



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER
For The People & The Press

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Republicans Like State Government,
Especially in GOP-Led States

Growing Gap in Favorable Views of Federal, State Governments

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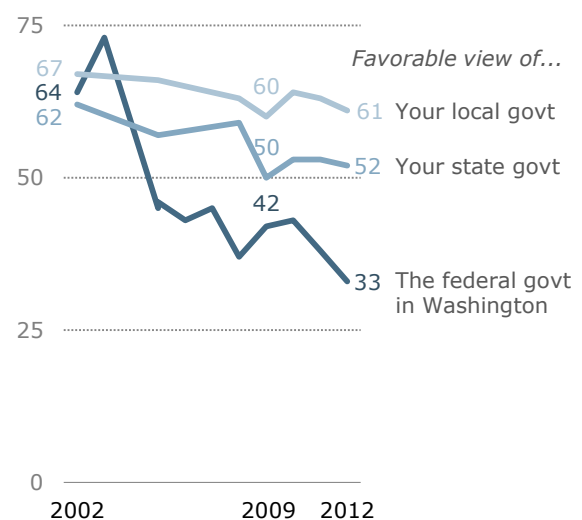
Just a third of Americans have a favorable opinion of the federal government, the lowest positive rating in 15 years. Yet opinions about state and local governments remain favorable, on balance. As a result, the gap between favorable ratings of the federal government and state and local governments is wider than ever.

Ten years ago, roughly two-thirds of Americans offered favorable assessments of all three levels of government: federal, state and local. But in the latest survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, conducted April 4-15, 2012 among 1,514 adults nationwide, the favorable rating for the federal government has fallen to just 33%; nearly twice as many (62%) have an unfavorable view.

By contrast, ratings of state governments remain in positive territory, with 52% offering a favorable and 42% an unfavorable opinion of their state government. And local governments are viewed even more positively. By roughly two-to-one (61% to 31%) most Americans offer a favorable assessment of their local government.

Although favorability ratings for state governments declined between 2008 and 2009 as the financial crisis hit, they have remained steady over the past four years. Consequently, the gap between ratings of state governments and the federal government has grown.

As Ratings of Federal Government Fall, State and Local Hold Steady



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While the balance of opinion toward state governments is favorable, majorities say their state government is not careful with people's money (56%), is too divided along party lines (53%) and is generally inefficient (51%). But much larger percentages fault the federal government's performance in those areas. Moreover, while more say their state government is mostly honest rather than mostly corrupt (by 49% to 37%), a majority (54%) says the federal government is mostly corrupt.

Falling Ratings for the Federal Government

The overall decline in favorability toward the federal government in Washington is consistent with other views of government. Recent Pew Research Center studies have shown overall public trust in government at or near all-time lows (See these reports from [2011](#) and [2010](#).). And a survey conducted in [January 2012](#) found ratings of Congress have also reached historic lows.

In the current survey, 51% of Democrats have a favorable opinion of the federal government in Washington, compared with 27% of independents and just 20% of Republicans. This contrasts with partisan views of the federal government when George W. Bush was president. As recently as 2008, Republicans held a more favorable opinion of the federal government in Washington (53%) than did Democrats (29%).

Democrats' Ratings of Federal Government Decline

	Apr 2008	July 2009	Feb 2010	Feb 2011	Apr 2012	09-12 change
<i>Favorable view of federal gov't ...</i>	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	37	42	43	38	33	-9
Republican	53	24	30	25	20	-4
Democrat	29	61	60	58	51	-10
Independent	33	35	39	30	27	-8

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Since Barack Obama's first year in office, public assessments of the federal government have dropped nine-points, with most of the change among Democrats and independents. In 2009, 61% of Democrats and 35% of independents had favorable opinions of the federal government in Washington, those figures stand at 51% and 27%, respectively, today. Republicans' views, already low in 2009, have shown less change.

Republicans More Satisfied with State Governments

While Republicans offer an overwhelmingly negative assessment of the federal government in Washington, they take a far more positive view of state governments than do either Democrats or independents.

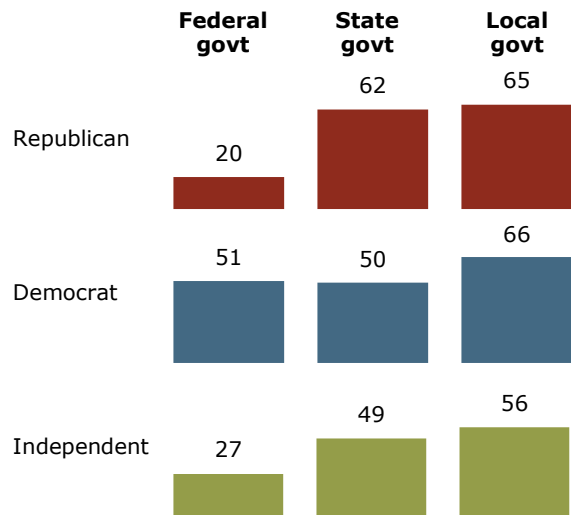
Among Republicans, more have a favorable than unfavorable view of their state government, by a 62% to 34% margin. Democrats (50% favorable, 45% unfavorable) and independents (49%, 44%) are divided.

The higher ratings among Republicans overall are driven by the strong satisfaction Republicans feel in the 21 states that have Republican leaders at the helm. Fully 70% of Republicans and Republican leaners in these states give their state government a favorable rating. Republican states are those that have Republican governors and Republican majorities in both state legislative chambers; among the largest are Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas (see appendix at the end of this report for a full list of states).

By contrast, in the 11 states with unified Democratic control (the largest being California, Illinois, Washington and Massachusetts), just 33% of Republicans and Republican leaners offer a favorable rating.

Democrats' views of their state governments are less correlated with the political makeup of the government. In the 11 states with Democratic governors and Democratic legislative majorities, 55% of Democrats and

Partisan Views of Government



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Republicans More Positive Toward State Governments in GOP States

Live in state where governor and majority in both legislative chambers are...	State government favorability among...		
	Total	Rep/lean R	Dem/lean D
All Republican (21 states)	%	%	%
Favorable	56	70	43
Unfavorable	39	27	52
No opinion	5	3	5
	100	100	100
All Democratic (11 states)			
Favorable	47	33	55
Unfavorable	48	64	40
No opinion	5	3	5
	100	100	100
Mixed (18 states)			
Favorable	53	55	55
Unfavorable	40	40	40
No opinion	7	5	5
	100	100	100

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See appendix for full list of states.

Democratic leaners rate their state government favorably; in states with Republican governors and Republican legislative majorities, 43% feel favorably toward their state government.

Views of State Governments

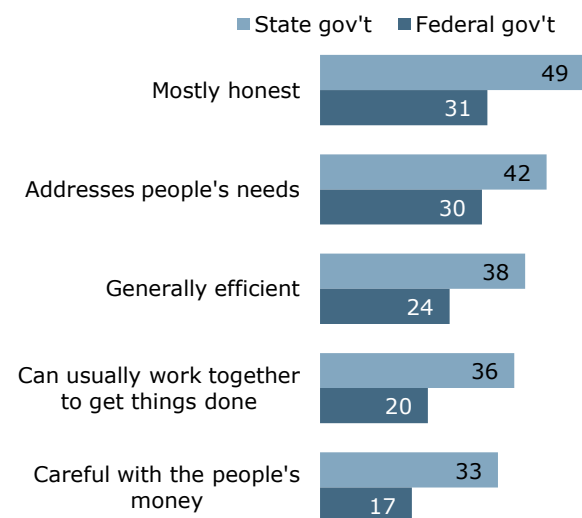
State governments receive more positive ratings than the federal government across a range of performance-related traits. In a separate survey, conducted April 19-22 among 1,004 adults, more people describe their state government as mostly honest (49%) rather than mostly corrupt (37%). Evaluations of the federal government run in the opposite direction: 54% say it is mostly corrupt, while just 31% say it is mostly honest. More say state governments address people's needs (42%) than say the same about the federal government (30%). State governments are also seen as more efficient (38%) than the federal government (24%). State governments are also seen as more efficient (38%) than the federal government (24%).

Partisanship is seen as a bigger problem at the federal level than at the state level. Three-quarters (75%) say the federal government is too divided along party lines, with just 20% saying the federal government can usually work together to get things done. State governments get substantially less negative ratings; 53% say their state government is too divided along party lines, while 36% say it usually works together to get things done.

Just one-in-three (33%) say their state government is careful with people's money, but that is nearly double the 17% who say the federal government is careful with people's money.

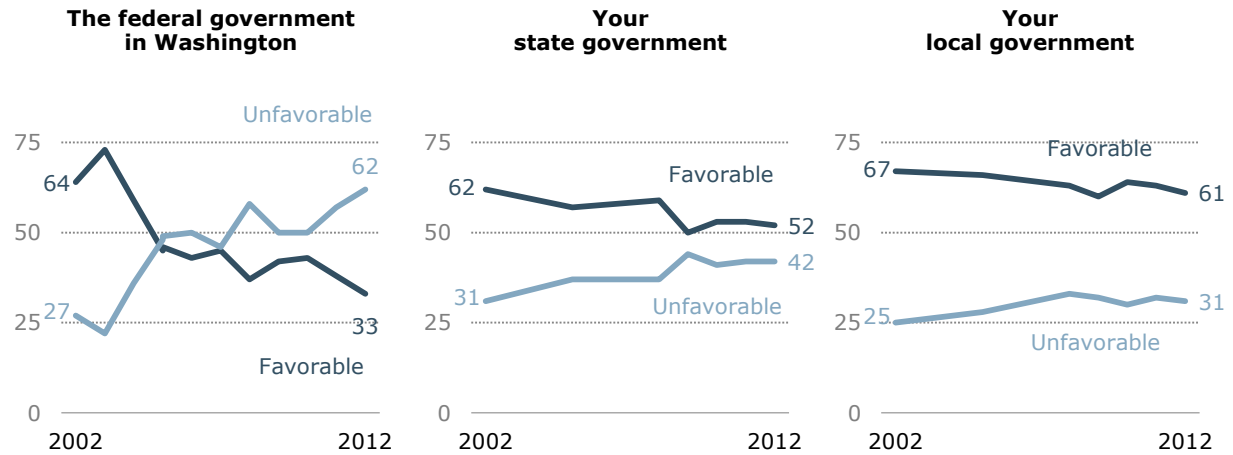
State Government Get Higher Marks for Performance

Percent saying _____ describes the government ...



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Apr. 19-22, 2012 Omnibus.

Views of Government: 2002-2012



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Apr. 4-15, 2012.

Appendix: Party of Governors and State Legislatures

Republican governors and Republican majorities in both state House and Senate:
AL, AZ, FL, GA, ID, IN, KS, LA, ME, MI, MS, ND, OH, OK, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, WY

Democratic governors and Democratic majorities in both state House and Senate:
AR, CA, CT, DE, HI, IL, MD, MA, VT, WA, WV

Mixed party control of governorship, state House, state Senate. This includes states with a nonpartisan legislature (NE), states with no majority (ties) in one or more chambers (AK, OR, WI), and states with independent governors (RI). Wisconsin results reflect outcome of recent recall elections.

AK, CO, IA, KY, MN, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OR, RI, VA, WI

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, March 19, 2012.

About the Surveys

Most of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted April 4-15, 2012, among a national sample of 3,008 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (1,805 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,203 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 603 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 March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. 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 2011 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...
Form B	1,514	2.9 percentage points
Form B		
Republicans	390	5.8 percentage points
Democrats	486	5.2 percentage points
Independents	568	4.8 percentage points

Some of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted April 19-22, 2012, among a national sample of 1,004 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (603 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 401 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 196 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted 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/>.

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Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,004	3.6 percentage points

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

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

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
2012 VALUES SURVEY
April 4-15, 2012
N=3008

QUESTIONS 1-2, 7-8, 17-21, 35-36 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 3-4, 9-16, 30, 40-59 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 6, 22-29, 31-14, 37-39

ASK FORM B ONLY [N=1514]:

Q.5 Is your overall opinion of [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE ITEMS a THROUGH c AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS a THROUGH c AS A BLOCK WITH ITEM d] very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable? [INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."] How about [NEXT ITEM]? [IF NECESSARY: Just in general, is your overall opinion of [ITEM] very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly UNfavorable, or very unfavorable?] [INTERVIEWERS: PROBE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "NEVER HEARD OF" AND "CAN'T RATE."]

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			(VOL.) Never heard of	(VOL.) Can't rate/ Ref
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Very</u>	<u>Mostly</u>		
a.FB The federal government in Washington								
Apr 4-15, 2012	33	7	26	62	25	37	*	5
Feb 2-7, 2011	38	6	32	57	19	37	*	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	43	6	38	50	16	34	*	7
Jul 22-26, 2009	42	4	38	50	18	31	*	8
April, 2008	37	6	31	58	21	37	1	4
January, 2007	45	7	38	46	15	31	1	8
February, 2006	43	6	37	50	16	34	*	7
December, 2005	46	7	39	49	18	31	*	5
Late October, 2005	45	6	39	48	16	32	*	7
February, 2004	59	10	49	36	11	25	*	5
April, 2003	73	14	59	22	5	17	0	5
December, 2002	64	11	53	27	7	20	*	9
Mid-November, 2001	82	17	65	15	3	12	0	3
Late October, 2000 (RVs)	54	7	47	40	10	30	*	6
October, 1997	38	4	34	59	18	41	0	3
b.FB Your STATE government								
Apr 4-15, 2012	52	11	42	42	15	27	*	6
Feb 2-7, 2011	53	10	42	42	14	28	*	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	53	9	44	41	14	27	0	6
Jul 22-26, 2009	50	6	44	44	16	28	*	6
April, 2008	59	9	50	37	16	21	0	4
December, 2005	57	8	49	37	11	26	*	6
December, 2002	62	15	47	31	10	21	1	7
Mid-November, 2001	77	15	62	18	4	14	*	5
October, 1997	66	10	56	29	7	22	*	5
c.FB Your LOCAL government								
Apr 4-15, 2012	61	13	48	31	9	22	*	7
Feb 2-7, 2011	63	15	48	32	10	22	1	5
Feb 3-9, 2010	64	11	53	30	10	20	*	6
Jul 22-26, 2009	60	8	52	32	9	23	0	8
April, 2008	63	11	52	33	12	21	1	3
December, 2005	66	12	54	28	10	18	*	6
December, 2002	67	16	51	25	9	16	*	7
Mid-November, 2001	78	15	63	17	4	13	*	5
October, 1997	68	12	56	25	7	18	*	7

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?

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Apr 4-15, 2012	24	31	39	3	*	2	15	15
Mar 7-11, 2012	24	34	36	3	1	2	16	17
Feb 8-12, 2012	26	32	36	4	1	2	13	17
Jan 11-16, 2012	22	31	42	3	*	2	17	16
Jan 4-8, 2012	26	31	35	4	*	4	14	14
Dec 7-11, 2011	23	33	38	3	*	2	12	17
Nov 9-14, 2011	24	33	38	3	1	2	16	15
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	23	33	38	2	1	3	18	16
Aug 17-21, 2011	24	30	40	3	*	3	17	18
Jul 20-24, 2011	24	32	38	4	*	2	16	14
Jun 15-19, 2011	26	34	32	4	*	4	13	13
May 25-30, 2011	24	33	38	3	*	2	15	17
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	25	32	37	3	*	3	17	16
Yearly Totals								
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	--	--	--	--	--

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
APRIL 19-22, 2012 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,004**

ASK OF A RANDOM HALF OF RESPONDENTS; DO NOT SPLIT BY FORM [N=507]:

First, I'd like to ask you about the federal government...

PEW.1 As I read some pairs of opposite phrases, please tell me which one better describes the federal government in Washington. First **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**. **[REPEAT AS NECESSARY: "Which statement better describes the federal government in Washington: [ITEM]?"]**

Apr 19-22

2012

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| a. | 24 | Generally efficient OR |
| | 71 | Generally inefficient |
| | 2 | Both/Neither (VOL.) |
| | 3 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| b. | 54 | Mostly corrupt OR |
| | 31 | Mostly honest |
| | 8 | Both/Neither (VOL.) |
| | 6 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| c. | 17 | Careful with the people's money OR |
| | 79 | Not careful with the people's money |
| | 2 | Both/Neither (VOL.) |
| | 3 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| d. | 30 | Addresses people's needs OR |
| | 66 | Does not address people's needs |
| | 3 | Both/Neither (VOL.) |
| | 2 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| e. | 75 | Is too divided along party lines OR |
| | 20 | Can usually work together to get things done |
| | 1 | Both/Neither (VOL.) |
| | 4 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

ASK RESPONDENTS WHO DID NOT GET QUESTION PEW.1; DO NOT SPLIT BY FORM [N=497]:

First, I'd like to ask you about your state government...

PEW.2 As I read some pairs of opposite phrases, please tell me which one better describes your state government. First **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**. **[REPEAT AS NECESSARY: "Which statement better describes your state government: [ITEM]?"]**

Apr 19-22

2012

- | | | |
|----|----|-------------------------------------|
| a. | 38 | Generally efficient OR |
| | 51 | Generally inefficient |
| | 3 | Both/Neither (VOL.) |
| | 8 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| b. | 37 | Mostly corrupt OR |
| | 49 | Mostly honest |
| | 4 | Both/Neither (VOL.) |
| | 9 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |
| c. | 33 | Careful with the people's money OR |
| | 56 | Not careful with the people's money |
| | 3 | Both/Neither (VOL.) |
| | 8 | Don't know/Refused (VOL.) |

PEW.2 CONTINUED...

Apr 19-22

2012

- d. 42 Addresses people's needs OR
 43 Does not address people's needs
 6 Both/Neither **(VOL.)**
 9 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**
- e. 53 Is too divided along party lines OR
 36 Can usually work together to get things done
 2 Both/Neither **(VOL.)**
 8 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

PEW.3-PEW.4 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**NO QUESTIONS PEW.5-PEW.6****PEW.7-PEW.10 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**