

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Consumer Reports, American Red Cross and AARP Most Trusted Inside the Beltway

These three are also best known DC organizations

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – December 11, 2008 – Among all adults who are familiar with them, Consumer Reports, The American Red Cross, AARP, the Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are the most trusted among 16 large organizations that influence politics and business in Washington. The AFL-CIO, the ACLU, the NRA and PhRMA are the least trusted. However, even these organizations are trusted “a great deal” or “a fair amount” by 47 percent or more of all adults.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll®*, a new nationwide survey of 2,126 U.S. adults surveyed online between November 10 and 17, 2008 by [Harris Interactive®](#). This survey focused on 16 organizations that have considerable influence on public policy, business and are frequently covered by the media.

Familiarity

The first question asked the public how familiar they are with these 16 organizations. The organizations that are **familiar to the largest number of people** are:

- The American Red Cross 93%
- The AARP 85%
- Consumer Reports 81%
- The National Rifle Association (NRA) 79%
- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce 70%

The organizations on the list that the **fewest people are familiar with** are:

- Conservation International 12%
- National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) 17%
- PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America) 19%
- American Public Transportation Association (APTA) 19%
- The Heritage Foundation 27%
- National Association of Home Builders 32%

Trust

Among those who are familiar with them, **the most trusted** organizations (based on those who trust them “a great deal” or “a fair amount”) are:

- Consumer Reports 92%
- The American Red Cross 88%
- AARP 82%
- The Nature Conservancy 82%

The least trusted organizations on the list are:

- AFL-CIO 47%
- The ACLU 48%
- The NRA 56%
- PhRMA 58%

It is noteworthy that all four of these organizations take strong and often controversial positions on political issues.

Power in Washington

The organizations listed that are believed to have **the most power**, based on the number of people who are thought to have “a great deal” or “a fair amount” of power (as percentages of those who are familiar with them) are:

- The AFL-CIO 87%
- The ACLU 82%
- PhRMA 82%
- NAM 80%
- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce 80%
- The NRA 79%

The organizations thought to have **the least power** are:

- Consumer Reports 42%
- The Nature Conservancy 51%
- Sierra Club 58%
- American Red Cross 62%

So What?

Within Washington D.C. groups live by one tenet — power —how to get it and how to retain it. The least powerful groups inside the Beltway are also the most trusted; these include Consumer Reports and the American Red Cross, who by their sheer size and scope of work are able to work around their lack of power.

On the other hand, those groups who are most powerful, such as the NRA and the AFL-CIO are also the least trusted. These groups have risen to power status by the sheer fact they survive on controversy and their ability to play politics very well.

The equations are simple; in general, those with the least power are most trusted, while those with the most power are least trusted.

TABLE 1
FAMILIARITY WITH ORGANIZATION - TREND
 "Please indicate your familiarity with the following organizations"
 (Percentage who say they are familiar)

Base: All Adults

	2005	2006	2007	2008
	%	%	%	%
American Red Cross	N/A	96	96	93
AARP	89	88	85	85
Consumer Reports	N/A	N/A	86	81
NRA (National Rifle Association)	90	87	83	79
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	76	78	79	70
ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union)	80	76	72	64
AFL-CIO	75	67	65	59
National Education Association (NEA)	N/A	N/A	N/A	51
Sierra Club	64	54	56	49
The Nature Conservancy	47	40	41	37
Nat'l Assoc. of Homebuilders (NAHB)	N/A	N/A	39	32
Heritage Foundation	33	32	33	27
American Public Transportation Association (APTA)	N/A	N/A	N/A	19
PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America)	N/A	N/A	N/A	19
National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)	N/A	N/A	N/A	17
Conservation International	N/A	N/A	N/A	12

Note: N/A indicates organization not asked about in that year

TABLE 2
TRUST IN ORGANIZATIONS

"How much do you trust these organizations?"

Base: Adults Familiar With Organizations (Variable Base)

		A Great Deal/A Fair Amount (NET)	A Great Deal	A Fair Amount	Not Very Much	Not At All
Consumer Reports	%	92	44	48	7	2
American Red Cross	%	88	45	44	9	3
AARP	%	82	29	53	13	5
The Nature Conservancy	%	82	31	52	13	5
American Public Transportation Association (APTA)	%	73	24	49	22	5
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	%	72	16	56	23	5
Conservation International	%	71	34	37	21	8
National Education Association (NEA)	%	67	18	49	21	12
National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)	%	67	25	42	27	6
Sierra Club	%	66	24	43	21	13
Nat'l Assoc. of Homebuilders (NAHB)	%	66	14	52	30	5
Heritage Foundation	%	66	26	40	23	11
PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America)	%	58	20	38	32	11
NRA (National Rifle Association)	%	56	21	35	23	21
ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union)	%	48	18	29	25	28
AFL-CIO	%	47	11	36	33	19

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% because of rounding

TABLE 3
TRUST IN ORGANIZATIONS - TREND

"How much do you trust these organizations?"
(Percentage trust "a great deal" or "fair amount")

Base: Adults Familiar with Organization (Variable Base)

	2005	2006	2007	2008
	%	%	%	%
Consumer Reports	N/A	N/A	91	92
American Red Cross	N/A	84	86	88
AARP	77	84	83	82
The Nature Conservancy	79	80	83	82
American Public Transportation Association (APTA)	N/A	N/A	N/A	73
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	70	77	73	72
Conservation International	N/A	N/A	N/A	71
National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)	N/A	N/A	N/A	67
National Education Association (NEA)	N/A	N/A	N/A	67
Nat'l Assoc. of Homebuilders (NAHB)	N/A	N/A	69	66
Sierra Club	59	65	68	66
Heritage Foundation	57	68	62	66
PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America)	N/A	N/A	N/A	58
NRA	48	54	52	56
ACLU	49	49	50	48
AFL-CIO	41	51	52	47

Note: N/A indicates organization not asked about in that year

TABLE 4
HOW MUCH POWER ORGANIZATIONS ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE IN WASHINGTON

"How much power within Washington, DC do you believe these organizations have?"

Base: Adults Familiar With Organizations (Variable Base)

		A Great Deal/A Fair Amount (NET)	A Great Deal	A Fair Amount	Not Very Much	None At All
AFL-CIO	%	87	41	46	10	2
ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union)	%	82	38	44	16	2
PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America)	%	82	49	33	14	4
National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)	%	80	32	48	18	2
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	%	80	28	53	17	2
NRA (National Rifle Association)	%	79	39	40	18	3
National Education Association (NEA)	%	74	29	45	24	2
AARP	%	73	28	46	23	4
American Public Transportation Association (APTA)	%	70	27	43	26	4
Conservation International	%	66	26	40	29	5
Nat'l Assoc. of Homebuilders (NAHB)	%	64	17	47	31	4
Heritage Foundation	%	63	21	42	32	5
American Red Cross	%	62	18	45	33	5
Sierra Club	%	58	17	41	38	5
The Nature Conservancy	%	51	11	39	43	6
Consumer Reports	%	42	9	33	47	11

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% because of rounding

Methodology

This Harris Poll[®] was conducted online within the United States between November 10 and 17, 2008 among 2,126 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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