



WomanView

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Public Support Grows for Gender Equality and for Government Role in Fighting Poverty

A recent report released by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press shows a slow decline of conservative values on women's social roles but charts some overall progress in opinions toward gender equality. Seventy-five percent of current respondents opposed the statement that "women should return to their traditional roles in society"—up from 66 percent in 1987. The percentage that completely disagrees with this statement has increased more dramatically over time, changing from 29 percent in 1987 to 51 percent, although only 41 percent of Republicans completely dissent.

The report, *Trends in Political Values and Core Attitudes: 1987–2007*, finds the current American political landscape to be more favorable toward Democrats and shows a pattern of increasing support for governmental response in fighting poverty. The report measures Americans' political, social, and economic values ranging from party favorability to government efficacy and responsiveness and from women's roles in society to rights for terrorist sympathizers. Spanning two decades of American life, the data highlights a weakening of many key trends—including many significant social welfare values—that defined the Republican resurgence of the mid-1990s.

Positive sentiments toward a government safety net for the poor have increased considerably, along with a notable sympathy toward those in poverty. Seventy-three percent of current respondents concurred with this statement: "Today it's really true that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer." Consensus on the nation's widening income gap has risen eight points since 2002, corresponding to the highest number in agreement since 1991 (80 percent). Nearly 70 percent of those surveyed supported government responsibility "to take care of people who can't take care of themselves"—up ten points since 2002. A majority of Americans, 69 percent, believe that people in poverty have become too dependent upon government assistance programs. While still a widely held opinion, the percentage represents a 10 percent decrease since 1997. Most Americans remain "pretty well satisfied" with their personal financial situation, but more and more are claiming that they are unable to make ends meet (44 percent). Sixty-two percent still reject the notion that individual financial success is based on circumstances outside one's control.

Princeton Survey Research Associates International collected the survey results through telephone interviews with 2,007 adults nationwide from December 12, 2006, through January 9, 2007. To read the full report, visit <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/312.pdf>.

For more information, contact Wendy Pollack, director of the Women's Law & Policy Project at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, at 312.263.3830 ext. 238 or wendypollack@povertylaw.org.

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