



Government & Consumer Issues Survey

2017 Nationally Representative Phone Survey

Prepared by CR Survey Research Department

May, 2017

INTRODUCTION

In April 2017, the Consumer Reports National Research Center conducted a nationally representative phone survey to assess the opinion of Americans regarding the government and key consumer issues. Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) of Princeton, New Jersey administered the survey to a nationally representative sample of 1,007 U.S. residents through its CARAVAN Omnibus Survey. Respondents were selected by means of random-digit dialing and were interviewed via phone. The data were statistically weighted so that respondents in the survey are demographically and geographically representative of the U.S. population.

This is the second of a series of consumer voices surveys. The previous consumer voices survey (CVI) was administered using the same methodology to a nationally representative sample of 1,012 U.S. residents in January, 2017.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

QUESTIONS NEW TO CVII¹

- Most (78%) Americans think that the government should have a role in making sure that everyone has access to affordable, quality healthcare.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) of Americans say increases to insurance premiums/deductibles is their biggest healthcare concern going forward.
- Most (92%) Americans say internet service providers should be required to get their permission before selling/sharing their data with other companies. The same amount (92%) of consumers say internet companies and websites should be required to provide them with a complete list of the data they've collected about them, if asked.
- Two thirds of consumers either *strongly* (47%) or *somewhat* (18%) oppose dynamic pricing.
- The majority (82%) of Americans say the government should do more to enforce food safety laws.
- Consumers are divided on the effect of an overhaul to the tax system; 37% say it will make the tax system less fair, 31% say it will make the tax system more fair, and 24% say it will make the system just as fair.

CHANGES FROM CVI TO CVII

- Many (65%) Americans say they do not trust the government to protect the interests of consumers. This number did not change from CVI.
- Over four out of 10 consumers are either *pessimistic* (26%) or *very pessimistic* (16%) that the government will protect their rights as a consumer. This percentage is higher than what we found in CVI (36%).

¹ "New questions" were asked for the first time in this iteration of the consumer voices survey.

- Seven out of 10 Americans are either *slightly* (29%) or *not at all* (41%) *confident* that their personal data is private and not distributed without their knowledge. This combined percentage is higher than in CVI (65%).
- Nearly seven out of 10 Americans are either *slightly* (34%) or *not at all* (35%) *confident* that going forward, most Americans seeking higher education will be able to afford it. This percentage has not changed since CVI.

HEALTHCARE

MOST AMERICANS THINK GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE A ROLE IN HEALTHCARE ACCESS

78%

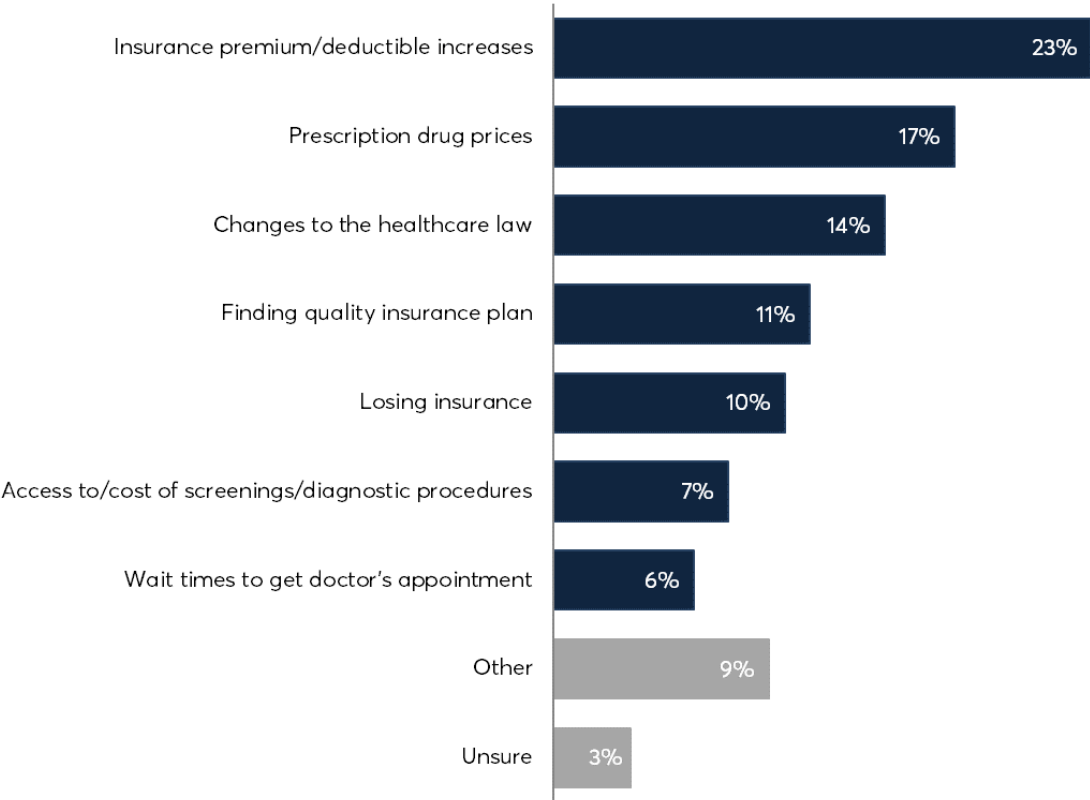
THINK GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE
ROLE IN ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE
QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

IN A NEW QUESTION, we found that most (78%) Americans think that the government should have a role in making sure that everyone has access to affordable, quality healthcare.

BIGGEST HEALTHCARE CONCERN: INCREASING COSTS

IN A NEW QUESTION, we found that when given a list of healthcare concerns, nearly a quarter (23%) of Americans say increases to insurance premiums/deductibles is their biggest healthcare concern going forward.

CONSUMER HEALTHCARE CONCERNS



Base: All respondents

INTERNET DATA USAGE

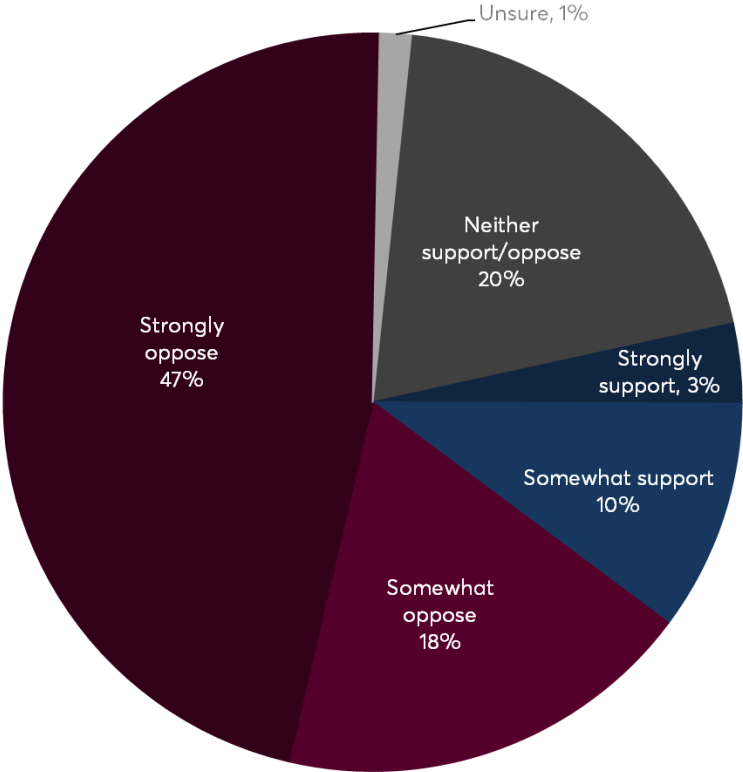
92%

SAY INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS SHOULD GET PERMISSION BEFORE SELLING/SHARING THEIR DATA

IN A NEW QUESTION, we found that most (92%) Americans say internet service providers should be required to get their permission before selling/sharing their data with other companies. Accordingly, in another new question, the same percentage (92%) of Americans say internet companies and websites should be required to provide them with a complete list of the data they've collected about them, if asked.

IN A NEW QUESTION, we found that two thirds of consumers either *strongly* (47%) or *somewhat* (18%) oppose dynamic pricing.

CONSUMER OPINION OF DYNAMIC PRICING



Base: All respondents

FOOD SAFETY

82%

SAY GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO MORE TO ENFORCE FOOD SAFETY LAWS

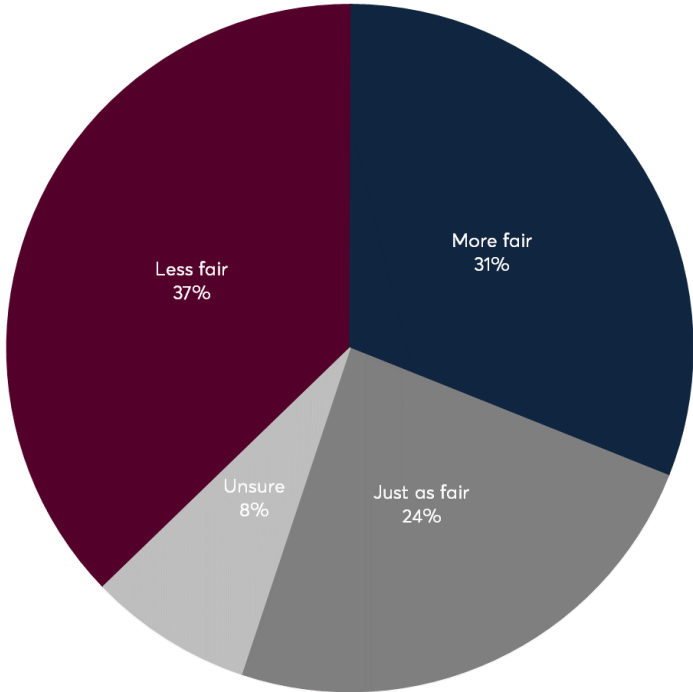
IN A NEW QUESTION, we found that the majority (82%) of Americans say the government should do more to enforce food safety laws.

TAXES

NEARLY FOUR IN 10 AMERICANS SAY TAX SYSTEM OVERHAUL WILL MAKE TAX SYSTEM LESS FAIR

IN A NEW QUESTION, we found that consumers are divided on the effect of an overhaul to the tax system; 37% say it will make the tax system less fair, 31% say it will make the tax system more fair, and 24% say it will make the system just as fair.

AMERICANS' OPINION OF FAIRNESS OF NEW TAX SYSTEM



Base: All respondents

CONSUMER PROTECTION

MANY AMERICANS DO NOT TRUST GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS

65%

Many (65%) Americans do not trust the government to protect the interests of consumers. This number did not change from CVI.

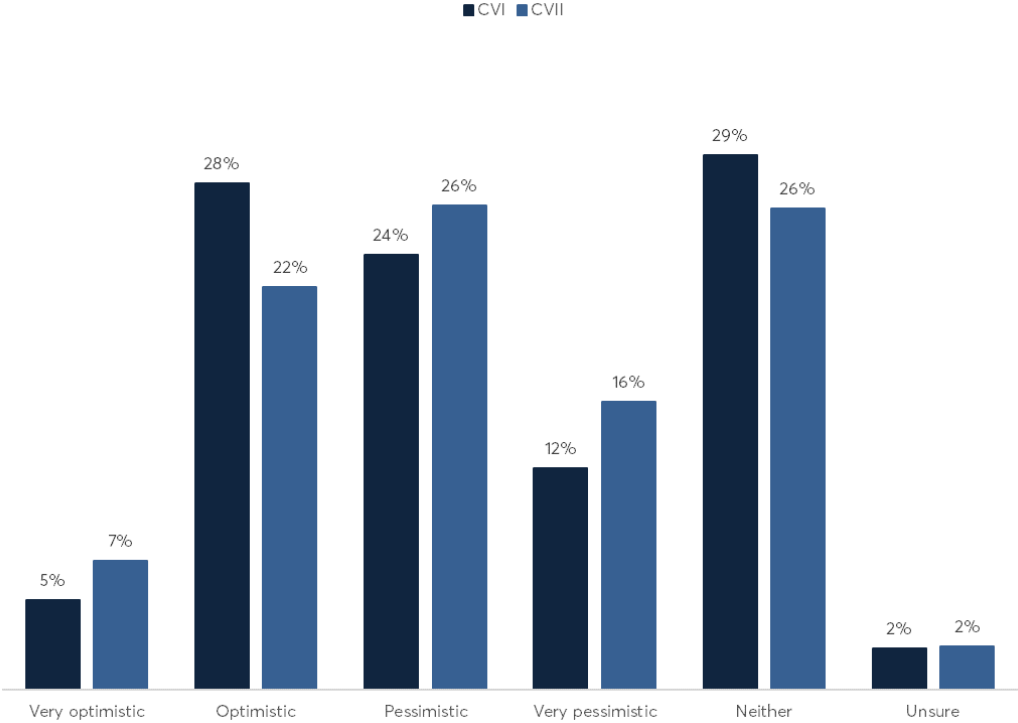
DO NOT TRUST GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT CONSUMER INTERESTS

FORTY-TWO PERCENT OF AMERICANS NOT OPTIMISTIC GOVERNMENT WILL PROTECT THEIR CONSUMER RIGHTS

Over four out of 10 consumers are either *pessimistic* (26%) or *very pessimistic* (16%) that the government will protect their rights as a consumer (this is 6 percentage points higher than in CVI).

So, while the percentage of consumers that *trust* the government to protect the interests of consumers was unchanged between surveys (many consumers don't trust the government to do this), here we see an increase in the percentage of consumers that are *pessimistic* about the government protecting their consumer rights.

OPTIMISM/PESSIMISM GOVERNMENT WILL PROTECT CONSUMER'S RIGHTS



Base: All respondents

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

MANY CONSUMERS LACK CONFIDENT OUTLOOK FOR SOME KEY CONSUMER ISSUES

70%

SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT
PERSONAL DATA IS PRIVATE

Seven out of 10 Americans are either *slightly* (29%) or *not at all* (41%) *confident* that their personal data is private and not distributed without their knowledge. This is 5 percentage points higher than in CVI (see 'INSIGHTS' on page 12 for additional notable inter-survey changes).

69%

SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT IN
AFFORDABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Nearly seven out of 10 Americans are either *slightly* (34%) or *not at all* (35%) *confident* that going forward, most Americans seeking higher education will be able to afford it.

65%

SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT
BANKS/INVESTMENT COMPANIES ACTING
RESPONSIBLY

Nearly two-thirds of Americans are either *slightly* (33%) or *not at all* (32%) *confident* that banks and investment companies are acting transparently and responsibly to charge reasonable fees and protect their investments.

60%

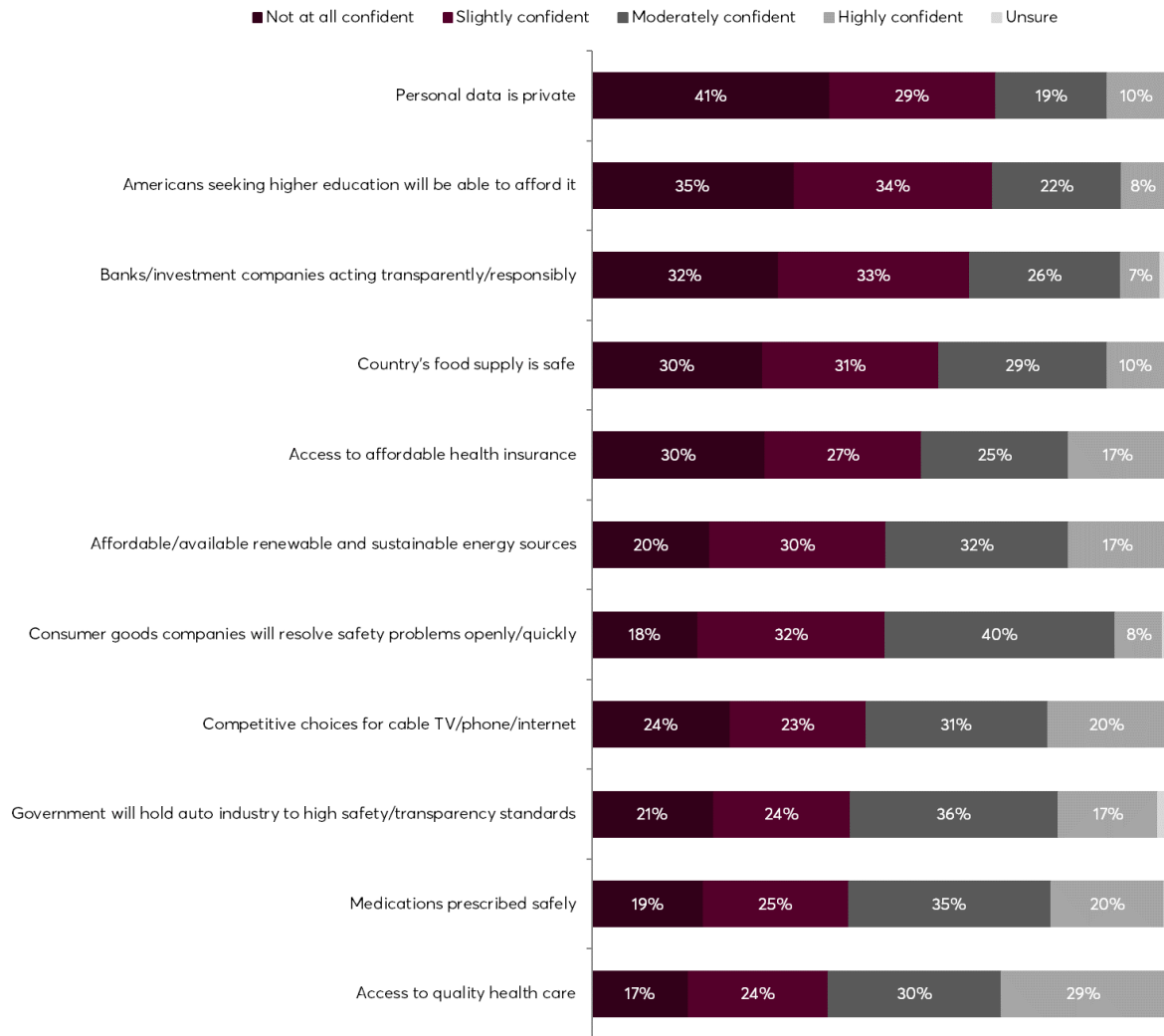
SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT OUR
COUNTRY'S FOOD SUPPLY IS SAFE

Six out of 10² Americans are either *slightly* (31%) or *not at all* (30%) *confident* that our country's food supply is safe, free of contamination, and produced without unnecessary antibiotics.

The percentage of consumers that are *slightly/not all confident* for all the key consumer issues can be found in the following graph.

² Due to rounding, 60% does not equal the sum of the two contributing factors.

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE LEVEL WITH KEY ISSUES



Base: All respondents

GENDER TRENDS

70%

OF WOMEN DO NOT TRUST THE GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS
A significantly greater percentage of women (70%) than men (61%) do not trust the government to protect the interests of consumers.

64%

OF WOMEN SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT OUR COUNTRY'S FOOD SUPPLY IS SAFE
A significantly greater percentage of women (64%) than men (56%) are *slightly/not at all confident* that our country's food supply is safe, free of contamination, and produced without unnecessary antibiotics.

45%

OF WOMEN SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY OF QUALITY HEALTH CARE
A significantly greater percentage of women (45%) than men (36%) are *slightly/not at all confident* that they will have access to quality healthcare.

GENERATIONAL TRENDS

83%

OF MILLENNIALS SAY THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE ROLE IN ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

A significantly greater percentage of Millennials (83%) versus Gen Xers (72%) say the government should have a role in making sure that everyone has access to affordable, quality healthcare.

54%

OF GEN XERS VERY PESSIMISTIC/PESSIMISTIC THAT GOVERNMENT WILL PROTECT THEIR CONSUMER RIGHTS

A significantly greater percentage of Gen Xers (54%) than Millennials (38%) or Baby Boomers (40%) are *very pessimistic/pessimistic* that the government will protect their rights as a consumer.

53%

OF GEN XERS SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT GOVERNMENT WILL HOLD AUTO INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE

A significantly greater percentage of Gen Xers (53%) than Millennials (41%) or Baby Boomers (44%) are *slightly/not at all confident* that the government will hold the auto industry accountable to high standards of safety and transparency.

INSIGHTS

CVII VERSUS CVI

70%

SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT PERSONAL DATA IS PRIVATE

This is 5 percentage points higher than in CVI, where 65% reported being *slightly/not at all confident* that their personal data is private and not distributed without their knowledge.

45%

SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT GOVERNMENT WILL HOLD AUTO INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE

This is 7 percentage points higher than in CVI, where 38% reported being *slightly/not at all confident* that the government will hold the auto industry accountable to high standards of safety and transparency.

42%

VERY PESSIMISTIC/PESSIMISTIC THAT GOVERNMENT WILL PROTECT THEIR CONSUMER RIGHTS

This is 6 percentage points higher than in CVI, where 36% reported being *very pessimistic/pessimistic* that the government will protect their consumer rights.

41%

SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY OF QUALITY HEALTH CARE

This is 6 percentage points higher than in CVI, where 35% reported being *slightly/not at all confident* that they will have access to quality health care.

POLITICAL INSIGHTS

95%

OF DEMOCRATS BELIEVE³ GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE ROLE IN ACCESSIBILITY OF HEALTHCARE
IN THIS NEW QUESTION, we found that only 56% of Republicans believe the government should have a role in making sure that everyone has access to affordable, quality healthcare. It's still notable that over half of Republicans hold this view.

59%

OF DEMOCRATS THINK TAX SYSTEM OVERHAUL WILL MAKE IT LESS FAIR
IN THIS NEW QUESTION, we found that only 16% of Republicans say overhauls to the tax system will make the system less fair; 47% of Republicans say it will make the tax system more fair.

56%

OF DEMOCRATS SLIGHTLY/NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT GOVERNMENT WILL HOLD AUTO INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE
Only 27% of Republicans are *slightly/not at all confident* that the government will hold the auto industry accountable to high standards of safety and transparency.

50%

OF DEMOCRATS ARE VERY PESSIMISTIC/PESSIMISTIC THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROTECT THEIR CONSUMER RIGHTS
Only 27% of Republicans are *very pessimistic/pessimistic* that the government will protect their rights as a consumer.

³ Please note that political insights compare the responses of voters identified as Republican or Democrat. This does NOT include voters who identify as Independent, Independent-lean Republican or Independent-lean Democratic.

93%

OF DEMOCRATS SAY INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS SHOULD GET THEIR PERMISSION BEFORE SELLING/SHARING THEIR DATA

This number is roughly consistent among all political affiliations. Moreover, across all political affiliations, over nine out of 10 Americans want internet companies and websites to provide them with a list of the data collected from them, if asked. Both of these questions were new to this iteration of the consumer voices survey.

SUMMARY

With recent changes in Washington, Consumer Reports surveyed Americans across the nation to assess consumer confidence in a range of issues. Regarding healthcare, in a new question we found that most consumers think the government should have a role in ensuring access to affordable, quality healthcare for all. In other new questions we found that consumers want to have more information about and control over the selling/sharing of their data by internet service providers; this is true across political affiliations. Accordingly, compared with CVI, there was an increase in the percentage of consumers who lack confidence that their personal data is private/not distributed without their knowledge.

Our results show that the majority of Americans do not trust the government to protect the interests of consumers. Accordingly, when asked about optimism/pessimism about the government protecting their consumer rights, compared to CVI, our findings showed an increase in the percentage of Americans that are not optimistic that the government will protect their rights as a consumer. Moreover, many consumers continue to lack a confident outlook for a number of key consumer issues, including the affordability of higher education, banks and investment companies acting transparently/responsibly, and food safety.

METHODOLOGY

This phone survey was fielded by ORC using a nationally representative sample. The survey fielded from April 6-9, 2017. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.