

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MAY 29-JUNE 1, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1001

Q.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY “Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?”]

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
a. The nomination of Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court	29	29	19	23	1
January, 2006 <i>Samuel Alito</i>	14	23	25	36	2
December, 2005	14	20	31	32	3
Early November, 2005	21	28	24	25	2
Early October, 2005 <i>Harriet Miers</i>	22	33	21	23	1
Early September, 2005 <i>John Roberts</i>	18	26	25	29	2
August, 1993 <i>Ruth Bader Ginsburg</i>	18	30	27	24	1
October, 1991 <i>Clarence Thomas</i>	28	35	18	18	1
July, 1991 <i>Clarence Thomas</i>	33	33	19	14	1
August, 1990 <i>David Souter</i>	16	27	27	29	1
September, 1987 <i>Robert Bork</i>	17	23	29	29	2
b. The California Supreme Court upholding a ban on gay marriage	22	35	19	23	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹					
May 8-11, 2009: <i>Steps to legalize gay marriage in ME and NH</i>	16	16	22	45	1
April 9-13, 2009: <i>Gay marriage in IA & VT</i>	13	21	23	42	1
Nov. 7-10, 2008: <i>CA vote bans gay marriage</i>	18	26	24	32	*
June 20-23, 2008: <i>Same sex marriage in CA</i>	22	26	25	27	*
May 16-19, 2008: <i>CA Supreme Court ruling</i>	19	27	25	28	1
May 2004: <i>Gay marriage</i>	20	27	25	27	1
March 2004: <i>Gay marriage</i>	29	33	20	17	1
Early-February 2004: <i>Debate over gay marriage</i>	26	32	22	19	1
Mid-August 2003: <i>Debate over gay marriage</i>	19	30	22	28	1

¹ May 8-11, 2009, asked about: “Steps to legalize gay marriage in Maine and New Hampshire.” April 9-13, 2009, asked about: “The legalization of gay marriage in Iowa and Vermont.” November 7-10, 2008, asked about: “California voting to ban gay marriage.” June 20-23, 2008, asked about: “The issue of same sex marriage in California.” May 16-19, 2008, asked about: “The California Supreme Court’s decision giving same sex couples the right to marry.” March, 2004 and May, 2004 asked about: “The issue of gay and lesbian marriage.” August, 2003 and February, 2004 asked about: “The debate about allowing gays and lesbians to marry.”

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
c. Reports that General Motors may go into bankruptcy	34	40	17	9	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²					
May 1-4, 2009: <i>Financial problems in the U.S. auto industry</i>	32	42	17	8	1
April 24-27, 2009	30	39	16	15	*
April 3-6, 2009	31	35	16	18	*
February 20-23, 2009: <i>U.S. automakers seeking billions in federal loans to avoid bankruptcy</i>	33	34	22	11	*
December 19-22, 2008: <i>Bush administration plan for emergency loans to U.S. automakers</i>	37	33	16	13	1
December 12-15, 2008: <i>Debate over a government bailout for U.S. auto industry</i>	40	33	18	9	*
December 5-8, 2008: <i>Debate in Congress over a bailout for U.S. auto industry</i>	34	38	17	11	*
November 21-24, 2008	41	26	17	15	1
November 14-17, 2008: <i>Problems facing U.S. automakers</i>	30	35	20	15	*
October 31-November 3, 2008: <i>Possible merger of GM and Chrysler</i>	16	28	24	31	1
May 18-21, 2007: <i>DaimlerChrysler sells Chrysler</i>	8	20	25	46	1
September 28-October 1, 2007: <i>Agreement between GM and UAW ending strike</i>	14	28	28	30	*
December, 2005: <i>General Motors job cuts</i>	22	30	26	21	1
June, 1998: <i>Chrysler/Daimler Benz merger</i>	12	22	27	38	1
January, 1992: <i>General Motors job cuts</i>	35	38	18	9	*
d. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	43	37	11	8	*
May 21-24, 2009	44	35	13	9	*
May 15-18, 2009	44	35	12	8	*
May 8-11, 2009	42	34	12	12	*
May 1-4, 2009	47	36	11	5	1
April 17-20, 2009	52	30	10	7	1
April 9-13, 2009	48	29	13	10	0
March 27-30, 2009	48	32	10	10	*
March 20-23, 2009	52	34	8	6	*
March 13-16, 2009	48	33	9	10	*
February 27-March 2, 2009	56	30	8	6	*
February 13-16, 2009	55	29	10	6	*
January 30-February 2, 2009	52	31	12	5	*
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0

² February 20-23, 2009 asked about: "U.S. automakers seeking billions of dollars in federal loans to avoid bankruptcy." December 19-22, 2008 asked about "The Bush administration's plan to provide billions in emergency loans to U.S. automakers." December 12-15, 2008 asked about "The debate over a government bailout for the U.S. auto industry." November 21-24, 2008 and December 5-8, 2008 asked about "The debate in Congress over a government bailout for the U.S. auto industry." November 14-17, 2008 asked about: "News about problems facing U.S. automakers." October 31-November 3, 2008 asked about: "The possible merger of automakers General Motors and Chrysler." May 18-21, 2007 asked about: "DaimlerChrysler's decision to sell Chrysler to a private equity firm." January, 1992 and December, 2005 asked about: "The major job cuts announced by General Motors." June, 1998 asked about: "The merger of the Chrysler Corporation and Daimler Benz." September 28-October 1, 2007 asked about "An agreement between General Motors and the United Auto Workers union that ended a two-day strike over wages and job security."

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1
e. Reports about North Korea testing nuclear weapons and missiles	34	36	17	13	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:³					
<i>April 3-6, 2009: North Korea's plans to test long range missile</i>	23	31	19	27	*
<i>June 27-30, 2008: North Korea takes steps to halt its nuclear weapons program</i>	19	30	26	24	1
<i>February 16-19, 2007: Nuclear weapons negotiations</i>	15	31	22	31	1
<i>Late October, 2006: Nuclear weapons test</i>	45	33	13	8	1
<i>February, 2005: Nuclear weapons program</i>	22	34	22	22	*
<i>September, 2003</i>	19	32	27	21	1

³ April 3-6, 2009 asked about: "North Korea's plans to test a long range missile." June 27-30, 2008 asked about: "North Korea taking steps to halt its nuclear weapons program." February 16-19, 2007 asked about: "Recent negotiations to shut down North Korea's nuclear weapons program." October, 2006 asked about: "North Korea's announcement that it recently tested a nuclear weapon." January, 2003 to February, 2005 asked about: "North Korea's nuclear weapons program." Late October, 2002 asked about: "North Korea's admission that it has been secretly developing nuclear weapons." June, 1994 asked about: "Reports about North Korea's building of nuclear weapons and refusal to allow UN inspections."

Q.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
May, 2003	27	40	22	11	*
March, 2003	34	34	19	12	1
February, 2003	33	34	18	13	2
January, 2003	33	34	18	14	1
Late October, 2002: <i>Admits to secret weapons program</i>	25	31	23	20	1
June, 1994: <i>Refuses U.N. inspections</i>	27	33	26	14	*
f. The military conflict between the Taliban and the Pakistani government	23	30	23	23	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁴					
May 8-11, 2009: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	18	23	23	36	*
April 24-27, 2009	15	27	27	31	*
March 13-16, 2009	14	20	26	40	0
September 26-29, 2008: <i>Hotel bombing</i>	16	32	23	28	1
August 15-18, 2008: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	10	25	29	35	1
February 22-25, 2008: <i>Parliamentary elections</i>	9	24	28	39	*
January 11-14, 2008: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	19	33	20	27	1
January 4-7, 2008: <i>Bhutto assassination</i>	32	36	15	16	1
Nov. 30-Dec. 3, 2007: <i>Pakistan instability</i>	16	28	26	30	*
Nov. 23-26, 2007	13	27	31	28	1
Nov. 16-19, 2007	20	30	21	28	1
Nov. 9-12, 2007	20	29	23	28	*
October 19-22, 2007: <i>Pakistan bombing aimed at Bhutto</i>	21	28	21	30	*
July 13-16, 2007: <i>Raid on Pakistani mosque</i>	10	19	23	47	1

Q.2 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? [DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]

- 20 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 18 Reports that General Motors may go into bankruptcy
- 15 The nomination of Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court
- 15 Reports about North Korea testing nuclear weapons and missiles
- 9 The California Supreme Court upholding a ban on gay marriage
- 3 The military conflict between the Taliban and the Pakistani government
- 7 Some other story
- 11 Don't know/Refused

⁴ September 26-29, 2008 asked about "A bombing at a Marriott Hotel in Pakistan that killed over 50 people." November 9-12, 2007 through November 30-December 3, 2007; January 11-14, 2008, August 15-18, 2008, March 13-16, 2009 and April 24-27, 2009 and May 8-11, 2009 asked about "Political instability in Pakistan." February 22-25, 2008 asked about "Parliamentary elections and changes in party control in Pakistan." January 4-7, 2008 asked about "The assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and resulting instability in Pakistan." October 19-22, 2007 asked about "A bombing in Pakistan aimed at former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto that killed over 120 people." July 13-16, 2007 asked about "The Pakistani government's raid on a mosque held by Islamic radicals."

On another topic...

Q.3 Would you say the press has been too critical, not critical enough, or fair in the way it has covered Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor?

- 17 Too critical
- 20 Not critical enough
- 45 Fair
- 18 Don't know/Refused (**VOL.**)

Q.4 How much, if anything, would you say you have learned about Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor since she was nominated? [**READ**]

- 18 A lot
- 33 Some
- 24 Just a little
- 25 Nothing at all
- 1 Don't know/Refused

IF 1,2,3 IN Q.4 ASK:

Q.5 From what you've read and heard so far, what, if anything, would you say you LIKE about Sonia Sotomayor? **[OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW: "It can be anything you've read or heard that has made you feel positively toward her?" ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES]. [RECORD ALL MENTIONS ON ONE SCREEN]**

BASED ON TOTAL [N=1001]:

45	Yes, Named something
20	Background/Experience (NET)
	7 Personal background/story
	3 Experience (general)
	2 Qualified/good candidate
	2 Education
	2 Legal background/record
	2 Background (general)
11	Female
9	Hispanic/minority
8	Personal Character (NET)
	3 Fair
	2 Intelligent
	2 Her attitude/personality
	1 Honest
1	Brings diversity to the court
1	Position on abortion
1	Her judgments/decisions
*	Everything
10	Other
29	Nothing/Don't know/Refused
26	Haven't learned anything yet/DK in Q.4

IF 1,2,3 IN Q.4 ASK:

Q.6 From what you've read and heard so far, what, if anything, would you say you DISLIKE about Sonia Sotomayor? [**OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW: "It can be anything you've read or heard that has made you feel negatively toward her?" ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES]. [RECORD ALL MENTIONS ON ONE SCREEN]**

BASED ON TOTAL [N=1001]:

- 26 **Yes, Named something**
 - 7 **Racial bias (NET)**
 - 3 Racist
 - 2 Comment comparing white men and Latina women
 - 1 Ruling in the New Haven, CT, firefighter's case
 - 5 **Judicial activism (NET)**
 - 2 Comment about judges making policy/legislating from the bench
 - 2 Interprets law she sees it/Uses emotion to make decisions
 - 1 Activist judge
 - 3 **Other Issues (NET)**
 - 1 Position on abortion
 - 1 Position on gun control
 - 1 Other legal decision
 - 2 **Background/Experience (NET)**
 - 1 Background
 - 1 Do No trust/Not genuine/not forthcoming
 - * Experience/Inexperience
 - 2 Too liberal
 - 2 Dislike some of her statements/inappropriate comments
 - 2 Everything
 - 1 Female
 - 6 Other
- 48 **Nothing/Don't know/Refused**
- 26 **Haven't learned anything yet/DK in Q.4**