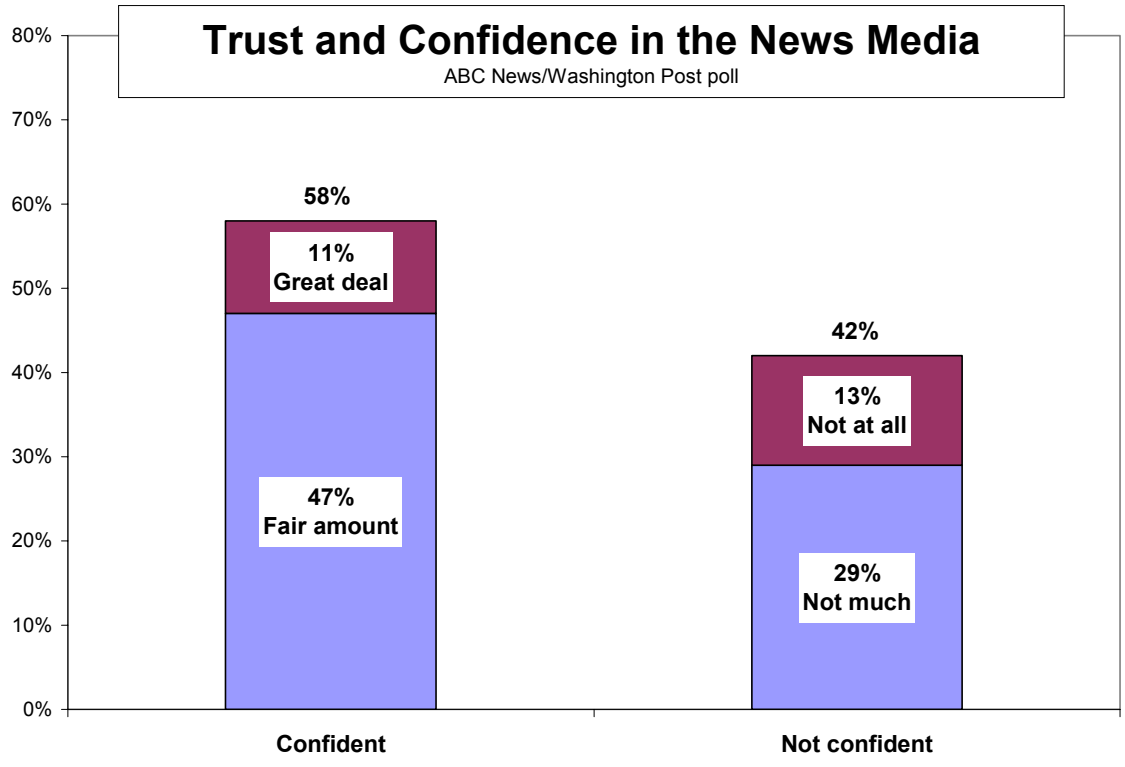
ABC NEWS/WASHINGTON POST POLL: MEDIA – 5/22/05
EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE AFTER 7 a.m. Monday, May 30, 2005

Most Express Trust in the News Media, Support the Use of Anonymous Sources

Despite the recent Newsweek controversy, six in 10 Americans generally trust the media to report the news accurately, and more approve than disapprove of the use of anonymous sources by journalists. <p>

Fifty-eight percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll trust the media to report the news fully, fairly and accurately. That's up from 44 percent in a similar question in a Gallup poll last September, in the midst of the CBS "60 Minutes" scandal, and just above where it was in the late 1990s through 2003.<p>

Still, confidence is not as high as it once was – close to seven in 10 in the post-Watergate 1970's. And just 11 percent express a "great deal" of trust in the news media. <p>

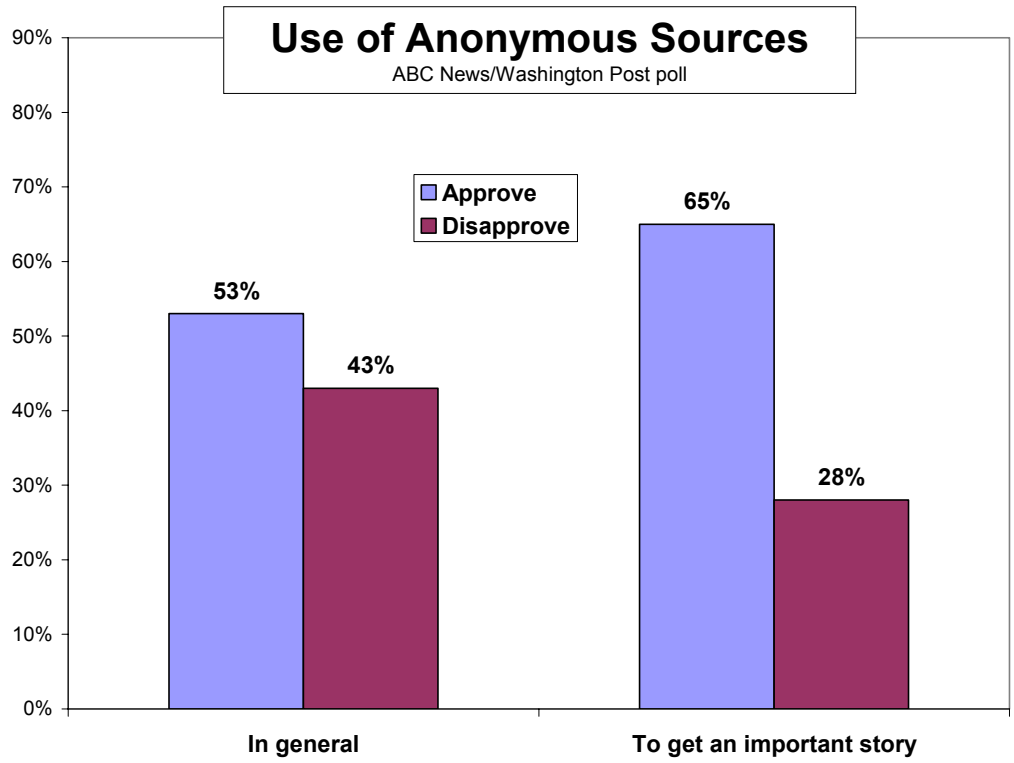


MEDIA vs. GOVERNMENT – There's more of a change in whom people trust more when government officials dispute the accuracy of a news report. Americans by a 20-point margin say they're more inclined to believe the media, 46-26 percent, but a sizable 22 percent say it depends on the situation. The media have slipped quite a bit on this

score; it's back near what it was in 1983 (during a controversy over media access to the invasion of Grenada), but well down from polls in 1997, when 66 percent trusted the media over the government, and 1994, when 56 percent did.

	When gov't denies a news report, who do you tend to believe?		
	Government	News media	Depends
Now	26%	46	22
1997	18	66	13
1994	18	56	21
1983	32	47	13

ANONYMOUS SOURCES – Fifty-three percent generally approve of journalists using unidentified sources in their reports, and that rises to about two-thirds if it's the only way a reporter can get an important story. Moreover, while one-third say anonymous sources are used too often, six in 10 say they're used about the right amount, or not often enough.



Newsweek last week said it would strictly limit its use of anonymous sources after it retracted a report that the Koran had been desecrated at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

GROUPS – Older Americans are far less trustworthy of the media. Fewer than half of senior citizens, 48 percent, have confidence in news reporting, compared with 67 percent of those under age 35. Senior citizens are by far the least likely to side with the media in

disputes with the government – just 29 percent do, compared with 58 percent of people under 35. And seniors are least likely to approve of using anonymous sources.

Republicans – whose party holds the presidency and Congress – are more likely to side with the government in clashes with media; independents, and especially Democrats, are more apt to believe the news media.

More generally, Democrats express more confidence in the media (64 percent), than either Republicans (55 percent) or independents (51 percent). And nearly six in 10 independents and seven in 10 Democrats support the use of unidentified sources, while most Republicans oppose it.

There's a gender gap regarding the use of anonymous sources. Women are 17 points more likely than men to approve, 61 to 44 percent. Support for the use of anonymous sources also is higher among better educated Americans.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone May 18-22, 2005, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html.

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-2 previously released.

3. On another subject, in general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the news media, such as newspapers, newsmagazines, TV and radio news - when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly -- a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

	--------Confident--------			----Not confident----			
	NET	Grt.deal	Fair amt.	NET	Not much	None	No opin.
5/22/05	58	11	47	42	29	13	1

Compare to Gallup: "In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media such as newspapers, T.V. and radio…"

	--------Confident--------			----Not confident----			
	NET	Grt.deal	Fair amt.	NET	Not much	None	No opin.
9/15/04	44	9	35	55	39	16	1
9/10/03	54	14	40	46	35	11	*
9/8/02	54	10	44	46	35	11	*
9/10/01	53	12	41	47	33	14	*
7/9/00	51	12	39	49	37	12	*
2/8/99	55	11	44	45	34	11	*
12/29/98	55	11	44	44	35	9	1
6/1/97	53	10	43	46	31	15	1

6/76	72	18	54	26	22	4	2
4/74	69	21	48	29	21	8	2
5/72	68	18	50	30	24	6	2

4. From time to time, high government officials deny reports in the national news media and say the reports are not accurate. In such cases, who do you tend to believe - the government, or the national news media?

	Government	Media	Depends (vol.)	No opinion
5/22/05	26	46	22	6
1/7/97	18	66	13	2
4/17/94	18	56	21	5
12/8/83	32	47	13	9

5. As you may know, journalists sometimes get information by agreeing not to identify their source by name in the story. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the use of anonymous sources in news stories?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
5/22/05	53	43	4

6. (IF DISAPPROVE, Q5) Would you approve or disapprove of the use of anonymous sources if it’s the only way a reporter can get an important story?

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
5/22/05	29	66	5

5/6 NET:

	Approve				
	NET	In general	To get story	Disapprove	No op.
5/22/05	65	53	12	28	6

7. Overall, do you think news reporters use anonymous sources too often, not often enough, or about the right amount?

	Too often	Not often enough	About right	No opin.
5/22/05	33	20	40	8

END