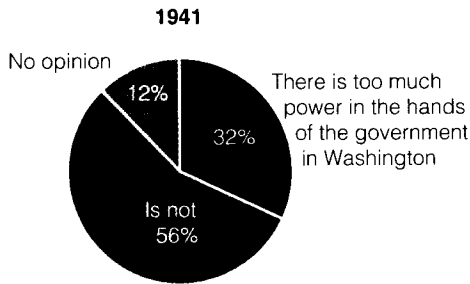


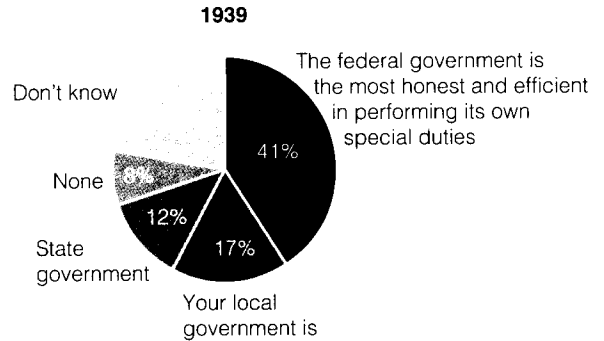
ASSESSING GOVERNMENT

President Bill Clinton is more disposed toward federal government activism than his recent predecessors. Yet he confronts a public more skeptical about federal action than ever before. Americans' attitudes today contrast sharply with the high hopes and expectations they had for the federal government from the 1940s through the mid-1960s.

Question: **Do you think there is too much power in the hands of the government in Washington?**



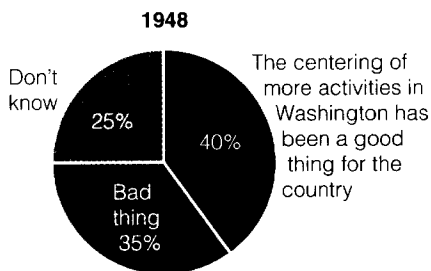
Question: **Which do you think is the most honest and efficient in performing its own special duties?**



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, April 10-15, 1941.

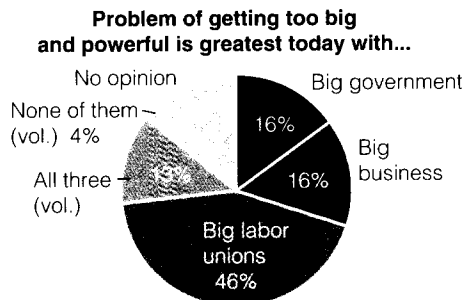
Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune*, July 1939.

Question: **Most people agree that a good many activities and responsibilities that were formerly left up to the states are now centered in the national government in Washington. Generally speaking, do you think...?**



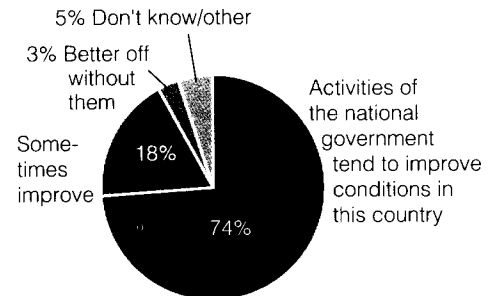
Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune*, September 13-20, 1948.

Question: **One problem is keeping any group in the United States from getting too big and too powerful. Where do you feel this problem is greatest today...? (1954)**



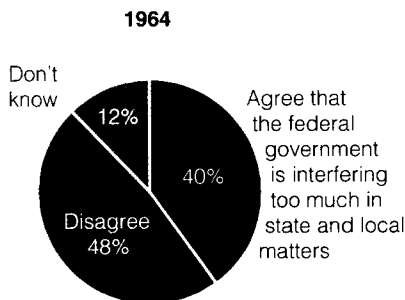
Source: Survey by the Opinion Research Corporation, August 23-September 3, 1954.

Question: **On the whole, do the activities of the national government tend to improve conditions in this country or would we be better off without them? (1960)**



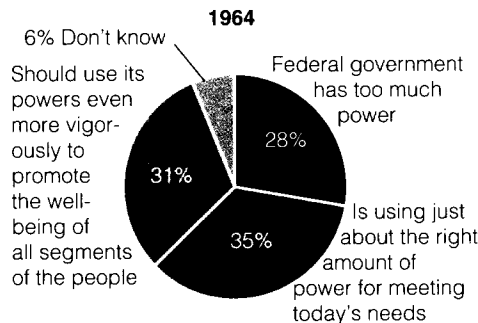
Source: Survey by the National Opinion Research Center for the Center of International Studies, Princeton University, March 1960.

Question: **Here are several statements that people critical of the government sometimes make. Just tell me whether, in general, you...?**



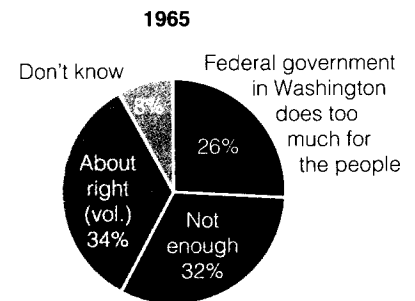
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for Potomac Associates, September 1964.

Question: **Which one of the statements listed on this card comes closest to your own views about governmental power today?**



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for Potomac Associates, October 1964.

Question: **In general, do you feel the federal government in Washington does too much for the people, or not enough for the people?**

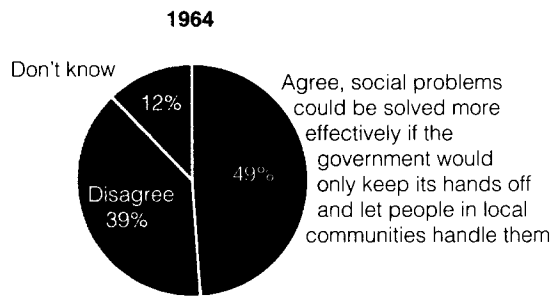


Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, February 1965.

Growing Skepticism

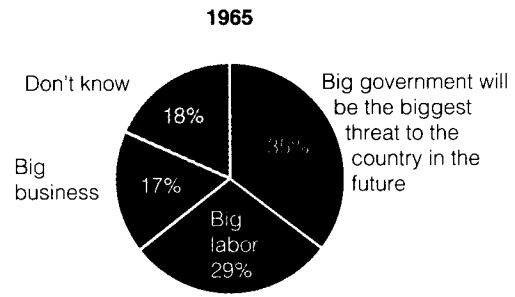
Disaffection from federal government activity can be seen in the mid 1960s, though 39 percent disagreed in 1964 that social problems would be solved more effectively if government got out of the way. The view that the government was too expensive and inefficient was joining the familiar sentiment that it was out of touch with the people.

Question: **Now, several more statements one sometimes hears. Again, please tell me whether you agree or disagree.**



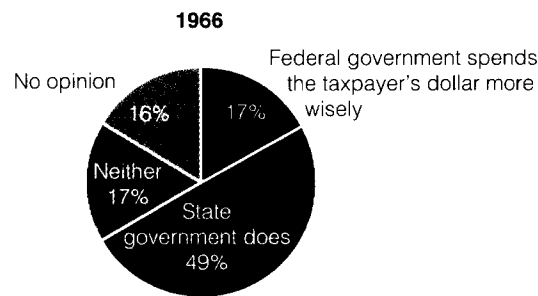
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for Potomac Associates, September 1964.

Question: **In your opinion, which of the following do you think will be the biggest threat to the country in the future—big business, big labor, or big government?**



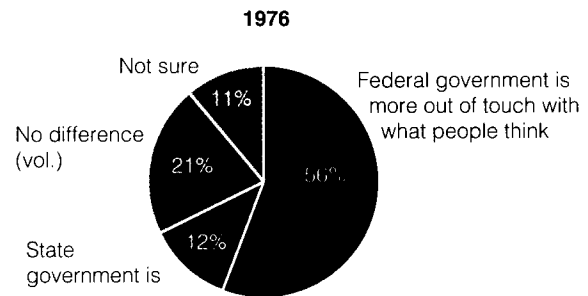
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, February 1965.

Question: **Which do you think spends the taxpayer's dollar more wisely—the state government or the federal government?**



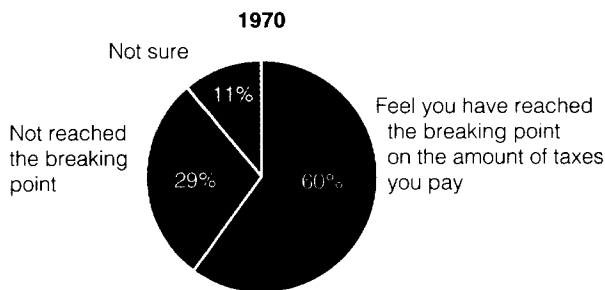
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, December 8–13, 1966.

Question: **If you had to choose, which do you think is more out of touch with what people think—the federal government or the state government?**



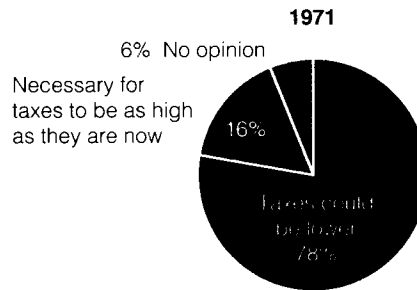
Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, June 9–14, 1976.

Question: **As far as you and your family are concerned, do you feel you have reached the breaking point on the amount of taxes you pay, or not?**



Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, February 1970.

Question: **In order to meet the country's needs, do you think it's necessary for taxes to be as high as they are today, or do you think they could be quite a bit lower?**

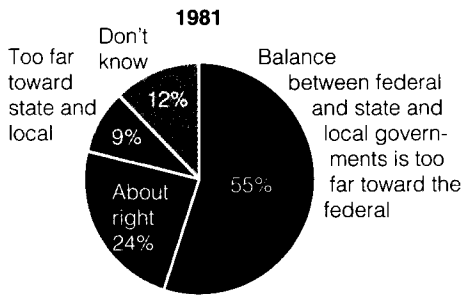


Source: Survey by Opinion Research Corporation, May 22–June 20, 1971.

The Present Critique of Government

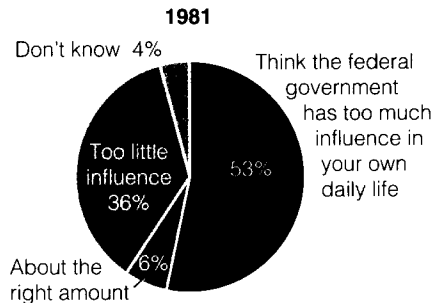
By the early 1980s, Americans felt that the balance had tipped too much toward Washington, but the view that government should do a better job prevailed over the view that it should simply be cut. Americans are not reflexively antigovernment. They are concerned about performance, excessive costs, wastefulness, and inefficiency.

Question: **All in all, would you say the present balance or responsibility between the federal government on the one hand, and the state and local governments on the other is...?**

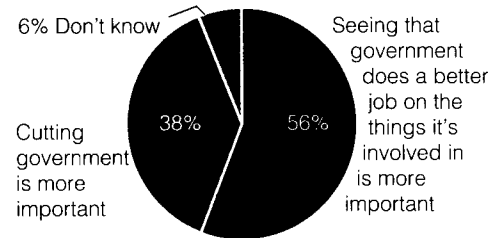


Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for the Roper Center and the American Enterprise Institute, November 14-21, 1981.

Question: **Here is a list of some groups and organizations in our society. Thinking about the role each plays in your own daily life, please tell me if you think...?**

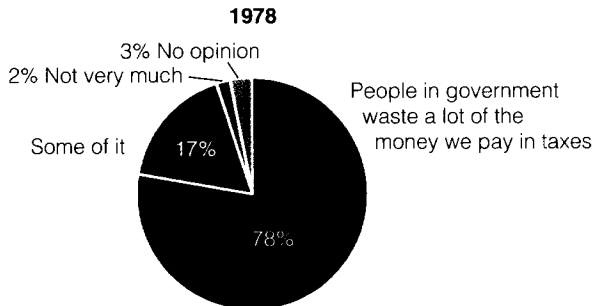


Question: **The question of how much government we should have is big in the news these days. Some people say government has too much to say about everything and we must work to reduce its role. Others say cutting the size of government isn't as important as seeing that government does a better job.... (1981)**



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Reports 81-4), March 21-28, 1981.

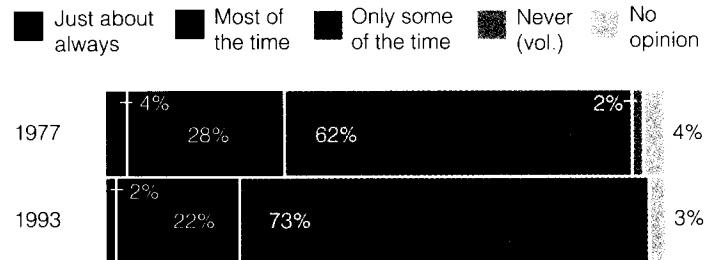
Question: **Do you think people in the government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?**



Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, June 19-23, 1978.

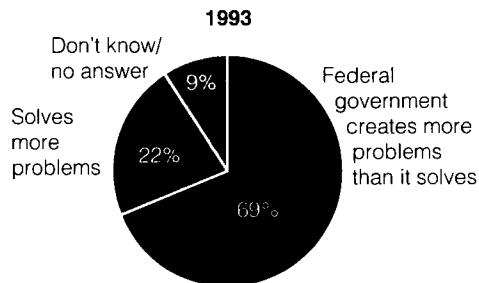
Question: **How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?**

Think you can trust the government to do what is right...



Source: Surveys by CBS News/New York Times, latest that of January 12-14, 1993.

Question: **Do you think that, in general, the federal government creates more problems than it solves, or do you think it solves more problems than it creates?**



Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, January 12-14, 1993.

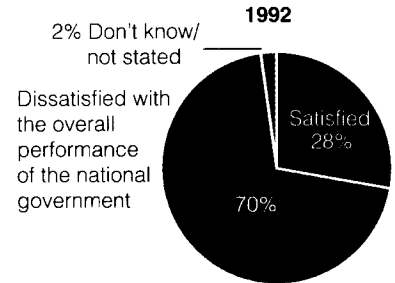
Question: **I am going to read you a series of statements that will help us understand how you feel about a number of things. For each statement, please tell me whether you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it, or completely disagree with it.**

1992
Agree, when something is run by the government, it is usually inefficient and wasteful



Source: Survey by the Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, May 28-June 10, 1992.

Question: **Thinking of the national government of the United States, would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with its overall performance?**

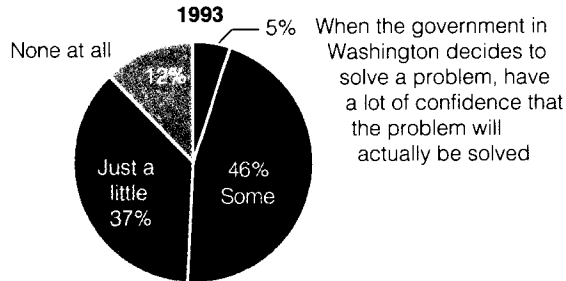


Source: Survey by the Angus Reid Group for CNN, March 1992.

Perform Better: It's Just That Simple

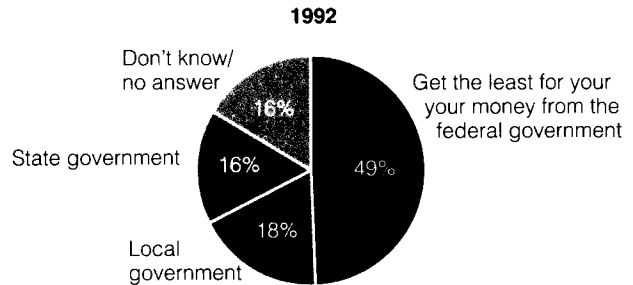
Criticism of the way the federal government works is higher than it has ever been. It is said to give us the least for our money and contrasts poorly with other institutions. Still, on questions about whether government should be doing more to solve the country's problems or to promote the well-being of all, significant numbers indicate support.

Question: **When the government in Washington decides to solve a problem, how much confidence do you have that the problem actually will be solved...?**



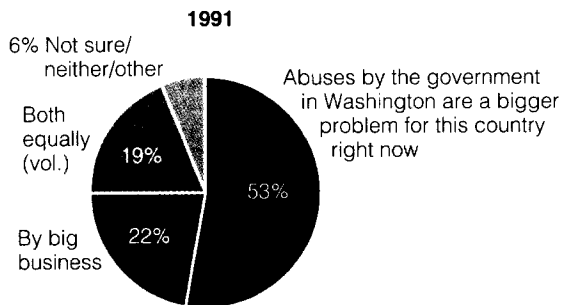
Note: Of the 49% of respondents who indicated they had little or no confidence in the government's ability to solve problems, 20% said that the reason for their lack of confidence is that "problems are difficult to solve," compared to 66% who said the "government is incompetent."
Source: Survey by ABC News/Washington Post, February 25-28, 1993.

Question: **From which level of government do you feel you get the least for your money?**



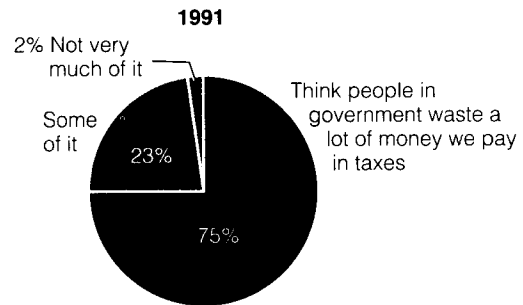
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, June 23-28, 1992.

Question: **In your opinion, which is a bigger problem for this country right now—abuses by big business or abuses by the government in Washington?**



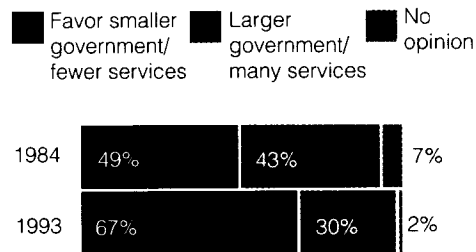
Source: Survey by the Los Angeles Times, November 21-24, 1991.

Question: **Do you think that people in the government waste a lot of money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?**



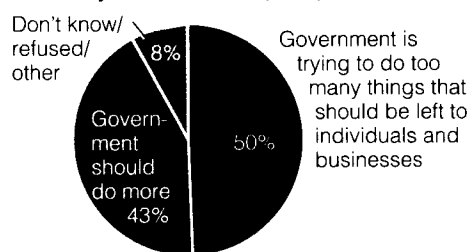
Source: Survey by ABC News/Washington Post, October 15-20, 1991.

Question: **Would you say you favor smaller government with fewer services, or large government with many services?**



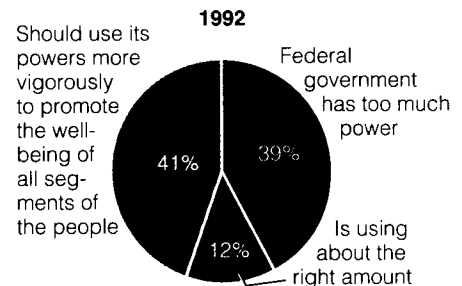
Source: Surveys by ABC News/Washington Post, latest that of February 25-28, 1993.

Question: **Some people think the government is trying to do too many things that should be left to individuals and businesses. Others think that government should do more to solve our country's problems. Which comes closer to your own view? (1992)**



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, August 31-September 2, 1992.

Question: **Which of these statements comes closest to your view about government power today?**



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, June 23-28, 1992.