

# Quality of Life in America

Survey conducted  
November 2011  
by C. David Crouch  
[www.letsbuildexcellence.com](http://www.letsbuildexcellence.com)

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# Survey Intent

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- Since 2007, I've been working on a book on the topic of excellence. Nearing the end of the project, I decided to add a final chapter applying my concepts of excellence to what's going on in America. To effectively do that, I needed to better understand the perceptions of citizens on some key issues related to "America the Excellent" (the title of chapter 18). This simple survey is one of the ways I chose to do that. Thank you to everyone who participated.

• *C. David Crouch*

# Survey Construct

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- The survey consisted of ...
  - 8 questions asking participants to rate quality of life issues, perceptions of service from the federal government, and levels of engagement by citizens
  - 1 open ended question asking participants to comment on anything they like related to the survey or the quality of life issues it presents, and
  - An opportunity for participants to leave their email address to receive a copy of the results
- Survey link shared via email, [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#)
- Survey period, month of November, 2011
- The survey is non-scientific

# Survey Highlights

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- 270 participants, no demographics collected
- On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), participants rate the quality of life in America a 3.32, good to very good.
- Education is the #1 factor influencing quality of life ratings. Economic strength is #2 and personal freedom is #3.
- Overall, participants rate the service provided by the federal government as fair.
- 82.6% vote most of the time.
- 68.7% volunteer in the community.
- 83% believe America is headed in the wrong direction.
- 26.5% expect quality of life to get better.

# Survey Commentary

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- While viewing the overall quality of life in America as good to very good, survey participants were generally pessimistic about their view of the future . 83% feel America is headed in the wrong direction and about 54% feel things will get worse in the next 50 years, while only 26% feel they will get better.
- The view of America today compared to 50 years ago is polarized, with 43% viewing it as worse or much worse and 40% viewing it as better or much better.
- There is a high level of engagement by survey participants in the American process with about 83% voting most of the time and 69% volunteering in their communities. Their perception of the participation of others, however, is much lower with 80% rating it as fair or poor.

# Survey Commentary

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- Survey participants hold a decidedly low opinion of the service provided by all branches and agencies of the federal government. Congress received the lowest marks with 90% rating their service to the American people as fair or poor. The Judicial branch received the highest marks, but still only had 36% rating them good or very good.
- Education topped the list of most important factors affecting quality of life, with economic strength, personal freedom, safety and security, and standard of living rounding out the top 5. Geographic appeal, gender equality, inflation rate, climate, and energy provisions were of least importance.



# Survey Comparisons

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- **Question:** How do these results compare to similar questions asked by the professional pollsters and researchers?
  - **Answer:** very similarly
- Gallup's [Well-Being Index](#) scores overall at 65.6 out of 100, which correlates closely to the 3.32 rating out of a 5.0 in this survey.
- The [Human Development Index](#), a composite of life expectancy, education, and gross national income, places America at #4 in the world out of 187 countries measured.

# Survey Comparisons

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- The [World Values Survey](#) conducted in 2005 places America at #13 out of 50 countries in the world on their Net Happiness measure.
- According to the Eighth [United Nations Survey](#) on Crime in 2002, America has more crime than any other country in the world with 11,877,218 incidents.
- According to [Rasmussen Reports](#)...
  - 82% say America is headed in the wrong direction.
  - 37% believe America's best days are in the future.
  - 59% rate their own lives today as good or excellent.
  - Nearly 2/3rds feel government has lost touch.
  - 49% think neither party in Congress represents the people

# Survey Comparisons

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- According to [Gallup Surveys](#)...
  - Only 9% rate the US economic condition as excellent or good.
  - 72% view the economic outlook as getting worse, with 23% seeing it as getting better.
  - 44% say their standard of living is getting better, 35% worse, and 21% no change.
  - 46% report lots of happiness and enjoyment without a lot of stress and worry.
  - Only 13% approve of the performance of Congress

# Conclusion

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- Even though our survey was non-scientific, the results closely mirror those taken from scientifically valid surveys conducted by highly respected professional survey organizations with statistically valid samples of all demographic segments of American society.
- I find that, in itself, somewhat interesting.
- Again, thank you for your participation. The actual survey data is included on the following slides. I hope you find the results as equally interesting as I do. My book, which will include these findings, should be available by late Spring, 2012. I hope you'll consider picking up a copy.

• *Respectfully, C. David Crouch*

# Quality of Life in America

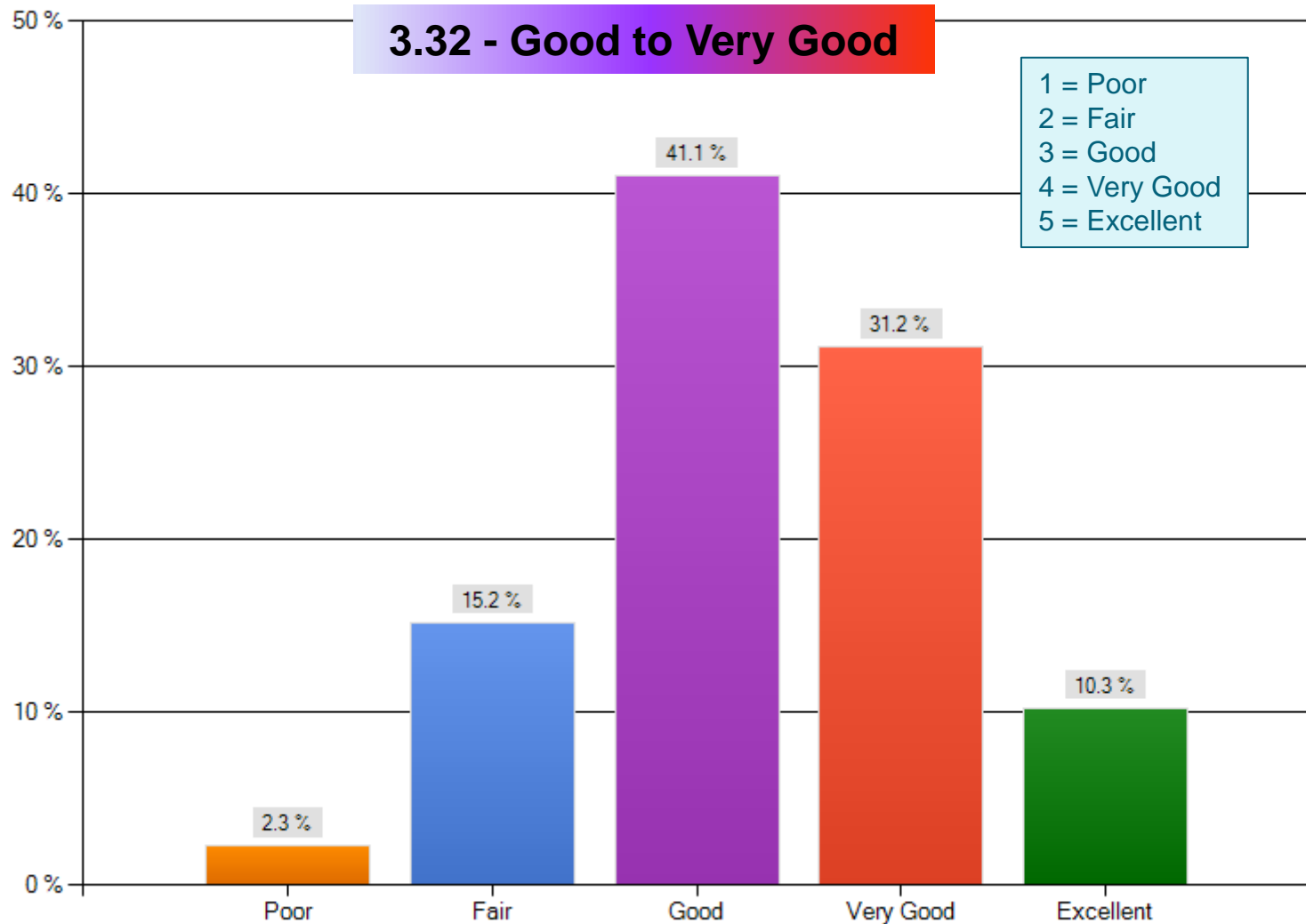
## The Data

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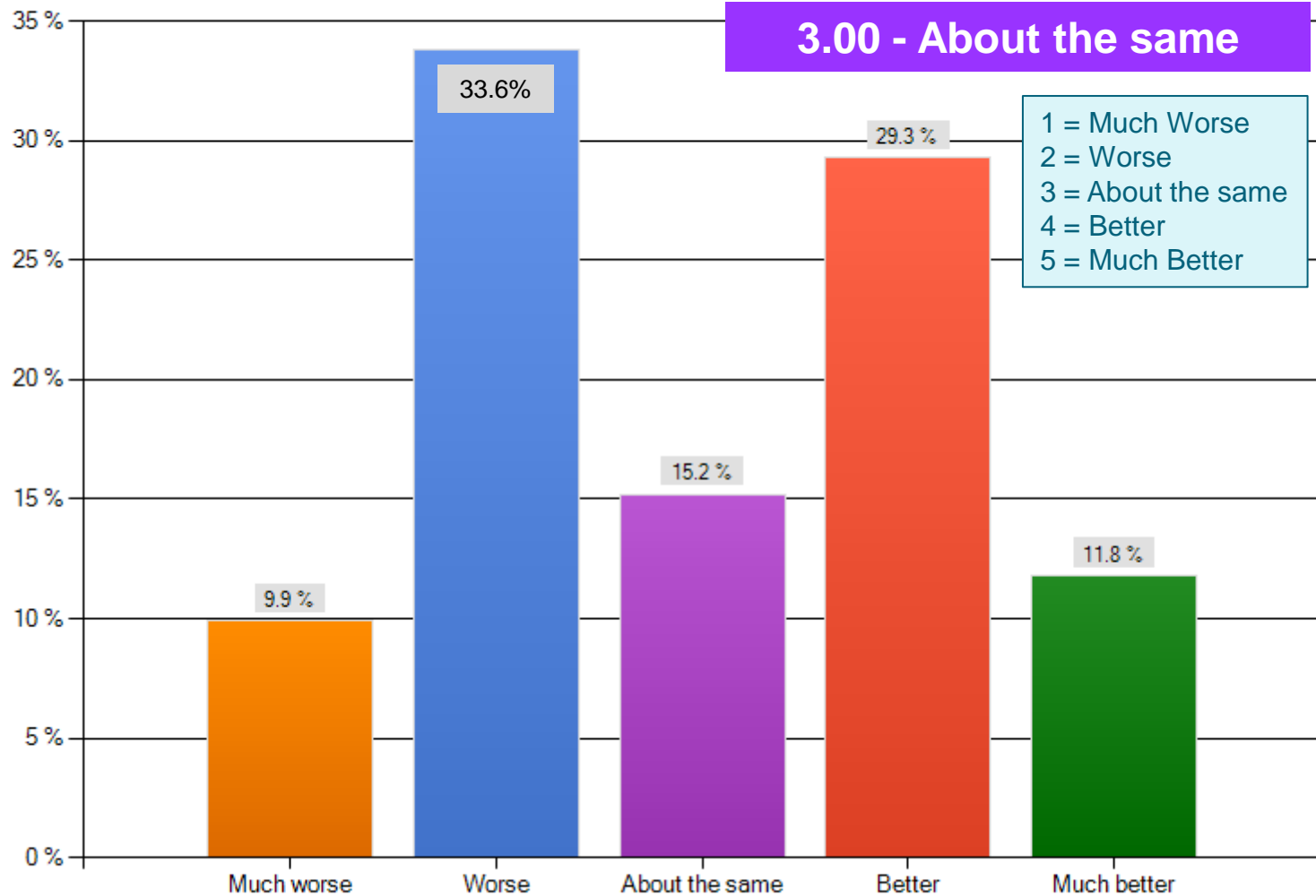
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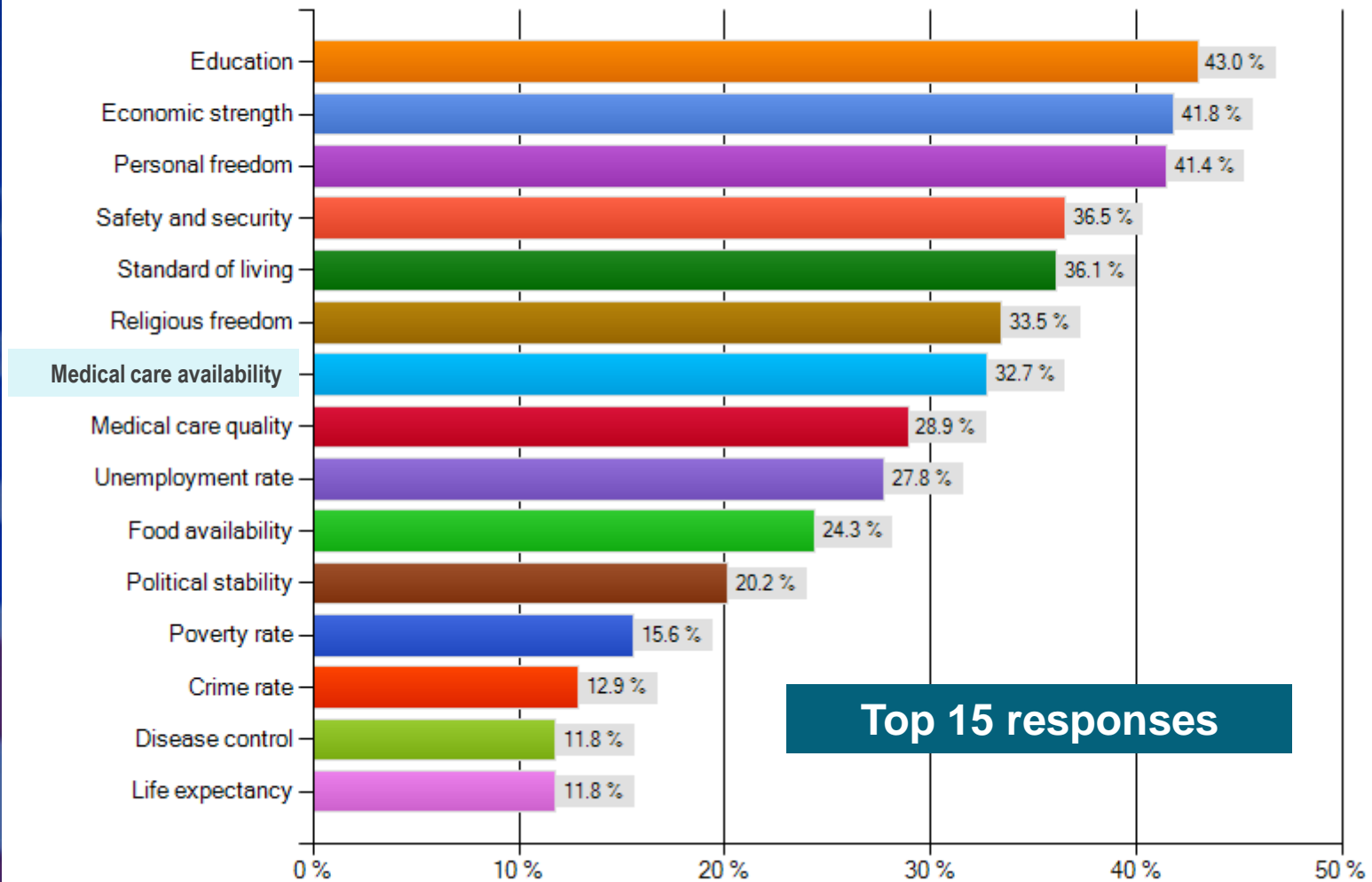
How would you rate your personal overall perception of the quality of life in America?



### How would you compare the quality of life in America today to your perception of what it was 50 years ago?



Please indicate what you perceive as the top 5 most important aspects of quality of life in America today. Please select only 5.





# Other responses on the

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## “most important aspects of quality of life in America”

- Government intervention and overreaching into personal and corporate freedoms and liberties.
- Information technology
- Moral standards
- Positive outlook of people
- Political Integrity
- Corporate control of government at state federal and local levels
- Less Pollution/Congestion
- Defeat Obama in 2012
- Evaluation/Continued monitoring of Gov't Support
- Economic insecurity
- All of the above
- Faith in the LORD (or lack thereof)

# Other responses on the

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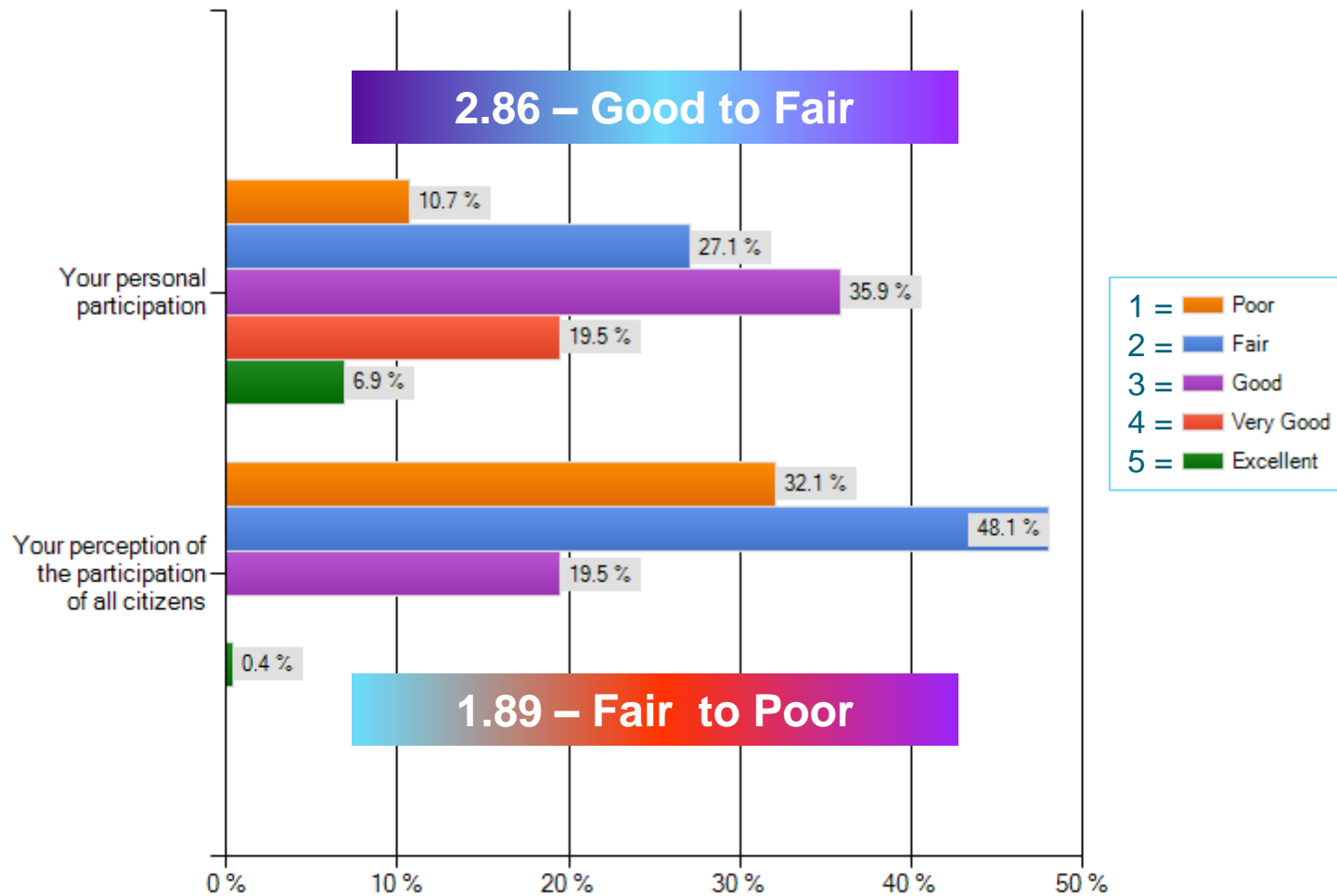
## “most important aspects of quality of life in America”

- Decreasing Economic Diversity
- Large divide between those who have and those who have not. This is what starts revolutions. Just ask the French or Russians (or any 5th world country)
- Overall environment of fear that comes from the instability of the world
- Health of our population; national debt issue
- Illegal drug use
- Quality of the environment, e.g., lack of pollution, lack of overpopulation, wise use of natural resources
- Fiat spending
- Traditional values; family, God and country, principles
- Sense of hopelessness among youth. Polarization as a positive value
- Political division, loss of USA Identity

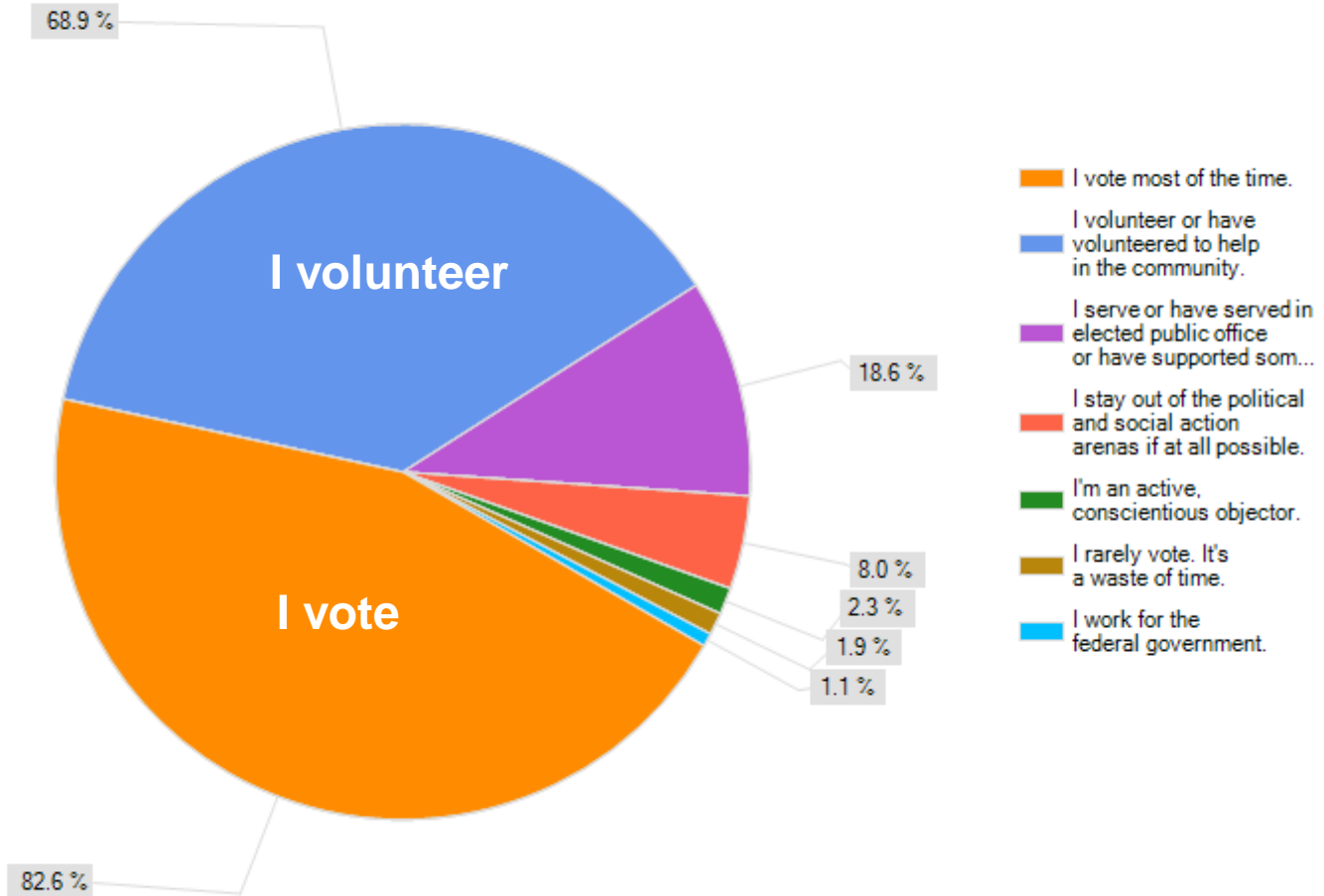
How would you rate the service provided by the United States federal government.  
Please rate each area listed.



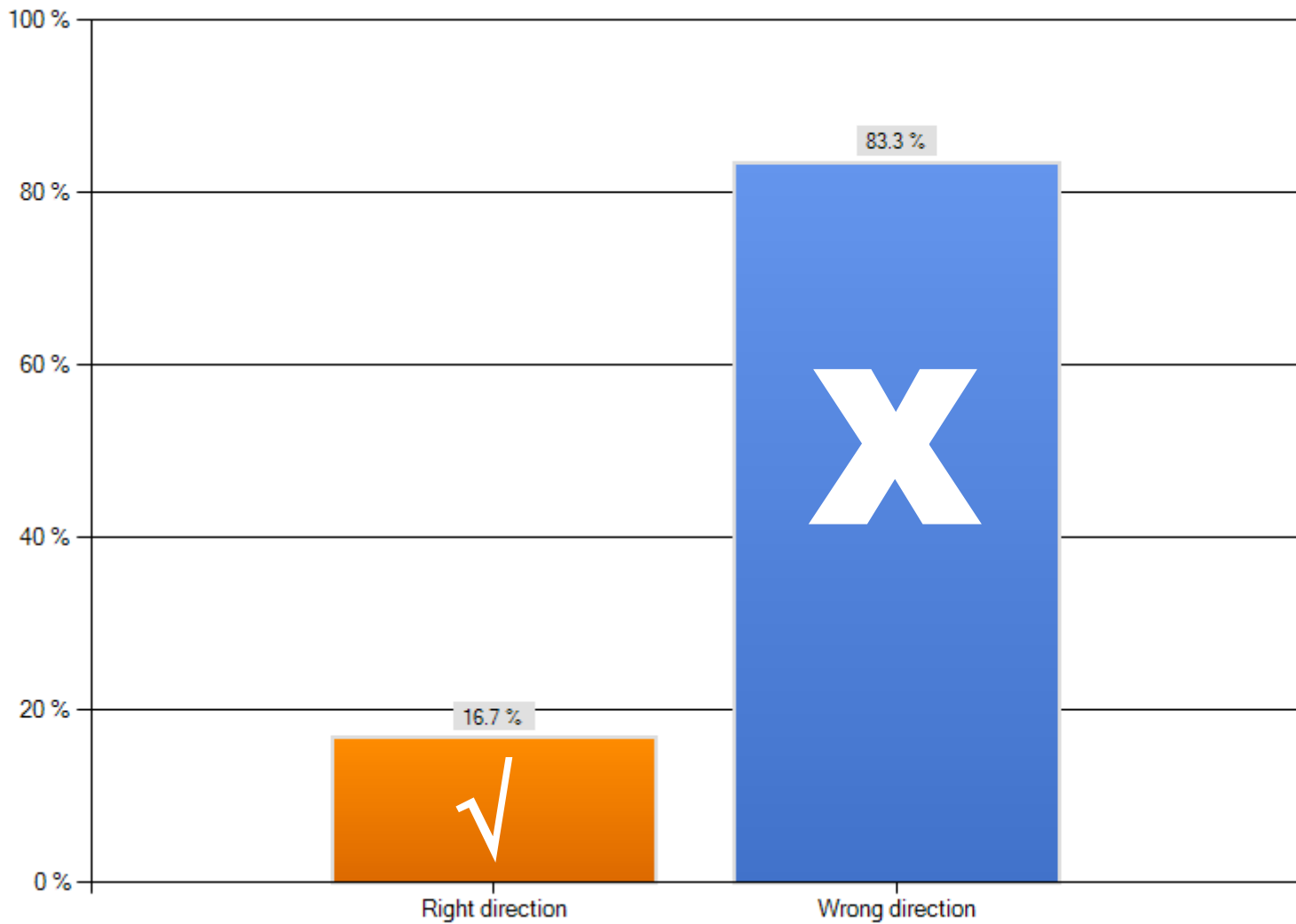
How would you rate the level of citizen participation in the American political and social processes? (voting, political action, social action, running for office, volunteering in the community, etc)



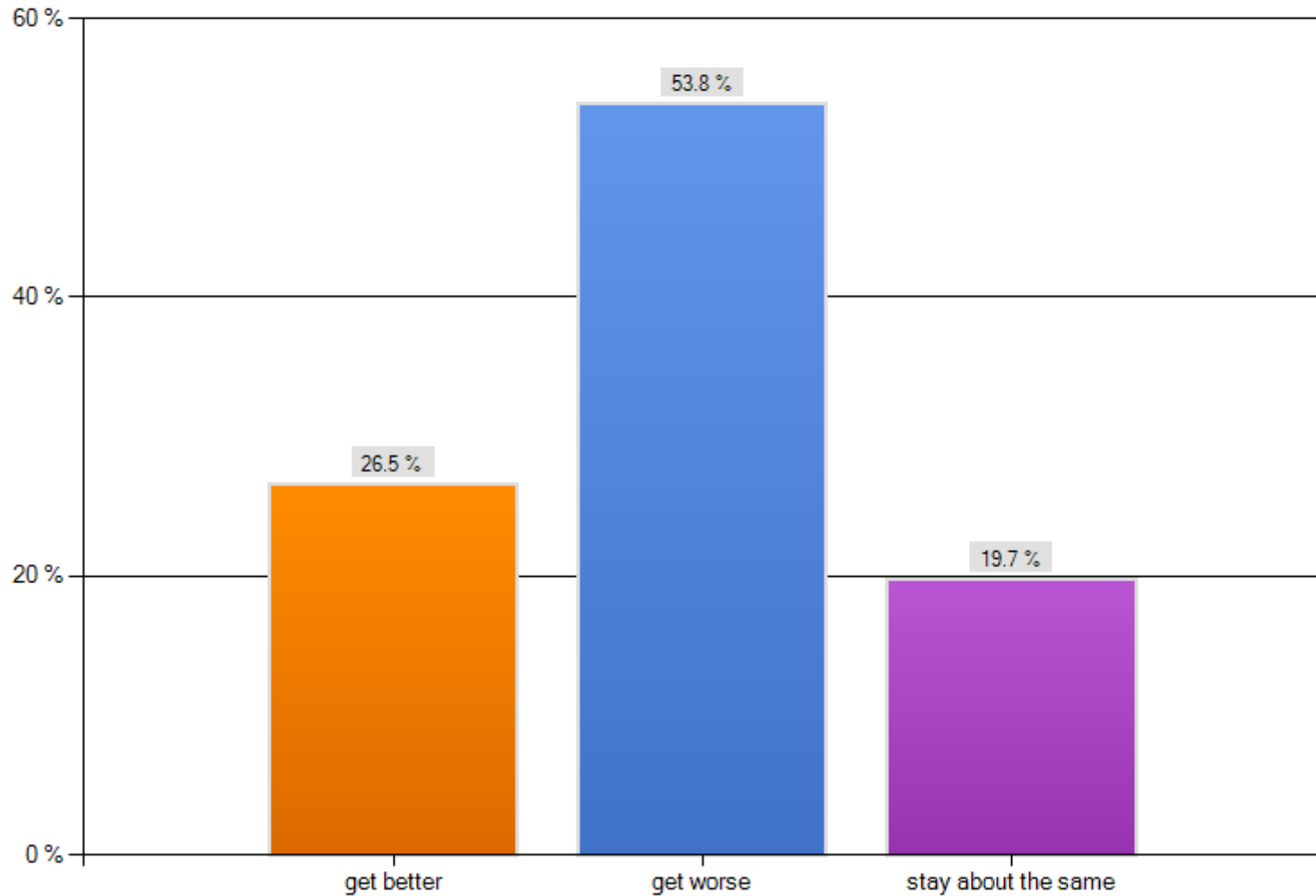
### Which statement or statements below best describe your current involvement in the American system?



### Which direction do you believe America is headed?



Please fill in the blank. I expect the quality of life in America to \_\_\_\_\_ over the next 50 years.



# Open-ended Comments on America

- Times are tough and opportunities for advancement at my place of business are limited
- We have to place God Back in control.
- Food, shelter, and education are really important issues for quality of life but ultimately the quality of one's life is better measured by someone's heart and attitude rather than the things that surround them. Kindness and generosity increases the quality of life for both the recipient and the giver.
- There is far too little regulation of banks and financial markets. The income gap between the top 20% and everyone else has gotten too wide, at least in part because of a sense of selfishness that has affected those at the top. Our country will continue to struggle until we get religion and corporate influences out of our politics. Policies and laws must be based on science, facts, and research, not faith and beliefs. Too many people have forgotten that our government has to do what's right for ALL, not just the loudest, nuttiest, or most religious.



# Open-ended Comments on America

- I don't believe America is headed in any direction currently, but that isn't an option. We can't agree on what direction to head so we are going nowhere.
- I am lucky to be in America
- We can't afford the current social security system and the welfare system needs reform. Wars are sucking a lot of money from the economy
- Demographics are shifting toward majority Hispanic population with higher levels of multi-racial families. Those who embrace that will be able to handle change positively. Those hanging on to the memory of a white majority are bitter and will become irrelevant in a few short years.
- Corporate greed, excessive CEO compensation, growing poverty and unemployment are increasing problems

# Open-ended Comments on America

- I don't believe government exists to 'provide' for the people so I read that question as sort of assumptive that quality of life depends on the government. A government that protects freedom perhaps, but that's why I selected getting worse. I think the trend is away from the freedom/constitution... I believe quality of life comes from contentment, which is primarily spiritual, also having needs met (food clothing, shelter) and the freedom to pursue goals/interests (which requires gov't stay out of a lot of things, but could include some role in permitting educational opportunities, equality, etc) and all the rest is gravy. If people can complain about poor quality of life with their big screen TVs, iPhones and a closet full of designer duds, they're clueless and I'd prefer they didn't vote. :)
- Change needs to happen soon. You can't keep doing the same things and expecting different results
- Obama is a "President in Training". He has made many wrong decisions and should not get a 2nd term.

# Open-ended Comments on America

- That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back (9780374288907): Thomas L. Friedman, Michael Mandelbaum tells it all.
- Several answers were based on firsthand knowledge of political and social agendas around the world and how America compares.
- We must work to strengthen and support the middle class - the working families - of this country. Unfortunately our legislators are bought and paid for by millionaires, billionaires and huge multinational corporations. Campaign finance reform is absolutely necessary to reverse this trend.
- As a country, we are turning away from God and his guiding principles. Therefore, things can only get worse unless we can unite in Christian faith and trust in God.
- I think America is headed in the same direction rather than the "right" or "wrong" direction, primarily because of political stagnancy and ineffectiveness.

# Open-ended Comments on America

- Unless we have a dramatic change in the leadership of America the quality of life in America is going to decline. Men and women who could lead our country in the right direction cannot get elected due to the shark tank mentality of the press. For the first time in my life I'm afraid that the USA could become a dictatorship with citizens having very little economic and personal freedom.
- My only worry is the large federal deficit and total amount of debt the United States owes; it is too much for our economy to support. The solution is both a cut in spending and a tax increase. The Republicans will not agree to increase taxes and the Democrats won't agree to cut spending; when this situation is fixed our country will be much improved.
- We have an illusion of democracy, but corporations and monied interests rule. I don't know if I will vote in the future. It's a sham.
- This is a chilling survey to see such a sad and demoralized person (me) answering with so much negativity and dismay at the state of affairs.

# Open-ended Comments on America

- 50 years ago people took the time to listen and really "hear" each other even when opinions differed. Such division will lead our society to collapse.
- I believe that our government has not been carrying out the will of the people and it is going to cost us some of the potential gains we could have in quality of living over the next few years. Our current Congress gets nothing done because of political and ideological stubbornness. I think Congress should have term limits and should not get paid like they currently do and it would alleviate the problems we have with career politicians who refuse to compromise to get anything done. The changes that we need to see are going to have to come from entrepreneurs and innovators and not from politicians; however the politicians are going to have to be much more proactive instead of reactive. Until that paradigm shift happens, I believe we are going to be at a standstill in our overall quality of living.

# Open-ended Comments on America

- Interesting questions; at this point in time, the primary issue to resolve: Is there a perceived value in America for ALL or should only those at the top be rewarded for the efforts of the many.
- Unless there is more compromise by our leaders in the future and cooperation, nothing constructive can be easily achieved.
- Time for a constitutional convention which will introduce term limits for senators and representatives. The Federal government is out of control and disconnected from the American public. Fed government has become too self-serving.
- The US middle class is disappearing. Jobs for the low class are disappearing. The great divide between the rich and the poor and lack of a strong middle class to hold the country together does not bode well for the future. Our tax structure overly burdens certain economic groups (middle and lower class) which directly impacts quality of life. Lack of health care, especially for children, impacts quality of life.

# Open-ended Comments on America

- Entitlements impact quality of life, why bother to strive for a better quality of life when doing nothing still gets me by.
- Career politicians are ruining our country. They are too out of touch with real life and too tied to lobbyist. There should be term limits on all.
- Thought provoking...
- My hope is that a change in the 2012 elections will get us back on track to maintain or improve our quality of life.
- I anticipate our economy and way of life to improve as our world around us is evolving with change daily.
- The Bible projects the results!
- Shut down the borders and create jobs in America
- Our country is headed in the wrong direction. We cannot be "everything to everyone". We will end up being a third world country...if you take from those who work, and give it to those who don't, eventually, those who work will quit....duh!!!

# Open-ended Comments on America

- I think the public would be better served if the media , politician would recognize the public is thirsty for how the govt. is run. We are educated people and yet the public is recognizing they have set back to long and just let life go. It seems we are taking a step backwards and living in a fear based society once again.
- Going more toward socialism
- Over the past 25 Years I have traveled to 90 countries in the world and overall the United States is the country I still want to call HOME. If it so bad WHY? Are People Still Dying to get here?
- Government is no longer of the people, for the people or by the people. Despite voting, people don't really influence the political system.
- The Fed must be brought under control or eliminated. Currency should be established by Congress, not a central bank. Replace the EPA with sound fair practices.



# Open-ended Comments on America

- I think our basic fundamentals and values as individuals and as a family have deteriorated significantly in the past 25 years. We as a nation are no longer committed to a God respecting, freedom protecting, everyone looks out for each other nation. No common mission or value system in place. The political arena is loaded with professional politicians that are only interested in getting re-elected. As individuals they are more inclined to follow surveys and polls rather than make the right decision, hang tough, and process accordingly. Only make decisions for the short run, not the long haul. This is why there will be no change. Democrats and Republicans will continue to "dig in" to their own ideals. The divide in political philosophy will get bigger. Again, no common mission, no commitment to a value based foundation. Stalemate for sure.
- Instate tariffs for all non charitable products received from other countries entering US borders for commercial sale.

# Open-ended Comments on the Survey

- Not enough information. You had to assume you wanted as of today with the current administration. In one question, the best answer was not good.
- The meaning of the question pertaining to the top 5 aspects of q of life question was a little ambiguous to me.....e.g. most important to me personally (what am I individually facing), most important to the county, most important for the future, most endangered right now.....etc.
- Always glad to share my opinion ;-)
- Question 3 somewhat ambiguous. Not clear whether mean current perceived consensus or what should be in future.
- Question # 2 above should read something like: "30 to 50 years ago".
- Question 3: Some are positive influences, some are negative. But they are subjective. E.g. personal freedom may be a negative to a far left person and a positive to a right-of-center person.

# Open-ended Comments on the Survey

- It is a little evident from your choices for question 3 that you expect most people to rate the first two questions on the "poor" and "worse" side.
- On immigrant visa - so, do not have personal data to answer questions 5a and 6.
- I think your survey is slanted toward the negative. Despite our bloated, wasteful, inefficiently managed federal government, America is still the land of opportunity and the desired destination for millions of people worldwide who understand that the freedom and security that America provides enables anyone with ambition and a decent work ethic to have a wonderful life here.
- No. 7 is overly vague. America is headed in the right direction. Her federal government, however, is not.
- Interesting questions. I am looking forward to seeing the outcome of the survey results.

# About the Author

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David Crouch has been serving as an organizational development professional in healthcare, manufacturing, food service and hospitality for over 30 years.

He earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1979 and his Masters in Organizational Development from Western Carolina University in 2009.

In 2011, David started his own consulting firm focused on helping people, teams and organizations discover and deploy their unique passions to create a memorable experience of excellence for everyone.

David is available for training, coaching and speaking in the areas of leadership development, team building, strategic planning, change management and performance management.

For more information, please visit our website at ...

[www.letsbuildexcellence.com](http://www.letsbuildexcellence.com)

# Thank you!

for participating in our survey

For more information, please feel free to contact David directly at  
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