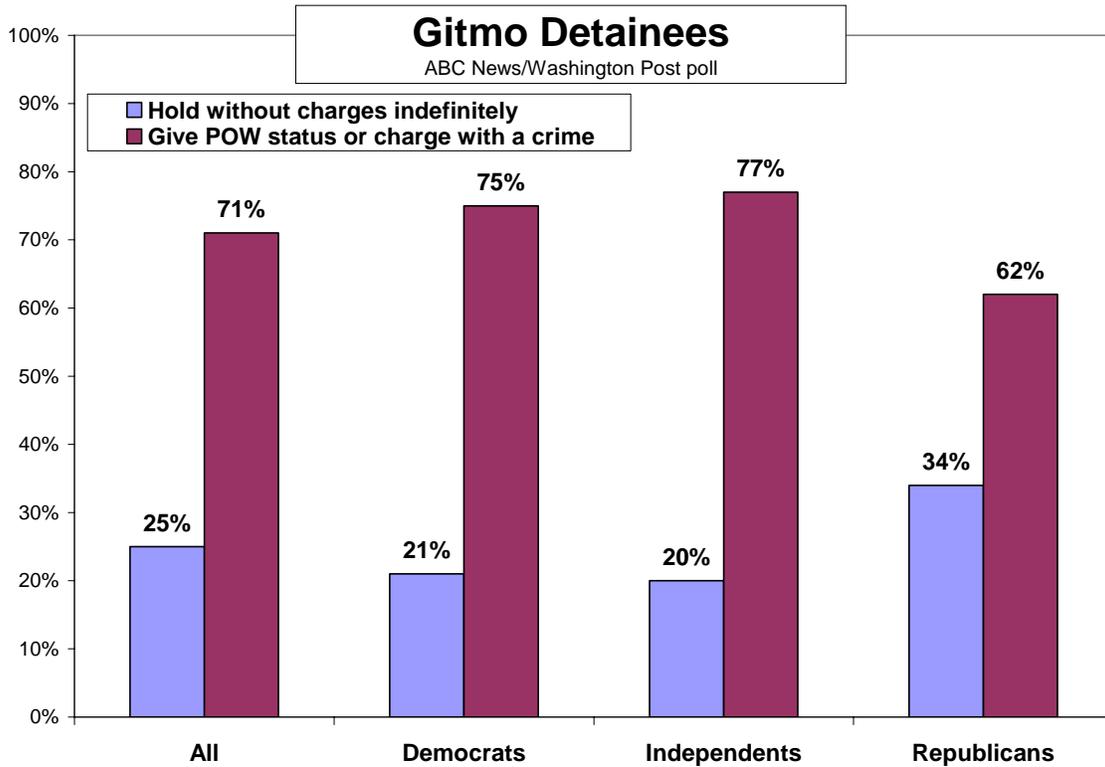


## **Seven in 10 Oppose Holding Detainees Indefinitely Without Charges**

While most Americans continue to favor holding suspected terrorists at the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the public overwhelmingly opposes the current terms of their imprisonment.

Given pro-and-con arguments – letting the detainees defend themselves at trial vs. risking further terrorism if they're released – 71 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll say they should either be given POW status or charged with a crime. Just 25 percent back current administration policy, holding these detainees indefinitely without charges.

The majority view rises above the partisanship that marks many such issues. Sixty-two percent of Republicans and conservatives alike favor charging or conferring POW status on Gitmo detainees, as do three-quarters of Democrats, independents and moderates. It goes higher, to 85 percent, among liberals.



More than six in 10 Americans also think that holding prisoners at Guantanamo Bay has damaged the United States' image in the rest of the world. Fewer, 51 percent, think it's made the United States safer from terrorism, and almost as many think not.

On balance, regardless of their views on conferring charges, 57 percent support the federal government holding suspected terrorists at Gitmo, while 37 percent oppose it. Support is down from 65 percent three years ago (down 12 points among Democrats and nine points among independents, while steadier among Republicans). Two-thirds are confident the rights of these prisoners are being adequately protected, although far fewer, 21 percent, are "very" confident of it.

Partisan and ideological divisions arise in these latter results. Eighty-one percent of Republicans and 73 percent of conservatives favor holding prisoners at Gitmo; just 41 percent of Democrats and 36 percent of liberals agree. More than eight in 10 Republicans and conservatives think the detainees' rights are being adequately protected; barely over half of Democrats, and just under half of liberals, share that view.

Republicans and conservatives also are far more likely than their counterparts to say the detentions have made the United States safer.

	Holding prisoners at Gitmo:		Rights being protected:	
	Support	Oppose	Confident	Not confident
All	57%	37	67%	31
Democrats	41	52	53	45
Republicans	81	15	88	10
Independents	54	41	65	33
Liberals	36	62	46	53
Moderates	54	39	66	33
Conservatives	73	22	82	16

**OTHER GROUPS** – Views on the protection of detainee rights at Guantanamo play a role in opinions on use of the facility. Among people who are confident that such rights are being protected, more than seven in 10 support holding prisoners there; among those not confident, seven in 10 are opposed.

Similarly, people who are very confident the prisoners' rights are being protected are more likely to support continuing to hold them without charges.

Perhaps because of the location of the 9/11 attacks, Northeasterners are more likely to favor holding suspects at Guantanamo – more than two-thirds do, compared with 58 percent of Midwesterners and Southerners and fewer than half of Westerners. Still, sizable majorities across regions oppose holding them there without charges.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone June 22-25, 2006, among a random national sample of 1,000 adults. The results have a

three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer and Dalia Sussman.

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

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

24. Do you support or oppose the federal government holding suspected terrorists without trial at the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
6/25/06	57	37	5
9/7/03	65	28	7

25. Some people say (these prisoners should be given prisoner-of-war rights or charged with a crime so they can defend themselves at a trial.) Others say (P.O.W. status or criminal law don't apply to suspected terrorists because of the risk if they were released.) What's your opinion - do you think the prisoners at Guantanamo should be (given P.O.W. status or charged with a crime), or should be (held without charges indefinitely)?

	Given P.O.W. status or charged with a crime	Held without charges indefinitely	No opinion
6/25/06	71	25	4

26. How confident are you that the United States is adequately protecting the rights of prisoners being held at Guantanamo - very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident or not confident at all?

	Confident			Not confident			No op.
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	At all	
6/25/06	67	21	45	31	17	14	2
6/5/05*	60	23	38	37	20	17	3

\*"rights of prisoners in the U.S. campaign against terrorism, such as those being held in the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba"

27. Do you think holding prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay military prison has or has not (ITEM)? IF HAS: Has is done that a great deal or somewhat?

6/26/05 - Summary Table\*

	NET	Has Great deal	Somewhat	Has not	No op.
a. damaged the United States' image in the rest of the world	62	21	41	35	3
b. made the United States safer from terrorism	51	17	34	45	4

\*Item a asked of half sample, item b asked of other half sample.