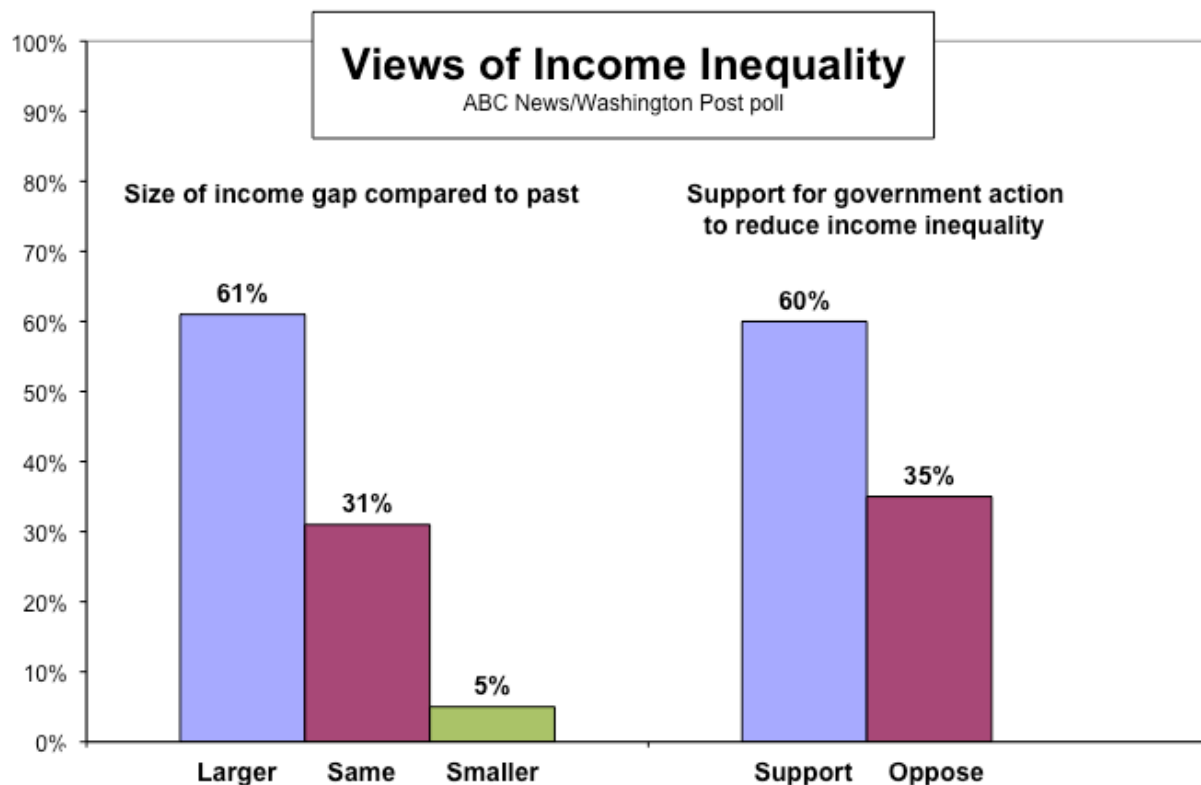


## **Six in 10 Support Policies Addressing Income Inequality**

Six in 10 Americans say the federal government should pursue policies to reduce the gap between the wealthy and less-well-off Americans, although fewer express support for the Occupy Wall Street movement that's been protesting U.S. income inequality.

Sixty-one percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll think the wealth gap is larger than it's been historically. And despite longstanding public concerns about activist government, six in 10 also say the federal government should seek to reduce that differential.

The public's concern is buttressed by a recent Congressional Budget Office estimate that the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans have nearly tripled their incomes since 1979, while the bottom 80 percent of earners have seen their share of the nation's total income slightly decline.



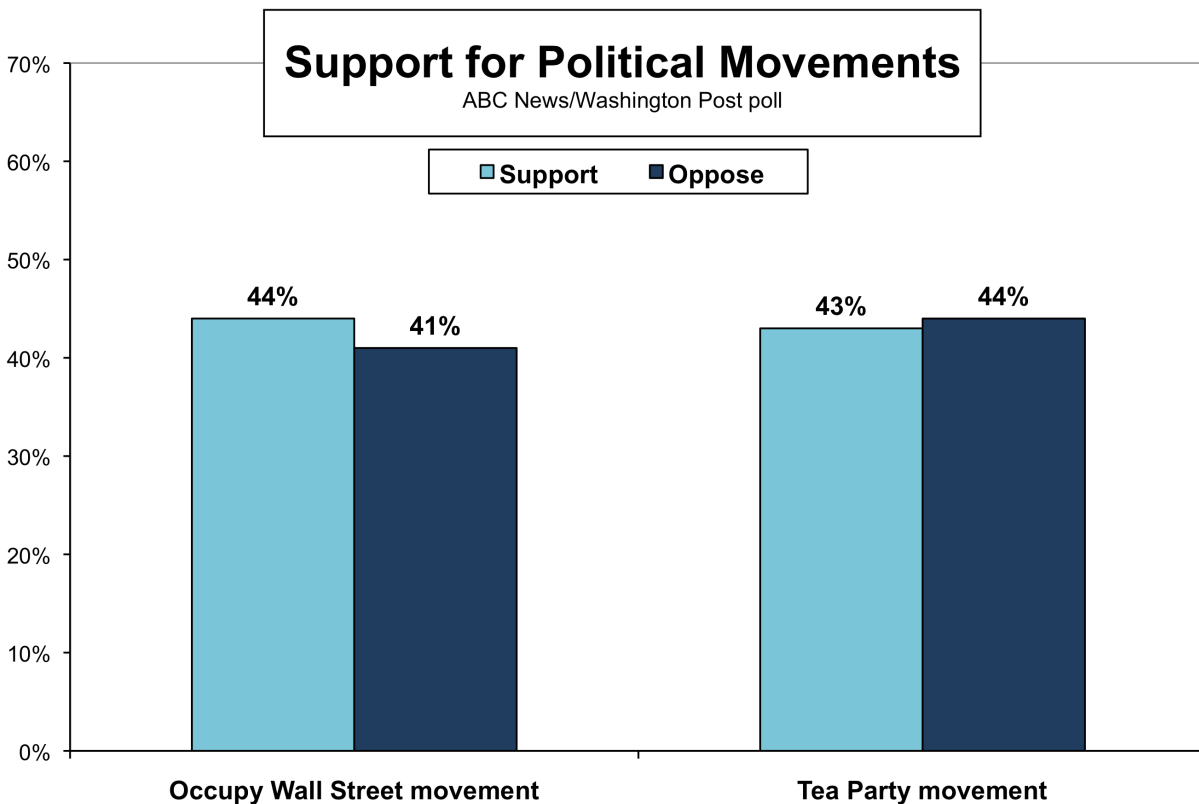
This poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that 37 percent perceive the wealth gap as "much larger" than it's been; just 5 percent think it's smaller. And 43 percent feel

“strongly” that the government should pursue policies to address it, vs. 24 percent who are strongly opposed.

Overall support for such policies is linked to perceptions of a widening wealth gap. Among those who think the gap is much larger than it’s been historically, 84 percent say the government should pursue policies to address it. That declines to 54 percent among people who think the gap is just somewhat larger than in the past, and 41 percent of those who think it’s about the same.

Support for specific policies presumably would depend on the details. On one hand, 75 percent in an ABC/Post poll in October supported raising taxes on millionaires. On the other, the public in general favors “smaller government that provides fewer services” over a larger government that does more – by 56-38 percent in September.

Additionally, while 60 percent support polices to address wealth distribution, substantially fewer, 44 percent, identify themselves as supporters of the Occupy Wall Street movement, and just 18 percent strongly so. About as many, 41 percent, say they oppose the movement.



GROUPS – These views vary by partisanship and ideology. Seven in 10 Democrats and 65 percent of independents think the income gap is larger than it’s been, compared with 45 percent of Republicans. Even more Democrats, 81 percent, think the federal government should act to address the gap, as do nearly six in 10 independents but just 37 percent of Republicans.

Similarly, 73 and 67 percent of liberals and moderates, respectively, think the gap has grown, compared to slightly fewer than half of conservatives. Eighty-four percent of liberals think the government should be doing something about this issue; that declines to a still-substantial two-thirds of moderates, then to 49 percent of people who say they're somewhat conservative, and just 29 percent of "very" conservatives.

There are more than just partisan and ideological divides. Better-educated and higher-income Americans are more likely to think the income gap is wider now than in the past – but less likely to think the federal government should act to address it. Sixty-four percent of Americans without a college degree favor such policies, compared with 53 percent of graduates. So do 70 percent of lower-income Americans, compared with 52 percent of middle- and higher-income earners.

TEA vs. OCCUPY – Overall support for the Occupy Wall Street movement, at 44 percent, is nearly identical to support for the Tea Party movement (43 percent, with 44 percent opposed). But the support profiles of these groups vary in expected and unexpected ways.

Republicans and Republican-leaning independents account for 65 percent of Tea Party supporters; just 27 percent are Democrats or Democratic leaners. It's essentially the opposite for Occupy Wall Street supporters – 69 percent are leaned Democrats; 24 percent, leaned Republicans.

Ideologically, Occupy Wall Street shows more diversity. More than half of Tea Party supporters, 57 percent, identify themselves as conservatives; just 13 percent are liberals. By contrast, Occupy Wall Street supporters include sizable shares of moderates (42 percent), liberals (31 percent) and conservatives (26 percent) alike.

Occupy Wall Street supporters are more racially diverse – three in 10 are non-white compared with one in five Tea Party supporters – and they're also somewhat more apt to earn less than \$50,000 a year. A quarter of strong Tea Party supporters are over the age of 65, vs. about half as many Occupy supporters.

MOTIVATIONS – Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party supporters differ in political views as well. In one example, just 24 percent of Tea Party supporters approve of Barack Obama's overall job performance; that jumps to 63 percent among Occupy supporters.

Nearly three-quarters of Occupy Wall Street supporters say the wealth gap is larger than it's been, compared with 54 percent of Tea Party supporters, and just 42 percent of its strong supporters. And eight in 10 Occupy supporters want the government to do something about it, far more than the number of Tea Party supporters who say so, 42 percent.

Still, these groups have some things in common. For one, anger at the government peaks among strong supporters in each group. In the Tea Party ranks, 39 percent describe themselves as angry at the way the government is working, and that soars to 55 percent among "strong" supporters. Fewer Occupy supporters, 28 percent, express anger at the government; but among its strong supporters this, too, grows, to 40 percent.

Indeed there's another point of similarity between these movements, and perhaps an unexpected one: More than a third of Tea Party supporters say they also support the Occupy Wall Street movement – and vice versa.

	---- Demographic profiles ----			
	Sup. Tea Party		-Support OWS--	
	NET	Strongly	NET	Strongly
Race:				
White	79	75	69	65
Black	9	10	12	8
Latino	7	8	13	16
Asian	*	0	1	2
Other	5	7	5	8
Sex:				
Male	55	61	46	50
Female	45	39	54	50
Party ID:				
Democrat	15	10	39	41
Independent	39	38	40	42
Republican	40	44	16	13
Ideology:				
Liberal	13	14	31	42
Moderate	30	12	42	38
Conservative	57	72	26	19
Somewhat	31	25	19	11
Very	26	48	7	8
Education:				
College grad	36	35	38	40
No degree	64	65	62	60
Age:				
Under 30	20	13	16	19
65+	16	25	15	13
Income:				
Under \$50,000	47	49	54	57
Over \$100,000	20	11	19	18
Obama:				
Approve	24	17	63	62
Disapprove	73	82	34	33
Angry at gov't	39	55	28	40
Income gap:				
Is larger	54	42	74	78
Gov. should fix	42	26	79	86
Support TP	--	--	35	38

Strongly	--	--	7	13
Support OWS	36	21	--	--
Strongly	16	17	--	--

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 2011, among a random national sample of 1,004 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points for the full sample. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

Analysis by Julie E. Phelan.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>. Media Contacts: [David Ford](#), (212) 456-7243, and [Julie Townsend](#), (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

\*= less than 0.5 percent

1-15 previously released.

16. I'd like to ask you about the distribution of wealth in this country - that is, the gap between how much money wealthy people have compared with how much money the rest of the population has. Do you think this gap is larger than it's been historically, smaller, or about the same?

	Larger	Smaller	Same	No opinion
11/3/11	61	5	31	3

17. (IF DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH IS LARGER) As far as you know is it much larger, or somewhat larger?

	Much larger	Somewhat larger	No opinion
11/3/11	61	37	2

16/17 NET:

	Distribution of - wealth is larger --					
	NET	Much	Somewhat	Smaller	Same	No opinion
11/3/11	61	37	24	5	31	3

18. Do you think the federal government should or should not pursue policies that try to reduce the gap between wealthy and less well-off Americans? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Should pursue -----			--- Should not pursue ---			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
11/3/11	60	43	18	35	11	24	5

19-38 previously released.

39. On another subject, what is your view of the Tea Party political movement - would you say you support it strongly, support it somewhat, oppose it somewhat or oppose it strongly?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
11/3/11	43	14	29	44	20	24	13
10/2/11	42	12	30	47	20	27	11
9/1/11	47	13	35	45	18	27	8
7/17/11	44	13	31	46	23	24	10
6/5/11	46	13	33	44	21	24	10
4/17/11	42	16	26	49	21	27	10

40. What is your view of the Occupy Wall Street movement - would you say you support it strongly, support it somewhat, oppose it somewhat or oppose it strongly?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
11/3/11	44	18	26	41	19	22	15

41-42 previously released.

\*\*\* END \*\*\*