



PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

Three in four Americans feel that people should worry about the national debt

Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget/Ipsos poll reveals that Americans mostly want federal budget allocated evenly across generations

Washington, DC, May 13, 2021

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between April 23-26, 2021, on behalf of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. For this study, a sample of 1,110 youths and adults age 13+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points for all respondents.

NOTE: * = less than 0.5%, - = no respondents



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Full Annotated Questionnaire

1. Do you agree or disagree with the following?

Total Agree Summary

	Total (N=1,110)
The government wastes a lot of money.	80%
The federal government should spend money to rebuild our roads and bridges.	79%
Too much federal debt can hurt the economy.	75%
We should worry about the national debt.	75%
Investing in the future should be a government priority.	71%
The national debt is an unfair legacy being left to younger generations.	66%
Corporations should pay more in taxes.	65%
Wealthier people should have to rely on their own savings more than government benefits for retirement.	62%
The government shouldn't subsidize children from wealthier families to go to college.	61%
Health care should be free and universally available.	60%
The government takes too much in taxes out of people's paychecks.	59%
The government should spend more money on research and development.	56%
Wealthy people should pay taxes on money they inherit.	53%
It is the government's responsibility to try to eliminate poverty with spending programs.	52%
The government should tax carbon emissions.	50%
Congress should be required to raise taxes and/or cut spending to pay for the cost of new programs.	45%
The government should help families cover the costs of raising children.	36%
The government safety net is too large.	35%
Congress should cut taxes even if it increases the national debt.	30%
People should pay more taxes on the money they earn from investing.	29%
We should reduce the size of the military.	27%
The government should spend more money on children than on seniors.	23%
The rich already pay too much in taxes.	18%
Since the government can always print more money, there's no need to worry about the federal debt.	15%



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a. Too much federal debt can hurt the economy.

	Total
Strongly Agree	30%
Agree	44%
Neutral	19%
Disagree	4%
Strongly Disagree	2%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>75%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>6%</i>

b. The government takes too much in taxes out of people's paychecks.

	Total
Strongly Agree	23%
Agree	36%
Neutral	26%
Disagree	12%
Strongly Disagree	3%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>59%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>15%</i>

c. Investing in the future should be a government priority.

	Total
Strongly Agree	26%
Agree	45%
Neutral	21%
Disagree	6%
Strongly Disagree	2%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>71%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>8%</i>

d. Corporations should pay more in taxes.

	Total
Strongly Agree	31%
Agree	34%
Neutral	22%
Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	5%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>65%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>13%</i>

e. We should reduce the size of the military.

	Total
Strongly Agree	10%
Agree	17%
Neutral	27%
Disagree	26%
Strongly Disagree	20%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>27%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>46%</i>



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f. Wealthy people should pay taxes on money they inherit.

	Total
Strongly Agree	22%
Agree	31%
Neutral	24%
Disagree	13%
Strongly Disagree	9%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>53%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>23%</i>

g. Since the government can always print more money, there's no need to worry about the federal debt.

	Total
Strongly Agree	6%
Agree	9%
Neutral	13%
Disagree	30%
Strongly Disagree	42%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>73%</i>

h. It is the government's responsibility to try to eliminate poverty with spending programs.

	Total
Strongly Agree	14%
Agree	38%
Neutral	25%
Disagree	13%
Strongly Disagree	9%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>52%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>22%</i>

i. The federal government should spend money to rebuild our roads and bridges.

	Total
Strongly Agree	29%
Agree	50%
Neutral	16%
Disagree	4%
Strongly Disagree	1%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>79%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>5%</i>



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j. The government should spend more money on children than on seniors.

	Total
Strongly Agree	8%
Agree	15%
Neutral	42%
Disagree	25%
Strongly Disagree	10%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>23%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>35%</i>

k. The rich already pay too much in taxes.

	Total
Strongly Agree	6%
Agree	12%
Neutral	24%
Disagree	26%
Strongly Disagree	32%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>18%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>58%</i>

l. The government should help families cover the costs of raising children.

	Total
Strongly Agree	12%
Agree	24%
Neutral	26%
Disagree	22%
Strongly Disagree	15%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>36%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>37%</i>

m. The government safety net is too large.

	Total
Strongly Agree	12%
Agree	23%
Neutral	44%
Disagree	15%
Strongly Disagree	6%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>21%</i>

n. The government shouldn't subsidize children from wealthier families to go to college.

	Total
Strongly Agree	25%
Agree	35%
Neutral	29%
Disagree	7%
Strongly Disagree	3%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>61%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>10%</i>



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o. Health care should be free and universally available.

	Total
Strongly Agree	30%
Agree	30%
Neutral	18%
Disagree	11%
Strongly Disagree	12%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>60%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>22%</i>

p. The government wastes a lot of money.

	Total
Strongly Agree	43%
Agree	37%
Neutral	15%
Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	1%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>80%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>6%</i>

q. We should worry about the national debt.

	Total
Strongly Agree	30%
Agree	45%
Neutral	18%
Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	2%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>75%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>7%</i>

r. Wealthier people should have to rely on their own savings more than government benefits for retirement.

	Total
Strongly Agree	25%
Agree	38%
Neutral	24%
Disagree	10%
Strongly Disagree	4%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>62%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>14%</i>



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- s. People should pay more taxes on the money they earn from investing.

	Total
Strongly Agree	10%
Agree	19%
Neutral	32%
Disagree	25%
Strongly Disagree	14%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>29%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>39%</i>

- t. The government should spend more money on research and development.

	Total
Strongly Agree	17%
Agree	39%
Neutral	33%
Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	3%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>56%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>11%</i>

- u. Congress should be required to raise taxes and/or cut spending to pay for the cost of new programs.

	Total
Strongly Agree	11%
Agree	34%
Neutral	38%
Disagree	13%
Strongly Disagree	5%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>45%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>18%</i>

- v. The government should tax carbon emissions.

	Total
Strongly Agree	17%
Agree	33%
Neutral	32%
Disagree	8%
Strongly Disagree	10%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>18%</i>



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w. Congress should cut taxes even if it increases the national debt.

	Total
Strongly Agree	8%
Agree	22%
Neutral	38%
Disagree	24%
Strongly Disagree	9%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>33%</i>

x. The national debt is an unfair legacy being left to younger generations.

	Total
Strongly Agree	24%
Agree	42%
Neutral	25%
Disagree	7%
Strongly Disagree	2%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>66%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>9%</i>

2. How do you think the federal budget is currently allocated between generations? Please provide a percentage for each group so that together they add up to 100%.

Mean Summary

	Total
Children (0-18)	31%
Adults (19-64)	36%
Seniors (65+)	34%



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a. Children (0-18)

	Total
0-5%	5%
6-10%	6%
11-15%	7%
16-20%	10%
21-25%	12%
26-30%	14%
31-35%	14%
36-40%	12%
41-45%	8%
46-50%	6%
51-55%	2%
56-60%	2%
61-65%	1%
66-70%	1%
71-75%	1%
76-80%	*
81-85%	*
86-90%	*
91-95%	-
96-100%	1%
<i>Mean</i>	31%



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b. Adults (19-64)

	Total
0-5%	2%
6-10%	4%
11-15%	6%
16-20%	9%
21-25%	10%
26-30%	12%
31-35%	12%
36-40%	11%
41-45%	9%
46-50%	8%
51-55%	5%
56-60%	5%
61-65%	2%
66-70%	1%
71-75%	1%
76-80%	1%
81-85%	*
86-90%	*
91-95%	*
96-100%	1%
Mean	36%

c. Seniors (65+)

	Total
0-5%	6%
6-10%	4%
11-15%	5%
16-20%	9%
21-25%	10%
26-30%	11%
31-35%	11%
36-40%	13%
41-45%	7%
46-50%	8%
51-55%	4%
56-60%	6%
61-65%	2%
66-70%	2%
71-75%	1%
76-80%	1%
81-85%	*
86-90%	*
91-95%	*
96-100%	*
Mean	34%



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3. How do you think the federal budget is should be allocated between generations? Please provide a percentage for each group so that together they add up to 100%.

Mean Summary

	Total
Children (0-18)	33%
Adults (19-64)	33%
Seniors (65+)	34%

a. Children (0-18)

	Total
0-5%	5%
6-10%	4%
11-15%	3%
16-20%	7%
21-25%	11%
26-30%	11%
31-35%	21%
36-40%	15%
41-45%	7%
46-50%	8%
51-55%	3%
56-60%	1%
61-65%	1%
66-70%	0%
71-75%	1%
76-80%	1%
81-85%	*
86-90%	-
91-95%	*
96-100%	*
<i>Mean</i>	<i>33%</i>



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b. Adults (19-64)

	Total
0-5%	3%
6-10%	3%
11-15%	5%
16-20%	9%
21-25%	11%
26-30%	15%
31-35%	21%
36-40%	11%
41-45%	6%
46-50%	8%
51-55%	3%
56-60%	2%
61-65%	1%
66-70%	1%
71-75%	1%
76-80%	1%
81-85%	*
86-90%	*
91-95%	*
96-100%	1%
Mean	33%

c. Seniors (65+)

	Total
0-5%	5%
6-10%	2%
11-15%	3%
16-20%	7%
21-25%	9%
26-30%	15%
31-35%	19%
36-40%	14%
41-45%	7%
46-50%	8%
51-55%	3%
56-60%	3%
61-65%	1%
66-70%	1%
71-75%	1%
76-80%	1%
81-85%	*
86-90%	*
91-95%	*
96-100%	*
Mean	34%



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4. Are you currently registered to vote at your current address, or not?

	Total
Yes, registered to vote at my current address	84%
No, not registered to vote at my current address	16%

5. Did you happen to vote in any of these other elections? (Select all that apply)

	Total
2014 midterm congressional election (local congressperson)	45%
2016 presidential election (Clinton vs. Trump)	67%
2018 midterm congressional election (local congressperson)	53%
2020 presidential election (Biden vs. Trump)	79%
None of these	16%

6. How likely are you to vote in the 2022 midterm congressional election?

	Total
Very likely	65%
Somewhat likely	15%
Not too likely	6%
Not at all likely	7%
Don't know	7%
<i>Likely (Net)</i>	<i>80%</i>
<i>Not likely (Net)</i>	<i>13%</i>

7. In general, do you think of yourself as...

	Total
Extremely liberal	7%
Liberal	16%
Slightly liberal	12%
Moderate, middle of the road	35%
Slightly conservative	9%
Conservative	14%
Extremely conservative	8%
<i>Liberal (Net)</i>	<i>34%</i>
<i>Conservative (Net)</i>	<i>31%</i>



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About the Study

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted April 23-26, 2021, on behalf of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. For this study, a total of 1,110 youths and adults age 13+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from [Ipsos' online panel](#), partner online panel sources, and "[river](#)" sampling and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2018 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Posthoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the online sample for this poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points for all online respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=1,110, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-4.9 percentage points).

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Chris Jackson
Senior Vice President, US
Public Affairs
+1 202 420-2025
chris.jackson@ipsos.com

Kate Silverstein
Media Relations Specialist, US
Public Affairs
+1 718 755-8829
kate.silverstein@ipsos.com



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