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National Survey Shows Positive Attitudes Toward Business, Wariness Toward Government Regulation

*Third annual Public Affairs Pulse survey reveals unfavorable views
of federal government and desire for business to help solve nation's problems*

WASHINGTON — A majority of Americans have favorable views toward business and believe that federal regulation of business usually does more harm than good. In addition, a majority find the federal government wasteful and inefficient, and are looking to the private sector to help solve the country's problems. These are some of the major findings of the [2013 Public Affairs Pulse survey](#).

This in-depth national survey of over 1,600 Americans — released today by the nonpartisan [Public Affairs Council](#) and conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International — examines the relationship between business and society, and what the public expects from the public and private sectors.

“Americans continue to favor private businesses over the federal government,” said Doug Pinkham, president of the Public Affairs Council. “And, unfortunately, people don't have much faith in government to solve our biggest problems. That may be why Americans are becoming less supportive of regulation — and why the public hasn't been more upset over the federal budget sequestration.”

Among the key findings from the 2013 Public Affairs Pulse survey:

- **Americans expect more from major companies and less from the government.** Seventy-three percent of respondents say major companies generally do a good job providing useful products and services, and 65 percent say companies are doing a good job serving their customers. A majority of Americans also think private businesses should take on more responsibility to help solve problems that have traditionally been the responsibility of the government, such as providing community services like food banks (70 percent), improving the quality of education (64 percent) and improving the quality and affordability of health care (62 percent).
- **Young people give both the federal government and businesses credit for doing a good job.** Fifty-one percent of Millennials give the federal government favorable scores, compared with only 44 percent of Gen X-ers and 35 percent of Baby Boomers. In addition, nearly four in five Millennials say big companies are doing a good job creating jobs and providing useful products and services.
- **Americans believe that government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.** A majority of Americans (52 percent) continue to believe that government regulation of business usually does more harm than good, with 44 percent believing that regulation is necessary to protect the public interest. This represents a slight uptick in support for less regulation, as the 2012 survey was almost evenly split (48 percent to 49 percent).

- **Americans don't want public financing of political campaigns.** Americans are overwhelmingly opposed to using public financing to fund political campaigns, with only 33 percent agreeing that tax dollars should be a source of funding. The public continues to support contributions from individual citizens, as well as the concept of allowing wealthy candidates to fund their own campaigns.
- **Most Americans are supportive of PACs.** Seven in ten Americans (73 percent) are supportive of the role of political action committees (PACs) in our nation's campaigns and electoral process, and 34 percent believe that PACs should be a major source of campaign funding. However, these same respondents are wary of Super PACs, with half of Americans saying they should not be a source of election funding.
- **Customer service feedback is changing as the online world expands.** Fifty percent of Millennials and 44 percent of Gen X-ers have posted positive comments about a company online, compared with only 29 percent of Baby Boomers. Reinforcing the conventional wisdom that online engagement is largely positive, only 39 percent of Millennials and 22 percent of Gen X-ers say they've posted negative comments about a company online.

The Public Affairs Pulse survey, conducted May 8-23, 2013, is based on telephone interviews in English and Spanish with 1,604 adults living in the continental United States. For full results, visit pac.org/pulse.

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