



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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**Wednesday, March 2, 2011**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
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## Many Tracking Union Fight in Wisconsin, Violence in Libya Rising Oil Prices Big News for American Public

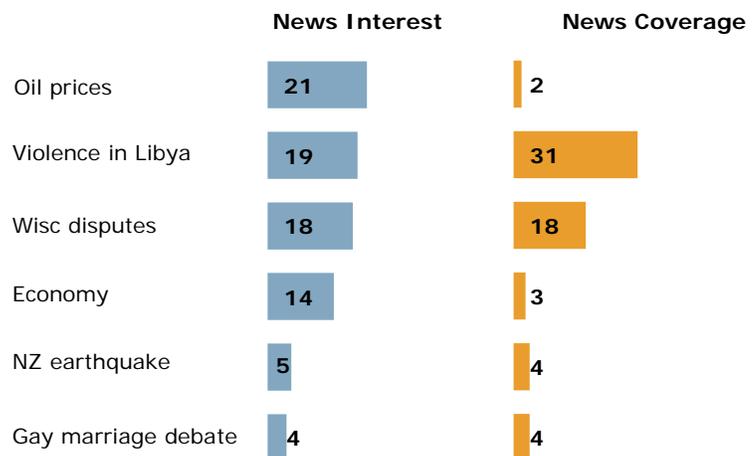
Both the public and the media focused last week on the increasing violence in Libya, but Americans also closely tracked news about a related concern – the impact the crisis in the Middle East is having on oil prices at home.

About two-in-ten (21%) say they followed news about the rising price of oil more closely than any other major story, according to the latest News Interest Index survey conducted Feb. 24-27 among 1,009 adults. Comparable

numbers say they most closely followed news about the situation in Libya (19%) or the budget disputes in Wisconsin and other states between state governments and public employee unions (18%).

Each of the top stories attracted strong interest. Using a separate measure, fully 50% say they followed news about rising oil prices very closely, while 49% say they followed news about the economy that closely. That is the highest number tracking the economy very closely so far this year.

### News Coverage vs. News Interest



News interest shows the percentage of people who say they followed this story most closely, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, February 24-27, 2011.  
News coverage shows the percentage of news coverage devoted to each story, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, February 21-27, 2011.

Nearly four-in-ten (38%) say they followed news about the growing violence in Libya very closely, about the same as the number that followed the unrest in Egypt very closely the week that Hosni Mubarak resigned (39%, Feb. 10-13). About as many (36%) say they followed news about the confrontations between governors and public employee unions that closely.

News about Libya topped coverage, accounting for 31% of the newshole, according to a separate analysis by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ). News about the budget standoffs in Wisconsin and other states made up 18% of coverage. News about oil prices, on the other hand, was limited, accounting for just 2% of the coverage measured by PEJ.

The public is typically very attentive to news about fluctuating gas and oil prices. The sharp run-up in gas prices following Hurricane Katrina was among the most closely followed stories of the previous decade, as was news about the falling price of gas in the fall of 2008. (See *"Public's Top Stories of the Decade – 9/11 and Katrina,"* Dec. 30, 2010).

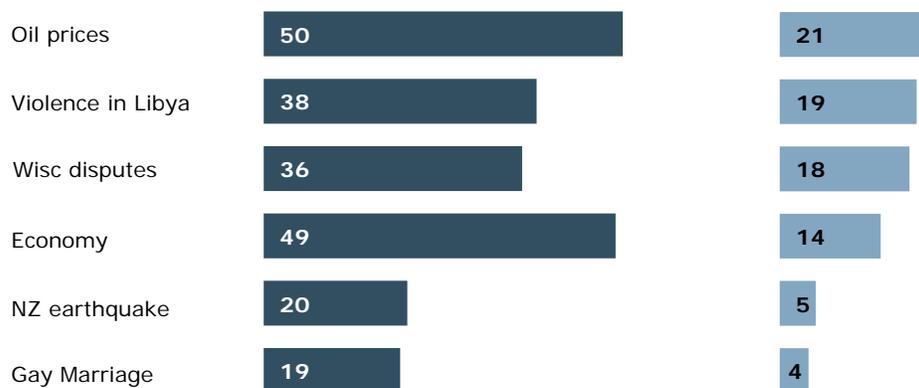
The recent price increases also come at a time of continued interest in the health of the U.S. economy; 14% say they followed news about the economy most closely last week. Not including news about budget fights at the state and federal levels, news about the economy accounted for 3% of the newshole.

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## News Interest

% following each story very closely

Which one story did you follow most closely?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER February 24-27, 2011.

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Fewer say they very closely followed news about a deadly earthquake in New Zealand (20%) or recent developments in the debate over gay marriage (19%). Five percent say they followed news about the earthquake more closely than any other top story, while 4% say they followed news about gay marriage developments that closely. Each of these stories accounted for 4% of coverage last week, according to PEJ.

### Income a Factor in Interest in Oil Price News

There are only slight differences in interest in these stories in most demographic groups and among partisans. Those with household incomes of less than \$30,000 are more likely than those with incomes of \$75,000 or more to say they followed news about oil prices more closely than any other news (26% vs. 17%). Oil prices were clearly the top story for those earning less than \$30,000, while affluent households also paid considerable attention to the situation in Libya (22% most closely) and the ongoing fight in Wisconsin (21%).

Not surprisingly, people in the Midwest are more likely to say they followed the disputes in Wisconsin and other states most closely. Nearly three-in-ten (28%) say this, compared to 16% for those in Northeast and South and 11% for those in the West.

### Most Aware of Somali Pirates and Possibility of Gov't Shutdown

About eight-in-ten (81%) say they heard a least a little last week about Somali pirates hijacking an American yacht and killing four hostages; 41% say they heard a lot about this, while 40% say they heard a little. Few (18%) had heard nothing at all. The media devoted 3% of the newshole to the pirate story.

About seven-in-ten (71%) say they heard at least a little about the possibility that the federal government could soon shut down if Republicans in Congress and the Obama Administration fail to agree on a budget. Nearly four-in-ten (37%) say they heard a lot about this, while 33% say they heard a little. That's up from one week

#### What Public Has Heard About

	A lot	A little	Nothing at all
Somali pirates hijack American yacht, kill four	41	40	18
Possibility of gov't shutdown without budget agreement	37	34	29
Toyota recalls about 2 million vehicles	29	45	26

PEW RESEARCH CENTER February 24-27, 2011.

earlier when 21% said they had heard a lot about a possible shutdown and 35% said they had heard a little. If the government were to shut down, Americans are just as likely to blame the Obama administration as Republicans in Congress. ( See *"More Side with Wisconsin Unions than Governor," Feb. 28, 2011.*)

Most of the public (74%) also says they heard at least a little about Toyota recalling about two million vehicles. About three-in-ten (29%) say they heard a lot about this, while 45% say they heard a little about the recall.

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 February 21-27, and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected February 24-27, from a nationally representative sample of 1,009 adults.

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted February 24-27, 2011 among a national sample of 1,009 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (678 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 331 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 144 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. 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/detailed>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2010 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2010 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 within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the 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	Sample Size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1009	4.0 percentage points
Republicans	248	7.5 percentage points
Democrats	290	7.0 percentage points
Independents	397	6.0 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.

## 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:

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX  
FEBRUARY 24-27, 2011 OMNIBUS  
FINAL TOPLINE  
N=1009**

**PEW.1 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.2 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>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
February 24-27, 2011	49	29	11	10	*
February 17-20, 2011	35	33	14	17	*
February 10-13, 2011	36	34	13	16	*
February 3-6, 2011	35	37	14	14	*
January 20-23, 2011	37	33	14	15	1
January 13-16, 2010	37	29	15	18	1
January 6-9, 2011	39	37	11	12	1
December 16-19, 2010	39	31	14	15	2
December 9-12, 2010	39	30	14	16	1
December 2-5, 2010	52	28	11	9	*
November 18-21, 2010	46	31	11	11	*
November 11-14, 2010	38	30	15	16	1
November 4-7, 2010	44	32	11	13	*
October 28-November 1, 2010	39	34	11	15	1
October 21-24, 2010	41	29	14	14	1
October 14-17, 2010	42	33	12	13	*
October 7-10, 2010	36	33	15	15	1
September 30-October 3, 2010	43	35	10	11	1
September 23-26, 2010	43	34	13	9	1
September 16-19, 2010	37	30	16	16	1
September 2-6, 2010	43	31	13	12	*
August 19-22, 2010	39	31	14	15	1
August 5-8, 2010	39	33	14	13	1
July 29-August 1, 2010	51	33	11	5	*
July 22-25, 2010	46	33	14	6	1
July 15-18, 2010	37	33	14	15	1
July 8-11, 2010	36	33	15	16	*
July 1-5, 2010	48	30	13	8	*
June 24-27, 2010	37	37	15	11	1
June 17-20, 2010	38	34	15	13	*
June 10-13, 2010	39	35	17	9	*
June 3-6, 2010	35	33	16	14	1
May 27-30, 2010	43	29	13	15	*
May 20-23, 2010	40	35	13	11	*
May 13-16, 2010	49	32	11	8	1
May 7-10, 2010	42	34	11	12	*
April 30-May 3, 2010	32	37	17	14	1
April 23-26, 2010	42	31	13	14	*
April 16-19, 2010	40	32	14	14	0
April 9-12, 2010	40	32	15	13	*
April 1-5, 2010	33	34	14	19	*
March 19-22, 2010	41	32	14	13	*
March 12-15, 2010	41	35	12	12	*
March 5-8, 2010	40	34	12	13	*

## PEW.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
February 26-March 1, 2010	31	33	17	19	*
February 19-22, 2010	38	34	15	12	*
February 12-15, 2010	35	34	15	16	*
February 5-8, 2010	43	36	13	9	*
January 29-February 1, 2010	45	32	13	10	*
January 22-25, 2010	41	34	14	10	*
January 15-18, 2010	37	38	14	11	*
January 8-11, 2010	39	33	15	12	*
December 18-21, 2009	45	31	14	10	0
December 11-14, 2009	42	31	14	13	*
December 4-7, 2009	41	36	13	9	1
November 13-16, 2009	38	33	14	15	*
October 30-November 2, 2009	34	32	17	16	*
October 23-26, 2009	44	30	15	10	1
October 9-12, 2009	41	29	16	13	*
October 2-5, 2009	44	30	15	11	0
September 25-28, 2009	44	37	10	10	*
September 18-21, 2009	44	34	15	7	*
September 11-14, 2009	45	32	14	9	*
September 3-6, 2009	41	31	15	13	*
August 28-31, 2009	45	30	13	12	1
August 21-24, 2009	50	27	13	10	1
August 14-17, 2009	41	37	11	12	*
August 7-10, 2009	42	34	13	10	*
July 31-August 3, 2009	46	34	11	8	*
July 24-27, 2009	45	35	12	8	*
July 17-20, 2009	43	35	11	11	1
July 10-13, 2009	37	38	13	11	*
July 2-5, 2009	38	35	15	12	*
June 19-22, 2009	42	33	15	10	*
June 12-15, 2009	41	35	12	12	*
June 5-8, 2009	41	34	11	14	*
May 29-June 1, 2009	43	37	11	8	*
May 21-24, 2009	44	35	13	9	*
May 15-18, 2009	44	35	12	8	*
May 8-11, 2009	42	34	12	12	*
May 1-4, 2009	47	36	11	5	1
April 17-20, 2009	52	30	10	7	1
April 9-13, 2009	48	29	13	10	0
March 27-30, 2009	48	32	10	10	*
March 20-23, 2009	52	34	8	6	*
March 13-16, 2009	48	33	9	10	*
February 27-March 2, 2009	56	30	8	6	*
February 13-16, 2009	55	29	10	6	*
January 30-February 2, 2009	52	31	12	5	*
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*

## PEW.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1

## PEW.2 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1
b. Disputes in Wisconsin and other states between state governments and public employee unions					
February 24-27, 2011	36	22	15	26	1
c. Growing violence in Libya					
February 24-27, 2011	38	30	15	16	*
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON</b>					
February 17-20, 2011: <i>News about the situation in Egypt</i>	34	32	17	16	1
February 17-20, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests in other Middle Eastern and North African nations</i>	20	30	22	28	1
February 10-13, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests in Egypt and the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak</i>	39	31	14	15	1
February 3-6, 2011: <i>Anti-government protests in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries</i>	32	35	16	18	*
January 27-30, 2011	17	26	21	35	*
January 20-23, 2011: <i>Political instability in Tunisia following the collapse of the government</i>	7	15	25	53	1
January 13-16, 2010: <i>The collapse of the Lebanese government</i>	4	11	20	64	*
May 20-23, 2010: <i>A government crackdown on protestors in Thailand</i>	7	14	27	52	1
July 31-August 3, 2009: <i>The Iranian government's crackdown on opposition protestors</i>	18	23	26	31	2
July 2-5, 2009: <i>News about controversy surrounding the recent Iranian election</i>	22	31	23	23	*
June 26-29, 2009: <i>The Iranian government's crackdown on election protestors</i>	31	27	18	23	1
June 19-22, 2009: <i>Protests in Iran over disputed elections</i>	28	28	21	22	1
March 20-24, 2008: <i>Violent protests in Tibet against the Chinese government</i>	12	27	26	35	*
September 28-October 1, 2007: <i>Pro- democracy protests by Buddhist monks in Burma</i>	13	27	20	39	1
March 17-21, 2005: <i>Protests and political changes in Lebanon</i>	10	28	25	36	1

## PEW.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<b>(VOL.) DK/Ref</b>
January 6-11, 2004: <i>Reports that Libya will end its weapons program and cooperate with UN inspectors</i>	14	30	28	27	1
October 6-8, 2000: <i>Civil unrest and rioting in Belgrade, Yugoslavia</i>	18	27	24	31	*
January 9-12, 1997: <i>Protests and demonstrations in Belgrade against Serbian President Milosevic</i>	7	14	29	49	1
July 10-24, 1986: <i>The U.S. air strike against Libya</i>	58	27	11	3	1
d. A major earthquake in New Zealand February 24-27, 2011	20	30	26	23	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
October 28-November 1, 2010: <i>A tsunami and a volcano erupting in Indonesia</i>	11	25	27	36	1
March 12-15, 2010: <i>Major aftershocks in Chile following an earthquake in late February</i>	18	41	27	14	*
March 5-8, 2010: <i>A major earthquake in Chile</i>	27	42	19	12	*
February 19-22, 2010: <i>Haiti releasing most of the Americans who were accused of attempted kidnapping</i>	16	30	29	23	*
February 12-15, 2010: <i>The aftermath of a major earthquake and relief efforts in Haiti</i>	37	37	17	8	*
February 5-8, 2010	42	39	13	6	*
January 29-February 1, 2010	45	38	13	4	*
January 22-25, 2010	50	40	8	3	*
January 15-18, 2010: <i>A major earthquake in Haiti</i>	60	28	8	4	*
August 14-17, 2009: <i>A typhoon that caused flooding and mudslides in Taiwan</i>	7	21	30	41	1
April 9-13, 2009: <i>A major earthquake in Italy</i>	18	35	25	22	*
May 16-19, 2008: <i>The earthquake in China</i>	30	41	17	12	*
May 9-12, 2008: <i>Reports about the cyclone that hit Burma</i>	23	35	23	19	*
November 2-5, 2007: <i>The impact of Hurricane Noel on the Bahamas and Cuba</i>	11	22	31	35	1
September 7-10, 2007: <i>The impact of Hurricanes Felix and Henriette on Mexico and Central America</i>	14	29	29	27	1
August 24-27, 2007: <i>The destruction caused by Hurricane Dean in Mexico and the Caribbean</i>	18	39	24	18	1
October, 2005: <i>The earthquake in Pakistan</i>	22	39	23	16	*
January 2005: <i>The earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean</i>	58	32	7	3	*
January 2004: <i>The earthquake in Iran</i>	16	34	31	19	*
February 2001: <i>The earthquake in India</i>	15	33	31	20	1
March 2000: <i>Flood rescue efforts in Mozambique</i>	10	26	30	34	*
September 1999: <i>The earthquake in Turkey</i>	27	37	23	12	1
November 1998: <i>Hurricane Mitch and the rain and mudslides in Central America</i>	36	36	16	11	1
February 1995: <i>The earthquake in Japan</i>	25	47	20	8	*

## PEW.2 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
May 1991: <i>The cyclone that devastated Bangladesh</i>	23	36	23	17	1
July 1990: <i>The earthquake in Iran</i>	20	36	28	16	*
e. Recent developments in the debate over gay marriage					
February 24-27, 2011	19	26	20	34	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
May 29-June 1, 2009: <i>The California Supreme Court upholding a ban on gay marriage</i>	22	35	19	23	1
May 8-11, 2009: <i>Steps to legalize gay marriage in Maine and New Hampshire</i>	16	16	22	45	1
April 9-13, 2009: <i>The legalization of gay marriage in Iowa and Vermont</i>	13	21	23	42	1
Nov. 7-10, 2008: <i>California voting to ban gay marriage</i>	18	26	24	32	*
June 20-23, 2008: <i>The issue of same-sex marriage in California</i>	22	26	25	27	*
May 16-19, 2008: <i>The California Supreme Court's decision giving same-sex couples the right to marry</i>	19	27	25	28	1
May 2004: <i>The issue of gay and lesbian marriage</i>	20	27	25	27	1
March 2004: <i>The issue of gay and lesbian marriage</i>	29	33	20	17	1
Early-February 2004: <i>The debate about letting gays and lesbians marry</i>	26	32	22	19	1
Mid-August 2003: <i>The debate about letting gays and lesbians marry</i>	19	30	22	28	1
f. The rising price of oil					
February 24-27, 2011	50	29	13	8	*
June 27-30, 2008	57	26	11	5	1
March 7-10, 2008	43	33	12	11	1
November 9-12, 2007	44	28	14	13	1
<b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>					
October 17-20, 2008: <i>The falling price of gas and oil</i>	53	33	11	3	*
July 3-7, 2008: <i>The rising price of gasoline</i>	62	25	8	4	1
June 6-9, 2008	66	19	7	7	1
May 22-25, 2008	65	22	9	4	*
May 16-19, 2008	64	21	10	4	1
May 2-5, 2008	63	23	9	4	1
April 25-28, 2008	62	23	10	5	*
May 24-27, 2007	52	29	10	8	1
May 18-21, 2007 <sup>1</sup>	48	27	16	8	1
August, 2006 <sup>2</sup>	60	26	7	5	2
June, 2006	58	26	10	5	1
May, 2006	69	21	6	3	1
April, 2006	65	22	8	4	1
December, 2005	61	27	7	4	1
Early November, 2005	61	27	9	2	1
Late October, 2005	67	23	7	3	*

<sup>1</sup> For May 18-21, 2007 the item was not asked as part of a list.

<sup>2</sup> From October, 2000 to August, 2006, the story was listed as "The high price of gasoline these days." From August, 1990 to June, 2000, the story was listed as "Recent increases in the price of gasoline."

**PEW.2 CONTINUED...**

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Early October, 2005	65	25	6	3	1
Early September, 2005	71	19	7	3	*
Mid-May, 2005	58	27	9	5	1
Mid-March, 2005	50	32	13	5	*
Mid-October, 2004	64	22	8	5	1
August, 2004	52	29	10	8	1
July, 2004	56	25	11	7	1
June, 2004	58	26	9	6	1
April, 2004	46	30	15	8	1
Early April, 2004	58	23	10	8	1
Mid-March, 2004	47	27	14	10	2
September, 2003	45	27	15	11	1
March, 2003	52	27	11	9	1
February, 2003	53	25	12	9	1
June, 2001	56	31	7	5	1
May, 2001	61	26	6	6	1
Early October, 2000	56	25	12	6	1
June, 2000	61	25	9	5	*
March, 2000	58	28	10	4	*
October, 1990	62	26	8	4	*
September, 1990	56	28	11	5	*
August, 1990	57	27	10	5	1

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.3 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.]**

Feb 24-27

2011

21	The rising price of oil
19	Growing violence in Libya
	Disputes in Wisconsin and other states between state governments and public employee unions
18	
14	Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
5	A major earthquake in New Zealand
4	Recent developments in the debate over gay marriage
9	Some other story (VOL.)
11	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**PEW.4 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.5 How much if anything, have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE ITEMS a AND b, WITH ITEM c ALWAYS LAST]**

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>
a. Toyota's recall of about 2 million vehicles February 24-27, 2011	29	45	26	*
b. Somali pirates hijacking an American yacht and killing four hostages February 24-27, 2011	41	40	18	1
c. The possibility that the federal government might shut down this year if Republicans and the Obama administration can't agree on a budget February 24-27, 2011	37	34	29	*
February 17-20, 2011 <sup>3</sup>	21	35	44	*

**PEW.6 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

<sup>3</sup> The wording for February 17-20, 2011, was: "The possibility that the federal government might shut down this year if Congress and President Obama can't agree on a budget."