Food Policy And The Political Environment

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A Country Divided

President’s Approval Rating

- Disapprove: 46%
- Approve: 49%
- Not sure: 5%

Trial Heat for President

- Voting for Romney: 43%
- Voting for Obama: 49%
- Other/undecided: 8%

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal survey, April 2012
### A Roiling Electorate

- **59%** say the country is off on the wrong track:
  - U.S. is headed in right direction: **33%**
  - U.S. is off on wrong track: **59%**

- Feelings toward the parties are mixed at best:
  - **Democratic Party**
    - Positive: **39%**
    - Negative: **38%**
  - **Republican Party**
    - Positive: **33%**
    - Negative: **43%**

- **56%** would vote to defeat every member of Congress, including their own:
  - Would not vote to defeat all: **40%**
  - Would vote to defeat all members of Congress if I could: **56%**

Sources: NBC News/Wall Street Journal surveys, January & April 2012
It’s The Economy, Stupid

- 54% have negative views of the economy today and are pessimistic about the next 12 months.

- Workers predict wage *deflation* of 0.3%.

- Consumers predict price *inflation* of 4.8%.

- For the fourth straight year, homeowners expect the value of their home to decrease.

Source: CNBC survey, March 2012
The Public Is Focused On The Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Issues Facing the U.S.</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The economy</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment/jobs</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with government/politicians</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget deficit</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of money</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical/moral decline</td>
<td>3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gallup, Feb 2012
Vote Of “No Confidence” In Washington

How much confidence do you have that the government in Washington will make progress over the next year on the most important problems facing the country?

Source: National Journal survey, April 2012
What Is Government’s Role?

Government should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people

Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal surveys


32%  41%  43%  38%  45%  47%  51%  46%
Partisans Differ On Role Of Government

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal survey, June 2011
Government is responsible for things we cannot do ourselves.
Do you think the federal government should be responsible for ensuring that food is safe to eat, or is this something the federal government should not have responsibility for?

85%
Federal government should be responsible for food safety

11%
Should not be responsible

Government Should Be Responsible
- Democrats: 94%
- Independents: 81%
- Republicans: 77%
- Tea Party supporters: 67%

Source: Pew Health Group survey, May 2011
Americans Strongly Endorse Food Safety Measures

Support For Federal Government Putting Various Food Safety Measures in Place

- Strongly support: 89%
- Support: 61%
- Oppose: 8%

Source: Pew Health Group survey, July 2009
Voters Also Place School Foods In Government’s Purview

Support For Increased Nutritional Standards for School Meals

- 62% Support
- 23% Oppose

Support for Nutrition Standards for Vending Machines/A La Carte Foods in Schools

- 80% Support
- 17% Oppose

Sources: Pew Health Group survey, Dec 2010; RWJF survey, Jan 2012
Better And Safer Food Worth The Cost

View of 1% to 3% Increase in Food Prices to Have New Food Safety Measures

- 74% Worth it
- 18% Not worth it

View of 1% Increase of $135 Million Per Year for Healthier School Meals

- 61% Favor
- 22% Oppose

Sources: Pew Health Group surveys, May 2011, Dec 2010
The Bottom Line

◆ Politically, people are not seeing things in red and blue, they’re seeing them in black and white.

◆ The public is angry and jaded and worried about the future.

◆ Most have given up on Washington’s ability to and interest in making things better.

◆ BUT Americans still want a role for government in helping them be safe and healthy.

◆ It’s not government as Big Brother or the Nanny State, it’s government as a common-sense partner.