



Topline

The Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University

Role of Government Survey

October 2010

Methodology

The Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University Survey Project is a three-way partnership and an experiment in combining survey research and reporting to better inform the public. The Role of Government Survey, the 20th in this partnership series, was conducted by telephone from September 22 - October 3, 2010 among a nationally representative random sample of 2,054 adults ages 18 and older. Telephone interviews conducted by landline (1,383) and cell phone (671, including 289 who had no landline telephone) were carried out in English and Spanish by Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS). The margin of sampling error for results based on the total sample is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

Representatives of The Washington Post, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University worked together to develop the survey questionnaire and analyze the results. Each organization bears the sole responsibility for the work that appears under its name.

The project team included Jon Cohen, The Washington Post director of polling and Kyle Dropp, assistant polling analyst; Drew E. Altman, president and CEO of the Kaiser Family Foundation, Mollyann Brodie, senior vice president for executive operations and director of public opinion and survey research, Elizabeth Hamel, associate director of public opinion and survey research, and Carolina Gutierrez, survey analyst; and Robert J. Blendon, professor of health policy and political analysis at the Harvard School of Public Health and the John F. Kennedy School of Government, and John M. Benson, managing director of the Harvard Opinion Research Program in the Harvard School of Public Health. Consultants Jack Citrin and Meredith Chaiken also contributed.

Please note: (1) Table percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. (2) Values less than 0.5% are indicated by an asterisk (*). (3) "Vol." indicates that a response was volunteered by the respondent and not an explicitly offered choice. (4) Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

Trends in this document all come from national random sample surveys with interviews of at least 1,000 adults. Most have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. "RV" indicates that a trend question is based on registered voters; "LV" indicates it is based on likely voters. Trend data from prior surveys refers to polls by The Washington Post or the Kaiser Family Foundation and other partners, unless otherwise noted.

Full information about each trend question can be obtained at: www.washingtonpost.com/fedrole for Washington Post surveys, and from the Roper Center for surveys from other organizations (<http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/>).

1. All in all, do you think things in the nation are headed in the right direction or do you feel that things are on the wrong track?

	Right direction	Wrong track	No opinion
10/3/10	34	59	7
8/2/04	36	59	5
6/25/00	44	47	9

2. How much credit do you give the federal government in Washington for that? A great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

Based on those who say things in the nation are headed in the right direction (N=681)

	- Grt deal/Fair amt-		-- A little/none --			No opinion
	NET	Great deal	Fair amt	NET	Only a little	
10/3/10	76	25	51	23	20	3
6/25/00	69	21	47	29	25	4

2. How much blame do you give the federal government in Washington for that? A great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

Based on those who say things in the nation are on the wrong track (N=1244)

	- Grt deal/Fair amt-		-- A little/none --			No opinion
	NET	Great deal	Fair amt	NET	Only a little	
10/3/10	89	60	29	10	8	2
6/25/00	80	50	30	18	14	4

Q1/2 Net Table (based on total)

	10/3/10	6/25/00
Think things are headed in the right direction	34	44
Give federal government a great deal of credit	8	9
Give federal government a fair amount of credit	17	21
Give federal government only a little of the credit	7	11
Give federal government none of the credit	1	2
Dk/Refused credit	*	*
Feel things are on the wrong track	59	47
Give federal government a great deal of blame	36	24
Give federal government a fair amount of blame	17	14
Give federal government only a little of the blame	5	6
Give federal government none of the blame	1	2
Dk/Refused blame	1	*
No opinion	7	9

3. In general, do you think the federal government is (mostly focused on the right things), or (mostly focused on the wrong things)? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

	Focused on right things	Focused on wrong things	No opinion
10/3/10	39	55	6

4. How much impact do you think the FEDERAL government has on your daily life? A lot, some, just a little, or no impact at all?

	--- A lot/some---			-- A little/None --			
	NET	A lot	Some	NET	Just a little	None	No opinion
10/3/10	82	50	32	17	12	5	1
6/25/00	79	41	38	20	15	5	1

4a. Would you say that's a mainly (positive) or (negative) impact? (verbiage in parentheses rotated) (N=1953)

	Mainly positive	Mainly negative	No opinion
10/3/10	43	52	5

Q4/4a. Net Table #1 (based on total)

Federal government has impact on daily life	94
Mainly positive	41
Mainly negative	49
No opinion	4
Federal government has no impact on daily life	5
No opinion	1

Q4/4a. Net Table #2 (based on total)

Federal government has positive impact on daily life	41
A lot	16
Some	17
Just a little	7
Federal government has negative impact on daily life	49
A lot	31
Some	14
Just a little	5
Federal government has no impact on daily life	5
No opinion	5

5. If you were to grade the overall performance of the federal government, what grade would you give - A, B, C, D or F?

	---- A/B ----			---- C/D ----			F	No opinion
	NET	A	B	NET	C	D		
10/3/10	25	3	21	55	32	24	19	1
6/25/00	37	5	32	53	38	15	9	1

6. Would you briefly describe the MAIN reason you gave (a/an) (INSERT GRADE FROM Q4) grade to the federal government? (RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM)

Based on those who gave a grade of A, B, C, D, or F (n=2,037)

	Total	Based on those who gave gov't a grade of...			
		A/B	C	D	F
FAVORABLE REASONS (NET)	19	62	10	*	--
FAVORABLE ECONOMY/JOBS (SUBNET)	2	9	*	--	--
Fixing the economy/progress on economy	2	6	*	--	--
Saved jobs/trying to resolve unemployment	1	2	--	--	--
Other favorable economy/jobs	*	1	*	--	--
FAVORABLE POLICIES/PROGRAMS (SUBNET)	5	16	2	--	--
Healthcare reform	2	7	1	--	--
Keeping citizens safe/protected	*	1	*	--	--
Satisfied with social security status	*	1	*	--	--
Good programs for education (general)	*	1	*	--	--
Other favorable policies/programs	2	9	*	--	--
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS (SUBNET)	9	28	6	*	--
Trying/trying hard/doing their best/the right thing	3	8	2	--	--
Heading in the right direction/on the right track	1	5	*	--	--
Good job considering what was inherited from previous admin.	1	4	1	--	--
Doing okay/all right/muddling along	1	4	2	--	--
Getting things done/made accomplishments	1	2	*	--	--
Other overall effectiveness	2	7	1	*	--
Favorable President Obama	2	8	1	--	--
Good for me/doesn't affect me (general)	1	2	*	--	--
Other favorable reasons	1	4	*	--	--
UNFAVORABLE REASONS (NET)	71	24	76	95	97
UNFAVORABLE POLICIES/PROGRAMS (SUBNET)	17	5	17	27	22
Dissatisfied with healthcare reform	4	1	3	8	7
Troops still overseas/war not ended	2	2	3	2	1
Not focusing on domestic issues/too much attention abroad	2	--	1	3	3
Not doing enough to help poor/middle class, too focused on rich	2	*	3	3	3
Using the money for bailout	1	*	1	2	2
Unfavorable immigration policy	1	*	1	2	1
Poor management of social security	1	--	*	1	1
Need to focus more on education (general)	1	*	2	2	*
Improve care for veterans	*	--	*	*	*
Other unfavorable policies/programs	5	2	4	7	7
UNFAVORABLE POLITICS/POLITICIANS/PROCESSES (SUBNET)	16	6	16	19	23
Self-serving/own agendas/not working for the people	7	1	5	10	15
Lack of cooperation between parties/partisan politics	4	3	6	4	3
Corrupt politicians/deceit	1	--	1	1	3
Influence of lobbyists/corporate/special interests	1	*	1	1	1
Congress creating roadblocks/not helping President	1	1	1	1	*
Republicans stopping progress	*	1	1	--	--
Other unfavorable politics/politicians/processes	2	1	2	3	4

OVERALL INEFFECTIVENESS (SUBNET)	15	7	22	17	14
Not trying hard enough/could do better/more	3	4	5	*	1
Headed in the wrong direction/wrong priorities/decisions	2	*	2	3	3
Not focused on important issues/focused on trivial matters	2	1	4	2	2
No accomplishments/results/can't get anything done	2	*	2	3	2
Do nothing right/incompetent/inexperienced	1	--	1	1	2
Bureaucracy/inefficiency, moving too slow	1	1	2	1	1
Not paying attention to what needs to be done	1	--	1	2	*
Not doing what they promised	*	--	*	1	1
Other overall ineffectiveness	3	*	5	4	2
UNFAVORABLE ECONOMY/JOBS (SUBNET)	15	4	16	20	19
Economy/economic situation/not recovering	4	1	6	6	4
No jobs/high unemployment/still rising	3	*	3	5	4
Don't know how to handle economy/doing poor job on economy	2	*	3	3	2
Not creating jobs/lack of concern	2	1	2	2	3
Not being focused on economy/going in wrong directions	1	--	1	1	2
Inadequate stimulus plan	1	*	*	1	1
Jobs/job situation (general)	1	1	1	1	--
Jobs sent overseas	1	*	*	1	3
Other unfavorable economy/jobs	1	--	2	2	2
UNFAVORABLE SPENDING/DEBT (SUBNET)	8	1	5	14	15
Excessive/wasteful/irresponsible spending	5	*	3	8	12
Debt accumulation/deficit too large	2	1	1	4	3
Other unfavorable spending/debt	1	--	1	1	1
GOVERNMENT GOING TOO FAR (SUBNET)	6	*	3	10	14
Heading toward a socialist government	1	*	*	1	4
Stepping outside the constitution/Americans losing rights	1	--	*	2	4
Too much government in personal lives	1	*	1	3	3
Too much intrusion/control/too many laws	1	--	1	2	2
Government too big (general)	1	*	1	2	2
Too much regulation/control over business/small business	*	--	--	1	2
Other government going too far	*	--	*	1	*
High taxes/too many taxes/poor management	3	1	3	5	6
Unfavorable President Obama	2	*	2	1	5
Heading away from Christian values	1	1	*	1	1
No common sense	*	--	*	*	*
Other unfavorable reasons	4	3	4	4	3
MIXED/NEUTRAL REASONS (NET)	8	12	12	2	1
Doing good job but not great/need help/not perfect	1	3	2	--	--
Doing their best but going about it the wrong way	1	2	2	1	*
Some thing right/okay and others not (general)	1	1	2	--	--
Government is victim of circumstance (general)	*	1	*	--	--
Other mixed/neutral reasons	4	5	5	1	1
Other	*	*	*	--	--
No reason/just guessed/have that feeling	2	4	2	2	--
Don't know/Refused	2	1	2	1	2
N=	2037	474	636	502	425

7. Do you think the federal government is performing (better) than it usually does, (worse) or about the same as it usually does? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

	Better	Worse	Same	No opinion
10/3/10	18	33	48	1

7a. Is that because of the people in power now, or for some other reason?

Based on those who say the federal government is performing worse than it usually does (N=772)

	People in power	Other reason	No opinion
10/3/10	83	14	2

Q7/Q7a Net Table (based on total)

	Better	NET	People in power	Other reason	No opinion	Same	No opin.
10/3/10	18	33	27	5	1	48	1

8. Some people think (criticism of the way the federal government does its job is justified), while others think (the government often does a better job than it is given credit for). Which comes closer to your views? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

	Criticism Justified	Gov't does better job	No opinion
10/3/10	59	36	5
6/25/00	56	39	5

9. Please tell me what grade you would give the following for their overall performance. First, would you give (INSERT) an A, B, C, D or F? (items scrambled)

	NET	A/B		C/D			F	No opinion
		A	B	NET	C	D		
a. Barack Obama as president	48	17	30	33	20	13	18	1
b. Democrats in Congress	31	6	25	47	29	18	19	3
c. Republicans in Congress	22	3	19	56	33	22	18	5
d. Your own representative in Congress	40	10	30	42	30	12	9	9
e. The federal court system	40	9	30	45	32	13	9	7
f. The U.S. military	86	58	28	10	8	2	1	2

10. I am going to read you a list of activities that the federal government is involved in or might be involved in. Please tell me whether you'd like to see more federal government involvement in that area, less involvement, about the same amount of involvement, or no federal government involvement at all. How about (INSERT)? (items scrambled)

10/3/10

	--- More/Same ---			--- Less/No ---			No opinion
	NET	More	Same	NET	Less	No	
a. Protecting the environment	84	61	23	16	13	3	1
b. Ensuring access to health care	67	52	15	32	21	11	1
c. Promoting values and morality in the society	59	40	19	40	23	17	1
d. Reducing poverty	81	64	17	17	13	4	2
e. Setting educational standards for public schools	75	57	18	24	16	8	1
f. Regulating Wall Street financial institutions	72	47	25	24	18	7	4
h. Fighting terrorism	87	56	32	11	10	2	1
i. Regulating gun ownership	57	32	25	41	26	15	2

Trend:

	--- More/Same ---			--- Less/No ---			No opinion
	NET	More	Same	NET	Less	No	
b. Ensuring access to health care							
10/3/10	67	52	15	32	21	11	1
6/25/00*	86	73	13	13	7	6	1
c. Promoting values and morality in the society							
10/3/10	59	40	19	40	23	17	1
6/25/00	65	50	15	35	17	17	1
d. Reducing poverty							
10/3/10	81	64	17	17	13	4	2
6/25/00	83	69	14	16	11	5	1
e. Setting educational standards for public schools							
10/3/10	75	57	18	24	16	8	1
6/25/00**	81	64	17	18	10	8	1

*"affordable health care"

**"minimum educational standards"

11. Do you think the nation's economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

	Getting better	Getting worse	Staying the same	No opinion
10/3/10	28	36	35	1
7/9/00	21	28	50	0

12. Which of these statements do you agree with more...? (items rotated)

Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they're willing to work hard	66
Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people	32
Neither (vol)	1
No opinion	1

13. Thinking about the economic challenges facing the country would you say the actions taken by (INSERT) things better, made things worse, or had no effect? Would that be much (better/worse) or somewhat (better/worse)?

10/3/10

	---- Better ---			---- Worse ----			No	No
	NET	Much	Smwt.	NET	Much	Smwt.	Effect	opinion
a. The Obama admin. made	40	10	30	31	19	12	26	2
b. The Bush admin. made	15	3	12	63	37	26	19	3

14. Do you think improving the economy is something an effective president can do a lot about, do a little about, or is that mostly beyond any president's control?

	A lot	A little	Beyond Control	No opinion
10/3/10	40	34	25	1
10/19/00	35	41	23	1
8/2/96	31	29	39	1

15. Which of these do you think is more important right now - (increasing federal spending to try to create jobs and improve the economy); or (avoiding a big increase in the federal budget deficit)? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

	Increasing Spending	Avoiding Deficit	No opinion
10/3/10	50	46	4

16. When the government in Washington decides to solve (INSERT ITEM), how much confidence do you have that the problem actually will be solved: A lot, some, just a little, or none at all? How about (INSERT NEXT ITEM)? (items scrambled)

	-----A lot/Some-----			---Little/None---			No opin.
	NET	A lot	Some	NET	Little	None	
a. Economic problems							
10/3/10	47	10	37	52	32	21	1
9/6/02	58	9	49	41	27	14	1
1/27/02	63	11	52	37	31	6	*
b. National security problems							
10/3/10	66	22	44	33	23	9	1
9/6/02	70	20	50	29	20	9	1
1/27/02	78	27	51	22	18	4	*
c. Problems in health care							
10/3/10	44	13	30	56	29	27	1
d. Problems in Social Security							
10/3/10	40	11	29	58	30	29	2

17. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:
 Whatever its faults, the United States still has the best system of government in the world. Do you agree or disagree?

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
10/3/10	77	21	2
12/19/07*	81	17	1
12/15/00	89	11	*
5/6/96**	83	15	2
4/9/95**	85	14	1
9/1/94**	84	13	3

*ABC News/Facebook; **ABC News

18. Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?

18a. Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	Gov't run by few ----big interests--			Gov't run for ----benefit of all--			Other/ depends (vol)	No opinion
	NET	Strong	Smwt	NET	Strong	Smwt		
10/3/10	65	45	20	31	13	19	NA	4

19. Considering all the problems a big country like this faces today, do you feel it is possible for the federal government to be run well or not?

Based on one half of total respondents (N=1022)

	10/3/10
Yes, possible for government to be run well	79
No, not possible for government to be run well	20
No opinion	1

Compare to Harris:

Considering all the problems a big country like this faces today, do you feel...your federal government can be run well or not?

	9/22/73
Yes, can be run well	86
No, can't be run well	8
No opinion	6

20. Considering all the different things people, businesses and other groups want in a big country like this, do you feel it is possible for the federal government to be run well or not?

Based on one half of total respondents (N=1032)

	10/3/10
Yes, possible for government to be run well	78
No, not possible for government to be run well	20
No opinion	1

21. Do you think the federal government threatens your own personal rights and freedoms, or not?

21a. Is this a MAJOR threat or a MINOR threat?

	-----Threat-----			Not a threat	No opinion
	NET	Major	Minor		
10/3/10	46	24	22	52	2
3/25/10*	47	30	17	50	2
10/29/03	45	18	27	54	1
8/13/02	32	13	18	63	3
11/12/01	30	14	14	67	3
6/25/00	46	23	23	52	2
12/4/95	42	20	21	54	4
5/14/95	36	12	24	62	1

*Pew Research Center

22. I'm going to read you pairs of phrases, and for each pair, please tell me which statement you agree with more. Here's the first pair: (items rotated).

22a. Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	10/3/10
Government policies generally reflect my values (NET)	42
Feel that way strongly	12
Feel that way somewhat	30
Government policies generally do not reflect my values (NET)	54
Feel that way strongly	26
Feel that way somewhat	28
Mixed/Both/Neither (vol)	2
No opinion	2

COMPARE TO:

Council for Excellence in Government

I am going to read you pairs of phrases, and for each pair, please tell me which statement you agree with more.

	6/1/99
Government policies generally reflect my values (NET)	35
Agree much more	15
Agree somewhat more	20
Government policies generally do not reflect my values (NET)	53
Agree much more	27
Agree somewhat more	26
Mixed/Both/Neither (vol)	9
No opinion	3

23. (I'm going to read you pairs of phrases, and for each pair, please tell me which statement you agree with more) Here's the next pair: (items rotated).

23a. Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	10/3/10
Government programs have helped me and my family (NET)	44
Feel that way strongly	21
Feel that way somewhat	23
Government programs have not helped me and my family (NET)	54
Feel that way strongly	33
Feel that way somewhat	19
Mixed/Both/Neither (vol)	2
No opinion	1

COMPARE TO:

Council for Excellence in Government

I am going to read you pairs of phrases, and for each pair, please tell me which statement you agree with more.

	6/1/99
Government programs have helped me and my family (NET)	41
Agree much more	20
Agree somewhat more	21
Government programs have not helped me and my family (NET)	52
Agree much more	27
Agree somewhat more	25
Mixed/Both/Neither (vol)	4
No opinion	3

24. When you think and talk about government, do you tend to think of it more as "the government" or more as "our government"?

	Think of it as "the government"	Think of it as "our government"	No opinion
10/3/10	55	44	1
6/1/99*	55	42	3

*Council for Excellence in Government

25. Thinking about all the federal government does for you, do you think you get (more) value than what you pay in taxes, (less) value than what you pay in taxes, or about the right amount? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

Based on one half of total respondents (N=1024)

	Get more value than what you pay in taxes	Get less value than what you pay in taxes	About the right amount	No opinion
10/3/10	7	55	37	1

26. Thinking about all the federal government does for you - including providing for things like national defense, Social Security, food stamps and environmental protection - do you think you get (more) value than what you pay in taxes, (less) value than what you pay in taxes, or about the right amount? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

Based on one half of total respondents (N=1030)

	Get more value than what you pay in taxes	Get less value than what you pay in taxes	About the right amount	No opinion
10/3/10	9	48	41	2

27. I'm going to read you a list of federal government programs and for each one, please tell me how important you think this program is. Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important? (First,) what about... (INSERT)? (items scrambled)

a. Medicare

	---- Important ----			----- Not important-----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not very	Not at all	opin.
10/3/10	96	74	22	4	2	2	1
3/24/99	97	80	17	3	2	1	*

b. Social Security

	---- Important ----			----- Not important-----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not very	Not at all	opin.
10/3/10	95	77	18	5	3	2	1
3/24/99	97	85	12	3	2	1	*

c. Defense spending

	---- Important ----			----- Not important-----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not very	Not at all	opin.
10/3/10	90	56	34	8	6	3	2
3/24/99	87	48	39	11	8	3	2

d. Food stamps

	---- Important ----			----- Not important-----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not very	Not at all	opin.
10/3/10	82	41	41	17	11	6	1
3/24/99	76	26	50	23	15	8	1

e. Foreign aid

	---- Important ----			----- Not important-----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not very	Not at all	opin.
10/3/10	62	17	45	36	21	15	2
3/24/99	60	14	46	38	25	13	2

f. Federal aid to public schools

	---- Important ----			----- Not important-----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not very	Not at all	opin.
10/3/10	91	71	20	8	5	4	1
3/24/99	91	71	20	9	5	4	1

g. Unemployment benefits

	---- Important ----			----- Not important-----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not very	Not at all	opin.
10/3/10	91	55	35	9	6	3	1

h. Environmental protection

	---- Important ----			----- Not important-----			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not very	Not at all	opin.
10/3/10	89	55	34	10	7	3	*

28. In general, would you rather have: (a). (The federal government provide more services, even if it costs more in taxes) OR (b). (The federal government cost less in taxes, but provide fewer services)? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

	More services/even if more taxes	Fewer services/ less taxes	No opinion
10/3/10	49	47	4
2/5/03	44	48	7
10/18/01*	52	36	12
9/28/95	39	57	4
1/3/95**	29	64	7
8/26/94*	28	57	16

*Newsweek; **ABC News

29. Do you think the federal government can balance its budget just by cutting wasteful spending, or do you think it would also have to cut some useful government programs?

	Just by cutting wasteful spending	Also have to cut useful gov't programs	No opinion
10/3/10	50	47	4
7/17/95	43	55	2
1/29/95	47	51	3

30. Thinking about the Congress, do you think your own representative in Congress is more interested in doing what's best for the country or what's best for your own congressional district where you live?

	What's best for the country	What's best for your district	Both (vol)	Neither (vol)	Depends (vol)	No opin.
10/3/10	39	46	NA	NA	NA	15
1/31/99*	33	48	4	5	1	9
9/11/94**	26	65	NA	NA	NA	10

*Center for the Study of Policy Attitudes, University of Maryland; **ABC News

31. Do you think your own representative in Congress SHOULD BE more interested in doing what's best for the country or what's best for your own congressional district where you live?

	What's best for the country	What's best for your district	Both (vol)	Neither (vol)	Depends (vol)	No opin.
10/3/10	58	38	NA	NA	NA	5
1/31/99*	52	38	8	*	1	1
9/11/94**	63	33	NA	NA	NA	4

*Center for the Study of Policy Attitudes, University of Maryland; **ABC News

32. Do you want your representative in Congress to fight for more government spending in your congressional district, in order to create jobs; or do you want your representative to fight to cut government spending, even if it means fewer jobs in your district?

	Fight for more gov't spending	Fight to cut gov't spending	Fight to maintain current spending (vol)	No opinion
10/3/10	57	39	*	4
9/11/94*	42	53	2	3

*ABC News

33. Do you think the U.S. Supreme Court should base its rulings (on its understanding of what the U.S. Constitution meant as it was originally written), or should the court base its rulings (on its understanding of what the U.S. Constitution means in current times)? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

	What is meant as originally written	What it means in current times	Somewhere in between (vol)	No opinion
10/3/10	50	46	1	3
7/21/05	46	50	3	1

34. Which of these statements comes closer to your view? It is never justified, under any circumstance, for Americans to take violent action against the United States government. OR Under some circumstances, it may be justified for Americans to take violent action against the government?

	It is never justified under any circumstances	Under some circumstances it may be justified	No opinion
10/3/10	66	30	4
4/6/09*	55	34	11
10/31/97*	71	27	2

*Pew Research Center

35. For each of the following possible changes, please tell me whether it would make the government in Washington work better, worse or would not make a difference either way? First, how about (INSERT), would that make government work better, worse or would not make a difference either way? How about (INSERT NEXT ITEM)? (items scrambled)

10/3/10	Better	Worse	No diff.	No opin.
a. Passing a constitutional amendment that requires a balanced budget	60	12	25	3
b. Making it easier for third parties to compete in politics	52	13	30	5
c. Having a national referendum system in which all citizens voted on proposals that deal with major national issues—voting either for them or against them—before they became law	56	18	22	3

36. Thinking specifically about the upcoming congressional elections, so far, would you say that you're very interested, somewhat interested, not too interested, or not interested at all?

	---- Interested ----			-----Not interested-----			No opinion
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Not too	Not at all	*
10/3/10	79	44	35	21	13	8	*

37. Compared to the presidential election in 2008, would you say you are more interested in the upcoming election than you were two years ago, less interested, or about the same?

	More	Less	About the same	No opinion
10/3/10	29	18	53	*

38. Are you registered to vote at your present address, or not?

	Yes, registered	No, not registered	No opinion
10/3/10	80	20	*

39. Between now and the November election, how likely are you to (INSERT)? Are you very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or not likely at all to do that between now and November 2nd? How about (INSERT NEXT ITEM)? (items rotated)

	-----Likely---			----Not Likely---			Already done (vol)	No opin.
	NET	Very	Smwt	NET	Smwt	Not at all		
a. Try to convince someone to vote for a certain candidate or party	47	22	25	52	13	39	*	*
b Attend a political meeting, rally or speech	38	14	24	61	14	47	*	*
c. Contribute money to a political candidate or party	27	10	17	72	13	59	1	1

40. Regardless of how you plan to vote, which of the following would you most like to see result from the congressional elections this November: a (Democratic) majority in Congress or a (Republican) majority in Congress? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

	10/3/10 (adults)	10/3/10 (RV)
A Democratic majority in Congress	48	45
A Republican majority in Congress	40	41
Split control of Houses (vol.)	4	4
No opinion	8	9

41. Would you lean toward (Democratic control of Congress) or toward (Republican control of Congress)? (asked of those who volunteered "split control" or offered no opinion; verbiage in parentheses rotated)

Q40/Q41. Net Table (based on total)

	10/3/10 (All adults)	10/3/10 (RV)
Democratic/leaned Democratic majority	50	47
Prefer Democrat	48	45
Lean Democrat	1	2
Republican/leaned Republican majority	41	43
Prefer Republican	40	41
Lean Republican	1	1
Split control (vol)	4	4
No opinion	6	6

42. Which best describes your family's financial situation? Do you feel as if you (are getting ahead financially), have just enough money to maintain your standard of living, or (are falling behind financially)? (verbiage in parentheses rotated)

	Getting ahead financially	Have just enough money to maintain your standard of living	Falling behind financially	No opinion
10/3/10	15	56	28	1
1/12/08	21	61	17	1
9/7/07	26	53	20	1
6/3/07	27	53	19	1
11/4/96	28	48	23	1

D1. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as: A Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or what?

	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Other	No opinion
10/3/10	33	22	37	6	2

D1a. Do you lean more towards the: Democratic Party, Or Republican Party? (asked of those who said independent/other or offered no opinion)

D1/D1a. Net Table (based on total)

	Democrat/lean Democrat	Republican/lean Republican	Independent	Something else	No opinion
10/3/10	51	38	7	2	1

D1b. Would you call yourself a strong (Democrat/Republican) or not a very strong (Democrat/Republican)? (asked of those who think of themselves as Democrats or Republicans)

D1/D1b. Net Table (based on total)

	10/3/10
Democrat	33
Strong	20
Not very strong	13
Republican	22
Strong	12
Not very strong	9
Independent	37
Other	6
No opinion	2

D1/D1a/D1b. Net Table (based on total)

	10/3/10
Democrat/lean Democrat	51
Strong	20
Not very strong	13
Lean	19
Republican/lean Republican	38
Strong	12
Not very strong	9
Lean	17
Non-lean Independent	7
Other	2
No opinion	1

D2. Would you say your views on most POLITICAL matters are very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative or very conservative?

	---Liberal----				--Conservative-			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	Moderate	NET	Very	Smwt	opinion
10/3/10	29	9	20	29	39	15	24	3
6/3/07	28	8	19	30	39	25	14	3

D3. How about on most SOCIAL issues: would you say your views are very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative or very conservative?

	---Liberal----				--Conservative-			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	Moderate	NET	Very	Smwt	opinion
10/3/10	33	14	19	28	37	14	22	2
6/3/07	31	12	19	27	39	14	25	3

D4. How about on most FISCAL issues - such as taxes and government spending: would you say your views are very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative or very conservative?

	---Liberal----				--Conservative-			No
	NET	Very	Smwt	Moderate	NET	Very	Smwt	opinion
10/3/10	22	6	16	28	47	22	25	3
6/3/07	17	6	11	30	50	19	31	3

D5. What was the last grade of school you completed? (DO NOT READ)

D5a. Was that an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or what?

	10/3/10
8th grade or less	3
Some high school	10
Graduated high school	31
Some college	28
Graduated college	15
Post-graduate training	12
No opinion	1

D6. What is your age?

D6a. Could you please tell me if you are between the ages of (READ LIST)...?

	10/3/10
18-29	22
30-49	36
50-64	25
65+	17
Refused	*

D7. For the following items, please tell me if you or anyone in your household has done this in the past two years. In the past two years, has anyone in your household (INSERT), or not? (scramble items)

	10/3/10	Yes, has done	No, have not done	No opinion
a. Received unemployment benefits		18	82	1
e. Taken an income tax deduction for interest paid on a home mortgage		31	64	5
f. Received health care coverage from Medicare or Medicaid		35	63	1
g. Received Social Security payments		31	68	1

Compare to:

I'm going to mention some other kinds of assistance that people may get from the federal government, and for each, I'd like you to tell me if you or anyone in your household has gotten that kind of assistance in the past two years.) For the past two years, has anyone in your household gotten...

2/20/81

	Gotten assistance	No assistance	No opinion
Unemployment benefits	15	85	--
Income tax deduction for interest paid on a home mortgage	34	63	3
Either Medicare or Medicaid assistance	19	80	1

D8. At present, are you yourself employed part-time or full-time, or are you retired or something else?

	10/3/10
Part-time	13
Full-time	44
Retired	18
Something else	24
Refused	1

D9. Are you of Hispanic origin or background?

D9a. Are you White Hispanic or Black Hispanic?

D10. Are you white, black, or some other race?

	10/3/10
White (non-Hispanic)	68
Black (non-Hispanic)	11
Hispanic (NET)	13
White Hispanic	8
Black Hispanic	2
Hispanic unspecified	3
Asian	2
Mixed race	1
Native American	1
Some other race	2
No opinion	2

D11. Do you or anyone in your household work for the federal, state or local government?

D11a. Which is that - federal, state, or local?

	10/3/10
Someone in household works for government	15
Federal	5
State	5
Local	5
Dk/Refused which level	1
No one in household works for government	84
No opinion	1

D12. Overall, would you say you support the political movement known as the Tea Party, you oppose the Tea Party, or that you neither support nor oppose it?

D12a. Do you feel that way STRONGLY or SOMEWHAT?

	10/3/10
Support the Tea Party movement	21
Strongly	13
Somewhat	8
Oppose the Tea Party movement	22
Strongly	18
Somewhat	4
Neither support nor oppose it	49
No opinion	8

D12b. Would you say you LEAN towards supporting or opposing the Tea Party movement? (asked of those who neither support nor oppose the tea party)

D12/D12a/D12b. Net Table (based on total)

	10/3/10
Support/lean towards supporting	38
Support strongly	13
Support somewhat	8
Lean support	17
Oppose/lean towards opposing	36
Oppose strongly	18
Oppose somewhat	4
Lean oppose	14
Neither support or oppose it	18
No opinion	8

D13. Do you own or rent your home?

	Own	Rent	Other arrang. (vol)	No opinion
10/3/10	70	25	4	1

D14. Are there any children under age 18 living in your home, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
10/3/10	37	62	2

D15. Which of the following CATEGORIES best describes your total annual household income before taxes, from all sources?
 D15a. Is that 100 to under 150 thousand, 150 to under 200 thousand, 200 to under 250 thousand, or 250 thousand or more?

Income Summary Table based on total

Less than \$20K	15
\$20K but less than \$35K	16
\$35K but less than \$50K	16
\$50K but less than \$75K	14
\$75K but less than \$100K	10
\$100K or more (NET)	16
\$100 to under \$150K	10
\$150 to under \$200K	3
\$200 to under \$250K	1
\$250K or more	1
Don't know	4
Refused	9

D16. REGION

	Northeast	North central	South	West
10/3/10	18	22	37	23

D17. METRO STATUS

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
10/3/10	54	30	16

D18. GENDER OF RESPONDENT

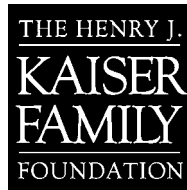
	Male	Female
10/3/10	49	51

The following question was added to a national omnibus survey, conducted by telephone from September 30 - October 3, 2010 among a nationally representative random sample of 1,002 adults ages 18 and older. Telephone interviews conducted by landline (671) and cell phone (331, including 132 who had no landline telephone) were carried out in English and Spanish by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). The margin of sampling error for results based on the total sample is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points.

Q01. Thinking about the federal government in Washington, if you had to use a single word to describe your feelings about the federal government, what would that one word be? (OPEN-END)

Responses given by at least 5 respondents shown

Response	Unweighted count of respondents
Disappointed	46
Good	37
Incompetent	27
Sucks	21
Confused	19
Poor	19
Corrupt	15
Dysfunctional	12
Inefficient	12
Bad	11
Big	11
Crooked	11
Disgusted	11
Frustrated	11
Adequate	9
Okay	9
Terrible	9
Inadequate	8
Necessary	8
Challenging	7
Chaos	7
Complicated	7
Disaster	7
Lousy	7
Unfair	7
Untrustworthy	7
Average	6
Bloated	6
Fair	6
Gridlock	6
Improvement	6
Ineffective	6
Joke	6
Mess	6
Too big	6
Crap	5
Dishonest	5
Greedy	5
Indifferent	5
Overpaid	5
Satisfied	5
Stinks	5
Trying	5
Other responses	298



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