

# SPECIAL REPORT

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## What Does America Think About Taxes? *The 2007 Annual Survey of U.S. Attitudes on Taxes and Wealth*

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### Introduction

While foreign policy continues to dominate politics in Washington, the 2007 *Annual Survey of U.S. Attitudes on Taxes and Wealth* shows that the domestic issues of tax complexity, fairness and burdens continue to weigh heavily on the minds of the American people.

For the third consecutive year, we find that a majority of U.S. adults say the federal income taxes they pay are “too high,” that the federal tax code is complex, and that the U.S.

tax system is in need of major changes or a complete overhaul.

This report summarizes the findings of our third annual survey of U.S. opinions on taxes. All results are based on a Harris Interactive® survey conducted on behalf of the Tax Foundation between March 5 and 12, 2007. The survey covers a nationwide cross section of 2,012 U.S. adults aged 18 or older.<sup>1</sup> All data from this and previous years’ surveys are available for download free of charge at [www.taxfoundation.org](http://www.taxfoundation.org) under “Public Opinion Surveys on Taxes.”

### Key Findings

- A new 2007 poll of tax attitudes finds a majority of U.S. adults believe the federal tax code is complex, that the federal income taxes they pay are “too high,” and the federal tax system needs major changes or a complete overhaul.
- Just one in ten (10 percent) say they are willing to pay higher taxes to eliminate 2007’s projected \$244 billion federal budget deficit.
- Two-thirds (66 percent) favor a complete elimination of the controversial federal estate tax.
- Roughly half (48 percent) say they are willing to give up some federal tax deductions if such broadening of the tax base were coupled with an across-the-board cut in tax rates.
- The estate tax is seen as the most “unfair” federal tax, followed by gasoline taxes and personal income taxes. At the state and local level, gasoline taxes are seen as the most “unfair” tax, followed by local property taxes and motor vehicle taxes.

### Views on the Tax Burden

In 1947, the Gallup Organization began asking Americans a famous tax question. Do you consider the amount of federal income tax you have to pay as too high, too low or about right? Over the years, that question has become a standard barometer of tax satisfaction and has been asked in dozens of previous opinion surveys.

In 2005, the Tax Foundation began asking that question as well. According to this year’s Harris Interactive® survey conducted on behalf of the Tax Foundation, 58 percent of U.S. adults say the amount of federal income tax they pay is too high. This represents an increase of 3 percentage points since 2005 but a slight decline from the 59 percent recorded in 2006.

<sup>1</sup> Please see the “Survey Methodology” section at the end of this report for a complete discussion of the methodology and potential sources of error in the findings.

Those most likely to say their federal tax bill is too high included those in their peak earning years, ages 45 to 54 (65 percent), as well as those in the top income group of \$75,000 and up (64 percent). Married couples (61 percent) were more likely to say federal income taxes are too high compared to singles (48 percent). Those who itemize when filing their federal tax returns are also more likely to say taxes are too high (65 percent) compared to those who take the standard deduction (56 percent).

To get a sense of how opinions on the federal income tax burden have changed over time, Figure 1 presents a compilation of results from other surveys that have asked this question between 1947 and today. While these results are not strictly comparable due to the different methodologies used by these surveys over the years, we present them here as an illustration of tax attitudes over time.

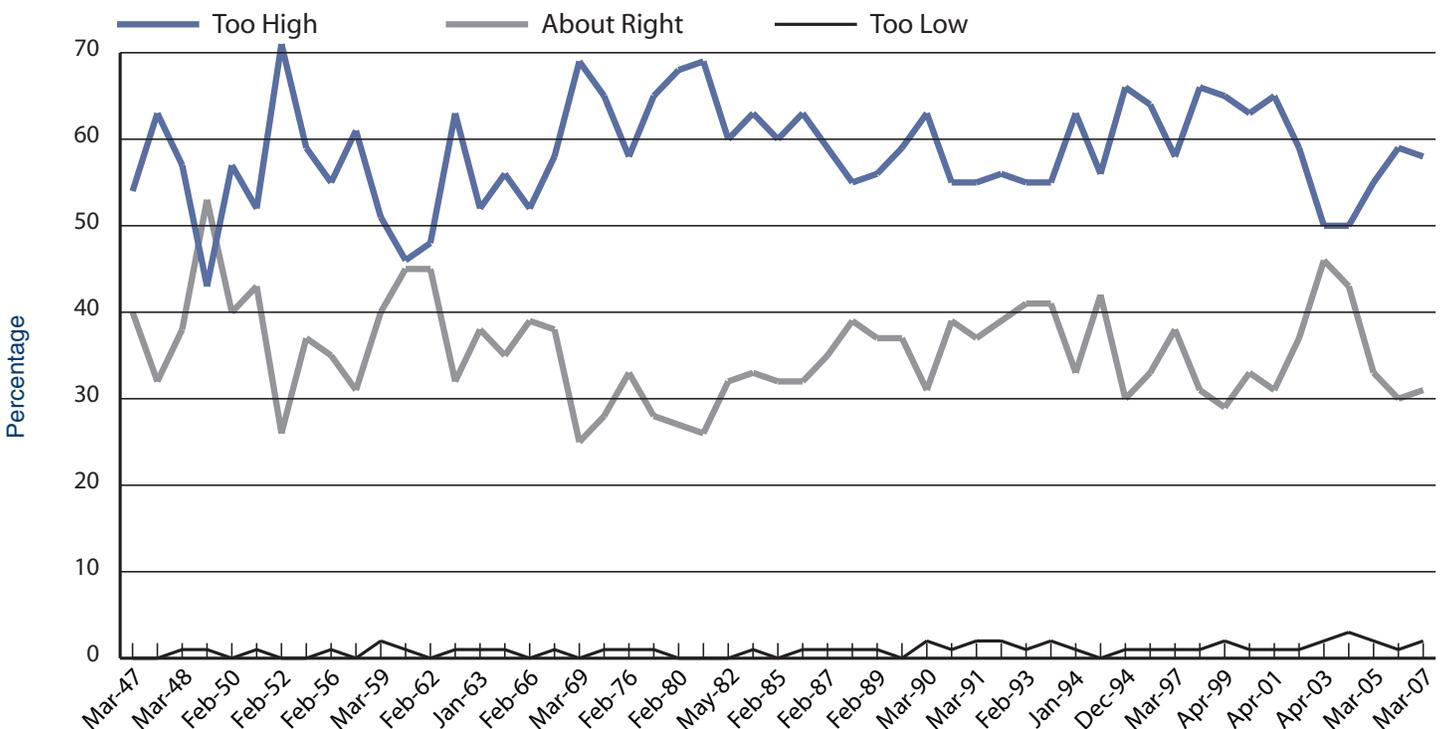
Despite erratic movements from year to year, Figure 1 displays a remarkably steady

long-term trend. Since the late 1940s, a consistent majority of roughly 50 to 70 percent say federal income taxes are too high, while a sizable minority of roughly 25 to 45 percent say taxes are about right. The percentage who say taxes are too low has never exceeded 3 percent in any survey, and it is 1 to 2 percent in most years.

*Roughly half of U.S. adults said they were willing to give up some tax deductions — such as the home mortgage interest deduction — for an across-the-board cut in federal income tax rates.*

Among these surveys, the highest percentage ever recorded as saying federal income taxes were too high occurred in 1952 at 71 percent.

Figure 1  
“Do you consider the amount of federal income tax you have to pay as too high, too low, or about right?”



Source: Tax Foundation; pre-2005 data compiled from Karlyn Bowman, “Public Opinion on Taxes,” *AEI Studies in Public Opinion* (April 12, 2006), available online at [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.16838/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.16838/pub_detail.asp).

The second highest percentages were in 1969 and 1982 when 69 percent said federal income taxes were too high. As is clear from the figure, that percentage fell sharply in the period following the 2001 and 2003 Bush tax cuts from 65 percent in 2001 to 50 percent in 2003 and 2004—the lowest percentage recorded as saying taxes were too high since 1962. Since then the percentage has crept upward again, and today it stands at 58 percent.

### How High Should Taxes Be?

This year the Tax Foundation estimates the nation's average total tax burden will be 32.7 percent of income.<sup>2</sup> To test whether U.S. adults view that tax burden as too high or too low, we asked the following question: "What is the maximum percentage of a person's income that should go to taxes—that is, all taxes, state, federal and local?"

In 2007 the average response was 14.7 percent—less than half the nation's actual total average tax burden. That figure has fallen slightly in each of the past three years, down from 16 percent in 2005 and 15 percent in 2006.

As in previous years, we found that women prefer somewhat lower tax rates (12.8 percent) than men (16.6 percent). Young adults aged 18-24 tend to favor higher tax rates (17.5 percent) than older Americans aged 45-54 (13 percent).

Another interesting result is that of any income group, those favoring the lowest tax rate are those with modest incomes of \$25,000-\$35,000 (13.2 percent), while those favoring the highest tax rates are those in the top income group earning \$75,000 per year and up (17.5 percent).

The most dramatic difference in opinion about how high tax rates should be is between those with different levels of education. Those with less than a high school diploma favored a low average tax rate of just 11.9 percent, but those with a graduate degree or more favored a high average tax rate of 21.5 percent. Overall, these findings are consistent with past surveys

from the Tax Foundation and other organizations.

### The Value of Government Spending Received

Ultimately, Americans pay taxes in exchange for government services. This year, we asked a new question about how much Americans value the thousands of federal, state and local government programs they are supplied with by lawmakers each year.

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*At the federal level, Americans view the federal estate tax as the "least fair" tax, followed closely by the federal gas tax.*

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Here is what we asked. First, we asked people to think about all the government services they use in a year—national defense, roads, public schools, food stamps, Social Security, police protection and so on. Next, we asked them to mentally total up how much they value all those services. That is, we asked how much they'd be willing to pay for every government service they use in a year.

The average response among all U.S. adults was \$7,243.80 per year. Overall, 89 percent reported valuing government services at less than \$10,000 per year, with 98 percent reporting they valued all government programs at less than \$50,000 per year.

How does that figure compare to what governments actually spend on U.S. households? According to a 2007 Tax Foundation study of government spending, governments at all levels spent an average of \$12,124 per person or \$31,108 per household in 2004—far greater than the average response given in our survey.<sup>3</sup>

What explains the large gap? One possibility is simply that households don't value government services as much as it costs governments to supply those services. For example, if

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2 Curtis S. Dubay and Scott A. Hodge, "America Celebrates Tax Freedom Day." *Tax Foundation Special Report*, No. 152 (April 2007).

3 Andrew Chamberlain and Gerald Prante, "Who Pays Taxes and Who Receives Government Spending? An Analysis of Federal, State and Local Tax and Spending Distributions, 1991-2004." *Tax Foundation Working Paper*, No. 1 (March 2007). Available at [www.taxfoundation.org/publications/show/2213.html](http://www.taxfoundation.org/publications/show/2213.html).

a government program leads to large amounts of waste and produces things taxpayers don't value, there will be a gap between government spending and how much people say they value it.

Second, much of what governments spend money on is hidden from view of most taxpayers. For example, in 2006 the federal government spent roughly \$328 million on "general property and records management," which few average taxpayers are aware of or would identify as a useful service they'd be willing to pay for each year.<sup>4</sup>

### Should Government Do More or Less?

For the first time in two years we asked Americans a question about whether they would prefer more government services and taxes, or less: "Considering all government services on the one hand and taxes on the other, would you like to increase taxes and services, decrease them, or keep them about the same?"

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*A majority of U.S. adults say federal income taxes are "too high," that the federal tax code is complex, and that the tax system is in need of major changes or a complete overhaul.*

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Thirty-two percent of U.S. adults say they would like to decrease government services and lower taxes. That compares to 8 percent who favored more government services and higher taxes, and 41 percent who say they enjoy the status quo and wish to keep taxes and government services about where they are today. Twenty percent were unsure of what to do.

These responses are similar to our 2005 survey. Since then, the number who say they'd like higher taxes and more government services has fallen from 13 percent to 8 percent. Additionally, more U.S. adults today seem satisfied with the status quo (41 percent) than in 2005 (30 percent).

### Estate Taxes, Gas Taxes Seen as Unfair

While few taxes are popular, some are viewed as much less painful than others. We asked people to think about the fairness of different taxes, and tell us which ones are fair or unfair in their opinion.

In the past we've asked people to choose just *one* tax as the "least fair" from among a list of different taxes. To get a more detailed picture of the public's views on tax fairness we made two improvements.

First, we added new types of taxes: gas taxes, cigarette and alcohol taxes, and motor vehicle taxes. Second, rather than asking people to pick just one unfair tax, we let them rank the fairness of every tax on a scale from one to five, with one being "very fair" and five being "not at all fair." As in past surveys, first we asked about federal taxes sent to Washington, and then we asked about state and local taxes paid at home.

#### Federal Tax Fairness

At the federal level, the least fair tax is the federal estate tax. It received an unfairness ranking of 3.9 on a scale of 1 to 5. This finding is consistent with previous surveys. As we've noted in past reports, American's strong feelings of unfairness toward the estate tax are remarkable given the very small number of deceased who face estate tax liabilities each year.

Among all groups the strongest dislike for estate taxes was among those aged 55 and over (4.2) and those who are married (4.1). The estate tax is even unpopular, though less so, among the youngest respondents aged 18-24 (3.3) and those who are single (3.6).

The second most unfair federal tax was the federal gasoline tax. Today, the federal gas tax stands at 18.4 cents of each gallon purchased by drivers. The gas tax received an unfairness ranking of 3.8. It was followed by the federal individual income tax, which received a score of 3.5. Overall, it's notable that federal income taxes and federal payroll taxes were not viewed as the most unfair taxes despite making up the vast majority of Americans' tax bills each year.

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<sup>4</sup> Figure from the Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2008*, Historical Table 3.2. Available at [www.whitehouse.gov/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/)

This suggests a complex relationship between Americans' tax loads and their views about tax fairness.

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*The percentage of Americans who say federal income taxes are “too low” has never exceeded 3 percent in any survey since 1947.*

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The least unfair federal taxes were cigarette, beer and wine taxes which received a score of 2.9. Americans seem polarized about the fairness of these “sin” taxes, with 21 percent labeling them “not at all fair” while 29 percent take the opposite view that they’re “very fair.” This division seems to reflect today’s sharp lifestyle differences between those who choose to smoke or drink alcohol and those who don’t.

### State and Local Tax Fairness

At the state and local level the most unfair tax was the gasoline tax, which received an unfairness ranking of 3.8 on a scale of 1 to 5. State gas taxes range widely throughout the nation from a low of 7.5 cents per gallon in Georgia to a high of 38.65 cents per gallon in New York. This finding came as a surprise, as previous surveys have generally found local property taxes to be the most disliked state and local tax.

As a group, women view gas taxes as more unfair (4.0) than men (3.6). Additionally, those in the lowest income group of less than \$25,000 per year view gas taxes as more unfair (4.1) than those in the top income group of \$75,000 and up (3.5)—a finding that probably reflects the well known regressivity of gas taxes.

The second most unfair state or local tax was local property taxes, which received a score of 3.6. This finding is consistent with past surveys that routinely find property taxes as among the most disliked of any tax.

Property taxes are perceived as an unfair tax for at least three reasons: (1) they are highly visible taxes, making taxpayers more aware of their burden; (2) they rise or fall based on

neighborhood property values that taxpayers can’t control; and (3) they make up a large portion of the total tax burden faced by elderly retirees who often rely on relatively modest fixed incomes.

The least unfair state or local taxes were cigarette, beer and wine taxes which received a score of 2.9. As with similar taxes at the federal level there is considerable disagreement about the fairness of these taxes—a fact that probably reflects the growing political unpopularity of smokers and the expanding public health campaigns aimed at stigmatizing cigarette and alcohol use.

### Taxes Complex, Support for Tax Reform

With the April 17 tax deadline looming, we asked people about the perceived complexity of federal income taxes. When asked, “How complex do you think the current federal income tax is?” an overwhelming 83 percent said the federal income tax is very complex or somewhat complex. This represents a slight increase from 2006, when 80 percent said taxes were very or somewhat complex. Just 2 percent said federal taxes are not complex at all, and 10 percent said they’re “not too complex.”

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*Two-thirds of U.S. adults said they favor complete elimination of the estate tax. Just 19 percent opposed elimination, while 15 percent were unsure.*

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After asking about tax complexity, we asked people whether Congress should reform the federal tax code. As in previous surveys we found overwhelming support for federal tax reform. Seventy-eight percent believe the federal tax system needs “major changes” or “a complete overhaul.” Just 3 percent said the federal tax code is “fine the way it is,” while 15 percent said it only needs some minor changes.

## Willing to Give Up Deductions for Reform

Americans say they support federal tax reform, but are they willing to make personal sacrifices to get it? Tax reform often requires trimming back tax deductions and credits such as for home mortgage interest, state and local taxes paid, education expenses and others in order to broaden tax bases and lower rates. These deductions are popular and are vigorously defended by special interest groups, making them a political minefield for members of Congress who support fundamental tax reform.

However, tax deductions may not be as big a stumbling block to fundamental tax reform as is commonly assumed. This year, we asked people if they would be willing to give up some of their federal tax deductions—including the cherished home mortgage interest deduction—if doing so meant they'd receive an across-the-board cut in federal income tax rates.

Roughly half of U.S. adults (48 percent) said they were willing to take that deal and would give up some tax deductions for a rate cut. Just 22 percent said they weren't willing to give up deductions, while 31 percent said they weren't sure.

Surprisingly, those with the highest incomes of \$75,000 per year and up were more willing to give up tax deductions (59 percent) than those with lower incomes, despite the fact that upper-income taxpayers receive the most powerful tax savings from deductions. We also found that the willingness to give up deductions rose with education level, and those who take the standard deduction when they file their taxes are more willing to give up deductions (54 percent) than those who itemize (49 percent).

## Estate Tax Elimination Favored

In 2001 the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act (EGTRRA) set the federal estate tax on a path to full repeal by the end of 2010. However, EGTRRA's provisions also expire at the end of 2010. As a result, unless Congress takes action in the next few years

the estate tax is scheduled to return in 2011 at rates of up to 55 percent on estates of \$1 million or more.

Do Americans favor a permanent estate tax repeal? We asked them the following question: "Do you personally favor or oppose completely eliminating the estate tax—that is, the tax on property left by people who die?"

Two-thirds of U.S. adults (66 percent) said they favor complete elimination of the estate tax. Just 19 percent opposed elimination, while 15 percent were unsure.

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*Seventy-six percent of U.S. adults said they were not willing to pay additional taxes to close the federal deficit. Just 10 percent said they were willing to pay the additional tax.*

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Those aged 55 and over were more likely to support estate tax repeal (71 percent) compared to young adults in the 18-24 range (41 percent). Those earning \$75,000 per year and up were most likely to support repeal among all income groups (72 percent). Additionally, married persons were more likely to favor estate tax repeal (70 percent) compared to singles (54 percent).

## "Non-Payers" Viewed As Unfair

In 2006 the Tax Foundation estimates 43.4 million Americans paid zero individual income tax after all tax deductions and credits.<sup>5</sup> While federal income taxes are just one of many taxes paid by Americans, they make up the single largest tax paid to Washington for the nation as a whole. Because this number who pay zero federal individual income tax has grown in recent decades, we asked whether it's fair or unfair that some pay zero federal income tax while other pay large amounts.

When asked whether it is fair that an estimated 43.4 million Americans pay no federal income taxes, 61 percent of U.S. adults said

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<sup>5</sup> Scott A. Hodge, "Number of Americans Paying Zero Federal Income Tax Grows to 43.4 Million." *Tax Foundation Fiscal Fact*, No. 54 (March 30, 2006).

that it was not, and that everyone should be required to pay some minimum amount of tax to help fund government. Just 24 percent said it was fair, while 15 percent said they weren't sure.

### Higher Taxes to Pay the Deficit?

The federal budget deficit shrank in 2006, but it remains a key political issue on Capitol Hill. Are budget deficits bad for the nation? And should Americans be willing to pay higher taxes to close the budget gap?

To find out, we asked two questions about the federal deficit. First, we explained that the U.S. budget deficit is projected to be \$244 billion this year, or \$1,789 per individual tax return.<sup>6</sup> Then we asked if people would be willing to pay an additional \$1,789 in federal taxes to eliminate that deficit and balance the budget.

Seventy-six percent of U.S. adults said they were not willing to pay the additional taxes to close the deficit. Just 10 percent said they would be willing to pay the additional tax, while 14 percent weren't sure of their view.

Then we asked a second question. To those who said they *were* willing to pay higher

taxes to cut the federal deficit (10 percent), we asked a follow-up question: "If you paid that extra \$1,789 in additional taxes, how do you believe today's Congress would use it?"

Fifty percent said they believe Congress would not do what it promised and would simply increase spending with the new tax dollars. Just 20 percent believed Congress would in fact pay off the entire deficit with the additional money. Twenty-eight percent held the middle-ground view that Congress would only pay off part of the deficit and would probably increase spending with the rest.

### Conclusion

While Congress's attention has drifted away from tax issues, we find that tax policy continues to be a key issue in the minds of the American public. For the third consecutive year we find a majority say federal income taxes are complex, too high and need major changes or a complete overhaul. For members of Congress looking for ways to improve the nation's tax code, these results offer a useful starting point for fundamental tax reform.

<sup>6</sup> Based on 2007 budgetary projections from the Office of Management and Budget as of February 2007.

### Topline Survey Results

Below we present the topline results from the 2007 *Annual Survey of U.S. Attitudes on Taxes and Wealth*. All results are available for download free of charge at [www.taxfoundation.org](http://www.taxfoundation.org), and the complete survey microdata are available to researchers upon request.

In the tables, an asterisk (\*) represents a value of less than one-half percent. A dash (-) represents a value of zero. Percentages do not always add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

**Q600** *Do you consider the amount of federal income tax you have to pay as...?*

	2007	2006	2005
Unweighted Base	2,012	2,017	2,013
Too high	58%	59%	55%
About right	31%	30%	33%
Too low	2%	1%	2%
Not sure	10%	9%	10%

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q605** *What is the maximum percentage of a person's income that should go to taxes — that is, all taxes, state, federal, and local?*

	2007	2006	2005
Unweighted Base	2,012	2,017	2,013
100%	*	-	-
90% - 99%	*	*	-
80% - 89%	*	*	-
70% - 79%	*	*	-
60% - 69%	*	*	-
50% - 59%	2%	1%	2%
40% - 49%	1%	1%	3%
30% - 39%	6%	6%	7%
20% - 29%	20%	22%	23%
10% - 19%	47%	43%	41%
1% - 9%	22%	24%	20%
0%	2%	1%	3%
MEAN	14.7	15	16

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q610** *Thinking about all the government services you use during a year — national defense, roads, public schools, food stamps, Social Security, police protection and so on — how much would you say these are worth to you in dollars for one year? That is, how much would you be willing to pay for all the services provided to you by governments for one year?*

	<b>Total</b>
Unweighted Base	2,012
\$0 - 1,000	43%
\$1,001 - 10,000	46%
\$10,001 - 50,000	9%
\$50,001 - 99,999	1%
\$100,000+	1%
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>\$7,243.80</b>

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q615** *Considering all government services on the one hand and taxes on the other, which of the following statements comes closest to your view?*

	<b>Total</b>
Unweighted Base	2,012
Keep taxes and services about where they are	41%
Decrease services and lower taxes	32%
Increase services and raise taxes	8%
Not sure	20%

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q620** *Some taxes are paid to the federal government in Washington and some are paid to state and local governments. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where one means “very fair” and five means “not at all fair,” please indicate what you think of these federal taxes in terms of fairness.*

	<b>Very fair</b>		<b>Fair</b>		<b>Not at all fair</b>	
	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
Unweighted Base	2,012	2,012	2,012	2,012	2,012	2,012
Cigarette, beer and wine taxes	29%	12%	24%	15%	21%	2.9
Corporate income taxes	16%	10%	32%	17%	25%	3.3
Social Security payroll taxes	8%	9%	42%	21%	19%	3.3
Gas taxes	6%	7%	24%	28%	35%	3.8
Estate taxes	5%	6%	23%	25%	42%	3.9
Federal income taxes	4%	9%	39%	31%	17%	3.5

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q625** Using a scale of 1 to 5, where one means “very fair” and five means “not at all fair,” please indicate what you think of these state and local taxes in terms of fairness.

	Very fair		Fair		Not at all fair	MEAN
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
Unweighted Base	2,012	2,012	2,012	2,012	2,012	2,012
Cigarette, beer and wine taxes	27%	13%	22%	14%	24%	2.9
State income taxes	7%	10%	38%	24%	20%	3.4
Retail sales taxes	6%	11%	46%	23%	14%	3.3
Motor vehicle taxes	5%	10%	37%	27%	20%	3.5
Gas taxes	5%	8%	25%	26%	36%	3.8
Local property taxes	4%	8%	38%	27%	23%	3.6

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q630** How complex do you think the current federal income tax is?

	2007	2006	2005
Unweighted Base	2,012	2,017	2,013
TOP 2 BOX (NET)	83%	80%	81%
(4) Very complex	50%	48%	46%
(3) Somewhat complex	33%	32%	35%
BOTTOM 2 BOX (NET)	11%	10%	11%
(2) Not too complex	10%	9%	9%
(1) Not complex at all	2%	1%	2%
Not sure	5%	10%	8%

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q635** Which of the following statements best describes your opinion of the federal tax system?

	2007	2006	2005
Unweighted Base	2,012	2,017	2,013
TOP 2 BOX (NET)	78%	80%	77%
(1) It should be completely overhauled	38%	40%	35%
(2) It needs major changes	39%	40%	42%
BOTTOM 2 BOX (NET)	18%	16%	18%
(3) It needs minor changes	15%	14%	16%
(4) It is fine the way it is	3%	2%	2%
None of these	5%	4%	6%

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q640** *Would you be willing to give up some federal tax deductions — such as the home mortgage interest deduction, the deduction for state-local taxes paid, or the deduction for education expenses — in exchange for an across-the-board cut in your federal income tax rates?*

	<b>Total</b>
Unweighted Base	2,012
Yes	48%
No	22%
Not sure	31%

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q645** *Do you personally favor or oppose completely eliminating the estate tax — that is, the tax on property left by people who die?*

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
Unweighted Base	2,012	2,017	2,013
Favor	66%	68%	68%
Oppose	19%	19%	17%
Not sure	15%	14%	15%

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q650** *Last year 43.4 million Americans — that's one-third of all taxpayers — paid no federal income tax after deductions and credits. Thinking about your own tax burden, do you think this is fair, or do you feel everyone should be required to pay some minimum amount of tax to help fund government?*

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
Unweighted Base	2,012	2,017	2,013
Everyone should be required to pay some minimum amount of tax to help fund government	61%	63%	59%
This is fair	24%	21%	21%
Not sure	15%	16%	20%

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q655** *This year the U.S. budget deficit will be \$244 billion, or \$1,789 per individual tax return. Some people say it is important to balance the budget. Thinking about your own situation, would you be willing to pay an additional \$1,789 in federal taxes to eliminate the deficit and balance the budget?*

	<b>Total</b>
Unweighted Base	2,012
Yes, I would be willing to pay the additional tax	10%
No, I would not be willing to pay the additional tax	76%
Not sure	14%

Source: Tax Foundation

**Q660** *(Asked only of those who responded “yes” to Question 655 above.) If you paid the extra \$1,789 in additional taxes, how do you believe today’s Congress would use it?*

	<b>Total</b>
Unweighted Base	241
To pay off the entire deficit	20%
To pay off part of the deficit and increase spending with the rest	28%
To mostly increase spending and not pay off the deficit	50%
Not sure	2%

Source: Tax Foundation



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### Survey Methodology

The data in this report come from a survey of 2,012 adults aged 18 and older conducted online by Harris Interactive® between March 5 and 12, 2007. Figures for age, sex, race, education, household income, and region were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All surveys are subject to several sources of error. These include sampling error caused by only interviewing a sample of the total population; measurement error due to question wording and order; inaccurate responses or non-responses to questions; and improper weighting. With the exception of sampling error, the magnitude of these errors cannot be estimated.

With pure probability samples it is possible to calculate the probability that the sampling error is below some amount. With a pure probability sample of 2,012 adults, one can say with 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 2.2 percentage points. The sampling error is higher for subgroup results based on subsets of respondents. As with all surveys of public opinion, sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error.