

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Global Strategy Group & North Star Opinion Research
DATE: December 1, 2017
RE: Key Findings from Tax Reform Survey

Tax legislation working its way through Congress is out of step with public concern about the national debt, according to a new bipartisan survey conducted by Democratic polling firm Global Strategy Group and Republican polling firm North Star Opinion Research on behalf of the Peter G. Peterson Foundation.

The survey finds that Americans are deeply concerned about the possible consequences if new tax laws increase the national debt. Voters believe it is more important for Congress to focus on addressing the national debt than to cut taxes, and overwhelmingly agree that any changes to the country's tax laws should be done in a fiscally responsible way that doesn't add to the debt. Key findings from this survey include:

KEY FINDINGS

It is critically important to voters that new tax laws do not increase the debt. An overwhelming majority of voters (85%) say it is important that any changes to the country's tax laws do not increase the national debt, including 56% who say it is "very" important. These strong attitudes are shared by voters from both parties, with majorities of Democrats (86% important, 54% very important) and Republicans (85% important, 59% very important) both saying it is very important that new tax laws don't add to the debt.

Americans prioritize making progress on the debt over cutting taxes. When forced to choose between the two options, voters believe it is more important to make progress on the debt (55%) than to cut taxes (36%) by a margin of 19 points. Further, voters would rather delay tax cuts than pass them in a way that will add to the debt. By a greater than two-to-one margin, voters would prefer to see Congress "wait to pass tax cuts until Congress has a plan that won't add to the national debt" (64%) rather than "use the opportunity to cut taxes now, even if the tax cuts add to the national debt" (28%).

Voters believe that the middle class and next generation will bear the consequences if tax cuts increase the debt. If tax cuts add to the national debt, voters believe the overall impact on high earning Americans will be more positive than negative (41% positive/18% negative) but expect a negative impact on middle class Americans (29% positive/53% negative). Voters believe the negative consequences are particularly likely to come down on the next generation of Americans (26% positive impact/60% negative impact).

Americans want tax reform to happen in a bipartisan way that makes the tax code fairer and more supportive of growth. Voters strongly agree on the importance of making the tax code fairer, with 87% saying it is important for them in determining whether they will support new tax laws and 68% saying it is "very" important. Americans also say it is important to them that tax laws lead to more economic growth (87% important, 60% very important), and that changes to the country's tax laws have bipartisan support from Democrats and Republicans in Congress (83% important, 59% very important).

METHODOLOGY

Global Strategy Group and North Star Opinion Research conducted a telephone survey from November 17 through 21, 2017 among 1,003 registered voters nationwide. The results have a margin of error of +/- 3.1%, and care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the electorate are properly represented. The margin of error on subgroups is greater.
