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Despite a Drop in Frustration, Fewer Americans Have Traveled in the Last 3 Months Compared to Same Time Last Year

New York, New York – Frustration with traveling has dropped off sharply, according to a new Ipsos Public Affairs poll conducted on behalf of Access America. The results of the poll have revealed that many Americans' consternation with just about all aspects of travel have dropped significantly when compared to data collected earlier this year, as well as during the same period last year.

A familiar resident at the top of the list is the cost of gas, as 51% of Americans say that they find this aspect of travel 'frustrating'. However, the proportion of Americans who indicate that this is the case is down a staggering 35 points since August of this year, and 27 points from this time last year.

It appears that frustration with costs have been significantly diffused in the last 4 months as the price of oil is now a fraction of what it was during the summer. In fact, just two in ten Americans say that cost issues (22%), specifically gas prices (18%), are the *most* frustrating aspects of traveling. Compared to last December, the proportion of Americans who say they're *most* frustrated with the price of gas is down 6 points, and down 13 points from August of this year.

Despite a drop in annoyance among the leading contender caused by lower gas prices, fewer Americans report having traveled within the last three months, compared to a year ago. One in ten (10%) say they've traveled within the last week (down 4 points) of taking the survey, 8% have traveled two to three weeks ago (down 3 points), 8% one month ago (down 2 points), and 11% two to three months ago (down 2 points).

Other aspects of travel that Americans are less frustrated with, compared to a year ago, include airline/airport service (44%, down 10 points), the cost of airline/cruise/train tickets (46%, down 3 points), the cost of lodging or attractions (41%, down 6 points), and homeland security and safety (35%, down 6 points).

By creating an 'index of frustration' among those who have traveled in the last three months, Ipsos and Access America have identified the aggregate level of frustration that exists among American travelers. The results have been tallied, and Americans are much less frustrated, overall, than they were a few months ago when it comes to traveling. The index currently has a count of 42.6, which is drastically lower than the count in August of this year (55.1) or even at the end of last year (53.3)

The index also allows for comparisons among various demographic groups:

- Those living in the Northeast (44.6), South (43.6) and Midwest (42.5) are more frustrated with traveling, overall, when compared to those living in the West (39).



- Those with children (45.5) are considerably more frustrated with traveling than are those without children (40.6).
- Interestingly, those who are not married (46.0) are more frustrated by travel than are married individuals (41.3).
- The gap in frustration between business (41.2) and leisure (42.6) travelers has been closed.

Comparing the different modes of traveling, it appears that the calculated level of frustration is still higher when it comes to car travel (score of 44.3) than with air travel (score of 38.4). Car travel appears to be particularly frustrating for those with children (48.8) than for those without (41.3).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted December 4-21, 2008. For the survey, a nationally representative sample of 827 Americans who had traveled in the past three months were interviewed by telephone via Ipsos' U.S. Telephone Express omnibus. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate within ± 3.41 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire population of adults in the U.S. been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/gender composition reflects that of the actual U.S. population according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

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