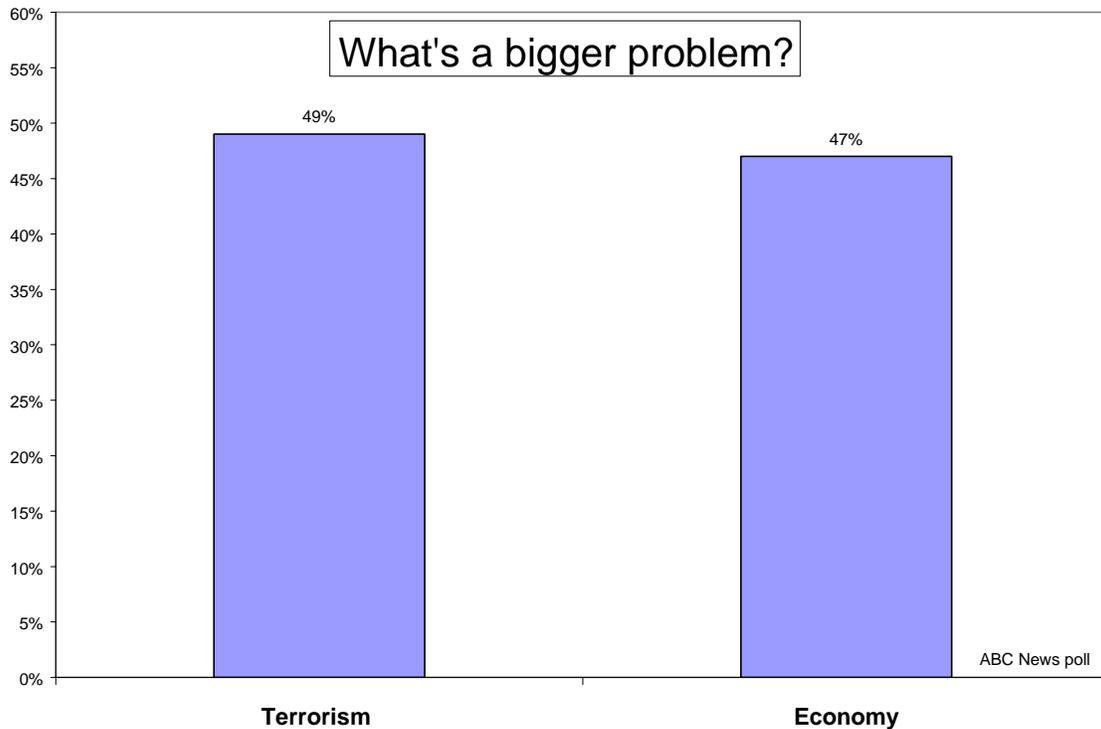


# Economy Rivals Terrorism as Nation's Bigger Problem

The economy now rivals terrorism as a greater concern to average Americans.

Asked to choose between the two, 49 percent say terrorism is the bigger problem facing the nation today. But – with recession officially upon us and no further terrorist strikes to date – about as many, 47 percent, say it's the economy.



| What's the nation's bigger problem? |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Terrorism                           | 49% |
| The economy                         | 47  |

This result underscores the urgency with which the Bush administration has been pushing Congress for an economic stimulus package. While the president's job approval rating remains extraordinarily high in today's wartime environment, it's always vulnerable to economic discontent, as Bush's father demonstrated in the downturn of the early 1990s.

Other polls have shown an easing of concern about imminent terrorism. The number of people calling terrorism (or related issues) the nation's most important problem has lost 17 points since October in Gallup polls, to 47 percent, while the number saying it's the economy has grown by 10 points, to 30 percent.

That's in an open-ended question; this poll, measuring the two concerns head-to-head, finds an even closer division in opinion.

Naturally, of course, both issues are concerns: Terrorism personally affects fewer people, but carries devastating consequences to those it does touch. Economic troubles are less damaging, but have much broader personal impact.

WHERE – Where you stand depends, in part, on where you live. In the Northeast, where the Sept. 11 attacks occurred, people call terrorism a bigger problem than the economy by a 16-point margin, 57-41 percent. In the Midwest and West, by contrast, the economy is seen as a bigger problem, by a five- or six-point edge.

|           | Bigger problem: |         |
|-----------|-----------------|---------|
|           | Terrorism       | Economy |
| Northeast | 57%             | 41      |
| South     | 50              | 46      |
| Midwest   | 44              | 50      |
| West      | 46              | 51      |

WHOM – There are other differences among groups. Women, Republicans, and older Americans are more apt to call terrorism a bigger problem; men and Democrats are more apt to say it's the economy.

|              | Bigger problem: |         |
|--------------|-----------------|---------|
|              | Terrorism       | Economy |
| Women        | 54%             | 41      |
| Men          | 44              | 53      |
| Republicans  | 59              | 39      |
| Democrats    | 43              | 55      |
| Independents | 48              | 50      |
| Age 55+      | 56              | 38      |
| Age 18-54    | 46              | 50      |

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone Dec. 12-16, 2001, among a random national sample of 1,020 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:

<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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Here are the full results:

119. What do you think is a bigger problem facing the nation right now:  
(terrorism) or (the economy)?

|          | Terrorism | Economy | No opin. |
|----------|-----------|---------|----------|
| 12/16/01 | 49        | 47      | 4        |