

TO: The Peter G. Peterson Foundation
FROM: Global Strategy and North Star Opinion Research
DATE: May 19, 2015
RE: National Survey on the National Debt and the Economy

Americans of all political backgrounds believe that action to address the national debt will produce significant, long-term benefits for the economy, according to a national survey conducted by Global Strategy Group and North Star Opinion Research for the Peter G. Peterson Foundation. Further, voters believe that the country's renewed economic stability creates a window for the government to focus on the debt and overwhelmingly want lawmakers to seize this opportunity to address the country's fiscal challenges. The following memo outlines key findings from this survey.

Voters, including wide majorities of Democrats, Republicans and Independents, want greater focus on the debt now that the economy is more stable.

- Nearly eight in ten (78%) agree that now is a good time for the government to develop a long-term plan for the debt because it is not facing an immediate short-term economic crisis, including more than three-quarters of Democrats (78%), Republicans (76%), and Independents (80%).
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) believe the federal government can focus on stabilizing the debt without putting the economic recovery at risk.
 - Voters of all socioeconomic backgrounds agree that the economy is stable enough to handle strong action on the national debt, including self-described lower/middle class voters (63%), middle class voters (64%), and upper middle class (68%).

Voters believe a strong fiscal foundation will create economic opportunity for workers and businesses.

- Nearly eight in ten voters (78%) agree that there will be more opportunities for everyday Americans to be successful if the economy is less burdened by the national debt, including half (52%) who feel strongly.
 - Again, voters across socioeconomic lines reach a clear consensus as 80% of working/lower middle class voters, 78% of middle class voters, and 74% of upper middle class voters agree that a lower debt burden will lead to greater opportunity for the average worker.
- Roughly seven in ten (72%) agree that more small businesses will be able to get the loans they need to start up and grow if the government stabilizes the national debt.
- Roughly two-thirds (67%) agree that the United States will be able to create a more highly educated and better trained workforce if the government stabilizes the national debt.

Americans believe action on the debt now will produce a stronger economy.

- More than three-quarters of voters (77%) support the government making necessary choices now to reduce the debt so that the economy will be stronger in the long run, including approximately half (49%) who agree strongly. Reducing the debt's burden on the national economy remains a consistent priority for voters, with 77% also agreeing with the same statement in April 2014.
 - Voters across the political spectrum, including 73% of Democrats, 76% of Republicans, and 80% of Independents, all support action on the debt to strengthen the economy in the long run.

About the Survey

Global Strategy Group and North Star Opinion Research conducted a nationwide survey of 1,006 registered voters between April 20th and April 23rd, 2015. The results of this survey have a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points. Care has been taken to ensure that the partisan, geographic and demographic divisions of the national electorate are properly represented.