Results of SurveyUSA News Poll #16270

Geography: USA 50 States
Data Collected: 02/05/2010 - 02/09/2010
Release Date: 02/10/2010
Percentages

Sponsor:
People For The American Way, (Washington DC)

Americans Broadly in Favor of Limiting What Corporations Can Spend to Influence U.S. Elections: By 5:1, Americans say corporations should be limited in how much money they can spend to influence the outcome of an election, according to a new SurveyUSA poll conducted for People for the American Way. Americans are divided on whether corporations should have the same rights as individuals, or fewer rights than individuals to influence elections.

But Americans across party line and ideology say that foreign corporations should not be able to spend any money to influence an election; say corporations who have received financial rescue money from the government should not be able to spend money to influence an election; say publicly traded corporations should get shareholder approval before spending money to influence the outcome of an election.

4 in 10 Americans do not have an opinion on an amendment to the US Constitution, but of Americans with an opinion, twice as many favor a hypothetical amendment that would limit what corporations can spend as oppose such an amendment.

1,200 USA adults were interviewed by SurveyUSA 02/05/10 through 02/09/10.

1

[Answer Choices Rotated]
In the past, have corporations had ... too much influence on American elections? Too little influence? Or just the right amount of influence?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.6 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Too Much	70%	66%	75%	68%	70%	72%	72%	69%	72%	74%	59%	64%	58%	67%	69%	75%	57%	77%	76%	68%	74%	60%	77%	65%	84%
Too Little	8%	9%	8%	6%	11%	10%	8%	8%	9%	8%	13%	6%	5%	11%	7%	8%	15%	8%	3%	9%	8%	11%	9%	9%	5%
Right Amount	16%	20%	11%	18%	16%	13%	14%	17%	14%	13%	22%	28%	15%	18%	16%	14%	23%	11%	20%	16%	15%	25%	11%	16%	9%
Not Sure	6%	5%	7%	8%	3%	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%	2%	23%	4%	8%	3%	4%	3%	2%	8%	3%	4%	3%	10%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

2

[Answer Choices Rotated]
In the past, has Congress ... done too much to regulate how much influence corporations have over elections? Has Congress done too little? Or, has Congress done just the right amount?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.8 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Too Much	28%	29%	26%	33%	26%	23%	27%	30%	25%	24%	42%	45%	18%	32%	29%	24%	42%	15%	37%	29%	26%	37%	24%	31%	18%
Too Little	61%	62%	61%	59%	62%	64%	62%	60%	63%	65%	52%	50%	59%	56%	61%	66%	47%	73%	60%	60%	65%	53%	65%	56%	77%
Right Amount	7%	6%	8%	5%	8%	10%	6%	6%	8%	7%	2%	3%	21%	9%	8%	5%	7%	8%	2%	8%	6%	8%	7%	8%	4%
Not Sure	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%	3%	5%	3%	4%	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	0%	3%	3%	2%	4%	5%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

3

[Answer Choices Rotated]
Should corporations be limited in how much they can spend to influence an election? Or, should there be no limit on what a corporation can spend?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.4 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Should Be Limited	78%	71%	83%	69%	76%	82%	88%	72%	85%	84%	68%	55%	60%	78%	75%	80%	68%	85%	75%	76%	80%	69%	85%	71%	91%
No Limit	16%	19%	13%	19%	19%	14%	9%	19%	12%	13%	30%	13%	38%	18%	16%	16%	28%	10%	12%	14%	17%	12%	11%	26%	9%
Not Sure	6%	10%	3%	12%	5%	4%	2%	9%	3%	3%	2%	32%	2%	5%	9%	4%	4%	5%	12%	10%	3%	19%	4%	3%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

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4

[Answer Choices Rotated]
Should corporations have the same right as individuals to spend money to influence elections? ... Should corporations have more of a right than individuals to spend money to influence elections? ... Or, should corporations have less of a right than individuals to spend money to influence elections?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.9 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Same Right	39%	44%	34%	43%	42%	33%	37%	42%	35%	38%	48%	40%	36%	49%	38%	33%	55%	34%	33%	41%	37%	50%	36%	40%	29%
More Of a Right	5%	3%	6%	6%	6%	5%	2%	6%	4%	3%	6%	4%	24%	5%	6%	3%	4%	3%	3%	7%	3%	2%	6%	7%	3%
Less Of a Right	52%	50%	54%	47%	50%	59%	55%	48%	58%	56%	43%	46%	38%	43%	51%	62%	38%	60%	59%	50%	55%	45%	55%	46%	67%
Not Sure	4%	2%	6%	4%	2%	3%	6%	3%	4%	3%	3%	10%	2%	4%	5%	2%	3%	2%	5%	3%	5%	3%	3%	6%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

5

[Answer Choices Rotated]
Thinking just about corporations that do business with the government ... Should there be a limit? Or no limit ... on how much a corporation that does business with the government may spend to support or oppose a candidate for public office?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.2 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Limit	82%	83%	81%	76%	85%	87%	83%	80%	85%	86%	67%	82%	69%	83%	84%	79%	78%	88%	87%	78%	86%	89%	81%	76%	88%
No Limit	10%	10%	11%	16%	8%	8%	8%	12%	8%	6%	26%	14%	25%	8%	10%	13%	14%	5%	8%	14%	8%	5%	7%	16%	10%
Not Sure	7%	7%	8%	8%	7%	5%	10%	7%	7%	8%	8%	4%	6%	9%	6%	8%	8%	7%	5%	8%	7%	6%	12%	8%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

6

[Answer Choices Rotated]
Thinking just about corporations that have been rescued financially by the government ... Should there be a limit? Or no limit ... on how much a corporation that has been rescued by the government may spend to support or oppose a candidate for public office?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-1.9 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Limit	87%	89%	86%	86%	89%	87%	86%	87%	87%	90%	83%	82%	71%	87%	89%	85%	86%	91%	93%	83%	91%	90%	87%	86%	86%
No Limit	8%	8%	9%	12%	6%	7%	7%	9%	7%	6%	10%	14%	25%	10%	6%	11%	11%	3%	5%	11%	6%	6%	9%	9%	9%
Not Sure	5%	4%	5%	1%	5%	6%	7%	3%	6%	4%	7%	4%	4%	3%	6%	4%	3%	5%	2%	6%	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

7

[Answer Choices Rotated]
Thinking just about foreign corporations ... Should foreign corporations be allowed to spend money to influence US elections? Or, should foreign corporations be banned from spending money to influence US elections?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.1 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Allowed To Spend Money	11%	16%	8%	21%	9%	7%	5%	15%	6%	7%	11%	28%	32%	9%	15%	8%	11%	8%	16%	15%	8%	20%	11%	9%	8%
Banned From Spending Money	85%	83%	87%	79%	86%	90%	89%	82%	89%	90%	83%	67%	66%	87%	80%	90%	86%	88%	82%	80%	90%	76%	85%	87%	90%
Not Sure	3%	2%	5%	1%	5%	4%	6%	3%	5%	3%	6%	5%	2%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	2%	4%	2%	4%	4%	4%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

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8

[Answer Choices Rotated]
Should a publicly traded corporation get shareholder approval before the corporation spends money to support or oppose a candidate for elected office? Or, is shareholder approval not necessary?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.5 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Should Get Shareholder Approval	75%	72%	78%	70%	71%	83%	79%	70%	81%	80%	82%	52%	49%	79%	74%	75%	76%	81%	65%	70%	81%	63%	78%	79%	76%
Shareholder Approval Is Not Necess	13%	15%	12%	11%	18%	12%	12%	14%	12%	14%	12%	11%	9%	14%	11%	15%	20%	12%	11%	12%	14%	17%	13%	13%	11%
Not Sure	12%	13%	10%	20%	10%	5%	8%	15%	6%	6%	6%	37%	43%	7%	15%	11%	3%	7%	23%	18%	5%	20%	9%	8%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

9

Should Congress be able to place limits on the amount of money that corporations can spend to influence an election? Or, should Congress not be able to place limits?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.6 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Able To Place Limits	73%	74%	72%	74%	70%	74%	73%	73%	74%	73%	64%	91%	56%	67%	79%	71%	58%	75%	88%	69%	78%	78%	73%	67%	79%
Not Able	21%	22%	19%	22%	24%	18%	17%	23%	18%	20%	32%	0%	43%	24%	17%	21%	35%	18%	10%	21%	19%	16%	18%	26%	17%
Not Sure	6%	4%	9%	4%	6%	8%	10%	5%	8%	7%	4%	8%	2%	8%	4%	8%	7%	7%	2%	9%	3%	6%	9%	7%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

10

[Answer Choices Rotated]
If there were an amendment to the US Constitution that allowed Congress to limit how much corporations could spend to influence elections, would you support the amendment? Oppose the amendment? Or do you not know enough to say?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.9 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Support	42%	41%	43%	42%	42%	46%	38%	42%	42%	45%	40%	22%	53%	39%	47%	39%	33%	47%	46%	37%	48%	41%	47%	39%	43%
Oppose	19%	23%	15%	16%	25%	19%	18%	20%	18%	17%	32%	19%	22%	21%	14%	25%	30%	15%	13%	18%	20%	18%	17%	20%	21%
Do Not Know Enough	39%	36%	41%	42%	33%	35%	45%	38%	39%	38%	28%	59%	25%	40%	39%	37%	37%	38%	41%	45%	32%	41%	36%	41%	36%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

11

[Answer Choices Rotated]
When the president chooses a new member of the Supreme Court, would you prefer a justice who thinks there should be a limit on how much corporations can spend to influence an election? A justice who thinks there should not be a limit on what corporations can spend to influence an election? Or, do you not feel strongly either way?

1200 Adults	All	Gender		Age				<50 / 50+		Race				Party Affiliation			Ideology			Income		Region			
Credibility Interval: +/-2.7 pct points		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-49	50+	White	Black	Hispani	Asian /	Republi	Democr	Indepe	Conser	Modera	Liberal	< $50K	> $50K	Northea	Midwes	South	West
Limit	69%	60%	78%	68%	65%	72%	75%	67%	73%	71%	67%	57%	74%	64%	73%	69%	61%	77%	65%	70%	70%	56%	72%	72%	75%
No Limit	14%	22%	7%	17%	16%	13%	9%	17%	11%	11%	20%	28%	17%	15%	14%	15%	25%	7%	17%	16%	12%	29%	8%	13%	9%
Don't Feel Strongly	15%	17%	14%	15%	17%	14%	16%	16%	15%	17%	13%	11%	9%	20%	12%	15%	14%	14%	18%	14%	17%	14%	20%	13%	16%
Not Sure	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Composition of Adults	100%	48%	52%	32%	25%	24%	19%	57%	43%	72%	11%	11%	6%	25%	42%	31%	27%	35%	26%	49%	51%	20%	23%	37%	20%

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Statement of Methodology: About the Poll: This poll was conducted by telephone in the voice of a professional announcer. Respondent households were selected at random, using Random Digit Dialed (RDD) sample provided by Survey Sampling, of Fairfield CT. All respondents heard the questions asked identically. The pollster's report includes the geography that was surveyed; the date(s) interviews were conducted, the number of respondents who answered each question and the theoretical margin of sampling error for each question. Where necessary, respondents were weighted using the most recent US Census estimates for age, gender, ethnic origin and region, to align the sample to the population. In theory, one can say with 95% certainty that the results would not vary by more than the stated margin of sampling error, in one direction or the other, had the entire universe of respondents with home telephones been interviewed with complete accuracy. There are other possible sources of error in all surveys that may be more serious than sampling error. These include: the difficulty of interviewing respondents who do not have a home telephone; the refusal by some with home telephones to be interviewed; the order in which questions are asked; the wording of questions; the way and extent to which data are weighted; and the manner in which specialized populations, such as likely voters, are determined. It is difficult to quantify the errors that may result from these and other factors. Research methodology, questionnaire design and fieldwork for this survey were completed by SurveyUSA of Clifton, NJ. This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.