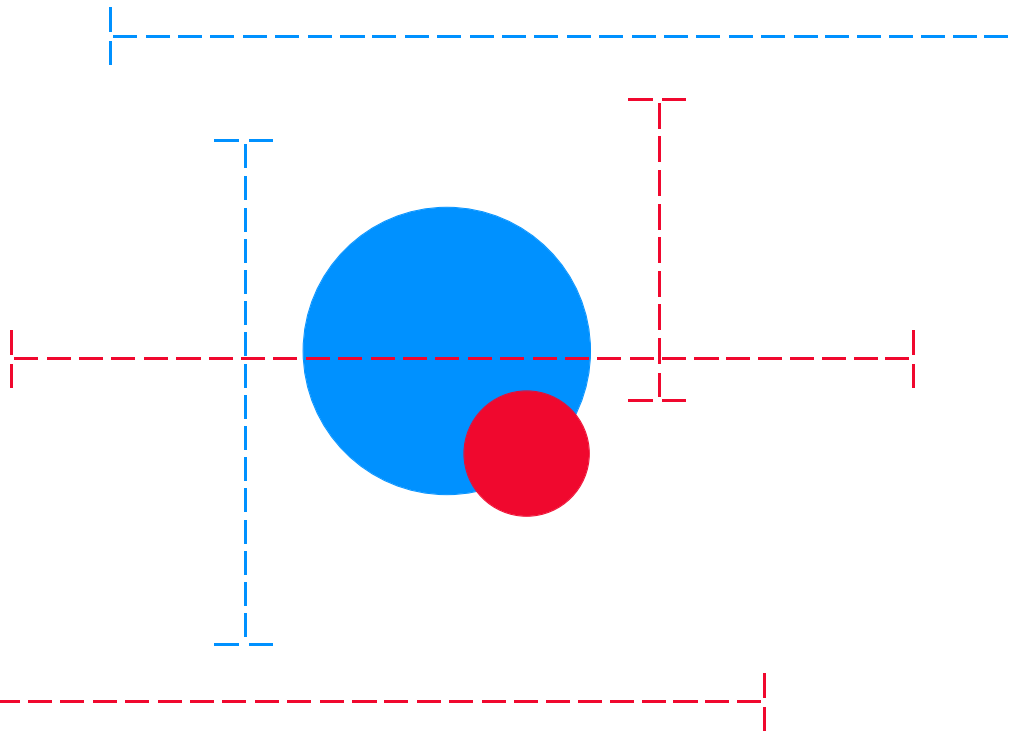


Rebuilding the  
1996

Vital Center

Post-Election Voter Survey



Mark J. Penn  
President, Penn & Schoen Associates, Inc.  
Foreword by Al From  
President, Democratic Leadership Council

## Democratic Leadership Council

The DLC is an idea center, catalyst, and national voice for a reform movement that is reshaping American politics and setting the agenda for progressive government in the United States. The DLC, with its affiliated think tank, the PPI, seeks to define and galvanize popular support for a new public philosophy built on progressive ideals, mainstream values, and innovative, nonbureaucratic solutions that move the nation beyond the obsolete left-right debate.

The DLC is putting its ideas into action at the local, state, and national levels—working through a national network of reformers and practitioners, and offering an approach to governing that is distinctly different from traditional liberalism and conservatism. At its heart are three principles: promoting opportunity for all, demanding responsibility from everyone, and fostering a new sense of community.

The DLC was founded in 1985 and publishes *The New Democrat* bimonthly magazine. The chair of the DLC is Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut. The president is Al From. The past chairs include former U.S. Rep. Dave McCurdy of Oklahoma, Sen. John Breaux of Louisiana, President Bill Clinton, Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia, Sen. Charles Robb of Virginia, and House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri.

For more information about joining the DLC or to order any of its publications, please call the Publications Department at 1-800-546-0027 (in the Washington, DC metro area please call 202-544-6172), e-mail us at [info@dlcppi.org](mailto:info@dlcppi.org), or visit us at our Web site <http://www.dlcppi.org/>.



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# Foreword

Al From

President, Democratic Leadership Council

The report which follows contains the results of a post-election survey conducted for the Democratic Leadership Council by Mark Penn, the President's pollster and a principal architect of the strategy that led to President Clinton's amazing political comeback after the 1994 Republican landslide.

The DLC commissioned Mr. Penn to examine why the President won re-election while at the same time Republicans maintained control of the Congress, and what the outcome of the 1996 election portends for the direction of American politics over the next four years.

The conclusions of this survey are striking and compelling. They bring clarity to an election that on the surface seems to have yielded confusing results and which has been the subject of a variety of often conflicting analyses by political pundits.

Five points in particular are worth noting.

**First**, the bottom line of the 1996 election is this: President Clinton won re-election decisively because voters viewed him as a new, different kind of Democrat. Congressional Democrats failed to win back control of Congress because voters viewed them as more traditional liberals. A majority of voters saw the President as a New Democrat who believes the role of government is to empower and equip people to make the most of their lives and who favors policies like a balanced budget to spur economic growth. In contrast, a plurality of voters saw congressional Democrats as traditional "tax-and-spend" liberals who favor big-government solutions to every problem.

**Second**, the President neutralized issues like fiscal responsibility, crime, welfare, and family that have been the key to Republican success in presidential elections over the past three decades. That was critical to his re-election. On those issues he ran far ahead of congressional Democrats. Those issues are threshold issues for Democrats, who must cross that threshold to get voters to listen to them on other issues. The president did that; congressional Democrats did not.

**Third**, the future of American politics is in what President Clinton calls the vital center. And the New Democrat philosophy—of economic growth and opportunity for all, mainstream values like work, family, and responsibility, and empowering government and community—best defines the vital center in today's politics. For Democrats, there is no turning back to old-style big government, tax-and-spend liberalism. The voters are emphatic about that. And for Republicans, there is no future in a strident anti-government philosophy. The voters won't buy that either.

**Fourth**, not only do the politics demand a return to centrism, but the issues do as well. Americans have a clear view of the kinds of problems their country faces and they understand that partisan prescriptions won't solve them. They want the president and the Congress to work together to forge practical, centrist solutions to the formidable challenges of moving welfare recipients to work, reforming entitlements, revitalizing public education, and tackling drugs and crime. And they want it done with a new kind of public activism that marries fiscal responsi-

bility with innovative solutions grounded in mainstream values.

**Fifth**, after nearly three decades of averaging 43 percent in presidential elections, President Clinton's decisive victory offers a roadmap for Democrats to forge a new and lasting majority coalition in national politics. The President made substantial gains among

middle-class voters, families with children, and younger voters, both men and, especially, women. These future-oriented voters responded to the New Democrat vision, and if we govern in accordance with that vision for the next four years, it can be the basis of a New Democratic majority in American politics at the dawn of the 21st century.



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# 1 Introduction

Mark J. Penn  
President, Penn & Schoen Associates, Inc.

In 1996, for the first time ever, Americans elected a Democratic President and a Republican Congress. Almost immediately, pundits staked out partisan interpretations of this outcome. Some said voters returned a Republican Congress in order to check the excesses of President Clinton, whom they favored but did not trust. Others countered that so few voters actually split their tickets that “divided government” was really just an unintended consequence of voters’ static, if lukewarm, partisan preferences.

This post-election survey shows that like voters’ preferences themselves, the better interpretation is closer to the middle. Compiled from 1200 telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample the weekend after the election, the data from this survey show that voters affirmatively endorsed President Clinton’s positions on the major issues over the less tempered views of both the Republicans and the congressional Democrats. The survey demonstrates that President Clinton won the election because voters perceived him as able to balance the competing desires of the people for, on the one hand, a limited government that works within the constraints of new fiscal realities and, on the other hand, an effective government that continues to fulfill the roles that only government can fulfill. The poll results show that the people were unwilling to

return the Democrats to power in the House because they were concerned that the Democrats could not be relied upon to work within the limitations of a tightening budget. At the same time, the results show that the people believed that President Clinton would continue, within the bounds of the present fiscal constraints, to stand against those Republicans who were willing to sacrifice the vital interests that government protects to the otherwise desired goal of quickly eliminating the deficit.

Based on the poll results, the mandate of the 1996 election is clear. The people want balance in government policies, and balance in the government itself. In the year preceding the vote, the public watched with approval as the divided government they had elected produced major legislation in the areas of health care, the minimum wage, welfare, and immigration. They want that process to continue. They want Congress and the President to continue forging reasonable solutions to our most significant problems in ways that are compatible with smaller government. More specifically, they want the government to find ways to continue moving people from welfare to work, to place Medicare and Social Security on a sound financial footing so that those programs can continue to function into the future, and to make American cities and neighborhoods safe by fighting crime and drugs.

## 2 Clinton's Capture of the Center

President Clinton won the election because on every issue that the Republicans hoped to dominate—balancing the budget, welfare, crime, immigration, and taxes—he staked out a strong centrist position early on.

For decades, Republicans have counted on being identified with the principles of fiscal and social conservatism. They have staked their election hopes on the belief that mainstream America sided with them on economic issues like taxes and balancing the budget and on social issues like welfare, crime, and immigration. Well before becoming president, candidate Bill Clinton recognized that his party was vulnerable on those issues. He emphasized the need to realign the Democratic party with the economic, moral, and security interests of regular Americans, or what he called the “forgotten middle class.” Our survey shows that after Clinton’s first four years as president, voters are satisfied that he successfully represents the mainstream on those issues.

- **Balanced budget.** Distinguishing himself early on from more liberal congressional Democrats, President Clinton stressed the need for a balanced budget. Unlike congressional Republicans, however, he insisted that it protect fundamental American values as

embodied by Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment. Clinton understood that voters support the objectives of entitlement programs, but want the costs contained.

- 9 percent of voters said balancing the budget was the most important issue to them in the whole election (second only to the 23 percent who cited the economy and jobs). (Table 32<sup>†</sup>).
- 88 percent of voters said they would favor President Clinton if he made a balanced budget the top priority of his second term. (Table 105).
- 78 percent of Clinton voters said that his defense of education and the environment from the proposed cuts of the Republican Congress was very important to their decision to vote for him. (Table 55).
- More than 85 percent of voters would favor Clinton’s making Social Security and Medicare reform his second-term priority. (Tables 113, 119).
- **Welfare.** Signing the welfare reform bill was probably the most important proof that President Clinton was willing to make hard

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<sup>†</sup> Tables referred to in the text refer to the poll results beginning on page 17.

choices. The poll also shows, however, that an important aspect of the voters' support for President Clinton's position on welfare was their understanding that people cut from the welfare lists were finding, and would continue to be assisted in finding, jobs.

—Asked to rate the importance of 20 different accomplishments of Clinton's first term to their decision to vote for him, more Clinton voters cited as very important his role in helping move one million people from welfare to work than cited any other accomplishment. (Table 51).

—Voters as a whole ranked "moving a million more people from welfare to work" their top priority for Clinton's second term. (Table 110).

- **Taxes.** The President neutralized Dole's essentially across-the-board tax-cutting plan with his own proposal for targeted tax cuts for education, child rearing, home sales, and health care. During the campaign, Clinton's tax proposal was favored over the Dole plan by two to one.

—74 percent of voters said they would be favorable to Clinton if he made these cuts a priority of his second term. (Table 109).

- **Crime.** Early in his first term, President Clinton signed the crime bill, which provided for an expanded death penalty, "three strikes and you're out," 100,000 new cops, handgun restrictions, and a ban on assault weapons. In enacting the bill, Clinton was able to turn a staple Republican position—opposition to gun control—into a wedge for challenging another traditionally secure Republican claim: that they were the party better able to bring down crime rates.

—71 percent of voters approve of Clinton's position on crime. (Table 82).

—80 percent of Clinton voters said his signing of the crime bill was very important to their decision to vote for him. (Table 49).

- **Immigration.** From the outset, President Clinton increased both border guards and deportations, and insisted on stronger enforcement of immigration rules and requirements. As a result, when the Republicans tried to deploy this issue against the President in California, Florida, and several conservative states, they got little traction.

—83 percent of Clinton voters said his stepped-up efforts to bar illegal immigration were important to their decision to vote for him. (Table 61).

By staking out clear and strong positions on each of the above issues, but at the same time moving the rhetoric into a larger framework designed to assure the voters that the government would continue to perform certain functions always left to government, President Clinton was able to blunt the traditional Republican advantage on each of these issues and win back key voter groups like independents, married voters with children, and the middle class. The chart *Shift in Key Voter Groups* on the following page shows the change in key voter groups' preferences between 1992 and 1996, ranked (beneath the "all" category) by the change in the margin for Clinton.

Notably, while some observers have posited a shift in the Catholic vote, it appears that what they were really seeing was a shift among Hispanic voters. Among white Catholics, the positive change in Clinton's margin of victory was small.

In thinking about the future, the Democratic party needs to continue to consolidate its support among the middle class and to energize support among its new key constituencies—namely, youth, women, and Hispanics.

### Shift in Key Voter Groups, 1992-1996

	Presidential Race 1992			Margin for Clinton	Presidential Race 1996			Margin for Clinton	Change in Margin for Clinton
	Clinton	Bush	Perot		Clinton	Dole	Perot		
All	43%	38%	19%	5%	49%	41%	8%	8%	3%
Women	45	37	17	8	54	38	7	16	8
\$15-30,000	45	35	20	10	53	36	9	17	7
\$30-50,000	41	38	21	3	48	40	10	8	5
Married with Children	40	38	22	2	48	41	9	7	5
\$50-75,000	40	41	18	-1	47	45	7	2	3
Independents	38	32	30	6	43	35	17	8	2
< \$15,000	58	23	19	35	59	28	11	31	-4
<b>Race</b>									
Asian	31	55	15	-24	43	48	8	-5	19
Hispanic	61	25	14	36	72	21	6	51	15
Black	83	10	7	73	84	12	4	72	-1
<b>Gender by Age</b>									
Women 18-29	48	33	20	15	58	31	9	27	12
Men 18-29	38	36	25	-2	47	38	12	9	11
Women 60+	50	40	10	10	53	41	5	12	2
Men 60+	49	36	15	7	43	48	8	-5	-12

### 3 Voters Recognize and Approve of Clinton's New Democrat Centrism

President Clinton's mainstream positions on the issues discussed above reflect his roots and ideology as a New Democrat.

The polling data clearly indicate that in staking out the centrist positions outlined in the preceding section, President Clinton has distinguished himself from what people consider to be traditional Democratic ideals. It is specifically this distinction between Clinton and what the people view as traditional Democratic ways of doing business that made voters—many of whom had not voted for Democratic presidential candidates in the past—willing to vote for him in 1996, even as they were voting against Democratic House candidates.

One striking finding is that 57 percent of voters think Bill Clinton is a different kind of Democrat from those who have run for president before him. Only 37 percent think he is “pretty much the same.” (Table 68). In describing the ways in which Clinton is different, voters said he is “more conservative” and “more moderate,” and cited his focus on economic issues, the budget, and jobs.

Voters particularly noted a difference between Clinton and other Democrats in Clinton's attitude toward the role of government:

Some people say Clinton is a traditional “liberal,” or that he favors big government

solutions to every problem in America. Other people say that he is a different kind of Democrat who believes the role of government is to empower and equip people to make the most of their lives. Which kind of Democrat do you think President Clinton is? (Table 131).

Liberal/favors big government solutions	42%
Different kind of Democrat/believes government should empower people	50
Don't know	8

Voters saw Clinton's New Democrat credentials even more sharply in terms of his attitude toward the economy:

In terms of economics, some people say Clinton is a traditional tax-and-spend “liberal,” taxing the wealthy to create programs that favor the needier people in society. Other people say that Clinton is a new kind of Democrat, favoring policies like a balanced budget to spur economic growth. Which kind of Democrat do you think President Clinton is? (Table 134).

Traditional tax-and-spend liberal, creating programs for the needy	39%
New Democrat/ favoring policies for economic growth	50
Don't know	10

Two fundamental points emerge from voters' views about the role of government. First, voters wholeheartedly approve the New Democrat philosophy with which they associate Clinton. Second, they perceive the rest of the Democratic party as lagging behind.

**Voters Endorse the Centrist, New Democrat Agenda.** Voters' own attitudes toward the role of government, both generally and as regards the economy, are harmonious with Clinton and with the New Democrat philosophy. When asked their views about the proper role of government, 53 percent said government should help people equip themselves to solve their own problems—rejecting both the traditional liberal view that government should “solve problems and protect people from adversity” (13 percent), and the traditional conservative view that government should “stay out of people’s lives so they can solve their problems without interference or regulation” (30 percent). See chart, *Role of Government*

In the context of economics, fully 60 percent of voters said the proper role of government was to “focus on spurring economic growth and creating opportunity for all

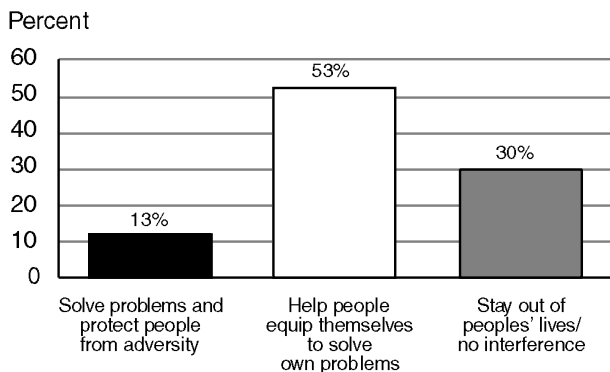
Americans.” Only 18 percent favored the traditionally conservative viewpoint that government should “stay out of the economy altogether so private forces can compete and create jobs,” and an even smaller 15 percent said government should “spend on social programs where necessary, because America is not about leaving everyone to fend for himself.” See chart, *Proper Economic Role of Government*

There is no better example of voters' preference for the role of government than President Clinton's “values initiative.” Appropriating an issue traditionally identified with the Republicans, Clinton focused during the campaign on a series of “family values” initiatives designed to help parents assert control over their children amid competing commercial and peer influences. These initiatives started with education and extended to tobacco, family and medical leave, violent TV, children's health, curfews, school uniforms, keeping teenage mothers in school, and drug testing teens seeking drivers' licenses.

The Republicans fundamentally misunderstood the role Americans want their government to play. The Dole campaign took the position that where conflict exists between government power and family life, government should stay out. What they utterly overlooked is that while parents want government increasingly out of their own lives, they welcome government help in their fight against outside influences corrupting their children. This oversight was starkly apparent toward the end of the campaign, when Dole reiterated his posi-

### Role of Government

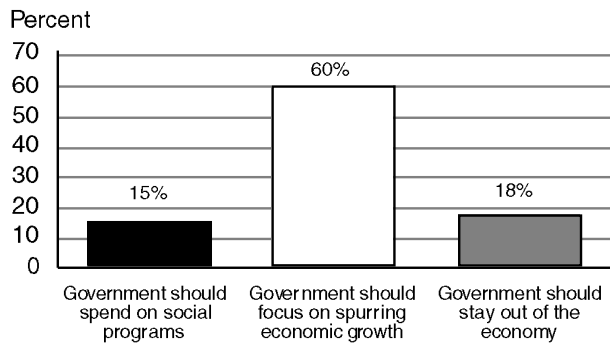
Which of the following is closest to your own thinking about the proper role of the federal government?



(Table 133)

### Proper Economic Role of Government

Which of the following is closest to your own thinking about the proper role of the government in terms of economics?



(Table 136)

tion that the government should stay out of Family and Medical Leave—opposing a law supported by a staggering 88 percent of the electorate. Voters agreed with the President; more than two-thirds of them supported him on every one of his new family values issues. The results of his initiative were dramatic: during the campaign, Clinton closed a 15-point gap among married voters and married voters with children. By the end of the campaign, when asked who would implement programs that would be better for children, voters said Clinton over Dole by 60 percent to 30 percent, one of the widest issue gaps of the race.

Voters’ preference for government that neither smothers nor ignores, but rather empowers and equips, is clear. They are satisfied that President Clinton represents this balance well.

**The Rest of the Party Lags Behind.** Unlike President Clinton, whom voters perceive as a

“new” or centrist Democrat, congressional Democrats are perceived as still clinging to old-style liberalism. Whereas by a margin of 57 percent to 37 percent, voters said Clinton was a different kind of Democrat, they said by a margin of 54 percent to 41 percent that the Democratic party is pretty much the same. (Table 72). In fact, although voters acknowledge some shift in the party from an emphasis on tax-and-spend liberal programs to one of mainstream programs and economic growth (Table 77), they see little or no change in

the party’s attitudes or effectiveness on the issues Clinton seized early on. Asked to compare the current Democratic party to that of several elections ago, voters said:

The Democratic party cares about economic interests of regular people:

About the same	49%
More	28
Less	18

(Table 73)

On moral values, the Democratic party is:

About the same	39%
Less in tune	35
More in tune	23

(Table 74)

On issues of national security, the Democratic party is:

About the same	44%
Less effective	28
More effective	22

(Table 75)

On issues of personal security, like crime and drugs, the Democratic party is:

About the same	36%
More effective	35
Less effective	26

(Table 76)

The gap in perception between Clinton's positions and the Democratic party's is key to understanding why he won and they did not.

## 4 What the House Democrats Should Have Done

House Democrats made at least two key mistakes that resulted in their failure to regain a congressional majority. First, they failed to join Clinton in the center, demonstrating fiscal moderation. Second, they failed to join him in riding the wave of good economic news available in 1996.

The table below casts the approval gap between Clinton and the congressional Democrats in sharp relief. On three of the issues where Clinton successfully staked out the center—balancing the budget, welfare, and crime—Clinton’s approval rating was nine or ten percentage points higher than that of House Democrats.

With regard to the economy, congressional Democrats invested heavily in wooing the so-called “downscale” voters who they believed

were the key constituency in the 1994 elections. Even as unemployment kept dropping to record lows in 1996, most Democrats, egged on by the labor unions, focused relentlessly on wage stagnation and the perceived lack of good jobs. In doing so, they systematically deprived themselves of the greatest edge the party controlling the White House can have—a successful economy.

In his 1996 State of the Union address, the President broke with his economic doomsayers and declared this to be the healthiest economy in 30 years. His approach turned out to be the right one. By election day, 56 percent of voters were saying the economy was on the right track, and 70 percent were reporting that their personal economic situation had improved. Of those voters who said the economy was on the right

### Approval Gap Between President and Congress

Issue	President Clinton		Congressional Democrats		Margin for Clinton*
	Approve	Disapprove	Approve	Disapprove	
Balancing Budget	69%	28%	59%	28%	10%
Welfare	64	31	56	32	9
Crime	71	24	64	26	9
Education	72	35	66	24	5
Taxes	56	39	50	33	0
Medicare	65	30	62	27	0

(Tables 80-91)

\*The difference between the approval and disapproval ratings for President Clinton minus the difference between the approval and disapproval ratings for congressional Democrats.

track, 70 percent voted for Clinton. Moreover, by a large margin, voters said that the economy and jobs were the most important issues to them in the election.

That voters thought the congressional Democrats had fallen behind was clear on election day. When asked why they did not vote for the Democratic candidates for Congress, the highest proportion (21 percent) of those voting Republican said their Democratic candidate was “too liberal” or that they “don’t agree with the Democratic view.” This wedge between Clinton and the congressional Democrats was particularly evident among young voters. Voters aged 18-24 favored Clinton over Dole by 23 points (53 percent to 30 percent)—but favored the Republicans in Congress by eight points (45 percent to 37 percent). Women aged 25-34

voted for Clinton over Dole by two points (47 percent to 45 percent), but favored the Republicans in Congress by 23 points (56 percent to 33 percent). Also, notably, Catholics and Jews favored Clinton over Dole by 21 and 66 points, respectively—but split their votes for Congress evenly along party lines.

Had the Democrats moved with the President toward more mainstream positions, they would have retaken the House. Their lesson for the future is clear: earn credibility by proving fiscal responsibility and centrist moderation. Only by establishing these more centrist credentials will the Democrats acquire the credibility they need to be heard on the rest of their issues, such as education, the environment, and protection of entitlements.

## 5 Clinton's Victory is About Sensible, Moderate Reform—Compatible With a Smaller Government

It would be a mistake to interpret voters' support for Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment as a call for a return to Big Government.

Some commentators have postulated that Clinton's victory was premised not on centrist compromise, but on the preservation of big government programs like Medicare and Medicaid. Those observers argue that the re-election of President Clinton shows that voters are as supportive as ever of the big government programs that take care of Americans.

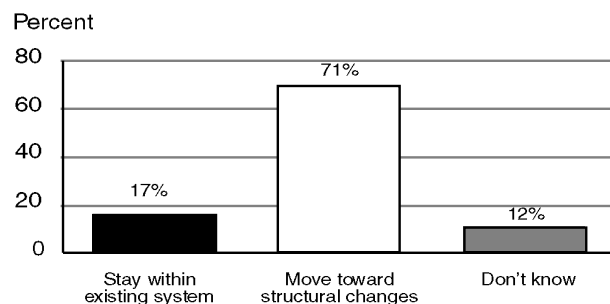
Such an argument is overstated. This poll shows that while clearly voters value programs like Medicare and Medicaid, they want to contain their costs in order to preserve them and their underlying values into the coming decades.

In fact, voters clearly recognize the need for serious entitlement reform. Sixty-nine percent of voters said Medicare and Social Security will soon face a crisis requiring us to un-

dertake serious reform, as opposed to the 26 percent who said these programs are basically sound and should not be tampered with or altered. (Table 92). Voters said they want to undertake the reform in small steps, probably with a bipartisan commission. (Table 93). But by large margins, voters are more interested in real, structural changes to Medicare and Social Security than in simply tinkering with the current system. The following tables demonstrate how strong this preference is.

### Medicare: Stay within the System vs. Move Toward Structural Change

In thinking about making the necessary changes to Medicare, do you think it would be better to stay within the existing system—for example, raise premiums and cut benefits—or would it be better to move toward more structural changes to Medicare like getting the private sector involved?



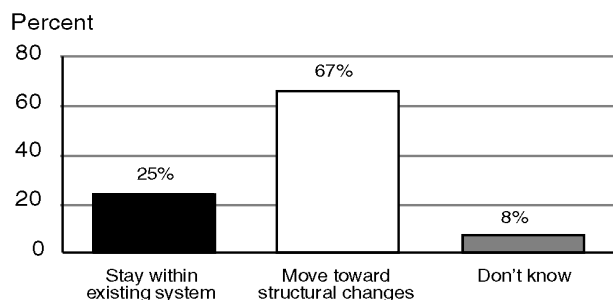
(Table 94)

Voters want to protect the values behind entitlement programs, but they believe it is time for substantial reform. They have entrusted the

Democratic president and the Republican Congress to find a common ground solution.

### Social Security: Stay within the System vs. Move Toward Structural Change

In thinking about making the necessary changes to Social Security, do you think it would be better to stay within the existing system—for example, raise payroll taxes and cut benefits—or would it be better to move toward more structural changes to Social Security like letting people control portions of their own retirement savings?



(Table 95)

## 6 The Low Turnout Rate This Year Was a Yawn, Not a Protest

Only 4 percent of registered non-voters said they were trying to send a message of discontent.

The historically low turnout this year was attributable to voters' sense that the election was already decided—not to any significant sense of dissatisfaction with the candidates. Indeed, voters were relatively content with their choices: 57 percent of voters said they were satisfied with the choices in this year's Presidential election (Table 31); and 62 percent said they voted positively for their candidate (over 33 percent who said they were voting against one or both of the other candidates). (Table 40).

Why didn't they vote? Forty-three percent of the non-voters said they physically couldn't get to the polls. Nine percent said they didn't think their vote made a difference. Only 4 percent said they were trying to send a message that they rejected negative campaigning or the political system, and 37 percent said they didn't know why they didn't vote (Table 24).

Non-voters were 59 percent male and 41 percent female, and mostly young. Twenty-one percent of the non-voters were between the ages of 18 and 24 (meaning 29 percent of registered voters in that age group failed to vote). The next highest group of registered non-voters was age 25-34; 13 percent of that age group failed to vote. Non-voters were 70 percent white; almost half of them made \$35,000 per year or less.

Had they voted, they would have overwhelmingly supported the President and narrowly supported the Republicans in the House:

Had Non-Voters Turned Out		
President:	Clinton/Gore	57%
	Dole/Kemp	23
	Perot/Choate	10
Senate:	Democrat	49
	Republican	35
House:	Democrat	40
	Republican	39

(Tables 21-23)

## 7 Agenda for the Future

The voters' message for the future is clear: Clinton and Congress must continue to forge solutions in the vital center that address our most significant problems and are compatible with smaller government.

Voters' priorities for Clinton's second term are the issues on which the President dominated in the campaign: move a million more people from welfare to work, reform Social Security and Medicare, and continue to fight crime and drugs in our communities. These priorities were fairly uniform among men and women and all age groups, as well as independent voters. See table, *Priorities During Clinton's Second Term*

Several guiding principles emerge from this survey of voters' priorities.

- Only a centrist, activist agenda can satisfy the public's expectations. Voters want centrism in the form of fiscal responsibility, and activism in the form of helping equip and empower people to make the most of their opportunities. The top priority on this list, moving a million more people from welfare to work, underscores this balance: voters want to contain the costs of welfare, but not to entirely abandon people dependent on the government. Part of the welfare reform package must be to assist people in finding jobs.

- Voters want their leaders to address a multiplicity of "priorities" at once. The close concentration of voters' top priorities sug-

gests that they want incremental change on combinations of issues addressed together. No single issue earns voters' trust. For example, by demonstrating fiscal conservatism on issues like welfare or Social Security reform, leaders earn the credibility they need to move forward with policies like education reform and tuition tax credits.

- A balanced budget combined with entitlement reform is the key to economic security and growth. Voters' high ranking of Social Security and Medicare reform along with a balanced budget suggests how clearly they regard fiscal restraint as a predicate to economic stability. Americans are ready for structural reforms to entitlements, so long as the values that underlie those programs are appropriately addressed.

- Voters' strong concern with welfare reform, drugs, and juvenile justice suggests a desire for a new urban agenda that addresses these problems in combination. Whereas voters put "the problems of the inner cities" somewhat lower on the list, they clearly want government to address the three major problems that plague those areas.

- It continues to be hard to garner voters' interest in foreign policy, in the absence of a specific crisis overseas. One strategy for the future may be a concerted effort to highlight key foreign policy issues Americans need to be concerned with in order to avert a crisis or to minimize its impact if one occurs.

## Priorities During Clinton's Second Term

Ranked by "Very Favorable"

	Very Favorable	Total Favorable
Suppose he made his top priority moving a million more people from welfare to work. ....	66	89
Suppose he made his top priority reforming Social Security so that it survives into the coming decades. ....	57	87
Suppose he made his top priority fighting drugs, especially by stepping up border control efforts and combating drug use by teens. ....	54	84
Suppose he made his top priority passing the juvenile justice bill to help fight and strengthen penalties against teen gangs. ....	54	84
Suppose he made his top priority ending race and sex discrimination. ....	54	80
Suppose he made his top priority ensuring the safety of Medicare. ....	53	86
Suppose President Clinton made the top priority of his second term balancing the budget to keep the economy strong, interest rates low, and create new jobs. ....	52	88
Suppose he made his top priority widening the access to college with tuition tax deductions that would make the typical community college free, a \$1,500 per year tax credit, and a \$10,000 per year tax deduction good for any college and for adult education. ....	52	79
Suppose he made his top priority devoting several additional billion dollars in resources to research in areas like AIDS and breast cancer. ....	51	80
Suppose he made his top priority continuing to reform health care step-by-step to cover people who are unemployed with up to six months in paid coverage, and adding coverage for 1 million children who are not now covered. ....	51	79
Suppose he made his top priority fighting crime, by continuing to fund 100,000 police on the streets. ....	51	78
Suppose he made his top priority embarking on a major new initiative to strengthen job training to move more people into higher wage technology jobs. ....	49	84
Suppose he made his top priority fighting illegal immigration, especially by stepping up border control efforts and by demanding stricter enforcement of immigration laws. ....	49	81
Suppose he made his top priority focusing on the problems of the inner cities, creating and sustaining Empowerment Zones to spur job creation and business development, and targeting youth gangs who thrive there. ....	46	82
Suppose he made his top priority expanding the protection of the environment. ....	46	74
Suppose he made his top priority cracking down on international terrorism with new international agreements and toughening of security measures that further isolate rogue states. ....	45	77
Suppose he made his top priority simplification of the tax code, including a fairer, flatter tax. ....	45	76
Suppose he made his top priority strengthening the social safety net that protects poor people. ....	44	76
Suppose he made his top priority expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act so families can take time off for doctor's appointments and parent-teacher conferences. ....	42	73
Suppose he made his top priority campaign finance reform, reducing the power of the special interests. ....	41	79
Suppose he made his top priority repealing the parts of the new welfare law he said were wrong, like its provisions to deny aid to legal immigrants and to cut money for food stamps. ....	29	64
Suppose he made his top priority bringing civil rights back to the fore, working to ensure gays and lesbians enjoy the same protection from discrimination as other minorities and women. ....	26	53
Suppose he made his top priority working for peace in Bosnia, the Middle East, and Ireland. ....	25	59
Suppose he made his top priority re-establishing relations with China, moving forward economic trade and winning some reversal of their human rights policies. ....	23	64

## 8 Conclusion

The 1996 election reflects voters' desire for balance. The most obvious manifestation of this preference is in their choice for a Democratic President and a Republican Congress, but perhaps more significant is the balance Americans demand between protecting our

values and exercising fiscal responsibility. As this poll shows, voters perceive President Clinton as representing that balance appropriately. It is this mandate for moderation that American leaders must carry into the future.

# 9 Post-Election Poll

Conducted by Penn & Schoen Associates, Inc.  
for the Democratic Leadership Council  
on November 9-11, 1996

This is a telephone survey as it was conducted on November 9-11. The sample included 1200 registered voters throughout the nation. (The sample was composed of 1,000 randomly selected voters and an oversample of 200 independent voters.) The respondents were given both closed and open-ended questions. The margin of error for the sample is +/- 2.8% but is higher for subgroups.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

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**Table 1.** Are you 18 years or older and registered to vote?

[IF YES, CONTINUE] [IF NO] Is there a registered voter at home I can speak to?  
[REPEAT INTRODUCTION OR TERMINATE]

---

**Table 2:** Do you consider yourself a strong Democrat, weak Democrat, weak Republican, strong Republican, or Independent?

Strong Democrat.....	30%
Weak Democrat .....	9
Weak Republican .....	10
Strong Republican .....	25
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 3:** Did you vote in the election on Tuesday?

Yes .....	89%
No .....	11

[IF NO, SKIP QUESTIONS 4-20 AND GO DIRECTLY TO QUESTIONS 21-24]

---

**Table 4:** For whom did you vote for President?

Clinton/Gore .....	49%
Dole/Kemp .....	41
Perot/Choate .....	8
Ralph Nader .....	0
Other .....	2

---

**Table 5:** Why?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

---

**Table 6:** Why else?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

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**Table 7:** IF CLINTON: Why didn't you vote for Dole?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

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**Table 8:** IF DOLE: Why didn't you vote for Clinton?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

---

**Table 9:** IF PEROT: Why didn't you vote for one of the others?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

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**Table 10:** [IF SENATE RACE IN THAT STATE] In the election for U.S. Senate, did you vote for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate?

The Republican candidate .....	49%
The Democratic candidate .....	44
Don't know/other .....	7

---

**Table 11:** Why?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

---

**Table 12:** Why else?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

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**Table 13:** IF VOTED FOR THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE: Why didn't you vote for the Democratic candidate?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

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**Table 14:** IF VOTED FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE: Why didn't you vote for the Republican candidate?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

---

**Table 15:** In the election for U.S. Congress, did you vote for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?

The Republican candidate .....	47%
The Democratic candidate .....	43
Don't know/other .....	10

**Table 16:** Why?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

**Table 17:** Why else?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

**Table 18:** IF VOTED FOR THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE: Why didn't you vote for the Democratic candidate?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

**Table 19:** IF VOTED FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE: Why didn't you vote for the Republican candidate?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

**Table 20:** IF PEROT VOTER: If Ross Perot had not run for President, for whom would you have voted?

Clinton/Gore .....	45%
Dole/Kemp .....	28
Other .....	11
Don't know .....	15

ASK QQ. 21-24 OF NON-VOTERS ONLY

**Table 21:** If you had voted in the election on Tuesday, whom would you have supported for President?

Clinton/Gore .....	57%
Dole/Kemp .....	23
Perot/Choate .....	10
Ralph Nader .....	0
Don't know .....	10

**Table 22:** [IF SENATE RACE IN THAT STATE] In the election for U.S. Senate, would you have voted for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate[s]?

The Republican candidate .....	49%
The Democratic candidate .....	35
Don't know/other .....	16

**Table 23:** In the Election for U.S. Congress, would you have voted for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?

The Republican candidate .....	40%
The Democratic candidate .....	39
Don't know/other .....	21

---

**Table 24:** What is the main reason you did not vote?

[OPEN END WITH PRE-CODES]

I didn't know enough about the candidates .....	7%
All the candidates were too conservative for me .....	1
All the candidates were too liberal for me .....	0
I was trying to send a message that I reject negative campaign/political systems .....	4
I don't think my vote makes a difference anyway .....	9
Physically couldn't get to polls, etc.....	43
Other/don't know.....	37

ASK OF ALL

---

**Table 25:** Do you think that things in the country are generally headed in the right direction or are they off on the wrong track?

Right direction .....	52%
Wrong track .....	37
Don't know .....	11

---

**Table 26:** Thinking in general, would you say that you strongly approve of the job Bill Clinton has been doing as President, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of it?

Strongly approve.....	22%
Somewhat approve .....	40
Somewhat disapprove .....	15
Strongly disapprove .....	22
Don't know .....	1

---

**Table 27:** In general do you think our economy is on the right track or off on the wrong track?

Right direction .....	60%
Wrong track .....	31
Don't know .....	9

---

**Table 28:** Do you think that your personal economic situation is on the right track or off on the wrong track?

Right direction .....	73%
Wrong track .....	22
Don't know .....	6

---

**Table 29:** When would you say you made up your mind about whom to vote for for President?

In the last week or so before the election .....	10%
In the last month or so before the election .....	20
In the last year before the election .....	31
More than one year before the election.....	36
Don't know .....	3

**Table 30:** Did the candidates' Vice Presidential running mates make a lot of difference, some difference, not much difference, or no difference at all in your choice of whom to vote for for President?

A lot of difference .....	13%
Some difference .....	22
Not much difference .....	23
No difference at all .....	42
Don't know .....	0

**Table 31:** Would you say you were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, or very unsatisfied with the choices in this year's Presidential election?

Very satisfied .....	21%
Somewhat satisfied .....	36
Somewhat unsatisfied .....	23
Very unsatisfied .....	18
Don't know .....	1

**Table 32:** What was the most important issue to you in this election?

Economy/jobs .....	23%
Balance the budget .....	9
Drugs .....	0
Preserving Medicare .....	6
Fighting crime .....	4
Fighting terrorism .....	0
Taxes .....	8
Welfare reform .....	5
Health care .....	8
Education .....	7
Abortion .....	5
The environment .....	1
Immigration .....	1
Other domestic issues (specify) .....	15
Other foreign policy issues .....	1
Don't know .....	9

**Table 33:** In general, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable view of Bob Dole?

Very favorable .....	22%
Somewhat favorable .....	36
Somewhat unfavorable .....	19
Very unfavorable .....	20
Don't know .....	3

**Table 34:** In general, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable view of Bill Clinton?

Very favorable .....	26%
Somewhat favorable .....	31
Somewhat unfavorable .....	14
Very unfavorable .....	27
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 35:** In general, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable view of Hillary Clinton?

Very favorable .....	22%
Somewhat favorable .....	23
Somewhat unfavorable .....	13
Very unfavorable .....	32
Don't know .....	9

---

**Table 36:** In general, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable view of Ross Perot?

Very favorable .....	11%
Somewhat favorable .....	28
Somewhat unfavorable .....	20
Very unfavorable .....	33
Don't know .....	8

---

**Table 37:** In general, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable view of Newt Gingrich?

Very favorable .....	11%
Somewhat favorable .....	20
Somewhat unfavorable .....	16
Very unfavorable .....	45
Don't know .....	9

---

**Table 38:** In general, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable view of Al Gore?

Very favorable .....	24%
Somewhat favorable .....	34
Somewhat unfavorable .....	18
Very unfavorable .....	16
Don't know .....	8

---

**Table 39:** In general, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable view of Jack Kemp?

Very favorable .....	19%
Somewhat favorable .....	41
Somewhat unfavorable .....	15
Very unfavorable .....	9
Don't know .....	17

---

**Table 40:** When you voted for President, would you say that you voted positively for that candidate or were you voting more against one or both of the other candidates?

Positive vote for candidate .....	62%
Protest vote against other candidates .....	33
Don't know .....	6

---

**Table 41:** IF AFFIRMATIVE VOTE: What was the most important thing to you about the candidate you chose?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

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**Table 42:** IF PROTEST VOTE: What was the main factor in your decision to vote against the candidate or candidates you were protesting?

[OPEN-ENDED response]  
 ASK QUESTIONS 43-63 OF CLINTON VOTERS ONLY

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Now I'm going to read you a list of accomplishments in President Clinton's first term. For each, please tell me whether it was very important in your decision to vote for Clinton, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all.

**Table 43:** President Clinton's budget plan resulted in a 60% decrease in the deficit.

Very important .....	65%
Somewhat important .....	26
Not very important .....	6
Not important at all .....	1
Don't know .....	1

---

**Table 44:** Under President Clinton, we have 10 million new jobs, we make more autos than Japan, and unemployment is at its lowest rate in 7 1/2 years.

Very important .....	73%
Somewhat important .....	21
Not very important .....	2
Not important at all .....	3
Don't know .....	1

---

**Table 45:** President Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Very important .....	73%
Somewhat important .....	21
Not very important .....	3
Not important at all .....	2
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 46:** President Clinton increased funding for breast cancer research.

Very important .....	65%
Somewhat important .....	25
Not very important .....	4
Not important at all .....	3
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 47:** President Clinton cleaned up toxic waste sites and increased safeguards for meat and poultry.

Very important .....	73%
Somewhat important .....	21
Not very important .....	3
Not important at all .....	1
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 48:** President Clinton signed major welfare reform legislation.

Very important .....	60%
Somewhat important .....	25
Not very important .....	7
Not important at all .....	4
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 49:** President Clinton signed the Crime Bill, adding 100,000 local police.

Very important .....	80%
Somewhat important .....	14
Not very important .....	2
Not important at all .....	3
Don't know .....	0

---

**Table 50:** President Clinton signed into law an increase in the minimum wage.

Very important .....	72%
Somewhat important .....	20
Not very important .....	5
Not important at all .....	3
Don't know .....	0

---

**Table 51:** President Clinton helped move one million people from welfare to work.

Very important .....	83%
Somewhat important .....	11
Not very important .....	3
Not important at all .....	1
Don't know .....	1

---

**Table 52:** President Clinton signed the Kennedy-Kassebaum legislation, allowing people to keep their health insurance when they change jobs.

Very important .....	81%
Somewhat important .....	12
Not very important .....	2
Not important at all .....	3
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 53:** President Clinton expanded Head Start, reformed student loans, and increased the minimum Pell Grant.

Very important .....	70%
Somewhat important .....	27
Not very important .....	2
Not important at all .....	1
Don't know .....	1

**Table 54:** President Clinton defended Medicare and Medicaid from the proposed cuts of the Republican Congress.

Very important .....	72%
Somewhat important .....	21
Not very important .....	3
Not important at all .....	2
Don't know .....	2

**Table 55:** President Clinton defended education and the environment from the proposed cuts of the Republican Congress.

Very important .....	78%
Somewhat important .....	16
Not very important .....	3
Not important at all .....	1
Don't know .....	3

**Table 56:** Under President Clinton's new trade agreements, exports have risen and a million export-related jobs have been created.

Very important .....	51%
Somewhat important .....	30
Not very important .....	10
Not important at all .....	5
Don't know .....	4

**Table 57:** President Clinton presided over the creation of a record number of new small businesses.

Very important .....	52%
Somewhat important .....	33
Not very important .....	9
Not important at all .....	2
Don't know .....	4

**Table 58:** President Clinton extended the death penalty to drug kingpins and made "three strikes and you're out" the law of the land.

Very important .....	62%
Somewhat important .....	21
Not very important .....	10
Not important at all .....	5
Don't know .....	2

**Table 59:** President Clinton called for regulations that ban advertising of tobacco aimed at children.

Very important .....	72%
Somewhat important .....	15
Not very important .....	9
Not important at all .....	4
Don't know .....	1

---

**Table 60:** President Clinton helped enhance peace efforts in Ireland, Bosnia, and the Middle East.

Very important .....	48%
Somewhat important .....	37
Not very important .....	8
Not important at all .....	5
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 61:** President Clinton stepped up efforts to bar illegal immigration.

Very important .....	57%
Somewhat important .....	26
Not very important .....	11
Not important at all .....	4
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 62:** President Clinton signed the Brady Bill and assault weapons ban.

Very important .....	74%
Somewhat important .....	17
Not very important .....	3
Not important at all .....	5
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 63:** Do you feel that in casting your vote, you were saying “yes” to President Clinton, or were you saying “no” to Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole? Is this a strong yes/no or a moderate yes/no?

Strong “Yes” to Clinton .....	52%
Moderate “yes” to Clinton .....	14
Moderate “no” to Gingrich and Dole .....	10
Strong “No” to Gingrich and Dole .....	20
ASK OF ALL	

---

**Table 64:** President Clinton’s victory shows that this election was a rejection of the Republican Party’s Contract with America. Do you strongly agree with this statement, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this?

Strongly agree .....	21%
Somewhat agree .....	27
Somewhat disagree .....	19
Strongly disagree .....	30
Don't know .....	3

---

**Table 65:** President Clinton’s victory shows that this election was about expanding opportunity, responsibility, and working together as a community.

Strongly agree .....	35%
Somewhat agree .....	25
Somewhat disagree .....	15
Strongly disagree .....	23
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 66:** President Clinton’s victory shows that this election was about ending old-style liberalism and bringing the Democratic party back into the mainstream.

Strongly agree .....	24%
Somewhat agree.....	30
Somewhat disagree .....	18
Strongly disagree .....	23
Don’t know .....	4

---

**Table 67:** President Clinton’s victory shows that this election was about preserving Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment.

Strongly agree .....	41%
Somewhat agree.....	23
Somewhat disagree .....	13
Strongly disagree .....	21
Don’t know .....	2

---

**Table 68:** Do you think Clinton is a different kind of Democrat from those who have run for President before him, or is he pretty much the same kind of Democrat?

Clinton is different from Democratic presidential candidates before him .....	57%
Clinton is pretty much the same .....	37
Don’t know .....	6

---

**Table 69:** What is the greatest similarity between Clinton and the Democratic Presidential candidates of the past?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

---

**Table 70:** What is the greatest difference between Clinton and the Democratic Presidential candidates of the past?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

---

**Table 71:** What event or issue, either positive or negative, stands out strongest in your mind when you think about President Clinton’s performance in his first term?

[OPEN-ENDED response]

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**Table 72:** Do you think the Democratic party is a different kind of Democratic party from the one it used to be, or is it pretty much the same?

Different kind of Democratic party .....	41%
Pretty much the same .....	54
Don’t know .....	5

---

**Table 73:** Thinking back a couple of elections, would you say that the Democratic party cares more the economic interests of regular people than it used to, cares less than it used to, or cares about those interests about the same?

Cares more .....	27%
Cares less .....	18
About the same .....	50
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 74:** Thinking back, would you say that the Democratic party is more in tune with people's moral values than it used to be, less in tune, or about the same?

More in tune .....	23%
Less in tune .....	35
About the same .....	39
Don't know .....	3

---

**Table 75:** Thinking back, would you say that the Democratic party is more effective on issues of national security than it used to be, less effective, or about the same?

More effective .....	22%
Less effective .....	28
About the same .....	44
Don't know .....	5

---

**Table 76:** Thinking back, would you say that the Democratic party is more effective on issues of personal security like crime and drugs than it used to be, less effective, or about the same?

More effective .....	35%
Less effective .....	26
About the same .....	36
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 77:** Some people say the Democratic party primarily stands for tax and spend economics and the advancement of liberal social programs, as it always has. Other people say that in recent years, the Democratic party has changed and now stands for economic growth and mainstream programs like cops on the street and welfare reform. Which is closer to your view of the Democratic party?

tax and spend economics, liberal social programs .....	39%
economic growth and mainstream programs .....	52
Don't know .....	8

---

**Table 78:** How much credit do you think President Clinton should get for the strength of the current economy—a great deal, some, not very much, or no credit at all?

A great deal of credit .....	22%
Some credit .....	42
Not very much credit .....	20
No credit at all .....	14
Don't know .....	1

---

**Table 79: ASK OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED PREVIOUS QUESTION 1, 2, OR 3:**

To the extent President Clinton should get credit for the strength of the economy, do you think this is because he backed tax-and-spend programs, or because he cut the deficit and focused on programs for economic growth?

Backed tax and spend programs .....	16%
Cut deficit/focused on economic growth .....	66
Don't know .....	17

---

Now I'm going to read you a list of issues. For each, please tell me whether you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of President Clinton's position.

**Table 80: Taxes**

Strongly approve.....	24%
Somewhat approve .....	32
Somewhat disapprove .....	14
Strongly disapprove .....	25
Don't know .....	6

---

**Table 81: Balancing the Budget**

Strongly approve.....	37%
Somewhat approve .....	32
Somewhat disapprove .....	12
Strongly disapprove .....	16
Don't know .....	3

---

**Table 82: Crime**

Strongly approve.....	41%
Somewhat approve .....	30
Somewhat disapprove .....	11
Strongly disapprove .....	13
Don't know .....	6

---

**Table 83: Education**

Strongly approve.....	46%
Somewhat approve .....	26
Somewhat disapprove .....	11
Strongly disapprove .....	14
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 84: Welfare**

Strongly approve.....	34%
Somewhat approve .....	30
Somewhat disapprove .....	12
Strongly disapprove .....	19
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 85: Medicare**

Strongly approve.....	35%
Somewhat approve .....	30
Somewhat disapprove .....	13
Strongly disapprove .....	17
Don't know .....	5

---

Now for the same list of issues, please tell me whether you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the congressional Democrats' positions.

**Table 86: Taxes**

Strongly approve.....	16%
Somewhat approve .....	34
Somewhat disapprove .....	15
Strongly disapprove .....	18
Don't know .....	17

---

**Table 87: Balancing the Budget**

Strongly approve.....	26%
Somewhat approve .....	33
Somewhat disapprove .....	14
Strongly disapprove .....	14
Don't know .....	13

---

**Table 88: Crime**

Strongly approve.....	34%
Somewhat approve .....	30
Somewhat disapprove .....	13
Strongly disapprove .....	13
Don't know .....	10

---

**Table 89: Education**

Strongly approve.....	36%
Somewhat approve .....	30
Somewhat disapprove .....	11
Strongly disapprove .....	13
Don't know .....	10

---

**Table 90: Welfare**

Strongly approve.....	27%
Somewhat approve .....	29
Somewhat disapprove .....	16
Strongly disapprove .....	16
Don't know .....	12

**Table 91:** Medicare

Strongly approve.....	31%
Somewhat approve .....	31
Somewhat disapprove .....	12
Strongly disapprove .....	15
Don't know .....	12

**Table 92:** Do you think that Medicare and Social Security will soon face a crisis requiring us to undertake serious reform, or do you think these programs are basically sound and should not be tampered with or altered?

Soon face crisis/undertake serious reform .....	69%
Programs are basically sound .....	26
Don't know .....	5

**Table 93:** Some people say we should fix Medicare and Social Security in small steps, perhaps starting with a bipartisan commission. Other people say we should undertake major reform immediately, rather than risk letting the seriousness of this problem fade from public view. Which is closer to your opinion?

Fix in small steps/use bipartisan commission .....	54%
Undertake major reform immediately .....	40
Don't know .....	7

**Table 94:** In thinking about making the necessary changes to Medicare, do you think it would be better to stay within the existing system—for example, raise premiums and cut benefits—or would it be better to move toward more structural changes to Medicare like getting the private sector involved?

Stay within existing system/raise premiums and cut benefits .....	17%
Move toward structural changes/get private sector involved .....	71
Don't know .....	12

**Table 95:** In thinking about making the necessary changes to Social Security, do you think it would be better to stay within the existing system—for example, raise payroll taxes and cut benefits—or would it be better to move toward more structural changes to Social Security like letting people control portions of their own retirement savings?

Stay within existing system/raise payroll taxes and cut benefits .....	25%
Move toward structural changes/let people control retirement savings .....	67
Don't know .....	8

**Table 96:** In general, would you say that President Clinton was basically right on the Medicare issue, or would you say he was exaggerating the situation for political purposes?

He was basically right .....	42%
He was exaggerating for political purposes .....	48
Don't know .....	10

---

**Table 97:** Suppose that President Clinton negotiated a balanced budget deal with the Republicans and Democrats in Congress and the balanced budget extended the life of Medicare trust for 10 years and included tax cuts for college tuition and for child rearing. If he did this would you be very favorable to him, somewhat favorable to him, somewhat unfavorable to him, or very unfavorable to him?

Very favorable .....	41%
Somewhat favorable .....	38
Somewhat unfavorable .....	8
Very unfavorable .....	10
Don't know .....	2

---

**Table 98:** If this balanced budget deal were negotiated, would you be very favorable to the Democrats in Congress, somewhat favorable to them, somewhat unfavorable to them, or very unfavorable to them?

Very favorable .....	35%
Somewhat favorable .....	48
Somewhat unfavorable .....	8
Very unfavorable .....	7
Don't know .....	3

---

**Table 99:** If this balanced budget deal were negotiated, would you be very favorable to the Republicans in Congress, somewhat favorable to them, somewhat unfavorable to them, or very unfavorable to them?

Very favorable .....	37%
Somewhat favorable .....	45
Somewhat unfavorable .....	8
Very unfavorable .....	6
Don't know .....	3

---

**Table 100:** Suppose the Republicans in Congress said that the Clinton plan did not include enough tax relief and left entitlements growing too fast and they held out for a different kind of balanced budget. Would you be very favorable to the Republicans in Congress, somewhat favorable to them, somewhat unfavorable to them, or very unfavorable to them?

Very favorable .....	19%
Somewhat favorable .....	35
Somewhat unfavorable .....	23
Very unfavorable .....	15
Don't know .....	9

---

**Table 101:** Do you think that in the area of education, the new Clinton Administration should focus on reforms to improve our schools and ensure America's skills and competitiveness, or is this something the federal government should not really get involved in?

Clinton should focus on educational reforms .....	58%
Federal government should not really be involved .....	38
Don't know .....	4

**Table 102:** Some people say the existing public school system needs more money and resources; other people say school standards and performance will only improve if we promote choice and competition among schools. Which is closer to your view?

School system needs more money and resources .....	45%
Standards and performance will only improve if choice and competition among schools .....	45
Don't know .....	10

**Table 103:** Do you favor expanding free trade with other countries, so long as it is done on a reciprocal basis, or do you not favor expanding free trade?

Favor expanding free trade on reciprocal basis .....	74%
Do not favor expanding free trade .....	20
Don't know .....	6

**Table 104:** Some people say that more free trade results in money and American jobs going overseas; other people say that in the long run, free trade makes America more competitive in the global economy and produces more and better jobs here at home. Which is closer to your view?

Free trade sends jobs overseas .....	29%
Free trade makes America more competitive .....	62
Don't know .....	9

For Questions 105-130. Now I'm going to read you a list of possible priorities for President Clinton's second term. For each, please tell me whether it would make you very favorable toward Clinton, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable toward him?

**Table 105:** Suppose President Clinton made the top priority of his second term balancing the budget to keep the economy strong, interest rates low, and create new jobs.

Very favorable .....	52%
Somewhat favorable .....	36
Somewhat unfavorable .....	5
Very unfavorable .....	4
Don't know .....	4

**Table 106:** Suppose President Clinton made the top priority of his second term getting our education system back on the right track—helping schools raise and meet their performance standards, making college available to every American, and making technology an integral part of every school child's education.

Very favorable .....	51%
Somewhat favorable .....	29
Somewhat unfavorable .....	7
Very unfavorable .....	9
Don't know .....	4

**Table 107:** Suppose he made his top priority campaign finance reform, reducing the power of the special interests.

Very favorable .....	41%
Somewhat favorable .....	38
Somewhat unfavorable .....	6
Very unfavorable .....	6
Don't know .....	8

---

**Table 108:** Suppose he made his top priority repealing the parts of the new welfare law he said were wrong, like its provisions to deny aid to legal immigrants and to cut money for food stamps.

Very favorable .....	29%
Somewhat favorable .....	35
Somewhat unfavorable .....	13
Very unfavorable .....	16
Don't know .....	7

---

**Table 109:** Suppose he made his top priority implementing his targeted tax cuts for college education and buying a home.

Very favorable .....	39%
Somewhat favorable .....	35
Somewhat unfavorable .....	12
Very unfavorable .....	8
Don't know .....	6

---

**Table 110:** Suppose he made his top priority moving a million more people from welfare to work.

Very favorable .....	66%
Somewhat favorable .....	23
Somewhat unfavorable .....	3
Very unfavorable .....	5
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 111:** Suppose he made his top priority fighting drugs, especially by stepping up border control efforts and combating drug use by teens.

Very favorable .....	54%
Somewhat favorable .....	30
Somewhat unfavorable .....	6
Very unfavorable .....	6
Don't know .....	5

---

**Table 112:** Suppose he made his top priority ending race and sex discrimination.

Very favorable .....	54%
Somewhat favorable .....	26
Somewhat unfavorable .....	7
Very unfavorable .....	7
Don't know .....	5

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**Table 113:** Suppose he made his top priority ensuring the safety of Medicare.

Very favorable .....	53%
Somewhat favorable .....	33
Somewhat unfavorable .....	6
Very unfavorable .....	4
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 114:** Suppose he made his top priority fighting crime by continuing to fund 100,000 police on the streets, and expanding the Brady Bill to keep guns out of the hands of people who commit domestic violence.

Very favorable .....	51%
Somewhat favorable .....	27
Somewhat unfavorable .....	6
Very unfavorable .....	13
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 115:** Suppose he made his top priority fighting illegal immigration, especially by stepping up border control efforts and by demanding stricter enforcement of immigration laws.

Very favorable .....	49%
Somewhat favorable .....	32
Somewhat unfavorable .....	9
Very unfavorable .....	6
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 116:** Suppose he made his top priority focusing on the problems of the inner cities, creating and sustaining Empowerment Zones to spur job creation and business development and by targeting youth gangs who thrive there.

Very favorable .....	46%
Somewhat favorable .....	36
Somewhat unfavorable .....	6
Very unfavorable .....	6
Don't know .....	6

---

**Table 117:** Suppose he made his top priority strengthening the social safety net that protects poor people.

Very favorable .....	44%
Somewhat favorable .....	32
Somewhat unfavorable .....	10
Very unfavorable .....	9
Don't know .....	6

---

**Table 118:** Suppose he made his top priority expanding the protection of the environment.

Very favorable .....	46%
Somewhat favorable .....	28
Somewhat unfavorable .....	11
Very unfavorable .....	10
Don't know .....	5

---

**Table 119:** Suppose he made his top priority reforming Social Security so that it survives into the coming decades.

Very favorable .....	57%
Somewhat favorable .....	30
Somewhat unfavorable .....	5
Very unfavorable .....	4
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 120:** Suppose he made his top priority bringing civil rights back to the fore, working to ensure that gays and lesbians enjoy the same protection from discrimination as other minorities and women.

Very favorable .....	26%
Somewhat favorable .....	27
Somewhat unfavorable .....	15
Very unfavorable .....	24
Don't know .....	7

---

**Table 121:** Suppose he made his top priority simplification of the tax code, including a fairer, flatter tax.

Very favorable .....	45%
Somewhat favorable .....	31
Somewhat unfavorable .....	10
Very unfavorable .....	4
Don't know .....	9

---

**Table 122:** Suppose he made his top priority widening the access to college with tuition tax deductions that would make the typical community college free, a \$1,500 per year tax credit, and a \$10,000 per year tax deduction good for any college and for adult education.

Very favorable .....	52%
Somewhat favorable .....	27
Somewhat unfavorable .....	10
Very unfavorable .....	8
Don't know .....	3

---

**Table 123:** Suppose he made his top priority expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act so that families can take time off for doctor's appointments and parent-teacher conferences.

Very favorable .....	42%
Somewhat favorable .....	31
Somewhat unfavorable .....	12
Very unfavorable .....	13
Don't know .....	3

---

**Table 124:** Suppose he made his top priority continuing to reform health care step-by-step to cover people who are unemployed with up to six months in paid coverage, and adding coverage for 1 million children who are not now covered.

Very favorable .....	51%
Somewhat favorable .....	28
Somewhat unfavorable .....	9
Very unfavorable .....	8
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 125:** Suppose he made his top priority passing the Juvenile Justice Bill to help fight and strengthen penalties against teen gangs.

Very favorable .....	54%
Somewhat favorable .....	30
Somewhat unfavorable .....	4
Very unfavorable .....	6
Don't know .....	7

---

**Table 126:** Suppose he made his top priority embarking on a major new initiative to strengthen job training to move more people into higher wage technology jobs.

Very favorable .....	49%
Somewhat favorable .....	35
Somewhat unfavorable .....	7
Very unfavorable .....	5
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 127:** Suppose he made his top priority devoting several additional billion dollars in resources to research in areas like AIDS and breast cancer.

Very favorable .....	51%
Somewhat favorable .....	29
Somewhat unfavorable .....	9
Very unfavorable .....	7
Don't know .....	4

---

**Table 128:** Suppose he made his top priority re-establishing relations with China, moving forward economic trade and winning some reversal of their human rights policies.

Very favorable .....	23%
Somewhat favorable .....	41
Somewhat unfavorable .....	16
Very unfavorable .....	13
Don't know .....	8

---

**Table 129:** Suppose he made his top priority working for peace in Bosnia, the Middle East, and Ireland.

Very favorable .....	25%
Somewhat favorable .....	34
Somewhat unfavorable .....	15
Very unfavorable .....	21
Don't know .....	5

---

**Table 130:** Suppose he made his top priority cracking down on international terrorism with new international agreements and toughening of security measures that further isolate rogue states.

Very favorable .....	45%
Somewhat favorable .....	32
Somewhat unfavorable .....	10
Very unfavorable .....	8
Don't know .....	5

---

**Table 131:** Some people say Clinton is a traditional “liberal,” or that he favors big government solutions to every problem in America. Other people say that he is a different kind of Democrat who believes the role of government is to empower and equip people to make the most of their lives. Which kind of Democrat do you think President Clinton is?

Liberal/favors big government .....	42%
Different kind of Democrat/believes government should empower and equip people .....	50
Don't know .....	8

---

**Table 132:** Which kind of Democrat do you think most of the Democratic candidates for Congress were this year?

Liberals/favor big government .....	40%
New Democrats/believe government should equip and empower people .....	36
Don't know .....	24

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**Table 133:** Which of the following is closest to your own thinking about the proper role of the federal government?

Government should solve problems and protect people from adversity .....	13%
Government should help people equip themselves to solve their own problems .....	53
Government should stay out of people's lives so they can solve their problems without interference or regulation .....	30
Other/don't know .....	5

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**Table 134:** In terms of economics, some people say Clinton is a traditional tax-and-spend “liberal,” taxing the wealthy to create programs that favor the needier people in society. Other people say that Clinton is a new kind of Democrat, favoring policies like a balanced budget to spur economic growth. Which kind of Democrat do you think President Clinton is?

Traditional tax-and-spend liberal .....	39%
New Democrat/favoring policies for economic growth .....	50
Don't know .....	10

---

**Table 135:** Given that distinction—between traditional liberals who favor higher taxes and more social programs, and “new” Democrats who favor policies for economic growth—which kind of Democrat do you think do you think most the Democratic candidates for Congress were this year?

Traditional liberals .....	39%
New Democrats/favor policies for economic growth .....	37
Don't know .....	23

**Table 136:** Which of the following is closest to your own thinking about the proper role of the government in terms of economics?

Government should spend on social programs where necessary, because America is not about leaving everyone to fend for himself .....	15
Government should focus on spurring economic growth and creating opportunity for all Americans .....	60
Government should stay out the economy altogether so private forces can compete and create jobs .....	18
Other/don't know .....	7

**Table 137:** Do you think the era of big government is over?

Yes .....	31%
No .....	59
Don't know .....	10

**Table 138:** Some people say the size of the government is not important; what is important is that it deliver essential services at a reasonable cost. Other people say that the federal government has gotten too big and too intrusive, and it needs to be cut back no matter what. Which is closer to your view?

Government should be worth its cost, however big .....	28%
Government is too big and must be cut back .....	65
Don't know .....	7

**Table 139:** Do you think the federal government should play a bigger role in our lives, a smaller role in our lives, or continue to play just about the same role it has been playing?

Bigger role .....	5%
Smaller role .....	59
Just about same role .....	29
Don't know .....	6

**Table 140:** Some people say that the end of the era of big government means that leadership and decision making should come from close to home, not from Washington. Other people say the end of the era of big government means that government should still have big plans and visions for America, but that it should implement them in smaller steps. Which is closer to your view?

Leadership should come from close to home, not Washington .....	48%
Government should have big plans but implement in small steps .....	42
Don't know .....	10

**Table 141:** Thinking generally, which level of government do you trust more—the federal government, your state government, or your local government?

Federal government .....	20%
State government .....	26
Local government .....	37
Don't know .....	18

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Questions 142-155

Now I'm going to read you a series of statements. For each, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

**Table 142:** The federal government has too much power.

Strongly agree .....	50%
Somewhat agree.....	28
Somewhat disagree .....	9
Strongly disagree .....	5
Don't know .....	8

---

**Table 143:** Most decision making should be left to the states, not the federal government.

Strongly agree .....	48%
Somewhat agree.....	26
Somewhat disagree .....	10
Strongly disagree .....	9
Don't know .....	6

---

**Table 144:** Most decision making should be left to the people and their communities, not to bureaucracies and the special interests.

Strongly agree .....	59%
Somewhat agree.....	23
Somewhat disagree .....	5
Strongly disagree .....	3
Don't know .....	10

---

**Table 145:** I am tired of the stale left-right debate in American politics.

Strongly agree .....	57%
Somewhat agree.....	17
Somewhat disagree .....	8
Strongly disagree .....	8
Don't know .....	9

---

**Table 146:** I think Bill Clinton has done a lot to lift us out of the gridlock of American politics and move us forward with new, effective solutions.

Strongly agree .....	26%
Somewhat agree.....	26
Somewhat disagree .....	15
Strongly disagree .....	25
Don't know .....	9

---

**Table 147:** The Republicans promised a revolution but instead have delivered an "overthrow." They offered a cheaper, meaner government that merely moves public resources from liberal interest groups to conservative interest groups.

Strongly agree .....	29%
Somewhat agree.....	23
Somewhat disagree .....	15
Strongly disagree .....	20
Don't know .....	13

**Table 148:** The Information Age is coming soon.

Strongly agree .....	58%
Somewhat agree.....	17
Somewhat disagree .....	4
Strongly disagree .....	4
Don't know .....	17

**Table 149:** We are living in the Information Age already.

Strongly agree .....	69%
Somewhat agree.....	19
Somewhat disagree .....	2
Strongly disagree .....	3
Don't know .....	6

**Table 150:** Bureaucracies and social arrangements that were created in the post-World War II period have to be replaced with institutions and policies that reflect the country's changing needs as we move into the 21st century.

Strongly agree .....	45%
Somewhat agree.....	30
Somewhat disagree .....	6
Strongly disagree .....	5
Don't know .....	15

**Table 151:** There is nothing more important to the future of our society than to reweave the bonds of family, marriage, and parental responsibility.

Strongly agree .....	75%
Somewhat agree.....	12
Somewhat disagree .....	3
Strongly disagree .....	4
Don't know .....	7

**Table 152:** There is a bureaucratic monopoly on solving social problems, and we need to think about ways to reshape government so that it gives citizens more control over their own democratic institutions, from schools to police to environmental protection.

Strongly agree .....	54%
Somewhat agree.....	27
Somewhat disagree .....	5
Strongly disagree .....	4
Don't know .....	11

**Table 153:** The key to governmental policy as we move to the next century is to focus not on redistributing wealth, but on creating the right incentives and conditions for people to expand their knowledge and skills.

Strongly agree .....	66%
Somewhat agree.....	21
Somewhat disagree .....	3
Strongly disagree .....	4
Don't know .....	7

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**Table 154:** Public schools should be given more flexibility, but should have to provide more accountability.

Strongly agree .....	63%
Somewhat agree.....	20
Somewhat disagree .....	3
Strongly disagree .....	2
Don't know .....	12

---

**Table 155:** Government should not manage Americans' health care—but rather set the basic rules for competition among private health plans and help provide information about those plans so Americans can make their own responsible choices.

Strongly agree .....	53%
Somewhat agree.....	25
Somewhat disagree .....	5
Strongly disagree .....	9
Don't know .....	9

---

**Table 156:** Which is of greater concern to you right now - economic issues concerning job creation and growth, or the decline in values and the moral fabric of society contributing to the breakup of the family and increase in crime and violence?

Economic issues/job creation and growth .....	28%
Decline in values/breakup of family .....	61
Don't know .....	11

---

**Table 157:** Do you think that Tuesday's Presidential election settled or did not settle most of the big public questions facing this country?

It settled most of the big questions .....	13%
It did not settle most of the big questions .....	76
Don't know .....	11

---

**Table 158:** Do you think that the two major parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, are stronger or weaker following Tuesday's election?

The two major parties are stronger .....	39%
The two major parties are weaker .....	27
Don't know .....	34

---

**Table 159:** Do you think that in the next few years we will see a government of the "vital center" of America, drawing on the strengths of both parties, or will government be divided by people on the extremes once again?

Government by vital center .....	35%
Government divided by extremes .....	47
Don't know .....	18

## DEMOGRAPHICS

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**Table 160:** In the 1992 election, for whom did you vote?

Did not vote .....	8%
Bill Clinton .....	40
George Bush .....	30
Ross Perot .....	12
Other .....	0
Don't know .....	9

---

**Table 161:** In the 1994 elections for Congress, did you vote for the Democratic or Republican candidates for Congress?

Democratic candidates .....	38%
Republican candidates .....	37
Mixed .....	4
Other .....	2
Don't know .....	20

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**Table 162:** In 1988, did you vote for Bush or Dukakis for President?

Bush .....	53%
Dukakis .....	21
Other .....	6
Don't know .....	20

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**Table 163:** In the 1980s, did you vote for Ronald Reagan both times he ran, one of those times, or never?

Both times .....	38%
Once .....	16
Never .....	38
Don't know .....	7

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**Table 164:** Which of the following categories best describes your age?

18-24 .....	8%
25-34 .....	16
35-49 .....	32
50-64 .....	21
65+ .....	15
Don't know .....	7

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**Table 165:** What is the last grade in school you completed?

Grade school .....	2%
Some high school .....	6
High school graduate .....	26
Some college .....	25
College graduate .....	24
Graduate school .....	7
Technical school .....	2
Don't know/refused .....	7

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**Table 166:** What is your current marital status—are you married, single, widowed, or divorced?

Married .....	57%
Single .....	19
Widowed.....	7
Divorced .....	9
Don't know .....	8

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**Table 167:** How many children do you have living at home?

Zero .....	51%
One.....	17
Two-four.....	23
Five or more .....	1
Don't know .....	8

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**Table 168:** IF OTHER THAN ZERO: Are any of these children under 18?

Yes .....	78%
No.....	22
Don't know .....	0

---

**Table 169:** IF OTHER THAN ZERO: Are any of these children over 18?

Yes .....	35%
No.....	65
Don't know .....	0

---

**Table 170:** Do you have any children in college or school right now?

Yes .....	34%
No.....	58
Don't know .....	8

---

**Table 171:** For statistical purposes only, we need to know your total family income for 1994. Will you please tell me which of the following categories best represents your total family income?

Less than \$20,000 .....	15%
\$20,000-\$34,999.....	23
\$35,000-\$59,999.....	26
\$60,000-\$99,999.....	12
\$100,000+ .....	4
Don't know .....	19

---

**Table 172:** Do you generally consider yourself liberal, moderate, or conservative?

Liberal.....	16%
Moderate .....	39
Conservative.....	34
Don't know .....	11

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**Table 173:** What is your religion?

PROTESTANT - Episcopal .....	7%
PROTESTANT - Baptist .....	17
PROTESTANT - Lutheran .....	6
PROTESTANT - Methodist .....	10
PROTESTANT - Presbyterian .....	4
Unitarian .....	1
Anglican .....	0
Congregationalist .....	1
Mormon .....	1
Catholic .....	21
Jewish .....	1
Moslem .....	0
Hindu .....	0
Buddhist .....	0
Other .....	11
None/atheist .....	7
Don't know/refused .....	12

**Table 174:** IF PROTESTANT Do you consider yourself a born-again Christian?

Yes .....	50%
No .....	48
Don't know .....	2

**Table 175:** How often do you attend worship services?

At least once a week .....	42%
Once a month .....	8
Twice a month .....	11
Two to three times a year .....	12
Less than twice a year .....	13
Don't know .....	14

**Table 176:** Did you serve in the military?

Yes .....	19%
No .....	74
Don't know .....	8

**Table 177:** IF YES: Do you consider yourself a veteran of any armed conflict?

Yes .....	66%
No .....	33
Don't know .....	0

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**Table 178:** IF YES: Of which conflict are you a veteran?

World War I .....	3%
World War II .....	24
Korean War .....	19
Viet Nam .....	39
Persian Gulf/Desert Storm .....	8
Somalia .....	0
Bosnia .....	0
Grenada.....	1
Panama .....	0
Other .....	3
Don't know .....	4

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**Table 179:** Are you or is anyone in your household a member of a labor union?

Yes .....	17%
No .....	75
Don't know .....	8

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**Table 180:** Do you or does anyone in your household own or run a small business?

Yes .....	23%
No .....	68
Don't know .....	8

---

**Table 181:** What is your race?

White .....	80%
Black/African-American .....	9
Caribbean-Hispanic/Latino .....	2
Asian .....	0
Arabic .....	0
Other .....	1
Don't know .....	8

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**Table 182:** IF NOT HISPANIC: Do you consider yourself to be of Hispanic descent?

Yes .....	3%
No .....	88
Don't know .....	9

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**Table 183:** Do you live in a city, suburb just outside a city, or a less developed or rural area not near a city?

City .....	35%
Suburb .....	26
More rural, less developed .....	39

**Table 184:** Do you use a computer at work?

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Frequently .....	40%
Occasionally/rarely .....	10
Never .....	38
Don't know .....	13

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**Table 185:** IF YES, is your computer part of a network connecting you to other workers?

Yes .....	67%
No .....	33
Don't know .....	1

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**Table 186:** At work, do you make decisions as part of a team or do you mostly work alone?

Part of a team .....	42%
Mostly work alone .....	29
Don't know .....	28

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**Table 187:** Gender

Male .....	48%
Female .....	52

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**Table 188:** Region

Northeast .....	20%
Midwest .....	23
South .....	32
Farm .....	5
West .....	20

## **Mark Penn**

**Mark Penn** is president of Penn & Schoen Associates, Inc., a prominent public opinion polling firm, and an advisor to the 1996 Clinton-Gore presidential campaign. He received his initial training in research at Harvard's Department of Government and later at Corporate Planning at NBC. Mr. Penn has served as a consultant for many of Penn & Schoen's major corporate clients, including Texaco, AT&T, CSX, Intermodal, and Johnson & Higgins. He is an expert in Latin American research, and has served as an advisor to numerous presidents. Mr. Penn is also developing the firm's new neural network programs which permit highly sophisticated market analysis.

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