

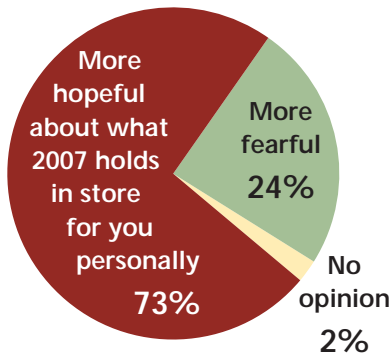
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The New Year

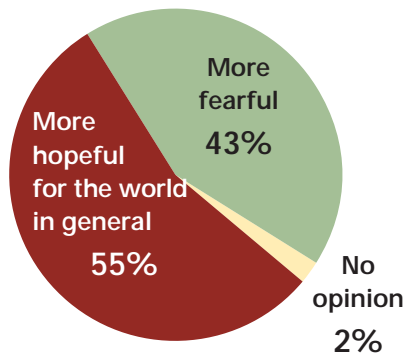
As Americans contemplate the year 2007, they are more optimistic about their personal prospects than they are about the world in general. Looking ahead, people are most optimistic about their own financial situations and the country's ability to defend itself against a terrorist attack and least optimistic about the war in Iraq.

Question: Looking ahead to next year, are you . . . ?



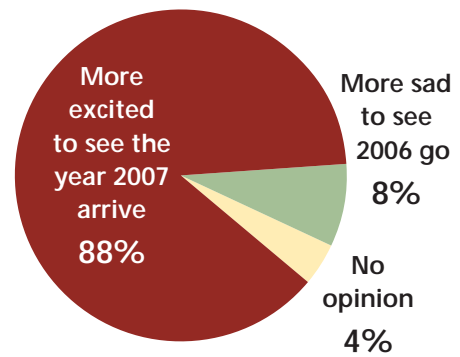
Source: ABC News/Washington Post, December 2006.

Question: How about for the world in general? Are you . . . ?



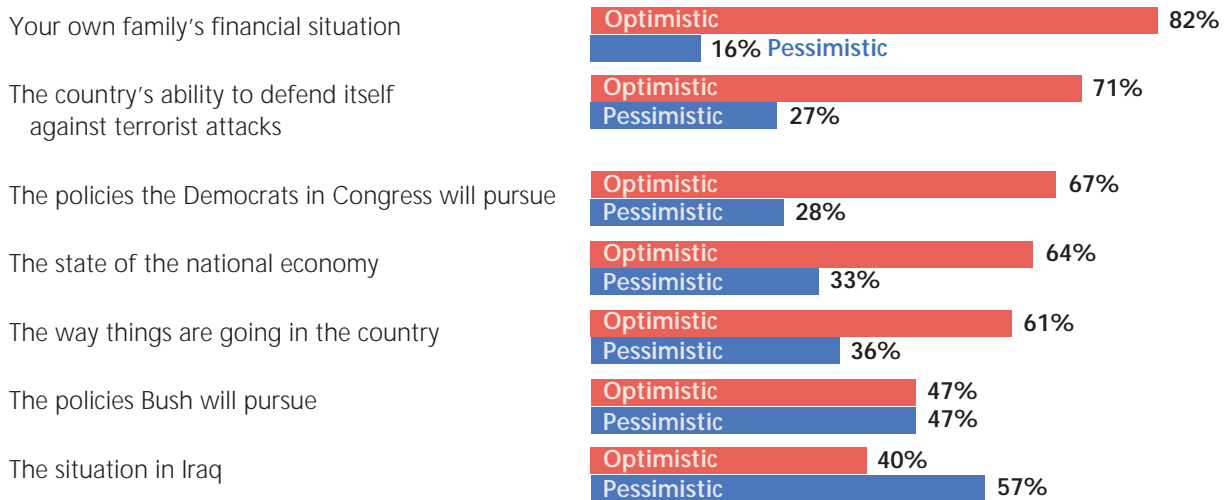
Source: ABC News/Washington Post, December 2006.

Question: If you had to choose, would you say you are . . . ?



Source: The Gallup Organization, December 2006.

Question: Thinking about the next 12 months, would you say you feel . . . ?



Source: ABC News/Washington Post, December 2006.

The New Congress

Americans believe the change in Congressional leadership is a good thing. More trust the Democrats in Congress to handle issues than trust George W. Bush. A third say the new Congress will be more ethical and honest than in the past, but a majority say it will be about the same. A plurality believes the new Congress will be as partisan and divided as it was in the past.

Question: As you may know, control of Congress will switch from the Republicans to the Democrats next month. Do you think that's a good thing, a bad thing, or doesn't it make any difference?

	Good thing	Bad thing	No difference
Jan. 1995*	48%	20%	28%
Dec. 2006	55	17	27

Note: * In the 1995 question, people were asked about control of Congress switching from the Democrats to the Republicans.
Source: ABC News/Washington Post, latest that of December 2006.

Question: Who do you trust to do a better job handling _____, Bush or the Democrats in Congress?

	Trust	
	Bush	Congressional Democrats
The situation in Iraq	32%	56%
The economy	34	58
The campaign against terrorism	41	50
Health care	26	64
Immigration	34	49
Ethics in government	35	49

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, December 2006.

Question: Do you . . . ?

Approve of the way the U.S. Congress is doing its job	37%
Disapprove	57
2006 average	36

Source: ABC News/Washington Post, December 2006.

Question: Do you expect the new Congress to be . . . ?

More honest and ethical than it has been in the past	33%
Less honest and ethical	12
About the same	53

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, December 2006.

Question: Do you expect the new Congress to be . . . ?

More partisan and divided than in the past	26%
Less	23
About the same	46

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal, December 2006.

Question: Generally speaking, now that the Democrats are a majority in both houses of Congress, how much do you think . . . ?

Will be able to accomplish in next two years

George W. Bush		Democrats in Congress	
4%	A great deal	14%	
38	Some	53	
41	Not much	25	
16	Nothing at all	6	

Source: Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg, December 2006.

A Look at the Makeup of the 110th Congress

Democrats picked up thirty seats in the House and six in the Senate to take the majority for the first time since 1994. The 110th Congress has 233 Democrats and 202 Republicans in the House and fifty-one Democrats and forty-nine Republicans in the Senate (technically Senators Bernie Sanders and Joe Lieberman call themselves Independent and Independent Democrat, but they both caucus with Democrats).

An Across-the-Board Democratic Election Victory: The 2006 midterm election was an across-the-board victory for Democrats similar to the broad election victory for Republicans in 1994. Democrats gained at every level. In addition to their House and Senate gains, Democrats picked up six governorships. (According to the National

(continued on the next page)

(THE 110TH CONGRESS, continued from previous page)

Conference of State Legislatures (<http://www.ncsl.org>), Democrats gained ten new legislative chambers (Republicans also picked up one and one is now tied) and 339 legislative seats. These gains are slightly smaller than the gains Republicans made in 1994, but the Democrats' 2006 victory was on the same scale. Even the gain in House seats (which was smaller) can be explained in part by the fact that Democrats ran with fewer possible pick-ups: fewer open seats, fewer freshmen, and fewer Republicans in Democratic seats.

No incumbent Democratic House member, senator, or governor lost. Nor did any Democratic open seats in the House, Senate, or governorships go to Republicans.

Office	1994	2006
	Rep. Gains	Dem. Gains
House	55	30
Senate	8	6
Governor	12	6
State legislative chambers	20	8
State legislators	514	339

The election was notable in three ways. First, it deepened the geographic trends of both parties, with Democrats nearly wiping out Republicans in the Northeast. Second, the number of women has continued to increase. Third, Republicans lost many of their more moderate members.

Geographic Trends: Over the past forty years, the South has changed from a Democratic region to a Republican one. The Northeast has become significantly more Democratic. The Midwest remains the great competitive swing region in American politics.

The 2006 election extended these trends. Democrats gained most heavily in the Northeast and Midwest, while Democratic gains in the South and West were few. Republicans were nearly wiped out in the Northeast.

In the House, Democrats gained five seats in the South, ten in the Midwest and plains states, eleven in the Northeast, and four seats in the West.

After the midterm election, there is only one Republican House member representing New England, Chris Shays, who survived a close challenge winning with 51 percent of the vote.

	109th		110th	
	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.
South	82	49	77	54
Midwest	66	43	56	53
Northeast	35	57	24	68
West	49	54	45	58

Women: Women have gained steadily in Congress. In 1976, there were only nineteen women in the House, and no women in the Senate. Women have gained in numbers each election since, and 2006 was no exception with women gaining two Senate and four House seats. With the Democratic victory, the number of Democratic women increased, while the number of Republican women declined by three. More than two-thirds of the women in both chambers are Democrats.

Women in Congress

	109th			110th		
	Rep.	Dem.	Total	Rep.	Dem.	Total
House	24	43	67	21	50	71
Senate	5	9	14	5	11	16

Moderates: While there were some prominent Democratic moderates elected to the House and the Senate, the overall effect of the 2006 election was to diminish the number of moderates in the Congress. Most Democrats elected were not moderates, and many Republican moderates lost. By one voting measure (<http://www.voteview.com>, developed by political scientists Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal), eight of the fifteen most moderate Republicans in the 109th Congress will not be returning for the 110th.

In addition, many of the Republican members who held seats in the districts John Kerry had won were defeated. In the 109th Congress, there were eighteen representatives who held seats in the districts John Kerry had won. In the 110th, there will only be eight.

Republican Moderates

Michael Castle	Charlie Bass (defeated)
Jim Gerlach	Jeb Bradley (defeated)
Frank Lobiondo	Mike Fitzpatrick (defeated)
Todd Platts	Nancy Johnson (defeated)
Jim Ramstad	Sue Kelly (defeated)
Chris Shays	Jim Leach (defeated)
Chris Smith	Rob Simmons (defeated)
	Sherwood Boehlert (retired)

Source: 109th House and Senate rank ordering, <http://www.voteview.com>.

A New Course in Iraq

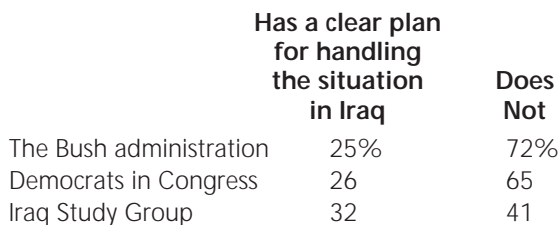
Americans' pessimism about Iraq is deep, and the public is calling for major changes. Only a third think the Iraq Study Group has a clear plan for handling the situation there.

Question: When it comes to the war in Iraq, do you think George W. Bush should . . . ?



Source: CBS News/*New York Times*, December 2006.

Question: Do you think . . . ?



Source: ABC News/*Washington Post*, December 2006.

Afghanistan Update

Eighty-three percent in Pew's December poll knew that the United States military was still involved in Afghanistan.

Question: Do you think . . . ?



Source: PSRA/Pew Research Center, December 2006.

Question: Do you think . . . ?



Source: PSRA/Pew Research Center, December 2006.

Social Security Redux?

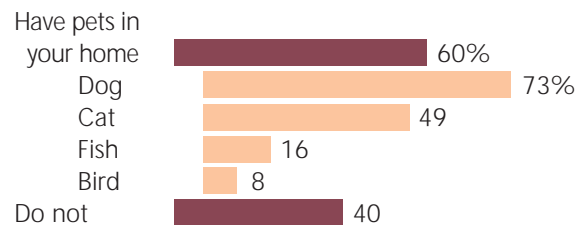
Question: Do you think Congress should . . . ?



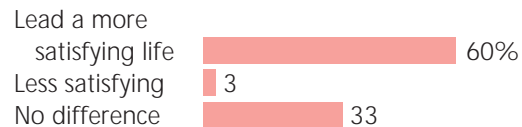
Source: *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg, December 2006.

Going to the Dogs?

Question: Do you or any other household members have . . . ?



Question: In your opinion, do people who have household pets . . . , lead a more satisfying or less satisfying life than people who do not have pets, or is there no difference?



Source: The Gallup Organization, December 2006.

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