



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

THURSDAY, SEPT 6, 2012

How Much Government Do People Want?

Excellence in Government Conference
Ronald Reagan Building, Washington D.C.

Michael Dimock

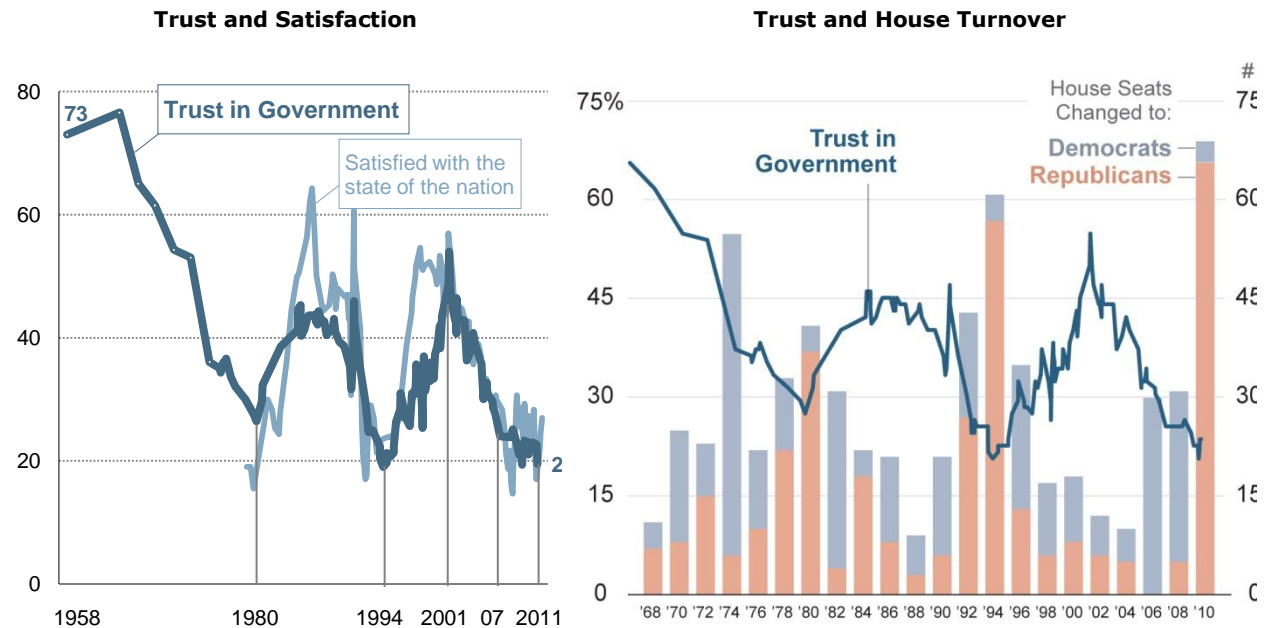
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Figure 1: Trust in Government

How much of the time do you trust the government in Washington to do what is right?
(Percent "Always" and "Most of the time" shown.)



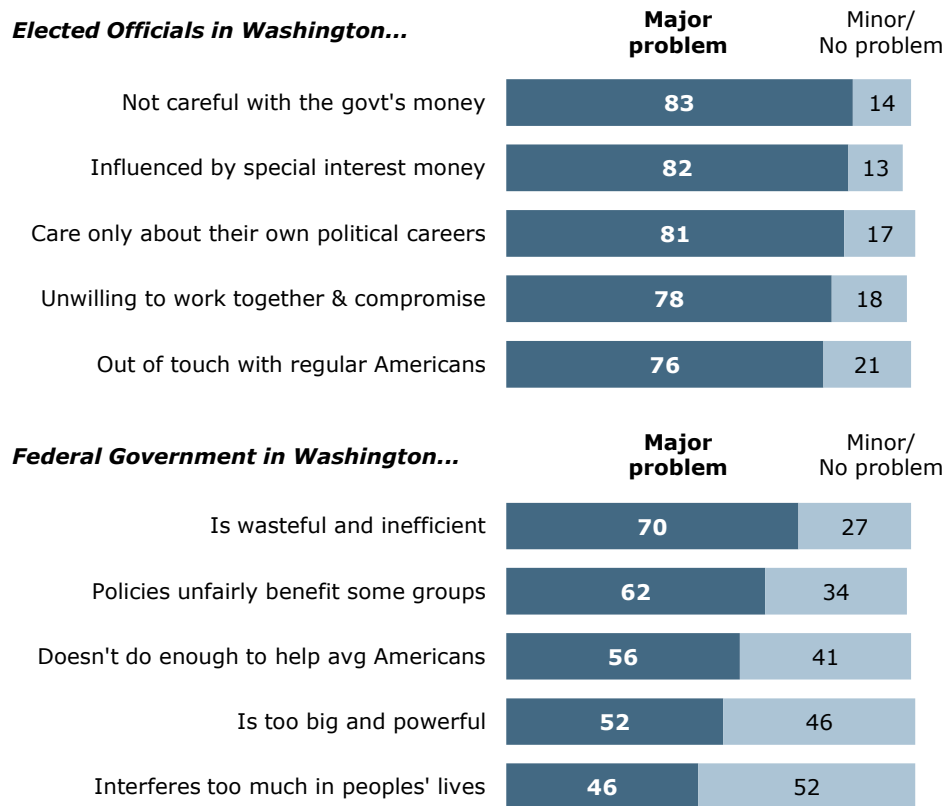
Pew Research Center. Source: Trust trendline is a moving average of data from Pew Research, ANES, Gallup, CBS/New York Times, ABC/Washington Post and CNN surveys. Satisfaction from Pew Research (1993-2012) and Gallup (1979-1992).

Figure 2: Government Favorability Ratings

	1987/ 1988	1997/ 1998	2010	1998-2010 Change
	%	%	%	
Congress	64	53	26	-27
Supreme Court	79	77	58	-19
<i>Federal Agencies and Departments</i>				
Dep't of Education	60	61	40	-21
FDA	74	75	58	-17
Social Security Admin.	--	62	49	-13
EPA	62	69	57	-12
NASA	66	73	61	-12
CDC	--	79	67	-12
Defense Department	57	76	67	-9
Postal Service	76	89	83	-6
Justice Department	53	56	51	-5
Veterans Administration	75	59	57	-2
FBI	78	67	67	0
CIA	52	51	52	+1
IRS	49	38	47	+9

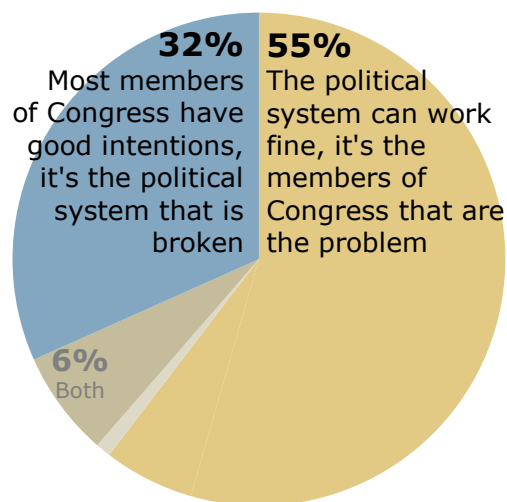
PEW RESEARCH CENTER April 18, 2010.

Figure 3: The Problem: Leadership vs. Goals



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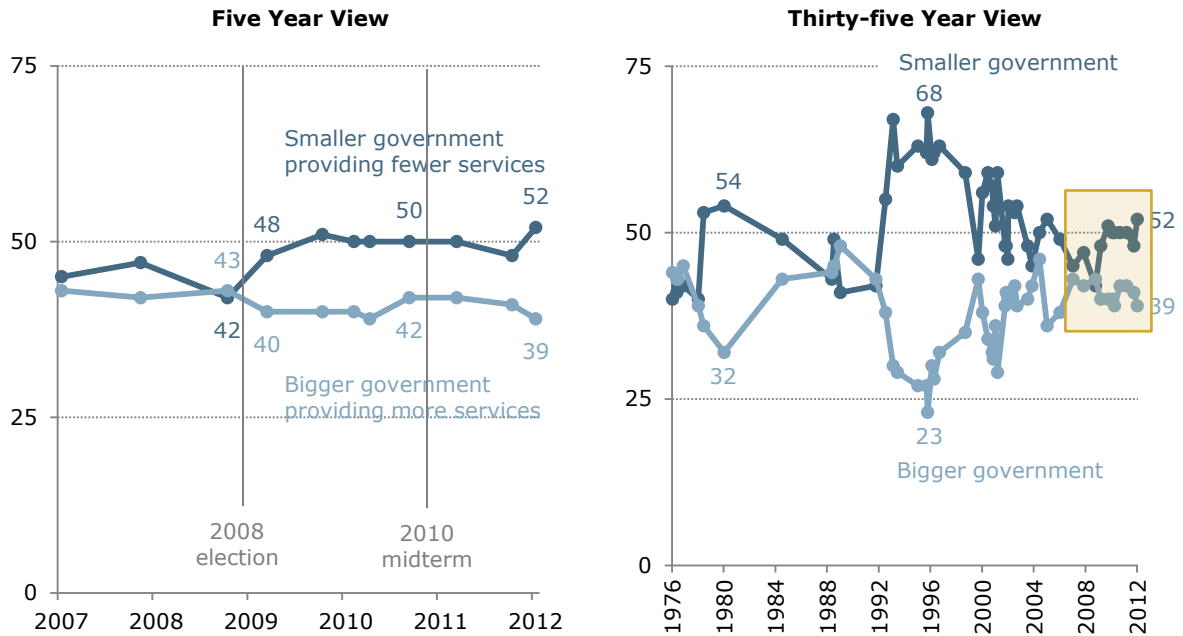
Figure 4: A "Personnel" Problem



PEW RESEARCH CENTER, Dec 7-11, 2011.

Figure 5: Bigger Government or Smaller Government

If you had to choose, would you rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, or a bigger government providing more services?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan 4-8, 2012.

2007-2012 Pew Research Center, 1976-2006 trends from ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times and LA Times surveys.

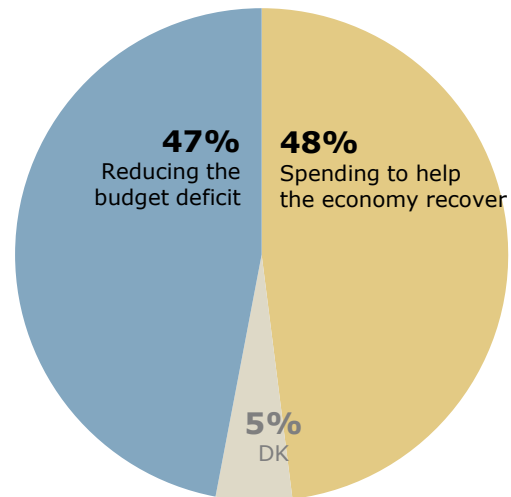
Figure 6:
Voters and Non-Voters in the 2010 Midterm

	All Adults	Voters	Non-voters
	%	%	%
<i>Size of government</i>			
Government is doing too many things	48	56	34
Government should do more to solve problems	43	38	53
Don't know	9	7	13
<i>Place higher priority on...</i>			
Spending more to help economy recover	43	39	49
Reducing budget deficit	50	55	41
Don't know	7	5	10
<i>Health care legislation passed by Obama & Congress earlier this year</i>			
Approve	43	41	47
Disapprove	47	51	40
Don't know	10	8	14
<i>What should Congress do with health care law?</i>			
Expand it	30	26	36
Keep as is	22	21	25
Repeal it	40	46	28
Don't know	8	7	10
<i>View of Bush tax cuts</i>			
Keep all cuts	34	40	23
Repeal cuts for wealthy	30	33	24
Repeal all cuts	28	22	39
Don't know	8	5	14
Sample size	1255	899	356

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Nov. 4-7, 2010.

Figure 7:
Still a Very Balanced Public

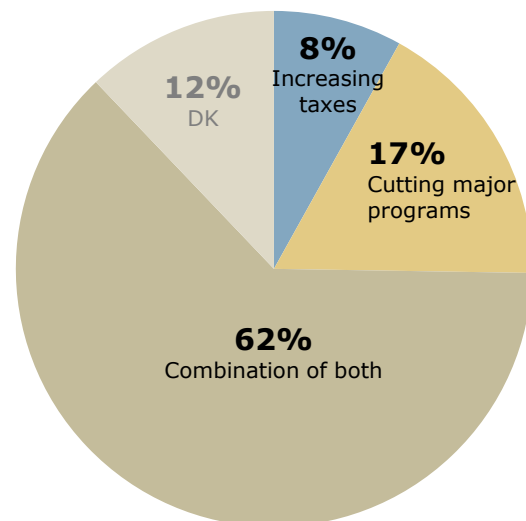
If you were setting priorities for the federal government these days, would you place a higher priority on...?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 7-17, 2012.

Figure 8:
Looking for Balanced Solutions

In your view, what is the best way to reduce the federal budget deficit? Should we mostly focus on cutting major programs, mostly focus on increasing taxes, or should we do a combination of both?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Nov 9-14, 2011.

Figure 9:
Issue-by-Issue, Few Support Federal Spending Cuts

If you were making up the budget for the federal government this year, would you increase, decrease or keep spending the same for...

	Decrease	Same	Increase
Veterans benefits	7	41	50
Education	10	25	63
K-12 public schools	13	30	56
Social Security	12	45	41
College financial aid	16	38	43
Medicare	12	39	42
Combating crime	17	39	40
Terror defenses	19	45	33
Aid to needy in US	20	36	41
Energy	20	39	37
Infrastructure	21	36	39
Scientific research	22	36	37
Health care	24	31	41
Enviro. protection	25	35	37
Agriculture	23	39	33
Unemployment aid	27	41	27
Military defense	31	34	32
Aid to world's needy	46	29	21

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011.

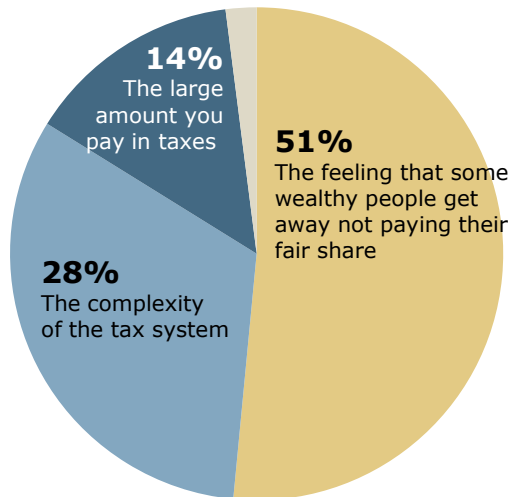
Figure 10:
Partisan Gaps Over Government Spending

		Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	D-R gap
Unemployment aid	Increase	11	47	23	+36
	Decrease	50	11	29	-39
Health care	Increase	22	56	39	+34
	Decrease	47	8	25	-39
Aid to needy in the U.S.	Increase	24	57	37	+33
	Decrease	35	12	20	-23
Education	Increase	45	77	62	+32
	Decrease	15	4	13	-11
Environmental protection	Increase	16	47	41	+31
	Decrease	43	12	26	-31
Medicare	Increase	27	55	38	+28
	Decrease	20	5	14	-15
Aid to world's needy	Increase	7	32	22	+25
	Decrease	70	28	45	-42
Public school systems	Increase	42	65	58	+23
	Decrease	25	4	13	-21
Roads and transportation	Increase	22	44	43	+22
	Decrease	32	18	18	-14
College financial aid	Increase	30	51	47	+21
	Decrease	30	9	15	-21
Scientific research	Increase	28	46	35	+18
	Decrease	30	13	26	-17
Energy	Increase	26	41	37	+15
	Decrease	28	18	22	-10
Social Security	Increase	33	45	40	+12
	Decrease	21	4	15	-17
Agriculture	Increase	29	37	31	+8
	Decrease	26	15	28	-11
Veterans' benefits	Increase	46	52	53	+6
	Decrease	8	6	5	-2
Combating crime	Increase	41	45	33	+4
	Decrease	19	13	20	-6
Terrorism defenses	Increase	38	32	30	-6
	Decrease	16	20	23	+4
Military defense	Increase	41	28	27	-13
	Decrease	18	36	33	+18

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 2-7, 2011. Percent saying "keep spending the same" not shown.

Figure 11: The Fairness of the Tax System

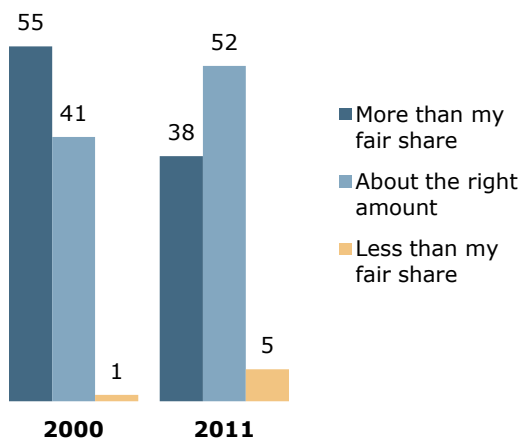
Which comes closest to your overall view of the federal tax system in this country?



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Figure 12: Less Frustration with Taxes

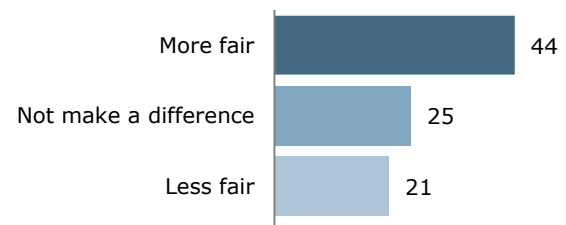
Considering what you get from the federal government, do you pay...



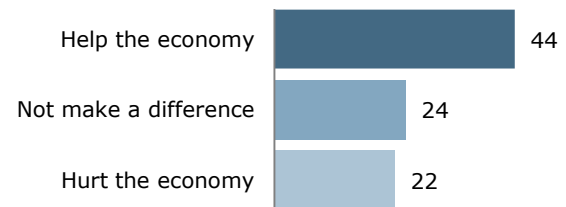
PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec 7-11, 2011.

Figure 13: Raising Federal Taxes on Income Over \$250,000

Make the tax system...

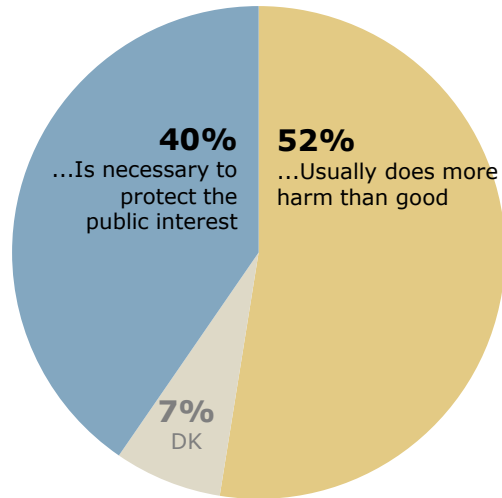


Effect on the economy



PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 12-15, 2012.

Figure 14:
Government Regulation of Business...



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Figure 15:
In Most Areas, More see Too Little than Too Much Regulation

<i>View of federal regulations in these areas ...</i>	Strengthen	Keep as they are	Reduce	DK
	%	%	%	%
Food production & packaging	53	36	7	4=100
Environmental protection	50	29	17	4=100
Car safety & efficiency	45	42	9	3=100
Workplace health & safety	41	45	10	4=100
Prescription drugs	39	33	20	8=100

<i>View of federal regulations of these businesses ...</i>	Too little	Right amount	Too much	DK
	%	%	%	%
Banks & financial institutions	43	20	30	7=100
Large corporations	43	19	31	7=100
Oil & gas industry	44	14	36	7=100
Health insurance industry	40	18	37	5=100
Small businesses	21	23	49	7=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Feb. 8-12, 2012. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Figure 16: Entitlement Programs Overwhelmingly Viewed as Good for the Country...

	Social Security Medicare Medicaid		
<i>Over the years, each has been...*</i>	%	%	%
Good for the country	87	88	77
Bad for the country	11	10	20
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100

But Job Ratings Are Negative...

Job serving recipients

Excellent/Good	39	41	36
Only fair/Poor	56	53	54
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100	100

Finances Are Seen as Troubled...

Current financial condition

Excellent/Good	18	18	15
Only fair/Poor	77	74	72
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100

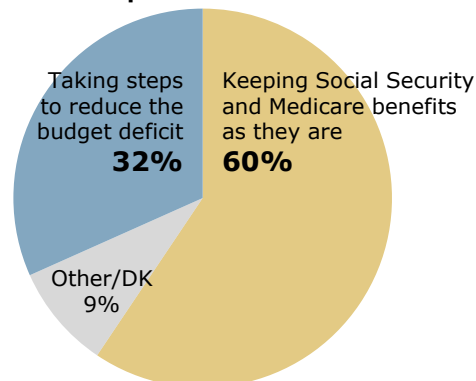
And Majorities Say They Need Major Changes

	Social Security Medicare Medicaid		
Needs to be completely rebuilt	18	21	17
Needs major changes	34	33	37
Works pretty well	41	38	39
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100

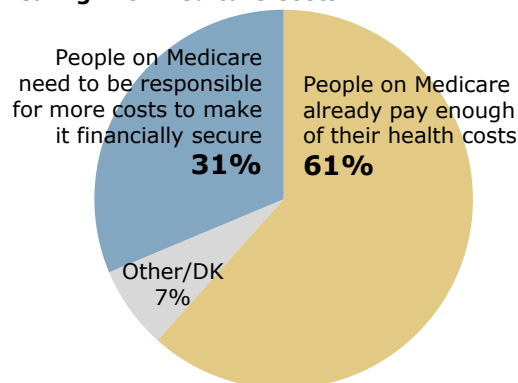
PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 15-19, 2011.

Figure 17: In Entitlement Debate, Most Want to Maintain Benefits

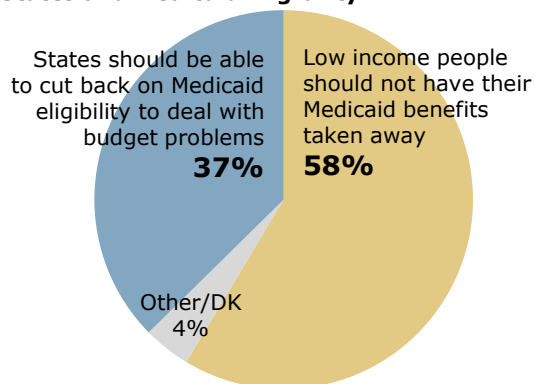
Which is more important ...



Dealing with Medicare Costs



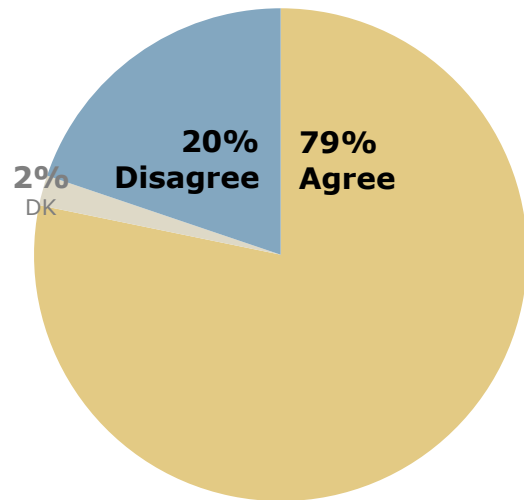
States and Medicaid Eligibility



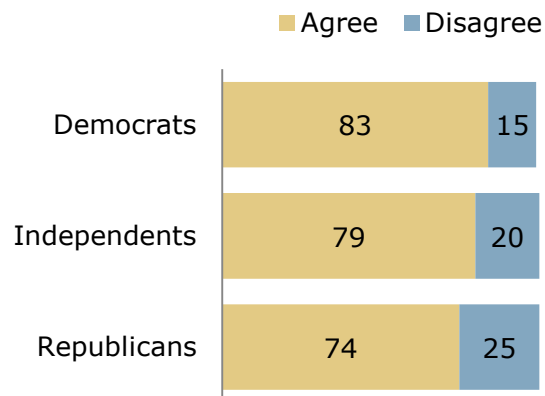
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Figure 18:
Are the Problems Bigger?

The government is facing more difficult problems than in the past



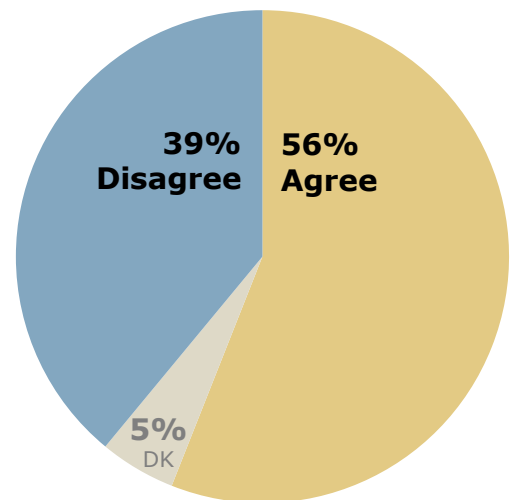
By Party



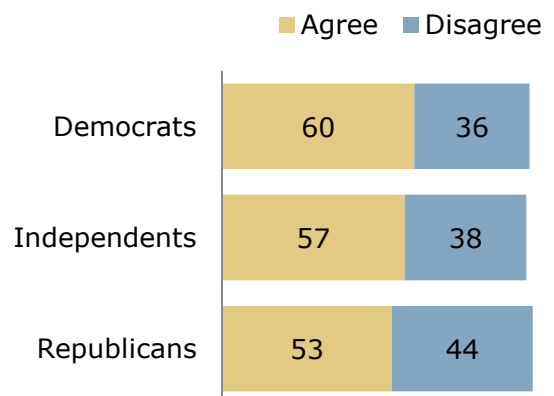
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Figure 19:
Are We Part of the Problem?

Americans aren't willing to pay for the things they want government to do



By Party



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