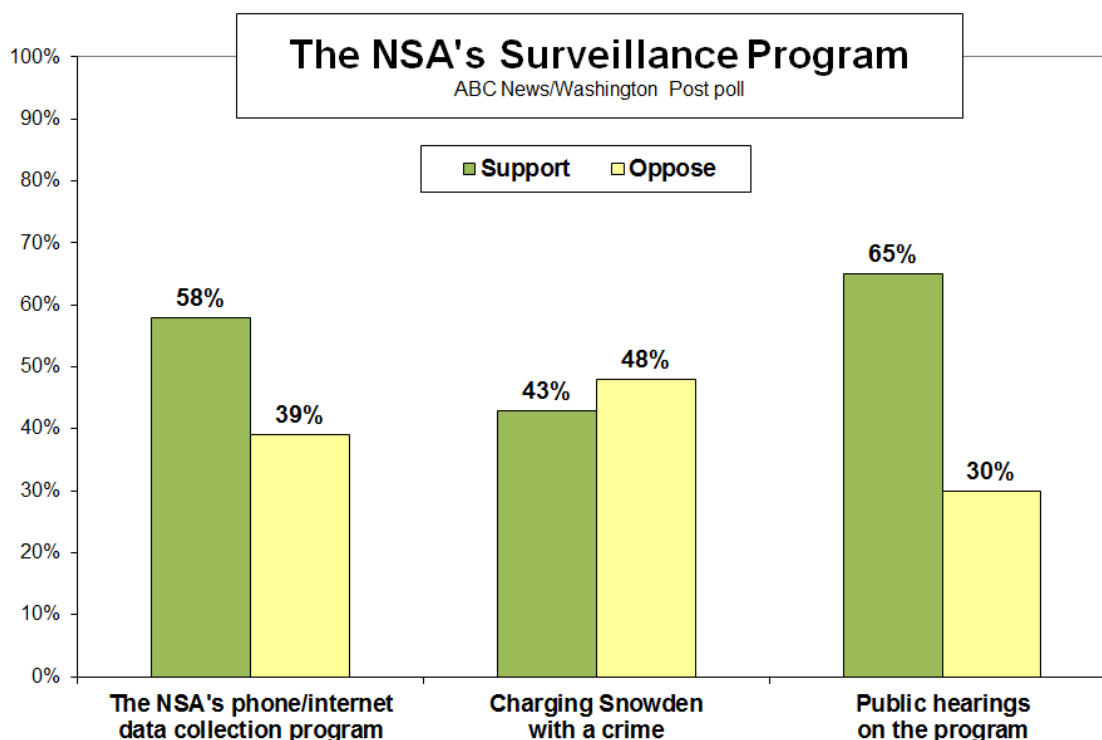


Most Back NSA Surveillance Efforts – But Also Seek Congressional Hearings

Most Americans in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll support telephone and internet surveillance by the National Security Administration, but two-thirds also favor congressional hearings on the subject – indicating broad interest in more information about these activities.

The public by 58-39 percent supports the NSA collecting “extensive records of phone calls, as well as internet data related to specific investigations, to try to identify possible terrorist threats.” Support for the program is far higher among Democrats and liberals than among Republicans and strong conservatives, reversing Bush-era political divisions on issues of privacy vs. security.

At the same time, in a strikingly nonpartisan result, 65 percent of Americans favor congressional hearings on the subject – a view expressed by more than six in 10 Democrats, Republicans and independents alike, as well as by virtually equal numbers across the ideological spectrum.



The survey, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds a close division in attitudes on whether or not to prosecute Edward Snowden, the former government contractor who disclosed the classified NSA program. Forty-three percent support charging him with a crime; 48 percent oppose such charges.

These results reflect attitudes on a developing story; views could shift based on more information about the government’s activities or the potential impact of Snowden’s disclosures. That highlights the competing values at stake – the right to privacy from government intrusion vs. security from terrorism.

Attitudes on the NSA effort are similar to those measured in a Washington Post/Pew Research Center poll June 9, in which 56 percent called it acceptable for the agency to obtain “secret court orders to track telephone call records of millions of Americans in an effort to investigate terrorism.” Surveys asking other questions have had different results – 48 percent approval for “the government's collection of telephone and internet data as part of anti-terrorism efforts” in a Pew/USA Today poll June 16; the same level of approval in a Time magazine poll June 11; and in a CBS News poll June 10, just 38 percent approval for “federal government agencies collecting phone records of ordinary Americans” in order to reduce the threat of terrorism.

A variety of factors could be at play, including exactly which records or data have been collected; how and why they were collected; as well as, speculatively, a distinction between asking about “support” vs. “approval” for a program that some may see as needed yet at the same time intrusive.

PARTISANS – As noted, results of this survey turn Bush-era partisan divisions on their head. In ABC/Post polls during the presidency of George W. Bush, Republicans and conservatives put far more emphasis on anti-terrorism investigations, even at the cost of privacy, while Democrats and independents were more apt to prioritize privacy rights.

The divisions were closer in a 2010 survey; now with the NSA controversy arising on the Obama administration’s watch, the tables are turned: Seventy-three percent of Democrats and 67 percent of liberals in this survey support the NSA program; that declines to 49 percent of Republicans (and about as many independents, 51 percent) and just 46 percent of those who call themselves “very” conservative. (Support is much higher, 62 percent, among “somewhat” conservatives, similar to its level among political moderates.)

	----- NSA's data program 58-39%	Support-Oppose Charging Snowden 43-48	----- Congressional hearings 65-30
All	58-39%	43-48	65-30
Democrats	73-24	50-45	66-29
Republicans	49-50	45-45	69-30
Independents	51-45	38-54	63-33
Liberals	67-32	43-51	68-28
Moderates	58-38	45-46	66-30
Conservatives NET	55-42	45-46	66-31
Somewhat cons.	62-36	52-39	68-30
Very cons.	46-52	35-56	63-34
Whites	53-43	45-46	70-26
Nonwhites	68-29	41-51	57-39

In line these results, the survey also finds substantially more support for the NSA program among nonwhites, who are more apt to be Democrats, than among whites, 68 vs. 53 percent. And whites are more apt than nonwhites to favor hearings, 70 vs. 57 percent.

Opposition to charging Snowden with a crime peaks among very conservatives, at 56 percent, and adults who (like Snowden himself) are younger than 30. Fifty-eight percent in this group prefer not to see him charged.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone June 12-16, 2013, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,017 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

Media contacts: [David Ford](#), (212) 456-7243, and [Julie Townsend](#), (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

1. It's been reported that the federal government's National Security Agency collects extensive records of phone calls, as well as Internet data related to specific investigations, to try to identify possible terrorist threats. Do you support or oppose this intelligence-gathering program? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
6/16/13	58	24	34	39	14	25	4

2. The NSA surveillance program was classified as secret, and was made public by a former government contractor named Edward Snowden. Do you support or oppose Snowden being charged with a crime for disclosing the NSA surveillance program? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
6/16/13	43	23	20	48	20	27	9

3. Do you support or oppose having the U.S. Congress hold public hearings on the NSA surveillance program? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
6/16/13	65	38	27	30	15	15	5

*** END ***