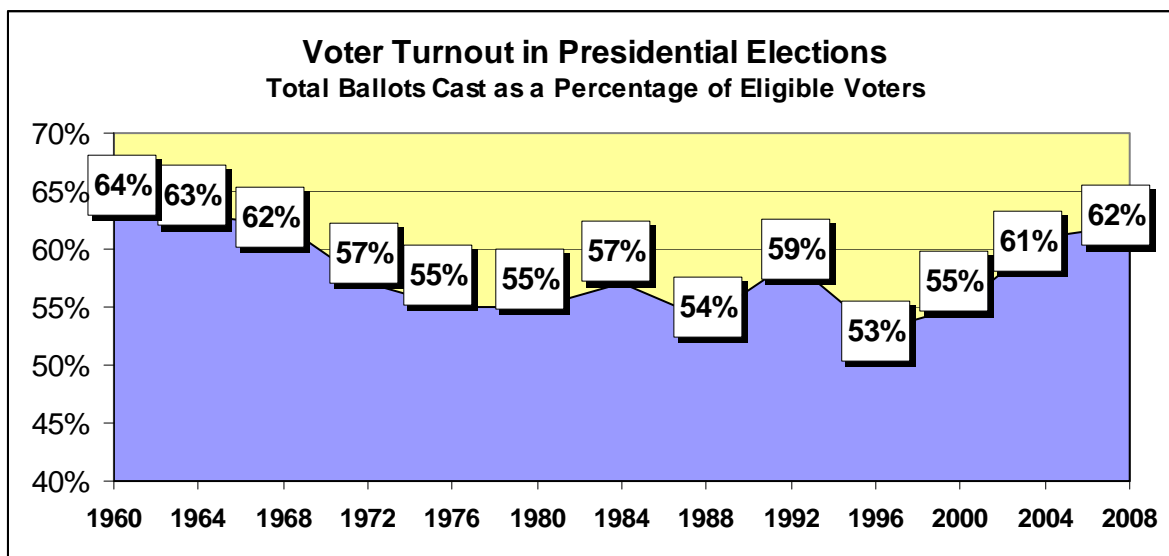


## 2008 Voter Turnout Brief

Prepared by George Pillsbury  
Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network, [www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org)

### Voter Turnout Nears Most Recent High in 1960

Primary Source: *United States Election Project*



- **Turnout Highest Since 1960s:** Many states are still counting absentee and provisional ballots; nevertheless, voter turnout has already reached its second highest peak since women won the right to vote in 1919. Only the Kennedy and Johnson elections of the 1960s saw comparable voter turnout.
- This year marks the **second consecutive presidential election with a rise in participation**, building on the solid voter growth also evident in 2004. The turnout was fueled by large increases in voting by youth, Latino and African-American voters. Turnout was dampened in areas where a larger than expected number of white voters did not vote and by low turnout in populous non-swing states like New York and Texas.
- Voter participation has a great deal of room for growth. **More than one of three eligible voters still did not participate in 2008** or, due to a registration or other problem, will not have their vote count in the final tally. Higher turnout in the future will depend on election reforms such as Election Day registration, better early voting and greater election competition (public financing, ranked voting).

## State Comparisons (based on unofficial results 11/9/08)

Primary Source: U.S. Election Project, [http://elections.gmu.edu/voter\\_turnout.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm)

- Voter turnout increase is adjusted for change in the # of eligible voters by state
- Highlighted states have largest projected turnout growth (over 5%)
- EDR = Election Day Registration, SS = Swing State (by campaign spending)

State	Estimated Votes	Turnout % Est.	% Increase over 2004	TO Rank (unofficial)	EDR or Swing State
Alabama	2,100,000	61.8%	7.9%	31	
Alaska	320,000	66.6%	-5.9%	16	
Arizona	2,300,000	56.1%	-3.5%	47	
Arkansas	1,150,000	56.5%	3.3%	46	
California	13,650,000	61.8%	2.9%	32	
Colorado	2,300,000	66.5%	-2.8%	18	SS
Connecticut	1,650,000	67.1%	2.9%	14	
Delaware	416,500	66.5%	2.1%	17	
Dist of Columbia	255,000	58.5%	2.5%	40	
Florida	8,474,700	67.8%	2.4%	9	SS
Georgia	3,963,600	61.8%	7.6%	33	
Hawaii	453,158	50.6%	4.1%	50	
Idaho	660,000	63.2%	-2.2%	27	EDR
Illinois	5,400,000	61.3%	1.0%	35	
Indiana	2,750,000	59.2%	6.3%	38	SS
Iowa	1,535,000	69.7%	-0.5%	5	EDR, SS
Kansas	1,210,000	61.3%	-4.4%	34	
Kentucky	1,830,000	57.7%	-3.4%	42	
Louisiana	1,960,400	63.4%	4.3%	26	
Maine	750,000	73.0%	-0.6%	2	EDR
Maryland	2,600,000	67.0%	5.2%	15	
Massachusetts	3,060,000	66.2%	4.1%	20	
Michigan	5,050,000	69.3%	3.7%	6	SS
Minnesota	2,915,000	77.9%	0.9%	1	EDR, SS
Mississippi	1,220,000	57.9%	3.3%	41	

State	# of Votes	Turnout % Est.	% Increase over 04	TO Rank (unofficial)	EDR or Swing State
Missouri	2,925,000	68.0%	1.6%	8	
Montana	500,000	67.2%	4.4%	13	EDR, SS
Nebraska	800,000	62.4%	-3.6%	30	
Nevada	1,000,000	59.4%	6.9%	37	SS
New Hampshire	718,000	71.7%	1.0%	4	EDR, SS
New Jersey	3,700,000	63.0%	-2.4%	28	
New Mexico	830,000	59.6%	0.8%	36	SS
New York	7,500,000	57.5%	0.1%	44	
North Carolina	4,325,000	66.0%	11.4%	21	SDR*, SS
North Dakota	320,000	65.5%	0.4%	23	EDR**
Ohio	5,800,000	68.1%	0.7%	7	SS
Oklahoma	1,470,000	56.7%	-4.3%	45	
Oregon	1,825,000	67.3%	-4.5%	11	SS
Pennsylvania	5,950,000	63.5%	1.0%	25	SS
Rhode Island	474,500	62.7%	6.0%	29	
South Carolina	1,930,000	58.8%	11.0%	39	
South Dakota	385,800	64.4%	-8.2%	24	
Tennessee	2,630,000	57.7%	1.1%	43	
Texas	8,100,000	54.6%	1.3%	48	
Utah	900,000	50.8%	-18.1%	49	
Vermont	328,300	67.3%	1.6%	12	
Virginia	3,725,000	67.6%	9.9%	10	SS
Washington	3,010,000	66.2%	-1.8%	19	
West Virginia	710,000	50.3%	-7.2%	51	
Wisconsin	2,970,000	72.2%	-5.9%	3	EDR, SS
Wyoming	257,200	65.9%	1.3%	22	EDR

\*In 2007, North Carolina adopted Same Day Registration during its 16 day early voting period

\*\* North Dakota does not have voter registration

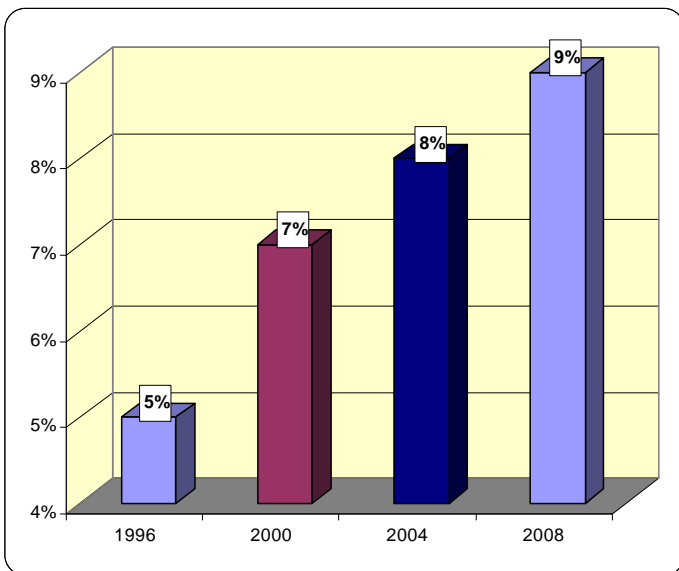
## Latino Vote

Primary Source: CNN National Exit Poll for 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008 General Elections, Pew Hispanic Center, US. Election Atlas, Secretaries of State

**Latino voters continue to rise quickly as a share of the overall electorate.**

- **Latinos comprised 9% of voters** on November 4 - up from 8% in 2004 and 7% in 2000.
- The largest increases in Latino percentage of the electorate occurred in **New Mexico** (9 point increase), **Colorado** (5 point increase) and **Nevada** (5 point increase) – all swing states.
- In the Southwest, voter turnout increased by at least **10-15%** in counties with large Latino populations, such as those encompassing Denver, Las Vegas, Albuquerque, Las Cruces (NM) and El Paso (*where county data was readily available*).

**Latino Share of the Electorate**  
As a Percent of Overall Electorate  
in Presidential Elections 1996-2008



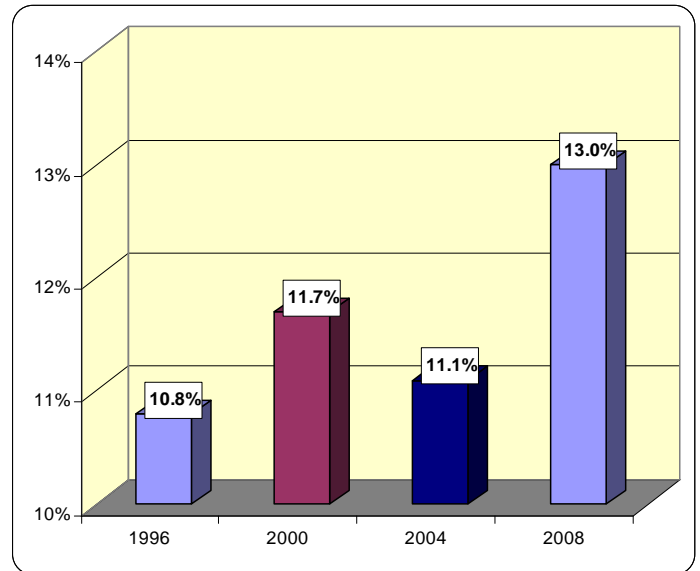
## Black Vote

Primary Source: U.S. Census Report on Voting 1996, 2000, 2004 and CNN Exit Poll for 2008 General Election, US. Election Atlas, Secretaries of State

**Black voters comprised 13% of turnout on November 4th.**

- Black voter participation jumped as a percentage of the overall electorate – from 11.1 percent in 2004, where it has been fairly steady since 1996, to **13.0% in 2008**.
- Percent of white voters turning out in 2008 appears to have dropped, especially in the Midwest.
- **Counties in the South** with large black populations, voter turnout increased by 15-20% as in Clayton and DeKalb in Georgia or Orangeburg or Sumter in South Carolina (*where county data was readily available*).

**Black Share of the Electorate**  
As a Percent of Overall Electorate  
in Presidential Elections 1996-2008



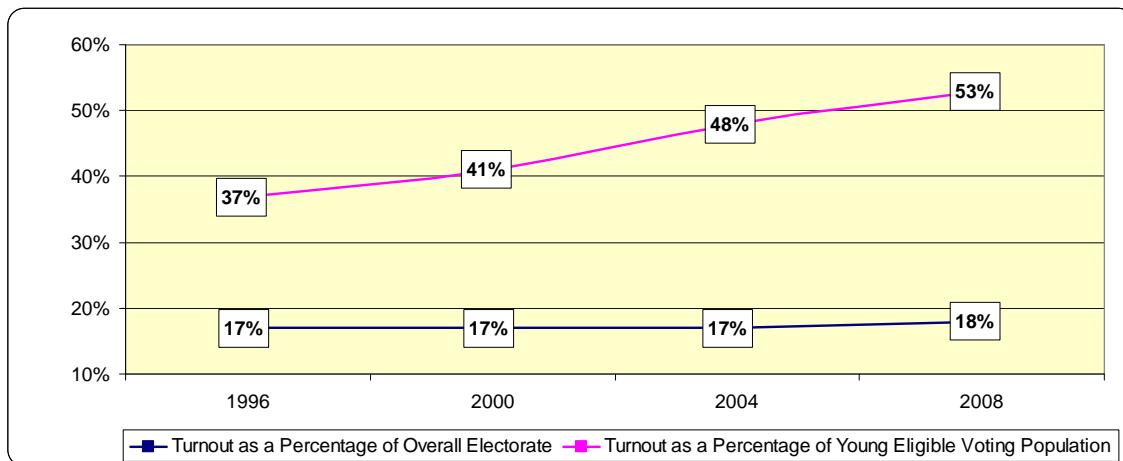
## Youth Vote

Primary Source: CIRCLE ([www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org))

**Young voter turnout at highest rate since 18-to-21 year-olds voters first received the vote in 1972.**

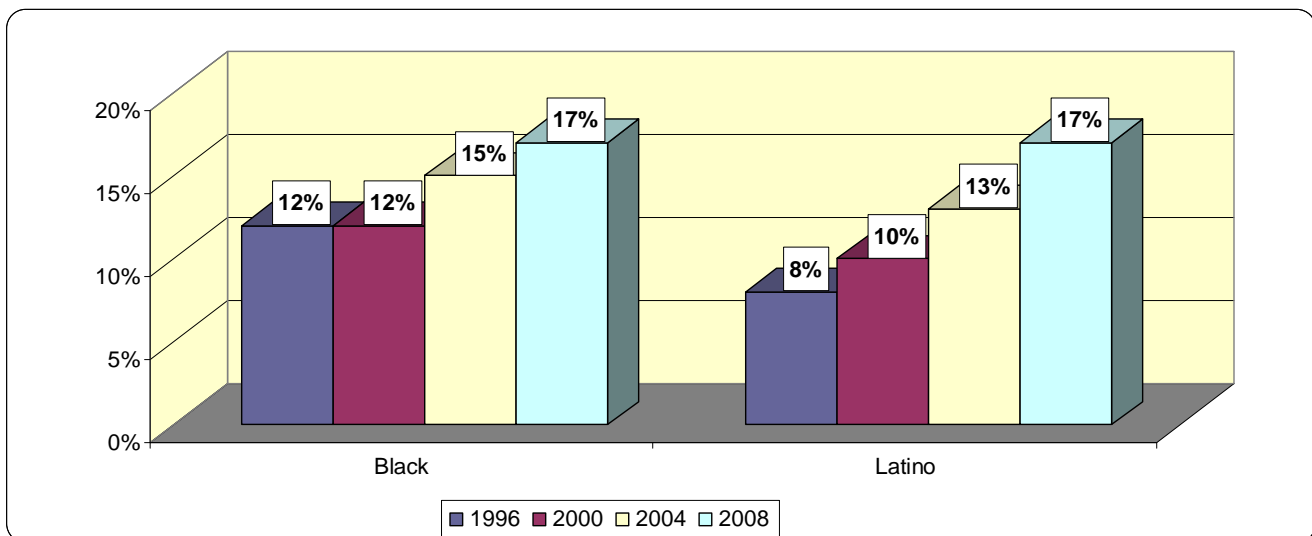
- Total youth turnout numbers estimated at 22-24 million, **or 53% of eligible voters aged 18-29**, up from 48% in 2004 and 41% in 2000.
- Young voters comprised 18% of the electorate on November 4<sup>th</sup>, up from their steady 17% share in 2004, 2000 and 1996.
- Increases in young Latino vote and young Black vote played a role in the 2008 overall percentage increases of Latino and Black voters.

**Growth in the Youth Vote**  
Presidential Elections 1996 – 2008



## Black and Latino Youth Vote Up

As a Percent of Overall Youth Vote in Presidential Elections 1996-2008

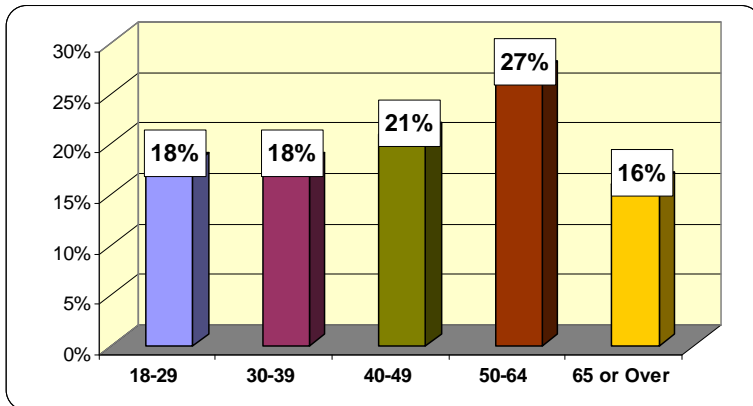


## Exit Poll Trends

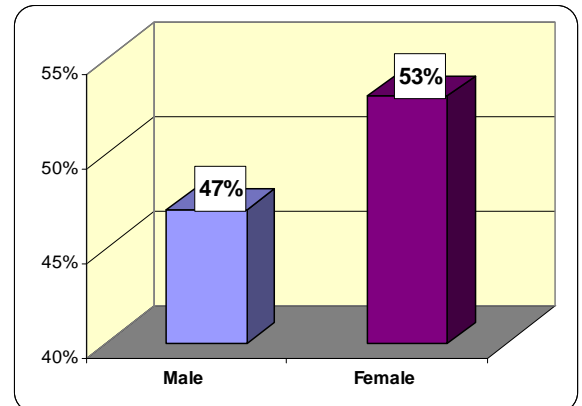
### SOURCES:

Data were taken from CNN's exit poll results, provided by Edison Media Research/ Mitofsky International for the National Election Pool. Questionnaires were completed by 17,224 voters leaving 300 polling places around the nation on Election Day and 2,378 telephone interviews with absentee and early voters. [www.exit-poll.net](http://www.exit-poll.net)

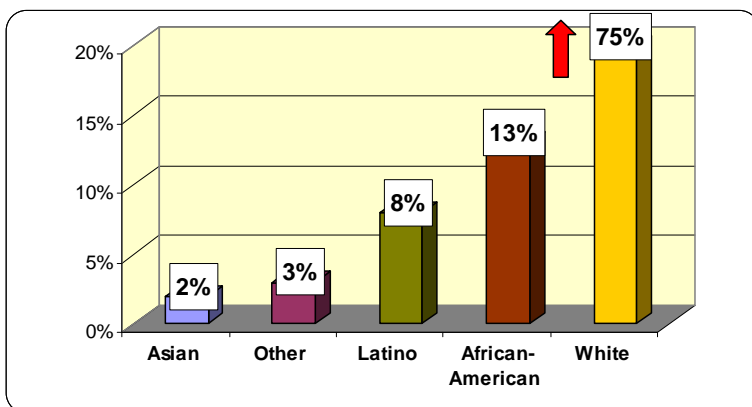
### The Electorate by Age



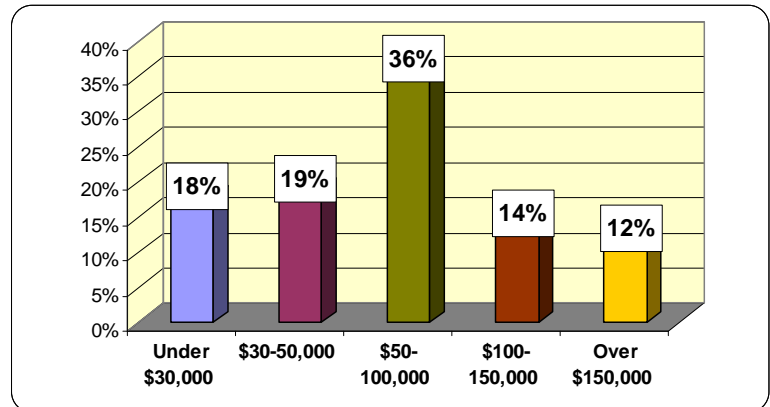
### The Electorate by Gender



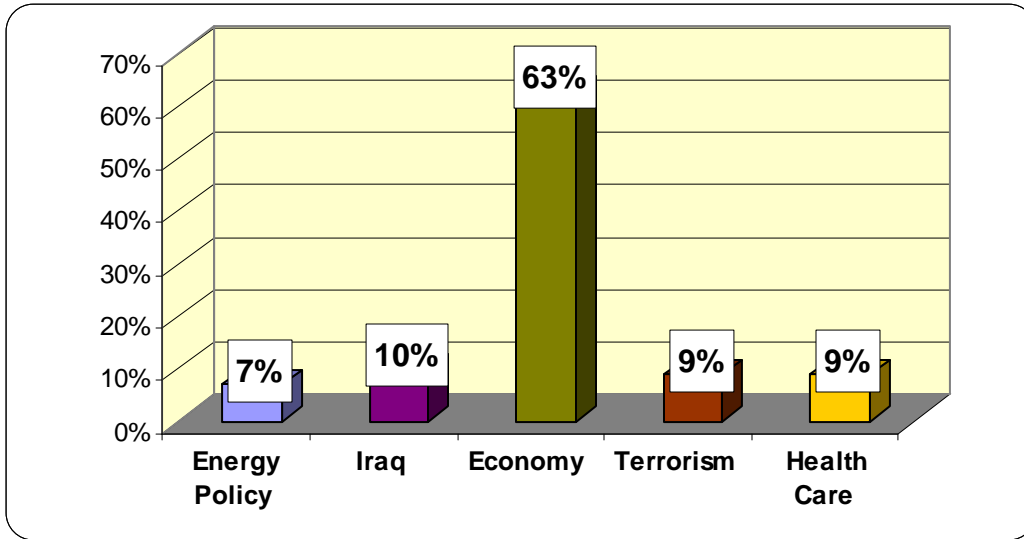
### The Electorate by Ethnicity



### The Electorate by Income

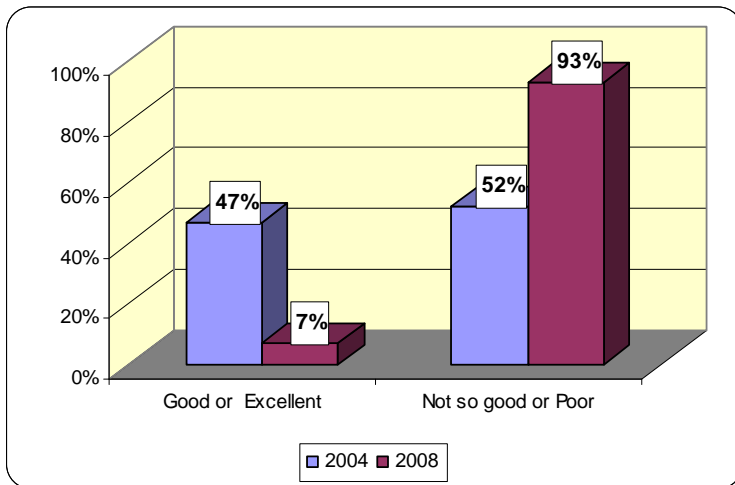


## Most Important Issue

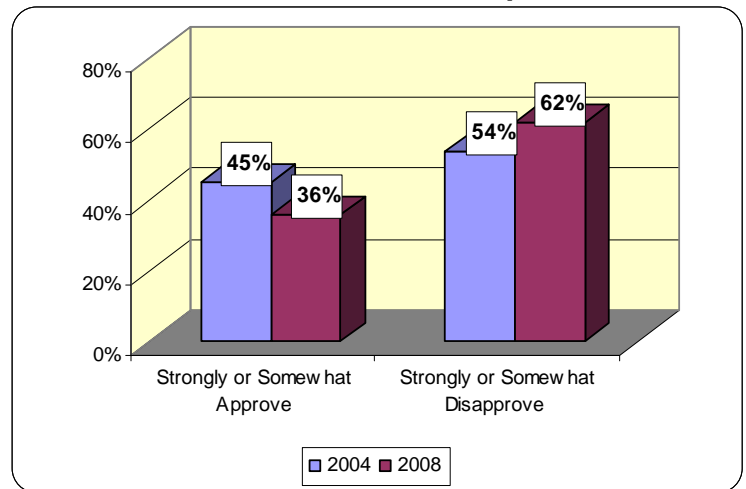


## Comparing Views 2004 vs. 2008

### Describe the Condition of the Economy



### U.S. War in Iraq\*



- 63% of voters said that the economy was their number one issue this year, a jump from only 20% in 2004. The number of voters for whom the war in Iraq was the most important issue dropped from 15% in 2004 to 10% this year, while terrorism dropped from 19% to 9%. Health care showed little change with 8% of voters saying it was their top issue in 2004 and 9% saying the same this year.
- Although overall concern about healthcare showed little change, the number of respondents who were “very worried” about health care dropped by more than half, from 70% in 2004 to only 33% in 2008.