

Research Report:

Government Issues:

Citizen ratings of personal importance and government performance

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Abstract: Voter opinions on the importance of government service issues and how well government is delivering them at city, county, state and federal levels are measured with reliable Likert scale items. Data reveals generally high importance ratings and low performance ratings across the seventy plus areas studied.

The author has studied political psychology via questionnaire measures for several years, clarifying dozens of attitudes across several dimensions of political discourse (McConochie, General). In these studies strong liberals and strong conservatives, as groups, tend to be relatively close together on these dimensions, including desires for improved government services in almost all content areas. These studies include 24 areas of government service presented by a committee of the Occupy Movement (McConochie, Pub 40).

The present study was designed to explore the possibility of measuring dozens of specific political issue content areas across city, county, state and federal levels separately in an expedient manner.

Method. A questionnaire in Likert scale format of 70 items and 15 supplemental areas was drafted to elicit responses of how important each of several areas of government service are to citizens and how well those citizens believe government is currently performing those services. These judgments were made by choosing one option for each item in Likert scale format, very low endorsement at 1 and very high at 5. The questionnaire was loaded on the author's research web site (Politicalpsychologyresearch.com) as 3 questionnaires (numbers 17-19) totaling 519 items. 72 community college students completed all three

questionnaires for extra credit in classes taught by a colleague of the author. They ranged in age from 18 to 72, mean 26.2, standard deviation 10.6. 54 were females, 18 males. 29 were strong liberals, 12 strong conservatives. Students were provided brief feedback initially and then this final report later as additional educational experience.

Results.

The basic results for the 70 content areas (items 1-504) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Citizen judgments of issue importance (Impor) and quality of government delivery of services provided (Provid). See Addendum for full item texts. Mean scores tended to be similar across city (c), county (co), state (s) and federal (f) government levels. For most items the statistics are for the federal level. If for other levels, that is indicated in column 1, e.g. “c” for city. Correlations with Conservatism and Liberalism tended to be quite similar across levels, so usually the federal level statistic is given. Some items are listed for only one or two levels, in which case they are noted by a letter, e.g. “f” for “fed”. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was usually calculated across all four levels (city, county, state and federal). If the mean is for a single level (e.g. city), the alpha couldn’t be calculated and is not applicable (n/a). Conservatism and Liberalism were measured with single items in 5-option Likert scale format (1= Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The Diff score is the Impor mean (1) minus the Provid mean (5). Statistical significance indicated by * at .05 level, ** at .01.

Topic	1.Impor mean	2.Impor alpha reliab	3.Pearson r with con	4.Pearson r with lib	5.Provid mean	6.Provid alpha reliab	7. r / con	8. r/ lib	9. Diff mean1-mean 5
1. Corruption free govt	4.2	.89	-.09	.29*	3.0	.78	.13	.12	1.2
2. Serves common good (cg)	4.25	.92	-.28*	.29*	3.04	.67	.11	.04	1.21
3. Protects cg from special interest grps	4.08	.93	-.17	.23	3.01	.71	.18	-.19	1.07
4. Does polls of public	4.22	.93	-.09	.10	2.92	.81	.03	.05	1.30
5. Resolv impt issues	4.33	.93	-.12	.27*	2.83	.80	.02	.08	1.50
6. Taxes sufficient	3.95	.96	-.06	.25*	3.00	.88	.06	.00	.95
7. Limited	4.04	.94	-.18	.18	2.82	.76	.28*	-.06	1.22

excess imports (f)										
28. Cultural interchanges (f)	4.01	.84	-.11	.10	3.21	.84	.10	.04	.80	
29. Personal job assistance (f)	4.49	.92	-.15	.17	2.54	.88	.16	.08	1.95	
30. Encour. new busin.(c)	4.18	.93	.02	.09	2.99	.78	.01	.09	1.19	
31. Drug. alc. prev.(f)	4.29	.91	-.02	.10	2.93	.89	.26*	.00	1.36	
32. Jail, parole (c)	4.24	.91	-.01	.06	2.79	.89	.09	.10	1.45	
33. Police, sheriff, FBI (f)	4.47	.89	.31**	-.06	3.47	.87	-.27*	.16	1.00	
34. Military (f)	4.39	.63	.38**	-.17	4.03	.82	.08	.06	.36	
35. Oversee safe civ. gun sales (f)	4.36	.86	-.27*	.28*	2.71	.84	.07	-.18	1.65	
36. Pesticide reg. (f)	4.19	.93	-.22	.30	2.67	.75	.14	.02	1.52	
37. Fire pre. Fight (c)	4.67	.89	.05	-.11	3.99	.87	-.05	.08	.68	
38. Ambulance (c)	4.54	.90	-.07	.01	3.44	.87	.16	.03	1.10	
39. Disaster aid (f)	4.78	.92	.02	.03	3.19	.92	.16	-.04	1.59	
40. Water svcs.(c)	4.64	.96	-.14	.20	3.71	.88	.03	.06	.93	
41. Sewer svcs. (c)	4.56	.93	-.05	.20	3.43	.86	.27*	-.01	1.42	
42. Garbage, waste (c)	4.65	.86	-.23*	.25*	3.38	.79	.25*	-.19	1.13	
43. Re-cycling (c)	4.57	.90	-.28*	.17	4.01	.80	.21	-	1.43	
44. Energy production (s)	4.17	.92	.14	.09	3.17	.82	.15	-.05	1.00	
45. Non-polut. fuels (f)	4.50	.92	.13	.22	2.67	.82	.28*	-	1.83	
46. Safe food (f)	4.56	.93	.00	.05	3.08	.83	.18	-.29	1.48	
47. Food to poor (f)	4.40	.91	-.13	.06	3.01	.88	.16	-.06	1.39	
48. Health drug safe (f)	4.43	.91	.03	.12	3.00	.89	.15	.06	1.43	
49. Disease	4.44	.92	-.06	-.03	3.38	.90	.07	-.09	1.06	

control (f)									
50. Alcoh. & tobacco (f)	4.17	.89	-.19	.15	3.31	.84	-.14	.00	.86
51. Safe bldg. codes (f)	4.32	.91	-.08	.24*	3.51	.90	.01	-.16	.81
52. Afford. Housing (f)	4.31	.93	-.19	.09	2.50	.86	.18	-.09	1.81
53. Afford. health care (f)	4.50	.92	-.27*	.14	2.60	.91	.09	.08	1.90
54. Social security (f)	4.42	.81	-.05	-.01	2.93	.73	.19	.09	1.49
55. Injured worker care (s)	4.54	.90	-.09	.11	3.64	.82	.04	.01	.90
56. Needy children svcs (f)	4.42	.92	-.18	-.15	2.90	.88	.01	.07	1.52
57. Vets. svcs (f)	4.54	.87	.08	-.08	2.97	.82	.02	-.04	1.57
58. Dog and cat reg. (c)	4.24	.92	-.05	.05	3.28	.89	-.05	.02	.96
59. Conserv. energy/fuel (f)	4.44	.95	.01	-.31**	2.99	.89	-.02	-.06	1.45
60. Wildlife habitat (co)	4.50	.88	.08	-.24*	3.06	.88	-.02	-.05	1.44
61. Hunt/fish (s)	4.33	.76	-.07	-.07	3.79	.72	-.06	-.04	.54
62. Avoid fossil fuels (f)	4.47	.95	.03	-.07	2.85	.88	-.13	.12	1.62
63. Use resources carefully (f)	4.10	.95	.01	-.09	2.92	.83	.06	.12	1.10
64. Control urban sprawl (f)	4.17	.94	-.07	-.16	2.93	.90	.02	-.06	1.24
65. Pop. control. (f)	4.36	.94	-.03	-.13	2.82	.91	-.07	.00	1.54
66. Objective news media (f)	4.31	.93	-.14	-.06	2.74	.91	.14	-.04	1.57
67. Protect relig. gps. (f)	4.06	.96	.15	-.11	2.93	.88	.17	-.05	1.13
68. Protect minor. gps. (f)	4.56	.94	.20	-.23*	2.87	.88	-.04	.03	1.49
69. Protect common	4.29	.93	.12	-.13	2.87	.89	-.06	.12	1.42

good (f)										
70. Separate church/state (f)	4.06	.95	.09	-.12	2.92	.82	.18	-.11	1.14	

This public opinion survey format provides generally good to excellent reliabilities for scores presented in clusters of four items (Column 2). Most of these are at or near .90 for how Important issues are for citizens. This high reliability implies that citizens are clear and confident of their opinions about what they want from government and that what they want is consistent across all levels of government, from city to state, county and the federal level. For how well services are Provided, the reliabilities tend to be in the 80's (Column 6). Perhaps these reliabilities are slightly lower than those for Importance ratings because citizens have less factual information about how well governments are actually providing various services.

These opinion scores are relatively independent of political orientation, liberal or conservative, as reflected in the low and usually statistically insignificant correlations between these two political orientations and the content areas (Columns 3 and 4). There are a few exceptions, such as the significant correlations between Conservatism and Importance of Military and Police services for conservatives (items 33 and 34). Similarly the correlations are significant between corruption-free politics (item 1), serving the common good (2), overseeing civilian gun ownership (35) and providing building safety codes (51). Some correlations seem counterintuitive, for unclear reasons, such as the lower concern in conservatism for garbage and recycling services (items 42 & 43) and the negative correlation between liberalism and the importance of government protecting minority groups (item 68).

The relatively low correlation between political worldviews and Importance ratings is consistent with many prior studies by the author which have consistently shown rather close mean scores for strong conservatives and strong liberals on all major dimensions of political discourse measured by reliable opinion questionnaires (McConochie, 30,36).

Two additional indicators of the high value both liberals and conservatives place on government services is evident in the high mean Importance scores in the first column. A score of 4.0 on a given item in the questionnaire indicates "Agree". A score of 5 means "Strongly Agree". A mean score of 3.5 can be considered the cutoff between overall agreement versus disagreement with a questionnaire topic. 68 of the 72 (94%) mean Importance scores are above 3.5. 59 of 72 (82%) are 4.0 or above. Thus, as measured by this questionnaire, government overall is considered to be important or very important by almost all of these research participants.

How well citizens believe government is serving them is reflected in the Provide scores, Column 5. Here we see a less rosy picture. We can again use 3.5 as the cutoff between those who see government as performing poorly or well. Only 11 of the 72 participants (15%) have mean scores of 3.5 or higher on their Provide services (column 5) scale. Only 15 percent of these students seem satisfied with government overall. The fact that 96 percent see government as *important* implies that up to 85 percent of them may be dissatisfied with how well government is meeting their expectations.

This study did not specifically measure libertarian attitudes, disvaluing government per se, “The less government the better”, so some of the 6 percent who do not see government as Important (above) could be among the 15% who are satisfied with present government because they see it as ineffective *and* irrelevant.

To the extent that one values democracy as government designed to reflect the desires of majority opinions of citizens, the present study suggests that a strong majority of citizens may value government but see it at present as having significant room for improvement. The slogans “the less government the better” and “government is the problem” are unlikely to reflect majority public opinion but rather a minority opinion of libertarians.

Another suggestion of the gap between citizen desires and what government delivers is the Difference score in the last column of Table 1. This is a rather crude statistic, as the two concepts are different, Importance ratings and Performance ratings. With that caveat in mind, we can review this column for a rough idea of what areas of government citizens seem to be most and least satisfied with. Difference scores below 1 imply a relatively close match between importance of a service and how well government is providing it. Numbers above 1.00 reflect a greater gap between importance and government delivery.

The difference scores (Column 9) that are below 1.00 are 6. Sufficient taxes, 11. Federal regulation of radio, t.v., etc. airway frequencies, 16. Public transportation, 17. Airport services, 20. Library services, 21. Public recreation, 22. Entertainment, 23. Museums, 28. Cultural interchanges, 34. Military services, 37. Fire prevention services, 40. Water services, 50. Alcohol and drug oversight services, 51. Building code services, 55. Injured worker care, 58. Dog and cat regulations, and 61. Hunting and fishing regulations.

Items above 1.00 imply less satisfaction or the greatest disappointment with government relative to the importance that citizens give the service of focus. These government performance areas are 1. Corruption, 2. Serving the common good, 3. Protecting the common good from exploitation by special interest groups, 4. Polling the public, 5. Resolving important issues, 7. Limited borrowing, 8. Federal cooperation with other nations, 9. Cooperation with the United Nations, 10. Cooperation with other nations re: crime, 12. Judicial services to the common good vs. special interests, 13. Prompt and humane trials, 14. Dealing with criminals, 15. Supreme court services to the common good, 18. Good, affordable education, 19. Federal funding of university research, 25. Promoting jobs, 26 & 27. Limiting imports to protect jobs, 29. Providing personal job finding help, 30. Encouraging new business, 31. Drug and alcohol abuse prevention, 32. Jail and parole services, 33. Overseeing civilian access to guns, 36. Pesticide regulation, 38. Ambulance services, 39. Disaster response services, 41. Sewer services, 42. Garbage and waste services, 43. Recycling services, 45. Arranging for non-polluting fuels, 46. Safe food production, 47. Food to the poor, 48. Health drugs safety, 49. Disease control, 52. Affordable housing, 53. Affordable health care, 54. Viable Social Security, 56. Services to needy children, 57. Veterans’ services, 59. Conservation of energy and fuel resources, 60. Wildlife habitat, 62. Avoiding fossil fuels, 63. Using resources carefully, 64. Controlling urban sprawl, 65. Population size management, 66. Objective media services, 67. Protecting religious groups, 68. Protecting minority groups, 69. Protecting the common good, 70. Separating church and state.

Of all these last items, the highest ones were: 25. Promoting jobs, 29. Providing personal job help, 45. Non-polluting fuels, 13. Prompt and humane trials, and 19. Federal funding of university research. These data were based on mean scores across all levels (usually city, county, state and federal) for each item, so they are probably a bit more reliable than if they were based on the single items selected for each category as presented in Table 1.

The last fifteen items of the study, items 505-519, measure citizen attitudes or opinions about a variety of specific government issues (see Appendix, Government preferences.....specific issues items:). The topics include school budgets (school, police and county budgets: items 1-4; state budgets: 5; health care: 6, 7, 8, 14; foreign policy/war: 9, 10; federal campaign issues: 11, 12; and government use of polls of citizens to decide policy issues: 15. These are issues that came up in prior studies by the author. The statistical findings were interesting.

None of these fifteen items correlated significantly with either liberal or conservative worldviews as measured by single items in Likert scale format (five options ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly agree). All of the items correlated positively at the .01 level of significance with the total score made up of all the items. These correlations ranged from .41** to .64**. The reliability of this 15-item cluster was .76. The mean score was 2.61, and the range was 1.73 to 3.57. Only 2 of the 72 scores were above 3.5. Thus, overall, these 72 students did not endorse these items as desirable government policy, as the researcher thought they might. That the items all correlated significantly with the total score and that the scale had reasonable reliability (.76) indicates that the items measure citizen opinions about politics. Perhaps the results imply that citizens think issues such as these should be determined by elected officials, not directly by citizens.

However, factor analysis yielded 5 clear factors, only the first of which had adequate reliability (.86). This consisted of only two items (515 and 516), which reflect attitudes of dislike for the Citizens United Supreme Court decision giving corporations unlimited campaign contribution rights and a preference for only individual citizen contributions. None of the five factors correlated significantly with political orientation (liberal or conservative). The mean scores for this factor and two others were 3.5 or higher, reflecting general endorsement of the content of these factors: supporting individual campaign contributions only, supporting reasonable state budget decisions to prevent state bankruptcy, and endorsing a peaceful foreign policy. Perhaps the most meaningful information yielded by this 15-item cluster of questionnaire items is that because the items all correlate significantly with the total score of all these items, the 72 students seemed to have an underlying concern for responsible government. Their mean score on the first of the five factors is 3.97, for example, suggesting citizen disapproval of the idea of corporations having financial control over elections via unrestricted campaign contributions.

Discussion.

One thing that strikes the present researcher when reviewing this data is the very broad scope of services that citizens provide themselves via their collective effort called "government". In 2012, 22.2 million, or 1 in every 6 employed citizens in the United States, were government employees at the city, county, state or federal level. Police, fire fighters, school teachers, county sheriffs, building inspectors, utility workers (electricity, water, gas, sewers), Social Security

clerks, slaughter house inspectors, IRS agents, clerical workers, military personnel, fish and game wardens, National Park rangers, airport safety inspectors, prison guards, federal court clerks, attorneys and judges, government representatives, mayors, county commissioners, all work for us as public employees. Tens of millions of citizens are needed to keep the wheels of government turning and government keeps the services operating that form the framework for society.

In a sense, the present study is a mini customer satisfaction survey. Perhaps it can inspire more such polling research and more surveys of the public to guide government in providing services to keep the public well served and satisfied with the services they depend on their governments to provide. Political parties could also do such surveys to help parties craft agendas and platforms that will appeal to party members and potential new members.

More detailed analyses can be performed on the data thus gained, for example by examining the data just at the level of specific interest. For example, a state government could conduct a study and analyze just the state level data, or just frame their poll in terms of the state services and not county, city or federal services. And, the present questionnaire can be modified by leaving items out and/or adding new items.

Caveats and conclusions.

The present study is on only 72 community college students and thus not a very large or representative sample of citizens as a whole. However, as a pilot study of a technique for measuring citizen attitudes about specific government policies and programs, it does appear to yield promising information. Citizens seem able to provide reliable information very efficiently with as few as four questionnaire items per topic. They seem able to be quite reliable in providing information about how important various government services are. They seem to value a very comprehensive list of services, contrary to the slogan “the less government the better” voiced in recent years by what would appear to be a minority of citizens.

These students also give government rather poor “grades” for performance in some areas. And the discrepancies between Importance and Provided judgments seem to reflect issues that were important in the recent (2016) presidential campaign, such as concern for family wage jobs. They are also concerned about eliminating fossil fuel use, an issue of increasing controversy.

While the results of this study do not support the notion that citizens believe government policies should be directly determined by public opinion polls, they do seem to indicate that citizens can provide reliable opinions on detailed issues of government policy. Thus, large random samples of public opinion on detailed issues with at least four questions per issue could be used by governments to measure public desires and judgments about how well government is performing. Such information can guide governments to more effectively serve citizens. The Pew Research Center already does regular polls on many topics. It could be commissioned by governments to do more detailed studies to yield information of value in guiding government policies and programs. Political parties interested in serving the common good could also do such research to help them craft mission statements and platforms that will appeal to the majority of voters.

Addendum. Questionnaire items.

Note: The numbers 1-70 refer to clusters, usually of 8 items each. Thus, item 1 measures attitudes for Importance and Provided responses at the city, county, state and federal levels, for a total of 8 measures. The last 15 items appear in the research questionnaire as items 505-519.

Desired Government Services questionnaire (Internet version).

This is a study that explores whether it would be possible to ask citizens to help form government policies on specific areas of government service. You are asked to share your opinions on how important each of several government services are. Then you will be asked how well you think that government is currently providing that service.

The average scores for a large sample of citizens on the “importance” items will provide an operational definition of the common good, what the citizens want from government.

The average scores for the “how well” judgments will constitute a current “report card” for government performance.

With enough data across a nation, individual scores can be computed for each state, as well as for the national as a whole.

Some services are provided by government directly, such as public roads and police or military services. Other services are provided by government in the form of policies, such as tax breaks for companies moving into a community to provide jobs for local citizens. Thus, a service may be “provided”, “encouraged”, “overseen” or “regulated”, as alcohol sales are regulated by states and radio frequencies are regulated by the federal government.

Many government services are provided at all levels of government. Roads, for example are provided by cities, counties, states and the federal government. Thus, for most questionnaire items you will be asked to express your opinions at all four of these levels of government.

Some government services are provided at just one level, e.g. military services at the federal level. For these you will only be asked for opinions at that level.

Ideally, each topic would be studied by a committee and voters, such as yourself, would be given summary information to familiarize them with each issue. In this first effort, you are asked to do your best without such background information. Please do the best you can, based on what you currently know about government services. The questionnaire takes about 30 minutes, more or less, depending on how fast you read and make decisions.

Please complete the items in numerical order, 1, 2, 3, 4 and so on.

Use these codes:

How important is the service? (“How important?...”)

Not at all important	Not important	I don't know or between 2 and 4	Important	Very important
1	2	3	4	5

How well does government provide, encourage or regulate this service? (“How well provided?” ...)

Very poorly	Poorly	I don't know or between 2 and 4	Well	Very well
1	2	3	4	5

Now, read each item carefully and circle one number for each of the eight opinions after it. Make your decisions in terms of your city, your county, your state and your nation.

1. Government provides services that are free from corruption of government itself (no embezzlement of public funds, no favoritism in awarding contracts, no bribery of government officials, etc.):

City level: 1. How important? 1 2 3 4 5 2. How well provided? 1 2 3 4 5

County level: 3. How important? 1 2 3 4 5 4. How well provided? 1 2 3 4 5

State level: 5. How important? 1 2 3 4 5 6. How well provided? 1 2 3 4 5

Federal level: 7. How important? 1 2 3 4 5 8. How well provided? 1 2 3 4 5

2. Government provides services to the common good, serving citizen needs overall, more than special interest groups per se:
3. Government protects the common good from exploitation by special interest groups that are motivated by financial greed, political dominance, police or military power or religious fervor.
4. Government periodically polls citizens on major policy issues to determine what services they want from government (e.g. in terms of taxes, how much money is spent for various departments, etc.):
5. Government addresses and resolves important issues in a timely manner:
6. Government raises sufficient revenue via fair taxes, fees, etc.:
7. Government does not borrow money excessively to fund services, e.g. via bonds, etc.:
8. Federal government cooperates with other nations on treaty issues to coordinate space satellites, prevent terrorism, prevent pollution of the atmosphere or oceans, etc.:

9. Federal government cooperates with the United Nations and other nations to promote peace, fair trade, disease control, invasive species control, protection of copy rights and patents, etc.
10. Federal government cooperates with other nations to prevent international crimes such as drug and sex trafficking, genocides, and other crimes against humanity.
11. Federal government provides regulation of radio and telephone frequencies to assure adequate service to police departments, airlines, telephone users, television transmitters, military communications, etc.
12. Provides judicial services that are not politicized, serving special interest groups, but serve the common good.
13. Provides a court and justice system of fair and prompt trials and humane sentences for convicted offenders.
14. Provides rehabilitation programs for offenders and prevention services for young offenders.
15. Provides Supreme Court system that serves the common good and is not politicized, serving special interest groups.
16. Provides public transportation services as needed (buses, subway trains, ferries, etc.). (Interstate high speed rail service at the federal level).
17. Provides airport services, as needed (air traffic control services at the federal level).
18. Provides good quality education services at affordable rates.
19. Federal level (funds university research programs):
20. Provides library services. Federal level (Library of Congress, etc.):
21. Provides public recreational facilities...parks, sports fields, swimming pools, tennis courts, etc. (at state level: marinas, park, camp grounds; at federal level National Parks, campgrounds, etc.):
22. Supports entertainment venues...music concerts, parades, live theater, festivals, art shows, etc.:
23. Provides museum(s) (at federal level Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, etc.):
24. Supports business and industry activities. At state level add agriculture, forestry mining, tourism, intrastate trade, etc. At federal level add international trade, management of national natural resources (forests, coal mining, oil and gas drilling, metal ore mining), etc.
25. Supports a steady, vibrant, reliable job market for all employable citizens.
26. Limits or discourages imports of goods and services from outside the area (city, state, nation) to ones that local citizens cannot create within the community...to assure jobs for all employable citizens.
27. Limits or discourages imports exceeding exports to prevent net outflow of capital from the area.
28. Promotes cooperative interchanges with other areas in sports, educational activities, student exchanges, art, music and tourism.
29. Provides job placement assistance for citizens of all aptitude, training and ability levels and training for displaced workers to prepare for new jobs. Federal level, add: limits outsourcing of jobs by our businesses and manufacturers to protect jobs for our citizens.
30. Encourages new businesses and business models, e.g. via temporary property tax breaks, seminars, business codes, prizes, school/business collaborations, volunteer or public jobs,

- teen jobs, etc. Federal level. Add: Funds research and innovation at public colleges and universities.
31. Provides addictive drug, alcohol and gambling abuse prevention and rehabilitation services for citizens.
 32. Provides adequate jail or prison space and treatment and parole/probation services for incarcerated citizens.
 33. Provides adequate police services, county sheriff services, state troopers and highway patrol. At federal level: FBI, CIA, Homeland Security services.
 34. Provides military services: State level (provides National Guard for state services, e.g. riot control, natural disaster assistance, etc):
 35. Oversees sale and use of guns only to and by qualified individuals.
 36. Regulates use of pesticides and herbicides to protect health of desirable insects, such as honey bees, and desirable plants, animals and humans.
 37. Provides fire prevention and fire-fighting services on city, county, state or national lands, as appropriate.
 38. Provides affordable, quick ambulance/and or helicopter service for transporting citizens to medical facilities in emergencies.
 39. Provides emergency assistance for natural disasters...fires, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.
 40. Provides clean water for use by citizens. And irrigation at county and state level. At state level, oversees use of fresh water to assure use does not exceed capacity, aquifers are not depleted, etc. At state and federal levels, oversees use of fresh water to assure use does not exceed capacity, fisheries are not destroyed in major rivers, rivers are not polluted by fertilizers, pesticides, metals, etc.
 41. Provides storm and sanitary sewer services, protecting streams, rivers and aquifers from pollution.
 42. Provides or regulates garbage services to assure sanitary disposal of waste.
 43. Provides recycling services for metals, paper, building materials, vehicles, appliances, etc.
 44. Provides or oversees energy production and/or distribution for public utilities, commercial and private use (electricity, natural gas, gasoline, and diesel fuel). At federal level manages national reserves of oil, gas, coal, hydroelectric (dam/generator), and nuclear power production.
 45. Encourages the development and use of non-polluting fuels for transportation vehicles, heating and electricity production, replacing fossil fuels with solar, hydro, geothermal and hydrogen sources.
 46. Encourages and enforces safe, disease-free food production and distribution in stores and restaurants, and in production and transportation facilities.
 47. Encourages refrigeration and redistribution of excess prepared food to needy citizens. At state and federal level provides food stamps to needy citizens, free school lunches to poor children in schools, etc.
 48. Oversees marketing of health drugs and medicines to assure medical necessity and health protection. At federal level oversees production as well.
 49. Oversees community response to communicable diseases, as via promotion of immunizations, to prevent or minimize epidemics.
 50. Oversees marketing of tobacco and alcohol products to comply with relevant laws. At state and federal level creates appropriate laws governing production and marketing.

51. Oversees compliance with state and national building codes to assure construction of safe residential and commercial buildings, bridges and other structures. At state and federal level, creates such codes.
52. Promotes affordable housing for citizens of all income levels, including homeless, disabled or otherwise impoverished citizens.
53. Promotes affordable health care for citizens of all income levels.
54. Promotes a Social Security system to provide income and other needed services to elderly and disabled citizens.
55. Provides health care benefits and temporary unemployment income for injured workers (at state and federal levels).
56. Provides or promote foster home, shelter, treatment and related services for abused, abandoned, homeless or otherwise severely needy children.
57. Provides temporary housing, job training, medical and other services needed by military veterans.
58. Provides animal control services for dogs, cats and other feral or abused or abandoned pets, in part to protect songbirds, children or other citizens from disease or injury.
59. Encourages conservation of energy and fuels, e.g. by use of insulation in buildings, energy-efficient building designs, and use of local rather than distant foods, goods and services to reduce transportation fuel use.
60. Promotes protection and restoration of wildlife habitat.
61. Regulates and oversees hunting and fishing on public and private lands and waters.
62. Encourages transition from fossil and hydrocarbon fuels (gasoline, diesel, natural gas, coal, wood) to non-polluting fuels to reduce emission of CO₂ and other global warming gasses.
63. Promotes careful husbanding of non-renewable natural resources such as fossil fuels, metal ores, agricultural soil, gravel deposits (for cement, etc.).
64. Controls urban sprawl to protect agricultural land and wildlife habitat, etc.
65. Promotes responsible birthing, healthy families, disciplined immigration and population density that does not overstress available resources.
66. Promotes news media (newspapers, radio and television news programs, etc.) that is objective, informative and useful to the common good and discourages media that is distorted or propagandized in the service of special interest groups at the jeopardy of the common good.
67. Promotes protection of various religious groups from persecution by the state, other religious groups or individuals.
68. Promotes protection of minority groups (ethnic minorities, elderly, women, children, etc.) from discrimination, persecution or prejudice.
69. In general, protects the common good (overall citizen welfare) from exploitation by special interest groups.
70. Promotes appropriate separation between government policies and specific religious doctrines.

Government preferences.....specific issues items:

The following items measure hypothetical citizen preferences about making government decisions that are typically made by elected representatives, senators, etc.

Note: The science of public opinion polling is well-advanced. For example, random samples of as few as 1500 persons can provide rather accurate estimates of opinions or attitudes of a whole group of persons, e.g. citizens of a nation. Random samples have the advantage of including some citizens of each of many categories that might otherwise not participate in a vote by virtue of poverty or minority group exclusion. They also are much less expensive than conducting a vote of an entire population. Thus, we can anticipate that polls of citizens will gradually become more and more important in shaping government policy, even on specific issues, such as war, taxes and health care programs.

As you complete these items, imagine that the government has chosen you to respond on a random sample survey to determine government policies on several issues.

Please express your opinions by marking one number for each of the items below, using this code:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, or between 2 and 4, or "I don't know".	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Local:	
1 2 3 4 5	1. If school budgets have to be cut, ideally, all aspects of the budget would be cut proportionally so that no essential services or programs have to be cut and no teachers have to be laid off.
1 2 3 4 5	2. If school budgets have to be cut, ideally, tenured teachers' salaries and benefits would always be protected and other aspects of the school program cut or eliminated.
1 2 3 4 5	3. If police department budgets have to be cut, ideally, all salaries should be cut rather than any personnel being laid off.
County:	
1 2 3 4 5	4. If county budgets have to be cut, a random sample of county citizens should be polled on options determined by commissioners, to determine how cuts will be made.
State:	
1 2 3 4 5	5. The state should make no contracts with public employees that require future revenues to pay benefits due in the future for previously employed persons. Notes: For example, anticipated future retirement and health care benefits to current public employees would have to be funded out of current State revenues and set aside in a secure savings account. The purpose of this plan is to protect the State from future obligations that it may not be able to afford in the future.
1 2 3 4 5	6. I support the general idea of a basic public health care program that is funded by a sales tax (e.g. 2%) in each state and administered and provided by each state. Note: Citizens who could afford additional services could privately purchase supplemental health insurance.
1 2 3 4 5	7. I support the idea of such a health care program providing only

	those services that a sales tax can currently fund, with which specific services are provided determined by a panel of citizens, physicians and others appointed by the governor, with such services updated every two years.
1 2 3 4 5	8. I support the idea that “health care” should include “dental care” in public health care programs.
National:	
1 2 3 4 5	9. Wars in which our nation is engaged should be subject to approval or disapproval by the public. Specifically, any war involving U.S. Military personnel or funding must terminate within six months of a majority-plus vote (more than 60%) of a random sample of 2500 voting age citizens of the nation that calls for termination of that war.
1 2 3 4 5	10. The United States Peace Institute’s funding should be a fixed percentage of the nation’s military budget, and no less than 5% of the military budget.
1 2 3 4 5	11. U.S. corporations should not be considered “persons” for purposes of determining how much money they can contribute to political campaign funds. Note: The purpose of this item is to prevent very wealthy corporations from controlling politics.
1 2 3 4 5	12. Only individual persons, voluntarily deciding and by personal check or money order, should be permitted to contribute to political campaign funds, and with a dollar limit no greater than one percent of the median salary of citizens (of the State or Nation involved) provided to any given candidate. Note: The purpose of this item is to prevent very wealthy persons from controlling politics.
1 2 3 4 5	13. Appointment of Supreme Court Justices should require a majority-plus (60% or more) vote of a random sample of 2500 (or more) voting age citizens of the nation. Note: The purpose of this item is to minimize political orientations determining who is appointed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court should base its decisions not on politics but on principles of existing law and related documents, such as the U.S. Constitution.
1 2 3 4 5	14. Whether our nation has a national health care service and in what form should be determined by a majority plus (60% or more) vote of a random sample of 2500 (or more) voting age citizens who are asked to choose between at least three options prepared by a bipartisan commission appointed by the President.
1 2 3 4 5	15. In general, because the science of public opinion polling is now well established, many state and national government policies should be determined by well-designed random samples of the well-informed opinions of voting age citizens.

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