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# As Election Year Nears, Public Sees Mixed Economic Picture

*Less economic optimism, but fewer feel like they're 'falling behind'*

**FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:**

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# As Election Year Nears, Public Sees Mixed Economic Picture

*Less economic optimism, but fewer feel like they're 'falling behind'*

The public's views of the nation's economy have shown little change throughout 2015. But Americans are less optimistic about how well the economy will fare over the next year than they were last January.

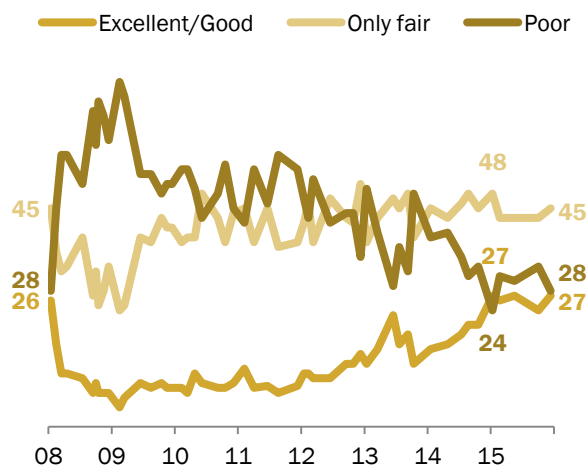
Currently, 45% rate economic conditions as only fair, while 27% view them as excellent or good, and about the same percentage (28%) rates the economy as poor.

While these attitudes have changed little over the past year, they have gradually improved over the past seven years. In fact, opinions of the national economy today are quite similar to views in January 2008, before the financial crisis later that year. At that time – the start of George W. Bush's final year in office – 26% expressed positive views of the economy; by the fall of 2008, in the aftermath of the financial meltdown, positive economic ratings had plummeted to 7% – and remained in single digits for more than two years.

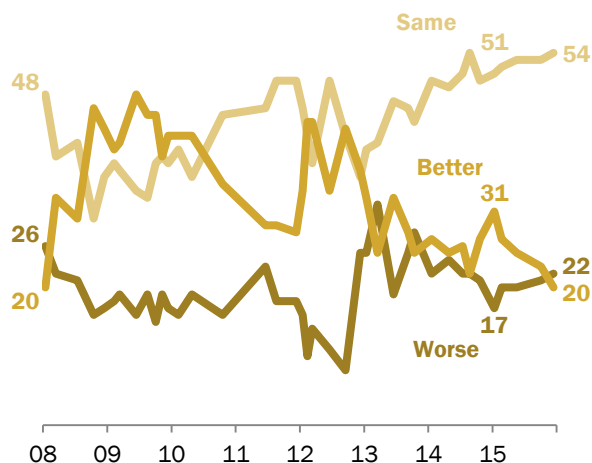
The latest national survey by Pew Research Center, conducted Dec. 8-13 among 1,500 adults, finds that most Americans (54%) expect that economic conditions a year from now will be about the same as they are today, while similar shares expect the economy to get worse (22%) or better (20%).

## Long-term improvement in economic views; less optimism than last January

*Economic conditions in the country today are ... (%)*



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



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Don't know responses not shown.

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That represents a change from January of this year, when economic optimism was on the upswing. At that time, 31% expected the economy to get better over the coming year, compared with 17% who expected it to get worse (51% expected little change in economic conditions).

Nonetheless, Americans are somewhat more likely to say their incomes are keeping pace with the cost of living than they were at the start of this year. And perceptions of local job availability continue to modestly improve.

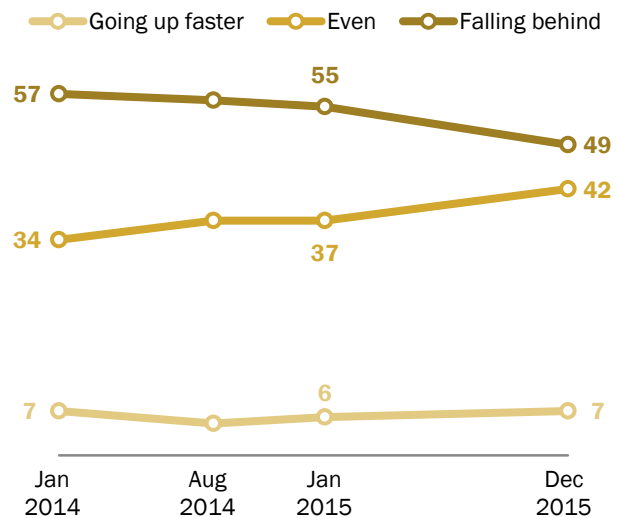
Currently, 42% say their family's incomes are staying about even with the cost of living, up from 37% in January. Nearly half (49%) say their incomes are falling behind, down from 55%. As was the case in January, very few people – just 7% currently – say their incomes are actually going up faster than the cost of living.

About four-in-ten (41%) say that there are plenty of jobs available in their communities. While that is little changed from May (40%), these represent the most positive evaluations of local job conditions in eight years. Fewer Americans (33%) say there are plenty of *good* jobs available locally, though the share saying this has increased seven percentage points since August 2014 (26%).

As in the past, there is broad public support for raising the federal minimum wage from its current level of \$7.25 an hour: 73% say they generally favor increasing the minimum wage, while 24% are opposed. When those who support raising the minimum wage are asked, in an open-ended format, to what level it should be increased, they offer a wide range of responses. Based on the overall public, about 20% volunteer a level of less than \$10 an hour, while 26% give an amount that falls between \$10 and \$11 an hour; 14% volunteer an amount between \$11 and \$14 an hour, while 11% say it should be \$15 an hour or a higher amount.

## Fewer say they are falling behind financially now than in January

Family income relative to the cost of living ... (%)



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.  
Don't know responses not shown.

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## Democrats' economic optimism declines

As is typically the case, Republicans and Democrats have very different attitudes about the national economy. Currently, 38% of Democrats say national economic conditions are excellent or good, compared with 22% of independents and 21% of Republicans.

Democrats' views have changed little over the past year, while Republicans express somewhat more positive views of the current state of the economy (21%) than they did in January (14%).

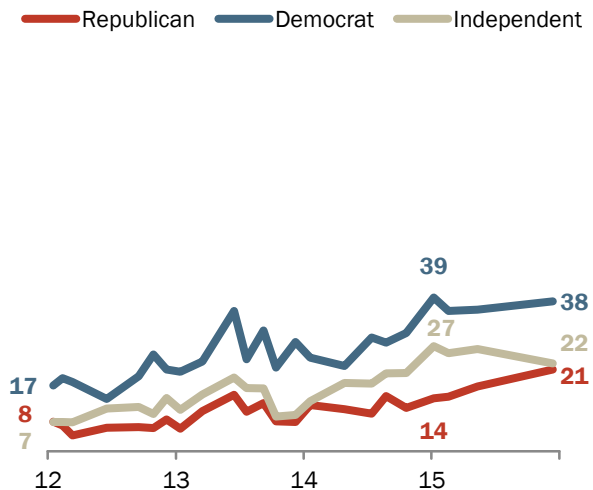
Democrats' expectations about the future economy have fluctuated in recent years. Currently, just 24% of Democrats expect the economy to be better a year from now; that is down sharply from 44% in January.

Republicans, by contrast, have been consistently more gloomy in their expectations for the economy. Currently, just 16% of Republicans expect economic conditions to be better a year from now than they are today, which is largely unchanged from January (19%).

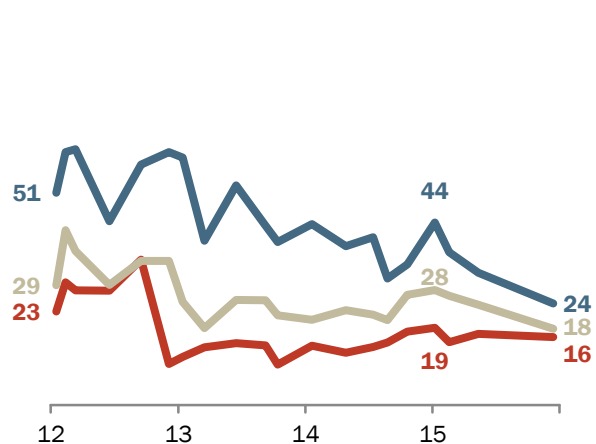
The last time more than a third of Republicans (35%) expressed optimism about the national economy was in September 2012, two months before the 2012 election. Democrats were even more optimistic at that time (58%), but unlike the Republicans, remained upbeat about the economy's future, at least for a few months after the election. By March of 2013, however, just 40% of Democrats expected the economy to improve over the following year.

### Partisan views of current economic conditions, outlook for the future

*Economic conditions in the country today are excellent/good (%)*



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



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

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There also continue to be education and income differences in views of the nation's economy – though these gaps are far less pronounced when it comes to views of how well the economy will fare over the next year.

About four-in-ten with a postgraduate degree (39%) say the economy is either excellent or good, while just 11% rate it as poor. Among those with a high school education or less, about as many rate the economy positively (27%) as say conditions are poor (33%).

Similarly, those with family incomes of \$30,000 or less are almost twice as likely as those with incomes of \$100,000 or more to view current economic conditions as poor (35% vs. 19%).

However, economic expectations for the coming year vary only modestly by education and income. Adults with incomes of at least \$100,000 are no more likely than those with incomes of less than \$30,000 to say the economy will better a year from now (24% vs. 22%).

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## Education, income gaps in views of the nation's economy

*Economic conditions in the country today are ...*

	<b>Excellent/ Good</b>	<b>Only fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>DK</b>
	%	%	%	%
Total	27	45	28	1=100
Postgrad	39	50	11	0=100
College grad	32	45	24	*=100
Some college	20	50	30	*=100
HS or less	27	39	33	1=100
<i>Family income</i>				
\$100,000 or more	36	45	19	0=100
\$75,000-\$99,999	26	51	23	0=100
\$30,000-\$75,000	24	45	30	1=100
Less than \$30,000	25	39	35	1=100

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## Views of personal finances little changed

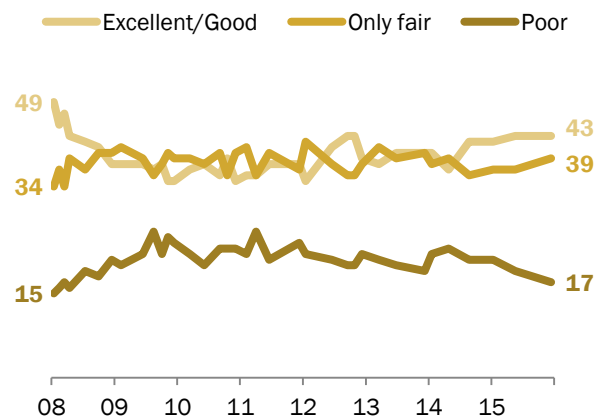
People's views of their personal finances – as well as their expectations for the coming year – have shown little change in recent years.

Currently, 43% say their financial situation is excellent or good, 39% say it is only fair, while 17% rate their finances as poor. Most adults (61%) expect their financial situation to improve at least some over the next year.

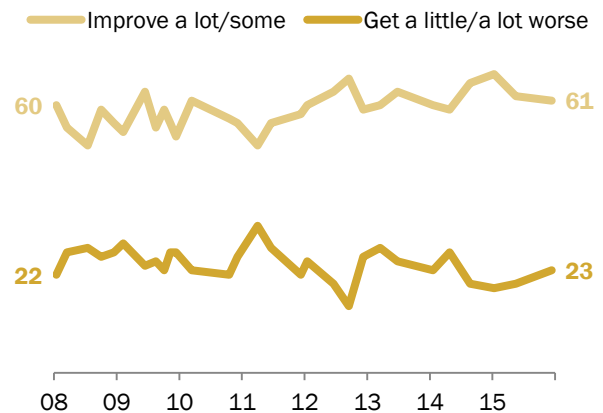
As always, there are wide income and education differences in views of personal finances. But while 66% of those with high family incomes (\$100,000 or more) expect their finances to improve, so too do 58% of those with incomes below \$30,000.

### Views of personal finances, financial outlook little changed

Personal financial situation is in \_\_\_\_ shape (%)



Over next year, personal financial situation will ... (%)



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Don't know responses not shown.

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## Those with low incomes still feel like they're 'falling behind'

While there has been a modest increase in the proportion of Americans who say their incomes are keeping up with the cost of living, these perceptions continue to be deeply divided along socioeconomic lines.

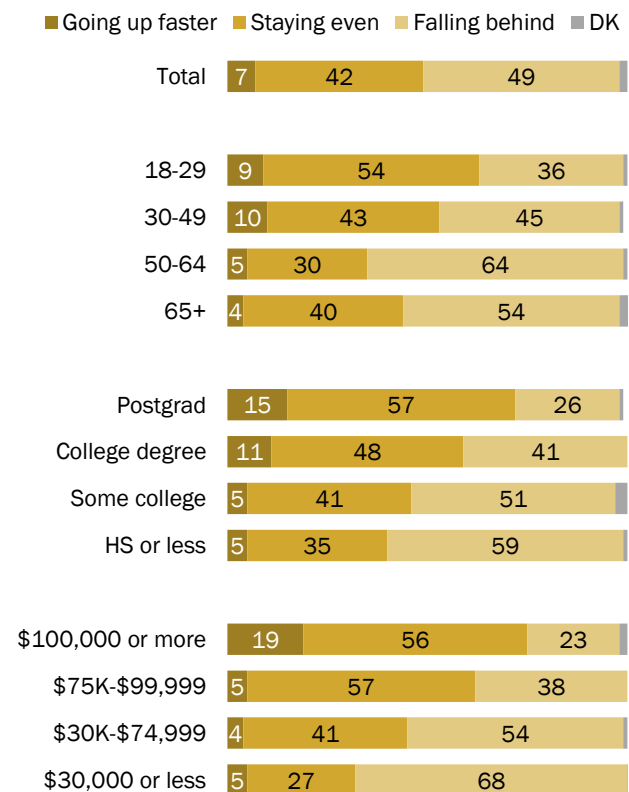
Nearly three-quarters of those with postgraduate degrees (72%) say either that their incomes are keeping pace with the cost of living (57%) or are rising faster than living costs (15%). The shares saying they are staying even or getting ahead financially declines among those with less education.

For those in households earning \$30,000 or less annually, the feeling of falling behind financially is widespread. Fully 68% of lower-income households think their family's income is falling behind the cost of living; just 31% say they are staying even or getting ahead. A majority of those with incomes of \$30,000 to \$75,000 (54%) also say they are falling behind financially. But fewer of those with incomes of \$75,000-\$99,999 (38%), and \$100,000 or more (23%), say the same.

A majority of 18-to-29-year-olds (63%) say their family's income is staying even with or rising faster than the cost of living, while 36% say they're falling behind financially. On the other hand, 60% of those older than 50 think their family's income is falling behind.

### Less-educated, lower-income feel like their incomes are 'falling behind'

Family income relative to the cost of living ... (%)



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## Perceptions of availability of jobs, ‘good jobs’

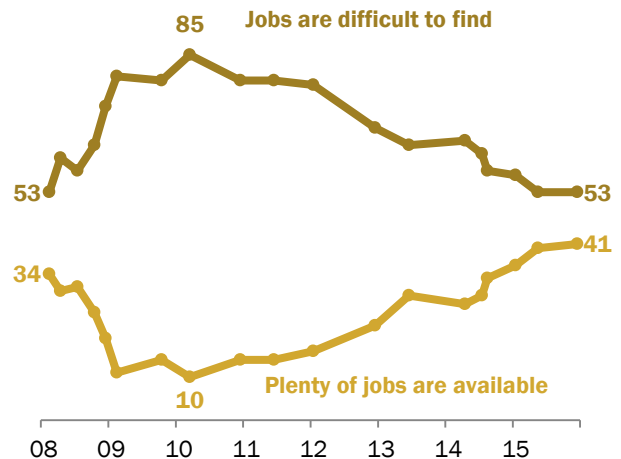
Since 2008, perceptions of local job conditions have followed a fairly similar trajectory as views of the national economy. Currently 41% say there are plenty of jobs available in their community, while 53% say jobs are difficult to find.

This is little changed from May, when 40% said plenty of jobs were available. But prior to that, it had been more than seven years since as many as four-in-ten Americans said jobs were plentiful locally (41% in November 2007).

Perceptions about the availability of “good jobs” remain somewhat less positive: 33% say there are plenty of good jobs in their communities. Still the share saying good jobs are available has risen modestly since August 2014 (from 26%), and has more than tripled since 2009 (from 10%).

### Views of job opportunities in local area

% saying \_\_\_\_\_ in their community



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.  
Don't know responses not shown.

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Young adults are more likely than older people to say plenty of jobs are available: 47% of those younger than 30 see jobs as plentiful, compared with 37% of those 50-64 and 34% of those 65 and older. The differences are similar in perceptions of the availability of good jobs.

College graduates (52%) are about as likely as those with postgraduate degrees (48%) to say there are plenty of jobs available. But college graduates are 12 percentage points less likely than postgrads to see good jobs as available (45% vs. 33%). Smaller shares of those with less education have positive perceptions of both the availability of jobs generally and good jobs.

## Just a third of college graduates say good jobs are plentiful

% saying \_\_\_\_\_ in their community

	Plenty of jobs available	Jobs difficult to find	Plenty of GOOD jobs available	GOOD jobs difficult to find
	%	%	%	%
Total	41	53	33	62
Men	46	47	38	58
Women	35	58	29	66
18-34	47	48	40	56
35-49	43	52	34	64
50-64	37	57	27	67
65+	34	56	30	60
Postgrad	48	44	45	51
College grad	52	41	33	60
Some college	39	53	37	58
HS or less	35	60	27	69
<i>Family income</i>				
\$75,000 or more	49	44	42	52
\$30,000-\$75,000	46	48	38	57
Less than \$30,000	28	67	20	77

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015.  
Don't know responses not shown.

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## Most favor raising minimum wage

About three-quarters of the public overall (73%) favors raising the federal minimum wage from its current rate of \$7.25 an hour. Just 24% oppose an increase.

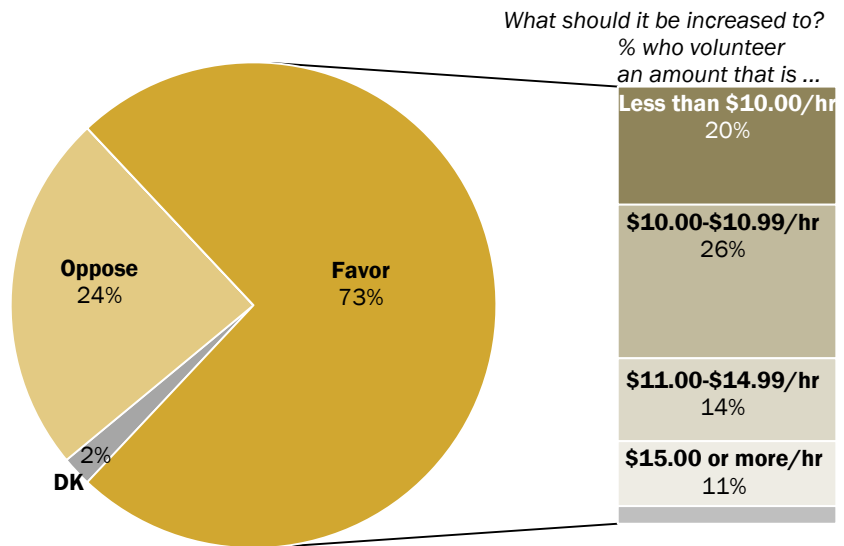
Those who support raising the minimum wage were asked, in an open-ended format, to name what the wage should be instead.

Two-in-ten (20%) say the federal minimum wage should be higher than its current rate of \$7.25, but less than \$10.00 an hour. Nearly four-in-ten (40%) name a rate between \$10.00 and \$14.99 an hour.

Relatively few (11%) say the minimum wage should be raised to \$15.00 an hour or more.

### Majority supports increase in federal minimum wage

*Do you favor or oppose raising the federal minimum wage from \$7.25/hour?*



Source: Survey conducted Dec. 8-13, 2015. Follow-up was an open-end question asked only of those who said they favor raising the minimum wage; figures based on total public. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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## Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted December 8-13, 2015 among a national sample of 1,500 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (525 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 975 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 582 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	1,500	2.9 percentage points
Republican	416	5.5 percentage points
Independent	557	4.8 percentage points
Democrat	446	5.3 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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DECEMBER 2015 POLITICAL SURVEY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
DECEMBER 8-13, 2015  
N=1,500**

**QUESTIONS 1-2, 7, 15a-d, 16, 22, 22-27, 30b, 30c, 31 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**NO QUESTIONS 3-6, 8-10, 12-14, 17-19, 21, 29, 32-39**

**QUESTIONS 11, 28, 30a, 30d, 30e HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**RANDOMIZE Q.40/Q.41 BLOCK WITH Q.42/Q.43 BLOCK**

**ASK ALL:**

Thinking about the nation's economy...

Q.40 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.) DK/Ref</b>
Dec 8-13, 2015	3	24	45	28	1
Sep 16-Oct 4, 2015	3	21	43	33	*
May 12-18, 2015	3	24	43	30	*
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

**Q.40 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Feb 4-8, 2009	*	4	24	71	1
December, 2008	*	7	33	59	1
November, 2008	1	6	28	64	1
Late October, 2008	*	7	25	67	1
Early October, 2008	1	8	32	58	1
Late September, 2008	*	7	27	65	1
July, 2008	1	9	39	50	1
April, 2008	1	10	33	56	*
March, 2008	1	10	32	56	1
Early February, 2008	1	16	36	45	2
January, 2008	3	23	45	28	1
November, 2007	3	20	44	32	1
September, 2007	3	23	43	29	2
June, 2007	6	27	40	25	2
February, 2007	5	26	45	23	1
December, 2006	6	32	41	19	2
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>1</sup>	2	29	42	26	1

**RANDOMIZE Q.40/Q.41 BLOCK WITH Q.42/Q.43 BLOCK****ASK ALL:**

Q.41 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>
Dec 8-13, 2015	20	22	54	4
Sep 16-Oct 4, 2015	23	21	53	3
May 12-18, 2015	25	20	53	2
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

<sup>1</sup> Earlier trends available from Gallup.

## Q.41 CONTINUED...

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>(VOL.)</u> <u>DK/Ref</u>
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
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

**RANDOMIZE Q.40/Q.41 BLOCK WITH Q.42/Q.43 BLOCK****ASK ALL:**

Thinking about your personal finances...

Q.42 How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape or poor shape financially?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
Dec 8-13, 2015	8	35	39	17	1
May 12-18, 2015	8	35	37	19	1
Jan 7-11, 2015	7	35	37	21	1
Aug 20-24, 2014	8	34	36	21	1
Apr 23-27, 2014 (U)	6	31	39	23	1
Jan 15-19, 2014 (U)	6	34	38	22	1
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	6	34	40	19	1
Jun 12-16, 2013	7	33	39	20	1
Mar 13-17, 2013	6	32	41	21	1
Dec 5-9, 2012	7	32	38	22	1
Oct 24-28, 2012	8	35	36	20	1
Sep 12-16, 2012	8	35	36	20	1
Jun 7-17, 2012	7	34	38	21	1
Jan 11-16, 2012	6	29	42	22	1
Dec 7-11, 2011	6	32	37	24	1
Jun 15-19, 2011	5	33	40	21	1
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	7	29	36	26	2
Feb 2-7, 2011	7	29	41	22	1
Dec 1-5, 2010	5	30	40	23	2
Oct 13-18, 2010	6	33	36	23	1
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	6	30	40	23	1
Jun 3-6, 2010	6	32	38	20	4
Mar 10-14, 2010	6	31	39	22	2
Dec 9-13, 2009	7	28	39	24	2
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	5	30	40	25	1
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	6	32	38	22	1
Aug 11-17, 2009	6	31	36	26	2
Jun 10-14, 2009	6	32	39	22	1
Feb 4-8, 2009	5	33	41	20	1
December, 2008	6	32	40	21	1
Early October, 2008	6	35	40	18	1
July, 2008	9	33	37	19	2
April, 2008	8	35	39	16	2
March, 2008	8	39	34	17	2
Early February, 2008	9	36	37	16	2
January, 2008	10	39	34	15	2
November, 2007	9	41	34	15	1
September, 2007	10	38	34	16	2
February, 2007	8	41	36	14	1
December, 2006	8	40	35	16	1
Late October, 2006	9	40	33	16	2
March, 2006	9	39	36	15	1
January, 2006	7	39	37	15	2
Mid-May, 2005	7	37	39	16	1
January, 2005	10	41	34	14	1
August, 2004	9	42	34	14	1
September, 2003	10	38	36	15	1
Late March, 2003	10	43	31	12	4
January, 2003	7	38	39	15	1
Early October, 2002	7	39	37	16	1
June, 2002	5	40	37	16	2
Late September, 2001	7	40	37	14	2
June, 2001	6	38	39	16	1



**Q.42 CONTINUED...**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	Only <u>fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
June, 2000	9	43	35	11	2
August, 1999	6	43	41	9	1
May, 1997	7	43	38	11	1
September, 1996 (RVs)	8	47	34	10	1
February, 1995	8	39	38	14	1
March, 1994	5	41	40	13	1
December, 1993	5	34	45	15	1
U.S. News: January, 1993	4	33	46	16	1
U.S. News: October, 1992	6	34	40	19	1
U.S. News: August, 1992	5	30	47	17	1
U.S. News: May, 1992	4	35	45	15	1
U.S. News: January, 1992	4	32	45	18	1

**RANDOMIZE Q.40/Q.41 BLOCK WITH Q.42/Q.43 BLOCK****ASK ALL:**

Q.43 Over the course of the next year, do you think the financial situation of you and your family will improve a lot, improve some, get a little worse or get a lot worse?

	Improve <u>a lot</u>	Improve <u>some</u>	Get a <u>little worse</u>	Get a lot <u>worse</u>	(VOL.) <u>Stay the same</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Dec 8-13, 2015	9	53	17	6	14	2
May 12-18, 2015	11	52	13	7	16	1
Jan 7-11, 2015	11	56	14	5	12	2
Aug 20-24, 2014	10	56	15	5	11	3
Apr 23-27, 2014 (U)	8	51	19	8	12	3
Jan 15-19, 2014 (U)	10	50	17	6	14	2
Jun 12-16, 2013	12	51	18	7	11	2
Mar 13-17, 2013	8	52	19	9	10	2
Dec 5-9, 2012	9	50	18	8	13	2
Sep 12-16, 2012	12	54	11	4	11	7
Jun 7-17, 2012	10	53	15	5	14	4
Jan 11-16, 2012	10	50	18	7	11	3
Dec 7-11, 2011	9	49	17	5	15	4
Jun 15-19, 2011	7	49	21	7	13	3
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	7	44	23	10	13	3
Dec 1-5, 2010	7	49	20	6	14	4
Oct 13-18, 2010	9	48	16	6	17	5
Mar 10-14, 2010	9	52	15	8	12	4
Dec 9-13, 2009	9	44	19	8	15	4
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	6	50	19	8	13	4
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	10	49	17	6	13	4
Aug 11-17, 2009	8	47	17	8	15	5
Jun 10-14, 2009	9	54	17	7	9	4
Feb 4-8, 2009	7	47	22	7	13	4
December, 2008	7	49	21	6	13	4
Early October, 2008	8	51	20	6	9	6
July, 2008	7	44	21	7	14	7
March, 2008	10	45	20	7	13	5
January, 2008	11	49	16	6	14	4
September, 2007	10	52	14	4	16	4
February, 2007	11	52	12	3	19	3
December, 2006	10	57	13	3	14	3
January, 2006	10	51	14	5	16	4
Mid-May, 2005	10	51	15	5	15	4
January, 2005	10	54	14	4	15	3
August, 2004	13	57	9	3	12	6
September, 2003	11	53	15	4	14	3

**Q.43 CONTINUED...**

	Improve <u>a lot</u>	Improve <u>some</u>	Get a <u>little worse</u>	(VOL.) Get a lot <u>worse</u>	Stay the <u>same</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Late March, 2003	12	51	15	4	11	7
January, 2003	9	51	18	5	13	4
Early October, 2002	10	54	13	5	12	6
June, 2002	11	55	15	4	11	4
January, 2002	12	53	15	5	11	4
Late September, 2001	9	46	16	4	17	8
June, 2001	11	52	15	4	14	4
January, 2001	11	46	18	9	12	4
January, 1999	17	55	7	3	14	4
May, 1997	12	56	10	2	17	3
February, 1995	11	53	13	3	17	3
March, 1994	10	57	11	3	16	3
U.S. News: October, 1992	9	51	14	3	15	8
U.S. News: August, 1992	6	50	20	5	14	5
U.S. News: May, 1992	8	49	22	4	13	4
U.S. News: January, 1992	9	46	19	5	16	5

**QUESTION 44 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****ASK ALL:**

Q.45 As you may know, the federal minimum wage is currently \$7.25 an hour. Do you favor or oppose increasing the minimum wage?

Dec 8-13

2015

73 Favor  
24 Oppose  
2 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**TREND FOR COMPARISON:** *An increase in the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 an hour*

	----- FAVOR ----- Strongly			----- OPPOSE ----- Strongly			(VOL.)
	<u>Net</u>	<u>favor</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Net</u>	<u>oppose</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
Jan 15-19, 2014 (U)	73	40	33	25	9	16	3
Feb 13-18, 2013 <sup>2</sup> (U)	71	36	34	26	10	16	3
January, 2007	84	48	36	14	6	8	2
March, 2006	86	49	37	11	3	8	3
December, 2004	86	53	33	12	4	8	2
June, 2001	87	49	38	12	4	8	1
October, 1999	82	48	34	16	4	12	2
February, 1998	80	48	32	19	5	14	1

<sup>2</sup> In February 2013, the question was worded "An increase in the minimum wage, from \$7.25 to \$9.00 an hour." In January 2007, the question was worded, "An increase in the minimum wage, from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour." In March 2006, December 2004, June 2011 and October 2009, the question was worded: "An increase in the minimum wage, from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.45 an hour." In February 1998, the question was worded: "An increase in the minimum wage, from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.15 an hour."

**ASK IF FAVOR INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE (Q45=1) [N=1,064]:**

Q.45a What should the minimum wage be increased to [OPEN END—DO NOT READ]?

**BASED ON TOTAL  
[N=1,500]:****BASED ON THOSE  
WHO FAVOR [N=1,064]:**

Dec 8-13 <u>2015</u>	Dec 8-13 <u>2015</u>	
20	27	Less than \$10.00/hour
26	36	\$10.00-\$10.99/hour
14	18	\$11.00-\$14.99/hour
11	15	\$15.00 or more/hour
3	4	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>
24	--	<i>Should not be increased</i>

**QUESTIONS 45z, 51 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTIONS 46-48 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****NO QUESTIONS 49-50, 52-58****ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=731]:**

Q.59F1 Thinking now about job opportunities where you live, would you say there are plenty of jobs available in your community or are jobs difficult to find?

	Plenty of <u>jobs available</u>	Jobs are <u>difficult to find</u>	(VOL.) Lots of some jobs, <u>few of others</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Dec 8-13, 2015	41	53	3	4
May 12-18, 2015	40	53	4	3
Jan 7-11, 2015	36	57	3	3
Aug 20-24, 2014	33	58	4	5
Jul 8-14, 2014	29	62	4	5
Apr 23-27, 2014 (U)	27	65	4	4
Jun 12-16, 2013	29	64	3	4
Dec 5-9, 2012	22	68	5	5
Jan 11-16, 2012	16	78	2	4
Jun 15-19, 2011	14	79	3	4
Dec 1-5, 2010	14	79	3	4
Mar 10-14, 2010	10	85	3	2
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	14	79	3	3
Feb 4-8, 2009	11	80	3	6
December, 2008	19	73	4	4
Early October, 2008	25	64	4	7
July, 2008	31	58	4	7
April, 2008	30	61	4	5
Early February, 2008	34	53	5	8
November, 2007	41	48	4	7
September, 2007	36	50	6	8
June, 2007	39	49	5	7
February, 2007	39	48	6	7
December, 2006	40	49	5	6
March, 2006	37	56	3	4
January, 2006	33	56	6	5
Early October, 2005	36	56	4	4
May, 2005	30	60	6	4
January, 2005	32	58	5	5
Mid-September, 2004	31	52	6	11
August, 2004	34	55	4	7
Late April, 2004	30	57	4	9
Late February, 2004	31	59	5	6

**Q.59F1 CONTINUED...**

	Plenty of <u>jobs available</u>	Jobs are <u>difficult to find</u>	(VOL.) Lots of some jobs, <u>few of others</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Mid-January, 2004	27	60	6	7
October, 2003	24	66	5	5
June, 2002	31	59	4	6
June, 2001	42	44	8	6
<i>U.S. News</i> : August, 1992	15	76	6	3
<i>U.S. News</i> : May, 1992	16	77	4	3
<i>U.S. News</i> : January, 1992	12	79	6	3

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=769]:**

Q.60F2 Thinking now about job opportunities where you live, would you say there are plenty of good jobs available or are good jobs difficult to find?

Dec 8-13 <u>2015</u>		Aug 20-24 <u>2014</u>	Sep 30-Oct 4 <u>2009</u>	July <u>2008</u>	June <u>2007</u>	Jan <u>2006</u>
33	Plenty of GOOD jobs available	26	10	22	36	28
62	GOOD jobs are difficult to find	71	84	73	55	64
1	Lots of some jobs, few of others (VOL.)	1	2	1	3	3
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	3	4	4	6	5

**ASK ALL:**

Q.61 Do you think your family's income is going up faster than the cost of living, staying about even with the cost of living, or falling behind the cost of living?

	Going up <u>faster</u>	Staying <u>about even</u>	Falling <u>behind</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Dec 8-13, 2015	7	42	49	2
Jan 7-11, 2015	6	37	55	1
Aug 20-24, 2014	5	37	56	2
Jan 15-19, 2014 (U)	7	34	57	2
October, 2008	5	34	57	4
July, 2008	6	28	64	2
Early February, 2008	6	33	58	3
September, 2007	10	43	44	3
January, 2006	9	41	47	3
<i>NBC/WSJ</i> : June, 1996	9	38	50	3

**QUESTIONS 62-63, E1-E3, 71, 90-92 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****NO QUESTIONS 64-68, 72-80, 86-89****QUESTIONS 69-70, 81-85 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****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 <u>preference</u>	(VOL.) Other <u>party</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>	Lean <u>Rep</u>	Lean <u>Dem</u>
Dec 8-13, 2015	26	31	37	4	*	2	16	15
Aug 27-Oct 4, 2015	24	29	41	4	*	2	17	17
Sep 22-27, 2015	26	30	40	2	*	2	15	16
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

## PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Jan 7-11, 2015	21	30	44	3	1	1	19	18
Dec 3-7, 2014	24	31	39	3	1	2	17	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
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	--	--	--	--	--

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

(U) Pew Research Center/USA Today polls