



CBS NEWS POLL  
For release: December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
6:30pm EST

**HELPING THE BIG THREE U.S. AUTOMAKERS**

December 4-7, 2008

Americans are split over government providing financial assistance to U.S. automakers, but strongly insist on government oversight of the companies' management - whom most blame for the companies' problems - as a condition of any aid.

Yet Americans do agree on the big three's importance: most (55%) foresee a major impact on the economy if any of them go under.

The nation divides over the general idea of helping the big three if that would prevent them from going into bankruptcy.

**GOVERNMENT HELP TO BIG THREE CARMAKERS?**

Approve	45%
Disapprove	44

Americans would put conditions on any assistance, and even those who support assistance want strict conditions on it. Most believe that if taxpayers do help the automakers, the government should have a say in how the companies are managed - and should require them to make more alternative-fuel cars.

**IN EXCHANGE FOR ASSISTANCE, SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT...**

	Yes	No
Have a say in automakers' management?	69%	28
Require more alternative-fuel cars	66%	29

Views that the government should have a say are shared both by those who approve of financial help, and those who oppose it.

Americans blame the carmakers' management for the companies' problems - much more so than the prevailing economic conditions.

**U.S. AUTOMAKERS' CURRENT PROBLEMS**

**MAINLY CAUSED BY...**

Management decisions	56%
Conditions beyond companies' control	28

Despite divided views on assistance, 55% of Americans believe letting the big three go out of business would be a major hit to the U.S. economy.

**IF AUTOMAKERS WENT OUT OF BUSINESS,  
IMPACT ON U.S. ECONOMY WOULD BE...**

Major	55%
Minor	35
Not much/no impact	8

The big three's current problems could have a negative impact on their sales.

By a three to one margin, Americans say the automakers' troubles would make them less likely to buy a car from the companies, not more likely, if it played into their buying decision.

**WOULD AUTOMAKERS' PROBLEMS  
AFFECT YOUR DECISION TO BUY THEIR CARS?**

More likely to buy from them	11%
Less likely to buy from them	31
Make no difference	55

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This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1,098 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone December 4-7, 2008. Phone numbers were dialed from RDD samples of both standard land-lines and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

**CBS NEWS POLL**  
**Helping the Big Three Automakers**  
**December 4-7, 2008**

q40 Do you approve or disapprove of the federal government providing money to the big three U.S. automakers if it would help prevent them from going out of business or declaring bankruptcy?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **			
	*** Party ID ***			
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Approve	45	35	56	38
Disapprove	44	57	33	49
Depends (Vol.)	6	5	6	7
Don't know/No answer	5	3	5	6

q41 If the government does provide money to the big three automakers, should the government get a say in how these companies are managed, or should the government not be involved in the companies' management decisions?

Should get a say	69	63	72	69
Not be involved	28	34	26	26
Don't know/No answer	3	3	2	5

q42 If the government does provide money to the big three automakers, should it require these automakers to build more cars that use alternative fuels or should the government not be involved in deciding what kinds of cars these companies make?

Require new types of cars	66	51	75	66
Not be involved	29	44	22	28
Don't know/No answer	5	5	3	6

q43 If one or more of the big three automakers were to go out of business, how much of an impact do you think that would have on the nation's economy? Do you think it would have a major impact, a minor impact, not much impact, or no impact at all?

Major impact	55	46	62	53
Minor impact	35	41	29	37
Not much impact	6	8	5	7
No impact	2	2	2	1
Don't know/No answer	2	3	2	2

q44 If you were in the market to buy a new car right now, would the economic problems of General Motors, Ford, or Chrysler affect whether or not you buy a car from them?  
 IF YES, ASK: Would you be more likely or less likely to buy a car from them?

Yes, more likely	11	9	12	12
Yes, less likely	31	20	38	31
No, no difference	55	68	47	55
Don't know/No answer	3	3	3	2

q45 Are the problems facing the big three auto companies mostly the result of the companies' management strategies and decisions, or are they mostly the result of economic conditions outside the companies' control?

\*\* TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*

\*\*\* Party ID \*\*\*

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Management decisions	56	61	48	62
Outside companies' control	28	22	36	22
Both/Neither (Vol.)	11	13	9	11
DK/NA	5	4	7	5

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>
Total Respondents	1098	
Total Republicans	289	259
Total Democrats	445	465
Total Independents	364	373