

Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Poverty Pulse

Wave VII

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Presented By:

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Objectives and Methodology

This is a report of findings from Wave VII of the Poverty Pulse survey, a study designed to evaluate attitudes toward poverty in America. This is the seventh in a series of studies conducted annually beginning in December of 2000. The results of each Poverty Pulse are used by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) to promote understanding of poverty in America and greater awareness of the problem in our society.

This year's Pulse once again used an online methodology for data collection. A total of 1,027 surveys were completed among the general adult population through Harris Interactive Service Bureau (HISB), a separate operating unit of Harris Interactive. The surveys were completed between December 7 and 11, 2006. The sample was selected at random by HISB using their database of potential respondents. The results of the study were collected and weighted demographically by HISB. The questionnaire was designed in conjunction with CCHD by Market Research Bureau LLC. Market Research Bureau also conducted the analysis of the data and prepared this report.

Many (but not all) of the questions in this year's survey were also asked in previous waves of the Poverty Pulse. In some cases, results from previous years are presented in this report for reference purposes. It should be noted that prior to 2005, the Poverty Pulse was conducted using a telephone methodology. Because of this difference in data collection, comparisons between studies from 2000-2004 and subsequent waves (2005 and 2006) should be made with caution. While general comparisons can be made, numerical differences may reflect the difference in data collection technique rather than true differences in people's opinions. In addition to the data collection differences, some questions were asked differently. For example, in some cases questions were asked this year in an aided fashion – that is, respondents were shown a list from which to choose their response – while in previous years, the question was unaided (no options provided to respondents). Also, in some cases only one response was accepted from respondents where in previous years respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. Any general comparison made in this report is accompanied with a caveat reflecting these differences.

The results presented on the following pages have been tabulated and analyzed by various demographics by Market Research Bureau. If a table total is 99% to 101%, this is likely due to rounding the individual percentages in the table. For some questions, more than one response was accepted from each respondent. In these cases the table percentage totals exceed 100%.

Statistical significance testing was conducted to determine differences by demographics and other criteria. Significance testing across years was conducted just between 2005 and 2006 where the methodology was the same, but these two years are not compared to earlier years. All testing for statistical significance was conducted at the 95% level of confidence. Any statistical differences are indicated in the tables with an “s” or are discussed in the text. The sample tolerance for the total sample is +/- 3 percentage points. This study can be considered reasonably representative of all adults in the United States.

One of the demographic categories analyzed was a combination of income and household size to determine people living with low incomes. The following definition of low income was used in this year’s study:

Low Income Definition

<i>Household size of . . .</i>	1+	<i>and income less than . . .</i>	\$15,000
	2 or 3+		\$25,000
	4+		\$35,000
	5+		\$50,000

For comparison, the poverty thresholds as established by the federal government are as follows:

Poverty Guidelines

<i>Household size of . . .</i>	1	<i>and income less than . . .</i>	\$ 9,973
	2		\$ 12,755
	3		\$ 15,577
	4		\$ 19,971
	5		\$ 23,613
	6		\$ 26,683

Findings

- *The concern over poverty continues to be high.* About half of all respondents in 2006 (48%) indicated that they were “very concerned” about poverty (on an aided basis) and an additional 36% indicated that they were “somewhat concerned” (for a total of 84% who are concerned). Only 3% were “not at all concerned” about poverty in this most recent survey. This shows a small, but statistically significant decline in those who are concerned with poverty from last year (88% in 2005, 84% in 2006), the decline coming mostly from those who are “very concerned.”

**Thinking just in terms of the problem here in the United States,
how concerned would you say that you are about poverty?
Would you say that you are very concerned, somewhat concerned,
not very concerned, or not at all concerned with poverty?**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very	55	54	50	52	56	53	48
Somewhat	<u>32</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>36</u>
Total Concerned	87	90	89	89	90	88	84
Not Very	8	8	7	8	7	10	13
Not at All	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
Total Not Concerned	13	10	11	11	10	12	16
Base - Total respondents	1015	1014	1015	1008	1004	1131	1027

Among four specific issues addressed in this survey – poverty, health care, access to education and affordable housing – poverty ranks second behind health care in terms of the level of concern that Americans have.

Thinking just in terms of the problem here in the United States,
how concerned would you say that you are about _____?
Would you say that you are very concerned, somewhat concerned,
not very concerned, or not at all concerned with _____?

2006

	Poverty	Health Care	Access to Education	Affordable Housing
	%	%	%	%
Very	48	61	41	40
Somewhat	<u>36</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>42</u>
Total Concerned	84	91	78	82
Not Very	13	7	19	16
Not at All	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Total Not Concerned	16	8	22	19

Base - Total respondents (1027)

- *On an unaided basis, poverty ranks fifth as the “biggest social problem facing the U.S. today.”* Five percent (5%) cited poverty as the biggest concern (top of mind) and a total of 15% cited it in response to either of two questions asked regarding social problems (the biggest problem + all other problems = total unaided). Health care, illegal immigration, education and the war in Iraq all were of greater concern to respondents. Racial discrimination was equal to poverty as a concern to respondents.

**What do you feel is the single biggest social problem facing the U.S. today?
(Top-of-Mind)**

**What other social issues or problems in the U.S. are you concerned about?
(Combined with top-of-mind for Total Unaided)**

Note - Only those items with at least 5% Total Unaided are shown.

	<u>Top of Mind</u>	<u>Total Unaided</u>
	%	%
Health care	12	26
War/U.S. involvement in war	7	22
Illegal immigration	10	18
Education	5	18
Poverty	5	15
Racism/ethnic discrimination/prejudice	5	15
Unemployment/under employment/low wages	3	10
Government/Politics	3	8
Crime	2	8
Drug/alcohol abuse	2	8
Homelessness	1	8
Economy	2	7
Immorality	3	6
Social Security	1	5
Environmental issues	*	5
Base - Total respondents		1027

* Less than 0.5%

Previous years' responses for some of these are shown on the following page for reference. (Please note that the question wording prior to 2005 differed slightly. In 2005 and 2006, the question was "What do you feel is the single biggest social problem facing the U.S. today?" In earlier studies the question was asked, "What do you feel is the single biggest problem facing U.S. society today?")

**What do you feel is the single biggest problem
facing U.S. society today?
(Top-of-Mind)**

**What other issues or concerns do you have
with regard to society in the United States?
What other problems are you concerned about?
(Combined with top-of-mind for Total Unaided)**

SELECTED RESPONSES

	-----2000-----		-----2001-----		-----2002-----		-----2003-----		-----2004-----		-----2005-----		-----2006-----	
	Top of Mind	Total Unaided	Top of Mind	Total Unaided	Top of Mind	Total Unaided	Top of Mind	Total Unaided	Top of Mind	Total Unaided	Top of Mind	Total Unaided	Top of Mind	Total Unaided
Healthcare	4	10	2	6	2	7	3	10	3	12	8	19	12	26
War	-	-	7	13	9	17	9	18	11	20	4	15	7	22
Education	5	16	4	11	4	12	4	11	3	11	3	12	5	18
Poverty	3	7	2	7	2	3	1	5	2	6	7	14	5	15
Racism/discrimination	3	7	2	7	2	5	2	7	2	6	8	17	5	15
Government/politics	7	14	5	10	7	13	11	21	9	17	4	11	3	8
Homelessness	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	2	*	1	2	6	1	8
Crime	6	13	2	6	4	8	5	12	3	10	1	5	2	8
Economy	6	13	11	24	10	23	9	21	10	23	4	9	2	7
Immorality	9	12	6	10	7	11	8	13	10	16	4	6	3	6

1015

1131

1015

1008

1004

1131

1027

Base - Total respondents in each group

* Less than 0.5

- *Fifty-eight percent (58%) of Americans in 2006 have some concern that they will be poor at some point in their lives.* Twenty-six percent (26%) are “very concerned” that they will be poor. This is a statistically significant decline from the previous year, but the decline is primarily due to individuals who are living with low incomes. Low income individuals are more concerned than those with higher incomes (see table below), but their level of concern dropped from 88% to 75%. This could be due to the heightened visibility in late 2005 of poor people in the aftermath of Katrina and the vulnerability depicted in the media. People living with low incomes might have been more likely to be affected by those images. (In 2003 and 2004, the percent of low-income respondents who feared being poor, was 74% and 71% respectively, closer to this year’s 75%).

**How concerned are you that you might be
poor at some point in your life? Are you very concerned,
somewhat concerned, not very concerned,
or not at all concerned that you will ever be poor?**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very	23	24	24	30	30	29	26
Somewhat	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>32</u>
Total Concerned	49	51	53	56	56	63	58
Not Very	25	25	24	25	24	25	30
Not at All	<u>26</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
Total Not Concerned	51	49	46	43	44	37	42
Don't know	*	*	1	1	1	-	-
Base - Total in each category	1015	1014	1015	1008	1004	1131	1027

* Less than 0.5%

**How concerned are you that you might be
poor at some point in your life? Are you very concerned,
somewhat concerned, not very concerned,
or not at all concerned that you will ever be poor?**

	Low Income		NOT Low Income
	2006		2006
	%		%
Very	53	s	22
Somewhat	<u>22</u>	s	<u>34</u>
Total Concerned	75	s	56
Not Very	9	s	33
Not at All	<u>16</u>	s	<u>12</u>
Total Not Concerned	25	s	45
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Base - Total in each category	126		901

s - Indicates statistically significant difference at the 95% level of confidence

**How concerned are you that you might be
poor at some point in your life? Are you very concerned,
somewhat concerned, not very concerned,
or not at all concerned that you will ever be poor?**

**2005 Results
(Shown for comparison)**

	Low Income		NOT Low Income
	2005		2005
	%		%
Very	68	s	22
Somewhat	<u>19</u>	s	<u>37</u>
Total Concerned	87	s	59
Not Very	9	s	28
Not at All	<u>4</u>	s	<u>13</u>
Total Not Concerned	13	s	41
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Base - Total in each category	179		952

s - Indicates statistically significant difference at the 95% level of confidence

- *The most significant cause of poverty continues to be the lack of jobs that pay a living wage.* Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents felt that lack of a living wage is the single most significant cause of poverty. Education received the second highest level of response, followed by a lack of initiative/laziness. Low-income respondents were more likely to choose the living wage as a cause (25% versus 16%) and less likely to indicate education (6% versus 16%). Low-income respondents were also more likely to cite outsourcing of jobs as a cause (14% versus 8%).

What is the single most significant cause of poverty?

	2005	2006
	%	%
Lack of work that pays a living wage	18	17
Lack of education	11	15
Lack of understanding of the importance of education	4	7
Poor education system	4	4
Lack of desire for education	3	3
Lack of access to education	*	1
Other education	1	*
Lack of initiative/laziness	12	12
Welfare/assistance is too easy to get	11	9
Outsourcing of jobs to other countries	9	8
Cost of living	8	8
Unfair distribution of wealth	7	7
Lack of job skills	6	5
Lack of opportunity	4	4
Poor decision-making/bad luck	2	4
Drugs/alcohol abuse	2	2
Unjust laws or social policies	2	2
Racial/ethnic discrimination	1	2
Cost of healthcare/lack of insurance	3	1
Physical or mental disabilities	1	1
Health/medical problems	*	1
Other causes	3	3
Base - Total respondents	1131	1027

* Less than 0.5%

- *The federal government and “everyone” are seen as having the primary responsibility to address poverty.* When asked whose responsibility it is to respond to the needs of poor people or to address issues with regard to poverty, 32% of all respondents felt that it was the responsibility of “everyone/general public.” The “federal government” was cited by 28%. These two responses were the top two in last year’s Poverty Pulse, but in reverse order, with the federal government having a small lead. The “poor themselves” were thought to be responsible by 18% of respondents.

Who has the greatest responsibility to respond to the needs of poor people in the U.S. and to address other issues related to poverty?

	2005	2006
	%	%
Everyone/general public	29	32
The federal government	31	28
The poor themselves	17	18
Local and state governments	10	13
Corporations/businesses	3	2
Churches	2	3
Charitable organizations other than churches	1	1
No one/there is nothing you can do about it	4	2
Other	1	1
Base - Total respondents	1131	1027

- ***Better education for children and paying a living wage to low-income workers are seen as the best ways to break the cycle of poverty.*** When asked, “What is the single best way to *permanently* break the cycle of poverty in the United States?” better education for children was selected (from the list provided to respondents) by 25%, followed by paying a living wage at 24%. These two were cited as the top two ways last year as well. The differences between the two years for these two comments, although not great, are statistically significant).

What is the single best way to *permanently* break the cycle of poverty in the United States?

	2005 %		2006 %
Better education for children	20	s	25
Pay living wages to low-income workers	28	s	24
A better economy	14		11
Development of leadership skills among low-income people	10		10
More opportunities for education for adults	7		8
Change laws	6		6
Increasing access to affordable housing	3		2
More government aid	2		2
Participation in community-based organizations	1		2
More private aid/charitable contributions	*		1
Other ways	8		10
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Base - Total respondents	1131		1027
* Less than 0.5%			

- *The American public continues to be pessimistic about poverty, believing that the number of people living in poverty will grow, but the level is lower than in the previous year.* Sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents felt that there are more people living in poverty today than a year ago and about the same amount (60%) felt that there will be more people in poverty a year from now. However, in last year's survey the numbers were a bit higher – 71% felt that there were more people in poverty, and 65% felt that there would be more. Katrina coverage may have contributed to this higher level of response in 2005 or there could be a bit more optimism based on the economy and political situation.

Do you feel there are more or fewer people living in poverty today than there were a year ago?

	Total	
	2005	2006
	%	%
More people living in poverty	71	s 62
Fewer people living in poverty	7	s 9
About the same number living in poverty	21	s 30
Base - Total respondents	1131	1027

Do you feel there will be more or fewer people living in poverty next year than there are today?

	Total	
	2005	2006
	%	%
More people living in poverty	65	s 60
Fewer people living in poverty	9	s 7
About the same number living in poverty	27	s 34
Base - Total respondents	1131	1027

- *Perceptions with regard to the income level needed to cover basic needs continue to be much higher than actual poverty levels.* Respondents were asked, “How much annual income would you say a family of four living in the United States needs to cover their basic needs?” The median level cited is \$40,000. As a point of comparison, the federal poverty income threshold for a family of four currently is \$19,971. [NOTE: The **Cumulative** column presents a sum of the percents for all income levels up to that line. For example, the 21% for the “\$51-\$60,000” line includes the 7%, 7% and 8% for “Over \$75,000,” “\$61-\$75,000,” and “\$51-\$60,000.” The discrepancy (21% versus 7+7+8 = 22%) is due to rounding.]

How much annual income would you say a family of four living in the United States needs to cover their basic needs?

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Cumulative
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Over \$75,000	4	6	13	7	7	7
\$61-\$75,000	3	4	5	7	7	14
\$51-\$60,000	5	7	5	8	8	21
\$46-\$50,000	9	13	17	15	15	36
\$41-\$45,000	3	3	4	4	5	41
\$36-\$40,000	14	12	14	16	13	54
\$31-\$35,000	9	7	8	10	8	62
\$26-\$30,000	14	16	13	13	15	77
\$21-\$25,000	11	9	5	10	11	88
\$16-\$20,000	6	6	5	4	6	95
\$15,000 or less	4	5	3	5	5	100
Don't know	17	14	9	-	-	-
Median	\$ 35,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	
Base - Total respondents	1015	1008	1004	1131	1027	1027

- *About half of all adults believe that the poverty line is higher than it actually is.* From a list provided, respondents were asked to choose the annual income for a family of four to be considered living in poverty. Fifty two percent (52%) chose income levels higher than the actual of \$19,971. A third (32% and the highest single response level) selected the correct income level.

**Thinking about a family of four,
which of the following would you say is currently the poverty line?**

	2006
	%
\$12,622	15
\$19,971	32
\$26,434	27
\$32,783	12
\$37,856	13
Base - Total respondents	1027

- *Most people believe an hourly wage of more than \$7.50 is needed to earn a living wage.* Eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents selected options higher than \$7.50 when asked what hourly wage was needed to ensure that someone earns a living wage. Seventeen percent (17%) chose “more than \$12.50 an hour.”

**What hourly wage do you feel is necessary to ensure
that someone earns a 'living wage'?**

	2006
	%
\$5.00 or less an hour	1
\$5.01 to \$6.50 an hour	4
\$6.51 to \$7.50 an hour	13
\$7.51 to \$10.00 an hour	36
\$10.01 to \$12.50 an hour	28
More than \$12.50 an hour	17
Base - Total respondents	1027

- **Most Americans are aware of the current federal minimum wage.** Respondents were asked to select the current federal minimum wage from a list. Almost three-quarters (72%) selected “\$5.01 to \$6.50 an hour.” The federal minimum wage is \$5.15 an hour. About a quarter (24%) believed it is more than \$6.50 an hour.

Do you know what the current federal minimum hourly wage is?

	2006
	%
\$5.00 or less an hour	4
\$5.01 to \$6.50 an hour	72
\$6.51 to \$7.50 an hour	20
\$7.51 to \$10.00 an hour	3
\$10.01 to \$12.50 an hour	1
More than \$12.50 an hour	*
Base - Total respondents	1027

* Less than 0.5%

- **Fewer than a third of the general public is aware that children under the age of 18 are more likely to live in poverty than other demographic groups.** Thirty percent (30%) of respondents selected “children under the age of 18,” while 33% chose “older people over 65 years of age.” The actual poverty rate for seniors (over 65) is 9.8%, while 17.8% of children live in poverty.

Which of the following demographic groups would you say is most likely to be living in poverty?

	2006
	%
Older people over 65 years old	33
Children under the age of 18	30
Women between 18 and 34 years old	29
Men between 35 and 54 years old	8
Base - Total respondents	1027

- *The general public sees African Americans as being more likely to live in poverty.*
The survey asked which ethnic or racial groups has the highest percent living in poverty. More than half of all respondents (54%) indicated that African Americans have the highest percent living in poverty. Latinos were cited by 17%, Native Americans by 16%. Asian Americans received the lowest response (less than 0.5%).

**Of the following ethnic or racial groups,
which would you say has the highest percent living in poverty?**

	2006 %
African American/Black	54
Latino/Hispanic	17
Native American	16
White/Caucasian	13
Asian/Pacific Islander	*
Base - Total respondents	
	1027

* Less than 0.5%

- *Most Americans have some idea of where poverty is a greater problem.*
Respondents were asked which state has the highest percentage of people living in poverty. Many southern states were cited among the top ten with Mississippi (which has the highest poverty rate according to the U.S. Census Bureau) chosen by one in five respondents (21%). But respondents missed some prominent states. Oklahoma (ranked #10) and South Carolina (#11) were cited by fewer than 0.5% in response to the question in the survey. California and New York were in the top ten in the survey (their actual ranks in 2005 were #21 and #19, respectively), perhaps because respondents were thinking of states with higher populations in general. The actual ranking by the 2005 poverty rate for states with at least 0.5% mention in this survey is presented in the table below for reference. (A table showing the ranking for all states is presented in the Appendix.)

**Which state in this country would you say
has the highest percentage of people living in poverty?**

	2006	Actual
	%	Rank*
Mississippi	21	1
California	12	21
Louisiana	12	2
Alabama	10	8
New York	10	19
Arkansas	5	7
District of Columbia	3	3
Texas	3	6
West Virginia	3	5
Florida	2	25
New Mexico	2	4
Pennsylvania	2	30
Alaska	1	34
Georgia	1	14
Idaho	1	18
Illinois	1	29
Indiana	1	28
Kentucky	1	9
Maryland	1	50
Michigan	1	23
New Jersey	1	48
North Carolina	1	13
Ohio	1	24
Tennessee	1	12
Virginia	1	44
Wisconsin	1	43

Base - Total respondents 1027

* Source - U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey

The following states did not receive any mentions - Colorado, New Hampshire, Montana, Vermont, Nevada, and Wyoming. All others were cited by fewer than 0.5% of respondents.

- *More than half of all Americans believe that health care services are not readily available to the poor and uninsured.* When asked how often the poor and uninsured can get health care services when they need them (other than in emergencies) 50% said “rarely” and 7% said “never.” Only 10% felt that the uninsured have access to health care services “all of the time.” There was no change in the responses from the previous year.

**When those who are poor and uninsured need health care services
- other than in emergencies - how often do you think they can get them?**

	2005	2006
	%	%
All of the time	9	10
Some of the time	35	33
Rarely	50	50
Never	5	7
Base - Total respondents		
	1131	1027

- *The general public is very much in favor of health coverage for all children, including those living in poverty.* When asked if health care should be guaranteed to all children, 92% of respondents agreed that it should be. The responses to this question have remained consistent across the three years that it has been asked.

In this country we guarantee all children, including those living in poverty, a quality education. Do you think the same should be true for health care and that all children, including those living in poverty, should have health care?

	2004	2005	2006
	%	%	%
Yes	96	91	92
No	3	9	8
Don't know	1	-	-
No answer	*	-	-
Base - Total respondents			
	1004	1131	1027

* Less than 0.5

- *Most people also believe that the federal government should be responsible for ensuring that low-income people have health coverage.* Nine in ten (89%) believe that it is important for the federal government to make sure that all low-income persons have health coverage.

How important do you think it is for the federal government to make sure that all low-income persons have health coverage?

	2004	2005	2006
	%	%	%
Very important	73	64	58
Somewhat important	<u>18</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>31</u>
Total Important	91	90	89
Not very important	5	5	6
Not at all important	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
Total Not Important	8	10	11
Don't know	*	-	-
Base - Total respondents	1004	1131	1027

* Less than 0.5

- *Helping the poor is a lower priority for Americans than health care, education, and national defense.* Respondents were asked, “What do you feel should be the federal government’s highest priority in terms of spending? Where should Congress spend your tax dollars?” Only one answer was accepted from respondents. “Helping the needy/poor” was cited by 4%, with “health care” cited by 21%, “education” by 22%, and “national defense” by 15%.

What do you feel should be the federal government's highest priority in terms of spending? Where should Congress spend your tax dollars?

	2006
	%
ANY MEDICAL/HEALTH (NET)	26
Healthcare	21
Health insurance	1
Affordable healthcare	1
Healthcare for the elderly	*
Lowering drug cost	*
Other medical/health mentions	2
ANY SECURITY/DEFENSE (NET)	18
National defense	15
Fighting terrorism	1
War	1
Crime prevention	*
Other security/defense mentions	1
ANY SOCIAL PROGRAMS (NET)	8
Helping the needy/poor people	4
Social Security	1
Social programs	1
Welfare	*
Fight against drugs/alcohol	*
Seniors/elders	*
Other social program mentions	2
ANY ECONOMY (NET)	8
Economy	2
Lower taxes	1
Improving cost of living	1
Reducing debt	2
Creating more jobs	1
Stop outsourcing	*
Other economy mentions	1
Education	22
Spend on the nation/not on foreign countries	5
Housing/affordable housing	1
Improve infrastructure	1
Giving the money back to the tax-payers	1
Immigration control	3
Cut the pork barrel expenses	*
Job training	*
To improve the quality of life	*
Environment	1
Court system	*
Research and development	*
Finding fuel/alternate fuel	1
Get the military out of Iraq	1
Other mentions	4
None/Nothing	1
Don't know	4
Refuse/decline to answer	1
Base - Total respondents	1027
* Less than 0.5%	

- *Most respondents do not believe that changes in the political landscape as a result of the last election will have any impact on poverty.* About half (53%) believe that poverty will stay the same in the next several years even with a change in Congress.

With the Democrats taking control of Congress in the most recent election, do you feel that poverty in the U.S. will increase, decrease or stay about the same over the next several years?

	2006
	%
Increase	20
Decrease	27
Stay about the same	53
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Base - Total respondents	1027

- *Americans believe that more poverty will hurt the national security of the U.S.* They also believe that they, themselves, would be affected if more people lived in poverty. Respondents were asked their level of agreement with the following statements about poverty:
 - An increase in poverty will hurt our national security.
 - If there are more people living in poverty in the U.S. it will probably not affect me very much.

Sixty-two percent (62%) agreed that more poverty would hurt our national security. About the same number (64%) disagreed with the statement that more people living in poverty “will probably not affect me very much.”

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

An increase in poverty will hurt our national security.

	2006
	%
Strongly agree (1)	24
Agree (2)	<u>38</u>
Total Agree	62
Neither agree nor disagree (3)	24
Disagree (4)	12
Strongly disagree (5)	<u>2</u>
Total Disagree	14
Mean rating	2.29
<hr/>	
Base - Total respondents	1027

**If there are more people living in poverty in the U.S.
it will probably not affect me very much.**

	2006
	%
Strongly agree (1)	2
Agree (2)	<u>11</u>
Total Agree	13
Neither agree nor disagree (3)	22
Disagree (4)	41
Strongly disagree (5)	<u>23</u>
Total Disagree	64
Mean rating	3.72
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Base - Total respondents	1027

Appendix

Additional Table Questionnaire

Poverty Rates by State

Source – U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey

	2005 Poverty Rate
1. Mississippi	21.3
2. Louisiana	19.8
3. District of Columbia	19.0
4. New Mexico	18.5
5. West Virginia	18.0
6. Texas	17.6
7. Arkansas	17.2
8. Alabama	17.0
9. Kentucky	16.8
10. Oklahoma	16.5
11. South Carolina	15.6
12. Tennessee	15.5
13. North Carolina	15.1
14. Georgia	14.4
15. Montana	14.4
16. Arizona	14.2
17. Oregon	14.1
18. Idaho	13.9
19. New York	13.8
20. South Dakota	13.6
21. California	13.3
22. Missouri	13.3
23. Michigan	13.2
24. Ohio	13.0
25. Florida	12.8
26. Maine	12.6
27. Rhode Island	12.3
28. Indiana	12.2
29. Illinois	12.0
30. Pennsylvania	11.9
31. Washington	11.9
32. Kansas	11.7
33. Vermont	11.5
34. Alaska	11.2
35. North Dakota	11.2
36. Colorado	11.1
37. Nevada	11.1
38. Iowa	10.9
39. Nebraska	10.9
40. Delaware	10.4

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Poverty Rates by State

Source - U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey

	2005 Poverty Rate
41. Massachusetts	10.3
42. Utah	10.2
43. Wisconsin	10.2
44. Virginia	10.0
45. Hawaii	9.8
46. Wyoming	9.5
47. Minnesota	9.2
48. New Jersey	8.7
49. Connecticut	8.3
50. Maryland	8.2
51. New Hampshire	7.5

Source - U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey

2006 POVERTY PULSE

Questionnaire

1. What do you feel is the single biggest social problem facing the U.S. today? PLEASE LIST JUST ONE PROBLEM. (OPEN ENDED - TOP OF MIND. RESPONSE CATEGORIES WILL NOT BE PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS.)

2. What other social issues or problems in the U.S. are you concerned about? (OPEN ENDED - TOTAL UNAIDED, WHEN COMBINED WITH QUESTION 1. RESPONSE CATEGORIES WILL NOT BE PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS.)

3. How concerned would you say that you are about each of the following? Would you say that you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned with this problem? Think just in terms of the problem here in the United States.

	Very	Somewhat	Not Very	Not at All
Poverty	[]	[]	[]	[]
Health care	[]	[]	[]	[]
Access to Education	[]	[]	[]	[]
Affordable Housing	[]	[]	[]	[]

4. What is the single most significant cause of poverty? ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE - CLOSED ENDED (LIST WILL BE PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS)

- Unjust laws or social policies
- Lack of work that pays a living wage
- Lack of education -- CLARIFY:

- Lack of access to education
- Lack of understanding of the importance of education
- Lack of desire for education
- Poor education system

- Lack of opportunity
- Lack of initiative/laziness
- Outsourcing of jobs to other countries
- Welfare/assistance is too easy to get
- Cost of living
- Cost of healthcare/lack of insurance

- Poor decision-making/bad luck
- Drugs/alcohol abuse
- Unfair distribution of wealth
- Physical or mental disabilities
- Health/medical problems
- Racial/ethnic discrimination
- Lack of job skills

Other causes SPECIFY _____

5. How concerned are you that you might be poor at some point in your life?

- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Not very concerned
- Not at all concerned

6. Who has the greatest responsibility to respond to the needs of poor people in the U.S. and to address other issues related to poverty? (CLOSED-ENDED - RESPONSES WILL BE SHOWN TO RESPONDENTS) ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE

- The poor themselves
- The Federal government
- Local and state governments
- Churches
- Charitable organizations other than churches
- Everyone/general public
- Corporations/businesses
- No one/there is nothing you can do about it
- Other _____

7. What is the single best way to *permanently* break the cycle of poverty in the United States? (CLOSED-ENDED - RESPONSES WILL BE SHOWN TO RESPONDENTS)
ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE

- Better education for children
- More opportunities for education for adults
- More government aid
- More private aid/charitable contributions
- Change laws
- A better economy
- Increasing access to affordable housing
- Development of leadership skills among low-income people
- Participation in community-based organizations
- Pay living wages to low-income workers
- Other ways _____

8. Do you feel there are more or fewer people living in poverty today than there were a year ago?

- More people living in poverty
- Fewer people living in poverty
- About the same number living in poverty

9. Do you feel there will be more or fewer people living in poverty next year than there are today?

- More people living in poverty
- Fewer people living in poverty
- About the same number living in poverty

10. How much annual income would you say a family of four living in the United States needs to cover their basic needs? RECORD AMOUNT IN THOUSANDS

11. The Federal government sets guidelines on the annual income levels for families to be considered living in poverty. This is sometimes referred to as the **poverty line**. Families who earn less than this amount are considered to be living in poverty. Thinking about a family of four, which of the following would you say is currently the poverty line?

- \$12,622
- \$19,971
- \$26,434
- \$32,783
- \$37,856

12. Which of the following demographic groups would you say is most likely to be living in poverty? [THESE CHOICES WILL BE ROTATED.]

- Children under the age of 18
- Women between 18 and 34 years old
- Older people - over 65 years old
- Men between 35 and 54 years old

13. Of the following ethnic or racial groups which would you say has the highest percent living in poverty? [THESE CHOICES WILL BE ROTATED.]

- White/Caucasian
- African American/Black
- Latino/Hispanic
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Native American

14. Which state in this country would you say has the highest percentage of people living in poverty?

_____ [PROVIDE A LIST OF ALL STATES]

15. There has been some talk in recent years about a “living wage.” What hourly wage do you feel is necessary to ensure that someone earns a “living wage”? If you don’t know, please provide your best guess.

- \$5.00 or less an hour
- \$5.01 to \$6.50 an hour
- \$6.51 to \$7.50 an hour
- \$7.51 to \$10.00 an hour
- \$10.01 to \$12.50 an hour
- More than \$12.50 an hour

16. Do you know what the current Federal minimum hourly wage is? If you don't know, please provide your best guess.

- \$5.00 or less an hour
- \$5.01 to \$6.50 an hour
- \$6.51 to \$7.50 an hour
- \$7.51 to \$10.00 an hour
- \$10.01 to \$12.50 an hour
- More than \$12.50 an hour

17. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

SCALE TO BE PROVIDED FOR EACH.

- a. An increase in poverty will hurt our national security.
- b. If there are more people living in poverty in the U.S. it will probably not affect me very much.

18. With the Democrats taking control of Congress in the most recent election, do you feel that poverty in the U.S. will increase, decrease or stay about the same over the next several years?

- increase
- decrease
- stay about the same

19. When those who are poor and uninsured need health care services - other than in emergencies - how often do you think they can get them?

- all of the time
- some of the time
- rarely
- never

20. In this country, we guarantee all children, including those living in poverty, a quality education. Do you think the same should be true for health care and that all children, including those living in poverty, should have health care?

- Yes
- No

21. How important do you think it is for the federal government to make sure all low-income persons have health care coverage? Would you say that it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important for the federal government to make sure all low-income persons have health care coverage?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

22. We have just a few more questions. What do you feel should be the federal government's single highest priority in terms of spending? Where should Congress spend your tax dollars? PLEASE LIST JUST ONE PRIORITY.

23. What is your political affiliation? What party do you most identify with?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent/none/no party affiliation
- Other _____

24. Which religious denomination do you identify with?

- Catholic
- Protestant (Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, etc.)
- Mormon/LDS/Latter Day Saints
- Jewish
- Muslim/Islam
- Buddhist
- None
- Other _____