



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 21, 2011

Gallup Poll: Government Threat Growing in Minds of Americans

Not surprising for many conservative Americans, the only time the fear of government was at a higher peak was in 1999 to 2000, at the tail end of the Bill Clinton years, when a whopping 65 percent of Americans thought government would be the biggest future threat.

Back in 1965 Gallup began asking Americans: “In your opinion, which of the following will be the biggest threat to the country in the future — big business, big labor, or big government?” And throughout the past 45 years, Americans have always expressed more concern over government than they did for business or organized labor. “Concerns about big business surged to a high of 38% in 2002, after the large-scale accounting scandals at Enron and WorldCom,” recalled Elizabeth Mendes, deputy managing editor at Gallup. She noted that concerns over big labor “have declined significantly over the years, from a high of 29% in 1965 to the 8% to 11% range over the past decade and a half.”



But neither of those highs comes close to the nearly consistent concern over big government, which hit its low of 35 percent in the years between 1965 and 1970, and steadily rose to its high of 65 percent between 1999 and 2000, before plummeting to 47 percent as the U.S. faced the fears of terrorism in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

“Americans’ concerns about the threat of big government are near record-high levels,” noted Mendes. While the “Occupy Wall Street” movement has garnered a great deal of media attention and fomented copy-cat movements across the nation, “the majority of Americans do not view big business as the greatest threat to the country.... In fact, Americans’ concerns about big business have declined significantly since 2009.”

In fact, the concern over runaway government seems to have infected even government-loving Democrats. While only 32 percent of Democrats thought government was the biggest threat in 2009, the second year of the Obama presidency, that number had jumped 16 points to 48 percent as of December 2011. In fact, at 44 percent, that concern over government was actually four points higher than the Democrats’ concern over their traditional bogey-man, big business (48 percent).

But the Democrats’ distrust of government could not match that expressed by Republicans at 82



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percent, and even Independents, 64 percent of whom called government the biggest threat facing America.

Not surprisingly, President Obama appears to be out of sync with the concerns expressed by Americans. During a December 6 address in Osawatomie, Kansas, reported [CNSNews.com](#), the President argued that the 2008 economic meltdown had brought a loss of trust by the American people for big business. “Remember that in those same years, thanks to some of the same folks who are now running Congress, we had weak regulation, we had little oversight, and what did it get us?” asked Obama. “Insurance companies that jacked up people’s premiums with impunity and denied care to patients who were sick, mortgage lenders that tricked families into buying homes they couldn’t afford, a financial sector where irresponsibility and lack of basic oversight nearly destroyed our entire economy.”

Ignoring government’s culpability in the nation’s ever-worsening economic crisis, the President made a pitch for increased government regulation. “We simply cannot return to this brand of ‘you’re on your own’ economics if we’re serious about rebuilding the middle class in this country,” declared Obama. “We know that it doesn’t result in a strong economy. It results in an economy that invests too little in its people and in its future. We know it doesn’t result in a prosperity that trickles down. It results in a prosperity that’s enjoyed by fewer and fewer of our citizens.”

In short, the President’s address in the nation’s heartland was a classic demonstration of why there is a dramatically increasing fear of government among all Americans. Insisting that the government-imposed penalties for violations of government-imposed regulations is too low, Obama promised that he’d be “be calling for legislation that makes those penalties count so that firms don’t see punishment for breaking the law as just the price of doing business. The fact is,” declared the big-government President, “this crisis has left a huge deficit of trust between Main Street and Wall Street.”



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