</i> : November 2003	45	42	4	9
<i>CBS/NYT</i> : July 2003	48	40	5	7

**Q.55F1 CONTINUED...**

	Smaller government, <u>fewer services</u>	Bigger government, <u>more services</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Depends</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
ABC: November 2002 ( <i>Likely voters</i> )	60	35	--	5
Wash Post: September 2002	54	39	--	7
ABC/Wash Post: July 2002	53	42	--	6
ABC/Wash Post: January 2002	54	41	--	5
CBS/NYT: January 2002	46	40	3	11
LA Times: November 2001	48	41	--	11
CBS/NYT: October 2001	48	39	3	11
LA Times: March 2001	59	29	--	12
CBS: January 2001	51	36	5	8
CBS: November 2000	54	31	5	10
CBS: October 2000	57	32	5	6
ABC/Wash Post: October 2000 ( <i>RVs</i> )	58	32	--	10
ABC/Wash Post: Early October 2000 ( <i>RVs</i> )	58	33	--	9
LA Times: September 2000 ( <i>RVs</i> )	59	26	--	15
ABC/Wash Post: July 2000	59	34	--	7
ABC/Wash Post: April 2000	56	38	--	7
CBS: September 1999	46	43	5	6
ABC/Wash Post: August 1998	59	35	--	6
ABC/Wash Post: August 1996	63	32	--	5
LA Times: April 1996	62	28	--	10
CBS/NYT: February 1996	61	30	4	5
LA Times: October 1995	68	23	--	9
LA Times: September 1995	62	27	--	11
LA Times: January 1995	63	27	--	10
LA Times: June 1993	60	29	--	11
ABC/Wash Post: February 1993	67	30	--	2
ABC/Wash Post: July 1992	55	38	--	7
CBS/NYT: October 1991	42	43	7	8
CBS/NYT: January 1989 <sup>3</sup>	41	48	4	7
CBS/NYT: October 1988 ( <i>Likely voters</i> )	47	37	7	9
ABC/Wash Post: July 1988	49	45	--	6
CBS/NYT: May 1988	43	44	5	8
ABC/Wash Post: July 1984	49	43	--	7
CBS/NYT: March 1980	54	32	--	14
CBS/NYT: June 1978	53	36	--	11
Wash Post: January 1978	40	39	--	21
CBS/NYT: November 1976	42	45	--	13
CBS/NYT: October 1976 ( <i>RVs</i> )	49	37	--	14
CBS/NYT: September 1976 ( <i>RVs</i> )	48	41	--	11
CBS/NYT: June 1976	42	43	--	15
CBS/NYT: May 1976	41	43	--	16
CBS/NYT: April 1976	40	44	--	16

**QUESTIONS 56-57, 64-65, 70-71, 75-77 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTIONS 58, 60-61, 66-69 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****NO QUESTIONS 59, 62-63, 72-74**

<sup>3</sup>. In 1989 and earlier, CBS/NYT question read, "In general, government grows bigger as it provides more services. If you had to choose, would you rather have a smaller government providing less services or a bigger government providing more services?"

**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?

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>No preference</u>	<u>Other party</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>
Mar 20-25, 2019	26	30	37	3	1	3	14	19
Jan 9-14, 2019	25	31	40	2	1	2	16	18
Sep 18-24, 2018	25	32	37	3	1	2	15	18
Jun 5-12, 2018	25	31	38	3	1	2	15	18
Apr 25-May 1, 2018	27	28	38	4	1	2	14	19
Mar 7-14, 2018	26	28	41	3	*	1	17	18
Jan 10-15, 2018	26	33	34	3	1	3	12	18
<b>Yearly Totals</b>								
2018	25.7	30.8	37.6	3.0	.8	2.0	14.7	18.3
2017	23.6	31.4	39.4	3.3	.6	1.7	15.8	18.7
2016	25.4	32.0	36.5	3.4	.5	2.2	14.6	17.0
2015	23.7	30.4	40.1	3.6	.4	1.8	16.4	17.3
2015	23.7	30.4	40.1	3.6	.4	1.8	16.4	17.3
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
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	--	--	--	--	--