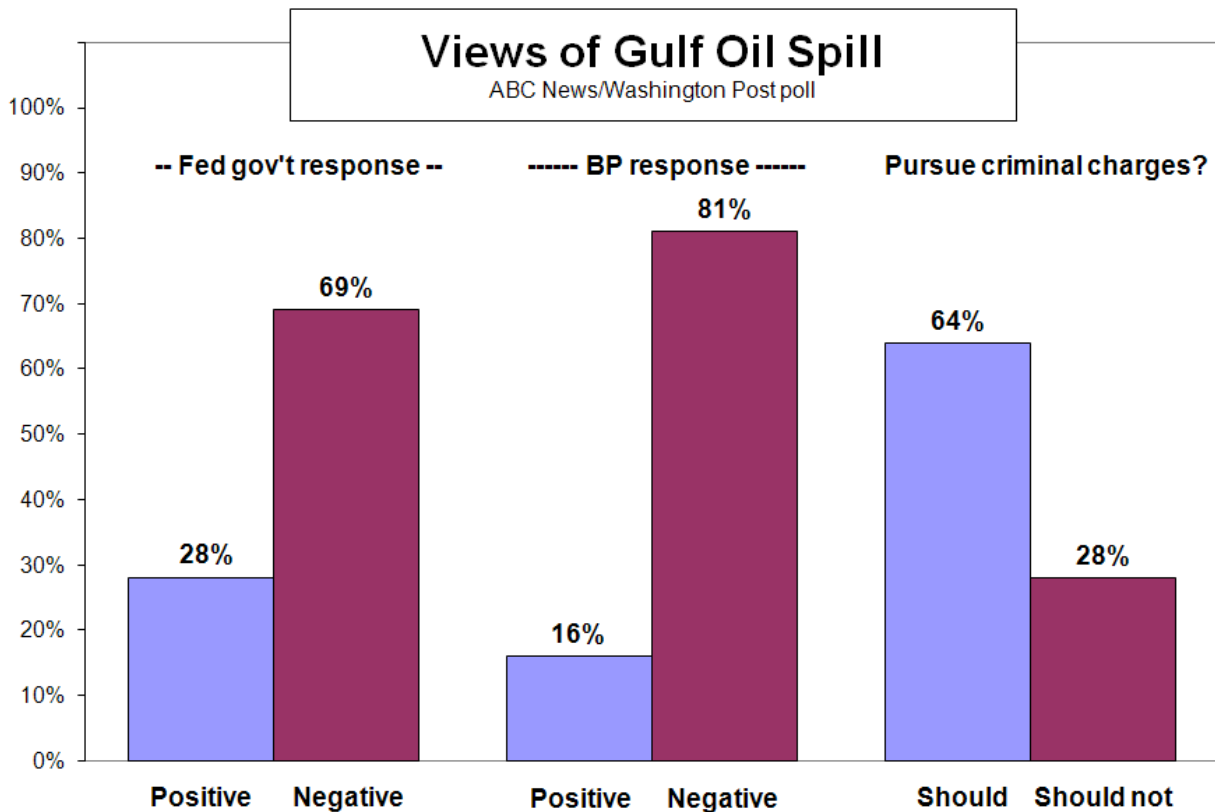


Spill Response Rated Worse than Katrina; Most Favor Pursuit of Criminal Charges

Americans by more than 2-1 support pursuit of criminal charges in the nation's worst oil spill, with increasing numbers calling it a major environmental disaster, eight in 10 criticizing the way BP's handled it – and the federal government's own response rated worse than it was in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

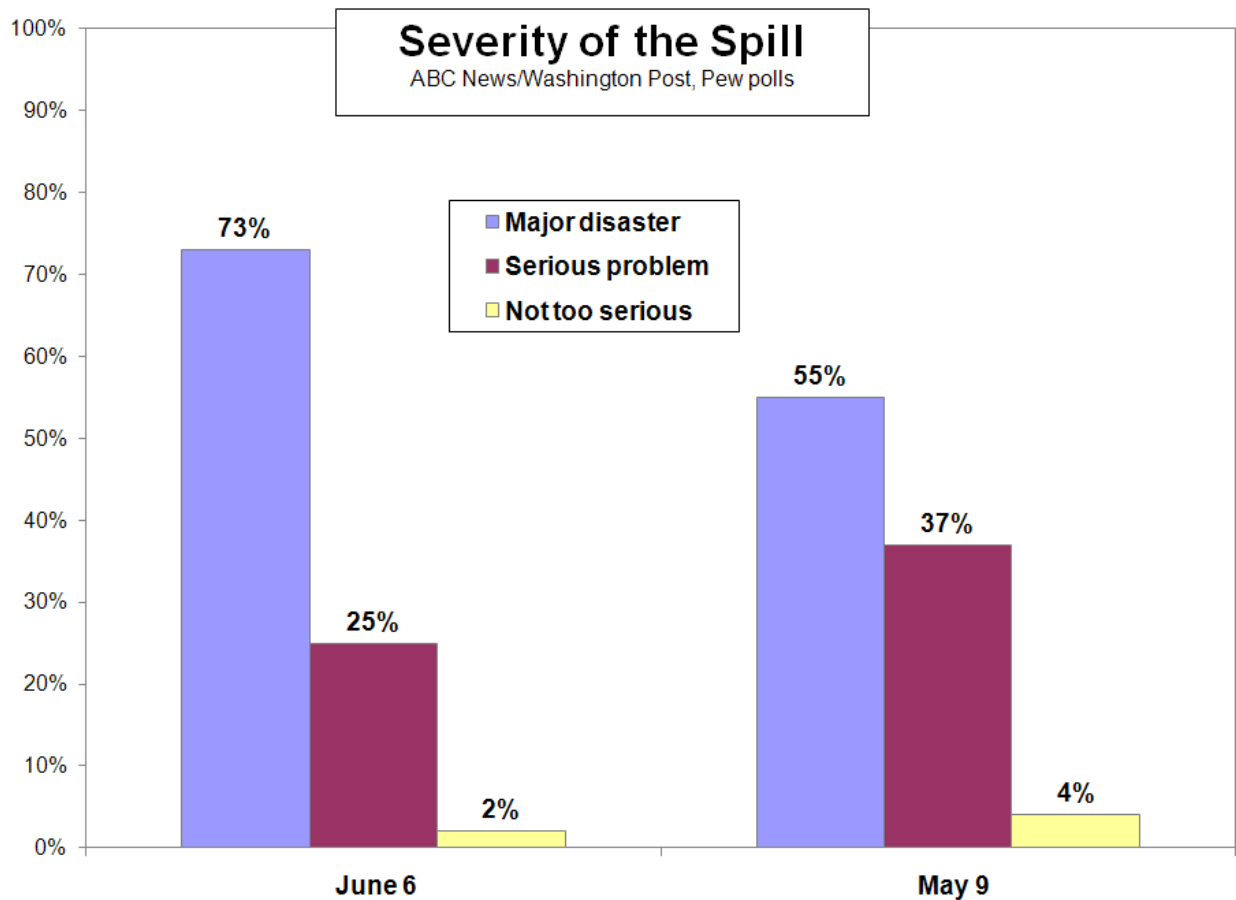
A month and a half after the spill began, 69 percent in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll rate the federal response negatively. That compares with a 62 negative rating for the response to Katrina two weeks after the August 2005 hurricane.

BP's response to the spill draws even broader criticism – 81 percent rate it negatively. And 64 percent say the government should pursue criminal charges against BP and other companies involved in the spill, which has poured oil into the Gulf from a well 5,000 feet beneath the surface since an explosion and fire destroyed the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig April 20.



This poll was conducted Thursday through Sunday, mainly before BP announced Sunday that a containment cap on the well was capturing a substantial portion of the gushing oil. Nonetheless BP faces deep damage to its public image: Nearly three-quarters of Americans, 73 percent, see “unnecessary risks taken by BP and its drilling partners” as a significant factor in the spill.

And amid fouled beaches, oiled wildlife and closed fisheries, there’s growing public dismay with the damage. Seventy-three percent now call the spill a major environmental disaster, up sharply from 55 percent in a Pew Research Center poll a month ago.



Support for pursuit of criminal charges against BP and its partners rises to 71 percent among people who call the spill a major disaster, and likewise to 73 percent among those who suspect that unnecessary risks were taken by BP and its partners.

INTENSITY/PARTISANSHIP – There’s sharp negative intensity in views of BP. Fifty-four percent give its response the lowest rating, “poor,” and 51 percent “strongly” favor examination of criminal charges against the company and its partners – both high levels of strong sentiment.

Substantially fewer, by contrast, rate the federal government’s response as “poor,” 32 percent.

There's partisanship in views of the federal response, with Democrats less critical of the Democratic-led government. Nonetheless, even among Democrats 56 percent rate the federal response negatively. That rises to 74 percent of independents and 81 percent of Republicans.

Partisanship ran in precisely the opposite direction in views of the Katrina response under the Bush administration. Just 41 percent of Republicans rated that response negatively, rising to 64 percent of independents and 79 percent of Democrats.

	Negative ratings: federal response	
	Deepwater Horizon	Hurricane Katrina
All	69%	62%
Democrats	56	79
Independents	74	64
Republicans	81	41

In addition to the 7-point difference in negative ratings of the federal response to the oil spill vs. Katrina, there's a 10-point difference in positive ratings – 28 percent for the government's oil spill response, vs. 38 percent for its response to Katrina. That's in part because 59 percent of Republicans rated the response to Katrina positively, while just 40 percent of Democrats say the same about the current oil spill response.

All the same, there's far less partisan division in concern about the spill's effects: It's seen as a major environmental disaster by seven in 10 Republicans and three-quarters of Democrats and independents alike.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone June 3-6, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,004 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results for the full sample have a 3.5-point error margin. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, 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).

1-8 held for release.

9. (HALF SAMPLE) How would you rate [ITEM]'s overall response to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico - excellent, good, not so good or poor?

6/6/10 - Summary Table

	Positive			Negative			No opinion
	NET	Excellent	Good	NET	Not so good	Poor	
a. The federal government	28	2	26	69	37	32	3

Compare to: Katrina								
9/11/05	38	5	32	62	28	34	*	
9/2/05	48	11	37	51	23	28	1	
b. The oil								
company BP	16	1	15	81	27	54	3	

10, 11a-b held for release.

11c. For each of the following, how much blame, if any, do you think it deserves for the oil spill - a great deal, a good amount, just some or none at all? How about [ITEM]?

c. Unnecessary risks taken by BP and its drilling partners	73	55	18	23	17	6	4
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12. Do you think the federal government should or should not pursue criminal charges against BP and other companies involved in the oil spill? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Should -----			----- Should not -----			Depends/ too soon	No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	(vol.)	
6/6/10	64	51	14	28	14	14	4	4

13. From what you've seen and heard, do you think that the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a major environmental disaster, a serious environmental problem but not a disaster, or is it not too serious an environmental problem?

	Major disaster	Serious problem	Not too serious	Too soon (vol.)	No opinion
6/6/10	73	25	2	*	*
5/9/10*	55	37	4	1	3

*Pew, "oil leak"

14-37 held for release.

END