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Immigration Action Gets Mixed Response, But Legal Pathway Still Popular

Rise in Hispanic Support of Obama on Immigration

A Pew Research Center/USA TODAY Survey

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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Immigration Action Gets Mixed Response, But Legal Pathway Still Popular

Rise in Hispanic Support of Obama on Immigration

The public is divided over President Obama's recent executive action that expands the number of undocumented immigrants permitted to stay and work in the U.S. At the same time, Americans continue to broadly support a pathway to legal status for people in this country illegally.

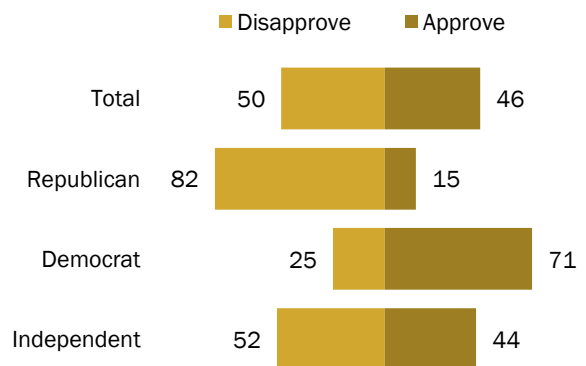
About as many disapprove (50%) as approve (46%) of Obama's action, which could make [up to 4 million people](#) newly eligible for deportation relief. Roughly eight-in-ten Republicans (82%) disapprove of the executive action and about seven-in-ten Democrats (71%) approve of it, with very strong attitudes on both sides.

The new national survey by the Pew Research Center and [USA TODAY](#), conducted Dec. 3-7 among 1,507 adults, finds that 70% say there should be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the country legally, if they meet certain requirements. Most of those who support legal status think there should be a way for unauthorized immigrants to become citizens (43% overall), while 24% say the path should only include permanent residency. These opinions are little changed from October.

A majority of the public continues to give poor marks to Obama on how he is handling the nation's immigration policy (56% disapprove

Divides on Immigration Executive Action

Obama executive action that expands number of undocumented immigrants allowed to stay & work (%)

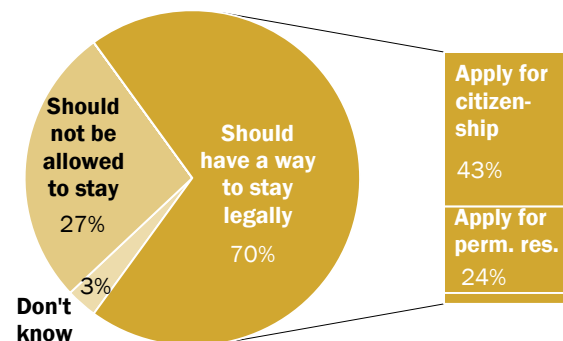


Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014. Don't know response not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

Seven-in-Ten Continue to Support Path to Legal Status for Undocumented

Undocumented immigrants in the U.S. who meet certain requirements ...



Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

vs. 38% approve). But his immigration approval rating is six points higher than it was in November 2013 — and is up 24 points among Hispanics since then (67% approval, up from 43%).

Views of Obama's Executive Action

Obama's executive action on immigration draws more intense opposition (39% disapprove very strongly) than intense support (30% approve very strongly).

Among Republicans, 71% disapprove very strongly. And 83% of Republican and Republican leaners who agree with the Tea Party disapprove very strongly. By comparison, about half of Democrats (52%) very strongly approve of Obama's action.

Hispanics overwhelmingly support the deportation-relief action: 81% approve, including 59% who very strongly approve. But non-Hispanic whites disapprove of it by nearly two-to-one (62% vs. 34%), with nearly half (49%) disapproving very strongly.

Overall, adults 50 and older disapprove of the executive action by narrow majorities, while younger adults are more supportive of it.

Opinions About Obama's Action Divide Along Age, Education, Ethnic Lines

Obama's executive action that expands the number of undocumented immigrants who are allowed to stay and work in the U.S. ...

	Approve			Disapprove		
	NET Approve %	Very strongly %	Not strongly %	NET Disapprove %	Very strongly %	Not strongly %
Total	46	30	15	50	39	11
White	34	21	13	62	49	12
Black	64	41	23	31	22	9
Hispanic	81	59	20	15	12	4
18-29	54	30	23	44	30	13
30-49	50	35	15	45	33	11
50-64	40	26	13	57	47	10
65+	39	27	12	58	49	8
College grad+	55	37	18	42	31	11
Some college	42	29	13	53	45	8
HS or less	44	26	16	53	41	12
Republican	15	7	8	82	71	11
Democrat	71	52	18	25	16	9
Independent	44	26	18	52	40	12
<i>Among Reps/ Rep leaners</i>						
Tea Party	7	3	4	91	83	8
Non-Tea	22	10	12	74	59	14

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014. Don't know responses not shown.

Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

Most Continue to Favor Legal Status for Undocumented Immigrants

Overall, views are little changed about a pathway to legal status for unauthorized immigrants who meet certain requirements. The share in support of a legal pathway **ebbed slightly** after a surge of Central American minors crossed the border during the summer (dropping from 73% to 68%), but now is at 70%.

However, support among Republicans has dropped since February, when nearly twice as many (64%) said there should be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay as said they should not be allowed to stay (34%). Today, 53% of Republicans support a pathway to legal status and 42% think there should not be one.

There is a large divide in opinion among Republicans and leaners based on agreement with the Tea Party. Tea Party support for a legal pathway dropped dramatically between February and July (from 56% to 41%) and sits at 42% today. But a majority of non-Tea Party Republicans and leaners (61%) say there should be a way for unauthorized immigrants to stay legally.

Support for a legal pathway among Hispanics (92%) and Democrats (83%) remains as high as at any point during 2014.

Support for Legal Status at 70%, But GOP Backing Has Declined Since Feb.

% saying there should be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the U.S. legally

	Feb 14-23	Jul 8-14	Oct 15-20	Dec 3-7	Feb-Dec diff
	%	%	%	%	
Total	73	68	71	70	-3
White	70	63	67	64	-6
Black	77	71	74	75	-2
Hispanic	89	85	88	92	+3
Republican	64	54	57	53	-11
Democrat	81	77	82	83	+2
Independent	74	70	72	70	-4
<i>Among Reps/Rep leaners</i>					
Tea Party	56	41	46	42	-14
Non-Tea	69	62	65	61	-8

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

Obama and Immigration

Ratings of how Obama is handling the nation's immigration policy have slightly improved since late August but remain mostly negative (56% disapprove vs. 38% approve).

Opinions about the president's handling of immigration were more negative than positive throughout his first term, though he started his second term about even (44% approve, 43% disapprove) before dropping to 32% approval last November and 31% approval this August.

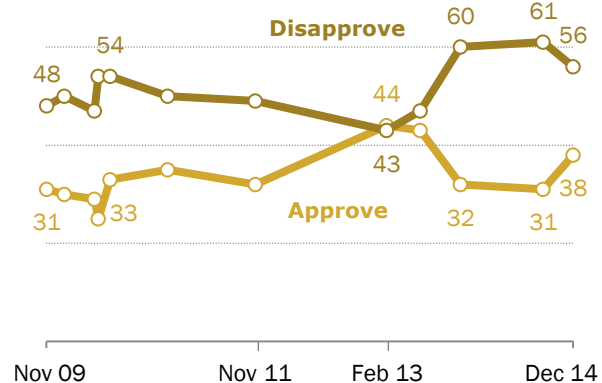
Hispanics' approval of Obama's immigration policy has never been higher after plummeting earlier in the year; last November, just 43% approved and 51% disapproved of how he was handling immigration. In the aftermath of Obama's deportation-relief policy, two-thirds of Latinos (67%) now approve and just 27% disapprove.

On balance, non-Hispanic blacks remain positive toward Obama on this issue: About six-in-ten (61%) approve of his handling of immigration and 32% disapprove.

Non-Hispanic whites have moved little over the past year, with 28% today approving of Obama on immigration policy and two-thirds (67%) disapproving.

Obama Immigration Approval Up, But Majority Still Disapproves of Handling

% approving/disapproving Obama's handling of immigration policy



Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

Approval of Obama on Immigration Rises among Hispanics in Past Year

% approving Obama's handling of immigration policy

	Feb 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2014	Nov 13- Dec 14 change
	%	%	%	
Total	44	32	38	+6
White	36	25	28	+3
Black	68	70	61	-9
Hispanic	63	43	67	+24

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

Most Feel Sympathetic Toward Undocumented Immigrants

In general, about two-thirds of the public say they are “very sympathetic” (23%) or “somewhat sympathetic” (42%) toward immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally. Another 15% are somewhat unsympathetic and 17% are very unsympathetic. That sentiment is similar to feelings in June 2013, although the share saying “very sympathetic” has risen 7 points.

By a wide margin, Democrats are more likely to say they are sympathetic (78%) than unsympathetic (21%), as are independents (64% vs. 33%). Republicans are narrowly divided – 52% are sympathetic toward unauthorized immigrants and 45% say they are unsympathetic.

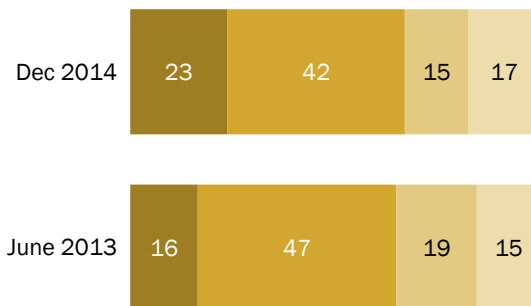
Compared with last year, more Democrats and independents say they are “very sympathetic” toward unauthorized immigrants (up 11 points and eight points, respectively), while Republicans’ sympathies are unchanged.

Differences in sympathies correlate with approval of Obama’s executive action. Among those who sympathize with immigrants in the U.S. illegally, 62% approve and 35% disapprove of his action. By contrast, just 14% of those who do not sympathize with unauthorized immigrants approve of the action, compared with about eight-in-ten (82%) who disapprove.

About Two-Thirds Are Sympathetic Toward Undocumented Immigrants

Sympathetic toward immigrants in U.S. illegally? (%)

■ Very sympathetic ■ Somewhat sympathetic
■ Somewhat unsympathetic ■ Very unsympathetic



Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.
Don't know responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted December 3-7, 2014 among a national sample of 1,507 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (605 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 902 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 513 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2012 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2013 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,507	2.9 percentage points
Republican	408	5.6 percentage points
Democrat	445	5.4 percentage points
Independent	574	4.7 percentage points
White non-Hispanic	1,077	3.4 percentage points
Black non-Hispanic	132	9.8 percentage points
Hispanic	172	8.6 percentage points
<i>Among Reps/Rep leaners</i>		
Tea Party	250	7.1 percentage points
Non-Tea Party	393	5.7 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER/USA TODAY
DECEMBER 2014 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
DECEMBER 3-7, 2014
N=1,507**

QUESTIONS 1-2, 5-7 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**NO QUESTIONS 3-4, 8-11****ASK ALL:**

Now thinking about how Barack Obama is handling some issues ...

Q.12 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling **[INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]?** How about **[NEXT ITEM]? [REPEAT INTRODUCTION AS NECESSARY]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
a. The nation's immigration policy			
Dec 3-7, 2014	38	56	6
Aug 20-24, 2014 (U)	31	61	7
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	32	60	7
Jun 12-16, 2013	43	47	11
Feb 13-18, 2013 (U)	44	43	13
Nov 9-14, 2011	32	49	20
Jan 6-9, 2011	35	50	16
Jun 16-20, 2010	33	54	12
May 6-9, 2010	25	54	21
Apr 21-26, 2010	29	47	24
Jan 6-10, 2010	30	50	21
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	31	48	21

ITEMS b-h.F2 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**NO QUESTIONS 13-16, 22-23, 25-29, 32-35, 39, 41-44****QUESTIONS 17, 20-21, 30-31, 36-38 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTIONS 18-19, 24, 40 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

Q.45 Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are now living in the U.S.? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]** [They should not be allowed to stay in this country legally] [OR] [There should be a way for them to stay in the country legally, if certain requirements are met]

ASK IF ALLOWED TO STAY IN THE COUNTRY (Q.45=2) [N=1,052]:

Q.46 And do you think immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally and meet the requirements should **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]** [Be able to apply for U.S. citizenship] [OR] [Be able to apply for permanent residency, but not U.S. citizenship]

	<u>Allowed to stay legally</u>	<u>Apply for citizenship</u>	<u>Permanent residency, not citizenship</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>	<u>Not allowed to stay legally</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
Dec 3-7, 2014 (U)	70	43	24	3	27	3
Oct 15-20, 2014	71	42	25	4	25	3
Jul 8-14, 2014	68	40	24	3	30	3
Feb 14-23, 2014	73	46	24	3	24	3
Jun 12-16, 2013	71	--	--	--	25	2
May 1-5, 2013	73	44	25	4	25	3

Q.45/46 CONTINUED...

	Allowed to stay <u>legally</u>	<i>Apply for <u>citizenship</u></i>	<i>Permanent residency, not <u>citizenship</u></i>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>	Not allowed to stay <u>legally</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Mar 13-17, 2013 ¹	71	43	24	4	27	2

NO QUESTIONS 47-52, 56-60, 62-65**QUESTIONS 53-55 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTION 61 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

Q.66 As you may know, Barack Obama recently issued an executive action that expands the number of undocumented immigrants who are allowed to stay and work in the country. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of this new policy?

ASK IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE (Q.66=1,2) [N=1,458]:

Q.66a Do you [approve/disapprove] very strongly, or not so strongly?

(U)	
Dec 3-7	
<u>2014</u>	
46	Approve
30	Very strongly
15	Not so strongly
1	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
50	Disapprove
39	Very strongly
11	Not so strongly
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTIONS 67-69**ASK ALL:**

Q.70 Just in general... how sympathetic would you say you are toward immigrants who are in the United States illegally [**READ; READ IN REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF SAMPLE**]?

(U)		(U)		
Dec 3-7		Jun 12-16	Gallup/USA Today	
<u>2014</u>		<u>2013</u>	<u>May 2010²</u>	<u>May 2006</u>
66	NET Sympathetic	64	64	64
23	Very sympathetic	16	24	17
42	Somewhat sympathetic	47	40	46
32	NET Unsympathetic	34	34	34
15	Somewhat unsympathetic	19	17	18
17	Very unsympathetic	15	17	16
3	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	3	1	3

NO QUESTIONS 71-73, 79-84**QUESTIONS 74-78 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****QUESTIONS 85-89 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

¹ In May 2013 and March 2013, question read "Which comes closer to your view about how to handle immigrants who are now living in the U.S. illegally?" and the second answer choice read "There should be a way for those who meet certain requirements to stay in the country legally."

² In 2010 and 2006, question read, "How sympathetic would you say you are toward illegal immigrants in the United States..."

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
Dec 3-7, 2014	24	31	39	3	1	2	17	17
Nov 6-9, 2014	27	32	36	2	*	1	15	16
Oct 15-20, 2014	24	33	38	4	*	1	13	17
Sep 2-9, 2014	24	33	38	3	1	2	15	15
Aug 20-24, 2014	24	31	37	4	1	4	15	16
Jul 8-14, 2014	25	34	37	2	1	1	16	15
Apr 23-27, 2014	24	30	41	2	1	2	18	17
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	22	31	41	3	1	2	17	17
Feb 14-23, 2014	22	32	39	4	1	2	14	17
Jan 15-19, 2014	21	31	41	3	1	2	18	16
Dec 3-8, 2013	24	34	37	3	*	2	17	15
Yearly Totals								
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

ASK REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):

TEAPARTY3 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

BASED ON REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS [N=660]:

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/ DK
Dec 3-7, 2014	34	9	55	2	1	--
Nov 6-9, 2014	31	10	57	1	1	--
Oct 15-20, 2014	32	8	56	2	2	--
Sep 2-9, 2014	38	10	50	1	1	--
Aug 20-24, 2014	34	10	53	*	2	--
Jul 8-14, 2014	35	12	50	2	1	--
Apr 23-27, 2014	33	11	54	1	1	--
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	37	11	50	1	1	--
Feb 14-23, 2014	36	9	54	1	1	--
Jan 15-19, 2014	35	12	52	1	*	--
Dec 3-8, 2013	32	9	57	1	1	--
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	40	9	48	2	1	--
Oct 9-13, 2013	41	11	45	2	1	--
Sep 4-8, 2013	35	9	54	1	1	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	37	10	50	2	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	9	46	1	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	41	7	48	1	3	--
May 1-5, 2013	28	8	61	2	1	--
Mar 13-17, 2013	43	7	47	1	1	--
Feb 13-18, 2013	36	9	52	1	3	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	43	9	45	1	2	--
Jan 9-13, 2013	35	10	51	2	2	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	11	51	1	*	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	40	8	49	1	2	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	9	50	1	3	--
Sep 12-16, 2013	39	7	52	1	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	40	9	47	2	1	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	36	9	53	1	2	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	38	10	49	2	1	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	40	7	51	1	1	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	42	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	37	8	52	1	1	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	40	9	48	2	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	37	11	51	1	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	7	49	*	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	40	7	51	*	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	42	9	47	1	1	--
May 25-30, 2011	37	7	52	1	3	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	45	9	46	*	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	37	7	54	1	*	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	41	9	48	1	1	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 ³	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--

³ In the February 2-7, 2011, survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."

TEAPARTY3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	(VOL.) <u>Haven't heard of</u>	(VOL.) <u>Refused</u>	Not heard of/ <u>DK</u>
Nov 4-7, 2010	51	5	42	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	58	5	27	--	1	9
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	54	5	30	--	1	10
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	56	6	29	--	*	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	46	5	36	--	1	13
Jun 16-20, 2010	46	5	30	--	*	19
May 20-23, 2010	53	4	25	--	1	16
Mar 11-21, 2010	48	4	26	--	1	21

Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:

(U) Pew Research Center/USA Today polls