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Growing Concern over Vets' Financial Issues, PTSD

Four Years After Walter Reed, Government Still Faulted for Troop Support

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Growing Concern over Vets' Financial Issues, PTSD Four Years After Walter Reed, Government Still Faulted for Troop Support

As President Obama begins to draw down U.S. forces in Afghanistan, most Americans continue to say that government support for troops returning from war is falling short.

The public remains divided over whether the American people give enough support to soldiers who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Opinions on this tilt more negative, however, among the families of those who have served in the military since the 9/11 terror attacks.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted June 15-19 among 1,502 adults, finds that the government gets better marks for supporting returning troops than it did in 2007, amid the scandal over military medical care at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, or a year later.

Nonetheless, just 32% say the government gives enough support to soldiers who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly twice as many (62%) say the government does not provide enough support for the returning troops. In 2007 and 2008, even fewer said the government was providing adequate support for the troops (21% in 2007, 22% in 2008).

The public is split in its views of whether the American people give enough support for returning troops – 47% say they do, while 49% disagree. These views are little changed from 2007 or 2008. However, a majority (58%) of those in households with veterans who have served since the 9/11 attacks say the American people do not give enough supports to the returning troops. Far fewer (38%) say the American people have given enough support to the troops.

Vet Households Critical of Gov't and Public Support for Troops

	Total	Post-9/11 veteran household*
<i>US gov't gives enough support to troops returning from wars?</i>	%	%
Yes	32	31
No	62	65
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100
<i>American people give enough support to troops?</i>		
Yes	47	38
No	49	58
Don't know	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100
N=	1502	130

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 15-19, 2011
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.
 * Household member served in military since 9/11.

More See Gov't Falling Short on Vets' Finances, PTSD

When people who say the government has not provided enough support for returning troops are asked for specific problems, nearly as many cite a lack of help with financial issues (37%) as problems with medical care (42%). Three years ago, medical care was the dominant concern, mentioned by half of those who answered the question (50%). About a quarter (27%) cited financial issues.

Among financial concerns cited, 19% say the government is not doing enough to address the lack of jobs or preparation for work among returning soldiers. In February 2008, 12% cited these concerns.

About a third (34%) of those who say the government has not done enough for returning troops point to mental health issues as the biggest area of concern; that is unchanged from 2008. However, specific mentions of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have doubled – from 5% to 11%.

Where Government Falls Short in Addressing Veterans' Problems ...

<i>Problems of returning troops government is not doing enough about...</i>	Feb 2008	June 2011
	%	%
Medical care (Net)	50	42
General medical/health problems	33	19
Medical bills/insurance	4	6
Quality of care/facilities	7	5
Care related to disabilities	2	4
Injuries	2	4
Financial issues (Net)	27	37
No jobs/preparation for work	12	19
Financial support generally	9	9
Housing/Loss of homes/homeless	3	6
Benefits	3	4
Military pay	4	4
Mental health issues (Net)	34	34
General mental health	22	17
Post-traumatic stress disorder	5	11
Depression/Stress	7	5
Other issues (Net)	28	23
Insufficient support in general	5	6
Need for more support for families	5	5
Help with transition to civilian life	5	4
Other issues	6	11

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 15-19, 2011.
Based on those who said the government did not give enough support to returning soldiers (N=939). Figures add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

Partisan Agreement on Troop Support

Following media revelations in early 2007 about poor medical care in government facilities given to veterans of the ongoing wars, Democrats were more likely than Republicans to say the government was not doing enough for returning troops (81% vs. 58%).

Fewer Democrats and independents fault the government's support for returning troops today, while Republicans' views are little changed. In the new survey, there are no significant differences among partisans on this question: 61% of Republicans, 63% of Democrats and 64% of independents say the government does not give enough support to returning soldiers. There also are no significant partisan differences in views of public support for returning troops.

Women are somewhat more likely than men to say that both the American people and the government do not give enough support to returning troops. About two-thirds of women (67%) say the government does not provide enough support, compared with 57% of men. More than half of women (54%) say the American people do not give enough support to these veterans, compared with 43% of men.

Partisan Agreement: Gov't Does Too Little for Returning Troops

<i>US govt gives enough support to troops returning from wars</i>	March 2007	Feb 2008	June 2011
Yes	21	22	32
No	72	72	62
Don't know	7	6	6
	100	100	100
<i>% saying <u>not enough</u> support for troops</i>	%	%	%
Republican	58	62	61
Democrat	81	76	63
Independent	72	74	64

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 15-19, 2011.
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted June 15-19, 2011 among a national sample of 1,502 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (1,001 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 501 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 200 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, 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	1,502	3.5 percentage points
Republicans	408	6.0 percentage points
Democrats	495	5.5 percentage points
Independents	479	5.5 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
JUNE 2011 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
June 15-19, 2011
N=1502

QUESTIONS 1-2, 30-35, 37-42, 72-75, 77, 82-83 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 7-8, 16-18, 49-51, 53-57, 60-61, HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 3-6, 9-15, 19-29, 36, 43-48, 52, 59-59, 62-71, 76

ASK ALL:

RANDOMIZE Q.78 AND Q.79

Q.78 Do you think the American people give enough support to soldiers who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, or not?

Jun 15-19 <u>2011</u>		Feb <u>2008</u>	Mar <u>2007</u>
47	Yes, the American people give enough support	50	51
49	No, the American people do not give enough support	46	44
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	4	5

ASK ALL:

RANDOMIZE Q.78 AND Q.79

Q.79 Do you think the U.S. government gives enough support to soldiers who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, or not?

Jun 15-19 <u>2011</u>		Feb <u>2008</u>	Mar <u>2007</u>
32	Yes, the U.S. government gives enough support	22	21
62	No, the U.S. government does not give enough support	72	72
6	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	6	7

IF 'NO, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DOES NOT GIVE ENOUGH SUPPORT' (Q.79=2), ASK [N=939]:

Q.80 From what you have read and heard, what kinds of problems are returning soldiers having that the government is not doing enough about? [**OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW." ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES. PROBE ONCE WITH "ANYTHING ELSE?"**]

Jun 15-19 <u>2011</u>		<u>Feb 2008</u>
42	MEDICAL ISSUES (NET)	50
19	Medical/Health care problems/Physical health (general mentions)	33
6	Medical bills/Insurance/Health-care benefits	4
5	Quality of care/adequate or enough medical care/facilities	7
4	Disabilities/Loss of limbs/Care related to disabilities	2
4	Injuries	2
2	Other medical issues	3
1	Head/Brain injuries	1
1	Rehabilitation	2
37	FINANCIAL ISSUES (NET)	27
19	No jobs/Preparing returning military personnel for the workforce	12
9	Money/Financial support/Financial issues (general mentions)	9
6	Housing/losing homes/homeless veterans	3
4	Benefits (generally)	3
4	Military personnel don't get paid enough/Compensation	3
1	Education	3
34	MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES (NET)	34
17	Mental health/Psychological health issues (general mentions)	22
11	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	5
5	Depression/Stress/Emotional problems, etc.	7
2	Counseling	2
1	Suicide	1
28	OTHER ISSUES (NET)	23
11	Other, various	6
6	Don't get enough/not enough care or support (generally) upon return	5
5	Needs of military families/Need to support military families	5
4	Transition to civilian life	5
2	Deployments are too long/frequent/tightly spaced/Bring them home	2
1	Once back, they are forgotten/not respected	1
10	Don't know/Refused	11

* Total adds to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer. Individuals who list more than one item in a category are counted only once for the category's net calculation.

ASK ALL:

Q.81 How would you rate the job the government has been doing providing medical care to U.S. soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan? [**READ IN ORDER**]

Jun 15-19 <u>2011</u>		<u>Feb 2008</u>	<u>Mar 2007</u>
7	Excellent	5	4
31	Good	24	22
36	Only fair	37	33
16	Poor	26	32
10	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	8	9

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 <u>Rep</u>	Lean <u>Dem</u>
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
Mar 8-14, 2011	24	33	38	3	*	2	17	15
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	16
Feb 2-7, 2011	24	31	39	3	*	2	16	16
Jan 5-9, 2011	27	32	35	4	*	2	15	14
Dec 1-5, 2010	25	33	34	5	1	2	13	14
Nov 4-7, 2010	26	30	37	4	*	2	17	13
Oct 27-30, 2010	25	34	31	6	1	4	13	11
Oct 13-18, 2010	25	31	36	4	*	3	16	13
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	24	32	39	2	*	2	15	17
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	26	33	34	4	*	3	14	14
Jun 16-20, 2010	27	34	34	3	1	2	15	15
Yearly Totals								
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 ALL:

VET1 Have you or has anyone in your household ever served in the U.S. military or the military reserves?
[IF YES: Is that you or someone else?]

Jun 15-19

2011

37	Yes [NET]
13	Self
23	Someone else in household
1	Both
63	No, nobody in household has served
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF VET IN HOUSEHOLD (VET1=1,2,3):

VET2a Did **[IF VET1=1:you]** **[IF VET1=2:that person]** **[IF VET1=3:you or that person]** serve in the military or military reserves since September 11, 2001?

BASED ON VETERAN HOUSEHOLDS [N=586]:

Jun 15-19

2011

28	Yes [NET]
7	Self
21	Someone else in household
1	Both
72	No, nobody in household has served since September 11, 2001
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)