

Americans more likely to trust Clinton than Congress

NEW YORK — Americans are twice as inclined to express trust and confidence in President Clinton as in Congress, according to an Associated Press poll.

Clinton was considered trustworthy most or all of the time by 52 percent of Americans, but fewer than one in four said the same about Congress. To deal with the country's problems, 55 percent had more confidence in Clinton, compared with 25 percent who put more faith in Congress.

The poll found relatively little expectation that the gridlock between the executive and legislative branches will go away. Just four in 10 think Clinton will be able to keep his Inauguration Day promise to end what he called "an era of deadlock and drift." Even more troublesome for a new president in the traditional honeymoon period,

nearly a quarter of those polled think he has done a bad job ensuring honesty and integrity in his administration.

Fifty-three percent think he's done a good job with it, but less than a majority hold that view among men, whites, upper-income Americans and people older than Clinton. Ten months ago, President Bush had a slightly worse rating on the same question: 49 percent saying good, 28 percent bad.

The national poll of 1,002 adults was taken Wednesday through Sunday by ICR Survey Research group of Media, Pa., part of AUS Consultants. Results from the random sample have a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

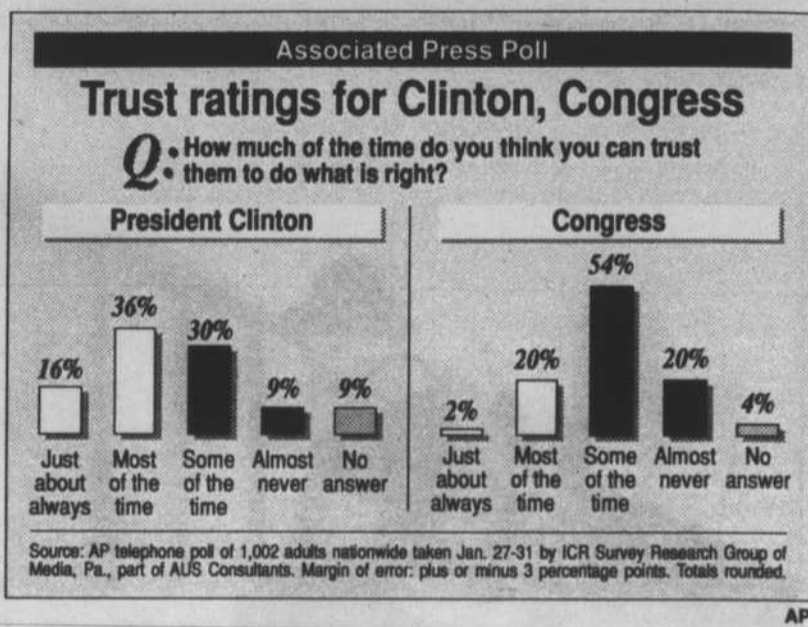
The last time the AP poll measured Clinton's trust rating was in April. With Clinton's character

under scrutiny in the campaign, only 18 percent said he could be trusted almost always or most of the time. Congress did just as bad, 17 percent.

The new poll may partly reflect that it's easier to feel confidence in a person — especially one given the attention and adulation accorded to a new president — than in an institution as conflict-riven and unwieldy as Congress.

As the AP poll was taken, Clinton and some of his own party's leaders in Congress were at odds on emotional issues such as gays in the military and whether Social Security should be included in deficit cutting.

That conflict helps explain why 42 percent said Clinton won't be able to keep his promise to end gridlock, compared with 41 percent who think he will.



WORLD WIRE

Super Bowl draws largest television crowd

NEW YORK — The Dallas Cowboys, Michael Jackson and NBC teamed up to make the 1993 Super Bowl the most-watched show in television history, and gave NBC its first weekly ratings victory in more than six months.

Alaskan cold freezing tires, creating ice fog
ANCHORAGE, Alaska — If you think it's cold where you live, consider Alaska. It's minus 50 on the North Slope, and if you include the wind chill, make it 100 below zero.

Tires are freezing on cars. Blinding ice fog is restricting flights in some cities. Snow is piling up, cutting off some villages.

In Fairbanks, the overnight low

NBC said Tuesday that an estimated 133.4 million people watched the game Sunday, about 6.4 million more than watched the 1986 Super Bowl, the previous record-holder which also was on NBC.

was 56 below. The National Weather Service said the coldest point in the state Tuesday was 61 below at Tanana, about 125 miles west of Fairbanks, but one trucker was pooh-poohing that number.

At Coldfoot, about 50 miles north of the Arctic Circle and the nation's northernmost truck stop, it was about 72 below zero.

Economic indicators flash most positive signals in nearly a decade

WASHINGTON — The government's chief economic forecasting gauge jumped sharply in December, flashing its most positive signal for future growth in nearly a decade. Sales of new homes surged during the month.

The reports, both issued by the Commerce Department on Tuesday, are the clearest signs yet of continued economic growth past midyear.

"Even if the numbers are somewhat overstated, there's no question they show we have economic growth ahead of us," said economist David Berson of the Federal National Mort-

gage Association. The Department's Index of Leading Indicators leapt 1.9 percent, the third consecutive monthly gain and the biggest increase since April 1983, when the nation was emerging from the last recession.

Meanwhile, new home sales shot up 6.3 percent in December to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 656,000, contributing to a 19.4 percent rise for all of 1992, the best in nine years.

The latest economic data came as the Clinton administration put the final touches on an economic stimu-

lus package that many analysts argue is no longer needed.

A Democratic official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Tuesday that the package will consist of \$16 billion in job-creating spending for the current fiscal year plus \$15 billion in tax breaks to encourage businesses to invest in more equipment.

At the White House, Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers said President Clinton was encouraged by the rise in the leading index "but feels very, very concerned about a recovery without a recovery in job growth."

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Clinton vows to change welfare into a 'second chance' for citizens

WASHINGTON — President Clinton pledged Tuesday to transform welfare into a "hand up, not a handout" by giving recipients training and then requiring them to work. He said he would allow governors broad freedom to experiment with welfare changes.

"Most people on welfare are yearning for another alternative, aching for the chance to move from dependence to dignity," Clinton said in a speech to the National Governors' Association. "Welfare should be a second chance, not a way of life." Clinton broke little new ground, largely repeating rhetoric and all, an array of campaign promises he said would "end welfare as we know it" and give dignity to families who work but still find themselves below the poverty line.

And aides said that despite Clinton's detailed campaign proposal and Tuesday speech, many critical questions about the policy were unresolved. Among them was what, if any,

sanctions would be imposed on welfare recipients who refused to work, and who besides the disabled would be exempt from the work requirements.

During the campaign, Clinton said his proposal would cost \$6 billion a year for its first four years. But Bruce Reed, the White House deputy domestic policy adviser, said that was "not necessarily what is going to be included in the president's budget." To answer such questions and draft the legislation, Clinton said he would name within 10 days a White House-led task force made up of officials from government departments and agencies involved in welfare, education and job training. Their goal would be to draft a legislative proposal by spring or early summer.

As much as restating his welfare policies and goals, Clinton's speech appeared designed to shift public attention onto one of his popular, conservative-sounding campaign themes.

Palestinians turn down Israel's proposal; deportees to remain as 'innocent victims'

JERUSALEM — By refusing Israel's offer to let 100 of them return, the Palestinians deported to south Lebanon have retained a platform that allows them to present themselves as victims and block U.S.-backed peace talks.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who championed the deportations and the compromise offer Monday to let some of the men return, came under a barrage of criticism in Israel on Tuesday for failing to win a propaganda victory.

Even his spokesman, Gad Ben-Ari, acknowledged the 400 deportees were holding the world's attention.

Ben-Ari said Rabin had "called the bluff" of the Palestinians by showing that they wanted to prolong the crisis rather than reach a settlement.

But the Palestinians remained on "a live stage of propaganda," he noted. "It provides them with an opportunity to present themselves as innocent victims."

Daily Nebraskan

FAX NUMBER 472-1761
The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE. Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions.
Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Doug Fiedler, 436-8762.
Subscription price is \$50 for one year.
Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448.
Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE
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