

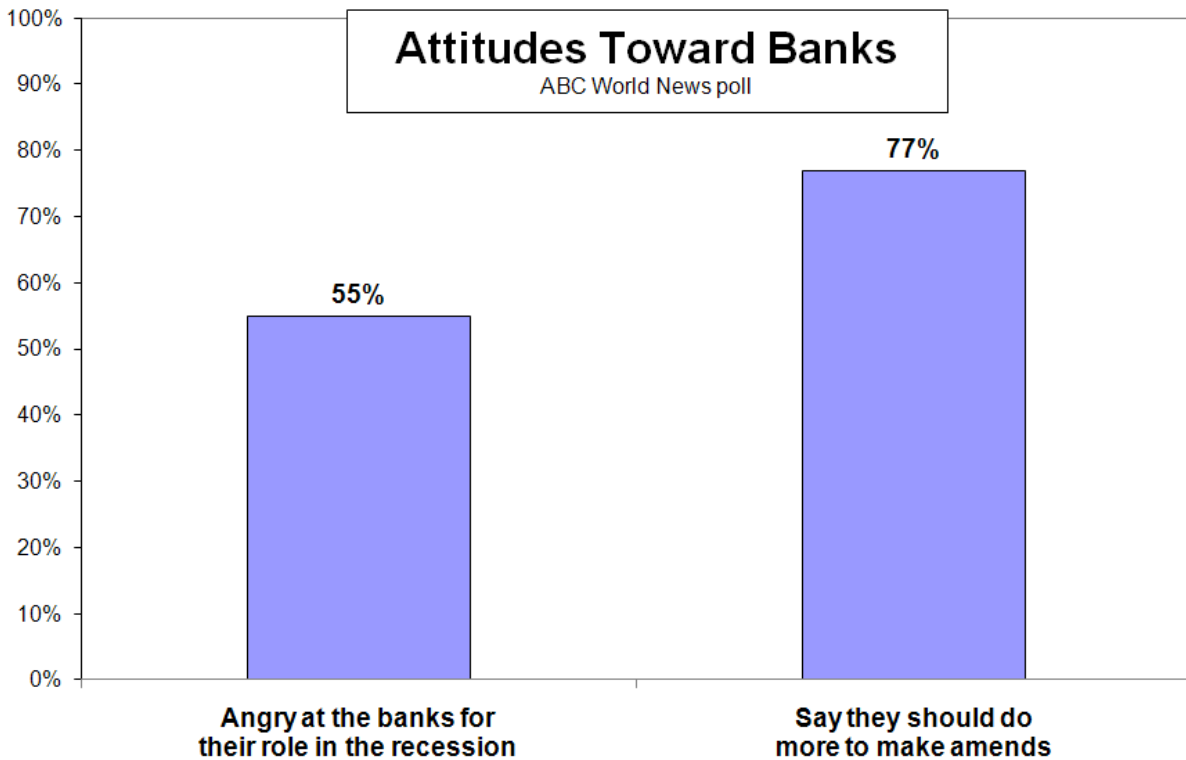
**ABC WORLD NEWS POLL: THE BANKS**

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 7 a.m. Monday, March 22, 2010**

## **Three-Quarters Say the Banks Still Need to Make Amends**

Public anger at the nation's banks and other financial institutions has eased from its peak – but large majorities of Americans nonetheless say the financial industry should make good for its role in the economic downturn.

Seventy-seven percent in this poll for ABC World News with Diane Sawyer say these institutions have not done enough to make amends for their part in the economy's meltdown. Sixty-nine percent also say the banks owe it to the country to try to help Americans who are still struggling economically; just a quarter say that's not the financial industry's responsibility.



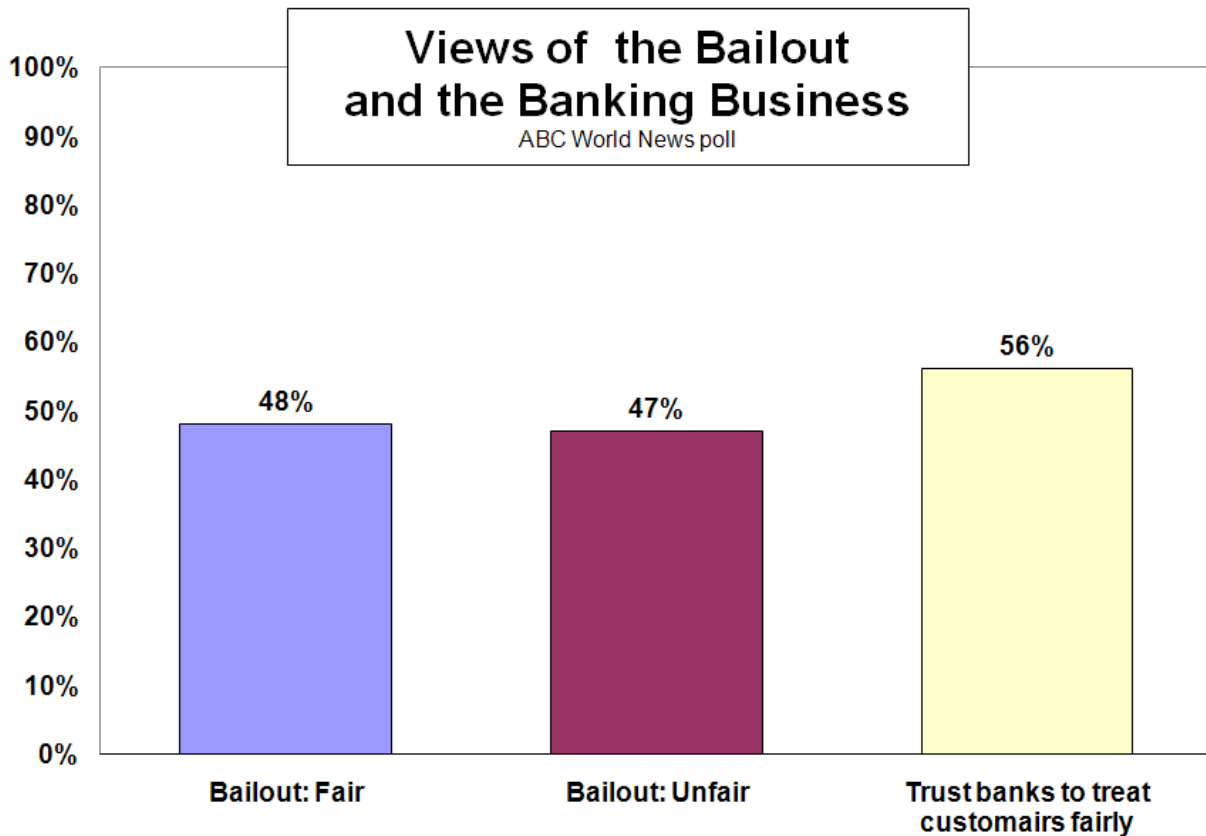
**DO WHAT?** – What might they do? Try cutting interest rates for people with good credit records and simplifying paperwork associated with credit cards and loans, suggestions supported by 84 and 83 percent of Americans, respectively, even if that cuts the banks' profits. Many fewer, but still 64 percent, also support a halt on home foreclosures until the economy improves. (Halting foreclosures is particularly popular with lower-income and self-described working-class adults, less so with their better-off counterparts and among Republicans.)

These views in part reflect blame on the banks and related institutions for their role in the economy’s troubles. Nearly six in 10 assign them a great deal or good amount of blame for the recession, and these people are much more likely than others to say the banks have not done enough to make amends and indeed have a responsibility to assist still-struggling Americans.

Banks should:	
Cut rates	84%
Ease paperwork	83
Halt foreclosures	64

Blame on the banks also informs their weak popularity – just 40 percent of Americans see them favorably overall, vs. 49 percent unfavorably, again with far more critical ratings among those who blame them for the recession. (In this group, 63 percent see them unfavorably.)

Nonetheless, even with these criticisms, banks and other financial institutions possess a significant reservoir of public support. Fifty-six percent say they can be trusted to treat their customers fairly; as many say they can be trusted to conduct their business responsibly. It’s a key metric, because people who trust the banks are vastly less apt to assign them substantial blame for the recession or to be angry with them for the economy’s condition. Still, even those who trust the banks say by a wide margin that they haven’t done enough to make amends.



Banks, moreover, hold their own in views of their fundamental fairness of the bailout that restored them to profitability. Forty-seven percent say it's unfair that banks and other financial institutions benefited from government loans and are now profitable again while many Americans are still struggling. But as many, 48 percent, say it's fair, because returning the banks to profitability will help the broader economy in the long run.

Overall trust is a major factor; people who think the banks deal well with their customers are nearly twice as apt as others to say it's fair how these institutions have been helped.

Partisan preferences also play a role: Republicans call the outcome fair by 55-39 percent; Democrats, unfair by 54-44 percent. (Independents split down the middle.) And there are differences by education and economic class. The use of government loans in the banks' recovery is seen as fair by 57 percent of college graduates and 58 percent of people who call themselves at least upper-middle class, but by considerably fewer high school graduates and working-class Americans, 43 and 42 percent, respectively.

There also are partisan gaps in criticism of the banks more broadly – nearly two-thirds of Democrats and independents alike assign them significant blame for the recession, but just under half of Republicans agree. And there's a similar gap in views of whether banks and related institutions have a responsibility to help Americans who are still struggling with the economy. Seventy-nine percent of Democrats say they do, and again nearly as many independents, 72 percent, agree. It's also a majority among Republicans, but a much smaller one, 54 percent.

	Blame the banks?	Fair that gov't loans benefitted the banks?	Banks have responsibility to help those struggling?
All	59%	48%	69%
Democrats	63	44	79
Independents	65	48	72
Republicans	49	55	54

As noted, outright anger has subsided, from 68 percent a year ago to a still considerable, but substantially lower, 55 percent now. (Again, lower among Republicans.) Many fewer, 16 percent, are "very" angry at the banks and financial institutions.

There is greater and more persistent anger in another, related direction: Seventy-nine percent of Americans remain angry about large bonuses being paid to employees at companies that accepted government loans, unabated from its level a year ago. And on this score an impressive 53 percent are "very" angry.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC World News poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 26-March 2, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,005 adults reached by landline and cell phone alike. Results for the full sample have a 4-point error margin; click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by Social Science Research Solutions at ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

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

1. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of banks and other financial institutions in this country? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
3/2/10	40	10	30	49	24	25	11

2. Do you think banks and other financial institutions can or cannot be trusted to [ITEM]? How about to [ITEM]? (ROTATE)

3/2/10 - Summary Table

	Can be trusted	Cannot be trusted	No opinion
a. Treat their customers fairly	56	39	5
b. Conduct their business responsibly	56	38	6

3. How much blame do you think banks and other financial institutions deserve for the country's economic situation?

	-Grt deal/Good amt-			----Some/Hardly any/None----				
	NET	Grt deal	Good amount	NET	Only some	Hardly any	None (vol.)	No opinion
3/2/10	59	33	27	38	30	8	1	1

4. Would you describe yourself as angry or not angry about [ITEM]? How about [ITEM]? (IF ANGRY) Would you say you're very angry about that, or somewhat angry?

3/2/10 - Summary Table

	----- Angry -----			Not	No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	Angry	opin.
a. The role banks and other financial institutions have played in the economic situation	55	16	38	44	1
b. Large bonuses being paid to employees at companies that have accepted government loans	79	53	27	19	1

Trend:

a. The role banks and other financial institutions have played in the economic situation

	----- Angry -----			Not	No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	Angry	opin.
3/2/10	55	16	38	44	1
3/29/09	68	NA	NA	31	1

b. Large bonuses being paid to employee at companies that have accepted government loans

	----- Angry -----			Not	No
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	NET	Very	Somewhat	Angry	opin.
3/2/10	79	53	27	19	1
3/29/09	81	NA	NA	18	1

5. Do you think banks and other financial institutions have or have not done enough to make amends for their role in the financial crisis?

	Have done enough	Have not done enough	No opinion
3/2/10	15	77	6

6. As you may know, some banks and other financial institutions took government loans to avoid bankruptcy, and most now have repaid those loans with interest and are profitable again. Some people say it's unfair that the banks benefited from the bailout while many Americans still are struggling. Others say it's fair because returning the banks to profitability will help the broader economy in the long run. Which of these views comes closer to your own?

	Fair	Unfair	No opinion
3/2/10	48	47	5

7. Do you think these banks and other financial institutions owe it to the country to try to help Americans who are struggling with the economy, or do you think it's not the responsibility of banks and financial institutions to do that?

	Banks owe it to the country	Not their responsibility	No opinion
3/2/10	69	26	5

8. Do you think the banks should or should not [ITEM], even if it makes them less profitable? How about [ITEM]?

3/2/10 - Summary Table

	Should	Should not	No opinion
a. Simplify paperwork associated with credit cards and loans	83	13	4
b. Cut interest rates for people with good credit records	84	12	4
c. Halt home foreclosures until the economy improves	64	29	7

9-11 previously released.

\*\*\*END\*\*\*