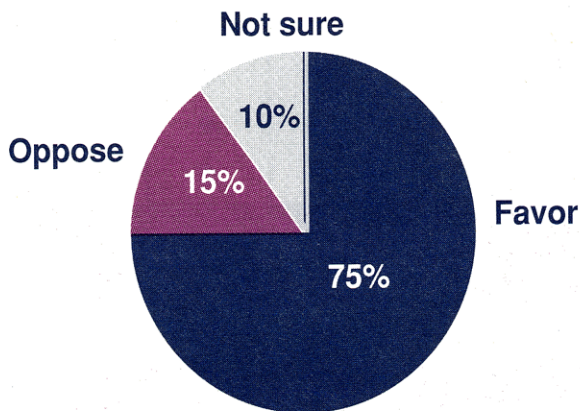


How Much Government—Devolution

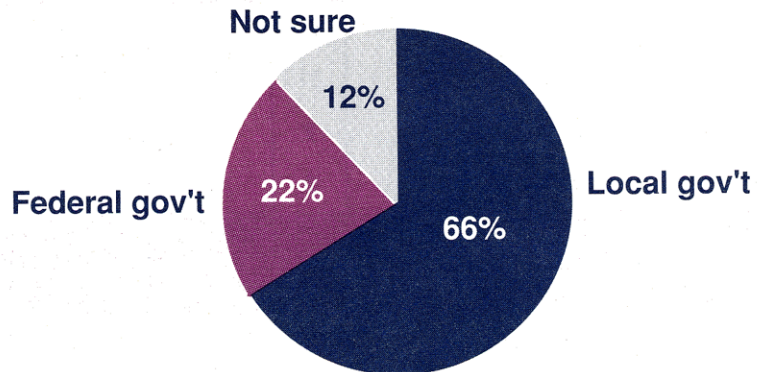
Today's interest in devolution stems from dissatisfaction with federal government performance, and from an inclination to disperse and decentralize authority. This contrasts with the older "states' rights" emphasis.

Question: ...Do you favor or oppose: having the states take over more responsibilities now performed by the federal government?



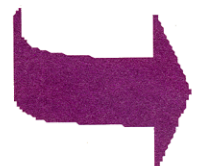
Source: Survey by Yankelovich Partners, Inc. for *Time/CNN*, January 25-26, 1995.

Question: In general, who do you think should be most responsible for people's well-being...the local government or the federal government?



Source: Survey by NBC News, January 25, 1995.

Historically, of course, "states' rights" had a strong appeal. With some exceptions during the New Deal and Great Society years—reflected in data on p. 27—Americans have endorsed a broad state and local role.

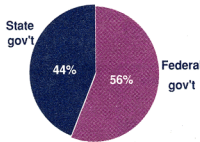


How Much Government—Devolution

Mixed Findings—1936-1976

1936

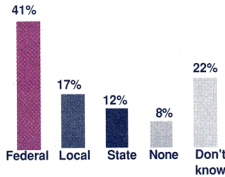
Question: Which...do you favor—concentration of power in the federal government, or ... in the state governments?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, January 20-25.

1939

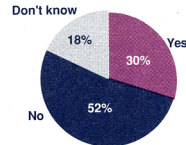
Question: Which do you think is the most honest and efficient in performing its own special duties?



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune*, July 9.

1939

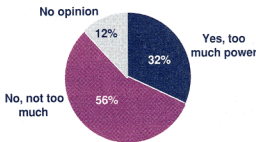
Question: ...[T]he federal government has been gaining in power over the state governments. Do you think this trend ought to continue?



Source: Survey by People's Research, October 30-November 3.

1941

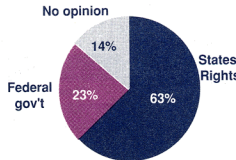
Question: Do you think there is too much power in the hands of the [federal] government...?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, April 10-15.

1957

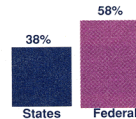
Question: ...Which group do you... tend to agree with more—people who believe in state's rights, or those who believe that more problems should be turned over the [federal] government...?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, July 18-23.

1963

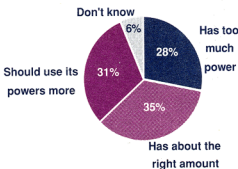
Question: Do you feel that the question of Negro rights is more a problem that individual states should solve, or ...that the federal government should solve?



Source: Survey by the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, December.

1964

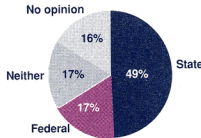
Question: Which...[statement] comes closest to your own views about governmental power today? The federal government....



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, October.

1966

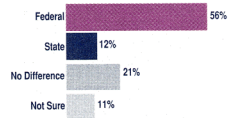
Question: Which do you think spend the taxpayer's dollar more wisely--the state government or the federal...?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, December 8-13, 1966.

1976

Question: ...[W]hich do you think is more out of touch with what people think—the federal government or the state...?



Source: Survey Louis Harris and Associates, June 9-14.

How Much Government—Devolution

Devolutionary Thinking is Now Part of a Larger Critique of Modern Governmental Experience

Question: Think about relations between the states and the federal government. Does the federal government have too much power, do the state governments have too much power, or is the balance about right?

	Everyone 1995	Republicans	Democrats	Independents	Everyone 1987
Federal too much	48	59	40	44	39
States too much	6	4	8	6	5
About right	38	28	44	41	47
DK/NA	8	9	8	9	9

Source: Surveys by CBS News/*New York Times*, February 22-25, 1995; and May 11-14, 1987.

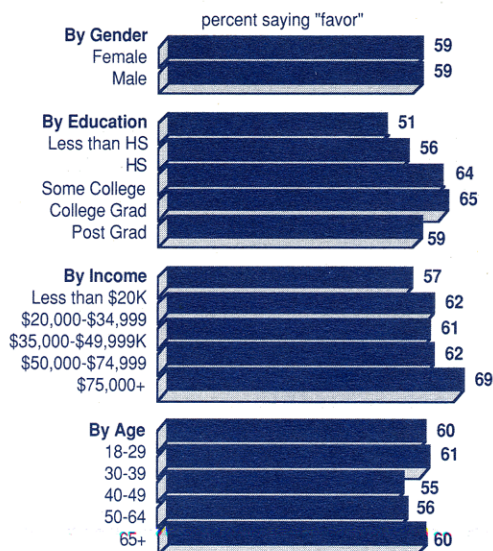
Question: In general, who do you think does the best job of spending tax dollars in an efficient and constructive way: the federal government, your state government or your local government?

	Everyone	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Federal	12	8	21	7
State	32	45	23	32
Local	38	35	43	36
Don't know	18	12	13	25

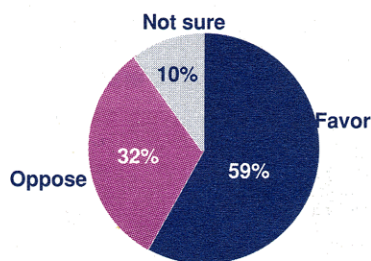
Question: What if some of the tax dollars that go to the federal government now went to your state government instead. Generally speaking, do you think that would result in better government services, in worse government services or wouldn't it have much impact on the quality of government services?

	Everyone	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Better	53	65	46	52
Worse	4	6	6	3
Little impact	32	25	34	34
Don't know	11	4	14	11

Source: Surveys by the Los Angeles Times, January 19-22, 1995.



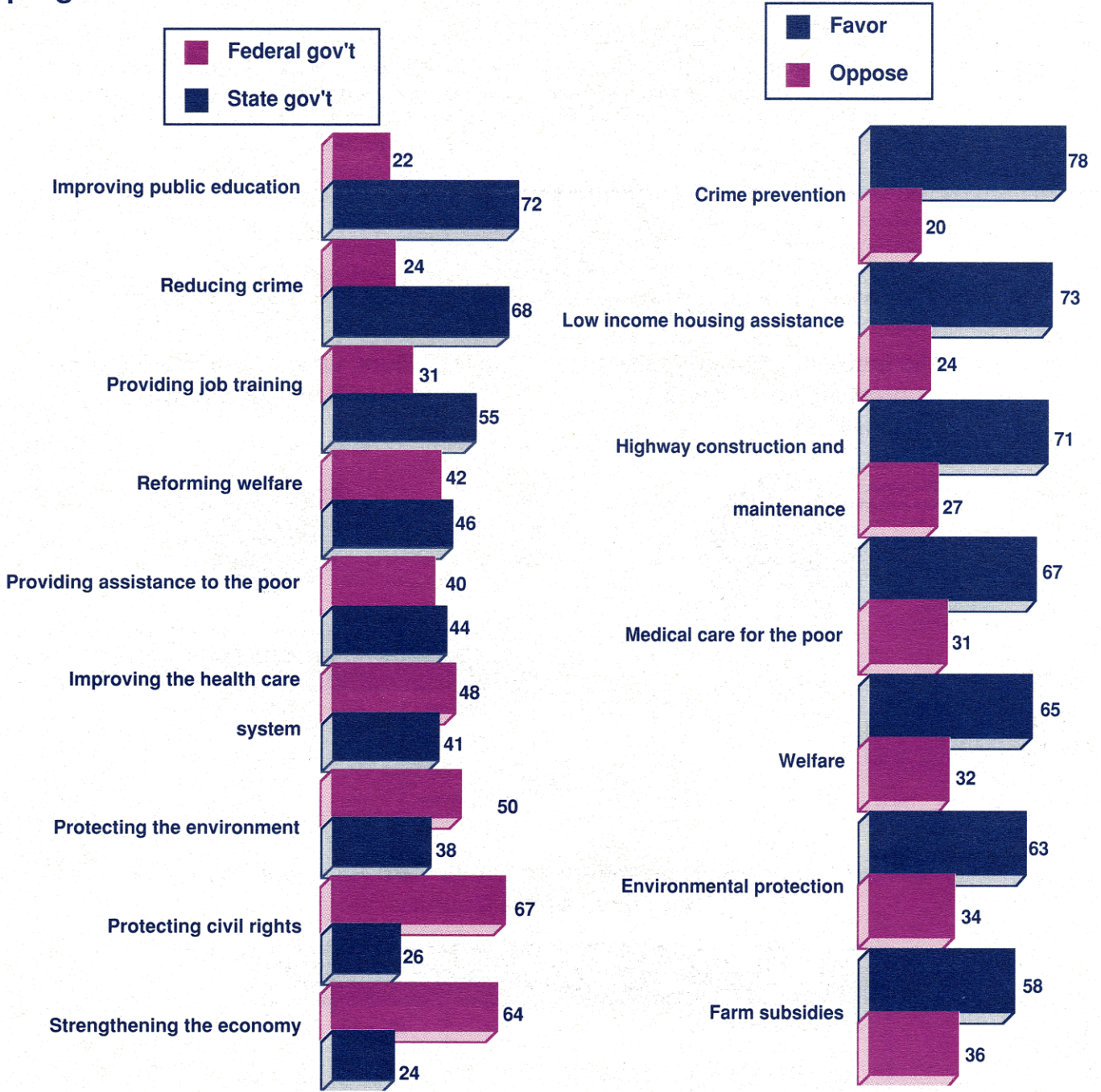
Question: Would you favor or oppose having your state government assume many of the governmental powers and functions now exercised by the federal government in Washington?



Source: Survey by Yankelovich Partners, Inc. for *Time/CNN*, September 1, 1994

How Much Government—Devolution

When it comes to control of various programs, the public's preference for a shift to the states is evident. But as the Harris and Hart/Teeter batteries remind us, how the "federal vs. state" question is posed makes a big difference. And, while more inclined these days to enhance state government authority, Americans make sharp distinctions on who should be in charge from one program to another.



Question: "...Which...should have more responsibility for...?"

Source: Surveys by the Hart and Teeter Research Companies for NBC News and the *Wall Street Journal*, December 10-13, 1994, and January 14-17, 1995.

Question: "...[F]or each would you favor or oppose shifting more control to the states?"

Source: Survey conducted by Louis Harris & Associates for *Business Week*, January 4-8, 1995.