

# THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION

*Public Opinion Regarding America's Space Program*

Submitted to:

The Space Foundation for  
The Coalition for Space Exploration

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## Methodology

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The survey results are based on a nationally representative sample of 1000 telephone interviews with a general population sample of U.S. adult men and women age 18 and over residing in telephone households. The study is one in a continuing series of studies conducted by The Gallup Organization and commissioned by The Space Foundation in an effort to better understand the extent of support for America's space program and public attitudes toward the space program. Trend data for previously asked questions are provided. Interviewing for the current study was conducted following the successful mission of the Space Shuttle Discovery launched July 26, 2006.

The sample used for this survey was a random digit telephone sample drawn from telephone exchanges serving the continental United States. The design of the sample ensures representation of both listed and unlisted numbers by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange and bank number.

Interviewing was conducted from August 2-19, 2006. A three-call design was used; that is one initial call and up to two additional calls were made to a household to reach an eligible respondent. Only one interview within each household was conducted. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects could be plus or minus three percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias in the findings of opinion polls.

# Detailed Findings

## Public Opinion Regarding Issues Facing the U.S.

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*Q1: In your opinion, how good a job is the U.S. doing in (read and rotate issues)? Is the U.S. doing a very good job, a good job, not a very good job or a very poor job?*

*-Handling the war on terrorism*

*-Handling national disasters, such as the 2005 hurricanes*

*-Maintaining its leadership in space exploration*

*-Addressing the healthcare needs of the nation*

When asked to rate four issues facing the U.S. today on how well the U.S. was handling each of the four issues measured, the public is most likely to feel the U.S. is doing a good job in maintaining its leadership in space exploration. Approximately seven in ten (69%) believe the U.S. is doing either a good (52%) or very good job (17%) in maintaining its leadership in space exploration. One in five (21%) do not think the U.S. is doing a good job in this area.

As in March, 2006, one in every two (50%) adults believe the U.S. is doing either a good (37%) or very good job (13%) in handling the war on terrorism. The other 46% think the U.S. is not doing a very good job or is doing a very poor job in this regard.

One-third believe the U.S. is doing a good (27%) or very good (7%) job in handling national disasters, such as the 2005 hurricanes, while 63% do not. Thirty-one percent think the U.S. is doing a good (26%) or very good (5%) job of addressing the healthcare needs of the nation. Sixty-five percent feel the country is not doing a good job in this area.

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**Opinion Regarding Issues Facing the U.S.**

March 2006 (n=1001)  
August 2006 (n=1000)

|                     | War on Terrorism<br>% |         | National Disasters<br>% |         | Leadership in Space<br>% |         | Healthcare Needs<br>% |         |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|
|                     | Mar '06               | Aug '06 | Mar '06                 | Aug '06 | Mar '06                  | Aug '06 | Mar '06               | Aug '06 |
| Very good job       | 15                    | 13      | 6                       | 7       | 13                       | 17      | 7                     | 5       |
| Good job            | 34                    | 37      | 26                      | 27      | 54                       | 52      | 25                    | 26      |
| Not a very good job | 26                    | 25      | 34                      | 32      | 18                       | 15      | 37                    | 36      |
| Very poor job       | 23                    | 21      | 33                      | 31      | 7                        | 6       | 30                    | 29      |
| Don't know/Refused  | 2                     | 4       | 1                       | 3       | 8                        | 10      | 1                     | 4       |
| Total               | 100                   | 100     | 100                     | 100     | 100                      | 100     | 100                   | 100     |

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## Opinion Regarding the Funding of the Space Program

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*Q2: NASA'S budget request this year is under one percent of the federal budget which would amount to approximately \$58 per year for the average citizen. Do you think the nation should continue to fund space exploration...?*

*-At this current level*

*-At a slightly increased level*

*-At a significantly increased level*

*-At a slightly decreased level*

*-At a significantly decreased level*

*-Not fund at all*

More than three in five (63%) of adults surveyed believe that the U.S. should continue to fund space exploration either at its current level or at an increased level. Three in ten (31%) adults believe the nation should continue to fund space exploration at the current level, and 31% believe funding should be increased either at a slightly increased level (22%) or at a significantly increased level (9%). These findings are very similar to those reported in March 2006.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to feel funding should be either increased or kept at its current level (74% vs. 55%). The corresponding percentage among independents is 60%. Adults under age 35 and those between the ages of 50-64 are the most likely age groups to say funding should stay at its current level or be increased (69% and 66% respectively).

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### Opinion Regarding the Funding of the Space Program

|                                    | 2005<br>% | March '06<br>% | August '06<br>% |
|------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| At this current level              | 36        | 31             | 32              |
| At a slightly increased level      | 25        | 22             | 22              |
| At a significantly increased level | 12        | 7              | 9               |
| At a slightly decreased level      | 12        | 14             | 14              |
| At a significantly decreased level | 4         | 8              | 6               |
| Not fund at all                    | 8         | 15             | 12              |
| Don't know/Refused                 | 3         | 3              | 5               |
| Total                              | 100       | 100            | 100             |
| Number of Interviews               | (1001)    | (1001)         | (1000)          |

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## Extent of Support For New Plan For Space Exploration

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*Q4: In January 2004, a new plan or goal for space exploration was announced. The plan includes a stepping-stone approach to return the space shuttle to flight, complete assembly of the space station, build a replacement for the shuttle, go back to the Moon, and travel to Mars and beyond. If NASA's budget did not exceed one percent of the federal budget, to what extent would you support or oppose this new plan for space exploration? Would you strongly support it, support it, oppose it or strongly oppose it?*

Currently, two-thirds (66%) of the public supports the plan for space exploration including one in five who strongly support the plan. Twenty-eight percent currently oppose the plan.

Men are more likely than women to strongly support the space exploration plan (24% vs. 14%). Adults under age 35 are twice as likely as adults age 65 and over to strongly support it (23% vs. 12%). Republicans are more likely than Democrats to strongly support the plan. However, both parties including independents support the space plan.

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### Extent of Support for 2004 Plan for Space Exploration

|                      | 2005<br>% | March '06<br>% | August '06<br>% |
|----------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Strongly support it  | 26        | 14             | 19              |
| Support it           | 51        | 50             | 47              |
| Neutral              | 2         | 5              | 4               |
| Oppose it            | 14        | 19             | 18              |
| Strongly oppose it   | 6         | 10             | 10              |
| Don't know/Refused   | 1         | 2              | 2               |
| Total                | 100       | 100            | 100             |
| Number of Interviews | (1001)    | (1001)         | (1000)          |

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## Benefits vs. the Risks

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*Q4a: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the scientific, technical and other benefits of space exploration are worth the risks of human space flight? Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?*

Roughly seven in ten (69%) respondents surveyed agree that the benefits of space exploration outweigh the risks of human space flight. Twenty-seven percent disagree. Those more likely than their counterparts to agree with this statement are men, adults under age 65, and Republicans.

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### Benefits vs. the Risks

|                                   | GENDER  |        |          | AGE     |         |         |       |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------|----------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
|                                   | Total % | Male % | Female % | 18-34 % | 35-49 % | 50-64 % | 65+ % |
| Strongly agree                    | 26      | 36     | 17       | 26      | 32      | 32      | 15    |
| Agree                             | 43      | 42     | 44       | 49      | 41      | 40      | 42    |
| Neither agree nor disagree (vol.) | 1       | 1      | 2        | 1       | 1       | 1       | 2     |
| Disagree                          | 19      | 12     | 25       | 19      | 18      | 15      | 26    |
| Strongly disagree                 | 8       | 7      | 9        | 5       | 8       | 9       | 11    |
| Don't know/Refused                | 3       | 2      | 3        | -       | 4       | 3       | 4     |
| Total                             | 100     | 100    | 100      | 100     | 100     | 100     | 100   |
| Number of Interviews              | (1000)  | (472)  | (528)    | (167)   | (266)   | (306)   | (242) |

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## Concern That China May Become New Leader in Space Exploration

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*Q5: Both China and the U.S. have announced plans to send astronauts to the moon. China has announced plans to send astronauts to the moon by 2017 and the U.S. has announced plans to send astronauts to the moon by 2018, a year later. To what extent, if any, are you concerned that China would become the new leader in space exploration or take the lead over the U.S.? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not concerned at all?*

Most (69%) of the adult public say they are not concerned that the U.S. will lose its leadership in space exploration. Only one in eight (12%) report being very concerned. Sixteen percent say they are somewhat concerned.

These findings are statistically unchanged from the March, 2006 survey.

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### Degree of Concern that China May Become New Leader in Space Exploration

|                      | March 2006<br>% | August 2006<br>% |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Very concerned       | 13              | 12               |
| Somewhat concerned   | 20              | 16               |
| Neutral              | 1               | 2                |
| Not very concerned   | 34              | 32               |
| Not concerned at all | 32              | 37               |
| Don't know/Refused   | -               | 1                |
| Total                | 100             | 100              |
| Number of Interviews | (1001)          | (1000)           |

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# Technical Appendix

## Sampling Tolerances

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In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error, that is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population had been interviewed. The size of such sampling errors depends largely on the number of interviews.

The following tables may be used in estimating the sampling error of any percentage in this report. The computed allowances have taken into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. They may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to vary, 95 percent of the time, assuming the same sampling procedures, the same interviewers, and the same questionnaire.

The first table shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error of a percentage:

Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error  
of a Percentage

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In Percentage Points  
(at 95 in 100 confidence level)\*  
S A M P L E S I Z E

|                     | 1000 | 700 | 500 | 300 | 200 | 100 |
|---------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| PERCENTAGES NEAR 10 | 2    | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   |
| PERCENTAGES NEAR 20 | 3    | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 9   |
| PERCENTAGES NEAR 30 | 3    | 4   | 4   | 6   | 7   | 10  |
| PERCENTAGES NEAR 40 | 3    | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 11  |
| PERCENTAGES NEAR 50 | 3    | 4   | 5   | 6   | 8   | 11  |
| PERCENTAGES NEAR 60 | 3    | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 11  |
| PERCENTAGES NEAR 70 | 3    | 4   | 4   | 6   | 7   | 10  |
| PERCENTAGES NEAR 80 | 3    | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 9   |
| PERCENTAGES NEAR 90 | 2    | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   |

\* THE CHANCES ARE 95 IN 100 THAT THE SAMPLING ERROR IS NOT LARGER THAN THE FIGURE SHOWN.

The table would be used in the following manner: Let us say a reported percentage is 33 for a group which includes 1000 respondents. Then we go to row "percentages near 30" in the table and go across to the column headed "1000". The number at this point is 3, which means that the 33 percent obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3 points. Another way of saying it is that very probably (95 chances of 100) the true figure would be somewhere between 30 and 36, with the most likely figure the 33 obtained.

In comparing survey results in two samples, such as, for example, men and women, the question arises as to how large a difference between them must be before one can be reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. In the tables below, the number of points which must be allowed for in such comparisons is indicated.

Two tables are provided. One is for percentages near 20 or 80; the other for percentages near 50. For percentages in between, the error to be allowed for is between those shown in the two tables.

**RECOMMENDED ALLOWANCE FOR SAMPLING  
ERROR OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
20 % AND 80 %**

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**IN PERCENTAGE POINTS  
(AT 95 IN 100 CONFIDENCE LEVEL)\*  
S A M P L E S I Z E**  
=====

|             | <u>1000</u> | <u>700</u> | <u>500</u> | <u>300</u> | <u>200</u> | <u>100</u> |
|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>1000</b> | 4           |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>700</b>  | 4           | 5          |            |            |            |            |
| <b>500</b>  | 5           | 5          | 5          |            |            |            |
| <b>300</b>  | 6           | 6          | 6          | 7          |            |            |
| <b>200</b>  | 7           | 7          | 7          | 8          | 9          |            |
| <b>100</b>  | 9           | 9          | 9          | 10         | 11         | 12         |

**RECOMMENDED ALLOWANCE FOR SAMPLING  
ERROR OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
50 % AND 50 %**

-----  
**IN PERCENTAGE POINTS  
(AT 95 IN 100 CONFIDENCE LEVEL)\*  
S A M P L E S I Z E**  
=====

|             | <u>1000</u> | <u>700</u> | <u>500</u> | <u>300</u> | <u>200</u> | <u>100</u> |
|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>1000</b> | 5           |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>700</b>  | 5           | 6          |            |            |            |            |
| <b>500</b>  | 6           | 6          | 7          |            |            |            |
| <b>300</b>  | 7           | 7          | 8          | 9          |            |            |
| <b>200</b>  | 8           | 9          | 9          | 10         | 11         |            |
| <b>100</b>  | 11          | 12         | 12         | 12         | 13         | 15         |