

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
APRIL 2000 NEWS INTEREST INDEX
— FINAL TOPLINE —
April 12 - 16, 2000
N=1,000 / Parents of Children Age 5-17 =283

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton 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 Bill Clinton is handling his job as President? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

| | <u>Approve</u> | <u>Disapprove</u> | <u>Don't Know</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| April, 2000 | 57 | 31 | 12=100 |
| March, 2000 | 57 | 35 | 8=100 |
| February, 2000 | 58 | 33 | 9=100 |
| January, 2000 | 56 | 35 | 9=100 |
| December, 1999 | 55 | 35 | 10=100 |
| October, 1999 | 59 | 34 | 7=100 |
| Late September, 1999 | 59 | 33 | 8=100 |
| September, 1999 | 56 | 36 | 8=100 |
| August, 1999 | 60 | 32 | 8=100 |
| July, 1999 | 58 | 31 | 11=100 |
| June, 1999 | 55 | 35 | 10=100 |
| May, 1999 | 56 | 34 | 10=100 |
| April, 1999 | 56 | 38 | 6=100 |
| March, 1999 | 62 | 31 | 7=100 |
| February, 1999 | 64 | 30 | 6=100 |
| Mid-January, 1999 | 66 | 29 | 5=100 |
| January, 1999 | 63 | 30 | 7=100 |
| Late December, 1998 | 71 | 27 | 2=100 |
| Early December, 1998 | 61 | 32 | 7=100 |
| November, 1998 | 65 | 29 | 6=100 |
| September 21-22, 1998 | 62 | 33 | 5=100 |
| September 19-20, 1998 | 55 | 36 | 9=100 |
| Early September, 1998 | 61 | 33 | 6=100 |
| Late August, 1998 | 62 | 32 | 6=100 |
| Early August, 1998 | 63 | 28 | 9=100 |
| June, 1998 | 59 | 32 | 9=100 |
| May, 1998 | 62 | 28 | 10=100 |
| April, 1998 | 62 | 28 | 10=100 |
| March, 1998 | 65 | 26 | 9=100 |
| Early February, 1998 | 71 | 26 | 3=100 |
| January, 1998 | 61 | 30 | 9=100 |
| November, 1997 | 58 | 31 | 11=100 |
| September, 1997 | 58 | 29 | 13=100 |
| August, 1997 | 59 | 32 | 9=100 |
| June, 1997 | 54 | 34 | 12=100 |
| May, 1997 | 57 | 34 | 9=100 |
| April, 1997 | 55 | 34 | 11=100 |
| February, 1997 | 60 | 32 | 8=100 |
| Early February, 1997 | 57 | 30 | 13=100 |
| January, 1997 | 59 | 31 | 10=100 |

Q.1 CONTINUED ...

| | <u>Approve</u> | <u>Disapprove</u> | <u>Don't Know</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| November, 1996 | 57 | 34 | 9=100 |
| July, 1996 | 54 | 38 | 8=100 |
| June, 1996 | 54 | 38 | 8=100 |
| April, 1996 | 53 | 39 | 8=100 |
| March, 1996 | 55 | 38 | 7=100 |
| February, 1996 | 51 | 39 | 10=100 |
| January, 1996 | 50 | 43 | 7=100 |
| October, 1995 | 48 | 42 | 10=100 |
| September, 1995 | 45 | 42 | 13=100 |
| August, 1995 | 44 | 44 | 12=100 |
| June, 1995 | 50 | 40 | 10=100 |
| April, 1995 | 47 | 43 | 10=100 |
| March, 1995 | 44 | 44 | 12=100 |
| February, 1995 | 44 | 44 | 12=100 |
| December, 1994 | 41 | 47 | 12=100 |
| November, 1994 | 48 | 40 | 12=100 |
| October, 1994 | 41 | 47 | 12=100 |
| Early October, 1994 | 38 | 47 | 15=100 |
| September, 1994 | 41 | 52 | 7=100 |
| July, 1994 | 45 | 46 | 9=100 |
| June, 1994 | 42 | 44 | 14=100 |
| May, 1994 | 46 | 42 | 12=100 |
| March, 1994 | 45 | 42 | 13=100 |
| January, 1994 | 51 | 35 | 14=100 |
| Early January, 1994 | 48 | 35 | 17=100 |
| December, 1993 | 48 | 36 | 16=100 |
| October, 1993 | 44 | 42 | 14=100 |
| September, 1993 | 49 | 35 | 16=100 |
| Early September, 1993 | 43 | 43 | 14=100 |
| August, 1993 | 39 | 46 | 15=100 |
| May, 1993 | 39 | 43 | 18=100 |
| Early May, 1993 | 45 | 37 | 18=100 |
| April, 1993 | 49 | 29 | 22=100 |
| February, 1993 | 56 | 25 | 19=100 |

Q.2 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely? **[INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]**

| | <u>Very Closely</u> | <u>Fairly Closely</u> | <u>Not too Closely</u> | <u>Not at all Closely</u> | <u>DK (VOL.)</u> |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. News about candidates for the 2000 presidential election | 18 | 39 | 22 | 20 | 1=100 |
| March, 2000 | 26 | 41 | 19 | 13 | 1=100 |
| February, 2000 | 26 | 36 | 21 | 17 | *=100 |
| January, 2000 | 19 | 34 | 28 | 18 | 1=100 |
| December, 1999 | 16 | 36 | 24 | 23 | 1=100 |
| October, 1999 | 17 | 32 | 28 | 22 | 1=100 |
| September, 1999 | 15 | 31 | 33 | 20 | 1=100 |
| July, 1999 | 15 | 38 | 24 | 22 | 1=100 |
| June, 1999 | 11 | 25 | 29 | 34 | 1=100 |
| b. The court ruling that the computer software company Microsoft was guilty of unfair business practices | 13 | 33 | 24 | 29 | 1=100 |
| December, 1999 ¹ | 11 | 31 | 29 | 28 | 1=100 |
| November, 1998 | 12 | 20 | 31 | 36 | 1=100 |
| c. The debate over whether 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez should be returned to his father in Cuba | 33 | 38 | 16 | 11 | 2=100 |
| February, 2000 ² | 37 | 41 | 15 | 6 | 1=100 |
| January, 2000 | 39 | 38 | 14 | 8 | 1=100 |
| d. Recent major ups and downs in the U.S. stock market | 19 | 29 | 20 | 32 | *=100 |
| March, 2000 | 23 | 29 | 21 | 26 | 1=100 |
| March, 1999 | 18 | 29 | 22 | 31 | *=100 |
| January, 1999 | 24 | 28 | 19 | 28 | 1=100 |
| Early September, 1998 | 32 | 31 | 20 | 17 | *=100 |
| Mid-August, 1998 | 17 | 23 | 21 | 39 | *=100 |
| January, 1998 | 21 | 25 | 23 | 31 | *=100 |
| November, 1997 ³ | 25 | 36 | 18 | 20 | 1=100 |
| September, 1997 | 14 | 22 | 23 | 40 | 1=100 |
| April, 1997 | 17 | 21 | 22 | 40 | *=100 |
| February, 1996 | 12 | 20 | 25 | 42 | 1=100 |

¹ In December 1999 and November 1998, the story was listed as "The antitrust trial against the computer software company Microsoft."

² In January 2000 and February 2000, the story was listed as "The debate over whether a 6-year-old boy rescued at sea should be returned to his father in Cuba."

³ In November 1997, April 1997 and February 1996, the story was listed as "Recent major ups and downs in the stock market."

On another subject...

ROTATE Q.3/4, Q.5/6 IN BLOCKS:

ASK FORM 1 ONLY:

Q.3F1 Suppose a member of Congress voted FOR impeaching and trying President Clinton. Do you think this member should be re-elected, or not?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=358]:

| | | <u>July 1999</u> |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------|
| 49 | Should be | 57 |
| 33 | Shouldn't be | 31 |
| <u>18</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>12</u> |
| 100 | | 100 |

ASK FORM 2 ONLY:

Q.4F2 Suppose a member of Congress voted AGAINST impeaching and trying President Clinton. Do you think this member should be re-elected, or not?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=358]:

| | | <u>July 1999</u> |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------|
| 48 | Should be | 52 |
| 32 | Shouldn't be | 38 |
| <u>20</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>10</u> |
| 100 | | 100 |

ASK FORM 1 ONLY:

Q.5F1 Suppose a member of Congress voted AGAINST gun control. Do you think this member should be re-elected, or not?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=358]:

| | | <u>July 1999</u> |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------|
| 44 | Should be | 35 |
| 41 | Shouldn't be | 55 |
| <u>15</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>10</u> |
| 100 | | 100 |

ASK FORM 2 ONLY:

Q.6F2 Suppose a member of Congress voted FOR gun control. Do you think this member should be re-elected, or not?

BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=358]:

| | | <u>July 1999</u> |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------|
| 60 | Should be | 69 |
| 25 | Shouldn't be | 25 |
| <u>15</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>6</u> |
| 100 | | 100 |

[NO Q.7/Q.8]

ASK ALL:

Q.9 Please tell me if you think the REPUBLICAN Party or the DEMOCRATIC Party could do a better job of reflecting your views about gun control?⁴

| | | June <u>1999</u> | Dec <u>1993</u> |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 30 | Republican Party | 34 | 32 |
| 36 | Democratic Party | 42 | 42 |
| 4 | Both equally (VOL.) | 4 | — |
| 7 | Neither (VOL.) | 8 | 8 |
| <u>23</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>12</u> | <u>18</u> |
| 100 | | 100 | 100 |

Q.10 Now, I am going to read you some things that might be done to reduce violent crime in this country. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it would reduce the amount of violent crime a lot, a little or not at all? Do you think [ROTATE ITEMS] would reduce the amount of violent crime a lot, a little, or not at all?

| FORM 1 [N=500]; FORM 2 [N=500]: | | <u>A Lot</u> | <u>A Little</u> | <u>Not At All</u> | <u>Don't Know</u> |
|--|---|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| a.F1 | Stricter gun control laws | 41 | 33 | 24 | 2=100 |
| | March, 1994 | 39 | 28 | 31 | 2=100 |
| | December, 1993 | 41 | 32 | 26 | 1=100 |
| b.F2 | More police on the streets | 46 | 45 | 7 | 2=100 |
| | March, 1994 | 57 | 36 | 6 | 1=100 |
| | December, 1993 | 53 | 38 | 7 | 2=100 |
| c.F1 | More job and community programs for young people | 63 | 29 | 7 | 1=100 |
| d.F2 | Restrictions on the amount of violence shown on TV | 48 | 37 | 14 | 1=100 |
| | March, 1994 | 43 | 40 | 16 | 1=100 |
| | December, 1993 | 49 | 36 | 14 | 1=100 |
| e.F1 | Longer jail terms for those convicted of violent crimes | 49 | 33 | 15 | 3=100 |
| | March, 1994 | 69 | 23 | 7 | 1=100 |
| | December, 1993 | 63 | 23 | 11 | 3=100 |

⁴ Question usually asked as part of a series.

ASK ALL:

Q.11 What do you think is more important: to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership?

| | | March <u>2000</u> | June <u>1999</u> | May <u>1999</u> | Dec <u>1993</u> |
|----------|--|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 37 | Protect right of Americans to own guns | 29 | 33 | 30 | 34 |
| 55 | Control gun ownership | 66 | 62 | 65 | 57 |
| <u>8</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>5</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>9</u> |
| 100 | | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Q.12 Do you think the National Rifle Association has too much influence, too little influence or, the right amount of influence over gun control laws in this country?

| | | Dec <u>1993</u> | Time/CNN <u>Aug 1993</u> |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 42 | Too much | 45 | 39 |
| 17 | Too little | 15 | 15 |
| 28 | Right amount | 27 | 33 |
| <u>13</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>13</u> | <u>13</u> |
| 100 | | 100 | 100 |

Q.13 In general, how safe would you say you and your family are from crime at each of the following locations? (First/How about)... **(READ AND ROTATE)** — are you and your family very safe, somewhat safe, not too safe or not at all safe from crime?

| | | (VOL.) | | | | | |
|----|--|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | Very <u>Safe</u> | Some- what <u>Safe</u> | Not Too <u>Safe</u> | Not At All <u>Safe</u> | Does Not <u>Apply</u> | Don't Know/ <u>Refused</u> |
| a. | At home at night | 67 | 28 | 4 | 1 | 0 | *=100 |
| | Pew Center: October, 1999 | 67 | 29 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1=100 |
| b. | When walking in your neighborhood after dark | 49 | 33 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 1=100 |
| | Pew Center: October, 1999 | 41 | 39 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 1=100 |
| c. | When at a shopping mall at night | 22 | 49 | 16 | 6 | 6 | 1=100 |
| | Pew Center: October, 1999 | 22 | 48 | 14 | 5 | 10 | 1=100 |
| d. | At school | 33 | 36 | 9 | 3 | 17 | 2=100 |
| | Pew Center: October, 1999 | 35 | 38 | 8 | 3 | 16 | 1=100 |

Q.18 THRU Q.20 BASED ON PARENTS OF CHILDREN AGE 5-17: [N=283]

Q.18 I am going to read a list of things that have been in the news recently. For each, please tell me how much, if at all, you have talked about it with this child. First, how much have you talked about **(INSERT ITEM; ROTATE)**... a lot, some, not too much, or not at all? What about...

| | | <u>A Lot</u> | <u>Some</u> | <u>Not too Much</u> | <u>Not At All</u> | <u>DK/Refused</u> |
|----|--|--------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| a | The 2000 presidential election campaign | 7 | 26 | 19 | 47 | 1=100 |
| b | The debate over whether 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez should be returned to his father in Cuba | 10 | 31 | 17 | 42 | *=100 |
| c. | The shootings that have occurred at schools across the country | 45 | 32 | 13 | 10 | *=100 |
| | Child: 5-11 | 34 | 35 | 18 | 13 | 0=100 |
| | Child: 12-17 | 56 | 29 | 8 | 6 | 1=100 |
| | September, 1998 (<i>Parents of children 8 to 17</i>) | 41 | 40 | 11 | 8 | 0=100 |
| | Child: 8-10 | 30 | 43 | 13 | 14 | 0=100 |
| | Child: 11-13 | 47 | 37 | 9 | 7 | 0=100 |
| | Child: 14-17 | 47 | 40 | 9 | 4 | 0=100 |

Q.19 Thinking about your child's personal safety at school, do you think your child is very safe at school, somewhat safe, not too safe or not at all safe?

| | |
|----------|--|
| 40 | Very safe |
| 50 | Somewhat safe |
| 6 | Not too safe |
| 2 | Not at all safe |
| * | Child not in school (VOL.) SKIP TO Q.24 |
| <u>1</u> | Don't know/Refused |
| 100 | |

Q.20 How concerned, if at all, does your child seem about (his/ her) personal safety at school — very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned?

| | |
|----------|--|
| 12 | Very concerned |
| 22 | Somewhat concerned |
| 27 | Not too concerned |
| 37 | Not at all concerned |
| 2 | Child not in school (VOL.) SKIP TO Q.24 |
| <u>0</u> | Don't know/Refused |
| 100 | |

Q.21 THRU Q.23 BASED ON PARENTS OF CHILDREN AGE 5-17 WHO ATTEND SCHOOL: [N=278]

Q.21 To your knowledge have there been any serious threats of violence involving children at your child's school?

| | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 17 | Yes |
| 81 | No |
| <u>2</u> | Don't know/Refused |
| 100 | |

Q.22 How much, if it all, did the Columbine shooting last year change your views about how safe your child is at school? Did your views change a lot, some, only a little or not at all?

| | |
|----------|--------------------|
| 44 | A lot |
| 27 | Some |
| 17 | Only a little |
| 12 | Not at all |
| <u>*</u> | Don't know/Refused |
| 100 | |

Q.23 Do you happen to know if your child's school has taken any measures to ensure safety in the past year, such as installing metal detectors, closed circuit TV cameras, or hiring police or security guards?

| | |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 37 | Yes |
| 53 | No |
| <u>10</u> | Don't know/Refused |
| 100 | |

ASK ALL:

Q.24 Now I have some questions about the recent school shootings like the one at Columbine High school in Colorado...In general, what do you think is the MAIN reason why kids commit such violence? (**READ**)

| | | Newsweek |
|----------|--|-------------------|
| | | <u>April 1999</u> |
| 4 | Genetic or biological tendencies toward violence | 5 |
| 42 | Poor upbringing from parents | 36 |
| 26 | Violence in the media they are exposed to | 34 |
| 14 | Peer pressure from other kids | 15 |
| 7 | Other (VOL.) | 7 |
| <u>7</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>3</u> |
| 100 | | 100 |

Q.25 Which ONE of the following do you think is the most effective way to prevent such things from happening?... **(READ and ROTATE)**

| | | Newsweek <u>April 1999⁵</u> |
|----------|---|--|
| 11 | Increasing school security, such as installing metal detectors and hiring more guards | 21 |
| 6 | Passing stricter gun control laws | 11 |
| 60 | Paying more attention to kids' anti-social attitudes and behaviors | 49 |
| 13 | Reducing violence in popular entertainment | 14 |
| 6 | Other (VOL.) | 3 |
| <u>4</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>2</u> |
| 100 | | 100 |

Q.26 In the end, who's mostly responsible for ensuring that children don't commit violent acts at school...Is it mostly the schools' responsibility or mostly the parents' responsibility?

| | |
|----------|-----------------------|
| 9 | School responsibility |
| 85 | Parent responsibility |
| 3 | Other |
| <u>3</u> | Don't know/Refused |
| 100 | |

⁵

In April 1999, the question was worded: "Which ONE of the following do you think is the most effective way to prevent such violent incidents from happening again?"

ON ANOTHER SUBJECT ...

Q.27 In the past 12 months, have you or your family, or has someone else in your neighborhood... **(INSERT ITEM; ROTATE ORDER.)**?⁶

| | | Yes, Self <u>Or Family</u> | Yes, Someone Else <u>In Neighborhood</u> | <u>No</u> | Don't know/ <u>Refused</u> |
|----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------|-------------------------------|
| a. | Had money or property stolen | 11 | 12 | 76 | 1=100 |
| | June, 1997 | 14 | 20 | 64 | 2=100 |
| | March, 1994 | 16 | 22 | 61 | 1=100 |
| b. | Been physically assaulted or mugged | 2 | 4 | 93 | *=100 |
| | June, 1997 | 4 | 8 | 87 | 1=100 |
| | March, 1994 | 5 | 8 | 86 | 1=100 |

Q.28 Do you happen to have any guns or revolvers in your home?⁷

Q.28a Is it, or are they, handguns, rifles, shotguns, or what? **[ENTER ALL THAT APPLY]**

| | | June <u>1997</u> | Dec <u>1993</u> |
|----------|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| 35 | Yes, have guns or revolvers in home | 40 | 45 |
| 21 | Handgun | n/a | 24 |
| 21 | Rifle | n/a | 31 |
| 18 | Shotgun | n/a | 27 |
| 2 | Other | n/a | 3 |
| 1 | Don't know/Refused/No More Apply | n/a | 2 |
| 62 | No, does not have guns or revolvers in home | 57 | 53 |
| <u>3</u> | Don't know/Refused | <u>3</u> | <u>2</u> |
| 100 | | 100 | 100 |

⁶ In 1994, the question was worded: "I'd like to ask if you, your family, or your neighborhood has been affected by crime in the past 12 months. (First,) in the past 12 months, have you or your family, or has someone else in your neighborhood..."

⁷ In 1993, the question was worded: "Do you have any guns in this household?"