

# HEARTLAND MONITOR POLL



## ***Heartland Monitor Poll Shows Americans Are Looking to Push Social and Civic Change at the Grassroots***

*Public Increasingly Frustrated with Large Public and Private Institutions*

**May 9<sup>th</sup> 2014, Washington D.C** - Poll results announced today by [The Allstate Corporation](#) (NYSE: ALL) and [National Journal](#) show that seventy percent of Americans desire “major changes” on par with historical social movements, but question whether their collective voices are heard and acted upon by America’s leaders. Seventy-one percent of respondents said that Americans can, through their own actions, make at least some difference on issues affecting the country. Americans say the most effective ways to promote change are through volunteering (80 percent), helping to elect a candidate for public office (67 percent), organizing a group of people with similar views (66 percent) and using consumer purchasing power to influence companies (59 percent).

Americans attribute the country’s major social achievements such as civil rights and women’s suffrage to the efforts of ordinary citizens and grassroots leadership – as opposed to government-led efforts. Against this backdrop, most Americans believe that the best way to make a meaningful and lasting impact on key issues is for citizens get involved in their communities through individual action and the democratic process.

“Americans have a history of rising up and leading change at the local level to achieve important social progress,” said Thomas J. Wilson, chairman, president and CEO of The Allstate Corporation. “This survey shows that a large majority of Americans have a real desire and willingness to come together and act on challenges confronting their communities and the nation. This is a reminder that each one of us has a hand in tomorrow and, together with our fellow citizens, we can drive meaningful change that improves lives and overcomes our collective challenges.”

Overall, the 20th installment of the **Allstate/National Journal Heartland Monitor Poll** reveals an American public that believes it has the power to bring about change, particularly around civil and social issues. When asked about the issues where average Americans can make the biggest impact:

- 78 percent cited environmental protection
- 74 percent highlighted K-12 education
- 72 percent said civil rights
- 70 percent named crime and domestic violence

This poll shows Americans do not believe the existing political processes are the best way to drive change. Instead, Americans are increasingly turning to individual or local actions as the way to make a difference on issues they care about. The percentage of Americans who do each activity at least “somewhat often” is as follows:

- 67 percent donate money to a community organization
- 65 percent volunteer in your community
- 63 percent share your opinions with people you know through email or social networks
- 59 percent make purchases based on a company’s business practices and issue positions
- 37 percent attend community meetings or town halls
- 31 percent write or call your elected officials

- 30 percent share your opinions on issues by publicly posting online or in the news media
- 29 percent donate money to a political or issue campaigns
- 20 percent volunteer on political or issue campaigns
- 17 percent attend political rallies

"These findings suggest that on the one hand many Americans see great opportunities for ordinary citizens to make a difference on the biggest challenges facing the country," said Atlantic Media Editorial Director Ron Brownstein. "On the other, they indicate that most Americans believe those challenges can't be truly tamed without changes in major public and private institutions that the public broadly distrusts and considers unresponsive to their concerns. At a moment of widespread anxiety over the country's direction, these precariously balanced attitudes suggest that the coming years in American politics could tip either toward deeper disengagement, distrust and polarization, or a revitalized commitment to national renewal that flows from the grassroots up."

### **Additional Key Findings**

- Most Americans (70 percent) believe the country is on the wrong track on many key issues, including:
  - protecting individual privacy (72 percent)
  - reducing taxes and government spending (70 percent)
  - reducing poverty (66 percent)
  - keeping college affordable (61 percent)
  - protecting Social Security and Medicare (59 percent)
- President Obama's job approval rests at 41 percent, just a few points above his November 2013 score (38 percent), with just one-in-four (25 percent) saying that the actions being taken by the administration will increase opportunity for people to get ahead. By comparison, Congress is suffering through an 11 percent approval rating.
- Just 27 percent say America is headed in the right direction; 62 percent say wrong track.
- Ninety-five percent of Americans believe change is needed, and a plurality (42 percent) believe that those changes should be led by average Americans. Another 40 percent are split between preferring that changes be led by state and local government (21 percent) or the federal government (19 percent).
- Nearly three-in-five (58 percent) respondents are more concerned about the country than about the world (25 percent), their neighborhood or their local community (15 percent).

Key findings from the 20th Allstate/National Journal Heartland Monitor Poll are also available via [PDF](#). Additional information on the entire polling series can be found at: <http://www.theheartlandvoice.com/category/insights>.

### **Survey Methodology**

Since April 2009, the quarterly Allstate/*National Journal* Heartland Monitor Polls have explored Americans' personal financial experiences, their views on the financial system, and their opinion of how the federal government's budget situation impacts their personal finances. The most recent Allstate/*National Journal* Heartland Monitor poll was conducted by FTI Consulting, from April 9-13, 2014, among N=1,000 American adults age 18+ reached via landline and cell phone. The margin of error for the N=1,000 telephone sample is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

### **About Allstate Corporation**

[The Allstate Corporation](#) (NYSE: ALL) is the nation's largest publicly held personal lines insurer, serving approximately 16 million households through its Allstate, Encompass, Esurance and Answer Financial

brand names and Allstate Financial business segment. Allstate branded insurance products (auto, home, life and retirement) and services are offered through Allstate agencies, independent agencies, and Allstate exclusive financial representatives, as well as via [www.allstate.com](http://www.allstate.com), [www.allstate.com/financial](http://www.allstate.com/financial) and 1-800 Allstate®, and are widely known through the slogan “You’re In Good Hands With Allstate®.” In 2013, \$29 million was given by The Allstate Foundation, Allstate, its employees and agency owners to [support local communities](#). Allstate employees and agency owners donated 200,000 hours of service across the country.

#### **About National Journal**

[National Journal](#) is regarded as the most credible and influential publication in Washington, providing more than 3 million influentials in public policy and business with the insights they need to make government work. Fiercely honest and scrupulously non-partisan, *National Journal* has a four-decade history of serving leaders in Washington—and around the country—with trustworthy, in-depth analysis on legislation, politics, and the structural trends shaping America.

#### **About FTI Consulting**

FTI Consulting, Inc. is a global business advisory firm dedicated to helping organizations protect and enhance enterprise value in an increasingly complex legal, regulatory and economic environment. With more than 4,200 employees located in 26 countries, FTI Consulting professionals work closely with clients to anticipate, illuminate and overcome complex business challenges in areas such as investigations, litigation, mergers and acquisitions, regulatory issues, reputation management, strategic communications and restructuring. The Company generated \$1.65 billion in revenues during fiscal year 2013. More information can be found at [www.fticonsulting.com](http://www.fticonsulting.com).

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