

## Survey Results - Beltway Influencers

The survey was fielded by Harris Interactive® from February 10 and March 9, 2010. Participants included a total of 303 Beltway influencers, comprised of 150 D.C. opinion elites and 153 D.C. leaders including 50 government (congressional staffers and executive branch), 46 media employees and 57 thought leaders from NGOs, interest groups, foundations and associations. The D.C. opinion elite surveys were conducted online and figures were weighted on age, sex, education, race, household income and education where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the D.C. opinion elite population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for the D.C. opinion elite respondents' propensity to be online. Leadership interviews were conducted via telephone and were not weighted.

		Leaders n = 153	Elites n = 150
<b>Would you say that things in this country are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?</b>	Right Direction	50%	38%
	Wrong Track	43%	62%
	Don't know/Refused	4%	
<b>Thinking about Congress during the past three months, how would you characterize relations between members of the two parties? Is this more a time of partisan conflict, or more a time of bi-partisan cooperation?</b>	Cooperation	1%	2%
	Conflict	99%	98%
<b>How would you characterize relations between Congress and the President during the past three months? Is this more a time of conflict, or more a time of cooperation between the Administration and Congress?</b>	Cooperation	24%	22%
	Conflict	71%	78%
	Don't know/Refused	3%	
<b>What do you consider to be the one most important problem facing the country today? [Open-ended question]</b>	The economy	35%	37%
	Employment/jobs	19%	11%
	Budget deficit / National debt / Government spending	13%	9%
	Health care	7%	11%
	Partisan conflict	7%	6%
	Other	19%	26%
<b>What one particular national issue do you care about the most? [Open-ended question]</b>	Health care (non-Medicare)	22%	25%
	National security / terrorism / the war in Iraq	16%	11%
	The economy (non-specific)	14%	19%
	Employment / jobs	12%	11%
	Budget deficit / National debt / gov't spending	8%	10%
	Education	3%	11%
	Other	28%	14%
<b>When considering proposals made by the federal government to address the issues that you care about, how important in your decision to support a proposal is the overall cost and how it affects the federal budget?</b>	Very important	43%	57%
	Somewhat important	44%	31%
	Not too important	10%	11%
	Not important at all	3%	2%
<b>Thinking specifically about improving the United States economy, which of the following do you think will help the most in getting the economy back on track? [Randomized response order]</b>	Investing in job creation and retraining	52%	37%
	Doing more to reduce the national debt	16%	12%
	Greater banking and financial oversight	9%	16%
	Cutting taxes for the middle class	10%	13%
	Spending on another economic stimulus plan	7%	4%
<b>Thinking specifically about improving the United States economy, which of the following do you think will help the most in getting the economy back on track? (cont.)</b>	Cutting taxes for all, including business	1%	5%
	Something else	5%	14%
<b>These days how often would you say you personally advocate policies based around reducing the national debt by talking to elected officials and media organizations or by discussing the issue online?</b>	Often	12%	21%
	Sometimes	15%	25%
	Rarely	30%	30%
	Never	41%	23%
	Don't know/Refused	1%	

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<b>How worried are you about each of the following?</b> <i>[Question Items were rotated]</i>	China and other countries that hold much of the national debt will start to lose confidence in the United States economy and stop buying American bonds.		
	Very worried	21%	36%
	Somewhat worried	42%	39%
	Not too worried	27%	21%
	Not at all worried	10%	5%
	Don't know/Refused	1%	
	These days, policy makers are focusing too much on controlling the national debt.		
	Very worried	12%	15%
	Somewhat worried	33%	25%
	Not too worried	20%	30%
	Not at all worried	31%	29%
	Don't know/Refused	2%	1%
	The American people in general do not care enough about the growing national debt.		
	Very worried	21%	49%
	Somewhat worried	35%	31%
Not too worried	30%	16%	
Not at all worried	12%	4%	
Don't know/Refused	2%		
<b>Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.</b> <i>[Question items were rotated]</i>	Pragmatic solutions to the national debt will be impossible to achieve due to partisan politics.		
	Strongly agree	36%	43%
	Somewhat agree	42%	42%
	Somewhat disagree	14%	9%
	Strongly disagree	8%	3%
	Don't know/Refused		2%
<b>Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.</b> <i>[cont.]</i>	There are at least several practical policy approaches to meet the country's needs without causing the national debt to significantly rise.		
	Strongly agree	29%	41%
	Somewhat agree	48%	42%
	Somewhat disagree	14%	9%
	Strongly disagree	4%	4%
	Don't know/Refused	3%	3%
	If we do not act to get the national debt under control, it will overwhelm the federal budget and damage the economy in the long run.		
	Strongly agree	53%	55%
	Somewhat agree	32%	31%
	Somewhat disagree	11%	11%
	Strongly disagree	4%	3%
	Don't know/Refused		0%
	There is no realistic way to address the rising national debt by solely cutting spending or by solely raising taxes - both cutting spending and raising taxes are required to reduce the debt.		
	Strongly agree	54%	44%
	Somewhat agree	27%	32%
Somewhat disagree	10%	8%	
Strongly disagree	8%	14%	
Don't know/Refused	1%	2%	

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Please indicate which of the following two opinions comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right. [Randomized response order]	These days elected officials are often factoring in the national debt in their decisions because they think it is an important issue.	22%	13%
	Elected officials generally do not make decisions with the goal of reducing the national debt, because they are focused on more short-term issues.	78%	79%
	Don't know/Refused	1%	8%
Please indicate which of the following two opinions comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right.	Because Congress is unable or unwilling to reduce the national debt on its own, there should be a bipartisan commission to design a deficit reduction plan to reduce the overall debt and then Congress will hold a simple up-and-down vote on the commission's recommendations.	56%	47%
	Congress should assume responsibility for the fiscal future of the United States, and design its own plan to bring the national debt under control - they should not pass this responsibility off to anyone else.	42%	49%
	Don't know/Refused	1%	4%
In the past few months, would you say you have seen more, less or about the same amount of the following? [Question items were rotated]	Nonpartisan Policy Experts coming out with proposals designed to control the growth of the national debt.		
	More	24%	28%
	Less	12%	18%
	About the same	60%	41%
	Don't know/Refused	5%	13%
	Elected Officials Or Leaders Of Advocacy Organizations That You Agree With coming out with recommendations designed to control the growth of the national debt.		
	More	24%	33%
	Less	18%	22%
	About the same	56%	38%
	Don't know/Refused	3%	7%
	Public Opinion research in support of policies designed to control the growth of the national debt.		
	More	38%	41%
Less	7%	14%	
About the same	49%	34%	
Don't know/Refused	5%	11%	
Some experts track the national debt as a percentage of GDP, that is, they report the debt as a certain percentage of the total size of the U.S. economy (the GDP). What percentage of the total economy do you think the national debt represents as of today?	Around 30%	33%	14%
	Around 40%	22%	15%
	Around 50%	12%	8%
	Around 60%	10%	14%
	Around 70%	4%	16%
	Higher than 70%	8%	13%
Don't know/Refused	11%	20%	

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<b>What percentage of GDP do you think the debt should be in order to allow the government to sustain essential services without harming the overall economy?</b>	Around 30%	58%	42%
	Around 40%	10%	22%
	Around 50%	8%	7%
	Around 60%	2%	1%
	Higher than 70%	1%	1%
	Don't know/Refused	15%	28%
<b>Which in your mind is more important when trying to cut federal spending?</b>	Investments such as education and national defense, for instance, because these are important for the future of the United States.	49%	49%
	Benefits such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, for instance, because these were promises we made as a nation to our citizens.	41%	41%
	Don't know/Refused	3%	10%

*Characteristics of the Sample*

	Leaders	Elites
<b>Age</b>		
20-24	3%	
25-29	6%	1%
30-34	8%	1%
35-39	9%	5%
40-44	9%	6%
45-49	11%	17%
50-54	14%	14%
55-59	20%	15%
60-64	14%	21%
65 and over	7%	19%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	67%	56%
Female	33%	44%
<b>Political affiliation</b>		
Republican	14%	35%
Democrat	48%	44%
Independent, no party affiliation	29%	20%
Other party	3%	1%
Bipartisan	5%	
Not sure	1%	
Decline to answer	1%	
<b>Income (<i>DC opinion elites only</i>)</b>		
\$100,000 to \$124,999		17%
\$125,000 to \$149,999		20%
\$150,000 to \$199,999		30%
\$200,000 to \$249,999		15%
\$250,000 or more		18%
Decline to answer		
<b>Highest education attained (<i>DC opinion elites only</i>)</b>		
Some college		8%
College degree		18%
Associate Degree		1%
Some graduate school		20%
Graduate degree		53%
<i>(continued)</i>		

<i>Characteristics of the Sample</i> (cont.)	
<b>Employment status (DC opinion elites only)</b>	
Employed full time	73%
Employed part time	25%
Self-employed	31%
Not employed, but looking for work	2%
Not employed and not looking for work	15%
Not employed, unable to work due to a disability or illness	1%
Retired	25%
Student	6%
Stay-at-home spouse or partner / Housewife / husband	5%
<b>Race (DC opinion elites only)</b>	
White	86%
Black / African American	8%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%
Native American or Alaskan native	2%
Mixed racial background	1%
Other race	
Decline to answer	3%