




# **Political Behavior and Values Across the Generations: A Summary of Selected Findings**



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## *A Summary of Selected Findings*

Every candidate for elected office knows that the older population is a force with which to be reckoned. Older people are the group most likely to read newspapers, stay apprised of issues, register to vote, and actually turn out on election day. This is certainly true of what has been called “the greatest generation;” those individuals who came of age in the 1940s, fought the second world war, were parents to the baby boomers, witnessed the civil rights and women’s movements, and the political scandals of the 70s and 80s.

Today, this older group of voters, so revered by politicians, is passing on. Their children, the boomers, are between the ages of 40 and 57, and within 20 years, will become the older voting group. Will these boomers be as active as their parents in politics? Will they “age” into the roles their parents occupied in the political process, or will they continue to be innovative and independent minded boomers who happen to have gray hair and bad knees?

In January 2004, AARP Knowledge Management, AARP The Magazine, and Roper ASW collaborated on a study designed to provide a comprehensive look at the political behavior and values of baby boomers (aged 40 to 57), the “silent” generation (aged 58 to 69), and the “GI” generation (aged 70+). The guiding question that prompted this research was AARP’s celebration of the contributions of the greatest generation and speculation about what will happen when this generation passes on.

A detailed survey was conducted among 1,804 respondents – 630 Boomers, 585 Silents, and 589 GIs. The survey focused on important generational influences, attitudes toward emblematic social, ethical, and economic issues, voting behavior, party affiliation, beliefs about the role and priorities of government, and activism and civic involvement.

A comprehensive report on the findings from this survey will be issued in September, 2004. This summary contains selected findings and an annotated questionnaire of all results segmented by age group.



## **The GI Generation – a Political Profile**

There are 26 million people aged 70 or older in the United States. These people are largely conservative on economic (59%) and social (49%) issues, and about one-third of them say they have become more conservative on economic, social, foreign policy, moral, and legal issues as they have aged. Over 9 in 10 (91%) of this age group are registered to vote and 90% voted in the 2000 presidential election.

About 4 in 10 (44%) name the 40s, 50s, and 60s as the decades which made the most lasting impression on their views. Majorities of GIs consider the Great Depression (51%), World War II (79%), the Vietnam War (52%), and the September 11 terrorist attack (84%) to be major influences on their views of government and politics. Franklin Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, and John F. Kennedy are the national leaders GIs most admire for making contributions to the United States.

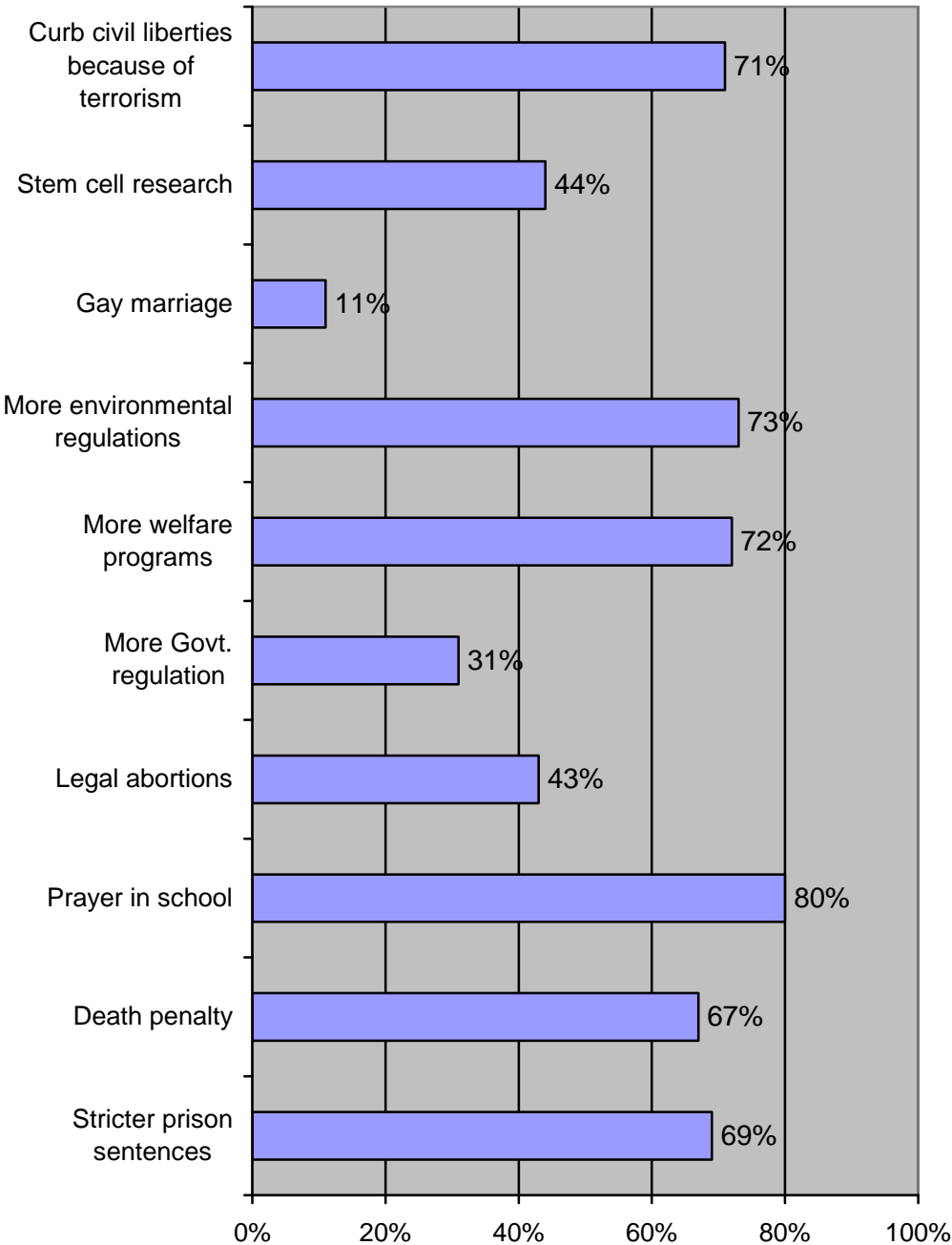
When asked what matters most when choosing candidates for national office, over 6 in 10 (62%) of GIs say that personal qualities are most important. Only 8% consider political party, and 25% consider positions on issues to be most important. Perhaps because of their age, the GIs are the least likely age group to participate in most political activities aside from voting.

As Chart 1 illustrates, the GIs' conservatism extends across many social, moral, and economic issues. Aside from their support for more welfare programs for those with low incomes, and more environmental regulation, GIs reliably support those issues emblematic of conservatives, and opposed those emblematic of liberals. Specifically, large majorities of people aged 70+ support prayer in school, the death penalty, stricter prison sentences, and curbing civil liberties to deter terrorism. They oppose gay marriage and legal abortions.

Support for more welfare programs, and greater environmental regulation is not particular to the GI cohort. Majorities of Boomers and Silents also favor these policies. It may be the case that support for welfare and environmental regulation is no longer emblematic of conservative or liberal values. Welfare programs have been less contentious since the welfare reforms of the 1990s, and support for environmental regulation could be attributable to self-interest as well as concern for the greater community. GIs do reject privatizing Social Security and Medicare although many conservative policymakers in the U.S. would make changing these entitlement programs a priority. Again, GI rejection of privatization may be due to self-interest or the strong connection to, and support for, these programs we have noticed in many other surveys.



**Chart 1: GI Support for Selected Issues**



## **The Baby Boomers – a Political Profile**

There are 78 million people aged 40 to 57 in the United States. Boomers are slightly less conservative than GIs on economic (51%) and social (44%) issues, but about 4 in 10 of them say they have become more conservative on economic, social, foreign policy, moral, and legal issues as they have aged. Over 8 in 10 (84%) of this age group are registered to vote and 82% voted in the 2000 presidential election.

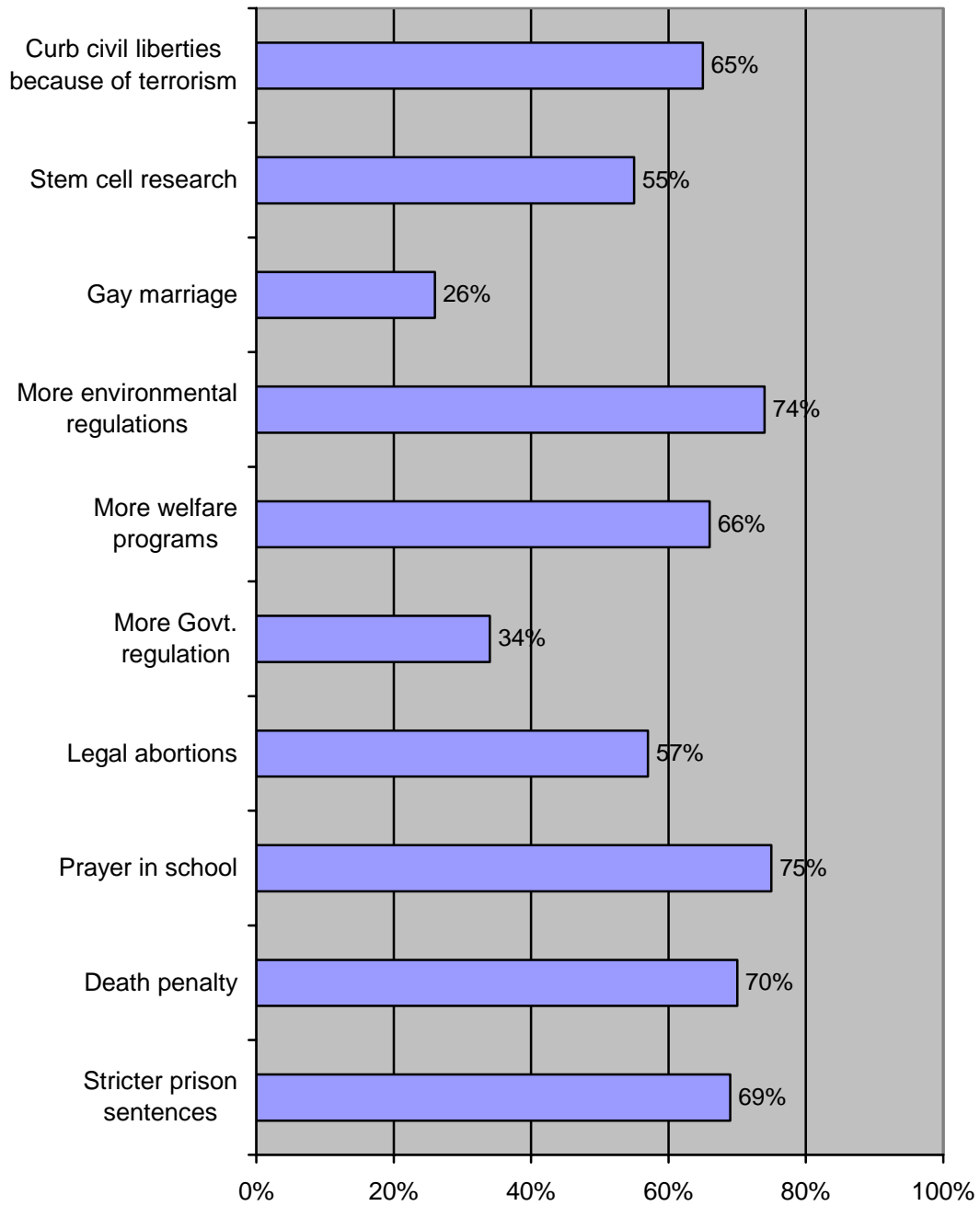
A very large majority of Boomers (86%) name the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s as the decades which made the most lasting impression on their views. Majorities of Boomers consider the civil rights movement (59%), the women's rights movement (51%), the Vietnam War (67%), and the September 11 terrorist attack (90%) to be major influences on their views of government and politics. John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan are the national leaders Boomers most admire for making contributions to the United States.

When asked what matters most when choosing candidates for national office, Boomers are split over the importance of issues (43%) versus personality (46%). Boomers are the most likely age cohort to participate in the 12 political activities listed in the survey, and the most likely (33%) to say they would like to become more politically active.

As Chart 2 illustrates, Boomers do not differ greatly from their parents on many issues emblematic of conservative or liberal values. Again, boomers support more welfare programs for those with low incomes, and more environmental regulation, and are similar to GIs in their support for prayer in schools, the death penalty, and stricter prison sentences, as well as their rejection of greater government regulation. However, on selected social issues, Boomers differ with the GI generation. Almost 6 in 10 Boomers support legal abortion and stem cell research, and Boomers are over twice as likely as their parents to support gay marriage. If one considers the issue of gay marriage to be on the frontier of liberal social issues, then the 26% of Boomers who support it means that one can probably assume even greater support among Boomers for liberal social issues that are not so close to the frontier of liberal values.



**Chart 2: Boomer Support for Selected Issues**



## **The Silent Generation – a Political Profile**

There are 30 million people aged 58 to 69 in the United States. This Silent Generation are more similar to the Boomers than they are to the GI generation -- 51% are conservative on economic and 45% are conservative on social issues, and similar to Boomers, about 4 in 10 of them say they have become more conservative on economic, social, foreign policy, moral, and legal issues as they have aged. Over 9 in 10 (92%) of this age group are registered to vote and 88% voted in the 2000 presidential election.

About 4 in 10 (43%) of Silents name the 50s and 60s as the decades which made the most lasting impression on their views. Majorities of Silents consider the civil rights movement (50%), the Vietnam War (65%), and the September 11 terrorist attack (90%) to be major influences on their views of government and politics. John F. Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan are the national leaders Silents most admire for making contributions to the United States.

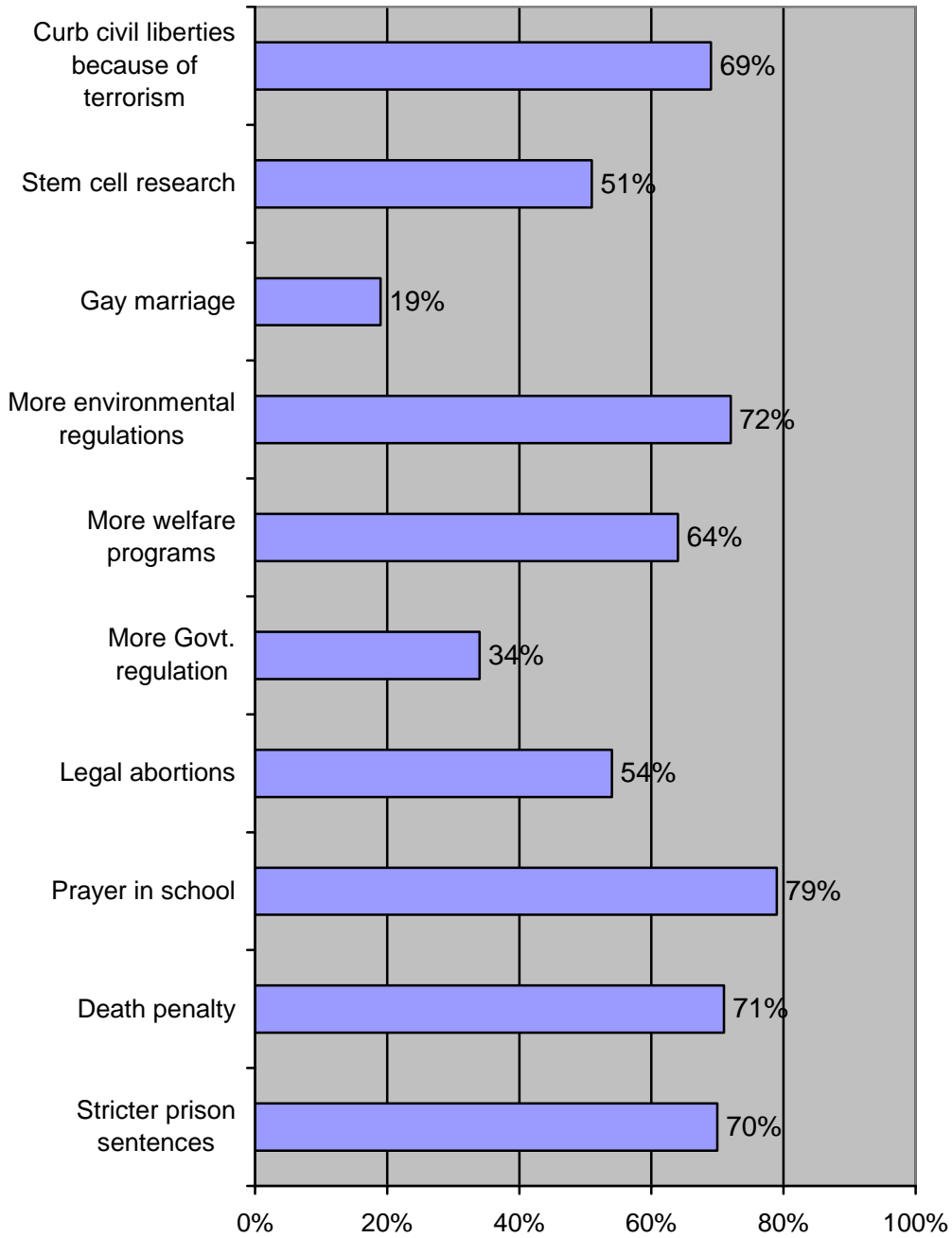
When asked what matters most when choosing candidates for national office, Silents are similar to GIs in that they consider personal qualities to be more important (59%) than positions on issues (32%). Perhaps suggesting an affect of aging on political participation besides voting, Silents are slightly less likely than Boomers, but more likely than GIs, to engage in political activism, and to say they would like to be more politically active (24%).

As Chart 3 illustrates, Silents are very similar to GIs in their conservatism on many issues – school prayer, curbing civil liberties, prayer in schools, and stricter prison sentences. However, Silents are closer to Boomers than to GIs on some emblematic social issues – majority support for stem cell research and legal abortions, and tolerance of gay marriage among about one-fifth of Silents. As with the Boomer cohort, if we consider the issue of gay marriage to be at the frontier of liberal social issues, then the 19% of Silents who support it means that one could probably assume even greater support among Silents for liberal social issues that are not so close to the frontier of liberal values. In fact, William Strauss and Neil Howe suggest that it is the Silent generation that instructed Boomers to think of many social issues in a more liberal fashion.





**Chart 3: Silents Support for Selected Issues**



## **How Will the Boomers Fill the Political Shoes of Their Elders?**

This survey suggests that on many measures, Boomers have aged into mid-life roles that would be familiar to their parents, and will continue to age into roles that their parents occupy now. However, there are some substantial differences among Boomers, Silents, and GIs that will shape Boomers into a political force different from both Silents and GIs. Whether or not the popular characterization of the Boomers as self-interested is correct, this survey suggests that, politically, Boomers of all orientations are now and will continue to engage in politics on their terms, and with clear self-interest in mind.

The best illustration of this is the manner in which Boomers regard entitlements and obligations. In the survey, Boomers are more likely to name more “definite responsibilities” of government, yet they are less likely to believe that they owe the country certain obligations, including military service, paying taxes, and paying attention to political issues. The sense of obligation increases among the Silents and is highest among the GIs.

The survey also suggests that Boomers are more skeptical than Silents and GIs about the political process, and more likely to regard issues (and not political parties or personalities) as the most important consideration when casting votes. Unlike the GI Generation and the Silent Generation for whom issue politics takes a strong back seat to the personal qualities of candidates, Boomers are almost equally likely to pay attention to issues as personal qualities when choosing a candidate for national office. Focusing on issues, which can change easily, may lead to a more volatile and fragmented electorate.

The differences among Boomers, Silents, and GIs on social issues is a further illustration of how Boomers will continue to regard political participation as a means toward personal ends, and less for larger goals. The fact that boomers are more open to social arrangements and behaviors that their parents would rarely consider points to an idea of politics that has less to do with regulating or prescribing behavior and more to do with allocating resources. The self-interest implied in this politics of resource allocation is evident in Boomers approach to entitlements. Although they are more liberal on certain moral and social issues than their predecessors and expect a lot of things from government, this does not necessarily translate into support for social welfare programs or traditional entitlements. Boomers are less likely than GIs to favor welfare programs for lower income people and far more likely to support privatizing Social Security and Medicare.

What all this means for politics and the political process we have called “tailored engagement.” That is, Boomers can be expected to be as active as their parents in the political process but it will be on issues they consider important, and in ways they think



are effective. Boomers will be the last to appear at a political rally in which there is no discussion of issues that clearly affect them. They will be the last to support a candidate because of party affiliation, or only because of a general sense that he or she would make a good legislator. Tailored engagement means that political participation by Boomers will be more like the social engagement of their youth – socially active but skeptical about politics; concerned with their communities or other things that directly affect them; results oriented with more regard for producing benefits than for achieving higher goals or fulfilling moral imperatives; and conducted through arrangements that may neglect the traditional political structures to which their parents felt an allegiance.



# AARP Aging American Voter Survey

Posted Weighted Data

2/6/04

## General Attitudes Toward Country

1. Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction today, or do you feel that things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Right direction	41%	35%	32%
Wrong track	53	56	56
Don't Know (vol.)	5	7	11

## NO QUESTION 2 OR 3

4. During what decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century do you think America was at its finest?  
 5. And what decade had the most lasting impression on your views?

	<u>Finest</u>			<u>Most Lasting Impression</u>		
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
1900-1909	1%	1%	1%	1	-	-
1910-1919	1	-	-	-	-	-
1920s	1	2	2	-	1	1
1930s	-	-	3	1	-	5
1940s	7	8	16	2	6	17
1950s	13	26	19	2	17	13
1960s	10	17	12	24	27	14
1970s	13	6	7	20	9	7
1980s	22	11	9	14	9	7
1990s	20	16	11	28	20	14
Don't know (vol.)	12	12	22	9	12	22

6. Now I'd like to mention some specific events and I would like you to tell me whether they have had a major influence, a minor influence, or no influence on your views about government and politics. First (READ ITEM) (ASK ABOUT EACH)

	<u>Major Influence</u>			<u>Minor Influence</u>			<u>No Influence</u>		
	40-57	58-69	70+	40-57	58-69	70+	40-57	58-69	70+
a. The Great Depression	29%	30%	51%	29	24	20	41	39	23
b. World War II	43%	51%	79%	28	23	12	28	23	6
c. The Cold War	36%	39%	33%	39	41	40	22	16	18
d. The Civil Rights Movement	59%	50%	45%	30	34	30	11	14	18
e. The Women's Rights Movement	51%	46%	45%	34	36	33	15	16	19
f. The Vietnam War	67%	65%	52%	27	24	30	6	8	14
g. Watergate	31%	36%	36%	53	44	33	16	19	26
h. The Reagan Presidency	45%	45%	42%	42	42	38	11	12	17
i. The first Gulf War in 1991	48%	49%	40%	42	41	37	8	9	17
j. September 11 <sup>th</sup>	90%	90%	84%	8	7	10	1	2	5
k. The 2003 War in Iraq	79%	79%	73%	18	17	16	2	4	7



**Attitudes Toward Government**

7. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right-- just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or not much of the time?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Just about always	5%	4%	5%
Most of the time	27	26	25
Only some of the time	49	41	42
Not much of the time	19	28	27
Don't know (vol.)	1	1	1

8. I am going to read you a list of things people have said are or should be the responsibility of the Federal Government. For each one please tell me whether you consider it to be a definite responsibility of government, or desirable but not a definite responsibility, or something that is beyond what the Federal Government should do? First, (READ ITEM; ASK ABOUT EACH)

	<u>Definite Responsibility</u>			<u>Desirable</u>			<u>Beyond Government</u>		
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
a. Protecting individual rights	79%	77%	70%	15	17	19	5	6	8
b. Regulating businesses	30%	29%	30%	43	40	32	25	28	30
c. Providing health care for all citizens	59%	56%	48%	26	29	35	14	14	14
d. Providing retirement benefits for all citizens	50%	48%	41%	32	33	35	17	18	20
e. Providing financial assistance to the poor	46%	47%	41%	41	37	41	12	14	13
f. Providing an adequate national defense	90%	87%	80%	7	9	11	2	1	5
g. Protecting the environment	72%	68%	62%	24	26	26	4	5	9
h. Helping U.S. companies compete with foreign industry	37%	35%	34%	42	42	35	18	21	22
i. Educating young people	72%	65%	60%	16	20	25	12	14	13
j. Funding research for new technologies	38%	34%	38%	48	47	42	13	17	16
k. Protecting consumers' privacy	63%	63%	56%	28	26	27	8	10	11

9. In the last 100 years, who is the national leader that you most admire for making contributions to our country? (OPEN ENDED)

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
John F Kennedy	19%	22%	11%
Franklin Roosevelt	8	14	24
Ronald Reagan	13	14	12
Bill Clinton	8	5	4
Martin Luther King, Jr.	8	2	3
Harry S. Truman	2	5	6
George W. Bush	6	3	2



10. Which of these groups, if any, do you think is doing a great deal to solve the nation's problems?  
(allow multiple response)

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
a. Government leaders	45%	43%	41%
b. Business and industry leaders	35	28	32
c. Community groups	60	57	54
d. Public interest groups	36	39	42
e. Religious groups	37	36	46
f. Individual Americans	57	55	53
None of these (vol.)	6	5	6
Don't know (vol.)	1	1	3

11. Thinking about economic issues, how would you describe your own general outlook--as being very conservative, moderately conservative, middle-of-the-road, moderately liberal, or very liberal?

12. And what about social issues, how would you describe your own general outlook--as being very conservative, moderately conservative, middle-of-the-road, moderately liberal, or very liberal?

	<u>Economic issues</u>			<u>Social issues</u>		
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Very conservative	13%	15%	24%	14%	14%	16%
Moderately conservative	38	36	35	30	31	33
Middle-of-the-road	28	31	23	28	31	29
Moderately liberal	16	12	11	19	16	11
Very liberal	4	4	4	7	6	7
Don't know	1	1	3	2	2	4

13. People's political views can change as they age. As you have gotten older, would you say that you personally have become more conservative, more liberal, or have your views stayed about the same when it comes to (READ ITEM)(ROTATE)

	<u>More Conservative</u>			<u>More Liberal</u>			<u>Stayed the Same</u>		
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
a. Economic issues	44%	40%	36%	14	13	10	40	45	50
b. Foreign policy	42%	39%	37%	15	16	11	41	40	44
c. Social issues (education, the homeless, etc.)	32%	32%	29%	25	26	22	41	41	46
d. Governmental problems (bureaucracy and taxes etc.)	42%	39%	38%	14	12	11	41	43	45
e. Moral questions (abortion, school prayer etc.)	36%	35%	36%	17	20	14	45	42	47
f. Law and order	39%	42%	34%	14	11	12	46	45	51



**Issues**

14. Which of the following matters most when you vote for a candidate for a national office? The candidate’s political party, the candidate’s position on one or two key issues, or the personal qualities of the candidate?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Political party	9%	5%	8%
Position on one or two key issues	43	32	25
Personal qualities	46	59	62
None of these (vol.)	3	3	2
Don’t know (vol.)	1	1	3

15. Here is a list of a number of different considerations that may be more important or less important to you in deciding whom to vote for as President next fall. For each one, please tell me if it is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important in deciding whom to vote for as President of the United States. (ROTATE LIST)

	<u>Very Important</u>			<u>Somewhat Important</u>			<u>Not too Important</u>			<u>Not at all important</u>		
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
a. The economy	73%	75%	77%	24	21	18	2	2	2	1	2	1
b. Foreign policy	60%	64%	69%	33	26	21	6	5	5	2	4	4
c. Social issues	61%	59%	66%	32	31	24	4	6	6	3	3	2
d. Governmental problems	58%	61%	64%	34	31	24	5	4	4	3	3	3
e. Moral questions	52%	53%	61%	35	32	24	9	9	7	4	5	5
f. Law and order	66%	71%	81%	28	22	16	4	3	1	2	2	1
g. The personal qualities of the candidates	61%	68%	74%	27	22	18	9	5	5	3	3	2

16. I'm going to name some different things, and for each one would you tell me whether on balance you would be more in favor of it, or more opposed to it? First (READ ITEM) (ASK ABOUT EACH) on balance, are you more in favor of it or opposed to it?

	<u>In Favor</u>			<u>Opposed</u>		
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
a. Harsher prison sentences for those convicted of crimes	69%	70%	69%	25	21	23
b. Mandatory waiting periods and background checks for anybody wanting to buy a hand gun	84%	87%	82%	15	11	16
c. Imposing the death penalty on those convicted of serious crimes such as murder, kidnapping, etc.	70%	71%	67%	26	24	27
d. Having prayers in public schools	75%	79%	80%	23	17	17
e. Legal abortions for those women who choose to have them	57%	54%	43%	38	41	49
f. Greatly increased military defense capabilities for the United States	74%	78%	77%	24	19	18
g. Increased government regulation of business	34%	34%	31%	62	60	60
h. Welfare programs for lower income people	66%	64%	72%	31	32	22
i. Increased environmental regulations and pollution controls	74%	72%	73%	25	26	22
j. Legalizing gay marriages	26%	19%	11%	68	76	84
k. Stem cell research	55%	51%	44%	36	34	35
l. Privatizing Social Security	43%	36%	26%	51	57	67
m. Privatizing Medicare	43%	35%	29%	52	57	62



n. Cracking down on illegal immigration	86%	83%	78%	13	13	17
o. Infringing on personal civil liberties to help crack down on terrorism	65%	69%	71%	31	26	24

### Political/Community Participation

17. Some people seem to follow what is going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there is an election or not, others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what is going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Most of the time	53%	63%	73%
Some of the time	31	27	18
Only now and then	11	6	6
Hardly at all	5	4	3
Don't know	-		

18. Do you feel the following is a very important obligation, a somewhat important obligation, or not an obligation that a citizen owes to the country?

	<u>Very Important</u>			<u>Somewhat Important</u>			<u>Not Important</u>		
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
a. Volunteering some time to community services	56%	54%	57%	38	38	34	5	7	7
b. Voting in elections	89%	89%	93%	8	7	5	4	4	2
c. Serving on a jury if called	76%	77%	80%	18	18	13	5	4	4
f. Serving in the military	62%	74%	71%	27	19	20	10	6	6
g. Protesting unjust public policies	46%	41%	42%	37	36	31	14	18	21
h. Paying your taxes	82%	86%	89%	14	12	8	4	2	2
i. Paying attention to political issues	63%	70%	74%	33	25	19	4	4	6

19. When you were growing up, how much did your family talk about government and politics at home—A great deal, a fair amount, just some, or very little?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
A great deal	14%	13%	15%
A fair amount	26	27	29
Just some	30	26	18
Very little	29	33	37
Don't know (vol.)	-	1	1

20. Do you ever get as worked up about something that happens in politics or public affairs as you do about something that happens in your personal life?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Yes	63%	67%	60%
No	37	32	39
Don't know (vol.)	-	1	1





21 Have you talked about politics with anyone recently?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Yes	78%	74%	70%
No	22	26	30

22. Do you think that people like you have a lot of influence on how the government runs things, some influence, not very much influence, or no influence at all?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
A lot	5%	6%	5%
Some	35	29	28
Not very much	35	36	39
No influence	24	29	25
Don't know (vol.)	-	1	2

23. Compared with other people you know, are you more likely or less likely than any of them to be asked your view of politics, or is there no difference?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
More likely	19%	16%	19%
Less likely	18	20	18
No Difference	62	62	59
Don't know (vol.)	1	2	4

24. How politically active would you say you are, are you very active, somewhat active, not very active, or not active at all?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Very active	7%	6%	9%
Somewhat active	43	45	41
Not very active	31	31	27
Not active at all	18	17	23

QUESTION 25 DELETED

26. Would you like to be more politically active than you are now?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Yes	33%	24%	17%
No	65	74	82
Don't know	2	2	1

(IF YES) BASED ON THOSE WHO WANT TO BE MORE POLITICALLY ACTIVE

27. Which of the following, if any, prevents you from being more politically active than you are now?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Lack of time	69%	46%	27%
Difficulty getting around	17	24	50
Politicians don't inspire you	32	40	28
Lack of money	41	33	31
Don't know	4	4	10



28. I'm going to read you a list of things some people do about government or politics. As I read each one, please tell me if you happened to have done any of these things in the past year. How about...

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Signed a petition	54%	47%	40%
Attended a public meeting on town or school affairs	48	37	31
Written or called any politician at the state, local, or national level	37	33	30
Written a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine or called a live radio or TV show to express an opinion	21	17	14
Served on a committee for some local organization	31	24	24
Served as an officer for some club or organization	27	24	21
Been an active member of any group that tries to influence public policy or government	24	18	15
Made a speech	19	12	7
Attended a political rally, speech, or organized protest of any kind	18	13	10
Written an article for a magazine or newspaper	12	12	13
Worked for a political party	7	10	11
Held or run for political office	1	1	1

29. I am going to read you a series of statements. For each statement, please tell me whether you strongly agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or strongly disagree with it.

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>			<u>Mostly Agree</u>			<u>Mostly Disagree</u>			<u>Strongly Disagree</u>		
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
a. It is every citizen's duty to vote regardless of how they feel about the candidates	68%	68%	70%	18	20	20	7	5	5	6	6	5
b. You should vote for the best candidate even if you don't think he/she can win	72%	67%	67%	16	21	20	5	4	6	6	6	5
c. There aren't many candidates worth voting for	26%	28%	19%	30	28	29	25	25	24	18	16	22
d. Voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things	46%	46%	37%	35	32	43	10	12	10	7	9	6
e. Voting is an act of patriotism	71%	76%	76%	20	16	19	5	4	2	3	3	1
f. I sometimes feel it doesn't matter that much who gets elected	14%	15%	15%	19	20	17	22	18	20	45	46	47
g. My vote doesn't make much of a difference.	13%	16%	15%	16	19	14	22	15	20	48	48	48



## Voting Patterns

30. These days, many people are so busy they can't find time to register to vote, or move around so often that they don't get a chance to re-register. Are you now registered to vote in your precinct or election district or haven't you been able to register so far?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Registered to vote	84%	92%	91%
Haven't registered	16	8	9

### 31. BASED ON THOSE WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED

Do you plan to register to vote, or is there a chance that you may not register?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Plan to register	48%	38%	41%
Chance may not register	25	23	28
No will not register	24	39	30
Don't know	4	-	-

### 32. BASED ON THOSE WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED

Have you ever, at any time, been registered to vote, or haven't you ever had the chance to register?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Ever been registered	55%	65%	92%
Haven't ever registered	45	35	8

33. Do you, yourself, plan to vote in the election this November (2004)?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Yes	90%	93%	92%
No (Skip to 35)	7	5	5
Don't know (skip to 35)	3	2	2

34. How certain are you that you will vote (in the election this November 2004)? Are you absolutely certain, fairly certain, or not certain?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Absolutely certain	83%	87%	85%
Fairly certain	13	9	11
Not certain	5	4	3
Don't know	-	1	1

35. Do you always vote for candidates from the same political party, nearly always vote for candidates from the same party, or do you often switch parties?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Always vote for same	14%	11%	18%
Nearly always vote for same	33	32	33
Often switch parties	46	51	45
Don't know (vol.)	7	5	3



36. Did you vote in....	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
The 2002 mid-term election	71%	81%	82%
The 2000 presidential election	82	88	90

37. Since you came of voting age, how many presidential elections, if any, have you missed voting in?

None	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
	47%	51%	57%

38. Regardless of how you may have voted in the past, what do you usually consider yourself--a Democrat, a Republican, or some other party?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Democrat	43%	41%	46%
Republican	32	37	36
Independent (vol.)	11	9	8
Member of no particular party (vol.)	9	9	7

**BASED ON THOSE WITH A PARTY DESIGNATION:**

39. Have you always considered yourself a (party mentioned in prior question), or have you changed at some point in your life? (Asked of and based on those who know party identity) What did you consider yourself before--a Democrat, a Republican, some other party, or what? (Asked of those who have changed their political party)

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Have always been the same party	72%	64%	73%
Have changed	24	32	24
And previously was:			
Democrat	41	48	56
Republican	25	28	31
Independent	19	10	4
Member of no particular party	7	6	5

40. Did you switch parties more because your view changed or because the political party's views changed?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Because own view changed	61%	45%	44%
Because political party's views changed	36	50	52
Don't know	3	5	4

41. Do you think that the two major parties generally do a good job of representing the views of the country?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Yes	59%	57%	58%
No	38	40	35
Don't know (vol.)	3	3	7



42. Do you think that we need a strong third party?			
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Yes (GO TO 43)	56%	47%	37%
No (SKIP TO D1)	39	47	54
Don't know	4	6	9
Refused	1	-	-

BASED ON THOSE WHO THINK WE NEED A STRONG THIRD PARTY

43. (IF YES TO 42). Why do you think we need a strong third party?			
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
not do a good job of representing Americans	13%	12%	14%
More choices/options	15	14	13
We need to breathe new life into American politics/need new ideas	22	23	20
Gives another point of view	8	5	8
Need to represent Independent voters better	6	4	6
More middle of the road	6	5	2
Keeps parties honest	5	2	3
Creates competition	3	3	7
Current parties fight too much/divided	4	5	2
Good/better for the country	3	2	1
Both parties are similar	2	4	3
Current parties influenced/ run by big business	2	3	1
Current parties influenced/ run by big labor	1	-	-
Current parties are corrupt	5	3	6
Would represent the people	4	4	5
Current parties are outdated	2	2	-

The next few questions are for classification purposes only.

D1. What is your age?			
	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Mean age	49	63	77



D2. What is the highest grade of school you completed – is it ...

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Grade school or elementary school	1%	2%	5%
Some high school	6	9	13
High school graduate	35	41	47
Some college	25	20	15
Technical school	3	3	3
College graduate	18	12	9
Post-graduate studies	12	12	7
Refused	1	1	-

D3. What is your marital status? Are you...(READ LIST)

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Married	60%	61%	43%
Separated	4	2	1
Divorced	18	14	5
Widowed	3	13	45
Never married	12	5	4
Living together	2	1	-
Refused/Don't know	1	3	1

D5. Are you or your spouse a member of AARP? (AS NECESSARY: The American Association of Retired Persons)

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Yes	23%	54%	53%
No	76	44	46
Don't Know	1	2	1

IF MEMBER OF AARP ASK:

D6. How many of the last 4 issues of A.A.R.P. The Magazine have you read? (DO NOT READ LIST)

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
0 of 4 issues	29%	19%	12%
1 of 4 issues	17	9	7
2 of 4 issues	15	11	6
3 of 4 issues	5	5	5
4 of 4 issues	33	52	64
Don't know	1	4	5

D7. Are you of Spanish or Hispanic origin?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Yes	4%	4%	2
No	94	95	97
Don't Know	2	1	1



D8.. What best describes your race – Are you ...

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
White	81%	86%	87%
Black or African American	10	5	8
Asian	2	1	-
Something else?	5	6	4
Refused	2	1	1

D9. Finally, for statistical purposes, is your annual household income, before taxes, over or under \$50,000?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
UNDER \$10,000	4%	6%	11%
\$10,000-under \$20,000	9	14	21
\$20,000-under \$30,000	11	15	19
\$30,000-under \$50,000	22	24	19
\$50,000-under \$60,000	10	9	5
\$60,000-under \$75,000	12	6	4
\$75,000-under \$100,000	12	5	2
\$100,000 or more	13	8	1

A reporter will be doing a story about the findings from this survey. Would you be willing to be recontacted by a reporter to discuss your responses in more detail?

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Yes	52%	47%	37%

If yes,. What is your first name  
Plus verify phone number

D10. [RECORD GENDER – DO NOT ASK]

	<u>40-57</u>	<u>58-69</u>	<u>70+</u>
Male	49%	47%	41%
Female	51	53	59

Those are all the questions that I have. Thank you very much for helping with our research.

