

HEARTLAND MONITOR POLL



One in Four Employed Americans Required to Work over the Holidays, Finds Allstate/National Journal Heartland Monitor Poll

American workers show enthusiasm for workplace and employers, but concern around pay, benefits and the impact of technology.

November 20, 2014 (Washington, D.C.)—Approximately one quarter of the American workforce will be required to work on Thanksgiving, Christmas Day or New Year’s Day. Despite this, American workers express not only satisfaction in their own work, but also pride in the role their employers play in communities. These are among the key findings of the 21st Allstate/*National Journal* [Heartland Monitor Poll](#), which surveyed Americans’ attitudes toward their jobs and, employers and the encroachment of the workplace into other facets of life.

The latest edition of the Heartland Monitor shows that American workers think very highly of their employers, with 82 percent of poll respondents saying they believe that their employer makes a positive impact on the community and 87 percent of workers saying they would recommend their place of employment to others. Ninety percent of workers polled are proud to tell people about their employer, and 88 percent believe in their employer’s mission and purpose. Likewise, working Americans are highly satisfied with their jobs: 93 percent said they are satisfied and 54 percent said they are very satisfied. Interestingly, among those who currently work somewhere with 10 or fewer employees, 69 percent say they are very satisfied with their job, surpassing those in 11-100 employee jobs (52 percent), 101-2,500 employee jobs (49 percent), and 2,501+ employee jobs (50 percent).

“Companies that do good in their communities are highly regarded by the people who make it possible – their employees,” said Harriet Harty, senior vice president of human resources at Allstate. “As a company made up of thousands of small, locally-owned businesses, Allstate knows first-hand that involvement in the communities we serve is incredibly meaningful to both employees and our customers.”

Despite Americans’ positive feelings toward their work and employers, family still comes first for the vast majority of people. By more than a three-to-one margin, Americans say they “work to live” (76 percent) rather than “live to work” (22 percent). If given the choice, two in three (67 percent) Americans would choose “more flexibility and shorter hours...but less pay” while just one-in-four (26 percent) would choose “more pay...but less flexibility and longer hours.” Millennials, and to a lesser extent, Gen X’ers, placed higher emphasis on flexibility from their employer, more so than workers from the Baby Boomer generation. When asked about the importance of flexible work hours, 77 percent of employed Millennials polled said they think it is important to have “the flexibility to work at different hours,” compared to 64 percent of Gen X’ers and 60 percent of Boomers. This compared to 67 percent for all workers.

"Like other results already released from the poll, these assessments of workplace satisfaction find Americans convinced that their own lives are generally moving in the right direction, even if the country is not," said Atlantic Media Editorial Director Ronald Brownstein. "And yet, like the earlier soundings, these findings also capture the strain many Americans feel trying to both provide for, and participate in, their family in an age of slow or nonexistent wage growth."

The findings aren't all positive, and in some areas real dissatisfaction exists: just under half (45 percent) of the American workforce say there's at least some chance they will work on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, or New Year's Day. More than half (55 percent) of these workers say it won't be by their own choice. Ultimately, one-in-four (25 percent) American workers will be required to work on one of these major holidays.

Further, only 31 percent of employed respondents say they're very satisfied with their pay, a sharp drop from the 54 percent who say they're very satisfied overall with their job. Likewise, just 43 percent of employed respondents, are very satisfied with the benefits, 45 percent with the amount of paid vacation and sick leave offered, and 38 percent with opportunities for advancement.

Among the key findings in *The Allstate/National Journal Heartland Monitor Poll XXI*:

Employee Satisfaction and Pride

Overall, Americans share a high degree of satisfaction with their jobs, believe they are successful, and think favorably about their employer.

- Among working Americans, those most satisfied in their work include business owners (68 percent very satisfied), and those at the executive level (64 percent).
- Working Americans are nearly universal (98 percent) in their belief that they are successful in their job, with two-in-three (63 percent) seeing themselves as very successful. When determining what it means to be successful, more than half (55 percent) of American workers are likely to point to softer indicators like "making a positive impact" (31 percent) or "doing what you like" (24 percent) over more concrete measures like "a good work-life balance" (14 percent), pay (9 percent), receiving recognition (7 percent), and having authority (2 percent).

Sacrifices for Work

For many Americans, the days of a nine-to-five job with time off for holidays, vacation, and sick leave are over. Despite overall satisfaction and pride in their jobs, Americans report making significant personal sacrifices to make ends meet while balancing work responsibilities with family commitments. Amid these pressures from work, Americans are looking for more flexibility and more personal time in their employer and would sacrifice pay to have a job that offered more flexibility.

- Just over half (53 percent) of American workers now hold a traditional Monday through Friday nine-to-five job while 47 percent say they usually work nights, weekends, or some combination of schedules.
- Those with and without 9am to 5pm schedules expressed similar dissatisfaction with their pay (only 31 and 32 percent very satisfied, respectively). But those working outside the 9am to 5pm track were much less likely than conventional nine-to-fiver's to say they were very satisfied with their required hours at work (just 42 percent vs. 64 percent) or their ability to balance work and home (40 percent vs. 54

percent). Those outside the 9am to 5pm world were also somewhat less likely to report satisfaction with their access to paid vacation and sick leave.

- Work has increasingly impacted Americans' personal time: 81 percent of American workers say they are required to be in contact outside of working hours, with 41 percent saying they're required to be in contact frequently. More than half (56 percent) of American workers checked email or otherwise checked in with work on their last vacation.
- With these challenges, Americans are looking for more flexibility and more personal time, and most say they would choose a job with less pay to obtain that. If given the choice between jobs based on the balance between work and personal/family time, two in three (67 percent) Americans would choose "more flexibility and shorter hours...but less pay" while just one-in-four (26 percent) would choose "more pay...but less flexibility and longer hours."

Survey Methodology

Since April 2009, the 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 October 22–26, 2014, among N=1,000 American adults age 18+, with 500 reached via landline and 500 reached via cell phone. The margin of error for the N=1,000 telephone sample is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

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