of Millennial voters feel satisfied with the Obama presidency, while nearly as many (27%) say they are disappointed. Fewer than 1-in-5 (16%) say they feel worried, while fewer than 1-in-10 say they feel excited (7%) or angry (9%).

Millennial voters’ opinions vary considerably according to political party affiliation. A majority (53%) of Democratic Millennial voters feel satisfied with Obama’s performance, while fewer than one-quarter say they feel disappointed (17%) or worried (9%). By contrast, only 9% of Republican Millennial voters say they feel satisfied, while roughly 6-in-10 feel disappointed (40%) or worried (23%). Independent voters’ opinions generally mirror Millennial voters’ overall views.

Almost 6-in-10 (57%) of Millennials who say they voted for Barack Obama in 2008 report that they are satisfied with his presidency. Fewer than 1-in-5 (18%) say they are disappointed or worried (7%), and 14% say they are excited. Among McCain voters, 6% say they are satisfied. Roughly 6-in-10 say they are disappointed by (37%) or worried about (24%) the Obama presidency.

Economic Inequality and the Role of Government

Economic Inequality and Opportunity

The American Dream

College-age Millennials (age 18 to 24) are divided on whether the American Dream – the idea that if you work hard you’ll get ahead – holds true today. A plurality (45%) believe that the American Dream once held true, but not anymore, while 4-in-10 (40%) say the American Dream still holds true today. One-in-ten (10%) Millennials say that the American Dream never held true.

Partisan differences on this question are modest, but Millennials vary more significantly by political ideology. Millennials who identify as conservative are more likely than moderate or liberal Millennials to say that the American Dream still holds true (53%, 38%, and 34%, respectively). Liberal and moderate Millennials, by contrast, are more likely than conservative Millennials to say that the American Dream once held true, but not anymore (50%, 49%, and 36%, respectively).

Millennials who attend religious services at least once a week are more optimistic about the status of the American Dream than Millennials who seldom or never attend religious services. Nearly half (49%) of Millennials who attend services at least weekly say that the American Dream still holds true, while fewer than one-third (32%) of Millennials who seldom or never attend religious services say the same.
Inequality, Equal Opportunity, and America’s Economic System

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of college-age Millennials agree that the economic system in the U.S. unfairly favors the wealthy. There are no significant differences on this question by race, gender, educational attainment or religious affiliation. There are, however, substantial variations by party affiliation. More than eight-in-ten (85%) Democratic Millennials say that the economic system unfairly favors the wealthy, compared to around 6-in-10 (59%) Republican Millennials. Independent Millennials fall in between, with approximately 7-in-10 (71%) agreeing that the economic system unfairly favors the wealthy.

More than 6-in-10 (63%) Millennials agree that one of the big problems in this country is that we don’t give everyone an equal chance in life. Approximately 3-in-10 (28%) disagree, saying that it is not really that big a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others.

Partisan differences on the issue of equal opportunity are striking. Republican Millennials are divided on whether it’s a big problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others: nearly half (48%) say that one of the big problems in this country is that we don’t give everyone an equal chance in life while 4-in-10 (40%) say it is not really that big a problem. On the other hand, nearly 8-in-10 (78%) Democratic Millennials agree that lack of equal opportunity is one of the biggest problems in this country, while only around 1-in-5 (19%) say that it’s not really that big a problem if some people have more of a chance than others.
There are substantial differences by race and religious affiliation. Fewer than 6-in-10 (58%) white Millennials agree that one of the big problems in this country is that we don’t give everyone an equal chance in life, compared to 73% of black Millennials and 72% of Hispanic Millennials. Approximately half of white evangelical Protestants (54%) and white mainline Protestants (48%) say that lack of equal opportunity is a big problem, compared to 77% of black Protestants and 73% of Latino Protestants. Similarly, among Catholic Millennials, 57% of white Catholics agree that lack of equal opportunity is a big problem, compared to 78% of Latino Catholics.

Despite these obvious concerns about economic inequality, Millennials are not anti-wealth. Nearly 9-in-10 (87%) of Millennials say they admire people who get rich by working hard; a majority (52%) of Millennials say they completely agree with this statement. There are no significant demographic, religious or educational differences on this question.

**Women in the Workplace**

Younger Millennials are, overall, conflicted about the extent to which women face challenges in the workplace. On the one hand, a solid majority (56%) of Millennials agree that women get fewer opportunities than men for good jobs, while 41% disagree. On the other hand, however, just as many (56%) believe that there are no longer any barriers to how far women can advance in the workplace, while 38% disagree.

Millennial men and women vary somewhat on these questions. Millennial men are nearly evenly divided on whether women get fewer opportunities for good jobs (49% agree, 48% disagree), while a roughly 6-in-10 (63%) of Millennial women agree that women get fewer opportunities. Millennial women are, however, more likely than Millennial men to agree that there are no longer any barriers to how far women can advance in the workplace (61% vs. 52% respectively).

There are large differences by party affiliation, but near consensus among religious groups. For example, fewer than half (47%) of Republican Millennials agree that women get fewer opportunities than men for good jobs, compared to nearly two-thirds (64%) of Democratic Millennials. In contrast, majorities of every religious group except white evangelical Protestant Millennials (45%) agree that women get fewer opportunities than men for good jobs.

**Role of Government in the Economy**

**The Government’s Role in Reducing the Wealth Gap**

Nearly 7-in-10 (69%) college-age Millennials (age 18-24) believe that the government should do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, while 28% disagree. There are, however, sizeable variations by party affiliation and race. Over 8-in-10 (84%) Democratic Millennials agree that the government should do more to
reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, compared to slightly over half of Republican Millennials (51%). Black (79%) and Hispanic (79%) Millennials are more likely than white Millennials (64%) to say that the government should do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, although majorities of all racial groups agree with this statement.

Majorities of all religious groups agree that the government should do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, including 53% of white evangelical Protestants.

The Increasing Size of Government

When asked to choose between two explanations for why government has grown larger over the years, a majority (56%) of college-age Millennials agree that government has gotten bigger because it has gotten involved in things that people should do for themselves. Around 4-in-10 (38%) disagree, saying that government has grown bigger over the years because the problems we face have become bigger.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of white Millennials agree that government has gotten bigger because it has gotten involved in things that people should do for themselves. A majority (55%) of black Millennials say that government has grown bigger because our problems have become bigger. One-third (34%) of black Millennials believe that government has gotten bigger because it has gotten involved in things that people should do for themselves. Hispanic Millennials are divided: almost half (49%) say that government has grown because our problems have grown, while 45% believe that government has grown because of its increasing involvement in things that people should do for themselves.

Three-quarters (75%) of Republican Millennials agree that government has become bigger over the years because it has gotten involved in things that people should do for themselves. Democratic Millennials are more divided. Half (50%) agree that government has become bigger over the years because the problems we face have become bigger, while 46% say that government has grown because of increasing involvement in things that people should do for themselves.

Dependence on Government Assistance Programs

Despite strong support for government action to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, two-thirds (67%) of college-age Millennials also believe that poor people have become too dependent on government assistance programs. White Millennials are more likely to agree with this statement than Hispanic or black Millennials (71%, 64%, and 50%, respectively). Similarly, there are sizeable differences between Republican and Democratic Millennials on whether poor people have become too dependent on government programs: more than 8-in-10 (83%) Republican Millennials agree, compared to a much smaller majority of Democratic Millennials (55%).
There are modest differences by religious affiliation. Strong majorities of white evangelical Protestant (86%), white mainline Protestant (76%), and Catholic (72%) Millennials all agree that poor people have become too dependent on government assistance programs. Solid, but less overwhelming majorities of black Protestants (58%) and religiously unaffiliated (60%) Millennials also agree.

**The Buffett Rule**

Younger Millennials are strongly in favor of a policy sometimes called the “Buffett Rule,” which would increase the tax rate on Americans earning more than $1 million a year. Over 7-in-10 (72%) Millennials favor this proposal. There are no substantial differences by race, gender, or education. Majorities of all religious groups favor increasing the tax rate on Americans earning more than $1 million a year.

Majorities of Republican, Independent and Democratic Millennials also support the “Buffett Rule.” There are, however, significant differences in intensity. Over 8-in-10 (84%) Democratic Millennials agree with this policy, compared to 7-in-10 (70%) Independent Millennials and 56% of Republican Millennials. A majority (55%) of Democratic Millennials strongly favor this policy.

**Feelings Towards Groups Related to the Economy**

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate their feelings toward certain groups on a 100-point scale, where ratings between 51 degrees and 100 degrees indicated that the respondent felt favorable and warm toward that group, while ratings between 1 degree and 49 degrees meant that the respondent did not feel favorably toward the group. Ratings of 50 degrees indicated that the respondent did not feel particularly warm or cold toward the group. Respondents’ feelings about four of these groups – Occupy Wall Street, the Tea Party, labor unions, and the federal government in Washington – shed more light on college-age Millennials’ perspectives on the economy.
**Occupy Wall Street**

On the 100-point scale described above, respondents give the Occupy Wall Street movement an average rating of 44, indicating that younger Millennials’ feelings toward the movement are only slightly unfavorable. There are stark divides by political ideology. Millennials who identify as liberal feel, on average, nearly twice as warmly toward the Occupy Wall Street movement, compared to Millennials who identify as conservative (60 vs. 32 respectively).

Black Millennials give Occupy Wall Street a higher average rating than white Millennials (55 and 41 respectively). Among religious groups, white evangelical Protestant Millennials (30) have, on average, a much cooler feeling about Occupy Wall Street than Catholic (46), religiously unaffiliated (52), or black Protestant (57) Millennials.

**The Tea Party**

Millennials’ attitudes toward the Tea Party movement are, on average, cooler than their feelings toward the Occupy Wall Street movement. When asked to rate the Tea Party, Millennials give the movement an average rating of 41. Republican Millennials feel more warmly toward the Tea Party than Democratic Millennials (54 vs. 33 respectively), while Independent Millennials (41) resemble Millennials overall. No religious group expresses significant warmth for the Tea Party movement. White evangelical Protestants feel more warmly towards the Tea party, on average (50), than any other religious group.

Notably, Millennials who have at least a bachelor’s degree gave the Tea Party a lower average rating than Millennials who do have a high school degree or less (32 vs. 44 respectively).

**Labor Unions**

Overall, Millennials have somewhat warmer feelings toward labor unions, with an average rating of 54. Democratic Millennials hold significantly more positive feelings toward labor unions than Republican Millennials (60 vs. 44 respectively). Black Protestant Millennials (60) feel more warmly toward labor unions than Catholic (54), white mainline Protestant (53), and white evangelical Protestant (48) Millennials.

**The Federal Government in Washington**

Millennials give the federal government in Washington an average rating of 41, although there is some variation according to race, party affiliation, and religious affiliation. White Millennials feel less warmly toward the federal government than black Millennials (34 vs. 57 respectively). Although Democratic and Republican Millennials both feel negatively toward the federal government in Washington, Democratic Millennials’ negative feelings are less cool than Republican Millennials’ feelings (48 vs.
35 respectively). Black Protestant Millennials, on average, elicit much warmer feelings toward the federal government than white evangelical Protestant or white mainline Protestant Millennials (59, 32, and 32, respectively).

Morality and Legality of Social Issues

Approaches to Morality

College-age Millennials are nearly evenly divided between those who take a more universal approach to morality and those who embrace a more contextual outlook. Half (50%) of Millennials say that what is right or wrong depends on the situation, compared to 45% who say that there are some things that are always wrong, regardless of the situation. There are stark differences in Millennials’ approaches to morality by education type, political affiliation and religious affiliation.

Among Millennials who attended or are currently attending a private college or university, nearly two-thirds (64%) agree that what is right or wrong depends on the situation. By contrast, fewer than half of Millennials who attend or attended community college (47%) or a religious college or university (49%) agree with this statement. A majority (53%) of Millennials who attended or are currently attending a public college or university believe that morality is dependent on the particular context or situation.

![Graph: Contextual vs. Universal Approaches to Morality by Religious Affiliation]

Source: Public Religion Research Institute, Millennial Values Survey, March 2012 (N=2,013)