



THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
For The People & The Press

DECEMBER 20, 2012

## Most Say Assault Weapons Make Nation More Dangerous

---

# After Newtown, Modest Change in Opinion about Gun Control

---

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Andrew Kohut**

President, Pew Research Center

**Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock**

Associate Directors

**Scott Keeter**

Director of Survey Research

1615 L St, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Tel (202) 419-4350  
Fax (202) 419-4399  
[www.people-press.org](http://www.people-press.org)

---

## Most Say Assault Weapons Make Nation More Dangerous After Newtown, Modest Change in Opinion about Gun Control

The public's attitudes toward gun control have shown only modest change in the wake of last week's deadly shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. Currently, 49% say it is more important to control gun ownership, while 42% say it is more important to protect the right of Americans to own guns.

This marks the first time since Barack Obama took office that more Americans prioritize gun control than the right to own guns. Opinion was evenly divided in July, following a shooting at a Colorado movie theater. At that time, 47% said it was more important to control gun ownership, while 46% said it was more important to protect gun rights.

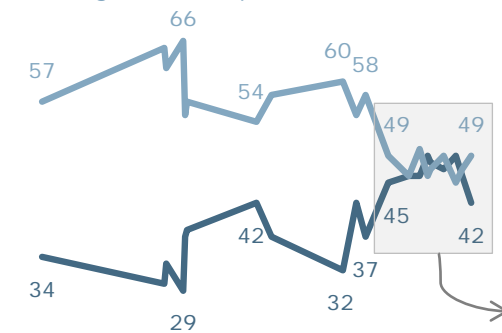
However, support for gun control remains lower than before Obama took office. In April 2008, 58% said it was more important to control gun ownership; just 37% prioritized protecting gun rights.

As in the past, there are wide partisan and demographic differences in opinions about gun control. Majorities of men, whites and Republicans say it is more important to protect gun rights. By contrast, most women, blacks, Democrats and those in the Northeast prioritize controlling gun ownership. In other regions, opinion is divided.

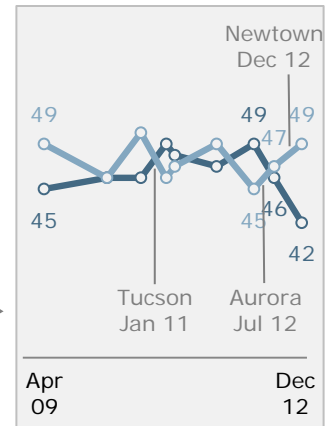
### Views of Gun Control: 1993-2012

More important to...

Control gun ownership



Protect the right of Americans to own guns



1993 2000 2003 2007 2009 2012

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012.

There are deeply held opinions on both sides when it comes to the choice between controlling gun ownership and protecting gun rights: 42% strongly believe it is more important to control gun ownership, while 37% strongly feel it is more important to protect the right of Americans to own guns.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Dec. 17-19 among 1,219 adults, finds a higher percentage saying that gun ownership in this country does more to protect people from crime (48%) than to put their safety at risk (37%).

However, about two-thirds (65%) think that allowing citizens to own assault weapons makes the country more dangerous. Just 21% say that permitting these types of weapons makes the country safer.

There is widespread public opposition to a ban on handguns: Two-thirds (67%) oppose banning the possession of handguns, except by law enforcement officers. Far more favor banning bullets designed to explode or penetrate bullet-proof vests (56%) and high capacity ammunition clips (53%). Opinion is divided over whether to ban semi-automatic guns – 44% favor such a ban, while 49% are opposed.

Americans also remain split over the broader significance of shootings like the one in Connecticut: 47% say they are just are the isolated acts of troubled individuals, while 44% say they reflect broader problems in society. That is little changed from a survey conducted last weekend, but far more say that such shootings reflect broader societal problems than did so after shootings in Colorado this summer and in Tucson, Ariz. in Jan. 2011. (For more, see [“Public Divided over What Newtown Signifies,” Dec. 17, 2012.](#))

When those who point to broader problems are asked to describe, in their own words, what the tragedy reflects in society, 46% cite the nation’s social climate, such as the breakdown of families and parental failures, while 30% cite issues relating to mental health or mental illness. About one-in-five (22%) mention guns or gun policy, which is similar to reactions after the 2011 Tucson shooting and the shooting at Virginia Tech University in 2007.

---

### Most Feel Strongly about Gun Issue

	Dec 17-19
<i>What is more important?</i>	%
<b>Control gun ownership</b>	<b>49</b>
<i>Strongly</i>	42
<i>Not strongly</i>	6
<i>Don't know</i>	2
<b>Protect gun rights</b>	<b>42</b>
<i>Strongly</i>	37
<i>Not strongly</i>	4
<i>Don't know</i>	*
Don't know	9
	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012. Q3/Q3a. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

---

A concurrent study of the conversation about Newtown on Twitter and blogs conducted by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism finds far more discussion of gun policy following this event than after the Tucson shooting. In the social media conversation, calls for stricter gun control measures exceed defenses of current gun laws by more than two-to-one. (For more, see ["In Social Media and Opinion Pages, Newtown Sparks Calls for Gun Reform."](#) Dec. 20, 2012.)

## No Partisan Advantage

The survey on attitudes toward gun control finds that neither party has an advantage on the issue. About as many say the Republican Party (27%) as the Democratic Party (28%) can do a better job of reflecting their views on gun control. A relatively high percentage (27%) volunteer that both parties can do about the same (13%) or that neither party can do better (14%). This is similar to 2004, when opinion also was divided.

Fewer Americans (36%) say the National Rifle Association (NRA) has too much influence over gun control laws than did so in 2000 (42%) and 1993 (45%). Nearly half (47%) says either that the organization has too little influence (19%) or the right amount of influence (28%).

---

### Neither Party Has Advantage on Gun Control

<i>Which party could do a better job of reflecting your views about gun control?</i>	Rep Party	Dem Party	Both/Neither (vol)	DK
	%	%	%	%
December 2012	27	28	27	18=100
July 2004	34	36	9	21=100
Late October 2002	36	38	10	16=100
April 2000	30	36	11	23=100
June 1999	34	42	12	12=100
December 1993	32	42	8	18=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012. Q11.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

---

### Fewer Say NRA Has "Too Much" Influence over Gun Control Laws

<i>NRA's influence over gun control laws...</i>	Dec 1993	April 2000	Dec 2012
	%	%	%
Too much	45	42	36
Too little	15	17	19
Right amount	27	28	28
Don't know	<u>13</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>17</u>
	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012. Q12.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

---

## Wide Partisan Gap over Gun Control

By a seven-point margin, the public currently says it is more important to control gun ownership (49%) than to protect the right of Americans to own guns (42%). There are substantial demographic and partisan differences over the issue, and most of the patterns of opinion on this question are little changed from past surveys.

Republicans and Democrats are on opposite sides of the issue: About seven-in-ten (69%) Republicans say protecting gun rights is more important, while about the same proportion of Democrats (72%) say gun control is more important. Independents are divided (47% gun rights, 42% gun control).

The gender gap also is stark: Women prioritize controlling ownership over gun rights by a 24-point margin, while men prioritize gun rights by a 10-point margin. Racial differences also are striking, as African-Americans overwhelmingly say gun control is more important than gun rights (68% to 24%), while opinion among whites tilts in favor of gun rights (51% to 42%).

Those with post-graduate degrees stand out from those with less education in their support for gun control, with 66% prioritizing gun control while just 26% say protecting gun rights is more important. Other educational groups are more evenly divided in their opinions.

## Gun Control Opinions Starkly Divided by Party, Gender, Race

*What is more important...*

	What is more important...		
	Protect right to own guns %	Control ownership %	DK %
Total	42	49	9=100
Men	51	41	8=100
Women	33	57	10=100
18-29	36	55	9=100
30-49	48	42	10=100
50-64	44	50	7=100
65+	34	54	13=100
White	51	42	8=100
Black	24	68	8=100
White men	62	32	6=100
White women	40	51	9=100
College grad+	35	55	9=100
Post-graduate	26	66	8=100
College grad	42	48	10=100
Some college	49	47	4=100
HS or less	42	47	12=100
Republican	69	27	4=100
Democrat	20	72	8=100
Independent	47	42	11=100
Parents	45	47	8=100
Non-parents	40	50	9=100
Urban	35	56	9=100
Suburban	43	47	9=100
Rural	52	39	9=100
Northeast	29	65	6=100
Midwest	45	45	10=100
South	48	44	8=100
West	40	48	11=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012. Q3. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic.

Young people (18-29 year olds) continue to support gun control over gun rights (55% vs. 36%), while those 30-64 are more divided on the question. Notably, older Americans (ages 65+) have shifted over the last several months; today they prioritize gun control over gun rights (54% vs. 34%), but were more divided earlier in the year.

Northeasters continue to stand out compared to other regions of the country, supporting gun control over gun rights by about a two-to-one margin (65% vs. 29%), while those in other regions are more evenly split on this question.

### More Say Gun Ownership Protects People from Crime

Overall, a slim plurality (48%) thinks gun ownership in this country does more to protect people from becoming victims of crime, while 37% say it does more to put people's safety at risk; 16% offer no opinion. Demographic and partisan divides on this question are similar to those seen on the more general question of gun rights versus gun control. Majorities of men, whites and Republicans say gun ownership does more to protect people from becoming victims of crime. By contrast, most Democrats and blacks say gun ownership does more to put people's safety at risk; women are divided (40% protect people from crime vs. 43% put people's safety at risk).

#### Does Gun Ownership Do More to ...

	Protect people from crime	Put people's safety at risk	DK
	%	%	%
Total	48	37	16=100
Male	55	30	15=100
Female	40	43	16=100
White	54	33	14=100
Black	29	53	17=100
Republican	63	21	16=100
Democrat	33	56	11=100
Independent	53	33	14=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012. Q7.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding

While a plurality sees gun ownership as doing more to protect people from crime, there are broad concerns over a specific type of gun: assault weapons. By about three-to-one, more say allowing citizens to own assault weapons makes the country more dangerous (65%) rather than safer (21%). Broad majorities of Democrats, blacks and women say assault weapons make the country more dangerous; most men and whites feel this way as well, though by a slimmer margins. Opinion is divided among Republicans (41% safer, 50% more dangerous).

Those who give priority either to protecting gun rights or controlling ownership on the more general question do not always offer one-sided responses to other gun questions. For example, among those who say it is more important to protect gun rights, as many say assault weapons make the country more dangerous (40%) as safer (41%).

---

### Allowing Citizens to Own Assault Weapons Makes Country ...

	Safer	More dangerous	DK
	%	%	%
Total	21	65	13=100
Male	28	58	14=100
Female	15	73	13=100
White	26	61	13=100
Black	10	83	7=100
Republican	41	50	10=100
Democrat	12	80	9=100
Independent	20	63	17=100
<i>More important to...</i>			
Protect gun rights	41	40	18=100
Control ownership	7	87	6=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012. Q8.  
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding

---

## Mixed Support for Gun Control Proposals

The public offers a mixed reaction to four specific gun control proposals tested in the survey. Majorities support banning bullets that explode or are designed to penetrate bullet-proof vests, and banning high-capacity ammunition clips. However, the public is divided over banning semi-automatic guns and a broad majority opposes banning handguns for non-uniformed civilians. Reflecting the public's mixed reaction to different types of measures, very few favor all four proposals (13%) or oppose them all (14%).

By a 56% to 36% margin, most favor banning bullets that explode or can penetrate bullet-proof vests. Partisan divides on this question are modest, with 62% of Democrats and 51% of Republicans in favor. Even among those who prioritize gun rights over controlling ownership, 47% favor this proposal, while 43% are opposed.

A majority also backs banning high-capacity ammunition clips that can hold more than 10 bullets (53% favor, 42% oppose).

A ban against semi-automatic guns receives less support: 44% favor this proposal, 49% oppose it. About two-thirds (68%) of those who prioritize gun rights would oppose such a ban, while 61% of those who prioritize gun control would favor it

### Views of Gun Control Proposals

	Favor %	Oppose %	DK %
<b>Ban bullets that explode or penetrate bullet-proof vests</b>	56	36	7=100
Republican	51	40	9=100
Democrat	62	33	5=100
Independent	59	34	7=100
<i>More important to...</i>			
Protect gun rights	47	43	10=100
Control ownership	65	30	4=100
<b>Ban high-capacity ammunition clips</b>	53	42	5=100
Republican	46	47	6=100
Democrat	62	35	2=100
Independent	52	43	5=100
<i>More important to...</i>			
Protect gun rights	39	57	4=100
Control ownership	65	30	5=100
<b>Ban semi-automatic guns</b>	44	49	7=100
Republican	38	55	8=100
Democrat	51	43	6=100
Independent	41	52	7=100
<i>More important to...</i>			
Protect gun rights	25	68	7=100
Control ownership	61	34	6=100
<b>Ban handguns, except for law enforcement</b>	28	67	5=100
Republican	14	83	3=100
Democrat	45	51	3=100
Independent	19	75	6=100
<i>More important to...</i>			
Protect gun rights	9	89	2=100
Control ownership	44	50	5=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012. Q9.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding



The least popular option of the four tested is banning the possession of handguns except by law enforcement officers: 67% oppose this measure, just 28% favor it. Even those who prioritize gun control over gun rights are divided on a handgun ban (44% favor, 50% oppose).

## Who Owns Guns?

About a third (35%) of Americans say that there are guns, rifles or pistols in their home. The proportion of the public reporting they own firearms has remained about the same for more than a decade.

More men (42%) than women (27%) report having guns in their household. And gun ownership is far more prevalent among whites than blacks; 42% of whites have guns in their homes, compared with just 16% of blacks.

Gun ownership is strongly correlated with both region and community type. Just 21% of Northeasterners say there is a gun in their home, compared with 38% of Midwesterners and 45% of Southerners. Half (50%) of those living in rural areas say they have a firearm in their home; that compares with 36% of those living in the suburbs and 26% of those in urban areas.

Gun ownership also differs by party, with nearly half of Republicans (49%)—and just a quarter (25%) of Democrats—reporting that there is a gun in their household.

## Far More Republicans than Democrats Have Guns in Home

*Do you happen to have any guns, rifles or pistols in your home?*

	Yes %	No %	DK %
Total	35	61	4=100
Men	42	52	6=100
Women	27	70	3=100
18-29	29	69	2=100
30-49	32	64	3=100
50-64	41	52	7=100
65+	37	58	5=100
White	42	52	5=100
Black	16	83	1=100
College grad+	30	66	5=100
Post-graduate	22	75	3=100
College grad	34	59	6=100
Some college	38	59	2=100
HS or less	36	59	5=100
Republican	49	46	5=100
Democrat	25	74	1=100
Independent	36	58	6=100
Northeast	21	77	2=100
Midwest	38	58	5=100
South	45	51	4=100
West	27	67	6=100
Parents	32	65	3=100
Non-parents	36	59	5=100
Urban	26	70	5=100
Suburban	36	60	4=100
Rural	50	44	5=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012. Q13.  
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic.

## Views of Those Who Own Guns and Those Who do Not

About two-thirds (65%) of gun owners say it is more important to protect gun rights than to control ownership (27%). The balance of opinion is reversed among those who do not have a gun in the household (64% control ownership, 26% protect gun rights).

Gun owners offer strong support for the idea that gun ownership in this country does more to protect people from becoming victims of crime (68%) rather than putting people's safety at risk (18%).

But half of those with a gun in the household (50%) say allowing citizens to own assault weapons makes the country more dangerous for citizens, fewer (34%) say this makes this country safer.

When it comes to politics, more gun owners say the Republican Party (37%) rather than the Democratic Party (22%) could do a better job reflecting their views about gun control. Those without a gun in the household favor the Democratic Party 34% to 21%.

And while 45% of non-gun owners say the National Rifle Association has too much influence over gun control laws in this country, only 25% of gun owners say this. A plurality of gun owners say the NRA has the right amount of influence (42%) over gun laws, while 20% say too little.

---

### Gun Owners vs. Non-Owners

	<i>Have any guns, rifles or pistols in home?</i>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>More important to...</i>	%	%
Protect gun rights	65	26
Control ownership	27	64
Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100
<i>Gun ownership does more to...</i>		
Protect people from being victims	68	35
Put people's safety at risk	18	49
Don't know	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>
	100	100
<i>Allowing citizens to own assault weapons</i>		
Makes country safer	34	13
Makes country more dangerous	50	77
Don't know	<u>17</u>	<u>10</u>
	100	100
<i>NRA's influence...</i>		
Too much	25	45
Too little	20	18
Right amount	42	19
Don't know	<u>13</u>	<u>19</u>
	100	100
<i>Party do better job reflecting your views on gun control?</i>		
Republican Party	37	21
Democratic Party	22	34
Both/Neither/DK	<u>41</u>	<u>46</u>
	100	100
<b>N</b>	456	700

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 17-19, 2012.  
 Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding

---

## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted December 17-19, 2012 among a national sample of 1,219 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (734 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 485 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 227 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1219	3.4 percentage points
Men	580	4.9 percentage points
Women	639	4.7 percentage points
White, non-Hispanic	925	3.9 percentage points
Black, non-Hispanic	114	11.0 percentage points
Northeast	208	8.2 percentage points
Midwest	290	6.9 percentage points
South	441	5.6 percentage points
West	280	7.0 percentage points
Republicans	291	6.9 percentage points
Democrats	377	6.1 percentage points
Independents	458	5.5 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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.

© Pew Research Center, 2012

## Attitudes About Gun Control

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Dec 17-19, 2012

Q.3 What do you think is more important—to protect the right of Americans to own guns, or to control gun ownership?

	April 2012		July 2012		December 2012		Dec N
	<u>Protect right to own guns</u>	<u>Control ownership</u>	<u>Protect right to own guns</u>	<u>Control ownership</u>	<u>Protect right to own guns</u>	<u>Control ownership</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	49	45	46	47	42	49	1219
Men	60	35	57	38	51	41	580
Women	39	54	37	56	33	57	639
18-29	43	53	37	55	36	55	176
30-49	51	43	51	45	48	42	282
50-64	51	43	45	50	44	50	370
65+	51	41	48	42	34	54	371
Men 18-49	59	38	53	41	53	38	246
Women 18-49	38	57	39	56	33	58	212
Men 50+	61	33	61	34	48	46	330
Women 50+	41	51	33	58	34	55	411
White, non-Hispanic	57	37	56	38	51	42	925
Black, non-Hispanic	35	60	23	73	24	68	114
White men	68	27	67	27	62	32	441
White women	47	47	37	56	40	51	484
College grad+	40	53	43	50	35	55	482
Some college	59	37	51	43	49	47	330
HS or less	49	44	45	48	42	47	397
Republican	72	23	71	26	69	27	291
Democrat	27	67	21	72	20	72	377
Independent	55	40	50	43	47	42	458
Conservative Rep	76	18	--	--	72	24	205
Mod/Lib Rep	62	35	--	--	--	--	80
Cons/Mod Dem	35	60	--	--	23	68	237
Liberal Dem	17	78	--	--	14	79	127
<i>Among Republicans...</i>							
Republican men	78	17	76	23	75	23	139
Republican women	66	29	66	30	63	31	152
<i>Among Democrats...</i>							
Democratic men	41	54	28	66	22	66	147
Democratic women	19	75	17	76	18	76	230
<i>Among independents...</i>							
Independent men	63	34	61	34	58	33	249
Independent women	44	49	38	55	33	52	209

---

## Attitudes About Gun Control Cont...

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Dec 17-19, 2012

Q.3 What do you think is more important—to protect the right of Americans to own guns, or to control gun ownership?

	April 2012		July 2012		December 2012		Dec N
	<u>Protect right to own guns</u>	<u>Control ownership</u>	<u>Protect right to own guns</u>	<u>Control ownership</u>	<u>Protect right to own guns</u>	<u>Control ownership</u>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Parents	46	49	48	48	45	47	294
Fathers	57	40	61	33	56	38	148
Mothers	37	58	37	59	34	56	146
Non-parents	51	43	46	47	40	50	923
Men	61	34	55	40	48	43	431
Women	40	52	37	55	33	57	492
Urban	42	54	37	57	35	56	393
Suburban	50	43	48	45	43	47	583
Rural	58	35	61	30	52	39	241
Northeast	36	57	32	59	29	65	208
Midwest	50	43	46	47	45	45	290
South	57	38	53	43	48	44	441
West	46	48	48	46	40	48	280

---

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**DECEMBER 2012 GUN POLICY SURVEY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**December 17-19, 2012**  
**N=1,219**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.1 All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?

	Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>		Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Dec 17-19, 2012	25	68	7	Late May, 2008	18	76	6
Dec 5-9, 2012	33	62	5	March, 2008	22	72	6
Oct 18-21, 2012	32	61	8	Early February, 2008	24	70	6
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	31	64	5	Late December, 2007	27	66	7
Jun 7-17, 2012	28	68	5	October, 2007	28	66	6
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	29	64	7	February, 2007	30	61	9
Apr 4-15, 2012	24	69	6	Mid-January, 2007	32	61	7
Feb 8-12, 2012	28	66	6	Early January, 2007	30	63	7
Jan 11-16, 2012	21	75	4	December, 2006	28	65	7
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	17	78	5	Mid-November, 2006	28	64	8
Aug 17-21, 2011	17	79	4	Early October, 2006	30	63	7
Jul 20-24, 2011	17	79	4	July, 2006	30	65	5
Jun 15-19, 2011	23	73	4	May, 2006*	29	65	6
May 5-8, 2011	30	62	8	March, 2006	32	63	5
May 2, 2011	32	60	8	January, 2006	34	61	5
Mar 8-14, 2011	22	73	5	Late November, 2005	34	59	7
Feb 2-7, 2011	26	68	5	Early October, 2005	29	65	6
Jan 5-9, 2011	23	71	6	July, 2005	35	58	7
Dec 1-5, 2010	21	72	7	Late May, 2005*	39	57	4
Nov 4-7, 2010	23	69	8	February, 2005	38	56	6
Sep 23-26, 2010	30	63	7	January, 2005	40	54	6
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	25	71	5	December, 2004	39	54	7
Jun 24-27, 2010	27	64	9	Mid-October, 2004	36	58	6
May 13-16, 2010	28	64	7	July, 2004	38	55	7
Apr 21-26, 2010	29	66	5	May, 2004	33	61	6
Apr 1-5, 2010	31	63	6	Late February, 2004*	39	55	6
Mar 11-21, 2010	25	69	5	Early January, 2004	45	48	7
Mar 10-14, 2010	23	71	7	December, 2003	44	47	9
Feb 3-9, 2010	23	71	6	October, 2003	38	56	6
Jan 6-10, 2010	27	69	4	August, 2003	40	53	7
Oct 28-Nov 8, 2009	25	67	7	<i>April 8, 2003</i>	50	41	9
Sep 30-Oct 4, 2009	25	67	7	January, 2003	44	50	6
Sep 10-15, 2009 <sup>1</sup>	30	64	7	November, 2002	41	48	11
Aug 20-27, 2009	28	65	7	September, 2002	41	55	4
Aug 11-17, 2009	28	65	7	Late August, 2002	47	44	9
Jul 22-26, 2009	28	66	6	May, 2002	44	44	12
Jun 10-14, 2009	30	64	5	March, 2002	50	40	10
Apr 28-May 12, 2009	34	58	8	Late September, 2001	57	34	9
Apr 14-21, 2009	23	70	7	Early September, 2001	41	53	6
Jan 7-11, 2009	20	73	7	June, 2001	43	52	5
December, 2008	13	83	4	March, 2001	47	45	8
Early October, 2008	11	86	3	February, 2001	46	43	11
Mid-September, 2008	25	69	6	January, 2001	55	41	4
August, 2008	21	74	5	October, 2000 (RVs)	54	39	7
July, 2008	19	74	7	September, 2000	51	41	8
June, 2008	19	76	5	June, 2000	47	45	8
				April, 2000	48	43	9
				August, 1999	56	39	5
				January, 1999	53	41	6
				November, 1998	46	44	10
				Early September, 1998	54	42	4

<sup>1</sup> In September 10-15, 2009 and other surveys noted with an asterisk, the question was worded "Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?"

**Q.1 CONTINUED...**

	Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>		Satis- <u>fied</u>	Dis- <u>satisfied</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Late August, 1998	55	41	4	March, 1994	24	71	5
Early August, 1998	50	44	6	October, 1993	22	73	5
February, 1998	59	37	4	September, 1993	20	75	5
January, 1998	46	50	4	May, 1993	22	71	7
September, 1997	45	49	6	January, 1993	39	50	11
August, 1997	49	46	5	January, 1992	28	68	4
January, 1997	38	58	4	November, 1991	34	61	5
July, 1996	29	67	4	<i>Gallup</i> : Late Feb, 1991	66	31	3
March, 1996	28	70	2	August, 1990	47	48	5
October, 1995	23	73	4	May, 1990	41	54	5
June, 1995	25	73	2	January, 1989	45	50	5
April, 1995	23	74	3	September, 1988 (RVs)	50	45	5
July, 1994	24	73	3				

**Q.2 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****ASK ALL:**

On a different subject,

Q.3 What do you think is more important – to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership?

**ASK IF OPINION GIVEN (Q.3=1,2):**

Q.3a Do you feel strongly about that, or not?

	Protect the right of Americans to own guns				Control gun ownership				
	<u>Net</u>	<u>Strongly</u>	<u>Not strongly</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>	<u>Net</u>	<u>Strongly</u>	<u>Not strongly</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
Dec 17-19, 2012	42	37	4	*	49	42	6	2	9
July 26-29, 2012	46	--	--	--	47	--	--	--	6
Apr 4-15, 2012	49	--	--	--	45	--	--	--	6
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	47	--	--	--	49	--	--	--	5
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	48	--	--	--	47	--	--	--	6
Jan 13-16, 2011	49	--	--	--	46	--	--	--	6
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	46	--	--	--	50	--	--	--	4
Mar 10-14, 2010	46	--	--	--	46	--	--	--	7
Mar 31-Apr 21, 2009	45	--	--	--	49	--	--	--	6
April, 2008	37	--	--	--	58	--	--	--	5
November, 2007	42	--	--	--	55	--	--	--	3
April, 2007	32	--	--	--	60	--	--	--	8
February, 2004	37	31	6	*	58	46	11	1	5
June, 2003	42	--	--	--	54	--	--	--	4
May, 2000	38	--	--	--	57	--	--	--	5
April, 2000	37	--	--	--	55	--	--	--	8
March, 2000	29	--	--	--	66	--	--	--	5
June, 1999	33	--	--	--	62	--	--	--	5
May, 1999	30	--	--	--	65	--	--	--	5
December, 1993	34	--	--	--	57	--	--	--	9

**ASK ALL:**

Q.4 How much, if anything, have you read or heard about a shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut? **[READ IN ORDER]**

Dec 17-19

2012

88	A lot
10	A little
1	Nothing at all
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>

**ASK ALL:**

Q.5 Do you think this shooting reflects broader problems in American society, or are things like this just the isolated acts of troubled individuals?

Dec 17-19		Dec 14-16	TRENDS FOR COMPARISON		
			Jul 26-29	Jan 13-16	Apr 18-22
<u>2012</u>		<u>2012</u>	<u>2012</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2007</u>
44	Broader problems	47	24	31	46
47	Isolated acts	44	67	58	47
8	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	9	8	12	7

**ASK IF (Q.5=1) [N=589]:**

Q.5a Just in your own view, what broader problems does this shooting reflect? **[OPEN END; ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES; DO NOT PROBE FOR ADDITIONAL]**

Dec 17-19

2012

**46 SOCIAL CLIMATE/SOCIAL FAILURES (NET)**

16	Family breakdown/Parental failures
11	General lack of/decline in morals or religion/Breakdown of social structure
7	Numbness/Disassociation/Desensitization/Life not valued
7	Violence in media (News, video games, TV, movies)
4	Lack of discipline/personal responsibility
3	School safety/security
2	Violence, generally/Violent society
2	Lack of education/The education system
2	The economy/Jobs
1	Bullying

**30 MENTAL HEALTH/MENTAL ILLNESS (NET)**

15	Poor safety net/not enough treatment for mental illness
14	Mental health/Mental illness, generally
1	People are angry/frustrated/depressed/sad

**22 GUN-RELATED ISSUES (NET)**

18	Guns, in general/Too easy to access guns/Lack of gun control/Access to assault rifles
2	Gun policy/Politicians failing on policy
2	Guns available to mentally ill people
1	Gun owners need to lock up their weapons

1 Fear of copycats/Fear that attention will give ideas to others

14 Other

6 Don't know/Refused

*Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple responses.*

<sup>2</sup> July 2012 question asked about the shooting in Colorado. January 2011 question asked about the shooting in Tucson, Arizona. April 2007 question was asked after the shooting at Virginia Tech and asked about "this shooting and others like it."



## Q.5a CONTINUED...

**TREND FOR COMPARISON: Arizona/Rep. Giffords Shooting**

Jan 13-16

2011**27 SOCIAL CLIMATE (NET)**

- 8 Breakdown of society (general)
- 6 Poor child rearing/Bad family/Bad kids/Bad education system
- 4 Lack of civility/respect
- 3 Feelings of frustration/discontent/hopelessness (general)
- 2 Lack of religion/God pushed out of society
- 2 Lack of discipline/self control
- 2 Anger
- 2 Lack of morals
- 1 Stupidity

**21 POLITICAL/MEDIA CLIMATE (NET)**

- 11 Partisan hatred/Political divisiveness
- 7 Dissatisfaction/upset with government
- 2 Polarizing rhetoric
- 2 Media coverage of politics/Talk show hosts
- 2 Extremists within the Republican Party/The Republican Party is to blame

- 14 Lack of mental health services/Mental health problems
- 13 Lack of gun control/access to guns
- 9 Dissatisfaction/upset with economy/unemployment
- 6 Violence (general)
- 1 Security issues
- 17 Other
- 8 Don't know/Refused

**[N=307]****TREND FOR COMPARISON: Virginia Tech Shooting**

April 18-22

2007**37 MORALITY/SOCIAL VALUES (NET)**

- 11 Moral breakdown / People don't know right from wrong
- 9 Violence in society/Movies/TV/Music/Video games
- 9 Family breakdown / Children neglected
- 5 Lack of community / No one cares or pays attention
- 5 Youth out of control / Selfish / No discipline
- 3 Lack of religion

**23 SOCIAL/GOVERNMENT SYSTEM FAILURES (NET)**

- 13 Mental health system not helping those in need
- 5 Legal system / Laws don't allow these people to be locked up
- 3 Not enough security
- 3 School system failing

- 14 Gun laws/Too easy to get guns

**12 SOCIAL/PERSONAL PRESSURES (NET)**

- 4 Social alienation / Isolation / Despair
- 3 Young people can't cope / High-pressure/fast-paced society breeds insecurity
- 2 Rich-poor divide breeds anger
- 2 Racial divisions / Minorities face pressures
- 1 Bullying

- 5 Copycat violence / Media coverage glorifies/sensationalizes
- 4 Crazy people in the world / He was crazy
- 2 Immigration
- 7 Other
- 11 Don't know/Refused

**[N=687]**

**NO QUESTION 6****ASK ALL:**

Q.7 Do you think that gun ownership in this country does more to **[INSERT OPTION; RANDOMIZE]** or does more to **[NEXT OPTION]**?

Dec 17-19

2012

48 Protect people from becoming victims of crime [OR]  
 37 Put people's safety at risk  
 16 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.8 Do you think allowing citizens to own assault weapons makes the country **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]** for citizens?

Dec 17-19

2012

21 Safer [OR]  
 65 More dangerous  
 13 Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**

**ASK ALL:**

Q.9 Please tell me if you would favor or oppose the following proposals. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]**? What about **[NEXT ITEM]**? **[IF NECESSARY: Would you favor or oppose [ITEM]?**

		<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>(VOL.)</u> <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	Banning semi-automatic guns, which automatically reload when the trigger is pulled Dec 17-19, 2012	44	49	7
b.	Banning the possession of handguns except by law enforcement officers Dec 17-19, 2012	28	67	5
c.	Banning high-capacity ammunition clips that can hold more than 10 bullets Dec 17-19, 2012	53	42	5
d.	Banning bullets that explode or are designed to penetrate bullet-proof vests Dec 17-19, 2012	56	36	7

**NO QUESTION 10****ASK ALL:**

Q.11 Please tell me if you think the Republican Party or the Democratic Party could do a better job reflecting your views about gun control?

	<u>Republican</u> <u>Party</u>	<u>Democratic</u> <u>Party</u>	<u>(VOL.)</u> <u>Both</u> <u>equally</u>	<u>(VOL.)</u> <u>Neither</u>	<u>(VOL.)</u> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Dec 17-19, 2012	27	28	12	15	18
July, 2004	34	36	3	6	21
Late October, 2002 (RV)	36	38	5	5	16
April, 2000	30	36	4	7	23
June, 1999	34	42	4	8	12
December, 1993	32	42	0	8	18

**ASK ALL:**

Q.12 Do you think the National Rifle Association has too much influence, too little influence or, the right amount of influence over gun control laws in this country?

		<i>Time/CNN</i>		
Dec 17-19 <u>2012</u>		Apr <u>2000</u>	Dec <u>1993</u>	Aug <u>1993</u>
36	Too much	42	45	39
19	Too little	17	15	15
28	Right amount	28	27	33
17	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	13	13	13

**ASK ALL:**

Q.13 Do you happen to have any guns, rifles or pistols in your home?<sup>3</sup>

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
Dec 17-19, 2012	35	61	4
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	37	60	4
Mar 11-21, 2010	33	62	5
Mar 31-Apr 21, 2009	33	63	4
April, 2007	37	61	2
January, 2007	33	64	3
December, 2004	37	60	3
Mid-October, 2004	39	59	2
Mid-July, 2003	34	63	3
August, 2002	35	62	3
April, 2000	35	62	3
June, 1997	40	57	3
December, 1993	45	53	2

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

**ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>(VOL.) No preference</u>	<u>(VOL.) Other party</u>	<u>(VOL.) DK/Ref</u>	<u>Lean Rep</u>	<u>Lean Dem</u>
Dec 17-19, 2012	21	32	38	4	*	4	15	14
Dec 5-9, 2012	23	33	38	3	1	2	14	19
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012	26	34	34	3	1	3	13	16
Oct 24-28, 2012	28	33	33	4	*	2	12	16
Oct 4-7, 2012	27	31	36	3	1	3	15	15
Sep 12-16, 2012	24	35	36	2	*	2	14	16
Jul 16-26, 2012	22	33	38	4	*	3	14	15
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	17
Jun 7-17, 2012	24	33	39	2	*	2	17	17
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	24	32	36	4	*	4	13	14
Apr 4-15, 2012	24	31	39	3	*	2	15	15
Mar 7-11, 2012	24	34	36	3	1	2	16	17
Feb 8-12, 2012	26	32	36	4	1	2	13	17
Jan 11-16, 2012	22	31	42	3	*	2	17	16
Jan 4-8, 2012	26	31	35	4	*	4	14	14
<b>Yearly Totals</b>								
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7

<sup>3</sup> The question was part of a list in March 2011, April 2009, January 2007, December 2004, Mid-October 2004, Mid-July 2003 and August 2002. From 1997 to 2003, the question asked about "guns or revolvers in your home." In 1993, the question asked: "Do you have any guns in this household?"

## PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	No	Other	DK/Ref	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>
				preference	party			
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--