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**Doctors and Teachers Most Trusted Among 22 Occupations and Professions: Fewer Adults Trust the President to Tell the Truth**  
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*Actors and lawyers at bottom, with pollsters also fairing poorly*

About half (48%) of U.S. adults generally trust that the President tells the truth – down substantially from 65 percent in 2002. However, 12 of the 22 professions measured by *The Harris Poll*® are trusted to be truthful by 60 percent or more of U.S. adults, with doctors (85%) and teachers (83%) topping the list. In addition, over half of the occupations measured have seen an increase in the eyes of the general public to tell the truth when compared to 2002. This is a turnaround from four years ago when most occupations saw a decrease in feeling about truthfulness.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll*® conducted by telephone between July 7 and 10, 2006, by Harris Interactive® among a nationwide sample of 1,002 U.S. adults.

In addition to doctors and teachers, those rounding out the top five of generally trusted occupations and professions are scientists (77%), police officers (76%) and professors (75%). Conversely, the five occupations that are least trusted to be truthful include actors (26%), lawyers (27%), stockbrokers (29%), trade union leaders (30%) and opinion pollsters (34%).

Specifically the survey found the following changes in responses since 2002:

- In the past four years the occupations that have received the largest increase in the percentage of U.S. adults who trust that they tell the truth are accountants (up 13 percentage points from 55% in 2002 to the current 68%), bankers (up 11 percentage points to 62%), clergymen or priests (an increase of 10 percentage points to 74%), and scientists (up nine percentage points to 77%). Doctors and military officers have also shown increases. Doctors rose eight points to the current 85 percent, and military officers also increased eight points to 72 percent.
- Others that have shown more modest positive change include police officers (up seven percentage points to 76%), stockbrokers (up six percentage points to 29%), judges (up five percentage points to 70%), teachers (up three percentage points to 83%) and lawyers (up three percentage points to 27%).
- Those who have shown the most substantial drop are the President (a decrease of 17 percentage points from 65% in 2002 to a current 48%) and public opinion pollsters (a drop of 10 points to 34%). Others that had a more modest decrease are civil servants (a drop of three points to 62%) and TV newscasters (down two points to 44%).
- Those that have shown little or no change in the past four years are professors (75%), the ordinary man or woman (66%), journalists (39%), members of Congress (35%), and trade union leaders (30%).

**A word about pollsters**

Even though many polls (at least in national elections) generally do an accurate job, a 54 to 34 percent majority of the U.S. adult public does not believe that pollsters generally tell the truth. Obviously, the results are disturbing to those of us in the public opinion polling profession. This should be seen as a wake-up call to the pollsters that we must do more to educate the public about surveys and work more to earn the public's trust.

**TABLE 1**

**WHO WOULD YOU GENERALLY TRUST?**

"Would you generally trust each of the following types of people to tell the truth, or not?"

Base: All Adults

	Would Trust	Would Not	Not Sure/Refused
	%	%	%
Doctors	85	12	3
Teachers	83	15	2
Scientists	77	19	4
Police officers	76	21	3
Professors	75	19	6
Clergymen or priests	74	22	4
Military officers	72	26	3
Judges	70	24	5
Accountants	68	28	3
Ordinary man or woman	66	26	8
Civil servants	62	32	6
Bankers	62	34	3
The President	48	47	4
TV newscasters	44	51	5
Athletes	43	47	10
Journalists	39	58	3
Members of Congress	35	63	3
Pollsters	34	54	12
Trade union leaders	30	60	10
Stockbrokers	29	63	8
Lawyers	27	68	5
Actors	26	69	5

**TABLE 2**

**TREND – WHO WOULD YOU GENERALLY TRUST?**

"Would you generally trust each of the following types of people to tell the truth, or not?"

*Those who say they would trust*

Base: All Adults

	1998	2001	2002	2006	CHANGES Between 1998 & 2006	CHANGES Between 2002 & 2006
	%	%	%	%		
Doctors	83	84	77	85	+2	+8
Teachers	86	88	80	83	-3	+3
Scientists	79	76	68	77	-2	+9
Police officers	75	78	69	76	+1	+7
Professors	77	77	75	75	-2	-
Clergymen or priests	85	90	64	74	-11	+10
Military officers	NA	67	64	72	*	+8
Judges	79	75	65	70	-9	+5
Accountants	NA	NA	55	68	*	+13
The ordinary man or woman	71	74	65	66	-5	+1
Civil servants	70	71	65	62	-8	-3
Bankers	NA	NA	51	62	*	+11
The President	54	79	65	48	-6	-17
TV newscasters	44	54	46	44	-	-2
Athletes	NA	NA	NA	43	*	*
Business leaders	49	43	NA	NA	*	*
Journalists	43	49	39	39	-4	-
Members of Congress	46	42	35	35	-11	-
Pollsters	55	51	44	34	-21	-10
Trade union leaders	37	37	30	30	-7	-
Stockbrokers	NA	NA	23	29	*	+6
Lawyers	NA	NA	24	27	*	+3
Actors	NA	NA	NA	26	*	*

NOTE:

\* No trend

- No change

NA Not included

#### Methodology

This Harris Poll<sup>®</sup> was conducted by telephone within the United States between July 7 and 10, 2006 among 1,002 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region, number of adults in the household, number of phone lines in the household were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Note: respondents were asked about 10-11 occupations each, on a rotating basis.

All surveys are subject to several sources of error. These include: sampling error (because only a sample of a population is interviewed); measurement error due to question wording and/or question order, deliberately or unintentionally inaccurate responses, nonresponse (including refusals), interviewer effects (when live interviewers are used) and weighting.

With one exception (sampling error) the magnitude of the errors that result cannot be estimated. There is, therefore, no way to calculate a finite "margin of error" for any survey and the use of these words should be avoided.

With pure probability samples, with 100 percent response rates, it is possible to calculate the probability that the sampling error (but not other sources of error) is not greater than some number. With a pure probability sample of 1,002 adults one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 3 percentage points. However that does not take other sources of error into account.

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

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