

September 2008

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Anne Kim and Jim Kessler
RE: New Third Way Economic Poll – Insights on the Middle Class

From the housing crisis to oil prices to the latest meltdown on Wall Street, the American economy is limping from repeated blows. But do middle-class Americans also feel themselves to be personally under siege?

In August 2008—when gas prices were hitting near-highs—Third Way and the Center for Innovative Policy commissioned Global Strategy Group to ask middle-class Americans about their economic worries, aspirations and what they hope to see from government. Our definition of the “middle class” was households with incomes between \$30,000 and \$100,000. As the attached analysis finds, the results were eye-opening.

We found that the middle class is still overwhelmingly success-oriented. Even in these tough times, middle-class Americans remain far less worried about losing their homes to foreclosure or losing their jobs to China than they are about seeing their aspirations slip away: paying for their children’s college education, saving for a comfortable retirement, maintaining their health care coverage, caring for aging parents. And no doubt these fears have intensified in the midst of a financial crisis that could potentially gut a family’s nest egg or decimate a retirement portfolio. In August:

- 31% of middle-class Americans said they were “very worried” about rising college tuitions; 27% were very worried about having enough saved for retirement and 15% were very worried about losing their health care coverage.
- 3% say they were very worried about losing their homes to foreclosure; 3% were very worried about bankruptcy; and 5% were very worried about losing their jobs to outsourcing.

Moreover, middle class people are proud of their status in life. They believe they are enjoying a standard of living that is still as good as or better than other Americans; and they describe their debt as manageable.

But they are worried that their children would have it worse, and they saw the American economy slipping in comparison to the rest of the world.

- 84% of middle-class Americans still felt their own personal circumstances to be “good,” “very good” or “excellent.”
- 28% believed that their children’s standard of living would not match their own.

- 42% said that America will be the world's strongest economy in ten years.

But even as a large majority of Americans want action on such pressing issues as energy and gas prices, they had little faith in government to solve the problem. The majority of Americans see government as largely irrelevant to their success—if not an obstacle—and a minority of people believe that politicians can keep their promises to cut middle-class taxes.

- Only 5% of middle-class Americans said they trust the government “a lot” to do the right thing for the middle-class.
- 35% said that if Congress promises to cut middle-class taxes, their own taxes will go down; 19% said their taxes will go *up*.

The results of this poll have significant implications for what progressives have to say and offer to reach the middle class. These results also point to another major hurdle that progressives must overcome if they are to pass any major initiatives on health care, energy or other issues: the lack of trust in government. To reach the middle class, progressives must speak to the underlying root of economic anxiety – the fear of not getting ahead. Success has been the embodiment of the American middle class for centuries and it still holds true today—even in these dismal economic times.

This poll offers critical guidance on how that can be done and about the policy responses Americans are looking for that would ease their worries about their economic future.

MEMORANDUM

To: Third Way
Center for Innovative Policy
From: Jeffrey Pollock, James Delorey
Global Strategy Group
Re: Economics/Middle Class Nationwide Survey Analysis
Date: September 24, 2008

Executive Summary: The Success Agenda

Progressive candidates focus on a rather narrow slice of the persuadable electorate when they talk about an American public that is very worried about falling into bankruptcy, having their jobs outsourced, losing their home to foreclosure, or unable to put food on the table. Certainly, there are millions of Americans who are worried about each of these things and want their government to do something about them. But those are not the dominant concerns of a majority of voters – or even of a sizable percentage of Independent and swing voters, self-described middle-class voters, or voters with yearly household incomes between \$30,000 and \$100,000.*

Progressives have an opportunity to reach more of these Independent and middle-class Americans by addressing their day-to-day concerns and promoting an agenda that will help them get ahead. This includes guaranteeing health care for all children, improving access to education, promoting retirement security and providing help for families caring for aging parents who need it. Middle class Americans are far more worried about those things than they are worried that they will fall into bankruptcy, face foreclosure, not be able to put food on the table or lose their job to outsourcing.

Most Americans believe they and their families are doing fairly well. They enjoy a standard of living better than their parents did when they were their age. Four out of five Americans rate their own household's finances as "good" or better. When they compare themselves to other Americans, more Americans say they are doing better financially than most other people in the country, while relatively few feel they are doing worse.

But the last few years have been difficult ones for many Americans, and more feel they have taken a step back than a step forward. The overwhelming majority of Americans believe the entire country has been headed in the wrong direction for the last several years. One in four (25%) Americans fear that, by the time their children reach the age their parents are now, their standard of living will be worse, not better. And most are very concerned that America is not as respected as it used to be, and agree that the country needs to improve its standing

* This survey was conducted July 29th- August 7th 2008 – when the national average price of a gallon of gasoline was \$3.90.

in the world. Yet voters also believe that the American Dream is alive. Most Americans are confident that the country will “bounce back.”

Today, Americans do not have much faith that their government will help them succeed. Most believe government is “pretty much irrelevant to whether you succeed or not.” Few trust government very much to “do the right thing for middle class Americans.” And Americans do not currently see the Democratic Party as a champion of middle class success. Even when a Democratic congress says it is going to cut taxes on middle class people, just one in three self-described middle-class Americans believes their taxes will actually go down.

Progressive candidates also have an opportunity to engage more middle class voters – a group they have lost in six of the last seven elections – by addressing middle class concerns and promoting policies that will help more Americans get ahead. This means doing something to make college more affordable, helping people save for retirement, covering all children with health insurance, and improving the quality of elder care.

Direction of country

Americans are overwhelmingly negative about the direction of the country. While there is a great partisan divide on this question – with Democrats and Independents overwhelmingly believing that the country is pretty seriously off on the wrong track – even a majority of Republicans think the country is headed in the wrong direction.

- Four out of five (80%) Americans who are making less than \$75,000 a year think the country is headed in the wrong direction.
- Self-described “Middle-class” Americans are more than five times more likely to say that the country is headed in the wrong direction (74%) than in the right direction (14%).
- Americans of prime working age (ages 25-59) are as negative about the direction of the country as are voters generally.

And in general, would you say that things in the country as a whole are headed in the right direction or would you say things in the country as a whole are off on the wrong track?

	Total	Lower Income	Middle class	Upper/Affluent	Dems	Ind/Oth	GOP	<30K	INCOME 30-100K	>100K	AGE 25-59 Men	Women
Right Direction	15%	10	14	24	4	12	32	13	14	20	14	15
Wrong Track	74%	81	74	65	91	74	55	80	77	67	77	74

Rating the economy and America's economic future

Voters generally agree that the country's economy is in poor shape. Just 3% of Americans believe the United States economy is "very good." Just 27% rate it as good or better. Fully 72% rate the economy as "bad" or worse.

- A majority of Republicans rate the economy as bad or worse (44% net good / 55% net bad), though their views are rosier than other Americans'. Democrats overwhelmingly rate the economy as bad (12%/88%). Independents are somewhere in the underwhelmed middle (28%/71%).

Just 24% rate America's economy as the "strongest in the world." Still, no other country is rated by more Americans as the world's number one economy. China comes close, with 17% of Americans rating it as the world's strongest economy.

There is a bit more optimism that the American economy will re-emerge: Two in five Americans (40%) believe the United States economy will be the strongest in the world 10 years from now.

Domestic confidence

Most Americans feel their own household's finances are in pretty good shape. Fully 81% of Americans, including 89% of self-described middle-class Americans, say their household's own finances are good.

- Just 9% of middle-class Americans rate their finances as poor.

Just under one in five (17%) Americans say they owe more than they can afford on their credit cards and other loans; 6% say they owe "a lot more" than they can afford.

- Younger people ages 18-44 (24%) and middle-age Americans (17%) are far more likely than seniors (6%) to say they owe more than they can afford.
- Mothers (26%) and lower-income Americans (30%) are more likely than others to say they owe too much. One in five (19%) full-time workers and 13% of middle-class Americans believe they owe too much.

Looking back to how things were going for them four years ago, more Americans feel their standard of living has gotten worse (33%) rather than better (33%).

- Seniors (17% better / 32% worse), women over the age of 55 (14%/35%), union members (21%/37%) and non-white women (26%/41%) are feeling the worst about how things have gone in the last four years.
- More fathers (35%/23%) think things have gotten better for them, while mothers (30%/38%) are more likely to think their standard of living is getting worse.

While Americans are far more likely to think their standard of living is better than that of their parents – 60% say theirs is better than their parents was – they are far less certain that their children’s standard of living will be better than their own.

- Just 50% of mothers and 52% of fathers today believe their children will have a better standard of living as adults than they have now.

Rather than feel that they are doing much worse than other people, most Americans feel they are doing pretty much the same as everyone else – or even a little better.

- Just 11% of Americans believes they are doing worse financially, compared to most other Americans.

Compared to most other Americans, would you say you are doing better financially, doing worse financially, or are doing about the same?

	Total	Lower Income	Middle class	Upper/Affluent	Dems	Ind/Oth	GOP	<30K	INCOME 30-100K	>100K	AGE 25-59 Men	Women
Better	35	19	35	64	32	36	38	18	35	56	41	31
Same	53	54	58	33	54	49	53	52	57	42	50	57
Worse	11	25	5	3	12	13	7	27	7	1	9	10

Top issues: Economy

Jobs/economy/unemployment is named by more voters as the “most important problem facing your state that you would like to see your governor work on.” Nearly one in three (30%) rate it as the top issue.

- The economy is the top issue especially among African-Americans (40%), voters in the Midwest (44%), and self-described moderates (38%).
- Liberals (34%) are more concerned about the economy than are conservatives (22%).
- Gas prices/Oil prices is the next most-mentioned issue (12%), followed by schools (9%) and taxes (6%).

Top issues: Elder Care

Improving “the quality of elder care and provid[ing] help for families caring for aging parents who need it” is rated the most important issue by 28% of middle-class Americans with incomes between \$30,000 and \$100,000. No other issue is rated as the most important by more middle-class Americans. Two-thirds (67%) of Americans in this income bracket say this is a very important thing for government to do.

- Improving elder care is also the top issue among Americans with a high school education or less, with 88% of less-educated Americans saying this is very important for government to do.

Top issues: Energy

Energy costs – specifically the rising cost of gas and oil – currently stands atop voters list of current concerns. Voters strongly support initiatives to address the issue, and want government to mandate higher fuel efficiency standards and increase funding for alternative energy research. This question is settled.

- Fully 60% of Americans are “very worried” about “rising energy, gas and oil prices.” This is the top “worry” among every single demographic group. The top-testing issue initiative among many demographic groups is requiring the auto industry to make cars that get better gas mileage. Three out of four (74%) Americans say this is a very important issue to them personally.

Among college graduates, the top energy initiative is to increase funding for “clean, alternative energy” (73%)

While a majority of Americans (55%) say it is very important to “lower gas prices by eliminating gas taxes,” there is a sharp divide along educational lines, with 67% of those with a high school education or less saying it is a very important thing for government to do, but just 39% of college graduates rating it as very important.

Just 44% of voters think it is very important to “create a windfall profits tax on oil companies.”

- This initiative divides sharply between supporters of the two major candidates for president, with Obama voters supporting it (55%) far more than McCain supporters (29%). On this question, undecided voters (49%) look more like Obama voters than McCain supporters.

Top issues: Health Care

Voters overwhelmingly believe it is very important to “guarantee health care for all children” (73%). This is the top issue among African-Americans (92%), full-time workers (75%), parents (76%), and mothers (81%).

Guaranteeing health care “for all Americans” has less support than covering all children. Support for this is weakest among upper middle-class/affluent Americans (47%) and Republicans (44%).

- 17% of Americans are very worried that they will lose their health care coverage.

Women are more concerned than men about guaranteeing access to health insurance when people are “in-between jobs.” Three out of four women (75%) say this is a very important thing for government to do, compared to 63% of men.

Top issues: Retirement security

Over half of Americans (56%) are at least somewhat worried about “not having enough money saved for retirement.” 37% of working-age Americans are very worried about not having enough saved.

Mothers, especially, believe it should be easier to “manage retirement accounts” and want the government to “provide matching contributions to promote greater retirement savings.” Two-thirds (66%) of mothers rate this as very important.

Working age women, likewise, are more likely than others to support requiring all employers to offer a retirement plan like a 401(k).

Top issues: Taxes

Clear and equal majorities of Democrats (57%) and Republicans (57%) believe it is very important for government to “cut middle class taxes.”

On raising taxes on wealthy people, however, there is a sharp division here among supporters of the two major candidates for President. A majority (55%) of Obama supporters say it is very important to raise taxes on wealthy people, compared to 29% of McCain voters.

Top issues: Gender Divide

There are stark differences between men and women on the question of raising the minimum wage. Women (59%) are far more likely to support another minimum wage increase than are men (40%).

Working-age women are also far more likely to think it is very important for government to “guarantee paid leave for new parents” than do their working age male peers (50% to 33%).

On the question of child care, however, mothers and fathers are on the same page. Over half (54%) of fathers believe it is very important for government to “improve the quality of health care and provide bigger tax breaks for child care costs,” as do 58% of mothers.

As many working-age men (20%) as working-age women (20%) are very worried that they “can’t spend enough time” with their family. Concern about lack of family time is directly proportional, rather, to income. Those making less than \$30,000 a year are more than three times as likely (30% to 9%) to be very worried that they can’t spend enough time with their family as someone with an annual income of \$100,000 or more. Among those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$100,000, 13% are very worried that they can’t spend enough time with their family.

Top issues: Unemployment benefits

Just one in nine Americans (11%) is very worried that they or someone in their household will lose a job in the next year. Concern about this is significantly greater among working age women (17%) than it is among working age men (9%).

There is comparatively little support for extending unemployment benefits. Just 36% of voters overall, including 47% of self-described lower-income/lower middle-class voters and 35% of self-described middle class voters, rate this as a very important thing for government to do.

Top issues: Education Access

Aside from rising energy, gas and oil prices, the “rising cost of college tuition” is the issue that provokes the greatest worry, especially among mothers (53% are very worried about it), those aged 18-44 (43%) and women under 55 years of age (45%).

Over two-thirds (68%) of voters overall think it is very important to make college education more affordable by “creating a college tuition tax break.”

- Parents (76%) strongly support this idea, and it is likewise extremely strong with younger adults ages 18-44 (75%), African-Americans (88%) and Hispanics (90%).

The Issues Agenda

We asked voters to rate how important to them, personally, each of 17 different things that the government might do. The following chart ranks these by the percentage of voters who say that thing is “very important” for government to do.

- The top ideas relate to improving gas mileage requirements, guaranteeing health care for all children and to those “in-between jobs,” increasing funding for alternative energy research, improving the quality of elder care, and making college education more affordable.
- The chart also notes which issues resonate particularly well (or not so well) with key demographics.

Issues Agenda

Next I want to read a list of issues others have mentioned as important for government to do. Not all of them will make a difference in your life or be important to you, personally. For each one, please tell me if it is your most important issue, a very important issue or priority to you personally, somewhat important to you, or not all that important to you personally that government address that issue?

NET %age responding "Very Important"	Total	AGE 25-59	INCOME 30-100K	PARTY Ind/Oth	Notes
Require the auto industry to make cars that get better gas mileage	74%	72	70	66	Top issue in Northeast (81%) and West (74%), among women (T-77%), middle-class (T-74%), Hispanics (94%), union households (78%), McCain voters (61%).
Guarantee health care for all children	73%	76	72	71	Top issue among African-Americans (92%), those ages 18-44 (78%), middle-class (T-74%), full-time employees (75%), parents (T-76%), moms (81%), Obama voters (92%)
Increase research funding for clean, alternative energy	71%	70	69	67	Top issue among college graduates (73%)
Improve the quality of elder care and provide help for families caring for aging parents who need it	70%	71	67	63	Top issue among those with high school education or less (88%)
Make sure people have access to health insurance when they are in-between jobs	69%	70	67	63	Stronger support among women (75%) than among men (63%). Very high support among undecided voters (70%).
Make college education more affordable by creating a college tuition tax break	68%	69	66	62	Parents strongly support (76%). Extremely strong with younger adults ages 18-44 (75%), African-Americans (88%) and Hispanics (90%).
Guarantee health care for all Americans	64%	65	63	59	Very strong support among Obama voters (86%), singles (75%), moms (68%), Relatively low support among upper middle class/affluent (47%) and Republicans (44%).
Make it easier to manage retirement accounts and provide matching contributions to promote greater retirement savings	58%	59	57	55	Higher support among moms (66%), lower-income (64%),
Cut middle-class taxes	58%	60	55	61	Full time employees (60%), Democrats (57%), Republicans (57%)
Lower gas prices by eliminating gas taxes	53%	55	49	49	High school education or less (67%), College grads (39%).
Require all employers to offer a retirement plan like a 401(k)	52%	52	53	46	Working-age women (56%), Full-time employees (52%).
Raise the minimum wage	50%	49	46	44	Significantly more support among women (59%) than among men (40%). Scores high with African-Americans (79%) and those with a high school education or less (63%).
Improve the quality of child care and provide bigger tax breaks for child care costs	50%	49	46	44	Working-age women (54%), Dads (54%), Moms (58%).
Create a windfall profits tax on oil companies to pay for a temporary rebate to middle-class families	44%	46	40	38	Obama voters (55%), McCain voters (29%), Undecided voters (49%).
Raise taxes on wealthy people	42%	42	42	40	Obama voters (60%), McCain voters (25%).
Guarantee paid leave for new parents	40%	42	39	31	Ages 18-44 (51%), Working-age women (50%) Working age men (33%).
Extend unemployment benefits	36%	34	32	30	Lower-income (47%), middle-class (35%).

Top Worries

We asked voters to rate how much they, personally, were worried by several different concerns. The following chart ranks these by the percentage of voters who say that they are “very worried” about each.

- The chart also notes which concerns are particularly troubling to key demographics.

Top Worries

I am going to read you a list of things that some people are worried about, and I would like you to tell me if you are very worried, somewhat worried, not very worried or not at all worried about each of the following.

%age responding “Very Worried”	Total	AGE 25-59	INCOME 30-100K	PARTY Ind/Oth	Notes
... about rising energy, gas and oil prices?	60%	62	58	61	Top worry among every single demographic group.
... about the rising cost of college tuition?	31%	34	31	29	Greatest concern among moms (53%), those ages 18-44 (43%) and women under 55 years of age (45%).
... about not having enough money saved for retirement?	29%	37	27	30	Obama voters (37%), McCain voters (18%), Undecided (33%).
... that you that you will not have enough money to live comfortably in your retirement?	21%	24	22	20	Americans are less worried when you add the word “comfortably.” Self-described Middle class (14%).
... about housing prices in your neighborhood?	18%	19	16	14	Owners (14%), Renters (35%).
... that you will lose your health care coverage?	17%	18	13	14	Americans with government health care (22%) are more worried about this than those with private insurance (14%).
...about your weight?	12%	13	14	16	Working age women (19%), Working age men (6%). Lower income (16%), Middle class (12%), Affluent (7%).
...that you can't spend enough time with your family?	17%	20	13	14	By income: Less than \$30K (30%), \$30-75K (15%), \$75K+ (9%). Working age women (20%), Working age men (20%).
... that you will be a victim of a violent crime?	9%	9	8	5	High school/less (14%), Some college (10%), College grad (4%).
...that you might fall into poverty in the next ten years?	13%	13	8	10	African-American (33%), Part-time workers (30%). By income: Less than \$30K (36%), \$30-75K (10%), \$75K+ (3%).
... that you or someone in your household will lose a job in the next year?	11%	13	10	8	Working age women (17%), Working age men (9%).
... that you won't be able to take a vacation in the next year?	10%	9	11	3	By income: Less than \$30K (18%), \$30-75K (11%), \$75K+ (8%). Full-time worker (10%), Part-time worker (14%).
... about not being able to pay your rent or mortgage?	8%	10	5	5	Homeowners (5%), Renters (23%).
... [IF EMPLOYED] that you don't have the skills for the modern economy?	6%	6	4	4	High school/less (16%), Some college (3%), College grad (2%).
...[IF EMPLOYED] that you will lose your job to outsourcing?	8%	8	5	3	Union (3%), Non-union (9%). By income: Less than \$30K (25%), \$30-75K (6%), \$75K+ (3%).
... about being able to put food on the table?	7%	8	5	7	Homeowners (5%), Renters (21%). Obama voters (11%), McCain voters (3%), Undecided (5%).
...[IF OWN HOME] about losing your home to foreclosure?	4%	5	3	4	With student loans (8%).
... that you will fall into bankruptcy?	3%	5	3	3	With student loans (6%).
... that your favorite sports team won't win a championship in your lifetime?	3%	3	3	4	Dads (7%), Moms (1%). Whites (3%), African-Americans (0%), Hispanics (0%).

Blame for the state of the United States economy

There is a lot of blame to go around for the current state of the U.S. economy. Among all Americans, Congress takes the most blame – 62% blame Congress “a lot” for how the economy is doing.

- Among Democrats, 79% blame President Bush “a lot” for the shape of the economy.
- Voters in union households are more likely to blame President Bush (60%) than any other person, group or policy. They are also more likely to blame “international trade agreements like NAFTA” (41%) than non-union Americans (29%).

Blame for the state of the United States economy

For each of the following people, groups or policies, please tell me how you blame each for the current state of the U.S. economy?

%age responding “blame a lot”	Total	Dems	Ind/Oth	GOP	INCOME 30-100K
Congress	62%	58	63	66	61
Oil speculators	56%	58	53	54	57
Oil companies	55%	67	51	42	55
President Bush	52%	79	49	20	50
Bad choices by American consumers	42%	39	42	44	43
Oil producing consumers	41%	43	36	41	39
Corporations	37%	48	33	25	38
International competition from countries like China and India	34%	35	27	39	32
International trade agreements like NAFTA	31%	35	30	29	32

Attitudes: Workers and the Corporate World

Voters are particularly piqued at the unfairness of CEOs “who run their companies into the ground are paid millions while their average workers are laid off.” Fully three-fourths (75%) of Americans, including 80% of working age women and 78% of voters in union households strongly agree that that is not fair.

Working-age women, especially, feel that they are “loyal” to their employer. Two-thirds of women (67%) strongly agree, as do 62% of working-age Americans.

On the other side of the same coin, just 14% of Americans strongly agree that “American companies care about the success of their workers.” Mothers, just 8% of whom strongly agree with that statement, are less endeared with American companies than are fathers, among whom 23% strongly agree that companies care about their workers’ success.

Full-time workers (42%) are about twice as likely as part-time workers (24%) to strongly agree that “my employer is loyal to me.” Among workers overall, 39% strongly agree with this statement.

Less-educated and lower-income Americans (61%) are more likely than others (some college, 53%; college graduates, 48%) to strongly agree that “the things that it takes to succeed in today’s economy seem a lot more complicated than in the past.”

Oddly, there is no significant difference by education in reaction to the assertion that “it takes a college degree to prosper in today’s economy.” Just 41% of those with a high school education or less strongly agree with this statement, compared to 39% with some college and 39% of college graduates.

Attitudes: America’s Place in the World

Two-thirds of Americans strongly agree that America “is not as respected as it used to be, and needs to improve its standing in the world.”

- A voters’ reaction to this question is highly predictive of their presidential vote: Fully 82% of Obama voters strongly agree with this statement, compared to just 49% of McCain voters. Two-thirds (68%) of undecided voters strongly agree.

Men (55%) are more likely than are women (39%) to strongly agree with the statement that “America will bounce back – we always do.” This statement is more resonant than a parallel construction that the “American economy” will bounce back – with which just 48% of men and 36% of women strongly agree.

Americans believe that a good explanation for the loss of “our best jobs” to foreign countries “like China and India” is because they offer cheaper labor. Fully 69% of Americans strongly agree with this statement, compared to just 52% who agree with the statement without the “cheaper labor” explanation.

- Voters with less education are more likely to strongly agree with the “cheaper labor” explanation than are more educated or more affluent Americans.

Despite the agreement that many of America’s best jobs are being lost to outsourcing and low-cost labor, relatively few voters (29%) view American companies that send jobs overseas as “unpatriotic.”

Attitudes: The American Dream

A majority of Americans (52%) strongly agrees that it is “still possible in America to start out poor, work hard and get rich.” The higher you get on the income ladder, the stronger the attachment to this idea gets. Just under half (49%) of those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$100,000 strongly agree, as do 61% of those with incomes over \$100,000.

Attitudes

We asked voters to respond to several statements. The following chart ranks these by the percentage of voters who say that they “strongly agree” with each.

- The chart also notes which statements resonate with key demographic groups.

Attitudes

Now I am going to read you some statements, and you may agree with some, and disagree with others. I would like you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement.

%age responding “strongly agree”	Total	AGE 25-59	INCOME 30-100K	PARTY Ind/Oth	Notes
It's not fair when corporate CEO's who run their companies into the ground are paid millions while their average workers are laid off.	75%	74	75	78	Working age women (80%), Union households (78%)
We are losing many of our best jobs to foreign countries like China and India because they offer cheaper labor.	69%	67	72	64	High school/less (79%), Some college (67%), College grad (63%). Lower income (73%), Middle class (70%), Affluent (56%).
America is not as respected as it used to be, and needs to improve its standing in the world.	68%	68	67	70	Obama voters (82%), McCain voters (49%), Undecided (68%).
I feel loyal to my employer.	60%	62	60	51	Full time (62%), Part time (48%). Working-age men (56%), Working-age women (67%).
The things that it takes to succeed in today's economy seem a lot more complicated than in the past.	54%	51	53	48	High school/less (61%), Some college (53%), College grad (48%).
It's still possible in America to start out poor, work hard and get rich.	52%	49	49	53	By income: Less than \$30K (47%), \$100K+ (61%).
We are losing many of our best jobs to foreign countries.	52%	50	52	53	Union (57%). Non-college women (63%).
America will bounce back - we always do.	47%	46	45	49	Men (55%), Women (39%). Dads (65%), Moms (39%).
Americans have lived beyond their means for too long and now we're paying the price with a bad economy.	44%	40	42	42	By income: Less than \$30K (50%), \$100K+ (43%).
The skills I have now are the right skills for the modern economy.	44%	49	42	43	Men <54 (53%), Men 55+ (43%), Women <54 (48%), Women 55+ (32%)
The American economy will bounce back - it always does.	42%	39	39	41	Men (48%), Women (36%). Dads (47%), Moms (31%).
The world economy has changed a great deal and America hasn't kept up.	40%	38	37	35	High school/less (43%), Some college (40%), College grad (38%).
It takes a college degree to prosper in today's economy.	40%	36	37	35	High school/less (41%), Some college (39%), College grad (39%).
My employer is loyal to me.	39%	38	40	27	Full time (42%), Part time (24%).
People are more on their own today than in the past in figuring out what it takes to succeed.	34%	35	32	29	Lower income (40%), Middle class (33%), Affluent (27%).
American companies that send jobs overseas are unpatriotic.	29%	28	28	26	Obama voters (29%), McCain voters (28%), Undecided (31%).
America is in decline and may never return to what we once were.	23%	22	19	27	Obama voters (26%), McCain voters (18%), Undecided (24%).
American companies care about the success of their workers.	14%	13	13	17	Dads (23%), Moms (8%).

Taxes, Trust and the Democrats

Fully 54% of Americans, including 57% of working age (25-59), think the amount of federal income tax they have to pay is too high.

- Mothers (58%) are even more likely than fathers (54%) to say the amount they pay to the federal government is too much.
- While the difference between Democrats and Republicans is on this question only a few points, Independent voters look more like Republicans when it comes to federal taxes. 56% of Republicans, 56% of Independents and 51% of Democrats think the amount of federal income tax they have to pay is too high.

Americans are slightly more approving of the level of taxation at the state level. As many voters believe the amount of state taxes they pay is about right (47%) as think the amount is too high (48%).

- These numbers are virtually identical among working-age voters.

Working-age men are significantly more suspicious of Democratic tax proposals than are working-age women.

- If a Democratic congress says it is going to raise taxes on wealthy people, fully 34% of working-age men think their own taxes would go up – compared to just 24% of working-age women who think so.

Apparently, Americans' understanding of "wealthy" includes a significant number of people who make less than a quarter of a million dollars a year.

- More people believe their own taxes would go up if taxes were to be increased on "wealthy people" than if the tax increase were to be imposed on those who make "more than \$250,000 a year."

Fully 23% of Americans think their taxes would go up if a Democratic congress says it is going to raise taxes on people who make more than a quarter of a million dollars – including 20% of those who make less than \$30,000 a year and 25% of those who make between \$30,000 and \$100,000.

If a Democratic Congress says it is going to **raise taxes on wealthy people**, do you think your own taxes would go up, stay about the same, or go down?

	Total	Lower Income	Middle class	Upper/Affluent	Dems	Ind/Oth	GOP	<30K	INCOME 30-100K	>100K	AGE 25-59	
											Men	Women
Up	28%	20	24	50	20	23	42	17	24	55	34	24
Down	9%	17	8	1	14	11	3	16	10	1	9	12

If a Democratic Congress says it is going to **raise taxes on people who make more than 250 thousand dollars a year**, do you think your own taxes would go up, stay about the same, or go down?

	Total	Lower Income	Middle class	Upper/Affluent	Dems	Ind/Oth	GOP	<30K	INCOME 30-100K	>100K	AGE 25-59	
											Men	Women
Up	23%	23	20	35	21	25	25	20	25	27	24	23
Down	14%	19	13	9	20	8	11	26	13	11	12	17

Working-age women are also more likely to believe that a middle class tax cut would be of benefit to them, personally. 39% of working-age women think a middle class tax cut would result in a cut in their own taxes (compared to just 27% of working-age men).

- Men are evenly divided as to whether their own taxes would go down than go up in the event of a middle-class tax cut, compared to a net 22% of women who believe a middle-class tax cut would benefit them.

If a Democratic Congress says it is going to **cut taxes on middle class people**, do you think your own taxes would go up, stay about the same, or go down?

	Total	Lower Income	Middle class	Upper/Affluent	Dems	Ind/Oth	GOP	<30K	INCOME 30-100K	>100K	AGE 25-59	
											Men	Women
Up	21%	17	19	32	13	20	32	17	19	27	25	17
Down	31%	32	33	24	39	26	22	30	35	23	27	39

Just 40% of American voters, including 45% of self-described middle-class voters, trust the government at least a little to “do the right thing for middle class Americans.”

- Fully 58% of Americans trust the government “not too much” or “not at all” when it comes to doing the right thing for the middle class, a difference of -18 points.
- Self-described “low-income” and “lower middle class” Americans are even less trusting of the federal government. Fully 66% trust the government “not too much” or “not at all.”
- Part time employees (33% trust/65% don’t trust) are far less trusting than full-time employees (42%/57%)

Voters are slightly more likely to trust their state government when it comes to doing the right thing for the middle class. Over half (52%) trust their state government at least a little, while 47% trust their state government “not too much or “not at all.”

As many voters think they would do worse (29%) as do better (31%) financially, if Democrats controlled the White House and the Congress.

- Working-age women are slightly more optimistic about their prospects under a Democratic government (35% better / 27% worse).
- The economic dividing line on this question appears to be \$75,000. Above that income level, voters are more likely to think they will do worse, not better, under the Democrats. One third (31%) of those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$100,000 think they would do better under a Democratic government, while nearly as many (29%) think they would do worse.
- Independent voters are not optimistic about Democratic control of the White House and Congress. Just 22% believe they would do better, compared to 31% who expect to do worse.
- Democrats (56% better/6% worse) and Republicans (6% better/58% worse) are mirror images of one another on this question, as are Obama voters (59% better/4% worse) and McCain voters (4% better/61% worse). Undecided voters (21% better/25% worse) are evenly split.

If Democrats controlled the White House and the Congress, do you think that your personal financial circumstances would get better, worse, or would it make no difference?

	Total	Lower Income	Middle class	Upper/Affluent	Dems	Ind/Oth	GOP	<30K	INCOME		AGE 25-59	
									30-100K	>100K	Men	Women
Better	31%	45	28	18	56	22	6	44	31	25	28	35
Worse	29%	22	26	48	6	31	58	17	29	38	30	27

The Role of Government

When it comes to whether the government helps or hinders Americans from succeeding, most voters (56%) believe government is “pretty much irrelevant to whether you succeed or not.” Just 11% think government “mostly helps you succeed,” and 26% believe government “mostly hinders you from succeeding.”

- When forced to choose between “helps” and “hinders,” 46% of voters, including 48% of those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$100,000, believe government mostly hinders them from succeeding, while 31% of Americans, and 34% of middle-income voters, say government mostly helps.
- Independent voters (23% helps/51% hinders) are even more down on government than are Republican (34% helps/48% hinders) and Democratic (32% helps/42% hinders) voters.

The Role of Unions

Just one in three Americans (32%) believe unions are “a force for raising incomes and helping middle class families resist big business’ efforts to squeeze down wages.” Half (50%) think unions “haven’t kept up with the times and no longer help the middle class.”

- Among voters in union households, just 52% agree that unions are “a force.”
- Younger voters are slightly more favorable towards unions. Among 18-44 years olds, 37% see unions as a force for good, compared to 30% of voters ages 45-59 and just 27% of seniors.
- On the question of unions, Independent voters (27% “force” / 56% “haven’t kept up”) are more like Republicans (23%/60%) than Democrats (42%/39%).
- Voters with incomes between \$30,000 and \$100,000 have a somewhat better opinion of unions than Americans overall. Fully 37% believe unions are a force for raising incomes and helping middle class families.
- Working age women are friendlier toward unions (35%/47%) than are working-age men (28%/59%). Still, among both groups far more believe that unions haven’t kept up with the times than consider unions a force for raising incomes.

Class Identification

Half of all Americans consider themselves simply “middle class.” Nine out of ten Americans (88%) think of themselves as upper middle class, middle class or lower middle class.

- Of those with incomes between \$30,000 and \$100,000, fully 61% consider themselves simply “middle class.”
- Among those with household incomes over \$100,000, 45% consider themselves as “middle class.”
- Democrats (50%), Independents (47%) and Republicans (53%) are equally likely to describe themselves as “middle class” when considering their economic situation.

Which of the following terms would you use to describe your economic situation?

	Total	Dems	Ind/Oth	GOP	INCOME					AGE 25-59	
					<30K	30-50K	50-75K	75K-100K	>100K	Men	Women
Wealthy	1%	1	2	1	1%	-	*	1%	5%	2	*
Upper middle class	16%	13	16	22	3	5	11	25	47	17	14
Middle class	51%	50	47	53	24	52	67	64	45	53	53
Lower middle class	21%	22	24	16	35	35	20	11	2	17	23
Low income	9%	12	8	6	36	8	1	-	1	9	8

Methodology

Global Strategy Group conducted a random digit dial (RDD) telephone survey July 29-August 7, 2008 among 1000 likely 2008 General Election voters. The margin of error for this survey at the 95% confidence level is $\pm 3.1\%$ on the overall sample. **The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.** The interviews were conducted with a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) system. The number of interviews conducted in each region was established by a quota and based on historic voting data.



Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling long distance from O.T.R., a national public opinion research firm. This is not a sales call and I won't ask you for a contribution or donation. We're talking with people like yourself today about some important issues in your area and this number was selected at random. According to the research procedure, I need to speak to the [ALTERNATE: YOUNGEST/OLDEST] [ALTERNATE: MAN/WOMAN] at this address who is registered to vote?

x1. Do you or any member of your household currently work for an elected official, a candidate for political office or as a member of the new media?

Yes	-
No	100
Don't Know/Refused.....	-

1. As you may know, there will be a general election for President, United States Congress and other offices in November. How likely would you say you are to vote in this election? Will you definitely vote, probably vote, are the chances 50-50, will you probably not vote, or will you definitely not vote?

Definitely.....	91%
Probably	9
Chance 50-50.....	-
Probably not vote.....	-
Definitely not vote.....	-
Don't Know/Refused.....	-

2. No matter how you are voting this year, when it comes to politics, do you generally think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else? [IF DEMOCRAT/REPUBLICAN ASK] Would you call yourself a strong [DEMOCRAT/REPUBLICAN] or a not very strong [DEMOCRAT/REPUBLICAN]? [IF INDEPENDENT ASK] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

Strong Democrat	30%
Not very strong Democrat	8
Independent Democrat.....	4
Independent.....	17
Independent Republican	5
Not very strong Republican	7
Strong Republican.....	20
VOL: (Something else/Other).....	6
VOL: (Don't know/Refused).....	3
DEMOCRAT (NET)	42%
INDEPENDENT (NET).....	23
REPUBLICAN (NET)	32

3. And in general, would you say that things in the country as a whole are headed in the right direction or would you say things in the country as a whole are off on the wrong track?

Right direction.....	15%
Wrong track	74
VOL: (Neither/Mixed).....	8
VOL: (Don't Know/Refused).....	2

4. What would you say is the most important problem facing your state that you would like to see your governor work on? [OPEN END, PRE-CODE, DO NOT READ LIST]

Economy/Jobs/Unemployment.....	30%	Values/Morals.....	1
Gas prices/Oil prices	12	Home values.....	1
Schools/Education.....	9	The environment.....	1
Taxes.....	6	Health care/hospitals (general).....	1
Immigration/migrant workers/illegal immigration	4	Overdevelopment/Land use/Zoning	1
Health care - cost	3	Inflation	1
Iraq/The war	2	Terrorism/Homeland security	*
Traffic/Transportation	2	Social Security	*
Health care - coverage.....	2	Global warming.....	*
Property taxes	2	Veterans' issues	*
Government waste/Government spending.....	1	Other (SPECIFY)	12
Crime/Drugs	1	(No/none/nothing).....	1
Foreclosures/Mortgage crisis	1	(Don't know/Refused)	6

5. If the November 2008 election for President were held tomorrow and the candidates were [ROTATE] Barack Obama, the Democrat and John McCain, the Republican, for whom would you vote? [IF UNDECIDED, ASK] If you had to decide, which candidate would you lean towards supporting?

Barack Obama.....	41%
Lean Barack Obama	3
John McCain.....	35
Lean John McCain.....	3
VOL: (Other)	1
VOL: (Undecided).....	13
VOL: (Refused).....	3
OBAMA (NET).....	44%
MCCAIN (NET).....	38

6. If the November election for United States Congress were held today, would you vote for the [ROTATE] Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate for Congress? [IF UNDECIDED ASK] And toward which candidate would you lean?

Democratic candidate.....	41%
Lean Democratic candidate.....	3
Republican candidate.....	28
Lean Republican candidate.....	3
Other party's candidate/Independent candidate (SPECIFY).....	1
VOL: (Undecided/Refused)	24
DEMOCRATIC (NET).....	44%
REPUBLICAN (NET).....	31

7. And If the election for the state legislature were held today, would you vote for the [ROTATE] Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate for state legislature in your district? [IF UNDECIDED ASK] And toward which candidate would you lean?

Democratic candidate.....	41%
Lean Democratic candidate.....	2
Republican candidate.....	27
Lean Republican candidate.....	3
Other party's candidate/Independent candidate (SPECIFY).....	*
VOL: (Undecided/Refused)	27
DEMOCRATIC (NET).....	43%
REPUBLICAN (NET).....	30

8. How would you rate the United States economy today? Would you rate it as [READ CHOICES]?

Excellent.....	*
Very good.....	3
Good.....	24
Bad.....	34
Very bad.....	16
Terrible.....	22
VOL: (Don't Know/Refused)	1
GOOD (NET).....	27%
NOT GOOD (NET).....	72

9. Which country's economy would you say is the strongest in the world? [OPEN END, PRE-CODE, DO NOT READ LIST]

United States.....	24%
China.....	17
Japan.....	7
Europe.....	7
Saudi Arabia.....	4
India.....	1
Russia.....	1
Other (SPECIFY).....	11
Don't know.....	26
Refused.....	2

10. Which country's economy do you think will be the strongest in the world ten years from now? [OPEN END, PRE-CODE, DO NOT READ LIST, USE LIST FROM Q ABOVE]

United States.....	40%
China.....	26
Japan.....	3
Europe.....	3
India.....	2
Saudi Arabia.....	1
Russia.....	1
Other (SPECIFY).....	2
Don't know.....	21
Refused.....	1

11. How would you rate your own household's finances today? Would you rate them as [READ CHOICES]?

Excellent.....	8%
Very good.....	18
Good.....	54
Bad.....	12
Very bad.....	3
Terrible.....	3
VOL: (Don't Know/Refused)	1
GOOD (NET).....	81%
NOT GOOD (NET).....	18

12. Would you say your standard of living is [ROTATE] better, about the same, or worse now than it was four years ago? [IF CHOICE, ASK] Would you say it is much better/worse or somewhat better/worse?

Much better.....	10%
Somewhat better	15
About the same	41
Somewhat worse	21
Much worse	12
VOL: (Depends / Don't know).....	*
VOL: (Refused).....	*
BETTER (NET).....	25%
WORSE (NET)	33

13. Compared to when your parents were the age you are now, do you think your own standard of living now is [ROTATE] better, about the same, or worse than theirs was?

Much better.....	34%
Somewhat better	26
About the same	21
Somewhat worse	10
Much worse	6
VOL: (Depends / Don't know).....	2
VOL: (Refused).....	1
BETTER (NET).....	60%
WORSE (NET)	16

[IF CHOICE, ASK] Would you say it is much better/worse or somewhat better/worse?

14. When your children are at the age you are now, do you think their standard of living will be [ROTATE] better, about the same, or worse than yours is now?

Much better.....	20%
Somewhat better	22
About the same	19
Somewhat worse	15
Much worse	10
VOL: (Depends / Don't know).....	10
VOL: (Refused).....	4
BETTER (NET).....	43%
WORSE (NET)	25

[IF CHOICE, ASK] Would you say it is much better/worse or somewhat better/worse?

15. Compared to most other Americans, would you say you are doing better financially, doing worse financially, or are doing about the same?

Much better.....	11%
Somewhat better	24
About the same	53
Somewhat worse	7
Much worse	4
VOL: (Depends / Don't know).....	1
VOL: (Refused).....	*
BETTER (NET).....	35%
WORSE (NET)	11

[IF CHOICE, ASK] Would you say it is much better/worse or somewhat better/worse?

Next I want to read a list of issues others have mentioned as important for government to do. Not all of them will make a difference in your life or be important to you, personally. For each one, please tell me if it is your most important issue, a very important issue or priority to you personally, somewhat important to you, or not all that important to you personally that government address that issue?

	IMPORTANT		NOT IMPORTANT		(DK/Ref.)	NET	
	Most	Very	Some	Not		IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
	• [FORM B] Require the auto industry to make cars that get better gas mileage.....	25%	49	15		10	1
• Guarantee health care for all children	28%	45	15	11	1	73%	26
• [FORM A] Increase research funding for clean, alternative energy.....	22%	49	21	7	1	71%	28
• [FORM B] Improve the quality of elder care and provide help for families caring for aging parents who need it.....	27%	43	22	8	1	70%	29
• Make sure people have access to health insurance when they are in-between jobs.....	22%	48	21	8	2	69%	29
• Make college education more affordable by creating a college tuition tax break.....	23%	44	20	11	1	68%	31
• Guarantee health care for all Americans.....	26%	38	17	17	1	64%	35

Next I want to read a list of issues others have mentioned as important for government to do. Not all of them will make a difference in your life or be important to you, personally. For each one, please tell me if it is your most important issue, a very important issue or priority to you personally, somewhat important to you, or not all that important to you personally that government address that issue?

	IMPORTANT		NOT IMPORTANT		(DK/Ref.)	NET	
	Most	Very	Some	Not		IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
• Make it easier to manage retirement accounts and provide matching contributions to promote greater retirement savings.....	17%	40	27	12	3	58%	40
• Cut middle-class taxes.....	19%	39	27	13	2	58%	40
• Lower gas prices by eliminating gas taxes.....	20%	33	19	25	3	53%	44
• Require all employers to offer a retirement plan like a 401(k)	16%	36	26	20	2	52%	46
• Raise the minimum wage.....	17%	33	23	26	1	50%	49
• [FORM A] Improve the quality of child care and provide bigger tax breaks for child care costs.....	13%	37	28	20	2	50%	48
• Create a windfall profits tax on oil companies to pay for a temporary rebate to middle-class families.....	17%	27	23	29	4	44%	52
• Raise taxes on wealthy people.....	16%	26	24	31	3	42%	55
• Guarantee paid leave for new parents.....	12%	28	29	29	1	40%	58
• Extend unemployment benefits.....	11%	24	35	27	2	36%	62

33. Of all the issues we just discussed, and others you may think are important, which one would make the most difference for you, personally? [OPEN END, PRE-CODE FROM LIST ABOVE]

Guarantee health care for all Americans.....	16%
Lower gas prices by eliminating gas taxes.....	11
Cut middle-class taxes.....	8
Make college education more affordable by creating a college tuition tax break.....	7
Improve the quality of elder care and provide help for families caring for aging parents who need it.....	4
Guarantee health care for all children.....	4
Make sure people have access to health insurance when they are in-between jobs.....	3
Create a windfall profits tax on oil companies to pay for a temporary rebate to middle-class families.....	3
Require all employers to offer a retirement plan like a 401(k).....	3
Increase research funding for clean, alternative energy.	2
Make it easier to manage retirement accounts and provide matching contributions to promote greater retirement savings.....	2
Raise taxes on wealthy people.....	2
Improve the quality of child care and provide bigger tax breaks for child care costs.....	2
Require the auto industry to make cars that get better gas mileage.....	1
Extend unemployment benefits.....	1
Guarantee paid leave for new parents.....	1
Raise the minimum wage.....	1
Other (SPECIFY).....	13
Don't Know.....	14
Refused.....	2

34. Thinking about the money you owe on credit cards and other loans, would you say you... [READ LIST]

Owe a lot more than you can afford.....	6%
Owe a little more than you can afford.....	11
Owe about what you can afford.....	30
Owe less than you can afford.....	13
Do not have any debts.....	27
No credit cards or loans.....	12
VOL: (Don't know/refused).....	2

35. Do you own or rent your home?

Own 84%
 Rent 14
VOL: (Don't Know/Refused) 2

I am going to read you a list of things that some people are worried about, and I would like you to tell me if you are very worried, somewhat worried, not very worried or not at all worried about each of the following. If something doesn't apply to you, just say so and we'll move on... Here's the first one:

	WORRIED		NOT WORRIED		(Does not apply)	(DK/Ref.)	NET	
	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all			WORRIED	NOT WORRIED
• [FORM A] How worried are you about rising energy, gas and oil prices?.....	60%	32	2	6	*	-	92%	8
• How worried are you about the rising cost of college tuition?.....	31%	30	9	22	8	*	62%	31
• [FORM A] How worried are you about not having enough money saved for retirement?.....	29%	28	12	29	2	-	56%	41
• [FORM B] How worried are you that you that you will not have enough money to live comfortably in your retirement?.....	21%	33	14	31	1	-	54%	45
• How worried are you about housing prices in your neighborhood?.....	18%	24	17	39	2	*	42%	55
• How worried are you that you will lose your health care coverage?.....	17%	22	17	41	3	*	39%	57
• [FORM B] How worried are you about your weight?.....	12%	27	17	43	1	*	39%	60
• [FORM A] How worried are you that you can't spend enough time with your family?.....	17%	22	16	42	3	-	38%	59
• How worried are you that you will be a victim of a violent crime?.....	9%	27	25	38	*	*	36%	64
• [FORM A] How worried are you that you might fall into poverty in the next ten years?.....	13%	21	17	47	1	1	34%	64
• How worried are you that you or someone in your household will lose a job in the next year?.....	11%	17	18	46	7	*	28%	65
• [FORM B] How worried are you that you won't be able to take a vacation in the next year?.....	10%	15	16	56	3	*	24%	72
• How worried are you about not being able to pay your rent or mortgage?.....	8%	14	18	51	9	*	22%	69
• [IF EMPLOYED] How worried are you that you don't have the skills for the modern economy?.....	6%	14	22	56	2	*	20%	77
• [IF EMPLOYED] How worried are you that you will lose your job to outsourcing?.....	8%	12	20	58	2	*	19%	78
• [FORM B] How worried are you about being able to put food on the table?.....	7%	12	21	59	2	-	19%	80
• [IF OWN HOME] How worried are you about losing your home to foreclosure?.....	4%	6	15	69	5	*	11%	84

I am going to read you a list of things that some people are worried about, and I would like you to tell me if you are very worried, somewhat worried, not very worried or not at all worried about each of the following. If something doesn't apply to you, just say so and we'll move on... Here's the first one:

	WORRIED		NOT WORRIED		(Does not apply)	(DK/Ref.)	NET	
	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all			WORRIED	NOT WORRIED
• [FORM B] How worried are you that you will fall into bankruptcy?.....	3%	5	18	70	3	*	9%	88
• [FORM A] How worried are you that your favorite sports team won't win a championship in your lifetime?.....	3%	4	10	72	10	1	7%	81

55. Of all the concerns we just discussed, and others you may think are important, which one is the most important to you, personally? [OPEN END, PRE-CODE FROM LIST ABOVE]

Energy, gas and oil prices	14%
Health care coverage / Losing health care coverage.....	13
Education costs / Cost of college tuition.....	10
Retirement savings not enough.....	9
Crime / Will be a victim of violent crime.....	4
Lose job in the next year (self/other in household)	4
Lose job due to outsourcing	3
Housing prices.....	3
Foreclosure / losing home to foreclosure	3
Can't pay rent/mortgage	3
Family time / Can't spend enough time with family	2
Food costs	2
Weight	1
Bankruptcy / Will have to file for bankruptcy	1
Poverty / Falling into poverty in the next ten years	1
Skills / Don't have the skills for the modern economy.....	1
No vacation in the next year.....	*
Favorite sports team won't win a championship in your lifetime	*
Other (SPECIFY).....	12
Don't know.....	8
None.....	7
Refused.....	*

For each of the following people, groups or policies, please tell me how you blame each for the current state of the U.S. economy?

	BLAME		DON'T BLAME		(DK)	(Ref.)	NET	
	A lot	A little	Not too much	Not at all			BLAME	DON'T BLAME
• Congress	62%	28	4	5	2	*	89%	9
• Oil speculators.....	56%	22	6	11	5	*	78%	17
• [FORM A] Oil companies	55%	23	6	14	1	*	79%	20
• President Bush	52%	26	6	14	1	*	78%	21
• Bad choices by American consumers	42%	34	8	12	2	*	77%	21
• [FORM B] Oil producing countries	41%	28	10	18	3	*	69%	28
• Corporations.....	37%	35	10	15	3	*	72%	25
• [FORM A] International competition from countries like China and India.....	34%	31	11	21	2	*	65%	32
• [FORM B] International trade agreements like NAFTA	31%	33	10	17	8	*	65%	27

65A. [FORM A] As a result of the recent rise in gas prices, have you changed your personal behavior in any way? Yes 70%
No 29
 VOL: (Don't know/Refused)..... 1

66B. [FORM B] As a result of the recent rise in gas prices, have you changed your summer vacation plans? Yes 39%
No 59
 VOL: (Don't know/Refused)..... 2

Now I am going to read you some statements, and you may agree with some, and disagree with others. I would like you to tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement.

	AGREE		(Neither)	DISAGREE		(DK/Ref)	(N/A)	NET	
	Strong	Some		Some	Strong			AGREE	DISAGREE
• It's not fair when corporate CEO's who run their companies into the ground are paid millions while their average workers are laid off.....	75%	13	1	4	5	2	-	88%	9%
• [FORM A] I feel loyal to my employer.....	60%	27	*	5	4	-	3	88%	9%
• [FORM B] America is not as respected as it used to be, and needs to improve its standing in the world.....	68%	19	1	8	4	1	*	87%	12%
• [FORM B] We are losing many of our best jobs to foreign countries like China and India because they offer cheaper labor.....	69%	18	2	6	5	1	-	86%	11%
• It's still possible in America to start out poor, work hard and get rich.....	52%	33	1	8	6	1	*	84%	14%
• [FORM A] The things that it takes to succeed in today's economy seem a lot more complicated than in the past.....	54%	28	1	11	5	1	*	82%	15%
• [FORM B] America will bounce back - we always do.....	47%	34	3	9	4	3	*	81%	12%
• [FORM A] The American economy will bounce back - it always does.....	42%	35	4	11	6	2	-	77%	17%
• [FORM A] We are losing many of our best jobs to foreign countries.....	52%	25	2	12	7	2	-	77%	19%
• Americans have lived beyond their means for too long and now we're paying the price with a bad economy.....	44%	31	3	11	10	1	*	75%	21%
• [FORM B] The skills I have now are the right skills for the modern economy.....	44%	28	2	12	8	1	4	73%	19%
• [FORM B] The world economy has changed a great deal and America hasn't kept up.....	40%	29	1	16	11	3	*	69%	27%
• [FORM B] My employer is loyal to me.....	39%	30	3	9	14	1	5	69%	23%
• [FORM A] People are more on their own today than in the past in figuring out what it takes to succeed.....	34%	29	3	18	12	4	-	63%	30%
• It takes a college degree to prosper in today's economy.....	40%	23	3	20	14	1	*	62%	34%
• American companies that send jobs overseas are unpatriotic.....	29%	21	4	26	17	2	-	50%	44%
• [FORM A] America is in decline and may never return to what we once were.....	23%	24	3	19	29	2	-	47%	48%
• American companies care about the success of their workers.....	14%	32	4	24	23	2	*	46%	48%

85. Thinking again about taxes: Do you think the amount of federal income tax you have to pay is too high, about right, or too low?	Too high.....	54%
	About right.....	43
	Too low.....	3
86. Do you think the amount of taxes you have to pay to your state government is too high, about right, or too low?	Too high.....	48%
	About right.....	47
	Too low.....	5
87A. [FORM A] Which of these statements comes closest to your opinion? [ROTATE FIRST TWO]	Government mostly helps you succeed.....	11%
	Government mostly hinders you from succeeding.....	26
	Government is pretty much irrelevant to whether you succeed or not.....	56
	VOL: (None of these).....	4
	VOL: (Refused).....	3
88B. [FORM B] Which of these statements comes closer to your opinion? [ROTATE FIRST TWO]	Government mostly helps you succeed.....	31%
	Government mostly hinders you from succeeding.....	46
	VOL: (Both equally).....	7
	VOL: (Neither).....	10
	VOL: (Refused).....	5
89. Generally speaking, how much do you trust the federal government to do the right thing for middle class Americans? Do you trust the federal government a lot, trust them a little, not too much, or not at all to do the right thing for middle class Americans?	Trust, a lot.....	6%
	Trust, a little.....	34
	Not too much.....	31
	Not at all.....	27
	VOL: (Don't Know / Not Sure).....	2
	VOL: (Refused).....	*
	TRUST (NET).....	40%
	DON'T TRUST (NET).....	58
90. Generally speaking, how much do you trust your state government to do the right thing for middle class Americans? Do you trust your state government a lot, trust them a little, not too much, or not at all to do the right thing for middle class Americans?	Trust, a lot.....	10%
	Trust, a little.....	41
	Not too much.....	28
	Not at all.....	19
	VOL: (Don't Know / Not Sure).....	1
	VOL: (Refused).....	*
	TRUST (NET).....	52%
	DON'T TRUST (NET).....	47
91. If Democrats controlled the White House and the Congress, do you think that your personal financial circumstances would get better, worse, or would it make no difference? [IF CHOICE, ASK] Would you say they would get much better/worse or somewhat better/worse?	Much better.....	10%
	Somewhat better.....	21
	No difference.....	36
	Somewhat worse.....	12
	Much worse.....	17
	VOL: (Depends / Don't know).....	3
	VOL: (Refused).....	*
	BETTER (NET).....	31%
	WORSE (NET).....	29
92A. [FORM A] If a Democratic Congress says it is going to raise taxes on wealthy people, do you think your own taxes would go up, stay about the same, or go down?	Up a lot.....	12%
	Up a little.....	16
	Stay about the same.....	58
	Down a little.....	6
	Down a lot.....	3
[IF CHOICE, ASK] Do you think they will go up/down a lot or a little?	VOL: (Depends / Don't know).....	4
	VOL: (Refused).....	1
	UP (NET).....	28%
	DOWN (NET).....	9

93B. [FORM B] If a Democratic Congress says it is going to raise taxes on people who make more than 250 thousand dollars a year, do you think your own taxes would go up, stay about the same, or go down?

[IF CHOICE, ASK] Do you think they will go up/down a lot or a little?

Up a lot	10%
Up a little.....	13
Stay about the same	58
Down a little	10
Down a lot.....	4
VOL: (Depends / Don't know).....	3
VOL: (Refused).....	2
UP (NET)	23%
DOWN (NET).....	14

94. If a Democratic Congress says it is going to cut taxes on middle class people, do you think your own taxes would go up, stay about the same, or go down?

[IF CHOICE, ASK] Do you think they will go up/down a lot or a little?

Up a lot	9%
Up a little.....	11
Stay about the same	43
Down a little	26
Down a lot.....	5
VOL: (Depends / Don't know).....	5
VOL: (Refused).....	1
UP (NET)	21%
DOWN (NET).....	31

95. Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion of unions? [ROTATE STATEMENTS]

Unions are a force for raising incomes and helping middle class families resist big business' efforts to squeeze down wages.....	32%
Unions haven't kept up with the times and no longer help the middle class.....	50
VOL: (Neither).....	7
VOL: (Both).....	2
VOL: (Refused).....	9

96. [FORM A] Now I'm going to ask you about two hypothetical candidates for office. After hearing about each description, tell me which one you would be more likely to vote for if this were all you knew about the candidates. [ROTATE, AND ROTATE A/B]

Candidate A says the American Dream is about getting ahead and the middle class has been stuck in place. Candidate A says we need a success agenda for America that includes a generous middle class college tuition tax break, help so families can save for a comfortable retirement, affordable health care that stays with you when you change jobs, high quality and affordable child care, and a plan to create well-paying jobs in America.....	48%
Candidate B says the middle class is under assault with wages falling, gas prices rising, and millions of Americans losing their homes to foreclosure. Candidate B says we need to raise the minimum wage so that work pays, provide health care to all children, rescue homeowners from foreclosure, and close the tax loopholes that benefit big oil.....	37
VOL: (Neither/Don't Know/Refused).....	15

97. [FORM B] Now I'm going to ask you about two hypothetical candidates for office. After hearing about each description, tell me which one you would be more likely to vote for if this were all you knew about the candidates. [ROTATE, AND ROTATE A/B]

Candidate A says our great middle class is hard-pressed. Millions of Americans have lost their jobs, and millions more are struggling. Three million more Americans have fallen into poverty since 2000. Average family debt is higher than ever. The middle class is under assault like never before, and we must help Americans deal with the staggering increase in everyday costs of living.....	44%
Candidate B says the middle class deserves to get ahead but the rules for success in the middle class have changed. College is a necessity that's priced like a luxury, families must juggle work obligations with caring for children and aging parents, and people are on their own to manage their retirement savings. We need a success agenda that helps the middle class to truly get ahead.....	43
VOL: (Neither/Don't Know/Refused).....	13

Now I would like to ask you a few final questions for statistical purposes only.

98. Which of the following terms would you use to describe your economic situation?	Wealthy.....	1%
	Upper middle class.....	16
	Middle class.....	51
	Lower middle class.....	21
	Low income.....	9
	VOL: (Don't know/Refused).....	2
99. When it comes to politics, do you generally think of yourself as liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, or conservative?	Liberal.....	16%
	Somewhat liberal.....	12
	Moderate.....	25
	Somewhat Conservative.....	15
	Conservative.....	26
	VOL: (Don't know/Refused).....	6
LIBERAL (NET).....	28%	
	CONSERVATIVE (NET).....	41
100. Which of the following do you or your spouse have? [ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES]	Stocks, bonds, or mutual funds.....	50%
	A checking account.....	76
	A savings account.....	64
	An IRA, 401K or similar kind of retirement account.....	57
	A pension.....	39
	None of these.....	5
VOL: (Don't Know/Refused).....	4	
101. Do you or does any member of your household currently have any student loans? [ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES]	Respondent.....	10%
	Household member.....	9
	No member.....	80
	VOL: (Don't know/Refused).....	1
102. [IF OWN HOME] Do you have a mortgage? [IF YES] How many mortgages do you have?	Yes - 1 mortgage.....	48%
	Yes - 2 or more mortgages.....	12
	No.....	39
	VOL: (Refused).....	1
103. [IF OWN HOME] Do you have a home equity line of credit?	Yes.....	33%
	No.....	62
	VOL: (Refused).....	6
D101. What is your age?	18-29.....	12%
	30-44.....	23
	45-54.....	20
	55-64.....	22
	65+.....	23
	VOL: (Refused).....	-
D102. What is the last grade that you completed in school?	Some grade school.....	1%
	Some high school.....	5
	Graduated high school.....	26
	Technical/Vocational.....	3
	Some college.....	23
	Graduate college.....	27
	Graduate professional.....	14
	VOL: (Refused).....	1
D103. Are you or is any member of your household a member or a retiree of a labor union? [ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES]	Respondent.....	13%
	Household member.....	8
	No member.....	79
	VOL: (Don't know/Refused).....	1
D108. In terms of your job status, are you employed, unemployed but looking for work, retired, a student, or a homemaker?	Employed.....	51%
	Unemployed.....	6
	Retired.....	30
	Student.....	4
	Homemaker.....	8
	VOL: (Refused).....	1

D109. [IF EMPLOYED] Is your employment full-time or part-time?	Full-time	86%
	Part-time	14
	VOL: (Refused)	*
D110. What is your current marital status?	Married	64%
	Not married, but living with partner	1
	Single, never married	17
	Divorced or separated	10
	Widowed	7
VOL: (Refused)	1	
D111. Do you currently have any children under 18 living at home with you?	Yes	32%
	No	68
	VOL: (Refused)	*
D120. What kind of health insurance do you have? [READ LIST]	Private insurance provided by your work or union	42%
	Private insurance provided by your spouse's work or union	16
	Private insurance that you or your spouse purchased yourself from an insurance company	12
	A government program such as Medicaid or Medicare	22
	Do not currently have health insurance	6
	VOL: (Don't Know/Refused)	3
D203. Apart from special events like weddings and funerals, when it comes to attending religious services, do you attend services at least every week, a few times a month, about once a month, a few times a year, rarely or never?	At least every week	37%
	A few times a month	12
	About once a month	6
	A few times a year	21
	Never	21
VOL: (Refused)	3	
D300. And just to make sure we have a representative sample, could you please tell me your race? [IF WHITE/BLACK/OTHER] Do you consider yourself a Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish-speaking American?	Black/African-American	12%
	White/Caucasian	75
	Hispanic/Latino	9
	Asian-American	1
	Other (SPECIFY)	2
	VOL: (Refused)	2
D900. What would you say is your total annual family income before taxes - Is it less than \$30,000, \$30,000 to \$50,000, more than \$50,000 but less than \$75,000, more than \$75,000, but less than \$100,000, or more than \$100,000?	Less than \$30,000	18%
	\$30,000-\$50,000	18
	\$50,001-\$75,000	18
	\$75,001-\$100,000	13
	More than \$100,000	15
	VOL: (Don't Know/Refused)	18
Gender [BY OBSERVATION; DO NOT ASK]	Male	47%
	Female	53
Census Region [CODE FROM SAMPLE]	New England	5%
	Middle Atlantic	14
	East North Central	17
	West North central	8
	South Atlantic	18
	East South Central	6
	West South Central	11
	Mountain	7
Pacific	15	