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Contact: Esten Perez
(617) 496-4009

**SOLID MAJORITY OF YOUNG ADULTS CONCERNED ABOUT
MEETING THEIR BILLS
AND OBLIGATIONS, HARVARD POLL FINDS**

***45% Rate Personal Financial Situation “Bad;”
Republicans Energized for 2010 Midterm Elections***

Washington, D.C. – A new national poll of America’s 18-29 year-olds by Harvard’s Institute of Politics (IOP), located at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, finds that six in ten (60%) are concerned about meeting their current bills and obligations and almost half (45%) report that their personal financial situation is bad. Among America’s undergraduate population, 45% are concerned about their ability to stay in college given the state of the economy.

The poll also finds young Republicans are showing more enthusiasm than young Democrats for participating in the upcoming midterm elections with 41% of Republicans planning on voting, compared to 35% of Democrats and 13% of Independents. A detailed report on the poll’s findings is available on the Institute’s homepage at www.iop.harvard.edu.

“Today we know this new generation of emerging leaders is less sure where we and they are headed,” said Bill Purcell, Director of Harvard’s Institute of Politics. “The question now is whether they will continue to grow their engagement in politics and public life in the years ahead – we may find out this fall.”

“Millions of young people are losing faith in government, politics and in many cases – the American dream,” said John Della Volpe, Director of Polling for Harvard’s Institute of Politics. “Millennials are calling on government to follow through on the bright promise that a generation dedicated to public service has come to passionately believe in.”

The web-enabled survey of 3,117 18-29 year-old U.S. citizens with a margin of error of +/- 2.3 percentage points (95% confidence level) conducted with research partner Knowledge Networks for the IOP between January 29 and February 22, 2010 finds –

- ***Strong majority of young adults concerned about keeping their heads above water.*** Economic anxiety among 18-29 year-olds is palpable, with six in ten (60%) saying they are concerned about meeting their current bills and obligations. A majority of young adults are also worried about affording a place to live (58%) and affording health care (56%). Almost half (46%) of those in the workforce are concerned about losing their job, and an identical proportion are concerned about their ability to live in the city or town they want to.

- ***Less than half of Millennials are confident they can reach the “American Dream.”*** Asked to rate their personal financial situation, almost half (45%) of 18-29 year-olds report their situation as bad with only a slight majority (52%) describing theirs as good. When 18-29 year-olds reach their parent’s age, less than half (46%) say they believe they will be better off financially; slightly more than one-in-ten (11%) say they will be worse off, with the rest saying their situation will be the same (24%), they are unsure or declined to answer.
- ***Given the state of the economy, nearly half of college students today question their ability to stay in school.*** Almost half of all four-year undergraduates (45%) and nearly two-thirds of community college students (64%) are concerned about staying in college. When four-year college students were asked how easy or difficult it would be for members of their class to find jobs after graduation, only 14 percent said it would be “easy” but more than eight in ten (84%) indicated it would be “difficult.” Two years ago in the spring of 2008, when this question was asked by our different polling partner, 30 percent of college students said it would be “easy” to find a job; in 2006, 37 percent and in 2004 31 percent said the same.
- ***Majority of 18-29 year-olds still approve of President Obama’s job performance generally, but continue to disapprove of his handling of major issues.*** The President’s overall approval rating is down slightly from November IOP polling (56% approve; November: 58% approve) – and his job approval ratings on five major issues have not changed more than two percentage points. A majority of 18-29 year-olds still disapprove of his handling of health care (53%; November: 52%), Iran (55%; November: 53%), the economy (51%; November: 52%), Afghanistan (54%; November 55%), and the federal budget deficit (56%; November: 58%).
- ***Young Republicans energized and looking forward to the 2010 midterm elections.*** Among 18-29 year-olds surveyed, young Republicans are showing more enthusiasm than young Democrats for participating in the upcoming midterm elections and are statistically more likely than Democrats to say they will “definitely be voting in November.” More than two-in-five (41%) Republicans are planning on voting, compared to 35 percent of Democrats and 13 percent of Independents. Those who voted for U.S. Sen. John McCain for President in 2008 are more likely (53%) to say they will definitely vote this November than those who voted for then-U.S. Sen. Barack Obama (44%). In addition, those disapproving of President Obama’s job performance (35%) are more likely to vote than those that approve of his performance (30%).
- ***Congressional approval drops and number of Independents grows.*** Concerning elected office, only 35 percent of young adults say they agree with the statement, “Running for office is an honorable thing to do.” Since IOP polling in November 2009, fewer young adults say they approve of the job performance of Republicans in Congress (32%; November: 35%) and Democrats in Congress (42%;

November: 48%). Over the same time period, the number of 18-29 year-olds self-identifying as Independents has grown six percentage points from 34% to 40%.

- ***A majority of Millennials believe the President and Congress should keep the deficit down, even at the expense of a slower economy.*** When offered a choice, a majority (51%) of young adults said they believe that the “President and Congress should worry more about keeping the budget deficit down, even though it may mean it will take longer for the economy to recover;” 45% of 18-29 year-olds said that the “President and Congress should worry more about boosting the economy even though it may mean larger budget deficits now and in the future” (This question was originally asked several times in 2009 *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News polling).

Harvard students designed the poll in consultation with IOP Polling Director John Della Volpe, whose firm *SocialSphere, Inc.* commissioned Knowledge Networks to conduct the survey. Complete results and past surveys are available online at www.iop.harvard.edu.

The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, Knowledge Networks provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection. People who already have computers and Internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research. More technical information is available at <http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp/reviewer-info.html>.

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Harvard University's Institute of Politics (IOP), located at Harvard Kennedy School, was established in 1966 as a memorial to President Kennedy. The IOP's mission is to unite and engage students, particularly undergraduates, with academics, politicians, activists, and policymakers on a non-partisan basis and to stimulate and nurture their interest in public service and leadership. The Institute strives to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the academic world and the world of politics and public affairs. More information is available online at www.iop.harvard.edu/.

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