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Subject: No Money, Mo Problems - ALR's National Polling Summary

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Anzalone Liszt Research

National Polling Summary

Friends,

Below you will find the weekly Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Newsletter, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

This week, we look at public opinion on the budget and federal deficit, following the release of President Obama's 2012 budget. Americans understand that the deficit is a serious issue but remain conflicted and often contradictory - when it comes to how to fix the problem.

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

STORY THIS WEEK: NO MONEY, MO PROBLEMS - PUBLIC OPINION ON THE BUDGET

President Obama unveiled [his budget](#) proposal last week, which aims to cut \$1.1 trillion within ten years while continuing to invest in energy, education, and transportation. Republicans decried the budget, proposing [their own](#) budget proposals that would make devastating cuts to healthcare, affordable housing, and eliminate dozens of programs. According to a recent [Democracy Corps poll](#), the majority of the public (50%) supports the Republicans plan to cut \$32 billion from domestic programs (the poll was conducted prior to House Republicans doubling this figure), but upon hearing where the cuts would come from, support dropped to 43%. A [CBS News](#) poll also found that Americans disapprove of Republicans' efforts to defund the healthcare law (55% disapprove - 35% approve). So, does that mean that the public favors Obama's budget? Not necessarily.

The American public is quite contradictory when it comes to views on the budget. On one hand, an [AP poll](#) found that by a 2 to 1 margin, Americans prefer cutting federal services to raising taxes (59% cutting services - 30% increasing taxes) to balance the budget. And a [CBS poll](#) finds that 37% of Americans do not feel that "it will be necessary" to raise taxes on people like themselves to balance the budget. What exactly are the services they want to cut? Well, very few.

A [Gallup poll](#) found that out of 10 proposed cuts (table below), the only area of the budget a majority of Americans support cutting is foreign aid (59% favor - 37% oppose), while a majority oppose cuts to arts/sciences, anti-poverty programs, and budget behemoths Medicare, Social Security, and defense (among others). A [Harris poll](#) confirms this finding; their poll provided 20 different areas of spending, and found a majority only support cutting six, none of which comprise a sizable part of the budget (foreign aid, regulatory agencies, and space programs, among the six). By comparison, Harris asked the same question of Americans in 1980, and a majority supported cuts to 14 of the 20 (see table below).

One potential way to explain Americans' support for cutting smaller programs is a fundamental misunderstanding about how much of the budget these programs comprise. A [World Public Opinion poll](#) found that Americans believe that foreign aid is 27% of the overall US budget and think an appropriate level for foreign aid is 13% of the federal budget. In fact, the foreign aid budget in President Obama's 2009 budget is [less than 1%](#).

Conversely, many Americans also underestimate the size of the larger budget items, defense in particular. A [Zogby poll](#) found that three-fifths of Americans underestimate the size of the defense budget. According to [Gallup](#), only 58% of Americans realize that the US spends more on national defense than any other country (it spends 7x more than China, the nation with the second largest defense spending). A [Pew survey](#) found that only 39% of Americans knew that the US spends more on defense than on education, Medicare, or interest from the national debt.

The public does not put their trust in one single person or organization to resolve issues with the deficit and budget. According to [CBS](#), 42% of Americans trust President Obama to lower the deficit, the same number as trust Republicans in Congress, while one in ten voters do not trust either side.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Obama's approval rating holding steady. A recent [CBS News poll](#) finds that 48% of Americans approve of the job President Obama is doing, including 50% who approve of the way he handled the Egyptian uprising. According to pollster.com, Obama's average approval rating among all recent polls is 48%.

Obama tied with unnamed Republican challengers. According to a [Gallup poll](#) out this week, President Obama is tied with an unnamed Republican candidate for President (45% - 45%). Democrats currently support the President 84% - 10%, while Independents are split, 41% - 41%.

China considered top economic powerhouse. By a 52% - 32% margin, Americans are more likely to name China than the United States as the leading economic power in the world today, according to a [Gallup poll](#). This is a 13% increase for China since 2009. For the first time, Americans also believe that in 20 years China will be the world's leading economic power (47%, compared to 35% who say the United States). In 2009, 34% of Americans believed China would be the leading economic power.

Regulating businesses. For the first time since 2002, Americans believe that businesses are too regulated by the federal government, according to a [CBS News poll](#). Their poll finds that 45% of Americans believe that businesses are regulated too much, up from only 28% two years ago. Only a quarter (27%) believe they are regulated too little (compared to 40% in 2009), and 17% believe they are regulated the right amount (consistent with 2009).

Decline in blue states. A recent [Gallup study](#) found that based on their daily tracking, twelve states have shifted from solidly or leaning Democratic to competitive, while no states have moved in a more Democratic direction.

direction. States that have shifted include: New Hampshire, Alabama, Kansas, Montana, South Dakota, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Missouri, Nevada, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin.

This week in the West Wing - [Check out](#) this week's wrap-up of what happened in the White House, including saying goodbye to Robert Gibbs.

PUBLIC POLLING

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
Pollster.com Trend	2/22/11	Adults	48%	46%

PARTY SELF ID					
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Ind / other
Pollster.com Trend	2/22/11	Adults	32%	25%	37%

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Right Direction	Wrong Track
Pollster.com Trend	2/22/11	Adults	35%	55%

CUTS OR TAXES TO BALANCE BUDGET				
Polling Firm	Question Language	Sample	Increasing Taxes	Cutting Government Services
AP-GfK Poll, 925 adults, November 18-22, 2010, MOE \pm 4.3 percentage points	In order to balance the federal budget, which should be the main focus of lawmakers?	Adults	30%	59%

SUPPORT FOR CUTS TO FEDERAL SPENDING					
Polling Firm		1980	2008	2011	Change from 1980-2011
	Foreign economic aid	82	74	75	-7
	Foreign military aid	77	69	69	-8

Harris Poll. Jan 17-24, 2011. 2,566 adults.	Spending by the regulatory agencies generally	72	53	56	-1
	Space programs	66	49	54	-1
	Subsidies to business	69	62	51	-1
	Federal welfare spending	69	52	51	-1
	Federally funded scientific research programs	51	35	42	-9
	Farm subsidies	53	44	42	-1
	Defense spending	34	35	41	+7
	Federal housing subsidies	53	44	42	-1
	The food stamp program	65	43	40	-2
	Pollution control	49	22	37	-1
	Spending for mass transportation	42	28	35	-7
	Federal aid to cities	58	33	34	-2
	Federal highway financing	59	24	31	-2
	Revenue sharing with states and cities	53	30	28	-2
	Health care	37	12	24	-1
	Federal aid to education	37	17	21	-1
	Social security payments	23	8	11	-1

TRUST MORE TO MAKE RIGHT DECISIONS ABOUT REDUCING DEFICIT				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Obama	Reps in Congress
CBS News poll, Feb 11-14, 2011, 1031 adults, MOE ± 3.0 percentage points	2/11-14/2011	Adults	42%	42%

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REGULATES BUSINESSES					
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Too Much	Too Little	Right Amount

CBS News poll, Feb 11-14, 2011, 1031 adults, MOE \pm 3.0 percentage points	2/11-14/2011	Adults	45%	27%	17%
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