



AEI Public Opinion Studies

Taking Stock of Business

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CONFIDENCE: *Three pollsters—Gallup, the National Opinion Research Center, and Harris Interactive—have asked questions about confidence in business for more than thirty years, and their results are shown below. Gallup shows the proportion expressing a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in big business dropping to 16 percent in 2009. In the late 1990s and the early part of this decade when the economy was humming, around three in ten had high confidence. Harris’s question shows that just 15 percent in 2010 placed a great deal of confidence in the people in charge of running major companies. Twenty-seven percent said they had hardly any confidence. These low ratings stand in stark contrast to the ratings for business (and many other key institutions) in the late 1990s. NBC News and the Wall Street Journal have asked about large corporations, small business, Wall Street, and the financial industry. In early 2009, 13 percent had a great deal of confidence in large corporations and separately, Wall Street, while 10 percent had high confidence in the financial industry.*

Still, 26 percent completely agreed and 50 percent mostly agreed in a 2009 Pew poll that the strength of this country is mostly based on the success of American business. In a March 2009 Gallup poll, 32 percent said big business represented the biggest threat to the country in the future; 53 percent said big government did.

	Quite a lot	Some	Very little
1973	26%	36%	30%
1975	34	36	25
1977	33	34	27
1978	27	38	30
1979	32	37	28
1980	29	39	28
1981	24	35	36
1983	28	39	28
1985	32	41	24
1986	28	40	28
1988	25	42	30
1990	25	40	31
1991	22	42	32
1993	23	44	31
1994	26	42	30
1995	21	50	26
1996	24	46	28
1997	28	43	27
1998	31	42	24
1999	30	44	25
2000	29	45	24
2001	28	44	26
2002	20	47	32
2003	22	44	31
2004	24	42	33
2005	22	45	29
2006	18	40	36
2007	18	39	38

2008	20	43	32
2009	16	42	36

Small business

1997*	63%	30%	5%
1998*	57	34	9
2007	59	32	7
2008	60	31	7
2009	67	26	7

NOTE: *Source is Gallup/CNN/USA Today.

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.

Q: As far as people in charge of running major companies are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them?

People in charge of running major companies

	Great deal	Only some	Hardly any
1966	55%	35%	5%
1967	47	32	6
1971	27	50	15
1972	27	44	21
1973	28	52	16
1974	16	48	33
1975	20	48	25
1976	19	51	23
1977	20	51	23
1978	23	55	17
1979	17	51	27
1980	16	54	27
1981	16	60	22
1982	17	60	20
1983	18	61	19
1984	21	58	18
1985	18	63	18
1986	17	60	20
1987	22	61	14
1988	16	60	23
1989	17	60	23
1990	15	68	16
1991	16	63	18
1992	11	63	24
1993	17	65	16
1994	20	59	18
1995	23	60	16
1996	21	59	18
1997	21	57	19
1998	21	58	17
1999	23	59	15
2000	28	56	13
2001	20	63	13
2002	16	56	24
2002	13	51	31
2003	—	—	—

2004	12	55	30
2005	17	59	24
2006	13	62	25
2007	16	58	25
2008	14	53	29
2009	11	52	35
2010	15	56	27

People in charge of running small businesses

2005	47	47	6
2006	45	47	6
2007	54	42	3
2008	47	45	5
2009	48	43	6
2010	50	42	5

People in charge of running Wall Street

1989	8	56	31
1990	21	-	-
1991	14	-	-
1992	13	-	-
1993	13	-	-
1994	15	-	-
1995	13	-	-
1996	17	58	20
1997	17	-	-
1998	18	-	-
1999	30	-	-
2000	30	46	11
2001	23	51	16
2002	19	54	18
2003	12	50	31
2004	17	50	23
2005	15	59	23
2006	15	56	24
2007	17	51	24
2008	11	52	27
2009	4	33	57
2010	8	43	45

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: Would you say your overall opinion of business corporations is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

Business corporations

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Jun. 1985	8%	50%	24%	7%
Jan. 1988	6	53	27	5
Nov. 1991	8	57	22	6

Jul. 1994	8	62	19	5
Oct. 1995	6	54	29	7
Feb1996*	9	50	24	10
Jun1996*	10	52	25	6
May1997*	9	50	21	7
Jun1997*	8	61	18	7
Aug.1997*	7	63	19	6
Sept. 1999	8	65	19	3
Mar. 2001	9	56	19	6
Jul. 2001+	9	50	21	6
Mar. 2002	10	52	23	6
Jul. 2005	9	40	29	11
Oct. 2005	8	37	29	16
Dec. 2005-Dec. 2006	9	48	25	10
Jan. 2007	9	48	22	8
Apr. 2008	10	37	30	15

NOTE: *Question wording began, "I'd like your opinion of some people and organizations..." +Question wording began, "I'd like your opinion of some groups and organizations in the news...?"

SOURCE: Pew Research Center.

Q: I'm going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the people running these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them . . . major companies?

People running major companies

	Great deal	Only some	Hardly any
1973	29%	53%	11%
1974	31	51	14
1975	19	54	21
1976	22	51	22
1977	27	56	12
1978	22	58	16
1979	—	—	—
1980	27	53	14
1981	—	—	—
1982	23	58	14
1983	24	59	13
1984	31	57	9
1985	—	—	—
1986	24	62	10
1987	30	58	8
1988	25	60	11
1989	24	60	10
1990	25	61	11
1991	20	62	13
1992	—	—	—
1993	21	63	12
1994	25	61	10
1995	—	—	—
1996	23	59	14
1997	—	—	—
1999	26	57	13
2000	—	—	—

2001	28	57	11
2002	—	—	—
2003	17	63	18
2004	19	64	18
2006	18	64	18
2008	16	66	16

SOURCE: National Opinion Research Center.

Q: I'm going to read you the names of some institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one: a great deal, quite a lot, some, very little, or none at all?

	Great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None at all
Large corporations					
Jul. 1998	13%	18%	42%	22%	2%
Dec. 2000	9	17	42	22	8
Jan. 2002	8	14	44	23	9
Jul. 2002	4	8	37	32	17
Jul. 2007	5	6	37	30	19
Sep. 2008	2	9	33	33	21
Jan. 2009	6	7	31	35	20
Small business					
Dec. 2000	31	28	27	8	3
Jul. 2002	30	30	31	5	2
Jul. 2007	26	28	31	9	3
Jan. 2009	28	30	30	7	3
Wall Street					
Jan. 2009	6	7	25	31	28
The financial industry					
Dec. 2000	11	25	45	13	4
Jul. 2002	5	10	49	27	8
Jul. 2007	5	11	48	21	9
Sep. 2008	5	5	33	37	18
Jan. 2009	4	6	28	34	26

NOTE: *Question asked only of registered voters.

SOURCE: NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*.

Q: How much confidence do you, yourself, have in large business corporations . . . a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?

Large business corporations	Great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little
Sep. 1981*	9%	17%	40%	31%
Dec. 1983*	10	22	36	30
Sep. 1990	11	15	42	29
Jan. 1991	8	16	49	25
Oct. 1991	9	13	45	31
Nov. 1991	11	15	47	26
Apr. 1992*+	9	12	51	25
Jun. 2002	9	15	43	33
Jul. 2002*^	6	10	47	35
Jul. 2002*+	4	11	45	37

NOTE: *Question was asked about “big business.” +Question asked by CBS News/*New York Times*. ^Question asked by CBS News. When asked by CBS, question wording is: “How much confidence do you have in big business . . . A great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?”

SOURCE: ABC News/*Washington Post*.

Q: Now I'm going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one—a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little.

	A great deal of confidence		Quite a lot of confidence		Some confidence		Very little confidence	
	2009/2008		2009/2008		2009/2008		2009/2008	
The military	45%	45%	37%	26%	12%	20%	5%	7%
Small business	30	28	37	32	26	31	7	7
The police	28	28	31	30	29	30	10	10
The church/Organized religion	29	26	23	22	29	31	14	15
The presidency	26	13	25	13	24	25	19	21
U.S. Supreme Court	15	13	24	19	41	44	17	17
Public schools	15	16	23	17	39	42	20	22
Medical system	15	16	21	19	41	38	21	24
Criminal justice system	11	8	17	12	44	44	25	32
Newspapers	10	10	15	14	43	45	27	26
Television news	10	11	13	13	41	43	31	28
Banks	8	11	14	21	49	45	26	21
Organized labor	8	10	11	10	40	44	34	28
Health Maintenance Organizations	8	6	10	7	44	41	31	38
Congress	6	6	11	6	45	45	34	38
Big Business	6	7	10	13	42	43	36	32

NOTE: We show here the latest rankings on this question.

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization, June 2008 and June 2009.

Q: I am going to read you a series of questions that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree . . .

-----The strength of this country today is mostly based on the success of American business-----

	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree
May 1987	16%	60%	16%	3%
May 1988	25	54	14	3
Feb. 1989	23	54	14	4
May 1990	20	57	14	3
Nov. 1991	29	47	15	6
Jun. 1992	24	54	15	5
Jul. 1994	26	52	15	5
Nov. 1997	22	54	16	5
Sep. 1999	23	53	14	5
Feb. 2002	25	51	16	4
Aug. 2002	22	50	18	6
Aug. 2003	26	49	15	6
Dec.2006-				
Jan. 2007	19	53	18	6
Apr. 2009	26	50	15	5

SOURCE: Pew Research Center.

Q: Next, I'm going to read some aspects of life in America today. For each one, please say whether you are – very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied. How about . . . ?

	-----The size and influence of major corporations-----			
	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Jan. 2001	7	41	31	17
Jan. 2002	7	43	30	17
Jan. 2003	6	37	33	21
Jan. 2004	7	31	34	27
Jan. 2005	7	31	32	27
Jan. 2006	6	29	30	32
Jan. 2007	8	31	28	30
Jan. 2008	6	29	28	33

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.

Q: How much confidence do you have in business living up to its responsibility to the American public—a great deal of confidence, some confidence, or no real confidence?

Business living up to its responsibility

		Great deal	Some	None
Oct. 1979	Yankelovich	14%	57%	25%
Oct. 1995	Pew	10	65	23
Jun. 2002	Pew	10	52	35

SOURCE: Yankelovich, Skelly and White and the Pew Research Center.

Q: In general, how would you rate the job being done by. . . . ?

	Excellent 2005/1993		Good 2005/1993		Fair 2005/1993		Poor 2005/1993	
Corporate America	7%	4%	32%	39%	39%	44%	21%	11%
Labor Unions	7	4	25	30	47	39	18	23

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: Do you think _____ has/have too much or too little power and influence in Washington?

		-----Power & Influence in Washington-----		
		Too much	Too little	About right
Big Companies	Feb. 2009	85%	10%	2%
	Feb. 2010	87	9	2
Banks and financial institutions	Feb. 2010	83	9	3
PACs	Feb. 2009	85	9	2
	Feb. 2010	83	11	1
Political Lobbyists	Feb. 2009	81	14	1
	Feb. 2010	83	11	1
News media	Feb. 2009	75	18	3
	Feb. 2010	66	23	4

Entertainment and sports celebrities	Feb. 2009	70	20	4
	Feb. 2010	61	24	5
TV and Radio Talk Shows	Feb. 2009	59	29	5
	Feb. 2010	55	33	5
Trade Associations	Feb. 2009	55	30	2
	Feb. 2010	57	24	3
Labor Unions	Feb. 2009	54	40	3
	Feb. 2010	57	34	3
Opinion Polls	Feb. 2009	38	51	5
	Feb. 2010	31	55	4
Churches and Religious Groups	Feb. 2009	34	57	4
	Feb. 2010	35	54	3
Racial Minorities	Feb. 2009	33	53	6
	Feb. 2010	32	52	6
Nonprofit Organizations	Feb. 2009	19	71	3
	Feb. 2010	21	67	3
Public Opinion	Feb. 2009	18	76	3
	Feb. 2010	13	82	2
Small Business	Feb. 2009	5	90	3
	Feb. 2010	4	93	1

Trends since 1994:

	-----Big Business-----		----- Small Business-----	
	Too much	Too little	Too much	Too little
1994	86%	9%	4%	92%
1999	82	8	3	85
2000	84	6	5	85
2001	86	6	5	88
2002	84	5	5	87
2003	80	10	4	88
2004	83	9	5	88
2005	90	5	4	92
2007	84	11	6	90
2008	86	8	4	90
2009	85	10	5	90
2010	87	9	4	93

NOTE: The 2009 party breakdown for those who say Big Companies have too much power for Republicans is 84 percent, for Democrats 88 percent, and Independents 86 percent. In 2010 the party breakdown for Republicans is 80 percent, for Democrats 86 percent, and independents 95 percent.

SOURCE: Harris Interactive

Q: For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree with it. There is too much power concentrated in the hands of a few big companies.

	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree
Nov. 1991	41%	39%	14%	3%
Jun. 1992	30	47	18	3
May 1993	26	46	22	3
Jul. 1994	31	42	22	4
Nov. 1997	31	42	20	5
Sep. 1999	31	43	20	3
Aug. 2002	33	44	16	4
Aug. 2003	40	37	15	5
Dec. 2006-				
Jan. 2007	38	38	17	4
Apr. 2009	32	45	16	5

SOURCE: PSRA/Pew Research Center.

Q: For each of the following major US institutions, please tell me if your impression is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable.

Mar. 2010	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Small business	33%	46%	6%	3%
Corporate executives	2	18	34	31
Banks	5	30	36	17
Wall Street	2	22	34	23
Congress	5	17	33	34
The White House	14	30	19	26
The Federal Reserve	7	35	19	12
Insurance companies	4	24	35	25

SOURCE: Bloomberg.

Q: Would you like to see major corporations have more influence in this nation, less influence, or keep their influence as it is now?

	More influence	Keep as it is now	Less influence
Jan. 2001	10%	36%	52%
Jan. 2002	8	37	53
Jan. 2003	8	30	60
Jan. 2004	9	30	60
Jan. 2005	9	30	60
Jan. 2006	7	26	65
Jan. 2007	10	27	61
Jan. 2008	7	24	68

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.

Q: In your opinion which of the following will be the biggest threat to the country in the future—big business, big

labor, or big government?

	Big business	Big labor	Big government
Sep. 1954	16%	46%	16%
Feb. 1965	17	29	35
Dec. 1966	14	21	48
Jul. 1968	12	26	46
Nov. 1969	19	28	33
Jan. 1977	23	26	38
Sep. 1978	19	19	47
May 1979	28	17	43
Sep. 1981	22	22	46
May 1983	19	18	51
Jun. 1985	22	19	50
Aug. 1995	24	9	64
Dec. 1998	24	7	64
Aug. 1999	24	8	65
Oct. 2000	22	7	65
Jul. 2002	38	10	47
Nov. 2003	29	9	57
Dec. 2004	27	11	57
Dec. 2005	27	8	61
Dec. 2006	26	9	61
Dec. 2008	31	11	53
Mar. 2009	32	10	55

NOTE: Question wording in 1954 was “One problem is keeping any group in the United States from getting too big and powerful. Where do you feel this problem is greatest today – with big businesses or big labor unions or big government?”

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization. The 1954 survey was conducted by Opinion Research Corporation.

Q: What do you think is a greater potential threat to the country’s future – big business or big government?

	Big business	Big government	Both/same
Apr. 2009	30%	46%	18%
Apr. 2010	26	57	13

SOURCE: Fox News/OD.

Q: Who do you think is better qualified to manage American businesses and corporations – the federal government or business executives?

	Federal govt. is better qualified to manage businesses	Business executives
Mar.-Apr. 2009	26%	51%

Q: Who do you think is better qualified to manage major American businesses and corporations that are having financial problems – the federal government or business executives?

	Federal govt. is better qualified to manage businesses	Business executives
Jun. 2009	27%	49%

SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.

Q: Who do you trust more to solve the United States' economic problems – the U.S. government or U.S. businesses?

	Trust U.S. Government	Businesses
Mar. 2009	53%	42%

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.

Q: As a result of the current economic situation has your opinion of business leaders (e.g. company chief executives, finance directors) in your country . . . ? (United States)

	Become better	Stayed about the same	Become worse
Mar. 2009	6%	26%	68%

NOTE: Responses for a handful of European countries are available from Harris Interactive.

SOURCE: Harris Interactive/*Financial Times*.

Q: Which of the following two statements best reflects your attitudes toward big financial companies and the role they play in this country?

Mar. 2010	
They have a vital function that enables the economy to grow	40%
They enrich themselves at the expense of ordinary people and have a negative impact on the economy	56

SOURCE: Bloomberg.

WALL STREET: *Opinions of Wall Street have been mixed as long as pollsters have measured them. The Harris trend on confidence in the people in charge of running Wall Street shows a sharp rise in high confidence in the late 1990s followed by a sharp drop when the question was asked in December 2002 continuing to the present. In February 2009 there was an even sharper drop. Only four percent had a great deal of confidence in the people in charge of running Wall Street, 33 percent only some, and 57 percent hardly any. In 2010, there was been a slight uptick in positive views. Views on whether Wall Street benefits the country have been relatively stable but they have taken a turn downward recently. In February 2010, 55 percent expressed a positive opinion of what Wall Street does. Fifty-nine percent in 2010 also said that Wall Street is absolutely essential because it provides the money business must have for investment. At the same time, however, a majority of those surveyed say (as they have in earlier iterations of the question since 1996) that most people on Wall Street would be willing to break the law if they believed they could make a lot of money and get away with it. The view that people on Wall Street are as honest and moral as other people has dropped since 1997, when 51 percent gave that response. Only 31 percent agreed in 2010.*

Q: As far as people in charge of running Wall Street are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them?

	-----People in charge of running Wall Street-----		
	Great deal	Only some	Hardly any
1977	19%	NA	NA
1978	15	NA	NA
1980	12	NA	NA
1981	13	53%	22%
1987	12	59	21
1988	10	58	29
1989	8	58	30
1990	9	55	31
1991	9	57	26
1992	12	56	26
1993	14	63	19
1994	16	58	17
1995	14	61	19
1996	18	59	19
1997	19	57	17
1998	19	56	15
1999	30	NA	NA
2000	30	46	11
2001	23	51	11
2002 (Jan)	19	54	18
2002 (Dec)	12	50	31
2004	17	50	23
2005	15	59	23
2006	15	56	24

2007	17	51	24
2008	11	52	27
2009	4	33	57
2010	8	43	45

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: The words “Wall Street” are often used to describe the nation’s largest banks, investment banks, brokerage and other financial institutions. Overall, would you say Wall Street benefits the country a lot, benefits the country somewhat, harms the country somewhat, or harms the country a lot?

	Benefits country a lot	Benefits somewhat	Harms somewhat	Harms a lot
1996	19%	51%	16%	6%
1997	27	53	10	3
1998	22	51	16	3
1999	24	48	11	3
2000	22	47	13	3
2002	23	43	17	7
2003	24	44	11	5
2006	22	51	17	6
2009	17	37	25	14
2010	11	44	24	14

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: Please say if you tend to agree or disagree with the following statements about Wall Street?

Wall Street is absolutely essential because it provides the money businesses must have for investment.

	Agree	Disagree
1996	69%	25%
1997	69	27
1998	73	24
1999	69	23
2000	72	21
2002	66	26
2003	62	24
2006	71	25
2009	62	32
2010	59	34

Most people on Wall Street would be willing to break the law if they believed they could make a lot of money and get away with it.

	Agree	Disagree
1996	64%	33%
1997	56	40
1998	56	41
1999	60	34
2000	60	33
2002	61	34
2003	54	34

2006	63	35
2009	71	27
2010	66	29

Wall Street only cares about money and absolutely nothing else.

	Agree	Disagree
1996	57%	39%
1997	48	48
1998	57	39
1999	56	37
2000	57	36
2002	56	40
2003	53	35
2006	59	38

Wall Street is dominated by greed and selfishness.

	Agree	Disagree
1996	57%	39%
1997	48	48
1998	57	39
1999	56	37
2000	57	36
2002	56	40
2003	53	35
2006	59	38

Most successful people on Wall Street deserve to make the kind of money they earn.

	Agree	Disagree
1996	40%	55%
1997	51	44
1998	48	47
1999	45	46
2000	42	50
2002	36	58
2003	37	51
2006	40	56
2009	30	66
2010	29	65

In general, what is good for Wall Street is good for the country.

	Agree	Disagree
1997	39%	57%
1998	43	53
1999	42	51
2000	41	52
2002	40	55
2003	39	47
2006	37	60

2009	37	59
2010	33	61

In general, people on Wall Street are as honest and moral as other people.

	Agree	Disagree
1996	43%	52%
1997	51	45
1998	49	47
1999	39	51
2000	35	56
2002	35	57
2003	35	50
2006	41	54
2009	26	70
2010	31	64

Recent events have shown that Wall Street should be subject to tougher regulations.

	Agree	Disagree
2009	87%	10%
2010	82	14

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree with it.

Wall Street makes an important contribution to the American economy

	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree
Apr. 2009	17%	46%	20%	8%

Wall Street only cares about making money for itself

	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree
Apr. 2009	28%	39%	21%	6%

SOURCE: PSRA/Pew Research Center.

EXECUTIVE PAY AND BONUSES: *Americans think many people in America are overpaid including CEOs, star athletes, celebrities, members of Congress, and media anchors. The amount CEOs, corporate executives, and financiers on Wall Street make has come under close scrutiny in the wake of the economic crisis. Large majorities of Americans, 66 percent in a 2009 Harris poll and 65 percent in 2010, do not believe that most successful people on Wall Street deserve to make the kind of money they earn. This is a marked change from 1997 when 51 percent of those polled said they deserved the money they made.*

Most Americans do not, however, want to pass laws regulating CEO pay in general. When asked about the topic in late March and early April 2009 by Fox News/Opinion Dynamics pollsters, 56 percent said the federal government should not be allowed to regulate the salaries of corporate executives (38 percent said it should). The same poll found that if those executives worked at companies taking taxpayer bailouts, 64 percent believed the federal government should regulate the salaries. Quinnipiac's late March 2009 results point in the same direction. Sixty-four percent said government should not limit the amount of money that companies not taking federal funds pay their executives (30 percent said the government should). As for companies taking federal funds, 81 percent said the government should limit the amount of money these companies pay their executives.

A CBS News poll from January 2010 found that 27 percent were following news about bonuses that some financial companies on Wall Street were going to pay their executives this year very closely and another 34 percent were following it somewhat closely. In the next question in the poll, 37 percent said they were angry about them, 33 percent bothered, and 28 percent not bothered. An ABC News/Washington Post poll from January 2010 found that 50 percent thought government should try to limit the size of the bonuses of banks that had repaid rescue loans, but 49 percent wanted government to stay out.

Q: Please say if you tend to agree or disagree with the following statements about Wall Street?

Most successful people on Wall Street deserve to make the kind of money they earn.

	Agree	Disagree
1996	40%	55%
1997	51	44
1998	48	47
1999	45	46
2000	42	50
2002	36	58
2003	37	51
2006	40	56
2009	30	66
2010	29	65

Wall Street firms should only pay bonuses when they are doing well and making good profits

	Agree	Disagree
2009	78%	20 %
2010	75	21

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: Thinking about some different positions, how much do you think the following contribute to the well being of our society? Do business executives contribute a lot, some, not very much, or nothing at all to the well being of our society?

Jul. 2009

	A lot	Some	Not very much	Nothing at all
Business executives	21%	43%	22%	9%
Scientists	70	23	3	2
Engineers	64	25	4	2
Journalists	38	41	13	4
Artists	31	43	15	7
Lawyers	23	46	18	9
Members of the military	84	11	3	1
Clergy	40	37	10	5
Medical doctors	69	24	4	1
Teachers	77	17	3	1

SOURCE: Pew Research Center.

Q: How important is it to you that any government plan to deal with the financial problems _____?

Sep. 2008

	Very Important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important
Set limits on compensation for executives at corporations that participate in the plan	63%	18%	9%	7%
Include provisions to help homeowners who cannot pay their mortgages	49	31	10	9

SOURCE: Gallup/USA Today.

Q: How closely have you been following news about bonuses that some financial companies on Wall Street will be paying their executives this year?

Jan. 2010

	Very closely	Somewhat closely	Not too closely	Not at all
Following news about bonuses that some financial companies on Wall Street will be paying their executives this year	27%	34%	19%	17%

SOURCE: CBS News.

Q: Many large banks and financial companies that received bailout money from the government have paid the money back. Which best describes your feelings about these companies now paying their employees bonuses?

	Jan. 2010	Feb. 2010
Angry about the bonuses these companies are paying their employees	37%	40%
Bothered but not angry	33	35
Not bothered	28	23

SOURCE: CBS News.

Q: Do you think banks and financial companies paying bonuses to some of their employees is a major economic problem, a minor economic problem, or is it not a problem?

	Major economic problem	Minor	Not a problem
Jan. 2010	45%	33%	18%

SOURCE: CBS News.

Q: Some governments have considered measures to claw back pensions or bonuses of companies that have received government help in the form of a bailout. How much do you support or oppose such measures in your country? (United States)

	Support	Neither	Oppose
Mar. 2009	68%	13%	14%

NOTE: Responses for a handful of European countries are available from Harris Interactive.

SOURCE: Harris Interactive/*Financial Times*.

Q: Changing topics, as you may know, several banks that received rescue loans from the government have now paid back those loans. Do you think the federal government should try to limit the size of the bonuses these banks can pay to their top employees or do you think the government should stay out of it now that its loans have been repaid?

	Federal government should try to limit the size of bonuses	Should stay out
Jan. 2010	50%	49%

SOURCE: ABC News/*Washington Post*.

Q: Would you support or oppose a special tax on bonuses over one million dollars?

	Support a tax on bonuses over \$1,000,000	Oppose
Jan. 2010	73%	26%

SOURCE: ABC News/*Washington Post*.

Q: Do you think the federal government should ever be allowed to regulate the salaries of corporate executives at American companies?

	Yes, allowed to regulate salaries for American executives	No
Mar.-Apr. 2009	38%	56%

SOURCE: Fox News/*Opinion Dynamics*.

Q: Do you approve or disapprove of the government limiting the salaries of the highest paid executives at companies that received bailout money last year?

	Approve	Disapprove
Oct. 2009	73%	23%

SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.

Q: Do you think the federal government should be allowed to regulate the salaries of corporate executives at American companies that take taxpayer bailouts?

	Yes, allowed to regulate salaries for executives taking money	No
Mar. - Apr. 2009	64%	32%

SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.

Q: Do you think the government should limit the amount of money that companies not taking federal funds pay their executives?

	Yes, limit executive pay for companies not taking money	No
Mar. 24-20, 2009	30%	64%

SOURCE: Quinnipiac University.

Q: Do you think the government should limit the amount of money that companies that are taking federal funds pay their executives?

	Yes, limit executive pay for companies taking money	No
Mar. 2009	81%	16%
Nov. 2009	76	19

SOURCE: Quinnipiac University.

Q: In your opinion do senior executives in your country earn too much each year in salaries and bonuses, too little or about the right amount?

	Too much	Too little	About the right amount
Jul. 2007	77%	1%	10%

NOTE: Responses for a handful of European countries are available from Harris Interactive.
SOURCE: Harris Interactive/*Financial Times*.

Q: How much do you agree or disagree that business leaders in the United States, are generally paid too much?

	Agree	Disagree
Mar. 2009	79%	9%

NOTE: Responses for a handful of European countries are available from Harris Interactive.
SOURCE: Harris Interactive/*Financial Times*.

Q: Do you think that your country's government should set pay caps for heads of companies?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Jul. 2007	32%	47%	22%

NOTE: Responses for a handful of European countries are available from Harris Interactive.
SOURCE: Harris Interactive/*Financial Times*.

Q: How much do you support or opposes bonuses forming a lower part of pay for business leaders of the future?

	Support	Neither	Oppose
Mar. 2009	37%	28%	35%

NOTE: Responses for a handful of European countries are available from Harris Interactive.
SOURCE: Harris Interactive/ *Financial Times*.

Q: Financial institutions in New York paid over 18 billion dollars in bonuses for 2008 when their shareholders lost large amounts of money. Knowing this, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree	Disagree
Feb. 2009		
These bonuses should be returned and the money should instead be paid out to the shareholders	83%	14%
In order to attract and retain the top talent, these companies need to pay out these large bonuses	22	76

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: Next, I'm going to list several things that people have mentioned that disturb them about what is happening in America. Please tell me which one or two of these things, if any, disturb you most.

	Disturbs me
Jan. 2007	
The number of Americans who do not have health insurance	35%
Declining moral values and standards	27
Lack of control over illegal immigration	25
The growing gap between the highest income workers and middle and low-income workers	24
The poor quality and standards in public education	23
American jobs going overseas	20
The amount of pay that CEOs and top corporate executives receive	15

SOURCE: NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*.

Q: In general, do you think most CEOs of large American companies are compensated too much, too little, or just about the right amount?

	Too much	Too little	Right amount
Jun. 2007	81%	1%	14%

SOURCE: *LA Times*/Bloomberg, June 2007.

Q: I would like to read you a few actions that large financial corporations might undertake moving forward. After I read each one, please tell me whether this action would increase the trust you have in them a lot, some or not at all.

Jan. 2010

----Financial corporations action would increase trust----

	A lot	Some	Not at all
Acknowledging mistakes they made that contributed to the financial crisis	48%	31%	18%
Not paying out bonuses to employees	31	32	32
Pay back bailout money they received from the federal government as soon as possible	59	28	11
Supporting tougher government regulation of their industries	32	40	23
Hiring more American workers, even if it significantly decreases their profitability	46	34	17
Helping provide Americans with greater access to programs to become more educated about how to manage their personal finances	42	39	16

SOURCE: Allstate/National Journal Heartland Monitor Poll.

Q: Has what you have seen, read or heard about bonuses for employees and executives of financial services companies made you more likely or less likely to support increased government oversight and regulation of companies in the financial sector?

	More likely	Less likely	No difference
Mar. 2009	46%	34%	10%

SOURCE: FD/Diageo/Hotline.

Q: Would you support or oppose the federal government putting limits on the salaries and other compensation that can be paid to top executives at the companies that received emergency government loans in the past year? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	Support	Oppose
Oct. 2009	71%	27%

SOURCE: ABC News/Washington Post.

Q: Do you favor or oppose the federal government taking steps to limit the pay of executives at major companies?

	Favor	Oppose
Jun. 2009	59%	35%

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.

Q: Which comes closer to your view about companies receiving federal bailout money? It is acceptable for these companies to pay bonuses to whomever they choose. It is acceptable to pay bonuses to only mid- and lower-level employees who do not earn large salaries. It is unacceptable for these companies to pay employees any bonuses no matter who gets them.

	Acceptable for all	Acceptable for mid and low	Unacceptable
Mar. 2009	6%	26%	65%

SOURCE: CBS News.

Q: Do you think each of the following is common practice in corporate America or only happens rarely? . . . Excessive salaries for high level executives.

	Common practice	Happens rarely
Jan. 2009	92%	8%

SOURCE: Knights of Columbus/Marist.

ATTITUDES TOWARD REGULATION: *American's views on regulation have fluctuated over time. In the immediate aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, however, Americans seemed to be more receptive to greater regulation than to the past. Still, in December 2008, CNN and the Opinion Research Corporation found the country split with 39 percent of those surveyed saying there was too much and, conversely, too little regulation of business and industry while 20 percent said there was the right amount. In an August 2009 Gallup question, a plurality, 45 percent, said there was too much regulation of business and only 24 percent too little. In January 2010, perhaps because of the significant federal government involvement in the economy at that time, 57 percent told Gallup they were more worried that there would be too much regulation of business, and 37 percent not enough.*

When questions are narrowed to ask about regulation of banks and financial institutions, the results change. In a February 2009 ABC News/Washington Post poll, 76 percent of Americans supported stricter federal regulation of banks and financial institutions. Twenty-two percent were opposed.

Q: In general, do you think there is too much, too little, or about the right amount of government regulation of business and industry?

		Too much	Right amount	Too little
Mar. 1981	<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	54%	14%	18%
Apr. 1991	<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	27	36	29
Mar. 1993	Gallup	37	30	28
Sep. 2001	Gallup	41	38	17
Feb. 2002	Gallup	28	39	30
Jun. 2002	Gallup	32	30	33
Sep. 2002	Gallup	35	31	31
Sep. 2003	Gallup	37	35	25
Sep. 2004	Gallup	37	24	34
Sep. 2005	Gallup	34	23	40
Sep. 2006	Gallup	36	30	28
Sep. 2007	Gallup	38	33	26
Sep. (early) 2008	Gallup	38	31	27
Sep. (late) 2008	CNN/ORC	38	19	42
Oct. 2008	<i>LA Times</i> /Blomberg	27	14	45
Dec. 2008	CNN/ORC	39	20	39
Aug.-Sept. 2009	Gallup	45	27	24
Dec. 2009*	CNN/ORC	50	30	18

NOTE: *Asked of a half sample.

Q: Which worries you more?

	Too much regulation of business by the government	Not enough regulation of business by the government
Jan. 2010	57%	37%
SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.		

Q: Which of the following do you agree with – the federal government should become more involved in regulating and controlling business, the federal government should become less involved in regulating and controlling business, or things are about right the way they are?

	More involved	Less involved	About right
Jan. 2010	24%	50%	23%
SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.			

Q: Please tell me whether you, personally, are worried or not worried about each of the following . . . The federal government's increasing regulation of business and industry.

	Worried	Not Worried
Jun. 2009	58%	40%
SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.		

Q: Do you think the federal government regulates business too much these days, does it regulate business too little, or does it impose the right amount of regulation on business?

	Too little	Too much	Right amount
Jan. 1986	22%	41%	22%
Feb. 2002	26	35	25
Jul. 2002	37	30	24
Mid Sep. 2008	45	21	18
Late Sep. 2008	43	28	16
Feb. 2009	40	28	18
SOURCE: CBS News/New York Times.			

Q: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements . . . ?

Regulation of business usually does more harm than good

	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree
1982	32%	38%	18%	6%
1987	12	43	30	4
1988	17	40	31	4
1990	16	42	29	4
1992	19	42	28	5
1994	27	36	28	5
1997	20	37	32	5
1999	19	36	31	6
2002	16	32	35	8
2003	15	38	30	9
Dec.2006-				
Jan. 2007	18	39	30	5
March/Apr. 2009	23	31	31	8
SOURCE: PSRA/Pew Research Center.				

Q: All in all, do you think it is a good idea for the government to more strictly regulate the way major financial companies do business?

	Good idea	Bad idea
Mar. - Apr. 2009	60%	31%
Sept. - Oct. 2009	54	38
Feb. 2010	59	33

SOURCE: PSRA/Pew Research Center.

Q: I'm going to read you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. As I read each pair, 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 . . . government regulation of business necessary to protect the public interest, or government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.

	-----Government regulation of business-----	
	Is necessary to protect public interest	Does more harm than good
Jul. 1994	41%	54%
Oct. 1994	38	55
Apr. 1995	43	51
Oct. 1995	45	50
Oct. 1996	45	46
Aug. 1999	48	44
Feb. 2002	50	41
Jul. 2002	54	36
Dec. 2004	49	41
Oct. 2008	50	38
Dec. 2008	47	43

SOURCE: PSRA/Pew Research Center.

Q: I'm going to read you a list of proposed laws and regulations, and for each one, I'd like you to tell me whether you would favor or oppose that law or regulation. Would you favor or oppose more regulations to protect people who own stock in corporations?

	Favor	Oppose
Mar. 2004	65%	26%

SOURCE: NBC News/Wall Street Journal.

Q: In general, do you think there is too much, too little, or about the right amount of government regulation of the stock market and financial institutions?

	Too much	Too little	Right amount
Sep. 2008	26%	50%	21%
Dec. 2008	22	59	18

SOURCE: CNN/Opinion Research Corporation.

Q: How much do you support or oppose increased regulation by your own government of commercial banks? By commercial bank we mean a bank or a division of a bank primarily dealing with deposits and loans from corporations or large businesses.

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Jan.-Feb. 2009	28%	37%	19%	12%

SOURCE: Harris Interactive/*Financial Times*.

Q: How much do you support or oppose increased regulation by your own government of business activities to prevent future financial global market crises?

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Jan.-Feb. 2009	28%	37%	12%	9%

SOURCE: Harris Interactive /*Financial Times*.

Q: Do you support or oppose stricter federal regulations on the way banks and other financial institutions conduct their business?

	Support	Oppose
Feb. 2009	76%	22%
Feb. 2010	62	34
Apr. 2010	65	31

SOURCE: ABC News/*Washington Post*.

Q: Please say if you tend to agree or disagree with the following statements about Wall Street?

Recent events have shown that Wall Street should be subject to tougher regulations

	Agree	Disagree
Feb. 2009	87%	10%

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: President Obama has said he wants increased government regulation of business. Do you think this will be good for the economy, bad for the economy, or not affect the economy?

	Good for the economy	Bad	No effect
Mar. 2009	47%	36%	9%

SOURCE: Quinnipiac University.

Q: When it comes to government regulation of banks and financial institutions, which comes closer to your opinion: 1. The government should increase regulations on these institutions now to help prevent more financial crises from happening again in the future, or 2. The government should not increase regulations on these institutions now, because that will discourage private investors and slow down economic growth.

	Should increase regulations	Should not
Apr. 2009	71%	23%
Feb. 2010	56	36

NOTE: In the February 2010 poll, 36 percent of Republicans, 75 percent of Democrats, and 56 percent of independents stated the government should increase regulations. Fifty four percent of Republicans, 21 percent Democrats, and 34 percent independents stated the government should not increase regulations.

SOURCE: CBS News/*New York Times*.

Q: Generally, do you think that federal regulation of corporations should be increased a great deal, increased somewhat, kept about the same as it is now, decreased somewhat, or decreased a great deal?

	Increased a great deal	Increased somewhat	Kept about the same as it is now	Decreased somewhat	Decreased a great deal
Dec. 2008	27%	40%	17%	10%	6%

Mar. 2009	22	39	20	14	6
Jul. 2009	15	33	25	15	12
Oct. 2009	16	30	29	16	10

SOURCE: Public Strategies/Politico.

Q: When it comes to addressing the economic crisis, which of the following statements comes closer to your view?

Dec. 2009 – Jan. 2010

Government should regulate business and the economy more	45%
More government regulation will hurt business and the economy	55

SOURCE: Knights of Columbus/Marist.

Q: As you may know, Congress is considering legislation that would increase federal regulation over banks, Wall Street investors, and other financial institutions. Based on what you have heard or read about this, do you favor or oppose this legislation?

Mar. 2010

Favor legislation to increase regulation of banks, Wall Street investors, and other financial institutions	53%
Oppose	43

SOURCE: CNN/Opinion Research Corporation.

Q: Which of these industries do you think should be more regulated by government – for example for health, safety or environmental reasons – than they are now?

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Oil companies	52%	48%	55%	54%	53%	53%	47%
Pharmaceutical and drug companies	57	55	51	48	53	49	47
Health insurance companies	59	56	46	48	52	49	45
Banks	21	20	19	17	20	36	40
Managed health care companies, such as HMOs	60	55	43	41	45	39	36
Tobacco companies	44	42	36	38	41	31	33
Electric and gas utilities	-	-	43	38	41	34	32

NOTE: Only industries that had a 2009 rating above 30 percent are shown.

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: When President Obama took office, he said he was determined to address the roots of the financial crisis so that another meltdown would not happen. Do you believe the government has taken enough action to fix what was wrong in the financial industry, has taken too little action, or do you think the government has gone too far and taken action that will be harmful down the road?

	Has taken enough action	Has taken too little action	Has gone too far
Mar. 2010	18%	37%	42%

SOURCE: Bloomberg.

Q: What about Wall Street banks themselves? Do you think banks have taken enough action to change what they do to avoid a future meltdown, have taken too little action, or do you think they've gone too far and made changes that will be harmful down the road?

	Have taken enough action	Has taken too little action	Has gone too far
Mar. 2010	12%	58%	23%

SOURCE: Bloomberg.

Q: Congress is considering a proposal to increase oversight of consumer credit, including mortgages and credit cards. To best serve consumers, do you think this should be a new, separate agency, with complete independence and its own authority to make rules for consumer credit, or would it be better to enhance the existing system to make sure bank regulators do more to protect consumers?

Mar. 2010	
New, separate agency	24%
Enhance the existing system	69

SOURCE: Bloomberg.

Q: Whose responsibility do you think it is to keep large banks and the financial services industry in check, and rebuild public confidence in Wall Street – regulators in Washington, the banks and corporations themselves, or investors?

	Regulators	Banks & Corp.	Investors	All
Apr. 2010	28%	25%	30%	10%

SOURCE: Fox News/OD

Q: Do you think individuals in Wall Street banks whose actions helped cause the financial crisis should be punished by the federal government by limiting their compensation or banning them from working in the industry, or do you think the banks are best able to address individual issues and government should not be dictating what happens at this level?

	Should be punished	Banks can address
Mar. 2010	56%	40%

SOURCE: Bloomberg

Q: Currently there is no government agency with the sole mission of overseeing financial products sold to consumers and small businesses, like mortgages, bank loans, and credit cards. Congress and President Obama are currently discussing creating an agency to create and enforce rules for financial products. Now I'd like to read you two viewpoints about this proposed agency. Please tell me which one comes closest to your own.

Some people say this agency represents one of the worst trends in politics today – Congress failing to take tough choices about regulations and instead giving this job to unaccountable federal bureaucrats. We do not need another federal agency wasting more of our hard earned tax dollars to do work that Congress should be doing.

Other people say that we need a Consumer Financial Protection Agency to create and enforce fair,

affordable, understandable, and transparent rules for financial products and top banks and credit card companies from tricking people with teaser rates, hidden fees, and small print.

Which viewpoint is closest to your own?

	Enough Protection/ No new agency 45%	Too many protections/ Need new agency 50%
Apr. 2010		
SOURCE: GWU/Tarrance.		

Q: Do you favor or oppose Congress passing a law that would give the federal government new powers to regulate ... ?

Apr. 2010*

	Favor 46%	Oppose 43%
Regulate large banks and financial institutions		
Regulate Wall Street Banks	50	36

NOTE: *Both questions asked of a half sample.

SOURCE: Gallup.

Q: Which of the following comes closest to your view regarding the proper role of government in the economy?

	April	January
In the current economic environment, government is not the solution to our economic problems; government is the problem	33%	35%
I would like to see government play a more active role in the economy to ensure it benefits people like me, but I can not sure I can trust government to do this effectively	28	33
In the current economic environment, the government must play an active role in regulating the marketplace and ensuring that the economy benefits people like me	32	29

SOURCE: All State/National Journal, latest that of April 2010.

Q: Based on what you know, do you favor or oppose the federal government imposing new stricter controls and regulations on Wall Street and the financial services industry?

	Favor 69%	Oppose 20%
May 2010		
SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.		

Q: Do you believe new laws regulating the financial industry will be effective and change things on Wall Street or do financial executives have ways to get around regulations so it wouldn't make any difference?

	Regulations will be effective 25%	Won't make a difference 66%
May 2010		
SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.		

PRESTIGE, HONESTY and TRUST: *Business executives have never enjoyed great occupational prestige, and in the Harris poll below, they are at the low end of the scale, on par with entertainers, union leaders, journalists, bankers, and accountants. In 2008, 12 percent of those surveyed by Gallup said business executives had high honesty and ethical standards. Americans do not have high confidence in the honesty and ethical standards of most corporate executives. This isn't new.*

Q: I am going to read off a number of different occupations. For each, would you tell me if you feel it is an occupation of very great prestige . . . ?

Very great prestige

	1977	1982	1992	1997	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003
Doctor	61%	55%	50%	52%	61%	61%	61%	50%	52%
Scientist	66	59	57	51	55	56	53	51	57
Teacher	29	28	41	49	53	53	54	47	49
Minister/Clergyman	41	42	38	45	46	45	43	36	38
Military Officer	NA	22	32	29	34	42	40	47	46
Police Officer	NA	NA	34	36	41	38	37	40	42
Member of Congress	NA	NA	24	23	25	33	24	27	30
Engineer	34	30	37	32	34	32	36	34	28
Architect	NA	NA	NA	NA	26	26	28	27	24
Lawyer	36	30	25	19	23	21	18	15	17
Athlete	26	20	18	21	20	21	22	21	17
Entertainer	18	16	17	18	19	21	20	19	17
Union leader	NA	NA	12	14	16	16	17	14	15
Journalist	17	16	15	15	15	16	18	19	15
Business Executive	18	16	19	16	18	15	12	18	18
Banker	17	17	17	15	18	15	16	15	14
Accountant	NA	13	14	18	17	14	15	13	15

Very great prestige

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Firefighter	48%	56%	63%	61%	57%	62%
Doctor	52	54	58	52	53	56
Scientist	52	56	54	54	56	57
Teacher	48	47	52	54	52	51
Minister/Clergyman	32	36	40	42	40	41
Military Officer	47	49	51	52	46	51
Police Officer	40	40	43	46	46	44
Member of Congress	31	26	28	26	28	28
Engineer	29	34	34	30	--	39
Architect	20	27	27	23	28	29
Lawyer	17	18	21	22	24	26
Athlete	21	23	23	16	20	21
Entertainer	16	18	18	12	15	17
Union Leader	16	15	12	13	18	17
Journalist	14	14	16	13	18	17
Business Executive	19	15	11	14	17	23
Banker	15	15	17	10	15	16

Accountant	10	13	17	11	15	11
Stockbroker	10	8	11	12	10	13

NOTE: In 2003, “fireman” (55 percent), “nurse” (47 percent), “actor” (13 percent), “stockbroker” (8 percent), and “real estate broker/agent” (6 percent) were asked for the first time. Prior to 2002, question asked about the prestige of “businessman” and “policeman.” In 2009, 54 percent said nurse, 36 percent farmer, actor 15 percent, real estate agent 5 actor.

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: Please tell me how you would rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields – very high, high, average, low, or very low?

---Honesty and ethical standards as high and very high---				
	Business executives	College teachers	Policemen	Advertising practitioners
1981	19%	45%	44%	9%
1983	18	47	41	9
1985	23	53	47	12
1988	16	54	47	7
1990	25	51	49	12
1991	21	45	43	12
1992	18	50	42	10
1993	20	52	50	8
1994	22	50	46	12
1995	19	52	41	10
1996	17	56	49	11
1997	20	55	49	12
1998	21	53	49	10
1999	23	52	52	9
2000	23	59	55	10
2001	25	58	68	11
2002 (Feb.)	16	57	61	14
2002 (Nov.)	17	NA	59	9
2003	18	59	59	12
2004	20	NA	60	10
2005	16	NA	61	11
2006	18	58	54	11
2007	14	NA	53	11
2008	12	NA	56	10
2009	12	54	63	11

NOTE: Selected professions shown.

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.

Q: In general, do you think that most corporate CEOs are honest and ethical, or not?

	Yes, CEOs are honest and ethical	No
Jul. 2002	34%	54%
Feb. 2009	22	73

SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.

Q: In general, what grade would you give the company where you work for its honesty and ethical conduct? . . . A, B, C, D, F

	A	B	C	D	F
Jan. 2009	43%	33%	16%	6%	2%

SOURCE: Knights of Columbus/Marist.

Q: Do you think CEOs of American companies are always ethical, mostly ethical, not too ethical, or not ethical at all in their business practices?

	Always ethical	Mostly ethical	Not too ethical	Not ethical at all
Jun. 2007	33%	44%	18%	6%

SOURCE: *LA Times*/Bloomberg.

Q: How much do you admire those who run your country's largest companies?

	A great deal	Quite a bit	A fair amount	Somewhat	Not at all
Jul. 2007	5%	6%	16%	33%	33%

NOTE: Responses for a handful of European countries are available from Harris Interactive.

SOURCE: Harris Interactive/*Financial Times*.

Q: Would you generally trust each of the following types of people to tell the truth, or not?

Jul. 2006	Would trust	Would not
Doctors	85%	12%
Teachers	83	15
Scientists	77	19
Police officers	76	21
Professors	75	19
Clergyman or priests	74	22
Military officers	72	26
Judges	70	24
Accountants	68	28
Ordinary man or woman	66	26
Civil servants	62	32
Bankers	62	34
The President	48	47
TV newscasters	44	51
Athletes	43	47
Journalists	39	58
Members of Congress	35	63
Pollsters	34	54
Trade union leaders	30	60
Stockbrokers	29	63
Lawyers	27	68
Actors	26	69

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: I'm going to read you a number of different professions. For each, please tell me if you think it is a noble profession, or not?

May 2006	Noble	Not noble
Politician	49%	45%
Member of Congress	60	32
Journalist	61	30
Business executive	54	33

SOURCE: Diageo/Hotline.

Q: Would you say that each of the following phrases does or does not apply to the people who run most companies? How about . . . honest and ethical?

	-----People who run most companies are-----	
	Honest and ethical	No, does not apply
Jun. 2002	54%	44%

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization/UBS.

Q: In general, who do you trust more to tell the truth—a CEO of a U.S. corporation or a member of the United States Congress?

	CEOs	Congress	Both	Neither
Jun. 2006	17%	25%	2	50%

SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.

Q: For each of the following, please tell me how you would rate their moral and ethical standards - as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

Jul. 2002	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Members of Bush administration	8%	38%	34%	17%
Religious leaders	7	33	33	27
The news media	5	26	35	31
Accountants	3	29	37	23
Congress	3	26	46	22
CEOs of major corporations	2	19	33	39
Stockbrokers	1	17	39	32

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: Compared with the average person, do you think the typical CEO of a major corporation is more honest and ethical or less honest and ethical?

	More honest and ethical than average person	Less honest and ethical
Jul. 2002	14%	71%

SOURCE: Harris Interactive/Time/CNN.

Q: Do you think most American corporate executives are honest, or not?

Most American executives are	Honest	Not Honest
May 1985*	32%	55%
Jul. 2002 +	27	67

NOTE: *Survey done by CBS News/*New York Times*. +In a separate question, when asked, "Do you think American business executives share the moral values most Americans try to live by or don't they?", 27 percent said they did share those moral values and 64 percent said that they did not share them.

SOURCE: CBS News.

Q: In general, do you think that most corporate CEOs (chief executive officers) are honest and ethical, or not?

	Yes	No
Feb. 2009	22%	73%

SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.

Q: Would you say top executives of larger corporations taking improper action to help themselves at the expense of the corporation—is very widespread, is somewhat widespread, only happens occasionally, or never happens in the business world?

	Very widespread	Somewhat widespread	Happens occasionally	Never happens
Jul. 2002	43%	39%	14%	1%

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.

Q: Which of following statements comes closer to your view: “Cases of wrongdoing among chief executives of major corporations represent a problem of a few corrupt individuals in a system that is mostly honest and above board,” or “Cases of wrongdoing among chief executives of major corporations is a widespread problem in which many business executives are taking advantage of a system that is failing?”

	A Few corrupt individuals	Many
Mar. 2004	40%	50

SOURCE: *The Los Angeles Times*.

Q: There’s been a lot of news recently about individuals and corporations committing white collar crimes to make a dishonest profit for themselves and their companies. How often do you think this happens in American business—very often, occasionally, or hardly ever?

Individuals and corporations commit white collar crimes

	Very often	Occasionally	Hardly ever
May 1985	59%	34%	3%
Jul. 2002	57	39	2
Jul. 2002	62	32	3

SOURCE: CBS News/*New York Times*.

Q: Which of these would you most like to see one of your children grow up to be...?

	1992	2002
President of a university	38%	37%
Head of a large corporation	28	16
Other*	--	16
Sports star	11	9
President of the U.S.	7	10
Movie star	4	7

NOTE: *Volunteered response.

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: If you were getting professional help or advice from each of the following, how much would you trust them to give you advice which was best for you?

Mar. 2006

	Completely	Somewhat	Not at all
Doctor	50%	43%	4%

Dentist	47	44	4
Nurse	46	46	3
Accountant	28	58	7
Lawyer	18	62	14
Banker	16	67	12
Financial advisor	16	64	12
Mechanic	12	68	14
Insurance agent	9	63	21
Real estate agent	7	65	20
Stockbroker	6	57	25

SOURCE: Harris Interactive.

Q: Who do you trust more – Congress or Wall Street?

	Congress	Wall Street	Neither
Jun. 2002	42%	15%	25%
Oct. 2007	29	33	24

SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.

Q: How much of the time do you think you can trust the executives in charge of major companies in this country to do what is right – just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or hardly ever?

	-----Trust executives in charge of major corporations to do what's right-----			
	Almost always	Most of the time	Only some	Hardly ever
Mar. 2004	1%	22%	52%	23%

NOTE: In a CBS News/*New York Times* Poll taken in July 2004 about trusting the government in Washington to do what's right, 4 percent said they could trust just about always; 36 percent most of the time; 56 percent only some of the time; 3 percent never.

SOURCE: The *Los Angeles Times*.

MISCELLANEOUS: *We have included a collection of miscellaneous questions on business. Topics covered include: the stock market, do businesses make too much profit, how much power should business have, and more.*

Q: Just off the top of your head, would you say you have a positive or negative image of each of the following. How about . . . ?

Jan. 2010

Small business	95%
Free enterprise	86
Entrepreneurs	84
Capitalism	61
Big business	49
The federal government	46
Socialism	36

Positive image

	Free enterprise	Capitalism	Big business	Entrepreneurs	Socialism
18-29	94%	68%	56%	88%	51%
30-49	83	58	55	88	36
50-64	89	64	41	82	30
65+	79	54	43	76	30
Con.	89%	68%	57%	86%	20%
Mod.	82	52	46	83	39
Liberal	87	60	38	84	61

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization.

Q: For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree with it. Business corporations generally strike a fair balance between making profits and serving the public interest.

	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree
May 1987	4%	39%	38%	10%
May 1988	6	36	39	13
Feb. 1989	5	33	44	12
May 1990	5	38	37	13
Nov. 1991	8	32	38	19
Jun. 1992	5	35	42	14
Jul. 1994	7	38	38	15
Nov. 1997	7	38	40	12
Sep. 1999	7	38	37	13
Feb. 2002	7	33	38	16
Aug. 2002	7	34	38	17
Aug. 2003	6	32	35	22
Dec. 2006-				
Jan. 2007	6	32	39	19
Apr. 2009	6	31	39	19

SOURCE: PSRA/Pew Research Center.

Q: I'm going to read you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. As I read each pair, tell me whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to you own views—even if neither is exactly right. The first pair is . . . business corporations make too much profit, or most corporations make a fair and reasonable profit.

	Make too Much profit	Make fair/ Reasonable profit
Jul. 1994	52%	43%
Oct. 1994	50	44
Apr. 1995	51	44
Oct. 1995	53	43
Oct. 1996	51	42
Jun. 1997	51	43

Aug. 1999	52	42
Sep. 2000	54	38
Feb. 2002	54	39
Jul. 2002	58	33
Jun. 2003	51	42
Dec. 2004	53	39
Oct. 2008	59	33
Dec. 2008	58	35

SOURCE: PSRA/Pew Research Center.

Q: Just as a rough guess, what percent profit on each dollar of sales do you think the average manufacturer makes after taxes?

	Mean percentage
1971	28%
1973	28
1975	33
1976	29
1979	32
1981	31
1983	37

SOURCE: Opinion Research Corporation.

Q: What do you consider to be a reasonable profit for the average manufacturer after taxes?

	Mean percentage
1976	25%
1979	26
1981	26
1983	30

SOURCE: Opinion Research Corporation.

Q: I'm going to read you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. As I read each pair, tell me whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to you own views—even if neither is exactly right. The first pair is . . . too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few large companies, or the largest companies do not have too much power.

	Power with few large companies	Too much power not with large companies
Jul. 1994	76%	19%
Oct. 1994	73	20
Apr. 1994	75	20
Oct. 1995	77	18
Oct. 1996	75	18
Aug. 1999	77	17
Feb. 2002	77	17
Jul. 2002	80	12
Dec. 2004	77	16
Oct. 2008	78	15

SOURCE: PSRA/Pew Research Center.

Q: Now we would like to ask you a few questions about corruption. In this survey we are using corruption to mean the abuse of entrusted power—by a public official or a business person for example—for private gain. This could include material gain or other benefits. Some people believe that corruption affects different spheres of life in this country. In your view, does corruption affect . . . ?

Jun. 2005	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a large extent
Personal life	35%	21%	24%	17%
Political life	8	12	27	51
Business environment	9	18	31	40

SOURCE: The Gallup International Voice of the People Survey.

Q: For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree with it. Business corporations make too much profit.

	Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Completely disagree
May 1987	21%	44%	24%	4%
May 1988	25	40	25	4
Feb. 1989	27	45	20	3
May 1990	23	40	24	6
Nov. 1991	29	36	23	7
Jun. 1992	21	39	29	5
May 1993	22	41	27	5
Jul. 1994	22	39	28	7
Nov. 1997	21	37	31	7
Sep. 1999	23	33	32	7
Aug. 2002	23	35	29	7
Aug. 2003	29	33	24	8
Dec. 2006-				
Jan. 2007	30	35	22	8
Apr. 2009	28	34	25	8

SOURCE: PSRA/Pew Research Center.

Q: Please tell me whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right. 1) There are plenty of controls on the books that control corporate conduct. Governments just needs to do a better job of enforcing those laws. OR 2) Corporate and CEO misconduct is out of control and we need new laws to crack down on it.

	Plenty of controls	Need new laws
Mar. 2006	54%	41%

SOURCE: Economic Policy Institute and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner.

Q: Do you think the government's increased involvement in the management of U.S. banks and the financial industry is a good thing, or a bad thing?

	Good thing	Bad thing	Combination
May 2009	38%	47%	11%
SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.			

Q: Do you think the federal government's increased involvement in the management of U.S. car companies is a good thing, or a bad thing?

	Good thing	Bad thing	Combination
May 2009	33%	55%	9%
SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.			

Q: Do you think the government's recent takeovers of sections of private industries such as in the banking industry, the insurance industry, and the auto industry were a good idea or a bad idea?

	Good idea	Bad idea	Mixed
Sept. 2009	33%	54%	9%
SOURCE: Fox News/Opinion Dynamics.			

The data in this report come from the archive of public opinion polls at AEI and from The Roper Center's archive at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Connecticut. The Roper Center is the oldest and largest archive of public opinion data in the world. To learn more about the Roper Center, visit <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/>.

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