

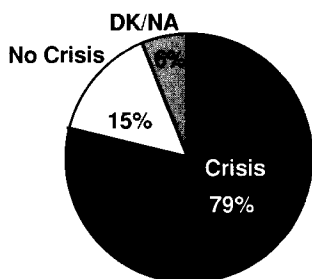
The Public Decides on HEALTH CARE REFORM

For the last several years, and intensely over the Clinton administration's first 20 months, the US has had a great debate on a truly big issue—the future form of the country's health care system. This debate went on in several different arenas. In the one we examine here—Public Opinion—it ended fairly decisively and with a conclusion different from what many, perhaps most, analysts had expected.

Over the late 1980s and early 1990s, public concerns over health care spiked sharply and—as the data in the line graph below show clearly—reached their high point around the time of the last presidential election.

Question: Which comes closer to your view—because of rising health care costs we are headed toward a crisis in the health care system, or even though costs are rising, we are not headed toward a crisis?

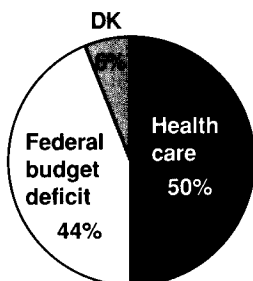
A health care crisis?



Source: Survey by CBS News/*New York Times*, August 18-22, 1991.

Question: Which do you think is the more important problem facing the country today—reforming health care or reducing the federal budget deficit?

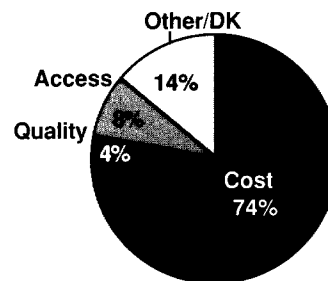
Most important problem?



Source: Survey by CBS News, May 27-29, 1993.

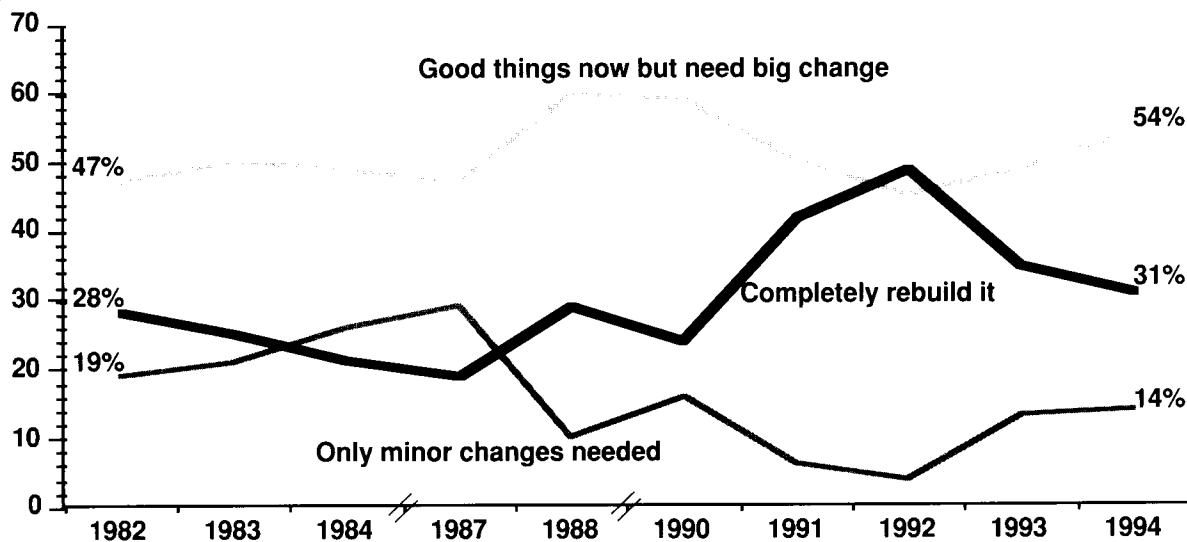
Question: Thinking about everything that has to do with health care and medicine, what do you think is the main problem facing health care in the US today?

Main Health Care Problem?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for the American Medical Association, January 22-February 8, 1993.

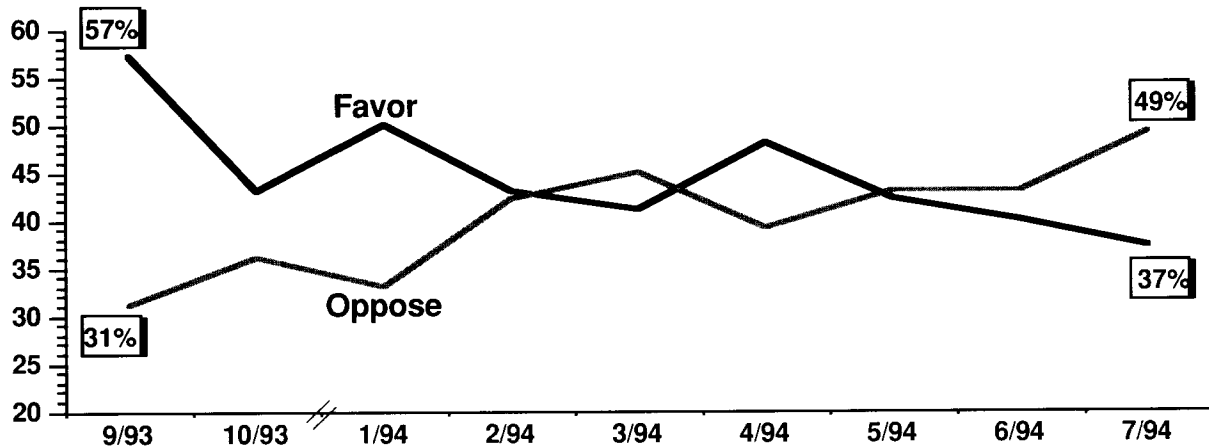
Question: Which of the following statements comes closest to expressing your overall view of the health care system in this country...There are some good things in our health care system, but fundamental changes are needed to make it better...Our health care system has so much wrong with it that we need to completely rebuild it...On the whole, the health care system works pretty well and only minor changes are necessary to make it work?



Source: Surveys by Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of April 4-7, 1994.

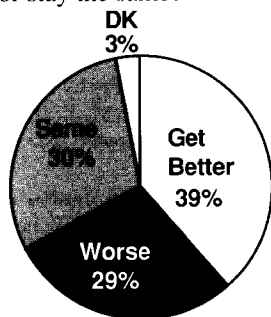
When President Clinton's health plan was unveiled last fall, it seemed to enjoy substantial support. Even then, though, there were numerous signs for caution—such as the October 1993 Washington Post survey that showed only 19% saying they thought their own health care would get better if the President's plan carried. On a different front, a large majority said they knew little or nothing about what Clinton was proposing.

Question: In general, do you favor or oppose President Clinton's health care reform plan?



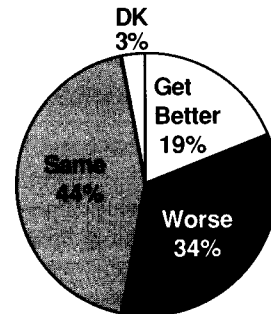
Source: Surveys by Yankelovich Partners for Time/CNN, latest that of July 13-14, 1994.

Question: [Under President Bill Clinton's health care plan] do you think the quality of the health care for most Americans will get better, get worse, or stay the same?



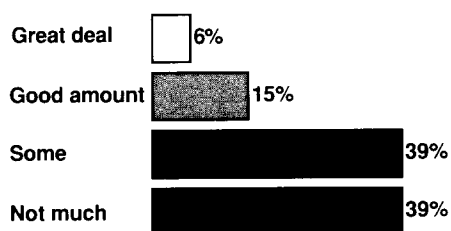
Source: Survey by The Washington Post, October 7-10, 1993.

Question: Under Clinton's [health care] plan, do you think the quality of the health care you receive will get better, get worse, or stay the same?



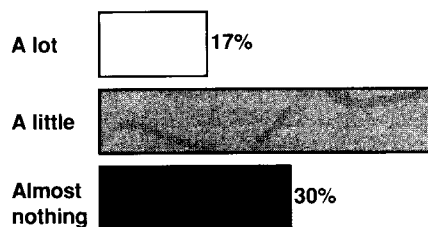
Source: Survey by The Washington Post, October 7-10, 1993.

Question: As you may know, President Clinton presented his health care reform proposals to Congress....How much do you know about the details of President Clinton's health care proposals?



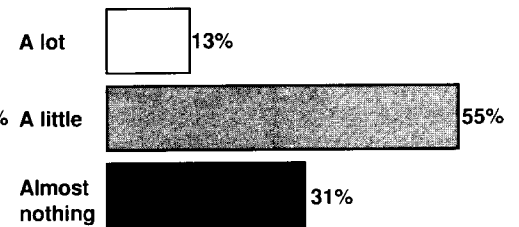
Source: Survey by The Los Angeles Times, September 25-28, 1993.

Question: How much do you feel you know about President Clinton's health care plan—a lot, a little or do you feel you know almost nothing about it?



Source: Survey by The Washington Post, October 7-10, 1993.

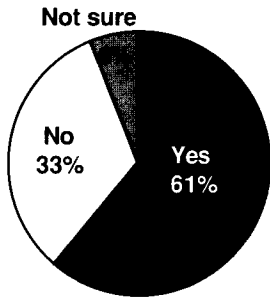
Question: How much do you feel you know about Clinton's health care plan—a lot, a little or do you feel you know almost nothing about it?



Source: Survey by ABC News/Washington Post, November 11-14, 1993.

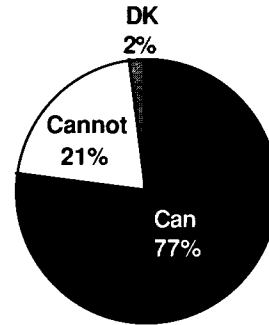
The biggest reason for doubts about the popularity of Clinton's approach involved the widespread skepticism about a more government-centered health care system. Americans were not viscerally anti-government (top two charts), but they were certainly not enthusiastic about expanding government's reach and role.

Question: Turning to issues related to health care and health care reform... Do you think the **federal government should guarantee health care for all Americans**, or don't you think so?



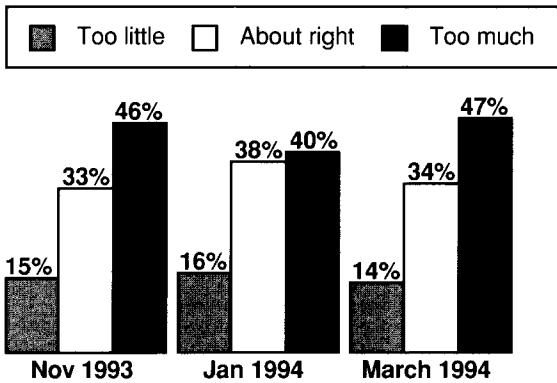
Source: Survey by Yankelovich Partners for *Time/CNN*, July 13-14, 1994.

Question: For each issue I name, please tell me if you think the **federal government can or cannot do much to make it better... The health care system?**



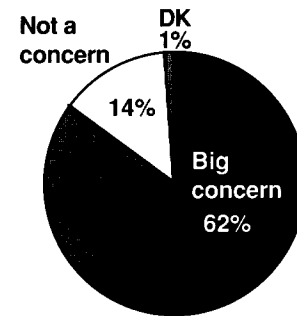
Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, February 24-27, 1994.

Question: Do you think Clinton's [health care] plan creates **too much government involvement** in the nation's health care system, not enough government involvement or about the right amount?



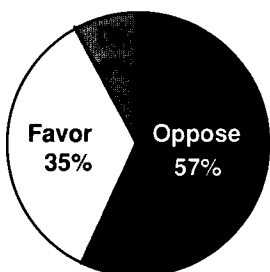
Source: Surveys by ABC News/*Washington Post* latest that of March 25-27, 1994.

Question: I'm going to mention things that might concern some people but not others about the Clinton health care plan...for each, please tell me if it's a big concern, a small concern, or not at all a concern of yours. How about...**the plan would create another large and inefficient government bureaucracy?**



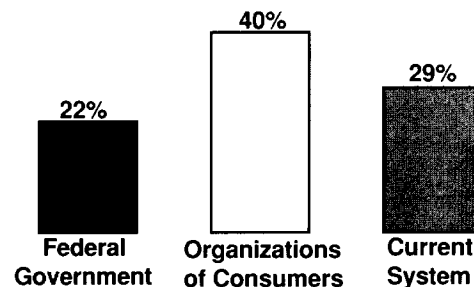
Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, February 24-27, 1994.

Question: Would you favor or oppose a health care plan which involves paying a direct tax like Social Security, and **has the government administer the system** instead of private insurance companies?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, April 16-18, 1994.

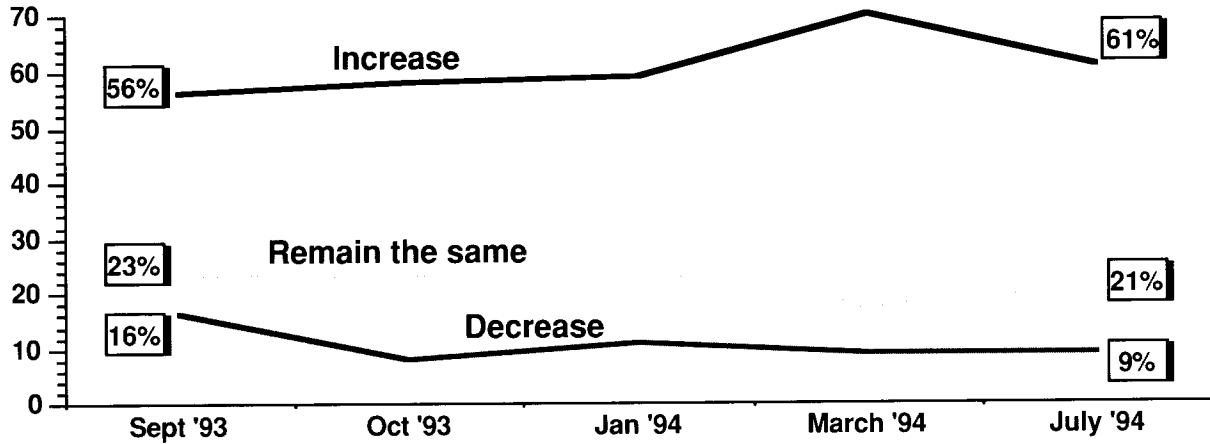
Question: Which of the following do you think **would do the most effective job of controlling health care costs while maintaining the current quality** of health care in this country—the federal government, regional organizations of consumers created by state governments, or the current system that relies on doctors, hospitals, and health insurance companies?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, October 28-30, 1993.

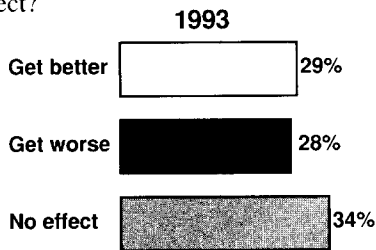
As the debate proceeded, opinion on the Administration's approach did turn more negative, but as the data below show, the initial background judgements contained highly critical elements. Recent surveys also show that the apparent finding that Americans saw a full blown health care "crisis"—taken by some analysts in 1992-93 to suggest strong support for action along the lines the Administration was proposing—in fact greatly overstated the public's view (charts at the bottom of page).

Question: From what you know of the health care reforms which the Administration is working on, do you think the amount you pay for medical care will increase, decrease, or remain the same?



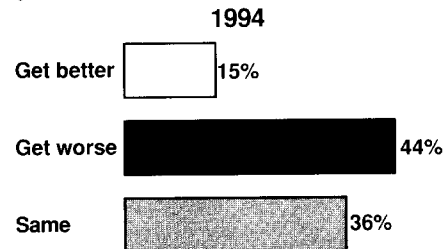
Source: Surveys by Yankelovich Partners for *Time/CNN*, latest that of July 13-14, 1994.

Question: ...From what you know of the health care reforms which the [Clinton] Administration is working on, do you think the quality of medical care available to you will get better, get worse, or have no effect?



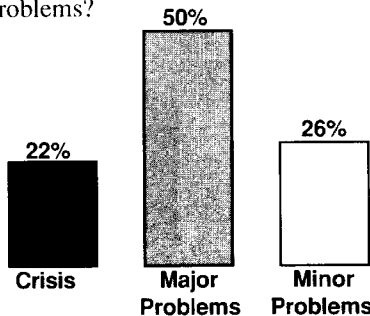
Source: Survey by Yankelovich Partners for *Time/CNN*, September 23.

Question: If health care reform is passed, do you think the quality of health care available to you will get better, become worse, or stay the same?



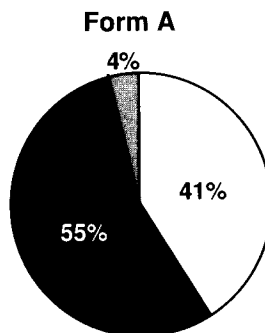
Source: Survey by Yankelovich Partners for *Time/CNN*, July 13-14.

Question: Which of the following comes closest to your belief about the American health care system—the system is in crisis: the system has major problems, but is not in crisis: the system has problems, but they are not major: or the system has no problems?

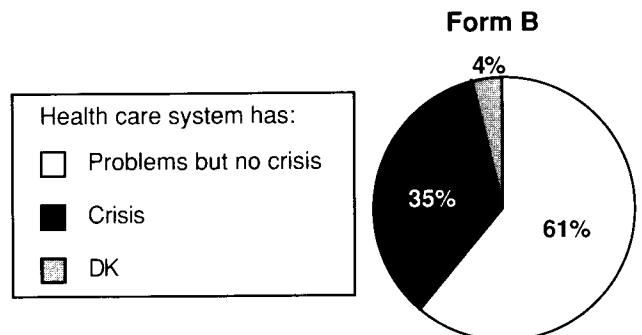


Source: Survey by NBC/Wall Street Journal, March 4-8, 1994.

Question: Which of these statements do you agree with more: The country has health care problems, but no health care crisis, or, the country has a health care crisis?



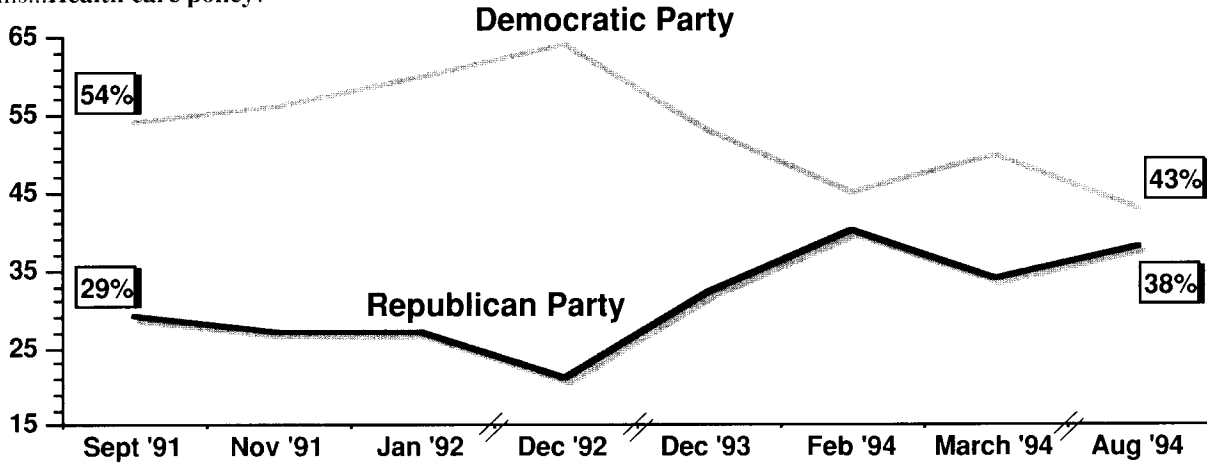
Question: Which of these statements do you agree with more: The country has a health care crisis, or the country has health care problems, but no health care crisis?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, June 25-28, 1994.

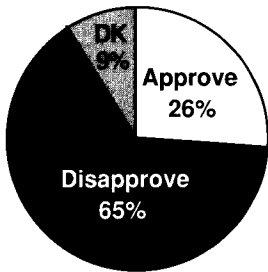
As the health care debate has proceeded, the political balance relating to it has shifted strikingly. The Democrats may still have some advantage, as the top graph suggests, but it has shrunk dramatically. And, "take more time on the issue" is now more favored than "legislate now" in the broad sweep of public sentiment.

Question: Do you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party would do a better job of dealing with each of the following issues and problems...**Health care policy?**



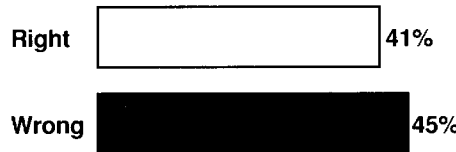
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, latest that of August 15-16, 1994.

Question: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the job Congress is doing in handling the issue of health care reform?



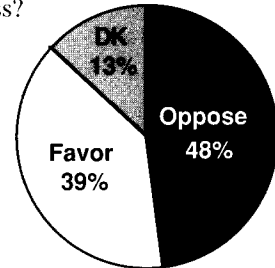
Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, July 23-26, 1994.

Question: ...Do you think Congress is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction on health care reform?



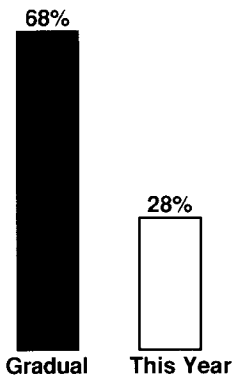
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, August 15-16, 1994.

Question: ...Do you favor or oppose the health care reform plans proposed by the leaders of the Democratic party in Congress?



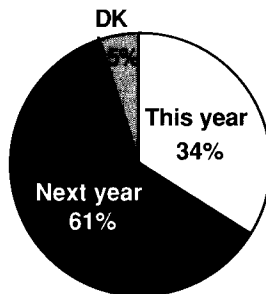
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, August 15-16, 1994.

Question: ...Should Congress deal with health care reform on a gradual basis over several years, or should Congress try to pass a comprehensive health care reform plan this year?



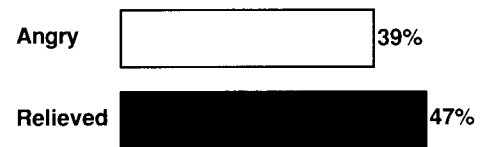
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, August 8-9, 1994.

Question: Do you think Congress should pass a health care reform bill this year, or continue to debate the issue and act next year?



Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, July 23-26, 1994.

Question: Which of the following best describes how you would feel if Congress does not pass a comprehensive health care reform bill this year—angry or relieved?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, August 15-16, 1994.

The Demographics of Health Care Politics

Question A: In general, do you favor or oppose President Clinton's health care reform plan?

Question B: If Congress is going to reform the health care system, should Congress deal with health care reform on a gradual basis over several years, or should Congress try to pass a comprehensive health care reform plan this year?

Question C: Which of the following best describes how you would feel if Congress does not pass a comprehensive health care reform bill this year—angry or relieved?

	"A"		"B"	"C"
	Favor	Oppose	% Saying "Gradual Basis"	% Saying "Relieved"
TOTAL	37%	49%	68%	47%
GENDER				
Male	38	51	66	48
Female	36	47	70	46
RACE				
White	32	54	71	51
Black	62	23	48	15
AGE				
18-29	34	53	64	43
30-49	37	51	70	49
50-64	38	45	71	46
65 +	38	42	67	50
EDUCATION				
< High School	43	45	59	48
High School	37	48	65	42
Some College	33	50	72	48
College	32	55	76	57
Post Graduate	42	47	75	49
INCOME				
< \$20K	45	38	59	44
\$20-50K	27	58	70	46
\$50K+	37	57	77	55
REGION				
East	40	46	68	44
Midwest	33	51	69	47
South	37	51	66	44
West	36	45	69	55
PARTY				
Democrat	58	28	62	28
Republican	17	76	79	73
Independent	32	50	66	45
VOTE 1992				
Bush	NA	NA	76	75
Clinton	NA	NA	64	24
Perot	NA	NA	71	54
IDEOLOGY				
Conservative	NA	NA	NA	61
Moderate	NA	NA	NA	40
Liberal	NA	NA	NA	34

Source A: Survey by Yankelovich Partners for *Time/CNN*, July 13-14, 1994; **B:** Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, August 8-9, 1994; and **C:** Survey by the Gallup Organization for *USA Today/CNN*, August 15-16, 1994.