



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

NEWS Release
1615 L Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel (202) 419-4350
Fax (202) 419-4399

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THURSDAY, December 11, 2008

Job Worries Mount, 73% Spending Less on Holidays
PSYCHOLOGY OF BAD TIMES FUELING CONSUMER CUTBACKS

Also inside...

- Rising prices still a problem for poor
- Public's long-term optimism undiminished
- Bipartisan support for infrastructure spending
- Obama cabinet gets good marks from Reps

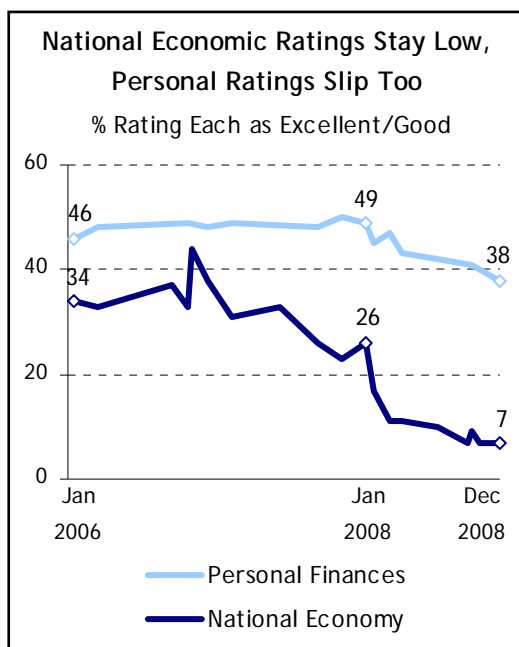
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press
202/419-4350
<http://www.people-press.org>

Job Worries Mount, 73% Spending Less on Holidays PSYCHOLOGY OF BAD TIMES FUELING CONSUMER CUTBACKS

Americans continue to render extremely bleak assessments of economic conditions, both with respect to the national economy and their own financial situations. Fully 92% of the public rates the national economy as only fair or poor, and a substantial majority (61%) judges their personal finances that way. Both measures are among the most negative recorded in Pew Research Center surveys over the past 15 years.

The public's bearish economic outlook is spurring ever growing numbers of consumers to say they are cutting back on purchases or reconsidering their saving or retirement decisions. As a result of what's been happening with the economy recently, 60% of Americans say they are changing the way their money is saved or invested, up from just 48% two months ago; 32% say they have adjusted their retirement plans. Substantial minorities also say they are either delaying or shelving plans to make major household purchases (45%) or buy a home or make major improvements (44%). And fully 73% say that they plan to cut back on holiday gifts this year.



The latest survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press suggests that the psychological impact of bad times, rather than an actual decline in people's financial conditions, is the principal driver of these cutbacks and reconsiderations. Nearly six-in-ten (59%) of those who say they are cutting back or delaying purchases report they are doing so because they *worry* things might get worse. Just 28% say they are cutting back because their financial situation has gotten worse.

More Americans Cutting Back

<i>Has recent economy caused you to ...</i>	Sep %	Oct %	Dec %
Cut back holiday spending	--	--	73
Cut back vacation spending	48	59	62
Change savings/investments	39	48	60
Eat out less often	--	55	58
Delay buying major home item	30	39	45
Delay home purchase/improve	29	38	44
Delay buying new car	23	36	39
Adjust retirement plans	23	26	32

Worry is the overwhelming factor in spending cutbacks being made by more affluent consumers: 72% of those with family incomes of \$75,000 or more per year cite concerns about what might happen as a reason for their intended cutbacks. Among less affluent people the fear factor still predominates, but many more people cite an actual worsening of their situation as a reason for cutbacks.

<i>Cutting back on spending because...</i>	<u>Total</u>	<i>Household income</i>		
		<u>75K+</u>	<u>\$75K</u>	<u>\$30K</u>
	%	%	%	%
Finances <i>have</i> worsened	28	17	30	40
Worry they <i>might</i> get worse	59	72	56	52
Both (Vol)	4	4	5	4
Other/DK (Vol)	9	7	9	4
	100	100	100	100

Based on the 85% of respondents who have made personal spending cutbacks recently.

The new survey, conducted Dec. 3-7 among 1,489 adults reached on landline phones and cell phones, finds that no single economic problem stands out as the principal cause of public anxiety. When asked about what worries them most, about equal numbers cite rising prices (31%), problems in the financial markets (29%), and the job situation (26%). In October, personal concerns about prices were somewhat greater than today, while worries about jobs were less prominent. People with lower family incomes express greater concern about prices, while affluent people worry more about problems in the financial markets.

There is little in the survey to suggest that lower fuel and food costs have had a positive impact on the public. The percentage of people saying that gasoline is easy to afford has climbed from just 27% in July to 67% in the current poll. Less dramatic but clear improvements are also seen in the number of people who say it is easy to afford utility bills and food. Yet the percentage of Americans saying that it is easy to generally afford the things they want has fallen, from 49% in early October to 43% currently. And despite falling energy costs, 47% say they expect inflation to increase over the next year.

At the same time, concerns over jobs and employment have increased, and most people expect this situation to worsen. More than six-in-ten (63%) believe that unemployment will increase next year, which is higher than the percentage who say that inflation will increase (47%). An even greater number (73%) say that jobs currently are hard to find in their local community. Similarly, on a more personal level, 56% of those who are employed say that jobs in their line of work are hard to find.

	<i>Over the next year</i>		
	<u>Better</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Worse</u>
General Outlook	%	%	%
National economy	43	36	17
	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Specific Issues	%	%	%
Unemployment	17	18	63
Taxes	10	32	55
Inflation	11	37	47
Interest rates	32	32	31

The most positive news in the survey is that the public remains relatively optimistic about the long-term fundamental vitality of the economy, the current psychology of bad times notwithstanding. The new poll finds 43% expecting that the national economy will be in better shape a year from now, and a 56% majority believing that their own financial situation will be improved a year from now.

There also is no evidence that the current downturn has taken a toll on the public's overall optimism or on its confidence in the government's ability to solve economic problems. More than two-thirds (68%) agree with the statement "As Americans, we can always find ways to solve our problems and get what we want"; that represents a modest increase since early October (64%) and a more substantial rise since December 2004 (59%). Moreover, most Americans (59%) continue to say that the government still has the power to fix the economy even though the United States is part of a global economy.

	Dec 2004 %	Oct 2008 %	Dec 2008 %
<i>Which comes closer to your view?</i>			
As Americans, we can always find ways to solve problems	59	64	68
This country can't solve many important problems	36	29	27
Neither/Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100
The government still has the power to fix the economy	--	56	59
The government can't fix it so easily because we are part of a global economy	--	37	35
Don't know	--	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>
		100	100

While the public remains confident that the government has the power to improve the economy, it sees no quick fix for the financial crisis. Nearly twice as many people say that financial difficulties of banks and other institutions will get worse in the future (62%) as say the worst is behind us (32%). In this regard, the public remains divided over the federal bailout plan: 47% say it is the right thing for the government to invest billions to secure financial markets and institutions, while 43% say it is the wrong thing.

The public offers varying support for other proposals aimed at addressing economic problems. Fully 70% say it is the right thing for the government to spend billions to substantially increase spending on roads, bridges and other public works projects; comparably large majorities of Democrats (73%), independents (71%) and Republicans (65%) favor this idea.

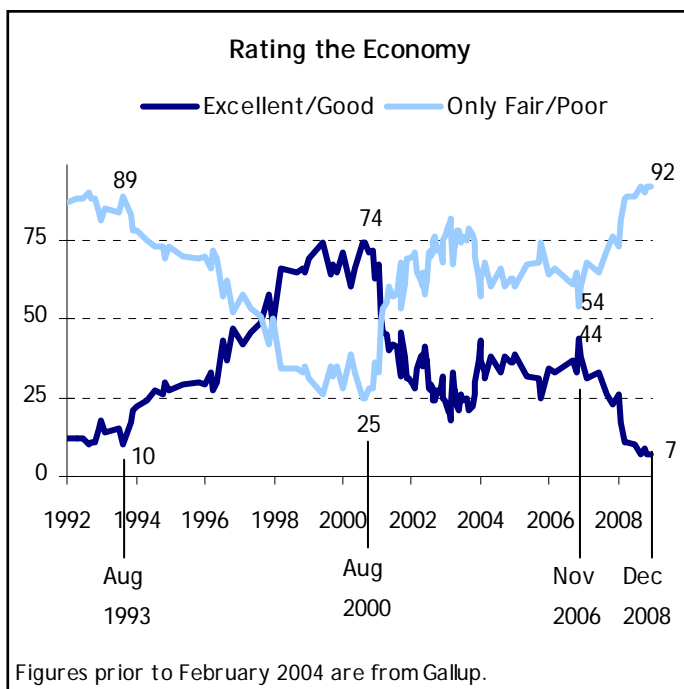
	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %
<i>Right thing for govt. to spend billions of dollars to ...</i>				
Increase spending on roads, other public works projects	70	65	73	71
Help homeowners facing foreclosure on mortgages they cannot afford	49	31	60	56
Keep financial institutions and markets secure	47	40	50	49
Make loans to automakers to keep them in business	39	31	45	38

However, there are sizable partisan differences over spending billions to help homeowners facing disclosure on homes they cannot afford and to make loans to General Motors, Ford and Chrysler to help them stay in business. About twice as many Democrats as Republicans say it is right to help out foreclosed homeowners (60% vs. 31%); 45% of Democrats endorse loans to struggling automakers, compared with 31% of Republicans.

The survey finds a highly positive public reaction to President-elect Obama's appointments and his overall handling of the transition. More than seven-in-ten (72%) approve of the job Obama has done in explaining his policies to the American people while about as many (71%) approve of his cabinet selections. About two-thirds (68%) believe his cabinet picks have been about right, rather than too liberal or too conservative. Nearly half of Republicans (47%) say that Obama's choices have been about right ideologically. By comparison, in January 2001 just a third of Democrats said President-elect Bush's picks were about right.

SECTION 1: THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

Americans remain extremely downbeat about national economic conditions. More than nine-in-ten (92%) say the economy is in only fair (33%) or poor (59%) shape, while just 7% offer positive views. Assessments of the national economy have been stable over the past two months and are somewhat more negative than they were during the recession of the early 1990s. In August 1993, about nine-in-ten Americans (89%) said the economy was in only fair or poor shape and 10% said it was in excellent or good shape.



A growing percentage of Americans now describe current economic conditions as a recession. More than six-in-ten Americans (64%) say the U.S. economy is in a recession and an additional 20% say it is in a depression, compared with 58% and 19%, respectively, in late October. The view that the country is facing a recession has become more widespread across most demographic groups.

Democrats continue to offer more negative economic ratings than do Republicans and independents, but overwhelming majorities across partisan groups express dissatisfaction with the economy; 96% of Democrats say the economy is in only fair or poor shape, compared with 88% of Republicans and 91% of independents. Democrats, Republicans and independents are about equally as likely to describe current economic conditions as a recession (65%, 66% and 64%, respectively). Nearly a quarter of Democrats (23%) say the country is in a depression; 19% of independents and just 14% of Republicans share that view.

Democrats More Bullish

Most Americans think economic conditions will be either the same (36%) or worse (17%) a year from now. Still, a substantial minority (43%) is optimistic that things will be better in a year, virtually unchanged from when Pew last asked the question in early October (46%).

Views about the future of the economy do not vary significantly across demographic groups, including across income categories. Those with annual family incomes under \$30,000 are about as likely as those with incomes of \$100,000 or more to say the economy will be better in a year (45% and 46%, respectively).

	Better %	Worse/ Same %	DK %
Total	43	53	4=100
\$100,000 and over	46	53	1=100
\$75,000-\$99,999	40	57	3=100
\$50-\$74,999	42	55	3=100
\$30-\$49,999	42	57	1=100
Less than \$30,000	45	51	4=100
Republican	37	59	4=100
Democrat	50	47	3=100
Independent	42	56	2=100

There are, however, partisan differences in economic outlook. Democrats are considerably more optimistic about the future of the national economy than are Republicans and independents. Fully half of Democrats expect conditions to be better in a year, while about the same proportion (47%) thinks things will be worse or about the same as they are now. In contrast, nearly six-in-ten Republicans (59%) and 56% of independents say the economy will be worse or about the same in a year.

But Even the Optimists Are Guarded

While a sizable minority of Americans expect overall national economic conditions to improve over the next year, people are far less upbeat when asked about improvement in specific areas of the economy. Very few see unemployment, inflation or taxes actually decreasing in the coming year, and by nearly two-to-one most say the problems facing banks and financial institutions will only get worse.

Even those who are optimistic about overall economic prospects are guarded when asked about these specific issues. Nearly half (49%) of those who say the economy will be

	Total %	Better %	Worse/ Same %
<i>Among those who say nat'l economy will be...</i>			
Difficulties of banks			
Worst is behind us	32	47	21
Will get worse	62	49	74
Unemployment			
Increase	63	53	72
Decrease	17	23	12
Stay the same	18	21	14
Inflation			
Increase	47	36	56
Decrease	11	15	9
Stay the same	37	43	32
Taxes			
Increase	55	47	62
Decrease	10	16	6
Stay the same	32	35	29
Interest rates			
Increase	31	31	32
Decrease	32	33	32
Stay the same	32	32	32

better a year from now believe the problems with financial institutions will get worse in the future; 47% say the worst is behind us. Those who say the economy will be the same or get worse a year from now overwhelmingly (74%) believe the problems of financial institutions will worsen.

Most people who think the economy will be better a year from now nonetheless say that unemployment will rise over the next 12 months; 53% say this, while just 23% of economic optimists say that unemployment will decrease; 21% say it will stay about the same. Among those who believe the overall economy will get worse in the next year, 72% say unemployment will rise.

Increase in Joblessness Predicted

In this regard, the belief that unemployment will rise over the next year is shared widely across demographic, class and income categories. However, well-educated people and those with higher incomes are more likely than those with less education and lower incomes to say that unemployment will increase.

Nearly seven-in-ten college graduates (69%) express this view, compared with 59% of those with no more than a high school education. Among those with household incomes of \$75,000 or more, nearly three-quarters (73%) say unemployment rates will rise in the near future. In contrast, 54% of those earning less than \$30,000 a year, while almost a quarter (24%) of this group say unemployment will decrease.

	Most Expect Unemployment to Rise in Next Year				N
	In-crease %	De-crease %	Stay the same %	DK %	
Total	63	17	18	2=100	766
College Grad+	69	14	17	*=100	269
Some college	64	16	17	3=100	190
HS or less	59	20	18	3=100	303
\$75,000+	73	12	13	2=100	200
\$50-\$74,999	64	14	22	*=100	131
\$30-49,999	63	16	18	3=100	154
Less than \$30K	54	24	20	2=100	189
Professional	65	13	19	3=100	279
Working class	63	17	19	1=100	329
Struggling	60	24	14	2=100	112
Republican	66	14	17	3=100	214
Democrat	57	23	17	3=100	294
Independent	64	14	20	2=100	228

Democrats are slightly more optimistic than Republicans or independents about unemployment in the future (23% say it will decrease, compared to just 14% of Republicans and independents).

Taxes, Inflation, Interest Rates

Most Americans (55%) believe that taxes will increase over the next year, while 47% say they expect inflation to rise. About a third (31%) says they expect interest rates to increase.

A large majority of Republicans (71%) say they expect taxes to go up over the next year. In contrast, 57% of independents and just 41% of Democrats expect taxes to increase.

Republicans also are more pessimistic about inflation than Democrats. More than half of Republicans (54%) say they expect inflation to increase, compared with 41% of Democrats. A slim majority (52%) of self-described working-class Americans say inflation is on the rise. By contrast, just 43% of those in the professional/business class think inflation will increase.

	In-crease %	De-crease %	Stay the same %	DK %
Taxes				
Total	55	10	32	3=100
Professional	57	7	34	2=100
Working class	59	11	28	2=100
Struggling	48	12	38	2=100
Republican	71	7	17	5=100
Democrat	41	17	41	1=100
Independent	57	7	33	3=100
Inflation				
Total	47	11	37	5=100
Professional	43	12	41	4=100
Working class	52	10	33	5=100
Struggling	44	13	40	3=100
Republican	54	10	31	5=100
Democrat	41	13	43	3=100
Independent	47	11	37	5=100
Interest Rates				
Total	31	32	32	5=100
Professional	22	38	34	6=100
Working class	35	32	30	3=100
Struggling	40	24	33	3=100
Republican	34	30	31	5=100
Democrat	32	34	31	3=100
Independent	28	33	34	5=100

Jobs More Difficult to Find

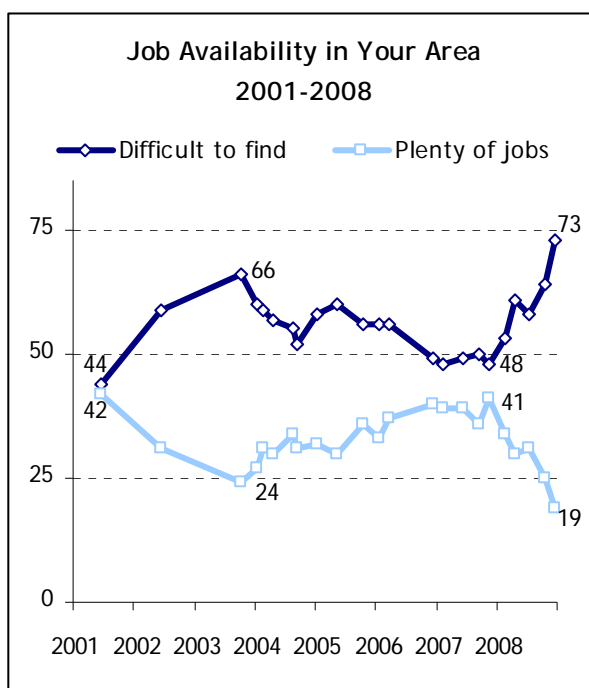
The percentage of Americans who say jobs are difficult to find in their area is now greater than at any point since 2001, when Pew first asked this question. Nearly three-quarters of Americans (73%) say jobs are hard to find where they live. This is significantly greater than the previous high in October 2003 (66%). Views of the labor market are not as pessimistic as they were in January 1992 when, according to a U.S. News and World Report poll, 79% of the public reported that jobs were difficult to find in their area.

Views of the job market have worsened significantly across all income categories, except among those making \$100,000 a year or more. In lower income categories, there have been 10-point increases or more in the percentages saying jobs are scarce locally.

The education gap in perceptions of the local job market has widened since October. While about two-thirds of college graduates (66%) say that jobs are difficult to find, 79% of those with no more than a high school education say the same.

Republicans' views of the job market in their local community have grown substantially more negative since October. Two-thirds of Republicans (66%) say that jobs are difficult to find, up from 53% two months ago. Nonetheless, more Democrats (77%) and independents (75%) continue to say that jobs are scarce locally, and these percentages also have increased since October.

Personal experience with unemployment is associated with views of job availability; 82% of those in households where someone has looked for work in the prior year say jobs are hard to find, compared with 68% of those in households that haven't experienced recent unemployment.



Jobs Getting Scarcer

% saying jobs difficult to find:	Oct	Dec	Change
	2008	2008	
Total	64	73	+9
College grad	60	66	+6
Some college	60	71	+11
HS or less	68	79	+11
\$100,000 or more	54	59	+5
\$75K-\$99,999	59	72	+13
\$50-\$74,999	59	72	+13
\$30-\$49,999	68	79	+11
Less than \$30K	70	80	+10
Professional	57	64	+7
Working class	62	74	+12
Struggling	83	87	+4
Republican	53	66	+13
Democrat	70	77	+7
Independent	67	75	+8

Unemployment Hits Home

More than a third (35%) of Americans say that a member of their household has been without a job and looking for work over the past twelve months. This is an increase of seven percentage points since February of this year.

The increase has been most pronounced among those making between \$50,000 and \$100,000 a year. Nonetheless, people with incomes of less than \$30,000 a year remain the most likely to say that someone in their household has been unemployed over the past 12 months.

A majority of Americans younger than 30 (55%) have experienced household unemployment in the past year, compared to significantly lower rates among other age groups. Household unemployment among those with college degrees (25%) continues to be substantially lower than unemployment in households of those who have not attended college (39%).

	Feb 2008 %	Dec 2008 %	Change
Total	28	35	+7
18-29	47	55	+8
30-49	30	34	+4
50-64	25	32	+7
65+	13	16	+3
College grad	16	25	+9
Some college	36	40	+4
HS or less	32	39	+7
\$100,000 or more	15	21	+6
\$75-\$99,999	17	28	+11
\$50-\$74,999	23	34	+11
\$30-\$49,999	37	41	+4
Less than \$30K	46	46	0
Professional	18	25	+7
Working class	30	35	+5
Struggling	50	56	+6
Republican	22	27	+5
Democrat	30	37	+7
Independent	33	39	+6

Among those who are currently employed, a majority (56%) now says jobs in their line of work are hard to come by in their area, a 10-point increase since February. Working people with annual household incomes of less than \$50,000 are significantly more likely than those with higher household incomes to say jobs in their particular field of work are difficult to find (63% compared with 52% of those with incomes of \$50,000 or more).

While most working Americans continue to characterize the financial health of their employers as excellent or good (69%), the proportion saying that the company or organization they work for is in only fair or poor financial shape has continued to rise over the course of the year. Currently, 35% describe their employer's financial situation in this way, compared with 27% in February and 30% in October.

	Feb 2008 %	Oct 2008 %	Dec 2008 %
<i>Financial condition of employer is...</i>			
Excellent/Good	69	66	63
Fair/Poor	27	30	35
Other/DK	4	4	2
	100	100	100

Based on those who are employed either full- or part-time

Individuals with lower household incomes are the most likely to provide negative ratings of their employer’s financial condition (43% of those with annual incomes of less than \$50,000 say this, compared with 30% of those with family incomes of \$50,000 or more).

Real Estate Slump

Americans have grown markedly more negative in evaluations of their local real estate markets since earlier this year. Fully 67% say that home prices in their area have declined a little (33%) or a lot (34%). In early October, 54% said prices had fallen a little (29%) or a lot (25%).

Since October, more people across all regions report that the values of their homes have gone down, although the increase has been somewhat smaller in the West. There continues to be a wide gap in the perceptions of the local home

market between affluent and low-income Americans. More than eight-in-ten (82%) of those with incomes of \$100,000 or more say home prices have declined, compared with 52% of those with incomes of less than \$30,000.

	Oct <u>2008</u>	Dec <u>2008</u>	<u>Change</u>
<i>Local home prices have gone down:</i>	%	%	
Total	54	67	+13
East	53	69	+16
Midwest	56	69	+13
South	45	62	+17
West	68	76	+8
\$100,000 or more	77	82	+5
\$75,000-99,999	65	87	+22
\$50,000-74,999	58	72	+14
\$30,000-49,999	54	71	+17
Less than \$30,000	37	52	+15

SECTION 2: PERSONAL FINANCES AND ECONOMIC CONCERNS

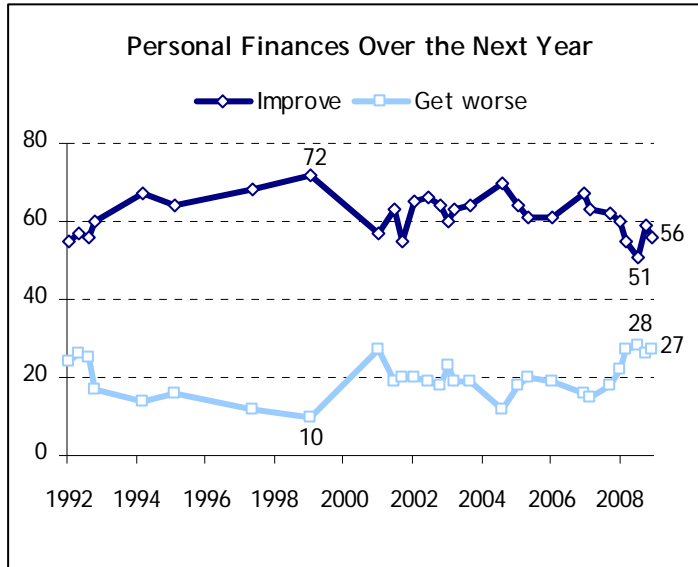
While the public continues to rate national economic conditions more negatively than personal finances, the proportion of people rating their own finances as only fair or poor is the highest it has been in nearly 16 years. Currently, 61% say they are in only fair or poor shape financially. That is up only slightly since October (58%), but personal financial ratings are now almost as negative as in August 1992, when 64% rated their personal finances as only fair or poor.

Lower-income people, African Americans and those who are unemployed are the most likely to give a negative assessment of their personal finances. Virtually all (94%) of those who describe their households as struggling express a negative view of their personal finances, compared with 62% of those in working class households and 39% of those in professional or business class households.

	Excellent/ good %	Only fair/ poor %	DK %
Total	38	61	1=100
\$100,000 or more	70	30	0=100
\$75K-\$99,999	54	46	0=100
\$50K-\$74,999	43	57	*=100
\$30K-\$49,999	31	68	1=100
Less than \$30K	14	85	1=100
<i>Self-described class</i>			
Prof/business	60	39	1=100
Working	36	62	2=100
Struggling	6	94	*=100
White	43	56	1=100
Black	20	79	1=100
Republican	50	49	1=100
Democrat	30	69	1=100
Independent	38	61	1=100
Employed	42	57	1=100
Not employed	31	68	1=100

Despite people's gloomy assessments of their finances, most (56%) expect their financial situation to improve at least somewhat over the course of the next year. The proportion saying their finances will improve is about the same as in October (59%), but personal financial optimism is somewhat higher than it was in July (51%), when it reached an all-time low.

Majorities across education levels, income groups and classes continue to be optimistic that their personal economic situation will improve over the next year. Moreover, there is virtually no difference in optimism about future finances among those who rate their current finances negatively – 55% of whom say their situation will get better over the next year – and those who view their current finances positively (57%).



Young people and African Americans continue to be among the most optimistic about their personal financial situation over the coming year. Among those younger than 30, more than seven-in-ten (71%) believe their economic situation will improve over the next year. By contrast, just 36% of people 65 and older say that they expect their financial situation to improve, while about as many (37%) expect their finances to get worse. In addition, blacks remain more likely than whites to predict an improvement in their personal financial situation (70% blacks, 50% whites).

Top Economic Worries

Reflecting on their financial situation, about three-in-ten (31%) cite rising prices as the economic issue that worries them most. While this remains a top concern, fewer Americans now cite this than did so in October (38%) and March (49%). Nearly as many (29%) mention problems in the financial markets – this is largely unchanged since October. An increasing proportion (26%) cites the job situation as the economic issue that most worries them, up from 18% in October. Only about one-in-ten (9%) say that declining real estate values are their biggest economic concern.

Which economic issue worries you most now?	March	Oct	Dec
	2008	2008	2008
	%	%	%
Rising prices	49	38	31
Problems in fin. mkts.	14	31	29
Job situation	19	18	26
Declining real estate values	12	8	9
Other/none/DK	6	5	5
	100	100	100

Just 17% of those with household incomes of more than \$100,000 say that rising prices is the economic issue that worries them most, down from 22% in October. By contrast, 45% of those with incomes of less than \$30,000 cite rising prices as their biggest worry, which is down modestly from October. Rising prices remain by far the biggest concern for people in this income category.

Concern about the job situation has risen sharply among those with annual household incomes of \$50,000 to \$75,000: 27% in this income category say the job situation is their biggest economic worry, up from 14% in October. About three-in-ten (31%) of those with annual incomes of less than \$30,000 say the job situation is the economic issue that worries them most, which is little changed from October (28%).

Among people with family incomes of \$100,000 or more, problems in the financial markets dwarf other economic concerns. About half of this group (49%) say they are most worried by problems in the financial markets, which is far more than the percentages citing jobs and rising prices (17% each).

What's Affordable

A majority of the public (55%) says that it is generally difficult to afford the things they want in life, while 43% say it is easy. The percentage saying it is difficult to afford the things they want has increased seven points since October and now is approaching the 58% measured in January 1992.

Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) of those with annual incomes of less than \$30,000 say it is difficult to afford the things they want, compared with 26% of those who earn \$100,000 or more. The percentage saying the things they want in life are difficult to afford is up among all income groups since October.

<i>Rising prices is top economic worry</i>	<u>Oct</u> %	<u>Dec</u> %	<u>Change</u>
Total	38	31	-7
\$100,000 or more	22	17	-5
\$75,000-\$99,999	33	16	-17
\$50K-\$74,999	40	28	-12
\$30K-\$49,999	40	34	-6
Less than \$30,000	50	45	-5
<i>Job situation is top economic worry</i>			
Total	18	26	+8
\$100,000 or more	12	17	+5
\$75,000-\$99,999	11	20	+9
\$50K-\$74,999	14	27	+13
\$30K-\$49,999	21	30	+9
Less than \$30,000	28	31	+3

<i>Affording things you want...</i>	Jan 1992*	June 2001	Feb 2008	Oct 2008	Dec 2008
	%	%	%	%	%
Easy	39	50	52	49	43
Difficult	58	48	45	48	55
Don't Know	3	2	3	3	2
	100	100	100	100	100

* From US News & World Report.

Nonetheless, when it comes to life's basic necessities, the percentages saying it is difficult to afford gasoline, food, and home energy costs have all decreased since July. As gas prices continue to drop, only 27% of Americans say it is difficult to afford gasoline, down from 68% in July when gas prices were at their peak. About three-in-ten (29%) say that it is difficult to afford food, a decrease of nine percentage points since July. Somewhat more say that home heating and electricity are difficult to afford (42%), although this too is down from 49% in July.

	Feb <u>2008</u>	July <u>2008</u>	Dec <u>2008</u>	<u>July-Dec</u> <u>Change</u>
<i>% saying it is difficult to afford...</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
Gasoline	60	68	27	-41
Food	27	38	29	-9
Heat and electricity	44	49	42	-7
Health care	45	46	45	-1
Taxes	51	52	52	0
Retirement saving	56	59	64	+5

More than four-in-ten (45%) continue to say that health care is difficult to afford and a majority (52%) says the same about taxes; both have changed little since July and February. Most Americans say it is difficult to afford saving for retirement (64%); this is the only item that has increased since July (up from 59%).

Overall, majorities of those with annual incomes of less than \$30,000 say that every item mentioned – with the exception of gasoline (42%) – is difficult to afford. In contrast, just 10% of those in the highest income category (\$100,000 or more) say that food and gasoline are difficult to afford while just 20% say the same about heat and electricity, and health care. About a third (34%) in this group says taxes are difficult to afford while 45% say the same about retirement.

Food Still Costly for Poor

For people in every income group, gasoline is now easier to afford than it was just a few months ago. Notably, the proportion of people with incomes of less than \$30,000 saying it is difficult to afford gas has fallen by almost half since July (from 79% to 42%); the declines among middle-income groups have been even more dramatic.

Yet affording food remains a challenge for 50% of those in the lowest income group, which is largely unchanged from July (55%). By contrast, there have been larger declines in the proportions of those with middle incomes (between \$30,000 and \$75,000) who say that food is difficult to afford.

Nearly six-in-ten (59%) Americans in households earning less than \$30,000 also say they have difficulty affording heat and electricity. By comparison, 44% of middle-income people and just 23% of those earning \$75,000 or more report this as a problem.

There has been a slight increase since July in the proportion saying it is difficult to afford saving for retirement (five points), and the increase is seen across all income groups. More people with incomes of at least \$75,000 cite difficulty affording retirement saving than say they have difficulty affording gas, food, health care, or other things; still, people in this income group are less likely than people with lower incomes to say that it is difficult to save for retirement.

Lower-Income Households Still Feeling the Pinch			
<i>% saying it is difficult to afford</i>	<u>July</u> %	<u>Dec</u> %	<u>Change</u>
<i>Gasoline</i>			
Total	68	27	-41
\$75,000 or more	54	15	-39
\$50K-\$74,999	72	22	-50
\$30K-\$49,999	74	25	-49
Less than \$30,000	79	42	-37
<i>Food</i>			
Total	38	29	-9
\$75,000 or more	19	14	-5
\$50K-\$74,999	31	20	-11
\$30K-\$49,999	45	30	-15
Less than \$30,000	55	50	-5
<i>Heat and electricity</i>			
Total	49	42	-7
\$75,000 or more	31	23	-8
\$50K-\$74,999	48	44	-4
\$30K-\$49,999	54	44	-10
Less than \$30,000	65	59	-6
<i>Saving for retirement</i>			
Total	59	64	+5
\$75,000 or more	44	52	+8
\$50K-\$74,999	59	64	+5
\$30K-\$49,999	66	70	+4
Less than \$30,000	73	79	+6

Many Cut Spending

While necessities like gasoline and food have gotten easier to afford, Americans continue to say they are cutting back on spending as a result of what's been happening with the economy lately.

Fully 62% say recent economic developments have caused them to cut back on planned spending for vacation travel. This is up slightly from early October (59%); in September, just 48% said they

were cutting back on vacation spending. There also have been small increases since October in the percentages saying they are reducing other spending. In addition, 73% say they are cutting back on holiday spending, which was not asked about in previous surveys.

The proportion saying they have changed the way they save or invest has increased more substantially, from 48% in early October to 60% today. There is also a six-point increase (from 26% to 32%) in the proportion saying they have adjusted their plans for retirement.

Overall, an overwhelming percentage (91%) says they have delayed or reduced spending, or made another change, as a result of what has been happening in the economy; nearly half (47%) say they have adjusted plans or delayed or cancelled spending in five or more areas.

Austerity Driven by Worry

A majority of Americans (59%) are delaying or cancelling purchases or cutting back on other spending because they worry that their financial situation *might* get worse in the future, while 28% are cutting back because their financial situation has already gotten worse and made such cutbacks necessary.

<i>Has the recent economy led you to...</i>	<u>Yes</u> %	<u>No</u> %	<u>DK</u> %
Cut holiday gift spending	73	27	*=100
Cut vacation spending	62	37	1=100
Change savings/investments	60	39	1=100
Eat out less often	58	41	1=100
Delay buying major home item	45	54	1=100
Delay home purchase/improvements	44	54	2=100
Delay buying a new car	39	60	1=100
Adjust retirement plans	32	66	2=100
<i>% saying they have made any change</i>	91		

Nearly three-fourths (73%) who say they are in excellent or good shape financially say they have cut back out of worry about the future. Similarly, 61% of those whose personal finances are in only fair shape have cut back out of worry. In contrast, a majority (53%) of those who say they are in poor shape financially have cut back out of necessity.

The reason for cutting back on spending also varies by income and self-described class. Fully three-quarters of those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more have cut back because they worry their finances might get worse, not because they have already gotten worse. People with incomes of less than \$30,000 are more evenly divided; 52% are cutting back out of worry and 40% have cut back out of necessity.

Similarly, 50% of those who describe their household as struggling have made cutbacks because their financial situation has gotten worse, compared with 25% who describe themselves as working class, and just 19% of those who describe themselves as professional or business class.

	Has gotten worse %	Might get worse %
Total	28	59
<i>Personal finances</i>		
Excellent/Good	9	73
Only fair	30	61
Poor	53	33
<i>Household income</i>		
\$100,000 or more	14	75
\$75K-\$99,999	20	69
\$50K-\$74,999	26	63
\$30K-\$49,999	33	50
Less than \$30,000	40	52
<i>Class</i>		
Professional/Business	19	67
Working	25	63
Struggling	50	41

* Based on those who have delayed/canceled spending for a new car or major household purchase; cut back planned spending for vacation travel; eat out at restaurants less often; or cut back on holiday spending. Figures read horizontally, other volunteered responses not shown.

SECTION 3: THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY

The public broadly favors the government substantially increasing funding for roads, bridges and other public works projects. However, other government efforts to deal with the struggling economy – including the program already enacted to help secure financial institutions and markets – are much more controversial.

Fully 70% believe it is the right thing for the government to spend billions on road and other public works projects and large majorities across the demographic and political spectrum support this idea.

In contrast, only about half of Americans (49%) say it is right for the government to help homeowners who are facing foreclosure on mortgages they cannot afford. A comparable percentage (47%) favors the program to aid financial institutions and markets, which is unchanged since mid-October. And just 39% say it is the right thing for the government to spend billions in loans to keep GM, Ford and Chrysler in business.

	Views of Economic Plans and Proposals			
	<i>Right for govt. to spend billions on...</i>			
	Infra- structure	Home- owners	Finan. inst.	Auto- makers
	%	%	%	%
Total	70	49	47	39
Men	78	46	46	43
Women	64	53	48	34
Conserv Rep	65	30	39	24
Mod/Lib Rep	71	34	43	44
Independent	71	56	49	38
Cons/Mod Dem	74	56	49	47
Liberal Dem	76	67	56	45
\$100,000 or more	73	41	59	41
\$75K-\$99,999	76	48	49	35
\$50K-\$74,999	75	45	43	36
\$30K-\$49,999	71	52	46	45
Less than \$30K	64	59	45	41
East	74	52	54	47
Midwest	74	49	44	42
South	66	50	45	36
West	71	47	46	33

There is a substantial political divide over the prospect of government aid to homeowners facing foreclosure. Two-thirds of liberal Democrats (67%) endorse this idea, as do solid majorities of moderate and conservative Democrats and independents (56% each). By contrast, only about a third of moderate and liberal Republicans (34%) and 30% of conservative Republicans say it is right for the government to help homeowners with mortgages they cannot afford. People with lower family incomes also are much more likely than the affluent to support government help for homeowners.

The Financial Bailout

While the percentage saying it is right for the government to spend billions to secure financial institutions has remained stable since mid-October, opposition has ticked up, from 37% to 43%. Notably, the program draws strong support from those with family incomes of \$100,000 or more; 59% of this group says the program is the right thing. Fewer than half in lower income categories endorse the program.

In addition a majority of liberal Democrats (56%) say it is the right thing for the government to invest billions to secure financial markets and institutions. About half of independents and conservative and moderate Democrats, and substantially fewer Republicans, agree.

Asked why they thought government efforts to boost the country's financial institutions and markets were the right thing to do, supporters noted that the alternatives were worse: Connections between the finance system and the rest of the economy meant that the failure of financial institutions would ripple through the country. As one person said, "If they crash, we all crash." "They don't have much choice," said another supporter of the government's efforts. "They have to do something. They have to at least try."

Opponents of the financial rescue say that people who created the crisis are benefiting, at the expense of the American people. "Let it crumble," advised one person who complained that those who allowed mismanagement got to "walk away with millions." Said another opponent of the bailout: "They're giving it to the wrong people. They need to be giving it to the individual taxpayers." Some opponents noted that the government's efforts violated free market principles.

Aid to Automakers

A proposal to spend billions in loans to keep the Big Three automakers afloat draws only modest public support. Fewer than half of conservative and moderate Democrats (47%) and liberal Democrats (45%) say this is the right thing for the government to do. Independents and Republicans are less supportive. While people in the East and Midwest are more supportive of helping the automakers than are those in other regions, just 47% of Easterners and 42% of Midwesterners endorse this idea.

Those who support loans for the automakers express concerns about the loss of jobs – at both the car companies and at other businesses – should the auto companies go out of business. "We need to keep the Big Three going because of the trickle-down effect of unemployment," said one supporter. Another person said it was the right thing for government to offer emergency loans to automakers "to save the pensions of those that gave their careers and to help those employees on the line – not executive bonuses or salaries."

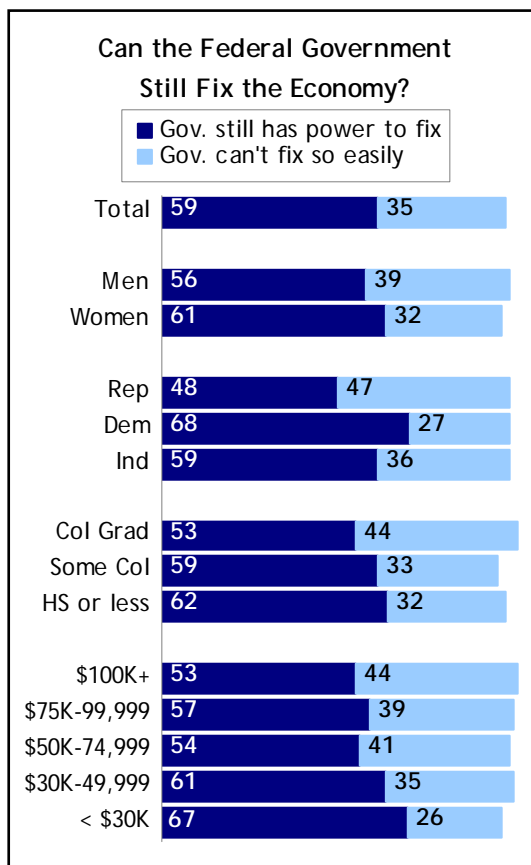
Some opponents of government help for the auto industry suggested that bankruptcy was a better route for Detroit. Others pointed to bad decisions by the automakers that made supporting them the wrong move: "They have done that to themselves with inferior products and poor management," said one person. Others were opposed to Washington intervention on principle: "Government should not be involved in private business," said one respondent.

Most Say Government Can Fix Economy

Almost six-in-ten (59%) say government still has the power to fix the economy, despite the United States being part of a global economy. That is virtually unchanged from early October, but somewhat lower than in July, when 68% said the government could fix the economy.

Democrats are far more likely to think that Washington can fix the economy than are Republicans, whose confidence in the federal government's economic abilities has been falling since last summer. In July, 65% of Republicans said they thought the federal government still had the power to fix the economy, a figure that dropped to 57% in October and to 48% now.

By comparison, almost seven-in-ten Democrats (68%) now say the government can still fix the economy. That is up slightly from early October (62%), but is lower than in July, when three-quarters of Democrats expressed this view.



Inherent American Optimism Unshaken

The public remains steadfastly confident in the ability of the American people to solve the nation's problems. Indeed, compared with two months ago slightly more now say that "As Americans, we can always find ways to solve our problems and get what we want" (68% today vs. 64% in October). Just 27% say that "this country can't solve many of its important problems."

Yet the public is not oblivious to some of the implications of the current economic situation. When asked to choose, a small majority of 53% now agrees that "people should learn to live with less," and just 40% think that "there are no real limits to growth in this country." This is a complete reversal of the pattern seen four years ago, when 51% saw no limits to growth.

In the midst of this tumultuous period in which the roles of government and business are undergoing scrutiny and possible revision, the public's basic orientations toward both have remained relatively unchanged. Americans are divided over whether regulation of business is needed to protect the public (47%) or does more harm than good (43%). At least in part, this reflects skepticism about both government competence and business practices. A small majority of 53% says government is almost always wasteful and inefficient. Somewhat more (58%) believe that business corporations make too much profit.

There is also little change in the public's view of government assistance. Currently, 55% say that the government should do more to help the needy even if it means going deeper into debt. Just 35% say the government can't afford to do much more to help the needy.

Public Still Confident, But Sees Limits to Growth			
	Dec 2004 %	Oct 2008 %	Dec 2008 %
<i>Which comes closer to your view?</i>			
As Americans, we can always find ways to solve problems	59	64	68
This country can't solve many important problems	36	29	27
Neither/Don't know	<u>5</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100	<u>5</u> 100
There are no real limits to growth in this country	51	41	40
People should learn to live with less	41	49	53
Neither/Don't know	<u>8</u> 100	<u>10</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100
Govt. reg. of business is needed to protect public interest	49	50	47
Gov't reg. of business usually does more harm than good	41	38	43
Neither/Don't know	<u>10</u> 100	<u>12</u> 100	<u>10</u> 100
Govt. is almost always wasteful and inefficient	47	57	53
Govt. often does a better job than it is credited for	45	35	40
Neither/Don't know	<u>8</u> 100	<u>8</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100
Business corporations make too much profit	53	59	58
Most corporations make a fair and reasonable profit	39	33	35
Neither/Don't know	<u>8</u> 100	<u>8</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100
Govt. should do more to help needy Americans even if it means going deeper into debt	57	51	55
The govt. can't afford to do much more to help the needy	33	37	35
Neither/Don't know	<u>10</u> 100	<u>12</u> 100	<u>10</u> 100

SECTION 4: OBAMA'S TRANSITION

Public reaction to President-elect Obama's transition thus far has been very positive. Large majorities approve of his choices for cabinet positions and other high level offices (71%) and the job he has done in explaining his policies and plans for the future (72% approve). More than six-in-ten (63%) say it is a good thing that many of his top advisors worked in the Clinton administration.

Most Americans also are satisfied with the ideological tenor of Obama's appointments: 68% say they are "about right," while 15% say they are too liberal and just 3% say they are too conservative. In particular, just 1% of liberal Democrats say Obama's choices are too conservative, despite grumbling among some activists on the left.

Surveys conducted during previous presidential transitions have generally found a favorable public reaction to the incoming president and his actions, but public response to Obama's appointments and speeches has been even more favorable than average. For example, 64% approved of President-elect Clinton's cabinet appointments during the transition in 1993, and 58% approved of George W. Bush's appointments during the same transition period eight years later. A 56% majority said that it was a good thing that many of Bush's top advisors had served in his father's administration. Obama's ratings on all of these questions are significantly higher.

Positive Views of Obama's Transition				
	Bush Sr.	Clinton	GW Bush	Obama
<i>Explanation of his policies*</i>	1989	1993	2001	2008
	%	%	%	%
Approve	65	62	50	72
Disapprove	28	24	36	18
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>His cabinet choices**</i>				
Approve	59	64	58	71
Disapprove	15	15	16	17
Don't know	<u>26</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>12</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Many top advisors from Bush Sr./Clinton admin.</i>				
Good thing	--	--	56	63
Bad thing	--	--	29	22
Neither/Don't know	--	--	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>
			100	100
<i>His cabinet choices</i>				
Too moderate/liberal***	--	--	7	15
Too conservative	--	--	21	3
About right	--	--	50	68
Don't know	--	--	<u>22</u>	<u>14</u>
			100	100

*1989 figures are from Gallup.
 **1989 figures are from ABC News; 1993 figures are from U.S. News & World Report.
 ***In 2001 the question asked if Bush's choices were "too conservative, too moderate or about right." In 2008 the question asked if Obama's choices were "too liberal, too conservative or about right."

Obama is getting less laudatory marks – though on balance, still positive – for his explanation of how he would handle current problems with financial institutions and markets. Overall, 57% give him an excellent (19%) or good (38%) rating on this, but 21% say he has done only a fair job and 12% rate his explanations as poor. At the height of the presidential campaign in October, registered voters were evenly divided about the job Obama was doing in explaining

how he would handle problems with financial institutions (48% excellent/good vs. 47% only fair/poor).

Partisan Reactions to Transition

On balance, more Republicans approve of Obama's cabinet choices than disapprove (45% vs. 41%). Democrats and independents offer overwhelmingly positive opinions of Obama's cabinet selections (89% and 75% approve, respectively).

In January 2001, George W. Bush's cabinet choices received about the same approval rating from Democrats (44%) as Obama's selections currently receive from Republicans. Bush's selections received lower marks from independents (58%) than Obama's today.

Notably, a plurality of Republicans (47%) say that Obama's choices are about right ideologically; 35% say they are too liberal, while very few (2%) say they are too conservative. In January 2001, just a third of Democrats said Bush's picks were about right, although as with overall approval of the selections, a relatively large proportion of Democrats (26%) offered no opinion.

Republicans are less positive about Obama's use of Clinton-era advisors, with just 34% saying it's a good thing Obama is relying on so many of them and 49% saying it's a bad thing. Bush's use of advisors from his father's administration evoked a similar pattern of reactions among Democrats in January 2001.

Reactions to Transition				
	All	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
<i>Obama cabinet choices</i>				
Approve	71	45	89	75
Disapprove	17	41	4	13
Don't know	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>12</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Cabinet choices are ...</i>				
Too liberal	15	35	4	13
Too conservative	3	2	1	5
About right	68	47	86	67
Don't know	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>15</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Many top advisors from Clinton administration</i>				
Good thing	63	34	84	64
Bad thing	22	49	7	20
Neither/Don't know	<u>15</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>16</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Explanation of his policies</i>				
Approve	72	45	92	76
Disapprove	18	41	3	15
Don't know	<u>10</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Explaining how he will handle financial problems</i>				
Excellent	19	7	30	16
Good	38	21	49	37
Only fair	21	34	12	25
Poor	12	27	4	11
Don't know	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,489 adults, 18 years of age or older, from December 3-7, 2008 (1,126 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 363 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 138 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2007 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2007 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 sample.

The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,489	3.0 percentage points
Form 1 sample	766	4.0 percentage points
Form 2 sample	723	4.5 percentage points

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ABOUT THE CENTER

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

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

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

Andrew Kohut, Director
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
Michael Remez, Senior Writer
Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian, Jocelyn Kiley and Neha Sahgal, Research Associates
Kathleen Holzward and Alec Tyson, Research Analysts

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
DECEMBER 2008 POLITICAL & ECONOMIC SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
December 3-7, 2008
N=1,489

ROTATE Q.1 WITH Q.2/2a

ASK ALL:

Q.1 All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?

	Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	No <u>Opinion</u>		Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	No <u>Opinion</u>
December, 2008	13	83	4=100	Early September, 2001	41	53	6=100
Early October, 2008	11	86	3=100	June, 2001	43	52	5=100
Mid-September, 2008	25	69	6=100	March, 2001	47	45	8=100
August, 2008	21	74	5=100	February, 2001	46	43	11=100
July, 2008	19	74	7=100	January, 2001	55	41	4=100
June, 2008	19	76	5=100	October, 2000 (RVs)	54	39	7=100
Late May, 2008	18	76	6=100	September, 2000	51	41	8=100
March, 2008	22	72	6=100	June, 2000	47	45	8=100
Early February, 2008	24	70	6=100	April, 2000	48	43	9=100
Late December, 2007	27	66	7=100	August, 1999	56	39	5=100
October, 2007	28	66	6=100	January, 1999	53	41	6=100
February, 2007	30	61	9=100	November, 1998	46	44	10=100
Mid-January, 2007	32	61	7=100	Early September, 1998	54	42	4=100
Early January, 2007	30	63	7=100	Late August, 1998	55	41	4=100
December, 2006	28	65	7=100	Early August, 1998	50	44	6=100
Mid-November, 2006	28	64	8=100	February, 1998	59	37	4=100
Early October, 2006	30	63	7=100	January, 1998	46	50	4=100
July, 2006	30	65	5=100	September, 1997	45	49	6=100
May, 2006	29	65	6=100	August, 1997	49	46	5=100
March, 2006	32	63	5=100	January, 1997	38	58	4=100
January, 2006	34	61	5=100	July, 1996	29	67	4=100
Late November, 2005	34	59	7=100	March, 1996	28	70	2=100
Early October, 2005	29	65	6=100	October, 1995	23	73	4=100
July, 2005	35	58	7=100	June, 1995	25	73	2=100
Late May, 2005	39	57	4=100	April, 1995	23	74	3=100
February, 2005	38	56	6=100	July, 1994	24	73	3=100
January, 2005	40	54	6=100	March, 1994	24	71	5=100
December, 2004	39	54	7=100	October, 1993	22	73	5=100
Mid-October, 2004	36	58	6=100	September, 1993	20	75	5=100
July, 2004	38	55	7=100	May, 1993	22	71	7=100
May, 2004	33	61	6=100	January, 1993	39	50	11=100
Late February, 2004	39	55	6=100	January, 1992	28	68	4=100
Early January, 2004	45	48	7=100	November, 1991	34	61	5=100
December, 2003	44	47	9=100	Late February, 1991 (Gallup)	66	31	3=100
October, 2003	38	56	6=100	August, 1990	47	48	5=100
August, 2003	40	53	7=100	May, 1990	41	54	5=100
April 8, 2003	50	41	9=100	January, 1989	45	50	5=100
January, 2003	44	50	6=100	September, 1988 (RVs)	50	45	5=100
November, 2002	41	48	11=100	May, 1988	41	54	5=100
September, 2002	41	55	4=100	January, 1988	39	55	6=100
Late August, 2002	47	44	9=100				
May, 2002	44	44	12=100				
March, 2002	50	40	10=100				
Late September, 2001	57	34	9=100				

ROTATE Q.1 WITH Q.2/2a

ASK ALL:

Q.2 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	App-rove	Dis-approve	Don't know		App-rove	Dis-approve	Don't know
December, 2008	24	68	8=100	December, 2004	48	44	8=100
Late October, 2008	22	70	8=100	Mid-October, 2004	44	48	8=100
Early October, 2008	25	67	8=100	August, 2004	46	45	9=100
August, 2008	28	66	6=100	July, 2004	46	46	8=100
July, 2008	27	68	5=100	June, 2004	48	43	9=100
April, 2008	27	65	8=100	May, 2004	44	48	8=100
March, 2008	28	63	9=100	Late April, 2004	48	43	9=100
Late February, 2008	33	59	8=100	Early April, 2004	43	47	10=100
Early February, 2008	31	62	7=100	Late March, 2004	47	44	9=100
January, 2008	31	59	10=100	Mid-March, 2004	46	47	7=100
Late December, 2007	31	60	9=100	February, 2004	48	44	8=100
November, 2007	30	59	11=100	Mid-January, 2004	56	34	10=100
October, 2007	30	63	7=100	Early January, 2004	58	35	7=100
September, 2007	31	59	10=100	December, 2003	57	34	9=100
August, 2007	31	59	10=100	November, 2003	50	40	10=100
July, 2007	29	61	10=100	October, 2003	50	42	8=100
June, 2007	29	61	10=100	September, 2003	55	36	9=100
April, 2007	35	57	8=100	Mid-August, 2003	56	32	12=100
March, 2007	33	58	9=100	Early August, 2003	53	37	10=100
February, 2007	33	56	11=100	Mid-July, 2003	58	32	10=100
Mid-January, 2007	33	59	8=100	Early July, 2003	60	29	11=100
Early January, 2007	33	57	10=100	June, 2003	62	27	11=100
December, 2006	32	57	11=100	May, 2003	65	27	8=100
Mid-November, 2006	32	58	10=100	<i>April 10-16, 2003</i>	72	22	6=100
Early October, 2006	37	53	10=100	<i>April 9, 2003</i>	74	20	6=100
September, 2006	37	53	10=100	<i>April 2-7, 2003</i>	69	25	6=100
August, 2006	37	54	9=100	<i>March 28-April 1, 2003</i>	71	23	6=100
July, 2006	36	57	7=100	<i>March 25-27, 2003</i>	70	24	6=100
June, 2006	36	54	10=100	<i>March 20-24, 2003</i>	67	26	7=100
April, 2006	33	56	11=100	March 13-16, 2003	55	34	11=100
Early April, 2006	35	55	10=100	February, 2003	54	36	10=100
March, 2006	33	57	10=100	January, 2003	58	32	10=100
February, 2006	40	52	8=100	December, 2002	61	28	11=100
January, 2006	38	54	8=100	Late October, 2002	59	29	12=100
December, 2005	38	54	8=100	Early October, 2002	61	30	9=100
Early November, 2005	36	55	9=100	Mid-September, 2002	67	22	11=100
Late October, 2005	40	52	8=100	Early September, 2002	63	26	11=100
Early October, 2005	38	56	6=100	Late August, 2002	60	27	13=100
September 8-11, 2005	40	52	8=100	August, 2002	67	21	12=100
September 6-7, 2005	40	52	8=100	Late July, 2002	65	25	10=100
July, 2005	44	48	8=100	July, 2002	67	21	12=100
June, 2005	42	49	9=100	June, 2002	70	20	10=100
Late May, 2005	42	48	10=100	April, 2002	69	18	13=100
Mid-May, 2005	43	50	7=100	Early April, 2002	74	16	10=100
Late March, 2005	49	46	5=100	February, 2002	78	13	9=100
Mid-March, 2005	45	46	9=100	January, 2002	80	11	9=100
February, 2005	46	47	7=100	Mid-November, 2001	84	9	7=100
January, 2005	50	43	7=100	Early October, 2001	84	8	8=100

Q.2 CONTINUED ...

	App-rove	Dis-approve	Don't know
Late September, 2001	86	7	7=100
Mid-September, 2001	80	9	11=100
Early September, 2001	51	34	15=100
August, 2001	50	32	18=100
July, 2001	51	32	17=100
June, 2001	50	33	17=100
May, 2001	53	32	15=100
April, 2001	56	27	17=100
March, 2001	55	25	20=100
February, 2001	53	21	26=100

QUESTION 2a HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 3-7

QUESTIONS 8 THROUGH 14 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Q.15 I'm going to read you some pairs of statements, tell me whether the **FIRST** statement or the **SECOND** statement comes closer to your own views — even if neither is exactly right. The first pair is... **(READ AND RANDOMIZE; READ OPTIONS IN ORDER) (AFTER CHOICE IS MADE, PROBE: Do you feel STRONGLY about that, or not?)**

		Early														
		Oct 08	Dec 04	Jun 03	Jul 02	Feb 02	Sep 00	Aug 99	Oct 97	Jun 97	Oct 96	Apr 96	Oct 95	Apr 95	Oct 94	Jul 94
a.	53	Government is almost always wasteful and inefficient														
	46	57	47	48	--	--	52	51	--	59	56	--	63	63	64	66
	7	50	38	38	--	--	43	41	--	49	48	--	53	51	54	54
		7	9	10	--	--	9	10	--	10	8	--	10	12	10	12
	40	Government often does a better job than people give it credit for														
	27	35	45	46	--	--	40	43	--	36	39	--	34	34	32	31
	13	25	28	28	--	--	27	28	--	23	25	--	20	19	19	17
	7	10	17	18	--	--	13	15	--	13	14	--	14	15	13	14
	100	8	8	6	--	--	8	6	--	5	5	--	3	3	4	3
		100	100	100			100	100		100	100		100	100	100	100

		Early														
		Oct 08	Dec 04	Jun 03	Jul 02	Feb 02	Sep 00	Aug 99	Oct 97	Jun 97	Oct 96	Apr 96	Oct 95	Apr 95	Oct 94	Jul 94
b.	47	Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest														
	35	50	49	--	54	50	--	48	--	--	45	--	45	43	38	41
	12	38	32	--	39	35	--	32	--	--	29	--	28	25	24	24
		12	17	--	15	15	--	16	--	--	16	--	17	18	14	17
	43	Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good														
	36	38	41	--	36	41	--	44	--	--	46	--	50	51	55	54
	7	31	30	--	27	31	--	32	--	--	33	--	37	38	41	39
	10	7	11	--	9	10	--	12	--	--	13	--	13	13	14	15
	100	12	10	--	10	9	--	8	--	--	9	--	5	6	7	5
		100	100		100	100		100			100		100	100	100	100

Q.15 CONTINUED...

		Early														
		Oct	Dec	Jun	Jul	Feb	Sep	Aug	Oct	Jun	Oct	Apr	Oct	Apr	Oct	Jul
		<u>08</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>00</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>94</u>
c.	The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt	51	57	--	--	--	--	57	--	--	46	49	47	46	50	48
55	Strongly	42	46	--	--	--	--	44	--	--	36	42	35	33	39	35
	Not Strongly	9	11	--	--	--	--	13	--	--	10	7	12	13	11	13
	The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy	37	33	--	--	--	--	35	--	--	44	44	47	47	43	47
35	Strongly	28	22	--	--	--	--	23	--	--	31	34	31	34	31	32
	Not Strongly	9	11	--	--	--	--	12	--	--	13	10	16	13	12	15
	Neither/Don't know (VOL.)	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>	--	--	--	--	<u>8</u>	--	--	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>10</u>		100	100					100			100	100	100	100	100	100

NO ITEM d.

		Early														
		Oct	Dec	Jun	Jul	Feb	Sep	Aug	Oct	Jun	Oct	Apr	Oct	Apr	Oct	Jul
		<u>08</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>00</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>94</u>
e.	Business corporations make too much profit	59	53	51	58	54	54	52	--	51	51	--	53	51	50	52
58	Strongly	52	46	43	51	44	46	42	--	43	43	--	44	42	40	43
	Not Strongly	7	7	8	7	10	8	10	--	8	8	--	9	9	10	9
	Most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit	33	39	42	33	39	38	42	--	43	42	--	43	44	44	43
35	Strongly	23	25	27	22	24	28	29	--	28	27	--	27	26	28	27
	Not Strongly	10	14	15	11	15	10	13	--	15	15	--	16	18	16	16
	Neither/Don't know (VOL.)	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	--	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	--	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>7</u>		100	100	100	100	100	100	100		100	100		100	100	100	100

		Early														
		Oct	Dec	Jun	Jul	Feb	Sep	Aug	Oct	Jun	Oct	Apr	Oct	Apr	Oct	Jul
		<u>08</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>00</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>94</u>
f.	There are no real limits to growth in this country today	41	51	--	--	--	--	54	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	51
40	Strongly	31	36	--	--	--	--	38	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	33
	Not Strongly	10	15	--	--	--	--	16	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	18
	People in this country should learn to live with less	49	41	--	--	--	--	40	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	45
53	Strongly	41	30	--	--	--	--	30	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	30
	Not Strongly	8	11	--	--	--	--	9	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15
	Neither/Don't know (VOL.)	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	--	--	--	--	<u>6</u>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	<u>4</u>
<u>7</u>		100	100					100								100

Q.15 CONTINUED...

		Early														
		Oct	Dec	Jun	Jul	Feb	Sep	Aug	Oct	Jun	Oct	Apr	Oct	Apr	Oct	Jul
		<u>08</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>00</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>94</u>
g.	As Americans, we can always find ways to solve our problems and get what we want	64	59	--	--	--	59	63	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	52
68	Strongly	56	45	--	--	--	46	47	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	35
	Not Strongly	8	14	--	--	--	13	16	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	17
	This country can't solve many of its important problems	29	36	--	--	--	36	32	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	45
27	Strongly	25	27	--	--	--	29	24	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	30
	Not Strongly	4	9	--	--	--	7	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15
	Neither/Don't know (VOL.)	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	--	--	--	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	<u>3</u>
<u>5</u>		100	100				100	100								100

QUESTIONS 16 AND 17 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTION 18

ASK ALL:

ROTATE Q.19-Q.21/Q.22-Q.23 IN BLOCKS

Thinking now about the nation's economy...

Q.19 How would you rate economic conditions in this country today... as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	(VOL.)				
	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	Don't know/Refused
December, 2008	*	7	33	59	1=100
November, 2008	1	6	28	64	1=100
Late October, 2008	*	7	25	67	1=100
Early October, 2008	1	8	32	58	1=100
Late September, 2008	*	7	27	65	1=100
July, 2008	1	9	39	50	1=100
April, 2008	1	10	33	56	*=100
March, 2008	1	10	32	56	1=100
Early February, 2008	1	16	36	45	2=100
January, 2008	3	23	45	28	1=100
November, 2007	3	20	44	32	1=100
September, 2007	3	23	43	29	2=100
June, 2007	6	27	40	25	2=100
February, 2007	5	26	45	23	1=100
December, 2006	6	32	41	19	2=100
Early November, 2006 (RVs)	9	35	37	17	2=100
Late October, 2006	6	27	40	25	2=100
September, 2006	5	32	41	20	2=100
March, 2006	4	29	44	22	1=100
January, 2006	4	30	45	19	2=100
Early October, 2005	2	23	45	29	1=100
Mid-September, 2005	3	28	44	24	1=100
Mid-May, 2005	3	29	47	20	1=100
January, 2005	3	36	45	15	1=100
December, 2004	3	33	43	20	1=100
Early November, 2004 (RVs)	5	31	37	26	1=100
Mid-September, 2004	4	34	40	20	2=100
August, 2004	3	30	45	21	1=100

Q.19 CONTINUED...

	(VOL.)				
			Only	Don't know/	
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Refused</u>
Late April, 2004	4	34	38	22	2=100
Late February, 2004 ¹	2	29	42	26	1=100

ASK IF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ONLY FAIR OR POOR (3,4 IN Q.19):

Q.19a Do you think the U.S. economy is just having a few problems, is in a recession, or is in a depression?

		Nov	Late	Early	Late	July	March
		<u>2008</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2008</u>
7	Excellent/Good	7	7	9	7	10	11
92	Only fair/Poor	92	92	90	92	89	88
6	Just having a few problems	11	12	11	12	14	14
64	In a recession	58	58	54	56	54	56
20	In a depression	18	19	22	21	18	15
2	Don't know/refused (VOL.)	5	3	3	3	3	3
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100

NO QUESTION 20

ASK ALL:

Q.21 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?

	(VOL.)			
				Don't Know/
	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Refused</u>
December, 2008	43	17	36	4=100
Early October, 2008	46	16	30	8=100
July, 2008	30	21	41	8=100
March, 2008	33	22	39	6=100
January, 2008	20	26	48	6=100
September, 2007	19	23	53	5=100
June, 2007	16	24	55	5=100
February, 2007	17	20	58	5=100
December, 2006	22	18	56	4=100
September, 2006	16	25	55	4=100
January, 2006	20	22	55	3=100
Early October, 2005	20	32	45	3=100
Mid-September, 2005	18	37	43	2=100
Mid-May, 2005	18	24	55	3=100
January, 2005	27	18	52	3=100
August, 2004	36	9	47	8=100
Late February, 2004	39	12	41	8=100
September, 2003	37	17	43	3=100
May, 2003	43	19	35	3=100
Late March, 2003	33	23	37	7=100
January, 2003	30	20	44	6=100
January, 2002	44	17	36	3=100
January, 2001 <i>Newsweek</i>	18	33	44	5=100

¹ Earlier trends available from Gallup.

Q.21 CONTINUED...

	(VOL.)			
	Don't Know/			
	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Refused</u>
June, 2000	15	24	55	6=100
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	16	22	57	5=100
Early September, 1998	18	17	61	4=100
May, 1990	18	31	45	6=100
February, 1989	25	22	49	4=100
September, 1988 (RVs)	24	16	51	9=100
May, 1988	24	20	46	10=100
January, 1988	22	26	45	7=100
January, 1984 <i>Newsweek</i> (RVs)	35	13	49	3=100

ASK ALL:

ROTATE Q.19-Q.21/Q.22-Q.23 IN BLOCKS

Now thinking about your own personal finances...

Q.22 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?

	(VOL.)				
	Don't Know/				
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Refused</u>
December, 2008	6	32	40	21	1=100
Early October, 2008	6	35	40	18	1=100
July, 2008	9	33	37	19	2=100
April, 2008	8	35	39	16	2=100
March, 2008	8	39	34	17	2=100
Early February, 2008	9	36	37	16	2=100
January, 2008	10	39	34	15	2=100
November, 2007	9	41	34	15	1=100
September, 2007	10	38	34	16	2=100
February, 2007	8	41	36	14	1=100
December, 2006	8	40	35	16	1=100
Late October, 2006	9	40	33	16	2=100
March, 2006	9	39	36	15	1=100
January, 2006	7	39	37	15	2=100
Mid-May, 2005	7	37	39	16	1=100
January, 2005	10	41	34	14	1=100
August, 2004	9	42	34	14	1=100
September, 2003	10	38	36	15	1=100
Late March, 2003	10	43	31	12	4=100
January, 2003	7	38	39	15	1=100
Early October, 2002	7	39	37	16	1=100
June, 2002	5	40	37	16	2=100
Late September, 2001	7	40	37	14	2=100
June, 2001	6	38	39	16	1=100
June, 2000	9	43	35	11	2=100
August, 1999	6	43	41	9	1=100
May, 1997	7	43	38	11	1=100
September, 1996 (RVs)	8	47	34	10	1=100
February, 1995	8	39	38	14	1=100
March, 1994	5	41	40	13	1=100
December, 1993	5	34	45	15	1=100
January, 1993 <i>U.S. News</i>	4	33	46	16	1=100
October, 1992 <i>U.S. News</i>	6	34	40	19	1=100
August, 1992 <i>U.S. News</i>	5	30	47	17	1=100

Q.22 CONTINUED...

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Refused</u>
May, 1992 <i>U.S. News</i>	4	35	45	15	1=100
January, 1992 <i>U.S. News</i>	4	32	45	18	1=100

ASK ALL:

Q.23 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?

	<u>Improve a lot</u>	<u>Improve some</u>	<u>Get a little worse</u>	<u>Get a lot worse</u>	<u>Stay the same</u>	<u>Refused</u>
December, 2008	7	49	21	6	13	4=100
Early October, 2008	8	51	20	6	9	6=100
July, 2008	7	44	21	7	14	7=100
March, 2008	10	45	20	7	13	5=100
January, 2008	11	49	16	6	14	4=100
September, 2007	10	52	14	4	16	4=100
February, 2007	11	52	12	3	19	3=100
December, 2006	10	57	13	3	14	3=100
January, 2006	10	51	14	5	16	4=100
Mid-May, 2005	10	51	15	5	15	4=100
January, 2005	10	54	14	4	15	3=100
August, 2004	13	57	9	3	12	6=100
September, 2003	11	53	15	4	14	3=100
Late March, 2003	12	51	15	4	11	7=100
January, 2003	9	51	18	5	13	4=100
Early October, 2002	10	54	13	5	12	6=100
June, 2002	11	55	15	4	11	4=100
January, 2002	12	53	15	5	11	4=100
Late September, 2001	9	46	16	4	17	8=100
June, 2001	11	52	15	4	14	4=100
January, 2001	11	46	18	9	12	4=100
January, 1999	17	55	7	3	14	4=100
May, 1997	12	56	10	2	17	3=100
February, 1995	11	53	13	3	17	3=100
March, 1994	10	57	11	3	16	3=100
October, 1992 <i>U.S. News</i>	9	51	14	3	15	8=100
August, 1992 <i>U.S. News</i>	6	50	20	5	14	5=100
May, 1992 <i>U.S. News</i>	8	49	22	4	13	4=100
January, 1992 <i>U.S. News</i>	9	46	19	5	16	5=100

ASK ALL:

Q.24 Compared with others around the country, do you think current economic conditions are hurting you more, less, or about the same as most others?

19	More
22	Less
56	About the same
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=766]:

Q.25 Next, I'd like to ask you a few questions about what you think will happen in the next year. First, do you think [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] will increase, decrease or stay about the same? How about [NEXT ITEM]?

		(VOL.)			
		Increase	Decrease	Stay About the Same	Don't Know/ Refused
a.F1	Unemployment				
	December, 2008	63	17	18	2=100
	February, 1989	32	20	43	5=100
b.F1	Inflation				
	December, 2008	47	11	37	5=100
	February, 1989	64	6	26	4=100
c.F1	Taxes				
	December, 2008	55	10	32	3=100
	February, 1989	76	3	19	2=100
d.F1	Interest rates				
	December, 2008	31	32	32	5=100
	February, 1989	67	7	21	5=100

NO QUESTIONS 26-28

ASK ALL:

Q.29 In considering the financial difficulties of major banks and financial institutions, do you feel that it is a bad situation but the worst is behind us, or do you think the problem may get worse in the future?

32 Worst is behind us
 62 Problem will get worse in the future
6 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
 100

TREND FOR COMPARISON:

In considering the financial difficulties of the savings and loans institutions, do you feel that it is a bad situation but the worst is behind us, or do you think the problem may get worse in the future?

	May <u>1990</u>	Feb <u>1989</u>
Worst is behind us	28	23
Problem will get worse in the future	59	64
Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>13</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100

ASK ALL:

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

50 Full-time
 13 Part-time
 37 Not employed
* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
 100

IF NOT FULL TIME (2-9 IN EMPLOY) [N=796]:

RETIRE	Are you currently retired?	
40	Yes	
4	Yes, semi-retired or "still do some type of work" (VOL.)	
56	No	
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	
<u>100</u>		

ASK ALL:

Q.30 Over the past 12 months, has there been a time when you or someone in your household has been without a job and looking for work, or not?

		Early Feb	May
		<u>2008</u>	<u>2005</u>
35	Yes	28	31
65	No	71	69
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>
<u>100</u>		100	100

ASK OF EMPLOYED ONLY (1 or 2 in EMPLOY) [N=881]:

Q.31 How would you rate the financial condition of the company or organization that employs you? Would you say it is in excellent financial shape, good shape, only fair shape or in poor shape?

		Early	Early		--- U.S. News & World Report ---			
		Oct	Feb	June	Oct	Aug	May	Jan
		<u>2008</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1992</u>
20	Excellent shape	22	30	31	27	23	25	22
43	Good shape	44	39	39	38	40	40	39
27	Only fair shape	25	21	20	23	26	22	24
8	Poor shape	5	6	7	10	9	11	12
1	Does not apply (VOL.)	2	2	2	--	--	--	--
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

ASK ALL:

Q.32 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?

			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
		Plenty of	Jobs are	Lots of some jobs,
		<u>jobs available</u>	<u>difficult to find</u>	<u>few of others</u>
				<u>DK/</u>
				<u>Refused</u>
December, 2008		19	73	4=100
Early October, 2008		25	64	7=100
July, 2008		31	58	7=100
April, 2008		30	61	5=100
Early February, 2008		34	53	8=100
November, 2007		41	48	7=100
September, 2007		36	50	8=100
June, 2007		39	49	7=100
February, 2007		39	48	7=100
December, 2006		40	49	6=100
March, 2006		37	56	4=100
January, 2006		33	56	5=100
Early October, 2005		36	56	4=100
May, 2005		30	60	4=100

Q.32 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.) DK/ <u>Refused</u>
January, 2005	32	58	5	5=100
Mid-September, 2004	31	52	6	11=100
August, 2004	34	55	4	7=100
Late April, 2004	30	57	4	9=100
Late February, 2004	31	59	5	6=100
Mid-January, 2004	27	60	6	7=100
October, 2003	24	66	5	5=100
June, 2002	31	59	4	6=100
June, 2001	42	44	8	6=100
August, 1992 <i>U.S. News & World Report</i>	15	76	6	3=100
May, 1992 <i>U.S. News & World Report</i>	16	77	4	3=100
January, 1992 <i>U.S. News & World Report</i>	12	79	6	3=100

ASK IF EMPLOYED FULL OR PART TIME (1,2 IN EMPLOY) [N=881]:

Q.33 And what about the job opportunities available to you? Do you think there are plenty of jobs in your line of work available in your community, or are jobs in your line of work difficult to find?

		Early Feb <u>2008</u>	<i>U.S. News & World Report</i> May <u>1992</u>
38	Plenty of jobs available	48	32
56	Jobs are difficult to find	46	63
2	Lots of some jobs, few of others (VOL.)	3	2
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
100		100	100

NO QUESTIONS 34-35

ASK ALL:

Q.36 What's your impression about the real estate market in your area? Over the past year, have home prices in your area gone up a lot, gone up a little, gone down a little, or gone down a lot?

		Early Oct <u>2008</u>	July <u>2008</u>	Early Feb <u>2008</u>	Sept <u>2007</u>
11	Gone up a lot	19	20	28	28
11	Gone up a little	14	13	18	22
33	Gone down a little	29	32	23	25
34	Gone down a lot	25	24	18	15
5	Stayed about the same (VOL.)	4	5	3	3
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
100		100	100	100	100

NO QUESTIONS 37-38

ASK ALL:

Q.39 In general, how easy is it for you to afford the things in life that you want — very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult?

		Early Oct <u>2008</u>	Early Feb <u>2008</u>	June June <u>2002</u>	June June <u>2001</u>	<i>U.S. News & World Report</i> Jan <u>1992</u>
6	Very Easy	8	9	5	7	4
37	Easy	41	43	44	43	35
40	Difficult	37	33	37	36	46
15	Very Difficult	11	12	11	12	12
<u>2</u>	Don't Know/Ref (VOL.)	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

ASK ALL:

Q.40 How easy or difficult is it for you and your family to afford [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] – very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult? How about [NEXT ITEM]?²

		Very <u>easy</u>	<u>Easy</u>	<u>Difficult</u>	Very <u>difficult</u>	<u>N/A</u>	(VOL.) Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
a.	Food						
		December, 2008	9	60	25	4	* 2=100
		July, 2008	10	50	30	8	* 2=100
		Early February, 2008	14	57	22	5	* 2=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	August, 1992	11	65	18	5	* 1=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	May, 1992	12	66	18	3	* 1=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	January, 1992	7	68	21	3	* 1=100
b.	Health care						
		December, 2008	7	44	29	16	1 3=100
		July, 2008	9	40	30	16	2 3=100
		Early February, 2008	11	39	29	16	3 2=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	August, 1992	7	39	32	19	2 1=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	May, 1992	10	42	29	15	3 1=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	January, 1992	6	43	29	16	4 2=100
c.	Taxes						
		December, 2008	3	38	41	11	3 4=100
		July, 2008	5	35	40	12	3 5=100
		Early February, 2008	6	36	37	14	3 4=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	August 1992	3	32	43	17	3 2=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	May 1992	4	30	46	15	3 2=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	January 1992	2	33	45	13	4 3=100
d.	Savings for retirement						
		December, 2008	2	23	39	25	8 3=100
		July, 2008	5	23	37	22	10 3=100
		Early February, 2008	5	28	34	22	8 3=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	August 1992	3	22	36	29	9 1=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	May 1992	2	21	38	24	13 2=100
	<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	January 1992	2	22	37	23	14 2=100

²

In 1992, the question was worded: "How easy is it for you and your family to afford" the items.

Q.40 CONTINUED...

		Very <u>easy</u>	<u>Easy</u>	<u>Difficult</u>	Very <u>difficult</u>	<u>N/A</u>	(VOL.) Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
e.	Your home heating and electric bills ³						
	December, 2008	7	46	32	10	2	3=100
	July, 2008	6	41	38	11	1	3=100
	Early February, 2008	8	44	33	11	2	2=100
<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	August 1992	7	54	29	8	1	1=100
<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	May 1992	9	54	28	6	1	2=100
<i>U.S. News & World Report:</i>	January 1992	4	55	31	7	1	2=100
f.	Gasoline						
	December, 2008	10	57	21	6	5	1=100
	July, 2008	4	23	42	26	3	2=100
	Early February, 2008	5	30	38	22	3	2=100

NO QUESTIONS 41-45

ASK ALL:

Q.46 Some people think that the federal government cannot fix the economy so easily these days because the U.S. is part of a global economy. Others believe that the government still has the power to fix the economy. Which of these comes closer to your view?

		Early Oct <u>2008</u>	July <u>2008</u>
35	The government can't fix it so easily	37	26
59	The government still has the power to fix it	56	68
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>
100		100	100

ASK ALL:

Q.47 As you think about your OWN financial situation, which of the following economic issues worries you MOST right now? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]

		Early Oct <u>2008</u>	March <u>2008</u>
31	Rising prices	38	49
29	Problems in the financial markets	31	14
26	The job situation	18	19
9	Declining real estate values	8	12
1	Other (VOL.)	2	2
2	None / not worried about any (VOL.)	1	2
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
100		100	100

NO QUESTIONS 48-49

³ In 1992, category was "Heating oil, gas and electric."

ASK ALL:

Q.50 As you may know, the government is investing billions of dollars to try to keep financial institutions and markets secure. Do you think this is the right thing or the wrong thing for the government to be doing?

		-NII-		-NII-	
		Nov 14-17	Mid Oct	Late Sept	Sept 19-22
		<u>2008</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2008⁴</u>	<u>2008</u>
47	Right thing	40	47	45	57
43	Wrong thing	43	37	38	30
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>13</u>
100		100	100	100	100

**ASKED OF FIRST-NIGHT RESPONDENTS ONLY; RESULTS USED FOR QUALITATIVE PURPOSES
ASK FORM 1 ONLY IF ANSWER GIVEN (1,2 IN Q.50F1):**

Q.51F1 What's the main reason you think this is the [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q.50F1] to do? [OPEN END; DO NOT PROBE FOR MULTIPLE RESPONSES]

Q.51F1 RESULTS NOT SHOWN; USED FOR QUALITATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

NO QUESTION 52

ASK ALL:

Q.53 As you may know, the government is considering several other proposals to address economic problems facing the nation. Do you think it is the right thing or the wrong thing for the government to spend billions of dollars [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]?

		Right	Wrong	(VOL.) Don't Know/ Refused
		<u>thing</u>	<u>thing</u>	<u>Refused</u>
a.	To substantially increase spending on roads, bridges, and other public works projects	70	24	6=100
b.	To help homeowners facing foreclosure on mortgages they cannot afford	49	43	8=100
c.	In loans to General Motors, Ford and Chrysler to keep them in business	39	54	7=100

**ASKED OF FIRST NIGHT RESPONDENTS ONLY; RESULTS USED FOR QUALITATIVE PURPOSES
ASK FORM 2 ONLY IF ANSWER GIVEN (1,2 IN Q.53c):**

Q.54F2 Thinking about the government giving loans to General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, what's the main reason you think this is the [INSERT ANSWER FROM Q.53c] to do? [OPEN END; DO NOT PROBE FOR MULTIPLE RESPONSES]

Q.54F2 RESULTS NOT SHOWN; USED FOR QUALITATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

NO QUESTIONS 55-57

⁴ In Late September 2008 and in the Sept. 19-22 *News Interest Index* the question was worded, "As you may know, the government is potentially investing billions to try to keep financial institutions and markets secure. Do you think this is the right thing or the wrong thing for the government to be doing?" In Late September 2008, an experiment testing the word "committing" instead of "investing" showed no difference in the results. Results for the two versions have been combined.

On another subject...

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=766]:

Q.58F1 Do you approve or disapprove of the job President-elect Obama has done so far in explaining his policies and plans for the future to the American people?

		Bush	Clinton	<i>Gallup</i> Bush
		Jan	Jan	March
		<u>2001</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1989</u>
72	Approve	50	62	65
18	Disapprove	36	24	28
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>7</u>
100		100	100	100

NO QUESTION 59

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=766]:

Q.60F1 So far, would you say you approve or disapprove of Barack Obama's cabinet choices and other high level appointments?

		<i>U.S. News & World Report</i>		TREND FOR COMPARISON		
		Bush	Clinton	<i>ABC</i> Bush	<i>Harris</i> Reagan	
		Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	
		<u>2001</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1981⁵</u>	
71	Approve	58	64	59	52	<i>Excellent/Good</i>
17	Disapprove	16	15	15	34	<i>Only fair/Poor</i>
<u>12</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>26</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>14</u>	<i>Don't know</i>
100		100	100	100	100	

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=723]:

Q.61F2 Do you think Barack Obama has done an excellent, good, only fair, or poor job of explaining how he would handle the current problems with financial institutions and markets?

		RVs
		<u>Early Oct 2008</u>
19	Excellent	13
38	Good	35
21	Only fair	31
12	Poor	16
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>5</u>
100		100

5

In 1981, the question was worded: "Now let me ask you about President-elect Reagan's Cabinet appointments. How would you rate his appointment of... the cabinet as a whole? Would you say it was an excellent, pretty good, only fair or poor appointment?"

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=723]:

Q.62F2 What's your opinion of the cabinet choices and other high level appointments Barack Obama has made so far... Do you think they are too liberal, too conservative, or about right?

		TREND FOR COMPARISON	
		Bush	
		<u>Jan 2001</u>	
15	Too liberal	21	<i>Too conservative</i>
3	Too conservative	7	<i>Too moderate</i>
68	About right	50	<i>About right</i>
<u>14</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>22</u>	<i>Don't know/Refused (VOL.)</i>
100		100	

NO QUESTIONS 63-64

ASK ALL:

Q.65 Do you think it's a good thing or a bad thing that many of Barack Obama's top advisors worked in the Clinton administration?

		Bush
		<u>Jan 2001⁶</u>
63	Good thing	56
22	Bad thing	29
7	Neither/Doesn't matter (VOL.)	n/a
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>15</u>
100		100

On another subject...

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=766]:

Q.66 As a result of what's been happening with the economy lately, have you [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] or not? [REPEAT AS NECESSARY: As a result of what's been happening with the economy lately,] Have you [NEXT ITEM] or not? [IF RESPONDENT SAYS THIS DOES NOT APPLY, CODE AS NO]⁷

		(VOL.)		
		Don't know/		
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Refused</u>
a.F1	Delayed or canceled plans to buy a new home or make major home improvements			
	December, 2008	44	54	2=100
	Early October, 2008	38	61	1=100
	Sept. 19-22, 2008, NII	29	70	1=100
b.F1	Delayed or canceled plans to buy a new car			
	December, 2008	39	60	1=100
	Early October, 2008	36	63	1=100
	Sept. 19-22, 2008, NII	23	77	*=100

⁶ In 2001, the question was worded: "Do you think it's a good thing or a bad thing that many of George W. Bush's top advisors worked in his father's administration?"

⁷ In the September 19-22, 2008 News Interest Index the question was worded "As a result of what has been happening with the economy lately, have you done any of the following?"

Q.66 CONTINUED...

		(VOL.)		
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
c.F1	Delayed or canceled plans to make a major purchase for your household, such as a computer or appliance			
	December, 2008	45	54	1=100
	Early October, 2008	39	60	1=100
	Sept. 19-22, 2008, NII	30	69	1=100
d.F1	Cut back on planned spending for vacation travel			
	December, 2008	62	37	1=100
	Early October, 2008	59	40	1=100
	Sept. 19-22, 2008, NII	48	51	1=100
e.F1	Adjusted your plans for retirement			
	December, 2008	32	66	2=100
	Early October, 2008	26	73	1=100
	Sept. 19-22, 2008, NII	23	75	2=100
f.F1	Changed the way your money is saved or invested			
	December, 2008	60	39	1=100
	Early October, 2008	48	51	1=100
	Sept. 19-22, 2008, NII	39	61	*=100
g.F1	Been eating out at restaurants less often			
	December, 2008	58	41	1=100
	Early October, 2008	55	43	2=100
h.F1	Cut back on how much you will spend on holiday gifts this year			
	December, 2008	73	27	*=100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=723]:

Q.67 Thinking about your personal finances, have you done any of the following lately? (First,) Have you [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] or not? [IF RESPONDENT SAYS THIS DOES NOT APPLY, CODE AS NO]

		(VOL.)		
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
a.F2	Delayed or canceled plans to buy a new home or make major home improvements	36	63	1=100
b.F2	Delayed or canceled plans to buy a new car	33	67	*=100
c.F2	Delayed or canceled plans to make a major purchase for your household, such as a computer or appliance	44	56	*=100
d.F2	Cut back on planned spending for vacation travel	57	42	1=100
e.F2	Adjusted your plans for retirement	27	72	1=100
f.F2	Changed the way your money is saved or invested	48	51	1=100

Q.67 CONTINUED...

		(VOL.)		
		Don't know/		
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Refused</u>
g.F2	Been eating out at restaurants less often	55	44	1=100
h.F2	Cut back on how much you will spend on holiday gifts this year	72	26	2=100

IF CHANGED SPENDING HABITS (1 IN Q66b, Q66c, Q66d, Q66g, Q66h Q67b, Q67c, Q67d, Q67g, Q67h) ASK [N=1,252]:

Q.68 In general, have you been cutting back on spending because your financial situation has GOTTEN worse and made such cutbacks necessary, or because you worry that your financial situation MIGHT GET worse in the future?

28	Financial situation has gotten worse
59	Worry that it might get worse in the future
4	Both (VOL.)
5	Other (VOL.)
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

ASK ALL:

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

IF ANSWERED 3, 4, 5 OR 9 IN PARTY, ASK:

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

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)		
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>No Preference</u>	<u>Other Party</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Lean Dem</i>
December, 2008	26	39	30	2	*	3=100	8	15
Late October, 2008	24	39	32	2	*	3=100	11	15
Mid-October, 2008	27	35	31	4	*	3=100	9	16
Early October, 2008	26	36	31	4	*	3=100	11	15
Late September, 2008	25	35	34	3	1	2=100	13	15
Mid-September, 2008	28	35	32	3	*	2=100	12	14
August, 2008	26	34	34	4	*	2=100	12	17
July, 2008	24	36	34	3	*	3=100	12	15
June, 2008	26	37	32	3	*	2=100	11	16
Late May, 2008	25	35	35	2	*	3=100	13	15
April, 2008	24	37	31	5	1	2=100	11	15
March, 2008	24	38	29	5	*	4=100	9	14
Late February, 2008	24	38	32	3	*	3=100	10	17
Early February, 2008	26	35	31	5	*	3=100	11	14
January, 2008	24	33	37	4	*	2=100	12	18
Yearly Totals								
2007	25.4	32.9	33.7	4.6	.4	3.1=100	10.7	16.7
2006	27.6	32.8	30.3	5.0	.4	3.9=100	10.2	14.5
2005	29.2	32.8	30.3	4.5	.3	2.8=100	10.2	14.9
2004	29.5	33.1	30.0	4.0	.4	3.0=100	11.8	13.6
2003	29.8	31.4	31.2	4.7	.5	2.5=100	12.1	13.0
2002	30.3	31.2	30.1	5.1	.7	2.7=100	12.6	11.6
2001	29.2	33.6	28.9	5.1	.5	2.7=100	11.7	11.4
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6=100	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	28.2	34.6	29.5	5.0	.5	2.1=100	11.7	12.5
2000	27.5	32.5	29.5	5.9	.5	4.0=100	11.6	11.6
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9=100	13.0	14.5

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)		
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>No Preference</u>	<u>Other Party</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Lean Dem</i>
1998	27.5	33.2	31.9	4.6	.4	2.4=100	11.8	13.5
1997	28.2	33.3	31.9	4.0	.4	2.3=100	12.3	13.8
1996	29.2	32.7	33.0	5.2=100			12.7	15.6
1995	31.4	29.7	33.4	5.4=100			14.4	12.9
1994	29.8	31.8	33.8	4.6=100			14.3	12.6
1993	27.4	33.8	34.0	4.8=100			11.8	14.7
1992	27.7	32.7	35.7	3.9=100			13.8	15.8
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	4.5=100			14.6	10.8
1990	31.0	33.1	29.1	6.8=100			12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34=100					
1987	26	35	39=100					

ASK ALL:

CLASS Which of the following labels best describes your household: [READ ITEMS, IN ORDER]

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)
	<u>Business</u>	<u>Working</u>	<u>Struggling</u>	<u>More than one/None</u>	<u>Don't know/Refused</u>
December, 2008	32	44	19	3	2=100
Early October, 2008	31	48	15	4	2=100
April, 2008	33	42	17	6	2=100
Early February, 2008	32	47	15	3	3=100
January, 2008	33	46	12	6	3=100
December, 2007	30	46	15	6	3=100
September, 2007	35	46	12	4	3=100
August, 2007	34	44	13	7	2=100
January, 2007	30	47	16	5	2=100
October, 2006	34	45	15	4	2=100
January, 2006	32	46	14	4	4=100
Mid-October, 2004	32	45	15	5	3=100
February, 2004 GAP	32	47	15	4	2=100
August, 2003	31	47	14	6	2=100
June, 2003	31	44	15	8	2=100
June, 2002	31	47	14	5	3=100
February, 2002	32	46	14	6	2=100
June, 2001	29	47	15	6	3=100

ASK ALL:

OWNRENT Do you own or rent your home?

66	Own
29	Rent
4	Other arrangement (VOL.)
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

IF 'OWN' (1 IN OWNRENT) ASK [N=1,100]:

MORTGAGE Do you pay money on a mortgage or other home loan, or is your home paid for?

66	Pay a mortgage
32	Paid for
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	