

Survey of Young Americans' Attitudes
Toward Politics and Public Service:
21st Edition

Institute of Politics, Harvard University



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Introduction

Conceived by two Harvard undergraduate students during the winter of 1999, Harvard University's Institute of Politics Survey of Young Americans' Attitudes toward Politics and Public Service began in 2000 as a national survey of 18-to-24-year-old college undergraduates. Over the last eleven years, this research project has grown in scope and mission, as this report now includes an analysis of 18- to 29- year olds on a broad set of longitudinal and current events issues.

Methodology

The first survey of N=800 college undergraduates was completed in the Spring of 2000 and all interviews were conducted over the telephone; since that time, 19 subsequent surveys have been released. Over this period, a number of modifications have been made to the scope and methodology in order to ensure that sampling methods most accurately capture the view of the population of young adults in a manner that will be useful to both the Institute of Politics and the broader research and political communities.

- In 2001, the survey was expanded from N=800 to N=1,200 college students in order to capture a more robust sample of the undergraduate population.
- In 2006, the survey expanded to N=2,400 interviews, as we began interviewing members of the 18-to-24-year-old cohort who were not currently attending a four-year college or university. In addition, because of changing uses of technology among younger Americans, in 2006 the survey moved from a telephone poll to a survey that was administered online.
- In 2009, we expanded our scope a third time to include the population of young

adults aged 18 to 29. While we will continue to report on the attitudes and opinions of U.S. college students, this change in our research subject was made to allow for better and more direct comparisons to the broader set of election and general public opinion research tracking data, which tends to track the 18- to 29-year-old demographic group. Our Fall political tracking surveys will include samples of N=2,000 while the Spring semester's research project will be more in-depth and include N=3,000 interviews. All of our interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. Using Knowledge Networks as our research partner, the Institute of Politics surveys use RDD and Address-Based Sampling (ABS) frames and are administered online (see Appendix for more information).

The interviewing period for this survey of N=3,096 18- to 29- year olds was March 23 to April 9, 2012. The margin of error for the poll is +/- 1.7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. During the interviewing period, major media stories included President Obama's comments about Trayvon Martin, the Obama-Medvedev open mic moment, the health care case was heard by the Supreme Court, the record Mega Millions jackpot and the passing of 60 Minutes anchor Mike Wallace.

IOP Polling Director John Della Volpe supervised the survey group of undergraduate students. As always, the IOP survey group would like to thank IOP Director Trey Grayson and Executive Director Catherine McLaughlin for their insight and support over the course of this and all IOP projects.

Demographic and Political Profile

For this survey, we completed N=3,096 web-enabled interviews with 18- to 29- year-olds in the United States.

Demographic profile:

- 49 percent male, 51 percent female;
- 59 percent are between the ages of 18 and 24; 41 percent are between the ages of 25 and 29;
- 58 percent White (non-Hispanic), 21 percent Hispanic, 12 percent African-American (non-Hispanic), 6 percent other and 2 percent 2+ races;
- 22 percent are Catholic, 13 percent Protestant, 11 percent Fundamental/ Evangelical, 1 percent Jewish, 2 percent Mormon, less than one percent Muslim, 9 percent another religion, 25 percent cite no religious preference, and 10 percent decline to answer;
- 21 percent are married, 14 percent are living with a partner, 1 percent are divorced, 1 percent are separated and 63 percent have never been married;
- 87 percent own a cell phone, 25 percent have a landline, and 3 percent have VOIP;
- 90 percent have Internet access at home.

Current educational status:

- 12 percent of the sample indicated that they are in a two-year junior or community college, 22 percent in a four-year college, 4 percent in graduate school, 1 percent in a business or professional school, 2 percent are not enrolled but taking at least one

class, and 52 percent of 18- to 29- year olds surveyed are not enrolled in any of these categories;

- 75 percent of college students attend a public institution, 25 percent a private one;
- 51 percent of students attend college in an urban area, 29 percent in a suburb and 20 percent in a small town or rural area.

Political and ideological profile:

- 65 percent say they are registered to vote;
- 58 percent of those who were 18 in 2008 said they voted in the 2008 general election (42 percent at a polling place, 11 percent by absentee ballot and 5 percent early);
- 21 percent consider themselves to be politically engaged or active;
- 36 percent self-identify as liberal or leaning liberal, 27 percent moderate, and 35 percent conservative or leaning conservative;
- 37 percent consider themselves Democrats, 24 percent Republicans, and 38 percent Independents;
- 10 percent are supporters of the Tea Party, 17 percent are supporters of Occupy Wall Street movement.

Employment status:

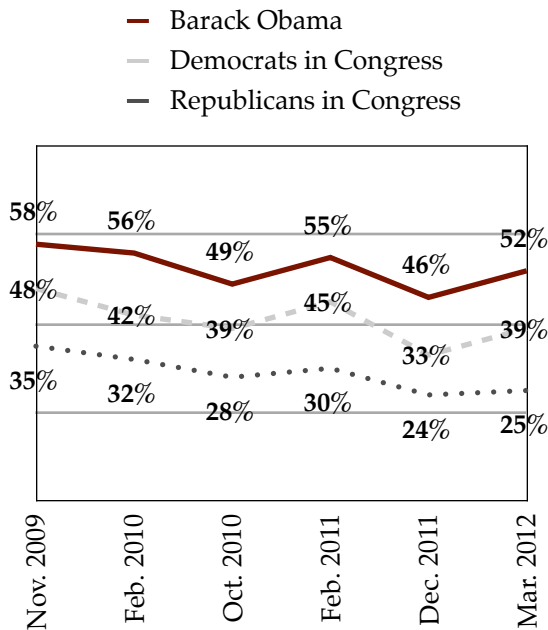
- 55 percent are working as a paid employee, 4 percent are self-employed, and 23 percent are looking for work.

Heading into the General Campaign, Obama and Democrats in Congress Beginning to Reconnect with Millennials

Job Performance of Obama and Democrats are Beginning to Rise; Republicans Stalled

Approximately four months since Harvard IOP polling indicated that Barack Obama's approval ratings among 18- to 29- year olds reached new lows, there is evidence to suggest that the President and Democrats more broadly are beginning to regain the approval of this important segment of the electorate. Since our December 2011 release, the President's approval rating has increased six percentage points, as has the approval rating of Democrats in Congress. The approval ratings of Republicans in Congress remains significantly lower than Democrats, currently standing at 25 percent approval.

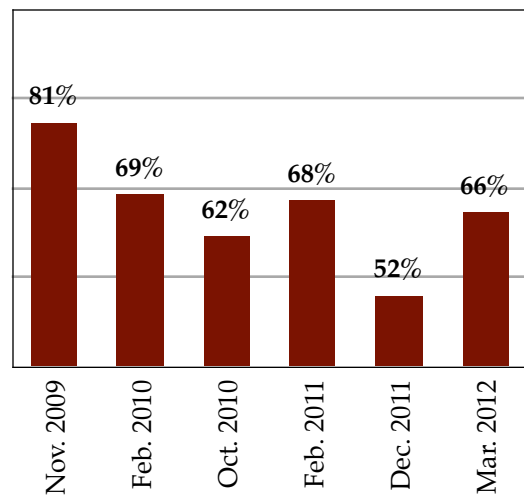
DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE
JOB PERFORMANCE OF ____:
-- APPROVAL RATINGS --



The increase in the President's standing is driven in large part by an increase among important elements of his political base, most notably Democrats whose approval increased seven percentage points (from 74% in December to 81% currently) and Hispanics whose approval increased 12 percentage points (from 54% to 66%) since our last poll was taken.

Watching the President's ratings among young Hispanics could be an important harbinger for the fall campaign; this segment of the youth electorate has been especially volatile in recent years.

DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE
JOB PERFORMANCE OF ____:
-- APPROVAL RATINGS OF HISPANICS ONLY--



Despite an overall better showing in this poll, as the proceeding table indicates, the President continues to struggle with 18- to 29- year old Whites (41% approval) -- who according to 2008 exit polls were the largest cohort of the 18- to 29-

year old segment, and supported Obama over McCain by 10 points, 54 percent to 44 percent.¹

OBAMA APPROVAL RATING
BY SUBGROUP

	NOV 2009	FEB 2010	OCT 2010	FEB 2011	DEC 2011	MAR 2012
18-29 TOTAL	58%	56%	49%	55%	46%	52%
18-24	60%	55%	48%	55%	44%	50%
25-29	56%	57%	52%	55%	47%	55%
IN 4-YR COLL	57%	60%	51%	60%	48%	52%
DEM.	86%	84%	79%	81%	74%	81%
REP.	21%	21%	18%	17%	15%	18%
IND.	49%	49%	42%	46%	39%	40%
WHITE	48%	45%	37%	44%	35%	41%
BLACK	84%	83%	83%	83%	83%	82%
HIS- PANIC	81%	69%	62%	68%	52%	66%
MALE	56%	53%	47%	52%	44%	50%
FE- MALE	60%	59%	52%	57%	48%	54%
NORTH EAST	66%	56%	52%	55%	48%	51%
MID- WEST	57%	51%	46%	56%	43%	50%
SOUTH	52%	53%	46%	52%	46%	51%
WEST	64%	64%	56%	57%	45%	56%

Still Gloomy, the Mood of Millennials Has Improved Since Late Fall 2011

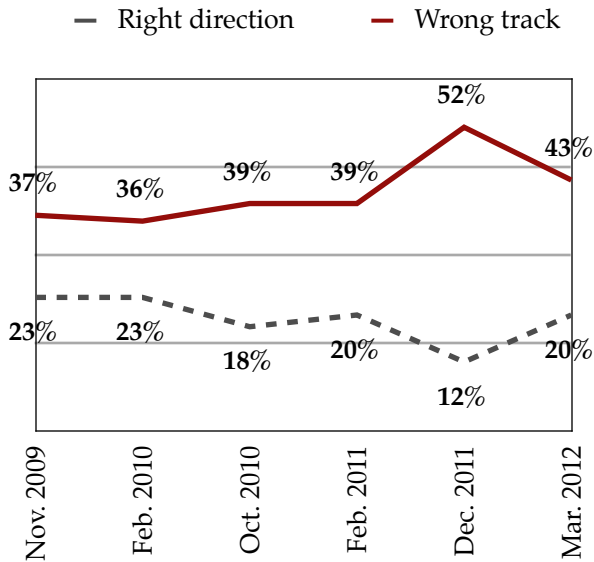
Not surprisingly, the President's job approval rating has been tied closely with the view that young Americans hold about the direction of the country. While only one-in-five 18- to 29- year olds believe that things in the nation are heading in the right direction, this is a marked improvement since the end of 2011.

In late Fall 2011, when our last survey was taken, by more than a 4-to-1 margin, young Americans believed things in the country were heading in the wrong direction. Nearly four months later, while the mood is not necessarily optimistic -- the percentage of young Americans who believe things are headed in the *wrong* direction fell by nine (52% to 43%) and those who say things are turning around increased by eight (12% to 20%). Currently 20 percent believe we are heading in the right direction, the most optimistic subgroup being young Blacks.

- 40 percent of Blacks say things in the nation are headed in the right direction -- which is significantly higher than the percentage of Whites (16%) and Hispanics (21%) who say the same.
- Men are also statistically more likely to say they are optimistic about the direction of the country than women (23% to 18%);
- Democrats (35%) are significantly more optimistic than Republicans (7%) and Independents (8%).

¹ <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls/#USP00p1>

ALL IN ALL, DO YOU THINK THAT THINGS
IN THE NATION ARE ...



Issue of Top Concern

It appears that some of the intense pressure that young Americans were feeling related to the economy toward the end of 2011 is beginning to dissipate, if only a little.

When young Americans were asked to cite (open-ended question) the national issue that concerns them most in the Fall 2011 Harvard IOP survey -- nearly three-in-four (74%) reported jobs and the economy.

Currently, 58 percent cite jobs and the economy, a decrease of 16 percentage points -- and close to the number who cited this issue as top concern one year ago.

An additional seven percent cited health care, five percent cited education, five percent immigration, and four percent mentioned issues related to national security as their top priority.

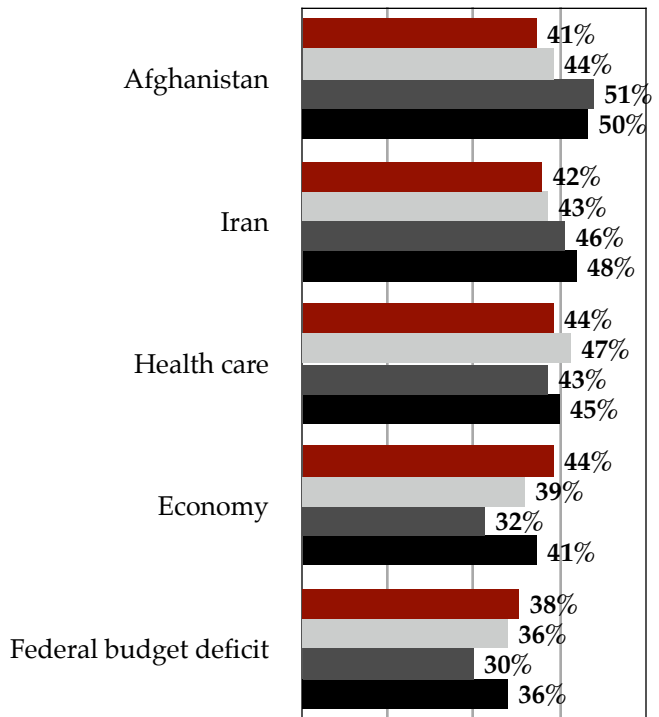
Obama's Job Performance on Most Important Issues Stabilizing, Some Improvement on Economy Noted

While a majority of young Americans under the age of 30 still disapprove of the way that President Obama is handling a variety of important domestic and foreign policy-related issues -- the President has seen marked improvement over his handling of the economy since the December 2011 poll.

After receiving approval ratings of less than one-in-three (32%) for the economy and the federal budget deficit (30%) -- Obama's approval ratings increased to 41 percent and 36 percent respectively.

DO YOU APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE OF THE
WAY BARACK OBAMA IS HANDLING:
-- APPROVAL RATINGS --

■ November 2009 ■ November 2010
■ December 2011 ■ March 2012

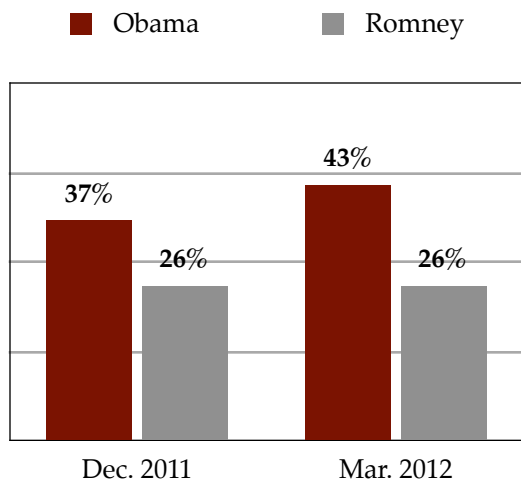


As the General Election Begins to Take Shape, Obama Leads Romney by 17 Points

At the time that this survey was conducted, Mitt Romney was in the process of securing the Republican nomination. When young voters were asked who they would be most likely to support in the 2012 election -- a plurality, 43 percent, selected Barack Obama and 26 percent selected Mitt Romney. Thirty percent (30%) indicated that they were undecided.

In our late November-early December poll, several weeks before the Iowa and New Hampshire contests -- Barack Obama polled at 37 percent and Mitt Romney polled at 26 percent. Since this time, the President's standing increased 6 percentage points and Romney's stayed the same.

IN THE 2012 CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENT,
ARE YOU MORE LIKELY TO VOTE FOR
BARACK OBAMA OR FOR MITT ROMNEY?



While Obama's lead over Romney has been extended since the end of 2011 -- there are several subgroups where important differences exist. Although there is not necessarily a youth gender gap (i.e., no statistical differences between men

and women in support of Obama or Romney), there are statistical differences by:

- Age: Obama leads 18- to 24- year olds by 12 points (41%-29%); 25- to 29- year olds by 23 points (46%-23%); and
- Race: Obama leads among Blacks by 78 points (79%-1%), Hispanics by 38 points (50%-12%), yet he trails Whites by 3 (37%-34%) -- a group he won by 10 in 2008.

It should also be noted that while Obama (75% to 6% among Democrats) and Romney (69% to 11% among Republicans) both do well among their base vote -- two-thirds (66%) of self-described Independents are undecided at this time, 22 percent are supporting Obama and 12 percent are supporting Romney in 2012.

In a *hypothetical* election between Democrat Obama, Republican Romney and an Independent Ron Paul -- we learned that under such a scenario most of the "Paul vote" would be drawn from Romney supporters: Obama, 41 percent (losing 2 points from a one-on-one matchup); Romney, 18 percent (losing 9 points); Paul, 13 percent with 27 percent undecided.

More Young Voters Now Believe Obama Will Win Re-Election

Four months ago, when our last poll was taken, it was a difficult time for the Obama campaign. A united Republican field was pitched against the President, and more young voters believed that he would lose re-election (36%) than win (30%). When the same question was asked in this survey, the findings are reversed -- momentum seems to be building for the Obama re-election among young voters as 43 percent say he will win and 27 percent believing he will lose.

Forced to Make Trade-Offs, Jobs Creation Dominates, Health Care & Education Trump the Deficit

New Series of Questions Highlights Importance of Domestic Issues

For the first time in our project's history, we designed a new series of questions aimed at determining the preference that 18- to 29- year olds have for a specific issue when it is paired against another issue in a pairwise comparison model. The objective of this new series of questions is to look beyond traditional open-ended questions and forced rankings that have consistently shown that "creating jobs and improving the economy" is the dominant issue -- and attempt to understand how the economy and other issues compare across a broad spectrum of domestic and international priorities in a time of limited government resources.

Beginning with a list of 20 issue priorities, we randomly paired one against the other and asked survey respondents to choose which one is more important (and how much more important): Issue A or Issue B.

The table on the next page highlights the overall strength of each of the 20 issues based upon the percentage of time that it "won" its match-up against every other issue. For example, "creating jobs and lowering the unemployment rate" was considered the most important issue overall by a significant margin -- it won its match-up 77 percent of the time against the field.

A second set of priorities emerged from this analysis which illustrates the importance that Millennials put on domestic, financial-related concerns. For example, 62 percent of the time "reducing the federal deficit" was considered more important than everything else, 61 percent

of the time "ensuring affordable access to health care" won its match-up, 60 percent of the time "lowering the tax burden for all Americans" won -- as did "creating a world-class education system."

When 2012's undecided voters are isolated, we find again that creating jobs remains the number one priority (75% win percentage), but unlike the general population of 18- to 29- year olds, ensuring affordable access to health care is positioned number two (64%), interestingly in a virtual tie with lowering the tax burden for all Americans (62%).

Perhaps more importantly, when members of the general 18- to 29- year old population were asked to make *trade-offs* between two priorities, we found that:

- Providing affordable access to health care won against reducing the federal deficit 58 percent of the time;
- Creating a world-class education system won against reducing the federal deficit 59 percent of the time;
- Countering China's rising influence won against solving the European debt crisis 59 percent of the time;
- Becoming energy independent won against preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon 58 percent of the time; and
- Reducing the federal deficit was in a *statistical tie* (54%) against addressing Social Security (46%).

While reducing the federal deficit is clearly an important issue for Millennials, this analysis tells us that it is a *more important* priority than every foreign policy priority tested -- but is in a *statistical tie* against addressing Social Security, lowering the tax burden for all, becoming energy independent and protecting individual liberties. Reducing the federal deficit is considered *less important* than creating jobs, creating a world-class education system and ensuring affordable access to health care.

THINKING ABOUT THE MAJOR ISSUES FACING THE UNITED STATES TODAY, PLEASE TELL ME WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TWO IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU:

- % OF MATCH-UPS EACH ISSUE WAS CONSIDERED MORE IMPORTANT -

	% WIN
CREATING JOBS AND LOWERING THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	77%
REDUCING THE FEDERAL DEFICIT	62%
ENSURING AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE	61%
LOWERING THE TAX BURDEN FOR ALL AMERICANS	60%
CREATING A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION SYSTEM	60%
BECOMING ENERGY INDEPENDENT	59%
ADDRESSING SOCIAL SECURITY	58%

	% WIN
PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF TERRORISM	54%
PROTECTING INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES FROM GOVERNMENT	52%
PREVENTING IRAN FROM ACQUIRING A NUCLEAR WEAPON	52%
REDUCING THE ROLE OF BIG MONEY IN U.S. ELECTIONS	51%
WITHDRAWING FROM AFGHANISTAN	51%
ADDRESSING INCOME INEQUALITY	50%
DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION POLICY	48%
COMBATING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE	37%
PROMOTING A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION TO THE ISRAEL PALESTINE ISSUE	34%
COUNTERING CHINA'S RISING INFLUENCE	31%
PROMOTING STABLE DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST / NORTH AFRICA	31%
SOLVING THE EUROPEAN DEBT CRISIS	28%
RE-INTEGRATING NORTH KOREA INTO THE WORLD COMMUNITY	22%

As an appendix to this report, we will attach a spreadsheet that compares how each of the 20 issues fared against the others.

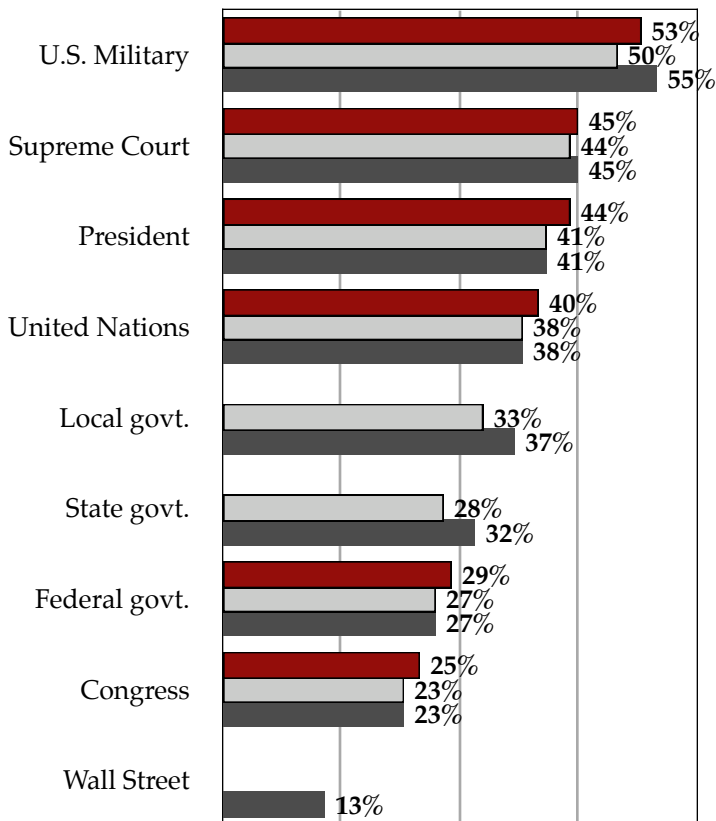
Millennials Find UN More Trustworthy than Congress, the Federal Government and Wall Street

Trust in U.S. Military Increases Slightly, along with State and Local Government

While the level of trust that Millennials place in the public institutions that we measure in our annual survey have remained constant over the last 12 months -- some slight increases in trust levels for the U.S. military, state, and local government are worth noting.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRUST ...
TO DO THE RIGHT THING?
(ALL OF THE TIME / MOST OF THE TIME)

■ Feb. 2010 ■ Feb. 2011 ■ March 2012



Overall, a majority (55%) of 18- to 29- year olds trust the military to do the right thing all (13%) or most of the time (42%), which is a five-point increase in the last year; the percentage of Millennials who trust state and local government all or most of the time are relatively low, but nevertheless saw slight four-point increases since last February while others remained constant.

In addition to questions about domestic and international public institutions, in this survey we also asked about "Wall Street." Two percent (2%) of Millennials cite that they trust Wall Street to do the right thing "all of the time," 12 percent cite "most of the time," 51 percent "some of the time" and more than a third, or 36 percent say never.

Similar to findings we have highlighted in the past, trust in U.S. institutions differs widely by race and ethnicity in the United States. For example:

- Whites (58%) are significantly more likely than Blacks (45%) trust the U.S. military all or most of the time;
- Blacks (62%) are significantly more likely than Whites (35%) or Hispanics (50%) to trust the President; and
- Whites (47%) and Hispanics (48%) are both more likely than Blacks (29%) to trust the Supreme Court.

Millennials Prefer Multilateral Solutions to International Conflict by a Wide Margin

In 2002, CBS News and the *New York Times* crafted a survey question asking Americans: Which of the following statements comes closer to your point of view -- the United States should take the lead in solving international crises and conflicts, or the United States should let other countries and the United Nations take the lead in solving international crises and conflicts? Nearly 10 years ago in 2002, 46 percent of Americans indicated that they would prefer the U.S. to take the lead; in 2006, the number dropped to 31 percent.²

As we have asked this question over the years to Millennials, our findings have consistently shown by wide margins that 18- to 29- year olds strongly prefer the United Nations and other countries take the lead in solving international crises and conflicts. This year's results offer the same, consistent finding. In fact, it is one of a few questions in our poll where there is no significant difference between Democrats and Republicans -- it is a unifying issue: 76 percent of Democrats, 74 percent of Republicans and 75 percent of Independents agree that United States should let other countries and the United Nations take the lead in solving international crises and conflicts. One-quarter (25%) believe that the United States should take the lead.

² http://www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/CBSNews_polls/jul06mideast.pdf

Although Community Service Remains Priority for Majority on Campus, Disillusionment with Politics Is Rising

A Majority of College Students and One-Third of All Millennials Volunteer for Community Service

Slightly more than one-in-three (34%) of all Millennials report that they have volunteered for community service in the last year; as has been the case from the start of this project, we find that volunteerism is greater among college students than others in this cohort. Fifty-three percent (53%) of college students report volunteering in the last year -- of which, 40 percent do so at least a few times a month or more.

Negativity Toward the Political Process Abounds

Despite an interest in serving others in their community and a clear spirit of service that can be found in every corner of America, our analysis indicates that the heightened sense of political spirit we marked in the years after 9/11 through 2008 is dissipating. For example, in nearly every attitudinal measure related to the efficacy and importance of political engagement, the attitudes and opinions of Millennials continues to slowly grow more negative.

Using a 5-point scale with a neutral rating:

- 59 percent of Millennials agree strongly or somewhat that “elected officials” seem to be motivated by selfish reasons” (4-point increase in the last year);
- 55 percent agree that “elected officials don’t have the same priorities I have,” (4-point increase since 2010);

- 49 percent agree that “politics has become too partisan” (5-point increase in the last year);
- 29 percent agree that “ political involvement rarely has any tangible results” (5-point increase in the last year); and
- In a question that we developed this year, 45 percent agree that “politics today are no longer able to meet the challenges our country is facing,” only 15 percent disagree -- with 39 percent saying that they neither agree nor disagree.

When the attitudes toward the process of politics and governing are analyzed by key subgroups such as race, we find significant differences -- specifically, that White 18- to 29- year olds are significantly more likely to hold cynical views than Blacks and Hispanics. Whites are more likely than both Blacks and Hispanics to agree that:

- Elected officials don’t seem to have the same priorities I have;
- Politics has become too partisan; and
- Politics today are no longer able to meet the challenges our country is facing.

While this data indicates that attitudes are not positive, reported actions also back up this claim. When Millennials were asked which of the following activities they have participated in, compared to 2011, all responses were down. For example:

- In 2011, 29 percent reported “liking” a political issue on Facebook; in 2012, the number dropped 6 points to 23 percent;
- In 2011, 24 percent reported “liking” a political candidate on Facebook; in 2012, the number dropped 6 points to 18 percent;
- In 2011, 21 percent reported “liking” a political issue on Facebook; in 2012, the number dropped 4 points to 17 percent.

The percentage of Millennials who self-report that they are politically active is now 21 percent, compared to 25 percent in December 2011; for college students, only 22 percent say they are politically active, which is down 9 points since our last poll which was released in December.

And most importantly, as the election draws closer, there is not an increase so far in the percentage of young people who indicate that they will definitely be voting in November. In our Fall 2011 survey, it was reported that 51 percent of Millennials would “definitely” vote with another 16 percent saying that they would “probably vote” -- now, four months later, there is no movement in this position as 49 percent tell us they will “definitely” vote” -- and another 15 percent say “probably.”

Understanding the Political Typology of the Emerging Generation; More Than Half Do Not Fit Into the Traditional Left-Right Spectrum

Traditional Party and Ideological Labels Mean Little to Millennials

For many years, we have known that Millennials do not strongly associate with one political party or another. Only 16 percent tell us that they are “strong Democrats” and ten percent say that they are “strong Republicans.” Exactly one quarter (25%) classify themselves as liberal, the same number (25%) consider themselves conservative.

Since political party and rigid self-defined ideology do not play prominent roles in the politics of Millennials today, for nine years, our survey has focused on understanding how Millennial attitudes toward a dozen-plus issues and values can help us better understand the emerging political typology of this generation.

Over the 12 months since our last poll on this subject was released, of the 15 issues that we tested, only one has changed outside the margin of error: 18- to 29- year olds have become less supportive of the concept that basic health insurance is a right for all people, and if someone has no means of paying for it, the government should provide it. Last year at this time, 50 percent of all Millennials agreed with this statement, currently that number has decreased to 44 percent.

Millennial Views More Comfortably Fall into Four Segments Rather than Two Parties

However, more notable than responses to any one question, we have found that as Millennials begin to age and further develop their personal and political personas, four distinct ideological groups emerge from our statistical modeling.³

Two of the segments mirror the traditional view of American politics and ideology: progressives and conservatives. Combined, these two segments, which are more politically active than their counterparts, represent 26 percent of all 18- to 29- year olds and are shrinking (last year, it was 31%). An additional 51 percent can be divided into two segments that were re-defined in 2010 IOP polling as the “New Religious” and the “New Passive” segments.

New Progressives

New Progressives, 15 percent of the total sample,

- Are very supportive of President Obama (85% job approval rating overall);
- Agree that basic health insurance (96% agree) and other necessities like food and shelter (89% agree) should be provided for those who cannot afford them;
- Agree that government should spend more to reduce poverty (81%);
- Agree that (44%) government spending is an effective way to increase economic growth; and

³ Analysis based on Latent Class GOLD Analysis; 78% of total sample classified.

- Are more likely than others to believe that the government should do more to curb climate change (65% agree).

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the members of the New Progressive group are Democrats (or lean Democrat), 10 percent are Independents, and 3 percent are Republicans. Nearly two-thirds (65%) are White, 18 percent are Hispanic and nine percent are Black.

New Conservatives

Eleven percent (11%) of the 18- to 29- year-old population, the New Conservatives are 81 percent Republican (or lean Republican), 13 percent are Independents, and six percent say they are Democrats (5%). Thirty-seven percent (37%) support the Tea Party. They:

- Are very concerned about the moral direction of our country (97% agree); believe homosexual relationships are morally wrong (70%); believe religious values should play a more important role in government (58%);
- Disagree strongly that qualified minorities should be given special preferences in hiring and education (96% disagree);
- Disagree that government spending is an effective way to increase economic growth (87%); and that basic health care is a right for all people (79%); and
- 43 percent agree that in today's world, it is sometimes necessary to attack potentially hostile countries, rather than waiting until we are attacked to respond.

New Conservatives are 87 percent White, 60 percent male, and 95 percent say that religion plays either a very (68%) or somewhat (27%) important part in their lives.

New Religious

Representing more than a quarter (28%) 18- to 29- year olds, the New Religious are shaping up to be one of the most influential voter segments in American politics. Looking back to their voting patterns in the last two presidential elections, this group split evenly between George W. Bush and John Kerry in 2004 and closely mirrored the youth vote in 2008, with 64 percent supporting Barack Obama.

Currently, 45 percent support President Obama for re-election against Mitt Romney (23%), with 33 percent undecided. From an ideological perspective, 30 percent say they are liberal, 40 percent conservative, with 29 percent saying they are moderate.

While not as politically active (17% consider themselves politically active compared to 31% and 36% for Progressives and Conservatives) as the two more traditional groups, the New Religious have proven that they will respond if targeted and connected with by a political campaign.

Multi-cultural, less than half-white (43%), this group boasts the highest percentage and numbers of Hispanics /Latinos (30%) and Blacks (19%) than any of the other three segments. Nearly 9-in-10 (87%) say that religion plays an important part in their lives. While 28 percent of this segment is Catholic, 17 percent of the New Conservatives are Fundamentalist /Evangelical Christians.

Their views do not fit neatly into traditional left-right categories, as they balance their strong feelings toward religion and morality, with views of an active federal government. The New Religious tend to track very closely with the

New Conservatives when it comes to issues related to:

- Concern over the moral direction of the country (66% agree);
- A greater role for religious values in government (39% agree);
- The morality of homosexual relationships (43% believe that they are morally wrong); and
- School choice (54% agree that the education system would be better if parents had more freedom to choose).

However, the New Religious track closely with New Progressives when issues like the following are discussed:

- Health insurance as a right (67% agree);
- Increased government spending to reduce poverty (65% agree); and
- Eliminating barriers to free trade (31% agree).

New Passives

The fourth and final segment represents 23 percent of Millennials; and this group looks slightly more liberal, but similar to the New Religious from traditional ideological lens:

- 37 percent liberal, compared to 30 liberal;
- 32 percent conservative, compared to 40 percent; and
- 30 percent moderate, compared to 29 percent.

Their differences of opinion on issues and values are significant, driven mainly by their level of

religiosity. Compared with the New Religious, this moderate group of New Passives is more than half as likely to say that religion plays a very important part in their lives (24% compared to 52% for the New Religious).

And while this group earned the name New Passives for their lack of political engagement, this current segment shows some willingness to participate in 2012; 70 percent are registered to vote.

For many of the 15 issues that were tested in the survey, this segment's responses were clustered toward neutral -- showing a relative lack of familiarity or passion with the subject. However, there are a number of issues where their passion was highlighted, mostly along libertarian lines:

- 75 percent disagreed that qualified minorities should be given special preferences in hiring and education;
- 73 disagreed that religious values should play a more important role in government;
- 71 percent disagreed that homosexual relationships are morally wrong; and
- 26 percent agree that basic health insurance is a right.

Following is a table that highlights the percentage of all 18- to 29- year olds who agree with the 15 statements that were used in the segmentation model.

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?⁴
 -- % WHO STRONGLY / SOMEWHAT AGREE --

FOREIGN POLICY/ NATIONAL SECURITY	FEB. 2010	FEB. 2011	MAR 2012
I AM WILLING TO GIVE UP SOME PERSONAL FREEDOM AND PRIVACY FOR THE SAKE OF NATL. SECURITY.	28%	24%	23%
IN TODAY'S WORLD, IT IS SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO ATTACK POTENTIALLY HOSTILE COUNTRIES, RATHER THAN WAITING UNTIL WE ARE ATTACKED TO RESPOND.	23%	19%	22%

HEALTH CARE, POVERTY, EDUCATION & ENVIRONMENT	FEB. 2010	FEB. 2011	MAR 2012
BASIC HEALTH INSURANCE IS A RIGHT FOR ALL PEOPLE, AND IF SOMEONE HAS NO MEANS OF PAYING FOR IT, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE IT.	47%	50%	44%
BASIC NECESSITIES, SUCH AS FOOD AND SHELTER, ARE A RIGHT THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE TO THOSE UNABLE TO AFFORD THEM.	46%	46%	43%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SPEND MORE TO REDUCE POVERTY.	40%	40%	37%

HEALTH CARE, POVERTY, EDUCATION & ENVIRONMENT	FEB. 2010	FEB. 2011	MAR 2012
IF PARENTS HAD MORE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE WHERE THEY COULD SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THIS COUNTRY WOULD BE BETTER.	38%	38%	37%
GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO MORE TO CURB CLIMATE CHANGE, EVEN AT THE EXPENSE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH.	29%	28%	28%

ECONOMY/TRADE/ STIMULUS	FEB. 2010	FEB. 2011	MAR 2012
CUTTING TAXES IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO INCREASE ECONOMIC GROWTH.	42%	38%	39%
OUR COUNTRY'S GOAL IN TRADE POLICY SHOULD BE TO ELIMINATE ALL BARRIERS TO TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT SO WE HAVE A TRULY GLOBAL ECONOMY	24%	25%	24%
GOVT. SPENDING IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO INCREASE ECONOMIC GROWTH.	25%	21%	20%

⁴ Full question offered 5-point scale, with option for neutral response.

IMMIGRATION, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, MORALITY	FEB. 2010	FEB. 2011	MAR 2012
I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE MORAL DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY.	51%	48%	49%
HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE MORALLY WRONG.	30%	25%	25%
RECENT IMMIGRATION HAS DONE MORE GOOD THAN HARM.	23%	22%	25%
RELIGIOUS VALUES SHOULD PLAY A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE IN GOVT.	25%	21%	21%
QUALIFIED MINORITIES SHOULD BE GIVEN SPECIAL PREFERENCES IN HIRING AND EDUCATION.	15%	14%	14%

Conclusion

What is the American Dream?

*“Before it was just to live a happy life. Now it’s to be able to live and start a family, not in poverty.”
(28 year-old White male with some college, no degree)*

*“Living debt free in a debt free country where soldiers are treated like celebrities, no one is homeless, every child has parents and privacy is respected.”
(22 year-old White female college senior)*

*“The American Dream means having a stable job, food on the table every day, having a house, having a vehicle, and the whole family just having a good life.”
(20 year-old Hispanic female enrolled in a junior college)*

The dreams and aspirations of America’s largest generation, the Millennials, were not formulated from the glitter of Hollywood or the gold from Wall Street; they were formed in large part by the very personal impacts of a Great Recession and an America at war.

And now, less than four years after millions of young people from across the country banded together to vote -- some for John McCain, more for Barack Obama -- Millennials feel let down and abandoned by the public and private institutions that they entrusted to guard their dream.

After having conducted 21 major surveys of this generation of young Americans over 12 years -- their message in 2012 could not be more clear.

While it is tempting to look at a snapshot of this generation as we head into the November election and make broad comparisons to exit polls, the regular study and tracking of this generation paints a more nuanced and complete picture of their political and public identity.

Although this generation is not as supportive of President Obama and Democrats as they may have been in the historic 2008 campaign, this in now way implies that the Republican Party has successfully captured the hearts, minds and votes of Millennials.

Instead, Millennials have clearly shown that they are a generation that cares deeply about our country, their role in it – and feel that the political system as represented by both parties has not effectively engaged them on the issues that will shape their, and our nation’s future.

When faced with difficult choices about priorities facing this nation, Millennials show knowledge and concern about the challenges confronting us.

They are asking President Obama and Governor Romney to provide leadership and a clear vision that makes America and its citizens more safe, prosperous and secure. Millennials are willing to invest their time and their resources to do the same locally.

It would be wise for each campaign to begin immediately with a discussion of innovative methods to improve the economy, plans for a world-class education system, options for affordable health care for all -- and a strategy that creates energy independence.

Harvard Public Opinion Project

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Harvard's Institute of Politics (IOP) was established in 1966 as a memorial to President Kennedy. The IOP's mission is to unite and engage students, particularly undergraduates, with academics, politicians, activists, and policy-makers on a non-partisan basis and to stimulate and nurture their interest in public service and leadership. The Institute strives to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the academic world and the world of politics and public affairs. The Institute has been conducting national political polls of America's college students since 2000. More information, including past results, is available online at www.iop.harvard.edu

Appendix

Methodology

Knowledge Networks conducted a study of young adults on political issues on behalf of Harvard University's Institute of Politics. The goal of the project was to collect 3,000 completed interviews with young Americans between 18- and 29- years old. The main sample data collection took place from March 23 to April 9, 2012. A small pretest was conducted prior to the main survey to examine the accuracy of the data and the length of the interview.

Six thousand, four hundred and sixteen (6,416) KnowledgePanel members were assigned to the study. The cooperation rate was 48.2 percent resulting in 3,096 completed interviews. One hundred seventy three (173) interviews were conducted in Spanish with the remainder done in English.

The web-enabled KnowledgePanel® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, Knowledge Networks provides a laptop and ISP connection at no cost. People who already have computers and Internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and are sent e-mails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research. More technical information is available at <http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp/reviewer->

[info.html](#) and by request to the IOP.

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About Knowledge Networks

Knowledge Networks delivers quality and service to guide leaders in business, government, and academia – uniquely bringing scientifically valid research to the online space through its probability-based, online KnowledgePanel®. The company delivers unique study design, science, analysis, and panel maintenance, along with a commitment to close collaboration at every stage of the research process. Knowledge Networks leverages its expertise in brands, media, advertising, and public policy issues to provide insights that speak directly to clients' most important concerns. For more information: www.knowledgenetworks.com

Solving the European Debt Crisis		26%	38%	49%	49%	52%	25%	33%	9%	12%
Preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon	69%		72%	63%	62%	81%	40%	49%	37%	45%
Countering China's rising influence	59%	28%		47%	44%	56%	24%	26%	21%	30%
Promoting a peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestine issue	51%	37%	48%		50%	69%	41%	32%	19%	27%
Promoting stable democracy in the Middle East/ North Africa	49%	35%	52%	47%		67%	31%	28%	22%	13%
Re-integrating North Korea into the world community	42%	19%	37%	30%	30%		22%	23%	26%	10%
Preventing the spread of terrorism	71%	59%	73%	56%	68%	71%		57%	33%	41%
Withdrawing from Afghanistan	63%	49%	73%	67%	65%	74%	41%		35%	35%
Reducing the federal deficit	89%	61%	78%	80%	78%	74%	65%	64%		54%
Addressing Social Security	88%	48%	68%	72%	86%	88%	58%	61%	43%	
Creating a world-class education system	75%	54%	76%	79%	74%	85%	59%	55%	54%	48%
Creating jobs and lowering the unemployment rate	87%	75%	81%	75%	93%	81%	78%	72%	65%	80%
Addressing income inequality	72%	49%	69%	61%	65%	68%	42%	43%	42%	47%
Lowering the tax burden for all Americans	74%	54%	75%	70%	74%	81%	48%	66%	55%	51%
Becoming energy independent	76%	58%	82%	65%	82%	79%	55%	55%	48%	55%
Combating the impacts of climate change	65%	26%	55%	48%	67%	69%	31%	27%	21%	30%
Ensuring affordable access to health care	77%	58%	72%	74%	63%	82%	47%	58%	58%	60%
Reducing the role of big money in U.S. elections	80%	55%	66%	78%	67%	86%	36%	50%	35%	47%
Protecting individual liberties from government	72%	45%	78%	60%	65%	81%	40%	43%	44%	28%
Developing a comprehensive immigration policy	80%	48%	58%	73%	76%	82%	45%	53%	30%	44%

Percentages shown are how often the issue on each row was rated as "More Important" than the issue in the corresponding column.
Bold and Black = "Win" - **Bold and Red = "Loss"** That is Statistically Significant

	Creating a world-class education system	Creating jobs and lowering the unemployment rate	Addressing income inequality	Lowering the tax burden for all Americans	Becoming energy independent	Combating the impacts of climate change	Ensuring affordable access to health care	Reducing the role of big money in U.S. elections	Protecting individual liberties from government	Developing a comprehensive immigration policy
Solving the European Debt Crisis	19%	12%	27%	24%	20%	33%	20%	20%	28%	20%
Preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon	42%	24%	50%	46%	41%	71%	36%	45%	51%	51%
Countering China's rising influence	22%	14%	31%	21%	15%	40%	28%	32%	19%	34%
Promoting a peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestine issue	19%	14%	37%	29%	39%	52%	25%	21%	34%	24%
Promoting stable democracy in the Middle East/North Africa	23%	7%	30%	25%	15%	33%	35%	28%	30%	23%
Re-integrating North Korea into the world community	15%	11%	27%	13%	20%	25%	18%	13%	19%	15%
Preventing the spread of zoonosis	37%	21%	56%	51%	44%	67%	50%	64%	56%	51%
Withdrawing from Afghanistan	45%	22%	54%	32%	45%	71%	42%	46%	56%	47%
Reducing the federal deficit	41%	33%	58%	44%	48%	76%	42%	62%	54%	70%
Addressing Social Security	52%	17%	53%	45%	43%	68%	39%	47%	72%	55%
Creating a world-class education system		30%	56%	43%	53%	72%	41%	55%	55%	74%
Creating jobs and lowering the unemployment rate	67%		65%	82%	62%	79%	66%	89%	73%	85%
Addressing income inequality	39%	15%		46%	45%	65%	32%	38%	40%	57%
Lowering the tax burden for all Americans	55%	18%	53%		54%	72%	41%	59%	66%	69%
Becoming energy independent	46%	38%	54%	45%		62%	41%	59%	55%	60%
Combating the impacts of climate change	27%	20%	29%	26%	33%		24%	33%	44%	33%
Ensuring affordable access to health care	55%	32%	63%	52%	57%	74%		68%	48%	66%
Reducing the role of big money in U.S. elections	41%	11%	57%	41%	40%	66%	30%		39%	51%
Protecting individual liberties from government	44%	23%	55%	34%	45%	55%	48%	60%		54%
Developing a comprehensive immigration policy	25%	15%	40%	30%	37%	64%	30%	48%	43%	

Percentages shown are how often the issue on each row was rated as "More Important" than the issue in the corresponding column.
Bold and Black = "Win" - **Bold and Red** = "Loss" That is Statistically Significant