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THE IPSOS-REID/COOK POLITICAL REPORT POLL

Is Politics Returning to Politics? Part II – The Budget War

Americans Agree that Biggest Causes of Budget Deficits are Recession and War/Terrorism Spending, but Then Split on Whether to Blame Tax Cuts or Domestic Spending for the Rest of the Deficit Problem

For Immediate Release

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Between February 1 and February 3, 2002, Ipsos-Reid U.S. Public Affairs interviewed a representative sample of 803 U.S. registered voters nationwide by telephone. The margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

Washington, DC (February 5, 2002) – Americans split evenly on whether to blame tax cuts or domestic spending (to improve education and extend unemployment benefits) as the bigger cause of the federal budget deficit. Most Americans (79%) recognize that the federal government will have a budget deficit this year. Most (61%) say that spending to win the war on terrorism is one of the causes of the federal budget deficit, and nearly half (45%) say that a decline in revenue caused by the recession is a big cause. After the war and terrorism, however, the old tax cuts vs. domestic spending divisions remain just below the surface as the focus of blame for deficit spending.

Groups most likely to say that accelerating tax cuts planned for next year in order to jump start the economy is one of the most important causes of the federal budget deficit include:

- Those who say they definitely will vote for someone other than President Bush (40%)
- Democrats (30%)
- 18-34 year olds (26%)
- Non-Whites (26%)
- Those who live in the Northeast (26%)

Groups most likely to say that extending unemployment benefits and spending to improve education are one of the most important causes of the federal budget deficit include:

- Those with a high school education or less (25%)
- Those who say they would definitely vote to re-elect President Bush (22%)
- Republicans (21%)
- Those with children (21%)



The nearly unanimous willingness of Americans to agree to deficit spending in the current circumstances does not mean there will be no blame game on deficit spending. In fact, the less-well-educated, parents and Republicans, to name three important and disparate groups, blame domestic spending more than the tax cuts for deficits. On the other hand, young people, non-whites, northerners and Democrats blame the tax cuts. And the division between those who blame domestic spending (20%) and those who blame tax cuts (21%) reflects the same pattern of closely divided politics that defined the 2000 Election.

NOTE: all results shown are percentages unless otherwise labeled. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

18. Last year the federal government had a budget surplus, meaning the federal government took in more money than it spent. What about this year? Will there be a larger surplus, a surplus like we had last year, or a deficit, meaning the federal government will spend more than it receives?

	REGISTERED VOTERS
	2/1-3/02
Larger surplus.....	4
Surplus like we had last year	12
Deficit.....	79
Not sure	5

19a. As you may know, President Bush’s federal budget plan indicates there will be a deficit this year, meaning the federal government will spend more money than it receives. Which of the following SIX reasons do you think is the number one cause of the federal budget deficit?

(Q. 19b ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO CHOOSE A NUMBER ONE CAUSE IN Q.19a.)

19b. From the remaining items, what do you think is the next biggest cause of the federal budget deficit?

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF NUMBER ONE CAUSE

	REGISTERED VOTERS	
	2/1-3/02	
	#1 Cause (Q.2a)	Combined 1 st and 2 nd Cause
Spending to win the war on terrorism	37	61
A decline in revenue caused by the recession.....	21	36
Spending to improve our military and defense to make our country safer and stronger	17	45
Accelerating the tax cuts planned for next year in order to jump start the economy	11	21
Spending to improve the education of students from kindergarten through college	3	7
Extending unemployment benefits and providing other assistance to displaced workers	3	13
All of them (VOL)	3	N/A
None of them (VOL).....	2	N/A
Not sure	3	N/A



Blame Game on Deficits

Blaming Tax Cuts vs. Domestic Spending (to Improve Education & Extending Unemployment Benefits) as Cause of Deficits

	Party ID				Elect President Bush		
	All Adults	Rep- ubli- can	Demo- crat	Indep- end- ent	Definitely vote to re-elect	Consider someone else	Definitely vote for someone else
Accelerating tax cuts	21	14	30	22	14	24	40
Spending to improve education/ extending unemployment benefits....	20	21	18	19	22	20	15

To view the latest poll results and research from Ipsos Public Affairs please go to:
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The survey was conducted by Ipsos-Reid U.S. Public Affairs, the Washington, D.C.-based division of Ipsos-Reid, which is part of the world’s fourth largest polling and market research organization, the Ipsos group, based in Paris. Ipsos-Reid U.S. Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective public affairs research organization made up of Democratic and Republican campaign and political polling veterans. It was established in Washington in August 2001, and it is led by Thomas Riehle, who has more than 15 years of experience as a political pollster in Washington.

The political survey is designed in conjunction with Charlie Cook of the Cook Political Report. Founded in 1984, The Cook Political Report is an independent, non-partisan newsletter that analyzes elections for the U.S. House, Senate, governor and President as well as domestic American political trends. The *New York Times* has called the publication, “a newsletter that both parties consider authoritative” while the dean of the Washington political press corps, the *Washington Post*’s David Broder has called Charlie

Cook, its editor and publisher, “perhaps the best political handicapper in the nation.” Cook also writes two weekly columns that appear in *National Journal* magazine and *CongressDaily/AM* and on nationaljournal.com, and serves as a political analyst for Cable News Network’s show “Inside Politics.” Researched and written by a staff of five based in Washington, D.C., the Cook Political Report’s subscribers are primarily the lobbyists and managers for the political action committees of the nation’s major corporations, trade associations and labor unions as well as by news organizations, foreign governments and others with an interest in detailed, impartial information and analysis of Congressional, gubernatorial and presidential elections.