



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 19, 2010

Gallup: Economy, Big Government Top List of Americans Concerns

A mid-July survey from the Gallup polling agency found that the nation's flagging economy, rising unemployment, and intrusive government top the list of issues on the minds of Americans this summer.

When asked, "What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?" 31 percent of the 1,021 respondents to the Gallup survey said that the economy in general was their biggest concern, followed by 21 percent who viewed unemployment as the main issue, and 11 percent who expressed their greatest worries over increased "dissatisfaction with government/Congress/politicians" and "poor leadership, corruption, and abuse of power."



While such issues as illegal immigration, the Gulf oil spill, and healthcare have dominated the national news over the past several months, these topics fell lower on the list of public concerns, with only seven percent of the respondents saying they worried about, respectively, a rising influx of illegal aliens, the high cost of healthcare, and response to natural disasters.

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Even fewer Americans voiced their concern over such issues as the federal debt and increasing deficit (six percent), fuel/oil prices (five percent), war in general (four percent), the decline of religious and moral values (three percent), and America's military involvement in both Afghanistan and Iraq (three percent, respectively).

Gallup noted that the perception among Americans that the economy and unemployment are the nation's top problems has remained constant since early 2008. "At this point, 64% of Americans mention some aspect of the economy as the top problem, compared with 22% as recently as October 2007," reported Gallup.

According to the latest survey, Americans' concerns over natural disasters had dropped dramatically from 18 percent in June to just seven percent a month later, a decrease Gallup speculated might be accounted for by the media's over-coverage of the Gulf oil spill (and the public's corresponding desensitization to the story), or by the sense among the American people that the problem would soon be fixed.

The decrease in concern over healthcare from February, when the congressional battle over healthcare "reform" was in full swing and 23 percent of Americans cited it as the top problem, to just seven percent five months later, could also be explained by the issue's absence as the top story on the nightly news and from the front page of the nation's newspapers.



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Among the other findings of the poll:

- Americans' negative attitude toward government appeared to go down in July, with only 11 percent of respondents saying they were dissatisfied with government, compared to 14 percent one month earlier.
- Predictably, Republicans were far more likely than independents or Democrats to cite dissatisfaction with government as their top concern.
- The economy was a top concern among all political groups, with Republicans and independents most often citing the issue in general and Democrats typically citing jobs as their greatest economic concern.
- Both Republicans and independents were more likely than Democrats to express their concern over illegal immigration.

Gallup noted that the latest findings placing the economy at the top of Americans' concerns was confirmed by another of the agency's recent surveys that placed public confidence in the economy at the nation's lowest rating since July 2009. "Although the precise percentage of Americans mentioning economic concerns varies from month to month," said the report, "these issues have dominated the public's consciousness for well over two years. This fact should serve as a sharp reminder to politicians and challengers involved in House and Senate races this fall; failure to address economic issues will be at the candidate's own peril."



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