



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 20, 2013

## Americans Fear Government, Poll Shows

A recent Gallup poll [reveals](#) that the American people have very little faith in their federal government. The poll shows that 72 percent of the American people view the federal government as a bigger threat to the future of the country than big business or big labor, the highest percentage ever to respond in the affirmative in the 50-year history of the question.



The Gallup website reports, “Gallup has documented a steady increase in concern about big government since 2009, rising from 55 percent in March 2009 to 64 percent in November 2011 and 72 percent today. This suggests that government policies specific to the period, such as the Affordable Care Act — perhaps coupled with recent revelations of government spying tactics by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden — may be factors.”

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Some Americans have always viewed big government as the greatest threat when that question was posed to them, but the degree to which they view government as a threat has fluctuated a lot during the last few decades.

In 2002, for example, Gallup notes that Americans were less likely to choose government as the biggest threat “given the rally in support for government institutions and officials after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.”

Under Obama’s leadership, an average of 64 percent of Americans have viewed the government as the greatest threat, while 56 percent shared that sentiment under President George W. Bush’s administration. During President Clinton’s administration, 64 percent of Americans also declared big government to be the greatest threat.

While Republicans rank big government as a higher threat when Democrats are in office, and Democrats do the same with a Republican in office, each party currently rates big government as the greatest threat.

A record high 92 percent of Republicans named big government as the biggest threat, as well as 56 percent of Democrats and 71 percent of Independents.

The poll results reflect strongly on the current administration. Gallup’s analysis states:

Americans have consistently viewed big government as a greater threat to the United States than either big business or big labor, but never more than they do now. That may be partly a reaction to an administration that favors the use of government to solve problems. Also, the revelation of



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widespread government monitoring of U.S. Internet activity may be a factor in raising Americans' concern about the government.

The federal government has grown so dramatically, particularly in recent years, that Americans even ranked big government as a greater threat than terror in April of this year, indicating in two separate polls that they were more concerned about government overreach in response to terror than the terror itself.

An April 16 poll [conducted](#) by Fox News asked Americans whether they would be willing to give up some personal freedom in efforts to reduce the threat of terrorism. Of those polled, 45 percent responded that they would not, with 43 percent answering in the affirmative.

A similar poll [conducted](#) by the *Washington Post* just one day later revealed comparable results.

"Which worries you more," the *Post* asked, "that the government will not go far enough to investigate terrorism because of concerns about constitutional rights, or that it will go too far in compromising constitutional rights in order to investigate terrorism?"

The poll found 48 percent of respondents worry the government will go too far, compared to 41 percent who worry it won't go far enough.

As observed in both polls, the concerns shared by those surveyed are rather new developments, reflecting greater fear of the federal government than in prior years when similar questions were asked.

Given Gallup's recent finding, it is clear that this development continues to grow, with the American people less secure under the protection of big government and increasingly concerned about its vast growth.



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