



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Public Sees Debt Debate as Important, Hard to Understand Debt Limit Fight Tops News Interest, Coverage

The debate over raising the federal debt limit proved to be the public's – and the media's – top news story last week as the federal government neared a possible default and high level deficit-reduction talks produced no agreement.

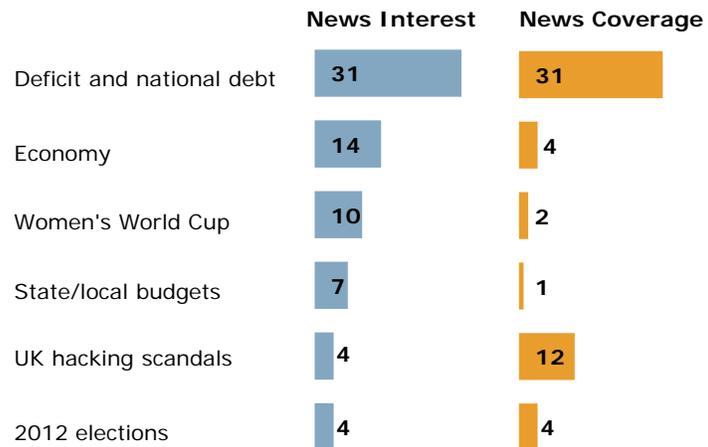
About three-in-ten (31%) say they followed the discussions about how to address the federal deficit and national debt more closely than any other story.

Another 14% say they most closely followed news about the

condition of the nation's struggling economy, according to the latest weekly News Interest Index survey conducted July 14-17 among 1,006 adults by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.

News about the debt limit debate made up 31% of the newshole, much more than any other story. More general news about the state of the economy accounted for 4% of coverage, while state and local budget woes accounted for another 1%, according to a separate analysis by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ).

News Interest vs. News Coverage



News interest shows the percentage of people who say they followed this story most closely, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, July 14-17, 2011. News coverage shows the percentage of news coverage devoted to each story, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, July 11-17, 2011.

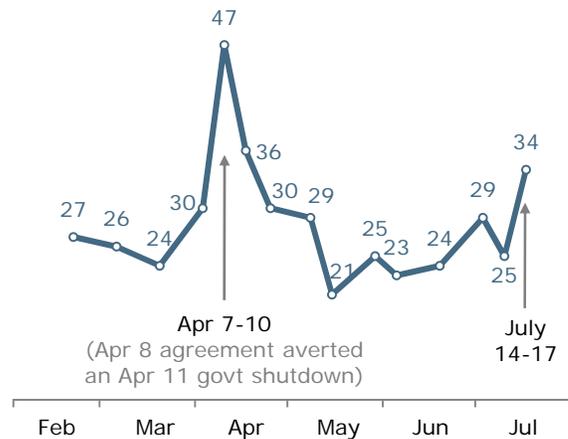
Looking at a separate measure of interest, 34% of the public says they followed news about the debt talks very closely. That's up from 25% one week earlier. Still, it falls short of the 47% who very closely followed the final days of the April budget standoff between the White House and congressional Republicans that nearly led to a government shutdown.

Many apparently do not see a similar sense of urgency in the debt limit debate. While four-in-ten (40%) say that, from what they've read and heard, it is absolutely essential that the federal debt limit be raised by Aug. 2 to avoid an economic crisis, about as many (39%) say the country can go past this date without major economic problems, [according to a separate Pew Research/ Washington Post poll released Monday.](#)

While Republicans and Democrats offer differing perspectives on that question, partisans express comparable levels of interest in the debt limit story. Nearly four-in-ten in each (38%) say they followed news about the debate very closely last week; 31% of independents also say this.

The debate, though, is attracting greater interest from Republicans and Republican-leaning independents who agree with the Tea Party movement. Among that group, 52% say they followed news about the debt limit debate very closely last week. Among Republicans and GOP-leaners who do not agree with the Tea Party or have no opinion of it, 27% followed very closely.

Attention to Budget, Deficit and Debt Debates in Washington



PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 14-17, 2011. See topline for specific question wording at different times.

Debt Limit Debate Seen as Important but Hard to Understand

An overwhelming majority of Americans agree that the debate over the nation's debt limit is important to people like themselves (90%), while nearly seven-in-ten (68%) say it is interesting. The public is more narrowly divided on whether the debate is tough to understand. Just more than half (52%) say it is hard to understand, while 44% say it is easy to understand. Differences among partisans on these questions are slim.

The overall numbers are similar to public assessments of last year's debate over financial regulatory changes or the debate in late 2009 over health care reform legislation. Still, in both of those earlier debates, greater numbers said the topics were hard to understand. In December 2009, for example, 69% said the health care debate was hard to understand, while 29% said it was easy to grasp.

Among partisans, 51% of Republicans, 54% of Democrats and 53% of independents say the deficit and debt limit debate is hard to understand. But that number drops to 42% among Republicans and GOP-leaning independents who say they agree with the Tea Party movement. Among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents that do not agree with the Tea Party, nearly six-in-ten (59%) say the issue is hard to understand.

The Week's News

About four-in-ten Americans (41%) say they followed news about the condition of the U.S. economy very closely last week. That's comparable to the level of interest in recent weeks amid continuing signs of a slowing recovery.

But the public focused most closely on the related debate over the federal debt limit, a key component of which has been the potential impact on the recovery if the government cannot borrow more money. About three-in-ten (31%) say this was the story they followed most closely.

Impressions of Debt Limit Debate

	Health care reform	Financial regulation	Debt debate
<i>Do you think the debt limit issue is...</i>	Dec 11-14 2009	May 20-23 2010	Jul 14-17 2011
	%	%	%
Important to people like you*	93	87	90
Not important to people like you	6	9	9
Don't know	1	3	2
	100	100	100
Interesting	70	60	68
Boring	27	34	27
Don't know	2	6	5
	100	100	100
Easy to understand	29	32	44
Hard to understand	69	62	52
Don't know	2	6	4
	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 14-17, 2011.

* In May 2010 and Dec 2009 this item asked if the issues were "important or not important."

More than a quarter (27%) say they very closely followed news about local and state budget problems; 7% say this was the news they followed most closely. Primarily a local story, this news accounted for 1% of the coverage examined by PEJ.

Nearly two-in-ten (18%) say they followed news about the 2012 elections very closely. That's similar to the level of interest in recent weeks. Partisans show comparable interest in election news. This was the top story of the week for 4% of the public. News about the campaign made up 4% of coverage.

Another 15% say they very closely followed news about the U.S soccer team making the finals of the Women's World Cup. The level of interest is comparable to the 14% that said they followed the men's World Cup tournament in South African very closely in June 2010. One-in-ten (10%) say this was the news they followed most closely. News about the tournament accounted for 2% of the week's coverage, according to PEJ.

As with most sports stories, men were more likely than women to follow the Women's World Cup very closely (19% vs. 11% followed very closely). The event was also among the top stories for Americans under age 30. This is not because younger people were substantially more interested in this story than people 30 and older; relatively few in any age range report having followed the U.S. women's World Cup team's success very closely. But younger Americans were so much *less* interested in the other news of the week, that about one-in-five (19%) said this was the most interesting story to them. That's comparable to the percent of young people rating the debt debate as their top story of the week (21%).

Just more than one-in-ten (12%) say they very closely followed reports that British newspapers owned by Rupert Murdoch may have hacked into people's phones and illegally obtained financial and medical records; 4% say this was the news they followed most closely. The growing scandal accounted for 12% of the newshole, ranking this among the week's most covered stories.

The story grew in prominence on Sunday, as the survey period was nearing its end, as a former top executive of the newspaper group was arrested and the top official at Scotland Yard resigned his post.

Though overall interest has been relatively modest, there are big differences among partisans. Roughly two-in-ten Democrats (21%) say they followed news about Murdoch's British papers very closely last week, compared with 5% of Republicans and 11% of independents. Among Murdoch's U.S. properties are the Fox News Channel and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Fewer Republicans Following "News of the World" Scandal

	% following very closely
Total	12
Republican	5
Independent	11
Democrat	21

PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 14-17, 2011.

News Interest

% following each story very closely

Which one story did you follow most closely?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER July 14-17, 2011.

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 July 11-17, and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected July 14-17 from a nationally representative sample of 1,006 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. (For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.) The News Interest Index survey collects data from Thursday through Sunday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted July 14-17, 2011, among a national sample of 1,006 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (604 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 402 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 166 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.

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 is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status 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	1006	4.0 percentage points
Republicans	279	7.5 percentage points
Democrats	310	7.0 percentage points
Independents	325	7.0 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.

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX
July 14-17, 2011 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1006

ASK ALL:

PEW.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>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a. The U.S. women's soccer team making it to the World Cup finals					
July 14-17, 2011	15	19	22	43	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON¹:					
June 24-27, 2010: <i>The World Cup soccer tournament in South Africa</i>	14	19	25	41	*
June 17-20, 2010	11	14	22	52	*
June, 2006: <i>Soccer's World Cup championship being held in Germany</i>	8	15	19	57	1
June, 2002: <i>Soccer's World Cup championship being held in Japan and South Korea</i>	10	16	23	50	1
July, 1999: <i>Women's World Cup Soccer</i>	18	26	21	35	*
b. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
July 14-17, 2011	41	30	14	14	1
July 7-10, 2011	36	30	15	18	1
June 30-July 3, 2011	38	32	13	16	1
June 23-26, 2011	37	29	15	19	*
June 16-19, 2011	39	33	14	13	*
June 9-12, 2011	39	30	15	16	1
June 2-5, 2011	35	34	17	14	*
May 19-22, 2011	33	34	17	16	*
May 12-15, 2011	32	32	17	18	2
May 5-8, 2011	40	35	15	9	1
April 21-25, 2011	41	33	12	14	*
April 14-17, 2011	44	30	14	12	1
April 7-10, 2011	46	30	14	10	*
March 31-April 3, 2011	42	31	16	11	0
March 24-27, 2011	36	32	17	15	*
March 17-20, 2011	38	32	17	13	*
March 10-13, 2011	40	30	16	13	*
March 3-6, 2011	37	31	17	13	1
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, 2011	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

¹ With the exception of July, 1999 all trends for comparison refer to men's World Cup soccer tournaments.

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
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	*
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

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
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	*
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

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
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
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
c. Reports that British newspapers owned by Rupert Murdoch may have hacked into people's phones and illegally obtained financial and medical records					
July 14-17, 2011	12	22	23	41	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
August, 2007: <i>Rupert Murdoch's purchase of Wall Street Journal publisher Dow Jones and Company</i>	7	17	22	54	*
d. News about state and local budget problems					
July 14-17, 2011	27	28	22	22	1
May 26-29, 2011	26	29	19	26	*

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
March 17-20, 2011	26	29	22	23	1
February 17-20, 2011	28	31	17	23	1
January 6-9, 2011	24	37	18	20	1
June 24-27, 2010	26	35	22	15	1
March 5-8, 2010	31	32	19	18	*
April 9-13, 2009	28	30	21	21	*
e. News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections					
July 14-17, 2011	18	26	27	28	1
July 7-10, 2011	16	23	27	33	1
June 30-July 3, 2011	21	28	24	25	2
June 23-26, 2011	19	26	24	31	*
June 16-19, 2011	23	29	23	25	*
June 9-12, 2011	18	30	22	30	1
June 2-5, 2011	21	31	22	26	*
May 26-29, 2011	20	27	24	28	*
May 19-22, 2011	15	27	24	32	1
May 12-15, 2011	15	22	26	35	1
May 5-8, 2011	16	24	27	32	1
April 21-25, 2011	18	26	23	32	1
April 14-17, 2011	20	23	29	27	1
March 24-27, 2011	13	19	26	41	1
March 10-13, 2011	15	21	26	38	0
February 10-13, 2011	16	19	24	40	*
February 3-6, 2011	15	20	23	42	*
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
2008 Election					
October 31-November 3, 2008: <i>News about the presidential election</i>	57	29	9	5	*
October 24-27, 2008: <i>News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election</i>	44	36	11	8	1
October 17-20, 2008	61	28	7	4	*
October 10-13, 2008	52	31	12	5	*
October 3-6, 2008	57	31	8	4	*
September 26-29, 2008	56	29	10	5	*
September 19-22, 2008	47	33	14	6	*
September 12-15, 2008	40	38	14	7	1
September 5-8, 2008	45	39	12	4	*
August 29-31, 2008	45	32	15	8	*
August 22-25, 2008	31	36	22	11	*
August 15-18, 2008	25	41	19	14	1
August 8-11, 2008	27	38	22	13	*
August 1-4, 2008	30	42	19	9	*
July 25-28, 2008	30	34	21	15	*
July 18-21, 2008	30	35	21	14	*
July 11-14, 2008	28	34	22	15	1
July 3-7, 2008	25	35	23	17	*
June 27-30, 2008	39	33	18	10	*
June 20-23, 2008	28	38	22	12	*
June 13-16, 2008	35	35	20	10	*
June 6-9, 2008	38	35	17	10	*
May 30-June 2, 2008	30	35	21	14	*
May 22-25, 2008	32	37	20	11	*
May 16-19, 2008	33	37	19	10	1
May 9-12, 2008	35	36	18	11	*
May 2-5, 2008	27	35	23	14	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
April 25-28, 2008	34	37	18	11	*
April 18-21, 2008	29	41	19	10	1
April 11-14, 2008	31	37	22	10	*
April 4-7, 2008	33	36	17	14	*
March 28-31, 2008	31	41	18	10	*
March 20-24, 2008	34	37	18	11	*
March 14-17, 2008	40	37	16	7	*
March 7-10, 2008	39	36	15	9	1
February 29-March 3, 2008	43	34	14	9	*
February 22-25, 2008	42	37	13	8	*
February 15-18, 2008	44	36	10	10	*
February 8-11, 2008	39	37	15	9	0
February 1-4, 2008	37	35	16	12	*
January 25-28, 2008	36	37	14	12	1
January 18-21, 2008	36	34	18	12	*
January 11-14, 2008: <i>News about the New Hampshire primaries and the presidential campaign</i>	32	31	19	17	1
January 4-7, 2008: <i>News about candidates for the 2008 presidential election</i>	33	36	19	11	1
December 14-17, 2007	25	34	22	19	*
December 7-10, 2007	24	35	22	19	*
November 30 – December 3, 2007	23	35	23	19	*
November 23-26, 2007	20	33	26	20	1
November 16-19, 2007	26	33	21	19	1
November 9-12, 2007	21	33	25	21	*
November 2-5, 2007	27	30	21	21	1
October 26-29, 2007	21	34	26	19	*
October 19-22, 2007	23	32	22	23	*
October 12-15, 2007	13	31	26	30	*
October 5-8, 2007	22	30	24	24	*
September 28 – October 1, 2007	21	34	25	20	*
September 21-24, 2007	24	31	22	23	*
September 14-17, 2007	22	31	24	23	*
September 7-10, 2007	18	34	26	22	*
August 30-September 2, 2007	19	35	21	25	*
August 24-27, 2007	22	28	24	26	*
August 17-20, 2007	19	27	24	30	*
August 10-13, 2007	23	32	21	24	*
August 3-6, 2007	19	31	25	25	*
July 27-30, 2007	19	32	22	26	1
July 20-23, 2007	16	26	30	27	1
July 13-16, 2007	17	29	27	27	*
July 6-9, 2007	24	29	24	22	1
June 29-July 2, 2007	20	32	25	23	*
June 22-25, 2007	18	31	21	30	*
June 15-18, 2007	17	32	26	25	*
June 8-11, 2007	19	30	24	26	1
June 1-4, 2007	16	27	32	24	1
May 24-27, 2007	22	33	23	22	*
May 18-21, 2007	18	31	24	27	*
May 11-14, 2007	18	30	23	28	1
May 4-7, 2007	23	34	21	21	1
April 27-30, 2007	14	30	29	26	1
April 20-23, 2007	18	28	27	27	*
April 12-16, 2007	18	28	27	27	*
April 5-9, 2007	25	30	26	19	*
March 30-April 2, 2007	20	29	27	23	1
March 23-26, 2007	20	32	22	26	*

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very <u>closely</u>	Fairly <u>closely</u>	Not too <u>closely</u>	Not at all <u>closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
March 16-19, 2007	15	28	29	27	1
March 9-12, 2007	24	30	23	23	*
March 2-5, 2007	19	31	26	23	1
February 23-26, 2007	22	33	24	21	*
February 16-19, 2007	18	32	22	27	1
February 9-12, 2007	24	30	24	21	1
February 2-5, 2007	24	36	22	18	*
January 26-29, 2007	24	33	23	20	*
January 19-22, 2007: <i>Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2008</i>	24	27	22	26	1
2004 Election					
November, 2004: <i>News about the presidential election</i>	47	35	10	7	1
Mid-October, 2004: <i>News about candidates for the 2004 presidential election</i>	46	30	12	11	1
September, 2004	40	34	14	11	1
August, 2004	32	38	16	14	*
July, 2004	29	37	18	15	1
June, 2004	28	34	19	18	1
April, 2004	31	33	19	16	1
Mid-March, 2004	35	34	18	13	*
Late February, 2004 (GAP)	24	40	23	12	1
Early February, 2004: <i>The race for the Democratic presidential nomination</i>	29	37	20	13	1
Mid-January, 2004	16	30	27	26	1
Early January, 2004	14	32	30	23	1
December, 2003	16	26	27	30	1
November, 2003	11	26	34	28	1
October, 2003	12	27	28	32	1
September, 2003	17	25	30	27	1
Mid-August, 2003	12	27	27	33	1
May, 2003	8	19	31	41	1
January, 2003: <i>Recent announcements by prominent Democrats about plans to run for president in 2004</i>	14	28	29	28	1
2000 Election					
Early November, 2000: <i>News about the presidential election</i>	33	41	15	10	1
Mid-October, 2000: <i>News about the presidential election campaign</i>	36	35	17	11	1
Early October, 2000	35	35	19	10	1
September, 2000	22	42	21	15	1
July, 2000: <i>News about candidates for the 2000 presidential election</i>	21	38	20	20	1
June, 2000	23	32	23	21	1
May, 2000	18	33	26	23	*
April, 2000	18	39	22	20	1
Early April, 2000					
March, 2000	26	41	19	13	1
February, 2000	26	36	21	17	*
January, 2000	19	34	28	18	1
December, 1999	16	36	24	23	1
October, 1999	17	32	28	22	1
September, 1999	15	31	33	20	1
July, 1999	15	38	24	22	1
June, 1999	11	25	29	34	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
1996 Election					
November, 1996: <i>News about the presidential election</i>	28	42	19	10	*
October, 1996: <i>News about the presidential election campaign</i>	31	39	18	12	*
Early September, 1996	24	36	23	17	*
July, 1996	22	40	23	14	1
April, 1996	23	35	25	17	*
March, 1996 <i>News about the Republican presidential candidates</i>	26	41	20	13	*
January, 1996	10	34	31	24	1
October, 1995	12	36	30	22	*
August, 1995	13	34	28	25	*
June, 1995	11	31	31	26	1
1992 Election					
October, 1992: <i>News about the presidential election (RVs)</i>	55	36	8	2	0
September, 1992: <i>News about the presidential election campaign</i>	42	37	13	8	*
August, 1992: <i>News about the presidential election (RVs)</i>	36	51	11	2	0
July, 1992: <i>News about the presidential campaign</i>	20	45	26	9	*
May, 1992: <i>The presidential election campaign</i>	32	44	16	8	*
March, 1992: <i>The race for the Democratic presidential nomination</i>	35	40	16	9	*
March, 1992: <i>The race for the Republican presidential nomination</i>	25	40	22	13	1
February 1992: <i>The Democratic primary in New Hampshire</i>	19	31	26	24	*
February, 1992: <i>The Republican primary in New Hampshire</i>	19	31	26	23	1
January, 1992: <i>News about the Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination</i>	11	25	36	27	1
December, 1991	10	28	32	30	*
October, 1991	12	26	31	29	2
1988 Election					
October, 1988: <i>News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (RVs)</i>	43	44	11	2	*
August, 1988 (RVs)	39	45	13	3	*
May, 1988 (RVs)	22	46	23	6	3
November, 1987: <i>News about the Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination</i>	15	28	35	21	1
November, 1987: <i>News about the Republican candidates for the presidential nomination</i>	13	28	36	22	1
September, 1987: <i>Coverage of the Democratic and Republican candidates for the presidential nomination</i>	14	34	37	14	1
f. Discussions in Washington about how to address the federal budget deficit and national debt					
July 14-17, 2011	34	29	18	19	*
July 7-10, 2011	25	30	21	23	*
June 30-July 3, 2011	29	30	15	25	2

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
June 16-19, 2011: <i>Debate in Washington over whether to raise the federal debt limit</i>	24	26	22	28	*
June 2-5, 2011	23	24	22	31	*
May 26-29, 2011: <i>Discussions in Washington about how to address the federal budget deficit</i>	25	26	20	29	*
May 12-15, 2011	21	26	24	28	1
May 5-8, 2011: <i>Discussions in Washington about how to address the federal budget deficit and national debt</i>	29	28	22	20	1
April 21-25, 2011	30	31	18	21	*
April 14-17, 2011	36	27	18	19	1
April 7-10, 2011: <i>The threat of a government shutdown because of budget disagreements in Washington</i>	47	26	15	12	*
March 31-April 3, 2011: <i>Discussions in Washington about how to address the federal budget deficit</i>	30	27	21	22	*
March 17-20, 2011	24	25	24	26	1
March 3-6, 2011	26	29	19	26	1
February 17-20, 2011	27	30	17	25	1
December 2-5, 2010	35	25	21	17	2
November 11-14, 2010: <i>Proposals made by leaders of the federal budget deficit commission</i>	15	21	21	41	1
January 9-12, 2009: <i>Projections of a record high federal budget deficit this year</i>	35	30	19	16	*
November, 1990: <i>Congressional and administration efforts to reach a budget deficit agreement</i>	34	33	20	11	2
October, 1990: <i>Attempts by Congress and the administration to find ways to reduce the budget deficit</i>	34	37	17	12	*

ASK ALL:

PEW.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.]**

Jul 14-17
2011

31	Discussions in Washington about how to address the federal budget deficit and national debt
14	Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
10	The U.S. women's soccer team making it to the World Cup finals
7	News about state and local budget problems
4	Reports that British newspapers owned by Rupert Murdoch may have hacked into people's phones and illegally obtained financial and medical records
4	News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections
14	Some other story (VOL.)
16	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PEW.3 Do you think the debt limit issue is... **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**. Do you think it is **[NEXT ITEM]**?

		TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
		FINANCIAL REGULATION		HEALTH CARE REFORM			
	Jul 14-17		May 20-23	Dec 11-14	Oct 2-5	Sep 3-6	Jul 17-20
	<u>2011</u>		<u>2010²</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2009</u>
a.	68	Interesting	60	70	71	72	72
	27	Boring	34	27	26	26	25
	5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	6	2	2	2	3
c.	44	Easy to understand	32	29	33	31	34
	52	Hard to understand	62	69	66	67	63
	4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	6	2	1	2	3
d.	90	Important to people like you	87	93	94	93	95
	9	NOT important to people like you	9	6	6	6	4
	2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	3	1	*	*	1

PEWWP.1 AND PEW.4 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

² For May 20-23, 2010 and before the response options for item PEW.3d read, " Important or Unimportant."