

A COMMISSION SURVEY

CHANGING PUBLIC ATTITUDES ON GOVERNMENTS AND TAXES

1994

Advisory Commission on
Intergovernmental Relations
Washington, DC 20575



S-23

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FOREWORD

This 1994 report presents the 23rd annual public opinion survey commissioned by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR). The sample for the poll was 1,003 adults aged 18 and older. The margin of error for samples of this size, at the 95 percent level of confidence, is plus or minus 2 to 4 percentage points, depending on the percentage response to the question.

The Gallup Organization has conducted the poll for ACIR since 1983, using the Gallup Personal Omnibus. A description of the survey method appears on page 8.

This year ACIR asked just two questions. The report contains the 1994 survey results only. Detailed data for each question are in Appendix A.

The analysis of the poll results was prepared by Seth B. Benjamin, a former ACIR Senior Analyst, under the direction of Bruce D. McDowell, Director of Government Policy Research. Joan Casey edited the report for publication.

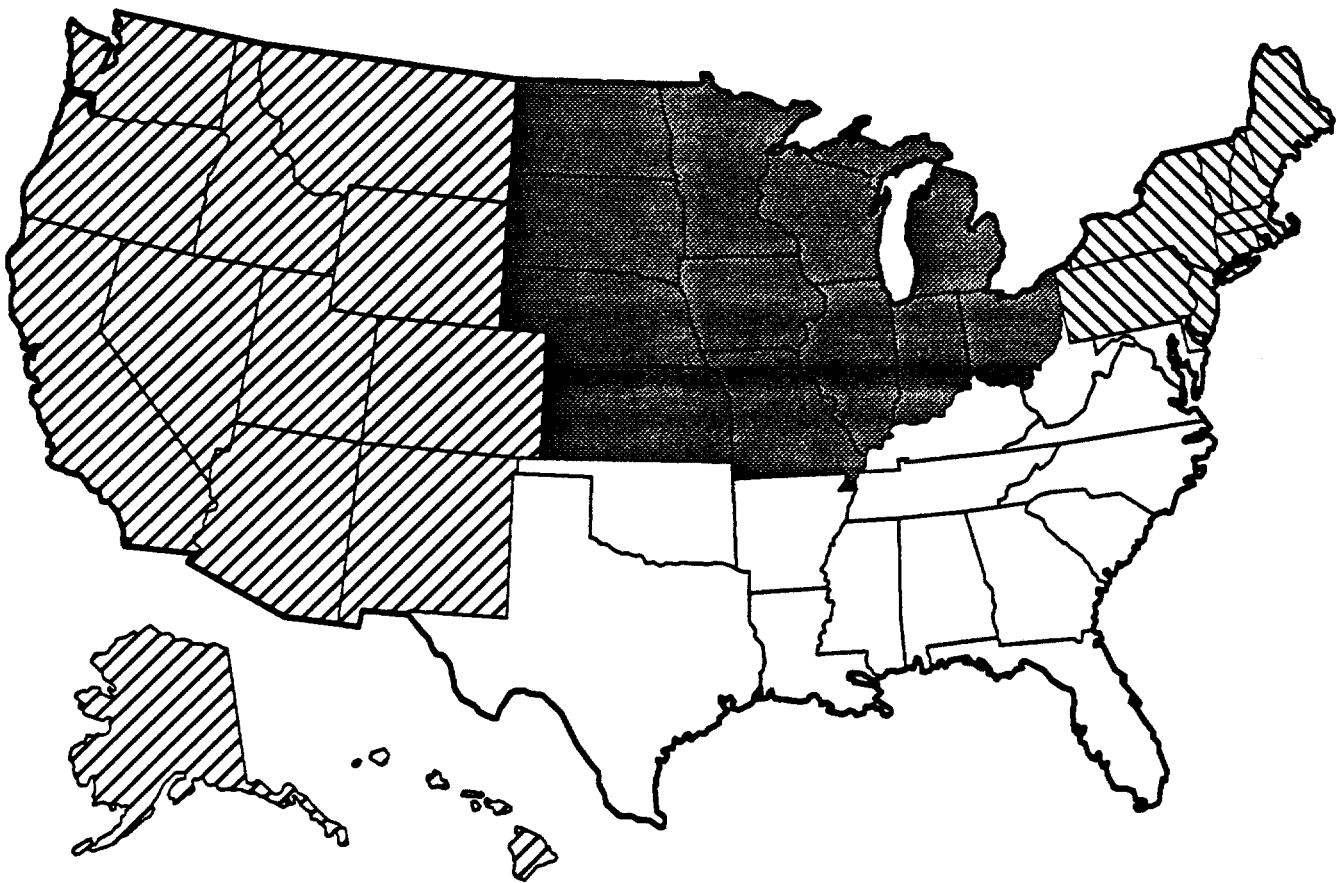
All interpretations of the data are those of the ACIR staff.

William E. Davis III
Executive Director

CONTENTS

Survey Highlights	1
The Survey	3
<i>Which Do You Think is the Worst Tax—That is, the Least Fair?</i>	3
<i>From Which Level of Government Do You Feel You Get</i> <i>the Least for Your Money?</i>	6
The Survey Method	8
Appendix A - Detailed Results	
Table A1 Which Do You Think is the Worst Tax—That is, the Least Fair: Federal Income Tax, Social Security Tax, State Income Tax, State Sales Tax, Local Property Tax?	11
Table A2 From Which Level of Government Do You Feel You Get the Least for Your Money?	12
Appendix B - Index to Questions, 1972-1994	
<i>Taxes</i>	14
<i>Spending</i>	15
<i>Aid Programs</i>	16
<i>Government Power and Efficiency</i>	17
<i>Trust and Confidence in Government</i>	18
<i>Government Functions</i>	18
<i>Other</i>	20

Regions and States



Northeast

Connecticut
 Maine
 Massachusetts
 New Hampshire
 New Jersey
 New York
 Pennsylvania
 Rhode Island
 Vermont

Midwest*

Illinois
 Indiana
 Iowa
 Kansas
 Michigan
 Minnesota
 Missouri
 Nebraska
 North Dakota
 Ohio
 South Dakota
 Wisconsin

South

Alabama
 Arkansas
 Delaware
 District of Columbia
 Florida
 Georgia
 Kentucky
 Louisiana
 Maryland
 Mississippi
 North Carolina
 Oklahoma
 South Carolina
 Tennessee
 Texas
 Virginia
 West Virginia

West

Alaska
 Arizona
 California
 Colorado
 Hawaii
 Idaho
 Montana
 Nevada
 New Mexico
 Oregon
 Utah
 Washington
 Wyoming

*Gallup classifies this region as "North," and that designation is used in the tables in Appendix A.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

In its 1994 annual survey, *Changing Public Attitudes on Governments and Taxes*, ACIR asked just two long-term trend questions:

- Which do you think is the worst tax - that is, the least fair: federal income tax, federal Social Security tax, state income tax, state sales tax, or local property tax?
- From which level of government do you feel you get the least for your money?

The federal income tax is in a virtual tie with the local property tax as worst—27 percent and 28 percent.

The federal government was selected by far more Americans than were state governments and local governments as giving the least for taxpayers' money—46 percent, 21 percent, and 19 percent, respectively (see Table 1).

<i>Table 1</i> The Public's 1994 Ratings of Federal, State, and Local Governments <i>(percent)</i>					
Government	Worst Tax				Least for Money
	Income	Social Security	Sales	Property	
Federal	27	12			46
State	7		14		21
Local				28	19

As in past years, the fewest Americans (7 percent) think state income taxes are worst. State sales taxes are rated least fair by 14 percent.

The Social Security tax is considered worst by 12 percent of Americans.

The worst-tax question including Social Security has been asked five times beginning in 1988. The least-for-your-money question has been asked four times beginning in 1989. Beginning in 1990, these questions have been asked every other year. The comparisons among the governments and their taxes have remained fairly stable (see Figures 1 and 2). The only consistent trend is a decline in the number of respondents judging the Social Security tax to be worst.

Figure 1

Which Do You Think is the *Worst* Tax – That is, the *Least* Fair:
 Federal Income Tax, Social Security Tax, State Income Tax,
 State Sales Tax or Local Property Tax?

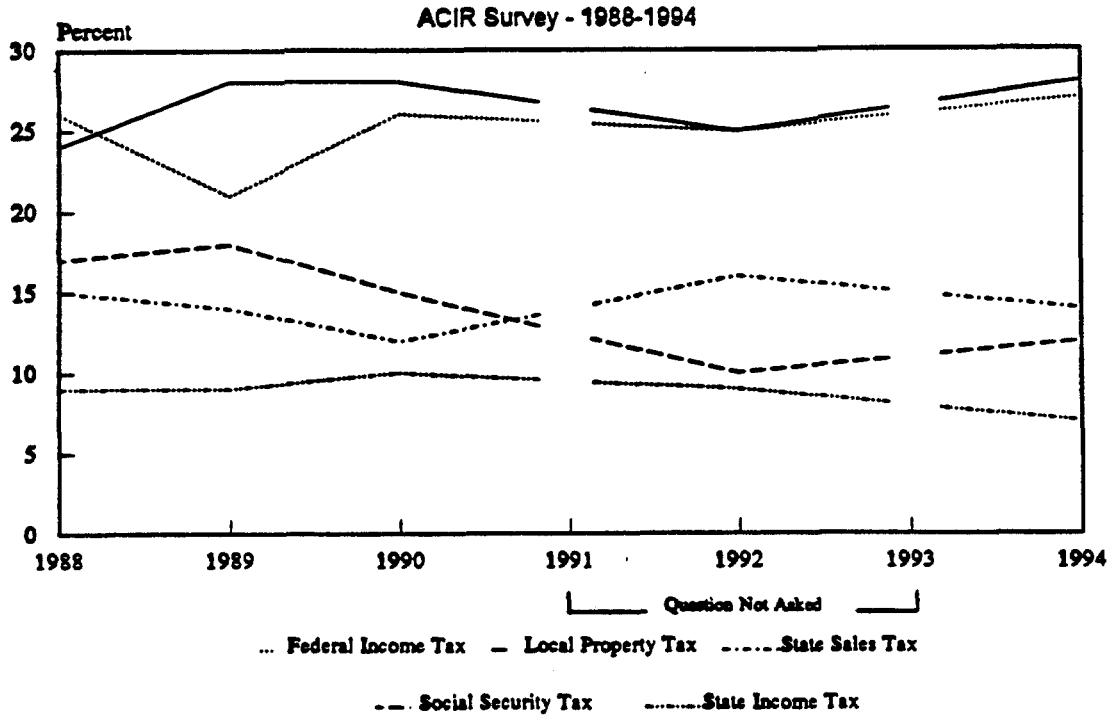
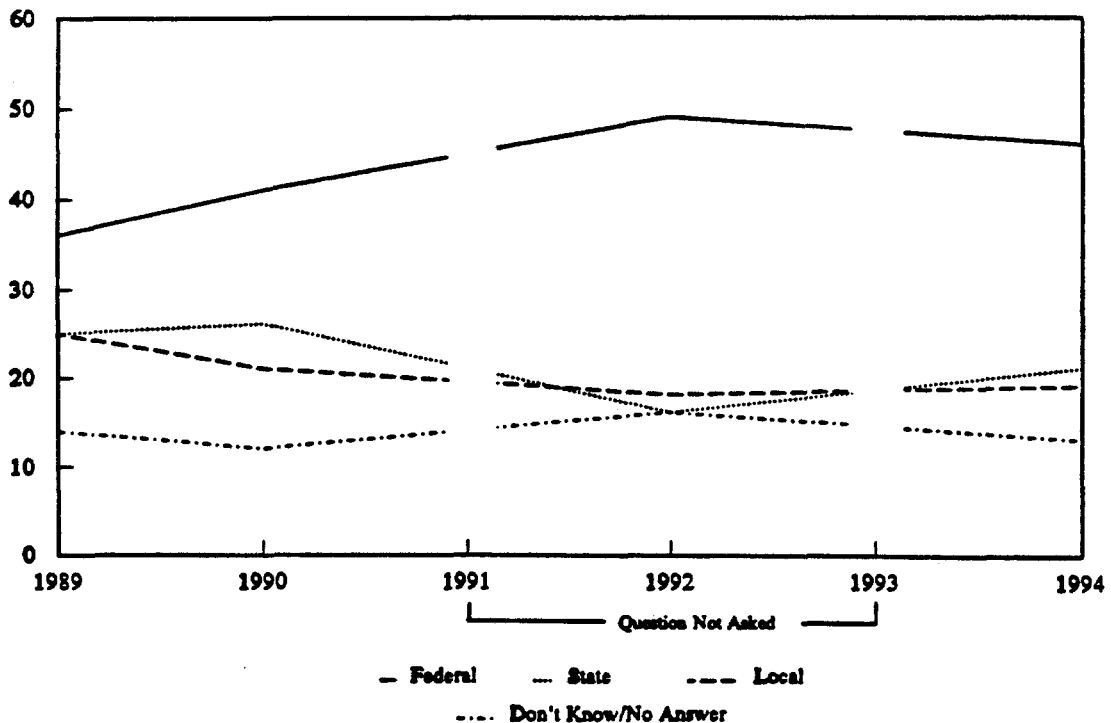


Figure 2

From Which Level of Government Do You Feel You Get *Least* for Your Money:
 Federal, State, Local?

ACIR Survey - 1989-1994



THE SURVEY

Which Do You Think is the Worst Tax— That is, the Least Fair?

In 1994, 28 percent of Americans chose the local property tax as the worst tax, or the least fair, about the same as the federal income tax, which 27 percent consider worst. The state sales tax is third, with 14 percent of Americans viewing it as worst, followed by the Social Security tax with 12 percent and the state income tax with 7 percent. Some 11 percent of Americans did not know or did not answer the question.

Trends

Since this question was first asked in 1988, the federal income tax and the local property tax have been viewed consistently as worst by substantially larger percentages than the other taxes. Americans also have viewed the state income tax most favorably. The Social Security tax and the state sales tax have occupied a middle ground in public opinion, but there has been a more negative view of the state sales tax in recent years and a more positive attitude toward the Social Security tax (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Specifically:

- The percentages for both the property tax and the federal income tax were higher this year than in 1992. Then, the federal income tax and the local property tax were considered worst by 25 percent of Americans. The federal income tax also did better in 1990 (26 percent), but the property tax was rated the same as this year (28 percent).
- State sales taxes were third in all three years, but the percentage was higher in 1992 (16 percent) and lower in 1990 (12 percent).
- Fewer Americans rated the state income tax worst in 1994 than the 9 percent in 1992 and 10 percent in 1990.
- The Social Security tax dropped from 15 percent in 1990 to 10 percent in 1992, then rose this year.
- The percentage of people not responding to the question rose from 9 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 1992, then dropped again this year (see Table 2).

Table 2
**Which Do You Think is the Worst Tax—
 That is, the Least Fair?**
(percent)

Year	Federal Income Tax	Social Security Tax	State Income Tax	State Sales Tax	Local Property Tax	Don't Know/ No Answer
1994	27%	12%	7%	14%	28%	11%
1993			Question Not Asked			
1992	25	10	9	16	25	15
1991			Question Not Asked			
1990	26	15	10	12	28	9
1989	21	18	9	14	28	10
1988	26	17	9	15	24	9

High and Low Responses

Federal Income Tax. The tax did best among 18-24-year-olds (21 percent) and those over 65 (17 percent), those with an incomplete high school education (22 percent), persons in families earning \$25,000-29,999 (18 percent), those not in the labor force (21 percent), retirees (21 percent), and residents of the Northeast (22 percent). The groups giving the tax the most negative ratings were those aged 25-34 and 35-44 (35 and 34 percent), college graduates (37 percent), professionals/managers/owners (34 percent), and residents of the South (32 percent).

Social Security Tax. Most groups of respondents rated the tax about the same as the average response of 12 percent. Respondents who did not complete high school gave it the best rating (8 percent). Among individuals in families with a household income of \$25,000-29,999 and those living in the West, 18 percent considered the tax least fair.

State Income Tax. This tax fared best overall in the survey. Again, subgroups varied little from the average 7 percent response rate. The tax did best among retired persons (4 percent) and those living in the North (5 percent), and worst with renters (12 percent) and residents of the Northeast (11 percent).

State Sales Tax. This tax did not produce any significant differences in attitudes from the overall 14 percent.

Local Property Tax. This tax traditionally vies with the federal income tax as the worst. Americans over age 45 and retirees gave the highest negative ratings (36 percent and 38 percent). Homeowners were more negative than renters (33 percent to 18 percent). The same was true for those not in the labor force and those employed (34 percent to 26 percent). The tax got the fewest negative responses among professionals (24 percent), sales and clerical employees (23 percent), and those under age 35 (22 percent). Regionally, those living in the Northeast and the North liked the property tax least (33 percent), compared to Westerners (21 percent). There was a substantial difference in the percentage of Americans in rural areas (35 percent) and those living in central cities (21 percent) citing the property tax as worst.

***From Which Level of Government Do You Feel You Get
the Least for Your Money?***

Americans chose the federal government by far as giving them the *least* for their money (46 percent). State government was a distant second with 21 percent, followed by local government at 19 percent. Some 13 percent did not answer the question.

Trends

- The trend for the *federal government has worsened since 1989*, the first time this question was asked. In 1992, the federal government fared worst, with 49 percent of Americans saying it gave them the least for their money. It did better in 1989 (36 percent) and 1990 (41 percent).
- There has been a *slight improvement* in opinion on the *states*. They did not do as well this year as in 1992, when only 16 percent viewed them as giving the least for their money, but better than the 25 percent in 1989 and 26 percent in 1990.
- *Local government* has enjoyed a *consistent improvement* in the public perception of value given for the money spent. Local governments fared about the same as in 1992 (18 percent), but better than the 25 percent tie with state government in 1989 and 21 percent in 1990 (see Figure 2 and Table 3.)

Table 3
From Which Level of Government
Do You Feel You Get the *Least* for Your Money?
(percent)

Year	Federal	State	Local	Don't Know/ No Answer
1994	46	21	19	13
1993		Question Not Asked		
1992	49	16	18	16
1991		Question Not Asked		
1990	41	26	21	12
1989	36	25	25	14

High and Low Responses

Federal Government. Those giving the federal government the worst rating were college graduates (59 percent), those in the employment categories of white

collar/sales/clerical (58 percent) and professionals/managers/owners (56 percent), male heads of household and those aged 35-44 (55 percent), persons in families earning above \$25,000 (53 percent) with the \$40,000+ income group the most negative (56 percent), and males and residents of the North and central cities (52 percent).

The federal government did better among blue collar employees and retirees (43 percent), suburbanites (42 percent), females and female heads of household (41 percent), the 18-24 age group (39 percent), persons not in the labor force (38 percent), those who did not finish high school (36 percent), and those earning less than \$15,000 (33 percent).

State Government. Those living in the Northeast (29 percent), in the suburbs (25 percent), and with an incomplete college education (26 percent) most often said the state gives them least for their tax money. State government fared better in the South (16 percent) and the North (17 percent).

Local Government. Those living in the South (27 percent), persons in families with less than \$15,000 annual income and rural respondents (26 percent), and the 25-34 age group and blacks (24 percent) cited local governments most often as giving them the least for their money. College graduates (13 percent) and residents of the Northeast (15 percent) least often said that local governments gives them the least for their money.

THE SURVEY METHOD

This report presents the findings of a personal interview research survey conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1,003 men and women, 18 years of age or over, living in private households in the United States. To ensure the representativeness of the sample, data were weighted for demographic variables. Therefore, the results may be projected to the total adult civilian population.

Interviewing for the original survey was completed June 17 through July 6, 1994, by members of the Gallup Personal Omnibus national interviewing staff. All interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents.

Survey Categories

The Appendix tables in this report present detailed survey results. Details may not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

The following definitions are provided for some of the standard breakdowns by which the data are analyzed. Other breakdowns are self-explanatory.

Occupation categories include several types of positions. Examples are listed below.

Professional/Manager/Owner: executives, professionals, technical and kindred workers, managers, officials, and proprietors.

White Collar/Sales/Clerical: clerical, office, and secretarial workers; and sales agents and workers.

Blue Collar: skilled and semi-skilled workers, laborers and service workers, and craftsmen.

Metropolitan size groupings are determined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Metropolitan areas consist of two parts: (1) "central city" areas with populations of 50,000 or more in a central city or combination of central cities of a metropolitan area and (2) "fringe areas" with urban concentrations of population outside but closely associated with the central city or cities.

Geographic regions are defined as follows:

Northeast—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont.

North—Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

South—Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas.

West—Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.

Income groups are for 1993 total household income before taxes.

Sampling tolerances for the survey are plus or minus 2 to 4 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence for the total sample.

APPENDIX A

Table A1
1994

Which Do You Think is the *Worst* Tax - That is, the *Least* Fair: Federal Income Tax, Social Security Tax, State Income Tax, State Sales Tax, Local Property Tax?

	(percent)					
	Federal Income Tax	Social Security Tax	State Income Tax	State Sales Tax	Local Property Tax	Don't Know No Answer
Total Public	27.2	12.4	7.4	13.6	28.4	11.0
Male	28.9	12.0	7.9	11.9	28.5	10.8
Female	25.6	12.8	6.9	15.2	28.3	11.2
Total Head of Household	28.3	12.6	6.7	13.3	29.0	10.1
Male Head	29.5	11.1	7.1	12.2	30.5	9.5
Female Head	27.2	13.9	6.3	14.2	27.7	10.7
Under 35 Years of Age	29.9	14.2	9.3	13.2	21.8	11.5
18-24	21.1	14.4	10.2	16.9	20.9	16.5
25-34	34.6	14.1	8.8	11.3	22.2	8.9
35-44	33.8	13.8	6.9	11.5	26.8	7.2
45-65	24.1	10.6	7.2	15.1	33.9	9.1
Over 65	17.1	10.7	5.0	13.6	35.9	17.7
High School Incomplete	21.5	8.2	7.2	15.8	30.9	16.4
High School Graduate	26.1	14.7	6.9	11.2	30.3	10.8
College Incomplete	24.4	14.1	8.3	17.2	27.4	8.6
College Graduate	37.3	9.6	7.8	13.0	24.0	8.3
Household Income: Under \$15K	22.8	11.1	7.3	15.9	28.3	14.6
\$15-24.9K	28.4	12.6	6.1	11.5	29.8	11.7
\$25K+	27.6	12.4	8.5	14.0	29.6	8.0
\$25-29.9K	18.4	17.6	6.5	15.0	31.5	11.0
\$30-39.9K	29.9	12.7	12.3	17.3	22.3	5.6
\$40K+	28.9	10.6	6.7	11.7	33.6	8.5
Own	26.1	12.8	5.5	12.8	33.3	9.5
Rent	29.7	11.1	11.6	15.4	17.6	14.6
White	26.0	12.8	7.6	13.0	29.0	11.5
Black	32.1	11.5	5.8	17.7	26.8	6.0
Employed	30.8	13.3	8.4	13.1	25.5	9.0
Employed Female	29.4	14.6	6.7	15.8	24.7	8.8
Not Employed	21.0	11.5	6.1	14.0	33.5	13.9
Non Employed Female	20.6	11.4	7.4	14.2	33.0	13.4
Professional/Manager/Owner	34.4	12.0	7.6	12.1	23.8	10.1
White Collar/Sales/Clerical	24.8	19.6	5.1	19.6	22.5	8.3
Blue Collar	26.8	10.9	8.8	12.7	30.3	10.4
Retired	21.4	10.1	4.3	14.3	37.9	11.8
Married	28.9	12.9	7.7	12.1	29.3	9.2
Not Married	24.9	11.8	7.0	15.7	27.1	13.5
Household Size: 1-2 People	27.6	12.8	7.2	13.0	28.1	11.2
3-4 People	24.3	11.2	8.5	15.5	31.4	9.1
5+ People	29.1	11.2	5.7	21.0	15.4	17.6
Children in Household under 18	26.7	13.4	7.5	15.8	27.9	8.7
No Children	27.6	11.9	7.7	11.9	28.9	12.0
Northeast	21.9	9.5	10.7	16.0	33.1	8.8
North	25.7	13.9	4.9	15.2	33.0	7.3
South	31.7	10.3	6.7	13.3	27.0	11.2
West	25.9	17.9	8.3	9.8	20.8	17.2
Nonmetro	27.7	13.2	6.4	12.5	34.7	5.4
Metro: 50,000 and over						
Fringe	27.9	10.0	8.5	13.1	28.9	11.6
Central City	26.0	13.7	7.5	15.2	21.2	16.4

Table A2
1994

From Which Level of Government Do You Feel You Get the *Least* for Your Money -
Federal, State, or Local?

	Federal	State	Local	Don't Know No Answer
Total Public	46.1	21.2	19.3	13.3
Male	51.9	20.3	16.6	11.2
Female	40.7	22.1	21.9	15.4
Total Head of Household	47.2	21.1	18.8	12.8
Male Head	54.7	19.1	16.5	9.7
Female Head	40.8	22.8	20.8	15.5
Under 35 Years of Age	44.1	19.7	21.8	14.4
18-24	39.2	22.9	18.2	19.7
25-34	46.7	18.0	23.6	11.6
35-44	55.0	19.9	18.7	6.5
45-65	47.2	22.7	17.6	12.5
Over 65	37.5	24.1	17.7	20.7
High School Incomplete	35.6	20.8	22.0	21.5
High School Graduate	44.2	19.8	20.9	15.1
College Incomplete	48.0	26.0	18.8	7.3
College Graduate	58.5	20.1	13.3	8.1
Household Income: Under \$15K	32.5	24.1	25.8	17.6
\$15-24.9K	41.8	19.0	21.0	18.2
\$25K+	53.4	21.0	17.5	8.1
\$25-29.9K	50.9	19.7	15.5	13.8
\$30-39.9K	50.9	21.4	18.7	9.1
\$40K+	55.7	21.2	17.3	5.9
Own	49.6	20.4	18.3	11.7
Rent	40.9	23.0	20.8	15.3
White	46.7	20.9	19.2	13.2
Black	41.7	23.8	23.9	10.6
Employed	51.3	21.5	18.3	8.9
Employed Female	45.4	23.0	20.5	11.1
Not Employed	38.0	20.7	21.0	20.4
Non Employed Female	36.1	20.9	23.4	19.6
Professional/Manager/Owner	56.0	18.6	15.7	9.7
White Collar/Sales/Clerical	58.0	20.2	18.3	3.5
Blue Collar	42.7	24.6	21.7	11.0
Retired	42.8	20.7	16.1	20.4
Married	49.1	20.6	19.7	10.6
Not Married	42.1	22.0	18.7	17.2
Household Size: 1-2 People	46.6	20.8	18.9	13.7
3-4 People	42.9	22.0	22.7	12.4
5+ People	49.8	34.8	10.4	4.9
Children in Household under 18	48.5	19.6	22.0	9.9
No Children	43.7	22.3	17.8	16.2
Northeast	43.9	29.0	14.9	12.2
North	52.0	17.3	21.4	9.3
South	45.2	15.9	26.6	12.3
West	43.3	27.9	7.4	21.4
Nonmetro	44.2	20.6	25.7	9.5
Metro: 50,000 and over				
Fringe	41.9	24.8	15.5	17.9
Central City	52.0	18.7	15.9	13.4

APPENDIX B

Appendix B
Index to Questions
1972-1994

This guide is an index to all questions asked in the ACIR polls from 1972 through 1994. Individuals wishing to order data may (1) order individual tables and/or (2) order the publications in which the data appear.

This index should be read as follows: The first column is the question wording. Column 2 (Year) reports the years in which the question was asked. Column 3 (Publication, Table Number) reports the

publication and table number for previously published detailed tables.

The data for 1993 are published in *Changing Public Attitudes on Governments and Taxes 1993* (S-22). The data for 1992 are in volume S-21, for 1991 in volume S-20, for 1990 in volume S-19, for 1989 in volume S-18, for 1982-1988 in volume S-17, and for 1972-1981 in volume S-12 or S-13. For years with blanks, data are included in the first tables in that list.

	Year	Publication, Table Numbers
TAXES		
Federal-State-Local Taxes		
From which level of government do you feel you get the most for your money—federal, state, or local?	1993	S-22, A2
	1991	S-20, A2
	1989-72	S-18, 1
		S-17, 1-4
From which level of government do you feel you get the least for your money—federal, state, or local?	1994	S-23, A2
	1992	S-21, A2
	1990	S-19, A2
	1989	S-18, 2
Considering all government services on the one hand and taxes on the other, which of the following statements comes closest to your view?	1986, 82	S-17, 38-40
	1980-77	
	1976-75	
Here is a list of the major types of taxes in the country today. Which do you think is the fairest?	1972, 74	S-13, E
Which do you think is the worst tax, that is, the least fair (not including social security tax)?	1993	S-22, A1
	1991	S-20, A1
	1990	S-19, A1
	1988-77	S-18, 3
	1975-72	S-17, 6-9
Which do you think is the worst tax, that is, the least fair (including social security tax)?	1994	S-22, A1
	1992	S-21, A1
	1990	S-19, A1
	1989	S-18, 4
	1988	S-17, 5

Federal-Local Taxes

Which statement agrees most with your own thinking about the national value-added tax and local property tax? 1972 S-13, 1

Federal Taxes

If the federal government had to raise taxes/revenues, which would be the best way to do it? 1987 S-17, 22-24
1984 S-13, K
1983
1972

If the federal income tax collections must be increased, which way is the best? 1983 S-17, 25

Which one of the changes would be the single most important change that would make the nation's tax system more fair? 1983 S-17, 46

Which one way of reducing the federal deficit would you prefer? 1984 S-17, 43

State Taxes

Suppose your state government must raise taxes/revenue, which would be the better way to do it? 1987 S-17, 26-27
1983
1972, 76 S-13, D

Do you favor or oppose state laws which give special tax breaks or other incentives to industries that will locate or expand present operations in the state? 1977 S-13, L

Local Taxes

Some states are thinking about taking some local property tax money from upper income school districts and giving it to lower income school districts in order to ensure equal, or nearly equal spending on education for each public school student in the state. If this were proposed in your state, would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the idea? 1993 S-22, A5

Suppose your local government must raise more taxes/revenue, which would be the better way to do it? 1987 S-17, 28-31
1986
1983
1981

SPENDING

Federal Mandates

The federal government has passed laws requiring better local pay and benefits, local wastewater treatment standards, and state health services to the poor. Do you think the federal government was right in passing these laws? 1991 S-20, A6, A8, A10

Regardless of how you feel about these laws, do you think the costs should be paid by the federal government, your state or local government, or the federal and state or local government each paying part?	1991	S-20, A7, A9, A11
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Federal-State-Local Spending

Which level of government do you think spends your tax dollars most wisely—federal, state, or local?	1993	S-22, A3
	1991	S-20, A3
	1989	S-18, 7

Federal Spending

Do you think the Congress and the President can solve the federal government's budget problems on their own, or do you think that the state legislatures should pass resolutions to require a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution?	1993	S-22, A6
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Which functions should the federal government turn back to state and local governments?	1981	S-13, P
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Which one way of reducing the federal deficit would you prefer?	1984	S-17, 43
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If the federal government decides to reduce spending, which one way would you prefer?	1986, 84	S-17, 37
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State-Local Spending

Suppose the budgets of your state local governments have to be curtailed, which one part would you limit most severely?	1980-81	S-13, O
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Local Spending

If central cities—like New York, Chicago, Atlanta and Los Angeles—need more money to solve their budget problems, do you think its primarily the federal government's the respective state government's responsibility, or the individual city's responsibility to provide that money?	1993	S-22, A4
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AID PROGRAMS

Federal Aid

Rank types of federal grant programs as to whether they are necessary or unnecessary.	1982	S-17, 16
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Do you favor or oppose revenue sharing?	1973-76, 79	S-13, C
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Do you favor or oppose special federal aid for central cities experiencing financial difficulty?	1976-79	S-13, J
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For which, if any, of the following programs should the federal government stop providing federal financial support?	1985	S-17, 42
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State Aid

With the cutbacks in federal financial aid to local governments, what should states do? 1983 S-17, 47

Welfare

Should single parents receiving welfare be required to work in a government program to continue receiving payments? 1986 S-17, 41

GOVERNMENT POWER AND EFFICIENCY

Federal-State-Local Power

Power in our federal system is divided between the federal, state, and local governments. Here is a card with glasses of water illustrating different amounts of power for each government. Which set of glasses do you think best illustrates how power is actually distributed between our federal, state, and local governments today? 1991 S-20, A12

Here is a card with three empty glasses. Each glass has a scale from 0 to 100, 0 meaning empty or no power, and 100 meaning full or a lot of power. If you had 100 units of power to distribute, so that you could give the federal, state, and local governments the amount of power you thought each should have, how many units of power would you put in each glass? 1991 S-20, A13-15

Which level of government do you think has too much power today—federal, state, or local? 1989 S-18, 8

Which level of government do you think needs more power today—federal, state, or local? 1989 S-18, 9

How much power do you feel the federal government has over the activities of state and local governments? 1987 S-17, 32

Which of these statements comes closest to your view about government power today? 1992 S-21, A6
1986-82 S-17, 35-36
1978

Federal Efficiency

In your opinion, how often does the federal government perform its duties efficiently and at the best cost possible? 1988 S-17, 10

Federal-State-Local Efficiency

Which government do you feel wastes the most of your tax money? 1987 S-17, 21

In your opinion, how often does your state government perform its duties efficiently and at the best cost possible? 1988 S-17, 11

In your opinion, how often does your local government perform its duties efficiently and at the best cost possible? 1988 S-17, 12

State-Local Efficiency

Which of these statements about the ability of state and local government to deal with today's problems comes closest to your view?	1978	S-13, N
Would the following services be more efficiently produced/delivered by private companies or your local government?	1985	S-17, 44

TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT

Federal-State-Local Confidence

On the whole, who do you think is the most honest—federal officials, state officials, or local officials?	1989	S-18, 5
Which level of government do you think responds best to your needs?	1989	S-18, 6
How much trust and confidence do you have in your government to do a good job?	1992 1987	S-21, A3-5 S-17, 34
In which people in government do you have the most trust and confidence?	1987	S-17,33
To the extent that government may be involved, in which level of government do you have the most trust and confidence to handle each of the following problems most effectively: federal, state, local?	1990	S-19, A3-8
In which level of government do you have the most trust and confidence to handle each of the following problems most effectively—federal, state, local?	1989	S-18, 10-15

Federal-State-Business/Nonprofit Organization Confidence

If the nation's health care system is reformed, how much trust and confidence would you have in each of the following to administer the new system effectively—the federal government, the state governments, business and nonprofit organizations?	1993	S-22, A7-9
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GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

Performance and Cooperation

If you were to grade the overall performance of the following legislative institutions, what grade would you give each—city/town council, county commission, state legislature, U.S. Congress?	1993	S-22, A10-13
If you were to grade the overall performance of the following executive institutions, what grade would you give each—local mayor, state governor, U.S. President?	1993	S-22, A14-16

If you were to grade the overall performance of the following judicial institutions, what grade would you give each—local city or county courts, state courts, federal courts?	1993	S-22, A17-19
Overall, how well do you think the federal government and your state government cooperate and get along with each other?	1991	S-20, A4
Overall, how well do you think your state government and your local government cooperate and get along with each other?	1991	S-20, A5
Overall, how would you grade the performance of each of the following governments—federal, state, local?	1990	S-19, A9-11
Overall, how would you grade the ability of the federal, state, and local governments to cooperate and work together today?	1990	S-20, A12-14

Foreign Policy and Trade

In recent years, many states have set up full-time offices in foreign countries to promote trade, tourism, and investment for their states. Are these state offices usually a very good use of public funds, a somewhat good use, not a very good use, or a poor use of public funds?	1988	S-17, 15
In recent years, many governors and mayors have travelled to foreign countries to promote trade, tourism, and investment for their states. Are these foreign trips by governors and mayors usually a very good use of public funds, a somewhat good use, a not very good use, or a poor use of public funds?	1988	S-17, 17
Many city councils have passed resolutions on such foreign policy issues as Israel, Northern Ireland, South Africa, and nuclear weapons. These resolutions sometimes oppose the foreign policy of the President and Congress. Do you think it is very proper, somewhat proper, not very proper, or not proper at all for city councils to pass resolutions on foreign policy?	1988	S-17, 17

Public Works

If you were to grade the performance of the following types of public works services based on your own experience, what grade would you give each—roads and bridges, water supply, solid waste disposal?	1992	S-21, A8-10
	1988	S-17, 18
Average grades for public works services	1992	S-21, A7
	1988	S-17, 19
If there is a need to raise additional revenues to improve public works services, which one of these methods would you prefer?	1992	S-21, A11
	1988	S-17, 20

OTHER

Political Organizations

In general, which one of the organizations listed below do you feel best represents the political interests of people like you? 1983 S-17, 48

State Surplus Funds

How should states use their surplus funds? 1984 S-17, 45

State Constitutions

In addition to the United States Constitution, do you know if your state has its own constitution, or does your state not have its own constitution? 1991 S-20, A16

Does your state have its own constitution, or does it rely on the United States Constitution for its governing powers? 1988 S-17, 13

Does the constitution of your state have a Bill of Rights or some other provisions that protect individual rights, like freedom of religion and freedom of speech? 1988 S-17,14

Preemption

Should the federal government regulate the use of pesticides on home lawns and public grounds throughout the country, or should each local government regulate the use of pesticides on home lawns and public grounds in its community? 1992 S-21, A12

Should the federal government regulate the location and building of low-income housing in communities throughout the country, or should each local government regulate the location and building of low-income housing in its community? 1992 S-21, A13

Should the federal government regulate the listing of health risks on the labels of food products sold throughout the country, or should each state government regulate the listing of health risks on the labels of food products sold in its state? 1992 S-21, A14

Should the federal government regulate banks so as to let them operate freely across state lines throughout the country, or should each state government regulate banks that operate in its state so as to be able to limit or keep out banks from other states if it wishes to do so? 1992 S-21, A15

Should the federal government regulate companies that sell life, fire, property, casualty and automobile insurance throughout the country, or should each state government regulate the companies that sell these types of insurance in its state? 1992 S-21, A-16

What is ACIR?

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) was created by the Congress in 1959 to monitor the operation of the American federal system and to recommend improvements. ACIR is a permanent national bipartisan body representing the executive and legislative branches of federal, state, and local government and the public.

The Commission is composed of 26 members—nine representing the federal government, 14 representing state and local government, and three representing the public. The President appoints 20—three private citizens and three federal executive officials directly, and four governors, three state legislators, four mayors, and three elected county officials from slates nominated by the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National Association of Counties. The three Senators are chosen by the President of the Senate and the three Representatives by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Each Commission member serves a two-year term and may be reappointed.

As a continuing body, the Commission addresses specific issues and problems the resolution of which would produce improved cooperation among governments and more effective functioning of the federal system. In addition to dealing with important functional and policy relationships among the various governments, the Commission extensively studies critical governmental finance issues. One of the long-range efforts of the Commission has been to seek ways to improve federal, state, and local governmental practices and policies to achieve equitable allocation of resources and increased efficiency and equity.

In selecting items for the research program, the Commission considers the relative importance and urgency of the problem, its manageability from the point of view of finances and staff available to ACIR, and the extent to which the Commission can make a fruitful contribution toward the solution of the problem.

After selecting specific intergovernmental issues for investigation, ACIR follows a multistep procedure that assures review and comment by representatives of all points of view, all affected levels of government, technical experts, and interested groups. The Commission then debates each issue and formulates its policy position.

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