

## **No-Show '96: Americans Who Do Not Vote**

On November 5, Bill Clinton or Bob Dole will be elected President of the United States. Assuming that the three-decade trend of declining voter turnout continues, their contest will be decided by roughly half of the eligible electorate. More than 88 million Americans will not bother to vote. Many of them will be like Jason Caldwell, a 29-year-old roofer from suburban Kansas city who conventional wisdom suggests should vote.

Caldwell is certainly no stranger to political activism. He works on the campaigns of his favorite local candidates, helping to rally support by passing out bumper stickers and yard signs. He actively follows his Congressman's voting record and regularly fires off letters to register his opinions. But Jason made a conscious choice not to vote in the 1992 presidential and congressional elections, and he's not sure that he'll voter this November. "I didn't like any of the candidates, and I'm not going to vote for someone I don't believe in," he said.

Shawn Curtis, 24, lives with his mother, stepfather, and girlfriend in Laguna Niguel, California. He watches a television newscast four or five nights each week and reads the newspaper daily. He has a generally favorable view of both the Republican and Democratic parties, although he says he feels closer to the Democrats because, "I'm not into the anti-abortion stuff."

Curtis also chose not to vote in 1992 because, as he put it, "I just didn't think it [voting] made a difference either way. I wasn't really interested." He says the only thing that could get him to the polls this November would be a close election, but since he expects President Clinton to win reelection easily he probably won't vote.

The last time Terril Printy voted for president she got so nervous that she pulled the wrong handle. It was 1988, and the lifelong Republican accidentally cast her vote for Democrat Michael Dukakis. The experience was so horrifying she hasn't voted since. "Experience has taught me a lesson," the 49-year-old resident of Montrose, Iowa noted. "Even when we vote, we have no control over what's going on in government."

Kelly Michael Smith only watches the news when he can't find a good baseball or football game on TV. "I love my Mets, and the 49ers are the best," explained the 39-year-old single father from Dayton, Washington.

Smith occasionally picks up a copy of his local newspaper, but between working various odd jobs, taking care of his 7-year-old son Skylar, and tracking the Mets and 49ers, he doesn't have time to monitor either local or national politics. "I'm too busy trying to survive," he laments.

Although Smith has lived in the same house for more than two years, he is not registered to vote. And while his search for work has temporarily taken him to California, South Dakota, and Arizona at different times over that time span, he doesn't view his mobility as the major impediment to registering. "I've always had it in my mind that I should," he said. "I might just do it this year, but I've got so much going on right now."

Maralynn McDonald, a 69-year-old resident of Oceanside, California, can no longer remember the last time she voted, although she can tell you that the last president she trusted was John F. Kennedy. Since she doesn't like her current alternatives, she has already decided against voting this year. "It's discouraging when you find out how [politicians] actually live and fool around and all that stuff," she complains. "They make it sound like they're trying to do something, but they never actually do."

Sometime shortly after September 1, every major news organization that conducts public opinion polls will begin making a concerted effort to identify these likely nonvoters and exclude them from their surveys. Nonvoters will be all but forgotten until November 6, when scholars and political pundits alike will begin asking the quadrennial question: Can democracy survive without the active participation of half its members?

Medill Journalism School and WTTW Television in Chicago set out to answer that question, at least in part. Working with the Campaign Study Group, Medill and WTTW identified 1,001 people who are not likely to vote this November and asked them a series of questions designed to provide demographic, political, and information-consumption profiles of the non-voting population. We discovered that while there is some truth in the stereotypical view of the nonvoter, it is a mistake to view these electoral non-participants as a monolith if one's goal is to maximize voting. There are, in fact, five distinct groups of nonvoters who view government, the political parties, politicians, and the news very differently.

### **Busting The Conventional Wisdom**

Viewed as a whole, the likely nonvoters we surveyed conform in many ways to conventional wisdom (Table 1):

- Compared with their likely voter counterparts, likely nonvoters are disproportionately young. While 16 percent of the likely voters identified by the

survey had not yet celebrated their thirtieth birthday, 39 percent of the likely nonvoters were between the ages of 18 and 29.

- Likely nonvoters are significantly less educated than likely voters. Fifty-five percent of the likely nonvoters have a high school education or less; the comparable figure among likely voters is 37 percent. While 18 percent of the likely nonvoters have a college degree, 37 percent of likely voters are college graduates.
- Household incomes for likely nonvoters tend to be lower than those reported by likely voters. Nearly half (48%) of the nonvoters surveyed said their 1995 household income was below \$30,000. One-third (33%) of the likely voters reported household incomes that low.
- Minorities comprise a larger share of the likely nonvoter pool—30 percent of the nonvoters are nonwhite compared with 18 percent of the likely voters.
- Nonvoters are far less likely than voters to follow politics. When asked how often they follow what’s going on in government and public affairs, 53 percent of the likely voters responded “most of the time,” and only 5 percent said “hardly ever.” Among likely nonvoters, just 24 percent responded “most of the time,” while another 24 percent said “hardly ever” (Table 2).

However, while interesting, the group attributes that distinguish likely nonvoters from likely voters obscure nearly as much as they reveal. Although they tend to be less educated, 18 percent of all likely nonvoters do have a college degree. While they tend to be less well off financially, 43 percent have household incomes of \$30,000 or more, including 12 percent whose household income during 1995 was between \$50,000 and \$74,999 and another 6 percent who reported making \$75,000 or more. While as a group they are significantly younger than likely voters, one-quarter of all likely nonvoters are 45 years old or older.

Using cluster analysis, a statistical technique for classifying respondents into the most homogeneous, mutually exclusive groups possible, we have identified five types of nonvoters:

- Nearly three out of ten (29%) of the likely nonvoters can be described as “Doers.” They are disproportionately young, even for nonvoters. Nearly half (48%) of all Doers are between the ages of 18 and 29, and another 32 percent are between the ages of 30 and 44. While 38 percent of all other nonvoters report 1995 household incomes of \$30,000 or more, 55 percent of Doers had incomes that high. Fifty-five percent of Doers said they have attended college, including 23 percent who have a college degree. The comparable college attendance figure for all other nonvoters was

40 percent. They are more likely than other nonvoters to have contacted a federal, state, or local politician to express their views. They are also more likely to have written a letter to the editor of their local newspaper, attended a political meeting or rally, or volunteered their time to a charity or other non-profit organization. They are avid information consumers who follow politics regularly. Compared with other nonvoters, they have a relatively upbeat opinion about politicians, political parties and political institutions. Doers also tend to have a much greater sense of self-efficacy—71 percent disagreed with the statement, “success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control.

- Another 27 percent are people we refer to as the “Unplugged.” Like Doers, the Unplugged are disproportionately young—81 percent are younger than 45, including 46 percent who have not yet turned 30. However, that is one of the only characteristics they share with the Doers. They are far less educated than the Doers, with 63 percent reporting that they have a high school education or less. They read newspapers and watch television news far less regularly than the Doers, and are much more likely to say they follow politics “hardly at all.” They rarely discuss politics with family members or friends and are much less likely than Doers to have taken the time to write their elected representatives, contact their local newspaper to express an opinion, or volunteer their time to a charity. Although 13 percent claim to have voted in 1992 and 52 percent say they will definitely or probably vote in November, 68 percent are not currently registered to vote.
- Eighteen percent are what we call the “Irritables.” Like the Doers, Irritables are avid news and information consumers. With the exception of the Doers, Irritables say they follow what’s going on in government and public affairs more than any other group of nonvoters. However, unlike Doers, they have a largely negative view of the politicians and political institutions that govern them. One-third (33%) of the Irritables are 45 years old or older. Other than the Doers, the Irritables have the second highest household incomes, with 48 percent earning \$30,000 or more. Twenty-five percent of all Irritables have a college diploma, tops among the five clusters. Sixty-five percent of the Irritables think the country has “pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track.
- Fourteen percent of the likely nonvoters can be classified as “Don’t Knows.” These are the truly information-deprived. They have little or no interest in politics and their

answers to the questions in this poll usually represent complacency or a self-professed lack of knowledge. They are the least likely of all nonvoters to be registered to vote. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of this group is comprised of people who have not graduated from high school, with another 40 percent having a high school diploma. More than half of the Don't Knows (52%) reported 1995 household incomes of less than \$30,000. Only the Alienated and the Irritables are older on average; 15 percent of the Don't Knows are between the ages of 45 and 64, and another 12 percent are 65 years old or older.

- Only 12 percent of nonvoters can be described as “Alienated.” More than half (52%) said they “chose not to vote” in 1992, and 31 percent told us they will “definitely not vote” this November. They had the most negative views of all five groups concerning politicians, political institutions, and the impact of elections. Only 11 percent of this group are college graduates. They are also disproportionately older, with 38 percent saying they are at least 45 years old. Sixty-three percent of the Alienated report 1995 household incomes of less than \$30,000—making this group the poorest of the five clusters, on average.

These five distinct clusters emerge despite the fact that members of any one cluster may share with members of another cluster some demographic attributes, news consumption patterns, or attitudes towards politicians, political parties, and government. The fact that these five groups of nonvoters exist makes it highly unlikely that any single outreach program can significantly impact turnout.

### **Voter Registration And Voting Intentions**

While it would undoubtedly help increase turnout, higher levels of voter registration will not solve the no-show problem entirely. Slightly more than one-third (36%) of the likely nonvoters say they are currently registered to vote in the precinct or election district where they now live, but 80 percent of them said they did not vote in 1992. One-quarter of those who say they are currently registered have already made up their minds that they will “definitely not vote” or “probably not vote” in November.

While mobility is viewed by many as a prime factor in suppressing voter turnout, our study suggests that the impact of a recent move on registration—supposedly the most crucial impediment to voting—is marginal at best. Eleven percent of the likely nonvoters said they had moved within the past six months, and three-quarters of those said they are not registered to vote.

However, a much more robust 66 percent of the likely nonvoters have lived at their current address for more than two years, and 61 percent of that group has not been motivated to register (Table 3).

Among those who are not registered, 14 percent cited a recent move as the reason, while roughly one out of five simply said they didn't care much about politics. Among the other open-ended responses given by at least 4 percent of the likely nonvoters were "I don't know how to register," mentioned by 5 percent; "the place where I have to go to register is too far from home/ is inconvenient," mentioned by 4 percent; and "I work during registration hours," also mentioned by 4 percent.

Sixteen percent of likely nonvoters said they actually voted in the 1992 presidential election (Table 4), but among this group only 31 percent said they are registered to vote at their current address.

Eighty percent of the likely nonvoters said they did not vote in 1992, including 45 percent who said they simply chose not to vote. Among the reasons given for not voting in 1992 were "not registered," cited by 20 percent; "didn't like the candidates" and "not old enough," each cited by 12 percent; and "no particular reason," "not interested in politics," and various forms of "inconvenience," each mentioned by 10 percent.

Perhaps the most troubling group of nonvoters is that 45 percent who said they *chose* not to vote in 1992. While a host of intervention techniques have been concocted to remove barriers to voting, including the so-called "Motor Voter" bill that makes it easier for people in a highly transient society to register, it is hard to imagine an effective technique for engaging those who consciously opt out of the democratic process. While self-identified Independents and those with less than a high school education are more likely to admit to this conscious decision, age and political ideology seem to have little impact (Table 4).

Nevertheless, despite the long list of excuses for not voting in 1992, the large numbers who chose not to vote, and the low levels of current registration, 53 percent of the likely nonvoters said they will "definitely" or "probably" vote this November (Table 5), and the reasons given for wanting to vote sound heartfelt. Among those who said they definitely will vote, about one out of five (21%) said it was because they "want a say in who's elected." Another 21 percent gave responses such as "it's my right," "it's my duty," or "it's the right thing to do." A total of 12 percent gave the corollary civics class answers "my vote counts/makes a difference," "you can't complain if you don't vote," and "because it is important." (Table 6). Unfortunately, while these

are textbook responses, more than half of this group (53%) also said they are not currently registered to vote, and the other 47 percent did not vote in 1992 for some reason other than age.

In many respects, Doers perfectly illustrate this reality disconnect. As a group, they resemble voters more than nonvoters; they certainly talk like voters. When asked how likely it is that they will vote in the presidential and congressional elections this November, three-quarters signaled their good intentions, with 41 percent saying they will “definitely” turn out on election day and another 34 percent stating that they will “probably” vote. Among all other likely non-voters surveyed, 46 percent indicated some intention to vote, including 19 percent who claimed they will definitely vote.

However, while their democratic inclinations are voiced strongly, 62 percent of the Doers report that they are not now registered to vote. Given the fact that 64 percent of these unregistered Doers have lived at their current address for more than two years and another 10 percent have had the same address for at least one year, it is unlikely that most will be inspired to register in time to vote in this election.

A mass, last-minute registration surge among Doers seems particularly unlikely when one looks at the reasons they give for not being registered. Only one in five unregistered Doers cited a recent move as the reason, while the rest provided a myriad of excuses, including “I don’t care much about politics,” which was offered by 11 percent. Adding to the body of evidence suggesting that the vast majority of Doers will not vote in 1996 is the fact that only 17 percent report having voted in 1992. Forty-one percent said that “something prevented” them from voting, and 39 percent said they chose not to vote.

### **Information Consumption**

Some nonvoters may lack the information critical to making informed voting decisions—as one recent study found—but the suggestion that all nonvoters are information-deprived simply is not true. More than one-quarter (28%) of the likely nonvoters we interviewed said they read a newspaper six or seven days a week. That number ballooned to 50 percent among those 65 years old or older. Although only 14 percent of those with less than a high school education reported reading a newspaper that often, 38 percent of those with a college degree reported doing so. (Table 7)

Roughly half (49%) of the likely nonvoters said they watch a television news broadcast six or seven nights a week, with viewership once again sharply skewed by age. Among those between the ages of 18 and 29, just 39 percent said they watched the news virtually every night. The comparable figure among those 65 years old or older was 86 percent, and nearly six out of ten likely nonvoters between the ages of 45 and 64 said they watch the news that frequently.

(Table 8)

Approximately one-third (35%) of all nonvoters claimed to “regularly” listen to news on the radio. That figure was highest for college graduates (46%) and lowest for those who have not finished high school (29%). Forty-one percent of male likely nonvoters indicated that they regularly listen to radio news broadcasts; among women, the comparable figure was 31 percent (Table 9).

When asked how frequently they read news magazines such as *Time*, *US News*, and *Newsweek*, 11 percent of the nonvoter pool said “regularly,” and another 34 percent responded “sometimes.” Approximately one-third (32%) of all likely nonvoters said they regularly watch a news magazine show such as 60-Minutes, Dateline or 20/20; another 40 percent said they sometimes watch such shows. Fifty-nine percent claimed to watch CNN at least sometimes, including 24 percent who said they regularly tune in. More than one out of four likely nonvoters said they watch C-Span at least sometimes. (Table 10)

Differential rates of information consumption among nonvoters are particularly evident when one looks at the results of the cluster analysis. While the Doers are not likely to vote in November, they are clearly not cut off from information. Seventy-eight percent indicated that they read a newspaper at least four times a week, including 53 percent who read a newspaper six or seven days each week. (Table 11)

Two-thirds of Doers report reading a weekly news magazine at least “sometimes,” including 19 percent who say they read them “regularly.” Eighty-three percent of the Doers say they watch news magazine shows at least sometimes, including 43 percent who say they are regular viewers. Moreover, Doers are relatively heavy consumers of cable news programming, with 74 percent stating that they watch CNN at least sometimes. More than 40 percent said they watch C-SPAN either regularly or sometimes. (Table 11)

That substantial level of news consumption was virtually matched by the Irritables, 52 percent of whom said they read a newspaper six or seven days a week. Another 21 percent reported reading a paper four or five times during a typical week. Forty-five percent of the Irritables said



they read a weekly news magazine at least sometimes, and after Doers, the Irritables reported the next highest level of regular news magazine readership (12%). (Table 11)

Sixty-two percent of the Irritables—the highest percentage among all clusters—said they watch an evening news program at least six times a week; an additional 20 percent reported tuning in four or five evenings each week. Thirty-four percent said they regularly watch a news magazine such as 60-Minutes or Dateline—again, second only to the Doers. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the Irritables said they sometimes or regularly watch CNN, including 28 percent who said they watch it regularly. More than one-quarter (27%) claimed to watch C-SPAN at least sometimes. (Table 11)

One step further down the information-consumption ladder were the Unplugged and the Alienated. Only 6 percent of those in each group indicated that they read a newspaper at least four days a week, and while someone in each of the other four clusters said they read a newspaper six or seven days each week, not one person among the Unplugged could make that claim. While nearly one-third (31%) of the Unplugged and 44 percent of the Alienated said they read a newspaper less than once a week, no Doer reported reading a paper that infrequently. (Table 11)

That pattern largely held for other forms of news and information consumption, as well. While 19 percent of the Doers said they regularly read a weekly news magazine, “regular” readership was reported by 7 percent of both the Unplugged and the Alienated. (Table 11)

Although 65 percent of the Alienated said they watch a national or local news program at least four nights a week, they were considerably less likely than Doers to report regularly watching a news magazine show (24% versus 43%). While one-third of the Doers said they watch CNN regularly, only 17 percent of the Alienated do so. The difference in C-SPAN viewership is even more marked, with 19 percent of the Alienated saying they watch it at least “sometimes,” or roughly half the occasional or regular viewership reported by Doers. (Table 11)

As the cluster name would imply, only 35 percent of the Unplugged watch a national or local news broadcast at least six nights a week; the comparable figure among Doers is 58 percent. Slightly more than one-quarter (27%) of the Unplugged said they regularly watch a news magazine show—16 percentage points below the regular viewership reported by Doers. The Unplugged were nearly four times more likely than Doers to say they never watch such programs (25% versus 7%). (Table 11)

One sizable step down the news and information-consumption ladder were the Don’t Knows. Although they reported more frequent newspaper readership than the Alienated or the

Unplugged, the Don't Knows brought up the rear in virtually all of the other news consumption categories.

Slightly less than one-third (32%) of the Don't Knows said they read a newspaper as frequently as four days a week; only 19 percent responded that they read a paper at least six days a week. While two-thirds of Doers indicated that they sometimes pick up a news magazine, 32 percent of the Don't Knows could make that statement. Only 20 percent of the Don't Knows said they regularly watch a news magazine show such as 60-Minutes, Dateline and 20/20. Among the Don't Knows, just 14 percent described themselves as regular viewers of CNN, while another 27 percent said they sometimes tune in. C-SPAN viewership was virtually non-existent. (Table 11)

Given these differential levels of information consumption, it is not surprising that there are considerable differences in the degree to which nonvoters follow political news. While only 19 percent of those under 30 years of age say they follow what's going on in government and public affairs "most of the time," 43 percent of those over the age of 65 do so. Among those between the ages of 45 and 64, approximately one-third (32%) say they regularly follow such news. (Table 12)

Among Doers, 73 percent are relatively plugged into political news. Roughly one-third (34%) said they follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time and 39 percent responded "some of the time." Sixty-two percent of the Irritables follow such news at least some of the time, including 29 percent who responded "most of the time." Roughly half the Alienated and the Unplugged say they follow what's going on in government and public affairs "only now and then" or "hardly at all," a statement echoed by 60 percent of the Don't Knows.

Their level of political news consumption would appear to put Doers roughly on par with the population as a whole. Using a question identical to the one used in this study, a poll conducted in October, 1995, by the Times Mirror Center For The People, The Press & Politics found that 81 percent of all adults followed political news at least some of the time.

It may well be that many nonvoters who regularly watch television news, read newspapers, and listen to news on the radio do so for reasons that have nothing to do with following the public policy debate. If they are politically uninformed, it is, in many cases, because they choose to be and not because they are information-deprived.

## **Civic Cynicism**

Many nonvoters are clearly angry about much of what they see in the political arena. When asked whether they felt that “things in this country are generally going in the right direction” or had “pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track,” 58 percent of all likely nonvoters took the pessimistic view. While that largely pessimistic assessment was evident across all demographic groups, men, college graduates, those under the age of 45, and those who feel their personal financial situation will improve over the next year were significantly more likely to say “right direction.” Self-identified conservatives were among the least optimistic. (Table 13)

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of all nonvoters “completely agreed” with the statement, “most elected officials don’t care what people like me think,” and another 41 percent said they “mostly agreed” with that statement. Again, that pessimistic view was shared by sizable majorities in every demographic group. (Table 14)

Just over half (53%) of the likely nonvoters agreed to some extent with the statement, “it makes no real difference who is elected—things go on just as they did before.” Forty-four percent of those surveyed said they disagreed with that statement, including 16 percent who said they completely disagreed. Those most likely to completely agree were self-identified independents, those with a high school education or less, and those 65 years old or older. (Table 15)

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of all nonvoters agreed to some extent that, “there should be a limit on how many terms a person can serve in Congress.” Forty-eight percent said they completely agreed with that statement, while 26 percent said they mostly agreed. While large majorities in every demographic group shared the pro-term limit view on some level, among those most likely to completely agree were men, self-identified liberals, and those who said they follow government and public affairs most of the time. (Table 16)

Two-thirds of all nonvoters also agreed that, “the federal government should run only those things that cannot be run at the local level,” suggesting that the “get the government off our backs” philosophy is alive and well among this group. Once again, no demographic group had anything close to a majority of its members disagreeing with the statement. Those most likely to completely agree with this sentiment were men, self-described liberals, self-identified Republicans and Independents, and those between the ages of 45 and 64. (Table 17)

A slight plurality (46 percent) of the likely nonvoters questioned said they agreed that there should be a third political party in this country, while 39 percent disagreed and 15 percent

offered no opinion. Those most likely to agree were men, self-identified liberals and moderates, self-identified Independents, college graduates, those younger than 45, whites and minorities other than blacks, and those who tend to follow politics at least some of the time. (Table 18)

However, while these opinions suggest considerable discontent, nonvoters are not entirely disenchanted with the political process. Slightly more than half (52%) agreed to some extent with the statement, “the federal government often does a better job than people give it credit for.” Those most likely to strongly agree with that statement were self-identified liberals and Democrats, as well as those who follow political news most of the time. (Table 19)

While 35 percent said they generally have an unfavorable view of Congress, 44 percent of all nonvoters gave the institution a guarded thumbs up, and 21 percent said they didn’t have an opinion one way or the other. Among those between the ages of 18 and 29, a slight majority (51%) said they had either a “very favorable” or “mostly favorable view of Congress. The comparable figure for those 65 or older was 30 percent. (Table 20)

Despite all of the protests over the Supreme Court’s rulings on abortion and its recent controversial rulings against affirmative action and racially gerrymandered congressional districts, 65 percent of the nonvoters said they have either a “mostly favorable” or “very favorable” view of that institution. With the exception of those 65 years old or older—nearly one-third of whom said they had no opinion—majorities in every demographic group gave the Court a largely positive review. (Table 21)

Although they apparently want to see more power moved to the local government, the likely nonvoters clearly believe that Washington plays a pivotal role in their lives. Sixty percent said they disagreed on some level with the view that “most issues discussed in Washington don’t affect me personally,” and no demographic group had a majority agreeing with the statement. Those least likely to see a connection between their own lives and the debate in Washington were those with a high school education or less and, not surprisingly, those who follow government and public affairs the least. (Table 22)

More importantly, most nonvoters think the government *should* have a major policy role, at least in the realms of health care, housing and education. Fifty-seven percent of all likely nonvoters said they completely agreed with the statement, “government should play an active role in improving health care, housing, and education for middle income families.” Another 26 percent said they mostly agreed with that statement. While women, self-identified Democrats and Independents, self-described liberals, and those younger than 45 were the most likely to agree strongly, large majorities in every demographic group agreed at least to some degree. (Table 23)

Given that they apparently would like to see more decisions pushed down from the federal to the local level, it is hardly surprising that a majority of likely nonvoters expressed a generally favorable opinion of their city or county council. No more than 29 percent of any demographic group said they held an unfavorable view. If there was a surprise, given the desire for more localized decision-making, it was that only 48 percent of the likely nonvoters said they were interested in following local politics to any degree (Table 24) and that 23 percent of the likely nonvoters had no opinion of their local government. (Table 25).

Although 46 percent of nonvoters think there is a need for a third political party, 56 percent of those surveyed said they could see at least “a fair amount of difference” in what Democrats and Republicans stand for. Not surprisingly, self-described Independents had considerably more difficulty than self-identified Republicans and Democrats in distinguishing between the parties. Blacks were far more likely than whites to see a clear difference. (Table 26)

When asked to rate how favorably or unfavorably they view the Republican party, 42 percent of all nonvoters said they had either a “very unfavorable” or “mostly unfavorable” opinion. However, 42 percent also gave the party either a “very favorable” or “mostly favorable rating.” Sixteen percent could not offer an opinion.(Table 27)

Asked to make a similar assessment of the Democrats, nearly half (48%) of all nonvoters gave the party a favorable rating overall. Thirty-seven percent said they hold an unfavorable opinion, while 16 percent had no opinion one way or the other. (Table 28)

Once again, the extent of anger toward and alienation from the political process varied significantly from cluster to cluster, with Doers showing few signs of alienation from their elected officials or governmental institutions. Although only 39 percent said they felt the country was headed in the right direction, Doers were the most optimistic in this regard. (Table 29)

And while their answers to this question leave little doubt that they see considerable room for improvement, Doers were the most likely to feel that elected officials actually care what they think. More than half (53%) disagreed to some extent with the statement, “most elected officials don’t care what people like me think.” While they overwhelmingly favor term limits, as do all groups of nonvoters, 77 percent said they have either a “very favorable” or “mostly favorable” opinion of Congress. Sixty-three percent indicated favorable views of both the Republican and Democratic parties. (Table 29)

Similarly, 71 percent of the Doers agreed with the statement, “the federal government often does a better job than people give it credit for.” Only about one-third (32%) agreed that “it makes no real difference who is elected—things go on just as they did before.” (Table 29)

At the other end of the political-pessimism spectrum are the Alienated. Although majorities in every nonvoter cluster said they felt the country had “pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track,” the Alienated were the most pessimistic, with 65 percent stating that view. (Table 29)

Although majorities in four of the five clusters—the Doers were the only exception—agreed that most elected officials don’t care what they think, the Alienated took a much more strident position. Forty-five percent said they “completely agreed” with that statement; Only 12 percent of the Doers, 23 percent of the Unplugged, 25 percent of the Don’t Knows, and 27 percent of the Irritables took that extreme position. (Table 29)

More than half (53%) of the Alienated disagreed that “the federal government often does a better job than people give it credit for,” and 25 percent said they completely disagreed. Only one other cluster group came close to expressing this degree of vehemence—the Irritables (Table 29)

Those in the Alienated cluster were also the least sanguine about the impact of elections. While only 14 percent of the Doers completely agreed that it makes no real difference who is elected, 39 percent of the Alienated took that most pessimistic view. The comparable figures for the Unplugged, the Irritables, and the Don’t Knows were 27 percent, 28 percent, and 32 percent, respectively. (Table 29)

Majorities in all five clusters agreed that “the federal government should run only those things that cannot be run at the local level,” but among the Alienated, 40 percent said they completely agreed with that sentiment—again tending more than any other group to gravitate toward the extreme. The Unplugged were the next most strident group, with 30 percent completely agreeing. (Table 29)

The Alienated were the least enamored with Washington and its various political institutions. They were the most likely to completely agree (26 percent) that most issues discussed in Washington do not affect them personally. Sixty-one percent of the Alienated expressed an unfavorable view of the Republican party and 59 percent voiced similar opinions about the Democrats.

Sixty-one percent of the Alienated said they have a largely unfavorable opinion of Congress, including 21 percent who said their view was “very unfavorable.” No more than 11 percent of those in any other group said their view was very unfavorable. Among Doers, only 2 percent expressed such a highly negative opinion. Only two members of the Alienated cluster had even a marginally favorable view of the Supreme Court; the remainder were split almost evenly between having no opinion and having a negative one. In contrast, 81 percent of the Doers expressed

positive feelings for the Court, including 24 percent who said their opinion was “very favorable.” (Table 29)

Like the Alienated, 65 percent of the Irritables think the country has “pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track.” While only 27 percent of the Irritables said they completely agreed that most elected officials do not care what they think, another 47 percent said they mostly agreed with that assessment. Fifty-eight percent expressed an unfavorable opinion of Congress—making the Irritables the second most strident of the five cluster groups on this topic. Slightly more than three-quarters (77%) agreed on some level that limits should be placed on the number of terms a person can serve in Congress, including 53 percent who said they strongly agreed—again making the Irritables the second most strident of the five clusters. Fifty-nine percent have an unfavorable view of the Republican party; 48 percent rated the Democrats unfavorably. A plurality of 47 percent agree that a third political party would be a fine idea. Nevertheless, Irritables were the least likely to agree that the federal government should turn more of the business of governing over to local officials. (Table 29)

The Unplugged are generally more skeptical than the Doers but less skeptical than the Alienated and the Irritables. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of the Unplugged completely agreed that elected officials care little about what they think. The comparable figures for the Doers and the Alienated were 12 percent and 45 percent, respectively. Among the Unplugged, 27 percent completely agreed that it makes no difference who is elected, a level of disaffection that placed them squarely between the Doers and the Alienated. Thirty-seven percent of the Unplugged said they think the country is headed in the right direction—a modest level of contentment that puts them on par with the Doers. (Table 29)

Although they do not follow politics to any real extent, the Unplugged expressed relatively high opinions of both political parties. Sixty percent said they had a favorable view of the Democrats; 49 percent held a favorable view of the Republican party. Sixty-one percent rated Congress favorably. On all three measures, the Unplugged were second only to the Doers in their positive assessments. (Table 29)

For the Don’t Knows, the issue is not distrust of—or disgust for—government as much as it is an almost total lack of interest in the political process. The political parties are not on their radar screen at all. Only one member of the cluster had a favorable opinion of the Republicans, which was one more than had a favorable view of the Democrats. Well over 90 percent of the Don’t Knows expressed no opinion—favorable or unfavorable—of either party. And when asked

whether the country needs a third party to shake things up, 43 percent of the Don't Knows had no opinion. (Table 29)

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the Don't Knows had no opinion about Congress, and 43 percent were unable to make a definitive statement about the Supreme Court. Sixty-two percent indicated little or no interest in following local politics, and another 9 percent said they did not know how they felt about the subject. When asked about their feelings toward their city or county council, 48 percent said they did not know. When asked how they felt about their local school board, 46 percent had no opinion. (Table 29)

Fifty-eight percent of the Don't Knows said they "chose not to vote" in 1992, and another 25 percent said that "something prevented" them from voting. Seventy-two percent of the Don't Knows said they are currently unregistered—the highest percentage of unregistered adults among any of the five clusters. One-third (34%) say they have definitely decided to stay home this November, and another 27 percent say they probably will sit out this election. (Table 29)

Nevertheless, the Don't Knows are not particularly alienated from government. Eighty-two percent agreed at least to some extent that government should play a major role in improving health care, housing, and education for middle income families. Forty-five percent also agreed that the federal government often does a better job than people give it credit for. (Table 29)

While nonvoters in the five clusters differ considerably from one another on their attitudes towards politics and government, as a collective, nonvoters hold views that are no more negative than those expressed by voters. An NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll conducted August 2 through August 6, 1996 found only 37 percent of those over the age of 18 willing to say the country is headed in the right direction; 43 percent said "wrong track," while 20 percent couldn't say one way or the other.

In the October, 1995, Times Mirror survey, 64 percent of those responding said they agreed to some extent that "most elected officials don't care what people like me think—the identical percentage among nonvoters in our study. Fifty-three percent of those responding to the Times Mirror study said they strongly agreed with the statement, which suggests that the population as a whole is, if anything, *less* likely than the nonvoting population to think politicians care what they think.

That same Times Mirror poll found 79 percent of all adults agreeing that there should be a limit on how many terms a person can serve in Congress, virtually the same level of support for term limits found among nonvoters in our study. Eighty-one percent of the respondents in the



Times Mirror survey agreed to some extent that government should play an active role in improving health care, housing and education for middle income families.

Times Mirror studies conducted in April and in October, 1995, found the public's "favorability rating" of Congress mired at 45 percent and 42 percent, respectively—considerably lower than the ratings given Congress by our panel of likely nonvoters.

Reacting to these and other findings in our study, Raymond Wolfinger, a professor of political science at the University of California at Berkeley, put it succinctly, "Journalists love the alienation idea, [but] the universal findings of people who study the subject are the same. No matter how you measure alienation, there is as high a proportion of the alienated among voters as nonvoters."

### **Community Involvement**

While voting is apparently not one of their top priorities, many likely nonvoters find time for other community and quasi-political activities. Sixty percent of those who are unlikely to vote this November report having done volunteer work for a charity or other non-profit organization in the past. Slightly more than half (52%) of those who said they have volunteered at least once indicated that they had done so in the past twelve months. (Table 30)

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of the likely nonvoters said they have called or sent a letter, telegram, fax or e-mail message to their Congressman or Senator, and 42 percent of those report having done so within the past twelve months. Sixteen percent have communicated their opinions to a state representative, while 14 percent have contacted their local school board or a member of their city government. Thirteen percent of the likely nonvoters have contacted their local newspaper to express an opinion. Eleven percent of those interviewed reported having attended at least one political meeting or rally during the past three or four years, 68 percent of whom had done so within the past twelve months. (Table 30) Overall, 41 percent of the likely nonvoters reported having engaged in at least one of these five quasi-political activities.

The Doers were by far the most active, with 81 percent reporting that they had at some point volunteered their time to a charity or other non-profit organization, contacted a federal, state, or local representative, attended a political meeting or rally, or contacted their local newspaper. Their participation breaks down as follows:

- Seventy percent said they have volunteered time to a charity, 48 percent of whom have done so within the past year;
- Thirty percent have written, phoned, faxed or e-mailed their congressional Representative or Senator, and among those who have, 40 percent made at least one contact within the past year;
- More than one-fifth (22%) claimed similar overtures to their state Representative or Senator, with 40 percent of that group having done so at least once during the past twelve months;
- Twenty percent have contacted their local newspaper to express their views, and 39 percent of those said they had done so in the past year;
- Nineteen percent have written, telephoned, faxed, or e-mailed a city official or school board member; 70 percent of this group made at least one contact within the last twelve months;
- Sixteen percent have attended a political meeting or rally, and among those who have, 76 percent said they had done so within the past year.

Following the established pattern, the Alienated were the least likely to have been involved in any of these extracurricular activities. However, even among the Alienated, 56 percent indicated that they had somehow found time to volunteer, write letters to their elected representatives, attend political meetings or rallies, or contact their local newspaper to express an opinion. While charities were the most likely to benefit from their involvement—49 percent have volunteered their time at least once—the Alienated were not entirely silent in other respects. Sixteen percent have contacted their congressional Representative or Senator, and 14 percent have contacted a state representative. Only five percent had ever contacted a local politician or school board member, and even fewer (4%) said they had ever been to a political rally.

### **The Public Policy Debate**

Whether or not large numbers of nonvoters can ever be moved to participate in the electoral process, the question remains—does it matter? While the survey did not address the issue of how the outcome of the current presidential campaign might be changed, the responses to several questions indicate that nonvoters and voters hold virtually identical positions on a number of issues currently under discussion.

When asked what they consider to be the most important problem facing the country today, 18 percent of the likely nonvoters mentioned crime and violence. Combining those who listed “the economy,” “the budget deficit,” and “unemployment,” general economic concerns were named by another 21 percent of those polled. “Drugs,” “education,” and “ethics/values” followed at 6 percent, 5 percent, and 4 percent, respectively

Overall, that list of problems looks very much like the list of problems named in a survey conducted by The New York Times and CBS News in early June. In that nationwide survey of 1,200 randomly selected adults, 15 percent cited crime as the most important problem facing the country. A combined 24 percent cited unemployment, the federal budget deficit, and the economy in general. Drugs and ethics/values were each mentioned by 5 percent. Those percentages changed less than 1 percentage point in any direction when only registered voters were included.

Having nearly identical perceptions of the problems is not necessarily the same as having identical approaches to the solutions. However, at least on two issues, nonvoters would seem to be in synch with the overall policy objectives of the general population.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of all likely nonvoters agreed to some extent that “a woman’s right to decide about abortion should be preserved.” More than half (53%) said they completely agreed with the statement. Those most likely to agree completely were self-described liberals and moderates, those who had attended at least some college, and those 44-years-old or younger. However, even among self-described conservatives, 43 percent said they completely agreed and another 20 percent said they mostly agreed. (Table 31) This finding largely mirrors the results of countless surveys of the public at large.

Nonvoters may be a bit less anxious than the general public to bar illegal immigrants from receiving government subsidies, but only a little less anxious. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed that “illegal immigrants and their children should not be allowed to receive education, health and welfare benefits,” 47 percent agreed and an equal number disagreed. Those most strongly in favor of such a benefit ban were men, self-identified Republicans, and whites. (Table 32)

While not strictly comparable, since it was conducted months earlier, the Times Mirror poll conducted in October, 1995, found 58 percent of the public in favor of cutting off education, health and welfare benefits to illegal immigrants and their children.

Judgments on whether these slight policy differences on issues ranging from abortion to congressional term limits to immigration policy would be enough to tip the scale of the debate or significantly alter the agenda will have to await another study.

## Tables

Table 1

A Demographic Comparison Of Likely NonVoters And Voters

	Likely Non- Voters (Base = 1,001)	Likely Voters (Base = 2,322)
Gender	%	%
Male	46	48
Female	54	52
Age	%	%
18-29	<b>39</b>	16
30-44	34	32
45-64	18	30
65 and older	7	21
Race	%	%
White	68	<b>81</b>
Black	13	9
Other	17	9
Education	%	%
Less than high school	17	10
High school graduate	38	27
Some College	26	26
College graduate	18	<b>37</b>
Income	%	%
Under \$30,000	<b>48</b>	33
\$30,000 and over	43	<b>60</b>

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding and the exclusion of those who refused to answer.

Table 2

Frequency Of Following Politics

Q1. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

	Likely Non- Voters (Base = 1,001)	Likely Voters (Base = 2,322)
	%	%
Most of the time	24	<b>53</b>
Some of the time	33	31
Only now and then	19	11
Hardly ever	<b>24</b>	5

Table 3

Registered To Vote At Current Address  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q2. These days, many people are so busy they can't find time to register to vote, or move around so often they don't get a chance to re-register. Are you **NOW** registered to vote in your precinct or election district, or haven't you been able to register so far?

	Base		Registered	Not Registered	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	36	64	1
Gender					
Male	448	%	33	67	**
Female	553	%	38	61	1
Lived At Present Address					
Less than 6 months	101	%	24	75	1
At least 6 months but less than 1 year	91	%	36	64	---
More than 1 year but less than 2 years	118	%	29	70	2
2 years or more	677	%	39	61	1
Party Identification					
Republican	180	%	<b>43</b>	57	1
Democrat	243	%	38	60	1
Independent/Other	486	%	34	66	1
Education					
Less than high school	178	%	29	71	---
High school graduate	380	%	35	64	1
Some college	252	%	39	60	1
College graduate	173	%	36	63	1
Age					
18-29	363	%	32	68	**
30-44	322	%	35	64	1
45-64	207	%	37	62	1
65 and older	89	%	<b>46</b>	54	---
Race					
White	747	%	36	63	1
Black	126	%	44	56	---
Other	107	%	26	74	---

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

\*\* Indicates a response given by less than .5 of those in the sub-sample.

--- Indicates a response given by no one in the sub-sample.

Table 4

Participation In The 1992 Presidential Election  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q3. Did you vote for President in 1992, did something prevent you from voting, or did you choose not to vote for President in 1992?

	Base		Yes, Voted	Something Prevented Me From Voting	Chose Not To Vote	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	16	35	45	4
Gender						
Male	448	%	14	36	48	2
Female	553	%	18	34	42	6
Political Ideology						
Liberal	183	%	16	40	42	3
Moderate	391	%	18	31	48	3
Conservative	293	%	15	37	43	5
Party Identification						
Republican	180	%	14	41	38	7
Democrat	243	%	<b>22</b>	35	38	5
Independent/Other	486	%	15	32	51	2
Education						
Less than high school	178	%	8	33	55	4
High school graduate	380	%	13	36	47	4
Some college	252	%	<b>18</b>	33	47	3
College graduate	173	%	<b>25</b>	38	32	5
Age						
18-29	363	%	12	41	45	2
30-44	322	%	19	31	45	4
45-64	207	%	14	33	47	6
65 and older	89	%	22	29	45	4
Race						
White	747	%	17	31	48	4
Black	126	%	22	38	38	3
Other	107	%	<b>7</b>	51	39	3
Vote In 1996						
Definitely vote	250	%	18	51	27	4
Probably vote	285	%	13	35	48	5
Probably not vote	202	%	21	23	53	3



Definitely not vote      226    %      11                      31                      56                      3

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 5

Stated Likelihood Of Voting In November  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q4. How likely would you say it is that you will vote in the presidential and congressional elections this November—would you say you’ll definitely vote, probably vote, probably not vote, or definitely not vote?

	Base		Definitely Vote	Probably Vote	Probably Not Vote	Definitely Not Vote	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	25	28	20	23	4
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	27	27	21	23	3
Female	553	%	24	30	20	23	4
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	26	29	21	23	1
Moderate	391	%	26	33	21	19	2
Conservative	293	%	28	25	21	23	3
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	<b>39</b>	32	16	12	1
Democrat	243	%	29	32	19	19	2
Independent/Other	486	%	22	28	22	24	4
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	14	28	25	29	4
High school graduate	380	%	21	32	21	23	4
Some college	252	%	<b>33</b>	31	16	17	2
College graduate	173	%	<b>36</b>	18	20	25	1
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	27	31	22	18	2
30-44	322	%	23	28	19	27	3
45-64	207	%	26	27	20	23	4
65 and older	89	%	24	19	18	32	8
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	25	29	22	21	3
Black	126	%	31	34	14	17	4
Other	107	%	21	22	19	35	3
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	38	28	14	18	3
Some of the time	327	%	32	30	17	18	3
Now and then	415	%	<b>13</b>	27	26	<b>30</b>	4

Registered At Current  
Address

Yes	357	%	<b>37</b>	33	17	8	5
No	635	%	19	25	22	31	3

Table 6

Main Reasons For Voting

(Base = 271 Likely Non-Voters Who Said They Would “Definitely Vote”)

Q4a. What would you say is the main reason you’ll definitely vote?

	%
Want a say in who is elected	21
To get rid of Clinton/his administration	9
It’s my right/privilege	9
Duty/obligation	8
My vote counts/makes a difference	6
For change	6
Issues: Other/unspecified	5
Keep Clinton in office	4
Right thing to do	4
Can’t complain if you don’t vote	3
It is important	3
Keep Dole out	3
Issues: Economy	2
I vote every election	2
Because I’m a Democrat	1
Other	11
No particular reason/Don’t know/No answer	3

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 7

**Newspaper Readership**  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q15. Generally speaking, how many days each week do you read a newspaper?

	Base		6 Or 7 Days	4 Or 5 Days	2 Or 3 Days	Once A Week	Less Than Once A Week	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	28	15	23	16	17	1
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	448	%	27	15	26	15	16	1
Female	553	%	29	15	21	17	18	1
<b>Political Ideology</b>								
Liberal	183	%	<b>35</b>	17	22	11	15	---
Moderate	391	%	28	18	22	17	16	1
Conservative	293	%	25	12	27	17	17	2
<b>Party Identification</b>								
Republican	180	%	25	13	27	18	17	**
Democrat	243	%	31	14	22	15	17	1
Independent/Other	486	%	28	17	23	16	16	1
<b>Education</b>								
Less than high school	178	%	14	9	22	21	33	1
High school graduate	380	%	<b>28</b>	15	24	17	15	1
Some college	252	%	<b>31</b>	17	26	11	15	1
College graduate	173	%	<b>38</b>	16	19	15	11	1
<b>Age</b>								
18-29	363	%	22	18	27	16	17	1
30-44	322	%	29	15	24	15	17	1
45-64	207	%	<b>30</b>	11	22	19	17	1
65 and older	89	%	<b>50</b>	4	7	16	21	2
<b>Race</b>								
White	747	%	29	15	21	16	18	1
Black	126	%	27	17	24	14	16	1
Other	107	%	24	11	30	18	17	---
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>								
Most of the time	252	%	<b>39</b>	17	21	13	10	1
Some of the time	327	%	28	17	27	13	15	1
Now and then	415	%	22	12	21	20	23	2

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

\*\* Indicates response given by less than .5% of those surveyed

--- Indicates response given by no one in the sub-group

Table 8

Television News Viewership  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q16. Generally speaking, how many evenings each week do you watch a TV news program?

	Base		6 Or 7 Days	4 Or 5 Days	2 Or 3 Days	Once A Week	Less Than Once A Week	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	49	19	18	6	8	**
Gender								
Male	448	%	45	22	19	7	8	**
Female	553	%	<b>52</b>	17	18	6	8	1
Political Ideology								
Liberal	183	%	43	16	23	9	9	1
Moderate	391	%	49	23	18	5	5	---
Conservative	293	%	50	17	19	7	7	1
Party Identification								
Republican	180	%	43	21	22	7	7	---
Democrat	243	%	<b>58</b>	17	14	3	8	---
Independent/Other	486	%	45	19	21	7	8	**
Education								
Less than high school	178	%	58	13	11	6	11	1
High school graduate	380	%	48	20	20	6	6	**
Some college	252	%	51	18	20	6	5	**
College graduate	173	%	<b>38</b>	22	22	7	11	---
Age								
18-29	363	%	39	22	23	6	9	1
30-44	322	%	46	19	18	8	8	**
45-64	207	%	<b>59</b>	16	13	5	7	---
65 and older	89	%	<b>86</b>	4	6	2	2	---
Race								
White	747	%	47	18	20	7	8	**
Black	126	%	<b>60</b>	16	14	3	5	1
Other	107	%	48	22	17	5	8	---
Follow Government And Public Affairs								
Most of the time	252	%	<b>55</b>	20	14	2	9	---
Some of the time	327	%	48	23	17	5	6	---
Now and then	415	%	45	15	22	10	8	1

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

\*\* Indicates response given by less than .5% of those questioned

--- Indicates response given by no one in the sub-group

Table 9

Listen To Radio News  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q17. Do you listen to the news on the radio regularly, or not?

	Base		Regularly	Not Regularly	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	35	64	**
Gender					
Male	448	%	<b>41</b>	59	1
Female	553	%	31	69	---
Political Ideology					
Liberal	183	%	37	63	---
Moderate	391	%	37	63	**
Conservative	293	%	35	66	---
Party Identification					
Republican	180	%	35	65	---
Democrat	243	%	39	61	1
Independent/Other	486	%	35	65	---
Education					
Less than high school	178	%	29	71	1
High school graduate	380	%	34	66	---
Some college	252	%	35	65	---
College graduate	173	%	<b>46</b>	54	---
Age					
18-29	363	%	34	65	**
30-44	322	%	39	61	---
45-64	207	%	37	63	---
65 and older	89	%	<b>22</b>	78	---
Race					
White	747	%	<b>38</b>	63	--
Black	126	%	27	73	--
Other	107	%	34	65	1
Follow Government And Public Affairs					
Most of the time	252	%	41	58	1
Some of the time	327	%	43	57	---
Now and then	415	%	<b>26</b>	73	**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

\*\* Indicates response given by less than .5% of those questioned

--- Indicates response given by no one in the sub-group

Table 10

Media Consumption

(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q20/21. I'd like to know how often you read certain types of publications/how often you watch or listen to certain TV and radio programs. As I read each, tell me if you read/watch/listen to them regularly, sometimes, hardly ever, or never. How about...?

		Regularly	Sometimes	Hardly Ever	Never	No Answer
News Magazine Shows: 60 Minutes, Dateline, or 20/20	%	32	40	11	18	**
CNN	%	24	35	10	30	1
TV Shows Such As Hard Copy or Inside Edition	%	23	38	15	24	1
News Magazines: Time, U.S. News, or Newsweek	%	11	34	19	35	**
Call-in Radio Shows	%	9	20	17	53	**
National Public Radio: Morning Edition or All Things Considered	%	8	16	13	64	1
C-SPAN	%	5	21	15	59	1
The National Enquirer, The Sun, or The Star	%	4	15	13	68	**
Business Magazines: Fortune or Forbes	%	3	14	15	68	**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

\*\* Indicates response given by less than .5% of those questioned.

Table 11

Media Consumption by Cluster Group

Q20/21. I'd like to know how often you read certain types of publications/how often you watch or listen to certain TV and radio programs. As I read each, tell me if you read/watch/listen to them regularly, sometimes, hardly ever, or never. How about...?

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
Base	1,001	288	177	250	121	146
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Newspaper Readership: 4-7 Days	43	78	72	6	6	33
Television News: 4-7 Days	68	77	82	55	65	54
Radio News: Regularly	36	39	36	34	38	30
News Magazine Shows: Regularly	32	43	34	27	24	20
CNN: Regularly	24	33	28	22	17	14
C-SPAN: Regularly	5	8	6	3	2	2
News Magazines: Regularly	11	19	12	7	7	4

Note: Clusters do not add to 1,001 because 19 respondents did not fit into any of the five clusters.

Table 12

## Following Government And Public Affairs

(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q1. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

	Base		Most Of The Time	Some Of The Time	Only Now And Then	Hardly At All	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	24	33	19	24	1
Gender							
Male	448	%	<b>28</b>	33	17	21	1
Female	553	%	21	33	20	26	**
Political Ideology							
Liberal	183	%	30	36	17	17	1
Moderate	391	%	24	35	25	16	**
Conservative	293	%	24	30	16	29	1
Party Identification							
Republican	180	%	<b>34</b>	36	19	12	---
Democrat	243	%	27	39	15	18	2
Independent/Other	486	%	23	31	21	25	---
Education							
Less than high school	178	%	23	28	13	36	1
High school graduate	380	%	19	33	21	26	1
Some college	252	%	26	40	17	18	---
College graduate	173	%	<b>36</b>	29	23	13	---
Age							
18-29	363	%	19	32	23	25	1
30-44	322	%	23	38	18	22	---
45-64	207	%	<b>32</b>	32	15	21	1
65 and older	89	%	<b>43</b>	19	9	27	2
Race							
White	747	%	25	32	19	24	1
Black	126	%	25	34	16	24	1
Other	107	%	23	35	19	22	1
Read Newspaper							
4-7 days a week	434	%	<b>32</b>	34	19	15	**
< 4 days a week	554	%	19	33	18	30	1



Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

\*\* Indicates a response given by less than .5 of those in the sub-sample.

--- Indicates a response given by no one in the sub-sample.

Table 13

Views On Where The Country Is Headed

(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q5. Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction today, or do you feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?

	Base		Right Direction	Wrong Track	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	31	58	10
Gender					
Male	448	%	<b>34</b>	56	11
Female	553	%	28	61	11
Political Ideology					
Liberal	183	%	39	53	8
Moderate	391	%	33	58	9
Conservative	293	%	<b>25</b>	65	10
Party Identification					
Republican	180	%	30	63	7
Democrat	243	%	35	52	13
Independent/Other	486	%	30	60	10
Education					
Less than high school	178	%	24	68	8
High school graduate	380	%	27	62	11
Some college	252	%	30	60	11
College graduate	173	%	<b>47</b>	40	13
Age					
18-29	363	%	<b>35</b>	57	8
30-44	322	%	<b>34</b>	55	12
45-64	207	%	22	66	11
65 and older	89	%	22	61	17
Race					
White	747	%	29	60	12
Black	126	%	25	63	12
Other	107	%	44	51	5
Over Next Year Expect Financial Situation To					
Improve	647	%	<b>36</b>	53	11
Worsen	247	%	20	71	9

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 14

**Alienation From Elected Officials**  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q8a. I'm going to read you a series of statements, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree with it. The first one is "most elected officials don't care what people like me think." Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Base		Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	23	41	26	7	3
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	26	37	29	6	3
Female	553	%	21	45	24	7	3
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	22	41	27	7	4
Moderate	391	%	19	45	28	7	2
Conservative	293	%	<b>28</b>	36	30	6	1
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	19	41	33	5	2
Democrat	243	%	22	36	32	7	3
Independent/Other	486	%	25	43	23	6	2
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	32	33	23	5	6
High school graduate	380	%	28	39	23	7	3
Some college	252	%	20	44	32	4	1
College graduate	173	%	<b>9</b>	49	30	10	3
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	20	42	29	7	2
30-44	322	%	24	42	27	5	2
45-64	207	%	24	41	24	9	3
65 and older	89	%	33	37	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>	10
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	23	43	26	6	2
Black	126	%	26	33	29	8	4
Other	107	%	23	43	25	6	4
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	26	39	24	7	3

Some of the time	327	%	16	45	31	5	3
Now and then	415	%	27	40	24	7	3

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 15

Belief That Elections Make A Difference  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q8e. It makes no real difference who is elected—things go on just as they did before. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Base		Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	25	28	28	16	3
Gender							
Male	448	%	25	30	27	15	3
Female	553	%	25	27	29	16	3
Political Ideology							
Liberal	183	%	26	25	34	13	3
Moderate	391	%	21	31	28	18	2
Conservative	293	%	25	28	28	18	2
Party Identification							
Republican	180	%	17	23	33	26	1
Democrat	243	%	23	26	30	18	3
Independent/Other	486	%	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	26	13	2
Education							
Less than high school	178	%	30	30	29	<b>9</b>	2
High school graduate	380	%	31	27	25	15	2
Some college	252	%	23	28	28	18	3
College graduate	173	%	<b>10</b>	30	34	23	3
Age							
18-29	363	%	22	25	29	21	2
30-44	322	%	27	27	29	15	2
45-64	207	%	24	34	27	11	4
65 and older	89	%	36	34	22	<b>4</b>	3
Race							
White	747	%	26	26	29	18	2
Black	126	%	24	28	29	17	3
Other	107	%	24	36	25	10	5
Follow Government And Public Affairs							
Most of the time	252	%	22	24	32	21	2
Some of the time	327	%	23	28	32	17	1

Now and then                      415    %    29            31            24            **12**            4

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 16

Term Limits

(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q8i. There should be a limit on how many terms a person can serve in Congress. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Base		Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	48	26	11	9	6
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	<b>52</b>	25	11	9	4
Female	553	%	45	27	12	9	8
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	<b>58</b>	16	14	8	4
Moderate	391	%	46	29	12	10	4
Conservative	293	%	48	27	10	10	5
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	48	30	12	9	2
Democrat	243	%	52	26	12	6	4
Independent/Other	486	%	49	24	11	10	6
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	41	29	14	7	9
High school graduate	380	%	45	26	13	10	7
Some college	252	%	<b>57</b>	25	8	6	3
College graduate	173	%	48	23	10	13	5
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	46	27	14	10	3
30-44	322	%	48	25	11	9	7
45-64	207	%	50	26	8	8	8
65 and older	89	%	57	24	9	2	10
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	<b>51</b>	23	12	9	5
Black	126	%	34	31	13	11	11
Other	107	%	<b>48</b>	32	7	7	6
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	<b>54</b>	24	8	11	3
Some of the time	327	%	48	25	14	8	5

Now and then                      415    %       45            28            11            8            8

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 17

Desire For More Local Autonomy  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q8f. The federal government should run ONLY those things that cannot be run at the local level. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Base		Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	29	38	18	7	8
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	<b>34</b>	35	20	7	6
Female	553	%	25	<b>41</b>	17	7	11
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	<b>35</b>	35	17	7	7
Moderate	391	%	26	39	23	7	5
Conservative	293	%	30	39	17	9	6
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	34	38	15	7	6
Democrat	243	%	<b>21</b>	40	21	11	7
Independent/Other	486	%	32	39	19	5	6
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	27	33	16	6	19
High school graduate	380	%	30	39	17	7	7
Some college	252	%	31	40	18	7	4
College graduate	173	%	27	39	24	6	5
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	27	42	19	7	6
30-44	322	%	30	40	19	6	6
45-64	207	%	<b>36</b>	30	18	7	10
65 and older	89	%	25	33	14	9	19
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	31	38	18	6	7
Black	126	%	21	40	19	9	11
Other	107	%	29	36	19	9	7
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	33	33	18	9	7
Some of the time	327	%	28	42	20	5	6

Now and then                    415    %       27            38            18            7            11

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 18

Need For Third Political Party  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q29. Some people say we should have a third major political party in this country in addition to the Democrats and Republicans. Do you agree or disagree?

	Base		Agree	Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	46	39	15
Gender					
Male	448	%	<b>54</b>	35	11
Female	553	%	40	42	18
Political Ideology					
Liberal	183	%	<b>57</b>	34	8
Moderate	391	%	<b>49</b>	38	13
Conservative	293	%	42	<b>47</b>	11
Party Identification					
Republican	180	%	42	46	12
Democrat	243	%	43	46	11
Independent/Other	486	%	<b>52</b>	<b>34</b>	14
Education					
Less than high school	178	%	<b>30</b>	<b>48</b>	22
High school graduate	380	%	42	<b>43</b>	15
Some college	252	%	<b>54</b>	32	14
College graduate	173	%	<b>59</b>	31	10
Age					
18-29	363	%	<b>51</b>	37	12
30-44	322	%	<b>50</b>	36	14
45-64	207	%	39	43	18
65 and older	89	%	<b>22</b>	<b>53</b>	26
Race					
White	747	%	<b>47</b>	39	14
Black	126	%	36	45	19
Other	107	%	<b>50</b>	34	15
Follow Government And Public Affairs					
Most of the time	252	%	<b>48</b>	40	12
Some of the time	327	%	<b>51</b>	36	13

Now and then                      415    %    41            41            18

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 19

Attitudes Toward The Federal Government  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q8b. The federal government often does a better job than people give it credit for. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Base		Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	11	41	29	14	5
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	12	36	32	16	5
Female	553	%	11	45	27	12	6
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	<b>16</b>	39	29	13	3
Moderate	391	%	10	44	32	11	4
Conservative	293	%	8	41	29	18	5
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	11	49	25	13	2
Democrat	243	%	<b>18</b>	39	29	11	4
Independent/Other	486	%	9	40	32	15	4
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	11	39	26	18	6
High school graduate	380	%	12	38	30	15	6
Some college	252	%	10	43	31	14	2
College graduate	173	%	11	46	29	8	6
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	11	<b>48</b>	28	11	4
30-44	322	%	12	37	29	16	6
45-64	207	%	10	32	35	19	3
65 and older	89	%	11	<b>47</b>	23	10	11
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	9	44	29	14	4
Black	126	%	12	31	36	14	7
Other	107	%	19	37	25	13	6
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	18	38	28	13	5
Some of the time	327	%	14	41	30	12	4

Now and then                    415    %        **5**            44            29            16            6

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 20

Overall Opinion Of Congress  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q9c. Would you say your overall opinion of the Congress is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	Base		Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	5	39	27	8	21
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	6	40	<b>31</b>	<b>10</b>	14
Female	553	%	5	39	24	6	27
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	3	41	29	8	20
Moderate	391	%	5	40	32	7	16
Conservative	293	%	8	39	25	9	19
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	9	46	27	6	13
Democrat	243	%	5	41	26	10	18
Independent/Other	486	%	4	38	31	8	19
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	7	34	23	13	23
High school graduate	380	%	6	41	23	7	23
Some college	252	%	5	44	28	8	16
College graduate	173	%	3	33	<b>41</b>	5	18
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	7	<b>44</b>	22	7	20
30-44	322	%	4	35	31	8	21
45-64	207	%	6	39	31	7	17
65 and older	89	%	---	30	27	14	30
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	5	39	29	7	20
Black	126	%	5	36	28	9	23
Other	107	%	7	42	23	10	18
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	8	40	33	10	9
Some of the time	327	%	5	43	27	6	20



Now and then                    415    %    4            36            24            9            27

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
 --- Indicates response given by no one in sub-group.

Table 21

Overall Opinion Of The Supreme Court  
 (Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q9e. Would you say your overall opinion of the Supreme Court is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	Base		Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	15	50	15	5	16
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	18	49	15	7	11
Female	553	%	12	51	15	3	20
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	17	48	16	7	13
Moderate	391	%	14	57	15	3	11
Conservative	293	%	18	46	15	6	14
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	20	51	15	3	11
Democrat	243	%	13	51	19	5	13
Independent/Other	486	%	15	50	14	6	15
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	15	42	15	6	21
High school graduate	380	%	15	51	13	4	18
Some college	252	%	14	51	17	7	11
College graduate	173	%	16	55	14	3	12
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	19	51	13	5	13
30-44	322	%	14	55	16	4	17
45-64	207	%	12	53	16	6	14
65 and older	89	%	8	34	20	6	31
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	16	52	14	5	14
Black	126	%	9	43	24	6	19
Other	107	%	17	48	12	5	17
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	20	46	16	6	12
Some of the time	327	%	14	57	15	4	11

Now and then                    415    %    12            48            15            5            21

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 22

Personal Impact Of Policy Discussions In Washington  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q8h. Most issues discussed in Washington don't affect me personally. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Base		Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	14	23	37	23	3
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	13	26	37	23	2
Female	553	%	15	21	37	23	4
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	12	19	40	28	2
Moderate	391	%	11	22	41	23	2
Conservative	293	%	16	25	36	22	1
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	10	22	43	24	1
Democrat	243	%	15	21	38	24	2
Independent/Other	486	%	15	24	37	23	2
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	<b>18</b>	27	25	24	5
High school graduate	380	%	<b>18</b>	25	34	21	3
Some college	252	%	9	20	<b>44</b>	25	3
College graduate	173	%	8	20	<b>46</b>	26	1
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	13	26	37	21	3
30-44	322	%	13	19	40	25	2
45-64	207	%	15	21	36	26	2
65 and older	89	%	17	31	27	20	5
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	14	24	38	22	2
Black	126	%	13	20	36	25	6
Other	107	%	15	24	33	27	2
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	10	19	39	31	2
Some of the time	327	%	11	19	42	26	2

Now and then                    415    %        **18**        **29**        32        17        4

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 23

Government Should Play An Active Role On Healthcare, Housing And Education  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q8j. Government should play an active role in improving healthcare, housing, and education for middle income families. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Base		Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	57	26	11	4	3
Gender							
Male	448	%	52	27	13	4	4
Female	553	%	<b>61</b>	25	8	3	3
Political Ideology							
Liberal	183	%	<b>68</b>	22	6	2	3
Moderate	391	%	56	27	11	5	1
Conservative	293	%	54	26	14	3	3
Party Identification							
Republican	180	%	48	30	16	4	3
Democrat	243	%	<b>63</b>	26	7	2	2
Independent/Other	486	%	<b>57</b>	25	10	4	3
Education							
Less than high school	178	%	54	30	10	3	3
High school graduate	380	%	60	24	9	4	3
Some college	252	%	60	26	10	3	2
College graduate	173	%	53	25	15	3	4
Age							
18-29	363	%	<b>62</b>	26	7	3	2
30-44	322	%	<b>61</b>	22	11	4	3
45-64	207	%	45	28	15	6	5
65 and older	89	%	48	33	14	---	5
Race							
White	747	%	56	26	12	4	3
Black	126	%	53	30	9	5	4
Other	107	%	<b>66</b>	23	7	1	3
Follow Government And Public Affairs							
Most of the time	252	%	53	23	18	4	3

Some of the time	327	%	58	29	8	3	3
Now and then	415	%	59	25	9	3	4

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.  
 --- Indicates answer given by no one in the sub-group.

Table 24

**Interest In Local Politics**  
 (Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q8g. I'm pretty interested in following local politics. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Base		Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	16	32	30	19	3
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	17	31	30	19	4
Female	553	%	15	33	30	20	2
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	14	<b>26</b>	39	16	4
Moderate	391	%	17	35	29	18	1
Conservative	293	%	17	35	27	19	3
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	19	41	29	11	1
Democrat	243	%	17	39	29	14	1
Independent/Other	486	%	16	<b>27</b>	32	22	3
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	15	32	24	23	6
High school graduate	380	%	15	31	29	24	2
Some college	252	%	16	35	33	15	2
College graduate	173	%	19	34	33	13	1
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	14	32	<b>32</b>	21	2
30-44	322	%	18	30	<b>31</b>	18	3
45-64	207	%	17	35	24	21	3
65 and older	89	%	16	37	24	16	7
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	15	33	30	20	2
Black	126	%	18	35	26	13	8
Other	107	%	18	28	30	23	2
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	<b>30</b>	35	25	9	2
Some of the time	327	%	18	42	27	10	3

Now and then                      415    %            6            23            35            **32**            3

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 25

Overall Opinion Of City Or County Council  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q9i. Would you say your overall opinion of your city or county council is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	Base		Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	11	44	17	6	23
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	11	42	22	7	18
Female	553	%	10	46	13	5	26
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	13	44	14	7	21
Moderate	391	%	10	51	18	3	19
Conservative	293	%	12	41	19	8	19
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	11	46	18	8	16
Democrat	243	%	14	46	15	4	20
Independent/Other	486	%	10	44	19	6	22
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	14	40	13	8	26
High school graduate	380	%	13	43	17	6	21
Some college	252	%	7	48	21	6	18
College graduate	173	%	9	48	13	3	27
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	13	44	16	7	21
30-44	322	%	9	46	16	6	24
45-64	207	%	11	47	21	3	18
65 and older	89	%	11	38	15	3	34
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	10	47	16	5	22
Black	126	%	14	44	22	4	16
Other	107	%	14	36	16	7	27
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	13	43	19	5	20
Some of the time	327	%	11	46	19	7	18

Now and then                    415    %            9            44            15            5            27

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 26

Are There Differences In What The Parties Stand For?  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q7. Thinking about the Democratic and Republican parties, would you say there is a great deal of difference in what they stand for, a fair amount of difference, or hardly any difference at all?

	Base	%	Great Deal Of Difference	Fair Amount Of Difference	Hardly Any Difference	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	24	32	32	12
Gender						
Male	448	%	24	33	34	8
Female	553	%	24	32	31	14
Political Ideology						
Liberal	183	%	25	35	30	10
Moderate	391	%	23	40	31	7
Conservative	293	%	25	28	35	12
Party Identification						
Republican	180	%	30	34	30	6
Democrat	243	%	35	35	25	5
Independent/Other	486	%	17	34	36	14
Education						
Less than high school	178	%	25	23	35	17
High school graduate	380	%	22	33	32	12
Some college	252	%	23	37	34	7
College graduate	173	%	29	34	27	10
Age						
18-29	363	%	26	35	29	10
30-44	322	%	22	34	31	13
45-64	207	%	23	28	40	9
65 and older	89	%	24	24	35	17
Race						
White	747	%	19	37	32	11
Black	126	%	45	17	28	10
Other	107	%	26	24	36	13
Over Next Year Expect Financial Situation To Improve						
	647	%	26	35	28	10

Worsen                      247    %            16                      30                      40                      14

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 27

Overall Opinion Of The Republican Party  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q9a. Now I'd like to ask your opinion of some groups and organizations. First, would you say your overall opinion of the Republican Party is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	Base		Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	7	35	28	14	16
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	8	35	29	15	12
Female	553	%	7	35	27	13	18
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	5	35	32	17	12
Moderate	391	%	6	38	34	11	11
Conservative	293	%	<b>12</b>	35	24	16	13
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	<b>25</b>	65	5	**	5
Democrat	243	%	3	12	45	31	8
Independent/Other	486	%	4	38	30	11	17
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	8	29	22	21	21
High school graduate	380	%	7	35	27	14	17
Some college	252	%	5	39	33	12	11
College graduate	173	%	10	36	31	10	13
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	8	38	28	14	12
30-44	322	%	9	34	28	12	17
45-64	207	%	4	35	29	17	15
65 and older	89	%	6	<b>23</b>	30	15	26
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	9	39	26	10	17
Black	126	%	2	<b>20</b>	38	28	13
Other	107	%	8	32	28	19	13
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	12	38	27	14	9
Some of the time	327	%	8	36	32	11	14
Now and then	415	%	5	33	27	15	21

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 28

Overall Opinion Of The Democratic Party  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q9b. Would you say your overall opinion of the Democratic Party is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	Base		Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	9	39	28	9	16
Gender							
Male	448	%	10	37	31	10	12
Female	553	%	8	40	26	7	19
Political Ideology							
Liberal	183	%	9	46	24	8	13
Moderate	391	%	8	44	31	6	11
Conservative	293	%	12	32	31	13	13
Party Identification							
Republican	180	%	4	21	51	19	6
Democrat	243	%	<b>25</b>	57	10	3	6
Independent/Other	486	%	4	39	31	9	17
Education							
Less than high school	178	%	12	34	21	11	21
High school graduate	380	%	11	39	27	7	17
Some college	252	%	7	42	29	9	13
College graduate	173	%	6	38	36	9	11
Age							
18-29	363	%	8	39	30	10	13
30-44	322	%	8	41	26	8	18
45-64	207	%	14	34	32	8	13
65 and older	89	%	11	37	18	11	23
Race							
White	747	%	7	37	29	10	17
Black	126	%	<b>15</b>	<b>49</b>	18	5	14
Other	107	%	13	39	29	8	11
Follow Government And Public Affairs							
Most of the time	252	%	12	35	32	13	9
Some of the time	327	%	11	48	23	7	12



Now and then                    415    %            6            34            30            8            22

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 29

Measures of Alienation by Cluster Group

Q5. Do you feel things in the country are generally going in the right direction today or do you feel things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
Base	1,001	288	177	250	121	146
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Right Track	31	39	22	37	21	22
Wrong Track	58	54	65	56	65	59
Don't Know/Refused	11	8	13	6	15	19

Q8a. I'm going to read you a series of statements, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree with it. The first one is "most elected officials don't care what people like me think." Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
Base	1,001	288	177	250	121	146
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Completely Agree	23	12	27	23	45	25
Mostly Agree	41	34	47	52	26	40
Mostly Disagree	26	41	22	20	16	22
Completely Disagree	7	11	3	4	6	6
Don't Know/Refused	3	1	2	**	6	8

Q8i. There should be a limit on how many terms a person can serve in Congress.

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
Base	1,001	288	177	250	121	146
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Completely Agree	48	48	53	48	55	39
Mostly Agree	26	26	24	29	25	23
Mostly Disagree	11	15	8	13	6	10
Completely Disagree	9	9	11	8	6	9

Don't Know/Refused	6	2	5	3	8	18
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Q 8f. The federal government should run ONLY those things that cannot be run at a local level.

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
Base	1,001	288	177	250	121	146
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Completely Agree	29	26	29	30	40	26
Mostly Agree	38	45	26	48	29	29
Mostly Disagree	18	20	26	13	14	19
Completely Disagree	7	8	8	6	8	3
Don't Know/Refused	8	2	11	3	9	23

Q8j. Government should play an active role in improving healthcare, housing and education for middle income families.

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
Base	1,001	288	177	250	121	146
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Completely Agree	57	59	58	58	48	60
Mostly Agree	26	26	25	31	22	22
Mostly Disagree	11	12	10	8	15	9
Completely Disagree	4	3	4	2	8	3
Don't Know/Refused	3	1	3	1	8	6

Q9a. Now I'd like to ask your opinion of some groups and organizations. First, would you say your overall opinion of the Republican Party is very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
Base	1,001	288	177	250	121	146
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very Favorable	7	14	2	8	5	---
Mostly Favorable	35	49	35	41	27	1
Mostly Unfavorable	28	25	41	34	33	4
Very Unfavorable	14	11	18	15	27	2
Don't Know/Refused	16	1	4	2	7	93

Q9b. Overall opinion of the Democratic party.

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
Base	1,001	288	177	250	121	146
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very Favorable	9	10	9	12	10	---
Mostly Favorable	39	53	43	48	24	---
Mostly Unfavorable	28	26	38	30	41	4
Very Unfavorable	9	9	10	8	18	1
Don't Know/Refused	16	2	1	1	7	96

Q9c. Overall opinion of the Congress.

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
Base	1,001	288	177	250	121	146
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very Favorable	5	9	2	8	2	1
Mostly Favorable	39	69	8	53	14	11
Mostly Unfavorable	27	20	47	26	40	13
Very Unfavorable	8	2	11	9	21	3
Don't Know/Refused	21	1	32	4	23	73

Q9e. Overall opinion of the Supreme Court.

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very Favorable	15	24	14	15	---	9
Mostly Favorable	50	58	50	72	1	35
Mostly Unfavorable	15	14	20	10	26	9
Very Unfavorable	5	3	6	3	14	3
Don't Know/Refused	16	2	10	---	59	43

Q29. Some people say we should have a third major political party in this country in addition to the Democrats and Republicans. Do you agree or disagree?

	Total	Doers	Irritables	Unplugged	Alienated	Don't Knows
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	46	53	47	51	44	26
Disagree	39	40	39	40	42	31
Don't Know/Refused	15	7	14	9	14	43

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

\*\* Indicates a response given by less than .5 of those in the sub-sample.

--- Indicates a response given by no one in the sub-sample.

Table 30

Other Community And Political Activity  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q23-28. Have you ever done volunteer work for a charity or other non-profit organization?  
Have you ever called, or sent a letter, telegram, fax or e-mail message to...?  
In the past three or four years have you attended any political meetings or rallies?  
Have you done so in the past 12 months?

		Yes, Have Done So	No	Active Base	Have Done In Past Year
Volunteer work for charity/non-profit	%	60	40	(642)	52
Communicated with Congressional Representative or Senator to express opinion	%	23	77	(243)	42
Communicated with state representative or senator to express opinion	%	16	83	(176)	44
Communicated with local school board or city government official to express opinion	%	14	86	(150)	61
Communicated with local newspaper to express opinion	%	13	87	(141)	46
Attended political meeting or rally in past few years	%	11	89	(117)	68

Note: "No Answer" category not shown.

Table 31

Attitudes Concerning A Woman's Right To Decide About Abortion  
(Base = 1,001 Likely Non-Voters)

Q8k. A woman's right to decide about abortion should be preserved. Would you say you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with that statement?

	Base		Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	No Answer
Total	1,001	%	53	20	8	14	5
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	448	%	55	21	9	11	4
Female	553	%	50	19	8	17	5
<b>Political Ideology</b>							
Liberal	183	%	<b>72</b>	14	3	7	4
Moderate	391	%	<b>56</b>	24	6	10	4
Conservative	293	%	43	20	13	20	3
<b>Party Identification</b>							
Republican	180	%	48	22	9	19	2
Democrat	243	%	55	21	8	12	4
Independent/Other	486	%	55	20	8	12	5
<b>Education</b>							
Less than high school	178	%	<b>41</b>	15	12	25	7
High school graduate	380	%	<b>50</b>	21	8	15	5
Some college	252	%	60	20	7	10	4
College graduate	173	%	61	20	6	11	2
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	363	%	<b>54</b>	22	7	13	5
30-44	322	%	<b>58</b>	16	10	12	4
45-64	207	%	47	20	8	20	5
65 and older	89	%	39	18	9	24	9
<b>Race</b>							
White	747	%	55	21	7	13	4
Black	126	%	47	16	11	19	7
Other	107	%	51	17	10	18	4
<b>Follow Government And Public Affairs</b>							
Most of the time	252	%	50	20	10	16	4

Some of the time	327	%	56	21	7	13	3
Now and then	415	%	52	19	9	14	6

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

## Survey Methodology

## **Survey Methodology**

Results of the Medill News Service/WTTW survey are based on telephone interviews conducted July 8 through July 21 with 3,323 adults, 18 years of age and older, living in the continental United States.

The sample of telephone exchanges called was selected by a computer from a complete list of working exchanges in the country. The exchanges were chosen so as to insure that each region would be represented in proportion to its population. The last four digits in each telephone number were randomly generated by a computer and screened to limit calls to residences. This procedure provided access to both listed and unlisted residential numbers.

The sample for each region of the country was released in replicates to ensure that the established calling procedures were followed for the entire sample. This procedure also helped ensure that the appropriate number of interviews would be obtained in each region.

At least four attempts were made to complete interviews at every sampled telephone number. The calls were placed on different days and at different times of the day to maximize the chances of reaching a respondent. In each contacted household, interviewers first asked to speak with the “youngest male 18 years of age or older who is at home now.” If no eligible male was at home, interviewers asked to speak with the “oldest female 18 years of age or older who is at home.” This systematic respondent selection process has been shown to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and gender.

Each eligible respondent was asked whether they are registered to vote at their current address, whether they voted in the 1992 presidential election, what kept them from voting in 1992 if they did not do so, and whether they intend to vote in the 1996 presidential elections. Respondents who said they are currently registered, voted in 1992, and would “definitely vote” or “probably vote” this November were included in the pool of likely voters, as were those who said they are registered, didn’t vote in 1992 because they were not old enough, and would “definitely” or “probably” vote in November. Once a likely voter was identified, the interviewer collected information on the respondent’s age, race, education level, and household income before terminating the interview. A total of 2,322 of these short interviews were conducted.

Respondents who said they are not registered to vote at their current address, or who cited some reason other than age for not voting in 1992, or who said they would “probably not vote” or “definitely not vote” this November were classified as likely non-voters. These 1,001 respondents were then asked a battery of sixty-four questions to determine the levels and patterns of their news and information consumption; the extent of their alienation from or affinity for governmental institutions, political parties and politicians; the extent of their participation in other forms of political behavior (such as attending political meetings or



contacting their federal, state or local representatives); and their attitudes on selected social and public policy issues. Likely non-voters were also asked eight demographic questions.

To facilitate our exploration of both the similarities and differences among non-voters, a typology was constructed by using cluster analysis, a statistical technique that classified respondents into the most homogeneous and meaningful groups possible based on their news and information consumption, the extent of their alienation from government and the political process, their feelings of political self-efficacy, the extent of their participation in other forms of quasi-political behavior, and basic demographic characteristics, including length of time at their current address.

The results of the survey have been weighted to adjust for variations in the sample relating to race, gender, age, and education. For results based on the sample of 1,001 likely non-voters, one can say with 95 percent confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3 percentage points. However, for results based on interviews with subgroups of respondents, the margin of error is larger. For example, the responses of the 288 non-voters classified as “Doers” have a margin of error of plus or minus 6 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, it should be noted that question wording, question order and the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of public opinion can introduce error or bias into the findings.