



Americans Three Times as Likely to Single Out Politics as Biggest Economic Threat

Less than 1 in 4 saving more due to economic risks

New York, NY – April 17, 2019 – Forty-four percent of Americans say the political environment in Washington is the biggest threat to the U.S. economy over the next six months, according to a new Bankrate.com report. This is more than three times the amount who cite terrorism or political/economic developments overseas, the next most popular choices (both 14%). Other perceived economic risks include a decline in the stock market (11%), interest rate decisions (8%) and something else (2%). Click here for more information:

<https://www.bankrate.com/personal-finance/financial-security-april-2019/>

The propensity to point to politics in Washington is greatest amongst Republicans (49% vs. 45% of Democrats and 42% of Independents), and increases with age, income and education level:

- 40% of Millennials (ages 23-38) cite politics as their chief economic concern, compared to 51% of those who are ages 55 and older.
- 52% of those who make at least \$50K per year single out Washington, compared to 40% who make less than that.
- 54% of those with a college degree name the political environment in Washington, versus 32% who have no more than a high school diploma.

While nearly all Americans (93%) can point to some factor as being a potential threat to the economy over the next six months, the majority are not taking appropriate measures to prepare for a downturn. Just one-quarter of those who identified a threat to the economy are spending less as a result, 25% say they are paying down more debt and only 23% are saving more.

“With the economic expansion set to become a decade-old this summer, more Americans should be focused on paying down debt and saving more both for retirement and for emergencies,” said Bankrate.com senior economic analyst Mark Hamrick. “Savings rates are the highest we’ve seen in some time (<https://www.bankrate.com/banking/savings/rates/>), and there are generous balance transfer offers on the market (<https://www.bankrate.com/credit-cards/balance-transfer/>) to help knock down high-interest credit card debt. Take advantage while things are going well, otherwise, when the inevitable downturn does occur, individuals risk having failed to improve their finances when the proverbial sun was still shining.”

While the political environment in Washington was the most commonly cited economic threat, worries about a stock market decline are most prevalent amongst Millennials, especially younger Millennials (ages 23-29), and those who make less than \$50K per year. Terrorism is more of a concern for those with lower income and education levels, while interest rates worry Millennials and Gen Xers (ages 39-54) more than their elders. Fears about international politics or economic developments are highest amongst younger Baby Boomers (ages 55-64).

This study was conducted for Bankrate via telephone by SSRS on its Omnibus survey platform. The SSRS Omnibus is a national, weekly, dual-frame bilingual telephone survey. Interviews were conducted from April 2-7, 2019 among a sample of 1,000 respondents in English (965) and Spanish (35). Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (396) and cell phone (604, including 380 without a landline phone). The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.64% at the 95% confidence level. All SSRS Omnibus data are weighted to represent the target population.

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