



**THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**For The People & The Press**

*NEWS Release*  
1615 L Street, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Tel (202) 419-4350  
Fax (202) 419-4399

FOR RELEASE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2008

**State and Local Still Viewed Positively**  
**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FAVORABLE RATINGS SLUMP**

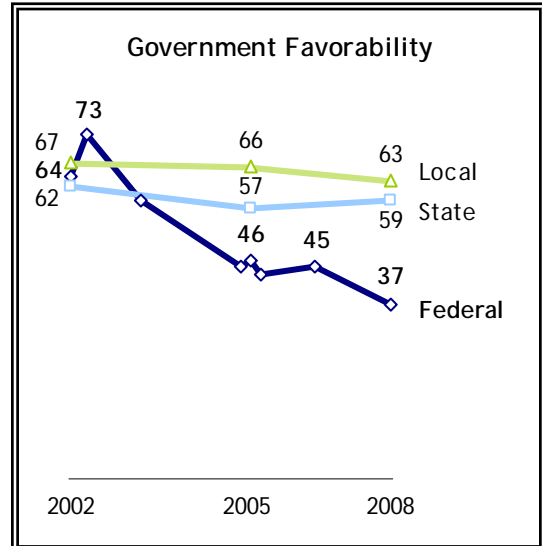
*FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:*

Andrew Kohut, Director  
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors  
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research  
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press  
202/419-4350  
<http://www.people-press.org>

## State and Local Still Viewed Positively

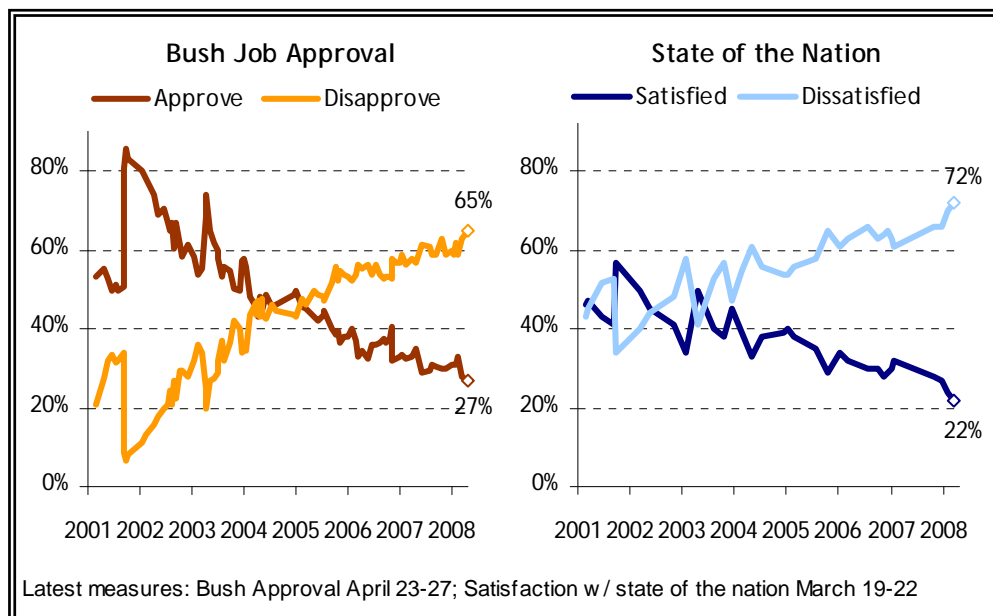
### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FAVORABLE RATINGS SLUMP

Americans continue to hold their local and state governments in fairly high esteem, but positive views of the federal government are at their lowest point in at least a decade. Only 37% of people say they hold a favorable view of the federal government, while 58% express an unfavorable opinion. By comparison, 59% hold favorable views of their state governments and 63% hold favorable views of their local governments, figures that have been essentially stable since 2002.



Favorability ratings of the federal government in Washington have tumbled over the past year. As recently as January 2007, as many Americans offered a favorable (45%) as unfavorable (46%) opinion. In December 2002, favorable opinions of the federal government outnumbered unfavorable opinions by more than two-to-one (64% vs. 27%).

Ratings of the federal government are tracking Americans' low opinions of the president and Congress, as well as their overall frustration with the state of the nation. George W. Bush's approval rating has reached an all-time low of 27%, and Pew's March survey found just 22% expressing satisfaction with the way things are going in the country, while 72% were dissatisfied. Asked whether most members of Congress should be re-elected, only 36% said yes in late



February, and only 31% approved of the job Democratic leaders in Congress were doing when asked in January.

Partisanship also matters. A slim majority of Republicans (53%) view the federal government favorably, an opinion shared by just 34% of independents and 29% of Democrats. For all groups, opinion is down sharply from December 2002, when majorities of all three held favorable opinions of the federal government.

By contrast, political affiliation is less of a factor in ratings of state and local governments. Most Republicans (64%), Democrats (59%) and independents (57%) view their state governments favorably, figures that are largely unchanged from 2002 and 2005. Substantial majorities of all three partisan groups look favorably on their local governments as well, but Republicans are more favorable (73%) than either Democrats (62%) or independents (61%).

	Dec 2002	Dec 2005	April 2008	02-08 change
<i>Federal level</i>				
Republican	78	69	53	-25
Democrat	59	34	29	-30
Independent	56	37	34	-22
<i>State level</i>				
Republican	67	61	64	-3
Democrat	63	61	59	-4
Independent	59	53	57	-2
<i>Local level</i>				
Republican	75	69	73	-2
Democrat	65	67	62	-3
Independent	65	66	61	-4

### The U.S. Military

The military continues to get high marks from a large majority of Americans. More than eight-in-ten (84%) offer very or somewhat favorable opinions of the military, up six points from July 2007. Positive ratings of the military have not fallen below 75% since 1990. Positive views of the military reached 94% in March 1991, shortly after the Persian Gulf War.

Currently, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to offer favorable views of the military, and conservatives and moderates are more likely than liberals to offer positive ratings. There is virtually no difference in opinion by gender.

	Favorable %	Unfavorable %	Can't rate/DK %	N
Total	84	11	5=100	755
Men	85	10	5=100	382
Women	83	11	6=100	373
Republican	92	4	4=100	213
Democrat	79	14	7=100	243
Independent	85	13	2=100	241
Conservative	88	6	6=100	290
Moderate	89	8	3=100	271
Liberal	71	26	3=100	152

## Supreme Court Viewed Favorably

The Supreme Court, now in its third term under Chief Justice John Roberts, is viewed favorably by most Americans: 65% hold very or somewhat favorable opinions of the court, while 25% express an unfavorable opinion. In July 2007, 57% had a positive view of the court while 29% expressed a negative opinion.

	Favor- <u>able</u> %	Un- favor- <u>able</u> %	Can't rate/ <u>DK</u> %	<u>N</u>
Total	65	25	10=100	755
Republican	80	14	6=100	213
Democrat	64	24	12=100	243
Independent	60	33	7=100	241

Republicans, in particular, express a favorable opinion of the Court. Eight-in-ten Republicans view have a very or somewhat favorable opinion of the Supreme Court, compared with 64% of Democrats and 60% of independents.

## The News Media

Most Americans (56%) have an unfavorable opinion of the news media, while just 40% express a favorable view. Positive opinions of the news media have declined since March 2007; at that time, 49% expressed an unfavorable view while 45% had a favorable opinion.

Women hold more favorable views of the press than do men, and Democrats hold more favorable views than either Republicans or independents. Conservatives are much more negative in their assessments of the press than are moderates or liberals.

	Favor- <u>able</u> %	Un- favor- <u>able</u> %	Can't rate/ <u>DK</u> %	<u>N</u>
Total	40	56	4=100	755
Men	33	62	5=100	382
Women	45	51	4=100	373
Republican	30	66	4=100	213
Democrat	50	46	4=100	243
Independent	35	61	4=100	241
Conservative	29	66	5=100	290
Moderate	42	56	2=100	271
Liberal	48	49	3=100	152

## Business Corporations

Americans are divided in their opinions of business corporations. About half (47%) view corporations favorably, while nearly as many (45%) view them negatively. Positive ratings of corporations have declined 10 points since January 2007 (57%). Opinions about business corporations have fluctuated substantially in recent years; favorable ratings have been as high as 73% in August 1999 and as low as 45% in October 2005.

In the current poll, men express more positive views of business corporations than do women, and those with more education are more positive about corporations than are those with less education. Republicans are notably more positive than are Democrats or independents.

A Less Favorable View Of Business Corporations			
	<i>Favorable view of business corporations</i>		
	Jan <u>2007</u> %	April <u>2008</u> %	<i>Change</i>
Total	57	47	-10
Men	60	52	-8
Women	54	41	-13
18-29	62	54	-8
30-49	60	47	-13
50-64	51	45	-6
65+	51	43	-8
College Grad	60	53	-7
Some College	66	43	-23
HS or less	52	46	-6
\$75K+	68	55	-13
\$50K-\$74,999	56	54	-2
\$30K-\$49,999	57	46	-11
Less than 30K	51	40	-11
Republican	70	64	-6
Democrat	53	42	-11
Independent	54	42	-12
Conservative	65	62	-3
Moderate	54	44	-10
Liberal	52	32	-20

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Abt SRBI, Inc. among a nationwide sample of 1,502 adults, 18 years of age or older, from April 23-27, 2008. The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus...</b>
Total sample	1,502	3.0 percentage points
Form 1 sample	747	4.0 percentage points
Form 2 sample	755	4.0 percentage points

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.

## ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of eight projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director  
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research  
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors  
Kim Parker, Senior Researcher  
Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian and Jocelyn Kiley,  
Research Associates  
Kathleen Holzwart, Research Analyst  
James Albrittain and Alec Tyson, Research Assistants

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**APRIL 2008 POLITICAL SURVEY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**April 23-27, 2008**  
**N=1502**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? [**IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK**]

	App-rove	Dis-approve	Don't know		App-rove	Dis-approve	Don't know
April, 2008	27	65	8=100	Late March, 2005	49	46	5=100
March, 2008	28	63	9=100	Mid-March, 2005	45	46	9=100
Late February, 2008	33	59	8=100	February, 2005	46	47	7=100
Early February, 2008	31	62	7=100	January, 2005	50	43	7=100
January, 2008	31	59	10=100	December, 2004	48	44	8=100
Late December, 2007	31	60	9=100	Mid-October, 2004	44	48	8=100
November, 2007	30	59	11=100	August, 2004	46	45	9=100
October, 2007	30	63	7=100	July, 2004	46	46	8=100
September, 2007	31	59	10=100	June, 2004	48	43	9=100
August, 2007	31	59	10=100	May, 2004	44	48	8=100
July, 2007	29	61	10=100	Late April, 2004	48	43	9=100
June, 2007	29	61	10=100	Early April, 2004	43	47	10=100
April, 2007	35	57	8=100	Late March, 2004	47	44	9=100
March, 2007	33	58	9=100	Mid-March, 2004	46	47	7=100
February, 2007	33	56	11=100	February, 2004	48	44	8=100
Mid-January, 2007	33	59	8=100	Mid-January, 2004	56	34	10=100
Early January, 2007	33	57	10=100	Early January, 2004	58	35	7=100
December, 2006	32	57	11=100	December, 2003	57	34	9=100
Mid-November, 2006	32	58	10=100	November, 2003	50	40	10=100
Early October, 2006	37	53	10=100	October, 2003	50	42	8=100
September, 2006	37	53	10=100	September, 2003	55	36	9=100
August, 2006	37	54	9=100	Mid-August, 2003	56	32	12=100
July, 2006	36	57	7=100	Early August, 2003	53	37	10=100
June, 2006	36	54	10=100	Mid-July, 2003	58	32	10=100
April, 2006	33	56	11=100	Early July, 2003	60	29	11=100
Early April, 2006	35	55	10=100	June, 2003	62	27	11=100
March, 2006	33	57	10=100	May, 2003	65	27	8=100
February, 2006	40	52	8=100	<i>April 10-16, 2003</i>	72	22	6=100
January, 2006	38	54	8=100	<i>April 9, 2003</i>	74	20	6=100
December, 2005	38	54	8=100	<i>April 2-7, 2003</i>	69	25	6=100
Early November, 2005	36	55	9=100	<i>March 28-April 1, 2003</i>	71	23	6=100
Late October, 2005	40	52	8=100	<i>March 25-27, 2003</i>	70	24	6=100
Early October, 2005	38	56	6=100	<i>March 20-24, 2003</i>	67	26	7=100
September 8-11, 2005	40	52	8=100	March 13-16, 2003	55	34	11=100
September 6-7, 2005	40	52	8=100	February, 2003	54	36	10=100
July, 2005	44	48	8=100	January, 2003	58	32	10=100
June, 2005	42	49	9=100	December, 2002	61	28	11=100
Late May, 2005	42	48	10=100	Late October, 2002	59	29	12=100
Mid-May, 2005	43	50	7=100	Early October, 2002	61	30	9=100

**Q.1 CONTINUED...**

	<u>App-rove</u>	<u>Dis-approve</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Mid-September, 2002	67	22	11=100
Early September, 2002	63	26	11=100
Late August, 2002	60	27	13=100
August, 2002	67	21	12=100
Late July, 2002	65	25	10=100
July, 2002	67	21	12=100
June, 2002	70	20	10=100
April, 2002	69	18	13=100
Early April, 2002	74	16	10=100
February, 2002	78	13	9=100
January, 2002	80	11	9=100
Mid-November, 2001	84	9	7=100
Early October, 2001	84	8	8=100
Late September, 2001	86	7	7=100
Mid-September, 2001	80	9	11=100
Early September, 2001	51	34	15=100
August, 2001	50	32	18=100
July, 2001	51	32	17=100
June, 2001	50	33	17=100
May, 2001	53	32	15=100
April, 2001	56	27	17=100
March, 2001	55	25	20=100
February, 2001	53	21	26=100

**QUESTIONS 2-20 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.21 Now, I'd like your opinion of some organizations and institutions. (First,) is your overall opinion of...  
**[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]** very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? **INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE"]**

	-----Favorable-----			(VOL.) (VOL.)			Never Heard of	Can't Rate
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>		
<b>ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=747]:</b>								
a.F1 The federal government in Washington	37	6	31	58	21	37	1	4=100
January, 2007	45	7	38	46	15	31	1	8=100
February, 2006	43	6	37	50	16	34	*	7=100
December, 2005	46	7	39	49	18	31	*	5=100
Late October, 2005	45	6	39	48	16	32	*	7=100
February, 2004	59	10	49	36	11	25	*	5=100
April, 2003	73	14	59	22	5	17	0	5=100
December, 2002	64	11	53	27	7	20	*	9=100
Mid-November, 2001	82	17	65	15	3	12	0	3=100
Late October, 2000 (RVs)	54	7	47	40	10	30	*	6=100
October, 1997	38	4	34	59	18	41	0	3=100



**Q.21 CONTINUED...**

		-----Favorable-----			-----Unfavorable-----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
		<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	Never	Can't
								Heard of	Rate
b.F1	Your state government	59	9	50	37	16	21	0	4=100
	December, 2005	57	8	49	37	11	26	*	6=100
	December, 2002	62	15	47	31	10	21	1	7=100
	Mid-November, 2001	77	15	62	18	4	14	*	5=100
	October, 1997	66	10	56	29	7	22	*	5=100
c.F1	Your local government	63	11	52	33	12	21	1	3=100
	December, 2005	66	12	54	28	10	18	*	6=100
	December, 2002	67	16	51	25	9	16	*	7=100
	Mid-November, 2001	78	15	63	17	4	13	*	5=100
	October, 1997	68	12	56	25	7	18	*	7=100

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=755]:**

d.F2	The news media	40	8	32	56	20	36	0	4=100
	March, 2007	45	7	38	49	17	32	*	6=100
	January, 2007	45	8	37	49	17	32	*	6=100
	April, 2006	48	8	40	46	15	31	*	6=100
	February, 2006	59	12	47	37	10	27	0	4=100
	Late October, 2005	52	11	41	42	13	29	0	6=100
	Mid-March, 2005	56	12	44	40	13	27	0	4=100
	December, 2004	43	8	35	51	18	33	*	6=100
	Late October, 2000 (RVs)	50	7	43	45	14	31	0	5=100
	February, 1999	49	6	43	49	15	34	0	2=100
	March, 1998	48	9	39	50	16	34	*	2=100
	October, 1997	50	7	43	48	14	34	*	2=100
e.F2	The military	84	49	35	11	3	8	*	5=100
	July, 2007	78	47	31	15	6	9	0	7=100
	March, 2007	77	43	34	17	6	11	0	6=100
	January, 2007	84	47	37	11	3	8	*	5=100
	Late October, 2005	82	44	38	12	4	8	0	6=100
	Late March, 2005	87	49	38	9	3	6	*	4=100
	June, 2004	85	48	37	10	3	7	*	5=100
<i>Newsweek:</i>	May 16-17, 2002	93	59	34	5	2	3	--	2=100
<i>Newsweek:</i>	September 13-14, 2001	94	58	36	4	2	2	--	2=100
	July, 2001	81	29	52	11	4	7	*	8=100
	January, 2001	82	32	50	12	3	9	0	6=100
	August, 1999	89	30	59	10	2	8	*	1=100
	June, 1999	83	36	47	13	2	11	0	4=100
	Early September, 1998	86	29	57	10	3	7	0	4=100
	October, 1997	78	22	56	18	5	13	0	4=100
	May, 1997	80	23	57	16	5	11	0	4=100
	February, 1996	82	33	49	16	4	12	*	2=100
	July, 1994	87	30	57	11	3	8	*	2=100
	May, 1993	85	32	53	10	2	8	0	5=100
	March, 1991	94	60	34	4	2	2	0	2=100
	May, 1990	73	18	55	21	6	15	*	6=100
	January, 1988	77	20	57	17	3	14	*	6=100
	April, 1987	80	17	63	16	4	12	0	4=100

**Q.21 CONTINUED...**

		-----Favorable-----			-----Unfavorable-----			(VOL.)	(VOL.)
		<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	Never	Can't
								Heard of	Rate
	January, 1987	73	19	54	16	5	11	*	11=100
	July, 1986	85	32	53	10	3	7	0	5=100
	July, 1985	77	24	53	18	5	13	*	5=100
f.F2	Business corporations	47	10	37	45	15	30	*	8=100
	January, 2007	57	9	48	30	8	22	2	11=100
	December, 2005	57	9	48	35	10	25	*	8=100
	Late October, 2005	45	8	37	45	16	29	*	10=100
	July, 2005	49	9	40	40	11	29	*	11=100
	March, 2002	62	10	52	29	6	23	1	8=100
	July, 2001	59	9	50	27	6	21	*	14=100
	March, 2001	65	9	56	25	6	19	1	9=100
	August, 1999	73	8	65	22	3	19	0	5=100
	Early September, 1998	64	9	55	26	5	21	*	10=100
	October, 1997	66	11	55	28	5	23	*	6=100
	June, 1997	68	8	60	25	7	18	*	7=100
	May, 1997	59	9	50	28	7	21	1	12=100
	June, 1996	62	10	52	31	6	25	*	7=100
	February, 1996	59	9	50	34	10	24	1	6=100
	October, 1995	60	6	54	36	7	29	0	4=100
	July, 1994	70	8	62	24	5	19	*	6=100
	November, 1991	65	8	57	28	6	22	0	7=100
	January, 1988	59	6	53	32	5	27	*	9=100
	June, 1985	58	8	50	31	7	24	1	10=100
g.F2	The Supreme Court	65	15	50	25	7	18	*	10=100
	July, 2007	57	12	45	29	9	20	0	14=100
	January, 2007	72	18	54	17	3	14	2	9=100
	July, 2006	63	7	56	27	8	19	1	9=100
	February, 2006	60	16	44	28	10	18	*	12=100
	Late October, 2005	62	12	50	27	10	17	*	11=100
	July, 2005	61	12	49	28	10	18	*	11=100
	June, 2005	57	8	49	30	8	22	*	13=100
	July, 2001	70	15	55	20	6	14	*	10=100
	March, 2001	72	15	57	20	5	15	*	8=100
	January, 2001	68	18	50	21	8	13	1	10=100
	October, 1997	77	13	64	18	6	12	*	5=100
	May, 1997	72	16	56	22	5	17	0	6=100
	July, 1994	80	18	62	16	3	13	*	4=100
	May, 1993	73	17	56	18	4	14	0	9=100
	November, 1991	72	18	54	21	5	16	0	7=100
	May, 1990	65	10	55	25	7	18	1	9=100
	January, 1988	79	14	65	13	2	11	*	8=100
	May, 1987	76	13	63	17	2	15	*	7=100
	March 1985 ( <i>Roper</i> )	64	17	47	28	7	21	--	8=100

**QUESTIONS 22-23, 25 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**  
**NO QUESTIONS 24, 26**  
**QUESTIONS 27-28 RELEASED SEPARATELY**  
**QUESTIONS 29-47 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**