

FRANKLIN & MARSHALL

September 2009

**Franklin & Marshall
College Poll**

**NATIONAL SURVEY
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

**Prepared By:
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Center for Politics & Public Affairs
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Methodology

The survey findings presented in this release are based on the results of interviews conducted September 15-21, 2009. The interviews were conducted at the Center for Opinion Research at Franklin and Marshall College under the direction of the poll's Director Dr. G. Terry Madonna, Head Methodologist Berwood Yost, and Project Manager Jennifer Harding. The data included in this release represent the responses of 1,046 adults in the United States, and 900 of them are registered to vote. Telephone numbers for the survey were generated using random digit dialing, and respondents were randomly selected from within each household. Survey results were weighted (age, education, race, region, and gender) using an iterative weighting algorithm.

The sample error for this survey is +/- 3.0 percentage points. The sample error for registered adults is +/- 3.3 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, this poll is also subject to other sources of non-sampling error. Generally speaking, two sources of error concern researchers most. Non-response bias is created when selected participants either choose not to participate in the survey or are unavailable for interviewing. Response errors are the product of the question and answer process. Surveys that rely on self-reported behaviors and attitudes are susceptible to biases related to the way respondents process and respond to survey questions.

This release is the first in a series that will present the findings from the September 2009 National Franklin & Marshall College Poll.

Key Findings

The most recent National Franklin and Marshall College Poll finds a majority of adults reporting the economy and personal finances (50%) as the most important problems their families currently face, with healthcare-related issues a distant second (19%). For both economic and healthcare issues, a majority of adults believes the problems faced by their families can be solved with the help of the government; 57% of those with financial concerns believe this, and 68% of those with healthcare issues believe it.

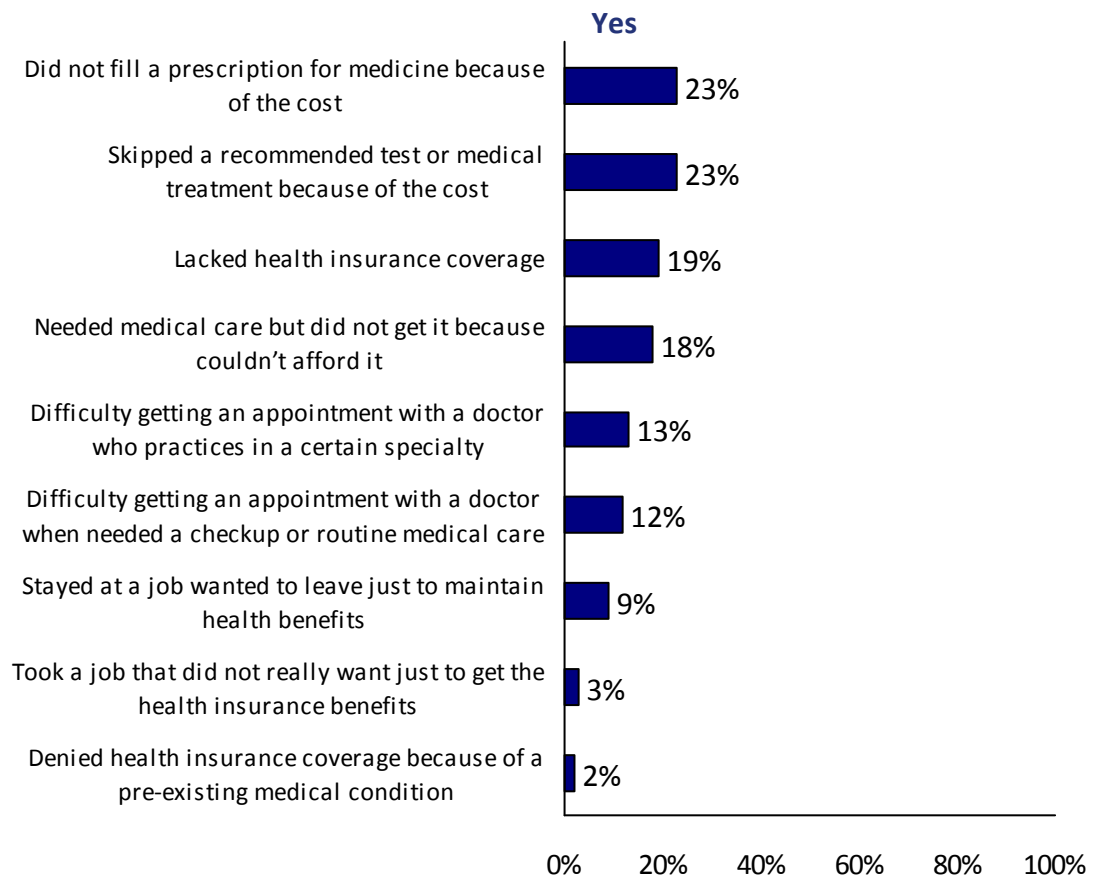
Healthcare

Americans are divided about how well the United States' healthcare system compares to the systems in other industrialized countries. About one in three (36%) believe the U.S. system is above average, while similar proportions believe it is average (29%), or below average (30%). Still, respondents are generally satisfied with how well the current healthcare system meets their needs. More than one in three (35%) say the system meets their needs very well, and another two in five (43%) say it meets their needs pretty well, leaving about one in five (21%)

Americans who feel the system is not serving their personal needs. Women, those under 54 years of age, Blacks, and registered Democrats are least likely among sex, age, race, and party registration groups to believe the system does not meet their needs (see Table A-1). Three in four (75%) Americans who have health insurance currently rate their coverage as very good or good.

The cost of healthcare and availability of health insurance coverage were significant problems for many adults during the past year. Nearly one in four adults report skipping a recommended test or medical treatment because of the cost, and one in four did not fill a prescription medicine because of the cost (see Figure 1). About one in five respondents say they were without health insurance coverage at some point during the previous 12 months.

Figure 1. Selected Healthcare Experiences during Past 12 Months



Presidential Performance

Half (51%) of registered Americans believe that President Obama is doing an excellent or good job as president. The president's job performance ratings differ considerably among demographic groups, and he fares most poorly, not surprisingly, among Republicans (see Table A-2). More registered Americans believe the president has better ideas for reforming healthcare (47%) than do the Republicans in Congress (21%), but a third (32%) do not know who has the better ideas.

More than half (51%) of registered Americans approve of the way President Obama is handling the situation in Afghanistan, and about the same proportion (54%) personally favor the military operations taking place in that country.

Table A-1

How well does the current healthcare system meet the needs of you and your family?

	Very Well	Pretty Well	Not Too Well	Not at All	Don't Know
Gender*					
Male	41%	42%	8%	8%	0%
Female	29%	45%	15%	11%	0%
Census Region					
Midwest	41%	39%	11%	9%	0%
South	34%	40%	15%	10%	1%
West	33%	47%	8%	12%	0%
Northeast	33%	50%	12%	5%	0%
Age*					
18-34 Years	35%	41%	11%	13%	0%
35-54 Years	27%	47%	14%	11%	1%
55 Years and Older	43%	41%	10%	5%	1%
Education					
High School or Less	32%	47%	12%	9%	0%
Some College	40%	37%	13%	10%	1%
College Degree	35%	44%	10%	10%	1%
Race/Ethnicity*					
Non-Hispanic White	38%	41%	11%	9%	1%
Hispanic	31%	56%	12%	0%	0%
Non-Hispanic Black	28%	38%	22%	12%	0%
Non-Hispanic Other	18%	51%	4%	27%	0%
Party Registration*					
Republican	54%	32%	6%	7%	0%
Democrat	18%	51%	19%	12%	0%
Independent/Other	35%	46%	7%	11%	1%
Don't Know	48%	41%	7%	4%	0%

* Significant differences (p<.05)

Table A-2

How would you rate the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Gender*					
Male	14%	31%	26%	27%	2%
Female	25%	30%	23%	20%	3%
Census Region*					
West	25%	27%	22%	23%	3%
South	23%	28%	24%	25%	0%
Northeast	18%	30%	26%	19%	7%
Midwest	10%	38%	26%	23%	3%
Age*					
18-34 Years	18%	36%	21%	20%	4%
35-54 Years	21%	31%	26%	21%	1%
55 Years and Older	20%	25%	25%	28%	2%
Education*					
High School or Less	19%	32%	23%	21%	5%
Some College	17%	29%	23%	28%	2%
College Degree	23%	30%	27%	19%	0%
Race/Ethnicity*					
Non-Hispanic Black	48%	37%	10%	4%	1%
Non-Hispanic Other	21%	37%	29%	11%	2%
Hispanic	18%	30%	33%	17%	3%
Non-Hispanic White	16%	29%	24%	28%	3%
Party Registration*					
Republican	3%	10%	29%	54%	4%
Democrat	31%	43%	19%	6%	2%
Independent/Other	15%	32%	31%	23%	0%
Don't Know	27%	34%	14%	10%	14%

* Significant differences (p<.05)

Marginal Frequency Report

UStrk. All in all, do you think things in the United States are generally headed in the RIGHT DIRECTION, or do you feel that things are off on the WRONG TRACK?

Jun 08*	Sep 08*	Oct 08*	Sep 09	
17%	21%	14%	36%	Right direction
78%	73%	82%	55%	Wrong track
5%	6%	4%	9%	Don't know

MIP_YF. What do you think is the MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM facing YOU and YOUR FAMILY TODAY?

Jun 08*	Sep 08*	Oct 08*	Sep 09	
45%	57%	65%	50%	Economy, personal finances, cost of living
8%	8%	9%	19%	Healthcare, insurance
3%	1%	1%	5%	Government, politicians
3%	4%	5%	3%	Taxes
0%	1%	1%	3%	Personal illness, health problems
0%	1%	2%	2%	Retirement, social security
0%	1%	1%	2%	Housing, real estate
0%	0%	0%	2%	Personal issues
3%	2%	2%	1%	Iraq War
0%	2%	2%	1%	Terrorism, national security, foreign policy
3%	2%	2%	1%	Values, morality, religion
0%	1%	1%	1%	Education, schools
0%	1%	0%	1%	Crime, drugs, violence
0%	0%	0%	1%	Civil liberties, individual rights
22%	11%	4%	0%	Gasoline/oil prices, energy
0%	1%	1%	0%	Environment, climate change
2%	0%	0%	0%	Immigration, illegal immigrants
0%	2%	1%	2%	Nothing
7%	2%	2%	2%	Other
4%	4%	3%	6%	Don't know

Gov. Do you think that the problems facing you and your family can be solved with the help of the government, or are these problems beyond what you think the government can do?

Jun 08*	Sep 08*	Oct 08*	Sep 09	
66%	67%	68%	54%	With help of government
27%	24%	24%	38%	Beyond what government can do
7%	9%	8%	8%	Don't know

*Question asked of registered adults only.

Now I have some questions related to healthcare.

Q1. Is there a place that you usually go to when you are sick or need advice about your health?

92% Yes
8% No

Q1yK. What kind of place do you go to most often?

n = 961

72% Doctor's office
18% Clinic
6% Emergency room
4% Other

Q1yS. Is that the same place you usually go when you need routine or preventive care, such as a physical examination or a check up?

n = 961

91% Yes
7% No
2% Don't get routine/preventative care

Q2. Compared to other advanced industrial nations of the world, do you think the U.S. healthcare system is...?

36% Above average
29% Average
30% Below average
5% Don't know

Q3. How well does the current healthcare system meet the needs of you and your family?

35% Very well
43% Pretty well
12% Not too well
9% Not well at all
1% Don't know

Q3not. Why is the current healthcare system NOT meeting your needs?

n = 221

- 56% Cost
- 22% Certain things not covered
- 18% Doctors or facilities not meeting needs
- 15% Not insured
- 9% Turned down for insurance, has pre-existing condition
- 3% Unemployed, changed job, retired
- 3% Difficult to understand, complex
- 6% Other
- 1% Don't know

*Responses total over 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

HC. Do you have any kind of HEALTHCARE coverage, such as coverage provided by your employer, private health insurance, or government plans such as Medicare, Medicaid, or CHIP, the Children's Health Insurance Program?

- 88% Yes
- 12% No

HCins. Which is it?

n = 920

- 50% Coverage provided by employer
- 16% Medicare
- 14% Private health insurance
- 6% Medicaid
- 6% Medicare and private
- 2% Employer and Medicare
- 1% CHIP
- 1% Employer and private
- 3% Other

HCrate. Would you say your health insurance coverage is...?

n = 920

- 37% Very good
- 38% Good
- 18% Fair
- 4% Poor
- 2% Very poor
- 1% Don't know

HCde1. Has your current insurance provider ever denied a request from your doctor for you to undergo a specific test, procedure, or treatment?

n = 920

- 13% Yes
- 86% No
- 1% Don't know

HCde2. Has your current insurance provider ever denied your request to visit a specialist?

n = 920

6%	Yes
93%	No
1%	Don't know

HCno. Which of the following is the main reason you are currently without health insurance coverage?

n = 122

7%	You tried to get insurance but were turned down
73%	You cannot afford to pay for insurance
9%	You do not think you need any health insurance
11%	Other

HCever. Have you ever had health insurance, or not?

n = 126

84%	Yes
16%	No

HCno2. What is the main reason you no longer have health insurance?

n = 105

49%	Cost
40%	Unemployed, changed job
2%	Turned down for insurance, has pre-existing condition
1%	Divorce
7%	Other

HCde3. Have you ever been denied insurance coverage because of a pre-existing medical condition?

9%	Yes
91%	No

Q4. During the past 12 months...

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Did you skip a recommended test or medical treatment because of the cost?	23%	77%	0%
Did you not fill a prescription for medicine because of the cost?	23%	77%	0%
Was there any time when you lacked health insurance coverage?	19%	81%	0%
Was there any time when you needed medical care but did not get it because you couldn't afford it?	18%	81%	1%
Was there any time when you had difficulty getting an appointment with a doctor who practices in a certain specialty, such as a cardiologist, orthopedist, or surgeon?	13%	87%	0%
Was there any time when you had difficulty getting an appointment with a doctor when you needed a checkup or routine medical care?	12%	88%	0%
Did you stay at a job you wanted to leave just to maintain your health benefits?	9%	91%	0%
Did you take a job that you did not really want just to get the health insurance benefits?	3%	97%	0%
Were you denied health insurance coverage because of a pre-existing medical condition?	2%	98%	0%

Q5. During the past 12 months, did you have any non-emergency surgery performed?

12% Yes
88% No

Q5y. How long did it take to have the surgery performed after your doctor told you it was necessary?

n = 127

26% Less than 1 week
50% 1-2 weeks
13% 3-4 weeks
11% More than 4 weeks

Q6. Have you heard or read anything about plans to reform the nation's healthcare system, or not?

79% Yes
20% No
1% Don't know

Q7. What exactly have you heard or read about healthcare reform?

n = 822

17%	Government-run healthcare, government control
13%	Everyone would be insured, government help pay for
10%	Unclear, confusing proposals
9%	Public option
7%	Expensive, costs more
5%	Covers less, rationing of care
5%	Socialized healthcare
5%	Insurance companies have to cover pre-existing conditions
3%	Mandatory health insurance
3%	Same, standardized care for everyone
3%	Seniors would have less coverage
3%	Less expensive, costs less, cost control
2%	Have to switch plans, change doctors
2%	Foreign country mentioned
2%	Covers more procedures/treatments
2%	Medicare changes
1%	Privatized healthcare
1%	Private insurance companies would be forced out
1%	Malpractice suits expensive, tort reform
1%	Higher taxes
1%	Illegal immigrants covered
1%	Single payer plan
1%	Employers would have to cover employees
1%	Difficult, complex problem to solve
1%	Can keep current insurance, doctors
1%	Illegal immigrants not covered
1%	Abortions covered
1%	Quality of healthcare would decrease
1%	Insurance/drug companies making too much profit, regulate
1%	Seniors would have more coverage
1%	Doctors and facilities are charging too much
1%	Nothing
26%	Other
9%	Don't know

*Responses total over 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Q8. How closely have you been following the debate on healthcare reform?

n = 822

34%	Very closely
41%	Somewhat closely
21%	Not too closely
4%	Not at all

Q9. What do you think are the major arguments in favor of reforming the country's healthcare system?

- 33% Everyone would be insured, government help pay for
- 18% Less expensive, costs less, cost control
- 4% Insurance companies have to cover pre-existing conditions
- 3% Insurance/drug companies making too much profit, regulate
- 3% Malpractice suits expensive, tort reform
- 2% Quality of healthcare would increase
- 2% Government-run healthcare, government control
- 1% Same, standardized care for everyone
- 1% Covers more procedures/treatments
- 1% Limits on doctor fees
- 1% Illegal immigrants not covered
- 1% Public option
- 1% Privatized healthcare
- 1% Seniors would have more coverage
- 1% Foreign country mentioned
- 1% Socialized healthcare
- 1% Single payer plan
- 12% Nothing
- 12% Other
- 25% Don't know

*Responses total over 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Q10. Do you think the country's healthcare system is in need of reform, or not?

- 79% Yes
- 15% No
- 6% Don't know

Q11. How strongly do you feel that the country's healthcare system [FILL is/is not] in need of reform?

Is in Need of Reform n = 825	Is Not in Need of Reform n = 152	
65%	49%	Very strongly
28%	37%	Somewhat strongly
6%	3%	Not very strongly
1%	6%	Not strongly at all
0%	5%	Don't know

Q12. Do you think the country's healthcare system works pretty well and needs only minor changes to work better or do you think the country's healthcare system has so many problems that it should be completely rebuilt?

n = 825

- 43% Works pretty well and needs only minor changes
- 47% Has so many problems that it should be completely rebuilt
- 10% Don't know

Q13. What do you personally think the federal government should do to reform the country's healthcare system?

- 16% Cover everyone, government help pay for
- 9% Insurance/drug companies making too much profit, regulate
- 7% Reduce cost, cost control
- 7% Malpractice suits expensive, tort reform
- 6% Stay out of it, less government intervention
- 5% Same, standardized care for everyone
- 5% Public option
- 4% Insurance companies have to cover pre-existing conditions
- 3% Government-run healthcare, government control
- 3% Foreign country mentioned
- 3% Medicare changes
- 2% Limit doctor fees
- 2% Cover more procedures/treatments
- 1% Employers have to cover employees
- 1% Single payer plan
- 1% Privatized healthcare
- 1% Do not cover illegal immigrants
- 1% More coverage for seniors
- 1% Socialized healthcare
- 1% Mandatory health insurance
- 7% Nothing
- 17% Other
- 22% Don't know

*Responses total over 100% because multiple responses were accepted.

Q14. Which of the following best describes Medicare: Medicare is a publicly funded program administered by the government that provides health insurance for people over 65 and the disabled, OR Medicare is a health insurance program for people over 65 and the disabled that is run by private health insurance companies?

- 76% Medicare is a publicly funded program administered by the government
- 12% Medicare is a health insurance program run by private health insurance companies
- 12% Don't know

Q15. Would you favor or oppose...

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Don't Know
Requiring insurance companies to sell health coverage to people, even if they have pre-existing medical conditions	66%	18%	6%	6%	4%
Requiring all businesses to provide health insurance to their employees or pay money into a government fund that pays to cover those without insurance	45%	17%	11%	20%	7%
Requiring that all Americans have health insurance, with the government providing financial help for those who can't afford it	40%	23%	13%	19%	5%
Requiring everyone to join a health insurance plan	34%	18%	13%	29%	6%
Expanding Medicare to cover all Americans	34%	15%	13%	30%	8%
Creating a government health insurance plan similar to Medicare that provides an alternative to private health insurance plans	33%	29%	7%	21%	10%
Expanding Medicare to cover everyone who does not have health insurance	31%	19%	13%	28%	9%

Q16. Would you favor or oppose each of the following to help pay for healthcare reform and provide coverage for more of the uninsured?

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Don't Know
Increasing the cigarette tax	52%	12%	9%	26%	1%
Limiting the profits of health insurance companies	48%	18%	12%	18%	4%
Setting strict limits on the amounts doctors and hospitals receive for specific tests and treatments	45%	20%	11%	18%	6%
Increasing taxes for people making more than \$250,000 per year	44%	19%	9%	25%	3%
Increasing taxes on alcohol, wine, and beer	42%	17%	9%	30%	2%
Requiring healthcare providers to use electronic medical records	40%	22%	10%	17%	11%
Increasing taxes on soda and sugary soft drinks	33%	17%	11%	36%	3%
Increasing taxes on unhealthy foods	27%	16%	14%	39%	4%
Lowering doctor salaries	17%	17%	20%	39%	7%
Counting the health insurance benefits employees receive as taxable income	14%	15%	13%	49%	9%
Increasing taxes for everyone	13%	17%	14%	53%	3%

Now I have a few questions about some people and issues in politics.

[Reg AND RegParty were not asked of North Dakota residents.]

REG. Some people are registered to vote, and many others are not. Are you CURRENTLY REGISTERED to vote at your present address?

Jun 08	Sep 08	Oct 08	Sep 09	
84%	83%	85%	86%	Yes
15%	17%	15%	14%	No

RegPARTY. Are you currently registered as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or as something else?

n= 900

Jun 08	Sep 08	Oct 08	Sep 09	
44%	41%	43%	45%	Democrat
30%	35%	33%	28%	Republican
22%	21%	22%	24%	Independent/Other
4%	3%	3%	3%	Don't know

Gen. When it comes to presidential elections, do you always vote, do you usually vote, do you only sometimes vote, or do you rarely vote?

n= 900

Jun 08	Sep 08	Oct 08	Sep 09	
64%	66%	69%	78%	Always
14%	13%	11%	12%	Usually
8%	6%	5%	5%	Only sometimes
13%	14%	13%	5%	Rarely
1%	2%	2%	0%	Don't know

Vot08. Did you vote in the last presidential election in 2008, or not?

n= 900

92% Yes
8% No

RatePres. How would you rate the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president?

n= 900

20% Excellent
31% Good
24% Only fair
23% Poor
2% Don't know

Q17. Who do you think has better ideas about reforming the country's healthcare system?

n= 900

47%	Barack Obama
21%	Republicans in Congress
32%	Don't know

Q18. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling the situation in Afghanistan?

n= 900

21%	Strongly approve
30%	Somewhat approve
10%	Somewhat disapprove
19%	Strongly disapprove
20%	Don't know

Q19. Do you personally favor or oppose the US military operation in Afghanistan?

n= 900

28%	Strongly favor
26%	Somewhat favor
11%	Somewhat oppose
25%	Strongly oppose
10%	Don't know

Q20. If the 2010 elections for the United States House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for the Republican Party's candidate or the Democratic Party's candidate for the House in your district?

n= 900

43%	Democratic Party's candidate
30%	Republican Party's candidate
4%	Other candidate
1%	Would not vote
22%	Don't know

DEMO. I now have a final few questions for statistical purposes only.

AGE. What was your age on your last birthday?

9%	18-24
22%	25-34
13%	35-44
24%	45-54
10%	55-64
22%	65 and older

EDUC. What was the last grade level of schooling you have completed?

9%	Non high school graduate
34%	High school graduate or GED
21%	Some college
10%	Two-year or tech degree
15%	Four year college degree
11%	Post graduate degree

MAR. What is your CURRENT marital status, are you single, married, separated, divorced, or a widower?

25%	Single, Never Married
53%	Married
22%	Separated/divorced/widower

PRTY1. Regardless of how you are registered, in politics, as of today, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?

15%	Strong Republican
7%	Republican
15%	Lean Republican
13%	Pure Independent
14%	Lean Democrat
9%	Democrat
25%	Strong Democrat
1%	Other
1%	Don't know

LABR. Are you or is any member of your household a member of a LABOR UNION?

14%	Yes
85%	No
1%	Don't know

VET. Are you a military veteran?

14%	Yes
86%	No

Hisp. Are you Hispanic or Latino, or not?

13%	Yes
87%	No

RACE. Which of the following categories best describes your racial background?

76%	White
12%	Black or African American
2%	Asian
3%	American Indian, Alaska Native
6%	Other
1%	Don't know

REL. Do you consider yourself to be Protestant, Catholic, some other religion, or not affiliated with any religion?

33%	Protestant
25%	Catholic
23%	Some other religion
18%	Not affiliated with any religion
1%	Don't know

BAC. Do you consider yourself to be a born-again Christian or fundamentalist, or not?

44%	Yes
53%	No
3%	Don't know

NumA. Including yourself, how many adults 18 years of age or OLDER CURRENTLY live in this household?

29%	One
55%	Two
12%	Three
4%	Four or more

WORK. Are you currently working FULL-time, PART-time, going to school, keeping house, or something else?

44%	Full-time
9%	Part-time
5%	Going to school
10%	Keeping house
6%	Unemployed
6%	Disabled
19%	Retired
1%	Don't know

INC1. And, just for statistical purposes, we need to know if your total family income is above or below \$50,000 per year?

23%	Under \$25,000
11%	\$25-\$35,000
12%	\$35-50,000
21%	\$50-75,000
12%	\$75-100,000
15%	Over \$100,000
6%	Don't know

DONE. Sex of respondent:

52%	Female
48%	Male

Region. Region of the country

36%	South
23%	Midwest
22%	West
19%	Northeast