

TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Global Strategy Group and North Star Opinion Research  
DATE: May 2, 2016  
RE: The National Debt and the 2016 Presidential Election

---

Addressing the national debt is a top priority for voters from both parties as they consider who to support in the Presidential election, according to recent national polling conducted by Democratic polling firm Global Strategy Group and Republican polling firm North Star Opinion Research. Democrats and Republicans both want candidates in their party's primaries to make the debt a larger campaign issue and are prepared to reward Presidential candidates who commit to plans to address the issue.

#### KEY SURVEY FINDINGS:

- **The national debt is a top issue for voters from both parties.** Voters widely agree (79%) that a candidate for president from their party should make the national debt one of the top three priorities of his or her campaign, including overwhelming majorities of Democrats (71%) and Republicans (92%).
- **Voters want more focus on the debt from candidates in the presidential primaries.** A clear majority of voters (71%) believe presidential primary candidates should make the debt a larger part of their campaign platforms, while just 15% believe the issue should be a smaller part of campaigns' platforms. Both Democrats (65% larger/20% smaller) and Republicans (81% larger/8% smaller) reach a clear consensus that the issue warrants more focus from candidates.
- **Candidates in both primaries can benefit electorally by committing to plans to address the debt.** Most voters (55% more likely/2% less likely) are more likely to vote for a candidate for president who supports a bipartisan plan to address the debt, including majorities of Democrats (54% more/3% less) and Republicans (61% more/2% less) alike.
- **Both parties can increase their voters' engagement by focusing more on the debt.** A majority of voters (57%) say they would be more interested in this year's elections if candidates spent more time focusing on the national debt, including 51% of Democrats and 64% of Republicans.
- **Voters want fiscal issues higher on the agenda in Washington.** An overwhelming majority (85%, including 81% of Democrats and 89% of Republicans) agree the President and Congress should be spending more time addressing the national debt. Roughly two-thirds (68%) say their level of concern about the issue has increased in the last few years, including majorities of Democrats (53%), Independents (69%), and Republicans (84%).

**ABOUT THIS POLL:** Global Strategy Group and North Star Opinion Research conducted two national surveys of registered voters nationwide, including a 1,006-interview survey between February 15<sup>th</sup> and February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and a 1,001-interview survey between April 18<sup>th</sup> and April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016. The results of each survey have a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points and care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the registered voter population are properly represented.

---