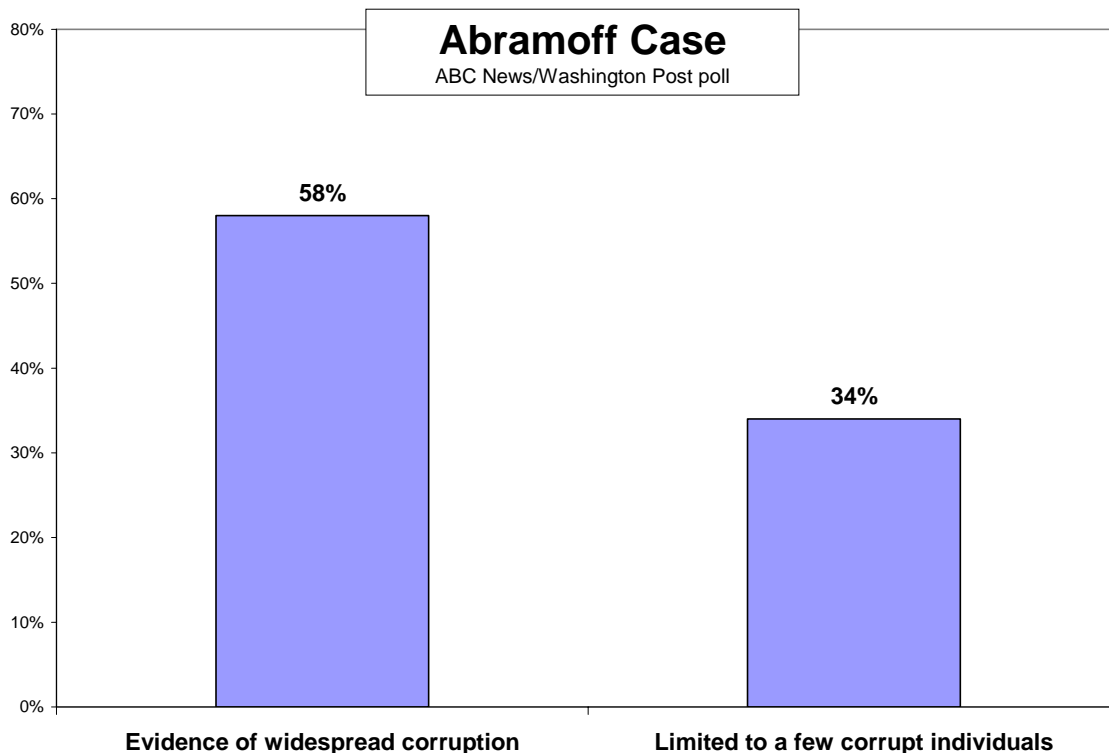


Majorities See Widespread Corruption, Want Tougher Lobbying Restrictions

Nearly six in 10 Americans see lobbyist Jack Abramoff's plea deal as a sign of widespread corruption in Washington, and majorities support legislation that, if enacted, would end political lobbying as it's currently practiced.

The political fallout of the still-evolving case is unclear – at this stage neither party holds an advantage in perceptions of its ethics and honesty. But there could be benefit in getting in front on reform: A whopping nine in 10 Americans, across the political spectrum, favor banning lobbyists from giving members of Congress anything of value.

Abramoff plead guilty last week to conspiracy and fraud charges in an unfolding scandal in which investigators are reported to be focusing on six or more Congress members and as many congressional aides. While a third of Americans see his case as limited to a few corrupt individuals, 58 percent call it evidence of widespread corruption in Washington.



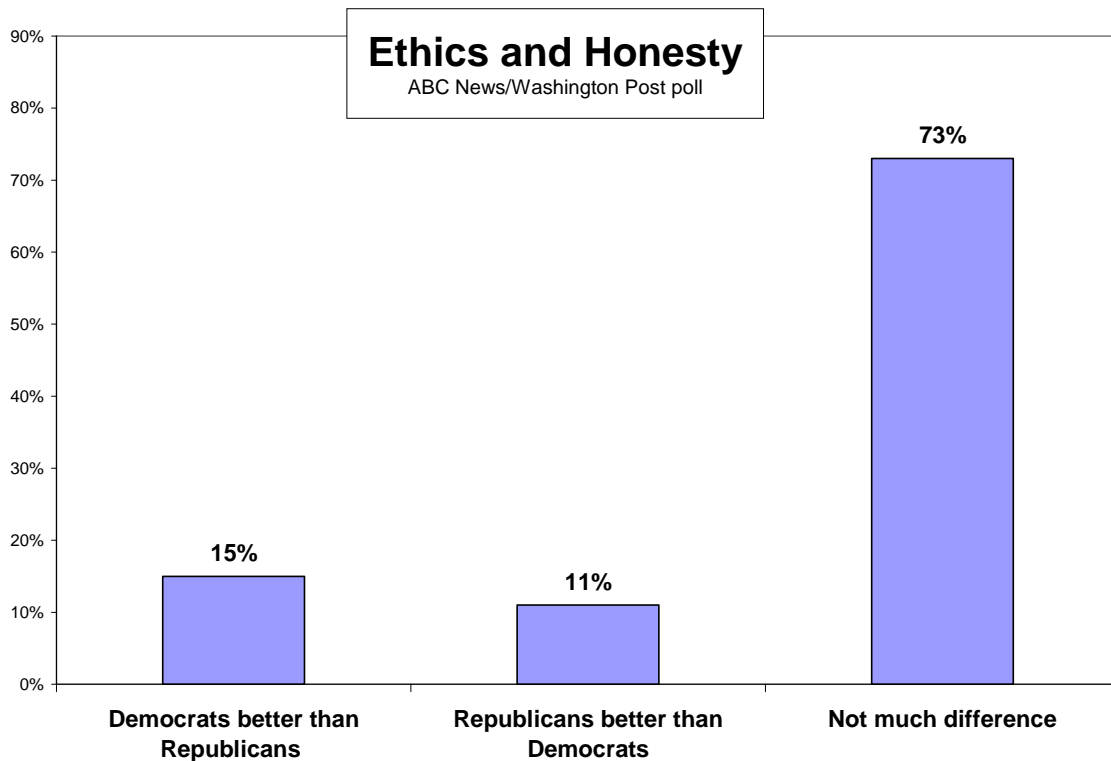
That view could be influenced by other recent criminal cases involving federal officials – the indictment of former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, R-Texas, on campaign

finance charges, and even of Lewis “Scooter” Libby, formerly Vice President Dick Cheney’s chief of staff, in the CIA leak investigation (a false-statement, not corruption, case). Indeed, most Americans see corruption as an endemic problem in Washington, but a limited one, confined to a few corrupt individuals, in their state and local governments.

This poll also finds a growing sense (albeit not held by a majority) that innate dishonesty among Congress members is part of the problem: Forty-four percent now think members of Congress are more dishonest than most people, up from 33 percent in a 1993 poll. While 52 percent say they’re about equally honest (perhaps more tempted, though), that’s down from 65 percent 13 years ago.

Members of Congress, compared to most people		
	Now	1993
More honest	2%	2%
More dishonest	44	33
About the same	52	65

POLITICS – Abramoff (like DeLay) is a Republican, and the Democrats have sought to turn the ethics issue to their advantage. There’s no sign yet that it’s working: Essentially no more people say the Democrats are more ethical and honest than the Republicans (15 percent) as say the opposite (11 percent). Nearly three-quarters, instead, say there’s not much difference between them.



Indeed this skepticism engenders rare bipartisanship. About six in 10 Democrats say there's no real difference in honesty and ethics between the parties; so do seven in 10 Republicans and even more independents, 84 percent. Similarly, about seven in 10 liberals and conservatives alike agree on this point, as do nearly eight in 10 moderates.

"Not much difference between Dems and Reps in ethics and honesty"	
All	73%
Democrats	62
Republicans	70
Independents	84
Liberals	68
Conservatives	70
Moderates	79

Overall congressional approval is low (41 percent), but about matches its 2005 average. If Congress needs to watch its back on ethics, so does George W. Bush: A slim majority, 52 percent, disapproves of the way he's handling ethics in government.

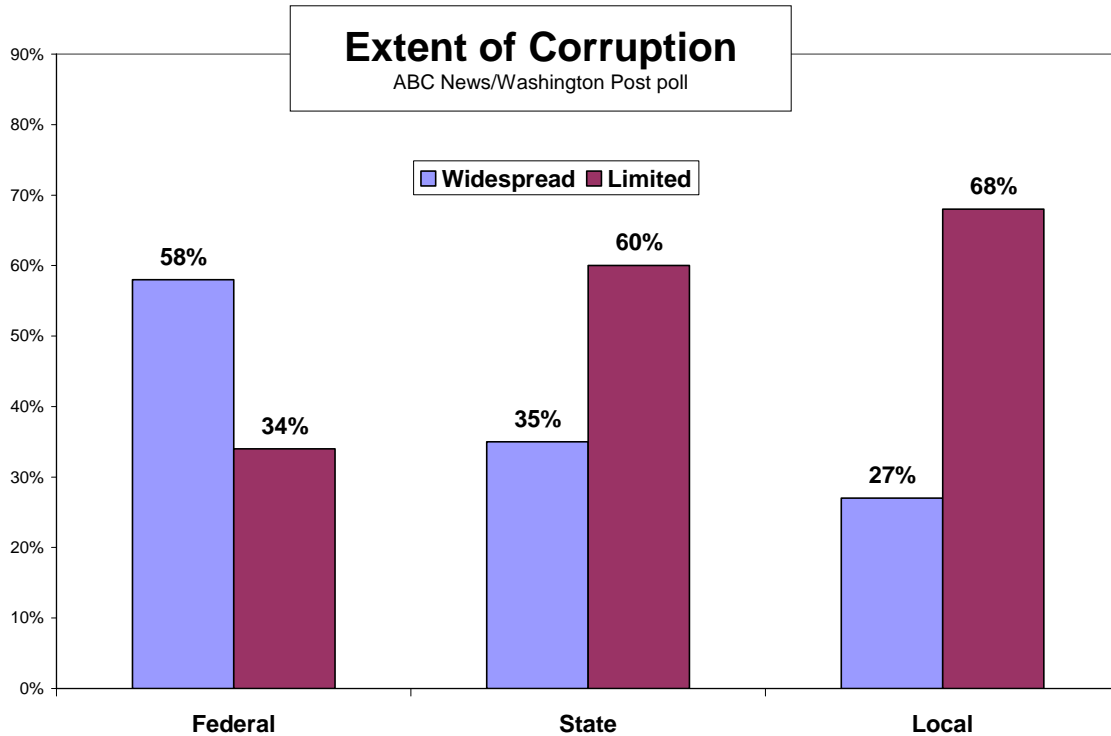
LIMITING LOBBYING – The public's dim view of Washington ethics is backed by broad support for legislation to ban lobbying largess. As noted, 90 percent would ban lobbyists from giving gifts to members of Congress. Two-thirds also would bar lobbyists from making direct campaign contributions. And 54 percent would make it illegal for lobbyists even to organize fundraisers on behalf of congressional candidates.

The first two proposals win support from majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents alike. Republicans, though, are evenly split on whether lobbyists should be allowed to organize fundraisers, while most Democrats and independents would ban it.

STATE AND LOCAL – As noted, on ethics and honesty in government, as in other matters, public suspicions are focused more on Washington than on state and local governments.

While nearly six in 10 see the Abramoff case as evidence of widespread corruption in Washington, fewer suspect widespread corruption in their state (35 percent) and local (27 percent) governments; most there instead see it as isolated.

Republicans are the least likely to see widespread corruption at each level of government. Among other groups, young adults are less likely than their elders to see widespread corruption at the federal level, or to support legislation limiting lobbying in Washington.



METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Jan. 5-8, 2006, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Jon Cohen and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. Held for release.

2a. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling ethics in government?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
1/8/06	45	52	3
12/18/05	48	49	3

2b. Held for release.

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is doing its job?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
1/8/06	41	55	5

12/18/05	43	53	4
11/2/05	37	59	4
8/28/05	37	59	4
6/5/05	41	54	4
10/29/03	40	52	9
4/30/03	57	37	6
9/26/02	51	43	6
7/15/02	57	36	7
2/21/02	57	39	4
1/27/02	58	35	7
12/19/01	59	34	7
9/9/01	45	48	7
7/30/01	48	48	4
4/22/01	58	33	8
10/31/99	42	53	6
9/2/99	46	47	7
6/6/99	48	46	6
3/14/99	44	49	7
2/14/99	46	50	4
12/20/98	44	51	5
12/19/98	45	50	5
12/13/98	49	46	5
11/7/98	41	55	4
11/1/98	49	47	5
10/25/98	45	44	11
10/18/98	46	45	8
9/28/98	52	44	4
8/21/98	55	39	6
7/12/98	46	44	11
5/12/98	45	45	9
4/4/98	47	45	8
1/31/98	55	35	10
1/30/98	55	35	10
1/25/98	56	37	8
1/24/98	55	38	7
1/19/98	47	49	5
10/13/97	36	57	7
8/27/97	39	54	7
7/8/97	40	53	6
4/24/97	40	53	7
3/9/97	35	60	5
8/5/96	42	52	7
6/30/96	35	58	7
5/22/96	35	60	5
3/10/96	30	64	6
1/7/96	31	65	5
11/19/95	27	68	5
10/1/95	32	65	3
7/17/95	34	63	3
3/19/95	39	56	5
1/29/95	42	52	6
10/31/94	21	72	8
10/23/94	18	78	4
9/11/94	24	70	5
6/26/94	34	61	5
3/27/94	35	62	3
2/27/94	32	64	4
1/23/94	29	60	11
11/14/93	28	66	6
8/8/93	33	64	3
4/26/93	30	69	2
1/17/93	29	66	6
4/9/92	17	78	5

3/18/92	19	76	5
3/8/92	22	73	6
2/2/92	32	64	4
12/15/91	35	59	6
10/21/91	45	50	5
6/2/91	49	46	5
10/14/90	34	63	3
2/4/90	41	55	4
1/16/90	39	55	6
8/21/89	42	53	5
5/23/89	54	44	2
2/14/89	53	44	3
1/23/88*	43	53	4
6/1/87	56	40	4
6/22/85	54	37	9
5/83	33	43	24
6/81	38	40	22
6/79	19	61	20
9/78	29	49	22
6/77	34	42	24
6/75	29	54	17
8/74	48	35	17

*1/23/88 and previous: Gallup

4-11. Held for release.

12. On another subject, generally, do you think members of Congress are more honest than most people, more dishonest, or about the same?

	More honest	More dishonest	About the same	No opinion
1/8/06	2	44	52	2
8/8/93	2	33	65	*

13. When it comes to the level of ethics and honesty among politicians, do you think (the Democrats are generally better than the Republicans), (the Republicans are generally better than the Democrats), or isn't there much difference between them when it comes to ethics and honesty?

	Democrats better than Republicans	Republicans better than Democrats	Not much difference	No opin.
1/8/06	15	11	73	1
11/2/05	16	12	71	1
3/27/94	10	8	81	1
5/23/89	13	8	79	1

14. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for registered lobbyists to (ITEM)?

Summary table - 1/8/06

	Legal	Illegal	No opin.
a. Make campaign contributions to members of Congress or congressional candidates	29	67	4
b. Organize fundraisers on behalf of congressional candidates	41	54	5
c. Give members of Congress gifts, trips or other things of value	8	90	2

15. As you may know, a prominent lobbyist in Washington named Jack Abramoff has pleaded guilty to corruption charges allegedly involving a U.S. congressman. Do you think this case (is limited to a few corrupt individuals); or do you think it (is evidence of widespread corruption in Washington)?

	Limited to a few individuals	Widespread	Neither/none (vol.)	No opinion
1/8/06	34	58	2	6

15a. Now thinking about (ITEM) - if it occurs at all, do you think corruption in (REPEAT ITEM) (is limited to a few corrupt individuals) or (is widespread)?

Summary table - 1/8/06

	Limited	Widespread	Neither/ none (vol.)	No opin.
a. The local government in your area	68	27	3	2
b. Your state government	60	35	2	2

END