

Public Agenda Survey Results - Beltway Influencers and General Public

The Beltway Influencer survey was conducted by Harris Interactive® between September 23 and October 28, 2010 among a total of 302 Beltway Influencers comprised of 150 DC Opinion Elite, and 152 “Leaders,” which consist of 50 Government (Congressional Staffers and Executive Branch), 46 Media, and 56 Thought Leaders from NGO’s, Interest Groups, Foundations and Associations. 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 DC Opinion Elite population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for the DC Opinion Elite respondents’ propensity to be online. All other groups were conducted via telephone and were not weighted.

Results of less than 0.5 percent are signified by an asterisk. Results of zero are signified by a dash. Responses may not always total 100 percent due to rounding. Combining answer categories may produce slight discrepancies between numbers in these survey results and numbers in the report. Note that not all questions were asked of each sample -- blanks under a column signify that the question was not asked of that sample.

The general population responses come from telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,003 adults living in the continental United States. Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (672) and cell phone (331, including 134 without a landline phone). The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI) as part of their October survey omnibus conducted October 28-November 1, 2010. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies.

Note that not all questions were asked of each sample,
a blank indicates that a question was not asked

October 2010 Results

		Leaders n = 152	Opinion Elites n = 150	General Public n = 1003
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?	Right Direction	49%	43%	
	Wrong Track	43%	57%	
	Don't know	4%	-	
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?	Cooperation	1%	2%	
	Conflict	95%	98%	
	Don't know	3%	-	
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?	Cooperation	29%	23%	
	Conflict	65%	77%	
	Don't know	5%	-	
How concerned are you personally about the size of the national debt? <i>[Base: Asked only of General Public]</i>	Very concerned			52%
	Somewhat concerned			30%
	Not very concerned			9%
	Not concerned at all			7%
	Don't know			1%
What do you consider to be the one most important problem facing the country today? <i>[Open-ended question]</i>	The economy	38%	43%	
	Employment/jobs	23%	13%	
	Health care (non-Medicare)	1%	3%	
	Budget deficit / National debt / Government spending	10%	12%	
	Partisan conflict	3%	4%	
	Other	24%	24%	
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?	Very important	39%	55%	
	Somewhat important	50%	34%	
	Not too important	9%	4%	
	Not important at all	3%	6%	

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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?	Often	17%	22%	
	Sometimes	16%	34%	
	Rarely	20%	22%	
	Never	45%	22%	
	Don't know			
How worried are you about each of the following? <i>[Randomized response order]</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	18%	28%	30%
	Somewhat worried	36%	38%	30%
	Not too worried	28%	25%	22%
	Not at all worried	17%	9%	15%
	Don't know	-	-	1%
	These days, policy makers are focusing too much on controlling the national debt.			
	Very worried	18%	24%	
	Somewhat worried	26%	25%	
	Not too worried	23%	22%	
	Not at all worried	30%	28%	
	Don't know	3%	1%	
	The American people in general do not care enough about the growing national debt.			
	Very worried	23%	31%	37%
	Somewhat worried	32%	34%	37%
	Not too worried	27%	27%	12%
	Not at all worried	15%	8%	12%
	Don't know	2%	-	2%

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Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. <i>[Randomized response order]</i>	Pragmatic solutions to the national debt will be impossible to achieve due to partisan politics.			
	Strongly agree	29%	50%	
	Somewhat agree	46%	35%	
	Somewhat disagree	16%	11%	
	Strongly disagree	7%	4%	
	Don't know	1%	1%	
	There are at least several practical policy approaches to meet the country's needs without causing the national debt to significantly rise.			
	Strongly agree	34%	46%	
	Somewhat agree	43%	40%	
	Somewhat disagree	14%	9%	
	Strongly disagree	5%	2%	
	Don't know	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	51%	49%	56%
	Somewhat agree	32%	29%	28%
	Somewhat disagree	12%	19%	9%
	Strongly disagree	5%	3%	3%
	Don't know	-	*	2%
	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	43%	44%	
	Somewhat agree	32%	29%	
	Somewhat disagree	11%	17%	
	Strongly disagree	13%	10%	
	Don't know	1%	*	

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Do you think that the issue of the rising national debt can be best addressed by...? <i>[Base: Those that disagree that spending and taxes are required]</i>	Cutting spending	80%	62%	
	Raising taxes	6%	17%	
	Neither cutting spending nor raising taxes will really address the growing national debt	11%	21%	
	Don't know	-	-	

*Base is only 40 for Elite and 35 for Leaders
**Asked only Influencers in October 2010

<i>Characteristics of the Sample</i>			
	Leaders	Opinion Elites	Public
Age			
18-29	10%	2%	20%
30-49	33%	32%	34%
50-64	47%	46%	26%
65 and over	11%	19%	17%
Gender			
Male	68%	60%	48%
Female	32%	40%	52%
Political affiliation			
Republican	22%	25%	25%
Democrat	43%	46%	31%
Independent, no party affiliation	30%	27%	31%
Other	1%	2%	7%
Decline to answer	4%	-	6%
<i>continued on next page</i>			

Characteristics of the Sample (cont.)

Income

Less than \$10,000	-	8%
\$10,000-\$19,999	-	12%
\$20,000-\$29,000	-	10%
\$30,000-\$39,000	-	11%
\$40,000-\$49,000	-	8%
\$50,000-\$74,999	-	14%
\$75,000-\$99,999	-	10%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	35%	7%
\$150,000 or more	63%	4%
Decline to answer		

Highest education attained

High school incomplete	-	10%
High school graduate/GED	-	31%
Technical, trade or vocational school after high school	-	4%
Some college	12%	25%
College degree	26%	18%
Post graduate or professional schooling after college	60%	10%

Race

White	85%	68%
Black / African American	10%	12%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%	3%
Native American or Alaskan native	1%	-
Mixed racial background	1%	-
Hispanic	1%	12%
Other	*	3%
Decline to answer	-	2%