

TABLE 8
MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE

"What do you think are the two most important issues for the government to address?"

Spontaneous, unprompted replies

Base: All adults

	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	07	08	09	09	10	10	'11	'11	'11	12
	May	Jan	Feb	Aug	Dec	Dec	June	Oct	Aug	June	Oct	Oct	Mar	Nov	Jan	Nov	Jan	May	Sept	Jan
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Employment/jobs	5	3	4	4	7	8	8	10	3	7	5	5	21	24	31	36	33	33	50	42
The economy (non-specific)	8	9	7	5	32	34	25	28	19	14	13	64	50	34	32	33	24	29	27	31
Healthcare (not Medicare)	10	11	12	15	5	10	14	18	11	12	25	22	25	47	45	30	35	18	17	21
Budget deficit/National debt	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	3	X	X	8	12	17	13	12
Taxes	14	16	12	13	6	5	11	8	5	4	3	6	4	4	4	7	6	4	7	10
Budget/Government spending	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	5	6	2	6	11	7	10	13	9	11	9
Education	15	14	21	25	12	11	13	7	8	7	6	6	5	5	5	6	7	7	5	8
Immigration	2	1	*	1	1	1	2	2	3	20	12	3	4	5	5	8	8	10	6	6
Downsizing government	X	X	X	1	*	X	X	1	*	1	1	*	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	4
Environment	3	2	3	3	1	3	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	3
Foreign policy (non-specific)	3	5	4	3	2	4	2	3	2	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3
Social security	6	6	24	16	3	2	4	4	10	5	3	3	1	2	1	4	3	3	7	3
Human/civil/women's rights	2	1	*	1	1	1	*	1	1	1	2	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Wars/Armed conflicts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	6	3	2
Military/defense	2	2	2	4	4	1	5	3	1	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
(Programs for) the poor/ poverty	3	2	2	3	1	2	3	*	4	4	4	*	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
National security	X	X	2	2	6	3	6	5	2	2	2	5	2	1	4	1	1	1	1	2
Housing	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	*	*	1	2	2	6	1	1	1	2	1	2	2
Terrorism	X	X	X	X	22	17	11	7	7	4	4	3	4	3	6	2	2	4	1	2
Gas and oil prices	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	10	8	2	1	1	1	*	1	1	12	2	2
Abortion	2	2	2	6	1	1	1	4	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*	1
Bipartisanship	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	2	1

Obama/president	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	*	*	1	1	1	*	1	1	1
Ethics in government	*	*	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	*	1	1
Homelessness	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	*	1	1	3	*	*	1	1	*	1	*	*	1
Business accountability/bailouts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	*	*	1
Homeland/domestic security/public safety	X	X	X	X	8	9	3	6	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Medicare	4	5	5	6	1	1	4	3	2	1	3	2	*	*	*	2	1	2	1	1
Welfare	14	8	4	2	1	1	3	*	3	1	2	*	*	1	*	1	1	*	1	1
Inflation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	2	3	*	1	1	*	1	1	1	1	1
Energy	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	4	4	1	4	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
(The) war	X	X	X	X	12	18	8	35	41	27	24	14	9	9	2	4	3	*	1	*
Infrastructure	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	1	1	*
Afghanistan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	1	*	*	*
Religion (decline of)	*	1	*	1	2	1	1	1	*	1	1	*	*	*	*	1	*	*	*	*
Same sex rights	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	2	*	*	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*
Iraq	*	*	1	X	X	11	3	9	6	8	14	7	2	4	2	1	*	*	*	*
Judicial/Legal Issues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	*	2	1	1	*	1	1	1	*	*	*	x	*
Programs for the elderly (not Medicare/Social Security)	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	*	*	*	1	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Crime/violence	19	13	8	10	1	2	3	1	3	2	2	1	*	1	1	*	1	1	*	X
Income gap/Wealth distribution/Middle class	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	1	1	x	X
Overspending/wasting money	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	2	x	X
Other	8	19	2	19	3	8	8	8	1	6	5	15	5	3	1	6	5	3	6	7
Not sure/refused/no issue	9	12	16	18	11	10	12	9	8	6	8	4	4	3	2	2	4	4	3	3

* = Less than 0.5%, X = Not mentioned as specific issue

Note: Prior to March, 2009, this question was asked via telephone