

## HEARTLAND MONITOR POLL



### **AMERICANS SAY HARD WORK AND RESILIENCY ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN SUCCESS, AHEAD OF THE ECONOMY AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**--New Allstate/National Journal Poll finds a mostly optimistic public in wake of the Great Recession--**

**DES MOINES, IA and WASHINGTON, D.C. (January 27, 2016)** — The Allstate Corporation (NYSE:ALL) and *National Journal* today released results of the 25<sup>th</sup> Heartland Monitor Poll, which found that the majority of Americans believe determination and hard work are the critical differentiators in personal success, ahead of economic conditions and government policies.

In the midst of the political season marked by discussion about upward mobility, the poll gauged the public's views and outlooks on a variety of topics affecting local communities across the country, such as the state of the economy, financial security, education and homeownership. It also compared sentiments to responses from earlier Heartland Monitor Polls conducted during the height of the Great Recession (2009-2011) to assess how the recovery affected important issues for Americans.

“Our latest Heartland Monitor Poll reaffirms our prevailing American values of hard work, resilience and creativity,” said Harriet K. Harty, Executive Vice President – Human Resources, Allstate Insurance Company. “We see this spirit of innovation and self-determination in the 10,000 communities we serve every day. Our country is rebuilding because individuals are taking their future into their own hands and working hard to make a good life for themselves and their families.”

#### **State of the Economy**

The majority of Americans believe the economy will improve or stay the same during the next year, but rate the current state as fair/poor:

- During the next 12 months, 71 percent of respondents believe the United States economy will improve or stay the same, though only a quarter (24 percent) think it will become worse.
- In terms of viewpoints of the U.S. economy post Great Recession, more than half of Americans (53 percent) believe the economy looks and works differently from before the recession, whereas 43 percent say it looks the same as it was prior to the recession.
- In rating the current state of the economy, 78 percent of Americans say it is fair/poor, compared to 21 percent who believe it is excellent/good. However, this is an uptick from a September 2013 Heartland Monitor Poll, where only 11 percent believed the economy was excellent/good.

#### **Financial Security**

In regards to financial security, Americans remain cautious, but there are some signs of improvement in future outlooks:

- Nearly two-thirds of Americans (63 percent) believe they are living the American Dream, compared with 59 percent in March 2011.

- The number of Americans in January 2016 in this latest poll who reported their personal financial situation as excellent/good reached the highest rate since June 2013 (45 percent). However, 54 percent rated their personal financial situation as fair/poor.
- More Americans (57 percent in 2009 to 64 percent in 2016) believe that determination and hard work are the most important success factors.
- Adults who claimed they can live comfortably and save adequately for retirement increased by 10 percent since the recession. Nevertheless, 46 percent of respondents still say they find it difficult to save and invest for retirement and other purposes.
- During the recession, almost six-in-10 (59 percent) were confident they had enough financial assets to provide a reasonable cushion of security in the case of job loss or significant decrease in income, but only half (51 percent) expressed the same confidence in 2016.

### **Education and Homeownership**

The majority of respondents believe that owning a home and graduating from college are just as achievable as during the recession, but their attitudes towards education's role in success and getting ahead are changing:

- Most people polled believe say owning a home (63 percent) and graduating from college (62 percent) are just as achievable in January 2016 as they were in March 2011. However, they say that “raising a family and making sure they have more opportunity than you did” (65 percent in 2011 to 55 percent in 2016) is less achievable today.
- Fifty-two percent of respondents say young people do not need a four-year college education in order to be successful. This belief is similar for Americans with a college degree (52 percent) and those who do not have a college degree (53 percent).
- Only 36 percent of Americans believe that personal debt for college, homeownership or to start a business is necessary as it helps people achieve the American Dream. In addition, nearly six-in-10 (57 percent) believe personal debt creates obstacles.
- Fifty-five percent of Millennials think their generation has more opportunities than their parents.

“Americans still have faith that their own efforts rather than forces beyond their control are the key to their success in life,” said Ronald Brownstein, editorial director of Atlantic Media. “But this poll makes clear that Americans believe that the path to success has grown more complex and challenging. To a large extent Americans still believe they are ‘paddling alone’ through more turbulent financial waters than earlier generations faced.”

To see in-depth poll data for the 25<sup>th</sup> Allstate/*National Journal* Heartland Monitor Poll, please visit [www.HeartlandMonitor.com](http://www.HeartlandMonitor.com).

### **Survey Methodology**

The 25th installment of the Allstate/National Journal Heartland Monitor Poll, conducted January 2-6, 2016, reprised questions asked during the heart of the economic recession to measure changes in Americans opinions and attitudes on important issues: How do the opportunities and challenges facing my generation compare to my parent's generation or my children's generation? Is it still possible to live the American Dream? What impact did the economic recession have on Americans' finances? Did the government's response help or hinder the economic recovery and what kind of government agenda is most likely to help Americans get ahead?

The survey was conducted among a national sample of 1,000 adults age 18+, with 500 reached via cell phone and 500 reached via landline. The margin of error for a sample of 1,000 is +/- 3.1 in 95 out of 100 cases.

### **About Allstate Corporation**

The Allstate Corporation (NYSE: ALL) is the nation's largest publicly held personal lines insurer, protecting approximately 16 million households from life's uncertainties through auto, home, life and other insurance offered through its Allstate, Esurance, Encompass and Answer Financial brand names. Allstate is widely known through the slogan "You're In Good Hands With Allstate®." The Allstate brand's network of small businesses offers auto, home, life and retirement products and services to customers in the United States and Canada. In 2014, The Allstate Foundation, Allstate, its employees and agency owners gave \$34 million to support local communities. Allstate employees and agency owners donated 200,000 hours of service across the country.

### **About National Journal**

*National Journal* is a premium provider of essential insights and analysis for those operating in Washington's policy and government arenas. Through its membership strategy and research products and services, editorial content, *National Journal* serves 1000 of Washington's top organizations and convenes the nation's top leaders at dozens of editorial and member events each year. *National Journal* is a division of Atlantic Media, based in Washington, D.C. Poppy MacDonald is President and Publisher.

### **About FTI Consulting**

FTI Consulting, Inc. (NYSE: FCN) 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 4,400 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 \$1.76 billion in revenues during fiscal year 2014. For more information, visit [www.fticonsulting.com](http://www.fticonsulting.com) and connect with us on Twitter (@FTIConsulting), Facebook and LinkedIn.

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