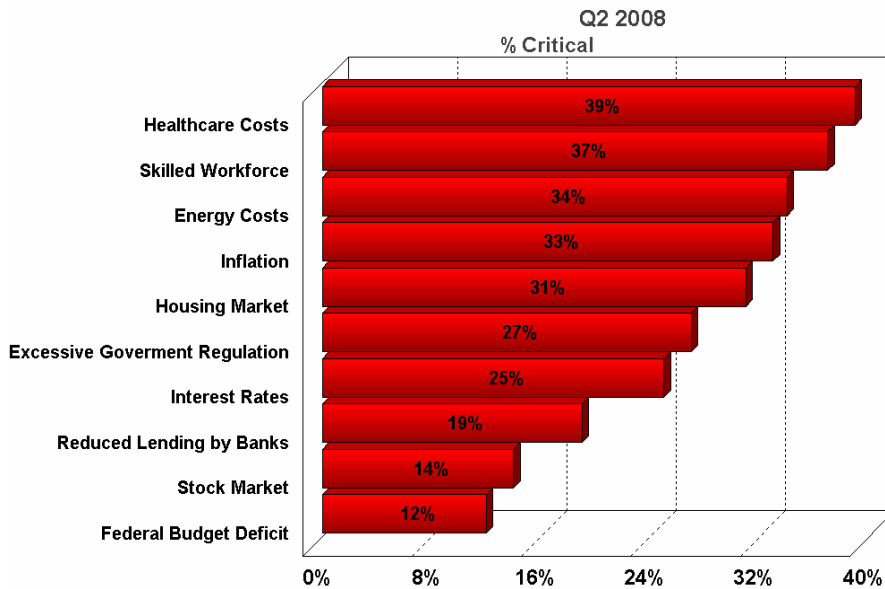


## Healthcare Costs and Skilled Workforce Rated as Most Critical Issues for Arizona Businesses



Arizona small businesses were asked to rate the importance they attached to each of ten separate issues for their business. Each was rated as being either “critical,” “important,” “somewhat important,” or “not very important.” When we examined those most likely to be rated as critical, healthcare costs (39%) and skilled workforce (37%) are the dominant responses. Second tier responses are energy costs (34%), inflation (33%), and the housing market (31%).

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*These results are taken from the Q2 **Silver State Bank/ASBA/O'Neil Associates Arizona Economic Indicators Monitor**. This project provides insights to support business leaders in companies of all sizes to make key economic decisions, as well as sharing small business attitudes on major political issues. **O'Neil Associates**, a national public opinion research firm based in Tempe, sent surveys to ASBA's membership of 3,000 small businesses across the state in late June as it did at the end of Q1 2008. The survey covered a wide range of economic issues, including business performance, revenue and job growth, and overall business confidence ratings. Results provide insights into the perceptions of business owners on the economic health and vitality of the Arizona economy. The survey has a margin of error (at the 95% confidence level) of approximately +/-6%. Silver State Bank President Mike Thorell said: "This release continues our efforts to inform the business community about significant economic trends affecting Arizona".*

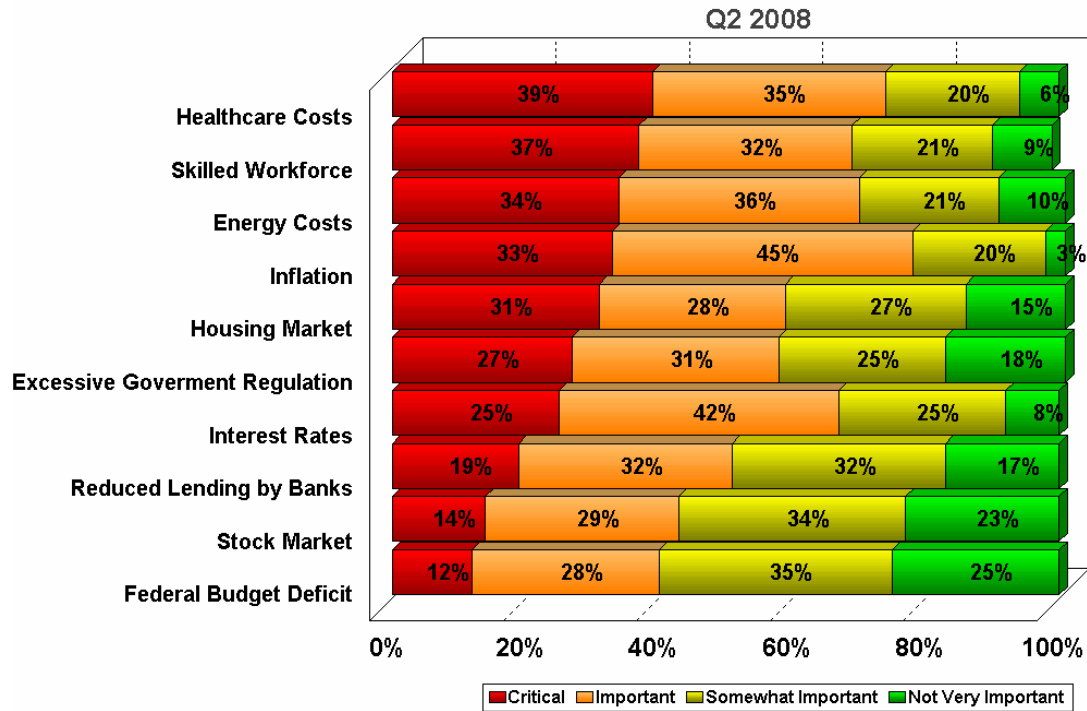
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**Results of this survey may be cited freely with the proviso that they be cited as the "Silver State Bank/ASBA/O'Neil Associates Arizona Economic Indicators Monitor"**

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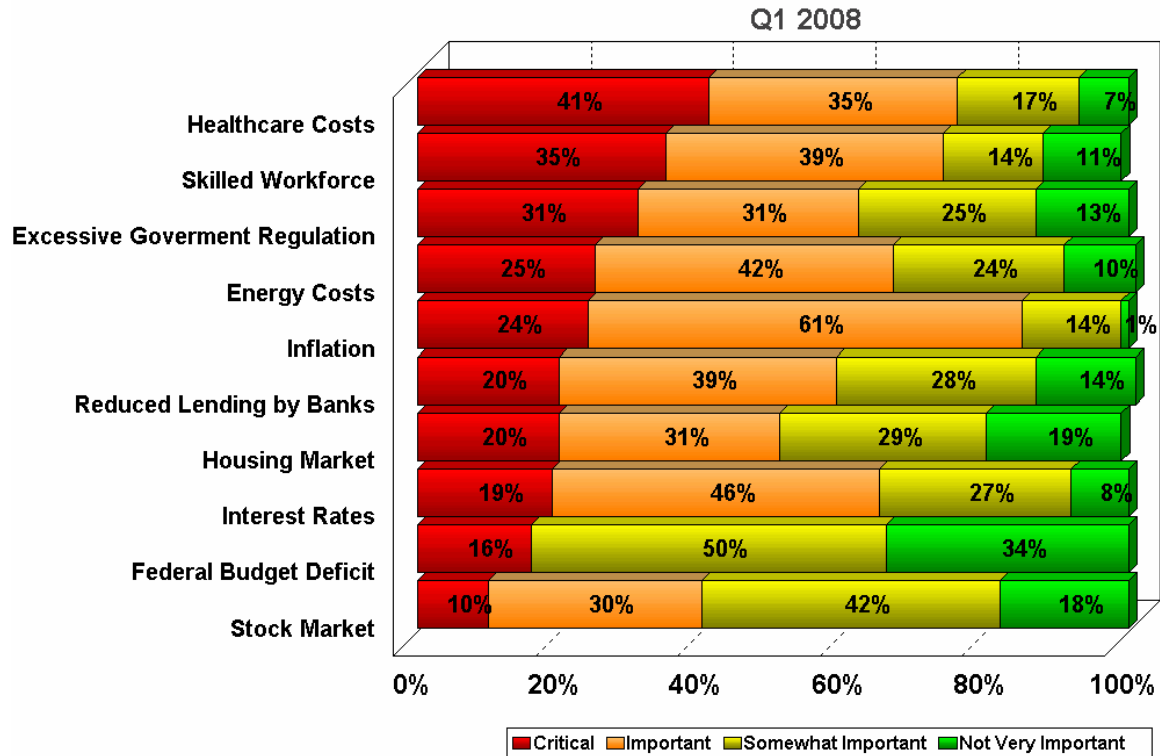
Dr. Michael O’Neil, the poll’s director, observed: *“When we add in those responses which considered items important, the rank ordering of responses tends to be similar; although, the relative importance given to inflation and interest rates goes up dramatically”* That indicates that while neither inflation or interest rates are yet critical issues, each is of considerable importance”.

The responses to all questions are presented graphically below:



## Changes Since Q1 2008

We had asked this same question last quarter. As O’Neil, explained, *“The primary changes which we observed from last quarter were increases in the percentages who rated each of the following critical: housing market (up 11%), inflation (up 9%) and energy costs (up 9%). Interest rates, up 6%, were also significantly higher than last quarter.”*



The **Silver State Bank/ASBA/O'Neil Associates Arizona Economic Indicators Monitor** is made possible by a cooperative effort of

- **[Silver State Bank](#)** is Nevada's largest small business lender and has recently expanded its operations in Arizona.
- **[ASBA](#)**, the Arizona Small Business Association, is the leading voice for small businesses in the State of Arizona.
- **[O'Neil Associates](#)**, a national public opinion research firm based in Tempe, has done over 1700 public opinion and marketing research projects since 1981. These include surveys and focus group projects for a wide array of businesses throughout the country.

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For Further Information or to schedule media interviews contact *via email*:

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