

From: Anzalone Liszt Research <newsletter@anzaloneresearch.com>

Subject: Death and Taxes and Polling - ALR's National Polling Summary

Reply: newsletter@anzaloneresearch.com

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



April 21, 2011

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.

Among the first signs that Spring is really here are the first mowing of the lawn, Major League Baseball's Opening Day, and cutting an income tax check to Uncle Sam. This week, our summary focuses on U.S. p - both facts about taxes and the public perceptions that often belie them.

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

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

STORY THIS WEEK: DEATH AND TAXES AND POLLING (MINUS THE DEATH)

Tax Facts

The average American family is paying less in federal income taxes than at any time since the Eisenhower administration.

A recent study by the [Tax Policy Center](#) (and reported by the [Orange County Register](#)) finds that a median income family of four has paid less in federal income taxes for the past two years than at any time since 1980. The average American family paid a federal income tax rate of 4.68% in 2010, compared to rates of 11% or more from 1980-1982. While the marginal federal income tax rate for such a family is 15%, deductions like the earned income tax credit, child care tax credits, and the "Making Work Pay" tax credits included in President Obama's 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act cut the real burden of a typical middle class family by almost 70%. The economic recession also plays a role in this phenomenon, as unemployment or falling wages can drive families into lower tax brackets.

The wealthiest Americans are paying substantially less in taxes than they did twenty years ago

The [Associated Press](#) recently explored trends in the IRS' tracking of the four hundred highest adjusted g incomes. IRS data from the last year with such information available (2007) reveals these top four hundr earners, with an average income of \$345M, paid a federal income tax rate of 17%. This 17% rate is dowr more than one-third from the 26% rate the top four hundred were paying in 1992.

Even more galling, [Tom Herman of the Fiscal Times](#) points to roughly ten thousand Americans who earr over \$200,000 in 2007 but paid no federal income taxes. The [Wall Street Journal's Robert Frank](#) shows h this trend extends to state income taxes as well. In California, more than 2400 upper income households j no state income tax and in New York the number is over 1500.

Many of the wealthiest US corporations pay little or no federal taxes

[Forbes](#) reveals that several of the top twenty-five US corporations paid no federal taxes in 2010. Exxon, Citigroup, General Electric, Bank of America, are among the corporate giants that paid no U.S. federal ir taxes in 2010. Others like Ford and Chevron paid 1-2% of their pretax income in U.S. income taxes - a fraction of the tax rate of the average American family. The ability of these international companies to ut low-tax foreign countries places American-based companies at a fundamental competitive disadvantage. example, CVS pharmacies (\$100B in domestic sales) pay a full 35% federal income tax rate, as they hav overseas operations to lower their overall rate.

Senator Bernie Sanders has compiled his own [list of the most egregious corporate income tax evaders](#).

Miscellaneous Tax Facts

Blogger Michael Wise compiles [15 "surprising facts" about the income tax](#). Find out: Why April 15th? H many people think its ok to cheat on their taxes? How many hours and how much money do Americans s preparing their taxes?

And if you're insufficiently taxed by the first list, Wise offers another compilation of ["20 outrageous and plain weird tax deductions"](#).

Tax Perceptions

Despite the above facts that demonstrate most Americans are paying less in federal income taxes than at time since the 1950s, there is an apparent perception in some quarters that taxes have dramatically increa over the past few years. The Tea Party movement is the best example of this sentiment, and they have no doubt helped fuel such a narrative. However successful the elites of the Tea Party have been driving their message through the media, the American public has not embraced their view of federal tax policy.

Gallup finds no such spike in belief that taxes are too high. [In polling released just this week](#), Gallup sho that the 50% who say the federal income tax is "too high" (43% "about right") is well in line with polling the last several decades. In fact the 50% who currently say taxes are too high is less than the 52-53% sha the last two years of the Bush administration. And 50% is lower than at any point during the 1990s and te points lower than in the middle of Ronald Reagan's first term (1982: 60% "too high).

Perhaps even more fundamentally, 57% of Americans believe the income tax they pay is "fair". This nun has hovered in the high 50s / low 60s for the last decade, and is twelve points higher than the 45% "fair" number from 1999. [Early April nationwide polling from Fox News](#) asks a similar question in a slightly different way, and revealed a slight majority of registered voters feel the taxes they pay are "pretty close their fair share" (52%), compared to 42% who said they were taxed "more than their fair share".

While both Gallup and Fox News show majorities believe their own federal income tax rates are "fair", a sizable majority feel "upper-income people" and "corporations" should be shouldering more of the tax burden. [Recent Gallup polling reveals](#) that two of three voters (67%) feel corporations pay "too little" in federal taxes and 59% feel upper-income people pay too little. Conversely, a small plurality feel lower-income people pay too much (40%), with 37% feeling they pay their "fair share", and an additional 21% who believe those with lower-incomes pay too little.

In their belief that corporations and upper-income earners aren't taxed enough, Americans see federal tax policy as a tool to address the income inequality they deem objectionable. [Gallup finds 57% of Americans believe "money and wealth should be more evenly distributed"](#), to 35% who believe the current distribution is "fair". A nearly 5:1 majority of Democrats believe there should be more even distribution (78% Should be Distributed More Evenly / 16% Status Quo is Fair), while a solid majority of Republicans believe the current distribution is fair (36% Should be Distributed More Evenly / 56% Status Quo is Fair). Independent voters (55% Should be Distributed More Evenly / 36% Status Quo is Fair) closely approximate the nationwide numbers.

However, on the more polarizing verbiage of "should government redistribute wealth by heavy taxes on the rich?" (Should 47% / Should Not 49%) voters are more evenly divided.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Voters strongly prefer new taxes on the wealthy, rather than Medicare cuts, to trim deficit: With the federal budget deficit the issue du jour in Washington, fresh numbers from McLatchy / Marist reveal voters dramatically prefer higher taxes on the wealthy to cuts to Medicare as a tool to remedy the budget deficit roughly 2:1, voters favor raising taxes on individuals with incomes of \$250K+ (64% Favor / 33% Oppose) and an even greater margin opposes cutting Medicare and Medicaid (18% Favor / 80% Oppose).

A [new Washington Post / ABC News poll](#) issues similar findings. They find over 70% support for "raising taxes on incomes over \$250K" (72% Support / 27% Oppose), while finding greater than 3:1 opposition to "cutting spending in Medicare" (21% Support / 65% Oppose).

The first couple releases tax returns: The [Obama's publicly-released tax return](#) reveals a \$1.7M income mostly through the presidential salary and continued book sales. The first couple contributed 14% to charity including a six-figure donation to the [Fisher House Foundation](#) that supports members of the military and their families.

President Obama bests GOP field in head-to-head votes: Polling released this week by [ABC News / Washington Post](#) shows President Obama beating the Republican candidates in seven individual head-to-head tests. The President leads Sarah Palin by 17 points (55% Obama / 38% Palin) and also posts double-digit leads over Newt Gingrich, Donald Trump, Tim Pawlenty, and Michelle Bachman. Only Romney (49% Obama / 45% Romney) and Huckabee keep the President's margin in single digits (50% Obama / 44% Huckabee).

Republican voters less than enthused about the GOP primary field: The same [ABC News / Washington Post poll](#) also finds that Republican voters are much more dissatisfied with their field of primary candidates than this time four years ago. Currently, only 43% of Republicans say they're "satisfied with the choice of Republican candidates for President". In April 2007, 65% of Republicans were satisfied with the 2008 field.

The more voters learn about the Ryan Budget, the more they oppose it: [Fresh numbers from Democratic Corps](#) report a plurality of voters initially approve of a Republican budget that cuts six trillion dollars in 10 years (48% Favor / 33% Oppose). But with a neutral explanation of the changes to entitlements and tax provisions contained within the Ryan budget, voters move to majority opposition (36% Favor / 56% Oppose).

Ninety-eight percent of House Republicans vote for Ryan Budget: Of the 240 House Republicans, [all five voted for Paul Ryan's budget](#) that changes Medicare and Social Security as we know it, jeopardizing guaranteed benefits for tens of millions of Americans. Republicans voting against the Ryan Budget were Walter Jones (NC), David McKinley (WV), Ron Paul (TX), and Dennis Rehberg (MT). Conspicuous by failure to vote either way was perennial Democratic target Dave Reichert (WA). For their part, Democrat were uncharacteristically unified in their opposition to the Ryan budget.

Nate Silver throws cold water on bullish predictions of a GOP Senate takeover: Washington conven wisdom has Senate Republicans as heavy favorites to take the Senate in 2012. However, [Silver points ou competitive Senate races often fall the same way](#) on election night, and a good Democratic year at the top the ticket could ward off Republican takeover plans. Silver still sees Republicans as slight favorites, but it a data-driven case that Mitch McConnell shouldn't start measuring the drapes.

The Fix focuses on first quarter fundraising: The [Washington Post's Aaron Blake and Chris Cillizza highlight what you need to know](#) in the 1st Quarter federal fundraising reports. One interesting nugget: "The GOP freshman class raised significantly less on average in the first quarter than the big classes of Democratic freshmen in 2007 and 2009."

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget - Budget Calculator: Many organizations offer "budget calculators" that allow armchair appropriators to tinker with the federal budget. The [CRFB calculator](#) may be the most realistic as they not only identify potential cuts, but also areas that many (on both sides) may very well wish to spend more. Happy crunching!

What the hell is a debt ceiling anyway?: CNN Money's [Jeanne Sahidi offers a layman's primer](#) on the ceiling and why it matters. [NPR](#) and [Slate](#) also offer quick primers.

PUBLIC POLLING

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: Is the national economy...					
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying the Same
ABC/Wash Post	4/14-17/11	Adults	28%	44%	28%

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
ABC/Wash Post	4/14-17/11	Adults	47%	50%
Gallup	4/14-16/11	Adults	44%	47%
Gallup	4/10-12/11	Adults	44%	48%
Ipsos/Reuters	4/7-11/11	Adults	46%	49%
CNN	4/9-10/11	Adults	48%	50%

PRESIDENTIAL HEAD-TO-HEADS				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Obama	Palin
ABC/Wash Post	4/14-17/11	Adults	55%	38%
			Obama	Gingrich
			54%	39%
			Obama	Romney

49%	45%
Obama	Huckabee
50%	44%
Obama	Pawlenty
53%	38%
Obama	Trump
52%	40%
Obama	Bachman
51%	39%

CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICANS' JOB RATING				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
Democracy Corps	4/10-12/11	Likely Voters	38%	55%

CONGRESSIONAL GENERIC BALLOT				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	DEM	GOP
Democracy Corps	4/10-12/11	Likely Voters	45%	47%

PARTY SELF ID					
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Ind / other
Pollster.com Trend	4/13/11	Adults	30%	23%	39%



[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to chase@anzalonereseach.com by newsletter@anzalonereseach.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Anzalone Liszt Research | 260 Commerce St | Montgomery | AL | 36104