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# The Most Important Events of the Century From the Viewpoint of the People

BY **FRANK NEWPORT**, DAVID W. MOORE, AND **LYDIA SAAD**

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## GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

What is the most important event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Historians may ponder that question for years to come, but from the perspective of the people of the United States, it is World War II. In a recent Gallup poll, Americans nominated the war in general, the Nazi Holocaust that occurred during the war, and the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan that helped end it, as three of the top five events of the century. Rounding out the top five are two events that signaled major changes in human rights and equality: the granting of the right to vote to women in 1920, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

A Gallup poll conducted earlier this fall first asked the American public to name the most important event of the century off the top of their head, without prompting. Gallup Poll analysts then took this list, deleted the "events" that in reality are more like sweeping advances (such as the computer), added additional events that have appeared on other lists, and created a new list of 18 events for the public to rate. These events were then read to a new random sample of Americans in November, and the respondents were asked to rate each of the events on the following scale:

1. *One of the MOST important events of the century,*
2. *Important but not the MOST important,*
3. *Somewhat important, or*
4. *Not important*

The 18 events were then rank-ordered based on the percentage of Americans who placed each in the top category as "one of the most important events of the century."

The results:

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	(MI)	(I)	(SI)	(NI)	(DK)
	%	%	%	%	%
1. World War II	71	21	5	2	1
2. Women gaining the right to vote in 1920	66	20	11	3	0
3. Dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945	66	20	9	4	1
4. The Nazi Holocaust during World War II	65	20	9	5	1
5. Passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act	58	26	13	2	1
6. World War I	53	28	11	5	3

7. Landing a man on the moon in 1969	50	30	15	5	*
8. The assassination of President Kennedy in 1963	50	29	15	5	1
9. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989	48	30	19	3	0
10. The U.S. Depression in the 1930s	48	29	18	3	2
11. The breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s	46	31	19	3	1
12. The Vietnam War in the 1960s and early 1970s	37	31	20	11	1
13. Charles Lindbergh's transatlantic flight in 1927	27	33	28	11	1
14. The launching of the Russian Sputnik satellites in the 1950s	25	34	28	12	1
15. The Korean War in the early 1950s	21	36	32	10	1
16. The Persian Gulf War in 1991	18	38	32	11	1
17. The Impeachment of President Bill Clinton in 1998	15	25	24	35	1
18. The Watergate scandal involving Richard Nixon in the 1970s	14	32	34	19	1

(MI) = Most important (I) = Important

(SI) = Somewhat important

(NI) = Not important

(DK) = Don't know

\* = Less than 0.5%

What were Americans thinking as each of these events occurred? The sections that follow look in greater detail at what polling showed about Americans' reactions to the top five events in the rankings as they were occurring and/or what the trend of American thought has been on the topic through the years of this century.

## *World War II -- The Most "Just" War*

According to the American public, not only was the Second World War one of the most important events of the 20th Century, it was the most "just" of all the major wars fought by the United States in its history. A Gallup poll conducted shortly after the beginning of the Persian Gulf War in January 1991 showed that 89% of all Americans rated World War II as a just war, compared with 76% who rated World War I that way, 75% the Revolutionary War, 74% the Persian Gulf War, and 70% the Civil War. Only about half (49%) of Americans rated the Korean War as just, with 32% saying it was not, and 19% unsure. Not surprisingly, only 25% rated the Vietnam War as just, while 65% said it was not, and another 10% were unsure.

Despite this retrospectively positive view of World War II, it may come as a surprise to learn that in the years leading up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Americans were not inclined to become involved in fighting against either the Germans or the Japanese. In fact, so strong was American opposition to U.S. involvement in fighting that in October 1939, more than a month after the Germans had started World War II by attacking Poland, fully 68% of all Americans said it had been a mistake for the U.S. to enter even the First World War. And only 16% said the United States should send our army and navy abroad to fight Germany in the war that was under way. This opposition to U.S. involvement persisted throughout the next two years. The last time before Pearl Harbor that Gallup asked a question about U.S. involvement in the war was in June 1941, when only 21% said the U.S. should go to war.

But if Americans were reluctant for the country to become involved in actual fighting, they nevertheless wanted to take aggressive steps -- short of war -- to help England and France, and to thwart the buildup of power in Japan.

In October 1941, about two months before the Japanese attacked the U.S. military in Hawaii, 64% of Americans said the United States should take steps "now" to prevent Japan from becoming more powerful, even if this action would mean risking a war with Japan, while just 25% were opposed. Even earlier, in October 1939, 62% of Americans said the U.S. should do everything possible, except going to war, to help England and France. But even this caveat was tempered by the willingness of the American public, in a June 1941 poll, to have the U.S. provide military escorts for ships carrying war materials to Britain -- with 56% in favor and 35% opposed. Even more telling was the widespread support of Americans for allowing the U.S. Navy to shoot at German submarines and warships on sight, supported by a margin of 62% to 28%. These latter two actions are clearly acts of war, and had they been implemented would have drawn the United States into war even earlier than it was.

One reason for the public's opposition may well have been its perception that U.S. involvement was not needed. When Americans were asked in August 1941 who would win the war between Germany and Britain, 69% said Britain, while just 6% said Germany.

### ***The Atomic Bomb***

In the days immediately following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, Americans overwhelmingly approved of the action, by a margin of 85% to 10%. And by a margin of 69% to 17%, Americans also said it was a good thing rather than a bad thing that the bomb had been developed at all.

But in the years since, public opinion has become less supportive of both the development and use of the atomic bomb. The question about using the bomb on the Japanese cities was asked again in 1990, when barely half of the public -- 53% -- said it approved of the dropping of the bomb, while 41% expressed disapproval. In the latest asking, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the event in July 1995, the margin of approval increased from 1990 -- with 59% of the U.S. public saying it approved of the use of the atomic weapon, and 35% disapproving -- but was still far below 1945 approval levels.

Even more dramatically, the 1995 Gallup poll showed that 61% of Americans now thought it was a bad idea that the atomic bomb had been developed in the first place, with just 36% saying it was a good idea. These figures are similar to results of a 1990 Gallup poll. The 1995 poll also showed that while 86% of Americans believed that dropping the atomic bomb saved American lives, the public was about evenly divided on whether it saved Japanese lives by shortening the war -- 40% thought it did, but 45% said it cost more Japanese lives.

### *The Holocaust*

Although the Holocaust is viewed by the American public as one of the most significant events of the 20th Century, there were no Gallup Poll questions about the Holocaust that were asked during or immediately after the Second World War. However, in 1993, the release of a poll by the Roper Organization led some people to believe that a substantial number of Americans simply did not believe that the Holocaust had ever occurred. The question asked of a national sample of respondents was as follows: "Does it seem possible or does it seems impossible to you that the Nazi extermination of the Jews

never happened?" Fielded in November 1992, the poll was released in April 1993. It reported that 22.1% said "possible," 65.4% said "impossible," and 12.4% said "don't know." This suggested that more than one-fifth of all Americans had doubts about the occurrence of the Holocaust, and overall more than a third either were unsure or had doubts.

Some observers expressed doubt about the results, suggesting that the double-negative structure of the question ("do you think it is impossible that the Holocaust never happened") could have confused the respondents. In early 1994, a Gallup poll sought to explore the extent to which respondents' doubt or lack of certainty was the result of question wording rather than an accurate reflection of what people believed. Half the sample in a January survey were asked the Roper question, and the other half of the sample were asked the following question: "As you know, the term Holocaust usually refers to the killing of millions of Jews in Nazi death camps during World War II. In your opinion, did the Holocaust definitely happen, probably happen, probably not happen, or definitely not happen?" The findings from the Roper question in this survey showed that over a third of respondents -- 37% -- said it seemed possible that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened, very similar to the results of the original Roper survey. The findings from the second question, however, showed that only 2% said the Holocaust probably did not happen, and 1% said it definitely did not happen, while 83% said it definitely did happen and 13% said it probably occurred.

Further follow-up questions, asking respondents why they felt the Holocaust only "probably" happened or why it probably or definitely did not happen, showed that only about 1-2% of all Americans were committed, consistent

deniers of the Holocaust, and that the doubts of others were reflective of their ignorance of history, not their denial of the event itself.

### ***Women's Progress This Century***

In 1872, Susan B. Anthony was arrested and fined \$100 for casting an illegal vote in the presidential election at a Rochester, New York polling place. In a speech subsequent to her arrest, Anthony said:

*Friends and fellow citizens: I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any state to deny.*

Almost fifty years passed before Anthony and other members of the American suffrage movement succeeded in their cause. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was finally ratified, stating: "The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Although the issue of suffrage was decided before the establishment of The Gallup Poll in 1935, the collection of surveys since then documents a wide variety of attitudes relative to the role of women in society. The questions themselves serve as a helpful reminder of the wholesale changes that gender roles have undergone this century:

- **1936:** Should a married woman earn money if she has a husband capable of supporting her? (18% yes; 82% no)



- **1937:** Are you in favor of permitting women to serve as jurors in your state? (68% favor; 29% oppose)
- **1938:** Would you favor the appointment of a woman lawyer to be a judge on the United States Supreme Court? (37% favor; 59% oppose)
- **1939:** A bill was introduced in the Massachusetts legislature prohibiting married women from working for the state or local government if their husbands earn more than \$1,000 a year. Would you favor such a law in this state? (66% yes; 31% no)
- **1942:** If women replace men in industry, should they be paid the same wages as men? (78% yes; 14% no)
- **1945:** Do you think women should or should not receive the same rate of pay as men for the same work? (77% yes; 17% no)
- **1948:** Do you approve or disapprove of women of any age wearing slacks in public, that is, for example, while shopping? (34% approve; 32% "indifferent;" 39% disapprove)
- **1949:** Do you think a woman will be elected president of the United States at any time during the next 50 years? (31% yes; 60% no)
- **1950:** Would you favor or oppose drafting young women if there is another world war? (30% yes; 66% no)
- **1951:** Speaking in terms of their day-to-day activities, do you approve or disapprove of women in this community wearing shorts, in hot weather, on the street? (21% approve; 75% disapprove)
- **1973:** Do you approve or disapprove of the use of "Ms." as an alternative to "Miss" or "Mrs."? (30% approve; 45% disapprove)
- **1979:** Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that it would be a good thing if women were allowed to be ordained as priests? (37% of Catholics say yes; 53% of Catholics, no)

- **1980:** If a draft were to become necessary, should young women be required to participate as well as young men, or not? (51% yes; 45% no)
- **1981:** Do you favor or oppose passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (to the Constitution)? (55% favor; 32% oppose)
- **1999:** Do you consider yourself a feminist, or not? (26% yes; 67% no)

Gallup trends on some of these questions show notable change over time. Perhaps the most dramatic example of the cultural shifts in gender-related attitudes is the question of voting for a woman president. When first asked in 1937, only a third of the country said they would vote for a woman for president "if she qualified in every other respect." By 1955, majority support for this proposition had been reached, at 52%, but as recently as 1971, close to a third of the country remained resistant to putting a woman in the Oval Office. In 1999, nearly unanimous support has been reached, with 92% saying they would support a woman candidate and only 7% saying they would not.

Willingness to Vote for a Woman Candidate for President

	YesNoNot		
	sure		
	%	%	%
1999	92	7	1
1987	82	12	6
1984	78	17	5
1983	80	16	4
1978	76	19	5
1975	73	23	4
1971	66	29	5

1969	53	40	7
1967	57	39	4
1963	55	41	4
1959	57	39	4
1958	54	41	5
1955	52	44	4
1949	48	48	4
1937	33	64	3

Attitudes about women in the workplace also seem to have undergone substantial change since Gallup began tracking them. When Americans were asked in 1953 whether they would prefer to work for a man or woman boss, two-thirds (66%) chose a man, while just one-quarter chose a woman, and only 5% said it would make no difference. The percentage choosing a male boss in the 1990s is now just 39%, while many more Americans (36%) now say the gender of their boss would not matter.

In recent years, Gallup Poll questions dealing with women's rights have tended to focus on the perceived amount of progress in this area. Despite the major advances in legal rights for women this century, a belief that women are at a cultural disadvantage to men persists. For example, only 26% of Americans told The Gallup Poll earlier this year that they think society today treats men and women equally. Sixty-nine percent said society treats men better than women while just 4% said it treats women better than men. According to a 1993 Gallup survey focusing on gender issues, six in ten Americans (including 69% of women and 50% of men) believed that men have the better life in this country; only 21% overall chose women while 15%

thought the genders have equal experiences. Similarly, only 39% of the public indicated in the same survey that women and men have equal job opportunities; 60% disagreed.

At the same time that Americans tend to be pessimistic about the progress made by women, there seems to be a clear recognition and appreciation for the positive impact made by the suffrage movement. As noted above, among the 18 events of the century recently rated by Gallup in terms of their importance, women gaining the right to vote in 1920 ranked number two, on par with dropping the atomic bomb in World War II.

Importantly, in a different survey assessing major events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that specifically affected women, the right to vote was ranked first out of a list of nine items rated, with 73% saying the suffrage movement had the greatest impact on women. This event exceeds all other reforms listed, including those related to marriage, sexual reproduction, and work.

Percentage Rating as Having "Highest Impact" on Women

The right to vote	73%
Birth control	63%
Opportunity for higher education	56%
Women's athletics	39%
The women's movement	37%
Changes in abortion law	37%
Changes in divorce law	29%
Access to jobs	29%
Political representation	22%

## *The Civil Rights Act of 1964*

Some observers argue that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the most important civil rights legislation in U.S. history. The act was pushed through by President Lyndon Johnson, who declared almost immediately after assuming the presidency in November 1963 that the continuation of assassinated President John F. Kennedy's efforts on civil rights would be one of his highest priorities. Due in large part to Johnson's efforts, the Civil Rights Act was passed by the House of Representatives in February 1964, and after extraordinary debate in the Senate, was passed by the Upper Chamber and signed into law in June 1964.

The heart of the bill was the section that declared it illegal to discriminate on the basis of race in public places, as follows:

## Title II

**Sec. 201.***(a) All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin.*

*(b) Each of the following establishments which serves the public is a place of public accommodation within the meaning of this title if its operations affect commerce, or if discrimination or segregation by it is supported by State action*

*(1) any inn, hotel, motel, or other establishment which provides lodging to transient guests, other than an establishment located within a building which contains not more than five rooms for rent or hire and which is actually occupied by the proprietor of such establishment as his residence;*

*(2) any restaurant, cafeteria, lunchroom, lunch counter, soda fountain, or other facility principally engaged in selling food for consumption on the premises, including, but not limited to, any such facility located on the premises of any retail establishment; or any gasoline station;*

*(3) any motion picture house, theater, concert hall, sports arena, stadium or other place of exhibition or entertainment;*

How did the public react to this sweeping legislation that in parts of the country -- particularly the South -- upset social patterns that had been in place for centuries? Gallup polls conducted at the time showed that reaction was generally positive. As far back as June 1961, in fact, Gallup asked the public to react to Supreme Court decisions that ruled against school segregation and segregation on trains, buses and in public waiting rooms. The majority of the public at that time said they approved of the Supreme Court's decisions:

*The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that racial segregation in the public schools is illegal. This means that all children, no matter what their race, must be allowed to go to the same schools. Do you approve or disapprove of this decision?*

Approve 63%

Disapprove 32

No opinion 5

*The Supreme Court has also ruled that racial segregation on trains, buses, and in public waiting rooms must end. Do you approve or disapprove of this ruling?*

Approve 66%

Disapprove 28

No opinion 6

*Both questions asked May 28-June 2, 1961*

The Gallup Poll also tracked a question that summarized the thrust of the proposed new Civil Rights Act from 1963 through 1964. In a June 1963 poll, taken while John F. Kennedy was still president, there was mixed reaction to the idea of racial equality in public places, with a slight plurality -- 49% -- in favor, compared to 42% opposed. By August 1963, support had moved above 50%, and in 1964, with LBJ in the White House and the Act moving through Congress, support shifted to around 60%. After the civil rights legislation was passed, in two polls conducted in September and October 1964, roughly 60% of the public continued to approve of the measure, with roughly 30% disapproving.

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## **Reaction of the American Public to a New Civil Rights Law**

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	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Disapprove</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>
June 21-16, 1963*	49%	42	9
August 15-20, 1963*	54%	38	8
January 2-7, 1964*	61%	31	8
<b>Civil Rights Act Signed Into Law in June 1964</b>			
September 1964**	59%	31	10
October 1964**	58%	31	10

*\*How would you feel about a law which would give all persons -- Negro as well as white -- the right to be served in public places such as hotels, restaurants, theaters, and similar establishments ?? would you like to see Congress pass such a law, or not?*

*\*\*As you know, a civil rights law was recently passed by Congress and signed by the president. In general, do you approve or disapprove of this law?*

As might be predicted, significantly different reactions to the new legislation by Americans of different races and regions of the country were noted by Gallup analysts at the time these surveys were conducted. For example, in the January 1964 poll, Gallup reported that 71% of whites outside of the South approved, compared to only 20% of whites living in the South who approved.

Despite the generally positive reaction to the new civil rights legislation, Gallup polling during the period of the civil rights movement captured mixed feelings among the American public about the speed with which integration and civil rights legislation should be implemented. For instance, as far back as 1961, it was obvious that the public wanted changes in racial laws and patterns to be implemented slowly, rather than all at once:



*Do you think integration should be brought about gradually, or do you think every means should be used to bring it about in the near future?*

Gradually 61%

Near future 23

NEVER (vol.) 9

No opinion 7

*May 28-June 2, 1961*

By October 1964, when polls were showing that about six out of ten Americans supported the new civil rights legislation, almost the same percentage -- 57% -- said that the pace of implementation of integration was too fast:

*On the whole, do you think that racial integration of Negroes in this country is going ahead too fast or not fast enough?*

Too fast 57%

Not fast enough 18

ABOUT RIGHT (vol.) 20

Don't Know 6

*October 1964*

And by 1965, the idea that the federal government was doing too much for the blacks in this country and moving too fast had plurality support over the idea that the federal government was not doing enough or moving too slow:

*Generally speaking, do you, yourself, feel that the federal government in Washington is not doing enough for the Negro or is doing too much for the Negro?*

Not doing enough	24%
Doing too much	34
ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT (vol.)	36
Don't Know	7

*Now, how about the new Civil Rights Law passed last year guaranteeing Negro voting rights and the right of Negroes to be served in public places such as restaurants, hotels, and theaters. Would you say the federal government was moving too fast to enforce this new law, or not fast enough?*

Too fast	42%
Not fast enough	25
ABOUT RIGHT (vol.)	29
Don't Know	5

*Both asked in February 1965*

(vol.) = volunteered response

## Have Broader Racial Attitudes Shifted Over Time?

Whether a result of specific civil rights legislation or not, one of the most striking changes in American racial attitudes has been the change over time in the overt expression of racially negative attitudes. Gallup summarized these changes in a 1997 Gallup Poll Social Audit of the trends in racial attitudes:

Whites express tolerant racial views across a variety of measures, and a majority of whites indicate a preference for living, working and sending their children to school in a mixed racial environment. A majority of whites say they would not object if blacks in great numbers moved into their neighborhood, or if their child went to a school which was majority black. Almost no whites would object to voting for a black for President, and six out of ten now approve of interracial marriage. The over time changes in a number of these attitudes have been profound. There has thus been a significant decline in the past several decades in the number of whites who express overtly prejudicial sentiments.

Willingness to Vote for a Black for President

The percentage of the American public willing to vote for a black for president has shifted over time from just over a third (in 1958) to over 90% (in 1999). The affirmative percentage in response to this question stayed below 40% until 1959, moved to about 50% in the early '60s as the civil rights laws were being passed, and then jumped by the late 1960s to closer to 70%. By 1997, the percentage was at 93%, and in a 1999 poll, it was 95%.

*If your party nominated a generally well-qualified person for president and that person happened to be black, would you vote for that person?*

		Yes	No	DK/ Refused	Sample Size
		%	%	%	
TOTAL	97 Jan 4-Feb 28	93	4	3	3,036
	87 Jul 10-13	79	13	8	1,607
	84 Jul 27-30	77	16	7	1,579
	83 Mar 11-14	77	16	7	1,558

	78 Jul 21-24 <sup>1-B</sup>	76	18	5	1,555
	71 Oct 8-11 <sup>1-C</sup>	69	23	7	1,526
	69 Mar 12-17 <sup>1-C</sup>	66	24	10	1,634
	67 Apr 19-24 <sup>1-C</sup>	53	41	6	2,190
	65 Jul 16-21 <sup>1-C</sup>	59	34	7	2,407
	63 Aug 15-20 <sup>1-C</sup>	48	45	7	1,588
	61 Aug 24-29 <sup>1-C</sup>	50	41	9	1,534
	59 Dec 10-15 <sup>1-C</sup>	49	46	5	1,527
	58 Sep 10-15 <sup>1-C</sup>	38	54	8	1,514
	58 Jul 30-Aug 4 <sup>1-C</sup>	37	53	10	1,621
<b>BLACKS</b>	<b>97 Jan 4-Feb 28</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1,269</b>
	87 Jul 10-13	95	2	3	166
	84 Jul 27-30	77	17	6	165
	83 Mar 11-14	85	4	11	133
	78 Jul 21-24 <sup>1-B</sup>	91	5	4	152
	71 Oct 8-11 <sup>1-C</sup>	88	6	6	111
	69 Mar 12-17 <sup>xt</sup>	97	0	3	108
	67 Apr 19-24 <sup>1-C</sup>	90	8	2	117
	65 Jul 16-21 <sup>1-C</sup>	97	2	1	178
	63 Aug 15-20 <sup>1-C</sup>	93	4	3	189
	61 Aug 24-29 <sup>1-C</sup>	92	3	5	141
	59 Dec 10-15 <sup>1-C</sup>	93	2	4	136
	58 Sep 10-15 <sup>1-C</sup>	85	7	7	102
	58 Jul 30-Aug 4 <sup>1-C</sup>	67	16	17	133
<b>WHITES</b>	<b>97 Jan 4-Feb 28</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1,680</b>

87 Jul 10-13	77	15	8	1,425
84 Jul 27-30	77	16	7	1,365
83 Mar 11-14	76	18	6	1,387
78 Jul 21-24 <sup>1-B</sup>	75	20	5	1,394
71 Oct 8-11 <sup>1-C</sup>	68	25	7	1,396
69 Mar 12-17 <sup>1-C</sup>	63	26	10	1,515
67 Apr 19-24 <sup>1-C</sup>	49	45	7	1,377
65 Jul 16-21 <sup>1-C</sup>	53	39	8	1,392
63 Aug 15-20 <sup>1-C</sup>	41	51	8	1,390
61 Aug 24-29 <sup>1-C</sup>	46	45	9	1,389
59 Dec 10-15 <sup>1-C</sup>	44	51	5	1,371
58 Sep 10-15 <sup>1-C</sup>	34	58	8	1,410
58 Jul 30-Aug 4 <sup>1-C</sup>	35	56	9	1,484

#### Wording Notes:

<sup>1</sup>There is always/there will be much discussion about the qualifications of presidential candidates - their education, age, religion, race and the like. If your party nominated...

<sup>B</sup>Black

<sup>C</sup>Negro/Colored

#### Perception of Equality of Opportunity in Terms of Jobs

One of the major changes in American attitudes over time has been the increase in the perception that blacks have the same chance as whites to get any type of job for which they are qualified. The major changes on this measure took place, significantly, in the years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed:

*In general, do you think that blacks have as good a chance as white people in your community to get any kind of job for which they are qualified, or don't you think they have as good a chance?*

		<b>Have Chance</b>	<b>Don't Have Chance</b>	<b>DK/ Refused</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
		%	%	%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97 Jan 4-Feb 28</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,036</b>
	95 Oct 19-22	71	25	4	1,229
	95 Mar 17-19	64	32	4	1,220
	93 Aug 23-25	65	31	4	1,065
	91 Jun 13-16	68	26	6	990
	90 Jun 7-10	69	23	8	1,233
	89 Dec 7-10	65	28	7	1,235
	78 Jul 7-10	67	24	9	1,555
	63 Jun 21-26	39	48	13	1,605
	63 Mar	43	48	9	N/A
<b>BLACKS</b>	<b>97 Jan 4-Feb 28</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,269</b>
	95 Oct 19-22	52	45	3	321
	95 Mar 17-19	36	62	2	324
	93 Aug 23-25	30	66	4	307
	91 Jun 13-16	40	58	2	303
	90 Jun 7-10	43	54	3	96
	89 Dec 7-10	43	54	3	102
	78 Jul 7-10	35	57	8	204

63 Jun 21-26	23	74	3	244
63 Mar	24	74	2	N/A
<b>WHITES 97 Jan 4-Feb</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,680</b>
<b>28</b>				
95 Oct 19-22	75	21	4	833
95 Mar 17-19	68	27	5	837
93 Aug 23-25	70	27	3	725
91 Jun 13-16	70	23	7	650
90 Jun 7-10	73	20	7	1,062
89 Dec 7-10	68	25	7	1,054
78 Jul 7-10	73	19	9	1,336
63 Jun 21-26	41	45	14	1,348
63 Mar	46	44	10	N/A

## The Legacy of the Civil Rights Act: Perceptions of Harmony Between the Races as the Century Closes

Despite the types of progress in racial attitudes shown above, a persistent pattern of differential perceptions between black and whites of the state of race relations in this country continues. For example, in two different polls conducted in 1997 and 1998, whites and blacks evinced two distinctly different views of how well blacks are treated in the local areas where they live. Three-quarters of whites felt that blacks were treated the same as whites in their local community, compared to only 43% of blacks.

*Now, let's talk about your community. In your opinion, how well do you think blacks are treated in your community - the same as whites are, not very well, or badly?*

		Same as	Not Very	BadlyNo	Sample	
		Whites	Well	OpinionSize		
		%	%	%	%	
TOTAL	98 Aug 13-Oct 26	71	20	3	6	2,004
	97 Jan 4-Feb 28	72	18	3	7	3,036
	90 Jun 7-10	63	21	3	13	1,233
	87 Jan 16-19	61	24	4	12	1,562
	80 Dec 5-8	63	20	5	13	1,549
	80 May 30 - Jun 2	65	19	4	11	1,597
	78 Jul 7-10	65	18	4	13	1,555
	68 May 2-7	70	17	3	10	1,507
	67 Jul 13-18	72	15	2	11	1,518
	67 Jun 22-27	73	18	2	7	1,549
	65 Apr 2-7	65	18	2	15	1,531
	64 Feb 28-Mar 5	52	24	5	18	1,662
	63 Jul 18-23	61	23	3	13	1,573
	BLACKS	98 Aug 13-Oct 26	43	43	7	7
97 Jan 4-Feb 28		49	38	7	6	1,269
90 Jun 7-10		37	43	14	6	96
87 Jan 16-19		44	44	8	4	150



80 Dec 5-8	35	41	16	8	149
80 May 30 - Jun 2	44	31	14	10	190
78 Jul 7-10	26	51	12	11	204
68 May 2-7	26	51	13	10	108
67 Jul 13-18	44	34	9	12	99
67 Jun 22-27	41	49	9	1	N/A
65 Apr 2-7	25	52	10	13	126
64 Feb 28-Mar 5	19	57	18	6	181
63 Jul 18-23	23	57	7	13	177
<b>WHITES</b> 98 Aug 13-Oct 26	<b>76</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>942</b>
97 Jan 4-Feb 28	76	15	2	7	1,680
90 Jun 7-10	66	18	2	14	1,062
87 Jan 16-19	64	21	3	12	1,385
80 Dec 5-8	67	17	3	13	1,381
80 May 30 - Jun 2	68	17	3	12	1,393
78 Jul 7-10	71	13	3	13	1,336
68 May 2-7	73	14	3	9	1,392
67 Jul 13-18	74	14	1	11	1,402
67 Jun 22-27	76	15	1	8	N/A
65 Apr 2-7	69	15	2	15	1,531

08/10/2018	The Most Important Events of the Century From the Viewpoint of the People					
64 Feb 28-Mar	57	20	3	21	1,478	
5						
63 Jul 18-23	62	17	3	19	1,388	

As these findings suggest, in the final analysis, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not bring about a state in which all racial differences, or at least the perceptions of differences, were erased. Significantly, only about 48% of Americans in a recent Gallup poll said that relations between whites and blacks in this country were at least somewhat good (44% said somewhat good, 4% very good), while 27% said relations were bad (23% somewhat bad, 4% very bad), and 19% said they were somewhere in between.

Additionally, there is actually somewhat more, rather than less, pessimism now than there was in the early 1960s about the future of the relationship between the races. In a 1963 poll conducted by the National Opinion Research Company, 42% of Americans said "relations between blacks and whites will always be a problem for the United States," while 55% said that a solution "will eventually be worked out." In 1998, the percentage feeling race relations will always be a problem was actually higher, at 56%, while only 41% said that a solution will eventually be worked out. This increased pessimism was at about the same level among both whites and blacks.

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CONTACT: Gallup World Headquarters, 901 F Street, Washington, D.C., 20001, U.S.A  
+1 202.715.3030

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