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# *As U.S. Energy Production Grows, Public Policy Views Show Little Change*

## *Majority Prioritizes Developing Alternative Energy Sources*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
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# As U.S. Energy Production Grows, Public Policy Views Show Little Change

## *Majority Prioritizes Developing Alternative Energy Sources*

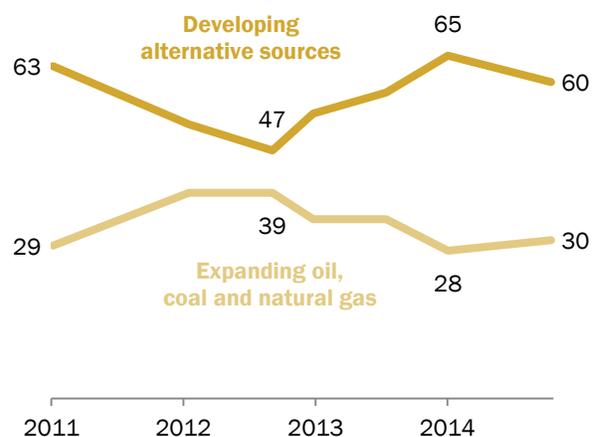
The public is gradually becoming aware of America's energy boom. Currently, 54% say domestic energy production has been increasing in recent years, up from 48% in September 2013. Meanwhile, the recent slide in gas prices is registering widely: An overwhelming 89% say that that pump prices have fallen in the past month.

Despite [the growth of domestic energy production](#), public attitudes about energy policies have changed only modestly in recent years. In broad terms, developing alternative energy is viewed as a more important priority than expanding the exploration and production of oil, coal and natural gas. By two-to-one (60% to 30%), more prioritize the development of alternative energy sources than expanded extraction of energy from traditional sources.

Yet when asked about specific policies to address the energy supply, a majority of Americans continue to support allowing more offshore oil and gas drilling in U.S. waters (56%) and more mining and drilling on federally-owned land (58%). These opinions are largely unchanged from recent years.

### Public Prioritizes Development of Alternative Energy Sources

*More important energy priority for country ... (%)*



Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.

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At the same time, 81% favor requiring better fuel efficiency for cars, trucks and SUVs. The share supporting improved fuel efficiency has risen eight points since September 2013.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted Dec. 3-7 among 1,507 adults, finds that the public remains wary of the increased use of nuclear power. By a 53%-41% margin, more oppose than favor the government promoting the increased use of nuclear power.

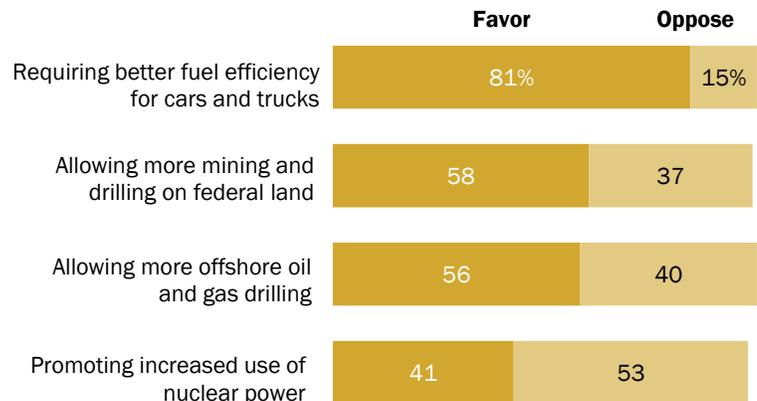
Opposition to nuclear power has been at about 50% or above since March 2011, following the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan.

In [November](#), the Pew Research Center found that the public continues to favor construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, though by a smaller margin than a year earlier. About six-in-ten (59%) favor building the pipeline while 31% are opposed.

The same survey found that more Americans oppose (47%) than favor (41%) the increased use of fracking to extract oil and natural gas from underground rock formations. The balance of opinion on fracking has tilted more negative; in March 2013, more favored (48%) than opposed (38%) the increased use of fracking.

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## Views of Policies for Addressing U.S. Energy Supply



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

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## Perceptions of U.S. Energy Production

Overall, 54% say that from what they've read and heard, the amount of energy produced in the U.S. has been increasing in recent years; just 10% say it has been decreasing, while 27% say it's been staying about the same. Last fall, somewhat fewer (48%) said they thought energy production in the U.S. was up. College graduates are among the most likely to say the amount of energy produced in the U.S. has been increasing (67%); those with no college experience are less likely to hold this view (44%).

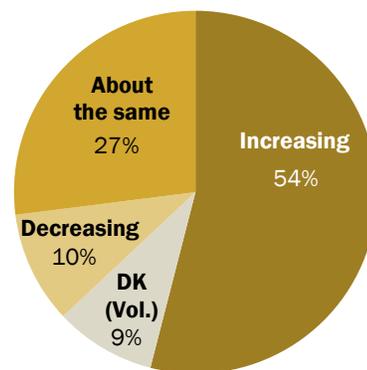
Furthermore, the drop in gas prices around the country has registered widely: Fully 89% say that gas prices have gone down either a lot (50%) or a little (39%) over the past month; just 8% say they have gone up at a little or a lot.

Large majorities of college graduates (91%) and those with no college experience (86%) say gas prices have fallen, but college graduates are more likely to say they have declined a lot (56% vs. 43%).

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### Public Sees Growing U.S. Energy Output

*Amount of energy produced in U.S. has been ...*



Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.

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## Demographic Divides in Views of Energy Priority

While the public prioritizes developing alternative sources of energy over expanding production of fossil fuels by a 60%-30% margin, attitudes on this question vary widely across demographic groups.

Adults under 30 express broad support for prioritizing alternative energy development over expanding traditional sources (74%-20%). By contrast, those 65 and older are roughly divided over whether developing sources such as wind, solar and hydrogen is the more important priority (48%) or whether expanding production of oil, coal and natural gas should be given more priority (41%).

By a 53%-36% margin, more Republicans prioritize the production of oil, coal and natural gas over the development of alternative sources of energy. By contrast, 72% of Democrats and 66% of independents say developing alternative energy sources should be the country's more important priority.

Across regions, support for prioritizing alternative energy development is lowest in the South (52%). At least six-in-ten in the Midwest (62%), Northeast (66%) and West (67%) say it's more important to develop alternative sources such as wind, solar and hydrogen technology than to expand the exploration and production of oil, coal and natural gas.

### Young People Far More Likely to Prioritize Developing Alternative Energy

*More important energy priority for country...*

	Developing alternative sources %	Expanding fossil fuels %	Other/DK %
Total	60	30	10=100
Men	58	33	9=100
Women	63	27	10=100
White	60	32	8=100
Black	55	30	15=100
Hispanic	61	27	12=100
18-29	74	20	5=100
30-49	64	26	10=100
50-64	53	35	11=100
65+	48	41	11=100
Post grad	69	24	7=100
College grad	63	29	8=100
Some college	63	28	8=100
HS or less	55	33	12=100
<i>Family income</i>			
\$75,000 or more	59	31	10=100
\$30,000-\$75,000	61	33	5=100
Less than \$30,000	64	25	11=100
Republican	36	53	11=100
Democrat	72	19	8=100
Independent	66	24	9=100
Northeast	66	26	8=100
Midwest	62	31	7=100
South	52	36	12=100
West	67	23	10=100

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic;

Hispanics are of any race.

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## Wide Party Divides on Energy Policies

There also are wide differences between Republicans and Democrats in their support for specific U.S. energy policies.

About eight-in-ten Republicans say they are in favor of allowing more mining and drilling on federally owned land (80%) and allowing more offshore oil and gas drilling in U.S. waters (77%). By contrast, support is far lower among Democrats: just 43% back more mining and drilling on federal lands, while 41% support expanding offshore drilling.

The increased use of nuclear power is not especially popular with either party, though significantly more Republicans (50%) than Democrats (28%) back this policy.

One area of general agreement is on better fuel efficiency standards for cars, trucks and SUVs.

Fully 91% of Democrats support this policy; Republicans are 25 points less likely to back stricter fuel efficiency standards, but a 66% majority join Democrats in saying they favor this policy.

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### Republicans Support More Offshore Drilling, Mining on Federal Land

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	R-D Diff
<i>More important energy priority for the country ...</i>	%	%	%	%	
Developing alternative sources	60	36	72	66	D+36
Expanding oil, coal and natural gas	30	53	19	24	R+34
<hr/>					
<i>% who favor ...</i>					
Requiring better fuel efficiency for cars, trucks	81	66	91	83	D+25
Allowing more mining and drilling on U.S. federal land	58	80	43	57	R+37
Allowing more oil and gas drilling in U.S. waters	56	77	41	55	R+36
Promoting increased use of nuclear power	41	50	28	47	R+22

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.

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## Age Differences on Expanded Mining and Drilling

Consistent with the high priority younger adults place on developing alternative sources of energy, they are less supportive of expanded mining and drilling in the U.S. than are older Americans.

When it comes to allowing more mining and drilling on federally-owned land, those ages 50-64 and 65 or older back this policy by about two-to-one (66%-30% and 62%-30%, respectively). Younger adults are more divided. Among those 18-29, 52% favor this policy, while 45% are opposed; the balance of opinion is similar among those ages 30-49 (52% favor, 41% oppose).

More than six-in-ten of those ages 50-64 (66%) and 65 or older (62%) favor more offshore oil and gas drilling in U.S. waters. By contrast, support falls to 54% among those ages 30-49 and drops to 42% among those ages 18-29.

Age divides are less prominent when it comes to fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks, and promoting the increased use of nuclear power. Broad majorities of all age groups support requiring better fuel efficiency for cars, trucks and SUVs. On nuclear power, fewer than half across all age groups say they favor promoting its increased use in the U.S.

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### Younger Adults Less Supportive of Drilling Offshore and on Federal Lands

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
% who favor ...	%	%	%	%
Requiring better fuel efficiency for cars, trucks	86	81	79	80
Allowing more mining and drilling on U.S. federal land	52	52	66	62
Allowing more oil and gas drilling in U.S. waters	42	54	66	62
Promoting increased use of nuclear power	36	46	36	45

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.

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## 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:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
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

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.

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DECEMBER 2014 POLITICAL SURVEY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
DECEMBER 3-7, 2014  
N=1,507**

**QUESTIONS 1-2, 5-7, 12, 17 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****NO QUESTIONS 3-4, 8-11, 13-16****ASK ALL:**

Q.18 Right now, which ONE of the following do you think should be the more important priority for addressing America's energy supply? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]?**

	Developing alternative sources such as, wind, solar and hydrogen <u>technology</u>	Expanding exploration and production of oil, coal and natural gas	(VOL.) Both should be given equal priority	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Dec 3-7, 2014	60	30	5	4
Feb 12-26, 2014	65	28	5	2
Sep 4-8, 2013	58	34	6	3
Feb 13-18, 2013 (U)	54	34	7	4
Oct 24-28, 2012	47	39	9	5
Mar 7-11, 2012	52	39	5	4
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	63	29	6	2

**ASK ALL:**

Q.19 From what you've read and heard, has the amount of energy produced in the United States been increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same in recent years?

Dec 3-7 <u>2014</u>		Sep 4-8 <u>2013</u>
54	Increasing	48
10	Decreasing	12
27	Staying about the same	31
9	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	10

**QUESTIONS 20-21, 24, 30-31, 36-38 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****NO QUESTIONS 22-23, 25-29, 32-35, 39****ASK ALL:**

Now thinking about some issues ...

Q.40 From what you have seen and heard, have gasoline prices **[READ; READ CATEGORIES IN REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF THE SAMPLE]** over the past month?

Dec 3-7 <u>2014</u>		May 24-27 <u>2012</u>
4	Gone up a lot	22
4	Gone up a little	17
39	Gone down a little	44
50	Gone down a lot	7
1	Stayed about the same (VOL.)	3
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	7

**NO QUESTIONS 41-44, 47-52, 56-60****QUESTIONS 45-46, 53-55 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

Next,

Q.61 As I read some possible government policies to address America's energy supply, tell me whether you would favor or oppose each. First, would you favor or oppose the government **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**? Would you favor or oppose the government **[INSERT NEXT ITEM]**?

		<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>(VOL.)</u> <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	Allowing more offshore oil and gas drilling in U.S. waters			
	Dec 3-7, 2014	56	40	4
	Sep 4-8, 2013	58	40	2
	Mar 7-11, 2012	65	31	4
	Nov 3-6, 2011	58	35	7
	Mar 17-20, 2011	57	37	6
	Oct 13-18, 2010	51	41	7
	Jun 16-20, 2010	44	52	4
	May 6-9, 2010	54	38	8
	Feb 3-9, 2010	63	31	6
	Apr 14-21, 2009	68	27	5
	September, 2008	67	28	5
<b>NO ITEM b.</b>				
c.	Promoting the increased use of nuclear power			
	Dec 3-7, 2014	41	53	6
	Sep 4-8, 2013	38	58	4
	Mar 7-11, 2012	44	49	7
	Nov 3-6, 2011	39	53	8
	Mar 17-20, 2011	39	52	8
	Oct 13-18, 2010	45	44	11
	Jun 16-20, 2010	47	47	6
	May 6-9, 2010	45	44	11
	Feb 3-9, 2010	52	41	7
	Apr 14-21, 2009	45	48	7
	September, 2008	50	43	7
	Late February, 2008	44	48	8
	February, 2006	44	49	7
	Mid-September, 2005	39	53	8
d.	Allowing more mining and drilling on federally owned land			
	Dec 3-7, 2014	58	37	5
	November 3-6, 2011	58	34	7
e.	Requiring better fuel efficiency for cars, trucks and SUVs			
	Dec 3-7, 2014	81	15	4
	Sep 4-8, 2013	73	25	3
	Mar 7-11, 2012	78	19	3
	Oct 13-18, 2010	79	17	4
	September, 2008	88	10	2
	February, 2008	90	8	2
	February, 2006	86	12	2
	Mid-September, 2005	86	12	2

**NO QUESTIONS 62-65, 67-69, 71-73, 79-84****QUESTIONS 66-66a, 70, 74-78, 85-89 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**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
<b>Yearly Totals</b>								
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 <sup>1</sup>	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--

<sup>1</sup> 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>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>Haven't heard of</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <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