



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, May 13, 2009

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
Andrew Kohut, Director
Michael Remez, Senior Writer

Swine Flu Interest High But Flagging
PUBLIC SEES NEWS ABOUT ECONOMY LESS GLUM

Most Americans say they are hearing a mix of good and bad news about the U.S. economy, a stark change from the start of the year when a sizable majority said they were hearing mostly bad economic news.

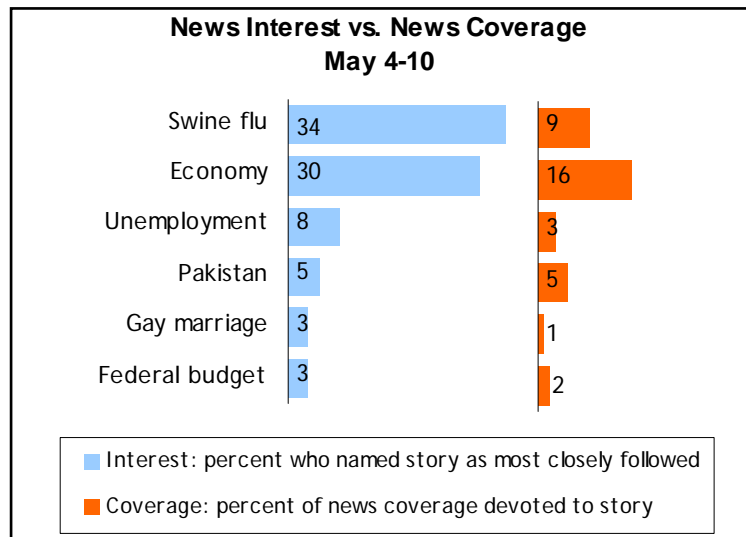
The latest weekly News Interest Index survey, conducted May 8-11 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, finds that almost two-thirds (64%) of the public says they are now hearing a mix of good and bad news about the economy. That share has increased monthly since two-in-ten (19%) said they saw a mix of economic news in December. Last month, it was 56%.

What Americans Are Hearing About the Economy

| | Dec 2008 | Jan 2009 | Feb 2009 | Mar 2009 | Apr 2009 | May 2009 |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Mostly bad news | 80 | 67 | 60 | 51 | 39 | 31 |
| Mix of good and bad | 19 | 30 | 37 | 46 | 56 | 64 |
| Mostly good news | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Don't know | * | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Three-in-ten (31%) now say they are hearing mostly bad news. In December, 80% said they were hearing mostly bad news. By April, that was down to 39%. Currently, only 4% say they are hearing mostly good news about the economy, the same as in April.

The public continued to follow reports about the condition of the U.S. economy closely last week. Still, about a third (34%) say they followed reports about the swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere most



closely, slightly more than the 30% that say they followed economic stories most closely. But with the swine flu outbreak apparently not as dangerous as first feared, the share saying they followed news about the virus very closely was down 9 points from the previous week to 34%.

Meanwhile, the economy received the most coverage, filling 16% of the newshole as measured by the Pew Research Center’s Project for Excellence in Journalism. That number separates out coverage of the April unemployment report and the Obama budget, which together bring total economic coverage to 21%, according to PEJ. The swine flu, which dominated news coverage the week before with 31% of coverage, dropped to the second spot – taking up 9% of the newshole – as fears eased about the immediate spread and potential lethality of the H1N1 virus.

Growing Sense of Mixed Economic News

According to PEJ’s analysis, a major portion of economic news last week focused on government assessments of the financial health of struggling banks – and the need for additional money. But the media also reported on administration projections of economic growth later this year and a mixed federal jobs report for April: unemployment rose from 8.5% to 8.9%, the highest level since 1983, but the number of jobs lost proved significantly smaller than economists had predicted.

As in previous months, more Republicans than Democrats say the economic news is mostly bad; in the current poll about twice as many Republicans (41%) as Democrats (21%) say this. But the growing public impression that the news is mixed crosses partisan lines. Last month, Republicans were almost evenly divided between those saying they were hearing mostly bad news (48%) and those hearing a mix of good and bad (50%). Now the gap has widened (41% now say mostly bad, while 54% say a mix of good and bad).

| | <u>Dec</u> | <u>Jan</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Apr</u> | <u>May</u> | <i>Apr-May change</i> |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Republicans | % | % | % | % | % | % | |
| Mostly bad | 80 | 68 | 73 | 65 | 48 | 41 | -7 |
| Mix of good/bad | 19 | 30 | 26 | 33 | 50 | 54 | +4 |
| Mostly good | * | 1 | * | 1 | 2 | 5 | +3 |
| Democrats | | | | | | | |
| Mostly bad | 82 | 67 | 56 | 42 | 31 | 21 | -10 |
| Mix of good/bad | 17 | 30 | 41 | 55 | 62 | 75 | +13 |
| Mostly good | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 4 | -3 |
| Independents | | | | | | | |
| Mostly bad | 76 | 69 | 55 | 52 | 42 | 32 | -10 |
| Mix of good/bad | 22 | 28 | 40 | 44 | 56 | 63 | +7 |
| Mostly good | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | +2 |

Three quarters of Democrats now say they are hearing a mix of good and bad economic news, up from 62% last month. Roughly two-in-ten (21%) say they are hearing mostly bad news, down from 31% in April. Among independents, the share hearing a mix of economic news grew slightly from 56% to 63%, while the share hearing mostly bad news declined from 42% to 32%.

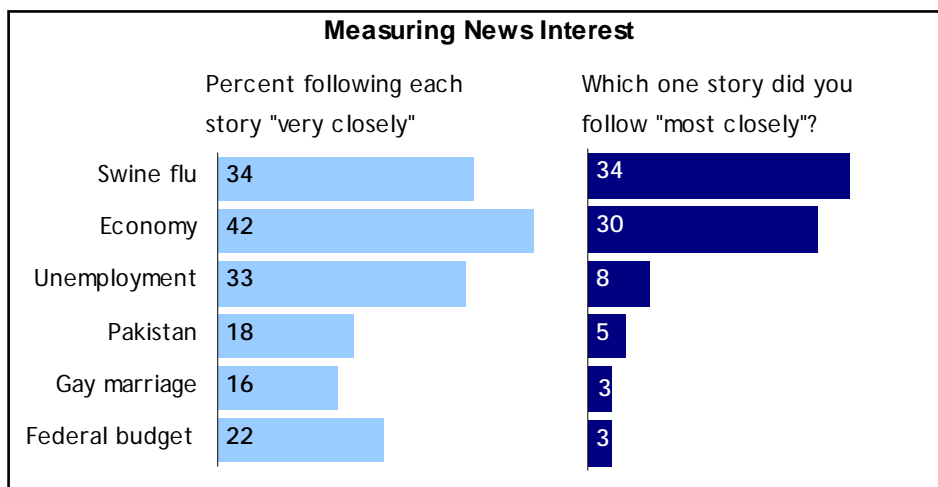
Still, very few Democrats (4%), independents (3%) or Republicans (5%) report that they are hearing mostly good economic news.

Swine Flu Story Cools A Bit

In late April, the spread of the swine flu virus from Mexico to the U.S. and elsewhere grabbed public attention and media coverage. For the week of April 27, more than four-in-ten (43%) said they were following developments on the potentially deadly flu very closely. But last week, with the immediate threat seeming to diminish, the share of those following swine flu reports very closely dropped to 34%. That's still greater than the 26% that said they very closely followed the spread of a drug-resistant staph infection in October 2007.

Meanwhile, 34% say they followed reports about the swine flu more closely than any other story, slightly higher than the 30% that say they followed news about the U.S. economy most closely. But there were some significant differences among demographic groups. For example, 41% of women say they followed news about the swine flu most closely, while 27% of men say the same. Instead, 38% of men followed economic news most closely, compared with 22% of women.

People with children under 18 in their homes also were more likely to say they were following flu news most closely. More than four-in-ten (42%) of those people say they followed flu developments more closely than any other story, compared with 30% of those without children under 18 in their homes.



Meanwhile, one third (33%) say they followed news about the latest unemployment report very closely, while 8% say that was the story they followed most closely. The unemployment report took up 3% of the newshole, according to PEJ.

Close to two-in-ten (18%) say they followed news about the instability in Pakistan very closely, while 5% say this was the story they followed most closely. Developments in Pakistan took up 5% of the newshole.

Slightly more than two-in-ten (22%) say they followed the debate in Washington over the federal budget very closely, while 3% say this was the story they followed most closely. Reporting on the federal budget took up 2% of the newshole, according to PEJ.

A smaller share (16%) says they followed steps to legalize gay marriage in Maine and New Hampshire very closely; 3% say this was the news they followed most closely last week. News about gay marriage took up 1% of the newshole.

Many Heard About Peterson Arrest

Close to three-in-ten (28%) say they heard a lot about former police officer Drew Peterson getting charged with the murder of his third wife; 46% say they heard a little about this story. Still, the share is significantly smaller than the percentage that had heard a lot about two other recent crime stories. In mid-April, 50% said they had heard a lot about allegations that a Sunday school teacher had killed an 8-year-old California girl. Later in the month, 42% said they had heard a lot about the arrest of a man suspected of robbing and killing women he met through the Craigslist website.

| How Much the Public's Been Hearing About... | | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|
| | A <u>lot</u> % | A <u>little</u> % | Nothing <u>at all</u> % | DK % |
| <i>How much have you heard about...</i> | | | | |
| Former police officer Drew Peterson being charged with murder of his third wife | 28 | 46 | 26 | *=100 |
| The suspension of the Dodgers' Manny Ramirez after tests for banned substances | 25 | 40 | 35 | *=100 |
| The woman who received the first face transplant operation in the US | 22 | 49 | 28 | 1=100 |

One quarter say they heard a lot about the suspension of Los Angeles Dodgers slugger Manny Ramirez after he tested positive for a substance banned by baseball. Four-in-ten say they heard a little about this story; 35% say they heard nothing at all. Not surprisingly, men are more likely to have heard a lot about the suspension (33% of men vs. 17% of women).

Just over two-in-ten (22%) say they heard a lot about the woman who received the first face transplant operation done in the United States. About half (49%) say they heard a little and 28% say they heard nothing at all about this. In this case, women were more likely to have heard a lot about the story than men (27% vs. 17%).

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly News Interest Index, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center's longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media's coverage. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage were collected from May 4-10, 2009 and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected May 8-11 from a nationally representative sample of 1,002 adults.

About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events.

This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Monday through Sunday) PEJ compiles this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey collects data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.5 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, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.

About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

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 seven 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
Michael Remez, Senior Writer
Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian and Jocelyn Kiley
Research Associates
Kathleen Holzwart and Alec Tyson, Research Analysts

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
May 8-11, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
TOPLINE
N=1002

Q.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY “Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?”]

| | <u>Very closely</u> | <u>Fairly closely</u> | <u>Not too closely</u> | <u>Not at all closely</u> | <u>DK/ Refused</u> |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| a. News about political instability in Pakistan | 18 | 23 | 23 | 36 | *=100 |
| TREND FOR COMPARISON:¹ | | | | | |
| <i>April 24-27, 2009: Pakistan instability</i> | 15 | 27 | 27 | 31 | *=100 |
| <i>March 13-16, 2009: Pakistan instability</i> | 14 | 20 | 26 | 40 | 0=100 |
| <i>September 26-29, 2008: Hotel bombing</i> | 16 | 32 | 23 | 28 | 1=100 |
| <i>August 15-18, 2008: Pakistan instability</i> | 10 | 25 | 29 | 35 | 1=100 |
| <i>February 22-25, 2008: Parliamentary elections</i> | 9 | 24 | 28 | 39 | *=100 |
| <i>January 11-14, 2008: Pakistan instability</i> | 19 | 33 | 20 | 27 | 1=100 |
| <i>January 4-7, 2008: Bhutto assassination</i> | 32 | 36 | 15 | 16 | 1=100 |
| <i>Nov. 30-Dec. 3, 2007: Pakistan instability</i> | 16 | 28 | 26 | 30 | *=100 |
| <i>Nov. 23-26, 2007</i> | 13 | 27 | 31 | 28 | 1=100 |
| <i>Nov. 16-19, 2007</i> | 20 | 30 | 21 | 28 | 1=100 |
| <i>Nov. 9-12, 2007</i> | 20 | 29 | 23 | 28 | *=100 |
| <i>October 19-22, 2007: Pakistan bombing aimed at Bhutto</i> | 21 | 28 | 21 | 30 | *=100 |
| <i>July 13-16, 2007: Raid on Pakistani Mosque</i> | 10 | 19 | 23 | 47 | 1=100 |
| b. Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere | 34 | 36 | 19 | 11 | *=100 |
| <i>May 1-4, 2009: Swine flu²</i> | 43 | 37 | 15 | 4 | 1=100 |
| <i>April 25-27, 2009</i> | 25 | 30 | 19 | 26 | *=100 |
| TREND FOR COMPARISON:³ | | | | | |
| <i>October 19-22, 2007: Drug-resistant staph infection in the U.S.</i> | 26 | 31 | 19 | 24 | 0=100 |
| <i>June 1-4, 2007: Atlanta man traveling with dangerous form of Tuberculosis</i> | 24 | 34 | 21 | 19 | 2=100 |

¹ September 26-29, 2008 asked about “A bombing at a Marriott Hotel in Pakistan that killed over 50 people.” November 9-12, 2007 through November 30-December 3, 2007; January 11-14, 2008, August 15-18, 2008, March 13-16, 2009 and April 24-27, 2009 asked about “Political instability in Pakistan.” February 22-25, 2008 asked about “Parliamentary elections and changes in party control in Pakistan.” January 4-7, 2008 asked about “The assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and resulting instability in Pakistan.” October 19-22, 2007 asked about “A bombing in Pakistan aimed at former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto that killed over 120 people.” July 13-16, 2007 asked about “The Pakistani government’s raid on a mosque held by Islamic radicals.”

² For May 1-4, 2009 the story was listed as: “The outbreak of swine flu in different parts of the world.” For April 25-27, 2009 the story was listed as: “Reports of swine flu in Mexico and the U.S.”

³ October 19-22, 2007 asked about: “The growing danger of a drug-resistant staph infection in the U.S.” June 1-4, 2007 asked about: “An Atlanta man with a dangerous form of tuberculosis who traveled to Europe against the advice of government health officials.” March, 2006 asked about: “Outbreaks of bird flu in different parts of the world.” Late October and November, 2005 asked about: “The outbreak of bird flu in Asia and Europe.” January, 2004 asked about: “Reports about a case of mad cow disease in Washington state.” May and June, 2003 asked about: “The lung disease called ‘SARS’ that has spread from Asia.” September, 2002 asked about: “Cases of West Nile Virus spread by mosquitoes.” Early September, 2001 asked about: “The spread of mad cow disease in Europe.” March, 2001 asked about: “The outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among livestock in Europe.” January, 1998 asked about: “The outbreak of an Asian flu spread by birds or chickens.”

Q.1 CONTINUED...

| | <u>Very closely</u> | <u>Fairly closely</u> | <u>Not too closely</u> | <u>Not at all closely</u> | <u>DK/ Refused</u> |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| March, 2006: <i>Outbreaks of bird flu</i> | 21 | 36 | 24 | 19 | *=100 |
| November, 2005: <i>Bird flu</i> | 22 | 37 | 25 | 15 | 1=100 |
| Late October, 2005: <i>Bird flu</i> | 22 | 33 | 24 | 20 | 1=100 |
| January 2004: <i>Mad cow disease in Washington state</i> | 29 | 42 | 19 | 9 | 1=100 |
| June 2003: <i>The lung disease called "SARS" that has spread from Asia</i> | 28 | 44 | 19 | 8 | 1=100 |
| May 2003: <i>SARS</i> | 39 | 39 | 15 | 6 | 1=100 |
| September, 2002: <i>Cases of West Nile virus</i> | 34 | 36 | 21 | 8 | 1=100 |
| Early September, 2001: <i>Mad cow disease in Europe</i> | 18 | 34 | 27 | 20 | 1=100 |
| March, 2001: <i>Foot-and-mouth disease</i> | 22 | 33 | 22 | 22 | 1=100 |
| January, 1998: <i>Bird flu</i> | 19 | 36 | 25 | 20 | *=100 |
| c. Steps to legalize gay marriage in Maine and New Hampshire | 16 | 16 | 22 | 45 | 1=100 |
| TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁴ | | | | | |
| April 9-13, 2009: Gay marriage in IA & VT | 13 | 21 | 23 | 42 | 1=100 |
| Nov. 7-10, 2008: CA vote bans gay marriage | 18 | 26 | 24 | 32 | *=100 |
| June 20-23, 2008: Same sex marriage in CA | 22 | 26 | 25 | 27 | *=100 |
| May 16-19, 2008: CA Supreme Court ruling | 19 | 27 | 25 | 28 | 1=100 |
| May 2004: <i>Gay marriage</i> | 20 | 27 | 25 | 27 | 1=100 |
| March 2004: <i>Gay marriage</i> | 29 | 33 | 20 | 17 | 1=100 |
| Early-February 2004: <i>Debate over gay marriage</i> | 26 | 32 | 22 | 19 | 1=100 |
| Mid-August 2003: <i>Debate over gay marriage</i> | 19 | 30 | 22 | 28 | 1=100 |
| d. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy | 42 | 34 | 12 | 12 | *=100 |
| May 1-4, 2009 | 47 | 36 | 11 | 5 | 1=100 |
| April 17-20, 2009 | 52 | 30 | 10 | 7 | 1=100 |
| April 9-13, 2009 | 48 | 29 | 13 | 10 | 0=100 |
| March 27-30, 2009 | 48 | 32 | 10 | 10 | *=100 |
| March 20-23, 2009 | 52 | 34 | 8 | 6 | *=100 |
| March 13-16, 2009 | 48 | 33 | 9 | 10 | *=100 |
| February 27-March 2, 2009 | 56 | 30 | 8 | 6 | *=100 |
| February 13-16, 2009 | 55 | 29 | 10 | 6 | *=100 |
| January 30-February 2, 2009 | 52 | 31 | 12 | 5 | *=100 |
| January 23-26, 2009 | 57 | 30 | 8 | 5 | 0=100 |
| January 16-19, 2009 | 43 | 35 | 13 | 9 | *=100 |
| January 2-4, 2009 | 42 | 36 | 15 | 7 | *=100 |
| December 12-15, 2008 | 51 | 33 | 9 | 7 | *=100 |
| December 5-8, 2008 | 42 | 38 | 13 | 7 | *=100 |
| November 21-24, 2008 | 59 | 24 | 9 | 8 | *=100 |
| November 14-17, 2008 | 56 | 29 | 9 | 6 | *=100 |
| November 7-10, 2008 | 54 | 31 | 8 | 7 | *=100 |
| October 31-November 3, 2008 | 63 | 27 | 6 | 4 | *=100 |
| October 24-27, 2008 | 52 | 35 | 7 | 5 | 1=100 |

⁴ April 9-13, 2009, asked about: "The legalization of gay marriage in Iowa and Vermont." November 7-10, 2008, asked about: "California voting to ban gay marriage." June 20-23, 2008, asked about: "The issue of same sex marriage in California." May 16-19, 2008, asked about: "The California Supreme Court's decision giving same sex couples the right to marry." March, 2004 and May, 2004 asked about: "The issue of gay and lesbian marriage." August, 2003 and February, 2004 asked about: "The debate about allowing gays and lesbians to marry."

Q.1 CONTINUED...

| | <u>Very closely</u> | <u>Fairly closely</u> | <u>Not too closely</u> | <u>Not at all closely</u> | <u>DK/ Refused</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| October 17-20, 2008 | 62 | 29 | 6 | 3 | *=100 |
| October 10-13, 2008 | 65 | 25 | 7 | 3 | *=100 |
| October 3-6, 2008 | 69 | 23 | 5 | 3 | *=100 |
| September 26-29, 2008 | 70 | 22 | 5 | 3 | *=100 |
| September 19-22, 2008 | 56 | 27 | 12 | 5 | *=100 |
| September 5-8, 2008 | 44 | 33 | 16 | 7 | *=100 |
| August 29-31, 2008 | 41 | 34 | 13 | 11 | 1=100 |
| August 15-18, 2008 | 39 | 36 | 15 | 10 | *=100 |
| August 8-11, 2008 | 39 | 35 | 16 | 10 | *=100 |
| August 1-4, 2008 | 47 | 34 | 11 | 8 | 0=100 |
| July 25-28, 2008 | 46 | 32 | 10 | 12 | *=100 |
| July 18-21, 2008 | 45 | 33 | 13 | 9 | *=100 |
| July 11-14, 2008 | 44 | 33 | 12 | 10 | 1=100 |
| June 27-30, 2008 | 49 | 31 | 12 | 7 | 1=100 |
| June 13-16, 2008 | 42 | 33 | 14 | 11 | *=100 |
| May 9-12, 2008 | 45 | 31 | 13 | 11 | *=100 |
| May 2-5, 2008 | 43 | 31 | 15 | 10 | 1=100 |
| April 18-21, 2008 | 41 | 35 | 13 | 10 | 1=100 |
| April 4-7, 2008 | 39 | 37 | 12 | 12 | *=100 |
| March 28-31, 2008 | 42 | 36 | 14 | 8 | *=100 |
| March 20-24, 2008 | 45 | 33 | 13 | 9 | *=100 |
| February 29-March 3, 2008 | 38 | 35 | 15 | 11 | 1=100 |
| February 15-18, 2008 | 37 | 36 | 11 | 16 | 8=100 |
| February 1-4, 2008 | 40 | 37 | 14 | 8 | 1=100 |
| January 18-21, 2008 | 42 | 31 | 16 | 11 | *=100 |
| January 11-14, 2008 | 36 | 32 | 15 | 16 | 1=100 |
| November 2-5, 2007 | 27 | 37 | 16 | 19 | 1=100 |
| October 19-22, 2007 | 25 | 34 | 20 | 21 | *=100 |
| August 10-13, 2007 | 28 | 36 | 18 | 18 | *=100 |
| Mid-November, 2006 | 31 | 40 | 17 | 11 | 1=100 |
| December, 2005 | 35 | 35 | 18 | 11 | 1=100 |
| Early November, 2005 | 35 | 39 | 17 | 9 | *=100 |
| Mid-May, 2005 | 30 | 39 | 19 | 11 | 1=100 |
| January, 2005 | 35 | 41 | 17 | 7 | *=100 |
| Mid-October, 2004 | 30 | 43 | 16 | 10 | 1=100 |
| Early September, 2004 | 39 | 34 | 15 | 11 | 1=100 |
| Mid-January, 2004 | 37 | 41 | 15 | 7 | *=100 |
| December, 2003 | 35 | 38 | 14 | 11 | 2=100 |
| November, 2003 | 40 | 34 | 15 | 10 | 1=100 |
| October, 2003 | 32 | 39 | 16 | 12 | 1=100 |
| September, 2003 | 39 | 30 | 18 | 12 | 1=100 |
| March, 2003 | 40 | 35 | 16 | 8 | 1=100 |
| February, 2003 | 42 | 33 | 15 | 10 | *=100 |
| January, 2003 | 40 | 35 | 13 | 11 | 1=100 |
| December, 2002 | 38 | 34 | 17 | 10 | 1=100 |
| February, 2002 | 35 | 40 | 15 | 9 | 1=100 |
| January, 2002 | 30 | 44 | 16 | 9 | 1=100 |
| December, 2001 | 37 | 40 | 13 | 8 | 2=100 |
| Mid-November, 2001 | 41 | 36 | 15 | 7 | 1=100 |
| June, 2001 | 24 | 41 | 18 | 16 | 1=100 |
| May, 2001 | 34 | 36 | 15 | 15 | 0=100 |
| April, 2001 | 36 | 34 | 16 | 13 | 1=100 |
| February, 2001 | 30 | 39 | 18 | 12 | 1=100 |

Q.1 CONTINUED...

| | <u>Very closely</u> | <u>Fairly closely</u> | <u>Not too closely</u> | <u>Not at all closely</u> | <u>DK/Refused</u> |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| January, 2001 | 32 | 38 | 17 | 11 | 2=100 |
| June, 1995 | 26 | 41 | 22 | 11 | *=100 |
| March, 1995 | 27 | 45 | 19 | 9 | *=100 |
| February, 1995 | 23 | 41 | 22 | 13 | 1=100 |
| December, 1994 | 28 | 43 | 20 | 9 | *=100 |
| October, 1994 | 27 | 40 | 20 | 12 | 1=100 |
| June, 1994 | 25 | 42 | 23 | 10 | *=100 |
| May, 1994 | 33 | 40 | 16 | 10 | 1=100 |
| January, 1994 | 34 | 39 | 16 | 10 | 1=100 |
| Early January, 1994 | 36 | 44 | 13 | 7 | *=100 |
| December, 1993 | 35 | 41 | 15 | 8 | 1=100 |
| October, 1993 | 33 | 38 | 20 | 9 | *=100 |
| September, 1993 | 37 | 40 | 14 | 8 | 1=100 |
| Early September, 1993 | 39 | 39 | 14 | 9 | *=100 |
| August, 1993 | 41 | 36 | 14 | 9 | *=100 |
| May, 1993 | 37 | 38 | 18 | 6 | 1=100 |
| February, 1993 | 49 | 36 | 10 | 5 | *=100 |
| January, 1993 | 42 | 39 | 12 | 7 | *=100 |
| September, 1992 | 43 | 37 | 13 | 6 | 1=100 |
| May, 1992 | 39 | 39 | 15 | 6 | 1=100 |
| March, 1992 | 47 | 38 | 11 | 4 | *=100 |
| February, 1992 | 47 | 37 | 10 | 6 | *=100 |
| January, 1992 | 44 | 40 | 11 | 5 | *=100 |
| October, 1991 | 36 | 38 | 16 | 9 | 1=100 |
| e. Reports about the rising unemployment rate | 33 | 33 | 17 | 17 | *=100 |
| April 3-6, 2009 | 36 | 37 | 16 | 11 | *=100 |
| March 6-9, 2009 | 42 | 33 | 13 | 11 | 1=100 |
| February 6-9, 2009 | 44 | 36 | 11 | 9 | *=100 |
| January 9-12, 2009 | 45 | 34 | 14 | 7 | *=100 |
| December 5-8, 2008 | 40 | 33 | 17 | 10 | *=100 |
| November 7-10, 2008 | 39 | 32 | 17 | 12 | *=100 |
| June 6-9, 2008 | 25 | 31 | 23 | 21 | *=100 |
| f. The debate in Washington over the federal budget | 22 | 28 | 19 | 31 | *=100 |
| TREND FOR COMPARISON:⁵ | | | | | |
| <i>March 27-30, 2009: Debate over Obama's budget proposal</i> | 28 | 34 | 18 | 19 | 1=100 |
| <i>February 27-March 2, 2009: Barack Obama's budget proposal to increase spending, raise taxes on the wealthy</i> | 47 | 34 | 9 | 10 | *=100 |
| <i>February, 2002: Debate in Congress over G.W. Bush's budget and tax cut plan</i> | 17 | 31 | 28 | 23 | 1=100 |
| <i>April, 2001</i> | 24 | 38 | 20 | 18 | *=100 |
| <i>February, 2001: G.W. Bush's tax-cut plan</i> | 31 | 35 | 19 | 14 | 1=100 |

⁵ March 27-30, 2009 asked about: "The debate over Barack Obama's budget proposal." February 27-March 2, 2009 asked about: "Barack Obama's budget proposal for next year that raises taxes on wealthy Americans and increases spending on health care, education and other programs." April, 2001 and February, 2002 asked about: "The debate in Congress over George W. Bush's budget and tax cut plan." February, 2001 asked about: "George W. Bush's tax-cut plan."

Q.2 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? [DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]

- 34 Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere
 - 30 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
 - 8 Reports about the rising unemployment rate
 - 5 News about political instability in Pakistan
 - 3 Steps to legalize gay marriage in Maine and New Hampshire
 - 3 The debate in Washington over the federal budget
 - 8 Some other story (SPECIFY)
 - 9 Don't know/Refused
- 100

On another topic...

Q.3 How much if anything, have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? [READ AND RANDOMIZE; ITEM d ALWAYS COMES LAST]

| | <u>A lot</u> | <u>A little</u> | <u>at all</u> | <u>Nothing Refused</u> | DK/ |
|--|--------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------|-------|
| a. A woman who received the first face transplant operation done in the United States | | 22 | 49 | 28 | 1=100 |

NO ITEM B

| | | | | | |
|---|--|----|----|----|-------|
| c. The suspension of the Dodger's Manny Ramirez after testing positive for banned substances | | 25 | 40 | 35 | *=100 |
|---|--|----|----|----|-------|

NO ITEMS D AND E

| | | | | | |
|--|--|----|----|----|-------|
| f. Former police officer Drew Peterson being charged with the murder of his third wife | | 28 | 46 | 26 | *=100 |
| TREND FOR COMPARISON: | | | | | |
| May 1-4, 2009: A man suspected of robbing and killing women he met through the Craigslist website | | 40 | 38 | 21 | 1=100 |
| April 23-26, 2009: The arrest of a man suspected of robbing and killing women he met through the Craigslist website | | 42 | 35 | 23 | *=100 |
| TREND FOR COMPARISON: | | | | | |
| April 17-20, 2009: The murder of an 8-year-old California girl by a Sunday school teacher | | 50 | 28 | 22 | *=100 |

Q.4 Are you hearing mostly good news about the economy these days, mostly bad news about the economy or a mix of both good and bad news?

| | <u>Apr</u> | <u>Mar</u> | <u>Feb</u> | <u>Jan</u> | <u>Dec</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 9-13 | 13-16 | 13-16 | 16-19 | 5-8 |
| | <u>2009</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2008</u> |
| 4 Hearing mostly good news about the economy | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 31 Hearing mostly bad news about the economy [OR] | 39 | 51 | 60 | 67 | 80 |
| 64 A mix of good and bad | 56 | 46 | 37 | 30 | 19 |
| <u>1</u> Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ) | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>*</u> |
| 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |