

# EARLY POLL READINGS ON THE CLINTON PRESIDENCY

## CLINTON AND HIS OPPOSITION

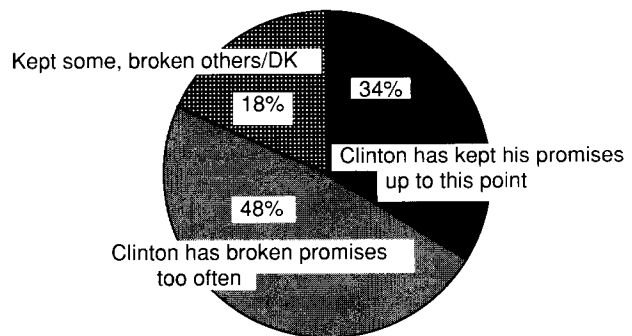
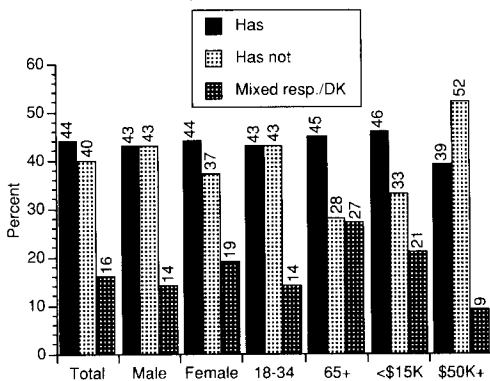
**Question:** I'm going to read you the names of several people and institutions who are active in public affairs. I'd like you to rate your feelings toward each one as.... **Source:** NBC News/Wall Street Journal, April 17-20, 1993.

	% Positive	% Negative		% Positive	% Negative
Bill Clinton	52	29	The U.S. Congress	26	45
The Democratic Party	44	31	Bob Dole	38	18
The Republican Party	39	31	Ross Perot	44	26

## HAS CLINTON SET THE RIGHT TONE?

**Question:** In these opening months in office, do you think President Clinton has set the right tone for his administration, or not? **Source:** ICR/Associated Press, April 16-20, 1993.

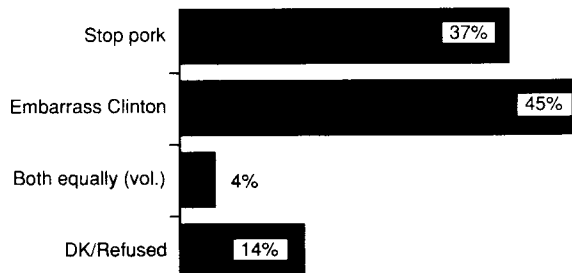
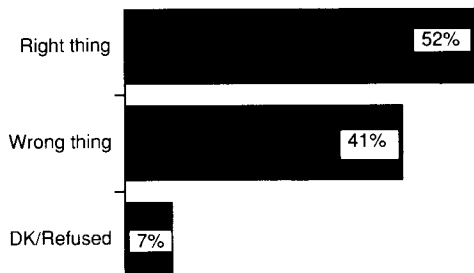
**Question:** Which of the following two statements do you agree with more? **Source:** ICR/Associated Press, April 16-20, 1993.



## THE ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN: MIXED READINGS ON THE POLITICS

**Question:** ...Clinton was forced to drop his economic stimulus package this week because of opposition from Republicans in the U.S. Senate. ...did Republicans do the right thing by stopping unnecessary government spending, or did they do the wrong thing by continuing the gridlock...? **Source:** Gallup/CNN/USA Today, April 22-24, 1993.

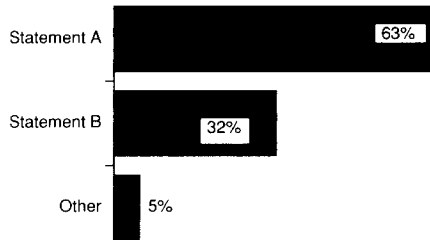
**Question:** ...Clinton's federal spending bill to create jobs was blocked in Congress. Do you think Clinton's opponents mostly wanted to stop unnecessary "pork barrel" projects—or mostly wanted to embarrass Clinton politically? **Source:** PSR/Newsweek, April 22-23, 1993.



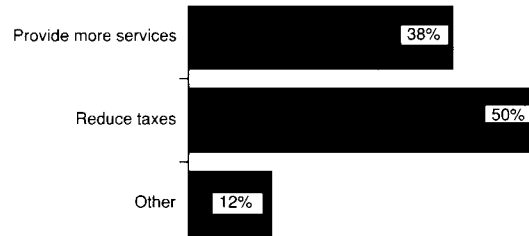
For all the basic approval scores on Clinton's handling of his presidency in its early months, see p. 90 of the *Public Opinion Report*, center section of this issue.

## NO ACTIVIST CYCLE

**Question:** ...which statement comes closer to your point of view: Statement A: ...Clinton's [economic] plan relies too heavily on tax increases and too little on spending cuts to bring down the budget deficit; Statement B: ...Clinton's plan provides a good balance between cuts in spending and tax increases to bring down the budget deficit. **Source:** NBC/Wall Street Journal, April 17-20, 1993.



**Question:** Which of the following statements do you agree with more?...The government should provide more services even if it means raising taxes to pay for these services; The government should reduce taxes even if it means providing fewer services. **Source:** NBC/Wall Street Journal, April 17-20, 1993.



## AID RUSSIA?...WE WOULD RATHER NOT, BUT THINK WE SHOULD

**Question:** Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements....  
**Source:** NBC/Wall Street Journal, April 17-20, 1993.

It is in the national interest of the U.S. to see that Russia makes a successful transition to democracy and a free-market economy

The money we would spend helping Russia would be better spent here at home.

Helping Russia become democratic is a worthwhile investment, in light of the hundreds of billions of dollars we spent defending our country from the threat of the former Soviet Union.

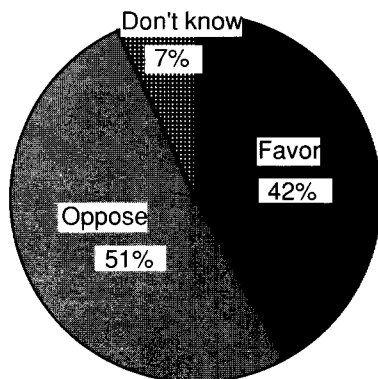
The aid we provide to Russia will probably be wasted.

It is important that the U.S. do whatever it can to see that Boris Yeltsin remains president of Russia.

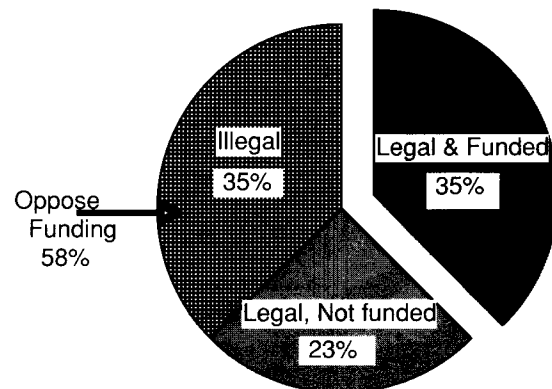
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Not sure
It is in the national interest of the U.S. to see that Russia makes a successful transition to democracy and a free-market economy	73	20	7
The money we would spend helping Russia would be better spent here at home.	66	26	8
Helping Russia become democratic is a worthwhile investment, in light of the hundreds of billions of dollars we spent defending our country from the threat of the former Soviet Union.	60	28	12
The aid we provide to Russia will probably be wasted.	44	47	9
It is important that the U.S. do whatever it can to see that Boris Yeltsin remains president of Russia.	48	36	16

## STILL NO TO FEDERAL FUNDING OF ABORTIONS

**Question:** Do you favor or oppose allowing federal funds to pay for abortions under the Medicaid plan that provides health care for poor people? **Source:** PSR/Newsweek, April 8-9, 1993.



**Question:** Do you think abortion should be illegal, or not? (Respondents who said abortion should be legal were asked: Do you believe the federal government should or should not help pay for abortions for lower-income women who cannot afford them?) **Source:** NBC/Wall Street Journal, April 17-20, 1993.



## TWO VIEWS OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM AT THE START OF THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION: IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU ASK IT

**Question:** What do you think is the **most** important problem facing this country today? **Source:** PSR/Times Mirror, April 1-4, 1993.

	%
Economy (general)	20
Unemployment	18
Deficit	17
Health care	13
Crime/Drugs	9
Morality/Ethics/Values	6

**Note:** Multiple responses allowed.

**Question:** What do you think are the **two** most important issues for the government to address? **Source:** Louis Harris and Associates, March 4-10, 1993.

	%
Health care	35
Deficit	26
Economy (general)	26
Employment/jobs	20
Taxes	15
Crime/drugs	9
Education	9
Domestic/social issues	8

## PUBLIC OPINION AT PRESIDENTS' BEGINNINGS: TRUMAN TO CLINTON

**Editor's Note:** The first hundred days of a presidency have no magical properties for predicting long-term success or failure. Still, this span is a time for important first impressions. The conclusion of Bill Clinton's first hundred days finds him getting lower approval ratings from the American public than any new president since Franklin Roosevelt, with the possible exception of Gerald Ford. The Yankelovich Partners poll of April 28-29 showed just 48% approving Clinton's presidential performance, 39% disapproving. The Princeton Survey Research survey for *Newsweek* of April 29-30 got an almost identical reading: 46% approving, 37% disapproving. A complete listing of the other surveys asking about Clinton's performance as president may be found in the Public Opinion Report of this issue, page 90.

In the next pages, we take a snapshot of public opinion at the start of eight previous presidencies, from Truman to Bush. (Each page leads with the standard Gallup presidential approval question: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way...is handling his job as President?") The one new presidency not included is that of Ford's. We omit it not because he got low approval scores, but because the terms of his entry into the nation's highest office meant that he could not possibly have enjoyed a "honeymoon." Truman and Johnson did not first win the office on their own, but they entered it with no stigma. Ford came to the presidency under the huge cloud of the Watergate scandal, which saw Richard Nixon, the three-time presidential nominee of the Republican party, forced to resign his office. For the record—while the start of Ford's presidency is fundamentally non-comparable—the Gallup approval scores during Ford's first hundred days are:

	Approve	Disapprove
August 16-29, 1974	71%	3%
September 6-9	66	13
September 27-30	50	28
October 11-14	52	29
October 18-21	54	29
November 8-11	47	33
November 15-18	48	32