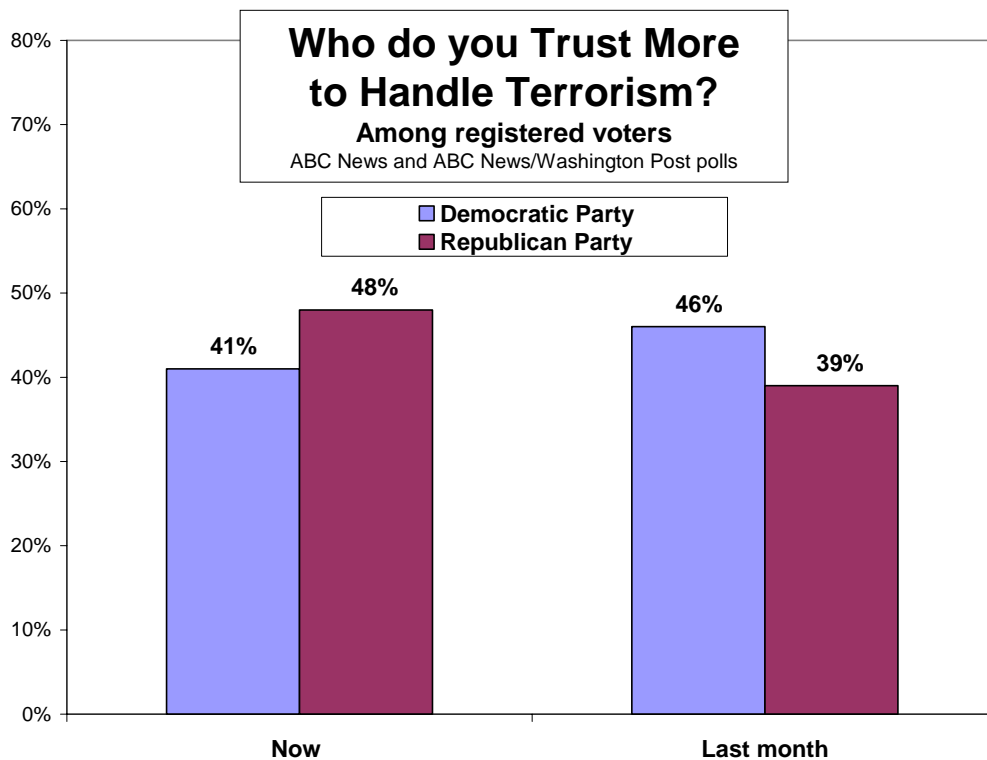


Republicans Inch Closer in '06 Election Preference

Terrorism has inched up in importance in the 2006 midterm elections and Republicans have regained an edge in trust to handle it – helping George W. Bush's party move closer to the Democrats in congressional vote preference.

The Republicans lead the Democrats in trust to handle terrorism by 48-41 percent among registered voters in this ABC News poll, a flip from a seven-point Democratic advantage last month. And 16 percent now call terrorism the top issue in their vote, a slight five-point gain.

The Republicans' edge on handling terrorism is still vastly below their 35-point lead on the issue heading into the 2002 midterm elections. But it's still their best issue – the one Bush rode to re-election. And part of their gain is among independents, the key swing voters in any election: They now split between the parties in trust to handle terrorism, after favoring the Democrats by nine points last month.



ISSUES – On issues, Iraq and the economy continue to share top billing in voters' minds. But terrorism has moved up in mentions as the most important issue, from nine percent in

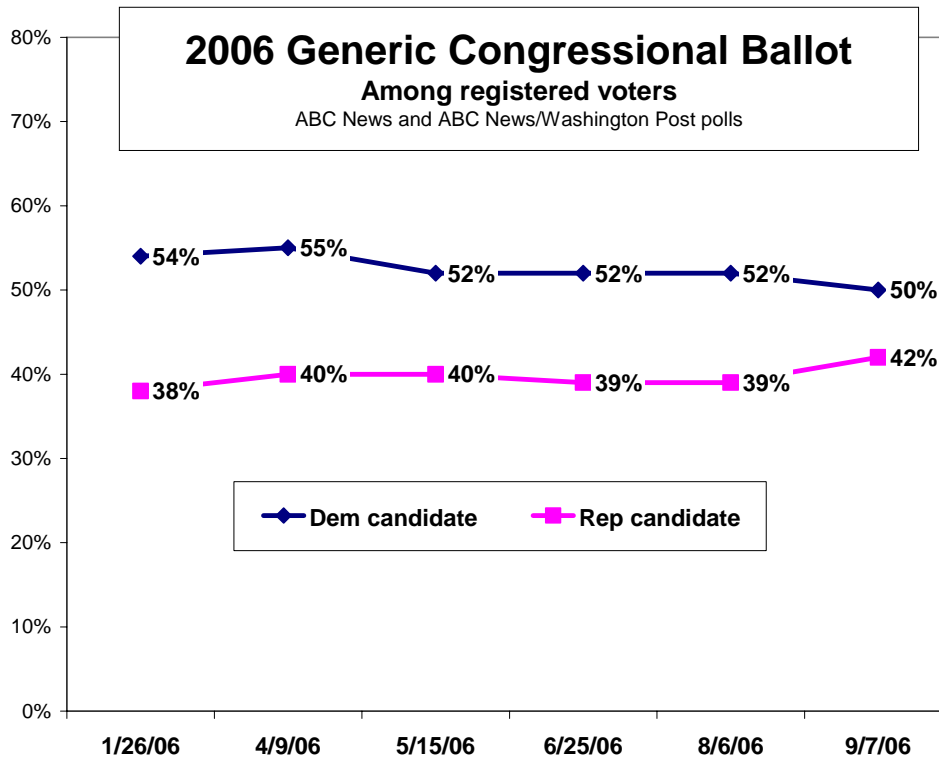
June to 11 percent in early August to 16 percent now. This week's focus on the five-year anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks may have played a role; so, too, has the decline in gasoline prices – cited as a top issue by 15 percent last month, but just five percent now.

Clearly, the more voters focus on terrorism, the better for the Republicans in November: Among registered voters who call terrorism their top issue, 77 percent say they'll vote for the Republican candidate in their district.

Democrats, for their part, would rather keep Iraq and the economy center stage. Two in 10 registered voters call Iraq their top issue; about as many cite the economy. Democrats win the support of these voters handily – 68 percent in both groups currently back the Democratic candidate in their congressional district.

'06 vote preference		
	Dem	Rep
Economy voters (22%)	68%	26
Iraq voters (21%)	68	27
Terrorism voters (16%)	18	77

All told, 50 percent of registered voters now favor the Democratic congressional candidate in their C.D., 42 percent the Republican – a narrower Democratic advantage than the 13-point lead they held all summer, and half what it was last January. It's a similar 51-44 percent among likely voters.



IRAQ/TERRORISM – The Democrats face challenges on Iraq as well. While the party’s candidates lead widely among the voters who call Iraq their top issue, registered voters overall are now evenly split over which party they better trust to handle Iraq: Forty-three percent trust the Democrats, 44 percent the Republicans. The Democrats had led on Iraq by as many as 13 points last May.

One reason could be the lack of a clear alternative strategy: While 60 percent of registered voters don’t think Bush has a clear plan what do in Iraq, 69 percent don’t think the Democrats have a clear plan, either.

Moreover, most Americans, 57 percent, continue to see the war in Iraq as part of the war on terrorism, as Bush has steadily suggested. That has been more or less stable since fall 2004, after peaking at 77 percent just after the fall of Baghdad in April 2003.

People who see Iraq as part of the broader U.S. campaign against terrorism are more apt to support the Iraq war – and to support Bush and his party as well. That’s the apparent strategy behind Bush’s inclusion of Iraq in his 9/11 anniversary address Monday night.

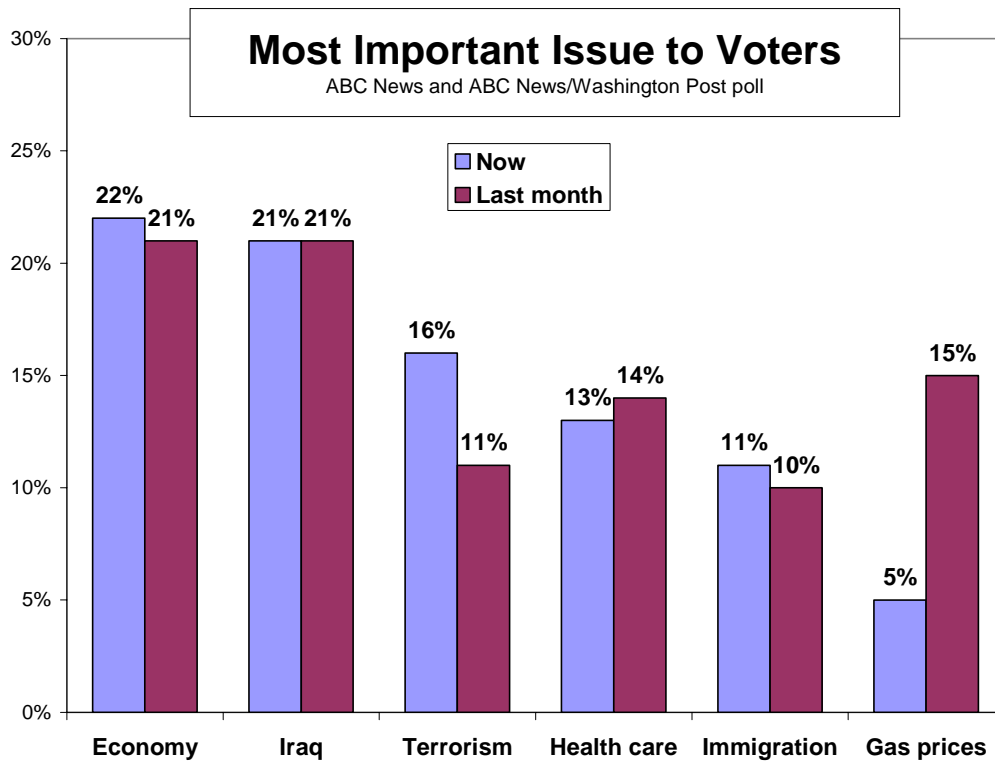
Indeed, among people who think the war in Iraq is part of the war on terrorism (a group that is disproportionately Republican), the Republican Party holds a 2-1 lead in the generic congressional horse race. Among those who say Iraq is *not* part of the war on terrorism, by contrast, it’s a 75-16 percent Democratic lead.

	'06 vote preference (among registered voters)	
	Dem	Rep
Think Iraq is part of GWOT	31%	61
Think Iraq is NOT part of GWOT	75	16

OTHER ISSUES – Most generally, 46 percent of registered voters trust the Democrats to do a better job handling the country's main problems, 40 percent trust the Republicans more. That six-point Democratic lead, again, is half what it was in May, when Bush’s job approval rating skidded to a career low 33 percent (it’s 42 percent now).

The Democrats maintain their leads in trust to handle the economy, by 51-41 percent, and gasoline prices, 51-31 percent. But while the economy has maintained its level of importance to voters, gas prices, as noted, have not. No small wonder: The average price of a gallon has dropped by 42 cents in the last six weeks.

Among other issues, 13 percent cite health care as the most important to their vote, 11 percent cite immigration, and just two percent education. Republicans win the support of immigration voters by 59-33 percent, while Democrats counter with the support of more than six in 10 health care voters.



CONGRESS – There are better signs for congressional incumbents in general. Thirty-nine percent of registered voters approve of the job Congress is doing overall while 57 percent disapprove – no great shakes, but up from a 32-65 percent rating in May (the increase was led by a nine-point advance in approval among Republicans). Similarly, 60 percent of registered voters approve of the job their own representative is doing. It was 56 percent last month, its lowest since 1994.

Approval of the Republican-controlled Congress is another important factor in the election: Among those who approve, 58 percent back their Republican candidate; among those who disapprove, 59 percent support the Democrat.

GROUPS – After favoring their Republican House candidate by nine points in 2004, married women are now splitting their vote. Six in 10 unmarried men and women alike favor Democratic candidates; married men support Republicans, 53-38 percent (compared with 58-40 percent in 2004).

Democrats are maintaining their edge thanks largely to support among independents. Fifty-three percent of independents support the Democratic candidate in their district, just 27 percent the Republican. However, another swing voter group, white Catholics, have moved away: Last month they backed Democrats by 54-36 percent. This month they divide about evenly between the parties – helping the Republicans narrow the gap.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Sept. 5-7, 2006, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults, including 863 registered voters. The results have a three-point error margin for the full sample, 3.5 points for registered voters. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-3. Previously released.

4. Thinking about this November's election for the U.S. House and some U.S. Senate and governor seats, are you following the election very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely or not closely at all?

		----- Closely -----			----- Not closely -----			No
		NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	op.
9/7/06	RV	66	20	46	34	20	14	*
8/6/06	RV	66	21	45	34	23	11	*
5/15/06	RV	60	20	40	39	23	16	*
	All	57	18	38	43	24	19	*

5. Would you say you'll definitely vote in the congressional election this November, probably vote, or might you skip this one?

		Definitely	Probably	Might skip	No opin.
9/7/06	RV	68	22	9	1

6. (and 6a) If the election for the U.S. House of Representatives in November 2006 were being held today, would you vote for (the Democratic candidate) or (the Republican candidate) in your congressional district? (IF OTHER, NEITHER, DK, REF) Would you lean toward the (Democratic candidate) or toward the (Republican candidate)?

Net Leaned Vote:

		Dem cand.	Rep cand.	Other (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	Will not vote (vol.)	No opin.
9/7/06	RV	50	42	*	3	2	4
8/6/06	RV	52	39	*	2	1	5
6/25/06	RV	52	39	1	3	1	4
	All	52	38	1	2	2	5
5/15/06	RV	52	40	1	3	1	4
	All	53	38	1	3	1	4
4/9/06	RV	55	40	*	2	*	3
	All	54	40	*	2	1	4
1/26/06	RV	54	38	1	3	1	5
	All	55	36	1	3	1	4
12/18/05	RV	51	41	1	3	1	4
	All	50	41	1	3	1	4
11/2/05	RV	52	37	1	4	2	6
	All	53	36	1	3	2	5

11/4/02	LV	48	48	1	1	0	2
11/3/02	LV	48	48	*	1	0	2
11/2/02	LV	50	49	*	1	0	2
10/27/02	LV	47	49	1	1	0	3
9/26/02	LV	49	47	1	2	0	2
	RV	47	44	2	3	2	3
	All	46	42	2	2	5	3
7/15/02	RV	47	46	1	1	1	4
	All	47	45	1	1	1	4
1/27/02*	RV	43	50	NA	2	1	5
9/6/00	RV	49	42		2	1	6
7/23/00	RV	46	45		3	1	5
2/27/00	RV	45	46		2	1	5
10/31/99	RV	50	43		3	1	3
9/2/99	RV	48	44		3	*	5
3/14/99	RV	50	41		2	1	6
2/14/99	RV	48	41		3	1	7
1/30/99	RV	49	39		8	1	3
11/1/98	RV	51	43		4	*	2
10/25/98	RV	48	43		3	1	4
10/18/98	RV	49	44		3	1	4
9/28/98	RV	49	44		2	*	4
8/21/98	RV	48	45		3	1	3
7/12/98	RV	47	45		2	*	6
1/31/98	RV	49	40		2	1	8
1/19/98	RV	47	44		3	1	5
10/8/96	RV	51	41		2	1	5
9/29/96	RV	48	41		3	1	7
9/22/96	RV	50	43		2	1	4
9/15/96	RV	49	45		1	1	4
9/4/96	RV	48	44		3	*	5
8/29/96	RV	53	39		3	1	5
8/28/96	RV	51	40		3	1	5
8/27/96	RV	51	41		3	0	5
8/26/96	RV	51	41		3	0	5
8/25/96	RV	48	43		3	1	6
8/24/96	RV	47	43		2	1	6
8/19/96	RV	49	42		3	0	6
8/18/96	RV	45	46		3	0	6
8/15/96	RV	46	43		4	1	5
8/14/96	RV	48	42		3	1	6
8/13/96	RV	49	43		3	0	5
8/12/96	RV	49	42		3	1	5
8/11/96	RV	49	40		4	1	6
8/10/96	RV	49	41		4	1	5
8/4/96	RV	48	45		2	1	4
6/30/96	RV	49	44		3	*	3
5/22/96	RV	52	41		3	1	3
3/10/96	RV	51	43		2	*	4
1/21/96	RV	52	43		3	1	1
10/1/95	RV	49	44		3	*	3
11/6/94	RV	47	42		5	2	5
10/31/94	RV	48	44		4	1	3
10/23/94	RV	50	45		2	1	2
10/9/94	RV	46	47		3	2	2
9/11/94	RV	50	45		1	1	4
8/7/94	RV	49	42		4	1	4
2/27/94	RV	50	40		8	1	2
10/21/91	RV	51	41		4	*	4
7/28/91	RV	49	41		6	*	3
6/2/91	RV	48	42		4	1	5
11/4/90	RV	51	41		5	*	3
10/14/90	RV	50	41		5	*	3

9/9/90	RV	47	46	3	*	3
7/24/90	RV	51	41	4	1	4
5/21/90	RV	47	45	5	1	2
9/21-10/10/88	RV	52	41	2	1	4
9/19/88	RV	51	39	3	1	6
6/22/85	RV	48	44	5	*	3
10/16/84	RV	52	44	2	NA	5
9/11/84	RV	53	45	2	NA	1
7/8/84	RV	58	40	2	NA	1
10/27/82	RV	58	39	NA	NA	3
10/11/82	RV	55	36	NA	NA	9
9/13/82	RV	58	36	NA	NA	6
11/22/81	RV	53	41	"	NA	7
*1/27/02 and previous: No "other candidate" option recorded						

7. What will be the single most important issue in your vote for Congress this year: (the U.S campaign against terrorism), (the war in Iraq), (the economy), (immigration), (gas prices), (health care) or something else?

			Iraq	Econ.	Health care	Immi-gration	Gas prices	Terror-ism	Educ.	All	Other	No op.
9/7/06	RV	21	22	13	11	5	16	2	0	7	3	3
8/6/06	RV	21	21	14	10	15	11	*	*	6	1	1
6/25/06	RV	23	24	15	13	8	9	1	1	4	2	2
	All	24	23	14	13	9	8	1	1	4	2	2

8. Overall, which party, the (Democrats) or the (Republicans), do you trust to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years?

		Democrats	Republicans	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/7/06	RV	46	40	2	8	4
	All	47	38	1	10	4
6/25/06		48	38	1	10	3
5/15/06		50	36	1	11	3
4/9/06		51	37	1	9	2
3/5/06		42	40	2	14	2
1/26/06		51	37	1	8	3
12/18/05		47	42	1	8	2
11/2/05		49	37	3	9	3
6/5/05		46	41	1	9	2
8/11/03		39	40	3	10	7
12/15/02		41	44	2	11	2
10/27/02	LV	39	51	2	5	2
9/26/02		39	46	3	8	4
7/15/02		42	45	2	7	4
1/27/02		40	44	3	10	4
4/22/01		47	40	4	7	3
7/23/00		42	42	2	9	6
9/2/99		45	39	4	9	4
6/6/99		45	35	3	13	5
3/14/99		47	37	5	9	3
2/14/99		48	37	4	7	4
10/18/98		44	36	3	12	6
9/28/98		49	38	2	8	3
8/21/98		48	36	4	9	3
7/12/98		45	38	3	8	6
1/31/98		47	37	4	6	7
1/19/98		45	42	2	7	4
7/8/97		44	37	2	14	3

9/15/96	RV	45	38	3	11	3
8/5/96		43	38	3	11	3
6/30/96		46	37	3	12	3
5/22/96		47	38	3	10	3
11/6/94	RV	41	39	2	12	6
10/31/94		43	43	2	8	4
10/23/94		39	40	3	15	3
9/11/94		43	40	4	11	3
6/26/94		41	36	3	14	5
2/27/94		46	32	4	16	3
11/14/93		42	39	3	11	4
1/17/93		49	28	5	13	5
7/8/92		48	38	1	8	4
6/7/92		43	37	3	11	6
3/11/92		45	37	1	11	5
3/8/92		51	36	1	7	5
2/2/92		49	39	2	7	3
12/15/91		39	37	3	15	6
10/21/91		39	40	3	13	5

9. Which political party, the (Democrats) or the (Republicans), do you trust to do a better job handling (ITEM)?

9/7/06 RV - Summary Table*

	Democrats	Republicans	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
a. The situation in Iraq	43	44	2	9	2
b. The U.S. campaign against terrorism	41	48	1	7	3
c. The economy	51	41	1	5	3
d. Gasoline prices	51	31	*	12	5

*Items a-b asked of half sample, items c-d asked of other half sample.

Trend:

a. The situation in Iraq

	Democrats	Republicans	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/7/06 RV	43	44	2	9	2
All	43	44	2	10	2
8/6/06	43	40	*	11	5
6/25/06	47	41	1	9	2
5/15/06	50	36	2	10	3
4/9/06	49	42	1	6	2
3/5/06	42	42	2	11	2
1/26/06	47	40	1	9	2
12/18/05	47	44	2	6	2
11/2/05	48	37	2	11	2
12/15/02*	30	56	4	7	3
10/27/02 LV	31	58	3	4	4
9/26/02	33	52	6	4	6

*12/15/02 and previous: "The situation with Iraq and Saddam Hussein"

b. The U.S. campaign against terrorism

	Democrats	Republicans	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/7/06 RV	41	48	1	7	3
All	40	47	1	9	3

8/6/06	46	38	1	11	4
6/25/06	39	46	2	10	3
5/15/06	46	41	2	8	3
4/9/06	46	45	1	6	1
3/5/06	39	46	3	10	2
1/26/06	41	46	2	6	4
11/2/05	42	42	4	10	3
12/15/02	25	61	5	6	2
10/27/02* LV	26	61	4	5	4
9/26/02*	30	51	6	6	8
7/15/02	27	55	9	3	6
1/27/02	23	62	10	3	2

*"The war on terrorism"

c. The economy

		Democrats	Republicans	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/7/06	RV	51	41	1	5	3
	All	50	39	1	7	4
6/25/06		52	39	1	5	3
5/15/06		52	34	3	9	2
4/9/06		49	43	1	4	3
3/5/06		49	40	2	8	2
1/26/06		55	37	2	5	2
11/2/05		56	34	1	8	1
12/15/02		44	45	4	6	1
10/27/02* LV		43	48	3	3	2
9/26/02*		47	39	3	6	5
7/15/02**		38	48	3	6	5
1/27/02**		39	48	5	6	3
4/22/01***		47	43	4	4	3
9/28/98		53	40	NA	NA	7
7/12/98		49	37	4	5	6
1/19/98		45	44	3	6	3
7/8/97		43	39	5	12	2
10/23/94		38	43	3	14	2
9/11/94		39	43	3	11	4
2/27/94		47	36	3	11	3
2/2/92		49	38	2	7	4
12/15/91		43	36	4	11	5
3/4/91		32	49	5	10	4
1/16/90		33	52	4	7	4

*"The economy and jobs"

**"Improving the economy"

***4/22/01 and previous: "The nation's economy"

d. Gasoline prices

		Democrats	Republicans	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op.
9/7/06	RV	51	31	*	12	5
	All	51	29	*	13	7
5/15/06		54	23	1	17	2
11/2/05		47	26	2	21	5

10. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is doing its job?

		Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
9/7/06	RV	39	57	4
	All	40	55	5
8/6/06		36	60	4

5/15/06	33	63	4
4/9/06	35	62	3
3/5/06	36	62	3
1/26/06	43	53	4
1/8/06	41	55	5
12/18/05	43	53	4
11/2/05	37	59	4
8/28/05	37	59	4
6/5/05	41	54	4
10/29/03	40	52	9
4/30/03	57	37	6
9/26/02	51	43	6
7/15/02	57	36	7
2/21/02	57	39	4
1/27/02	58	35	7
12/19/01	59	34	7
9/9/01	45	48	7
7/30/01	48	48	4
4/22/01	58	33	8
10/31/99	42	53	6
9/2/99	46	47	7
6/6/99	48	46	6
3/14/99	44	49	7
2/14/99	46	50	4
12/20/98	44	51	5
12/19/98	45	50	5
12/13/98	49	46	5
11/7/98	41	55	4
11/1/98	49	47	5
10/25/98	45	44	11
10/18/98	46	45	8
9/28/98	52	44	4
8/21/98	55	39	6
7/12/98	46	44	11
5/12/98	45	45	9
4/4/98	47	45	8
1/31/98	55	35	10
1/30/98	55	35	10
1/25/98	56	37	8
1/24/98	55	38	7
1/19/98	47	49	5
10/13/97	36	57	7
8/27/97	39	54	7
7/8/97	40	53	6
4/24/97	40	53	7
3/9/97	35	60	5
8/5/96	42	52	7
6/30/96	35	58	7
5/22/96	35	60	5
3/10/96	30	64	6
1/7/96	31	65	5
11/19/95	27	68	5
10/1/95	32	65	3
7/17/95	34	63	3
3/19/95	39	56	5
1/29/95	42	52	6
10/31/94	21	72	8
10/23/94	18	78	4
9/11/94	24	70	5
6/26/94	34	61	5
3/27/94	35	62	3
2/27/94	32	64	4
1/23/94	29	60	11

11/14/93	28	66	6
8/8/93	33	64	3
4/26/93	30	69	2
1/17/93	29	66	6
4/9/92	17	78	5
3/18/92	19	76	5
3/8/92	22	73	6
2/2/92	32	64	4
12/15/91	35	59	6
10/21/91	45	50	5
6/2/91	49	46	5
10/14/90	34	63	3
2/4/90	41	55	4
1/16/90	39	55	6
8/21/89	42	53	5
5/23/89	54	44	2
2/14/89	53	44	3
1/23/88*	43	53	4
6/1/87	56	40	4
6/22/85	54	37	9
5/83	33	43	24
6/81	38	40	22
6/79	19	61	20
9/78	29	49	22
6/77	34	42	24
6/75	29	54	17
8/74	48	35	17

*1/23/88 and previous: Gallup

11. Do you approve or disapprove of the way your own representative to the U.S. House of Representatives in Congress is handling his or her job?

		Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
9/7/06	RV	60	31	9
	All	60	30	9
8/6/06		55	37	7
5/15/06		62	31	7
4/9/06		59	34	6
1/26/06		64	30	6
12/18/05		65	29	6
11/2/05		60	33	7
6/5/05		61	32	8
9/26/02		64	27	9
7/15/02		68	23	9
11/1/98		72	20	8
11/1/98	LV	73	23	5
10/18/98		68	20	11
10/18/98	LV	67	25	9
9/28/98		70	21	10
9/28/98	LV	71	23	6
7/12/98		70	18	12
1/19/98		74	19	7
4/5/95		65	25	9
10/31/94		51	38	11
10/23/94		49	43	8
9/11/94		53	35	12
6/26/94		59	31	10
3/27/94		62	26	12
1/17/93		60	29	11
4/9/92		47	39	13
3/18/92		49	40	11
2/2/92		56	32	12

12/15/91	60	28	12
10/21/91	64	27	9
6/2/91	61	26	14
10/14/90	64	29	7
5/23/89	71	18	11

12-42. Previously released.

END