



The Generation Gap on Government

Why and How the Millennial Generation Is the Most Pro-Government Generation and What This Means for Our Future

Guy Molyneux and Ruy Teixeira, with John Whaley July 2010

Center for American Progress



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Based on a nationwide survey conducted by Hart Research Associates for the Center for American Progress and its Doing What Works project

doing
what works

This publication is a product of CAP's Doing What Works project, which promotes government reform to efficiently allocate scarce resources and achieve greater results for the American people. Doing What Works specifically has three key objectives: (1) eliminating or redesigning misguided spending programs and tax expenditures focused on priority areas such as health care, energy, and education; (2) improving government's ability to execute by streamlining management and strengthening operations in the areas of human resources, information technology, and procurement; and (3) building a foundation for smarter decision making by enhancing transparency, performance measurement, and evaluation. Doing What Works publications and products can be viewed at http://www.americanprogress.org/projects/doing_what_works. This project is undertaken in partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation's Campaign for American Workers.

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Executive summary

Young Americans today across the ideological spectrum share a far more favorable view of the federal government than do their elders. Importantly, this so-called Millennial Generation may hold the key to reversing historic declines in public confidence in government—the major finding from a new survey commissioned by the Center for American Progress.

The May survey of 2,523 adults conducted by Hart Research Associates found that young Americans age 18 to 32 give the government more positive performance ratings and more strongly favor a significant role for government in addressing national challenges than does the public at large. Millennials' distinctly pro-government outlook may well be a leading indicator of a nascent rebound in public confidence in government.

Despite their relatively positive outlook, though, Millennials do share their elders' concerns that the federal government is often poorly managed and spends money inefficiently, the survey found. And there is no guarantee that their more favorable disposition toward government won't sour as they age. The message for politicians and policymakers who would seize on the opportunity presented by relatively pro-government Millennials: Make government better, not smaller.

Young adults are particularly receptive to a reform agenda that would strip wasteful spending and focus on improvements in the delivery of government services. Millennials will reward politicians who adhere to these principles with their votes, young respondents say.

Millennials have been the subject of intense interest among political scientists and strategists since the group's strong support and turnout helped carry Barack Obama into the White House in 2008. The CAP poll, which surveyed these young adults, is the first to extensively probe Millennials' view of the role and performance of the federal government. What it found was a remarkable generation gap:

- Sixty-two percent of Millennials—compared to just 46 percent of non-Millennials—believe “we need a strong government to handle today’s complex economic problems”
- Half of Millennials say government should do more to solve problems, while only a third of non-Millennials share that view
- Just under half of Millennials report a favorable view of the federal government, though that is a considerably higher approval rating than the 30 percent of non-Millennials who have a favorable view of Washington
- Forty-four percent of Millennials voice confidence in the federal government’s ability to solve problems, 14 points higher than do older generations. This generation gap in confidence has grown dramatically over the past decade
- Millennials are 21 percentage points more likely than non-Millennials to call for increased government involvement in improving public schools (75 percent to 54 percent), and 17 points more inclined to favor more governmental involvement in making college affordable (73 percent to 56 percent)

The roots of Millennials’ more pro-government outlook appear to stem from their more positive assessment of government performance. Young adults are more likely than their elders to believe government spends money efficiently. Millennials are also more likely to see their own values aligned with government policies. Three demographic patterns also contribute to Millennials’ support for government:

- They are more ethnically diverse, boasting an especially large number of generally pro-government young Hispanics
- They are less susceptible to class divisions; notably, young whites without a college degree are less hostile to government than are older working-class whites
- Young Republicans and conservatives are less anti-government than their older ideological counterparts

These findings about Millennials are part of a broad public opinion poll commissioned by the Center for American Progress to explore American attitudes toward government. The survey found that while confidence in government is at an all-time low, clear majorities of Americans of all ages want and expect more federal involvement in priority areas such as energy, poverty, and education.

The key lesson embedded in these seemingly paradoxical results is that people would rather improve government performance than reduce its size. They are extremely receptive to a reform agenda that would eliminate inefficient government programs, implement performance-based policy decisions, and adopt modern management methods and information technologies.

The takeaway for policymakers: A better-run government will increase public confidence in public institutions. That could expand public support for smart government solutions to pressing social problems. The survey found substantial support for a government reform plan organized around three core elements:

- Eliminating inefficient programs and redirecting support to the most cost-efficient programs
- Carefully evaluating the performance of individual programs and agencies, and making that information available to the public
- Using more modern management methods and information technologies

Millennials are especially likely to believe this plan will improve government effectiveness, improve the quality of government services, and reduce the federal budget deficit.

Rather than a rejection of big government, the poll reveals a rejection of incompetent government. Public mistrust in government's ability to solve problems is more closely related to perceptions of government performance than it is a function of partisan affiliation or political ideology, the survey found.

The message to politicians and policymakers is clear. Government will not regain the public trust unless it earns it. But there is a silver lining: A majority of respondents indicated they would be more likely to support political candidates who embrace a reform agenda of improving government performance, effectiveness, and efficiency. That support is stronger among Millennials, suggesting they hold the key to a new era of public confidence in government—if public officials learn to spend taxpayers' dollars more carefully, and do what works.

Introduction and key findings

A new survey commissioned by the Center for American Progress finds that Americans' confidence in government is at an all-time low, with negative feelings about government ascendant in the public mind. But the survey of 2,523 adults also detected an important and surprising countervailing trend—a large generation gap exists between the so-called Millennial generation and older Americans on attitudes toward government.

Millennials, ages 18 to 32, have more confidence in government and rate its performance higher than do older adults. Young adults are also strongly receptive to a reform agenda that would strip away wasteful spending and focus on improvements in the delivery of government services. Millennials will reward candidates for public office who adhere to these principles, respondents say.

This report reviews the survey's key findings about Millennials. The poll was conducted May 10-22, 2010, by Hart Research Associates, a national survey research firm, and consisted of extensive interviews with a total of 2,523 American adults, including 911 members of the Millennial generation. For an analysis of the poll's broader findings, please consult the companion report, "[Better, Not Smaller: What Americans Want From Their Federal Government.](#)"

The remainder of this paper—and this introductory summary of key findings—is organized around the three questions that undergird the survey's exploration of Millennial attitudes:

- How do Millennials view the federal government?
- Why do Millennials have more confidence in the government than do older Americans?
- How do Millennials react to CAP's government-improvement plan?

Let's unpack the survey to answer each of these questions in turn.

How do Millennials view the federal government?

Young Americans have relatively high confidence in government

Public confidence in government is at an all-time low. Yet among Millennials, 44 percent still voice a lot or some confidence in Washington, which is a higher confidence level than any other generation—14 percentage points higher than for older generations overall. Likewise, the proportion of Millennials who say they have “no confidence” in government is 20 percent, or 15 points lower than non-Millennials.

The confidence generation gap has widened in the last decade

Ten years ago, 55 percent of adults aged 18-32 said they had confidence in the government, according to an NPR/Harvard/Kaiser poll, compared with 51 percent of the overall public. Today, that four-point spread has grown to 11 percentage points.

Millennials are more likely to have a favorable view of government

While two-thirds of non-Millennials view the government unfavorably today, young adults are evenly divided on the question, with 47 percent holding a favorable view and 48 percent an unfavorable view.

Millennials have a broader agenda for government

About half of Millennials say that government should do more to solve problems, a sharp contrast with the 60 percent of older Americans who say government is doing too much. Likewise, 62 percent of young Americans want a strong government to handle the current economy, compared with only 46 percent of non-Millennials.

Education is Millennials' top priority for government intervention

Millennials are 21 points more likely to call for more government involvement in improving public schools, and 17 points more inclined to want more involvement in making college education affordable, than are older Americans.

Millennials are especially likely to believe the federal government could be more effective if better managed and to prioritize making these improvements

Over three-quarters (77 percent) of Millennials believe the government *could* be more effective with better management, while only 19 percent say the federal government is bound to be ineffective no matter what. In addition, while most Americans believe that better government rather than smaller government should be the priority for the future, the margin in favor of improving government is more than twice as large with Millennials (+45 points) as with older generations of Americans (+20).

Why do Millennials have more confidence in the government than do older Americans?

Young Hispanics are a pro-government influence on Millennials

Hispanics make up 19 percent of the Millennial demographic, compared with just 8 percent of non-Millennials. The pro-government views of young Hispanics therefore contributes to the overall positive disposition of young Americans toward government.

The white class divide is less pronounced among Millennials

Among older generations, non-college-educated whites generally express less confidence in government's capacity for solving problems, and a more negative attitude toward government, than do college-educated whites. This class divide appears to have shrunk or even reversed among Millennials. On most measures in the survey, non-college white Millennials hold views toward government that are as favorable, or more favorable, than those of whites with a college degree.

Millennial conservatives are less anti-government

While younger Democrats and liberals generally share the pro-government perspective of their older partisan or ideological fellows, younger Republicans and conservatives are much less anti-government than their non-Millennial counterparts.

Millennials find government to be less wasteful

Millennials and older Americans share concerns about ineffective government programs and inefficient spending. But a marked generation gap appears when we ask whether federal programs and agencies waste a lot of money. Just under half of Millennials (49 percent) find waste, compared with nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of non-Millennials.

Millennials more likely to see government as helping people and representing their values

There is a tremendous age gap in the perception that the federal government helps people get ahead in life. Nearly a majority (49 percent) of Millennials think this description applies to the federal government (including 56 percent of those age 18-24), whereas only 28 percent of non-Millennials feel the same.

How do Millennials react to CAP's government-improvement plan?

Millennials across the political spectrum believe CAP's government reform plan would be effective

About two-thirds of Millennials say the overall program would improve government performance. The plan enjoys support even among young adults who self-identify as Tea Party followers and conservatives. More than half of Millennials who currently say they have no confidence in government believe the Doing What Works plan would still be effective. Moreover, all the specific elements of the Doing What Works plan (see box) also enjoy strong support among Millennials, with most being embraced by 70 percent or more.

CAP's Doing What Works government-improvement plan

The Doing What Works project at the Center for American Progress recommends a government-wide initiative to improve government efficiency, performance, and management:

- Require federal agencies to set clear goals measured by real-world results
- Reform the federal budget process to make spending decisions based on objective evidence about what works
- Measure and compare state actions to determine which approaches work
- Consolidate federal programs where there is overlap
- Reform the federal procurement system to make it faster and easier to identify best vendors
- Reform federal hiring and firing practices to improve performance of work force
- Evaluate tax subsidies for effectiveness and eliminate wasteful ones
- Subject new policies to "try before you buy" pilot programs
- Establish rigorous measurement and evaluation systems to determine government effectiveness and guide future policy
- Modernize federal information technology systems for better service
- Apply the best private-sector management practices for improved government performance
- Create Internet tools that allow the public to monitor government performance
- Establish an online report card informing the public about national progress toward goals
- Institute a speedy up-or-down confirmation vote in U.S. Senate for presidential appointments
- Allow taxpayers to opt-in to a free, pre-filled IRS tax return

The Doing What Works plan would increase Millennials' confidence in government. Seventy-three percent of Millennials say CAP's reform plan for the federal government would increase their confidence in government, with more than half stating it would increase their confidence some or a lot.

Millennials would reward politicians who pledged to implement the Doing What Works plan

More than half of young adults say they would be more likely to vote for candidates who put implementing our reform plan at the top of their agenda. A majority of Republicans (53 percent), independents (54 percent), and conservatives/Libertarians (51 percent) all are more likely to vote for a candidate who supported and prioritized the Doing What Works initiative, the survey found.

A generation gap in confidence in the federal government

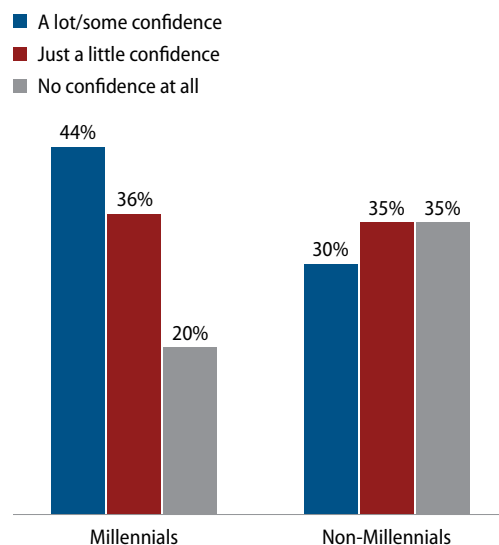
The most distinctive aspect of the general public’s view of the federal government today is a low level of confidence that government can solve problems. Our survey asks American adults young and old, “When the government in Washington decides to solve a problem, how much confidence do you have that the problem actually will be solved?” Just one-third (33 percent) of adults voice “a lot” or “some” confidence, 35 percent express “just a little” confidence, and another one-third (31 percent) have no confidence at all. By comparison, in a survey conducted a decade earlier (June 2000, NPR/Harvard/Kaiser), 51 percent of adults expressed a lot or some confidence, 18 points higher than today, while the proportion saying no confidence was just 13 percent (18 points lower than today).

Our survey, however, reveals a massive generation gap with respect to confidence in government. The Millennial generation—adults born since 1978, and now between the ages of 18 and 32—displays a relatively high level of confidence in the federal government (see chart). Today, 44 percent of Millennials voice a lot or some confidence in government, 14 points higher than for older generations overall (30 percent confident) and much higher than any other generational cohort. Similarly, the proportion of Millennials who say they have no confidence is just 20 percent, or 15 points lower than non-Millennials.

A decade ago, there was only a small generation gap (see Table 1). At that time, adults age 18-32 expressed slightly more confidence than did older Americans. Yet over the next decade, confidence dropped by 19 points among those over age 32, compared to 11 points among the younger generation. The proportion of the older group expressing no confidence also soared by 21 points, as opposed to a more modest nine-point increase among the young.

Different levels of confidence in government

Our survey asks Millennials and older generations about their confidence in the federal government’s ability to solve problems



Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

TABLE 1

Generation gap in confidence widens in 21st century

Changes in confidence in government in 2000 and 2010 among American adults by age

	2000			2010		
	A lot/some confidence	A lot/some confidence	Change	No confidence	No confidence	Change
Age 18 to 32	55%	44%	-11%	11%	20%	+9%
Age 33 and older	49%	30%	-19%	14%	35%	+21%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

To be sure, young Americans' confidence in government has also fallen, with fewer than half of Millennials now expressing confidence. But the generation gap that has emerged is quite dramatic. And the relative optimism felt by this large cohort of young adults, especially among the youngest Millennials, offers hope for the prospect of renewed public confidence in the federal government in the years ahead.

Feelings toward the federal government

As with confidence, Millennials offer a much more positive verdict than older generations when people rate their overall feelings toward the federal government. Fully two-thirds of non-Millennials view the government unfavorably today (67 percent), while just 30 percent are favorable. In contrast, the Millennials divide evenly on this question, 47 percent favorable to 48 percent unfavorable.

There is a clear and very strong connection between someone's confidence in the government's ability to solve problems and his or her overall opinion of the federal government. Those with confidence have a favorable opinion (71 percent favorable, 25 percent unfavorable), and those with no confidence feel strongly negative (8 percent favorable, 89 percent unfavorable).

Historically, the two attitudes also track extremely closely, rising and falling together. While we cannot assume a one-way causal relationship—general feelings about the government depending on which political party is in power may influence confidence in its problem-solving ability, as well as the reverse—it seems clear that confidence in government's capacity to address problems plays an important role in shaping the overall view of government.

Of course, people's opinion of government can be strongly influenced by their partisan allegiance, and that is very much the case today. Republican Millennials now view the government unfavorably by a 71 percent to 26 percent margin,

independents offer a narrowly negative judgment by 49 percent to 41 percent, and Democrats are more favorable (64 percent) than unfavorable (32 percent). But within each partisan category we see the same generation gap: Millennials feel more positive than older generations about the federal government (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

The generation gap in government favorability

Millennials' and non-Millennials' favorable feelings toward federal government

	Millennials	Non-Millennials	Difference
All	47%	30%	+17%
Democrats	64%	56%	+8%
Independents	41%	24%	+17%
Republicans	26%	10%	+16%
White: Noncollege graduates	44%	22%	+22%
White: College graduates	39%	29%	+10%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Note also how much larger the generation gap is among white non-college graduate (no four-year degree) Millennials (22 points) than among white college graduate Millennials (10 points). This is because white non-college Millennials tend to be as or more pro-government than white college graduate Millennials.* This contrasts to older generations where non-college whites tend to be markedly more hostile to government than college graduate whites. We discuss this pattern and its potentially large significance in a later section.

A perusal of ratings for other institutions reveals that the generation gap is not limited only to the federal level of government, but it is much larger there. While 51 percent of Millennials have a favorable opinion of their state government, just 42 percent of non-Millennials hold the same view (a nine-point gap), and a favorable attitude toward local government is expressed by 62 percent of Millennials and 57 percent of non-Millennials (a four-point gap). In contrast, the gap regarding the federal government stands at 17 points. We find similarly large gaps in ratings for President Obama (60 percent Millennials, 45 percent non-Millennials) and Congress (40 percent, 23 percent), confirming that this difference in generational outlooks is greatest at the federal level.

* This pattern is absolutely not driven by the relatively large presence of students among the white non-college Millennials, particularly those under 25. In fact, removing students from the analysis leaves the pattern essentially unchanged: white noncollege Millennials remain as pro-government or more so than white college graduate Millennials. Similarly, considering all students as part of the four-year college graduate group (which ignores the fact that some will never graduate and many others are attending two-year or vocational schools) makes little difference to the pattern of results.

Millennials and the role of government

A commonly heard interpretation of the general public's current negative feelings toward the federal government is that it reflects an ideological shift to the right, a desire for smaller and more limited government. There is some survey evidence, including data in this survey, that appears to support claims of an ideological shift. Yet as we document in our [companion report](#) to this one, Americans' critical view of government has much more to do with government's perceived performance and competence than concern over "mission creep." Indeed, Americans continue to favor strong government engagement in areas such as reaching energy independence, improving education, and combating poverty, and they expect government's role in improving people's lives to grow rather than shrink in importance in the years ahead.

This continued support for an active role for government is even more decisively true among the Millennial generation. On multiple questions in this survey, Millennials clearly signal their desire for a government that addresses their needs and tackles national problems. Just as we found a large generation gap with regard to confidence in government (and in part because of that), we see a distinctive Millennial perspective on the proper role of government in our society (see chart).

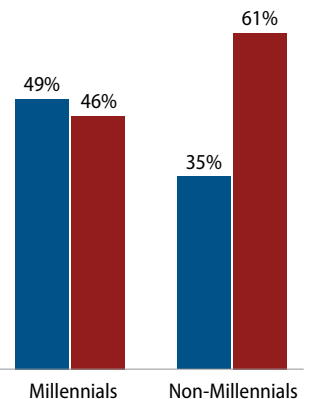
Young adults offer a divided verdict on whether the federal government should assume more responsibilities today. A 49 percent plurality of Millennials say that "government should do more to solve problems," while 46 percent feel that "government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals." This divide still represents a sharply different view than the one we hear from older generations, who say by a 26-point margin (61 percent to 35 percent) that government is doing too many things today.

Support among Millennials for a government that does more is especially strong among African Americans (61 percent), Hispanics (60 percent), and Democrats (71 percent). Millennials of all partisan affiliations support a more active government than comparable non-Millennials. Interestingly, the gender gap among Millennials regarding the role of government is rather narrow, as women favor a government that does more by just three points more than men. Among older generations, we observe a much larger 11-point difference (40 percent of women, vs. 29 percent of men) (see Table 3).

How much government help is enough?

Our survey asks Millennials and older generations about their preferred level of government involvement in solving problems

- Government should do more to solve problems
- Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals



Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

TABLE 3

Should government do more?

Different groups among the Millennial generation have different views on this question

	Should do more	Doing too much
All Millennials	49%	46%
Men	47%	47%
Women	50%	46%
Democrats	71%	23%
Independents	43%	50%
Republicans	23%	76%
Whites	44%	52%
Hispanics	60%	33%
African Americans	61%	34%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

In a similar vein, we see that 62 percent of Millennials, compared to 46 percent of non-Millennials, believe “we need a strong government to handle today’s complex economic problems.” This 16-point generational divide is one of the larger ones we observe in the survey, suggesting that Millennials differ with older generations, especially with regard to the desired economic role for government.

At the same time, this result represents a substantial decline in support for a robust economic role for government. In November 2004, for example, 71 percent of those ages 18 to 32 favored a strong economic role, according to the University of Michigan’s National Election Study. Managing the economy is one of the government’s most important responsibilities, and prolonged economic weakness has taken a toll on confidence in government’s economic competence, even among Millennials.

Government’s mission

Other questions provide a more specific sense of what responsibilities Americans of different generations do and do not want to assign the federal government. The survey asks people whether they would like to see the federal government become more or less involved (or not change its involvement) in five different domestic arenas. As the accompanying graph illustrates, a majority of Millennials favor *more* government involvement in all five areas:

- Developing new energy sources
- Improving public schools
- Making college education affordable
- Reducing poverty
- Ensuring access to affordable health care

The limited mandate for smaller government is demonstrated by the fact that in four of these five areas, a majority of non-Millennials also favors more involvement. Still, the generation gap is again apparent as support for greater federal government involvement is consistently higher among Millennials (see chart).

Education, as we might anticipate, is the area in which Millennials' greater desire for engaged government is most clearly apparent. Millennials are 21 points more likely to call for more government involvement in improving public schools (75 percent vs. 54 percent), and 17 points more inclined to want more involvement in making college education affordable (73 percent versus 56 percent). In contrast, the generation gap on other issues ranges from seven to nine percentage points.

Young Hispanics voice especially strong support for more government involvement in making higher education affordable.

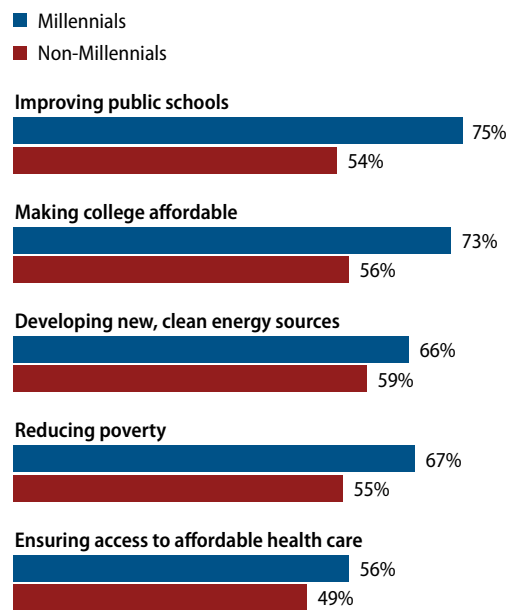
Hispanic Millennials (85 percent) support an enhanced government role more than either white Millennials (67 percent) or older Hispanics (76 percent).

Millennials (and older generations) clearly voice greater caution on health care than the other issues examined. The 56 percent saying more involvement on health care represents a very large decrease from a decade earlier, when 72 percent of Americans ages 18 to 32 favored a larger government role, according to a June 2000 NPR/Harvard/Kaiser poll. The recent passage of national health care reform certainly explains these findings. Many Americans, reasonably enough, want to wait to see the impact of the new legislation before deciding whether further government involvement is a good idea.

More generally, young Americans clearly see a future for their nation in which government plays a role at least as substantial as it does today, if not more robust. When Millennials look ahead 10 to 20 years, they say by a 47 percent-to-12 percent margin that the federal government will become more rather than less important in terms of improving the lives of the American people. Non-Millennials agree, but by a narrower margin of 39 percent to 21 percent.

Where should government get more involved?

Our survey asks Millennials and older generations about whether government should do more in five areas



Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Better government, not smaller

Many Americans, including nearly half of Millennials, believe that government is “doing too many things today.” But this attitude reflects in part their current low level of confidence in government’s ability to successfully solve problems. That is, it represents a practical assessment of government’s current abilities more than a statement about what people want government to do in the future. To understand that potential distinction, we asked Americans what they think should be the higher priority for improving the federal government: reducing the cost and size of federal government, or improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government? By a decisive margin of 71 percent to 26 percent, the Millennial generation says its priority is making government more efficient and more effective, not reducing its size (see chart).

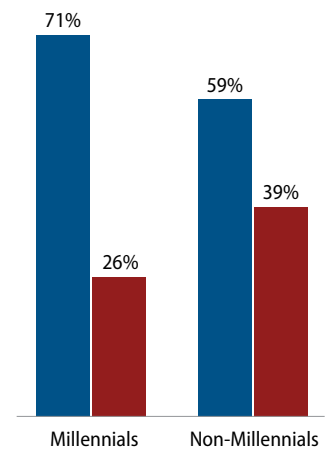
In this case, older generations concur that better government (59 percent), rather than smaller government (39 percent), should be the priority for the future. Yet we again see a sharp generational difference as the margin in favor of improving government is more than twice as large with Millennials (+45 points) as with older generations of Americans (+20 points).

The preference for improving government’s performance proves remarkably broad. Not only do young Democrats (83 percent) and independents (70 percent) hold this view, 56 percent of young Republicans concur (as do 54 percent of conservatives/libertarians). So do both white college graduate (64 percent) and white non-college (71 percent) Millennials. And even among the 46 percent of Millennials who say government is doing too many things today, there is far more sentiment for improving government’s effectiveness (59 percent) than for shrinking government (38 percent). Taking the two questions together, we can see that less than a fifth (18 percent) of Millennials say both that government does too much now *and* that it should get smaller in the future.

What should government focus on?

Our survey asks Millennials and older generations about smaller government vs. more efficient government

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of government
- Reduce cost and size of government



Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

The generation gap among Republicans and conservatives

Millennials' partisan leanings are much more Democratic than older generations. In this survey, 44 percent identify as Democrats and just 31 percent as Republicans—a 13-point Democratic advantage—compared to a one-point Democratic edge among older generations (35 percent Democrats, 34 percent Republicans). Millennials' more pro-government stance, however, is apparent even after we control for partisanship. For instance, 64 percent of Democratic Millennials have a favorable view of the federal government, eight percentage points higher than Democratic non-Millennials, and 59 percent of young Democrats have confidence in the federal government, six points higher than older Democrats (see Table 4).

While Millennials invariably express a more positive view of government than their non-Millennial counterparts, the size of this generation gap varies. Note that on the issue of confidence, the Democratic gap is six points while the Republican gap is 15 points. Similarly, we find a generational split among Democrats of eight points on having a favorable attitude toward the government, but a split twice as large (16 points) among Republicans.

A review of other questions uncovers a distinct pattern: The governmental generation gap tends to be much larger on the political right than on the left. On many questions, the difference in perspective between Millennials and older

TABLE 4
The generation gap within partisanship

Across partisan groups, Millennials are more positive about government than non-Millennials

	Millennials			Non-Millennials		
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
View of federal government						
Favorable	64%	41%	26%	56%	24%	10%
Unfavorable	32%	49%	71%	40%	72%	90%
Confidence in government						
A lot/some	59%	37%	27%	53%	23%	12%
A little	32%	34%	43%	31%	40%	32%
None	8%	28%	30%	15%	36%	56%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

TABLE 5

Generation gap on the right

Millennials on the right are not in sync with their counterparts in older generations

	Millennial Republicans	Older Republicans	Millennial conservatives/libertarians	Older conservatives/libertarians
Unfavorable view of federal government	71%	90%	67%	81%
No confidence at all in government	30%	56%	31%	49%
Government makes it harder for people to get ahead	59%	80%	57%	80%
Part of the Tea Party movement	21%	37%	20%	32%
Government is doing too many things	76%	84%	68%	79%
Government less involved in reducing poverty	32%	48%	27%	41%
Government less involved in improving education	20%	51%	20%	45%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

generations is noticeably larger among Republicans than Democrats, and larger for conservatives/libertarians than liberals/progressives (see Table 5).

While younger Democrats and liberals generally share the pro-government perspective of their older partisan or ideological comrades, younger Republicans and conservatives are much less anti-government than non-Millennials who share their partisan/ideological orientation. Young Republicans and conservatives are significantly *less* likely to:

- Have an unfavorable view of the federal government
- Consider themselves part of the Tea Party movement
- Have no confidence in government's ability to solve problems
- Favor less government involvement in reducing poverty
- Favor less government effort to improve education

Our survey does not allow us to predict the future. As conservative Millennials age, they may come to adopt more of the strongly negative attitudes toward the federal government now common among older conservatives. But this generational divide could, if it does not narrow, create increasing pressure within the Republican party and conservative movement to moderate their position on role of government questions. Surprisingly, the potential for a generational rift now appears greater on the right than on the left.

Vanishing class divide among white Millennials

As documented in our [companion report](#) analyzing results among all adults, a class division in attitudes toward government is evident among white Americans. Non-college-educated whites generally express less confidence in government’s capacity for solving problems and a more negative attitude toward government compared to college-educated whites. (Importantly, though, non-college-educated whites do not necessarily favor a smaller role for government, calling for as much or more government involvement in many issue areas as college-educated whites do.)

Among Millennials, however, this class divide in attitudes toward the federal government appears to have shrunk or even been reversed. On most measures in this survey, non-college white Millennials hold views toward government that are as favorable or more favorable than those of whites with a college degree. Young non-college whites, for example, have as much confidence in government as better-educated whites, are as likely to want government to do more to solve problems, and register equal support for a strong government to address today’s economic problems (see Table 6).

Here again, the survey data do not constitute a crystal ball. We can’t know how college-educated and non-college white Millennials may change their outlooks in the years ahead. But if current patterns continue—the role of government reform is critical here, as we discuss later in the report—then we can expect the class

TABLE 6
A narrowing class divide

White college- and non-college-educated Millennials find more common ground than their non-Millennial counterparts

	Millennial noncollege whites	Millennial college whites	Older noncollege whites	Older college whites
Favorable view of federal government	44%	39%	22%	29%
Very/fairly confident in government	38%	36%	22%	31%
Government should do more to solve problems	44%	43%	27%	39%
Priority: improve government effectiveness (not reduce size)	71%	64%	53%	60%
Need strong government to handle today’s economic problems	61%	60%	38%	46%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

divide over the role of government to narrow as the Millennials make up a larger share of the voting population, replacing older generations that are more riven along class lines. As a result, the white working class as a whole could shift significantly away from an anti-government stance, with potentially huge consequences for the politics of government in our country.

Why are Millennials more positive about government?

As documented in the previous section, Millennials consistently express significantly more pro-government views than do non-Millennials. This section builds on that finding to analyze the demographic and attitudinal factors associated with Millennials' more positive outlook on the federal government. The analysis suggests that the attitudes of Millennials are produced by a combination of four main factors that make them significantly different from their older generation counterparts:

- A greater belief that government performs effectively, especially with regard to spending money efficiently
- Greater ethnic diversity, especially a large proportion of generally pro-government young Hispanics
- Different sources for news and information about government
- A greater belief that government policies are consistent with their values and help people to get ahead in life

Let's consider each in turn.

More positive assessment of government performance

In looking at public confidence in government across all generations ([see main report](#)), we find that people's perceptions of government performance are powerful drivers of their confidence. Indeed, ratings of government's efficiency, management, and similar factors prove even more powerful than partisanship or ideology in predicting confidence levels. These relationships also hold true for Millennials, whose perceptions of government performance are the single most significant predictor of their confidence in government, far more so than party identification or political ideology.

So it is very consequential that Millennials generally give government higher marks on its performance than do older generations. On every one of five dimen-

sions tested (see Table 7), Millennials offer a more upbeat assessment than do non-Millennials. Neither group’s ratings can truly be called positive because both Millennials and older generations have serious concerns about how federal programs and agencies currently operate. Only modest numbers of Millennials, for example, give excellent or good marks to government services or the ability of federal programs and agencies to help people, accomplish goals, run effectively, or spend money efficiently. Millennials, however, are much less likely than older generations to hold sharply negative views of government’s current level of effectiveness. This has a powerful impact on their relative confidence in government to take on important responsibilities.

TABLE 7
Millennials less negative on government performance

Across all areas, fewer Millennials believe government’s performance is not so good or poor

	Excellent/good	Fair	Not so good/poor
Being customer-friendly and providing quality services			
Millennials	27%	41%	27%
Older generations	19%	35%	41%
Helping you and your family			
Millennials	23%	39%	34%
Older generations	18%	32%	43%
Accomplishing their goals			
Millennials	23%	43%	32%
Older generations	13%	34%	49%
Being well run and effectively managed			
Millennials	21%	40%	38%
Older generations	11%	29%	58%
Spending money efficiently			
Millennials	10%	28%	60%
Older generations	6%	18%	74%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Of particular importance is the huge generation gap on two performance metrics, effective management and spending money efficiently, on which Millennials’ assessment differs the most from that of non-Millennials. Specifically:

- When it comes to the government “being well run and effectively managed,” 58 percent of non-Millennials give low marks to the federal government, compared with just 38 percent of Millennials (with twice as many non-Millennials as Millennials saying federal programs and agencies perform poorly in this area).
- Fully 50 percent of non-Millennials give the lowest possible rating (“poor”) in the area of spending money efficiently, compared with 32 percent among Millennials.

These same two factors prove to be the strongest overall predictors of public confidence in government’s ability to solve problems. So Millennials’ much less negative attitudes here probably play a significant role in their higher level of confidence in government.

Demographics of government performance among Millennials

Ratings on these performance measures vary significantly by key demographic characteristics, including age, race, education, and marital status, with the same general patterns being repeated across each measure. These patterns are exemplified in the item on government being well-run and effectively managed, which is also the performance metric most predictive of Millennials’ confidence in government. Recall from the preceding table that 38 percent of Millennials rate the government as not so good (22 percent) or poor (16 percent) when it comes to being well-run and effectively managed.

As Table 8 indicates, the youngest Millennials, ages 18 to 24, are much less likely to rate the government as not so good or poor (33 percent) than are older Millennials, ages 25 to 32 (44 percent). This important age pattern, with younger Millennials demonstrating more pro-government views than those between the ages of 25 and 32, is repeated throughout the survey. This pattern suggests that as younger Millennials become regular voters, their impact as a relatively pro-government voting bloc may grow.

Race also is significantly associated with ratings on this and other performance measures, with African Americans and Hispanics far more positive than whites. African Americans are especially positive, with their excellent and good marks (31 percent) nearly twice those of whites (16 percent).

TABLE 8

Younger Millennials more positive on government being well-run

Comparing views of Millennials on government performance by demographic group

	Excellent/good	Fair	Not so good/poor
All Millennials	20%	40%	38%
Age 18 to 24	23%	43%	33%
Age 25 to 32	18%	37%	44%
Whites	16%	39%	44%
Hispanics	30%	38%	30%
African Americans	31%	46%	23%
Nonmarried	23%	41%	35%
Married	15%	36%	46%
Students	23%	44%	33%
White: Noncollege graduates	16%	39%	43%
White: College graduates	14%	37%	47%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Repeating a pattern seen earlier with general attitudes toward government, when it comes to education, student Millennials tend to offer more positive assessments than do non-students. But in a divergence from all Americans, there are no significant differences in government performance ratings between white Millennials who have graduated from college and white Millennials who have not (47 percent and 43 percent, respectively, say not so good or poor).

By contrast, white non-Millennials with college degrees are far less negative in their assessments (56 percent not so good or poor) than are their colleagues without a degree (66 percent not so good or poor). In one performance area, however—helping you and your family—Millennials echo the education pattern we see in older generations. On this measure, white non-Millennials without college degrees (49 percent) are much more likely to give ratings of not so good or poor than are white non-Millennials with college degrees (37 percent).

Millennials perceive less waste in government

Millennials and older generations share concerns about inefficient government spending. But Millennials and older generations diverge markedly when we look at those who say federal programs and agencies waste a lot of money: Just under

half of Millennials (49 percent) believe this to be the case, compared with nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of non-Millennials who agree (see Table 9).

The substantial difference in how Millennials and non-Millennials perceive waste in government is critical to understanding why Millennials are so much more positive toward government. The reason: We know from our analysis across generations that one’s perceptions of waste directly and significantly influence one’s confidence in government.

TABLE 9
Millennials see less waste in government

Millennials by partisan group and race are less likely to think government wastes a lot of tax money

	A lot of waste	Some waste/not very much waste
All		
Millennials	49%	49%
Older generations	72%	27%
Democrats		
Millennials	33%	66%
Older generations	56%	42%
Independents		
Millennials	63%	34%
Older generations	73%	25%
Republicans		
Millennials	63%	36%
Older generations	86%	14%
Whites		
Millennials	55%	43%
Older generations	76%	23%
Hispanics		
Millennials	41%	57%
Older generations	62%	36%
African Americans		
Millennials	35%	65%
Older generations	43%	55%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Table 9 illustrates the sharp contrast on perceived waste between Millennials and older generations along some key demographic characteristics. Note, for example, that Republican Millennials perceive far less waste (63 percent a lot) than do their non-Millennial counterparts (86 percent a lot). Whites, who in general tend to perceive more governmental waste than non-whites, differ significantly between white Millennials (55 percent a lot) and older generations (76 percent a lot).

Hispanic Millennials are especially interesting. Fifteen percent of them say there is not very much waste at all, a proportion even higher than that of Millennial Democrats (10 percent). African Americans, who already hold more pro-government views than the general population, nevertheless display even more positive views among Millennials when it comes to perceptions of waste.

In general, we find a much narrower gender gap on governmental attitudes among the Millennials than among the non-Millennials. One case in point: 79 percent of

TABLE 10
Millennials across demographic groups see less waste in government

Millennials by gender, education, and age are less likely to think government wastes a lot of tax money

	A lot of waste	Some waste/not very much waste
Men		
Millennials	53%	47%
Older generations	79%	19%
Women		
Millennials	46%	51%
Older generations	65%	33%
White: Noncollege graduates		
Millennials	57%	42%
Older generations	80%	19%
White: College graduates		
Millennials	53%	45%
Older generations	67%	33%
Millennials		
Age 18 to 24	44%	54%
Age 25 to 32	55%	43%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

older-generation men report a lot of government waste, compared with 65 percent of women who agree—a spread of 14 percentage points—but among Millennials, the spread is just seven points (see Table 10).

Another gap that narrows dramatically in the Millennial generation is the education division among white adults. Among older-generation whites, non-college graduates are much more likely to perceive waste in government than are college graduates (80 percent and 67 percent, respectively). In the Millennial population, however, the two groups offer about the same assessment of waste (57 percent vs. 53 percent).

Definitions of waste

The survey explores the issue of waste in greater depth, asking Millennials to rate potential examples of wasteful government spending using a zero-to-10 scale, on which a “10” means the item is a perfect example. For Millennials, the best examples of waste are people receiving government benefits who don’t deserve them, and government contractors receiving no-bid contracts and overcharging the government, each receiving a mean score of 7.5. The two next-highest-rated items elicit similar mean scores: government programs continuing for years even though they have not proven effective, and inefficient government employees receiving generous benefits or high salaries (see Table 11).

TABLE 11
What is government waste?

Our survey examines what kinds of things best exemplify government waste among Millennials

	Average ratings on zero-to-ten scale*			
	All Millennials	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
People receiving government benefits who do not deserve them	7.5	7.0	7.8	7.9
Government contractors receiving no-bid contracts and overcharging for services	7.5	7.4	7.6	7.5
Inefficient government employees receiving generous benefits or high salaries	7.4	7.1	7.7	7.6
Government programs continuing for years even though they have not proven effective	7.4	7.1	7.6	7.5
Tax breaks for corporations that have political influence	7.1	7.3	7.2	6.9
Government agencies duplicating the efforts of other agencies	6.6	6.2	6.8	6.8
Government agencies failing to use new technologies and modern management methods to improve efficiency	6.3	6.1	6.5	6.3
Excessive and unnecessary military spending	6.2	6.7	6.3	5.3

* 10 = perfect example of waste; zero = not an example of waste

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

The general partisan pattern is that Republicans are more likely to see each item as a strong example of waste and Democrats are less likely. Yet corporate tax breaks are the exception in that this item receives higher mean scores among Democrats and Independents. Unnecessary military spending, which garners the lowest mean score of any item listed, reverses the usual partisan pattern by pitting concern about waste (higher for Republicans) against support for military spending (also higher for Republicans). Therefore, the pattern is flipped for unnecessary military spending, with Republicans scoring it as a 5.3 and Democrats as a 6.7.

Broadly speaking, we can identify two concepts of government waste here. The first is that money is being spent for no good purpose, such as duplicative agencies. And the second is that money is being spent on people who don't deserve it, such as contractors, program beneficiaries, and inefficient employees. While both fit with Millennials' concept of wasteful spending, the relative ratings suggest that the latter type of waste, people taking from the government, poses the greater concern.

Views of specific government agencies

The survey findings reveal considerable differentiation in Millennials' views of how individual programs and agencies perform. Millennials, for example, give the FBI, the top-rated agency in terms of performance, a mean score of 6.9 on a zero-to-10 scale (10 = run extremely well; zero = not run well at all), compared with the lowest-rated agency (the Social Security Administration, with a mean score of 4.5). Despite this differentiation, the fact remains that none of the agencies fares especially well, with nearly half of those garnering negative ratings (mean scores of 5.0 or lower).

While most programs or agencies earn mediocre performance ratings, Americans often ascribe a considerable amount of importance to the same programs or agencies in terms of their serving an important public interest. The gap between an agency or program's performance score and its perceived importance can be instructive. Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, for example, are all perceived to be much more important than they are effective. It is probably not a coincidence that each of these programs primarily serves a targeted population (seniors and/or the poor), which leaves many Millennials who do not directly benefit feeling skeptical about its efficiency.

In contrast, the Department of Defense and the FBI, which provide broadly for public safety and national defense, score relatively high on both measures. Interestingly, the IRS is considered relatively unimportant but ranks fairly high in terms of performance.

The Department of Education is rated as extremely important, second only to the Department of Defense at 8.1 (and far higher than by non-Millennials at 6.7). As discussed in the first section of this paper, Millennials assign much greater responsibilities to the federal government in the education arena than do older generations. Interestingly, though, the Education Department receives a rather low rating from Millennials for its performance (5.0), well below most other agencies. Although this exceeds its rating from non-Millennials (4.5), it still suggests some disappointment with how well the Department does its job of improving public education (see Table 12).

TABLE 12
How Millennials rate different federal government agencies and programs

Millennials rate the services that are provided to all Americans better than ones targeted at specific groups

	Average ratings on zero-to-ten scale*		
	Performance	Importance	Difference
The Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI	6.9	8.0	1.1
Department of Defense	6.1	8.3	2.2
Department of Homeland Security	5.8	7.8	2
Environmental Protection Agency, EPA	5.6	7.2	1.6
Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA	5.6	6.9	1.3
Internal Revenue Service, IRS	5.6	6.7	1.1
National Institutes of Health, NIH	5.4	7.4	2
Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC	5.4	6.8	1.4
Department of Education	5.0	8.1	3.1
Medicare	5.0	7.3	2.3
Medicaid	4.9	7.2	2.3
Social Security Administration	4.5	7.2	2.7

* Performance: 10 = extremely well run, zero = not at all well run
 Importance: 10 = serves an extremely important public interest; zero = not at all important
 Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

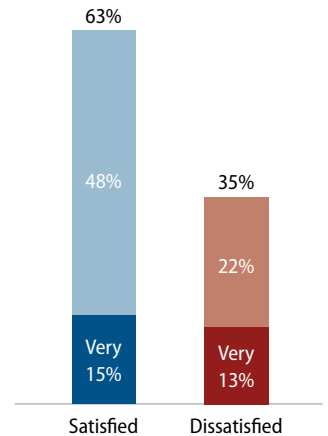
Satisfaction with personal interactions

Although Millennials have concerns about what they perceive to be ineffective performance in government, fully 63 percent of them say that they are satisfied with their own personal interactions (see chart) with federal government programs and agencies over the past year (15 percent very satisfied). Millennials (63 percent) are slightly more positive than are non-Millennials (59 percent), a smaller generational divide than we observe on many government assessment questions.

As with the performance ratings, satisfaction ranges dramatically depending on the program or agency people are thinking about in reporting their satisfaction. The IRS, for example, earns relatively high marks, with 69 percent of Millennials who associate their ranking with the IRS expressing satisfaction. Two-thirds (67 percent) of Millennials who associate their ranking with either the Department of Education or student loans say they are satisfied. Some Millennials report basing their satisfaction level on their interactions with Congress, which in most cases presumably means their general perception of members of Congress. In this group 52 percent express dissatisfaction, another sign that negative views of government often reflect the public's opinion of elected officials.

Millennials satisfied with government interactions

Millennials view their personal interactions with government positively



Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

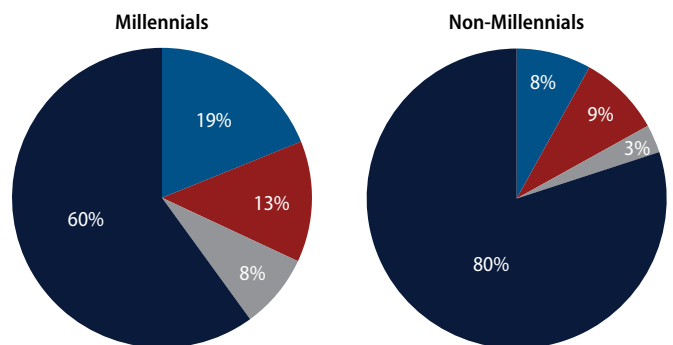
Ethnic diversity

In all age groups, African Americans and Hispanics hold much more pro-government views than do non-Hispanic whites, both in terms of confidence in the federal government and support for activist government. Consequently, Millennials' much more diverse ethnic makeup contributes significantly to their pro-government outlook. Note that among Millennials the proportion of Hispanics and African Americans combined (33 percent) is approximately twice that of older generations (17 percent) (see chart). Importantly, this greater diversity among young adults is likely to increase in the future, because younger Hispanics and African Americans comprise an even larger proportion of Americans under 18 years of age.

Millennials are far more diverse than older generations

Millennials are more ethnically diverse, which translates into greater confidence in government

- Hispanics
- African Americans
- Whites
- Other/refused



Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

The strongly pro-government attitudes of young Hispanics is of particular consequence because Hispanics' share of the electorate will grow dramatically over the next few decades. The pro-government attitudes of young Hispanics increase the likelihood that Millennials will continue to hold relatively pro-government views in the future. At the same time, since Millennial Hispanics are even more supportive of active government than older Hispanics, Hispanics overall are likely to become an even more pro-government voting bloc in the years ahead as Millennials become a larger share of the Hispanic electorate. On almost all questions regarding both government's role and its perceived performance, young Hispanics evince a more positive view than both older Hispanics and white Millennials (see Table 13).

TABLE 13
Millennial Hispanics are especially upbeat on government

Both Millennial whites and Hispanics are much more pro-government in outlook than their non-Millennial counterparts

	Millennials		Non-Millennials	
	Whites	Hispanics	Whites	Hispanics
Government should do more to solve problems	44%	60%	31%	40%
Government is doing too many things	52%	33%	65%	53%
A lot/some confidence in government	38%	51%	25%	35%
No confidence in government	24%	14%	39%	27%
Priority: improve effectiveness/efficiency of government	69%	79%	55%	73%
Priority: reduce size of government	28%	17%	43%	25%
Government should do more to improve schools	70%	84%	49%	68%
Government should do more on college affordability	66%	85%	49%	76%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

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News sources

Millennials who base their opinions about government performance on what they learn from the media (newspapers, television, or online) exhibit significantly more positive views of government than Millennials who base their opinions on what they hear from family and friends or from their own personal experience. Table 14 compares the results for Millennials who base their opinions on news stories and those who do not across key attitudinal questions. Note that in each

TABLE 14

Millennials are influenced by where they get their information about government

Millennials who base their opinions on media stories are more positive about government than those who don't

	Opinion of government based on news reports	
	No	Yes
Role of government		
Government should do more	44%	56%
Government doing too many things	51%	40%
Government involvement in economy		
Need a strong government for complex economic problems	57%	66%
Free market can handle these problems	37%	30%
Confidence in federal government		
A lot/some confidence in government	41%	48%
Just a little confidence in government	36%	35%
No confidence in government	22%	17%
Wasting taxpayer money		
Government wastes a lot of tax money	54%	43%
Government wastes some tax money	38%	48%
Government doesn't waste very much	7%	7%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

case, Millennials turning to news stories to draw conclusions on performance offer more pro-government views. For instance, 56 percent of Millennials who look to the news say government should do more, compared with 44 percent among Millennials who obtain their performance impressions elsewhere.

This pattern is largely nonexistent among non-Millennials, perhaps reflecting the fact that Millennials and older generations get their news about national politics and the federal government from different sources. Far more Millennials (55 percent) say they turn to the Internet than do older generations (37 percent). Indeed, nearly one in five (19 percent) Millennials cite the Internet as the sole source for news about national politics and the federal government. For older generations, only 7 percent turn exclusively to the Internet for their political news (see Table 15).

TABLE 15
Millennials' primary sources of news on government

Millennials turn to the Internet the most for their news on government

	Millennials	Older generations
Local broadcast TV news	31%	40%
National broadcast TV news on ABC, CBS, or NBC	38%	44%
Fox News Channel	27%	40%
CNN	27%	32%
A printed newspaper	25%	36%
Radio	21%	29%
The Internet	55%	37%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Even more important is the source of television news. Two in five (40 percent) Millennials who depend on Fox News Channel (but not CNN or the broadcast networks) have no confidence in government; just 12 percent of those who get news from either CNN or the broadcast networks (but not Fox) feel the same. Note also that Millennials are far less likely than older generations to turn to Fox for news (27 percent vs. 40 percent), with an especially large gap among Republicans (38 percent vs. 61 percent) (see Table 16).

TABLE 16
Millennials' sources of TV news matter

Millennials' views on government depend a lot on which TV networks they watch

	Fox News Channel (not CNN or broadcast)	CNN or broadcast (not Fox News)
A lot/some confidence	28%	48%
Just a little confidence	29%	39%
No confidence	40%	12%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Does government reflect your values and interests?

Just as performance measures are an important predictor of Millennials' confidence in the federal government's ability to solve problems, so too are perceptions about how the federal government impacts people and the degree to which it represents their values. Millennials generally have less serious concerns than do older generations about the federal government along these dimensions.

In the following table, the statements on the left generally reflect a belief that the government is on the side of ordinary citizens, respects their rights, and is constantly evolving to fit changing circumstances. In every case, Millennials express more

TABLE 17
Millennials are more likely to believe government has the right values

More Millennials than not think government is innovative, protects our freedoms, helps people get ahead in life, and has policies that reflect their values

Statement A	Agree much/ somewhat more	Statement B	Agree much/ somewhat more
Is innovative and changes with the times		Is old fashioned and does not keep up with changing times	
Millennials	58%	Millennials	37%
Older generations	46%	Older generations	42%
Protects our personal freedoms		Threatens our personal freedoms	
Millennials	57%	Millennials	40%
Older generations	45%	Older generations	50%
Helps people get ahead in life		Makes it harder for people to get ahead in life	
Millennials	49%	Millennials	45%
Older generations	28%	Older generations	64%
Has policies that generally reflect my values		Has policies that generally do not reflect my values	
Millennials	48%	Millennials	47%
Older generations	36%	Older generations	60%
Operates openly and makes most information available to the public		Operates secretly and makes little information available to the public	
Millennials	44%	Millennials	53%
Older generations	34%	Older generations	63%
Serves the public interests		Serves the special interests	
Millennials	34%	Millennials	62%
Older generations	29%	Older generations	67%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

support for the positive statement than older generations and are less likely to agree with the critical statement. Fifty-seven percent of Millennials, for example, think the federal government protects our personal freedoms, compared with 45 percent among older generations. A 48 percent plurality of Millennials believe that government policies generally reflect their values, in contrast to a 60 percent majority of non-Millennials who feel policies do not reflect their values (see Table 17).

Particularly striking is the tremendous age gap in the perception that the federal government helps people get ahead in life. Nearly a majority (49 percent) of Millennials thinks this description applies to the federal government (including 56 percent of those between the ages of 18 and 24), whereas only 28 percent of non-Millennials feel the same. The fact that young adults are much more likely to see government as being on their side, or at least much less likely to see government as standing in their way, clearly contributes to their support for a more activist government. Republican Millennials contribute significantly to this age gap, with more than a third of them agreeing that government can help people get ahead in life, compared with a mere 12 percent among older Republicans.

Making government work

This report documents Millennials' relatively high confidence in the federal government's ability to solve problems and their support for a more assertive role for government compared to their non-Millennial counterparts. But Millennials' views on government, while more positive than those of older generations, still have far to go before they can be characterized as truly confident in government and enthusiastic about its performance.

This final section looks at the possibility that Millennials' assessments of government can be further improved through a government reform program. First, we explore Millennials' interest in and priorities for improving government's performance. Then we look at how much importance this generation places on various approaches to increasing governmental efficiency and effectiveness, including young people's assessment of a specific reform plan, the "Doing What Works" program at the Center for American Progress (see page 7 for details of the program).

Compared with the other issues examined here, reform is a subject on which Millennials' perspective more closely resembles that of older generations in most respects. But we find some important generational differences in emphasis regarding the kinds of reform people believe hold the most promise for improved government performance. In addition, Millennials express even more optimism than non-Millennials that pursuing a reform agenda like Doing What Works would in fact make government work better and would increase their own confidence in government's capacity to solve problems.

Priorities for government reform

Millennials are committed to the principle of improving government performance. Almost all young adults (94 percent) believe that it is important for the president and Congress to take steps to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the federal government's programs and agencies, including 66 percent who say it is very important. Support for improving the government's performance

is shared across partisan lines, with large majorities of Democrats (70 percent), independents (65 percent), and Republicans (60 percent) saying reform is very important. Both whites (62 percent) and minorities (68 percent of Hispanics, 77 percent of African Americans) agree that improving government should be a very important priority, as do both white non-college graduates (64 percent) and white college graduates (61 percent).

As discussed in section one, Millennials overwhelmingly prefer to improve and reform the government over shrinking its size. Seventy-one percent of Millennials prioritize improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government, while only a quarter (26 percent) favor reducing its size (compared with a margin of 59 percent to 39 percent for non-Millennials). Moreover, 77 percent of Millennials believe that the government could be more effective than it is today, in contrast to just 19 percent who feel that government is bound to be ineffective no matter what. Clearly, Millennials believe in both the urgency and possibility of improving government’s performance.

To further increase Millennials’ confidence in government, it will certainly not be enough to just improve outcomes. Our survey shows that young adults also want improvements in accountability and wasteful spending. When Millennials are asked to rank their priorities for improving the government, their top two responses are making the government more accountable for how it spends its money (40 percent) and reducing wasteful spending (40 percent), clearly out-ranking their third-ranked priority—making programs more effective at solving problems (33 percent). Hispanics and African Americans, however, both rate

TABLE 18
Millennials’ priorities for improving the federal government

How all Millennials and Millennials by race rank priorities for making government work better

	All Millennials	Whites	Hispanics	African Americans
Accountability for how government spends its money	40%	45%	38%	26%
Reduce wasteful spending	40%	42%	38%	40%
Programs more effective at solving problems	33%	28%	44%	40%
Provide information on what government is doing	22%	21%	23%	24%
Reduce size of government	14%	15%	9%	6%
End programs that are no longer needed	13%	14%	11%	13%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

improving outcomes as high or higher than either accountability or reducing wasteful spending. White Millennials, in contrast, believe that accountability and wasteful spending are far more important than effectiveness at solving problems (see Table 18).

Another interesting result is among Millennials who have relatively little confidence today in government but believe that it could be more effective. This “swing” group prioritizes accountable spending (44 percent), with an additional 42 percent saying that reducing wasteful spending is a top priority. Solving problems is seen as a priority among only 28 percent of this group. Clearly, improving the way that the government spends money is a concern among key segments of Millennials and something that must be addressed in any plan to improve the government’s performance.

It is worth noting how little resonance the notion of reducing the size of government has among Millennials. Given the chance to select two reform priorities, only 14 percent select reducing government’s size as a priority for making government better.

An important generational distinction in opinion is the level of importance given to providing the public information on what the government is doing—transparency in government. This is ranked as a priority by 22 percent of Millennials, while only 14 percent of those over age 32 say the same. The youngest Millennials (ages 18 to 24) are most supportive of this priority, with 26 percent saying it is a priority (compared with 18 percent of older Millennials (ages 25-32)). Both young Democrats (25 percent) and Republicans (24 percent) see transparency as an important priority for improving our government. Among Millennials who cite the Internet as one of their primary sources of news about the government, 25 percent rank providing the public with information as a priority.

The Doing What Works program

The survey tested reactions to CAP’s Doing What Works program for improving government effectiveness. Millennials’ response demonstrates that the plan is very much in step with their beliefs about how to improve the overall effectiveness of government. The survey first explores three core components of the Doing What Works program, all of which Millennials see as effective in making the federal government work better. The three core components are:

- Eliminating inefficient programs and redirecting support to the most cost-effective programs—72 percent very/fairly effective
- Evaluating government program performance and making information available to the public—70 percent very/fairly effective
- Improving the management methods and information technologies of the government—62 percent very/fairly effective

All three of these core reform objectives are seen as important. In each case, non-Millennials provide similar effectiveness ratings for these reforms.

After hearing about the plan’s three core components, Millennials say they believe that the program will be effective in making the federal government work better. Two in three (65 percent) say that the overall plan would be very or fairly

TABLE 19
Millennials from a wide array of different groups support the Doing What Works plan

Millennials strongly believe that CAP’s government reform plan would be effective in improving government performance

	Effective	Not effective
All Millennials	65%	33%
Democrats	68%	31%
Independents	61%	37%
Republicans	64%	35%
Tea Party	58%	42%
Progressives/liberals	72%	27%
Conservatives/libertarians	58%	41%
Obama voters	66%	33%
McCain voters	57%	42%
Whites	61%	37%
Hispanics	74%	24%
African Americans	69%	30%
A lot/some confidence in government	69%	29%
Just a little confidence in government	66%	34%
No confidence in government	54%	44%
Government could be more effective	69%	30%
Improve efficiency/don’t reduce size	68%	31%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

effective, a bit higher than among non-Millennials, including strong majorities of Millennials from both parties and independents (68 percent Democrats, 61 percent independents, 64 percent Republicans) (see Table 19). Both African Americans (69 percent) and Hispanics (74 percent) see the plan as effective, as do a solid majority of whites (61 percent). A majority (54 percent) of white college graduates see the plan as effective, while even more white non-college graduates agree (64 percent).

Even among unlikely groups, there is a strong belief that CAP's plan would improve the government. Fifty-eight percent of young Tea Party followers, 57 percent of McCain's young voters, and 58 percent of conservatives/Libertarians all see the plan as being effective. Both Millennials with strong confidence in the government to solve problems (69 percent), and those with just a little confidence (66 percent), agree. Even a majority of young Americans with no confidence in their government see the plan as effective (54 percent).

Specific elements of the Doing What Works program

Like the broad outlines, the specific elements of the Doing What Works plan enjoy strong support among Millennials. Of the 16 reforms we tested in our survey, all are seen as effective (rated 6 to 10 on a 10-point scale) by more than 60 percent of Millennials, and 12 are embraced by more than 70 percent. By and large, the items with the strongest effectiveness ratings are directly tied to efficiency and performance, while process reforms such as management and transparency are seen as somewhat less effective (see Table 20).

Millennials, however, do voice relatively high support for some transparency measures that involve the Internet as a tool to provide the public with information—most likely due to their higher reliance on the Internet as a crucial information source.

After hearing the specific proposals of our government reform program, fully three-quarters (73 percent) of Millennials say CAP's plan would give them more confidence in the federal government (see chart). Even among those with little or no confidence initially, 64 percent say their confidence would increase and two-fifths say their confidence would increase some or a lot. We call this latter group “persuadable skeptics,” and they constitute 22 percent of all

TABLE 20

Millennials strongly support all facets of the Doing What Works program

Millennials think all 16 specific government reform proposals would be effective in improving government performance

	Highly effective	Total effective	Neutral	Total ineffective	Highly ineffective	Cannot rate	Average rating
	8-10	6-10	5	0-4	0-2		
Require every federal agency to set clear goals that are measured by real-world results	64	86	8	5	3	1	8.0
Reform the federal budget process, so that spending decisions are based on objective evidence about what works and what does not	60	82	10	8	2	—	7.7
Measure and compare the performance of state actions in areas such as health care, education, and energy to identify which approaches work and which do not	59	81	9	9	4	1	7.7
Change the way government contracts are awarded, so government officials can quickly and accurately determine the best contractor for the job	51	80	11	7	3	2	7.5
Evaluate the effectiveness of tax breaks and tax credits to determine which ones are cost-effective	53	79	11	8	4	2	7.5
Consolidate federal programs where there is significant overlap	51	79	12	7	4	2	7.4
Reform government hiring, firing, and other personnel practices to improve the quality and performance of the federal workforce	50	79	11	9	3	1	7.3
Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of government programs to guide future policy decisions	46	77	14	8	3	1	7.2
Conduct “try before you buy” pilot experiments to test different policy approaches before investing a lot of money in them	50	75	13	11	5	1	7.2
Modernize federal government information technology to improve the quality of government services	47	75	14	11	5	—	7.1
Provide the public with Internet-based tools to monitor government performance	53	74	11	14	8	1	7.1
Apply the best practices in private-sector management to improve the performance of government programs	43	74	15	9	4	2	7.0
Provide the public with an online report card detailing the federal government’s progress toward meeting national goals	48	69	13	18	7	—	6.9
Provide the public with Internet-based tools to give feedback and advice to government officials	42	68	12	20	8	—	6.7
Give people the option of allowing the IRS to prepare their tax return, at no charge, which they can then review and change before submitting to the IRS	44	63	14	22	13	1	6.5
Ensure that people nominated by the president to lead government agencies receive a quick up-or-down confirmation vote in the U.S. Senate	36	60	22	16	8	2	6.4

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Millennials. Their attitudes and profile are especially important to consider, as they are the young people whose confidence in government is most likely to be significantly affected by successful reform.

Improving efficiency and reducing waste

Reform proposals related to efficient spending of tax dollars all receive strong ratings on their effectiveness in making government programs and agencies work better. The best-received efficiency proposal focuses on reforming the budget process so spending decisions are based on objective evidence, with 82 percent of Millennials rating this reform as effective, and 60 percent rating it as highly effective (ratings from 8 to 10 on a zero-to-10 scale, 10 = extremely effective). This directly speaks to the desire for smarter decision-making and the need for real measurements both to evaluate current programs and to make future decisions.

Evaluating the effectiveness of tax breaks and tax credits to determine which ones are cost-effective is viewed as effective by 79 percent of Millennials and as highly effective by 53 percent. This is followed closely by changing the way government contracts are awarded so the best contractor can be quickly and accurately determined (80 percent effective, 51 percent highly effective) and consolidating programs where there is significant overlap (79 percent effective, 51 percent highly effective) (see Table 21).

TABLE 21
Millennials support efficient government services

Millennials strongly embrace key efficiency elements of the Doing What Works reform plan
Element would be highly effective (score of 8 to 10)

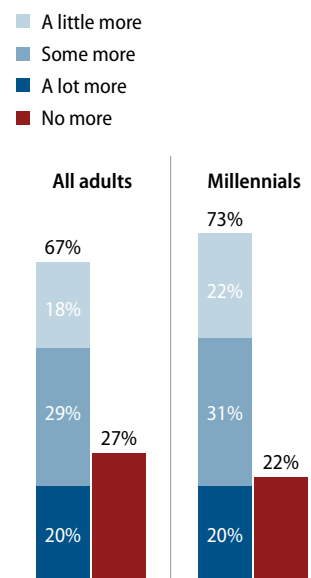
Efficiency and cost	All Millennials	Millennial persuadable skeptics
Reform federal budget process, spending decisions based on objective evidence about what works and what does not	60%	73%
Evaluate the effectiveness of tax breaks and tax credits to determine which ones are cost-effective	53%	61%
Change way government contracts awarded, government officials can quickly and accurately determine best contractor	51%	56%
Consolidate federal programs where significant overlap	51%	51%

Note: Persuadable skeptics are those who have little or no confidence in the federal government but who, after hearing the details of the Doing What Works plan, say it would give them a lot or some more confidence in government's ability to solve problems.

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

The Doing What Works program would increase Millennials' confidence in government

Most Americans believe CAP's government reform plan would increase their confidence in government, but Millennials are even more convinced



Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Measuring performance

Like the items in the efficiency proposals, many of the performance-related policy proposals receive very strong effectiveness ratings from Millennials. The best-received proposal requires every agency to set clear goals that are measured by real-world results (86 percent effective, 64 percent highly effective). The key to this item is its support for the idea of evaluating outcomes based on concrete measurements. Real-world results are objective and finite, and the Millennials, like the general public, have a strong desire to create this type of system for judging performance (see Table 22).

In addition, proposals that evaluate the effectiveness of programs before the government fully accepts and invests in them are seen as a key improvement to government performance. Millennials strongly favor looking at state actions in areas such as health care, education, and energy to identify what approaches work (81 percent effective, 59 percent highly effective). A similar idea that proposes so-called “try before you buy” pilot experiments on policy approaches also receives high ratings (75 percent effective, 50 percent highly effective). These two specific elements of CAP’s government reform plan address the concern that the government wastes money on programs and policies that it does not know will work and lack clear systems to measure and evaluate performance.

TABLE 22
Millennials want performance to matter

Millennials support several ways of making government more accountable for its performance

Element would be highly effective (score of 8 to 10)

Performance	All Millennials	Millennial persuadable skeptics
Require every federal agency to set clear goals that are measured by real-world results	64%	74%
Measure and compare performance of state actions in health care, education, and energy to identify which approaches work	59%	73%
Conduct “try before you buy” pilot experiments to test different policy approaches before investing a lot of money	50%	56%
Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of government programs to guide future policy decisions	46%	55%

Note: Persuadable skeptics are those who have little or no confidence in the federal government but who, after hearing the details of the Doing What Works plan, say it would give them a lot or some more confidence in government’s ability to solve problems.

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Modernizing management and technology

Several management and technology proposals in the Doing What Works program are seen very positively by Millennials, though none of them is rated as highly as the leading items on improving efficiency and measuring performance. The most popular management/technology proposal is reforming government’s hiring, firing, and other personnel practices, which is rated by 79 percent as effective and by 50 percent as highly effective (see Table 23). This reflects Millennials’ belief that a major source of waste is inefficient government employees receiving generous benefits or high salaries (rated 8-10 as an example of government waste by 61 percent of young adults).

Two items from our Doing What Works plan address the perceived need to adopt new technologies and modern management methods. Millennials rate both as effective ways to improve government’s performance. They support modernizing the government’s information technology to improve the quality of services (75 percent effective, 47 percent highly effective), and applying the best practices from private-sector management to improve performance of government programs (74 percent effective, 43 percent highly effective).

TABLE 23
Millennials want government management and workforce reform

Improving the performance of government employees is a highly-rated reform for Millennials

Element would be highly effective (score of 8 to 10)

Management and technology	All Millennials	Millennial persuadable skeptics
Reform government hiring, firing, & personnel practices to improve quality & performance of federal workforce	50%	64%
Modernize federal government information technology to improve the quality of government services	47%	60%
Apply the best practices in private-sector management to improve the performance of government programs	43%	54%

Note: Persuadable skeptics are those who have little or no confidence in the federal government but who, after hearing the details of the Doing What Works plan, say it would give them a lot or some more confidence in government’s ability to solve problems.

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Increasing transparency

Millennials rate providing Internet-based tools to monitor government performance very favorably. Seventy-four percent say this reform would be effective, and 53 percent say it would be highly effective. The latter figure puts the reform among the top five specific elements of our plan in terms of being highly effective. An online report card detailing progress toward goals (69 percent effective, 48 percent highly effective) and Internet-based tools to give feedback and advice to government officials (68 percent effective, 42 percent highly effective) are also rated as reasonably effective. Recall that Millennials select providing information about government to the public as a much higher priority for improving government than do non-Millennials. The Millennial generation see transparency as an important way for government to improve (see Table 24).

TABLE 24
Millennials favor making government more transparent

Millennials think Internet-based monitoring tools can help improve government performance

Element would be highly effective (score of 8 to 10)

Transparency	All Millennials	Millennial persuadable skeptics
Provide the public with Internet-based tools to monitor government performance	53%	56%
Provide public with an online report card detailing federal government's progress toward meeting national goals	48%	56%
Provide the public with Internet-based tools to give feedback and advice to government officials	42%	49%

Note: Persuadable skeptics are those who have little or no confidence in the federal government but who, after hearing the details of the Doing What Works plan, say it would give them a lot or some more confidence in government's ability to solve problems.

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Doing What Works plan would improve confidence

After hearing both the core elements and specific proposals of CAP's government reform plan, an impressively strong three-quarters (73 percent) of Millennials say that if carried out, it would give them more confidence in the government's ability to solve problems, including 20 percent who say that it would give them a lot more confidence. More than two-thirds of Millennial men, women, whites, blacks, and

Hispanics say that their confidence in the government would increase with the Doing What Works plan in place. Even young Republicans (68 percent), conservatives (67 percent), and Libertarians (55 percent) report they would feel more confidence in the federal government. White college grads (65 percent) and white non-college grads (70 percent) both predict the plan would increase their confidence in government. Across partisan, demographic, and ideological lines, strong majorities of young Americans say that the Doing What Works government performance plan would raise their confidence in government’s ability to solve problems.

As noted earlier, a key group to consider in evaluating our plan are the views of “persuadable skeptics,” the 22 percent of Millennials who have little or no initial confidence in the government to solve problems, but after hearing the details, say the Doing What Works plan would increase their confidence level some or

TABLE 25
How Millennial persuadable skeptics differ from Millennials who already have confidence in government

How Millennial persuadable skeptics differ from Millennials who already have confidence in government

	Initially confident	Persuadable skeptics
All Millennials	44%	22%
Democrats	60%	38%
Independents	21%	25%
Republicans	19%	38%
Tea Party supporters	8%	11%
Progressives/liberals	62%	47%
Conservatives/libertarians	29%	44%
Obama voters	50%	38%
McCain voters	11%	23%
Whites	52%	65%
Hispanics	22%	15%
African Americans	18%	14%
Government should do more	64%	45%
Government doing too much	32%	50%

Note: Persuadable skeptics are those who have little or no confidence in the federal government but who, after hearing the details of the Doing What Works plan, say it would give them a lot or some more confidence in government’s ability to solve problems.

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

a lot. This group differs considerably from those who are initially confident in government. The initially confident have a 41-point partisan advantage among Democrats, more than three in five (62 percent) consider themselves progressive or liberal, and 18 percent are African Americans.

Persuadable skeptics are a more challenging audience. They have an equal number of Democrats and Republicans, nearly half (44 percent) consider themselves conservatives or Libertarian, and two-thirds (65 percent) are white. In most respects, they present a substantially more conservative profile than the initially confident (see Table 25).

These persuadable skeptics rate the Doing What Works program even more highly than the initially confident. While those Millennials already confident in government see the overall Doing What Works plan as effective (69 percent effective, including 40 percent very effective), the persuadable skeptics show even more support (74 percent effective, 41 percent very effective). Similarly, the persuadable skeptics rate most of the specific elements as more effective than both Millennials overall (see Tables 21-24) and the initially confident. In particular, the top three rated proposals in CAP's plan are all rated much stronger by persuadable skeptics than by those with initial confidence:

- Setting clear goals measured by real-world results (74 percent rated highly effective among persuadable skeptics)
- Reforming budget process to be based on objective evidence (73 percent rated highly effective among persuadable skeptics)
- Measuring and evaluating state actions to identify approaches that work (73 percent rated highly effective among persuadable skeptics)

Perceived consequences of the Doing What Works plan on our federal government

Millennials are even more hopeful than non-Millennials about the positive consequences of implementing the Doing What Works plan. Millennials expect that the plan would improve the quality of services and the efficiency of government spending. One key measuring stick for any improvement in government's performance is how it spends its money. This report documents the importance of spending issues when it comes to Millennials' attitudes toward the government

and their priorities for improving its performance. The Doing What Works plan clearly addresses those concerns in Millennials’ eyes, as 69 percent say that the plan will make things better when it comes to the federal government spending tax dollars efficiently (see Table 26).

Independents and Republicans, who are particularly worried about this issue and rank it among their top priorities, give CAP’s reform plan excellent ratings on improving the efficiency of spending. Sixty-two percent of independents and 66 percent of Republicans say that it will make the government a more efficient spender of tax dollars. Whites (68 percent), Hispanics (69 percent), and African Americans (74 percent) all believe in the power of the plan to improve the spending of tax dollars. Even among those who initially say that the government does a poor job of spending money efficiently, 61 percent think the program will reduce waste.

Similarly, seven in 10 believe that CAP’s plan will improve the government’s ability to provide quality services (70 percent). Three-quarters (75 percent) of Democrats think that services will improve, and two in three Republicans and independents agree (66 percent and 68 percent respectively). Again, whites and Hispanics strongly believe improved services will result from the plan (70 percent and 68 percent respectively), while African Americans feel even more certain (76 percent) that services will improve. Both white college graduates and non-graduates see services improving with the plan in place.

Millennials also expect that Doing What Works will make things better regarding the budget deficit, although they are less confident in its impact on the deficit than they are on its improvements to spending and service quality. When asked whether CAP’s plan would make things better, worse, or have no effect on the deficit, over six in 10 Millennials (62 percent) believe it will make

TABLE 26
Millennials expect results in three areas from the Doing What Works plan
 Millennials overwhelmingly believe CAP’s plan will make government performance better

	All Millennials	Whites	Latino	Blacks
Quality of services provided by federal government	70%	70%	68%	76%
How efficiently government spends tax dollars	69%	68%	69%	74%
Federal budget deficit	62%	61%	61%	72%

Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

the federal budget deficit situation better, including majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents. Even a majority of conservatives/libertarians (58 percent), as well as more than three in five progressives and liberals, believe that the budget deficit will get better. African Americans (72 percent) are most sure that the federal budget deficit would improve under the Doing What Works agenda, and whites and Latinos (61 percent) agree.

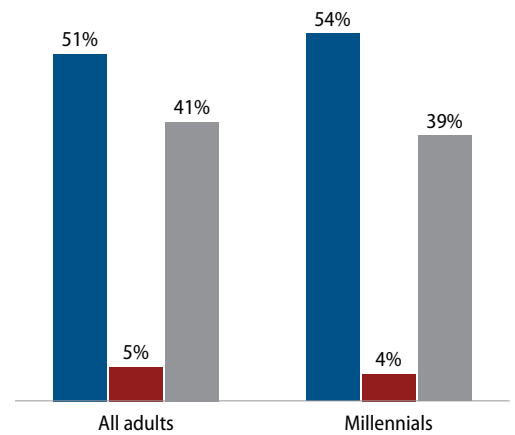
Importantly, Millennials not only support the plan but also would reward candidates for public office who supported the plan and advocated for its implementation. A majority (54 percent) of Millennials report being more likely to vote for a candidate who put implementing this plan at the top of his or her agenda (see chart). A majority of Republicans (53 percent), independents (54 percent), and conservatives/Libertarians (51 percent) all are more likely to vote for a candidate who supported and prioritized the major elements of CAP's government reform plan. There is almost no negative response to supporting the plan, as just 4 percent say that it would reduce their support for a candidate.

Looking across all the data on reaction to the Doing What Works plan, Millennials are strongly supportive of CAP's agenda for government reform, seeing it as an effective way to make government work more efficiently, deliver quality services, and reduce the federal budget deficit. This support is strong across party lines, including Republicans and independents, so this is not an agenda popular only among those already disposed to like government. Indeed, it is Millennials currently skeptical of government whose confidence in government would be boosted the most by our government reform plan (our persuadable skeptics). This indicates that the Doing What Works plan could go far toward helping consolidate this generation, which is already more pro-government than older generations, behind a solidly positive agenda and role for government.

Millennials are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports the Doing What Works plan

Congressional candidates would do well to champion CAP's plan when going before the voters

- More likely to vote for
- Less likely to vote for
- Wouldn't affect my vote



Source: Hart Research Associates/Center for American Progress Doing What Works survey.

Appendix A

Survey methodology

Our survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted from May 10 to 22, 2010, by Hart Research Associates, among 2,523 American adults age 18 and over, including 911 “Millennials” age 18 to 32. The resulting sample size for the sample among all adults (in which Millennials are weighted down to their proper proportion of the population) is 2,180 respondents. The margin of error is ± 2.1 percentage points for the all adults sample, ± 3.3 percentage points for the Millennials sample, and is higher among subgroups, for example ± 5.5 percentage points for African Americans.

Demographic profiles of the two samples

	Main sample	Millennial sample
18 to 32	27%	100%
33 to 49	27%	—
50 to 64	29%	—
65 and over	17%	—
Men	49%	51%
Women	51%	49%
Whites	74%	60%
African Americans	10%	13%
Hispanics	11%	19%
Democrats	37%	44%
Independents	30%	25%
Republicans	33%	31%
Noncollege graduates	69%	71%
College graduates	29%	27%

Three sampling approaches were used: random-digit dialing of landlines; random-digit dialing of cell phones; and targeted dialing of sample lists composed of ethnic minorities and young people to ensure the proper representation of those subgroups. The sample includes 503 cell phone interviews—254 Millennials and 249 adults age 33 and over—with people for whom a cell phone is their only telephone. Nominal weights were then applied to both the all adults sample and the Millennials sample to ensure each was demographically representative according to U.S. Census data.

The total sample is representative of the total population in this country. A little over a quarter are Millennials (27 percent), 33- to 49-year-olds make up 27 percent of the sample, 50- to 64-year-olds are 29 percent of the sample, and the final 17 percent of the sample are age 65 or over. There are slightly more women (51 percent) than men (49 percent), and African Americans (10 percent) and Hispanics (11 percent) both make up about a tenth of the sample.

Democrats hold a 4-point partisan advantage (37 percent versus 33 percent), whereas independents make up the remaining 30 percent of the sample. Nearly seven in 10 adults are not college graduates (69 percent), whereas 18 percent of the sample have a four-year college degree and another 11 percent have a post-graduate education.

The Millennial sample is based only among 18- to 32-year-old respondents. This group is split 52 percent among 25- to 32-year-olds and 48 percent among 18- to 24-year-olds, and is slightly more male (51 percent) than female (49 percent). Racially, it is much less white (60 percent), whereas African Americans (13 percent) and Hispanics (19 percent) make up a larger part of this sample than the national sample. Democrats here hold a 13-point partisan advantage (44 percent versus 31 percent), while the remaining quarter identify as independents. Only 26 percent do not have a college degree, although that number is low due to the fact many in this age group currently are in school (19 percent students).

Appendix B

The Doing What Works survey of attitudes toward government and government reform

1724 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009

(202) 234-5570

Interviews: 2,523 adults, including 911 Millennials

Dates: May 10-22, 2010

[109]	All adults	Millennials
Male	49%	51%
Female	51%	49%

FINAL

Study #9823

CAP DWW Survey

May 2010

Please note: all results are shown as percentages unless otherwise stated.

I'm calling from Hart Research, a national public opinion polling firm in Washington, D.C. We are conducting a national survey, and I'd really appreciate the chance to get your opinions on a few questions. This survey is being conducted for research purposes only, and we promise that your name and individual opinions will be kept confidential.

Millennials are defined as 18-32 year olds.

1a. Generally speaking, do you feel that things in the nation are going in the right direction these days, or do you feel that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track? [140]

	All adults	Millennials
Right direction	30	36
Wrong track	62	55
Not sure	8	9

2. How satisfied are you with the state of the U.S. economy today—are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the state of the economy? [145]

	All adults	Millennials
Very satisfied	3	4
Somewhat satisfied	20	26
Somewhat dissatisfied	32	39
Very dissatisfied	44	30
Not sure	1	1

3. How closely do you follow news from Washington, D.C., about what the president and Congress are doing—very closely, fairly closely, just somewhat closely, or not too closely? [146]

	All adults	Millennials
Follow very closely	35	19
Follow fairly closely	30	30
Follow just somewhat closely	24	36
Do not follow too closely	11	15
Not sure	—	—

4. I would like your opinion of some organizations, people, and institutions. What is your overall opinion of (READ ITEM)—very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable or very unfavorable?

	Total favorable	Total unfavorable	Favorable		Unfavorable		Not sure
			Very	Mostly	Mostly	Very	
Federal government in Washington [147]							
All adults							
May 2010	35	62	4	31	36	26	3
July 2009*	42	50	4	38	18	31	8
April 2008*	37	58	6	31	21	37	5
January 2007*	45	46	7	38	15	31	9
February 2006*	43	50	6	37	16	34	7
December 2005*	46	49	7	39	18	31	5
Late October 2005*	45	48	6	39	16	32	7
February 2004*	59	36	10	49	11	25	5
April 2003*	73	22	14	59	5	17	5
December 2002*	64	27	11	53	7	20	9
Mid-November 2001*	82	15	17	65	3	12	3
Late October 2000* (RVs)	54	40	7	47	30	10	6
October 1997*	38	59	4	34	18	41	3
Millennials							
May 2010	47	48	6	41	32	16	5
Your state government [148]							
All adults							
May 2010	44	52	6	38	30	22	4
July 2009*	50	44	6	44	16	28	6
April 2008*	59	37	9	50	16	21	4
December 2005*	57	37	8	49	11	26	6
December 2002*	62	31	15	47	10	21	8
Mid-November 2001*	77	18	15	62	4	14	5
October 1997*	66	29	10	56	7	22	5
Millennials							
May 2010	51	43	9	42	27	16	6
Your local government [149]							
All adults							
May 2010	58	38	10	48	23	15	4
July 2009*	60	32	8	52	9	23	8
April 2008*	63	33	11	52	12	21	4
December 2005*	66	28	12	54	10	18	6
December 2002*	67	25	16	51	9	16	7
Mid-November 2001*	78	17	15	63	4	13	5
October 1997*	68	25	12	56	7	18	7

* Comparative data conducted by Pew Research Center.

4. I would like your opinion of some organizations, people, and institutions. What is your overall opinion of (READ ITEM)—very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable or very unfavorable?

	Total favorable	Total unfavorable	Favorable		Unfavorable		Not sure
			Very	Mostly	Mostly	Very	
Millennials							
May 2010	62	32	12	50	21	11	6
Congress [150]							
All adults							
May 2010	28	67	3	25	35	32	5
August 2009*	37	52	4	33	20	32	11
Early April 2009*	50	43	10	40	15	28	7
January 2009*	40	52	5	35	20	32	8
Late May 2008*	41	51	6	35	17	34	8
July 2007*	41	51	6	35	16	35	8
Early January 2007*	53	38	11	42	9	29	8
Late October 2006*	41	46	5	36	15	31	13
February 2006*	44	47	6	38	14	33	9
Late October 2005*	45	45	7	38	13	32	10
July 2005*	49	40	6	43	11	29	11
June 2005*	49	40	6	43	10	30	11
June 2004*	56	33	7	49	7	26	11
July 2001*	57	32	7	50	8	24	11
March 2001*	56	36	6	50	10	26	8
January 2001*	64	23	10	54	5	18	13
September 2000* (RVs)	61	32	8	53	5	27	7
August 1999*	63	34	8	55	7	27	3
June 1999*	56	39	9	47	9	30	5
February 1999*	52	44	4	48	8	36	4
January 1999*	48	45	7	41	15	30	7
Millennials							
May 2010	40	52	4	36	34	18	8
President Obama [151]							
All adults							
May 2010	49	47	20	29	19	28	4
November 2009*	65	30	33	32	16	14	5
June 2009*	72	25	37	35	11	14	3
Mid April 2009*	73	24	38	35	10	14	3
January 2009*	79	15	40	39	4	11	6
Millennials							
May 2010	60	37	22	38	19	18	3

* Comparative data conducted by Pew Research Center.

4. I would like your opinion of some organizations, people, and institutions. What is your overall opinion of (READ ITEM)—very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable or very unfavorable?

	Total favorable	Total unfavorable	Favorable		Unfavorable		Not sure
			Very	Mostly	Mostly	Very	
Business corporations [152]							
All adults							
May 2010	39	52	5	34	32	20	9
July 2009*	47	45	10	37	15	30	8
January 2007*	57	30	9	48	8	22	13
December 2005*	57	35	9	48	10	25	8
Late October 2005*	45	45	8	37	16	29	10
July 2005*	49	40	9	40	11	29	11
March 2002*	62	29	10	52	6	23	9
July 2001*	59	27	9	50	6	21	14
March 2001*	65	25	9	56	6	19	10
August 1999*	73	22	8	65	3	19	5
Early September 1998*	64	26	9	55	5	21	10
October 1997*	66	28	11	55	5	23	6
June 1997*	68	25	8	60	7	18	7
May 1997*	59	28	9	50	7	21	13
June 1996*	62	31	10	52	6	25	7
February 1996*	59	34	9	50	10	24	7
October 1995*	60	36	6	54	7	29	4
July 1994*	70	24	8	62	5	19	6
November 1991*	65	28	8	57	6	22	7
January 1988*	59	32	6	53	5	27	9
June 1985*	58	31	8	50	7	24	11
Millennials							
May 2010	45	46	6	39	32	14	9

* Comparative data conducted by Pew Research Center.

5a. I'm going to read you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. As I read each pair, tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right. [153/156]

(STATEMENT A) Government should do more to solve problems, OR

(STATEMENT B) Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals.

	All adults						Millennials		
	5/10	1/10 ¹	6/09 ²	3/09 ³	11/08 ⁴	3/07 ²	5/10	1/10 ¹	11/08 ⁴
Statement A/Should do more	39	45	34	41	50	41	49	53	69
Statement B/Doing too many things	57	47	56	51	44	52	46	42	27
Both equally (VOL)	2	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Neither (VOL)	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Not sure	1	}8	}10	}8	}6	}7	1	}6	}4
		4/02 ¹	7/00 ²	1/97 ²	10/95 ²	10/94 ²			
		47	33	34	27	30			
		45	57	58	64	63			
		—	—	—	—	—			
		—	—	—	—	—			
		}8	}10	}7	}9	}7			

1 Comparative data conducted by Pew Research Center. Pew Millennials defined as 18 to 29 year olds.

2 Comparative data conducted by CBS/New York Times. Statement A was phrased, "Government should do more to solve national problems."

3 Comparative data conducted by CBS.

4 Comparative data conducted by Pew Research Center only among 2008 voters.

5b. I'm going to read you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. As I read each pair, tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right. [154/157]

(STATEMENT A) I pay too much in taxes for what I get from the government, OR

(STATEMENT B) I don't mind paying taxes when I consider all that the government does.

	All adults	Millennials
Statement A/I pay too much	56	49
Statement B/I don't mind paying	41	47
Both equally (VOL)	1	1
Neither (VOL)	1	1
Not sure	1	2

5c. I'm going to read you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. As I read each pair, tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right.* [155]

(STATEMENT A) Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest, OR

(STATEMENT B) Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.

	All adults			Millennials
	5/10	10/08 ¹	12/04 ¹	5/10
Statement A/Regulation is necessary	46	50	49	53
Statement B/Regulation does more harm than good	49	38	41	43
Both equally (VOL)	2	NA	NA	2
Neither (VOL)	1	}12	}10	—
Not sure	2	—	—	2
	7/02¹	8/99¹	10/94¹	
	54	48	38	
	36	44	55	
	NA	NA	NA	
	}10	}8	}7	

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORMS A/C).

¹ Comparative data conducted by Pew Research Center.

5d. I'm going to read you some pairs of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. As I read each pair, tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views even if neither is exactly right.** [158]

(STATEMENT A) We need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems, OR

(STATEMENT B) The free market can handle these problems without government being involved.

	All adults			Millennials
	5/10	2008 ¹	2004 ¹	5/10
Statement A/Need a strong government	50	72	64	62
Statement B/Free market can handle these problems	44	26	33	33
Both equally (VOL)	3	NA	NA	2
Neither (VOL)	1	—	—	1
Not sure	2	}2	}2	2
	2000¹	1992¹	1990¹	
	60	68	71	
	37	25	23	
	NA	NA	NA	
	}3	}7	}7	

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORMS B/D).

¹ Comparative data conducted by National Election Studies.

6. When the government in Washington decides to solve a problem, how much confidence do you have that the problem actually will be solved—a lot, some, just a little, or none at all? [159]

	All adults					Millennials
	5/10	6/06 ¹	11/05 ⁶	9/02 ⁶	1/02 ¹	5/10
A lot of confidence	4	8	7	8	14	6
Some confidence	29	38	38	45	52	38
Just a little confidence	35	33	36	38	27	36
No confidence at all	31	21	18	9	7	20
Not sure	1	—	1	—	—	—
		6/00 ⁵	1-4/96 ⁴	12/95 ³	5/94 ¹	
		8	4	4	4	
		43	35	35	31	
		35	39	38	42	
		13	21	23	22	
		1	1	—	1	
		1/94 ¹	2/93 ¹	4/92 ²	10/91 ¹	
		4	5	4	7	
		39	46	46	31	
		40	37	38	38	
		16	12	12	23	
		1	—	—	1	

1 Comparative data conducted by ABC/Washington Post.

2 Comparative data conducted by ABC.

3 Comparative data conducted by Washington Post/Kasier/Harvard.

4 Comparative data conducted by Gallup/UVA.

5 Comparative data conducted by Kaiser/NPR/Harvard.

6 Comparative data conducted by the Washington Post.

7. When you think about “the government in Washington,” what first comes to mind for you—federal elected officials such as the president and members of Congress, or the programs and agencies that carry out federal policies and services? [160]

	All adults	Millennials
Elected officials	68	67
Programs and agencies	28	29
Other (VOL)	1	1
Not sure	3	3

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about the federal government, specifically meaning the programs and agencies of the federal government, not elected officials.

8. How would you rate the performance of federal government programs and agencies, in terms of (READ ITEM)? Would you say excellent, good, fair, not so good, or poor?

Ranked by the percentage of all adults who say excellent, good, or fair

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Not so good	Poor	Not sure
Being customer-friendly and providing quality services [164]						
All adults	3	18	37	18	19	5
Millennials	4	23	41	15	12	5
Helping you and your family [165]						
All adults	3	16	34	20	21	6
Millennials	4	19	39	17	17	4
Accomplishing their goals [162]						
All adults	2	14	37	23	21	3
Millennials	3	20	43	20	12	2
Being well run and effectively managed [161]						
All adults	2	12	32	24	29	1
Millennials	4	17	40	22	16	1
Spending money efficiently [163]						
All adults	1	6	21	25	45	2
Millennials	1	9	28	28	32	2

9. Generally speaking, would you say the performance of federal government programs and agencies is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same? [166]

	All adults	Millennials
Getting better	15	22
Getting worse	38	25
Staying about the same	45	52
Not sure	2	1

10. When you think about the performance of the federal government, is your opinion based mainly on your own personal experience with government, what you hear from family and friends, or what you read and hear about government in newspapers, television, or online? [167]

	All adults	Millennials
Own personal experience	34	36
Family and friends	9	16
Stories in newspapers, TV, online	52	43
None/other (VOL)	3	4
Not sure	2	1

11ab. I'm going to read you the names of some federal government programs and agencies, and I'd like to know how well run you feel that program or agency is in terms of being effective and spending tax dollars efficiently. For each one, please use a scale from zero to ten, on which a ten means you think it is run extremely well, and zero means it is not run well at all. You may use any number from zero to ten.

Ranked by the highest mean score of all adults

	Mean	Run extremely well				Not run well at all		Cannot rate
		9-10	7-8	4-6	2-3	0-1		
The Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI* [170-171]								
All adults	6.5	14	39	31	5	4	7	
Millennials	6.9	16	48	24	3	3	6	
Department of Defense** [208-209]								
All adults	6.2	17	32	35	8	5	3	
Millennials	6.1	16	33	37	7	6	1	
Department of Homeland Security** [214-215]								
All adults	5.2	10	28	32	14	13	3	
Millennials	5.8	14	31	32	10	10	3	
National Institutes of Health, NIH* [168-169]								
All adults	5.1	5	20	42	9	9	15	
Millennials	5.4	7	23	42	6	8	14	
Internal Revenue Service, IRS** [210-211]								
All adults	5.0	7	25	39	13	13	3	
Millennials	5.6	9	33	37	11	8	2	
Environmental Protection Agency, EPA** [212-213]								
All adults	5.0	6	26	39	17	10	2	
Millennials	5.6	6	35	37	14	5	3	
Medicare* [172-173]								
All adults	4.8	8	20	39	16	13	4	
Millennials	5.0	7	20	42	13	13	5	
Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA* [174-175]								
All adults	4.8	5	21	42	14	14	4	
Millennials	5.6	7	28	45	9	6	5	
Social Security Administration** [218-219]								
All adults	4.7	9	19	37	18	15	2	
Millennials	4.5	5	16	42	23	12	2	
Medicaid** [216-217]								
All adults	4.6	7	18	37	18	13	7	
Millennials	4.9	8	16	44	17	9	6	
Department of Education* [176-177]								
All adults	4.6	5	18	45	18	13	1	
Millennials	5.0	5	21	50	15	9	—	
Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC* [178-179]								
All adults	4.3	4	12	40	17	15	12	
Millennials	5.4	6	25	36	11	6	16	

* Asked of one-fourth the respondents (FORM A).

** Asked of one-fourth the respondents (FORM B).

11cd. I'm going to read you the names of some federal government programs and agencies, and I'd like to know how important you feel that program or agency is in terms of serving an important public interest. For each one, please use a scale from zero to ten, on which a ten means you think that program or agency is extremely important and a zero means you think that program or agency is not important at all. You may use any number from zero to ten.

Ranked by the highest mean score of all adults

	Mean	Extremely important				Not important at all		Cannot rate
		9-10	7-8	4-6	2-3	0-1		
Department of Defense** [232-233]								
All adults	8.3	59	25	11	2	2	1	
Millennials	8.3	51	32	13	1	1	2	
The Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI* [222-223]								
All adults	8.0	48	29	18	1	3	1	
Millennials	8.0	45	33	18	3	—	1	
Social Security Administration** [242-243]								
All adults	7.7	46	27	19	4	3	1	
Millennials	7.2	39	27	20	7	5	2	
Medicare* [224-225]								
All adults	7.6	48	23	18	6	4	1	
Millennials	7.3	44	23	21	6	5	1	
Department of Homeland Security** [238-239]								
All adults	7.5	43	27	18	7	4	1	
Millennials	7.8	46	32	15	3	4	—	
Medicaid** [240-241]								
All adults	7.3	41	25	22	6	4	2	
Millennials	7.2	39	26	23	6	4	2	
Department of Education* [228-229]								
All adults	7.1	45	19	20	7	8	1	
Millennials	8.1	60	17	13	5	4	1	
National Institutes of Health, NIH* [220-221]								
All adults	6.9	27	28	25	6	4	10	
Millennials	7.4	31	35	23	2	2	7	
Environmental Protection Agency, EPA** [236-237]								
All adults	6.8	30	31	25	7	6	1	
Millennials	7.2	35	29	24	7	3	2	
Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA* [226-227]								
All adults	6.7	29	26	29	7	6	3	
Millennials	6.9	29	33	24	5	6	3	
Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC* [230-231]								
All adults	6.3	21	26	30	7	7	9	
Millennials	6.8	24	26	32	4	4	10	
Internal Revenue Service, IRS** [234-235]								
All adults	6.2	20	30	33	9	8	—	
Millennials	6.7	25	33	28	8	6	—	

* Asked of one-fourth the respondents (FORM C). ** Asked of one-fourth the respondents (FORM D).

12a. On the whole, are you mostly satisfied or mostly dissatisfied with your personal interactions with federal government programs and agencies over the past year or so? (IF "SATISFIED/DISSATISFIED," ASK:) Is that very or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)? [244]

	All adults	Millennials	
Very satisfied	13	14	CONTINUE
Somewhat satisfied	37	43	
Somewhat dissatisfied	18	20	
Very dissatisfied	13	11	
Have not had any interactions (VOL)	18	10	Skip to Q.13
Not sure	1	2	

Ask only of respondents who make a choice in Q. 12a

12b. When you say you were (satisfied/dissatisfied), which federal government programs, agencies, or departments were you thinking of? [245-246] Ranked by the highest percentage of all adults

			Satisfied		Dissatisfied	
	All adults	Millennials	All adults	Millennials	All adults	Millennials
Medicare	22	18	22	15	21	24
Social Security	22	11	24	8	19	14
IRS/paying taxes	17	16	16	17	17	14
Department of Defense, military	7	9	8	9	6	8
Congress	6	8	3	6	12	11
Student loans	5	9	4	9	5	10
Department of Education	5	7	5	8	5	6
Department of Motor Vehicles	4	6	4	6	4	5
President Obama	4	5	3	4	7	7
Veterans Administration	4	2	4	1	4	4
Postal Service	3	4	4	5	2	2
Medicaid	2	2	1	2	3	2
FEMA	2	2	1	3	2	2
Department of Homeland Security	2	1	2	1	2	1
Health care	2	1	1	1	2	1
Welfare, food stamps	1	2	1	1	2	2
Housing, housing assistance, HUD, FHA	1	1	1	—	2	1
EPA, other environmental programs	1	1	1	1	2	-
Department of Health and Human Services	1	1	1	1	2	2
Unemployment, job services, other job programs	1	1	1	1	2	2
Immigration borders, ICE	1	—	—	—	1	1
Social Services	1	—	—	—	1	—
Other (specify)	10	10	8	9	12	12
Not sure	15	19	18	22	11	13

13. I am going to list activities that the federal government is involved with or might be involved with. Please tell me whether you'd like to see more federal government involvement in that area, less involvement, about the same amount of involvement, or no federal government involvement at all.*

Ranked by the percentage of all adults who say more involvement

	Involvement			No government involvement	Not sure
	More	Less	About the same amount		
Developing new, clean energy sources [255]					
All adults					
May 2010	61	10	18	10	1
Millennials					
May 2010	66	8	21	5	—
Improving public schools [256]					
All adults					
May 2010	60	14	14	11	1
Millennials					
May 2010	75	8	12	4	1
Making college education affordable [258]					
All adults					
May 2010	60	11	17	11	1
Millennials					
May 2010	73	7	14	5	1
Reducing poverty [257]					
All adults					
May 2010	57	15	17	9	2
June 2000 ¹	69	11	14	5	1
Millennials					
May 2010	64	12	18	5	1
Ensuring access to affordable health care [254]					
All adults					
May 2010	51	19	10	19	1
June 2000 ¹	73	7	13	6	1
Millennials					
May 2010	56	17	14	12	1

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORMS A/C).

¹ Comparative data conducted by NPR/Kaiser.

14. Looking ahead to the next ten or twenty years, how important do you think the federal government will be in terms of improving the lives of the American people—more important than in the past, less important than in the past, or equally as important as it was in the past?*** [259]

	All adults	Millennials
More important	42	47
Less important	18	12
Equally important	36	39
Not sure	4	2

15. I am going to read you pairs of phrases that could be used to describe the federal government, and for each pair, please tell me which statement you feel better applies to federal government. (IF RESPONDENT MAKES A CHOICE, ASK:) Is that much more or only somewhat more?***

Statement A	Much more	Somewhat more	Statement B	Somewhat more	Much more	Not sure
[260] Has policies that generally reflect my values			Has policies that generally do not reflect my values			
All adults	13	27	All adults	27	29	4
Millennials	14	34	Millennials	26	21	5
[261] Serves the special interests			Serves the public interest			
All adults	43	23	All adults	20	10	4
Millennials	33	29	Millennials	23	11	4
[262] Helps people get ahead in life			Makes it harder for people to get ahead in life			
All adults	12	22	All adults	27	32	7
Millennials	17	32	Millennials	24	21	6
[263] Is innovative and changes with the times			Is old fashioned and does not keep up with changing times			
All adults	16	33	All adults	23	18	10
Millennials	20	38	Millennials	23	14	5
[264] Threatens our personal freedoms			Protects our personal freedoms			
All adults	29	18	All adults	31	18	4
Millennials	20	20	Millennials	35	22	3
[265] Operates openly and makes most information available to the public			Operates secretly and makes little information available to the public			
All adults	13	24	All adults	24	36	3
Millennials	17	27	Millennials	27	26	3

*** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORMS C/D).

16. Do you think that federal government programs and agencies waste a lot of money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?*[266]

	All adults						Millennials
	5/10	2008 ¹	2004 ¹	2000 ¹	1998 ¹	1996 ¹	5/10
A lot	66	73	61	59	61	60	49
Some	28	NA	NA	38	34	38	42
Not very much	4	NA	NA	3	4	1	7
Not sure	2	NA	NA	—	1	1	2
		1994¹	1992¹	1990¹	1988¹	1984¹	
		70	67	67	63	65	
		27	30	30	33	29	
		2	2	2	2	4	
		1	1	1	2	2	
		1982¹	1980¹	1978¹	1976¹	1974¹	
		66	78	77	74	74	
		29	18	19	20	22	
		2	2	2	3	1	
		3	2	2	3	3	

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORMS A/B).

¹ Comparative data conducted by University of Michigan/National Election Studies.

17. People sometimes say that spending by federal government programs and agencies is “wasteful.” For each of the following items I read, please indicate whether you feel that this is a good example of what you personally mean by wasteful government spending. Use a scale from zero to ten, on which a ten means it is a perfect example of wasteful spending, zero means it is not an example of wasteful spending, and five is in the middle.*

Ranked by the highest mean score of all adults

	Mean	Perfect example				Not an example		Cannot rate
		9-10	7-8	4-6	2-3	0-1		
Government programs continuing for years even though they have not proven effective [275-276]								
All adults	8.1	60	16	13	4	5	2	
Millennials	7.4	45	25	18	6	6	—	
Government contractors receiving no-bid contracts and overcharging for services [269-270]								
All adults	8.1	59	18	13	4	4	2	
Millennials	7.5	44	26	19	5	5	1	
People receiving government benefits who do not deserve them [267-268]								
All adults	8.0	60	13	15	5	5	2	
Millennials	7.5	52	15	19	6	7	1	
Tax breaks for corporations that have political influence [279-280]								
All adults	7.9	56	17	17	4	5	1	
Millennials	7.1	40	22	25	6	6	1	
Inefficient government employees receiving generous benefits or high salaries [277-278]								
All adults	7.8	55	18	16	5	5	1	
Millennials	7.4	48	23	15	7	7	—	
Government agencies duplicating the efforts of other agencies [273-274]								
All adults	7.4	44	19	25	4	4	4	
Millennials	6.6	28	21	36	7	5	3	
Government agencies failing to use new technologies and modern management methods to improve efficiency [308-309]								
All adults	6.7	29	23	34	6	5	3	
Millennials	6.3	24	23	37	7	7	2	
Excessive and unnecessary military spending [271-272]								
All adults	5.8	27	17	30	11	13	2	
Millennials	6.2	30	19	28	10	11	2	

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORMS A/B).

Now I have some questions on the issue of improving the performance of federal government programs and agencies.

18. Overall, how important do you think it is for the president and Congress to take steps to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of federal government programs and agencies—very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important? [310]

	All adults	Millennials
Very important	74	66
Fairly important	19	28
Not too important	3	3
Not at all important	3	3
Not sure	1	—

19. Do you think the federal government could be more effective if it were better managed, or do you think the federal government is bound to be ineffective no matter what? [311]

	All adults	Millennials
Could be more effective	74	77
Bound to be ineffective	23	19
Not sure	3	4

20. Please tell me which you think should be the higher priority for improving the federal government—A) Reducing the cost and size of federal government, or B) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government? [312]

	All adults	Millennials
A/Reducing the size of federal government	36	26
B/Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of federal government	62	71
Not sure	2	3

21. Now I'm going to list some goals related to improving federal government programs and agencies. Please tell me which one or two of the following goals you think should be the highest priorities for improving federal government programs and agencies at this time. (IF "MORE THAN TWO," ASK:) Well, if you had to choose just one or two, which would you choose? ** [313]

Ranked by the highest percentage of all adults

	All adults	Millennials
Make government more accountable for how it spends money	45	40
Reduce wasteful spending	38	40
Make programs more effective at solving problems and helping people	29	33
Reduce the size of government	19	14
End programs once they are no longer needed	17	13
Provide more information to the public about what government is doing	16	22
Other (VOL)	1	—
None (VOL)	—	—
Not sure	—	—

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORMS B/D).

22a. Now I'm going to talk to you about a plan for improving the performance of federal government programs and agencies. This government performance plan has three main components. After I read each one, please tell me whether you think that it would be very effective, fairly effective, just somewhat effective, or not very effective in making the federal government work better.

	Effective				Not sure
	Very	Fairly	Just somewhat	Not very	
Eliminate inefficient government programs and redirect support to the most cost-effective programs [314]					
All adults	54	17	20	7	2
Millennials	48	24	21	6	1
Carefully evaluate the performance of government programs and agencies and make this information available to the public [315]					
All adults	53	17	22	7	1
Millennials	50	20	23	6	1
Have the government use the most modern management methods and information technologies [316]					
All adults	39	21	29	9	2
Millennials	37	25	31	6	1

22b. And overall, do you think this plan would be very effective, fairly effective, just somewhat effective, or not very effective in terms of making the federal government work better. [317]

	All adults	Millennials
Very effective	36	35
Fairly effective	25	30
Just somewhat effective	29	28
Not very effective	8	5
Not sure	2	2

23. Here are some more specific elements in this plan to improve the performance of federal government programs and agencies. For each one, please tell me on a scale from zero to ten how effective you think it would be in making federal government programs and agencies work better. Ten means the idea would be extremely effective in making federal government programs and agencies work better, zero means the idea would not be effective at all in making federal government programs and agencies work better, and five is in the middle.

	Mean	Highly effective 8-10	Total effective 6-10	Neutral 5	Total ineffective 0-4	Highly ineffective 0-2	Cannot rate
Require every federal agency to set clear goals that are measured by real-world results*							
All adults	8.1	68	83	10	5	3	2
Millennials	8.0	64	86	8	5	3	1
Reform the federal budget process, so that spending decisions are based on objective evidence about what works and what does not**							
All adults	7.8	65	82	10	7	3	1
Millennials	7.7	60	82	10	8	2	—
Measure and compare the performance of state actions in areas such as health care, education, and energy to identify which approaches work and which do not**							
All adults	7.6	58	80	10	9	5	1
Millennials	7.7	59	81	9	9	4	1
Consolidate federal programs where there is significant overlap*							
All adults	7.7	62	79	12	7	4	2
Millennials	7.4	51	79	12	7	4	2
Change the way government contracts are awarded, so government officials can quickly and accurately determine the best contractor for the job*							
All adults	7.7	60	79	11	7	4	3
Millennials	7.5	51	80	11	7	3	2
Reform government hiring, firing, and other personnel practices to improve the quality and performance of the federal workforce**							
All adults	7.4	55	76	13	9	4	2
Millennials	7.3	50	79	11	9	3	1
Evaluate the effectiveness of tax breaks and tax credits to determine which ones are cost-effective*							
All adults	7.6	58	75	14	8	4	3
Millennials	7.5	53	79	11	8	4	2
Conduct “try before you buy” pilot experiments to test different policy approaches before investing a lot of money in them*							
All adults	7.4	56	74	14	10	6	2
Millennials	7.2	50	75	13	11	5	1
Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of government programs to guide future policy decisions*							
All adults	7.3	51	74	16	8	4	2
Millennials	7.2	46	77	14	8	3	1
Modernize federal government information technology to improve the quality of government services**							
All adults	7.2	51	74	15	10	5	1
Millennials	7.1	47	75	14	11	5	—

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A/C).

** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B/D).

23. Here are some more specific elements in this plan to improve the performance of federal government programs and agencies. For each one, please tell me on a scale from zero to ten how effective you think it would be in making federal government programs and agencies work better. Ten means the idea would be extremely effective in making federal government programs and agencies work better, zero means the idea would not be effective at all in making federal government programs and agencies work better, and five is in the middle.

	Mean	Highly effective 8-10	Total effective 6-10	Neutral 5	Total ineffective 0-4	Highly ineffective 0-2	Cannot rate
Apply the best practices in private-sector management to improve the performance of government programs**							
All adults	7.2	51	74	16	8	5	2
Millennials	7.0	43	74	15	9	4	2
Provide the public with Internet-based tools to monitor government performance*							
All adults	6.9	49	66	16	16	9	2
Millennials	7.1	53	74	11	14	8	1
Provide the public with an online report card detailing the federal government's progress toward meeting national goals**							
All adults	6.8	48	65	17	17	9	1
Millennials	6.9	48	69	13	18	7	—
Provide the public with Internet-based tools to give feedback and advice to government officials**							
All adults	6.6	44	64	15	20	9	1
Millennials	6.7	42	68	12	20	8	—
Ensure that people nominated by the president to lead government agencies receive a quick up-or-down confirmation vote in the U.S. Senate*							
All adults	6.5	42	59	20	18	12	3
Millennials	6.4	36	60	22	16	8	2
Give people the option of allowing the IRS to prepare their tax return, at no charge, which they can then review and change before submitting to the IRS**							
All adults	5.6	36	50	15	32	23	3
Millennials	6.5	44	63	14	22	13	1

* Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM A/C).
 ** Asked of one-half the respondents (FORM B/D).

24. If Congress and the president adopted this government performance plan, do you think that would make things better, make things worse, or have no effect when it comes to (READ ITEM)?

	Make things better	Make things worse	Have no effect	Not sure
The federal budget deficit [350]				
All adults	57	7	30	6
Millennials	62	7	26	5
How efficiently the government spends tax dollars [351]				
All adults	64	8	24	4
Millennials	69	7	21	3
The quality of services provided by the federal government [352]				
All adults	65	5	26	4
Millennials	70	4	23	3

25a/b. And if Congress and the president do adopt this government performance plan, would that give you more confidence in the federal government's ability to solve problems? (IF "YES," ASK:) Would that be a lot, some, or just a little more confidence? [353/354]

	All adults	Millennials
Yes, would give more confidence	67	73
A lot more confidence	20	20
Some more confidence	29	31
Just a little more confidence	18	22
Not sure	—	—
No, would not give more confidence	27	22
Not sure	6	5

26. If a candidate running for Congress supported this government performance plan and said that working to pass the plan would be one of their top priorities if elected, would that make you more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for that candidate, or would it not affect your vote either way? [355]

	All adults	Millennials
More likely to vote	51	54
Less likely to vote	5	4
Not affect vote either way	41	39
Not sure	3	3

FACTUALS: Now I am going to ask you a few questions for statistical purposes only.

F1. Are you currently employed? (IF "NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED," ASK:) Are you a student, a homemaker, retired, or unemployed and looking for work? [356]

	All adults	Millennials
Currently employed	54	61
Not currently employed		
Student	6	19
Homemaker	5	5
Retired	21	—
Unemployed, looking for work	8	10
Other (VOL)	4	3
Not sure/refused	2	2

F2. What is the last grade that you completed in school? [357-358]

	All adults	Millennials
Grade school	1	—
Some high school	7	8
High school graduate	30	27
Some college, no degree	20	27
Vocational training/two-year college	11	9
Four-year college/Bachelor's degree	18	20
Some postgraduate work, no degree	2	2
Two or three years' postgraduate work/Master's degree	8	4
Doctoral/law degree	1	1
Not sure/refused	2	2

F3. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or something else? (IF “DEMOCRAT” OR “REPUBLICAN,” ASK:) Would you call yourself a strong (Democrat/Republican) or not a very strong (Democrat/Republican)? (IF “INDEPENDENT” OR OTHER ASK:) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party? [359]

	All adults	Millennials
Strong Democrat	19	19
Not very strong Democrat	9	14
Independent/lean Democrat	9	11
Strictly independent	19	15
Independent/lean Republican	12	10
Not very strong Republican	6	8
Strong Republican	15	13
Other (VOL)	8	7
Not sure	3	3
Total Democrat	37	44
Total Republican	33	31

F4. Which of the following do you feel best describes your political perspective: progressive, liberal, moderate, conservative, libertarian?

Ask only of respondents who say moderate, none/other, or not sure in Q. F4

F5. If you had to pick one of the following, which do you feel best describes your political perspective—progressive, liberal, conservative, libertarian? [360/361]

	Without leaners		With leaners	
	All adults	Millennials	All adults	Millennials
Progressive	13	16	20	23
Liberal	15	21	20	27
Moderate	24	23	4	3
Conservative	34	25	42	33
Libertarian	5	7	7	8
Other (VOL)	1	1	—	—
None (VOL)	1	1	1	1
Not sure	7	6	6	5

F6. Do you consider yourself to be part of the Tea Party movement? [362]

	All adults	Millennials
Yes, part of Tea Party movement	18	13
No, not part of Tea Party movement	72	76
Not sure	10	11

F7a. Are you currently registered to vote at this address? [363]

	All adults	Millennials
Registered	85	79
Not registered	12	17
Not sure	3	4

F7b/c. Did you happen to vote in the 2008 election for president? (IF “YES,” ASK:) For whom did you vote—Barack Obama, John McCain, or someone else? [364/365]

	All adults	Millennials
Yes, Voted	79	68
Voted for Barack Obama	37	39
Voted for John McCain	32	22
Voted for someone else	4	4
Not sure	6	3
No, Did Not Vote	19	30
Not sure	2	2

F8a. What is your religion? [366]

	All adults	Millennials
Protestant (includes Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and other Christians)	53	48
Catholic	20	20
Jewish	1	1
Muslim	—	—
Mormon/LDS/Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	1	2
Other	6	8
None	13	17
Not sure/refused	6	4

F8b. How often do you attend services at a church, synagogue, mosque, or other place of worship? [367]

	All adults	Millennials
Never	19	20
Once a year	6	7
A few times a year	16	15
Once a month	6	8
About twice a month	8	9
Once a week or more often	39	36
Not sure	6	5

F9. Are you currently single and never married, unmarried and living with a partner, married, separated, widowed, or divorced? [368]

	All adults	Millennials
Single	25	59
Unmarried, living with a partner	4	6
Married	50	29
Separated	2	2
Widowed	6	—
Divorced	10	2
Other (VOL)	—	—
Not sure/refused	3	2

F10. Are you currently or have you ever been employed by the federal, state, or local government? For the purposes of this survey, federal does not include the military or any military service. [369]

	All adults	Millennials
Federal	9	6
State	12	8
Local	7	4
No, never employed by any government	69	80
Not sure	3	2

F11a. Are you a labor union member? [370/371]

Ask only of respondents who say no or not sure in Q. F11a

F11b. Is anyone else in your household a labor union member?

	All adults	Millennials
Labor union member	11	7
Labor union household	6	9
Nonunion household	79	79
Not sure	4	5

F12. Which of the following are your primary sources for news about national politics and the federal government? [372]

	All adults	Millennials
Local broadcast TV news	37	31
National broadcast TV news on ABC, CBS or NBC	43	38
Fox News Channel	36	27
CNN	31	27
A printed newspaper	33	25
Radio	27	21
The Internet	42	55
Other (VOL)	2	3
Not sure	3	2

F13. How would you describe the area in which you live? [373]

	All adults	Millennials
Urban	19	25
Suburban	29	33
Small town	29	24
Rural	19	14
Not sure	4	4

F14. If you added together the yearly income of all the members of your family who were living at home last year, would the total be less than ten thousand dollars, between ten thousand dollars and twenty thousand dollars, between twenty thousand dollars and thirty thousand dollars, between thirty thousand dollars and forty thousand dollars, between forty thousand dollars and fifty thousand dollars, between fifty thousand dollars and seventy-five thousand dollars, between seventy-five thousand dollars and one hundred thousand dollars, or would the total be more than that? [374]

	All adults	Millennials
Less than \$10,000	7	7
Between \$10,000 and \$20,000	9	8
Between \$20,000 and \$30,000	10	11
Between \$30,000 and \$40,000	10	11
Between \$40,000 and \$50,000	9	9
Between \$50,000 and \$75,000	16	17
Between \$75,000 and \$100,000	10	11
More than \$100,000	13	12
Not sure/refused	16	14

F15. For statistical purposes only, would you please tell me how old you are? (IF “REFUSED,” ASK:) Well, would you tell me which age group you belong to? [141-142]

	All adults	Millennials
18-24	13	48
25-29	8	31
30-32	6	21
33-34	3	—
35-39	7	—
40-44	9	—
45-49	8	—
50-54	9	—
55-59	9	—
60-64	11	—
65-69	6	—
70-74	7	—
75 and over	4	—
Refused/not sure	—	—

F16. And again, for statistical purposes only, would you please tell me whether you are from a Hispanic or Spanish-speaking background? [143]

	All adults	Millennials
Yes, Hispanic	11	19
No, not Hispanic	89	80
Not sure	—	1

F17. And to ensure that we have a representative sample, what is your race—white, black, Asian, or something else? [144]

	All adults	Millennials
White	76	63
Black	10	14
Asian	1	2
Other	4	7
Hispanic (VOL)	8	13
Not sure/refused	1	1

About the authors

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About Hart Research Associates

Peter D. Hart Research Associates is one of the nation's leading survey research firms. Founded in 1971, Hart Research has conducted over 5,000 public opinion surveys and interviewed more than three million individuals. The firm has also undertaken more than 5,000 focus group sessions.

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