

# Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg

## NATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES SURVEY – AUGUST 2008

Field dates: August 15-18, 2008

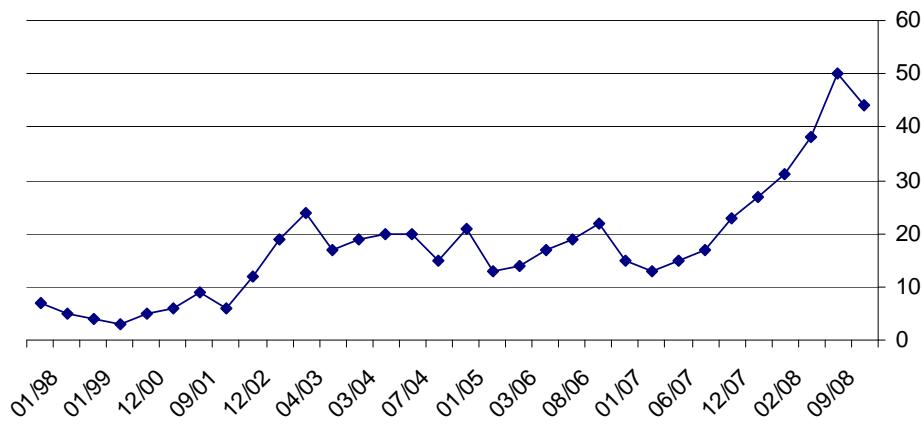
Press Release #2: National Economy

### Hints of Optimism In An Overall Gloomy Economic Outlook

*Very Few Approve of GW Bush or Congressional Lawmakers*

Gas prices have dropped below \$4.00 a gallon in many parts of the country over the last few weeks, and at the same time, public economic optimism has tweaked slightly upward, according to the latest Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll. While more than three-fourths of Americans said the economy is doing badly, that is down slightly from the overwhelming 82% who felt that way in a Times/Bloomberg survey in June. The share who said that it is doing well similarly rose from 15% to 22%. The proportion of those who say the economy is doing *very* badly, while still much higher than at any time in recent years, fell six points from 50% to 44% since June.

Proportion Who Say The Economy Is Doing Very Badly - 1997 to 2008



them or their family financial hardship. As always, those in the lowest income households are feeling the pinch the most – fully 84% of those with household incomes of less than \$40,000 a year report feeling the squeeze, up from 79% in June. The proportion of those in households making more than \$100,000 a year who are struggling with high fuel prices remained virtually the same since June at 56%.

### **Fuel Prices Cause Financial Hardship by Household Income, June and August 2008**

*Has the recent rise in gas and oil prices caused you or your family any financial hardship, or not? (IF YES) Has it caused you and your family a great deal or only a fair amount of financial hardship?*

	ALL		</40K		\$40-\$59K		\$60-100K		M/\$100K	
	Aug	June	Aug	June	Aug	June	Aug	June	Aug	June
No hardship	27	29	16	20	24	26	22	32	44	43
Hardship (net)	73	70	84	79	76	74	77	68	56	55
Great deal	26	28	42	40	21	34	25	21	12	13
Fair amount	46	42	42	39	55	40	53	47	44	42

There are many economic factors besides higher fuel prices putting pressure on American families – home foreclosures are driving home prices down, the unavailability of credit, inflation, and a stock market that has sagged, dragging the value of investments with it, that even some of the highest income families are struggling. Overall, 76% of Americans said the economy is doing badly. That includes roughly eight out of 10 of those in the middle – 80% of those in households making \$40,000 to \$59,000 and a very similar 78% in the higher ranges of the middle class - \$60,000 to \$100,000 and more than seven out of 10 of those in the highest income households.

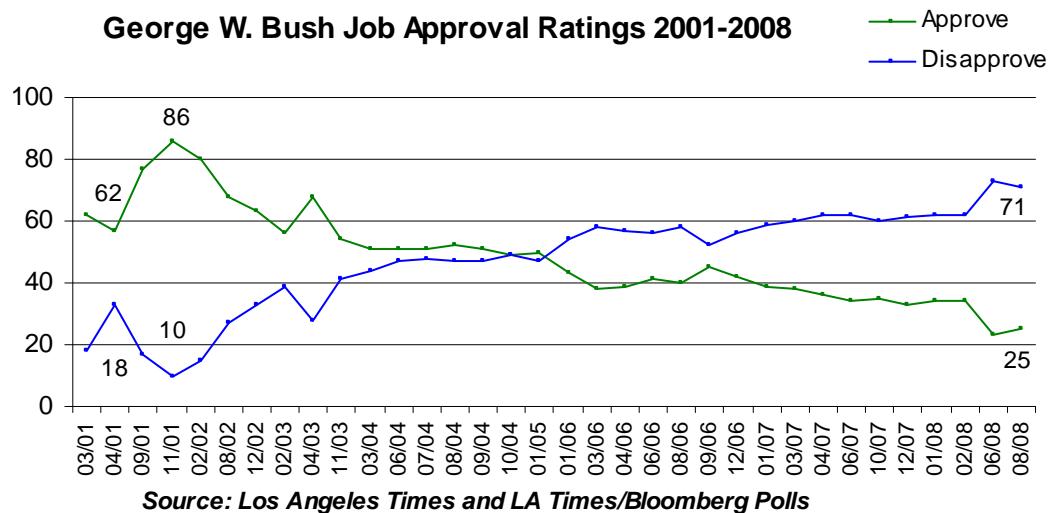
But there have also been some tidbits of better financial news in recent weeks. The price of a barrel of oil dropped nearly 25% and the dollar has strengthened against other major currencies, helping to drop the cost of imported goods. The economy grew slightly over the last quarter, staving off at least the technical definition of recession and despite the fact that so many Americans are having a rougher financial time, the survey found that public economic optimism has picked up at least a little from its mid-summer low.

The proportion of those who think the economy might improve in the coming six months increased by 10 percentage points since June, while the proportion of those who think the economy will get worse has dropped by that same amount. Overall, 28% think the economy will improve in six months, 21% said it will get worse, and 45% don't think it will change much over that period of time. Similarly, the proportion who say the country is on the right track has taken a twitch upward to 18% from the nearly depressive low of 13% in June when gas prices were rising with no indication of topping out.

### **Presidential And Congressional Job Approval**

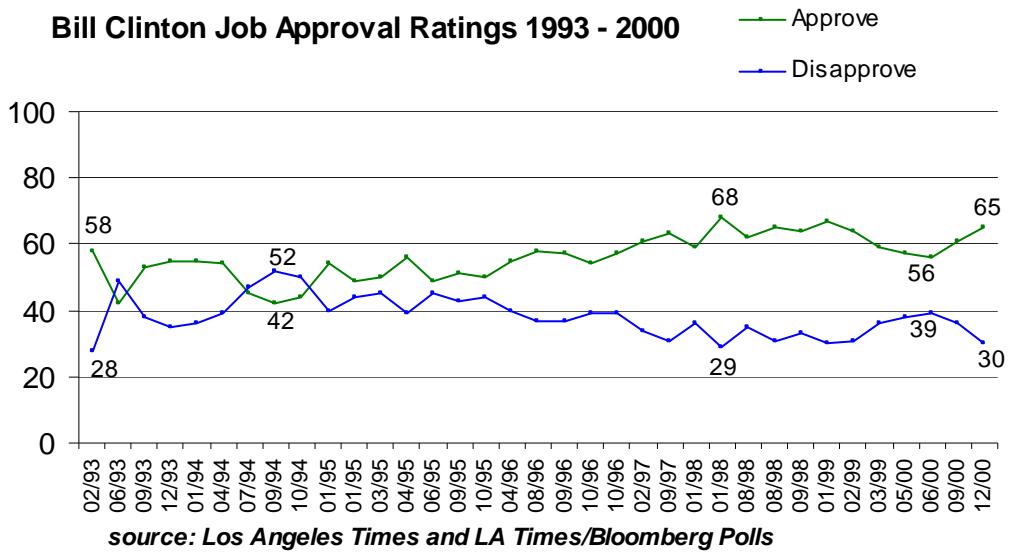
While the public might be feeling ever so slightly more upbeat about the economy, that has not been reflected in their feelings about the outgoing President, or about Congress. Only one in four

approve of the job George W. Bush is doing as president, and even fewer – 17% - approve of the job that Congress is doing.



Bush's low job approval rating puts him in rarified territory – of modern-day presidents, only Richard Nixon, weeks before he left office, received marks this low from the public. A Gallup poll taken in late summer 1974 found Nixon with a positive rating of only 24%.

Bush's predecessor, two-term Democratic president Bill Clinton's approval ratings dropped to 42% in 1994, but rose and never dropped below 50% again, ending at a solid 65% when he left office at the end of 1999, despite Clinton's impeachment by Congress for perjury.



Approval of the job Bush is doing has dropped precipitously even among those affiliated with his own party over the last year - from 81% in spring 2007 to 50% today.

### GW Bush Job Approval Among Affiliated Republicans, 2007-2008

	2008				2007			
	Aug	June	Feb	Jan	Dec	Oct	June	April
Approve	50	58	69	72	69	71	70	81
Disapprove	44	34	28	24	26	24	24	17
Don't Know	6	8	3	4	5	5	6	2

Source: LA/Times Bloomberg Polls

Bush's approval rating among independents and Democrats has been, and remains, very low – in the current survey 23% of independents and 7% of Democrats approve. In April 2007, when 81% of Republicans gave Bush a thumbs-up, only 27% of independents agreed, along with 9% of Democrats.

In another indication of how dissatisfied the country is with its leadership right now, Congress received an even lower rating than the President for the job they are doing – 17% approved and fully 73% disapproved. This is the lowest rating in an LA Times poll since the question was asked in 1996. The last time it was measured, in a Times/Bloomberg poll in June 2007, 27% approved and 65% disapproved. At the time, Bush's overall job approval rating was 34% to 62% who disapproved.

-- Analysis by Jill Darling

**Poll Methodology:** The Los Angeles Times / Bloomberg Poll contacted 1,375 adults nationwide by telephone Friday through Monday. Telephone numbers were chosen randomly in separate samples of landline and cell phone exchanges in the nation, allowing listed and unlisted numbers to be contacted, and multiple attempts were made to contact each number. Cell phone exchanges were hand-dialed. Areas with higher concentration of African American households were disproportionately contacted in a separate random national sample to allow a more accurate analysis of that subgroup and weighted into proportion. The cell and landline samples were combined and adjusted for sample size and non-response. Adults in the combined sample were adjusted to the most recent estimates from the National Health Interview Survey for household phone types and to census proportions of sex, ethnicity, age, education, and national region. The margin of sampling error for all adults is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For certain other subgroups, the error margin may be somewhat higher. Survey results may also be affected by combining samples and by factors such as question wording and the order in which they are asked. Interviews were conducted by Interviewing Service of America, Inc. in Van Nuys.

# Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg

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## Data Tables – Survey 559 – Release #2 – August 20, 2008

Guide to column headings:

ALL	All respondents
L/40K	Household income less than \$40,000
\$40-\$59K	Household income between \$40,000 and \$59,999
\$60-\$100K	Household income between \$60,000 and \$100,000
M/\$100K	Household income more than \$100,000
18-44, 45-64 and 65 and over	Age
MALE, FEMALE	Gender
WHITE/BLACK	Race
EAST, MIDWEST, etc.	National Regions
REG	All registered voters
DEM,IND,REP	Affiliated Democrats, Independents and Republicans

### Survey Notes:

- (vol) indicates a volunteered response
- ‘-’ indicates that a response added up to less than 0.5% of the question base
- The order of names and the order of any arguments or statements are rotated in all questions that mention them. Question order is also rotated, whenever required to eliminate order bias.
- Numbers are percentages, tables are read vertically
- Tables are among all respondents unless otherwise noted.
- Unless otherwise noted, missing questions are operational, or have been published in a previous release

Q44. Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? (IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE) Do you (approve/disapprove) strongly or do you (approve/disapprove) somewhat?

	All Respondents									
	ALL	L/40K	\$40-\$59K	\$60-100K	M/\$100K	18-44	45-64	65+	MALE	FEMALE
Approve (net)	<u>25</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>24</u>
Approve strongly	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
Approve somewhat	<u>15</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>
Disapprove (net)	<u>71</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>71</u>
Disapprove somewhat	<u>16</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>15</u>
Disapprove strongly	<u>55</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>56</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>

	All Respondents									
	WHITE	BLACK	EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	REG	DEM	IND	REP
Approve (net)	<u>30</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>50</u>
Approve strongly	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>21</u>
Approve somewhat	<u>19</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>30</u>
Disapprove (net)	<u>68</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>44</u>
Disapprove somewhat	<u>17</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>23</u>
Disapprove strongly	<u>50</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>21</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>

Q45. Do you think things in this country are generally going in the right direction or are they seriously off on the wrong track?

	All Respondents									
	ALL	L/40K	\$40-\$59K	\$60-100K	M/\$100K	18-44	45-64	65+	MALE	FEMALE
Right direction	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>14</u>
Wrong track	<u>76</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>79</u>
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>

	All Respondents									
	WHITE	BLACK	EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	REG	DEM	IND	REP
Right direction	<u>22</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>36</u>
Wrong track	<u>73</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>57</u>
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>

Q46. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job? (IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE) Do you (approve/disapprove) strongly or do you (approve/disapprove) somewhat?

	All Respondents									
	ALL	L/40K	\$40-\$59K	\$60-100K	M/\$100K	18-44	45-64	65+	MALE	FEMALE
Approve (net)	<u>17</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>19</u>
Approve strongly	4	3	2	5	2	3	4	3	3	4
Approve somewhat	<u>14</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>15</u>
Disapprove (net)	<u>73</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>67</u>
Disapprove somewhat	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>24</u>
Disapprove strongly	<u>48</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>43</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>10</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>14</u>

	All Respondents									
	WHITE	BLACK	EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	REG	DEM	IND	REP
Approve (net)	<u>16</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>
Approve strongly	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3
Approve somewhat	<u>12</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
Disapprove (net)	<u>75</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>79</u>
Disapprove somewhat	<u>25</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>23</u>
Disapprove strongly	<u>50</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>57</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>

Q47. Generally speaking, do you think the nation's economy these days is doing very well, or fairly well, or fairly badly, or very badly?

	All Respondents									
	ALL	L/40K	\$40-\$59K	\$60-100K	M/\$100K	18-44	45-64	65+	MALE	FEMALE
Well (net)	<u>22</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>19</u>
Very well	1	1	1	4	2	-	3	1	2	1
Fairly well	<u>21</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>18</u>
Badly (net)	<u>76</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>78</u>
Fairly badly	<u>32</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>30</u>
Very badly	<u>44</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>48</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

	All Respondents									
	WHITE	BLACK	EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	REG	DEM	IND	REP
Well (net)	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>35</u>
Very well	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	1
Fairly well	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>34</u>
Badly (net)	<u>75</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>62</u>
Fairly badly	<u>33</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>31</u>
Very badly	<u>42</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>31</u>
Don't know (net)	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>

Q48. Six months from now, do you expect the nation's economy will be better than it is now, worse than it is now or about the same as it is now?

	All Respondents									
	<u>ALL</u>	<u>L/40K</u>	<u>\$40-\$59K</u>	<u>\$60-100K</u>	<u>M/\$100K</u>	<u>18-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65+</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
Better	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>23</b>
Worse	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>
About the same	<b>45</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>52</b>
Don't know	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>

	All Respondents									
	<u>WHITE</u>	<u>BLACK</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>MIDWEST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>	<u>WEST</u>	<u>REG</u>	<u>DEM</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>REP</u>
Better	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>
Worse	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>
About the same	<b>42</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>33</b>
Don't know	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

Q49. Has the recent rise in gas and oil prices caused you or your family any financial hardship, or not? (IF YES) Has it caused you and your family a great deal or only a fair amount of financial hardship?

	All Respondents									
	<u>ALL</u>	<u>L/40K</u>	<u>\$40-\$59K</u>	<u>\$60-100K</u>	<u>M/\$100K</u>	<u>18-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65+</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>
Hardship (net)	<b>73</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>75</b>
Great deal	<b>26</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>
Fair amount	<b>46</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>46</b>
No hardship	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>
Don't know (net)	<b>1</b>	-	-	<b>1</b>	-	-	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	-	<b>1</b>

	All Respondents									
	<u>WHITE</u>	<u>BLACK</u>	<u>EAST</u>	<u>MIDWEST</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>	<u>WEST</u>	<u>REG</u>	<u>DEM</u>	<u>IND</u>	<u>REP</u>
Hardship (net)	<b>70</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>67</b>
Great deal	<b>22</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>
Fair amount	<b>48</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>
No hardship	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>33</b>
Don't know (net)	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	-	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	-