

## 3 Polls related to the federal deficit, budget, and the economy:

### More deficit concern, less hope about solving problem, Washington Post-Pew Research Center poll finds

*By Jon Cohen and Peyton M. Craighill*

(access to full poll: <http://people-press.org/2011/04/26/deficit-more-concern-less-optimism/>)

Americans increasingly see the budget deficit as a big problem that demands quick action, but a dwindling number thinks the U.S. will make significant deficit reductions over the next five years, according to a new poll by The Washington Post and the [Pew Research Center](#).

Just 31 percent now expect sizable deficit reductions in the coming five years, a 6 percentage point slide from a December Pew poll. While hopes have slipped over the five months of budget debates and furious dealmaking, 81 percent of Americans now call the deficit a major problem requiring immediate remedy, an 11-point jump.

The slippage in optimism about the deficit since December is most pronounced among Democrats, although it's dipped across party lines. In December, 53 percent of Democrats expected progress in closing the accounts gap; that's now down to 44 percent in the new poll. Despite the spreading pessimism, Democrats remain the most optimistic about the potential for progress in the next five years. Around six in 10 Republicans and independents alike expect no such improvement.

## % seeing significant progress on the deficit in next five years

	December	Now	<i>Change</i>
All	37	31	-6
Democrats	53	44	-9
Republicans	29	26	-3
Independents	29	25	-4
18-29	50	36	-14
30-49	28	28	<i>Even</i>
50-64	36	28	-8
65+	37	34	-3

Democrats have also led the way on changes to the concern question: 81 percent of Democrats now say the federal budget is a major problem that must be addressed now, up from 64 percent in December.

The deficit is often pitched as a particular problem for future generations, and another big shift in the poll is among younger adults, those between the ages of 18 and 29. Some 36 percent of young adults now expect progress on the deficit, down from 50 percent five months ago.

## % saying deficit is a major problem that must be addressed now

	December	Now	<i>Change</i>
All	70	81	+11
Democrats	64	81	+17
Republicans	79	89	+10
Independents	71	79	+8

Those who think the deficit is a major problem that must be addressed right now are particularly skeptical about the prospects for reduction, with 58 percent doubting near-term improvements.

## **GallupPoll Released**

**April 28, 2011**

### **More Than Half Still Say U.S. Is in Recession or Depression**

***Democrats rate the economy better than Republicans or Tea Party supporters***  
**by Dennis Jacobe, Chief Economist**

PRINCETON, NJ -- More than half of Americans (55%) describe the U.S. economy as being in a recession or depression, even as the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) reports that "the economic recovery is proceeding at a moderate pace." Another 16% of Americans say the economy is "slowing down," and 27% believe it is growing.

While most Americans seem to disagree with the FOMC's characterization of the economy, their current assessment is better than that of September 2008 -- during the height of the financial crisis -- when 69% said the economy was in a recession or depression. On the other hand, current attitudes are more downbeat, overall, than they were in early February 2008, when 45% considered the economy to be in either a recession or a depression. However, Americans are much more likely today to perceive the economy as growing rather than slowing down.

### **Democrats Give Better Ratings Than Republicans and Tea Party Supporters**

Forty-two percent of Democrats say the economy is growing -- essentially the same as the 43% from that party who say the economy is in a recession or depression. Democrats are much more positive on the economy than their Republican counterparts, 68% of whom describe the economy as in recession or depression, while 14% say it is growing. Tea Party supporters' ratings are similar to Republicans', and independents' ratings are about midway between those from the two major parties.

### **Nearly One-Third of Upper-Income Americans Say Economy Is Growing**

Fifty-two percent of upper-income Americans say the economy is in a recession or depression and 31% think it is growing. These ratings, though not good, are better than lower-income Americans' ratings: 65% of this group says the economy is in a recession or depression and 21% say it is growing.

### **Implications**

Although economists announced that the recession ended in mid-2009, more than half of Americans still don't agree. These ratings are consistent with Gallup's mid-April findings that [47% of Americans rate the economy "poor"](#) and [19.2% report being underemployed](#).

It also seems likely that most Americans would not agree with the FOMC's assessment of the current economic recovery. Nor does it seem likely that -- given surging gas and food prices --

most would agree with the Committee that "longer-term inflation expectations have remained stable and measures of underlying inflation are subdued."

Although the FOMC seems to perceive current economic conditions differently than most Americans, it does say it needs to "promote a stronger pace of economic recovery" by continuing its aggressive monetary policy, often referred to as "quantitative easing," through June. On the other hand, in the press conference after the FOMC's April meeting -- the first ever by a Fed chairman -- Ben Bernanke said that, "the trade-offs are getting less attractive at this point," meaning it is getting harder to aggressively add liquidity to stimulate stronger economic growth while avoiding inflation.

In another possible disconnect with monetary policymakers, many Americans may not see the trade-off Bernanke suggests between promoting a stronger economy and experiencing higher inflation. Right now, prices are soaring, yet the latest Gallup Daily tracking data show that [67% of Americans say the economy is "getting worse."](#)

### **Survey Methods**

Results for this *USA Today*/Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted April 20-23, 2011, with a random sample of 1,013 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 4$  percentage points.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on landline telephones and cellular phones, with interviews conducted in Spanish for respondents who are primarily Spanish-speaking. Each sample includes a minimum quota of 400 cell phone-only respondents and 600 landline respondents per 1,000 national adults, with additional minimum quotas among landline respondents for gender within region. Landline telephone numbers are chosen at random among listed telephone numbers. Cell phone numbers are selected using random-digit-dial methods. Landline respondents are chosen at random within each household on the basis of which member had the most recent birthday.

Samples are weighted by gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, region, adults in the household, and phone status (cell phone only/landline only/both, cell phone mostly, and having an unlisted landline number). Demographic weighting targets are based on the March 2010 Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older non-institutionalized population living in U.S. telephone households. All reported margins of sampling error include the computed design effects for weighting and sample design.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

[View methodology, full question results, and trend data.](#)

For more details on Gallup's polling methodology, visit [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).

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**A Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner poll conducted for First Focus showing opposition to cutting children's services as a deficit reduction strategy:**

[http://gqrr.com/articles/2626/6554\\_First%20Focus-Memo.pdf](http://gqrr.com/articles/2626/6554_First%20Focus-Memo.pdf) Thanks to First Focus!