

Holiday Poll Findings Center for a New American Dream

This document provides key findings from a census-balanced and representative telephone study of 500 American adults conducted by Widmeyer Research and Polling for the Center for a New American Dream during the first week of November, 2005. Questions asked and responses provided are in the appendix. The major findings of the poll include:

- **The high cost of living is the #1 concern of Americans as they approach the holiday season.**
 - More Americans are worried about the high cost of living (53%) and their families' personal financial situation (50%) than are about economic insecurity (40%) and the war in Iraq (37%).
 - Nearly all Americans (91%) say the cost of living has increased compared to last year, and more than 2 in 3 Americans blame the price of oil or gas (68%).
- **Americans incur a lot of holiday credit card debt and paying it off takes time.**
 - Nearly 3 in 5 Americans (59%) say they incurred or acquired **credit card debt** last year during the holiday season shopping or buying presents. Nearly one-third (32%) say it took them more than three months to pay off this credit card debt and 14% say they are still paying it off as the new holiday season approaches.
- **Americans say they will buy less this holiday season because of cost of living concerns and past experience with debt.**
 - By a nearly 4-to-1 margin, more Americans say they will buy fewer (37%), not more (10%), holiday gifts this season. About half (48%) say they will buy the same amount as last year.
- **Americans believe that the holiday season has become far too materialistic and many say they want to give gifts this year that encourage savings.**
 - More than 3 in 4 Americans (78%) wish that holidays were less materialistic.
 - Nearly 9 in 10 Americans (87%) believe that holidays should be more about family and caring for others, not giving and receiving gifts.
 - Nearly 4 in 5 Americans (79%) **DO NOT** believe that it's necessary to spend a lot of money in order to have a fulfilling and enjoyable holiday.
 - Nearly 3 in 4 Americans (74%) believe that the giving and receiving of gifts is awarded too much importance during the Holiday season.
 - More than 3 in 4 Americans (76%) say that kids are too materialistic and the holiday season just makes things worse.
 - More than 3 in 5 Americans (62%) say they are going to give family members gifts this holiday season that encourage them to save money, such as savings bond or even a piggyback for a child.



DATA TABLES

As the holiday season approaches, which of the following concern you? (Total > 100%)	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Higher cost of living	53	53	53	54
Your personal financial situation	50	47	53	64
Economic uncertainty	40	39	41	40
The War in Iraq	37	39	36	29
Your or a family member's employment situation	23	25	21	20

Do you think the cost of living has increased, decreased or stayed the same compared to last year?	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Increased	91	89	93	92
Decreased	1	2	1	1
Stayed the same	7	9	5	6
Don't know	1	0	1	1

Which ONE of the following do you think is the major reason the cost of living has increased?	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Price of oil	36	38	34	32
Gasoline prices	34	32	35	39
Cost of consumer goods	11	9	13	10
Don't know	11	13	9	12
Cost of buying a home	6	4	8	7
Cost of renting an apartment	2	4	1	0

Did you incur or acquire any credit card debt shopping or buying presents last year during the holiday season?	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Yes	59	76	43	39
No	39	22	54	59
Don't know	3	2	3	2

How long did it take for you to pay off your holiday shopping debt from last year?	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Less than 3 months	67	78	57	54
3-6 months	7	0	14	14
7-9 months	8	8	8	12
10-12 months	3	2	5	2
I'm still paying it off	14	12	15	18



Do you think you will buy more, fewer or about the same number of gifts this holiday season compared to last year?	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
More	10	13	8	12
Fewer	37	36	38	33
About the same	48	49	48	49
Don't know	4	2	6	6

I feel pressured to have a more elaborate or expensive holiday than I would like.	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Strongly agree	8	9	7	10
Somewhat agree	22	26	18	24
Somewhat disagree	23	17	28	26
Strongly disagree	46	48	44	39
Don't know	2	0	3	1

I wish the holidays were less materialistic.	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Strongly agree	40	37	43	42
Somewhat agree	38	35	41	37
Somewhat disagree	11	13	10	12
Strongly disagree	8	13	4	6
Don't know	2	2	2	3

The holidays should be more about family and caring for others, not giving and receiving gifts.	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Strongly agree	51	44	58	52
Somewhat agree	36	37	35	40
Somewhat disagree	9	13	5	6
Strongly disagree	3	6	1	2
Don't know	1	0	1	0

It's necessary to spend a lot of money in order to have a fulfilling and enjoyable holiday.	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Strongly agree	10	13	7	8
Somewhat agree	10	11	10	12
Somewhat disagree	25	28	22	24
Strongly disagree	54	48	59	54
Don't know	1	0	2	2



The giving and receiving of gifts is awarded too much importance during the Holiday season.	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Strongly agree	36	37	36	34
Somewhat agree	38	35	40	41
Somewhat disagree	15	17	13	16
Strongly disagree	10	11	9	8
Don't know	1	0	2	1

Kids are too materialistic and the holiday season just makes things worse.	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
Strongly agree	38	32	44	37
Somewhat agree	38	41	36	44
Somewhat disagree	10	11	9	9
Strongly disagree	10	13	8	9
Don't know	3	3	3	1

Some people are giving family members gifts this holiday season that encourages them to saving money, such as savings bond or even a piggyback for a child. Which one of the following comes closets to your views about giving a gift that encourages saving money?	ALL (%)	M (%)	F (%)	PAR (%)
I may considering doing it	41	35	46	51
I have done it before in the past, and plan on doing it again	17	17	17	9
Not sure	15	17	13	8
I would never do that	14	20	8	14
I have done it, but I am not doing it this year	10	9	11	9
I plan to do it this year	4	2	5	9