

Table 2.2

Attitudes toward important issues for the government to address

United States, 1993-2004

Question: "What do you think are the two most important issues for the government to address?"

Issue	January 1993	February 1994	February 1995	April 1996	May 1997	January 1998	February 1999	August 2000	February 2001	April 2002	February 2003	February 2004
The economy (non-specific)	26%	12%	7%	14%	8%	9%	7%	5%	12%	15%	37%	31%
Health care (not Medicare)	31	45	25	16	10	11	12	15	10	8	8	16
Employment/jobs	19	14	10	9	5	3	4	4	2	4	5	16
The war ^a	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	8	38	13
Education	10	6	10	14	15	14	21	25	30	12	5	11
Homeland/domestic security/public safety ^a	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	4	6	8
Foreign policy (non-specific)	6	4	2	3	3	5	4	3	4	4	2	6
Iraq/Saddam Hussein	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	15	6
Federal surplus/deficit/budget	19	8	22	22	20	12	5	4	4	2	3	5
Taxes	7	6	12	11	14	16	12	13	23	8	4	5
Defense/military	X	2	1	1	2	2	2	4	5	2	2	5
Terrorism ^a	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	23	16	4
Domestic/social issues (non-specific)	10	4	4	4	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	4
National security ^a	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	4	6	4
Environment	3	1	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	4
Drugs	3	6	3	4	8	6	2	5	4	2	2	3
Abortion	9	3	3	4	2	2	2	6	4	1	1	3
Crime/violence	3	36	21	16	19	13	8	10	5	5	(b)	3
Family values (decline of)	(b)	(b)	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	(b)	2
Medicare ^c	X	X	X	3	4	5	5	6	4	3	2	2
Welfare	2	7	16	13	14	8	4	2	1	2	1	2
Social Security ^c	X	X	X	X	6	6	24	16	12	5	1	2
(Programs for) the poor/poverty	7	8	10	2	3	2	2	3	1	2	1	2
Homelessness ^d	X	X	X	3	4	4	3	3	3	2	1	1
Peace/world peace/nuclear arms	2	1	1	3	1	3	3	1	1	3	3	1
Immigration	(b)	(b)	2	2	2	1	(b)	1	1	1	(b)	1
Programs for the elderly (not Medicare/Social Security)	3	2	5	6	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
Gun control	(b)	3	2	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	(b)	1
Human/civil/women's rights	X	1	1	2	2	1	(b)	1	1	1	(b)	(b)

Note: The issues mentioned are spontaneous, unprompted replies by the respondents. The numbers indicate the percent of respondents who mentioned the item as one of the top two issues for the government to address. Some issues mentioned by a relatively small percentage of respondents have been omitted. Sample sizes vary from year to year; the data for 2004 are based on telephone interviews with a randomly selected national sample of 1,020 adults, 18 years of age and older, conducted Feb. 9-16, 2004. For a discussion of public opinion survey sampling procedures, see [Appendix 5](#).

^aPreviously coded as "other."

^bLess than 0.5%.

^cPreviously coded under "programs for the elderly."

^dPreviously coded under "programs for the poor."

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