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AARP, Greenspan Most Trusted on Social Security
BUSH FAILING IN SOCIAL SECURITY PUSH

Also Inside...

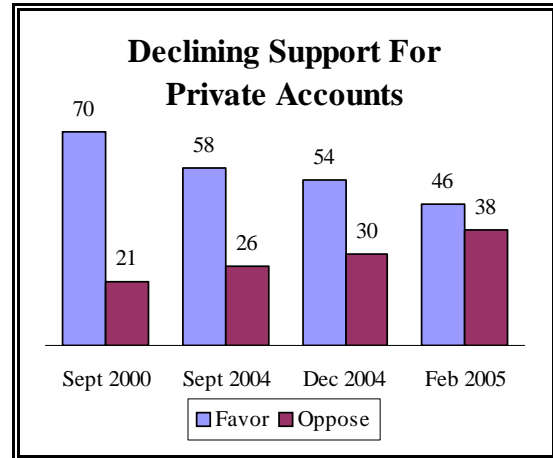
- Bush approval on Social Security at 29%
- Seniors oppose private accounts by 58%-25%
- Most favor targeting wealthy to fix Social Security
- Bush, Dems not explaining Social Security positions

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AARP, Greenspan Most Trusted on Social Security **BUSH FAILING IN SOCIAL SECURITY PUSH**

President George W. Bush is losing ground with the public in his efforts to build support for private retirement accounts in Social Security. Despite Bush's intensive campaign to promote the idea, the percentage of Americans who say they favor private accounts has tumbled to 46% in Pew's latest nationwide survey, down from 54% in December and 58% in September. Support has declined as the public has become increasingly aware of the president's plan. More than four-in-ten (43%) say they have heard a lot about the proposal, nearly double the number who said that in December (23%).



The new poll indicates that the Social Security debate is packing a powerful political punch. It finds that just 29% of Americans approve of the way that Bush is handling the issue. This is the president's lowest approval rating for any policy area, and is considerably lower than his overall job approval rating of 46%. Moreover, by a 65%-25% margin, most say the president has not explained his Social Security proposal clearly enough.

Further, the public expresses much more confidence on this issue in the AARP, which is strongly opposed to private accounts, than they do in the president or in Republican congressional leaders. However, Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan, who has offered a qualified endorsement of Bush's plan, also is widely trusted on Social Security. And while just 42% say they mostly trust Bush on Social Security, Democratic congressional leaders earn no more trust than the president (41%).

**Who Do You Trust
on Social Security?**

	Mostly Trust %	Mostly Distrust %
AARP	53	23
Alan Greenspan	49	20
George W. Bush	42	52
Democratic leaders	41	46
Republican leaders	35	53

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Feb. 16-21 among 1,502 Americans, suggests that the public agrees with Bush that the Social Security system is facing funding problems. Two-thirds (67%) think that the Social Security program will run short of money in the future. Yet even among supporters of private retirement accounts, the proposal's major appeal is *not* that it will make the program more financially secure.

More than half of the supporters of private accounts (52%) say they favor the idea mainly because private accounts will give individuals greater control; just 20% support private accounts because they will make Social Security more financially stable.

Among opponents of private accounts, nearly half (48%) worry about potentially risky investments. A significant number also cite the possibility that guaranteed benefits will have to be cut (28%). And 15% say the main reason for their opposition is that establishing private accounts will increase the federal budget deficit.

Over the past two months, support for private retirement accounts has declined among most demographic and political groups. But the erosion has been especially steep among Hispanics (down 18 points since December), conservative and moderate Democrats (down 17 points), and people age 65 and older (15 points). Support among African Americans for private accounts also has slipped from 50% to 36%, despite Bush's concerted efforts to promote his plan with blacks.

The president finds the greatest support for his plan among his fellow Republicans (68% favor private accounts) and among people under 30 (66% favor). Opinion among these groups has remained relatively stable since December.

The survey includes other findings that may portend trouble for private accounts. At this stage, opponents of the plan are more fixed in their attitudes than those who favor this option. A 68% majority of those who oppose

Why Favor/Oppose Private Social Security Accounts	
<i>Mostly favor private accounts because...</i>	
Individuals will have more control	52
Peoples' accounts will earn more money	23
Social Security will be more secure	20
Other/None/Don't know	<u>5</u>
	100
<i>Mostly oppose private accounts because...</i>	
Money will be put into riskier investments	48
Guaranteed benefits will be cut	28
The program will increase the deficit	15
Other/None/Don't know	<u>9</u>
	100

Support for Private Accounts Drops Among Hispanics, Seniors and Democrats					
	<i>December</i>		<i>February</i>		<i>Change in favor</i>
	<u>Fav</u>	<u>Opp</u>	<u>Fav</u>	<u>Opp</u>	
	%	%	%	%	
Total	54	30	46	38	-8
18-29	64	24	66	19	+2
30-49	56	27	49	35	-7
50-64	51	36	41	44	-11
65+	40	40	25	58	-15
Republican	71	14	68	16	-3
Democrat	43	43	29	57	-14
Independent	50	34	45	40	-5
Conserv Rep	73	14	70	14	-3
Mod/Lib Rep	68	16	67	22	-1
Cons/Mod Dem	46	41	29	59	-17
Liberal Dem	42	48	34	55	-8
<i>Bush job</i>					
Approve	67	18	65	19	-2
Disapprove	41	44	30	58	-11
White	54	30	46	38	-8
Black	50	37	36	49	-14
Hispanic	66	23	48	34	-18

the plan say they feel strongly and will not change their minds. In contrast, just 53% of backers are strongly in favor, with as many as 45% saying they could change their opinions and oppose private accounts.

In terms of other possible Social Security changes, there is considerable public opposition to proposals that would raise the retirement age (72% opposed), reduce the rate of benefit growth (64%), and raise payroll taxes (56%). The only possible changes tested that win majority support are those aimed at wealthy Americans. Six-in-ten favor applying the payroll tax to all wages, which would scrap the current limit of \$90,000; and 58% would limit Social Security benefits for wealthy Americans.

Social Security: Good, but Troubled

Americans overwhelmingly believe that the Social Security system has been good for the country, but some younger people express doubts. Overall, 79% say Social Security has been a good thing for America, with 18% calling it “very good.” This view is all but universal among those age 65 and older, 95% of whom call the program a good thing, 38% very good. Younger generations take a less uniform view of Social Security, however. While two-thirds of people under age 30 agree that Social Security has been good for the country, 22% say it has been bad and 13% don’t have a view either way.

While Democrats and Republicans may disagree on what, if anything, should be done to change Social Security, there is no disagreement over the basic value of the program to the country. Fully 83% of Republicans, along with 80% of Democrats, say the program has been good for the country.

Despite its good standing among the public, the Social Security system is clearly seen as troubled. When asked what one word best describes the Social Security program, “bankrupt” and “in trouble” came to mind more often than any others. Overall, 37% volunteered some word or phrase related to the future financial prospects of the program as the first thing that came to

Social Security’s Impact on the Nation					
		----- Age -----			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>18-29</u>	<u>30-49</u>	<u>50-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
	%	%	%	%	%
Good	79	65	78	84	95
Bad	15	22	16	13	4
Don’t know	<u>6</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100	100	100

One-Word Descriptions of Social Security	
	<u>Number of people</u>
Bankrupt	22
Troubled/In trouble	19
Unfair/Not fair	17
Retirement	16
Broke/Broken	14
Good	13
Scared/Scary	13
Will it be there?	12
Money	10
Leave it alone	9
OK	9
Mess/Messy	8
All right	7
Bad	7
Elderly	7
Failing	7
Hope it lasts/Hoping	7
Security	7

Figures show the number of respondents who offered each response. The numbers are not percentages. Only words or phrases mentioned seven or more times are shown here. (N=741)

their mind; examples include “scary,” “unstable,” “disaster,” and questioning “will it be there?” Others used words that describe the program’s purpose (“retirement,” “money,” “elderly”), criticize its operation (“unfair,” “mess,” “inadequate”), or describe it favorably (“good,” “security,” “working”).

Again, there is a significant generational gap in the way Social Security is described. Seniors are less likely to think about the program’s future, and tend to describe the current program in positive terms. Younger respondents (under 30) volunteer almost nothing good about Social Security, and most frequently offer either concerns about the program’s future or criticisms of its current operation. The first thought of respondents between 30 and 65 tends to relate to the financial future of the program.

Social Security’s Financial Future

Two-thirds of Americans believe Social Security in its present form will run short of money at some point, while 26% disagree. About half of the public (51%) believes the system will run short within the next 30 years. There is a sharp difference of opinion on this issue between those who are already of retirement age and those who are younger. Nearly three-quarters of people under age 50 believe the system will run short at some point, and two-thirds of those age 50-64 agree. But seniors are more divided, with 49% foreseeing a shortfall and 38% believing the system is secure.

Majorities across party lines foresee financial problems for the Social Security program, though Republicans are more unified in this view than are Democrats. Three-quarters of Republicans say the system will run short of money to pay all of the promised benefits at some point, compared with 70% of independents and 59% of Democrats.

Will the Current System Run Short at Some Point?					
	<u>Total</u>	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%
Will run short	67	74	74	65	49
Won't run short	26	23	20	28	38
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>13</u>
	100	100	100	100	100
<i>When?</i>					
In next 10 years	11	16	12	8	7
In next 20 years	28	27	33	29	16
In next 30 years	12	15	13	12	7
More than 30 yrs	11	13	11	12	12
Won't run short	26	23	20	28	38
Don't know	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>20</u>
	100	100	100	100	100

Prompt Action Supported

Nearly three-quarters of Americans want to see action on Social Security either “right away” (41%) or within the next few years (32%). A quarter are willing to wait longer than that (16% within the next decade, 9% further in the future). Social Security ranks among the public’s top policy priorities for the coming year. In a January survey by the Pew Research Center, making Social Security financially sound ranked third – behind only defending against terrorism and strengthening the economy – as the most important issue before the president and Congress.

If Change is Needed, How Soon?				
	---Party ID---			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
	%	%	%	%
Right away	41	43	44	38
Next few years	32	35	25	37
Next decade	16	17	16	16
Further in future	9	4	13	7
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100

As many Democrats as Republicans say changes need to be made right away (44% and 43%, respectively). But Republicans have a slightly higher sense of urgency overall; 78% of Republicans want change at least within the next few years, compared with 69% of Democrats.

Most Favor Targeting the Wealthy

Most Americans oppose changes in Social Security that would increase taxes or reduce benefits across the board. In fact, the only proposals that receive majority support are those that would concentrate costs – or benefit reductions – on the wealthy. By roughly two-to-one (60%-33%), most favor collecting Social Security taxes on all of a worker’s wages, rather than just the first \$90,000 earned each year. Also popular is the idea of limiting benefits for wealthy retirees, favored by 58%.

Nearly three-quarters (72%) oppose raising the retirement age, and 64% are against the idea of lowering the amount by which Social Security benefits rise each year for changes in the cost of living. Increasing payroll taxes for all workers is also opposed by 56%, while 38% favor the idea.

Possible Social Security Reforms			
	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK</u>
	%	%	%
Payroll tax on all income	60	33	7=100
Limit benefits for wealthy	58	36	6=100
Allow private accounts	46	38	16=100
Increase payroll tax rate	38	56	6=100
Reduce rate of benefit growth	30	64	6=100
Raise retirement age	25	72	3=100

There is broad agreement, politically and across age groups, in favor of collecting Social Security taxes on all of a worker’s annual earnings rather than just the first \$90,000. This idea receives equal support (roughly six-in-ten) from Republicans, Democrats and independents. Both

younger and older Americans support the idea at about the same rate. And as important, the idea gains as much support from people in the high-income households likely to be affected by this change as it does from lower-income households.

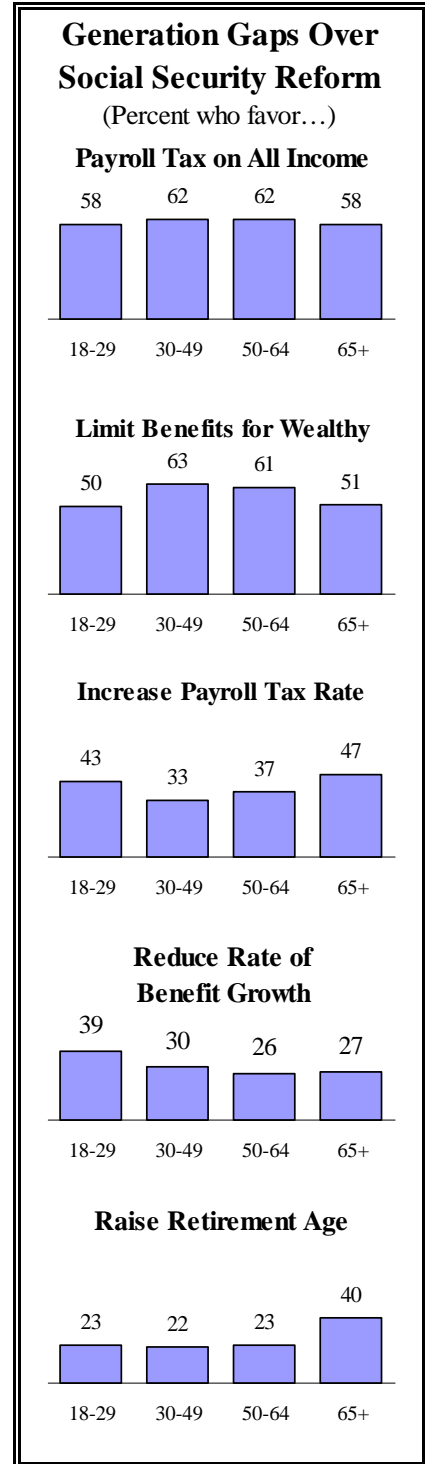
While also favored by about six-in-ten on average, support for limiting Social Security benefits for wealthy retirees – in essence, means testing – varies more across party and demographic groups. This draws more support from Democrats (63%) and independents (61%) than from Republicans (54%). Means testing also is more popular among people between the ages of 30 and 64 than among younger and older Americans. But again, despite being a measure that targets high-income Americans, limiting Social Security benefits for wealthy retirees gains as much support from high-income as from low-income households.

Two reform ideas that would not affect current retirees – increasing the payroll tax rate and raising the retirement age – are much more palatable to older Americans than to younger people. Nearly half of seniors (47%) favor raising the payroll tax rate, compared with barely a third of those between age 30 and 64. And 40% of people who have already reached retirement age favor the idea of raising that bar, compared with fewer than a quarter of those still under age 65.

Conversely, the idea of reducing the rate at which benefits increase over time is more popular among the young than the old, even though younger people ostensibly have more to lose over the long term from such a change.

Little Partisanship – Except on Private Accounts

Overall, partisanship is only weakly related to attitudes about Social Security reform with the exception of the one proposal that President Bush has personally supported – allowing private accounts. With the support of more than two-thirds of Republicans (68%), this



proposal is viewed more favorably within the president's party than any other tested. But just 29% of Democrats favor the idea of private accounts. In comparison with this 39-point partisan gap on private accounts, the party divide on other reform ideas is modest at best.

Politically, Democrats are somewhat more supportive of an increase in the payroll tax rate than Republicans (44% vs. 35%), while Republicans are more willing to accept an increase in the retirement age (33% vs. 20% of Democrats).

	Repub- licans	Dem- ocrats	R-D Gap
<i>Percent Favoring...</i>	%	%	
Payroll tax on all income	61	61	0
Limit benefits for wealthy	54	63	-9
Allow private accounts	68	29	39
Increase payroll tax rate	35	44	-9
Reduce rate of benefit growth	34	28	6
Raise retirement age	33	20	13

Tax Increases More Palatable than Benefit Cuts

In principle, Americans place a higher priority on preserving Social Security benefits than on preventing increases in payroll taxes. When forced to choose between these two options, 60% say avoiding any future cuts in benefits should be a more important consideration than avoiding any tax increases for workers and employers, while 30% say the reverse.

Not surprisingly, people age 65 and older are most likely to place priority on maintaining benefits. A majority of those under age 30 also favor avoiding future cuts in benefits, but a relatively large minority (38%) believe it is more important to avoid tax increases. Similarly, Republicans are more averse to the possibility of higher taxes than are Democrats. Even so, half of Republicans and 68% of Democrats place the higher priority on preserving benefits into the future.

More Aware of Bush Proposal

Compared with just two months ago, many more Americans say they have heard a lot about President Bush's proposal to allow younger workers to invest Social Security taxes in private retirement accounts. This month 43% have heard a lot, compared with only 23% in December. Another 35% have heard a little, and only 21% have heard nothing at all. In December, roughly a third (33%) had heard nothing.

	<i>Heard "a lot"</i>		
	Dec '04	Feb '05	<i>Change</i>
	%	%	%
Total	23	43	+20
18-29	10	20	+10
30-49	19	37	+18
50-64	32	60	+28
65+	39	64	+25
Men	30	48	+18
Women	17	38	+21
Republican	29	48	+19
Democrat	21	42	+21
Independent	21	43	+22
White	25	47	+22
Black	15	28	+13
Hispanic	14	26	+12

In December, only 10% of those under 30 had heard a lot about the plan; this number grew 10 percentage points to 20%. At the same time, however, the percentage of older Americans who heard a lot grew by 28 points (among those age 50-64) and 25 points (among those 65 and older). As a result, older Americans are three times more likely than younger people to have heard a lot about the proposed changes. Men are more aware than women, and more whites than blacks or Hispanics have heard a lot.

Awareness Fuels Opposition

While a plurality of Americans still favor Bush’s plan, support has been declining. Currently, 46% favor and 38% oppose the idea. Support has fallen from 54% in December, and from 58% in September. It had been as high as 70% in a poll of registered voters four years ago in September 2000.

In general, opposition to the plan to permit Social Security private accounts is much higher among people who have heard a lot about it than among those who are less familiar with it. Among those who have heard a lot about the proposal, 49% oppose the idea, compared with 30% of those who have heard little or nothing about the proposal. Younger people are more favorable toward the plan but – as a group – have heard less about it; among younger respondents, the level of awareness of the plan is unrelated to opinions about it.

Among those 65 and older, people who are most familiar with the private accounts proposal are more supportive than those who are less familiar. But even among those seniors who have heard a lot, opposition outnumbers support by a two-to-one margin. For the large group in the middle – those between the ages of 30 and 64 – people who are more familiar with the plan are significantly more opposed to it.

Greater Familiarity, Greater Opposition		
	Heard a lot	Little/ Nothing
<i>All</i>	%	%
Favor	43	49
Oppose	49	30
Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>21</u>
	100	100
<i>Age 18-29</i>		
Favor	68	65
Oppose	21	19
Don't know	<u>11</u>	<u>16</u>
	100	100
<i>Age 30-64</i>		
Favor	44	47
Oppose	49	30
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>23</u>
	100	100
<i>Age 65+</i>		
Favor	29	17
Oppose	60	56
Don't know	<u>11</u>	<u>27</u>
	100	100

Individual Control Key for Supporters

People who favor the creation of private retirement accounts in Social Security most often cite the ability to have control over their money as a principal reason for their support. Less common but still notable are references to reducing the scope and reach of government and obtaining larger benefits upon retirement. These patterns are evident when respondents are presented with a list of possible reasons for supporting private accounts, or when they explain their reasoning in their own

words.

In those open-end responses, 38% of supporters of private accounts mentioned something related to greater individual control, freedom, or responsibility. Within this category, the themes included having more options for what to do with their money, having the choice of whether to invest in the program or not, and the benefits of making people more accountable for their own decisions.

A second group of responses, mentioned by 13% of supporters of private accounts, cited limits on government, the fact that “it’s my money,” or the split between public and private as a benefit of the proposed system. Other common responses included the opportunity to make more money (12%) and the likelihood that personal accounts would ensure that something would be available at retirement (mentioned by 9% – perhaps because of a lack of faith in the current Social Security system). Just 4% say they favored the plan because it would help ensure the survival of the system.

Younger supporters of private accounts are much less likely than older people to offer a specific reason for their support. A quarter of those under age 30 gave no reason, and another 10% offered only a very general positive response when asked why they supported private accounts. In contrast, older respondents were much more likely to offer specific reasons for their opinions.

Opponents Cite Market Risk

When asked to describe, in their own words, why they oppose private accounts, a small plurality

Reasons for Supporting Private Accounts		%
Control, responsibility, freedom (NET)		38
Gives people more say so/more control		30
Options/freedom of choice/can opt out		5
Accountability, responsibility		3
Government vs. private (NET)		13
Gets government out/reduces government		6
Money is yours, not government’s		5
Private vs. public		3
Accounts will make more money		12
Money will be there		9
Will help save system/system is failing		4
Good for younger people		3
People will learn to invest and save		3
Can leave it to heirs		2
Good – unspecified		7
Good – other		3
Don’t know/No answer		15
Open-ended answers based on 662 respondents who say they favor allowing private accounts.		

Reasons for Opposing Private Accounts		%
Risk/uncertainty/stock market (NET)		34
Risky, potential for loss		22
Specific references to stock market		12
Public unprepared to use system (NET)		16
People don’t know how to invest/save		12
Specific references to young people		4
Specific references to poor/uneducated		1
Changes will harm Social Security (NET)		14
Will hurt or kill the system		7
Not broken/no need for this change		4
Inconsistent with intent of system		4
Transition costs too high		4
Not everyone will benefit (NET)		4
Good for rich, not poor		3
Good for young, not old		1
Government can’t manage this change		2
Bad – unspecified		13
Bad – other		4
Don’t know/No answer		12
Open-ended answers based on 609 respondents who say they oppose allowing private accounts.		

of 34% mention the greater risk that comes with private investments, including 12% who mentioned the stock market explicitly. Another 16% said that the public was unprepared to make informed decisions about their investments and might lose their money.

Nearly as many (14%) cited the danger that private accounts would pose for the Social Security system or said they were incompatible with the philosophy of the system. Only 4% cited the transition costs of the Bush plan, and a similar number (4%) said the system would be unfair because some people would benefit more than others.

As is the case for supporters of the plan, there are few partisan differences in the reasons offered for opposing private accounts. Among the very small number of young people who opposed the idea (just 42 individuals were asked the open-ended follow-up question), significantly fewer offered a substantive reason for their opposition.

Investing in Private Accounts

Overall, the public divides about evenly on the question of whether they would actually opt to invest in private retirement accounts, with 45% saying they would do so and 49% saying they would not. As with opinions on the plan itself, willingness to invest in private accounts also varies greatly by age.

A majority of those under age 55 (55%) say they would put money into private accounts, while most of those age 55 and older (70%) say they would not participate. (The White House has said that under the president’s plan, the current system will not change in any way for those born before 1950).

Personal Views of Private Accounts						
	<u>Total</u>	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	18-29
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Would you invest in private accts?</i>						
Yes	45	60	55	36	14	55 21
No	49	36	40	57	77	40 70
Don’t know	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u> <u>9</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100 100
<i>Would private accts affect your benefits?</i>						
Increase	44	66	55	26	13	56 16
Decrease	13	9	14	15	14	12 15
Have no impact	32	18	21	47	57	23 54
Don’t know	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>9</u> <u>15</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100 100
<i>How well would you do in managing acct?</i>						
Excellent/Good	57	66	61	56	39	62 46
Fair/Poor	38	33	35	39	49	36 44
Don’t know	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u> <u>10</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100 100

More than twice as many Democrats as Republicans say they would stick with the current system. But even among Republicans, a third say they would not invest in private accounts.

A plurality of respondents (44%) believes that the adoption of a system of private accounts

would result in an increase in their Social Security benefits, and a solid majority of 57% think they, personally, would do an excellent or good job of making investment decisions and managing their accounts.

Most Americans, with the exception of those 65 and older, have a favorable view of their ability to manage their accounts, but only among those under 55 years of age does a majority believe that the accounts would result in larger benefits. Still, very few people, regardless of age, think their benefits would be reduced by a system of private accounts.

Predictably, experience with investing in the stock market is associated with greater willingness to put one’s own Social Security taxes into private accounts and also with a belief in one’s personal ability to manage the accounts. Among people who are not yet retired and who currently have money invested in the stock market, 57% say they would take advantage of private accounts in Social Security; among current workers who do not have money in the market, just 39% would use private accounts.

But personal experience with markets does not lead to a greater belief that private accounts would necessarily increase the benefits available upon retirement. Among those who currently have money invested in the markets, 51% think private accounts would lead to increased benefits, but so do 48% of those who don’t have money in the markets.

Bush Approval Weak, Except on Terrorism

Bush’s approval rating for his handling of Social Security is markedly lower than for any other issue. But on every other issue except for his handling of terrorism (59% approval), his ratings fall well below 50%.

On education and the environment, roughly as many approve as disapprove of Bush’s performance. On his handling of the economy, approval lags disapproval by 43% to 50%, about the same levels as in January. And on health care policy Bush’s ratings are lopsidedly negative, with only 36% of respondents expressing approval and 51% disapproving.

As in the past, there are vast partisan differences in evaluations of Bush’s job performance. More than 70% of Republicans approve of the president’s handling of all domestic policies except Social Security and health care, where Republican

Bush Job Approval		
	<u>App</u>	<u>Dis</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Overall job	46	47
<i>Handling...</i>		
Terrorist threats	59	34
Education	44	42
Environment	42	43
Foreign policy	43	46
Economy	43	50
Budget deficit	41	46
Situation in Iraq	40	53
Health care	36	51
Social Security	29	55

approval ratings reach 60% and 67% respectively. Democrats, on the other hand, overwhelmingly disapprove of Bush's handling of domestic policies with fewer than 15% approving of his performance on the economy, the federal deficit, and health care, scarcely more than the 8% approving of his handling of Social Security.

Lowest on Social Security

Support for Bush's handling of Social Security is highest among conservative Republicans, 68% of whom approve. But that is far below the 93% approval rating these Republicans accord Bush's presidency overall. And among moderate or liberal Republicans the approval gap is the largest for any group: 78% approve of Bush's handling of the presidency, but only 48% endorse him on Social Security. Among independents, 41% have a positive view of Bush's overall job performance, but just 22% approve of his handling of Social Security.

	<i>Overall job</i>		<i>Handling Social Security</i>	
	<u>App-rove</u>	<u>Dis-approve</u>	<u>App-rove</u>	<u>Dis-approve</u>
	%	%	%	%
Total	46	47	29	55
Republican	86	10	60	20
Democrat	13	81	8	82
Independent	41	51	22	60
Conserv Repub	93	6	68	16
Mod/Lib Rep	78	17	48	29
Cons/Mod Dem	16	76	9	82
Liberal Dem	9	89	8	82

As expected, Bush draws overwhelming disapproval on Social Security (85%) among those who oppose the idea of establishing private accounts in Social Security. But even among those who support that proposal, a third disapprove of Bush's handling of Social Security while only about half (49%) give him a positive rating.

Bush also gets low marks for promoting his Social Security proposal. Nearly two-thirds (65%) say Bush has not clearly explained his plans for reforming Social Security, while just 25% say he has. Democrats and independents overwhelmingly believe Bush has fallen short in promoting his plan, but a narrow plurality of Republicans (46%) agree.

However, the public is also unimpressed with explanations by congressional Democrats for why they oppose Bush's plan. By more than two-to-one (60%-26%), the public believes that congressional Democrats have not clearly explained the reasons for their opposition. Half of rank-and-file Democrats express this view, compared with just 37% who say congressional Democrats have clearly articulated their reasons for opposing Bush's Social Security proposal.

Bush as Trusted as Democrats on Social Security

Roughly four-in-ten Americans (42%) say they mostly trust Bush’s statements on Social Security, which is lower than the number who trust the AARP or Alan Greenspan, but about the same as the percentage that generally trusts congressional Democrats (41%). Not surprisingly, trust in Bush on this issue is highest among those who approve of his presidency in general; even among those overall supporters who oppose his reform plan, about six-in-ten (61%) express trust in the president’s statements on the subject.

Those who support the idea of introducing private accounts into the Social Security system are most likely to have confidence in his statements on the subject; 62% say they mostly trust what the president says on the subject, although roughly a third (34%) say they do not. Among those who do not express an opinion about private accounts – 16% of the public – about as many trust Bush as say they distrust him on Social Security. Opponents of private accounts overwhelmingly distrust the president on this issue (79%).

AARP Widely Trusted

The public expresses considerable trust in the AARP’s statements on Social Security. Overall, 53% of the public, including half of those who support Bush’s plan for private accounts, say they mostly trust what the AARP has to say on Social Security.

Although a partisan divide is discernible, it is far smaller than on most other issues: 63% of Democrats trust the organization on Social Security, but so do 52% of independents and 46% of Republicans, including 41% of conservative Republicans. College graduates also give the AARP a strong endorsement, with 61% expressing confidence in the group’s statements on Social Security.

	Mostly Trust %	Mostly Distrust %	Haven’t Heard of %	Neither/ DK %
Total	53	23	11	13=100
18-29	43	19	22	16=100
30-49	55	22	13	10=100
50-64	60	24	4	12=100
65+	52	24	5	19=100
Republicans	46	31	10	13=100
Democrats	63	15	10	12=100
Independents	52	23	13	12=100

Trust in the AARP on this issue is highest among those nearing retirement (60% among the 50-64 age group). But while confidence is lowest among young people (43% of those age 18-29 say they mostly trust what it says on Social Security), that lower rating is accounted for by the fact that fewer in this group are familiar with the organization rather than by higher levels of distrust. Even among those under 30, more than twice as many mainly trust the AARP as distrust the organization’s statements on Social Security.

News Interest: Social Security in Context

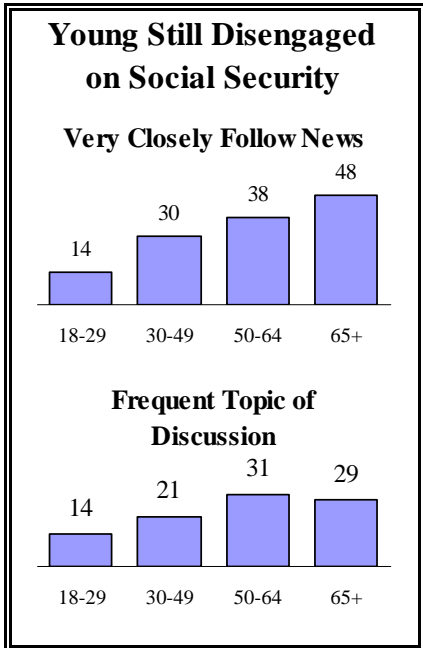
With 31% very closely following the news about Bush’s proposal to deal with Social Security, this debate ranks slightly above most other major domestic policy debates of the last decade. Just over a year ago, 26% followed the Medicare debate very closely, and the same number followed Bush’s 2003 tax cut plan very closely. The last major domestic policy discussion to receive as much public attention surrounded Bush’s tax cut plan at the start of his first term in 2001.

		Percent following <u>very closely</u>
Feb '05	Bush Social Security Plan	31
Nov '03	Medicare Debate	26
Feb '03	Bush Tax Cut Plan	26
Feb '01	Bush Tax Cut Plan	31
Feb '01	Bush Education Plan	21
Feb '98	Clinton Social Security Plan	24
Jan '96	Budget Debate	32
Aug '95	Welfare Reform Debate	26
Sept '93	Clinton Health Care Plan	49

The release of Bill Clinton’s health care reform proposal in September 1993 attracted considerably more attention than the current Social Security debate. In the weeks following the rollout of that plan, nearly half of Americans (49%) said they were paying very close attention, and interest remained high throughout the fall and into 1994.

One-in-four (24%) say the subject of Social Security’s problems comes up frequently in conversations with family and friends, and another 37% say it arises occasionally. Nearly four-in-ten say they hardly ever (28%) or never (11%) discuss the issue.

Despite efforts by the administration and others to engage younger people in the Social Security debate, so far the issue largely remains the focus of people age 50 and older. Just 14% of Americans under age 30 are following news about the Social Security policy debate very closely, as are just 26% of people in their 30s and 40s. By comparison, 45% of those age 50-64 are very closely following the news coverage, as are about half of those 65 and older. Similarly, people 50 and older are twice as likely as people under 30 (30% vs. 14%) to say that Social Security is a frequent topic of conversation among friends and family.



Rating Press Coverage of Social Security

Overall, Americans are very critical of media coverage of the Social Security discussion so far. Most say the coverage has been only fair (33%) or poor (31%). About a quarter rate the news coverage as good (24%) and only 4% give a rating of excellent.

About four-in-ten (39%) believe that press coverage of the issue has been fair, while 27% say coverage has been too critical of Bush’s proposals and nearly as many (24%) think it has not been critical enough. While Democrats and Republicans mostly fault press coverage of Bush’s plan, there is a predictable divide over whether coverage has a pro- or anti-Bush slant.

<i>Rating of</i>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
<i>press coverage</i>	%	%	%	%
Excellent	4	7	3	2
Good	24	22	27	21
Only fair	33	25	38	38
Poor	31	40	25	33
Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>
	100	100	100	100
Excellent/Good	28	29	30	23
Only fair/Poor	64	65	63	71
<i>Press treatment of</i>				
<i>Bush's proposals</i>				
Too critical	27	49	13	18
Not critical enough	24	6	39	26
Fair	39	36	38	45
Don't know	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 1,502 adults, 18 years of age or older, from February 16-21, 2005. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on Form 1 (N=761) or Form 2 (N=741) only, the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY IN DETAIL

The sample for this survey is a random digit sample of telephone numbers selected from telephone exchanges in the continental United States. The random digit aspect of the sample is used to avoid "listing" bias and provides representation of both listed and unlisted numbers (including not-yet-listed). The design of the sample ensures this representation by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange, and bank number.

The telephone exchanges were selected with probabilities proportional to their size. The first eight digits of the sampled telephone numbers (area code, telephone exchange, bank number) were selected to be proportionally stratified by county and by telephone exchange within county. That is, the number of telephone numbers randomly sampled from within a given county is proportional to that county's share of telephone numbers in the U.S. Only working banks of telephone numbers are selected. A working bank is defined as 100 contiguous telephone numbers containing three or more residential listings.

The sample was released for interviewing in replicates. Using replicates to control the release of sample to the field ensures that the complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. The use of replicates also insures that the regional distribution of numbers called is appropriate. Again, this works to increase the representativeness of the sample.

At least 10 attempts were made to complete an interview at every sampled telephone number. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making a contact with a potential respondent. All interview breakoffs and refusals were re-contacted at least once in order to attempt to convert them to completed interviews. In each contacted household, interviewers asked to speak with the "youngest male 18 or older who is at home." If there is no eligible man at home, interviewers asked to speak with "the oldest woman 18 or older who is at home." This systematic respondent selection technique has been shown empirically to produce samples that closely mirror the population in terms of age and gender.

Non-response in telephone interview surveys produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population, and these subgroups are likely to vary also on questions of substantive interest. In order to compensate for these known biases, the sample data are weighted in analysis.

The demographic weighting parameters are derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Annual Social & Economic Supplement data from the Census Bureau (March 2004). This analysis produced population parameters for the demographic characteristics of households with adults 18 or older, which are then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights. The analysis only included households in the continental United States that contain a telephone. The weights are derived using an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distributions of all weighting parameters. Form 1 and Form 2 interviews were weighted separately on these parameters and on the overall presidential vote preference in order to ensure equivalence between the two forms.

Allowing younger workers to invest a portion of their Social Security taxes in private retirement accounts

	----- December 2004 -----			----- February 2005 -----			<i>Change in Favor</i>
	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	54	30	16=100	46	38	16=100	-8
Sex							
Male	58	31	11	51	35	14	-7
Female	50	30	20	42	41	17	-8
Race							
White	54	30	16	46	38	16	-8
Non-white	52	32	16	46	40	14	-6
Black	50	37	13	36	49	15	-14
Hispanic*	66	23	11	48	34	18	-18
Race and Sex							
White Men	59	31	10	50	35	15	-9
White Women	50	29	21	42	40	18	-8
Age							
Under 30	64	24	12	66	19	15	+2
30-49	56	27	17	49	35	16	-7
50-64	51	36	13	41	44	15	-11
65+	40	40	20	25	58	17	-15
Sex and Age							
Men under 50	61	27	12	57	28	15	-4
Women under 50	56	25	19	52	33	15	-4
Men 50+	53	39	8	41	47	12	-12
Women 50+	40	37	23	29	52	19	-11
Education							
College Grad.	58	30	12	50	38	12	-8
Some College	58	27	15	51	34	15	-7
H.S. Grad.	49	32	19	44	40	16	-5
< H.S. Grad.	50	32	18	35	39	26	-15
Family Income							
\$75,000+	60	29	11	56	33	11	-4
\$50,000-\$74,999	60	28	12	51	31	18	-9
\$30,000-\$49,999	56	28	16	47	39	14	-9
\$20,000-\$29,999	52	31	17	46	41	13	-6
<\$20,000	47	34	19	38	46	16	-9

* The designation Hispanic is unrelated to the white-black categorization.

Question: Generally, do you favor or oppose this proposal?

Continued on next page...

	----- December 2004 -----			----- February 2005 -----			<i>Change in Favor</i>
	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	
Total	54	30	16=100	46	38	16=100	-8
Region							
East	55	32	13	44	42	14	-11
Midwest	53	30	17	42	41	17	-11
South	55	30	15	49	34	17	-6
West	52	30	18	48	37	15	-4
Religious Affiliation							
Total White Protestant	55	29	16	50	34	16	-5
- Evangelical	57	28	15	55	29	16	-2
- Non-Evangelical	53	30	17	44	39	17	-9
White Catholic	54	31	15	43	42	15	-11
Secular	46	35	19	47	42	11	+1
Party ID							
Republican	71	14	15	68	16	16	-3
Democrat	43	43	14	29	57	14	-14
Independent	50	34	16	45	40	15	-5
Party and Ideology							
Conservative Republican	73	14	13	70	14	16	-3
Moderate/Liberal Rep.	68	16	16	67	22	11	-1
Conservative/Mod. Dem.	46	41	13	29	59	12	-17
Liberal Democrat	42	48	11	34	55	11	-8
Use of Force in Iraq							
Right Decision	67	19	14	66	19	15	-1
Wrong Decision	40	45	15	29	58	13	-11
Marital Status							
Married	56	28	16	48	36	16	-8
Unmarried	51	33	16	44	40	16	-7
Presidential Approval							
Approve	67	18	15	65	19	16	-2
Disapprove	41	44	15	30	58	12	-11
Retired							
Yes	--	--	--	30	55	15	--
No	--	--	--	49	35	16	--
Parental Status							
Parent	59	25	16	54	31	15	-5
Non-Parent	51	33	16	42	42	16	-9
Labor Union							
Union Household	44	41	15	42	44	14	-2
Non-Union Household	55	29	16	47	37	16	-8

Presidential Job Approval and Job Handling Social Security

	<i>Presidential Job Approval</i>			<i>Presidential Job Handling of Social Security</i>			(N) %
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	46	47	7=100	29	55	16=100	(1502)
Sex							
Male	52	42	6	33	50	17	(708)
Female	40	53	7	25	59	16	(794)
Race							
White	52	42	6	32	51	17	(1237)
Non-white	22	70	8	15	72	13	(250)
Black	13	83	4	11	82	7	(156)
Hispanic*	43	51	6	28	60	12	(91)
Race and Sex							
White Men	56	38	6	36	46	18	(591)
White Women	47	46	7	30	55	15	(646)
Age							
Under 30	46	47	7	26	51	23	(212)
30-49	48	45	7	32	51	17	(553)
50-64	43	53	4	29	59	12	(422)
65+	44	48	8	26	62	12	(302)
Sex and Age							
Men under 50	51	41	8	32	49	19	(392)
Women under 50	42	51	7	28	53	19	(373)
Men 50+	52	45	3	35	52	13	(311)
Women 50+	38	55	7	22	67	11	(413)
Education							
College Grad.	48	48	4	34	50	16	(505)
Some College	50	44	6	31	52	17	(377)
H.S. Grad.	46	46	8	27	56	17	(491)
< H.S. Grad.	32	59	9	18	69	13	(126)
Family Income							
\$75,000+	54	42	4	37	49	14	(356)
\$50,000-\$74,999	54	42	4	36	48	16	(246)
\$30,000-\$49,999	43	50	7	26	56	18	(303)
\$20,000-\$29,999	46	45	9	27	53	20	(150)
<\$20,000	26	64	10	17	69	14	(237)

* The designation Hispanic is unrelated to the white-black categorization.

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling Social Security?

Continued on next page...

	<i>Presidential Job Approval</i>			<i>Presidential Job Handling of Social Security</i>			(N) %
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	46	47	7=100	29	55	16=100	(1502)
Region							
East	39	54	7	25	58	17	(284)
Midwest	41	52	7	28	58	14	(386)
South	53	42	5	33	50	17	(539)
West	46	46	8	28	54	18	(293)
Religious Affiliation							
Total White Protestant	61	32	7	39	45	16	(676)
- Evangelical	69	26	5	46	40	14	(369)
- Non-Evangelical	52	39	9	31	50	19	(307)
White Catholic	46	50	4	29	55	16	(288)
Secular	31	59	10	21	59	20	(146)
Party ID							
Republican	86	10	4	60	20	20	(476)
Democrat	13	81	6	8	82	10	(482)
Independent	41	51	8	22	60	18	(440)
Party and Ideology							
Conservative Republican	93	6	1	68	16	16	(303)
Moderate/Liberal Rep.	78	17	5	48	29	23	(156)
Conservative/Mod. Dem.	16	76	8	9	82	9	(294)
Liberal Democrat	9	89	2	8	82	10	(158)
Use of Force in Iraq							
Right Decision	79	15	6	50	28	22	(721)
Wrong Decision	14	81	5	9	82	9	(697)
Marital Status							
Married	53	42	5	36	48	16	(849)
Unmarried	37	54	9	21	62	17	(643)
Presidential Approval							
Approve	100	0	0	55	24	21	(712)
Disapprove	0	100	0	6	86	8	(698)
Retired							
Yes	46	46	8	26	62	12	(305)
No	46	48	6	30	53	17	(1197)
Parental Status							
Parent	52	43	5	32	49	19	(488)
Non-Parent	42	50	8	27	58	15	(1009)
Labor Union							
Union Household	38	56	6	20	67	13	(218)
Non-Union Household	47	46	7	31	52	17	(1268)

Attitudes about Social Security by Age, Party and Income

	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Age (4-way)</u>				<u>Age (2-way)</u>		<u>Party Identification</u>			<u>Income</u>		
		18- <u>29</u> %	30- <u>49</u> %	50- <u>64</u> %	65+ <u>65+</u> %	Under <u>55</u> %	55+ <u>55+</u> %	<u>Rep</u> %	<u>Dem</u> %	<u>Ind</u> %	Under <u>\$30k</u> %	\$30- <u>\$75k</u> %	\$75k or <u>more</u> %
<i>Bush handling Social Security</i>													
Approve	29	26	32	29	26	29	28	60	8	22	21	30	37
Disapprove	55	51	51	59	62	53	59	20	82	60	63	53	49
Don't know	<u>16</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Follow news about Soc. Sec.*</i>													
Very closely	32	14	28	41	49	25	48	30	39	27	29	33	36
Fairly closely	37	34	40	36	32	38	34	41	35	38	33	37	40
Not too closely	18	28	18	14	12	21	11	18	14	21	19	18	16
Not at all closely	13	24	14	8	6	16	6	11	12	14	18	12	8
Don't know	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>0</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Heard about private account proposal</i>													
A lot	43	20	37	60	64	34	65	48	42	43	35	43	53
A little	25	32	42	31	26	39	26	35	35	35	32	37	38
Nothing at all	21	47	21	9	8	27	8	16	23	22	33	20	9
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>0</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>View of private account proposal</i>													
Favor	46	66	49	41	25	52	33	68	29	45	41	48	56
Strongly	25	26	27	25	15	26	22	41	13	22	19	25	30
Could change mind	21	38	21	14	8	25	10	26	15	23	21	22	25
Oppose	38	19	35	44	58	31	53	16	57	40	44	36	33
Strongly	26	11	21	35	44	20	41	8	44	26	32	23	23
Could change mind	12	8	14	9	13	12	12	8	13	14	11	13	10
Don't know	<u>16</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>11</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Soc. Sec. will run short of money?</i>													
Agree	67	74	74	65	49	73	55	75	59	70	58	72	78
Disagree	26	23	20	28	38	22	35	19	33	25	33	23	18
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>When are Soc. Sec. changes needed?</i>													
Right away	41	44	48	37	29	46	31	43	44	38	45	42	41
Next few years	32	36	31	32	28	32	31	35	25	37	28	34	34
Next decade	16	14	14	19	18	15	18	17	16	16	12	16	21
Further in future	9	5	5	10	19	5	16	4	13	7	13	6	3
Don't know	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of cases	1,502	212	553	422	302	931	558	476	482	440	387	549	356

* Based on responses to Q5b and Q5e.

Attitudes about Social Security by Age, Party and Income

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Age (4-way)</u>				<u>Age (2-way)</u>		<u>Party Identification</u>			<u>Income</u>		
		18- <u>29</u>	30- <u>49</u>	50- <u>64</u>	65+ <u>65+</u>	Under <u>55</u>	<u>55+</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>	Under <u>\$30k</u>	\$30- <u>\$75k</u>	\$75k or <u>more</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
<i>Collect SS taxes on all wages rather than just first \$90,000</i>													
Favor	60	58	62	62	58	60	62	61	61	60	60	65	63
Oppose	33	39	33	32	25	35	26	33	31	35	32	31	33
Don't know	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Limit benefits for wealthy retirees</i>													
Favor	58	50	63	61	51	59	55	54	63	61	54	62	62
Oppose	36	46	33	35	32	37	34	42	30	35	38	33	35
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Increase payroll taxes for all workers</i>													
Favor	38	43	33	37	47	36	44	35	44	36	43	38	38
Oppose	56	54	62	57	41	60	46	60	51	58	50	58	59
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Reduce rate of benefit growth for cost of living</i>													
Favor	30	39	30	26	27	32	26	34	28	29	32	31	30
Oppose	64	57	65	69	64	63	67	60	68	66	62	64	68
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Raise retirement age</i>													
Favor	25	23	22	23	40	23	33	33	20	25	24	24	32
Oppose	72	75	77	75	53	76	62	65	78	72	73	75	67
Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>If private accounts are introduced, would you personally...</i>													
Invest in stocks or mutual funds	45	60	55	36	14	55	21	59	33	45	32	51	59
Stay within the current system	49	36	40	57	77	40	70	34	62	50	60	44	39
Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Discuss Soc. Sec. with friends and family</i>													
Frequently	24	14	21	31	29	20	31	21	28	22	24	24	22
Occasionally	37	31	41	40	33	38	36	38	40	34	34	38	42
hardly ever	28	38	28	19	27	30	23	31	22	32	29	27	31
Never	11	17	10	10	10	12	10	10	10	12	13	11	5
Don't know	<u>*</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of cases	1,502	212	553	422	302	931	558	476	482	440	387	549	356

Attitudes about Social Security by Age, Party and Income

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Age (4-way)</u>				<u>Age (2-way)</u>		<u>Party Identification</u>			<u>Income</u>		
		18- <u>29</u>	30- <u>49</u>	50- <u>64</u>	65+ <u> </u>	Under <u>55</u>	55+ <u> </u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>	Under <u>\$30k</u>	\$30- <u>\$75k</u>	\$75k or <u>more</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Mostly trust or mostly distrust what _____ has to say about Social Security													
George W. Bush													
Mostly trust	42	39	46	40	38	43	40	82	14	34	29	46	50
Mostly distrust	52	54	48	56	55	52	54	12	83	61	63	49	45
Neither/DK	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
The AARP													
Mostly trust	53	43	55	60	52	52	56	46	63	52	48	57	60
Mostly distrust	23	19	22	24	24	22	24	31	15	23	22	20	24
Neither/DK	<u>24</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>16</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Republican leaders in Congress													
Mostly trust	35	42	33	31	34	35	34	68	12	27	30	37	38
Mostly distrust	53	50	54	58	48	54	52	20	78	61	56	54	52
Neither/DK	<u>12</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Democratic leaders in Congress													
Mostly trust	41	50	41	36	39	43	37	17	71	38	47	43	38
Mostly distrust	46	41	48	53	38	46	46	73	18	48	37	47	54
Neither/DK	<u>13</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Alan Greenspan *													
Mostly trust	49	36	54	55	46	48	52	65	38	47	22	56	69
Mostly distrust	20	22	20	18	23	20	20	13	24	24	28	19	14
Neither/DK	<u>31</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>17</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of cases	1,502	212	553	422	302	931	558	476	482	440	387	549	356
Greenspan cases *	977	140	383	280	164	640	327	307	317	286	233	361	245

* Asked February 18-21 only.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
FEBRUARY 2005 NII/SOCIAL SECURITY SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
February 16-21, 2005
N=1,502

ON FORM ONE Q.1 PRECEDES Q.2 --- ON FORM TWO, Q.2 PRECEDES Q.1

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? [**IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK**]

	<u>Approve</u>	Dis- approve	Don't know		<u>Approve</u>	Dis- approve	Don't know
February, 2005	46	47	7=100	Early October, 2002	61	30	9=100
January, 2005	50	43	7=100	Mid-September, 2002	67	22	11=100
2004				Early September, 2002	63	26	11=100
December, 2004	48	44	8=100	Late August, 2002	60	27	13=100
Mid-October, 2004	44	48	8=100	August, 2002	67	21	12=100
August, 2004	46	45	9=100	Late July, 2002	65	25	10=100
July, 2004	46	46	8=100	July, 2002	67	21	12=100
June, 2004	48	43	9=100	June, 2002	70	20	10=100
May, 2004	44	48	8=100	April, 2002	69	18	13=100
Late April, 2004	48	43	9=100	Early April, 2002	74	16	10=100
Early April, 2004	43	47	10=100	February, 2002	78	13	9=100
Late March, 2004	47	44	9=100	January, 2002	80	11	9=100
Mid-March, 2004	46	47	7=100	2001			
February, 2004	48	44	8=100	Mid-November, 2001	84	9	7=100
Mid-January, 2004	56	34	10=100	Early October, 2001	84	8	8=100
Early January, 2004	58	35	7=100	Late September, 2001	86	7	7=100
2003				Mid-September, 2001	80	9	11=100
December, 2003	57	34	9=100	Early September, 2001	51	34	15=100
November, 2003	50	40	10=100	August, 2001	50	32	18=100
October, 2003	50	42	8=100	July, 2001	51	32	17=100
September, 2003	55	36	9=100	June, 2001	50	33	17=100
Mid-August, 2003	56	32	12=100	May, 2001	53	32	15=100
Early August, 2003	53	37	10=100	April, 2001	56	27	17=100
Mid-July, 2003	58	32	10=100	March, 2001	55	25	20=100
Early July, 2003	60	29	11=100	February, 2001	53	21	26=100
June, 2003	62	27	11=100				
May, 2003	65	27	8=100				
April 10-16, 2003	72	22	6=100				
April 9, 2003	74	20	6=100				
April 2-7, 2003	69	25	6=100				
March 28-April 1, 2003	71	23	6=100				
March 25-27, 2003	70	24	6=100				
March 20-24, 2003	67	26	7=100				
March 13-16, 2003	55	34	11=100				
February, 2003	54	36	10=100				
January, 2003	58	32	10=100				
2002							
December, 2002	61	28	11=100				
Late October, 2002	59	29	12=100				

QUESTIONS 2 AND 3 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE

ASK ALL:

More specifically...

Q.4 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]?

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
a. The economy	43	50	7=100
January, 2005	45	50	5=100
Mid-October, 2004	38	55	7=100
Early September, 2004	44	49	7=100
August, 2004	42	52	6=100
July, 2004	42	52	6=100
June, 2004	43	50	7=100
Early April, 2004	39	53	8=100
Mid-January, 2004	47	47	6=100
September, 2003	43	48	9=100
February, 2003	43	48	9=100
January, 2003	47	45	8=100
Early October, 2002	49	40	11=100
June, 2002	53	36	11=100
January, 2002	60	28	12=100
Early September, 2001	47	44	9=100
February, 2001	50	22	28=100
b. The situation in Iraq	40	53	7=100
January, 2005	45	50	5=100
Mid-October, 2004	37	56	7=100
Early September, 2004	47	45	8=100
August, 2004	43	52	5=100
July, 2004	42	53	5=100
June, 2004	42	51	7=100
Late April, 2004	44	48	8=100
Early April, 2004	40	53	7=100
Mid-January, 2004	59	37	4=100
September, 2003	52	40	8=100
April 10-16, 2003 ¹	77	17	6=100
April 8-9, 2003	71	23	6=100
--April 9, 2003	76	18	6=100
--April 8, 2003	65	28	7=100
April 2-7, 2003	73	21	6=100
March 28-April 1, 2003	69	26	5=100
March 25-27, 2003	73	23	4=100
March 23-24, 2003	72	22	6=100
March 20-22, 2003	70	23	7=100
February, 2003	56	37	7=100
January, 2003	56	36	8=100
Early October, 2002	56	34	10=100

¹ From March to April 2003 the item was worded: "... dealing with the war in Iraq?" The 1991 Gallup trend was worded "...George Bush is handling the situation in the Persian Gulf region."

Q.4 CONTINUED...		<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
c.	Social Security	29	55	16=100
	June, 2002	36	42	22=100
	<i>Gallup</i> : March, 2002	47	40	13=100
	<i>Gallup</i> : March, 2001	49	31	20=100
ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=741]:				
d.F2	Terrorist threats	59	34	7=100
	January, 2005	62	33	5=100
	Mid-October, 2004	49	40	11=100
	Early September, 2004	62	32	6=100
	August, 2004	58	37	5=100
	July, 2004	54	40	6=100
	June, 2004	56	35	9=100
	Late April, 2004	55	36	9=100
	Early April, 2004	53	38	9=100
	<i>Gallup</i> : December, 2003	65	33	2=100
	September, 2003	64	28	8=100
	February, 2003	67	25	8=100
	January, 2003	69	23	8=100
	Early October, 2002	71	22	7=100
	June, 2002	74	18	8=100
	Mid-September, 2001 ²	85	6	9=100
	Clinton : Early September, 1998	72	20	8=100
e.F2	The nation's foreign policy	43	46	11=100
	January, 2005	48	43	9=100
	Mid-October, 2004	37	49	14=100
	Early September, 2004	47	42	11=100
	August, 2004	42	49	9=100
	July, 2004	40	48	12=100
	Mid-January, 2004	53	36	11=100
	March, 2003	53	36	11=100
	Early April, 2002	69	20	11=100
	<i>Gallup</i> : October, 2001	81	14	5=100
	Early September, 2001	46	34	20=100
	August, 2001 ³	45	32	23=100
	Clinton : September, 1997	54	34	12=100
	Bush, Sr : May, 1990	58	30	12=100

² In Mid-September, 2001 the question was worded: "...dealing with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington." In Early September 1998 the question was worded: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling current threats from international terrorist groups?"

³ In August 2001 roughly half of the U.S. sample was asked about Bush's handling of international policy, while the other half was asked about the handling of the nation's foreign policy. Results did not differ between question wordings.

Q.4 CONTINUED...

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>
f.F2 The federal budget deficit	41	46	13=100
<i>Gallup</i> : December, 2003	32	60	8=100
<i>Gallup</i> : August, 2003	39	55	6=100
<i>Gallup</i> : January, 2003 ⁴	43	47	10=100
<i>Gallup</i> : March, 2002	51	37	12=100
<i>Gallup</i> : April, 2001	52	37	11=100
Clinton : July, 1994	31	58	11=100
Bush, Sr : May, 1990	22	64	14=100
g.F2 Health care policy	36	51	13=100
<i>Gallup</i> : November, 2004	37	57	6=100
<i>Gallup</i> : January, 2004	43	49	8=100
September, 2003	33	46	21=100
<i>Gallup</i> : January, 2003	41	44	15=100
June, 2002	37	46	17=100
Clinton : July, 1994	39	54	7=100
Bush, Sr : May, 1990	30	59	11=100
h.F2 Education	44	42	14=100
<i>Gallup</i> : August, 2004	47	47	6=100
<i>Gallup</i> : January, 2004	56	35	9=100
<i>Gallup</i> : January, 2003	57	30	13=100
June, 2002	56	31	13=100
<i>Gallup</i> : March, 2001	65	22	13=100
Bush, Sr : May, 1990	45	45	10=100
i.F2 The environment	42	43	15=100
<i>Gallup</i> : January, 2003	53	37	10=100
June, 2002	50	38	12=100
Early September, 2001	42	42	16=100
Bush, Sr : May, 1990	44	45	11=100

Q.5 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE. OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:		<u>Very</u>	<u>Fairly</u>	<u>Not too</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
		<u>Closely</u>	<u>Closely</u>	<u>Closely</u>	<u>Closely</u>	
a.F1	News about the current situation in Iraq	38	45	13	4	*=100
b.F1	George W. Bush's proposal to deal with the Social Security system	31	36	20	13	*=100
	Clinton : February, 1998 ⁵	24	38	26	12	*=100
	January, 1997	29	35	22	13	1=100

⁴ Between April 2001 and January 2003 the Gallup item was worded "the federal budget."

⁵ In February 1998, the story was listed as "Clinton's proposal to deal with the problem with Social Security." In January 1997 the story was listed as "Proposals to reform the Social Security System."

Q.5 CONTINUED...

		Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/Ref
c.F1	The Michael Jackson trial	8	17	30	44	1=100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=741]:

d.F2	The recent election in Iraq	27	39	18	16	*=100
e.F2	Discussion of how to deal with the Social Security system	32	38	16	14	*=100
	January, 1998 ⁶	18	27	29	25	1=100
	February, 1997	23	26	22	28	1=100
f.F2	North Korea's nuclear weapons program	22	34	22	22	*=100

ASK ALL:

Thinking about Social Security...

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:

Q.6F1 Over the years, do you think the Social Security system has been very good, good, bad, or very bad for the country?

18	Very good
61	Good
12	Bad
3	Very bad
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=741]:

Q.7F2 Please tell me what one word comes to mind when you think about the Social Security program in America... just the first word or thought that comes to mind. **(OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW". ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE).***

22	Bankrupt	6	Inadequate
19	In trouble	6	Not enough
17	Not/Unfair	6	Poor
16	Retirement	6	Unstable
14	Broken	6	Working
13	Good	5	Adequate
13	Scared/Scary	5	Disaster
12	Will it be there?	5	Joke
10	Money	5	Needs help
9	Leave it alone	5	Needs improvement
9	OK	5	Sad
8	Messy	5	Stinks
7	All right	5	Unstable
7	Bad		
7	Elderly		
7	Failing		
7	Hope it lasts/Hoping		
7	Security		

** The numbers listed represent the number of respondents who offered each response; the numbers are not percentages. Only words or phrases mentioned five or more times are shown here.*

⁶ In January 1998 and February 1997 the story was listed as "The debate about how to reform the Social Security system."

NO QUESTIONS 8-10

ASK ALL:

Q.11 How much, if anything, have you heard about a proposal which would allow younger workers to invest a portion of their Social Security taxes in private retirement accounts, which might include stocks or mutual funds — have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all?

		Dec <u>2004</u>	Early ⁷ Sept <u>2004</u>	(RVs) Sept <u>2000</u>
43	A lot	23	19	26
35	A little	43	41	43
21	Nothing at all	33	39	30
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100

Q.12 Generally, do you favor or oppose this proposal?

Heard about ⁸		-- Dec 2004 -- Heard		Early Sept 2004 Heard		-- Sept 2000 -- Heard	
<u>Total</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>About</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>About</u>	<u>RV's</u>	<u>About</u>
46	45	54	54	58	61	70	71
38	42	30	35	26	28	21	23
<u>16</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(N=1,241)

IF 'FAVOR' (1 IN Q.12):

Q.13FAV Do you feel strongly about this, or do you think you could change your mind?

24	Feel strongly / won't change mind
21	Could change mind / don't feel strongly
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
46%	

IF 'OPPOSE' (2 IN Q.12):

Q.13OPP Do you feel strongly about this, or do you think you could change your mind?

26	Feel strongly / won't change mind
12	Could change mind / don't feel strongly
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused
38%	

⁷ In 2004 the question included the words "... payroll taxes in private retirement accounts, which might include stocks or mutual funds, rather than having all of it go toward Social Security."

⁸ Based on the percent who heard "A lot" or "A little" in Q.11.

IF 'FAVOR' (1 IN Q.12) ASK [N=662]:

Q.14 What is it that you like most about the idea of private accounts as part of Social Security? [OPEN END;
**CODE UP TO THREE RESPONSES, PROBE FOR CLARITY ONLY. PROBE DK'S ONCE
BEFORE ENTERING AS DK]**

- 38 Control/Responsibility/Freedom [NET]**
- 30 Gives people control/say
- 5 Options/freedom of choice/can opt in or out
- 3 Accountability/responsibility
- 13 Private vs. Government [NET]**
- 6 Gets government out/reduces government
- 5 Money is yours, not governments
- 3 Private vs. public
- 12 Makes more money/more for retirement
- 9 Assures I will get some/Social Security will be there
- 7 Good (unspecified)
- 4 Will save Social Security/system is currently failing
- 3 Good (other)
- 3 Mentions of younger people
- 3 People will learn to invest and save
- 2 Can leave to heirs/family can inherit
- 15 Don't know/No answer

IF 'OPPOSE' (2 IN Q.12) ASK [N=609]:

Q.15 What is it that you don't like about the idea of private accounts as part of Social Security? [OPEN END;
**CODE UP TO THREE RESPONSES, PROBE FOR CLARITY ONLY. PROBE DK'S ONCE
BEFORE ENTERING AS DK]**

- 34 Risk/Stock market [NET]**
- 22 Risk/gamble/uncertainty/potential for loss
- 12 Stock market reference (specific)
- 16 Public unprepared [NET]**
- 12 People don't know how to invest/won't save
- 4 Mentions of younger people
- 1 Mentions of low education/income
- 14 Harm to Social Security system [NET]**
- 7 Will hurt or kill Social Security/won't fix it
- 4 Not broken/Already have options
- 4 Not the intent of Social Security
- 13 Negative (unspecified)
- 4 Cost/Borrowing/deficit/transition cost
- 4 Not everyone will benefit [NET]**
- 3 Good for rich not poor/Others will make money
- 1 Good for young not old/Not good for me
- 4 Negative (other)
- 2 Mentions of anti-government
- 12 Don't know/No answer

NO QUESTION 16

ASK ALL:

Q.17 Some have said the Social Security program in its present form will run short of money at some point to pay all of the promised benefits. Do you agree or disagree?

IF 'AGREE' (1 IN Q.17):

Q.18 Do you think Social Security will run short of money **[READ]**

67 Agree
11 In the next 10 years
28 In the next 20 years
12 In the next 30 years –OR–
11 In more than 30 years
5 Don't know/Refused
26 Disagree
7 Don't know/Refused
100

ASK ALL:

Q.19 I am going to read you a list of some ways that have been suggested to address concerns about the Social Security program. Please tell me if you would favor or oppose each one. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
a. Increasing Social Security payroll taxes for all workers	38	56	6=100
b. Raising the retirement age	25	72	3=100
c. Limiting benefits for wealthy retirees	58	36	6=100
d. Lowering the amount that Social Security benefits go up each year for changes in the cost of living	30	64	6=100
e. Collecting Social Security taxes on ALL of a worker's wages, rather than just the first \$90,000 they earn per year	60	33	7=100

Q.20 If the Social Security program needs changes, when do you think those changes need to be made **[READ]**?

41 Right away
32 Within the next few years
16 Within the next decade
8 Or can changes be made further in the future
1 **(VOL. DO NOT READ)** No changes needed
2 **(VOL. DO NOT READ)** Don't know/Refused
100

IF 'FAVOR' (1 IN Q.12) ASK [N=662]:

Q.21 Earlier, you said you favored the idea of private accounts as part of Social Security. Is that MOSTLY because...**[READ AND RANDOMIZE; READ NUMBERS (1,2,3) WITH RESPONSE OPTIONS SO RESPONDENT CAN ANSWER BY GIVING A NUMBER]**

- 52 Individuals will have more control
- 20 The Social Security program will be more financially secure
- 23 Peoples' Social Security accounts can earn a higher rate of return
- 2 Other/None (VOL.)
- 3 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
- 100

IF 'OPPOSE' (2 IN Q.12) ASK [N=609]:

Q.22 Earlier, you said you opposed the idea of private accounts as part of Social Security. Is that MOSTLY because...**[READ AND RANDOMIZE; READ NUMBERS (1,2,3) WITH RESPONSE OPTIONS SO RESPONDENT CAN ANSWER BY GIVING A NUMBER]**

- 28 The guaranteed benefits for future retirees will be cut
- 15 Setting up the program will increase the deficit
- 48 Social Security money will be put in riskier investments
- 5 Other/None (VOL.)
- 4 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
- 100

ASK ALL:

Thinking about yourself...

Q.23 If Social Security changes into a system where individuals could choose to invest some of their own payroll tax contributions themselves, do you think YOU would choose to invest some Social Security money in stocks or mutual funds, or would you choose to stay within the current system?

- 45 Invest some in stocks or mutual funds
- 49 Stay within the current system
- 6 Don't know/Refused
- 100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:

Q.24F1 Do you think this change would increase, decrease, or have no impact on your retirement savings benefits?

		<i>Bloomberg</i> ⁹
		<u>May 2002</u>
44	Increase	41
13	Decrease	16
32	Have no impact	31
<u>11</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>12</u>
100		100

⁹ Bloomberg question began with Q.23's introduction.

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=741]:

Q.25F2 How well do you think you would do making these investment decisions and managing your own retirement account? Do you think you would do an excellent job, good, only fair, or poor job with these investments?

		<i>Americans Discuss Soc. Security</i> ¹⁰		
		May	Feb	Aug
		<u>1999</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>1998</u>
16	Excellent	18	17	18
41	Good	40	34	37
25	Only fair	25	27	28
13	Poor	13	18	13
<u>5</u>	Don't know/Ref./Can't answer	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
100		100	100	100

ASK ALL:

Q.26 When decisions about Social Security's future are being made, which do you think is MORE important...
[READ AND ROTATE]

		<i>Americans Discuss Soc. Security</i> ¹¹		
		May	Feb	Aug
		<u>1999</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>1998</u>
30	AVOIDING any tax INCREASES for workers and employers? OR...	34	32	33
60	AVOIDING any future CUTS in Social Security benefit amounts?	53	59	55
4	Both/Neither/Other (VOL.)	8	5	7
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused/Can't answer	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
100		100	100	100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=761]:

Q.27F1 From what you've seen, heard and read, are news organizations doing an excellent, good, only fair, or poor job of explaining the pros and cons of George W. Bush's Social Security plan?

4	Excellent
24	Good
33	Only fair
31	Poor
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

¹⁰ ADSS question began with: "If Social Security changes into a system where individuals invest some of their own payroll tax contributions THEMSELVES, how well do you think YOU could make these investments and manage your own retirement account?"

¹¹ ADSS question was asked as part of a list and began with: "People have different opinions about how the Social Security system might be changed for the future. We'd like your opinion on what policymakers' priorities should be when they are making decisions about Social Security's future."

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=741]:

Q.28F2 Would you say the press has been too critical, not critical enough, or fair in the way it has covered George W. Bush's proposals for reforming Social Security?

27	Too critical
24	Not critical enough
39	Fair
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

ASK ALL:

Q.29 How often, if ever, does the topic of problems with Social Security come up in your conversations with family and friends ... frequently, occasionally, hardly ever or never?

		Early Oct ¹² <u>2002</u>	June <u>2002</u>	Early Sept <u>1998</u>
24	Frequently	22	33	31
37	Occasionally	31	31	33
28	Hardly ever	31	23	26
11	Never	15	13	10
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>*</u>
100		100	100	100

NO QUESTION 30

Q.31 Do you think George W. Bush has explained clearly his plans for reforming Social Security, or do you think he has not explained his plans clearly enough?

25	Explained clearly
65	Not clearly
<u>10</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.32 Do you think Democrats in Congress have explained clearly why they oppose Bush's plans for reforming Social Security, or have they not explained their position clearly enough?

26	Explained clearly
60	Not clearly
<u>14</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

¹² In Early October 2002 and earlier, this question was asked as part of a list of topics.

Q.33 As I read the names of some people and groups, tell me if you would mostly trust what they have to say about Social Security, or mostly DIStrust what they have to say. If you're not familiar with a name, just let me know. First, would you mostly trust or mostly DIStrust what [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] has/have to say about Social Security?

	(VOL)				
	Mostly <u>Trust</u>	Mostly <u>Distrust</u>	Neither/Wouldn't influence <u>either way</u>	(VOL) Haven't <u>Heard of</u>	Don't Know/ <u>Refused</u>
a. George W. Bush	42	52	1	0	5=100
b. The AARP	53	23	2	11	11=100
c. Republican leaders in Congress	35	53	3	1	8=100
d. Democratic leaders in Congress	41	46	3	1	9=100

ITEM e. ASKED FEBRUARY 18-21 ONLY [N=977]:

e. Alan Greenspan	49	20	2	17	12=100
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NO QUESTIONS 34-35

QUESTIONS 36 THROUGH 45 IN PREVIOUS RELEASE

ASK ALL:

On a different subject...

Q.46 How closely do you follow the stock market – closely or not closely?

	<i>L.A. Times</i>
	May <u>2000</u>
25 Closely	37
74 Not closely	62
<u>1</u> Don't know/Refused	<u>1</u>
100	100

Q.47 Would you say that the stock market is a relatively safe place, or a relatively dangerous place to invest money?

	— <i>L.A. Times</i> —	
	Aug <u>2002</u>	May <u>2000</u>
39 Safe	28	38
41 Dangerous	58	38
12 Depends (VOL.)	11	15
<u>8</u> Don't know/Refused	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>
100	100	100

Q.48 What's more important in our society – that everyone be free to pursue their life's goals without interference from the government OR that the government play an active role in society so as to guarantee that nobody is in need?

		Sept <u>2002</u>	July <u>1991</u>
53	Free to pursue their life's goals without interference from the government	58	52
38	Government guarantees nobody in need	34	36
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>
100		100	100

NO QUESTION 49

ASK ALL:

Now, just a few questions for statistical purposes only.

MARITAL Are you married, divorced, separated, widowed, or never been married?

55	Married
10	Divorced
3	Separated
9	Widowed
22	Never been married
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)
100	

EMPLOY Are you now employed full-time, part-time or not employed?

		June <u>2002</u>	June <u>2001</u>	Jan <u>2001</u>	Late Sept <u>1999</u>	Aug <u>1999</u>	Early Sept <u>1998</u>	Nov <u>1997</u>	May <u>1997</u>	June <u>1996</u>	Feb <u>1995</u>	July <u>1994</u>	Mar <u>1994</u>
53	Full-time	55	54	52	56	58	55	55	53	57	55	55	53
12	Part-time	10	11	12	13	11	12	12	12	13	11	12	14
35	Not employed	35	35	35	31	30	33	33	35	30	34	33	32
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

IF "NOT EMPLOYED" (3 IN EMPLOY) ASK:

EMPLOY2 Is that because you are a student, because you are retired, because you choose not to work, or because you've lost or quit a job?

		June <u>2002</u>	June <u>2001</u>
3	Student	2	n/a
17	Retired	19	17
6	Choose not to work	4	4
2	Lost or quit a job	4	4
7	Other reason (VOL.)	6	10
<u>0</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>
35%		35%	35%

IF MARRIED (1 IN MARITAL) ASK:

EMPLOYSP Is your (husband/wife) now employed full-time, part-time or not employed?

61	Full-time
11	Part-time
28	Not employed
<u> *</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

IF "NOT EMPLOYED" (3 IN EMPLOYSP) ASK:

EMPLOYSP2 Is that because (he/she) is a student, because (he/she) is retired, because (he/she) chooses not to work, or because (he/she) has lost or quit a job?

1	Student
14	Retired
6	Choose not to work
2	Lost or quit a job
5	Other reason [VOL.]
<u> 0</u>	Don't know/Refused
28%	

ASK IF NOT RETIRED (1,2,9 IN EMPLOY OR 1,3,4,5,9 IN EMPLOY2) [N=1197]:

Q.50 As far as you know, have you made any contributions to Social Security in your lifetime, or not?

89	Yes
8	No
<u> 3</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

ASK IF NOT RETIRED (1,2,9 IN EMPLOY OR 1,3,4,5,9 IN EMPLOY2) [N=1197]:

Q.51 **[IF 1 IN Q.50 READ: Aside from Social Security...]** Do you have a retirement plan or any savings set aside for retirement, or not?

IF 'YES' (1 IN Q.51) ASK:

Q.52 Is any of your retirement money in the stock market through stocks, mutual funds or a 401k plan?

69	Yes, have retirement plan
58	Retirement plan in the stock market
10	Not in stock market
1	Don't know
30	No, no retirement plan
<u> 1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

ASK IF NOT RETIRED (1,2,9 IN EMPLOY OR 1,3,4,5,9 IN EMPLOY2) [N=1197]:

Q.53 Looking ahead to your retirement, what do you expect to be your biggest source of income – Social Security, an employer-sponsored pension plan, or your own retirement savings?

		<i>CBS News/NY Times</i> ¹³
		<u>Jan 2005</u>
20	Social Security	17
19	Pension plan	22
53	Retirement savings	55
4	Other (VOL.)	4
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>2</u>
100		100

ASK IF RETIRED (2 IN EMPLOY2) [N=305]:

Q.54 Are you (or is your spouse) currently collecting Social Security retirement benefits, or not?

89	Yes
11	No
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

ASK IF RETIRED (2 IN EMPLOY2) [N=305]:

Q.55 [IF 1 IN Q.54 READ: Aside from Social Security...] Do you have a retirement plan or other savings which supplement your income?

IF 'YES' (1 IN Q.55):

Q.56 Is any of your retirement money in the stock market through stocks, mutual funds or a 401k plan?

75	Yes, have retirement plan
47	Retirement plan in the stock market
27	Not in stock market
1	Don't know/Refused
24	No
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

ASK IF RETIRED (2 IN EMPLOY2) [N=305]:

Q.57 What is your biggest source of income – Social Security, an employer-sponsored pension plan, or your own retirement savings?

		<i>CBS News/NY Times</i> ¹⁴
		<u>Jan 2005</u>
46	Social Security	45
25	Pension plan	23
17	Retirement savings	24
6	Other (VOL.)	5
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>3</u>
100		100

¹³ The CBS News/NY Times question was worded "Looking ahead to your retirement, what do you expect to be your major source of income..."

¹⁴ The CBS News/NY Times question was worded "What is your major source of income..."